

# WHAT'S IN A NAME? MALAY SEALS AS ONOMASTIC SOURCES

*(Apa Ada pada Nama? Cap Mohor Melayu sebagai Sumber Onomastik)*

*Annabel Teh Gallop*  
annabel.gallop@bl.uk

*The British Library*

Published on: 1 June 2018

To cite: Gallop, A.T. (2018). What's in a name? Malay seals as onomastic sources. *Malay Literature* 31(1), 1-28.

---

## **Abstract**

Most studies of Malay names to date have been based on ethnographic and literary sources. This article presents a new dataset for Malay onomastics, namely Islamic seals from Southeast Asia, inscribed in Arabic script and dating from the late 16th to early 20th century, over half of which bear a personal name. A high proportion of these seals are of sovereigns, and Malay seals are thus an exceptionally valuable primary source for regnal names. Yet while in Malay texts and chronicles the use of personal names is generally avoided in favour of kinship terms, relational names, titles and descriptive epithets, Malay seals are almost invariably inscribed with standard Arabic-Islamic personal names. This feature should be interpreted in the context of the image of self which the sealholder wished to project to the outside world, in which his or her Islamic identity, and membership of the universal *ummah*, was of prime importance.

**Keywords:** Malay names, onomastic, Malay seals, regnal names, Islamic names

## **Abstrak**

*Kebanyakan kajian tentang nama Melayu setakat ini berdasarkan sumber daripada bidang etnografi atau bidang persuratan. Makalah ini mempersembahkan sumber baharu untuk kajian onomastik*

*Melayu, iaitu cap mohor Islam dari Asia Tenggara yang ditulis dalam tulisan Arab, pada abad ke-16 hingga ke-20. Hampir separuh cap mohor tersebut mencatatkan nama perseorangan. Kebanyakannya milik sultan dan raja, dan cap mohor Melayu menjadi sumber yang amat berharga untuk nama pemerintah. Dalam hikayat dan riwayat Melayu, penggunaan nama perseorangan biasanya dielakkan, sedangkan yang digunakan ialah nama yang menjelaskan hubungan kekeluargaan, nama persaudaraan, pangkat, dan nama timang-timangan, tetapi cap mohor Melayu pula sentiasa ditulis dengan nama perseorangan Arab-Islam. Ciri ini diinterpretasikan dalam konteks imej diri yang ingin ditampilkan oleh pemilik cap mohor kepada dunia, sebagai ahli umat Islam, yang merupakan ciri utama identitinya*

*Kata kunci: nama Melayu, onomastik, cap mohor Melayu, nama pemerintah, nama Islam*

## INTRODUCTION

In any society, onomastics or the study of personal names and naming systems can yield important insights into traditional values, customs and institutions. In Muslim societies, “beautiful” or “graceful” names for children were exhorted by the Prophet, for it was by their names, and the names of their fathers, that people would be summoned on Doomsday.<sup>1</sup> Nowadays, there are many popular books on sale in Malaysia and Indonesia listing appropriate Islamic names for children.<sup>2</sup> But what do we know of how Malay names were selected and used in the past?

In the study of Malay names, three main categories of onomastic source materials have traditionally been consulted. In the first group are religious works which contain advice on the suitability of various names. One of the earliest such sources in Malay is the *Sirāt al-mustaqīm*, “The straight path”, composed in Aceh in 1644 by Nuruddin al-Raniri, which right until the late 19th century remained one of the most widely used handbooks for the practice of Islamic law in everyday life across the archipelago.<sup>3</sup> Both prescriptive and proscriptive, it commends the choice of certain names, as well as highlighting other names which should be shunned.

The second group is descriptive historical and ethnographic accounts, some of which date back to the 18th century. The earliest notable such source is William Marsden’s observations on Malay names in his *History of Sumatra*, first published in 1783, based on his years in Bengkulu on the

west coast of Sumatra from 1771 to 1779.<sup>4</sup> Published nearly one and a half centuries later in 1935, Edwin Loeb's *Sumatra: Its history and people* is also informative on naming practices in many Sumatran societies.<sup>5</sup> An especially valuable account by Ibrahim bin Datuk Muda entitled *Bahawa inilah kitab kumpulan nama Melayu, iaitu menghimpunkan segala nama dan gelaran, timang-timangan dan rawah-rawahan yang terpakai pada orang-orang Melayu di sebelah sini* ["This is a compendium of Malay names, being a compilation of names, titles, nicknames and associated forms used by Malays in these parts"],<sup>6</sup> was compiled and published in 1924 in Singapore at the behest of the Education Department of the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States, and is a good guide to Malay naming practice on the eve of the modern era.

The third major source for information on Malay names is literary texts and historical works, which record the genealogies of royal families and their descendants. Two of the richest such repositories of Malay names are the chronicle of the Sultanate of Melaka, *Sejarah Melayu* or *Sulalāt al-Salatīn*, "Genealogy of Kings", compiled in 1612 by the Bendahara of Johor, Tun Seri Lanang, and *Tuhfat al-Nafīs*, "The Precious Gift", the account of the history of Johor-Riau composed in the mid-19th century by Raja Ali Haji.

These and other sources will be surveyed for information on Malay naming practices, before we consider the evidence of a previously untapped source of onomastic data: Malay seals.

## **MALAY NAMES: NAMA AND TIMANG-TIMANGAN**

According to Nuruddin al-Raniri, the commended (*sunat*) moment for naming a child was either at the moment of birth or seven days later. The personal name (*nama*) given to a Malay child at birth was also referred to as the *nama daging*<sup>7</sup> or *nama batang tubuh*, or *nama kerat pusat* as it was usually given at the behest of the midwife at the moment of the cutting of the umbilical cord, according to the account by Ibrahim bin Datu Muda.<sup>8</sup>

However, for most of their lives, these children are probably called something else. Name taboos proliferate, and in many societies throughout the Malay archipelago it is forbidden to say one's own name. This indiscretion was strictly avoided in some societies and, at the very least, deemed indecorous in others.<sup>9</sup> Thus the over-frequent use of one's own name is mocked in the Malay proverb *bagai tiung menyebut nama* ["calling out one's name like a mynah bird"<sup>10</sup>], and the same proverb is found in Aceh and Gayo.<sup>11</sup>

In the Malay world, as in many Islamic societies<sup>12</sup> and other cultures, nor was it permitted to say the names of parents, ancestors, or anyone of a higher rank.<sup>13</sup> In the *Sirāt al-mustaqīm* those of lower age and status are instructed not to use the names of their elders and betters: *Dan demikian lagi sunat bagi anak dan murid dan khadam bahwa jangan ia menyerukan ibu bapanya dan gurunya dan tuannya dengan nama dirinya*<sup>14</sup> [“Thus children and pupils and servants should not address their parents or teachers or masters by their personal names”]. In traditional Malay society this taboo was extended to spouses, and it was deemed *kurang benar manisnya*, “really not very nice/appropriate”, to hear a wife utter her husband’s name.<sup>15</sup> These deeply-embedded name taboos led to the widespread use of relationship terms and other such titles instead of names in everyday speech.

Therefore, from childhood onwards Malays are often also given various nicknames or descriptive epithets called *gelaran* or *timang-timangan*, “cradle names”. These may be based on position in the family, such as *sulong* or *long* for the oldest, *ngah* for the second, *alang* for the third, *anjang* for the fourth, *andak* for the fifth, *teh* or *puteh* for the sixth, and *bungsu*, *busu*, *su* or *cu* for the last (irrespective of number), or *tunggal* for an only child. *Timang-timangan* could also reflect (perceived) physical attributes, complimentary or otherwise, such as *pendek*, “short”, *bisu*, “silent”, *buncit*, “pot-bellied”, or *itam*, “black”, i.e. dark-skinned; or certain days of the week or months, such as *Khamis*, *Jumat* or *Saban*.<sup>16</sup> When young, a variety of diminutives or nicknames may be used for a child, until one just “sticks”: *Pada masa kanak2 itu ditimang maka biasalah pula dipanggil akan dia dengan berbagai2 nama kemanjaan iaitulah yang dikatakan timang2an seperti yang tersebut di atas tadi, hingga terkadang lenyap namanya yang sebenar diserap oleh satu2 timang2an yang melekat sampai ke tua*<sup>17</sup> [“While a baby is still in the cradle, he or she is usually addressed by all sorts of terms of endearment, the “cradle names” referred to above, to the extent that sometimes his or her real name is completely replaced by a nickname that sticks right into adulthood”]. Once a person is married and has children, teknonymy – the naming of a person after their child – is practised for both father and mother; for example *Pak/Mak Long*, “father/mother of his/her first-born” or *Pak Tunggal*, “father of an only child”.<sup>18</sup> In Minangkabau society, personal names are abandoned completely at adulthood when each person inherits a family title, as illustrated by the proverb *kecil bernama, gadang bergelar*, “infants bear names, adults bear titles”.<sup>19</sup>

Positional sobriquets could also be combined with titles of rank for aristocrats, for example, *Tengku Sulung*, “Prince Eldest-born”, for the son of Yam Tuan Raja Ismail of Siak, and *Engku Andak*, “Lady Fifth-born”, for the daughter of Syarifah Halimah and Engku Sayid Muhammad Zain al-Kudsi in the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*.<sup>20</sup> Noble titles could also be combined with descriptive epithets, such as the delightfully-named *Tun Isap Misai*, “Sir Moustache-Stroker”, in the *Sejarah Melayu*,<sup>21</sup> or with titles of office, such as *Datuk Tua* or, indeed, *Lebai Malang*, “the ill-fortuned preacher”.

*Tun Muhammad namanya, Tun Seri Lanang timang-timangannya*, “Tun Muhammad is my name, and Tun Seri Lanang my familiar appellative”.<sup>22</sup> As this famous self-introduction by the compiler of the *Sejarah Melayu* illustrates, Malay birth-names (*nama*) are often Arabic-Islamic names<sup>23</sup> and *timang-timangan* are generally indigenous appellatives, although this is not necessarily always the case. The early genealogical sections of the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* are a mine of information on naming practice, and the classifier *nama* is found applied to many Malay descriptors, such as *Puteri Kesumba*, *Puteri Emas Inderawati*, *Dahing Cellak*, *Raja Andut* and *Engku Muda*.<sup>24</sup> Even when a distinction is drawn between *nama* and *timang-timangan*, it is not always obviously reflected in the nature of the appellative, as in the case of Sultan Sulaiman’s sister “*yang bernama Tengku Tengah, timang-timangannya Tun Irang*”<sup>25</sup> [“who was named Tengku Tengah, “Princess Middle-born,” while her appellative was Tun Irang”]. Conversely, Arabic names could also be given as *gelaran*: in the *Sejarah Melayu*, a son of Sultan Mansur Syah is named Raja Ahmad but bears the *timang-timangan* Raja Husain.<sup>26</sup> Thus it is not always easy to distinguish between *nama* and *timang-timangan* purely on a textual basis.

While a few birth names might be recorded in historical sources, in general in Malay texts the use of personal names is avoided in favour of kinship terms, relational names, titles and descriptive epithets. However, an exceptionally rich historical source for Muslim personal names from Southeast Asia can now be identified: Malay seals.

## MALAY SEALS AS ONOMASTIC SOURCES

Malay seals can be defined as seals from Southeast Asia with inscriptions at least partially in the Arabic script, generally written in Malay and/or Arabic. These seals are found mainly as seal impressions stamped on manuscript letters, treaties and other documents dating from the mid-16th to the early 20th century, but some seal matrices, usually made of silver or

brass, have also been recorded. In traditional Malay polities the right to use a seal was restricted to court circles, and Malay seals can generally be characterised as official personal seals, in which the inscription serves to identify the individual sealholder in terms of his position in the social and political hierarchy of the state. The only other significant social grouping in Islamic regions of Southeast Asia to use seals was the religious fraternity. The most important element of the inscription on a Malay seal was thus the title and/or name of the owner, and of the 2150 seals catalogued by the present author, over half – 1082 – contain a personal name.<sup>27</sup>

This corpus of data can be analysed according to various parameters. For example, a chronological analysis reveals that there 38 names are from the 17th century, 250 from the 18th century, 708 from the 19th century, and 84 from the early 20th century. Regionally, the results can be presented as follows: there are 248 names from the Malay peninsula; 388 from Sumatra, including 245 from Aceh; 140 from Borneo/Kalimantan; 110 from Sulawesi; 23 from Maluku; 47 from Nusa Tenggara; 61 from the Philippines; and 51 from Java and Madura. Certain observations can be made arising from this data; for example, only 27% of Islamic seals from Java bear personal names, compared to 75% from Sulawesi. Although throughout the Malay world the main function of the seal inscription is to identify the individual seal owner, there are certainly regional predilections in the style of inscription. Thus a high proportion of Banten seals only bear noble titles in Javanese rather than an Islamic personal name. On the other hand, Sulawesi seals tend to bear inscriptions written wholly in Arabic with standard Islamic personal names, but without any indigenous names or titles in Bugis/Makassar.

On Malay seals, indigenous appellatives of the form of *timbang-timbangan* are relatively scarce. Only a few obvious examples have been noted, such as *Busu ibn Sulaiman* (#148),<sup>28</sup> “the youngest-born of Sulaiman”, and *Mata-mata Imam Alang* (#151), for a guard and religious official who was the second-born in his family, both these examples being found on late 18th-century seals from Kedah. The name *Muhammad Puti* (*Putih*, “white”, i.e. fair-skinned) in the pedigree of a seal from Palembang (#1076) may be an example of a type of name identified by Ibrahim bin Datuk Muda: sometimes, those unhappily “stuck” with a nickname for so long that all around, and even they themselves, no longer know their real name, try to improve on it by adding *Muhammad* or *Abdul* in front when writing, *tetapi tidaklah disadar oleh mereka tambahan begitu akan memberatkan kesalahan itu lagi* [“not realising that by doing so they are simply making matters worse”<sup>29</sup>].

In general, personal names found on Malay seals are standard Arabic-Islamic names, familiar from throughout the Muslim world, and these will be explored further below. (It should be noted that in this study, Islamic names used in Southeast Asia are given in their standard Malay spellings, without diacritics, but references to any original Arabic-language forms in brackets are given in full transliteration, prefixed by the abbreviation “Ar.” for “Arabic”).

## NAMES ON MALAY SEALS: *ISM* AND *LAQAB*

A full classical Arabic name may be made up of several components: a *kunya*, a teknonymous name compound usually based on *Abū*, “father of”; an *ism* or ‘*alam* or proper name; a *laqab* or descriptive or honorific epithet; the *nasab* or pedigree, generally prefaced by *bin* or *ibn*, meaning “son of”; and a *nisba* or descriptive epithet which might indicate a place of origin or profession.<sup>30</sup> The question of *nasab*, or the presentation of genealogical information on Malay seals, is of considerable interest, and is the subject of a separate study.<sup>31</sup> *Kunya* are very rarely encountered on Malay seals, and then only as part of regnal names, and like *nisba* will be discussed further below. By far the most commonly encountered elements of Islamic names on Malay seals are *ism* and *laqab*, with the proviso that in the Malay world in many cases *laqab* function as *ism* or proper names, rather than descriptive epithets. Of the numerous types of *ism*,<sup>32</sup> the categories which occur on Malay seals are listed below, with the number of examples found on seals in brackets.

1. Names borne by the Prophet and the early figures of Islam: Muhammad (Ar. *Muḥammad*), “He who is worthy of Praise” (372), and its cognate forms from the same root *h.m.d*, Ahmad (Ar. *Aḥmad*), “More praiseworthy” (101), and Mahmud (Ar. *Mahmūd*), “Praised” (53); the four orthodox caliphs Abu Bakar (Ar. *Abū Bakr*) (19), Umar (Ar. ‘*Umar*) (46), Uthman (Ar. ‘*Uthmān*) (27) and Ali (Ar. ‘*Alī*) (83); the Prophet’s grandsons Hasan (Ar. *Ḥasan*) (30) and Husain (Ar. *Ḥusayn*) (50), and Zainal Abidin (Ar. *Zayn al-‘Ābidīn*) (31), the surname of Husain’s son Ali.
2. Biblical names of the prophets in their Qur’anic forms, for example Yusuf (Ar. *Yūsuf*) (28), Daud (Ar. *Dā’ūd*) (13), Musa (Ar. *Mūsā*) (17), Nuh (Ar. *Nūḥ*) (3), Sulaiman (Ar. *Sulaymān*) (27), etc.
3. Abdullah (Ar. ‘*Abd Allāh*) (68) and 190 other compound names formed from Abdul (Ar. ‘*Abd al-*, “the servant of”) followed by one of the

Divine Names, of which the most popular is Abdul Rahman (Ar. ‘*Abd al-Rahmān*’) (55); others include Abdul Rahim (Ar. ‘*Abd al-Rahīm*’) (10), Abdul Wahab (Ar. ‘*Abd al-Wahhab*’) (11), Abdul Kadir (Ar. ‘*Abd al-Qādir*’) (11), Abdul Kahar (Ar. ‘*Abd al-Qahhār*’) (8), Abdul Majid (Ar. ‘*Abd al-Majīd*’) (10) and Abdul Jalil (Ar. ‘*Abd al-Jalīl*’) (28).

4. Abstract nouns such *Fadl*, (Ar. *Faḍl*) “virtue” (6), etc.
5. Names based on *laqab*, which in the course of time have come to be regarded just as personal names, particularly compounds with *al-Dīn*, “of religion”, for example, Najamuddin, (Ar. Najm al-Dīn) “the star of religion” (5), and Zainuddin, (Ar. Zayn al-Dīn) “the ornament of religion” (3).
6. Names of pre-Muslim heroes, such as Iskandar (25).

Overall, there are few surprises in the statistics, for the popularity of certain names on Malay seals follows well-trodden paths familiar from all other Muslim regions. The most frequently-encountered name of all is naturally that of the Prophet, for there are various traditions (*ḥadīth*) which extol the virtues of the name *Muhammad*. In the *Ṣirāt al-mustaqīm* it is said that all who bear the name *Muhammad* will enter paradise.<sup>33</sup> Cognates of *Muhammad*, and names of his family, the *ahl al-bayt*, together constitute the most numerous category of personal names. The second most popular choice is the group of names which are technically *laqab* or descriptive epithets, formed out of the words ‘*Abd al-*’, “servant of”, followed by one of the Most Beautiful Names of God (*al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā*). In the *Ṣirāt al-mustaqīm*, Nuruddin judged *Abdullah* and *Abdul Rahman* the “best names” (*yang terafdol dari segala nama itu*).<sup>34</sup>

Names on seals of commoners normally comprise just a simple *ism*, sometimes accompanied by the *nasab*. But 473 or nearly half of all the Malay seals bearing names are sovereign seals, and this study will now focus on regnal names found on Islamic seals from the Malay world.

## ISLAMIC REGNAL NAMES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

As primary historical sources, Malay seals are an exceptionally important resource for the names of sovereigns. This is illustrated well by the earliest known seal from present-day Malaysia (#1677), which is also the only known source for the name the sultan of Pahang who ruled briefly for one year after killing his father, Sultan Abdul Ghafar Syah (r. 1592-1614) and his elder brother, the Raja Muda Abdullah, in 1614. In his *History of*



*Pahang* published in 1936, Linehan simply noted, “Sultan ‘Abdu’ l-Ghafur was succeeded in 1614 by his parricidal and piratical younger son whose name history does not disclose”.<sup>35</sup> Even a peace treaty with the Portuguese dated 16 August 1614 simply calls the ruler *El Rey de Pão*, and it is only his seal, stamped on the treaty, that reveals his regnal name as Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah, and also confirms the name of his father as Abdul Ghafar (Ar. ‘*Abd al-Ghaffār*, “Servant of The Ever Forgiving One”), not Abdul Ghafur (Ar. ‘*Abd al-Ghafūr*, “Servant of The Most Forgiving One”) (Figure 1).



**Figure 1** Seal of Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah of Pahang (r. 1614-1615), inscribed *al-Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah ibn Abdul Ghaffar Syah // al-wāthiq bi-al-... al-qā'im bi-... khallada Allāh mulkahu wa-sulṭānahu ...*, “The Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah, son of Abdul Ghaffar Syah // he who trusts in the ... he who is steadfast ... may God preserve his realm and dominion ...” (#1677). Stamped on a peace treaty in Portuguese between the King of Pahang (*El Rey de Pão*) and Diogo de Mendonça Furtado, Capitão-mor of the Southern Seas, on behalf of the King of Portugal, 16 August 1614. Biblioteca Nacional, Lisbon, Col. Pombalina, Cod.507, fol.511.

On taking the title *sultan*, many Southeast Asian Islamic rulers also assumed a formal regnal Arabic-Islamic name. Regnal names are generally more elaborate than non-sovereign names, and more likely to approximate to the classical Arabic model of consisting of both an *ism* and a *laqab*, and in a few cases even include a *kunya*. Their mode of combining in each state is often distinctive, to the extent that in some cases the origin or provenance of a seal could be divined simply from the pattern of the ruler’s regnal name.

Sometimes the regnal name was simply the ruler's personal name prior to his accession; for example, when Syarif Kasim of Pontianak (r. 1808-1819) ascended the throne his seal bore the name *al-Sultan al-Syarif al-Sayid Kasim* (#59).

In other cases, a ruler might adopt a regnal name which was completely different from his personal name; thus when Syarif Ismail became ruler of Siak (r. 1827-64) he took the regnal name *Sultan Abdul Jalil Jalaluddin* (Ar. *'Abd al-Jalīl Jalāl al-Dīn*, "Servant of the Awe Inspiring One, Majesty of the Faith"), as found on a seal dated 1242 (1826/7), the year of his accession (#758), although his personal name *Sultan Sayid Syarif Ismail* is still used on a seal dated 1273 (1856/7) (#919). The personal name of the second sultan of Selangor is given on his seal as Badaruddin (#328), although in the letters on which this seal is stamped he is always identified by his regnal name of Sultan Ibrahim (r. 1778-1826).

A third, and quite common, permutation was for the regnal name to be based on the ruler's personal name, but with the addition of an honorific epithet or *laqab*. Thus when *Pengiran Temenggung Hasyim* (#22, #23) acceded to the throne of Brunei in 1885, he took the regnal name *Sultan Hasyim Jalilul Alam Akamuddin* (Ar. *Jalīl al-'Ālam Aqāma al-Dīn*, "Glory of the earth, Upholder of religion") (#29, #30, #852).

## REGNAL NAMES IN BANTEN

Regnal names were chosen with great care for their auspicious meanings. In quite a few states dynastic patterns of names were established which survived many generations, and one of the most elaborate Islamic regnal naming systems in Southeast Asia can be observed in the kingdom of Banten in west Java. Banten received Islam from the city-state of Demak in around 1527, and its early rulers probably used Javanese royal titles. In 1638, a Banten embassy returned from Mecca with the news that the Grand Sharif had bestowed the title of "sultan" on the father and son co-sovereigns of the state. The king then took the regnal name Sultan Abu al-Mafakhir Mahmud Abdul Kadir (Ar. *Abū al-Mafākhīr Maḥmūd 'Abd al-Qādir*, "Father of glories, the richly praised one, servant of the Able One") (r. 1596-1651) while his son was named Sultan Abu al-Maali Ahmad Rahmatullah (Ar. *Abū al-Ma'ālī Aḥmad Raḥmat Allāh*, "Father of eminences, the most praiseworthy one, [the one who enjoys] God's mercy"). Both elaborate regnal names comprise a metaphorical *kunya* – so-termed as *Abū* precedes an abstract quality rather than the name of an actual son<sup>36</sup> – with an *ism* or proper name, followed

by *laqab*, and here too we note the close similarity of *ism* and *laqab*, with both comprising pious descriptors.

Sultan Abu al-Maali predeceased his father, and Sultan Abu al-Mafakhir was succeeded by his grandson, Sultan Abu al-Fath Abdul Fattah (Ar. *Abū al-Fath ‘Abd al-Fattah*, “Father of victory, servant of the Victorious One”) (r. 1651-1682), whose name comprises a *kunya* paired with an *ism* of the same root for alliterative and synonymous resonance, a principle underlying the composition of some other Muslim regnal names. Sultan Abu al-Fath’s son and from 1675 his co-sovereign, often referred to as Sultan Haji, was entitled Sultan Abu al-Nasr Abdul Kahar (Ar. *Abū al-Nasr ‘Abd al-Qahhār*, “Father of succour, servant of the All Compelling One”) (r. 1682-1687).<sup>37</sup> Thus these early regnal names from Banten suggest a pattern based around the formula **Sultan Abū al-X ‘Abd al-Y**, in each case combining a metaphorical *kunya* with an *ism*.

On 15 January 1691 Sultan Haji’s son was installed as Sultan Abu al-Mahasin Abdul Nasir (Ar. *Abū al-Mahāsīn ‘Abd al-Nāsīr*, “Father of virtues, servant of the Helper”) (r. 1691-1733), but according to contemporary Dutch East India Company (VOC) accounts, five weeks later the king announced that the name “Abdul Nasir” was to be replaced by “Zain al-Abedin”<sup>38</sup> (Ar. *Zayn al-‘Ābidīn*, “Ornament of the servants of God”). On all his seals, which are all dated 1691, his regnal name reads *Sultan Abu al-Mahasin Muhammad Zainal Abidin* (#91, #92, #953). This change of name is unexplained, but was most probably linked to inauspicious occurrences following his investiture. This episode recalls one of the most high-profile instances of the re-naming of an Muslim king, in fact concerning the Safavid ruler of Persia contemporary with this sultan of Banten. Shāh Ṣafī II was enthroned on 2 October 1667, but in consequence of his ill health and the misfortunes of the kingdom, it was decided to enthrone him a second time on 20 March 1669 as Sulaymān I, under which name he reigned until his death in 1694.<sup>39</sup> It is possible that knowledge of this event had some bearing on the Banten case, and certainly illustrates vividly the level of concern concerning the appropriateness of the regnal name.

Thereafter, almost without exception, the sultans of Banten bore regnal names with a *kunya*, an *ism* and a *laqab* according to the formula of **Sultan Abū al-X Muḥammad Y Zayn al-Z**, right until the end of the sultanate in the early 19th century. Five further examples are found on seals, including *al-Sultan Abu al-Fath Muhammad Muḥyīuddīn Zainal Salīhin* (#90) (r. 1802-5) (Ar. *Abū al-Fath Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn Zayn al-Ṣālīhīn*, “Father of

victory”, Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn [reviver of religion], “Ornament of pious ones”).

Of particular interest are two royal Banten seals which contain *nisba*. The seal of Sultan Abu al-Nasr Muhammad Arif Zainal Asyikin (#1197) (r. 1753-1777) (Ar. *Abū al-Nasr Muḥammad ‘Arif Zayn al-‘Ashiqīn*, “Father of succour, Muḥammad ‘Arif, Ornament of lovers”) includes no fewer than four *nisba*: *al-Qādirī al-Rifā‘ī al-Bantānī al-Shāfi‘ī*, signifying his membership of two sufi brotherhoods, his place of origin, and his *madhab* or school of law. The seal of Sultan Abu al-Nasr Muhammad Ishak Zainal Mutakin (#419) (r.1805) (Ar. *Abū al-Nasr Muḥammad Ishāq Zayn al-Muttaqīn*, “Father of succour, Muḥammad Ishāq, Ornament of pious believers”) contains the same toponymic and legal *nisba*, *al-Bantānī* and *al-Shāfi‘ī*.

Royal Banten seals are exceptional in the Malay Muslim world in consistently including a *kunya* in the regnal name, and, by the early 19th century, a selection of *nisba*. It could thus be said that Banten appears to be the only Islamic kingdom in Southeast Asia where there was a clear attempt to emulate fully the classical Arabic model for names in the composition of regnal names selected for its sovereigns.



**Figure 2** Royal seal from Banten: *al-wāthiq billāh al-Sultan Abu al-Nasr Muhammad Ishak Zainal Mutakin al-Bantānī al-Shāfi‘ī al-... sanat 1219*, “He who trusts in God, the Sultan Abu al-Nasr Muhammad Ishak Zainal Mutakin of Banten, of the Shāfi‘ī school of law, of ..., the year 1219 (1804/5)” (#419). Leiden University Library, Cod.Or.2240.II.9.

## RULERS ON THE ISLAND OF SUMBAWA: “SERVANTS OF THE PROPHET”

According to orthodox Islamic practice, name compounds formed with the word *abd* meaning “servant, slave” should be used exclusively with Divine Names and not with the names of the Prophet. Nonetheless such names are found, especially in the non-Arab eastern Islamic lands,<sup>40</sup> and when – following in the footsteps of the Banten sovereigns – Sultan Agung of Mataram received the title of sultan from the Grand Sharif of Mecca in 1641, he assumed the regnal name Sultan Abdul Muhammad Maulana Matarani.<sup>41</sup>

For a brief period in the second half of the 18th century, there seems to have been a particular “trend” for these names expressing devotion and servitude to the Prophet in the various kingdoms on the island of Sumbawa. One ruler of Pekat who ascended the throne in 1794 bore the name *Abdul Muhammad*, “servant of Muhammad” (#890), while an earlier ruler of Pekat who died on 13 February 1756 was called *Abdul Rasul*.<sup>42</sup> In the neighbouring kingdom of Bima, the Raja Bicara or Wazir al-Muazzam (chief minister) of Bima in 1805 was named *Abdul Nabi* (#388). Usually regarded as equally unacceptable to orthodox Sunnis is the name of the Raja Bicara of Bima in 1744, *Abdul Ali*.<sup>43</sup> This name, together with *Abdul Nabi* and *Abdul Rasul*, is specifically condemned by Nuruddin al-Raniri in the *Ṣirāt al-mustaqīm*.<sup>44</sup>



**Figure 3** Seal of the ruler of Pekat on Sumbawa: *Raja Pekat Abdul Muhammad* (#890), from a treaty with the Dutch of 1796. ANRI Makassar 375/5.

## LAQAB AS REGNAL NAMES

The use of certain types of *laqab* – honorific or descriptive epithets – as regnal names can be traced back to the Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad of the 8th century onwards, who were the first to adopt regnal names such as *al-Rashīd*, “the rightly guided” or *al-Mutawakkil ‘alā Allāh*, “who entrusts himself to God”, after which most other Islamic rulers followed suit.<sup>45</sup> From the 9th centuries onwards, *laqab* of honour were bestowed by the caliphs on princes and high officials, often compounds with *al-dawla* “the state”, *al-mulk* “the kingdom”, or *al-dunyā* “the world”; these could then be extended with the addition of *wa-al-dīn* “and of religion”, emphasizing both the temporal and spiritual dimensions of office.<sup>46</sup>

Later on, titles based only on *al-dīn* were issued, and in the course of time came to be regarded just as personal names, such as *Nur al-dīn*, “Light of religion”. This phenomenon was particularly associated with the eastern parts of the Islamic world, and it was probably from India that the popularity of these forms reached the Malay world. *Al-dīn* compounds comprise over half the regnal names in Sulawesi seals – such as *Sultan Zainuddin* (*Zayn al-dīn*, “Ornament of religion”) of Gowa (#863) – and were also strongly present on the east coast of Sumatra, where the pattern **Sultan X Y al-Dīn** is found in the seals of seven sultans of Jambi and five of Palembang. The same pattern is also found in Sambas, where the *ism* X in regnal names appears to have been selected consistently from the names of the Prophet and the four orthodox Caliphs. The formula **Sultan ‘Abd al-Jalīl Y al-Dīn** is found in the seals of five sultans of Siak (eg. *Sultan Abdul Jalil Saifuddin*, “Servant of the Awe Inspiring One, sword of religion”, #760).<sup>47</sup>

One of the most important *laqab* which features in the regnal names of a number of Malay rulers, but on seals is most strongly associated with Aceh, is *Alauddin* (*‘Alā al-dīn*, “Head of religion”). The first ruler of Aceh to bear this *laqab* was Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah al-Kahar, r. 1537-1579,<sup>48</sup> and it is found on all the seals of the sultans of the last, “Bugis” dynasty of Aceh, who reigned from 1735 onwards. In Aceh this *laqab* formed an integral part of the regnal title: *Sultan* signified his worldly power of the head of state, while *Alauddin* signified his spiritual dimension as head of the faith.<sup>49</sup> It was also chosen as the regnal name of the first Muslim sultan of Gowa (#1095) (elegantly complementing the name *Sultan Awaluddin* (Ar. *Awwal al-dīn*), “first of the faith”, chosen by the Sultan of Tallo’ who had converted to Islam slightly earlier), and as the official generic regnal name

of the Bugis Yang Dipertuan Muda of Johor, who were all styled *Sultan Alauddin Syah ibn Opu* (#144, #341, #342).

Another common constituent of Malay *laqab* is *al-‘ālam*, “the world”. The regnal name of the first queen of Aceh, *Sultanah Tajul Alam Safiatuddin Syah* (*Tāj al-‘Ālam Saḡīat al-Dīn*, “Crown of the world, the pure one of religion”) (#508), was evidently chosen to stress her inheritance from the great Iskandar Muda, for *tāj* is the Arabic equivalent of the Sanskrit-derived *makota*, rendering her *laqab* synonymous with her father’s title, *Makota Alam*. Another name of Iskandar Muda, *Perkasa Alam*, “Valiance of the world”, recurs as part of the regnal name of three sultans of Deli in the 19th century (#632, #634). *Alam* is also a constituent of some of the most obviously non-Islamic regnal names used in conjunction with the title “sultan” noted on Malay seals: *Gagar Alam*, “Earth Shaker”, *Gentar Alam*, “Earth Quaker” and *Mengidar Alam*, “Earth Revolver” of Panai (#610, #803), and *Tunggul Alam Begagar* “Support of the Shaking Earth” of Minangkabau (#1028). These titles from Malay states in Sumatra echo the royal Javanese titles originating from the house of Mataram, *Paku Buwono*, “Pivot of the World”, and *Hamengku Buwono*, “Bearing the World on his Lap”, suggesting a deeply-held Nusantara affinity for these concepts.

## NAMES OF HEROES AND SAINTS

A few sovereign seals pay homage to heroes, saints and prophets. The Islamic name of Alexander the Great, *Iskandar Dhū al-Qarnayn*, “Iskandar the Two-Horned”, is found on two royal seals from Ternate (#361, #940); with the name *Iskandar* on a further seal (#360), one from Maguindanao (#1016) and one from Minangkabau (#660), while his namesake, the most famous sultan of Aceh, in turn became a hero whose name *Iskandar Muda* is incorporated into the regnal name of a sultan of Perak (#294).

The name of “possibly the most venerated saint in the Islamic world”<sup>50</sup>, ‘Abd al-Qādir Jīlānī (d. 1166), founder of the Qadiriyyah sufi order, was inscribed on the seal used by Arung Tabujung, a Bugis nobleman resident in Selangor in the 18th century, whose seal reads *Sultan Abdul Kadir Jailani* (#765).<sup>51</sup> The same name, *Sultan Abdul Kadir Jailani*, is found in the text of a contract of 1770 between a sultan of Dompu on the island of Sumbawa and the Dutch VOC, although the ruler’s seal on that contract just reads *Sultan Abdul Kadir* (#892). The well-known *laqab* of this saint was *Muhyī al-Dīn*, “Reviver of religion”, and the use of the regnal name Sultan Abdul

Muhyiuddin for a sultan of Jambi named on 18th-century Minangkabau seals of patronage (#661, #1742, #1965) raises the question of whether this ruler might have been a member of the Qadiriyyah brotherhood.



**Figure 4** Seal of Arung Tabujung of Selangor, inscribed: *Sultan Abdul Kadir Jailani ibn Sultan Sulabat balad Tabujung fī mān Allāh sanat 1192*, “Sultan Abdul Kadir Jailani, son of Sultan Sulabat, the state of Tabujung, of the house of God, the year 1192 (1778/9)” (#765). SOAS MS 40320/11, f.163.

## DYNASTIC REGNAL NAMES

It was not uncommon in the Malay world, as elsewhere, for a regnal name to be repeated within a particular dynasty. Thus there were four rulers named Sultan Muhammad in Kelantan between 1798 and 1920, and three rulers called Sultan Umar Ali Saifuddin (Ar. *Sayf al-dīn*, “Sword of religion”) in Brunei over the course of two centuries. However, it does not seem to have been the custom in Malay seals or other written sources to identify these rulers numerically or ordinally, for example, in the form “Sultan Muhammad 3” or “Sultan Muhammad Ketiga (‘the Third’)”. One reason may be that in Malay chronicles, rulers with the same regnal name are often differentiated by citing their posthumous epithets; while even these may not be unique, the combination of the two usually is.<sup>52</sup>

The only such well-known “ordinal” title is that of Sultan Iskandar Thani, “Sultan Iskandar the Second” (r. 1636-1641), for the Pahang-born son-in-law and successor of Sultan Iskandar Muda of Aceh. Such nomenclature



has only been found on one seal, belonging to Sultan Abu al-Fath of Banten who was also known as Sultan Agung or Sultan Tirtayasa. One of his six seals, impressed in black wax on the wrapper of a letter dated 1681 to King Charles II, bears an inscription combining Malay, Arabic and Javanese linguistic elements, which reads *Alamat surat Sultan Agung ing Thānī*, “The sign of the letter of Sultan Agung the Second” (#1090), in acknowledgement of the (less well-known) fact that his grandfather and predecessor, Sultan Abu al-Mafakhir was also styled “Sultan Agung”.<sup>53</sup> The use of this ordinal term, so unusual in Malay seals, may have been modelled on Javanese<sup>54</sup> or other Islamic<sup>55</sup> practice.

### ***NISBA***

In Arabic names, the *nisba* is usually placed at the end, and takes the form of an adjectival noun which refers to some attribute by which a person may be identified, most frequently his place of origin. The earliest known use of a *nisba* which can be attributed to a Southeast Asian is that of the sufi master Masud al-Jawi (Mas‘ūd al-Jāwī), resident in Yemen in the early 14th century, who is referred to in a 15th-century collection of sufi biographies.<sup>56</sup> In the Malay world the use of *nisba* is most heavily associated with religious scholars writing in both Malay and Arabic, with many well-known examples including Abdul Rauf *al-Fansurī al-Jāwī*, Abdul Samad *al-Falimbānī*, Daud *al-Fatānī*, and naturally Nuruddin *al-Ranīrī*. Many of these *ulama* were for long periods resident in the Hijaz, where *nisba* formed a regular constituent part of an Arabic name, and where indeed such geographical *nisba* were needed to identify the regional origins of scholars perhaps sharing the same personal name or *ism*. On the other hand *nisba* are not often encountered in Malay chronicles or other writings, although a few examples do exist.

About one hundred Malay seals with *nisba* have been documented, of which the earliest is the seal of Sultan Maulana Jafar Sadik Syah of Maguindanao (r. ca. 1711-1733), who bears the *nisba al-Mindanāwī* (#1579). When this corpus is interrogated further, two distinct sub-groupings can be discerned. The first comprises about 20 seals bearing *nisba* which were produced and used within traditional Malay polities, such as the Mindanao seal noted above. Also in this category are four seals of nobles from south and east Kalimantan, whose names include *al-Banjari* (#1245, #2083), *al-Kutai* (#1269) and *al-Cantūngī* (#1267). In the Malay world *nisba* are often carefully Arabized to avoid using Jawi

letters not found in Arabic, hence the form *al-Falimbānī* to indicate origin from Palembang, but as the example *al-Cantūngī* shows this is not always the case. Even in this first group, in most of the seals the use of *nisba* reflects a high degree of religiosity, for example there are five late-19th century seals with the *nisba al-Tirāwī*, belonging to the circle of religious scholars from Tiro in Aceh.

The second and much larger group of seals bearing *nisba* are those which, judging from their iconography and calligraphy, can be identified as probably having been made in Hijaz, either for newly-arrived pilgrims from the Malay world or for resident *ulama*. These seals tend to be relatively small circles or wide ovals, with very competent cursive inscriptions, and are similar in appearance to contemporaneous Ottoman seals. Included in this category are 63 seals of pilgrims from Aceh and Kerinci found on a single document, a petition in Arabic to the Ottoman authorities complaining of the Dutch treatment of pilgrims from Sumatra.<sup>57</sup> Nearly all the seals are uniform in size and are dated 1289 (AD 1872/3), and bear the toponymic *nisba* (not all prefixed by *al-*) *Asyi* (*Ashī*) or *Karinsyi* (*Karinshī*).



**Figure 5** Silver seal matrix of Teuku Muda Nyak Baya of Aceh, inscribed: *Inshā' Allāh ta'ālā inilāh alamat Teuku Muda Nyak Baya nisba Teuku Imam Chik* ["If God Almighty wills it, this is the sign of Teuku Muda Nyak Baya [known as] Teuku Imam Chik"] (#1381). Tropenmuseum 1169/1.

As indicated above the majority of *nisba* on Malay seals indicate geographical origin or regional affinity, but a small number also reflect membership of sufi *tarekat*, of which the most prominent is *al-Khālidī*, found

on eight seals from Batu Bahara, Rokan, Riau, Penang and Sumbawa. Also encountered are *al-Naqshabandī* on four seals, and *al-Qādirī* and *al-Rifāʿī*. A *nisba* indicating adherence to a school of law (*madhhab*), *al-Shāfʿīī*, is found on five Malay seals. Some seals may give more than one *nisba*, and, as reported above, Sultan Abu al-Nasr Muhammad Arif Zainal Asyikin of Banten included four *nisba* on his seal.

The only actual mention of the word *nisba* on a Malay seal occurs in the silver seal matrix of Teuku Muda Nyak Baya from Aceh, which is inscribed: *Inshāʾ Allāh taʿālā inilāh alamat Teuku Muda Nyak Baya nisba Teuku Imam Chik* [“If God Almighty wills it, this is the sign of Teuku Muda Nyak Baya [known as] Teuku Imam Chik”] (#1381). In this case the term *nisba* appears to have been used simply to refer to the title of the seal owner, reflecting a pragmatic awareness of the function of the *nisba* as an identifying descriptive epithet.

## APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF MALAY MUSLIM ONOMASTICS

The information presented here was first collated in my doctoral dissertation,<sup>58</sup> at a time when little recent work had been carried on Malay naming systems, and observations were therefore based solely on the pre-war and earlier studies referenced above. In the past decade, however, several detailed studies of Malay onomastics have appeared.

In 2004, Lau-fong Mak published an article in the *Taiwan Journal of Anthropology* on “Naming and collective memory in the Malay Muslim world”, a study of Malay onomastics from an anthropological and sociological perspective, seeking to investigate naming systems viewed as a society’s “memory-perpetuating mechanism”.<sup>59</sup> His study was based on three sources of data: modern telephone directories, contemporary genealogies of up to four generations of 176 Muslim males collected through fieldwork in six Southeast Asian countries, and a published volume on royal genealogies of Southeast Asia.<sup>60</sup> With some reservations,<sup>61</sup> Mak’s study highlights a few aspects of interest in Malay naming practice for further analysis. Given the relatively low number of the most popular male Muslim names in circulation and their frequent use across generations, he notes the distinct absence of familial traditions for certain preferred names, which in many societies is a recognized strategy for perpetuating collective lineage memory, which he interprets within the Malay Muslim context as “partly because what the

names are intended to perpetuate is not a lineage but brotherhood across lineages”, namely the *ummah*.<sup>62</sup> Mak certainly overstates the matter in classifying Ali, Hasan and Husain as “Shiite names” and relating the use of these to perpetuating the memory of Karbala,<sup>63</sup> for as Anne-Marie Schimmel has noted these names are popular in both sunni and shia circles all over the Muslim world.<sup>64</sup> But within the constricts of his dataset, Mak’s research does appear to throw up certain patterns in the use of this cluster of names, with an apparent preponderance in Aceh, Kelantan, Terengganu and Brunei, and amongst the small Muslim minority in Bali.<sup>65</sup> I recall that during my oral examination to upgrade from an M.Phil. to a Ph.D. at SOAS, I was questioned by one of my internal examiners – Dr Geoffrey King, an archaeologist of the Middle East – as to whether there were evident traces of shia influences in Malay seals. When I expressed surprise at his question, King highlighted the relatively high incidence of the name *Zayn al-‘Ābidīn* on Malay seals, to an extent unimaginable in staunchly sunni regions in the Arabian peninsula.

The second study is by William Roff, whose article “Onomastics, and taxonomies of belonging in the Malay Muslim world” was published in the *Journal of Islamic Studies* in 2007. Within the context of the historical study of the onomastics of the Muslim world, Roff presents the problem of investigating Islamic naming systems in Southeast Asia without the type of data available on the medieval Middle East found in Arabic biographical dictionaries, as documented in the *Onomasticum Arabicum* project.<sup>66</sup> For his own study, Roff utilised three computerised datasets, compiled from the indexes of personal names in three publications: 73 names from the *Sejarah Melayu*, 856 names from the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, and 203 names from Roff’s own bibliography of Malay and Arabic periodicals published in Singapore and the Malay peninsula from 1876 to 1941.<sup>67</sup> On the basis of these three sources he made some preliminary remarks, first and foremost that “as certain onomastic elements employed in the Middle East are wholly or largely absent in Southeast Asia, we may have to recognize that Southeast Asian Muslims, though certainly Muslim, are not Arab”.<sup>68</sup> Roff highlights the dearth of genealogical information (*nasab*) in the *Sejarah Melayu*, but the increasing availability of this onomastic element in names in the *Tuhfat* and the newspaper sources. He also notes the almost total absence of *kunya* and *nisba* in the Malay chronicles, but documents a small but significant use of *nisba* amongst Malay intelligentsia in literary and press circles at the turn of the 20th century.

Most recently, in the context of his investigation into the name of the quintessential Malay culture hero Hang Tuah, the Laksamana (admiral) of Melaka, Ahmat Adam has revisited the ethnographic literature on taboos around names and naming in Malay society.<sup>69</sup> Ahmat explores the reasons underlying name taboos, noting that it was believed in some societies that revealing a personal name exposed the person concerned vulnerable to black magic.

## CONCLUSION

Studies of Malay names have traditionally drawn upon the same limited pool of sources dominated by the major Malay historical chronicles, while recent studies by Roff (2007) and Mak (2004) have introduced new data from newspapers and telephone directories. The present article draws upon a previously unused resource of over one thousand Malay seals bearing personal names, spanning three hundred years, from the early 17th to the early 20th centuries. It is however important to stress the social parameters of this new resource, for with a high proportion of sovereign seals, and a further substantial corpus of noble seals, this dataset overwhelmingly reflects elite preferences, and has limited use as a source for naming practice within ordinary Malay Muslim communities.

The names found on Malay seals are mainly familiar Arabic-Islamic personal names (*ism*), the most popular being names borne by the Prophet and early figures from Islamic history, as well as pious *laqab* or descriptive compound names expressing servitude or devotion to God (referred to by one of His Beautiful Names) or religion, *al-dīn*. Other standard elements of Middle Eastern naming practice, such as the *kunya* and *nisba*, are not generally found on Malay seals. The exception is in Banten, where, unusually for Southeast Asia, all regnal names found on seals include a *kunya*, *ism* and *laqab*, and often a *nisba*.

Mak commented on the distinct absence of preferred names within families in the Malay world. This scenario is confirmed in Malay seals, except in the case of Kelantan, where all rulers of the present dynasty bear the same regnal name, *Muhammad*. On the other hand, many Southeast Asian kingdoms show evidence of dynastic patterns for regnal names, from **Sultan Abū al-X Muḥammad Y Zayn al-Z** in Banten to **Sultan ‘Abd al-Jalīl Y al-Dīn** in Siak. Seals also reveal evidence of naming “trends” in certainly places and at certain times; for example there appears to have

been a preference for names expressing devotion to the Prophet in the kingdoms of Sumbawa in the 18th century.

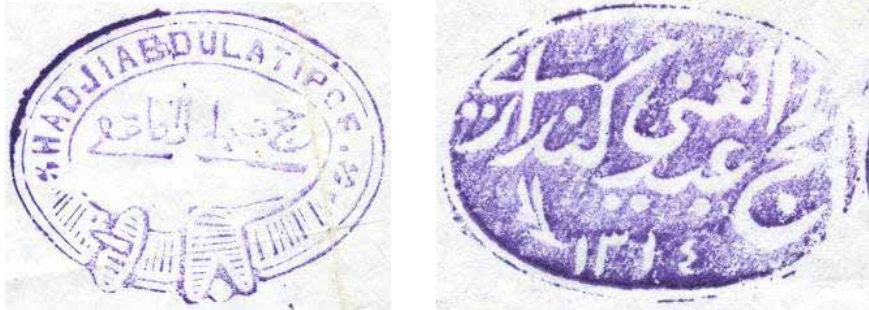
In highlighting the general absence of *kunya* and *nisba* in Malay names, Roff concluded that while Malays – and other Southeast Asians groups – were indubitably Muslim, they were not Arab. However, names found on Malay seals are more usually of Arabic origin than those found in written Malay texts, where *timang-timangan* predominate. The use of a formal Islamic-Arabic name on Malay seals should be interpreted in the context of the image of self which the owner of a Malay seal wished to project to the outside world, in which his or her Islamic identity, and membership of the universal *ummah*, was the single most significant component. In the pursuit of this ideal, to a greater or lesser extent in different states, local characteristics were subsumed in Malay seals, compared with other indigenous written sources.

## EPILOGUE

So profound and manifold are the meanings, implications and associations of names all over the world that most studies of onomastics invariably include a variety of personal anecdotes to illustrate attitudes towards names in a society.<sup>70</sup> I would therefore like to end this article with an encounter which to me evoked vividly the multiple personas associated with different names in the Malay world.

While gathering material in November 1999 for my Ph.D. in that incomparable treasurehouse of Malay documents, the National Archives in Jakarta, a fellow researcher in the Reading Room became interested in the material I was looking at, and approached me to ask what I was working on. When I explained that I was investigating seals, he introduced himself as Daniel Bunggulawa from Kendari in Southeast Sulawesi, and mentioned that he had two seals of his great-grandfather. He thereupon produced his wallet, and carefully brought out a small piece of paper stamped with the two small seals shown in Figure 6. One was in the name of *al-Haj Abdul Ghani* (#1154), while the other was inscribed *Haji Abdul Latifu / HADJI ABDULATIPOE* (#1155). But then Bapak Daniel explained further that these were only two of his great-grandfather's six names, each for use within a different context, and he wrote these down for me: *H[aji] Abdul Gani (ulama)*; *Haji Abdu Latif (nama pemerintahan)*; *Haji Laasamana (nama daerah)*; *Haji Taata (nama penghormatan dari Wawonii)*; *Tuan Haji/ Tua Hadi (nama umum)*; *Doworo (gelar)*.<sup>71</sup> Thus his great-grandfather's

name as a religious scholar was Haji Abdul Ghani, but his name for official purposes was Haji Abdu Latif; in his home district he was known as Haji Laasamana, but he had also been granted the honorific appellation of Haji Taata from Wawonii (an island off the coast of Southeast Sulawesi, to the north of Buton); but he was most commonly known as Tuan Haji or Tua Hadi, while his title was Doworo.



**Figures 6** Two seals of the same individual from Kendari, Sulawesi, inscribed *al-Haj Abdul Ghani 1314* (AD 1896/7) (#1154) and *Haji Abdul Latifu / HADJI ABDULATIPOE* (#1155). Collection Daniel Bunggulawa.

In analysing these multiple names of Daniel Bunggulawa’s grandfather, a connection could be posited between the two Arabic names, Abdul Ghani (*‘abd al-Ghanī*, “servant of The Independent One”) and Abdul Latif (*‘abd al-Latīf*, “servant of The Most Pleasant One”), in that there was a common belief that all names of the form Abdul (*‘abd al-*) followed by one of the Most Beautiful Names (*al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā*) were essentially synonymous, all having the meaning “servant of God”.<sup>72</sup> Yet aside from this linkage, without external corroboration, it would have been a difficult task to confirm that all these names and titles referred to the same person.

Therefore the main message to arise from this encounter is that an individual in the Malay world might have a wide range of appellatives, and that the number of these names and titles would probably increase in tandem with the person’s status and responsibilities. But in the context of this sigillographic study, more significant is the confirmation that of the manifold names and titles a person might bear, the names to be found inscribed on Malay seals will most likely relate to two main public spheres: the official governing structure of the polity, and circles of religious scholarship.

## NOTES

- 1 Schimmel, 1989, p. 14.
- 2 A typical example is Mukhtar 1988.
- 3 Scores of manuscripts survive, particularly from Aceh, and the edition used in this study is based on a manuscript dated AH 1296 (AD 1878/9) from Ogan Komering Ilir, in the hinterland of Palembang in south Sumatra (Abu Hanifah 1992, p. 4).
- 4 Marsden, 1986.
- 5 Loeb, 1990.
- 6 Ibrahim, 1924.
- 7 Marsden, 1986, p. 285.
- 8 Ibrahim, 1924, p. 10.
- 9 Marsden, 1986, p. 286; Loeb 1990, pp. 65, 118, 243.
- 10 Ibrahim, 1924, p. 21.
- 11 Loeb, 1990, p. 243.
- 12 Schimmel, 1989, pp. 5, 68.
- 13 Minangkabau (Loeb, 1990, p. 118), Aceh and Gayo (Loeb, 1990, pp. 243-4) and in the Batak lands, although in the latter there is no objection to a person of a higher status mentioning the name of someone of a lower age or status (Loeb, 1990, p. 65).
- 14 Abu Hanifah, 1992, p. 263.
- 15 Ibrahim, 1924, pp. 8-9.
- 16 For various lists see Ibrahim, 1924, pp. 10, 15-17; Wilkinson, 1925, p. 10; Mohd. Zulkifli, 1992, p. xii.
- 17 Ibrahim, 1924, p. 19.
- 18 Wilkinson, 1925, p. 10; Ibrahim (1924, pp. 7-8) cites the example *Bapak si Umar*; see also Marsden, 1986, p. 286, Loeb, 1990, p. 66.
- 19 See Loeb, 1990, p. 118, Ibrahim, 1924, p. 10.
- 20 Hooker, 1998, pp. 22, 31.
- 21 A. Samad, 1986, p. 202.
- 22 A. Samad, 1986, p. 2.
- 23 According to Wilkinson (1925, p. 9) all Malay children had to be given an Arabic name. In Aceh children could be given either an Arab name or a native one (Loeb 1990, p. 243).
- 24 Hooker, 1998, p. 28.
- 25 Hooker, 1998, p. 27.
- 26 A. Samad, 1986, p. 171.
- 27 See Gallop, 2018 *forthcoming*. In compiling statistics on the use of names on Malay seals, when searching the database it has not been possible to distinguish between multiple seals of a single sealholder, and thus a search for *Mahmud* would throw up five different seals of Sultan Mahmud Syah of Johor (r.1760-1812). Nonetheless the statistics cited do illustrate relatively faithfully the general patterns of popularity of certain names.
- 28 Here and elsewhere, the hash (#) number refers to the unique database number of each seal in the catalogue of Malay seals appended to Gallop 2002.
- 29 Ibrahim, 1924, p. 12.
- 30 EI2 'Ism', 1978, p. 4.179.



- 31 Gallop, 2002, pp. 1.108-131.
- 32 See EI2 'Ism', 1978, pp. 4.179-182; Philips 1951, p. 7; Schimmel 1989, pp. 1-4,14-24.
- 33 Abu Hanifah, 1992, p. 262.
- 34 Abu Hanifah, 1992, p. 262.
- 35 Linehan, 1973, p. 35.
- 36 Schimmel, 1989, p. 6.
- 37 In written sources such as the texts of letters this ruler is always called *Sultan Abu al-Nasr Abdul Kahar*, but in his seals his name is consistently given as *Sultan Abdul Kahar Abu al-Nasr* (#89, #1092, #1161). This discrepancy between the form of the name given in the letter and the seal was even noted and commented on by Thomas Hyde, official translator for Arabic at the court of St. James, in his translation of a letter in Arabic from this ruler to Charles II brought to London by the Banten ambassadors in 1682 (PRO C.O.77/14, f. 44r).
- 38 Talens, 1993, pp. 338-339.
- 39 Rabino di Borgomale, 1973, p. 37.
- 40 Schimmel, 1989, p. 28.
- 41 Ricklefs, 1998, p. 480.
- 42 ANRI Makassar 375/3.
- 43 Mulyadi & Salahuddin, 1990, p. 4.
- 44 Abu Hanifah, 1992, p. 262.
- 45 EI2 'Ism', 1978, p. 4.180.
- 46 The full regnal name of the current ruler of Brunei is Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Muizzaddin Waddaulah (Ar. *Mu'izz al-dīn wa-al-dawla*, "he who glorifies the religion and the state").
- 47 The preference for the name *Sultan Abdul Jalil*, common to all rulers of Siak, is due to its status as a regnal name in Minangkabau, from whence the Siak sultans claim descent (Gallop, 2015, p. 289).
- 48 Alfian, 1986, p. 6.
- 49 Pers. comm. from Tuanku Abdul Jalil, Director, Pusat Dokumentasi dan Informasi Aceh, Banda Aceh, November 1993.
- 50 Schimmel, 1989, p. 38.
- 51 It is known from the text of the contract on which his seal is found that the full name of a ruler of Dompu on the island of Sumbawa was Sultan Abdul Kadir Jailani (r.1770-1774), but his seal just reads *Sultan Abdul Kadir* (#892).
- 52 Cf. the list of rulers in the *Silsilah Raja-Raja Berunai* (Sweeney, 1968, p. 71).
- 53 Colombijn, 1989, p. 24, who also asserts (1989, p. 28, n.4), Sultan Abu al-Fath was only granted the title "Sultan Agung" after his death for his resistance against the VOC; this is disproved by the seal discussed above.
- 54 In the Javanese texts of two early 19th-century treaties concluded between the British and the rulers of Yogyakarta and Surakarta, both Sultan Hamengku Buwana IV and Susuhunan Paku Buwana IV describe themselves as *ing kang kaping sakawan*, "the Fourth" (Gallop & Arps, 1991, p. 141).
- 55 This ordinal term is used on the seals of the Safavid emperors to distinguish between two of the same regnal name (see Schimkoreit, 1982, pp. 50-55,67).
- 56 Feener and Laffan, 2005, p. 186.
- 57 See Gallop and Porter, 2012, p. 39.

- 58 Gallop, 2002, p. 1.64-69.  
59 Mak, 2004, p. 84.  
60 Finestone & Shaharil 2002.  
61 Among a few slightly bizarre comments are '[S]ome Malay celebrities are decorating their Islamic names with presumably incompatible secular honorifics such as Dato', Dato' Seri, Tan Seri, Tun, Tengku, Nik, and Wan' (Mak 2004, p. 105); and his identification of 'capitalist rather than historic influence' in the name s (emphasis in the original) 'Dr. J.B. Habibie, Abdurrahman Wahid, Dr. Amien Rais, Anita Sarawak, or Lily Abdul Rahim' (Mak, 2004, p. 105).  
62 Mak, 2004, p. 105.  
63 Mak, 2004, p. 101.  
64 Schimmel, 1989, p. 35.  
65 Mak, 2004, p. 108.  
66 Since the publication of Roff's study, the *Onomasticum Arabicum* has now come online, presenting information on 'more than 15000 scholars and celebrities from the first Muslim millenary.'  
67 Roff, 1973.  
68 Roff, 2007, p. 396.  
69 Section on 'Semangat dan pantangan menyebut nama' in Ahmat (2016, pp. 139-143).  
70 See, for example, Schimmel, 1989, p. ix; Roff, 2007, p. 387.  
71 Daniel Bunggulawa, pers. comm., Jakarta, 4 November 1999.  
72 Cf. Ménage, 1965, p. 116.

## REFERENCES

- A. Samad Ahmad (ed.). (1986). *Sulalatus salatin (Sejarah Melayu)*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.  
Abu Hanifah (ed.). (1992). *Sirata l-mustaqim*. [By Nuruddin al-Raniri]. Jakarta: Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa, Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.  
Ahmat Adam. (2016). *Antara sejarah dan mitos: Sejarah Melayu dan Hang Tuah dalam historiografi Malaysia*. Petaling Jaya: SIRD.  
Alfian, T. Ibrahim. (1986). *Mata uang emas kerajaan-kerajaan di Aceh*. [Banda Aceh]: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan. (Seri penerbitan Museum Negeri Aceh; 16).  
Colombijn, F. (1989). Foreign influence on the state of Banten, 1596-1682. *Indonesia Circle*, November, 50, 19-30.  
EI2 'Ism'. (1978). (1960- Ism. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, [Ed.]; v. 4, pp. 179-82. (2nd ed.) Leiden: Brill.  
Feener, R. Michael and Laffan, Michael F. (2005). Sufi scents across the Indian Ocean: Yemeni hagiography and the earliest history of Southeast Asian Islam. *Archipel*, 70, 185-208.  
Finestone, Jeffrey & Shaharil Talib. (2002). *The royal families of South-East Asia*. Petaling Jaya: Shahidera

- Gallop, Annabel Teh. (2002). Malay seal inscriptions: A study in Islamic epigraphy from Southeast Asia. [Unpublished Ph.D. thesis]. School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.
- Gallop, Annabel Teh . (2015). Royal Minangkabau seals: Disseminating authority in Malay borderlands. *Indonesia and the Malay world*, 43 (126): 270-297.
- Gallop, Annabel Teh . (2018). Malay seals from the Islamic world of Southeast Asia: Content, form, context, catalogue. Singapore: NUS Press in association with the British Library (*forthcoming*).
- Gallop, Annabel Teh and Arps, Bernard. (1991). *Golden letters: Writing traditions of Indonesia. Surat emas: Budaya tulis di Indonesia*. London: British Library.
- Gallop, Annabel Teh and Porter, Venetia. (2012). *Lasting impressions: Seals from the Islamic world*. Annabel Teh Gallop and Venetia Porter, with contributions from Heba Nayel Barakat ... [et al]. Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, in association with the British Library and the British Museum.
- Hooker, Virginia Matheson (ed.). (1998). *Tuhfat al-nafis*. Karangan Raja Ali Haji, dikaji dan diperkenalkan oleh Virginia Matheson Hooker. Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Karyawan & Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Ibrahim bin Datuk Muda. (1924). *Bahawa inilah kitab kumpulan nama Melayu, iaitu menghimpunkan segala nama dan gelaran, timang-timangan dan rawah-rawahan yang terpakai pada orang-orang Melayu di sebelah sini*. Singapore: Education Dept., S.S. & F.M.S.
- Linehan, W. (1973). *A history of Pahang*. (Previously published as Vol.14, Pt.2, *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, May 1936.) [Facsimile reprint of the 1936 ed.] Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. (MBRAS Reprints; 2).
- Loeb, Edwin M. (1990). *Sumatra: Its history and people*. With an additional chapter by Robert Heine-Geldern. [Facsimile reprint of the 1935 ed.] Singapore: Oxford University Press.
- Mak, Lau-fong. (2004). Naming and collective memory in the Malay Muslim world. *Taiwan Journal of Anthropology*, 2 (2), 81-114.
- Marsden, William. (1986). *The history of Sumatra*. With an introduction by John Bastin. (3rd ed.) [Facsimile reprint of the 1811 ed.] Singapore: Oxford University Press.
- Matheson, Virginia and Andaya, Barbara Watson (eds.). (1982). *The Precious Gift (Tuhfat al-Nafis)*. Raja Ali Haji ibn Ahmad. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- Ménage, V. L. (1965). Seven Ottoman documents from the reign of Mehemmed II. *Documents from Islamic chanceries*, ed. S.M. Stern; pp. 81-118. Oxford: Bruno Cassirer.
- Mohd. Zulkifli Hj. Abdul Aziz. (1992). *Gelaran orang Melayu Perak*. Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Muzium Malaysia.

- Mukhtar bin Abdul Aziz Syihabuddin. (1988). *Himpunan nama-nama pilihan Islam: Mengandung lebih 1,600 nama pilihan*. Kuala Lumpur: Syarikat Binyahya.
- Mulyadi, S. W. R. and Salahuddin, H. S. Maryam R. (1990). *Katalogus naskah Melayu Bima*. [Bima]: Yayasan Museum Kebudayaan 'Samparaja' Bima.
- Philips, C. H. (ed.). (1951). *Handbook of Oriental history*. London: Royal Historical Society. (Guides and handbooks; no.6).
- Rabino di Borgomale, H. L. (1973). *Coins, medals and seals of the Shahs of Iran, 1500-1941*. [Facsimile reprint of the 1945 ed.] Dallas: International Numismatic Press.
- Ricklefs, M. C. (1998). Islamising Java: The long shadow of Sultan Agung. *Archipel*, 56, 469-82.
- Roff, William R. (1973). *Bibliography of Malay and Arabic periodicals published in the Straits Settlements and Peninsular Malay states 1876-1941*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Roff, William R. (2007). Onomastics, and taxonomies of belonging in the Malay Muslim world. *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 18 (3), 386-405.
- Schimkoreit, Renate. (1982). *Regesten publizierter safawidischer Herrscherurkunden: Erlasse und Staatsschreiben der frühen Neuzeit Irans*. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz. (Islamkundliche Untersuchungen; Band 68).
- Schimmel, Annemarie. (1989). *Islamic names*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Sweeney, P. L. Amin. (1968). Silsilah Raja-raja Berunai. *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 41 (2), 1-82.
- Talens, Johan. (1993). Ritual power: The installation of a king in Banten, West Java, in 1691. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 149 (2), 333-55.
- Wilkinson, R. J. (1925). *Papers on Malay subjects. Life and customs. Part I. The incidents of Malay life*. Kuala Lumpur: Government of the F.M.S.

Received: 17 March 2018

Accepted: 18 April 2018