



# Trade in the 14th Century AD to the 20th AD on the Southwest Coast of Borneo

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## ABSTRACT

The southwestern coast of Kalimantan has a strategic position in world shipping traffic since the past. The voyage is an activity of various interests, ranging from trade, broadcasting culture to military expansion. This strategic position led to the emergence of important areas as transit ports to the royal capital in the past. The mention of location names such as Tanjungpura, Sukadana, Matan, Kendandangan, and Jelai in ancient inscriptions dating back to the 13th century AD is a sign that the southwestern coast of Kalimantan was important at that time. The research aims to provide an overview of trading activities in the past on the southwestern coast of Kalimantan. This study uses a historical and spatial archaeological approach with archaeological evidence, historical data and macro-spatial displays that show past trading activities on the southwestern coast of Kalimantan. Trading in the past on the southwestern coast of Kalimantan was greatly influenced by its strategic position. The busy shipping lanes in the Karimata Strait in the past were an important factor influencing exchange and trading activities in the region. Various commodities ranging from food, ceramics to jewelry are used as commodities in the region. Ports on the southwestern coast of Kalimantan are widely used as transit ports. In addition, commodities in the southwest Kalimantan region are commodities sought after by foreign traders.

**Keywords:** Karimata Strait, Archeology, Harbor, Shipping, Commodity, Maritime

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Before the arrival of Westerners, trade activities in the archipelago had developed into an international trade area. The land trade route starts from China (China) through Central Asia, Turkestan to the Mediterranean Sea. This route also connected with caravan roads from India. This route is known as the "Silk Road" (Iskandar 2005: 175).

The concept of the Silk Road is currently actively promoted by UNESCO through various projects and programs. Currently UNESCO has an online platform to provide information and learning about the Silk Road ([silkroads@unesco.org](mailto:silkroads@unesco.org)). This shows that the Silk Road is a very important historical cultural heritage for the world. The importance of the Silk Road, especially the maritime route, is because it reaches a wide geographical area between islands and between continents. Shipping and trade activities will give rise to cultural interactions or contacts which of course will result in cultural assimilation and acculturation. Shipping and trade are also vital for the world, especially Indonesia, because of its unique nature which can be reached via sea traffic and controls international maritime routes (Reid, 2015:3). Indonesia is a country rich in natural resources from ancient times until now. become an important part of the world. The large number of trade activities heading to Indonesia forms trade routes in the archipelago with other regions from various parts of the world such as India, Europe, the Middle East and China (Utomo, 2016: 16).

In maritime history in the archipelago, what encouraged the development of shipping and trade activities were superior commodities that were in great demand by other nations, such as sandalwood, nutmeg, cloves and pepper, which later gave rise to the term spice route. From the place that produces this very popular commodity, it is then marketed in relay from the producing port to other ports (Jejak Nusantara, Vol. 4 No. 3, 2016). Apart from spice resources, there are also various other resources that are attractive to nations from various countries. parts of the world. One of them is the resources on the island of Kalimantan, especially Southwest Kalimantan, which is said to be famous for producing wood, iron and diamonds. The Southwest Kalimantan region, including Karimata Island, has a

very strategic position, not only because of its natural resources, but also because it connects shipping from the west (Indian Ocean) via the Malacca Strait, and connects Eastern Indonesia (Maluku) via the Java Sea and the northern part is directly connected to the China Sea. South as shown on the map.



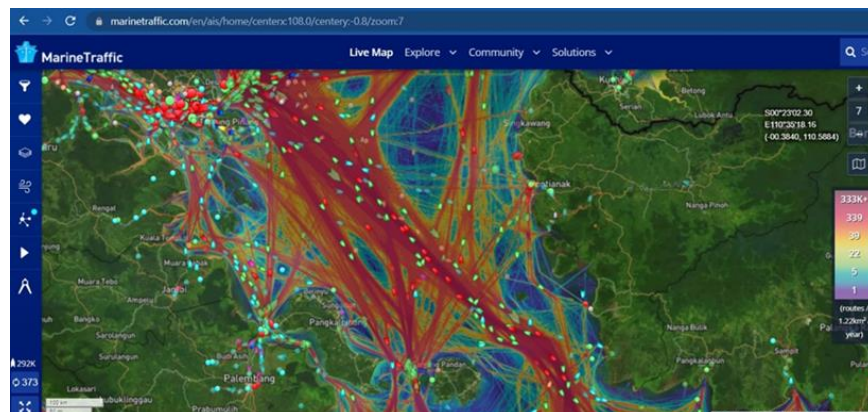
**Figure 1.** Silk Road

Source: [<https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/silkroad-interactive-map>, 2023]

The position of southwest Kalimantan has a very strategic location as a shipping route in the past. The Karimata Strait is very busy with traders from various large ports in Southeast Asia, Asia and even Europe. The Karimata Strait area itself can be called "A Highway and a Crossroads" because there is cultural diversity due to its position as a shipping and trade traffic route, all of which are mixed together in this area, including new cultures that eventually emerge and develop (Lape, 2003: 102 -109).

This strategic position allowed the emergence of settlements that could have grown into royal centers in the past. In the *Negarakretagama* manuscript, it is stated that one of the areas conquered by Majapahit in the 14th century AD, namely Tanjungpura, is thought to be located in southwest Kalimantan (Kern, 1910: 1-32). From several studies carried out, various artifacts were found. These artifacts include ceramic objects, metals, weapons, currency and other finds that indicate past exchange and trade activities.

Cities and ports on the coast of Southwest Kalimantan are currently starting to develop as port cities. The port city is a node for maritime trade and a landing place for both local and foreign merchant ships. This means that the port city is a 'market place' which has various functions (Pradjoko and Bambang Budi Utomo, 2013:10). Based on West Kalimantan Provincial Regulation No. 1 of 2019 concerning zoning plans for coastal areas and small islands, there is Melano Bay Harbor, Ketapang Port, and Kendawangan Port which are included in the public use area for the port zone. This shows that the three ports are strategic areas and will continue to be developed. In the current national scope, the coastal area of Southwest Kalimantan is within the Indonesian Archipelagic Sea Lane (ALKI) I area which connects the Sunda Strait, Karimata Strait, Natuna Sea and South China Sea (PP No. 37 of 2002, CHAPTER III, article 11, paragraph 1). From the results of observations of ship traffic in the Karimata Strait via the *marinetraffic.com* site as shown in the picture, it can be seen that the density of ship traffic passing through the Karimata Strait is more than 300 thousand ships/year.



**Figure 2.** Shipping Route Density Map in the Karimata Strait

Source: [[marinetraffic.com](http://marinetraffic.com), 2023]

## 2. OBJECTIVES

Based on the background above, the research problem is described, namely, how were past trade activities in Southwest Kalimantan based on archaeological findings and historical data? Hence, the aim of this research is to identify the trade activities in the past following the archaeological inventions and historical facts.

## 3. THEORETICAL REVIEW

Studies have been conducted regarding past trade in the Karimata Strait region. However, these studies did not focus on showing points on the southwest coast of Kalimantan. Previous studies have also never presented theories or evidence of trade data from archaeological finds.

Erman (2022) in her study entitled "The Karimata Strait: Heritage of Network System and Socio-political History of Malay Sultanate". This study shows that, The Karimata Strait is an intangible heritage that functions as a bridge for connecting people, goods, and ideas. The areas within the circle of the Karimata Strait had created their own socio-political history through various networks during the period of the 17th and 18th centuries. Various networks are formed and their formation through complicated historical processes, working across territorial or administrative boundaries, and differences in ethnicity, culture, and religion. There was the dominance of two major powers at that time which were influenced by the Arap descendant community and the Bugis descendant community. These two powers have a strong influence on trade traffic in the Karimata Strait. This study only emphasizes the condition of the Karimata Strait from a political history approach in the 17th and 18th centuries. This study did not look at the space at all or show artefactual data regarding these conditions.

Loh Wei Leng & Chi Seck Choo (2019) This study is part of a broader study of the contribution of one such minority sub-community, i.e., the Peranakan Chinese in maritime Southeast Asia in the period when the China-Southeast Asia component of the East-West trade had its most significant impact on the social and economic development of the region, i.e., the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries. There is strong evidence of trade diasporas in the coastal port polities in Southeast Asia from the early centuries of the first millennium. Various trade diasporas, mainly of Indian, Arab Moslem and Chinese origins emerged in the region to play an active role in the economic development of maritime Southeast Asia. By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, these trade diasporas had contributed to the development of trade in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea just before the entry of the Europeans into the region in the post-1500 era.

From the eleventh to thirteenth centuries new trade diasporas expanded in maritime Southeast Asia. Merchants guilds from India competed with one another to control the trade of maritime Southeast Asia. This resulted in the establishment of Indian trade diasporas in harbours along the Straits of Melaka. As for Chinese trade diasporas in maritime Southeast Asia, Chang Pin-tsun points to sporadic Ming records which indicate that some sojourners lived in Southeast Asia in the fourteenth century suggesting the possibility of the existence of Chinese settlements in Southeast Asia although no records are available to indicate how widespread these settlements were to make up a significant Chinese diaspora. By the early decades of the fifteenth century, however, the profile of this diaspora and of a busy Chinese trade network had emerged more clearly based on Chang's analysis of available sources. Factors such as population pressure in China and economic opportunities overseas together with other causes such as developments in shipping technology, commercial entrepreneurship, tribute trade and maritime prohibition as well as political networking, such as Cheng Ho's voyages, each played a mutually reinforcing role in contributing to the rise of the Chinese trade diaspora in this region.

A study on spatial analysis of trading networks was carried out by Sara, Pinto., Miguel, Nogueira., Monica, Wachowicz., Amélia, Polónia. (2010). The research about "Mapping 16 th Century Trade Networks: a GIS Application for Historical Data Sources" presents the results of a GIS application design for mapping historical data sources and analyzing the cooperation mechanisms among merchants in the 16th century. The focus of the research was on the network of Simon Ruiz, an important Iberian merchant in the 16th century. The GIS application successfully supported the spatial visualization and exploration of the nodes, orientation, extension, and intensity of the commercial network. The preliminary results demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed approach in analyzing historical data sources and enhancing their analytical potential. New approach is used in mapping commercial network historical data that involves an intrinsic georeferencing component. GIS applications have been developed to support spatial visualization and further exploration of network nodes, their orientation, extent and intensity.

Sara, Pinto. (2013). Based on research "Geographic Projections of a 16th Century Trade Network: New Meanings for Historical Research" by Pinto Sara in 2013 the research emphasizes the importance of integrating space and time

in historical analysis, as advocated by Fernand Braudel, in order to understand the evolution of societies in a spatial-temporal framework. The research project DynCoopNet (Dynamic Complexity of Cooperation-Based Self-Organizing Commercial Networks in the First Global Age) aims to uncover the mechanisms of cooperation among merchants in the self-organizing commercial networks of the First Global Age (1400-1800). The paper presents an approach that demonstrates the benefits of conducting spatio-temporal analysis of historical data sources.

#### 4. METHODS

This research involved inductive reasoning with qualitative data. Data obtained through excavation activities, surveys and literature studies, especially from data from ancient testament records and manuscripts. The data presented here is a collection of data from several research activities carried out by the author in the Southwest Kalimantan area from 2012, 2013, 2015, and 2018. This research uses a historical and spatial archaeological approach. With this data, it is hoped that a picture of past life can be reconstructed scientifically.

#### 5. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

##### 5.1. Past Trading Activities in Southwest Kalimantan

On the sea transportation route in the Karimata Strait there are three large islands, namely; Sumatra, Java and Kalimantan (Herwanto, 2010:96). The Karimata Strait began to be busy with sailors and traders after the Silk Road was deemed no longer safe and efficient for them. The large number of sailors and traders in the area is partly due to its very strategic position in shipping and trade traffic (Wolter 2011:61). Its position is located between countries in the western region and regions in the eastern region, as well as commercial ports in the northern region (Ibid). Apart from that, this area is also a waiting area for the exchange of seasonal winds by sailors (merchants) (Asnan, 2016: 84).



**Figure 3.** Map of shipping routes in the Karimata Strait

Source: [Research Data, 2023]

The west coast of Kalimantan Island has been an important route for Chinese traders for a long time (Flecker, 2015: 20-24). As a past trade shipping route, Kalimantan Island apparently has natural resources that are very important for traders. Indians, in the early AD, looked for sources of gold in the area they called Suvarnabumi (land of gold), and perhaps what they meant included Kalimantan and other parts of the western part of the archipelago (Broek, 1962:13). The western part of Kalimantan is known as Karpuradvipa (camphor producing island). The camphor has a distinctive fragrance and is used to make incense in China (Villiers, 2001:35).

In trade records during the Song Dynasty, it is stated that Borneo (Kalimantan) had valuable commodities for Chinese and other traders. Commodities sought include coconuts, pandan mats, camphor, cotton, kapok and areca nuts

(Wheatley, 1959: 47-83). Atsushi (2010) stated that apart from camphor, Chinese traders also looked for turtle shells, hornbill ivory, rhinoceros horn, beeswax, laka wood, rattan, bird's nests, and various spices. Portuguese sources from 1512-1530 mention diamonds originating from Tanjungpura (Broek, 1962:130). It was stated in Braddell (1949), that the most famous Borneo diamond in 1868 was owned by the Sultan of Matan. The diamond weighs 357 carats with very clear (crystal) quality and was estimated at more than a quarter of a million pounds at that time.

The existence of these diamonds is considered phenomenal in the early history of Kalimantan (Harrison, 1949: 104). At that time, West Kalimantan was the center of Javanese influence, but the diamond trade there was then controlled by the Chinese (Schrieke, 2016: 41). In historical notes, Cortesao (1944) quotes Barros, saying that Gongalo Pereira, on his way from Malacca to Maluku via Borneo, mentioned Tanjapura and in this city there were many diamonds (Cortesao, 1944: 89-90, Broek, 1962: 130). Pires said that Laue was outside Tanjompura, while Cortesao suspected that Laue was located in the southwest corner of western Kalimantan and Tanjompura was located several miles into the Pawan River. (Cortesao, 1944: 89-90, Broek, 1962: 130).

Various goods are used to obtain Kalimantan commodities, especially the western part. During the Song Dynasty, around the 10th to 13th centuries AD, traders used celadon ceramics as a barter tool (Wheatley, 1959: 47-83). In Tome Pires' notes, it was stated that there were traders who bartered using black benzoin (black frankincense) from Palembang with commodities in the Tanjungpura area (Villiers, 2001:38-39). In addition, commodity items used for bartering were silver, copper currency, colored satin, ivory boxes, copper kettles, porcelain cups, and earthenware jars (Villiers, 2001:38-39)).

Sukadana, the first Islamic Kingdom in southwest Kalimantan, also had interesting commodities. In 1604 Waerwijck's fleet anchored on the Karimata islands, sending a sloop to Sukadana to investigate the possibility of diamond trading (Broek, 1962: 138). Hans Roef who was a Dutch trader who went to Sukadana in 1606 or 1607 to buy diamonds, and a diamond processing factory was established and maintained until 1623 (Broek, 1962: 138).

Muller's travelogue in P.J. Veth (2012), stated that another natural resource that has the potential of the Pawan watershed is iron. Apart from being mined and processed by Dayak people in the Siduk area (an area downstream of the Pawan watershed), iron is also mined in the south coast area, namely in the Air Itam and Jelai river areas. Iron from this region is known as "steel from Matan". A lot of this iron is sent to Pontianak.

People in the Pawan watershed have blacksmith skills. The Dayak people in Matan who live in the upper reaches of the Pawan watershed also make weapons. The items made are sharp weapons, for example spears, machetes and other equipment. It is said that iron was obtained through their king (Veth, 2012:136-137).

Another commodity in the Matan area is swallow's nest. This commodity is usually taken by Dayak people from between cave walls and rock formations in Matan. The swallow's nest from Matan is of high quality because it is white. At that time the quality was very good and almost equaled the quality of bird nests from Brunei. These bird nests are mostly collected by Dayak people, then sold to leaders or officials in Matan at low prices. These collectors then sold them again to the king. In Matan, in the mid-19th century the price of 1 catty of this bird's nest was 30-40 Spanish mat; while in Sambas, Pontianak and Sukadana, the selling price is 70-85 Spanish mats (Veth, 2012: 138).

In a historical note written by P.J Veth (2012), in the 19th century, trade in the Matan region was busier than before. Trade in the Matan area is carried out with various traders. Trade is very often carried out with Singapore, both officially and smuggling. Unfortunately, these activities were not recorded and explained. Apart from that, there is also a lot of trade with traders in Pontianak. The busiest trade traffic is carried out with Pontianak. In 1847 a boat from Matan arrived in Pontianak with a load of 17 last; in 1848 as many as 12 boats from Matan arrived in Pontianak with a load of 41 last; In 1849 four boats arrived from Matan with a load of 15 last, while in 1850 a boat arrived with a load of 2 last. Meanwhile, 3 boats departed from Pontianak in 1847 with a load of 15 last, in 1848 21 boats departed with a load of 95 last, in 1849 a total of 13 boats with a load of 80 last and in 1850 a number of 11 boats with a load of 39 last. In the past, Chinese junks could sail up the Pawan River carrying goods such as tea, rough ceramics and various household goods, which were sold to kings in the interior areas inhabited by the Dayak people.

From historical data it can be seen the diversity of commodities in the Pawan watershed. Natural resource commodities are the orientation of traders outside Kalimantan Island. Apart from metal minerals in the upstream areas, Dayak people work as searchers for super quality aloes in the forests around the upper reaches of the Pawan watershed.

Based on research conducted in the Pawan watershed, the most prominent natural resource potential to date is metal minerals and precious stones. Metal minerals (gold, uranium minerals, nickel, iron ore and lead) currently exist

in the upstream part of the Pawan watershed. Based on geological data, in the upstream area there is a Sintang breakthrough which contains a lot of gold (Usman, 2011:30-41). Apart from that, in the past it was often said that the rulers of the Pawan watershed had precious stones in the form of diamonds which were probably found in the Pawan watershed. There are currently some traditional gold miners in the upper reaches of the Pawan watershed who find diamonds, but the problem is that some gold miners in the Pawan watershed do not all understand what the natural material of diamonds looks like before being polished and diamonds are also considered not to be the main target of their search.

The discovery of gold material sources upstream may be correlated with the discovery of gold-making activities in Negeri Baru downstream. At the Negeri Baru settlement site, a lot of gold was found, both in the form of jewelry and lumps of gold metal. From archaeological excavations carried out at Candi Negeri Baru, a tool for pouring hot molten gold (kowi) was found made of small clay.

Based on interviews, almost all residents living in Negeri Baru have found gold metal in the form of jewelry around their homes or on the banks of the Pawan River. There are many finds of gold metal in the form of gold, lumps of gold, and tools for pouring liquid metal (kowi). This data gives rise to the assumption that perhaps in Negeri Baru there were gold craftsmen in the past. This correlation is very possible if it is connected with the enormous gold potential in the upstream part of the Pawan watershed with the production of gold jewelry in the downstream part.

In the upstream part, sources of uranium, nickel, iron ore and lead have also been identified. In the past it was often said that local rulers in the Pawan watershed had precious stones in the form of diamonds, it is possible that these could have been found in the Pawan watershed. There are currently some traditional gold miners in the upper reaches of the Pawan watershed who find diamonds, but the problem is that some gold miners in the Pawan watershed do not all understand the shape of the natural material of diamonds before being polished and diamonds are also considered not to be the main target of their search. Apart from metal minerals in the upstream part, many Dayak people work as searchers for agarwood in the forests around the upper reaches of the Pawan watershed with super quality.

The existence of metalsmiths or metal craftsmen, both forging and smelting metal in every village in the Pawan watershed, is one of the ethnographic data that needs further research. They forged the iron metal using a heating technology called "puput" (a local term) and is better known in Java as ububan (Yogi, 2016: 140). Its existence can be used as an indication of activities related to the abundant availability of metal raw material sources in the Pawan watershed. The activities of these metal craftsmen have been passed down from generation to generation until today.

These natural resource commodities are the reason why outsiders are interested in entering and searching upstream. Based on the explanation above, we can mention the natural resource commodities that could be obtained in the Pawan watershed in the past, namely: diamonds, gold, iron ore, aloes, camphor, swallow's nests, coconuts, pandan mats, camphor, cotton, kapok, areca nut, turtle shells, hornbill tusks, rhino horns, beeswax, lacka wood, rattan, bird's nests, and various spices. Meanwhile, external commodities used as barter tools are celadon ceramics, silver, copper currency, colored satin, ivory boxes, copper kettles, porcelain cups and earthenware jars.

## ***5.2. Archaeological Data***

Shipping and trade activities in the Karimata Strait and Southwest Kalimantan have occurred since prehistoric times. This is proven by the findings of artifacts from prehistoric times on the coast of Southwest Kalimantan (Lombart 1996: 11; Bellwood 2000: 387-391). The southwest coast of Kalimantan is also a favorite stopping place for traders to and from China (Broke, 1962: 130). Apart from its position as a traffic route connecting areas in the north of the South China Sea, research results from the South Kalimantan Archaeological Center found various archaeological remains such as ceramic fragments, statue fragments, stupa reliefs and cave dwellings which indicate that in the Karimata Strait and Southwest Kalimantan areas has gone through a very long cultural process (Hindarto, 2017). Other archaeological evidence that is often found in the Karimata Strait and on the west coast of Kalimantan is the discovery of BMKT (submerged ship mutant objects) in very abundant quantities. It can be seen that during this period shipping traffic on the Karimata Strait route was very busy with traders. One of the BMKT lifts in the Karimata Strait was carried out by PT. Tuban Oceanic Research and Recovery in 2001 which was called the removal of the "Karang Cina Cargo", with the discovery of ceramic objects dating from the Yuan Dynasty (Yogi, 2010: 121).

Settlements from groups of foreign traders and various tribes during the 19th century Matan Kingdom around the Kraton location. From the remains of ancient tombs and the toponyms of settlements at that time, it can be seen that the heterogeneity of the community was already high because at that time people from various ethnic groups were living. Based on the data above, an initial conclusion can be drawn that the Matan authorities are open to accepting

immigrants to settle in Matan. They also seemed to be close to local authorities because they were allowed to live around the palace. The openness of the rulers led to the rapid growth of settlements in the center of government and in the Pawan watershed at that time, especially in the lower reaches of the river.



**Figure 4.** Archaeological Data in Southwest Kalimantan

Source: [Balai Arkeologi Kalsel, 2017]

Archaeological finds are not only on the southwest coast of Kalimantan. Archaeological finds with a variety of types and shapes were also found in the upstream areas of rivers that flow to the southwest coast of Kalimantan. Ceramic objects are the most common finds found in the upstream section. Until now, the people in the upper reaches, who are Dayak ethnic communities, still maintain the existence of these ceramic objects from generation to generation. These ceramic objects were inherited from generations to them. In several excavation activities upstream, findings from collecting data by peeling layers of soil also found fragments of ceramic objects.

### **5.3. Power in Southwest Kalimantan in the Past**

The development of the world of commerce or trade in the archipelago until the 16th century was basically no less advanced than developments in Europe. In fact, according to Ricklefs, at that time Europe was not the most developed region in the world. The areas that were developing at that time were parts of the Middle East to the Indonesian archipelago.

According to Van Leur (1967), during the old kingdom, both during the heyday of Hindu Buddhism and Islam, the influence of the king or sultan as head of state in the world of trade was quite large. They act not only as security controllers or tax collectors, but often also act as “shareholders.” Therefore, basically the world of trade in the archipelago at that time had a capitalist character, or rather a political capitalist character. Information obtained from Van Leur's travel notes (1596) shows that local rulers or nobles had a large role in trade and shipping. The rulers dominated the trade in luxury goods, while ordinary traders could only sell mass-produced goods (Evers 1988: 91-93)

This may be intended to revitalize Nagari Tanjungpura, as a precondition or pioneer in preparing infrastructure in Tanjungpura before placing it as an 'integral part of the Majapahit empire', which according to the WringinPitu Inscription (1447 AD) was one of the 14 Majapahit vassals. The economic sector (trade, agriculture, animal husbandry, etc.), religion, military. and government are the main things that need to be revitalized, by bringing in experts in each field from Majapahit.

The Pawan watershed became so important for Majapahit to conquer possibly for several reasons. At that time, Majapahit was intensively conducting trade activities with foreign countries. The Pawan watershed is one of the locations that has abundant natural resources. In an effort to provide export commodities in Majapahit's ports at that time, it was necessary to control the producers of these commodities. Export commodities found in Majapahit ports include salt, pepper, cloves, nutmeg, cubeb, fennel wood, sandalwood, resin, agarwood, camphor, sugar cane, bananas, areca nut, coconut, kapok, elephant ivory, tortoise shell, pandan mats, silk cloth, cotton cloth (Nastiti, 1991:

183-184). From Ying-yai Sheng-lan's news in Nastiti's (1991) article, it is known that the types of commodities exported include agarwood, white sandalwood, pearls, tortoise shells, nutmeg, pepper and iron. Apart from that, there are several types of poultry that are exported, such as parrots in various colors, parrots, peacocks, pigeons and turtle doves (Ibid).

The most important export item not mentioned in the Chinese news is rice. Apparently rice, which was the main product of the Majapahit kingdom, was exported to eastern Indonesia in exchange for spices. The spices were then traded or exchanged for other goods with foreign traders at the port of Malacca (Djafar, 1978: 54).

One interesting thing about the world of trade in that period was that there was no standard payment system, which was used as a standard. Apart from that, there is no institution that guarantees this currency. The collateral for the currency comes from the raw material of the money itself. Apart from that, the guarantee comes from the greatness of the kingdom that issued the money, for example from the currency of Iskandar Muda's time from the Sultanate of Aceh. Sometimes currency is also used as a trading commodity, either because of its metal value or because of its shape or art. Not a few currencies that are used as jewelry have a higher value than the nominal value of the currency. For example, the Chinese kepeng currency that has been circulating in the archipelago since the Majapahit era is still sought after by various groups and traders in the archipelago, especially because this currency is also used as a complement to traditional or religious ceremonies (Iskandar 188:2005).

Imported commodities, both for own consumption and for re-export, include silk cloth, silk umbrellas from China, swords from the Middle East and India, indigo and batik wax, Chinese ceramics, warangan, pandan mats, pepper, nutmeg, camphor, ivory, gold, silver and copper (Pinardi, 1993: 198-201). Apart from this, Majapahit needs to build a force or some kind of base to monitor the trade route, namely the Karimata Strait. The base was used to guarantee the safety of traders who would come to Majapahit city from pirate attacks.

Settlements from groups of foreign traders and various tribes during the 19th century Matan Kingdom around the Kraton location. From the remains of ancient tombs and the toponyms of settlements at that time, it can be seen that the heterogeneity of society was already high because at that time people from various ethnic groups had settled (Yogi, 2017: 136).

#### ***5.4. Pirates or Pirates in the Golden Triangle Area***

Pirates or pirates have a long history in Indonesia, especially during the maritime period which involved many kingdoms and trade in the region (Lapian, 2011). In the era of maritime empires such as Sriwijaya and Majapahit, the existence of pirates or sea pirates had emerged. Pirates can emerge as a threat to trade and shipping in Indonesian waters. During the colonial era, especially during Dutch domination, many sea pirates operated in Indonesian waters. They often act as rebels or resistance against invaders. Pirates often collaborated with rebels in the struggle against Dutch colonial rule. They utilized their maritime expertise to harass colonial powers (Vlekke, 2008).

During World War II, pirate activity increased due to the chaotic situation and war in the Asia Pacific region. Many pirates took advantage of this chaos to launch attacks on ships and take advantage of the emergency situation of war. Although the age of pirates in the Indian Ocean and the Strait of Malacca subsided after World War II, the pirate problem reemerged in the 21st century. There have been incidents of piracy and piracy in a number of Indonesian waters, especially in border areas. The history of Lanun in Indonesia reflects the complexity of the historical, social and economic conditions of the region. Although there have been significant changes in piracy dynamics over time, efforts to address this threat continue as part of maritime security policy (Amirell, 2019).

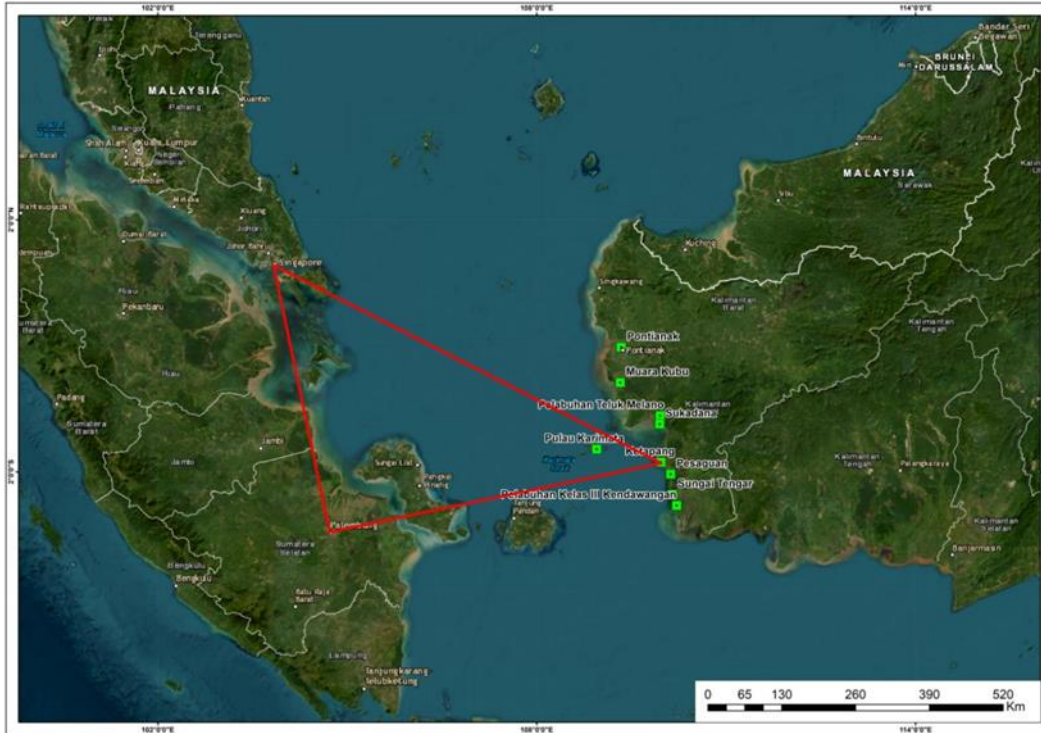
In the past, one proof that pirates had a big impact was when the capital of the Tanjungpura Kingdom experienced several changes in location. At that time, the Lanon group was known for its cruel actions and disturbing the peace of the population, which was the main cause of moving the capital of the Tanjungpura Kingdom (Mulia, 2007). The aim of changing the center of government was to protect itself from frequent attacks from pirates and other kingdoms. The existence of historical sites in the former royal capitals shows the Tanjungpura Kingdom's habit of moving frequently. One example of a former government center is Negeri Baru in Ketapang.

#### ***5.4. Strategic Position***

The position of Southwest Kalimantan and the Karimata Strait has a very important position geographically because it was an area that was on the trade route in the past which acted as a connecting route to connect people from the Western region (Indian Ocean) via the Malacca Strait, and from the Eastern region (Maluku) via the Java Sea, or the North coast of Kalimantan. In the north, the Karimata Strait area is connected to the South China Sea, borders the



Riau Islands province, as well as the former kingdoms of Johor-Riau-Lingga and Pahang (Erman, 2021). Southwest Kalimantan and the Karimata Strait can be included in the golden triangle because they are a link and are part of three important points in trade and shipping from ancient times to the present, namely the Straits of Malacca, Sumatra and Kalimantan. In the context of maritime history, the Strait of Malacca is a navigation route and trade center that has great significance. As a transit route for traders sailing between strategic cities around the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Malacca acts as the main access to trade routes to the Western and Southern regions of China. Therefore, the Strait of Malacca is considered the main gateway to the trade route from the East to China (Hasan, 1976: 7).



**Figure 5.** Map of City and Harbor Locations on the Coast of Southwest Kalimantan

Source: [Research Data, 2023]

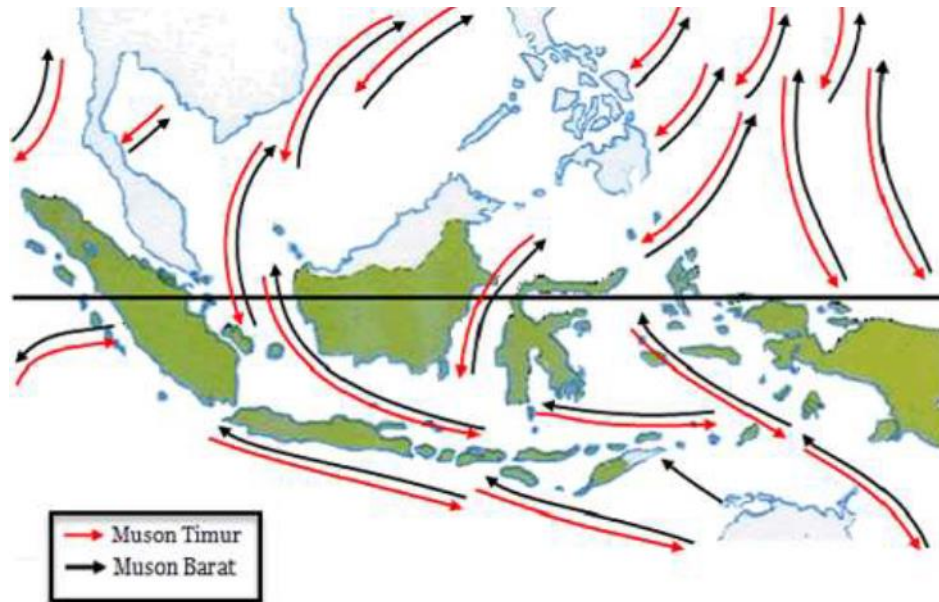
According to I-Tsing, when he first visited Sriwijaya in 671 AD, the welfare of the Sriwijaya people was lagging behind compared to the Malays. In terms of royal activities, Sriwijaya experienced disadvantages, especially in terms of shipping and trade. The Malay or Jambi port is considered more strategic than the Sriwijaya port, because its position is not obstructed by shipping traffic in the Malacca Strait which is completely controlled by the Malays. To improve the welfare of its people, Sriwijaya tries to control trade and shipping traffic in the Malacca Strait. In other words, Sriwijaya was required to conquer and control Malay first as a first step in achieving this goal (Soekmono, 1979:77).

In the 8th century AD, Sriwijaya succeeded in expanding its power in the Southeast Asia region by controlling the Malacca Strait, Sunda Strait and Java Sea. This kingdom dominated shipping traffic and international trade routes in that period. Sriwijaya functions as a strategic trade transit port located in the Malacca Strait. Its existence makes Sriwijaya the main port on the sea trade route visited by traders from various nations. Chinese and Arabs, who have lived in Sriwijaya since the 7th century AD, make up the majority of the population. Therefore, it is not surprising that Arabs and Chinese are an integral part of Sriwijaya's population (Berkah, 2017).

Based on an excerpt from the book "Getting to Know the Kingdoms of the Archipelago" written by Deni Prasetyo in 2009, it can be concluded that during the reign of Balaputradewa until Sri Marawijaya, the Srivijaya Kingdom succeeded in controlling the Malacca Strait, which was the main trade route between India and China. Apart from that, they succeeded in expanding their territory to include West Java, West Kalimantan, Bangka, Belitung, Malaysia, Singapore and Southern Thailand. With the successful control of West Kalimantan by the Sriwijaya Kingdom, this indicates that the Kalimantan region has potential and an important position, especially in the fields of shipping and trade. The golden triangle area which covers the Strait of Malacca, the West Coast of Sumatra and West Kalimantan

has been connected with various important activities in trade and shipping activities from the time of the Sriwijaya Kingdom until now.

The geographical conditions of a region are influenced by many "channels", both physical, socio-cultural, economic, and all other aspects of life (Gallup 2003: 2-3), which include certain spatial and regional dimensions. The geographical conditions of Southwest Kalimantan and the large number of shipping and trade activities have made the coastal area a place to settle and build civilization. There are large cities with ports now in the coastal area of Southwest Kalimantan which of course have historical value. From historical records and archaeological research results, it is stated that areas such as Sukadana, Ketapang, Karimata Islands, have contributed to ancient trade and shipping.



**Figure 6.** Map of City and Harbor Locations on the Coast of Southwest Kalimantan

Source: [www.referensibebas.com , 2017]

At a time when shipping still depended on the wind, the presence of seasonal winds greatly influenced the movements of sailors or merchants. In the waters of the archipelago, seasonal winds blow which regularly change direction at certain months or times. From November to April the wind blows from the north. In the South China Sea area (especially in the waters between the Malaysian Peninsula and Kalimantan) the wind blows from northeast to southwest. However, when it reaches the equator, the wind direction is divided into two: first, the wind blowing in waters closer to Kalimantan turns eastward towards the Karimata Strait, and then eastward into the Java Sea; and secondly, the wind blowing in the area or closer to the Malaysian Peninsula turns westward and then enters the Bay of Bengal. From May to October the wind reverses direction. In the Java Sea, Karimata Strait and Bangka, the wind comes from the east when it enters the area through which the equator passes, this wind will turn north and then northeast in the South China Sea area (Figure 6). From the wind movements above, it can be said that the area in the Karimata Strait is an important point in waiting for the wind direction. This area also has a very strategic position for sailors and traders coming from or going to the west, east and north.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The Karimata Strait is an important route in the context of regional and global trade from the past until now. This location is a very busy trade route passed by ships from various countries. In the 14th century AD, the Indonesian archipelago became a regional trade center at that time. The big ports on the island of Java are the destinations for merchant ships to carry out buying and selling transactions. In the 16th century AD, trading ports in Southeast Asia began to be controlled by Islamic kingdoms. Along with this, western nations began to expand trade into the Southeast Asian region in search of spice commodities.

Historical data shows that the activities and commodities traded are very complex on the southwest coast of Kalimantan. The complexity of archaeological findings on the southwest coast of Kalimantan to the hinterland of Kalimantan is a sign of high exchange and trade activity in the past.

Trade in the past in Southwest Kalimantan was very likely regulated and controlled by rulers from the royal centers that existed during that period. In southwest Kalimantan at that time there were several royal powers. During the Hindu period, the southwest part of Kalimantan was controlled by the Tanjung Pura Kingdom, which was a tributary kingdom under Majapahit. Contact between traders and people in southwest Kalimantan at that time. This is shown by archaeological evidence found in several locations in southwest Kalimantan.

## 7. COMPETING INTEREST STATEMENT

Authors declare that this article is free from any conflict of interest regarding the data collection, analysis, and the publication process itself. Either replicate or modify the previous sentence for this part.

## 8. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors contribute in designing the research, building up the conceptual framework, analyzing the data, and interpreting the research findings.

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