### Was there Singapore before 1819?

- 3 sources to determine the answer
- 1. *Sejarah Melayu*
- 2. *Wang Dayuan’s account*
- 3. Archaeological discoveries

### Sejarah Melayu
- Malay Annals written in 16th Century
- Singapore was a thriving trading centre under Sang Utama
- Attracted the attention of Majapahit
- War ensued.
- Destroyed by the Javanese and ruler fled and founded Melaka.
- THINK!!! Who wrote it? Was it really history as its main purpose was just to trace the origins and descent of Malay royalty? Was it legend? Are we relying on it just for convenience sake to establish or create history in Singapore?

### Wang Dayuan
- Chinese merchant from Yuan China
- *Dao Yi Zhi Lue (Description of the Barbarians of the Isles)*
- Invaluable record of Chinese overseas
- Reported on *Longyamen (Dragon’s Teeth Gate)* and *Dan-ma-xi (Temasek)*
- Exotic, famous, frequently visited by traders, Chinese settlers and piracy
- So, Wang’s records agree with *Sejarah Melayu*

### But…
- Sources for the history of Singapore are so scanty and ambiguous!!!
- Lack of confirmation!!!
- Why was there no mention of Temasek after 14th century?
- Room for debate whether Temasek and Singapore refer to the same place
- Was the mapping accurate? What if it was another place in the Singapore-Riau area?

### Archaeological Evidence
- Archaeological findings testified that Singapore was a vibrant trading city as early as the 14th century.
- Who brought these things over?
- Where were they commonly found? Why?
- Implications?
- Why was Singapore always described to be a sleeping fishing village before Raffles’ arrival?
- What happened from 14th to 18th century?
Main Archaeological Sites

- Fort Canning Hill – Site of religious activities and craftsmen’s workshops used for recycling of glass
- Parliament House – Site of commercial activities and metal working
- Empress Place – dumping area for people living there

Archaeological Discoveries

Istana Kampong Glam

Fort Canning Excavation

Singapore Padang
Fort Canning

Conclusion: Did Singapore exist as a port of trade?

• Yes, because…
• It was autonomous, specialized town, city or small state intended by policy for trade. It only paid occasional tribute too.
• It was usually a trans-shipment point between different ecological regions, i.e. China and India.
• It was often a deliberately neutral buffer zone. It did not belong to China, India nor Siam.