

Johor Currency Heritage

BANK NEGARA MALAYSIA

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Foreword

The publication of this book reflects the objective of the Bank Negara Money Museum, which is not only to serve as a permanent repository of the country's numismatic heritage, but also to disseminate information.

This is the second instalment in a series of books to be published by the Money Museum on Malay Sultanate currencies. The first was *The Legendary Kijang*, which featured the various issues of the Kelantan Kijang gold coins in the Museum's collection. Johor has long played an important commercial role in the Malay Peninsular. Seafarers plying the trade routes between the 16th and 18th centuries, stopped at its port and through it moved large amounts of goods. This book records chronologically the many coins issued in Johor during this period. Many of the coins denote the names of the rulers who authorized their issue.

I hope that this book will enable the numismatists and the general public to understand better Johor's glorious past.



(Ahmad Mohd Don)
GOVERNOR

A Brief History of Johor

Johor, at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsular, was part of the Melaka empire. The Kingdom of Johor rose into prominence after the fall of Melaka. It inherited Melaka's traditions, style of government and its goals.

In 1511, the Portuguese stormed and captured Melaka forcing Sultan Mahmud to make a strategic withdrawal to Pahang, eventually to Kampar, Sumatera. He ended his days there in 1528. His elder son, Muzaffar Shah migrated to Perak to become the first Sultan there. The other son, Alauddin Riayat Shah, started the Johor sultanate.

Sultan Alauddin Riayat Shah had not forgotten his father's former seat of power or goal to recapture Melaka. His efforts to do so proved futile. When he died, he was succeeded by his son, Sultan Muzaffar Shah (1564-1570).

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the growth of the Johor empire was impeded by wars with the Portuguese as well as Aceh.

Aceh, located across the Straits of Melaka in Sumatera, emerged as a power to be reckoned with during the reign of Sultan Ali Mughayat Shah (1514-1530). It soon became an important trading and Islamic centre in South-East Asia.

The winds of war did not favour Johor during that time and the capital at Batu Sawar was destroyed by the Portuguese and the Achinese. This was only a temporary setback for Johor.

In 1641, Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah III (1623-1677) aided the Dutch in the capture of Melaka from the Portuguese.

The Johoreans were instrumental in supplying reinforcements when many of the Dutch forces had fallen ill during the four-month conquest of Melaka.

A month later, Sultan Iskandar Thani of Aceh passed away. Freed from the threats of the Portuguese and Aceh, Johor grew. Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah III rebuilt the capital and encouraged trade. The Sultan arranged with the Dutch on matters like free ship passes based on their mutual respect for an old alliance. The Indian Muslims frequented Johor with cloth. Johor established direct trade with India in 1649, returning with ninety-five bales and fourteen chests of an assortment of cloths. Johor also established direct textile trade with China and spices with the East Indies.

Then, in 1661, war with Jambi forced Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah III to retreat to Pahang where he died in 1677. When Sultan Ibrahim ascended the throne, the capital was transferred to Riau. From this new base, the Sultan's Laksamana, Tun Abdul Jamil, defeated Jambi to end the war in 1679. The victory placed Johor back on its feet and avenged the humiliations that it had suffered at the hands of Jambi.