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| Daniel Perret. From Slave to King. Archipel, 2011, 82, pp.159-199. <halshs-01885243>

HAL Id: halshs-01885243

<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01885243v1>

Submitted on 1 Oct 2018

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From Slave to King: The Role of South Asians in Maritime Southeast Asia (from the late 13th to the late 17th century)

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Citer ce document / Cite this document :

Perret Daniel. From Slave to King: The Role of South Asians in Maritime Southeast Asia (from the late 13th to the late 17th century). In: Archipel, volume 82, 2011. pp. 159-199;

http://www.persee.fr/doc/arch_0044-8613_2011_num_82_1_4261

Document généré le 27/09/2016

Abstract

From Slave to King : The Role of South Asians in Maritime Southeast Asia (from the late 13th to the late 17th century).

This study is focused on people coming from South Asia not at all or at least not mainly involved in trade among the various societies of maritime Southeast Asia. One of the main obstacles related to this research is that these individuals and groups can be traced mostly through surviving material evidence or through identifications mentioned by others with all the distortions and uncertainties attached to this kind of sources. A panorama of the main social and occupational settings in which they found a place is presented : slaves, spouses and concubines, warriors, tax collectors, moneylenders, seamen and fishermen, miners and artisans, interpreters, staff and servants, religious proselytizers and leaders, rulers and civil dignitaries. All the coastal areas from Gujarat to Bengal yielded migrants to a greater or lesser extent, along with Ceylon and the Maldives. The Tamil area, Bengal, and Gujarat were probably the most significant suppliers, followed by Ceylon, the Maldives, Orissa and Malabar. Regarding geographical distribution, during the period under consideration South Asians not involved in trade were present from Aceh to Maluku. Even if the demographic weight of this migratory phenomenon is impossible to estimate with precision, I suggest that over one million individuals found their way to maritime Southeast Asia at that time.

Résumé

D'esclave à roi : le rôle de Sud-Asiatiques dans l'Asie du Sud-Est maritime (de la fin du 13e à la fin du 17e siècle).

Cette étude est centrée sur les gens d'Asie du Sud qui ne sont pas commerçants, ou tout au moins dont le commerce n'est pas l'activité principale, et qui sont installés dans les diverses sociétés de l'Asie du Sud-Est maritime. L'un des principaux obstacles de cette recherche est que ces individus ou ces groupes ne peuvent être perçus pratiquement qu'au travers des preuves matérielles ayant survécu jusqu'à nous ou d'après les identifications mentionnées par d'autres, avec toutes les distorsions et incertitudes liées à ce genre de sources. Un panorama des principales catégories sociales et professionnelles est présenté : esclaves, épouses et concubines, guerriers, percepteurs de taxes, prêteurs d'argent, marins et pêcheurs, mineurs et artisans, interprètes, employés et serviteurs, prédicateurs et leaders religieux, dirigeants et dignitaires civils. Toutes les régions côtières entre le Gujarat et le Bengale ont fourni des migrants dans une plus ou moins grande mesure, ainsi que Ceylan et les Maldives. Le pays tamoul, le Bengale ainsi que le Gujarat furent probablement les principaux réservoirs, suivis par Ceylan, les Maldives, l'Orissa et le Malabar. En ce qui concerne la distribution géographique, durant la période considérée, les gens d'Asie du Sud non commerçants étaient présents d'Aceh aux Moluques. Même si le poids démographique de ce phénomène migratoire est impossible à estimer avec précision, je suggère que plus d'un million de personnes vont prendre la direction de l'Asie du Sud-Est maritime à l'époque.

DANIEL PERRET

From Slave to King: The Role of South Asians in Maritime Southeast Asia (from the late 13th to the late 17th century)

Introduction

Maritime travel and migration from South Asia, in which I include here present India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, toward maritime Southeast Asia in which I include present Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and Timor-Leste, occurred for at least the last two millennia.¹ Two topics, namely indianization and trade, have dominated its historiography regarding the period before the 19th century. The aim of this study is to look at this phenomenon from a different angle, which is the place of South Asian people not at all or at least not mainly involved in trade in the various societies of the region. My time-scale starts at the end of the 13th century, a choice made not only because of the occurrence of important events for our subject, such as the emergence of the Sultanate of Pasai and the kingdom of Majapahit, as well as the breaking-up of the Chola kingdom, but also because more data become available. The end of the 17th century I stop at, saw notably the expansion of the authority of the VOC and the fall of the kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda. Moreover, tendencies converged at that time to confirm the overall decline of the relations between both regions.

Our starting point is the individual or the group, assuming that they display a more or less strong visibility, if not autonomy, allowing to identify them in the sources. The expression “people of South Asia” here refers to

1. I would like to thank Arlo Griffiths for his valuable comments and for correcting the language of this paper.

any individual or group originally settled in South Asia that considered itself, or was considered, as native or foreign there. Nevertheless, this simple definition should not obscure the diversity, the vagueness, and sometimes the ambiguity of situations. Another aspect is the diversity of these people. At least from the first millennium, through collective designations such as Arya, Vania, Khoja or Keling, whose precise origins are not always easy to trace, sources reveal a social mosaic of South Asian people living in maritime Southeast Asia. Moreover, as is well known, most of the coastal areas of India, whether already or not yet in contact with maritime Southeast Asia, were home to cosmopolitan populations, including people of Middle Eastern or Central Asian origins, long before the period under consideration here.

As far as I know, syntheses focused on South Asian people living in maritime Southeast Asia before the 19th century are still extremely rare, and even those focused on individuals, groups or communities, are very few. Several reasons may explain the lack of attractiveness of this field of research. One of them is no doubt the small number and fragmentary nature of the sources available before the arrival of the Europeans, especially in South Asia. This situation virtually prevents the reconstruction of a global and continuous view. We may assume that some prominent Indian families in contact with this region kept a number of documents, but they may have disappeared or so far, at least, have stayed out of reach for the historian.²

This means these individuals and groups can only be traced through material evidence of their presence in maritime Southeast Asia that have survived until today, or through identifications mentioned by others with all the distortions and uncertainties attached to this kind of sources. I may mention as example the ambiguity of the Western sources, which are inclined to provide unbalanced ethnic descriptions highlighting the Chinese, whereas the other communities are neglected or merged into a single entity (Guillot, 1999: 165). There was probably also for a long time an inclination to consider that, with the dwindling of Indian cultural influences in the region, people of South Asia disappeared or were reduced to small marginal trading communities not meriting study. Another point to recall here is that if foreigners were more noticeable in the major places of maritime Southeast Asia, which are better documented, they were certainly not confined there.

To the implicit idea of populations without history, as they almost did not leave any written traces, must be added the very tenuous links, or even the absence of any links, between the South Asian communities living in maritime Southeast Asia during the 17th century and the communities settled

2. Chaudhuri (1985: 101) mentions sophisticated account books and letters kept by Jain merchants in Gujarat and by Chettiars in Coromandel without giving any indication of their antiquity.

in the region today. This gap would explain why the latter show little interest for a past they do not feel to inherit. Therefore, the number of historical studies focused on these South Asian populations settled in the region is far behind the number of studies on Chinese migrations in maritime Southeast Asia.

Yet, since the end of the 1970s new researches enable a better understanding, on a global level and on the *longue durée*, of the place and role of these migrants in the local and regional history. There is a growing number of historical studies on sultanates like Pasai, Melaka, Aceh and Banten, studies on the long distance maritime trade based on Portuguese and Dutch sources, as well as archaeological researches conducted on old settlements in the region.

This study presents a panorama of the main social and occupational settings in which people from South Asia found a place in maritime Southeast Asia. For each category, I will here classify the sources, first, according to the geography of the region, from west to east, second, according to the chronology.

Slaves

At least during the 16th and 17th centuries, maritime Southeast Asia experienced a shortage of manpower which resulted in the usually forced immigration of people from South Asia. Demand came from kingdoms of the western part of the region (Pasai, Banten, Aceh, probably Melaka and maybe others); from the Portuguese *Estado da India*, as well as the VOC and the elites settled in centres controlled by the Europeans.

Several reasons may explain this strong demand in Pasai, Banten and Aceh, where the notion of slave carried various meanings. There was first the will to expand pepper plantations in order to meet the increase of demand, whether on the China or on the Western markets.³ Secondly, the policy of conquest conducted by Aceh from the first half of the 16th century certainly required slaves converted to warriors. This kingdom also needed workers to exploit gold deposits in its hinterland, and probably tin mines of the conquered territories in the Malay Peninsula. Moreover, Aceh had to increase its own population after the heavy losses suffered against the Portuguese, especially during the Melaka expedition in 1629, and following internal troubles in 1589 and 1607 (Ito, 1984: 341, 364). Through a domino effect, the generated prosperity required an increase in food-producing crops, especially rice-fields, to feed an increasing local population and a growing

3. It can also be assumed that the development of pepper plantations and mining on territories independent from Aceh and Banten, such as Jambi, Palembang or Banjarmasin, could have generated a demand for South Asian slaves.

number of foreign temporary settlers. This growth contributed to the accumulation of wealth by the ruling class that therefore accumulated enough funds to purchase manpower in order to fulfill the needs already mentioned as well as its private needs.

There are few data about the organization of the slave trafficking bound for Pasai, Aceh, Banten and other native polities. Whoever the buyers, they seemed to have faced a tight and volatile market, without oversupply, even more with the expansion of European trading posts in the Indian Ocean. This state of recurrent shortage alternated with times of relative abundance, especially during episodes of starvation.⁴ The existence of reservoirs of manpower in various regions did help to lower uncertainty in supply due to the improvement of local political and economic conditions, the disapproval of slave trafficking by local Muslim authorities, or the competition with Cape Town as regards the VOC.⁵ The high mortality rate of the slaves during transport is another factor to add to all these uncertainties.⁶ There were at least two other means to get South Asian labour. Firstly, through the capture of South Asian ship crews, a strategy that appears to have been common in Aceh.⁷ Secondly, through welcoming fugitive slaves, as was the case in the Sultanate of Banten, at least since the 1660s, when it received and employed slaves who had escaped from Batavia.⁸

Three regions of South Asia supplied large numbers of slaves to the native polities of maritime Southeast Asia: Bengal, Coromandel and the Maldives. The minor sources were Ceylon, Orissa and Malabar.

At the beginning of the 16th century, Pasai received Maldivian slaves transported on Gujarati ships (Alves, 1999: 119). By the second half of the 16th century, Aceh received slaves from Bengal through traders from that region (Ito, 1984: 398). At least since the end of the 16th century, Arakanese vessels conducted raids in Bengal along the banks of the Ganges river delta to catch slaves and Arakan rapidly became a major market (Arasaratnam, 1995a: 198). It is therefore possible that polities of maritime Southeast Asia, especially Aceh, got supply on this market at that time. The Arakan-Aceh

4. Therefore, many slaves left Coromandel in 1618, 1620, in the mid-1640s, 1652 and 1659-1661 (Raychaudhuri, 1962: 166; Stephen, 1998: 156).

5. Coolhaas (ed.), van Goens *et al.*, GM IV, 13/02/1679: 294.

6. Of the 2,118 slaves sent from Coromandel to Batavia in 1646, 572 died during the journey (Raychaudhuri, 1962: 166). The following year, of the 1,046 slaves sent from Bengal and Pegu, 430 died before reaching their destination (Coolhaas [ed.], C. van der Lijn *et al.*, Batavia, 31/12/1647, GM II: 326).

7. Best, 1934: 58; "Standish-Croft" in Best, 1934: 166; Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.), VII(1): 398. Beaulieu mentions shipwrecked crew of a ship from Dabhol taken as slaves by Iskandar Muda (Beaulieu, 1996: 216).

8. Van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 28/05/1664: 218; de Haan, 1910-1912, II: 46, note 4.

connection is certain for the following century, but I do not know yet who were the traders involved in this trafficking.⁹ There was also an active slave trade between Coromandel (Masulipatnam, Nagapattinam, and Porto Novo) and Aceh since the 1620s at least.¹⁰ During the second half of the 17th century, the people involved in this activity were high dignitaries from Coromandel (such as Nawab Mosemchan – or Chanchanan), the ruler of Golconda (Ito, 1984: 400), “Moor”¹¹ or Hindu merchants from Coromandel (Arasaratnam, 1995a: 206), as well as English and Danish traders. Sources mention that during the 1680s, within only two years between 15,000 and 20,000 South Asian slaves were transferred to the north of Sumatra.¹² Since the last decade of the 17th century at least, East India Company ships linked Madras and Aceh, carrying slaves among other trade items (Bassett, 1989: 630). The distinctive feature of Banten and its predecessor Banten Girang in the 16th century was that they went to the Maldives to buy slaves themselves (Pires, 1990, I: 169). The sultanate got perhaps also some supply from Ceylon during the 1670s.¹³

The descriptions of the courts in Aceh and Banten at the beginning of the 17th century speak for themselves. In 1620-1, Beaulieu noticed some 1,500 slaves at the court, mostly foreigners. Most of them did not go out of the palace and did not talk with people from outside. The sultan employed them for executions, murders, as well as for various other tasks (Beaulieu, 1996: 205) such as the care of the royal elephants. They were also active in the countryside, as many of them managed royal estates and took care of the cattle. Pepper plantations, rice-fields, gold mines as well as areas for gold panning were certainly parts of these royal estates.

The ownership of a large number of slaves was not restricted to the court. At the end of the 1680s, Dampier noticed that the *syahbandar* of Aceh had more than 1,000 slaves, and some among them were the main traders. These slaves owned themselves a large number of slaves and so on (Dampier, 1715: 172). In fact, the expression “patron-client relationship” would be more appropriate here. These clients were buyers on behalf of their master, controlled the foreign exchange of his cash, took part in the gold trade, cut wood, built houses, worked in quarries and were active in fishing. The

9. Reid, 1988, I: 133. Arasaratnam suggests that Portuguese carried slaves from Bengal and Arakan to Aceh.

10. Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.), III: 177 (1622); van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 10/03/1641: 206; Ito, 1984: 398-399 (1640s); Coolhaas (ed.), J. Maetsuyker *et al.*, Batavia, 26/01/1655, GM II: 791; van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 27/01/1661: 16-17; DR, 22/05/1663: 212.

11. Van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR, 22/05/1663: 212.

12. Martin, 1932: 493-4. See also Dampier, 1715: 3.

13. Van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 18/01/1675: 25, 23/01/1675: 26.

skilled ones were able to engage in trading activities or craft industry thanks to a loan from their master, who in return got part of the profits.

So far, I have not found any clear indication regarding the existence of a more or less forced flow of work force from South Asia to maritime Southeast Asia before the 16th century. However, considering the expansion cycle that started in the region by the turn of the 15th century (Reid, 1993, II: 1-61), I suggest that this flow lasted for almost the whole period under consideration here. Based on the few above mentioned indications, if I consider (a very rough low estimation in my opinion), that the native polities of the region received an average of 2,000 South Asian slaves, captives and fugitives every year between the 15 and the 17th centuries, the total figure would be 600,000 people. Of course, this figure does not include Portuguese Melaka and the VOC settlements.

In Melaka, the number of slaves just before the Portuguese conquest is estimated at between 4,000 and 10,000 people (Alves, 2003: 148, 150), and at least part of them were probably of South Asian origin. In Portuguese Melaka, the demand for slaves came from the Crown for its troops (Breuning, 1954: 45), from the Portuguese elite for its domestic needs and from foreign, especially Tamil, traders to operate their vessels (Manguin, 1983: 210), and probably also for their domestic needs. The majority of these slaves came from Coromandel (Stephen, 1998: 156). The Christianized slaves freed by the Portuguese, as well as their descendants, became the Mardica community. They were allowed to conduct various activities but in return were subjected to compulsory duties. Known as “Portuguese Keling”,¹⁴ they received a Christian name with their christening, wore Portuguese dresses and spoke Portuguese.

As soon as it took control of Melaka in 1641, the VOC wanted to repopulate the town with slaves. It carried on the strategy of the Portuguese by importing slaves from Coromandel and this until the end of the 17th century.¹⁵ Another important provider of slaves for Melaka was Ceylon, at least until the end of the 1670s.¹⁶ The needs of the VOC in the Archipelago were very similar to the needs of the native polities: development of spice plantations in Maluku, gold mining in Sumatra, craft industry, stockbreeding and fishing, development and protection of the towns under its authority,¹⁷ as well as servants for the elites.

14. Schouten, 1936: 116; Arasaratnam, 1995b: 484.

15. Van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 1641-2, p. 82: 12/1641; Coolhaas (ed.), Camphuys *et al.*, 23/12/1687, GM V: 133.

16. Van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 27/12/1663: 710; Coolhaas (ed.), van Goens *et al.*, 11/12/1679, GM IV: 367.

17. Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.), III: 278; I: 794, 795.

For the VOC, the main advantage to bring foreign workers in general, and South Asians in particular, was probably a lower risk of confrontation compared to native populations. The religious factor may have been important too as many South Asian slaves were previously Christianized by Portuguese missionaries.

By the mid-1610s, Indians with Portuguese names were captured and brought inside the fortress of Jacatra (Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.), III: 546). In 1616, Coen, then director-general of the VOC trading posts in the Archipelago, thought of bringing slaves and captives, especially Gujaratis, to the Banda islands, in order to increase nutmeg growing. The earliest traces of the importation of South Asian slaves by the VOC to the Archipelago date to 1618.¹⁸ Two years later, Coen again, this time as new governor-general, supported the idea of bringing people of South Asian origin to populate Batavia.¹⁹

The decision to set up colonies and to settle territories under the jurisdiction of the VOC, including Batavia, with free people and slaves, was officially enforced in 1623 (*ibid.*, IV: 602), and before leaving his office, Coen advised his successor to purchase slaves in Ceylon, Coromandel and Bengal (*ibid.*, III: 293). These importations lasted until the 1680s, mostly from Coromandel, from Bengal through the VOC base in Arakan, but also from Malabar, Orissa and Ceylon. The markets of these areas got their supply locally through war of conquest, raid or kidnapping. Sometimes, people offered themselves for sale in coastal ports after severe starvation²⁰ or devastation due to a long war. The capture of South Asian ship crews was regularly conducted by the VOC and free Batavia citizens. They also seized Portuguese vessels carrying South Asian slaves bound for Melaka.²¹ Moreover, Christian slaves captured by the VOC during the conquest of Portuguese territories, whether in India itself, at Melaka or in Ceylon, were sometimes kept as slaves. In this way, Batavia saw the arrival of some 15,000 slaves, prisoners and fugitives from South Asia between 1618 and 1680 (see table attached).

The Arakan slave market is probably the most often referred to in the sources. The Dutch got in touch with the local ruler in 1623, who permitted them to buy a limited number of slaves. However, the supply was unstable,

18. Fifty Indians who fled São Tomé [Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.), I: 412].

19. Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.), I: 590. Coen asked the representatives of the Company in Pulicat and Masulipatnam to buy slaves and then to send them to Jacatra, Ambon or Banda (*ibid.*, I: 574; III: 75, 96).

20. For example in the mid-1680s in Coromandel [Coolhaas (ed.), Camphuys *et al.*, 13/12/1686, GM V: 28].

21. Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.), I: 777; V: 59; VI: 304; van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 1627: 322.

with a market sometimes open and sometimes closed.²² The VOC closed down its trading post there in 1665, when the Moghols took over Bengal and put an end to raids for slaves in the Ganges delta. The VOC virtually ceased to get supply from South Asia in the 1680s, at a time when it was virtually impossible for it to buy slaves in Malabar, Bengal and Arakan.²³

Who were these imported slaves? We know that at the beginning of the 17th century, the Aceh court chose young people (Beaulieu, 1996: 205). Coen also recommended the importation of young slaves, boys and girls aged between 8 and 20 (Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.), V: 296). In 1655, on the Arakan market, slaves were sold between 2.5 reals for the youngest one (3-6 years) and 12 reals for the oldest one (20-36 years).²⁴ These prices need to be compared to the average price of rice in Southeast Asia at that time: about six reals for a *pikul* (Bulbeck *et al.*, 1998: 84), which usually corresponds to 60 kg. Moreover, certain categories of “Black Portuguese” (Indian-Portuguese mestizos) were also bought as slaves for Batavia (Bernet Kempers, 1974: 235).

Some of them were intended to cover the needs in work force of Batavia, others were sent to Maluku. In Batavia, the VOC employed some of them, but the majority was intended for private houses inside the walled area of the town, as well as farming estates outside. The most important officials and the wealthiest individuals kept more than 300 slaves. Even common citizens and artisans often kept between six and ten slaves, sometimes leased to get an additional income (Boomgaard, 2004: 85).

The VOC slaves were divided into prisoners of war and criminals on the one hand, slaves bought as manual workers (*ambachtslaven*) on the other hand. The latter, mostly of South Asia, were again divided into coolies and artisans living in specific districts of Batavia. They were given clothes twice a year, rice, fish and salt every month as well as some cash.²⁵ The VOC had 1,500 of them in 1665. The coolies were employed as porters, as building workers, in the construction of roads and fortifications, the digging of channels, the maintenance of farmlands and gardens, as clerks, in shops, in

22. In 1625, the King of Arakan brought back some 10,000 slaves from Bengal, but as 4,000 of them died in Arakan he did not allow purchases by the VOC (Coolhaas (ed.), Carpentier *et al.*, 03/02/1626, GM I: 185). A new royal permission was granted to the Company in 1643 (Dam, 1932, II(2): 97) before another prohibition was declared two years later. The Dutch temporarily left their trading post in Arakan between 1647 and 1649 (van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 11/03/1661: 58; DR 6/04/1664: 114; Schouten, 1707, I: 183, 261; Arasaratnam, 1995a: 201-202). Finally, in 1681, the ruler of Arakan announced that he was no more able to supply slaves from Bengal (van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 09/02/1681: 106).

23. Van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 09/02/1681: 106; Coolhaas (ed.), Camphuys *et al.*, 30/11/1684, GM IV: 744.

24. Coolhaas (ed.), Maetsuyker *et al.*, Batavia, 01/02/1656, GM III: 48-9.

25. De Haan, 1935: 271, 273; Raben, 1996: 100.

hospitals, and also as workers in various kinds of workshops. Artisans were usually employed in ironworks, cannon casting and by carpenters.²⁶ The majority of the South Asian prisoners of war were people captured on Portuguese or English vessels. The VOC employed them for some time without any salary, before providing a monthly income.²⁷

At Batavia, the slaves not previously Christianized by the Portuguese were usually given a Christian name followed by the name of their home region. With their christening, they usually got the name of their godfather. For example, a slave named Pieter van Bengalen whose godfather was Matthijs Jansz, would receive the name of Pieter Jansz. If Pieter Jansz. later married someone called Martha van de Cust (Coromandel), his wife would change her name to Martha Pieters. Their children would receive the same surname after the christening, namely Pietersz. (de Haan, 1917: 221-222). In this way, the traces of their South Asian origin disappeared completely.

Liberated and usually Christianized slaves from South Asia as well as their descendants became a major part of the *Mardijker* community, made of free and full-blooded Asians that became part of the *burgers*. This designation was commonly used since 1632. They were also called *vrije swarten* (free Blacks), “Black Portuguese” or even “Negros”. Another of their features was the use of a Creole Portuguese language. This community kept growing during the 17th century, following the increase of the slave population. It seems that, in Batavia, *Mardijkers* even outnumbered the Chinese during the 1650s and 1660s (Raben, 1996: 87; see table attached). In 1632, among a population of some 8,000 inhabitants inside the walled town, there were 2,500 slaves, mostly of South Asian origin and 495 *Mardijkers* (*ibid.*: 86, table 4.2). Some 60 years later (1689), among a population of some 66,000 inhabitants, there were 26,000 slaves (of South Asian and native origins), some 7,600 *Mardijkers* and more than 700 “Moors and Gentiles” (Raben, 1996: 91, table 4.5; 95, table 4.7), both designations which also referred to South Asian people. The growth of this community may also be traced through the evolution of its contribution to crossbowmen companies in Batavia during the 17th century: two in 1628, three in 1633 and 1641 – 356 individuals –, six in 1659 – 600 individuals – (van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 3/09/1659: 183) and 1670 – 960 individuals – (*ibid.*, DR 01/08/1670: 131).

Other people to consider here are the mestizos with a father or a mother of South Asian origin. The VOC statistics do not make it possible to follow the evolution of this community during the 17th century. Moreover, *Mardijkers* and mestizos gradually mixed to become the “inlandse Christenen” or “Portugeezen” (de Haan, 1935: 398).

26. De Haan, 1935: 271, 354; Taylor, 1983: 17; Raben, 1996: 12; Boomgaard, 2004: 85.

27. See for example Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.), III: 545, 572, 589, 775.

In 1612, an influential VOC official named Jacob L'Hermite recommended increasing the population of the Banda islands in order to stimulate the production of nutmeg. Coen, who repeated this advice four years later, suggested using slaves and convicts, especially Gujaratis.²⁸ In fact, by the 1620s, the VOC was facing a serious problem because numerous native slaves were fleeing the nutmeg plantations. Therefore, the Dutch decided to evacuate all the natives from the Banda archipelago and to replace them by slaves brought from South Asia.²⁹ It seems that the first significant batch, 355 individuals, arrived from Batavia in 1622. Most of them were probably South Asians, including former Gujarati sailors (Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.), III: 135). The mortality rate of the slaves in Banda was enormous.³⁰ In 1626, there were more than 4,000 *vrije lieden* and slaves.³¹ Four years later, Banda had a population of 702 VOC slaves, including 335 physically able to work (Tiele & Heeres, 1895, II: 163). 1,865 foreign slaves, including slaves from Bengal and Malabar, were counted in 1637.³² In 1680, Banda still received slaves from Malabar, and there were still 1,500 slaves living in this archipelago.³³ Mardijkers also settled as early as 1616 in the Banda islands (de Jonge, 1864-1873, IV: 47). In 1689, the number of Christian Mardijkers exceeded 1,300, whereas the number of Moors exceeded 300 individuals.³⁴ Ambon also received slaves of South Asian origin. Their number exceeded 300 in 1627 (Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.), V: 66; VI: 398). By 1690, among the 72,000 inhabitants of the island, there were 500 Mardijkers and almost 8,000 slaves, probably of South Asian origin.³⁵ Ternate was also a destination for Mardijkers and slaves during the 17th century. In the 1680s, the island had some 90 Mardijkers and 330 slaves, probably of South Asian origin.³⁶ Sumatra was

28. De Jonge, 1864-1873, III: 390; Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.), II: 206; VII(1): 167; Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 10/10/1616: 196. In 1614, Gerard Reynst recommended increasing the population of Maluku with slaves from Madagascar (Coolhaas (ed.), GM Reynst, Bantam, 11/11/1614: 44).

29. Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.), I: 794; Tiele & Heeres, 1895, II: xvii-xviii.

30. Coolhaas (ed.), Carpentier *et al.*, 3/02/1626, GM I: 186. Among Bengali and Malabar slaves especially (Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.), V: 296; van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 31/05/1661: 149).

31. Coolhaas (ed.), Carpentier *et al.*, GM I, 13/12/1626: 223-224.

32. Van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 1636: 6/10/1636: 236; Coolhaas (ed.), van Diemen *et al.*, Batavia, 9/12/1637, GM I: 615.

33. Coolhaas (ed.), van Goens *et al.*, 13/10/1680, GM IV: 406; van Goens, GM IV, 29/04/1681: 431.

34. *Ibid.*, Camphuys *et al.*, 30/12/1689, GM V: 301; Camphuys *et al.*, 26/03/1691, GM V: 392.

35. Coolhaas (ed.), Camphuys *et al.*, 26/03/1691, GM V: 390.

36. Coolhaas (ed.), Camphuys *et al.*, 13/12/1686, GM V: 33.

another destination for VOC slaves. Miners and servants from Malabar worked in the goldmines of West Sumatra since the 1670s.³⁷

Spouses and concubines

Very few sources mention the presence of South Asian women following their husband in maritime Southeast Asia,³⁸ and so far archaeological data seldom substantiate their presence.³⁹ In contrast with this general impression, Pires mentions the large number of Bengali men and women in Melaka at the beginning of the 16th century (Pires, 1990, I: 93). In that case, they were probably not slaves. Moreover, a number of local rulers brought or tried to bring Muslim or Hindu women from Gujarat.⁴⁰ In fact, most of the South Asian women living in the region were slaves or former slaves, many of them spouses or concubines. After the failure of its effort to attract Dutch women on a massive scale, from 1635 the VOC decided to support marriages between its low-level staff and Asian women in order to create a mestizo community loyal to the VOC. Portuguese speaking slaves from Malabar and Coromandel coasts were particularly in demand for this end.⁴¹

Warriors

The presence of South Asian warriors in maritime Southeast Asia probably predates the period under study here. It is possible for example that foreign troops protected South Asian trade-guilds in South Thailand since the 9th century and in North Sumatra since the 11th century until the 13th

37. Van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 1673, p. 134: 31/05/1673; Coolhaas (ed.), van Goens *et al.*, GM IV, 21/12/1678: 253; Coolhaas (ed.), van Goens *et al.*, GM IV, 13/03/1680: 385; Hesse, 1931: 84.

38. In 1602, François Martin mentions the presence in Aceh of a large number of “Turks” who came from India and Sri Lanka, some of them with their spouses (Martin *in* Pyrard, 1998, II: 925). I would like also to add the mentions of widows going with their late husband on the funeral pyre as required by the Hindu tradition. See accounts by Martin (1602) (Martin *in* Pyrard, 1998, II: 924) and Cortemünde (1953: 139) regarding Banten (I would like to thank Claude Guillot for having provided a translation of this passage of Cortemünde to me).

39. In Kota Cina, the discovery of a Tamil female gold jewel (*tali* of spouses) led to the suggestion that a number of South Indian women were living there (E. McKinnon, 1984: 87). *Sulalat al Salatin* mentions the presence in Melaka of a sister of Tun Ali (a son of the Indian “prince” Baginda Mani Puridam), who became a wife of Sultan Mansur Syah (SEME CH 145). Even if the authenticity of this story is impossible to verify, it shows at least that female immigration from South Asia was a plausible phenomenon in the local imaginary at the time of the writing of the text.

40. *India Office Records* E/3/37 p. 4216 – 30/07/1676. I thank Claude Guillot for having informed me of this important document. See also van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 15/06/1681: 369. It should be added that when the Portuguese envoy Joris de Conha went to Mataram in April 1636, he brought three Gujarati women as a present to the ruler (van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 18/08/1636: 195).

41. Taylor, 1983: 16-17; Blussé, 1986: 172.

century.⁴² North of Lake Toba in North Sumatra, the literature of the Karo people still preserves the tradition of a rich Indian trader coming there followed by troops spreading terror in the country.⁴³ This tradition could be related to the trade-guilds or to a later period.

Information that is more detailed is available from the 16th century onwards. By the turn of the 16th century, Persians and Turks, some of them probably coming from India, were mercenaries in the Melaka army (Thomaz, 2004: 130, 147). In 1510, the famous Gujarati merchant Malik Gopi sent warriors to Melaka in order to strengthen the troops of Sultan Mahmud Syah (Alves, 2003: 104). Several people, certainly or very likely of South Asian origin, did play a role in the army elite of the sultanate at that time: Koja Husain was *laksamana* (admiral), Tun Bandan, a warrior from Bengal, was one of the closest aides of the sultan and in favor of a military solution against the Portuguese. He died during the conquest of the town by the Portuguese (*ibid.*: 301). Tun Majlis, of Bengali or Turkish origin, came to serve under Sultan Mahmud and followed him to Bintan after the defeat. He went back to Melaka in 1512 to try to reinstate the sultan but failed. He reappeared nine years later in Gaur, Bengal (*ibid.*: 311).

In Portuguese Melaka, the Portuguese residents under the authority of the *Estado da India* (*casados*) owned some 2,000 slaves mostly used for military purposes (Thomaz, 1985: 64-65), many of them brought from South Asia. The Portuguese also enrolled Indo-Portuguese mestizos. Later, the Dutch captured many of these slaves and mestizos and brought them to Batavia.

In Aceh by the 1530s, Gujarati, Malabar, Turk and Abyssinian warriors were among troops fighting for the sultanate against its neighbors: the “Batas” and the kingdom of Aru (Mendes Pinto, 1991: 70). Later, Malabar warriors boarded Acehnese vessels during the attack against Melaka in 1568 (Meilink-Roelofs, 1962: 144-5). Regarding these warriors from Gujarat and Malabar, we do not know whether they were official soldiers sent by the respective kingdoms, troops made up of traders living in Aceh, mercenaries or slaves. The marine officer leading the troops in Aceh was Kuti Ali Marikkar, a man from Malabar (Mendes Pinto, 1991: 69, 99, 101). The Turks and Abyssinians probably came from Gujarat.⁴⁴ In the middle of the 16th century, Demak was also using Malabar and Turks soldiers against Pasuruan, and these Turks probably came from Gujarat via Aceh (*ibid.*: 596). After the fall of Vijayanagar in 1565, Aceh received troops from Golconda to attack Melaka (Subrahmanyam 1990: 151-3).

42. Regarding the hypothesis of the presence of soldiers at Takuapa, see Abraham, 1988: 31.

43. E. McKinnon, 1984: 27; E. McKinnon, 1996: 95, 97.

44. For a recent hypothesis on this question, see Guillot & Kalus, 2006: 91, 93.

I have mentioned earlier slaves and mestizos captured by the Dutch. Some of them became soldiers of the VOC. Considered as free men they were posted in several garrisons of the Archipelago and took part in a series of campaigns not only in the Archipelago⁴⁵ but also in other areas. Several of them had a very strange destiny, as they sailed back to South Asia to take part in the conquest of Colombo in 1655 (Dam, 1927-43, II(2): 255). South Asian *Mardijkers* even led some of these expeditions. For instance, Joan de Brito, a man from Cochin who had Javanese and Balinese troops under his authority, led several expeditions during the war against Banten in 1682.

Beside these *Mardijkers* of South Asian origin, two other categories participated in several expeditions. The first includes the Moors of Batavia, that is the Muslim community from Southeast India, which also took part in expeditions launched by the VOC (Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 31/12/1682 (1682-II): 1471). The second one includes a number of Gujarati sailors captured by the VOC who were sent as soldiers to the island of Seram in 1622 (Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.), VII(2): 948). Moreover, hundreds of these Gujaratis found also their way to Banten where they fought on the sultanate side during its conquest by the VOC in 1682 (van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 4/12/1682 (1682-II): 1349).

Tax collectors

To put a foreigner in charge of collecting taxes seems a very ancient practice in Java. In fact, as early as the beginning of the 10th century, traders from South Asia appear in inscriptions in the category of *warga kilalan* interpreted as “tax farmer”.⁴⁶ We know that this practice lasted until the very beginning of the 14th century (Balawi inscr., 1305), and was entrusted to Kelings, Aryas, Singhalas and Karnatakas (Poerbatjaraka, 1936). It has been assumed that they collected the taxes from villagers, probably mainly on markets (Christie, 1982: 271).

There is no more trace of South Asian “tax collectors” until the second half of the 17th century, when *Mardijkers* took part in the collection of taxes for the VOC in Batavia. As far as I know, the first case is dated 1665 and is related to the tax on rice.⁴⁷ *Mardijkers* played an important role in this tax farming activity at least until the beginning of the 1680s. In 1683 for

45. Maluku in 1629 (Coolhaas (ed.), *Specx et al.*, Batavia, 15/12/1629, GM I: 259); Jepara in 1677 (de Graaf, 1961-2, II: 147); north coast of Java against Trunojoyo in 1678 (de Jonge, 1873, VII: lxiv); Banten in 1682 (van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 13/12/1682 (1682-II): 1367).

46. Palebuan (927 CE) is the single authentic tenth-century inscription which mentions a list of foreigners. Among them are Singhalas and Pandikiras (South India) who are clearly identified as *kilalan* (Christie, 1998: 367).

47. Van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 01/01/1665: 1. About 1680, *Mardijkers* controlled a large part of the rice trade between the north coast of Java and Batavia (Nagtegaal, 1996: 127).

example, from 18 farms to be allocated, they obtained seven accounting for 40% of the total value of this activity (van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 31/12/1682 (1682-II): 1469-1470).

South Asians also had a significant place in tax farming during the Melaka Sultanate. As a ship arrived at the port with a cargo whose market value was known approximately, a group of merchants including five Kelings and five members from other regions formed a committee summoned by the customs officer, the *syahbandar*. Based on local rules, this committee estimated the value of the cargo and then handed over the customs duties to the *tumenggung* (Meilink-Roelofs, 1962: 44).

Moneylenders

Probably since the beginning of the period referred to here, part of maritime Southeast Asia was already integrated in the vast network of moneylenders from South Asia, especially the Chettiars. Their key-institution was the temple fund, to which all members contributed and were able to borrow. They developed a system of negotiable bills of exchange or *hundi*, which could be drawn out in a place and payable in another place, in India as well in Melaka, Banten or Aceh (Reid, 1993, II: 112). The success of these long distance complex financial transactions was based on the principle of mutual trust and shared values, hence the importance of religious solidarities. Moreover, as independent moneylenders, they were considered by the local authority as a way to strengthen their power against potential challengers. As such, the most prominent among these South Asian moneylenders certainly constituted very influential lobbies.

It was probably these Chettiars who were mentioned in the region as Keling moneylenders until the 17th century. It was for example the case in Banten, where the Kelings belonged to the wealthiest merchants in town by the end of the 16th century, and used to lend money especially for maritime transports.⁴⁸ They were still there in 1670.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, the Chettiars were not the only South Asian community of moneylenders in maritime Southeast Asia. Jews were there since the 16th century. An example is Khoja Azedim from Malabar, who was moneylender in Melaka in 1514 (Thomaz, 1993: 82). Gujaratis were also active in money lending in Banten by the end of the same century (Lodewycksz, 1609: 30).

Seamen and fishermen

According to a tradition collected by Linschoten in Goa at the beginning of the 1580s, various communities of fishermen, including people from

48. Lodewycksz, 1609: 30; Rantoandro, 2000: 588.

49. Vermeulen, 1677: 25; Struys, 1682: 70.

Bengal, were the earliest settlers in Melaka (Linschoten, 1988, I: 106). Bengali fishermen in Melaka were still noticed at the beginning of the 16th century (Pires, 1990, I: 93).

After the conquest of the town by the Portuguese, their Gujarati captives appeared in the region on the markets for seamen. In fact, the Portuguese employed them as rowers in their boats.⁵⁰ Several sources dating from the end of the 16th century until the beginning of the 17th century mention their presence in Maluku, working on Portuguese ships together with Indo-Portuguese mestizos. At that time, both groups formed the majority of the seamen working for the Portuguese in the far eastern part of Nusantara.⁵¹ In fact, during the 17th century, Gujarati seamen were regarded as among the most capable. They belonged to several castes specialized in navigation but some of them were also Muslims settled there, maybe Hindus converted to Islam.⁵² In Banten, by the end of the 16th century, these seamen of low social status seemed to make up the majority of the Gujarati community there (Lodewycksz, 1609: 30), and were hired on foreign ships, especially English and Dutch.⁵³ Gujarati seamen were also present on the labour market in Batavia at least since 1625 and the VOC had mixed Dutch-Gujarati crews.⁵⁴ If the Gujaratis seem to have formed the majority of South Asian seamen available on the labour market of maritime Southeast Asia during the 16th-17th centuries, they were not alone. We know for instance that the Portuguese quickly recognized the technical skills of the Kanaris, groups of professional Hindu or Muslim seamen from Konkan.⁵⁵ There is also the example of a cosmopolitan crew aboard a VOC ship around 1680, with seamen of Singhalese, Malabar and Maldivian origins (Schweitzer, 1929: 200).

Westerners did not have the monopoly over these South Asian seamen. In the second half of the 17th century, the royal trade ships of Banten sent up to the Coromandel Coast and Gujarat had South Asian seamen in their crews (Rantoandro, 1998: 266), seamen with Banten as their home port. The sultan and dignitaries preferred to hire them for their ships above Javanese crews (*ibid.*, 2000: 593). Several sources of the 1670s and 1680s even mentioned

50. Coolhaas in Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.), VII(2): 854, footnote 22. The Portuguese quickly acknowledged the quality of seamen belonging to various coastal communities in Gujarat, especially the Navayats of Rander (Pearson, 1987: 73).

51. Keuning (ed.), 1942, III: xix; V, eerste stuck, 1947: 140; tweede stuck, 1949: 177; Foster (ed.), II: 31 (Cokayne).

52. Arasaratnam, 1994: 260. At the beginning of the 16th century, Albuquerque noticed that the Vanias of Cambay hired Muslim crews (Pearson, 1981: 121).

53. Scott, 1990: 150; "Beschrijvinghe van de tweede Voyagie.... Onder den Heer Admiraal Steven vander Hagen..." in Commelin (ed.), 1646, II: 51; "W. Keeling" in Purchas, 1905, II: 538.

54. Van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 10/02/1625: 126; DR 05/1625: 153.

55. Pearson, 1981: 123; Arasaratnam, 1994: 261.

the names of *nakhodas*, for example the two Chulias Taja Mudalyar and Usa [Hussein] Marikar.⁵⁶ A source dated to 1689 (Dampier) attests that at that time South Asian seamen were still available on the labour market in the region (Dampier, 1715: 137). These seamen did not spend all their time aboard the ships. They went ashore, especially during the time of transactions. Some of them stayed even longer. During one of his stays in Aceh in 1621, Beaulieu mentioned the repurchase there of several Christian seamen from Goa, Cochin and Melaka. Formerly working on Portuguese ships, these people were probably captives or slaves (Beaulieu, 1996: 151). The career of these seamen sometimes took another turn. We have at least one example of South Asian seamen who became pirates in the region: a seemingly relatively important group of Gujarati pirates headed by Khoja Asem was in fact active in the South China Sea during the 1530s (Gopal, 1975: 12).

Finally, many South Asians were probably working as fishermen in the region, but they are very poorly documented.

Miners and artisans

In maritime Southeast Asia, local literature is the main type of source revealing direct indications of gold mining by South Asian people before the arrival of the Portuguese. As far as I know, the clearest indication is to be found in the Malay text entitled *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, which recounts the arrival in Pasai of an Indian merchant ship in which there is someone able to see the “smoke of gold” (*asap emas*).⁵⁷ Claiming to have detected seven goldfields unknown to the local people, he is given customary clothes by the ruler, who sends him to look for the sites with one of his guards and he manages to find a lot of gold (Jones (ed.), 1999: 21). A similar idea is found in a tale from the Karo area, north of Lake Toba, which recounts that, at the beginning, gold was the property of Tuan Banua Keling, the god of the intermediate world, and again here tales related to gold mention the presence of an “Indian” with supernatural powers (E. McKinnon, 1984: 29). This idea of gold mining carried out by Indians in the hinterland of North Sumatra may somehow be strengthened by the find of an inscribed gold ring in Lobu Tua near Barus, on the west coast of North Sumatra. The Sanskrit inscription on this ring is dated mid-9th until mid-11th centuries and has been read “*tamasi wara kuru*”, which is supposed to mean “in the dark I choose to work”. Based on this inscription, it has been assumed that its owner was an Indian miner (Friederich, 1858).

56. Van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 11/06/1680; Arasaratnam, 1995c: 135.

57. Hill (1960: 62) suggests the transcription ‘*asfa*’, not ‘*asap*’, which would mean ‘ore’ in Arabic (footnote 56 p. 182).

Much later, by mid-17th century, we know that Kelings managed the exploitation of gold deposits in the suburbs of Melaka (Arasaratnam, 1995b: 484) and that two Hindu Kelings from Nagapattinam had discovered a goldfield not far from the town.⁵⁸ There are other indications of early South Asian direct involvement in the exploitation of gold in the region or very close to it. One of them predates by a millennium the period under focus here. It is a touchstone found in Krabi, on the west coast of South Thailand. This artefact bears a Tamil inscription dated to the third or fourth century AD, which gives the name of a Tamil goldsmith, Perumpatan Kal.⁵⁹ A millennium later, not very far from Krabi, the Tamil inscription of Neusu, in the suburbs of present Banda Aceh, mentions activities related to gold by members of a South Indian trade guild. It is dated to the end of the 13th century (Subbarayalu, 2009). Therefore, between the Krabi inscription and this Aceh inscription fell maybe a millennium of exploitation of gold deposits by South Asian people in North Sumatra.

I have mentioned earlier the connection between gold and Kelings in the Karo area. In fact, in the same area, there is another tradition linking metal-working and the Kelings (E. McKinnon, 1984: 26, 88). There are other indications of this connection further south through two place names called “*pijor Koling*”, one south of Padang Sidempuan,⁶⁰ the other near Langgapayung. This name can be translated by “iron-working workshop run by Kelings”. It is interesting to note that the same link occurs in traditions in the eastern part of the Archipelago. For instance, the goldsmiths on the island of Lease near Ambon recount a tradition according to which they learned metal-working from Kelings of Coromandel (Rumphius, 2002: 111). In Melaka, the presence of South Asian artisans is attested since 1520.⁶¹ By the end of the century, at the latest, the wealthy Keling merchants of Melaka seemed to have brought goldsmiths, carpenters and other artisans with them (Arasaratnam, 1986: 115). Despite the significant decrease of the South Asian community during the 17th century, the presence of Indian artisans in Melaka was still mentioned by the end of the period (Watson Andaya, 1983: 207).

At least since the 17th century, Bengali people were well known as goldsmiths in Banten (Rantoandro, 2000: 551) and numerous Indian artisans were based in Aceh (Schrieke, 1957, II: 246). Moreover, at the same time, Indian and Singhalese cabinetmakers were working in Batavia. They represent an interesting case regarding the diffusion of furniture styles during

58. Van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 04/1642 (1641-2): 139; DR 09/1642 (1641-2): 170.

59. Srisuchat, 1996: 250, 269; Karashima, 2002: 10, 17.

60. E. McKinnon, 1984: 343. Near the confluence of the Angkola and Kumal rivers.

61. There were at least one mason from Bengal (Manguin, 1983: table 1) and Bengali tailors (Pires, 1990, I: 93).

the 17th century, as they brought a craftsmanship whose basis seem to have been set by the Portuguese in India. They were free workers, but also slaves or former slaves working under the supervision of Dutch masters.⁶²

Interpreters

At least from the end of the 16th century, sources about Banten mention the presence of Indian interpreters who were familiar with the Portuguese language. As the Portuguese started to visit Banten in 1540, one can assume that these interpreters were in demand there since mid-16th century (Rantoandro, 2000: 695, 731). Abdul, a “Moor” from Gujarat speaking good Portuguese, good Javanese and good Malay, even went to Holland with the first Dutch expedition and was back to Banten in 1598 with van Neck (Ijzerman & Rouffaer, 1915-1929, I: 160). This presence of Indian interpreters at Banten lasted until the beginning of the 17th century. At that time, Keling Panjang, a Tamil from Meliapur, was the head of the protocol and official interpreter at the Banten court due to his good command of the Portuguese language. Involved with the party in favor of free trade during the 1602-1608 crisis, he left Banten the next year with most of the Kelings.⁶³

Apart from Banten, we have several indications during the whole 17th century of the existence of Indian interpreters in the region, from Aceh to Buton Island in present Sulawesi Tenggara Province.

When Peter Floris arrived in Patani in June 1612, a group of people, including Chettiars, came on board in order to translate into Malay the letter of the King of England (Floris, 1934: 33). At about the same time, further south, a Moor was the official interpreter of the Portuguese captain of Melaka (Verberckmoes & Slots, 1988: 106). A few years later, we know that the sultans of Johor used to send “Moors” as envoys to the Dutch. Both parties recognized these Indian Muslims as skilled interpreters and negotiators (Watson Andaya 1978: 24).

In Aceh, Beaulieu noted in 1621 the presence of a group of Portuguese mestizos, interpreters converted to Christianity, which had established a “monopoly on this activity”. They were also employed as advisors and experts. Beaulieu mentions the name of Pedro Lamença, the official interpreter at the court, speaking Malay as well as Portuguese, and he hired Domingo Valé, an interpreter from Cochin (Beaulieu, 1996: 105, 117). The interpreter working there for the Dutch at that time was Pedro Lorenço, described by Beaulieu as an Acehnese belonging to a fair social class (*ibid.*:

62. Sons of *Mardijkers* were often apprentices to furniture makers (de Haan, 1935: 415; Breuning, 1954: 74).

63. Guillot, 1999: 168-169; Rantoandro, 2000: 588, 590.

122). From his name, in fact, he was very probably a Portuguese mestizo of Indian origin as the other interpreters.

A month before stopping at Aceh, Beaulieu was at Tiku, on the west coast of Sumatra, where he mentions that the former interpreter of the English there was someone from Goa named Pedro Ferreiro (*ibid.*: 91). We know another interpreter from Goa, this one working for the Dutch around 1615, when they settled in Jacatra. He was interpreter of Japanese language (Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.), IV: 151).

Later, in the 1670s, the interpreter of the sultan of Banten was a Bengali (Rantoandro, 2000: 730), whereas a Koja was the interpreter of the king of Buton (Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 02/01/1675: 5). This kind of association was not restricted to the coastal polities. We know for instance that Pakubuwana I, the ruler of Mataram at the beginning of the 18th century (1704-1719), had a Bengali interpreter during his meetings with the Dutch (Ricklefs, 1993: 137).

Staff and servants

In Melaka, before the Portuguese conquest, numerous clerks and accountants of Muslim traders were skilled Hindus (Sandhu, 1973: 54). We know also that at least since the 17th century, South Asians were secretaries of local rulers and dignitaries as well as foreigners.⁶⁴ In Batavia, numerous *Mardijkers* were clerks working for the VOC (Blussé, 1983: 70). In Aceh, the cashiers of the local and foreign merchants were generally Gujaratis, because of their reputation as most proficient identifiers of counterfeit money (Dampier, 1715: 164).

At least since the end of the 16th century, the wealthy Keling merchants of Melaka seem to have brought servants, laundry workers and other members of castes specialized in services (Arasaratnam, 1986: 115).

Eunuchs were noticed in the Banten and Aceh courts by the beginning of the 17th century. Pyrard de Laval, a French traveler, noticed that in Banten “high class women were securely taken care of by eunuchs in large number, and the Banten people bought them for that purpose” (Pyrard de Laval, 1998, II: 676). Another French traveler, Martin de Vitre, observed the same thing at the Aceh court where their main task was to keep guard over the concubines of the sultan (Beaulieu, 1996: 106, footnote 19). Some 20 years later, the first contact Beaulieu had with people in Aceh was on a royal ship where he saw one eunuch wearing the royal kris or seal, adding that there were 500 of them at the same court (*ibid.*: 104, 204).

64. In 1664 in Kedah, Eduard Lok, probably a private English trader, hired a Vania or a Keling as secretary in order to deal with payments to be made regarding his transactions and those of Mondas Naen, a trader from Coromandel (van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 9/07/1664: 267). At the same time in Makassar, Joseph de Silva, born a Kanari, was the secretary of Kraeng Palingo (*ibid.*, DR 17/09/1666: 149).

Unfortunately, these three almost contemporary observations do not give any clue about the origin and antiquity of this tradition. Although none of these sources specifies the origin of these eunuchs, I suggest that they probably came from South Asia, precisely from Bengal, where the trafficking of eunuchs was flourishing at least since the 16th century (Bouchon & Thomaz (ed.), 1988: 162). Around 1515, Barbosa mentioned that in Bengal, Muslim traders often ventured in the hinterland to buy pagan boys, castrate them before training and selling them (Barbosa, 1918-21, II: 147). This hinterland could be the Sylhet area, to the northeast of Dhaka, where at that time boys were particularly in demand to be made into eunuchs. After the castration, they were well treated, sometimes receiving an Islamic education, before being sold in Bengal itself or being exported in the neighboring countries of the Indian Ocean where they were employed in harems and sometimes got access to high civil and military positions (Bouchon & Thomaz (ed.), 1988: 162).

Another community needs to be mentioned here: the Muslims from Coromandel settled at Bengkulu with the English after the latter left Banten at the beginning of the 1680s (Coolhaas (ed.), Camphuys, 08/03/1686, GM V: 18).

Religious proselytizers and leaders

For the period examined here, the oldest explicit mentions I have found so far regarding the presence of South Asian Hindu or Buddhist religious teachers in the region relate to Majapahit, where people from Karnataka and Gaur stayed at the court in the mid-14th century (Pigeaud, 1960-3, III: 98). Two names are especially mentioned: Buddhaditya from Kancipuri and a Brahman named Mutali (or Mudaliar?) Sahrdaya. Both wrote Sanskrit verses to honor the king Hayam Wuruk. By the end of the following century, the Old Javanese inscription of Trailokyapuri (dated 1486) mentions an order by King Girindrawardhana *dyah* Ranawijaya addressed to a court brahmin, Brahmaraja of the Bharadvaja *gotra*, presumably an Indian (Casparis & Mabbett, 1999: 307). Looking for the motivation of these Indian Brahmans risking been polluted through contact with foreigners, the main one was maybe the financial advantages offered by the status of guest of honor at the Majapahit Court. Certainly revered by their host, these guests were prestigious because of their birth and as such were superior to the local religious teachers (Pigeaud, 1960-3, IV: 259, 270, 272). Another advantage was probably their supposed supernatural power, especially for the specialists of tantric Shivaism (Sarkar, 1970: 178).

It is interesting to draw a parallel between this situation and the later narratives, which recount the magical powers of Sufi masters. These powers are considered as crucial in several stories of Islamization of religious

leaders or rulers.⁶⁵ One example is the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* that recounts the conversion of the king of Pasai, Merah Silu, by a dervish from Coromandel described as “a descendant of the caliph Abu Bakar”. Apart from this case, as far as I know, neither in the whole history of the Samudra-Pasai Sultanate, nor in 15th century Melaka, traces of South Asian religious leaders have been found. The various sources only mention Persian and Arabic religious dignitaries.⁶⁶ The usual question needs to be raised here: is it possible that some of these Persian and Arab dignitaries were in fact previously or still based in South Asia?

I have recently highlighted this question for another place, namely Barus on the west coast of North Sumatra. Based on various sources, I suggested very tentatively that Barus could have been Islamized during the second half of the 13th century. Three sources mention that the hero of the Islamization of Barus came by ship, but do not agree on his origin and the route he followed. According to the unpublished *Hikajat Tjarita Baros* he departed from “Roehoem” (Rum) and stopped in India before to reach the archipelago. According to a legend collected in Barus at the beginning of the 19th century, he departed from Makah and came straight to the archipelago. According to the *Sejarah Melayu*, he also departed from Makah but before reaching the archipelago, he spent some time in Ma’abri, Mutabari or Muktabar, which could be the Ma’bar of the ancient Arab sources, which is the Coromandel Coast.

It is not impossible that this hero was commemorated through a memorial to Syeikh Mahmud dated 1425/6 and bearing Arabic and Persian inscriptions still in situ on the highest hill of Barus (Perret, 2009: 583-4). The name of the sponsor of this monument, perhaps an indication about the origin of the hero himself, could also lead to both India and the Middle East. In fact this Nugan b. Madari or Tugin b. Madari (as deciphered by Kalus, 2003: 311-3) could refer to a *tariqah* (Muslim brotherhood) established by Shah Madar and possibly active in India, especially in Bengal, during the 13th century. If Madari refers to the place name Madar, then Syeikh Mahmud could be linked to Yemen where four places still bear this name or to a town near Al Basrah in Iraq (Perret, 2009: 585).

For the period under study here, the best known examples are probably the Arab ulamas involved in the connection between the Gujarat and Aceh. It seems that ulamas from Gujarat regularly visited Aceh since the 1570s (Azra, 1995: 55). Among them was an Arab, Syeikh Muhammad Jailani,

65. For instance at Banten Girang (see Pudjiastuti (ed.), 1991: 91, 192-197; Guillot, Nurhakim & Wibisono, 1994: 93-95) or on the northeast coast of Sumatra (see Perret, 1995: 128-129).

66. Alves, 2003: tables on the verso of page 223; Guillot & Kalus, 2008.

from the present town of Rander. He arrived in Aceh in the 1580s to teach Islamic law, ethics, logic and rhetoric. He went back to Makah before to come again to Aceh a few years later to teach mysticism during the reign of Sultan Ala ad-Din Riayat Syah (1589-1604).⁶⁷ Syeikh Muhammad Jailani was the uncle of the famous Nur Al-Din Muhammad b. 'Ali b. Hasanji Al-Hamid Al-Syafi'i Al-Asy'ari Al-'Aydarusi Al-Raniri, also from Rander in Gujarat, whose father was a Hadrami. After a stay in Makah around 1620, he became head (*khalifah*) of a Muslim brotherhood, the tariqah Rifa'iyah, which he introduced later in maritime Southeast Asia. In Aceh, where he certainly stayed between 1637 and 1643, he became Syaikh Al-Islam, the most important religious adviser of the sultanate. He started a reform of Islam and had some opponents executed.⁶⁸ Facing a violent reaction he rushed back to Rander in 1643. Raniri was a prolific writer, producing religious and profane literature, including his famous *Bustan al-Salatin*.⁶⁹ Regarding 15th century Java, I refer to Pires, who mentions that Muslim traders from Gujarat and Bengal living on the north coast of Java used to bring in religious leaders, probably from the same regions. The economic success of these traders, exemplified through the construction of mosques, opened the door to the control of the commerce and power by their descendants (Pires, 1990, I: 182). These Muslim dignitaries probably legitimized their control of the power. Two centuries later, there is the interesting mention, in 1636, of the presence at the court of Mataram of a Haji Gujarati, who officiated the ceremony during which the ruler was conferred the title of sultan (de Graaf, 1958: 223, 269). By the end of the 17th century, during the Banten civil war, a large number of "Moors" left Banten for Batavia, where they spread Islam by opening *madrasah* and *langgar* (Heuken, 2003: 25, 42).

The single indication I have found regarding the presence of South Asian religious scholars in Bali during the period under study here refers to scholars formerly living in religious centres in the kingdom of Majapahit that encountered local scholars during the 16th century, after the fall of this kingdom.⁷⁰ In present Sulawesi, Indian Muslims are mentioned spreading their religion in Makassar by the mid-17th century (Schouten, 1707: 156 [1659]). A century earlier (1559), there is a similar report regarding Muslims from Calicut and Bengal in the island of Solor.⁷¹ In the eastern part of the

67. Nur Al-Din Al-Raniri, 1992: 5-6; Azra, 1995: 170; Bruinessen, 1995: 191.

68. Azra, 1995: 177; Bruinessen, 1995: 192.

69. For a very recent study of Raniri and the *Bustan al-Salatin*, which among other things highlights his loose cultural relations with India, see Wormser, 2010.

70. Creese (1997: 13) quoted by Hall, 2004: 220, footnote 8.

71. Jacobs (ed.), 1974: 302; Roevers, 2002: 61.

archipelago, areas such as Ambon (especially Hoamal and Hitu) were already strongly influenced by Islam at the turn of the 16th century, because foreign traders visited them. It is possible that the process of Islamization started there as soon as the 14th century, led by “Gujarati” traders who used Gresik in Java as a port of call. Data are more detailed for the beginning of the 17th century. They show the use of various strategies of Islamization, including the opening of specific schools to Islamize the children of the elite, where teachers were mostly Javanese and Gujarati traders or sailors. These Gujaratis claimed to be *syariff*,⁷² meaning “person of noble birth” or “descendant of the Prophet Muhammad”. Therefore, it is not surprising that, as in Aceh, people in Ambon still keep the tradition of Islamic teachers from Gujarat, starting probably in the 17th century with a certain Daud Ji Suleiman, followed by his son Abdul Rachman and later his grandson Hasan Suleiman (Knaap, 1987: 76, 80).

By the end of the 17th century, in various regions of the archipelago, South Asian Muslims were active in the establishment of ‘sects’ as mentioned in Dutch archives. These ‘sects’ were perhaps *tariqah*. These people were also active in spreading propaganda against the VOC or the Westerners.⁷³ Another combination found in maritime Southeast Asia was the South Asian individual, who was at the same time trader and religious leader, for example Koja Husain, a Gujarati probably from Dhabol, living in Johor by the end of the 16th century (Alves, 2003: 189-190). There were also South Asian traders who helped members of local ruling families to perform the hajj. This was the case for example in 1675, when a prince of Banten left aboard a Gujarati ship sailing first to Surat before to go to Makah with a large retinue (Arasaratnam, 1994a: 74).

Rulers and civil dignitaries

During almost the entire period considered here, most of the coastal polities of maritime Southeast Asia, from Aceh to Ternate and the Malay Peninsula, integrated more or less acculturated foreigners, including people from South Asia, in their political structure and highest administration. It seems that opportunities of upward mobility were numerous, and this characteristic may have encouraged people from South Asia to settle in the region. Based on the available sources, this phenomenon is certainly noticeable from the second half of the 14th century, but I suggest that it could perpetuate a much older regional tradition of entrusting foreigners with the

72. “MvO Artus Gijsels (1921)” in Knaap (ed.), 1987: 27-28; Knaap, 1987: 75.

73. For Banten, Batavia and Cirebon at the end of the 1670s, see Kathryn Wells (1970: 50). On the activities of a certain Sharif Habib Allah under the protection of the emperor Aurangzeb, ten years later, see Ricklefs, 1993: 305, footnote 39.

responsibility on specific matters, especially foreign affairs, whether economic or political. Compared to other social categories, this phenomenon is rather well documented in the sources.

A recent in-depth study of local epigraphic material revealed that during the second half of the 14th century, Pasai was ruled by a ‘Turkish’ elite from Bengal (Guillot & Kalus, 2008: 69-74). Inscriptions on tombstones reveal the names of four rulers. The discovery of this foreign dynasty confirms a Portuguese source according to which at a time of power vacuum and general weakness of the sultanate, local Muslim traders chose to put a ‘Muslim Bengali’ on the throne. They abandoned the power at the end of the 14th century, when the dynasty which founded the sultanate came back on the throne.

At least two individuals originating from South Asia acceded to the function of governor in the region. By the mid-16th century, Kaicil Guzerate⁷⁴ became governor (*sengaji*) of the kingdom of Jailolo, in the northern part of Halmahera, under the authority of Sultan Hairun of Ternate (r. 1535-70). He was previously the chief of his naval fleet. About 1616, Mataram destroyed and took control of ports on the north coast of Java, including Jepara, where a Gujarati bearing the title of Khoja Hulubalang (or Khoja Baba) was posted as governor of the town (and maybe of the surrounding territories) under the authority of the Mataram ruler.⁷⁵ The conditions of his access to power are not clear, but he was perhaps *syahbandar* of the port previously, and I assume that, according to his title of *hulubalang*, he played a major role in the conquest of the town. Coen noticed that he spoke Malay but not Javanese.⁷⁶ Another similar case yet to be confirmed is that of a probable Muslim from Coromandel who, during the 1510s, was posted as governor of Cirebon under the authority of Demak at the time.⁷⁷ Sources are relatively rich regarding the presence of *bendaharas* or *tumenggungs*, a kind of minister of finances, of South Asian origin in kingdoms of maritime Southeast Asia. In fact, sources reveal that there was a long tradition of “Keling *bendahara*” in 15th century Melaka and “Keling Tumenggung” in 16th century Banten.

Based on the *Sejarah Melayu* and the *Suma Oriental*, we may assume that a Keling gained prominence at the court of Melaka around the mid-15th century. Through his marriage to a daughter of the *bendahara*, he probably

74. Jacobs (ed.), *Documenta*, 1974, I: 4, footnote 16 p. 31, footnote 24 p. 188. ‘Kaicil’, ‘Cachil’ or ‘quichil’, was the title of princes in Maluku (*ibid.*, I: 4, footnote 16 p. 31, footnote 13 p. 414, footnote 24 p. 188, 725, 731).

75. Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.), II: 77, 384; *ibid.* (ed.), VII(1): 638-639.

76. *Ibid.*, II: 384; VII(1): 638-639, footnote 3 p. 890; de Graaf, 1958: 51, 57-60, 65, 70, 119.

77. Pires mentions his name: Lebe Uça (Pires, 1990, I: 183).

gained the confidence and support of the local trading community. Whereas the highborn status of this Keling in the *Sejarah Melayu* could be one of the recurrent themes of the text recently highlighted (Chambert-Loir, 2005), he probably belonged to the Chettiar financial community, as he became *bendahara*. Moreover, if he was not a Muslim before to access this function, he converted soon thereafter as suggested by Pires.

The comparison of the genealogies of various versions of the *Sejarah Melayu* gives rise to caution regarding the authenticity and intensity of the bonds between the sultans and this *bendahara* line of descent initiated by a Keling. However, the *bendahara* line as a reservoir of spouses for the sultans does seem to be one of the structural features of the kingdom of Melaka. Pires also points to this phenomenon (1990, II: 249). This *bendahara* line of descent initiated by a Keling raises the question of the ethnic identity claimed or assigned by the descendants, whether in the male or in the female line. In fact, the *Sejarah Melayu* and Pires clearly identify the origin of the founder of the line of descent, but the answer is much less obvious regarding the descendants. A number of indications suggest that the Malay text seeks to emphasize their integration in the Malay community. After the Portuguese conquest, a Keling acceded again to the function of *bendahara* of Melaka: Nayinar Chatu, previously probably a moneylender in Pulicat, is surely the most often studied South Asian of 16th century Melaka so far. He committed suicide in 1514 and was replaced by his son.⁷⁸ This feature of a Keling attached to the function of *bendahara* seems to have been carried on by Johor, the heir of the Melaka Sultanate. In fact, sources reveal that, in 1535, one of the sons of the *bendahara* Tun Narawangsa bore the title of Tuanku Marakayar, a title linked without any ambiguity to the Marakkayar Muslim community of Coromandel, especially active in the ports of Kunjimedu and Nagore at the time (Alves, 2003: 312).

At Banten, Indians, especially Tamils, dominated the administration of the town from its foundation in 1527 until 1609. The Tamil Gobay held the highest function of *tumenggung* (Prime Minister for foreign affairs) in 1596. Three other South Asian individuals assisted him.⁷⁹ A number of South Asians also held the position of *syahbandar*. As an intermediary between the local ruler and the foreigners, it was a key position for economic relations. The function of *syahbandar* seems to appear in the context of Muslim kingdoms, but it was not an innovation in maritime Southeast Asia, as the

78. Pires, 1990, II: 281, note 2 p. 287; Thomaz, 1979: 114-116; Thomaz, 1985: 59-62; Bouchon, 1979: 132, 134; Reid, 1993, II: 112; Alves, 2001: 132-135, 256; Alves, 2003: 163, 256.

79. See Guillot, Nurhakim, Wibisono, 1994: 131; Guillot, 1991: 56, 60, 66, 70, 72; Guillot, 1993: 57, 59, 63-64; Guillot, 1999: 166, 168-170; 'Verhoeff' in Commelin (ed.), 1646, II: 45-6; Scott, 1990: 88.

function of *juru*⁸⁰ was already an element of the administration structure of Hindu-Buddhist Javanese polities since the 10th century at least.⁸¹ During the whole period focused here, *syahbandars* of Tamil and Telugu origins, but also from Gujarat and Bengal, are mentioned from Aceh to Ternate, including Pasai, Melaka, Pahang, Kedah, Banten, Jepara, Banjarmasin and Bima.

The Keling Nayinar Kuniyappan, perhaps from Kunjimeđu in Coromandel, held the position of *syahbandar* in Pasai between 1516 and about 1523. He was also a diplomat.⁸² Among the four *syahbandars* of Melaka during the rule of Sultan Mahmud Syah (1488-1511), two were South Asians. One was in charge of people and ships from Bunuaqujim (the Tamil and Telugu areas), Bengal, Pegu and Pasai, the other was in charge of the Gujarati (Pires, 1990, II: 265). The reasons behind this repartition are not clear, but the demographic importance of each of these communities was certainly a deciding factor. None of the names of these Keling *syahbandars* during the Melaka Sultanate has come down to us. We only know the title of Raja Mendeliar at the time of Sultan Mahmud Syah, an individual as rich as the *bendahara* and probably one of the most influential dignitaries at the court. Nayinar Melaka, another Tamil, held again the position of *syahbandar* at the time of captain Dom Estêvão da Gama – 1534-1539 – (Alves, 2003: footnote 1 p. 316).

In maritime Southeast Asia, several *syahbandars* bore this title of Raja Mudeliar (or Mendeliar) used in Tamil Nadu, in the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka and in Malabar, to designate a head of territory. It was also a title of a caste used by Tamils.⁸³ The last *syahbandar* of Banten Girang, at the beginning of the 16th century, was Raja Mudelyar (or Mudyliar). Jacques de Coutre mentions a Raja Mudelyar, “veedor de hazienda” of the sultan of Pahang in the 1590s (Verberckmoes & Stols, 1988: 60).

At Banten, during the entire 16th century, Kelings monopolized the single position of *syahbandar* (Rantoandro, 1998: 255). Syahbandar Keling replaced the above mentioned Raja Mudelyar by the end of the 1520s, soon after the foundation of Banten.⁸⁴ He held that position until the 1540s, after he took part in the military campaigns against Pajajaran. Since the end of the 1570s at least and for more than 20 years, a Tamil originating from Meliapur

80. Which appears in inscriptions in association with the name of an ethnic group.

81. As far as I know, the oldest authentic inscription which mentions this expression is the Barsahan inscription (908 CE). Probably its last occurrence appears in the Jiju inscription (last quarter of the 15th century), in the vicinity of Mojokerto (Sarkar, 1971: 361).

82. Alves, 1994: 135; *ibid.*, 1999: 121; *ibid.*, 2001: 137-142.

83. Yule & Burnell, 1994: 569; Coolhaas (ed.), GM II: 632, note 3.

84. A Syahbandar Keling appears in the *Sajarah Banten* as one of the heads of the Banten Girang troops during the expeditions of Islamization of the hinterland (Pudjiastuti (ed.), 1991: 93, 203).

was again *syahbandar* with the Javanese title of Kiayi Wijamanggala.⁸⁵ He was one of the few foreigners allowed to live inside the walled area, near the palace. By the turn of the 17th century, he was replaced by another Tamil, who held the function until 1609.⁸⁶ Some sixty years later, another South Asian individual was again *syahbandar* of Banten. In fact, Soliman Daud was in charge of the entire Indian community living there – people from Coromandel, Gujarat and Bengal – (Guillot, 1999: 179).

As far as I know, the last mention of a Keling *syahbandar* in the region refers to an individual named Saracsatty living in Krawang, near Batavia, in 1659. It does not mean that Tamils never assumed the function later, but their successors were undoubtedly Muslims called Chulias. As the word ‘Keling’ did not always refer to a follower of Hinduism, the substitution of the word ‘Keling’ by ‘Chulia’ during the 17th century cannot be interpreted as a rupture in the religious affiliation. In 1675, the main *syahbandar* at the court of Kedah was a powerful Chulia named Sarajah Cawa (Suraj Khan).⁸⁷ Two years later, the *syahbandar* of Ternate was Selebe (Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 29/07/1677: 244), a Chulia probably belonging to the Labbai community, well represented in the region at the time.

Since the end of the 15th century at least, until the Portuguese conquest, Melaka had a Gujarati *syahbandar*. Nakhoda Begawan, the only name (or title) left, held the function at the beginning of the 16th century. He was an influential spiritual master at the court of Sultan Mahmud Syah and played a major role during the first visit of the Portuguese to Melaka in 1509 (Alves, 2003: 165, 253).

As in Melaka, there were four *syahbandars* in Aceh,⁸⁸ including at least one Gujarati at the time of Iskandar Thani (1636-1641). Nakhuda Mu'tabar Khan held this position until 1660 at least, during the reign of Safiyyat ad-Din (1641-1675). Aceh had another Gujarati *syahbandar* at the time (1659-60), Moutjakan or Moedjagkan Benjamin settled in Aceh since the 1640s (Ito, 1984: 288, 293, 300). It may be noted that the presence of Gujarati *syahbandars* was not limited to the western part of maritime Southeast Asia. In 1613 for example, the *syahbandar* of Hitu in Ambon was also a Gujarati (Knaap (ed.), 1987: 208).

If the dignitaries of Tamil, Telugu and Gujarati origins seem to represent the majority of the most influential South Asians in local courts, Bengali

85. Keuning (ed.), 1938, I: 48; Meilink-Roelofs, 1962: 240.

86. Guillot, 1992: 66; *ibid.*, 1999: 168-169; Rantoandro, 2000: 588, 590.

87. Bowrey, 1905: note 1, p. 265, 262. Strangely, this name sounds rather Gujarati.

88. At least since the reign of Iskandar Muda (see Beaulieu, 1996: 111) and during the following years (see for example the account of Mandelslo in 1639 [1727: 348]). There were still several *syahbandars* in Aceh during the 1670s (Bowrey, 1905: 301).

individuals on occasion functioned as *syahbandars* too. The 1522 agreement between Banten Girang and the Portuguese mentions a ‘mandarin’ from Bengal (Guillot, 1999: 165-6). In Jepara, where the administration seems to have been organized with several *syahbandars*, two Bengalis probably held the position. In fact, Key Raxa Bengal (or Bengala) was *syahbandar* there in the mid-1660s. Even if there is no explicit mention regarding his origin, his title leaves no doubt. He lived in Jepara with one of his sons and took part in two embassies to Batavia.⁸⁹ Ten years later, in 1674, Karti-Sedana was another Bengali among the *syahbandars* of the town. Since at least the 1660s, he was among the four major traders in town, with a powerful influence on the governor. As his predecessor, he took part in embassies to Batavia.⁹⁰ I would like to add also the *syahbandars* bearing the title of ‘Khoja’, who are most likely to have been of South Asian origin, in the absence of indications to the contrary. It is the case for Khoja Babu at Banjarmasin from the end of the 1620s until the mid-1630s at least. He notably went to Batavia in 1635 to sign the first contract of purchase of pepper by the VOC at Banjarmasin.⁹¹ At Bima, Khoja Rubu, an individual active in the trade of local sappanwood, was *syahbandar* from 1674 to 1680 at least.⁹²

The official function of *saudagar raja* (king merchant) was sometimes associated to that of *syahbandar*. This dignitary was especially in charge of all the business transactions of the ruler, but he also carried out other tasks not directly connected to trade.⁹³ In 1621, Beaulieu probably referred to the *saudagar raja* of Kedah, when he mentions that the king asked a Gujarati

89. Van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 3/12/1665: 396; DR 22/12/1666: 210; DR 15/07/1669: 361. Durpa Bengale, very probably another Bengali, was also a member of the embassy sent in 1666.

90. De Graaf, 1961-2, I: 162; II: 35, 70, 82. During the second half of the 17th century, another prominent individual from Jepara bore a title whose last word sounds Indian, but it is a pure guess so far and would need to be confirmed. It is Kiyai Lura Marmagatty, one of the four major traders of Jepara during the 1660s, as Karti-Sedana. As he spoke Malay and Portuguese, he was interpreter at the court of Mataram during the embassy of Wagenaer in 1667. He also took part in several embassies to Batavia (1666, 1669, 1670), especially to ask for letters of navigation in order to conduct trade in Sumatra and in the Malay Peninsula. Marmagatty was *syahbandar* during the 1670s (van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 22/12/1666: 210; DR 29/07/1669: 375; DR 04/05/1670: 66-67; DR 11/09/1672: 241; van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 27/04/1677: 116; de Graaf, 1961-2, I: 162, 170).

91. Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.), V: 450; Heeres, J.E. (ed.), 1907: 270; Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia (cp.), 1965: 2-3. According to Cense, he was a Gujarati, but no sources are given to support this (1928: 94).

92. Van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 25/01/1675: 33; Coolhaas (ed.), Maetsuyker *et al.*, 23/11/1675, GM IV: 60; van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 19/12/1680: 814.

93. For more details, see Watson Andaya 1978; Kathyritnamby-Wells, 1969: 462; Purchas, 1905, IV: 288. It seems that this function was never institutionalized in India. However in the small polities of Malabar and in the south, there were traders favored by the State, who managed the business of royal investors along their own business (Arasaratnam, 1994: 177).

trader to collect as much pepper as possible to buy cannons (Beaulieu, 1996: 161). The best documented *saudagar raja* of South Asian origin is surely Siddi Lebbe, a major Chulia trader of South Coromandel, probably from Cuddalore or Nagore. He was *saudagar raja* in Perak from the 1670s until the beginning of the 1680s and spent also some time in Melaka and Johor.⁹⁴ Mahometh Lebey was another Chulia *saudagar raja*, this time in Banten during the 1670s (Guillot, 1999: 180).

South Asians appear also among the Orang Kaya. For instance, at the beginning of 1610, one of the highest dignitaries of Banda was an Indian with the title of Orang Kaya Keling, and among the notables captured there a decade later by the Dutch we find individuals such as Codia Ali, Codia Omnian and Lebe Bousam.⁹⁵ Still in Maluku, in Ambon to be precise, a certain Lebe Somewel was an Orang Kaya of Hitu in 1625 (Tiele & Heeres, 1895, II: 78).

Interactions with the foreign world were entrusted to diplomatic agents nominated by the ruler. Here again the tendency in maritime Southeast Asia seems to have been to send foreigners to accomplish these missions.⁹⁶ These foreigners were not full time ambassadors but usually traders sent to their country of origin. Here we find again the above mentioned Tuanku Marakayar sent by Johor to Melaka to sign a peace agreement with the Portuguese in 1535 (Alves, 2003: 312), as well as the Raja Mudeliar or their descendants. Pahang also sent a certain Raja Mudeliar to Melaka at the end of the 16th century (Verberckmoes & Stols, 1988: 60). In the middle of the 17th century, Aceh sent Orang Kaya Raja Mudeliar to Tiku, on the west coast of Sumatra, to sign a trade agreement with the VOC, and soon later, he went to Perak for a similar mission.⁹⁷ Around the same time, Makassar sent Koja Ibrahim, probably a Gujarati, to Mataram in order to develop commercial cooperation and create a pan-Islamic movement.⁹⁸ During the 1660s, the same ambassador was sent twice to Batavia to meet the Governor-General in order to plead for the sultanate.⁹⁹ As regards Banten, I have found a Lebbe, therefore a Chulia trader,

94. Watson Andaya 1978: 19, 26, 32-33; Andaya, 1975: 38-39, 199-200, 208; Arasaratnam 1986: 147; Arasaratnam, 1995c: 132-133, 135, 148.

95. Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.), IV: 262; Verken, 1930: 97-98.

96. For example, on the Chinese ambassadors of Srivijaya since the 10th century at least, see Salmon, 2002: 71-77.

97. Tiele & Heeres, 1895, III: 502; Heeres (ed.), 1907: 530, 539. Coolhaas (ed.), GM II: 520, note 1. During a trip to Batavia, Raja Mudeliar was deprived of all his properties, being accused of conspiracy and having sold Aceh to the Dutch (Coolhaas (ed.), C. Reniers *et al.*, Batavia, 24/01/1652, GM II: 569-570).

98. Van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 26/04/1659: 79-80; DR 13/05/1659: 97; de Graaf, 1961-2, I: 69, 72, 120-121.

99. Van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 18/10/1663: 504; DR 12/09/1665: 257; de Graaf, 1961-2, I: 72, note 1.

sent by Banten to the ruler of Sukadana in 1680.¹⁰⁰ The hiring of South Asian envoys was not limited to local polities. The VOC hired at least two individuals from South Asia during the 17th century to conduct missions in the archipelago: ‘Genading’, a Ceylonese sent by admiral Speelman, and the ‘Moor’ Piero, who knew the Javanese language and the coast, sent to meet Trunojoyo (de Graaf, 1961-2, II: 47, 135, 150, 174).

Conclusion

During the period under consideration, South Asians not involved in trade were present from Aceh to Maluku. I have identified four centres of gravity: the northern part of Sumatra, the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, the north coast of west Java (Banten/Batavia), and Maluku. The mention of the latter raises the question of an earlier involvement of South Asians there. Thanks to the account of Pires, we may assume that South Asian traders settled in Maluku since at least the 14th century. As South Asian traders are identified on the north coast of Java since the ninth century, and as this area had long been in contact with Maluku for the spice trade, I suggest that South Asians, involved in trade or not, may have lived in Maluku since the beginning of the period studied here. The identification and archaeological excavations of old settlements in Maluku could yield some precious indications to support this hypothesis.

Regarding the origins of these people, we can conclude that all the coastal areas from Gujarat to Bengal yielded migrants to a greater or lesser extent, along with Ceylon and the Maldives. The Tamil area, Bengal, and Gujarat were probably the most significant suppliers, followed by Ceylon, the Maldives, Orissa and Malabar.

The demographic weight of this phenomenon is impossible to estimate with precision. However, I have suggested above a conservative estimate of 600,000 South Asian slaves imported by the natives polities between the 15th and the 17th centuries. If this figure is doubled to take into account slaves imported by the Portuguese and the Dutch, as well as the people who found their ways in other groups, except traders, the total estimate would be 1.2 million individuals. Arrivals between the late 13th century and the late 14th century need to be added to this number to cover the entire period under consideration here. Moreover, to estimate the overall impact of South Asian people in the region the various categories of traders need also to be taken into account.¹⁰¹ Even if these figures are only rough estimates, it seems clear that the phenomenon was far from negligible.

100. Van der Chijs *et al.* (ed.), DR 26/08/1680: 553; Arasaratnam, 1996: 169.

101. Van Leur, probably referring to the period 15th-16th centuries, gave a conservative yearly estimate of some 8,000 Indian and Middle-Eastern traders coming to the region (1960: 108).

If my hypothesis on the migration of South Asian labour force to maritime Southeast Asia since the 15th century is right, South Asia as a source of manpower is a recurrent feature of the economic relations between both regions until today. After an interruption during the 18th-19th centuries, the phenomenon surged again from the late 19th century until the 1930s in the Malay Peninsula, especially with the massive migration of Tamils in the rubber and oil palms plantations, and others in the development of public infrastructure and municipal services. It has been followed, since the 1980s, by the hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshi workers, who have flocked into Malaysia, especially in the construction and industry sectors.

I have shown the continuity of their involvement in the plantation sector since the development of native pepper plantations in North Sumatra, followed by the nutmeg plantations controlled by the VOC in Maluku and later in Peninsular Malaysia as just mentioned above. Does this involvement go back to the apparition of the pepper cultivation in 11th century Java, as this culture requires some expertise? This question will be very difficult to answer, except if archaeologists are lucky enough to spot these early plantations and find indications of an Indian presence in their vicinity. The same continuity of involvement is perceptible in the subsistence farming controlled by native polities and the VOC (cultivation of rice and vegetables, stockbreeding, fishing), as well as gold mining, in which Indian experts were very probably involved long before the period under consideration here.

We have seen South Asians meeting the native and foreign demands to increase the population, to build and maintain the infrastructure of strategic centres such as Aceh and Batavia. Again, this role in the development of infrastructure reappeared in 20th century Malaysia, as mentioned above. South Asians also met part of the demand of the rulers, as well as growing local and foreign elites, for palace staff, domestic helpers and artisans. The demand was also strong for Indian sailors by natives (Banten) and foreigners (Indian traders, Portuguese, Dutch and Englishmen) settled in maritime Southeast Asia. The continuity of their involvement in military troops is clear too. South Asian warriors served native rulers in several wars, and featured in troops of Portuguese Melaka and the VOC. As fighters, some of them had surprising destinies. I think especially of those sent back to South Asia (Ceylon) in the VOC military expeditions, but also of those fighting against each other during the conquest of Banten in 1682. Again, continuity should be pointed out here with the role played by Sikh soldiers and policemen in British Malaya and likely in today Malaysia. The same may be said of the role played by Indians in the civil service. I have noticed their role as tax farmers in late 17th century Batavia, perhaps a resurgence of what seems to be a very old tradition of South Asian tax collectors in Java. It is almost certain that other sectors have escaped our attention or are totally absent from the sources. Art would be one of them.

The common shortage of population stimulated the social mobility, usually leading to progressive shifts of cultural identities. The shortage of a middle-class especially, led to the formation of a class of slaves-clients in native polities, and to the liberation of a large number of South Asian slaves, who became parts of two bourgeois classes, the *Mardicas* in the Portuguese settlements and the *Mardijkers* in the VOC settlements. This middle class of foreign origin offered several advantages to the foreign authorities: no social demand, no pretention to power, and conversion to the Christian faith.

We have seen South Asians reaching the highest positions in the administrative hierarchy of several local polities, such as *bendahara* and *tumenggung*, *juru* and *syahbandar*, *saudagar raja*, or ambassador. This fact may be interpreted as a capacity to integrate through assimilation in an open society, which usually requires the conversion to Islam, the adoption of the local language and customs, marriage to a native spouse, and the acceptance of a native title. It may also be analyzed as a sign of shortage of native experts to fill certain positions, perhaps by lack of interest, or because of fear or difficulty to interact outside ones own society. In that case, the existence of a cosmopolitan high administration could be the result of a deliberate strategy conducted by the native rulers.

Regarding the involvement of South Asians in the religion, I have notably shown their role in the propagation of Islam almost all over the region during the 17th century. However, even at that time, it seems that most of the religious leaders were of Arab origin, born or having spent some time in South Asia before reaching maritime Southeast Asia. It has been argued that these Arab religions leaders succeeded mostly Persian Muslim leaders active from the 9th century onwards (Guillot, 2004). These hypotheses raise the question of the role of South Asians converted to Islam during the initial stage of Islamization of the region.

The late 17th century saw the progressive abandonment of navigation by South Asian traders towards maritime Southeast Asia, except the *Chulias* still quite active in the Malacca Straits and in Aceh. The phenomenon was the result of several important developments. Three of them are related to the VOC: the total monopoly on the spice trade achieved by the Company since 1667; the Company increasingly looking for native slaves, and the expulsion of foreign traders from Banten in 1682. Others are related to the situation in South Asia: the annexation of Golconda and Bijapur by the Moghols (1686-7), leading to a withdrawal from maritime transportation activities; an identical decision taken by the nobles and the high administration in Bengal. This dramatic decrease in trade between South Asia and maritime Southeast Asia certainly had an impact on the other activities. The mostly male South Asian communities settled in the region were therefore less and less revitalized or not revitalized at all, leading to their evanescence through

assimilation. In fact, I think that this century corresponds to a transition period from very significant South Asian involvement to large-scale Chinese involvement in maritime Southeast Asia.

This study has only touched upon a limited aspect of this long and fascinating history of the South Asians in maritime Southeast Asia. Numerous directions need in-depth investigations. I would like to suggest only two of them here. The Chinese have just been mentioned. As far as I know the history of the relations between the South Asians and the Chinese communities in the region have never been really analyzed, at least for the period before the 19th century. Moreover, would the concept of Overseas Indians be valid? In other words, is the idea of cultural unity in a foreign environment, as implied by the concept of overseas Chinese, also relevant for South Asian migrants at a particular time?

Population of Batavia, 1673-1699

(Figures regarding population of the suburbs are incomplete for the years 1673 & 1679)
(From Raben, 1996: table 4.5 p. 91)

	Europeans	Mestizos	Mardijkers	Chinese	Others	Slaves	Total
1673	2.024	726	5.362	2.727	2.931	13.281	27.051
1679	2.134	619	6.204	3.006	3.595	15.995	31.553
1689	2.162	965	7.638	5.169	23.499	26.168	65.601
1699	2.258	1.177	7.922	8.074	26.447	25.721	71.599

**Arrivals of slaves, prisoners, or fugitives from South Asia
at Batavia during the 17th century**

(Based on Dagh-Registers; Generale Missiven; Colenbrander & Coolhaas (ed.);
Raychaudhuri, 1962; Subrahmanyam, 1999; Arasaratnam, 1995a; Leider, 2004: 442-443)

Year	Origin of the passengers	Total
1618	São Tomé	50
1621	Coromandel	124
1622	Coromandel/ São Tomé	1376
1623	Bengal	< 100
-	Coromandel/ São Tomé	1280
1624	Bengal	250
-	Coromandel	928
1625	Bengal	144
-	Coromandel	512
1626	Coromandel	64
1627	Coromandel	832
-	Malabar	750
1628	Coromandel	73
1630	Orissa	?
1633	Bengal	300?
1631	Coromandel	?
1636	Coromandel	80
-	Bengal	216
1637	Coromandel	36
1641	Coromandel	51
-	Bengal	28
1642	Bengal	225 or 325
1643	Coromandel? Bengal?	108
-	Bengal	650
1644	Coromandel	52
-	Bengal	600
1645	Bengal	145
1646	Coromandel	1646
1647	Bengal/Pegu	616
1648	Coromandel	22
1654	Bengal	461
1655	Bengal	200
1656	Bengal	288
1657	Bengal	406
1658	Bengal	153
1659	Bengal	407
1660	Bengal	421
-	Coromandel	295
1661	Bengal	538
-	Coromandel	80
1662	Bengal	101
1663	Bengal	253
1664	Bengal	150
-	Coromandel	115
1665	Bengal	About 300
1677	Madura	100
1678	Ceylon	360
1680	Ceylon	25

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ABBREVIATIONS

BKI	Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van de Koninklijk Instituut
DR	Dagh-Register
GM	Generale Missive
JESHO	Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
JMBRAS	Journal of the Malayan Branch, Royal Asiatic Society
JSEAH	Journal of South-East Asian History
MAS	Modern Asian Studies
SEME CH	Sejarah Melayu, Cheah Boon Khen (ed.)
TBG	Tijdschrift voor indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde
VKI	Verhandelingen van de Koninklijk Instituut
VOC	Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie

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