ONE

Remembering Islamization, 1300–1750

TO THE MOUNTAIN OF FIRE

Seen from above, the great archipelagic world of Indonesia, the scene of much of what follows in this book, drifts eastward from the Bay of Bengal into the Pacific Ocean. The Malay Peninsula, too, has long been an integral part of this world. Its ports, and those of the mainland from the Gulf of Thailand to southern China, were tightly linked to states located on the major isles of Sumatra, Borneo, Sulawesi, and the Moluccas farther to the east. South of these islands, and sharing in that same nexus of trade, lie Java and such eastern islands as Bali, Lombok, and Sumbawa.

From the opening of the Common Era, the rulers of the western half of this world shared an Indianized court culture and profited from the presence of foreign traders. This is because Southeast Asia lies at the intersection of two trading zones of significant antiquity. The first encompassed the Indian Ocean while the other skirted the South China Sea; indeed our knowledge of some of the earliest Southeast Asian kingdoms comes from Chinese records that note the arrival of emissaries with seemingly Muslim names. From the other direction we have Arabic accounts of sailing routes from the Persian Gulf to the ports of Southern China that had the Malacca Strait as their fulcrum. There captains would await the change of monsoonal winds to carry them either onward with their journeys or back home, while the intra-archipelagic trade injected costly spices, gums, rare plumage, and aromatics into holds already brimming with fabrics, ceramics, and glassware.1

Though there are suggestions of early Muslim sojourners in the region, Islam was a late arrival as a religion of state. For much of the second half of the first millennium, the ports along the Malacca Strait seem to have paid tribute to the paramount estuarine polity of Srivijaya (or those states which claimed its inheritance). Based around the harbors of East Sumatra, Srivijaya's rulers supported Mahayana Buddhism, making pious bequests as far afield as the monastery of Nalanda in Bihar, India, and sending missions to China by way of Guangzhou and, later, Quanzhou, the great southern port established under the Tang Dynasty (618–907). On the other hand, Arab accounts, which refer to Quanzhou as the ultimate destination of Zaytun, appear only vaguely aware of Srivijaya at best, and merely mention a great “Maharaja” who claimed the islands of a domain that they called “Zabaj.” Its capital was distinguished by a cosmopolitan harbor and an ever-simmering “mountain of fire” nearby.2

More mysterious still are the identities of Southeast Asia's first established
Muslim residents. In part this is a result of the successive rememorations of Islamization that seldom tally with the physical traces left in the soil. Marco Polo referred in his account of Sumatra (around 1292) to a new Muslim community founded by “Moorish” traders at Perlak, and one of the first dated Muslim tombstones (which gives the Gregorian equivalent of 1297) names “Malik al-Salih” as having been the contemporary ruler at the nearby port of Samudra-Pasai, but some see evidence of even earlier communities further west at Lamreh, where badly eroded grave markers suggest a connection both with Southern India and Southern China.3

While we know little of the mechanisms underlying their deposition, whether they were middlemen acting for the China trade or perhaps even the Chola kings of Southern India, by the early thirteenth century, the spice traders of Aden, in Yemen, had at last become aware of Muslims inhabiting a place they now called “Jawa.”4 It also seems that, by the fourteenth century, the rulers of Samudra-Pasai were either competing or colluding with those of Bengal for the right to have their names invoked in Friday prayers in Calicut, where Jawis (as the peoples of Southeast Asia were known to Arabic speakers) often met Indian, Persian and Arab coreligionists.4 Hints of a Muslim Jawa appear in the writings of an Aden-born mystic, ‘Abdallah b. As’ad al-Yafi (1298–1367), who devoted much of his life to recording the miracles of ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (1077–1166), the Baghdadi saint adopted as their axial master by many
mystical fraternities. Known as tariqas, by al-Ya'fī’s day these fraternities had evolved into groupings under the leadership of specially initiated teachers, or shaykhs, who claim successive positions in an unbroken lineage or “pedigree” (silsila) of teachers that extends back to the Prophet. Whatever their particular line of spiritual descent, whether of the Qadiriyya, which is traced back through ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, or the Naqshbandiyya of Baha’ al-Dīn Naqshband (1318–89), the tariqas provide instruction in the techniques of being mindful of God—whether through silent contemplation, spectacular dances, or self-mortifications—that are commonly termed “remembrance” (dhikr). Perhaps one of the most famous forms of dhikr is the “Dabus” ritual favored by the Rifa’iyya order, which takes its name from the Iraqi Ahmad al-Rifa’ī (d.1182), in which devotees seemingly pierce their breasts with awls without injury. By contrast other tariqas, such as branches of the Naqshbandiyya, are known for their silent contemplation. Regardless of the specific mode of dhikr, it is held that such activities, when led by a knowledgeable master, can generate ecstatic visions and moments of “revelation” in which the veils of mystery separating the believer from God are swept aside.

Writing in the fourteenth century, al-Ya’fī recalled that as a youth in Aden he had known a man who was especially adroit at such mystical communications. He had even inducted him into the Qadiriyya fraternity. This man was called Maṣ’ud al-Jawi; that is, Maṣ’ud the Jawi. We would seem to have proof here of A. H. Johns’ famous theory of a link between trade and the spread of Islam to the archipelago at the hands of the tariqa shaykhs. But while al-Ya’fī’s works continue to play a role in the spread of the stories of ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī in Southeast Asia, any local memory of this process, if it was occurring in Sumatra in the same way as it was occurring in Aden, is lacking. Instead we often have regal accounts of how the light of prophecy was drawn to the region. In several cases, an ancestral ruler is said to have met the Prophet in a dream, to have had his somnolent conversion recognized by a Meccan emissary, or else to have been visited by a foreign teacher able to heal a specific illness. Perhaps the most famous example is found in the Hikayat Raja Pasai (The Romance of the Kings of Pasai), in which King Merah Silu (who would become the Malik al-Salih commemorated by the headstone of 1297), dreamt that the Prophet had spat in his mouth, thus enabling him to recite the Qur’an upon waking, much as the Persian-speaking ‘Abd al-Qādir had been rendered an eloquent speaker of Arabic in al-Ya’fī’s Khulasat al-mafakhir (Summary of Prideworthy Acts). Merah Silu is further said to have received a shaykh from Mecca to validate his conversion, a story that might at first seem to point to some form of tariqa connection. However the emphasis on Meccan validation more likely reflects regal concerns with genealogies of power and a long-running fascination for that city as the eternal abode of the family of the Prophet. Perhaps the most
famous of the many Malay royal lineages, Malacca’s *Sulalat al-salatin* (Pedigrees of the Sultans), incorporated sections of the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* and pre-empted the line of Muhammad by asserting that the dynastic founder had the blood of Alexander the Great.8

Regardless of how it was achieved or subsequently justified, Islamization brought the power of international connections that linked the Indian Ocean and China Sea ever more closely together. Even though the rulers of Malacca claimed descent from Alexander and Pasai, they nonetheless considered themselves Ming vassals right up to their conquest by the Portuguese in 1511. To be sure, there is much that remains mysterious about Malacca. Whereas the Tangiers-born Ibn Battuta (1304–77) claimed, around 1345, that the ruler of Samudra-Pasai was committed to the Shafi’i juridical method (a school of interpretation of Islamic Law attributed to Muhammad b. Idris al-Shafi’i [767–820]), the later navigator Sulayman al-Mahri (fl. 1500s) doubted whether the people of Malacca were Muslim at all. He would have had some reason for his doubts. Even though the famous code *Undang-undang Melaka* (The Laws of Malacca) ranked “the laws of God” as more lofty than local custom, they often favored the latter.9

The *Sulalat al-salatin* for its part has little to say about either juridical particularism or the texts in use at the sultanate. It only refers to the sending of questions to Pasai concerning the eternity of God’s reward or punishment, as well as a specific request for the explication of a text brought to Malacca by one “Mawlana Abu Bakar.” The question would seem to relate to ongoing arguments concerning the views of the Andalusian mystic Ibn al-’Arabi (1165–1240), who had claimed that while Hell was eternal, there would be an end to the suffering of those languishing there, for God’s mercy transcends his anger. Meanwhile the text brought by Mawlana Abu Bakr, which he is said to have personally taught Sultan Mansur Shah (r. 1456–77), seems to have been called *al-Durr al-manzum* (The Strung Pearls), a title that the scholar G.W.J. Drewes (1899–1993) attributed to Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali (1058–1111).10

Then again, there is no one text or agreement. Another version of the *Sulalat al-salatin* published by the famous Singaporean printer, Munshi Abdullah (‘Abdallah b. ‘Abd al-Qadir, 1796–1854), declares the *Durr al-manzum* to have been by “Mawlana Abu Ishaq” from “above the winds” and lays out its contents as a treatise on the Essence (*dhat*) of God and his Attributes (*sifat*), to which a further section on his Actions (*af‘al*) had been added. It has been proposed that this is suggestive of a work of mysticism, though it sounds more like a primer on dogma (on which mystical works certainly depended).11 Whatever the secrets of the *Durr al-manzum* were, it is clear that Malacca, joined by the northern peninsular ports of Pahang and Patani, played a role in the conversion of the Moluccan islands and that the process was linked to the ongoing extraction of spices for the global market.
From China to Java?

The kings of the Moluccas were not only in touch with Malay Muslims in the fifteenth century. Trade with China remained the key to ongoing success in Southeast Asia, just as much as conversion to this latest of world religions. Hence Muslim Chinese and Javanese were also on the scene, sailing out from newly converted ports like Tuban and Gresik, which had found their way onto Arab sailing itineraries. The emergence of Patani as a Muslim polity also owed
a great deal to Sino-Javanese contacts. This is recalled in the name of its harbor, also known as Gresik. Similarly the German naturalist Rumphius (1627–1702; see ch. 4) would later comment that the Javanese in Ambon were known as “Tubans.”

Ports like Gresik and Tuban had emerged on Java’s north coast under strongmen now remembered as walis, from the Arabic word implying both saintly proximity to God and the worldly exercise of power. Certainly no discussion of the history of Islam in Indonesia can be complete without mention of the canonical “Nine Saints” (Wali Sanga) to whom the Islamization of Java is ascribed. They include Malik Ibrahim and the “Lords” (sunan) Bonang, Ampel, Drajat, and Kalijaga. The first of these men, also known as Mawlana Maghribi, is remembered today as an Arab who arrived around 1404 from Champa in modern-day Vietnam and who died in Gresik in 1419. Few of the others were Arabs, however. Perhaps the most famous is Mawlana Maghribi’s Javanese adept, Sunan Kalijaga, who has been seen as the archetypal avatar of an Indonesian Muslim, being “malleable, tentative, syncretistic, and, most significantly of all, multivoiced,” in contradistinction to the land after which his master took his name, which Geertz characterized by “saint worship and moral severity, magical power and aggressive piety.”

Often cited as examples of Indonesian malleability, some of the Nine Saints are alleged to have created artistic forms to explain Islam in the local idiom. Sunan Kalijaga is said to have invented the shadow-puppet theatre (wayang); Sunan Drajat is credited with composing a melody for the traditional percussion orchestra (gamelan), and it is claimed that Sunan Bonang invented the poetic instructional form known as suluk, a term that comes from the Arabic word meaning one’s “wayfaring” in quest of divine knowledge. In addition, however, there are Javanese narratives about Mawlana Maghribi and his peers that suggest they relied upon the same trade links with China that would enrich Patani, where Mawlana Maghribi is also claimed as a founder saint. An account from Cirebon, on the borders of West Java, even credits the Ming admiral Zheng He (1371–1433) with seeding the island with communities of Muslims belonging to the Hanafi school of legal interpretation.

On the other hand more recent Arabian genealogies, such as that composed by ’Abd al-Rahman al-Mashhur of Tarim (1834–1902), claim that the Nine Saints were all descendants of the Prophet (Ar. sayyids). More specifically al-Mashhur’s genealogy asserts that they were, rather like the genealogist himself, of the family of a man called ’Alawi, whose grandfather had migrated to Hadramawt in 951. Still, the Chinese have not been written out of Indonesian history, as may be seen in the story of Sunan Gunung Jati, a Malay born in Pasai as Nur Allah, who traveled to Mecca after the Portuguese conquered his hometown in 1521. According to Indonesian legends he returned to the archipelago and married the younger sister of Sultan Trenggana of Demak around 1523, moved to Banten around 1527, and finally settled in Cirebon. There he
married a local Chinese whose heritage is strikingly referenced by the cloud pattern on the doors of her tomb and the particular style of batik fabric for which the town is famous.\textsuperscript{17}

The eagerness of various latecomers to appropriate the saintly histories of Java reminds us that the founders had great political importance, regardless of whether they came to the archipelago as Arab adventurers or as handlers of Chinese business. Regardless of their origins, each saint now has a mortuary complex, often the source of their present-day renown. For example the hilltop of Giri, behind Gresik on Java’s east coast, was once the site of the gleaming sepulchre of Sunan Giri, whose clan produced leaders known to the Dutch as the “popes” of Java.\textsuperscript{18} Such tombs remain pilgrimage sites and are visited by believers seeking a share in God’s blessing, or else active mediation by the saint on their behalf.\textsuperscript{19}

In both the reputed genealogies of the Nine Saints that are found in pamphlets handed out to pilgrims and the scholarly works on Indonesia’s Islamic heritage, most writers are quite convinced of the saints’ contribution to the making of Java. That inheritance, as we shall see, has been revived in part by virtue of the interventions of Dutch scholars, whose research led them to manuscripts that found their way into European collections. It is from these texts that we gain some insight into the teachings of the saints as they were understood within the first two centuries of their advent. Despite the common attribution of cultural flexibility to the Nine Saints, it appears that their concern was often to sternly inculcate behavioral norms in societies where by no means everybody was Muslim. A Portuguese apothecary, Tomé Pires, noted in the early sixteenth century, for example, that the coasts of Java may have been Muslim, but the interior population was not.\textsuperscript{20}

One representative of such coastal Islam was Seh Bari, who left his students a series of teachings framed as the “fundaments of traveling on the mystical path.” Judging from this work, the Islam being promoted was most definitely not a syncretic teaching that would have accommodated local practices. Rather Seh Bari advanced propositions for an elite community that sought knowledge of (1) the nature of God based on Qur’anic interpretation; (2) whether God was distinct from creation; and (3) how the believer might come to know of his transcendence. In exploring such questions Seh Bari referred above all to al-Ghazali, whom he invoked against the esoteric theology of Ibn al-\textsuperscript{Arabi}, especially against “the unity of being” (\textit{wahdat al-wujud}), the notion developed by Ibn al-\textsuperscript{Arabi}’s followers who took his teaching to entail that God and creation were in fact identical.\textsuperscript{21}

Similarly, another early teacher, Seh Ibrahim, urged his pupils to remain at a distance from earthly temptations, and to take inspiration from Khidr, a prophet-like figure mentioned obliquely in the Qur’an (18:65–82) and many Alexander romances. Questions have been raised about the dating of Seh Ibrahim’s text, but his views may perhaps be taken as representative of attitudes
during the formative period of Islamization on Java. The works of al-Ghazali and al-Yaﬁ’i are cited against instances of extreme heterodoxy, and transgression of the Shari’a. This is made plain in an appended text that describes a meeting of eight saints who were each to provide an explanation of his understanding of gnosis. When one of their number, known as Siti Jenar, dared to proclaim, “I am Allah. Who else could I be?” he was censured for revealing Ibn al-‘Arabi’s doctrine to the public.22

Siti Jenar would not be quiet, however, and was executed. Similar fates are said to have befallen other imprudent teachers. While these stories are far from verifiable, they are often taken as catalysts for discussions of the meeting of Javanese (and, by default, Indonesian) and Arab mysticism. In European scholarship parallels have even been drawn with the execution of the famous Mansur al-Hallaj of Baghdad (858–922). Curiously, similar comparisons with the story of al-Hallaj are ready to hand in today’s Indonesia, but it is worth noting that they postdate the publication of Western works on the subject. It is also worth pointing out that even if Siti Jenar and al-Hallaj shared the same fate for the same crime, there need be no link to the lineage of any particular tariqa, or at least not to one with deep roots in society beyond the courtly elite.23

FROM HAMZA AL-FANISURI TO AN OTTOMAN MOMENT

Whereas we have some limited sense of the teachings of the Nine Saints on Java, there is little comparable material for the peninsular port of Malacca. We have only tangential references to the philosophy of Ibn al-‘Arabi concerning God’s mercy or seemingly under-emphasized juridical elements in the Sulalat al-salatin. Malacca’s capture by the Portuguese in 1511 ended any pretensions it may have had to being a center for Islamic knowledge, and created instead an opportunity for other entrepôts to channel passing Sino-Muslim trade. The rulers of what would become the Sultanate of Aceh were among such beneficiaries who set about enlarging their territory at the expense of Pasai, the port that had once supplied Malacca’s scholars and perhaps even its narrative of conversion.24

Like Malacca and Pasai, non-Muslim Majapahit was soon in turmoil. After an abortive Javanese siege of Portuguese Malacca, the kingdom was overthrown by a force from Demak in 1527, to be reconstituted in time as Muslim Mataram. This state would reach its apogee the next century under Sultan Agung (r. 1613–46); though he would commence his reign by subduing the north coast and cap his victories with the sack of Surabaya in 1625. His court would then sponsor works that M. C. Ricklefs argues represent evidence of an emergent (rather than incipient) “mystic synthesis,” fusing non-Javanese Islam with a domestic form that seems to have developed after the Nine Saints had done their work.25
The lords of Java’s north coast had also had an impact elsewhere in the archipelago, where trading centers were drawing more and more Islamic territories ever closer together, including such ports as Gowa (Makassar), the first of the principalities of Sulawesi to be Islamized (in the early seventeenth century). With the encouragement of the lords of Giri, Gowa became an active Islamizer both of its neighbours and of the more distant isles of Banda, Lombok and Sumbawa. Some argue that, by the late sixteenth century, Sulawesi’s rulers had begun to construct their authority on the Sufi model of “the perfect man” (al-insan al-kamil) while looking to Mataram and Aceh for practical models.26 Certainly there is evidence of Sufi ideas permeating local traditions in the archipelago, given the evident popularity of Khidr, notions of the perfect man, not to mention the possibility of becoming truly aware of God by passing through the “five grades of being” formulated by ‘Abd al-Karim al-Jili (1365–1428). It seems that such ideas were made known to many Indonesian societies through the works of a certain Malay from north Sumatra, Hamza al-Fansuri by name. Much like the Nine Saints, he is credited with the invention of an artistic form, in his case the Malay poetic syair (from the Arabic word shi’r). Hamza’s peregrinations took him far away from his home. A recently interpreted funerary inscription even suggests that he ended his days in Mecca in 1527.27 This new dating has radically altered our understanding of the history of Malay literature and Sufism, as Hamza al-Fansuri has usually been placed at the court of Aceh under Iskandar Muda (1607–36). Whatever the truth of the matter, the preponderance of the literature shows that al-Fansuri’s poetry was suffused by Sufi images resonant with the maritime world of the Malays. In one case God is presented as an all-encompassing ocean to be traversed by the ship of the Shari’a en route to the islands of paradise. Another explanation likens the relationship between God and humanity to that of waves and sea, waves being of the sea, but not the sea itself.28

Based on the extant manuscripts and references to al-Fansuri’s anthologies, it is clear that he attained widespread popularity. It is further tempting to place the future Javanese saint Nur Allah in his Meccan entourage, before his venture to Java and ultimate interment as Sunan Gunung Jati, for it appears that al-Fansuri’s own tomb may once have been a site visited by other Southeast Asians, who referred to him as “the master in Mecca,” and who may well have been numerous enough there to simply inscribe his headstone with the relatively precise attribution “Fansuri” rather than the more general “Jawi.” In any case, his headstone declared him to be a “master,” “ascetic,” “the mine of reality,” and the “Marabout shaykh,” all titles appropriate to a master of tariqa Sufism.29 Al-Fansuri himself alludes in his poems to joining the tariqa of ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani in Ayutthaya, Siam.30

Unfortunately, and like the earlier Mas’ud al-Jawi of Aden, there is no proof that al-Fansuri ever inducted anyone else. Still, some of the foreign visitors drawn to Aceh’s increasingly prosperous shores over the course of the sixteenth
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century may well have maintained affiliations with particular tariqas, and the example of al-Fansuri could have made it possible for them to think of a Jawi being so affiliated. One potential pointer to a general knowledge of tariqa spreading after the passing of Hamza is the apparent adoption of the Arabic word *murid* (Sufi initiate or disciple) for “student.” Whereas it is found but once in Hamza’s poems (and in a different sense), it appears in the modern sense in three Malay romances of the mid-sixteenth century. These are the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* (The Romance of Amir Hamzah), the *Hikayat Inderaputra* (The Romance of Inderaputra), and the *Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain* (The Romance of Alexander the Two-Horned), though all are in fact translations, which leads us to wonder about antecedents and influence.31

In any case, 1527, the year in which Hamza apparently died in Mecca and the Muslim forces of Demak overran the Javanese interior, should be seen as a crucial one for Islam in Southeast Asia. Despite taking Malacca, the Portuguese failed to supplant their Old World rivals and they failed to undo the work of the Muslims who had preceded them in the Moluccas. By the 1570s, the Iberian position would be decidedly weak. There have been suggestions that this was the result of Ottoman policy put in place once an anti-Portuguese faction had gained influence in an effort to firm up relations with a number of disgruntled sovereigns in the Indian Ocean. Much as the Rasulids of Yemen had previously been important suppliers of patronage across the seas, Ottoman aid was certainly attractive to Muslim rulers or pretenders in the networked sultanates of Gujerat, Bengal, and the Maldives, as well as in the autonomous Muslim communities active under non-Muslim rulers like the Zamorin of Calicut. For their part, the increasingly confident rulers of Aceh had even sent ambassadors to Sulayman the Magnificent (r. 1522–66) seeking Ottoman cannon to use in more determined actions against Portugese Malacca and for their own regional ambitions in general. That said, and despite repeated promises, actual Ottoman intervention was limited. Whereas numerous Turkic mercenaries and their allies from Abyssinia, Egypt, and Gujarat were indeed to be found engaged in combat from the Batak highlands of Sumatra to the Moluccan isle of Ternate—where Sultan Bab Allah (r. 1570–84) even succeeded in expelling the Iberians in 1575—the famous “Ottoman” cannon of Aceh were actually cast by Turkic rulers in Gujarat. It also appears that Acehnese pledges of allegiance to the Ottoman sultan were probably concocted by an ambitious spice procurer, who gave but little hint of the doctrinal debates being played out at a court that would become the venue for some very famous arguments indeed.32

Aceh, Banten, and Mataram in the Seventeenth Century

And so, among the throngs some spoke to others saying, “How splendid is the assembly of our All-Exalted Ruler. Many of the lands below the
winds and those above the winds have we seen, yet of all the palaces of
great kings, none can compare with the assembly of our Excellent Ruler.
Verily, the state of Aceh Dar al-Salam is the forecourt of Mecca.33

Seventeenth-century Aceh is often seen as the template for Indonesian Islam,
especially during the long sultanate of the bellicose Iskandar Muda, a near
contemporary of Java's Sultan Agung. Modern historiography has sometimes
presented Aceh as a center of power and learning to be equated with the Otto-
man Empire.34 There is some truth to this. Acehnese sovereigns like 'Ali Mu-
ghayat Shah (r.c. 1514–28) may have already started commissioning replace-
ment headstones for the old tombs of the kings of Pasai in an effort to claim
continuity with the regional cradle of Islamization. Whereas such early rulers
were most likely conscious of their parvenu status, a century later they had
become confident of their place in the (Muslim) World. Iskandar II (r. 1636–
1641), whose port was sending spices to the Mediterranean in Gujarati ships,
would even lead visits to the graves of the “ancestors” at Pasai in the late 1630s.35

Such rulers also dispensed their largesse among the Islamic scholars, known
as 'ulama' (some of whom claimed links with the older port), who would travel
on the same vessels. It is fairly certain that among them was Shams al-Din al-
Sumatra'i (a.k.a. Shams al-Din of Pasai, d. 1630), who might be identified with
a ranking “archbishop” seen at the court of Aceh by John Davis (c. 1550–1605)
in 1599, and perhaps with the same Arabic-speaking “chief bishop of the
realme” met by James Lancaster (d. 1618) in 1602. Either way, the Arabic-lit-
erate Shams al-Din presided over a period of intensifying Jawi contacts with
the western end of an increasingly Muslim Indian Ocean. He was instrumental
in directing a doctrinal shift from al-Jili’s five grades of knowledge towards the
ascendant notion of seven grades. This had been advanced in 1590 by the Gu-
jarati Muhammad b. Fadl Allah al-Burhanpuri (d. 1620) in his epistle al-Tuhfa
al-mursala ila rub al-nabi (The Gift Addressed to the Spirit of the Prophet).36

In this schema, recognition of God ranges from the possible to the impos-
sible. At the innermost core is God’s impenetrable and unknowable being,
which is enclosed by six subsequent emanations culminating in the final world
of “the perfect man.” Scholars often divided these seven stages between the
inner three concerned with God’s immutable “eternal essences” (‘a’yan thabita)
and the surrounding four “external essences” (‘a’yan kbarija) that could be per-
ceived in some way. Perceptible or not, this was a theology not intended for the
masses. Only accomplished scholars like Shams al-Din were able to debate its
merits with peers across the Indian Ocean or yet explain it in detail to their
royal patrons, who may well have wanted to know more of the methods of such
Sufis as al-Burhanpuri, known as a master of the Shattariyya tariqa.37

Orders like the Shattariyya and Naqshbandiyya were active in India, Arabia,
and Yemen, but there is, once again, little surviving evidence of a specific tariqa
connection among Jawi scholars and their patrons prior to the seventeenth
century. While Shams al-Din is reputed to have inducted Iskandar Muda into
the fraternity of the Naqshbandiyya, there is no verifiable mention of the latter's having made a pledge to a Naqshbandi shaykh. Nor is there any surviving pedigree predating the nineteenth century that connects him to that, or indeed any other, tariqa subsequently active in the Malay world.38

Even so, one need not necessarily have been a member of a Sufi order to have been an exponent of mystical theology, which Shams al-Din propagated until his death in 1630. He was then succeeded by a local scholar of apparently extreme inclinations called Kamal al-Din, whose tenure was threatened with the arrival of a scholar from Gujarat in May of 1637. This was Nur al-Din al-Raniri (d. 1658), a member of the substantial and important Hadrami community of Surat, whose family already had connections with the Malay world. An uncle had taught elementary subjects at Aceh under ‘Ala’ al-Din Perak (r. 1577–85), and there are suggestions that he was already known to the Pahang-born Iskandar II, who had recently succeeded Iskandar Muda.39

It appears that al-Raniri was especially disquieted by Kamal al-Din having advanced the notion (perhaps even in public) that much as God was “our soul and being,” humans were “his soul and being.” Although there is no evidence of this phrasing in previous Malay or Arabic sources presently known, al-Raniri linked the enunciation to the writings of al-Fansuri and Shams al-Din. This is all the more surprising given that al-Raniri had previously praised Shams al-Din, who is also known to have urged that mystical works should be kept out of reach of the unlettered. In any event it was guilt by association. After a series of debates before Iskandar II, an apparently unrepentant Kamal al-Din was executed, while the books of his Jawi predecessors (which might have contained the phrase) were consigned to the pyre.40

Al-Raniri would henceforth rule on practically all questions of religion and state under the sultan. With the latter’s death in 1641, the accession of his widow Safiyyat al-Din (r. 1641–75) caused him no particular qualms. In fact he was likely gratified when she began her reign by honoring the established trading commitments with Gujarat to the momentary consternation of the Dutch. It was instead a renewal of the debate over theology that justified al-Raniri’s expulsion two years later with the return, in August 1643, of a student of Kamal al-Din. This man was an ethnic Minangkabau from West Sumatra called Sayf al-Rijal (d. 1653), said to have studied in Gujarat himself. While this may well be the case, a recently identified document indicates that he also styled himself Sayf al-Din al-Azhari, implying that he had had some experience at Cairo’s premier teaching mosque, al-Azhar.41

Founded by the Fatimids in the tenth century, al-Azhar became famous as a major center of Sunni juridical authority after their unseating by the Ayyubids in 1171. It was subsequently patronized by the Mamluk rulers of Cairo (1250–1517), who supported the holy places of Arabia until their displacement and incorporation by the Ottomans. As the ultimate destination of the Indian Ocean spice trade, Cairo was well known to Southeast Asia’s traders. Sumatra’s
early sultans seem to have emulated Ayyubid regal names, and the Acehnese welcomed Egyptian scholars in the sixteenth century. Aceh’s *Bustan al-salatin* (The Garden of Sultans) reports that the court had hosted a certain Muhammad al-Azhari in the 1570s, followed in the 1580s by an authority on the *ai‘yan thabita* who was implied to be the kinsman of the famous Egyptian jurist and Meccan resident, Ibn Hajar al-Haytami (1504–67).42

The identification of Sayf al-Din as Sayf al-Rijal is supported by the fact that al-Raniri later recalled how his enemy had declared that his approach was “that of all the saints of Mecca and Medina.”43 There is as yet no evidence of any Meccan and Medinese saints ever having publically proclaimed that the doctrine of the unity of being entailed interchangeable souls and beings. Rather, the statement appears to be a uniquely Acehnese contribution to Islamic philosophy, and one doomed to an oblivion almost as complete and that of its originator once the tide of more orthodox tariqa learning washed over Aceh’s shores. Perhaps the next attempt to suppress its enunciation after al-Raniri came in a short treatise written by Cairo’s Muhammad al-Manufi (d. 1663), who was asked (probably in the wake of al-Raniri’s expulsion) whether the partisans of Kamal al-Din were true “men of realization” (*mubaggiquin*). In his reply, al-Manufi used the utterances of Imam Nawawi (d. 1277–78) and Ibn Hajar al-Haytami to suggest that there were many “ignorant pseudo-Sufis” who busied themselves with the works of Ibn al-’Arabi at the expense of the formal sciences of Shari‘a and tariqa alike, ignoring the law and even frolicking with the opposite sex. Still, once he turned to consider the explicit claim that “God is our soul and being,” he remarked that the lack was less in Ibn al-’Arabi’s books than in the deluded antinomians themselves.44

The remainder of al-Manufi’s treatise recapitulated debates over the meanings of Divine Unity and God’s perceptible attributes, critiques of pseudo-Christian misinterpretation of scripture, and condemnations of the gatherings in which mystics claimed to experience the wonders of revelation and visions of heavenly gardens. As we shall see in this book, the sorts of concerns raised by al-Manufi will arise again and again. And again and again the defense will be made in terms of local Islam being the true Meccan form, even if the locus of juridical authority will so often be vested in Egypt or Egyptian scholarship, where the tariqas had become a crucial part of the social fabric under Ottoman rule. Be that as it may, the later Acehnese scribe who made an interlinear translation of al-Manufi’s tract had his own ideas regarding such gatherings and made sure to expand the Malay gloss on al-Manufi’s mention of “Ibn al-’Arabi and Ibn Farid and their followers,” to append, “as well as all the *ulama mubaggiquin* of Aceh Dar al-Salam, such as Shaykh Hamza Fansuri, Shaykh Shams al-Din Sumatra‘i, Shaykh Kamal al-Din Ashi, and Shaykh Sayf al-Din Azhari, may God Almighty’s grace be upon them all!”45

Setting aside the apparent line of scholars (which reflects a post factum desire to claim all four men as exponents of Acehnese Islam), the repeated refer-
ence here to the (plural) *muhaqqiqin* is important. Essentially an individual *muhaqqiq* is one who, following Ibn al-’Arabi, is engaged in seeking the ultimate “reality” (*haqq*) of God. Certainly the term and its verbal form *tahqiq* abound in tracts concerned with Sufism in the Jawi world and with the Arabian Sufi masters the writers came to admire, but we should perhaps look to Egypt in the early seventeenth century to understand its genesis and importance, much as the Acehnese arguing about Kamal al-Din did. This is because debates about *tahqiq* and its application had recently become of interest there in a more technical sense as “verification” of the intent of scripture. It has been suggested that this stemmed from a twofold influx of scholars into the Arab East. On the one hand there were the Azeri and Kurdish masters of “the books of the Persians,” fleeing the expansion of the Shi’i Safavid state; and on the other, there were scholars who came from the Arab West, popularizing works of earlier logicians, such as the Moroccan Muhammad b. Yusuf al-Sanusi (d. 1495). In some respects it is strangely fitting that a Javanese transcribing al-Sanusi’s gloss of his own primer, the *Umm al-barahin* (*The Mother of Signs*), slipped momentarily when describing the author as the “the glory of the sainted *muhaqqiqin*” (see fig. 2, line 9). Still, not all the *ulama* of the Arab East were favorable to the new *muhaqqiqin* and their heirs. The Acehnese copyist of al-’Manufi’s fatwa regarded the views of the Cairene mufti as opposed to his own, and called on God’s protection “from the evil of the ones who reject the sayings of all the *ulama* *muhaqqiqin*.”

Certainly we should be cautious in stating here that the arguments between al-Raniri and Kamal al-Din represented a showdown between an irenic and mystical Malayo-Indonesian Islam and a scripturalist Indo-Arab intolerance. Arguments for and against the *muhaqqiqin* would rage in all parts of the Muslim world. Even if al-Raniri’s tenure was controversial, it resulted in the writing of works of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) that remained in the Malay canon well after his expulsion. It is also clear that later writers appreciated al-Raniri’s insistence on the proper use of attested Muslim traditions and his rejection of Malay romances like the *Hikayat Seri Rama* (*The Romance of Seri Rama*) and *Hikayat Inderaputra* (*The Romance of Inderaputra*). Perhaps the root of the problem lay in the apparent willingness of aspirant *muhaqqiqin* to wed their teachings to just such writings. Seen from today’s perspective, there was much to reject in many of the romances personalizing the names of famous battles of early Islam, or having heroines rather than heroes. Still, al-Raniri had little interest in pursuing the question of female agency given his collaboration with the independent Queen Safiyyat al-Din, who was described by a later visitor, Mansur b. Yusuf al-Misri, as “a gracious and perfect Muslim woman.” Female rule evidently caused no problems for this Egyptian, whose stories reached Yemen by ca. 1662. In fact Mansur b. Yusuf had been impressed by the commitment of the Jawi peoples to Islam, declaring that those of Banten and Java “looked to Islam” under kings who were “just and aware.”
Certainly they had been looking ever westward. The *Sajarab Banten* (The Chronicle of Banten) recounts how one sovereign, ’Abd al-Qadir (r. 1626–51), had sent a mission to Mecca in the 1630s. This has often been explained as an effort to obtain the title of Sultan from the Sharif of Mecca, but this reading privileges the politics of titulature above the stated aim of the mission, which was to gain an understanding of key doctrinal works. After stopping at the Maldives, the Coromandel Coast, Surat, and Mocha, the emissaries traveled to Jeddah for an audience with Sharif Zayd (r. 1631–66), who was asked to explain the contents of three tracts. These have been identified as a text on Sufi eschatology, one of al-Fansuri’s anthologies, and perhaps even a repost by al-Raniri. Indeed recent scholarship raises the possibility that the dispute between Kamal al-Din and al-Raniri may well have been stirred up by the passing of the Bantenese mission or perhaps its return from Mecca. Whatever the case, the *Sajarab Banten* indicates that the issues being debated in Aceh were almost immediately of concern in West Java. Certainly the Bantenese remained in communication with al-Raniri once he was back in Gujarat. Although the mission was to have proceeded to Constantinople, with the death of their leader, the party took their leave of Sharif Zayd, who gifted them with a stone with the Prophet’s footprint, a piece of the covering of the Ka’ba, and a banner said to have belonged to the prophet Abraham. To their regret he was unable to spare a scholar to accompany them, nor was the Shaykh “Ibnu ‘Alam” (perhaps Muhammad ‘Ali b. ’Alan, d. 1647) prepared to leave the Holy city. Gratified nonetheless, the Bantenese returned to a rapturous welcome in 1638. The *Sajarab Banten* even implies that the Sharif had given the Bantenese the right to distribute titles to the lords of Mataram and Makassar. These rulers preferred, however, to send their own delegations to Mecca, which seems to have been the order of the day in the seventeenth century. The Meccans for their part were well aware of the potential largesse on offer, for they dispatched a delegation of their own to Aceh’s Queen Zakiyyat al-Din (r. 1678–88) in 1683.

It has often been said that factional politics would ultimately see letters sent to Mecca resulting in a fatwa urging the deposition of the last Acehnese queen, Kamalat al-Din (r. 1688–99), in favor of her husband, Sayyid Hashim Jamal al-Layl. While there is no evidence of any such fatwa, the ascendancy of a Hadrami dynasty has played its part in completing the vision of Aceh as the most Islamic of Islamic states in early modern Indonesia. Some scholars also point to the proselytising role of the ’Alawiyya, a tariqa from Hadramawt that traces its pedigree back to Muhammad b. ’Ali (d. 1255). The ’Alawiyya has even been referred to as an “expanded family tariqa,” which is no doubt appropriate, at least to some degree. We should keep in mind that the bonds of family often linked people like al-Raniri to the Hijaz, Gujarat, the Maldives, and Aceh. This is certainly a theme to return to, especially in relation to the widespread popularity of the numerous prayers focusing on the person of ’Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani as a descendant of the Prophet.
That said, the oft-touted diffusion of `Alawi grace overstates the role of the men of Hadramawt in Southeast Asian history before the eighteenth century, and we should look to Egypt and Mecca, too. Moreover the driving force for ongoing Islamization should not be seen solely in terms of the presence, or absence, of foreign visitors like the Hadramis. Not to be neglected is the role of Jawi scholars themselves in venturing to the holy lands and either returning to, or writing for, their homelands. It is arguably these figures who should be seen as key to the final transmission and elaboration of the ascendant “Meccan” complex of Islamic institutions under Ottoman rule, institutions that included tariqa practice. Perhaps the most influential scholar in the history of Islam in Southeast Asia has been `Abd al-Ra’uf al-Sinkili (1615–93). He was born not far from Pasai, and from his own brief notes we know that this “Jawi” left Aceh (and al-Raniri) in 1642, embarking on an overseas venture that would last some nineteen years.55

After moving from teacher to teacher between the Gulf, Yemen, Mecca, and India, it was in Medina that al-Sinkili found his masters, Ahmad al-Qushashi (1583–1661) and Ibrahim al-Kurani (d. 1690), who both had extensive links to Egypt. The first, born in Medina, had had a series of mystical experiences in Yemen, where his father had taken him in 1602. He later returned to Medina and established himself as a teacher of the Shattariyya order after the death of his key Sufi preceptor (and father-in-law) Ahmad al-Shinnawi (d. 1619), who was linked to many Egyptian scholars. Ibrahim al-Kurani was born in Kurdistan and joined al-Qushashi after numerous travels in the Arab East. In 1650 he traveled to Cairo and linked himself to a number of Egyptian scholars. He then returned to Medina in 1651 and became al-Qushashi’s deputy for the Shattariyya, though he is today better known in Arab biographical dictionaries as a Naqshbandi. Whereas `Abd al-Ra’uf claimed to have affiliated himself to several tariqas, it was the teachings of the Shattariyya that he would take to Aceh and pass on to his disciples like `Abd al-Muhyi of Pamijahan (1640–1715), who established himself at the West Javanese town of Karangnunggal sometime after 1661.

Al-Kurani was also responsible for a tract, the Ithaf al-dhaki (The Gifting of the Clever), which he addressed to those Jawis whose enthusiasm for al-Burhanpuri’s Tuhfa had never abated. Mustafa b. Fath Allah al-Hamawi (d. 1712), who met al-Kurani in 1675, claimed that the questions of several Jawis concerning the interpretation of the Tuhfa in their “religious schools” led Kurani to write his text.56 It seems, however, likely that we can identify a more specific theological issue behind such requests, for al-Kurani also produced a shorter epistle about the reported views of “some of the people of Jawa” who averred, “by virtue of learning and piety” that “God Almighty is our self and being and we are his self and being.” These had been the very words of Kamal al-Din; indeed it seems from the context of the reported question, addressed now to “the `ulama’ of verification,” that Kamal al-Din’s theology was being
reframed in terms of a general debate between "some of the people of Jawa" and "some of the [foreign] 'ulama' [now] heading there." 

Al-Kurani was more generous in his responses than al-Manufi had been. He argued that the Jawi in question had not deserved death, but that both he and his attacker had misinterpreted the esoteric meaning of the words of Ibn al-'Arabi relayed by al-Burhanpurī. In the Shath al-wali (The Utterance of the Saint), al-Kurani further proposed that only an individual possessed of a weak faith would come to such a view, and then only if he applied an overly rationalist reading of the Qur’an. The ultimate aim of the mystic was a “return” to the divine Creator, while recognizing that one’s being was still a part of creation, and hence inescapably separate.

Al-Sinkili’s own contributions on matters mystical seem to have begun when Safiyyat al-Din asked him to write his Mir’at al-tullab (Mirror of the Seekers). That al-Sinkili in this work sought a middle path between local ecstatic antinomians and the Shari’a-centrists heading (back) to Southeast Asia is shown by the fact that he paraphrased the poetry of Hamza al-Fansuri without citing his name. By the same token, and like al-Raniri, he was no opponent of al-Burhanpurī’s seven grades. Rather he argued in his Daqa’iq al-huruf (The Details of the Letters) against confusing the inner, eternal essences with the external, perceptible ones, for that would equate creation with God. Certainly his Bantenese emissary 'Abd al-Muhyi was a teacher of the Tuhfā, as was another deputy, Shaykh Burhan al-Din (1646–1704), who is now remembered as the Islamizer of the Minangkabau (regardless of the existence of many older Muslim graves) and founder of a school at Ulakan. Perhaps most famously al-Sinkili is known for his translation and exegesis of the Qur’an, the Tarjuman al-mustafid (The Beneficial Translation), the first fully fledged Malay exegesis based on the treatment of “the two Jalals” of Egypt; Jalal al-Din al-Mahalli (1389–1459) and his student Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (1445–1505).

Quite unlike the situation in the sixteenth century then, when it seems that there was simply an eagerness for the knowledge of “Sufism” that foreign guests could impart and a willingness to philosophize about the eternal essences, seventeenth-century Aceh would become a center of scholarly industry and a regally sponsored clearing house for tariqa learning in the Shattari tradition. But it was not the only polity to produce a scholar of international calibre, witness Yusuf al-Maqassari (a.k.a. Shaykh Yusuf Taj al-Khalwati, 1627–99). Born in the newly Islamized Kingdom of Gowa, on Sulawesi, Yusuf left for Arabia in September of 1644, stopping off at Banten, where he befriended the crown prince, and then Aceh, where he may have rued the absence of al-Raniri. Like al-Sinkili, al-Maqassari spent years in the teaching circles of the Middle East. He linked himself to the Naqshbandi fraternity and transcribed a work of Mawlana Jami (d. 1492) under the guidance of al-Kurani. Ultimately, however, he determined that the Khalwatiyya was the order for him, and was inducted at Damascus by Ayyub al-Khalwati (1586–1661).
On his return to the archipelago in the late 1660s, al-Maqassari, better known today as Shaykh Yusuf, was welcomed in Banten, where his old friend had since taken the throne as Ageng Tirtayasa (r. 1651–83). He married into the royal family and corresponded with the elite of his birthplace. It was this perhaps that made Banten an obvious place of refuge for many Makassarese after a combined Dutch and Bugis alliance sacked Gowa in 1669. Shaykh Yusuf is perhaps best known to Indonesians today for having led the resistance against the Dutch in Banten after the Dutch East India Company intervened in 1683. After the capture and exiling of Ageng, Shaykh Yusuf took over the command for some weeks from Karangnunggal. After his capture in December of 1683, he too went into exile, to Ceylon. He continued to write for his home community from that island until 1693, when he was sent further west to the Cape of Good Hope, where he died in 1699.

Throughout this time he remained a conduit for tariqa authority to the region, and became, ultimately, a pattern for retrospective emulation in the specific locales where he had been active. The *Sajarah Banten* and its Malay variant, the *Hikayat Hasan al-Din* (The Romance of Hasan al-Din), seem to retrofit Shaykh Yusuf’s Khalwati connections with notable muhaqqiqin onto Sunan Gunung Jati at the opening of the sixteenth century. It even trumps them in certain respects by making their particular saint a sayyid, who regularly communicated with his ancestor the Prophet, not to mention with various famous Sufis who were not necessarily alive at the same time or in Mecca during his alleged Hajj. These included Mawlana Jami, as well as the Cairene jurist Zakariyya al-Ansari (1420–1520) and his pupil ‘Abd al-Wahhab al-Sha’rani (1493–1565).63

The works of the last two scholars would arguably become of greater influence in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries than in their own lifetimes (see below). In any event, a more reliable royal account from Gowa, written some time before 1729, chronicles the arrival from Banten in 1678 of Shaykh Yusuf’s principal vicegerent, ‘Abd al-Basir (a.k.a. Tuang Rappang, d. 1723), who was followed by members of his retinue from Cirebon in 1684.64 There is clear evidence of Khalwati activity in Sulawesi by 1688, when a French priest, Nicholas Gervaise (c.1662–1729), published an account of Makassar, largely based on his interviews with two princes whom he tutored in Paris. In his account Gervaise described how local religious leaders, known as Agguy, presided over well-maintained stone mosques. These were equipped, what is more, with a staff of celibate mendicants called Santaris tasked with serving the mosque.65 In order, Gervaise noted:

that they be the less expos’d to the danger of becoming unfaithful to their Vocation, and to their Vow of Chastity, they Live Night and Day in little Cells, separated one from the other, and which are all built in the Mosque: There they receive every Morning the Alms of the Faithful, upon which they are to enjoy nothing in Propriety; and when they want any thing
necessary for the Support of Life, they think it an Honour to go and Beg from door to door. Their Number is more or less, according to the bigness of the Mosque; they wear neither Locks nor Beards; a plain Bonnet of white Linnen covers their Heads, and the Garment of the same clour, with which they are cloath'd, reaches no farther than their Knees. If they are forc'd to go abroad upon any urgent Affair, they beg leave of the Grand Agguy, and then they put on what cloathes they think convenient; nor are they distinguish'd from Seculars, but only that their Heads are shaved, carry a white Turbant, and wear neither Scimitar nor Cris by their Sides.66

This is perhaps the first clear Western reference to tariqa devotees in the archipelago, and one replete with echoes of Cairo, especially in its terminology as communicated by two young members of the learned elite. The word Agguy, for example, is very close to the Cairene variant of Hajji (Haggi), the title by which many Southeast Asian teachers would be known, while Friday services are referred to in Gervaise’s text as Guman, perhaps from the Egyptian pronunciation of “Friday” (al-gumi‘a).67 Still, this should not be taken too far as it does not necessarily bespeak anything beyond the presence of a scholar of Egyptian origin or Jawis having been trained by Egyptians. In fact Gervaise was at pains to point out that the devout Makassarese aimed to emulate one form of Islam alone, and it was not that of Cairo:

And now it is not to be imagin'd, with what exactness the Macasarians acquit themselves of the duties enjoyn'd by their new Religion: They would not miss of the meanest Holydays which it prescribes, without signalizing their Devotion, every one in particular, by some Good Work or other, of Supererogation; the neglect of a Bow, or any slight Washing, is look'd upon them as a considerable Crime. Some of them out of meer Sentiment of repentance, abstain'd all their Lives from drinking Palm-Wine, tho’ it be not forbidden by the Law: And some there are, that will rather dye for Thirst, than Drink so much as a Glass of Water, from Sun-rising to Sun-setting, during the whole time of their Lent. More than this, they are far more devout than all other Mahometans; because they observe an infinite number of Ceremonies that are not in use among the Turks, nor among the Indian Mahometans; because they believe them to be practis'd at Mecca, which they look upon as the Center of their Religion, and the Pattern which they ought to follow.68

The Santaris were not the only members of the Agguy elite described by Gervaise. There were also the junior members of the clerisy, known as Labe, and the all-important Tuians, a.k.a. “Tuans”; whose very authority rested on that same “Meccan” Pattern:

The third Order is that of the Tuiam, which cannot be conferr’d in any other place than at Mecca, and that by the Grand Mufti himself. Whence it
comes to pass, that there are very few Tōians in Macasar; because that every body will not give themselves the trouble of going far to be Ordain'd, nor engage themselves in so great an Expence. This Order, which they receive from the Grand Mufti, renders them all equal, as to the Dignity of the Character; but the inequality of the Jurisdiction, makes a great difference between them. They who serve the biggest Mosques, have more Credit and Authority than the others; and he who has the Honour to be near the King, is the highest of all, as it were the Patriarch and Primate of the Kingdom; nor does he acknowledge any one above him, but the Grand Mufti of Mecca. They may all Marry, and if their Wives happen to dye, they are permitted to take another. But they forbid Polygamy, under very severe Penalties, which they cannot escape, if they are convicted of it. As they are beloved and respected by all the People, who load them with Presents every day; and as there is not a Wedding, nor a Feast, to which they are not first all invited, and honourably admitted, the Life which they lead seems very commodious and easie.69

More crucially, we begin to see evidence that the cult maintained by the Ag-guys took on distinctly regal, and localized, tones. In 1701 the Gowan annals report that the kings began to visit the grave of Dato-ri-Bandung, said to have been one of the first preachers of Islam to the Makassarese in the 1570s. Soon, however, they began to favor that of Shaykh Yusuf after his body was repatriated from the Cape in 1705, perhaps in response to urging by his son, who had returned in June 1702.70 Certainly his son was welcome at court, and future royal genealogies of Makassar would incorporate the lineage of Shaykh Yusuf with the same alacrity as the Bantenese showed in making Sunan Gunung Jati into a Khalwati and a descendant of the Prophet. His mortal return even seems to have occluded the roles played by earlier Agguys and such sojourners as an Arab shaykh, 'Umarr Ba Mahsun (1634–93), who had also arrived in 1684 (some weeks after Shaykh Yusuf’s followers), and subsequently served as a prominent Tuan.71

Chaos at Kartasura

Azyumardi Azra argues that Shaykh Yusuf consistently emphasized the need for a balance between the requirements of Shari‘a and Sufism in his teachings, but that, unlike al-Qushashi, he held that the novice had to be utterly loyal to his shaykh. Such loyalty must have played on Dutch minds when they sent him across the Indian Ocean, or as they watched over coronations where regents initiated princes such as Mallawang Gawe (d. 1742) within the walls of the Dutch fort in a manner reminiscent of a Sufi pledge.72 It was to prove an issue too when, over the course of the next few decades, their formal allies in Mataram seemed to come under the influence of other Sufi masters.
By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Dutch had eaten away the domains of Mataram in exchange for promises of military assistance against the rebellious north coast provinces. In the process they gained the right to collect taxes on behalf of the descendants of Sultan Agung. Still, the Javanese chronicles betray but little concern with the Dutch, who were, it seems, poorly apprised of what was going on at court in respect of Islam. Much of what follows appears to have entered little into Dutch calculations, and has only been made known to us through the work of Ricklefs on Javanese accounts and from tangential observations made by the Dutch.

According to these sources, in 1731 a teacher was tried under Pakubuwana II (r. 1726–49) for revealing mystical truths to the uninitiated. This was Hajji Ahmad Mutamakin of the village of Cabolek, near Semarang, who claimed to have been instructed in the Naqshbandi techniques by a Shaykh “Zayn al-Yamani,” perhaps the son of a teacher to both al-Sinkili and al-Maqassari. Certainly his foreign pedigree was regarded with suspicion. In the *Serat Cabolek* (The Book of Cabolek), Ketib Anom of Kudus mocks Mutamakin for his Arabian credentials and preference for foreign books. As far as Ketib Anom was concerned, true knowledge of Sufism was already to be found in kawi texts like the *Ramayana*. It would seem then that there is some evidence of a conflict between synthetic local understandings of Sufism and the Sufism being imported from Arabia in both Arabic and Malay, the other scholarly language of Abd al-Ra’uf, Shaykh Yusuf, and Abd al-Muhyi.73

Hajji Mutamakin apparently escaped ultimate sanction, and a follower of Ketib Anom, Pangeran Urawan, showed the bemused yokel how true Sufism was to be found in the Indo-Javanese works. Yet Urawan may himself have had links to the same current of Arabo-Malay influence. The son of a royal exile sent to Batavia in 1721, Urawan was at the center of a clique forming around Pakubuwana II around 1729 that seems to have been especially active from 1731 to 1738, at which time, and at the insistence of the Dutch, he was exiled to Ceylon, an action that occasioned considerable disquiet in pious circles. Urawan had, however, hardly acted alone. His allies included the future chief minister, Natakusuma, and two other men from Batavia. One was a teacher called Kyai Mataram, who had arrived in 1735. The other was an Arab called Sayyid ‘Alwi, who had come in 1737.74

What teachings this clique supported are at present less than clear, though it seems that they were opposed by a faction backed by Pakubuwana II’s grandmother, who sponsored the rewriting of several texts held, since the time of Sultan Agung, to possess a magical power that united the Javanese and Muslim worlds. Among these was a reworking of the Qur’anic tale of Joseph; the *Kitab Usulbiyya* (The Book of Usulbiyya?), which was heavily influenced by the *Isra’ wa-mi’raj* (The Night Journey and Ascension) of Muhammad (see below); and an Alexander romance translated from a Malay model brought from Champa.75

Beyond importing a more pronounced opposition to the Dutch, there are
suggestions that at least one member of the young faction was affiliated in some way with the Qadiriyya order. The outward-looking proclivities of Natakusuma and Sayyid 'Alwi arguably became clearer once the so-called China War commenced in October 1740. Natakusuma's faction commissioned the writing down of a series of Shattari pedigrees following an early Javanese victory over the Dutch garrison of Kartasura. These pedigrees were also accompanied by a wayward interpretation of the Fath al-rahman, first written by the warrior-Sufi of Damascus, Wali Raslan, and redacted by al-Ansari. There must have been some global resonance here, as al-Ansari, the famous Shafi'i Qadi of Egypt under Qa‘it Bey (r. 1468–95), was already imagined to be a fellow in Mecca of Sunan Gunung Jati.

Despite such compositions and prayers, however, ultimate victory did not ensue for the Javanese. With the loss of the court to Madurese forces, Pakubuwana II returned to the Dutch fold and, after wanderings into the wilderness near Ponorogo, even handed over his erstwhile mentors to exile. In so doing he turned his back on the competing pietisms of his late grandmother and his Batavian allies alike. The stage was now set for other voices to challenge the legitimacy of the Dutch in Java.

Conclusion

We have seen that numerous difficulties beset any attempt at plotting a straightforward history of the conversion and Islamization of Indonesia’s many diverse peoples up to the middle of the eighteenth century. What does emerge is a sense that certain key courts took on the mantle of defenders of Islam (regardless of their actions against Muslims of neighbouring polities) and regularly sought validation from beyond their shores, most preferably from the person of the Prophet’s lineal descendants in Mecca and the scholars associated with them. As a part of the mix, the latest form of high orthodoxy as embodied by Sufi praxis would appear to have been embraced as well. Far from being a mechanism of conversion, however, Sufism was formally restricted to the regal elite, while adherence to the Shari’a was commended to their subjects. Moreover, as the singular case of Kamal al-Din makes clear, we begin to perceive the intense gravitational pull of Cairo in our story; which is only natural when one considers that Egypt supported the holy places under its Mamluk and Ottoman rulers. By the eighteenth century it even appears that the works of several Egyptian scholars, some of whom had a dim view of the Medinese tradition and its advocates, would begin to find a fixed place in the curricula of Jawi scholars throughout the region, and especially where sultans still reigned, if in name only.