

Maritime Activities of the Demak Sultanate: Shipping and Trade Route in the Nusantara Network (1478-1546)

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Abstract

This study endeavours to explain the geostrategic conditions of the north coast of Java, as well as the activities and maritime policies of the Demak Sultanate. It adopts a historiographic approach comprising heuristics based on the book *Suma Oriental* as a primary source and other relevant secondary sources; in-depth verification and interpretation of data from various sources; and methodical historical writing. The results illustrate (1) the geostrategic conditions of the north coast of Java, which is in the middle of the Nusantara spice route, helped make Demak and other port cities an important emporium. The region is traversed by monsoon winds that support shipping activities and has abundant teak wood resources for the shipbuilding industry. (2) Demak's maritime activities included military expeditions to conquer the Portuguese in Malacca and several important emporiums on the north coast of Java; trade expeditions to export-import various commodities; and establishing trade partnerships with other regions, especially Malacca and Maluku. (3) Raden Patah's maritime policy included the deployment of military expeditions to conquer the Portuguese in Malacca in 1512, establishing trade partnerships with Malacca, producing *Jung* ships, and building port cities on the north coast of Java as important emporiums; Pati Unus mobilized a military expedition to conquer the Portuguese in Malacca in 1521 and formed the Demak-Cirebon-Palembang military alliance; and Trenggana conquered Lampung and Banten to control the pepper trade until the conquest of the Sunda Kelapa emporium under the Pajajaran kingdom.

Keywords: Demak Sultanate, maritime activities, trade network, Nusantara, spices

Introduction

The north coast of Java in the 15th to 16th centuries was an integral part of the maritime trade known as "the Java sea zone". The area on the north coast of Java was able to develop rapidly because the Java Sea was connected to a network of inter-island trade routes in the Nusantara, intra-Asia, and internationally.¹ Some of the port cities that played an essential role in supporting maritime activities on the north coast of Java were Banten, Sunda Kelapa, Cirebon, Tegal, Semarang, Demak, Jepara, Rembang, Tuban, Gresik, and Surabaya. Although the political entity of the Nusantara faded with the collapse of Majapahit in the late 15th century, the maritime trade network strengthened due to the transition of government that coincided with the start of the trading period, in which Muslim traders played a central role in the coastal cities of the north coast of Java.² The collapse of Majapahit as the largest Hindu kingdom in Java provided an opportunity for the development of Islam with the proclamation of the Demak Sultanate, which was once one of Majapahit's water crossing bases.

The Demak Sultanate is located on the north coast of Java directly facing the Muria Strait, then bordering Semarang and Tidunan.³ Demak, with its administrative centre in Bintara, grew into a maritime sultanate with an international port during the leadership of three generations of rulers (1478-1546). The *Walisanga* is credited with building the city of Demak together with Raden Patah (Sultan Demak I), who adopted the Majapahit city planning that placed the square at the centre of the city, the

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¹ Singgih Tri Sulistiyono, Yety Rochwulaningsih, and Haryono Rinardi (2021), "Capitalism Expansion and Local Adaptation: Maritime Trade Network on the North Coast of Java During the Early Modern Period," *Jebat: Malaysian Journal of History, Politics & Strategic Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 1, pp. 71-95.

² Geoff Wade (2009), "An Early Age of Commerce in Southeast Asia 900-1300 CE," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 2, pp. 221-265.

³ Tome Pires (2017), *Suma Oriental Karya Tome Pires: Perjalanan Dari Laut Merah ke Cina & Buku Francisco Rodrigues*, Yogyakarta: Ombak, p. 257.

palace on the south side, the market and port on the north side, the mosque on the west side, and the settlement on the east side.⁴ Demak was the last traditional city boundary of the Hindu-Buddhist empire. The rule of Demak lasted approximately 79 years and was led by five sultans, Raden Patah (1475-1518), Pati Unus (1518-1521), Trenggana (1521-1546), Prawata (1546-1547), and Arya Penangsang (1547-1554).

The Demak Sultanate managed to control most of the north coastal areas of Java that were previously controlled by the Majapahit Kingdom so maritime hegemony continued for a long time until the collapse of the sultanate. The Demak Sultanate's maritime hegemony was supported by the existence of several major ports such as Jepara, Rembang, and Sunda Kelapa.⁵ These ports acted as important emporiums that sold various trade commodities as well as being transit and connecting locations between the eastern region, which was a producer of spices, and the western region (Malacca), which was the largest trading city at that time. The bustling maritime activities on the north coast of Java involved local and foreign traders such as Gujaratis, Persians, Arabs, and Bengalis who helped drive the process of Islamization in Java. When the Demak Sultanate was established, rulers such as Raden Patah, Pati Unus, and Trenggana attempted to expand their territory to the West and East of Java and even to Sumatra.⁶ The motive for the expansion of territories including attacking the Portuguese in Malacca, was the mission of Islamization, control of trade centers, and control of pepper-producing areas. Therefore, the rapid process of Islamization was in line with the bustling spice trade network.⁷ The bustling maritime activities on the north coast of Java also encouraged the development of local economies in coastal cities, where people could grow new businesses such as *batik* in Lasem and Pekalongan, wood carving in Jepara city, and embroidery in Kudus city.

In the maritime world, the sea and rivers have the same vital function of supporting the life activities of coastal and inland communities. In the Nusantara, there are several large kingdoms as government units that depend on social, economic, and political life through maritime activities in sea and river ports, such as Sriwijaya, Majapahit, and Demak. In this case, the kingdoms or sultanates mentioned earlier made the sea and rivers a central infrastructure to support the distribution of trade commodities from inland areas to coastal areas or vice versa and as a link for local and international trade. The sea and rivers became a symbol of political legitimacy, where the greatness of the kingdom or sultanate could be determined by how extensive its influence and power over strategic water areas. This is supported by Ricklefs' opinion that kingdoms or sultanates in the Nusantara tended to depend on sea trade.⁸ Demak was a maritime entity that continued Java's maritime hegemony. Through maritime trade, there would be an economic-intellectual-spiritual bond between each region involved in the spice trade route network.⁹ The process, was supported by cooperation between sultanates in trade, the process of Islamization, and the development of science.

Demak was the first Islamic kingdom in Java. Besides having a strong maritime culture,¹⁰ it was also supported by strategic maritime policies initiated by three generations of rulers, namely Raden Patah, Pati Unus, and Trenggana. Demak's maritime policies emphasized the integrality of politics, economics, and Islamization, such that these policies strengthened geopolitical stability, rendered Demak part of the trade center and transit station for shipping on the spice route, developed the economy in the north coast cities of Java and the interior and strengthened the Muslim network in Java. Demak maritime policies (1) during the reign of Raden Patah, established trade cooperation with Malacca, which had previously begun during the Majapahit period; instructed the manufacture of *Jung* ships in 1509 at the Lasem (Rembang) shipyard to prepare for an expedition to attack the Portuguese; instructed Pati Unus

⁴ Siti Rukayah, Fariz Addo Giovano, and Muhammad Abdullah (2023), "The Lost of Old Demak Sultanate City Pattern," *Journal of Architecture and Urbanism*, Vol. 47, No. 2, pp. 146-162; Hafid Setiadi (2021), "Worldview, Religion, and Urban Growth: A Geopolitical Perspective on Geography of Power and Conception of Space During Islamization in Java, Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 81-113.

⁵ Pires (2017), *Suma Oriental Karya Tome Pires: Perjalanan Dari Laut Merah ke Cina & Buku Francisco Rodrigues*, pp. 240-268; Annisa Gultom (2018), "Kalapa-Jacatra-Batavia-Jakarta: An Old City That Never Gets Old," *Spafa Journal*, Vol. 2, pp. 1-27.

⁶ Hermanus Johannes de Graaf and Theodoor Gautier Thomas Pigeaud (2019), *Kerajaan Islam Pertama di Jawa: Tinjauan Sejarah Politik Abad XV dan XVI*, Jakarta: Grafiti, p. 68.

⁷ Naniek Harkantiningih (2017), "Muatan Kapal Karam: Jaringan Pelayaran dan Perdagangan Rempah," in *Kemaritiman Nusantara*, Jakarta: Pustaka Obor, pp. 159-175.

⁸ Merle Calvin Ricklefs (2011), *Sejarah Indonesia Modern*, Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, pp. 21-30.

⁹ Richard Foltz (2010), "The Islamization of the Silk Road," in *Religions of the Silk Road Premodern Patterns of Globalization*, Berlin: Springer Science & Business Media, pp. 85-104.

¹⁰ Alamsyah et al. (2023), "Between Maritime Tradition and Violence on the Sea: Local Response to the European Expansion in Indonesia," *Journal of Maritime Archaeology*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 65-83.

to attack the Portuguese in 1512 who by then controlled Malacca to then become Demak's leading trading partner; then built the city of Demak and Jepara as important emporiums. (2) During the reign of Pati Unus, a Demak-Cirebon-Palembang military alliance was formed to strengthen Demak's naval power; and the attack on the Portuguese in Malacca continued in 1521. (3) During the reign of Trenggana, instructed the conquest of Lampung and Banten to control the pepper trade in the Java-Sumatra region; and the conquest of Sunda Kelapa, which was then an emporium under the rule of the Pajajaran Kingdom it was to be used as a base for Portuguese troops in Java. These maritime policies, among others, implemented by the three sultans, eventually made Demak the basis of Nusantara's maritime hegemony.

This research uses a historiographic approach. Historical research is a mechanism for testing and analyzing history to find authentic data, and present historical information that has been tested for validity.¹¹ This research is divided into four stages (1) heuristics, which is the excavation of historical data based on the primary source *Suma Oriental* by Tome Pires as well as several secondary sources. (2) Verification, which includes internal and external validation of various historical sources, both primary and secondary. (3) Interpretation, which involves interpreting the historical data obtained from validate sources. (4) Historiography, in which the researcher methodically records the results of the analysis of historical data. This article aims to provide an explanation of the maritime history of the Demak Sultanate related to shipping and trade activities in the spice route network and the policies of the three rulers (Raden Patah, Patih Unus, and Trenggana) who made Demak a maritime hegemonic power in the Nusantara in the 16th century.

Geostrategic Conditions of the North Coast of Java during the Demak Sultanate Period

Java is one of the most important islands in the Nusantara, surrounded by the Sunda Strait, Indian Ocean, Java Sea, and Bali Strait. Java island has a strategic location and is the location of various trade commodities, making it the scene for competing for maritime trade hegemony. The north coast of Java plays a central role in the spice trade network involving two major nations, India and China. Malacca, which became the most important city as well as the Nusantara's trade gateway, was able to operate through the support of several factors, (1) Malacca supplied various commodities such as spices from the eastern region of the Nusantara and rice from Java; (2) the guarantee of water security areas by several large kingdoms such as Majapahit and Demak; then (3) the existence of shipyards, especially on the island of Java as a transit location as well as repairing damaged merchant ships. Wind changes are also a central factor that determines the climatic conditions and life of the Nusantara people. This is inseparable from the location of the Nusantara (Indonesia) between two continents (Asia and Australia) and two oceans (Pacific and Hindia) which are traversed by the west and east monsoons. These two types of wind in the Nusantara cause the rainy season (October to April) and dry season (June to September),¹² and the direction changes every year. The monsoon is one of the prominent supporters of shipping and trade activities for the Nusantara and international communities.¹³ The existence of these monsoons also encourages the creation of shipping and trade interconnections between islands in the Nusantara and several nations in Asia.

Commodities that are the mainstay of the Nusantara include raw material products produced from the plantation, agriculture, and livestock sectors. The agricultural sector developed by the Nusantara community focuses on rice commodities, which are staples, while the plantation sector focuses on commodities such as pepper, nutmeg, cloves, and other spices. Java has long been known as the best rice exporter in Southeast Asia.¹⁴ Port cities along the north coast of Java were necessary as emporiums and bases, where traders stopped to buy supplies in the form of rice and water to support the next voyage to the city of Malacca or the east region. Java also produced fruits, vegetables, various meats, sea products, sago flour, palm and sugar. Of these commodities, spices were the most valuable and able to penetrate Asian and European markets. Long before the arrival of westerners to the Nusantara, the China-Java-Sunda Kecil islands-Maluku trade route had been established,¹⁵ such that approximately

¹¹ Nina Herlina (2020), *Metode Sejarah*, Bandung: Satya Historika, p. 2.

¹² Robert Cribb (2000), *Historical Atlas of Indonesia*, London: Curzon Press, p. 18.

¹³ Singgih Tri Sulistiyono, Yety Rochwulaningsih, and Haryono Rinardi (2020), "Peran Masyarakat Nusantara Dalam Konstruksi Kawasan Asia Tenggara Sebagai Poros Maritim Dunia Pada Periode Pramodern," *Jurnal Sejarah Citra Lekha*, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 75-84.

¹⁴ Pires (2017), *Suma Oriental Karya Tome Pires: Perjalanan Dari Laut Merah ke Cina & Buku Francisco Rodrigues*, p. 251.

¹⁵ Singgih Tri Sulistiyono and Yety Rochwulaningsih (2013), "Contest for Hegemony: The Dynamics of Inland and Maritime Cultures Relations in the History of Java Island, Indonesia," *Journal of Marine and Island Cultures*, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 115-127.

1340 Chinese merchant ships regularly came to Maluku to buy cloves.¹⁶ The establishment of trade routes to the eastern part of the Nusantara was followed by Javanese and Malay merchant ships, but in its development, Javanese merchant ships were able to dominate the eastern and western waters of the Nusantara, especially since the Majapahit period.¹⁷ This led the Chinese trade route to buy spices to moved to Malacca. The north coast of Java during the Majapahit to Demak periods played an essential role as a link for the distribution of spices from the east region to Malacca.

The existence of maritime kingdoms in Java such as Majapahit and Demak made the north coast the most strategic and dynamic area in the Nusantara. This is evidence by historical data on several important ports. According to Tome Pires, who visited Java in 1513, there were 24 ports on the north coast of Java, Banten, Pontang, Cigede, Tangerang, Sunda Kelapa, Cimanuk, Cirebon, Japura, Tegal, Tidunan, Semarang, Demak, Jepara, Rembang, Tuban, Sidayu, Gresik, Gamda, Cantam, Surabaya, Pajarakan, Panarukan, Blambangan, and Chamda.¹⁸ Of the previously mentioned ports Sunda Kelapa, Demak, Jepara, and Cirebon are the largest ports in Java to support the export and import of various commodities. Sunda Kelapa ports are well-managed with clearly written rules. The primary export commodities in this port are rice and pepper, while the import commodities include various types of fabrics.¹⁹ The port of Cirebon was previously controlled by the Pajajaran Kingdom but was captured by Demak during the reign of Trenggana. The Indramayu Peninsula surrounds Cirebon port, so it is often used as a ship shelter, and the teak wood commodity from Cirebon is the best for making *Jung* ships.²⁰ Small ports on the north coast of Java also sent trading fleets carrying commodities such as salt, rice, and sea products to the port of Sunda Kelapa for export to other regions.

In the past, the Demak region was estimated to have a coastline four kilometres longer than the current coastline. Mount Muria at the time of the Demak Sultanate, was located on an island separate from mainland Java, Demak, and Semarang were located in Java.²¹ Thus, Demak was on the south side of the strait separating Java and Muria. Therefore, if there were trading ships from Malacca that wanted to go to the east regions, they had to go along the north coast of Java by passing Semarang, then enter Demak through the Muria Strait. Apart from being the Sultanate's capital and port city, Demak was also used as a centre for stockpiling rice obtained from rice farming in the interior and Muria island.²² This strategic geography became an advantage, as merchant ships could dock long enough to replenish supplies and repair damaged parts, so Semarang and Demak became increasingly crowded. The strong Portuguese influence and trade monopoly since 1511 caused local and foreign merchants to avoid trading with them. Even merchant ships that had previously headed for Malacca switched to Java by travelling along the west coast of Sumatra and the Sunda Strait to ensure trade security. The ports of Banten and Sunda Kelapa, located near the Sunda Strait, became increasingly crowded with the arrival of merchant ships. Moreover, at that time, Banten, Lampung, and South Sumatra were the largest pepper-producing areas, which became the most essential commodity in the market.

Shipping and Trade Activities on the North Coast of Java during the Demak Sultanate Era

Shipping Activities

The north coast of Java is closely related to shipping activities in the Nusantara spice route network. Shipping activities in the Nusantara before the 19th century depended heavily on the direction of the monsoon winds to move merchant ships to maritime trade centres and spice-producing areas. The shipping patterns that relied on monsoon winds encourage seasonal analysis, thus forming a regular time cycle to support shipping activities. Nusantara is a tropical climate region with dry and rainy seasons. The rainy season lasts from October to April due to the impact of the west monsoon, and the dry season last from June to September due to the effects of the east monsoon. Several alternative shipping routes to spice-producing areas can be taken, firstly utilizing the west monsoon winds by sailing from Malacca to Riau, Johor, Sunda Kelapa, Makassar, and Maluku. Second, sailing from the east coast of Sumatra to the north coast of Java (Banten, Sunda Kelapa, Cirebon, Demak, Jepara,

¹⁶ W. W. Rockhill (1915), "Notes on the Relations and Trade of China with the Eastern Archipelago and the Coast of the Indian Ocean During the Fourteenth Century," *T'oung Pao*, Vol. 16, No. 1, pp. 435-467.

¹⁷ R. J. Wilkinson (1912), "The Malacca Sultanate," *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 61, pp. 67-71.

¹⁸ Pires (2017), *Suma Oriental Karya Tome Pires: Perjalanan Dari Laut Merah ke Cina & Buku Francisco Rodrigues*, pp. 238-276.

¹⁹ Pires (2017), *Suma Oriental Karya Tome Pires*, p. 236.

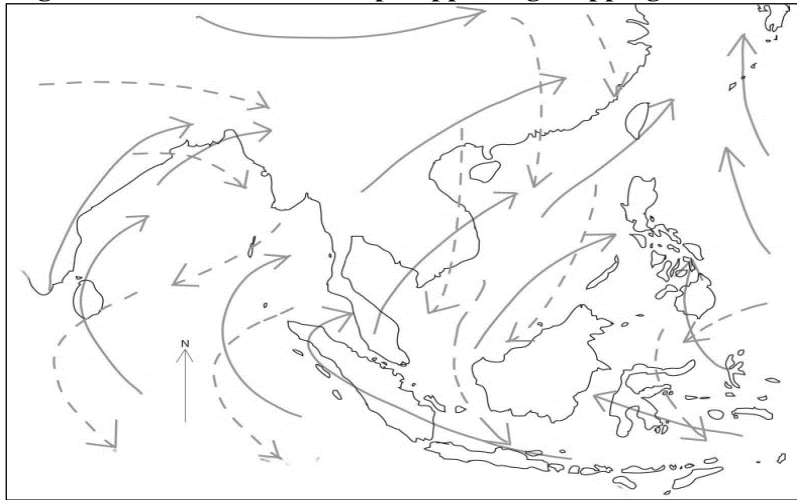
²⁰ Pires (2017), *Suma Oriental Karya Tome Pires*, pp. 255-256.

²¹ R. W. van Bemmelen (1949), *Geology of Indonesia*, Den Haag: Government Printing Office, p. 29.

²² Graaf and Pigeaud (2019), *Kerajaan Islam Pertama di Jawa: Tinjauan Sejarah Politik Abad XV dan XVI*, pp. 53-55.

Maritime Activities of the Demak Sultanate: Shipping and Trade in the Nusantara Spice Route Network Semarang, Rembang, Gresik, and Surabaya), *Sunda Kecil* (Bali, Lombok, and Sumbawa), Makassar, and Maluku.²³ As for the return voyage from Maluku to Malacca to sell spices, the merchant ships used the help of the east monsoon winds. However, because the east monsoon wind pressure was relatively weak when crossing the waters of Flores and the Java Sea, it caused the merchant ships to stop first in the port cities of the north coast of Java while trading and preparing supplies for the next voyage.

Figure 1: Monsoon Wind Map Supporting Shipping Activities²⁴



The voyage to Malacca through the waters of the Java Sea was quite difficult when the wind was strong and could potentially cause sea storms. Therefore, merchant ships must pass through carefully. Every time a sea storm came, the ships had to take refuge in the port, where Cirebon was the port most often used as a ship shelter. Such bad weather did not last long, but the majority of shipping routes that pass through the north coast of Java are not safe in these seasons, so merchant ships still have to stop at the port cities of the north coast of Java.

Since the 15th century, Java has had a central position in maritime activities in the Nusantara, supported by Majapahit's control over Maluku as a spice-producing base.²⁵ The expansion of power and advances in shipping made the north coast of Java the centre of major maritime kingdoms that contributed to the formation of Javanese marine identity, one of which was the Demak Sultanate. Many ports on the north coast of Java became emporiums and transit points for trade controlled by Demak. Sunda Kelapa, Demak, Jepara, and Cirebon were the main ports in Java that functioned to support the export and import of various commodities in inter-island, intra-Asian, and international maritime trade. Rembang is a port city with dockyards to build *Jung* ships and repair damaged merchant ships. Jepara, apart from being an emporium, was also the base of the Demak navy for military expeditions to the Malacca to conquer the Portuguese. Therefore, it can be seen that the monsoon cycle in Nusantara waters facilitated inter-island and international shipping activities. This formed an interconnection between the islands in the Nusantara and various regions outside, making Nusantara a key in the world spice trade network.

Trade Activities

Nusantara has long been known as a producer of spices, which became an important commodity, especially since the trading era of the 15th-16th centuries.²⁶ During this period, Java played an important role in inter-island, intra-Asian and international trade. Java mostly produced rice, vegetables, and processed marine products. Other commodities traded in Java included *batik* cloth, livestock meat, and slaves.²⁷ Java was the main exporter of rice to Malacca and other parts of the Nusantara, while Malacca traded various types of cloth from Bengal and Gujarat to Java on a large scale. The merchandise brought by Malacca traders was in high demand by the Javanese people. Java was also a storage base for spices from the eastern region (cloves, nutmeg, and mace) and *Sunda Kecil* (cinnamon) before being

²³ Sulistiyono and Rochwulaningsih (2013), "Contest for Hegemony: The Dynamics of Inland and Maritime Cultures Relations in the History of Java Island, Indonesia," pp. 115-127.

²⁴ Derek Heng (2022), *Southeast Asian Interconnections Geography, Networks, and Trade*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 7.

²⁵ Tom G. Hoogervorst (2021), "Commercial Networks Connecting Southeast Asia with the Indian Ocean," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 4.

²⁶ Anthony Reid (1990), "An 'Age of Commerce' in Southeast Asian History," *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 1-30.

²⁷ Ricklefs (2011), *Sejarah Indonesia Modern*, pp. 29-30.

distributed to other regions outside Java. Other commodities purchased by Javanese traders on a large scale included camphor, frankincense, gambier, and forest products. In this regard, Java has played an important role as a catalyst between the islands in the eastern and western parts of the Nusantara.²⁸

Nusantara has a strategic position in the maritime trade network between India and China. The people of Nusantara actively took part in this trade network, in which the north coast of Java certainly played an important role. This is characterized by the establishment of trade relations between Nusantara and India, which developed early, followed by China. The products from Nusantara that were traded with China and India included pepper, cloves, nutmeg, sandalwood, rice, cloth, and so on. Malacca was an emporium and important transit location in the Southeast Asian region in the context of inter-island and intra-Asian trade, where various people were involved in trade interactions, including Arabs, Indians, Chinese, Malays, Bugis, Banjar, Makassar, Ambon, Ternate, and Javanese. Javanese trade activities formed the Java Sea network that included port cities on the north coast of Java, Bali, Lombok, Sumba, South Kalimantan, South Sulawesi, Sumbawa, and Timor.

In maritime trade, port cities on the north coast of Java provided spices such as cloves, nutmeg, and pepper. These commodities were merchandise from the Nusantara that were sought after by Arab, Indian, and Chinese traders. Arab traders returned to their countries from Java with ships loaded with pepper, cloves, nutmeg, mace, kasia, and ginger to be traded in South India. Chinese traders brought back pepper, cloves, nutmeg, and mace from Java to trade in Chinese ports.²⁹ Pepper was obtained from Banten, Lampung, and South Sumatra, Javanese traders bought cloves and nutmeg from Maluku. Other commodities were also collected by Javanese traders such as sandalwood from Nusa Tenggara, while frankincense from Sumatra and Kalimantan was in demand by Indians and Chinese. Conversely, trade commodities from China and India were also in great demand by the Javanese. Commodities from China that were in demand were porcelain utensils such as plates, bowls, and cups. Products from India that were in demand were various types of fabrics of good quality. Products from India and China were traded in the north coast towns of Java directly or through intermediaries of traders from Malacca.³⁰

Table 1: Maritime Trade Commodities in the 15th to 16th Centuries

Trade Network	Export	Import
Java-Malacca (China, India, Persia, and other nations)	Rice, pepper, tamarind, slaves, gold, semi-precious stones, cloth, and other foodstuffs	Indian/Chinese cloth, porcelain utensils from China, areca nut, and rose water
Java-West Sumatra	-	Gold, camphor, pepper, silk, resin, honey, wax, rattan, horses, and other forest products
Java-South Sumatra	-	Cotton, honey, wax, tire, rattan, pepper, and gold
Java-Bali Lombok-Sumbawa	Java coarse cloth	Foodstuffs, coarse cloth, slaves, and horses
Java-Solor-Timor	Indian cloth	Sulphur and white sandalwood
Java-Maluku	Rice, Indian cloth, and cow	Cloves, nutmeg, and mace

The arrival of westerners in the early 16th century forced traders in the Nusantara to make adjustments. Moreover, the westerners implemented an armed trade system, which was a heavy blow to the existing merchants.³¹ The conquest of Malacca by the Portuguese in 1511 encouraged the growth of new trading centres in Java, such as Demak, Banten, Cirebon, Sunda Kelapa, and Jepara. The defeat of Malacca by the Portuguese disrupted the stability of the waters in the Malacca Strait, as piracy once again became

²⁸ Stuart O. Robson (1981), "Java at the Crossroads: Aspects of Javanese Cultural History in the 14th and 15th Centuries," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde*, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 259-292.

²⁹ Robson (1981), "Java at the Crossroads," pp. 259-292.

³⁰ Pires (2017), *Suma Oriental Karya Tome Pires: Perjalanan Dari Laut Merah ke Cina & Buku Francisco Rodrigues*, pp. 252-253.

³¹ Sulistiyono, Rochwulaningsih, and Rinardi (2021), "Capitalism Expansion and Local Adaptation: Maritime Trade Network on the North Coast of Java During the Early Modern Period," pp. 71-95.

a threat to merchant ships. This caused merchant ships to avoid Malacca, where Muslim traders tended to choose to sail to other trading cities, especially on the north coast of Java, because it was the Demak Sultanate that maintained trade security in these waters. The more crowded port cities on the north coast of Java encouraged the progress of local communities, because of the trade relations between local communities and foreign traders. These trade relations contributed to increasing profits from trade and taxes, and also became a means of exchanging information related to progress and developments in other regions.³²

Maritime Policy of Three Generations of Demak Sultans

Raden Patah's Maritime Policy (1478-1518)

Raden Patah's maritime policy is inseparable from Demak's change in status to a new sultanate after Majapahit collapsed around 1475. According to local sources such as *Babad Demak*, Raden Patah was the son of the last Majapahit king, Prabu Brawijaya (Bhre Kertabumi) and his Chinese concubine.³³ Raden Patah was initially ordered by Sunan Ampel (one of the *Walisanga*) to open a settlement and Islamization base in the Glagah Wangi forest, where the area later developed into a vassal of Majapahit. Raden Patah announced the establishment of the Demak Sultanate with the title Sultan Syah Alam Akbar al Fatah, marking the beginning of a new Islamic regime. Demak, under Raden Patah wanted to continue Majapahit's maritime hegemony until the mid-16th century.³⁴ This was realized by continuing the trade partnership with Malacca that had existed since the Majapahit period. Demak acted as the main exporter of rice and supplier of spices to Malacca. However, Demak's trade partnership with Malacca only lasted until 1511, because Malacca fell to the Portuguese that year, and Demak fought against them in 1512, as they were considered a major threat to Javanese trade.

The Portuguese came to Malacca around 1509. Raden Patah was quite worried about their presence, which had the potential to implement monopolistic practices in maritime trade. In the same year, Raden Patah also instructed his brother Raden Husen, together with Pati Unus, to lead the *Jung* shipbuilding. This fact is corroborated by João de Barros' report in 1513 that Demak managed to build a phenomenal-sized *Jung* ship in just four years (1509-1512).³⁵ The purpose of making *Jung* ship was not only to strengthen the Demak naval fleet but also to support trade mobility on the spice route. The production of Demak *Jung* ships was centred in the Lasem (Rembang) shipyard, which had been famous since the Majapahit period.³⁶ This is in line with Tome Pires' report that Lasem (Rembang) was the centre of the *Jung* shipyards used by Demak and imported to other regions.³⁷ This Demak shipyard was able to make *Jung* with the following specifications.

Table 2: *Jung* Ship Specifications From the 16th Century³⁸

Approximate Passenger Capacity	Weight Dead	Weight Burden	Weight Displacement	Length Overall
200	400 ton	667 ton	1.111 ton	52,33 m
250	500 ton	833 ton	1.389 ton	56,89 m
350	700 ton	1167 ton	1.944 ton	64,06 m

³² Ali Sunarso (2018), "Historiography of Indonesian Islam (Historical Analysis of the Transitional Era of Social and Political System in Java in the 15-16th Century and the Contribution of Javanese Kings in Islamization)," *IJISH: International Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 9-20.

³³ *Babad Demak*.

³⁴ Kenneth R. Hall (2004), "Local and International Trade and Traders in the Straits of Melaka Region: 600-1500," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 47, No. 2, pp. 213-260.

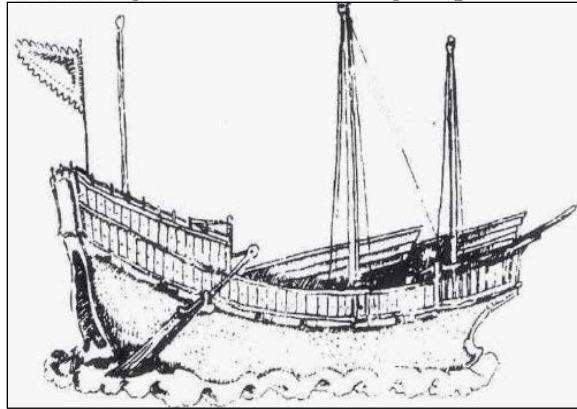
³⁵ Pires (2017), *Suma Oriental Karya Tome Pires: Perjalanan Dari Laut Merah ke Cina & Buku Francisco Rodrigues*, pp. 257-259.

³⁶ Anthony Reid (2011), *Asia Tenggara Dalam Kurun Niaga 1450-1680 Jilid 2: Jaringan Perdagangan Global*, Jakarta: Pustaka Obor, p. 52; Bambang Budi Utomo (2009), "Majapahit Dalam Lintas Pelayaran dan Perdagangan Nusantara," *Berkala Arkeologi*, Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 1-14.

³⁷ Pires (2017), *Suma Oriental Karya Tome Pires: Perjalanan Dari Laut Merah ke Cina & Buku Francisco Rodrigues*, pp. 262-263.

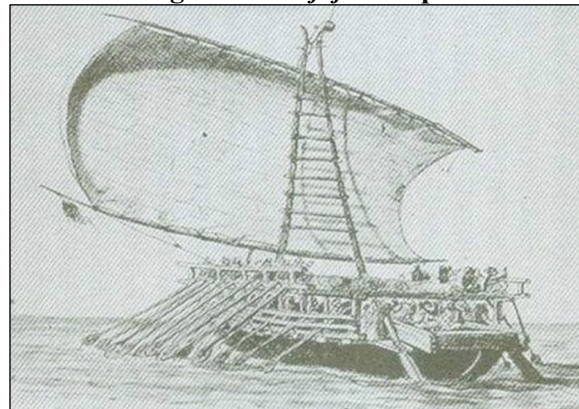
³⁸ Muhammad Averoesi (2021), "Re-Estimating the Size of Javanese Jong Ship," *Historia: Jurnal Pendidik dan Peneliti Sejarah*, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 57-64.

Figure 2: Javanese Jung Ship³⁹



One of the most important cities during Raden Patah's time was Jepara. Raden Patah built Jepara as an emporium as well as a base for the Demak navy led by Pati Unus. When Pati Unus served as Duke of Jepara in 1512, Raden Patah ordered him to attack the Portuguese who had controlled Malacca since 1511. The attack on the Portuguese involved a military alliance of Demak, Cirebon, and Palembang totalling 5,000 troops equipped with 100 *Jung* ships and several *Penjajab* ships.⁴⁰ However, the attack ended in defeat for Demak, with only 10 *Jung* ships left from the alliance to return to Demak.

Figure 3: Penjajab Ship⁴¹



Apart from attacking the Portuguese in Malacca, Raden Patah sought to establish Jepara and Demak as port city bases that would be used to control trade on the north coast of Java. Thus, the spice commodities previously monopolized by Majapahit traders were transferred to Demak traders. Demak's trading activities also boosted the progress of other port cities such as Semarang, Jepara, and Rembang (Lasem). The Muria Strait also facilitated the access of merchant ships that wanted to sail to Malacca or to the eastern region to collect spices and sell them to Malacca. The profits earned from the trade were used to build the infrastructure of Demak and other port cities. In its development, the port cities became increasingly crowded and could compete with the city of Malacca, which began to quieten after being controlled by the Portuguese.

Pati Unus' Maritime Policy (1518-1521)

Pati Unus, before becoming the second sultan of Demak to succeed his father Raden Patah, had also served as Duke of Jepara and warlord of Demak when he led the attack on the Portuguese in Malacca in 1512. Unlike Raden Patah, whose maritime policy was complex, Pati Unus (Sultan Alam Akbar al Tsani) tended to focus on strengthening the military to attack the Portuguese again so that Malacca would fall to Demak. However, in reality, Pati Unus' mission was preceded by the Portuguese who took control of Malacca in 1511. Pati Unus had contacted Javanese traders living in Malacca the year before the attack on Malacca to keep an eye on the Portuguese movements. Utimuti Raja led the Javanese in Malacca, but before Pati Unus attacked Malacca Utimuti Raja was executed by the Portuguese, because

³⁹ Pierre Yves Manguin (1980), "Southeast Asian Ship: An Historical Approach," *Journal of Southeast Asian*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 266-276.

⁴⁰ Pires (2017), *Suma Oriental Karya Tome Pires: Perjalanan Dari Laut Merah ke Cina & Buku Francisco Rodrigues*, p. 385; Ricklefs (2011), *Sejarah Indonesia Modern*, pp. 54-56.

⁴¹ James Francis Warren (2003), *Iranun and Balangingi: Globalization, Maritime Raiding, and the Birth of Ethnicity*, Singapore: NUS Press.

he was known to play two-footed politics.⁴² The next Javanese leader was Utimuti Raja's son-in-law, Pate Quedir who pioneered a rebellion against the Portuguese, but the rebellion was easily suppressed.⁴³ The absence of a Javanese leader in Malacca also contributed to the failure of the Demak attack in 1512. The original plan was for the Demak alliance to attack Malacca from the water, while the Javanese merchant group would attack from land. The failure of this plan caused the Portuguese to defeat the Demak alliance easily even though the Demak alliance at that time had been equipped with *Jung* and *Penjabab* ships.

Pati Unus ruled Demak for a short period from 1518 to 1521 because he died when attacking the Portuguese again in 1521. Pati Unus' maritime policy when he was involved in the construction of *Jung* ships in 1509-1512 advocated modifying the size of the *Jung* Demak to be smaller than the size of the *Jung* in general, to facilitate its movement in close sea battles against Portuguese ships which were known to be fast and agile.⁴⁴ The ships used in the first and second military expeditions against the Portuguese were also equipped with cannons to support long-distance sea battles. Pati Unus' maritime policy when he was a Demak warlord was to form a military alliance between Demak, Cirebon, and Palembang with Sunan Gunungjati (one of the *Walisanga*). This alliance was redeployed in 1521 to conquer the Portuguese under the command of Fatahillah as a warlord. The fleet of the Demak naval alliance departed for Malacca from the port of Jepara. Although this attempt to conquer the Portuguese was well prepared, the Demak alliance forces suffered another defeat, and Pati Unus was killed. The next sultan of Demak was Trenggana (Raden Patah's second son).

Trenggana's Maritime Policy (1521-1546)

The occupation of Malacca and its success in defeating Demak and other Malay Kingdoms made the Portuguese free to control the spice trade ports in the Nusantara. After Malacca was controlled, the Portuguese became increasingly ambitious to find a spice-producing region located at the eastern Nusantara. The Portuguese made this effort by following the existing trade routes. After knowing the route from Malacca to the eastern region, the Portuguese regularly sent their merchant ships there to buy spices. This Portuguese effort was seen as disrupting the spice trade which was previously controlled by Javanese traders based in the port cities of the north coast of Java. The arrival of the Portuguese in Maluku created competition among buyers. For example, the Maluku community preferred to sell spices to the Portuguese rather than Javanese traders, as they were willing to buy at higher prices. This Portuguese control affected the amount of spice supplies sent to Europe, where between 1502 to 1520, it was even quite rare for spices from Maluku to enter Europe via the Middle East.⁴⁵

Trenggana was crowned sultan of Demak in 1522 replacing Pati Unus who died, where he ruled until 1546. During his reign, Trenggana attempted to block the Portuguese from gaining control of Java. Referring to the failed first and second military expeditions of Demak under Raden Patah and Pati Unus, the attack on the Portuguese was centered on Java. It should be noted that the Portuguese in 1522 agreed with the Pajajaran Kingdom to establish a military base, control Sunda Kelapa and attack Demak.⁴⁶ In 1526, Trenggana instructed Fatahillah, who collaborated with Sunan Gunungjati and Maulana Hasanuddin, to conquer Banten, which was known as a pepper-producing region, and to suppress the Pajajaran Kingdom.⁴⁷ After successfully conquering Banten a new Islamic government was established as a vassal of the Demak Sultanate. In Banten, the *Surosowan* fort was also established as a base for Demak's defence in the western part of Java.

⁴² M.A.P Meilink Roelofs (1962), "Portuguese Malacca and Native Trade in the Malay-Indonesian Area," in *Asian Trade and European Influence: In the Indonesian Archipelago between 1500 and about 1630*, Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 136-172.

⁴³ Pires (2017), *Suma Oriental Karya Tome Pires: Perjalanan Dari Laut Merah ke Cina & Buku Francisco Rodrigues*, pp. 382-385; Sar Desai (2018), "The Portuguese Administration in Malacca, 1511-1641," in *Local Government in European Overseas Empires 1450-1800*, London: Routledge, pp. 517-528.

⁴⁴ Pierre Yves Manguin (1993), "The Vanishing Jong: Insular Southeast Asian Fleets in Trade and War (Fifteenth to Seventeenth Centuries)," in *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era: Trade, Power, and Belief*, New York: Cornell University Press, pp. 197-213.

⁴⁵ Reid (2011), *Asia Tenggara Dalam Kurun Niaga 1450-1680 Jilid 2: Jaringan Perdagangan Global*, p. 18.

⁴⁶ Graaf and Pigeaud (2019), *Kerajaan Islam Pertama di Jawa: Tinjauan Sejarah Politik Abad XV dan XVI*, pp. 199-200.

⁴⁷ Didin Saepudin and Fahmi Irfani (2022), "Islamization of Banten and the Fall of the Kingdom of Pajajaran," *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 4808-4821.

In 1527, the Demak forces also managed to conquer the most important emporium Sunda Kelapa and repelled the Portuguese from Java.⁴⁸ With Banten and Sunda Kelapa under Demak's control, the Portuguese were unable to continue their collaboration with the Pajajaran Kingdom to control trade in Java. Sunda Kelapa was later renamed Jayakarta by Fatahillah. By occupying Banten, Demak also managed to control one of the pepper-producing areas in the Nusantara.⁴⁹ Trenggana also extended Demak's power to Sumatra, where Demak succeeded in controlling Lampung, which was also a pepper-producing region in the Nusantara. Thus, the pepper supply in Sumatra was also under the Demak Sultanate. The expansion of Demak's territory continued to the eastern tip of Java, but in 1546 Sultan Trenggana died in his attempt to conquer Panarukan.

Conclusion

Maritime activities that included shipping and trade during the Demak Sultanate were supported by geostrategic, and geographical conditions, as well as the policies of its rulers. Java island, with its fertile soil, produced rice, which became the main trade commodity. Demak then established trade partnerships with Malacca and Maluku to supply and distribute spices to local and international markets. Demak also exported and imported various trade commodities involving traders within and outside the Nusantara. Port cities along the north coast of Java during the Demak period became important emporiums and transit points for merchant ships from the eastern and western parts of the Nusantara. The maritime-based Demak Sultanate also endeavoured to maintain the security of the sea it controlled from the threat of piracy.

To maintain its maritime hegemony, the three sultans of Demak implemented several policies, (1) attempting to conquer the Portuguese in Malacca and Sunda Kelapa, which posed a serious threat to Javanese trade; (2) forming the Demak-Cirebon-Palembang military alliance to attack the Portuguese; (3) establishing trade partnerships; (4) producing *Jung* ships to support shipping and trade activities; (5) building port cities on the north coast of Java as important emporiums; (6) conquering pepper-producing areas to control the pepper trade; then (7) conquering Sunda Kelapa as the main emporium in Java. These efforts eventually made Demak the heir apparent to the hegemony of Java's spice trade after Majapahit's 15th century triumph.

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⁴⁹ Robert van Niel and M.A.P Meilink Roelofs (1963), "Asian Trade and European Influence in the Indonesian Archipelago between 1500 and about 1630," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 83, No. 2, pp. 276-277.

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