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The migration of lute-type instruments to the Malay Muslim world

by Larry Francis Hilarian* (Singapore)

This paper will explore the migration of the Hadhrami Arab culture, religious practice and music to the Malay Archipelago (Nusantara). More specifically, the paper discusses the transmission of the folk-lute (gambus) from Hadhramaut (Yemen) to the Malay Archipelago (Nusantara) where the instrument has been adapted to local needs and culture. This paper will briefly discuss the existence of two types of lute instruments. The transmission of these instruments and their role and identity as "icons" of Islam in the Malay world (Alam Melayu) is reviewed and debated. The status of music and the emblematic representation of cultural icons are constantly challenged by Islamic purists generating debates regarding Islamic attitudes to music in today's Malay Muslim society. I will examine the role and functions of music, which constantly lies between acceptance and rejection within some Islamic societies. Finally, this paper will briefly explore the question of "cultural space" for traditional performers which is threatened by the influences of modernization, the influx of popular culture and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism.

Introduction: Trading-Links from the Arabian Peninsula to the Malay world (Alam Melayu)

The arrival of Arab traders and Islam is the most critical factor in this study. The historical periods are divided into three stages of Muslim trading links with the Malay Archipelago (Nusantara). First, in the Early Period (17th century) of early trading exploration in the historical sense by Muslim traders. Second, is the Middle Period (15th century) which is most significant influences of Islamic contributions by Arabs, Persians and Indian Muslim traders. Third, is the Later Period (19th century) where the principal actors (Arabs) as entrepreneurs and religious men taking a more influential role in Malay culture and politics. This led to the establishment of land ownership, education and political philosophies of the Arabs in the Malay world (Alam Melayu). Events in the 19th century played a vital role by the arrival of Arab Hadhrami traders. This period can be referred to as the Hadhrami emigration "diaspora" (Alatas: 1997). With the high status and respect accorded to the Arabs, many Hadhrami traders came to trade, marry and settle down with the local Malay community. Subsequently, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 expedited the arrival of the Islamic mullahs and religious scholars from Yemen to this region.

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THE GAMBUS (LUTES) OF THE MALAY WORLD

LARRY FRANCIS HILARIAN
The Gambus (Lutes) of the Malay World

Larry Francis Hilarian
(National Institute of Education, Singapore)

Introduction

This research was largely based on anthropology, organology, and ethnohistorical investigations. The main focus of this study is on the historical introduction of the gambus (Malay-lute) and the various hypotheses on the transmission of these types of instrument to the Malay Archipelago.

Problems and Situations of Malay Music

Very little has been written about the gambus or Malay music in either English or Bahasa Melayu. One might ask why there is so little information or documentation on Malay music. Perhaps the significance of Malay music was overshadowed by the gamelan music of Indonesia, which became popular with western researchers, scholars and composers in the late 19th and early 20th century. Another reason why Malay music went unnoticed could be largely due to the historical importance of Indonesia during the period of the spice trade. It can be argued historically that Indonesia's early history played a significant role in the Malayo kingdom of South East Asia.\(^1\) The general lack of enquiry into the area of traditional Malay music may also partly be because of the "folk" art label attached to its music. In terms of social function, Malay society today seems to have far less traditional music due to modernization and westernization. The lack of any kind of formal training for traditional Malay music in schools, private institutions
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and colleges is also responsible for its insignificant growth. Evidently, any of the factors that I have raised earlier could be the reason for the insignificant amount of interest generally shown in traditional Malay music.

Fieldwork and Research Methodology

When I first started my fieldwork in 1994, my attention was focused on the gambus found primarily in Peninsular Malaysia (see Map 1). Then I started by looking into the etymology and lexicon of the word “gambus” in Arabic, Persian, Bahasa Melayu and English.

Map 1: Peninsular Malaysia

In this study, I discovered the importance and relevance of investigating proto-type lute instruments from other countries. This helped me to understand the “similarities between and differences amongst” the various (short-necked lute) instruments and how this may be linked directly or indirectly to the gambus.

In the beginning, my research was focused on one type of gambus (arched-back) as I was unaware of the existence of the oval-shaped lute. When I first came across the ovoid-shaped lute my impression was that this instrument looked completely different and had nothing in common with the gambus of the arched-back type [see fig. 1 gambus Hadhramaut (a) and gambus Melayu (b)]. Why do they have the same name? However, I later found that both types of lute instrument were interchangeable in the performance of zapin and ghazal musical genres. This led to my belief that they are inseparable and it became necessary to investigate both types of lute instruments as both types were engaged to play the role as the main
instrument in *zapin* and *ghazal* but never played together in the same ensemble.

Fig. 1: Gambus Hadhramaut (a) and Gambus Melayu (b)

The research became complex as it became necessary to look into the practice of *gambus* playing in the whole of *alam Melayu* (Malay world) as this instrument is identified with *Melayu* tradition. If I did not take this step, this research would not be complete, effective or accurate (see Map 2).

Map 2: Malay Archipelago and *alam Melayu* (the Malay world)

As the *gambus* crosses many political boundaries it became imperative to focus my research on a particular area or country. After gaining a greater understanding through looking outwards, I
decided to narrow my research and focus on the *gambus*, primarily found in Peninsular Malaysia.

**Sources of Information**

Fieldwork interviews played a crucial part in this research. These were conducted with makers of *gambus*, professional and semi-professional *gambus* players, dancers and scholars. My data collection was largely based on personal interviews and participant-observations. The framework for this research came mainly from these discussions, conversations, seminars, interviews and active participation in music making in the various *Melayu* societies. Most of the interviews were carried out in the *kampong* in an informal setting. Over the nine years I visited the same musicians, makers and dancers. Most interviews were carried out in *Bahasa Melayu* as very few practitioners spoke English in the *kampong*. Part of my study is to construct and understand some sort of “music theory” as articulated by different practitioners of Malay culture as their music has been transmitted orally through generations.3

In my fieldwork methodology I did not engage my research in only one particular area. The approach to my initial field study was first made in Johor (southern part of Peninsular Malaysia). I then looked outwards by making field trips to the other *Melayu* cultural areas in Sumatra, Riau, Penyegat, Bintan in Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei and also the coastal areas of Borneo (Sabah) and Sarawak in East Malaysia. Finally I went back and concentrated my entire research in Johor, which became the focal point of this study. It was in Johor that most of my extensive visits were done by locating myself at a few places where *gambus* were made and performed regularly. These were mainly in Batu Pahat, Muar and Johor Bahru in the State of Johor. I also visited performers in Kuala Lumpur frequently as some of the best *gambus* performers have uprooted themselves from Johor to Kuala Lumpur mainly for recognition and employment, as opportunities are better in big cities. This method of fieldwork looked at the wider area of the study of music in the social context. I have also re-visited the other areas, especially in Indonesia and Brunei more than once, to compare the differences with the Johor performances.

Investigations on *gambus* were also carried out at the Musee de l' Homme and Cite de la Musique in France and at Horniman (Museum) Store in Greenwich, England. Personal contacts, scholars and musicians from Yemen, France, Israel, America, Turkey and Egypt interested in lute-type instruments outside the Malay
Archipelago were relied upon as secondary sources. Their invaluable comments and suggestions also helped to shape the direction of this research. Close contact was kept with many Malay music experts, makers and gambus performers.

The Various “Theories” Since the 9th Century on the Arrival of the Gambus

There are various “theories” as to how gambus Melayu and gambus Hadhramaut arrived in the Malay Archipelago. One hypothesis is that scholars such as Professor Anis have attributed the arrival of gambus to the Arabs during the Islamization of Melaka in the 15th century. My hypotheses I am propounding is that the Persians and the Arabs were trading in the Malay Archipelago as early as the 9th century and these instruments could have been carried on board their ships for personal entertainment on long voyages. The barbat, qanbus and ‘ud could probably have been introduced by these traders, when trading along the Malay Archipelago. I have designed a schematic map in Fig. 2 providing a diagrammatic illustration on the hypothetical historical routes of the gambus to alam Melayu.
The earliest western documented source that I have come across in English, recorded the word "gambus" was by Sachs in The History of Musical Instruments.5

"[sic. Lute-types instruments] carved out of a single piece of wood with no distinct neck and tapering towards the peg box, are found first in Iran (Persia), the same country which afterwards became their center; Elamic clay figures attributed to the 8th century B.C. show them in rough
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The Gambus Type Instruments

It is interesting to note that Sachs mentioned that the Persian lute could have arrived in the Malay Archipelago through “Islamic migration and conquest.” Sachs’s view clearly requires an examination of the probable dominant Persian influence on South East Asia before the arrival of Muslim Arab traders in the 15th century. This is an important quote by Sachs as it discusses some of the ideas surrounding the “transmission” with regards to the Malay Archipelago. It is possible that the barbat, could have been brought by Sufi missionaries from Persia who plied the trade route of the Muslim merchants to South East Asia. This vital fact was mentioned earlier in a quotation by Sachs (p.8). It supports the hypothesis that the barbat may have been introduced into the Malay Archipelago even before the arrival of Muslim Arab traders to Melaka in the 15th century. Historical evidence to prove that Persians and Arabs were in the Malay Archipelago as early as the 9th century.

Alatas supports the hypothesis the presence of large Persian and Arab trading Muslim settlements in the Malay Archipelago. Alatas states that a thriving port also existed on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula in the 9th century (named Kalah or Klang) inhabited by Muslims from Persia and India. Kalah is in the State of Selangor where the capital Kuala Lumpur is situated. It could therefore be possible to suggest that the Persians could have brought the barbat to the Malay Archipelago.

The question that comes to mind is did the gambus type instruments come from Persia or the Arabian Peninsula? The gambus Melayu that came to the Malay Archipelago could be either a direct descendant of the Persian barbat or from the Yemeni qanbus, which itself may have evolved from the “barbat.” The gambus Melayu has striking resemblances to both barbat and qanbus type instruments. There is historical evidence to suggest that either of these routes were possible as coming from Persia and Arabia. The similarities between the gambus and the barbat are...
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those that also link the gambus with the qanbus. Even the strings of both types of gambus instruments are tuned in perfect 4ths, as it would be in the case of most Persian and Arabian lutes.

Information gathered about the construction of gambus Melayu is similar in manner to the construction of barbat. Ella Zonis in her book titled Classical Persian Music concludes that barbat is constructed from one piece of wood. To quote Zonis: "As early as the Sassanian period (224-651 A.D.) the Persians had a ud called barbat. The construction was different from that of the Arab lute since in the barbat, the body and the neck were constructed of one graduated piece of wood..." (1973:179). The above quotation confirms the close similarities apparent in the construction of the barbat and gambus Melayu. One cannot doubt the probability of Persian influence in the construction method of gambus Melayu. The descriptions by Sachs and Zonis about gambus implies the instrument may be of Persian origin.

Also, according to Farmer, the barbat was exported to the Arabian Peninsula from Persia. This may explain the close similarities between the 'ud and the qanbus from Yemen. Farmer concludes that Persian lutes were taken to Arabia in late 7th century by Persian slaves who were to work in Mecca and other parts of the Arabian Peninsula. In the 8th century Zalzal introduced a new type of 'ud which superseded the barbat. It was this new invention ('ud) that was brought to Europe by the Arab invasion of Spain and became known to the West as the lute (1967:108).

Islamization of Alam Melayu (Malay World) in the 13th Century

There is another hypothesis that claims that the Persians may have brought the barbat or even the 'ud type instruments separately to the northern Sumatran states of Samudra, Pasai and Acheh during the 13th century as Islamic settlements were established by the early Persians. Picken concludes: "that the establishment of Islam in Sumatra in the 13th century has been correlated with the first transmission to the Indian Archipelago of kopuz like instruments" (1975: 269). It is believed that the Acheh royal court in the 13th century also maintained musicians from Persia. Persian musicians were invited to stay in Acheh and even today strong Persian Sufi influence is still apparent in Achehinese culture. During that time many literary works were translated from Persian and adapted into the Malay language.

It is difficult to state categorically when and how the gambus arrived in the alam Melayu. Questions such as: Was the gambus
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fretted or unfretted? Did it have wire, gut or other types of strings? are difficult to answer, as no documentary or iconographical evidence has been found. With little or no information regarding the arrival of gambus type instruments, the present research relied heavily on historical accounts and on theories regarding the Islamization of the Malay Archipelago during the 15th century. Early historical accounts of Islamization are vital clues for understanding the dissemination of Arabian and Persian lute-type instruments in the Malay Archipelago. The golden age of Malay history and the concept of Melayu culture began with the Melaka Empire and the arrival of Islam in the 15th century.

The 16th Century Portuguese Connection

Although no historical sources have mentioned anything about the possibility of the Portuguese connection with the transmission of gambus into alam Melayu, I am inclined to follow another line of argument on the hypothesis of the Portuguese link. There is some evidence to show the Portuguese arrival may have played a part in the transmission of gambus-type instruments into alam Melayu.

Historical sources claimed that since the early sixteenth century the Portuguese had brought large quantities of musical instruments to Melaka, especially plucked and bowed stringed instruments. The Portuguese who were in Melaka were not only white Portuguese, but “Portugis”, also known as the “Black Portuguese,” who were usually the freed slaves and mercenaries. It has been documented that the Portuguese folk music and instruments were introduced into colonial Melaka households, performed by slaves of African, Indian, Moorish (Morisco) and other origins, resulting in a musical synthesis between Portuguese, Malay, African, Indian and Arabian musical elements and instruments. The freed slaves and “native soldiers” adopted Christianity, intermarried the local Malays, settled in kampong and also took up employment as ceremonial and Malay court musicians. On being converted to Christianity they were allowed to take up Portuguese citizenship and their descendants have promoted Portuguese culture in Melaka (around kampong Serani). Even to this day there are strong Portuguese cultural influences maintained in Melaka, thus preserving a distinct cultural identity in Melaka.

An important musical development was that various genres of music and dance styles emerged during the period of Malay-Portuguese contact such as kronchong, joget, ronggang, dondang sayang in the Malay courts throughout the Malay Archipelago.
The important of the “Portugis” community in the development of music with “Portuguese influences” concluded by Kornhauser (1978), Salwa (1997) and Kartomi (1997) presented another convincing hypothesis of the arrival of gambus-type instruments into alam Melayu (Malay world). Kornhauser mentioned the Portuguese writer Filipe de Caverel had claimed that ten thousand guitars went with the Portuguese to Morocco in 1582. I am inclined to believe the possibility of Moorish from North Africa, Persian from the Hormuz region of the Gulf States played a part in the transmission of lute-type instruments into alam Melayu as the Portuguese were trading and colonizing these regions as early as the 15th century. Hence, the possibility of transmission of gambus-type instruments through the Portuguese cannot be discarded altogether.

The 16th and 18th Century Aceh-Johor-Riau- Triangulation

Once the “theories” pertaining to the arrival of the gambus have been advanced, its dissemination throughout alam Melayu in the 16th century needs further consideration. Another hypothesis is that gambus-type instruments could have been brought from Melaka to Johor by the fleeing Melakans after their defeat by the Portuguese the 16th century.

Johor-Riau-Lingga Empire became the direct inheritor of the old Melakan royal tradition. It has been claimed by scholars that gambus and zapin came to Johor from Melaka. Arab music could have virtually been a court music and later spread into Johor and then to the other parts of Indonesia and Riau-Lingga Islands but these are only presumptions as there is little evidence to prove this point. Anis concludes that:

“In Malaysia, the coastal areas of north-west Johor is the center of the zapin tradition. This area was at one time under the political hegemony of the Melaka empire (c.144-1511). It is from this region that zapin is believed to have later spread to the outlying areas east and west of Melaka. The fall of Melaka was followed by the emergence of the Johor-Riau kingdom into the Malay world and a continuation of the Melaka lineages in other parts of the Straits of Melaka region. Singapore and the Riau Islands were historically tied to the greater Johor empire when zapin made its appearance in these areas” (1993:19).
The conquest of the Melakan Empire by the Portuguese, led to the establishment of a new Empire by the Melakan rulers in Johor Lama (old). The Johor Empire eventually became powerful and controlled the Riau-Lingga islands as well as the eastern coast of Sumatra. In the 17th century there was much contact between Aceh and the Johor Empire established from the capital at Johor Lama (old). Hence there is an argument that the gambus could have arrived into Johor through the northern Sumatran state of Aceh since the 13th century.

As the Johor Empire maintained its supremacy over these areas, there were many contacts, conquests, inter-marriages, exchanges of musicians and, most importantly, political overlordship paid to the Johor Empire by the eastern Sumatran states and the Riau-Lingga islanders. Because of the close connections amongst these states in alam Melayu the gambus could have filtered across a triangulation of Johor-Riau-Aceh axis (see Map 3).

Map 3: Johor-Riau-Aceh Triangulation

The geographical closeness of Aceh-Johor-Riau axis made it almost inevitable for the Melayu people to engage in trade, commerce, intermarriage and the sharing of musical styles. This eventually would have led to the absorption of each other's cultures and music. The triangulation of the Johor-Riau-Aceh axis may have played a crucial role in the spread of gambus and its musical styles.
through the sharing and adopting of each other’s cultures. Something else that brought about the development of *gambus* was the patronage bestowed by the Malay rulers. The spread of Islam and the convergence of the common people in the sharing of culture also helped in the dissemination of the *gambus* throughout *alam Melayu*.

**The 19th Century Arrival of the Hadhramis from Yemen**

In the 19th century there was a greater interest shown by the Arabs to trade and also some Arabs were attracted to settle down in the Malay Archipelago. The Arab immigrants in Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia originated predominantly from the valley of Hadramaut. In the 19th century Hadhrami Arabs played a significant role in the spread of Islam as well as commercial trade in Southeast Asia. The Hadhrami not only arrived here, as traders and merchants, but many were cultured and scholarly men imbued in Arabic literature, religious law and philosophy. They traded extensively in the archipelago where they were granted special commercial privileges because they were of the same “race” as the Prophet. By the 19th century, it had become the mission of Islam that was the primary goal of the Arabs in *alam Melayu*. The Arabs brought along not only trade but huge amount of rich cultural baggages with them.

Another significance is the establishment of closer contact with West Asia, which began in the 19th century with the steamship travels and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. This shortened sea journeys and travel, especially from the Arab world to the Malay Archipelago. More exchanges and close developments of religious orthodoxy took place between the Arab world and the Malay world from the 19th century onwards. The economic success of the Hadhramis in the Malay Archipelago led to the arrival of more family members.

Hadhrami Arabs brought not only their music and culture but they also intermarried with the local women. Later Islamic clergymen and religious scholars from the Hadhrami community started to arrive in this region. Musical instruments such as the arched-back *ud* arrived into this region once again in the 19th century. The arched-back lute became more predominantly used during the 19th century in Peninsular Malaysia. Interestingly, the Hadhrami communities in *alam Melayu* provide a fascinating case of transnational communities. They assimilated well into their host countries of Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore but retained their
cultural identity at the same time. This is referred to as the Hadhrami practice of "asabiyya." 

The Re-introduction of the Gambus in the 19th and 20th Century

Having considered the various "theories" on the arrival and establishment of the gambus, there is one more hypothesis on the arrival of the 'ud in particular. The opening of Suez Canal in 1869 would have expedited and shortened the sea journey from the Middle-East to alam Melayu. The Arabian 'ud, but this time coming from other parts of the Middle East, could have been re-introduced as a "second coming" of the gambus in alam Melayu. It can be argued that the popularity of the 'ud (gambus Hadhramaut) superseded gambus Melayu in the late 19th or early 20th century in Peninsular Malaysia. In Peninsular Malaysia today, gambus Melayu has been almost completely replaced by gambus Hadhramaut.

Summary

The hypotheses on the arrival of gambus in alam Melayu have been mentioned by Sachs (1913;1940); Kunst (1934); Picken (1975) and Anis (1993), as being mainly through the spread of Islam. Information on the presence of early Muslim settlements in Borneo has been well documented in Chinese records. Islamic practices and gambus performances have become intertwined with some aspects of Malay music. The Malay Muslim populations of the coastal areas of Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei and Kalimantan (Borneo) identify with Islam and regard the gambus as an important instrument of their culture. Religious significance may account for the popularity and performance of gambus in Muslim areas of Sabah, Sarawak, Brunei, Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo) and Sulawesi. Hence, today the gambus is associated with Muslim populations in the whole of alam Melayu. There are many Malays who strongly believe that the gambus Melayu is of Malay origin, as opposed to gambus Hadhramaut.

Conclusion

No one knows for sure exactly how the gambus arrived in alam Melayu. My argument points to the fact that both types of gambus were already highly developed when introduced into the Malay Archipelago. There is no evidence of "similar" or "primitive" types of lute found that could point to the gambus being indigenous to alam Melayu. Evidence pointing towards the contribution of the Muslims from Persia and Arabia in the transmission of the gambus
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to the Malay Archipelago is substantial and conclusive. The gambus may have developed over the centuries in alam Melayu, however, the striking resemblance to qanbus or barbat, supports the theory that it was an "imported" instrument rather than being indigenous to alam Melayu albeit now modified and adapted.

I am convinced from the arguments that the gambus Hadhramaut was a later arrival to alam Melayu as the 'ud only arrived in Yemen in the 19th century. My research argues that gambus-Melayu type instruments probably arrived first. It could even be possible that these ovoid shaped lutes were transmitted by others and not only the Arabs from Hadhramaut. The Portuguese connection presents yet another convincing hypothesis. The significant contributions of the unique musical styles of the "Portugis" of Melaka concluded by Seebass (1976), Kornhauser (1978), Salwa (1997) and Kartomi (1997).

In short, both types of gambus were later modified and adapted to have regional characteristics and an identity that is today representative of Malay cultural heritage. It can be argued without doubt that the gambus is now the manifestation of the Malay/Muslim tradition through adaptation, modification and interaction with Arabic custom, culture and religion. Today, both types of gambus act as powerful symbols of Malay identity and pride tied to their culture and religion.

References


____. 2002b. "The Migrational Route of the Malay Gambus." Paper read at the meeting of the International Musicology Society (IMS), August 2-8, Belgium.


Notes

1. The Indonesian kingdoms of Sailendro (6th century), Sri Vijaya (7th-11th century) and Majapahit Empire (13th-15th century) ruled many parts of South East Asia.

2. It is important to note the differences between the Malay Archipelago and *alam Melayu* (the Malay world) which shown in Map 2.

3. Malay music "theory" is not within the scope of this paper.


5. Sachs was probably the first European scholar to have used the word "gambus" in his 1913 German publication of "Reallexikon der Musikinstrumente" (p.152) Georg Olm Verlagsbuchhandlung Hildesheim 1964 Nachdruck der Ausgabe, Berlin 1913 mit Genehmigung des Verlag Max Hesse, Berlin. Kunst used the word "gambus" in an article in 1934, describing the gambus as a plucked pear-shaped lute. He concluded that the gambus is fairly
common throughout the entire archipelago in strict Islamic areas. Kunst described it as having seven strings: three double strung pairs and one low single string (1934). In another article by Kunst it was also mentioned that its (gambus) country of origin was the Hadhramaut region of Yemen where it is known as quopuz. This article appeared in “Two Thousand Years of South Sumatra Reflected in its Music” (1952). Both reprints also appeared in Indonesian Music & Dance published by Royal Tropical Institute/Tropenmuseum University of Amsterdam/Ethnomusicology Centre “Jaap Kunst”, (1994:170; 237).

6. Sachs also claimed that the Persian lute (barbat) reappeared in the Islamic Near-East many centuries later. Its peg-box was bent backwards in a sickle shape and contained lateral pegs. The string holder was not frontal but at the lower end of the body and skin covered soundboard. This description is closely aligned to the gambus Melayu type instruments found in alam Melayu (Malay world). The migration could have carried this lute eastwards from Persia to Celebes ([sic.Sulawesi]) in Indonesia (gambusu), and also to Zanzibar (gambus1) and Madagascar (kabosa). He concludes that it was also introduced to Egypt around 1200A.D. Today this lute is extinct in the Near-East (1940: 251-252). The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, also briefly mentioned that contact with early spice trade brought many influences from Arabic-Persian sources. The 7 stringed gambus was mentioned as one of them (Mantle Hood: 1980:215:No 9).

7. Kunst described Sumatra and the surrounding islands as being strongly influenced by Islam and the Persian-Arabic culture. He mentioned gambus of the 7 stringed type lute as characteristic of coming from Persia and Arabian Peninsula (1994:175). This fact further supports one of my hypotheses that the gambus Melayu may probably be of Persian origin.

8. Summary of papers on “Hadhrami Diaspora” were discussions in the conference at Alwehdah (Singapore Arabs Association) on the 20th August 1995. Speakers were: Dr. Farid Alatas, Alwiya Abdul Aziz, Harasha bte. Khalid Banafa and Heike bin Khalid Banafa. Also see Muslim World 75 nos.3-4, (Alatas: 1985:163).

9. Dr. Alatas mentioned in an article, “Notes on Various Theories Regarding the Islamization of the Malay Archipelago” that the
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writings of Arab historians and geographers of the 9th century knew of the existence of Srivijaya Empire (Indonesia) that included large parts of the Malay Archipelago. Ya'quibi, for example writes of the trading connections between Kalah on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula and Aden (Yemen). Another writer, Ibn al-Faqih (902) mentioned about the cosmopolitanism of Kalah. Abu Zayd of Siraf (d.916) said Kalah lies half-way between China and Arabia and mentioned Kalah as a prosperous town inhabited by Muslims from India and Persia. Another 10th century source by Ismail b. Hasan mentioned in a condensed nautical treatise, as a work based in part on travels in the Malay Archipelago (Muslim World 75: nos: 3-4: 1985:163-4). However, historian Andaya describes Muslim trading colony Kalah as being in the northern part of the Malay peninsula (1982:51). All these facts support the evidence of Muslims from Persia, Arabia and India, inhabiting some of the important ports in the Malay Archipelago.

10. Shiloah mentioned in his writing that the 'ud was invented by a Persian philosopher Ibn Hidjdja (b.1366-d.1434) who called it barbat (1979:180).

11. The description given by Jean During in The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments closely identifies the barbat with gambus Melayu. However, During did not say where the barbat came from but he did say: "The barbat had four silk strings, sometimes doubled, tuned in 4ths and plucked with a plectrum...At an early date it was exported to Arabia via Ai-Hira on the Ephrates. The North African kwitra and Arab 'ud can be considered descendants of the barbat as can the Chinese pipa and Japanese biwa" (1984:156: No.1).

12. Jean Lambert described in his book La Medecine de l'ame that the qanbus from Yemen has three double course strings tuned progressively in 4ths except for the low single string which is tuned an octave lower to the high double course strings (1997:90). The tuning in 4ths is similar to most gambus of alam Melayu.

13. Shiloah mentioned to me that most, if not all, references in Arabic sources seem to identify the barbat with the 'ud either as one out of the five names of the 'ud, or as a close variant of it (Date:26th March:2000). This makes the issue of these two types of lute instrument more problematic as the word barbat or 'ud
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can be used to describe either instrument. Poche pointed out that the shape of the Yemeni qanbus is closely related to the early Islamic 'ud. In comparison between the 'ud and the Yemeni qanbus, the qanbus has reciprocal influences and continuous interaction with the Arabian classical 'ud. However the qanbus is covered with lambskin painted in green as the colour of Islam and it has seven strings, three double strung and a single low string. Poche mentioned that at Sa'na in Yemen the qanbus is called the 'ud of Sa'na or the 'ud with four strings to distinguish it from the classical Arabian 'ud in The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments (1984:168).

14. By the 5th century, the barbat was used by Byzantine and Persian singing girls, although the Arabic 'ud appeared in Mecca in the 6th century (Marcuse: 1975: 413).

15. Farmer concludes that the old pear-shaped barbat type lute, without a definite neck continued to exist side by side with the 'ud in the Castigas de Santa Maria (The Origin of Arabian Lute and Rebec: p.98). Sachs also describes a type of Moorish guitar of the 14th century 'la guitarra morisca' used by the Spaniards, was more and more influenced by the lute today which descended from the 'ud (1940:252). Malay sources also claimed to quote Mustapha Nik Mohd.Salleh: "Spanish 'ud is known as "aloof" or lutes in English are closely related to lute-type instruments" (1998:155). John M. Schecter in The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments describes the "laud" as a Spanish term for the Arabian 'ud and that it was introduced into Spain by the Arabs in the 13th century (1984:508). Anthony Baines in The Oxford Companion to Musical Instruments also mentioned the "laud" with flat-back, oval or wavy sided body often with wavy sound holes and metal strings from Spain. It is tuned to six double courses and tuned progressively downwards in fourths (1992:19-20). This is what, as can be seen from the description closely related to the Arabian 'ud (gambus Hadhramaut)

16. We know from Marco Polo that the port of Perlak in North Sumatra was converted to Islam in 1291-1292 A.D. Another scholar, Van Leur pointed out that by the end of the 13th century, rulers of some newly arisen coastal states in Northern Sumatra adopted Islam through Indonesian trade (Van Leur: p.112).
17. There are two problems here as Picken quoted this information from Sachs. Firstly, *kopuz* (*qopuz*, *qupuz*) is a long-necked lute dating from the 11th century used by some Turkish tribes of south central Asia. This instrument is similar to the *baglama* and *saz*. Sachs may have erroneously used the term *kopuz* to mean *qanbus*, *qabus* or *barbat*, which are structurally similar to the *gambus* *Melayu*. Secondly, the term “Indian Archipelago” described in the quotation is confusing. It may be helpful to refine its geographical terminology to mean “Malay Archipelago”. I suspect the term “Indian Archipelago” could be referring to the “spice islands”, which were commonly referred to as “Indian” by early European explorers to mean the “Malay Archipelago” during the 16th century exploration of the spice islands by the Europeans. The regional name “East Indies” is sometimes used as synonym for the “Malay Archipelago”. This term was confirmed by Dr. Karl Anthony Hack, a specialist on South East Asian History, Division of History, NTU/NIE. (Personal communication: 28th October 1999).

18. The Northern states of Sumatra have been influenced by Islam and the earliest gravestone of a Moslem prince was recorded in 1297 in Perlak and Samudra as mentioned by Tome Pires. The presence of some Muslim communities in Northern Sumatra was also reported by Marco Polo through his travels to this region in 1292.

19. Alatas mentioned that many Sufi teachers and scholars introduced Greek philosophical thought besides Sufi theology to the Malay Archipelago (Muslim World 75 no3-4 (1985:173).

20. Kunst mentioned that the contribution of the Muslim i.e. Persian and Arabic realm in the field of music consists of several instruments commonly used in Islamic societies in the Malay Archipelago. He mentioned for example the *gambus*, *marwas* and *rebana* as well as the structure of a number of melodies found in the Malay world have come from Persia and the Arab world (1994: 237).

21. Melaka has recently been declared a World Heritage site by the United Nations.

22. The Portuguese commander D’Alburquerque who invaded Melaka had 800 Portuguese and between 200-600 “others” as native sailors, soldiers and slaves. See Cortesao.
23. Presumably the Portuguese sailors introduced a small guitar or lute-type instrument called *kroncong* that resembles the ukulele or the Portuguese cavaquinho (also known as machete). It is also assumed that the *kroncong* musical genre takes its name from *kroncong* lute. (*The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians: 2001: vol. 12: 363*).

24. The "Portugis" music in the 16th century included not only Portuguese characteristics but also African, Indian and Southeast Asian stylistic traits. The "Portugis" consisted of mesticos (Portuguese-Indonesian Christians), converted locals and *mardijkers* (freed African, Indian or Malay slaves of the Portuguese converts). These "Portugis" also adopted Portuguese names and are proud of their "European" status and distinctive identity. At the same time the Portuguese culture was maintained through "descendants", mixed marriages and free slaves who adopted Christianity and preserved distinct cultural identities. See Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco (1997) and Kornhauser (1978).


26. According to Sarkissian the term *kampong Serani* was used to mean Christian settlement in Melaka, *Serani* to mean "Nazarene" is an old synonym for Christians (2000).

27. *Kronchong*, *joget*, *ronggang* and *dondang sayang* are Malay music genres.

28. This fact was recorded by Pinto. See The Voyages and Adventures of Fernand Mendez Pinto. Trans. H. Logan, London: Dawsons of Pall Mall. Also see Suma Oriental of Tome Pires by Armando Cortesao.

29. The Portuguese under the command of Alfonso d' Albuquerque dominated the key points in the Moslem trading network through which Asian spices trade reached Europe by seizure of Goa (India) in 1510, Melaka in 1511 and Hormuz, at the mouth of the Persian Gulf in 1515. (Andaya: 1982).


31. I am grateful to Professor Michael Gilsenan from the Department of Middle Eastern Studies, New York University for his helpful comments on the Hadhrami community from *alam Melayu* (personal communication: 10th-15th August 2000).
32. Dr. Farid Alatas describes this as Hadhrami consciousness and identity. He pointed out that for centuries "Hadhramis married into Malay-Indonesian communities and retained their cultural identities without losing their sense of Hadhami identity because such identity is not national or ethnic but kinship-based" (Personal communication: 12th July 1999). Also see Alatas (1996:10).


34. The musicians and scholars I spoke to in Indonesia, (S.Berrain), Malaysia, (Professor. Anis) and Brunei, (Haji Nayan bin Apong) seem to agree that gambus Melayu originated from alam Melayu (Malay world).

35. This astonishing fact was confirmed to me in a letter by Dr. Jean Lambert on the 27th December 1999. Dr. Lambert is an authority on the music of Yemen. His work on the qanbus and 'ud from Yemen is discussed in La medecine de l'ame. Le chant de Sana dans la société Yemenite. Nanterre, Societe d' ethnologie, 1997.