

## Gender, Islam and the Bugis Diaspora in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Riau

BARBARA WATSON ANDAYA

### ABSTRAK

*Pentingnya wanita dalam mengekalkan status laki-laki adalah tema umum dalam kajian ilmiah ke atas masyarakat Bugis. Sikap ini mungkin sudah tertanam dalam budaya yang dibawa orang hijrahan Bugis ke dunia Melayu pada penghujung abad ke-17 dan 18. Di Kepulauan Riau, yang menjadi pusat pengaruh Bugis dalam kerajaan Johor dan Alam Melayu yang luas itu, kahwin campur antara Bugis dengan Melayu bermakna imperatif jantina telah menjadi lemah sedikit. Namun, pengaruh wanita daripada keturunan Bugis-Melayu tetap ketara di kalangan mereka yang berkuasa di Riau pada awal abad ke-19. Sepanjang tempoh itu, perumusan baru tentang status jantina mulai meresapi masyarakat Islam melalui ajaran reformis dan fundamentalis daripada kumpulan Wahabi. Pengaruh ajaran mereka, yang telah memperkukuhkan kesamaran jantina yang sedia ada tentang kemunculan wanita di khalayak umum, ketara dalam Tuhfat- al-Nafis, yang mengisahkan sejarah diaspora yang ditulis sarjana agung Raja Ali Haji. Pada akhir kurun itu, tempat wanita yang berturunan bangsawan di Riau sudah menjadi kurang dominan berbanding dengan yang ada pada seratus tahun yang lalu. Namun, dengan mengkaji karya sastera dan sejarah, dikemukakan hujah dalam rencana ini bahawa persekitaran yang terwujud di Pulau Penyengat masih membuka ruang kepada wanita untuk menulis. Pendekatan sinkronik kepada penerbitan mereka itu telah membolehkan kita melihat bagaimana persoalan yang mereka kemukakan itu sudah berubah selaras dengan perubahan masa dan isu baru yang dibawa pengaruh Barat dan ide tentang 'pemodenan' di dunia Islam.*

### ABSTRACT

*The importance of women in maintaining male status is a common theme in academic studies of Bugis society. Presumably, these attitudes would have been embedded in the culture that Bugis migrants brought to the Malay world in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. On the island of Riau, which became the center for Bugis influence in the kingdom of Johor and the larger Malay world, intermarriage between Bugis and Malays meant these gender imperatives were somewhat diluted. Nonetheless, the influence of women of Bugis-Malay descent was still evident in Riau's ruling circles in the early nineteenth century. During this period, however, new formulations of gender*

*status began to penetrate Islamic society through the reformist and more fundamentalist teachings of the Wahabi. The influence of these teachings, which strengthened existing ambiguity towards the presence of women in public life, are evident in the Tuhfat al-Nafis, the history of the Bugis diaspora written by the great scholar Raja Ali Haji. By the end of the century, the place of well-born women in Riau is less prominent than a hundred years earlier. However, by examining literary and historical sources, this article argues that the environment created on Pulau Penyengat still allowed women a space in which they could write. A synchronic approach to their publications permits us to see how the kinds of questions their works address shifted according to changing times and the new issues raised by Western influence and ideas about 'modernity' in the Muslim world.*

## INTRODUCTION

The importance of women in maintaining male status is a common theme in academic studies of Bugis society (Millar 1983; Errington 1989; Pelras 1996), but the passage of these attitudes and values into the diaspora has yet to become a topic of academic research. Although the significance of the 'early modern' Bugis dispersal into the Malay world has long been recognized, the extent to which ethnicity played off against gender as migrants intermarried with locals remains a matter for supposition. In terms of male-female relations, there were additional factors at play, for by the early nineteenth century, inspired by reformist movements in the Middle East, pious Malays were increasingly bemoaning the moral decay and religious aberration they saw in contemporary Muslim society. A new attention to gender distinctions was evident in a growing insistence that the sexes should be strictly separated, that Muslim women should confine their activities to the domestic environment, and that they should be veiled in public. Focusing on the kingdom of Riau-Lingga, this article examines the ways in which these varying influences affected the position of women in elite Bugis-Malay circles. In the process, it argues that the Bugis legacy of female self-confidence did not disappear, but was redirected in ways that can be tracked into the twentieth century. While the ability of women to wield direct influence in the political realm was limited, especially as colonial control increased, they were able to participate in the male-dominated world of writing and publishing. Admittedly their voices were never loud, but the literary heritage opens a tiny window on the manner in which some women of mixed Malay-Bugis descent were viewing the changing world of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

## WOMEN IN THE BUGIS DIASPORA

'Femaleness' in Bugis cultural traditions has many manifestations, from formidable godrulers (*tomanurung* = "s/he who descended" and *totompo* = "s/he who ascended") to ritually potent spirit mediums (*bissu*) and legendary queens. Such figures, of course, can be found in the mythological world of many societies, although they are rarely if ever commensurate with the reality of female life experiences. What is intriguing about the Bugis case is that a succession of observers have been struck by the relatively egalitarian position of women, even within the region known as 'Southeast Asia', where the high status of females has long been touted as a distinctive feature. John Crawfurd (1783-1868), a man with many years of experience in the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago, remarked that Bugis women 'are consulted by the men on all public affairs, at public festivals women appear among the men', while Ida Pfeiffer (1797-1858), one of the 'intrepid lady travelers' of the period also commented that 'women in Celebes [Sulawesi] have equal rights with men (Crawfurd 1971: 74; Pfeiffer 1856: 27). However, it was at the elite level that the prominence of women was most marked. 'Those [women] in authority', said Crawfurd, 'sit in their councils when affairs of state are discussed, possessing, it is often alleged, even more that their due share in the deliberations (Crawfurd 1971: 74; Raffles 1965 II: appendix IX F, clxxxv). In the nineteenth century there were still several queens ruling in Bugis states, long after they had disappeared from other parts of the Muslim world. In describing the small Bugis state of Wajo, James Brooke (1803-1868), the 'White Rajah' of Sarawak, noted that all state offices, 'including even that of *aru matoah* (lawmakers) are open to women'. At that time, he said, four of the six great chiefs of Wajo were female and 'these ladies appear in public like the men; ride, rule and visit even foreigners, without the knowledge or consent of their husbands (Brooke 1848: 75). Ida Pfeiffer (1856: 267-77) was herself entertained by several Bugis queens.

The necessity for high-ranking women to marry a man of appropriate status meant that an unwed princess was by no means uncommon in Sulawesi. Nonetheless, the Bugis woman as partner to her husband, especially in a royal marriage, is well exemplified in the life of Daeng Telele, principal wife of the great Bugis leader Arung Palakka (1635?-1696). Dutch East India Company (VOC) sources record the numerous occasions when she mediated between her husband and Company officials, and her contribution to the successful Bugis-VOC alliance that assured the supremacy of Bone in south Sulawesi well into the eighteenth century. In particular, she acted as a mediator who helped to explain to the Dutch why on some occasions her husband may have felt embarrassment or annoyance, in effect alerting them to the consequences of male *siri* (sense of honor and shame) of which historians and anthropologists have written so much (L. Andaya 1981: 15-17; Pelras 1996: 206-7). Alternatively chiding, persuading, castigating and applauding, Daeng Telele appears as the epitome of

the strong, confident Bugis woman, an appropriate helpmate for her husband while deserving of respect in her own right. The details of Arung Palakka's will testify to his recognition of the loyalty and support she had rendered for so many years (L. Andaya 1981: 160-1, 203, 300).

Presumably, entrenched ideas about appropriate relationships between men and women would have been embedded in the cultural baggage that Bugis migrants brought to the Malay world in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, the kind of sources available to us means that it is difficult to see how the Bugis who left Sulawesi following the dislocations of this period would have reconstructed gender in their new environments, especially in their marriages with non-Bugis women. Sometimes the adjustments were apparently easy. In the early eighteenth century, for instance, one of the 'five brothers', Upu Daeng Manambun, married Puteri Kesumba, daughter of the ruler of Matan and Sukadana in west Borneo. He was able to attract a following among Dayak groups because his bride's mother, Puteri Emas Indarawati, was the daughter of the local chief of the district of Sanggau. When this chief died, Upu Daeng Manambun, his wife Puteri Kesumba, and her mother Puteri Emas Inderwati ruled Sanggau jointly (Veth 1854-56 I: 241-2). Yet while this type of arrangement would not have been at all problematic in Bugis understandings of female inheritance rights, there are suggestions that unions between migrants and local women, usually negotiated for political reasons, were not without problems. Furthermore, these problems were often related to different perceptions of appropriate behavior for the wife of a well-born man. A Malay account of Kutai, on the east coast of Borneo, provides an intriguing instance of the cultural misunderstandings that at times occurred. The leader of a band of Bugis migrants, entitled the Pua Adu, chose a Kutai wife from a family descended from war captives (*orang nyang*). This particular descent line played a central role in the traditional ritual known as 'erau bertijak tanah', held when a prince of the ruling house touched the ground for the first time. The ceremony required that the infant must first tread on the head of a member of this family, and then in succession on the head of a slain individual, a living buffalo, a dead buffalo, and finally on a piece of iron. Only then could the child set his foot on the earth. The Kutai ruler unsuccessfully tried to persuade the Pua Adu to change his mind because, he said, it could happen that his chosen bride might be required to fulfil this ceremonial role. It came to pass as the ruler had feared; a prince was born, the *erau bertijak tanah* was to be carried out, and the Pua Adu's wife was summoned to fulfil the ritual role that symbolized subservience. However, although the ceremony was duly performed, the Pua Adu felt great shame (*malu*; Bugis *siri*) because 'his wife's head had been used in the *tijak tanah*'. Consequently he and his entire family left Kutai and went to Sulu, where he swore his undying loyalty to the ruler in return for help to avenge his shame (Tromp 1887: 170-4).

Given Bugis cultural norms, it would have been impossible for Pua Adu to free himself from a sense of dishonor following a ritual which served as a public

reminder that he had married a woman descended from captives. Again, the subsequent attack on Kutai which he engineered is completely explicable in the Bugis cultural context. This is not to imply, of course, that the dishonor of high born women was of no consequence in other societies; indeed, Malay history is replete with cases of men who have gone to battle because of some real or imagined slight to their womenfolk. Bugis men, however, seem to have felt such insults especially keenly. In 1769, for instance, the Bugis ruler of Selangor, Sultan Salehuddin (the son of the famed Daeng Cellak, one of the 'five brothers' associated with eighteenth-century Bugis migration) declared war on Kedah because he felt his daughter had been badly treated by the Sultan's son.<sup>1</sup> Eight years later the ruler of Perak, founding himself in a similar position, took no such action. Admittedly he was in a much weaker position militarily, but nonetheless one is struck by his anxiety to avoid any confrontation with his Bugis neighbors in Selangor, even though his niece had been grossly insulted when her husband, Sultan Salehuddin, had secretly married another high-ranking Perak woman (B. W. Andaya 1979: 332-3).

The transmission of Bugis attitudes towards gender is of historical interest because the migration out of Sulawesi in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was by no means a male phenomenon, since women and children often accompanied their menfolk. As I have suggested, it is possible to identify the passage of 'masculine' Bugis values into the diaspora, especially since they were very similar to male attitudes in the receiving cultures. However, it is not nearly so easy to locate examples of the stereotypical 'strong Bugis woman'. This is somewhat surprising, since one might have assumed they would be quite visible in the western archipelago, where Islamic views that women should not assume an overtly public role had been particularly influential. Historians are familiar with the case of Aceh, where female succession over four reigns ended in 1699, reportedly after the arrival of a *fatwa* from Mecca decreeing that rule by women was against the law of Allah (Annals of Acheen 1850: 599). A similar pattern can be tracked in neighboring Malay states, and in the eighteenth century there are no counterparts to the queens who governed Jambi and Patani a hundred years earlier. Sources from several Malay areas indicate that during the eighteenth century pressure for a stricter observance of Islam was noticeable in other activities where women were prominent, such as the propitiation of spirits (Drewes 1976: 267-92). Yet in the Malay world we find no overt female opposition to more fundamentalist tendencies like that found in Bone in 1640, when the ruler's mother Datu Pattiro We Tenrisoloreng led the nobles in a revolt against her son's efforts to 'purify' local Islamic practices (L. Andaya 1981: 142-3).

Against this background, it is intriguing to identify the way in which a lowborn Bugis woman was able to attain a position of real power because of her hold over the ruler of Jambi. At the very time Daeng Telele was attracting VOC attention in Sulawesi, the heir to the Jambi throne, Pangeran Anum, had become infatuated with a former Bugis slave, To Ayo. She wielded such influence over

him that he would not give her up, even though a diplomatic marriage had been arranged with a daughter of the Palembang ruler. Against all the dictates of custom, To Ayo was accorded a public place in court ceremonies, and Pangeran Anum refused to leave her to live with his official wife in Palembang. A divorce was the inevitable result. To Ayo herself emerged unscathed, the more surprising since her husband (installed as Sultan Ingalaga in 1679) had taken two high-born Makassar women as wives, the first being no less than Kraeng Fatimah, the daughter of Sultan Hasanuddin, the former ruler of Goa. Despite clear signs of tension (Kraeng Fatimah at one time referred to her as a 'Bugis whore'), To Ayo was able to reach a working relationship with her co-wives. With her title of Ratu Mas Dipati now raised to Ratu Mas Sultan, this former slave formed part of a female triumvirate that virtually governed Jambi, and controlled most of its commerce. Their flouting of the VOC pepper monopoly was so blatant that one article of the 1683 treaty even attempt to exclude them from participation altogether (B. W. Andaya 1993: 103-4, 129).

One of the difficulties in tracking 'Bugis women' in the diaspora is the nature of the available sources. Histories of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago rely heavily on VOC records, but we must remember that they are essentially guides for effective commerce, and be grateful for the insights they provide on political and social histories. Relationships between men and women usually enter this material tangentially, and only recently have historians begun to approach the documents with gender in mind. The different concerns of indigenous material would seem to offer a promising terrain, but here too there are historiographical problems. Beyond question the most important source for any investigation of the Bugis diaspora in the eighteenth century is the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* (The Precious Gift), apparently conceived by the Bugis scholar Raja Ahmad ibn Raja Haji, but largely written by his learned son Raja Ali Haji (1809-1872). As a grandson of the Bugis hero Raja Haji (regarded in his own lifetime as a living saint) and a proud defender of the Bugis heritage, Raja Ali Haji's avowed goal was to set out 'the narrative of the Malay and Bugis kings and of all their children'. Yet although marriage relationships provide the anchoring subtext in a narrative framed by genealogy, women who can be compared to Dato Pattiro, Daeng Telele or To Ayo are curiously absent. Even the daughters of the 'five brothers' celebrated in the text remain shadowy figures. For instance, we are told little of Daing Khadijah, whose father was Upu Daeng Parani, the eldest of the brothers. We know she was born in Siantan, where there was a sizeable Bugis community, but the name of her mother is not given. Raja Ali Haji evidently knew little of her subsequent life except that she married Raja Alam of Siak, and that her grandson eventually became ruler of Siak (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 28, 46, 87, 166, 342, 346, 353). In fact, one of the most formidable women in the early pages of the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* is the Malay princess Tengku Tengah, daughter of Sultan Abdul Jalil of Johor (1699-1721). Initially betrothed to the Minangkabau prince Raja Kecil, she had been rejected in favor of her younger sister, Tengku Kamariah.

The insult was much resented but, as Raja Ali Haji points out, Sultan Sulaiman could do nothing because Raja Kecil had defeated him in battle. Raja Ali Haji then describes how Tengku Tengah and her brother, Raja Sulaiman, decide to approach Upu Daeng Parani with a marriage proposal. In referencing his major source, the so-called *Siak Chronicle*, Raja Ali Haji notes that the initiative came from Tengku Tengah herself, and that her goal was not merely to avenge the defeat of Johor, but also to assuage her own humiliation (*tolong lepaskan malu aku*) (Tengku Said 1992: 128).

Then (i.e. she and her brother Sultan Sulaiman) invited the Upus to dine, and afterwards Tengku Tengah stood at the entrance to the guest's gallery, opened the screen and threw down her ear stud, saying, 'O Bugis princes, if you are truly brave, avenge my shame and that of our family (*tutuplah kemaluan hamba ini anak-beranak saudara-bersaudara ... beta semua*) When that is done, I shall willingly be your slave, and even if you ordered me to cook your rice, I would do it'. When Upu Daeng Parani heard her words, he replied, 'Allah willing, I will do my utmost to help, and I will avenge your shame and that of every single member of your family (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 49-50; Matheson Hooker 1989: 191).

At first glance it might appear as though Tengku Tengah, a Malay princess, is acting completely in accordance with Bugis expectations and the expected response to feelings of shame (*siri*). She had been humiliated, and demanded revenge; indeed, the text goes on to remark that she was married to Upu Daeng Parani 'and they loved each other, as is customary between husband and wife.' But Tengku Tengah is impatient to exact revenge, and after Upu Dang Parani leaves for Siantan, she takes independent action. One day, when Raja Kecil is performing the obligatory prayers, she enters his palace and abducts Tengku Kamariah. Tengku Tengah's refusal to return her sister results in a fresh outbreak of hostilities between Johor and the Minangkabau, and ultimately Raja Kecil even sends an emissary to kill Sultan Abdul Jalil. In her last appearance in the *Tuhfat*, Tengku Tengah is depicted as a vengeful Fury, seizing a sword in her hand and 'hacking' (*tetaknya*) at the remaining Minangkabau, who leap into the sea for fear of Raja Kecil's anger. Yet despite his general antipathy towards the Minangkabau, Raja Ali Haji obviously believed that Tengku Tengah acted quite improperly and had completely failed to anticipate the political effects of her actions. Beneath his judgmental comments is the implication that problems are only to be expected when females are given too much authority: 'The reader knows what women will do; when they are angry or full of hatred they act in an improper manner, heedless of the consequences.'<sup>2</sup>

#### ISLAMIC REFORMISM IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY RIAU

On the simplest level, Raja Ali Haji's disapproving remarks about Tengku Tengah, and the relative absence of 'strong' Bugis women in the *Tuhfat* account of the eighteenth century can be read in terms of the environment in which he wrote. A

fundamental influence on Raja Ali Haji's own perception of the world was global Islam's increasing stress on greater adherence to the fundamentals of the faith together with a growing antipathy to the accretions that often characterized Islamic praxis. Calls for a purification of the faith were nothing new in Malay Islam, but in the second half of the eighteenth century reformism was given a fresh impetus by events in Arabia, where Wahabism had generated a powerful new force. Strongly critical of the moral decay and corruption of Islamic ideals he saw all around him, the teachings of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab (1703-87) provided the religious inspiration behind an Islamic movement that sought to take over direction of the Arab state. In so doing, his followers believed, they would be able to rejuvenate Islamic society through a return to the pristine faith based on the guidance of unquestioned religious authorities. They particularly inveighed against 'unlawful commerce with women', the 'infamous lust' and the debauchery of which unreformed Muslims were accused (Burckhardt 1831: 111). The Wahabi took Mecca in 1803, and immediately set about putting their policies into practice, most dramatically in relation to the mausoleums erected over the graves of revered Muslims and the 'idolatrous' offering of prayers at such sites (Burckhardt 1831: 200). 'At Mekka', reported a British traveler who was actually in Arabia at the time, 'not a single cupola was suffered to remain over the tomb of any renowned Arab; those even covering the birth place of Mohammed, and of his grandsons, Hassan and Hoseyn, and of his uncle Abou Táleb, and his wife Khadydje, were all broken down (Burckhardt 1831: 109). Any neglect of religious duties was severely punished; at prayer times, it was said, guards armed with large sticks patrolled the streets to force people into the mosque. Those who omitted to observe the daily prayers were punished, and the wearing of silk and gold ornaments was strictly prohibited (Burckhardt 1831: 144).

The repercussions of these developments were soon felt in the Malay world. Historical attention has focussed on Minangkabau, but the Padri preoccupation with reform was by no means unique (Dobbin 1983). Riau, which had become a center of Bugis influence,<sup>3</sup> had long been known as a magnet to Islamic scholars, but in the late eighteenth century links with the Middle East were tightening. To a considerable extent, this can be traced to more frequent travel between the archipelago and the Islamic heartlands. For instance, news of the Wahabi capture of Mecca and Medina would have spread quickly by word of mouth, but Bugis and Makassar diaries recording eyewitness accounts were also being translated into Malay (Ricklefs & Voorhoeve 1977: 109). The expanding presence of Arab teachers and the influence of local scholars who had been educated in the great Islamic centers of the Middle East was also a contributing factor. We know that Raja Ali Haji and his father Raja Ahmad Haji made the pilgrimage in 1828 (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 248-51), and in the cosmopolitan environment of Jeddah and Mecca they would have been brought into contact with other Muslims who were virulently anti-European. Many of the Wahabi had



rallied to the call of *jihad* when the French invaded Egypt in 1798, and the large Indian community helped to fuel resentment against the advance of 'the Kafir in India' (Burkhardt 1968: 207-9).

In the late eighteenth century the expanding European presence in the Malay world also infused the periodic exhortations for Muslim unity with a new urgency. Raja Haji, Raja Ali Haji's grandfather, was linked by marriage to the royal house of Jambi, and given his anti-Dutch stance it is quite possible that he had been influential in encouraging an assault on the VOC post some years earlier (B. W. Andaya 1993: 174-6). In the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* his attack on the Dutch in 1784 is depicted as a holy war, and he himself as a martyr, who dies in battle symbolically holding both a dagger and a book of prayers (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 174-5). At the time of this campaign, Raja Haji was closely associated with a certain Arab 'priest', the Tuan Besar, who made a special trip to Palembang to inform the ruler that the VOC *Melaka's Welvaren* had exploded with hundreds of men aboard. This catastrophe forced the Dutch to abandon their counter attack on Riau in January 1784, and to many Malays and Bugis would have seemed like a direct message from Heaven (B. W. Andaya & Ishii 1992: 558-9; Vos 1993: 150-1).

The events of the following years, however, virtually ensured that Riau would never regain its former glory. The successful Dutch return in 1787, the relegation to the status of vassal (*leenrijk*), the imposition of tariffs, and the founding of Singapore in 1819 all meant that this once flourishing port was condemned to become a commercial backwater. More particularly, there were continuing tensions regarding the sharing of power between Malays and Bugis, and further quarrels between locally-born Bugis and new arrivals that at times escalated into physical conflict. In this climate, a more self-conscious Islamic piety seemed to offer a special solace, drawing inspiration from events in the Muslim heartlands. According to the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, Sultan Abd al-Rahman (1812-31) dressed in 'the Arab manner', and enjoyed the company of 'Lord Sayids and Lord Sheikhs', even himself acting as muezzin to call people to prayers. The son of Raja Haji, Yamtuan Muda Raja Jaafar (1805-31) was if anything more concerned with Islamic scholarship, sponsoring visiting scholars, and encouraging greater understanding of Muslim law (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 220-1). His son Raja Ali (d. 1857), who succeeded as Yamtuan Muda in 1845, was also a patron to learned Muslims, and himself presided over religious discussions and the reading of religious books. Raja Ali was particularly concerned with social reform in accordance with stricter interpretations of Islamic law. He ordered women to be veiled, for instance, and forbade activities that 'led to loose behavior between men and women, and those who sang and crooned *pantun* with veiled invitations to adultery. On occasion he sent people to confiscate the lutes played by those who were serenading near the homes of decent folk'. Observation of the obligatory prayers was enforced, and like the Wahabi in Mecca Raja Ali even instituted a dawn watch to ensure that people rose for the morning prayer (Burckhardt 1831: 146-7). It also seems that the *tarikah* or Islamic

brotherhoods operating under royal sponsorship were unwilling to tolerate what were seen as deviation from acceptable Islamic practices. In Mecca, it had been said, Wahabi could be easily identified because they banned the silk garments so popular among elite Arabs, and on Riau too silk clothing and gold ornaments were forbidden together with unacceptable customs like cockfighting and gambling (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 282-5).

The same trend continued under Raja Ali's brother, Raja Haji Abdullah, who had gone to Mecca for a year's study in 1841 (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 297-8). He died in 1858 after only twelve months as Yamtuan Muda, but his influence was far-reaching, since for many years he had been Marshid or director of the popular Naksyahbandiyyah *tarikat* which is said to have been more 'sharia minded' than other brotherhoods. According to another source, the next Yamtuan Muda, Raja Muhammad Yusuf ibn Raja Ali (1858-99), had also spent time in Mecca, where he had sought initiation into the Naksyahbandiyyah order (Gordon 1999: 4, fn. 10; Bruinessen 1990: 161-2, 173).<sup>4</sup> In a significant conjunction of dates, the installation of Raja Haji Abdullah in 1857 and Raja Muhammad Yusuf in 1858 coincided with moves to depose the 'Malay' Sultan Mahmud (who was also of partial Bugis descent), primarily because his lifestyle was so oppose to that favored by the 'Bugis' cohort associated with the Yamtuan Muda's office. Among the many charges leveled against the most telling were those related to immoral behavior and sexual misconduct (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 289-94).

As an acknowledged Islamic scholar, the Raja Ali Haji had been a formative influence in the thinking of all these princes, and the *Tuhfat* details their religious policies with obvious approval (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 49-50, 274; B. W. Andaya & Matheson 1979: 108-28). It would be relatively easy to invoke the more 'sharia-minded' atmosphere of nineteenth-century Riau to explain Raja Ali Haji's depiction of two other prominent women with whom he was closely associated. The first of these was his aunt Raja Hamidah (better known as Engku Puteri) whose mother was the daughter of the third Bugis Yamtuan Muda Daeng Kemboja (1745-77) and whose father was the fourth Yamtuan Muda, the famed Raja Haji (1777-84). She was also the sister of the fifth Yamtuan Muda, Raja Ali (1784-1805) and of the writer and scholar Raja Ahmad (Raja Ali Haji's father).

The *Tuhfat's* treatment of Engku Puteri certainly makes it clear that she is a person of substance. Although we learn nothing of her childhood on Riau, we are told that in 1784 after her father's death she and her sister went to Mempawah and Sukadana with her relative Yamtuan Muda Raja Ali to escape the Dutch attack (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 179). Later, following their return to Riau, she married Sultan Mahmud (whose mother was half Bugis) as his fourth wife (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 179). It was during this period that Sultan Mahmud developed the island of Penyengat in the Riau harbor as the seat of government, constructing a mosque, a palace, a *balai*, and fortifications. Presumably as a means of resolving the fractious disputes between Bugis and Malay, a formal ceremony was held on 13 February 1804, giving Penyengat to Raja Hamidah and her descendants in per-

petuity. The 'Malay' side was to be given the island of Lingga, together with the revenues associated with it (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 212; Virginia Matheson 1989: 153-72). Following the death of Yamtuan Muda Ali, Raja Hamidah's brother Raja Jaafar, then in Kelang, arrived to take up the position of Yamtuan Muda and make his residence on Penyengat. Another brother, Raja Ahmad, the scholar and writer, also returned (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 215, 383). It is said that both princes built residences near Engku Puteri (Matheson Hooker 1989: 156).<sup>5</sup> Within the *Tuhfat*, Engku Puteri's influence in the Bugis community is made evident as she fulfills the traditional 'female' role of intervening to reconcile two warring sides in a conflict between locally born and migrant Bugis (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 222). The only discordant chord occurs in the episode recounting the installation of her stepson Raja Husain as Sultan of Singapore in 1819, when it is implied that Engku Puteri's male relatives, including her brother Raja Ahmad, forcibly prevented her from leaving Riau (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 230-1). This passing mention of family disharmony, however, is more than balanced by the *Tuhfat*'s repeated references to the close and supportive relationship between Engku Puteri and her kinsmen. For example, she takes responsibility for the care of Raja Ahmad when he returns home ill after a visit to Batavia; she personally farewells him and Raja Ali Haji when they leave for the pilgrimage and is among those who welcome them on their return (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 247, 259-60); she makes the journey to Lingga to be with her brother Yamtuan Muda Raja Jaafar who has fallen ill. Engku Puteri's counsel is clearly valued in government, for she is included in high level conferences with the Resident of Riau about matters such as the installation of a new Yamtuan Muda (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 260). Appropriately, her death occurs about a month after that of Raja Jaafar, and is recorded in the *Tuhfat* as 28 Rajab 1260 (5 August 1844). "Her brother Engku Haji Ahmad and his family buried her in her Fort and a vault was made".<sup>6</sup>

Engku Puteri is thus represented as the quintessential matriarch, wise, supportive, and beloved by her family. In many respects, this judgment was endorsed by the Europeans who made her acquaintance. Nonetheless, while confirming her influential position, the perspective of European sources is rather different from that of the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*. Some of the more interesting comments come from Peter J. Begbie, an Indian Army Officer who, as a result of his participation in the inglorious episode known as 'the Naning War' (1830-31), had made the acquaintance of Engku Puteri when she was living in Melaka. She was, he said, 'a fine, intelligent old lady', and his version of the 1819 episode presents her as a spirited individual who vigorously opposed the elevation of her stepson, Abdul Rahman, to the position of Sultan. Indeed, from Begbie's 1834 account we can infer that this was very much a battle between the royal women. When Sultan Mahmud died in 1810, he says, there were two possible candidates for succession: an older son, Tengku Husain, and his younger brother Tengku Abd al-Rahman. Neither was of fully royal birth: the mother of Tengku Husain was Encik Mariam (daughter of a female Balinese slave and a Bugis commoner),

while Tengku Abd al-Rahman's mother, Encik Halimah, was also lowborn. Engku Puteri, whose royal status was unquestioned, had only one child who had died an hour after birth. In this situation, Encik Mariam and Tunku Buntit (half-sister of Engku Puteri and Yamtuan Muda Raja Jaafar, her mother being an Inderagiri princess), supported the candidacy of a reluctant Raja Abd al-Rahman. However, Tengku Husain had been preferred by Sultan Mahmud and was therefore favored by Engku Puteri (Begbie 1967: 72-3, 77; Raja Ali Haji 1982: 32). According to Begbie, she was vocal in her opposition. 'Who,' she is reported to have said, 'elected Abdul Rahman as sovereign of Johor? Was it my brother Raja Jaafar, or by what law of succession has it happened? It is owing to this act of injustice that the ancient empire of Johor is fast falling to decay' (Begbie 1967: 72-3, 77). Begbie claims that Raja Ahmad and another prince who worked closely with the Dutch, used an unloaded pistol to persuade her and her Bugis entourage to return to Riau when she attempted to leave with the Johor regalia. This was finally taken from her by force by Dutch representatives on 13 October 1822, making possible the installation of Sultan Abd al-Rahman as ruler of Riau-Lingga the following year (Begbie 1967: 80-1; Hill: 1970 137; Ranzow 1827: 9).

Engku Puteri may have been outmaneuvered in the succession dispute, but her influence in other aspects of Riau life was pervasive. For example, one *syair* recounting the wedding of the son of Riau's Chinese captain indicates that she played an important role in the proceedings, and that part of the marriage ceremony was held her palace 'according to Malay *adat*' (Abu Hassan 1985: 58). She held several islands and their revenues in apanage, and with the income they yielded she became an important patron of literary and religious activities (Begbie 1967: 275). Even outsiders were struck by her involvement in these areas. Writing in 1843, a Dutch observer described her as 'a very cultured Bugis lady' (Putten & Al-Azhar 1995: 158). Like her male relatives, she also sponsored Islamic teachers, such as a Minangkabau imam born on Siantan, Abd al-Wahab (d. 1824) who became the most important religious official on Penyengat and the adviser of Yang Dipertuan Raja Jaafar. He translated a popular Persian tale, the *History of King Zadeh Bukhtin*, into Malay with the title of *Hikayat Golam* (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 221, 384; Begbie 1967: 285; Putten & Al-Azhar 1995: 62, 62, 160, 161, 164; Putten 2001: 216). Today Engku Puteri's grave (together with those of her father Raja Haji, her religious advisor Habib Sheikh Syakaf, her brother Raja Jaafar and her nephew Raja Ali Haji) is still considered *keramat*, or supernaturally charged (Matheson Hooker 1989: 158-9). Her formidable presence has extended even into modern times, for new arrivals on Penyengat are said to request her permission to take up residence, and she is purported to be willing to assist people in times of need (Matheson Hooker 1989: 159).

It would thus be quite possible to argue that Raja Ali Haji's personal distaste for women moving into the 'public' realm helps explain the rather passive depiction of Engku Puteri in the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, especially when juxtaposed with his comments on the conduct of Tengku Tengah a century earlier. One

could continue along this line of argument to contend that our reliance on such sources may disguise the extent to which Bugis attitudes towards women of high status were still operative in the diaspora. This argument could be further supported if we were to consider another shadowy female presence in the *Tuhfat*, that of Tengku Embong Fatimah.<sup>7</sup>

The glimpse of her childhood provided in a *syair* written by Encik Kamariah, who had been nurse to Sultan Mahmud, presents Tengku Fatimah in a formula-like manner which nonetheless hints at real capabilities. Taught by her mother, she can soon recite the Qur'an from beginning to end (*khatamlah putri asalnya suhada*). Beautiful and well-educated, she thus becomes a fitting daughter to Sultan Mahmud and his Singapore consort, who are concerned that there are no male heirs of fully royal blood. They begin to consider the possibility that Tengku Fatimah might succeed.<sup>8</sup> We can only speculate about the context for this discussion, but one wonders if their Singapore connections made them especially sympathetic to the idea of a female ruler. We should not forget that in Britain Victoria had come to the throne in 1837, and that under her the British Empire was steadily expanding in power. Represented as a fairytale young queen at her coronation, she had settled into the role of fertile matron-monarch, offering a domestic image to match Britain's booming productivity of the 1850s. It was not long before Singapore leaders began to plan buildings that would honor her name; the construction of Empress Place, for instance, began in 1864, and the Chinese community donated a commemorative statue of the queen in 1887.

Tengku Fatimah was subsequently married to Raja Muhammad Yusuf, son of the eighth Yamtuan Muda Raja Ali, and the wedding celebrations become a focal point of Encik Kamariah's *syair*. However, it was always an uneasy union, and Tengku Fatimah seems to have been the dominant personality. During the crisis following the deposition of her father Sultan Mahmud in 1857, there was some feeling that she should provide the conduit through which the throne would be inherited. Proponents of this view believed that Tengku Fatimah's husband, Raja Muhammad Yusuf, should succeed as ruler rather than the other candidate, Raja Sulaiman (an uncle of Sultan Mahmud), the son of Sultan Abd al-Rahman (d. 1812) and a commoner Javanese woman. The opposing faction contended that the succession of a prince of the 'Bugis dynasty' to the sultanate would be completely against established custom (*adat istiadat*).<sup>9</sup> Their arguments prevailed, and in consultation with Yamtuan Muda Raja Abdullah and his supporters (including, of course Raja Ali Haji), the Dutch Resident agreed that Raja Sulaiman should succeed (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 294).

The *Tuhfat* provides only a hint of Tengku Fatimah's ambitions in relation to another succession, that of Yang Dipertuan Muda. Her father-in-law, Yamtuan Muda Raja Ali, also died in 1857, and normally his son Raja Muhammad Yusuf would have succeeded. This was obviously the solution Tengku Fatimah preferred, since it would have given her considerable power and the year before, when her father had still been ruler, it had apparently been decided that Raja

Muhammad Yusuf would indeed become the next Yamtuan Muda.<sup>10</sup> The only obstacle was that the candidate himself was unwilling to take on the office as long as his uncle Raja Abdullah (brother of the deceased Yamtuan Muda) was still alive. Indeed, the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* reports that Raja Muhammad Yusuf was quite willing to incur Sultan Mahmud's anger, and even risk a divorce from his wife.<sup>11</sup> With Sultan Mahmud falling rapidly out of favor, the battle was soon lost and Raja Abdullah was duly installed (Raja Ali Haji 1982: 290). It was not long before his views on the implementation of Islamic law became evident, most notably in regard to sexual morality. According to a Dutch report of January 1858, a woman whose husband was absent had taken a young man into her house and was discovered. Without further ado, she was declared guilty of adultery and strangled in accordance with Malay custom. In response to Dutch objections, Yamtuan Muda Abdullah argued that religious law lay outside colonial jurisdiction.<sup>12</sup>

Following Raja Abdullah's death in late 1858 Raja Muhammad Yusuf did succeed as Yamtuan Muda, but his relationship with Tengku Fatimah showed no signs of improving. It is worth noting here that despite her high status she was not her husband's only wife. He had earlier married an Inderagiri princess, and subsequently took a commoner woman as a wife.<sup>13</sup> This estrangement was even causing concern among Tengku Fatimah's relatives in Singapore, and in 1868 the leader of a Johor delegation visiting Riau reminded her that she should be loyal to her husband, who was, after all a kinsman and did not wish her harm. She replied somewhat curtly that he was making Riau into 'a foreign country' (*dia hendak membuat negeri asing*), even though he was Yamtuan Muda (Fawzi 1983: 26). What could she have meant? Could it be that Tengku Fatimah found the restraints on her activities galling, given her strong connections to Singapore? Did she find the kind of environment fostered by a more fundamentalist Islam inhibiting? Did she look across the Straits and remember how much her father had enjoyed his visits there, and contrast the Singapore environment with that of Riau? Indeed, the evidence suggests that her memories of him were still strong. Sultan Mahmud had died only four years earlier, and during the Johor visit she ordered a headstone for his grave; subsequently she made a pilgrimage to his grave in Terengganu (Fawzi 1983: 26-28). Tengku Fatimah may also have been concerned about the influence of her father's critics – Raja Ali Haji and other religious scholars – over her son, Abdul Rahman, then about thirteen years old. This influence was no small matter; Abdul Rahman was in a direct line of succession to the throne because Sultan Sulaiman had no son. It was known, however, that both Sultan Sulaiman and her husband preferred Tengku Daud, son of Yamtuan Muda Abdul Rahman, a goal which was thwarted when he died in 1882.<sup>14</sup> In light of the years of marital discord, it is not surprising that the couple was not buried close together; Tengku Fatimah's grave is on Penyengat, while that of her husband is on the island of Lingga (Matheson Hooker 1989: 161).

Available Malay sources, heavily weighted in favor of Sultan Muhammad Yusuf, do not prepare us for the court decision following the death of Sultan Suleiman on 17 September, 1883. On this occasion, a majority of Bugis-Malay elite voted to install Tengku Fatimah as his successor. It is not possible to determine precisely what motivated this decision, although a woman as head of government would have been quite acceptable in the wider Bugis context, and Fatimah's right to the sultanate had been a topic of discussion for well over two decades. Contemporary events had also shown that women could be bold and forceful leaders. For instance, given its connections with Sulawesi, the Riau court would have heard how the queen of Bone, Besse Kajuara, had defied the Dutch and had refused to sign a declaration of allegiance following her succession in 1857 (Sutherland 1983: 186-93). In the Malay world, however, queens had not ruled for about two hundred years, and although I have not been able to find any report of the ensuing debates for and against Fatimah's installation, one can probably assume they were heated. Nearly a month later, on 13 October another gathering was convened, and on this occasion Raja Abdul Rahman, now 31, was named as the new Sultan.<sup>15</sup> Thus, while Tengku Fatimah is accorded little attention in the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* and is only lightly sketched in Dutch accounts, we must infer that her influence was considerable. Indeed, a Malay text dated to 1930 remembers her as the leading figure in the government in this transitional period, even claiming that with the agreement of the colonial authorities she served as regent for two years. Today, her grave on the island of Penyengat is still venerated as a place for prayers and meditation (Matheson 1986: 11, 15, 24; 1989: 155).

#### PEELING OFF ANOTHER LAYER

As I indicated, it would be relatively easy, using the material provided above, to argue that the independence said to distinguish women of Southwest Sulawesi survived in the diaspora's Bugis-Malay environment, although muted in the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, which was informed by Raja Ali Haji's belief that Islamic prescriptions regarding gender were a necessary component in a morally rigorous society. In fact, this was initially the line of approach I had planned to take in this article. As my research continued, however, I came to believe that such an interpretation, while certainly possible, would entail a misreading of the climate of Riau-Penyengat in the nineteenth century, and an underestimation of Raja Ali Haji's own views of female potentialities.

In the first place, we must be careful about equating the vision of 'sharia-minded' Islam with actual practice. Earlier, I stressed the influence of Wahabi thinking in Riau, and one can certainly track similarities that indicate developments in the Middle East were an inspiration to local leaders. Yet an examination of Wahabism as it was lived in the early nineteenth century suggests that funda-

mentalist doctrine was not necessarily unsympathetic to the female position, and it is worth noting that Wahabi leaders attempted to restrain the frequency with which Arabian men divorced their wives (Burckhardt 1831: 146-71). The same men who insisted that 'good' females should restrict their public movements were also ready to acknowledge the contribution a capable and intelligent woman could make to their cause. For instance, one large group of Arabs was led by a wealthy widow named Ghálye, whose husband had been one of the chief men in Taraba, a town some distance south of Mecca. By 1810, she had acquired a reputation as a munificent patron, distributing money and food to 'all the poor of her tribe' who consequently became loyal Wahabi followers in the battles against the Turks. Ghálye's hospitality to any faithful Wahabi was so generous that her home became a meeting place for joint deliberations, in which she also participated. Respected for her sound judgments, political acumen, and knowledge of tribal concerns, she was able to exert considerable influence in these male-dominated councils. According to Burckhardt (1831: 269), 'she was commonly regarded as the chief of the united Wahabis, attributed with supernatural powers which rendered her Wahabi followers invincible'.

In the second place, although Riau leaders were very aware of events in the Middle East, their society was by no means a carbon copy of that in Mecca, and local dynamics should be taken into account in any assessment of how outside influences were transmitted. Initially, for instance, most Malays were probably shocked by stories of Wahabi destruction of holy tombs, and their intolerance of veneration at saintly graves.<sup>16</sup> Though oral tradition recalls that in Riau a Yamtuan Muda forbade prayers at such sites, these prohibitions appear to have had little effect. It is said that Raja Jaafar's tomb was decorated with pillars, domes and a pool for ablutions, which suggests prayers were offered there, and a copula or *kubbah* was constructed over the grave of Engku Puteri (Matheson Hooker 1989: 159, 171 fn 27). *Ziarah* or pilgrimages to holy places also continued to be an important element in Riau's religious and cultural life. The word *ziarah* occurs five times in Raja Ahmad's *Kisah Engku Puteri*, and a *syair* of the period specifically mentions a pilgrimage by Sultan Mahmud and his family to the graves of his maternal relatives in Terengganu in fulfillment of a vow.<sup>17</sup> A similar and largely unsuccessful attack on established customs concerned the use of the rosary (Ar: *subhah*; Malay *tasbih*), which the Wahabis condemned as an innovation, even though it had been in use for a considerable period. As in most of the Islamic world, however, in Riau this criticism fell on unheeding ears, since the *tasbih* was often worn by some Sufi orders as a sign of their religious commitment (Burckhardt 1831: 115; Raja Ali Haji 1982: 288, 300; Matheson Hooker 1989: 620, 640).

As we have seen, despite the disapproving attitudes towards women who intervened in politics, there were females on Riau who exercised considerable influence in government. Although Raja Ali Haji was not inclined to condone the kind of behavior that transgressed permissible bounds for women, he re-



mained intensely concerned about their role in society, since he was convinced that contemporary values had been brought low by a prevailing ignorance, for which study and learning were the only remedies. If the moral tone of the community was to be raised, and the high standards of the past maintained, women as well as men should be educated. Raja Ali Haji's attitudes towards women may well have been influenced by his intellectual mentor, the great Sufi mystic al-Ghazali (d. 1111). Malays had long held al-Ghazali's name in reverence, but there was a revival of interest in his work from the late eighteenth century, probably attributable to the fact that his magnum opus *Ihya Ulum al-Din* (The Revitalization of the Domestic Sciences) had been rendered into Malay. It is therefore worth mentioning the comments al-Ghazali offered about a man's relationship to his daughters. While a son was to be preferred, one should not be dejected when a daughter is born because she may bring unexpected blessings. 'Many a man who has a son wishes he did not have him, or wishes that he were a girl'. Although the *hadith* transmission was weak, al-Ghazali still saw it fit to include the saying that 'if a man brings up his daughter well, nourishes her well, and shares with her the gifts which God has bestowed upon him, she will bring him fortune and will facilitate his passage from Hell to Heaven' (Farah 1984: 97, 100, 103, 109, 113).

As far as we know, Raja Ali never wrote a tract that specifically discussed education for women, but he is on record as affirming that the pen was 'mightier than ten thousands swords' (Andaya & Matheson 1979: 127). His own belief that a woman should ideally be able to read and understand written documents is implicit in his discussion of human characteristics, and his instructions concerning religious prohibitions. In his lengthy definition of menstruation (*haid*), for instance, he reminds his readers that certain acts are proscribed during this period, including performing the obligatory prayers, fasting, reading or touching the Qur'an and entering the mosque. If further information on this matter is desired, he says, it can be found in the books of Islamic law (*fikh*) and commentaries (*tafsir*). His reason for giving so much space to this topic is simply to enlarge the understanding of uneducated people (*orang yang bodoh*) (Hamzah 1996: 201-2).

One literary genre to which women were often exposed, and of which Raja Ali Haji clearly approved, was improving stories composed in the popular *syair* form and intended to be 'sung' before an audience (Hamzah 1996: 211-20; Putten 2001: 223-6). In his dictionary, *Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa* (of which only six letters were completed) Raja Ali Haji often employed the *syair* to reinforce a specific point, as in his long section to a definition of the word *bodoh*, or ignorance (Putten 2002: 421; Matheson 1983: 19-33). In his view, ignorance could be rectified by a willingness to learn and an application to study, and this was relevant to all human beings, regardless of sex (Hamzah 1996: 208-13; Putten 2002: 415-30).

Heed the advice of this humble poet  
 To all his brothers and sisters  
 Ignorance is like a sin  
 Truly your life is useless.

In his use of rhyme, Raja Ali Haji could again turn for justification to al-Ghazali, who had traced a reputable line of transmission to aver that the Prophet himself had said, ‘Verily, from poetry is wisdom.’ *Syair* had long been popular form of entertainment as well as religious instruction in Malay court circles, but its moralistic dimension seems to have been strengthened in nineteenth-century Riau, where it was common for *syair* to be sung to Arabic-influenced melodies. A *syair* describing the preparations for the fasting month, for instance, mentions Arabic tunes in the style of Mecca and Medina, and refers to the court women who, dressed in white ‘like hajis’, offered group prayers and chanted the Qu’ran (*orang tedarus*) (Matheson 1983: 25; Muhammad Yusoff 1980: 52 fn 154; Suwardi & Ridwan 1990: 150-1).

It is thus not surprising to find that Raja Ali Haji frequently turned to the *syair* to explain religious instructions regarding male-female relationships, most notably in his *Syair Kitab al-Nikah* (The Book of Marriage).<sup>18</sup> Less well known is the *Syair Siti Sianah*, which survives in both a manuscript and a printed form, and which scholars now believe should also be ascribed to Raja Ali Haji rather than to his father Raja Ahmad, as in the printed version (Mu’jizah & Maria Indra 1998: 43-5, Abu Hassan 1995: 87; Abu Hassan 1997: 19-51, 363-443). It is bound with another of Raja Ali Haji’s work, *Syair Suluh Pegawai*, the contents of which are obviously directed towards men. *Syair Siti Sianah*, however, is of particular interest because not only because it has been said to reflect the influence of al-Ghazali, but because it is presented as a discussion between several wives of religious scholars who exchange information on Islamic prescriptions ‘so that women will understand/the laws of almighty God.’ (Abu Hassan 1983: 23; 1987: 253, 266) Although the names of several participants are mentioned, namely like Siti Rubiah Halimah, Encik Jamilah and Siti Afifah, two particularly knowledgeable women are the source of most information. The first is Siti Dianah, who details, for instance, the ablutions required before obligatory prayers and those that necessary at circumcision (*mandi sunat*) and Siti Sianah, who offers advice on matters such as the prohibitions a woman must observe during her menstrual periods. The exchange between the women treats other aspects of Syariah law, including matters such as ritual prayers, fasting, the giving of alms, and the duties of a good wife. Of particular interest is the fact that the Riau manuscript includes a portrait of a woman accompanied by a short poem for those who ‘have not yet seen/the appearance of Sitti Sianah.’ She and her sister Siti Dianah, it continues, were both the wives of scholars, were well-educated, intelligent and eloquent as well as beautiful.<sup>19</sup>

When a Johor delegation visited Riau in 1868, they commented on the literary environment they encountered, remarking that during a visit to Raja Ali Haji's home 'they read histories and accounts of Malay rajas and discussed how things were in former times' (Fawzi 1983: 26). It may be in the contents and preoccupations of the literary works produced by a new generation of writers, men and women, that we should look for resonances of the 'Bugis heritage' in articulations of male-female relations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For instance, historical interest in gender during this period should be tweaked by the fact that a number of Penyengat poems, though written by men, took women as their central characters. One example is the *Syair Sitti Zawiyah*, composed by the imam of the Penyengat mosque, Bilal Abu (Ronkel 1921: 66). A *syair* attributed to Raja Ahmad (Raja Ali Haji's father), *Kisahny Engku Puteri*, describes his sister's voyage to Lingga in 1831, although this still awaits more detailed analysis.<sup>20</sup> The world of the copyist is a shadowy one, but the new demand for manuscripts, not least by the colonial Dutch, may have provided some educated women with a source of income. The *Syair Sitti Zawiyah*, for instance, was copied by 'a Malay women of Penyengat,' and the *Syair Selindung Delima* was transcribed by another Penyengat woman in April 1861 (Ronkel 1921: 66; Teuku 1999: 730). Women also purchased manuscripts, like Bilal Abu's daughter, Encik Wuk, who is recorded as owning a manuscript acquired by the Dutch scholar H. C. Klinkert (Abu Hassan 1995: 64).

A glance through the catalogues makes it clear that there were more women actively writing on Penyengat than in any other Malay court, and this itself points to a self-assurance that may owe much to the role models provided by individuals such as Engku Puteri and Tengku Fatimah. Sometimes the Bugis antecedents of these writers are very evident, as in the title of a certain Daeng Wok, who was born on Penyengat, of royal origin and died around 1851. She was the author of the *Syair Sultan Yayha*, which adopts the common motif of a woman who leaves home disguised as a man, on this occasion to search for a lost brother (Ronkel 1921: 65; Abu Hassan 1995: 63). It is also evident that Raja Ali Haji's example had considerable influence on his children. His favorite son Raja Hassan is known for his *Syair Burung*, a symbolic explanation of Islamic observances such as the confession of faith, ablutions, and prayers (Abu Hassan 1983: 23; 1987: 254; Putten & Al-Azhar 1995: 273). But Raja Ali Haji's daughters were also known as poets. Sometime before 1859, for instance, Raja Safiah wrote a *Syair Kumbang Mengindera*, still awaiting close examination.<sup>21</sup> Her sister, Raja Kalzum, produced the *Syair Saudagar Bodoh* about a rich but foolish merchant who was ultimately saved from financial disaster by his beautiful and pious wife Siti Zainah, whom he failed to recognize when she disguised herself as a young *khatib*, an Islamic scholar.<sup>22</sup> A *Syair Sultan Mahmud* composed in the mid 1850s, written by the ruler's nurse Encik Kamariah, describes, *inter alia*, Tengku Fatimah's marriage to Raja Muhammad Yusuf, the construction of a royal palace, and the pilgrimage of Sultan Mahmud and his family to Terengganu

(Suwardi & Ridwan 1990: 16, 40, 65).<sup>23</sup> Again, this *syair* reminds us that women were very much part of the Islamic environment on Riau, and when Sultan Mahmud is ill, the author relates how young women as well as men repeat *ratib* from the Samaniyya *tarikat* to assist in his recovery.

One of the more intriguing works from the mid-nineteenth century is the *Syair Abdul Muluk*, first published in 1845 in Singapore, and subsequently appearing in a Dutch journal (Roorda 1899: 285-6). The authorship of this poem is problematic. On the one hand, in his letter to Roorda van Eysinga Raja Ali Haji states quite clearly that he himself put it into poetic form in contemporary Malay (*yang sudah kita sendiri menyanyikan dengan bahasa melayu johor yang terpakai masa ini*). However, the cataloguer L.W.C van den Berg apparently found a note from Hermann von de Wall, who knew Raja Ali Haji well, stating that it was actually the work of Raja Ali Haji's sister, Raja Salihat, although he had revised it for publication (Wieringa 1998: 97-8; Putten & Al Azhar 1995: II fn 2, Dissel 1899: 170). If we regard the conception of the *Syair Abdul Muluk* as Raja Salehat's, then it may take on new meaning, especially since we know that the *syair* was often intended to be interpreted on different levels (Maier & Koster 1986: 204-218). One of the principal characters, for instance, is a princess, Sitti Rafiah, the second wife of Abdul Muluk, ruler of Barbary. When Barbary is attacked by the ruler of Hindustan, Abdul Muluk is defeated. He and his other consort Sitti Rahman, are taken captive and thrown into prison. Dressed as a man, 'lakunya seperti muda bangsawan' and going by the name of Sultan Duri, Sitti Rafiah goes to Hindustan where she leads a rebellion and dethrones the tyrannical king, freeing her husband and his consort, her co-wife (Sitti Syamsiar 1988/89; Winstedt 1970: 189, 192). Can this be interpreted as a statement on the unrealized potential of 'femaleness'? On the other hand, what are we to make of the recurring motif whereby women achieve success only when they disguise themselves as men?

### LOOKING TO MODERNITY

Although the late nineteenth century was a time of literary transition, a number of scholars have been intrigued by the appeal of traditional writing forms such as the *syair* even as newspapers, short stories, novels, written plays were beginning to appear in print. Riau's continuing importance as a center of Muslim scholarship and literary production is well known. In the 1890s an Islamic study club, the *Persekutuan Rusydiah*, was established on Penyengat as a forum for debate on contemporary issues, including the position of Islam in the modern world, and as medium for disseminating relevant publications. The club was also intended to foster writing and publication among its members, and applicants were required to provide an example of their written work before being admitted (Matheson 1989: 162). A founding member was the Melaka-born Syed Sheikh

Ahmad al-Hadi (1867-1934), who had been taken to Pulau Penyengat in 1874 at the age of seven, where he had been brought up with the royal children. His relations with the court were very close, for he was later adopted by Sultan Abdul Rahman's younger half-brother, Raja Ali Kelana. The latter was reluctant to assume the position of Yamtuan Muda in 1899 and the Dutch thought this an appropriate time to abolish the post (B. W. Andaya 1977: 126; Gordon 1999: 70). Sheikh al-Hadi was profoundly influenced by the reformist ideas then propagated in the Middle East, particularly by the Egyptian journal, *al-Manar*. He was also deeply involved with *al-Imam*, a Malay reformist journal established in Singapore in 1904, the editors of which were apparently conscious that women were both readers and subscribers. It will be remembered that Sheikh al-Hadi was the author of one of the first 'feminist' novels in Malay, *Faridah Hanom* (Matheson Hooker 2000: 20-39), and it may have been his influence that, according to one study, 'led *al-Imam* to pay special attention to the problems facing Muslim women in the region' (Abu Bakar 1991: 110).

One of the major concerns for Malay and Indonesian women into the present day has been polygamy. In religious teachings, a woman should accept the position of co-wife with equanimity as long as her husband treats each spouse equally. It may thus be no coincidence that the heroine of *Syair Abdul Muluk* is loyal not only to her husband, the ruler, but also to his other consort. Nonetheless, the editors of *al-Imam* had reservations regarding the advisability of this practice. In 1907, one columnist, Haji Muhammad Tahir bin Haji Ahmad, expressed his doubts about a man taking more than one wife because, he said, it would undermine the family since the wives were likely to quarrel and dispute their share of the husband's wealth (Abu Bakar 1991: 110). He assured his readers that he had personally witnessed these kinds of situations, and had seen the harmful consequences of polygamy. In his opinion, relations between husbands and wives would benefit from greater oversight from the *ulama* in cases of marital breakdown. Further, he advocated the formulation of new laws that would recognize women's rights, protect married women and their children, regulate and control polygamy and foster female self-awareness. Yet in the opinion of *al-Imam*, the education of women should occur within a Muslim rather than a Western framework. Later the same year, another contributor, though expressing guarded support for female schooling, was nonetheless concerned at the Westernization of 'daughters of our nobles' who were sometimes even seen in motor cars. In the view of this writer, the ultimate aim of female education should be to support the family, and girls should not be accorded the same freedoms as boys because this would undermine their essential 'femaleness' and could even lead to a decline in birth rate. Western women, he argued, felt that being housebound was tantamount to a prison sentence, and they therefore avoided motherhood, even taking pills to abort their pregnancies. Some were content to refrain from marrying despite advancing years. Indeed, a lesson could be drawn from France, where the population had begun to rise when the government

reversed 'modern' changes introduced into the curriculum for female students. Fundamentally, the article contended, women should be guided by the teachings of the holy Qur'an. 'And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and to display of their adornment only that which is apparent, and to draw their veils over their bosoms.... And turn under Allah altogether, O believers, in order that ye may succeed' (Abu Bakar 1991: 112-4).

To some extent, women's writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century reflects these influences, but without further research we can only catch glimpses of how local authors understood reformist ideas about marriage and the female position generally. The dearth of information is itself frustrating. All we know of a certain Raja Anisah binti Raja Muhammad Tahir (grandniece of Raja Ali Haji, and granddaughter of Yamtuan Raja Abdullah), for instance, is that she owned a work on *tauhid* (the doctrine of unity) written in both Arabic and Malay and dated 1896 (AH 1314).<sup>24</sup> The name of Raja Fatimah, a daughter of Raji Haji Abdullah (grandson of Raja Ali Haji) has come down to us only because she is listed as the owner of another poem, the *Syair Pahlawan Farhad* (Mu'jizah & Rukmi 1998: 99). It does appear, however, as though the pursuits of a number of women were undertaken in conjunction with their husbands. Raja Haji Ahmad (grandson of Raja Ali Haji, son of Raja Hasan, brother of Raja Khalid Hitam and Raja Haji Abdullah) was noted as a *tabib*, a physician as well as a writer. His wife Haji Maimunah did not compose any works, as far as we know, but like her husband she was skilled in traditional healing, and was also a specialist on Islamic astronomy (*ilmu falak*). The value Raja Haji Ahmad placed on partnership in marriage is evident in the *syair* he composed for his own son's marriage in 1926, celebrating a union which grew out of mutual compatibility, rather than being purely a product of parental negotiation.<sup>25</sup>

While it has been established that several wives of Rushdiyah Club members emulated their menfolk and also became writers, a number of questions remain unanswered. Did they attend the meetings when their husbands debated contemporary issues? Were they intrigued by the fact that queens ruled in both Britain and the Netherlands, which together governed virtually the entire Malay-Indonesian archipelago?<sup>26</sup> How much can we infer about their mental world from the works that have survived? We would be safe in assuming that motherhood remained a prime source of Malay female status, but what is the significance of a picture stuck into a manuscript dated 1902 (AH 1320) that shows a European woman caring for her child and preparing him for sleep? The inclusion of these illustrations of Caucasians is strangely reminiscent of those included in *Faridah Hanum*, which are perhaps photographs of Egyptian film stars (Mu'jizah & Rukmi 1998: 38-9; Matheson Hooker 2000: 21, 399 fn 17) Other texts suggest that traditional 'female' matters, such as pleasing a husband, continued to concern the wives of Rushdiyah Club members. For instance, a Penyengat woman of commoner origins, Khatijah Terong (1885?-1955?) became the fourth wife of Raja Haji Abdullah (grandson of Raja Ali Haji and brother of Raja Haji Ahmad and

Raja Khalid Hitam) who was intimately involved in attempts to obtain Turkish and Japanese help following the Dutch abolition of the Riau sultanate in 1911 (Mu'jizah & Rukmi 1998: 18; Hamidy 1985: 70; Ding 2002: 19-54; Mukherjee 1997: 29-46). Known for her mastery of 'white magic', Khatijah Terung was quite possibly encouraged to record her knowledge by her husband, himself a prolific writer with an interest in the occult, and by the Bugis-descended women who were now her relatives. The resulting manuscript, *Perhimpunan Gunawan bagi Laki-Laki dan Perempuan* (A Compendium of Charms for Men and Women), dated 1329 AH (1911), comprised a list of charms by which women could protect their absent husbands, and other 'special secrets' that would heighten sexual pleasure and ensure marital fidelity (Raja Hamzah 1987: 2-3; B. W. Andaya 1977: 148-50; Ding 1999). Salamah binti Ambar, also from Penyengat and married to Raja Abdul Mutalib, wrote a *Syair Nilam Permata* which contains advice on keeping one's body pure.<sup>27</sup> Linked to the Penyengat group was another woman, Badriah Muhammad Thaher, who translated an Arab book of etiquette for young females that was published by Mathba'at al Ahmadiyah in Singapore in 1925 (Raja Hamzah 1987: 3; Hamidy 1985: 72).

Concerns with virginity, marital fidelity and maternal beneficence were nothing new in Malay writing. However, in terms of gender there were other influences at work, most evident in al-Hadi's *Faridah Hanom*, published in 1925-26 (Matheson Hooker 2000: 20). Set in Cairo in 1894, the heroine of this 'realistic' novel is at once a loyal lover, a devoted patriot, a dutiful daughter, a committed Muslim and an advocate of women's rights. Although al-Hadi had by this time moved to Penang, he would have still been remembered by his relatives on Riau. As we have noted, one of the Riau princes most closely associated with al-Hadi and the anti-colonial initiatives on Riau was Raja Khalid Hitam bin Raja Hassan bin Raja Ali Haji (Gordon 1999: 276). Raja Hitam (himself the author of at least two works). The books are given as the *Kisah Perjalanan Sultan Lingga ke Johor* and *Thamaratul Matlub Fi Anuari Qulub* (Raja Hamzah 1987: 5). He had married his cousin Raja Aisyah, daughter of Raja Sulaiman ibn Raja Ali Haji, who was thus in a direct line of descent from the Bugis migrants of the early eighteenth century. It seems evident that Raja Aisyah had listened closely to the opinions of al-Hadi and his reformist group and it is to her writing that we will now turn.

#### RAJA AISYAH SULAIMAN

Raja Aisyah was born on Penyengat around 1870, where she spent most of her early life. Although little is known of her early experiences, she apparently began writing when she was in her teenage years, completing her first work, *Mulkhatul Badrul Mukmin* or *Hikayat Syamsul Anwar*, in 1890.<sup>28</sup> Her marriage to Raja Khalid Hitam not only made her a sister-in-law of both Khatijah Terung

and the *tabib* Haji Maimunah, but also brought her into the heart of Riau's literary circle. Her visits to Singapore meant she would have been well aware of the seductively secular environment that had aroused the concerns of *al-Imam*; indeed, her husband had written a *syair* about a Penyengat visit there in 1893, in which he described sights quite unknown in Riau, such as the Botanical Gardens, the zoo, a photography studio, Robinson's department store (Abu Hassan 1995: 58-9). It is perhaps not surprising that following the deposition of Sultan Abdul Rahman in 1911, Raja Aisyah and Raja Hitam chose Singapore as their place of self-exile. There, Raja Aisyah is said to have lived a secluded life, wearing full *jubah* and *jilbab* in public. We know that they went together to Japan in 1913, and that Raja Aisyah accompanied Raja Hitam's body back to Riau following his death in Tokyo the following year. Childless, and now a widow, she apparently devoted much of her time to study, and is remembered by friends and acquaintances as an avid reader and writer. She eventually took up residence in Johor Baru, dying around 1925 (Ding 1994: 40-1; 1992: 92, 98; B. W. Andaya 1997: 153-4).

A recent study of Raja Aisyah by Ding Choo Ming has drawn our attention to the theme of female learning that threads through her earliest work, *Hikayat Syamsul Anwar*. In his analysis, Ding (1999: 104) argues that the figure of Badrul Muin (who like so many other heroines, disguises herself as a man, Afandi Hakim) projects Raja Aisyah's own attitudes towards educated women and the belief that they have the capacity to achieve on the same level as men. The text describes the world in which Badrul Muin is raised as heavy with *hikayat*, *pantun*, *syair*, but depicts her as a woman for whom literature was not merely entertainment, but a source of mental stimulation and religious solace, an area where it appeared she and her husband could become true partners (Ding 1999: 98, 102). One episode, for example, describes Syamsul Anwar's pleasure in his wife's intelligence and his delight in her ability to write. 'His happiness increased when he saw his wife's fingers holding a pen, so sweet was her appearance that he was overwhelmed by a passionate love for her' (Ding 1999: 91). Through the text we are repeatedly shown how she and her husband are drawn together through their love of study and reading 'and then she recited several beautiful *hikayat* with Syamsul Anwar, which helped relieve their sadness and freed them from worry'. But her husband's love is not given unconditionally, and Badrul Muin rejects her marriage because of the constraints that even a loving husband can place upon a wife. By inference this expression of her own individuality and her love of learning go hand in hand. At one point Badrul Muin refuses to leave her room except for prayers, and without eating or drinking devotes herself to study. The books she reads include, as one might expect, religious and improving material like a *Kitab al-Adab* and the *Kitab Washul Muluki* (Ding 1999: 98, 104). Indeed, Badrul Muin even becomes a religious teacher in her own right. The study sessions in which she participated 'began at eight o'clock in the morning and continued until nine o'clock; this time was



fixed'. Does this, Ding (1999: 99) asks, reflect the disciplined religious life of Penyengat in which Raja Aisyah grew up?

Of Raja Aisyah's writing during her married life we have no knowledge. Three works attributed to her have been dated to the years following the death of Raja Hitam, including *Syair Seligi Tajam Bertimbal* (published in 1929) and *Hikayat Syariful Akhtar* (the first volume of which was also published in 1929).<sup>29</sup> *Syair Seligi Tajam Bertimbal* was possibly written in collaboration with another woman, the teacher and later UMNO leader Ibu Zain (1903-81), and it has been described as a didactic work providing guidance for family life.<sup>30</sup> However, it is the third piece, a long poem entitled *Syair Khadamuddin*, published posthumously in 1345 AH (1926) by Singapore's Mathba'at al Ahmadiyah press, that has attracted most scholarly attention (Hamidy 1985: 69). This is because *Syair Khadamuddin* with its heroine Sabariah is thought to be semi-autobiographical, representing the first such work known to have been written by a woman. One must be careful not to overstate the point, but there is some justification in seeing Sabariah's grief over the death of her husband at the hands of pirates as a metaphor for Raja Aisyah's own emotions when her husband died in a foreign land (Ding 1999: 93; Raja Hamzah 1987: 13-4). Ding (1999: 93-4) suggests that as a widow Sabariah's effort to resist the advances of well-born men found a parallel in Raja Aisyah's own life, and that her yearning to return to her own country might reflect the author's longing for her childhood home on Penyengat (Raja Hamzah 1987: 8, 71-2). Be that as it may, it is probably fair to see Raja Aisyah as standing at the threshold of a new era in female writing. Like her male cohort, she was willing to put her name to a text, and while drawing on traditional themes and motifs the world of which she wrote extended far beyond the court. It is significant that she found the opportunity to employ contemporary language, using words like 'watan', which had emerged in the 1920s as a new term for homeland (*tanah air*) (Milner 1994: 105; Raja Hamzah 1987: 9). At this stage of research it is impossible to ascertain the extent to which she was personally influenced by the reformist Islam reaching Malay society through individuals like Sheikh al-Hadi and publications such as *al-Imam*. It does not appear, however, that she saw any conflict between the assertion of individual aspirations and Muslim piety. Above all, she held firmly to the view that writing should guide and edify its readers, for it was not good 'to narrate things that have no benefit' (Ding 1999: 114). From a feminist perspective, one can perhaps see some significance in the fact that Raja Aisyah, by this time middle aged, saw no need to disguise Sabariah as a man. In this context, Raja Aisyah's declamation 'Kami ini seorang merdeka' is surely a statement that came from her own (female) heart (Ding 1999: 106-28; Raja Hamzah 1987: 58).

## CONCLUSION

This article has covered considerable ground. The initial inquiry rose from questions concerning the survival of 'Bugis' values in the diaspora, and the ways these may have been reflected in the position of women. In the early nineteenth century Engku Puteri could still be identified as a 'Bugis lady', but a hundred years later there is no indication that Raja Aisyah, Raja Ali Haji's granddaughter, felt herself to be anything other than Malay. The questions generated by her writing do not relate to matters of ethnicity, but to the position of women in a changing world, and the extent to which they could be the intellectual equal of men. Nonetheless, the lines of transmission are not faint ones. The literary environment on Penyengat owed much to scholars such as Raja Ahmad and his son Raja Ali Haji, but the patronage of Engku Puteri was also a major element in its success. On Penyengat, women were not merely the audiences for literary performance, but also creative writers, and the example of certain powerful women like Tengku Fatimah could provide persuasive role models. Nor should we assume that the concerns of these women were necessarily the same as those of men. Issues of nationalism were at the forefront of male thinking in the early twentieth century, but across Asia educated females were asking whether the promise of greater political rights for men would be translated into a closer partnership with women (B. W. Andaya 2001: 1-30). It is indeed a long way from *Syair Abdul Muluk* to *Syair Kadamuddin*, and Raja Salihat and her grandniece Raja Aisyah were very different women. I would nonetheless like to end this article by suggesting that behind them both it might still be possible to detect the shadowy presence of their distant Bugis antecedents, individuals like the queen Daeng Telele and the former slave To Ayo.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Barbara Watson Andaya, *Perak. The Abode of Grace: A Study of an Eighteenth-Century Malay State* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 293-94. In 1766 Sultan Salehuddin had been installed as ruler in a Malay-style ceremony, thus publicly announcing his independence from Riau, the Bugis power-center in the Malay world.

<sup>2</sup>Raja Ali Haji, *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, p. 53, 54; 'Maklumlah sahaja akal orang-orang perempuan apabila ia sudah marah atau benci, memperbuatlah ia akan pekerjaan yang tiada patut, dan tiada memikirkkan awal akhir di belakang kali'. Matheson Hooker, *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, p. 196, 198.

<sup>3</sup>For details on how a Bugis acquired sole rights to the institutionalized position of Yang Dipertuan Muda (Yamtuan Muda), in contradistinction to the 'Malay' Sultan, see Leonard Y. Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor 1641-1728: Economic and Political Developments* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975).

<sup>4</sup>I have not myself found any mention of this in Malay or Dutch sources.

<sup>5</sup>The date of Raja Ali's death, 1805 is not given in the *Tuhfat*. Raja Ali Haji, *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, p. 215, 383.

<sup>6</sup>Raja Ali Haji, *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, p. 279. 'Maka dikuburkan oleh paduka anakanda sekalian di dalam kotanya, diperbuatnya satu kubah demikian halnya'. Hooker, *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, p. 604.

<sup>7</sup>Raja Maimunah was the granddaughter of both the 'Bugis' Temenggong of Singapore Abd-al Rahman and of the 'Malay' Sultan Husain of Singapore, installed 1819. Temenggong Ibrahim of Johor was her uncle, and Temenggong (later Sultan) Abu Bakar (1861-95) her first cousin.

<sup>8</sup>Adapun akan paduka adinda/Bunda suruhan kepada anakda/Putraku ganti paduka ayahanda/Memohon memilihakan barang yang ada. Suwardi and Ridwan, *Syair Sultan Mahmud*, p. 43.

<sup>9</sup>Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague (hence ARA) Mailrapport 3/31 58, no. 32 L. A. V. 9 Feb. 1858, N145/2.; Res. To Batavia 4 Dec. 1858.

<sup>10</sup>ARA Mailrapport 3/31 58, no. 32 L. A. V. 9 Feb. 1858, N145/2.; Res. To Batavia 4 Dec. 1858.

<sup>11</sup>Raja Ali Haji, *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, p. 290; A version of the *Tuhfat*, owned by another Tengku Fatimah, daughter of Sultan Abu Bakar of Johor, emphasizes that the divorce did not take place. Matheson Hooker, *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, pp. 100, 622, 715.

<sup>12</sup>ARA Ministry of Colonies, 30 Jan. 1858 No. 3/110, Resident of Riau to Batavia 8 Nov. 1857.

<sup>13</sup>Suwardi & Ridwan. (1990): 54: Her name was Si Noer; she was the mother of Raja Ali Kelana, who refused to accept the position of Yamtuan Muda in 1899. ARA V. 20 Feb. 1901, W. 38 (Mailreport 1819, 717), Resident of Riau to Batavia, 18 June 1899.

<sup>14</sup>Koninklijk Instituut, Leiden. Handschrift 420, 'Memorie van overgaaf van den aftredenden Resident van Riouw E. Netscher aan zijnen opvolger D.W. Schiff', fo. 21.

<sup>15</sup>ARA Mailrapport, Geheim 1940: Resident of Riau to Governor General, 17 Dec. 1883. Initially, some nobles had pressed for Yamtuan Muda Muhammad Yusuf to become Sultan.

<sup>16</sup>Bugis and Makassar diaries recording eyewitness accounts of these events had been translated into Malay. Ricklefs and Voorhoeve, *Indonesian Manuscripts in Great Britain*, p. 109.

<sup>17</sup>'Karena beta di dalam dada/Hendak ziarah ke makam ayahanda/ Demikianlah niat permai yang suhada/Niat membawa kan anakda'. Suwardi and Ridwan, *Syair Sultan Mahmud*, p. 119.

<sup>18</sup>This *syair* is a primary concern of Abu Hassan, *Syair-Syair Melayu Riau*.

<sup>19</sup>Keduanya itu isteri pendita/ ilmunya banyak sudahlah nyata/ bijak bistari petah perkata/ Parasnya elok mengerna danta. Abu Hassan, *Syair-syair Melayu Riau*, p. 86.

<sup>20</sup>Raja Ali Haji, *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, p. 258. This poem is Cod. Or. 1761 in Leiden University Library. See H. H. Juynboll. *Catalogue van de Maleische en Sundaneesche Handschriften der Leidsche. Universiteits Bibliotheek*. (Leiden: Brill, 1855). See p. 17-18. Typed transcriptions have been made independently by Jan van der Putten and Ian Proudfoot.

<sup>21</sup>Jan van der Putten has prepared a typescript of this *syair* (KL. 190 in Leiden University Library) for the Malay Concordance project. Ph.S. van Ronkel, *Supplement-Catalogus der Maleische en Minangkabausche Handschriften in de Leidsche Universiteits-Bibliotheek*, Leiden: Brill, 1921), p. 93-94.

<sup>22</sup>This is Kl. 164, University of Leiden Library. Ph.S. van Ronkel, *Supplement-Catalogus der Maleische en Minangkabausche Handschriften in de Leidsche Universiteits-Bibliotheek*, Leiden: Brill, 1921), pp. 72-73; Abu Hassan, *Syair-syair Melayu Riau*, p. 67. A

romanization of this text is in A. A. Fokker, *Maleisch leesboek bevattende proza-stukken en een volledig verhalend gedicht (Sair [Saudagar Bodoh])* (Zutphen: W. J. Thieme, 1903). A more recent romanization is by Jan van der Putten for the Malay Concordance Project, although this is as yet unpublished. For further discussion, see Edwin P. Wieringa, 'The Theme of the Woman who Set out to Free her Husband in the Malay *Syair Saudagar Bodoh* (ca. 1861), by Raja Kalzum,' *Review of Indonesian and Malay Affairs* 31, 2 (December 1997): 11-28.

<sup>23</sup>Suwardi and Ridwan, *Syair Sultan Mahmud*, p. 16, 40, 65. This is a copy of K1 138 in Leiden University Library.

<sup>24</sup>Mu'jizah and Rukmi, *Penelusuran Penyalinan Naskah-naskah Riau*, p. 32, 99. Raja Anisah had obtained this from another owner.

<sup>25</sup>Aisyah *Syair Khadamuddin*, p. 3 (Notes by Hamzah Yunus). For a list of *syair* written by Raja Haji Ahmad Tabib, see Abu Hassan, *Syair-Syair Melayu Riau*, p. 49 fn. 73 and Lampiran E. I am grateful to Ding Choo Ming for sending me a copy of his paper, 'Raja Haji Ahmad bin Raja Hassan dengan karyanya "Perkahwinan Raja Muhammad Yusuf dengan Raja Zaleha",' presented at an international symposium in Bandung, December 2002. This contains a transliteration of the *syair*.

<sup>26</sup>When Willem III of the Netherlands died in 1890, his daughter Wilhelmina was only ten years old. Her mother, Queen Emma, reigned as regent until 1898, when Wilhelmina reached the age of eighteen and was installed as ruler.

<sup>27</sup>Mu'jizah and Rukmi, *Penelusuran Penyalinan Naskah-naskah Riau*, p. 41, 93. The manuscript is dated 1327 AH (1909) Hamidy et al., *Naskah Kuno*, p. 71. It has also been termed *Syair Nasihat untuk Penjagaan Anggota Tubuh*. Ding, *Raja Aisyah*, p. 103. Its contents may be similar to the advice given by Raja Ali Haji in *Syair Siti Sianah* regarding a Muslim woman's responsibility to guard what she sees with her eyes, what she hears with her ears, what she says with her tongue, where she goes with her legs and so forth. Abu Hassan, *Syair-Syair Melayu Riau*, p. 85. See his Lampiran E for a listing of works by Raja Abdullah and Raja Khalid Hitam.

<sup>28</sup>No original manuscript survives of this work, although there are five handwritten copies. Ding Choo Ming, *Raja Aisyah Sulaiman. Pengarang Ulung Wanita Melayu* (Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1999), p. 96.

<sup>29</sup>Ding, *Raja Aisyah*, p. 88-89. Ding Choo Ming informs me that the complete handwritten manuscript of *Hikayat Syariful Akhtar* is in the Museum Kuala Terengganu. Personal Communication, May 19 2003.

<sup>30</sup>Ding informs me that the Jawi text of *Syair Seligi Tajam Bertimbal* is available at <http://www.malaycivilization.com/main.asp>, although I have not yet been able to examine it.

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Barbara Watson Andaya  
Professor, Asian Studies Program  
University of Hawai'i  
Moore Hall 416  
1890 East-West Road  
Honolulu, HI 96822  
United States of America  
e-mail: [bandaya@hawaii.edu](mailto:bandaya@hawaii.edu).