



RHGT, Vol. XV, Issues 29-30, pp. 79-120

## **SINGAPORE'S PRE-COLONIAL PLACE NAMES: A PHILOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION DEVELOPED THROUGH THE ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL MAPS**

**Francesco PERONO CACCIAFOCO**

Nanyang Technological University (NTU), College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (CoHASS), School of Humanities (SoH), Linguistics and Multilingual Studies Programme (LMS), Singapore

Email: [fcacciafoco@ntu.edu.sg](mailto:fcacciafoco@ntu.edu.sg)

**Zheng Zhe Darwin SHIA**

Nanyang Technological University (NTU), College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (CoHASS), School of Humanities (SoH), Linguistics and Multilingual Studies Programme (LMS), Singapore

Email: [ZSHIA001@e.ntu.edu.sg](mailto:ZSHIA001@e.ntu.edu.sg)

**Abstract:** *Past research on pre-colonial toponyms in Singapore has focused on providing information about the pre-colonial maps that contained them, while overlooking the possible explanations behind their diachronic development. A comparative analysis of the historical maps will thus shed light on the development, similarities, and differences among names given, in different times, to the same location. The paper attempts to reconstruct pre-colonial toponyms through an analysis of maps collected from the National Archives of Singapore and the National Library Board. On top of that, the article explains the survival and disappearance of these ancient toponyms found in these pre-colonial maps. Results show a total of 12 pre-colonial toponyms, some of them with multilingual variations, given, over time, by different naming subjects. Despite the influence of official place naming policies and multilingual toponymic variations, the reasons for the survival of a pre-colonial toponym are mainly linked to its meaning and the continuous usage by inhabitants. The article provides a survey of place-naming trends during the pre-colonial period of Singapore and serves as a guide for future research on the origins of the toponyms documented in maps drawn by pre-colonial cartographers.*

**Key words:** *Historical Toponomastics, cartography, topography, Singapore, Pre-Colonial place names*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Toponyms are thought to be mainly used for orientation, identification, and navigation purposes to the general public. However, other than addressing just a general analysis of place names, Toponymy provides insights into our past by showing the history, physical geography, language, culture, and practices of the inhabitants of a place.<sup>1</sup> According to Kallasmaa,<sup>2</sup> toponyms do not exist by accident; they are, instead, a by-product of human association between places and their name. Naming practices in the ancient past commonly include features of the specific locations, as it was common for inhabitants to use particular spots or landmarks to characterize the landscape. In comparison, modern toponyms are often made up ‘aseptically’, and could be less meaningful.<sup>3</sup>

The earliest historical records of Singapore date back to the 1300s, when the country was previously known as *Temasik*, a Malay term that means ‘Lake’ or ‘Sea’.<sup>4</sup> Subsequently, in the late 1300s, the island was renamed *Singapura*, a Sanskrit word which means ‘Lion City’. The origin of the toponym are connected with the legend of *Sang Nila Utama*, a Sumatra prince who spotted, allegedly, a lion on the island and decided to name it as such.<sup>5</sup>

Most historical maps identify the island as *Singapura*, with its different spelling variations such as *Sincapura* (1561) and *Cincapura* (1630). Other variants include *Bargingapra* in the 1535 Ptolemaic map by Lorenz Fries and *Pulau Panjang* in a 1755 nautical map by Jacques Nicolas Bellin.<sup>6</sup> In 1604, a hand-drawn map of *Sincapura*, by Manuel Godinho De Erédia, included eight other local toponyms of the mainland for the first time. Some of the place names were conserved even until today, such as *Tanamena* (now *Tanah Merah*) and *Tanion Ru* (now *Tanjong Rhu*).<sup>7</sup>

Despite the variety of historical toponyms, many Singaporeans today are unaware of all the ancient place names of the territory, which are all part of the rich history of the island. As the country underwent several place-naming changes, many old toponyms were obliterated and forgotten by Singaporeans. To understand Singapore’s history better, it is necessary to investigate the meaning behind its ancient toponyms as there are linguistic elements that play an essential role in creating an affiliation and cultural identity for the local inhabitants.<sup>8</sup>

The present study aims at understanding the etymology behind the toponyms that first appeared during the pre-colonial period and at explaining their development by comparing them with significant maps throughout the history of Singapore. Due to the limited amount of research on Singapore’s toponymy before the pre-colonial period, many Singaporeans are unfamiliar with the etymology behind the place names in the country. By analysing the etymology of the ancient and forgotten toponyms, it is possible to piece together a historical timeline of significant events in ancient

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Poenaru-Girigan, O.M., (2013), p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kallasmaa, M., (2000), p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Kallasmaa, M., (2000), p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Miksic, J., (2013), p. 183.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Miksic, J., (2013), p. 151.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Periasamy, M., (2015), p. 60.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Borschberg, P., (2015), p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Poenaru-Girigan, O.M., (2013), p. 155.

Singapore. The study ultimately aims at providing the historical processes and possible reasons behind the survival or the removal of pre-colonial toponyms.

The present article is relevant not only at the regional level, highlighting aspects of the history of Singapore and the Straits so far rarely and incompletely studied, but also according to a global perspective, shedding some light on naming and renaming practices in ‘Western-Colonial’ Historical Cartography and in the perception and interpretation, by ‘Western’ Cartographers, of local place names in South-East Asia (in this specific case, in Singapore). A historical and philological study is required to interpret possible misunderstandings, by colonial Cartographers, of local toponyms and in providing a diachronic reconstruction of place names ‘changed’ not only according to the ‘natural’ evolution of local languages, but also according to the interpretation (often mistaken) given by the colonizers. Additionally, the phenomenon of the disappearance of some local place names in historical maps provides us with some hints on the preferences and the (voluntary or involuntary) choices by Cartographers about what they wanted or they needed to represent and, ultimately, to mark in their cartographic documents.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.1 Historical maps of Singapore***

The National Archives of Singapore (NAS) hold the most extensive publicly available collection of Singapore Cartography, with over 10,000 maps. However, only less than 40 maps in the collection are from the pre-colonial period, from the time before the foundation of modern Singapore by Sir Stamford Raffles, in 1819. For the early-colonial period between 1819 and 1866, an age where specific maps of Singapore appear, the NAS have a collection of about 190 documents.<sup>9</sup> The collection of maps by the NAS and the National Library Board (NLB) plays a vital role in research studies that involve the history of Singapore and its development over the years.

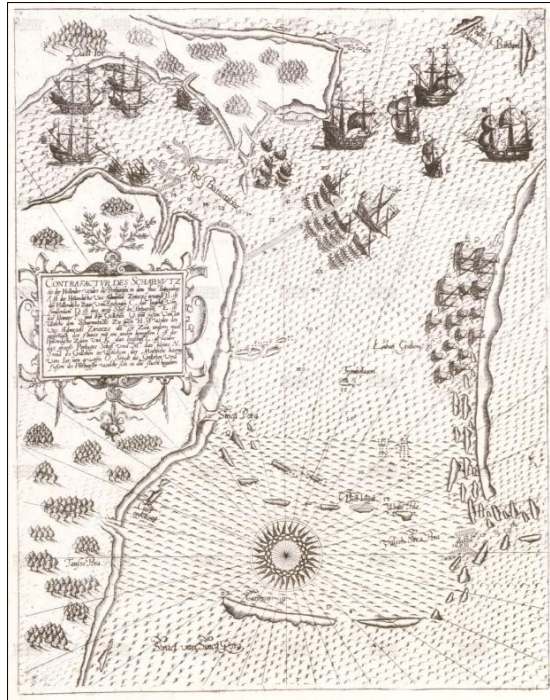
In 2015, the National Library Board and National Archives of Singapore jointly published a book entitled *Visualising Space: Maps of Singapore and the Region*. The book features an extensive collection of maps of Singapore and also includes the David Parry’s Southeast Asian Map collection, comprising maps dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Scholars such as Peter Borschberg and Mok Ly Yng contributed to the book by giving their insights and evaluation of the historical maps.<sup>10</sup>

Some of the significant pre-colonial maps of Singapore are included below.

---

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Khoo, K., (2015), p. 119.

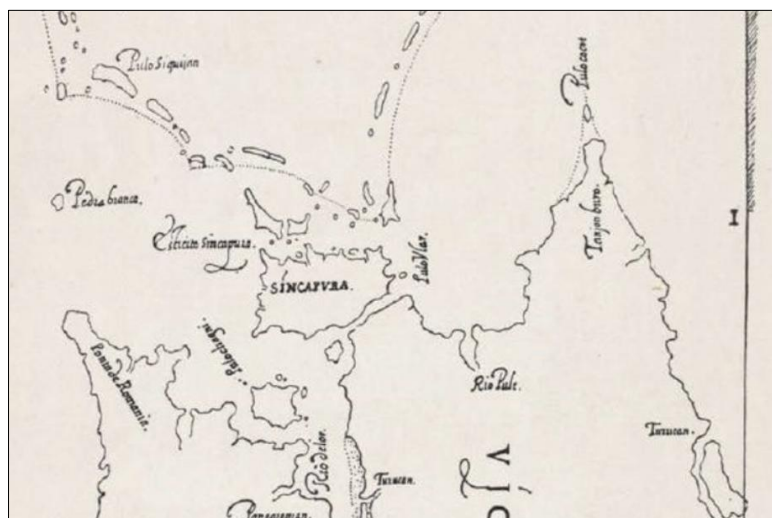
<sup>10</sup> National Library Board (2015) [*Visualising Space: Maps of Singapore and the Region, passim*].



**Map 1.** Map Of Singapore (1607)

Source: Prime Minister Office (Retrieved from the NAS)

During the pre-colonial period, the earliest map to have a close-up view of Singapore was published in 1607 by Theodore de Bry, and featured a sea battle at the Changi Coast of Singapore in 1604.<sup>11</sup> However, the map only depicts the southern coastline of Singapore and reports the geographical toponyms of river mouths in the surrounding area. As such, it does not provide much information regarding the toponyms of the island itself .



**Map 2.** de Bry's Map, Folio 45 R. (1604)

Source: Mills, 1930: 218

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Borschberg, P., (2010), p. 81.

In 1604, the Malay-Portuguese mapmaker Manuel Godinho De Erédia drew one of the earliest maps that featured toponyms from pre-colonial Singapore.<sup>12</sup> In his manuscript *Declaracam de Malaca e da India Meridional com Cathay*, the first map *JOR: Regno*, oriented south-north, is an overview of the Straits of Malacca and depicts Singapore as an island.<sup>13</sup> Two of the local toponyms in the map, *Pulo Chagni* and *Pulo Siquijan*, are believed to be an earlier reference for *Pulau Tekong Besar* and *St John Island*, respectively.<sup>14</sup>



**Map 3.** Chorographic Description of the Straits of Sincapura and Sabbam, 1604 A.D. (Folio 61 R.)

Source: Mills, 1930: 224

Another map in Erédia's manuscript could be a close-up version of Map 2 that depicts place names attested in the island. Some of the toponyms in the map are still recognisable today, such as *Sunebodo* (now *Bedok*), *Tanamena* (now *Tanah Merah*), and *Tanion Ru* (now *Tanjong Rhu*).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Periasamy, M., (2015), p. 67.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Mills, J., (1930), p. 219.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Mills, J., (1930), p. 219.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Borschberg, P., (2015), p. 18.



**Map 4.** Taboa dos Estreitos de Sabam e de Sincapura com o Rio de Ihor

Source: Borschberg, 2017: 374

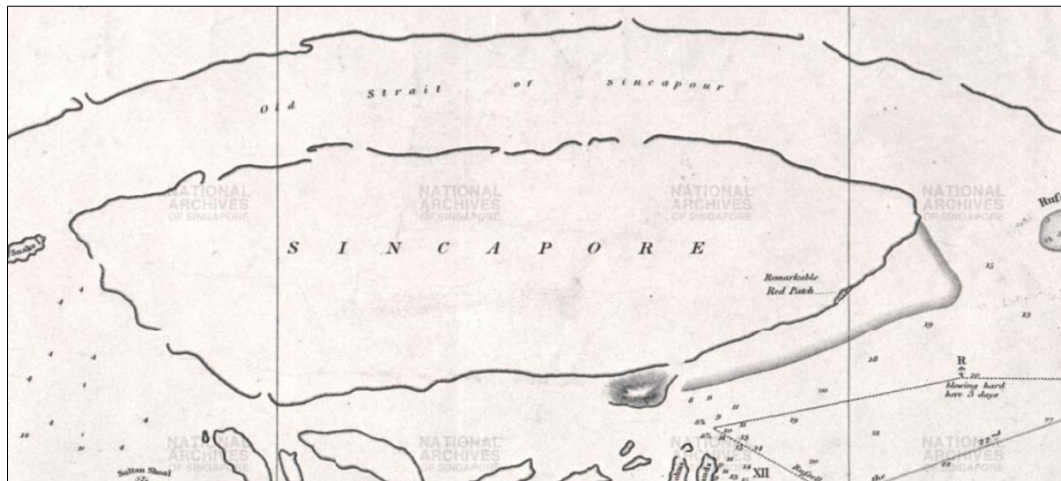
Erédia's map is revised and reconstructed from a source found in *Atlas Miscelânea of 1615, fol. 41 recto*, by Borschberg.<sup>16</sup> Other than minor spelling changes, the significant difference between the 1604 and the 1615 maps (Figure 4) would be the inclusion of two new toponyms, which are *Batu Quina* and *Brasas*. However, there is limited literature regarding the source of this map ascribed to Erédia.



**Map 5.** Historia de Servicos com Martiro de Luis Monteiro Coutinho (Folio 26)

Source: Pinto, 2012: xxxv

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Borschberg, P., (2017), p. 374.



**Map 6.** New Survey of the Straits of Singapore from Pulo Pesang to Bintang Hill (1807)  
 Source: Laurie & Whittle, 1807 (Retrieved from NAS)

Although maps that were depicting Singapore were produced from as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, most of them were not accurately tracing the outline of the island during the pre-colonial period.<sup>17</sup> Even up till 1807, a British survey map of the Straits of Singapore was not accurate in depicting the shape and size of Singapore and its surrounding islands. Advanced and precise mapping techniques only began when Sir Stamford Raffles established a trading post on the island.<sup>18</sup>



**Map 7.** Plan of The British Settlement Of Singapore  
 By Captain Franklin And Lieut. Jackson (1828)  
 Source: Retrieved from the NLB Spatial Discovery

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Mok, L.Y., (2015), p. 88.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Mok, L.Y., (2015), p. 88.

While Captain James Franklin was in Singapore, he found out that there was no accurate map of the island and took it upon himself to conduct such a cartographic survey.<sup>19</sup> Thus, in 1828, he drew the first map, which accurately captured the outline of Singapore.<sup>20</sup> The 1828 map by James Franklin is noteworthy even until today as it signifies the start of modern mapping for Singapore.

In today's technological advancements, maps that Singaporeans use are mainly *Google Maps* and other mapping applications that are available online. Streets and their locations can be found easily by keying the specific place name on a search bar, and they are updated monthly by users' inputs and reviews. For a hardcopy version, *Mighty Minds Publishing* publishes a street directory yearly that includes lists of Singapore's toponyms in alphabetical order. Just like a dictionary, the resource provides a description of the places and a relevant map along with the toponyms, to allow readers to have a clear idea of the actual location. *Mighty Minds* published their first street directory in the year 2000 and the latest edition in 2019.<sup>21</sup> If we were to draw a comparison between these two editions, we would notice a considerable amount of difference in the toponyms of Singapore throughout the past 20 years.

## ***2.2. Singapore toponymy dictionaries***

Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, several publications give an etymological explanation of Singapore place names. However, two recent books, by Savage and Yeoh (2013) and Ng (2018), stand out among the rest as they provide an in-depth analysis of almost all the street names in Singapore.

*Singapore Street Names: A Study of Toponymics*, by Savage and Yeoh, lists in alphabetical order the island toponyms and provides historical information as well as the possible etymological explanation for each entry. The book also provides explanations to renamed and expunged toponyms. For place names with a more extended history, the Authors conducted a comprehensive analysis of their origins using old maps, showing the toponymic development throughout the years. In the book *What's In The Name? How the Streets and Villages in Singapore Got Their Names*, Ng focuses more on the place naming styles. The Author also explains how specific toponyms changed due to evolution as well as linguistic refinement. For example, the original meaning of the place *Ang Mo Kio* referred, apparently, to a red hair (man)'s bridge in the Chinese Hokkien dialect. But due to its negative connotation, a linguistic refinement was implemented by using Chinese homonyms of different spelling. As such, *Ang Mo Kio* now means 'a spacious and abundant bridge'.<sup>22</sup>

## ***2.3. The history of Singapore's toponymic policies***

Singapore has gone through several changes in the ruling power of the island since the pre-colonial period. Before the British took over in 1819, the island was ruled by the Srivijaya Empire in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Malacca Sultanate between the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, and, finally, the Johore Sultanate between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Mok, L.Y., (2015), p. 88.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Khoo, K., (2015), p. 121.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Mahmud, A.H., 2019, *passim*.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Ng, Y., (2018), p. 54.



centuries.<sup>23</sup> Subsequently, the island merged with the Federation of Malaya to be under Malaysia in 1963, before it gained its independence in 1965.<sup>24</sup> Inevitably, the alternation of different political powers since the pre-colonial period lead to an array of changes in the local toponymic policies, and many toponyms were respelled or removed entirely.<sup>25</sup>

The British colonisation of Singapore lasted from 1819 to 1963, including the disruption by the Japanese occupation between 1942 and 1945.<sup>26</sup> The British, being the governing party for more than a century, added to the Singapore toponymy a large amount of British street names, which are associated with British contexts and individuals, such as European royalties, public servants, and “deserving” citizens.<sup>27</sup> For example, the naming of *Victoria Street* was produced after Queen Victoria, the naming of *Shenton Way* after Sir Shenton Whitelegge Thomas, a Governor from 1934 to 1946, and the naming of *Kitchener Road* after the war hero Lord Kitchener.<sup>28</sup> These examples illustrate the toponymic practices of the British colony, highlighting an interest on the preferences and projections of the authorities. Pre-colonial toponymic policies did not reflect the collective views of the masses who resided or used the streets.<sup>29</sup>

However, even for a particular area with an official name conferred by the authorities, the practice of using personalised toponyms according to the local native languages was common among the Chinese, Malay, and Tamil locals.<sup>30</sup> For example, in 1880s, *Cross Street* was inhabited by Indian boatmen selling milk, mutton, and herbs. Thus, the area was referred by the Chinese as *Kiat Leng Kia Koi*, which means ‘the Klingmen’s Street’, as there were numerous *klings*<sup>31</sup> who resided there. For the Malays, *Cross street* was known as *Kampong Susu*, which means ‘milk village’, and the Tamils named the street *Pâlkadei Sadakku*, which means ‘Street of the milk shops’.<sup>32</sup> The used of localised unofficial toponyms observed during the colonial era is still prevalent today among the older generations of Singaporeans. For example, *Bukit Merah* is referred by the older Chinese Singaporeans as *Ang Suah*, a Hokkien term that translates to ‘Red Hill’.<sup>33</sup>

In regard to toponymic policies during the post-colonial period, an article by Horsman<sup>34</sup> shows that it is common for a new ruling party to remove old toponyms associated with the previous government. The use of modifications and dispositions were methods to frame a new national identity with the aim to erase the memory of the colonial power and beliefs. For example, after Kenya gained its independence from the British in 1963, the new government removed a vast amount of toponyms that were associated with its colonial past.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Lepoer, B.L., (1989), pp. 5-7.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Turnbull, C.M., (2016), p. 302.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Perono Cacciafoco, F., and Tuang, S.Q., (2017), p. 12.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Turnbull, C.M., (2016), p. 286.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Yeoh, B.S.A., (1996), p. 300.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Savage, V.R., and Yeoh, B.S.A., (2013), *passim*.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Yeoh, B.S.A., (1992), p. 313; Perono Cacciafoco, F., and Tuang, S.Q., (2017), *passim*.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Haughton, H., (1969), p. 196.

<sup>31</sup> A derogatory local term for Indians.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Edwards, N., and Keys, P., (1988), p. 406.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Takahama, V.C., (2016), *passim*.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Horsman, S., (2006), pp. 279-291.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Wanjiru, M.W., and Matsubara, K., (2016), p. 2.

For the post-colonial period of Singapore, research by Yeh<sup>36</sup> shows that, if compared to the 2,290 street names counted in the year 1962, 1,634 names remained and 656 names were removed (and/or changed) as of the year 2011. Despite having one-quarter of the toponyms removed, the Author concluded that the modification and removal of place-names were not methods for decolonisation.<sup>37</sup> The reason was the fact that Singapore toponyms still contained colonial names of every category, such as “British person”, “British environment”, and “British place name”. The keeping of place names by the Singapore Government was in contrast with the presumption that toponyms would be subjected to erasure without hesitation when managed by a new regime.<sup>38</sup>

#### **2.4. Digital archives**

The National Library Board created a platform called *Spatial Discovery* to allow users to conveniently retrieve, explore, and compare maps, with their related information, across the collections from the NAS and the NLB. The platform has over 3,000 maps with the oldest map dating back to January 1799. Among all the maps, 21 are from the pre-colonial era. More than 2500 of the maps are rendered in high resolution, which allows users to view the details of each map very clearly.

The Department of Geography at the National University of Singapore (NUS) also created a similar platform (*Historical Maps of Singapore*) that incorporates *Spatial Discovery* as well as *One Historical Map* by the Singapore Land Authority (SLA). As such, the platform by NUS allows to compare historical maps with street directory maps.

#### **2.5. Toponymy research methods**

Jan Tent<sup>39</sup> concluded that two are the main methodological approaches to conduct toponymic research. The first is intensive toponymy, which requires facts and historical information of the analysed place name. Intensive toponymy research requires the answers for “wh-questions” such as (a) who gave the place name? (b) what is the meaning of the name? (c) why is this name chosen? (d) when was the place named? (e) where does the name come from? By answering these few questions, we would possibly be able to find out the historical origins of the place name. The second approach is, conversely, extensive toponymy, which is conducted through an analysis of surrounding toponyms, datasets, maps, and gazetteers. In this broad research, distribution patterns, geographic features as well as place naming practices and style are revealed. Concerning the project, historical maps would play an essential role in giving

---

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Yeh, Y.T., (2013), p. 137.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Yeh, Y.T., (2013), p. 148.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Horsman, S., (2006), p. 279. The history of Singapore street names shows to be unique, to some extent. It is possible, nonetheless, to highlight some patterns common, with the due, expected differences, to other contexts all over the world, as it is possible to ascertain, among others, in Azaryahu, M., (1996), pp. 311-330, an article on the power of commemorative names, in Alderman, D.H., (2003), pp. 163-173, a study about streets named after Martin Luther King, and in Crețan, R., and Matthews, P.W., (2016), pp. 92-102, a research on martyr street names.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Tent, J., (2015), pp. 65-74.

interesting insights from Cartographers' work through the misspellings or possible alternative forms for various toponyms.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Data collection

A large number of maps have been collected for comparison, according to a diachronic criterion, in order to understand the evolution and development of pre-colonial toponyms. Research materials were mainly sourced from the National Archives of Singapore (NAS) and the National Library Board (NLB), to ensure validity and accuracy. Archives, including toponymic policies' records, old photographic documentation, and newspaper collections, have also been used as references.

The pre-colonial period of the Lion City could be defined as the time before Sir Stamford Raffles founded modern Singapore in 1819.<sup>40</sup> As such, maps that were drawn and published before 1819 have been used as the primary research materials. However, as there are several types of maps, only the maps that record the toponyms on the island of Singapore have been chosen. Cadastral maps and maps with only the main island place name have not been used as the variety of names given to Singapore itself during the pre-colonial period are not part of the discussion<sup>41</sup>. Maps collated are described with the indication of the Author, the year of publication, and the language used for the toponyms of the maps. This ensures that there is no discrepancy with regard to the description of the place names due to the different languages used. Modern mapping techniques began to blossom after Sir Stamford Raffles founded modern Singapore in 1819.<sup>42</sup> Maps from the colonial period allow us to discover toponymic developments and to draw comparisons starting from pre-colonial maps. By cross-referencing the names given, over years, to a location and the related passage of time, we are able to uncover the history and etymology of the toponyms. We are able also to know when the pre-colonial place names stabilize in the modern mapping era.

Publications such as *Visualizing Spaces: Maps of Singapore and the Region* (2013), *Singapore Street Names: A Study of Toponymics* (2013), and *What's in the Name? How the Streets and Villages in Singapore Got Their Names* (2018) are used as primary references as they provide literature and background for Singapore map-making and toponymy. Modern Mapping Comparison tools, such as *Spatial Discovery* by the NLB, are used to geo-reference maps over different periods to ascertain when the changes and additions occurred.

#### 3.2. Data analysis

Toponyms found in pre-colonial maps are listed in-table and discussed individually. The sample maps collated are compared side by side, to identify the diachronic developments over time. Thus, a relatively large number of maps is needed to significantly show the similarities or differences among toponyms from the pre-colonial to the modern era.

---

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Turnbull, C.M., (2016), p. 30.

<sup>41</sup> On the different names given to *Singapore* over time cf., among others, Perono Cacciafoco, F., and Gan, J.Y.C., (2020, in press), *passim*.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Mok, L.Y., (2015), p. 88.

Both methods of intensive and extensive toponymy research described by Tent<sup>43</sup> are applied in the study. Intensive toponymy research is applied to the modern toponyms to backdate the historical origins of ancient toponyms that appeared in pre-colonial maps. A linkage between the pre-colonial toponyms and their present-day references may be discovered through an intensive toponymy research. Alternatively, extensive toponymy research is applied to pre-colonial toponyms as their etymology might consist of components that cannot be found in current literature and topography. Through an extensive toponymy research, information from pre-colonial samples might reveal the origins and meanings of the ancient place names. The reconstruction of the history of the analysed place names and of their origins takes into account historical-linguistic, philological, geographical, and topographical criteria,<sup>44</sup> with a careful, exhaustive interpretation of the available documents and with a screening of the reliability of the different sources, in order to highlight possible misinterpretations of toponyms by the Cartographers. Toponymic changes, which include spelling and misspelling and semantic shift, are discussed, when applicable. The multilingual variants of toponyms are listed and analysed to account for any difference in meaning. Most importantly, a review of the toponyms is given to explain the reasons behind the survival or disappearance of the toponyms themselves, when applicable.

#### 4. ETYMOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION

Among the pre-colonial maps that are available at the NAS, the NLB, and through related sources (like books), six are chosen here as they contain toponyms attested within the island. Most of the maps in pre-colonial times only have a name for the main island as it was uncommon for mapmakers to know or to document the specific place names that were within the island, besides its general name. In regard to colonial period samples, six maps are also selected as they contain related toponyms found during the pre-colonial period. These maps include significant documents, such as the above-mentioned Captain James Franklin's 1828 map of Singapore, which was the first map that accurately captured the outline of Singapore island.

##### 4.1. Selected pre-colonial maps

The first map selected is Erédia's 1604 map of Singapore published in his above-mentioned manuscript *Declaracam de Malaca*. Erédia's works were the earliest to depict the coastal areas with recognisable place names of pre-colonial Singapore.<sup>45</sup> According to Gibson-Hill,<sup>46</sup> Erédia was knowledgeable about the south coast of Singapore island, as he gave a better and fuller picture than any other mapmaker in pre-colonial times.

---

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Tent, J., (2015), pp. 65-74.

<sup>44</sup> Cf., among others, Crețan, R., (2000), *passim*; Perono Cacciafoco, F., (2014), pp. 79-98; Perono Cacciafoco, F., Cavallaro, F., and Kratochvíl, F., (2015), pp. 29-47.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Borschberg, P., (2015), p. 18.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Gibson-Hill, C., (1954), p. 176.



**Figure 1.** Chorographic Description of the Straits of Sincapura and Sabbam, 1604 A.D. (Folio 61 R.)  
 Source: Mills, 1930: 224 (cf. Map 3)

Pre-colonial toponyms reported by Erédia are listed below in the related table along with their present-day references. Local toponyms, including *Pula Chagni* and *Pulo Siquijan* (see Map 2), which appeared in Erédia’s maps, are listed below. The supposed corresponding modern toponyms are given accordingly through the respective reference.

**Table 1.** Comparison between Erédia's place names and the current toponyms

Toponym in Erédia’s 1604 Map	Current Toponym
<i>Blacan Mati</i>	<i>Sentosa</i> (Savage and Yeoh, 2013: 339)
<i>Estreito Nouo</i>	<i>New Strait</i> (Gibson-Hill, 1954: 172)
<i>Estreito Velho</i>	<i>Old Strait</i> (Gibson-Hill, 1954: 172)
<i>Xabandaria</i>	<i>Shahbandar</i> , obsolete (Borschberg, 2004: 98)
<i>Tanion Rû</i>	<i>Tanjong Rhu</i> (Savage and Yeoh, 2013: 375)
<i>Sune bodo</i>	<i>Bedok</i> (Savage and Yeoh, 2013: 34)
<i>Tanamera</i>	<i>Tanah Merah</i> (Savage and Yeoh, 2013: 372)
<i>Tanion Ruça</i> <sup>47</sup>	Obsolete (Gibson-Hill, 1954: 172), cf. <i>Tanion Rusa</i>
<i>Tanion Rusa</i>	<i>Changi</i> (Savage and Yeoh, 2013: 70)
<i>Pulo Ular</i>	<i>Pulau Ular / Pulau Merambong</i>

<sup>47</sup> On Erédia’s map and pre-colonial place names in Singapore like *Tanion Ruça* and *Tanion Rusa* cf., among others, Cavallaro, F.P., Perono Cacciafoco, F., and Tan, Z.X., (2019), *passim*.

	(Mills, 1930: 219)
<i>Pulo Chagni</i>	<i>Pulau Tekong Besar</i> (Mills, 1930: 219)
<i>Pulo Siquijan</i>	<i>St. John Island</i> (Savage and Yeoh, 2013: 332)

The second sample is a 1654 maritime chart by André Pereira dos Reis. Like Erédia, the Portuguese Cartographer Pereira spelled place names in the style of his native language, whereby *Xebandaria* refers to a ‘harbour master’s compound’, *Bareiras Vermelhas* refers to ‘red barriers’, and *Tanjung Tahit* refers to ‘Changi Point’.<sup>48</sup> However, *Estreito Velho*, which refers to the *Old Strait of Singapore*, appears to be inland on the map even though it is a waterway.



**Figure 2.** André Pereira dos Reis’s Map (1654)

Source: Kwa, C.G., Heng, D., Borschberg, P., and Tan, T.Y., 2019: 94

The 1755 pre-colonial map published by the French hydrographer Jacques Nicolas Bellin was one of the most sophisticated and detailed maps of the region in the period of its publication. On this map, Singapore was denominated as *Pulo or Isle Panjang*, i.e. *Panjang Island, Long Island* in Malay.<sup>49</sup> The map collects several toponyms of the surrounding islands, such as *Salat Buro* and *Jean island (St. John Island)*.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Kwa, C.G., Heng, D., Borschberg, P., and Tan, T.Y., (2019), p. 94.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Kwa, C.G., Heng, D., Borschberg, P., and Tan, T.Y., (2019), p. 112.

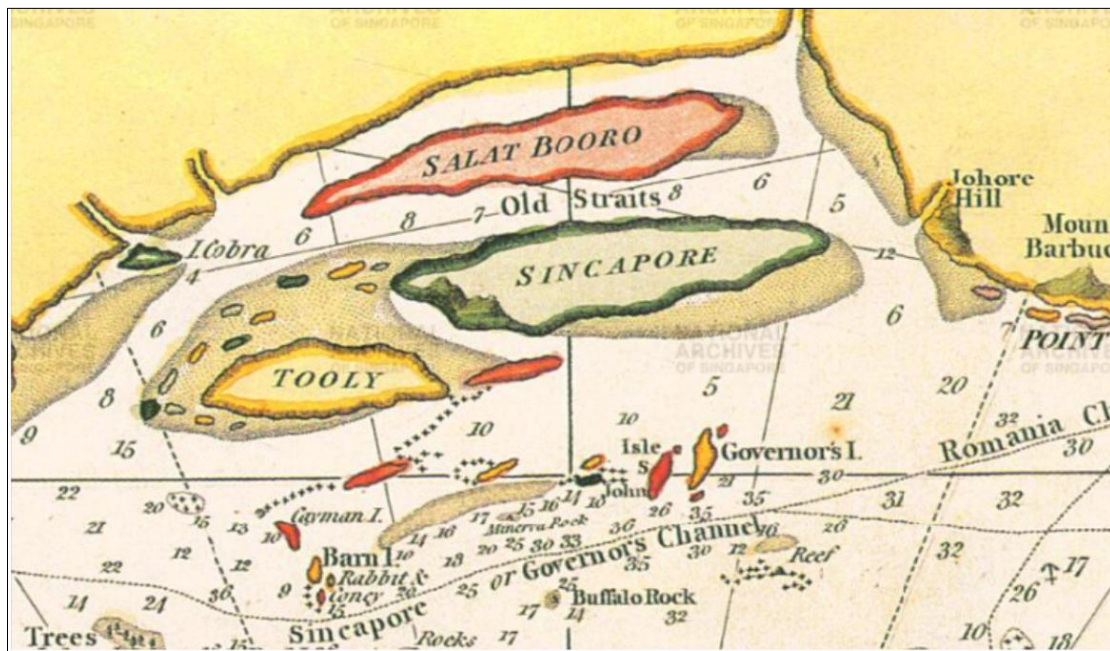


**Figure 3.** Carte réduite des détroits de Malacca, Sincapour, et du Gouverneur, dressée au dépôt des cartes et plans de la Marine (1755)

Source: Bellin, 1755 (Retrieved from the NLB)

The third map selected from the NAS was published by Laurie & Whittle, a London firm that produced maps in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The map, depicting the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, includes parts of the adjacent Sumatra and profiles of the high and low terrains. Toponyms in the map include *Salat Booro*, *Tooly*, and *Isle of John*. An island located west of the mainland was depicted as *Cobra Island*, for the first time.

Similarly to Figure 3, William Heather, who published the below chart (Figure 5) in 1803, named the Singapore island *Pulo Panjang*. In this chart, we see toponyms that are similar to the ones in Figure 4, such as *Salat Booro*, *Tooly*, and *St. John*. However, *Tooly* is within the main island and named *Tooly Point* on this map. Other place names include *Red Cliff Point* and *Goa Point*. An island located west of the mainland was depicted as *Snake Island*, and this might be a variation of the *Cobra Island* that was drawn in Figure 4.



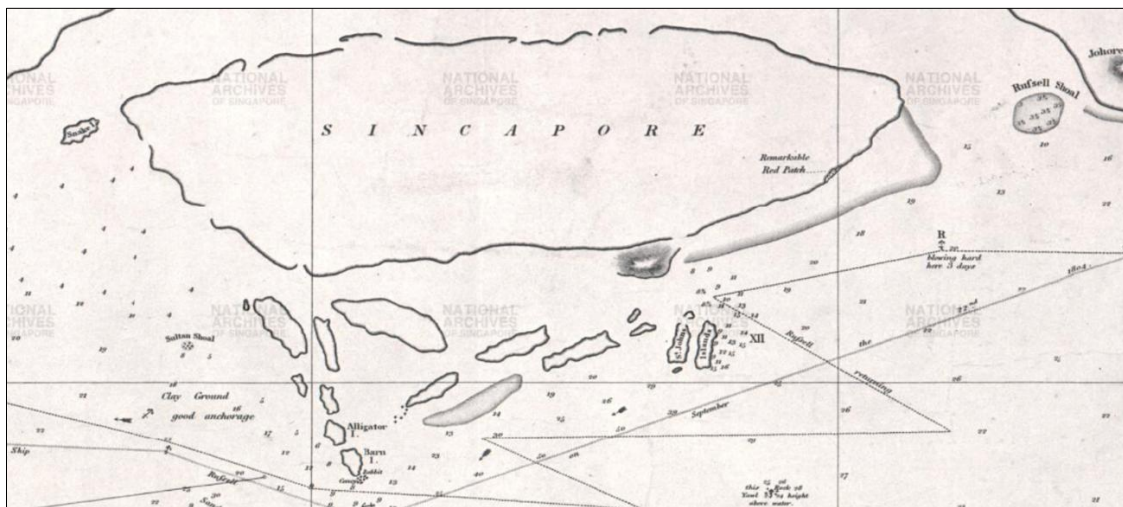
**Figure 4.** The Straits Of Singapore With Those Of Drion, Sabon, Mandol & ca and Southern Part Of Malacca Straits (1799)  
 Source: Laurie & Whittle, 1799 (Retrieved from the NAS)



**Figure 5.** New Charts of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (1803)  
 Source: William Heather (Heather & Williams), 1803 (Retrieved from the NLB)

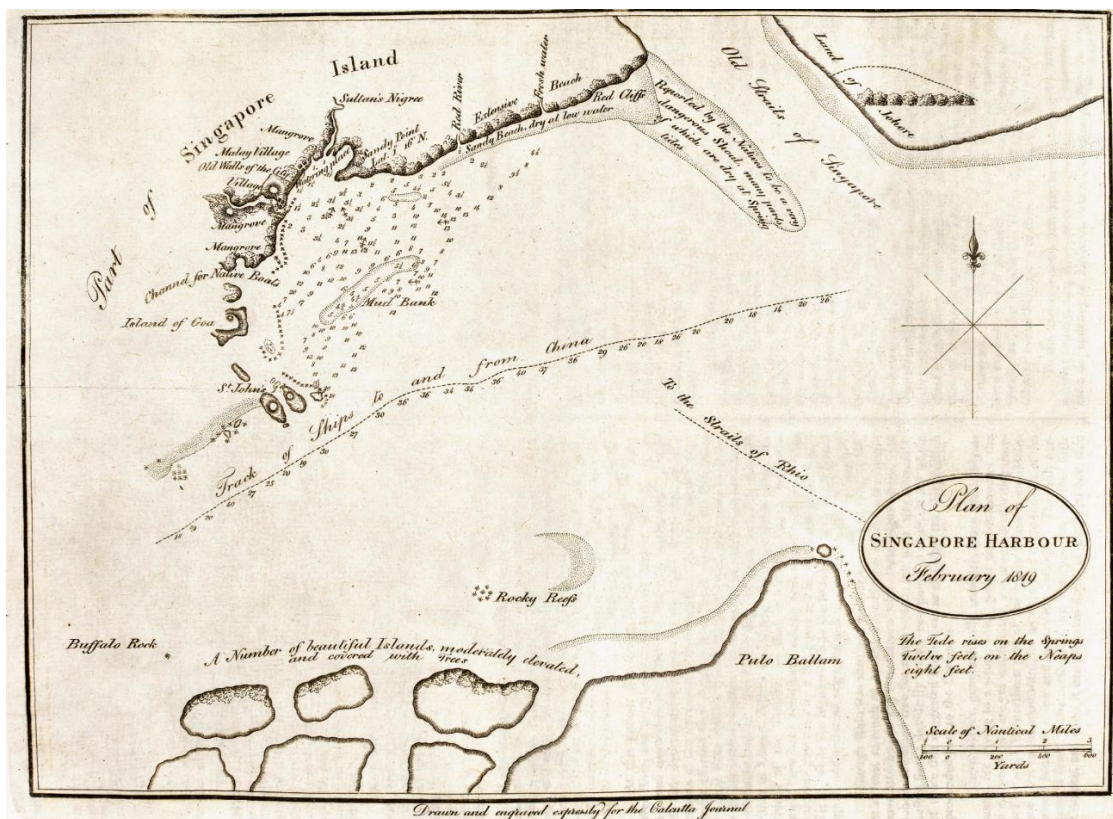
The last pre-colonial sample, also a publication by Laurie & Whittle, is significantly different from the one published in 1799. Both *Salat Booro* and *Tooly* are omitted from the map. *Isle of St. John* has also been renamed into *St. John Island(s)*, and an area at the south-eastern corner is being described as *Remarkable Red Patch*.





**Figure 6.** New Survey of the Straits of Singapore from Pulo Pesang to Bintang Hill (1807)  
 Source: Laurie & Whittle, 1807 (Retrieved from the NAS)

4.2. Selected colonial maps



**Figure 7.** Plan of Singapore Harbour, February 1819  
 Source: Calcutta Journal, 1819 (Retrieved from the NLB)

As deliberated by Sir Stamford Raffles, Captain Daniel Ross conducted a survey of the Singapore harbour and produced a related chart in February 1819. The document is attesting the first appearance of the name *Singapore* on a map or chart, since previously the island was denominated *Singapore* or *Singapoora*, with other variants.<sup>50</sup> In this chart, familiar toponyms, such as *Red Cliffs* and *St. John's Island*, are included. As Ross was most likely unfamiliar with local place names, descriptive words were used to chart the interiors of the island, such as *Malay Village*, *Mangrove*, and *Red River*. This map also depicts *Sandy Point* for the first time. Additionally, there is a small island south of the mainland depicted as *The Island of Goa*, and this draws a similarity to Figure 5, which named the southern tip of the mainland as *Goa Point*.



**Figure 8.** Plan of the island of Singapore, including the new British Settlement and adjacent Islands (1822)

Source: *Bollinger and Bollinger, 1822 (Retrieved from the NLB)*

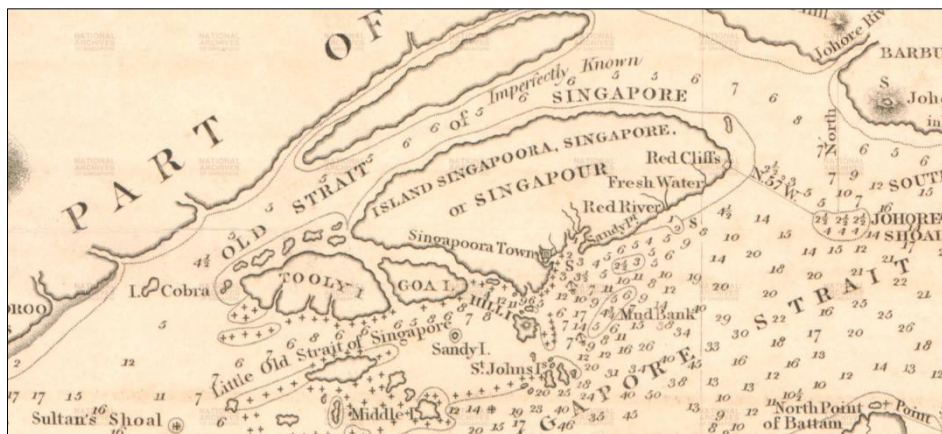
With the help of Captain Franklin, William Farquhar elaborated a survey map and published it in 1822. Several related pre-colonial toponyms could be found in similar forms on this map, which includes *Tanjong Changee* and *Red Cliffs*. Minor islands surrounding the main island were also given names such as *Pulo Obin* for the current-day *Pulau Ubin*, *Pulo Tookong* for the present-day *Pulau Tekong*, and *Pulo Panjang* for the present-day *Sentosa*. *Pulo Tookong*, however, seems to be split into *Little Pulo Tookong* and *Great Pulo Tookong*, even though the island should be one by itself and not separated into two units. *St. John's Island* was given another name, which was *Pulau Sijang*.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Mok, L.Y., (2015), p. 88.



**Figure 9.** Plan Of The British Settlement Of Singapore  
By Captain Franklin And Lieut. Jackson (1828)  
Source: Retrieved from the NLB Spatial Discovery

The map drawn by Captain James Franklin was the first document that correctly captured the outline of Singapore Island and its surrounding islands. On the map, many toponyms received spelling changes from William Farquhar’s 1822 *Survey Map*. *Small Red Cliff* is named *Sungei Badok* and *Large Red Cliff* is denominated *Bugis Campong*. For the surrounding islands, *Pulau (Pulo) Tookong* is renamed as *Pulo Takung*, *Pulau (Pulo) Obin* as *Pulo Ubin*, *St. John’s Island* as *Polu Sakijang*, and the current-day *Sentosa* is named *Balaken Mati*.



**Figure 10.** Chart Of The Islands & Channels At  
The Southwest Extremity Of The China Sea (1831)  
Source: Horsburgh, 1831 (Retrieved from the NAS)

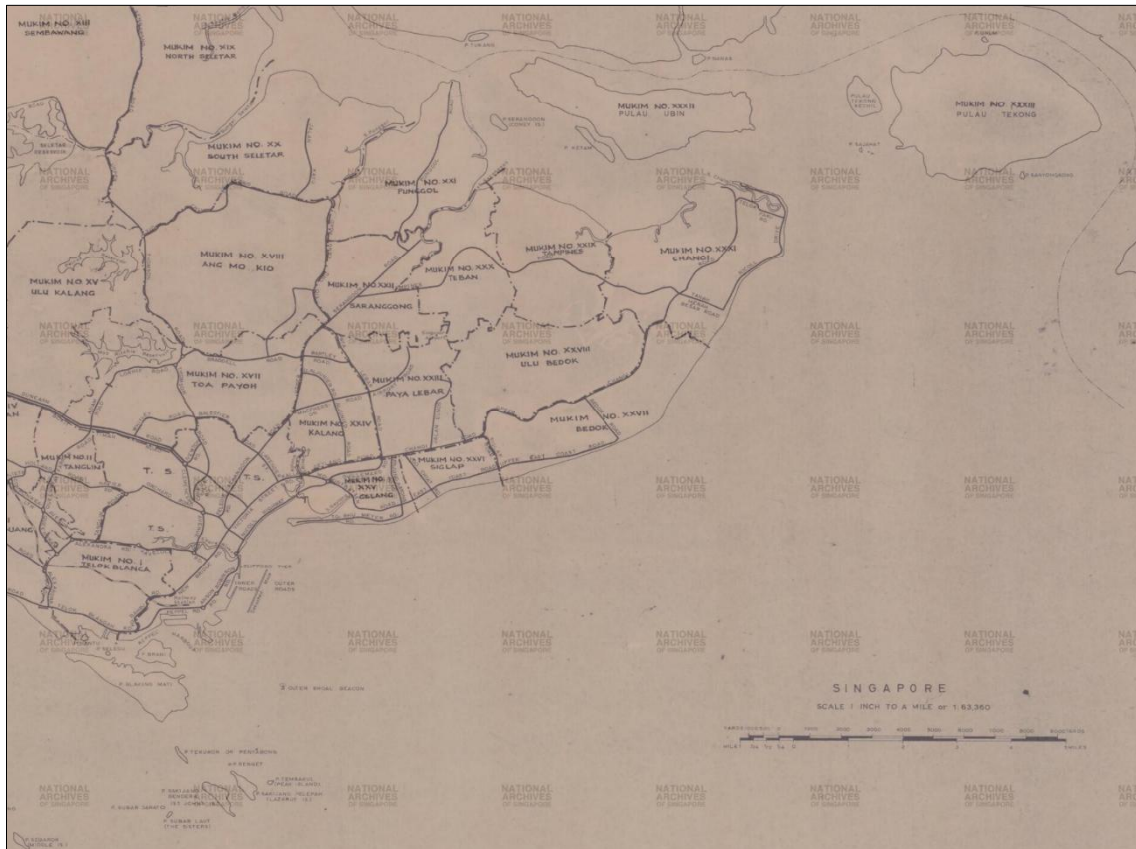
The chart was published in 1831 by James Horsburgh, a hydrographer working for East India Company. The map differs, in the geographical representation, from the earlier discussed samples. *Tooly Island* and *Goa Island* are both depicted on the western side of the mainland. Otherwise, familiar toponyms such as *St. John's Island*, *Red Cliffs*, and *Sandy Point* are included in the chart.



**Figure 11.** Map Of Singapore Island, And Its Dependencies (1852)

Source: Smith & Elders, 1970 (Retrieved from the NAS)

The 1852 map of Singapore shown above is the first known map to depict developments in the interiors of the island during the colonial period. Previous terms such as *Franklin Point*, *Large Red Cliff*, and *Small Red Cliff* became obsolete and were replaced with *Tanjong Changi*, *Tanah Merah Besar*, and *Tanah Merah Kechi*, respectively. Current-day *Tekong Island* was renamed and split into two islands, namely *Tikong Besar* and *Tikong Kechi*. Another familiar toponym in the map is *Sandy Point* or *Tanjong Ru*, depicted below the *Kallang River*.



**Figure 12.** Singapore Locality Plan - Map of Singapore Island (1960)  
 Source: Survey Department (Retrieved from the NAS)

The above map was published during the final days of the colonial period. Bolder lines indicate the different Electoral Divisions of the Legislative Assembly. The map is the first sample that contains the toponym *Bedok*, which is likely linked to Erédia's *Sunebodo*. The surrounding islands have slight spelling changes, with *Pulau Blakang Mati* (previously *Blakan Mati*), *Pulau Ubin* (previously *Pulo Ubin*), and *Pulau Tekong* (previously *Pulo Tikong*). *Sandy Point* appears to have become obsolete, in this map, and is replaced with *Tanjong Rhu Road*.

## 5. DISCUSSION

Many of the place names that Singaporeans are currently using only surfaced during the colonial period. Pre-colonial toponyms of Singapore are rarely discussed in the literature, as their etymology and origins remain unclear. Most of the pre-colonial toponyms originated from the map and interpretation of the Malay-Portuguese Cartographer Manuel Godinho de Erédia. Other pre-colonial Cartographers, such as Bellin, Laurie, Whittle, and Heather, appear to be unaware of toponyms within the mainland, as they only provided the place names for the surrounding islands.

From our selected pre-colonial maps, excluding the names of the Old and New Straits of Singapore, a total of twelve pre-colonial toponyms have been found and are collated in the comparative table below:

**Table 2.** Diachronic comparative table

	Erédia, 1604	Pereira, 1654	Bellin, 1755	Laurie & Whittle, 1799	William Heather, 1803	Laurie & Whittle, 1807	<b>Current Names</b>
1:	<i>Blacan Mati</i>						<i>Sentosa</i>
2:	<i>Xabandaria</i>	<i>Xebandaria</i>					<i>Shadbandar</i>
3:	<i>Tanion Rû</i>						<i>Tanjong Rhu</i>
4:	<i>Sunebodo</i>				<i>Red Cliffs</i>		<i>Bedok</i>
5:	<i>Tanamera</i>	<i>Bareiras Vermelhas</i>			<i>Red Cliffs Point</i>	<i>Remarkable Red Patch</i>	<i>Tanah Merah</i>
6:	<i>Tanion Rusa</i>	<i>Tanjung Tahit</i>					<i>Changi</i>
7:	<i>Pulo Chagni</i>						<i>Pulau Tekong</i>
8:	<i>Pulo Ular</i>			<i>Cobra Island</i>	<i>Snake Island</i>	<i>Snake Island</i>	<i>Pulau Merambong / Pulau Ular</i>
9:	<i>Pulo Siquijan</i>		<i>Jean Island</i>	<i>Isle of St John</i>	<i>St. John</i>	<i>St. John's Islands</i>	<i>St. John's Island</i>
10:				<i>Tooly</i>	<i>Tooly Point</i>		<i>Sentosa</i>
11:	<i>Salat Tubro</i>		<i>Salat Buro</i>	<i>Salat Booro</i>	<i>Salat Booro</i>		
12:				<i>Governor's Island</i>	<i>Goa Point</i>		<i>Kusu Island</i>

### 5.1. Possible Etymology of *Blacan Mati* - *Sentosa*

**Table 3.** From *Blacan Mati* to *Sentosa*

<b>Figure 1</b> (1604)	<b>Figure 8</b> (1822)	<b>Figure 9</b> (1828)	<b>Figure 11</b> (1852)	<b>Figure 12</b> (1960)	<b>Current- Day</b>
<i>Blacan Mati</i>	<i>Pulo Panjang</i>	<i>Balaken Mati</i>	<i>Blakan Mati</i>	<i>Pulau Blakang Mati</i>	<i>Sentosa</i>

Renamed in 1972 as *Sentosa*, the new name of the island located south of Singapore refers to ‘peace and tranquility’ in the Malay Language.<sup>51</sup> Previously, as depicted in Figure 11, the island was known as *Pulau Blakang Mati*, which means

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Savage, V.R., and Yeoh, B.S.A., (2013), p. 339.

‘Island of Death Behind’ in Malay (*Pulau* means ‘island’, *Blakang* means ‘behind’, and *Mati* means ‘dead/death’<sup>52</sup>). Variants of *Pulau Blakang Mati* can be seen in Figure 9 and Figure 10 as well, with minor spelling changes most likely due to the incompetence of European Cartographers in Malay language spelling.

There are many theories behind the inauspicious name given to the island by its inhabitants during the colonial period. Firstly, the island being a place of pirates ingenerated fear among the settlers.<sup>53</sup> Early records by Morgan<sup>54</sup> reported that piracy acts in Malayan waters were rampant throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and an interviewee commented: “at this time, no mortal dared pass through the Straits of Singapore”. Pirates often patrolled around the vicinity of *Pulau Blakang Mati*, and their victims were usually murdered or forced into slavery, thus creating an impression of death when being nearby the island. Secondly, the island was behind *Pulau Brani*, an island where warriors were buried, and hence the name ‘death behind’.<sup>55</sup> Thirdly, in the late 1840s, an outbreak of malaria obliterated many of the original Bugis settlers on the island.<sup>56</sup> The deadly epidemic gave birth to the belief that the island was cursed and, hence, a fitting name to warn people to keep away from the island was established. Lastly, the island went through a period of murderous killings and oppression during the Japanese occupation, with terrible episodes such as the Sook Ching Operation that killed over 300 individuals.<sup>57</sup>

### 5.1.1. Meaning Variation

A similar and earlier reference to *Blakang Mati* was found in Erédia, who identified the island south of Singapore as *Blacan Mati*, proving that the toponym already existed in the pre-colonial period. The origins of the name remain debatable, because the naming processes discussed above for *Pulau Blakang Mati* date back to the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. There is the option of an original meaning difference for the Malay word *mati*. In Malay, the term *mati*, ‘dead’, could also mean ‘end’. A singular Malay lexeme *jalan* refers to ‘road’, and, when combined with *mati*, the phrase *jalan mati* refers to ‘the end of a road’ or ‘road’s end’. Thus, *mati*, in the Erédia map context, might not be referring to ‘dead’, but could instead refer to the ‘end’ of the *Straits of Singapore*, also because the island is the most southern point of Singapore and of continental South-East Asia.

Despite this, as seen from Figure 1, the island that represents *Blacan Mati* appears to be small and far away from the main island, which differs from the *Sentosa* of today. Gibson-Hill<sup>58</sup> believes that Erédia’s *Blacan Mati* was instead referring to the two small islands currently known as *Sisters’ Islands*. Hence, it is unclear if 1604’s *Blacan Mati* was the actual reference of current-day *Sentosa* or if it represented just a labelling error.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Lewis, M., (2003), p. 107.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Savage, V.R., and Yeoh, B.S.A., (2013), p. 303.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Morgan, L., (1958), p. 9.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Savage, V.R., and Yeoh, B.S.A., (2013), p. 303.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Ng, M., (2017), *passim*.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Wynn, S., (2017), p. 35.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Gibson-Hill, C., (1954), p. 164.

### 5.1.2. Possible Toponymic Mistake

Other names for *Sentosa* include *Burne Beard Island* (Wilde's 1780 Map) and *Pulau Niry* (from 1690-1700).<sup>59</sup> *Sentosa* was also referred to as *Pulo Panjang* up till the 1930s, as could be seen in Figure 7. However, in Jacques Nicolas Bellin's 1755 map, as well as in William Heather's 1803 map (Figure 5), *Pulo Panjang* was also used to label the main island of Singapore. *Pulo Panjang* refers to 'long island' in Malay, where *Pulo* means 'island' and *Panjang* means 'long'. While there is a possibility that different places could have had the same name, this might also be a mislabeling mistake by European Cartographers.

### 5.1.3. Pre-Colonial Toponym Review

There were attempts by the British authorities to rename the island as well. In 1827, Captain Edward Lake of the Madras Engineers, who was tasked to fortify Singapore, suggested an alternative name of *Island of St. George* for *Pulau Blakang Mati*.<sup>60</sup> However, as the authorities believed that the island was unsuitable for inhabitation, the renaming proposal was shelved. Apart from that, the pre-colonial toponym *Blakan Mati* existed till the 1970s, even after Singapore gained independence. The survival of *Blakan Mati* might be due to the consistent usage across the different local ethnicities, as well as the lack of other toponymic variations for the island. However, *Blakan Mati* was eventually omitted and forgotten as a result of the Government intention to develop the island into a touristic resort. A naming contest ultimately gave birth to the toponym *Sentosa* in 1972. The renaming proposal for the island was believed by the public to be an attempt to rebrand and provide a new start for the island from its adverse history.<sup>61</sup>

## 5.2. *Xabandaria* - *Shahbandar*

The name *Xabandaria* first appeared in Erédia's 1604 map (Figure 1) and as *Xebandaria* in André Pereria's 1654 map (Figure 2). Rather than to a place, *Xabandaria*, spelled in the Portuguese way, was referring to *Shahbandar*, a high rank of Malay officials translatable as 'harbour master' or 'port master'.<sup>62</sup> The naming explanation was supported by Mills<sup>63</sup>, which refers to *Xabandaria* as the 'Harbour Master's Office'.<sup>64</sup> The title *Shahbandar* originated from Persian, with the meaning of 'Lord of the Haven'.<sup>65</sup>

A *Shahbandar* acted like a local governor and was responsible for implementing policies in his area of authority. The presence of a *Shahbandar* in pre-colonial Singapore was attested also in the autobiography of the Flemish merchant Jacques de Coutre. As De Coutre exited the Old Strait of Singapore, he found a settlement known

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Gibson-Hill, C., (1954), p. 182.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Gibson-Hill, C., (1954), p. 200.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Ho, A., and Chua, A., (2015), *passim*.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Kwa, C.G., Heng, D., Borschberg, P., and Tan, T.Y., (2019), p. 89.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Mills, J., (1930), p. 225.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Cavallaro, F.P., Perono Cacciafoco, F., and Tan, Z.X., (2019), p. 3.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Kwa, C.G., Heng, D., Borschberg, P., and Tan, T.Y., (2019), p. 90.



as *Shahbandaria* ('*Shahbandar's Town*'), which was populated by Malays loyal to the Johor ruler.<sup>66</sup> Another reference by Peter Borschberg<sup>67</sup> shows that De Coutre also referred to the island of Singapore as *Ysla de la Sabandaria Vieja* ('*Island of the Old Shahbandar's House*'). In both Figure 1 and Figure 2, there is insufficient evidence to determine the location of the *Shahbandar's* settlement. However, Borschberg<sup>68</sup> claims that the location of the port-master house was near the mouth of today's Singapore River. Secondly, based on Erédia's 1604 map, *Xabandaria* could likely have been located near the current-day *Tanjong Rhu*. Further research would be needed to determine an exact place for the residence of that ruler of pre-colonial Singapore.

### 5.3. *Tanion Rû - Tanjong Rhu*

**Table 4.** From *Tanion Rû* to *Tanjong Rhu*

<b>Figure 1</b> (1604)	<b>Figure 7</b> (1819)	<b>Figure 10</b> (1831)	<b>Figure 11</b> (1852)	<b>Figure 12</b> (1960)	<b>Current-Day</b>
<i>Tanion Rû</i>	<i>Sandy Point</i>	<i>Sandy Point</i>	<i>Sandy Point</i> / <i>Tanjong Ru</i>	<i>Tanjong Rhu Road</i>	<i>Tanjong Rhu</i>

#### 5.3.1. *Multilingual Variations*

The location of current-day *Tanjong Rhu* was indicated as *Sandy Point* in several colonial maps, as it can be seen from the table above. Other toponymic variations include Erédia's *Tanion Rû* that has similar phonetic features to *Tanjong Rhu*. The local Chinese named the location *Sha Tsui*, which means 'sand pit' in Cantonese.<sup>69</sup>

#### 5.3.2. *Possible Meaning of the Toponym*

In 1992, under the Great Reclamation of East Coast, 1,525 hectares of land were claimed along the south-eastern coast of the island where *Tanjong Rhu* is located.<sup>70</sup> Before the reclamation, based on Figures 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 the location of *Sandy Point / Tanjong Rhu* appears to be a protruding tip in the south-east region of the islands, surrounded by seas. The reason of the original naming process for place names such as *Tanion Rû / Tanjong Rhu* and *Sandy Point* might be due to the environmental features of the place, connected with the idea and notion of a beach. With regard to *Tanjong Rhu*, *Tanjong* is a generic element indicating location in the Malay language, used for naming areas with headland features.<sup>71</sup> According to the *Oxford Dictionary*, *headland* refers to "A narrow piece of land that projects from a coastline into the sea". The definition fits the geographical features of *Tanjong Rhu*. *Rhu*, in its

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Kwa, C.G., Heng, D., Borschberg, P., and Tan, T.Y., (2019), p. 92.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Borschberg, P., (2004), p. 95.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Borschberg, P., (2004), p. 98.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Savage, V.R., and Yeoh, B.S.A., (2013), p. 376.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Lim, T.W., (2017), *passim*.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Ng, Y., (2018), p. 8.

turn, would likely derive from *pokok rhu*, the Malay name for the *Casuarina Tree*, since these trees were commonly found growing along *Tanjong Rhu*'s and *Changi*'s areas.<sup>72</sup> As such, *Tanion Rû* / *Tanjong Rhu* was likely referring to the vast amount of *Rhu* trees in the area. *Sandy Point* was used as a reference for *Tanjong Rhu* by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century British settlers.<sup>73</sup> One of the reasons of the naming would be their unfamiliarity with Malay toponyms, and the 'normalised' thus *Sandy Point* was used instead. *Sandy Point* is a descriptive toponym, with *sandy* describing the feature of the territory and *point* indicating the geographical aspect of the pointy tip.

### 5.3.3. Pre-Colonial Toponym Review

There are several explanations behind the survival of Erédia's toponym, *Tanion Rû*, which appeared in 1604. During the pre-colonial period, the main island was inhabited by *Orang Laut*, 'sea people' in Malay. Even though the *Orang Laut* consisted of several different tribes, they shared the same Malay ethnicity.<sup>74</sup> The *Orang Laut* people were believed to have occupied the country since the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, making them the earliest settlers on the island.<sup>75</sup> In the 1840s, there were records of 450 *Orang Laut* inhabiting *Tanjong Rhu*.<sup>76</sup> According to Ng<sup>77</sup>, *Rhu* was spelled as *Ru* during the early days, as shown in a newspaper report published in 1848. As such, Malays inhabitants might have continued to name the area *Tanjong Rhu* (or with other similar variants), which led to the survival of the toponym since the pre-colonial era.

According to Haughton<sup>78</sup>, in that age, it was common to use personalised toponyms according to the speakers' native languages. Thus, other non-related variations, such as *Sandy Point* used by the British settlers, or *Sha Tsui* used by the Chinese, did not affect the survival of *Tanjong Rhu*. Most Singaporeans might not remember the other variants, such as *Sandy Point*, due to the lack of usage over time. Thus, the pre-colonial toponym, *Tanion Rû*, is kept alive by Malay language speakers and is still part of the official Singapore toponymy, as *Tanjong Rhu*, today.

### 5.4. Sunebodo - Bedok

**Table 5.** From *Sunebodo* to *Bedok*

<b>Figure 1</b> (1604)	<b>Figure 7</b> (1819)	<b>Figure 8</b> (1822)	<b>Figure 9</b> (1828)	<b>Figure 11</b> (1852)	<b>Figure 12</b> (1960)	<b>Current-Day</b>
<i>Sunebodo</i>	<i>Red River</i>	<i>1<sup>st</sup> Red Cliff</i>	<i>Sungei Badok.</i>	<i>Tanah Merah Kechi</i>	<i>Bedok</i>	<i>Bedok</i>

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Keng, H., Tan, H.T.W., and Chin, S.C., (1990), p. 222.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Kwa, C.G., Heng, D., Borschberg, P., and Tan, T.Y., (2019), p. 93.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Corfield, J.J., and Mulliner, K., (2011), p. 199.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Hwang, J., (2018), *passim*.

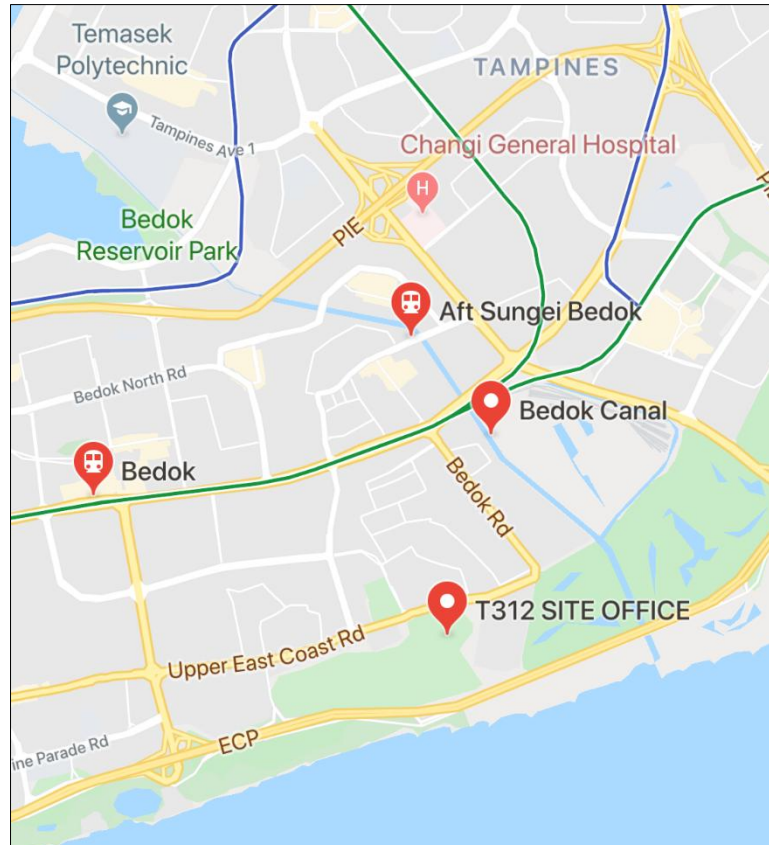
<sup>76</sup> Cf. Gibson-Hill, C., (1952), p. 163.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Ng, Y., (2018), p. 411.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. Haughton, H., (1969), p. 169.

#### 5.4.1. Possible Etymology of Bedok

A side by side analysis of the colonial maps' samples shows that the location of present-day *Bedok* had several different names assigned to it. Based on Mills<sup>79</sup>, Erédia's *Sunebodo* refers to *Sungei Bedok*, where *Sungei* is a Malay word for 'river'. This suggests the existence of a river near the south-eastern region of the island, which is further supported by *Red River*, a descriptive indication on the location of present-day *Bedok* given by Captain Daniel Ross (Figure 7).



**Figure 13.** Sungei Bedok  
Source: Google Maps (2019)

Indeed, based on *Google Maps*, a river by the name of *Sungei Bedok*, anglicized as *Bedok Canal*, could be found along the boundary between today's *Bedok* and *Tampines*. Thus, it is likely that Erédia used *Sunebodo* as a reference for the river since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. A possible explanation given by Savage and Yeoh<sup>80</sup> suggests that *Bedok* could be a reference to *biduk*, which were small fishing boats, found commonly along the coastlines. These small fishing boats were most probably owned by early inhabitants of the island, *Orang Laut*, who would have relied on them for transportation along the river and to the sea. Given that the *Orang Laut* populated the

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Mills, J., (1930), p. 225.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Savage, V.R., and Yeoh, B.S.A., (2013), p. 35.

south-eastern area of Singapore in the pre-colonial period<sup>81</sup>, the theory by Savage and Yeoh is plausible. As such, similarly to *Tanion Ru*, the *Orang Laut* may have provided, ideally, *Erédia* with the toponym *Sunebodo* in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Another meaning, given by Ng<sup>82</sup>, suggests that *Bedok* might be a reference for *bedoh*, a kind of wooden drum used in the mosques. However, the theory only surfaced during the colonial period, which thus would not have any relationship with *Sunebodo*.

#### 5.4.2. Diachronic Development

Present-day *Bedok* was likely to be part, in the past, of *Tanah Merah*, as they were both referred to as *Red Cliffs*. As it appears in Figure 5, William Heather named the entire south-eastern part of the island *Red Cliffs*. During the early years of the British colonization, *Bedok* and *Tanah Merah* were known as *1<sup>st</sup> Red Cliff* and *2<sup>nd</sup> Red Cliff*, respectively, as seen in Figure 8. Later in 1828 (Figure 9), the areas were depicted instead as *Small Red Cliff* and *Large Red Cliff*. The Malay equivalent of the name(s) was later adopted in Figure 11, showing *Tanah Merah Kechi*<sup>83</sup> and *Tanah Merah Besar*.<sup>84</sup> Eventually, towards the end of the colonial period, *Bedok* was used to name an entire legislative district as shown in Figure 12.

#### 5.4.3. Pre-Colonial Toponym Review

The pre-colonial toponym *Sunebodo* is most likely referring to the river now known as *Sungei Bedok*. Due to the continuous usage, over time, by local inhabitants, the hydronym, *Sunebodo*, was most probably retained, which gave inspiration to the authorities to name the surrounding land *Bedok*. Therefore, during the pre-colonial time, *Bedok* might only have been used to refer to the surrounding areas of the river. The present-day location of *Bedok* is thus likely to be referred to as *Red Cliffs* or similar variants, as shown by William Heather in the pre-colonial sample.

However, the red cliffs of *Bedok* were flattened when the East Coast Great Reclamation began in 1966.<sup>85</sup> The hills were leveled to obtain filling materials. The earth collected from this endeavour was then transported to the coastline and used to fill sectors of the area. With the red cliffs gone, *Bedok* likely became the only name for the area, over time. However, surrounding street names, such as *Tanah Merah Kechil Road* and *Tanah Merah Kechil Rise*, were kept commemorating the previous small red cliff(s).<sup>86</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Lim, T.W., (2017), p. 257.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Ng, Y., (2018), p. 84.

<sup>83</sup> *Kechil*, 'small' in Malay, is misspelled here as *Kechi*, literally 'Small Red Land'.

<sup>84</sup> *Besar*, 'big' in Malay

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Lim, T.W., (2017), *passim*.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Ng, Y., (2018), p. 410.

### 5.5. *Tanamera - Tanah Merah*

**Table 6.** From *Tanamera* to *Tanah Merah*

<b>Figure 1</b> (1604)	<b>Figure 2</b> (1654)	<b>Figure 6</b> (1807)	<b>Figure 7</b> (1819)	<b>Figure 11</b> (1852)	<b>Figure 12</b> (1960)	<b>Current-Day</b>
<i>Tanamera</i>	<i>Bareiras Vermelhas</i>	<i>Remarkable Red Patch</i>	<i>Red cliffs</i>	<i>Tanah Merah Besar</i>	<i>Tanah Merah Besar Road</i>	<i>Tanah Merah</i>

#### 5.5.1. *Diachronic Development*

The Malay toponym *Tanah Merah* translates to ‘Red Land’ into English. Since the pre-colonial period, the present location of *Tanah Merah* is identified consistently as a ‘red’ geographical area, for example through *Red Cliffs* in Figure 5 and *Remarkable Red Patch* in Figure 6. In Figure 2, although the exact location could not be identified, the Portuguese Cartographer Pereira included the toponym *Bareiras Vermelhas* in the mainland, which could be translated as ‘Red Barriers’ from Portuguese. An explanation behind the consistency in the meaning of the names could be due to the red-orange coloured lateritic soil found at the place.<sup>87</sup> On top of the red soil, the surrounding hills located in the area were presumably striking to travelers and were thus captured as accordingly in the early maps of Singapore.<sup>88</sup>

As explained in 5.4, *Tanah Merah* was also previously known as the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Red Cliff* (Figure 8), *Large Red Cliff* (Figure 9), and *Tanah Merah Besar* (Figure 11). After the toponym *Bedok* replaced *Tanah Merah Kechil*, the current location was only known as *Tanah Merah*, as there is no need for *Besar* to differentiate between the two original *Tanah Merah(s)*. However, street names such as *Tanah Merah Besar Lane* and *Tanah Merah Besar Road* are retained until today, witnessing the existence of the old *Tanah Merah Besar* in the colonial period.<sup>89</sup>

#### 5.5.2. *Pre-Colonial Toponym Review*

Erédia’s *Tanamera* is most likely a misspelled version of today’s *Tanah Merah*. The Malay place name was probably introduced, ideally, to Erédia by the *Orang Laut*, whose descendants kept the toponym alive for over 400 years. Based on the comparison of different sample maps, it is clear that the meaning of *Tanamera* was kept intact despite going through multilingual variations. The consistency of the meaning is the main reason that kept *Tanah Merah* alive since the colonial period. However, the geographical features of *Tanah Merah* in the earlier days might have played a part in allowing easy identification and naming of the place.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Savage, V.R., and Yeoh, B.S.A., (2013), p. 372.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Savage, V.R., and Yeoh, B.S.A., (2013), p. 372.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. Ng, Y., (2018), p. 410.

### 5.6. *Tanion Rusa - Changi*

**Table 7.** From *Tanion Rusa* to *Changi*

Figure 1 (1604)	Figure 2 (1654)	Figure 8 (1822)	Figure 9 (1828)	Figure 11 (1852)	Figure 12 (1960)	Current-Day
<i>Tanion Rusa</i>	<i>Tanjung Tahit</i>	<i>Tanjong Changee/ Franklin point</i>	<i>Tanjong Changi/ Franklin point</i>	<i>Tanjong Changi</i>	<i>Changi</i>	<i>Changi</i>

#### 5.6.1. Possible Etymology of *Tanjong Rusa*

According to Mills<sup>90</sup>, Erédia's *Tanion Rusa* refers to *Changi Point*, the location of present-day *Changi*. As mentioned previously in 5.3, *Tanion* is likely to be *Tanjong*, used for naming areas with headland features.<sup>91</sup> The present location of *Changi*, being close to the seas, fits the description of *Tanjong*. However, the reasons behind the usage of *Rusa* during pre-colonial days are not explained in any literature. *Rusa*, a Malay word for 'deer', could be referring to deers that were commonly found in Singapore in the past.<sup>92</sup>

#### 5.6.2. Possible Etymology of *Changi*

In Erédia's map, the first document reporting the toponym *Changi*, the place name appeared as *Pulo Chagni*.<sup>93</sup> However, instead of being located at the easternmost part of Singapore, where *Changi* is today, *Pulo Chagni* appears to be an island located north-west of the mainland. The island, *Pulo Changi*, was also similarly indicated in Map 5 as *Chani*, at a similar location. According to Savage and Yeo<sup>94</sup>, the toponym *Changi* came from botanical lexical items such as *Changi Ular*, a climbing shrub, *Dhengai*, a type of tree that surrounded the area in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and *Chengai*, a name of a kind of local timber.

#### 5.6.3. Diachronic Development

Due to the proximity between *Tanion Rusa* and *Pulo Chagni*, there is a possibility that inhabitants from *Pulo Chagni* migrated over to *Tanion Rusa* between 1604 and the 1800s<sup>95</sup> and named the area of *Tanion Rusa* as *Changi*, instead. During the colonial period, mapmaker Captain Franklin most probably tried to name present-day *Changi* as *Franklin Point* (Figures 8 and 9). This was a common phenomenon

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Mills, J., (1930), p. 225.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. Ng, Y., (2018), p. 8.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Goh, L.K., (2018), *passim*.

<sup>93</sup> A phonetic variation or misspelling

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Savage, V.R., and Yeoh, B.S.A., (2013), p. 70.

<sup>95</sup> Time frame from Figure 1 to Figure 8

during the colonial period, as toponymic policies by the colonisers often incorporated the names of important British figures in place names<sup>96</sup>. However, Franklin's plan did not succeed, as the toponym given after him was quickly erased, as it can be seen from Figure 11. The British toponym did not survive, because *Changi* was a more familiar and localized toponym among the inhabitants. The introduction of a new British toponym, indeed, might not have been popular and commonly used among the locals.

#### 5.6.4. Pre-Colonial Toponym Review

*Tanjung Tahit*, a toponym found in Pereira's 1654 map, was said to be also referred to *Changi Point*.<sup>97</sup> However, there is not enough literature to establish the relationship between the two toponyms. While *Tanjung* is likely connected with *Tanjong*, *Tahit* has no meaning in both Portuguese and Malay. Thus, *Tanjung Tahit* could be referring to another part of Singapore with headland features. As there were no accurate records of *Pulo Chagni* in the pre-colonial period, the toponym was likely carried over from the island to the mainland by the inhabitants. During the colonial period, without references from any pre-colonial maps, the location of present-day *Changi* was referred to as *Changi* or similar variants by the mapmakers. Thus, some more details on the pre-colonial toponym have been collected through interviews with the early inhabitants, which suggested that *Changi* was already a reference to its present location before colonial Singapore.

Based on the etymology of *Tanion Rusa* and *Changi*, both names were derived from Malay words, and thus the toponyms were used by Malay language speakers. As both toponyms do not share similar meanings, the introduction of a more popular *Changi* variant would eventually have meant the disappearance of the pre-colonial toponym, *Tanion Rusa*.

#### 5.7. Pulo Chagni - Pulau Tekong

**Table 8.** From *Pulo Chagni* to *Pulau Tekong*

Figure 5 (1577)	Figure 2 (1604)	Figure 8 (1822)	Figure 9 (1828)	Figure 11 (1852)	Figure 12 (1960)	Current-Day
<i>Chani</i>	<i>Pulo Chagni</i>	<i>Great Tookong / Litte Tookong</i>	<i>Pulo Takung</i>	<i>Tikong Besar / Tikong Kechi</i>	<i>Pulau Tekong / Tekong Kechil</i>	<i>Pulau Tekong / Tekong Kechil</i>

*Tekong*, a Malay word for 'obstacle', was given to the place due to its morphology, which, in a way, 'blocks' the mouth of the Johor River.<sup>98</sup> While the locations of *Chani*, *Pulo Chagni*, and present-day *Pulau Tekong* are geographically

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Yeoh, B.S.A., (1996), p. 300.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Kwa, C.G., Heng, D., Borschberg, P., and Tan, T.Y., (2019), p. 94.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Savage, V.R., and Yeoh, B.S.A., (2013), p. 310.

connected (north-eastern coast of the mainland), there is no explanation given by Mills<sup>99</sup> as to how *Tekong Besar* was derived from Erédia's *Pulo Chagni*. Variations of *Tekong* can be seen from the development of maps in the colonial period. As the phonological elements were similar, the variants, *Tookong*, *Takung*, and *Tikong*, are most probably due to the unfamiliarity of British mapmakers with Malay spellings.

### 5.7.1. Pre-Colonial Toponym Review

As explained in 5.6, the pre-colonial toponym *Chagni* was kept alive and retained as *Changi* due to the possible 'migration' of the toponym, 'imported' by local speakers. However, the toponym *Tekong* was not reported in any pre-colonial maps before it first appeared in 1822 as *Pulau Tookong*. According to Takahama<sup>100</sup>, the early inhabitants of *Pulau Tekong* were the *Orang Melayu* (literally 'Malay People') from *Pahang* (a part of Malaysia). The *Orang Melayu* migrated to the island before the outbreak of a civil war in their native land.<sup>101</sup> The *Pahang* refugees originally belonged to a district named *Teluk Tekong* (with similar variants) and, thus, called their new home *Pulau Tekong* for the sake of their memories. If the explanation provided by Takahama is correct, a possible timeline can be inferred for the toponyms *Tanion Rusa*, *Chagni*, and *Tekong*, like shown in Table 9.

**Table 9.** Timeline for *Tanion Rusa*, *Chagni*, and *Tekong*

<b>Prior to 1604</b>	>	<b>Between 1604- 1819</b>	>	<b>Colonial Period</b>
<i>Pulo Chagni</i> (Present-day <i>Pulau Tekong</i> )	>	<i>Pulo Chagni</i> occupied by <i>Orang Melayu</i> , renamed <b><i>Pulau Tekong</i></b>	>	<i>Pulo Chagni</i> replaced <i>Pulau Tekong</i>
<i>Tanion Rusa</i> (Present-day <i>Changi</i> )	>	<i>Tanion Rusa</i> occupied by original <i>Pulo Chagni</i> inhabitants and renamed <b><i>Tanjong Changi</i></b>	>	<i>Tanion Rusa</i> replaced with <i>Changi</i>

Thus, from this timeline, it is possible to deduce that the pre-colonial toponym, *Chagni*, was retained by the inhabitants at another location as *Changi*.

### 5.8. *Pulo Ular* - *Pulau Merambong*

**Table 10.** From *Pulo Ular* to *Pulau Merambong*

<b>Figure 1</b> (1604)	<b>Figure 4</b> (1799)	<b>Figures 5, 6</b> (1803, 1807)	<b>Figures 8, 9</b> (1822, 1828)	<b>Figure 11</b> (1852)	<b>Current-Day</b>
<i>Pulo Ular</i>	<i>Cobra Island</i>	<i>Snake Island</i>	<i>Marambong Island</i>	<i>Pulau Merambong</i>	<i>Pulau Merambong</i>

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Mills, J., (1930), p. 219.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. Takahama, V.C., (2012), *passim*.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. *Pahang Civil War Breaks Out* (Source: NLB).



### 5.8.1. Diachronic Development

*Pulau Merambong*, an island west of Singapore, was first depicted as *Pulo Ular* by Erédia. Even though the Malay toponym refers to *Snake Island*, there has been no research done to show that the island was associated with snakes. Judging from the location of *Pulo Ular* in Erédia's 1604 map,<sup>102</sup> the place is now identified as *Pulau Merambong*. The place had its name developed from *Pulo Ular* to *Snake Island* (Figures 5 and 6) to *Marambong Islands* (Figures 8 and 9) and, eventually, to *Pulau Merambong* (Figure 11). However, *Pulau Merambong* is, rather, an island from Malaysia.

### 5.8.2. Pre-Colonial Toponym Review

Due to the close proximity of *Pulau Merambong* to Singapore, the island might be easily mistaken to be part of Singapore itself. The earlier reference, *Pulo Ular*, depicted in Erédia's map, proves that the Author was indeed quite familiar with the territory and its surrounding islands in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

## 5.9. *Pulo Siquijan - St. John*

**Table 11.** From *Pulo Siquijan* to *St. John's Island*

Map 2 (1604)	Figure 4 (1799)	Figures 6, 7 (1807, 1819)	Figure 8 (1822)	Figure 9 (1828)	Figure 12 (1960)	Current- Day
<i>Pulo Siquijan</i>	<i>Isle of St. John</i>	<i>St. John's Island (SJT)</i>	<i>SJT / Pulau Sijang</i>	<i>SJT / Pulau Sakijang</i>	<i>SJT / Pulau Sakijang Bendera</i>	<i>St. John's Island</i>

### 5.9.1. Diachronic Development

Present-day *St. John's Island* has a long history showing various toponymic variants. The first account of *St. John* is believed to be *Pulo Siquijan* in Erédia's 1604 map (Map 2). The form was likely a misrepresentation of the Malay toponym, *Pulau Sakijang*, which may have been the earliest place name used by local inhabitants.<sup>103</sup> The *Orang Laut*, who occupied the territory since the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, could have established the Malay toponym, which survived till the 1960s, as could be seen from Figure 12. *Sakijang* could be broken down into *sa* and *kijang*, where *sa* is the Malay word for 'one', and *kijang* refers to a 'barking deer' or 'roe'.<sup>104</sup> However, there is no concrete evidence to prove that the island was associated with deers or roes.

Before Raffles colonised Singapore, pre-colonial European Cartography had already named the location of *St. John Island* as *Isle of St. John* and *St. John*

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Borschberg, P., (2015), p. 78.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. Ng, Y., (2018), *passim*.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Savage, V.R., and Yeoh, B.S.A., (2013), p. 332.

*Island* (Figures 4, 5, and 6). This shows clearly that *St. John* was already known and referred by foreigners dealing with Singapore during the pre-colonial period. However, these pre-colonial samples do not show the supposedly earlier toponym *Pulau Sakijang*. A possible explanation provided by Gibson-Hill<sup>105</sup> suggests that *St. John* was a corrupted English version of the Malay place name *Sa-kijang*. The Malay word *Bendera* was later added to *Pulau Sakijang*, as it can be seen in Figure 12. *Bendera*<sup>106</sup>, which is the Malay word for ‘flag’, was added to the toponym to recognize the flagstaff signpost location that was erected on the island since 1823.<sup>107</sup> Upon independence, the multilingual variants of *St. John Island* were less commonly used. Also, current-day maps do not include *Sakijang Bendera* or any of the other variants anymore.<sup>108</sup>

### 5.9.2. Cross-Language Homophones

As there are no etymological explanations of the toponym *St. John* itself, it is possible that *St. John* was a corrupted anglicised form of *Sakijang*. An phonetically ‘British’ form of *Sakijang* could be *Sin Jang*, which is more suitable for the native English language. Over time, *Sin Jang* would have become *St. John*, and this would explain the variation in Figure 8, where *St. John’s Island* is named *Pulo Sijang*.

### 5.9.3. Pre-Colonial Toponym Review

The reason for the survival of the two pre-colonial toponyms, *Pulau Sakijang* and *St. John*, is mainly due to the continuous usage by the Malay locals and British foreigners, respectively. This process is similar to the phenomenon characterizing *Tanjong Rhu*, which was kept alive due to the usage of ‘personalised’ toponyms more familiar to the different native languages. Even though the Malay toponym is not recorder anymore in current maps, many Singaporeans belonging to the older generations still remember its existence.

## 5.10. Tooly - Sentosa

In Figure 4 we can see that a separate island west of Singapore was named *Tooly* and in Figure 5 the western tip of Singapore is denominated *Tooly Point*. Some sources attest that *Tooly* was referring to *Palau Blakang Mati*, current-day *Sentosa*. According to Kwa, Heng, Borschberg, and Tan<sup>109</sup>, *Blakang Mati* was also known as ‘Nutty Island’, as nuts and coconuts grew there. The name came from *nyiu*, which is the Malay word for ‘coconut’. Variations of the toponym were then produced by early inhabitants, which resulted in names such as *Niry* and *Toly* and, eventually, *Tooly* was recorded on a pre-colonial map by James Horsburgh. According to Borschberg<sup>110</sup>, *Sentosa* was previously known as *Tooly Island*, *Island of St. George*, and *Pulau Belakang Mati*.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Gibson-Hill, C., (1954), p. 173.

<sup>106</sup> On the use of *bendera* in Singapore toponymy, cf., among others, Cavallaro, F.P., Perono Cacciafoco, F., and Tan, Z.X., (2019), p. 8.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. Ng, M., (2018), *passim*.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. *Google Maps* (2019).

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Kwa, C.G., Heng, D., Borschberg, P., and Tan, T.Y., (2019), p. 122.

<sup>110</sup> Cf. Borschberg, P., (2004), p. 98.

### 5.10.1. Pre-Colonial Toponym Review

However, it would be contradictory for *Tooly* to be *Sentosa*, due to geographical reasons. Firstly, *Tooly* appears to be located westward of the main island consistently in Figure 4, Figure 5, and Figure 10. Secondly, Gibson-Hill<sup>111</sup> commented on the fact that several Cartographers split up Singapore into separate islands, and *Tooly* was one of them. Lastly, it is a fact that the island of *Sentosa* is ubicated southward of the main island. As such, there is a possibility that *Tooly* might be referring to another location west of pre-colonial Singapore instead of to the current-day *Sentosa*. Further research would be required to determine the etymology itself of *Tooly*.

### 5.11. Salat Buro - Salat Booro

An island was first denominated in Bellin's 1755 map (Figure 3) *Salat Buro*, and it was situated north of the mainland. Subsequently, in Figures 4 and 5, a similar island was identified as *Salat Booro*, a slight toponymic variation of Bellin's version.

#### 5.11.1. Toponymic Error

Even though the location of *Salat Buro / Booro* points towards the direction of current-day *Pulau Ubin*, it is likely that *Salat Buro* was mistakenly identified as an island by Bellin.<sup>112</sup> The size of *Salat Buro / Booro* was too big to be *Pulau Ubin*, and *Pulau Ubin*'s actual location is north-east of the mainland. According to Savage and Yeoh<sup>113</sup>, *salat* is a Malay term for 'straits', describing "a narrow passage of water". Thus, *Salat Buro* might probably be referring to the *Straits of Johor* instead. This is also supported by Mills<sup>114</sup>, who identifies *Salat Tubro* (Figure 1) as the *Johor Straits*. Bellin might have misinterpreted Erédia's 1604 map and assumed that *Salat Tubro* was an island north of the mainland and named it *Salat Buro* on his map. Cartographers such as William Heather, who used Bellin's map as a reference, made thus a similar toponymic error.

### 5.12. Goa Point - Kusu Island

**Table 12.** From *Goa Point* to *Kusu Island*

<b>Figure 4</b> (1799)	<b>Figure 5</b> (1803)	<b>Figures 8, 9, 11, 12</b> (1822, 1828, 1852, 1960)	<b>Figure 10</b> (1831)	<b>Current-Day</b>
<i>Governor's Island</i>	<i>Goa Point</i>	<i>Pulau Tambakul (Tembakul) / Peak Island</i>	<i>Goa Island</i>	<i>Kusu Island</i>

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Gibson-Hill, C., (1954), p. 174.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Tan, H., (2015), *passim*.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Savage, V.R., and Yeoh, B.S.A., (2013), p. 267.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Mills, J., (1930), p. 225.

### 5.12.1. Diachronic Development

According to Savage and Yeoh<sup>115</sup>, *Kusu Island* was formerly known as *Goa Island* and then *Peak Island*. The location of present-day *Kusu Island* was first recorded in March 1616, when the Spanish Governor of the Philippines, Dom Jose De Silva, had his fleet grounded at the *Kusu Reef*. Following the incident, the island was known in the 17<sup>th</sup> century as the *Governor's Island* (Figure 4) and, later, named the *Governor's Straits* by the British.<sup>116</sup> Although the expression *straits* was commonly used to name waterways, it was reported that ships found the entrance of the *Governor's Straits* by identifying a "round islet with trees growing on it".<sup>117</sup> In 1806, the hydrographer James Horsburgh renamed the island *Goa Island*.<sup>118</sup> Although he did not produce any map in 1806, we can see from Figure 10, indeed, that Horsburgh named the island south-west of Singapore *Goa Island*. Hence, the toponym *Goa* was possibly an abbreviation for *Governor's Island*, as the pre-colonial inhabitants could not have been able to pronounce the earlier toponym correctly.

### 5.12.2. Multilingual Variants

Most of the colonial maps in the samples named the island *Pulau Tambakul / Tembakul* and *Peak Island*, but there were no possible explanations for the origins of these two toponyms. *Kusu Island*, which translates as 'turtle's island' in the Chinese Hokkien dialect, was derived from the island turtle-back shaped like features.<sup>119</sup> A possible explanation for the island earlier name might also be linked to the shape of the island as well. *Tembakul*, which is 'shoot' in Malay, like *Peak*, was probably referring to the island protruding features. The multilingual variants for *Kusu Island* during the pre-colonial period might be actual references used by the Chinese, Malays, and British inhabitants.

### 5.12.3. Toponymic and Geographical Error

Even though a number of sources point towards *Goa Island* as an earlier reference to current-day *Kusu Island*, there are discrepancies which prove otherwise. The pre-colonial toponym *Goa* made its first appearance in Figure 5, when William Heather recorded the southernmost point of the mainland as *Goa Point*. According to Heather's chart, *Goa Point* was not a separate island, but was drawn as a part of the main island. However, Heather was likely pointing to the direction of *Goa*, which was what the Cartographer also did for *Tooly Point*. Secondly, in Figure 6, Captain Daniel Ross identified the small island south of Singapore and north-west of *St. John's Island* as the *Island of Goa*. Geographically, the *Island of Goa* in Ross' map was the current-day *Sentosa*. Thus, the *Island of Goa* in Figure 7 could be a toponymic error by Ross or an earlier reference to *Sentosa*. Thirdly, in Figure 10 *Goa Island* is located south-west of the mainland, which is geographically wrong, as current-

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Savage, V.R., and Yeoh, B.S.A., (2013), p. 221.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Chia, J. M., (2009), *passim*.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Borschberg, P., (2004), p. 119.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. Chia, J.M., (2009), *passim*.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. Savage, V.R., and Yeoh, B.S.A., (2013), p. 221.

day *Kusu Island* is south of the main island instead. As such, there is a chance that *Goa Island* was a geographical error by Horsburgh. Lastly, records from the NAS and the NLB do not show any map that reports the location of current-day *Kusu Island* as *Goa* or with any other similar toponymic variants.

5.12.4. Pre-Colonial Toponym Review

The above discrepancies show an issue about the pre-colonial toponym *Goa*, questioning if the place name was previously an actual earlier reference to current-day *Kusu Island* or current-day *Sentosa* or another island located south-west of Singapore.

5.13. Other Southern Islands



Figure 5. (1803) - Detail

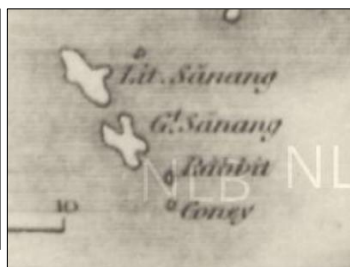


Figure 9. (1829) - Detail

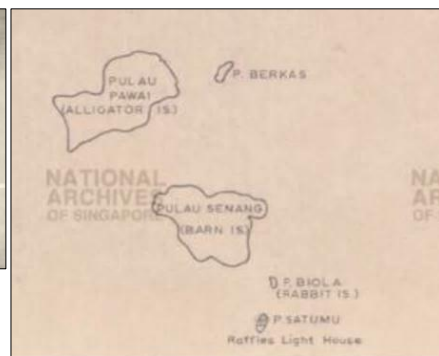


Figure 12. (1960) - Detail

Table 13. Singapore's Southern Islands

	Figure 4 (1755)	Figure 5 (1803)	Figure 6 (1807)	Figure 8 (1822)	Figure 9 (1828)	Figure 12 (1960)	Current Name
1.		<i>Alligator Island</i>	<i>Alligator Island</i>	<i>Aligator Island</i>	<i>Little Sanang</i>	<i>Pulau Pawai</i>	<i>Pulau Pawai</i>
2.		<i>Barn Island</i>	<i>Barn Island</i>	<i>Barn Island</i>	<i>Great Sanang</i>	<i>Pulau Senang</i>	<i>Pulau Senang</i>
3.	<i>Isle (Lsle) La Viole</i>	<i>Rabbit Island</i>	<i>Rabbit Island</i>	<i>Rabbit Island</i>	<i>Rabbit</i>	<i>Pulau Biola</i>	<i>Pulau Biola</i>
4.		<i>Coney Island</i>	<i>Coney Island</i>	<i>Coney Island</i>	<i>Coney</i>	<i>Pulau Satumu</i>	<i>Pulau Satumu</i>

In several of the pre-colonial samples (Figures 4, 5, and 6), the Cartographers depicted some of the southern islands from the mainland, which were *Alligator*, *Barn*, *Rabbit*, and *Coney Island*. During the colonial period, Malay names were given to these islands, which were *Pawai*, *Senang*, *Biola*, and *Satumu*, respectively. It is unclear who came up with the Malay toponyms for the islands during the colonial period, but these names remained as present-day references

to these islands. Most of these islands' toponyms do not share similarities with their pre-colonial references, except for *Pulau Biola*, where *Biola* is a Malay word for 'violin'. Thus, the present-day toponym *Pulau Biola* might have shared the same meaning with its pre-colonial reference by the name of *Isle (Lsle) La Viole* in Figure 4. The location of *Isle (Lsle) La Viole* on the map is also the approximate location of present-day *Pulau Biola*. A possible explanation for the similarity in meaning could be the shape of the island that looks like a violin.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

This paper analyses some pre-colonial toponyms of Singapore from historical maps to understand their development over time and to provide an explanation for their continuous survival or later disappearance. The place names have been reconstructed through a combination of comparative methodology and intensive and extensive toponymic approaches. A total of twelve pre-colonial place names were selected from pre-colonial maps, and ten of them date back to the celebrated Erédia's map. Interestingly, Erédia was able to correctly identify the locations of present-day toponyms, such as *Tanah Merah*, which is located between *Changi* and *Sungei Bedok*. This shows that the Cartographer was quite familiar with the place-naming trends of Singapore in the pre-colonial period.

Among the twelve pre-colonial analysed toponyms, seven of them survived with slight variants, and they are *Blacan Mati*, *Tanion Ru* (today's *Tanjong Rhu*), *Sunebodo* (today's *Sungei Bedok*), *Tanamera* (today's *Tanah Merah*), *Pulo Chagni*, *Pulo Ular*, and *Pulo Siquijian / St. John*. However, *Blacan Mati* only survived in the post-colonial period, for a quite short time, until 1972. *Pulo Ular* resisted, but it is, instead, a Malaysia toponym. Despite the British influence, these place names survived since the pre-colonial period due to the constant usage by early local inhabitants. The five toponyms that were, over time, forgotten are *Xabandaria*, *Tanion Rusa*, *Tooly*, *Salat Tubro*, and *Goa*. *Xabandaria* was mistakenly identified as a place name, while *Changi* replaced *Tanion Rusa*. *Tooly*, *Salat Tubro*, and *Goa* did not have an accurate location to reference to and were thus, forgotten. Through the reconstruction and analysis of pre-colonial toponyms, this paper tries to shed some light on the history of ancient place names in Singapore that were continuously used by local inhabitants or that contained a tangible meaning connected with their landscape that allowed them to survive over time, even under the influence of toponymic policy changes or multilingual toponymic variations.

Despite being able to provide a punctual outline of the diachronic development of pre-colonial toponyms and to explain the reasons for their survival and disappearance, the main limitation of our article lies in the reconstruction process, by pre-colonial Cartographers, of the origins and variants of the toponyms under examination, which often are unclear and derive from misinterpretations. Nonetheless, such research has provided insights into place naming trends in the pre-colonial period of Singapore and a survey of the few attested place names of the territory before the arrival of the British. Further research on the origins of pre-colonial Singapore and its ancient place names would be necessary in order to analyse more in-depth toponymic layers that have been lost over time, through changes in populations and settlement dynamics.

The current results, moreover, give the idea of a sort of ‘watershed’ between pre-colonial Singapore and colonial Singapore in the context of the local toponymy. The place names we have to deal with derive, generally, from colonial documents, with an unavoidable interpretation given by ‘Western’ Cartographers. The philological operation required to try to recover the original pre-colonial toponyms of Singapore has, therefore, always to take into account this diachronic onomastic layer often producing linguistic misunderstandings and phonetic mistakes in the transcriptions. That said, the Cartography of old Singapore in the colonial context is an indispensable instrument to assess the evenemential dynamics in the area between pre-colonial and colonial times and to preserve a heritage of toponyms that, otherwise, would be lost, at least in their older attestations. After all, ancient maps always speak their unspoken language.

## 7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank very much the National Archives of Singapore (NAS) and the National Library Board (NLB) of Singapore. The two authors share the authorship of the article in equal parts.

## REFERENCES

- Alderman, D.H.**, (2003), Street Names and the Scaling of Memory: The Politics of Commemorating Martin Luther King, Jr Within the African American Community, *Area*, vol. 35, nr. 2, pp. 163-173, doi: 10.1111/1475-4762.00250.
- Azaryahu, M.**, (1996), The Power of Commemorative Street Names, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 14, nr. 3, pp. 311-330, doi: 10.1068/d140311.
- Bellin, J.N.**, (1755), *Carte réduite des détroits de Malaca, Sincapour, et du Gouverneur, dressée au dépost des cartes et plans de la Marine*, retrieved on November 7, 2019, from [http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/printheritage/detail/3a948b6a-2865-4753-b621-d9518339f9c1.aspx?s=Jacques Nicolas](http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/printheritage/detail/3a948b6a-2865-4753-b621-d9518339f9c1.aspx?s=Jacques%20Nicolas).
- Bollinger, W., and Bollinger, J.**, (1822), *Plan of the Island of Singapore, Including the New British Settlement and Adjacent Islands*, retrieved on October 26, 2019, from <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/printheritage/detailmap/e60e3d92-2da5-4d6d-a02e-44da321e6684.aspx>.
- Borschberg, P.**, (2004), *Iberians in the Singapore-Melaka Area and Adjacent Regions: (16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> Century)*, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz.
- Borschberg, P.**, (2010), *The Singapore and Melaka Straits: Violence, Security, and Diplomacy in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century*, Singapore, NUS Press.
- Borschberg, P.**, (2015), *Jacques de Coutre’s Singapore and Johor: 1594 - c. 1625*, Singapore, NUS-Press.
- Borschberg, P.**, (2017), Singapore and Its Straits, c.1500-1800. *Indonesia and the Malay World*, vol. 45, nr. 133, pp. 373-390, doi: 10.1080/13639811.2017.1340493.
- Cavallaro, F.P., Perono Cacciafoco, F., and Tan, Z.X.**, (2019), Sequent Occupance and Toponymy in Singapore: The Diachronic and Synchronic Development of Urban Place Names, *Urban Science*, vol. 3(3), nr. 98 (Special Issue “Urban Place Names: Political, Economic, and Cultural Dimensions”), pp. 1-18.
- Chia, J.M.**, (2009, December), Managing the Tortoise Island: Tua Pek Kong Temple, Pilgrimage, and Social Change in Pulau Kusu, 1965-2007, *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 11, nr. 2, pp. 72-95.

- Corfield, J.J., and Mulliner, K.**, (2011), *Historical Dictionary of Singapore*, Lanham (MD), The Scarecrow Press.
- Crețan, R.**, (2000), *Toponimie geografică [Geographical Toponymy]*, Timișoara, Editura Mirton.
- Crețan, R., and Matthews, P.H.**, (2016), Popular Responses to City-Text Changes: Street Naming and the Politics of Practicality in a Post-Socialist Martyr City, *Area*, vol. 48, nr. 1, pp. 92-102, doi: 10.1111/area.12241.
- Edwards, N., and Keys, P.**, (1988), *Singapore: A Guide to Buildings, Streets, Places*, Singapore, Times Books International.
- Gibson-Hill, C.**, (1952), The Orang Laut of the Singapore River and the Sampan Panjang, *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 25, nr. 1 (158), pp. 161-174.
- Gibson-Hill, C.**, (1954), Singapore: Notes on the History of the Old Strait, 1580-1850, *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 27, nr. 1 (165), pp. 163-214.
- Goh, L.K.**, (2018), When Tigers Used to Roam: Nature and Environment in Singapore, *Biblioasia*, vol. 13, nr. 4, pp. 46-53.
- Haughton, H.**, (1969), Native Names of Streets in Singapore, *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 42, nr. 1 (215), pp. 196-207.
- Historical Maps of Singapore**, (n.d.), retrieved on November 15, 2019, from <https://libmaps.nus.edu.sg/>.
- Ho, A., and Chua, A.**, (2015, March 23), *Sentosa*, retrieved on November 3, 2019, from [http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP\\_247\\_2005-01-20.html](http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_247_2005-01-20.html).
- Horsburgh, J.**, (1831), *Chart Of The Islands And Channels At The Southwest Extremity Of The China Sea*, retrieved on November 4, 2019, from [http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/maps\\_building\\_plans/record-details/f9007241-115c-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad](http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/maps_building_plans/record-details/f9007241-115c-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad).
- Horsman, S.**, (2006), The Politics of Toponyms in the Pamir Mountains, *Area*, vol. 38, nr. 3, pp. 279-291, doi: 10.1111/j.1475-4762.2006.00697.x.
- Hwang, J.**, (2018), *Orang Laut*, retrieved on November 5, 2019, from [http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP\\_551\\_2005-01-09.html](http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_551_2005-01-09.html).
- Kallasmaa, M.**, (2000), Place, Names, and Place Names, *Place and Location, Estonian Academy of Arts Proceedings*, vol. 8, pp. 120-128.
- Keng, H., Tan, H.T.W., and Chin, S.C.**, (1990), *The Concise Flora of Singapore: Gymnosperms and Dicotyledons*, Kent Ridge (Singapore), Singapore University Press.
- Khoo, K.**, (2015), Map Collection of The National Archives of Singapore, in *Visualising Space: Maps of Singapore and the Region - Collections from the National Archives and National Library of Singapore*, Singapore, National Library Board, pp. 118-142.
- Kwa, C.G., Heng, D., Borschberg, P., and Tan, T.Y.**, (2019), *Seven Hundred Years: A History of Singapore*, Singapore, National Library Board.
- Laurie & Whittle**, (1799, January 1), *The Straits of Singapore With Those Of Drion, Sabon, Mandol & ca and Southern Part Of Malacca Straits*, retrieved on October 26, 2019, from [http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/maps\\_building\\_plans/record-details/fb453a18-115c-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad](http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/maps_building_plans/record-details/fb453a18-115c-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad).
- Laurie & Whittle**, (1807, July 26), *New Survey of the Straits of Singapore from Pulo Pesang to Bintang Hill*, retrieved on October 26, 2019, from [http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/maps\\_building\\_plans/record-details/fa93c806-115c-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad](http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/maps_building_plans/record-details/fa93c806-115c-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad).
- Lepoer, B.L.**, (1989), *Singapore: A Country Study*, Washington, D.C., Library of Congress.
- Lewis, M.**, (2003), *The Rough Guide to Singapore*, New York, Rough Guides.
- Lim, T.S.**, (2017, April 4), *Land From Sand: Singapore's Reclamation Story*, retrieved on November 5, 2019, from <http://www.nlb.gov.sg/biblioasia/2017/04/04/land-from-sand-singapores-reclamation-story/#easy-footnote-bottom-32-6013>.



- Lim, T.W.**, (2017), *Cultural Heritage and Peripheral Spaces in Singapore*, Basingstoke (UK), Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mahmud, A.H.**, (2019, July 9), *In the Age of Online Maps, Who Needs Street Directories Anymore?*, retrieved on November 5, 2019, from <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/online-maps-street-directories-mighty-minds-history-11601258>.
- Map Of Singapore**, (1607), retrieved on November 4, 2019, from [http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/maps\\_building\\_plans/record-details/94c7a838-a0be-11e6-9af5-0050568939ad](http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/maps_building_plans/record-details/94c7a838-a0be-11e6-9af5-0050568939ad).
- Miksic, J.**, (2013), *Singapore and the Silk Road of the Sea: 1300-1800*, Singapore, NUS Press.
- Mills, J.**, (1930), Erédia's Description of Malaca, Meridional India, and Cathay, *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 8, nr. 1 (109), pp. 1-288.
- Mok, L.Y.**, (2015), Mapping Singapore: 1819-2014, in *Visualising Space: Maps of Singapore and the Region - Collections from the National Archives and National Library of Singapore*, Singapore, National Library Board, pp. 86-117.
- Morgan, L.**, (1958, September 13), Century of Piracy in Malayan Waters, *The Straits Times*, p. 9.
- Ng, M.**, (2017, April 6), Through Time and Tide: A Survey of Singapore's Reefs, *Biblioasia*, retrieved on November 2, 2019, from <http://www.nlb.gov.sg/biblioasia/2017/04/06/through-time-and-tide-a-survey-of-singapores-reefs/#easy-footnote-2-6015>.
- Ng, M.**, (2018, April 20), St John's Island: From Gateway to Getaway, *Biblioasia*, retrieved from <http://www.nlb.gov.sg/biblioasia/2018/04/20/st-johns-island-from-gateway-to-getaway/>.
- Ng, Y.**, (2018), *What's in the Name? How the Streets and Villages in Singapore Got Their Names*, Singapore, World Scientific Publishing Co. Pte Ltd.
- Pahang Civil War Breaks Out**, (2014), retrieved on November 11, 2019, from <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/history/events/e0ab6637-5e31-4d23-8617-d2dacb1aa842>.
- Periasamy, M.**, (2015), The Rare Maps Collection of The National Library, in *Visualising Space: Maps of Singapore and the Region - Collections from the National Archives and National Library of Singapore*, Singapore, National Library Board, pp. 34-85.
- Perono Cacciafoco, F.**, (2014), Beyond Etymology: Historical Reconstruction and Diachronic Toponomastics through the Lens of a New Convergence Theory, *Acta Linguistica: Journal for Theoretical Linguistics*, vol. 8, nr. 3, pp. 79-98.
- Perono Cacciafoco, F., Cavallaro, F., and Kratochvíl, F.**, (2015), Diachronic Toponomastics and Language Reconstruction in South-East Asia According to an Experimental Convergent Methodology: Abui as a Case-Study, *Review of Historical Geography and Toponomastics*, vol. 10, nr. 19-20, pp. 29-47.
- Perono Cacciafoco, F., and Tuang, S.Q.**, (2018), Voices from the Streets: Trends in Naming Practices of Singapore Odonymy, *Review of Historical Geography and Toponomastics*, vol. 13, nr. 25-26, pp. 9-30.
- Perono Cacciafoco, F., and Gan, J.Y.C.**, (2020, in press), Naming Singapore: A Historical Survey of the Naming and Re-Naming Process of the Lion City, *Annals of the University of Craiova: Series Philology, Linguistics / Analele Universității Din Craiova: Seria Științe Filologice, Linguistică*, vol. 42, nr. 1 / 2, in press.
- Pinto, P.J. de S.**, (2012), *The Portuguese and the Straits of Melaka, 1575-1619: Power, Trade, and Diplomacy*, Singapore, NUS Press.
- Poenaru-Girigan, O.M.**, (2013), The Relationship between Toponymy and Linguistics, *Anadiss*, vol. 1, nr. 15, pp. 154-166.
- Savage, V.R., and Yeoh, B.S.A.**, (2013), *Singapore Street Names: A Study of Toponymics*, Singapore, Marshall Cavendish Editions.

- Singapore Locality Plan (Map of Singapore Island)**, (1960), retrieved on October 31, 2019, from [http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/maps\\_building\\_plans/record-details/f8ad3ea9-115c-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad](http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/maps_building_plans/record-details/f8ad3ea9-115c-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad).
- Singapore's Kallang Planning Area**, (n.d.), retrieved on November 5, 2019, from <https://keylocation.sg/singapore/planning-areas/kallang>.
- Smith & Elders**, (1970, January 1), *Map Of Singapore Island, And Its Dependencies, 1852*, retrieved on October 27, 2019, from [http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/maps\\_building\\_plans/record-details/fb830a64-115c-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad](http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/maps_building_plans/record-details/fb830a64-115c-11e3-83d5-0050568939ad).
- Spatial Discovery**, (n.d.), retrieved on November 15, 2019, from <http://search.nlb.gov.sg/spatialdiscovery/>.
- Takahama, V.C.**, (2012), *Pulau Tekong*, retrieved on November 11, 2019, from [https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP\\_241\\_2005-01-20.html](https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_241_2005-01-20.html).
- Takahama, V.C.**, (2016), *Bukit Merah*, retrieved on November 15, 2019, from [http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP\\_779\\_2005-01-26.html](http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_779_2005-01-26.html).
- Tan, H.**, (2015), Geo-Graphic: Celebrating Maps and their Stories, *MuseSG*, vol. 8, nr. 1, pp. 50-51.
- Tent, J.**, (2015), Approaches to Research in Toponymy, *Names: A Journal of Onomastics*, vol. 63, nr. 2, pp. 65-74, doi: 10.1179/0027773814z.000000000103.
- Turnbull, C.M.**, (2016), *A History of Modern Singapore: 1819-2005*, Singapore, NUS Press.
- Wanjiru, M.W., and Matsubara, K.**, (2016), Street Toponymy and the Decolonisation of the Urban Landscape in Post-Colonial Nairobi, *Journal of Cultural Geography*, vol. 34, nr. 1, pp. 1-23, doi: 10.1080/08873631.2016.1203518.
- William, H.**, (1803), *A New Chart of the Straits of Malacca and Sincapore drawn from the latest surveys, with additions and improvements*, retrieved on October 26, 2019, from <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/printheritage/detail/45bb9cfd-a154-4c3a-aaa0-58becb1930ea.aspx>.
- Wynn, S.**, (2017), *The Surrender of Singapore: Three Years of Hell, 1942-45*, Barnsley (South Yorkshire), Pen & Sword Military, an imprint of Pen & Sword Books Ltd.
- Yeh, Y.T.**, (2013), 'Erased Place Names' and Nation-Building: A Case Study of Singaporean Toponyms, *Asia-Pacific Research Forum*, nr. 59, pp. 119-155.
- Yeoh, B.S.A.**, (1992), Street Names in Colonial Singapore, *Geographical Review*, vol. 82, nr. 3, pp. 313-322.
- Yeoh, B.S.A.**, (1996), Street-Naming and Nation-Building: Toponymic Inscriptions of Nationhood in Singapore, *Area*, vol. 28, nr. 3, pp. 298-307.
-