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The dynastic myth of Negri Sembilan (Malaya)

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THE DYNASTIC MYTH OF NEGRI SEMBILAN (MALAYA)

I sat upon the shore
Fishing, with the arid plain behind me
Shall I at least set my lands in order?

The Waste Land: 423-425

I. *Minangkabau and Negri Sembilan*

Minangkabau is the name of a region, and its inhabitants, in west central Sumatra. It is well known for its matrilineal institutions, which are still very vigorous (Bachtiar 1967; de Josselin de Jong 1951). In past centuries it was a monarchy: there are 14th-century inscriptions in stone, set up by order of the Hindu-Minangkabau¹ ruler Adityawarman, and Dutch records of the 17th to early 19th centuries speak of a king, or a triumvirate of kings, residing at Pagarruyung. A remarkable feature of the Minangkabau dynasty was that succession appears to have been patrilineal. During the first thirty years of the 19th century a puritanical Muslim reform movement, the Padri, were active in Minangkabau. They overthrew the ruling dynasty, the last ruler dying in 1844. The dynasty has never been restored. We know little of the functions and power the royal family may have had, but one has the impression these were mainly sacral, and as such exerted influence over other parts of Sumatra as well, e.g. over the eastern coastal region of Siak.

A feature of Minangkabau culture is and was *merantau*: temporary or permanent residence abroad. It has resulted in the formation of a permanent "colony" of Minangkabau on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, in the present-day state of Negri Sembilan. The Negri Sembilan people are unlike the surrounding Malays, and like the Minangkabau, in having a matrilineal organization; their ruling dynasty too is

¹ It is customary to use the term "Hindu-Javanese", "Hindu-Sumatran", etc. to denote not only Hinduism in the strict sense, but also Buddhism and an amalgam of both.

patrilineal. The earliest mention of "Monancabos" living at their present site is an account of 1613 (Eredia 1613). They may well have begun settling there earlier, in the hey-day of Malacca.

Malacca, a port on the west coast of the Peninsula, was an independent Malay Sultanate from 1400 to 1511; in that year it was captured by the Portuguese, who held it until they were driven out by the Dutch in 1641. It remained in Dutch hands until the early 19th century. After their defeat by the Portuguese, the descendants first of the Malacca Sultans and then of their Chief Ministers became Sultans in southern Malaya — Johor — and the off-shore islands of Riau and Lingga.

During the 18th century, the period with which this paper is chiefly concerned, yet another force makes its appearance: the Bugis of south-western Celebes try to get the upper hand in Malaya, and try either to dominate or to supplant the (formerly Malaccan) Malay dynasty of Johor and Riau.

This placed the population of Negri Sembilan in a most unenviable position. They had at the time no unified government of their own, being (as far as we know) split up into a number of matrilineal clans and localized clan-segments, each under its own chieftain. Internally divided, they were caught between several powers:

- A. The Dutch in Malacca, their closest neighbours. The relationship between Negri Sembilan and Malacca can best be described as a state of armed truce, with perpetual tension and quarrels.
- B. The Malay Sultans of Johor, their nominal overlords, but distant and becoming ever weaker in the course of the 18th century.
- C. The Bugis, becoming ever stronger until their defeat by a Dutch naval squadron in 1784.
- D. Raja Kecil of Siak, himself probably of part-Minangkabau descent, who captured Johor in 1718 (Andaya 1972).

How they resolved their difficulties is told in what I shall call their "dynastic myth".

II. *The dynastic myth of Negri Sembilan*

Most versions of the myth agree in the following respects. The people of Negri Sembilan, dissatisfied with their position of powerless passivity, send to the Minangkabau homeland for a prince of the Pagarruyung dynasty to be their paramount ruler. An impostor passes himself off as that prince, but is later unmasked and defeated by the true Minang-

kabau emissary, Raja Maléwar. Maléwar becomes the first ruler of Negri Sembilan and founder of the dynasty ruling there to the present day. This means that the present Negri Sembilan dynasty can be traced back by "apostolic succession"² to Minangkabau (whose own royal family has since then become extinct), and ultimately to Adityawarman.

This link with the Minangkabau homeland, and particularly with the mysterious, sacral rulers of Pagarruyung, is a source of considerable national pride to Negri Sembilan, and adds to their prestige in the eyes of other Malayan Malays who know of it.

There are several references to the Raja Maléwar episode in the literature on Malaya. The various versions of the traditional account can be arranged in order of similarity, thus:

A. The *Winstedt* (1934, 1935) group. A "Minangkabau king from East Sumatra", Raja Ibrahim, rules the provinces of Rembau and Naning.³ This is taken from a *historical* source: *Daghregister*, 3 and 6 July 1677. Winstedt then draws on two local *traditions*: one from Naning, to the effect that Raja Ibrahim was killed as being an impostor; the other from Sungai Ujong: Raja Ibrahim is succeeded by Raja Kasah, who is sent over from Minangkabau. He proves to be unsatisfactory as a ruler, and is deposed. His successor is Raja Adil, who is succeeded by *Raja Khatib*. He also turns out to be an impostor, and is chased away by *Raja Maléwar*. During his rule, Raja Maléwar studiously avoids contact and conflict with Malacca and Rembau, and stays in the inland districts of Negri Sembilan.

B. *Lister* (1887). The Negri Sembilan provinces of Sungai Ujong, Jebebu, Ulu Muar and Johol want to rid themselves of the Bugis, and send for a ruler from Minangkabau. *Raja Khatib* is sent out from there

² It is generally held that after Maléwar's death his successor was again sent out by Minangkabau. This procedure was followed until the fall of the house of Pagarruyung. Since then succession to the dignity of ruler of Negri Sembilan has been through selection, by a body of Electors, from among the patrilineal heirs of the previous ruler.

³ Negri Sembilan is divided into a number of provinces. Those playing a part in the events under discussion are Sungai Ujong, Rembau, Jebebu and Johol, the four largest; and several smaller ones, among them Sri Menanti and Naning. Of these, only Sungai Ujong has a coastline. Rembau is the most prosperous and populous, and in Dutch records frequently stands for Negri Sembilan as a whole. Sri Menanti, at the geographical centre of the state, is the site of the royal palace. Naning is nowadays a part of Malacca territory, not of Negri Sembilan.

to reconnoitre, but on arrival in Negri Sembilan he passes himself off as the Minangkabau prince. He is then unmasked and defeated by the genuine prince, *Raja Maléwar*.

C. *Gullick* (1949). Almost entirely as B.

D. *Newbold* (1839). The people of Negri Sembilan elect a Bugis, Dyen Cambodia, as their ruler, but his rule turns out to be too "arbitrary" for their taste. Some Negri Sembilan provinces remain loyal to him, but others: Sungai Ujong, Rembau, Johol and Sri Menanti, invite *Rajah Malaywar* to come over from Minangkabau to be their ruler. He does so, and defeats Dyen Cambodia, who thereupon retires to the Bugis stronghold of Riau, where he dies around 1773.

These data are valuable, but unfortunately, though several publications cite "local traditions" or tales "handed down by word of mouth" as their sources (*Gullick* 1949: 15; *Winstedt* 1934: 59; *Lister* 1887: 35), we have no complete, authentic texts of such local traditions (i.e. of locally varying versions of the Negri Sembilan dynastic myth). When I was in Negri Sembilan in 1954 I tried to remedy this situation by making recordings, on a wire-recorder, of Rembau versions. This failed through a cause to be explained in section VI, p. 290, and I only have a manuscript summary I made at the time of what was said. A few notes on these may be added to the data.

E. *De Josselin de Jong* (1954). Various informants in Rembau were asked for their comments on versions B and C, i.e. the versions which state that Rembau was *not* among the provinces that sided with the Minangkabau prince, *Raja Maléwar*. Most informants agreed with these accounts, and added that *Maléwar* was even chased out of Rembau. This was said to be the origin of all subsequent tension between the patrilineally organized court of Sri Menanti and the surrounding matrilineal provinces, of which Rembau is the chief protagonist. (On this tension, see *De Josselin de Jong* 1951: 152, 153; 1960: 175, 185, 201.)

F. *De Josselin de Jong* (16-VI-1954). A quite different reaction was provoked when the same question was put to a formal meeting of clan chieftains, gathered in the office of the Undang (Provincial Lord) of Rembau: indignant denial! The Undang and one of the clan chiefs each told a long tale of the coming of the impostor, *Raja Khatib*, and of *Raja Maléwar's* expedition from Naning via Rembau to Sri Menanti

in the interior, where he defeated him. The tales included several supernatural events which are probably significant. We shall return to them in sections VI and VII.

III. *Myth, tradition and history*

As we saw, Lister, Winstedt and Gullick mention "traditions", "stories" or "local tales" among their sources of information on the Maléwar episode. Apparently they accept these as basically reliable from the historical point of view. These local legends are placed on a par with contemporary Dutch records (published in the volumes of the *Dagh-register* and the *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum*) as source material, the Maléwar episode of the legends is interwoven with the facts given in the primary historical sources, and it is placed in a chronological context. Dates are supplied, for example: Raja Maléwar deliberately refuses to participate in the Bugis attack on Dutch Malacca of 1784 (Winstedt 1934: 60; 1935: 167); Maléwar dies in 1795 (Winstedt 1934: 60); Maléwar reigns over the united provinces of Negri Sembilan from 1773 to 1795 (Gullick 1949: 15).

Newbold (1839) does not state what the sources were for his account of the invitation and arrival of Malaywar, but his work is particularly interesting as it is so close in time to the putative events we are studying.

Putative events — and here lies a problem. I think it is undeniable that in present-day Negri Sembilan the Raja Maléwar story has the social function of a myth, in the sense of a text (either written or oral) with sacral or supernatural overtones, that is meaningful for the society as a whole, that is value-laden. But how must we consider the contents of this myth? The authors we have just cited obviously hold that the contents is a generally reliable account of what did once actually happen. It may be so, and then we would be dealing with a piece of historiography that has become a national myth, as the story of Joan of Arc has become part of the national myth of France.

On the other hand it could be that the Maléwar tradition, as it has been told (with variations) from 1839 to 1954, will prove to be markedly at variance with historical events as we know or infer them. In that case we would be dealing with myth-formation in two senses: not only would a tradition have assumed the social role of a myth, but the contents of the traditional tale itself would have been "formed" out of material other than the records of actual events alone. We should try to find out which of these two alternatives is the most likely.

IV. *Reasons for doubting the historicity of the Maléwar tradition*

My own doubts about the historicity of the Maléwar tradition were awakened by the fact that I had never come across Maléwar as a name or a title either among Sumatran or among Peninsular Minangkabau. (Minangkabau proper names are the usual Muslim-Arabic ones; titles are usually Sanskrit-like compounds, such as Rajo Bandaharo, Datuk Lelo Wangso, etc. Maléwar fits into neither category.)

The first pointer to its possible origin came, for me, in 1963, with the publication of the *Sja'ir Perang Mengkasar*, an epic poem in Malay about the siege of Makassar by the Dutch in 1666-1669; the poem itself was written in 1669-1670. Among the heroic defenders of Makassar is one *Daeng Maréwa*.⁴

The name also occurs in the *Daghregister*⁵ for December 31st, 1680.

Important data come from the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, a history of the Bugis in Malaya by Raja Ali al-Haji, himself a Bugis of Riau (see Matheson 1971). The *Tuhfat* describes the crucial capture of the Malay capital on Riau island by the Bugis in 1721. The Bugis are led by five brothers: Upu Daeng Parani, U.D. Merambun, U.D. Celak, U.D. Kamboja and U.D. Maréwah.

The subsequent history of these Bugis condottieri (which one can find described in rather more detail in various studies on Malayan history, e.g. Netscher 1870, Ryan 1967) is as follows.

After their capture of Riau, the Bugis maintain a Malay Sultan of Riau and Johor, but keep the position of viceroy (Yam Tuan Muda) and all actual power to themselves. The first four Bugis viceroys are successively:

Daeng Maréwa,	1722-1728
Daeng Celak,	1728-1745
Daeng Kamboja,	1745-1777
Raja Haji,	1777-1784.

⁴ *Daeng* (Newbold's "Dyen") is a South Celebes title. The transition from Bugis-Makassar *Maréwa* to Minangkabau-Malay *Maléwar* is linguistically acceptable. Parallels for the change from *r* to *l* are e.g. Portuguese *armario* - Malay *lemari*, "cupboard"; European *director* - Sundanese *dilektor*. In fact, a treaty of October 1669 (*Corpus Diplomaticum* II: 426) mentions a "daijen Maleeuwa", and in 1947 the prime minister of the state of East Indonesia was Nadjamuddin Daeng Malewa (Levij 1948: 431); so the name *Maléwa* is apparently also not uncommon in South Celebes itself.

⁵ The *Daghregister* was a day-book kept at the Dutch East India Company's central office in Batavia for registering in-coming letters from the Company's outstations and summarizing their contents. The *Daghregister* for the period 1624-1682 has been published.

Raja Haji was the son of Celak and the grandfather of Raja Ali al-Haji, the author of the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*.

During the sixty years of the Bugis ascendancy they wielded influence up and down the Malay Peninsula, notably in Negri Sembilan and in Selangor, the state immediately north of Negri Sembilan. Daèng Kamboja in particular was probably more often campaigning in Rembau than exercising his viceregal power in Johor-Riau.

No Maréwa or Maléwa(r) is mentioned in the primary sources after the Maréwa who was the first Bugis viceroy.

If, therefore, the events recorded in the dynastic myth, and incorporated in their historical accounts by Lister, Winstedt and others are probably not in accordance with historical reality, we must now try to make a more truly historical reconstruction.

V. *Events in the critical period*

Three sources we may consider as "primary" (being contemporaneous or closely connected with the persons and events in question) are Raja Ali al-Haji's *Tuhfat*, Newbold's *Political and Statistical Account*, and the records of the Dutch in Malacca, as published in the *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum*.⁶ They give the following information.

A. *The Tuhfat*. Daèng Maréwah is one of the captains of the Bugis who take Riau in 1721. He is the first viceroy of Riau, and campaigns in Malaya (inter alia in Selangor); dies in 1728.

Daèng Kamboja takes part in Malayan campaigns before becoming viceroy in 1745. During his viceregency several military campaigns take place in Negri Sembilan (the village of Pedas, in Rembau, is specifically mentioned). He dies in 1777.

B. *Newbold*. Dyen Cambodia rules Negri Sembilan "arbitrarily"; the provinces of Sungai Ujong, Rembau, Johol en Sri Menanti invite Rajah Malaywar to come over from Minangkabau, while other provinces (Segamat, Klang, Ulu Pahang and Jelai) remain faithful to Cambodia. Malaywar drives out Cambodia, who retreats to Riau, and dies there around 1773. Malaywar is ruler of Negri Sembilan.

⁶ The *Corpus Diplomaticum* is a published collection of reports on the negotiations and of treaties between the Dutch East India Company and local rulers or their emissaries, and of the correspondence about these diplomatic contacts between the Company's outstations and Batavia. For our purpose the dealings of the Malacca station with the other powers on the Peninsula are the most relevant.

On Malaywar's death a successor, Raja Adil, is sent over from Minangkabau; he dies in 1795 or 1796.

Adil's successor, Raja Itam, is also sent over from Minangkabau.

On Itam's death, he is succeeded by the "fourth deputed prince from Menangkabowe", Lingang Laut; he dies in 1824.

Lingang Laut's successor, Raja Labuh, is once again sent over from Minangkabau, in 1826. A member of his entourage, Raja Krejan, precedes him. On arriving in Negri Sembilan Raja Labuh meets with opposition from a rival claimant to the throne: Raja Ali, a half-brother of Lingang Laut.

In 1830 Raja Ali, who is supported by men of Rembau, is besieged in his "mud fort" at Bandar (Rembau) by Raja Labuh who has the support of Sungai Ujong, Johol, Jempol and Sri Menanti. The attacking party has to raise the siege, whereupon Raja Ali occupies the royal residence of Sri Menanti, and Raja Labuh returns to Minangkabau. At the time of writing, 1839, Raja Labuh's faithful henchman Raja Krejan was still fighting Raja Ali on his master's behalf.

It is worth noting that the Minangkabau connection of Raja Labuh, at least, seems to be authenticated: a facsimile reproduction has been published of his credentials, issued to him by the ruler — or at least by a person claiming to be the ruler (Yangdipertuan Nan Sati) — of Minangkabau (Dulaurier 1845: 12 and facsimile XV; Newbold 1839 II: 82, footnote).

C. *Corpus Diplomaticum*, Vol. VI.

(1) January 1758. A treaty between the Dutch at Malacca and "Dain Cambodia, Radja-hadil, and the four *ponghoelos*,⁷ headmen of the nine *negoryen* ⁸ of Rombouw".

(2) November 1759. A treaty between David Boelen, governor of Malacca, on the one side, and on the other: Dain Cambodia, the four

⁷ From Malay and Minangkabau *panghulu*, "a chief"; in this case more specifically the chieftain of a clan, or at least of a genealogical unit.

⁸ From Malay *negeri*, Minangkabau *nagari*, "a territorial unit". *Nagari* usually denotes a village, *negeri* a larger unit: state, country, land etc. The state name Neg(e)ri Sembilan, "The Nine Lands", refers to the nine *negeri* — translated as "province" in the present paper — into which the state is traditionally divided. The treaty of 1758 speaks of the nine *negeri* of Rembau, but there is no evidence that the province of Rembau was ever divided into nine. Rembau is probably used here as a *pars pro toto*, standing for something like the whole of present-day Negri Sembilan. If so, this would be the earliest reference to that country as a group of nine territories, as Winstedt has observed (1934: 50).

soekohs,⁹ and the "headmen of the nine *negoryen* of Rombouw, qualified to act on behalf of Radja Hadel".

(3) August 1779. Now that Raja Adil of Rembau has died, the *panghoeloe* and the four *soekoe* (i.e. roughly: the chieftains of the lesser and the greater clans) request the Dutch not to appoint a new "regent", but to allow the said chieftains to govern Rembau jointly. They will act as electors if and when a new "regent" is required. (Only two of the four *suku* had sent representatives, but they were entitled to act for the others as well. One of the *suku* representatives was Boeiong. We shall mention him again presently.)

(4) February 1785. "*Panghoeloes*, clan chieftains and congregation¹⁰ of the nine districts of Rombouw" have elected Sultan Achmat Ibeni Radja Baijang as "king". He confirms the treaty of August 1779.

Using these data, I think we can draw the following negative and positive conclusions.

1. Maléwa, Maléwar, Maréwa(h) is not a Minangkabau or Negri Sembilan name, but undeniably is a Bugis-Makassar one.

2. Any Maléwar active in Negri Sembilan can not have been a Minangkabau.

3. A Maléwar who opposed Daèng Kamboja (Newbold's version) between 1745 and 1777 would have been a Bugis himself.

4. There is no record of any Bugis named Maléwar active in Negri Sembilan since the first viceroy, 1721-1728.

5. There is no record of any conflict between a Bugis ruler (e.g. Daèng Kamboja) and anyone from Minangkabau or Negri Sembilan.

In a positive sense, Negri Sembilan dynastic history in the crucial eighteenth century appears roughly as follows:

6. Previous to 1721, Negri Sembilan was under some form of home rule (by clan chieftains) under nominal sovereignty of the Malay Sultans of Johor.

⁹ From Minangkabau *suku*, "a clan". At present there are twelve clans in Negri Sembilan, but four of these are held to be the most ancient, and their chieftains have certain privileges. They are known as the *Urang Ampè' Suku*, the "Men of the Four (major) Clans". In the treaties we are considering here, the "four *ponghoelos*" (1758), the "four *soekohs*" (1758, 1759) are territorial chiefs, possibly comparable with the present-day Provincial Lords.

¹⁰ "*Panghoeloe, soekoes en gemeente . . .*"

7. In 1721 and after, the Bugis ascendancy under Daèng Maléwar (Maréwa) prevails in Negri Sembilan as elsewhere, but home rule continues.

8. During the viceregency of Daèng Kamboja, the latter is closely involved in Negri Sembilan government, but in conjunction with the "native" chiefs: clan chieftains, and in particular Raja Adil.

Who was Raja Adil? Winstedt (1934) says: A Bugis with Negri Sembilan connections. Another possibility would be: a local, Negri Sembilan, man with Bugis connections. At any rate, during this period an osmosis of Bugis and Negri Sembilan "natives" sets in. (Source: the treaties of 1758 and 1759.)

9. Daèng Kamboja dies in 1777 (source: the *Tuhfat*). Raja Adil becomes paramount chief of Negri Sembilan.

10. Raja Adil dies in 1779, and a period of plural rule by a group of chiefs begins (source: the treaty of 1779).

11. Sultan Ahmad, son of Baijang, is elected paramount chief in 1785 (source: the treaty of that year).

Who was Ahmad? His father, Baijang, *might* be the same as Boeijong, one of the representatives of the four major clans who signed the treaty of 1779. If so, Ahmad was a native of Negri Sembilan.

12. The first authenticated ruler to come from Minangkabau, Raja Labuh, arrives about 1826. (Sources: Newbold, and Dulaurier's facsimile.)

13. About 1832, Raja Labuh is defeated by the men of Rembau. This ensures the victory and the reign of Raja Ali, son of Itam, son of Raja Adil (above, sub 8, 9 and 10). This links up the monarchy with the "native" Negri Sembilan population once more.

14. With Raja Ali's successors (Raja Radin, Raja Iman, Yam Tuan Antah, etc.) we are firmly in the historical period. Succession to the monarchy is by election or selection from among the deceased ruler's patrilineal descendants. The question of a ruler being sent from Minangkabau no longer arises.

We can only conclude that the tradition that makes Raja Maléwar the first in a line of rulers sent over from Minangkabau is not in accordance with historical fact. The establishment of the "apostolic succession" by a Minangkabau prince bearing a different name is not validated by any historical source, and is most unlikely.

VI. *The formation of the dynastic myth*

At the end of section III we put the question: is the dynastic myth of Negri Sembilan a historical account that has assumed the cultural function of a myth, or is the contents *not* simply a reproduction of historical events, but compounded of other material, or of other material *besides* the historical? The data discussed in sections IV and V have led us to reject the first alternative, so we must now try to find out what materials — what themes, ideas and ideals — are recognizable as components of the Maléwar myth.

In doing so, we shall be moving out of the field of history into that of anthropology and philology, and out of the realm of facts and events into the realm of ideas. At this juncture it may be useful to summarize, very briefly, the first five sections of this article.

Negri Sembilan is undeniably a Minangkabau settlement in Malaya. It has its own ruling dynasty (which Minangkabau lost in the early 19th century). It has a myth saying that this dynasty originated through the inhabitants of Negri Sembilan asking the Minangkabau ruler to send a prince to govern them. A certain Raja Khatib passed himself off as this prince. He is shown to be an impostor and defeated by the genuine Minangkabau prince, Raja Maléwar. A version of this myth relates that one of the principal Negri Sembilan provinces, Rembau, would not acknowledge Raja Maléwar but drove him inland, where he established his residence at Sri Menanti. The historicity of these traditions has been disproved.

Having come so far I should add that although I hold that the Maléwar myth is not a historical account, this does not mean that I deny it has any historical components. On the contrary, in the present section I shall try to show that two events in history — or rather, in the records or traditions of them — may well have contributed material to its formation. These events also give us the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem* of the process of formation of the myth.

1. The first is described in the *Daghregister* (3-VII-1677, 6-VII-1677, 20-IX-1679) and the *Corpus Diplomaticum* (1-VIII-1680; cp. section II sub A, p. 279).

"The people of Naningh, Rombau and Songoldjong"¹¹ have placed themselves under a new pretender king, now called Radja Ebrahim, who came from the Manicaber¹² rulers of eastern Sumatra, "and is full of wondrous holiness and rare miracles and magic, and whose

¹¹ Sungai Ujong.

¹² Minangkabau.

ancestors possessed the land of Malacca".¹³ They even attack the Dutch at Malacca (assisted by "Machomethans" from western Java). After some set-backs, the people of Naning kill their "upstart king" and a delegation from Naning and Rembau makes peace with Malacca.

2. Newbold (1839 II: 82, 89) and Dulaurier (1845: 12, facsimile XV; cp. section V sub B, p. 283 f.) are our sources.

Around 1826 Raja Labuh comes to Negri Sembilan from Minangkabau, and is supported by Sungai Ujong, Sri Menanti, and two other provinces, while Rembau supports a native Negri Sembilan claimant, Raja Ali, who is finally victorious in 1832. The Minangkabau claimant, Raja Labuh, had been preceded to the Peninsula by his adherent, Raja Krejan.

I would suggest that these two actual events (and possibly similar cases of which we have no record), and the second in particular, served as "models" for shaping the Maléwar myth. In the Raja Labuh episode we have the features of the real Minangkabau prince being preceded by another person from Minangkabau (although in this case we have not a rival but an adherent), and of Rembau opposing him. There is no mention of an imposture, but the imposture motif does occur in several recorded "local traditions". I shall describe five of these, to be distinguished by the letters A to E. The imposture motif is important in A, B, and E.

A. The Naning tradition (Winstedt 1934: 59; cp. section II sub A, p. 279) that Raja Ibrahim was killed as an impostor.

B. The Naning tradition (Winstedt 1934: 59; cp. section II sub A, p. 279) that Raja Khatib was killed as an impostor, who was defeated by Raja Maléwar.

E. The Rembau tradition, to be discussed presently (p. 290). We should, however, deal with two others matters first, and for these we need accounts C and D.

C. Newbold (1839 II: 79; cp. section II sub D, p. 280). Rembau, Sungai Ujong and Sri Menanti support the Minangkabau prince Raja Malaywar — not, in this case, against Raja Khatib, but against the Bugis Dyen Cambodia.

We see that traditions B and C give Raja Maléwar as the name of the Minangkabau prince, called to Negri Sembilan to be the focus of national unity¹⁴; but in the previous sections we also said that Maréwa or Maléwar was the name of one of the prominent Bugis

¹³ His "wondrous holiness" would agree with the sacral character of the Minangkabau rulers.

¹⁴ As do D and E, to be discussed presently.

leaders. The explanation I offer for the "choice" of Maléwar as the name of the Negri Sembilan national hero is as follows.

All records point to a considerable degree of co-operation and interaction between the Bugis and the local population in the middle of the eighteenth century — on p. 286 I called it an "osmosis". Now for the Bugis, Daèng Maréwa, their first viceroy in Malaya and the founding father of their power there, appears to have been a figure of prime importance, and to have remained so after his death. As a heroic figure of an earlier age, the personage of Raja Maléwar could have been re-interpreted by the "natives" of Negri Sembilan as being part of their own honoured past, represented for them by their homeland Minangkabau. The following fact may corroborate the absorption of Daèng Maréwa into Negri Sembilan local tradition: the Provincial Lord of Sungai Ujong bears the title Klana Jaya Putra; that was also the title of Daèng Maréwa, according to the *Tuhfat*.

Daèng Kamboja was probably much more closely involved in Negri Sembilan affairs than Daèng Maréwa ever was, so one might wonder why *he* was not accorded the honour of becoming a legendary hero and a Minangkabau. I think the very fact of his having been more of a living reality in Negri Sembilan than the remoter Maréwa would militate against this; in addition, he was more closely associated with the drastic reduction of Bugis power in 1784.

The second matter we have to consider is the way the leading provinces, Sungai Ujong and Rembau, align themselves according to the various traditions in the struggle between a Minangkabau prince and his opponents. Sungai Ujong is consistently represented as supporting him. We see this happening in the Raja Ibrahim episode of 1677-1680, described sub 1 on p. 287 above, and in Newbold's account of Malaywar versus Cambodia, sub 2 on p. 288 above.

The position of Rembau, on the other hand, is ambiguous. This province is a member of the pro-Maléwar confederacy in account C. In the historical episode of Raja Ibrahim as described in the *Dagh-register* and the *Corpus Diplomaticum* (p. 287 sub 1), Rembau begins by joining other provinces in their support of this Minangkabau "upstart king", but it is only recorded of Rembau and Naning that they later forsake and kill him. In the events around 1826-1830 (p. 288 sub 2 above), Rembau is unequivocally opposed to the Minangkabau prince, Raja Labuh. Finally, when I recorded two Rembau traditions in 1954, one of these (D, below) made the province anti, the other (E, below) pro Maléwar.

Tradition D. As we saw in section II sub E (p. 280), while the present author was in Rembau in 1954 he made a point of eliciting the responses of various local people, in informal private conversations and in more formal sessions, to the traditions which classify Rembau as anti-Maléwar. There was fairly general agreement that this was the correct version. One of those present in a group discussion was of the opinion that the subsequent tensions between court circles and "commoners", those of Rembau in particular, have their origin in this rejection of Raja Maléwar by the 18th-century Rembau. It may be significant that this elaboration came from a member of a junior branch of the Negri Sembilan royal family, who prided himself on his family's Minangkabau connections and had recently made a kind of pilgrimage to his family's Minangkabau place of origin.

E. The reaction of a formal gathering of the Provincial Lord and clan chieftains of Rembau was quite the reverse (cp. section II sub F, p. 280). The account by one of the clan chiefs (Dato' Mandaliko, chieftain of clan Sri Malenggang) in particular was very detailed, containing as it did a description of the expedition of Raja Maléwar and his Rembau followers from the coastal area to the inland centre of Sri Menanti where the impostor, Raja Khatib, was finally defeated. Several episodes in this tale will be discussed in the next section (VII), but at this point I should add a technical detail.

The session had been arranged in order to remedy the total lack of full, authentic texts of the "local traditions" referred to by various authors, but never quoted verbatim or reported in full. For this purpose I recorded the Maléwar traditions, as they were told that day, on the recording apparatus of the period: a wire recorder. Recording went without a hitch, but attempts to play back the recording (also by others whose technical expertise is greater than mine) only resulted in progressive, and in the end complete, disintegration of the recording wire. I can now only reconstruct Dato' Mandaliko's version from manuscript notes I made at the time.

The course of the argument in the present section has been the following. There is a historical component in the dynastic myth, for we know of at least two occasions (1677-1680 and circa 1830) when a Minangkabau prince, or a person claiming to be one, attempted to establish himself as ruler of Negri Sembilan. We then tried to explain how the Minangkabau prince of the legend came to be called Raja Maléwar. In the third place we noticed that the province of Sungai Ujong is consistently represented as supporting the Minangkabau leader,

while Rembau's position is ambiguous. We *observed* this; to conclude section VI, we should try to explain it, and consider whether it is significant.

The position of the former Minangkabau and the present-day Negri Sembilan dynasties is a strange one, as both ruling families were (respectively: are) patrilineal in the midst of a matrilineal society. For some authors this has been a reason for thinking that the institution of monarchy as such was a foreign body in the two Minangkabau societies, and was a direct, unassimilated, import from India. I believe there are good reasons for rejecting this point of view, and for concluding that the monarchy, far from being an anomaly, was and is a structurally well-integrated element of the socio-political organization. I have given these reasons elsewhere (De Josselin de Jong 1951: 99-100, 151, 152), and they need not concern us now. A closer look at the Minangkabau monarchy will be useful, however.

The Sumatran Minangkabau conceptualize their own customary institutions or *adat* as having two variants: *adat parapatih* and *adat katumanggungan*, i.e. the customs as instituted by the legendary ancestors Parapatih and Katumanggungan respectively. Of these, *adat parapatih* is the more consistently matrilineal and egalitarian, while *adat katumanggungan*, though undeniably matrilineal, shows some patrilineal tendencies and is slightly more inclined towards hierarchy and monarchic rule. For example, an *adat parapatih* village is governed by a council of all the chiefs of the resident clans and lineages, while an *adat katumanggungan* village has a hierarchy: the general council of chiefs is subordinated to a council of headmen of the four principal clans or lineages, which in some cases elects one of its members to be its *pucuk* or "summit".

Adat katumanggungan is thus closer to the principle of monarchy, and there are traditions that make this explicit. Important for our purpose is the one that relates how the ancestor Katumanggungan was willing to recognize the founders of the Minangkabau royal house as rulers, while Parapatih refused to do so. If we add to this the traditional saying that *adat katumanggungan* is associated with the coastal region and *adat parapatih* with the interior, a parallel with the Peninsular Minangkabau of Negri Sembilan suggests itself.

In Negri Sembilan a similar saying has it that *adat (ka)tumanggungan* belongs to the area of salt water, *adat parapatih* to sweet water. Here Sungai Ujong is the coastal province, while Rembau is land-locked.

Now it is true that the terms *adat (ka)tumanggungan* and *adat*

parapatih have another meaning in Negri Sembilan than in Minangkabau proper: *adat parapatih* does not stand for one of the two varieties of matrilineal custom but for that custom as a whole, while *adat (ka)tumanggung(an)* refers to non-matrilineal, i.e. patrilineal or patrilineal, systems, and in particular to those of the royal house, of Islamic law, and of the Malays of the other Peninsular states. The structural opposition, however, is obviously similar in both cases:

MINANGKABAU

<i>adat katumanggungan</i>	<i>adat parapatih</i>
matrilineal system with a patrilineal admixture; the more monarchic variant; associated with the royal house; associated with the coast.	matrilineal system without admixture; the more egalitarian variant; not associated with royalty; associated with the interior.

NEGRI SEMBILAN

<i>adat (ka)tumanggung(an)</i>	<i>adat parapatih</i>
non-matrilineal systems: of Malays, of Islam, of the royal house; associated with salt water.	matrilineal system; associated with fresh water.

It becomes understandable that Sungai Ujong, the coastal, "salt-water" province, fits into the more monarchic half of the dichotomy, and is — we might say — structurally fit to be associated with a prince from overseas.

The ambivalence of Rembau is no less understandable. As we said before (p. 280, cp. 290), this province has the well-merited reputation of being particularly staunch in upholding matrilineal custom. So on the one hand it would welcome an emissary from the Minangkabau homeland to organize its defence against foreign encroachments, while on the other it would be loath to see the establishment of a monarchical system. Rembau might be said to favour a *Minangkabau* prince, but to be opposed to a *Minangkabau prince*.

A rather similar view was expressed by the informant, himself a member of the royal house, who saw Rembau's hostility towards Raja Maléwar as the origin of all subsequent friction between royalty and

"commoners", particularly in Rembau (this section, p. 290 above). I would agree, provided we reverse his cause-and-effect reasoning.

The ambivalent attitude of Rembau towards Minangkabau royalty need no longer surprise us. Given this attitude, we may see it as the cause of this province's authenticated hostility towards the Minangkabau Raja Labuh (this section, p. 288 above), and also as explaining the occurrence of the two variants of the dynastic myth: one attributing a hostile, the other a friendly attitude to the people of Rembau.

While the ambivalence is structural, it seems reasonable to suppose that specific factors led to the formation of the two variants of the "local traditions" that students of Negri Sembilan matters have been referring to since 1887.¹⁵ I mean that for certain political purposes, in certain historical situations, it would be to the advantage, or in accordance with the ideas, of particular sections of the population to believe and to propagate either the one or the other variant of the myth. As a statement this is vague, and it is no more than a supposition as we have no information on the social context in which the "local traditions" of 1887, 1934, etc. were told. When we turn to the version of 16th June 1954, however, (this section, p. 290 sub E) we have firmer ground for our conjecture and we can be more precise.

Here we had a formal meeting of clan chieftains — several of them dressed in traditional ceremonial costume — gathered in the office of the Provincial Lord. They indignantly rejected the version in which Rembau was anti-Maléwar, and put forward instead a pro-Maléwar account. The whole setting and atmosphere appeared to be arranged to set the seal of authority on that particular version. I think we can suggest reasons why this was done, and in particular why in that year that part of the Rembau population would wish to stress Rembau's adherence to Maléwar's cause, i.e. to stress the unity of all Negri Sembilan.

Only a few years before, in 1951, a political party (the United Malays National Organization, or Umno) had launched a vigorous campaign to "reform" Negri Sembilan's matrilineal institutions, and particularly the customary laws dealing with the inheritance of land, by bringing them into conformity with Islamic law. This action met with considerable support but also with no less considerable resistance. The result was a turbulent year during which mass meetings and rallies were the order of the day, and the Malay press was flooded with "Letters to

¹⁵ Lister (1887): the tale of Raja Maléwar's conflict with the impostor Raja Khatib was "handed down by word of mouth".

the Editor" from partisans of both factions.

This conflict was most bitter in Rembau — in later years it was referred to, not quite jokingly, as the "Rembau war" — and it is understandable that the principal opponents of the reform movement were those who stood to lose most by change: the clan chiefs. In the end the traditionalist *adat* party gained the day.¹⁶ From their point of view it would be fair to say that the Rembau clan chieftains had beaten off an attack on the matrilineal institutions of Negri Sembilan as a whole. In the light of these events it is not surprising that a few years later the "authorized version" of the dynastic myth, put forward as such by the same clan chieftains of Rembau, should not be one in which Rembau is "odd man out". In earlier times similar clashes of interests may have been instrumental in bringing the one or the other variant into prominence.

In the present section we have considered the contents of the dynastic myth as resulting from the memory of historically real events, interwoven with a structural feature (the opposition of coast versus interior, and the dichotomies associated with it), and also shaped by ideology. The myth has several other features as well which cannot be explained as simple representations of actual events. We shall consider these in the next section.

VII. *Specific themes in the myth*

In the myth of Raja Maléwar as told by Dato' Mandaliko a prominent feature was a detailed description of the route Maléwar followed as he advanced against the impostor, Raja Khatib. From my manuscript notes I can reconstruct the following version, which is certainly incomplete, and possibly incorrect in a few details.

Raja Maléwar's first official host in the Malay Peninsula was the Provincial Lord of Naning, with whom he stayed for a while. The Provincial Lord of Rembau, accompanied by the clan chieftains of that province, went there to meet him. As Raja Maléwar had brought genuine objects belonging to the Minangkabau regalia with him, the Lord of Rembau recognized him as the true prince of the house of Pagarruyung, and invested him with the dignity of Ruler (Yangdipertuan Besar) of Negri Sembilan then and there. From Naning the party, now led by Raja Maléwar, advanced on the impostor Raja Khatib who had established himself at Sri Menanti.

¹⁶ A detailed analysis of the conflict is given in de Josselin de Jong 1960.

Several events en route demonstrated Raja Maléwar's supernatural powers. For example, at Batu Gajah the reports reaching Raja Maléwar of the impostor's misdeeds so enraged him that he took up a stone and ground it on an outcrop of rock, with a movement like that of a man whetting a knife on a whetstone, while he cried: "Thus shall I grind down that Khatib!" So great was his strength that he actually pressed the stone into the hard surface of the rock, where it can be seen to the present day.

After journeying through Rembau into the interior, Raja Maléwar's party finally engaged Raja Khatib in battle near Sri Menanti. In that fight the impostor himself was beheaded. The spot where his skull (*tempurung*) touched the ground is now known as Bukit Tempurung, Skull Hill.¹⁷ To the present day, when a Lord of Rembau officially visits Sri Menanti to attend a state ceremony, he must not go there by the highway but should follow a minor road across the hills, for that was the route Raja Maléwar took with his Rembau supporters. Also, it is at Skull Hill that the Lord of Rembau must dwell as long as he is at the royal residence of Sri Menanti in an official capacity.

This theme — not part of the myth, but closely connected with it — of a traditionally established route along which one has to travel on state occasions is the first of several parallels between Peninsular and Sumatran Minangkabau traditions we shall be considering. When Minangkabau proper still had its own dynasty, the ruler paid state visits to the provinces of his realm once every two or three years. He then had to follow a stipulated route. A few of these are still known, and although we have no information on the significance, if any, of the prescribed stopping-places, the function of these royal progresses was periodically to revive traditional bonds, to cement the union between ruler and realm and between the various parts of the realm. In Negri Sembilan the Provincial Lord, as representative of the people, pays a state visit to the royal residence, while in Minangkabau it was the ruler who visited his people. But in Minangkabau there is (or was until well into the present century) also the custom of "commoners" ceremonially visiting their village of origin, and sometimes having to follow a specified route in doing so. A Minangkabau poem explains one such itinerary (from Singkarak to Sungai Pagu via Cinangkik) by saying it

¹⁷ The primary meaning of *tempurung* is "(half a) coconut shell", of which *tempurung* (*kepala*), "skull, cranium" is a derivative. One may conjecture that the hill's original name was "Coconut-shell Hill", and that it was only later associated with the skull of Khatib.

reproduces the original journey of a hero of legendary times (De Josselin de Jong 1951: 106, 107).

Raja Maléwar's expedition was marked by supernatural events, and the sites where they occurred are still landmarks today; for this too there are parallels in Sumatran traditions.

Some of these refer to a Javanese expedition against Sumatra, and have been incorporated in a prose history of northern Sumatra, the *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai*, dating possibly from the 16th century. The single manuscript of this history in existence ends with a description of the Java-Sumatra war that abounds with references to miraculous sites. For example: the Javanese stacked their lances against a wild mango tree, and so great was the number of lances that the tree leaned sideways. To the present day that place is known as Crooked Mango. Later, another Javanese force had to flee, and so many men ran into trees in their flight that to this day the trees, and even young saplings, all lean to the east at that spot. So many Javanese were massacred that the dead could not be disposed of, and that field is now still known as Field of Stench (*Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai* 1960: 158, 164).

Other versions persisted as oral traditions, and have been recorded (as usual, all too briefly) by Dutch amateur ethnologists. An interesting specimen tells that, while advancing, the Javanese troops passed by a hill, where they stopped to whet their swords. They were so numerous that the entire hill was whittled away and became a gorge, which from that day onwards was known as Kiliran Jao, "Javanese whetstone" (Willinck 1909: 39). This reminds us of Maléwar's whetting movement when he pressed a stone into a rock — a detail that would seem pointless unless one knew the Sumatran Minangkabau parallel. The same episode comes to mind when we turn to a story that is particularly relevant, as it is part of the Minangkabau origin myth.

We already mentioned Minangkabau's legendary ancestors, Katumanggungan and Parapatih, and the variant versions of matrilineal custom they are supposed to have established (p. 291). During their lifetime, according to the myth, their relation to each other was one that can best be described as "hostile friendship": they worked together to give the Minangkabau their distinctive culture, but were also frequently in open, and even armed, conflict, until their final reconciliation. During one such period of strife, as the two heroes were advancing against each other, they drew their swords and stabbed at rocks in their path, crying: "Thus shall I pierce my adversary!", actually piercing the stones with their swords. Prehistoric monoliths with round holes through

them are in fact to be seen in Minangkabau (and in Negri Sembilan), and are known as *batu batikam*, "stabbed stones" (De Josselin de Jong 1951: 72). The parallel with Maléwar's exploit is too obvious to require further comment.

VIII. *The basic theme of the myth*

The specific elements in the Maléwar myth, discussed in the previous section, are less important than its basic theme. The theme is, obviously, the legitimate ruler — and Raja Maléwar was supremely legitimate, being a scion of the sacral royal house of the Minangkabau homeland — kept from his rightful throne by a non-legitimate or less legitimate pretender, whom the rightful claimant had to defeat before he could assume his rightful position.

I believe it can be demonstrated that in the Indonesian world such a sequence of events was considered to be part and parcel of kingship: that the truly legitimate king had to win through, and literally to prove himself, by overcoming obstacles, humiliation and/or imposture. Many cases could be cited in support of this view. The one which is possibly the most relevant can be taken from the dynastic chronicle of the Malacca sultanate: the *Sejarah Melayu* or Malay Annals.¹⁸

Sultan Muhammad of Malacca has an elder son, Raja Kasim, by the daughter of his chief minister, and a younger son, Raja Ibrahim, by another wife, a princess of Rokan (eastern Sumatra). After Sultan Muhammad's death Raja Ibrahim usurps (or is made to usurp) the throne. Raja Kasim — the rightful successor by virtue of seniority and, at least in the Annalist's eyes, also more worthy to be sultan as he is of Malacca stock through his mother as well as his father¹⁹ — is sent from court and commanded "to take up his abode with a fisherman, and every day he went to sea to fish". While Raja Ibrahim is the nominal ruler he falls under the complete dominance of his Rokan relatives, so that the Malaccan ministers exclaim: "It seems that the Raja of Rokan is our master, and not Raja Ibrahim!" After more than a year of humiliation, for Kasim as well as for Malacca, a holy man recognizes Kasim, who "came selling fish like the other fishermen", as

¹⁸ Two principal versions of the Annals are known; the first has been dated 1536, the other 1612 (Winstedt 1938). A different dating of the first version has been proposed by Roolvink (1967).

¹⁹ Raja Kasim's mother was of the Chief Minister's family; so was Tun Sri Lanang, the author of the Annals. The whole work shows a bias in favour of members of his family.

the rightful heir to the sultanate. He rouses him to action. Gathering followers on his way, Kasim and his party finally storm the palace. The usurper Raja Ibrahim and his foreign master, the Raja of Rokan, are both killed in the mêlée, and Raja Kasim succeeds to the throne that is rightfully his under the title Sultan Muzaffar (*Sejarah Melayu* 1952: 62, 63).

So we have the legitimate claimant to the throne supplanted by a usurper (and a foreigner's puppet at that) who, after a year of humiliation, wins through and gains his heritage. Not just as one sultan like any other in a quite long line, for it is significant that, as has been noted by Hooykaas (1947: 271), Sultan Muzaffar is the first truly historical sultan of the Malacca dynasty. Like Maléwar, he was in a way a founding father, the legitimate ruler par excellence. The Annals, in fact, ascribe the establishment of an ordered form of government to him: "It was he who ordered the compilation of a code of laws in order that there should henceforward be uniform justice in the decisions of his ministers."

I shall only mention in passing that there is a similar episode in the Romance of Hang Tuah (*Hikayat Hang Tuah*), the national hero of the Peninsular Malays. Here it is Jayanantaka, a brother of the sultan of Malacca, who is banished from court and lives as a fisherman. A wealthy merchant of "Kling" (i.e. Kalinga, southern India), who is also an astrologer, draws a horoscope and thereby discovers that somewhere in Malaya there lives a man who is worthy of becoming ruler of Kalinga, "for the land of Kling has no ruler of its own". He sets out to find this man of destiny, and recognizes him in the humble fisherman who is prince Jayanantaka. Together they return to Kling. After defeating the "Franks" in a naval battle, Jayanantaka becomes king and organizes the government of his country (*Hikayat Hang Tuah* 1922: 85-115).

More important, however, than the Jayanantaka episode in the Romance of Hang Tuah, that was deliberately contrived as a work of art, are the 15th-century Chinese reports dealing with Su-mên-ta-la, i.e. Sumatra; to be more precise, with the Malay regions on the north-east coast of that island. The principal Chinese sources are the Annals of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1643) and Ma-Huan's *Ying-yai Shêng-lan* (circa 1451), translated in part by Groeneveldt (1880) and Rockhill (1915), elucidated by Duyvendak (1933, 1938) and Pelliot (1933, 1935), and recently re-translated with notes by Mills (1970). The story they tell is as follows.

The king of Sumatra is attacked and killed by the "king with the tattooed face" from the country of Na-ku-erh that lies to the west of Su-mên-ta-la (this would place Na-ku-erh roughly in the territory of the present-day Batak). The tattooed king usurps the throne of Sumatra, but is killed in his turn by a fisherman who marries the original king's widow, becomes king himself, and sends an embassy to China in 1409. Some years later there is a struggle for the succession between the fisher king's son, Su-kan-la (Iskandar?), and another claimant. This struggle is decided by a Chinese expedition led by Cheng Ho, who arrests Su-kan-la in 1413.

The interesting feature for our purposes is introduced by Pelliot (1935: 313, 314) who points out that according to other, probably more reliable, Chinese sources one and the same king (Tsai-nou-li-a-ping, i.e. Zainul Abidin) reigned over Sumatra continuously from 1405 to 1433. This fact (and some others as well) disproves the historicity of the fisherman-king episode. Pelliot's conclusion is that it must be considered a local Sumatran legend.

This seems reasonable, and the parallel that immediately comes to one's mind is the almost contemporaneous tale of Raja Kasim in the Malay Annals. There are differences, of course, but the similarities are striking. In the Sumatran legend, too, a foreign usurper is driven out and local rule restored by a person living in humble circumstances, as a fisherman.²⁰

I should state at this point that I am not trying to prove that the Maléwar myth of the rightful ruler having to win his rightful kingdom in the face of imposture and/or usurpation was directly modelled on these earlier tales of legitimate and/or local rulers only achieving kingship after passing through a phase of humiliation. What I am trying to demonstrate is that the Maléwar myth fits into the same set as these other traditions, and that the set as a whole has a common structure.

We should also bear in mind that even the present sketchy survey

²⁰ One might even conjecture that the Sumatran and the Peninsular Malay tales are variants of one and the same legend, considering the following resemblance in detail. The Ming Annals (Groeneveldt 1880: 90) say that after the Fisher King - Na-ku-erh - Su-kan-la imbroglio, "A-pu-sai" became king of Sumatra in 1434. In the Malay Annals, the puppet king Raja Ibrahim is given the posthumous title of Abu Shahid. This conjecture loses its value, however, if Cowan (1938: 207-212) is right in his reading of the inscription on an (undated) north Sumatran coin as "Abu Zaid". This would make the equation A-pu-sai = Abu Shahid less likely than A-pu-sai = Abu Zaid, and would establish A-pu-sai = Abu Zaid, at least, as a historical personage.

of royalty legends has given us a set of such legends that has a certain continuity, not only of place but also of time. We have 15th-century accounts of events held to have taken place in that same century (the Chinese records of Su-mên-ta-la); 16th and 17th-century accounts of events set in the 15th century (the Malay Annals); an 18th-century account of an adventure set in the 15th (the Romance of Hang Tuah on Jayanantaka); and 19th and 20th-century tales of events set in the 18th century (the Maléwar traditions).

The conception to be found in this whole set would seem to be that the true king, or generally the true hero, should overcome adversities before emerging victorious. We might also express it in this way: kingship, the highest dignity man can attain, needs to be balanced or even justified by setting it in opposition to a lowly position of humiliation. Those kings in particular who are exceptional (exceptionally heroic, or founders of a dynasty, or supremely legitimate) are required to prove themselves, to gain the heights by starting from or passing through the depths.²¹ I believe this point of view is supported by the remarkable fact that myths, legends and semi-legendary historiography from quite a vast area in Indonesia often show a similar structure. To conclude this section, I shall venture out of the Malay-Minangkabau area and cite some parallels from Java, Celebes and Borneo.

The Javanese historical material has to be approached with considerable caution, particularly by one who is not a specialist in this field. The most detailed standard work that covers the whole Hindu-Javanese period is still N. J. Krom's *Hindoe-Javaansche Geschiedenis*, but it dates from 1931 and a considerable amount of fact-finding and re-interpretation has been done since then. Rather than select from the large corpus of post-1931 literature on early Java I shall base my argument almost exclusively on Krom. To justify this procedure I should say that we are at the moment only concerned with the broad outlines, not with rectification of details or new interpretations on which no consensus has yet been reached. It is to the experts on Javanese history (both of

²¹ Although it is not directly relevant to the Maléwar tradition, one could put the question whether it is in any way significant that in the comparable legends the humiliation or lowliness of the king takes the particular form of his having to live as a fisherman. I do not think so, for there are also kings who had to tend the palace fowls, or who lived as tappers of palm-wine toddy (*Sejarah Melayu* 1952a: 45, 73).

(I set the quotation from *The Waste Land* at the beginning of this essay because it has for me the same eerie quality I find in the Malay Fisher King legends; not because I see a parallel between these and the Grail legend, or Eliot's twentieth-century version of it!)

the Hindu and the Muslim periods) to expand and correct the present notes if necessary.

It goes without saying that a survey of Javanese history such as Krom's has been pieced together from Javanese sources: literary works, commemorative inscriptions, charters, etc. It is therefore to a great extent a compendium of Javanese representations of their own history. For our present purpose it is important to note that the careers of three outstanding Javanese kings conform, in these representations, to the pattern that has now become familiar to us.

Airlangga — whom Coedès (1948) characterizes as one of the "trois grands rois" of his age — had just become the son-in-law of the king of Java, when the kingdom was overthrown by Wurawari, a realm that cannot be identified with certainty, but may have had Sumatran connections. This event, which took place in 1006-1007 A.D., became known to the Javanese as *pralaya*, The Catastrophe.

The young prince Airlangga fled to the forests where for several years, dressed in bark-cloth, he dwelt with hermits. This period of poverty and hardship came to an end in 1010, when a delegation of Brahmins and notables invited him to rule and restore the land. He gradually built up a kingdom in eastern Java, extended it into central Java, and became, as we saw, not just a king, but one of the outstanding figures of his century in South East Asia. His reign was also a period of great literary activity, and saw the creation of one of the classics of Old-Javanese literature, the *Arjunawiwâha* or "Arjuna's Wedding".

C. C. Berg has developed the hypothesis that the author of the *Arjunawiwâha* intended the initiated reader to remark the resemblance between the early years of the epic hero Arjuna and of his own king Airlangga. "On the one hand the hero of the epic, driven from his palace by ill luck in a game of dice, practising asceticism in the wilderness in order to restore the fortunes of his dynasty, then assisting the gods, in accordance with their will, in restoring the world order . . . On the other hand the contemporary hero, once driven from his palace by the fortunes of war, finding a haven in a hermitage and living the life of a hermit; then, at the request of the priests, restoring Java to order after the chaos that had come over it, vanquishing the enemies in battle, and finally triumphing and enjoying the fruits of his perseverance during a glorious reign" (Berg 1938: 41).

Even if one were to reject Berg's hypothesis of the allegorical meaning of the *Arjunawiwâha* — Zoetmulder (1957) is cautiously critical — the representation of Airlangga's career as passing through humiliation and

asceticism as a preparation for an exceptionally glorious reign is significant enough.

On his death Airlangga divided his kingdom into two halves, one of which, Kadiri, was dominant during the whole of the 12th century, until Angrok made his appearance in 1222. He spent his early years as a wanderer and robber; but the *Pararaton*, the 15th-century Javanese book of legendary history, relates that while he was once hiding in a dungheap, Bhatara Guru announced to the other gods: "Know ye, Gods, that I have a son who will make Java strong." "Thereupon Ken Angrok came forth out of the dungheap" (*Pararaton*: 44); he gathered followers and finally became king of Java, establishing a *new* dynasty, that of Singasari, to supplant the old realm of Kadiri. Brandes (1896: 53), Krom (1931: 312) and Bosch (1964) have all remarked on the "mythical" and "legendary" features of Angrok's career as described in the *Pararaton*, and we need hardly stress the obvious and explicitly formulate the mythical theme once more.

The third Javanese case, though less spectacular, again conforms to the pattern. In 1292 the last king of the Singasari line is defeated by Jayakatwang. Although Jayakatwang was actually, beyond doubt, a restorer of the ancient dynasty of Kadiri, the "official version" of Javanese historiography has it that he was a usurper (Krom 1931: 346). This official version then describes the life of prince Wijaya of Singasari as a wandering refugee, his travels and adventures, the aid given to him by a humble village headman, and the means by which he finally wins his kingdom. He becomes the founder of the last great Hindu-Javanese realm, Majapahit.

So, time and again we come across the theme of the exceptional king, and in particular the king who inaugurates a new political era, who proves himself by winning through in spite of exceptional adversity. I do not think it is fanciful to see a parallel between this theme and the one we encounter in Indonesian societies without monarchical government. There it is (or rather, was) the headhunter who is the man of proven worth, and it is by overcoming the dangers of a headhunting expedition and participating in the headhunting ritual that he initiates himself into the status of the fully adult male.

This ritual among the Toraja of central Celebes has been described as "an initiation or 'rite de passage' in which the hero passes from childhood to maturity by means of a struggle which takes place in the cosmic sphere. In this process he is usually depicted as dying (by being killed, descending into the underworld — the abode of the dead — or

going to sleep) and being revived in order to slay the enemy ... and as returning in triumph to his village with the head of the enemy and a wife ... (In) the myth of Sese n Toala the people in the village had been dead during his absence, too, and come back to life at his return ... which shows that it has also undergone the same rite of renewal." (Downs 1955: 50; cp. Downs 1956: 67).²² A Land Dayak story from western Borneo, that has been translated into English, also gives a lively account of the hero's combats with apparently stronger adversaries, his exploits as a headhunter (and as a lover), and his return to his village (Geddes 1957).

I would suggest that the conception common to these and similar tales is that, just as the adolescent has to endure and overcome the painful experience of initiation (in Muslim societies circumcision) before obtaining the full social status of an adult, so the true hero and king has to overcome adversities — humiliation and/or opposition — in order to prove himself and win his rightful place. In the case of a king, this means his throne. By achieving this, his legitimacy is vindicated. I have tried to show elsewhere (De Josselin de Jong 1964) how important the principle of legitimacy is in the Malay Annals, the Malacca dynastic chronicle. The importance of the legitimacy principle in the dynastic myth of Negri Sembilan is so evident that it does not have to be demonstrated here.

There is, however, one curious if tenuous link between the Malacca and the Negri Sembilan dynastic tales which we should not pass by without mention. It can best be discussed in the final section.

IX. *Concluding remarks*

The Peninsular Malay national hero par excellence is Hang Tuah. An entire Romance has his superhuman prowess, statesmanship and loyalty as its theme: the *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, one of the classics of older Malay literature (see p. 298 above). He also figures, in less legendary and more human guise, in the Malay Annals. There are two main versions of the Annals, both relatively well studied, and in addition a third, which has been almost entirely neglected by students of Malay literature (Dulaurier 1849, 1856). While the two better-known versions are silent about Hang Tuah's earliest years, and the *Hikayat Hang*

²² A conclusion I think we can draw from the monographic descriptions of Toraja societies (Adriani & Kruyt 1951; Kruyt 1938) is that the shaman is the ideal female, the headhunter the ideal male initiate.

Tuah states that he was born in the Peninsular Malay village of Sungai Duyong, the third version of the Annals tells the following story.

An embassy from Malacca travels to the southern Celebes state of Mangkasar (also called Goha). The envoys ask for a local boy to be given to them, and they receive Daeng Mempawah, the twelve year old son of Raja Bajong. They return with him to Malacca, where he later assumes the name of Hang Tuah and becomes a famous minister and military commander, as in the other versions of the Annals.

I do not want to make too much of this tale. On the other hand the resemblances — even if they should be merely fortuitous — between the Negri Sembilan myth (a prince fetched from abroad, who founds a dynasty, but bears the name of one of the defenders of Makassar) and the Malay Annals' story (a prince of Makassar brought to Malacca, where he becomes one of the outstanding leaders) are too remarkable to be passed over in silence. Whether they are significant is a question still to be studied.²³

There are several such questions. Of the things still to be done, the most obvious is the collection of at least one — and preferably more — full and authentic versions of the dynastic myth itself. Then, a more extensive and detailed study of published and unpublished archival material could, I am sure, give us much-needed information about the relations between the Minangkabau homeland and the Negri Sembilan "colony". In the third place, more qualified scholars in the field of Bugis and Peninsular history may still produce data on the same or other Maléwars or Maréwas to confirm or refute the views put forward in this essay. Finally, the most ambitious but also probably the most enlightening approach would be to undertake a systematic study of political (dynastic and kingship) myths in the Indonesian or western Indonesian culture area. In such an investigation of political myths as a set of transformations one would not concentrate on apparent similarities — as I have done in section VIII, p. 298 of the present article — but would consider the systematic differences as well. It is therefore obvious that I consider the present article not as a complete study in its own right, but rather as a first contribution to an investigation that will, I hope, be continued. I conclude with a summary of what problems we have dealt with and which others the essay has raised as worth a further inquiry.

A. It is a contribution to the history of Negri Sembilan. In studying

²³ The "third version" has been discussed by Roolvink (1967), who also gives the Malay text, with English translation, of the Hang Tuah episode.

the less documented periods of Malayan history, several attempts have been made in the past to find a "historical nucleus" in myths and legends. Here on the other hand we have been concerned with the "mythical nucleus" of what has generally been accepted as history.

B. If the Maléwar tradition is a myth, it is also a *political* myth. Even at the present stage it was useful to situate it in the context of other Indonesian political myths. Our first attempt to trace the relations between the Maléwar myth and some of its western Indonesian congeners has shown the desirability of pursuing this line of inquiry as a systematic study of transformations. The obvious model for such an inquiry is Lévi-Strauss' *Mythologiques*.

C. Having mentioned the *Mythologiques* we are immediately faced with a problem. We are considering political myths, which are markedly different from the myths studied by Lévi-Strauss (who would probably refuse to consider the Maléwar tradition as a myth). The North and South American myths he analyzes, like the Greek ones of Detienne's recent study, are in the domain of *pensée sauvage*: they are the products of "pure" mytho-logic. On the other hand political myths, in the garb of historical accounts, serve more directly practical ends.

D. It is therefore not surprising that in discussing the Maléwar myth we had to deal not only with the logical structure (section VIII, pp. 297-303), but also with the ideologies of certain sections of the society in which the myth is current. The interplay of logic and ideology (each with its own underlying structure: see p. 292) takes the form of manipulations with the myth, which in turn explain the preference for the one variant or the other (pp. 292, 293).

E. When dealing with such matters, a "combined operation" is required, involving anthropology, history and philology. Whatever its own shortcomings, this paper will have demonstrated that such an approach is feasible.

F. Besides having its place in a broadly-based study of (Indonesian) political mythology, the Maléwar myth has a special value of its own. It has contributed to our understanding of a truly important phenomenon: the *formation* of a myth. The Maléwar myth is all the more important as a topic for study because it is not, like so many myths, either ancient or undatable or both, but so comparatively recent that historical data on its formation are available.²⁴

²⁴ This article is a revised version of a paper presented to a symposium on Myth and Symbol in South East Asia, held at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, in September 1969.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BKI</i>	<i>Bijdragen ... van het Koninklijk Instituut.</i>
<i>JMBRAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Malayan Branch, Royal Asiatic Society.</i>
<i>JSBRAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Straits Branch, Royal Asiatic Society.</i>
<i>MKAWL</i>	<i>Mededeelingen van de Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde.</i>
<i>TBG</i>	<i>Tijdschrift van het Bataviaas-Genootschap.</i>
<i>VBG</i>	<i>Verhandelingen van het Bataviaas-Genootschap.</i>
<i>VKAWL</i>	<i>Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde.</i>
<i>VKI</i>	<i>Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut.</i>