


Tersurat kepada dua puluh hari Haji 1225 Sanah.

Catatan Tambahan
(Folio kedua)

Dan lagi darihal negeri Siak dari segala anak-anak kita telah harablah [sic] kita akan sesuatu hal ahwahnya kepada sahabat kita. Dan lagi telah harablah [sic] kita kepada sahabat kita; begini adanya susah kita mengerjakan pekerjaan Kompeni, melainkan harab [sic] kita boleh kita mendapat kesenangan di dalam negeri Siak. Dan lagi kita ada dengar khabar di Lingga perahu panya anak-anak di dalam Siak terlalu susah dari sebab Raja Siak. Dan lagi jikalau ada datang bicara dari Siak ke Melaka atau bicara dari Melaka ke Siak itulah kita mintak banyak-banyak kepada sahabat kita jangan sekali sahabat kita memberi khabar kepada Raja Siak khabar yang hebat [heboh?] karena Raja Siak terlalu pandai ilmu bicara; dan lagi kita kirim tabak banyak-banyak kepada Tuan Raja Melaka Kapitan Faqsha [sic, Faquhar] dan kepada kita Masteri [m-s-t-y-r-y] Hall. Daripada hal anak kita yang tinggal di Melaka telah harablah [sic] kita akan pelihara sahabat kita yang bertiga adanya.


73 Obviously Tunku Pangeran was referring to Daendels.
74 M-s-f-a-r-y [mim-sin-fa-alif—ra-ya].
datang Ibrahim itu membawa rial hendaklah sahabat kita terima kepada tangan Ibrahim itu, barang berapa adanya wakil mutlak kita kepada sahabat kita. Dan lagi jika kamu tiada Ibrahim itu membawa rial, jikalau ada Sayid Salim membawa rial kita hendaklah sahabat kita terima juga kepada Sayid Salim itu adanya; djalal Sayid Salim yang berbini di Siak; barang berapa adanya. Dan tabek kita kepada istri sahabat kita dan kepada saudara sahabat kita adanya. Dan lagi kita pun berlayarlah dari Singkab [sic] kepada tiga likur75 haribulan Dzulhijjah, hari Khamis, adanya. 1225 Sanah.

SIAK XIII

Letter of Tengku Tua, Jawi script, 1 folio, 20.2 x 24.1 cm, without seal, addressed to Raffles


Endorsement in Jawi script: ‘This is the letter of the mother of Tengku Pangeran of Siak’

Heading: ‘Qawlah u’l-Haqq’

A letter, token of sincerity and eternal goodwill and tender affection so long as the revolution of the sun and the moon exists, from us, Tengku Tua, the mother of Tunku Pangeran,76 most insignificant as she is, in the land of Siak Seri Indrapura. May it be delivered by [the grace of] God, Lord of all the Worlds, to our friend Mr. Thomas Raffles Esquire, who is great in authority and in devising a scheme; and who travels over the Eastern countries as agent for the Governor-General, the great raja of the land of Bengal; and who shows discretion and pity towards every friend through pure whiteness of his heart.

Following that, [be it known that] we are a frail old lady, having neither means nor resources. When we see the circumstances of our son, Tunku Pangeran, it breaks our heart exceedingly; there is no comfort, whether day or night. We place very high hopes on our friend for the support and protection of that son of ours and everyone of us who is of our son’s clan. Now at this very time there is nowhere else for us in the family to seek solace but only from, firstly, God and then our friend—to whom everyone of us is attached—to request for assistance whatever our circumstances might be. As for our son, the Tunku Pangeran, we submit him to our friend to be asked to follow the command of our friend; whether it is for the better or for the worse it is still assistance for our friend. We are but an elderly person, yet more a woman without means; only God Most High knows our excessive suffering in this land of Siak. However, if there be kindness in our friend, we plead with the best of our ability, through our friend’s assistance, to please let us be together with our son; be it [in] death or life, we do not wish to be separated from our son because we are old, and are waiting for the moment of death. Our friend may enquire from the scribe Ibrahim, for he has seen what our friend would have seen. And so we make our supplication day and night.

Further, there is no token of affection from us, only a prayer for [your] safety. Thus we make it plain that the epistle is written on the twenty-fourth of Dzulhijjah [without the Hegira year] [20 January 1811 CE?], finis.

Siak 13

Warkah bonda Tunku Pangeran [Tengku Tua], satu lembar, 20.2 x 24.1 cm


Waba’adah kemundian [sic] dari itu maka adakah kita ini orang tuha [sic] yang dha’dhif tiada berdaya dan upaya. Maka kita lihat akan hal anak kita itu, Tunku Pangeran, terlalu hancur hati kita siang dan malam tiada merasai senang. Maka sangatlah kita harabkan [sic] kepada sahabat kita daripada bela pelihara di atas anak kita itu, dan serta [sic] kita sekalian, mana suku anak kita itu. Adapun sekarang ini tiadalah lain tempat lagi yang boleh kita sekalian anak beranak hendak membawak

75 Three likur means a score (20) plus three.
76 Her real name was Tengku Awi, daughter of Raja Alam, son of the famous Raja Kecil. Her mother was a Bugis lady by the name of Daeng Tiedja. See Begbie, The Malayan Peninsula, “Genealogy of the Johore Rajahs” chart opposite p. 284.


SIAK XIV

Letter of Tengku Embab, wife of Tunku Pangeran Perca of Siak, Jawi script, 1 folio, 19.9 x 33.8 cm, without seal; addressed to Raffles Endorsement verso Malay letter: ‘Tunkoo Pungeron’s / wife’s note to Mr T Raffles / January 1811’

Endorsement in Jawi script: ‘This is the letter of Tunku [t-n-k-u] Pangeran of Siak’s wife’

Heading: ‘Qawlah u’l-Haqq’

A letter of sincerity and varied gifts which contains within it love and affection that are everlasting; so long as the revolution of the sun and the moon exists, so will they be unaltered, from us Tengku Embab, wife of Tengku Pangeran Perca, a woman with her children who is without resources and means, in the land of Siak Seri Inderapura. [May] God deliver [this letter] to our friend His Excellency Thomas Raffles Esquire, agent for the Governor-General, the raja of Bengal, who possesses magnificence in the country of Bengal and all its tributaries and comes to carry out government and great deliberations, travelling over the circuit of the Eastern countries, among great rajas; and who with prudence is skilful in winning over the heart of every affectionate friend.

Further to that, with regard to our friend’s letter that was conveyed by the scribe Ibrahim, it has already reached us together with all the things sent as mentioned in it. We have understood every part and line of it.

As to our condition and that of the children, it is impossible to relate further the tribulations and pain we suffer in this country. My friend may enquire from the scribe Ibrahim. He can relate them accordingly to what he has seen about our condition and that of our family. We could not bring ourself to turn to anyone except the support and protection of our friend of us and everyone of our children. We earnestly ask for assistance from our friend that under no circumstances do we wish to be separated from our husband; whether it be on sea or on dry land, please let us be together; for never have we suffered as we do now from the excessive weeping of all our children, day and night; without being certain of when to eat or drink, they crave to meet their father. Nevertheless, our friend may be the more informed of every aspect of the matter. Thus it is our fervent hope for our friend’s assistance to relieve us from this forlornness of ours because we cannot bear seeing our children in this condition. Other than that there is no token of affection from us except our prayers day and night.

We thus make it known that the letter is written on the twenty-fourth of Dzulhijjah AH 1225, the year of Jim. End of saying. [20 January 1811 CE]

It is our hope and trust that our friend would look after our son, Munek; and give us your duty with pity lavished towards us. We place much hope on our friend to help us; there is no one else other than you.

Siak 14

Warkah Tengku Embab, isteri Tunku Pangeran, kepada Raffles, satu lembar, 19.9 x 33.8 sm

Surat al-ikhtlas wa tuhfat al-ajnas yang ada di dalamnya kasih dan sayang selama-lamanya selagi ada peredaran matuhi dan bulan tiada berubah-ubah lagi daripada beta Tengku Embab, isteri Tunku Pangeran Perca,78 perempuan anak beranak yang tiada berdaya dan upaya di

77 Ch-r-t-w-l-s.
78 Another title of the Pangeran. Perca also refers to the island of Sumatra.
dalam negeri Siak Seri Inderapura; sampaikan Allah kepada sahabat beta Tuan Seri Paduka Thomas Raffles [sic] Askoyar; ganti Gurnur Jendaral [sic] raja Benggala yang mempunyai kebesaran di negeri Benggala dan segala ta’alukannya; serta datang membuat perintah dan bincara yang besar menjalani daerah negeri timur antara raja-raja yang besar-besar serta dengan bijaksana, pandai mengambil hati kepada segala sahabat yang kasih.


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79 T-r-f.
80 S-og-h2.
81 T-a-w-a-n.

SIAK XV

Letter of Dato’ Seri Pikrama Raja, Jawi script, 1 folio, 30 x 37.3 cm, with black seal

Addressed to Raffles

Endorsement verso in Raffles’ hand: ‘February 1811 / Datoo Puckeremah / Rajah nagree Siac’

Endorsement in Jawi script: ‘This is the letter of Dato’ Seri Pikrama Raja / from Siak, dated the twentieth of Muharram’

Heading: ‘Nur u’l-Syams wa’l Qamar’

Whereas this epistle symbolizes earnestness and sincerity along with everlasting pure whiteness of heart, without bound and duration, so long as the revolving body of the light of the sun and the moon exists so will the friendship; that is, from Dato’ Sri Pikrama Raja within the country of Siak. May it be conveyed by the All-Supporting God of all the Worlds, we pray, to our friend His Excellency Thomas Raffles who is on the throne of government in the Settlement of Malacca; who has attained greatness and magnificence of rank and is compassionate and affectionate to all of his friends. Out of such an innate character and disposition his fame is celebrated in every quarter, East and West. We too invoke God, Lord of all the Worlds, may He grant him a long life, in peace and good health. Amen! O God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds.

Following that, be it known to our friend that with regard to the matter of our friend’s letter conveyed by the scribe Baki, it has arrived safely. Whatever was stated in it has been understood by us in regard to every matter. Furthermore, it was mentioned in our friend’s letter that the [Siak’s] letter has remained unanswered because there has been no letter coming from His Highness the Yang Dipertuan of Siak. What had been sent was the letter from the Old Yang Dipertuan. Because of that our friend has not replied to the said letter. The Yang Dipertuan of Siak is Paduka Sri Sultan Abdul Jalil Khalifuddin. It is correct that he owns the throne of government in the country of Siak. But the regency is with his father, Paduka Sri Sultan Abdul Jalil Saifuddin, who is the Yang Dipertuan Tun82 together with all of us of the four suku and all the chiefs in Siak; such is the situation.

82 The old raja.
And further, with regard to our request for our friend’s permit,\(^{83}\) it is to instruct the boats to set sail. You mentioned that the *perahu* have not been acquired yet and whether they should go. What our friend said is right. But then, next year, we would still insist on having the permit. We wish to order the vessels to depart for Java.

Furthermore, concerning our friend’s desire to have the text, “Pathi [sic] Sebatang”, we have instructed [someone] to go to Minangkabau to look for it. Should the text arrive, we shall command to have it sent to our friend.

Furthermore, with regard to our situation in the country of Siak at this very time, we place the utmost confidence in our friend to come to our assistance in the case of anything that afflicts us. There is nobody else for us to turn to represent our case except the English Company that is able to support and protect all of us, including the country of Siak, for the English Company is our true friend. Such is the case.

Following that, there is nothing whatever for a token of life from us to our friend except the final supplication. 1226 AH on the twentieth of Muharram, on Friday, at ten o’clock, during the daytime this [letter] is written [14 February 1811].

**Siak 15**

**Warkah Dato’ Seri Pikrama Raja kepada Raffles, satu lembar, 30 x 37.3 cm**


Syahadat lagi akan hal kita di dalam negeri Siak kepada waktu sekarang ini terlebih harablah [sic] kita akan sahabat kita akan menolong atas kita, daripada barang suatu hal ehwal kesurakan kita. Maka tiada saja lain tempat kita mengadakan hal ehwal kita, melainkan Kompeni [k-m-p-n-y] Inggeris; yang boleh membela dan memelihara kita sekalian, serta negeri Siak; karana [sic] Kompen Inggeris sahabat yang sebutul kepada kita. Demikianlah adanya.

SIAK XVI

Malay letter, Jawi script, 1 folio, 22.7 x 37.3 cm, with black (charcoal) seal at the bottom right-hand corner of folio, inscribed with the words: ‘Alamat [signature]: Dato’ Raja [1225?] Sanah’
Addressed to Raffles through Ibrahim
Endorsement verso: ‘Inee surat/engg deper Tuan / Siac ingatan’
Heading: ‘Nur u’l-Syams wa’l Qamar’

This is a reminder from the Old DIPertuan to our friend His Excellency Thomas Raffles Esquire; to the clerk Ibrahim, we request it be conveyed to our friend: firstly, it is our earnest expectation that the Honourable Thomas Raffles will render assistance to our son, Along Mengangkat in Penang; secondly, it is our hope that the Honourable Thomas [sic] will seek an audience with His Excellency Gilbert Lord Minto, Governor-General, raja above every raja in the land of Hindustan, who has been invested with authority as the representative to make counsel, to sway every business in the Eastern lands through meritorious actions such that he becomes our source of help when we have need or difficulties; thirdly, our trust in him who is extremely thorough in the Malay language, wise and prudent in the customs and ceremonies of every Malay raja, each with his own customs, is because he is extremely knowledgeable and considerate with the feelings of his friends; and fourthly, we trust him to show pity to every raja and country that gets close to the English Company; and fifthly, we hope that since he is so accomplished in his intelligent scheme in looking after every land of his friends and connections in the Eastern region, for which reason His Excellency Gilbert Lord Minto, the Governor-General, has appointed him as his representative to rule in the East, we can expect prosperity bestowed on us, an insignificant person; there is none other who will give welfare to us, father and son, and who will assist in relieving us from whatever difficulty and illness.

Great is our trust in His Excellency Thomas Raffles, whether by day or night, and so you, Ibrahim the clerk, must convey our instructions and the contents of our heart to our friend; let him know; and the sixth, Oh Ibrahim the clerk, we place our trust in our friends; we request it to be conveyed that throughout this time we have never found a single fault with the English Company. What we know is that all this while we have been true friends with the English Company; and now at this very time our friend is His Excellency Thomas Raffles Esquire. If he listens to the slander by Sayid Zain concerning us, we will surely suffer injustice in connection with all that matters because of his slander against us. If our friend has compassion and sympathy for us, do not listen to any slander by Sayid Zain. Our friend should first carefully and thoroughly investigate with every person who knows anything about his behaviour and character; and with all those who are familiar with Sayid Zain pertaining to his rule because our friend is wise and prudent and when he conducts government and counsel among rajas in the Eastern region it should be with perfection so that his name will be well-known to all rajas, more so to the great Tuan Raja in Bengal.

Lastly, our only request to our friend is that please do not bear a grudge against us, whose own self is insignificant. Such is the state of affairs. Out of truthfulness and plainness our seal85 is stamped on this paper as a sign of friendship.

[undated]

Siak 16

Warkah Yang Di Pertuan Tua kepada Raffles melalui Ibrahim, satu lembar, 22.7 x 37.3 cm


85 The seal bearing the words ‘Alamat … tua Raja’ is stamped at the bottom right-hand corner of the letter in line with the margin of the letter.


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86 A-ch-p.

SIAK XVII

Letter of the scribe Baki, Jawi script, 1 folio, 20.5 x 30 cm, with red wax seal

Addressed to Ibrahim, Raffles’ scribe

Endorsement verso Malay letter: ‘The Rajah of Siac’s / letter to Mr. Raffles / written Ibrahim / February 1811’

Heading: ‘Qawlug u’l-Haqq’

Praise be to God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds, the Provider of good life and success in the hereafter. May prayers and peace and blessings be upon our Master Muhammad, Chief of all the Messengers, his family and all his Companions. Other than that [are] this beautification of words and sapphire salutations from the scribe Baki in the land of Siak Seri Inderapura. May it be conveyed by God, the Exalted and the Sublime, to my brother, that is the scribe Ibrahim, who is presently in the settlement of Malacca; who is protected by God, the Exalted and the Sublime, in regard to his religion and good works of this world and the hereafter. Amen! O God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds.

Following that, be it understood by my brother that with regard to my case, I have safely arrived in the land of Siak on the seventeenth of Muhamarr, on Tuesday, at seven o’clock, daytime.

Further, with regard to my brother’s letter, I have conveyed it to His Highness the Old Yang Dipertuan; furthermore, I have also delivered an epistle of His Excellency Thomas Raffles to Datuk Seri Pikrama Raja. Furthermore, with regard to all my brother’s instructions, I have conveyed them without exception and all those are still under deliberation. Nonetheless, God knows best. Further, with regard to the instructions of His Excellency Thomas Raffles to His Highness the Old Yang Dipertuan, those too I have conveyed. His Highness the Old Yang Dipertuan is also thankful to His Excellency Thomas [Raffles]. That is the situation. If it pleases God Most High, in the days ahead I shall write a letter to my brother; such is the case. Subsequent to that, there is nothing whatever as a token of life to my brother, only prayers, be it night or day. 1226 [1811]
Siak XVIII

Letter of Sultan Abdul Jalil Khaliluddin of Siak, Jawi script, 1 folio, 33.2 x 41.2 cm, with black seal, addressed to Raffles
Endorsement verso in Raffles’ hand: ‘February 1811. — Rajah Siac’
Endorsement in Jawi script: ‘This is the letter of the Yang Di Pertuan of Siak dated / twenty-fourth of the month of Muharram’
Heading: ‘Nur u’l-Syams wa’l Qamar’

The existing epistle and extended right guidance within which is incorporated earnestness and sincerity along with a pure whiteness of heart, without limit and duration, so long as the revolving firmament, the light of the sun and the moon exists, so will the friendship be; that is to say, from the Yang Dipertuan Sri Sultan Abdul Jalil Khaliluddin, son of Sultan Abdul Julil Saifuddin, who sits in state upon the throne of the kingdom of the land of Siak Seri Indrapura. May it be brought forth by [the grace of] God, Lord of all the Worlds, to our friend His Excellency Thomas Raffles Esquire, representative of His Excellency Gilbert Lord Minto, Governor-General, chief yang dipertuan, His Highness, who sits enthroned on the seat of government in the land of Bengal, raja above all the great rajas in the land of Hindustan; it is he who is much celebrated in every quarter, east and west. May it please the Lord to increase the greatness and dignity of grade and rank of one who is loving and affectionate, as well as fair and generous to all his friends. We too invoke God, the Eternal, Absolute, Lord of all the Worlds, if it pleases Him to grant him a long life in peace and good health. Amen. O Lord, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds.

Following that, be it known by our friend that, pertaining to the matter of the epistle of sincerity and varied gifts from our friend conveyed by Ibrahim, it has safely arrived along with the gift from our friend. Everything that was stated within it has been understood by us. Further, regarding the letter from our father, the Old Yang Dipertuan that was conveyed by the scribe Baki, it seems our friend is not willing to respond to that letter. Our friend insists on a letter from us. We are, in fact, being looked after and cared for by our father and all the chiefs, as we are still a mere youth; if there be issues for deliberation within the country of Siak, none but our father, together with the chiefs, will confer. Furthermore, now, at this very time, with regard to our friend’s request for the Pangeran to be joined by his mother and wife, we can give instruction to our uncle, Tengku Besar, to have his mother and wife

87 The finger of fate is illustrated as a pen writing on a tablet [lok] of slate. This pen that is made of divine light [nur] records at God’s command all the Past and all the Future, together with the destinies of the Blessed and the Damned.
88 The phrase “tahsin al kalam wa tahmidin nilam” may be translated as: “beautification of words and pristine salutations”.
89 The world that is within a greater world.
90 P-k-m-a.
91 Signs of fraternity.
escorted to Palalawan. Over there, he can meet his mother and wife, because we and our father, together with the chiefs in the country of Siak, are very much afraid of the Pangeran. Our friend would understand the fear of someone who is very afraid. Such is the situation.

Further, with regard to our situation in the land of Siak, those in whom we have placed much confidence are our friend the English Company and our friend himself who can assist us, whatever our affliction is; and whatever deficiencies we may have; it is the English Company on which we place our reliance, for we are a mere youth who has yet to attain level-headedness and we are also feeble. And so we have ordered our man, Raja Nagara, to convey this letter to our friend; that is the situation.

Following that, there isn’t any token of life from us to our friend to accompany the ending of this epistle, except an elephant tusk as a mark of sincerity. Other than that there is only the final supplication.

1226 AH, 24th Muharram, on Monday, at 10 o’clock daytime [18 February 1811 CE].

Siak 18

Warkah Sultan Abdul Jalil Khatuluddin ibni al Sultan Abdul Jalil Saifuddin, Raja Siak, satu lembar, 33.2 x 41.2 sm

Warkatul mayjud dan wal [sic] hidayat al mamud maka dipesertakan di dalamnya tulus dan ikhlas suci putih hati selama-lamanya yang tiada beringga dan bermasa selagi ada mubah peredaran cakrawala nur al-syamsu wal qamar, sebaitu [sic] juga adanya iaitu daripada Yang Di Pertuan Paduka Siri Sultan Abdul Jalil Khatuluddin ibni al Sultan Abdul Jalil Saifuddin yang sememang di atas tahta [sic] kerajaan di dalam negeri Siak Seri Indera Pura. Maka barang disampaikan Tuhan sarwa alam apalaha kiranya kepada sahabat kita Seri Paduka Thomas Raffles Askoyar [sic] yang ada ganti daripada Seri Paduka Gilbatlat [sic] Lord Minto Gurnur General yang dipertuan besar yang maha mulia sememang di atas tahta kerajaan di dalam negeri Benggala, raja di atas segala raja-raja yang besar-besar di dalam negeri Hindustani; ialah yang amat kepujian kepada tiap-tiap baladan timur dan barat; barang bertambah-

tambah juga kiranya daripada pangkat maratab [sic, martabat] yang kebesaran dan kemuliaan; lagi pengasih dan penyayang kepada sekalian sahabatnya serta dengan adil murahnya; maka kita pun memintokan [sic] juga kepada Tuhan samad sekalian alam barang dipanjangkannya juga daripada umur usiannya di dalam sihat dan afit amin ya rabb al-’alam.


Kemudian daripada itu suatu pun tiada alamat al-khayat [sic] daripada kita kepada sahabat kita yang dipesertakan pada akhiran syatar ini, anyalah [sic] ada satu gading tunggal tanda ikhlas juga adanya. Lain daripada itu do’a al khair.

1226 Sanah. Kepada dua puluh empat hari bulan Muharram hari Ithnin fi waktu pukul sepuluh siang hari teramaktubnya [sic].

92 Or Pelalawan, situated in the Bengkalis region, East Sumatra.
SIAK XIX

Letter of Yang Di Pertuan Tua of Siak, Jawi script, 1 folio, 25 x 41 cm, with black seal, addressed to Raffles

Endorsement verso in Raffles’ hand: ‘Rajah of Siak / Recd 2 April 1811’

Endorsement in Jawi script: ‘This letter is from the Raja of Siak / dated 4th Rabi‘ul-awal’

Heading: ‘Nur u‘l-Syams wa‘l Qamar’

The existing epistle and extended right guidance in which is incorporated earnestness and sincerity along with pure whiteness of heart, without limit and duration so long as the heavenly bodies revolve and the light of the sun and the moon are also in actual state, that is, from the Old Yang Dipertuan in the land of Siak Seri Inderapura. May it be conveyed by [the grace of] God, Lord of all Worlds to our friend, His Excellency Thomas Raffles Esquire who, at this very time, is exercising the functions of a government in the Eastern district, identical with the very great rajas with the command of His Excellency Lord Minto, Governor-General, Chief Yang Dipertuan, His Highness, raja of every district in the land of Bengal and Hindustan, the Madras Presidency and Surat and every land that is dependent on the colours of the very great raja of the land of the English; who has obtained rank and dignity of office as well as honours; and his kindness and affection to all God’s poor are much renowned and celebrated in very quarter, east and west. We too invoke God, the Eternal, Absolute, Lord of all the Worlds, to grant him long life and good health. Amen! O God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds.

Further, be it known to our friend, that with regard to the epistle of sincerity from our friend, it has reached us safely together with your gift, a telescope. Whatever was stated in it has been understood by us in regard to every matter. Furthermore, it was mentioned in our friend’s letter that our friend desires every kind of food that is available in the land of Siak. Our friend requests the following to be despatched to Malacca: buffaloes, cows, goats, fowls, ducks, geese and rice. But all these are not available in Siak. Nevertheless, our friend may inquire from all those who are accustomed to coming into Siak; even for their own consumption there is hardly any. As you know, the land of Siak is small, like a village; what do we have? Even rice has not been acquired for the last two years; padi is not available. Everybody eats sago. If there is any [extra food] in the land of Siak, surely we shall be more than happy to help our friend, so that every little person can make an ample profit from it. And as for the hilsa,\textsuperscript{93} it is true that the fish is available in Siak, but it is not in season yet. Nonetheless, may we be forgiven and sheltered by our friend.

Further, concerning our friend’s letter to our son, the Yang Dipertuan of Siak, it has reached our son along with the gift from our friend; our son, nonetheless, expresses much gratitude to our friend. However, our son really hopes for and puts much trust in the Company’s assistance and protection and our friend’s affection; there is nobody else to rely on but always only the English Company.

Furthermore, regarding our friend’s letter to Padang, we have instructed that it be conveyed; and pertaining to our friend’s request to assess the land of Minangkabau, we have also ordered our man to travel over every part of the country. When the man we ordered to go has returned we shall then deliver a letter to our friend. Such is the state of affairs.

Following that, there is not a single gift of life that accompanies the final lines of this paper from us to our friend, excepting a piece of cloth made in Siak, a gift from our nyonya to our friend’s madam, which is not as a thing should be; still a token of sincerity and whiteness of heart, nonetheless. May it be of some use to our friend. Other than that, the last supplication that is eternal; end of words. 1226 AH on the fourth day of Rabi‘ul-awal, Saturday, 10 o’clock day time [29 March 1811].

Siak 19

Warkah Yang Di Pertuan Tua negeri Siak kepada Raffles, satu lembar, 25 x 41 sm


\textsuperscript{93} Hilsa or terubuk is also known by its scientific name, Tornosella toli.


Kemudian daripada itu suatu pun tiada burhan al-a'jad [sic, u'jud] yang disertakan pada akhiran syatir ini daripada kita kepada sahabat kita. Anyalah [sic] ada sebelah kain buatan Siak kiriman nyonya kita kepada nyonya sahabat kita; tiadalah dengan sepertinya, tanda ikhlas putih hati juga, seharang gunanya oleh sahabat kita. Lain daripada itu doa akhir alat al dawam, intahi al-kalam.

1226 Sana. Kepada empat haribulan Rabu-awal hari Sabtu, waktu pukul sepuluh siang hari.

SIAK XX

Letter of Sultan Abdul Jalil Khaliluddin ibni Sultan Abdul Jalil Saifuddin, Jawi script, 1 folio, 32 x 40 cm, with black seal, addressed to Lord Minto in Bengal

Endorsement verso Malay letter in Raffles’ hand: ‘Reed. 7 June 1811’

Heading: ‘Nur u’l-Syams wa’l Qamar’

The existing epistle and extended right guidance in which is incorporat-ed earnestness and sincerity, along with pure whiteness of heart, without limit and duration so long as the revolving vault of heaven, the light of the sun and the moon exists, so will the friendship be forever; that is, from the Yang Dipertuan Paduka Sri Sultan Abdul Jalil Khaliluddin, son of Sultan Abdul Jalil Saifuddin, son of the late al-Habib Sultan Othman bin al-Syelikh Ali Ba’alwi, who is most insignificant 94 in the land of Siak Seri Inderapura. May it be conveyed by [the grace of] God, Lord of all the Worlds, to our friend, the great master, His Excellency, the Maharaja Gilbert Lord Minto, chief yang dipertuan, most honourable Governor-General, raja of every district of the land of Bengal, Hindustan, Keling. 95 Surat, Gujerat and Maha Lingga and all of the land of Turkestan, the large countries which are dependent on the colours of the very great king of the land of the English; His Excellency who sits in state upon a throne of dominion in the land of Bengal, who has attained  

94 The word is used to indicate humility.
95 The Madras Presidency on the coast of Coromandel.
greatness and illustrousness of rank as well as honours in every quarter, East and West; he dispenses the law to abound justly and with liberality; with tender and gentle disposition he investigates the unchanging customs; wherefrom such a temperament and innate character render him fame from excess of wisdom, intelligence and discretion and from his reciprocity of goodwill and mutual affection towards every raja, near and far. We too invoke God, the Eternal, Absolute, Lord of all Worlds, to grant him a long life, in good health. Amen! O God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds.

Further to that, be it known to our friend pertaining to our letting fly this white sheet, which is not as it should be, to you; furthermore, we have asked our brother, Sayid Abdul Rahman bin Umar, to seek audience to present this epistle, moving in procession, in order to express earnestness and sincerity and whiteness of heart as well as our trust from one who is rendered powerless and poor, to our friend. Upon hearing that you have set out to come Eastward, it so delighted us to be able to seek a place to place trust and dependence of our ownself, a mere youth who is, furthermore, deprived of strength and poor; so great is our confidence in you and the English Company in rendering us affection and assistance whatever our circumstances might be, forever, until the days of our descendents with our friend and the English Company.

Furthermore, we have heard that our friend’s journey on this occasion will be onwards to Java, bringing along an expedition of innumerable men-of-war with a desire to strike against the Dutch and the French. We are very pleased to hear of our friend; if it be right for you, we would have liked to request our father, the Old Yang Dipertuan, to accompany you, but alas, we are weak and poor. We have but 100 men because our country is small, like a village. However, we do place much trust and confidence with the utmost sincerity and a heart that is white and hopeful of the fostering care of our friend towards us forever. Please do not cast infamy upon our father. We only hope for assistance from you and the Company forever. Such is the situation.

Following that, there is no proof of generosity from us to you, except a male slave as a token of our trust and sincerity of heart that is white. Other than that is the final supplication. 1226 AH, on the seventh of Jamadi’l-awal, on Friday, at ten o’clock, daytime [30 May 1811].

Siak 20

Warkah Sultan Abdul Jalil Khaliluddin ibni Sultan Abdul Jalil Saifuddin kepada Raffles, satu lembar, 32 x 40 sm


Waba’adah daripada itu maklum kiranya sahabat kita akan hal kita melayangkan sekemping abiad97 ini dengan tiada sepertinya kepada sahabat kita. Syahadan lagi maka adalah kita menyuruhkan saudara kita al-Sayid Abdul Rahman bin Umar ini mengadab [sic] sahabat kita akan berpesembahkan [sic] sekemping warkah yang mubarak ini

96 Lord; everlasting.
97 White [piece of paper].
daripada menyiarkan talas ikhlas serta putih hati dan harab [sic] kita yang la’if miskin ini kepada sahabat kita.


SIAK XXI

Letter of Tunku Pangeran Kusuma Dilaga, Jawi script, 1 folio, 33.5 x 42 cm, with red wax seal, addressed to Raffles

Letter is written on both sides of folio, with endorsement in Raffles’ hand, on top of verso: ‘April 1811- / Tunkoo Pangeran’

Endorsement in Jawi at the bottom of second page: ‘This is the letter of Tunku Pangeran, dated eleventh day of the month of Rabi’ul-awal’

Heading: ‘Qawluh u’l-Haqq’

Whereas this is an epistle of existence and extended right guidance within which is incorporated straightforwardness and sincerity along with a pure whiteness of heart, limpid and transparent candour, without limit and duration, so long as the revolving vault of heaven, the sun and the moon exists, so will the friendship be forever; that is to say, from Tunku Pangeran Kusuma Dilaga of Siak who, at this very moment, is stationed in Muntok. May it be brought forth by God, Lord of all the Worlds, I pray, to the presence of my friend, that is His Excellency Thomas Raffles Esquire, who lives in peace and good health in the settlement of the Malacca fort, representing His Excellency Lord Minto, Governor-General of Bengal, raja above every raja dependent on the flag of the very great raja of the land of the English, whether from above the wind or below the wind; who is exceedingly wise, intelligent and discreet in effecting mutual friendship and affection without interruption and in perpetuity; and who conducts a gentle and tender disposition like the waters of al-Kawthar which is tranquilly cool; it is to assure the thirst of friends and companions, near and far. We invoke God, Lord of all the Worlds, if it pleases Him, to increase the greatness and illustriousness of grade, richness and victory upon the friend of the Company. Amen. O Lord, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds!

Following the stated words, be it known to my friend that regarding my journey from Lingga, after a day’s sail I reached Pulau Berhala;\(^{99}\) night fell and the ra’ayat\(^{99}\) ordered by Sultan Mahmud to accompany me fled. It thus caused me much hardship. So I pondered and devised a way that could enhance my friend’s rank. I then wrote a letter to Tuank Sayid Abdullah in Jambi, because the Raja of Jambi is in dispute with the common people; and now that the Raja has absconded, I have installed Tuank Sayid Abdullah as Raja of Jambi in your name since, after all, his position is under the flag of the English Company. And moreover, whatever the Company’s trade is, it can be transacted with the land of Jambi; and likewise, the people of Jambi will then come to Malacca and Pulau Pinang without fear any more; but instead they will be able to rely on the Company’s assistance in case of any difficulty or deficiency.

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98 Pulau Berhala, a small island not very far from the island of Singkep, lies to the south of the latter, and north of the strait which is also named Berhala. Pulau Berhala, which is about 10 sq. km in area, is surrounded by other tiny islands— Pulau Manjen, Pulau Telur, Pulau Layak, Pulau Selumar, Pulau Nyirih and Pulau Nytor.

99 Private soldiers or militia. In this context, peasants were conscripted to serve Tunku Pangeran.
With your help, and also his letter along with my letter, together with its complimentary gifts, I entered Jambi with the intention of looking for vessels and men since the men assigned by Sultan Mahmud from Lingga have all fled. The vessels that I wanted to look for were the slightly bigger ones because the boats from Lingga are rather small and they cause too much inconvenience in conveying the pangeran. How are we to carry the gambang? It will not fit in a small space, but needs a bigger one. [However] nothing that I wanted was available in Jambi. So I left Jambi and headed for Muntok, where I met Raden Muhammad.

I wanted to look for the boats in Muntok, but even there I failed to get them because the Palembang people were afraid of the Dutch in Palembang. They would not dare sell me the boats because the hobot [colonel] and the Commandant had taken them out of Palembang and gone to Lampung, where they set up a factory. From there they can travel to Palembang since it is quite close to upriver Palembang. To my mind it is nothing but Palembang’s scheme. Further, I devised a plan. I mentioned that I am agent to you. I enquired about the Dutch in Palembang, and Raden Muhammad answered that the case has been settled. Sayid Abu Bakar Rum has gone to Malacca carrying a letter from the Sultan of Palembang, taking passage in the perahu kura-kura [fighting perahu]. I asked Raden Muhammad why he had stayed behind, and not gone together with the others to Malacca since it is not the custom of one who has been asked to serve to do otherwise. He replied that there was no more room in the boat. In my opinion it was because he was taking along four or five ladies from Palembang. How could they find a place in the perahu kura-kura? He had also instructed Sayid Abu Bakar to carry some tin to Malacca. The ruling that I received from the Company was that if one was in the course of duty for the Company, one should not mix it with pleasure and commerce, that is what I know.

I then entered Sunga together with Raden Muhammad. If the Palembang people would welcome me I would have liked to enter Palembang. My aspiration was to take the Dutch in the factory at Palembang myself; let me meet death rather than put your name to shame. The very day I arrived, two Palembang ministers coming downstream approached me. One was named Temenggung Lanang Sura Dapa by title, and the other was called Gemas Rangga Jen, Citra Dewangga being his title; both met me. I then enquired about the Dutch in the land of Palembang since the Dutch are enemies of the English Company. They answered that the Sultan had given his reply to Raden Muhammad. I scrutinised the answer further: when will they be rid of

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100 The town of Jambi was at that time situated at a distance of 60 miles [96 km] from the sea. Tunku Pangeran must have sailed upriver to approach the town. In the late 17th century, Jambi was known to have traded in gold-dust, pepper and canes. W. Marsden, The History of Sumatra, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1966, p. 358.

101 The gambang is a traditional musical instrument that has 15–25 strips of metal (copper) or wood of varying lengths and forms part of the gamban set. The notes of the gambang are struck by two rapper. Wilkinson, A Malay-English Dictionary, and Kamis Besar Bahasa Indonesia.

102 Tunku Pangeran was referring to the town and harbour on the island of Bangka, standing near the foot of Menumbing hill and nearly opposite the Palembang River. Muntok, also pronounced ‘Mentok’, lies on a plateau or hill rising about 80 feet above the sea. Established in the early 18th century, preceding the reign of Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin I, Muntok became a producer of tin and and began to attract swarms of Chinese adventurers who then flocked to the banks of the river Teluk Rumbia in Bangka where rich deposits of tin ore were found; from the 18th until the early 19th century its population was mainly Chinese and tin was its principal trade. See “Report on the Island of Banda”, JIME, 2, 1848, pp. 308–309. See also Walter Hamilton, The East India Gazetteer; Containing Particular Descriptions of the Empires, Kingdoms, ... of Hindostan ... and the Eastern Archipelago, 2nd edn, Wm. H. Allen and Co., London, 1828, Vol. 2, p. 232.

103 A small perahu used for fighting. See note 112 below.

104 Refers to the Sunga village. It was here that merchant ships of all kinds that wished to enter Palembang had to stop and be inspected by the estuary guards. The late O. W. Wolters who visited Sunga in 1978 wrote that Sunga village lies not very far from where the Musi River flows out into the Bangka strait. It is about 50 miles from the present city of Palembang. When Tunku Pangeran made a stop at Sunga he was, therefore, quite a distance from the palace of the Sultan of Palembang. See O. W. Wolters, ‘A Note on Sunga Village at the Estuary of the Musi River in Southeastern Sumatra: A Reconstruction of the Historical Geography of the Palembang Region’, Indonesia, no. 27, April 1979, Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, pp. 33–50.

105 Temenggung Lanang, the Palembang chief accused of carrying out the murder of the Dutch garrison in September 1811 was, in the words of Colonel Gillespie, “the harbinger of treachery and deceit in the first instance, ... also the promoter of the Sultan’s cruelty”. Gillespie expressed surprise at Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin’s boldness for having the audacity to appoint the man as his ambassador to the British government on Java. See Lady Sophia Raffles, Memoir of the Life and Public Services of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles (Oxford University Press, Singapore, 1991, p. 20.
the Dutch, or will they not be rid of them? The Temenggung retorted to me: “What is there to be so vexed about the Dutch? They are like the proverbial ants in the betel-leaf box.”¹⁰⁶ So I said that I wished to go upstream to seek an audience with the Sultan, all the same. The Chief answered—and Temenggung Hasan was also present at that time, his designation being Sura Di Prana—and the three ministers responded to me: “Even Raden Muhammad, who was not born in Palembang, has been presented to the Dutch as the Sultan’s kinsman; he was gone for a long time and only now has he come back.”

Still I insisted on going upstream. But they asked me to postpone my journey as they wanted to seek an audience with the Sultan first. After having gone upstream for six days, they returned bearing gifts from the Sultan for me: a koyan of rice and a buffalo. I enquired about the Sultan’s word. They answered that the Sultan’s request to me was to sail on to Muntok; the Sultan will then devise a plan. Subsequently, I could re-enter Palembang. I then asked my son, Tengku Said, whom I had taken along with me to Pulau Pinang before, to proceed upstream to Palembang. I took Raden Muhammad along with me to Muntok for, to my mind and observation, as long as Batavia is not yet taken by the English Company, the Sultan of Palembang will not get rid of the Dutch from Palembang. That is why I wanted to instruct Raden Muhammad to return to you in Malacca because, in my considered opinion, understanding and view, all the letters of the Sultan conveyed by Sayid Abu Bakar Rum to you are mere lies because he is still afraid of the General at Batavia and loves the Dutch who are in Palembang. It is only his fear of the English Company that made him write letters to you. By his magic arts your cause can be temporarily halted because the ilmu [magic arts] ...

**Verso:**

... together with Raden Muhammad and Abu Bakar Rum. In my considered opinion, they wanted to conduct trade in textiles and tin with convenience.

Upon my leaving Sungshang I met the ketch of Sayid Abu Bakar Rum in the Sungshang waters; but Raden Muhammad merely evaded me together with the ketch, while proceeding to enter Sungshang. So I followed behind until I arrived back at Sungshang. I asked Nakhoda Amat, the Malacca man who lives at Ujong Pasir, to approach Sayid Abu Bakar Rum and Raden Muhammad. I inquired: What news? He replied that my friend is gratified over what was in the Sultan’s letter. I then turned back to Muntok. To my mind what he said must be true since you have already given him a ketch that could be laden with merchandise from Malacca and enable him to purchase tin in Palembang. If it happens to that extent with your mission, I fear pursuing it to Java since it is certain that I am bringing the enemies of the Dutch, namely the six pangeran; for, in my considered opinion, what Raden Muhammad brought from Malacca to Palembang is: firstly, the Sultan of Palembang must get rid of the Dutch in Palembang; secondly, if the Sultan has no courage to get rid of them, the Company will do it. Aren’t those words acceptable to you? Yet even these words of untruth are accepted by you. There is evidence that Sayid Abu Bakar left the first mate in Muntok for he dared not go out, and neither did Sayid Abu Bakar dare take him along to Palembang. According to custom, one who is a designated envoy will, even in times of war, enjoy immunity; but alas, the Palembang people’s excessive fear of the Dutch. Yet you are happy with the situation.

Further, when in the employment of a dignitary one should not mix that service with trade. If that is allowable I too can look for loans because there are many rich people in Malacca; if it be by way of trade there is the rich Mr. Hall [Hare]¹⁰⁷ since the people of Palembang are not the enemies of the Company. The enemies of the Company are the Dutch, and there are not many of them in Palembang. I myself am sufficiently able to get rid of the Dutch in Palembang if it is allowed by the Sultan of Palembang. You were willing enough to hire a ketch and give it to Sayid Abu Bakar Rum and Raden Muhammad, thus enabling the Palembang men to board it; and it is Raden Muhammad and Sayid Abu Bakar Rum who make the profit while you suffer losses; as for work, not a single result was achieved. Raden Muhammad and Sayid Abu Bakar Rum reaped the benefit.

¹⁰⁶ Meaning they do not pose a threat.

¹⁰⁷ Tunku Pangeran must have been referring to Alexander Hare, a merchant who had arrived in Malacca around 1807. According to Gibson-Hill, quoting F. de Haan, he was also agent between Raffles and the emissaries from Palembang in 1811. It was also Alexander Hare who first drew Raffles’ attention to Banjarmasin. Following the request made by the Sultan, he became British Resident at Banjarmasin in 1812 after the Dutch had left the place three years earlier. See C. A. Gibson-Hill, “Raffles, Alexander Hare and Johanna van Hare”, *JMBRAS*, 28(1), 1955, pp. 184–191.
I am providing this intelligence to you in this manner because you told me I am your agent and my body is [like] your body and I see that the persons who are supposed to perform your agenda are idle. Furthermore, to my own understanding regarding the Dutch in Palembang, if it is the duty of the Sultan of Palembang to get rid of them it is futile to expect it to happen. If it is not you who will throw the Dutch out with the apparatus of the men-of-war, or the General at Batavia who will recall them, or Batavia is taken over by the English, they will never leave Palembang. It is definite, to my mind, for the Palembang people are too smooth and slick in their deliberations; the Palembang people’s vulnerability lies only with the kris. That is the case.

Furthermore, regarding my service to you, whatever I may acquire, be it good or otherwise, whether out of monetary pursuit or profit-seeking, all will be delivered to you. Of magic arts I have none between you and me because that was the instruction of my father; when in the service of a dignitary never take advantage of one’s self. What has been accomplished is my going to Lingga, which you commanded me to do. It was safely done. Then I devised my own plan to proceed to enter the land of Jambi until it is possible for the Company to build a factory there since the ‘palms of the Jambi people’s hands’ are already extended to me. Then I went to Palembang and so this is the Palembang report. Moreover, if God wills it I shall be able to arrive in Java. Then I can again convey further news to you.

Herewith, whatever gifts the Palembang people have given me I send them to you. Further, as a concessionary accompanying the Raja of Jambi’s letter there is an elephant tusk and two quids of wax; these are the gifts of the Raja of Jambi to you; and there is also a document of commerce which can be carried into the land of Jambi; and the merchandise in Jambi is mentioned in the letter. Further, there is a gift from the Pangeran Ratu to me, that is four quids of wax which I am sending to you along with a pair of water-jars made of tin. Also included are my presents to Captain Farquhar, a quid of wax and a water-jar made of tin. To Mr. Hare I send a tin water-jar; and there are two Palembang betel-leaf boxes for you and one for the Raja of Malacca; and Mr. Hutts [sic. Mr. Hare], one betel-leaf box; and to your Madam: a piece of Palembang-woven silk and a Palembang-made silk handkerchief; and moreover, to my son, Tengku Munek, a silk cloth. All are there, together with the addresses; and further, there is one letter enclosed in this letter; I request its delivery to the wife of Nakhoda Amat at Ujong Pasir. That is all. Written on the eleventh of Rabi’ul-awal, on Friday, in the year 1226 Hegira [5 April 1811 CE].

And further, I am making known to you that my situation has been very disquieting; throughout my life I have never had this kind of anxiety; what scheme could I devise? But for your sake, I tried to perform it nonetheless; the little perahu leaked and so they could not hold out against the rolling waves; and the men given to me were all useless. Just a day after leaving Lingga, all of them absconded. This is why I am instructing my son to enter Palembang to look for vessels. It is now already one and a half months since he left and I have not obtained a single piece of news. I thought of asking my companions to enter Palembang in order to follow my son, but even that is not possible as the Palembang people refused to receive them for fear of the Dutch. That is the situation; what is your proposal? Further, it has been quite some time since I parted from you. I have met several people, but not a single letter has come to me from you.

Furthermore, regarding the deliberations with Siak, it is my hope and trust that you will help to look into the matter of my separation from my wife and children while in the employment of the Company. Following that, I have sent something to you. It is a spear which I made myself; its shaft is of the salah [salak]? wood. You may use it as a night walking staff.

Furthermore, with regard to Banten I have heard a report that some people from Lampung are no longer able to pass through. All that is due to the Dutch scheme. The Raja of Banten is like their slave.

As for Cirebon, I have not yet received any report on conditions there. If it be accorded by God I shall make its news available to you. That is all. Finis.

And further, concerning me, if I have received news of my son who entered Palembang—whether he will come or not—on the coming twentieth of Rabi’ul-awal [14 April 1811] I shall sail to Java from Muntok. Perhaps I shall arrive, perhaps not. That is all.

108 This is a spelling error made by the scribe, which has not been crossed out, perhaps due to the intention of maintaining tidiness in writing.

109 The thorny salak palm (Zalacca edulis) produces the salak fruit, much prized by people of the Malay Archipelago. The salak Jambi was most popular in the early 19th century. It is possible that Tunku Pangeran would have carved a spear out of its wood.

110 Palembang is to the north of Lampung. The territory forms the southeastern end of Sumatra, with the Sunda Strait to the south and the Java Sea to the east.
Siak 21

Warkah Tunku Pangeran Kusuma Dilaga kepada Raffles, satu lembar, 33.5 x 42 sm

Bahawa ini warkat al-maujud dan hidayat al-mamduh maka disertakan dalamnya tulus dan ikhlas serta suci putih hati dengan hening jernihnya yang tiada berhingga dan bermasa selagi ada peredaran cakrawala matahari dan bulan sahabat juga adanya alat al dawam, iaitu daripada Tunku Pangeran Kusuma Dilaga Siak, yang ada terhenti pada masa ini di dalam Muntok [n-n-t-w-k]. Maka barang diwiskakan Tuhun sarwa sekalian alam apalah kiranya datang ke hadapan manjalis [sic] sahabat kita iaitu Seri Paduka Thomas Raffles Askoyar yang ada beristirahat al-khair di dalam negeri kota Melaka yang ada ganti dari Seri Paduka Gilbert Lord Minto, Gubernur Jenderal di Benggala, raja di atas segala raja-raja yang ada takluk di bawah bendera raja yang maha besar di negeri Inggeris; dari atas angin sampai ke bawah angin adanya; yang amat arif dan budiman serta bijaksana pada hal melakukan sahabat bersahabat serta berkash-kashan yang tiada berkeputusan selamalamanya; serta melakukan perangai yang lemah lembut seperti Ma' al-Kauthar yang sejahtera sejuknya, akan jadi menghilangkan haus dan dahaga handai taulannya, karib wal-ba' id. Maka kita pohonkan kepada Tuhun sarwa sekalian alam barang bertambah-tambah juga kiranya dari martabat yang kebesaran dan kemuliaan serta kekayaan dan kemenangan atas sahabat Kompeni amin ya rabb al-alam.


Maka adalah surat dia bersama-sama dengan surat kita ini serta dengan bingkisannya.


111 Perahu beratap = houseboat.
112 Mis-spelling for ‘kura’. Perahu kura or, more correctly, kura-kura (literally ‘tortoise prahu’) refers to a type of fighting-ship.
jangan malu nama sahabat kita. Hari kita sampai, hari itu juga hilir duar orang menteri Palembang mendapatkan kita; seorang bernama Temenggung Lanang Suradipa gelarnya dan seorang Gemas Rangga Jin namanya, Citra Dewangsa gelarnya, bertemu dengan kita.


Sebab takutnya sahaja kepada Kompeni Inggersis maka dia memberi surat kepada sahabat kita dengan ilmunya. Boleh berhenti dahulu bicara sahabat kita karena [sic] ilmu itu (bahagian hujiang verso warkah tidak terdapat) ...


Maka adalah kita memberi khabar kepada sahabat kita yang demikian ini karena [sic] kita sahabat kita ada ganti sahabat kita;

Syahadat lagi, darithak kita mengerjakan sahabat kita barang apa yang kita dapat buruknya atau baiknya atau daripada jalan wangi atau untung semuanya kita hantarkan kepada sahabat kita. Yang nama berilin sekali-kali tidak, antara kita dengan sahabat kita; karena [sic] itu pesan bapak kita: apabila ada mengerjakan orang besar jangan mengambil faedah diri. Yang sudah, kita pergi di Lingga sahabat kita suruh, sudah selamat; kemudian kita cari dengan akal kita sendiri, kita pergi masuk dalam negeri Jambi sehingga bolehah Kompeni mau buat loji di dalam negeri Jambi itu karena [sic] ada sudah tapak tangan orang Jambi kepada kita. Dan lagi pergi di Palembang, inilah khabar Palembang adanya. Dan lagi jika ada disampaikan Allah boleh sampai kita ke tanah Jawa; boleh lagi kita membawa khabar adanya kepada sahabat kita.


Tersurat kepada sebelas haribulan Rabi’ul-awal, kepada hari Jumaat, kepada tarikh 1226 sanah.


Akan hal Cirebon bagaimanalah lagi behunlah dapat kita akan khabaranya. Jikalau ada disampaikan Allah kita bolehah [sic] sahabat kita akan khabaranya; itulah adanya. Tamat.

Dan lagi darithak kita jikalau sudah kita dapat khabar darithak anak kita yang masuk Palembang itu, datangnya atau tidaknya, melainkan kepada dua puluh haribulan Rabi’ul-awal ini kita berlayarah ke Jawa adanya; dari Muntok. Entah sampat entah tidak; itulah adanya.
SIAK XXII

Letter of Tunku Pangeran Kusuma Dilaga, Jawi script, 1 folio, 20 x 33.5 cm, with red wax seal, addressed to Raffles

Endorsement verso Malay letter in Raffles' hand: ‘March 1811- Tunkoo Pangeran’

Endorsement in Jawi script: ‘This is Tunku Pangeran’s letter / dated twelfth of Rabiu-ul-awal’

Heading of letter: ‘Qawluh u l-Haqq’

The existing epistle and right guidance extended, accompanied with earnestness and sincerity, along with pure whiteness of heart, limpid and transparent, without limits so long as the revolving vault of heaven, the sun and the moon exists, so will the friendship be forever; that is, from Tunku Pangeran Kusuma Dilaga of Siak who is presently stationed in the land of Muntok. May it be delivered by [the grace of] God, Lord of all the Worlds, before the presence of my friend, His Excellency Thomas Raffles Esquire who has lived in peace and good health in the Settlement of the Malacca fort, representing His Excellency Lord Minto, the Governor-General of Bengal, raja above every raja dependent on the flag of the very great raja in the land of the English whether from above the wind or below the wind; who is exceedingly wise, intelligent and discreet in matters affecting mutual friendship and affection, without interruption and until eternity; and who has a gentle and tender disposition like the waters of al-Kawthar which is tranquilly cool, to assuage the thirst of friends and companions, near and far.

I invoke God, Lord of all the Worlds, if it pleases Him to increase the greatness and illustriousness of grade as well as richness and victory of the friend of the Company. O Lord, Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds! Amen!

Following the stated words, may my friend be informed that I am making it clear to you that it was only on the twelfth of Rabiu-ul-awal that I received reliable news that my son, Sayid Abu Bakar,113 who has entered Palembang, [and] Juragan [shipmaster] Lanang, who came from Palembang, have fled from me. It appears that I have been deceived all long. How long I have waited for him, and on top of that he has even received the Company’s wages; now that is the situation. I make it known to you that on my part I no longer consider him my son. Likewise, you should do the same—for my son is [like] your son and your son is [like] my own son—because he has broken his pledge in his service to the Company. Moreover, the Raja of Siak has written him a letter. What is disallowed by the Raja of Siak is for him to perform the Company’s work; for that reason, he is afraid that he may not be able to return to Siak if he were to effect the Company’s undertaking. What is to become of my fate in carrying out the Company’s work? Even my own son who joined me and together served the Company is forbidden by the Raja of Siak. He wrote the letter out of perfidy towards me and the Company; along with the craftsmanship of the Palembang man who is followed by my son, Sayid Abu Bakar, so that my going to Java will not materialize; and, what’s more, the Sultan of Palembang, along with the Dutch, had sent me on an errand to go to Java on the first day of Rabiu-ul-awal. The Palembang Dutchman who went was instructed by the Palembang Captain on the day of arrival of the fighting ketch brought by Sayid Abu Bakar Rum. That is all.

Written on the twelfth of Rabiu-ul-awal, on Saturday, at four o’clock. 1226 Hegira [6 April 1811 CE]; and further, there is a letter which I request to be sent to Siak, to my wife.

Siak 22

Warkah Tunku Pangeran Kusuma Dilaga kepada Raffles di Melaka; satu lembar, 20 x 33.5 sm


113 Sayid Abu Bakar, also called Tunku Said, was probably the real name of either Tengku Gendut (pronounced ‘Gondon’ in the Minangkabau dialect) [the fably] or Tengku Sembar (pronounced ‘Semboo’) [the bespattering one]. Tunku Pangeran’s other son was Tengku Munek. See note 7 in the introduction to the Siak letters above.
Seri Paduka Galbat [sic] Lord Minto Guburnur [sic] Jenderal di Benggala, raja di atas segala raja-raja yang ada takluk di bawah bendera raja yang maha besar di negeri Inggeris dari atas angin sampai ke bawah angin adanya; yang amat arif dan budiman serta bijaksana pada hal melakukkan sahabat bersahabat serta kasih berkbasihan yang tiada berkeputusan selama-lamanya; serta melakukan perangai yang lemah lembut seperti ma’al kauhur yang sejahtera sejuknya; akan jadi menghilangkan haus dan dahaga haidal taulannya yang karib wal ba’id. Maka kita pohokan kepada Tihan sarwa alam barang bertambahan-tambah juga kiranya dari martabat yang kebesaran dan kemuliaan serta kekayaan dan kemenangan atas sahabat Kompeni ya rabb al’alam.


Tersurat kepada dua belas haribulan Rabi’ul-awal kepada hari Sabtu, kepada waktu jam pukul empat adanya. Tarih 1226 Sanah [6 April 1811]. Dan lagi ada satu surat mintat kirinkan ke negeri Siak kepada kita punya bini.
Mahmud\textsuperscript{115} and I obtained vessels from Sultan Mahmud consisting of one *pemayang* [boat with outriggers]\textsuperscript{116} and one *penjajah* [war-ship].\textsuperscript{117} I then set sail from Lingga, with the intention to stop at Muntok and afterwards proceed to Java. Just as we arrived at Pulau Berhala the militia absconded—ten of them. Just one day after sailing out from Lingga to Pulau Berhala I pondered: since the vessels could not hold out against the rollers, I would proceed to Jambi because I wanted to search for a somewhat bigger vessel; those small boats were an extreme nuisance.

Further, taking the *pangeran* from Cirebon—six of them, and including their companions, thirteen altogether—and what with bringing the *gangbang*; even passing urine had to be in the compartment! But no vessels were available in Jambi. So I devised a scheme. Thus it was on that account that I sent the letter of the Raja of Jambi, Tuan Sayid Abdullah\textsuperscript{118} by name, through the ketch of Sayid Husin Aaidid. So then I was searching for vessels in Muntok. I found a vessel which was to be mine after I had paid the price. But I only received the vessel after one and a half months because of the extreme deception of the Palembang people. And so, it was only on the nineteenth of Rabi‘ul-awal, on Sunday, that I finally obtained the vessel at the cost of 350 dollars, which I paid. With regard to me, on the twenty-second of Rabi‘ul-awal [= 16 April 1811] I shall set sail for Java; God willing, it will be by the *pen-calang* vessel that I purchased for 350 dollars.

As for the boats I brought from Lingga, I left both at Muntok, one with Temenggung Hasan and the other with Juragan [shipmaster] Aji. Whenever you wish to have the boats, or if there is a warship that passes by and requires the boats for use as dinghies, you may order them to be taken in Muntok from Temenggung Hasan.

Further, with regard to your letters to the Chinese in Java and to the Dutch, I am carrying them; I took them from Captain Tait.\textsuperscript{119} As for me, you may issue the order for a warship; it will recognize us by our three black flags; we may possibly be met by the warship.

Further, pertaining to Palembang, since their counsel is not honest with the Company and they tell you extreme falsehoods, it is better that you give an order to take Muntok, which has a bigger revenue than Java.\textsuperscript{120} The Company could buy [the Muntok tin] at six dollars per picul. That one picul could become one and a half piculs, just like the price paid by the Sultan of Palembang in the land of Bangka. That is what comes to my mind. Two warships are sufficient to take Muntok because all the common people will welcome it on account of the actions of the Sultan of Palembang who raises up the little men but brings down the people of good birth from their greatness.

Further, I have sent several letters to you from Lingga, Jambi and Palembang. I did not cease sending letters, but I have not received a reply from you to any of them. I am extremely sorrowful, for I am so concerned with this pursuit. As for Raden Muhammad, everything is fine; he and his trade and what not. For me, do not mention the term ‘trade’, my body alone could not find comfort; daylight is like night and night appears like day in the conduct of the Company’s business and yours.

Further, with regard to Siak, it is my hope that you will wind it up. Let me not be given trouble on account of my separation from my mother, relatives, wife and family. In regard to the Company’s calling, I shall serve to the best of my ability. Such is the case. Since I am pursuing the Company’s business I cannot return to the country of Siak anymore. As for the land of Java, if there be assistance from God to me, it is my longing to proceed straight to Batavia. Even if I were to be captured by the Dutch because I wanted to see what the circumstances of the Dutch at Batavia are. If it were possible, I would, at the same time, like to meet the General.\textsuperscript{121} God willing: for, to my mind, it is possible to speed because during this season it is possible to go and return quickly. However that may be, I have no knowledge of God’s command. In my aspirations I shall in all earnestness carry out the Company’s work.

\textsuperscript{115} This is not true. Both Scott and Tunku Pangeran failed to meet the Sultan of Lingga. See the Lingga letters above.

\textsuperscript{116} The kind of large boat that is about 40 feet long. It has 13 or 14 oars, four or five paddles and a large steering oar. Wilkinson, *A Malay-English Dictionary*, Vol. 2, p. 857.

\textsuperscript{117} See Lingga 1 (B) note 14, in the Lingga letters.

\textsuperscript{118} Note that this raja of Jambi who was made raja by Tunku Pangeran is different from the suggestion that the ruler of Jambi in 1812 was Mahmud Muhieddin bin Ahmad. See Indonesian Traditional States 1, http://www.worldstatesmen.org/Indonesia_princely_states.html.

\textsuperscript{119} Charles Tait, commander of the country ship *Thainstone*.

\textsuperscript{120} Being unable to understand Raffles’ personal design on Palembang, it was indeed naive of Tunku Pangeran to suggest such a thing to Raffles.

\textsuperscript{121} I.e., Daendels.
Further, concerning my son Munek, could you please advise him well. Do not allow him to return to Siak. Let him be instructed to read the Quran. Following that, there is nothing whatever as a souvenir for you, except a hamper containing twenty-three dried Spanish mackerel from Muntok, very rich in taste; for your wife, a Palembang betel-leaf box, a Bima set which is not as it should be. Please accept them appropriately. Please receive with the pureness of heart. The betel-leaf box has a mirror at its bottom. You may receive them from the captain who conveys this letter.

Written down on the twenty-first of Rabi’ul-awal, on Tuesday, at four o’clock, in the year 1226 Hegra [15 April 1811 AD].

Siak 23

Warkah Tunku Pangeran kepada Raffles, satu lembar, 33.5 x 42 sm

Bahawa ini warkat al-maujud dan hidayat al-mamduh, maka dipeserta-
takan dalamnya tulus dan ikhas serta suci putih hati, hening jernih yang tiada berhinga dan bermasa selagi ada peredaran cakrawala, makahirah dan bulan sahabat juga adanya aly al-dawam; iaitu daripada Tunku Pangeran yang telah musafir pada masa ini di tanah Muntok. Maka barang diwasilikan Tuhan sarwa alam sekalian apalahan kiranya datang ke hadapan manjelis [sic] sahabat kita iaitu Seri Paduka Thomas Raffles Esquire, yang telah beristirahat al-khair di dalam negeri kota Melaka; yang ada gani daripada Seri Paduka Gilbert [g-l-b-t] Minto [sic] Lord Minto Guburnur [sic] Jenderal di Benggala, raja di atas segala raja-raja yang ada takluk di bawah raja yang maha besar di negeri Inggeris, dari atas angin sampai ke bawah angin adanya; yang amat arif dan budiman serta bijaksananya dari hal melakukan berkasihs-kasihan, dan sahabat bersahabat selama-lamanya; melakukan perangai yang lemah lembut seperti Ma’al [sic] al Kauthar yang sejahtera sejuknya; akan

menjadi ma’al menghilangkan haus dan dahaga handai taulannya karib wal-ba’id. Maka kita pohonkan kepada Tuhan sarwa alam sekalian barang bertambah-tambah juga kiranya daripada marhabat yang kebesaran dan kemuliaan serta kekayaan dan kemenangan atas sahabat Kompeni, Amin ya rabb al-‘alamin.


Maka sekarang kita mencari perahu di dalam Muntok. Sudah dapat itu perahu. Sudah kita bayar dia punya harga. Maka itu perahu boloh [sic] kita terima; sampai tengan dua bulan lamanya baharu kita terima itu perahu; karena [sic] terlalu banyak pising orang Palembang di atas kita, maka kepada sembilan belas haribulan Rabi’ul-awal, kepada hari Ahad, baharudah kita dapat itu perahu; dengan harga tengah empat ratus ringgit kita bayar.

Dari hal kita kepada dua likur haribulan Rabi’ul-awal intilah kita bertayar ke Tanah Jawa. Insya’Allah ta’ala, dengan perahu pencalang yang kita bali [sic] tengah empat ratus ringgit itu. Dari hal perahu yang kita bawa dari Lingga itu tinggalkan di Muntok keduanya; satu kepada Temenggung Hasan, yang satu kita wakilkan kepada Juragan Aji. Apabila sahabat kita hendakkan perahu atau ada kapal perang lau, jikalau makan perahu itu membuat sampam tanda boleh sahabat kita suruh ambi d mutok kepada Temenggung Hasan adanya.

122 The betel-leaf box. Siyeh is betel-vine. The leaf is prepared for chewing by mixing it with tiny pieces of areca-nut, gambier and lime. In ceremonies, the leaves and the condiments are placed in a beautifully crafted box, which is itself a symbol of Malay culture associated with ceremonies such as betrothal or marriage.

123 Or Bhima – the second and strongest of the five Pandawa brothers, heroes of the Mahabharata.
Dan lagi darihal surat sahabat kita yang kepada orang Cina yang di Jawa dan Olanda, kita membawanya. Kita ambil dari Kapitan Tait [t-i-t]. Dan lagi darihal kita boleh sahabat kita beri hukum sama kapal perang; barangkali ada kapal perang pergi di Tanah Jawa; boleh dia kenal kita punya perahu karena [sic] ada kita pakai tiga bendera hitam. Barangkali ada berjumpa dengan kita itu kapal perang.


Tersurat kepada seluruh haribulan Rabi‘ul-awal, kepada hari Selasa, kepada waktu jam pukul empat adanya; kepada tarikh 1226 Sanah.

124 S-a-n- b-y-m-a.
IX. THE JAMBI LETTER

JAMBI

Letter of Sayid Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman of Jambi to Raffles. 7 February 1811
Malay letter, Jawi script, 1 folio [folded], 41.2 x 33.1 cm
Letter of Sayid Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman of Jambi, with black seal, addressed to Raffles
Endorsement verso Malay letter in Raffles’ hand: ‘February 1811—/Tuan Syed Abdullah / Jambee’
Endorsement in Jawi script: ‘This letter is from Tuan Sayid Abdullah / Jambi on the thirteenth of the month of Muharram’
Heading: ‘Nur u’l-Syams wa’l Qamar’

Verily this letter expresses sincerity and whiteness of heart with perpetual love and affection from Sayid Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman al-Habsyi who is taking shelter in the country of Jambi; may it by the grace of God, lord of the universe reach His Excellency Thomas Raffles Esquire who is representing His Excellency Mr Gilbert Lord Minto, Governor-General in Bengal.

Following that, be it known to the Tuan Raja that the epistle of the Tuan Raja carried by Tengku Pangeran Sukma Dilaga has arrived safely to me. On a select day and at an auspicious moment we hastened to welcome it with all honour and gratification with our two hands, and whatever was stated in it was well understood and we thank the tuan raja profusely for the generosity that is hard to reciprocate.

Following that, pertaining to the Sultan of Jambi, we have already ousted him for failing to conduct governance in accordance with the adat and the syarak [canon law of Islam] which had brought affliction to his people. Owing to that, the country has been ruined and the trading centre died a natural death. That is the reason why at this moment we are in control of the country of Jambi. It is our hope that the English Company will assist us by supplying powder and ammunitions. We earnestly hope for our friend’s protection.

Regarding our friend’s enquiry about the Hollanders, not for an instance have the Dutch been in our country and neither did we establish friendship with the Dutch, never! That is the case. And further, Tengku Pangeran is also kindred to us. That is all.

Written on the thirteenth of Muharram, on Friday, at eight o’clock, in the year one thousand two hundred and twenty six Hegira [7 February 1811 CE].

Jambi

Warkah Sayid Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman, tulisan Jawi, 1 folio [berlipat], 41.2 x 33.1 cm

Bahawa ini surat daripada menyatakan tulus dan ikhlas serta putih hati, kasih dan sayang yang tiada berekesudahan iaitu daripada Sayid Abdullah bin Abdul Rahman Al-Habsyi; yang ada bernaung dalam negeri Jambi. Barang disiarkan Tuhankaruna alam apalaha kiranya datang kepada Seri Paduka Tuan Thomas Raffles Askor [sic, a-s-k-w-r] yang ada ganti Seri Paduka Tuan Gilbert Minto [sic], Gubernur Tuan Jenderal [sic] di Benggala, raja di atas segala raja-raja yang ada takluk di bawah bendera raja yang maha besar di negeri Inggeris dari atas angin sampai ke bawah angin adanya; yang ada duduk setirahat [sic] al-khair dalam Bandar negeri Melaka, bandar al-makmur wada’in [sic] al-masyur atas segala raja-raja waktu ini; serta arif dan budi-man, lagi bijaksana pada melakukan kasih bergkhasan dan sahabyat bersahabat kepada sekalian handai taulannya, karib wal-baid. Maka kita pohonkan kepada Tuhankaruna alam barang bertambah-tambah juga kuasanya daripada pangkat martabat yang kebesaran dan darjat yang kemuliaan mim amin.

Waba’adahu kemudian daripada itu barang makmur kiranya Tuan Raja darah warkah daripada Tuan Raja yang dibawa oleh Tengku [t-ngk-w] Pangeran Sukma Dilaga itu telah wasillah kepada kita dengan selamat sejauhannya kepada hari yang terpilih kepada sa’at yang mastarik. Maka segera kita sambut dengan beberapa kemuliaan dan kesukaan menerima dengan kedua belah tangan kita. Dan barang yang termazak di dalamnya itu telah mahu lam kita, serta kita menerima kasih daripada Tuan Raja beribu-ribu kasih penuh limpah. Tiadalah akan terbalas oleh kita.

Syahadan lagi darahal Sultan Jambi maka sudah kita tudong [tundung] karena [sic] sebab tiada mengerjakan perintah adat syarak.

Terusrat kepada tiga belas haribulan Muharram hari Jumaat, waktu jam pukul duaapian, al-tarikh seribu dua ratus dua puluh enam. 1226 Sanah.

X. THE PALEMBANG LETTERS

While most of the Palembang letters (nine in all) are letters written between 1809 and 1811, there is, however, an earlier letter dated 1780 from Governor Reynier de Klerk to the Sultan of Palembang, and another letter of a later date (1824), written by Sultan Ahmad Najamuddin, Mahmod Badaruddin's successor. The nine Palembang letters comprise three undated letters from Sultan Mahmod Badaruddin to Tengku Raden Muhammad, Raffles' plenipotentiary, a letter in the form of a treaty document concluded between Raden Muhammad and Sultan Mahmod Badaruddin, a letter from Raden Muhammad to Raffles' clerk Ibrahim, and one from Raden Muhammad to Raffles. There are only three letters (Palembang 8, 9, and 10) addressed by the Sultan of Palembang directly to Raffles.

Sultan Mahmod Badaruddin ascended the throne of Palembang in 1804. Despite all his faults, as have been portrayed by many writers, Badaruddin was a forceful, brave and clever ruler. He was described as one who could be 'affable if he liked and had a favourable appearance compared with that of Najamuddin, his brother'. Van de Capehen, who met him in Ternate during his banishment in 1824, was reported to have described Badaruddin as "a genteel person, well-made and of good

1 Raden Muhammad bin Husin bin Syahabuddin was employed by Raffles as agent to Palembang. He was born in Palembang and "connected by blood with the leading men, if not the reigning family, and who married a sister of the present King of Kedah [Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin]". See John Bastin, 'Palembang in 1811 and 1812', in Essays on Indonesian and Malay History, Eastern Universities Press Ltd., Singapore, 1961, p. 57. Capt. Macdonald also stated that he was "a near kinsmen of the Sultan". See Davis Macdonald, Captain Macdonald's Narrative of his Early Life and Services Embracing an Unbroken Period of Twenty-two Years Extracted from his Journals & Other Official Documents, 3rd edn, Thomas Willey, Cheltenham, 1840. W. Robison referred to him in 1814 as "an adventurer... a fellow of mean extraction and bad character". Bastin, however, thought that the character referred to by Robison could be Raden Wahib [sic], a fugitive prince of Palembang who was given asylum by the Sultan of Lingga during this period.
countenance, with very prepossessing manners”.² Mahmud Badaruddin was also known to be a man of letters who wrote prose and poetry in Jawi and was a lover of books.³ Apart from a collection of pantun, the two known syair that he wrote were the poem “Syair Sinyor Kosta” and the allegorical “Syair Nuri”.⁴ He was twice dethroned by Raffles, first in May 1812, after having been accused of conducting the massacre of the Dutch garrison on 14 September 1811, and again on 13 August 1813 after Raffles disapproved of the action taken by Captain (later Major) Robison, the appointed Resident of Palembang, for having sought the abduction of Najamuddin.⁵ As soon as Dutch rule was re-established in Java in 1816, the deposed Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin, with a view to clearing his name, submitted to the Commissioners-General, through an old friend at Batavia, several of the letters that Raffles had sent to him which purportedly incited him to exterminate the Dutch at Pulau Borang in Palembang. Based on these letters, scholars writing on Raffles have argued about whether Raffles was morally responsible for the brutal murder of the Dutch soldiers and their families at the Palembang factory on 14 September 1811.⁶ It was also based on Raffles’ letters to Badaruddin that J. C. Baud, later Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies and Minister for the Colonies, wrote his famous article “Palembang in 1811 en 1812” in the first volume of the Bijdragen in 1853. This article, together with another article by Baud on the so-called “Bandjarmasin atrocity”,⁷ blackened Raffles’ character in the eyes of Dutch historians for over a century. The article by Baud drew a sharp response from both Wurtzburg and Bastin,⁸ who questioned the accuracy of the translation of the Malay letters that Baud⁹ used, which consequently led them to accuse Baud of being biased in his interpretation.¹⁰

The 1810–11 Palembang letters are therefore interesting and of historical importance as they provide further information on Raffles’ alleged attempt to influence Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin into evicting the Dutch from Palembang and establishing a treaty with the English East India Company. When read together with copies of the other letters that Baud and Bastin had quoted and reproduced in their publications, a

³ He had a good collection of books which included hikayat and other genres of Malay literature. In 1822, after he was deposed, it was reported that 55 very fine manuscripts in Malay and Arabic were sent to Batavia. See M. O. Woelders, Het Sultanaut Palembang 1811–1825, VKI 72, Martinus Nijhoff, ’s-Gravenhage, 1975, p. 3. Cf. Teuku Iskandar, Klasik Melayu Sepanjang Abad, Penerbit Libra, Jakarta, 1996, pp. 497–498 and 503–505.
⁴ Woelders, Het Sultanaut Palembang, p. 3. See also A. Tecuw et al. (eds.), A Merry Sonhor in the Malay World, Four Texts of the Syair Sinyor Kosta, KITLV Press, Leiden, 2004, vol. 1, p. 20. R. O. Winstedt, A History of Classical Malay Literature, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1969, p. 191, nevertheless, thinks that while Badaruddin was the writer of the syair, there is insufficient evidence to say that he was the original author. But Koster thinks that the author of the Syair Nuri was indeed Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin. See G. L. Koster, ‘Stranded in a Foreign Land: Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin’s Syair Nuri’, Indonesia Circle, no. 68, March 1996.
⁵ See C. W. Wurtzburg, Raffles of the Eastern Isles, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1954, pp. 298–299. On the rumour repeated by Wurtzburg that Robison had been bribed by the re-instated sultan, Coolhaas, quoting van der Kemp, says this accusation made by Raffles in the Memoirs of the Life of Sir Stamford Raffles, was very doubtful since there was no evidence about the matter. See W. Ph. Coolhaas, ‘Baud on Raffles’, JMBRAS, 24(1) (1951) (Reprinted by Schmidt Periodicals GMBH, 1988), p. 115.

⁶ According to Coolhaas, Muntinghe attributed the murder of the Dutch garrison to “at least very impudent instigations and promises of the British Government” (read Raffles). Coolhaas, ‘Baud on Raffles’, p. 115.
⁸ See C. E. Wurtzburg, ‘Raffles and the Massacre at Palembang’, JMBRAS 23(1) (1949), pp. 38–52; Coolhaas, ‘Baud on Raffles’. The subject has also been re-investigated by John Bastin in his paper ‘Palembang in 1811 and 1812’ which appeared in the BKI, 109 (1953), pp. 300–320 and 110 (1954), pp. 64–88. This article was revised and republished in Bastin, Essays on Indonesian and Malaysian History.
⁹ The transliteration into Rumi of the letters produced by Baud was also inaccurate. The original Malay words and sentence structures had, in many instances, been replaced or influenced by Javanese or Batavian [Low] Malay words and linguistic structures. See Appendices II (d), IV (b), V (b) and VI (c).
¹⁰ The letter quoted by Baud which he claimed to be the first letter that Raffles wrote to Mahmud Badaruddin had the date missing because of a torn portion of the page. Bastin, however, was the first to ascertain that the letter was written on 15 [or 14] December 1810 and that it was not the first Malay letter that Raffles dispatched to the Sultan of Palembang since in this letter it was mentioned that five days earlier Raffles had already sent another letter, although it had been written nine days earlier. This missing letter, nonetheless, was unknown to both Baud and Coolhaas.
clearer picture emerges of Raffles’ attempt to establish relations with the sultanate of Palembang and also the massacre of the Dutch garrison at Palembang, comprising 24 European and 63 Javanese officials and soldiers, in September 1811.

Raffles’ first letter to Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin appears to have been written on 8 Dzulkaedah 1225 in the year of the second Jim (5 December 1810).11 Its delivery by Raffles’ emissary Sayid Abu Bakar Rum was, however, delayed by five days. In a second letter dated Friday, 17 Dzulkaedah 1225 AH (14 December 1810) Raffles stated, “I wrote to your majesty five days ago and now without waiting for an answer address you again by Tunku Raden Mahomet whom I have appointed my Agent to proceed to your majesty’s Court with this letter ...”.12

It was the contents of the two letters which had the words “pukul buang habiskan sekali-kali” that allegedly instigated Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin to carry out the massacre. The subject of the massacre has indeed attracted other writers to re-interpret the contents of the earlier letters that Baud quoted. Coolhaas, writing in response to Wurtzberg’s criticisms of Baud, also felt that while Raffles may not have wanted the Dutch in Palembang to be murdered, he was nevertheless “guilty of using words in such a rash way as to bring about the death of innocent people”.13 In 1971, Syed Hussein Alatas gave another interesting viewpoint on Stamford Raffles as a pioneer of British imperialism in the Malay Archipelago and he, too, touched on the subject of the Palembang massacre and re-interpreted Raffles’ Malay letters to Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin in 1811 by providing his own translation of the controversial phrase, buang habiskan sekali-kali.14

Indeed, the debate among many writers centred on the contents of Raffles’ two letters in December 1810 which had the words buang habiskan sekali-kali segala orang Holandes. The question raised by all the writers was whether the instructions given by Raffles through these

words had provided a cue that Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin took to order the massacre of the Dutch. It appears that the controversy regarding the letters had much to do with the accuracy of their translation and the fact that, as Bastin has correctly pointed out, it has been difficult to give the exact dating of the Raffles–Badaruddin correspondence.15 To place the letters in the proper context, I have included as appendices copies of earlier letters taken from Baud’s and Bastin’s articles.

To understand the background of Raffles’ communication with the sultanate of Palembang, it would perhaps be useful to go back to the day when Raffles arrived at Malacca from Penang to assume duty as agent to the Governor-General Lord Minto in the Malay states. Upon his arrival on 4 December 1810, and on being informed that some Dutch vessels had been sent to the River Musi by Daendels, Raffles immediately wrote a letter to the Sultan of Palembang on 5 December informing the latter that he was now agent to the Governor-General in the Malay states and that he had heard that “there were many Dutch ships-of-war that had arrived in the mouth of the Palembang River”. He expressed concern over the matter and urged the Sultan to reject the Dutch and be friendly with the English instead. He wrote, “my friend should strike and throw out at all costs” (hendaklah sahabat beta pukul buang sekali-kali) if the Dutch refuse to deliberate with care according to my friend’s wishes”.

The first reply from Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin to both of Raffles’ letters was dated 10 January 1811.16 This could only mean that the Sultan gave his answer to Raffles’ queries only after having met Tengku Raden Muhammad, who delivered the second letter, as well as a copy of the first letter, when he arrived at the Palembang court on 5 January 1811. Even then, the Sultan made no promises or commitment to Raffles’ appeal because, according to him, he had yet to receive Raden Muhammad’s official seal of authority as a plenipotentiary of Raffles.

From the reference made by Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin in his letter to Raden Muhammad, which was not dated (see Palembang VI below), we know that the first letter (written on 5 December) had already been delivered by Sayid Abu Bakar Rum. But since the dispatch of the second letter was delayed, and it also mentioned that it was to be

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11 See the English translation of the letter and its original in Jawi in MSS Eur. F. 148/4, British Library, pp. 85–87. Another copy of the original Jawi letter, addressed to the Sultan of Palembang, which was discovered in Holland, also bears the Muslim date of Wednesday, 8 Dzulkaedah 1225 (5 December 1810 CE). See Bastin, Essays on Indonesian and Malayan History, Appendix IV, p. 185.
12 Ibid., p. 86. The second letter was written nine days after the first letter. See MSS, Eur. F. 148/4.
14 See Alatas, Thomas Stamford Raffles, p. 11.
15 See Bastin, Essays on Indonesian and Malayan History, Appendix 1, p. 180. A copy of the translation is also available in MSS, Eur. F. 148/4 at the British Library.
16 See Appendix III, letter A.
conveyed by Tengku Raden Muhammad, it is safe to assume that Raden Muhammad must have left Malacca immediately after the second letter was written. He arrived at Palembang on 5 January 1811 and immediately sought an audience with Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin to deliver both the second letter as well as a copy of the first letter. Subsequently, Raden Muhammad also submitted the treaty document to the Sultan.

On 10 January 1811, Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin gave his reply to Raffles’ two letters. The Sultan stated that since Raden Muhammad, the supposed plenipotentiary of Raffles, did not have in his possession a letter of credentials (surat cap), the Sultan could not give his final answer, even though Raden Muhammad had forwarded a written treaty document to him.

Tengku Raden Muhammad only submitted his report to Raffles via the letter dated 8 February 1811 in which he specifically mentioned that he could not return to Malacca immediately, but was forced to stop at Mentok. He had, instead, asked Sayid Abu Bakar Rum to deliver the Sultan of Palembang’s gifts and the letter dated 10 January. He also informed Raffles that “there is no obstacle in this undertaking as far as the Sultan is concerned”, except that he (Raden Muhammad) as agent (yakel) was not in possession of the surat cap (letter of credentials) and that he hoped Raffles would send back Sayid Abu Bakar Rum together with the material he requested.

In the meantime, the Sultan of Palembang wrote to Raden Muhammad and Sayid Abu Bakar Rum to explain Palembang’s relations with the Dutch. This undated letter must have been written before 8 February 1811, i.e. before Raden Muhammad submitted his report to Raffles.

On 4 March 1811, in response to the Sultan’s letter, Raffles wrote in a more aggressive tone urging Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin to “get rid of, and finish off entirely every Dutchman, including the Resident and everyone who is under the jurisdiction of the Hollanders”.17 In response to this, Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin then wrote on 15 April 1811:

...pertaining to the position that is desired by our friend (i.e. ‘huang habiskan sekali-kali’) regarding the way to act upon our friend’s enemies, the Dutch in Palembang, our friend should harbour neither...
In the very same letter, the Sultan also indicated his reply to Raffles' first letter which was delivered by Sayid Abu Bakar Rum; expressing extreme caution, Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin wrote,

"... regarding the desire of the dignitary at Malacca as stated in the letter conveyed by Sayid Abu Bakar Rum, only our brother knows better that under no circumstances can we bear up under such an appearance. Verily it should be clear to our brother that a friend with a motive will not endure but only takes pleasure in destruction; there is no sincerity in the mutual affection between two sides."  

Based on the contents of the letters, Palembang VI and a copy of the first Malay letter in Jawi which was addressed to the Sultan of Palembang, and also Palembang IX, it is clear that Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin was not really eager to fulfill what was requested of him by Raffles, through his letters of 5 December 1810 and 4 March 1811, namely to strike and throw out entirely (pukul buang habis sekali-kali) the Dutch. Following the 4 March letter, Raffles sent through Captain Macdonald22 another letter dated 25 Rabi'ul-awal 1226 (19 April 1811) in which was mentioned that Raffles had also sent four crates of guns, each containing 20 muskets, together with ten powder horns that contained powder in cartridges. In his letter to Raffles dated 29 Rabi’ul-awal 1226 (23 May 1811), Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin thanked the

we shall act to the best of our ability, and in such a manner that our name shall occur [sic] no obloquy among great men, and those who are our particular friends. However we have to request our great person in Malacca, a little patience..."

Bastin, Essays on Indonesian and Malay History, p. 68.

Emphasis in the above translation is mine. The translation of Raffles Collection, IV no. 9 runs as follows: “With regard to the letter, expressive of the wishes of the great man at Malacca, which was brought by the Seyyad Abu Bekir Rumi, we wish our brother to be particularly well apprized that we can by no means assent to it, and we desire him to be informed that, as far as regards its excuses and reasons, it cannot be stable, but on the contrary, an introduction to destruction, for there is no mutual regard or affection indicated between the parties... Ibid.

20 It was discovered in Holland and had the Muslim date of Wednesday, 8 Dzulkaedah 1225 (5 December 1810 CE).
21 Besides the letter from Raffles, Macdonald also delivered Minto’s letter to Mahmud Badaruddin.
22 The reply written on 23 April 1811 (25 Rabi’ul-awal 1226) was delivered by Macdonald towards the end of May together with another letter dated 15 May. Bastin, Essays on Indonesian and Malay History, p. 72, n. 58.

former for the 80 muskets and also wrote: “With respect to the Hollander who are at Palembang do not be uneasy, all shall be done as you desire.”  

Judging from the tone of Raffles’ letters to the Sultan, especially his third, and the Sultan’s reply to both Raden Muhammad and Raffles, it is obvious that the Palembang ruler must have taken the cue, as he was incited by the words ‘buang habis sekali-kali’. Raffles’ dispatch of the guns and this offer of lasting friendship of the English Company must have lent extra courage to Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin to carry out what he perceived as a persistently persuasive instruction from Raffles to exterminate the Dutch. Thus, as events were to show later, on 14 September 1811 the entire population of the factory at Palembang consisting of 24 Europeans and 63 Javanese in the Dutch garrison—comprising soldiers and civilians as well as the Dutch Resident—were deceived into leaving the fort and asked to board their perahu, and were then drowned in the Musi River.

The following Palembang letters, when read together with the other Palembang letters which have been included in the appendices, will help scholars to reconstruct the events that led to the infamous massacre of Palembang.

PALEMBANG I

Malay letter, Jawi script, 2 folios, 28.9 x 47 cm
Letter of Governor-General Reynier de Klerk with red wax seal, inscribed with the illustration of a boat and the letters “VOC” Addressed to Sultan Ratu Muhammad Bahaudin of Palembang Endorsement verso: [uncipherable] Heading: ‘Qawdul u’l-Haqq wa Kalamuh u’l-Siddiq’

Verily the Governor-General Reynier de Klerk and the Council of the Indies send this epistle of sincerity to fellow signatory to the contract,