Papers on Johore Lama and the Portuguese in Malaya (1511-1641) by I. A. Macgregor, M. A. C. A. Gibson-Hill, M.A. G. de G. Sieveking
JOURNAL
of the
Malayan Branch
of the
Royal Asiatic Society

(Covering the territories of the Federation of Malaya, the Colonies of Singapore, Sarawak and North Borneo, and the State of Brunei)

Papers on Johore Lama and the Portuguese in Malaya (1511-1641) by
I. A. Macgregor,
C. A. Gibson-Hill, M. A.
G. de G. Sieveking

Printed for the MBRAS by Malaya Publishing House, Limited
SINGAPORE.
Contents
Volume 28, pt 2, published May, 1955
(No. 170)

Papers on Johore Lama and the Portuguese in Malaya,
(1511-1641)

Notes on the Portuguese in Malaya,
by I. A. Macgregor, M.A. ... page 5

Johore Lama in the Sixteenth Century,
by I. A. Macgregor, M.A. ... 48

Johore Lama and other ancient sites on the Johore River,
by C. A. Gibson-Hill, M.A. ... 126

The fortified city of Johore Lama, and the use
of archaeological evidence,
by G. de C. Sieveking ... 198

The Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society dates from 1923. It is the direct successor, by change of title, of the Straits Branch, R.A.S., which was founded in 1878. Its objects are the increase and diffusion of knowledge concerning the territories of the Federation of Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei. Membership is open to anyone interested in the Society's activities. The annual subscription is at present $10 a year, and there is no entrance fee. Members receive free one copy of all journals published for the period for which their membership is valid. In addition they may buy single copies of back numbers at reduced rates. The latter include Sir Richard Winstedt's History of Malaya, and his history of Malay Literature, histories of the majority of the individual states, C. C. Brown's English translation of the Sejarah Melayu, A. H. Hill's translation of the Hikayat Abdullah, accounts of the Stone Age finds from Malaya and of Malayan fishing methods, and biographies of Yap Ah Loy, Captain Speedy and John Clunies Ross. An index to the first twenty volumes of the present series (1923-47) is available to members at $3.50 a copy. The index to the Straits Branch series is regretably now out of print, but it may be consulted at the Singapore and Penang Libraries, and at the Museums at Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Taiping: it will be re-issued as part of a combined index at the end of Vol. 30.
Notes on the Portuguese in Malaya

(Received March 1955)

by IAN A. MACGREGOR, M.A.

The first Portuguese to reach Malaya probably did so on 11 September, 1509, when a squadron of five vessels, under the command of Diogo Lopes de Sequeira, is said to have anchored before Malacca1. The Portuguese conquest of Malacca followed less than two years later, the successful attack being launched on Friday, 8 August, or Sunday, 10 August, 15112. From then until 14 January, 16413, Malacca was in Portuguese hands, a possession of the Portuguese king, whose clerks occasionally noted the fact when listing his titles4. During the 130 years that the Portuguese held Malacca they also had contact with many other parts of Malaya. In the north, the Perlis river was the scene of a fierce battle with the Achinese in 15475; further south, the Perak river saw a Portuguese attack on Gujarati ships loading tin there in 16136; the Bernam, Selangor and Klang rivers are all mentioned in Portuguese reports7, and the Muar river appears often in the accounts of their wars and battles. In fact most Malayan rivers and some minor ones bring back memories of Portuguese activities. So also do the waters round the island of Singapore. In the 1570’s there was very active naval warfare in this area, with two and possibly three fights between Portuguese and Achinese fleets8. Inevitably, contact with the interior of Malaya was much less extensive, but the Portuguese did ascend the Johore river to a point beyond Kota Tinggi9, and they made

1. See Pires, 1944, p. 235, n. 1. Cortesão says that Diogo Lopes de Sequeira was the first European to visit Malacca, but this is not certain.
2. For these dates see Macgregor, 1955, n. 85 (p. 69, below).
3. Leupe, 1936, pp. 42 and 44. The date is in new style.
4. This seems to have been done sometimes by the clerks employed by Afonso de Albuquerque when he was Governor of Portuguese India, 1509-15. See Lisbon, Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo, Chancelaria del Rei dom Manuel, 10, fl. 74v.
8. An account of these battles will appear in JMBRAS, 29, (3), 1956.
9. Couto, 1778-88, 11, pp. 283-88; Macgregor, 1955, Section II.

I. A. Macgregor

an expedition to Naning in 1586\textsuperscript{10}. We have no evidence of large early Malay Settlements away from the rivers, and in the sixteenth century at least the west side of the Peninsula was probably very sparsely populated. As late as 1848 south Johore was described—correctly in one sense if not in another — as a "vast desert"\textsuperscript{11}. On the whole, it seems that the Portuguese had fairly frequent contact with the more important places in Malaya during their occupation of Malacca. That being so, the aim of this paper is not to give a brief history of the Portuguese in Malaya between 1511 and 1641, but to try to show what sort of people the Portuguese sent to Malaya in this period and the manner of their living while they were there.

There were never very many Portuguese in Malaya. Only rarely did the number of Portuguese in Malacca exceed 600. Nor did they all stay for any length of time: people were always leaving Malacca to go somewhere else\textsuperscript{12}. In addition, the numbers were subject to a seasonal variation. Vessels from India generally reached Malacca in May and June, and in October: these were the two occasions in the year when the winds were favourable to the voyage\textsuperscript{13}. The vessels normally brought reinforcements and accordingly the number of Portuguese in Malacca would rise sharply. Then, from November to January, was the season for voyages from Malacca to India and to the Moluccas. Ships would leave and the number of Portuguese would fall again. A complete set of ration orders for the Portuguese serving in Malacca on the first of each month between 1 April, 1519, and 1 May, 1520, is still extant. During this period the numbers never rose above 348 and in one month they fell to 29, though it is likely that other Portuguese were nearby on the second occasion. The average over the fourteen months is under 200\textsuperscript{14}.

\textsuperscript{10} Couto, 1778-88, 21, pp. 357-61; Macgregor, 1955, Section IV.
\textsuperscript{12} Malacca tended to be a starting place for trade ventures to the surrounding area and a port of call for vessels on their way to and from India on the one side and China, Java, Banda and the Moluccas on the other. It is remarkable that on each of the five occasions that St. Francis Xavier visited Malacca, he was on his way to another place.
\textsuperscript{13} See Macgregor, 1955, n. 195. (p. 95, below).
\textsuperscript{14} All these orders are preserved in the Corpo Cronológico (CC) collection in the Arq. Nac. da Torre do Tombo. The numbers are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>No. in CC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 1519</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>2-80-200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>2-81-110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>2-82-58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>2-82-135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>2-83-114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>2-84-41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>2-85-38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>2-85-123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>2-86-48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan., 1520</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>2-86-158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2-87-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>2-88-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>2-88-128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>2-89-52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unlike their Dutch successors, these few hundred men were not the servants of a trading company. They were the servants of the King and very conscious of their position. Afonso de Albuquerque, a proud man and the writer of some fierce, hectoring letters, always signed himself 'creature of your Highness' at the bottom of his letters to the King. Lesser men adopted similar habits. The great majority of the Portuguese who came to Malaya in the sixteenth century came as members of one section or another of the government service. Each was due to receive a fixed rate of pay and a cost of living allowance\(^\text{15}\). The latter was sometimes quite handsome. It began as a ration allowance, issued in kind. In Malacca the issue was made in rice and in the first years of Portuguese rule the Captain of the Fortress, that is, the Governor of the place, the captains of vessels, the Chief Gunner of the Fortress, the Inspector of the Watch, the Supervisor of Works and various craftsmen each received 60 gantang a month, paid in advance. A few others received 40 or 50 gantang, and the men-at-arms, sailors and the vicar received 30 gantang each. Chaplains got a mere 15 gantang, unless they chanced to be serving with a ship: then their allowance was doubled\(^\text{16}\). Later, this ration allowance became a fixed money payment which varied from fortress to fortress in accordance with the cost of living. In Malacca, which was dependent on imported food\(^\text{17}\), the cost of living was relatively high\(^\text{18}\). Con-

---

15. \textit{Soldo} was the pay granted according to function and status. At first it was paid all the year round, but later it was paid only for such quarters of the year as a man was on active service, unless he was in some special employment which lasted throughout the year: hence the use of the name \textit{quarteis} for these payments in later years. \textit{Mantimento} was a ration allowance. \textit{Ordenado} was a salary attached to a specific office. (See Pissurleu, 1951, passim; Linschoten, 1598, pp. 55-56; Whiteway, 1899, p. 72).


17. Castanheda, 1924-33, 2, p. 458. See also demand made by Jorge de Albuquerque to Bastião de Sousa, 12 December 1523 (Lisbon, Arq. Nac. da Torre do Tombo, Corpo Cronológico, 1-30-77) and Documenta Indica, 2, 1950, p. 423.

18. The staple food of the people at Malacca was rice (see Documenta Indica, 2, 1950, p. 219): most of it was imported and rice prices seem to have been considerably higher in Malacca than in Pegu, a rice exporting country, and in its neighbour Bengal. In September 1512 the Portuguese bought rice at Pasai, not far from Malacca, on the NE coast of Sumatra, at an equivalent of 170 reis for 20 gantang. A little later in 1512 and in the first half of 1513 they were buying the same quantity at Martaban, in Pegu, for rates varying around 17 reis, though a customs' duty of 6% had to be paid on these purchases (see Livro da receita e despesa de Pero Paes, Lisbon, Arq. Nac. da Torre do Tombo, Núcleo Antigo, Maço 167, Livro 801). The impression gained from these figures is confirmed by a certificate of 3 Sept. 1522 (Lisbon, Arq. Nac. da Torre do Tombo, Corpo Cronológico, 1-28-27) which says that the normal price of rice in Malacca varied from 160 to 260 reis for 20 gantang, and by a letter from Pero de Faria to the King, written from 1955] Royal Asiatic Society.
subsequently the allowance was larger there than in the fortresses in India proper 19.

Every Portuguese who came to Malaya had (or was supposed to have) his name registered in government books, called Matricula books, in Portugal, in India and in Malacca. With his name were supposed to be recorded various other details: his father’s name, his birthplace (to facilitate identification), the pay to which he was entitled, together with the year when he came to the East, the details of his service there, and any payments which he had received, or fines which had been imposed on him 20. If an official’s accounts were found to be out of order, a note could be inserted in the register so that the government might retain any amount still due to him 21. Generally, men had credit balances, for the Portuguese government soon fell behind in its payments to its servants in the East. By 1527 it was in arrears in Malacca in its wages account, and in the payment of the ration allowances 22. Arrears of pay could

Goa and dated 18 Nov. 1537 (Corpo Cronológico, 1-60-17) in which he says that the King’s factors bought rice at 130 reis for 20 gantang in Malacca, when the same quantity could be obtained for 20-25 reis in Pegu. The price in Bengal also appears to have been considerably lower than that of Malacca. In 1518 it was reported that 20 gantang of rice cost 60 reis there (Dom João de Linha to the King, Cochin, 22 Dec. 1518, in Lisbon, Arq. Nac. da Torre do Tombo, Corpo Cronológico, 1-23-117). During wars and sieges the price at Malacca could rise steeply. In the time of the troubles of 1521-25 one gantang of rice was said to have cost 600 reis (Manuel Godinho to the King, Goa, 25 Oct. 1545, Lisbon, Arq. Nac. da Torre do Tombo, Corpo Cronológico, 1-76-118). Barros, 1777, 6, p. 476, who, speaking of the same period, says that one gantang then cost ten cruzados (i.e., 3900 reis) is almost certainly exaggerating. (For siege prices of food see also Casteleda, 1924-33, 3, p. 309 and Documenta Indica, 2, 1950, p. 219.) For the dearness of Malaca see also Tristão de Aaúde to the King, 15 Nov. 1537 and Pero de Faria to the King, 25 Nov. 1539 (Lisbon, Arq. Nac. da Torre do Tombo, Corpo Cronológico, 1-60-7, 1-66-37).

19. This is shown by the ration allowances paid to the Inspectors of the Watch in different fortresses. In the west coast of India fortresses of Cochin, Cannanore, Quilon and Goa this official received 4800 reis per annum; in Ormuz (also dependent on imported food) he received 7200 reis per annum, but in Malacca he received 8400 reis. (See Lima Felner, 1858, pp. 19, 29, 38, 67, 96, 108-09.)

20. See Lisbon, Arq. Nac. da Torre do Tombo, Corpo Cronológico, 2-150-100; Regimento da Matricula, Goa, Arq. Geral e Histórico, Regimentos e Instruções, 1, fl. 166-83.


22. Certificate of Manuel de Araújo, clerk of the royal factory at Malacca, 31 Aug. 1527 (Lisbon, Arq. Nac. da Torre do Tombo, Corpo Cronológico, 1-37-64). The situation did not improve in the next few years (see Silva Rego, 2, 1949, p. 227). Payment of soldos and mantimentos was not always made in money (see Pero de Faria to the King, Malacca, 25 Nov. 1539, Lisbon, Arq. Nac. da Torre do Tombo, Corpo Cronológico, 1-66-37).

Journal Malayan Branch [Vol. XXVIII, Pt. 2
press hard on a Portuguese man-at-arms, because the government normally gave him neither free clothes nor free weapons, nor free accommodation. He generally had to buy his own weapons and clothes, but if he bought his weapons from the government the amount could be deducted from the pay that was due to him. Therefore, if his pay was in arrears, he virtually did not pay for his weapons.

When the men were not paid one or more of five things usually happened. A man could sell his right to pay, at a discount, to someone with ready cash. This was illegal, but was always being done. From quite early in the sixteenth century there were people who bought up the arrears of soldiers’ pay cheaply and then used their own or a friend’s influence to get themselves paid in full by the government. Second, a soldier could try to find a powerful patron to protect him. He could do this because Portuguese soldiers in the East in the sixteenth century were not organised into regular companies and battalions. They were merely attached or attached themselves to individual captains. In time of war an influential captain would often keep fairly open hospitality in order to attract the best men into his service. Third, if he could not find a patron, a soldier could become a beggar. Or, fourth, he could sell his weapons. And,

23. Linschoten, 1598, p. 55, implies that weapons were hired for the duration of the campaigning season.
25. See Braz Bvão to the King, Goa, 1 Nov. 1540 (Lisbon, Arq. Nac. da Torre do Tombo, Corpo Cronológico, 1-68-65). Bvão suggested various reforms. See also Couto, 1937, pp. 89-91; Silva Rego, 1, 1947, p. 445; dom João de Castro to the King, undated copy (1539?) (Lisbon, National Library, Fundo Geral, no 2943, Letter III) and Diogo Lopes de Aguiam to the King, Goa, 5 Nov. 1548 (Lisbon, Arq. Nac. da Torre do Tombo, Corpo Cronológico, 2-241-87).
26. This practice existed from the earliest times of Portuguese activity in the East (e.g., see Castanheda, 1924-33, 3, p. 309). But it became especially important from the 1530’s onwards, as the Crown grew more indebted. Those who gave hospitality sometimes received grants and favours from the Crown as a direct reward for their generosity. See Baião, 1927, p. 318.
27. By Canon Law it was strictly forbidden to sell weapons to infidels. This ban was confirmed by secular law: see Ordenações del Rei dom Manuel, 1565, p. 67. In Goa a Vicerégal order of 1561 forbade anyone living on the island, but outside the city, to possess any weapons, gunpowder or materials from which gunpowder might be made (Archivo Portuguez-Oriental, 1865, pp. 480-81).

finally, he could desert and become an adventurer. Of these five things, all but the second — attachment to a patron — were either illegal or dangerous to Portuguese power.

The home government was aware of the situation and tried to remedy it in several ways. One of the ways that it adopted, after a little hesitation, was that of encouraging its servants to marry locally. The idea was that these men would settle down and that they and their descendants would form a loyal, resident population, ready to hand and able to live off the food of the country. In the beginning, the government paid the settlers, just as it paid its other servants, but it soon abandoned this practice and paid the settlers only when they were on active service. Afonso de Albuquerque, the Governor of Portuguese India from 1509 till 1515, supported the idea, but the scheme was by no means completely successful. For one thing, not enough men adopted it. Indeed, not every Portuguese who came to the East could adopt it, for they were not all bachelors. And bachelors or married they were often unwilling to settle down in India during their early years there. They were quite ready to have mistresses — three or four for one man was not uncommon in Malacca, according to the complaints of the missionaries, while some prodigies of virility and resource were said to have had half a dozen. But marriage was a different matter, and before they had grown much older many of the bachelors had died or been killed in war. The death rate among the Portuguese in the East was high. It may have been especially high at Malacca which had a reputation for unhealthi-
In 1525 there seem to have been only 38 married Portuguese settlers there. The number did increase, however, though only slowly, and in 1552, when Malacca was granted city status, the married settlers became the citizens with the right to elect a town council. Even then, as late as 1626 there were only 114 married settlers in Malacca, 62 of whom were living outside the city walls, probably either in Hilir or in small estates up the Malacca river. Clearly this scheme was not a great success in providing soldiers, and at the time of the siege of Malacca in 1629 only 120 settlers are mentioned as fit or willing for military service. However, some settlers served the city well, especially in the second half of the sixteenth century.

Mention has been made of the unhealthiness of Malacca and the high mortality among the Portuguese in the East. The government recognised a responsibility towards its sick soldiers

36. Castanheda, 1924-33, 1, p. 458; Barros 1777, 4, p. 14; Leupe, 1936, p. 128. See also Pero de Faria to the King, Malacca, 25 November 1539 (Lisbon, Arq. Nac. da Torre do Tombo, Corpo Cronológico, 1-66-37). Eredia's map (Cardon, 1934, facing p. 1) shows that the town was surrounded by marshes. But compare Maxwell, 1911, p. 5; Mills, 1930, pp. 45-46.

37. Inhabitants of Malacca to the King, Malacca 12 August 1525 (Lisbon, Arq. Nac. da Torre do Tombo, Corpo Cronológico, 1-32-93). An official receipt of 1528 declared that the married settlers numbered only 33 (Lisbon, Arq. Nac. da Torre do Tombo, Corpo Cronológico, 1-40-80), but the Vicar of Malacca, Afonso Martins, said in 1532 that they numbered 40 (Silva Rego, 1, 1947, p. 223). Before returning to Malacca in 1539, Pero de Faria estimated the number at 60 (Pero de Faria to the King, Lisbon, Arq. Nac. da Torre do Tombo, Corpo Cronológico, 1-60-17). In 1527 it was estimated that there were 500 married settlers at Goa, 160 at Cochin and a few at the other Indian fortresses (Schurhammer, no. 115).

38. Malacca was made a city by a royal grant of 18 March 1552 (Lisbon, Arq. Nac. da Torre do Tombo, Chancelaria del Rei dom João III, Privilégios, 1, fl. 215v).


40. See Maxwell, 1911, p. 5 —“Along the river and inland there are many orchards belonging both to married Portuguese and natives”. This description by Barreto de Rezende is roughly contemporaneous with the 1626 estimate.


42. Notably, António de Andria, for whom see Leitão, 1948, pp. 101-05 and Macgregor, 1955, Section IV and n. 226. For others see Descripção dos cercos de Malaca sendo capitão Tristão Vaz da Velga e de huma vitória naval que teve da armada do Achem. Evora Public Library and District Archives, Codex CXVI/1-26, fl. 11-12v, 25-27v.

Journal Malayan Branch [Vol. XXVIII, Pt. 2