

<http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm>

Go

AUG JAN MAY

◀ 03 ▶

2002 2003 2004



▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017

# EGYPTIAN AND WEST SEMITIC WORDS IN SUMATRA'S REJANG CULTURE

*The colonization of Indonesia by the ancient Egyptians is fully documented by Sir Thomas Raffles in his volume, the History of Java. I was therefore, not surprised when I began uncovering words in the Indonesian and Rejang syllabary which bore a striking resemblance to Egypt's ancient language.*

*...Charles Jones>*

Evidence of Phoenician influence in Sumatran culture was presented to the archaeological and geographical societies of Great Britain in 1896 by J. Park Harrison. Semitic scholars, Sayce, M. Renan, and Neubauer who had earlier examined the bamboo tablets of the Rejang culture of southwestern Sumatra, determined that the alphabetical characters used by Rejang called the *rencong* script, were clearly Phoenician. Dr. Neubauer considered the shapes of the letters as representing Phoenician of the fourth and fifth century B.C.E. (Fig. 1). These tablets had been returned to England by William Marsden in 1783 and the alphabetical characters of Sumatran scripts were published in his volume, *The History of Sumatra*.<sup>1</sup>

The earlier scholar's work was confined to the source of the Rejang script, and focused on the structure of the alphabetical characters and their corresponding sounds. They determined that none of the earliest Indic scripts matched either the *rencong*, or the related Sumatran scripts. Their discovery was published in an Oxford scientific journal, *Archaeologia Oxoniensis*, in 1896. They concluded that the Sumatran script was developed through direct Phoenician contact.<sup>2</sup>

<http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm>

Go

AUG JAN MAY

◀ 03 ▶

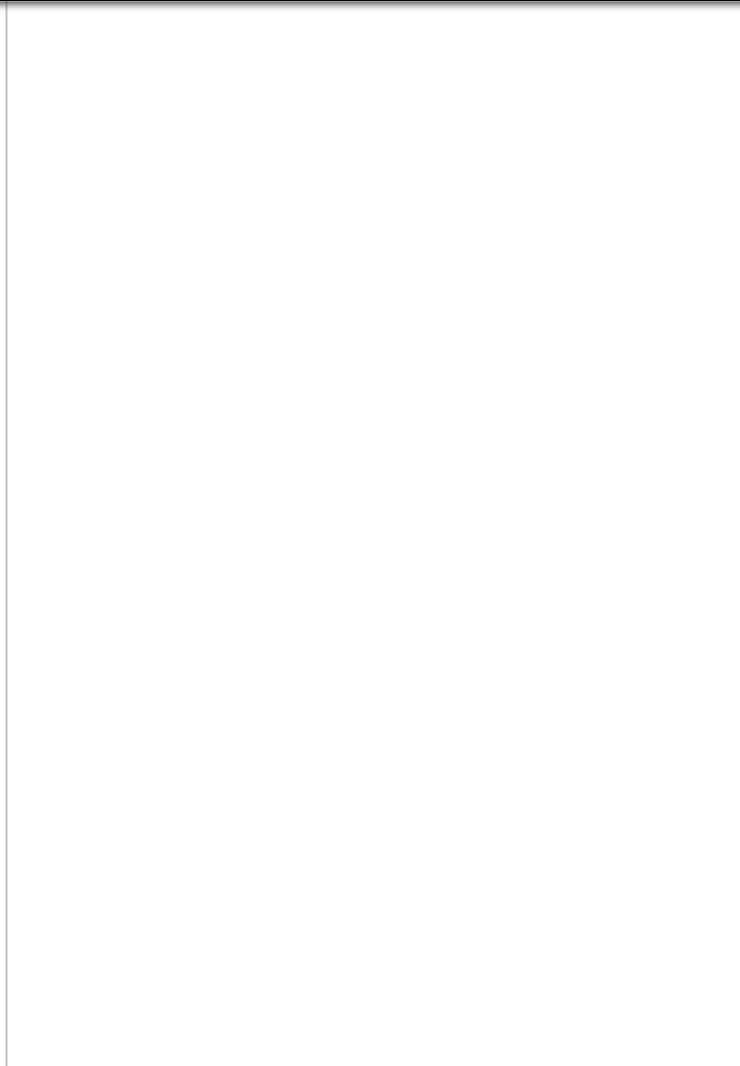
2002 2003 2004



▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017



http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm  AUG JAN MAY  
◀ 03 ▶  
2002 2003 2004

[17 captures](#)  
21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017

▼ About this capture



By the late 1920's, the British research under Harrison had apparently ended. In 1927, a German researcher initiated an independent research project with the related Batak script of Central and Northern Sumatra. E.E.E.G. Schroder conducted fieldwork in Sumatra and determined to find whether there "existed sufficient data to fix the period at which they were first adopted, and whether they must have come to Sumatra through India, or if they could have come from Phoenicia directly." Schroder said that he was unaware of the earlier British work when he began his research and analysis of the Batak alphabet.<sup>3</sup>

Schroder's investigation and conclusions are found in an article titled *A Phoenician Alphabet On Sumatra*. In this article, Schroder gives evidence of a direct Phoenician relationship with the Batak alphabet. He shows a comparison of developments taking place between the Phoenician and the Aramaic alphabet, and shows the same developments taking place in the Batak. He said that *this is the keystone proof that the Batak alphabet came to Sumatra at the time of the development of this phenomenon, between 700 and 650 B.C.E.*<sup>4</sup> His conclusions confirm that the characterizations of the Batak alphabet represent a transition stage between Phoenician and Aramean. Also, the period of its transference from the Phoenician to the Batak was between the beginning and end of the 7th century B.C.E.

The investigations of both Schroder and the earlier British scholars were limited only to the forms of the alphabetical characters. The absence of any language studies during this time by the British and Germans may have been due to the lack of any concise dictionary or lexiconal work outside of the Netherlands. Had a dictionary or lexicon been available, a positive evaluation of the Rejang, Batak, and Phoenician connection could have been supported.

The Australian National University sent a field anthropologist to Rejang country in 1961. M.A. Jaspen spent several years among the Rejang people learning the language and compiling folktales and word lists of Rejang language. The *rencong* script was still in use among the traditionalists of these people when Jaspen was there. He transcribed texts from the bamboo and bark tablets and compiled these in a volume called, *Redjang Ka Ga Nga Texts* published by the Australian National University. The cover of the book was printed with the characters of the Rejang *rencong* script, a somewhat modified Phoenician alphabet.<sup>5</sup>

<http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm>

Go

AUG JAN MAY

◀ 03 ▶

2002 2003 2004



▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017

Although Mr. Jaspen had died prior to the publication of the dictionary, which was included as part of the ANU's Pacific Linguistics Series, Professor P. Voorhoeve, who is now in retirement in the Netherlands, edited the work and wrote an introduction to the text.<sup>7</sup> My investigation into the dictionary and Rejang culture as the result of Mr. Jaspen's work supports the earlier work of the Semitic scholars who determined that the alphabetical links between the Sumatran cultures and West Semitic culture was conclusive. The dictionary can now validate their work because of the evidence of West Semitic words of great antiquity, and the evidence of the Phoenician script still being used by the cultures of Indonesia.<sup>8</sup> However, the Egyptian presence in Malaysian and Indonesian cultures may be earlier and extend back to the 15th century B.C.E.--the time of Queen Hatshepsut's expedition to the divine land, Punt.

### REJANG ALPHABET

A description of the Rejang alphabet is found in Mr. Jaspen's book, *Redjang Ka-Ga-Nga Texts*.<sup>9</sup> Neither Jaspen, nor Professor P. Voorhoeve, retired dean of Pacific Linguistics at the Australian National University, made any connection with the Phoenician alphabet in their publications. Both scholars supported the current theory that the invention of the Rejang alphabet took place somewhere in India, and was part of the writing systems which had developed there. Thus, both the Batak and the *rencong* scripts were understood to be imported Pali scripts, even though Voorhoeve, himself, was aware of Professor Schroeder's investigation of the Batak script.<sup>10</sup>

### DISTRIBUTION

The script is distributed throughout Sumatra and Java and includes the principle variations of Lampong, Redjang, Kerintji, and about eight others. The script is written on bark and bamboo tablets and bamboo cylinders which may have been used for cultic purposes. Several texts have been found on buffalo horn and a copper plate.<sup>11</sup> Clay and stone tablets were not used, although Sir Thomas Raffles records some kind of writing on stone tablets in the vicinity of Bogor in Java.<sup>12</sup>

### SPECIMENS

The Sumatran Rejang and Batak bark scripts are distributed in museums around the world. Marsden's collection which was in the India Office in London, is now in the British Library and cataloged in a volume titled, *Indonesian Manuscripts in Great Britain*.<sup>13</sup> Other collections containing the folktales of the Rejang people can be found in Leiden,<sup>14</sup> and the Australian National University.<sup>15</sup> Published works of Rejang and Batak literature are available from Dutch resources, and Mr. Jaspen's published and unpublished manuscripts.<sup>16</sup>

<http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm>

Go

AUG JAN MAY

◀ 03 ▶

2002 2003 2004



▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017

**: The Rejang alphabet is read from left to right. The characters show a common relationship with the other Sumatran communities and suggest a common origin of the script. Because of the deterioration of the bark and bamboo tablets, and fade of the ink, it is uncertain what kind of evolution the rencong alphabet had undergone since its introduction to Indonesia.<sup>17</sup> The existing Marsden manuscripts may be among the oldest and perhaps extend back to the Middle Ages. The oldest manuscripts, moreover, have no references to Allah which indicates that Islamic penetration of Rejang culture had not yet occurred.<sup>18</sup>**

**The Rejang alphabet consists of twenty-two characters and six variations. Few changes have been made between the time of Marsden's analysis (1783 and 1811),<sup>19</sup> and Jaspen's (1962). Marsden's 1783 *aleph* resembles more the Hebrew *aleph* than the Phoenician . The alphabetical characters have been adapted to both western and Austronesian sounds which form the primary language base of the Malay language.**

**Although the earlier Semitic scholars examined this alphabet and compared it with the Phoenician, I confirmed their findings and found approximately fourteen characters consistent with Phoenician sounds. I have added a separate column to Jaspen's plate which shows the similarities.**  
20



<http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm>

Go

AUG JAN MAY

◀ 03 ▶

2002 2003 2004



▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017

## THE REJANG DICTIONARY

Rejang is part of the Austronesian language groups which may have originated in southern China or Formosa 5,000 years ago.<sup>21</sup> It is uncertain when these people may have migrated to Indonesia, but they seem to have settled in the mountainous regions of Western Sumatra, an area of rich gold deposits. Marsden gives the most complete description of these people and their customs.<sup>22</sup>

It is understandable that many elements of Rejang's root language are included in modern Indonesian and Malaysian. But, the comparisons and similarities are only marginal. The Rejang language is distinctly different, incorporating loan words from Sanskrit, modern Arabic, and various West Semitic words, including Egyptian. The core of the language is supposedly Austronesian. However, the language experts who have investigated the Rejang language, and who can discuss the philological differences in the development of the Malay languages and their morphology, find in Rejang two languages which are independent of each other!<sup>23</sup> The structure and division of these languages between Early, Middle, and Late Malay is not the focus of this study.<sup>24</sup> The loan words which we are interested in come from Western Semitic and Egyptian sources, and have little bearing on the development of the Rejang *Ka-Ga-Nga* alphabet, sometimes called the *rencong* script.

<http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm>

Go

AUG JAN MAY

◀ 03 ▶

2002 2003 2004



▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017

Malaysian dictionary to interpret some of the meanings and expressions in the Jaspén dictionary. Several words of great importance to me took over one year to find precise meanings. Two of these words were *lebun* and *asem*. *Lebun* was described only as a *sedjenis kaju* "wood tree," and *asem* was defined only as "tamerind acid," "vinegar," "sour." In the next section, I will discuss the value of these two words as Egyptian resources.

The importance of this dictionary is that it contrasts the Rejang word with Indonesian and provides the English definition. The dictionary is the means by which scholars can compare West Semitic and Egyptian words. In the former, it offers the most precise Phoenician transliterations outside of the Levant. The latter supports the earlier tradition of Egyptian colonization of Indonesia in ancient times.

W. Aichele's, *A Fragmentary Sketch of the Rejang Language*,<sup>27</sup> is attached to the end of the dictionary. Aichele explains the linguistic structure of the language, including its morphology and evolution. He also cites primary sources which are invaluable to researchers. The bibliography at the end of the book is an excellent collection of resources from mostly Dutch and Indonesian experts.

My use of the dictionary was the result of the discovery of the earlier work by the Semitic scholars. That such a dictionary existed in 1992 when I began the research, was miraculous. I found the text at the research library at UCLA and began sorting and soundexing each Rejang word by computer. I compared the soundex analysis with Egyptian, and then with Hebrew and Phoenician and achieved positive results with many words.

*Frequency, distribution and connotation* of the Rejang lexicon show that loanwords from the Egyptian and West Semitic syllabaries have *shifted* in meaning. These connotative differences between the syllabaries explain why the meaning or form of some words do not coincide. The Egyptian and West Semitic loanwords in the Rejang syllabary may have started out with "exactly" the same meaning, but the meanings began to drift apart before very long, one acquiring quite a different frequency, distribution, and connotation from the other. It is incredible, though, that the Rejang language retains many of the words developed in its lexicon.

Finding a true synonym for the Egyptian/West Semitic comparison with Rejang was the principle objective of this study. A word such as *betula*, which means "young woman," or "virgin" in Hebrew, took on another meaning in Rejang. Some words were exact such as *hati* which means "heart" in Egyptian. Other words had opposite meanings in Rejang such as the Egyptian *min* (today), and Rejang *meun* (tomorrow). With some words, the Egyptian and the Rejang sounds are exact, but the meanings are entirely different.

Egyptian words which may have become obsolete in the Rejang language may have remained in the neighboring countries. The wide distribution of some of these words appear in Malaysia, Java, and even Borneo. For example, "Mati Heri" is common in the Malay cultures, but "Matti Bilai" occurs in Rejang. The meaning is the same, "Eye of the Day" or simply "the Sun."

The development of the Rejang language from early, middle, and late Malay should reveal many of these problems. For this reason, I have selected only those words with the most appropriate connotation, and have indicated the differences.

### **THE WEST SEMITIC SYLLABARY**

<http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm>

Go

AUG JAN MAY  
◀ 03 ▶  
2002 2003 2004

▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017

were clearly distinguished by the Rejang dictionary.

**Rabun (Rej) blindness, half blind, failing eyesight**  
**(Ph) large eyed; precise meaning unknown**  
**Porat (Rej) capital, means, stock**  
**(Ph) provider; uncertain meaning**

The Hebrew lexicon offered the best comparison with Rejang. Several words which were exact had different meanings. The word *ba'al*, which in Hebrew refers to the West Semitic deity *Ba'al*, was defined as "disaster, catastrophe, baleful influences" in Rejang.<sup>30</sup> This may refer to an aspect of the Canaanitic deity which appears in Egyptian documents from the fourteenth century B.C.E.. In the Amarna Letters, this deity appears as a "storm god" rather than a Canaanitic fertility god.<sup>31</sup>

The meaning of the Hebrew word *btula* was also different than the definition given in the Rejang dictionary.<sup>32</sup> In Hebrew, the word has been translated as "young woman," and "virgin."<sup>33</sup> This translation of the word has had a significant theological effect on Christian dogma and doctrine. In the Rejang syllabary, the word *btula* literally means "descent" and "lineage." A custom of descent and lineage emerges when the word *btula* is used with the word *ano'* (child) and *bele'* (returned). A child (male or female) of one marriage is "returned" or "adopted" by a childless relative of another marriage for the purpose of continuing the family lineage.<sup>34</sup>

The word typology in the Rejang lexicon included religious terms some of which could have been due to specific Islamic influence. It should be noted that Islamic penetration of Rejang culture came after the British occupation of the region in 1685.<sup>35</sup> Arab and Islamic loan words during the Dutch administration are noted in Jaspen's dictionary. Therefore, the older Rejang literature is devoid of specific references to Islam and Allah, thus offering word specimens of greater antiquity.

Common West Semitic words such as *Nabi* (prophet), *kesapo* (witchcraft), *ruah* (wind, spirit), *sitan* (Satan), *keparat* (sinful), *Adam* ('dam), *Seti'awa* (Eve), could be the result of Koranic influence.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, the meanings of some of these words differ from the Arabic, and suggest a Phoenician/Hebrew presence in the region at an earlier time.<sup>37</sup> According to Jaspen, the Rejang culture continues to remain animistic and only superficially Islamic. For example, Rejang cosmology holds "four satans." When someone offends one of these "satans," all four of them must be appeased. This concept seems to be pre-Islamic in meaning, although I have heard from Moslems that "sitan" can have many diverse meanings.<sup>38</sup>

The royal family and dynasty of Bencoolen before the British occupation in 1685, the "Ano' Dalam," is referred to as the *meligeui* or "palace." This very old West Semitic word appears in the Hebrew and Phoenician as *melek*, or King.<sup>39</sup> The lack of other administrative words in the Rejang syllabary may be due either to the incompleteness of the Rejang dictionary itself, or to the limitations of the small Phoenician syllabary. A list of some Phoenician or Old Hebrew words follows: [Phoenician Word List](#)



<http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm>

Go

AUG JAN MAY

◀ 03 ▶

2002 2003 2004



▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017

is near impossible to assign a specific date for the beginning of Arab contact with Indonesia. If the criteria given by Professor Schröder's analysis of the Batak script is accepted then the seventh century B.C.E., may be promising.

## THE EGYPTIAN SYLLABARY

Encoded words from the Egyptian lexicon were compared with the Rejang dictionary. Several hundred word specimens were retrieved that had exact or synonymous meanings, or were closely related by code.

The words *perehu*, *asem*, *ati* occurred in the Rejang syllabary, but also were found in Egyptian records of the Punt expedition initiated by Queen Hatshepsut in the fifteenth century B.C.E.<sup>41</sup> In these documents, recorded on the Temple at Deir El-Bahari in Luxor, *Perehu* is the personal name of the chief *waru* of Punt. *Ati*, his wife, is related to the Rejang word *ati* (*hati*) which means heart. In the Rejang as well as Malay language, the word *perehu* means boat and refers to the common type of deckless boat used by the Malaysians.<sup>42</sup> It also is a common name in the Rejang language. One of the Marsden bamboo tablets in the British Library is titled, *The Story of Perehu* (Malay D11).<sup>43</sup>

The presence of these words in the Rejang language suggests early Egyptian contact with the Malaysian archipelago during the time of Queen Hatshepsut. Several of these words demand considerable attention:

**ASAM:** (Eg) "fine gold" (Gardiner),<sup>44</sup> or "alloy of gold and silver" (Naville); also known as *asemos* or *electron* in Egyptian papyrus.<sup>45</sup> These donut shaped "rings of gold" are a product of Punt.<sup>46</sup> They appear in the reliefs commemorating the Punt expedition on the Northern and Southern wall of the Middle colonnade at the 18th dynasty Temple at Deir El-Bahari. I have also found a specimen on a fragment from the XI dynasty temple at Deir el Bahari.<sup>47</sup> In the historical documents of the reigns of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III, and the tomb inscriptions of Rekhmire<sup>48</sup> and Puyemre',<sup>49</sup> the *asam* is also a product of Djahi (Phoenicia),<sup>50</sup> and later, Nubia. James H. Breasted described these "donut" shaped gold rings which appear on the temple reliefs as a form of commercial gold.<sup>51</sup> The word *asem* occurs in the Malay, Rejang, Indonesian, and Iban culture of Borneo.<sup>52</sup> It means specifically, "sour," "acid," "tamarind." However, it also refers to precious metal, alloy, and base metal of silver, nichol, gold, etc., as being "sour" or "much alloyed."<sup>53</sup>

**MAAT HERU**"Eye of Horus," occurs frequently in the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*,<sup>54</sup> and the *Pyramid Texts*.<sup>55</sup> It is an old expression of the *Wadjet*, or "healthy eye."<sup>56</sup> According to Egyptian mythology,<sup>57</sup> the eyes of Horus (the elder) were the Sun and the Moon. In the battle with the god of darkness, Seth, Horus's eye, the Sun, was destroyed. This eye was considered the most powerful symbol in Egypt. It was restored by Isis and was called the *wadjet* or "healthy eye." During the contentings between Horus the elder and Seth, Horus the younger, or "Behdetite" the falcon god, soared into the sky and turned into a winged sun disk, and attacked Seth's forces on earth and in the underworld.

As a result of this victory, the emblem of the Sun disk (Horus Behdetite) became a popular symbol in Egypt. In Egyptian, the word for "day" and "daylight" is identical with the word "Horus."<sup>58</sup> One may conclude that "day" and "sun" are identical expressions. *Maat Heru* may be expressed,

<http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm>

Go

AUG JAN MAY

◀ 03 ▶

2002 2003 2004



▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017

Egyptian Heru which means day, and daylight, or simply, the Sun. Both expressions, *Mau Heru* and *Maat Heru* confirm a similar origin and suggest direct Egyptian influence in the Indonesian archipelago.

**ANTI** : lit. "sycamores of anti," or "incense"; "frankincense." Obtaining the sacred anti of Punt was the chief objective of the naval expedition. Egyptologists have related the anti to the aromatic resin commonly known as "frankincense," of the *Bosweillia Carterii*, or *Thurifera*.<sup>61</sup> The location of the lands producing the resin has long been held to be Yemen, Oman, and Dhofar. It is also found in Somalia.<sup>62</sup> For this reason, historians assigned these incense producing regions to the divine land of Punt. This has traditionally been accepted as the destination of the expedition during the reign of Queen Hatshepsut.<sup>63</sup>

The Hebrew word for the resin, frankincense, is *labona*, and the Arab word is *Lebeun*. The word *Lebeun* occurs in Rejang, Indonesia, and Malaysia. The Malaysian dictionary identifies the word as "Arabic," and means *frankincense*.<sup>64</sup> However, it is specified as the *Lebeun Jawi* or "frankincense of Java." The product is the "gum benjamin" of the *Styrax benzoin*.<sup>65</sup>

The Malaysian dictionary, however, directs us to the source of the "frankincense" which is Java. The *Lebeun*, however, is not identified as the genus *Bosweillia*. Instead, it identifies "frankincense" with the *Styrax benzoin*.<sup>66</sup> This is the possible reason why the plates of the temple at Deir El-Bahari showing the incense producing trees do not match the genus *Bosweillia*. The identification of the word also reinforces the identification of Indonesia with Punt, the source of Egyptian incense.

David Verity, botanist at UCLA, examined the plates showing these trees and speculated that the *Bosweillia* in Southern Arabia may not have even existed at the time of the expedition. He said that a species of incense producing trees from Indonesia may have been transported to Southern Arabia and cultivated there when the demand for frankincense in European capitals had increased during the Classical Age.<sup>67</sup>

For the Egyptian Word List [click here](#)

### THE LAND OF PUNT

The records of ancient Egypt establish the geographical location of Punt in a vague area to the east of Egypt. According to the Book of the Dead, Punt is comprised of many eastern countries...*set nu Punt*... which are of uncertain geographical locations.<sup>68</sup> Although the traditional location of Punt has been decided by Egyptologists as the western coast of Somalia on the Red Sea, more recent scholarship has situated Punt along the south-western coast of Ethiopia and Somalia. Some modern authorities have analyzed the toponyms of the countries surrounding Egypt and support a location of Punt along the Eritrean/Ethiopian coastline.<sup>69</sup>

In Egyptian literature, *The Shipwrecked Sailor*, the king of Punt reigns over an Island.<sup>70</sup> The ancient references to Punt in Egyptian documents of the Old and Middle Kingdoms are geographically vague, but distinguish Punt somewhere to the south of Egypt.<sup>71</sup> The temple reliefs at Deir El-Bahari,

<http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm>

Go

AUG JAN MAY

◀ 03 ▶

2002 2003 2004



▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017

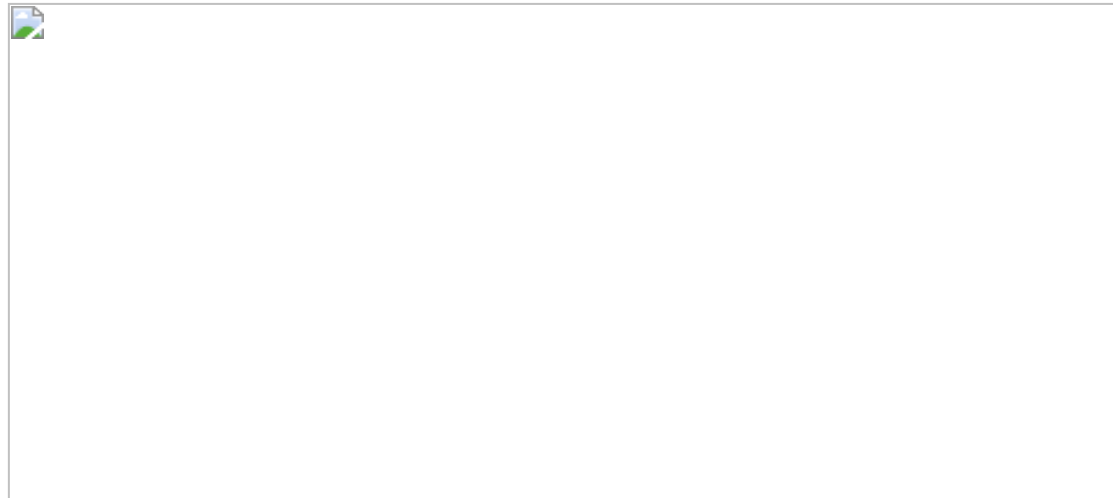
Mesopotamian languages, but it does throughout Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and Borneo. The linguistic evidence alone identifies these toponyms with the divine land.<sup>73</sup>

That an Egyptian naval expedition succeeded in the monumental task of sailing the distance to Indonesia is based on the following arguments:

**TIME:** The purpose of the expedition, which was initiated by the oracle of Amon at the beginning of Hatshepsut's rule, was trade and exploration.

*...my Majesty put before her eyes to reach the harbors of incense, to open its ways fully (?), to know its circumference, to throw open its roads according to the orders of my father Amon<sup>74</sup>*

In Punt, Egyptian Admiral Nehesi meets the Indonesian Chief Perehu, which means "boat" in the Indonesian/Rejang language



The royal fleet had returned to Egypt by the ninth year of her rule.<sup>75</sup> This gives more than enough time for the expedition to sail far beyond the Red Sea. If Punt lay along the coast of the Red Sea at the south of Egypt, the voyage to that region would have been relatively short. I do not believe that this would have been considered as a major event worthy of one of Egypt's most powerful sovereigns. Yet, at this juncture, it is impossible to determine how far the fleet actually went.

**DISTANCE:** During the Middle Ages, Arab ships from Oman, sailed the four thousand miles to Sumatra in approximately 55 days.<sup>76</sup> These ships were made from wood and "sewn" together with ropes. With three sails, the 87 foot ships were capable of withstanding the harsh seas and unpredictable

http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm

Go

AUG JAN MAY

◀ 03 ▶

2002 2003 2004



▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017

~~The integrity of Egyptian wooden ships. In comparison, Egyptian ships on this expedition were constructed out of wood and supported only one main~~  
 sail.<sup>78</sup> Compared with later Bronze Age ships, the Egyptian vessels (without knowing what the infra-structure looked like) appear to be built similarly. Each ship in this expedition carried thirty oars. The construction of the vessel's superstructure appears to have been approximately 50 feet in length.<sup>79</sup> Similarly constructed ships can be seen on other reliefs of the 18th dynasty temple at Deir El-Bahari. These were cargo barges which were designed to transport tons of stone and obelisks from rock quarries to the site of the XVIIIth dynasty temple.<sup>80</sup> The five vessels which carried the Egyptian crews, military, and products to Punt in this expedition may have been the prototypes of successive shipbuilding in the Eastern Mediterranean.

That the Egyptians were capable of such a naval expedition in the 15th century, B.C., is astounding, yet conceivable. The evidence is certain. The map to Punt is clearly defined by the word list in the Sumatran cultures. Whether a colony was established during this time, or at a later time is conjectural. Certainly, the Indonesian tradition of an Egyptian colony in those Islands can be supported by linguistic evidence alone.<sup>81</sup>

**LOCATION:** Sumatra offers the best choice of the Egyptian destination because:

(1) The products of Sumatra are the same as those of Africa. As shown above, the *anti* of Punt, is identified with a genus of "frankincense" that does not match the *Boswellia* varieties which are found in the traditional frankincense producing regions south of Egypt. The word *asem* is still used throughout Malaysia and Southeast Asia with a broader meaning applied to other precious metals such as nichol, tin, and silver.<sup>82</sup> Yet, this is one of the oldest Egyptian 18th dynasty words (a fragment found at the XIth dynasty temple at Deir El-Bahari showing the *asem* "gold in rings" appears to have come from the larger 18th dynasty temple). I am uncertain as of this writing, how long the Egyptians used this term for gold alloy, but Naville is convinced that it has been used in Egyptian papyrus under the Greek word word, *asemos*.<sup>83</sup> Arabs still import the "asseum" or "tamerind" from Thailand, today.

The relief below shows some of the products of Punt including the rings "asem" of gold.

http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm  AUG JAN MAY  
◀ 03 ▶  
2002 2003 2004

[17 captures](#)  
21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017

ⓘ ? ✕  
f t  
▼ About this capture

The other products of Punt such as ivory, ironwood, incense, boomerangs, cinnamon wood, tortoise shell, spices, and gold dust could be found in Indonesia, Africa and even India.<sup>84</sup> The strong Arab presence today in the Indonesian Islands, however, suggests to me that these products had been coveted by them for many thousands of years.

(2) The ethnic diversity of the population is obtrusive in the Punt series. Black men who are typically African, but also could be Indonesian Negritos continue to live in the Malay regions. These are the people of *Nemyew* (?).<sup>85</sup> Irem and Punt traders are painted a reddish color. They could be of Malay stock. Both *Nemyew* and *Irem* are Malay words and can be found in the Malaysian dictionaries.<sup>86</sup> I am only proposing this as a possibility because no research has yet been done relating Egyptian geographical and ethnic words to Malaysia. *Nanywe* is the closest geographical word to *Nemyew* and referred to southern China from Canton to Viet Nam. *Irem* is a geographical word referring to "Long Irem" in Borneo.<sup>87</sup>

(3) The linguistic evidence is supportive for an Indonesian identification with Punt. Certainly, the Egyptians were there at some time or another in ancient times. It is impossible to say how long ago this happened. The tradition of the Indonesians, as Sir Thomas Raffles relays to us, indicates that Egyptian colonization was at a time when the Islands were joined with the mainland.<sup>88</sup>

(4) Certain cultural features in the Punt series are distinctively Malay and not African as has been formerly believed. Naville identified the spiral rings around Perehu's right leg as an African cultural feature.<sup>89</sup> Certainly he is correct in that the feature is shared by several East African tribes such as the Bongos of central Africa, and Ndebele of South Africa.<sup>90</sup> However, in my research, it became apparent that this culture feature had been diffused to the East Africans by the Malay- Indonesian colonists who began the settlement of the Azanian coast at the beginning of the Christian era.<sup>91</sup> The last of this group, the Malagasy, is now situated in the Merina region of the Island of Madagascar and continue to speak a dialect from Borneo.<sup>92</sup> I traced this culture to Borneo, and discovered that the use of these brass spirals was confined to the Dusuns of the Marudu and Kudat districts.<sup>93</sup> Both males and females from this culture wear these spirals around the legs, arms, and neck.

<http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm>

Go

AUG JAN MAY

◀ 03 ▶

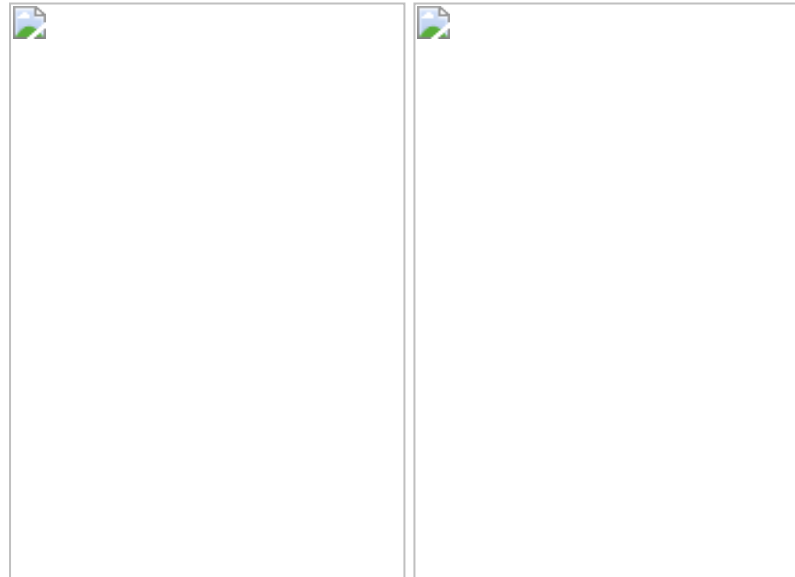
2002 2003 2004



▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017



## Houses

**-Puntite houses are circular in construction, and appear to be small, possibly three feet in diameter, and they rest on wood piles perhaps six feet in height from the ground. The floors apparently are made of planks. The roof slopes in a circular pattern to the floor, and is most likely made of bamboo and leaves. The hut is entered by means of a ladder, and the entrance is only a hole in the structure.<sup>96</sup>**

**These houses compare remarkably with the round pile houses in Engano, an island which is to the west of Sumatra and they still exist in Burma and elsewhere. They are peculiar houses with the same shape and style of Puntite houses, and stand from six to twenty feet in height from the ground. They are accessible only by a notched ladder. A specimen of this kind of house is in the Leyden Museum.<sup>97</sup> This kind of round house found on Enganno Island, is regarded by Heine-Geldern as the oldest type of dwelling found in Indonesia. It is found not only in Sumatra, but in Burma (Amu), the Philippines, and in the Moluccas.**

<http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm>

Go

AUG JAN MAY  
◀ 03 ▶  
2002 2003 2004

▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017

(5) The evidence of *lebeun* as a product of Java. As discussed previously, the Malay dictionary identifies the origin of frankincense with Java.<sup>98</sup> The manner in which the resin is harvested is consistent with the reliefs in the Punt series illustrating "heaps" of "anti."<sup>99</sup> The species is different than the traditional species found in Arabia which does not match the illustrations of the "sycamores of anti" found in the Punt series.

(6) The geographical word identification of Djawi (Java) with Djahi (Phoenicia). Professor George Giacumakis confirmed the first word identification based on materials I presented to him when the re-discovery of the *rencong* script was made.<sup>100</sup> In Egyptian documents, the first use of the Egyptian geographical word for Phoenicia most likely occurred during the reign of the Pharaoh Amose I who expelled the Hyksos from Egypt.<sup>101</sup> The use of the word *Djahi* as a geographical designation for the Palestinian-Phoenician coast continues during the military campaigns of Thutmose III.<sup>102</sup> It is in Megiddo that the "gold in rings" is found being made by the metal workers; it is in Punt that the "gold in rings" is being stockpiled.<sup>103</sup> The spread of this technology of making "asem" or "rings" as a commercial product, is subsequent to the Punt expedition and is made by countries surrounding Egypt.<sup>104</sup>

#### TOMB 143 EIGHTEENTH DYNASTY TOMB OF MIN

A relief in the Tomb of Min, an official of Thutmose III depicts a visit by sailors from Punt who arrive and depart in a strange kind of craft depicted by an Egyptian artist. Some have speculated that this craft is a kind of raft, although the evidence to support is vague (see *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, vol. XXXIII, 1996, p. 37). Egyptian art can be highly stylized at times and completely one-dimensional. The perspective of the artist must be taken into account. The rounded ends of the craft could reflect the dimension that the artist is viewing. If I were looking down on a

<http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm>

Go

AUG JAN MAY

◀ 03 ▶

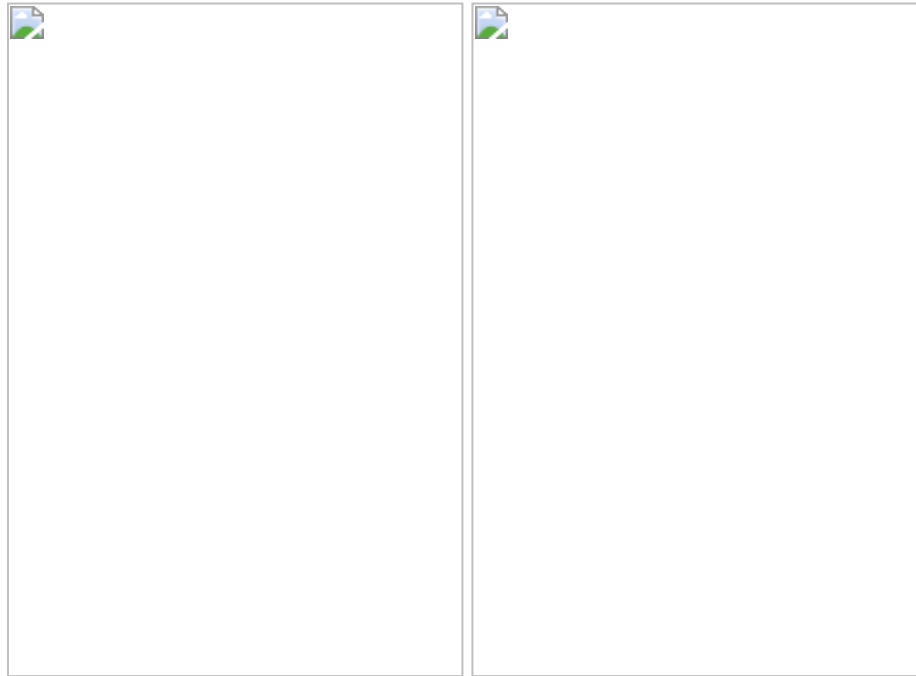
2002 2003 2004



▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017



### ***THE "RAFFLES" STONE WRITINGS***

**The absence of any systematic writing system related to Egyptian hieroglyphics in the cultures of Indonesia remained one of the principle difficulties of this study. One might conclude that the presence of concrete Egyptian words in those cultures would bare some evidence of a script which would prove a cultural link with Egypt.**

**Although Indonesia has ancient archaeological features such as pyramid structures and even reliefs on temples which might suggest an Egyptian presence in the archipelago, the writing system which appeared in the Rejang and related Sumatran cultures, closely resemble the writing systems of the Phoenician or old Hebrew characters. However, an examination of several writing samples on stone which appeared in Sir Thomas Raffles, *History of Java*, are even more conclusive. I have reproduced these two facimilies of the stone inscriptions in evidence as "Exhibit A," and "Exhibit B."**

**The first specimen, Exhibit A, was found on a stone in Java at a place called "Kerali."**

### **EXHIBIT A KERALI STONE**



<http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm>

Go

AUG JAN MAY

◀ 03 ▶

2002 2003 2004



▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017

<http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm>

Go

AUG JAN MAY

◀ 03 ▶

2002 2003 2004



▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017

Sir Thomas copied the ancient inscription and reproduced it in his first edition of the *History of Java*.<sup>105</sup> I have compared the characters with Phoenician and Hebrew. Fifteen of the characters which I have examined are directly related to Phoenician variations (see Chart #1). An equal number of characters cannot be deciphered. This problem could be the result of deterioration of the stone when Sir Thomas visited the site, or the result of foreign sounds represented by newly developed radicals, some of which appear in the Sumatran syllabaries.



<http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm>

Go

AUG JAN MAY

◀ 03 ▶

2002 2003 2004



▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017

None of these characters bear any close resemblance to writing systems developed in India, or Malay writing systems in Indonesia of Indic origin.<sup>106</sup> The radicals are distinctively Phoenician in shape and development. Although a study has never been made, it may be possible to compare some of these characters with those found in Egypt and the Levant to reveal the origin of this group of Phoenicians. Another feature of this stone writing is what appears to be vowel signs around the radicals. There are approximately eight of these vowel signs Three of them are distinguished in the Rejang syllabary.

Characters of specific Demotic origin [Exhibit B ]appear on a stone near Bogar, Java. These radical characters were copied by Sir Thomas and reproduced in his volume, the *History of Java*.<sup>107</sup>



http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm

Go

AUG JAN MAY

◀ 03 ▶

2002 2003 2004



▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017



I compared the specimens with Egyptian Demotic (3rd to 7th century B.C.) and its variations.<sup>108</sup> Because Demotic handwriting differs from specimen to specimen, I reproduced only the most verifiable in Chart #2.

http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm

Go

AUG JAN MAY

◀ 03 ▶

2002 2003 2004

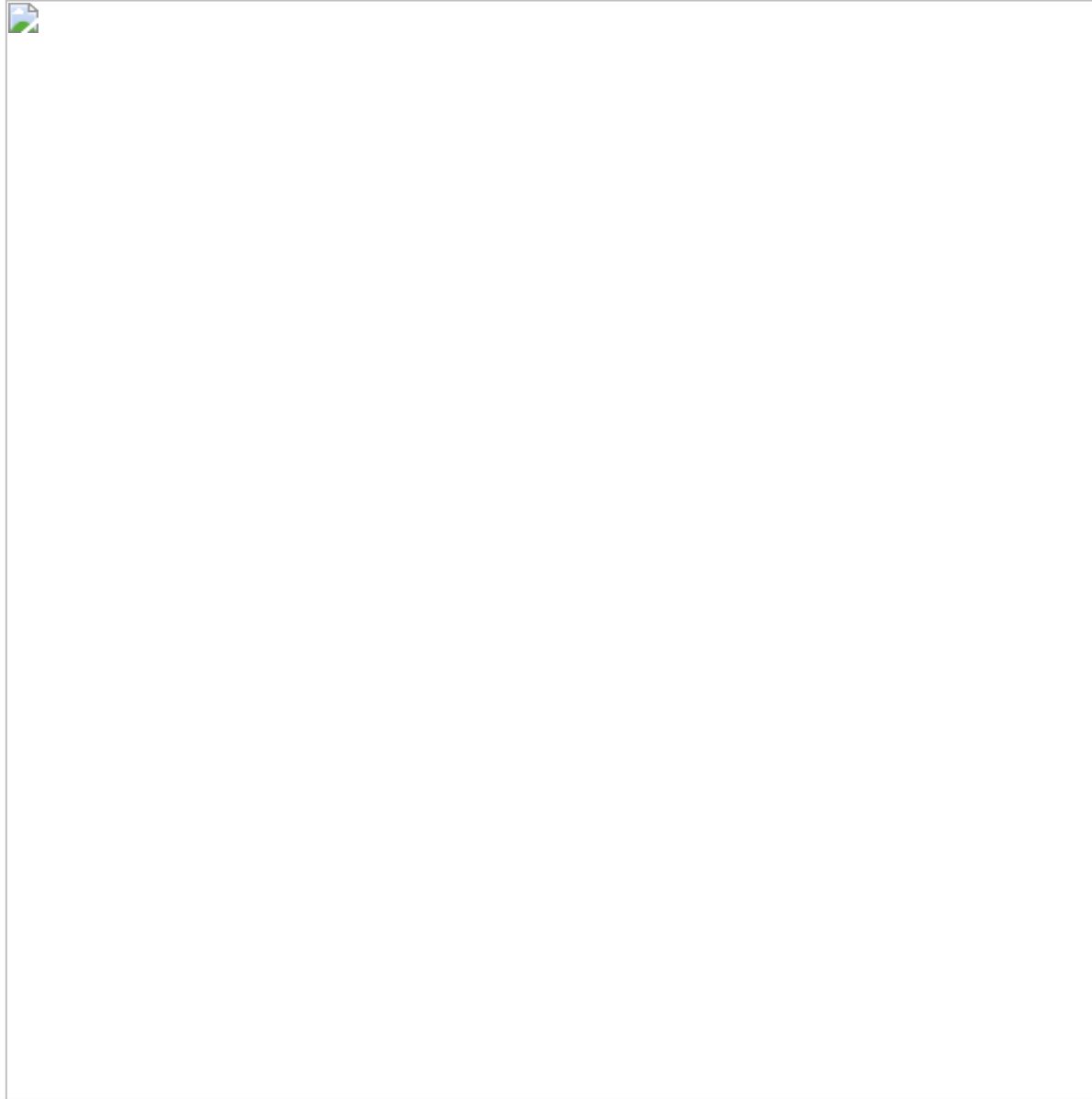


▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017

**At least one character which resembles the Egyptian/Coptic (dj) appears on the Bogar specimen and in one Sumatran syllabary (Kerintji).<sup>110</sup> Some of the characters which appear on this stone, also appear on the stone inscription found in Kerali.**



http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm

Go

AUG JAN MAY  
◀ 03 ▶  
2002 2003 2004



▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017



<http://members.uia.net/cjones3/doc.htm>

Go

AUG JAN MAY

◀ 03 ▶

2002 2003 2004



▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017

Both stone specimens, Exhibit A and B, remain untranslated. Several facts, however, can be supported by the examination of the characters. *First*, they are not identifiable with any existent scripts, modern or ancient, found in India or in Malaysia when writing systems were developed in those regions. They do, however, closely resemble Sumatran writing specimens, and because they appear on stone, may be the earliest known specimens. *Second*, the scripts show an approximate relationship with writing systems developed in the Near East, specifically among the Phoenicians and Egyptians. *Third*, radicals in both stone specimens which I cannot identify seem to indicate a "third" language signification which may reflect sounds found in the Indonesian/Malay archipelago. These sounds, accompanied by a sophisticated vowel system based on diacritic signs placed above, below, or to the side of the radical characters, may be the result of a late development in the scripts themselves. A comparison with Sumatran vowel systems may reveal the signification of these vowel marks and their relationship to the entire syllabary represented on the stones. *Fourth*, the duplication of several characters on both stones, Exhibit A and B, may indicate that there were two related West Semitic communities, or that the radical characters were developed from a common source. *Finally*, the type of characters revealed on the stones, if Egyptian and Phoenician, could give us a better profile of these people, and the source and origin of these communities may be established.

### CONCLUSION

A most extraordinary event may have occurred during the reign of Queen Hatshepsut. That an Egyptian fleet sailed across the Indian Ocean 3500 years ago to Indonesia is a staggering idea. The evidence, however, has been presented to the American Research Center in Egypt at the Toronto convention on April 30, 1994. There, I presented only the Egyptian list, not the West Semitic. On this Web Site, I present the best samples of both lists, the Egyptian and West Semitic. Hebrew reconstructions have been completed, but are not yet published here due to the lengthy word list.

The fundamental theory of Egyptian colonization of Indonesia did take place in ancient times. And, the evidence of so many words in this dictionary that Mr. Jaspén compiled before his untimely death, will validate our basic insights along with those of the Semitic scholars who were convinced that

Go

AUG JAN MAY

◀ 03 ▶

2002 2003 2004



▼ About this capture

[17 captures](#)

21 Aug 2002 - 12 Sep 2017

**New Kingdom will have to be re-evaluated. I am certain that experts in the field of Egyptology will examine the evidence and reinterpret the sequence of events which led to Egyptian colonization of the Indonesian Islands. and the extension of their influence throughout the sub-continent and even China.**

**For Footnote documentation: [click here](#)**

**Charles Robert Jones-Gregorio M.Div.**

**Dominican School of Theology and Philosophy  
St. Albert the Great College  
Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California, USA 1985  
Member of the American Research Center in Egypt, Southern California Chapter**

[Menu](#) | [Downloads](#) |