

IN SITU TESTIMONIES: THE WITNESS OF WHETSTONES AND SEMAI ORANG ASLI TOPONYMS TO THE RAWA MALAY SLAVE RAIDS

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With 2 figures and 1 appendix

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Summary: This paper recounts toponyms and whetstones memorializing a specific episode in the history of the indigenous Semai Orang Asli of Peninsular Malaysia, namely the Prak Sangkiil or Rawa Malay slave raids. The pillage of Orang Asli settlements for the purpose of acquiring slaves remains unacknowledged in official versions of Malaysian history. Although it was the Semai ancestors who were directly victimized, the Prak Sangkiil lives on in contemporary Semai imagination as a frame of reference for current struggles. As markers of indigenous historical memory, sites, names and narratives testify to the Prak Sangkiil and other acts of violence perpetrated against the Orang Asli. The paper concludes with the idea that the validation of indigenous oral histories is necessary for the creation of more inclusive and just representations of national pasts as well as for growing understanding and reconciliation between non-indigenous and indigenous peoples.

Zusammenfassung: Der vorliegende Beitrag beschäftigt sich mit Ortsnamen und Wetzsteinen, die an eine besondere Episode in der Geschichte der indigenen Semai Orang Asli auf der malaysischen Halbinsel erinnern, nämlich den Prak Sangkiil bzw. die Sklavenraubzüge der Rawa Malaien. Die Plünderung von Orang Asli Siedlungen mit dem Ziel der Sklavengewinnung bleibt in der offiziellen malaysischen Geschichtsschreibung bisher weitgehend unberücksichtigt. Wenngleich die Semai Vorfahren die Opfer der Ereignisse waren, nimmt der Prak Sangkiil in der Vorstellungswelt der der heutigen Semai einen hohen Stellenwert ein und bildet ein wichtiges identitätsstiftendes Element im Kontext gegenwärtiger Konflikte. Orte, Namen und Erzählungen bilden Ankerpunkte dieser indigenen geschichtlichen Erinnerung und zeugen von dem Prak Sangkiil und anderen Gewaltakten gegen die Orang Asli. In der Schlussfolgerung wirbt der Beitrag für eine Validierung und Aufarbeitung der indigenen geschichtlichen Überlieferungen als notwendigen Beitrag einer umfassenderen Geschichtsschreibung, die über die reine Nationalgeschichtsschreibung hinausgeht und einen Beitrag für wachsendes Verständnis und Aussöhnung zwischen indigenen und nicht-indigenen Bevölkerungsteilen leisten kann.

Keywords: Ethnogeography, indigenous, Malaysia, oral tradition, Orang Asli, place-names, slavery

Place-names are a regular part of aboriginal oral narratives because places are a witness to both the story's veracity and the teller's memory
(MEYER HO'OMANAWANUI 1999, 163)

1 Introduction

In his novel, *Perang Sangkiil*, AKIYA MAHAT CHINA (2007) relates a historical event that is absent from the annals of Malaysian history. The story, set in 1874¹⁾, follows the lives of Semai Orang Asli living

in the jungle fastness of Cangkat Rimau. The village is in a state of turmoil over the dreaded *sangkiil*, the 'foreign Malay' slavers making inroads into the interior to capture women and children. News of attacks on neighbouring villages makes remaining in their territory impossible, yet the Cangkat Rimau villagers vacillate between fleeing and staying put. As they linger, they come to the realization of the powerful hold that trade goods have over their lives, particularly the versatile condiment salt. Alas, trade has paved the way for outsiders to infiltrate the forest and even long-time trading allies such as, Leman, the local Malay middleman is suspect of colluding with the *sangkiil* to sell the villagers into slavery.

¹⁾ British presence was already established in the Malay Peninsula by then, with the annexation of the Straits settlements of Penang, Malacca and Singapore in 1826. From these settlements, the British controlled other parts of the peninsula through instituting protectorates over the Malay sultanates. Although the British parliament imposed a ban

on the trade of slaves in 1807 (COUILLARD 1984), it took a little more than a century, by approximately 1915, for slavery and debt-slavery to be officially abolished in all states of the Malay Peninsula (ENIDICOTT 1983).

AKIYA's narration of the Prak Sangkiil or Prak Rawéy specifically relates the experiences of Erong Semai whose ancestral lands border the Bernam river, in present-day Gunung Besout Forest Reserve (see Fig. 1). 'Prak Sangkiil' is an intriguing term; consisting of Malay loanwords, it makes evident the non-violent character of Semai who have no equivalents in their own language for 'fighting, rowing or warring'. *Prak* (*perang*) means 'war', while *sangkiil* (*sangkil*) conveys 'hitting the target', suggesting that the attacks took the form of sorties.²⁾ The alternate name *rawéy* is the Semai pronunciation of 'Rawa', the name of an Austronesian people of Central Sumatra infamous as slavers to all Orang Asli (BAH PAGAAR, interview, 29.3.2012). Although a work of fiction, the novel contains a number of factual references. Cangkat Rimau, for instance, is an actual village and the birthplace of the author. The headman Dirik, a Temuan Orang Asli escapee from slave raids occurring further south of the Malay Peninsula, is an ancestor of the author's. The book was written to re-live the Prak Sangkiil period from the perspective of those who experienced it first-hand; to achieve this, it was necessary to revivify ancestral narratives recounting the raids and chart old forest settlements still in communal remembrance but as yet, unmapped (AKIYA, pers. comm., 19.9.2014).

Even as *Perang Sangkiil* captures the portent of slave raiding in a remote forest community, Semai oral histories from elsewhere in Perak contain similarly themed accounts—the unpredictability of Semai–Malay relations, the flight of Semai to hinterland areas to escape the violence of the raids, and the wariness with which Semai regard non-indigenous peoples and places outside the forest. These themes surface in the works of ROBERT DENTAN the first anthropologist to have completed a sustained period of ethnography with the Semai. For generations, the Rawa raids have struck dread in this community and contact with non-Semai negotiated with much caution or eschewed altogether. DENTAN was particularly interested in what he observed to be a pervasive peaceability in Semai communities. This prompted him to study the Semai taboo complex, which he understood as a set of proscribed

behaviours simultaneously rooted in and a medium for non-violence (or more accurately the avoidance of violence). However, a series of violent incidents in Semai villages in the 1990s called for a reassessment of Semai non-violence in the context of extreme, unrelenting cases of hostility meted out against them by outsiders (see DENTAN 2008). This involved a look back in time, to the Prak Sangkiil period and the impacts of slave raiding in War (Woh river) Semai customary territory. This paper highlights the significance of geography to Semai, a culture dependent on oral narratives and place-names to remember past events such as the Rawa raids. In so doing, it resumes DENTAN's (1999) argument that geography is an important source of history for Semai.

2 Semai: a people of the forest

Semai are a Central Aslian speaking people who inhabit the interior forest and forest-fringe areas of the states of Perak, Pahang and Selangor in Peninsular Malaysia (Fig. 1). Their language is Austroasiatic, related to languages spoken by certain hill tribes of mainland Southeast Asia. Indeed, it differs drastically from the Austronesian Malay language, the official language of Malaysia and Indonesia. Semai are frequently called 'Orang Asli' (Malay for 'original people'), although the term's usage extends to other autochthonous peoples of Peninsular Malaysia. Each group is distinct in terms of language and culture, with Semai being the most populous group at 44,000 people. Though less than one percent of the population, Orang Asli are the de facto indigenous people of Peninsular Malaysia—they are culturally as well as ideologically distinct from Malays, who are Malaysia's dominant ethnic group. It is held that Malays arrived on the peninsula some 500 to 1,000 years after the area had already been inhabited by Orang Asli groups (ANDAYA 2002). Archaeological evidence indicates that Orang Asli were involved, as producers of aloes, rattan and tree bark, in 'a very ancient tradition of exchange with the outside world', prior to Orang Asli–Malay contact c. 1000 BC (*ibid.*, 29, 43).

A language viability assessment carried out on a number of Malaysian indigenous languages indicates that Semai is still widely spoken across all age cohorts (SMITH 2003). This is noteworthy despite the growing use of Malay among younger people. Linguistic resilience seems to correspond to the fact that most Semai still make their homes in for-

²⁾ A reviewer of this article is gratefully acknowledged for supplying this definition of *sangkil*. Nonetheless, other interpretations remain; Bah Tony, a key informant, remarks that Temuan Orang Asli believe the word to be a corruption of Sebir, the place where their ancestors fought the Rawa. DENTAN's (1999, 422) comments on *sangkil* are also worthy of note.



Fig. 1: Peninsular Malaysia, showing study area and other localities quoted in text

est environments and engage in the forest-based livelihoods of agroforestry, hunting, gathering and fishing. As the locus of livelihood practices, memory and morality, the forest exerts authority over every facet of Semai life and moulds social interactions with the world at large (HEIKKILÄ 2014). The influence of the forest on the Semai psyche can be

observed in the names of places. Referring inter alia to topography, subsistence information, taboos, historic events, and ancestral personalities, toponyms cache information relating to the recent and distant past. For instance, names referring to the spirit world and recounting the genesis of landforms and places in the forest are believed to have been coined

by Ngkuuq (the thunder deity of shamanism) and tigers (Ngkuuq's spirit familiar emblems). Other toponyms, such as those with direct appeal to the senses, exemplify an accommodation of the forest world on a quotidian level. Visual, auditory and olfactory descriptions of natural phenomena in toponyms reinforce the intimate, all pervasive presence of the forest in terms of imagery and locational preciseness.

The place-name data for this paper were obtained from Semai settlements in Perak, several of which are located within the Bukit Tapah Forest Reserve (see appendix). Linked to a broader toponymy project (see HEIKKILÄ 2014), this data shows the extent of slave raiding on several communities. Interviews, conversations and field tours were conducted with villagers possessing detailed knowledge of the raids and the place-names that evoke them. The role of Semai toponymy in communicating the Rawa raids indicates the larger role of indigenous place-names as markers of cultural memory. CONNERTON (1989, 28) reasons that a mental map, wrought in childhood, underlies the workings of memory; shared collectively with other members of the same community, the map serves as a code to remembering and interpreting events from within a specific cultural framework. It may be thus reasoned that the toponymy of Semai lands represents a geography of Semai memory, recording past happenings from a Semai standpoint.

Toponomastics sheds light on how landscapes are known and lived. Addressing theoretical approaches to the study of place-names, WATT (2009), for instance, describes toponyms as facets of cultural heritage through which a sense of identity and emplacement are derived; he emphasizes that it is through daily life events rather than through built historic memorials that people develop a bond to places and that the naming of places mirrors human experience in/of place. HELLELAND (2009), also addressing theory, discusses the synchronic and diachronic dimensions of place-names, noting that the former concerns spatial orientation and the latter, 'linguistic prints of the past'. Her observation builds on the idea of place-names as cultural heritage, given their value in telling history, specifically incidents involving a particular community. She (*ibid.*, 30) argues that 'place-names of a landscape function as social consensus or an agreement reached over many generations'. Implicit in her remarks is the flexible nature of this consensus based on community needs. With reference to Semai toponymy, the naming and re-naming of geographic

phenomena and sites has occurred due to the need to record the unprecedented. Unusual circumstances surrounding human and animal deaths as well as other tragic or unexpected events have motivated toponymic changes, for instance due to the demise of elders, taboo violations and the infiltration of outsiders such as the Rawa and communist guerrillas during the Malayan Emergency (1948–60).

Geographical toponymic research has resurged along the lines of examining the contested nature of place-names (see BERG and VUOLTEENAHO 2009). While addressing mainly non-indigenous urban contexts, critical toponymy focusses on how place-naming contributes to the making of places and identities in 'wider national, regional and ... identity negotiations' (ALDERMAN 2008, 208). Arguably, the thrust of critical toponymy is to expose the powers that dominate and resist in place-naming processes (ROSE-REDWOOD et al. 2010). In view of postcolonial reclamations of indigenous homelands and identities, indigenous toponymy may duly be regarded critical toponymy: because they run counter to dominant modes of valuing the landscape and define instead spaces of indigenous identity and belonging, indigenous place-names contribute to 'the revival and continuity of indigenous languages and knowledges' (HEIKKILÄ 2014, 362). Knowledge of the past has prominence in the continuity of indigeneity, and indigenous toponymic systems such as Semai place-names play a part in communicating indigenous histories.

The discussion below focusses on toponyms memorializing the Rawa slave raids. Delineating places and landforms that embody eyewitness accounts, these place-names testify to the actual occurrence of the raids. Geography is thus a powerful mnemonic in reconstructions of Rawa infiltration into Semai country. Moreover, 'as powerful semiotic texts embedded in larger systems of meaning and discourse' (ROSE-REDWOOD et al. 2010, 458), these place-names encourage consideration of the ideological and political meanings of the Prak Sangkiil in contemporary Semai imagination.

3 The Rawa slave raids

Documentation of the enslavement of Orang Asli is extant (see LYE 2001). SKEAT and BLAGDEN (1906), ENDICOTT (1983), COUILLARD (1984) and ANDAYA and ANDAYA (2001), for instance, provide exhaustive reviews of ethnographic and government materials stemming from the colonial period.

DENTAN (1999) and NOWAK and MUNTIL (2004), in particular, have published oral histories of the slave raids perpetrated on the Semai and Hma' Btsisi³, respectively. It may be said that these written and oral sources present a coherent account of the acts of aggression committed against the Orang Asli, over time, by local Malays as well as other Austronesian-speaking peoples from Sumatra, such as the Batak, Mandailing and Rawa.

It is unsurprising that Orang Asli conflate the Austronesian-speaking peoples of the Malay Archipelago to *gòp* ('Malay'). There has, after all, been a history of admitting into the Malay racial category converts to Islam³. These 'foreign Malay' groups, in addition to local Malays, are believed to have terrorized the ancestors of the Semai (CERRUTI 1908; EVANS 1915; ROBACHEK 1977; JULI 1998; GOMES 2004; DENTAN 2008; HEIKKILÄ 2014). Hence, the grim association between Austronesian peoples, Islam and bondage lives on in Orang Asli collective memory. Oral narratives recorded with Semai communities for the present research relate how the *gòp* pursued and subjugated the non-Muslim forest dwellers, to the point of driving whole communities into remote hinterland areas: 'we people used to live downstream, even close to Teluk Intan but were chased up here by Malays, to areas difficult to access but also difficult to make a living in' (BEK TERUS, interview, 30.3.2012).

A perplexing array of 'foreign Malay' (i.e., Batak, Mandailing, Jawa and Dayak) attacks is quoted in Semai narratives. Toponyms in the War river system such as Geel Terangdayak, Gepgeeb Terangdayak, (BEK TERUS, interview, 30.3.2012) Gepgeeb Caaq Batak, Bareh Caaq Batak and Tééw Caaq Batak⁴ (BAH TEBU, interview, 17.4.2014) suggest the intense fear Semai had of outsiders who ventured into their territories. The latter three names, especially, recall a time when a group of Batak crossed into War country from the Jelaay region. The party had small children in tow and was spied slaughtering and eating them; the perpetrators were seen later to retire in the cave Gepgeeb Caaq Batak, making their way downriver the next day. There is consensus, however, that it was the Rawa who were exclusively involved in the slave trade as well as being the forerunners of the kid-

napping and cannibalistic peoples who would later invade Orang Asli lands (ROBACHEK 1977; DENTAN 1999; NOWAK and MUNTIL 2004; BEK TERUS and BEK NUAR, interview, 29.3.2012; APAK RIYUT, pers. comm., 24.5.2014; NUSI NATI and FARIDAH GOH, pers. comm., 5.6.2014). In the Cebaaq Tenlòòp narrative told to DENTAN (1999), for example, it is clear that an army of Rawa was guilty of the slave raids described therein. This is known from the name Prak Rawééy, used to label the attacks as well as from toponyms describing the raids in graphic detail (see below).

MILNER (1978) provides a succinct account of the Rawa. A part of the Paderi movement, intent on replacing indigenous custom throughout the Malay World with *shariah* law, the Rawa were also known as Rinchi (cf. Kerinchi below), after Tuanku Nan Rintjih one of the most radical leaders of the movement. MILNER reports that Rawas were first observed in the Malay Peninsula in the late 1820s, and were found in a number of states including Malacca, Negeri Sembilan, Perak and Pahang. When the Dutch conquered their homeland in the 1830s, the Rawa fled en masse to central Sumatra and subsequently abroad to the Malay Peninsula. In Perak and Pahang, for instance, Rawa men became involved in gold mining and wet rice agriculture (see also DENTAN 1999, 415). Many served as mercenaries to local Malay chiefs, gaining notoriety as disturbers of the peace and ruthless plunderers. The Rawa warred against neighbouring fiefdoms, despoiled their territories and took over their trade as the Linggi invasion of Rembau and the Pahang civil war (1857-63) attest. They also launched their own attacks on villages; thus, skirmishes with the Rawa were frequent as communities defended against being raided and decimated. It was also common for the Rawa to take over or found villages in rural areas, thus settling permanently in these areas as farmers and petty merchants. Place-names bear witness to the peopling of Peninsular Malaysia by Rawas and other foreign Malays: towns, villages and landforms with the names 'Rawa' (or Kerinchi), 'Bugis', 'Aceh', and 'Jawa'⁵) exist as reminders of the comparatively recent history of Malay settlement in the Malay Peninsula (see; JULI 1998; DENTAN 1999; MOHAMMED 2010).

³ See MILNER 1982 for accounts of the 'islamization/malayization' of groups of Sumatran peoples, some of whom later migrated to the Malay Peninsula.

⁴ See HEIKKILÄ 2014 for toponymic orthography employed.

⁵ Searches with these names on the online toponymic gazetteer, Geoname (GOVERNMENT OF MALAYSIA 2014), reveal lists of villages, towns and landforms. Semai recognize the villages of Sungai Gading, Batu Tiga, Bermin and Jambai (all neighbouring Tapah) as being populated by the descendants of Rawa slavers (BAH TONY, pers. comm., 9.4.2016).

4 Toponyms and whetstones memorializing the Rawa raids

Semai oral accounts state that the Rawa sailed up the Straits of Malacca to Teluk Intan whence they made their way, on foot, into the interior of Perak; once inland, they broke into smaller bands to target different river valleys (AJOK ATÖÖR, interview, 10.3.2012). Settlements were typically ambushed at night when people were asleep. The slavers' modus operandi was to kill off males, the very young and old, and abduct nubile females and preadolescent children to sell as slaves (BEK TERUS, interview, 30.3.2012). In some instances, entire settlements were destroyed, as in the case of Barih Óódat and Barih Penep. The etymologies of *óódat* and *penep* – 'death' and 'burial' – suggest the carnage that occurred in these once thriving villages. Tantalizing to the Jernaang lowlands in the Sungkai region (see DENTAN 1999, 408), both settlements were turned into mass graves by the Rawa (BAH SMAIL, interview, 13.12.2011; TOK DUNI, interview, 14.5.2014). Other toponyms record sudden or unusual noises that pierce the drone of the rainforest. The streams Tééw Herloow and Tééw Kikir are examples of onomatopoeic toponyms, mimicking the sound of metal being forged and hammered into machetes (AJOK ATÖÖR, interview, 10.3.2012). People still claim to hear clinking and screeching noises around these streams, believing these places to be haunted by Rawas who were executed by their ancestors. In contrast, Tééw Surook and Tééw Èc Rawééy record matter-of-fact sightings of Rawa activity. The former is from the Malay *surok* ('to hide'), referring to the surreptitious comings and goings of Rawas along this stream, where they were encamped. The latter is a droll description of a Rawa spied defecating in a stream literally known as 'stream–faeces–Rawa' (AJOK DUNI, interview, 3.8.2012).

Fear of Rawa attacks drove people to distant territories (see ENDICOTT 1983 and COUILLARD 1984). To avoid detection, people took to walking in streams and sheltering in caves where the lighting of fires was withheld (BAH SMAIL, interview, 13.12.2011). In the War region (Fig. 2), Tééw Bah Getaar and Leeb Ranwééy memorialize the experiences of individuals in flight. The names evoke a sense of urgency, of the long periods of deprivation and wandering through unknown forest territory. The former commemorates Bah Getaar, a man who experienced immense hardship in fleeing the slavers and who finally settled by this stream. The latter designates a cave concealed behind a waterfall and communicates the idea 'to be carefree, to walk with your hands swinging by your

side', recalling how people made the cave their home and came to feel safe and free in its vicinity (AJOK DUNI, interview, 3.8.2012).

Oral history accounts from the Senta and Kenoh villages also provide a sense of these forced migrations. Fleeing the Rawa, Tééw Jerap Mengkuang as well as Teluk Intan Semai stopped first at Tééw Sentaar and then at Danòòs Bukuuq Empòòc but once again besieged, they fled further inland to Tééw Pemandaal. There, they were compelled to fight the Rawa; the hill Lon Kubuuq embodies the episode of intense fighting that left many Semai and Rawa dead and marks the point at which the Rawa were beaten back. Community narratives state that a fence was erected on the hill, behind which the Semai ambushed and killed the slavers; the name *kubuuq* puns on the Malay words *kubu* ('fortress') and *kubur* ('grave'), suggesting the hill's role as a stronghold and subsequently, a mass grave (BAH KASING and BAH KANAA, pers. comm., 5.5.2014; APAK RIYUT, pers. comm., 24.5.2014). The survivors of this battle – two Semai men and women – eventually reclaimed the village of Tééw Sentaar and settled there with other displaced Semai.

Similarly, further northwest, Guhaaq Denãäk was unpopulated until Semai villages in surrounding areas came under attack; hence it became a village where refugees fleeing the Rawa began to settle. The village's name, taken from that of a nearby cave, suggests where people hid until it was safe to rebuild their lives in a new place (BAH KOYANG, pers. comm., 19.4.14). Changes to social organization and custom as a result of slave raiding were also inevitable; JULI (1998, 20–21) notes how Dirik (mentioned above) married a Semai woman from Bidor and eventually led her people away to hide in various locations to the south. When the colonial government formally outlawed slave raiding, Dirik established the village Gunung Payung (nowadays, Erong) where he served as headman and introduced Temuan customs to his Semai followers (*ibid.*).

While certain Semai communities escaped attack (due to their inaccessibly distant or high locations), they were nonetheless terrorized by the Rawa raids. For instance, Geel Galuuq village, located in the upper reaches of the War river, has two toponyms providing first-hand accounts of the Rawa (BAH TEBU, interview, 18.5.2014). Geel Terang Rawééy, a river pool, marks the general area where a band of Rawa was spotted by a villager fishing nearby. The toponym glosses as 'bright–Rawa', communicating the unusual occurrence of Rawa movement in broad daylight. Barih Geel Galuuq, a valley adjacent to the

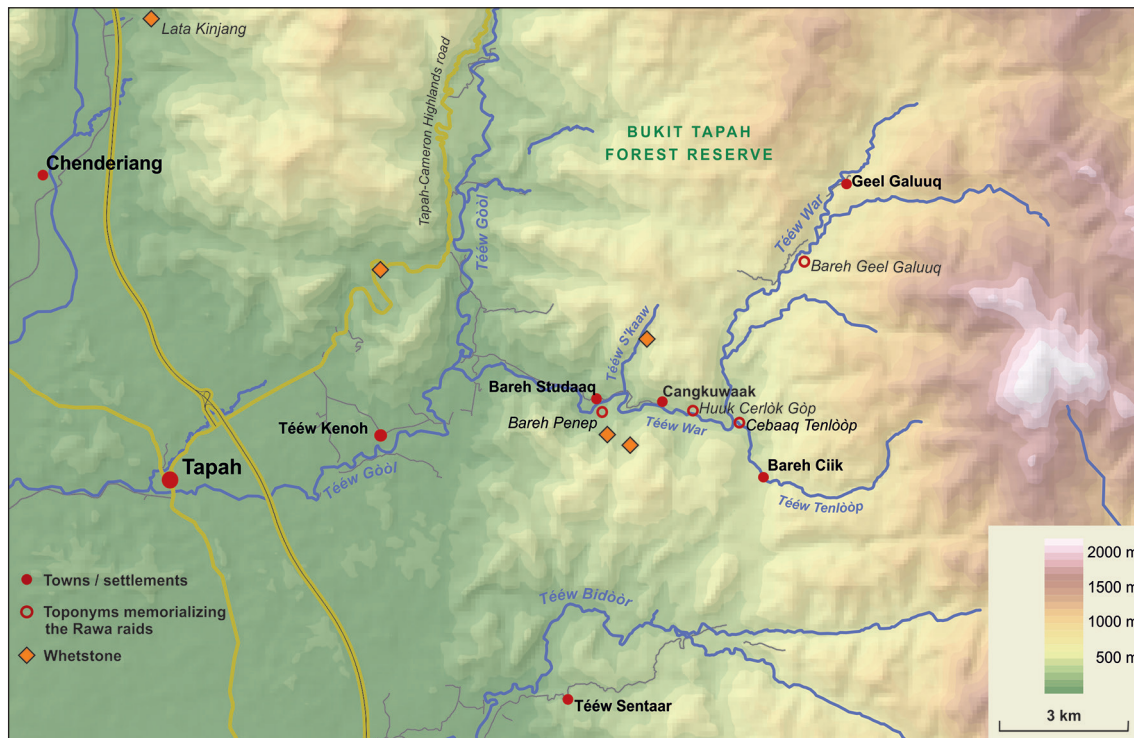


Fig. 2: A sample of toponyms and whetstones in the War region and surrounding environs

village, is where the Rawa blazed a trail to neighbouring Semai territories. Despite its original use to murder and kidnap, the trail serves today as a practical travel route.

The most iconic of toponyms associated with the Prak Sangkiil are Cebaaq Tenlòp and Huuk Cerlòk Gòp (Fig. 2). These names have come to symbolize Semai resilience to onslaughts on their indigeneity. When Semai relate the Rawa slave raids, they stress that their survival as a people depended on fleeing into dense jungle, fighting back and using magic. Violent retaliations are rare among Semai, but became an ineluctable means to defend against mounting Rawa attacks. War and Tenlòp Semai recount how the Rawa made inroads into their territories from downstream Semai settlements near Sungkai. While half the population fled, those who remained prepared hundreds of poisoned darts to blowgun dead the Rawa. Semai harried the Rawa up- and downstream of Cebaaq Tenlòp, to the extent that the confluence of the War and Tenlòp rivers came to symbolize Semai victory over ‘Malay’ might (BAH TONY, pers. comm., 11.4.2014). A sunken cavern along the banks of the War, not far from Cebaaq Tenlòp, communicates the fate of the Rawa: Huuk Cerlòk Gòp (‘under the earth—to poke

into a hole—Malay’) is where Rawa corpses were dumped. Both cavern and the rivulet flowing at its base, Téew Cerlòk Gòp, starkly proclaim how and where the corpses were disposed. Perhaps the foremost episode of Semai retaliation against the Rawa concerns a shaman who singlehandedly defended the War region from the marauders.⁶ His grave, located on the ridge Danòs Semenaak, is called Nyep Semenaak in deference to his ongoing supernatural powers and ability to help in present-day adversities (BEK NUAR, interview, 29.3.2012; BAH TONY, pers. Comm. 11.4.2014).

Further evidence of the Prak Sangkiil is to be found in particular rocks that once functioned as whetstones. Located along Rawa travel routes, these rocks are known in Semai as: *batuuq ceniis*, *batuuq ceniis rawéy*, *ceniis sendraaq*, *batuuq tenrééb* or *batuuq sempedang*. Whetstones are as significant to Semai as rocks or stones of spiritual or mythic im-

⁶ See JULI 1998 and DENTAN 1999 for full narrative. A parallel narrative exists in Temuan Orang Asli history (NUSI NANI and FARIDAH GOH, pers. comm., 5.6.2014). The stream Kenaboi (‘to boil or bubble’) recounts the cunning of a Temuan headman who plied scores of Rawa with drink and then killed them in their stupor. Dumped into the Kenaboi, the bodies rotted away, trailing bubbles, before finally sinking.

portance: not only are their exact locations recalled but the minutiae of the slave raids they memorialize. In the manner of the infamous slave trading place, Batu Berangkai ('stone enchained') near Kampar (see DENTAN 1995), rocks have spatial singularity and mnemonic purchase. Although the general area of Batu Berangkai is known in Semai as Téew Mencaak, the Malay name continues to be used by Semai, serving as a solemn reminder of when Semai children were captured and chained to a boulder to be sold as slaves (BAH TONY, pers. comm., 11.4.2014). In the War region, whetstones are located at Deek Kikir (at the confluence of the Kikir and Óódat streams); in the Téew Kelawée area (at the confluence of the Bah Getaar and Terpuuk streams); and at Téew Batuq Ceniis (upstream of the S'kaaw stream, in the vicinity of the incline Lon Kèès) (TOK DUNI, interview, 14.5.2014).

Specific histories are attached to each stone and its location. The whetstone at Deek Kikir, for instance, is said to be broken away from the repeated grinding of Rawa blades (TOK ATÒÒR, interview, 10.3.2012). The stone in the area of Téew Kelawée (also known as Téew Rawééy) recalls the stream as the Rawa entry point into the lower reaches of the War region, whereupon the raiders stopped at Téew Bah Getaar to whet their blades. Kelawée, believed to be a corruption of the Malay *pelawa* ('to invite'), suggests that the Rawa were helped into Semai territory by *maay sendraaq* ('warlike people') or Temiar Orang Asli who diverted the Rawa to neighbouring territories to prevent the victimization of their own people (TOK DUNI, interview, 14.5.2014; ENDICOTT 1983, 231). Just outside the War region, a whetstone⁷ can be seen jutting out of a steep bank skirting the Tapah–Cameron Highlands thoroughfare. The rock is specifically termed *batuq sempedang*, highlighting the type of weapon the Rawa carried, namely a *pedang* or cutlass (BAH JALI, interview, 24.5.2014). Rawa whetstones are also present in the following areas: at the ridge or summit of the Lata Kinjang falls (BAH TONY, pers. comm., 26.4.2014); Bidor, at the headwaters of Téew Bukaaw (BAH KASING and BAH KANAA, pers. comm., 6.5.2014); and Kenoh, in the Téew Tempehoor area (APAK RIYUT, pers. comm., 24.5.2014).⁸⁾

⁷⁾ The rivulet, Téew Yòk Dòk, flows beneath.

⁸⁾ Outside Perak, Rawa whetstones are located in the Koyan region in Pahang (WAQ 'NOOH, pers. comm., 1.6.2014); and outside Semai country in Ayer Sialang Temuan customary territory near Batang Melaka, Malacca (NUSI NATI and FARIDAH GOH, pers. comm., 5.6.2014).

Places and their names witness. They provide evidence. Names make permanent things that are now no longer around
(BAH PAGAAR, interview, 30.3.2012)

5 Discussion

The whetstones, toponyms and related oral history presented above trace the pathway of the Prak Sangkiil in a portion of Semai country; more information from other Semai communities as well as from other Orang Asli communities is needed to fully comprehend the scale of the Rawa (and other foreign Malay) raids. Place-names, narratives and whetstones have impressed the memory as well as terror of the raids on contemporary Semai, demonstrating that geography is interwoven with cognition. For Semai, who 'suffered more from slave raiding than any other Orang Asli group' (ENDICOTT 1983, 231), the Prak Sangkiil exists as an ever-present reality to the community. A part of Semai daily life, toponyms and sites evoke the raids each time the names are uttered or the places themselves visited. CONNERTON (2009, 18) explains that it is through the sensory actions contained in naming and journeying that the experience of remembering is emplaced, embodied and concretized in memory. In CONNERTON'S (2009, 10–27) schema, both 'memorial' and 'locus' concern the remembrance of traumatic memories, the former commemorating the agony of loss as a result of displacement and the latter, the internalization of trauma as psychosomatically manifested through the experiences of helplessness and inexplicable fear when dealing with the wider world. Poignantly, the schema illustrates the condition of inherited trauma among succeeding generations of Semai who continue to experience the terror of enslavement undergone by their forefathers two centuries ago (DENTAN 2008, 177–179).

Even so, places within Semai lands memorialize not only losses but reprieves; a subtext in the narrative of enslavement is Semai resilience and continued survival despite attacks against them as a people. After all, the coinage of place-names to memorialize the Prak Sangkiil is in itself testimony to Semai survival, showing that people did manage to resume their lives and 'properly bear witness to the past' (CONNERTON 1989, 15). The names and narratives they gave to places to memorialize the violence of the raids bespeak a geographical imaginary associated with being murdered, separated from kin, abducted and removed from the forest. Places without the Semai ancestral forest domain, in contrast, are

emblematic of Semai fear of outsiders, and overall the threats of rootlessness and annihilation that are manifest in dealing with the outside world. The latter might be termed 'locus' as it is a site of collective memory for Semai, where the Rawa raids serve as a frame of reference for current struggles. Place-names, whetstones and oral narratives are the bases for the production and reproduction of the raids as *fact*. They prompt contemplation of past situations, bringing them to bear on the contemporary situation of Orang Asli as a disenfranchised minority of Malaysia.

Threats to the Semai indigenous way of life have taken different forms over time. Where once it was the genocidal attacks of slave raiding, today's onslaughts are ethnocidal in nature (see ENDICOTT 1983; DENTAN 1999; NICHOLAS 2000, 2002). Forests are no longer sufficiently distant from the outside world to offer sanctuary. In fact, Orang Asli forest homelands are indeterminately under development by state and private enterprises alike, causing Semai and other forest-dependent Orang Asli to live in a state of impermanence (NICHOLAS 2000, 2002). Development of indigenous customary territories has in turn meant forced resettlement in other ancestral territories or re-groupment with other Orang Asli peoples, aimed at sedentarizing and moulding them into cash crop farmers. Re-settlement and re-groupment have been accompanied by the further ethnocidal tactics of forced conversion to Islam and absorption into the Malay racial category, which have also negatively impacted the Semai forest-dependent lifestyle (*ibid.*). For reasons cited earlier, redefining the Orang Asli as Malay is especially political given that Malays make the claim of being the bona fide indigenous group of Peninsular Malaysia. Historical revisionism has helped back this claim, whereupon the official history of Malaysia has been altered to demonstrate the cultural and political ascendancy of Malays (CHEAH 1997; DENTAN 1999, 2002). Accounts of history that favour such a perspective are promoted in history books (CHEAH 2003) and museums (KALB 1997); those that do not, that suggest for instance, Malay involvement in piracy and pillage are played down or concealed altogether. As KALB (1997, 78) argues, '[q]uestions and contestations of taxonomy, classification, arrangement and geography consume modern Malaysian officials as they construct new notions of Malay-ness'.

The nineteenth-century Rawa Malay raids on Semai communities are an example of buried history, unacknowledged in Malaysia's official history and unknown to mainstream, non-indigenous Malaysians.

TILL and KUUSISTO-ARPONEN (2015, 302) maintain that victims (or in the case of Semai, 'inheritors') of past violence can be spared the trauma of social and official forgetting when they are allowed to be *in place*, 'to step outside [the] social-spatial forms of silencing and...create ...a space-time for ...grieving, mourning, remembering [and] imagining different futures'. Together, the place memorials of toponyms, whetstones and narratives demonstrate that acts of remembering are site-specific and that the wholeness or integrity of places aids the remembrance of past events for societies that rely on spoken lore and geography to communicate their histories and knowledges. The implication here is that indigenous territories should be protected for beyond livelihood reasons, for their worth as cultural or memorial landscapes (see DWYER and ALDERMAN 2008; HEIKKILÄ 2014). Through analysis of Semai place-names and sites related to the Prak Sangkiil, this paper has attempted to demonstrate the importance of places, toponyms and related oral narratives in reconstructions of indigenous histories. Acceptance and recognition of these histories are not only needed for the creation of more inclusive and just representations of national pasts, but for growing understanding and reconciliation between non-indigenous and indigenous peoples.

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Appendix:

A list of toponyms and whetstones by informant and community

COMMUNITY	INFORMANT	LANDFORM
Cangkuwaak (Kampung Ampang Woh) -'branch- <i>kunnaak</i> ': tree species used as a gangway or bridge; wood is naturally notched.	Bah Tony; Bek Nuar Danòs Semenaak (Nyep Semenaak): ' <i>ridge-semenaak</i> '; bamboo species.	Ridge
	Huuk Cerlòk Gòp: 'under the earth-to poke into a hole-Malay'.	Underground cavern
	Téew Cerlòk Gòp: 'stream-to poke into a hole-Malay'.	Stream
	Téew Tenlòòp (Sungai Telom): 'stream- <i>tenlòòp</i> '; name given by a tiger spirit familiar.	Stream
	Bareh Ciiik: 'valley-elephant'; named after a rock believed to be the petrified form of a shaman who transmogrified into an elephant.	Valley
	Bek Terus Geel Terangdayak: 'river pool-bright- <i>dayak</i> '; possibly refers to natives of Sarawak, who supported the Peninsula security forces during the Malayan Emergency. Gepgeeb Terangdayak: 'cave-bright- <i>dayak</i> '.	River pool Cave
Bareh Studaaq (Kampung Pos Woh) -'valley-spear': named after the Studaaq stream, which in the past was set with wild boar traps; <i>studaaq</i> is a variant of <i>sudaag</i> ('spear').	Bah Smail; Tok Duni Bareh Óodat: 'valley-die'. Bareh Penep: 'valley-grave'.	Valley Valley
	Tok Duni; Tok Atòòr Deek Kikir: 'old house- <i>kikir</i> '; onomatopoeic name; whetstone location.	Old settlement or habitation
	Ajok Duni Leeb Ranwéey: 'cave- <i>ranwéey</i> '; tree species that is thorny and has an intricate branch network. Téew Bah Getaar: 'stream-Bah Getaar'; the name of a man fleeing the slave raids.	Cave, overgrown with creepers and ferns Stream
	Téew Surook: 'stream-to hide'.	Stream
	Téew Èc Rawéey: 'stream-faeces-Rawa'.	Stream
	Ajok Atòòr Téew Herloow: 'stream- <i>herloow</i> '; onomatopoeic name. Téew Kikir: 'stream- <i>kikir</i> '; see Deek Kikir.	Stream Stream
	Tok Duni Téew Óodat: 'stream-die'. Téew Terpuuk: 'stream-smelly'; refers to a rotting tiger carcass.	Stream Stream
	Téew Kelawéé (Téew Rawéey): 'stream-to invite'; whetstone location.	Stream
	Lon Kèès: 'incline- <i>kèès</i> '; tree species (<i>Quercus lampadaria</i>). Téew S'kaaw (Sungai Sekau): 'stream- <i>s'kaaw</i> '; onomatopoeic name.	Incline Stream
	Téew Batuuq Ceniis: 'stream-whetstone'; whetstone location.	Stream
Téew Gòl (Sungai Batang Padang); features in narrative about the formation of rocks in the War river.	Stream	
Téew War (Sungai Woh); see Téew Gòl.	Stream	

<p>Geel Galuuq (Kampung Woh Intek)</p> <p>-‘river pool–eaglewood (<i>Aquilaria malaccensis</i>)’.</p>	<p>Bah Tebu Bareh Caaq Batak: ‘valley–eat–Batak’. Gepgeeb Caaq Batak: ‘cave–eat–Batak’. Téew Caaq Batak: ‘stream–eat–Batak’. Bareh Geel Galuuq: ‘valley–river pool–eaglewood’. Geel Terang Rawéey: ‘river pool–bright–Rawa’.</p>	<p>Valley Cave Stream Valley River pool</p>
<p>Téew Telaraah (Kampung Batu Enam)</p> <p>-‘stream–<i>telaraah</i>’; from <i>diraah</i> or ‘to pull away’; name refers to a tiger guarding the remains of its prey.</p>	<p>Bah Jali Téew Yòòk Dòk: ‘stream–fall–pig-tailed macaque’; also known as Téew Batuq Sempedang (‘stream–[whet] stone–cutlass’); whetstone location.</p>	<p>Stream</p>
<p>Téew Kenoh (Kampung Kenoh)</p> <p>- ‘stream–<i>kenoh</i>’; name uttered by a tiger spirit familiar; it counted and named the streams in the Téew Gòòl region.</p>	<p>Apak Riyut; Bah Kasing and Bah Kanaa Danòòs Bukuuq Empòòc: ‘ridge–book (slab)–salt’. Lon Kubuuq: ‘ridge–<i>kubuuq</i>’; borrowing from the Malay <i>kubu</i> (fortress) and <i>kubur</i> (grave). Téew Pemandaal Téew Sentaar Téew Tempheoor: whetstone location.</p>	<p>Ridge Incline Stream Stream Stream</p>
<p>Téew Sentaar (Kampung Sente)</p> <p>-‘stream–<i>sentaar</i>’; suggests ‘to cross over something or someone’.</p>	<p>Bah Kasing and Bah Kanaa Téew Bukaaw: whetstone location. Téew Bidòòr (Sungai Gedong): name uttered by a tiger; pausing to drink at this stream, it named the stream and landforms in the surrounding area.</p>	<p>Stream Stream</p>
<td data-bbox="496 1131 1037 1162"> <p>Lata Kinjang: whetstone location.</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1070 1131 1161 1162"> <p>Waterfall</p> </td>	<p>Lata Kinjang: whetstone location.</p>	<p>Waterfall</p>
<td data-bbox="496 1193 1037 1214"> <p>Téew Mencaak (Batu Berangkai)*</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1070 1193 1214 1214"> <p>Stream, village</p> </td>	<p>Téew Mencaak (Batu Berangkai)*</p>	<p>Stream, village</p>
<p>Guhaaq Denāāk* (Kampung Ayer Denak)</p> <p>-‘cave–wild fowl’.</p>	<p>Bah Koyang Guhaaq Denāāk</p>	<p>Cave, village</p>
<p>Téew Simòòy** (Kampung Simoi Baru, RPS Betau)</p> <p>-‘stream–<i>simòòy</i>’; a miniature bat that lives in bamboo.</p>	<p>Waq ‘Nooh Téew Jelaay (Sungai Jelai): ‘stream–<i>jelaay</i>’; upright fern species (<i>Helminthostachys zeylamica</i>). Téew Koyan (Sungai Koyan): whetstone location.</p>	<p>Stream Stream</p>
<p>Anak Ayer Sialang*** (Kampung Sialang)</p> <p>-‘rivulet–<i>sialang</i>’; refers to a <i>kejur</i> tree that was full of beehives; honey was harvested from these hives in the past; whetstone location.</p>	<p>Nusi Nati and Faridah Goh Sungai Kenaboi: ‘stream–bubble’.</p>	<p>Stream</p>

* Semai community located outside the Bukit Tapah Forest Reserve

** Semai community in Pahang

*** Temuan Orang Asli community in Malacca