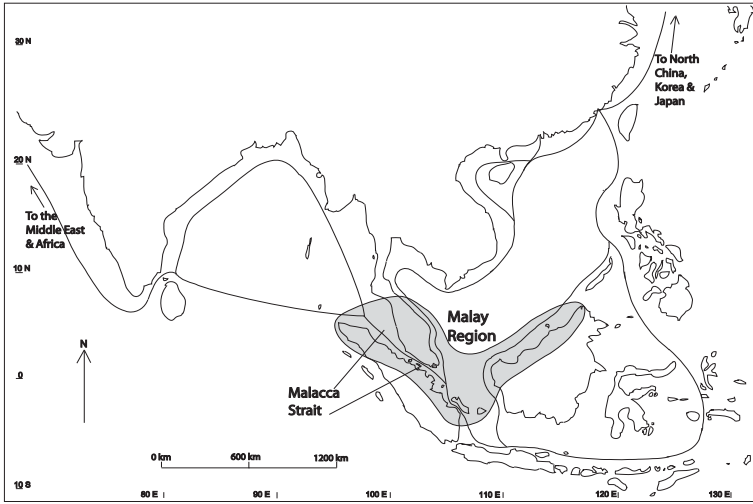


INTRODUCTION

The Malay region, comprising the Malay Peninsula, the eastern coast of Sumatra, and the northern coast of Borneo, has, throughout history, played an important and strategic role in the international maritime economy of Asia. Located at the southern periphery of the Asian continental landmass, the Strait of Malacca has been an important maritime passage, linking the Indian Ocean to the South China and Java seas, while the annual pattern of the northeast and southwest monsoon winds has made the Malay region and the East Java Sea area the interface between the Indian Ocean littoral, maritime and mainland Southeast Asia, and Northeast Asia. This region was a natural meeting place where vessels sailing between eastern and western Asia would await the change in direction of the monsoon wind and merchants from east and west could exchange goods. Numerous ports emerged along the coastlines to capitalize on the shipping and trade that congregated in or passed through the region. It has also been, throughout history, an important geographical region, famed for its indigenous products, which have long been in high demand in the major Asian markets and, in the modern era, in Europe.

Given their dependence on international trade for survival and prosperity, changes in the political fortunes of key Asian states, which determined the economic outlook and policies of these states and, in turn, the overall state of the international economy of Asia, had a direct impact on the nature of the interaction of the polities of the Malay region with the international maritime trade, on the key Asian states,



Map I.1. Trade routes linking the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, and China, tenth through fourteenth century

and ultimately, on the fortunes of these individual port-polities. China was one such state in Asia.

The economic relationship between China and the Malay region can be traced back two millennia, and this dynamic interaction between the two regions may be periodized into several watershed cycles—the second century BC to the third century AD, corresponding to the Han period;¹ the sixth to the eighth century AD, corresponding to the Sui and early Tang periods;² the tenth through the fourteenth century, corresponding to the Song and Yuan periods; the fifteenth century, corresponding to the early Ming period; and the eighteenth century, corresponding to the mid-Qing period.³

These key cycles, however, were not entirely similar. More significantly, fundamental changes appear to have occurred from the tenth to the fourteenth century. Before the late tenth century, the trade between China and the states and polities of the Malay region was characterized by small-volume exchanges carried by traders and shipping from the latter, and high-value Middle Eastern and Indian Ocean littoral products were the chief items brought to China's ports. By the fifteenth century, however, the trade had changed dramatically; it consisted mainly

of high-volume exchanges carried by Chinese traders and shipping and predominantly involved low-value maritime Southeast Asian products sourced directly from the Malay region. Diplomatic relations between China and the Malay region began with representatives of the Malay region interacting with the Song court at the advent of its rule. This state of affairs, however, devolved, by the end of Song rule, in 1279 AD, to the point that there were no concerted or coherent diplomatic overtures between China and the Malay region—a situation characterized by the near absence of any state-level interaction between the two.

These dramatic changes in the interaction between China and the Malay region during this period took place against the backdrop of major internal developments in the two. Politically, China experienced the rule of two dynasties—the Song (960–1279) and Yuan (1279–1368)—of which the latter was non-Chinese. During this period the dynastic capital shifted between three different cities. Economically, China underwent a revolution characterized by the monetization of the Chinese economy, regional specialization in agricultural and manufactured products, the rise of the merchant class and the increasing sophistication of mercantile trade, and the expansion of international maritime trade. Socially, China's population became increasingly urbanized.

The Malay region was also characterized by significant political and economic developments during this time. Between the tenth and the early thirteenth century, the region was dominated by Srivijaya, a port-polity that had managed to raise itself to a position of preeminence by the eighth century AD. The political center of Srivijaya was located initially at Palembang, along the Musi River in Sumatra, but in the latter half of the eleventh century it shifted to Jambi, along the Batang Hari River in Sumatra. The capitals functioned, through the eighth through the thirteenth century, as the region's chief maritime hub for shipping and trade between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, and transshipped foreign products to the Chinese, Indian, and island Southeast Asian markets, where they were in high demand.⁴

By the early thirteenth century, however, a number of port-polities that appear to have engaged independently in international trade had begun to emerge in the northern part of the Strait of Malacca, the

northeastern tracts of the Malay Peninsula, and the northern coast of Borneo. Srivijaya's position as the key entrepôt port of the region was gradually being eroded.⁵ In 1275 the capital of Srivijaya was sacked by invading Javanese forces, and from that point the region was characterized by the mushrooming of a plethora of minor ports, a number of which fell under the influence of such regional powers in Southeast Asia as Sukhothai, in Thailand, and Majapahit, in Java. Such dramatic developments in the region's political history can no doubt be directly linked to changes in the international and regional economic context upon which the Malay region's polities were highly dependent for their political sustainability.

The tenth to the fourteenth century must have been a pivotal phase in the history of Sino-Malay interactions. Significant changes must have occurred in both regions that led to such fundamental shifts evident by the fifteenth century, changes that have continued to characterize the relationship between the two regions up until the present time. What was the nature of this relationship, within the context of evolving diplomatic and economic links between China and its foreign trading partners, particularly those in Southeast Asia? What changes occurred in both China and the Malay region that consequently affected maritime trade between the two? What were the channels of trade at the various levels of economic interaction, and how did they evolve in response to the changes in the maritime trade? What commodities were exchanged between the two regions, and how did the nature of that trade evolve from the tenth to the fourteenth century? What social developments and commercial practices resulted from these changes?

Themes and Approaches

Although there is a large body of literature on the economic and diplomatic interaction between China and the Malay region in the tenth through the fourteenth century, most studies deal with the histories of the two regions' relations separately. Only a select few explore the interaction in its own right. The gaps in the literature help shape the issues I shall address here.

There is also a large number of studies on the economy of China's Song and Yuan periods.⁶ These works deal in considerable detail with

the development of China's economy, including such aspects as China's monetary system, the sources and administration of state finance, and the commercialization of the Chinese economy. However, the links between developments in China's overall economy and its maritime economy have not been adequately addressed, even though the maritime economy became a crucial aspect of the overall economy during the tenth through the fourteenth century and an important source of state revenue by the twelfth century.

Several studies have explored China's maritime economy during this time.⁷ These works—in particular those of J. Kuwabara, Yu Chang Sen, and So Kee Long—deal primarily with the institutions governing maritime trade, the nature of Chinese participation in that trade, and the types of products traded at both the state and provincial levels. Nonetheless, there is insufficient discussion pertaining to the changes and development in China's maritime economy over these four centuries. This is due, in large part, to the types of sources used by these scholars—predominantly Chinese historical texts and some Chinese archaeological reports. Often no foreign sources of historical data are used. Consequently, these studies have not taken into account, in any significant way, the role that China's foreign trading partners played in the development of Chinese maritime trade. The studies that do extend beyond China include only brief, cursory discussions of the role that the states and polities in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean littoral played in China's maritime economy.

Furthermore, current studies of the Chinese maritime economy are centered predominantly on the Song period. The amount of scholarship pertaining to the Yuan period is relatively insignificant. This is a critical gap; even though China's maritime trade was quite different during the two periods, the changes that occurred in the Yuan grew out of developments in the Song. The Song and Yuan periods need to be viewed together for the progression in the diplomatic and economic aspects of China's maritime relations in the tenth through the fourteenth century to be fully understood.

A number of studies presently available do attempt to explore the interaction between the Malay region and China.⁸ These works place

a certain emphasis on the mutual importance of both regions in this economic relationship, and they approach this issue from two key angles. The first approach deals with historical geography, namely the identification of regional ports and the development of trade routes between southern China and maritime Southeast Asia during the period in question. However, subtle changes in the nature of the interaction between China and the Malay region over the course of the tenth through the fourteenth century have not been captured. This is due in large part to the heavy reliance on historical texts, in particular those from China, and epigraphic and philological data from the region and the Middle East. Archaeological data—particularly data collected from research at Malay-region settlement sites over the last thirty years—have been distinctly absent from the body of information used by these studies, most of which appeared before the 1980s.⁹

The second key approach is that of commodities studies, which inquires into the products that were exchanged between China and the Malay region. Here two main methods have been employed—looking at the sources and uses of these products in both China and Southeast Asia, and the evolution of the trade of individual products; and providing information on a large number of products that were traded between China and the region. In this regard, the works of Paul Wheatley and Roderich Ptak stand out.¹⁰ These unique works continue to be important to present-day scholars working on the history of China–Southeast Asia trade, as they provide both a broad overview and detailed discussions of the products involved in the Sino-Malay trade. However, apart from the individual products examined by Roderich Ptak, the evolution of the commodities trade as a whole through the tenth to the fourteenth centuries has not been examined. In addition, we do not at present fully understand the respective roles that China and the Malay region played in shaping the commodities trade.

The exposure and dependence of the Malay region on the international economic context has received significant discussion—especially the region’s involvement in and response to international trade and foreign relations from the tenth through the fourteenth century.¹¹ Bennet

Bronson, in particular, has formulated a model for the economic and social interaction between the coastal port-settlements of the Malay region and their immediate hinterlands in the era before European colonialism. The model, known as the dendritic model, has also been used to contextualize the dynamics of the links between these hinterland economies and their societies, the coastal port-settlements, and the external world. This model continues to be adopted by historians and archaeologists studying parts of Southeast Asia that have inland groups as well as coastal settlements and are located along the major routes of the international maritime economy. Nonetheless, this model is not without its flaws. The dendritic model assumes that the nature of the international maritime economy, particularly that which flowed between the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean, remained relatively unchanged until the arrival of the Europeans in Asia in the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries. The key states of the South China Sea and Indian Ocean regions definitely did not remain static until the early modern era, and this poses a critical problem with the consistency of the dendritic theory.

A number of important works, particularly those of Jan Wisseman Christie, have attempted to address the impact that changes experienced by key Asian states had on the Malay region.¹² Christie focuses on the economic and political relationship between the Malay region and the Indian subcontinent, and they provide us with a crucial understanding of the impact that social, political, and economic developments in India had on the ports and coastal polities of the Malay region.

Unfortunately, similar works on the impact that the political and administrative changes in China and the changes to the structures of the Chinese maritime economy had on the region and its port-polities are largely absent. The only works that do study the interrelated nature of the diplomatic and economic interaction between China and the Malay region in the period in question are centered largely on Srivijaya, the preeminent Malaccan port-polity between the seventh and thirteenth century. O. W. Wolters has explored the causes of the rise and fall of this polity as the Malay region's key emporium along the international maritime trade circuit and the role it played as the

representative in the region's economic and political interaction with China during its seven-century existence.¹³

One of the most important aspects of the Sino-Malay interaction that Wolters has examined pertains to state-level exchanges. Wolters assumes that state-level exchanges were the main channel through which the Malay region, under the auspices of Srivijaya, conducted its trade with China. Consequently, he examines Sino-Malay relations during the Song and Yuan periods through this interpretative lens and explains the economic, social, and political implications that this channel of trade had for Srivijaya and the Malay region.

However, Wolters has placed too much emphasis on the importance of state-level exchanges as the main channel through which trade was conducted with China during the Song period.¹⁴ Most of his arguments have been based on the assumption that the Song court's conduct of maritime trade remained largely unchanged from the tenth through the thirteenth century, and indeed into the Yuan period. The impact of the changes in the conduct of maritime trade by the Chinese, and of China's maritime trade institutions and structures, on Srivijaya and the Malay region's conduct of its economic and diplomatic relations with China, have therefore not been taken into account.

Nor has Wolters satisfactorily explained the continued flourishing of trade between the Malay region and China, despite the complete decline of state-level missions from Srivijaya to China by the latter half of the twelfth century. In fact, the works presently available do not sufficiently address the role of Chinese private traders in China's maritime trade or the impact that increasing private Chinese participation in this trade had on the Malay region and on Sino-Malay relations. These inadequacies in the scholarship remain unresolved.

Finally, almost none of the currently available literature on Sino-Malay relations explores the interaction between smaller port-polities of the Malay region and China—even though textual and archaeological information indicates that a large number of coastal settlements in the Malay region interacted economically with China during the tenth through the fourteenth century. The gap in the scholarship on smaller port-polities is partially filled by a number of studies that have

been carried out on individual ports in the region. These include research on Kota Cina, southern Kedah, and Singapore Island, as well as Barus, on the northwestern coast of Sumatra. The focus, however, is primarily archaeological, since textual information concerning such smaller ports tends to be very sparse or even nonexistent. While they are important in revealing certain characteristics of the region's international trade at the port level—such as the material culture of the polities' population and the port's trade in such nonperishable products as ceramics and metal items—no longer-term overview of the region's economy at the port level, based on archaeological data, has yet been assembled. This is further hampered by the fact that no single site spans the entire period of the tenth through the fourteenth century; normally any single site was active for only one to two hundred years.

The present study thus aims to explore the changes in the nature of the economic and diplomatic relationship between China and the Malay region and to impart a sense of continuity in the developments over the course of the four hundred years. I also aim to move away from the confines of state-sponsored exchanges to explore such other aspects as port activities, the impact of the subregional demand markets in the Malay region on the export of Chinese products, and the meeting of changing market demands in China for foreign products.

These topics will be explored through three key themes. First, changes in China's political and economic contexts and the administration of maritime trade had a direct and profound impact on the Malay region. This included the manner in which the region's polities conducted their diplomatic relations with China, the manner in which those polities related economically with China and with each other, and ultimately the formation, viability, and hierarchy of the polities in the region. Second, these developments ultimately determined the types of products that were exchanged between the two regions. Third, these structural changes and developments in China and the Malay region had an impact on how maritime trade was conducted between the two regions. From the tenth through the fourteenth century, that trade evolved from a state-controlled and state-sponsored exchange to one largely driven by Chinese private concerns, and one that went from

being initiated by regional polities and confined to the regional level to one that was highly diffuse. This was accompanied, and often spurred on, by developments in how the traders conducted their commercial and social activities in the respective foreign regions.

Three key approaches have been adopted in this study. First, the relationship between the two regions will be explored from the perspective of the economic interaction itself, not centered on one region or the other. Second, the economic relationship will be examined at three levels—the region, state, and individual. Third, the nature of the economic interaction will be reconstructed as one that changed over time. In this regard, the Song and Yuan periods will be studied together, since the Yuan period, with regard to China's maritime trade, represents a period of continuity, rather than change, from the Song.

A Note on Sources

This study draws its information from two key sources—historical texts and epigraphy, and archaeological data. Although a number of Indian and Middle Eastern texts and epigraphic data have been used, Chinese historical texts and epigraphic information dominate the first source. Chinese texts constitute a significant source of data for the study of the nature of, and changes in, the economic relations between China and the Malay region during the Song and Yuan periods. These texts provide both contemporary information and later syntheses of, and commentaries on, information concerning such topics as the products that were traded, the administrative structure of China's maritime trade, and the practices of those involved in the trade between China and the region.

Although sixty-three known texts published or written during the Song period contain information on Southeast Asia, only a few contain information pertaining to the Malay region and to China's economic and political relations with the polities in the region.¹⁵ Among these latter texts, I focus on five here: *Pingzhou ketan* (Zhu Yu, 1116),¹⁶ *Lingwai daida* (Zhou Qufei, 1178),¹⁷ *Yunlu manchao* (Zhao Yanwei, 1206),¹⁸ *Zhufanzhi* (Zhao Ruguo, 1225),¹⁹ and *Songhuiyao jigao*.²⁰ They provide

information on this relationship between China and the Malay region from the late eleventh to the thirteenth century.

These texts mainly reflect the Chinese administrative perspective on Sino-Malay relations and China's maritime trade. Even though the authors of these texts, with the exception of the authors of the *Songhuiyao jigao*, wrote and published their literary works on a private basis, they were employed in various capacities during their lifetime by the Song bureaucracy. Anyone using these texts in the study of Malay history has to bear in mind this unbalanced perspective.

Yuan-period texts containing information pertaining to China's relations with the Malay region fall into two general groups. The first comprises texts that provide an account of this relationship in the Song and Yuan periods. These texts consist mainly of historical studies that contain sporadic references to the Sino-Malay relationship, in particular the trade and diplomatic exchanges that took place between the two regions. Although these texts are considered to be primary documents, they are in themselves historical works. They were assembled entirely from earlier textual sources. The texts thus present a late-thirteenth- or fourteenth-century interpretation of the earlier historical data. The *Wenxian tongkao* (Ma Duanlin, 1307),²¹ *Songshi* (ed. Tuo Tuo et al., 1345),²² and *Yuanshi* (1370)²³ are texts that belong in this category. The first two are Yuan-period historical works containing information on the Song period, the third being an early-Ming-period work containing information on the Yuan period.

The second group of Yuan-period texts comprises contemporaneous accounts of Sino-Malay relations during the Yuan period. Three texts of this group have been used in this study—the *Dade nanhaizhi* (Chen Dazhen, 1304),²⁴ the *Yuandianzhang* (anon., ca. 1321–24),²⁵ and *Daoyi zhilue* (Wang Dayuan, ca. 1349).²⁶ The first, written by a Chinese official, reflects the personal perspective of a Chinese official on the trade centered at Guangzhou. The second, an administrative guide written and published under the auspices of the Yuan court, provides the perspective from the political center of Yuan China. The third, an eyewitness account of the ports and other areas in Southeast Asia written by a Chinese trader, provides a unique view of the Sino-Malay

trade from the perspective of a Chinese participant in the trade who was operating outside China.

All these Song and Yuan texts are already known to scholars. However, this body of information has been underused in the study of the Malay region's economic interaction with China during the period in question. In addition, although a number of these texts have been drawn upon by sinologists in their discussions of China's history, not all have been translated into Western languages. As a result, important as they are as a source of information on Southeast Asia's early history, many are not accessible to historians of Southeast Asia. Nor have previous studies used the textual data in furthering our understanding of the nature of the trade between the two regions at levels below that of the state. The present study brings together information through a critical rereading of these texts and in the process extends the boundaries of our understanding of the topic at hand.

Archaeological data, the second major body of information used here, are derived from the two geographical regions of maritime Southeast Asia and southern China. The sites from which this study draws its information fall into three categories: kiln sites in southern China; shipwrecks found both in Chinese and Southeast Asian waters; and settlement sites in the Malay region.

The ports of Guangzhou and Quanzhou provide information concerning relations with Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean littoral, and the Middle East through epigraphic records on tombstones and the remains of places of worship of foreign religions, such as mosques and temples. However, the archaeological data most useful for the study of Sino-Malay patterns of trade are derived from kiln site excavations. The ceramic remains from such sites can be directly compared with the ceramic finds in shipwrecks and settlement sites in Southeast Asia. This also provides insight into the economic links between the Chinese ports and their economic hinterlands within which the kiln sites were located.

Archaeological reports on tenth- to fourteenth-century kiln sites in southern China are primarily concerned with the fine stoneware produced by these kiln districts. A good deal is currently known about the

types of fine stoneware—as well as the glazes, forms, and decorative techniques—associated with various kiln districts. While there was a general exchange of knowledge between potters concerning ceramic production—as witnessed by similarities in decorative techniques, forms, glazes, and kiln construction—differences in the physical characteristics of the wares from different kiln districts are discernible, and that has enabled the provenance of many excavated shards and whole examples to be fairly confidently assigned. The sources of fine ceramics found at Southeast Asian archaeological sites can therefore be fairly accurately identified at the Chinese provincial, and in some cases even the district, level.²⁷

Studies on coarse Chinese stoneware have focused on vessel forms and types of decoration, such as molded and incised motifs, character, and motif stamping and decorative lugs. However, most of the forms and the types of decoration used by Fujian and Guangdong kilns were not exclusive to any particular district or even province, and many of the kilns produced a wide range of forms and decorations that were similar to those produced by other kilns. The clay body thus stands as the best means of distinguishing the different sources of coarse stoneware. Unfortunately, no scientific analysis of the clay used by the different kiln districts has yet been conducted, and the precise nature of variations in the clay used by the potters is still unclear. The classification of coarse stoneware from Guangdong and southern Fujian is thus based on visual identification of clay types currently known, and on vessel forms attributable to a particular kiln area or larger kiln district.

The only southern Chinese area in which a study has been made both of the development of the ceramics industry and of the role that local ceramics played in domestic and international economy is southern Fujian.²⁸ No major study has yet been made of the Guangdong ceramics industry, or for that matter of those of provinces north of Guangdong and Fujian, such as Zhejiang, Jiangxi, and Jiangsu. The implications of the archaeological data for the Chinese export trade have been discussed only briefly in the current body of works. Most of the studies of the role of the southern Chinese kilns in the Southeast Asia–China trade of the

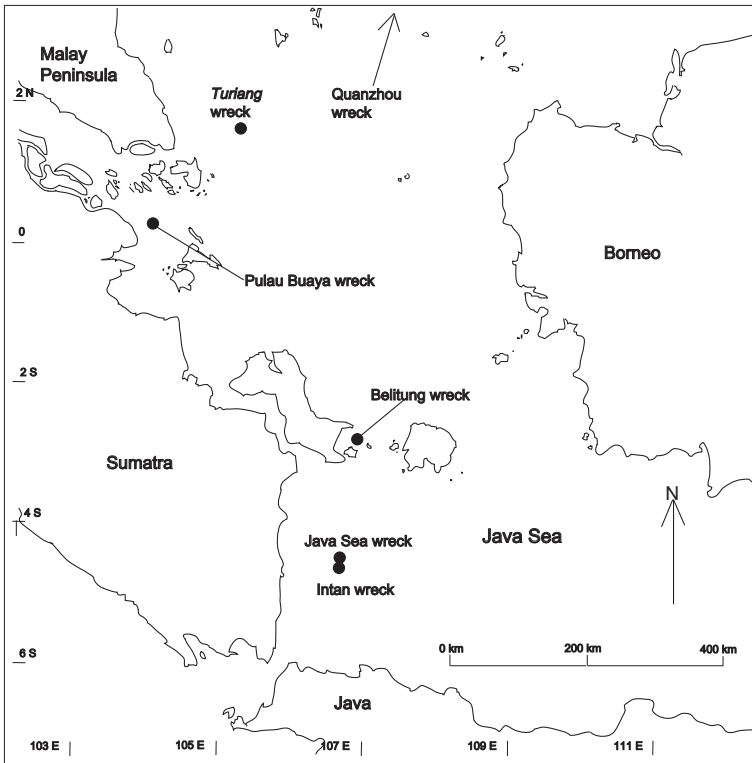
tenth through the fourteenth century have been carried out by Southeast Asian archaeologists and historians, with heavy reliance on secondary sources, since most of the reports resulting from the archaeological surveys on the southern Chinese kiln districts conducted by Chinese archaeologists remain unpublished. Our present understanding of the economic links between southern China and maritime Southeast Asia, and in particular the Malay region, remains limited.²⁹

Shipwreck excavations, the second body of archaeological data, provide a different form of information. Data from shipwrecks reflect the shipping patterns and other characteristics of the shipping trade that was taking place between the two economic regions at the time the ship foundered, as well as types of products traded at that time. Despite the snapshot nature of shipwreck data, with data from a sufficient number of wrecks spread over a substantial period, we get a picture of the development of this maritime trade.

In dating wrecks, both the ship's contents and its hull are relied upon. An approximate date can often be assigned on the basis of coins—in particular Chinese copper cash bearing reign marks—along with trade wares such as ceramics or metal wares, the decoration and forms of which often reveal their period of manufacture, and any other items that may have inscriptions or stylistic characteristics to which a date or period may be attributed. When parts of a vessel are recovered, organic samples may be sent for radiocarbon dating. The resulting composite date can often be precise to within a few decades, and occasionally to within a few years or even months.

Five wrecks have been drawn upon in this study for information concerning the maritime trade patterns between the Malay region and China. The Intan, Pulau Buaya, Java Sea, Quanzhou, and *Turiang* wrecks have been assigned to the early tenth, early twelfth, thirteenth, late thirteenth, and late fourteenth centuries respectively.³⁰ The data from these wrecks thus provide snapshots of the development in the shipping and products trade between the two regions at fairly even intervals over four centuries.

Not all the ships originated from the same port or region. The Intan and Java Sea wrecks appear to have been Southeast Asian vessels, while the



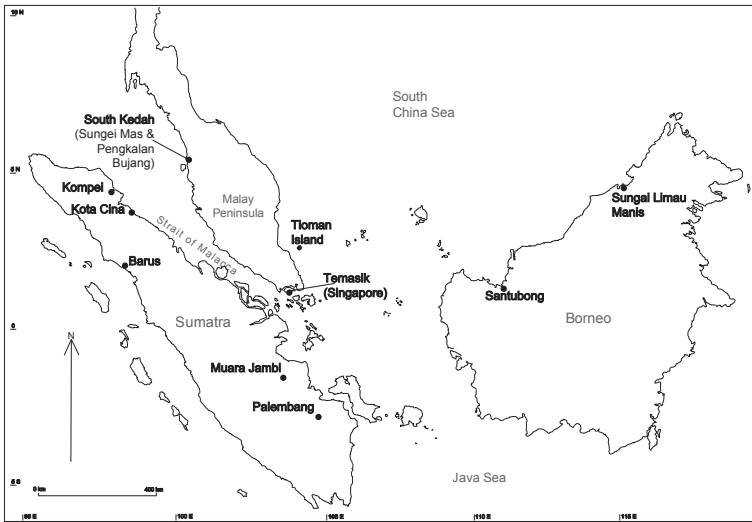
Map I.2. Shipwrecks in maritime Southeast Asia, tenth through fourteenth century

Quanzhou and *Turiang* wrecks were probably Chinese vessels. Whence the Pulau Buaya ship originated is not known because of the absence of any hull structure at the wreck site. Also, these ships sank off parts of southern China and maritime Southeast Asia. The Intan, Pulau Buaya, and Java Sea wrecks were discovered in the Java Sea off the southeastern coast of Sumatra. The Quanzhou wreck was discovered in Houtu harbor, in Quanzhou Bay, southern Fujian. The *Turiang* wreck was discovered off the southeastern coast of the Malay Peninsula. Nor were all the ships on the same route. While the contents of the tenth-century Intan wreck reflect the types of goods exported or transhipped from the Malay region to Java, the Pulau Buaya, Java Sea, and *Turiang* wrecks reflect the types of goods imported by the

Malay region, largely from China and mainland Southeast Asia. The picture that these wrecks provide is not focused on one segment of the maritime trade between China and maritime Southeast Asia, and it does not reflect the flow of goods in one direction alone. The Quanzhou wreck provides an important counterpoint to the otherwise one-dimensional view of the region's participation in international maritime trade evidenced by data from land-based archaeological sites.

Land-based excavations and survey reports from the Malay region form the third important source of the archaeological data used in the present study. Land-based archaeological data provide information concerning trade only in imperishable commodities, such as ceramics, glass, and metals. Other commodities, including such organic products as textiles and foodstuffs, are absent from the data. Even the identity of the commodities that were transported in ceramic containers can only be inferred, and conclusions are not definite. The picture of the trade between China and the Malay ports, as reflected by the data from land-based excavations, is therefore not complete. Nonetheless, it is important.

Settlement sites on the coasts of Sumatra corresponding to the tenth through the fourteenth century include Palembang, Muara Jambi, Kompei, Lobu Tua (Barus), and Kota Cina.³¹ Of these, a detailed report is available only for Kota Cina. A number of tenth- to fourteenth-century sites along the coast of the Malay Peninsula have also been studied archaeologically over the last sixty years. These include southern Kedah (Pengkalan Bujang and Sungai Mas), Tioman Island, and Temasik (present-day Singapore). The finds include ceramics from China, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East as well as other trade goods such as glass beads and fragments of glassware. In the case of the southern Kedah sites, these include monumental remains and inscriptions as well as sculpture and images in stone, bronze, gold foil, and terra-cotta. Two key settlement sites along the northern Borneo coast have also been discovered and systematically surveyed. These are at Santubong (Sarawak) and Sungai Limau Manis (Brunei).³² Ceramic shards are the primary finds recovered from these sites, although a large quantity of Chinese copper cash and fragments of the hulls of several wooden vessels have also been recovered from Sungai Limau Manis.



Map I.3. Archaeological settlement sites in the Malay region, tenth through fourteenth century

Each of the two groups of historical data—texts and archaeological finds—has its strengths and weaknesses. Textual data provide a good understanding of the structures of the economic relationship from the Chinese perspective, in particular the administration of trade. Textual data also remain the only source of information on certain types of products carried by the trade, in particular those that were perishable. However, as Chinese texts provide the bulk of this group of data, the information reflects a Chinese perspective on this economic relationship. Archaeological data, on the other hand, provide, where available, information on the development of trade in such imperishable goods as ceramics, currency, and metals. In addition, quantitative data on these groups of goods are often made available, supplying information that the texts do not provide. This information may be used to link the Malay ports to key economic areas and ports in southern China, where these products were produced and from which they were exported, as well as changes in the patterns of demand for them over time. By integrating both the archaeological and textual sources of information, the resulting synergy provides for levels of analysis and perspectives not immediately apparent in the textual data. The result is a more complex

and complete picture of the developments of China's economic and diplomatic relations with the Malay world, and the changes that occurred between the tenth and the fourteenth century.