

## Tamra Terengganu 702H: Continuation of Pre-Islamic Malay Prasasti Tradition

### *Tamra Terengganu 702H: Kesenambungan Tradisi Prasasti Melayu Era Pra-Islam*

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#### ABSTRACT

*The study of Islamic historiography in Southeast Asia and particularly in the Malay World was greatly revolutionised with the discovery of the Terengganu Stone Inscription dated 702H (1303CE) in Kuala Berang in inland locality of the eastern coast of the Malay Peninsula. Since early 20th century the study concentrated on its value as the clear evidence of Islamic presence and implementation of its law for the first time in the region. However, there was a considerable gap left by scholars by not explaining the mysterious and implicit elements of pre-Islamic, Indic and Brahminic elements that abundantly found within the inscription. Coined as a tamra, containing the law of dharmas, a question arises regarding the origin of such vocabularies on an Islamic inscription. The presence suggests a transitional period of the pre-Islamic Malay society towards the Islamic one by practice. The survival of the former may direct to other information such as the ruling dynasty and kingdom or empire which may had initiated the project namely the kingdom of Srivijaya and its dependency Terengganu. Islamisation is a process involving interaction between the Muslim community in Southeast Asia mentioned since Tabari and Mas'udi with the Indianised Malay society from 9th century CE up till the 14th century. The power as a cultural and civilisational hub has demonstrated a considerable ability in bridging Islam and pre-Islamic cultures including universal religious values, invention and innovation of writing system and preserving a tradition of literary industry which gave birth to the paper-based one in succeeding centuries. The Terengganu Inscription or Tamra was indeed a demonstration of high culture producing an ideal fused culture that has been practiced up to this day.*

**Keywords:** *Terengganu Stone Inscription, Kuala Berang, Srivijaya, Melayu, Dharma, Manu Law, Jawi, Kawi, Pallava.*

#### ABSTRAK

*Kajian mengenai historiografi Islam di Asia Tenggara khususnya di rantau Alam Melayu mengalami revolusi yang ketara dengan penemuan Batu Bersurat Terengganu bertarikh 702H (1303CE) di Kuala Berang, terletak di hulu kawasan Pantai Timur Semenanjung Tanah Melayu. Semenjak awal abad ke-20 Masihi kajian mengenainya tertumpu terhadap nilainya sebagai bukti nyata akan kewujudan Islam dan penerapan*

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*perundungannya buat pertama kalinya di rantau ini. Walaubagaimanapun, terdapat sela yang ditinggalkan oleh para sarjana apabila mereka tidak menjelaskan dengan lebih lanjut akan kewujudan elemen-elemen Pra-Islam, Indik dan Brahminik yang sarat terkandung pada batu bersurat tersebut. Dipanggil sebagai tamra, mengandungi undang-undang darma, persoalan timbul berkenaan dengan asal-usul perbendaharaan bahasa pada suatu persuratan yang disifatkan sebagai Islami. Kewujudan tersebut mengandaikan suatu tempoh peralihan masyarakat Melayu zaman pra-Islam kepada yang Islami dari sudut amali. Kewujudan elemen zaman lampau tersebut membawa kita kepada maklumat lain berkenaan dengan pemerintah dari kerajaan wangsa seperti Srivijaya dan naungannya Terengganu. Proses Islamisasi ini terhasil daripada interaksi dengan masyarakat Islam yang ada di Asia Tenggara yang dicatatkan oleh misalnya Tabari dan Mas'udi dengan masyarakat Melayu Terindianisasi diantara abad ke-9 hingga ke-14 Masihi. Pengaruh kuasa sebagai pusat kebudayaan dan ketamadunan telah menunjukkan kemampuan mereka untuk menjambatani Islam dan kebudayaan Pra-Islam termasuk dalam aspek nilai keagamaan yang sejagat, penciptaan dan inovasi sistem tulisan, dan dalam pemeliharaan tradisi kesusasteraan yang bakal melahirkan tradisi persuratan atas-kertas pada abad-abad selepasnya. Batu Bersurat Terengganu atau Tamra sesungguhnya adalah satu pertunjukan budaya tinggi yang menghasilkan budaya campuran yang ideal yang kekal dipraktikkan sehingga hari ini.*

**Kata Kunci:** Batu Bersurat Terengganu, Kuala Berang, Srivijaya, Melayu, Dharma, Undang-undang Manu, Jawi, Kawi, Pallava.

## Introduction

According to Rahimin Affandi et. al (2010), Al-Attas has stated that the gradual Islamisation process of the ancient Malay society rationalises the position of the stone inscription which is known as Tamra Terengganu. It could be a unique premier historical source and a combination of the pre-Islamic and Islamic Era's elements. This is quite contrary to the reality believed by some of dualistic historians. There are two sides of them, the first one is those whom heavily invested on European Orientalist perspective of viewing anything cultural in Southeast Asia. This includes the view that religion was an extension of the Greater India where instead of it was purely adapted to the ancient past romanticism it was more subjected to the matter of interest of the imperialistic British Raj. On the other side, we have the total opposite of the former which is the Islamic perspective. These two have disputes in terms of interests and subjects covered pertaining the Malay history and culturology.

For this matter, the orientalist's perspective has no great benefit to the local value of the Malay Society as it is degenerating the idea of localness and making the society revolving away from a more established past. This eventually happened by making its cultural phenomenon called as 'foreign' or 'recent' which led toward the mind-set of "nothing actually Malay" including the religion and language in practice for centuries. These were quite wrong for both extremists since the act of society reconciliation here in the Malay World is unique based on its history. The idea of total Indianised Kingdoms of Southeast Asia posted by G. Coedes (1968) was in certain degree denying the aspect of syncretic and intermediate layer in between such period with the arrival of Islam. As demonstrated in various traditional sources from the Arabs and Malays literary volumes, we could assume that if the nominal conversion did not take place earlier as suggested in Perlak (9th century CE) (Ali Hasymy, 1980). Meanwhile, in 1136CE at Kedah, we could see that many Islamicate entities sprung up, which

at the same time adopted more Muslim culture which integrated both the local and Hindu-Buddhist layers.

It means that, focusing too much on one layer by neglecting or to the extent of opposing the other layers on either way can be considered an attempt to deconstruct the historical heritage of a society and limiting it to a certain bias. Unfortunately, this will greatly diminish a wider picture to understand a subject such as the matter of Terengganu Tamra. In most of the parts, we could see that from the earliest discussions coming from S.Q. Fatimi, Al-Attas and Muhammad Zainiy Uthman (2012) where they particularly described the Islamic purposes and contexts of the tamra and lesser on the pre-Islamic layer which is more peripheral but the crucial layer of the Brahminic. The pre-Islamic layer may give more details on the unexplained matter including the socio-cultural, political, religion and writing systems of the society. The current belief is that the tamra is simple and quite insignificant, but the truth is hidden behind by the mistaken reality.

For centuries, there are integration and normalization of both cultures; Brahminic (Hindu-Buddhist) along with Islam took place in the rise of Srivijaya mandala as a host of various segments of society in an area thousands of miles from Sri Lanka to Indochina. Their dominance and active participation in the international geopolitics and commerce earned them the respect as the cosmopolitan and vibrant entity in the Old World which also linked the Middle East with Orient China. The process of cultural sharing and consolidation occurred since the birth of Islam in 7th century CE, followed by the heavy Persianised maritime activities in 9th to 11th century CE before the Chola Invasion. Next, a kingdom in South India changed the pattern but it maintained as the catalyst for a mass Islamic conversion in the 12th and 13th century CE in Kedah. Then, it followed up by the South China Sea trading outlets and later Samudera Pasai in late 1200s CE. A lot of Muslim travellers such as Mas'udi, Buzurg, Ibn Khordhadbeh, Al-Biruni and Ibn Battutah (Paul Wheatley, 2010) informed us the high position of Muslims in the Srivijayan and its satellite courts. They were the celebrated envoys specifically sent by the kings to Tang and Song Dynasties to maintain the good relationship earned since the time of Caliphate Uthman where the first delegation was sent under Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas (Dusuki Ahmad, 1974).

This heavy presence existed until 12th century CE followed by the development in the Late Srivijayan Period. It had influenced the emergence of Terengganu Tamra in 1303H with the hijri date of 702 H. Interestingly, if one studies the subjects found on the tamra, they will observe the connections it has with the Malaccan Sultanate settings as found in the renowned Hikayat Sulalatus Salatin. For the issue of limitation of time and recent resourcing, the work of Ahmat Adam (2016) explained that the pre-Islamic links of the tamra is not included. It is very important for us to observe the tamra to understand the emergence process of the ancient Malay society, whether it was Islamised or rather Islamicate in nature, also on how it saw itself in the last phase of pre-Islamic era. Some decided to retain while some decided to change in a considerable way. This development in Terengganu and the late phase-Srivijaya in South Sumatra will be related in a chain of socio-political settings. This, comes along with successive centuries in the form of Malay Dynasties established in the ancient Palembang which includes the Island of Bentan, Malacca and later with the emergence of the *tawaiif* (Ar. Petty kingdoms), the kingdoms of Johor, Perak, Kedah et cetera after the disintegration caused by the catastrophic Portuguese invasion in 1511CE. The appreciation of tamra will open a wider segment of the society. There will be more Muslims who could be included within the huge organisation of Malay history thus being closer to absorb into the body of mainstream Islamic historiography instead of it being treated in isolation.

*ibarat melukut di tepi gantang* (Malay proverb, meaning isolated case).

The research gap left as mentioned by the previous scholars vis. descriptive socio-political studies and polemicalised for decades without trying to reconcile both pre-Islamic and Islamic if filled could answer the phenomenal, historical and hermeneutic values of the tamra and this indirectly could aid the deciphering of other historical and archaeological sources as well. The deciphering of the identity of Raja Mandulika, his family and Seri Paduka Tuan inscribed as the upholder of the dharma law with Islamic provisions as well as the combination of pre-Islamic and Islamic vocabularies and writing systems will significantly create an impetus to the academia.

### **The Prasasti and Nesan Traditions in the Malay World**

The traditional Malay ethnic and cultural territory will be the focus in discussing the stone inscription (Sanskrit: *prasasti*) tradition instead of relying more on the tradition of manufacturing tombstones (Mal.: *nesan*). Other than that, an inscriptive tradition in the Malay World is where the current is quite a supralayer of the more embedded underlayer of the preceding culture. However, it would not be a problem to mention the existence of the nesan as an overview. Thus, this paper focuses on the preceding which is explainable and significant. In such development, the prasasti establishment in Southeast Asia and specifically the Malay World would be the pre-dating of the coming of early Islamic evidences; tombstones with Hejazi, Iraqi and Syrio-Egyptian styles. These come with the discoveries that began in the late 19th century CE I at Tanjung Inggeris, then in Kedah in 9th century CE, followed by those in Permatang Pasir, Pekan in 11th century CE, also the tomb of Fatimah binti Maimun binti Hibatullah in Leran, along with East Java and the tomb of Makhdarah binti Sultan Abdul Majid from Brunei both dated 11th century CE plus two tombstones and instructions found in Panduranga (modern Phanrang, Vietnam) (Husaini Ibrahim, 2016 ; Abdul Latif Ibrahim & Shariffuddin, 1979). The subsequent centuries first saw the emergence of the new style of tombstones from Malikussaleh of Samudera Pasai in 1297 CE, also Nurul A'la binti Raja Hussain bin Raja Kedah in Minye Tujoh at North Sumatra (1380 CE) and others that were found scattered and less significant throughout the Malay Archipelago (Husaini Ibrahim, 2016).

Among them, it is best to note that all of these are examples of mortuary monuments and early Islamic arts or artefacts in Malay World that are never emerged to be part of the local. The indigenous law inscription through the evolution that took place with the trend originated from Middle East in adding up the elements like poetry, Quranic verses, and arabesque motives in 11th century CE following the rise of the Fatimids and the Ayyubids. The nesan in Panduranga is believed to be imposed upon the mercantile community of Arab-Persian origin and was absent in implicating the local neither using any of the local language - the Cham or Malay. The development there seemed to be indirectly related to the Terengganu Tamra and perhaps the indirect due to the Muslims in Champa was accustomed establishing their autonomous mercantile ruling based on the demand by local ruler vis. the existing local law. Thus, we could say that the Panduranga Muslim law was influenced by the pre-Islamic stone inscription tradition as it was demonstrated to be related with the one in Terengganu. These signify the common cultural ancestors of both nesan and tamra. The Fatimid influenced Panduranga nesan was opposite with the much raw, unrefined, unorthodox Arabo-Persian characters especially the absent of diacritical marks (Zainiy Uthman, 2012). Some scholars believe that they signify high skills (Zainiy Uthman, 2012) referring to whoever that had

designed and inscribed the tamra, yet there is a possibility that it is influenced by non-diacritic Indian writing system.

In the course of history, the earliest Indian styled prasasti were influenced by the Gupta and Pallava traditions which involved praises, hymns, poems, formulas, dedications and laws that were disseminated to Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia through various ports of the Indian Ocean (Chia & Andaya, 2011). Hindu Shaivist and Vaishnavite cults arrived since the time of Gupta but their presence across traditional Malay polities (Malaya, Sumatra and Borneo) was related to the emergence of Chola Empire from South India along the course of 11th to 12th century CE. The prasasti tradition also involved Buddhistic sects of Mahayana and Theravada; or combining both with Hindu tenets and forming the tantric Brahminic cult such as Vajrayana. This was greatly adhered in the holy cities and institutions of the Malay thalassocracy of Srivijaya and its satellites and neighbours. In different times, the stone inscriptions frequently appeared in different forms such as in pinnacle columns or elongated slabs styles with varied materials of iron, bronze, copper, mostly granite or sandstone stones. They were over hundreds localities of important Indian or Indianised administrative capitals, cities, towns, villages like Delhi, Pataliputra, Takshashila, Magadha, Nakhon Pathom, Angkor, Tanjavur, and Nagapattinam; the holy pilgrimage sites in Sarnath, Vaishali, Bodhgaya or in adhered natural environment frequented for its mystical power and grandeur like Ellora, Elephanta, Udayagiri, Kedu Plain and Bujang Valley. The prasasti were accordingly placed either in the open spaces, or in specific defined spaces like in the palace, monasteries, and halls embedded with religious monuments like stupas or chedis. The one in Chero' Tok Kun in Bukit Mertajam, Seberang Perai was unique as it was inscribed on a natural rock. Both traditions were thus interrelated in the overlapping cultural chronology former known as prasasti in Sanskrit and widely known as nesan from Indo-Arabic tradition. The development of pure Arabic grave markers clearly influenced by Indian tradition as well since the later embellishments and artistic elements demonstrated the Indianised style including the typology term given. From a general comparison, there are similarities found on the Terengganu Tamra to summarize its styles as a mixture of prasasti and nesan traditions.

**Table 1.0: Prasasti and Nesan Elements found on Terengganu Tamra**

Prasasti Style	Nesan Style
Stone or metal inscribed	Stone inscribed
Indian scripts	Indian, Indo-Arab or Arab
Dedication praises, curse, doctrine formula, mortuary, code of conduct purposes	Mortuary and code of conduct purposes
Poetry	Poetry
Public and private spaces	Public and private spaces
Erected by rulers, merchants or monastery (elites)	Erected by rulers, merchants or monastery (elites)

Sources: Nabil et al. (2020)

Specifically, the prasasti were erected on the initiative of the rulers or local elites, patrons of a theocratic Malay thalassocracy for the sake of integrity and legitimation as well as an expression of piety. With the rise of Srivijayan, mandala emerged their evidences of ruling ship in the form of prasasti such as Prasasti Kedukan Bukit (683 CE), Prasasti Telaga Batu (680s CE), Prasasti Talang Tuwo (684 CE), Prasasti Kota Kapur (686 CE) and Prasasti Ligor (775 CE). There are also the least significant ones like Prasasti Palas Pasemah, Prasasti Bongkok

dan Prasasti Bom Baru (Chia & Andaya, 2011). Srivijaya prasasti during the period of Chola Intervention from 1025 CE to first half of 12th century CE probably had influenced the Malay with Tamil tradition though in minimal. According to Nilakantha Sastri, the Tamil literary influence is more ethnocentric among the immediate clique of the Cholan expatriates, particularly the merchantile guilds and traders (Tamil: *vaniyaga*) as found in Talaittakolam (modern Takuapa, Southern Thailand) and Lobu Tua in modern Barus, Indonesia) (Chia & Andaya, 2011). The great culture of Srivijaya which existed could be repulsive to this hegemony and was quite nominal and temporal in nature. In addition, the only existing Tamil prasasti related to Srivijaya could only be found in India, namely Nagapattinam inscribed by Maharaja Srichudamanivarman, Maharaja Maravijayatungavarman and Maharaja Sangramavijayatungavarman of Sailendra Dynasty of Srivijaya. Perhaps, the absence of Malay prasasti in the 11th to 12th century CE was due to the higher status of the Cholan sovereign. There was also the possibility that the disintegration of Srivijaya after the invasion confer by the Song Dynasty consequently gave birth to the autonomous Terengganu, Langkasuka, Pahang, Kelantan and Melayu (Jambi) (Coedes, 1968). It also left a political gap and had been taken advantage by the diaspora of affected Muslim communities to influence the Malay polities to adopt Islam at least in terms of its cultural.

After almost a century later under these circumstances it was identified that there was an emergence of Grahi Prasasti inscribed with Mahayanist doctrine in Chaiya and Southern Thailand erected by a king attributed with the Malay Dynasty in South Sumatera in the 12th century (1183 CE). In return, after another century emerged in the heartland of Melayu in Jambi, the Padang Roco Prasasti (1286 CE) portrayed the king as Sri Tribuanaraja Mauliwarmadeva. It is still debated of the relationship involved with the Kingdom of Singosari in Java as some believed the origin of the prasasti from Java signifies that the latter imposed religious legitimacy over the former Raja Akarendravarman. However, did it only exist as a claim but not in real power exercise? And yet, it was certain that the king's son Raja Adityavarman later moved several miles inland and established himself in the heartland of Minangkabau to diverge the domination away from Singosari. This was also described by the Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai about the bad relationship between the Javanese and the Minangese in a legendary bullfight (Russel Jones, 1999). The further act of political struggle for Melayu independence suggests us that Adityavarman additionally rewrote on the prasasti, a segment glorifying himself over those inscribed by the Javanese sovereign, maybe to be a better representation. At this point, the Padang Roco Prasasti had changed to be known as Amoghapasa Prasasti, yet both contained the Buddhist representation of Amoghapasa deity in Buddhistic tradition from the beginning.

The title 'Paduka Amoghapasa' derived by Adityavarman as his incarnation was done in 1347 CE. The title paduka was for most of the time related to the Malay dynasty rarely found in Siam or Java and for the generations that had been inherited by Malay kings up to Singapore and Malacca Era which at the same time found in the Terengganu Tamra. According to Coedes (1968), several decades in the past Singosari would be usurped by Majapahit under the charismatic but bloodthirsty Raden Vijaya and conferred by Song Dynasty record. At this time, the kingdom of Sanfochi (Srivijaya) was ruled by three separate but interrelated sovereigns by blood. This had resulted in prolonged civil war and the historians beliefs was first related to the Malay king diaspora, and then from Dharmasraya of Adityavarman towards Minangkabau and the other to the island of Bentan before being established in Singapore under the legendary Sri Tribuana of Sulalatus Salatin (A. Samad Ahmad, 2003). The establishment of the Malay dynasty on the peninsula as demonstrated previously must be the continuation of the Malay hegemony on its whole coastal area.

**Table 2.0: Main Prasastis of Malay Kingdoms**

Prasastis	Date	Language	Character
Kedukan Bukit	683 CE	Malay-Sanskrit	Post-Pallava
Telaga Batu	680s CE	Malay-Sanskrit	Post-Pallava
Talang Tuwo	684 CE	Malay-Sanskrit	Post-Pallava
Kota Kapur	686 CE	Malay-Sanskrit	Post-Pallava
Ligor	775 CE	Khmer-Sanskrit	Kawi
Grahi	1183 CE	Khmer-Sanskrit	Kawi
Padang Roco	1286 CE	Malay-Sanskrit	Kawi
Terengganu	1303 CE	Malay-Arab-Sanskrit	Arab-Jawi (Kawi Influenced)
Amonghapasa	1347 CE	Malay-Sanskrit	Kawi
Minye Tujuh	1380 CE	Malay-Arab-Sanskrit	Arab-Kawi
Pengkalan Kempas	1463 CE	Malay	Arab-Kawi

Source: Nabil et al. (2020)

Moving towards another parallel development in Northern Sumatra, we will observe the period of disintegration of Srivijaya from the 11th to 14th century CE. Post-Chola gave way for the kingdom of Pannai one of the Srivijayan satellites to gain autonomy and later was mentioned in the *Nagarakrtagama* of Mpu Prapanca in 1365 CE as a claimed part of Singosari-Majapahit. This position is similar the one that had been experienced by the Kingdom of Melayu (Mokhtar & Suprayitno, 2011). The Pannai Prasasti tradition would involve Sijorengblangah Prasasti (1179 CE); Sitopayan Prasasti (1235 CE); and Porlak Dolok Prasasti (1213 CE) with all aimed for religious dedication for Mahayanist and Vajrayanist doctrine. It was also observed by the Malay elites indicated from the Old Malay language used as well as the Kawi character (Mokhtar & Suprayitno, 2011). Since the time of Srivijaya, the use of Pallava evolved into Post Pallava. From there, it made way to the invention of Kawi or it was dubbed as Old Java as it first took the shape in the realm of Sailendra in 8th century Central Java. The influence of Kawi was then found in Ligor (Southern Thailand) and all parts of Srivijayan mandala (Chia & Andaya, 2011; & Coedes, 1968).

The only difference is that those found in Ligor were inscribed in Khmer-Sanskrit instead of Malay language although they mentioned the role of Malay sovereign which perhaps in terms of pragmatism addressing the local inhabitants whom predominantly speaking in the Austroasiatic languages (Chia & Andaya, 2011). This creative and diverse usage might be related to the following use of Jawi inscription in Terengganu Tamra whereby Kawi and Arab are believed to be influencing each other thus the new form of writing system known as Jawi is born (Zainiy Uthman, 2012). It was indeed a continuous revolution patronized by the literary industry found across the Srivijayan epoch. If the tamra tradition was not originated from Terengganu, then we could assume that it was related to the much central power of Melayu in Palembang or Singapura. However, we did not have any supporting archaeological evidences to support such theory. Perhaps, the tradition in Melayu was uniquely created in the east coast Malay Peninsula by the majority Muslim and Islamised community since the Cholan Invasion which saw the mass resettlement of Muslims in ports located at the east of Strait of Malacca. The tamra however could not be denied having been inscribed with the consent of Melayu ruler. In fact, it could not be erected due to its high cultural elements without the cooperation of the Islamised elites with pre-Islamic background. The emergence of Terengganu Tamra is

seen as an extension of Srivijayan Malay as 70% of its content were comparable to the ones that used in prasasti found in South Sumatera (Zainiy Uthman, 2012). With the arrival of Islam and heavy industrialisation of the world with a new form of merchandise, there were also changes in the writing system as suggested by the historian where they introduced the influence of using papers as a more well-known material in inscribing rather than the stone. The prasasti style soon died out except that it evolved into nesan typology which often to be found more on the Islamic mortuary monuments. The law and dedicative feature of prasasti has disappeared and it has become the beginning of the era where they were written on paper such as Undang-Undang Melaka and Undang-Undang Kedah et cetera.

It seems that prasasti was more associated with the pre-Islamic purpose that was left behind with the gradual adoption of Islamic style and philosophy in literary tradition in the Malay World. Terengganu Tamra 1303 CE was finally followed by Minye Tujoh Prasasti dated 1380 CE and Syekh Ahmad Majnun in Pengkalan Kempas, Linggi River dated 1436 CE with both using a composite of Arabic-Kawi characters. By this time, it was the intermediate phase where the prasasti was evolving into nesan and the transition was a combination from pure Arabic or pure Kawi writing system and later the Kawi character slowly faded into Jawi but the grammatical elements survived as demonstrated in the syllabic ruling of the inscriptions found in the 14th century CE early Jawi (Zainiy Uthman, 2012; Fadzillah, 2010). Etymologically, the name to describe Jawi characters was derived as early as the Middle Eastern travellers and merchants who used to describe the Malay World polities they had visited. According to the 8th century CE Arabic sources, up until the modern classical world, the word was related to the archaic form of the name "Zabaj" or "Zabag" which associated with a region dominated by Srivijaya in Central Java. But we know that the thalassocracy were ruled from several other loci such as Palembang-Jambi, Chaiya and Kedah, then the term 'Jawi' could also be applied to Sumatra and Malay Peninsula as we also was informed that the term Mulku Jawa and Javadvipa in ancient treatises were earlier designation towards the latters and the modern island of Java presumed the similar character subsequently (Coedes, 1968; & Wheatley, 2010).

### **Sanskrit Vocabulary and Brahmanic Influence**

The long chronological history of Pre-Islamic prasasti tradition as demonstrated by previous discussion may give us a clear picture that it does influence the creation and the emergence of Terengganu Tamra along with its course. There are not many discussions provided by Islamic and Western scholars regarding the relationship of the tamra with its Sanskrit features. Although there are some descriptions in the sub-discussions, but they are not thoroughly discussed as the scholars focused more on the tamra's Islamic features such as the impetus of Jawi scripture and its shariatic legal origin and its effects towards the society of the late ancient Terengganu in the wake of Islam as the dominating culture and religion. Again, this shows the dualism of Malay World studies between the Indianised scholars and the post 1980s - 1990s Malayo-Indonesian Muslim historians who started to shift their studies aim towards Islamic revivalism by focusing on Islam as a more critical cultural root. The long discussions are best demonstrated in a seminar which discuss the first Islamization of Malay World in North Sumatra (Ali Hashmy, 1980)

The study on the sub-layer beneath the Islamic culture is crucial to understand Islam as a process and that it does not vanquish in total the pre-dominating cultures. In this respect, according to Adi Yasran, the influence of the *tamra's* writing system could be found in Undang-

Undang Melaka and Kedah (Zainiy Uthman, 2012). The evolution of Jawi happened from the pure form of Arabic with the striking resemblance of the pre-Islamic Kawi writing system. According to Fadzillah Rahim (2010), Jawi was greatly influenced by Arabic writing system and the writing system was acknowledged from the 1590 CE manuscript of Aqidatun Nasafi.

Based on the observation by Asmah Haji Omar, there were 270 Old Malay vocabularies found on the *tamra*, 26 of them were Sanskrit and comprised of 16% overall (Zainiy Uthman, 2012), however some words that perhaps been mistook as local Malay could be included as Sanskrit in origin and added up to 28 in total and possibly with some other knowledge, it could reach up to 30 total in numbers. This makes the influence of Sanskrit of Brahmanic language at one-fourth (1/4) of the *tamra*. However, given that the few constituted of the high culture and complex philosophical terms, they must be very foundational and dominant within the 14th century CE's literary system. We cannot claim it to be lesser than that as they were important and highly regarded over the Arabic literary terms even though the inscription was in its scripture. This means that the local and foreign Muslims still could not replace the sophisticated Brahmanic vocabularies and the process to remove it was gradually done. Some words remained until today such as *hyang* (deity), *agama* (religion), *dosa* (sin), *pahala* (rewards), *syurga* (paradise) and *neraka* (hell). These retaining terms however experienced change in terms of semantics such as the term *dharma* was known as law in the past but later it is comprehended as charity which is more suitable to semantic comprehension according to the Islamic theory and practice. The Brahmanic terms eventually lost pragmatism where it could not be integrated with the Islamic belief system.

**Table 2.0: List of Sanskrit vocabularies in Terengganu Tamra**

Sanabi	Dewata	Mulia	Raya
Benua	Agama	Bicara	Darma
Raja	Mandalika	Bhumi	Seri
Paduka	Tamra	Adi	Pertama
Sasanakala	Merdeka	Balacara	Bujang
Isteri	Suami	Danda	Menteri
Harta	Keluarga	Atawa	Bandara

**Source: Nabil et al. (2020)**

The list of 28 Sanskrit vocabularies can be found in other examples of Malay *prasastis* which includes relevance over the following aspects:

1. Kingship
2. Discussion
3. Nobility
4. God
5. Freedom
6. Law
7. Crime
8. Punishment
9. Art of Inscription
10. Family system

Importantly, all the complex vocabularies indicated that the Islamic shariatic concern were indeed had its earlier form in Brahmanic tradition and some scholars like al-Attas wondered if they were direct translated from Arabic such as "*Dewata Mulia Raya*" for "*bismillahirrahmanirrahim*" (Zainiy Uthman, 2012). Accordingly, the term used for God, *Dewata Mulia Raya* suggested the normalisation of the Malay society regarding the monotheistic concept which was also applied in the polytheistic pantheon of god. This pragmatism was unlike the statement on the same tamra of the word "Rasulullah" as the vocabulary as it was coincidentally a new concept and may be adopted freely without conflicting with the previous belief which was Hinduism that provided sacrilegious figures in the form of saints and sages known as Rishis or Muni.

Further studies are needed to observe the Brahmanic Law System in comparison with the shariah tenets that are found on the tamra. However, it is interesting to note that the style of the tamra was perhaps comparable with the formulation of 10 dharma doctrines which were known from ancient sources like *dharmashastra* and *mandushastra*. The later would be vital as the foundational Brahmanic communal religious law found throughout Southeast Asia and the Malay World. Some were erected on prasasti or written in manuscripts of both adhered to Hinduism or Buddhism. In Champa, for example we have the story of the originator of the law in a form of *hikayat* (Mal. romance) literature genre which is known as Akayet Dewa Mandu. The tamra, indeed had 10 evicted dharmas and was issued by the ruling Mandulika, perhaps the title was derived from the role as the enforcer of Mandu Law which demonstrated from the existence of the same roles over the kingdom of Perak in 16th century (Fawzi Basri, 1986), as well as traditional territory of Srivijaya in Malacca, post Malaccan Kedah, Sungei Ujong, and several islands in Riau. The Tembera of Datuk Seri Paduka Tuan consisted both words "tamra" and "Seri Paduka Tuan" in 17th century Kedah which added to the enigma of the relationship despite they were quite different from the tamra's content whereby the one in Kedah enforced agricultural law (Rogayah & Mariyam, 2006). It seems that the style of the pre-Islamic prasasti developed freely by adopting whatever incoming laws which not necessarily in agreement with the Brahminic's existing rules.

**Table 3.0: Similarities of Shariah found in between Terengganu Tamra with Dharmashastra**

Terengganu Tamra	Dharmashastra
Rulers Role	Punishment, Administration & Management, Management Code of Conduct
Debt (4)	Torts
Ownership (5)	Torts
Adultery (6)(7)	Marriage, Adultery, <i>Mahapataka</i>
Law above Ruler (10)	Administration and Punishment

Source:

Table 3.0 demonstrates the relationship of the shariah and *dharmashastra* whereby both have their own focuses. The Dharmashastra of Manu Law shows a great emphasis on the adultery. In the history, most of the Manu Laws in the Indianised world were derived from the Dharmashastra. It also was embedded from the same Late Vedic Period of epics like Mahabharata whereby values of moral and social placements were presented in a form of literary storytelling. In this case, the popular media would be another creative and innovative step of making the law and ruling more readily comprehensible and acceptable compared to in

the instructive and authoritative forms. The language of the media made the message disintegrated for the consumption of the cultural minds more embedded within the philosophical mind of individuals. This suggests the reason the Indian and Indianized society stick to this kind of law as its effects were going beyond than normative enforcement, but as well as towards faith and lifestyle. It was the culture which human life would not be completed, and it does determine one's identity. So, the well-adopted Manu Law or coined as Manava Dharmashastra (Olivelle & Olivelle, 2005) had considered the other laws to be irrelevant or not significant or unorthodox. The spread of the ideology took place throughout Brahminic and Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms of Southeast Asia in both normative prescriptions and proscriptions forms (Amitay Acharya, 2012).

Content wise, the Dharmashastra contains a wide array of topics which could be found in the shariah:

"That conduct which sustains, protects, harmonizes all human beings including family, society, nation, nature and the cosmos."  
(Deen Chandora, n.a.)

"The ten characteristics of a person who upholds Dharma are contentment, forgiveness, maintenance of purity, thought, action, emotional, and sensual discipline, irate lessness, truthfulness, abstinence from stealing, acquisition of knowledge and wisdom."  
(Deen Chandora, n.a.)

Manu Law is regarded as the earliest law of universal mankind society whereby Manu is believed to be the avatar or reincarnation of Brahman in the world and upheld the divine law. 10 as sacred numerology constitute important parts and phases of life as the avatars of Brahman numbered at 10 (G. Buhler, ). The concept of Manu is related to the concept of mankind that is the '*manusya*' which in Malay is also known '*manusia*'. The Ten Virtuos Conduct (Khenchen Thrangu, 2001) is the same concept of dharma with some variation involves: *Not to take life, not to take what is not given, avoid sexual misconduct, not to deceive, avoid slander of others, avoid harsh words, avoid empty speech, avoid greed thoughts, not to be malicious, avoid the wrong view*. By abiding to the laws which are under the series of code of conducts or disciplinary act of obedience (*shila*), one is hoped to gain the ultimate truth by eradicating the cycle of sorrow, suffering and bad karma. If we look into the content of the *shastras*, the *tamra* is indeed to be found previously in the *ye dharma* formula of 5th and 7th century CE Mahayana Buddhisme in Sungai Mas and Chero' Tok Kun Inscriptions (both in Bujang Valley, Kedah) whereas the Buddhagupta is either a ruler, ascetic or simply religious merchants who were mentioned to be associated with Raktamrtikka, the holy country where he performed his *siddhayatra*, a holy pilgrimage as part of his act of obedience.

This concurrently emerged together around the same time whereby the similar votive tablets were discovered in Perlis caverns and Gua Cha, Upper Kelantan which demonstrated the Srivijayan era Mahayanist doctrine of dharma. The *tamra* in the succeeding century was rather one kind of the variation. The derivation of the same code of *dharma* and law of Mandu which the Islamized rulers and lawgiver foresaw its compatibility and implemented it as a universal integrated law. Manu Law, according to R.O. Windstedt, did arrive earlier than Gupta period and had influenced the local law. It was related to Srivijaya and Majapahit (Abu Talib Ahmad, 2014). This gives us the picture of the early form of Indic or Brahminic Law that influenced the Malay World Society from the start and had been used in variation since the period of Iron Age civilisation of Sungai Batu in 6th century BCE in which Buddha lived and

preached in the forests and villages of Bengal India. This tradition of erecting a moral code of law is demonstrated from the edict pillars with Greek influence introduced by the famous king Ashoka from the Mauryan Dynasty. He stressed on and preached the code of dharma throughout his dominions (Anuradha Seneviratna, 1994). (He is famously known in) The story of a king preaching to his people and regarded them as his sons. He then called them to the religion. Tarikh Fathani mentioned the king's name in jawi as "Ganggabhadrā" (فخابطر) son of King Ungga (عوقفا) (Wan Mohd. Shoghir, 2000). Hence, it gives us the information of the undiscovered and unidentified kingdom in India influenced by the Ashokan tradition with the same tone.

Referring to Terengganu Tamra, it shows us its critical demand upon the ancient Malay society whereby adultery provision constitutes 1/3 of the tamra despite the fact it is in a simple form. If we count the civil law provisions, they become the indication that the complex reality of the living society during those days. It tells us that the Islamized society had been facing a real socio-cultural and economic problems especially in terms of morality and social integrity. The uncompromising tamra issued upon all people, regardless of their social status. However, there were different levels of punishments which clearly originated from Brahminic origin: The Mandulika himself, his uncles, his sons, his whole family, the free people (*mardika*). The Manu stated that the dharma provided respective social orders (Sanskrit: *varna*) (Sri Rama, 2009). According to Tarikh Fathani, the provision might be a practical solution to the one of the main society problems that was uncontrolled sexual relationship and illegal marriages which became common practice during the ancient time in the Malay states on the Malay peninsula. Demonstrating their commercial importance at the international level (Wan Mohd Saghir, 2000). The Manusmṛiti in this case provides the law on adultery under a special section known as *achara* (Sanskrit: good conduct), whereas the punishments meted out by magistrate were adultery deterrent such as causing one into banishment; secondly under the section of Primary Offences (Mahapatakas) (Olivelle & Olivelle, 2005). Perhaps, the former left open space for the Islamic rule on *zina* (referred as *balachara* in Terengganu Tamra) to be included under the Manu Law section (Sri Rama, 2009). The punishments (Sanskrit: *dandam*) were intended to protect and satisfy both the ruler and people. It also was done to keep them in order (Sri Rama, 2009). The Law resulted into three types of goodness: *dharma* (Sanskrit: right living), *artha* (Sanskrit: material prosperity) and *kama* (Sanskrit: enjoyment) (Sri Rama, 2009). It seems that the law of Manu and Dharma indirectly become the cause of the acceptance of shariatic element of the tamra.

The role of the lawgiver of 'mandulika' in the tamra is parallel to the role of the judge and rulers as stated by G. Buhgler:

"[A judge] who knows Dharma, must inquire into the traditional laws and customs of people of all the districts, of guilds, and of families, and [thus] settle the peculiar law of each..." (G. Buhgler, 1886)

As much that the concept of kingship of Indic culture and those Indianised depended heavily on Manu Law and all statecraft return to Manusmṛiti in Southeast Asia (Amitav Acharya, 2012)

## Conclusion

The imposition of the law by the ruling class which demonstrated by Al-Attas during the intermediated periods of Hindu-Buddhist with Islamic Era was not vanished due to the coming

of Islam. The suggestion is that the language was considered indicative to the disintegration of the elite into what is known as 'democratic' religion of Islam. It was also open to the mass subjects which could be hypothetical as the implementation, literature style and pattern of prasasti which indicated that the ruler and lawgiver were still dominant as the central force of the new religion and its past Brahminic layer although they stated officially that they were nothing above the religious law. Perhaps, these pioneer Muslim elites thought that by establishing Islamic Law, it could gain them the title of several few "Enlightened Rulers" with a new zeal and fresh revivalism spirit that sought for continuation of the fallen apart religion of the past. The Strong *devaraja* cult in the Malay custom and political system suggested that the strong penal code was readily accepted by the people who followed the king or lawgiver who were only third to God and His Messenger ("*selepas Dewata Mulia Raya dan Rasulullah...*") (Zainiy Uthman, 2008).

In summarising the discussion above, we confidently decide to adopt the idea that the artefact known as Terengganu Tamra from 702H(1303CE) to be crucial in Islamic historiography in Southeast Asia and the Malay World. It has been identified to be the continuation of the cultural tradition of stone inscription from pre-Islamic era as demonstrated by the style of presentation, the law provisions, the language and the human subjects (Greek: *hermos*). The tamra gives us the solid evidence of the Islamised ancient Malay Kingdom where it can either be local in characteristic or simultaneously under a larger sovereign with similar characteristics. The existence of the kingdom of Terengganu since 12th century CE is almost continuously under suzerainty of the thalassocracy of Srivijaya correlated that the tamra was inscribed with the consent from both rulers of the polities. Terengganu thus, be the centre of intercultural integration whereby a new typology is born as the result from the roaming composite cultures and it has established previously across scattered locality. There might be multiple factors that contribute to the rise of Terengganu as the only centre where the significant events took place. Coexistence must have existed for a well-established Brahminic Law to be able to be fused with an orthodox Islamic doctrine. This shows the best characteristics of Islam which are mature and universal as it can be integrated with other traditions. The form of Islam in Srivijayan realms and its neighbours were ideal as it prepared the region to accept Islam more openly, not in term of nominally but officially in the form of sultanate system in 13th century up to 17th century CE. Thus, the event has strengthened them philosophically and has become the steppingstone in rejuvenating their culture and civilisation against the incoming of European crusaders in 15th century CE. Hence, Islam rejuvenated Indianised kingdoms in the Malay World and prepared them for such clash of civilisation.

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