# **Textile and Trade in Alam Melayu**

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#### **Abstract**

Apart from being a trade commodity and cultural driver, textile is always mentioned as something valuable in Alam Melayu. Some Malay manuscripts such as Sullalatus Salatin (Ahmad, 2003), Tawarikh Raja-Raja Melaka dan Pahang, Tuhfat An-nafis (Haji & Ahmad, 1997) and Hikayat Siak, mentioned that the textile acts as the symbol given when facing someone higher, a sign of friendship between kingdoms, proposing to a king's daughter and the cancellation of a king. Textiles in Alam Melayu are found in various types and forms, the function of the textile and its labels. Using the historical method in reconstructing historical events, this article with the theme of social history states that textile and the art of embroidery among Malay women have been fused in people's lives since the past. Relations with the outside world such as China, India, Arabia and Europe, affect various types and forms, functions of textiles and their names.

Keywords textile, role, trade, embroidery

#### I. Introduction

In the course of Malay history, textile has always been mentioned as something valuable. Some Malay manuscripts such as Sullalatus Salatin(Ahmad, 2003), Tawarikh Raja-Raja Melaka dan Pahang, Tuhfat An-Nafis (Haji & Ahmad, 1997) and Hikayat Siak, mentions that textile has a place of honor at the time of the coronation of a king and friendship between kingdoms. In addition, as part of a set of deliveries at the time of asking for a princess and part of a traditional royal ceremony. Textiles are also always mentioned as one of the trade commodities. In its development, the textile is divided into several types such as rivet textile, cindai textile, woven textile, zarzuri textile, limar textile and so on.

This is very reasonable because of the trade in the archipelago which causes each region to mention a certain type of textile according to the local mention and where the textile from which the textile is traded. Or based on the type and shape and function of the textile itself. This paper will describe how the textile trade in Alam Melayu contributed to the discovery of various types and forms, functions of textile and their name using historical methods. The method used in reconstructing events in the past goes through four stages of work, namely heuristics (collection of sources), source criticism (external/material and internal/content), interpretation and historiography (writing of historical stories).

#### **II. Research Methods**

The method is a procedure, or has to do with a systematic procedure, process, or technique in the investigation of certain scientific disciplines to obtain the object (materials) under study (Wasino & Hartatik, 2018). The historical method is a method or method used as a guide in conducting research on historical events and problems. This method is an instrument to reconstruct historical events (history as past actuality) into history as a story

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(history as written). This method is a step that is carried out to reconstruct events in the past. While the historical method is the process of critically examining and analyzing records and relics of the past.

The topic of historical research in this research are textile and trade in Malay nature. This topic is very interesting considering that the activity of embroidering textile is not done on a large scale but is done traditionally. Although the textile in Alam Melayu has a very high role. The role of textile as a trading commodity in the past allows it to be researched based on primary sources such as Sullalatus Salatin (Ahmad, 2003), Tawarikh Raja-Raja Melaka dan Pahang, Tuhfat An-nafis (Haji & Ahmad, 1997) and Hikayat Siak. The research using the historical method there are several stages that must be done, namely: heuristics, criticism, interpretation and historiography.

Heuristics is the stage of searching and finding the sources and historical data needed. In this study, the sources obtained are primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources include Malay manuscripts. Malay scripts such as Sullalatus Salatin (Ahmad, 2003), Tawarikh Raja-Raja Melaka dan Pahang, Tuhfat An-Nafis (Haji & Ahmad, 1997) and Hikayat Siak. Furthermore, source criticism is carried out with secondary sources that tell the contemporary period from the 1st to the 16th century. Then do the interpretation and do the writing of history (historiography) themed social history. A historical writing is always limited by temporal and spatial scope. The temporal scope covers the period from the 1st to the 16th centuries and is of course named after that period. While the spatial scope is the Alam Melayu whose current context covers the archipelago or countries in Southeast Asia.

### **III. Discussion**

## 3.1 Textile as Trading Commodity

During the Hindu-Buddhist development in the archipelago, there were two great civilizing powers, namely China in the north and India in the southwest. Both were the two superpowers of their time and had a very big influence on the population in Indonesia. They were directly integrated into the textile of world trade at that time. The Strait of Malacca became important as a gateway connecting Chinese traders and Indian traders. At that time the Malacca Strait was an important route in shipping and trade for traders who crossed important ports around the Indonesian Ocean and the Persian Gulf (AW Swastiwi, 2018).

The strait is a sea route that connects Arabia and India in the northwest of the archipelago, and with China in the northeast of the archipelago. This route is the gateway to shipping known as the "jalur sutra". This name was used from the 1st to the 16th century AD, with the commodity of silk textile being brought from China to be traded in other regions. This busy shipping route has encouraged the emergence of important ports around the route, including Samudra Pasai, Malacca, and Kota Cina (now North Sumatra). The Malay vocabulary holds memories of the precious textiles traded by China, namely lokcuan or lokcan "krep sutra", kimka "damas", pangsi "sutra hitam", kuntuan "satin".

The lives of residents along the Malacca Strait have become more prosperous by the process of integrating world trade through the sea route. They became more open socio-economically to establish commercial relations with foreign traders who passed that route. In addition, the local community is also increasingly exposed to external cultural influences. The culture of India and China at that time was clearly very influential on the people around the Straits of Malacca. Even today, the influence of culture, especially India, can still be found in the people around the Straits of Malacca.

According to Faishal (2019) Indonesia is a country that is rich in tribes so that it gives birth too many diverse traditions / customs. Tradition can be interpreted as inheritance or transmitted from the past to the present. This Strait of Melaka in the course of Malay history is mentioned as a strategic area that connects east and west. Where trade is carried out not only with traders in Southeast Asia but also with traders from the west and east such as India, China and Persia. Even at that time, Malacca was also known as a trading center and port for traders from the Middle East, Africa and Europe. At that time, the mixture of two very different cultures, namely the culture of the Nusantara (Malay) people with the culture of generally Middle Eastern alumni can bring new clothes to life (Multajimah, 2021).

Furthermore, the Melaka Strait is a busy strait with the presence of traders from all corners of *Alam Melayu* and the outside world because there are strategic ports such as Sriwijaya, Aceh, Melaka, Riau, Palembang and Siak which were appointed as enterpot ports and centers of trading activities. The fall of Melaka to the Portuguese in 1511 (16th century) did not change its position as a cosmopolitan and world-famous port where merchant ships around the Malacca Strait, Malay Archipelago, India and China still continued to visit Melaka and according to Tom Pires, Melaka became more prosperous. At the same time (16th century), European traders brought textile from India in exchange for spices(Reid, 2001). The Patola factory, which is known as a producer of cindai in Malay nature, becomes a trade textile. Cindai textile is the inspiration for most of the weavers in Southeast Asia (John et al., nd).

In its development, Riau, which is located in the south of the Melaka Strait, later became a trading center in *Alam Melayu* in the mid-17th century. The strength of the Kingdom of Johor in managing and controlling commodities as well as facilitating ships quickly and cheaply became the main factors that were admired by the Dutch. According to a Dutch report in 1687, it was recorded that the number of ships that stopped at the Port of Riau was so large that the river was difficult to enter. Textile became a trade commodity that was in great demand at this time in addition to tin.

The trading network in the Port of Riau is in addition to areas that have been pioneered by Daeng Marewa, Daeng Celak and Daeng Cambodia as well as Tembesi, Tebo, Kumpen, Muara Sabak and Kuala Tungkal. This is reinforced by the existence of economic relations between these areas which are marked by the proliferation of shipping from ports ranging from the ports of Tembesi, Tebo, Kumpen, Muara Sabak and Kuala Tungkal. The existence of these ports is a link in the chain of shipping lines in the Malacca Strait and to the sea in the eastern part of Indonesia. In addition, trade relations were also established with several kingdoms on the island of Sumatra. These kingdoms include Indrapura, Anak Sungai, Pasaman, Siak, Jambi and Palembang (AW Swastiwi, 2021)

While the commodities produced from these areas on the island of Sumatra include pepper (divided into three types, namely kawur pepper, manna pepper and jambi pepper), nutmeg and cloves, camphor, frankincense, cotton, areca nut, coffee, resin, gambier, rhubarb., and agarwood (AW Swastiwi, 2021). In addition to the plantation products, there are also natural resources such as tin, copper, iron ore and sulfur, ivory (used as a fine purple dye for silk or household purposes), and ivory.

In subsequent developments, although it is not written as a commodity, textile remains something very valuable. When the center of government was moved to Lingga, "Riau" was almost deserted. At this time the *Tuhfat An-Nafis* Malay text mentions that valuables become the target of "robbers". These valuables include textile. Here's the quote.

So Syed Ali obtained a lot of wealth from gold (and) silver and copper utensils and textile and rice and all other foodstuffs until the evening he took them. (Haji & Ahmad, 1997)

Furthermore, the decline in the activities of the Riau Port above was further complicated by the presence of the British and the Dutch in the Malacca Strait area. This relationship brought the consequence that Riau belonged to the Dutch. Meanwhile, Singapore is under the British based on the Treaty of London (Traaktat London 1824). Since 1824, Singapore has continued to show progress. Meanwhile, Riau and its ports are far behind. Even five years later, Singapore managed to control almost the entire market that was previously controlled by Riau. In Riau, the Netherlands also continues to try to catch up with Singapore. Four years after the 1824 London Treaty, namely in 1828, the Dutch government made Riau a trading area and a free port, Vrijhaven Van Riouw. This is stated in the government decree (Koninkelijk Besluit) No. 104 dated April 10, 1828 which became effective as of January 1, 1829. The hope of the Dutch by enacting the Port of Riau as a free port was that traders, both Bugis and other traders, would be willing to return to Riau. In its development the Dutch government's efforts to juxtapose Riau with the success of Singapore were unsuccessful. Trade in Riau, after the decree was unable to move in a bigger direction In its development the Dutch government's efforts to juxtapose Riau with the success of Singapore were unsuccessful. Trade in Riau, after the decree was unable to move in a bigger direction in its development the Dutch government's efforts to juxtapose Riau with the success of Singapore were unsuccessful. Trade in Riau, after the decree was unable to move in a bigger direction (Roolvink, 1980).

Furthermore, the Dutch made an agreement which in essence further emphasized the freedom of the Netherlands to trade in the Riau-Lingga Kingdom area. Among other things, in 1836, all ships sailing in Riau waters must have a certificate of sailing permit from the Netherlands. The Sultan was also obliged to eradicate those who disturbed the Dutch. Therefore, the Sultan had to place royal officers on the islands of Galang, Temiang, Moro, Sugi, Bulang, Bekaka, Sekana, and Mepar (Tajudin, nd).

The situation as mentioned above was expressed by JSG Gramberg on his way from Batavia to Bengkalis in 1863, stopping at Tanjungpinang by describing the condition of Riau as follows:

"Riau's capital city can be said to be quite free of trade. With its free port, Riau will not be a dangerous rival to Singapore which is growing rapidly. Riau may even lag behind because Singapore is moving too fast."

Meanwhile, hinterland areas on Sumatra Island after the implementation of Riau Port as a free port prefer to market their commodity products directly to Singapore. As a result, the area is no longer a hinterland area for the Riau Port. However, it is a hinterland area for Singapore. One area on the island of Sumatra that remains a hinterland for trade in Riau is Siak Sri Indrapura. Because Siak Sri Indapura has great economic potential and has abundant natural resources. Siak is also one of the kingdoms whose territory is very wide after Aceh. This is also described by Anthony Reid as follows: There are nine small kingdoms in the broad valleys of the three rivers Rokan, Siak and Kampar, but eight of the population is very thin and poor.

Siak Sri Indrapura has historically controlled the entire East Coast of Sumatra. The Siak Sri Indrapura region, apart from having a land area, also has an ocean area and islands along the Malacca Strait bordering the Riau Lingga Kingdom. Anthony Reid also mentioned that at that time, in Riau, there were many places where people were doing folk weaving, namely Siak, Bukit Batu, Indapura and so on. But of the many areas that are well known and look so developed are Siak Sri Indapura woven textiles(Reid, 2014).

Meanwhile, one of the areas of the Riau-Lingga kingdom, namely Daik-Lingga, during the reign of Sultan Sulaiman Badrul Alamsyah II (1857–1883) was a sago-producing area for the Riau-Lingga kingdom. At that time, Sultan Sulaiman Badrul Alamsyah II focused his economic life on agriculture. He said sago plants as a staple food in addition to rice. Sago plants were chosen because sago is a type of plant that is resistant to pests. In addition, these plants do not require special attention in planting. In its development, the sago plant is used as an export trade commodity to Singapore, Johor and Pahang. However, the trading system was organized by the government. The sago is carried through the Daik River which is located in the middle of the city of Daik. Furthermore, transported using royal ships such as Srilanjut, Gempita and Lelarum to Singapore, Johor and Pahang. Although there is no sufficient evidence that these royal ships brought textile back from Singapore, Johor and Pahang, it is very likely that these ships also carried goods for the community, including textile. From this period also, Daik Lingga's trade relations with Singapore began to be well established.

Based on the description above, the Daik River in Daik-Lingga could be called "Riau Harbor" at that time. Although it is not as busy as the Riau Harbor at the time on the Riau River Ulu. Of course this refers to the notion of ports in the economic concept (economical concept) not to the physical concept. At that time, the Daik River in Daik-Lingga was considered more as a place of exchange or entry and exit of commodity goods between the hinterland and foreland (across the area) rather than just as a shelter for ships. Along with the improving economy of the Riau-Lingga Kingdom, the Sultan used the proceeds of the royal treasury to improve the living standards of the people, the cost of the kingdom and the cost of development. The development includes various facilities in Daik City and around the Daik River. Therefore, the city of Daik is increasingly crowded with traders from various ethnic groups so that the population is increasing. This situation is also supported by the existence of the Daik River, which is located in the middle of the city, which can be navigated upstream.

However, along with the development of the city of Daik as the center of the Riau-Lingga Kingdom, the Dutch were increasingly trying to make as much profit as possible from the economic wheels of the Riau-Lingga Kingdom. The manifestation of the increasingly strong intervention was the conclusion of an agreement between the Sultan and the Netherlands on December 1, 1857 regarding the permission of Dutch businessmen to open tin mines. In addition, there was an agreement between the Sultan and the Netherlands on January 26, 1888 regarding the collection of excise by the Dutch on various businesses, companies and individuals.

Besides the agreements such as the above, the Netherlands still takes action such as collecting plantation taxes, permits and individual taxes to sago traders who will export abroad. Dutch intervention and pressure on the economic activity of the Riau-Lingga Kingdom lead to the economic life of the practical community not to develop up to 1900. Therefore, trade activities on the Daik River are no longer heard. Likewise with Hinterland regions. Furthermore, in 1905, the Dutch government added several excise imposed on the people in addition to the agreement in 1888. Additional excise included excise commercial and excise. Thus the burden of the people is getting heavier because they are burdened with a variety of duties and taxes required by the Netherlands. While the income of the royal cash was increasingly reduced as a result of a tin mine in Dabo Singkep by the Netherlands. The situation continued until finally the Sultan's role was reduced even eliminated by the Netherlands in 1913. Since that year, the Dutch is increasingly in power to determine the economy in the former Riau-Lingga royal area.

Since the abolition of the Riau-Lingga Kingdom in 1913, the Riau area which includes the ocean area and the mainland area has its own characteristics in the field of economic life of its people. This characteristic is that there is no market as a trading center. Likewise the ports in Riau. No one big port dominates it. Because in general, traders who are generally Bugis and Malays immediately bring their merchandise which is obtained directly to bring their merchandise which is obtained directly from the producing areas to Singapore. Vice versa, there are certain items that are needed in the former territory of the Riau Lingga Kingdom. This situation was triggered by the development of Singapore as a trading port in Southeast Asia.

Thus, until the beginning of the 20th century, the trade in *Alam Melayu* above sufficiently illustrates that textile has become the main commodity of trade. The movement of textile was able to cross *Alam Melayu* boundaries which led to a trading center in Singapore in the early 20th century. As the main commodity of trade, of course, textile has a special place for the people who support it.

## 3.2 The Role of Textile in *Alam Melayu*

Based on the script of *Salatus Salatin*(Ahmad, 2003)almost in every important event always use childbirth. A set of births is given when facing someone higher, a sign of friendship between kingdoms, proposing to a king's daughter and the cancellation of a king. Here's one of them.

After arriving in Melaka, Seri Maharaja went in to face Sultan Mahmud. So he presented the third princess under the care of Sultan Mahmud; So too much joy for him by Kelantan God, and the king gave the gift of giving birth to Seri Maharaja and all those who went.

So by Seri Wak Raja, he tied Tun Biajid with a cindai, and brought him inside to face Sultan Mahmud Syah. So as the treasurer said, everything was presented to him. So the command of Sultan Mahmud Shah, "It's the same with the treasurer, because the servant is a bad person, the child is tied up, let go!" So released by Seri Wak Raja; Then Tun Biajid was given birth by the king, ordered to bring it back to the Treasurer(Ahmad, 2003).

In another Malay manuscript, namely *Hikayat Siak*, it is stated in more detail that one of the tools for childbirth is an element of textile. Or already in the form of textilees. As written in the following quote.

And the Sultan of Palembang sent a diamond bun, ten thousand rials, for shopping for his wife. And all ministers, all sent. There is a diamond ring, there is a diamond earring, each one on top. And Panglima Tuha was given birth in a complete outfit, with a kris. After that, then Panglima Tuha took care of it, then went down to the boat, downstream, then sailed. Not how long, then arrived at Terengganu, facing the king, offering the letter. Then the king read the letter; the shipment was taken, sire, there is

While in *Salatus Salatin*(Ahmad, 2003), The textile element is more assertive, namely as a textile. Even in other parts, the textile is intact as part of childbirth. Like the following quote.

Come and worship, both of you, what do you wish for me. Worshiped Hang Isa Appropriately, "My lord, if there is a gift of grace, the Lord, please plant gold, onions two or three, and textilees, two or three banians (A. Samad, 2006: 196).

After coming to Melaka, Hang Nadim went in to face Sultan Mahmud. The textile he bought, only four pieces were loose, so he presented it to Sultan Mahmud Shah(Ahmad, 2003)

Based on *Sullatus Salatin* (Ahmad, 2003) and *Hikayat Siak* as mentioned above, illustrates that textile has a special role in the 13th century to the end of the 18th century. Most say that textile functions as part of childbirth. *Persalin* in Malay means a gift in the form of a complete set of textilees. Labor comes from the word [per.sa.li.nan] | hcihw لأ ي في نافي المحافظة والمحافظة والمح

However, there is no sufficient written evidence regarding the relationship between the role of textile and the embroidery skills of the people in *Alam Melayu*. Written evidence that becomes a bright spot only mentions that at that time Malacca at the beginning of its glory (15th century) had a relationship with Trengganu who had long had a close relationship with Patani. Malacca as a trading center between East and West has encouraged the arrival of Portuguese, Dutch and British traders. The arrival of Western traders brought merchandise including textile, in addition to bringing ideas related to economic and political development. This situation more or less had an impact on the traditions in *Alam Melayu*.

An overview of the role of cloth around the 19th century can be obtained from the *Tuhfat An Nafis* Malay manuscript (Haji & Ahmad, 1997). Mentioned in the text at the time of the Young Lord of King Jaafar. When he welcomed the King of Malacca, he was given gifts including cloth and gold thread. The quote is as follows.

Then give him some gifts to the younger brother-in-law, namely a rifle inlaid with silver, (and a purifier) and others (rather than sakhalt and velvet and cloth/thread/gold as well as some gifts to the sons of kings and great people.

Based on the description above, textile as part of childbirth and became a valuable gift for the nobility until well into the 19th century. In fact, not only textile but gold thread also become a special part. Along with the current of modernization, at the end of the 19th century, the Malay Peninsula was introduced to weaving textile from Europe which more or less influenced the existence of textile in *Alam Melayu*. Textiles are easier to get quickly. In addition, its function has also experienced a shift from something that is considered special for certain circles to something that is naturally used by all groups.

Dames (1921) made an interpretation of Barbosa's notes on how the role of textile in Malay nature. Among them are how the textile that becomes the textilees of the Malays is used for various purposes such as bath textile (sarong), headgear (hood), sebai (to protect from the sun), cradles, packages, corpse covers and sleeping textilees. Meanwhile, according to Dames (1921) textile refers to plain textile, plots and cop (printed textile) that have been used as merchandise. However, in *Sullatus Salatin*(Ahmad, 2003)textile not only refers to the three types of textile but also refers to the types of cindai textile, rivet textile and woven textile. The following is an excerpt from the script:

As for Tun Biajid, when behind the Treasurer, he said to the youths, "I am being tied up by my father, I should be the servant; at that time the servant was wearing a crimson dress, he tied me with green natar cindai; Once a servant dressed in white, he tied me with yellow natar cindai," then everyone heard the words that Tun Biajiad liked to laugh.(Ahmad, 2003)

King's son going to kingdom

After forty days the king's son had been outside, then the Admiral made a yellow parade, meaning: swaddling, and mattresses, rice and textilees; of the procession of birds affixed to the ends of the poles, sixteen in number, and the crown of the crown sixteen, and the bones of the flesh sixteen, and the fan sixteen, the man in the lotus sixteen, the rivet forty telepa, the litter forty, cindai kara four twenty, all delivered on poles; of the pillow and the mat on the elephant, all of them are of gold and jewels(Ahmad, 2003)

The type of cindai textile is believed to be influenced by patola textile from India. Likewise rivet textile. Rivet comes from Sanskrit, Kalingga which means an area in South India. In addition to the types of cindai and rivet textiles, in the Malay script, woven textiles are also found, such as the following excerpts:

So, your father's servant is not obedient, dalilu'I-life than your father, one piece of Siamese coral reef gold, and the woven textile of the Javanese yeast farmer in five scattered hills at the top of the mountain, two strands, like a flower(Ahmad, 2003).

Winstead (1925) in his writing entitled *Malays Industries Part I Art and Craft* explained how the process of producing cloth was carried out by the Malays such as dyeing, weaving, embroidering and crocheting as well as several other ways to produce fabric patterns. Studies conducted by Skeat (1902) and Winstedt (1925) state that the tradition is declining. The *batik* cloth found in Malay nature was not produced by the inhabitants of Malay nature. Although the people also wear this batik cloth, the batik cloth has been produced in Java before they can produce it themselves.

## 3.3 Textile and Malay Women

Based on the description above, textile has a special place in Malay nature. The textile in Malay nature is then combined with gold thread embroidery. The raw material for gold thread is believed to have been imported by Indian traders. Gold embroidery has an expensive price, because it follows the price of gold in the market. In addition to gold, there is also that which comes from silver. Silver is the choice because it is easier to maintain. The combination of textile and gold thread is produced through the art of embroidery. Gold and silver threads are divided into 2 types, namely flat and round like a pipe but very thin and light. This flat gold thread in Malay nature is called the rivet thread (John et al., nd).

The lack of written sources regarding the art of embroidery in Malay script is understandable considering that this activity is not carried out on a large scale but is carried out traditionally. However, Denys Lombard in his study, said that the high level of embroidery and sewing came from China (Lombard, 2005).

In almost all areas in Alam Melayu, the art of embroidery is found which is manifested in women's textileing as a scarf or as a layah (head cover), textilees, and curtains. Some areas in Alam Melayu that still carry on this embroidery art are the former territory of the Malay Kingdom of Melaka (14th-16th centuries) including Jambi, Siak and Langkat. In addition, the former territory of the Malay Kingdom of Johor-Riau as well (17-19 centuries). This embroidery art also flowed to other Malay court areas such as the Malay Kingdom of Brunei (including Sabah-Sarawak), Selangor, Perak, Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu, the Malay Kingdom of Sulu-Mendanau, Banjar-Kutai and Sulawesi.(Suhana & Norhayati, 2015).

#### IV. Conclusion

The role of textile in Alam Melayu is included in the theme of social history. Textile is seen as part of the interaction process (reciprocal relationship) between humans as historical actors as has happened in the socio-cultural context of the past. Sullalatus Salatin Malay Manuscript(Ahmad, 2003), Tawarikh Raja-Raja Melaka dan Pahang, Tuhfat An-nafis (Haji & Ahmad, 1997) and Hikayat Siak implies the role of textile in the socio-cultural life of the Malay community in the past. Even though it is implied in the Malay manuscripts, the existing data seems to be "cut into pieces", so an interpretation of the existing data is needed.

Textile in Malay nature is the most popular trade commodity. The textile then has a high value for the Malay community. The textile serves as a symbol that given when facing someone higher, a sign of friendship between kingdoms, proposing to the princess and the cancellation of a king. In everyday life, textile cannot be separated from the art of embroidery among Malay women. The study of textile as a commodity, its role in society and its future development still needs to be done again. Textile not only brings together traders from the west and east to carry out trading activities. But textile is also a cultural driver.

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