Amirul Hadi

Islam and State in Sumatra

A Study of Seventeenth-Century Aceh

BRILL

ISLAM AND STATE IN SUMATRA

ISLAMIC HISTORY AND CIVILIZATION

STUDIES AND TEXTS

EDITED BY

WADAD KADI

AND

ROTRAUD WIELANDT

VOLUME 48

ISLAM AND STATE IN SUMATRA

A Study of Seventeenth-Century Aceh

BY

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BRILL
LEIDEN · BOSTON
2004

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Hadi, Amirul, 1962-
Islam and state in Sumatra : a study of seventeenth-century Aceh / by Amirul Hadi.
p. cm. — (Islamic history and civilization. Studies and texts, ISSN 0929-2403 ; v. 48)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 90-04-12982-0
1. Islam—Indonesia—Sumatra. 2. Islam and state—Indonesia—Sumatra. 3. Sumatra (Indonesia)—History. I. Title. II. Series.

BP63.I52S896 2003
322'.1'095981—dc22

2003059551

ISSN 0929-2403
ISBN 90 04 12982 0

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Ayah (Almarhum)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In writing this book I have become indebted to several people and institutions. My thanks go first of all to Professor A. Uner Turgay, director of the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University, who provided me with guidance and support in all academic and official matters. My deep gratitude extends also to Professor Howard M. Federspiel, who, with his thoroughness and high scholarly standards, painstakingly read this work from its inception to its final form. Indeed, he has been a true teacher in every sense of the word and I will forever be indebted to him. I would also like to thank Professor Rotraud Wielandt who read my entire manuscript and, with her customary thoroughness, offered valuable comments and queries. Having said this, it must be acknowledged that any weakness or shortcoming to be found in this book is my responsibility and mine alone.

I am especially grateful as well for the fellowships I obtained from the Indonesia-Canada Islamic Higher Education Project, for its support was instrumental in allowing me to complete this work. Wendy Allen, the current director of the project, has been very helpful and supportive. Susy Ricciardelli, Lori Novak, Joanna Gacek, at the Montreal project office, and Anni Yoesoef, from the Jakarta office have also been extremely helpful. To them I present my sincere thanks. Special thanks must go to Professor Ibrahim Husein and Professor M. Yasir Nasution for their understanding and support. Ms. Trudy Kamperveen of E.J. Brill has been supportive and cooperative for which I am also thankful.

In the Library of the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, I am thankful to Adam Gacek, Salwa Ferahian, Steve Millier and Wayne St. Thomas for all their help, and to Steve especially, not only for assisting me in locating materials, but also for proof-reading this work. Many other friends and colleagues have also been supportive; I would like to acknowledge especially Dr. Thoha Hamim, Hamdiah A. Latif, M. Syahnan Nasution, Eka Sri Mulyani and Alwahidi Ilyas. Thanks are also due to Dr. Karel Steenbrink, Mevrouw Steenbrink and Mevrouw Beppie Boudens for their valuable Dutch lessons.

The support of my family in Banda Aceh, Pematang Siantar and Medan was invaluable. The love and support of my wife Nazly, a true partner and colleague, were likewise priceless to me. Her suggestions and criticisms were also significant as this book slowly took shape. Our little sweethearts, Fawwaz and Nadhra, have been extremely supportive. Their cheerfulness has indeed been a real inspiration, as have their understanding and patience during their father's long absences in the course of research.

Above all, the lasting love, guidance and prayers of my parents have always been the greatest treasure of my life. They were my first and ever my best teachers. Their conviction as to the importance of pursuing higher education has shaped my ambition in search of knowledge. If my education has had any fruit, it is to no small extent due to their encouragement and practical assistance in that direction. Sadly, my father (*yarḥamhu Allāh*) passed away just as this book was rearing completion. It is to his memory and to my dear mother, therefore, that I humbly dedicate this work.

Washington, DC
April, 2003

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BKI	*Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde* The Hague, 1853–
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* London, 1917–
EI2	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition Leiden, 1960–
ER	*Encyclopedia of Religion*, 15 Vols. New York: Macmillan, 1987.
JMBRAS	*Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* Singapore, 1923–
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* London, 1834–
JSAI	*Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* Jerusalem, 1973–
JSBRAS	*Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* Singapore, 1878–1922.
JSEAH	*Journal of Southeast Asian History* Singapore, 1960–1969.
JSEAS	*Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* Singapore, 1970–
TBG	*Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde* Batavia, 1853–1954.

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NOTE ON SPELLING AND TRANSLITERATION

In this study, most Indonesian words and phrases are written according to the new spellings as decreed in the *Ejaan Bahasa Indonesia yang Disempurnakan* (1972). Exceptions are made for common Islamic terms derived from Arabic, which are transliterated with the appropriate diacritical marks. The word *hikayat*, however, is maintained in its Indonesian or Acehnese form. The various spellings of place-names and the names of kingdoms have been standardized. European travelers and scholars used to spell *Pasai* as *Pase* or *Pacem*. The spellings of *Aceh* are numerous and include *Acheh, Achem, Achin, Acheen* and *Atjeh*, the latter being the preferred spelling in Indonesia until the issuance of the new spelling in 1972, by which we are guided in this book. The spelling *Melaka* is used in this work instead of the more familiar *Malacca*. Acehnese words and phrases, whether or not of Arabic origin, are written according to Acehnese spelling. While every attempt has been made in this work to use standardized spellings, the forms and words used in direct quotations remain unchanged. All Arabic words and phrases that occur in this book are transliterated in accordance with the system used by The Library of Congress.

INTRODUCTION

Many would agree with Anthony H. Johns' assertion that "the presence and role of Islam in Southeast Asia has been consistently underestimated."[1] There are, at the very least, two underlying reasons for this attitude. First, there is the "syncretic" character of Islam in the region, in which many pre-Islamic beliefs and practices are still apparent. Then there is the "conflict" between *adat* and Islamic law, in which the former is seen to be dominant. This has led Ira M. Lapidus to remark that "indigenous pre-Islamic Southeast Asian culture formed the basis of the later Islamic civilization."[2]

The issue is not as simple as labeling one group more Islamic than another, however.[3] The complexity of the problem is to be observed when "one tries to understand, and reduce to descriptive and analytical order, phenomena associated with the translation of a major religious system from the culture(s) (systems of shared meaning) in which it arose and was formed to the substantially different cultures of Southeast Asia."[4] In fact, it was an Islam colored by Arab and Persian elements that was introduced to the region. This new religion was adopted, adapted and translated into the Southeast Asian context, suggesting the "active role" played by indigenous peoples in this process.[5]

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[1] Anthony H. Johns, "Sufism in Southeast Asia: Reflections and Reconsiderations," *JSEAS* 26, 1 (1995), p. 172. The same tone is also taken by William R. Roff who insists that "there seems to have been an extraordinary desire on the part of Western social science observers to diminish, conceptually, the place and role of the religion of Islam now and in the past, in Southeast Asian societies." William R. Roff, "Islam Obscured? Some Reflections on Studies of Islam and Society in Southeast Asia," *Archipel* 29 (1985), p. 7.

[2] Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Muslim Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 467.

[3] Johns regrets the marginalization of Islam in the study of this region. To him, this "was compounded by the currency of such terms as the heartland and the periphery of the Islamic world to refer to the Middle East and the Indonesian islands respectively—as though the further one got from Mecca the more diluted and weaker Islamic faith and practice inevitably became. Such are the ways in which we are captive to methapors of our own creation!" ("Sufism in Southeast Asia," p. 172).

[4] Roff, "Islam Obscured?," p. 8.

[5] It would not be accurate to suggest that Southeast Asian Islam is less Islamic

It is in the above context that the Muslims of Southeast Asia are seen "as members of communities participating in the commonwealth of Islam in their own right."[6] This is not the place for a detailed survey of Muslim activities in the region. Suffice it to say, however, that in the course of their history, the Muslims of Southeast Asia have actively engaged in a religious discourse, a phenomenon that deserves to be studied in its own right.

This book attempts to address this neglected area.[7] Specifically, it focuses on the political dimension of Islam within a particular Southeast Asian state, i.e., Aceh. The sultanate of Aceh, founded in about 1500 at the northern tip of the island of Sumatra, assigned Islam an important role in all aspects of the state. In a region where the degree to which Islam was integrated in society differed from one area to another, Aceh "was the homeland of Indonesian Islamic societies," to the extent that "Muslim teachings did not remain an isolated phenomenon but became part of Achehnese society."[8] This issue, however, raises many questions, such as: What was Islamic about the sultanate of Aceh? Did Islam successfully penetrate into Acehnese political life? To what degree did indigenous pre-Islamic traditions remain influential in the sultanate? To answer these questions, this study describes and analyzes the Islamic ingredients of Acehnese political life. Each aspect of the state's existence is studied in rela-

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than that of the Arabized and Persianized version. Indeed, as Roff suggests, there is tension "that exists within the Islamic religious system and within societies that seek to embody or apply that system, between the demands of the ideal and the demands of social realities." Roff further insists that "if it be accepted that the *sharīʿah* points to a discoverable but unrealizable ideal, of great—and dynamic—complexity, it follows that all Islamic societies (from the first generation in Arabia to the Indonesia or Morocco—or for the matter the Arabia—of the present) can exist only in approximation to that ideal" (Roff, "Islam Obscured?" p. 8). C. Snouck Hurgronje who emphasizes "the ethnological characteristics" of the adherents of this religion writes: "the customary law of the Arabs and the "Excellent Qānūn" (the mundane code) of the Turks differ from the written and unwritten adat law of our Indonesians, but they are equally far removed from the *sharīʿat* or *sharʿ*. . ." (*The Achehnese*, trans. by A.W.S. O'Sullivan, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1906), p. 280). See also M.B Hooker, "Introduction: The Translation of Islam into South East Asia," in M.B. Hooker, ed., *Islam in South-East Asia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983), pp. 1–22.

[6] Johns, "Sufism in Southeast Asia," p. 170.

[7] Indeed, as A.C. Milner observes, scholars have paid more attention to the study of Islam's introduction to the region than to the role it played in indigenous societies. See A.C. Milner, "Islam and the Muslim State," in Hooker, ed., *Islam in South-East Asia*, p. 23.

[8] Lapidus, *A History of Muslim Societies*, pp. 474–475.

tion to Islam, including, among others, the concept of kingship and the problem of authority, the royal enclosure and religious ceremonies, and the formation of Islamic institutions. All these aspects will be scrutinized in terms of their relations with each other and with an eye to their formation in what might be called the Islamic political tradition of the sultanate.

In this study the discussion is, broadly speaking, conducted on two levels. The first is the "practical" aspect of the inquiry. From this perspective, Acehnese political structures and institutions, such as the office of the *sulṭān*, the titles adopted, the religious ceremonies, the *'ulamā'* and the office of *shaykh al-Islām*, are described and analyzed. Each of these political features is studied in terms of its structure and function within Acehnese political life. The second stage of inquiry operates on the "conceptual" level. Through this we intend to explore the ideas and motivations that lay behind the political practices of the sultanate. To pursue this line of investigation, it is imperative to conduct an inquiry into the Acehnese "worldview." Through such an inquiry into "practical" politics and the "worldview" underlying the former, the complex interplay of meaning and action can be grasped.

At the same time Aceh will be viewed from three perspectives: as home to an ethnic group with a distinct culture; as part of a broader Southeast Asian civilization; and, most importantly, as a component of the Islamic world. These three facets will be considered here in order to identify their role in the formation of Aceh's worldview and in its political tradition. Indeed, while Aceh can be seen as "an autonomous unit comprising endogenous forces . . .,"[9] this characterization can only be explained in terms of exogenous forces and influences, namely those of Southeast Asia or those of the Islamic world. To better understand Acehnese political life and Islam's place in it, therefore, a comparative analysis of the subject must be undertaken. In the Southeast Asian context, we will take into account the two Muslim states of Melaka and Mataram, while parallel instances found in the wider Islamic world will also be brought to bear on the subject.

In broad terms, the period covered in this study is that of the seventeenth century, particularly between 1600 and 1675, which, we

[9] Sartono Kartodirdjo, "The Concept of Regional History," in Bernhard Dahm, ed., *Regions and Regional Developments in the Malay-Indonesian World* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992), p. 14.

believe, marked the high point in the formation of Aceh's political traditions. As we shall see, the achievements of the sultanate were significant in many areas, but especially in the fields of politics, religion and culture.

This study draws upon both *primary* and *secondary* sources. The *primary* sources include both indigenous and non-indigenous works on seventeenth century Aceh that date from that period. All our indigenous sources can be counted as examples of traditional historical literature, defined by A. Teeuw as all literature "pertaining to history, referring to real or presumed facts, events, persons in the past."[10] In our case, the writings are predominantly court-oriented in nature, and contain historical materials interspersed with myths, legends, fairy tales and didactic elements. As to the historical accuracy of such sources, a few scholars, including Hoesein Djajadiningrat[11] and J.C. Bottoms,[12] suggest that they should be verified against European records. Another important element found in this type of source is information about the lifestyles, livelihoods, attitudes, norms, and worldviews of a people. Of the *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay Annals), the principle Malay source for fifteenth-century Melaka, J.M. Gullick admits that "there is a certain amount of historical facts embedded in it. But its main significance in the context of social analysis is that Malay literature and history served to transmit the traditions and values of the community, more especially of its ruling class."[13] As such, traditional writings constitute an essential source for our study, not only in view of their historical value but also due to their rich depiction of the worldview of the Acehnese and their self-perception of statehood and society. Of this type of source Bottoms writes:

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[10] A. Teeuw, "Some Remarks on the Study of So-Called Historical Texts in Indonesian Languages," in Sartono Kartodirdjo, ed., *Profiles of Malay Culture: Historiography, Religion and Politics* (Jakarta: Ministry of Education and Culture, Directorate General of Culture, 1976), p. 5.

[11] Hoesein Djajadiningrat, "Local Traditions and the Study of Indonesian History," in Soedjatmoko, ed., *An Introduction to Indonesian Historiography* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), p. 77.

[12] J.C. Bottoms, "Some Malay Historical Sources: A Bibliographical Note," in Soedjatmoko, ed., *An Introduction to Indonesian*, pp. 179–190.

[13] J.M. Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*, revised ed. (London: The Athlone Press, 1988), pp. 6–7.

> The important dates, generally speaking, can be established by other means—by archeological evidence or from foreign sources. The kind of material not so found is exactly that characteristic of Malay historiography—social material, detailed physical descriptions of places and things, implicit revelations of group attitudes and conflicts. If carefully checked and evaluated . . . this material helps more than anything else to answer the questions of modern historical research, which is rightly more concerned with social, economic, and conceptual backgrounds than with the simple chronology of political events.[14]

The primary indigenous text employed as a source for our study is the *Hikayat Aceh*. Written during the reign of Sulṭān Iskandar Muda (r. 1607–1636), the work was composed as a panegyric to this ruler. Due to the fact that the sole surviving manuscript is missing several pages, however, the author is unknown. T. Iskandar suggests that the author must have been a court-writer and quite a learned man,[15] but whoever he may have been, the importance of this work for our purposes lies primarily in its depiction of Acehnese perceptions of their rulers and state.

The next most important source is the *Bustān al-Salāṭīn*, a voluminous work written in Aceh in 1638 by Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī at the order of Sulṭān Iskandar Thānī (r. 1636–1641). Divided into seven books, the *Bustān* is "the biggest book of its kind in Malay classical literature."[16] Only chapter 13 of the second book, however, concerning the history of Aceh, is useful for our purposes.[17]

The *Adat Aceh* is another important source for our study. A collection of tracts from the court library of Aceh, this work is essential to our understanding of the "inner configuration" of the sultanate as an indigenous political entity. It is thanks to the efforts of two Dutch scholars, G.W.J. Drewes and P. Voorhoeve, who published the manuscript belonging to the India Office Library,[18] that we have a

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[14] Bottoms, "Some Malay Historical Sources," p. 190.

[15] T. Iskandar, "Three Malay Historical Writings in the First Half of the 17th Century," *JMBRAS* 40, 2 (1967), p. 42. Iskandar has studied this text in his *De Hikajat Atjeh* ('s-Gravenhage: N.V. de Nederlandsche Boek-en Steendrukkerij VH. H.I. Smits, 1959).

[16] Iskandar, "Three Malay," p. 52.

[17] This part of the work has been studied, romanized and ed. by T. Iskandar, *Bustanu's-salatin*, bab 2, fasal 13 (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1966).

[18] G.W.J. Drewes and P. Voorhoeve, *Adat Atjeh*, Reproduced in Fascimile from a Manuscript in the India Office Library ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1958).

complete text at our disposal. Two-thirds of it concerns seventeenth-century Aceh and covers four major topics: the regulations for kings (*perintah segala raja-raja*), the genealogy of the kings of Aceh, the customs to be observed at court (*adat majelis raja-raja*), and the administrative rules and practices of the port of the capital city, Dār al-Salām. This source is also fundamentally significant in that it provides information, albeit limited in quantity, that can be historically validated.

It will also be necessary to draw on the *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* as a source for this study. Written in 1603 in Aceh by Bukhārī al-Jawharī, this work is a Southeast Asian variant of the "Mirror for Princes" genre of writing. Primarily literary and idealistic in character, works of this kind cannot be expected to provide an accurate picture of the real workings of government. Nevertheless, the *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* remains relevant to our study, for it reveals much information on topics ranging from the worldview of the period to the prevailing social, political, intellectual and religious trends in the Aceh of our period. In some respects it goes beyond being a mere theoretical treatise, and raises some issues that are relevant to the historical discourses of the day. It is in this unique dimension that the *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* is crucial to enriching our understanding of the historical events in Aceh.[19]

As for the category of non-indigenous sources, it is sufficient to state that they consist mainly of the accounts of European visitors to Aceh in this period. Nevertheless, while they contain valuable information on the events, chronology and physical state of the sultanate of Aceh, and offer useful facts on trade and politics during the course of the seventeenth century, these sources are for the most part silent on Islamic issues, and provide scant information on the religious dimension of the sultanate. This is in addition to the possibly one-sided and misleading nature of these foreigners' opinions concerning Islam and the motivations of non-European actors. Their

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Takeshi Ito has employed this source in his study of the "inner configuration" of the Acehnese state in his "The World of the Adat Aceh: A Historical Study of the Sultanate of Aceh" (Ph.D. dissertation, Australian National University, 1984).

[19] See also the interesting perspective taken by Taufik Abdullah with regard to this text in "The Formation of a Political Tradition in the Malay World," in Anthony Reid, ed., *The Making of an Islamic Political Discourse in Southeast Asia* (Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Monash University, 1993), pp. 35–58.

ignorance of Islam and the local culture also played a part. Hence, these sources must be carefully handled if one is to employ them in such a study as ours.

Our *secondary* sources can also be divided into two main categories. The first includes a number of early indigenous works from the region (but not from Aceh itself) that are relevant to this study. The most important are the *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai* (the Story of the Rulers of Pasai), the *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay Annals) and the *Undang Undang Melaka* (the Laws of Melaka). The second category comprises all modern studies done by scholars of the Aceh of our period and other parts of the archipelago, as well as other works related to this study.

Since our purpose is to discover those ingredients in the political life of seventeenth-century Aceh that were Islamic, a reconstruction of its political system and structure will be our preliminary task. This will be supplemented by an explanation of the motivations or ideas behind particular practices. Towards this end, the following methods of analysis are employed.

The first is a *descriptive* analysis. Through this, Acehnese political institutions and organizations are described insofar as our sources will permit. This step requires a review of the historical source materials that allow us to reconstruct the political life of the Acehnese state in this period. Thus, indigenous materials are explored, examined and verified against European records, while European accounts are confirmed in the light of traditional sources.

The results obtained from this exercise are then subjected to a second method of investigation, namely, an *interpretative* analysis. This allows us to explore Acehnese conceptions of and ideas about politics and to demonstrate their coherence. To reiterate, all such research will be conducted from the Acehnese perspective, for it is only by deciphering the meaning assigned by the people themselves to all aspects of their political institutions that a general comprehension of the workings of politics in the sultanate will be achieved.

Finally, a *comparative* analysis will be applied to the findings. This is designed to help us better understand our object of inquiry, as neither the political system of the sultanate of Aceh nor the concept underlying it can be comprehended without measuring them against similar developments elsewhere. As mentioned earlier, Aceh may be seen as an integral part of both the Southeast Asian and Islamic worlds. This being the case, similarities and contrasts between Aceh

and other Muslim sultanates, e.g., Melaka and Mataram in Southeast Asia, and Muslim political culture outside of the region, are highlighted. Through this exercise we can explore what was peculiar about Acehnese political life in Islamic terms and question how this peculiarity came into existence.

The history of the seventeenth-century sultanate of Aceh has received considerable scholarly attention. Scholars such as Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1906),[20] Bertram Schrieke (1957),[21] Denys Lombard (1967),[22] and Takeshi Ito (1984)[23] have made significant contributions to the field. Snouck Hurgronje's monumental work, *The Achehnese*, represents a pioneering study of Acehnese society. Although the main concern of the work is Aceh in the nineteenth century, considerable attention is devoted to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as well, allowing the author to pass certain judgments on the Acehnese political system and the role of the sulṭāns. However, his image of Aceh in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is largely constructed upon his observations of nineteenth-century Aceh and on a few manuscripts from the earlier period. Schrieke, for his part, has likewise touched upon certain aspects of Islamic political structures in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. His cursory appraisal of the subject, however, leaves much to be explained. Furthermore, Schrieke's research was conducted in the early 1940s (he died in 1945), a fact which, in spite of its great merit, means that his findings are somewhat dated. Lombard's study on the other hand constitutes a major contribution to our knowledge of Aceh's history. In it, the author has tried to show that Aceh's "golden age," especially during Iskandar Muda's reign (1607–1636), was a historical fact. This is in refutation of Snouck Hurgronje's thesis that such claims were mere legend. Basing his study on both indigenous and European sources, Lombard has successfully reconstructed the political and social life of the sultanate during Iskandar Muda's reign. Finally, Takeshi Ito's unpublished dissertation is perhaps the latest major research on Aceh

[20] *The Achehnese*, trans. by A.W.S. O'Sullivan, vol. 2 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1906).

[21] *Indonesian Sociological Studies*, pt. 2 (The Hague and Bandung: W. van Hoeve, 1957).

[22] *Le sultanat d'Atjéh au temps d'Iskandar Muda, 1607–1636* (Paris: École française d'Extreme-Orient, 1967).

[23] "The World of the Adat Aceh: A Historical Study of the Sultanate of Aceh" (Ph.D. dissertation, Australian National University, 1984).

during the seventeenth century. Aimed at reconstructing a comprehensive history of Aceh during this period, Ito's research concentrates on "internal" rather than external features of the sultanate. Towards this end, he broaches a wide range of topics covering the life of the state, including the governing system, Islam and the ruler, and the commercial activities at the port of Dār al-Salām. In so doing, Ito relies heavily on indigenous sources, especially the *Adat Aceh*, supplementing them with information derived from European sources.

The foregoing works have contributed much to our knowledge of Acehnese state and society from various perspectives: the ethnographic outlook of Snouck Hurgronje's work, the sociological aspect of Schrieke's research, and the historical nature of Lombard and Ito's studies. Nonetheless, a thorough study of the role of Islam in Acehnese political life in the seventeenth century remains a desideratum. Neither Snouck Hurgronje, nor Schrieke, nor even Lombard provides us with a thorough discussion of the role of Islam in state and government. Even Ito, with his exhaustive description of the sultanate and his concern to provide a comprehensive survey of the inner structure of the sultanate, fails to address the issue sufficiently. While he does touch on the place of Islam in the state, Ito shows little interest in pursuing an inquiry into the Islamic nature of Acehnese political life.

Although it is often suggested that the sultanate of Aceh exhibited an Islamic approach in its political affairs,[24] the actual nature of this Islamic character, in both concept and practice, is little studied. This study attempts, therefore, to discover whether Islam did play as central a role in Acehnese affairs of state as is sometimes claimed. If this was the case, then, into which aspects of political life did Islam successfully penetrate? What, moreover, was the role played by Acehnese local culture in the process? In the course of this investigation, we will also attempt to show how historical Islam and the nature of Acehnese society combined to give Islam an impetus at the state level.

This work is divided into five chapters. Chapter One provides a brief overview of the history of Aceh prior to the seventeenth century, when the foundations of the Islamic sultanate were laid. A discussion

[24] See for instance Schrieke, *Indonesian*, pt. 2, pp. 237–260; Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," especially Chapter Three and Four.

of the theory of Acehnese kingship in relation to Islam is provided in Chapter Two. Chapter Three is devoted to a discussion of the religious practices and policies of the sultanate, whereas Chapter Four studies traditional Islamic institutions in terms of their relation to the state. A comparative examination looking at other Muslim states in the region, especially Melaka, an early Malay coastal sultanate in the region, and Mataram, an inland Javanese sultanate, is provided in Chapter Five. Finally, a summary of the results of our study and its implications is offered in the Conclusion.

CHAPTER ONE

THE SULTANATE OF ACEH PRIOR TO THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: A HISTORICAL SKETCH

A reconstruction of the early history of Aceh and its emergence as a sultanate is a difficult enterprise. Neither the indigenous nor the foreign sources are of much help in this endeavor, with the result that the history of the sultanate prior to the sixteenth century remains largely unknown.[1] This chapter is, therefore, confined to the study of Aceh in the sixteenth century, when the seeds of what was to become the newly founded and powerful sultanate of Aceh are observed.

A. *The Foundation of Aceh*

Aceh occupies the northernmost part of Sumatra, now a province within the Republic of Indonesia. G.P. Tolson writes that, in precise terms, Aceh "is the correct name of that part of Sumatra extending from Tamiang point on the east to Trumon on the west coast, though it is commonly, not erroneously known to the Europeans as Acheen."[2] This geographical definition was only valid, however, from the sixteenth century onwards. One can argue that Aceh in its early history denoted what is called "Aceh Proper," i.e. "the district to the northwest with the Atjeh river and the port of Atjeh."[3] Yet even

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[1] Raden Hoesein Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht van de in Malaische werken vervatte over de geschiedenis van het Soeltanat van Atjeh," *BKI* 65 (1911), p. 142. Edwin M. Loeb repeats this observation by saying "the history of Atjeh before 1500 A.D. lies very much in the dark." See his *Sumatra: Its History and People*, additional chapter by Robert Heine-Geldern (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 215.

[2] G.P. Tolson, "Acheh, Commonly Called Acheen," *JSBRAS* 5 (1880), p. 37. See also T.C.R. Westpalm, "Geography of Achin," trans. by Bierber, *JSBRAS* 3 (1879), pp. 120–123; William Marsden, *The History of Sumatra*, a reprint of the third edition, introd. by John Bastin (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 396; C. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, trans. by A.W.S. O'Sullivan, vol. 1 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1906), p. 1.

[3] P. Voorhoeve, "Atjeh," *EI2*.

this definition is imprecise for it includes the areas that constituted Aceh after unification, a process that will be described below.

Indeed, following Teuku Iskandar's analysis, Aceh was perhaps originally the name of a small kingdom in Dār al-Kamāl, the hinterland located about one mile from the coast at the northern tip of the region.[4] As an inland kingdom, Aceh was neither known nor visited by many foreign travelers or traders. Djajadiningrat suggests that before the year 1500 Aceh was an insignificant entity.[5] Its founder is unknown to us, but the kingdom itself must have come into existence around the end of the fourteenth century.[6] Early signs of the emergence of Aceh are observable after its unification with Lamuri of Mahkota ʿĀlam around the end of the fifteenth or early in the sixteenth century.

Lamuri[7] was a kingdom that, at the time, was better known and perhaps more powerful than Aceh itself. Yet there is little information available regarding it. Founded in around the ninth century with Krueng Raya as its capital,[8] it was an important port-kingdom visited by many people from different corners of the world, such as Arabia, Persia, Europe and China.[9] The account of *Ying-yai Sheng-*

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[4] Teuku Iskandar, *De Hikajat Atjeh* ('s-Gravenhage: N.V. De Nederlandsche Boeken Steendrukkerij VH. H.L. Smits, 1959), p. 31. To avoid any confusion in referring to this source, hereafter the text will be simply referred to as *Hikayat Aceh*, while Iskandar's analysis will be cited as Iskandar, *De Hikajat Atjeh*.

[5] Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," p. 152. The confusion surrounding Aceh's early history is discussed here, pp. 142–152.

[6] Iskandar, *De Hikajat Atjeh*, p. 32. Iskandar bases his argument on the information inscribed on the tomb of Muẓaffar Shāh (d. 1497), the son of ʿInāyat Shāh and the grandson of ʿAbd Allāh al-Malik al-Mubīn.

[7] The name of this kingdom is spelled differently by various peoples. The Arabs and Persians spelled it *Rāmī, Rāmnī*, or *Lāmurī*. Europeans wrote *Lambri, Lambry*, or *Lamori*. The Chinese called it *Lan-li, Lan-bu-li, Lan-wu-li*, and *Nan-po-li*. The *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay Annals) spelled it *Lamiri*, whereas the *Hikayat Aceh* used the name *Lamri*. The spelling *Lamuri* is found in the *Nagarakertagama*. Local historians, such as M. Junus Djamil and A. Hasjmy, use the spelling *Lamuri*. See H.K.J. Cowan, "Lāmurī-Lambri-Lawrī-Rām(n)ī-Lan-li-Lan-wu-li-Nan-poli," *BKI* 90 (1933), pp. 421–424; Iskandar, *De Hikajat Atjeh*, pp. 25–28; Denys Lombard, *Le sultanat d'Atjéh au temps d'Iskandar Muda, 1607–1636* (Paris: École française d'Extreme-Orient, 1967), p. 31; M. Junus Djamil, *Silsilah Tawarich Radja 2 Keradjaan Atjeh* (Banda Atjeh: Kodam Iskandar Muda, 1968), pp. 34–37; A. Hasjmy, *Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1990), pp. 15–16.

[8] Iskandar, *De Hikajat Atjeh*, p. 37.

[9] See G.R.A. Tibbets, *Study of the Arabic Texts Containing Materials on South East Asia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970), p. 230; notes in Duarte Barbosa, *The Book of Duarte Barbosa*, ed. and annot. by Mansel Longworth Dames, vol. 2 (London: The Hakluyt Society,

lan (1416) describes both the people and their rulers as Muslims. A thriving sea trade with China facilitated relations between the two states.[10] Indeed, China acted as the overlord of Lamuri, an arrangement according to which the latter sent envoys and paid tribute while the former, in return, provided protection.[11] Sometime in the fifteenth century, however, Lamuri was removed to the region of Mahkota ʿĀlam. There were at least two reasons for this change in policy: to counter an expected attack by Pidie, which had ambitions to conquer Aceh, and to acquire another harbor, since the mouth of the river on which Lamuri had previously been situated had become shallow, preventing ships from docking.[12]

The Lamuri kingdom in Mahkota ʿĀlam constituted a new rival for Aceh, which, located in Dār al-Kamāl, was separated from Mahkota ʿĀlam by only a river. The rivalry led to war between the two that ended in stalemate. This situation encouraged Munawwar Shāh, the king of Lamuri, to resort to trickery by proposing the marriage of his son with the daughter of Sulṭān ʿInāyat Shāh of Aceh. When ʿInāyat Shāh accepted this proposal, the envoys of Munawwar Shāh secretly brought guns with them to attack Dār al-Kamāl. This ruse was successful and Dār al-Kamāl was occupied by Munawwar Shāh's envoys, who were actually soldiers. From then on Lamuri and Aceh were united under the reign of Sulṭān Shams Shāh, the son of Munawwar Shāh. In order to strengthen his position, Shams Shāh married his son, ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh (d. 1530), to the daughter of ʿInāyat Shāh.[13]

With the unification of the two kingdoms and the rise of ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh as its sulṭān, a new era for the sultanate of Aceh Dār al-Salām commenced. By conquering Daya in 1520, Pidie in 1521 and Pasai in 1524, this sulṭān proved to be the first ruler strong enough to control the entire region of Aceh. Indeed, the *Bustān al-Salāṭīn* insists that ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh was the first sulṭān of Aceh Dār al-Salām.[14] This must be understood to mean that he was the

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1921), pp. 182, 184; W.P. Groeneveldt, *Historical Notes on Indonesia and Malaya Compiled from Chinese Sources* (Djakarta: Bhratara, 1960), p. 100.

[10] Groeneveldt, *Historical Notes*, pp. 98–99.

[11] Ibid.; G. Schlegel, "Geographical Notes XVI: The Old States in the Island of Sumatra," *T'oung Pao* 2, 2 (1901), pp. 357–359.

[12] See Iskandar, *De Hikajat Atjeh*, pp. 31–32.

[13] For further discussion on this issue, see ibid., pp. 32–33, 37.

[14] Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī, *Bustanu's-salatin*, bab 2, fasal 13, ed. by T. Iskandar

first to expand the frontiers of the sultanate. For this reason, scholars such as Th.W. Juynboll and P. Voorhoeve suggest that ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh was the "real founder of the empire of Aceh,"[15] while R.O. Winstedt portrays him as the "first Sultan of Greater Acheh."[16] Indeed, the conquests of these three kingdoms by ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh were absolutely essential for the later development of this newly fledged state. A brief historical account of these kingdoms would, therefore, be useful.

In his description of the kingdoms of Sumatra in the early sixteenth century, Tome Pires names several kingdoms in the northernmost part of the island.[17] Pasai, Pidie and Daya seem to have been among the most important and would eventually provide the power base of what was later to constitute "Greater Aceh."

Pasai, along with its neighbor Samudra, may have been the earliest Islamic sultanate in the Indonesian archipelago. Yet neither the timing of Islam's coming to the region nor the date of its foundation as a state are known. The earliest accounts available are the ones provided by Marco Polo and Ibn Baṭṭūṭah. Marco Polo, who stopped at Perlak in 1292 on his way home to Venice, described the inhabitants of the former as "for the most part idolaters, but many of those who dwell in the seaport towns have been converted to the religion of Mahomet, by the Saracen merchants who constantly frequent them."[18] The villages that he designated in his account as Samara (where he stayed for five months)[19] and Basman "have been identified as Samudra and Pase, two towns separated by the Pase river, a short distance above Perlak."[20]

(Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1966), pp. 22, 31 (hereafter this source will be referred to as *Bustān*, while Iskandar's introduction and analysis are cited as Iskandar, *Bustanu's-salatin*). See also Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," p. 152; Iskandar, *De Hikajat Atjeh*, p. 38.

[15] Voorhoeve, "Atjeh," *EI2*.

[16] R.O. Winstedt, "The Early Rulers of Perak, Pahang and Acheh," *JMBRAS* 10 (1932), p. 43.

[17] Tome Pires, *The Suma Oriental Tome Pires*, trans. and ed. by Armando Cortesao, vol. 1 (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1944), pp. 135–136.

[18] Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, trans. by W. Marsden and introd. by John Masefield (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Limited, 1926), p. 338.

[19] Ibid., pp. 341–342.

[20] P.A. Hoesein Djajadiningrat, "Islam in Indonesia," in Kenneth W. Morgan, ed., *Islam the Straight Path* (New York: The Roland Press, 1959), p. 375.

About five decades later[21] Ibn Baṭṭūṭah visited Samudra, where he found that Islam had been established for about a century. The ruler, Malik al-Ẓāhir, was a devout Muslim who encouraged religious observance as well as performed the religious obligations himself. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah's account also contains a description of some royal court ceremonies that he witnessed.[22] Indeed, this account and that of Marco Polo have led Djajadiningrat to conclude that "if the identification of Samara with Samudra is correct, then this must have been the first Muslim kingdom in Indonesia when Marco Polo visited it at the end of the seventh century (thirteenth century A.D.)."[23]

Little is known about Pasai subsequent to these accounts. It was later united with Samudra and called Samudra Pasai.[24] This unification took place during the reign of Sulṭān Muḥammad Malik al-Ẓāhir (1289–1326), but the reasons for it remain uncertain. One may postulate, however, that the unification occurred due to their geographic and ideological (i.e., religious) proximity to one another. Political and economic interests are also bound to have played a role. An even more plausible theory is that relations between both kingdoms were very cordial, since "the first sultan of Samudra also founded the sultanate of Pase."[25]

Historically one of the most important entrepots in Southeast Asia,[26] Pasai has been described as a prosperous sultanate where merchants from many countries pursued trade. According to Horace Stone, "the port of Pasai grew into a great trading centre, so that at about A.D. 1400 the trade was shared between Majapahit, in Java, and Pasai, in Sumatra."[27] Describing Pasai in the early sixteenth century,

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[21] In 746 A.H. (1345 A.D.) and again in Ramaḍān 747 A.H. (December 1346 or January 1347).

[22] Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *Riḥlah*, Arabic text with translation by C. Defremery and B.R. Sanguinetti, vol. 4 (Paris: L'Imprimerie Nationale, 1894), pp. 224–240. See also *Riḥlat Ibn Baṭṭūṭah*, ed. by 'Abd al-Ḥalī al-Tāzī, vol. 4 (Rabat: Akādīmiyyah al-Mamlakah al-Maghribiyyah, 1997), pp. 113–117.

[23] Dajadiningrat, "Islam in Indonesia," p. 376.

[24] Loeb, *Sumatra*, p. 218; Teuku Ibrahim Alfian, ed., *Kronika Pasai: Sebuah Tinjauan Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1973), p. 21.

[25] Loeb, *Sumatra*, p. 218.

[26] This was besides Melaka, Johor, Patani, Aceh and Brunei. See Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450–1680*, vol. 1 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 7.

[27] Horace Stone, *From Malacca to Malaysia 1400–1965* (London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1966), p. 17. See also M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz, *Asian Trade and European Influence* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), pp. 13, 18–19.

Tome Pires points out that since Melaka had fallen to the Portuguese and Pidie was at war, its port became increasingly prosperous, since it was visited by merchants from many different regions, such as Arabia, Turkey, Iran, Gujarat, the Malay peninsula, Java and Siam.[28]

Pasai's natural resources included pepper, silk and benzoin. Pires informs us that it produced "from eight to ten thousand bahars of peppers every year."[29] Oil was another important resource, imported from nearby Perlak.[30] Silk from Pasai was likewise an important commodity, attracting European interest—especially that of Alfonso de Albuquerque, the governor of Portugal at Goa, who eventually conquered Melaka. Anthony Reid writes:

> Albuquerque learned about the silk of Pasai when he was on the way to the conquest of Melaka in 1511. He sent his Genoese troubleshooter, Giovanni da Empoli, back there from India to negotiate for the supply of all the silk Pasai could produce. Empoli was told by the Raja that this would cost the Portuguese one hundred thousand ducats.[31]

Pasai's rapid economic development contributed to the kingdom's growth in a number of respects. By the time Tome Pires reached the kingdom, the population of the city was not less than twenty thousand.[32] A number of large towns in the interior of the kingdom also came to be inhabited by prosperous and educated people.[33] This, however, is the extent of our knowledge.

Despite the meager information we have on Islam in Pasai, it has been suggested that the sultanate was a center of religious studies and, indeed, as D.G.E. Hall puts it, was "the first important diffusion centre of the new faith in South-East Asia."[34] By the time Ibn Baṭṭūṭah stopped there, there were two Persian theologians participating in the discussion circles of the Sulṭān Malik al-Ẓāhir, namely Qāḍī Sharīf Amīr Sayyid of Shirāz and Tāj al-Dīn of Isfahān.[35] This Sulṭān

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[28] Pires, *The Suma*, vol. 1, p. 142.

[29] Ibid. See also Meilink-Roelofsz, *Asian Trade*, p. 21. *Bahar* is a "variable unit of weight, equivalent to 3 pikul or approx. 180 kg when weighing pepper, but only 72.5 kg when weighing gold." See Reid, *Southeast Asia*, p. 267.

[30] Reid, *Southeast Asia*, p. 75.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Pires, *The Suma*, vol. 1, p. 143.

[33] Groeneveldt, *Historical Notes*, pp. 85–93.

[34] D.G.E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, 3rd ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1962), p. 206.

[35] Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *Riḥlah*, vol. 4, p. 230; *Riḥlat Ibn Baṭṭūṭah*, vol. 4, p. 113.

was so eager to acquire knowledge of the faith that he participated in religious discussion both at his palace and at the mosque.[36] Thus, we have clear evidence that there was a strong tradition of Islamic learning in this sultanate.

From Pasai, Islam spread to Melaka, Patani[37] and eventually to Java. It has also been suggested that Sunan Gunung Jati, one of the nine famous *walis* (saints) of Java, originally came from Pasai.[38] Though later in the fifteenth century Melaka would assume Pasai's role in the spread of Islam, the latter remained highly respected as a center of Islamic studies. Moreover, the scholars of Pasai continued to be regarded as "more learned than those in Malacca."[39]

The sultanate's international relations were extensive, particularly in the areas of trade, religion and even politics. Relations with China, for instance, were established at an early date. It is believed that in 1282 Pasai sent two ambassadors to China identified as Sulaymān and Shams al-Dīn.[40] Pasai and China often exchanged envoys bearing presents, such as in the reign of the emperor Cheng-Tsu (1403–1424). The famous Chinese admiral Cheng Ho was sent to Pasai three times, in 1405, 1414 and 1430,[41] while Pasai sent envoys

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[36] Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *Riḥlah*, vol. 4, pp. 230–231; *Riḥlat Ibn Baṭṭūṭah*, vol. 4, pp. 114–115.

[37] For a discussion of the Islamic relationship between Patani and Pasai, see Hamdan Hasan, "Pertalian Pemikiran Islam Malaysia-Aceh," in Khoo Kim, ed., *Tamaddun Islam di Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1980), pp. 48–59.

[38] Hosein Djajadiningrat, *Tinjauan Kritis Terhadap Sedjarah Banten* (Jakarta: Djambatan, 1983), pp. 93–95; H.J. de Graaf and Th.G.Th. Pigeaud, *De eerste Moslimse vorstendommen op Java* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), pp. 111–115.

[39] Haji Buyung bin Adil, *The History of Malacca during the Period of the Malay Sultanate* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1974), p. 36. On one occasion, Sulṭān Manṣūr Shāh of Melaka asked Makhdum Patakan, an *'ālim* of Pasai, to interpret a book called *Durr al-Manẓūm* written by Mawlānā Abū Isḥāq. His pupil, Mawlānā Abū Bakr, brought this book to Melaka and delivered it to Sulṭān Manṣūr Shāh. The Sulṭān also sent his assistant, Tun Bija Wangsa, to Pasai to submit a religious question. The same mission led by Tun Muḥammad was also sent to Pasai to "pose a problem of theology" during the reign of Sulṭān Maḥmūd Shāh. See *Sejarah Melayu* or *Malay Annals*, annot. and trans. by C.C. Brown (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 90–96, 145–149; H. Overbeck, "The Answer of Pasai," *JMBRAS* 11, 2 (1933), pp. 254–260; R. Roolvink, "The Answer of Pasai," *JMBRAS* 38, 2 (1965), pp. 129–139; Abu Hassan Sham, "Perhubungan Melaka dengan Pasai di Abad 14–15 dan 16," *Jurnal Sejarah Melaka* 6 (1981), pp. 5–14.

[40] R.R. di Meglio, "Arab Trade with Indonesia and Malaya Peninsula from the 8th to 16th Century," in D.S. Richards, ed., *Islam and Trade of Asia: A Colloquium* (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1970), p. 16.

[41] Groeneveldt, *Historical Notes*, pp. 85–93.

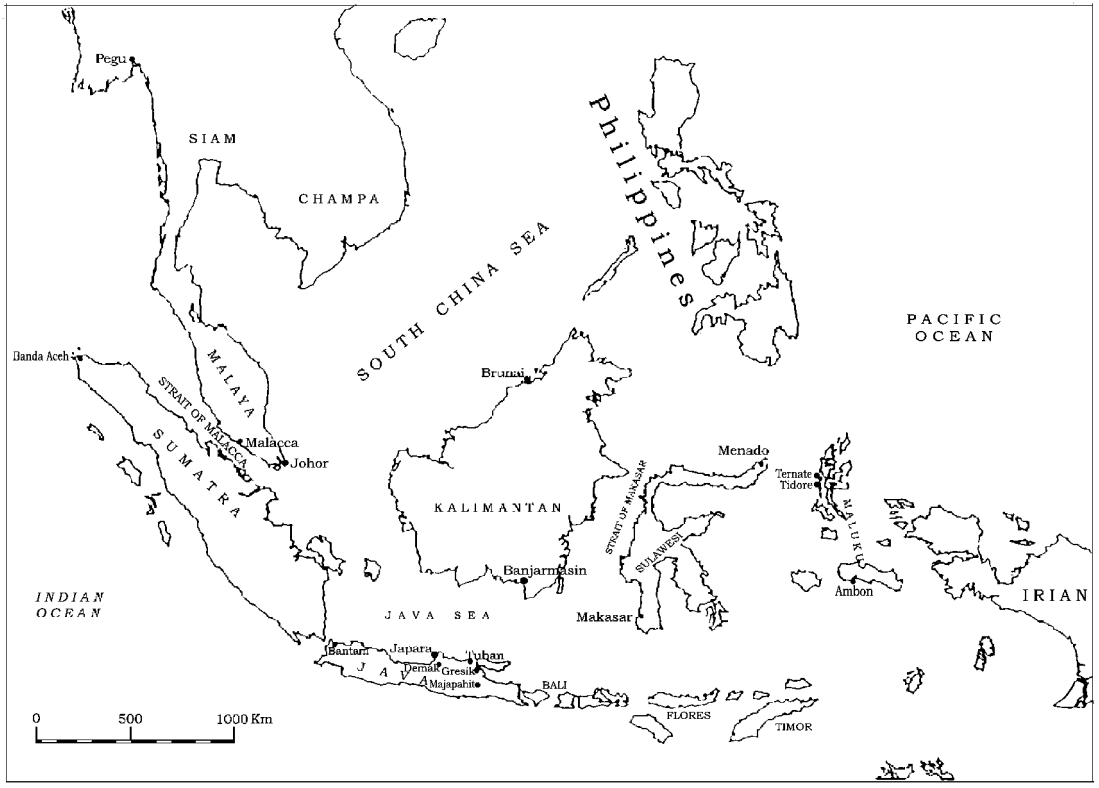

Figure 1. The Malay-Indonesian archipelago, showing the main cities in the sixteenth century. (Sources: Francis Robinson, *Atlas of the Islamic World Since 1500* (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1982), p. 89; D.J.M. Tate, *The Making of Modern South-East Asia*, vol. 1 (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 44)

bearing gifts to China in 1426, 1433, and 1434.[42] These relations are indicative of China's activities in the Southeast Asian region. The court at Peking nurtured diplomatic contacts with those kingdoms it regarded as important economic and political partners.

There was perhaps no other state in the archipelago with which Pasai had more cordial relations than Melaka. These encompassed the spheres of religion, commerce, politics and culture. Above, mentioned was given as to close contacts between the two states in religious terms.[43] In terms of commerce, although Melaka dominated trade in the region, Pasai still produced goods that were in demand in Melaka, such as pepper and rice. Moreover, when political turmoil occurred in Pasai around the end of the fifteenth century, Melaka's ruler, Manṣūr Shāh (d. 1477), interfered by sending Bendahara Paduka Raja and the hero Hang Tuah to support Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, who was engaged in a conflict over the throne with his brother.[44] In socio-cultural terms, however, both Pasai and Melaka influenced each other, as can be seen in the areas of language (Malay), literature and tradition.[45]

Pasai began to decline as an important entrepot in the early sixteenth century due, mainly, to the dominance of Melaka as a major trading center in the late fifteenth century. Even so, Pasai's trading activities continued, for it still imported rice from Pegu and produced pepper, oil and good quality silk.

Pasai later suffered from even more serious political turmoil, a situation that allowed foreign penetration. The power struggle between Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn and his brother Zayn al-Dīn led to the interference of both Melaka and the Portuguese. Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn was supported by Melaka, while the Portuguese backed his brother. This standoff allowed the Portuguese to exploit the situation and to use the port of Pasai as a temporary launching pad for its attack on Melaka in 1511. It was not until 1521[46] that the Portuguese occupied Pasai, only to lose it in 1524 to ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh of Aceh.[47]

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[42] Muhammad Said, *Aceh Sepanjang Abad*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Medan: Waspada, 1981), pp. 120–121.

[43] See p. 17 and note no. 39 above.

[44] Adil, *The History of Malacca*, pp. 36–38.

[45] Sham, "Perhubungan Melaka dengan Pasai," pp. 5–14.

[46] Marsden, *The History of Sumatra*, pp. 406–408, 414–417; F.C. Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. 1 (New York: Octagon Books, 1966), pp. 221–222.

[47] *Malay Annals*, pp. 96–100; Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," p. 152.

Pidie was another important kingdom in the region. Located "on the straits nearly opposite to Malacca,"[48] this kingdom, like Pasai, was known as a trading center and for being rich in natural resources. Its main products were pepper, white silk, benzoin and gold. Of these, pepper was the most important. Duarte Barbosa states that Pidie "had long been famous in India as one of the principal entrepots for pepper."[49] Even the Arab traveler Sulaymān b. Aḥmad al-Maḥrī confirms the status of Pidie as one of the most important ports on the east coast of Sumatra, especially as a focal point of the trade in pepper.[50] Joao de Barros has this to say on the issue:

> Of all these kingdoms [of the north coast] that of Pedir was the greatest and most famous in these regions, and was so before Malacca was inhabited. In it came together what went from the west and came from the east by reason of the emporium and market where goods of all kinds could be found, and because that city commanded the strait between this island of Samotra and the mainland. But after the foundation of Malacca, and especially at our entry into India, the kingdom of Pacem began to grow and that of Pedir to decline. And that of Achem its neighbour being (that) but of little power is now the greatest of all; such are the variations in states of which mankind makes so much account.[51]

Until 1500 Pidie was still engaged in trade. Its decline was to occur later, after the Portuguese appeared in Melaka and subsequent to the war in Pidie itself.[52] This kingdom, which established cordial relations with the Portuguese, was attacked and occupied by Aceh in 1521.[53]

It must be admitted that information about the kingdom of Daya is extremely scarce. The kingdom was located on the west coast of the northern part of Sumatra,[54] but its exact location is, unfortu-

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[48] Barbosa, *The Book of Duarte*, vol. 2, p. 181.

[49] Ibid. See also Meilink-Roelofzs, *Asian Trade*, pp. 19–20, 288–289.

[50] Tibbets, *The Arabic Texts*, p. 223.

[51] Joao De Barros, *Decadas da Asia* (Lisbon and Madrid, 1563–1615), vol. 3, p. 120, as quoted in Barbosa, *The Book of Duarte*, vol. 2, p. 182. A similar description is also given by Pires in his *The Suma*, vol. 1, pp. 139–140. A more detailed description of this kingdom is given by Ludivico di Varthema, a Bolognese traveler who visited Pidie in the early sixteenth century, as mentioned in Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, p. 235.

[52] Pires, *The Suma*, vol. 1, pp. 139–140.

[53] Marsden, *The History of Sumatra*, pp. 406–419; Danvers, *The Portuguese*, vol. 1, pp. 221, 356.

[54] De Barros, *Decada*, quoted in Barbosa, *The Book of Duarte*, vol. 2, p. 183. See

nately, unknown. Tgk. Ismail Jakoeb points to de Vink's discovery, in 1915, of the tomb of Poteu Meureuhom Daya, or 'Alā' al-Dīn Ri'āyat Shāh (d. 7 Rajab 913/12 November 1508), the son of Sulṭān 'Ināyat Shāh in Cot Gle Jong (in Kuala Daya, Calang),[55] as possible evidence for the kingdom's location. This might indicate that the kingdom was located on the coast of what is now known as Calang (west Aceh).[56] In the early sixteenth century, the Portuguese founded a settlement in this area, which was finally taken over by Aceh in 1520.[57] Indeed, Aceh's conquest of these three regional kingdoms led to its emergence as the most powerful sultanate in the archipelago.

B. *The Rise of a Powerful State*

The rise of Aceh in the sixteenth century can be evinced in four areas: military strength, politics, economic development and intellectual life. None of these areas can be studied independently from the others, for the existence of each was predicated on the rest.

Aceh's military capability was apparent in the early sixteenth century, not only because of its successes in conquering Daya (1520), Pidie (1521) and Pasai (1524), but also due to its response to the military-economic impact of the Portuguese presence in the first three decades of the century. Unlike Pidie and Pasai,[58] Aceh never sought

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also Pires, *The Suma*, vol. 1, p. 135; Hasjmy, *Sejarah Kebudayaan*, p. 14; Djamil, *Silsilah*, p. 30.

[55] Tgk. Ismail Jakoeb, *Atjeh Dalam Sedjarah*, vol. 1 (Koetaradja: Penerbit Joesoef Mahmoed dan Semangat Merdeka, 1946), p. 25. See also Said, *Aceh*, pp. 150–151, 155.

[56] For a version of the early history of this kingdom and its Islamization see Djamil, *Silsilah*, pp. 30–32; Hasjmy, *Sejarah Kebudayaan*, pp. 14–15.

[57] Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," p. 152; Iskandar, *De Hikajat Atjeh*, p. 41.

[58] The earliest contact between Pidie and the Portuguese may have been when, on his way to Melaka in 1509, Diogo Lopez de Sequiere anchored at Pidie. In this kingdom he was received with hospitality by the ruler who proposed an alliance with the Portuguese. The same treatment was also afforded him in Pasai. Indeed, from the early visits of the Portuguese, Pidie made friendly overtures. Pasai-Portuguese relations, however, were unstable, in the sense that their cordial relations were frequently interrupted by military incidents. Both Pidie and Pasai, prior to their occupation by Aceh, became vassals of the Portuguese, who built military bases there and controlled the pepper trade. Thus, when conquering both Pidie and Pasai, Aceh had to face both indigenous and European forces. This was also the case in Daya. See Marsden, *The History of Sumatra*, pp. 406–408, 412–417; Danvers, *The Portuguese*, vol. 1, pp. 221–222. Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Pengantar Sejarah Indonesia Baru, 1500–1900*, jilid 1 (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1988), pp. 38–39.

to foster cordial relations with the Portuguese, viewing them as political and economic competitors and even religious enemies. Accordingly, Aceh responded militarily to the Portuguese presence and trade activities. War broke out in about 1519, when a Portuguese ship under Gaspar de Costa's command lost its way off the coast of Aceh and was attacked by the Acehnese, who killed many of her crew.[59] Another ship under Joao de Lima was later attacked near Aceh's port, an incident in which the entire company was killed. It was not until 1521 that Jorge de Brito sailed from India with 200 soldiers to attack Aceh in retribution. The attack was repulsed and Brito, along with most of his men, was killed.[60] Indeed, the first three decades of the sixteenth century reveal the extent of Aceh's military capability. Well-equipped with cannons captured from the Portuguese and probably also supplied by "the Muslim commercial elements from the old trading centers of Pasai and Pidie,"[61] Aceh was a formidable foe. It was even the case, as Fernao Lopez Castanheda writes, that Aceh "was much better supplied with artillery than was the fortress of Malacca,"[62] which served as a military lynchpin for Portuguese activities in Southeast Asia. Even though there is not much information available on the Acehnese warships of this period, it can be suggested that their naval forces were equipped with a large number of vessels known in the region as *lanchara* and *jong*.[63]

Direct attacks on the Portuguese in Melaka were carried out by the successors of ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh (d. 1530). Sulṭān ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn

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[59] P.A. Tiele, "De Europeers in den Maleischen Archipel," *BKI* 25 (1877), p. 363.

[60] Marsden, *The History of Sumatra*, pp. 416–417; Iskandar, *De Hikajat Atjeh*, pp. 34–35. Another incident took place between Aceh and the Portuguese in 1527 and in 1528. For further discussion see Marsden, *The History of Sumatra*, pp. 423–424; Danvers, *The Portuguese*, vol. 1, p. 388.

[61] Anthony Reid, "Sixteenth Century Turkish Influence in Western Indonesia," *JSEAH* 10, 3 (1969), p. 400. See also Marsden, *The History of Sumatra*, pp. 418–419.

[62] Fernao Lopez de Castanheda, *Hitoria do Descombrimento e Conquista da India Pelos Portugueses*, Livro VII (Coimbra, 1554), Capps. 84, 85, 100, as quoted in C.R. Boxer, "A Note on Portuguese Reactions to the Revival of the Red Sea Spice Trade and the Rise of Aceh, 1540–1600," *JSEAH* 10, 3 (1969), pp. 415–416.

[63] See note 84 below. C.R. Boxer has pointed out that the Acehnese ships were actively engaged in the Red Sea commercial traffic. The ships used were either small vessels or large and well-armed merchant ships that, he suggests, would have originated mostly in Gujarat, as well as in Arabia and Turkey. See his "Portuguese Reactions," pp. 427–428.

Ri'āyat Shāh (d. 1571), known as al-Qahhār,[64] launched the first of many such strikes. In 1537 he led the first surprise attack with a standing regiment of some 3000 troops. Initially, the Acehnese landed in Melaka successfully, but were unable to penetrate the fort and two nights later were driven out with heavy losses. Indeed, that attack, notable for the ferocity of the fighting on both sides, marked Aceh's status as an "irreconcilable enemy of the Portuguese."[65] With an enhanced military capability, Aceh launched its second attack in 1547, this time by night. Again, the Acehnese were defeated in the Perlis river.[66] In spite of these defeats, the Acehnese war fleets were to become more active in Malay waters around 1564.[67] Several years later, on January 20, 1568, a third siege was launched against Melaka. Led by al-Qahhār himself, it was the largest and the strongest attack launched by the Acehnese to that time, in that it included 15,000 men, 400 Ottoman elite fighters and 200 bronze cannons.[68] Surprised by the attack, the Portuguese sought the help of Johor and Kedah. The aid did not arrive in Melaka until the Portuguese had successfully defended the city. Nevertheless, Johor's attempt at assisting the Portuguese angered the Acehnese, who, on their way home, stopped in Johor and burned several villages in retribution.[69] The last expedition carried out during al-Qahhār's reign was a sea battle that took place in 1570 near the port of Aceh. Again, the Acehnese fleet suffered heavy casualties.[70]

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[64] *Bustān*, pp. 22–23.

[65] Danvers, *The Portuguese*, vol. 1, p. 480; R.O. Winstedt, *A History of Malaya* (Singapore: Marican & Sons, 1962), p. 79; Moorhead, *A History of Malaya*, vol. 1, p. 196.

[66] See Fernao Mendez Pinto, *The Travel of Mendez Pinto*, ed. and trans. by Rebecca D. Catz (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 455–456; Danvers, *The Portuguese*, vol. 1, pp. 480–481; Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, pp. 80–81.

[67] I.A. Macgregor, "A Sea Fight Near Singapore in the 1570s," *JMBRAS* 29, 3 (1956), p. 6.

[68] Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, p. 81; Danvers, *The Portuguese*, vol. 1, p. 535; Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, p. 241 (Hall is mistaken over the date of the attack, which he claims to have taken place in 1558.); Reid, "Turkish Influence," p. 405. In this expedition the Sulṭān was joined by his wife and three sons. See Joao de Barros and Diogo do Couto, *Da 'Asia de Joao de Barros' e de Diogo do Couto*, 8, chap. 22 (Lisbon: Na Regia Officina Typgrafica, 1778–88), pp. 133–163, in notes provided in Pinto, *The Travels*, p. 559.

[69] Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, p. 81; Danvers, *The Portuguese*, vol. 1, p. 535.

[70] Danvers, *The Portuguese*, vol. 1, p. 557.

Al-Qahhār's policy of confronting the Portuguese was continued by his son and successor, Sulṭān Ḥusayn (d. 1579). Like his father, Ḥusayn maintained a large Acehnese navy in Malaya waters. At the same time he sought to isolate the Portuguese from its Malay allies by working diplomatically with Johor and Japara and by creating a common front with them, a move that put pressure on the Portuguese. Anthony Reid writes:

> The two decades from 1560 and 1580 must be seen as the highest point for the military fortunes of Islam in Southeast Asia. During this period the Portuguese were consistently on the defensive. Aṭjeh dominated the Straits of Malacca, with fitful support from Johor and Japara, while the Muslim traders of Japara, Gresik, Ternate and Banda islands gained the upper hand in the eastern archipelago.[71]

The threat was great enough that the Portuguese considered capturing Aceh. For various reasons, these plans were never implemented.[72]

The first attack launched by Ḥusayn against the Portuguese in Melaka was in 1573. In spite of the formidable force amassed for the invasion, the Acehnese were forced to leave empty-handed.[73] A series of military attacks, launched by both Japara in 1574 and Aceh in 1575, followed. These attacks were moderately successful, leading to the destruction of several Portuguese vessels. However, the Portuguese were not vanquished, even though their condition was desperate, given that "only 150 men now remained for the defense of Malacca, and of this number two-thirds were sick and aged. Want of ammunition and men prevented the captain from replying to the enemy's fire."[74] Yet "for some inexplicable reason," Winstedt observes, the Acehnese withdrew from the field.[75] Another attempt in 1577, also marked by failure, was called off after the Acehnese sustained heavy loses.[76] This was the last military campaign initiated by Sulṭān Ḥusayn, who died in 1579.

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[71] Reid, "Turkish Influence," p. 408.

[72] For further discussion of these plans see Danvers, *The Portuguese*, vol. 1, p. 510; Boxer, "Portuguese Reactions," pp. 421–425; idem, "Portuguese and Spanish Projects for the Conquest of Southeast Asia, 1580–1600," *Journal of Asian History* 3 (1969), pp. 118–136; B.N. Teensma, "An Unknown Portuguese Text on Sumatra from 1582," *BKI* 145, 2–3 (1989), pp. 308–323.

[73] Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, p. 82; Reid, "Turkish Influence," p. 407; Macgregor, "A Sea Fight," pp. 6–7.

[74] Danvers, *The Portuguese*, vol. 2, p. 10.

[75] Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, p. 82.

[76] Macgregor, "A Sea Fight," pp. 11–12.

The series of Acehnese naval campaigns described above clearly demonstrates the kingdom's military and naval capability, a capability that depended upon a combination of both artillery and traditional weapons. Fighting men were transported on sizeable warships throughout the sixteenth century. The constant armed conflict between Aceh and the Portuguese also enabled the former to acquire the modern weaponry of their opponents. This does not necessarily mean, however, that it was the first time that the Acehnese had used artillery in war. It is probable that Aceh possessed artillery previously acquired from China, which had already attained an advanced stage in artillery production between the years 1000 and 1500.[77] The question that should be raised here is: Why did Aceh, which was "much more advanced than the Javanese kingdoms"[78] in military technology, never succeed in its campaigns against the Portuguese?

There were many reasons for this failure. The first is the fact that the fifteenth century witnessed a rapid development in European technology, a factor that ensured the superiority of Western military equipment over that of Asia. The Portuguese took full advantage of this development for the purpose, among others, of their overseas exploration. Carlo M. Cipolla writes:

> During the last quarter of the fifteenth century Portugal had become an excellent market for cannon merchants. With her involvement in overseas trade and expansion, Portugal's need for artillery grew vastly beyond her inadequate home resources, while the large profits from overseas commercial ventures translated needs into effective demand.

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[77] Admiral Cheng Ho, who used to visit the region, led expeditions to the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea, and the coast of Africa in the first half of the fifteenth century. His ships, which were equipped with guns and troops, carried about 1500 tons, a much bigger cargo capacity compared to that of Vasco da Gama's, which were only able to load around 300 tons of cargo at the end of the fifteenth century. See William H. McNeil, *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force, and Society Since A.D. 1000* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 24–62; Carlo M. Cipolla, *Guns and Sails in the Early Phase of European Expansion 1400–1700* (London: Collins, 1965), pp. 104–108. Artillery was no doubt used extensively in the Indian Ocean prior to the sixteenth century. The Portuguese found that artillery was used in Malabar, Calcutta and Goa. In Melaka, Albuquerque seized a large number of artillery and bronze cannons. See C.R. Boxer, "Asian Potentates and European Artillery in the 16th–18th Century," *JMBRAS* 38, 2 (1965), pp. 158–159; Braz de Albuquerque, *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, ed., trans. and annot. by Walter de Gray Birch, vol. 3 (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1880), p. 127.

[78] F.H. van Naerssen and R.C. De Iong, *The Economic and Administrative History of Early Indonesia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977), p. 88.

> Portuguese kings imported Flemish and German gunners and gunfounders as well as guns . . .[79]

It was apparent in 1489, for instance, that "the armament of the Portuguese ships was something totally unexpected and new in the Indian seas and gave an immediate and decisive advantage to the Portuguese over their Indian opponents."[80] Not even the Ottomans could compete with their European counterparts in this field.[81] Since Acehnese military technology depended in part on that of the Ottomans, their artillery strength was not comparable to that of the Portuguese. At the end of the sixteenth century, John Davis, for instance, noted that the sulṭān of Aceh "hath great store of brasse ordnance which they use without carriages, shooting them as they lye upon the ground."[82] This, Charles R. Boxer argues, "may help to account for the relative ineffectiveness of the Achinese artillery . . ."[83]

The disparity that existed between the naval technology of the two sides was another factor. The inferiority of Acehnese warships, like that of other Malay ships,[84] lay primarily in the absence of iron and heavy timbers in their construction. In this they resembled other Asian warships which were "relatively much more frail than the Portuguese carracks and galleons which they had to encounter."[85] The inferiority of Acehnese military tactics was another factor contributing to their defeat. Davis noted that the Acehnese "have no defensive armes, but fight naked."[86] Eredia described Malay tactics in war, which were probably similar to Aceh's, in the following words:

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[79] Cipolla, *Guns and Sails*, p. 31.

[80] K.M. Pannikar, *Asia and Western Dominance* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1970), p. 29.

[81] Cipolla insists that the Ottomans "remained 'medieval' when the modern age had already begun" (Cipolla, *Guns and Sails*, p. 102). For further discussion on the war industry in Europe see McNeil, *The Pursuit of Power*, pp. 63–116.

[82] John Davis, *The Voyages and Works of John Davis*, ed. by A.H. Markham (New York: The Hakluyt Society, 1880), p. 150.

[83] Boxer, "Asian Potentates," p. 163.

[84] The main warships used in the region were called *lancharas* and *jongs*. For further discussion on this subject see E. Manuel Godinho de Eredia, "Description of Malacca and Meridional India and Cathay," trans. and notes by J.V. Mills, *JMBRAS* 8, 1 (1930), pp. 1–228; Pierre-Yves Manguin, "The Southeast Asian Ship: An Historical Approach," *JSEAS* 11, 2 (1980), pp. 266–276; C.R. Boxer, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire, 1415–1825* (New York: Alfred H. Knopf, 1969), p. 44.

[85] Boxer, *Portuguese Seaborne Empire*, p. 44. See also Manguin, "The Southeast Asian Ship," pp. 267–270; Cipolla, *Guns and Sails*, p. 102.

[86] Davis, *The Voyages and Works*, p. 150.

> The armed forces of the Malay do not follow the ordered military tactics of Europe: they only make use of attacks and sallies in mass formation: their sole plan is to construct an ambush in the narrow paths and woods and thickets, and then make an attack with a body of armed men: whenever they draw themselves up for battle, they acquit themselves badly and usually suffer heavy losses.[87]

These three key areas in which the very integrity of the Acehnese army was compromised led to the failure of all Acehnese attacks on the Portuguese in Melaka. Even so, the Acehnese were respected by both their Malay counterparts and the Portuguese as "formidable fighters who formed the greatest threat to Malacca for over a century."[88]

In general, the archipelago in the sixteenth century was marked by a decided escalation in political activities affecting several kingdoms. This was no doubt prompted by the presence of the Portuguese in Melaka.[89] Aceh's active political involvement is self-evident. First, it adopted an expansionist policy motivated by its ambition to control both the east and west coasts of Sumatra. Batak was, therefore, sacked in 1539,[90] and a second target was Aru, which was attacked in the same year. It was not until 1540 that its queen, with the aid of Johor, Perak, Pahang and Siak, drove Aceh from Aru. Aceh, however, retook Aru in 1564.[91]

The conquest of the latter had several implications. It meant a reduction in Portuguese power, for Aru was a vassal of the former. Furthermore, located very close to Melaka, Aru could be used as a military base against the Portuguese. From Aru, Aceh was also in a position to blockade both the Straits of Singapore and Sabang in its

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[87] Eredia, "Description of Malacca," p. 31.

[88] Boxer, "Portuguese Reactions," p. 417. The Portuguese who fought the Acehnese in 1561 stated that they were "a roving piratical people, formed from many nations, and most bitter enemies of the Portuguese and very courageous warriors." Castaways' accounts in A.B. de Sa, *Documentacao, Insulinda*, II, 1550–1562, pp. 394, 405, 425, as quoted in Boxer, "Portuguese Reactions," p. 418.

[89] Sartono Kartodirdjo, "Religious and Economic Aspects of Portuguese-Indonesian Relation," *STVDIA* (Centro de Estudios Historicos Ultramarinos, Portugal), 29 (April 1970), p. 193.

[90] For further discussion on the conflict between Aceh and Batak, see Pinto, *The Travels*, pp. 22–26.

[91] Ibid., pp. 36–50, 56–57. Indeed, the conflict between Aceh and Aru can be traced further back to when the latter helped the Portuguese in Pasai in 1524. Both the kings of Daya and Pidie fled Aru when Aceh conquered Pasai in the same year. In 1528 Aru sent its ambassadors to Melaka. At the very least, these events help explain the degree of enmity between Aceh and Aru. See Catz in her notes in Pinto, *The Travels*, Chap. 21, no. 2, p. 554.

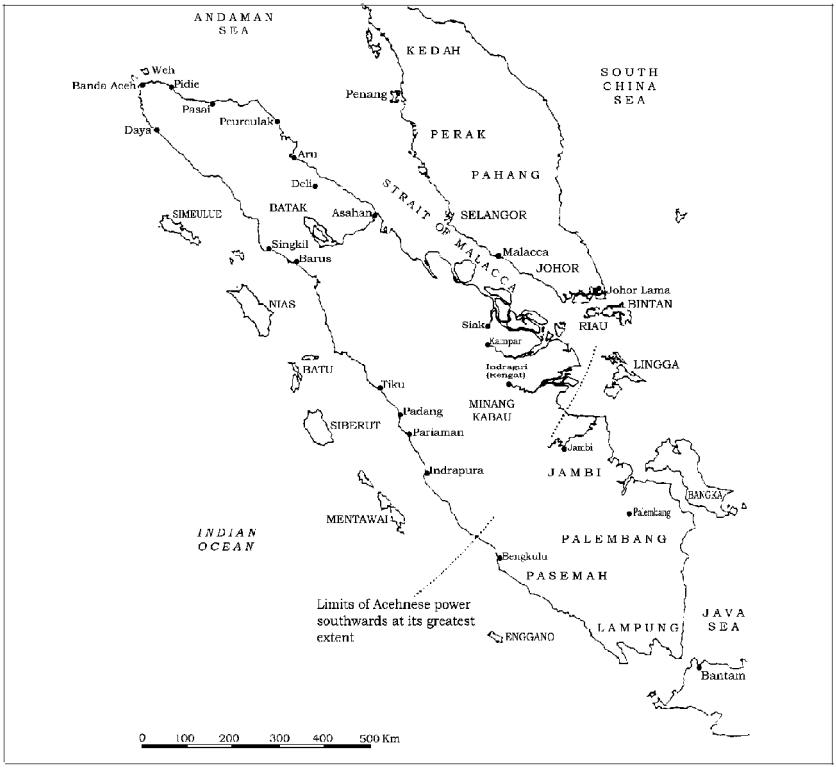

Figure 2. Western archipelago in the sixteenth century. (Sources: Francis Robinson, *Atlas of the Islamic World Since 1500* (New York: Facts on Publications, 1982), p. 89; D.J.M. Tate, *The Making of Modern South-East Asia*, vol. 1 (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 224)

effort to prevent the Portuguese from passing into the China Sea, Sunda, Banda and the Moluccas. Indeed, Aceh accrued significant economic benefit from the conquest, for it gained "access to all of the spice trade in the archipelago. . . ."[92] To secure his control over Aru, Sulṭān ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Riʿāyat Shāh, appointed his son, ʿAbd Allāh, as its ruler.[93]

[92] Ibid., p. 46.
[93] Ibid., p. 57.

Aceh went on to extend its control over the west coast of Sumatra. Its political hegemony was established over Barus when Aceh's ruler was appointed its sulṭān.[94] The designation, according to J. Kathirithamby-Wells, "seems to have been conferred on all Acheh's key representatives in the subordinate regions."[95] Aceh's control was later extended to Pariaman where the sulṭān's son, Prince Mughal, was appointed as ruler.[96]

Aceh's external relations reflect a political atmosphere in which trade and Islam went hand-in-hand. This is to suggest that in areas where the rise of new Muslim kingdoms was evident, religion was often a basis for alliance. At the same time, however, this religious-based alliance was also strained by competing trade interests.

Throughout the sixteenth century, Aceh tried its best to forge such an "Islamic alliance" with other Muslim kingdoms in the region, a goal that it could not completely achieve. Johor's ties to Aceh remained strained. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, Johor, together with Perak, Pahang and Siak, had helped drive the Acehnese out of Aru in 1540. In 1547 and 1568, furthermore, Johor, with its allies, went to Melaka to help the Portuguese repel an attack by Aceh. One can surmise that these alliances arose out of the Malay kingdoms' fear of Aceh, as suggested by R.O. Winstedt.[97] Nonetheless, examples of mutual aid between Aceh and other Muslim kingdoms can be cited. In 1575 Johor and Bintan supported the Acehnese campaigns against Melaka.[98] Correspondence between Aceh and Johor was established and a royal marriage between the two states was also contracted.[99] Nevertheless,

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[94] It was this sulṭān of Barus who helped Aceh in the expedition against Aru in 1539. Later, he married the sister of Sulṭān 'Alā' al-Dīn Ri'āyat Shāh. See J. Kathirithamby-Wells, "Achehnese Control Over West Sumatra up to the Treaty of Painam," *JSEAH* 10, 3 (1969), p. 457.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ibid., p. 458. We possess neither detailed information regarding Acehnese administration over Pariaman, nor information on its economic activities in the region.

[97] Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, p. 78.

[98] I.A. Macgregor, "Johor Lama in the Sixteenth Century," *JMBRAS* 28, 2 (1955), p. 86; Haji Buyung bin Adil, *Sejarah Johor* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1971), p. 30.

[99] The marriage was arranged between the prince of Johor and the daughter of the sulṭān of Aceh. See Couto, 1778–88, pp. 19, 235–236 as quoted by Macgregor, "Johor Lama," p. 86.

cordial relations did not last long. Aceh attacked Perak, an ally of Johor, in 1575[100] and later, in 1582, Aceh sacked Johor itself. Apparently its own quest for political and economic power led it to view its neighboring states as potential colonies, even if, at times, it sought alliances with those very states in its anti-Portuguese campaign. It was only with the help of the Portuguese that the Acehnese were eventually driven out of Johor.[101] In fact it was the "triangular fight between Portugal, Johor, and Acheh" that helped facilitate the Portuguese presence in the region.[102] Aceh won Japara and prepared for a joint attack on the Portuguese only in 1574/1575. It failed to attract the support of Demak, however, "which was so afraid of the insatiable ambition of the Sultan of Atjeh that it put his ambassadors to death."[103]

Still, political Islam, in the form of a Southeast Asian Islamic alliance, was an important consideration. Religion, as mentioned earlier, played a crucial role in providing an ideological basis for the Muslim struggle against the Portuguese. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that Muslims of the archipelago, either through trade or other means, were aware of the crusading spirit of the Portuguese. This fact alone constituted sufficient basis for a strong reaction on their part. In the first place, the Portuguese Christian missionary effort in the region failed to achieve its goals, having achieved only

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[100] After the war, the royal family of Perak was taken to Aceh. The sulṭān of Perak's son was later married to the daughter of the sulṭān of Aceh. It was this son of the sulṭān of Perak who was later appointed the sulṭān of Aceh, under the name ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Manṣūr Shāh, who ruled between 1579 and 1585. See R.O. Winstedt and R.J. Wilkinson, "A History of Perak," *JMBRAS* 12, 1 (1934), p. 19; Barbara Watson Andaya, *Perak, the Abode of Grace* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 41; Arun Kumar Das Gupta, "Acheh in Indonesian Trade and Politics, 1600–1641" (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1962), p. 47.

[101] It is suggested that the cause of the war was the refusal by the sulṭān of Johor, ʿAlī Jallā ʿAbd al-Jalīl, to consent to the rule of his father-in-law, the sulṭān of Aceh, over his kingdom. See Macgregor, "Johor Lama," p. 88; Adil, *Sejarah Johor*, p. 31.

[102] Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, p. 84. D.K. Basset has suggested that "had not the Sultan of Johore considered the ambition of Acheh to be so insatiable and dangerous as to preclude the possibility of an alliance with that state, there is little doubt that the Portuguese garrison at Malacca could not have survived." D.K. Basset, "European Influence in the Malay Peninsula, 1511–1786," *JMBRAS* 33, 3 (1960), p. 15.

[103] Reid, "Turkish Influence," p. 405.

limited success in the eastern parts of the archipelago. Even in Melaka itself, where Christian missionary activity began in 1545, there was no mass conversion, with the result that it became only "an administrative center for the church but not a great mission."[104] On the contrary, as Schrieke points out, the coming of the Portuguese resulted in the intensification of Islamization in the region.[105] As such, religious sentiment became a fundamental basis for an Islamic alliance. Aceh provided much leadership in this area, for in addition to its continuous attempts at establishing an Islamic alliance with other Muslim states in the region, this state also established a similar alliance with the Turks for the purpose, among others, of driving the Portuguese from Melaka.[106]

Aceh is indeed known for having tried to establish diplomatic relations with Muslim states outside of the region, particularly among those on the periphery of the Indian Ocean. Schrieke has pointed out that Aceh sent its ambassadors to Calcutta, Bijapur and the Coromandel rulers, Bengal, Ceylon and the Mughal Empire.[107] Its political successes in this field can also be gathered from the multiethnic composition of its military forces. In its campaign against Aru in 1539, for instance, Aceh's troops consisted of Borneans, Luzons, Ottomans, Abyssinians, Malabaris and Gujaratis. Fernao M. Pinto informs us that in that same campaign, an Abyssinian, Maḥmūd Khān, acted as commander of the Acehnese forces.[108] The most successful political relations, however, were established with the Ottomans.

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[104] Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, vol. 1, book 1 (Chicago and London: The University Chicago Press, 1965), p. 287. See also Lawrence A. Noonan, *The First Jesuit Mission in Malacca: A Study of the Use of the Portuguese Trading Center as a Base for Christian Missionary Expansion During the Years 1545 to 1552* (Lisboa: Centro de Estudos Historicos Ultramarinos da Junta de Investigacos Cientificas do Ultramar, 1974).

[105] Schrieke, *Indonesian*, pt. 2, pp. 232–237. See also W.F. Wertheim, *Indonesian Society in Transition: A Study of Social Change* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1969), pp. 198–207.

[106] For further discussion on this issue, see Reid, "Turkish Influence," pp. 395–414; idem, "Islamization and Christianization in Southeast Asia: The Critical Phase, 1550–1650," in Anthony Reid, ed., *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era: Trade, Power, and Belief* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 151–178; Boxer, "Portuguese Reactions," pp. 420–421.

[107] Schrieke, *Indonesian*, pt. 1, p. 44.

[108] Pinto, *The Travels*, pp. 46–47.

Initiated by Aceh, the first contact seems to have taken place as early as 1537–1538. Diplomatic relations peaked in the 1560s, prompted by both religious and commercial considerations.[109] These mutual interests were not sustainable, however, because of the great physical distance and the dynamics of history operating in their respective regions at the time.

Sixteenth century Aceh was also notable for its growing economic power. Trade increased dramatically, encouraged by Aceh's status as a producer of natural sources and as a strategic port in the western archipelago. Naturally, this fostered a cosmopolitan climate where traders from around the archipelago as well as Arabs, Persians, Ottomans, Abyssinians, Chinese and Indians visited.[110] As the capital city, Banda Aceh became the sultanate's "commercial emporium."[111] Indeed, the change in trade patterns, initiated by the development of a new trade route along the west coast of Sumatra, boosted the Acehnese economy. Yet no detailed information regarding Acehnese products, or the organization of trade, is available. The scanty data provided by European sources can only help us to draw a general picture.

The most important Acehnese products were pepper, which came from both Pasai and Pidie, and gold, which was mined in Minangkabau. Furthermore, as "an essential coastal state and seaborne empire,"[112] Aceh was bound to become involved in the Indian Ocean and Red Sea trading routes. Acehnese participation in Red Sea trade began in the 1530s and reached its highest peak in the mid-sixteenth century.[113] By 1585, Jorge de Lemos, a Portuguese advocate for the conquest of Aceh, was able to report that a large quantity of spices,

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[109] For further discussion on this issue, see Ismail Hakki Uzuncarsili, *Osmanli Tarihi*, vol. 2 (Ankara: Turk Tarih Kurumu Basmevi, 1949), p. 388; vol. 3 (1983), p. 31. (I must thank my friend Ahmed Yuksel who kindly translated these pages for me.) See also *Bustān*, pp. 31–32; Reid, "Turkish Influence," pp. 395–414; T. Mohammad Sabil, *Hikajat Soeltan Atjeh Marhoem (Soeltan Iskandar Moeda)* (Batavia: Balai Pustaka, 1932), pp. 3–11; R.B. Serjeant, *The Portuguese off the South Arabian Ḥaḍramī Chronicles* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1963), pp. 76–80; Affan Seljuq, "Relations Between the Ottoman Empire and the Muslim Kingdoms in the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago," *Der Islam* 57, 2 (1988), pp. 301–310.

[110] Schrieke, *Indonesian*, pt. 1, pp. 42–43.

[111] Reid, "Trade and the Problem of Royal Power," p. 46.

[112] Boxer, "Portuguese Reactions," p. 416.

[113] Ibid.

gold and jewels belonging to it entered the Red Sea.[114] In the same year, the Acehnese were also "exporting (mostly in Gujarati ships) some 40,000 or 50,000 *quintals* of spices to Jidda each year."[115] Indeed, trading activities in the Red Sea enriched, according to de Lemos, the sulṭān of Aceh's annual income by about three or four million gold ducats.[116]

Aceh's prominent commercial role in both the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea meant that it had become a serious threat to the Portuguese, who had themselves come to control the Red Sea. Boxer points out that "the Atjehnese spice-trade with the Red Sea was undermining the Portuguese claim to the monopoly of the 'conquest, navigation, and commerce' of the Indian Ocean."[117] Accordingly, frequent sea skirmishes were reported between Aceh and the Portuguese convoys at great distances from Malay waters.[118] It was natural, therefore, for Aceh to forge an alliance with the Ottoman Empire, in its time the strongest Muslim state as well as master of the Red Sea.

Aceh benefited economically from its control over the west coast of Sumatra. Minangkabau gold was brought to Aceh through the ports of Tiku and Pariaman,[119] while around 1560 rich new pepper plantations were established in the area around Tiku, Pariaman and Indrapuri.[120] Aceh's economic bounty also depended on "the tribute of neighboring regions on the coasts and the harbor-dues of the capital of Atjeh."[121]

From the point at which the presence of Islam may be detected in the region (by the end of the thirteenth century), it played a significant role in Acehnese society. Richard V. Weeks has astutely suggested that "adherence to Islam is perhaps the primary factor in a person's self identification as Acehnese. . . ."[122] Yet lack of sources

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[114] Jorge de Lemos, *Hystoria dos Cercos* (Lisboa, 1585), part III, fls. 1–164, as quoted in ibid., p. 423.
[115] Ibid., p. 59.
[116] De Lemos, *Hystoria dos Cercos*, fl. 61, as quoted in ibid., p. 424.
[117] Boxer, "Portuguese Reactions," p. 425.
[118] For a detailed discussion on these maritime incidents see ibid., pp. 416–419.
[119] Reid, *Southeast Asia*, p. 98.
[120] Reid, "Turkish Influence," pp. 403–404.
[121] Voorhoeve, "Atjeh," *EI2*.
[122] Richard V. Weeks, *Muslim People: A World Ethnographic Survey*, vol. 1 (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1984), p. 3.

has hampered the efforts of scholars to reconstruct a clear picture of Islam's place and role in Aceh during the sixteenth century.

Like its predecessor state, Pasai, Aceh was "a center of Islamic studies."[123] The *Bustān al-Salāṭīn* tells us that Islamic learning in the state was bolstered by its ties to other Muslim countries. Islamic scholars from other parts of the Muslim world came to Aceh for the purpose of teaching. Muḥammad Azharī, for instance, a Meccan *ʿālim*, taught metaphysics, while Shaykh Abū al-Khayr b. Shaykh b. Ḥajar, another Meccan *ʿālim*, taught Islamic law in Aceh. A Yemeni teacher, Shaykh Muḥammad Yamanī, came to teach Islamic jurisprudence, whereas Shaykh Muḥammad Jīlānī b. Ḥasan b. Muḥammad, from Gujarat, taught Arabic literature, Islamic law and jurisprudence.[124] Indeed, it can be said that the status of Aceh as a center of Islamic learning and as a part of a global Islamic civilization was already established by the start of the seventeenth century.[125]

C. *Reasons for Its Rise*

Thus far, we have outlined Aceh's rise to power in the sixteenth century. It is not difficult to trace the underlying factors behind this development. In part, it was due to the consolidation of both Dār al-Kamāl and Mahkota ʿĀlam by their leaders at the end of the fifteenth century. This allowed the formerly unimportant principality of Aceh to bring many other important political entities under its control and to emerge as a power in the region, even though the process by which this occurred is not entirely clear to us. The various military encounters between Aceh and the Portuguese during

[123] Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, p. 216.

[124] *Bustān*, pp. 33–34.

[125] A.H. Johns, "Aspects of Sufi Thought in India and Indonesia in the First Half of the 17th Century," *JMBRAS* 28, 1 (1955), pp. 70–77; idem, "Sufism as a Category in Indonesian Literature and History," *JSEAH* 2, 2 (1961), pp. 10–23; idem, "Muslim Mystics and Historical Writings," in D.G.E. Hall, ed., *Historians of Southeast Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 37–49; S.M.N. Al-Attas, *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fanṣūrī* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1970).

[126] Amirul Hadi, "Aceh and the Portuguese: A Study of the Struggle of Islam in Southeast Asia, 1500–1579," (M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1992), p. 114.

the first three decades of the sixteenth century attest to this rise in Aceh's military prowess. The conquest of Pidie, Daya and Pasai enhanced its power and resulted in the formation of a new state, Aceh Dār al-Salām. As I have stated elsewhere, this new state "was to incorporate all these lesser ports into its economic system and to transcend the political scales of these principalities by assuming the role of a regional power and an important international actor in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean."[126]

Aceh also benefited from its strategic location on the northern tip of Sumatra, an area that provided it with direct access to trade in the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. This had a twofold consequence: in economic terms, Aceh became prosperous, while politically the state was able to establish an extensive network of contacts with other Muslim states. This policy was exacerbated by the fall of Melaka to the Portuguese in 1511. The presence of the Portuguese was opposed not only by the Melakans themselves, but also by Muslim traders who were present there.[127] The Portuguese policy of punishing the traders as much as possible aggravated the situation,[128] resulting in the migration of the latter to other parts of the archipelago, including Aceh. Fear of the Portuguese and the increasingly unsafe trade route through the straits of Melaka, due to frequent military conflicts between the Portuguese and kingdoms of the region, resulted in the opening of a new trade route along the west coast of Sumatra, reaching Java and eastern parts of the archipelago via the Sunda strait.[129] Shifting trade patterns helped Aceh to emerge as "the chief station in the intermediary trade of the Muslims of western Asia and India with the Archipelago."[130]

Acehnese military prowess was also instrumental to this rise, as Acehnese military pressure on Melaka undermined Portuguese ambitions to control trade in the region. Acehnese military strength allowed the state to maintain a much-needed secure trade route in the area. Furthermore, their claims to political supremacy were realized with

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[127] Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, p. 67.
[128] Schrieke, *Indonesian*, pt. 1, p. 42.
[129] Naerssen and Jong, *The Economic and Administrative History*, pp. 88–89.
[130] Kartodirdjo, "Religious and Economic Aspects," p. 192. See also Meilink-Roelofsz, *Asian Trade*, pp. 143–144.

the conquest of Aru and the area along the west coast of Sumatra. Aceh's economic and political gains were thus made on the basis of a strong military capability and trading network, which allowed it to establish ties with other Muslim states. The above process only accelerated the dissemination of Islamic culture to the region.

CHAPTER TWO

THE RULER AND THE PROBLEM OF AUTHORITY

A. *The Office of* Sulṭān: *Its Origins and Authority*

As we saw earlier in Chapter One, it was the unification at the end of the fifteenth century of two small principalities, Dār al-Kamāl and Mahkota ʿĀlam, that led to the foundation of the Islamic sultanate of Aceh Dār al-Salām. In this chapter, we will inquire into the concept of legitimate rule, the bases of the authority claimed by rulers, and their primary responsibilities.

The first point to be noted is that the Acehnese state was conceived of as both a sultanate and a *kerajaan*, two terms that are used interchangeably by our sources in describing the system of government. A sultanate normally refers to a state presided over by a *sulṭān* (Islamic ruler), while a *kerajaan* denotes a state headed by a *raja* (a Hindu ruler).[1] Both terms symbolized and signified the unity of the state.[2]

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[1] The word *kerajaan* basically signifies "kingdom" or "royalty." It comes from the Hindu (Sanskrit) word *raja*, meaning a king, prince or administrator, or independent chief. In both Malay and Acehnese, the word *raja* can be used in many ways, including to refer to a king or ruler, an heir apparent, a royal or non-royal, or to a conventional ruler. For further information on the use of the word see A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India*, 3rd revised ed. (New York: Talinger Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 34–35, 43, 82–89; J. Gonda, *Sanskrit in Indonesia*, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1973), pp. 92, 98, 110, 114, 118–119, 228, 621; R.O. Winstedt, *The Malays: A Cultural History*, 4th ed. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956), pp. 30–31, 45, 63; William Marsden, *A Dictionary and Grammar of the Malay Language*, introd. by Russell Jones, vol. 1 (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 141; R.J. Wilkinson, *A Malay-English Dictionary* (Romanised), pt. 2 (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd., 1959), pp. 934–935; Hoesein Djajadiningrat, *Atjehsche-Nederlandsche woorden-boek*, vol. 2 (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1934), pp. 460–461. Snouck Hurgronje mentions that the Acehnese use of the term *raja* in reference to their ruler, alongside the title *sulṭān* found in official Malay documents. Another term used was *poteu* (our lord). See C. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, trans. by A.W.S. O'Sullivan, vol. 1 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1906), p. 120.

[2] The *Bustān al-Salāṭīn* insists that before the establishment of Aceh as a sultanate or a *kerajaan*, there was no state as such, but only local rulers (*meurah-meurah*) who were the masters of their own territories (Nūr al-Dīn Al-Rānīrī, *Bustanu's-salatin*, bab 2, fasal 13, ed. by T. Iskandar (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1966), p. 31). See also Hoesein Djajadiningrat, *Atjehsche-Nederlandsch woordenboek*, p. 74.

For while the terms sultanate (in Malay: *kesultanan*) and *kerajaan* implied that both the Islamic and Southeast Asian concepts of statehood were in operation, textual sources nevertheless reveal that for the Acehnese the two terms connoted one concept. The first clue to this phenomenon is that nowhere in the indigenous texts is the term sultanate mentioned.[3] Indeed, even the word *kesultanan* is never employed or explicitly mentioned. Yet the preference shown by the ruler for the title *sulṭān* and the concept underlying it reveal that the same Islamic idea of the sultanate prevailed in Aceh as it did throughout the medieval Muslim world. And because the sulṭān was so pivotal to this system, it is necessary to begin our discussion of this topic with the ruling family.

The origins of the ruling family are far from clear. The brief discussion on the foundation of the sultanate provided in Chapter One illustrates the difficulties inherent in reconstructing its history. The earliest evidence is available from the tomb of Muẓaffar Shāh (d. 1497), the son of ʿInāyat Shāh and grandson of ʿAbd Allāh al-Malik al-Mubīn,[4] from whom the line of the Aceh Dār al-Kamāl dynasty can be traced. Lamuri, the state that preceded the sultanate, was, according to the *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay Annals), Islamized before Pasai.[5] The *Adat Aceh*, providing us as it does with the genealogy of the sulṭāns of Aceh, narrates how a certain Jawhar Shāh came from "above the wind" (*atas angin*)[6] and converted the Acehnese people to

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[3] See for instance, *De Hikajat Atjeh*, ed. by Teuku Iskandar ('s-Gravenhage: N.V. De Nederlandsche Boek-end Steendrukkerij VH. H.L. Smits, 1959); *Bustanu's-salatin*, bab 2, fasal 13*; Adat Atjeh*, Reproduced in Facsimile from a Manuscript in India Office Library, ed. by G.W.J. Drewes and P. Voorhoeve ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1958); Bukhārī al-Jawharī, *Tāj al-Salāṭīn (De kroon aller koningen)*, ed. and trans. into Dutch by P.P. Roorda van Eijsinga (Batavia: Lands Drukkerij, 1827); idem, *Taju'ssalatin*, ed. by Jumsari Jusuf (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Proyek Penerbitan Buku Bacaan dan Sastra Indonesia dan Daerah, 1979); idem, *Taj us-salatin*, ed. by Khalid Hussain (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1966). Throughout this book, the texts of *De Hikajat Atjeh, Bustanu's-salatin, Adat Atjeh, Taju'ssalatin* or *Taj us-salatin* will be referred to as *Hikayat Aceh, Bustān, Adat Aceh* and *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* respectively.

[4] T.J. Veltman, "Nota over de geschiedenis van het lanschap Pidie," *TBG* 58 (1919), p. 37.

[5] *Sejarah Melayu* or *Malay Annals*, with annot. translation by C.C. Brown, introduction by R. Roolvink (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 32.

[6] "Above the wind" is an expression signifying the countries of Arabia and Persia; while "below the wind" denotes the countries of Southeast Asia. These expressions allude to the strong south-west direction of the monsoon weather system during spring and summer. See *The Voyages of Sir James Lancaster to Brazil and the East Indies,*

Islam, becoming the first sulṭān to rule Aceh (from 601 to 631 A.H./ 1205–1234 A.D.).[7] This information was later accepted by local historians, such as M. Junus Djamil and A. Hasjmy.[8] No matter how uncertain the genesis of the ruling family of later centuries, its origins can be traced back to their roots in both the Dār al-Kamāl and Mahkota ʿĀlam dynasties. The connection came about through the marriage of ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh, the first sulṭān of Aceh Dār al-Salām and the descendant of Lamuri of Mahkota ʿĀlam, to the daughter of ʿInāyat Shāh of the Dār al-Kamāl dynasty. From this union sprang the dynastic line that would rule Aceh in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[9]

In addition to birthright, charisma played an important role in justifying a ruler's authority. The sources of this charisma were two: wealth and capability as a military warlord. Wealth was clearly a fundamental pillar of the royal family's strength and status, and derived from both maritime trade and agriculture. Trade,[10] actually,

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1591–1603, introd. and notes by Sir William Foster (London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1940), p. 159, note 2.

[7] *Adat Aceh*, p. 31; Newbold, "Genealogy of the Kings," p. 55.

[8] M. Junus Djamil, *Tawarich Radja2 Keradjaan Atjeh* (Banda Atjeh: Kodam I Iskandar Muda, 1968), p. 37; Hasjmy, *Sejarah Kebudayaan*, p. 16.

[9] See the section on "Succession and Legitimation" in this chapter, pp. 65–90.

[10] The economic dynamism of Southeast Asia might be viewed as the outcome of both its natural resources—including pepper, rainforest products, gold, bronze, brass, tin, and iron—and the active involvement of its people in business—including wet-rice cultivation, the development of metallurgical techniques, and maritime trade. In the first century of the Christian era, the region, known to the Indians and the Westerners as the "Golden Khersonese" (The Land of Gold), developed its first political-economic center in Funan that reached its peak in international trade, especially with China and India, in the fourth century. The control of both the hinterland and the sea appeared to be among the most important factors in the emergence of the state and other major political economic centers in the region, such as Srīvijaya (from the seventh to the eleventh centuries) and Majapahit (from the thirteenth to the early sixteenth centuries). With the fall of these two kingdoms, several important central entrepots came into existence, continuing the tradition of close connection between economic activities and political centers. Among the most important centers from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, called by Anthony Reid the "age of commerce," were Pasai, Melaka, Johor, Banten, Patani, Aceh, and Brunei. For further discussion on this subject see Kenneth R. Hall, "Economic History of Early Southeast Asia," in Nicholas Tarling, ed., *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 185–275; Kenneth R. Hall, *Maritime Trade and State Development in Early Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985); Paul Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1961); O.W. Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967); J.C. van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society* (The Hague: W. van Hoeve, 1967); F.H. van Naerssen, "The Economic and Administrative

contributed to the formation of the ruling elite that governed principalities throughout the region. The *Hikayat Raja Raja Pasai* (The Story of the Rulers of Pasai) reveals the first ruler of Pasai to have been a wealthy merchant,[11] something that was also true of Melaka's sulṭān in the fifteenth century.[12] Another probable source of the royal

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History of Early Indonesia," in F.H. van Naerssen and R.C. De Iongh, *The Economic and Administrative History of Early Indonesia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977), pp. 1–84; Lynda Norene Shaffer, *Maritime Southeast Asia to 1500* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1996); Anthony Reid, "An Age of Commerce in Southeast Asian History," *Modern Asian Studies* 24, 1 (1990), pp. 1–30; idem, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University, 1988/1993).

[11] The *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai* narrates the legend of the founder of Pasai, Meurah Silu, who is said to have miraculously been able to turn worms into gold and silver, indicating two things. The first of these, as Reid suggests, is the possible importance of silkworm domestication in Pasai at the early stage of its development. Indeed, Pasai was known as an important supplier of silk in Sumatra. The second is the importance of wealth in realizing political ambition. In this case, Kenneth R. Hall points to two important initiatives undertaken by Meurah Silu in his efforts to establish his credentials (economic and military). By controlling the pepper-producing hinterland this aspiring leader was able to conquer the coast and found a sultanate, called Samudera-Pasai. When visiting the region in 1292, Marco Polo observed that the people of Pasai, comprised mostly of "idolaters" (Hindus), lived under a "great and rich king." A.H. Hill's interpretation of the early reign of Meurah Silu (before his foundation of the sultanate) seems correct when he says that his "activities during his wanderings before he came to Samudra reflect the ease with which a wealthy and resourceful Hindu could get himself acclaimed, his needs met and his leadership accepted by the people of the country." See "Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai," romanized and translated by A.H. Hill, *JMBRAS* 33, 2 (1961), pp. 50–53; Hill's "Introduction" to "Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai," p. 15; Teuku Ibrahim Alfian, ed., *Kronika Pasai: Sebuah Tinjauan Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1973), pp. 43–44; Hall, "Economic History," pp. 228–229; Reid, *Southeast Asia*, vol. 1, pp. 92–93.

[12] Melaka is the best example of a state entirely indebted to trade for its existence. For this reason, efforts to enhance trade were a priority of the state. Among these efforts was the establishment of an Islamic connection. It has been suggested that the conversion of its first ruler, Parameswara, to Islam was a deliberate bid for both political and economic gain. Indeed, conversion provided him with strong political support from Muslim ports in the region and the Islamic world in general. It also meant an economic boon for the new state, since Muslim traders from the Archipelago and from other parts of the Islamic world came there to do their business. More specifically, the marriage of Parameswara to the daughter of the sulṭān of Pasai has been seen as an important step towards the establishment of the Islamic connection. Another effort was also apparently made through the creation of a state organization to facilitate trade. At the apex of the state organization was the sulṭān, who was supported by his most powerful officials, i.e., the *bendahara*, the *penghulu bendahari*, the *temanggung*, the *laksamana*, and the *shahbandar*. This form of organization was later adopted by the Portuguese. For further discussion on this issue see F.J. Moorhead, *A History of Malaya and Its Neighbours*, vol. 1 (Kuala Lumpur: Longmans of Malaya, 1961); Richard O. Winstedt, *A History of Malaya* (Singapore: Marican & Sons, 1962); Horace Stone, *From Malacca to Malaysia, 1400–1965*

family's wealth was the hinterland. If it is true that Aceh was originally a small inland kingdom in Dār al-Kamāl, as has been suggested, then the agricultural basis of the sultanate's economy may actually have been a source of royal power. This agriculturally based wealth would have been accumulated even earlier than revenue from maritime sources, a fact substantiated by the existence of many land-based local rulers (known as *rajas* but also called *meugats*, *meurahs* and *uleebalangs*) throughout the region. These independent local chiefs played a significant role in all periods of Acehnese history,[13] indicating that the earliest members of the royal family must have been the strongest and most powerful landlords in the region.

The family's military capability was another important element in their rise to power, according to the sources. The brother of ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh, known as Raja Ibrāhīm, was a great warrior who attacked Daya in 1520. The Portuguese observer, Joao de Barros, who synthesized much of the local knowledge of historical events in the region, regards him as the founder of Aceh, and the figure who took up arms in response to Pidie's efforts at colonization.[14] This warrior, who died in 1523, also besieged the Portuguese in Pidie,

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(London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1960); R.J. Wilkinson, "The Malacca Sultanate," *JMBRAS* 13, 2 (1935), pp. 22–67; C.H. Wake, "Melaka in the Fifteenth Century: Malay Historical Traditions and the Politics of the Islamization," in Kernial Singh Sandhu and Paul Wheatley, eds., *Melaka: the Transformation of A Malay Capital, c. 1400–1980*, vol. 1 (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 128–161; George Cho and Marion W. Ward, "The Port of Melaka," in Sandhu and Wheatley, eds., *Melaka*, vol. 1, pp. 623–651; D.R. Sar Desai, "The Portuguese Administration in Malacca, 1511–1641," *JSEAH* 10, 3 (1969), pp. 501–512; Barbara W. Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia* (Houndmills and London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 7–75.

[13] From the sixteenth century onwards, Aceh was confined territorially to the coastal city of Banda Aceh Dār al-Salām, which was known as "Aceh proper." The rest of the area was ruled by local rulers (*uleebalangs* or *rajas*). Later, the semi-independent surrounding regions were to be divided into *sagis*, an institution attributed to the Queen Nūr al-ʿĀlam (r. 1675–1678). Literally meaning corner or angle, the *sagi* was in fact a confederation of territories under an *uleebalang* (*uleebalangships*). There were three *sagis* in Aceh of this period, each consisting of several *mukims* (parishes): the *sagi* of 22 *mukims*, another of 26 and a third of 25. Indeed, the confederation of the *sagis* was to possess its own political and economic power. See K.F.H. van Langen, "De inrichting van het Atjehsche staatbestuur under het Sultanaat," *BKI* 5, 3 (1888), pp. 390–410; Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achenese*, pp. 88–140.

[14] Joao de Barros as quoted in Raden Hoesein Djajaningrat, "Critisch overzicht van de in Maleische werken vervatte gegevens over de geschiedenis van het Soeltanaat van Atjeh," *BKI* 65 (1911), p. 147.

taking it from them in 1521.[15] ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh was himself also known as a formidable fighter who led an expedition against the Portuguese in Pasai in 1524, an event of which F.C. Danvers writes, "[he] overran all the country with fire and sword, and entering the city of Pacem [Pasai] with 15,000 men, he summoned Dom Andre [a Portuguese commander] to surrender."[16] The warlike characteristics of the royal family were also evident in the personality of Sulṭān ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Riʿāyat Shāh (r. 1530–1571), whose famed aggressiveness in warfare led to his being called "al-Qahhār" (the Subduer).[17] Of the three military expeditions launched against the Portuguese in Melaka during his reign (in 1537, 1547 and 1568) two of them (the first and last) are said to have been led by the sulṭān himself. In the last expedition, he took his wife and three sons with him to observe the battle.[18] The celebrated Sulṭān Iskandar Muda was also renowned as a gifted warrior who conquered the greater part of Sumatra. The *Hikayat Aceh* provides a long narrative of his precocious childhood, recalling his skills as a warrior when he was only a boy of eight. Indeed, by fourteen years of age Iskandar Muda had already been given the title *sayf al-mulūk* (the sword of kings).[19]

Both wealth and military prowess constituted the fundamental elements of the family's bid for rule. They provided the power that was essential to commanding obedience from their subjects. However, the family also needed their authority to be recognized in order to rule effectively.[20] The mutual interdependence of power and authority is something of a truism. Jacques Maritain insists that "authority requests power. Power without authority is tyranny."[21] Yet "what

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[15] William Marsden, *The History of Sumatra*, reprint of the third edition, introd. by John Bastin (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 419; F.C. Danvers, *The Portuguese in India*, vol. 1 (New York: Octagon Books, 1966), p. 356.

[16] Danvers, *The Portuguese*, vol. 1, p. 356.

[17] *Bustān*, pp. 22–23.

[18] Joao de Barros and Diego do Couto, *Da Asia de Joao de Barros e de Diego do Couto*, 8, chap. 22 (Lisbon: Na Regia Officina Typografica, 1778–88), pp. 133–163, in notes provided in Fernao Mendez Pinto, *The Travels of Mendez Pinto*, ed. and trans. by Rebecca C. Catz (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 559.

[19] *Hikayat Aceh*, pp. 118–153.

[20] Jacques Maritain defines authority as "the *right* to direct and command, to be listened to or obeyed by others." See his *Man and the State* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 126.

[21] Ibid.

is of absolutely *primary* importance," he continues, "is authority. To 'gain power' is important for him who wants to act on the community. To possess and acquire authority . . . is more important still."[22] For our purposes, therefore, it is necessary to examine the kind of authority that the ruling family possessed and to account for the ways in which it was formulated.

To begin with, the ruling family claimed to possess both political and religious authority, reflecting a conscious effort to integrate the politico-religious unity of the Muslim community into the state ethos. By the time Islam had established itself in the region (as early as the end of the thirteenth century),[23] the central authority of the caliphate in Baghdad had diminished and been delegated to regional rulers.[24] By the time Aceh emerged as a powerful sultanate in the

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[22] Jacques Maritain, *Scholasticism and Politics*, 2nd ed. (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1945), p. 74.

[23] The issue of the introduction of Islam into the region is extremely complex. None of the many studies conducted by scholars has been able to reach any firm conclusion as to its origins, date, or location. The only evidence available so far is that of Samudra-Pasai, identified as the first Islamic sultanate in the archipelago and founded in the thirteenth century. For further discussion on the issue see, J.P. Moquette, "De grafsteenen te Pase en Grisse vergeleken met dergelijke monumenten uit Hindostan," *TBG* 54 (1912), pp. 536–548; R.O. Winstedt, "The Advent of Muhammadanism in the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago," *JSBRAS* 77 (1917), pp. 171–175; T.W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam: A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith* (London: Custable, 1913); G.H. Bousquet, "Introduction a l'etude de l'Islam Indonesien," *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, 2–3 (1938), pp. 159–164; G.E. Marrison, "The Coming of Islam to the East Indies," *JMBRAS* 24, 1 (1951), pp. 28–37; S.Q. Fatimi, *Islam Comes to Malaysia* (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Institute, 1963); A.H. Johns, "Sufism as a Category in Indonesian Literature and History," *JSEAH* 2, 2 (1961), pp. 10–23; idem, "Muslim Mystics and Historical Writings," in D.G.E. Hall, ed., *Historians of South East Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 37–49; idem, "Islam in Southeast Asia: Reflections and New Directions," *Indonesia* 19 (1975), pp. 33–55; idem, "Sufism in Southeast Asia: Reflections and Reconsiderations," *JSAS* 26, 1 (1995), pp. 169–183; G.W.J. Drewes, "New Light on the Coming of Islam to Indonesia, *BKI* 124 (1968), pp. 433–459; S.M.N. al-Attas, *Preliminary Statement on a General Theory of the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1969); idem, *Islam dalam Sejarah Kebudayaan Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1972); M.B. Hooker, "Introduction: The Translation of Islam into South East Asia," in M.B. Hooker, ed., *Islam in South East Asia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983), pp. 1–22; A. Hasjmi, ed., *Sejarah Masuk dan Berkembang Islam Islam di Indonesia* (Bandung: Al-Ma'arif, 1989).

[24] The waning of Abbasid power was marked by the occupation of Baghdad by the Shi'ite Buyids in 945 and later the Seljuqs in 1055. It was not until 1258 that the Mongols conquered Baghdad and the last Abbasid Caliph, al-Mu'taṣim, was killed. "During the long period from the Buyid occupation of Bahgdad to the conquest of the city by the Mongols," Bernard Lewis writes, "the Caliphate became a purely titular institution, representing the headship of Sunnī Islam, and acting as

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, several powerful independent sultanates already existed in other parts of the Islamic world, among the most important being the Ottomans, the Ṣafavids and the Mughāls. How Aceh's rulers in particular formulated the basis of their political authority is the subject of our inquiry.

The author of the *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* insists that the two most important and difficult tasks that can be undertaken in this world are those of *nubuwwah* (prophecy) and *ḥukūmah* (government). Of the two, *ḥukūmah* is described as "the most difficult of the messenger's tasks, [because] he is required to take care of his flock, love all poor, command his people, lead them to good deeds, and treat them with justice; such is the task of government."[25] This is the core of the Islamic political ethos which sees Muḥammad, *rasūl Allāh* (the messenger of God), as a statesman, whose mission was both religious and political in so far as it entailed the establishment of an *ummah* (Islamic community). This political dimension to Muḥammad's prophecy was a necessary vehicle for the mediation of God's teachings in society. Thus, political power is justified as essential to establishing a community of believers.[26] From this conviction, the notion of temporal/spiritual leadership was formulated, and the office of caliph[27] established, filled

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legitimating authority for the numerous secular rulers who exercised effective sovereignty, both in provinces and the Capital" (Bernard Lewis, "Abbasids," *EI2*). For further discussion of this issue see C.E. Bosworth, "Military Organization under the Buyids of Persia and Iraq," *Oriens* 18–19 (1965–1966), pp. 143–167; M. Kabir, *The Buwayhid Dynasty of Baghdad* (Calcutta: Iran Society, 1964); C.E. Bosworth, "Barbarian Incursions: The Coming of the Turks into the Islamic World," in D.S. Richards, ed., *Islamic Civilization, 950–1150* (Oxford: Cassirer, 1973), pp. 1–16; J.A. Boyle, ed., "The Seljuq and Mongol Periods," *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968); D.O. Morgan, *The Mongols* (New York: Blackwell, 1987).

[25] *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* (Eijsinga), p. 48; (Jusuf), p. 29; (Hussain), pp. 48–49.

[26] Ibn Taymiyyah writes: "the exercise of authority for the people's benefit constitutes one of the greatest religious duties, without which neither religion nor a well-ordered world can be established" (Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Siyāsah al-Sharʿiyyah fī Iṣlāḥ al-Rāʿī wa al-Rāʿiyyah* (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1955), p. 161). See also Mehdi Mozaffari, *Authority in Islam* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1987), pp. 19–28.

[27] The main titles of the rulers were *khalīfat Allāh* or *khalīfat rasūl Allāh*. For a discussion of the various meanings of the titles see D.S. Margoliouth, "The Sense of the Title *Khalīfah*," in T.W. Arnold and R.A. Nicholson, eds., *A Volume of Oriental Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), pp. 322–328; H. Ringgren, "Some Religious Aspects of the Caliphate," *La Regalita Sacra* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1959), pp. 737–748; W. Montgomery Watt, "God's Caliph: Qurʾanic Interpretations and Umayyad Claims," in C.E. Bosworth, ed., *Iran and Islam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh

by the first four Rightly-Guided Caliphs (*al-khulafā' al-rāshidūn*). In its historical progression, Muslim political thought has developed the argument for the necessity of the caliphate along three main lines. The first is the theory grounded in reason, which argues that it is the nature of reasonable men to grasp the need for a leader who can foster a just social order. The Muʿtazilah were advocates of this view.[28] The second is based on *sharʿī* (scriptural) evidence or revelation and underlines the need for a community leader to see to the implementation of God's religion. This theory was developed by members of al-Ashʿarī's school and later adopted by al-Māwardī (d. 1058).[29] The third line of argument was pursued by al-Ghazzālī (d. 1111) and Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328), who went even further in stressing the need for a leader on the basis of both reason and revelation.[30]

Just as the theories advocated by classical jurists reflect historical developments in the Muslim polity,[31] the concept of leadership in Aceh can be viewed as an extension of that polity. The whole process reflected a contemporary reality in which Muslim communities around the world were finding themselves under diverse forms of regional leadership. It became necessary, therefore, to justify the rise of local rulers alongside the caliphs, as a compromise between the ideal caliphate and the pragmatic need to secure social order—a precondition

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University Press, 1971), pp. 565–574; Ann K.S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 14–15; Patricia Crone & Martin Hinds, *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Century of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 1–23.

[28] W. Madelung, "Imāma," *EI2*; Lambton, *State and Government*, pp. 21–42.

[29] H.A.R. Gibb, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, ed. by Stanford J. Shaw and William R. Polk (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 155; A.K.S. Lambton, "Islamic Political Thought," in Joseph Schacht and C.E. Bosworth, eds., *The Legacy of Islam*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p. 411; idem, *State and Government*, pp. 83–102.

[30] Lambton, *State and Government*, pp. 107–129, 143–151. The idea behind this theory, as Lambton puts it, is that:

> On the one hand the well-being of men could not be achieved except in society because of their mutual need of each other, and when they lived in society they inevitably required a leader. On the other hand, the exercise of authority (*wilāya*) was one of the most important duties of religion and without it religion could not be maintained, and God imposed upon men when they came together in community the duty of enjoining the good and forbidding evil, which could only be accomplished through power (*quwwa*) and leadership (*imāra*) (p. 147).

[31] H.A.R. Gibb, "Constitutional Organization," in Majid Khadduri and Herbert J. Liebesny, eds., *Law in the Middle East* (Washington: The Middle East Institute, 1955), p. 4; idem, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, pp. 141–150.

for the implementation of Islamic teachings.[32] Thus, by the time Aceh emerged as a sultanate in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, autonomous sultanates had long been the accepted model of government in Islam.

From its inception, Aceh was essentially an independent sultanate. This being the case, the ruler possessed a supreme political authority that expected obedience from his subjects.[33] This was reinforced by the oft-repeated principle that obeying a bad ruler is preferable to falling into *fitnah* (dissension) and *fasād* (corruption). This is explicitly articulated in the *Tāj al-Salāṭīn*:

> The only ruler to be obeyed is he who follows God's precepts and His messenger's teachings.
>
> *Question*: When a ruler refuses to follow God's precepts and the teachings of the Prophet, how do you obey him, when he is actually regarded as disobedient, ignorant and an unbeliever?
>
> *Answer*: All just rulers who follow God's prescription are to be obeyed in both their words and deeds, whereas in the case of bad rulers we only obey their words from the throne, not their bad deeds.
>
> *Question*: As a matter of fact we must disobey both the words and deeds of a bad ruler. How are we to follow his words?
>
> *Answer*: We obey his words for the sake of avoiding *fitnah* and *fasād* in the country.[34]

Among the most important messages conveyed in these lines is that the unity of the *ummah* was seen to be of paramount importance. Aceh, with the exception of the reigns of strong rulers such as al-

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[32] Al-Māwardī's *al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyyah*, for instance, is basically a reflection of the political phenomena of his time (the later Buyid period), when power was firmly in the hands of local rulers.

[33] With the emergence of independent local rulers throughout the Islamic world after the fall of the Abbasids, jurists tried to construct theories to justify the situation. Among them was Ibn Taymiyyah who advocated the absolute necessity of a leader in a community on the basis of both reason and religion. He quoted the Prophet's *ḥadīth* saying that: "If three of them were on a journey, they should choose one of them as a leader" (narrated by Abū Dāwūd on the authority of Abū Saʿīd and Abū Hurayrah). Another famous tradition was also quoted: "Sixty years with an unjust ruler are better than a single night without a sulṭān." That being the case, a leader deserves obedience from his subjects. Indeed, Ibn Taymiyyah insisted that obedience is the first duty incumbent upon subjects with respect to their ruler. See his *al-Siyāsah al-Sharʿiyyah*, pp. 161–168; Lambton, *State and Government*, pp. 143–151; Mozaffari, *Authority in Islam*, pp. 30–31.

[34] *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* (Eijsinga), pp. 49–50; (Jusuf), pp. 29–30; (Hussain), pp. 50–51.

Mukammil (r. 1589–1604) and Iskandar Muda (r. 1607–1636), was known to be a fragile state. The power of its nobility, especially the *uleebalangs*, was dominant in both the capital and the hinterland, a function of their political and economic hegemony. As we shall demonstrate in the next section, these nobles were to play an important role in both installing and deposing rulers. In economic terms, their commercial interests and monopoly over agricultural lands within their own *nanggroes* (territories) provided them with an independent power base. C. Snouck Hurgronje, writing of the nineteenth century, speaks of *uleebalangs* who were, theoretically, officers of the sultanate but were, practically, independent of the central power.[35] This is not to suggest, however, that the sulṭāns were ignored, for the *uleebalangs* still turned to them for *sarakatas* (royal edicts), which, though often ignored in practice, were highly respected. Indeed, the polarization of power between the sulṭāns and *uleebalangs* was peculiar to Aceh. However, both the *uleebalangs* and the common people still respected the sulṭān as "a figure of genuine power."[36] Snouck Hurgronje insists that the sulṭān "was the object of a somewhat extraordinary reverence in the minds of Achehnese."[37] James Siegel refers to this phenomenon as the "most surprising thing about Aceh," which, he writes, "remained a unified state for centuries while the power of the Sultan waned."[38] The point to be made at this stage, therefore, is that the office of the sulṭān was indeed seen as a necessary feature of state and one that signified its unity.[39]

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[35] Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 1, pp. 88–92.

[36] James Siegel, *Shadow and Sound: The Historical Thought of a Sumatran People* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 12.

[37] Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 1, p. 141.

[38] Siegel, *Shadow and Sound*, p. 21. On various theories as to the origins of *uleebalangs*, their nature and their relationship with the sulṭān, see Langen, "De inrichting," pp. 381–471; Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 1, pp. 88–120; James T. Siegel, *The Rope of God* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 7–77; Anthony Reid, "Trade and the Problem of Royal Power in Aceh c. 1550–1700," in Anthony Reid and Lance Castles, eds., *Pre-Colonial State Systems in Southeast Asia* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1979), pp. 45–66; Takeshi Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh: A Historical Study of the Sultanate of Aceh" (Ph.D. dissertation, Australian National University, 1984), pp. 57–121.

[39] Compare this with the role of the *sulṭān* in the Western Malay states before the coming of the British as investigated by J.M. Gullick. In his study, Gullick found out that the role of the sulṭān "was to symbolise and to some extent to preserve the unity of the state." He further insists that "there was an acceptance of the sultanate, if not of the Sultan, as the formal head of the state." See his *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*, revised ed. (London: The Athlone Press, 1988), p. 44.

We may now look at the ways in which political authority was formulated within the sultanate. In the first place, it was reflected in the titles bestowed upon its rulers. The most important title attached to the ruler was that of *sulṭān*. This word, which in Arabic essentially means "power or authority," began being used in the 4th/10th century to denote the "holder of power, authority."[40] It was the Seljuqs, usurping the caliph's power in the 5th/11th century, who popularized the term as a "regular title for a ruler."[41] By that time the title was being conferred by the caliph on each new, de facto ruler in Baghdad and the provinces, to whom he delegated much of his authority. But, it was not until the thirteenth century that the term came to designate a fully autonomous ruler, as with the Mamlūk and Ottoman dynasties. The title gained ever-wider currency throughout the Muslim world where it was adopted by local chiefs, none of whom required a "legitimizing" delegation of authority from the caliph.[42]

It was within this historical context that the title *sulṭān* came to be borne by Aceh's rulers. While it is not entirely clear when the title was first adopted, it seems certain that it was used to signify the Islamic character of the ruler and his state. The *Bustān* relates that ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh was the first sulṭān of Aceh Dār al-Salām to refer to himself in this fashion.[43] Indeed, the genealogy of the Acehnese rulers found in the *Adat Aceh* refers to a certain Jawhar Shāh as the first Islamic proselytizer and the first ruler of Aceh to bear the title of *sulṭān*.[44] Although we cannot say with certainty that this was the case, the lack of historical evidence to support either version does not undermine the argument that the title must have been adopted by the Acehnese long before the foundation of Aceh Dār al-Salām itself.[45] The title was usually preceded by other honorific royal titles, such as the Hindu titles *paduka raja* (as in *paduka seri Sulṭān*,

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[40] For further discussion on the various meanings of the word see Muḥammad b. Mukarram b. Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab al-Muḥīṭ*, ed. by Yūsuf Khayyāṭ, vol. 3 (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, Dār Lisān al-ʿArab, 1988), pp. 182–183; Sir Thomas W. Arnold, *The Caliphate* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1965), pp. 128, 202; Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 35, 48–52.

[41] H.J. Kramers, et al., "Sulṭān," *EI2*; Lewis, *The Political Language*, p. 52.

[42] Ibid., pp. 182–183; Arnold, *The Caliphate*, pp. 99–183.

[43] *Bustān*, p. 31.

[44] See above, pp. 38–39.

[45] The Acehnese rulers were not in fact the first regional rulers to adopt the title. The rulers of both Pasai and Melaka also bore the title at an earlier date.

which means his majesty the Sulṭān)[46] or *seri* (from the Hindi *sri*, which means auspicious),[47] such as in the expression *seri Sulṭān* (auspicious Sulṭān). Iskandar Muda, for instance, was given the title *sayyidunā wa mawlānā paduka seri Sulṭān Iskandar Muda johan berdaulat ẓill Allāh fī al-ʿālam* (our lord and master, his majesty the auspicious Sulṭān Iskandar Muda, the sovereign of the world, the shadow of God on earth) in the *Adat Aceh*.[48] The same titles are also said by the *Adat Aceh* to have been borne by Sulṭānah Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn, who was known as *paduka seri Sulṭān[ah] Tāj al-ʿĀlam* (her majesty, the auspicious queen, the crown of the world) (r. 1641–1675).[49] In Aceh, the title *sulṭān* was also borne by the ruler's sons, whether they were princes holding real power (as local rulers) or not. This personal title, however, did not imply any sovereign authority.[50] Other honorific titles were *shāh-i ʿālam*, a Persian title which means "ruler of the world,"[51] *johan berdaulat* (sovereign of the world), *tāj al-ʿālam* (crown of the world) and *perkasa ʿālam* (courage of the world), the latter being another of Iskandar Muda's epithets. This ruler was also referred to as *nyang meegeunggam ʿālam donya* (the one who holds the world).[52] Iskandar Thānī is reported to have claimed to be "the king of the whole world" chosen by God.[53] In a letter of 1602 authorizing trading rights for the captain of a British vessel, Sir James Lancaster, al-Mukammil (d. 1604) records his title as having the additional phrase "the ruler of Aceh and Samudera."[54] This, for Schrieke, is a perpetuation of the old Samudera tradition in which a ruler held a dual

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[46] In the section on the genealogy of the rulers, the *Adat Aceh* provides thirty-five names of Acehnese rulers, all of whom bear the title *paduka seri Sulṭān*. See *Adat Aceh*, pp. 28–31. See also Winstedt, *The Malays*, p. 70.

[47] Marsden, *A Dictionary and Grammar*, p. 169; Wilkinson, *A Malay-English Dictionary*, p. 1085.

[48] *Adat Aceh*, pp. 49, 113–116.

[49] Ibid., pp. 49, 53.

[50] See Iskandar, *Bustanu's-salatin*, p. 12. For a brief description of the use of this title in both Malay and Acehnese tradition see Wilkinson, *A Malay-English Dictionary*, pt. 2, p. 1132; Djajadiningrat, *Atjehsch-Nederlandch woordenboek*, vol. 2, pp. 862–863.

[51] The *Hikayat Malem Dagang* or *Hikayat Meukuta Alam* spells it in Acehnese as *cahi alam*.

[52] A common expression used in the *Hikayat Malem Dagang* or *Hikayat Meukuta Alam* is *deelat tuanku cahi alam, nyang meegeunggam alam donya*. See *Hikajat Malem Dagang*, ed. by H.K.J. Cowan ('s-Gravenhage: KITLV, 1937), lines: 581, 624, 697, 760, 1513, 1756, 1789, 2201, 2203, 2225. See also *Hikayat Meukuta Alam*, Text I, ed. by Imran Teuku Abdullah (Jakarta: Intermassa, 1991), lines: 610, 655, 728, 777, 903, 1492, 1542, 1765, 1798, 2223, 2245.

[53] *Dagh-Register gehouden in 't Casteel Batavia (1640–1641)*, p. 6.

[54] The phrase reads as follows: *Aku raja yang kuasa yang di bawah angin ini, yang*

title such as "ruler of Samudera-Pasai."[55] In the same year, a letter was also sent to Elizabeth I of England in which the sulṭān describes himself as "the king of the kingdoms of Ashey, who doth rule there with an absolute power."[56] In his letter addressed to King James I of England in 1612, Iskandar Muda describes himself as "the king who possesses kingly rank" which is followed by long and impressive epithets.[57]

Several state insignia deserve to be mentioned here in brief, as they not only bear royal epithets but also symbolize royal sovereignty. These include coins, *sarakatas* (royal edicts) and royal *caps* (seals). Scholars have in fact already made several studies of the coinage system in Aceh.[58] Here, we are only concerned with the titles given to rulers on coins and the possible intentions behind this practice. The first coinage bearing Islamic devices produced in the archipelago was that of Samudera-Pasai, where the ruler, Sulṭān Muḥammad (d. 1326), issued gold coinage with both his name and title engraved thereupon. On one side we find inscribed "Muḥammad malik al-ẓāhir" (Muḥammad, the victorious king), while on the reverse there is written "al-sulṭān al-ʿādil" (the just ruler).[59] The tradition of listing the royal epithets "malik al-ẓāhir" and "al-sulṭān al-ʿādil" was

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memegang takhta kerajaan negeri Aceh, dan negeri Samudra, dan segala negeri yang takluk kenegeri Aceh (I am the mighty ruler in the regions below the wind, who holds sway over the land of Aceh and the land of Samudra and all the land tributary to Aceh). See W.G. Shellabear, "An Account of Some of the Oldest Malay MSS. Now Extant," *JSBRAS* 31 (1898), pp. 113, 117; James Lancaster, *The Voyages of Sir James Lancaster to Brazil and the East Indies, 1591–1603*, introd. and notes by Sir William Foster (London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1940), pp. 155, 159.

[55] B. Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological Studies*, pt. 2 (The Hague and Bandung: W. van Hoeve, 1957), pp. 254–255.

[56] Shellabear, "An Account," p. 109.

[57] Ibid., pp. 123–130.

[58] The latest studies devoted to this subject are the works by Robert S. Wicks entitled "Survey on Native Southeast Asian Coinage, circa 450–1850: Documentation and Typology," (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1983), especially pp. 258–276; idem, *Money, Markets, and Trade in Early Southeast Asia: The Development of Indigenous Monetary Systems to A.D. 1400* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, Studies on Southeast Asia, 1992), especially chapter seven, pp. 219–242; T. Ibrahim Alfian, *Mata Uang Emas Kerajaan-Kerajaan di Aceh* (Banda Aceh: Proyek Pengembangan Permeuseuman Daerah Istimewa Aceh, 1986). This subject is also mentioned in passing in Denys Lombard's *Le sultanat d'Atjéh au temps d'Iskandar Muda, 1607–1636* (Paris: École française d'Extreme-Orient, 1967), pp. 105–109; and Anthony Reid's *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680*, vol. 2 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 93–107.

[59] Alfian, *Mata Uang Emas*, pp. 8, 15–17; Wicks, *Money, Markets, and Trade*, pp. 236–237.

common on Pasai gold coins.[60] Robert S. Wicks has observed that the coins functioned "primarily as means of declaring the Sultan's right to rule and would not have entered the marketplace frequented by traders, being distributed instead as largesse among the populace."[61] It was only about a century later that the coinage came to be used in international trade throughout the archipelago.[62]

Aceh Dār al-Salām also developed its own currency, minting in tin as was the practice in other Sumatran principalities. In addition, however, Pasai and Aceh are known to have issued gold coins as well. Aceh's gold coin was known as *meuih* (in Malay *mas*, meaning "gold coin").[63] The earliest Acehnese coins identified so far are those of Sulṭān Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (r. 1530–1537), the second of his line to succeed to the throne. In general, some Acehnese rulers, especially those of the sixteenth century, seem to have adopted the numismatic tradition of Pasai. From Sulṭān Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn to Sulṭān Ḥusayn the epithet "malik al-ẓāhir" on the obverse of the coins was maintained. The use of the epithet "al-sulṭān al-ʿādil", however, was to last until the reign of al-Mukammil. Indeed, while the use of titles and epithets on the coins may have differed from one ruler to another, their employment as symbols of political sovereignty was common to all.

The *sarakata* (royal edict) was another symbol signifying the political status that accrued to rulers. Snouck Hurgronje points to the importance of such edicts as "the only attempts at centralization of authority, or reformation whether social, political or religious."[64] Siegel agrees, suggesting that the edicts were "a way to assert his

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[60] An exception is found in the case of Sulṭān Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (d. 1412) who did not use the epithet "malik al-ẓāhir" on his coins. This ruler simply printed his name on one side and the epithet "al-sulṭān al-ʿādil" on the reverse. See Alfian, *Mata Uang Emas*, pp. 23–25; Alfian, "Ratu Nahrasiyah," in Alfian, et al, eds., *Wanita Utama Nusantara dalam Lintasan Sejarah* or *Prominent Women in the Glimpse of History* (Jakarta: Jayakarta Agung, 1994), 17–18. For more examples of Pasai's coins see Alfian, *Mata Uang Emas*, pp. 15–27. It is important to note here that the epithet "malik al-ẓāhir" was also commonly used by the Ayyūbids and the Mamlūks. The practice of adding adjectives such as "al-aʿẓam" and "al-ʿādil" following the title *sulṭān* was common in the Islamic world. See O. Codrington, *A Manual of Musalman Numismatics* (London: The Royal Asiatic Society, 1904), pp. 81–82.

[61] Wicks, *Money, Market, and Trade*, p. 235.

[62] Ibid., pp. 237, 242.

[63] Langen, "De inrichting," pp. 428–435. This Dutch scholar suggests that the first Acehnese coinage was created during the reign of al-Qahhār (d. 1571). Indeed, he provides an example of the coin, yet no reference is given in support of his conclusion.

[64] Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 1, p. 4.

[the sulṭān's] authority over chiefs who otherwise gave no sign of their subordination."[65] Providing an authoritative definition of the *sarakata* is difficult, since only a few have been discovered. Moreover, to look at the ones that have survived only from the perspective of the conflict between the sulṭāns and the *uleebalangs*[66] is in fact to minimize the scope and nature of the edicts themselves. G.L. Tichelman defines the *sarakata*, in its broad sense, as "a letter of recognition, grant or loan, ruler's decree, and government's decree and code or official state's gazette."[67] The tradition of issuing the edicts is believed to have started in the reign of Iskandar Muda. Judging from the devout formulas they bear, it can also be concluded that they were drawn up by the *'ulamā'*.[68] Various *sarakatas* may be distinguishable in terms of their specific content, but their general features are consistent, most of them beginning with devout formulas, followed by impressive royal titles and other symbols representing the sulṭān and court dignitaries.[69]

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[65] Siegel, *The Rope of God*, p. 43.

[66] See, for instance, Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 1, pp. 4–9.

[67] G.L. Tichelman, "Een Atjehsch sarakata (afshrift van een besluit van Iskandar Muda)," *TBG* 73 (1933), p. 369. Djajadiningrat provides a similar description of the meaning of *sarakata* in his *Atjehsche-Nederlandsch woordenboek*, vol. 2, pp. 684–685. Snouck Hurgronje defines the *sarakata* as "letters patent of appointment or rather recognition of the principal hereditary holders of offices or titles" (*The Achehnese*, vol. 1, p. 129). Besides providing an example of the *sarakata* given to the *panglima meusigit raya* (the general of the great mosque), this Dutch scholar claims to have obtained copies of several *sarakatas* containing regulations applying to everything from court ceremonies and festivals to commerce, taxation, and port activities (*The Achehnese*, vol. 1, pp. 5–6, 129). This being the case, to determine the difference between *sarakatas* and the so-called *adat meukuta 'ālam* or *adat poteu meureuhom* (the adat of defunct royalties) is rather difficult. Even in this sense, the *Adat Aceh* can also be included under the heading of *sarakata*. Indeed, the term *sarakata* is explicitly mentioned in the *Adat Aceh* in a passage telling of how Sulṭān Iskandar Muda ordered his state secretaries to put the *sarakatas* (in the sense of royal edicts/regulations) into writing, which became one of the main parts of the text. Queen Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn later gave permission to have these *sarakatas* copied (*Adat Aceh*, pp. 48–50). Perhaps, it can be suggested here that, in terms of their content, both the *sarakata* and *adat meukuta 'ālam* or *Adat Aceh* are similar. The difference appears only in the way they were issued. The former were mainly issued in writing and validated by the royal seal. The latter, however, were made either in writing or through oral means to which no royal seal was attached.

[68] Tichelman, "Een Atjehsch sarakata," p. 369; Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 1, pp. 7–8.

[69] Thanks to the efforts of several scholars we now have at our disposal several *sarakatas*. G.L. Tichelman has brought to our attention two of these issued by Sulṭānah Tāj al-'Ālam Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn. The *sarakatas* record that in 1613 Iskandar Muda granted the land of six *mukims* in Samalanga to a certain Orang Kaya Tuk

Royal *caps* (seals) were attached to *sarakatas* for the purpose of authentication.[70] We know of two types of these seals so far: the *cap sikureueng* (the ninefold seal) and the so-called private seal of a ruler. The *cap sikureueng*, which was also called the *cap halilintar* (the thunder seal), was a seal consisting of nine names of various rulers in nine circles. The name of the ruler in power was placed at the center surrounded by the names of eight rulers who preceded him/her.[71] Great freedom was enjoyed by the incumbent ruler in choosing these names, although in general it was the names of the most celebrated rulers, such as ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Riʿāyat Shāh al-Mukammil, Iskandar Muda, and the immediate predecessors of the reigning ruler, who were normally included.[72] The other type of royal seal was called, by Snouck Hurgronje, the "private seal," in that it bore only the ruler's name. Snouck cites an example of this kind of seal, issued by Sulṭān Muḥammad Dāwūd Shāh, showing it to have been of a

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Bahara. The grant was later confirmed during the reign of this Queen who affixed her seal to it. See G.L. Tichelman, "Een Atjehsch sarakata," pp. 368–373; and his "Samalangasche sarakata's," *TBG* 78 (1938), pp. 351–358. Tuanku Abdul Jalil provides a copy of the original text of the first *sarakata* in the appendix to his *Adat Meukuta Alam* (Banda Aceh: Pusat Dokumentasi dan Informasi Aceh, 1991), pp. 42–45. Langen in his "De inrichting," especially pp. 436–470, provides two *sarakatas*. The first contains decrees ascribed to Iskandar Muda regarding regulations in the sultanate. The second is a *fatwā* (religious decree) ascribed to Sulṭān Shams al-ʿĀlam (d. 1727). Another type of *sarakata* has been brought to our attention by Daniel Crecelius and E.A. Beardow who published a *sarakata* concerning recognition by the sulṭān of Aceh of a claim made by the descendant of the Jamāl al-Layl dynasty to the ownership of certain lands alleged to be the property of Sulṭān Badr al-ʿĀlam Sharīf Hāshim (r. 1699–1702), the founder of the dynasty. The copy was made in 1872 from the original document dated 1849. See their "A Reputed Acehnese *Sarakata* of the Jamal Al-Lail Dynasty," *JMBRAS* 52, 2 (1979), pp. 51–66. I have been unable to consult the so-called *waqfiyyah* types of *sarakata* which these two authors were preparing for publication. Snouck Hurgronje also provides an example of a *sarakata* issued by Sulṭān Muḥammad Dāwūd Shāh on 28 October 1889 concerning the appointment of the *panglima meusigit raya* (the general of the great mosque). In it, certain details of the panglima's duties were set forth. See his *The Achehnese*, vol. 1, pp. 129–130, 190–193.

[70] In the two *sarakatas* provided by Langen, previously cited, no seal is mentioned.

[71] Analysis of this model of seal has led G.P. Rouffaer to suggest that the *cap sikureueng* was adopted from that of the Mughals. See his "De Hindostansche oorsprong van het 'Negenvoudig' Sultans-zegel van Atjeh," *BKI* 59 (1906), pp. 349–384. See also C. Snouck Hurgronje, "Antekeningen op G.P. Rauffaer's opstel over Atjehsche Soeltanszegels," *BKI* 60 (1907), pp. 52–55.

[72] For an example of the *cap sikureueng* issued by Sulṭānah Tāj al-ʿĀlam, see Jalil, *Adat Meukuta Alam*, p. 45. For the one belonging to Sulṭān ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad Dāwūd Shāh (d. 1903) see Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 1, p. 129.

smaller format than the *cap sikureueng*.[73] Royal seals of a similar type are also affixed to a *sarakata* recognizing the dynastic claims of the Jamāl al-Layl dynasty.[74]

Mention should also be made of the royal seal belonging to al-Mukammil.[75] This *cap*, affixed in 1601, was, according to G.P. Rouffaer, "indeed the most official grand-seal that Sulṭān ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Riʿāyat Shāh possessed at that time."[76] At the center of the seal we find written: *al-Sulṭān ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ibn Firmān Shāh*. The marginal inscription reads: *al-wāthiqu bi al-māliki ikhtārahu li qabḍi al-mamāliki wa irtaḍāhu, adāma Allāhu ʿizzahu wa naṣara awliyāʾahu* (He who puts faith in God, who has chosen him to hold kingdoms and is pleased with him, Allāh makes his glory endure and helps all his followers).[77] The discovery of this royal seal of al-Mukammil could mean that, as a symbol of sovereignty, the royal seal was already in use in Aceh in the early seventeenth century, or perhaps even earlier. Indeed, Rouffaer suggests, this royal Acehnese seal may have come into existence earlier than the *cap sikureueng* did.[78]

The question that arises, of course, is the value that can be attributed to the *sarakatas* themselves as symbols of the political authority of the ruler. In the first place, they should be viewed as regular instruments in the affairs of state. The few *sarakatas* discovered provide, as previously mentioned, enough evidence to suggest that the edicts were concerned with a wide range of topics, and not merely aimed at "the great independence of the numerous chiefs and the all prevailing influence of traditional custom,"[79] as suggested by

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[73] Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 1, p. 130.

[74] The two seals, as the authors admit, are unfortunately illegible in the photocopy. See Crecelius and Beardow, "A Reputed Acehnese *Sarakata*," note no. 3, p. 51. See also the copy of the text attached to the article.

[75] This seal was used in the letter of al-Mukammil to Prince Maurits of the Netherlands, delivered by an Acehnese envoy in 1602. See Rouffaer, "De Hindostansche oorsprong," pp. 377–380. A similar stamp also appears in a letter of authority issued by al-Mukammil to Captain Henry Middleton of England sometime between 1601 and 1603. See Shellabear, "An Account," pp. 108, 121–123.

[76] Rouffaer, "De Hindostanche oorsprong," p. 378. The copy of the seal itself is provided by Rouffaer at the end of the article, i.e. plate I.

[77] Snouck Hurgronje, "Aanteekening op G.P. Rouffaer's opstel," pp. 54–55.

[78] Rouffaer, "De Hindostanche oorsprong," pp. 380–382.

[79] Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 1, p. 5. This scholar insists that the practice of issuing the *sarakatas* meant creating new elements in the state, summarized as follows:

Snouck Hurgronje. The *sarakata* granting land covering an area of six *mukims* in Samalanga issued by Iskandar Muda and another issued in recognition of the hereditary land claims of the descendants of the Jamāl al-Layl dynasty are two good examples of how these documents functioned in formulating and regulating the affairs of state. And while it is also true that the *sarakatas* were often used to curb the power of the *uleebalangs*, it should be remembered that their power really only developed during the last decades of the seventeenth century with the division of Aceh proper into three *sagis* under Sulṭānah Naqiyyat al-Dīn (d. 1678).[80] The edicts seem, as Snouck puts it, to have been "expensive luxuries,"[81] since, on the one hand, the *uleebalangs* largely tended to ignore them even while, on the other, they still needed them.[82] This being the case, how should this conflicting phenomenon be viewed?

Snouck Hurgronje and Siegel provide, at least, a partial answer. Even though he underestimates the value of the *sarakatas*, Snouck still recognizes that "the Achehnese himself, when questioned as to the institutions of his country, will refer with some pride to these documents."[83] Moreover, as the *sarakatas* were full of Islamic terms

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1. Attempts at an extension of the authority of the Sultan by allotting to him, the king of the port, a certain control over the succession of the other chieftains of the land . . . over the disputes of these chiefs with one another, or those between the subjects of different chiefs, and over the interests of strangers . . .
2. Certain rules intended to bring about a stricter observance of Muhammedan law.
3. Regulations dealing with trade (then confined to the capital), the shares of certain officials established in the capital in the profits drawn from this trade by the king of the port, the court ceremonial, the celebration of great religious festivals, etc. (p. 5).

Snouck seems to insist too strongly on the cynicism underlying the issuance of *sarakatas*; in fact, he provides neither evidence nor data in support the opposite state of affairs he claims existed before the edicts were issued.

[80] Some scholars have suggested that the sulṭāns were only port kings who actually had no power over the inland areas. This claim, however, has not yet been supported by convincing data. Studies on this issue still need to be seriously pursued. On the other hand, the royal edicts containing the granting of the land in Samalanga by Iskandar Muda to Orang Kaya Tuk Bahara may suggest, as Ito writes, "that the authority of the ruler was very wide, extending even into the interior, areas more suitable for pepper cultivation." See his "The World of the Adat Aceh," p. 62.

[81] Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 1, p. 141.

[82] See ibid., pp. 13–14.

[83] Ibid., p. 9.

and concepts, including the designation of the *uleebalangs* as the administrators of Islamic law, they were particularly useful. Siegel explains that "it was only through the idiom of Islam that this position became meaningful to himself and acceptable to the residents of his *nanggroe*."[84] Thus, it is obvious that in the minds of most Acehnese it was only the sulṭān who possessed the political authority, not to mention the right to issue *sarakatas*. This also provides insight into the reason behind the survival of the institution of the sultanate, though power was, for the most part, in the hands of the *uleebalangs*.

Another way of confirming the political authority and legitimacy of rulers was by winning recognition from other powerful states, usually by comparing the greatness of Acehnese rulers with that of great historical personalities and by emphasizing common, eminent ancestors. The *Hikayat Aceh* tells of how the sulṭān of Rūm (Turkey) used to say that: "At the present time God has created two great rulers in this world. We are the great ruler of the West while Seri Sulṭān Perkasa ʿĀlam [Iskandar Muda] is the great ruler in the East, a ruler who enforces God's religion and his messenger's [teachings]."[85] In the same context the text tells of how people used to praise Iskandar Muda as: *sayyidunā sulṭān perkasa ʿālam johan berdaulat ṣāḥib al-barrayn wa al-baḥrayn*, namely "our lord sulṭān perkasa ʿālam who holds the two lands and oceans of the East and West."[86] His political supremacy is clearly acknowledged in the *Hikayat Aceh* and is reported to have been recognized as well by the king of Siam who admired the prowess of Sulṭān Iskandar Muda in bringing so many kingdoms under his suzerainty.[87] The greatness of the Acehnese rulers, but especially that of Iskandar Muda, is also reinforced by statements comparing him to Iskandar Dhū al-Qarnayn (Alexander the Great), while the greatness of Rūm (Turkey) is compared in the same source to the kingdom of Sulaymān (Solomon).[88] The comparison is also extended to the royal ceremonies conducted by Iskandar Muda, which were seen as equivalent to those of Sulaymān's, Rūm's (Turkey)

[84] Siegel, *The Rope of God*, p. 43.
[85] *Hikayat Aceh*, p. 167.
[86] Ibid., 166. The Ottoman ruler, Mehmed II (d. 1481), also assumed the title *sulṭān al-barrayn wa al-baḥrayn*. This might indicate the adoption of the title by Iskandar Muda from Ottoman tradition. See Arnold, *The Caliphate*, p. 203.
[87] Ibid., p. 160.
[88] Ibid., p. 167.

and Iskandar Dhū al-Qarnayn's empires.[89] As a symbol reinforcing political authority, Iskandar Dhū al-Qarnayn was the outstanding example. He was regarded as the ancestor of the Acehnese ruling family and as the source of the latter's claim to political legitimacy.[90] Indeed, this particular myth was by no means unique to Aceh, since it was borrowed by rulers throughout the region.[91]

We now turn from the issue of the political authority, claims, and legitimacy of the rulers to that of the religious authority of the royal family. While the concept of religious authority can certainly be considered in isolation from political authority, the two are strongly connected; so much so that we might think of the authority of the rulers as being politico-religious in nature.[92]

Earlier, we saw how Aceh was explicitly referred to as a *kerajaan*, meaning a territory ruled by a *raja* (a Hindu ruler). But, in Aceh's context this term was also loaded with Islamic symbolism, a feature that developed as a consequence of the effort to adapt the traditional Southeast Asian concept to new Islamic ideals. The *Adat Aceh* explains that the term *raja* (written in Arabic script as: ر ا ج) consists of three characters. The first is the character "ra" (ر), which, it says, denotes *raḥmat Allāh* (God's mercy) upon the ruler, and encompasses the following characteristics of the ruler: 1) he is perfectly glorified (*dipermulia*) by his subjects; 2) he is feared (*ditakuti*) by them; and 3) he is respected in all his wishes (*diakui oleh segala mereka itu segala barang kehendaknya*). The second is the character "alif" (ا), which conveys God's will to make the "raja" His *khalīfah* (deputy) in this world. In this manner, a "raja" has bestowed upon him (*dianugerahkan*) the authority to apply all God's commands and avoid His prohibitions. The third characters is "jim" (ج), which implies that a "raja" is gifted with the quality of *jemala* (from Arabic *jamāl*, meaning beauty) or *keelokan* in three respects: (1) his character; (2) his throne and its

[89] See *Adat Aceh*, pp. 72–74, 91.
[90] *Hikayat Aceh*, pp. 71; *Bustān*, pp. 36–44.
[91] For further discussion on this issue see the next section, pp. 77–78.
[92] Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, who have studied the issue of religious authority as it was conceived in the first centuries of Islam, suggest that "the early caliphate was conceived along lines very different from the classical institution, all religious and political authority being concentrated in it; it was the caliph who was charged with the definition of Islamic law, the very core of the religion, and without allegiance to a caliph no Muslim could achieve salvation." See their *God's Caliph* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 1.

attributes; and (3) his actions in accordance with God's prescriptions.[93] The adaptation of this term to Islamic concepts reveals Aceh to have been a sovereign Islamic sultanate—called Aceh Dār al-Salām (the abode of peace)[94]—much like other Islamic sultanates elsewhere in the world.[95]

This is in line with the explanation given in the *Tāj al-Salāṭīn*. When discussing the topic of rulership, this text quotes the Qur'ānic verse IV, 59: "O ye who believe, obey Allāh and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority. . . ." Great emphasis is placed on the crucial words "those of you who are in authority . . ." when referring to a ruler (raja or sulṭān).[96] Examples of those in authority are given and include both the Prophets, such as Yūsuf, Dāwūd, Sulaymān, Mūsā and Muḥammad, and the Caliphs, such as Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, ʿAlī and ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. The author then insists that those rulers (raja-raja) who follow the path of these friends of God (*segala walī Allāh*) are to be called *khalīfat al-Raḥmān* (the deputy[ties] of the Merciful) and *zill Allāh fī al-ʿālam* or *al-arḍ* (the shadow of God on earth).[97] Indeed, traditions that enjoin Muslims to obey their rulers are abundant, ranging from those which insist that the ruler is *zill Allāh fī al-arḍ* (the shadow of God on earth)[98]

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[93] *Adat Aceh*, pp. 4–5; "Genealogy of the Kings of the Mahomedan Dynasty in Achin, from the 601st Year of the Hejira to the Present Time," trans. T.J. Newbold, *The Madras Journal of Literature and Science* 3 (1836), p. 54; "Translation from the Majellis Ache," by T. Braddel, *Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia* 5 (1851), p. 26.

[94] It is not entirely clear who was the first to use the name "Dār al-Salām." It was so widespread that most of our indigenous texts, such as *Hikayat Aceh*, *Adat Aceh* and *Bustān al-Salāṭīn*, use the name. A. Hasjmy, however, suggests that it was ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh (the first sulṭān of Aceh) who proclaimed the sultanate as Aceh Dār al-Salām (A. Hasjmy, *Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1990), p. 18).

[95] The most important Islamic sultanates of the period were those of the Ottomans (680–1342/1281–1924), the Ṣafavids (907–1145/1501–1732), and the Mughāls (932–1274/1526–1858).

[96] For various interpretations of the word "authority" (*ʾūl al-amr*) see Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, ed. by Muḥammad Maḥmūd Shākir and Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir, vol. 8 (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, n.d.), pp. 495–504.

[97] *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* (Eijsinga), pp. 49–60; (Jusuf), pp. 29–36; (Hussain), pp. 50–60.

[98] For instance, the Prophet's saying that "the ruler (*sulṭān*) is God's shadow and His spear on earth." See Muḥammad b. ʿAlī Al-Shawkānī, *al-Fawāʾiḍ al-Majmūʿah fī al-Aḥādīth al-Mauḍūʿah*, ed. by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAwad (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1986), p. 231; Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, *Kītāb al-Siyar al-Kabīr*, ed. by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munjid, vol. 1 (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Miṣr, 1957), p. 18. In another *ḥadīth* narrated by Abū Hurayrah the Prophet says: "He who obeys me obeys God and he who obeys my amīr obeys me, he who disobeys me disobeys God and he

to those which forbid people to curse their ruler.[99] This concept of rule entails a religious element that grounds obedience to the ruler in the obligation to obey God and the Prophet. It is a concept that was formulated in early Islam and demonstrated in the titles borne by both the Umayyads and the Abbasids, especially that of *khalīfat Allāh* (the deputy of God).[100] This title, maintain Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds, was employed by the Umayyads in order to make a "strong claim to religious authority."[101] Furthermore, they suggest, the use of the title by the Umayyads stemmed from the belief that this authority came directly from God.[102] At the same time, guarding the interests of the public was seen as being among the most important functions of authority.[103]

It is in light of this concept of authority that the *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* employs the titles *khalīfat al-Raḥmān* (the deputy of the Merciful) and *zill Allāh fī al-ʿālam* or *al-arḍ* (the shadow of God on earth) in reference to the sulṭān. A similar claim to religious authority is seen in Aceh, whose rulers likewise bore the second of these titles, for, as previously mentioned, Sulṭān Iskandar Muda is said to have borne the title *sayyidunā wa mawlānā paduka seri sulṭān Iskandar Muda johan*

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who disobeys my amīr disobeys me." See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 8, p. 495, no. 9851.

[99] The Prophet is reported to have said: "God will despise the man who despises God's authority (*sulṭān*) on earth." See Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUthmān al-Dhahabī, *Siyar Aʿlām al-Nubalāʾ*, ed. by Muḥammad Naʿīm al-ʿArqaswasī and Maʾmūn Ṣāgharjī, vol. 3 (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risālah, 1981), p. 20. In another *ḥadīth* the Prophet says: "He who honors God's authority (*sulṭān*), God will honor him on the day of resurrection." ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-Qadīr fī Sharḥ al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaghīr*, vol. 6 (Cairo: Muṣṭafā Muḥammad, 1938), p. 29, no. 8306. For more *ḥadīths* of the Prophet on the sulṭān as "shadow of God on earth" see al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-Qadīr*, vol. 4, pp. 142–144, no. 4815–4821.

[100] Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, trans. by C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern, vol. 2 (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1971), pp. 66–67; Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, pp. 4–23.

[101] Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, p. 5.

[102] Ibid., pp. 24–42. See also Watt, "God's Caliph," pp. 568–574.

[103] It is said of the Prophet that he preached: "The *sulṭān* is the shadow of God on earth, in whom all those tyrannized (*mazlūm*) seek refuge." He also says that: "God deters (*yazaʿu*) through authority (*sulṭān*) more than He does through the Qur'ān." In another *ḥadīth* the Prophet is reported to have said that: "God has guards both in heaven and on earth; His guards in heaven are the angels, while His guards on earth are those who get their wages (*arzāq*) and guard the people." Abū al-Ḥasan al-Māwardī, *Adab al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn*, ed. by Muṣṭafā al-Saqā (Beirut: Dār wa Maktabat al-Hilāl, 1985), p. 137. See also al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-Qadīr*, vol. 4, pp. 142–144; Abū ʿUthmān ʿAmr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasāʾil al-Jāḥiẓ*, ed. by ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, vol. 1 (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khārijī, 1964), p. 313.

berdaulat zill Allāh fī al-ʿālam. His successor and son-in-law, Iskandar Thānī, also bore the same title, as did all four sulṭānāt (queens).[104] In his *Miʾrāt al-Ṭullāb fī Tashīl Maʿrifat al-Aḥkām al-Sharʿiyyah li al-Mālik al-Wahhāb* (The Mirror for the Seekers in Facilitating the Cognition of God's Laws), a native Acehnese scholar, ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Singkilī (d. 1693), conceives of the sultanate of Aceh as a *khilāfah* in its own right. A *khalīfah*, whom he defines as "a deputy of God," is obliged to execute God's religion.[105] The very first *khalīfah* was the Prophet Adam, and this role was later filled by every prophet down to Muḥammad himself. After the latter's death, the position was held by the four rightly-guided caliphs. The end of their rule led to the *khalīfah*'s position being delegated to several leaders in different regions.[106] No specific mention of the Umayyads and the Abbasids is made here, nor is there any reason given for this omission. In general, al-Singkilī seems to take a pragmatic approach in seeing Muslims as an *ummah* scattered across a vast territory and governed by various political entities for the purpose of implementing God's religion. The emergence of several *khalīfahs* was, therefore, justified on the basis of this reality. And among these *khalīfahs* was *Sulṭānah Tāj al-ʿĀlam Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn berdaulat zill Allāh fī al-ʿālam*, serving as "the deputy of God in executing our Lord's orders in the blessed (*mubārak*) country of Aceh Dār al-Salām."[107] For al-Singkilī, therefore, the title *khalīfah* implied a duty to foster God's religion, an idea that is also dominant in the *Tāj al-Salāṭīn*. A fundamental question remains, however, as to the nature of the religious authority of a dynasty. Could the ruler claim, in this instance, to possess the religious authority of the *ʿulamaʾ* (religious scholars) classes?

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[104] See *Bustān*, pp. 36, 44, 58, 60, 72–73; *Adat Aceh*, pp. 49, 53, 113–116.

[105] *Thumma jaʿala fī al-arḍ khalīfah takhlufuh fī tanfīdh aḥkāmih*, which in Malay rendering he writes as *maka Ia menjadikan di bumi khalifahNya yang menggantikan Dia pada melakukan segala hukumNya*. It was characteristic of al-Singkilī, in the early pages of his *Miʾrāt al-Ṭullāb*, to write in both Arabic and Malay. He admits in this work that he was not fluent in Malay, which he refers to as *bahasa Pasai* or Pasai language, due to his long period of residency in the Middle East. See his *Miʾrāt al-Ṭullāb fī Tashīl Maʿrifat al-Aḥkām al-Sharʿiyyah li al-Mālik al-Wahhāb*, MS. (Banda Aceh: Universitas Syiah Kuala, 1971), p. 2.

[106] *Al-Umarāʾ al-Muʿazzamūn* or *Segala raja-raja yang besar-besar*. Ibid.

[107] *Al-Khalīfah fī tanfīdh aḥkām mawlātinā fī al-arḍ al-mubārak al-Jāwiyyah al-Ashiyyah* or *khalīfah pada melakukan segala hukum Tuhan dalam tanah Jāwī yang dibangsakan kepada negeri Aceh Dār al-Salām yang mubārak*. See *Miʾrāt al-Ṭullāb*, p. 3.

Of the ten conditions that the *Adat Aceh* requires of a ruler,[108] the second is that he should establish his order (*terdiri amarnya*). Essentially, this means that a ruler must use his power to foster a climate conducive to the implementation of God's commands and the avoidance of what He prohibits. Only once this is accomplished can he begin to issue orders (*melakukan amar*), which are in the interest of his country.[109] Indeed, the religious demands placed upon a ruler were not merely idealistic in nature, for they were amply reflected in reality. The *Bustān* speaks of rulers who followed God's path as well as of those who were unable to stay the course. The former are portrayed as successful, while the latter are depicted as failures who, accordingly, had short-lived careers. The first sulṭān of Aceh, ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh (d. 1530), is, for instance, portrayed as a ruler who stood for and implemented the religion of the Prophet Muḥammad. Sulṭān ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Riʿāyat Shāh al-Qahhār (r. 1539–1571) is likewise praised for having created a system of government, sent an ambassador to the Ottoman Sulṭān for the sake of Islām, launched *jihād* (holy war) against the Portuguese in Melaka, possessed a strong commitment to implement the law, and cared for the welfare of his people. His son and successor, Sulṭān Ḥusayn (r. 1571–1579), was a loving and gentle (*ḥalīm*) ruler who cared for his people and demonstrated respect for the *ʿulamāʾ*. During his reign Islamic learning flourished, especially after the arrival of an *ʿālim* from Mecca by the name of Muḥammad Azharī.[110]

Of Sulṭān ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn (r. 1579–1586), the *Bustān* says the following:

> The sulṭān was a devout ruler, just and firm in his laws. He loved all the *ʿulamāʾ*, guarded the teachings of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), prohibited his people from drinking *arak* (distilled liquor)

[108] The ten conditions can be summarized as follows: a ruler should 1) base his/her throne on power (*takhta atas kuasanya*); 2) establish his/her order (*terdiri amarnya*); 3) be merciful in his/her anger (*ampun tatkala murkanya*); 4) promote the weak (*membesarkan yang kecil*); 5) lower the great (*mengecilkan yang besar*); 6) honor the inferior (*muliakan yang hina*); 7) humble the splendid (*menghinakan yang mulia*); 8) punish those who cause trouble in the country (*mematikan yang hidup*) and restore those who show remorse for a wickedness he/she has committed (*menghidupkan yang mati*); 9) surround the throne on which he sits with officials (*adab pada hal duduknya*); and 10) be just and of renown in all countries (*ʿādil, masyhur namanya pada segala negeri*). For fuller discussion on these points see *Adat Aceh*, pp. 5–8.

[109] Ibid., p. 6.

[110] *Bustān*, pp. 31–32.

> and cockfighting, ordered all his officials to keep their beards and to wear a *jubbah* (long Arab flowing robe) and a turban, and required all his people to perform the five obligatory prayers, to fast during the month of Ramaḍān and other optional fasts, and to pay alms.[111]

Sulṭān Iskandar Muda (r. 1607–1636), besides being much esteemed for his conquests and constant *jihād* against the Portuguese in Melaka, was a devout ruler. The *Bustān* has this to say about him:

> He [is the one] who built the mosque of Bayt al-Raḥmān and several mosques in every *manzil* (stopping place). He also enforced the religion of Islam, ordered his people to perform the five obligatory prayers and to fast during the month of Ramaḍān and other optional fasts, and prohibited the people from drinking *arak* (distilled liquor) and gambling. This ruler established the *bayt al-māl* (treasure house), the *ʿushur* (tithe) and the *cukai* (import duty) in the market. He was so generous that every Friday, before his departure for the mosque, this ruler provided charitable gifts to the poor.[112]

The same strength of character is also attributed to others, such as Sulṭān Iskandar Thānī (r. 1636–1641)[113] and Sulṭānah Tāj al-ʿĀlam Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn (r. 1641–1671).[114]

We also find accounts in our texts of rulers who were somehow deficient in character, usually sulṭāns whose careers were short-lived. Sulṭān Sri ʿĀlam (r. 1579) is described as having been ill-tempered and weak in leadership skills, rendering him incapable of governing effectively.[115] The most unflattering depiction, however, is reserved for his successor, Sulṭān Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (d. 1579), who is portrayed as an unsavory character and, moreover, a murderer. After only a few months in power, both were, in their turn, forced to step down and were executed.[116]

High moral standards and the prioritization of God's religion were indeed the most important qualities demanded of a ruler. The *Hikayat Aceh* describes how the young, future sulṭān, Iskandar Muda, was trained not only in riding an elephant and waging war, but also in

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[111] Ibid., p. 33.
[112] Ibid., pp. 35–36.
[113] Ibid., pp. 44–47. Much of al-Rānīrī's attention is focused on this sulṭān, as the work itself was composed on the latter's order.
[114] Ibid., p. 73.
[115] *Bustān*, pp. 32–33. Cf. the *Hikayat Aceh*, pp. 95–96. See also Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," p. 27.
[116] *Bustān*, p. 33; *Hikayat Aceh*, pp. 97–98.

the Islamic faith.[117] Yet this is not to imply that the rulers were religious scholars, let alone that they should be compared to the *ʿulamāʾ*. Both the *Adat Aceh* and the *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* explicitly require of the ruler that he consult with the *ʿulamāʾ* on religious matters.[118] Because of this, many rulers were also the students of a master.[119] While it is not our intention here to outline the relations between rulers and *ʿulamāʾ* (which will be done in Chapter Four below), the point must be made that it is both recommended in our sources and evident from history that the rulers were expected to acquire some knowledge of religious matters and to respect and consult the *ʿulamāʾ* when making decisions.

The above consideration in no way reduced the rulers' right to claim religious authority, however. In both the *Bustān* and the *Hikayat Aceh* the religious legitimacy of a ruler's actions and deeds is stressed repeatedly. The most important term used in this connection is "divine decree" (*dengan takdir Allah*). Certain honorifics can also be seen as reinforcing the ruler's claim to religious authority. The title *sayyidunā wa mawlānā* (our lord and master) given to Iskandar Muda even suggests that he was seen by his followers as a kind of *shaykh* or leader of a *ṣūfī* religious order. The same is also hinted at in the title *sayyid al-mukammil* (the most perfect lord)[120] borne by ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Riʿāyat Shāh. Al-Singkilī moreover includes the title *sayyidatunā*

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[117] *Hikayat Aceh*, pp. 149–150.

[118] *Adat Aceh*, p. 13; *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* (Eijsinga) pp. 73–74; (Jusuf), pp. 42–43; (Ḥussain), pp. 75–76. Two examples should make this point clear. In the *Hikajat Malem Dagang* or *Hikayat Meukuta Alam* it is said that Meureudu's people, who were late to welcome Sulṭān Iskandar Muda, were so afraid to see him that they asked Ja Pakeh, an *ʿālim*, to accompany them to pay a tribute to the ruler. The *ʿālim* said that there was nothing to be afraid of and he himself would argue with the sulṭān on their behalf. The sulṭān, he insisted, was not superior to him, since the former was only master in governing and *ʿādah*, while he himself was master in religious matters and the laws of God (*Hikajat Malem Dagang*, lines: 520–532; *Hikayat Meukuta Alam*, text I lines: 540–558). In another case, the Queen Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn is said to have left the decision in a religious debate between al-Rānīrī and Sayf al-Rijāl to the *uleebalangs* since she had no knowledge of religious issues (see below p. 83, note 212, p. 158, note 53).

[119] Iskandar Muda was known to be the student of Shaykh Shams al-Dīn al-Samaṭrānī.

[120] The word *al-mukammil*, according to S.M.N al-Attas, should have been written as *al-mukammal*. It was for the purpose of fitting it into the rhyme scheme of his poem that Ḥamzah Fanṣūrī wrote it as *al-mukammil*. See S.M.N. al-Attas, *The Mysticism of Ḥamzah Fanṣūrī* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1970), pp. 12–13, 17.

wa mawlātunā (our lord and master) amongst those bestowed on Queen Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn.[121] The supreme religious authority of the ruler can also be observed in a policy that allowed for the ruler's will to be imposed on the law of the state,[122] and even in the Islamic court, a point to which we will return later. Religious currents within the state were also determined by the rulers. Al-Mukammil and Iskandar Muda, for instance, were both in favor of the Wujūdiyyah teachings of Ḥamzah Fanṣūrī and Shams al-Dīn, while Iskandar Thānī acted as patron to the orthodox *ʿālim* Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī. Al-Singkilī himself enjoyed the patronage of the four queens, i.e., Tāj al-ʿĀlam Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn (r. 1641–1675), Nūr al-ʿĀlam Naqiyyat al-Dīn (r. 1675–1678), ʿInāyat Shāh Zakiyyat al-Dīn (r. 1678–1688), and Kamālat Shāh (r. 1688–1699).

The preceding discussion has shown that rulers claimed both political and religious authority and how closely connected these two concepts were. The first was a precondition through which the full implementation of the Islamic religious life could be achieved. Accordingly, this required high moral standards and a sincere religious commitment on the part of the ruler.[123] As we have already noted, however, this did not entail a knowledge equal to that of the *ʿulamāʾ*. The question then arises: How can a ruler possessing only a limited knowledge of religion be seen to possess religious authority? The answer can be inferred from the Islamic theory of state, required by both revelation and reason. It is through political means that God's will can be implemented and a just social order made to prevail.[124] Indeed, nowhere is it claimed that a ruler should possess profound knowledge in religious matters. It is the aura of divinely

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[121] *Miʾāt al-Ṭullāb*, p. 2.

[122] Crone and Hinds have discussed the way the early caliphs formulated the law, which they see as evidence of the caliphal claim to religious authority. See their *God's Caliph*, pp. 43–57.

[123] The rulers were not considered *imāms* in the sense of leading the prayers, as was required of rulers by some *ʿulamāʾ*. There was no evidence that the names of the sulṭāns were mentioned in the Friday sermon (*khuṭbah*).

[124] It is interesting to see how the *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* describes the position of the ruler as being comparable to that of the Prophets. It reminds the ruler of two aspects that matter to him: his relationship with God (*ḥabl min Allāh*) and with his people (*ḥabl min al-nās*). In the first, the ruler is to be responsible in carrying out God's teachings revealed through the Prophet Muḥammad; while in the second he is to treat his subjects with justice and full realization, and lead them to the implementation of God's religion. It is in this context that he is to be regarded as "the real *khalīfah*" (*Tāj al-Salāṭīn* (Eijsinga), p. 66; (Jusuf), pp. 38–39; (Hussain), pp. 65–66.).

sanctioned authority that is important, not divine learning. The religious authority claimed by the rulers can, therefore, best be described as a "religiously sanctioned authority."

B. *Succession and Legitimation*

To the present-day scholar, the rules of succession in Aceh during this period are at best obscure; it might even be said that there was no hard and fast rule dictating the procedure that should be followed in this area. We would like to know what the criteria were that determined who was entitled to rule, and which person or institution, if any, had the last say in crises over succession and/or the rising challenge to the incumbent ruler. In his study of the problem of succession in the Malay sultanates, Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian writes that "the succession to the Malay throne had not been a simple, straight forward affair even during the Palembang-Melaka time when the main criteria of any claimant to the throne then was basically based on his impeccable genealogy."[125] This frustration is to be found as well in the case of the sultanate of Aceh, and it is perhaps not an exaggeration to suggest here that the procedure as it existed in Aceh of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries was less structured than in the other Malay sultanates. However, this very obscurity surrounding the rules governing succession ensured that Acehnese approaches to the issue were flexible and pragmatic. Moreover, at their core an Islamic-moral paradigm is found. This topic is addressed within a historical continuum,[126] which begins in the sixteenth century. By studying in detail individual cases of succession during this period, a better understanding of the issue in the seventeenth century can be achieved. This historical survey will then be followed by an analysis of its salient points.

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[125] Kobkua Suannathat-Pian, "Thrones, Claimants, Rulers and Rules: The Problem of Succession in the Malay Sultanates," *JMBRAS* 66, 2 (1993), p. 3.

[126] This historical explanation generally follows Djajadiningrat's main outlines of the reign of the sulṭāns of Aceh in his "Critisch overzicht." The work still has solid merit, in spite of some new findings that have appeared since its publication in 1911. Under the entry "Atjeh" in the new edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, P. Voorhoeve reproduces Djajadingrat's list of the sulṭāns of Aceh with a few modifications in dates only.

As we noted above in Chapter One, ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh (d. 1530) is generally regarded as having been the founder and first sulṭān of Aceh Dār al-Salām. As the son of Shams Shāh of the Mahkota ʿĀlam dynasty, he no doubt had royal lineage. Yet it remains a complete mystery whether he was the first-born son or whether it was his brother, Raja Ibrāhīm, known to the Portuguese as a distinguished warrior, who was the eldest male issue. Nor is it known exactly how he came to succeed his father. The *Bustān* is silent on this issue, describing him only as the first sulṭān of Aceh Dār al-Salām, the defender of Islam, and a fine warrior who conquered Pidie, Pasai and surrounding regions.[127] When he died in 1530, ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh was succeeded by his son, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn (r. 1530–1537). Known to be a weak leader, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn was challenged by his younger brother, ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn, who was ruler of Pasai, and who later came to be known as "al-Qahhār." He took power from the former and ruled the country from the years 1530 to 1571.[128] Indeed, the *Bustān* attributes the cause of the overthrow to the weak leadership of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn.[129] But details on this issue are not given, leaving us in some doubt as to the historical accuracy of the event. After taking power, Al-Qahhār perpetuated his father's legacy, building the new sultanate, expanding Acehnese territory and attacking the Portuguese in Melaka.[130] This strong ruler died in 1571 and was succeeded by his son, Sulṭān Ḥusayn, known as ʿAlī Riʿāyat Shāh (r. 1571–1579). It is important to pay some attention to the children of al-Qahhār, since it was they and, later, their sons, who would engage in the power struggles that led to the darkest period of sixteenth-century Acehnese history.

Al-Qahhār had five sons:[131] Sulṭān ʿAbd Allāh, Sulṭān Ḥusayn, Sulṭān Mughāl, Sulṭān Abangta and Sulṭān Abangta ʿAbd al-Jalīl. ʿAbd Allāh, the eldest of the five and the ruler of Aru, was killed in the Acehnese campaign against the Portuguese in Melaka in 1568. He was replaced on the throne of Aru by his brother Abangta ʿAbd al-Jalīl. Sulṭān Mughāl was the ruler of Pariaman, while the remaining son, Abangta, who was ambitious to wield power, was executed by his father. Sulṭān Ḥusayn, who remained in the capital, later suc-

[127] *Bustān*, p. 31.
[128] Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," pp. 152–153.
[129] *Bustān*, p. 31; *Hikayat Aceh*, p. 79.
[130] See above Chapter One, pp. 22–23, 27–34.
[131] None of our sources report the birth of a daughter.

ceeded al-Qahhār.[132] Ḥusayn held power for about eight years, and gained a reputation as a wise ruler who was revered by his people and the *'ulamā'*, and took pains to ensure the welfare of the poor. It was during this time that a Meccan scholar, Muḥammad Azharī, also known as Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn, came to Aceh to take up the position of teacher of Islamic sciences.[133] However, Ḥusayn's reign was by no means a smooth one. Prompted by jealousy, his two brothers, Sulṭān Mughāl (ruler of Pariaman) and Sulṭān Abangta ʿAbd al-Jalīl (ruler of Aru), mounted opposition to his rule. Political intrigues were pursued in an attempt to remove their brother from power. This, however, ended with a military engagement in which Sulṭān Mughāl lost his life.[134]

When Sulṭān Ḥusayn died in 1579 a succession dispute began. This, accordingly, ushered in the era of the *orang kayas* (nobles). Thereafter, any appointment to the office of sulṭān could only be made with their consent.[135] Within the space of a single year (1579), Aceh was ruled by three sulṭāns, each of whom met an untimely death while in power. Ḥusayn was succeeded by his four-month-old son, an appointment conferred by the *orang kayas*. This young ruler died seven months later[136] and was succeeded by his uncle Abangta ʿAbd al-Jalīl, ruler of Pariaman, who thereafter styled himself as Sulṭān Sri ʿĀlam. Two rather contradictory images of this ruler emerge from our sources. The *Hikayat Aceh* portrays him as a devout sulṭān as well as a generous and, even, a wastefully extravagant person, whose leanings towards the chiefs of the west-coast prompted him to overextend the state's budget in presenting them with gifts and incentives.[137] This raised the ire of the state officials and the

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[132] *Bustān*, p. 32; Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," pp. 155–158.

[133] *Bustān*, p. 32.

[134] *Hikayat Aceh*, pp. 90–95; Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," p. 155.

[135] Augustin de Beaulieu, "The Expedition of Commodore Beaulieu to the East Indies," in John Harris, ed., *Navigatum atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca*, or *A Complete Collection of Voyages*, vol. 1 (London: 1705), pp. 746–747.

[136] It is extremely difficult to describe how the young sulṭān was crowned or to identify by whom he was appointed, or who was running the country in the meantime. There is no information available as to the cause of his death either. The *Hikayat Aceh* is silent on this issue. It even skips any discussion of this ruler by giving a direct account of the reign of Sri ʿĀlam and the succession of Sulṭān Ḥusayn. The only information available is that provided by the *Bustān*, p. 32.

[137] See J. Kathirithamby-Wells, "The Inderapura Sultanate: The Foundations of Its Rise and Decline, from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries," *Indonesia* 21 (1976), p. 67; Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," pp. 164–165.

ʿulamāʾ who, eventually, took steps to overthrow him.[138] The *Bustān*, on the other hand, depicts him as a bad-tempered individual, unwise and weak in leadership skills. He was, accordingly, killed after only two months in power.[139] Of the two accounts, the most plausible one seems to be that provided by the *Hikayat Aceh*, where the dismay of both state officials and the *ʿulamāʾ* over his actions are said to have brought about his downfall. This is clearly in keeping with a political climate in which power rested with the state officials. It was they who, in consultation with the *ʿulamāʾ*, selected Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, the son of ʿAbd Allāh (killed in the campaign against the Portuguese in 1568), to be sulṭān. According to traditional sources, his lax morals and tyrannical approach to the exercise of power led to his being murdered in turn only a few months after gaining the throne.[140]

The string of violent transfers of power described above, which saw the deaths of three rulers in succession, resulted in an era of foreign-born rulers. After the death of Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, the country came to be ruled by Sulṭān ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn (of Perak origin), known as Manṣūr Shāh.[141] After Aceh's conquest of Perak in 1575, the widow of the former ruler of Perak, along with her family, had been taken to Aceh.[142] ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn was her eldest son, and would reign as sulṭān of Aceh for seven years (r. 1579–1586). The *Bustān* presents this ruler in a positive light, portraying him as a devout Muslim, a just ruler and a strong defender of Islam who loved the *ʿulamāʾ* and strongly encouraged his people to comply with Islamic *sharīʿah*. The religious sciences are said to have flourished during his reign, which was marked by the arrival in Aceh of three prestigious *ʿulamāʾ*: Shaykh Abū al-Khayr b. Ḥajar and Shaykh Muḥammad Yamanī, both from Mecca, and Shaykh Muḥammad Jīlānī b. Ḥasan b. Muḥammad from Gujarat. Each of them was active in the country's Islamic discourse.[143] The reign of this popular ruler too, however, would end

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[138] *Hikayat Aceh*, pp. 95–96.

[139] *Bustān*, pp. 32–33. This source provides no information on how this ruler was killed. Djajadiningrat likewise neglects to give an explanation in his "Critisch overzicht" (p. 159).

[140] *Bustān*, p. 33; *Hikayat Aceh*, pp. 96–98.

[141] *Bustān*, p. 33; Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," p. 159.

[142] R.J. Wilkinson and R.O. Winstedt, "A History of Perak," *JMBRAS* 12, 1 (1934), p. 19; Barbara Watson Andaya, *Perak, the Abode of Grace* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 41.

[143] *Bustān*, pp. 32–33.

violently. For unknown reasons, his general killed him, according to Portuguese sources, in 1586.[144] State officials then appointed as ruler Sulṭān Mahkota Buyung, known as ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Riʿāyat Shāh b. Sulṭān Munawwar Shāh[145] from Inderapura in West Sumatra. He reigned for about three years (1586–1589), but was killed in the end as well.[146]

The decade of political turmoil in Aceh (from the death of Ḥusayn in 1579 to the rise of al-Mukammil to power in 1589), in which all the reigning sulṭāns were murdered, cannot sufficiently be explained. The reasons for the murders given by both the *Hikayat Aceh* and the *Bustān*, although they may contain some truths, are too poor to allow us to reconstruct the events. Yet there is one possible explanation that suggests itself: that is the rise of the *orang kayas* as the real power holders in the country. This issue was raised by Augustin de Beaulieu in his famous accounts, where he claims that the *orang kayas* were so wealthy and powerful that they tended to control the country. They were able to depose any ruler and install another, even if this could only be accomplished by murder.[147] This account is indeed corroborated by indigenous sources.

This political upheaval ended with the installation on the throne of ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh al-Mukammil (r. 1589–1604), heir to the Dār al-Kamāl dynasty. Indeed, the accession of al-Mukammil signified the beginning of an era of a "high degree of centralization,"[148] and of success on the part of the Acehnese dynasty in regaining power from foreign-born rulers. In his bid for authority al-Mukammil was not without powerful backers. The *Hikayat Aceh* and the information provided by Beaulieu are in agreement in reporting that the *orang kayas* had invited the old man to serve as ruler. Beaulieu confirms

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[144] Ibid., p. 34; Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," pp. 161–162.

[145] *Bustān*, p. 34.

[146] It is said that Mahkota Buyung came to Aceh to look for his sister, Raja Dewi, who was married to the late Sulṭān Sri ʿĀlam. By the time he arrived in Aceh, which was in a state of political turmoil due to the assassination of its ruler, Buyung was asked to serve as sulṭān, an offer which he accepted. See Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," pp. 164–165; Kathirithamby-Wells, "The Inderapura Sultanate," p. 68.

[147] Beaulieu, "The Expedition," pp. 746–747.

[148] Compare with Anthony Reid, "Trade and the Problem of Royal Power in Aceh, c. 1550–1700," in Anthony Reid and Lance Castle, eds., *Pre-Colonial State Systems in Southeast Asia* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1979), p. 48.

that the *qāḍī* was al-Mukammil's strongest promoter.[149] Indeed, at that time it would have been impossible to ascend to the throne without the *orang kayas*' consent.[150] Yet it was these same individuals that al-Mukammil later turned against, killing them in large numbers and making every effort to prevent them from ever again asserting power.[151] This sulṭān had two surviving sons (two others having died) and two daughters, one of whom was the mother of the future Sulṭān Iskandar Muda. His eldest son, known as Sulṭān Ḥusayn or Sulṭān Muda, was first made ruler of Pidie and then later appointed as his father's deputy in Aceh. It was this same son who would eventually depose him in around 1604.[152] His second son, initially appointed ruler of Pasai, was later removed to Pidie.

The reign of Sulṭān Muda, who was known as ʿAlī Riʿāyat Shāh, was not a smooth one. The first calamity was a famine that caused the deaths of many Acehnese.[153] This was followed by a royal struggle for power when Iskandar Muda, the grandson of al-Mukammil, clashed with the sulṭān, his uncle. Iskandar fled to Pidie for protection, where he persuaded the ruler, also his uncle, to rebel against the sulṭān, leading the attack against the capital city himself. The attack was eventually repulsed by the sulṭān's army and Iskandar Muda found himself imprisoned.[154] It was not until 1606, when a Portuguese fleet under Martin Alfonso de Castro attacked the city, that the sulṭān freed Iskandar Muda, in the hope of drawing on his

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[149] *Hikayat Aceh*, pp. 98–99; Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 747. See also Lancaster, *The Voyages*, pp. 96–97.

[150] Reid characterizes the period as being dominated by the highly mercantile *orang kayas* who had "considerable autonomy and power, without succeeding in establishing a stable, institutionalized basis for the state." See his "Trade and the Problem of Power," p. 48.

[151] Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 747; Reid, "Trade and the Problem of Power," pp. 48–49.

[152] *Bustān*, p. 34; Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," p. 174. There is no information provided in indigenous sources as to why and how this sulṭān was removed by his son. Denys Lombard suggests that al-Mukammil was the victim of his ambitious sons who were competing for the throne. See his *Le sultanat*, p. 70. On this issue Francois Pyrard writes: "when I was there, the reigning king was quite young; he had by force dispossessed his father of the kingdom and made himself master of it, holding his father prisoner for a long time, and his mother too, even with iron on their feet." See his *The Voyages of Francois Pyrard*, vol. 2 (London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1888), p. 158.

[153] *Bustān*, p. 34; Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," p. 174.

[154] According to Beaulieu, more than sixty thousand men were killed during the war. See his "The Expedition," p. 747.

bravery and fighting prowess in order to lead the army. The Portuguese attack was eventually repulsed, but for unknown reasons the sulṭān died immediately after the conflict, and soon afterwards Iskandar Muda assumed power. According to Beaulieu, the latter had hired an assassin to kill his only living uncle, the ruler of Pidie, on his way to gaining power.[155]

With the rise of Iskandar Muda (r. 1607–1636), the centralizing trend initiated by al-Mukammil reached its zenith: Anthony Reid describes it as "a true peak of royal power and centralization in the pre-colonial Malay world."[156] Military victories were secured in both east Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula. Both Deli and Johor were conquered in 1612 and 1613. Pahang and Kedah were occupied soon after, in 1618 and 1620 respectively, while Nias came under his control in 1624. These military successes helped Iskandar Muda to gain economic control over these regions, although an attack launched against the Portuguese in Melaka in 1629 ended in failure.[157] The centers of pepper production in west Sumatra also came under his close control.[158] This economic monopoly was reinforced by a policy of overseeing all trade with foreigners, while internally he managed to centralize the bureaucracy and legal system.[159] Moreover, in an indigenous source, he is praised not only as the founder of Acehnese tradition, but also as defender of the Islamic religion.[160]

This famous ruler died in 1636 with no direct heir of his own.[161] He was succeeded by a son-in-law of Pahang origin, Sulṭān Iskandar Thānī (r. 1636–1641), son of the Pahang ruler Aḥmad Shāh, who

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[155] Ibid., p. 748; Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," pp. 174–175; Lombard, *Le sultanat*, pp. 70–71.

[156] Reid, "Trade and the Problem of Royal Power," p. 50. Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 748.

[157] *Bustān*, p. 35; Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," pp. 178–181. For the attack on Melaka in 1629 see C.R. Boxer, "The Achinese Attack on Malacca in 1629, as Described in Contemporary Portuguese Sources," in John Bastin and R. Roolvink, eds., *Malayan and Indonesian Studies* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 105–121.

[158] For further discussion on this issue see J. Kathirithamby-Wells, "Achehnese Control over West Sumatra Pepper up to the Treaty of Painan of 1663," *JSEAH* 10, 3 (1969), pp. 453–479.

[159] Reid, "Trade and the Problem of Royal Power," pp. 48–51.

[160] *Bustān*, pp. 35–36.

[161] Iskandar Muda's only son was killed at his command just a few days prior to his own death. See Peter Mundy, *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia 1608–1667*, ed. by R.C. Temple, vol. 3, pt. 1 (London: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1919), pp. 119–120; Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," p. 183.

had been brought to Aceh at the age of seven when his native country was conquered by Iskandar Muda in 1618. According to chapter 13 of book 2 of the *Bustān*, in which Iskandar Thānī is the main focus of the narration, this young man was named Sulṭān Bungsu. At the age of nine, he was married to Iskandar Muda's daughter, Puteri Seri ʿĀlam, in the presence of Shaykh Shams al-Dīn al-Samaṭrānī, and was named Sulṭān Ḥusayn Shāh. By the age of ten he had received the title Sulṭān Mughāl.[162] Several good qualities are attributed to this ruler by the *Bustān*. He is portrayed as just (*ʿādil*), possessed of perfect attitudes (*sifatnya yang kāmil*), wise (*bijaksana*), gentle (*ḥalīm*), and blessed with other qualities required of a ruler. But, according to this source, the most important quality he possessed was his devoutness and modesty (*tawāḍuʾ*) to God and his commitment to the implementation of the *sharīʿah*.[163] He died in 1641 at thirty-one years of age.[164] Indeed, in confirmation of the information provided by the *Bustān*,[165] European sources acknowledge the great prosperity of the capital under his rule.[166]

The death of Iskandar Thānī signified the beginning of a corresponding process of decentralization. A crisis of succession occurred immediately after the death of this sulṭān, who left no male heir. N. de Graaff, who was in Aceh during that time, informs us that the *orang kayas* played an important role in bringing Aceh to the brink of crisis, "for each one," he states, "wanted to be king." Agreement was finally reached in the form of a consensus to crown Iskandar Thānī's widow, Puteri Sri ʿĀlam Permaisuri, as ruler with the title Tāj al-ʿĀlam Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn (r. 1641–1675).[167] The rise of Tāj al-ʿĀlam to the pinnacle of power marked the beginning of the rule of queens over Aceh. At the same time, the resurgence of the *orang kayas*' power was becoming apparent. Yet this did not necessarily spell the end of centralism, since, as Reid has observed, "the

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[162] *Bustān*, pp. 36–43; R.J. Wilkinson, "The Early Sultans of Pahang," *JMBRAS* 10 (1932), p. 54.

[163] Ibid., pp. 44–45.

[164] Ibid., p. 58; Djajadiningrat, "Critisch ovezicht," p. 56.

[165] *Bustān*, pp. 44–47.

[166] Thomas Bowrey, *A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal 1669 to 1679*, ed. by R.C. Temple (Cambridge: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1905), pp. 293–310; Mundy, *The Travels of Peter Mundy*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 335–338.

[167] *Reisen van Nicolaus de Graaff gedan naar alle gewesten des werelds, beginnende 1639 tot 1687 incluis* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1930), p. 13; Dajajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," pp. 187–188.

last say remained with the ruler."[168] The queen herself is portrayed in the *Bustān* as possessing excellent qualities as a just, devout, loving, wise, disciplined ruler who respected and revered the *ʿulamāʾ*. Her love for her subjects is said to have been so sincere that she is treated in the sources as though she were like "a mother [who] loves her own children."[169] Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn died in 1675, after reigning for approximately thirty-five years.[170]

Since there was still no male heir to Tāj al-ʿĀlam, another woman, by the name Sri Sulṭānah Nūr al-ʿĀlam Naqiyyat al-Dīn (r. 1675–1678), was crowned.[171] There is no information at our disposal with regard to the origins of this ruler.[172] However, as Thomas Bowrey records, the queen was young and well accepted in the city.[173] Two important events unfolded during the reign of this ruler. The first was the emergence of new political forces in the interior, called the *sagis*, which effectively divided Aceh into three autonomous regions: one *sagi* comprised 22 *mukims*, another 26 *mukims* and finally one of 25 *mukims*. This development undermined the power of the capital, Banda Aceh.[174] The second event involved the destruction of the Bayt al-Raḥmān mosque, the palace and all state treasures by fire.[175]

Following the death of Naqiyyat al-Dīn in 1678, another woman, ʿInāyat Shāh Zakiyyat al-Dīn (r. 1678–1688), was crowned. As in the case of Naqiyyat al-Dīn, obscurity surrounds her origins, although she was rumored to be the daughter of the former,[176] while the *Bustān* only mentions that she was the daughter of a certain Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh.[177] What we do know is that Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Singkilī enjoyed the protection of this queen, at whose orders he

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[168] Reid, "Trade and the Problem of Royal Power," p. 52.
[169] The *Bustān*, pp. 59, 73.
[170] Ibid., pp. 73–74; Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," p. 189.
[171] The *Bustān*, p. 74; Djajadiningat, "Critisch overzicht," p. 189.
[172] Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," p. 189. Teuku Iskandar, however, suggests that Nūr al-ʿĀlam was another daughter of Iskandar Muda, or the sister of the previous queen, Tāj al-ʿĀlam. Yet no source is mentioned to support this claim. See his *Bustanu's-salatin*, p. 13.
[173] Bowrey, *Countries Round the Bay of Bengal*, p. 312.
[174] See above p. 41, note 13. For further discussion of this issue, see Bowrey, *Countries Round the Bay of Bengal*, pp. 313–314; Langen, "De inrichting," pp. 390–409; Snouck Hugronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 1, pp. 88–91; Reid, "Trade and the Problem of Royal Power," pp. 53–55.
[175] *Bustān*, p. 74; Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," p. 189.
[176] Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," p. 189.
[177] *Bustān*, p. 74.

composed his commentary on forty *ḥadīths* (*arbaʿīn*),[178] and the sources record that, in 1683, the queen was visited by an envoy from Mecca bearing gifts from the Sharīf of Mecca.[179]

When ʿInāyat Shāh died in 1688, another queen, Kamālat Shāh (r. 1688–1699), was installed. However, this was met with strong opposition, finally reaching its climax when, as William Dampier describes it, "four of the *Oronkeys* [*orang kayas*] who lived more remote from the court took up arms to oppose the new Queen and the rest of the *Oronkeys*, and brought 5 or 6000 men against the City . . ."[180] Their demand was a return to male rule, a demand that would be made in vain until 1699. In that year, the queen was forced to resign based on a *fatwā* (legal ruling) issued from Mecca proclaiming that female rule was contradictory to the *sharīʿah*. This event marked the end of female rule in Aceh, fifty-nine consecutive years after its first appearance. At a later date, Aceh would be ruled by an Arab descendant of Sulṭān Badr al-ʿĀlam Sharīf Hāshim Jamāl al-Dīn (r. 1699–1702).[181]

Keeping in mind this brief historical outline of the reigns of the various Acehnese rulers, we may now turn to the task of extracting from it information on the rules of succession. First, it becomes apparent that the rulers of Aceh during the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were of royal lineage. ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh, the founder of Aceh Dār al-Salām and its first sulṭān, was a descendant of the Mahkota ʿĀlam dynasty. Even Sayyid al-Mukammil, who was described by F. M. de Vitre as having originally been a fisherman,[182] was in fact the son of Sulṭān Firmān Shāh of the Dār al-Kamāl dynasty.[183] Indeed, the accession of al-Mukammil also marked the resurgence of the Dār al-Kamāl dynasty. Religious consent is

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[178] P. Voorhoeve, *Bayān Tajallī: Bahan-bahan Untuk Mengadakan Penyelidikan Lebih Mendalam Tentang Abdurrauf Singkel*, trans. by Aboe Bakar (Banda Aceh: PDIA, 1980), p. 40.

[179] C. Snouck Hurgronje, "Een Mekkaansch gezantschap naar Atjeh in 1683," *BKI* 5 (1888), pp. 545–554.

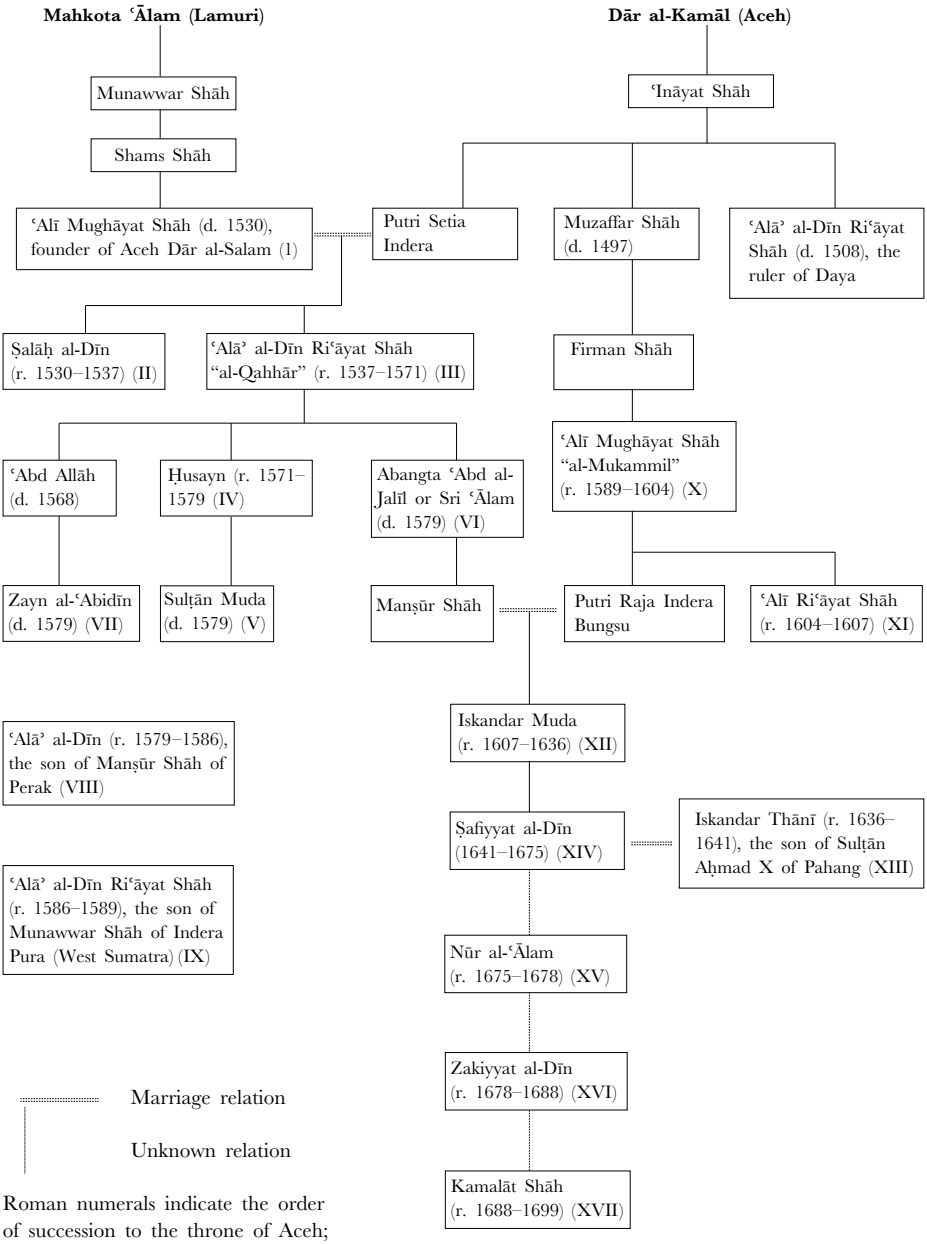
[180] William Dampier, *Voyages and Descriptions*, vol. 2, pt. 1 (London: Printed for James Knapton, 1699), pp. 139–140.

[181] Djajadingrat, "Critisch overzicht," p. 60.

[182] F.M. de Vitre, *Description du premier voyage faict aux Indes Orientales par les francois* (Paris, 1604), p. 39, as quoted in ibid., p. 163.

[183] As we mentioned in Chapter One, the sultanate of Aceh had its origin in the unification of the dynasties of Dār al-Kamāl and Mahkota ʿĀlam. See Chapter One above, pp. 11–14.

Figure 3. The Genealogy of the Rulers of Aceh Dār al-Salām (16th–17th Centuries)



Roman numerals indicate the order of succession to the throne of Aceh; nos. VIII and IX were foreign-born.

insisted on by the *Hikayat Aceh*, which describes al-Mukammil's ascension to the throne as divinely ordained, as a condition for restoring this royal family to its ruling position.[184] The appointment of Sulṭān Zayn al-Ābidīn by state officials can likewise be described as an effort to maintain the line of the Aceh Dār al-Salām dynasty.[185]

As this state was founded on the basis of the unification of Dār al-Kamāl and Mahkota ʿĀlam, most Acehnese rulers during the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, therefore, sprang from these two dynastic lines. The first was a line that combined the two royal families, commencing with ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh (d. 1530), who married Putri Setia Indera (the daughter of ʿInāyat Shāh of Dār al-Kamāl), and ending with the reign of Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (d. 1579). The second was the line of Dār al-Kamāl, which began with al-Mukammil (d. 1605) and ended with the reign of his son, Sulṭān Muda (d. 1607). Later, the two dynastic lines were reunited in the person of Iskandar Muda (d. 1636), whose father was Sulṭān Manṣūr Shāh, the grandson of al-Qahhār (d. 1571) of Mahkota ʿĀlam, and whose mother was Putri Raja Indra Bungsu, the daughter of al-Mukammil of Dār al-Kamāl.[186] Iskandar Thānī (d. 1641) was, therefore, both the royal descendant of Pahang and the son-in-law of Iskandar Muda. Queen Nūr al-ʿĀlam (d. 1678) is said to have been the daughter of Iskandar Muda, and while it cannot be verified, ʿInāyat Shāh (d. 1688) is said to have come from the royal family just as the last queen, Kamālat Shāh (d. 1699), is believed to have been of royal lineage.[187] In spite of their status as newcomers, the two foreign-born rulers—ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn (r. 1579–1586) of Perak origin and Raja Buyung (r. 1586–1589) of Inderapura origin—were crowned as sulṭān most probably on the basis of their royal credentials.

Thus, the practice of maintaining a royal family on the throne was apparent in the Aceh of our period. As mentioned earlier, the installment of Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn as sulṭān by state officials was for the purpose of continuing the dynastic line.[188] The reign of al-Mukammil

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[184] *Hikayat Aceh*, p. 99.
[185] Ibid., p. 96.
[186] Ibid., pp. 100–116. Cf. Lombard, *Le sultanat*, pp. 185–187.
[187] When he was in Aceh in 1688, William Dampier insisted that the queen of Aceh "is always an old Maid, chosen out of the Royal Family." See his *Voyages and Descriptions*, vol. 2, pt. 1, p. 142.
[188] *Hikayat Aceh*, p. 96.

was seen as evidence of God's will to "bring the royal heir back to the throne."[189] Iskandar Muda was, moreover, portrayed as a perfectly legitimate heir to the throne by virtue of his position as a direct descendant of both the Mahkota ʿĀlam and Dār al-Kamāl dynasties. Iskandar Thānī was another example of a legitimate ruler, who, in spite of his foreign origins, still had royal blood and who was, through marriage, related to the Acehnese royal family. It is to this sulṭān that the *Bustān* dedicates the following *rubāʿī* (quatrain):

> He who is courageous and so brave;
> The descendant of royal family;
> He who addresses God's providence;
> Whose title is Sulṭān Iskandar Thānī.[190]

One question, however, should be raised here: Were impeccable pedigree and personal sacredness of the ruler's qualities regarded as essential in the state? And if so, were thus considered to be the most fundamental qualifications for a ruler? The *Hikayat Aceh*, in an attempt at legitimizing the lineage of Iskandar Muda, constructs a rather elaborate myth to explain its origins. In the first place, this line is said to have sprung from a sacred element—given that his remote ancestors were supposed to have married *bidadari* (fairies) who inhabited bamboo trees and the heavens. In the second, his royal lineage is given added temporal weight by the claim that he was descended from Iskandar Dhū al-Qarnayn (Alexander the Great).[191] Iskandar Thānī was also said to have descended from a perfect ancestor. In chapter twelve of the second book of the *Bustān*, his genealogy is traced through the line of Pahang rulers dating back to the founder of Melaka, Tri Buana, who was also a descendant of Iskandar Dhū al-Qarnayn.[192] No doubt this emphasis on their ancestry reveals the importance of a sound genealogy to enjoying complete temporal and spiritual power.[193] Yet how far this claim influenced the concept of

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[189] "*Mengembalikan asal raja kepada kerajaan jua . . .*" Ibid., p. 99.

[190] *Bustān*, p. 44.

[191] *Hikayat Aceh*, pp. 66–74.

[192] R.O. Winstedt, "The Genealogy of Malacca's Kings from a Copy of the Bustanu's-Salatin," *JSBRAS* 81 (1920), pp. 39–47; *Bustān*, p. 44; Iskandar, *Bustanu's-salatin*, pp. 10–12.

[193] Indeed, the claim to perfect genealogy by rulers was a common phenomenon in the literature of the region. It usually consists of two components: first, the sacred element in which their ancestors are claimed to have come from the heavens or

kingship in this state is hard to determine. In the first place, the concept was not as well developed in Aceh as it was in the Melaka sultanate.[194] Furthermore, it had little influence on the way rulers were perceived. As a matter of fact, the sulṭāns were to be seen much like common people, possessing both merit and vice. Thus, good and strong rulers survived and succeeded, while bad and weak ones were soon forced to step down or were even killed. In conclusion, it can be said that the claims to impeccable pedigrees and personal sacredness represent more of a concession to popular myth and tradition than to a well-rooted Acehnese political philosophy.[195]

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to have married *bidadaries* (fairies) from the heavens; second, royal descent from celebrated ancestors, such as Iskandar Dhū al-Qarnayn (Alexander the Great), the ruler of China, or of India, among others. The claim in general conveys two messages: the right to rule and the glorification of the ruler himself. Further examples can be seen in, for instance, *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai*, p. 17; *Sejarah Melayu; Hikayat Banjar*, ed. by J.J. Ras (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968), p. 290. See also Edwar Djamaris, *Menggali Khazanah Sastra Melayu Klasik* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1990), pp. 71–86.

[194] The *Sejarah Melayu* provides an impressive genealogy for the rulers of Melaka. The line goes back to Iskandar Dhū al-Qarnayn (Alexander the Great) who is seen as a renowned Muslim king. After providing the details of the fortunes of Raja Iskandar's line in India and the Malay world, the work relates the story of a miraculous appearance by three young brothers on Bukit Siguntang (Palembang) who claimed to be "descended from Raja Iskandar Dhū al-Qarnayn: of the lineage of Raja Nushirwan, lord of the East and the West." The youngest of the three, who was later named Tri Buana, remained in Palembang and became its ruler. He later married the daughter of the previous Palembang ruler, Demang Lebar Daun, who became his chief minister. Both the ruler and the minister were later to conclude a solemn covenant declaring the unquestioning loyalty of the Malays to their rulers who in turn had to provide just rule over their subjects. This constituted the basis of traditional Malay political ethics as revealed in the concept of *daulat* (sovereign) and *derhaka* (disobedience). It was their descendants who later founded and ruled Melaka. See *Malay Annals*, pp. 1–49; *Sedjarah Melaju*, ed. by T.D. Situmorang and A. Teeuw (Djakarta: Djambatan, 1952), pp. 1–90; Barbara W. Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia* (Houndmills and London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 33–34; Datuk Zainal Abidin bin Abdul Wahid, "Power and the Authority in the Melaka Sultanate: The Traditional View," in Kernial Singh Shandhu and Paul Wheatley, eds., *Melaka: the Transformation of A Malay Capital c. 1400–1980* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 101–104.

[195] The worldwide legend of Iskandar Dhū al-Qarnayn (the Macedonian king Alexander the Great, 365–232 B.C.) was also to reach the Southeast Asian world through Islamic tradition which regards him as a Muslim hero. Despite the fact that many rulers in the region claimed to have descended from this great ruler, the *Hikayat Aceh* provides a less impressive claim to this genealogy. It only mentions that Munawwar Shāh, a Lamuri ruler and the ancestor of Iskandar Muda, was the descendant of Iskandar Dhū al-Qarnayn, implying that the genealogy of Iskandar Muda was also to be traced back to the great figure (p. 71). This is not the case with the genealogy of Melaka's rulers given in the *Sejarah Melayu* mentioned earlier,

The next point to be considered in our discussion of the rules of succession is the tradition of appointing only male heirs. The rules on this issue were not definitive as to which among the male progeny of the royal family had the strongest claim on the throne. As our previous survey showed, the heir apparent was sometimes the son of the former ruler, whether first-born or not, as in the case of ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, Ḥusayn, and Sulṭān Muda. The brother of the previous ruler could also be appointed sulṭān, as in the case of al-Qahhār, just as an uncle could, as in the case of Sri ʿĀlam, or a nephew, as in the cases of Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn and Iskandar Muda. Marriage ties were also reason enough to claim the throne, as we saw with Iskandar Thānī, an adopted child of Iskandar Muda and the latter's son-in-law. At this point it is necessary to raise the question of the reign of the four queens and how they should be viewed in this context.

In general, the prominence of women at the royal court, whether they were themselves rulers or holders of powerful positions behind the throne was not unusual for that place and time. Between the second half of the fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth, Pasai thrived under the reigns of two queens.[196] Starting in the fourteenth century, the kingdom of Bone in Sulawesi came to be ruled

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in which detailed lines going back to the Iskandar Dhū al-Qarnayn are provided. *Tambo Minangkabau* also provides a detailed genealogy for its rulers. The genealogy of Minagkabau's rulers, according to this text, extended back to the Prophet Adam. Adam is said to have had thirty-nine children. The youngest of these, Iskandar Dhū al-Qarnayn, was brought down by angels to earth. It was in accordance with God's command that he was married to a fairy. From this marriage Iskandar had three sons, the youngest of whom, Sulṭān Sri Maharaja Diraja, became the ruler of Minangkabau. See Edwar Djamaris, *Tambo Minangkabau* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1991), pp. 209–214. With the less developed genealogy provided by the *Hikayat Aceh*, one might asssume that Acehnese rulers were to be seen much more as real human beings with no magical powers. Although this thesis is still premature, nonetheless further inquiry into the personality of the rulers, which will be provided later, supports this thesis. For further discussion of the Malay literature on Iskandar Dhū al-Qarnayn as a Muslim hero and the alleged ancestor of the rulers in the region see R.O. Winstedt, "The Date, Authorship, Contents and Some New MSS. Of the Malay Romance of Alexander the Great," *JMBRAS* 16, 2 (1938), pp. 1–23; idem, *A History of Classical Malay Literature*, revised ed. (Singapore: MBRAS, 1961), pp. 77–80; Ismail Hamid, *The Malay Islāmic Ḥikāyat* (Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1983), pp. 139–167.

[196] The two queens are identified by Ibrahim Alfian as Nūr Ilāh (d. 1380) and Nahrasiyah (d. 1428). See Alfian, "Ratu Nūr Ilāh," and "Ratu Nahrasiyah," in *Wanita Utama Nusantara*, pp. 1–13 and 15–25; H.K.J. Cowan, "Bijdrage tot de kennis der geschiedenis van het rijk Samoedra-Pase," *TBG* 78 (1938), pp. 209–210.

by six queens in all.[197] Although queens never ruled Melaka, powerful ladies of the court were reported to have played pivotal roles in affairs of state.[198] During the third quarter of the sixteenth century the powerful queen Kali Nyamat ruled Japara.[199] Al-Mukammil, furthermore, appointed a woman as commander of his navy.[200] Besides Aceh, the best example of a state with a queen as sovereign was Patani, which came under the consecutive rule of women from 1584 to 1688.[201] These facts are important, since it helps us understand the tolerance for rule by a queen found in Aceh. Reid argues that "Austronesian societies, . . ., which include Polynesia and Madagascar as well as Indonesia and the Philippines, have been more inclined than perhaps any other major population group to place high-born women on the throne."[202] This inclination must have played a role in fostering Acehnese tolerance for woman rulers. An alternative explanation is provided by Reid who argues that the rise of women as rulers in the region, especially in Patani and Aceh, was prompted by the commercially-oriented aristocrats who made every effort to maintain political control of the states in the interests of mercantilism. Reid writes:

> Female rule was one of the few devices available to a commercially-oriented aristocracy to limit the despotic powers of kings and to make the state safe for international commerce. Iskandar Muda had been a

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[197] J. Brooke, *Narrative of Events in Borneo and Celebes down to the Occupation of Labuan: From the Journals of J. Brooke . . . by Captain Rodney Mundy*, vol. 1. (London: John Murray, 1848), pp. 74–75.

[198] *Malay Annals*, pp. 160–161; Cheach Boon Kheng, "Power Behind the Throne: The Role of Queens and Court Ladies in Malay History," *JMBRAS* 66, 1 (1993), pp. 1–4.

[199] H.J. de Graaf and Th. G. Th. Pigeaud, *De eerste Moslimse verstendommen op Java* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), pp. 103–107; idem, *Islamic States in Java 1500–1700* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), p. 11.

[200] John Davis, "The Voyage of Captaine John Davis to the Easterne India, Pilot in a Dutch Ship; Written by Himself," in *The Voyages and Works of John Davis the Navigator*, ed. by A.H. Markham (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1880), p. 150. See also Rusdi Sufi, "Laksamana Kemalahayati," in Alfian et al., eds., *Wanita Utama Nusantara*, pp. 27–39.

[201] Ibrahim Syukri, *History of the Malay Kingdom of Patani*, trans. by Connor Bailey and John N. Miksic (Athens, Ohio: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1985), pp. 22–38; *Hikayat Patani: The Story of Patani*, ed. by A. Teeuw and D.K. Wyatt (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), pp. 13–20; Mohd. Zamberi A. Malek, *Umat Islam Patani: Sejarah dan Politik* (Shah Alam: Hizbi, 1993), pp. 48–86.

[202] Anthony Reid, "Female Roles in Pre-colonial Southeast Asia," *Modern Asian Studies* 22, 3 (1988), p. 639.

> particularly frightening example of the dangers of absolutism, seeking to monopolize trade with the English and Dutch while killing, terrorizing and dispossessing his own *orang-kaya* (merchant aristocrats). Having experimented with the female alternative these aristocrats of Aceh and Patani sought to perpetuate it.[203]

Indeed, the emergence of rule by women coincided with the rise of the port-states as the main commercial centers. It was not until after 1700, when the influence of the aristocrats declined, that female rule came to an end.[204]

Reid's thesis seems credible. With the death of Iskandar Thānī in 1641, the power of the *orang kayas* reasserted itself in the midst of the resulting political confusion, as he had left no son to succeed him. The *orang kayas* played a major role in the crisis by installing his widow on the throne. As previously mentioned, the accession of this ruler marked the beginning of a gradual transferal of power into the hands of the aristocrats. Indeed, of the four successive queens, Tāj al-ʿĀlam was the only one who was "well qualified by descent,"[205] which might support the claim that a tradition of installing rulers based on the whims of the aristocrats prevailed. Yet to push this idea too far would be misleading, for it could undermine a comprehensive explanation of the rise of the queens. Another aspect deserves consideration as well, namely, the "politico-religious" attitudes of the Acehnese at the time.

In the first place, the emergence of the first queen should be seen in the context of a political crisis that came to represent a serious threat to the social order, a circumstance that was used to justify her rule. This accords with the prescription stated in the *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* to the effect that a "female cannot be crowned, except during turbulent times; that is when the ruler of the country has passed away without leaving a male heir. In this case, a female heir can be crowned as ruler, in accordance with people's desire to avoid *fitnah* (corruption) in the country."[206] It becomes vital, therefore, to determine whether there was, in fact, any eligible descendant of the ruling family other than Tāj al-ʿĀlam. This is not an easy question to answer, for there is not enough information available on this point.

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[203] Ibid., p. 641.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Ibid., p. 640.
[206] *Tāj al-Salāṭīn*, (Eijsinga), pp. 64–65; (Jusuf), p. 38; (Hussain), p. 64.

Based on the oral tradition and genealogies of the Polem family, Reid identifies a certain Teuku Itam (called Polem) as the illegitimate son of Iskandar Muda. The title *polem* (elder brother) was assigned to him, signifying that he was older than the queen, his half sister. As a matter of fact, he was the progenitor of the Polem family, a family that was to become famous as the "Panglimas of the powerful upland sagi of the 22 mukims."[207] Eventually, they would emerge as a threat, both politically and economically, to the capital city.[208] That being the case, it must be asked why no member of the Polem family was ever promoted to the position of sulṭān? No satisfactory answer can be provided here. As an illegitimate son, Teuku Itam (Polem) may not in fact have qualified for the position of heir apparent. Another possibility is that the family was outmanoeuvered in the competition for the throne,[209] eventually prompting them to withdraw to the interior, which was at that time experiencing considerable economic growth. What is certain, however, is that the accession of Queen Nūr al-ʿĀlam in 1675 was accepted in the city but opposed by the true heirs of royalty (most probably the Polem family and their followers). An eyewitness to the events, Thomas Bowrey, writes:

> The inhabitants up in the Countrey not above 20 or 30 miles off Achin are for the most part disaffected to this Sort of Government, and Scruple not to Say they will have a Kinge to rule and beare dominion over them, and that the true heire to the Crowne is yet alive and hath Severall Sons, and him they will obey. He is one that liveth amongst them, a great promoter of a Rebellion, and oftentimes doth much prejudice in Citty and Countrey, although I believe it is and will be past his reach or Skill Ever to Obtaine the Government of Achin.[210]

Whatever the exact course of these events, it is certain that a serious political crisis gripped Aceh and that a restoration of political order was badly needed. It is in this context that female rule was imposed and justified.

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[207] Reid, "Trade and the Problem of Royal Power," p. 53.

[208] Ibid.

[209] Consider Graaff's report, as mentioned earlier (p. 72 above), describing each of the *orang kayas* as competing for the throne.

[210] Bowrey, *Countries Round the Bay of Bengal*, p. 313.

The politico-religious justifications supporting female rule, besides the one offered by the *Tāj al-Salāṭīn*, can also be explored in al-Rānīrī's and al-Singkilī's thought and in their perception of the queens. Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī (d. 1658), of Gujarati origin, who resided in Aceh from 1637 until 1644, perceived Queen Tāj al-ʿĀlam in a positive way. In the *Bustān*, he provides a detailed account of this ruler, just as he does of her husband, Iskandar Thānī. She is described as a devout ruler who exerted every effort to implement the Islamic *sharīʿah* in the state. She is also described as just, gentle, generous, loving and caring. Esteem for the *ʿulamāʾ* and for those who visited the country were also some of her celebrated traits. Moreover, in her time Aceh prospered.[211] Indeed, al-Rānīrī was living under the protection of both Iskandar Thānī and his wife and successor, Tāj al-ʿĀlam. It was only about two and half years into the sulṭānah's reign, i.e., in 1054 A.H./1643–1644 A.D., that al-Rānīrī left Aceh.[212] The very fact that an orthodox *ʿālim* like al-Rānīrī should have approved of a legal ruling allowing for a queen to take the throne reveals an unexpected tolerance of female rule within religious circles. Kheng writes of this problem: "this was no small praise coming from such a conservative cleric as ar-Raniri, who had defended the queen, his late patron's wife, from the viewpoint of Islam. . . . It

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[211] *Bustān*, pp. 58–73.

[212] The confusion over the reasons surrounding the scholar's early departure has been settled by Takeshi Ito who discovered the diary of Pieter Sourij, a VOC (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie or Dutch East India Company) commissioner sent to Jambi and Aceh in 1643. Al-Rānīrī, who launched a fierce campaign against the Wujūdiyyah's teachings and its followers, was challenged by a newly-arrived Minangkabau scholar from Surat, Sayf al-Rijāl. Al-Rijāl used to study in Aceh and, as a proponent of the Wujūdiyyah, was forced to leave the country by the former. A theological debate took place between the two. The dispute became so intense that the nobles had to ask the queen to intercede. This latter, who admitted to having no knowledge of religious matters, declined to get involved. The issue was later moderated by the *uleebalangs*. Sourij reports that in the next few days Sayf al-Rijāl, who had many followers, appeared in the court and was appointed as the new *shaykh al-Islām*. This clearly indicates that al-Rānīrī had lost the ruler's patronage. See Takeshi Ito, "Why Did Nuruddin Ar-Raniry Leave Aceh in 1054 A.H?," *BKI* 143, 4 (1978), pp. 489–491. Al-Rānīrī indeed mentions briefly this debate in his *al-Fatḥ al-Mubīn ʿAlā al-Mulḥidīn* (A Clear Triumph over the Apostates), MS in Ahmad Daudy's personal collection (Banda Aceh), dating from 1068/1657, copied in 1279, p. 4. A brief description of this work can be found in Ahmad Daudy, "Al-Fath al-Mubin ʿAla al-Mulhidin Karya Syaikh Nuruddin Ar-Raniry," in Ahmad Rifa'i Hasan, ed., *Warisan Intellektual Islam Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan, 1990), pp. 21–35.

is possible that only ar-Raniri's powerful support and influence had legitimized the appointment of his benefactor's widow as Sultanah."[213] Was al-Rānīrī's acceptance of the rule of queens based on *ḍarūrah* (necessity)? The answer to this question is not easy to determine, for he makes no mention of this in his works. The viewpoint from another *ʿālim* of the period, ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Singkilī, may provide us with some clarification of this issue.

Born in Singkel (on the western coast of Aceh) in 1615,[214] ʿAbd al-Raʾūf b. ʿAlī al-Jāwī al-Fanṣūrī al-Singkilī was an eminent *ʿālim* who wrote about twenty-two works, ranging in topic from law, Qurʾānic exegesis and theology to mysticism.[215] In 1642 he left for the Middle East to study (visiting Doha in the Persian Gulf, Yaman, Jedda, Mecca and Medina), returning to Aceh in 1661.[216] From then on, al-Singkilī spent the rest of his life (he died in 1693) in Aceh, occupying important state positions such as *shaykh al-Islām* and advisor to the ruler. He was known as a moderate scholar who was neither partisan in the controversy between the Wujūdiyyah movement of Ḥamzah Fanṣūrī and the orthodoxy of al-Rānīrī, nor condemnatory of either. He did, however, criticize the Wujūdiyyah movement for propagating its teachings too aggressively to the populace, who were in fact unable to digest them; while al-Rānīrī was also critiqued for being too harsh in his condemnation of the Wujūdiyyah and in his labeling of its members as *kāfirs* (unbelievers) and *zindīqs* (atheists).[217] It

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[213] Kheng, "Power Behind the Throne," p. 11. On the Patani queens he writes that they:

> brought peace and prosperity to their kingdom. Although their ministers ran the state, they took great interest in their subjects' needs. Apart from the Siamese threat, they were able to defend and secure its independence by having diplomatic ties with many countries. They faced little internal opposition and obtained the allegiance and loyalties of their subjects without any difficulty. Religious forces did not raise any objections to their administration (p. 9).

[214] D.A. Rinkes, *Abdoerraoef van Singkel: bijdrage tot de kennis van de mystiek op Sumatra en Java* (Heerenven: Hepkema, 1909), pp. 25–26; P. Riddell, *Transferring a Tradition: ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Singkilī's Rendering into Malay of the Jalālayn Commentary* (Berkeley: Centers for South and Southeast Asia Studies, University of California, 1990), pp. 4–5.

[215] For a complete list of al-Singkilī's works see Voorhoeve, *Bayān Tajallī*, pp. 35–53; A. Hasjmi, "Syekh Abdurrauf Syiah Kuala, Ulama Negarawan yang Bijaksana," in *Universitas Syiah Kuala Menjelang 20 Tahun* (Medan: Waspada, 1980), pp. 377–378.

[216] Rinkes, *Abdoerraoef van Singkel*, p. 25; Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 2, p. 18; Voorhoeve, *Bayān Tajallī*, p. 2; Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII dan XVIII* (Bandung: Mizan, 1995), pp. 191–198.

[217] To al-Singkilī, condemning a person as a *kāfir* is an extremely dangerous step.

was the combination of his moderation and his status as Islamic scholar and statesman that most probably colored his perspective on female rule.

In the first place, al-Singkilī views equality between men and women as a component of our humanity, opportunity and rights.[218] This concept extends, among others, into the political domain. As previously mentioned, al-Singkilī saw a need to establish a *khilāfah* by means of which the *sharīʿah* could be implemented and to which the community could offer its loyalty. In such a case, a queen could be regarded as leader of an Islamic community or God's *khalīfah* in Aceh, to whom *ṭāʿah* (loyalty, rendered by al-Singkilī as *berbuat bakti*) ought to be given by the ruled. He expounds on this thesis in the *Mirʾāt al-Ṭullāb* where he also expresses his acceptance of the reigning queen's commission to write the work. The expressions he uses include "in honor of Her Majesty's words" (*menjunjung sabdanya*) and "being loyal to her" (*berbuat bakti akan dia*).[219] A similar tone is also adopted by al-Rānīrī towards this same queen.

At this point, it is safe to suggest that, even though the enthronement of the ruler occurred in the context of *ḍarūrah*, female rule was, to al-Singkilī, a normal phenomenon. This can be proven on two grounds. First, al-Singkilī never indicates, either explicitly or implicitly, that female rule was conditional upon a state of necessity. His moderate view on women is made more apparent by his implicit endorsement of the eligibility of women for the post of *ḥākim* (judge).[220]

He writes: "It is dangerous to accuse another of *kufr*. If you do so, and it is true, why waste words on it, and if it is not true, the accusation will turn back upon yourself." ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Singkilī, "Daḳāʾiḳ al-Ḥurūf by ʿAbd al-Rauf of Singkel," ed. by A.H. Johns, *JRAS* 1, 2 (1955), pp. 56, 143–144. He bases his argument on a *ḥadīth* narrated by Abū Dharr which states that the Prophet said: "If somebody accuses another of *fusūq* (wicked person) or accuses him of *kufr* (unbeliever), such an accusation will revert to him if his companion (the accused) is innocent." Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, *Kītāb al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. by M. Ludolf Krehl, vol. 4 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1908), p. 123.

[218] This is not to suggest that he preached complete equality between men and women, since in certain areas, like the family, he still believed in the superiority of men as leaders, aligning himself with the Qurʾānic tenet (IV: 34): "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means . . ." See ʿAbd al-Raʾūf b. ʿAlī al-Fanṣūrī al-Jāwī, *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1370/1951), pp. 7, 78, 85, 564.

[219] *Mirʾāt al-Ṭullāb*, p. 4.

[220] Al-Singkilī seems to leave open the possibility that a woman could be a *ḥākim* (judge). In his *Mirʾāt al-Ṭullāb*, nowhere he does mention sex as one of the

As well, the mere fact of a long history of female rulers in Aceh supports the view. It was only after the death of this *ʿālim* that the rule of the queens finally came to an end.

As the issue of female rule is a subject of controversy in Islam,[221] it is interesting to note that in Aceh there were at least two major works written explicitly acknowledging the permissibility of female rule in times of necessity: the *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* (The Crown of the Rulers)[222] and the *Safīnat al-Ḥukkām* (The Boat of the Judges).[223] Yet how can this be reconciled with the fact that female rule in Aceh came to an end with the issuance of a *fatwā*?[224] The fact is that this negative perspective only took root after al-Singkilī's death, suggesting that his respected status as a scholar of religion held sway on the issue. Thus, during his lifetime his views on female rule were never seriously challenged. To the Acehnese, after all, the issue was not merely a political one but, more importantly, a religious matter as well. This being the case, only a *fatwā* could possibly extinguish the tradition of female rule. In the final analysis, a combination of elements, namely, the gradual decline of the rulers' power along with the rise of powerful aristocrats and the division of Aceh into three

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qualifications for a judgeship. This in spite of the fact that in listing a judge's qualifications he admits to have quoted Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī's work, *Fatḥ al-Wahhāb*. Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī does mention *mudhakkar* (male) as a qualification, a point which al-Singkilī simply ignores. See al-Singkilī, *Mirʾāt al-Ṭullāb*, p. 6; Zakariyyā b. Muḥammad al-Anṣārī, *Fatḥ al-Wahhāb bi Sharḥ Manhaj al-Ṭullāb*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), p. 207.

[221] See, for instance, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī, *al-Faḍāʾiḥ al-Bāṭinīyyah*, ed. by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Badawī (Cairo: al-Dār al-Qawmiyyah li al-Ṭibāʿah wa al-Nashr, 1964), pp. 180–181; Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, *Kītāb al-Ǧāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. by M. Ludolf Krehl, 4 vols. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1862–1908), vol. 3, pp. 183–184, vol. 4, pp. 376–377; Ibn Ḥajr al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī bi Sharḥ al-Bukhārī* (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Ḥalabī wa Awlāduh, 1959), vol. 9, pp. 190–193, vol. 16, pp. 164–166; al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol. 8, pp. 290–291; Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ʿan Ḥaqāʾiq al-Tanzīl wa ʿUyūn al-Aqāwīl fī Wujūh al-Taʾwīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿārif, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 266; Abū Fidāʾ al-Ḥāfiḍ Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm*, ed. by Maḥmūd Ḥasan, et al. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1994), vol. 1, p. 503.

[222] See above, p. 81.

[223] This work was written by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Turāsānī, a *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil* during the reign of Sulṭān ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Aḥmad Shāh, known as Maharaja Lela Melayu (r. 1727–1735) and Sulṭān ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Johan Shāh, known as Pocut Uk (r. 1735–1760). On the issue of female rule al-Turāsānī writes: "It is permitted to crown a woman and a *fāsiq* (wicked person) as a ruler in a condition of *ḍarūrah* (necessity) in order God's religion to be implemented)" (*Safīnat al-Ḥukkām*, MS in the personal collection of A. Hasjmy, Banda Aceh, p. 27).

[224] Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," pp. 191–192.

powerful *sagis*, the familiarity of the people with female rule, and the religious approval of the *'ulamā'*, appear to have established the grounds for the long history of female rule in the country.

Another successionary practice current in Aceh was the designation of an heir by a dying ruler. Of this type, we are only able to refer to the example of two rulers, i.e. Iskandar Muda and Iskandar Thānī, revealed by both the *Hikayat Aceh* and the *Bustān*. In general, the *Hikayat Aceh* refers to Iskandar Muda as a talented and gifted figure who possessed excellent leadership qualities, signs of which were to be seen even before the birth of this celebrated sulṭān.[225] Long before his accession to power, his grandfather al-Mukammil predicted Iskandar Muda's future greatness, a prediction said to have come from Allāh:[226]

> It is this grandchild of mine who is called Muḥammad Ḥanafiyyah of the end of the day, who conquers Deli, seizes Merah Miru, brings the ruler of Johor and other Malay rulers under his control and defeats all rulers who do not recognize Aceh's suzerainty. And this grandchild of mine is the one who becomes the master of the *mashriq* (the East) and respects God's grant by becoming *khalīfat Allāh* (the deputy of God) in Aceh Dār al-Salām, Tiku and Pariaman, and shows his justice towards the people of countries which God has bestowed on him; and with power he [this grandchild of mine] is capable of bringing all Malay rulers under his control.[227]

On his deathbed, the old sulṭān expressed a wish to designate Iskandar Muda as his successor, saying "What do you think if I enthrone Johan 'Ālam to be my successor because I am getting older and weaker?"[228] All the chiefs respected his wish. When informed of this decision, Iskandar Muda is reported to have responded, in humility, that his two living uncles (al-Mukammil's sons: Sulṭān Muda and Sulṭān Ḥusayn) held precedence over him. Sulṭān Muda was brought forward and given the option of assuming the post, and his unwillingness to ascend the throne cleared the way for Iskandar Muda's candidacy.[229] In the matter of Iskandar Thānī's designation a more complete narrative is available. As in the case of Iskandar Muda,

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[225] See *Hikayat Aceh*, pp. 115–167.
[226] Ibid., p. 184.
[227] Ibid., p. 153.
[228] Ibid., p. 183.
[229] Ibid., pp. 183–185.

our source reports a long period of preparation for Iskandar Thānī's accession to the throne.[230] Iskandar Muda is reported to have summoned all state officials, including Shaykh Shams al-Dīn al-Samaṭrānī, *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil*, the prime minister, and all *hulubalangs [uleebalangs]*, to his presence and to have said: "when I pass away, my son, Sulṭān Mughāl [Iskandar Thānī], will take my position." His officials respected this directive,[231] which Iskandar Muda reiterated again in front of all state officials on his deathbed.[232]

The wish of a dying ruler seems to have been delivered in front of state officials and confirmed by them. The importance of this practice lies, no doubt, in the desire to avoid a future crisis in the succession, but it also conveys the importance of these officials in matters of this kind. Without their consent to and compliance with the wishes of a dying ruler, a political crisis could hardly be averted.[233] The importance of state officials was also evident in the event of deposition and in the selection of a successor when the previous ruler had failed to name one, or in the case of a power crisis.[234] This role was manifest, for instance, in the installation of Acehnese rulers during the crisis years (from 1579 to 1589) and during the years of female rule (1641–1699). When Sri ʿĀlam was shown to be squandering the state's treasury, therefore, he became the object of the officials' censure and was deposed. In their words, "It is our consensus that our lord Seri ʿĀlam should be deposed and succeeded by our lord Sulṭān Zaynal [Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn], the son of Sulṭān Ghori."[235] When Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn appeared to be morally deficient, state officials took the same action. The *Hikayat Aceh* records the event as follows:

> When they witnessed such bad behavior on the part of the sulṭān, the *uleebalangs* raised the issue among themselves. [One of them said] "How do you see this bad attitude of our lord? While he is still young the sulṭan dares to act against us, can we imagine how he will behave when he is grown up? I believe we will be facing serious trouble if he

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[230] See *Bustān*, pp. 36–42.
[231] Ibid., pp. 42–43.
[232] Ibid., p. 43.
[233] Even though the accession of Iskandar Muda has been ascribed to his trickery, indigenous sources tend to offer explanations of how he legitimately came to power. See the *Hikayat Aceh*.
[234] Cf. Suananthat-Pian, "Thrones, Claimants, Rulers and Rules," pp. 9–11.
[235] *Hikayat Aceh*, p. 96.

> is still in power." Sharīf al-Mulūk Maharaja Lela said: "That being the case, we should remove the sulṭān from power."[236]

Who were these state officials and how were they constituted? Not enough information is available on this issue. Earlier, mention was made of those officials who were summoned by Iskandar Muda to confirm his dying wish. When the case of Sri ʿĀlam was being discussed, the people who were reported to have been involved were: the *maharaja*, the *qāḍī*, the *hulubalangs [uleebalangs]*, all the chiefs (*segala raja-raja*), and all notables (*segala orang besar-besar*).[237] How these people were organized is unknown.[238]

The final point of our discussion of this matter revolves around the personal qualities of a ruler, namely his military prowess, leadership and moral superiority. This latter trait seems to have been crucial in determining his eventual success. The first sulṭān, ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh, was a capable military commander and defender of Islam. Al-Qahhār was likewise a talented and powerful ruler. He was also a determined military commander whose ambition in attacking the Portuguese in Melaka prompted him to bring his entire family on the campaign and personally lead the army. His decision to ask for Ottoman military aid won him the esteem of the Acehnese people. Al-Qahhār's reputation as a nation-builder and as a devout Muslim also encompassed a disciplined, caring and loving personage. Sulṭān Ḥusayn too was described as a "gentle," "caring" and "loving" figure who esteemed the *ʿulamāʾ*.[239] On account of these distinguished attributes, his status as a foreign-born ruler had little bearing on his wide popularity. Al-Mukammil was also portrayed as a capable ruler. His justice and generosity were said to have ensured the country's prosperity.[240] It is for Iskandar Muda, however, that the most fulsome praise is reserved in the indigenous sources.[241] He was apparently a talented warrior and conqueror, a capable leader and nation builder,

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[236] Ibid., p. 98.
[237] Ibid., p. 96.
[238] In Malay sultanates this body was known as the "Majlis Negara." See Suwannanthat-Pian, "Thrones, Claimants, Rulers and Rules," pp. 10–11.
[239] *Bustān*, p. 32.
[240] *Hikayat Aceh*, p. 100.
[241] The *Hikayat Aceh*, written as a panegyric to Iskandar Muda, provides, for the most part, an exaggerated picture of his personality. The *Bustān* seems to be more circumspect in its presentation, yet still depicts him in a positive way. This is in spite of the fact that the author, al-Rānīrī, was not welcomed by this ruler.

a devout Muslim, and possessed of a generous personality.[242] Although the mildness of the reigns of both Iskandar Thānī and Queen Tāj al-ʿĀlam has been noted, they were nevertheless seen as effective leaders, devout Muslims and possessed of a high degree of morality.[243]

In spite of the fact that there was no hard and fast rule on the issue of succession in Aceh at this time, the above discussion reveals some of the key concepts underlying it. On the one hand, this flexible concept contributed to several crises of succession. On the other, its ambiguity demonstrated a pragmatic approach to the issue. Of the many qualifications that a ruler was supposed to possess, personal capability was the most highly regarded. This included military and leadership skills as well as a full Islamic commitment on the part of the leader of an *ummah*. It was through these attributes that the prosperity of the country was seen to be assured.

C. *The Ruler's Tasks*

As the head of an Islamic state, a sulṭān had a number of responsibilities, most of which were derived from the concept of the ruler as the holder of both political and religious authority. The first task before a ruler was to pursue prosperity for the country and its people. To achieve this he had to wield considerable power, a condition that depended on the sulṭān's ability as a leader. Indeed, the first of ten criteria delineated in the *Adat Aceh* is a throne based on power (*takhta atas kuasanya*),[244] signifying a system where the sulṭān was not only the formal head of the state but also its real executor. Power, besides authority, was essential for the running of state. The most powerful rulers, such as al-Qahhār and Iskandar Muda, were, therefore, highly regarded by the Acehnese. Even though it is not explicitly elaborated, al-Qahhār is credited by the *Bustān* with having established the royal tradition of the land and with being the first to build a city in Aceh Dār al-Salām.[245] Iskandar Muda's reign was even more celebrated since it was in his time that Aceh's golden

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[242] See above p. 71.

[243] *Bustān*, pp. 44–47, 59. See also Bowrey, *Countries Round the Bay of Bengal*, pp. 293–310; Mundy, *The Travels of Peter Mundy*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 335–336.

[244] See above, p. 61, note 108.

[245] *Bustān*, p. 31.

age commenced. The state's political control over most of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula signified an economic boon. This formidable ruler was also said to have "established the *bayt al-māl* (treasure house), *ʿushr* (tithe) and tax system in the country."[246]

Public welfare was another responsibility of the ruler, a concept that the *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* describes as consisting in his/her relations with other human beings.[247] To be just (*ʿādil*) was deemed the most important attribute in promoting public welfare and was, indeed, a precondition for the attainment of prosperity and perfection (*sempurna*).[248] The same requirement is also advocated by the *Bustān*.[249] In addition, however, the ruler was also required to be gentle (*ḥalīm*) and loving (*pengasih*) towards his/her subjects. The best example, as previously mentioned, was the love that Queen Tāj al-ʿĀlam showed for her subjects, portrayed by the *Bustān* as akin to the love of a mother for her children.[250] Another quality that was admired was concern for the welfare of the poor, who were referred to as *faqīr* and *miskīn*. In this case, generosity on the part of a ruler was expected.[251] Yet it is stressed that this generosity must be accompanied by another attribute, namely thriftiness (*hemat*). So important was this quality that Sri ʿĀlam, who was seen to be extravagant, was forced to step down by the chiefs for the sake of the country's economic well being.[252] Generosity and thriftiness were, together, so fundamental that the *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* insists that "whoever, among rulers, does not possess these two qualities will never achieve perfection in his kingdom; and those on whom these are bestowed by Allāh possess the good in this world and the hereafter."[253] The best example of a ruler

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[246] Ibid., p. 36.

[247] *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* (Eijsinga), pp. 65–66; (Jusuf), p. 39; (Hussain), pp. 65–66.

[248] *Adat Aceh*, pp. 2, 4. The *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* also provides some accounts of non-Muslim rulers who obtained prosperity for their countries due to their just ways, signifying the absolute necessity for justice on the part of rulers regardless of the religion to which they belong. See *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* (Eijsinga), pp. 95–105; (Jusuf), pp. 55–60; (Hussain), pp. 98–108.

[249] *Bustān*, pp. 33, 44, 59,

[250] See above, p. 73. For similar qualities in other rulers, see the *Bustān*, pp. 32–33, 44.

[251] *Bustān*, pp. 32, 44, 59; *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* (Jusuf), pp. 92–93; (Hussain), pp. 159–164. The *Bustān* also provides a similar term for this act, as seen in its description of Iskandar Muda's qualities: "He was so generous that every Friday, before his departure for the mosque, this ruler provided charitable gifts to the poor" (p. 36).

[252] See above, pp. 67–68.

[253] *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* (Jusuf), pp. 92–93.

who was explicitly said to possess these qualities was Queen Tāj al-ʿĀlam.[254] The *Adat Aceh* likewise strongly urges a ruler to possess and to master these two qualities.[255]

Given his/her status as the leader of an Islamic community, a ruler's attributes were also religious in nature. In the first place, a ruler was required to make every effort to implement the Islamic religion. The most common expression used to denote this role was "to enforce" (*mengeraskan*) the faith.[256] The *Adat Aceh* mentions this as one of the fundamental tasks expected of a ruler in establishing his order (*terdiri amarnya*). This signified that he should (1) implement God's command and avoid His interdiction and (2) produce a public order good for the country.[257]

The *Bustān* reports on some of the measures adopted by rulers for the above purpose. While there are few details on how this was accomplished, some rulers urged their people to perform good deeds and to avoid bad ones,[258] since to do so was both conducive and necessary to the implementation of the *sharīʿah*. The building of mosques was among the more visible signs of this effort.[259] *ʿUlamāʾ* were to be respected and consulted, although a love of Islamic learning on the part of the ruler himself was also expected. When these latter qualities were fulfilled, it made for a flourishing Islamic discourse, as was evident in the sixteenth century. It was no coincidence, therefore, that the flow of *ʿulamāʾ* coming to the country from abroad increased in times of popular rule.

Security was another fundamental consideration for a ruler. The defense of the country was then a responsibility entrusted to the ruler and formulated in the institution of *jihād* (holy war). For this pur-

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[254] This queen was known to be "so thrifty a ruler, generous and sympathetic that all those who came to see her were presented with gifts. . . ." *Bustān*, p. 59.

[255] *Adat Aceh*, p. 7.

[256] For instance: "*mengeraskan agama Nabi Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallama; mengeraskan agama Islam; mengeraskan syarʿat Nabi Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh ṣalla Allāhu ʿalayhi wa sallama.*" See *Bustān*, pp. 31, 36, 44, and 73.

[257] See above, p. 61, note 108.

[258] Sulṭān ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn is said to have urged his people to keep away from drinking wine and cockfighting, to perform daily prayers, to fast (both the obligatory and the recommended varieties) and to pay *zakāh* (alms), and encouraged all his *uleebalangs* to grow their beards and wear robes and turbans. Similar efforts were also attributed to Iskandar Muda and Tāj al-ʿĀlam. See *Bustān*, pp. 33, 36, 73.

[259] Iskandar Muda is said to have built not only the Bayt al-Raḥmān mosque but other mosques as well elsewhere in the country. The construction of the Bayt al-Mushāhadah mosque is attributed to Iskandar Thānī. See *Bustān*, pp. 36, 44.

pose, military ability was one of the fundamental attributes desired in a sulṭān.[260] It is not our intention here to discuss the institution of *jihād* in the country, since it will be dealt with in more detail later in Chapter Four. But, suffice it to suggest here that in a region where trade and Islam went hand in hand and where a threat coming from non-Muslim European powers (first the Portuguese and later the British and the Dutch) was posed both in economic and religious terms, the security of the country became, ultimately, a major concern. Unsurprisingly, Islam was regarded as the surest bulwark. Al-Qahhār's efforts to lead a military campaign by mobilizing all his family members against the Portuguese and by appealing to the Ottomans for military help, were seen as sound initiatives in the defense of the country. And though, as we have noted, Sri ʿĀlam's dismissal from office was due to his penchant for overexpenditure, one of the reasons cited for this harsh measure was a depleted treasury posed a serious threat to national security.[261]

[260] The founder of the nation, ʿAlī Mughāyat Shāh, was known as a skilled military commander. All the offensives initiated by the Acehnese against the Portuguese in Melaka and other related military conflicts were seen as efforts at self-defence against non-Muslim aggressors. See above Chapter One, pp. 21–34.

[261] *Hikayat Aceh*, p. 96.

CHAPTER THREE

ROYAL ENCLOSURE AND RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES

The previous chapter surveyed the types of authority claimed by the Acehnese ruler, which were both political and religious in nature. The nature of the authority, accordingly, provided the basis for legitimacy. Indeed, these two fundamental elements (authority and legitimacy) were strongly determined by the ruler's tasks as head of a Muslim state. In this chapter other aspects of the state's traditions, namely, the royal enclosure complex and some royal rituals and ceremonies, will be discussed. The importance of these traditions lies mainly in their respective roles in symbolizing both royal authority and power. Again, the role of Islam in the traditions will be especially examined.

A. *The Royal Compound and Its Centrality*

The royal compound, with all its main attributes, forms an important aspect of this study, due to its function not only as the ruler's chief residence, but also as the seat of power or administrative center of the state, where the state's affairs (political, economic and, to a certain degree, religious) were overseen. Its importance, however, is belied by the scanty information available on its function, either in indigenous texts or European sources. Augustin de Beaulieu, the main European source on the subject, admits that he is unable to describe the palace in its entirety, for he was unable to enter the innermost courts.[1] Indeed, the royal enclosure was not accessible to people other than state officials and the palace servants.[2]

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[1] He writes: "As for the inner part of the castle, I can give no account of it, being denied accesses." See Augustin de Beaulieu, "The Expedition of Commodore Beaulieu to the East Indies," in John Harris, ed., *Navigatum Atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca, or A Complete Collection of Voyages*, vol. 1 (London, 1705), p. 744.

[2] Some discussion of the royal compound has been offered by a few scholars, e.g., Denys Lombard, L.F. Brakel and Takeshi Ito. Therefore, some points discussed

Located about two and half miles from the sea, the palace, known as the Dalam or Dār al-Dunyā (The Abode of the World), was built at the confluence of the Aceh (Krueng Aceh) and Dār al-ʿIshq (The Abode of Love) rivers, the latter known in later years as the Krueng Daroy.[3] When the reconstruction of the Dalam took place in 1613, a branch of the Krueng Daroy river was diverted to go through it.[4] In 1621 Beaulieu described the shape of the palace as being oval, reaching about one and half miles (about two kilometres) in circumference and surrounded by a ditch of about twenty-five or thirty feet in both depth and width.[5] The building was on a north-south axis, with the main gate being located on the north side. Known as Pintu Thānī,[6] it was through this main gate that all state visitors entered the palace. A large field, called the Medan Khayyālī, was located directly in front of the main gate.[7]

Overall, the palace consisted of four main sections, each of which had its specific function: these were the outer court, the middle court, the inner court, and the private quarters of the ruler.[8] Each of the

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here may have been raised by these scholars. See Denys Lombard, *Le sultanat d'Atjéh au temps d'Iskandar Muda, 1607–1636* (Paris: École française d'Extreme-Orient, 1967), pp. 127–139; L.F. Brakel, "State and Statecraft in 17th Century Aceh," in Anthony Reid and Lance Castles, eds., *Pre-Colonial State Systems in Southeast Asia* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1979), pp. 60–63; Takeshi Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh: A Historical Survey of the Sultanate of Aceh," (Ph.D. dissertation, Australian National University, 1984), pp. 21–45.

[3] John Davis, *The Voyages and Works of John Davis the Navigator*, ed. by A.H. Markham, (London: The Haklyut Society, 1880), p. 148; Thomas Bowrey, *A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal 1669 to 1679*, ed. by R.C. Temple (Cambridge: The Hakluyt Society, 1905) pp. 286, 293, 321–322; William Dampier, *Voyages and Descriptions* (London: James Kapton, 1699), vol. 2, pt. 1, pp. 129–130. This is the river mentioned in both the *Hikayat Aceh* and the *Bustān*. See *De Hikayat Aceh*, ed. by T. Iskandar ('s-Gravenhage: N.V. de Nederlandsche Boek- en Steendrukkerij VH. H.I. Smits, 1959), pp. 81, 129, 165. Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī, *Bustanu's-salatin*, bab 2, fasal 13, ed. by T. Iskandar (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1966), pp. 48–49.

[4] Thomas Best, *The Voyage of Best to the East Indies, 1612–1614*, ed. by Sir W. Foster (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1934), p. 213; Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 744; Lombard, *Le sultanat*, p. 130. By quoting P.W. Verhoef, who says that strong walls and palisades were used to protect the palace, Takeshi Ito suggests that its reconstruction must have taken place as early as 1608, about two years after the Portuguese attack on the city in 1606. See Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh", p. 38, note 46.

[5] Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 744.

[6] Brakel, "State and Statecraft," p. 62.

[7] *Bustān*, p. 65; Brakel, "State and Statecraft," p. 62.

[8] Beaulieu, "The Expedition," pp. 744; Lombard, *Le sultanat*, pp. 130–131; Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," p. 22.

three courts had its own courtyard and gate. Therefore, one had to pass through four gates and three courtyards to reach the private quarters of the sovereign.[9] The outer court was described as "an open field with few buildings,"[10] where about 4,000 men and 300 elephants could be displayed.[11] It was in this field that elephant fights in honor of foreigners were also sometimes held.[12] Therefore, there is little doubt that it was in this courtyard that royal ceremonies and entertainments took place. The middle court, which was called by the Dutch in the 1640s the "second court,"[13] was the administrative center of the state.[14] The next section was the inner court, which functioned as the site where audiences were held for both foreigners and state officials.[15] And the last section, located in the innermost part of the Dalam, constituted the private quarters of the ruler and the residence of the royal family. This section of the palace was highly guarded by both male and female servants. Davis describes the private quarters of al-Mukammil as being "built as the rest are, but much higher, hee sitteth where hee can see all that come to any of his guards, but none can see him. The wals and covering of his house are mats, which sometime is hanged with cloth of gold, sometime with velvet, and sometime with damaske."[16] Even though there was little information available on this part of the palace, it was

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[9] John Davis, writing in 1599, insists that before one could see the ruler, there were three guards had to be passed and between each guard there was a great lawn (Davis, *Voyages and Works*, p. 148). Sir James Lancaster, writing in 1602, declared that there were three courts that had to be passed before anyone could find "a place covered with cannopies, adjoyning to the kings gallerie, where the king satte" (Sir James Lancaster, *The Voyages of Sir James Lancaster to Brazil and the East Indies, 1591–1603*, ed. by William Foster (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1940), p. 130). See also Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 744; Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," pp. 22–23.

[10] Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," pp. 22–23.

[11] Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 744.

[12] Peter Mundy, *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608–1667*, ed. by R.C. Temple, vol. 3, pt. 1 (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1919), pp. 124–126; Bowrey, *A Geographical Account*, pp. 307–308, 310.

[13] Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," based on some Dutch sources of the 17th century, p. 38, note 53.

[14] Ibid., p. 23.

[15] This consisted of two halls, the audience hall and the hall for the nobles; this part of the palace, as noticed by Ito, was by no means open to all. It was not until the reign of Sulṭānah Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn that permission was granted to all officials to enter this section of the court (Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," p. 24). See also the description given by Davis earlier.

[16] Davis, *Voyages and Works*, p. 148.

speculated that "its walls must have enclosed a number of open courts and small gardens as well as the bathing places on the banks of the Krueng Daroy running through the middle point."[17]

The Palace complex also consisted of other elements that deserve to be mentioned. The *Bustān* speaks of a royal garden, called the Taman Ghayrah, which was built by Iskandar Thānī, in the middle of which stood a mountain-like building, called the Gunungan. It was within this garden that a mosque, called the 'Ishq Mushāhadah, was built. Near the Gunungan a royal burial place (Kandang) was located.[18] Later, we shall return to these aspects of the palace. For the purpose of this study, it is essential that we begin by inquiring into the nature and functions of the Dalam and its complex.

In the first place, the Dalam is to be seen as the place where the ruler lived. As such, the ruling family needed to establish a safe residence and a place where royal etiquette was observed, symbolizing their authority and power. The security of the Dalam was assured by various means.[19] As mentioned above, the palace was surrounded by a ditch, the banks of which, according to Beaulieu, "are almost inaccessible, by reason of their steepness, and being covered by thickets. Before the Castle the earth is cast up in banks, which serve

[17] Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," p. 24.

[18] *Bustān*, pp. 48–49; Djajadiningrat, "De stichting van het 'Goenongan' geheeten monument te Kotaradja," *TBG* 57 (1916), pp. 561–576. Indeed, Nicolaus de Graaff, who visited Aceh in 1641, also mentions the royal gardens. See Nicolaus de Graaff, *Reisen van Nicolaus de Graaf gedaan naar alle gewesten des werelds beginende 1639 tot 1687 incluis*, ed. by J.C.M. Warnsink ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1930), p. 23.

[19] This is beside the fact that European visitors described the city and its palace as ill fortified. Beaulieu says that the capital city was "an open place without walls, and the castle is no more fortified than any ordinary gentleman's house" (Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 744). This is perhaps particularly true of Aceh during the reign of its strongest ruler, Iskandar Muda, and when Acehnese self-confidence in the state's military prowess was most felt. This picture, however, seems to have changed during the period of the queens' rules, when both internal and external security threats were apparent. William Dampier says that "the Queen has a large palace here, built handsomely with stone, but I could not get into the inside of it" (William Dampier, *Voyages and Descriptions*, vol. 2 (London: James Knapton, 1699), p. 130). William Marsden describes the palace as "a very rude and uncouth piece of architecture, designed to resist the attacks of internal enemies, and surrounded for that purpose with a moat and strong walls, but without any regular plan, or view to the modern system of military defense" (William Marsden, *The History of Sumatra*, a reprint from the 3rd edition., ed. and introd. John Bastin (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 3977–398). But, to claim that the palace was not at all fortified is misleading. Even during the reign of Iskandar Muda the Dalam was well protected, as will be shown later.

for a wall. On the top of this bank there grow a great many large reeds as tall as ash-trees, and planted so thick that one cannot see through them."[20] A strict rule was enforced to the effect that no one was allowed to cut down or even touch the reeds: a death penalty applied to those who broke the rule. Beaulieu speaks of an Acehnese ambassador to Holland who, after having long been absent from his native country, made the mistake of tampering with the reeds and was as a result put to death.[21] This was but one of the many regulations enforced respecting the inviolability of the palace set out in article twenty-nine of the *Adat Aceh*.[22]

The Dalam was also equipped with many guns, which, it should be understood, represented protection for the palace itself and symbolized the ruler's power. The guns were placed in several parts of the palace to fortify the royal enclosure. On both sides of the main gate, two brass guns were mounted facing those who entered the palace. Many artillery pieces were also placed on a large bastion overlooking the point where the Krueng Daroy river entered the palace. The building where the firearms were stored was located in the outer court. Guns were also mounted on the terrace stretching from the second gate.[23] The fact that the palace was equipped with so many guns, besides other means of fortification, such as ditches and earth-walls, suggests that the royal enclosure was well protected.

The Dalam had a life of its own, given the large number and variety of people working and living there. During the reign of Iskandar Muda, there were three groups of servants working inside the palace: these included women, eunuchs, and military slaves. The women, who were observed by Beaulieu to number in the area of 3,000, were divided into several groups headed by female captains

[20] Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 744.

[21] Ibid.

[22] The royal prohibitions are five: people are required to (1) keep their eyes from spying on the palace; (2) keep their ears from hearing what is being said in the palace; (3) keep their mouths from saying bad things about everything inside the royal palace, for it could eliminate the glory of the ruler; (4) keep their eyes from seeing the ornaments of the palace; and (5) for those who break these rules punishment would be in force (*Adat Atjeh*, reproduced in facsimile from a manuscript from India Office Library, ed. by G.W.J. Drewes and P. Voorhoeve ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1958), pp. 22–24).

[23] Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 744; Lombard, *Le sultanat*, p. 131; Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," pp. 22–23.

and had the responsibility of providing domestic services to the court.[24] Even though we are provided with few details, these women were said to have stayed mainly in the palace where they had their own bazaar and law-court.[25] In 1641, however, Nicolaus de Graaff estimated that there were only seven to eight hundred women working and living in the palace.[26] A few years earlier, in 1637, Peter Mundy speaks of the court women participating in the sovereign's procession after watching an elephant-fight. They reinforced the ruler's guards, carrying bows and arrows.[27]

Iskandar Muda is also reported to have possessed about 500 eunuchs. They were the only ones who were allowed to enter both the private quarters of the ruler and the apartments of the court women (harem). They also functioned as the guards of the inner court during the night.[28] Indeed, eunuchs played a significant role within the sultanate. Yet the question of their exact function remains an open one, due to the fact that information on them is sketchy. The term used in Malay sources to designate them is *sida* (plural: *sida-sida*). This word denotes both court functionary and a castrated man. The verbal form of the word is *menyida*, which means to "emasculate" or "castrate."[29] Teuku Iskandar considers the term to refer

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[24] These women servants, according to Beaulieu, consisted mainly of unmarried orphan daughters and war captives from the conquered Malay states (Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 744).

[25] Ibid.

[26] Graaff, *Reisen*, p. 13.

[27] Mundy, *The Travels*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 131. What is striking about these women is that they all had their hair cut as a symbol of mourning for the death of Iskandar Muda one year earlier. Mundy explains that the practice was carried on in accordance with the custom of the country. This practice was also to be seen when the Queen Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn died in 1675. Thomas Bowrey, who was in Aceh at that time, says that "the mourninge of the female sect was to cut the haire of theire heads, which was performed, but to many of them by violence, for those who that wold not doe it were taken out into the market place and there compelled to doe [it] in publicke, without any respect to theire ranke and qualitie" (Bowrey, *A Geographical Account*, p. 311).

[28] Beulieu, "The Expedition," p. 744.

[29] See R.J. Wilkinson, *A Malay-English Dictionary* (Romanised), pt. 2 (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd., 1959), p. 1103; William Marsden, *A Dictionary and Grammar of the Malay Language*, introd. by Russell Jones, vol. 1 (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 195; Sir Richard Winstedt, *An Unabridged Malay-English Dictionary*, 6th ed. (Kuala Lumpur & Singapore: Marican & Sons Ltd., 1965), p. 333. In the Acehnese language, the word also denotes both court officials and eunuchs. See Hoesein Djajadiningrat, *Atjehsch Nederlandsch woordenboek*, vol. 2 (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1934), pp. 781–782.

to court officials who were castrated (*dikebiri*).[30] The few references to eunuchs at the court by European sources leave little doubt that *sida-sida* were court servants who were castrated. This sense of the term finds its parallel in the central Islamic lands where, according to David Ayalon, eunuch signifies both *khādim* (servant) and *khāṣī* (castrated man).[31]

The main reason behind the employment of eunuchs at the court seems to have been the large number of women living in the Dalam. Having the eunuchs working as servants, therefore, meant there was less chance of the forbidden act of adultery occurring within the palace. Ayalon's statement on this issue, although it again applies to the practice in the central Islamic lands, is worth quoting:

> Polygamy and concubinage on the one hand, and the Muslim woman's very strict seclusion on the other, created ideal conditions for the introduction of eunuchs in very great numbers into Muslim society, and especially into the court of the rulers and the homes of the well-to-do individuals, be they military or civilian. In a palace or in a stately home, the eunuch-servant (*khādim*) had a great advantage over the unemasculated one: he was permitted to move freely in all parts of the building or buildings. At the same time, the greater the number of the eunuch-servants (in proportion to the uncastrated ones), the greater the freedom of movement of the secluded women. An increase in number of women at court must have brought about the increase in the number of eunuchs. In time, the eunuch became an indispensable and most conspicuous element in the palatial court and the stately home.[32]

It was the sulṭān's personal harem that seems to have caused the greatest concern. Davis relates that al-Mukammil had "three wives, and very many concubines, which are very closely kept."[33] Iskandar Muda is also said to have possessed many wives and concubines.[34] This large number of royal and other women working and living in the Dalam, as mentioned earlier, was clearly the chief justification for the employment of eunuchs.

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[30] See the section on terms that he provides at the end of the *Bustān*, p. 106.

[31] David Ayalon, "On the Eunuchs in Islam," *JSAI* 1 (1979), pp. 74–89. See also his "On the Term of *Khādim* in the State of "Eunuch" in the Early Muslim Sources," *Arabica* 32 (1985), pp. 289–309; Idem, "The Eunuchs in the Mamluk Sultanate," in his *The Mamlūk Military Society: Collected Studies* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1979), pp. 267–295. See also Ch. Pellat, et al., "Khāṣī," *EI2*.

[32] Ayalon, "On the Eunuchs in Islam," p. 68.

[33] Davis, *The Voyages and Works*, p. 150.

[34] Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 744.

The eunuchs seem to have functioned mainly as court-servants, either inside the Dalam, as mentioned earlier, or outside of it. In an ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā[35] procession in 1637, Mundy saw several eunuchs among the participants. He states that they were "on horseback without saddles."[36] The increasingly significant role played by eunuchs was evident during the rule of the queens. When Queen Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn was crowned, the state councillors, whom Bowrey refers to as "the wisest men," imposed several conditions upon this new ruler. Among the conditions was: "Her attendants shold not be lesse than 500 women and eunuchs."[37] Thomas Bowrey further says that the queen "hath severall eunuchs of very acute witt about her that advise with her to condescend to what is requesite. Not one man, women or childe is admitted to get a sight of her, save the women and eunuchs that are of her attendants, and some eunuchs her chiefe councellours. . . ."[38] Female rule no doubt increased the role played by the eunuchs. This was due to the much freer access to the queens they could enjoy when compared to unemasculated servants. During the ceremony held to honor the English ambassadors who had brought a letter from their authority in Surat, Bowrey observed that the attendants of Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn consisted of "100 eunuchs and 1000 of the comliest women the countrey or citty affordeth. They show themselves openly everyday. . . ."[39] During her reign, the eunuchs also appeared at the port bearing the state *cap* (seal).[40] They also played an important role in audiences held for foreign envoys[41] as well as acting as close attendants on Queen Naqiyyat al-Dīn when she went down to the river for a royal bath.[42]

Military slaves were another important class of servants. Indeed, most of them were foreigners who had been brought to Aceh and received military training.[43] Numbering in the area of about 1,500 in the time of Iskandar Muda, they were employed for the most part as royal guards. Beaulieu relates that "in the great court, where

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[35] The festival of the sacrifice on the tenth of Dhū al-Ḥijjah of Islamic calendar.
[36] Mundy, *The Travels*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 124.
[37] Bowrey, *A Geographical Account*, p. 299.
[38] Ibid., pp. 299–300.
[39] Bowrey, *A Geographical Account*, p. 310.
[40] Ibid., p. 309.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid., p. 325.
[43] Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 744.

the king's apartments are, the eunuchs keep guard: besides which there is a guard of a hundred and fifty slaves at one gate, and another of the like number at the outer of all."[44] This was in addition to the various services they provided both inside and outside of the palace.[45] Artisans were also to be found in the palace. Beaulieu mentions that about 300 of them were goldsmiths who labored at making royal ornaments.[46]

The Dalam also served as the center for various state activities, symbolizing the centrality of the royal palace. The central administration of the state seems to have been based in the palace.[47] We know that the middle part of the Dalam served as the seat of administration. But how this administration was actually carried out is unknown. In addition to the lack of information on this issue, which has hampered our effort at fully understanding how it functioned, the fact that the nature of the governing system in Aceh itself "was not truly bureaucratic or institutionalized even though a certain system is discernible in the administration"[48] makes its study even more complex.[49] It is beyond the scope of this study to explore this point at length. Nevertheless, it is worth reviewing briefly the working of the government in order to get an idea of how its administrative branch was formed and how it operated.

Without providing further details, the *Hikayat Aceh* mentions that the administration of the state during al-Mukammil's reign was basically run by several senior officials under the direction of one in particular who bore the title *sri maharaja*.[50] During the reign of Iskandar

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid. For further discussion on slavery in Southeast Asia in general and Aceh in particular see Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," pp. 396–413; Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680*, vol. 1 (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 129–136.

[46] Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 744.

[47] For a discussion on central and provincial administration in the state see Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," pp. 78–121.

[48] Ibid., p. 82.

[49] Indeed, as Ito suggests, "the sultanate of Aceh of this period was neither purely bureaucratically organized nor an impersonalized political entity. It was a state in which the sovereign was identical both conceptually and institutionally with the state and then the ruler's will was the supreme law of the realm. This is particularly true of the reign of Iskandar Muda . . ., and even senior administrative officials were, like the servants of the royal household, the ruler's servants in the broad sense" (Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," p. 29).

[50] *Hikayat Aceh*, pp. 137–154, 173–183. Different accounts are provided by European sources on this issue. John Davis states that Aceh, at that time, was "governed by

Muda the picture is more definite. The administrative body was in general divided into two branches: the secular administration, which concerned itself mainly with temporal matters, including political and economic administration, and the religious administration, which in addition to religious affairs per se was concerned with matters pertaining to law and justice. The secular branch was run by officials known as the *perdana menteri orang kaya maharaja seri maharaja* (the prime minister), the *orang kaya laksamana* (the police chief) and the *orang kaya raja lela wangsa*. The religious branch, on the other hand, was run by Shaykh Shams al-Dīn and the *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil*.[51] In 1636, a Dutch official, J. Compostel, observed that the *orang kaya laksamana* and the *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil* were the two central figures in the administration of the state.[52]

The shrinking of royal power and the rise of the power of the *orang kayas*, especially during the period after the death of Iskandar Muda (1636), resulted in a more decentralized system of government.[53] This was evidenced by the formation of an executive council consisting of four senior *orang kayas* shortly after the enthronement of Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn in 1641. The members of the council were the *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil*, the *orang kaya maharaja seri maharaja*, the *laksamana*, and the *panglima bandar orang kaya maharaja lela*.[54] A few years later, the executive body still consisted of four main councillors, each of whom held specific responsibilities. The first in rank was the *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil*, who was responsible for the administration of law and justice. The second was the *orang kaya maharaja seri maharaja*, who was responsible for matters pertaining to political administration. The third was the *panglima dalam* who, like the *laksamana*, was in charge of the security of the capital city and the military. Finally, there was the *panglima bandar*, who was responsible for the administration of

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five principal men, with their inferior officers, his secretarie, and foure called Sabandar, with these resteth all authoritie . . . His women are his chiefest counsellers" (Davis, *The Voyages and Works*, p. 150). Frederick de Houtman and James Lancaster, however, give different information that suggests that a great religious man was al-Mukammil's chief advisor. See W.S. Unger, ed., *De oudste reizen van de zeeuwen naar Oost-Indie, 1598–1604* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1948), p. 74; Lancaster, *The Voyages*, pp. 96–97.

[51] *Bustān*, pp. 35–43.

[52] *Koloniaal Archief* [henceforth K.A.], 1031, "Daghregister of J. Compstel," f. 1197.

[53] Reid, "Trade and the Problem," pp. 52–55; See also Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," pp. 100–121.

[54] *Bustān*, pp. 60, 62–63; Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," p. 104.

foreign trade in the port and the security of foreign merchants and their properties.[55] This form of government was to last until the end of the seventeenth century, with only minor changes to the titles borne by the officials involved.[56]

This brief survey of the administrative aspect of the state has shown how the Acehnese government functioned in periods of centralization and decentralization, and within the context of the palace. Indeed, the administrative machinery was concentrated in the Dalam, especially in its middle court. This was necessary since the officials mentioned above were essentially servants of the sovereign.[57]

Royal audiences were occasions on which the centrality of the palace was highlighted. These audiences seem to have been held for both foreign ambassadors and state officials and servants. During the reign of Iskandar Muda, the audiences took place in the inner court, where the hall of audience was located, as well as in the hall of nobility (Balai Besar), called by the Dutch the *binnen hoff* (inner court) or *derde hoff* (third court).[58] Neither the fixed schedule of the audiences nor how they were conducted is really known. When Beaulieu arrived in Aceh (January 1621), he was brought to the court for an audience. He writes:

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[55] An English trade document of November 1684 says that the *panglima bandar* is "hee who is appointed to treate with all strangers for dispatch of their busynesse" (Anthony Farrington, "Negotiations at Aceh in 1684: An Unpublished English Document," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 27 (1999), pp. 26–27). See also Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," pp. 109–110.

[56] See *Dagh-Register gehouden int Casteel Batavia (1653)*, pp. 39–40, *(1663)*, p. 633; Bowrey, *A Geographical Account*, pp. 299–300; Dampier, *Voyages and Discoveries*, p. 98; Farrington, "Negotiations at Aceh," pp. 23–26.

[57] This was a characteristic of the governing system in Aceh, as in other parts of the Malay world, which was not truly bureaucratic in nature. In such a case, a clear demarcation between the outward servants and the officials of the administration can hardly be drawn. The relation between the ruler and his officials was mainly based, in Ito's terms, on "an emotional and familial concept" (Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," pp. 25, 29–31). Therefore, personal loyalty was an essential bond between the ruler and his officials. A similar case is to be found in other parts of the Islamic world. On the broader concept of social bonds in the tenth and eleventh century Iran and Iraq, see Roy P. Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in Early Islamic Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980). The similar topic in the medieval Mediterranean world is studied by S.D. Goitein, "Formal Friendship in the Medieval Near East," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 115, 6 (1971), pp. 484–489. On the Fatimids of Cairo see Paula Sanders, *Rituals, Politics, and the City in Fatimid Cairo* (Albany: SUNY, 1994).

[58] Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," p. 24, and note 55, p. 39.

> . . . I was conducted to an audience to the king by the Sabandar, and four of the principal Orankays, with two elephants, and that with the following ceremonies: Upon a great elephant sat one of the principal Orankays in a coveret pulpit, who sent me a great silver dish covered with a cloth, embroidered with gold and silk of divers colour, in which I put the letter, and then gave it to him. By his command one of the Orankays mounted the other elephant, and I sat between two persons.
>
> The other two Orankays rode upon *Arabian* horse before the elephant that carried the letter. Before them were fourteen or fifteen men, each of them carrying a piece of the present covered with yellow cloth, without which nothing could be presented to the king: six trumpets, six drums, and six hautboys led the van, which sounded till we arrived at the castle, about a league off. In the rear followed three Sabandars, and all the officers of the Alfandegue [customs office] on foot; when we arrived at the castle, we alighted at a great palace before it, and when we entered the outer gate, all the men were obliged to retire: then we passed two other gates: I was ordered to put off my shoes, without which ceremony I could not have audience of the king: some time after the royal chappe [royal seal] was brought, and being first put into my hands, then raised above my head, and redelivered to him that bought it, I was ordered to follow it, being accompanied by a Sabandar and an OranKaye.
>
> We waited some time at the king's chamber door, which was covered with silver plate: at last an eunuch came out, who gave the Sabandar to understand that tho the king was more indisposed that day than usually, yet, as I was so near, he should bring me in: upon which I was led into the chamber by two men, one holding me by each hand, and sat upon the *Turky* carpet with my legs accross, according to the custom of that country. Then the two men retired, and I saluted the king in the usual form, viz. by joining my hands and lifting them up to my forehead, bowing my hand a little. . . . The king sat upon a place about two feet higher, and informed me by the Sabandar that he was infinitely obliged to the king of France for the present that he had sent him,. . . .[59]

This type of ceremonial reception for foreign ambassadors was a common practice in Aceh during the seventeenth century.[60] Our sources indicate that over the course of that century there was no substantial change in the proceedings. The ceremony involved several high-ranking officials, a procession of highly-adorned state elephants upon which the envoys were seated and on which the foreign

[59] Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 731.

[60] As William Marsden insists, this ceremony was restricted to foreign ambassadors only (Marsden, *The History of Sumatra*, p. 402).

Figure 4. A European image of the way the Acehnese took foreign ambassadors and their presents to the royal palace. (Reproduced from W.S. Unger, ed., *De oudste reizen van de zeeuwen naar Oost-Indie, 1598–1604* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1948), p. 84)

ruler's letters and presents were put, musicians playing trumpets and drums, and several royal guards who marched before the envoys. Only minor variations of the proceedings can be observed. About two decades earlier, Lancaster had been brought into an audience with al-Mukammil accompanied by just such a procession. Six great elephants were involved (instead of the two in Beaulieu's case). But, here no horses are described as having taken part. The biggest of the elephants, Lancaster says, reached "about thirteene or fouteene foote high; which had a smal castle (like a coach) upon his back, covered with crimson velvet. In the middle thereof was a great bason of gold, and a piece of silke exceeding richly wrought to cover it, under which Her Majesties letter was put."[61] Lancaster himself rode

[61] Lancaster, *The Voyages*, p. 91.

another elephant.[62] Indeed, a similar procedure was also followed during the rule of the queens.[63]

When the procession arrived at the Dalam, the envoys were taken into their audience with the sovereign. Several aspects of this procedure were recorded by these visitors. Before entering the Dalam the guest was asked to remove his shoes. In the presence of the sovereign, Davis says, one had to sit before him "bare-legged, and barefooted, holding the palmes of the hands together, and heaving them up above his head, bowing with the bodie, [he] must say Doulat;[64] which done dutie is discharged. And so he sitteth downe crosselegged in the king's presence."[65] This was known as the act of obeisance (*sembah*),[66] which symbolized the respect of the visitor for the sovereign.[67] The sovereign was seated on the throne, immobile and in full regalia. When he was brought into an audience with al-Mukammil, Davis found that:

> Hee sitteth upon the ground crosse-legged like a taylor, and must all those doe that be in his presence. He always weareth foure Cresis, two before and two behind, exceeding rich with diamonds and rubies; and hath a sword lying upon his lap. He hath attending upon him fortie women at the least, some with fannes to coole him, some with clothes to dry his sweat, some give him aquavitae, others water: the rest sing pleasant songs.[68]

The symbolism of the throne was of the greatest significance in the traditions of the Acehnese monarchy. A fully ornamented royal throne,

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[62] Ibid.

[63] For some examples of the proceeding during the queen's rule see Mundy, *The Travels*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 118; Bowrey, *A Geographical Account*, pp. 309–310; Farrington, "Negotiations at Aceh," pp. 23–24.

[64] The word is commonly mentioned in the indigenous sources when state officials or servants were in an audience with the sovereign.

[65] Davis, *Voyages and Works*, pp. 149–150.

[66] In the *sembah*, Wilkinson states, "the hands are closed as though in prayer with the finger-tips touching; they are then raised, not above the chin if the chief is of less than royal blood but as high as the forehead if he is a reigning Sultan" (Wilkinson, *A Malay-English Dictionary*, pt. 2, p. 1055).

[67] Mundy points out that this was also the way the people made their obeisance to the ruler (Mundy, *The Travels*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 123). In February 1638, Mundy, together with his two friends, went to visit the sovereign, in which they made their act of obeisance (*sembah*) three times (Ibid., vol. 3, pt. 2, p. 335). For more examples of the obeisance practices see Lancaster, *The Voyages*, pp. 92, 130–131; Bowrey, *A Geographical Account*, p. 307.

[68] Davis, *Voyages and Works*, p. 148.

for instance, is explicitly insisted upon in the *Adat Aceh*. Moreover, as we saw in Chapter Two, the final character in the word "raja" (when written in Arabic script ج ا ر) is the letter ج, which designates the quality of "jemala" (Arabic: *jamāl*, meaning beauty). This is manifested by the sovereign in three aspects: his character, his throne and its attributes, and his behavior in accordance with God's commands.[69] The second aspect is elaborated more fully in article three of the first section of the *Adat Aceh* concerning "regulations for kings" (*kehendak segala raja-raja*). The second of the eight points delineated there deals with how to glorify the throne, wear highly ornamented and glorious royal clothing and the palace, but especially the hall of audience ([Balai] Penghadapan).[70] The throne's glory is then enhanced by the presence of state officials surrounding the ruler. These officials were to include the *'ulamā'*, the prime minister, all the nobles and other court functionaries. The *Adat Aceh* describes the scene metaphorically, likening the ruler to a full moon, and the officials around him to glittering stars.[71]

The style of the throne seems to have varied over time. As mentioned earlier, al-Mukammil normally sat on the ground. Beaulieu, however, informs us that Iskandar Muda sat upon a throne about two feet in height, while Marsden speaks of the throne as being made of "ivory and tortoise-shell."[72] During the reign of the queens the style of the throne was much different from before. As prescribed in the *Tāj al-Salāṭīn*, a female ruler was neither to be seen in public, nor could she meet with any man face to face. Only her voice was allowed to be heard.[73] Apparently, this ordinance was strictly followed by the queens. Speaking of the throne in their time, William Marsden insists that "a curtain of gauze was hung before it, which did not obstruct the audience, but prevented any perfect view."[74]

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[69] See above Chapter Two, pp. 57–58.
[70] *Adat Aceh*, pp. 9–11.
[71] Ibid., p. 8.
[72] Marsden, *The History of Sumatra*, p. 402.
[73] Bukhārī al-Jawharī, *Tāj al-Salāṭīn (De kroon aller koningen)*, ed. and trans. into Dutch by P.P. Roorda van Eijsinga (Batavia: Lands Drukkerij, 1827), pp. 63–64; idem, *Taj us-Salatin*, ed. by Khalid Hussain (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1966), pp. 64–65; idem, *Taju'ssalatin*, ed. by Jumsari Jusuf (Jakarta: Depertemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Proyek Penerbitan Buku Bacaan dan Sastra Indonesia dan Daerah, 1979), p. 38.
[74] Marsden, *The History of Sumatra*, p. 402.

Figure 5. An image of Acehnese royal palace during the reign of Sulṭān ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Riʿāyat Shāh al-Mukammil (d. 1604) as provided by John Davis. (Reproduced from W.S. Unger, ed., *De oudste reizen van de zeeuwen naar Oost-Indie, 1598–1604* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1948), p. 78)

However, Bowrey, through his personal experience, provides an even more accurate description. At his audience with Queen Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn, Bowrey found the female sovereign seated within a lodge. Therefore, anyone who had an audience with her had to sit facing this lodging. The act of obeisance in such a case was made to the ruler's window. According to Bowrey's description, "she all the while looketh upon us, althogh wee cannot see her."[75] Of the throne of Queen Zakiyyat al-Dīn in 1684, the English ambassadors write:

> There is adjoyneing to this [the palace of audience] an upper and open roome where the Queen sitts in a throwne of ivory and tortyse, and round her ladyes, and below the throwne two other seates of ladyes. Before this roome there is hung of a thin gawes which hinders

[75] Bowrey, *A Geographical Account*, pp. 307, 309.

> not the audience but prevents any perfect view of the Queen. Without the roome there is a gallery where are placed the ornaments of state, amongst which are most remarkble three large bucklers of masse gold and three fowling peeces likewise of gold.[76]

After making his obeisance, the guest was expected to sit on the carpeted floor before the ruler. Then, betel was served to him. A royal audience for foreign ambassadors was usually followed by a luxurious royal banquet, a presentation of royal gifts,[77] and various kinds of entertainment.[78]

Beginning from the reign of Iskandar Thānī, the audience seems to have been held on a regular basis, i.e., every Saturday.[79] Even though the picture provided is far from clear, the *Adat Aceh* describes how on this day the state officials, each of whom bore a *keris* (dagger) and a *pedang* (sword), arrived at the palace and entered the Balai Besar (the hall of nobility) in the inner court. They were then called upon to approach the stone platform, called the Perakna Seumah,[80] where the sovereign was seated.[81] It was from this place, according to the *Bustān*, that the ruler delivered his/her commands.[82] The exact

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[76] Farrington, "Negotiations at Aceh," p. 25.

[77] John Davis, for instance, was given by al-Mukammil "a cryse [*keris*] of honour. This cryse is a kind of dagger, whose haft and handle . . . is made of a kind of mettall, which the king esteemeth fare beyond gold, and is set with rubbies. This cryse, but from the kings gift, and having it, there is absolute freedome to take victuals without money, and to command the rest as slaves" (Davis, *Voyages and Works*, pp. 140–141). He was also presented with another royal gift by putting on a grand royal cloth (Ibid., p. 142). Royal gifts were also presented to Lancaster. They were "a fine white robe of calico, richly wrought with gold, and a very faire girdle of Turkey worke, and two cresses, which are a kind of daggers, all which nobleman put on [him] in the kings presence" (Lancaster, *The Voyages*, p. 93). Gifts in the form of royal clothes were also presented by Iskandar Muda to Beaulieu and Queen Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn to Bowrey, which they both put on before the rulers (Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 731; Bowrey, *A Geographical Account*, p. 307).

[78] The entertainments were presented in the forms of traditional dances performed by women. Elephant fights and cock-fightings were also among popular entertainments involved. See Lancaster, *The Voyages*, p. 93; Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 732; Bowrey, *A Geographical Account*, p. 310; Farrington, "Negotiations as Aceh," pp. 23–24; Marsden, *The History of Sumatra*, p. 402.

[79] Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," p. 32, based on the *Dagh-Register* from 1640 to 1660. Indeed, this information was also later, in 1684, confirmed by the English ambassadors at the court of Queen Zakiyyat al-Dīn (Farrington, "Negotiations at Aceh," p. 25).

[80] In the *Bustān* it is called Paratna Sembah (p. 61). See also C. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, trans. by A.W.S. O'Sullivan, vol. 1 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1906), p. 139.

[81] *Adat Aceh*, p. 99.

[82] *Bustān*, pp. 30, 58–60. See also Lombard, *Le sultanat*, p. 135, note 6.

location of the Perakna Seumah, however, is still unknown. L.F. Brakel suggests that it was located on the Medan Khayyālī.[83] Unfortunately, he provides no evidence to support this claim. What seems likely is that the stone platform was located either in the audience hall (inner court) or in the outer courtyard, as suggested by Takeshi Ito.[84]

During the audience, the nobles were seated in accordance with their *taraf* (rank/status) in the court. The four most prominent *orang kayas*[85] occupied the foremost place, followed by a group of eight other *orang kayas*.[86] Other court officials and functionaries were seated in places assigned to them.[87] Indeed, the tradition of arranging the seats or standing positions of state officials at the court in accordance with a hierarchical order was common in Aceh. The *Adat Aceh* provides cursory information on the issue under the heading of *Silsilah Taraf Berdiri Segala Hulubalang [Uleebalangs]* (Regulations Concerning the Standing Position of the *Uleebalangs*) that is said to have been established during the reign of Queen Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn. Various state officials are enumerated there. Yet full identification of each individual cannot actually be achieved, due to a lack of source materials pertaining to the issue. Nevertheless, the officials can generally be classified into three main groups. The first group consisted of high-ranking officials, including the *orang kayas, ceteria* (warriors) and ministers. The second group seems to have consisted of those who were responsible for the security of the Dalam, legal administration (i.e. *faqīhs*), and several *bentaras* (heralds). The third group consisted of a large number of *bentaras*. As for the seated or standing positions, the right side of the drum (one of the ruler's symbols) was reserved for those who had no *taraf*, which implies that those who had *taraf* were seated or stood on the left of the drum.[88] It is to be noted that the tradition of fixing a hierarchy of rank within the Acehnese court dated back to an early period. Yet it was only when the power of

[83] Brakel, "State and Statecraft," p. 63.
[84] Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," p. 44, note 98.
[85] These four *orang kayas* must have consisted of the four executive councillors.
[86] This number of the *orang kayas* is also confirmed by the accounts given by the British trade ambassadors in 1684. The accounts further describe that every Saturday an audience with the Queen was held in which the twelve *orang kayas* participated (Farrington, "Negotiations at Aceh," p. 25).
[87] *Adat Aceh*, pp. 99–100.
[88] Ibid., pp. 104–111.

the sovereign waned that the practice became much more apparent and elaborate.[89]

The political significance of the audience can be seen, for instance, from article five of the first section of the *Adat Aceh*, where it is stated that the ruler should inquire about certain points related to the proceedings from the *biduanda* (palace servant). These included who was present at the audience and who not, and who behaved correctly in paying homage and who not. He was also expected to inquire as to who had seemed to enjoy the audience and who not, and what impressions the participants had carried away from the event. Finally, the question of who was really loyal (*berbuat kebaktian*) to the ruler and who was showing disloyalty through disobedience to the law was also to be raised.[90] It was only "after asking these kinds of questions," the *Adat Aceh* insists, "that the ruler should enter his/her private quarters."[91]

The royal audience, therefore, served the sovereign in that it allowed him to express his power and authority and even to test these latter. The importance of the tradition was also shown in the demands placed upon the *biduanda* who was in charge of monitoring the proceedings. As the *pancara*[92] (master of ceremonies?), the *biduanda* was required to watch closely the following points: (1) the complete security of the sovereign; (2) the orders issued by the ruler and all words expressed by those present; (3) the seating etiquette of those present, making sure everyone was in his/her proper place (*masing-masing pada tempatnya atas kadarnya*); (4) the sovereign's behavior during the audience, either with foreign envoys or the people of the country (even when the ruler ordered something in obscure language, he was still able to understand it), and finally (5) his own behavior, given that, as the *pancara*, he had to set an example to all those present.[93]

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[89] Cf. Drewes & Voorhoeve, "Introduction" to the *Adat Aceh*, p. 22; Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," p. 33.

[90] *Adat Aceh*, pp. 14–16.

[91] *Setelah sudah raja bertanyakan demikian, maka rajapun berangkatlah masuk ke istananya.* (Ibid.).

[92] I have not been able to find the exact meaning of this word in dictionaries. But based on my understanding of the text, I assume that it must have signified "the master of the audience," which in Arabic is known as *ṣāḥib al-majlis*. Therefore, when the *Adat Aceh* refers to a *pancara dari pada majlis raja*, it means "the master of the ruler's audience." See more below.

[93] *Adat Aceh*, pp. 21–22.

The centrality of the Dalam may also be seen in terms of its function as an economic and political center. Both foreign traders and envoys were required to come to the palace to discuss many issues with the sovereign. Even during the reigns of less powerful rulers, they were still required to consult with him/her directly.[94] Ceremonies were held in their honor, signifying both recognition of the foreign authorities and the royal tradition of the sultanate. (Some other ceremonies, which also took place for the most part in the palace, will be discussed later.)

We now come to other elements of the palace complex, especially the garden, the Gunungan, and the river (Dār al-'Ishq). The *Bustān* says:

> At that time His Royal Highness [Iskandar Thānī] constructed a *bustān*, which is a garden about one thousand fathoms (*depa*) in its broad. The garden is called Taman Ghayrah. . . . In the middle of the garden is located a river, called Dār al-'Ishq, which is walled with stone. Its water is so clean and cool that whoever drinks it will recover from any sickness . . .
>
> To the right of the river is found a very large field . . . called Medan Khayrānī. And right in the middle of the field is located a mountain, on which stands a tower functioning as a place for sitting state (*semayam*), known as Gegunungan Menara Permata (the mountain of the jeweled tower). Its poles are made of copper, and its roof is made of silver, resembling the scales of palm leaves, while its peak is made of pinchbeck. . . . Next to the mountain is located his royal burial place (Kandang). . . . And whoever enters the area should recite prayer (*ṣalawāt*) for the Prophet (peace be upon him). . . . It is in the garden that a mosque is built, called 'Ishq Mushāhadah, the top of which is made of gold. In the mosque stands a stone-made pulpit (*minbar*). . . .[95]

In its description of the Taman Ghayrah, the *Bustān* does not provide any mention of its function. European sources are silent on this issue as well. Just before the Dutch occupation of Aceh, however, the garden seems to have functioned as a royal recreation area.[96] Could it also have served the same purpose during the seventeenth century?

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[94] See, for instance, how Queen Zakiyyat al-Dīn still functioned as the main reference in a long process of negotiations between the English envoys and Acehnese authority (from 18 October to 23 December 1684) over the former request to establish a fortified settlement on one of the islands on the road to Aceh (Farrington, "Negotiations at Aceh," pp. 19–33).

[95] *Bustān*, pp. 48–50.

[96] Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 2, p. 63.

The tradition of building a "paradise garden" in the royal palace complex was not new or even peculiar to Aceh. Earlier, Muslims in Persia, India, and the Middle East had already established the tradition.[97] Bertram Schrieke even suggests that the pleasure garden was one of the many identifiable Mughāl influences on Aceh.[98] In their own settings both the Mughāl and the Persian gardens are said to have symbolized cosmic notions and served as places for both contemplation and recapitulating paradise.[99] That being the case, can a parallel be drawn between the Taman Ghayrah and these Persian and Mughāl versions?

In the first place, the Taman Ghayrah needs to be seen in combination with the river that flowed through its center. As mentioned earlier, the Dalam was built at the confluence of the two rivers, the Krueng Aceh and the Dār al-'Ishq (Krueng Daroy). When it underwent a reconstruction in 1613, a branch of the Dār al-'Ishq was diverted through it. This no doubt shows a conscious effort on the part of the ruler to exploit the river. Indeed, all the countries "below the wind"[100] were rich in water. And, it was the availability of good water that appeared to be "a definite factor in the siting of many towns and royal centres."[101] Water was not only the everyday drink of the people of that region, but it was also associated with ritual purification, cooling and healing.[102] The *Hikayat Aceh* speaks of the Aceh River as wonderfully sweet and healthful. By God's will, it says, many sick people were cured either by drinking from or by bathing in it.[103] William Dampier says the following in this connection:

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[97] See John D. Hoag, *Islamic Architecture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1977), p. 9; John Brooks, *Gardens of Paradise: the History and Design of the Great Islamic Gardens* (New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1987), pp. 13–14, 17–24; Donald N. Wilber, *Persian Gardens and Garden Pavilions* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oak, 1979), p. 3.

[98] B. Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological Studies*, pt. 2 (The Hague and Bandung: W. van Hoeve, 1957), p. 260.

[99] Nader Ardalan and Laleh Bakhtiar, *The Sense of Unity: The Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 68; Sylvia Crowe, et al., *The Gardens of Mughal India* (London: Thames and Huston, 1972), pp. 14–27; Brooks, *Gardens of Paradise*, pp. 17–24.

[100] For the meaning of the term "below the wind" see above Chapter Two, p. 36, note 6.

[101] Reid, *Southeast Asia*, vol. 1, p. 37.

[102] For further discussion on the meaning and the use of water in Southeast Asia in general see ibid., pp. 36–40.

[103] *Hikayat Aceh*, p. 165.

> They are [the Acehnese] here, as at Mindanao, very superstitious in washing and cleansing themselves from defilements, and for that reason they delight to live near the rivers or streams of water. The river of Achin near the city is always full of people both sexes and all ages. . . . Even the sick are brought to the river to wash. I know not whether it is accounted good to wash in all distempers, but I am certain from my own experience, it is good for those that have flux, especially mornings and evenings, ... But the most do it upon a religious account, for therein consists the chief part of their religion.[104]

Water feasts also formed an important aspect of court tradition. The Dutchman Frederick de Houtman was invited by al-Mukammil to join him in a royal water feast on 10 July 1599.[105] On 2 May 1613, Thomas Best experienced a royal bath with Iskandar Muda who invited him to join him in the water.[106] Queen Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn also performed bathing rituals and invited foreign envoys to join her.[107] Participating in all such feasts were state officials as well. Royal banquets were served and eaten while they were immersed in the water. Certain entertainments were also performed.

The important role played by water in the country may help us understand the function of the Taman Ghayrah and its complex. Robert Wessing speaks of water and the associated lotus as "a Hindu symbol for renewal and enlightenment."[108] Thus, the practice of Acehnese rulers bathing in the river can be seen as being perfectly in line with this belief. Jacoba Hooykaas observes that when a king of Majapahit received the king of Kutai, Maharaja Sultan, they took a bath together. After their bath, the Majapahit King brought the Maharaja Sultan "to a Nagasari-tree and made him sit there, on a white stone."[109] Then the queen and other court ladies went to take a bath in the tank of Banjaran Sari (the flower garden). After bathing

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[104] Dampier, *Voyages and Descriptions*, p. 137.
[105] Unger, *De oudste reizen*, pp. 71–72.
[106] Best, *The Voyage*, pp. 55, 210.
[107] K.A., 1051, "Daghregister of Pieter Sourij," f. 567; Anthony Reid, "Elephants and Water in the Feasting of Seventeenth Century Aceh," *JMBRAS* 62, 2 (1989), pp. 39–41.
[108] Robert Wessing, "The *Gunongan* in Banda Aceh, Indonesia: Agni's Fire in Allah's Paradise?" *Archipel* 35 (1988), p. 173. See also George Michell, *The Hindu Temple* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 68.
[109] Jacoba Hooykaas, "Upon a White Stone under a Nagasari-Tree," *BKI* 113, 4 (1957), p. 325.

they walked about the garden picking flowers and fruits.[110] The bath in this story, for Wessing, was parallel to the royal bath in Aceh, while the Nagasari-Tree was similar to the Gunungan and the stone under the Nagasari-Tree comparable to the ones described in the *Bustān*.[111] Therefore, Wessing argues, "the Taman Ghairah was more than just a playground for the women of the palace. Rather, it had the highest cosmological significance, being a place of purification, a place where the heaven and earth intersected, a ritual place *par excellence*."[112]

The Gunungan was another important element of the royal complex. The history of this "mountain-like structure" is unknown. Only the *Bustān* indirectly reveals that the building was constructed by Iskandar Thānī. This has led Hoesein Djajadiningrat to ascribe its establishment to this ruler.[113] Surprisingly, all important European sources are silent on this issue. The only European source that makes a possible reference to this building is the *Decadas Da Asia* of Joao de Barros, where it is said that in Aceh, in the first decade of the sixteenth century, "there was a great heathen temple which was famous for its gold . . ."[114] However, the identification of this temple with the Gunungan is premature. Nevertheless, as Wessing suggests, whether the structure was built sometime in the 17th century or earlier, it can be ascertained that "its political ideology in terms of which it functioned had a distinctly Hindu flavor."[115]

Scholars, including Brakel and Wessing, argue that the Gunungan was a "cosmic mountain," constituting a replica of Mt. Meru.[116] Parallelism between the cosmos and the people was a common belief in Southeast Asia. In order for the latter to prosper they needed to be organized in line with the image of the former, which meant recreating the universe in a smaller scale.[117] Mt. Meru was believed

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[110] Ibid.
[111] Wessing, "The *Gunongan*," pp. 171–177.
[112] Ibid., p. 176.
[113] Djajadiningrat, "De stichting," p. 561.
[114] Mark Dion, "Sumatra Through Portuguese Eyes: Excerpts from Joao de Barros' *Decadas Da Asia*," *Indonesia* 9 (1970), p. 158.
[115] Wessing, "The *Gunongan*," p. 169.
[116] Brakel, "State and Statecraft," p. 60; Wessing, "The *Gunongan*," pp. 169–171.
[117] Robert Heine-Geldern, "Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia," *Far Eastern Quarterly* 2 (1942), pp. 15–18.

to be the center of the universe,[118] and indeed, as Wessing observes, the structure of the Gunungan is similar to that of Meru replicas.[119] Furthermore, he concludes that the structure "was not just a Meru in a Garden of Paradise but, more specifically that given the description of it in the Bustan, it was probably dedicated to Agni, the god of fire, the universal king."[120]

The question that must be raised here is: How could such a scenario be possible in the context of Aceh as an Islamic sultanate? It is to be noted in the first place that only the *Bustān* describes the existence of the garden, the Gunungan, and all other attributes. Our other two main indigenous sources, the *Hikayat Aceh* and the *Adat Aceh*, are completely silent on this issue. European sources are not helpful on this subject either. The only points that outside sources touched upon were some of the river rituals mentioned above, while the *Hikayat Aceh* makes only brief mention of the Aceh River. It is surprising how the European sources, which are fairly informative in their description of the topography of the country and its traditions, are silent on this subject. The most likely scenario is that with the intensification of Islam in Aceh, some dominant pre-Islamic traditions lost their grip on society, including the garden and its complex, while others survived. We have seen, for instance, how the popular indigenous river feasts in Southeast Asia were still favored in Aceh; yet an Islamic ingredient soon came to play a part here as well. The ritual bath on the last Wednesday of the Muslim month of Ṣafar, known as the *mandi ṣafar*,[121] may have served as a model here. A similar situation seems to have obtained regarding the Taman Ghayrah and its complex. The Islamization of the complex was apparent with the Arabization of the garden's attributes. A mosque, called the 'Ishq Mushāhadah (Love of Mystic Vision), was established in the garden. Therefore, it can safely be suggested that the garden functioned more than simply as a place for a recreation, it

[118] John Dowson, *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion, Geography, History, and Literature* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1961), p. 208.

[119] Wessing, "The *Gunongan*," pp. 169–171.

[120] Ibid., p. 186.

[121] Best, *The Voyage*, p. 159. See also Snouck Hurgronje, *The Acehnese*, vol. 1, pp. 206–207; G.F. Pijper, *Studien over de geschiedenis van de Islam in Indonesia, 1900–1950* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977), pp. 146–157; Reid, "Elephants and Water," pp. 38–39.

was the "highest form of pleasure represented by the mystic communion with God." Indeed, as Reid argues, "many of its features were intended to evoke that heavenly garden which is the conventional Islamic vision of paradise."[122]

B. *Religious Ceremonies*

The previous section has shown the centrality of the royal compound and its complex. The Dalam functioned as the most important center of the state. It was where the sovereign lived, the administration of the country was carried out, cultural symbols were displayed, and economic affairs were regulated. The physical features of the compound and all regulations associated with it also reflected and symbolized the royal power and its greatness. Ito has rightly suggested that "the *Dalam* was not just the political centre of the sultanate, but also the centre of religious, cultural and economic life."[123] Indeed, the *Adat Aceh* demands that the ruler create a glorious royal compound and work to achieve the prosperity of those who live in it, in addition to trying to obtain a prosperous life for all of his people in general.[124]

Religious ceremonies constituted a major element in the state. As will be shown later, the ruler was at the center of the rituals and the palace was their pivot. In seventeenth century Aceh, no matter how religious the nature of the ceremonies was, they also formed an essential part of state ritual. In other words, both religious and royal rituals became one. As such, the ceremonies reflected the articulation of both religious and political authority claimed by the ruler, the assertion of royal power, and the hierarchical social order in Aceh. Therefore, there are two fundamental issues that will be raised in our analysis: 1) What functional relationship existed between power and ceremonies?; and 2) Were there any conceptual links between the royal ceremonies and systems of belief? Through this analysis it is hoped that the real historical significance of the events will be

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[122] Reid, "Elephants and Water," p. 42. See also Brakel, "State and Statecraft," pp. 59–63; Wessing, "The *Gunongan*," pp. 186–187.

[123] Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," p. 24.

[124] *Adat Aceh*, p. 12.

comprehended. For this purpose, a historical reconstruction of the ceremonies in question is presented which will then be followed by a discussion of the construction of the festivals. However, before this a survey of the codification of the ceremonies in the *Adat Aceh* is worth presenting.

1. *The* Adat Aceh *and the Ceremonies*

The *Adat Aceh* is in fact a court record that is concerned with affairs of state. Compiled gradually over a considerable period of time,[125] the work in its surviving form was copied at the end of the second decade of the nineteenth century for the purpose of providing the English authority at Penang with the information necessary for establishing an Anglo-Acehnese commercial treaty;[126] nevertheless, it consists largely of material collected in the seventeenth century. Three stages in this process can be detected: the first encompassing the first year of the reign of Iskandar Muda (1607); the second the year 1055 A.H./1645–1646 (falling within the reign of Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn); and the third the year 1120 A.H./1708–1709 A.D. Some minor royal edicts from later in the eighteenth century were later included as

[125] This work includes in the category of court records that were mainly kept at the royal court, as was the case with other court records in other parts of the archipelago. For further discussion of the issue, see Hoesein Djajadiningrat, "Local Tradition and Indonesian Historiography," in Soedjatmoko, et al., eds., *An Introduction to Indonesian Historiography* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), pp. 74–86; R.O. Winstedt, "Malay Chronicles from Sumatra and Malaya," in D.G.E. Hall, ed., *Historians of South East Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 24–28; J.C. Bottoms, "Some Malay Historical Sources: A Bibliographical Note," in Soedjatmoko, et al., eds., *An Introduction to Indonesian Historiography* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), pp. 156–193; P.E. de Jong, "The Character of the Malay Annals," in J. Bastin and R. Roolvink, eds., *Malayan and Indonesian Studies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 235–241; T. Iskandar, "Three Malay Historical Writings in the First Half of the 17th Century," *JMBRAS* 40, 2 (1967), pp. 38–53; A. Teeuw, "Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai and Sejarah Melayu," in J. Bastin and R. Roolvink, eds., *Malayan and Indonesian Studies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 222–234; J. Noordyn, "Some Aspects of Macassar-Buginese Historiography," in D.G.E. Hall, ed., *Historians of South East Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 29–36; Raja Ali Haji ibn Ahmad, *Tuhfat al-Nafis (The Precious Gift)*, annot. and trans. by Virginia Matheson and Barbara Watson Andaya (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982), especially "Introduction," pp. 1–8.

[126] G.W.J. Drewes and P. Voorhoeve in their "Introduction" to the *Adat Atjeh*, pp. 7–8; T. Puvanarajah and R. Suntharalingam, "The Acheh Treaty of 1819," *JSEAH* 2, 3 (1961), pp. 36–46; Anthony Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 6–14.

well.[127] Both G.W.J. Drewes and P. Voorhoeve have published a complete text of the *Adat Aceh* based on a manuscript preserved in the India Office Library, London. Their analysis of this text proves that the authenticity of the source is beyond doubt.[128]

It is not the intention of this section to discuss this issue at any length. But, it seems necessary to emphasize that the *Adat Aceh* is rich in information on the cultural and administrative dimensions of Aceh of our period, since two-thirds of its contents relate mainly to the seventeenth century. Therefore, this text is no doubt central to any attempt at defining Acehnese culture in that era.[129]

One of the four areas of state affairs covered by this source concerns court ceremonial, both religious and non-religious, which is referred to in the work as *Adat Majlis Raja-Raja* (Etiquette to be observed at the Court).[130] A close scrutiny of the prescriptions given in the *Adat Aceh* for the ceremonies indicates a highly developed and regulated set of court rituals that unite for the most part both religious and traditional ceremonies within a single protocol. The question that should be raised here is: What was the reason behind the compilation of the section on ceremonies?

The *Adat Aceh* explicitly states that Iskandar Muda was the ruler who ordered the codification of this area of state practice. Right after his ascension to power in 1015 A.H./1607 A.D., he ordered his officials[131] in the Balai Besar to make a certified copy of the *sarakatas* or royal edicts (*suruh tandakan surat dalam tarakata*). On this basis, Orang Kaya Seri Maharaja Lela wrote down the regulations concerning:

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[127] *Adat Aceh*, pp. 48–50, 118–119. See also Drewes and Voorhoeve, "Introduction," pp. 17–18, 23.

[128] See their complete "Introduction" to the text, pp. 7–47. See also M.C. Ricklefs and P. Voorhoeve, *Indonesian Manuscripts in Great Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 121, 124.

[129] Indeed, in this aspect the *Adat Aceh* is beyond comparison with the other two major indigenous sources of seventeenth century Aceh, i.e., the *Hikayat Aceh* and the *Bustān al-Salāṭīn*. Ito, who dedicates his study mainly to the first text, writes: "the Sultanate [of Aceh] of our period [seventeenth century] was the world that framed the major part of the AA [Adat Aceh]" (Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," p. 8).

[130] Other sections are *Perintah Segala Raja-Raja* (Regulations for Kings), *Silsilah Raja-Raja di Bandar Aceh* (Genealogy of the Kings of Aceh), and various regulations concerning the port of the capital.

[131] These were *orang kaya seri maharaja lela*, *penghulu kerkun raja setia muda*, *kerkun kātib al-mulūk seri indra su[a]ra*, and *kerkun seri indra muda*.

Sekalian Majlis Raja (Kings), *Majlis Hulubalang [Uleebalang]* (Government Officials), *Majlis Tabal Pada Hari Meugang Puasa* (Ceremonies during the Days just previous to the Fasting Month of Ramaḍān), *Majlis Berangkat yang Kedua Hari Raya* (the Procession on the Days of the Two Religious Feasts), *Majlis Junjung Duli* (Making Obeisance to the Sovereign), *Majlis Berangkat Hari Jumʿat* (The King's Procession to the Friday Prayer), *Majlis Berangkat Bulan Ṣafar* (The Procession on the Final Wednesday of the Month of Ṣafar), *Majlis Jaga-Jaga* (The Vigils during the Night of the *Laylat al-Qadr* in the Month of Ramaḍān), and *Majlis Bandar Dār al-Salām* (The Harbor). Later, in 1055 A.H./ 1645–1646 A.D., permission was granted by Queen Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn to have these *sarakatas* copied.[132]

The ascription of this compilation to Iskandar Muda, however, does not necessarily mean that he was the one who invented the traditions. Some of the practices observed before his reign provide enough evidence in support of this assertion. In the first section of this chapter we cited a few examples of royal processions for foreign envoys, particularly those held for both Lancaster and Davis by al-Mukammil. On September 10th, 1599, Houtman arrived at the palace to meet the sovereign. His meeting with al-Mukammil, however, had to be postponed until the afternoon, for, as the *shahbandar* told him, the king and his court had to go to the mosque to attend Friday prayer.[133] Even though there is no further information given by Houtman on the Friday congregational prayer, it is safe to assume that a royal procession to the mosque on Friday must have already become an established practice by that time.[134] Nevertheless, Houtman gives a short, but clear, picture of a ceremony inaugurating the coming of the fasting month (Ramaḍān). He states:

> After witnessing the new moon [Ramaḍān], all the officials with their best garments headed towards the court, as if they were going to perform the prayer. Right in front of the court entrance stood one of the highest rank officials who dressed in a long white robe and held a gilded shield in his left hand and a drawn sword in his right hand. Then he held up the sword over his shoulder. All the drums were then beaten and the trumpets were blown, and all flintlocks were fired,

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[132] *Adat Aceh*, pp. 48–50; Drewes and Voorhoeve, "Introduction," pp. 17–18.
[133] Unger, *De oudste reizen*, p. 75.
[134] See also Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," p. 211.

> so were seven harquebuses located outside of the palace. Indeed, this marks the coming of their fasting month.[135]

Another example of a royal procession is the account given by S. de Weert, who writes of the ʿĪd al-Fiṭr (the festival of the Fast Breaking) celebration of 1603:

> In the meantime, a great elephant gracefully adorned was brought into the courtyard. Then young king [i.e. ʿAlī Riʿāyat Shāh], wearing a kind of gilt helmet, mounted the elephant and seated himself under a magnificent canopy; in front of him sat one wearing a gold coronet and being well-dressed, who controlled the elephant, and also the other handsomely dressed behind him. . . . Thus, the young prince went to the mosque, accompanied by many nobility, a great number of elephants and a small number of horses; in addition, several thousand people, carrying arms, standards, arrows and flintlocks, also followed on foot. There was a tremendous noise of various instruments, such as horns, trombones, kettledrums and cymbals.
>
> Having reached a small house or building, which stands in the large square or bazaar, the king alighted from his elephant and took a rest for a while; then mounted again the same elephant from one side and dismounted from it on the other, and mounted another elephant made ready there; and on this other elephant he continued on his way to the large mosque, which stands at the end of the large bazaar near the palace.[136]

All these tantalizingly brief accounts of royal processions reveal that Iskandar Muda was not the first to establish the tradition. This being the case, why is it that the rules for official ceremonies came to be codified under this sulṭān in particular?

The *Tāj al-Salāṭīn*, written in Aceh in 1602, prescribes that on the occasion of every *hari raya* (religious feast),[137] just as on every Friday, a male ruler has to go to the mosque in a full state procession.[138] This can be corroborated with practices observed in Aceh at that time. It was also this prescription that Iskandar Muda seems to have had a hand in establishing. But, what is striking is that the codification

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[135] Unger, *De oudste reizen*, pp. 85–86.

[136] W. van Waerwijk, "Oost-Indische reyse onder den Admirael Wijbrandt van Waerwijk," *B & V*, vol. 2 (1974, reprint), as quoted and translated in Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," pp. 227–228.

[137] *Hari Raya* could signify both ʿĪd al-Fiṭr and ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā. When it mentions regulations for the processions on the days of the two religious feasts (*kedua hari raya*), the *Adat Aceh* explicitly refers to both canonical feasts. The term *hari raya* referred in the *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* can be ascertained to have also meant these two religious feasts.

[138] *Tāj al-Salāṭīn*, (Eijsinga), p. 64; (Hussain), p. 64; (Jusuf), p. 38.

of the ceremonies coincided with the period of state centralization referred to in the previous chapter.[139] Thus, in instituting such a rule, Iskandar Muda, the greatest and strongest ruler of seventeenth century Aceh, must have intended to show his people, officials, and foreigners the grandeur of his power both as the strongest man in the region and as the ruler of a highly unified Islamic country. We shall discuss at the end of this chapter the relation between the elaborate rules governing processions and how these expressed the centralizing tendencies of (especially) Iskandar Muda's reign. In the meantime, suffice it to suggest that the codification of these rules preserved in the *Adat Aceh* was part of an effort to enforce stricter control of the official class, at the very least from a theoretical perspective.[140] Furthermore, it is not known for certain how much Iskandar Muda, in codifying the ceremonies, was actually aware that he was enshrining them as a guide for future rulers and officials. It can, however, be ascertained that the ceremonies had their roots in earlier practices. Indeed, the effort at their codification reflects the particular circumstances of Iskandar Muda's times. The only difference from earlier practices lies mainly in their elaboration and intensity, not so much in their nature and purpose.

2. *The Ceremonies*

The ceremonies presented in this section are confined to those which were religious in nature: these include the Friday prayer (Jumʿah) ceremonies, those commemorating the month of Ramaḍān, and the two main religious feasts (ʿĪd al-Fiṭr and ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā). In the following, descriptions of these ceremonies will be given first, followed by an analytical discussion at the end of this section.

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[139] The earliest information on royal feasts and processions to have survived to our day comes from the reign of al-Mukammil (r. 1598–1604). Indeed, as has been observed, the reign of this ruler marked the beginning of a high degree of centralization of royal power in Aceh. Yet to suggest that the practices of the royal ceremonials were mainly due to this centralizing tendency would be premature. It is highly probable that the royal practices had existed much earlier, going back to the early sixteenth century. The most celebrated ruler of Aceh during the sixteenth century, al-Qahhār (r. 1530–1571), to whom the *Bustān* refers as a state-builder, must have also practiced the tradition.

[140] For a discussion on similar topics from other regions see, for example, Averil Cameron, "The Construction of Court Ritual: the Byzantine *Book of Ceremonies*," in David Cannadine and Simon Price, eds., *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 106–136.

Figure 6. An image of the funeral of Sulṭān Iskandar Thānī in 1641 based on Nicolaus de Graaff's description. (Reproduced from Nicolaus de Graaff, *Reisen van Nicolaus de Graaff*, J.C.M. Warnsinck, ed. ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1930)

2.1. *The Friday Prayer (Jum'ah)*

It is beyond doubt that the royal procession to the mosque every Friday was a well-established tradition in Aceh[141] during the first half of the seventeenth century, and hence prior to the rule of the queens. And while it may be difficult to imagine how so elaborate a royal procession could have been held on a weekly basis, foreign accounts nevertheless seem to confirm this tradition. In addition to Houtman's account mentioned earlier, English merchants under Thomas Best witnessed two royal processions going to the mosque on two successive Fridays, 26 June 1613 and 2 July 1613. Of the Friday procession held on 2 July, Ralph Croft writes:

> . . . we meett his majestie in most rioall staitt in the waie to the church with great solemntie. He had, for his guard [that] went before him, 200 greatt ollephantes, 2000 small shott, 2000 pikes, 200 launces, 100 bowmen; 20 naked swordes of pure gould caried before him. 20 fencers went before him, plaiinge with swordes and targettes. A horsse [was] leed before him, covered with beaten gould, the bridle sett with stones; at his sadle crutch a shaff [i.e. sheaf] of arrowes, the quiver of beatten gould, sett with pretious stones. Before him went his towe sons, of 8 or 9 yeares old, arrayed with jewelles and rich stones. His majestie rode upon an ollephant; his sadle of pure gold; his slave behynd him in rich arraye, with his beetle box and a fann of pure gould in his hand, to keepe the flies from the kinge. The kinges robbes weere so rich that I cannott well describe them. He had a turband upon his head, sett with jewells and prettious stones invalluable; creast and sword of pure gold, the skaberd sett with stones. Before him went an ollephant with a chaire of staitt, covered all with beatten sillver, that, if yt should chaunce to rayne, he might change ollephants. This ollephant had casses maid of pure gold, to putt upon his teeth. From the church he retourned to a place of pleassure prepared for his entertaynmentt.[142]

This account is a good example of a procession being described by an eyewitness, but unfortunately it does not take us inside the mosque itself. We have to turn to the *Adat Aceh* for this portion of the ceremony. At the same time, it might be useful to compare its description of a typical procession with the eyewitness account of Ralph Croft.

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[141] See also Reid, "Elephants and Water," p. 33.

[142] Best, *The Voyage*, p. 171. For the royal procession held on 26 June 1613, see pp. 168–169.

The ceremony[143] began with the herald (*bentara*) asking the ruler's consent for preparing the Friday procession. Permission was invariably granted. By the time all were assembled, the royal sword,[144] the betel caddy and bag had been taken down. The official in charge of the drums (*keujreun geundrang seri udahna gambaran*) paid homage (*sembah*) to the sovereign, asking his permission to have the drums beaten. After this permission was granted, the drums sounded and all the *uleebalangs* formed up in order of their *taraf*. The sovereign, accompanied by all the attributes of the feast (*segala alat pawai*),[145] left the court through its main gate, while the officials made their obeisance and then followed him in procession heading towards the mosque.

When the ruler arrived at the mosque compound, the drums were beaten according to the rhythm of *ragam siwajan*.[146] The *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil* and all the jurists (*segala faqīh*) entered the mosque and took up their positions before the door of the place where the sovereign performed his prayer. The ruler, followed by all the officials and observing various rituals performed to a drumbeat (following the rhythm known as *ragam kuda berlari*), entered the mosque. He then headed towards his private alcove.[147]

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[143] It is described in the *Adat Aceh*, pp. 94–98.

[144] The royal sword is referred to as either *ṣalīḥ* or *pedang ṣalīḥ*. Both Drewes and Voorhoeve seem to suggest that the word *ṣalīḥ* was in fact a misuse of the Arabic word *silāḥ*, meaning "weapon" (Drewes and Voorhoeve, "Introduction," p. 20). However, based on the consistent use of the word *ṣalīḥ* or *pedang ṣalīḥ* in referring to the sword, it is safe to suggest that the *ṣalīḥ* was most probably the name given to the royal sword. As shown throughout the text, giving names to royal symbols and regalia was a common practice in Aceh. See also Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 1, p. 208.

[145] *Segala alat pawai* could signify all the material attributes for the procession, especially the insignia of royalty. But it could also include all the people involved in the procession, e.g., state's officials and other court functionaries. The sentence: *Dan segala alat pawaipun menyanjungkan tangannya ke atas kepalanya* should be translated as: those who involved in the procession raised their hands on their forehead (as an act of obeisance) (*Adat Aceh*, p. 95).

[146] I have been unable to identify this rhythm of the drumbeat, along with others, in various occasions. Indeed, this issue deserves a specific study of its own.

[147] This private alcove is referred to by the *Adat Aceh* as *mesjid kelambu* (the curtained part of the mosque). In the central Islamic land, this place was known as the *maqṣūrah*, i.e. an enclosed chamber located near the *miḥrāb* (prayer niche) reserved for the Caliph. Introduced during the period of the Rāshidūn Caliphs, it became widely known throughout the Islamic world in association with the royal authority. For further discussion on the history of the *maqṣūrah*, see R. Hillenbrand, et al., "Masdjid," *EI2*.

Immediately after entering this private area, the sovereign performed two *rakʿahs* of the *sunnat taḥiyyat al-masjid* (commendable prayer in honor of the mosque). This was followed by an *adhān* (call to prayer). The second two *rakaʿahs* of a *sunnah* prayer were then performed. When this was done, the caller to prayer (*muʾadhdhin*, known in Aceh as *bilāl*) held up a staff of the sermon known as *tongkat khuṭbah* and uttered: *Inna Allāh wa malāʾikatahu yuṣallūna ʿalā al-nabiyy, yā ayyuhalladhīna āmanū ṣallū ʿalayhi wa sallimū taslīmā* (God and His Angels send blessings on the Prophet. O you who believe! Send ye blessings on him, and salute him with all respect).[148] Then the *khaṭīb* (the preacher of the sermon) came forward took the *tongkat khuṭbah*, mounted to the pulpit[149] and said *salām*. This was followed by the recitation of a Prophetic tradition (a *ḥadīth* transmitted by Abū Hurayrah) by two *muʾadhdhins*.[150] The *khaṭīb* then delivered his two sermons. When this was done, the *bilāl* stood up and recited an *iqāmah* (the second call to prayer).[151] The *imām* (the prayer leader)[152] then came forward to lead the Friday prayer. When the prayer was done, *tasbīḥ* (the formula extolling Allāh) was uttered and *duʿāʾ* (prayers) for both the Prophet and the sovereign were spoken.[153] The congregational prayer was concluded with two repetitions of *sunnah* prayer.

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[148] This is in fact a verse of the Qurʾān, 33: 56. See *The Holy Qurʾan*, text, translated with commentary by ʿAbdullah Yusuf ʿAli, new revised edition (Brentwood: Amana Corporation, 1989). See also Edward William Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, first published in 1836 (reprint, the Hague and London: East-West Publications, 1978), p. 90.

[149] Standing on a pulpit or elevated place and leaning on a staff or a sword are *sunnah* (commendable) for the *khaṭīb*. See Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī b. Yūsuf al-Fīrūzābādī al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab fī Fiqh al-Imām al-Shāfiʿī*, ed. by Zakariyyā ʿUmayrāt, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1995), p. 211. See also Th. W. Juynboll, *Handleiding tot de kennis van de Mohammedaansche wet volgens de leer Sjafiʿitische school* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1930), pp. 71–72; Lane, *An Account*, p. 91.

[150] The text of the *ḥadīth* is unfortunately not provided by the *Adat Aceh*. It may well have concerned the warning (called *khuṭbat al-waʿẓ*) to participants not to talk during the *khuṭbah*. See Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 1, pp. 236–237; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 2, pp. 259–260, 264–265; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, vol. 1, pp. 216–217; Lane, *An Account*, p. 91.

[151] For further discussion on *iqāmah* see T.W. Juynboll, "Iqāma," *EI2*.

[152] The *imām* was not the same person as the *khaṭīb*. Indeed, this is a common practice in Aceh that both jobs were not performed by the same person. The sovereign was not to function as the leader (*imām*) of the prayer.

[153] This implies that the *duʿāʾ* to the sovereign was not contained in the *khuṭbah* itself, a common enough practice in other parts of the Muslim world.

At this point, preparations for the procession back to the palace got underway. All the *orang kayas*, chiefs and *qāḍīs* approached the sovereign and made their obeisance. The ruler then came out of his private alcove and left the mosque, followed by all the officials wearing their royal swords, again to the accompaniment of a drumbeat. At the palace, the sovereign was welcomed by all old women and court functionaries of the royal household, who sprinkled the royal howdah with yellow rice mixed with golden foil. During this process, the drums were beaten to the rhythm of *ragam sijudan* and *ragam kuda berlari*.[154] When the ruler entered his quarters, the *meugat*[155] came out with the royal order that all the officials should return to their appointed tasks.

The royal procession to the mosque as it is described in the *Adat Aceh* was short and simple, yet it corroborates the account provided by Croft we referred to earlier. The procession described by this English merchant was perhaps even more elaborate, involving around five thousand men and many more royal insignia and symbols. Yet as European sources could not have provided any account of the rituals that took place inside the mosque, the *Adat Aceh* fills this lacuna.

2.2. *The Fasting Month of Ramaḍān*

There were three state rituals performed in connection with the fasting month of Ramaḍān. The first and most important of these was the ceremony celebrating the coming of the month (*hari memeugang puasa*) while the other two, though less elaborate, were rituals pertaining to the vigils for *laylat al-qadr* (the night of power) and its related festival on the twenty-seventh of the month.

The first ritual began on the evening of the thirtieth of Shaʿbān.[156] On that occasion the *shahbandar seri rama setia*[157] arrived at the court

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[154] See note 146 above.

[155] A title borne by a senior court official.

[156] See *Adat Aceh*, pp. 50–52.

[157] The role played by port officials in this ritual is apparent. Two *shahbandars*, i.e., the *shahbandar seri rama setia* and the *shahbandar sayf al-mulūk*, and the *nazīr*, the inspector of the port of the Capital, are particularly mentioned. These two *shahbandars* were the titles of two harbor masters during the reign of Iskandar Thānī. In the meantime, the *nazīr*'s position was also attached to the port administration in this period (Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," p. 288). However, it is not clear to us the reasons behind the employment of these officials in this particular ritual.

bringing *antatan* (tributes) to the sulṭān. The tributes were placed in front of a ceremonial platform (called Biram) outside of the enclosure, from which the *shahbandar* observed the coming of the new moon.[158] In the event that he did not witness the moon, the *shahbandar*, surrounded by the *antatan*, had to spend the entire night in that same location.

The ritual continued into the following day, the first of Ramaḍān, when a type of crown (called Raja Tajuk Intan Dikarang) was carried in a procession of elephants. The *shahbandar* then preserved several *ceranas* (metal bowls) containing flowers that were sent to three royal burial complexes. Each of the complexes, i.e., the Kandang ʻIshq Mushāhadah, the Kandang Bayt al-Rijāl, and the Kandang Raja Emas, received seven *ceranas* apiece. The *bentara blang*[159] then stood up, accompanied by the sounds of trumpets and flutes played in seven modes, and requested that the Raja Tajuk Intan Dikarang be summoned by the sulṭān. Having received this request through the *meugat*, the sovereign granted his approval through his royal *cap* that was brought down to the Balai Uleebalang (the hall of chiefs). The command usually took the following form: "His Royal Majesty has commanded that the Raja Tajuk Intan Dikarang and the *antatan* from the *shahbandar seri rama setia* be summoned." Then both were brought into the palace in a procession, while all the chiefs stood in order of their *taraf* in the palace yard before the Cermin Jumʻat gate. The tributes, which consisted of various types of clothing, were then brought in to the sovereign's presence. Moreover, the *keujreun geundrang seri udahna gambaran*, requested that the drums be beaten to the rhythm of *titaragam adani*.[160] This request was granted and the drumsticks were delivered.

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[158] In line with the Shāfiʻite school, the coming of Ramaḍān in Aceh was determined through *ruʾyah* (physical sighting of the new moon). Al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, vol. 1, pp. 328–331. See also Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfiʻī, *al-Umm*, ed. Maḥmūd Maṭrajī, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʻIlmiyyah, 1993), pp. 124–126; ʻAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jazīrī, *Kitāb al-Fiqh ʻalā al-Madhāhib al-Arbaʻah*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʻArabī, 1986), pp. 548–551; Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Rushd, *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid wa Nihāyat al-Muqtaṣid*, vol. 1 (Cairo: Maktabat al-Tijāriyyah al-Kubrā, n.d.), p. 241; Juynboll, *Handleiding*, pp. 100–102.

[159] Translated as "the superintendent of the rice-fields," the holder of this title was the official responsible for the supervision of the state rice-fields. See Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," p. 128, note 87.

[160] See note 146.

After the sovereign retired to the innermost court, the *bentara* (herald) requested that the royal sword (called *ṣalīḥ*) and all royal regalia for the procession be delivered. Then the chiefs were seated facing the Balai Pedang (the hall of swords). Two royal swords were brought, one to the Balai Pedang and the other to the Balai Keujreun Tandil (the hall of the guard). Both the *keujreun geundrang* and the *bentara* carried out the royal order to beat a royal drum, called Ibrahīm Khalīl. This marked the end of the ritual inaugurating the coming of the month of Ramaḍān.

Similar yet simpler rituals were also carried out on the occasions of both *laylat al-qadr* and the twenty-seventh of Ramaḍān. Indeed, these two rituals were closely connected. In the former, which began on the night of the twentieth of Ramaḍān, the *shahbandar sayf al-mulūk* requested of the sovereign that the royal drums be beaten. Permission was granted, and the drums were then beaten for two consecutive nights for the purpose of the vigils, beginning on the night of the twentieth of the month.[161]

On the night of the twenty sixth, further *antatan*, or tributes, again containing various items of clothing, were brought from the *shahbandar* in a procession. Then the *shahbandar* made obeisance to the sovereign, requesting that the royal drums be beaten for the purpose of a vigil. The request was granted and the royal drums were then beaten for two consecutive nights. On the night of the twenty-ninth, the *shahbandar*'s *antatan* were carried from the latter's house to

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[161] *Laylat al-qadr* (the night of power) is regarded as the most important night during the whole month of Ramaḍān, for the Qur'ān (2: 185) says: "Ramaḍān is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'ān, as a guide to a mankind, also clear (signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong)." In other verses (97: 1–3) we read: "We have indeed revealed this (message) in the Night of Power. And what will explain to thee what the Night of Power? The Night of Power is better than a thousand months." For this very reason, the *qiyām al-layl* (staying up the whole night worshipping God) is highly recommended. In a tradition narrated from Abū Hurayrah, the Prophet is reported to have said: "He who stays the whole night of *Laylat al-Qadr* worshipping God with sincere faith and anticipation of God's reward, God forgives all his previous sins." The night is believed to take place during the last ten days of the month of Ramaḍān, especially on uneven dates, i.e. the 21st, 23rd, 25th, 27th, and 29th. Imām al-Shāfi'ī suggests that the most probable time for the coming of the night is either the 21st or 23rd. Yet there is a popular belief that the night falls on the 27th of the month. See Abū Fidā' al-Ḥāfiḍ ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Aẓīm*, ed. by Maḥmūd Ḥasan, et al. vol. 4 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1994), pp. 648–655; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, vol. 1, pp. 347–348; Juynboll, *Handleiding*, p. 107; G.E. van Grunebaum, *Muhammedan Festivals* (London: Curzon Press, 1976), p. 52.

the palace in a procession. Then, the *nazīr*[162] requested of the sovereign that he be allowed to bring the tributes into his presence, a request that was immediately granted. On the following day, the thirtieth, the *shahbandar seri rama setia* requested of the sovereign that the Raja Tajuk Intan Dikarang be brought in a procession. Permission was granted and the Raja Tajuk was carried in as prescribed by ancient ceremonial tradition.

Even though the descriptions of these two ceremonies are short, their procedures must have been similar to the ones prescribed for the occasion of the *memeugang* (the coming of the fasting month). This very similarity may have justified the shorter description, avoiding perhaps unnecessary repetition.

2.3. *The Festival of Fast-Breaking (ʿĪd al-Fiṭr)*

With the end of the month of Ramaḍān, celebrations marked the first of Shawwāl—then and now one of the most important religious festivals in Aceh, just as it is in other parts of the Islamic world. This event was also publicly celebrated by the sovereign, who would go to the mosque in a full state procession to take part in the ritual of the ʿīd prayer.[163]

The ceremony, as it is described by the *Adat Aceh*,[164] began with the coming of the *penghulu bilāl* (the chief *mu'adhdhin*) to the palace to request that the *tongkat khuṭbah* be delivered. Next, the *keujreun geundrang* came forward requesting royal consent to have the drums beaten. Royal approval was then granted. The herald responsible for carrying the royal sword came forward to pay his homage and

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[162] This is a title which was borne by inspectors of the port of the Capital. See Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," pp. 288, 294–295.

[163] This prayer, as in the case of ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā prayer, is *sunnah* (recommended), and is held on the first of Shawwāl. This date was generally established in Aceh either by *ḥisāb* (calculation) or by *ru'yah* (physical sighting of the new moon). Yet the *ru'yah* was still quite often attempted. In 1603, S. de Weert witnessed many Acehnese people were "standing everywhere in the city with eyes staring to the west anxious to see the new moon; and if the moon is seen, their fasting is over . . ." (Waerwijck, "Oost-Indische reyse," p. 12, as quoted and translated in Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," p. 223). For a detailed discussion on the use of both the *ḥisāb* and the *ru'yah* in determining the first of Ramaḍān and the first of Shawwāl, see al-Shāfiʿī, *al-Umm*, vol. 2, pp. 124–126; al-Jazīrī, *Kītāb al-Fiqh*, vol. 1, pp. 548–553; Al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, vol. 1, pp. 226, 328–330; Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat*, vol. 1, pp. 241.

[164] See *Adat Aceh*, pp. 54–59.

to request the sword in procession, royal betel caddy and betel bag. When the request was granted, the herald carried the sword, followed by all other participants positioned according to rank. The chiefs, in order of their ranks, also took their position in the Balai Pedang. Then came the *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil* who paid homage to the sovereign and asked him to set out for the Bayt al-Raḥmān mosque for the ʿīd prayer. The drums were beaten, and the sovereign departed to the mosque followed by the royal sword carried by a herald, all the other attributes of the royal procession (*segala alat pawai*) and all the chiefs drawn up in hierarchical order. The procession was also attended by *ṣūfīs, sharīfs*,[165] *imāms, khaṭībs, ḥāfizs, qārīs*, the *angham* (?), and those who led the recitation of the *takbīr*[166] and the *dhikr*. All these people lined up along the road to the main gate of the Dalam. When the procession had moved off, the chiefs turned their faces towards the sovereign and made their obeisance, then followed the sovereign on his way to the mosque.[167]

As the procession approached the mosque, the chiefs went forward and took up a position on the right side of its main gate, welcoming the sovereign by making their obeisance. The sovereign then entered the mosque. When he reached the wall of the mosque, the drums were beaten according to the rhythm of *ragam siwajan*.[168] Both the *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil* and *faqīh seri rama faqīh* then rushed to the door of the sovereign's private alcove, and stood before it. After performing various rituals, the sovereign headed towards his private place where both the *qāḍī* and the *faqīh* welcomed him with the words *al-salāmu ʿalaykum wa raḥmat Allāh yā daulat Makuta* (peace and

[165] These are the *'ulamā'* who were the descendants of the Prophet. At the end of the nineteenth century, Snouck Hurgronje observed the use of the titles *sharīf* and *sayyid* in referring to the respectful descendants of the Prophet. The former refers to the descendants of the Prophet through the line of his grandson, Ḥasan. The title *sayyid*, however, denotes the descendants of the Prophet through the line of his other grandson, Ḥusayn. See Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 1, pp. 153–154, 158.

[166] See note 170 below.

[167] During the preparation in the palace, the *Adat Aceh* does not provide any mention on both the erection of the ceremonial umbrellas and the royal banquets. As in the case of the ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā, the ceremonial umbrellas must have been erected during the ʿĪd al-Fiṭr celebration, as the case witnessed by Weert in 1603 (Waerwijck, "Oost-Indische Reyse," p. 12, as quoted in Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh, pp. 226–227).

[168] See note 146 above.

God's mercy be with you O your highness Makuta [Iskandar Muda]).[169] All were ready for the ʿīd ritual. The chiefs took up their positions in order of rank while, in the alcove, the sovereign performed the two *rakaʿahs* of the *sunnat taḥiyyat al-masjid*. Then, the *imām* led the recitation of the *takbīr* (pronouncing the words: *Allāh Akbar*, meaning God is most Great),[170] which was repeated as many times as possible (*barang sedapatnya*).[171]

The ʿīd prayer began when the *bilāl* arose and said loudly *al-ṣalāh jāmiʿah raḥimakum Allāh* (let the prayer be conducted in unity, may God have mercy upon you).[172] The *imām* then stepped forward and led the prayer, consisting of two *rakaʿahs* and one *salām*. In the first *rakʿah* there were seven *takbīrs*[173] recited, while in the second there were five only. This was in addition to the *takbīrs* of the ordinary

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[169] *Makuta* or *Meukuta* is the title given to Iskandar Muda.

[170] The *Adat Aceh* provides the formulae of the *takbīr* as: *Allāh Akbar, Allāh Akbar, Allāh Akbar; lā ilāha illa Allāh wa Allāh Akbar; Allāh Akbar wa li Allāh al-ḥamd* (God is most Great, God is most Great, God is most Great; there is no god but Allāh and God is most Great; God is most Great and praise be to Him). The basic formula for this *takbīr*, as prescribed in *fiqh* books, are the words *Allāh Akbar*, pronounced, at least, three times. Additional religious formula is, however, encouraged. It should be mentioned here that this *takbīr* is not to be mixed up with the one made at the beginning of *ṣalāh* (ritual prayer), known as *takbīrat al-iḥrām*, which is considered as one of the *arkān* (principles) of the ritual. Indeed, along with other pronouncement of *takbīrs* (five times in every *rakʿah*) in a ritual prayer, this *takbīr* uses the formula *Allāh Akbar* (God is most Great). It is at this point that Ito misunderstands the rules of the ʿīd prayer. When he analyzes the *muʾadhdhin*'s call to the prayer (by saying *al-ṣalāh jāmiʿah*), Ito writes: "It is preceded by the recitation of *takbīr*, which marks the commencement of the consecrated state for the valid performance of the prayer. This order should be reversed, the call coming first and then being followed by the recitation of the *takbīr*" (p. 229). The problem here lies in Ito's misunderstanding of the term *takbīr* given by the *Adat Aceh*. While he sees it as one of the *arkān* of the ritual prayer, the *takbīr* here is, in fact, the *takbīr* formula uttered in the ʿīd occasion, not a *rukn* in *ṣalāh*. For further discussion on this *takbīr*, see al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, vol. 1, pp. 227–228; al-Jazīrī, *Kitāb al-Fiqh*, vol. 1, pp. 218–226, 346–348; Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat*, vol. 1, pp. 187–188; A.J. Wensinck, "Takbīr," *EI2*.

[171] The utterance of the *takbīr* as many as possible (*barang sedapatnya*) corroborates with practice of continuous utterance of the formulae until the ʿīd prayer begins. For more thoughts on the utterance of the *takbīr* during the day, see al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, vol. 1, pp. 227–228; Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat*, vol. 1, pp. 187–188.

[172] Al-Shīrāzī only mentions the formula *al-ṣalāh jāmiʿah* in his works of Shāfiʿite practice. See Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī b. Yūsuf al-Fīrūzābādī al-Shīrāzī, *al-Tanbīh fī Fiqh al-Shāfiʿī* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1995), p. 62; idem, *al-Muhadhdhab*, vol. 1, p. 225.

[173] These *takbīrs* (pronouncing the formula *Allāh Akbar*, meaning God is most Great) are done as in the *takbīrat al-iḥrām*, by raising the hands above the shoulders to the level of the ears and then placing them on the base of the chest.

ṣalah. After the two *rakʿahs* of prayer, the *bilāl* came forward and passed the sermon staff to the *khaṭīb* who then delivered his ʿīd sermon. When this was done, all the chiefs came to pay their allegiance to the sovereign. Then the procession reformed in order to return to the palace. It may be remarked that this portion of the ceremony was basically in line with what is prescribed in standard *fiqh* texts.

The chiefs took up their position outside of the mosque, bearing their swords and waiting for the sovereign in order to pay him their obeisance while he made his way back to the elephant-borne howdah that he would occupy on the return journey. In the meantime, all those participating in the procession, including the herald carrying the royal sword, the state officials and the soldiers, assembled in their appointed order. As the sovereign approached his elephant, various rhythms were played on instruments and drums. During the homeward procession itself, heavy guns mounted upon other elephants were fired. When the procession arrived at the palace square, called the Medan Khayyālī, all the chiefs and state officials alighted from their elephants and walked slowly accompanying the royal elephant into the palace. In the meantime, the drums were beaten to the rhythm of *ragam siwajan*.[174] In the Balai Uleebalang there were several chiefs standing in order of rank waiting to welcome the sovereign. By the time the sovereign entered the Balai Besar, all the chiefs had paid their respect to him. Royal swords were lifted in honor of the sovereign. Meanwhile, the drums were beaten to the rhythm of *ragam kuda berlari*.[175] All chiefs, officials, and soldiers followed the sword ceremony with full solemnity. When the sovereign reached the platform, called the Biram Penting, on which he alighted, the guards and senior officials of the royal household were ready to welcome him by sprinkling the royal howdah with yellow rice mixed with gold foil. Then the sovereign entered his private quarters. Finally, the royal order was given that all the chiefs must return to their appointed tasks.

2.4. *The Festival of the Sacrifice (ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā)*

The festival of the sacrifice on the tenth of Dhū al-Ḥijjah seems to have played a much more important role in seventeenth century

[174] See note 146 above.
[175] See note 146 above.

Aceh than any other religious occasion.[176] The *Adat Aceh* provides many details on this procession, which featured many more participants and royal insignia than most other such events.[177] As we shall later demonstrate, the account of the same ceremony provided by Peter Mundy in 1637 confirms the greater significance attached to this occasion.

The official festival started at dawn on the tenth day of Dhū al-Ḥijjah, when the official responsible for the royal parasols (known as the *penghulu payung*) ordered their installation throughout the palace and on both sides of the road from the Dalam to the Bayt al-Raḥmān mosque. After all necessary preparations had been made, the sovereign departed in a full royal procession from the palace heading towards the mosque. The *Adat Aceh* speaks of thirty main groups taking part in the procession, but without providing any detailed information as to who formed the first to the twentieth groups. All we are told is that these people consisted mainly of court officials of various classes who were splendidly dressed and carried royal regalia and symbols. They were led by the royal sword carried by the *bentara.*

Identification of the rest of the participants in each group is, however, provided in the text. They were organized as follows:

1. The 21st group consisted of the *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil* riding on an elephant, named Gangsar. Surrounding the *qāḍī* were various religious authorities, i.e., *fuqahāʾ*, several *qāḍīs, sharīfs, ʿulamāʾ, khaṭībs, ḥāfizs, qārīs*, and the *angham* (?), and those who led the *dhikr.* All the participants, including the sulṭān, uttered the religious formulae of *dhikr.* Among this group there were also several chiefs who rode on elephants lined up in order of their ranks.
2. The 22nd group comprised cavalry who carried the royal standards and rode elaborately adorned horses; they were charged with the task of guarding the sovereign on both the right and left-hand sides.
3. The 23rd group was comprised those who carried royal banners and mirrors.

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[176] Indeed, the tenth of Dhū al-Ḥijjah is regarded by Muslims as *al-ʿīd al-kabīr* (the major festival). It is also known as *ʿīd al-qurbān* or *ʿīd al-nahr* (sacrificial feast), while the *ʿīd al-fiṭr* (the festival of breaking the fast) on the first of Shawwāl is known as *al-ʿīd al-ṣaghīr* (the minor festival). See Lane, *An Account*, p. 98; Juynboll, *Handleiding*, p. 109.

[177] *Adat Aceh*, pp. 63–91.

4. Then came the 24th group, consisting of the sulṭān himself seated in a howdah on the royal elephant named Lela Manikam. He was flanked by several leading chiefs equipped with daggers, swords, and lances.
5. The 25th group consisted of hundreds of foot troops from the garrison of the Dalam, armed with swords and daggers and guarding the royal elephant.
6. Next came the 26th group, featuring a large number of servants and slaves of the royal household, carrying large cups and bowls as well as swords and daggers.
7. The 27th group was made up of prominent warriors and court officials who were gracefully dressed. This group also included some district chiefs and several soldiers. They were assembled in order of position and rank and escorted the royal elephant. Several members of this group also carried ceremonial parasols provided to protect the sovereign and his elephant from the sun.
8. In the 28th group there were thirty war-elephants equipped with iron howdahs on their backs, each ridden by two heavily armed warriors guarding the area to the right of the sulṭān. These elephants were surrounded by two hundred foot soldiers and other large numbers of soldiers heavily armed and gracefully dressed.
9. As in the case of the 28th group, the 29th also comprised thirty war-elephants, each mounted by two armed warriors. This group was mainly designated to guard the area to the left of the sulṭān. Numerous soldiers marched alongside the elephants.
10. The 30th group constituted the last major part of the procession, but it also seemed to be the most diverse. Consisting mainly of well-known warriors and able-bodied soldiers guarding the sovereign from the rear, this group consisted of ten sub-divisions. In the first line, there were one thousand Abbysinian soldiers. Some of them were armed with Abbysinian swords and spears, while others carried iron maces. Then came a group of soldiers carrying shields and drawn swords. A third part consisted of soldiers armed with traditional lances. Groups of archers occupied the fourth and the fifth places, while the sixth and the seventh parts were comprised of soldiers armed with lances and spears, and with rifles, respectively. In the eight position there were five hundred court guards equipped with various weapons and dressed gracefully. Then, came the ninth sub-division, consisting of fifty elephants, on each of which was mounted a warrior. Every ele-

> phant carried a banner on its back and was guarded by two heavily armed warriors. This was in addition to one hundred foot soldiers guarding the left flank of the elephants and two hundred more escorting them on their right. To the rear of this group there was found the crown prince, splendidly dressed, seated on a stately elephant called Naga Beraksa, driven by a mahout (*keujruen gajah*) called Haria Diraja. One hundred parasols in red, yellow and green, together with several banners, were held over it. The prince was also heavily guarded by a large number of armed soldiers both to the front and the rear. Some slaves were also present at this stage, having the duty of carrying large bowls.

This great royal procession headed along the road towards the Bayt al-Raḥmān mosque, where, upon arrival, all the nobles alighted from their elephants, approached the sovereign's elephant and made obeisance to him. Then they led the procession into the mosque complex on foot, while the drums were beaten to the rhythm of *ragam siwajan*.[178] Both *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil* and the *faqīh* entered the mosque and stood at the door of the sovereign's private alcove. After various rituals, in which the sword ceremony was performed and the drums beaten to the rhythm of *ragam kuda berlari*,[179] the sovereign approached the terrace of the mosque, where the Shaykh Shams al-Dīn (d. 1630), in full Arab dress, welcomed him and made obeisance to him. Then, the sovereign, accompanied by the Shaykh, entered the mosque. When the ruler approached his private area, both the *qāḍī* and the *faqīh* welcomed him and said: *al-salāmu ʿalaykum wa raḥmat Allāh wa barakātuh daulat Mahkota Shāh-i ʿĀlam* (peace, God's mercy and blessing be with you O your highness Mahkota [Iskandar Muda], the ruler of the world). After replying with the *salām* (salutation), the sovereign entered his private, curtained alcove. The others in the procession also followed him into the mosque, and sat in order of rank. In the meantime, warriors and soldiers, with their elephants and horses, stood guard on both sides of the gate on the terrace. In his alcove, the sovereign performed the two *rakʿahs* of the *sunnat taḥiyyat al-masjid* accompanied by the Shaykh.

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[178] See note 146 above.
[179] See note 146 above.

When the sovereign had performed the *sunnah* prayer, the *bilāl* stood on the pulpit calling upon worshippers to perform the ʿīd prayer by saying: *al-ṣalāh jāmiʿah* (let the prayer be conducted in unity) three times. Then, the *imām* came forward and led the prayer. According to the *Adat Aceh*, the prayer consisted of two *rakʿahs* and one *salām*, with nine *takbīrs*[180] made in the first *rakʿah* and seven in the second.[181] When the ʿīd prayer was concluded, the *imām* led the audience in reciting the *takbīr* three times.[182] Having done this, the *bilāl* delivered the sermon staff to the *khaṭīb* who came forward and delivered the ʿīd sermon. The prayer was concluded with the recitation of *duʿā'* for the sovereign led by the *imām*.

After the ʿīd prayer, the ritual of the sacrifice began. First, all the nobles moved to the terrace of the mosque, while the sovereign remained within. When all the necessary preparations for the sacrifice ritual had been made, the *bentara*, carrying the royal sword, made his obeisance to the sovereign and reported that the ritual was ready to begin. Then, the sovereign went out to the terrace, where all the nobles welcomed him. He then honored the victims, which lay bound under a large tent with ceremonial parasols were held over them. Throughout this procedure all the nobles, *faqīhs, sharīfs*, court officials and slaves surrounded the sovereign. In the meantime, the victims were sprinkled (*permandikan*) with rose water by three officials, i.e., the chief scribe (*penghulu kerkun*), the *shahbandar*, and the *nazīr*. Next, their teeth were treated with *baja* (i.e. a substance to blacken the teeth) and their heads anointed with various types of perfumed oils.

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[180] See note 170 above.

[181] I have been unable to find references to this practice in many *fiqh* books. The only suggestion which can be provided here is the possible confusion of this *takbīr* as a *rukn* of *ṣalāh* with the *takbīr* formula that has to be uttered during the *ʿīd khuṭbah*. It is prescribed that during the *khuṭbah* the *takbīr* formulae are to be uttered nine times in the first part of the sermon and seven in the second. For further discussion of different thoughts on this issue, see Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat*, vol. 1, p. 184.

[182] These are the utterances of the *takbīr* formula (*Allāh Akbar*) or *tahlīl* (*lā ilāha illa Allāh*) during the tenth of Dhū al-Ḥijjah and the other following three days, known as *al-ayyām al-tashrīq*. This is in accordance with the Shāfiʿite school. See Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat*, vol. 1, pp. 372–373. Again, Ito in this case mistakenly views the *takbīr* as one of the *arkān* of the *ṣalāh*. He writes: "Properly speaking, the *salām* . . . concludes the legally prescribed consecrated state central to the valid performance of the ritual prayer. Thus if the Acehnese did in fact pronounce the *takbīr* three times after the conclusion of the prayer, such deviation from the prescribed ritual norms would not be significant as far as the validity of the prayer is concerned" (Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," p. 244).

They were also combed with both gold and silver combs and finally covered with white cloth.[183]

Before the slaughter took place, all the *faqīhs* who were present recited *takbīr*. Then, a senior *faqīh* came forward approaching the victims and showing the sovereign the vein to be cut. While various musical instruments played the rhythm of *kuda berlari*,[184] the sovereign started slaughtering the victims. As soon as the blood flowed, Shaykh Shams al-Dīn took the knife from the sulṭān and finished the slaughter without any interruption. Having done this, the sovereign deputed the slaughter of the remainder to the *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil*, who had all the *faqīhs* help him in performing this work. In the meantime, the drums were beaten while the *takbīrs* continued to be uttered.[185] When all this work was completed, the meat of the victims was brought to the palace.[186] This marked the end of the ritual of the slaughter.

By this time, the royal procession had reformed to return to the palace, with various royal rituals performed as in the case of the procession's departure. On the way home, the heavy guns mounted on the backs of the elephants were fired. When the procession arrived at the large square (Medan Khayyālī), all the nobles, the *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil*, and the chiefs alighted from their elephants and slowly walked the rest of the way, accompanying the sovereign's elephant to the palace yard. At the same time, various musical instruments were played and drums beaten to different rhythms. Additional royal rituals were performed at this stage. For instance, when the sovereign arrived at the platform set up for him to alight from the elephant, the older ladies of the court and hundreds of wet nurses of the

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[183] There is no information as to the number of the animals sacrificed or who the donors were. However, the sovereign must have been the main donor for the sacrifice. As will be given below, in 1637 Iskandar Thānī, according to Mundy, donated five hundred young buffaloes to be sacrificed.

[184] See note 146 above.

[185] It is *mustaḥabb* (recommendable) that the *takbīr* formula be uttered during slaughtering of the victims. Al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, vol. 1, p. 435.

[186] The exact number of the *qurbān* brought to the palace cannot be ascertained. Yet some of the meat must also have been delivered to the poor as a *ṣadaqah* (charity). Mundy, as mentioned below, speaks of the meat of the sacrificed animals being distributed among the people. Among the recipients must have been the poor. Indeed, the majority of the jurists are in agreement that it is *mustaḥabb* that the meat be divided into three parts: one third is taken by the party who make the sacrifice, one third is for the poor, and the other one third is for gift. See Al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, vol. 1, pp. 435–436; Al-Jazīrī, *Kitāb al-Fiqh*, vol. 1, pp. 722–724; Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat*, vol. 1, p. 375. The practice of taking the meat of the *qurbān* to the palace and distributing it among the poor was also observed during Faṭimids times. See Saunders, *Ritual, Politics*, pp. 79–81.

household sprinkled the sovereign's elephant with ritual yellow rice, welcoming the ruler. Then, the sovereign entered his private quarters.

It is beyond doubt that the description of this festival given by the *Adat Aceh* was the one that was in practice during Iskandar Muda's time. The mention of the participation of Shaykh Shams al-Dīn is fundamental evidence of this. Yet its exact date is unknown. The involvement of the Shaykh in the festival might suggest that the description is accurate for sometime between 1607 (the year Iskandar Muda took power) and 1630 (the year of the Shaykh's death). Indeed, if we accept the information given by the *Adat Aceh* itself that the codification of the ceremonies took place right after Iskandar Muda's accession to power, the description of the festival of ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā given above could certainly go back to as early as 1607.

Peter Mundy's account contains a description of the festival[187] held in Aceh in 1637 under the newly crowned Sulṭān Iskandar Thānī.[188] Even though there are some divergences to be found from the description given by the *Adat Aceh*, the account is worth examining.

Mundy went to the additional trouble of sketching what he had seen. In the reproduction of his drawing shown in figure 7, we can see that the royal procession to the mosque on this occasion was held in a stately manner, and that the sulṭān rode on a great and richly adorned elephant. The procession was so lengthy, and included so many state officials, armies, servants, weapons and regalia, that there was only little space for movement and order. This is why the procession, according to him, was so confused. Yet he further remarks that the festival "was rare and straunge to behold . . ."[189] Mundy was certainly unable to describe the rituals taking place in the mosque. Nevertheless, he was informed that there were five hundred young buffaloes sacrificed on that occasion. The sulṭān was said to have been the first to slaughter a victim, while other appointed officials slaughtered the rest. Then, the meat of the animals was distributed among the people.[190] Even though this procession seems to have been smaller than the one described in the *Adat Aceh* mentioned above, the main features are present in both. It should be noted as well

[187] The festival was called "Buckree Eede" (*Baqrah ʿId*), the term used in Surat.
[188] The date given is 26 April 1637 A.D., which corresponds to the tenth of Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1046 A.H.
[189] Mundy, *The Travels*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 123.
[190] Ibid., pp. 125–126.

Figure 7. A royal procession going to the mosque for the ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā ritual and celebration in Aceh as witnessed and sketched by Peter Mundy in 1637. Mundy identifies by letter the various components as follows: A, the great mosque; B–G, elephants in various arrays; H, gunners; I, pikemen; K, richly adorned state horses led by their reins; L, eunuchs on horseback; M, musicians; N, several types of flags carried before the sulṭān; O, the sulṭān on a stately adorned elephant covered down to the feet; P, a group of state nobles (*orang kayas*); Q, royal guards armed with bows, arrows and long narrow bucklers; R, the road to the palace, whence the procession came; S, a raised platform where the sulṭān alighted and changed his elephant; T, the second elephant that the sulṭān rode. (Reproduced from: Peter Mundy, *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia 1608–1667*, ed. R.C. Temple, vol. 3, pt. 1 (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1919), p. 125)

that the ceremonies for both the Friday prayer and the two canonical religious feasts were not observed under the rule of the queens.[191]

3. *The Construction of the Ceremonies*

Each of the religious ceremonies described above was inseparably linked to the traditional royal rituals embedded in them. Indeed, the religious rituals constituted an essential part of royal tradition and *vice versa*, the legitimation of which must be viewed in the context of Aceh's character as an Islamic sultanate whose ruler possessed both political and religious authority. The ceremonies became a symbolic expression of authority, both political and religious. Hence, these types of ceremonies, Paula Sanders writes, "worked within a complex system of references that included both the theoretical sources of a ruler's authority (whether caliph, sultan or amir) and the particular network of loyalties that made it possible for him to exercise his authority."[192] Therefore, all the ceremonies described above involved state officials (religious and non-religious), court functionaries and servants, royal insignia, and especially the palace and the mosque—as the two most important symbols of the state.

The Dalam was the pivot of the ceremonies, in that it was the point from which the ceremonies started and ended. It even appears that the religious ceremonies centered more on the palace than the mosque, since the latter was used only as a place to perform *ṣalāh*, whether Friday congregational prayer or the prayers of both canonical religious feasts (ʿĪd al-Fiṭr and ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā), whereas the more elaborate state rituals took place in the palace itself. Ceremonies inaugurating the coming of Ramaḍān, known as the *memeugang puasa*, and other ceremonies related to this month, i.e., *laylat al-qadr* and the twenty-seventh of the month, were concentrated in the court. As mentioned earlier,[193] the *shahbandar* watched for the coming of the new moon (Ramaḍān) from the palace, and when the moon was seen a ceremony was held there which ended with the beating of the royal drums. This marked the coming of the holy month, the announcement of which was actually the privilege of the sovereign.

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[191] Indeed, this was in line with the prescriptions given in the *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* that female rulers were discouraged to perform these traditions. See *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* (Eijsinga), p. 64; (Hussain), p. 64; (Jusuf), p. 38.

[192] Sanders, *Ritual, Politics*, p. 7.

[193] See above pp. 128–129.

This role of the palace was just as important in the same event witnessed by Houtman in 1599. On that occasion, after witnessing the new moon, the officials went to the court where the ceremony was held, drums were beaten, trumpets blown and cannons fired. This officially marked the coming of the month.[194] A further indication of the significant role played by the palace is demonstrated by the sovereign's insistence on keeping the *tongkat khuṭbah*,[195] which was in fact a religious symbol, in the palace.[196] Therefore, the festival of ʿĪd al-Fiṭr began officially with the request made by the *penghulu bilāl* (the chief *mu'adhdhin*) to the ruler to have the staff delivered into his care.[197]

The handing over of various royal insignia to the officials, the organization of those participating in the ceremonies, the processions in order of rank, the dress of those participating and all other details of protocol reveal that the events were intended as a visual display of power, loyalty, and the hierarchical nature of the state.[198] Many royal insignia, as symbols of the ruler's authority, constituted important elements of the ceremonies, for they were related to the ruler himself. As such, respect was paid to them. These included royal symbols, daggers, drums, elephants, cannons, the *puan kerajaan* (the betel caddy), the *bungkus kerajaan* (the betel bag), the royal *cap*, the crown (called Raja Tajuk Intan Dikarang), banners, and parasols. Some of these symbols of authority were extended to the ruler's subordinates, signifying favor and rank in the state. The high-ranking officials were expected to wear *pedangs* and *kerises*, and to ride elephants

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[194] See above pp. 121–122.

[195] For the meaning of this staff see note 149 above.

[196] This, however, was not the case with the sacrificial festival.

[197] See pp. 131–132.

[198] The hierarchical nature of the state was also shown by the extension of numerous royal titles to the state's officials. The titles were indeed meant to signify the transfer of royal authority to their holders. It should be admitted, however, that the titles provided by the *Adat Aceh* are so numerous and confusing, especially the ones that are given in the section entitled *Taraf Berdiri Segala Hulubalang [Uleebalang]* (Regulations Concerning the Standing Position of the *Uleebalangs*). However, a few main titles are given by the text, the assumption of which requires strict regulation. There were five *gelar* (titles) that were bestowed by the sovereign to his officials: (1) *paduka* (highness), (2) *maha* (the most, supreme), (3) *seri* (the illustrious, the glorious), (4) *raja* (king/queen or prince/princess), and (5) *tuan* (lord, master). The assumption of these titles would depend on one's *martabat* (rank). One could assume four titles, for instance *bendahara paduka seri maha raja* and *paduka seri maha raja*; or three titles, such as *paduka maha raja, seri maha raja lela*, and *seri maha raja*; or two titles, such as *paduka raja* and *seri raja mahkota*; or one title only, like *seri lela, tuan pakaram*, and others. See *Adat Aceh*, pp. 65–66.

or horses. Perhaps a good example of a mark of royal favor was the treatment accorded to British captain John Davis, who was given a royal *keris* by al-Mukammil. In having this conferred upon him, he was automatically granted other privileges as well.[199] Detailed information as to the types of royal clothing worn by different classes of officials, court functionaries, servants, and the various kinds and levels of soldiers and guards are too intricate to be systematically classified. Yet they too signified the variety of ranks.

Among the participants involved in the processions, such as soldiers, guards, and servants, state officials are especially notable. These officials, holding different offices, constituted the backbone of the country's bureaucracy. Even though a complete identification of this group is not provided in the *Adat Aceh*, we are at least told that they consisted of the *orang kayas* and the *uleebalangs*. The term *uleebalang* itself seems to be ambiguous, for it could include the *orang kayas* (nobles who were also of the merchant class), high ranking officials, and even, most importantly, district chiefs.[200] This group controlled their own lands and people,[201] and their importance is further shown by frequent mention of regulations pertaining to them in the *Adat Aceh*. They even had their own hall (Balai Uleebalang) at the court. The protocol regarding them was minutely regulated, whether at the court or during the ceremonies. In all the ceremonies we have described, it can be seen that they invariably accompanied the sovereign, followed all the ceremonial procedures and paid their allegiance to the sovereign on a number of occasions.

Religious officials were also said to have been involved in the ceremonies. They mainly consisted of the *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil* and a number of *faqīhs*, who played important roles in specifically religious ceremonies. When all the preparations for ʿĪd al-Fiṭr were made, the *qāḍī* was the person responsible for reporting to the sovereign that

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[199] See above p. 110, note 77.

[200] See Reid, "Trade and the Problem," pp. 47, 52–55; Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," pp. 57–121.

[201] In Chapter Two (pp. 41, 55, and 73), mention was given as to the emergence of semi-independent regions in Aceh, called *sagi*, during the reign of Queen Naqiyyat al-Dīn. Since that time, Aceh was to become a confederation of three *sagis*, rather than a united state. Under the heading of the *Taraf Berdiri Segala Hulubalang [Uleebalangs]* (Regulations concerning the Standing Position of the *uleebalangs*), the *Adat Aceh* includes various ranks of people, from the highest ranking officials, such as *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil, orang kaya maharaja seri maharaja*, to regional chiefs, under this category. See *Adat Aceh*, pp. 104–111.

the procession was ready to begin. In the mosque, both the *qāḍī* and the *faqīh* stood before the door of the ruler's private alcove, welcoming him. In slaughtering the victims during the ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā, the sovereign deputed the job to the *qāḍī*, who then had all the *faqīhs* finish the work. This was in addition to the protocol that they, together with other officials, had to follow. This suggests an effort on the part of the ruler to reassert himself as the one who held supreme authority by controlling his officials and demanding their loyalty. The question that should be raised at this point is: How much of the religious authority claimed by the ruler can be detected in these ceremonies?

Above, in Chapter Two, we discussed the claim to religious authority on the part of the ruler. The concept indeed corroborates the picture given in the ceremonies. In the first place the concept was articulated in the form of the "religiously sanctioned authority." The ruler, as the holder of power, was not seen as a religious leader, but rather as one who led a country in which the observation of certain religious practices was guaranteed. While the office of the sulṭān was sacred, the ruler himself was not. Therefore, equilibrium between the religious authority and the holder of power was demanded.[202] In the ceremonies, therefore, the sovereign was not expected to become the *imām* leading the *ṣalāh*, nor was his name mentioned in the *khuṭbah*. In the rituals marking ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā, the name of Shaykh Shams al-Dīn is mentioned as the holder of the highest religious authority, for he is said to have welcomed the ruler at the mosque and to have accompanied him at prayer in the alcove. This symbolized the equilibrium of both the ruler and the religious authority. At the same time, it also signified, above all, that the ruler was the supreme authority. This is also shown by the symbolic slaughtering of the victims at ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā by the sovereign.

The ruler was placed at the center in the ceremonies. All the protocol, rituals, and processions with their extraordinary performances were concentrated on the ruler at their center, above all, as the supreme head of an Islamic sultanate. As such, there was to be seen a complete intertwining of traditional ceremonies with religious rituals. In other words, traditional royal rituals and religious rituals became one. The ceremonies also became displays of the reassertion

[202] This point will be discussed in greater detail below in the next chapter on Islamic institutions.

of power, hierarchy, and loyalty. This was in addition to the show of the state's richness and greatness. Therefore, the ceremonies were to be seen not simply as entertainments and extravagant performances by the state, but as the state itself.[203]

In Aceh, the emergence of great state ceremonies coincided with the period of centralization of power begun by al-Mukammil, and they reached their highest point during the reign of Iskandar Muda. Therefore, there was a close connection between the centralized system of government and the need for ceremonies in which all state officials took part. In her study of the Byzantine Book of Ceremonies, Averil Cameron observes that "the more centralized the government became, the more the rituals themselves would need to and tend to include all the officials who mattered. Thus, the ceremonial was both self-generating and self-reinforcing. Ambition engendered ceremony and ceremony made ambition respectable."[204] This was particularly true of Aceh during the first half of the seventeenth century, especially prior to the rule of the queens, when the centralizing tendency prevailed. It was also in this context that the codification of the royal ceremonies in the *Adat Aceh* by Iskandar Muda must be understood. In short, the ceremonies and their codification were intended not only to impress the Acehnese public,[205] and foreign envoys, but most importantly to control the official class.

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[203] See a similar phenomenon in the "theatre state" of Bali in Clifford Geertz in his *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), especially pp. 102–103. See also his "Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power," in Joseph Ben-David and Terry Nichols Clark, eds., *Culture and Its Creators* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), pp. 150–171.

[204] Cameron, "The Construction of Court Ritual," p. 131.

[205] In his description of the royal procession for ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā under Iskandar Thānī, Peter Mundy shows that the public went out to see it and, "as the King passed, the people made their obeysaunce by lifting their Joyned hands over their heads" (Mundy, *The Travels*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 123). The *Adat Aceh* gives a picture of the crowd watching the spectacular picture of Iskandar Muda's procession going to the mosque on the ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā. Some pregnant women gave birth in the streets and the market places, while some were lost in the crowd (*Adat Aceh*, p. 91).

CHAPTER FOUR

ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS AND THE STATE

The previous two chapters have shown that Islam played a major role in the Acehnese state. In this chapter, the role of Islam in institution-building will be our focus, even though the historical reconstruction of these institutions is a difficult task due to the paucity of sources. Our inquiry will, therefore, be limited to three of them, namely, the *'ulamā'*, *adat* and Islamic law, and *jihād*.

A. *The* 'Ulamā' *and the State*

The term *'ulamā'* (the plural form of *'ālim*, meaning a scholar, and especially an Islamic religious scholar) might seem too general a category to address conveniently. The definition found in the *Encyclopedia of Religion* identifies the *'ulamā'* as "the guardians, transmitters, and interpreters of its [Islam's] sciences, doctrines, and laws and chief guarantors of continuity in the spiritual and intellectual history of the Islamic community."[1] In this sense, an *'ālim* in seventeenth century Aceh could hold any one of the various titles assigned to religious authorities.

The *Bustān* speaks of the coming in the sixteenth century of the *'ulamā'* to Aceh from other Muslim lands for the purpose of disseminating the faith and its various sciences, including law, jurisprudence, logic, rhetoric and sufism. Specific mention should be made of al-Rānīrī's paternal uncle, Shaykh Muḥammad Jīlānī, who came to Aceh in the early 1580s to teach logic, rhetoric, law and jurisprudence. It was sufism and theology that most interested the Acehnese, however, and so he left for Mecca to pursue these subjects. Only a

[1] Hamid Algar, "'Ulamā'," *ER*. See also Thomas W. Arnold, *The Caliphate* (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1965), pp. 14–15, 17, 54, 198–199; Nikkie R. Keddie, *Scholars, Saints, and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East since 1500* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1972).

few years later, during the reign of al-Mukammil, he returned to teach these fields.[2]

This account clarifies several points. In the first place, religious studies clearly flourished in Aceh during the sixteenth century. This was, no doubt, a product of the combined effects of Acehnese economic and military might in the region and the serious attention paid by its rulers to the Islamic faith. The topics of interest seem to have been extensive, ranging from law and jurisprudence to theology and sufism. This is important to remember if we are to comprehend fully the religious current in Aceh during this period. The case of Muḥammad Jīlānī reveals the extent to which sufism was in favor. After all, it was also at this time that the celebrated Ḥamzah Fanṣūrī (d. around 1600), a proponent of Wujūdiyyah doctrine, was active.[3] In concert with this development, there must also have flourished institutions of learning, such as *madrasahs*, although no such institution is attested to in contemporary records, which make only general reference to such matters. Describing the Acehnese people in 1599, John Davis confirms no more than the fact that, "in religion they are Mahometists, . . . They bring up their children in learning, and have many schooles."[4]

This lack of information on Islamic schools, together with their various components, such as the *'ulamā'*, their curricula and their religious and political affiliations, is true of the seventeenth century as well. Faced with such a dearth of information, we must confine our discussion to two subjects: the office of *shaykh al-Islām* and the *qāḍī* (the Islamic judge).

1. *Shaykh al-Islām*

Any discussion of the nature and development of the office of *shaykh al-Islām*[5] in Aceh during the seventeenth century must refer to three

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[2] Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī, *Bustanu's-Salatin*, bab 2, fasal 13, ed. by T. Iskandar (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementrian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1966), pp. 33–34 (henceforth *Bustān*).

[3] S.M.N. al-Attas, *The Mysticism of Ḥamzah Fanṣūrī* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1970), pp. 3–30; Ḥamzah Fanṣūrī, *The Poems of Hamzah Fansuri*, ed. by G.W.J. Drewes and L.F. Brakel, eds. (Dordrecht and Cinnaminson: Foris Publications, 1986), pp. 1–3.

[4] John Davis, *The Voyages and Works of John Davis, the Navigator*, ed. by A.H. Markham (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1880), p. 151.

[5] The word *shaykh* (pl. *shuyūkh*) has various meanings: an elderly or venerable

prominent religious figures: Shams al-Dīn al-Samaṭrānī (d. 1630), Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī (d. 1658) and ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Singkilī (d. 1693). This inquiry will, therefore, begin with a chronology of events in the lives of these individuals.

The term *shaykh al-Islām* is used once in the *Hikayat Aceh* in reference to an incident in which al-Mukammil is said to have asked the office holder to read a letter from the Portuguese authorities delivered by John Davis.[6] That individual has been identified as Shams al-Dīn al-Samaṭrānī.[7] Elsewhere in the text, Shams al-Dīn is only identified by the title *shaykh*.[8] However, this does not undermine the evidence that points to the existence of the office of *shaykh al-Islām*, as will be shown in the following discussion.

Little is known of the life of Shams al-Dīn. Anthony Johns suggests that he was born sometime before 1575,[9] while the *Bustān* informs us that he died on 12 Rajāb 1039/15 February 1630.[10] He originally came from Samudra-Pasai, which his name (Samaṭrānī or Samaṭrāʾī) alludes to in the form of a *nisbah* (attribution). There is little doubt that Shams al-Dīn was a prominent scholar. He was, as Johns puts it, "the first Djāwī known to have left significant works written in Arabic alongside a number of prose writings in Malay."[11] Some scholars have presented evidence suggesting that he was a proponent of the heterodox Wujūdiyyah doctrine in line with Ḥamzah Fanṣūrī.[12] This has led to speculation that Shams al-Dīn was the pupil of, or at least had an intellectual association with, the former.[13] Al-Rānīrī confirms that Shams al-Dīn was indeed a respected scholar

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man; chief or chieftain; title of a Persian gulf ruler; and master of a *ṣūfī* order. The title *shaykh al-Islām* denotes an honorific title applied to religious dignitaries in the Islamic world up to the twentieth century. See E.W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1984), pp. 1628–1629; J.H. Kramers, et al., "Shaykh al-Islām," *EI2*.

[6] *De Hikajat Atjeh*, ed. by T. Iskandar ('s-Gravenhage: H.L. Smits, 1959), p. 137 (henceforth *Hikayat Aceh*).

[7] See ibid., note 164; S.M.N. al-Attas, *Rānīrī and the Wujūdiyyah of 17th Century Acheh* (Singapore: MBRAS, 1966), p. 9, note 33; A.H. Johns, "Shams al-Dīn al-Samaṭrānī," *EI2*.

[8] *Hikayat Aceh*, pp. 153, 168.

[9] Johns, "Shams al-Dīn al-Samaṭrānī."

[10] *Bustān*, p. 35; C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze, *Šamsu 'l-Dīn van Pasai* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1945), p. 15; Johns, "Shams al-Dīn al-Samaṭrānī."

[11] Johns, "Shams al-Dīn al-Samaṭrānī."

[12] Nieuwenhuijze, *Šamsu 'l-Dīn*, pp. 234–235; Johns, "Shams al-Dīn al-Samaṭrānī."

[13] Nieuwenhuijze, *Šamsu 'l-Dīn*, pp. 19–20. Cf. C. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, trans. by A.W.S. O'Sullivan, vol. 2 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1906), p. 13 and note 2.

who was well known to the field of sufism and authored several works.[14]

There is little doubt that Shams al-Dīn was very active in affairs of state as well. The many posts he occupied in the court suggest that he held some of the highest positions in the Acehnese religious hierarchy, a hierarchy that culminated in the office of *shaykh al-Islām*. In the first place, there is reason to believe that he was religious instructor to Iskandar Muda. But this appears to be a *ṣūfī* term, the "ṣūfī *murshīd* to the Sulṭān."[15] Of the several works ascribed to this scholar,[16] at least two were dedicated to Iskandar Muda and were intended to serve as a basic introduction to mysticism in the early years of his reign. The first was an untitled work written in 1020 A.H./1611–1612 A.D.,[17] while the second was known as *Nūr al-Daqā'iq* (The Light of Particles).[18] Davis also provides us with a few insights into this figure, writing that the Acehnese had "an archbishop and spiritual dignitaries. Here is a prophet in Achien, whom they greatly honour; they say that hee hath the spirit of prophesie, as the ancients have had. He is dignified from the rest in his apparell, and greatly imbraced of the king."[19]

Shams al-Dīn also occupied the highest rank in both the religious hierarchy and the state council. In the first place, he was the *shaykh al-Islām*, signifying his position at the pinnacle of the religious bureaucracy and his standing as the state spiritual leader. In Chapter Three above, mention is made of the role of this figure in religious rituals and ceremonies. He welcomed the ruler to the mosque, accompa-

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[14] *Bustān*, p. 35. For a list of this scholar's works see Nieuwenhuijze, *Šamsu 'l-Dīn*, pp. 25–26.

[15] Johns, "Shams al-Dīn al-Samaṭrānī." Iskandar Muda received his earliest religious training while still a child, not under Shams al-Dīn's instruction, but under Faqīh Raja Indera Purba. See *Hikayat Aceh*, pp. 149–150.

[16] No work of Shams al-Dīn has been found in its complete form. His ideas, however, are quoted by al-Rānīrī in an attempt to refute Wujūdiyyah doctrine. The disappearance of his works must have resulted from Iskandar Thānī's policy, formulated under the influence of al-Rānīrī, of destroying Wujūdiyyah works in front of the Bayt al-Raḥmān mosque and executing followers of the order.

[17] The work seems to be entitled *Ṭarīqat al-Ṣālikīn* (The Path of Those Who Follow the Spiritual Creed). See Nieuwenhuijze, *Šamsu 'l-Dīn*, pp. 26, 291, 300–301, 318.

[18] Shams al-Dīn al-Sumaṭrānī, "Nūr al-Daḳā'iḳ by the Sumatran Mystic Shamsu 'l-Din ibn 'Abdullah," ed. by A. Johns, *JRAS* (1953), pp. 137–151. No date is given for the composition of this work.

[19] Davis, *The Voyages and Works*, p. 151.

nied him in the *ṣalāh* (ritual prayer) and was present at the ritual of slaughtering animals on the occasion of ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā.[20] This same person is also mentioned by the *Hikayat Aceh* as having attended a ceremony conferring the title *sayf al-mulūk* (the sword of kings) on Iskandar Muda's fencing-instructor. Many religious dignitaries (*segala pendeta dan segala sharīf*) and state officials were present at this occasion. The *duʿā'* (prayer) recitation, it is also said, was led by Shams al-Dīn.[21] In other places the text speaks of the arrival in Aceh of a mystic from Mecca, Mir Jaʿfar, who met with Shams al-Dīn.[22]

European sources too provide some information on Shams al-Dīn.[23] As we have seen, Davis mentions the presence of an "archbishop" and of religious dignitaries. When brought to an audience with the sulṭān in September 1599, Frederick de Houtman found a *shaykh* functioning as chief councillor.[24] It was this very *shaykh* who would later (in January 1601) persuade him to convert to Islam, after several such attempts by various judges had failed.[25] In 1602, James Lancaster found a "chief bishop" of Aceh serving as one of the negotiators in a commercial treaty whom he describes as:

> . . . one of those noblemen was the chiefe bishope of the realme, a man of great estimation with the king and all the people; and so he well deserved, for he was a man very wise and temperate. The other was one of the most ancient nobilitie, a man of very good gravitie, but not so fit to enter into those conferences as the bishop was. A day and a meeting was appointed, where many questions passed betwixt them. And all the conferences passed into the Arabicke tongue, which both the bishop and the other nobleman well understood.[26]

Since the "chief bishop" in the above account can be identified as Shams al-Dīn on the basis of information contained in both the

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[20] See above, p. 137.

[21] *Hikayat Aceh*, p. 153. In the text, the *shaykh* is said to have led the reciting of the *fātiḥah* (the name of the first *sūrah* in the Qur'ān), during which all the other religious dignitaries uttered "*amīn, amīn*" (amen). This must have been in the context of a *duʿā'*.

[22] Ibid., p. 168.

[23] See Nieuwenhuijze, *Šamsu 'l-Dīn*, pp. 16–18.

[24] W.S. Unger, ed., *De oudste reizen van de zeeuwen naar Oost Indie, 1589–1604* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1948), p. 74.

[25] Ibid., pp. 96–102. See also Karel Steenbrink, *Dutch Colonialism and Indonesian Islam, Contacts and Conflicts, 1596–1950*, trans. by Jan Steenbrink and Henry Jansen (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, B.U., 1993), pp. 11–16.

[26] Sir James Lancaster, *The Voyages of Sir James Lancaster to Brazil and the East Indies, 1591–1603*, ed. by W. Foster (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1940), p. 96.

Hikayat Aceh and the *Bustān*, it can be assumed that he held the highest religious post in the land in his capacity as the *shaykh al-Islām*. The question of whether or not he also functioned as a *muftī* (jurist consult) is on the other hand a difficult one to answer. So far, no single work on law has been ascribed to him. Indeed, according to the *Bustān*, another prominent *ʿālim*, who was also an expert in Islamic jurisprudence, lived during the same period. This scholar was Shaykh Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Shāmī al-Shāfiʿī, who died in the same year as Shams al-Dīn.[27] However, this does not imply that Shams al-Dīn's position as a *muftī* was marginal. He was, after all, the holder of the highest religious office, a position that suggests the opposite: indeed, one source affirms that Shams al-Dīn was a follower of the Shāfiʿite school of law.[28]

The information provided by certain European sources, it will be remembered, also suggests that the *shaykh al-Islām* functioned as chief councillor. In real terms, this meant that the *shaykh* ranked second only to the sovereign himself in authority. Thus, he was the sulṭān's advisor and, on many occasions, his vicegerent in matters of economy and politics. In addition to the information provided by Lancaster, Ralph Croft speaks of a chief official with whom Thomas Best negotiated in matters of commerce. It was to this official, according to Croft, that "the kinge referr all his chief and waightie matters of statte."[29] Two years later, this very person was presented with gifts by the English East India Company's fleet.[30] The *Bustān* is fairly informative on this issue, reporting that Shams al-Dīn appeared in public on several state occasions. He is said to have occupied the chief place among the officials on these occasions, ahead of the *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil* (the chief *qāḍī*), the *perdana menteri orang kaya maharaja sri maharaja* (the prime minister), the *orang kaya laksamana* (the police chief) and other notables.[31]

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[27] *Bustān*, p. 35. This must be the same Shaykh Ibrāhīm mentioned in the *Hikayat Aceh* (p. 144).

[28] *. . . Shams al-Dīn ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Samaṭrānī aṣlan wa al-Shāfiʿiyyah imāman wa madhhaban* (Shams al-Dīn the son of ʿAbd Allāh who was of Sumatran origin and belonged to the Shāfiʿite school of law). See Nieuwenhujze, *Šamsu 'l-Dīn*, pp. 291, 236–264.

[29] The person is referred to as "rassedor" or confidential advisor of the sovereign. See Thomas Best, *The Voyages of Thomas Best to the East Indies, 1612–1614*, ed. by W. Foster (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1934), pp. 165–167.

[30] *Letters Received by the East India Company from Its Servants in the East, 1615*, ed. by F.K Danvers and W. Foster, vol. 3 (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1899), p. 97.

[31] See *Bustān*, pp. 37–43.

With the death of Shams al-Dīn in 1630, the office of the *shaykh al-Islām* remained temporarily vacant until al-Rānīrī's arrival in 1637. There is an indication, however, that during this period the highest religious authority in the state was vested in the hands of Shams al-Dīn's student, Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn, an *'ālim* who was among the *'ulamā'* persecuted during Iskandar Thānī's reign.[32] However, nothing pertaining to the activities of this *'ālim*, nor to the religious life of the state during this six year period, is known. The office of the *shaykh al-Islām* and its core activities can only be said to have revived with al-Rānīrī's assumption of the office in 1637.

Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Ḥasanjī al-Ḥamīd al-Rānīrī was born in Rānīr (Rander) in Gujarat towards the end of the sixteenth century. He was, therefore, neither a native Acehnese, nor a long-time resident of Aceh. It must be said, however, that his short stay of seven years (from 1637 to 1644/45) coincided with perhaps the most controversial period in the history of Islam in this region during the seventeenth century. It was also during this time that al-Rānīrī held the office of *shaykh al-Islām*, making them the most productive of his years in Aceh.

As the representative of an orthodox Islam, al-Rānīrī was well-known as a *ṣūfī*, theologian, jurist consult, man of letters, and politician. Most of all, he was a prolific writer. Al-Rānīrī came to Aceh in 1637,[33] soon after the death of Iskandar Muda. His arrival in Aceh after the ruler's death, his immediate and active involvement in politics, his entanglement in religious controversy, and lastly his extraordinary productivity while in Aceh (resulting in the production of a number of works written in Malay) suggest that al-Rānīrī already possessed a strong connection to the region's culture, religion, and politics.[34] However, Iskandar Muda's preference for the popular

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[32] See Takeshi Ito, "Why Did Nuruddin ar-Raniri Leave Aceh in 1054 A.H.?," *BKI* 134 (1978), p. 490; idem, "The World of the Adat Aceh: A Historical Study of the Sultanate of Aceh" (Ph.D. dissertation, Australian National University, 1984), pp. 254–255.

[33] Raden Hoesein Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht van de in Malaische werken vervatte gegevens over de geschiedenis van het Soeltanaat van Atjeh," *BKI* 65 (1911), pp. 136–137; P. Voorhoeve, "Van en over Nuruddin Al-Raniri," *BKI* 107 (1951), p. 357.

[34] Al-Attas, *Rānīrī and the Wujūdiyyah*, pp. 12–14; idem, *A Commentary on the Ḥujjat al-Ṣiddīq of Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī* (Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Culture, 1986), pp. 7–8; Azyumardi Azra, "The Transmission of Islamic Reformism to Indonesia: Networks of Middle Eastern and Malay-Indonesian *'Ulamā'* in the Seventeenth and the Eighteenth Centuries" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1992), p. 358.

Wujūdiyyah mystical doctrine, propagated by both Ḥamzah Fanṣūrī and Shams al-Dīn, must have dissuaded al-Rānīrī from coming to Aceh at an earlier date.

The point to be made here is that al-Rānīrī's arrival in Aceh seems to have been motivated by a sense of "mission" to vanquish Acehnese "heterodox" mystical practices, which he termed "the deviant and straying Wujūdiyyah" (*Wujūdiyyah yang zindīq mulḥid*).[35] He clearly articulated his intention to rehabilitate his fellow Muslims in the region by bringing them to "true Islam."[36] For this very reason, he armed himself with as much knowledge of the people of the region as he could and made every effort to win the sovereign's favor and patronage so as to ascend to the office of *shaykh al-Islām*. This is important to note as it conveys something of the nature of the office during this time.

Once he had obtained the highest religious authority in the land, al-Rānīrī was able to launch his campaign against the Wujūdiyyah and limit the influence of its teachings on the general population. Various strategies were adopted in this endeavor. Books were written, some of these being polemics against Wujūdiyyah doctrine[37]

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[35] Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī, *Tibyān fī Maʿrifat al-Adyān*, reproduced in facsimile in *Twe Maleise geschriften van Nūruddīn Ar-Rānīrī*, ed. by P. Voorhoeve (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1955), p. 3.

[36] Al-Rānīrī's concern was shown by his constant reminders to his fellow Muslims of the danger of Wujūdiyyah teachings. Between his return to his home country and his death in 1658, al-Rānīrī is said to have composed several works dealing with what he had encountered during his sojourn in Aceh (ʿAbd al-Ḥayy b. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Ḥasanī, *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir wa Bahjat al-Masāmiʿ wa al-Nawāẓir*, vol. 5 (Hyderabad: Dā'irat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyyah, 1955), pp. 349–350). Among these works was *al-Fatḥ al-Mubīn ʿalā al-Mulḥidīn* (A Clear Triumph over the Apostates) written in 1068 A.H./1657 A.D. In content, this work is in fact not much different from his other works, in that it expounds on the deviations of heterodox Wujūdiyyah doctrine. But what is important for our purposes is to highlight this scholar's deep belief in the heresy of the Wujūdiyyah and his lasting commitment to protecting the Muslim community in the region from the doctrine. Thus he dedicated *al-Fatḥ al-Mubīn* to his fellow Muslims in Aceh, Kedah, Banten, Makasar, Pattani and other countries below the wind. See al-Rānīrī, *al-Fatḥ al-Mubīn ʿalā al-Mulḥidīn*, MS in Ahmad Daudy's personal collection (1068/1657), p. 298. See also Ahmad Daudy, "Tinjauan Atas 'al-Fath al-Mubin 'Ala al-Mulhidin' Karya Shaykh Nuruddin Ar-Raniry," in Ahmad Rifa'i Hasan, ed., *Warisan Intellektual Islam Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan, 1987), pp. 21–35.

[37] Among the most important works written in Aceh on this issue were *Shifāʾ al-Qulūb*, *Nubdhah fī Daʿwā al-Ẓill maʿa Ṣāḥibih*, *Ḥujjat al-Ṣiddīq li Dafʿi al-Zindīq*, *Tibyān fī Maʿrifat al-Adyān*, and *al-Fatḥ al-Mubīn ʿalā al-Mulḥidīn*. See P. Voorhoeve, "Lijst der geschriften van Rānīrī," *BKI* 111 (1955), pp. 152–161; al-Attas, *A Commentary*, pp. 24–28.

while others constituted general works on Islam, including law, the Prophetic traditions, sufism, history and mirrors for princes.[38] Religious discussions were held for the same purpose, and took place at the court in the presence of the ruler.[39] The campaign reached its climax with the issuance of a *fatwā* (legal ruling) defining Wujūdiyyah followers as disbelievers and, following a successful appeal to Iskandar Thānī, condemning their leaders to death. As a final stroke, their works were burned before the Bayt al-Raḥmān mosque.[40]

As is clear from the activities in which its incumbent engaged, the office of *shaykh al-Islām* was both religious and political in nature. Indeed, the religious current in the state was determined by the *shaykh al-Islām* himself. Having said this, it must be remembered that this became possible only after the favor of the political patron (the ruler) had been won. This was particularly true of al-Rānīrī, who was able to realize his goals through the patronage of both Iskandar Thānī and his widow and successor, Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn. Al-Rānīrī's grip on the reigns of power loosened only when he lost the latter's support.[41]

The above example also indicates that al-Rānīrī functioned as advisor to the ruler and his/her teacher in religious matters. The *Bustān* indicates that an intensification of Islamic teachings occurred in Aceh during Iskandar Thānī's reign. The pre-Islamic judicial punishments by plunging a hand into boiling oil (*mencelup minyak*) or by licking heated iron (*menjilat besi*) were, for instance, banned, no doubt at the behest of al-Rānīrī.[42] It follows, therefore, that he was the ruler's religious advisor. Moreover, the royal preoccupation with

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[38] Among his works on this subject were *Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm* (on fiqh), *Hadiyyat al-Ḥabīb fī al-Targhīb wa al-Tarhīb* (on traditions of the Prophet), *Bustān al-Salāṭīn* (an encyclopedic work concerning history and a mirror for princes), *Asrār al-Insān fī Maʿrifat al-Rūḥ wa al-Raḥmān* (on sufism) and *Jawāhir al-Aʿlām fī Kashf al-Maʿlūm* (also on sufism).

[39] Al-Rānīrī indicates that a polemic between himself and the followers of the Wujūdiyyah continued for several days and that Iskandar Thānī was present. See his *Tibyān*, pp. 3–6. His religious debate with Sayf al-Rijāl was held at the court. See Ito, "Why Did Nuruddin ar-Raniri Leave Aceh," pp. 489–491.

[40] See his *Tibyān*, p. 5; idem, *al-Fatḥ al-Mubīn*, pp. 3–4; al-Attas, *Rānīrī and the Wujūdiyyah*, pp. 14–16; idem, *A Commentary*, pp. 8–9.

[41] Hoesein Djajadiningrat, "De ceremonie van het 'poela batee' op het graf van Sultan Iskandar II van Atjeh (1636–1641)," *TBG* 69 (1929), pp. 109–111; Voorhoeve, "Van en over Nūruddīn ar-Rānīrī," pp. 353–354; Ito, "Why Did Nuruddin ar-Raniry Leave Aceh," p. 191.

[42] *Bustān*, pp. 44–45. See also Al-Attas, *A Commentary*, p. 11.

questions of faith meant that works on religious topics were often commissioned by both Iskandar Thānī and Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn, as al-Rānīrī himself indicates.[43]

The question of whether al-Rānīrī also functioned as chief councillor of the state is difficult to determine. Scant mention of this figure is found in Dutch sources. Besides portraying him as a "Moorish Bishop,"[44] the sources only mention that al-Rānīrī played a role in the state's policy of favoring Gujarati traders, a policy that angered the Dutch.[45] While it stands as an example of al-Rānīrī's role in influencing state political and economic policy,[46] it fails to establish that he held the position of chief councillor, a position filled by his predecessor, Shams al-Dīn. The absence of any mention of this title can be attributed to several reasons. In the first place, as a non-native Acehnese, he could not easily intervene in, let alone control, the state council. Secondly, there is the fact that the reigns of both Iskandar Thānī and Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn were marked by a gradual decline in the tendency towards royal centralization of power and by a revival of the *orang kayas*' (nobles') influence. Finally, al-Rānīrī was overwhelmingly occupied with religious activities, such as engaging in polemics with Wujūdiyyah proponents or composing treatises on doctrine, tasks that gave him little time for other activities. Indeed, it is remarkable that this scholar was able to contribute so much in such a short period of time. It is in this context that S.M.N. al-Attas writes:

> His [al-Rānīrī's] writings in Malay on theology and essentials of Islam, the sacred law governing its practical application and the moral and ethical principles deriving from it were the first of such writings to appear in the Malay world . . . There can be no doubt that no other man in the Malay world has contributed so much in the field of Islamic knowledge and learning than al-Rānīrī. From the perspective of Islamization, he played the greatest role in consolidating the religion among the Malays, and made a lasting contribution to their spiritual and intel-

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[43] Iskandar Thānī ordered the composition of *Bustān al-Salāṭīn* and *Asrār al-Insān fī Maʿrifat al-Rūḥ wa al-Raḥmān*, while Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn was responsible for ordering the composition of *Tibyān fī Maʿrifat al-Adyān*. See al-Attas, *A Commentary*, pp. 25–27.

[44] *Dagh-Register gehouden int Casteel Batavia (1641–1642)*, p. 166. Cf. B. Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological Studies*, pt. 2 (The Hague and Bandung: W. van Hoeve, 1957), p. 394.

[45] *Dagh-Register 1641–1642*, p. 166.

[46] Cf. Azra, "The Transmission," p. 361.

> lectual quality of life. Al-Rānīrī was one of the greatest figures of Islām in the Malay world.[47]

The decision as to who held the highest religious authority, i.e., who filled the office of *shaykh al-Islām*, depended on the ruler's will, a fact that was brought home to al-Rānīrī in 1644. In that year, he lost the queen's patronage and was forced to leave the country. Another *ʿālim*, Sayf al-Rijāl, assumed the position.[48] Information on either the latter's background or his activities is scarce. Peter Sourij says that this "Moorish Bishop" arrived in Aceh on 8 August 1643 from Surat, India, where he had studied. He was originally from Minangkabau, but came to reside in Aceh where he studied with Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn, who was himself the student of Shams al-Dīn, and eventually assumed the post of *shaykh al-Islām*. He only held this title for a few years before al-Rānīrī had him executed.[49] As such, the rise of Sayf al-Rijāl to the highest post of religious authority is a clear indication that the heterodox Wujūdiyyah had won a temporary victory over orthodox Islam and had ascended to the status of official doctrine,[50] although this did not herald a repetition of the golden days that the movement had enjoyed in its early years. The absence of further information on this figure and his religious activities, however, forces us to move on to another figure, ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Singkilī.

ʿAbd al-Raʾūf b. ʿAlī al-Jāwī al-Fanṣūrī al-Singkilī was born in 1615.[51] How much the political and religious controversies gripping Aceh in his day affected the young ʿAbd al-Raʾūf prior to his departure for Arabia in 1642 is impossible to gauge. However, it is fairly certain that he witnessed the polemics between the proponents of Wujūdiyyah doctrine and the orthodox al-Rānīrī, the tragic execution of Wujūdiyyah followers and the burning of their works, and the political controversy that erupted with the rise of Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn as Aceh's first female ruler. After his long sojourn in Arabia (about

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[47] Al-Attas, *A Commentary*, p. 48.

[48] Voorhoeve, "Van en over Nūruddīn," p. 353. Cf. Ahmad Daudy, *Allah dan Manusia dalam Konsepsi Nuruddin ar-Raniry* (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1983), p. 45; Djajadiningrat, "De ceremonie," pp. 109–111.

[49] Ito, "Why Did Nuruddin ar-Raniri Leave Aceh," pp. 489–491.

[50] Ibid.; al-Rānīrī, *al-Fatḥ al-Mubīn*, p. 4; Daudy, *Allah dan Manusia*, p. 47.

[51] D.A. Rinkes, *Abdoerraoef van Sinkel* (Heerenveen: Hepkema, 1909), pp. 25–26; P. Voorhoeve, "ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Sinkilī," *EI2*; Peter Riddell, *Transferring A Tradition: ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Singkilī's Rendering into Malay of the Jalālayn Commentary* (Berkeley: Centers for South and Southeast Asia Studies, University of California, 1990), p. 5.

19 years in length), al-Singkilī returned to Aceh in 1661 and was granted the highest religious authority in the state as *shaykh al-Islām*.[52]

The queen's dislike for al-Rānīrī[53] opened the door for al-Singkilī's rise. It should be noted here that, unlike al-Rānīrī, al-Singkilī was neither an ambitious nor a revolutionary figure, even though there is some indication suggesting that he was deeply concerned about the chain of events overtaking his homeland.[54] His success in winning the queen's favor and patronage were, however, based on his personal qualities. Most important perhaps was his moderate approach to religion. Indeed, this very characteristic distinguished him from al-Rānīrī, even though both were orthodox *'ulamā'*.[55]

Al-Singkilī seems to have been particularly devoted to authoring religious texts. He is said to have produced twenty-two works in various religious fields, ranging from law, Qur'anic exegesis, the Prophetic

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[52] Rinkes, *Abdoerraoef*, p. 25; Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 2, p. 18; P. Voorhoeve, *Bayān Tajallī: Bahan-Bahan Untuk Mengadakan Penyelidikan Lebih Mendalam Tentang Abdurrauf Singkel*, trans. by Aboe Bakar (Banda Aceh: PDIA, 1980), p. 2. For further discussion on his period of study in Arabia see Azra, "The Transmission," pp. 385–395.

[53] Indeed, as reported by al-Rānīrī himself and confirmed in a Dutch account, intense religious polemics took place at the court between this *'ālim* and the followers of the Wujūdiyyah. However, details on both the debate and the reason behind the queen's favoring of Sayf al-Rijāl are unknown. The Dutch source relates that the queen left the decision over the debate to the *uleebalangs* (chiefs or notables), for she had no knowledge of religious issues. What is striking is how the *uleebalangs*, who were not religious experts themselves, acted so arbitrarily on this matter. Hence, it can safely be assumed that the final decision to give Sayf al-Rijāl the state's patronage was not entirely based on religious doctrine or affiliation but, in part, on the personal character of the figure himself, a figure who must have been more temperate than al-Rānīrī. After all, Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn was known to be a compassionate and temperate ruler. Her preference for al-Singkilī must also have been based on his character. Furthermore, ethnicity may also have played a role. A Dutch source indicates this when it says that "the new (Bishop) has a good many followers, in particular among the Copado (eunuchs), and, moreover, is a Malay by birth." See Ito, "Why Did Nuruddin ar-Raniri Leave Aceh," p. 490.

[54] There was an account referring to a Jāwī (Malay) student who asked for his teacher's *fatwā* (legal ruling) on the controversy between the followers of the Wujūdiyyah and al-Rānīrī. In it, the latter condemned the former for *kufr* (disbelief). See Voorhoeve, "Van en over Nuruddin," pp. 365–368; Riddell, *Transferring A Tradition*, pp. 12–13; Azra, "The Transmission," pp. 371–373.

[55] The acceptance of al-Singkilī at the court involved a formal procedure in which he was presented with several religious questions by the state secretary, Kātib Seri Raja b. Ḥamzah al-Ashī. It was through the discussion that al-Singkilī's moderate religious view were made evident. See Azra, "The Transmission," p. 396; Vorhoeve, *Bayān Tajallī*, p. 34; Cf. K.F.H. van Langen, "De inrichting van het Atjesche staatsbestuur onder het Sultanaat," *BKI* 34 (1888), pp. 410–411, 420–423.

tradition and theology to mysticism.[56] Among his major writings is a work commissioned by the queen on law, entitled *Mirʾāt al-Ṭullāb* (The Mirror for the Seekers), which deals with the *muʿāmalāt* (the affairs of daily life) aspects of Islamic law.[57] Completed in 1663, the work designed to serve as a guide for *qāḍīs*.[58]

His moderate views on religion are apparent in two areas. The first of these involved granting religious legitimacy to a woman as ruler, a point that was touched on above in Chapter Two. His recognition of a woman's right to wear the crown was evident when he praised her as "*khalīfat Allāh* (deputy of God) in executing our Lord's orders in the blessed (*mubārak*) country of Aceh Dār al-Salām."[59] This recognition went a long way towards legitimizing in turn the three queens who followed Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn. As I argued earlier, the fact that female rule over Aceh came to pass and that it ended soon after the death of this scholar is a testament to the respect that al-Singkilī commanded as *shaykh al-Islām*. His moderation also comes across in the pages of his work *Daqāʾiq al-Ḥurūf* (Particles of the Letters), which contains his orthodox commentary on Ibn al-ʿArabī's celebrated thought.[60] In spite of his opposition to Wujūdiyyah doctrine, al-Singkilī never explicitly condemned its proponents. Rather, he tactfully expressed his displeasure with those who would accuse other Muslims of *kufr* (disbelief), an indirect reference to al-Rānīrī. In support of his view, he refers to a *ḥadīth* (Prophetic tradition).[61]

So far, no evidence has been uncovered suggesting that al-Singkilī was involved in decision-making on matters of either political or economic policy. Apparently, he did not become the chief councillor of state, nor did he act as the ruler's vicegerent in political matters. Rather, his role seems to have been confined to religious matters. This situation might have occurred because most of the power (both

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[56] For a complete list of his works, see Voorhoeve, *Bayān Tajallī*, pp. 35–53.

[57] Indeed, al-Rānīrī had earlier composed a work on *ʿibādāt* (devotional matters) in law entitled *Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm*. The availability of this work was perhaps one of the reasons for al-Singkilī's neglect of this aspect of *fiqh* in his work.

[58] ʿAbd al-Raʾūf b. ʿAlī al-Fanṣūrī, *Mirʾāt al-Ṭullāb fī Tashīl Maʿrifat al-Aḥkām al-Sharʿiyyah li al-Mālik al-Wahhāb*, MS (Banda Aceh: Universitas Syiah Kuala, 1971), pp. 8–9.

[59] See Chapter Two above, pp. 60–85.

[60] ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Singkilī, "Daḳāʾiḳ al-Ḥurūf by ʿAbd al-Raʾūf of Singkel," ed. by A.H. Johns, *JRAS* 1, 2 (1955), p. 56.

[61] See p. 85, note no. 217 above.

political and economic) under the queens was in the hands of the nobles (both *orang kayas* and *uleebalangs*).

In conclusion, it can be asserted that the office of *shaykh al-Islām* existed in seventeenth century Aceh. Functionally, it was a post attached to the court, so that, by definition, the fate of the office was linked to the historical development of the state. Candidates for the office were, moreover, those *'ulamā'* who were influential in their own right. Succession to the office was not, strictly speaking, hierarchical in nature, for the decision to appoint or dismiss its occupants lay in the ruler's hands. Several functions were common to the three *shaykh al-Islāms* discussed above. All were *ṣūfīs*, religious teachers and advisors to the ruler, *muftīs* and prolific writers. However, the degree to which they were involved in political matters varied from one to another and from one period to another. Shams al-Dīn functioned as chief-councillor and as vicegerent to the ruler in many areas, including political and economic matters. This function must have arisen from the close relation between him and Iskandar Muda as *ṣūfī-murshid* (mystical instructor) and pupil. Both al-Rānīrī and al-Singkilī seem not to have functioned as chief-councillors, even though they must have played an influential role in politics. This may be due, at least in part, to the reemergence of powerful nobles and chiefs. Nevertheless, their status as occupants of the highest religious bureaucratic post in the state was still highly esteemed in non-religious circles. Peter Sourij, the Dutch commissioner for Aceh in 1643, states that when Sayf al-Rijāl, the new *shaykh al-Islām*, was summoned to court by Her Majesty (Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn), he "was paid regal honors by the notables, so that it is to be expected that the former (bishop) Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn's high spiritual status will be irretrievably lost."[62]

Besides representing the supreme spiritual symbol in seventeenth century Aceh, the office of the *shaykh al-Islām* also epitomized the unity of both state and religion. The state's involvement in the religious discourse of those times was apparent. For example, religious discussions often took place in the royal court in the presence of the ruler. The *'ulamā'* also served as mentors and advisors to the rulers. Some of the works on religion produced during this period were dedicated to the latter, and in many cases, the rulers commissioned the *'ulamā'* to undertake those studies. However, it must be realized

[62] Quoted in Ito, "Why Did Nuruddin ar-Raniri Leave," pp. 490–491.

that the official religious doctrine of the state was determined by the political center. In other words, the patronage of the ruler was needed by any *ʿālim* who aspired to promote certain religious doctrines.

For this reason it must be admitted that the introduction of the office of *shaykh al-Islām* to Aceh is obscure in its origins, and difficult to account for. While there is sufficient information suggesting that intensive cooperation existed between Aceh and the Ottoman state in both military and trade matters during the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century, there is no indication of similar collaboration in religious matters. Yet this is not to deny completely the possible influence of Ottoman religious traditions and institutions upon those of Aceh, and especially the office of *shaykh al-Islām*. In the first place, it must be remembered that intensive relations between the two states took place as early as the 1530's and reached their peak in the 1560s. This, indeed, coincided with the reign of Sulaymān the Magnificent (r. 1520–1566) in Istanbul, during which internal office of the *shaykh al-Islām* became pre-eminent. Hence, the intensive contacts between the Ottomans and Aceh during this period and the high respect shown by the latter to the former as the strongest Muslim state in the region might have led to Aceh's adoption of the office, or at the very least parts of it, in spite of the fact that the nature of the institution in the two states was considerably different.[63]

2. *The* Qāḍī *(the Islamic Judge)*

One might expect to find a comprehensive body of literature on the judicial administration of the sultanate. This is not the case, however, as information pertaining to this feature of the state is extremely rare.[64] As a result, our discussion on the *qāḍī* as a state official will necessarily be limited. Aceh was not altogether different from other

[63] See for intance Richard W. Bulliet, "The Shaikh al-Islām and the Evolution of Islamic Society," *Studia Islamica* 35 (1972), pp. 53–68; R.C. Repp, *The Mufti of Istanbul* (Oxford: Oxford Oriental Institute Monographs, 1986), especially Chapter V.

[64] Efforts at reconstructing the role of the *qāḍī* in other parts of the archipelago, though by no means comprehensive, can be seen in Anthony Reid, "Kings, Kadis and Charisma in the 17th Century Archipelago," in Anthony Reid, ed., *The Making of an Islamic Political Discourse in Southeast Asia* (Clayton: Monash Papers on Southeast Asia, Monash University, 1993), pp. 83–108; and in Martin van Bruinessen, "*Shari'a* Court, *Tarekat* and *Pesantren*: Religious Institutions in the Banten Sultanate," *Archipel* 50 (1995), pp. 165–197.

Islamic states with respect to the delegation of the sovereign's authority and power to state officials. This was true in the matter of *qaḍā'* (jurisdiction) as well. In this regard, the *qāḍī* in Aceh is to be seen from two perspectives: he was an *'ālim* whose authority in religious matters was independent of the ruler; and a state official who was vested with certain powers by the sovereign. In this sense, the *qāḍī* "does not have an independent or even autonomous position."[65] This is demonstrated by the fact that in Aceh some judicial decisions were taken by the ruler him/herself, as will be seen in the next section.

There is every reason to believe that an Islamic law-court was well established in Aceh by the sixteenth century. The flourishing of Islamic learning and the influx of *'ulamā'* from other Islamic lands during this century are indicative of the intensive process of Islamization to which Aceh was exposed. In this climate, Islamic courts were, no doubt, judicial venues that were felt to be both welcome and essential to the needs of society. The earliest account of the existence of an Islamic court is given by Frederick de Houtman. On the orders of the Sulṭān, this Dutch captain was brought before a law court presided over by several judges commissioned by the sovereign to convert him to Islam. During this process, a religious debate between Houtman and the judges ensued. The effort failed, however, to convince him to change his religion. In 1601, the *shaykh al-Islām* applied himself to the same task, according to Houtman, but once again in vain.[66] For our purposes, a few points are worth extracting from this account. First, there was a religious court in Aceh at the turn of the sixteenth century. Second, the court was run by judges who were accredited *'ulamā'* and, simultaneously, state officials.

The above points are also corroborated by other sources. The *Hikayat Aceh* speaks of the *qāḍī* as being among those state officials who forced Sulṭān Sri 'Ālam to step down in 1579. The *qāḍī* also took part in the enthronement of his successor, Sulṭān Zayn al-'Ābidīn, in the same year.[67] With the enthronement of al-Mukammil in 1589, the *qāḍī*[68] played an even more crucial role in successfully

[65] Emile Tyan, "Judicial Organization," in Majid Khadduri and Herbert J. Liebesny, eds., *Law in the Middle East*, vol. 1 (Washington: The Middle East Institute, 1955), p. 235. Also see his article in the E. Tyan, "Ḳāḍī," *EI2*.

[66] See above p. 151.

[67] *Hikayat Aceh*, p. 96.

[68] Beaulieu also calls him the Great Bishop.

reconciling the contending *orang kayas* and, finally, in ending the political intrigues plaguing the country.[69] The *Hikayat Aceh* also provides us with an account of Faqīh Raja Indera Purba, the religious mentor of the young Iskandar Muda, a figure who was promoted to *qāḍī* with the title of *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil* (the chief judge).[70]

In terms of the law courts we can only rely on Augustin de Beaulieu's account, which provides a cursory description of Aceh in 1621. He describes two levels of judiciary: a central and various local courts. The first, located in the capital and under the direct authority of the ruler, was presided over by both the *qāḍī* and the leading *orang kayas*. The courts of the second type were reportedly concerned with cases at the local level (*nanggroe*) and were under the *orang kayas* who functioned, at the same time, as de facto local rulers. All the judges presiding over these two courts, whether *qāḍīs* or *orang kayas*, acted as representatives of the supreme ruler.[71]

While there is no further information on the courts at the local level, Beaulieu further identifies four subdivisions of the central court. The first was the "civil" court that dealt with civil matters, involving disputes arising from debts. Convened every morning (except on Fridays) in a *balai* (gathering hall) next to the grand mosque of Bayt al-Raḥmān, it was presided over by a leading *orang kaya.* The second was the "criminal" court located in the *balai* next to the gate of the palace, in which crimes such as quarrels, thefts, and murders were tried by several leading *orang kayas*. The third was the "religious" court in which cases involving offenses against Islam were tried.[72] This court was presided over by a *qāḍī*. The fourth and final type of court dealt with trade disputes among merchants, both native and foreign, and was presided over by the *orang kaya laksamana.*[73]

Takeshi Ito questions Beaulieu's categorization, arguing that his description of the four courts and their respective areas of jurisdiction are given "very much in European terms."[74] In Ito's view, all

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[69] Augustin de Beaulieu, "The Expedition of Commodore Beaulieu to the East Indies," in John Harris, ed., *Navigatum Atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca, or A Complete Collection of Voyages*, vol. 1 (London, 1705), p. 747.

[70] *Hikayat Aceh*, pp. 149–150.

[71] Beaulieu, "The Expedition," pp. 743–744.

[72] Unfortunately, Beaulieu is not specific as to what constituted a religious offense.

[73] Beaulieu, "The Expedition," pp. 743–744.

[74] Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," p. 157.

the courts functioned on the basis of Islamic law, which makes no distinction between civil, criminal and religious matters. Beaulieu's account on the other hand suggests a fundamental division in the court system between the religious and commercial domains.[75] Ito's analysis, however, risks distorting a valuable eyewitness account. It should be remembered that the picture drawn by Beaulieu is based on what he witnessed personally and is not interpretive. As such, there is no reason to believe it was tainted by personal bias and, hence, can be accepted more or less at face value. The question that should be addressed is: How should these different courts be viewed within the context of Aceh as an Islamic state? In other words, why were both the civil and the criminal courts separated from the religious one and why were these two courts presided over by *orang kayas* rather than *qāḍīs*?

These are not easy questions to answer. However, there are a few points that can be made in this respect. In the first place, the division of the courts should not be seen as a symptom of the polarization of the judicial system into religious and secular courts. Rather, it would be more appropriate to view it as stemming from the fact that Aceh was an Islamic sultanate in which the sovereign was the supreme judge and where both *adat*[76] and Islamic law prevailed.[77] Furthermore, if Beaulieu's claim can be substantiated (i.e., that the leading *orang kayas* presided over both the civil and the criminal courts), it would be indicative of the delegation of juridical power to the nobles by the ruler at a relatively early date. Indeed, in the nineteenth century, a similar observation was made by Snouck Hurgronje who spoke of *uleebalangs* as both the sole political authorities in their territories and, through the *sarakata* (royal edict), the sulṭān's deputies in the administration of Islamic law, even to the point of becoming judges themselves.[78] A parallel description is found in Beaulieu's 1621 account of the courts at the local level, where he says "each of the orangkays hath a province or country district under his jurisdiction, where he gives orders and administers justice to the

[75] Ibid., p. 158.

[76] In seventeenth century Aceh, this term denoted both customary law and royal edict/tradition, as discussed in the next section.

[77] We shall return to this topic in the following section.

[78] Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 1, pp. 102, 190–193.

inhabitants."[79] The same picture was also drawn in the 1680s by Thomas Bowrey who found the great *orang kaya* to be the "lord of chief justice" or *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil*.[80] The rise of the *orang kaya* to the position of judge in both the civil and criminal courts did not necessarily undermine the role of Islam in the judicial process. Sufficient knowledge of the field of the Islamic law must have remained a requisite qualification for the post. As well, *faqīhs* (jurists) must have been involved in the court process. In 1636, a Dutch envoy, Jacob Compostel, recorded that the "great bishop" held a court once a week, trying cases of theft, drunkenness and violation of royal etiquette or royal commands.[81]

It is clear that *qāḍī*-ship was an established religious position in Aceh. As a group, the *ʿulamāʾ* were, more often than not, the class from which *qāḍīs* were chosen. Mention has already been made of Faqīh Indera Purba, religious mentor to the young Iskandar Muda, who was promoted to *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil* by al-Mukammil. This reveals the obvious difference in position between the *faqīh* and the *qāḍī*, the latter being highest in rank. Moreover, it suggests that two different bodies of state *ʿulamāʾ*, besides the *shaykh al-Islām*, were known in Aceh during this period, i.e., the *qāḍī* and the *faqīh*. While the function of the *qāḍī* was to adjudicate and administrate Islamic law, the domain of the *faqīh* is less clear. In the capital, his functions were probably related to the functions of the state, particularly its royal and religious ceremonies. Earlier in Chapter Three, the roles of both *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil* and the *faqīhs* as religious scholars, dignitaries and state officials were discussed.[82] There we saw the significant role played by *faqīhs*. At the local level, the *faqīh* seems to have functioned as judge and Islamic scholar. The *Adat Aceh* after all describes a number of *faqīhs* and *ḥākims* (judges of local courts?) in the region of Pidie as being among the state officials who attended an audience with Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn.[83]

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[79] Beulieu, "The Expedition," p. 744.

[80] Thomas Bowrey, *A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal, 1669–1679*, ed. by R.C. Temple (Cambridge: The Hakluyt Society, 1903), pp. 299–300.

[81] *Koloniaal Archief* [henceforth K.A.] 1031, "Dahgregister of Jacob Compostel," ff. 1207–1208.

[82] See above Chapter Three, pp. 123–142.

[83] *Adat Aceh*, pp. 104–106.

What is most striking about the *qāḍī* during the seventeenth century in Aceh, especially the chief *qāḍī* or *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil*, is the fact that he also presided over the state council. During the reigns of both al-Mukammil and Iskandar Muda, the *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil* occupied a position second only to the *shaykh al-Islām*, Shams al-Dīn, and ahead of other officials, such as the *perdana menteri orang kaya seri maharaja* (the prime minister) and *orang kaya laksamana* (the police chief).[84] This situation does not seem to have been altered substantially after the death of Iskandar Muda in 1636. The *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil*, still the first in rank, was in charge of the administration of law and justice.[85] The high position of the *qāḍī* demanded his frequent participation in state occasions, i.e., royal and religious ceremonies.

In addition to his position as religious scholar and state official, the *qāḍī* played an important role in the political arena. Above, mention was made of the role of the *qāḍī* in deposing Sri ʿĀlam and in enthroning Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn as the new sulṭān. It was the chief *qāḍī* who played a decisive role in the enthronement of al-Mukammil. The *qāḍī*'s political role was also made evident during the reign of Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn and beyond. Indeed, as D.K. Basset has rightly suggested, the capture of Melaka in 1641 by the Dutch and their direct involvement in the trade and politics of the region had a major impact upon the Acehnese political climate for the next two decades.[86] Factional conflict arose among state officials who were polarized into two main political factions: the pro-Dutch faction led by the *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil* and the anti-Dutch group headed by the *orang kaya maharaja seri maharaja*.[87] As an illegitimate son of Iskandar Muda or half-brother of the queen, this *qāḍī* was wrongly accused by the other faction of conspiring to dethrone the sulṭānah. However, this does not seem to have had a major impact on the *qāḍī*'s position, who retained his office, in spite of the fact that the queen favored the anti-Dutch faction. For an unknown reason, he resumed the position of *orang kaya maharaja seri maharaja* in 1645. However, the conflict

[84] *Hikayat Aceh*, pp. 137–154; 173–183; *Bustān*, pp. 37–38, 40, 42; Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," pp. 84–88.

[85] *Bustān*, pp. 46, 63. See Ito's discussion of this issue in his "The World of the Adat Aceh," pp. 100–121.

[86] D.K. Basset, "Changes in the Pattern of Malay Politics, 1629–c. 1655," *JSEAH* 10, 3 (1969), pp. 437–438, 448.

[87] *Dagh-Register, 1641–1642*, pp. 96, 123.

continued to escalate and resulted in his removal from the office in 1652.[88] It is thus apparent that the bureaucratization of the *'ulamā'* led to their involvement in the political arena.

B. Adat *and Islamic Law*

The question of how much Islamic law was really practiced in seventeenth-century Aceh and what role *adat* played in the judicial process is an interesting issue to explore, especially in the context of Southeast Asian Islam, where *adat* is thought to have played an important, even dominant, role in legal practice. Snouck Hurgronje has remarked on the predominance of *adat* in nineteenth-century Aceh.[89] Did *adat* enjoy this predominance in the seventeenth century? This is an important question, and one against which scholars have measured the Islamic character of a community. Joseph Schacht suggests that "Islamic law is the most typical manifestation of the Islamic way of life, the core and kernel of Islam itself."[90] Therefore, the ideal Islam prescribed by the *sharī'ah* has always been examined against its actual practice in society.

The fundamental obstacles in exploring the role played by both *adat* and Islamic law in seventeenth century Aceh are twofold. In the first place, the information on legal practices during the period that has come down to us is insufficient. Since indigenous sources are silent on this issue, there is little choice but to rely upon accounts provided by European sources. Yet these accounts provide few significant details on specific issues, not to mention the possible biases they generate. The second obstacle is the absence of written legal codes. This is particularly true of Aceh and other states in the region. Even at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Cornelis van Vollenhoven, who was called by Barend ter Haar "the master of Adat Law" in Indonesia,[91] observed this phenomenon in

[88] Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," pp. 105–114.

[89] Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 1, pp. 72–73, 95–116.

[90] Joseph Schacht, "Law and the State," in Joseph Schacht and C.E. Bosworth, eds., *The Legacy of Islam* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1974), p. 392; idem, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 1.

[91] B. ter Haar, *Adat Law in Indonesia* (New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1948), p. 5, note 2.

the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). There he claimed, while parts of the constitutional, administrative and criminal laws were codified, yet "uncodified law is the dominant rule."[92] Despite these two obstacles, we will undertake to look at particular cases, but not before trying to define the term *adat* as it was understood in Aceh during the seventeenth century.

The word *adat*, which has long been used throughout the Malay Archipelago, derives from the Arabic *ʿādah*, meaning "custom," "practice," or "usage."[93] Theoretically, *ʿādah* (also known as *ʿurf*) has never been an official source of Islamic law. Practically, however, it has often been incorporated into legal rulings. *ʿĀdah* is sometimes used in areas where the main sources of Islamic law (the Qurʾān, *ḥadīth, ijmāʿ* and *qiyās*) are silent, although it is not meant to contradict the spirit of Islam as prescribed by both the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*.[94] Furthermore, *ʿādah* is frequently the only appropriate criterion when a choice between two or more interpretations of the verses of the Qurʾān is possible. In such instances the incorporation of customary law in their application can be a reflection of a particular time and place.[95]

This is how the Acehnese understood *adat*. Snouck Hurgronje speaks of the *adat* of nineteenth-century Aceh as referring to both custom and customary law, and claims that it was more predominant than the *sharīʿah* (known as *hukom*). Here, *adat* indeed had legal consequences.[96] In view of this fact Vollenhoven proposes the term

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[92] C. van Vollenhoven, *Van Vollenhoven on Indonesian Adat Law*, ed. by J.F. Holleman (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981), p. 2.

[93] H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, eds., *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1961), s.v., "Adat Law."

[94] See Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā al-Shāṭibī, *al-Muwāfaqāt fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Maktabat wa Maṭbaʿat Muḥammad ʿAlī Ṣabīḥ, 1969–1970), pp. 205, 209–210, 220–222.

[95] For further discussion of this subject see Aḥmad Faḥmī Abū al-Sinnah, *Al-ʿUrf wa al-ʿĀdah fī Raʾy al-Fuqahāʾ* (n.p.: Maṭbaʿat al-Azhar, 1947); Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Shalabī, *Uṣūl al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dār al-Nahḍah al-ʿArabiyyah, 1986), pp. 323–325; Muhammad Hasan Kamali, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1991), pp. 359–376; Farhat J. Ziadeh, "*ʿUrf* and Law in Islam," in James Kritzeck and R. Bayly Winder, eds., *The World of Islam: Studies in Honor of Philip K. Hitti* (London: Macmillan, 1959), pp. 60–67; Noel James Coulson, "Muslim Custom and Case-Law," *The World of Islam*, n.s., vol. 6 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1959–61), pp. 13–24; Tahir Mahmood, "Custom as a Source of Law in Islam," *Journal of the Indian Law Institute* (1965), pp. 102–106; Muhammad S. El-Awa, "The Place of Custom (*ʿUrf*) in Islamic Legal Theory," *Islamic Quarterly* 17 (1973), pp. 177–182; Madya Othman Ishak, "*ʿUrf* and Customs As Being Practiced Among the Malay Community," *Arabica* 33, 3 (1986), pp. 352–368.

[96] See note 89 above.

"adat law" to overcome the confusion arising from *adat* as mere etiquette and *adat* as a matter of law. While he recognizes the possible overlapping of custom and customary law, the two may still be differentiated, since "in many instances it is easy to distinguish the adats with legal consequences, and to set them apart from adats without legal consequences. . . ."[97]

Adat possessed of a legal character was not uncommon in Aceh during the seventeenth century. Nevertheless, *adat* during this period also included royal regulations, both written and unwritten, and penal and other laws established by the rulers having no relation to religious ordinances. The royal *adat* seems to have taken the form mainly of *sarakatas* (royal edicts). The term *adat* was clearly employed in these edicts and in the *Adat Aceh*, where the sovereign fixed the meanings of various rules. Accordingly, the popular term *Adat Meukuta Alam* refers to regulations established by the celebrated Sulṭān Iskandar Muda.[98] In the following, a few cases will be briefly presented to show how Islamic law was practiced and how far the *adat* understood by the Acehnese at that time was incorporated into legal practice. The cases include two main types: Islamic penal laws, such as *qiṣāṣ* (retaliation), *ḥadd* punishments, and *taʿzīr* (chastisement); and laws made in accordance with royal discretion. It should be noted, however, that, as will be shown below, the identification of which *adat* considerations led to specific legal decisions is extremely difficult.

1. *Penal Laws*

The first subject that we will address in this category is the case of *jināyāt* crimes, i.e., homicide and bodily harm. In Islam, the penalties for such offenses are either *qiṣāṣ* (retaliation) in the case of homicide and injuries, or the payment of blood money in cases where "pardon" is granted. There is little doubt that the crime of murder was not uncommon in Aceh during the seventeenth century, and that the retribution for this crime was severe. Thomas Bowrey states that the "laws of this kingdome are very severe in many respects, especially for theft, more cruel then for murther, for then 'tis death

[97] Vollenhoven, *On Indonesian Adat Law*, p. 6. See also Haar, *Adat Law*, p. 5.

[98] Langen, "De inrichting," pp. 381, 393; Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 1, pp. 9–10, 88, 120, 141; J. Kreemer, *Atjeh*, vol. 1 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1922), p. 6; Tuanku Abdul Jalil, *Adat Meukuta Alam* (Banda Aceh: PDIA, 1991).

without any tediousnesse, but for theft it cometh gradually on with great affliction."[99]

We have been unable so far to find a *qiṣāṣ* case in this category, although an account from 1642 by Pieter Williemzs provides some information related to this issue. This Dutch official reports that a certain Acehnese was sentenced to death by *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil* and other judges for homicide. He then petitioned to be allowed to pay 388 *tahils*[100] in exchange for his life. The *qāḍī* brought the request to Queen Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn, who did not deliver a verdict, but instead ordered that the case be settled in accordance with both "traditional practice and the law of the land."[101]

While the account is certainly incomplete, some points may be extracted from it. In the first place, the verdict of *qiṣāṣ* was reached in this case by the court, signifying that the law of Islam was in force.[102] Furthermore, the petition made by the offender to pay a certain amount of money may be regarded as equivalent to *diyyah* (blood money) paid to the family of the victim. The fact that the offender made this petition suggests that pardon was not given in this case by the victim's family/heirs. In such an instance, the *qiṣāṣ* should have prevailed in accordance with the Islamic law. Instead, a petition was brought to the queen, who accordingly ordered the

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[99] Bowrey, *A Geographical Account*, p. 315.

[100] *Tahil* is a unit of weight in silver that was equivalent to a string of 600 or 1000 "cashes,"—the "cash" being a unit of Chinese copper-lead currency of low denomination, derived from the Portuguese *caixes*. See Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680*, vol. 1 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 268, and vol. 2 (1993), pp. 377, 380.

[101] K.A., 1051, "Daghregister of Pieter Willemsz," f. 520v.

[102] The Qur'ān explicitly prescribes punishments for these crime, such (2:178): "O ye who believe. The law of equality is prescribed to you in cases of murder: the free for the free, the slave for the slave, the woman for woman. But if any remission is made by the brother of the slain, the grant any reasonable demand, and compensate him with handsome gratitude, . . ." In another verse (5:45) it says: "We ordained therein for them: life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and wound equal for equal. But if any one remits the retaliation by way of charity, it is an act atonement for himself . . ." These two verses clearly reveal two types of punishments for this crime: *qiṣāṣ* (retaliation) and *diyyah* (paying blood-money) in the case of pardon is granted. For further discussion on this subject see ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jazīrī, *Kītāb al-Fiqh ʿAla al-Madhāhib al-Arbaʿah*, vol. 5 (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1986), pp. 244–396; Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī b. Yūsuf al-Fīrūzābādī al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab fi Fiqh al-Imām al-Shāfiʿī*, vol. 3 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1995), pp. 170–248; Muhammad El-Awa, *Punishment in Islamic Law* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publishers, 1980), pp. 69–95.

case to be judged on the basis of both "traditional practice" and "the law of the land." The question that arises here is what these two laws were.

Ito suggests that "traditional practice" refers to indigenous legal practice, while "the law of the land" denotes Islamic law.[103] This view seems accurate, especially in view of the dichotomy between *adat* and Islamic law. The problem we face in this particular case, however, is identifying the nature of the traditional practice itself. Since no codified traditional legal codes have come down to us, precise identification is not possible. However, it can safely be assumed that it refers to traditional legal sanctions among the Acehnese, a practice that had survived perhaps from the pre-Islamic period.

The co-existence of both traditional/*adat* law and Islamic law is clearly indicated in the *sarakata* of Sulṭān Shams al-ʿĀlam issued in 1726, wherein the *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil, orang kaya sri paduka tuan, orang kaya raja bandhara*, and all the *faqīhs* are instructed to apply Islamic instead of *adat* law in certain areas. This included homicide and personal injury.[104] References to the provisions found in Islamic law are also mentioned in the *sarakata* of Iskandar Muda, which is also known as *Adat Meukuta ʿĀlam*. Articles 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29 mention laws concerning *qiṣāṣ* and *diyyah*, which are perfectly Islamic.[105] Based on these provisions, there is little doubt that a sentence of death would have been delivered in this case. Moreover, as Bowrey states, severe punishment was inflicted upon those who committed murder, punishment which amounted to "death without any tediousnesse."

The second aspect of this penal law category was the *ḥadd* punishments. Literally, *ḥadd* (pl. *ḥudūd*) means "hindrance, impediment, or boundary." As a legal term, it denotes the punishments of certain acts that are considered crimes against religion, as prescribed by the Qurʾān and the *ḥadīth*.[106] The crimes in this category include *zinā* (unlawful sexual intercourse), *qadhf* (false accusation of unlawful intercourse), *khamr* (drinking of alcohol), *sariqah* (theft) and *qaṭʿ al-ṭarīq*

[103] Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," p. 174.
[104] Langen, "De inrichting," pp. 463–464.
[105] Ibid., pp. 440–441. See also Jalil, *Adat Meukuta Alam*, pp. 20–21.
[106] Aḥmad b. Idrīs al-Qarafī, *Al-Furūq*, vol. 1 (Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyyah, 1344 A.H.), pp. 140–142; Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Sarakhsī, *al-Mabsūṭ*, vol. 9 (Cairo: Dār al-Maṭbaʿat al-Saʿādah, 1906), p. 36; Joseph Schacht, "Ḥadd," *EI2*. See also Schacht, *An Introduction*, pp. 175–181; El-Awa, *Punishment*, p. 1.

(highway robbery).[107] In this section only two types of crimes, witnessed to in our sources, will be discussed below, i.e., drinking alcohol and theft.

Drinking seems to have been a common practice in Aceh in the seventeenth century, particularly consumption of *arak* and *tuak* alcohol.[108] European accounts are in agreement in their information on this issue. *Arak* was served mainly at royal banquets and, for the European visitors, it was too strong to consume.[109] The *Bustān* also makes this point clear. Among the practices prohibited by Iskandar Muda during his reign was *arak* consumption.[110] On this issue, some clues may be found in Ḥamzah Fanṣūrī's poems. In some verses this *ṣūfī* poet speaks of how *arak*-drinking had come to be criticized by the *faqīhs*, including the *qāḍī*. Ḥamzah explains that the nature of the drink (*shurbah*) was not in fact that of rice-wine (*tapai* or *arak*), but rather a mystical drink, imbued with an intoxicating potency capable of making a person one with the Beloved Eternal. Therefore, according to Ḥamzah, the *qāḍī* too should drink it.[111] The term *arak*

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[107] Al-Jazīrī, *Kitāb al-Fiqh*, vol. 5, pp. 7–8; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, vol. 3, pp. 334–373.

[108] *Arak* is "distilled liquor" made either from rice or a certain type of nut, while *tuak* is "palm-wine." Both are strong drinks that quickly lead to inebriation. See Reid, *Southeast Asia*, vol. 1, pp. 267–268; Ito, "The World of the Adat Aceh," p. 170.

[109] See for instance Unger, *De oudste reisen*, pp. 71–72; Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 752; William Dampier, *Voyages and Descriptions*, vol. 2 (London: James Knapton, 1699), p. 126.

[110] *Bustān*, p. 36.

[111] The verse runs as follows:
Khabarkan ini pada mawlānā qāḍī,
Shurbat nin hening warnanya ṣāfī,
Barang yang meminum dia mabuk dan fānī,
Mendapat maḥbūb yang bernama Bāqī.

Translation:
Tell this to our lord the judge,
This drink is so pure and clear,
Whoever drinks it gets intoxicated and annihilated,
And he attains the Beloved Who is called the Eternal.

In another place he says:
Minuman itu terlalu ṣāfī,
Yogyakan shurbat mawlānā qāḍī, . . .

Translation:
The drink is most pure,
It ought to be drunk by our lord the judge, . . .
See Fanṣūrī, *The Poems*, pp. 98–100, 106, 118; al-Attas, *The Mysticism*, p. 22.

used in the poems and the reaction of the *faqīhs* indicate how its consumption was common at the time, and the reason for the strong concern of the *qāḍī*, on behalf of the state, over the issue.

Because *arak* and *tuak* were included among the intoxicating beverages forbidden or disapproved in Islam,[112] their production and trade in Aceh were placed under state control, and punishments inflicted upon those who broke the rules. While the precise rules are not available to us, a few cases provide enough evidence to support this view.

In Aceh, only non-Muslim foreign merchants were officially allowed to consume *arak*. For this reason restrictions were imposed upon its production and sale. Only non-Muslims with a license from the sovereign to distill and sell *arak* were allowed to do so. Jacob Compostel reports for instance that a certain Nakhoda Fijgie was given permission to distill *arak*.[113] Yet in 1642 two European men from the English factory were sentenced by Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn to have their hands cut off for attempting to distill *arak* which in fact had been prohibited by the queen on pain of corporal punishment.[114] Moreover, although Europeans were themselves allowed to consume it, they were prohibited from doing so in any Acehnese house.[115] Little is known about the punishments inflicted upon the Acehnese who drank. It is certain that they were prohibited from drinking and severe punishment was imposed upon anyone who violated this ordinance. In

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[112] The basic legal foundation for this is the verse in the Qur'ān (5:90), in which God says: "O ye who believe. Intoxicants and gambling, (dedication of) stones, and (divination by) arrows, are an abomination of Satan's handiwork; eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper." *Khamr* is usually translated as wine. In its legal sense it denotes all kinds of alcoholic beverages, such as those made from grapes, dates, honey, wheat and from barley. In a tradition it is reported that the Prophet once said: ". . . wine is what obscures the intellect." (. . . *al-khamr mā khāmara al-ʿaql*). See al-Bukhārī, *Kītāb al-Ǧāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīh*, vol. 4, p. 29. Therefore, *arak* and *tuak* beverages are also to be included in this category. The jurists of all schools are in agreement as to legal status of the alcoholic beverages. Traditions are abundant on this issue, saying that all types of drinks that may cause inebriation are *ḥarām* (prohibited) in any quantity. See for instance, al-Bukhārī, *Kītāb al-Ǧāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 4, pp. 27–30; Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Qushayrī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ed. by Mūsā Shāhin Lāshīn and Aḥmad ʿUmar Hāshim, vol. 4 (Beirut: Mu'assasat ʿIzz al-Dīn li al-Ṭibāʿah wa al-Nashr, 1987), esp. traditions 65–67, pp. 245–247. For further discussion on this issue see al-Jazīrī, *Kītāb al-Fiqh*, vol. 5, pp. 10–47; al-Shīrāzī, al-*Muhadhdhab*, vol. 3, pp. 369–373.

[113] K.A., 1031, "Daghregister of Compostel," f. 1207.

[114] K.A., 1051, "Daghregister of P. Soury," ff. 562v.–563r.

[115] Ibid.

an account given by Compostel it is said that two drunken Acehnese were found in the house of the above-named Nakhoda Fijgie. After they were caught and charged by the *penghulu kawal*, the chief of police, molten lead was poured down their throats.[116]

Thus, although intoxicating drinks were served at royal banquets in honor of foreign envoys, their possession by Acehnese was prohibited by the state. The production, sale and consumption of alcohol were only allowed to non-Muslim merchants. Even in these cases the rules were strictly applied. The punishments inflicted upon Acehnese who violated the law may seem disproportional, but they were based on local custom rather than on any book of *fiqh*.[117]

Aceh was known to European travelers to have imposed severe punishments upon those who broke the law or disturbed the good order of the state. Bowrey's remark cited earlier suggests that theft and murder were viewed as serious crimes, and met with correspondingly severe punishment. William Dampier makes a similar remark on this issue as follows:

> The laws of this country are very strict, and offenders are punished with great severity. Neither are there any delays of justice here; for as soon as the offender is taken, he is immediately brought before the magistrate, who presently hears the matter, and according as he finds it, so he either acquits, or orders punishment to be inflicted on the party immediately.[118]

This passage confirms what we have seen described in other European sources.

As theft was considered a serious crime in Aceh in the seventeenth century, for which severe punishments were imposed, it is important to know precisely how this crime was dealt with. Dampier provides the following description:

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[116] K.A., 1031, "Daghregister of Compostel," ff. 1207–1208.

[117] Some traditions of the Prophet have been recorded that prescribe capital punishment for those who repeatedly drink alcohol. However, this type of punishment was later abrogated (*mansūkh*). See al-Jazīrī, *Kītāb al-Fiqh*, vol. 5, pp. 29–32. Some jurists suggest that the punishment should consist of eighty blows. The Shāfi'ites suggest that the number of blows be limited to forty or twenty. See Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī, *al-Umm*, ed. by Maḥmūd Matrājī, vol. 6 (Beirut: Dā al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1993), pp. 199–200; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, vol. 3, pp. 370–373.

[118] Dampier, *Voyages and Descriptions*, p. 138. The same tone is also present in Peter Mundy's account; see *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608–1667*, ed. by R.C. Temple (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1919), vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 135, and pt. 2, pp. 330–331.

> A thief for his first offence has his right hand chopt off at the wrist; for the second offence off goes the other; and sometimes instead of one of their hands one or both their feet are cut off; and sometimes (tho very rarely) both hands and feet. If after the loss of one or both hands or feet they still prove incorrigible . . . that they will steal with their toes, then they banish'd to *Pulo Way*, during their lives . . . This sort of punishment is inflicted for greater robberies; but for small pilfering the first time thieves are only whipt; but after this a petty larceny is look'd on as a great crime. . . . I never heard of any that suffer'd death for theft.[119]

Bowrey gives the following description:

> If a thiefe be apprehended that hath stolen any thinge to the value of 4 mace, vizt. 05s. English, he is with all speed carryed to the pallace, and before the chiefe orongkay's face both his hands are cutt off in the joynts, for the secound small crime his feet, and, upon his committinge a third, his head. Yet, if the first crime be any thinge considerable vizt. to the value of a cow or buffolo, which exceedeth not 30s. English, it is present death, more welcome to them then the former punishments, but that is to make examples for others.[120]

No further details are given in these two accounts. Yet the general picture of the punishments imposed for this crime is clear. The two accounts agree in some aspects of the punishment, i.e., having the hands and feet cut off. Yet Bowrey's account indicates the possibility of more severe punishments for theft, including even the death penalty. In view of these facts, can these kinds of punishment be said to be Islamic?

There are two types of theft known in Islamic law: *al-sariqah al-ṣughrā* (theft) and *al-sariqah al-kubrā* (highway robbery or brigandage).[121] The cases described in the above accounts seem to refer to the first type of theft. For this crime *ḥadd* punishments are prescribed by the law. Punishment is inflicted upon the thief based on the fundamental reason that a thief has violated both the rights of God (*ḥaqq Allāh*) and the rights of the owner or the victim (*ḥaqq ādamī*). In the first case, the punishment of cutting off the hands is imposed, while in the latter a thief is obliged to make reparations.[122] While the punishment

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[119] Dampier, *Voyages and Descriptions*, pp. 138–140.

[120] Bowrey, *A Geographical Account*, p. 315.

[121] Al-Sarakhsī, *al-Mabsūṭ*, vol. 9, p. 133; al-Jāzirī, *Kitāb al-Fiqh*, vol. 5, p. 157; al-Shāfiʿī, *al-Umm*, vol. 6, pp. 169–204; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, vol. 3, pp. 353–369.

[122] Schacht, *An Introduction*, p. 176; W. Heffening, "Sariḳa," *EI2*; El-Awa, *Punishment*, pp. 2–6.

Figure 8. A sketch of an Acehnese criminal who had his hands and feet amputated. (Reproduced from Thomas Bowrey, *A Geogrpahical account of Countries round the Bay of Bengal, 1669 to 1679*, ed. By R.C. Temple (Cambridge: The Hakluyt Society, 1905), p. 314)

for this crime by cutting off the hand is based on the Qur'ān (5:41),[123] the details are found in *fiqh* texts. Most of the jurists are in agreement that for the first theft the right hand of the thief is cut off at the wrist. For the second, his left foot is cut off; for the third offense it is the left hand, and for the fourth the right foot. When he com-

[123] The verse runs as follows: "As to the thief, male or female, cut off his or her hands, a punishment by way of example from God for their crime, and God is Exalted in Power."

mits the same crime for the fifth time, according to al-Shāfiʿī, the culprit is to be put in prison.[124]

Some of the examples of *ḥadd* punishments described above seem to be in line with the Islamic law on theft, the only divergence being in regard to the order in which the parts of the body were cut off. Sending the criminal to Pulo Way [Weh], a place of banishment since the sixteenth century,[125] after cutting off both his hands and feet conforms to Shāfiʿī's position that after the fifth offense the thief should be imprisoned. Yet, for the Acehnese, it seems that cutting off both hands and feet was not a punishment reserved only for those who had committed the same crime four times. Lack of relevant data prevents us from elaborating on this issue further. Moreover, both accounts quoted above contradict in one main point, i.e., the infliction of capital punishment upon a thief. Although both were contemporary observers, Bowrey suggests that the death penalty was imposed for theft, while Dampier denies this. Indeed, there was a case in 1642 involving a man who stole a horse, which he later sold in Pidie. He was sentenced to death by Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn.[126] Yet this case was an exception, since it involved stealing the property of the sovereign, for which a severe punishment might be expected. The question that should be raised, however, is: Why was the sentence for theft so severe in Aceh, going beyond the one prescribed in the Islamic law?

The answer may be found by looking into the conditions of Acehnese society itself. As the European accounts reveal, the social order at that time was seriously plagued by two major crimes: theft and murder. In the words of Alexander Hamilton, "no place in the world punishes theft with greater severity than Atcheen, and yet robberies and murders are more frequent there than in any other place."[127] While Hamilton may have exaggerated the situation, yet there is every reason to believe the common occurrence of these two crimes. Bowrey explains how an Acehnese cripple, who had lost all

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[124] al-Shāfiʿī, *al-Umm*, vol. 6, pp. 174–176; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, vol. 3, pp. 364–366.

[125] Davis, *Voyages and Works*, p. 150; Lancaster, *The Voyages*, p. 135; Bowrey, *A Geographical Account*, pp. 315, 317.

[126] K.A., 1051, "Daghregister of Pieter Willemzs," f. 528r.

[127] Alexander Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies*, ed. by W. Foster, vol. 2 (London: The Argonant Press, 1930), p. 110.

of his hands and feet, still tried to steal in the English factory. He was sentenced to death for this crime. It was only through the intervention of the chief of the English factory that the man was granted a pardon.[128] Iskandar Muda himself acknowledged to Beaulieu that Aceh had become "a nest of murderers and robbers . . . and no man was safe, all of them being obliged to keep off the robbers with arms by day and barricade themselves in their houses by night . . ."[129] These acute conditions must, in part, have played a role in the severity of the punishments imposed, designed as they were to maintain law and order.

The third aspect of Islamic penal law is *taʿzīr*. Derived from the verb *ʿazara*, the word essentially means to prevent, respect, or reform. The verb *ʿazzarahu* (inf. *taʿzīr*) denotes "he disciplined, chastised, corrected or punished him; meaning he did to him that which should turn him away, or back, from evil, or foul, conduct."[130] In Islamic legal usage, Ibn Farḥūn writes, the term denotes "disciplinary, reformative and deterrent punishments which are neither fixed (*ḥudūd*) nor penance (*kaffārāt*)."[131] Al-Sarakhsī gives his definition of the term as "discretionary punishment to be inflicted for transgression against God, or against an individual for which there is neither fixed punishment nor penance."[132] Thus, *taʿzīr* is intended to prevent someone from committing further crimes and to reform him. In this case, Mohammed El-Awa claims that the combination of reform and deterrence constitutes the main feature of a *taʿzīr* punishment. Yet he further argues, "to deter is the real basis of *taʿzīr*, while reformation comes, in fact, as a means thereto."[133]

Since neither the Qur'ān nor the Prophet's traditions elaborate on them explicitly,[134] punishments of this type are left to the dis-

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[128] Bowrey, *A Geographical Account*, pp. 317–318.

[129] Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 734.

[130] Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 2, p. 2034. See also al-Jazīrī, *Kitāb al-Fiqh*, vol. 5, pp. 9, 397.

[131] Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī b. Farḥūn, *Kitāb Tabṣirat al-Ḥukkām fī Uṣūl al-Aqḍiyyah wa Manāhij al-Aḥkām*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, n.d.), p. 200.

[132] al-Sarakhsī, *Al-Mabsūṭ*, vol. 9, p. 36. See also Aḥmad Fatḥī Bahnasī, *Madkhal al-Fiqh al-Jinā'ī al-Islāmī* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1972), p. 182.

[133] Mohammed El-Awa, "Taʿzir in the Islamic Penal System," *Journal of Islamic and Comparative Law* 6 (1976), p. 41. See also his, *Punishment*, pp. 96–123.

[134] El-Awa argues that even though explicit mention of this type of punishment is not provided in the Qur'ān, there are several clues therein that refer to this subject. The same is also the case with the traditions. Therefore, he further argues,

cretion of the authorities (a judge and/or the ruler). The punishments may vary, according to particular crimes and circumstances,[135] yet, as al-Qarāfī insists, they are not pronounced on the basis of personal whim, nor can they defy Islamic values.[136] Indeed, discretionary power is understood as the "duty to pronounce the best penalty to fit the case in question, i.e. to correct the offender's behaviours and safeguard public interest by preventing further offences."[137]

Few cases from seventeenth century Aceh are identifiable as *taʿzīr* punishments, which can range from light penalties to a sentence of death. Dampier found out that in Aceh "small offenders are only whipt on the back, which sort of punishment they call *Chaubuk* [chambuk]."[138] Details as to the types of offenses in this case and the number of lashes prescribed are not provided. But, it may safely be assumed that the offenses would have been minor and the lashes few in number. This sort of punishment serves to admonish (*al-waʿz*) the offender and to discourage him from committing further transgressions.[139] A certain Acehnese, for instance, was sentenced to thirty lashes, according to Beaulieu, for peeping at his neighbor's wife while she was bathing.[140] But a more severe punishment was inflicted upon a person who spied on Iskandar Muda's concubine while she was bathing. The person was punished by having his eye plucked out.[141] This punishment seems severe. Yet once again it should be understood that an offense against the royal family was considered a very serious crime. An act of violence against a mother by her son is reported by Pieter Willemsz, who tells us that he was sentenced to have both his hands cut off. According to this Dutch official, the punishment was in accordance with customary law.[142] Indeed, the *sarakata* of Shams al-ʿĀlam specifically declared assaulting a woman

"the claim that the Qur'ān does not know it, and the sunna has very little to record about it is unfounded." See his, "Taʿzir," p. 44.

[135] al-Jazīrī, *Kītāb al-Fiqh*, vol. 5, pp. 397–405; Al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, vol. 3, pp. 373–375; Zayn al-Dīn b. Nujaym, *al-Baḥr al-Rā'iq, Sharḥ Kanz al-Daqā'iq*, vol. 5 (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1893), pp. 44–45.

[136] al-Qarāfī, *Al-Furūq*, vol. 3, pp. 16–20. See also El-Awa, "Taʿzir," pp. 53–54.

[137] El-Awa, "Taʿzir," p. 53.

[138] Dampier, *Voyages and Descriptions*, p. 138.

[139] El-Awa, "Taʿzir," p. 45. See also his, *Punishment*, p. 101.

[140] Beulieau, "The Expedition," p. 734.

[141] Best, *The Voyage*, pp. 164, 211.

[142] K.A., 1051, "Daghregister of Pieter Willemsz," f. 528r.

to be against the *adat* law of Aceh.[143] Yet, in the meantime, the punishment may also be viewed from a *taʿzīr* perspective.

Above, Dampier mentions the punishment of a thief through banishment to Way [Weh] Island. *Al-ḥabs* (imprisonment) or *al-nafy* (banishment) should be seen as a *taʿzīr* and is, indeed, allowed in Islamic law.[144] It is imposed upon habitual criminals who cannot be reformed through *ḥadd* punishments. In the case of a serious crime, according to Ibn Farḥūn, the imprisonment would last until the criminal repented, otherwise for life.[145] Al-Shāfiʿī, as we saw earlier, was of the opinion that a thief should be imprisoned after committing the same crime for the fifth time. The imprisonment of a thief for life, in the Acehnese context, reflected this position. It was chosen as a last resort after the *ḥadd* punishments had been performed. The punishment, therefore, clearly represents an attempt to dissuade both the criminal and others from imitating his crime, and, therefore, qualifies as a *taʿzīr* punishment.[146]

Even though it requires strict implementation, capital punishment may also be inflicted as a *taʿzīr*. The jurists normally disagree on this kind of *taʿzīr* punishment. Yet its imposition is generally permitted in exceptional cases of a very serious nature, such as spying for the enemy, propagating heretical beliefs or practices that cause dissension in the community; or in instances where there is no other effective method of stopping a habitual offender from repeating his crime.[147] If Dampier's account of the death penalty being imposed upon a thief is true, it must be understood as falling into the category of *taʿzīr* punishments, since theft, robbery and murder were common in Aceh. Treason was regarded as a serious offense against both the state and the social order. Therefore, the severe punishment inflicted for this crime was categorized as *taʿzīr*. Beaulieu describes how a plot to overthrow Iskandar Muda was discovered and those

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[143] Langen, "De inrichting," pp. 463–466.

[144] Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. Humām, *Sharḥ Fatḥ al-Qadīr*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), p. 216; al-Shāfiʿī, *al-Umm*, vol. 6, p. 209; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, vol. 3, pp. 364–366; El-Awa, "Taʿzir," pp. 48–50; idem, *Punishment*, pp. 105–106.

[145] Ibn Farḥūn, *Kitāb Tabṣirat*, vol. 2, pp. 225–227.

[146] Ibid., p. 225.

[147] Ibid, pp. 200, 205; El-Awa, "Taʿzir," p. 52; idem, *Punishment*, pp. 108–109. See also N. Coulson, "The State and the Individual in Islamic Law," *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 6 (1957), p. 54.

who were involved, accordingly, sentenced to death.[148] A similar conspiracy was also formed against Iskandar Thānī. About four hundred people, according to Mundy, were executed within the space of about three or four months in retribution for this plot led by the Sulṭān's sister-in-law.[149]

2. *Traditional Royal Punishment*

What is meant here by "traditional royal punishment" is those penalties decreed by the sovereign at his/her own discretion. These would normally apply to crimes outside religious jurisdiction, especially involving offenses against royalty, such as violations of etiquette, royal commands and other related matters. The exact rules in such cases are not known, since no written laws have come down to us. We are, therefore, left to draw conclusion from the information provided by European observers at the time. Mention of this dimension of punishment is important here for understanding the nature and the workings of the state judicial system and how far this traditional practice came to influence the Islamic legal decisions applied. There are two aspects that should be noted from the descriptions provided below: punishments related to the breaking of specific royal decrees and those that were arbitrary in nature.

Regulations regarding the court and royal etiquette had important judicial dimensions: failure to obey the rules resulted in severe punishment. Beaulieu provides examples of how this was put into practice. Touching or cutting the leaves or branches of trees planted before the palace earned one a death sentence. A former Acehnese ambassador to the Netherlands, who had long been absent from his homeland, was unaware of the rule. When he was found tampering with the reeds he was arrested and finally sentenced to death.[150] The *Adat Aceh* speaks of other prohibitions concerning the court, including those dealing with espionage. However, details on the royal prohibitions or punishments inflicted in such cases are never provided.[151]

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[148] Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 734. See also William Marsden, *The History of Sumatra*, a reprint from the 3rd ed. and introd. by John Bastin (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 446.

[149] Mundy, *The Travels*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 330–331.

[150] See above Chapter Three, p. 98.

[151] For a complete prohibitions see above Chapter Three above, p. 98, note 22.

There is no doubt that the ruler had a great interest in establishing royal etiquette. Earlier in Chapter Three, mention was made of how the ruler ordered the *biduanda*, the master of ceremonies, to observe those attending royal audiences and make sure they followed the rules carefully.[152] Again, there is no specific mention of the legal consequences for failing to obey the rules. Yet it may safely be assumed that certain punishments prevailed. A Dutch source informs us that Iskandar Muda ordered his son to eat his own feces for neglecting to do *sembah* (obeisance). A charge was also laid against his mother, who was seen as responsible for the son's ill-behavior. She was punished by having her fingers eaten by the son.[153] Various punishments, including castration, amputation of a limb, or flogging, were also inflicted upon thirty-four *orang kayas* who were charged for being slow to fulfill the ruler's commands.[154] Another case involved a Portuguese envoy who refused to mount the state elephant that was supposed to carry him to the court for an audience with Iskandar Thānī in 1638. He was later arrested and detained.[155] Casting one's eyes upon Iskandar Muda's harem, furthermore, according to Beaulieu, could result in capital punishment.[156]

Arbitrary rules and punishments inflicted by the ruler were not uncommon either. Iskandar Muda was especially known for his authoritarian rule. This is despite the fact that both the *Hikayat Aceh* and the *Bustān* both seem to imply that Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (d. 1579) was the cruelest ruler.[157] Iskandar Muda's oppressive manner reflects the fact that during his reign royal centralization of power reached its peak. Accordingly, laws and punishments were often imposed on the basis of personal whims. One such law, according to Beaulieu, allowed him to confiscate all the goods of foreigners who died while in Aceh, except for the English and the Dutch who had established

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[152] See above Chapter Three, p. 112.

[153] Pieter van den Broecke, *Pieter van den Broecke in Azie*, ed. by W.P. Coolhass, vol. 1 ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), p. 175.

[154] *Dagh-Register, 1631–1634*, pp. 239–240.

[155] See G.W.J. Drewes & P. Voorhoeve in their "introduction" to *Adat Atjeh*, reproduced in facsimile from a manuscript in India Office Library ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1958), p. 27 and note 6, and p. 24 note 5.

[156] Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 733.

[157] *Hikayat Aceh*, pp. 97–99; *Bustān*, p. 33; Anthony Reid, "Trade and the Problem of Royal Power in Aceh c. 1550–1700," in Anthony Reid and Lance Castle, eds., *Pre-Colonial State Systems in Southeast Asia* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1979), p. 47.

factories in the region. Beaulieu further insisted that he had "another bad custom of appropriating to his own use all the men and goods of all ships that suffer shipwreck upon his coast."[158]

It was not uncommon for Iskandar Muda's arbitrary punishments to be prompted by his bad temper. He was easily unnerved by the good reputation and the wealth of the *orang kayas* who, he suspected, might endanger his power, so he had them executed and their wealth confiscated.[159] Defeating him in cockfights and delays in carrying out his orders often resulted in harsh punishments, such as amputation or death.[160] However, to assume that Iskandar Muda was the only Acehnese ruler to have imposed harsh and arbitrary punishments would be a mistake. Similar penalties were also practiced earlier during al-Mukammil's reign[161] and later under Iskandar Thānī's rule.[162] But, there is little doubt that Iskandar Muda was the only ruler to impose the more severe and arbitrary forms of punishment.

In conclusion, the laws as practiced in Aceh during the seventeenth century were composite, made up as they were of a variety of elements. As a result, the boundaries between Islamic law as prescribed in the *fiqh* texts and *adat* law became blurred. Islamic law was widely enforced, and its application seen not only in the religious court, which dealt with religious offenses presided over by the *qāḍī*, but also in other courts, such as the criminal one under the jurisdiction of the *orang kayas*. *Adat* also played its part in the Acehnese judicial system. In this period, the term seems to have meant both traditional judicial practice and royal *adat*, both written (*sarakata*) and unwritten. This is beside the fact that the *sarakata* also retained certain Islamic legal characteristics. Royal *adat* was explicitly referred to in the *sarakata* of Shams al-ʿĀlam of 1726 as the established practices of earlier rulers that had evolved into customary laws. From the aforementioned discussion, it can also be concluded that the laws applied in Aceh during this period were so severe that they frequently went beyond the prescriptions provided by Islamic law. While

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[158] Beaulieu, "The Expedition," p. 746.
[159] Ibid., p. 734.
[160] Ibid., p. 733; Broecke, *Broecke in Azie*, vol. 1, p. 173; Best, *The Voyages*, p. 211; *Dagh-Register 1631–1634*, p. 240.
[161] See Davis, *The Voyages and Works*, p. 150; Lancaster, *The Voyages*, p. 135.
[162] See, for instance, Mundy, *The Travels*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 135.

in most cases the harsh punishments may be seen as *taʿzīr*, many of them reflected the traditional ways of judicial punishments.[163]

From a judicial perspective, therefore, it is perhaps valid to describe Aceh as an Islamic state within Southeast Asian realm. In this region, where the ruler was seen as the state's central figure, around whom all activities were concentrated and from whom all power derived, the sovereign was regarded as both the law-maker and the supreme judge. As law-maker, he imposed royal *adat*. In Aceh, the rulers who had most frequent recourse to this method of legislation were al-Mukammil, Iskandar Muda, and Ṣafiyyat al-Dīn.[164] As supreme judge, the ruler was the ultimate interpreter of the country's law, although in practice he delegated this power to his subordinates (officials). Nevertheless, he/she would on occasion intervene in court verdicts. This does not, however, mean that the laws of the country were entirely subject to the sovereign's discretion,[165] since other sources of laws, such as Islam and non-royal *adat*, remained important sources of the law.

C. Jihād

Jihād in Islam means "struggle" or "striving," and in phrases is usually followed by the words *fī sabīl Allāh* (in the path of God). The term should be viewed from two perspectives. In the first place, *jihād* is understood as an expression of the human need to follow God's guidance, in accordance with the *fiṭrah* (nature) of human beings to pursue this guidance revealed through His Prophet. Those who respond to this guidance are required to put the Islamic worldview into practice either in the "form of personal purification or the collective effort to establish an Islamic social order."[166] This practical

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[163] It is surprising that the traditional punishment of licking heated iron (*berjilat besi*), which, according to the *Bustān*, was forbidden by Iskandar Muda, is mentioned in the *sarakata* of Shams al-ʿĀlam. That is in spite of the fact that the laws stipulated in the *sarakata* are mostly Islamic. See Langen, "De inrichting," p. 465.

[164] See the *sarakata* of Shams al-ʿĀlam of 1726 that describes royal *adat* as part of the established practices in Aceh to these rulers in Langen, "De inrichting," pp. 463–466. Indeed, this is not peculiar to Aceh, as in Melaka, for instance, the laws of the country are mostly attributed to its rulers. See Liaw Yock Fang, ed., *Undang-Undang Melaka* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), pp. 31–41, 62–64.

[165] Cf. A.C. Milner, "Islam and the Muslim State," in M.B. Hooker, ed., *Islam in South-East Asia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983), esp. pp. 29–34.

[166] Abdulaziz A. Sachedina, "The Development of *Jihad* in Islamic Revelation

dimension is sometimes interpreted to mean the establishment of a just social order in the form of an Islamic political entity, accompanied by an invitation to unbelievers to follow this divine path. What all this means is that Muslims must constantly participate in *jihād* since they are obliged to create and maintain an ethical social order as envisioned in the Qur'ān, and to "command good and forbid evil." To achieve these goals "any means, including military, would be obligatory."[167] Thus, *qitāl* (fighting) can be viewed as an aspect of *jihād*.[168]

Qitāl, mentioned several times in the Qur'ān (e.g., 2:193, 8: 39) in the sense of *jihād*, may be categorized as either "offensive" or "defensive." Early jurists interpreted the "offensive" *jihād* to mean the expansion of Islam, both as a religion and a political entity.[169] This is what Muhammad Hamidullah calls "idealistic reasons for waging war."[170] The "defensive" *jihād* indicated by the Qur'ān (2: 190): "And fight in the way of Allāh against those who fight against you but be not aggressive; surely Allāh loves not the aggressors," connotes both religious and moral obligations. In other words, Muslims have a religious obligation to defend Islamic values against the attacks of unbelievers and a moral one to preserve the rights of the inhabitants of an Islamic state and its social order.[171]

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and History," in James Turner and John Kelsey, eds., *Cross, Crescent, and Sword: The Justification and Limitation of War in Western and Islamic Tradition* (New York: Greenwood, 1990), p. 37.

[167] Ibid., p. 38.

[168] Jamilah Jitmoud, "Principles of Jihad in the Qur'ān and Sunnah," in Mumtaz Ahmad, ed., *State, Politics and Islam* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publication, 1986), pp. 133–147; W. Montgomery Watt, "The Significance of the Theory of *Jihād*," in *Akten des VII. Kongresses fur Arabistik und Islamwissenschaft*, ed. by, Albert Dietrich (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1974), pp. 390–394; Rudolph Peters, "Djihad: War of Aggression or Defense?," in *Akten des VII. Kongresses fur Arabistik und Islamwissenschaft*, ed. by Albert Dietrich (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976), pp. 282–289; Muhammad Hamidullah, *Muslim Conduct of State*, 4th ed. (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1961), pp. 160–163; Bernard Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 71–72.

[169] For the jurists, this expansion was part of a general religious obligation to establish the kingdom of God. See Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Kītāb Ikhtilāf al-Fuqahā'*, ed. by Joseph Schacht (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1933), pp. 2–3; Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, *Kītāb al-Siyar*, ed. by Majīd Khaddūrī (Beirut: al-Dār al-Muttaḥidah li al-Nashr, 1975), p. 93; Hamidullah, *Muslim Conduct of State*, pp. 311–312, 320–325.

[170] Hamidullah, *Muslim Conduct of State*, p. 167.

[171] Ibid., pp. 164–166; Sachedina, "The Development of *Jihad*," pp. 39–40; Jitmoud, "Principles of Jihad," pp. 138–147. For further discussion on the theory of *jihād* in Islam see E. Tyan, "Djihād," *EI2*; Rudolph Peters, *Jihad in Medieval and*

How *jihād* was perceived and practiced by the Acehnese in the seventeenth century is the main concern of this section. It is well-known that a number of wars were waged by the state in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, both against the Portuguese in Melaka and against other Muslim states in the region. We shall return to discuss these conflicts later on in this section and examine them against both the Islamic concept of *jihād* and the Acehnese context of holy war. But first we need to delve deeper into the Acehnese concept of *jihād*.

No single treatise on *jihād* from a legal perspective is known to have been written in Aceh. Yet there are a number of *hikayat prangs* (heroic poems) through which the concept of war and peace in Acehnese society may be explored. Among the most important *hikayats* of this type are the *Hikayat Malem Dagang* (Story of Malem Dagang) of the seventeenth century, the *Hikayat Pocut Muhammad* (Story of Prince Muhammad) of the eighteenth century and the *Hikayat Prang Sabil* (Story of the War in the Path of God), also known as the *Hikayat Prang Gompeni* (Story of the War Against the Dutch), of the nineteenth century. On this type of Acehnese literature Snouck Hurgronje writes:

> The Heroic poems of the Achehnese, original both in form and in subject matter, stand indisputably higher in all respects than any other part of their literature. It is in the two most ancient of these hikayats [*Malem Dagang* and *Pocut Muhammad*] that we are especially struck by the poets' calm objectivity, their command of their subject, their keen sense of both the tragic and comic elements in the lives of their fellow-countrymen, and the occasional masterly touches in which they sketch, briefly but accurately, genuine pictures of Achehnese life.[172]

The word *hikayat* itself derives from the Arabic *ḥikāyah*, meaning "imitation." In common usage the term came to denote "tale, narrative, story, and legend."[173] Indeed, this is the meaning intended in both Malay and Acehnese *hikayat* works.[174] Both contain stories that com-

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Modern Islam (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977); idem, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996).

[172] Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 2, p. 80.

[173] Ch. Pellat, et al., "Ḥikāya," *EI2*. The term used here follows the one that is in use in Aceh, i.e., *hikayat*.

[174] Imran Teuku Abdullah, *Hikayat Meukuta Alam* (Jakarta: Intermassa, 1991), pp. 28–29, 32. Cf. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 2, p. 77.

bine fiction with legend.[175] Commenting on the scope of Acehnese *hikayats* in general, Snouck Hurgronje writes: "the Achehnese apply the term *hikayat* not only to tales of fiction and religious legends, but also to works of moral instruction and even simple lesson-books, provided that the matter is expressed in verse, as is in fact the case with the great majority of Achehnese literary productions."[176]

Although initially the Acehnese *hikayat* was influenced by the Malay *hikayat*,[177] there are two characteristics possessed by the former that distinguish it from its Malay counterpart. First of all, unlike the Malay version, which is usually in prose form, the Acehnese *hikayat* has a distinctly poetical form, called *sanjak*.[178] And second, the Malay *hikayat* developed out of a written tradition and was linked to the court;[179] whereas the Acehnese *hikayat* evolved from oral tradition and enjoyed a popular following. The tradition of putting a *hikayat* into writing was in fact a later development, and took place only after its oral composition.[180]

In keeping with its oral nature, Acehnese *hikayat* was recited before an audience accompanied by a specific tune or song.[181] This meant interaction between the poet and his listeners, wherein the former gave an aesthetic rendering of his poem that relied on all the arts of a storyteller. The beautiful poetical form of a *hikayat* and its tune were also supported by its content. These two aspects, the literary form and its story, were the fundamental elements of a *hikayat*. Indeed, there was certain interdependence between these two elements. No poem in fact could do without either an interesting subject or story. At the same time, the message of the story had to be delivered in

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[175] Abdullah, *Hikayat*, pp. 23, 32; L.F. Brakel, *The Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyyah: A Medieval Muslim Malay Romance* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), p. 66; A. Teeuw, "The History of the Malay Language," *BKI* 115 (1959), pp. 149–150.

[176] Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 2, p. 77.

[177] Abdullah, *Hikayat*, pp. 34–36, 38.

[178] For further information on the usage of *sanjak* in Acehnese *hikayat* see Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 2, p. 77; G.J.W. Drewes, ed., *Hikajat Potjut Muhamat: An Acehnese Epic* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1979), pp. 3–5; Abdullah, *The Hikayat*, pp. 17, 47–51.

[179] Fiaw Yock Fang, *Sejarah Kesusatraan Melayu Klasik* (Singapora: Pustaka Nasional, 1975), p. 1; Amin Sweeney, "Professional Malay Story-Telling," *JMBRAS* 46, 2 (1973), p. 2.

[180] Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 2, p. 66; Abdullah, *Hikayat*, p. 3.

[181] Drewes mentions two types of tunes: an Acehnese tune (*lagee Aceh*) and a Pidie tune (*lagee Pidie*). See his *Hikayat*, pp. 5–6.

as enjoyable a form as possible. Both were expected of a poet. Therefore, a poet had to possess the freedom to introduce variations into a *hikayat* in accordance with the time and the social setting.[182] However, its content remained essentially the same.

It is with this second element of the *hikayat*, i.e., the content, that we are concerned with here. As mentioned earlier, the story conveyed in a *hikayat* appears on the surface to be fictional.[183] However, the poet usually based his fictional composition on fact, whether actual or perceived. Thus, his listeners accepted the story as real.[184] In this regard a *hikayat* possesses a semantic element through which the worldview of a society can be explored.[185] This is particularly true of the epic *Hikayat Malem Dagang*, the most relevant of all the *hikayats* to our discussion.

While it is accepted as the oldest epic *hikayat* in Acehnese, neither the date of its composition nor its author are known. Scholars, however, suggest that it was written in the seventeenth century.[186] Its main concern is the Acehnese expedition against Johor during Iskandar Muda's reign. While several of the locations mentioned in the narrative are real, the overall story can hardly be accepted as historically accurate.[187] However, in terms of its content, the epic is not without its merits. Composed in elegant verse form, the text indeed reveals the Acehnese worldview, in particular with regard to the concept of just war or *jihād*. In his study on this epic Imran Teuku Abdullah points out:

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[182] Abdullah, *Hikayat*, p. 37.

[183] Ibid., p. 32. Cf. Brakel, *The Hikayat*, p. 6; Teeuw, "The History of the Malay Language," pp. 149–150. An exception should be made in the case of the *Hikayat Pocut Muhammad*, an eighteenth century Acehnese epic on a civil war that took place in this period. Beside its literary merits, the historical value of this epic is widely recognized. See Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 2, p. 2; Drewes, *Hikajat*, p. ix.

[184] Indeed, as Abdullah points out, this is to be seen in the early period and, even, in modern times among the older generation or among those who have less education. See Abdullah, *Hikayat*, p. 32.

[185] Ibid., pp. 4, 13.

[186] Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 2, p. 80; Drewes, *Hikajat*, p. 7; Abdullah, *Hikayat*, pp. 35, 37.

[187] Snouck Hurgronje, *The Acehnese*, vol. 2, p. 80. Indeed, although a historical reconstruction of the *hikayat* is extremely difficult, Hendrik Cowan has attempted such a task, and has concluded that the story is related to the Acehnese expedition against Johor in 1615. For further discussion on this point see H.J. Cowan, *De Hikajat Malem Dagang: Atjehsche heldendicht tekst en toelichting* ('s-Gravenhage: KITLV, 1937), pp. 1–12; Drewes, *Hikajat*, pp. 1–12. See also Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," pp. 179–180.

> This kind of text cannot be viewed primarily from its actual historical perspective as Cowan did. It should, rather, be interpreted from the perspective of Acehnese literary convention as a worldview of the Acehnese people, either as an individual or a group. More specifically, the text should be seen as the Acehnese interpretation of their own past within a particular socio-cultural context.[188]

1. *The Justification for War*

The *Hikayat Malem Dagang*[189] begins its narrative with a reference to the greatness of Iskandar Muda. Exercising his God-given ability (*raja meutuah*)[190] at governing and dispensing justice, this ruler succeeded in transforming Aceh into a rich and prosperous country. Economic life was so advanced that it attracted ship-borne commerce from other parts of the archipelago and many ports in South Asia, such as Bengal, Gujarat, and Malabar. Aceh, for this reason, was well-known to other parts of the Islamic world, including Arabia, Egypt, Syria, and Turkey. At this point, the narrative emphasizes the peaceful life of the country under this ruler. During his reign not a single disaster had taken place (*sapeue pi tan meumara*).[191] It seems that this point is stressed in order to draw a contrast between the peaceful life of the state before it was forced to wage war, and its resolution in pursuing the conflict afterwards.

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[188] Abdullah, *Hikayat*, p. 12.

[189] There are three versions of the epic referred to in this study. The first is the text edited by Cowan, which was published in 1937. This Dutch scholar gives the title of the text as *Hikajat Malem Dagang*, the name of the commander-in-chief who is the main figure portrayed in the text. The other two versions were edited by an Acehnese scholar, Imran Teuku Abdullah, and published in 1991. The titles of these two versions are given as *Hikayat Meukuta Alam*, referring to Iskandar Muda. This title, he argues, is used because it appears in the text itself. There are no fundamental differences between these versions, however. The text studied by Cowan is a shorter version. The first text edited by Abdullah is also another short version, and the other is a long one. It is worth noting here that neither of these two scholars discusses the epic from the perspective of the Acehnese concept of war and peace. In order to avoid confusion in referring to these three versions and between the text and the analysis of these two scholars, Cowan's text will simply be referred to as *Hikajat Malem Dagang* (hereafter abbreviated as *HMD*), while his analysis is referred to as Cowan, *De Hikajat*. The first text edited by Abdullah will be referred to as *Hikayat Meukuta Alam I* (abbreviated as *HMA I*), while the second one is referred to as *Hikayat Meukuta Alam II* (hereafter will be simply abbreviated as *HMA II*). Abdullah's analysis will be simply referred to as Abdullah, *Hikayat*.

[190] *HMA I*, line: 10; *HMA II*, line: 8.

[191] *HMD*, line: 22; *HMA I*, line: 37.

The crisis began with the coming of Raja Raden and the Princess of Pahang from Banang (Johor) to Aceh. After their arrival in this country, these two members of the royal family immediately went to see Iskandar Muda, introducing themselves to him and informing him of the intention of their visit. As they put it, they had come "for the purpose of conversion to Islam" (*meukeumeung meucahdat tamong agama*).[192] After their conversion, the Princess of Pahang was married to Iskandar Muda, while Raja Raden was married to the sister of this ruler. These marriages, according to the text, were viewed as "a sign of a genuine conversion" (*nyan keuh tanda ji-Iseulam*).[193] This means that the two newcomers were to be regarded as full-fledged members of the Acehnese royal family and entitled to their own palaces and all the appurtenances of their position. There are two further points that the narrative seems to emphasize. First, these two royal visitors came from a chaotic country (*habeh meuguncang haro hara*).[194] Therefore, the prosperous and peaceful Aceh was the best place in which to live. Second, they were non-Muslims who had journeyed to Aceh in order to be accepted into the Islamic faith. This, no doubt, implies the supremacy of Aceh as the holder of Islamic authority in the region. Further reinforcement comes from the Islamic-based bond through marriage, which is said to be the sign of a genuine conversion, a point to which we will return later in this study.

The narrative goes on to inform us that Raja Raden had a brother, who was himself a great military commander, named Raja Si-Ujut. The latter followed his brother to Aceh with several great warships. When he approached the shore, Si-Ujut received a warm welcome from the people who offered him food and drink. A stately reception was made for him, and he was then inaugurated as a state noble to whom the ruler later gave authority over Ladong, with its market, and the Krueng Raya region.

After three years in Aceh, Raja Si-Ujut asked his brother, Raja Raden, to follow him back to their homeland. He insisted that he

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[192] *HMD*, line: 36; *HMA I*, line: 50; *HMA II*, lines: 32–33.

[193] *HMD*, line: 40; *HMA I*, line: 54. Royal intermarriage was not uncommon in Aceh. This indeed had considerable implications in the fields of politics, economy, and religion.

[194] *HMA I*, line: 38. In the *HMD* it reads as *habeh meuguncang alam donja*. See line: 24.

had come to Aceh largely with the intention of taking Raja Raden back home. At this point an argument broke out between them. Raja Si-Ujut tried many arguments to persuade his brother. He insisted that Aceh was a poor country compared to theirs. He then promised his brother a luxurious life in their homeland over which, he said, Raja Raden was to become its ruler. The latter, however, was firm: he would never go back home. There were several reasons for this. In the first place, he would never betray Iskandar Muda, to whom his loyalty was genuine. He said: "O my brother, from being an unbeliever, I converted to Islam; therefore, I would never be hostile to the ruler."[195] Second, Raja Raden insisted that he would never return to a home that was forever in turbulence.[196]

Raja Si-Ujut was so disappointed with his brother's response that he threatened not only to kill him but also to destroy every corner of Aceh and to capture all Acehnese Muslims. Raja Raden tried to remind him not to be arrogant (*teukabo*), which would lead to his demise (*binasa*),[197] and that he had no reason to be hostile to the Acehnese ruler. This ruler, Raja Raden insisted, had been kind to Si-Ujut, welcoming and serving him so wonderfully in Aceh and even placing some regions under his authority. Si-Ujut's improper behavior during his stay in Aceh had also been forgiven by Iskandar Muda. Angered by this response, Si-Ujut and his followers prepared to leave the country, but on the way robbed the people, burned Ladong, its market and Krueng Raya. Several Achehnese fishermen were captured and savagely murdered.[198]

This was no doubt regarded by the Acehnese authorities as an offensive act against the state and social order. Islamic law regards a defensive war as justified when a Muslim territory is invaded by an enemy or when an enemy has committed unbearable acts against a Muslim state without actual invasion.[199] The crimes of Si-Ujut seem to have fallen into the second category; therefore, the attack was no doubt viewed as an aggression against both divine values and the inhabitants of the Acehnese state. The war was thus regarded as a

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[195] *HMD*, lines: 44–96; *HMA I*, line: 112; *HMA II*, line: 351.

[196] *Adoe, h'an kuwoe u nanggroe jeu'oh, nanggroe meumusoh rok-rok masa. HMD,* lines: 98–99; *HMA I*, line: 114; *HMA II*, lines: 353–355.

[197] *HMD*, lines: 117, 119; *HMA I*, lines: 134, 136; *HMA II*, lines: 374, 376.

[198] *HMD*, lines: 120–173; *HMA I*, lines: 184–190; *HMA II*, lines: 421–431.

[199] Hamidullah, *Muslim Conduct of State*, p. 164.

jihād, or in Achehnese, a *prang sabi* (war in the path of God).[200] At this point, the *jus ad bellum*, the right to wage a war, came into effect and the *prima facie* injunction against killing and injuring others was overruled in favor of the higher one demanding sacrifice.[201] Ibn Taymiyyah insists that "even though killing constitutes *sharr* (evil) and *fasād* (wicked), the civil dissension caused by the intrigues of the infidels is more evil and wicked."[202] James F. Childress argues that when we apply *prima facie* duties, sometimes not all obligations can be fulfilled at the same time. In this case, the highest obligation should be given priority, even at the cost of other duties, if necessary.[203]

Aggression is defined by Michael Walzer as a "violation of the territorial integrity or political sovereignty of an independent state." To him, this is "a crime of war," since "it challenges rights that are worth dying for."[204] Underlying this is the idea that "the duties and rights of states are nothing more than the duties and rights of the men who composed them."[205] While the crime that Si-Ujut had committed offended Islam, one may also view it from the perspective of Acehnese sovereignty being violated by an outsider. It was for this violence against the state that Iskandar Muda was determined to attack Si-Ujut, since the latter had humiliated him (*meunaleeku jiba*).[206] Again, these two aspects are inseparable, as both religion and state are one in Islam.

2. *The Authority to Declare* Jihād

Childress identifies legitimate authority as the first criterion of a just war as it "is really a presupposition for the rest of the criteria."[207]

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[200] *HMD*, line: 855; *HMA I*, line: 876; *HMD*, line: 630; *HMA II*, line: 120.

[201] In one tradition, the Prophet is reported to have said that "Muslims should support one another against the outsider; the blood of all Muslims is of equal value, and the one lowest in status can bind the others if he give a pledge of security." See al-Shaybānī, *Kitāb al-Siyar*, p. 100.

[202] Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Siyāsah al-Shar'iyyah fī Iṣlāḥ al-Rā'ī wa al-Rā'iyyah* (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1955), p. 124.

[203] James F. Childress, *Moral Responsibility in Conflicts* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), pp. 64–73.

[204] Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustration* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), pp. 52–53.

[205] John Westlake, *Collected Papers*, ed. L. Oppenheim (Cambridge, 1914), p. 78 as quoted in ibid.

[206] *HMD*, lines: 225, 385, 631; *HMA I*, lines: 410, 620, 662, 1459; *HMA II*, lines: 666, 766.

[207] Childress, *Moral Responsibility*, p. 74.

Indeed, legitimate authority is a precondition for both *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*, as war itself "is a rule-government activity."[208] In *jihād*, an action closely related to statecraft,[209] the question of who has the right to declare war is also an important issue. Both Sunnī and Shīʿī jurists generally agree that this authority is in the hands of the ruler, or *imām*. However, the Sunnīs rely on the authority of their political rulers,[210] while the Shīʿīs recognize authority only insofar as it derives from the theory of *imāmah*. In the latter case, the legitimate authority to declare and direct the war is that of the *imām*, and during his concealment, that of the *mujtahids*. However, when *mujtahids* cannot be consulted, any intelligent person has the right to declare *jihād*.[211] Yet this rule applies more in respect to "offensive" *jihād*, which is viewed by the jurists as a *farḍ kifāyah* (general duty).[212] In a "defensive" *jihād*, which is a *farḍ ʿayn* (personal duty), the case is different. Permission of the ruler or *imām* is not required. Muslims under attack should defend themselves either individually or collectively without waiting to be directed to do so by a ruler or *imām*. Even people normally exempted from offensive *jihād* must participate in a defensive one.[213]

As mentioned above, the reaction of the Acehnese to the offensive crime of Si-Ujut was defensive in nature. Yet since Si-Ujut's attack did not constitute a hostile invasion of the country, the military response of the Acehnese took the form of an offensive action. Throughout the text, furthermore, Si-Ujut is described as constantly preparing his forces in order to launch a second and larger attack on Aceh. As such, the offensive *jihād* was waged by the Acehnese within the context of a defense. Perhaps, it can be best described as a "defensive-retaliatory" war or a "preemptive strike." This is important for

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[208] Ibid., 73.

[209] Hamidullah, *Muslim Conduct of State*, p. 161.

[210] Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb b. Ibrāhīm, *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, ed. by Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār al-Shurūq, 1985), p. 123; Abū Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Māwardī, *al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyyah*, ed. by Khālid ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Sabʿ al-ʿAlamī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabī, 1994), p. 53.

[211] See Ann K.S. Lambton, "A Nineteenth Century View of *Jihād*," *Studia Islamica* 32 (1970), pp. 181–192; E. Kohlberg, "The Development of the Imāmī Shīʿī Doctrine of *Jihād*," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft* 126, 1 (1976), pp. 64–86.

[212] Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid*, vol. 1, pp. 324–325; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, vol. 3, p. 265.

[213] Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Siyāsah al-Sharʿiyyah*, p. 128; al-Humām, *Sharḥ Fatḥ al-Qadīr*, vol. 5, pp. 43–44; Lewis, *The Political Language*, p. 73.

comprehending not only who it was that had the authority to declare *jihād*, but also how the war itself was to be conducted.

We have seen that whenever a Muslim country is attacked by an enemy, a defensive *jihād* is a *farḍ ʿayn*, in which everyone is expected to participate, and for which no permission needs be sought from anyone in authority. As Aceh's reaction to the Si-Ujut's crime was "offensive" or "retaliatory" in form, the authority to decide whether or not to wage war lay with the ruler himself. Therefore, soon after he received the report from his port official (i.e., *keujruen kuala*) regarding Si-Ujut's crime, Iskandar Muda decided to retaliate by ordering all his people to prepare for war.[214] The war was then overseen by the sulṭān himself with the help of other state officials, who represented important elements in the state. These were: Malem Dagang, the commander-in-chief; the Panglima Pidie or Maharaja Indra, representing the nobles and regional chiefs; Raja Raden, a new convert whose commitment to Islam exceeded his love for his brother (Si-Ujut) and native land; and lastly the *ʿulamāʾ*, represented by Ja Pakeh, who acted not only as the spiritual inspiration but also the military strategist behind the expedition.

3. *The Conduct of the War*

Iskandar Muda's first decision was to send all the men of the country into the mountains, to look for wood with which to build warships. The text emphasizes that men from different backgrounds, even bridegrooms, were subject to this order. It was not until seventeen months later that the effort was completed. Yet it was not without its consequences. Many men died in the mountains after contracting illnesses. Similar tragedies befell the families they left behind. Consequently, their wives, as the text puts it, were worried about the upcoming expedition that would cost so much in terms of Acehnese lives. They had already suffered much, even before the war had begun.[215] This complaint may be viewed from the perspective of reasonable hope for success and proportionality. Yet this concept is more applicable in an offensive rather than in a defensive *jihād*.[216] The text, however, implies that the expedition was imperative.

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[214] *HMD*, lines: 183–188; *HMA I*, lines: 206–207; *HMA II*, lines: 448–450.
[215] *MHA I*, lines: 310–317; *HMD*, lines: 205–208; *HMA II*, lines: 387–401.
[216] Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat*, vol. 1, pp. 329–330.

The military expedition proper set out from the city of Banda Aceh, whence Iskandar Muda departed overland for the Jambo Aye region in northeastern Aceh. A part of his force, however, went there by sea. Along the way, the ruler recruited some experienced officers and a large number of men and warships. In Pidie, he received a warm welcome from the people and their chief, Maharaja Indra, who chose to participate in the expedition. Additional ships were also obtained there.[217] Iskandar Muda then reached Meureudu, where he received more volunteers. Yet the most important support he found in this place was the participation of an *ʿālim*, by the name of Ja Pakeh, as the advisor for the expedition (*guree prang*).[218]

From Meureudu, the troops arrived in Samalanga, then Peudada and Peusangan, where they received more support, either in the form of troops or warships. When they arrived in Jambo Aye, the Sulṭān appointed Malem Dagang, who was himself the grandchild of Ja Pakeh, as commander-in-chief for the expedition. As commander-in-chief (*panglima prang*), Malem Dagang received constant religious encouragement from Ja Pakeh to wage a holy war. He insisted that the latter's appointment to the position was comparable to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib's appointment by the Prophet as commander of the Muslim troops against the unbelievers.[219] From Jambo Aye the troops sailed toward Johor, looking for Si-Ujut and his troops.

After three days of sailing, the fleet approached Asahan. Ja Pakeh informed Iskandar Muda that Asahan was ruled by the unbelieving and tyrannical King Raja Muda, who was nevertheless the strongest in the region. An envoy of the King of Asahan approached the Acehnese vessels, asking about their intentions. Malem Dagang explained that they were on the way to attack Si-Ujut. The envoy, however, said that the Acehnese fleet could not proceed to Johor until they surrendered themselves and their wealth to Raja Muda; otherwise they would be attacked by Asahan troops.

Malem Dagang's response was decisive. He would not surrender to Raja Muda, and insisted that there was no justification for the latter to attack them. In the end, however, they had no other choice but to defend themselves against the unbeliever's attack. At this point,

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[217] *HMA I*, lines: 495–505; *HMD*, lines: 308–315; *MHA II*, lines: 670–678.
[218] *HMD*, lines: 460–590; *HMA I*, line: 619; *HMA II*, line: 1137.
[219] *HMD*, lines: 621–869, 1655–1657; *HMA I*, lines: 870–881, 1690–1695.

a disagreement arose between Iskandar Muda and his commander, Malem Dagang. The fearful Sulṭān preferred to conduct negotiations with Raja Muda, especially in view of the superior military capability of Asahan, which posed a danger to the Acehnese fleet. Furthermore, he argued that the main purpose of their expedition was to attack Si-Ujut.[220] Malem Dagang, however, insists that there was no other way in this particular case except to defend themselves against the desperate attack of the unbeliever Raja Asahan. This position was strongly supported by his two main assistants, Raja Raden and the Panglima Pidie. Religious sanction was also given by Ja Pakeh.[221]

The military engagement lasted for seven days. Malem Dagang finally landed in the city and captured the enemy's stronghold. The unbelieving ruler (*raja kaphee*), according to the text, was finally defeated and driven into the jungle.[222] Malem Dagang then ordered that the enemy's weapons be seized and booty taken and distributed among the soldiers. When the commander-in-chief, together with some of his troops, entered the royal palace, he found there about one hundred wives of Raja Muda, one of whom was named Keumala Donya. Malem Dagang immediately reminded his troops of two things. Firstly, they were to respect the ladies of the court and never do them any harm. Secondly, they were not to rejoice overmuch in the victory, since they were still effectively in a state of war.[223]

Seven days after the war stopped, Raja Muda and his soldiers returned to the capital city and were surprised to find that it had not been destroyed and that their families were still alive and unmolested.[224] However, Raja Muda could not find his consort, Keumala Donya who was being held captive by Malem Dagang on the ship. Learning of this fact, he went to the ship to meet Malem Dagang,

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[220] *HMD*, lines: 1020–1028; *HMA I*, lines: 1050–1054; *HMA II*, lines: 1391–1398.

[221] *HMD*, lines: 1029–1068; *HMA I*, lines: 1071–1094.

[222] *Kakeuh talo raja kaphe, jiplueng u gle jipeukoh lam rimba. HMD*, lines: 1171–1173; *HMA I*, lines: 1200–1204; *HMA II*, lines: 1506–1511.

[223] *HMD*, lines: 1189–1245; *HMA I*, lines: 1205–1275; *HMA II*, lines: 1515–1600.

[224] Al-Shaybānī insists that whenever the Prophet sent an army on an expedition, he ordered its commander to fear God and behave himself and instruct his soldiers to behave properly during the war. The only people who were allowed to be killed were the enemy's combatants. Therefore, they were not allowed to harm or kill children, women and old people. See his *Kītāb al-Siyar*, p. 93. See also al-Ṭabarī, *Kītāb Ikhtilāf*, pp. 9–12; Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat*, vol. 1, pp. 326–327; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, vol. 2, pp. 277–279; Hamidullah, *Muslim Conduct of State*, pp. 204–207.

bringing gold as ransom. Yet the latter did not accept the ransom for Keumala Donya's freedom. The only condition he set for her release was Raja Muda's acceptance of Islam, to which condition the Asahan ruler readily agreed. His example was later followed by seventy chiefs and nobles under his authority.[225]

The Acehnese fleet then sailed toward Banang. Si-Ujut, however, was not there. Later, Malem Dagang met the father of the princess of Pahang, who told him that Si-Ujut had left for Johor Lama to prepare a military force with which to attack Aceh. Again, when the Acehnese fleet reached Johor Lama, Si-Ujut had already left for Johor Bali for the same purpose. After waiting for months, Si-Ujut's fleet, consisting of a large number of warships, appeared off the shore of Banang. After receiving Iskandar Muda's consent, Ja Pakeh ordered Malem Dagang to attack the enemies of God, but not before religious blessings were spoken by this *ʿālim*. In the ensuing battle, this portion of Si-Ujut's fleet was destroyed and its commander, the latter's father-in-law, killed. The news of the destruction of his forces reached Si-Ujut while he was still in Guha.[226] Incensed at the death of his father-in-law, Si-Ujut departed with his other fleet for the Banang Sea. On reaching this destination, Si-Ujut's forces immediately surrounded the Acehnese fleet. The narrative then describes how Iskandar Muda, so fearful of being besieged by the huge enemy fleet, asked his commander-in-chief to abandon the expedition. Again, the brave Malem Dagang was determined to continue the holy war, all the while receiving religious support and military advice from Ja Pakeh.

The narrative goes on to tell of how both sides fought a bitter engagement in which the Acehnese dominated, although the enemy

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[225] *HMD*, lines: 1276–1362; *HMA I*, lines: 1306–1389; *HMA II*, lines: 1671–1928. The conversion of the enemy to Islam becomes an important element in *jihād*. In general, the jurists agree that it is *wājib* (an obligation) to "invite" the enemy to Islam before attacking them, especially in an offensive *jihād*. See al-Ṭabarī, *Kītāb al-Ikhtilāf*, pp. 2–3; al-Shaybānī, *Kītāb al-Siyar*, p. 93; Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat*, vol. 1, p. 331. The question of whether or not the male captives should be killed is left to the ruler to decide based on circumstance. Therefore, captives may be killed when the ruler deems this to be advantageous to the Muslims. However, if they convert to Islam they may not be killed. See al-Ṭabarī, *Kītāb al-Ikhtilāf*, pp. 40, 141–144.

[226] "Guha" cannot be identified. Yet as Cowan suggests, this must have been "Goa" in India, a Portuguese stronghold in the region. The identification of Si-Ujut as the prince of Guha (Goa), besides that of Johor, Banang and Melaka, should be understood as evidence of Johor's frequent cooperation with the Portuguese. See Cowan, *De Hikajat Malem Dagang*, p. 2, note 2.

force was strong. This battle also offered the Panglima Pidie an opportunity to seek martyrdom.[227] He first asked for a white cloth from Ja Pakeh, symbolizing death. Then, he asked to be allowed to put on Ja Pakeh's clothing, i.e., his *jubbah* and turban.[228] Ja Pakeh, who could not resist the Panglima Pidie's determination, granted his request. Wearing the *shaykh*'s dress meant that the Panglima Pidie was in the position of being united with Ja Pakeh, both in this world and the hereafter.[229] This no doubt symbolizes the religious zeal of the war in which Ja Pakeh played so crucial a role.[230] In the ensuing battle, the Panglima Pidie, dressed as Ja Pakeh, was shot by Si-Ujut who thought that he was aiming at Ja Pakeh himself.

The martyrdom of the Panglima Pidie heightened the stakes in the holy war. After months of intensive fighting Si-Ujut's force was finally defeated and Si-Ujut himself captured by Malem Dagang. This marked the end of the war. The Acehnese fleet headed home with Si-Ujut as captive. On the way home, they stopped for a month in Asahan. There Iskandar Muda asked Si-Ujut to convert to Islam as a condition for his freedom, an offer he refused. The Acehnese then sailed on to Aceh, where they were welcomed as victors. The story draws attention to the fact that the defeat and capture of Si-Ujut reversed the humiliation of Iskandar Muda (*kakeuh teutob malee po Meukuta Alam*),[231] which by extension included both the Acehnese state and Islam itself. Refusing to convert to Islam, Si-Ujut was sentenced to death in Aceh. Yet his execution was difficult to implement. Various methods were used, but each failed to have any effect. Finally, Si-Ujut himself suggested the most effective way, which was

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[227] To die as a *shahīd* (martyr) is the best fate that any Muslim could hope for, since this would entail the greatest reward in the hereafter. Ibn Taymiyyah writes: "the martyr's death is the easiest of all form of death and the best of them all" (Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Siyāsah al-Sharʿiyyah*, p. 123). The traditions on the superiority of martyrdom and the desire of Muslims to attain it are abundant. In a *ḥadīth* narrated by Anas b. Mālik, the Prophet said: "Nobody who dies and finds good from Allāh (in the hereafter) would wish to come back to this world and whatever is in it, except the martyr who, on seeing the superiority of martyrdom, would like to come back to the world and get killed again (in Allāh's cause)" (Bukhārī, *Kītāb al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, vol. 2, p. 201). For more traditions on this issue, see Mālik b. Anas, *al-Muwaṭṭaʾ*, ed. by Muḥammad Fuʾād ʿAbd al-Bāqī (Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyyah, 1951), vol. 2, section "jihād", pp. 443–471.

[228] *HMD*, lines: 1919–1922; *HMA I*, lines: 1930–1935.

[229] *HMD*, lines: 1940–1949; *HMA I*, lines: 1955–1965.

[230] Abdullah, *Hikayat*, p. 613.

[231] *HMA I*, line: 2245.

by pouring molten lead into his mouth, nose, and eyes.[232] The narrative ends with the death of Si-Ujut and the happiness of Iskandar Muda and his people over the success of the holy war.[233]

As a whole, the military campaign described in this *hikayat* was "defensive-retaliatory." Si-Ujut's crime was considered a grave threat to both the divine values of the Islamic state of Aceh and its social order. Never before, the text insists, had such a crime happened in Aceh during Iskandar Muda's reign.[234] The responsibility for the expedition was taken by the Sulṭān himself. Although the figure of Iskandar Muda in this narrative was overshadowed by both Malem Dagang and Ja Pakeh, he was, nonetheless, seen as the highest authority in prosecuting the war. Therefore, before the main attack was launched against Si-Ujut's army, the approval of the sovereign was first sought, although he later delegated the authority to Ja Pakeh.

The expedition is portrayed as a religious war. This is reflected in Ja Pakeh's position as both spiritual leader and military strategist. The idea of defending Islam, accordingly, precluded the idea of reasonable hope for success and proportionality in war. An example of this was the people's decision to go on in spite of their fear of suffering further consequences from the war, as we saw with families of the soldiers who had suffered during the harvesting of timber for the fleet.

According to the text, Islam was a genuine bond that united the people. The conversion of both Raja Raden and the Princess of Pahang to Islam was the only reason why intermarriage took place between Iskandar Muda and the princess, and between Raja Raden and the sister of this Acehnese ruler. Both were then to have their own palaces in Aceh. Islam was also the prime reason behind Raja Raden's decision to break off relations with his own brother, Si-Ujut,[235] and to join forces instead with Iskandar Muda. Conversion to Islam as a condition for the freedom of a captive, in the case of Raja Muda, as well as for exemption from the death penalty, in the

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[232] *HMD*, lines: 2338–2254; *HMA I*, lines: 2258–2275; *HMA II*, lines: 2311–2333. This type of punishment was common in Aceh, as reported by European sources. See above pp. 55, 174.

[233] *HMD*, line: 2254; *HMA I*, line: 2275.

[234] *HMA I*, lines: 2569–2580; *HMD*, lines: 1201–1211; *HMA II*, lines: 3202–3220.

[235] In the narrative, Raja Raden expresses his commitment to Islam and Aceh rather than to his own brother and instead urges Iskandar Muda to attack Si-Ujut. See *HMD*, lines: 230–232; *HMA I*, lines: 251–253; *HMA II*, lines: 340–341.

case of Si-Ujut, should both be seen within the wider context of "inviting" non-Muslims to Islam before attacking, as suggested by jurists.[236] The question that should be raised at this point is: How would this view of *jihād* have been seen in the context of the actual military campaigns of Aceh in the seventeenth century?

A number of wars waged by the Acehnese are mentioned in the *Bustān*. The campaigns may be categorized into two kinds: those waged against other Muslim states in the region and those launched against the Portuguese in Melaka. Only two rulers were said to have launched *jihād* against the Portuguese, 'Alā' al-Dīn Ri'āyat Shāh (d. 1571) and Iskandar Muda (d. 1636).[237] Al-Rānīrī, however, does not offer any details on this issue. Nor does he mention any justification for the wars launched against other Muslim states in the region.

In order to understand the nature of Acehnese war and peace and Aceh's relations with its neighbors, we must consider the sixteenth century political context of the region. In the first place, the occupation of Melaka by the Portuguese in 1511 had a fundamental impact on the region's history. A center for trading activities, Melaka was replaced by several newly emerged Islamic states, such as Aceh, Banten, Japara and others. As Islam and trade went hand-in-hand in the history of the archipelago prior to the coming of the Portuguese, they also continued to play a dominant role after the coming of these European intruders. But the focus of the struggle shifted toward the Christian Portuguese. In general, the strong reaction of the people in the region was seen in two main areas: religion (Islam vs. Christianity), and trade (indigenous people vs. the Portuguese).

Similarly, the remarkable achievement of the Portuguese in world exploration, a tribute to their navigational skills, was the result of two important factors: trading and religion. These were the keys to the success of the Portuguese expansion. The crusading spirit they brought with them constituted a fundamental spiritual power for the success, especially against Muslim countries.[238] This is to be seen in their religious and social policies known as "*Parado*: relentless war against the Muslims, and friendship and toleration for the heathens."[239]

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[236] See note 225 above.

[237] al-Rānīrī, *Bustān*, pp. 31–35.

[238] J.H. Parry, *The Establishment of the European Hegemony, 1415–1715* (New York and Evanston: Harper Torchbooks, 1966), pp. 10–25.

[239] Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, vol. 1, bk. 1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 233.

To describe the connection between Portuguese colonialism and Christianity, it is sufficient to quote Laurence A. Noonan who writes:

> Few historians would deny that religion played a very significant part in the story of Portugal's colonial development; wherever the Portuguese went, their priests went with them; wherever they settled, the church rose alongside the fort or trading post, and the conversion to Christianity of the native people was regarded as a matter of rejoicing by the merchants as well as by the priests.[240]

This was also to be seen in Melaka, where Christian missionary activity was being carried on. Yet the strong reaction of the Muslim states in the region began to undermine the missionary effort. Their success in other places could not be repeated in the archipelago. There was no mass conversion in Melaka, for instance. Thus, for the Portuguese, Melaka only "became an administrative center for the church but not a great mission."[241] However, Melaka functioned as a stepping-stone for Christian missions in Celebes, the Moluccas, Ambon, Ternate, and even to the Philippines, China and Japan.[242]

Compared to other Muslim states in the Archipelago, Aceh was clearly the state that had the most military contact with the Portuguese. This may be attributed in the first place to the strategic location of Aceh with respect Indian Ocean trading routes. The involvement of Aceh in the commercial traffic in both the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea resulted in several military contacts with the Portuguese, who were strong in the Indian Ocean in the first half of the sixteenth century.[243] Secondly, the proximity of Aceh to Melaka, separated only by the Straits of Melaka, made the Portuguese a constant target of Acehnese military expeditions. As such, the Portuguese were seen by the Acehnese as their chief enemies in both "trade" and "religion."

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[240] Laurence A. Noonan, *The First Jesuit Mission in Malacca: A Study of the Use of the Portuguese Trading Centre as a Base for Christian Missionary Expansion During the Years 1545 to 1552* (Lisboa: Centro De Estudos Historicos Ultramarinos da Junta de Investigacoes Cientificas do Ultramar, 1954), pp. 1–2.

[241] Lach, *Asia*, vol. 1, bk. 1, p. 287. See also I.A. Macgregor, "Notes on the Portuguese in Malaya," *JMBRAS* 28, 2 (1955), p. 39.

[242] Lach, *Asia*, vol. 1, bk. 1, p. 286.

[243] C.R. Boxer, "A Note on the Portuguese Reactions to the Revival of the Red Sea Spice Trade and the Rice of Acheh, 1540–1600," *JSEAH* 10, 3 (1969), p. 416, Amirul Hadi, "Aceh and the Portuguese: A Study of the Struggle of Islam in Southeast Asia, 1500–1579" (M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1992), p. 76.

Lasting military conflict between Aceh and the Portuguese was evident throughout the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries, either in the form of minor military incidents or major expeditions against the Portuguese in Melaka. It is not our intention to repeat the discussion on this issue here, since it is already mentioned in Chapter One. What is important to underline here is that strong commitment shown by Aceh to drive the Portuguese out of Melaka during this period was evident. Two incidents took place in 1519 and 1528, when Portuguese ships were cast ashore in Acehnese territory due to bad weather. Tragically, all the ships' crew were killed.[244] The conquests of Daya in 1520, Pidie in 1521, and Pasai in 1524 should be seen predominantly as Acehnese efforts to expel the Portuguese from the region. More intense military campaigns were launched against Melaka a number of times, i.e., in 1537, 1547, 1568, 1570, 1573, 1575, and 1577. A failed attack, however, was launched by the Portuguese against Aceh in 1606.[245] The biggest military expedition ever taken was that of Iskandar Muda against Melaka in 1629. This attack, however, ended in failure.[246] The last Acehnese attack on Melaka occurred in a joint expedition with the Dutch in 1639. Again, they failed to achieve their objective.[247]

The question of what inspired Acehnese attitudes toward the Portuguese is a relevant one from our perspective. It can safely be suggested that Islam played a predominant role in this regard. Portuguese power was considered a serious threat to Islamic hegemony in the region. It was for this reason that Aceh sought military help from the Ottomans, which has led some scholars to see in this cooperation traces of an Islamic alliance. Military alliances were also established with other Muslim states in the region, especially during the 1560s and 1570s that, according to Anthony Reid, appear to have been based on Islam.[248]

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[244] See above, pp. 21–24.

[245] Denys Lombard, *Le sultanat d'Atjéh au tempts d'Iskandar Muda, 1607–1636* (Paris: École française d'Extreme-Orient, 1967), p. 96.

[246] Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," pp. 180–181; Richard O. Winstedt, *A History of Malaya* (Singapore: Marican & Sons, 1962), p. 86; C.R. Boxer, "The Achinese Attack on Malacca in 1629 as Described in Contemporary Portuguese Sources," in John Bastin and R. Roolvink, eds., *Malayan and Indonesian Studies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 105–121.

[247] Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, pp. 86–87.

[248] Anthony Reid, "Sixteenth Century Turkish Influence in Western Indonesia," *JSEAH* 10, 3 (1969), p. 408.

The Acehnese hatred for the Portuguese was also shown, for instance, in the direct involvement of Acehnese rulers, together with their family members, in their campaigns. This is supported by Acehnese reluctance to establish diplomatic and economic relations with them. It has been suggested that the Portuguese attack on Aceh in 1606 was prompted mainly by their jealousy of the English and the Dutch success in forming ties with Aceh and their anger at Aceh's refusal of their proposal to establish a trade company.[249] The different treatment shown to European merchants in Aceh was not without its reasons. In the first place, as Richard Winstedt suggests, both the English and the Dutch voyagers were tolerant of Islam. They also brought with them official letters from their rulers.[250] The other reason rested in the nature of their presence. While the coming of both the English and the Dutch, at least prior to the occupation of Melaka by the Ducth in 1641, was for economic enterprise, the presence of the Portuguese was intended for the purposes of colonialism, trade, and Christian missionary activity. This is why the military campaigns launched by both al-Qahhār and Iskandar Muda against the Portuguese are explicitly referred to by al-Rānīrī as *jihād*.

Trade interests were certainly not absent from Acehnese policy. The alliance arranged with Turkey for instance can also be said to have contained an economic element. Moreover, Aceh's direct rule over Barus and Pariaman, on the west coast of Sumatra, and Aru, on the east coast, meant the control of both political and economic power in the island. Perhaps, it was this commercial ambition that lay behind the initial military alliances established with various other Malay states, including Johor, Kedah, Pahang, and Perak, with the Portuguese.[251] When this failed to bear fruit, the Acehnese overran most of these states: Johor in 1613, Pahang in 1617 and Kedah in 1619.[252] This led Winstedt to suggest that "it was not religion however that prompted Acheh to fight but Portugal's insistence on monopolies and her sinking of Achinese vessels on their voyages to India and the Red Sea."[253]

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[249] Lombard, *Le sultanat*, p. 96.
[250] Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, p. 84.
[251] Ibid., p. 78.
[252] Djajadiningrat, "Critisch overzicht," pp. 179–180; Lombard, *Le sultanat*, pp. 91–94.
[253] Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, p. 81.

Winstedt's underestimation of the Islamic dimension in Acehnese military confrontations with the Portuguese needs to be revised. As a matter of fact, the presence of the Portuguese constituted a grave threat to Islamic hegemony, including religion, politics, and economy. Therefore, the reaction under an Islamic banner from Muslims in the region was seen as justified. Indeed, this was shown by the Muslim states in a number of ways, including isolating Melaka's port, paralyzing the Portuguese Christian missionary activities, and active Islamization. Yet what distinguished Aceh from other Muslim states in the region, particularly in the western archipelago, was its lasting commitment to waging *jihād* against the Portuguese. Aceh never in fact showed a willingness to make friends with the Portuguese, as other states frequently did. It is from this perspective that al-Rānīrī's insistence that Acehnese launched *jihād*, especially during the rule of both al-Qahhār and Iskandar Mudā, against the Portuguese unbelievers should be explored.

This was indeed a reflection of Islamic identity as understood by the Acehnese, as articulated in the *Hikayat Malem Dagang*. The identification of Si-Ujut and Raja Muda of Asahan as unbelievers worshipping the sun cannot historically be established. By the seventeenth century the whole of the Malay Peninsula and most of Sumatra were already Islamized. Both Johor and Asahan (Deli) after all were Muslim states. However, there is little doubt that it was their frequent alliance with the Portuguese that constituted the main reason behind the Acehnese tendency to depict them as unbelievers.

CHAPTER FIVE

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Having discussed the Islamic dimensions of the Acehnese state during the seventeenth century, this chapter will analyze the manner in which Islam came to be adopted and officially incorporated into various other states in Southeast Asia. The main purpose is to establish a comparative perspective from which Aceh's place in history can best be understood. For this purpose, two cases will be discussed: those of Melaka and Mataram.

Within the Southeast Asian world, Melaka and Mataram provide examples of how this process worked elsewhere than in Aceh. Both were states with different backgrounds attempting to merge an Islamic religious consciousness with established political traditions. Fifteenth century Melaka was a coastal sultanate originally inspired by the Buddhist Srīvijaya tradition. It might at first seem unwarranted to compare the earlier political culture of Melaka with that of seventeenth-century Aceh. Yet the influence of the Melaka sultanate upon the political development of the states in the Malay Peninsula extended well into the nineteenth century.[1] Mataram, on the other hand, founded at the end of the sixteenth century, was an inland Javanese sultanate and a direct descendant of the Hindu-Buddhist tradition of Majapahit. Again, it must be noted that this comparative analysis is by no means exhaustive, and touches only on those points that illuminate our understanding of the situation in Aceh.

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[1] See, for instance, Leonard Andaya, "The Structure of Power in 17th Century Johor," in Anthony Reid and Lance Castles, eds., *Pre-Colonial State Systems in Southeast Asia* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1979), pp. 1–11; Barbara W. Andaya, "The Nature of the State in Eighteenth Century Perak," in Reid and Castles, eds., *Pre-Colonial*, pp. 22–35. See also Barbara W. Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia* (Houndmills and London: The Macmillan, 1982), pp. 37, 44; Datuk Zainal Abidin bin Abdul Wahid, "Power and Authority in the Melaka Sultanate: The Traditional View," in Kernial Singh Sandhu and Paul Wheatley, eds., *Melaka: The Transformation of A Malay Capital, c. 1400–1980*, vol. 1 (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 69.

A. *Melaka: A Fifteenth-Century Coastal Sultanate*

The story of Melaka began when Parameswara, Prince of Palembang and former ruler of Singapore, founded a new city-kingdom in the early 1390s. It was a move that would transform this unimportant site into the most important entrepot of the archipelago throughout the fifteenth century. Traders from all over the region converged there.[2] There were several factors behind Melaka's rise to prominence, the first of these being its strategic location. In Fernand Braudel's words, "the town occupies an advantageous site on the straits which bear its name, lying on the maritime channel connecting the waters of the Indian Ocean to those of the China Sea on the edge of the Pacific."[3] Excellent location alone, however, was not enough to attract commerce. In a region where piracy was commonplace, Melaka's rulers had to ensure the safety of merchants using its port. This they did successfully by establishing a cordial relationship with China—so cordial that it took on the status of a vassal state.[4] This connection had a double benefit for Melaka: security and trade cooperation. The security of commercial traffic was also guaranteed by Melaka's rulers through an alliance with the feared *orang laut* (the sea people) who were thereby transformed from pirates into protectors of foreign vessels. In an area where sea travel was always at the mercy of monsoon winds, traders often had to wait for several months before they could set sail. In such cases, warehouses were badly needed to protect their goods from damage and theft. The state's first priority, therefore, was to create a safe environment where this could be successfully accomplished.[5]

Consequently, much of Melaka's success was due to its ability to provide efficient legal and administrative machinery that met the

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[2] Tome Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, vol. 2 (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1944), pp. 229–236, 268–269; Braz de Albuquerque, *The Commentaries of the Great Afonso Dalboquerque*, trans., ed. and annot. by Walter de Gray Birch, vol. 3 (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1880), pp. 71–77; Richard O. Winstedt, *A History of Malaya* (Singapore: Marican & Sons, 1962), pp. 44–46.

[3] Fernand Braudel, *The Perspective of the World: Civilization and Capitalism 15th–18th Century*, trans. by Sian Reynolds, vol. 3 (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), p. 524.

[4] W.P. Groeneveldt, ed., *Historical Notes on Indonesia and Malay Compiled from Chinese Sources* (Djakarta: Bhratara, 1960), p. 123; Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, pp. 47–48.

[5] George Cho and Martin W. Ward, "The Port of Melaka," in Sandhu and Wheatley, eds., *Melaka*, vol. 1, p. 624; Andaya and Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, p. 42.

demands of its growing trading activities. Four *shahbandars* (harbor-masters) were appointed to manage transactions at the port for each separate group of traders.[6] The most crucial aspect of this trade was Melaka's dual role "as the principal collecting centre for cloves from the Moluccas and the nutmeg and mace of the Banda Islands, and as an important redistributing centre for Indian textiles from Gujarat, Coromandel, Malabar and Bengal."[7]

By the early fifteenth century, Melaka emerged as a new and powerful kingdom due to the strength of its growing trade. The importance of trade, however, did not detract from its significance as a cultural center. An Islamic kingdom, Melaka played a key role both in strengthening Islam's institutional role and in spreading the religion to other parts of the archipelago.[8] The question that should be raised here is: What was the role played by Islam in Melaka's own political culture?

The Islamization of the state took place gradually. In the first place, Melaka had been founded not by a Muslim ruler, but by a Hindu-Buddhist Palembang prince (Parameswara) who converted to Islam only late in his reign and was married to the daughter of a Pasai ruler.[9] It has been suggested that his conversion and this

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[6] Pires, *The Suma*, vol. 2, p. 265; Andaya and Andaya, *The History of Malaysia*, p. 42.

[7] Andaya and Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, p. 43. See also P. Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese: Studies in the Historical Geography of the Malay Peninsula before A.D. 1500* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1961), pp. 311–320; M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz, *Asian Trade and European Influence* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), pp. 60–88.

[8] D.G.E. Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, 3rd ed. (New York: 'St. Martin's Press, 1962), p. 213; M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofsz, "Trade and Islam in the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago Prior to the Arrival of the Europeans," in D.S. Richards, ed., *Islam and the Trade of Asia: A Colloquium* (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1970), p. 148.

[9] The earliest possible date for the conversion of one of Melaka's rulers is still a debatable issue. R.O. Winstedt, basing himself on *The Suma of Tome Pires*, is of the opinion that Islam was adopted by its first ruler. C.H. Wake, however, suggests that it was its third ruler, Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh, who was the first convert. Regardless of whichever of these solutions is the correct one, it is apparent that Islam was gradually adopted by the state. The process reached its highest point in the reign of Muẓaffar Shāh (r. 1446–1456). For further discussion on this issue, see Pires, *The Suma*, vol. 2, pp. 241–242; Albuquerque, *The Commentaries*, vol. 3, p. 77; R.O. Winstedt, "The Malay Founder of Medieval Malacca," *BSOAS* 12, 3–4 (1948), pp. 726–729; idem, *The Malays: A Cultural History*, 4th ed. (London: Routledge & Kegal Paul, 1956), p. 34; Hall, *A History of South-East Asia*, pp. 208–210; G. Coedes, *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*, ed. by Walter F. Veela, trans. by Susan Brown Coning (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1968), pp. 245–246; C.H. Wake,

marriage were driven by both political and economic motives.[10] Whatever the actual reasons behind his policies, it is apparent that Parameswara, who later added the epithet "Iskandar Shāh" to his name, succeeded in converting his own people to Islam. This religious transformation subsequently led to the formation of political bonds with other Muslim powers in the region. This had a considerable economic impact since many Muslim traders, both from the Archipelago and other parts of the Islamic world, came to this new center to engage in trade.[11]

There is little doubt that the conversion of this first ruler, accordingly, led Melaka to take on the character of a "sultanate." The title *sulṭān* was adopted by its rulers virtually from the outset. Yet the term *kerajaan* was also applied to the new state, indicating that the highest office was still thought of as having some Hindu/Buddhist background. The sulṭān/raja represented the highest authority in Melaka's political system. What is important to highlight is how the authority of its rulers was formulated.

The first political priority of Melaka's ruler was to maintain both religious and political authority. He was the holder of the religiously-sanctioned titles "the deputy of God" and "the shadow of God on earth,"[12] whose significance is reflected in the dying injunctions of the Bendahara Paduka Raja (the prime minister) to his children, recorded in the *Sejarah Melayu*:

> O my children, never truck your religion for the attractions of this world. This world is not lasting, and life will always end with death. Do your duty (*kebaktian*) with all sincerity towards God Almighty and His Prophet, as well as towards your ruler (*raja*). The wise men (*ḥukamāʾ*) say: a just ruler is with the Prophet as two jewels joined in one ring. Moreover, the ruler is a deputy of God in this world, since he is *zill Allāh fī al-ʿālam* (shadow of God on earth). When you do your duty

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"Malacca's Early Kings and the Reception of Islam," in Colin Jack-Hinton, ed., *Papers on Early South-East Asia* (Singapore: The Journal of Southeast Asian History, 1964), pp. 104–128. See also Wake's latest article on this issue, "Melaka in the Fifteenth Century: Malay Historical Traditions and the Politics of Islamization," in Sandhu and Wheatley, eds., *Melaka*, vol. 1, pp. 128–161.

[10] Pires, *The Suma*, vol. 2, pp. 241–242; Wake, "Malacca's Early Kings," p. 122; idem, "Melaka in the Fifteenth Century," p. 144.

[11] Pires, *The Suma*, vol. 2, pp. 268–269; Meilink-Roelofsz, *AsianTrade*, pp. 66–88.

[12] *Sedjarah Melaju*, ed. by T.D. Situmorang and A. Teeuw (Djakarta: Djambatan, 1952), pp. 170, 204, 208, 268, 274; *Sejarah Melayu* or *Malay Annals*, ed. and trans. C.C. Brown (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 1, 111, 148.

> towards your ruler (*raja*), it is as if you do it towards God Almighty Himself. Therefore, do your duty towards God, His Prophet, and your ruler.[13]

This religiously-sanctioned authority was strengthened by the traditional Malay concept of political authority. It is interesting to follow how this concept was expressed. The *Sejarah Melayu* relates that the political right of Melaka's ruler was derived from a solemn "covenant" between Sri Tri Buana, descendant of a royal family, and Demang Lebar Daun, chief of the Palembang, representative of the common folk. Sri Tri Buana was the youngest of the three sons of Raja Chulan (a descendant of Iskandar Dhū al-Qarnayn) who, miraculously, appeared at the top of the hill known as Bukit Si-Guntang, Palembang. He was made king by the chief of the region, Demang Lebar Daun. Sri Tri Buana later married the daughter of this chief. But consent to the marriage was given by Demang Lebar Daun only on the condition that a covenant be made between them. The covenant stipulated that the ruler and his descendants were obliged never to humiliate their subjects, the descendants of Demang Lebar Daun. In return, Sri Tri Buana insisted that the chief's descendants should never be disloyal (*derhaka*) to his descendants, even if these latter should act in an oppressive and evil manner.[14] The *Sejarah Melayu* explains further:

> And that is why it has been granted by Almighty God to Malay rulers that they shall never put their subjects to shame, and that those subjects however gravely they offend shall never be bound or hanged or disgraced with evil words. If any ruler puts a single one of his subjects to shame, that shall be a sign that his kingdom will be destroyed by Almighty God. Similarly, it has been granted by Almighty God to Malay subjects that they shall never be disloyal or treacherous to their rulers, even if their rulers behave evilly or inflict injustice upon them.[15]

Indeed, the symbolism of this sacred covenant between the ruler and his subjects exerted a powerful influence upon the political development of the sultanate. This can be seen in the importance of two

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[13] *Sedjarah Melaju*, p. 208; *Malay Annals*, pp. 110–111. For this and the following translations from the *Sejarah Melayu* I have adapted Brown's English version in certain places.

[14] *Sedjarah Melaju*, pp. 4–26; *Malay Annals*, pp. 1–16.

[15] *Malay Annals*, p. 16; *Sedjarah Melaju*, pp. 26–27.

Malay traditional concepts: *daulat* and *derhaka*. To convey the meaning of these two concepts, it is best to quote Zainal Abidin bin Abdul Wahid's explanation:

> *Daulat* can be interpreted as sovereignty. The sovereignty of a Malay ruler is not merely a legal concept; it is a cultural and religious one as well. And it lies in the person of the ruler. The *daulat* endows him with many rights and privileges, places him above his society, beyond reproach and criticism. The *daulat* also entails unquestioning loyalty from his subject. *Derhaka* is a related concept to *daulat*. It could, for convenience, be translated as "disobedience" though, in actuality, *derhaka* has a wider meaning. If one were disobedient to his ruler, he could be regarded as *derhaka*, or if one were to rebel against him, he would be considered as *derhaka*, or if one's father were ordered to be killed by a sultan for unjustifiable reasons, one would still be regarded as having *derhaka*, if he were to try to keep his parent from being killed.[16]

The historic covenant between Sri Tri Buana and Demang Lebar Daun symbolized three working elements in the state, each of which was dependent upon the others. The first element was the ruler, represented by Sri Tri Buana. He was required to be just,[17] merciful, generous, and capable of imposing his laws.[18] Demang Lebar Daun

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[16] Zainal Abidin bin Abdul Wahid, "Sejarah Melayu," *Asian Studies* 4, 3 (1966), p. 446. See also his "Power and Authority," pp. 101–103. Leonard Andaya insists that this concept of power "placed the ruler in a sacred realm far above the common people and thus worthy of their veneration" (see his, "The Structure of Power in 17th Century Johor," p. 9). One of the best examples of this concept illustrated in the *Sejarah Melayu* is the story of the act of adultery committed by Sulṭān Maḥmūd Shāh with the wife of one of his officials, Tun Bayajit. The Sulṭān visited the former's wife when he was away. When Tun Bayajit learned the truth, he resolved to kill the Sulṭān. Yet he could not do so and said to the ruler: "So that is how you behave, Sulṭān Maḥmūd Shāh! Alas that you are my master! Were you not, assuredly I would drive this spear of mine through your heart." The Sulṭān then said to his servants who were angry at Bayajit's strong remarks: "What he [Tun Bayajit] said is right, I have done him a wrong for which by the law of God he could take my life. It is only because he is a Malay subject who refuses to waver in his loyalty that he behaves as he is behaving now." Indeed, as one Bendahara said: ". . . it is the custom of Malays never to be disloyal to their masters." However, the evil habits of a ruler were not always without consequences, according to the *Sejarah Melayu*, for it is God who punishes him by destroying his country. See the *Sedjarah Melaju*, pp. 27, 163, 211; *Malay Annals*, pp. 16, 89, 121.

[17] *Sedjarah Melayu*, p. 186; *Malay Annals*, p. 103.

[18] Liaw Yock Fang, ed., *Undang-Undang Melaka* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), article 1.3, p. 66. To avoid confusion in referring to this source, Fang's analysis will be referred to in its full form, while the main text will be indicated to as *UUM*.

symbolized the other two elements: 1) he represented the common people, and 2) as a chief of the Palembang, he served as a link between the ruler and the ruled. Honorable conduct, loyalty and mercy were the key elements of a just polity.[19] Yet even though they were required to render unquestioning loyalty to their rulers, the sulṭān's subjects occupied an essential position in the state. Both the *Undang-Undang Melaka* (the Laws of Melaka) and the *Sejarah Melayu* portray Malay subjects as *akar* (roots) and the rulers as *pohon* (trees). Consequently, the rulers were dependent upon their subjects, since "if there are no roots, the trees cannot stand." Thus, harmony between the two was required so that "roots and trees may stand firmly."[20]

Demang Lebar Daun symbolized, therefore, the official structure of state authority. As a chief of the Palembang, his office was the backbone of state administration. This status was further strengthened by his daughter's marriage to the ruler, a practice that is seen by John R. Bowen as "an alliance model."[21] The importance of the state apparatus is indeed stressed in Malay sources. The first task of the ruler was to ensure that the high dignitaries, who effectively ran the country, were well enough trained to ensure that "both the ruler and his subjects can live in peace and security."[22] The main state dignitaries consisted of the *bendahara* (the prime minister), the *temenggung* (the police chief), the *penghulu bendahari* (the treasurer), and the *shahbandar* (the harbor master). These were extremely powerful figures since the prosperity of the country depended on them. Therefore, the *Undang-Undang Melaka* insists that the strength, justice and wisdom of the ruler would not be felt without the existence of these officials and their good works. To reinforce this point, a comparison is made in which the officials are portrayed as *kayu* (firewood) and the rulers as *api* (fire), viz., "if there is no firewood, certainly

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[19] *UUM*, article 1.2.

[20] Ibid., article 43.2, p. 164; *Sedjarah Melaju*, p. 186; *Malay Annals*, p. 117. For the translations from the *Undang-Undang Melaka* I have mostly adapted Fang's English version.

[21] Marriage alliances between members of the royal family and that of the *bendahara* were a dominant feature of Melaka's state policy. Indeed, this served to strengthen the power alliance between the rulers and their officials. See John R. Bowen, "Cultural Models for Historical Genealogies: The Case of the Melaka Sultanate," in Sandhu and Wheatley, eds., *Melaka*, vol. 1, pp. 163–170.

[22] *UUM*, article 0.1, p. 63.

the fire cannot burn. And so also it is with the rulers."[23] Furthermore, consultation with the state officials was required, "for no ruler, however great his wisdom and understanding, shall prosper or succeed in doing justice unless he consults with those in authority under him."[24]

Melaka was indeed known for its well-established administrative machinery. The fact that the Portuguese adopted the administrative structure essentially unaltered when they took control of the city is sufficient testimony to its effectiveness.[25] The role played by the senior officials, particularly the *bendahara*, was one of the fundamental factors in maintaining Melaka's status as a prosperous entrepot. Tun Perak was the most renowned of the *bendaharas*: Winstedt describes him as "the brain of Malacca's imperialist policy in Malaya and Sumatra for more than three reigns."[26] During the early years of Sulṭān Maḥmūd Shāh's reign (r. 1488–1530), he, along with other senior officials, effectively ruled the country.[27] Tun Mutahir, who took the title *bendahara seri maharaja*, was another famous occupant of the post.[28] On this issue, R.J. Wilkinson writes that the *bendahara* "was far the greatest figure in the state, leading the army when he wished to serve in war and sitting as the highest Court of Justice when he wished to try a case. He was viceroy, king's deputy, grand vizier."[29]

Melaka was a dynastic state, although, as in the case of Aceh, there were no fixed rules that governed the succession. This could, on the one hand, lead to political instability. Yet, on the other, it allowed for political flexibility.[30] The general outlines of the rules are to be found in the *Sejarah Melayu*. In principle, the succession followed the male lineage within the royal family. But the specific right to succeed was not necessarily based on primogeniture. Both Sulṭān

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[23] Ibid., article 0.1, p. 63, article 43.2, pp. 62–164.

[24] *Malay Annals*, p. 117; *Sedjarah Melaju*, p. 186.

[25] F.J.A. Moorhead, *A History of Malaya and Her Neighbours*, vol. 1 (Kuala Lumpur: Longmans of Malaysia, 1961), p. 184; Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, p. 88; D.R. Sar Desai, "The Portuguese Administration in Malacca, 1511–1614," *JSEAH* 10, 3 (1969), pp. 508–509.

[26] Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, p. 51.

[27] Ibid., p. 5; Haji Buyong bin Haji Adil, *The History of Malacca During the Period of Malay Sultanate* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1974), p. 47.

[28] *Malay Annals*, p. 128.

[29] R.J. Wilkinson, "The Malacca Sultanate," *JMBRAS* 13, 1 (1935), p. 31.

[30] See also Kobkua Suwannathat-Pian, "Thrones, Claimants, Rulers and Rules: The Problem of Succession in the Sultanates," *JMBRAS* 66, 2 (1993), p. 27.

ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Riʿāyat Shāh (r. 1477–1488) and the last ruler of Melaka, Sulṭān Maḥmūd Shāh, were chosen by their fathers as successors, despite not being the first-born sons.[31] Furthermore, the son of a royal mother (*anak gahara*) did not always enjoy preference over his half-brother even if the latter's mother had been a commoner (*anak gundik*). Therefore, the son of a royal consort could easily become ruler, such as in the cases of Raja Ibrāhīm or Sulṭān Abū Shāhid (r. 1445–1446). On many occasions the sons of non-royal consorts happened to become rulers as well, as was the case with Muẓaffar Shāh (r. 1446–1456).[32] Perhaps Suwannathat-Pian is correct when he points to the role of Islam in this matter. He says "the Islamic teachings made no difference among the children of a man. If they were sons they were of equal status to the parental heritage. It would be hard to convince the Malay society to accept the absolute right of one son over the rest."[33]

Choosing the best candidate for the throne was the key factor in deciding the succession. This was arrived at either through the wish of a ruler on his death-bed, or through a consensus arrived at among state officials. Manṣūr Shāh (r. 1456–1477) withdrew his proposal to appoint his elder son Muḥammad as his successor due to the fact that Muḥammad had murdered the son of the *bendahara*. On the point of death, Manṣūr Shāh declared instead his resolve to appoint another son, ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Riʿāyat Shāh. His officials then gave the latter their allegiance.[34] It was later this same ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn who, on his deathbed, appointed his own young son Maḥmūd as his successor, a decision witnessed by several state officials. This did not, however, prevent the appointment from being opposed by his eldest son, Sulṭān Menawar of Kampar.[35]

The consent and support of state officials were necessary elements since these officials were the main players in the country's administration and politics. Their role even extended to installing a new ruler on the throne. The installation of Muẓaffar Shāh was achieved through a coup d'etat led by his uncle, Tun ʿAlī (the chief treasurer of Melaka), and supported by other state officials. The contempt felt

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[31] *Sedjarah Melaju*, pp. 113, 136, 185, 187; Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, pp. 55–56.
[32] Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, pp. 50–51, 55–56.
[33] Suwannathat-Pian, "Thrones, Claimants, Rulers and Rules," p. 5.
[34] *Sedjarah Melaju*, pp. 162–164, 185–187; *Malay Annals*, pp. 89–90; 103–104.
[35] *Sedjarah Melaju*, pp. 203–204; *Malay Annals*, pp. 116–117.

by state officials for Abū Shahīd, on the other hand, was due to his personal weakness. In running the country, he had effectively abdicated his real power to the cousin of his mother, Raja Rekan, who was not a Muslim. The support given by officials to Muẓaffar Shāh, who was in fact an *anak gundik*, was moreover indicative of a larger power struggle among the political elite: this was the ongoing sectarian power struggle between the Muslim faction at the court, represented by Muẓaffar's maternal clan of Tamil origin, and the non-Muslim faction represented by Abū Shahīd's maternal clan. Muẓaffar Shāh's success in winning power marked the beginning of an intensification of the Islamization of the court.[36]

The creation of a state bureaucracy and the delegation of much of the ruler's tasks to state officials[37] led to the emergence of a rigidly hierarchical state in which royal regulations and etiquette were established and closely watched. Both the *Sejarah Melayu* and the *Undang-Undang Melaka* maintain that Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh (r. 1424–1444) was the first to establish the tradition of directly appointing high-ranking officials and of insisting upon formal adherence to royal customs and tradition.[38]

Etiquette at the court was strictly observed. Homage was paid to the sovereign, first by the chief heralds and then by other senior officials. This hierarchical arrangement was also reflected when the ruler presided over his court. The *bendahara, penghulu bendahari, temenggung*, other ministers and senior officials were seated in the center of the audience hall. The princes sat in the galleries on either side of the room, while other junior officials took their places in accordance with their ranks. When a royal audience was held, the senior officials were seated on the left of the royal drum, whereas on the right side could be found the lower ranking officials.

State processions and etiquette in honor of foreign envoys were also fixed by tradition. A letter from a foreign nation had first to be sent to the palace before an envoy could pay homage to the ruler. On arrival, this letter was put on a tray and brought to the

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[36] Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, pp. 51–52.

[37] According to the *Undang-Undang Melaka*, the appointment of these officials by the ruler was essential: they would "act on his behalf so that he needs not concern himself with trivial matters." See *UUM*, article 0.1, p. 62.

[38] *Sedjarah Melaju*, p. 80; *Malay Annals*, p. 42; *UUM*, article 0.1, p. 64. See also Wilkinson, "The Malacca Sultanate," p. 29.

palace in a procession. The type of procession performed for this purpose would depend on the status of the country of the letter's origin. Therefore, a letter from a country of similar status, such as Pasai or Aru, was to be received by a procession with full state regalia led by a minister riding on an elephant. The procession was accompanied by a pair of white royal umbrellas and musical instruments. When the procession reached the palace, the chief herald delivered the letter to the sovereign. Smaller processions were conducted to honor the letter of a country deemed to be lower in status than Melaka. Yet even on these more humble occasions, they were still led by a minister who rode either on an elephant or a horse, followed by officials bearing white and yellow umbrellas and musicians providing accompaniment on drums and flutes.

As the leader of an Islamic nation, Melaka's ruler took part in Islamic rituals, but these were conducted in a traditional royal manner. A royal procession took place during the night of the twenty-seventh of Ramaḍān when the ruler left for the mosque to perform *ṣalāt al-tarāwīḥ* (the ritual prayer held during the nights of Ramaḍān). This departure was first preceded by his mat being carried on an elephant in procession to the mosque. Royal regalia and receptacles for betel nuts were also carried in the procession. The ruler, dressed in a Malay costume, departed for the mosque during the night and returned to his palace after performing the prayers. Another procession was held the next day to carry the ruler's turban to the mosque.

On the morning of the *hari raya* (both ʿĪd al-Fiṭr and ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā) a royal ceremony was held at the palace prior to the sovereign's departure for the mosque. This began with the *bendahara* and other senior officials presenting themselves at the palace. The chief treasurer then carried in the royal palanquin (*usungan*). By the time the palanquin arrived, all the officials would have been standing in accordance with their ranks facing a pavilion on the palace grounds. Drums were then beaten to seven different rhythms, following which the sovereign made his entrance on an elephant heading towards the pavilion. When he reached the latter, the *bendahara* welcomed him, while other officials remained seated on the ground. The ruler then dismounted from the elephant and mounted the palanquin which carried him to the mosque.

This led to another great procession. The first row consisted of royal musicians playing drums, trumpets and the *gong* drum. This

was followed by the herald and military officials armed with swords and spears. Then came the royal palanquin, guarded by two men carrying the state lances, one standing on the right and the other on the left of the palanquin. This latter was carried by several officials, such as the chief treasurer and the admiral. On those occasions when the sovereign rode an elephant, he was accompanied by the *temenggung*, who sat at the head of the elephant, and the admiral or the commander of the land forces, who were armed with swords and sat at the rear. The royal palanquin was followed by a group of high-ranking state officials, including the *bendahara*, the *qāḍīs* (the judges), the *faqīhs* (the jurists) and other senior officials.[39]

In short, all these protocols and ceremonies placed the ruler at the center, with every other aspect of the state either physically or symbolically revolving around him. This was clearly designed to reinforce the ruler's supreme authority. As a Muslim ruler who claimed religiously-sanctioned authority, he also performed religious rituals in a stately manner. Therefore, traditional state ceremonials and processions also included religious rituals that began and ended in the palace. This further heightened his status in comparison with his officials and subjects. The subjects, for instance, were not allowed to wear yellow-colored materials nor could their *keris* sheath or handle be made of gold or silver.[40] The hierarchical distinctions imposed by the Melaka sultanate were, therefore, expressed symbolically at every stage of these ceremonial functions, revealing the status and power of each official.[41]

Islamic identity was also a central aspect of political life. Great concern for Islam was shown by all rulers. Sulṭān Manṣūr Shāh in particular was known for his piety and grave concern for religion.[42] ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Riʿāyat Shāh was another ruler whose piety was recognized. Of this ruler Tome Pires writes that the Malays believed that he was "more devoted to the affairs of the mosque than to anything else . . ."[43]

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[39] *Sedjarah Melaju*, pp. 83–90; *Malay Annals*, pp. 44–49. This section of the *Annals* is also included in Ph. S. van Ronkel, ed., *ʿAdat Radja-Radja Melajoe* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1929), pp. 105–113.

[40] For details on these rules see *Sedjarah Melaju*, pp. 83–84; *Malay Annals*, pp. 44–45; *UUM*, articles 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2., pp. 65–68.

[41] This is in addition to various titles conferred by the ruler upon his officials. For the titles, see Ronkel, *ʿAdat Radja-Radja Melajoe*, pp. 95–98.

[42] *Sedjarah Melaju*, pp. 168–173; *Malay Annals*, pp. 90–96.

[43] Pires, *The Suma*, vol. 1, p. 251.

Though details on the role played by the *'ulamā'* in the state are scanty, there is reason to believe that they constituted an important part of the state bureaucracy. While the office of *shaykh al-Islām* did not officially exist in Melaka, there were two basic types of *'ulamā'* that enjoyed a prominent role in the state: the *ṣūfīs* and the *qāḍīs*. The *ṣūfīs* seem to have been the most important of the *'ulamā'*, and many became the teachers of rulers. The *Sejarah Melayu* tells of the coming of a *ṣūfī* known as Mawlānā Abū Bakr, who journeyed from Arabia to serve as mentor to Sulṭān Manṣūr Shāh.[44] The latter also studied sufism with both Mawlānā Sadr Jahan and Mawlānā Yūsuf, the former being the *qāḍī* of Melaka.[45] The role of these *ṣūfīs*, however, seems to have been limited to the field of religion. There is no indication that they had any official position in the state bureaucracy.

The only *'ulamā'* involved in state bureaucracy were actually the *qāḍīs* and the *faqīhs*. These religious scholars were among the state officials usually present at official occasions. Based on the use of the titles *qāḍī* and *faqīh*, it can safely be suggested that they occupied key posts in the Islamic court. Qāḍī Yūsuf was the chief Islamic judge in the state. Later, due to his interest in sufism and his assumption of the title *mawlānā* (our lord), he resigned from this office and appointed his own son, Qāḍī Menawar, as his successor,[46] signifying the hereditary nature of the office.

The question of how the *qāḍīs* actually functioned in Melaka is unclear. They were not the only judges in Melaka's judicial system, since other senior officials also acted as judges.[47] It would appear, however, that in cases involving Islamic law the *qāḍīs* had ultimate authority.

This leads us to the issue of *adat* and Islamic law in the state. Fifteenth-century Melaka was remarkable in that it already had a tradition of codified laws, known as "the laws of Melaka" (*Undang-Undang Melaka*). Such a level of sophistication cannot be said to have existed in seventeenth-century Aceh. Liaw Yock Fang, who has conducted a study on and prepared a critical edition of this text, insists that the *Undang-Undang Melaka* is in fact "a hybrid text." It is, he writes, "composed of several separate texts bound together as one

[44] *Sedjarah Melaju*, pp. 168–169; *Malay Annals*, p. 92.
[45] *Sedjarah Melaju*, pp. 169–170, 221, 271–272; *Malay Annals*, pp. 124–125, 146–147.
[46] *Sedjarah Melaju*, pp. 169–170; *Malay Annals*, p. 94.
[47] See *UUM*, articles 0.1, pp. 62–64, 9.1, pp. 76–78.

manuscript. It was copied and later recopied and although it undoubtedly came to be regarded as one text, the various component parts still clearly show themselves."[48] As such, this text consists of various aspects of the law, ranging from criminal, *adat* (customary), and maritime law to the royal penal code. Islamic law was, therefore, only one component of Melaka's judicial system. An exhaustive survey of the practice of both *adat* and Islamic law cannot be provided here. Only a few examples will be quoted so as to give a general idea of how both *adat* and Islamic law functioned.

Melaka's family law was generally Islamic in nature. In the area of *nikāḥ* (marriage), for instance, it was prescribed that a bride's having a *walī* (guardian) was a precondition for a marriage to be legally valid. The guardian might be her father, a grandfather, or a brother. Yet in cases where there was no guardian the *ḥākim* (judge) had the power to act as her *walī*.[49] Two witnesses were required for an *ʿaqd* (marriage contract).[50] Islamic prescriptions were also stipulated in the matters of *khiyār* (refusal) and *ṭalāq* (divorce).[51]

Criminal law on the other hand was predominantly indigenous or *adat*-based. It is interesting that the *Undang-Undang Melaka* prescribes the penalties for certain crimes from both *adat* and Islamic law perspectives, while at the same time stating that the former are to be preferred. For instance, in one case mentioned where the husband of an adulteress pursued her paramour into another village only to be killed himself by the village protector, the *Undang-Undang Melaka* states that "there shall be no litigation. This is based on the *adat* of the country." At the same time, the text acknowledges that "according to the law of God, he who kills shall be killed."[52] Yet in another case where someone committed murder without the consent of the ruler or high dignitaries,[53] the *Undang-Undang Melaka* insists that he

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[48] Fang, *Undang-Undang Melaka*, p. 31.

[49] For further details on this issue, see *UUM*, articles 25.1, 25.2, pp. 126–128. Cf. Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī b. Yūsuf al-Fīrūzābādī al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab fī Fiqh al-Imām al-Shāfiʿī*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1995), pp. 423–461.

[50] *UUM*, article 26, p. 128. See also al-Shīrāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, vol. 2, p. 436.

[51] *UUM*, articles 27, 28.1, pp. 130–132.

[52] Ibid., article 5.3, p. 70.

[53] It should be noted that, besides the ruler himself, there were very few high dignitaries who had the authority to impose the death penalty: these included the *bendahara* (the chief minister), the *temenggung* (the police chief), the *shahbandar* (the harbor master), and the *nakhoda* (the sea captain). See *UUM*, article, 9.1, pp. 76–78.

should be sentenced to death, in accordance with law of God, even if the killing was done under provocation or had extenuating circumstances.[54]

Another example where *adat* plays a predominant role is in the punishment for *zinā* (unlawful sexual intercourse). The *Undang-Undang Melaka* explicitly mentions the Islamic punishments prescribed for those who commit this offence.[55] Yet it insists that *adat* punishments are to be implemented. The cases cited are as follows:

> If a man seduces another's wife, and the husband comes to know about it and lodges a complaint with the judge, he (the seducer) shall be ordered by the judge to prostrate himself before the husband in public. If he is unwilling to prostrate himself, he shall be fined 10 1/4 *tahil*.[56] However, the penalty is left to the discretion of the judge. If he (the seducer) is slain by the husband, the latter shall be fined 5 1/4 *tahil*, because he (the seducer) has merely committed an act of seduction (and) should not be killed (by any one) except the high dignitaries who are allowed to kill him.
>
> If a man seduces someone's daughter, and the father comes to know about it, he (the seducer) shall be fined 2 1/4 *tahil* by the judge. If (the girl's father deems) a marriage is suitable, he shall be made to marry (the girl) and be required to defray the full expenses (incurred). Such is the law.
>
> Concerning the seduction of someone's (female) slave, he (the seducer) shall be fined five *emas*,[57] but this only applies if (he) has not had illicit intercourse with her. If he has deflowered her, the fine is ten *emas*.
>
> In like manner, a man who seizes a woman and then rapes her, shall be fined ten *emas*, because force has been used. Such is the punishment according to *kanun* law.
>
> A man is not to seize and use force against any person. If a man seizes a free woman and then rapes her, and the latter informs the judge, he (the offender) shall be summoned by the judge and ordered to marry her. If he refuses to marry (her), he shall be fined three *tahil* and one *paha*,[58] (and in addition) to pay a wedding-gift as is customary for a subject of the ruler. But according to the law of God, if he

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[54] Ibid., articles 5.1 and 5.2, pp. 68–71.

[55] Ibid., articles 40.1, 40.2, pp. 158–160.

[56] For the meaning of *tahil*, see above, p. 170, note 100.

[57] *Emas* or *mas* is a small coin that is worth of a quarter or fifth of a Spanish *real*. See Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450–1680*, vol. 2 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), p. 379.

[58] *Paha* is equivalent to a quarter-*tahil*. See R.J. Wilkinson, *A Malay-English Dictionary* (Romanised), pt. 2 (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd., 1959), p. 828; R.O. Winstedt, *An Unabridged Malay-English Dictionary*, 6th ed. (Kuala Lumpur & Singapore: Marican & Sons Ltd., 1965), p. 252.

> is a *muḥṣan*, he shall be stoned (to death). The meaning of *muḥṣan* is a woman who has a husband or in the case of a man, he who has a wife. This is the meaning of *muḥṣan*. In the case of a person who is non-*muḥṣan*, he shall be sentenced to the lash and be flogged eighty strokes. This is the law and there should be no deviation.[59]

These two examples clearly indicate the co-existence of both *adat* and Islamic law in the sultanate.

In sum, Melaka represents an early coastal Malay sultanate in which Islam came, over time, to play an increasingly important social and political role. The sultanate, however, maintained much of its indigenous beliefs and traditions. It is perhaps safe to suggest that because Islam was not part of the society from the start, local tradition exerted a powerful influence over religious practice. Indeed, it was only after the royal house converted to Islam that the religion was securely established within the local culture.

B. *Mataram: An Inland Javanese Sultanate*

Founded at around the end of the sixteenth century, Mataram was originally an unimportant inland power which, as M.C. Ricklefs puts it, "produced the most powerful and the longest of modern Javanese dynasties."[60] Even though there is a dearth of sources on the early history of this state, there is sufficient evidence to indicate the manner in which Islam was incorporated into its political culture. This discussion will focus primarily on the seventeenth century, although before doing so it will first be necessary to look back at the earlier sultanates in the region.

As is the case with other regions of the archipelago, the precise date of the coming of Islam to the vicinity of Mataram is unknown. Scholars such as H.J. de Graaf and Th.G.Th. Pigeaud suggest that Muslim communities may already have existed in east Java in the thirteenth century. It is most likely that these early communities would have been first established in coastal towns, such as Gresik and Surabaya, both of which were important Islamic centers with

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[59] Ibid., articles 12.1, 12.2, pp. 82–84.

[60] M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1300*, 2nd ed. (Houndmills and London: Macmillan, 1993), p. 40.

long histories. So early a date is in line with what we know of the foundation of the Pasai sultanate in Sumatra and the first appearance of Muslim traders in east Java. There is strong evidence that Majapahit, the great Hindu-Buddhist state, which controlled both the land and waters of most of the archipelago, had contact with Muslim traders in this period.[61] It is more than likely that this led to the conversion of some members of the Majapahit elite in the fourteenth century. The Muslim graveyards of Trawulan (1368–1369) and Tralaya (1376–1611), near the site of the Majapahit court, strongly support this thesis.[62]

The conversion of some of the Majapahit elite makes the legend of the marriage of the Muslim princess of Champa (d. 1448) to Brawijaya, the last ruler of Majapahit, easier to comprehend. According to the legend, the princess of Champa brought along two nephews, said to be the sons of a religious man of Arab origin. These nephews then proceeded to spread Islam in the region. The elder was known as the imām of the Gresik mosque, and the younger as Raden Rahmat of Ngampel (Surabaya).[63] Regardless of the historical accuracy of this account, there is every reason to believe that Islam had already established itself in Majapahit during its heyday in the fourteenth century. It may have been present even as early as the thirteenth century.[64] Indeed, the decline of Majapahit at the end of the fourteenth century coincided with the growing presence of Muslim communities in the region.

At the end of the fifteenth century, the dominant part played by Muslim traders in the commerce of the archipelago resulted in an increasing number of Muslim communities springing up along the coastal areas of Java around Demak, Kudus, Japara, Tuban, Gresik, and Surabaya. It was these Muslim traders who would become, in Graaf's words, "the Muslim middle class." In the course of time, they became powerful enough to kill or expel the non-Muslim local vassals of Majapahit.[65]

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[61] H.J. de Graaf and Th.G.Th. Pigeaud, *De eerste Moslimse vorstendommen op Java* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), pp. 19–21.
[62] Ricklefs, *A History*, pp. 4–5.
[63] Graaf and Pigeaud, *De eerste Moslimse*, pp. 21–24.
[64] Ibid., pp. 19–21.
[65] Ibid., pp. 26–28.

Demak emerged as the most powerful Islamic state on the northern coast of Java in the early sixteenth century. The founder of this sultanate is still unknown, although scholars suggest that he was most probably a Muslim of Chinese origin. His son and successor, Pangeran Sumangsang, was able to brush aside the non-Muslim local ruler and later establish his own administration. He was then succeeded by his son, Trenggana (r. 1504–1546), who is regarded as having been the real founder of Demak hegemony in Java. In 1527, he conquered Majapahit and Tuban. Then between 1529 and 1530 Madiun was taken and in the 1530s Pasuruan was occupied and Surabaya came under Demak suzerainty. Trenggana undertook a number of expeditions against other small kingdoms in east Java in the 1540s. He was apparently killed during an expedition against Panarukan in 1546. The rise of Demak thus solidified Islam as a political force since both Cirebon and Banten in West Java were founded under Demak tutelage.[66]

Trenggana was succeeded by Susuhunan Prawata (r. 1546–1561?). During his reign, however, the sultanate disintegrated. Nothing is known about Demak after the death of this last ruler, except that it became, in the later half of the sixteenth century, a province of the inland kingdom of Pajang, before later being taken over by Mataram. Yet the historical importance of Demak should not to be underestimated. In Javanese tradition, it was regarded as one of the main centers of Islam; indeed, the *walisongo* (nine saints) of Java are connected with its legendary mosque. Most importantly, the lineage of Mataram's rulers extending back to the pre-Islamic state of Majapahit can be traced through the rulers of Demak.[67]

The decline of Demak coincided with the rise of Pajang that, according to Javanese tradition, was conquered and Islamized by Sunan Kudus in the 1530s. Jaka Tingkir, the son-in-law of Sulṭān Trenggana of Demak, was appointed to rule this region as a vassal of Demak. Later on, however, he extended his power to central Java and ruled this area until 1587. At that time, Demak was considered

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[66] Ibid., pp. 34–43; Ricklefs, *A History*, pp. 36–37.

[67] Graaf and Pigeaud, *De eerste Moslimse*, pp. 28–33, 47–50, 78–83. See also James J. Fox, "Sunan Kalijaga and the Rise of Mataram," in Peter G. Riddell and Tony Street, eds., *Islam: Essays on Scripture, Thought and Society* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), pp. 187–218.

as a part of Pajang. The following year, Pajang itself was annexed by the new-rising Mataram.[68]

Mataram was another inland district adjacent to Pajang. According to Javanese legend, this area was under the rule of a certain Kyai Gede Pamanahan, who had earlier been a captain in the service of the sulṭān of Pajang in the middle of the sixteenth century. When he died in 1584, his son, Panembahan Senapati Inggala (r. 1584–1601), took control and began an imperial expansion. Campaigning in central Java, he conquered Pajang and Demak in 1587 and 1588, respectively, and Japara in 1599. His ambition to expand Mataram's hegemony to the east, however, was not entirely successful. Although he managed to conquer Madiun and Kediri in 1591, Senapati's ambition to expand his power further east was checked by the powerful state of Surabaya. Two unsuccessful attacks on Tuban, on the north coast, were launched in 1598 and 1599. A further unsuccessful attack on Banten, West Java, was also attempted in 1597.[69]

Senapati (d. 1601) was succeeded by his younger son, Panembahan Seda-ing-Krapyak (r. 1601–1613). Not much progress was made by this ruler in expanding Mataram hegemony. Continuous assaults on Surabaya were made from 1610 to 1613 that resulted only in the destruction of some rice crops. In the meantime, Krapyak was forced to confront a number of rebellions, including two by his half-brothers. The first of these revolts was led by Pangeran Puger, who began an uprising in 1602 that lasted until his defeat in 1605. This was followed by a military revolt launched by his other half-brother, Pangeran Jaga Raga, the governor of Panaraga, in 1608. This rebellion was successfully defeated in the same year. Kediri also rose in rebellion in the same year and was defeated.[70]

With the death of Krapyak in 1613, Mataram came under the administration of a strong ruler, Sulṭān Agung (r. 1613–1646). Ricklefs portrays him as "the greatest of Mataram's rulers" and "the greatest of Java's warrior kings."[71] This ambitious ruler showed his military capability by launching successful military actions against several

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[68] Graaf and Pigeaud, *De eerste Moslimse*, pp. 211–219; Ricklefs, *A History*, pp. 39–40.

[69] Ibid., pp. 220–234.

[70] H.J. de Graaf, *De regering van Sultan Agung, vorst van Mataram, 1613–1646, en die van zijn voorganger Panembahan Seda-ing-Krapyak, 1601–1613* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1958), pp. 1–13.

[71] Ricklefs, *A History*, p. 43.

central and east Javanese kingdoms during the 1610s. Complete control of the region would come with his conquest of Madura and Surabaya between 1624 and 1625. However, his ambition to control all of Java was hampered by the growing presence of the VOC (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, or Dutch East India Company) which had conquered Batavia in 1619. Mataram-VOC relations were delicate: in fact Mataram launched two unsuccessful military expeditions against the VOC in 1628 and the other in 1629. After these failures there was an attempt at maintaining a peaceful coexistence. Nevertheless, there was unrest in later years in the two important religious centers of Tembayat (central Java) and Giri (east Java). Both rebellions were finally brought to heel, the first in 1630 and the latter in 1636.[72]

The death of Agung in 1646 marked the end of Mataram's period of greatest power. The two rulers after Agung, Susuhunan Amangkurat I (r. 1646–1677) and Susuhunan Amangkurat II (r. 1677–1703), faced a serious problem in rebellions that threatened the disintegration of the country. Indeed, this political turmoil encouraged the involvement of the VOC in the Mataram political and military landscape.[73]

In brief, the rise of Mataram as an Islamic kingdom was the political expression of the rise of Islam in east Java around the thirteenth century and more specifically in Majapahit during the fourteenth century. This was strengthened by the growing presence of Muslim traders in the main coastal towns of northern and eastern Java. This new class of notables would later become more powerful and take regional control. It seems valid to regard imperial Mataram as the final expression of this sequence of development, starting from predecessor states, such as Demak and Pajang. Unlike Demak, however, Mataram concentrated on expanding towards the interior, a policy that had far reaching effects not only on the nature of the state, but also on center-periphery relations. It was during the formation of the Mataram state that Islam became articulated as a political ideal within the Javanese vernacular. For our purpose, it is necessary to inquire how this came about.

The idea of kingship in Mataram should be seen in the first place from the perspective of the traditional Javanese belief in the magico-religious nature of this office that, in spite of later Islamic influence,

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[72] Graaf, *De regering*, pp. 26–98, 127–163, 173–222; Ricklefs, *A History*, pp. 43–46.
[73] See Ricklefs, *A History*, pp. 72–85.

remained constant. This concept, as Soemarsaid Moertono insists, was to "play the crucial role not only in justifying and strengthening the power of the monarch but also in explaining the roles of the ruler and ruled as well as the relationship between the king and his subjects."[74] In Java, where the concept of the division of the cosmos into a micro (the world of man) and a macro aspect (the suprahuman world) was familiar,[75] the state was seen as a reflection of the cosmic order. Thus, the state had to be organized so as to embody cosmic harmony. There are two points that should be mentioned at this juncture: first, there was a necessary interaction between macro- and micro-cosmos; and second, there was a parallelism that existed between the two.[76] In this context, the ruler was placed at the center of the state where his status was more than merely that of a representative of God; he was a divine incarnation.[77] It was on the basis of this sublime status that his absolute right to rule was understood. Therefore, "the concept of the king as the center of the state from whom all power and authority emanate, around whom all activities of the state are concentrated, is then perfectly in harmony with the organizational structure of the rule of the universe, at least as man thought it to be."[78]

This belief seems to have been interrupted with the coming of Islam, yet it by no means disappeared. Indeed, the God-king identification is not in accordance with Islamic teaching, since in this religion the ruler is considered a *khalīfat Allāh* (deputy of God) on earth. But the need for Islamic legitimacy had only a limited impact on Javanese political culture during the seventeenth century. The two predecessors of Sulṭān Agung did not hold Islamic titles, but merely retained the Javanese title of *panembahan*, which means a person who has a high rank and spiritual knowledge.[79] Later on (1624)

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[74] Soemarsaid Moertono, *State and Statecraft in Old Java: A Study of the Later Mataram Period, 16th to 19th Century*, revised ed. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, 1981), p. 2.

[75] See R. Heine-Geldern, "Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia," *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 2 (1942), pp. 15–30.

[76] Moertono, *State and Statecraft*, p. 27.

[77] See Willem Stutterheim, "The Meaning of the Hindu-Javanese *caṇḍi*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 51 (1931), pp. 1–15; Heine-Geldern, "Conceptions of State," pp. 22–27.

[78] Moertono, *State and Statecraft*, p. 5.

[79] The term originally derives from the word "sembah," which means an act of homage. See Moertono, *State and Statecraft*, pp. 34, 163.

Sulṭān Agung assumed the title *susuhunan ngalaga Mataram*.[80] *Susuhunan* derives from *sunan*, a Javanese title that simply means "he who is honored."[81] The title, however, was to have far reaching implications. In the first place, it was the title used by the famous *walis* (saints) of Java, a fact which suggests that it had a religious significance. Yet as Graaf points out, the title was meant to convey a deeper message. He writes:

> This [title] Susuhunan no doubt denoted that its bearer, ornamented with the highest conceivable sacred title, must also himself be God's messenger. His descendants -and this would be shown by custom- would also be called Susuhunan and their beneficent influence would spread over the realm. With this, the divinity of the Hindu-Javanese kings revived, although under a new name and in a different form.[82]

This is supported by the fact that, even though Sulṭān Agung assumed the title *sulṭān* in 1641 with his full name given as Sulṭān Agung ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad Mawlānā Mataramī,[83] his successors continued to prefer the title *susuhunan* instead.[84]

This dual loyalty can be explained further as being due to the fact that authority is seen as derived both from a divine source (Islam) and local tradition (Javanese belief). In the first place, the role played by Islamic religious figures, in Java known as *walis* (saints), was fundamental in providing religious justification for the Mataram rulers, especially in the early years of the dynasty. The idea that the religious legitimacy of the monarch derives from the *walis* is a common theme in Javanese literature, especially in the *Babad Tanah Jawi*. When Raden Patah, the first ruler of Demak, attacked Majapahit,

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[80] Graaf, *De regering*, pp. 127–129; Moertono, *State and Statecraft*, p. 34.

[81] Moertono, *State and Statecraft*, p. 34.

[82] H.J. de Graaf, "Titels en namen van Javaanse vorsten en groten uit de 16e en 17e eeuw," *BKI* 109 (1953), p. 77.

[83] Graaf, *De regering*, pp. 264–268.

[84] The much more popular Islamic title *sulṭān* was assumed during the seventeenth century only by Sulṭān Agung. It was only later (at the end of the eighteenth century in fact), when the Mataram court was divided between that of Yogyakarta and Surakarta, that the title began to be constantly employed by the rulers of the Yogyakarta sultanate. In the meantime, the rulers of Surakarta used the title *susuhunan*. See Moertono, *State and Statecraft*, p. 29. The title *khalīfat Allāh* was unknown in seventeenth century Mataram. It was used only later by Amangkurat IV (r. 1719–1724) who assumed the title *prabu mangku-rat senapati ingalaga ngabdu-Rahman sayidin panatagama kalipatullah*. See C. Lekkerkerker, *Land en volk van Java* (Groningen-Batavia: J.B. Wolter's Uitgevers-Maatschappij, 1938), p. 339.

Sunan Ampel-Delta prophesied that he would become the future ruler of the latter kingdom. Yet he warned that before Raden Patah's ascendance to power, another *wali*, Sunan Giri, must reign first for forty days in order to purge the kingdom of its non-Islamic features. Once this was done Raden Patah began his rule over the whole of Java by establishing his court at Demak and taking the title *senapati jimbun ngabdur Rahman panembahan Palembang saidin panatagama*.[85]

A similar situation is also to be found in the case of Mataram. Sunan Kalijaga emerged as the main religious figure in this kingdom not only by foretelling its rise as regional power but also due to his role as a spiritual patron and protector. Kalijaga had earlier predicted that the descendants of Pamanahan, the captain of Mataram under Pajang, were to enforce God's will over all Java. This point was also prophesied by Sunan Giri. Later, his son, Senapati, was to receive Sunan Kalijaga's council and advice during his campaign to establish an autonomous state. The importance of Kalijaga's religious support for the house of Mataram is evident in the fact that his gifts to the dynasty, known as the *anta kusuma* and *kyai gundil*, later became part of the royal regalia of Mataram.[86] Two *kerises* (daggers) amongst the regalia were also said to have been made of Sunan Bonang's iron staff.[87] The religious support for the house of Mataram was also expressed in Sunan Giri's prophesy that Senapati's descendants were to become the rulers of Java. Even the conquest of Giri by Mataram was foretold.[88]

Interestingly, this Islamic religious legitimation of Mataram's rule was also supported by a pre-Islamic Javanese indigenous belief. The Goddess of the Southern Ocean, known as Nyai Lara Kidul, was

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[85] *Babad Tanah Jawi*, trans. by Sudibjo Z.H. (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, Proyek Penerbitan Buku Sastra Indonesia dan Daerah, 1980), pp. 40–45.

[86] This historic *anta kusuma* contained a powerful religious message since it linked the house of Mataram to that of the Prophet. Being a packet wrapped in a goat's skin containing a prayer mat and a shawl from the Prophet, it was originally a gift received by Sunan Kalijaga in the mosque of Demak and was believed to have come down from heaven. After receiving this gift, Sunan Kalijaga fasted for forty days and then sewed the goat's skin; this later came to be known as *anta kusuma*. The *Babad Tanah Jawi* lays great stress on the theory that the *anta kusuma* was destined to become the royal regalia of Mataram and was to be worn by the rulers of Mataram at the time of their accession to power and during war. See *Babad Tanah Jawi*, pp. 46, 138–139.

[87] See *Babad Tanah Jawi*, pp. 46–47.

[88] Ibid., pp. 85–88, 92–96, 132–133.

also appealed to in justification of Mataram's bid for power. Senapati is said to have met this underwater queen who foretold that his descendants would become rulers of Java. He then fell in love with and eventually married her. Senapati followed Lara Kidul to her sea palace, where she instructed him the art of governing and promised spiritual support for this future king. After three days of union in the depths of the ocean, Senapati returned to the shore where he met Sunan Kalijaga who was deep in prayer. This *wali* then instructed Senapati to begin the task of establishing a kingdom.[89]

Belief in the Goddess of the Southern Ocean as king-maker and spiritual protector for Javanese rulers was widespread during the Majapahit period.[90] What is striking to find is that this belief, which has survived even until today, was also adopted by the more Islamic-minded ruler of Mataram, Sulṭān Agung, who was also said to have taken Nyai Lara Kidul as his bride, often visiting her in her underwater palace.[91] It is even suggested that the cult of Lara Kidul in Mataram began to be elaborated during the reign of this ruler.[92] Indeed, the importance of the cult of Lara Kidul demonstrates "the Mataram dynasty's ambivalence towards Islam and indigenous Javanese beliefs,"[93] and reveals how this inland Javanese state tried to maintain a balance between the old Javanese belief system and Islam.

In view of the belief that the state was a replica of the cosmic order, the ruler was regarded as the only medium linking the micro-cosmos (the world of man) with the macro-cosmos (the supra-human). Thus, the ruler was Allah's *warana*,[94] signifying that he was not only a "deputy of God" but also "His screen," the screen "through which man must pass to reach God and, conversely, through which God must pass to reach man."[95] This undivided sacro-political power led to the ruler being described as *ratu pandita* (the sage king) and *ratu gung banatara* (the great divine king).[96]

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[89] Ibid., pp. 104–107. See also Sir Th. Stanford Raffles, *The History of Java*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (London: John Murray, 1830), p. 157.

[90] Th.G.Th. Pigeaud, *Java in the Fourteenth Century*, vol. 4 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), pp. 211, 319, 483.

[91] *Babad Tanah Jawi*, p. 182.

[92] Roy E. Jordaan, "The Mystery of Nyai Lara Kidul, Goddess of the Southern Ocean," *Archipel* 28 (1984), p. 100.

[93] Ricklefs, *A History*, p. 41.

[94] *Babad Tanah Jawi*, p. 341.

[95] Moertono, *State and Statecraft*, p. 35.

[96] Ibid., pp. 35–36. These titles were no doubt meant to suggest the titles given

This, accordingly, led to the belief that the king was the "protector" of the state and was thus invested with absolute power. He was beyond the reach of common people. While this did not prevent him from delegating affairs of state to his officials, he was nevertheless solely responsible for maintaining order in the country.[97] Consequently, the state notables, led by *patih* (the prime minister), played an important role as executors of the ruler's power.[98] Thus, Amangkurat I's destruction of the consensus of notables was damaging not only to his own rule but also to the integrity of the state itself.[99]

The decision to place the ruler at the center and pinnacle of the state hierarchy and to create a bureaucracy resulted in the political stratification of the state. This hierarchy can best be represented by reference to the concept of *kawula-gusti* (servant and master) relations. This concept in turn derives from the Javanese mystical belief in the ultimate "union" (*manunggal*) of man with God, which was also applied to the unity of the ruler and his subjects. Yet, "despite the common bond," Moertono writes, "neither servant nor master is allowed to transgress the formal lines of the social hierarchy, apparent in birth or rank and perceptible in the many rules governing the etiquette of wearing apparel, use of language . . ., the use of color or the paying of homage."[100]

Mataram was a dynastic state, in which royal descent was the basis for legitimate rule. Indeed, all Mataram's rulers during the seventeenth century came from the same lineage, in spite of the power struggles that took place at the end of that period. But, what is important to notice here is that Mataram claimed to be the heir of Majapahit's sovereignty through Demak and Pajang. This was based on the concept that "continuity" in lineage is the only legitimation of rule.[101] Therefore, when royal blood could not be linked to previous rulers, various devices were created to prove the continuity. Among the most important were intermarriage and adoption.[102]

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to Sunan Giri in the *Babad Tanah Jawi* as *Raja Pandita*. See *Babad Tanah Jawi*, pp. 92–93.

[97] Moertono, *State and Statecraft*, pp. 4–5, 35–39.

[98] Graaf, *De regering*, pp. 116–120.

[99] Riklefs, *A History*, pp. 72–76.

[100] Moertono, *State and Statecraft*, p. 15.

[101] Ibid., pp. 52–53.

[102] For further discussion on this issue from the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, see Fox, "Sunan Kalijaga and the Rise of Mataram," pp. 187–218.

Even though there is little information available concerning the role of the state in promoting Islamic religious practice during this period,[103] its involvement in creating the social conditions conducive to the propagation of the faith is obvious. Besides constructing a new palace in 1625, for instance, Sulṭān Agung also built a new great mosque in the city. Royal celebrations and processions known as *garebeks* were conducted on several religious occasions, such as the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet and on major holy days such as ʿĪd al-Fiṭr and ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā.[104] Such rituals publicly identified the state with Islam. Given this fact, we might ask what the role of the *ʿulamā'* was in all this.

Looking at the archipelago as a whole, it seems to have been only in Java, and especially in the early years of Islam's introduction in the region, that religious and political power went hand in hand. Ngampel Delta in Surabaya was known for its function as a religious site.[105] Giri/Gresik was famous as a religious and political center. After the fall of Surabaya as the last non-Muslim state in Java, the town rose to power once again under the rule of Sunan Giri around 1535. It was from this powerful religious and political center that Islam spread to Borneo, Celebes, Lombok, the Moluccas and Ternate.[106] Sunan Kudus, who led the attack on Majapahit in 1527, established a dynasty of *ʿulamā'* that ruled the holy city of Kudus until it came under Mataram suzerainty in the 1590s.[107] Also in west Java, the *ʿālim* Sunan Gunung Jati founded the sultanate of Banten around 1525. Two years later, he conquered Sunda Kalapa, the second main port of Pajajaran, which he renamed later as Jayakarta (now Jakarta). Leaving Banten to his son to rule, this *ʿālim* moved to Cirebon in the 1550s, and died there in 1570.[108]

Thus, the political use of Islam predates the establishment of Mataram. Islam seems to have been adopted by the founders and

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[103] The more apparent involvement of the state in the Islamization process occurred during the reign of Pakubuwana II (r. 1726–1749). This topic has been discussed in detail in M.C. Ricklefs, "Islam and the Reign of Pakubuwana II, 1726–49," in Riddell and Street, eds., *Islam*, pp. 237–252; and in his *The Seen and Unseen Worlds in Java, 1726–1749: History, Literature and Islam in the Court of Pakubuwana II* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998).

[104] Graaf, *De regering*, pp. 113–116.

[105] Graaf and Pigeaud, *De eerste Moslimse*, pp. 19–21.

[106] Ibid., pp. 137–153.

[107] Ibid., pp. 92–102.

[108] Ibid., pp. 108–116.

early rulers of the state as a legacy of this newly established political dynamic. The rulers claimed authority as an extension of the spiritual guidance of the great Javanese *walis*. However, it was against these powerful religious centers that the rulers of Mataram later turned their military power. For them, the religio-political influence of these centers was seen as a serious threat to Mataram's ambition to establish its hegemony in Java. For this reason, the holy site of Kudus was conquered by Senapati in 1590. Led by its religious leaders, Tembayat (in central Java) rebelled against the rule of Sulṭān Agung in 1630, only to be defeated in the same year by the latter, who effectively massacred his opponents. It was not until 1633 that this ruler performed a pilgrimage to this holy site. There he erected an ornamental gate over the grave-site of the Wali Sunan Bayat. This act may have signified both an intensification of his religious commitment[109] and a diplomatic gesture designed to ease spiritual and political opposition.[110] The independence of Giri likewise came to an end after its conquest by Agung's forces in 1636.[111] With the conquest of these religio-political centers Mataram became the sole power in central and east Java and thus claimed both spiritual and temporal authority.

The opposition shown by these important religious centers to the newly established central authority can be seen in their reluctance to recognize the predominance of Mataram in the religious sphere and to some extent even in the political as well. Yet this by no means implied that the state lacked religious support. The Islamic dimension of the state can best be described as having been embodied in the *'ulamā'*, who wielded considerable religious influence in the palace. The state was always in need of religious scholars who would serve not only the ruler's need for divine guidance but also to ensure the religious administration of the state. Therefore, when Senapati appointed Pangeran Benawa as his governor in Pajang, he advised him to appoint three officials as his advisors: the first was a *pandita* (sage) whom he could consult in matters of governance; the second was an astrologer who would foresee what was yet to come; and finally an *ahli tapa* (ascetic) who would act as his mentor in

[109] Graaf, *De regering*, pp. 197–204.
[110] Ricklefs, *A History*, p. 46.
[111] Graaf, *De regering*, pp. 205–222.

magic.[112] Further details as to the respective roles of these officials in Mataram are not known, especially that of the *pandita.*

The religious administration of the country was overseen by a *panghulu*, who can be described as both a religious scholar and state official. A separate hierarchy for this position was established. The highest-ranking *panghulu*, known as *panghulu gede*, served in the capital.[113] The lowest level *panghulu* could be found in the villages. This institution had a wide mandate. Raffles points out that the *panghulu* was not only in charge of religious matters, such as marriage, divorce and inheritance, but also in "reminding the villagers of the proper season for the cultivation of the lands."[114]

In addition to performing administrative functions and acting as the "high priest" of the mosque, the *panghulu* was also the judge in charge of the religious court. According to Raffles, there were two courts of justice active in Java during this period: the Islamic court, headed by the *panghulu*, and the secular one, presided over by the *jaksa* (judicial civil servant).[115] Following Islamic prescriptions, the Islamic court dealt mainly with issues pertaining to capital offenses, divorces, contracts and inheritance. This court was held on the *serambi* (verandah) of the mosque. The court overseen by the *jaksa* had jurisdiction over issues pertaining to thefts, robberies and other lesser crimes. This court referred to customary law as its main source, although the division of courts and jurisdictions reveals the coexistence of both Islamic and customary law. There was also another source of law available, i.e., the discretionary laws made by the sovereign.[116] Lack of information pertaining to these issues, however, hampers our efforts at further elaboration.

C. *A Comparative Note*

All the kingdoms discussed above deserve to be labeled as Islamic states in their own right, since Islam played a greater or lesser role

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[112] *Babad Tanah Jawi*, pp. 128–129.

[113] Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Pengantar Sejarah Indonesia Baru: 1500–1900*, vol. 1 (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1987), p. 55.

[114] Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 2, pp. 3–4.

[115] J. Gonda, *Sanskrit in Indonesia*, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1973), p. 639.

[116] Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 1, pp. 308–313.

in their political life. In view of this range of implementation, it is important to highlight both the differences and the common beliefs and practices among these three Muslim states, i.e., Aceh, Melaka and Mataram.

In the first place, all these states placed their rulers at the center and pinnacle of the state hierarchy. This was manifested in various ways. Firstly, relations between the ruler and the ruled were clearly defined. In all these states subjects were in fact seen as an essential element in the hierarchy. So important were the subjects to the state in Melaka that they were described as the *akar* (roots) on which the *pohon* (tree) of state was founded. In Mataram, ruler-subject relations were manifested in the concept of the *kawula-gusti* relationship, in which the unity of ruler and subjects was stressed. They were united but at the same time were distinct. This concept was also symbolized, for example, in the two parts of the *keris* (a dagger), i.e., the scabbard and the blade. The former represented the people and the latter the ruler. One was incomplete without the other. This also symbolized the interdependency between the two, as the blade needs the scabbard to protect it from damage, while the scabbard needs the blade to save it from theft and loss.[117] A similar concept was also articulated in Aceh.

However, state officials or notables, who were given executive power as an extension of the sovereign's rule, acted as the intermediaries between the ruler and his subjects. Indeed, in each of these states they were the backbone of the country's administrative machinery; it was upon them that the prosperity of the nation depended. They were given titles in accordance with their positions, signifying their ranks in the state hierarchy. In many instances the officials became so strong that they frequently became the main players in both overthrowing and installing a ruler. This was particularly true of Melaka and Aceh, whereas seventeenth-century Mataram seems to have proven the exception. Yet, as we have already pointed out, the role of the notables there was so important that Amangkurat I's policy of undermining their consensus became one of the fundamental reasons for the disintegration of the country.[118] The fate of these officials, however, was ultimately in the hands of their rulers,

[117] Moertono, *State and Statecraft*, pp. 21–22.
[118] Ricklefs, *A History*, p. 70.

especially when the latter were at the height of their power. Therefore, the strong rule of both al-Mukammil and Iskandar Muda of Aceh led to the destruction of the old notables and their replacement with a new generation. A similar situation also obtained during the rule of Sulṭān Agung of Mataram,[119] while in Melaka we find Maḥmūd Shāh, the last of his line, killing his famous *bendahara* along with all his family members due to false reports of a political conspiracy.

The concept of placing the ruler at the pinnacle of the social and political hierarchy was also expressed in royal etiquette and ceremonies. Royal etiquette was carefully established and closely watched. Breaking these rules was considered a grave offense and punishable by a serious penalty. The rules dealt not only with audiences with the ruler, but also with the ruler's belongings, privileges and prohibitions. State ceremonies also signified the ruler's central position in the state, the extent of his power, the grandeur of his kingdom and even the state hierarchy. This imperial character of the state was even demonstrated in Islamic ceremonies wherein the ruler, along with all his officials, soldiers, servants and even royal insignia, was involved. In this context the religious rituals and ceremonies were mixed with the traditional royal protocols for which the palace served as pivot. This, accordingly, symbolized the ruler's assertion of his identity as a Muslim ruler. With certain variations, these phenomena are observable in the cases of Melaka, Mataram and Aceh.

Perhaps the most fundamental comparison that can be made between these states is the issue of the authority claimed by the ruler. It is obvious that all the rulers of these states claimed to have possessed both political and religious authority. Nevertheless, some substantial differences in approach need to be highlighted.

We begin this point with the concept of authority as articulated in Melaka in the fifteenth century. In this state, royal descent constituted the main basis for the right to rule. The miraculous appearance of Sri Tri Buana at the top of Bukit Siguntang in Palembang, Srīvijaya, marked the beginning of the story of the foundation of Melaka. In Malay tradition, he is seen as the descendant of the Muslim legendary figure Iskandar Dhū al-Qarnayn (Alexander the Great). This is the royal ancestry that formed the basis for his claim to rule the Muslim state of Melaka, and its Islamic aspect was clearly

[119] Ibid., pp. 44–45.

essential to the claim of authority made by Melaka in its early years as a Muslim state.

However, the extension of the royal lineage provided in the *Sejarah Melayu* back to Iskandar Dhū al-Qarnayn apparently decreases in importance when the focus switches to Palembang. The coming of Sri Tri Buana to Palembang and the recognition by its ruler at the time (Demang Lebar Daun) that the former was destined to rule the region is seen as the beginning of the foundation of Melaka. O.W. Wolters points out that the reign of Sri Tri Buana recorded in the *Sejarah Melayu* corresponds to the period when Palembang had ceased to be the capital city of Srīvijaya in the eleventh century.[120] The continuity of Palembang's ruling tradition was thus ensured, despite the fact that Sri Tri Buana chose Tumasek (Singapore) as the center of his kingdom. As such, Wolters insists, the Melaka rulers "are the heirs to the great Malay kingdom of earlier times: Srīvijaya-Palembang."[121]

The emphasis on the survival of Malay-Palembang greatness was essential to the concept of authority claimed by the rulers of Melaka. Sri Tri Buana's miraculous appearance on the hill known as Bukit Siguntang was seen as proof of the supernatural dimension of his rule, just as his ability to turn the land at the top of that same hill into gold was indicative of his possessing the attributes of the Bodhisattva. Clearly, the hill of Bukit Siguntang was an important element in itself. It was known to be "the bodhisattva's abode, where his divine rays are most intense, miraculously covering the top of the hill with gold."[122] As such, Sri Tri Buana's appearance on this hill was to be seen as "the incarnation of the bodhisattva."[123] Indeed, for the people of Palembang, the descent of Sri Tri Buana from this hill, which was believed to be "a sovereign's sacred seat"[124] was proof of his supernatural status and, therefore, of his God-given right to rule over them. This was confirmed by Demang Lebar Daun's recognition, Palembang's ruler, of Buana's overall suzereinty. Accordingly, the famous solemn "covenant" between the two was made.

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[120] O.W. Wolters, *The Fall of Srīvijaya in Malay History* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1970), p. 94.

[121] Ibid., p. 106.

[122] Ibid., p. 129.

[123] Ibid.; Winstedt, *The Malays*, pp. 64–68; A.C. Milner, "Islam and Malay Kingship," *JRAS* (1981), pp. 50–51.

[124] Wolters, *The Fall of Srīvijaya*, p. 129.

At this point, "Sri Tri Buana's original diadem," Wolters suggests, "may have been Alexander the Great's, but now he is fully revealed as the bodhisattva. He, and therefore Iskandar [the first ruler of Melaka], move forward as god-kings."[125] This must have become the primary basis for Melaka's political concept of the unrestricted power of its ruler, as defined in the concept of *daulat* and *derhaka*. Yet the role of Islam, especially in its later development when the court was transformed into a more Islamic political entity, should not to be underestimated. The combined politico-religious authority possessed by its rulers took on certain unmistakably characteristics. For one thing, the ruler came to be viewed as the deputy of God through the adoption of the more familiar Islamic title *sulṭān* and the epithet *ẓill Allāh fī al-arḍ* (the shadow of God on earth). In the meantime, the traditional Malay political concept of *daulat* and *derhaka* survived.

A similar concept of royal authority is also to be found in Mataram. The emphasis on Mataram as heir to the Majapahit kingdom, confirmed mainly through continuous lines of royal descent via Demak and Pajang, must have left a substantial influence upon Mataram's concept of authority. As an Islamic kingdom, Mataram's ruler in the first instance claimed to have received religious authority through Javanese *walis* who were popular in the region on both the religious and political levels. Yet at the same time his authority was also claimed to have derived from the Goddess of the Southern Ocean. This, accordingly, helped preserve the traditional Javanese concept of the divinity of its ruler as the incarnation of God.

On the one hand, the unrestricted power of Mataram's ruler seems not to have been much different from that of Melaka. As in Melaka, where the subjects were urged not to be disloyal to the sulṭān, so it was in Mataram. When Pangeran Puger was urged by Pangeran Cakraningrat to rebel against Amangkurat III (r. 1703–1708) he refused to do so, saying that since the ruler was Allah's *warana* (deputy and screen), no man is allowed to rise against him. Indeed, whoever did so would face certain misfortune.[126] Yet, while Melaka seems to have moved convincingly toward a more Islamic orientation, Mataram was comfortable with retaining its traditional Javanese beliefs.

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[125] Ibid., p. 131.
[126] *Babad Tanah Jawi*, p. 341; Moertono, *State and Statecraft*, p. 35.

While both Melaka and Mataram laid great stress on having inherited the beliefs and traditions of their ancestors, Aceh saw itself in a different light. The sources make no mention of any ancient tradition justifying Aceh's beliefs and customs. Indeed, nothing is known about this area before the coming of Islam. While K.F.H. van Langen has suggested that a Hindu civilization originally prevailed in this region,[127] this hypothesis has not been historically proven. Whether or not this was so, it is uncanny how completely Islamic civilization overlaid whatever had preceded it.

As we saw above in Chapter Two, Aceh's ruler also claimed to possess both political and religious authority. Royal descent constituted an important element in political legitimacy. Therefore, the ruler's ancestry, especially that of Iskandar Muda, was traced from Iskandar Dhū al-Qarnayn, even though less impressive claims were made in this regard. Moreover, the ruler was also said to possess religious authority in the sense that he was the leader of a Muslim community and was then expected to ensure the implementation of Islamic teachings. From its inception, therefore, the title *sulṭān* was consistently used and the epithets *khalīfat Allāh* (the deputy of God) and *zill Allāh* (the shadow of God) were also adopted. While this role of the ruler was religious in nature, it by no means implied that he possessed any supernatural status. In other words, while the office of the sulṭān was sacred, its holder was not.

'Ulamā' clearly played a vital role in all of these states. Yet the nature of their role differed from one state to another, depending upon the religious atmosphere, the court policy towards Islam, and the nature of the ruler-*'ulamā'* relation. In contrast to Aceh, the office of *shaykh al-Islām* was unknown in Melaka. While religious commitment is reported to have been shown by its rulers, the court's attempts at promoting religious discourse were not impressive. Among the most important reasons for this may have been Pasai's predominance as a center of religious learning; this may have overshadowed the role of Melaka's *'ulamā'* and the ongoing process of Islamization of the state itself. The state officials responsible for religious matters all seem to have been connected with the office of the *qāḍī*.

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[127] K.F.H. van Langen, "De inrichting van het Atjehsce staatsbestuur onder het Sultanaat," *BKI* 34 (1988), pp. 387–390; C. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, trans. by A.W.S. O'Sullivan, vol. 1 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1906), pp. 16–17.

As in the case of Melaka, seventeenth-century Mataram seems not to have instituted the office of *shaykh al-Islām* either. Yet the proximity of states that combined religious reputation with political influence set the pattern for relations between the *'ulamā'* and rulers there. In its earlier years, Mataram tended to cooperate with these powerful religious centers, yet it was against them that it eventually chose to go to war. Nevertheless, the role of religious scholars in this state was by no means negligible. The *panghulu* was perhaps the position that best represented this class. Its incumbent acted as administrator in religious matters, served as *qāḍī*, and discharged other social functions. In spite of this, we have little evidence that Mataram court tried to promote any Islamic religious discourse during this period.[128]

As we saw above in Chapter Four, the role played by the *'ulamā'* in Aceh was a considerable one. This was no doubt due to the long tradition of Islamic learning in this region prior to the seventeenth century, the political support provided by the court, and even the active involvement of its rulers in religious discourse. This stimulated the creation of the office of the *shaykh al-Islām*. Even though the exact functions of its holder cannot precisely be determined, he was generally expected to act as the highest religious authority in the country, as teacher to the ruler, as his adviser on both political and economic issues, and even as his deputy on certain occasions. Yet the power of the *'ulamā'* depended mainly on the ruler's patronage. Another important *'ulamā'* class in Aceh was that of the *qāḍīs* and *faqīhs*.

Islamic law no doubt operated alongside *adat* and royal decree in these states. Yet the extent to which these sources of law prevailed from one country to another is difficult to determine. What can perhaps be ascertained at this point is that the scope of Islamic law was confined more to matters of family law, while criminal and other matters were dealt with under the umbrella of *adat* and royal discretionary law.

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[128] This is in spite of the fact that Sulṭān Agung was known for his commitment to religious causes, such as building a great mosque and attempting to convert the Dutch to Islam. Yet he seems to have made little effort to initiate a deeper religious discourse at the court. Indeed, this occurred only later during the reign of Pakubuwana II (r. 1729–1749), who successfully turned the court into an Islamizing force. See note no. 103 p. 230 above.

What, in the end, determined the different degrees of Islamic assimilation in these three states? In the first place, it should be noted that, for the period under study, there was no, so-to-speak, unified Southeast Asian culture as such. Even in the Indonesian context, as Ricklefs reminds us, "there was not a unified 'Indonesian' culture. There was instead a series of related regional cultural traditions belonging to specific linguistic and ethnic groups . . ."[129] This accordingly influenced the modes of expression of Islamic culture in the archipelago along regional lines. The process of the translation of Islam into the Southeast Asian world[130] can certainly be seen in the states under discussion.

Accordingly, the strength of influence of the earlier pre-Islamic culture played a significant role in the process. The high Majapahit culture of Java seems to have been too powerful for the later Muslim state of Mataram to eliminate. This was further intensified by "the inward-looking tendency"[131] of this state that operated on both the spiritual and geographical levels. Indeed, the rulers of Mataram were not interested in establishing their capital city in the wealthier coastal regions, a decision that may be attributed to its claim to the Majapahit legacy, an important legitimating factor. A similar situation may also be observed in Melaka. Its claim to have inherited the Srīvijaya-Palembang ruling tradition, accordingly, led to its adoption of this Buddhist state's tradition. Yet what made Melaka different from Mataram in this case was its commitment to the Islamization process, resulting from intense cultural contacts with Islam, either in the Muslim port-states of the region, such as Pasai, or through Muslim traders and perhaps also scholars coming from other Islamic lands.

Aceh seems not to have retained its pre-Islamic culture and beliefs to quite the same extent. Indeed, traces of pre-Islamic culture in this region are difficult to identify, either in indigenous sources or in its history. L.F. Brakel has raised controversy on this issue by suggesting that certain Hindu elements prevailed in seventeenth century Aceh.[132] Yet too many of his arguments are historically tenuous. This

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[129] Ricklefs, *A History*, p. 50.

[130] See for instance M.B. Hooker, "Introduction: The Translation of Islam into South-East Asia," in M.B. Hooker, ed., *Islam in South-East Asia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982), pp. 1–22.

[131] Ricklefs, *A History*, p. 47.

[132] See his, "State and Statecraft in 17th Century Aceh," in Anthony Reid and

is in addition to his tendency of overstating the Hindu elements in Acehnese statecraft. Some resemblance between Acehnese political concepts and pre-Islamic Southeast Asian tradition may of course be detected. Yet this by no means signifies that the pre-Islamic culture was the main element influencing the later Islamic tradition. Indeed, general thought on these points have been raised by A.C. Milner.[133] Moreover, from its rise in the early sixteenth century Aceh manifested strong Islamic elements in its political tradition. Evidently, a substantial Islamic culture preceded the existence of this state, perhaps going back as far as the time of the Muslim state of Pasai.

This, accordingly, brings us to another element that contributed significantly to the modes of Islamic transformation, namely geography. It is well known that the coastal regions around the archipelago during this period developed not only as centers of trade but also as settlements for Muslim merchants of foreign origin. It was in these areas that Islamic culture gained its strongest foothold. This phenomenon was to have far-reaching implications in the form of both naked struggles for power and Islamic cultural intervention. In the first place, these Muslim settlers became, over the course of time, powerful enough to expel local rulers and even expand their power into the interior. In the second sense, Islam became an influential force in consolidating their gains. Thus, several coastal states in central and east Java became centers for Islamic learning, such as Gresik, Kudus and Demak.

In terms of the adoption of Islamic values, the latter polity furnished a stark contrast with Mataram that could boast of only one ruler, Sulṭān Agung, who had assumed the role of sulṭān, and only as late as the seventeenth century. Demak's rulers on the other hand had already adopted this title in the previous century. This pattern of coastal openness towards Islam versus inland retention of older cultural values is clearly observable in the case of Melaka, and more apparently in the case of Aceh, where the pre-Islamic culture had not put down roots firm enough to resist the new faith brought to the region by Muslim traders and missionaries.

Lance Castles, eds., *Pre-Colonial State Systems in Southeast Asia* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1979), pp. 56–66.

[133] Milner, "Islam and the Muslim Sate," pp. 23–49.

CONCLUSION

In this book we have examined the Islamic nature of the Acehnese state in the seventeenth century. This has been done in the light of several paradigms, ranging from the role of Islamic institutions to the political culture and practices in the state. As Aceh was known in this era as a center where the Islamic religious discourse had deep roots, the role played by religion in its political life is one that deserves study, which we have attempted in the foregoing.

By definition, Aceh was both a *kerajaan* and a *kesultanan* (sultanate), two terms that signified one concept, that is to say, a system in which the *sulṭān* or *raja* was placed at the pinnacle of the state hierarchy and was seen to symbolize the unity of the state. In the Southeast Asian context, wealth and military prowess seem to have been the main elements of a dynasty's acquisition and retention of rule. This was later articulated in the two forms of royal authority: political and religious. These two were in fact inseparable in that they were integrated in the concept of the "politico-religious unity" of the Muslim community (*ummah*). This shows clearly the Islamic nature of Acehnese kingship, since political power and religious authority were basically essential to establishing a Muslim *ummah*. In this respect, Aceh reflected an extension of the wider polity of the Muslim world, which had seen the passing of caliphal authority and the subsequent rise of autonomous sultanates. These latter had become, in turn, an accepted model of government in Islam, both in theory and practice.

Aceh's ruler, as was the case elsewhere in the Muslim world, had to possess supreme political authority. This was reflected in a number of ways: among the most important were the titles adopted—representing both Islamic and Southeast Asian tradition—and state insignia, such as coins, royal edicts and seals that bore the Islamic titles of the ruler. Religious authority was also fundamental to the ruler's hold on power. Yet this did not necessarily signify that the ruler was the supreme authority in religious matters. He might best be described as the holder of "religiously-sanctioned authority," or as one through whom the implementation of God's religion would be realized. This was reflected in the concept of the ruler as *khalīfat*

Allāh fī al-arḍ (the deputy of God on earth) and other similar epithets. This religious dimension of the king's authority was also extended to the queen whenever the succession devolved upon the female line.

Aceh was a dynastic state in which the right to rule was reserved only to the royal family. As a whole, there were no fixed rules regulating the succession that, on the one hand, could result in crisis, but, on the other, provided flexible and pragmatic ways of dealing with the issue. The continuity of the royal lineage was maintained in various ways. In the first place, it was expected to pass to a male heir who could either be a son (whether the first-born or not) or as son-in-law of the deceased ruler. A female heir had the right to ascend to power in the absence of either of the former. In this case, religious consent played a role. The personal qualities of a candidate for this position were another important factor, especially military prowess, leadership and moral superiority. Indeed, possessing these qualities was necessary for a ruler who was expected not only to safeguard the welfare of his people, but also to ensure the implementation of God's religion and a secure environment for its observance. In many respects, this could only be achieved by waging *jihād* warfare.

The royal compound, with all its attributes, symbolized royal authority, power and greatness. Its main component was the royal palace (Dalam) that served several functions. First, it was a royal residence. As such, its security was of prime importance, and was reinforced through extensive fortification. It was also home to a vast body of servants comprising of women, eunuchs, and military slaves. It also functioned as the center of state administration and bureaucracy. It was in the palace too that all political decisions and economic negotiations took place. Royal audiences were held there for state officials and servants on a regular basis, while foreign ambassadors also met with the sovereign and attended certain state processions and entertainments within its walls. For all of these functions strict etiquette and protocols applied. Another important element of the royal compound was the garden, known as Taman Ghayrah, in which certain other important elements, such as the river (Dār al-'Ishq) and the "mountain-like structure" called Gunungan, were located. While this complex reflected the survival of some Southeast Asian pre-Islamic beliefs, it represented to an even greater extent Islamic tradition. Perhaps it can safely be suggested that the garden, with all its attributes, functioned as both the royal pleasure and an Islamic garden paradise.

Royal participation in religious rituals and ceremonies was another of the fundamental elements of Aceh as an Islamic state. Indeed, there existed both functional relationships between ceremonies and power and conceptual links between the ceremonies and the system of belief. The ceremonies marked several major religious rituals and celebrations, such as the Friday prayer (Jumʿah), the fasting of Ramaḍān, the fast breaking (ʿĪd al-Fiṭr) and the sacrifice (ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā). Except perhaps for the main religious rituals in the mosque (from the call to prayer (*ādhān*) to prayer (*ṣalāh*) itself, and to some extent the process of slaughtering the animals on the occasion of ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā), all other rituals were royal in nature. In other words, Islamic religious rituals were performed within the state's imperial tradition, of which the ruler formed the center and the palace their pivot.

The rituals were significant in several ways. Firstly, the ruler showed himself to be the supreme head of a Muslim state. The ceremonies, therefore, constituted a symbolic expression of his authority, both political and religious. Secondly, the participation of various state officials, servants, guards and soldiers, their organization in order of rank, their splendid dress, and all other details of protocol constituted a visual display of power, loyalty, hierarchy, and even the state's wealth and grandeur. In the rituals, the position of the sulṭān as the holder of "religiously-sanctioned authority" was clearly demonstrated, and the status of the *ʿulamāʾ* as the holders of the religious authority was shown. The symbolism of the equilibrium of both the ruler and the religious authority in the state was also made apparent.

These royal religious ceremonies became the embodiment of the state during the period under discussion. Indeed, they were the state itself. This tradition seems to have been established in Aceh long before Iskandar Muda's reign. The attribution to this ruler of the decision to codify the ceremonies in the *Adat Aceh* is indicative of the high degree to which Iskandar Muda sought to centralize the state and of the importance of court ceremonials to preserving the sulṭān's position. It was regarded as a means to control the official class and to impress both the Acehnese public and foreign envoys. Nevertheless, with the rise of the queens to the pinnacle of Acehnese power, the royal religious ceremonies connected with the mosque effectively ceased to exist.

As an Islamic state, Aceh provided a specific role for the *ʿulamāʾ*, reflecting the ruler's fundamental concern and need for religious authority. Three roles were filled by the *ʿulamāʾ* in this state: those

of *shaykh al-Islām*, *qāḍī*, and *faqīh*. Occupied at different times by three prominent religious figures (al-Samaṭrānī, al-Rānīrī, and al-Singkilī), the office of the *shaykh al-Islām* was the most prestigious of the institutions held by the *ʿulamāʾ*. Attached to the court, the office was linked to the historical development of the state. Thus, the decision to appoint or dismiss its incumbents lay with the ruler, effectively eliminating the possibility that succession to the office could be controlled by any one family. This also was the reason why the extent of the *shaykh al-Islām*'s power varied from one time to another. In the seventeenth century especially, the *shaykh al-Islāms* were all *ṣūfīs*, religious teachers, advisors to the ruler, *muftīs* and prolific writers. They likewise all played a role in state politics, even if the degree to which they were involved in such matters varied considerably.

The *qāḍī* was another state institution in which *ʿulamāʾ* played a role. He was both judge in religious matters and an administrator in the state's legal apparatus. As such, the *qāḍī* was both religious scholar and state official whose power derived from the ruler. Yet since the religious court was only one element of the Acehnese judicial system, there were other state judges as well, who were for the most part *orang kayas*. The extent of the cooperation between the judges assigned to different courts, however, is not clear to us. What seems certain is that all these judges were under the *qāḍī malik al-ʿādil* (the chief *qāḍī*), who was responsible for the administration of law and justice in the state. The holder of this highest post in the judicial hierarchy seems to have been drawn mostly from the nobility and the *ʿulamāʾ*. What is notable is that this type of state official also played a crucial role in the political arena and even held the position of head of the state council. Last of all, the *faqīhs* also appear to have served a religious function in the Islamic court, although the exact nature of this function is unclear.

The law applied in Aceh was "composite," meaning that it was derived from a variety of sources. These latter included everything from Islamic law to *adat* (either customary laws or royal edicts and tradition) and ultimately to discretionary royal laws. The boundaries between these sources were not clearly defined. Indeed, Islamic law was also dominant in other jurisdictions, such as the "criminal court," and even in royal *adat* itself. Hence, Islamic law played a dominant role in the Acehnese judicial system. The penalties applied in the state during this period were also so severe that they frequently went beyond the prescriptions provided by Islamic law. While in many

cases the punishments may have been viewed as *taʿzīr*, they seem to have reflected traditional methods of judicial punishment as well.

Aceh was an Islamic state within the realm of Southeast Asian political culture, in the sense that the sovereign was placed at the center of a wheel around which all state activities were concentrated and from which all power derived. From a judicial perspective, the sovereign was considered to be both law-maker and supreme judge. As such, he was regarded as the one who established the royal *adat* and the supreme executor of the country's laws, as the one who delegated his power to his officials and, in many cases, intervened in court decisions. Yet this is not to suggest that the laws of the country were based on royal discretion, since other sources of law were actually predominant.

The ideology of *jihād* as religious warfare found fertile soil in Acehnese Islam. In his *Bustān al-Salāṭīn*, al-Rānīrī credits two prominent rulers, al-Qahhār of the sixteenth century and Iskandar Muda of the seventeenth century, with waging *jihād* against unbelievers. They were, after all, famous for having launched military expeditions against the Portuguese in Melaka. In the absence of any Acehnese-produced treatise on the concept of *jihād*, the seventeenth-century Acehnese epic on holy war known as *Hikayat Malem Dagang* is helpful. The epic relates how Aceh, under attack by neighboring Malay unbelievers, was forced to wage a "defensive-retaliatory" war. Led by the main elements of the Acehnese state (the commander-in-chief, an *ʿālim*, and the nobility) the war was deemed to be unavoidable and religiously justified. The entirely military expedition was observed by the sulṭān himself.

As it is difficult to determine with any confidence the historicity of this epic account, we must be content with what it tells us about the "concept" of *jihād* in that time and place. In the first instance, the depiction of the non-Islamic character of both Johor and Asahan provided in the epic should not be taken literally. After all, both states were already Muslim by that date. Rather, it was their generally cooperative attitude towards the Portuguese in Melaka that seems to have justified the epithet. This story, therefore, should be seen from within the wider context of constant Acehnese *jihād* against the Portuguese presence in the region. The interest of the latter in commerce, colonial expansion, and propagation of the Christian faith was regarded by the Acehnese as a threat to the Islamic hegemony. Aceh's hostile attitude can, therefore, be understood in religio-political

terms, and the *jihād* as a reaction to this state of affairs. Whether or not this was all in aid of gaining a commercial advantage does not belie the fact that decisions were taken and policies framed in the light of a wider concept of Islamic hegemony. *Jihād* provided an ideological basis for their military response.

The Islamic nature of Aceh is even more apparent when viewed in comparison with fifteenth-century Melaka and seventeenth-century Mataram. All three Muslim kingdoms deserve to be called "Islamic states," even though the degree of their adoption of this faith seems to have differed from one state to another. Some of the similarities they shared are apparent. All, for instance, placed their rulers at the pinnacle of the state hierarchy. The backbone of their administrative machinery was composed of state officials or notables upon whom the prosperity of the states depended. The centrality of the ruler was apparent, and was manifested primarily in royal etiquette, insignia, and ceremonies. Indeed, all these point to the imperial character of these states.

Furthermore, the rulers of all three states claimed to be the supreme head of the Muslim community and to hold both political and religious authority. Yet the divergence in the nature of this authority is perceivable. Melaka, as heir to the pre-Islamic beliefs of Srīvijaya, developed the concept of the unrestricted royal power and supernatural status of its ruler, articulated in the concept of *daulat* and *derhaka*. At the same time, however, the ruler was seen as the "deputy of God" whose duty was to ensure the implementation of God's religion. Indeed, this is indicative of the gradual transformation of Melaka into a more Islamic orientation. A similar case is also to be found in Mataram. Claiming to be the heirs of the pre-Islamic Majapahit Hindu-Buddhist state, via the Muslim states of Demak and Pajang, Mataram's rulers derived their authority from both Muslim saints and the Goddess of the Southern Ocean. The supernatural nature of its rulers was, therefore, more apparent, even to the point where they were viewed as the incarnations of God. While the Islamic concept of "deputy of God" was known, there was the equally powerful traditional Javanese belief in the ruler as the "screen" of God, through whom man should pass to reach God, as in *kawula-gusti* (servant and master) relationships. In Aceh, where the ruler was to claim both political and religious authority, the concept seems to have been more in accordance with Islamic tradition. There he was seen as

the "deputy of God." Yet in no way was he regarded as having possessed supernatural power.

The *'ulamā'* naturally played a role in these states. Yet the degree of their role and their institutions differed from one state to another, reflecting the varying historical backgrounds, cultures, and natures of these states. In general, the laws applied in each of them were similar in that Islam, *adat* and royal discretionary laws prevailed.

The different degree of Islamization of these states was due to several factors, among the most important being the strength of the pre-Islamic culture and geographical factors. It is in these two respects that Aceh, which was neither the heir to any ancient higher culture nor an inland state, showed itself to be more prone to Islamic influence. This was, accordingly, to have a significant role in shaping the strong Islamic elements in that polity. Given these facts, it is difficult to justify Snouck Hurgronje's underestimation of the role of the Islamic faith in Acehnese political life.[1]

[1] See C. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, vol. 1, trans. by A.W.S. O'Sullivan (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1906), p. 8.

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GLOSSARY

adat—custom, customary law, royal regulation and tradition.
antatan—tribute.
arak—distilled liquor made either from rice or a certain type of nut.
bahar—a weight of variable unit, equivalent to approximately 180 kg of pepper weight or three *pikul*, but only 7.25 kg of gold weight.
balai—a gathering hall.
balai uleebalang—the hall of chiefs.
bendahara—the prime minister.
bentara—a herald.
bentara blang—a state official charged with supervising the state rice-field.
biduanda—a palace servant.
bilal—the caller to ritual prayer (*mu'adhdhin*).
biram—a ceremonial platform at the royal palace.
bungkus kerajaan—a betel bag.
cap—a seal.
cerana—a metal bowl.
ceteria—a warrior.
dalam—a royal palace.
daulat—sovereignty, expression of deference to nobility.
derhaka—disobedience, disloyalty.
hari raya—two Muslim religious feasts.
hikayat—story, narrative.
hikayat prang—heroic poem.
jaksa—a judicial civil servant.
kandang—a royal burial complex.
keujreun geundrang—the official in charge of the drums.
memeugang—the ceremony inaugurating the coming of the fasting month (Ramaḍān).
meugat—a title borne by a senior court official.
meuih or *mas*—a gold coin.
mukim—a parish.
orang kaya—an aristocrat or state noble who was usually a merchant.
patih—prime minister in Mataram.
panghulu—a religious official in Mataram.
penghulu bendahari—the treasurer.
penghulu bilal—the chief *mu'adhdhin*.
penghulu kerkun—the chief scribe.
prang sabi—holy war, war in the path of God.
puan kerajaan—a betel caddy.
sagi—a confederation of *mukims* headed by an *uleebalang*.
sarakata—a royal edict.
sayyid—the title of those belonging to the *'ulamā'* class in Aceh known to have been descended from the Prophet through his grandson Ḥusayn.
sembah—homage or obeisance made in a certain manner.
shahbandar—harbor-master or state official in charge of the port.
sharīf—the title of those belonging to the *'ulamā'* class in Aceh known to have been descended from the Prophet through his grandson Ḥasan.
sida—eunuch.

tahil—a unit of weight in silver, equivalent to a string of 600 or 1000 *cashes*.
taraf—rank or status.
temenggung—the police chief.
tongkat khuṭbah—the staff of sermon.
tuak—palm wine.
uleebalang—a traditional chieftain, state noble and official.
wali—a religious saint in Java.
walisongo—the nine historical saints of Java.
warana—the deputy and screen of God.

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