

THE SEAFARERS AND MARITIME
ENTREPRENEURS OF MADURA

History, culture, and their role in the
Java Sea timber trade

Kurt Stenross

This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
at Murdoch University

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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research, and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary educational institution.

Kurt Stenross

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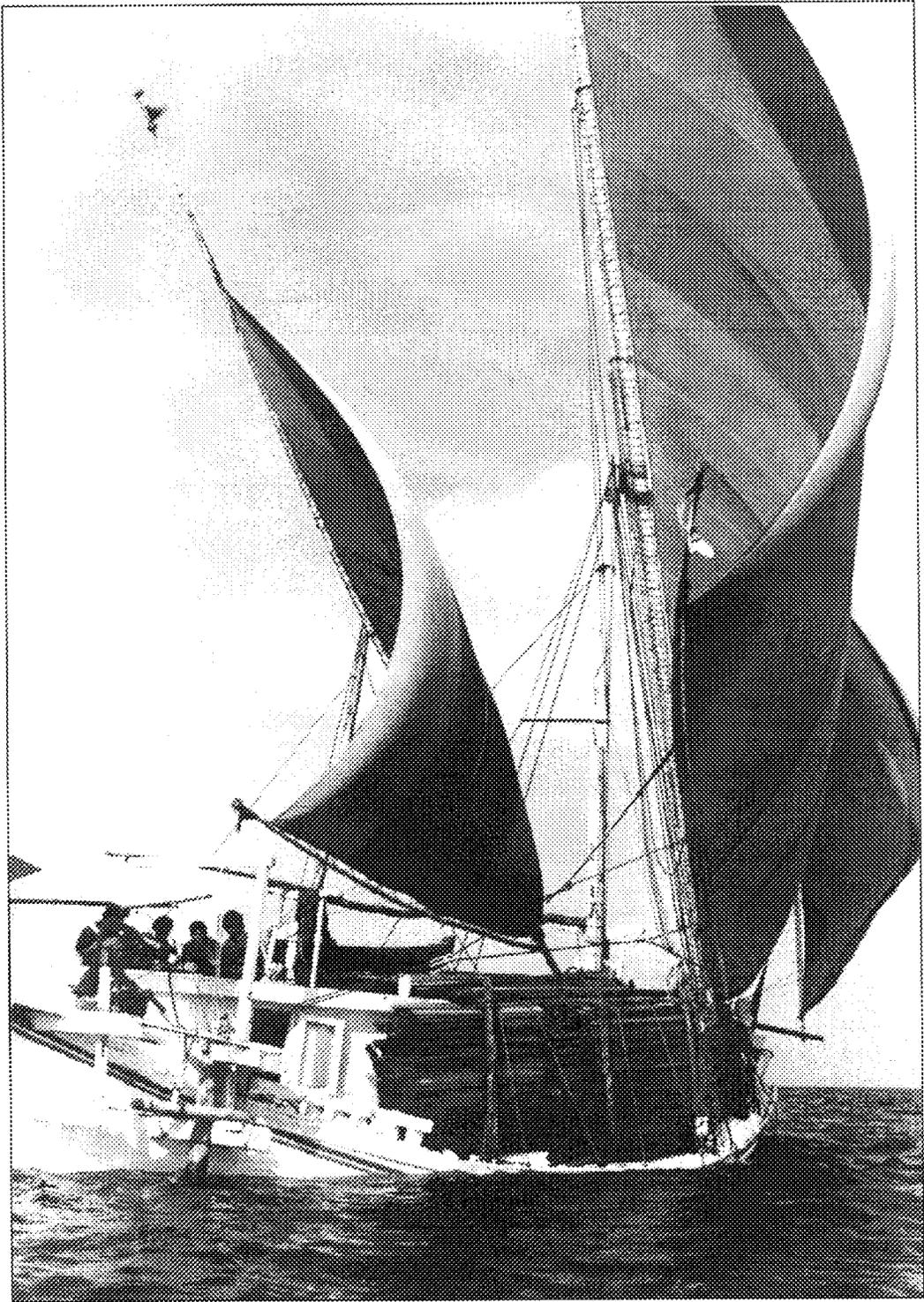
Abstract

The seafaring people of Madura, situated off the northeastern coast of Java, are one of the leading maritime groups in the Indonesian archipelago. They have played a major role in indigenous shipping, and since the second half of the nineteenth century their importance in this field has been second only to that of the Bugis and Makassarese. With their strong maritime orientation and outward economy, the coastal Madurese contrast strongly with the agricultural orientation of their near neighbours, the Javanese and the Balinese.

The first part of this thesis presents the Madurese in historical context vis-à-vis the Javanese and the maritime groups of Sulawesi. It then considers the various historical and cultural-ecological factors which predisposed the coastal Madurese toward seafaring as a livelihood, and which enabled them to eclipse their former rivals along the north coast of Java. The main seafaring centres of Madura during the twentieth century are identified, with these being in three distinct locations: the northwest coast, the southwest coast, and the eastern islands of Madura. Special attention is paid to the two major commodities carried by traditional Madurese vessels, salt and cattle, leading up to a more detailed consideration of the major transport commodity from the 1960s until the present, timber.

The second part of thesis focuses on the role of the Madurese in the Java Sea timber trade. A key aspect of this account is the struggle between timber importers and the state. The legal aspects of the movement of timber are explained, along with their economic significance for importers and vessel operators, and the changing degree of compliance with the law from the early 1970s to the much stricter enforcement after the mid-1990s. From the late 1990s until 2003 the focus becomes closer to reveal the inner workings of the timber trade, with special attention paid to the rise of 'wild' ports on the isolated north coast of Madura, as well as the difficulties faced by many Madurese vessel operators after the ethnic conflict in Central Kalimantan in 2001. The profitability and risks of the perahu operators and timber traders are explained, and career profiles of several prominent individuals are presented.

The study ranges widely in its setting, including maritime villages around Madura, perahu ports in Java, and timber ports in Kalimantan. It concludes that the traditional approach to business of the Madurese is no longer appropriate, and that diversification and change of approach are now necessary. The maritime entrepreneurs of East Madura have in this respect been more successful than their counterparts in West Madura, and it is suggested that this difference is linked to historical differences between the two areas.



Bound for Jakarta with a cargo of timber.

Contents

	Page
Abstract	iii
List of maps	vi
Lists of photographs and figures	vii
Preface	ix
Conventions used in this study	xii
Glossary	xiii
I Introduction	1
II Major patterns in indigenous shipping from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries	21
III A trading and maritime people	51
IV Three vessels	83
V Timber as a commodity in the context of Indonesia	115
VI Halcyon sailing: the Java Sea timber trade until the mid-1990s	139
VII <i>Pancaroba</i> : the Java Sea timber trade after 1996	167
VIII Madurese involvement in the contemporary timber trade	193
IX Seafarers and maritime entrepreneurs	227
X Conclusion	262
Appendices	
1 <i>Golekan, janggolan, and leletele</i>	272
2 The Kalimantan-Java timber trade in perspective	284
3 The 'small ship' pass, and tonnage	291
4 The timber transport permit	293
5 A note on Kalimantan timbers	296
Bibliography	300
Principal informants	314

Maps

		Page
1	Madura in the Indonesian archipelago	xviii
2	The monsoonal wind pattern in the Indonesian archipelago	30
3	Key centres of maritime trade around the Java Sea basin prior to European intervention	34
4	The northeast coast of Java	35
5	Madura	52
6	Islands in the <i>kabupaten</i> of Sumenep	54
7	Destinations for vessels from Telaga Biru and Banyuates	91
8	The Sreseh-Sampang area	99
9	Sumenep Bay and Giligenting	107
10	Sources of timber in Lampung and South Sumatra for Madurese vessels	143
11	The main timber ports of Java	154
12	The main waterways and ports of Central Kalimantan	158
13	The Jelai river	198
14	Banjarmasin to Kota Baru	206
15	Sampit Bay to Malatayur Point	218

Photographs

	Page
Frontispiece (i): Bound for Jakarta with a cargo of sawn timber	iv
Frontispiece (ii): Traditional vessel building at Kebun Dadap, Sumenep	xvii
1 Large motorized Bugis vessel	22
2 Mandar vessel with characteristic raised deck	23
3 Large Madurese perahu beached for maintenance	24
4 Smaller Madurese perahu, about the minimum size for the timber trade	25
5 Hauling up the wooden anchor on a large Madurese perahu	32
6 The bow of a fully traditional <i>golekan</i>	86
7 Spar crutch	86
8 Apex at after end of the deckhouse	86
9 Double-outrigger canoe at Sepulu	88
10 Full-sized <i>golekan</i> , of the type used for carrying cattle	93
11 <i>Golekan</i> on the beach at Telaga Biru in 1984	94
12 Large <i>janggolan</i> laid up for the wet season	97
13 <i>Janggolan</i> under sail	98
14 The first <i>sepel</i> at Batuputih	100
15 Small salt carrier returning to the Blega estuary	102
16 <i>Letelete</i> from Giligenting, Sumenep	105
17 The last <i>kacik</i> , <i>Lanceng Trisno</i>	106
18 <i>Letelete</i> from Giligenting, laden with drums of kerosene	110
19 Two powerful <i>letelete</i> from Sapudi, beached for maintenance	113
20 Kali Baru harbour, 1984	142
21 <i>Janggolan</i> laden with poles	145
22 <i>Janggolan</i> moored together off Kali Baru	146
23 Giligenting <i>letelete</i> with a cargo of timber	147
24 Loaded to the limit with timber, a <i>letelete</i> from Sapudi...	152
25 Unloading timber on to the beach at Sepulu	180
26 Unloading timber at Pasuruan	185
27 Unloading into the warehouse	187
28 Unloading squared logs from a large Madurese vessel	199
29 Logs for processing at a 'wild' sawmill	209

30	Sreseh vessels rafted up at Kintap	210
31	Logs quarter-sawn by chainsaw, prior to being milled	211
32	Loading planks into the hold	213
33	<i>Golekan</i> at Sungai Kaki	221
34	<i>Si Baru Dateng</i> at Sampang	236
35	<i>Bunga Bhakti</i> surging along on a broad reach	238
36	<i>Merpati</i> at Semarang	245
37	A large <i>letelete</i> under construction at Sapudi in 1983	247
38	The same beach in 2003	247
39	Small <i>alisalis</i> at Telaga Biru	274
40	<i>Si Sekar Mendung</i> , built by Haji Umar of Batuputih	277
41	The stern of the last <i>kacik</i>	281
42	<i>Letelete</i> from Sapudi, showing the low bulwark	282

Figures

1	Large outrigger trader in Madura Strait in 1856	273
2	<i>Golekan</i> leaving Singapore in about 1925	273

Preface

It may seem presumptuous for someone from Australia to attempt a major study of the seafaring people of the Indonesian island of Madura, a highly distinctive group about whom remarkably little has been written. But in this instance the topic is an appropriate one, for this thesis is the culmination of a deep involvement in the maritime world of the Madurese spanning more than two decades.

My interest in Indonesian watercraft and maritime culture was first aroused during a two-month visit to Indonesia in 1974; and on subsequent visits over the next few years I managed to experience more of this apparently anachronistic maritime world, mainly in eastern Indonesia. But notwithstanding this varied experience, on my first visit to Madura in 1983 I was amazed at the vessels I saw. Throughout the rest of the 1980s I returned each year, during my holidays, to Java and Madura, visiting every maritime village I could, and even crossing the Java Sea on some of these traditional vessels.

But as extensive and unusual as my experience was, I was also keenly aware of how little I knew. I had only a vague understanding of Indonesian history; I had no idea as to why the Madurese had become a great maritime people while their near neighbours, the Javanese and Balinese, were evidently not; and nor did I have any idea of why the maritime tradition of the Madurese was so different from that of South Sulawesi and eastern Indonesia.

With my historical interest kindled, I decided to enter university, majoring in Southeast Asian Studies. As part of my undergraduate course, in 1997-98 I spent a year in Indonesia. During the second semester I undertook a three-month field project, staying in a perahu village in Madura. This field study deepened into my Honours year research project, about the *janggolan*, a type of traditional Madurese vessel, and was followed by further visits to Madura in 1999 and 2000.

By this time I was well aware of the paucity of literature about the seafaring Madurese, and I was also well aware that the traditional maritime world, so recently flourishing, was all but gone as a result of the rapid changes which had taken place from the mid-1980s onward. In this situation, I felt uniquely placed to undertake a social historical study of the maritime Madurese. First, I had the great advantage of having observed this group intermittently over a prolonged period of economic change, with much of that observation not from 'outside' ('from the deck of a ship', as van Leur put it), but from 'within', with plenty of personal participation as well as observation. Second, I had a deep interest in the traditional vessels, and had taken much trouble in order to understand the details of their construction, their sailing rigs and operating techniques, and the ornamental

and symbolic elements which were of such importance in this culture. This study is not directly concerned with these matters, but my interest in them led to a deepening of my interest in Madurese maritime society and culture, and its place in the wider maritime culture of Southeast Asia. Third, I had a special interest in the private production of salt, which is a major source of income in parts of coastal Madura, and an industry which has been intimately linked with Madurese perahu shipping.

In addition to this background of experience in Madura and in perahu circles generally, I also had a particular interest in the commodity which has been the economic mainstay of perahu shipping for the past four decades, namely timber. I am an amateur carpenter of fair experience: a few years ago I built a 10.5 metre wooden sailing vessel, and as I write a smaller new wooden vessel sits in my workshop, somewhat neglected because of the exigencies of this thesis. In both cases, with the exception of the Douglas fir for the masts, the wood used came entirely from Borneo. As a result of these and other carpentry projects, most of the timbers which are mentioned in this study are not abstract commodities to me ('timber', like 'sand' or 'coal'). Rather, I am familiar with their appearance, their characteristics when worked, their structural properties, and in some cases their smell when cut. Meranti and kapur, for example, are not my favourite timbers (although good pieces of these are fine), but knowing what they are – what they are like to use – certainly added interest to my research. And as with first-hand knowledge of the traditional vessels of Madura, being able to talk with confidence born of experience about different timbers was often useful in fieldwork.

Although as a study of a maritime people this work necessarily makes frequent reference to particular indigenous vessel types, any reader who lacks background knowledge in this general area will not be disadvantaged. The thesis is written for the general reader, eschewing the nautical jargon which can be fazing for the non-specialist, and with minimal concern for technical or other esoteric matters. This is certainly not because of any lack of interest in these directions on my part, but rather because I realized early on that any attempt to incorporate such detailed description would inevitably unbalance the work as a whole, and detract from its value as a social history. Appendix One discusses the traditional vessels at greater length, but again the approach is non-technical, approaching the subject with broad brush strokes which should allow the reader to engage with the text. The story of the maritime Madurese is a significant part of the maritime and social history of Southeast Asia, and it is important that it be presented in such a way that it can be appreciated by a wide readership.

Of all the many people who have helped me in this study, none deserves my thanks more than my supervisor, Professor Jim Warren. As well as being a mentor of long standing, Jim

has also been an inspiration to me. His unflagging support throughout this long project, and his extraordinary promptness in reading different drafts of my lengthy chapters, with obvious attention to detail regardless of the pressures of his own teaching and writing, go beyond what one has a right to expect. Professor Carol Warren also read the entire thesis, and her incisive criticisms and constructive comments have contributed significantly to the final version.

I am grateful to Murdoch University for the various scholarships which I received, and without which this study would not have been possible; and also for the excellent office accommodation which was made available to me in the university's Asia Research Centre. My 'stablemates' under Jim Warren's supervision, Henry Chen, Line Liss, and the late Tricia Pursell added to the sense of camaraderie at the Centre, and were a much appreciated source of moral, intellectual, and technical support for me throughout my candidature.

My thanks are also due to the Indonesian Academy of Sciences (LIPI) and Universitas Muhammadiyah, Malang, for sponsoring my field study in Indonesia. Professor Achmad Habib, my counterpart for the field study, was a stalwart friend at whose house in Malang I frequently stayed. I must also express my appreciation of my wife, Selva, who has had to tolerate my long absences from home, and who has supported me enthusiastically throughout this project.

Finally, my gratitude is due to my field informants in Madura, Java, and Kalimantan. These people are far too numerous to include here, and even the list of principal informants at the end of the thesis is far short of the real number. Indeed, I would be unable to recall them all, as distinct individuals. Some became close friends, but in a broader sense these informants were part of the social matrix in which I lived and mixed, and learned. This study is a tribute to the seafaring people of Madura, and it is to them I dedicate it.

Conventions used in this thesis

Placenames. Placenames have in most cases been spelt according to contemporary Indonesian practice. However, in writing about the early modern period I have retained the old European spellings of Malacca and the Moluccas, rather than the modern versions of Melaka and Maluku, in keeping with the spelling used in the historical works upon which that part of my research was based.

Names of indigenous vessel types. Names of indigenous vessel types have been italicized throughout. The exception is the word *perahu*, which is sufficiently widely known to be treated as a loan word, and has for example long been used (as 'prau') without italicization in British Pilot volumes. 'Perahu' is nevertheless clarified in a footnote in Chapter I. No plural form is used for any of these indigenous vessel names, with plurality being apparent from context.

Common names of timber species. Standard Indonesian names for timber species have not been italicized, for two reasons. First, I have used italics for the botanical names. Second, while many readers may be unfamiliar with some of these common names, many of them are used for trade purposes around the world, and appear in numerous publications without italicization. However, in a few cases in which the name of a timber is a strictly local usage, and thus different from the standard Indonesian word for that species, I have used italics.

Indonesian words. These have been italicized except for abbreviations, or names of organizations; and no plural form is used. (For readers without any knowledge of Indonesian, [c] is always pronounced as [ch].)

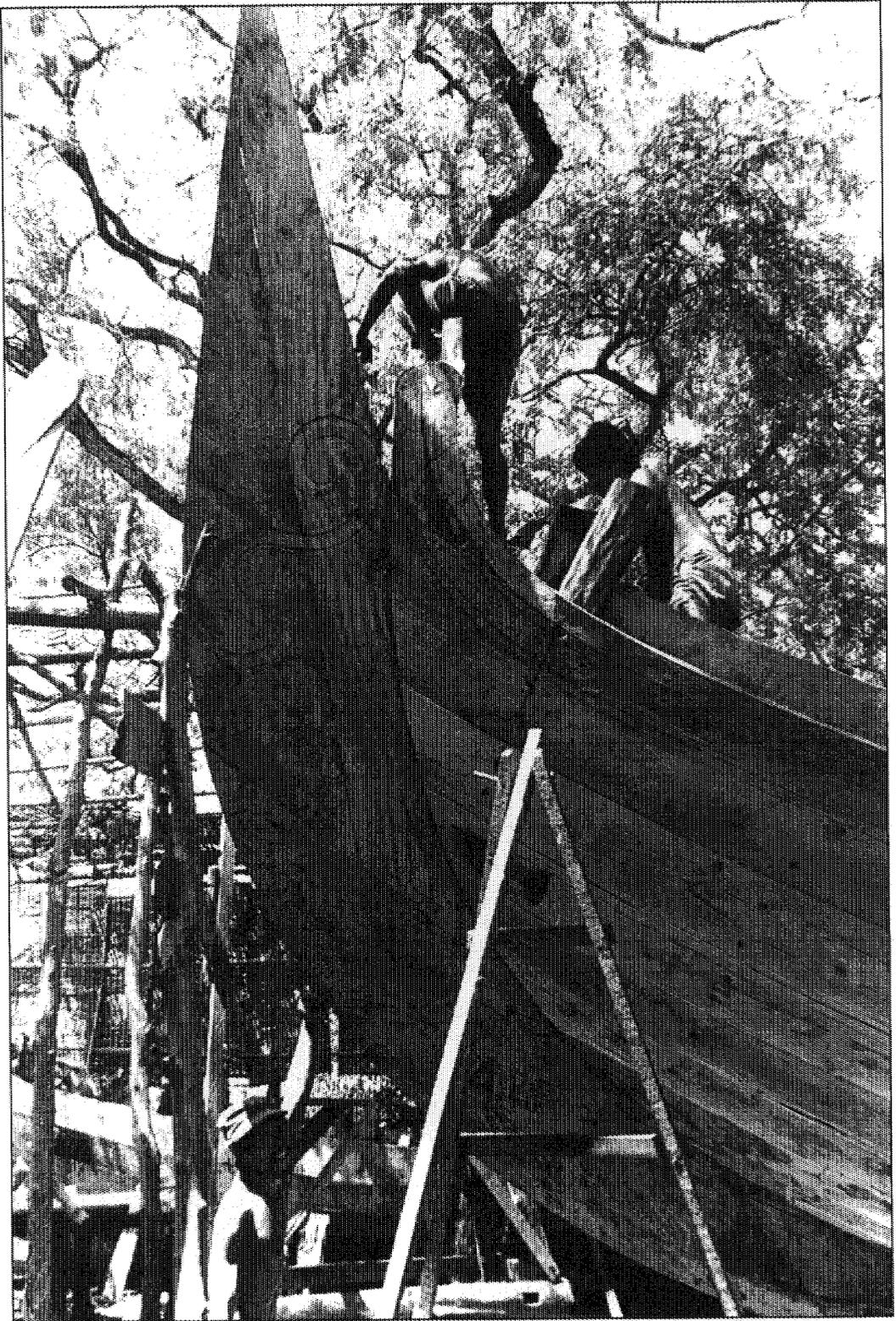
Glossary

<i>afdeeling</i>	administrative district under Dutch rule
<i>alisalis (lisalis)</i>	type of small traditional open vessel of Madura
<i>Airud</i>	‘water and air’ (police); ~ police, water police
bangkirai	kind of tree (<i>shorea laevifolia</i> Endert)
<i>banjir kap</i>	‘log flood’; floating large quantities of logs downriver
<i>becak</i>	pedal-driven trishaw
<i>bedouang (paduwang)</i>	traditional double-outtrigger vessel of Madura
<i>beluntu</i>	vessel from Bawean with angular profile in European style, but with traditional sailing rig and lateral rudder
benuas	kind of tree (<i>shorea laevis</i> Ridl.)
bifid-ended	~ vessel, one which when viewed in profile has a bifurcated shape at the bow and stern
<i>blater</i>	forceful, tough (of person, esp. a leader) (Java, Madura)
bowsprit	spar extending forward from the bow of a vessel
bulkhead	transverse partition in a vessel
bulwark	a broad rail or similar enclosing structure around the edge of a vessel’s deck
bungur	kind of tree (<i>lagerstroemia</i> sp.)
<i>bupati</i>	the highest-ranking official of a <i>kabupaten</i>
<i>cemplon</i>	type of traditional decked transport vessel of Java
DPP	<i>Daftar Penggantian Pengangkutan</i> , change of mode of transportation (permit)
<i>desa</i>	local administrative unit or ward, lowest tier of formal government
<i>Dinas Kehutanan</i>	Forestry Service
doghouse	short raised shelter cabin on a vessel, usually aft of and higher than the main deckhouse structure
DR	reforestation fund levy (<i>dana reboisasi</i>)
finial	ornamental piece on top or at end of a structure
gaff	spar attached at an angle to the upper part of a mast; standing ~, type of gaff that remains permanently aloft
<i>golekan</i>	traditional type of transport vessel of Madura
HPH	forestry concession permit (<i>hak pengusaha hutan</i>)
<i>jago</i>	a ‘tough’, person prepared to use force for coercion
<i>janggolan</i>	traditional type of transport vessel of Madura
<i>jong</i>	traditional Southeast Asian ship, extant until 17 th century

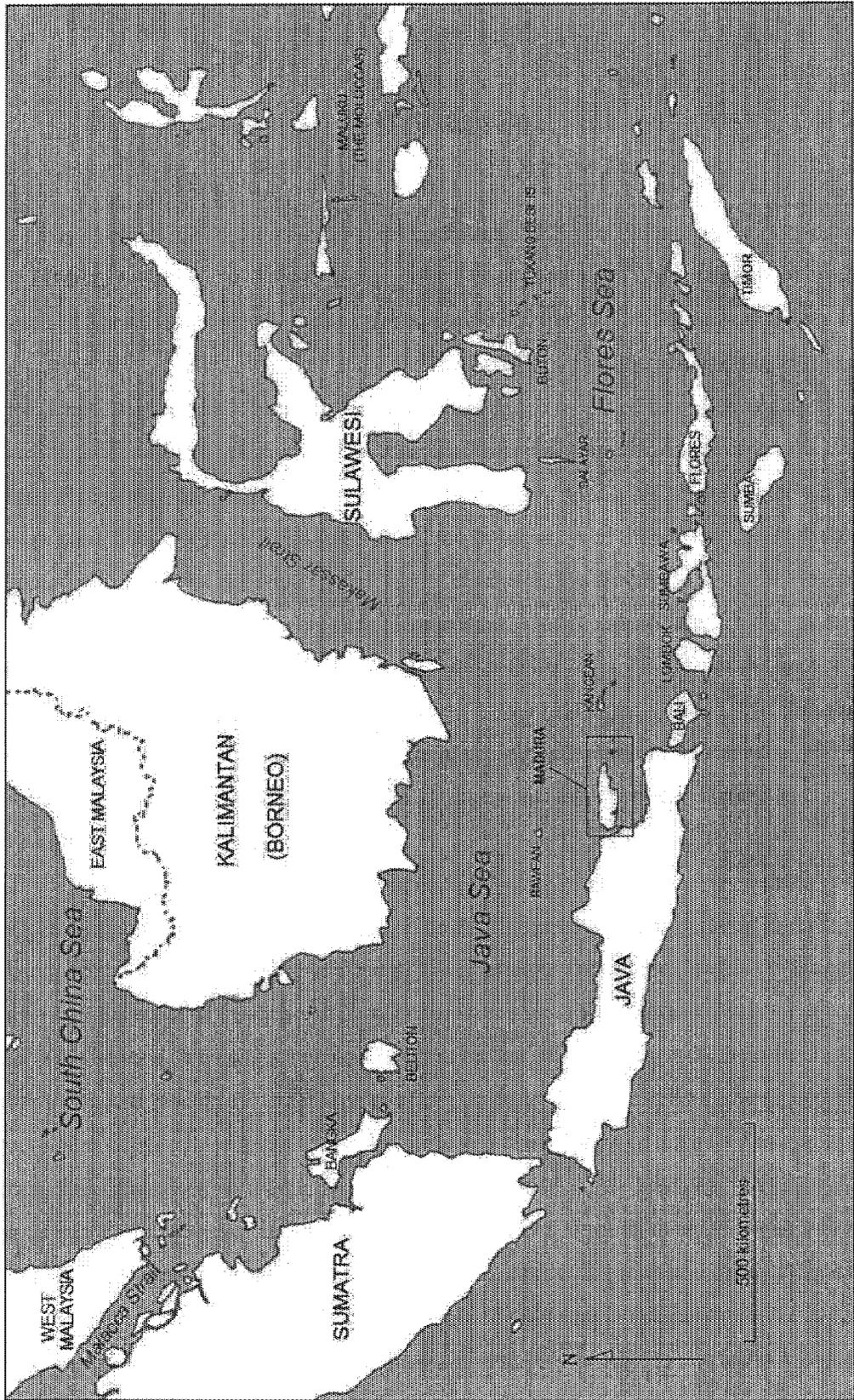
<i>kabupaten</i>	sub-provincial administrative district
<i>kacik</i>	type of traditional transport vessel of Madura, based on the <i>cemplon</i> of Java
<i>kafir</i>	(Isl.) non-believing; profane
<i>kampung</i>	small village; hamlet
<i>kapur</i>	various related kinds of tree (<i>dryobalanops</i> sp.)
<i>kecamatan</i>	administrative sub-district, below level of <i>kabupaten</i>
<i>kelotok</i>	small canoe-like open motor boat, used in Kalimantan
<i>kelurahan</i>	village level administrative unit, similar to a <i>desa</i>
<i>kenek</i>	assistant to driver on small passenger vehicle
<i>kepala desa</i>	elected official in charge of a <i>desa</i>
<i>keruing</i>	various related kinds of tree (<i>dipterocarpus</i> sp.)
<i>ketch</i>	vessel with two masts, the forward one the taller
<i>ketupat</i>	rice cake wrapped in plaited coconut leaves; ~ festival, festival with giving of such cakes.
<i>kiai (kiyayi)</i>	charismatic religious leader (Java, Madura)
<i>klebun</i>	Madurese term for <i>kepala desa</i>
KL	sailing vessel (<i>kapal layar</i>)
KLM	motor sailing vessel (<i>kapal layar motor</i>)
KM	motor vessel (<i>kapal motor</i>)
<i>kolek</i>	open boat (Java); type of large open fishing vessel of Java
<i>kongsi</i>	Chinese syndicate or clan-like organization
<i>konteng</i>	large traditional type of open vessel, similar to <i>kolek</i> (Java)
<i>koyan</i>	28 to 30 <i>pikul</i> , but sometimes more depending on the commodity concerned
KPM	Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij (Royal Packetship Company)
<i>kuala</i>	(in placenames) estuary, river
<i>laban</i>	kind of tree (<i>vitex pubescens</i>)
<i>lambo</i>	non-traditional vessel with counter stern in European style, widely used in eastern Indonesia
<i>last</i>	4000 lb; nominal or 'manifest' ton for cargo.
leeboard	a board mounted on the side of a vessel to prevent it from sliding sideways when under sail
<i>letelete</i>	type of traditional transport vessel of East Madura
<i>Lokal</i>	see <i>Pelayaran Lokal</i>
loose-footed mainsail	mainsail which does not have a boom on its lower edge
<i>mayang</i>	traditional large open fishing vessel of Java, similar to but slightly smaller than the <i>konteng</i> .

MC	mixed meranti (<i>meranti campur</i>)
meranti	various related kinds of tree (<i>shorea</i> sp.)
MSM	Madoera Stoomtram Maatschappij (Madura Steamtrain Company)
<i>Nusantara</i>	see <i>Pelayaran Nusantara</i>
nyamplong	kind of tree (<i>calophyllum inophyllum</i>)
<i>padewakang</i>	type of large decked trading vessel of Sulawesi, based on the <i>pajala</i> hull form (19 th century)
<i>pajak laut</i>	'sea tax' (unofficial charge)
<i>pajala</i>	basic vessel type of Sulawesi, with no deck
Pak (Bapak)	Mr., term of respect for older man or official; father
<i>palari</i>	type of large trading vessel from Sulawesi, developed from the <i>padewakang</i> (late 19 th to early 20 th centuries)
<i>pasisir</i>	coastal, the coast
<i>Pelayaran Lokal</i>	'Local shipping' (official category for small motor ships)
<i>Pelayaran Nusantara</i>	'Archipelago shipping' (official category for modern ships)
<i>Pelayaran Rakyat</i>	'People's shipping' (official category for perahu)
Pelra	association of <i>Pelayaran Rakyat</i> entrepreneurs
<i>pencalang</i>	type of traditional trading vessel of Java, of Malay origin (17 th to 19 th centuries)
perahu	wooden vessel, especially one used for transport work
<i>peranakan</i>	of mixed Chinese and indigenous descent; assimilated
<i>percaton</i>	appanage system in Madura, used until late 19 th century
<i>pesantren</i>	residential Islamic learning centre
<i>pikul</i>	about 125 lb (load of two baskets carried on a pole)
<i>pinis (pinisi)</i>	type of large trading vessel used by Bugis and Makassarese, with European sailing rig (20 th century)
PSDH	forest product royalty (<i>provisi sumber daya hutan</i>)
PT	limited liability company (<i>perusahaan terbatas</i>)
<i>rakyat</i>	common people; ~ shipping, perahu shipping; ~ salt producers, private salt producers
<i>rato</i>	ruler, prince
<i>retribusi</i>	levy
SAKO	transport permit for sawn timber (<i>surat angkatan kayu olahan</i>)
<i>sampan</i>	general term for small open vessel on south coast of Madura (with no similarity in form to Chinese sampan)
<i>sawah</i>	wet-field rice farming, plot of land for same
sea tax	unofficial payment demanded by police or Navy

<i>sekoci</i>	non-traditional perahu after European style, with sharp stern and central rudder; very small flat-bottomed craft
<i>sepel</i>	non-traditional type of perahu, with lateral rudder
sheer line	line formed by the upper limit of a vessel's basic hull structure, as seen in profile
SKSHH	certificate of legality of forest produce (<i>surat keterangan sahnya hasil hutan</i>)
sloop	vessel with one mast and two sails (mainsail and jib)
<i>sope (sopek, sopet)</i>	various types of small perahu, usually undecked
staysail	a sail set on a stay (rather than on a mast); jib
strop	a small loop made of rope or cord
<i>suku</i>	ethnic or sub-ethnic group
<i>sungai</i>	(in placenames) river
tack	when sailing into the wind, to change course so that the wind comes on the other side of the vessel
<i>tanjung</i>	(in placenames) point, cape, promontory
<i>tegal</i>	dry-field farming
<i>toop</i>	large 19 th century perahu, similar in form to European vessels
topsides	that part of a vessel's hull which is above the height of the sheer line
<i>totok</i>	pure-blood, unassimilated (esp. of Chinese persons)
ulin	kind of tree (<i>eusideroxylon zwageri</i>)
VOC	<i>Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie</i> (Dutch East India Company)
yard	a spar which is slung from or otherwise attached to a mast, and to which the upper edge of a sail is attached



Traditional vessel construction at Kebun Dadap, Sumenep.



Map 1: Madura in the Indonesian archipelago.