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Research Article

New Perspective on Writing History during the Glory of the Islamic Empire in the Archipelago

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Abstract: This journal discusses a new perspective on history in the XV-XVII centuries in the archipelago. This new perspective tries to balance the orientalist perspective and perfect the local perspective in depicting history during the Islamic kingdoms in the archipelago. This new perspective at least reduces the historical narrative that explains the superiority of "outsiders" in determining the fate of the archipelago. Then, this perspective will enrich the theme of Indonesian history which generally only pays attention to political and social issues in this era. At least, the narrative during this period shows the sophistication of thinking of local rulers who were able to create the archipelago into one of the centers of gravity for world trade. This is at least shown and discussed in depth. To obtain fragments of events that support the researcher's statement, a historical method is needed to select fragments of events through several sources, assemble them, and analyze them in depth.

Keywords: History; Islamic Empire; Archipelago; Writing; Glory

Abstrak: Karya ilmiah ini membahas tentang perspektif baru sejarah pada abad XV-XVII di Nusantara. Perspektif baru ini mencoba mengimbangi perspektif orientalis dan menyempurnakan perspektif lokal dalam penggambaran sejarah pada masa kerajaan-kerajaan Islam di Nusantara. Perspektif baru ini setidaknya mengurangi narasi sejarah yang menerangkan superioritas "orang luar" dalam menentukan nasib Nusantara. Lalu, perspektif ini akan memperkaya tema sejarah Indonesia yang pada umumnya hanya menaruh perhatian terhadap isu

politik dan sosial di era kurun niaga ini. Setidaknya, narasi pada kurun ini menampilkan kecanggihan berpikir para penguasa lokal yang mampu mengkreasikan Nusantara menjadi salah satu pusat gravitasi perdagangan dunia. Hal ini setidaknya ditampilkan dan dibahas secara dalam. Untuk mendapatkan kepingan-kepingan peristiwa yang mendukung pernyataan peneliti, maka perlu metode sejarah untuk memilih kepingan-kepingan kejadian melalui beberapa sumber, merangkainya, dan menganalisisnya secara dalam.

Kata kunci: Sejarah; Kekaisaran Islam; Nusantara; Penulisan; Kejayaan

INTRODUCTION

This journal aims to provide a new perspective to see events in the XV-XVII centuries. The idea for this article arose because existing historical works covered major events that had not yet been revealed, such as the ability of Indonesian people to play an important role in international trade. If historical works only show the existence and influence of the VOC in the archipelago in this era, it will show the inferiority of the people of the archipelago in determining their own fate. If historical works only tell about the influence of Arab and Eastern traders in this era, it will give a passive image to the people of the archipelago in determining the direction of their movement. This journal tries to show that the people of the archipelago had a major contribution in determining their future and carving out their own history in the 15th-17th centuries. This journal records their achievements and various strategies to reduce the dominance of foreign influence. Indeed, this journal does not provide a specific explanation of the situation of each kingdom in the archipelago but explains and collects relatively short and important events which represent that people of the archipelago could compete with foreign powers.

The number of social and political themes is relatively large, so this would mean that this theme was more important than other themes in historical works of that era. As a result, many great works describe the process of the arrival of Islam, cracks within the Islamic kingdom, and other socio-political problems. One of them is a book by Azyumardi Azra entitled *Network of Ulama-Ulama in Southeast Asia*¹. This work tells the story of the process of converting to Islam and maps the points of spread of this belief from upstream to downstream. Furthermore, books by orientalist and local historians paid attention to the political affairs of the Islamic kingdoms in the archipelago. Some of these works use local sources that combine and link mythical elements with reality, making it difficult to test their objectivity² because they rely on something that cannot be measured. One of them is a description of the existence of magical elements stored in the Islamic kingdoms of the archipelago in the 15th-17th centuries. At that time, their leaders seemed to be outside the human circle and had mystical powers that ordinary people did not have, all of which only aimed to display their extraordinary image in the eyes of society.

Of course, the case above provides the view that only political and social events occurred and developed in the 15th-17th centuries in the archipelago. The events described

¹ Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII: Melacak Akar-Akar Pembaruan Pemikiran Islam Di Indonesia*, Cet. 1 (Bandung: Mizan, 1994).

² Aditia Muara Padiatra, *Ilmu sejarah : metode dan praktik* (Gresik: CV. Jendela Sastra Indonesia Press, 2020).

only touch the socio-political field so this field is considered more important and worthy of knowing. This problem will close our eyes from seeing events that actually happened and were no less extraordinary at that time. During that time, for example, the archipelago was said to have become one of the gravity areas for world trade³ and local governments played a role in its dynamics. At least, this should appear in historical works. For example, the work of Ali Sakti and Ferry Syarifuddin (BI researchers) entitled *Financial Practices and Sharia Economic during the Islamic Kingdom in the Archipelago*⁴. This book tells the story of events synchronously and explains in great detail the economic structure of the Islamic kingdoms. However, this book does not explain events diachronically which shows the processes and changes that occur over time. Historical events should show changes over a long period of time so that there are frames and pieces of events that occurred and were valid only during a certain period of time. Furthermore, historical events at least describe the association of one event with other events so that this shows the cause-and-effect relationship between these events. There are several written works that discuss trade during that commercial period. However, the prowess and strategy of local authorities in trade competition needs to be emphasized rather than a flat depiction of economic mechanisms.

The awareness of the existence of a poor perspective has also been expressed by Anthony Reid. He divided it into two objectives of historical study. First, colonial history has reduced Southeast Asian people to mere insignificant backgrounds amidst the sweep of Western expansion.⁵ It is as if the movement of history was determined by western nations, thereby showing the inferiority of Southeast Asian people to their own dynamics. Second, a nationalist history that makes matters worse by treating the people of Southeast Asia as helpless victims rather than actors; or who try to remedy this by separating the Southeast Asian region from international forces and comparisons.⁶

In this case, there is a need for a new perspective that shows the active role of the people of Southeast Asia, especially the Indonesian archipelago, in the dynamics of the 15th-17th century commercial period. This aims to place them as actors on the historical stage of the archipelago in harmony with other foreign actors. Because in the author's opinion, they are not frame exhibitions that only appear as a complement to the main exhibition of past scenarios, but also contribute to the colorful history of the archipelago.

Awareness of this new perspective on Indonesian historiography has been written by historians. Henk Schulte Nordholt, Bambang Purwanto, and Ratna Saptari wrote the book 'Perspective of Writing Indonesian History' as a new lens for viewing history. This book is a collection of several writings that not only discuss and analyze historiography but also produce a new perspective on the writing of history in Indonesia. These alternative narratives are a total or partial rejection of the grand narratives in certain

³Anthony Reid and Mochtar Pabotinggi, *Asia Tenggara dalam kurun niaga 1450-1680* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2011).

⁴Ferry Syarifuddin and Ali Sakti, *Praktik ekonomi dan keuangan syariah oleh kerajaan Islam di Indonesia*, ed. Budi Sudrajat (Depok: Rajawali Press, 2020).

⁵Azyumardi Azra, "Islam di 'Negeri Bawah Angin' dalam Masa Perdagangan," *Studia Islamika* 3, no. 2 (1996): 33.

⁶Azra.

historical moments.⁷ Several writings produce antithetical theories from previous historical writings. It is not surprising that the call to develop Indonesian national history and historical writing from an 'insider's perspective' was put forward in response to writings on Indonesian history by Dutch or foreign historians, which often positioned colonial power as the central and all-encompassing force behind the development of modern life in whatever form in the archipelago.⁸

Furthermore, the journal entitled "Historicism and Constructive Consciousness: Critical Study of Indonesia-centric Historiography" written by Bambang Purwanto, tries to use a different lens in viewing an event during the Dutch colonial era. Big events at that time did not always occur because of colonial intervention but were produced by the dynamics of society itself. History during the colonial era was not always identical to colonial power because the history that occurred was the result of the interrelationship between various elements at that time.⁹

The research method in this paper uses the principles of historical research methods¹⁰ in its application where data is obtained from books and scientific journals. The research stages include starting from searching for sources, then verifying the story, then interpreting the story and finally presenting it in the form of reconstructed treasures or historiography in the form of critical descriptive-narrative.¹¹

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this discussion there are several sub-chapters that will be explained, such as natural conditions and human movements, new perspectives and the assignment of power, and divide et impera as a path of conquest. In writing history, it is necessary to depict natural conditions because the dynamics of society begin with the process of adaptation of individuals to their environment. Then, the placement of power shows the sophistication of local authorities' thinking in mapping the strengths of competitors and plays a strategic role in international trade contestation. Finally, the explanation of divide et impera aims to show how strong the existence of the Islamic kingdom was, so that they could only be defeated by dividing the power from within and producing internal conflict within the kingdom.

Nature and the Direction of Human Movement

Different landscape conditions give rise to different characteristics of people's lives in the archipelago. Consisting of various islands, from Sumatra to Papua, this archipelago has a variety of natural forms, land contours, and also various stretches of coast. In this

⁷ Henk Schulte Nordholt, Bambang Purwanto, and Ratna Saptari, "Memikir Ulang Historiografi Indonesia," in *Perspektif Baru Penulisan Sejarah Indonesia*, ed. Henk Schulte Nordholt, Bambang Purwanto, and Ratna Saptari, 1st ed. (Jakarta: KITLV-Jakarta, 2008).

⁸ Nordholt, Purwanto, and Saptari.

⁹ Bambang Purwanto, "Historisisme Baru Dan Kesadaran Dekonstruktif: Kajian Kritis Terhadap Historiografi Indonesiasentris," *Humaniora* 13, no. 1 (2001): 34.

¹⁰ *Pengantar ilmu sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Bentang Budaya, 2001).

¹¹ Padiatra, *Ilmu sejarah : metode dan praktik*.

case, such as in Java¹²¹³, Kalimantan and several areas in Sumatra such as Lampung and Palembang¹⁴¹⁵¹⁶ as well as the Malay¹⁷ region for example, with long river patterns that jut out into the interior, this then becomes an advantage that can provide traders with broad access for trade. On the other hand, some island areas have few short rivers and wide stretches of coast so they choose the sea directly for travel and trade.

Furthermore, Indonesia's position has the potential to be visited by people outside the archipelago. First, the archipelago is close to the Indian Ocean¹⁸ which intersects with several countries on the continents of Asia and Africa. This ocean facilitated traders from the Cape of Good Hope to sail eastward to the archipelago. The vast expanse of the Indian Ocean itself was too large to be controlled by a political entity, this was also added to by contestation between centers of power who showed mutual tolerance and friendliness to outsiders in order to compete to become a trade center at that time.¹⁹ With characteristics like these, traders felt safe sailing and creating trade nodes²⁰ that spanned the territorial boundaries of the kingdoms that existed at that time. Gradually, starting from traders from the Middle East and Europe, they then looked for spices and multiplied the profits from selling these spices to the trade chain in Asia and Europe, this then made the archipelago known in the eyes of the world.

On the other hand, the geographical contours of the archipelago, which consists of many islands, meant that the existing authorities at that time, needed to build ties with political entities in archipelago in the context of a relation that made the local authority became the mandala²¹ or center of the entity politics in a profitable way. In this case, local authorities have additional power to pacify movements that want to control the entity.²² On the other hand, as a service and thanks to those who helped, the local authorities gave relatively cheap spice prices.

¹²Restu Gunawan, ed., *Sungai Sebagai Pusat Peradaban: Prosiding Seminar Perubahan DAS Brantas Dalam Perspektif Sejarah* (Jakarta: Direktorat Geografi Sejarah, Direktorat Jenderal Sejarah dan Purbakala, Departemen Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata, 2008).

¹³Faisal Arif et al., "Changes and Existence of Rivers in Cirebon City 1900-1942," *Al-Tsaqafa : Jurnal Ilmiah Peradaban Islam* 17, no. 2 (December 2020): 173–85, <https://doi.org/10.15575/al-tsaqafa.v17i2.10136>.

¹⁴Ida Farida, Endang Rochmiatun, and Nyimas Umi Kalsum, "Peran Sungai Musi dalam Perkembangan Peradaban Islam di Palembang: Dari Masa Kesultanan sampai Hindia-Belanda," *JUSPI (Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam)* 3, no. 1 (July 2019): 50, <https://doi.org/10.30829/juspi.v3i1.4079>.

¹⁵Gregorius Andika Ariwibowo, "SUNGAI TULANG BAWANG DALAM PERDAGANGAN LADA DI LAMPUNG PADA PERIODE 1684 HINGGA 1914," *Jurnal Masyarakat Dan Budaya* 19, no. 2 (January 2018): 253, <https://doi.org/10.14203/jmb.v19i2.442>.

¹⁶Abdul Khaliq and Yusinta Tia Rusdiana, "PERANAN SUNGAI BATANGHARI SEMBILAN SEBAGAI JALUR PEREKONOMIAN DI MASA KESULTANAN PALEMBANG DARUSSALAM TAHUN 1659-1714," 2021.

¹⁷Abdul Halim Nasir, *Lembangan Sungai Dalam Peradaban Melayu*, Cet. 1, Siri Seni & Budaya Alam Dan Tamadun Melayu (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2005).

¹⁸Aisyah Syafiera, "PERDAGANGAN DI NUSANTARA ABAD KE-16," *Jurnal Avatara* 4, no. 3 (2016).

¹⁹Carool Kersten, *Mengislamkan Indonesia: sejarah peradaban Islam di Nusantara*, ed. Dien Cahaya, trans. Zia Anshor, Cetakan I (Pondok Aren, Tangerang Selatan: BACA, 2018).

²⁰A. B. Lopian, *Pelayaran Dan Perniagaan Nusantara Abad Ke-16 Dan 17*, Cet. 1 (Depok: Komunitas Bambu, 2008).

²¹Rosita Dellios, "Mandala: From Sacred Origins to Sovereign Affairs in Traditional Southeast Asia," *Centre for East-West Cultural and Economic Studies Bond University* 10 (2003): 15.

²²Pandu Utama Manggala, "The Mandala Culture of Anarchy: The Pre-Colonial Southeast Asian International Society," *JAS (Journal of ASEAN Studies)* 1, no. 1 (July 2013): 1, <https://doi.org/10.21512/jas.v1i1.764>.

New Perspectives and Positional Power

Indonesian history is divided into several periods. A quite interesting period is the "XV-XVII Archipelago Century" because the events in that period have interesting characteristics that can be studied in depth.²³ However, there was a period where there were many major historical events that understated the special features of that period, namely the period which is also known as the first century of the arrival of Islam to the archipelago^{24,25}. In this case, one example is the "Foreign Colonization" period where one of the famous ones was the Dutch Trading Company or VOC²⁶ which then caused changes in societal conditions and the unification of autonomous regions to become one part of the colonial country. This period (VOC) inevitably includes a narrative of the history of the archipelago in the XV-XVII centuries which marked the beginning of the influence²⁷ of Islam in the archipelago.

The periodization of the arrival of Islam in the archipelago itself is flanked by two periods, these two periods are the "Era of Hindu-Buddhist Kingdoms" and the "Era of Foreign Colonization". Because it is flanked by these two eras, the depiction of history in the Islamic Era cannot be separated from the characteristics of the era before and after. For example, this era still shows the dominant influence of mysticism and the polarization of king gods which were characteristic of the Hindu-Buddhist era. Furthermore, in another era, namely the era of foreign colonialism, it tells about the actions of European traders who established trade partnerships, such as the Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch as major powers that influenced trade in the archipelago in the era of the Islamic kingdom, which ultimately continued with the conquest of regions in the archipelago with various motifs based on the 3G concept or what are known as Gold, Gospel, Glory.²⁸ By hyperbolizing stories about the services of Westerners to Indonesian trade, this will minimize the impact of the existence of Islam on Indonesian trade.

²³ Some of Anthony Reid's statements about Southeast Asia, Maritime cities such as Melaka, Sriwijaya and Banten play an important role in world trade. Until the commercial revolution in the seventeenth century, when the Dutch East India Company (VOC) built a regular and persistent shipping network to buy up some of the region's export products around the Cape of Good Hope, coinciding with the increase in Chinese shipping to Nanyang, the trade network in the region remained influential compared to commercial networks in other parts of the world (Anthony Reid, *Asia Tenggara dalam Kurun Niaga 1450-1680*. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1992, h. 9). Bahkan di halaman berikutnya, dia membandingkan perkembangan di zaman kurun niaga ini dengan zaman sebelum dan sesudahnya. Dia mengatakan bahwa kota-kota maritim yang saling berhubungan di kawasan ini lebih dominan pada periode ini dibandingkan periode sebelum maupun sesudahnya (Anthony Reid, *Asia Tenggara dalam Kurun Niaga 1450-1680*. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1992, h. 10).

²⁴Jajat Burhanuddin, *Islam dalam arus sejarah Indonesia* (Rawamangun, Jakarta: Kencana, 2017).

²⁵Azra, "Islam di 'Negeri Bawah Angin' dalam Masa Perdagangan."

²⁶ Louisa Balk et al., *The Archives of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and the Local Institutions in Batavia (Jakarta)* (BRILL, 2007).

²⁷Hanatul Ula Maulidya, *Jejak masuknya Islam di Indonesia*, ed. Oktavia Rokhimaturrizki (Surabaya: Media Edukasi Creative, 2022).

²⁸Endi Aulia Garadian, "Colonialism in the Malay Archipelago: Civilisational Encounters", by Osman Bakar, Ahmad Murad Merican, Wan Ali Wan Mamat (Eds), *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 179, no. 2 (June 2023): 275–78, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-17902001>.

Looking further into the 15th to 17th centuries, there is an interesting event that is not clearly highlighted, namely the Indonesian archipelago which has an important role in world trade. There are historical works that have discussed this but only explain the economic and trade structure of the Islamic kingdoms in the archipelago. There should be awareness of capturing a bigger event, namely the archipelago becoming one of the centers of gravity of world trade²⁹ and a depiction of the extraordinary intelligence of local authorities in playing a role in trade routes. They are able to map themselves on the world level and think consciously to manage their power in such a way, in the current struggle between western and eastern powers concentrated in the archipelago.

The awareness of the position of local authorities adjusted to geographic conditions and mapping of trade routes. In this case, for example, Islamic kingdoms in the eastern region of Sumatra always had contact with foreign traders compared to kingdoms on other islands of the archipelago. The location of the kingdom is opposite the location of the kingdom in Malaysia so that these two lands flank the Strait of Melaka which has extraordinary traffic density. Meanwhile, kingdoms in Java and other regions, although in this case they do not have the status of opening gates to the archipelago. However, these areas have a very important role in revitalizing trade in the Malacca Strait region.³⁰

From the description above, as in this case, the kingdom of Aceh³¹, which declared itself an Islamic sultanate, was located in a busy area where there were large powers who wanted to control the Malacca Strait. The struggle for influence was often commonplace in this region. On the other hand, Malacca-Portuguese became part of the conflict network in the Malacca Strait, where Johor and Aceh competed with each other to defeat each other and also defeat the Portuguese so that they became the true successor to Malacca.³²

The Kingdom of Aceh had to seek additional power so that control of the Strait of Malacca remained in their hands. As a strategic area for trade, and also multiethnic³³, the position of the Strait of Melaka was not only important for attracting tribute from ships, but it also made it easier for them to distribute pepper which made them important players in trade routes. Although Malacca's trade had since slowly declined, its importance was still evident, from its very advantageous position in controlling the strait, which was

²⁹Azra, "Islam di 'Negeri Bawah Angin' dalam Masa Perdagangan."

³⁰ The kingdoms in question are the Kingdoms of Banten, Cirebon, Mataram and Demak. However, according to some classical literature, Demak was not one of the kingdoms considered important by the VOC. This is proven by the VOC's method of conquering Java by controlling four kingdoms. These kingdoms are the Kingdoms of Banten, Jakarta, Mataram and Cirebon, for more details, see John Joseph Stockdale, *The Island of Java: sejarah tanah jawa*, trans. Ira Puspitorini and An Ismanto, 2nd ed. (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Indoliterasi, 2017). However, from several literatures the Demak kingdom also had an important position and played quite an influential role in international trade. In the XVI-XVII century the two cities (Jepara and Demak) were a mighty duality, related to this, see Hermanus Johannes de Graaf and Theodore G. Th Pigeaud, *De Eerste Moslimse Vorstendommen Op Java: Studiën over de Staatkundige Geschiedenis van de 15de En 16de Eeuw*, Verhandelingen van Het Koninklijk Instituut Voor Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde ('s-Gravenhage: M. Nijhoff, 1974).

³¹Amirul Hadi, *Aceh: sejarah, budaya, dan tradisi*, Edisi Pert (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2010).

³²Merle Cochran Ricklefs, *Sejarah Indonesia modern 1200-2008* (Jakarta: Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2008).

³³Leonard Y. Andaya, *Leaves of the Same Tree: Trade and Ethnicity in the Straits of Melaka* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2008).

only sixteen miles wide, where ships inevitably had to pass through this strait, which will sail to Java, Sumatra, Borneo (Kalimantan), and the Maluku Islands.³⁴

The Kingdom of Aceh was the first layer of territory before traders from outside Southeast Asia could stop and arrive in other areas of the archipelago. To strengthen this defensive wall, the Acehnese kingdom collaborated with the Ottoman Empire and the British Empire. The Kingdom of Aceh had trade relations with European traders who had received permission from Sir James Lancaster from England³⁵. Then the Aceh kingdom collaborated with the Ottoman Turks to protect it from Portuguese interference. Interaction between these two countries first occurred at the end of the 15th century and became more intense in 1538 when Turkey sent military aid to Aceh at the request of Sultan Alauddin al-Kahhar to attack the Portuguese.³⁶ In the seventeenth century, Aceh Dar al-Salam was renowned as a powerful Islamic Kingdom in the north of the island of Sumatra and a major pepper trading center.³⁷

Meanwhile, the Kingdom of Banten and the Kingdom of Demak had sufficient sources of spices originating from Sumatra, Sulawesi and small islands in the eastern region. The Kingdom of Banten positioned itself as a supplier of spices originating from the western wing of the archipelago. This kingdom controlled enough spice source areas to play a role in inter-oceanic trade. Banten monopolized the pepper trade in Lampung, Bengkulu and parts of Jambi.³⁸ Over time, Banten's position was not only as a transit city, but as a connecting kingdom between domestic and foreign traders³⁹.

Then the Banten kingdom became the main trading area on the western wing of the archipelago, so the Demak Kingdom took over the eastern wing. Spice commodities from the eastern region of the archipelago stop at Demak first before continuing to Malacca where they are then taken to various regions of the world.⁴⁰ Under Raden Trenggono's government, Demak tried to control the spice trade in the Maluku islands and expand its territory, and its main enemy was the Portuguese, so anyone who collaborated with the Portuguese would be attacked by Demak.⁴¹

Unlike other Islamic kingdoms, Mataram produced its own natural products to trade on trade routes. The Mataram Kingdom focused on increasing production and pacifying movements that damaged the rice distribution chain. The Mataram Kingdom was able to project rice needs for people inside and outside the archipelago.⁴² This

³⁴Major William Thorn, *Sejarah Penaklukan Jawa* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Indoliterasi, 2015).

³⁵ In 1602, Sultan 'Alauddin Riayat Syah Sayyid al-Mukammil issued a sarakarta (letter) bearing the royal seal as permission for Sir James Lancaster from England to dock and trade in the ports of the Aceh region. A permit is the most important capital for European traders to guarantee product safety and quality. For more details, See Syarifuddin and Sakti, *Praktik ekonomi dan keuangan syariah oleh kerajaan Islam di Indonesia*.

³⁶Syarifuddin and Sakti.

³⁷Sher Banu A. L. Khan, *Sovereign Women in a Muslim Kingdom: The Sultanahs of Aceh, 1641-1699* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2017).

³⁸Syarifuddin and Sakti, *Praktik ekonomi dan keuangan syariah oleh kerajaan Islam di Indonesia*.

³⁹Ikot Sholehah, *Perdagangan internasional kesultanan Banten akhir abad XVI-XVII* (Ponorogo: Uwais Inspirasi Indonesia, 2019).

⁴⁰Syarifuddin and Sakti, *Praktik ekonomi dan keuangan syariah oleh kerajaan Islam di Indonesia*.

⁴¹Abdul Aziz Medan, *Islam Jawa : Masa Demak dan Mataram* (Surabaya: Alpha, 2006).

⁴²Anthony Reid and Mochtar Pabotinggi, *Asia Tenggara dalam kurun niaga 1450-1680 : Jilid 1 Tanah dibawah Angin* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2011).

kingdom introduced rice as the main commodity so that this kingdom had great potential to become a player in trade routes.⁴³ As with Mataram, the Cirebon kingdom had its own way to enter the archipelago trade competition. The prime commodities of this kingdom (Cirebon) at that time were rice and wood.⁴⁴ All the actions of these kingdoms and sultanates show that there is an awareness of their position in playing a role in this inter-oceanic trade route.

The narrative about the greatness of the economic-political strategy of Islamic kingdoms needs to be brought to the surface of history. This narrative is the counterweight to other narratives that only show the role of superiority of 'outsiders' in the dynamics of the archipelago. Furthermore, this narrative also expands the theme of political history that does not only discuss war but also strategies to take a role in controlling and dominating the region. Then, the economic theme in history not only describes changes in trade routes, the circulation and distribution of spices, and the role of the VOC in the trade game, but also analyzes the kings and sultans of Islamic kingdoms that make the pulse of the world economy beat. If these narratives are not brought out, it produces the image of the Nusantara community as a passive actor in the Nusantara historical stage. If this narrative is staged, it will build the image of the Nusantara community as an important actor in its history.

Divide Et Impera as a Path to Glory

The strong position and economic foundation of these Islamic kingdoms actually meant that the colonialists were unable to directly exert pressure or wage war on the rulers of these kingdoms, but several loopholes were then exploited well, as in the case of the VOC which was able to taking advantage of the internal tensions that occurred in the kingdoms, by further sharpening internal conflicts and then carrying out politics of divide⁴⁵ (divide et impera) within the scope of royal power. After that, they supported one of the parties in the conflict and then destroyed the foundations of the kingdoms, most of which were Islamic sultanates, as happened in the kingdoms of Banten, Islamic Mataram, Banjar, Ternate-Tidore, and several kingdoms in Sumatra. In this case, the Banten Kingdom⁴⁶, for example, was split into two political powers between Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa and the crown prince Sultan Haji. In the Mataram kingdom, the VOC concluded an agreement which resulted in conflict between Pengeran Mangkubumi and Pakubowono III. Apart from that, when Sunan Amangkurat I signed the first agreement with the VOC which actually gave the VOC more freedom to infiltrate the Mataram Sultanate's

⁴³The VOC was fully aware that rice was a potential product in trade routes, so the VOC had a target to control rice producing areas. Therefore, it became important for the VOC to be able to control the Java region. For more details, see Daradjadi, *Geger Pacinan, 1740-1743: Persekutuan Tionghoa-Jawa Melawan VOC* (Jakarta: Penerbit Buku Kompas, 2013).

⁴⁴Heru Erwantoro, "SEJARAH SINGKAT KERAJAAN CIREBON," *Patanjala : Jurnal Penelitian Sejarah Dan Budaya* 4, no. 1 (March 2012): 166, <https://doi.org/10.30959/patanjala.v4i1.130>.

⁴⁵Claudia Schnurmann, "'Wherever Profit Leads Us, to Every Sea and Shore . . .': the VOC, the WIC, and Dutch Methods of Globalization in the Seventeenth Century," *Renaissance Studies* 17, no. 3 (September 2003): 474–93, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1477-4658.t01-1-00032>.

⁴⁶Eva Syarifah Wardah, *Konflik Sultan Haji terhadap Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa : Perbandingan Sumber Naskah dan Arsip* (Serang: Lembaga Penelitian Istitut Islam Negeri Banten, 2012).

territory.⁴⁷ Furthermore, just as happened in the Banten and Mataram kingdoms, the VOC took advantage of conflicts between royal princes which gradually reduced political influence and territory in the Banjar kingdom. In this case, as colonists who ultimately succeeded in controlling most of the archipelago, the VOC actually did not have a more sophisticated way to destroy the large kingdoms in the archipelago and could only produce internal royal conflict which succeeded in dividing the two kingdoms that were fighting each other.

Of course, the explanation above shows the strength of the solid economic foundation built by local authorities that could only be shaken by intensifying the frictions that occurred within the kingdom. This shows that the existence of Islamic kingdoms was so strong that it was difficult to shake them directly through external forces. This illustrates that Islamic kingdoms at this time were not only limited to extraneous exhibitions that only had a small influence on the life of the archipelago in the XV-XVII centuries. But they were part of the main exhibition that drives the history of the period.

CONCLUSION

Looking at the development of pre-colonial history, our view seems to be covered by social and political themes within the scope of the Islamic kingdom of the archipelago. It was as if that theme was special and important for the public to know about before Indonesia entered the gates of colonialism. In fact, there is something to be proud of at that time, namely how the rulers actually played an important role in enlivening international trade routes via maritime. These local rulers were aware of their position and had a clear view of the structure of the trade routes. So they were able to compete and fight for influence to become the kings of the archipelago's maritime lanes in the 15th-17th centuries. Some of the achievements they have created would not have been possible if they did not have a trading strategy and a sharp awareness of the trading map. Furthermore, at that time they were able to play a role where there were powers from the West and Middle East in the maritime trade contest. It cannot be denied that the XV-XVII century was an extraordinary century in Indonesian history.

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⁴⁷Richard Samuel, *Entitas-Entitas Baru Eks Mataram* (Yogyakarta: Calpulis, 2017).

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