

Malay Muslim History as Seen by Western Colonialist

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Abstract: Initiated by the Portuguese and since the early days of their presence, Europeans have been deeply involved in studying, collecting and documenting a huge number of historical works on the Malay Muslims around South East Asia. Next to the Portuguese, the Dutch which was peculiarly led by a company emerged to be the second European power to control not only the region but also the historical perspectives. The perspective of local history was then seen only from the Eurocentric view, the view that sees the history of the Malay Muslim world only from the European perspectives. Through this view, the presence of Europeans in this region was seen as the centre point of the historical writings. It was dubbed as the earliest European worldview in the Malay Muslim history as in the case of the Portuguese and the Dutch and was also true with the British when they joined the colonial rule in the Malay Muslim world particularly in the Malay Peninsular. This paper aims at discussing the perspectives of Europeans colonialists on the Malay Muslim History since the early days of colonialism. Two most dominant views were identified, the old and new views. The old view concerns more on the utilization of colonial sources in describing the Malay Muslim world. On the other hand, the new view concerns more on the utilization of local sources to describe the history of the local Malay Muslims.

Key words: Malay · Muslims · History · Europeans · Colonialism

INTRODUCTION

The coming of Portuguese and the siege of Malacca on Friday, 8 August or Sunday, 10 August 1511 marked the beginning of European colonial powers in the Malay world. The Portuguese take control Malacca for almost 130 years until it was wrested by the Dutch on 14 January 1641 [1]. The Dutch ruled Malacca for almost 183 years and it was the longest colonial period holding the port city. Although Malacca was no more considered as an important colonial port under the Dutch, it was hold in order to prevent other European powers to take control the city. The British become the third European colonial powers to control some major parts of the Malay world. The first is Penang which possessed by British from Kedah on 1 May 1791 and then Singapore in 1819 from Johore. Anglo-Dutch Treaty in 1824 has legally given the British power to control Malay Peninsular. The Malay Muslim world was then divided into two, Indonesia to the Dutch and Malay Peninsular to the British.

For almost 500 years the Malay Muslim world ruled by European colonial powers and the history was then told that the Malay Muslims struggling to preserve their identity and existence. Politically and economically, they have lost the control and that was regained after they have been granted independent. Unfortunately, there was an area where the Malay Muslims incapable to regain the control, the historical documentation. Colonialism is not only about political and economic domination but more importantly is about historical domination. Along 500 years of European colonialism in the Malay Muslim world, colonial historical records had enormously exceeded the local historical records in numbers and impacts. What was the impact of these records and how the history of Malay Muslims seen by these colonial records? This is among the crucial issues discussed in this paper.

Malay Muslim History as Seen by the Portuguese: Historical documentation is not lacking behind other priorities for the Portuguese when they were in the Malay

Muslim world. Since early years, Portuguese have dedicated their efforts to record the history of their presence in this region. As the first European power to set foot on the Malay soil, they emerged as the first European community to record the history of the Malay Muslim world. Brian Harrison in his book *South-east Asia A Short History* wrote [2],

“With the coming of the Portuguese to South-east Asia at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the first serious attempts were made to carry out what we might call regional surveys of the area... European travellers coming for the first time face to face with the strange peoples and civilizations of another continent over four hundred years ago.”

There are many early Portuguese writers dedicated their efforts to document the history of the Malay world. The first among them is Tome Pires. His *Suma Oriental*, published few years after 1511 was considered as the first book ever written on the history of the Malay Muslim world through the perspective of European colonial power. The book was among the most important historical works recorded the presence of the Portuguese in the Malay Muslim world. It was reported that the author himself witnessed the downfall of Malacca to the Portuguese and the suffering of the Malaccan people [2,3,4] Other significant writers are [2,3,5,6];

1. Alfonso de Alburquerque's son, Braz de Alburquerque who compiled a book based on his father's notes and diary. The book called *Comentarios do grande Affonso de Albuquerque*, published in 1557, was later translated into English and edited under the title of “*The Commentaries of the Great Alfonso Dalbuquerque, Second Viceroy of India*” by Walter de Gray Birch in 1875-1884.
2. Manuel Godinho De Eredia (1563-1623)[7] composed two major historical works. The first entitled *Malaca, l'Inde Meridionale et le Cathay (Malacca, Meridional India and Cathay)* written a century after the downfall of Malacca [2], and another one was *Report on the Golden Chersonese*, written during the years of 1597-1600.
3. Joao de Barros (1496-1570) [5] spent his scanty leisure hours compiling his great chronicle of *Deeds Done by the Portuguese in Their Discovery and Conquest of the Seas and Lands of the East*, and eventually published under the collective title of

Decadas da Asia. There are all together four *Decadas da Asia* written by Barros. The first three came out of the press in 1552, 1553 and 1563. The last one was published and revised by Joao Baptista Lavanha in 1615.

4. Diogo do Couto (1543-1616) the first keeper of the archives at Goa continued the effort of compiling *Decadas* of Joao de Barros and eventually followed his predecessor's practice of consulting Asian traditional history and source material especially of the Malay world through the medium of interpreters.
5. Fernao Lopes de Castanheda (1500-1559) wrote about the history of the East including the history of the Malay Muslim world. His *Historio do descobrimento e conquista da India pelos Portugueses* was first published in 1551-1561 and was later republished in four volumes at Coimbra, in 1924-1933.

There were also other early Portuguese writers and historians who concentrated their writings and collected the records on the history of the Malay Archipelago particularly the one related to the Portuguese people. Apart from the historical works written by the Portuguese writers and historians, there were also numerous government reports portraying the history of the Malay Muslim world, such as reports regarding the battles between Achehnese and the Portuguese [2,7] and a number of personal records, such as the personal record of Dom John de Castro, Governor of the House of Civil (1500-1548) in Malacca [8]. Almost all of these early Portuguese historical records represent their very own perspectives on the history of this region.

The Dutch:

Mass Storage of Malay Muslim Historical Sources: A huge number of historical events were recorded and preserved by the Dutch during their colonial rule in the Malay Muslim world. The voluminous manuscripts and printed matters filled the State Archives in The Hague. The records of Dutch East India Company (VOC) alone number over twelve thousand. The records of the Company's successor, the Netherlands Indian Government are ten times as numerous [9]. This has opened the doors of opportunities for historians and scholars to study and publish numerous publications. Arasaratnam wrote [10], “*A glance at a bibliography of the history of the VOC is sufficient to give one an idea of the treasure house of source material that must be extant to have made possible studies of such wide and varied*

nature." To name some of the most influential and earliest Dutch historians are J. de Jonge, J.A. van der Chijs, J.E. Heeres and F.W. Stapel, P.A. Tiele, Colenbrander, Van Leur and Schrieke. They have worked on voluminous Dutch historical documents and manuscripts including those preserved at the State Archives in The Hague and published massive number of books, articles and reports [9,10,11];

1. Jonge, Chijs, Heeres and Stapel published *De opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in Oost-Indie: Verzameling van onuitgegevene stukken uit het oud-koloniaal archief (1595-1814)* between 1862 and 1909 in two series, with a supplement. The first series consisted of documents related to the pre-Company voyages, the founding and development of the East India Company, and the extension of Dutch influence in Java.
2. The second series, edited by Tiele and Heeres and subtitled *Bouwstoffen voor de geschiedenis der Nederlanders in den Maleischen Archipel* dealt with the Company's possessions in Indonesia particularly outside Java island and comprised nineteen parts, bound in thirteen volumes.
3. Chijs and others edited *Dagh-Register gehouden int Casteel Batavia* (31 volumes published between 1887 and 1931) in which this series reproduced the daybook or journal of the Dutch East India Company's Batavia headquarters for various years between 1624 and 1682.
4. Heeres and Stapel in another instance had also edited *Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico-Indicum* which was published in six parts between 1907 and 1955 by the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal, Land en Volkenkunde). All contracts, agreements, and treatises between the Dutch East India Company on the one side and the Asian princes with whom the Company had commercial relations on the other side were compiled in this series.
5. Stapel had also written the third volume of the monumental 5-volume *Geschiedenis van Nederlandsche Indie* in which he attempted to describe the history of Asia. However, according to Arasaratnam [10] this history of Asia was written as if it was an adjunct to the history of Europe, "...the whole work reads more like the history of ports and factories than of the East Indies".
6. Working on the Dutch historical resources Colenbrander have published *Koloniale geschiedenis - Colonial History*.
7. Van Leur had extensively utilized the Dutch sources in order to compile the history of the economy and commerce of contemporary kingdoms in Java and Sumatra. The publication of his works, *On Early Asian Trade* (1934) and *Indonesian Trade and Society* (1955), marked for the first time the transition from the study of the Dutch history in Malay Archipelago into the study of the local Malay and Javanese history.
8. Schrieke's *Indonesian Sociological Studies* was written through sociological approach and based mainly on the sources from *Dagh Register* of Batavia. His study, although concerned with the Dutch monopolistic policy, was in fact focused more on the effects of the policy on the local trade particularly the Javanese trade in the 17th century.

As comparable to the Portuguese, it was discovered that there are two common tendencies of the Dutch historical sources. Firstly, regarding the common theme in their writings; the superiority of their colonial powers over the ignorance and powerlessness of the Malay Muslims. Secondly, there was a rampant utilisation of the colonial sources, its subject matters and its approaches during the process of writing.

The British and the History of Malay Muslim World:

Although they are the late comers joining the intellectual and historical documentation activities in the Malay Muslim world, the British had contributed a significant amount of historical documents including books, articles and reports. There are numerous historical works published by the British on the history of the Malay Muslim world. Among them are, Frank Swettenham, Lennox A. Mills, Rupert Emerson, William Roff, R.J. Wilkinson, R.O. Winstedt, Rentse, Lineham, Graham, Sheppard, Middlebrook, and Gullick. Swettenham, Mills and Emerson are famous for their works on the history of the Malay Muslims world through the British colonial perspectives. Roff is dubbed as "the first European" to write on the history of the Malay Muslims people from Malay local perspectives. Wilkinson, Winstedt, Rentse, Lineham, Graham, Sheppard, Middlebrook, and Gullick are among the scholar-administrators who dedicated their studies on the local Malay history including state histories, Malay sultanates and biographical studies [12]. Their studies provided us with more local sense in the history of Malay world.

Swettenham's *British Malaya*, completed in 1906 and was at that time considered as among the first British handmade on the history of the Malay world from an imperialist perspectives. In his book, Swettenham [13] described the role of the people in British Malaya within the economic and political activities. Lennox A. Mills's *British Malaya, 1824-1867*, (1925) and Rupert Emerson's *Malaysia* (1937) were written in the imperialist context, following Swettenham's views. Mills's *British Malaya* revealed the history of the Straits Settlements in the pre-Crown colony phase and their relations with Thailand, the Peninsula and Brunei. Another historian of British history in Malaya, Rupert Emerson, had written *Malaysia*. In his book he argued that "the incursion of European industrialism and "modernism" into Malaysia was no more and no less peculiar and "deplorable" than earlier Hindu and Islamic incursions." Emerson indeed inclined strongly that imperialism had been "a necessary bridge from Malaysian medievalism to the modern world" [12].

William Roff's 1967 *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* was among the earliest book in which Harry J. Benda mentioned, "...the first history of the Malays in modern times, strange as this may sound." In this book, Roff attempted to retrieve the historical contents of the Malay history which concerned and focused most on the Malays, and which also for so long had been neglected by the British historians. Roff also extensively utilised a wide range of sources on the local histories from a local viewpoint [12].

Early Perspectives of Colonial Powers on the History of Malay Muslim World: Generally, the chronicles and historical reports written and published by earlier Portuguese writers were rather biased towards upgrading their presence in the Malay region and degrading the invaded people and their historical writings. The reports were also superficial, and dealing mainly with their presence in this region as if the Malays and others were minors, and likewise it was coloured by prejudices as Harisson remarked [2], "These (Portuguese) surveys had their limitations; they were somewhat hasty and superficial, and rather coloured by prejudice...".

Tome Pires's observation concerned only with the period of transition from the Malay power to the Portuguese colonial power. His observation was rather biased towards portraying the superiority of the Portuguese and the weaknesses of the Malay people. Reporting the event of Portuguese conquering Malacca, Pires described how the great number of the Malaccan people and their strong troops were attacking the

Portuguese. In spite of small in number, the Portuguese had successfully won the battle and conquered Malacca and this obviously proved their greatness over the Malays. The report stated [14],

"At this time it is said that Malacca had a hundred thousand men-at-arms, from Kuala Linggi (Coala Penagy - Kuala Pelangi) to the hinterland (?) and Kasang (Cacam - Kesang), which are the limits of the city of Malacca. And the Malays had many strong palisades, and on the sea there were many lancharas, and paraos in the river, and on the sea many junks and Gujarat ships which were ready to fight."

Pires' tendency towards describing the greatness of the Portuguese in the battlefield could also be discovered in other Portuguese records, such as a personal record of a man called Roque Carreiro. Boxer [2,7] claimed that he was a Jesuit priest and director of the Hospital at Goa, who reported that a great number of Achenese exceeded to 19,300 were defeated by a small number of Portuguese soldiers on the 24 March 1629 battle defending the fort of Malacca. While on 19 February 1630 in the dispatch of the Malaccan Captain, Antonio Pinto da Fonseca, it was reported that provided with only 260 soldiers combined with 450 local soldiers, the Portuguese had successfully won the battle over 19,400 Achenese. Despite these Portuguese predispositions, the Malay accounts on the Portuguese arrival according to Reid are quite neutral and the battles between them were described in a fair contest of two honourable parties [15], "The real villains of the story are not the Portuguese, but the Malays who let the side down – Sultan Mahmud himself, and Raja Abdullah of Kampar who foolishly believes that the Portuguese will help him become the king of Melaka."

In another instance, Pires also described the stubbornness of the Sultan to accept the peace proposal from the Portuguese [14],

"As soon as the said Captain-Major arrived with his fleet, he spent a few days sending messages of peace, trying as much as he could to avoid war. However, the levity of the Malayans, and the reckless vanity and arrogant advice of the Javanese, and the king's presumption and obstinate, luxurious, tyrannical and haughty disposition – because our Lord had ordained that he should pay for the great treason he had committed against our people – all this together made him refuse the desire for peace."

Sixteenth century Portuguese accounts according to Macgregor were usually hostile towards local people [1], "...and talk of them as fierce fighters, but false and treacherous". Tome Pires also misunderstood the Malay culture and social lives by reporting that the word "Bengali" was called when a Malay wanted to insult someone else, especially regarding the first encounter between the Malays and the Portuguese as reported in *Sejarah Melayu* [16],

"After a while there came a ship of the Franks from Goa trading to Malaka: and the Franks perceived how prosperous and well populated the port was. The people of Malaka for their part came crowding to see what the Franks looked like; and they all astonished and said, "These are white Bengalis!" Around each Frank there would be a crowd of Malays, some of them twisting his beard, some of them fingering his head, some taking off his hat, some grasping his hand."

Pires also claimed that the Malays were likening the Portuguese with "Benggali Putih" (White Bengali) because they don't really like them as much as they like the Arabs and Indians [16]. Pires's report was not entirely true since the word Bengali was not deliberately used by the Malays to insult someone else. They usually used this word to describe the people originated from the Province of Punjab, a part of Indian continent. Because they never in their entire life came face to face with the Portuguese, and the physical appearance of the Portuguese looked similar to those from India during their first encounter in Malacca, they then called the Portuguese "white Bengalis". The above report from *Sejarah Melayu* clearly described the curiosity of the Malays and not their scornful attitude. In general, *Suma Oriental* of Pires was evidently biased towards others by degrading them especially the Malays and exaggerated the greatness of the Portuguese. Therefore, nothing much can be expected from this work in terms of providing a sufficient account of the Malay Muslim history.

Looking at the immensity and the richness of the Dutch historical sources during their heyday triggered our mind whether these sources could partly contain some information on the Malay Muslim history. Unfortunately as Irwin wrote [9], "It would be strange if so vast an accumulation did not contain information on at least some non-European subjects – information, moreover, which cannot be obtained from any other source." Definitely, these official Dutch sources portrayed the

Dutch lives and they were written from the European point of view neglecting other people's lives and worldviews particularly the Malay Muslims. Arasaratnam remarked [12], "The Asian scene is only secondary concern of the historians, taken into consideration only as providing the arena for the main Dutch actors." By this nature of the contents of the official Dutch reports, many Dutch historians later continued to broaden the view called *Europocentric* view [11], which was so much prevalent since the early days of their colonisation.

Works of Jonge, Chijs, Heeres and Stapel are some examples of the earliest Dutch contribution towards establishing and expanding the *Europocentric*. This was then continued by other Dutch historians. Stapel for instance, in his third volume of the monumental 5-volume *Geschiedenis van Nederlandsche Indie*, has attempted to describe the history of Asia. However, according to Arasaratnam, this history of Asia was written as if it was an adjunct to the history of Europe [12], "...the whole work reads more like the history of ports and factories than of the East Indies". Stapel's *Europocentric* view was also shared by Colenbrander in his *Koloniale geschiedenis - Colonial History* [11].

In another instance, there was an attempt to escape from this *Europocentric* historical view to the one that concerned more on local history and its people, called *Regiocentric* view. Resink mentioned, [11] *the regiocentric views served to increase appreciation for the intrinsically Indonesian elements and to reduce the over-estimation of cultural influences from abroad*" [17,18]. The works such as of Van Leur and Schrieke are some examples of this view. Among other Dutch scholars whose inclinations were more or less towards the *Regiocentric* view include the scholars such as Krom, Stutterheim, Lekkerkerker and Rassers. However, with the exception of Van Leur and Schrieke, others concentrated more on the study of the Javanese sources in which Resink specified the view as "*Javanocentric*" view and it was a particularisation of *Regiocentric* view.

In order to see the flow of the transition from the *Europocentric* to the *Regiocentric* views, the discussion will be focused on the works of Van Leur and Schrieke. The key to this transition depended mostly on the courage of the Dutch scholars to dig deeper into the vastness of the Dutch historical sources, for therein lay the real source of the history of the countries being studied. Van Leur for instance, had extensively utilized the Dutch sources in order to compile the history of the

economy and commerce of contemporary kingdoms in Java and Sumatra. The publication of his works, *On Early Asian Trade* (1934) and *Indonesian Trade and Society* (1955), marked for the first time the transition from the study of the Dutch history in Malay Archipelago into the study of the local Malay and Javanese history [10]. Van Leur, according to Soedjatmoko [19],

“...who first directed our attention to this (the destruction of the myth of the Dutch East India Company). He was also the one who showed that the places of foreign occupation in Indonesia left almost no traces of influence on the life and strength of the Indonesian states until well into the eighteenth century. We are indebted to him for destroying the myth of the East India Company and the myth of the decline and weakness of the Indonesian states in facing the Company.”

Van Leur was also among the pioneer of another later historical view called “*Indocentric*” view. This view was the result of the extensive study on *Bahasa Indonesia* or Indonesian Language, which is basically Malay language [11].

Unfortunately, Van Leur’s *indocentric* tendency is not highly regarded among the majority of Dutch writers. Only a few of them follow the footsteps of Van Leur. Pluvier mentioned [10], “If one looks at the names of authors or scholars referred to in Wertheim’s chapter *The Sociological Approach to Indonesian History* one is struck by the small number of Dutch historians venturing in this direction.” Sociologists such as Schrieke and Wertheim were keener than historians to apply this sociological approach to history. Schrieke’s *Indonesian Sociological Studies* was based mainly on the sources from *Dagh Register* of Batavia. His study, although concerned with the Dutch monopolistic policy, was in fact focussed more on the effects of the policy on the local trade particularly the Javanese trade in the 17th century. Although they were mostly depended on the sources obtained from the Dutch records, Van Leur and Schrieke had indeed successfully escaped from the *Europocentric* view by concentrating more on the region they mainly described. This might be due to the reason as Arasaratnam mentioned [10], “Those of us whose main concern is the writing of the history of Asian states where the contact with the Dutch is but one part, though an important one, of the story, would be looking in the Dutch records for something different from the historian of Dutch settlements in Asia.”

However, it is premature to say that Van Leur and Schrieke had completely and successfully escaped from the *Europocentric* view. Firstly, as Irwin reminded [9], “Official Dutch accounts surely portray Dutch, not Indonesian, life and actions. They are written from a European, not an Asian, point of view.” An important question arose; how far both Van Leur and Schrieke could escape from the *Europocentric* point of view? They might change the focus of the story, from the stories of Dutch settlements to the local stories but could they possibly change the perspective of Europeans which was firmly embodied in their intellectual competency? Secondly, the root of Van Leur’s *Regiocentric* view particularly the *Indocentric* is *Europocentric*, as Resink further remarked [12], “That Van Leur’s *Indocentric* view springs from a *Europocentric* frame of reference and finds expression in Dutch scholarly terms...” In here something should be doubted; Van Leur’s transitional view might only involve the subject matter of history and not the historical methods and the approaches. If this is the case, as far as this study is concerned, the history of Malay Archipelago is still imprisoned in the “iron bars” of the Dutch colonial intellectualism.

The view that colonial powers are the centre of the historical writings is the earliest European worldview in the Malay history as in the case of the Portuguese and the Dutch. This is also true with the British when they joined the colonial rule in Malay Archipelago particularly in the Malay Peninsular. The trend to put their history over the top of the Malay history seemed to expand more rapidly and at times it became more rampant. They even put their colonial power at the paramount of the history although in some affairs and occasions they were actually minors. The person who claimed to be responsible for the growth and the expansion of these colonial worldviews in the study of history around the British Empire during the late nineteenth-century was John Robert Seeley. Seeley held the Regius Chair of Modern History in Cambridge from 1869 to 1895 where he ceaselessly promoted the colonial political hegemonic viewpoint in his lectures which then became the major theme of his 1883 *The Expansion of England*. The first half of *The Expansion of England* concerned with the history of the First British Empire and the second half concerned with India. His analysis was wholly political in which he ceaselessly discuss on how the British conquered India and how they have governed India. Seeley’s analysis and views were then discovered to be so appealing to the later British historians as West noted, “Forty years or more after

Seeley had lectured in Cambridge, the echoes of his theme still lingered in the preface to the first volume of the *Cambridge History of British Empire* published in 1929" [20].

Swettenham's *British Malaya*, completed in 1906 and was at that time considered as among the first British handmade on the history of the Malay world, obviously contained the similar theme echoed by Seeley. Apart from portraying the greatness of the British colonial empire, he was prejudiced over the Malays. For instance, he argued that the prosperity of the Federated Malay States during his times was due to three factors. First, the role of the Chinese immigrants working in the tin-mining industry; second, the Europeans miners and planters who brought new mining techniques, new crops and the Indian labouring community and finally, the British officers who served the Malay government and from whom the law and order had been passed and imposed. However, he claimed that the Malays did not play any significant role. Instead the British were the ones who were so kind to them by granting them the independence and extended the happiness and prosperity to their lives. On the contrary, William Roff dubbed Swettenham's views as the "creation of the myth" of British Malaya. Swettenham's book was harshly criticised by scholars including the British and western scholars such as William Roff and Richard Winstedt. Sir Richard Winstedt for instance pointed out, "*His education had not been such as to qualify him for research*" and in his short comment McIntyre declared, "*Swettenham's book had long been out of date*" [14].

Lennox A. Mills's *British Malaya, 1824-1867*, (1925) and Rupert Emerson's *Malaysia* (1937) were written in the imperialist context, following Swettenham's views. Mills's *British Malaya* revealed the history of the Straits Settlements in the pre-Crown colony phase and their relations with Thailand, the Peninsula and Brunei. Although he attempted to style his writing in such a neutral way, his conclusions were unfortunately quite parallel to Swettenham's views. In one of his conclusions Mills said, "*It is to the British Government alone, and most especially to the Government of the Straits Settlements, that the Malay States of the Peninsula owe the preservation of their independence.*" Another historian of British history in Malaya, Rupert Emerson, had written *Malaysia*. In his book he argued that "*the incursion of European industrialism and "modernism" into Malaysia was no more and no less peculiar and "deplorable" than earlier Hindu and Islamic incursions.*" Emerson indeed inclined strongly that

imperialism had been "*a necessary bridge from Malaysian medievalism to the modern world*"[12]. The works of Swettenham, Mills and Emerson illustrated the earlier trend of the British writings on the history of this region which also represented the *old view* of the British historians and scholars. There were other numerous British historical writings that concerned more on the history of their colonial power within this region. Burns wrote [21], "*There has been considerable research in Malaya's history in both the United Kingdom and Malaya. This research has been primarily concerned with the establishment and extension of British political authority in the region of the Malay Peninsula.*" Their works indeed represented the *Europocentric* view, which perceived the history of this region as the history of British Empire and therefore must be subjected to the British imperialist interests.

Then came the transitional stage, in which the old British view is about to be replaced by the new view. William Roff's 1967 *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* was among the earliest book to represent the British "new view" in looking at Malay Muslims history. In this book, Roff attempted to retrieve the historical contents of the Malay history which concerned and focused most on the Malays, and which also for so long had been neglected by the British historians. Roff also extensively utilised a wide range of sources on the local histories from a local viewpoint [12,22,23] Roff's work, therefore, should be considered as among the earliest British historical works that attempted to set free the British historical views from the *Europocentric* and bring them closer to the *Regiocentric* [12]. It was a transition from the old view to the new view, which later became the most consistent trend in the Malay historiography during pre 1950. Despite the emergence of the new trend among the British scholars, the study of Malay history did not actually move forward and improve tremendously. On the contrary, more problems were inflicted especially on the concept of Malay history itself. In this respect, Bottoms wrote [24],

"*Although in the past, the greatest services to Malay scholarship have been rendered almost exclusively by "expatriates" such as Marsden, Leyden, Raffles, W.E. and C.N. Maxwell, Wilkinson, and Winstedt, paradoxically the very fact of British protection and intellectual interest has previously inhibited the growth of local interest and activity in these fields. Much of the present written history has been written through Western eyes, in terms of Western concepts, and from non-native sources.*"

Later Perspectives of Colonial Powers on the History of Malay Muslim World: Later perspectives soon to be viewed as a new view. It was seen as a historical view in which the history of the Malay Muslims is the focal point, and it could be possible in any case through the utilisation of colonial and foreign or local sources. As discussed earlier, the tendencies in the study of Indonesian history by the Dutchmen changed from the *Europocentric* view to the *Regiocentric* view and finally to the *Indocentric* view. The flow of these changes had briefly demonstrated how the new views such as *Regiocentric* and *Indocentric* emerged. Meanwhile, *Indocentric* view pioneered by Van Leur was an example of the transition from the study of colonial history to the local history by utilising the colonial sources. Local sources such as the Javanese and the Malays were also being utilised by the historians during their course of study on local history since the Portuguese and the Dutch periods [12].

Due to the immense sources of the Dutch colonial history and the scarcity of the Portuguese sources, people tend to pay more attention on the contribution of the Dutch scholars rather than the Portuguese on the emergence of the new view [25]. However, Dutch scholars were in fact not the first colonial intellectuals that were solely responsible for the emergence of the new views. The study of the local Malay history had already taken place during the Portuguese era. Joao de Barros for instance, was not only the first great “colonial” historian but he was also regarded as a “pioneer Orientalist”. He had a life long interest in the lands and people of Asia and had also collected a number of Asian manuscripts including Persian, Arabic, Indian and Chinese. To facilitate his interest, he had also hired some Asian educated slaves and freemen to do the translation for him. Regarding the Malay sources, he had also attempted to obtain a chronicle of the Malay rulers of Malacca, “...but in this, unfortunately, he was unsuccessful. Nevertheless, he was able to secure and record the story of *Parameswara as the founder of Malacca*” [2]. Apart from Barros, there might be other Portuguese writers and explorers who followed his “oriental” trend, studying local Malay texts and attempted to give some reviews on them [26,27]. Nevertheless, the lack of information and resources on their early works on local Malay Muslims history prevents current researchers to explore the facts. Further studies might hopefully be able to excavate more information and resources and direct future researchers to explore more on this topic. However, based on the above fact it was already sufficient to draw the conclusion that

the new view had already emerged within the intellectual legacy of the Portuguese.

On the Dutch side, Francois Valentijn, a missionary-historian was claimed to be among the earliest Dutch historian interested in the study of Malay local sources. In his *Nieuwe en Oude Oost India* published in 1726, he mentioned some three Malay literary works in his possession including *Taju's-salatin* or *Mahkota Segala Raja-raja (the Crown of Kings)*, *Misa Gomitar*, probably the text known to us now as *Misa Kumitar*, a Panji tale, and *Kitab Hantoewa* or *Hang Tuah*, which according to Valentijn was also known as *Sulalatus-Salatin*. Valentijn's supposition on this final book, according to Ismail Hussein [28], was obviously confusing since *Sulalatus-Salatin* was in fact just another title for *Sejarah Melayu* and not the *Hikayat Hang Tuah*. However, regardless of his confusion, Valentijn's awareness of the existence of the Malay literature works and his concern over their values had proved that the new view was about to progress. In addition, Valentijn and his contemporary Werndly had also studied *Hikayat Kalila dan Damina* before 1726 and 1736 respectively [29].

Later, from the early nineteenth century to the twentieth century, we have seen an increasing number of Dutch scholars studying local history through local perspectives, especially by utilising the local sources. Among them were Van Vollenhoven and Ter Haar who studied *adat* law, Krom, Stutterheim, Lekkerkerker and Berg who studied the Javanese legacies, and the administrative scholars such as Snouck Hurgronje and academicians such as Drewes. Apart from them, there were countless Dutch scholars who associated their studies with British scholars in the later stages. The medium of their writings was also not restricted by Dutch language and in fact English as well as local languages such as Malay language were also used. Furthermore, the establishment of the archives and the centres of higher learning such as University of Leiden and its manuscripts centre stimulated further the research activities [30]. The *new view* flourished to the higher level especially when the British scholars joined this intellectual expedition. Unfortunately, for the Malay historical sources in particular and the Malay history in general, the Dutch oriental studies did not positively contribute to the development of a proper Malay concept of history. Al-Attas comments might well explain this issue [30,31], “Almost none of the Dutch “orientalists” of Malay Indonesian Islam have made any real contribution to Islamic studies with reference to the Malay civilization in the international sphere.”

The British “old views” were represented by the writings of Swettenham, Mills and Emerson which concerned mostly on the superiority of the imperial hegemonic power. There was however a “new view” emerged in pre-1950 historiography of nineteenth-century Malaya and it then became the most consistent trend in the study of local Malay history [12]. Wilkinson, Winstedt, Rentse, Lineham, Graham, Sheppard, Middlebrook, and Gullick were among the scholar-administrators who dedicated their studies on the local Malay history including state histories, Malay sultanates and biographical studies [12]. Their studies provided us with more local sense in the history of Malay world. Although the trend of localising the history of the Malay world by putting the Malays and their affairs at the paramount of the history was criticized by some historians, it continued to attract a vast majority of scholars to dedicate their efforts. Local Malay history then became the most dominant theme in the studies conducted by most of the orientalist on the history of Malaya [12].

As the local history became a new dominant theme in historical writings, British historians and scholars had to utilise whatever sources available to them, local as well as foreign sources in order to facilitate their studies and writings. Western sources as discussed earlier were so limited in terms of providing a thorough data and information regarding the history of the locals. Even the innumerable sources of the Dutch were unable to meet the demands of the Malay historical studies in this period. West noted [22], “*Nor is it too difficult to recognise that the European records which survive are written in terms of European concepts: sovereignty... and therefore are of limited value as a straightforward record of what the indigenous people were really like.*” Therefore most of the British scholars had to depend on the local sources. Generally, local sources were the historical sources of the Malays written and compiled by the Malays or conveyed down through oral stories from their ancestors in the form of prose or poetry [32]. It was strongly believed that although the British scholars were in need of these classical texts, they were also restrained by their narrowed modern methods which valued the classical Malay historical texts as insufficient in providing the accurate and precise historical data and information. This is obvious as Bottoms remarked [26], “*And even when native sources have been used, the approach has still sometimes been made from a Western viewpoint. This has been true for both Malaya and Indonesia.*”

Later British scholars encountered other difficulties in studying Malay historical texts. Partly because they lacked the skills of Malay language and in addition it was also due to their unawareness of the existence of the texts. Bottoms explained [26],

“But for the most parts of these Malay sources have not yet been translated into English: and they are normally difficult of access, being tucked away in the great museums and libraries in manuscript form, in Jawi script. Thus, though they may contain material of use to the modern historian, the latter cannot or does not use them either because he does not know Malay, or because he may not be aware of the existence of the material.”

As a landmark of further contention in this study, Winstedt’s *A History of Classical Malay Literature* was selected as the basis of the argument. Sir Richard Olof Winstedt [33] was one of the most prominent British scholars who dedicated most of his entire life here in Malaya then, studying Malay language, culture, history, and literature including the Malay classical texts [36,34]. His *A History of Classical Malay Literature* which was first published in 1939 might be considered as a comprehensive study on the Malay classical literature texts. His extensive study was indeed too valuable to be neglected in this discussion since no other western scholars were able to dedicate similar efforts on such a gigantic study on Malay literature as Winstedt did so far.

As early as in his preface, Winstedt claimed [31], “*Any one who surveys the field of Malay literature will be struck by the amazing abundance of its foreign flora and the rarity of indigenous growths.*” This claim showed that Winstedt obviously attempted to prove the imitation and artificial aspects of the Malay literature, as if the Malay literature was not really the product of the original Malay intellectuals. Tregonning had earlier restated Winstedt’s trend [35], “*When reading Winstedt, it is well to bear in mind the comment of the Dutch scholar, P. de Josselin de Jong, that ‘the overrating of Indian influence is almost a tradition in British studies on Malaya’.*” In a more lucid example given in his book, Winstedt argued that the story of Hang Tuah being concealed by Bendahara originated from the story of *Ramayana*, in which it told the story of Laksamana being concealed by Hanoman until Rama came to his senses [31]. Although the stories resembled, Winstedt should not directly judge

that the contents of Malay literary texts existed from the Indian continent. There were in fact Malay and Javanese versions of *Ramayana* and *Mahabrata* scattered around this region and both great books had been assimilated into the Malay culture. Therefore, it was difficult to understand why Winstedt was so convoluted to refer to the books in Indian culture albeit they had existed in the Malay culture a long time ago. According to Ismail Hussein [32], “*This is a totally unacceptable approach to me because the development of Ramayana and Mahabharata must be seen in the context of Nusantara first, before one shifts to India.*”

Next, after scanning through the table of content in his book we will ultimately be agitated by his division of the Malay classical texts. Firstly, he placed the Malay classical historical texts as a sub-division of the Malay classical literature texts [31]. Through this argument, Winstedt had narrowed down the classical Malay historical texts into a particular sub-division of Malay literature in general. This fact brought us to understand that he did not value other numerous classical Malay literature texts as historical texts or at least having Malay historical values that need to be considered during the writing of any part of the Malay history [30]. Secondly, for the other sub-division, he divided them according to the degrees of foreign influences contained in the texts. First, the Malay folk literature in which Winstedt claimed was influenced by Hinduism and Buddhism. Second, the group of Hindu period consisted of the Indian epics, shadow-play (*wayang kulit*) and romances. Third, the group of Javanese elements in which the *Hikayat Hang Tuah* was labelled as “*a transformation of history into mythology or rather a magical equation of history and mythology.*” Hang Tuah who was considered as a figure of a Malay hero in the history of Malacca, Winstedt claimed, was transformed into a mythology based on the Javanese elements contained in Panji, a Javanese literature text, and finally, the group of Muslim literature texts which flocked this region after the emergence of Islam. The texts contained the stories of the Muslim heroes, such as the stories of the Prophet Muhammad (*peace and blessing be upon him*), his companions and later Muslim figures, the stories and tales from Persian legacies and also Muslim history “proper” as most of the westerners claimed [31].

As a result of Winstedt’s classification over the classical Malay literature mentioned above, the texts that should be considered as historical texts or having the

historical values are so few [30]. Malay literature texts will only be considered as historical texts as long as their subject matters were “*more indigenous than any other type of Malay prose*”[31] This fact brought us to understand that Winstedt had intentionally tried to confine the understanding upon the Malay historical texts and this was clearly a type of western narrowed perspective on the Malay literature texts. The fact did not stop at this point as it was found that the narrowed perspective became narrower and shallower when the rare group of Malay historical texts were claimed to contain many unhistorical facts. See for instance Winstedt’s comments on the *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa*,[31] “*Were it not for a colophon giving a list of Kedah rulers, a preface copied from later recensions of the Malay Annals and the borrowing of the Arabic title of those chronicles, the Hikayat Merang (or Marong) Mahawangsa would never have been styled the Kedah Annals or accepted as serious history.*”

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Being the first colonial power to take control the Malay Muslim states, the Portuguese had also proved to be the first European power to record and document the history of this region in a large scale. Almost every detail of their presence in this region was composed and preserved since their early days. Their dedication has shown that history is a matter of nation’s pride and the most precious gift to their king. As such, early Portuguese writers had served their country and king to the extent that whatever happened in the Malay Muslim region is considered the history of the Portugal outside of their land. As a result, local Malay Muslims were almost unheard inside these early historical writings. Further survey however indicated that there was an attempt by some Portuguese writers to look into the Malay Muslims history including their local historical works. Unfortunately, due to the lack of resources no comprehensive conclusion can be made to show that the Portuguese are very concern about the Malay Muslims history. What was clearly seen in their perspectives to this point is that the Malay Muslims history is seen as insignificant to the history of Portugal. This is true according to Brian Harrison statement [2], “*These (Portuguese) surveys had their limitations; they were somewhat hasty and superficial, and rather coloured by prejudice...*”.

At earlier point, the Dutch writers are far more insignificant in looking at the Malay Muslims history as compared to the Portuguese. They have an immense resource and a gigantic store of historical manuscripts on the history of this region but choose to ignore the presence of the Malay Muslims in history. They have broadened the Eurocentric view on looking at the history of this region. Fortunately, at another points they have improved their understanding upon the importance of the history of local Malay Muslims and the used of local resources to represent the history of this region.

This was then followed by the British, although at early stage they had also looking at the history if this region from Eurocentric perspectives. Thanks to a number of British administrators cum scholars whose dedication makes possible for the Malay Muslims history and resources expanded and preserved. For instance, one should acknowledge the contribution of Winstedt in doing the best he could do to the study of Malay history in spite of a number of his negative comments. His contributions were so great until even local Malay scholars could not deny them. Za'ba wrote in his own words [37], "*Pada keseluruhan-nya Sir Richard ada-lah berhak mendapat terima kaseh daripada sakalian orang Melayu yang mengambil berat dalam hal pengajian Melayu...*" Read, "*In general, Sir Richard Winstedt is entitled to have an acknowledgment from the Malays who concerned more about the Malay studies...*" However, we also have to be fair to the Malay Muslims history and literature and therefore Winstedt works and the works of other colonial scholars and writers should be examined through a proper academic approach without prejudice.

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11. Resink, G.J., 1968. Indonesia's history between the myth; essays in legal history and historical theory, The Hague: W. Van Hoeve Publishers Ltd., pp: 7.
12. Winstedt emphasised on Malay language, culture and institutions, and Emerson on his political scientist's demand for a conceptually acceptable framework. Both approaches then became precursors of much recent research. See further McIntyre, "Malaya From the 1850's to the 1870," pp: 267.
13. Sir Frank Swettenham was born on March 28, 1850 at Belper, Derbyshire, England and died on June 11, 1946. He was a London British colonial official in Malaya who was highly influential in shaping the British policies and the structure of British administration in the Malay Peninsula. See further Barlow, H.S., 1995. Swettenham, Kuala Lumpur: Southdene Sdn. Bhd., pp: 1-31.

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17. Pluvier in another instance, had also included Vlekke and de Graaf in the list and maintained that their works were to be less Europocentric. Consecutively Vlekke's work was considered as the first attempt and de Graaf's as the second attempt to escape from the view of Europocentric. See further Pluvier, J.M., 1967. *Recent Dutch Contributions to Modern Indonesian History. Journal of Southeast Asian History* (1967), 8. Pp. 205-206. Meanwhile, Harry J. Benda in his quest for the Southeast Asian structure of history used the term "Southeast Asia-centric" in describing the view of Van Leur.
18. Benda, H.J., 1962. "The Structure of Southeast Asian History: Some Preliminary Observations," *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 3: 117.
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20. West, F.J., 1960. "The study of colonial history", *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 1, 70-82, pp: 70.
21. Burns, P.L., 1962. *Introduction to English language sources in the Federation of Malaya*. In *Malaysian Historical Sources*, Ed Tregonning, K.G., Singapore: University of Singapore, pp: 20.
22. Roff used a number of Malay local sources based on the perspectives of the local people whenever the topic related directly to the Malay interest. See for instance Roff, W. R., 1967. *Origins of Malay Nationalism*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press. pp: 1-31.
23. Cowan, C.D., and O.W. Wolters (eds.), *Southeast Asian history and historiography; essays presented to D.G.E Hall* (pp. 262 - 284), Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp: 264-265.
24. Bottoms, J.C., 1965. *Some Malay Historical Sources: A Bibliography Note*. In *An Introduction To Indonesian Historiography*, Eds Soedjatmoko, Mohammad Ali, G. J. Resink and G. Mc T. Kahin, New York: Cornell University Press, pp: 179-180.
25. As Andaya and Andaya stated, "Undoubtedly the most valuable European material for the early modern period is contained in the archives of the Dutch East India Company (VOC). The seventeenth century Dagh-Register, or Daily Register from the VOC's Asian headquarters at Batavia, has long been available to scholars in published form." See further Andaya, L. Y. and B. W. Andaya, "Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Period; Twenty-five Years On," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 26, 1 (March 1995): 94.
26. Interestingly, the role of Goa as the centre for the scholarly studies of the Portuguese was never clearly exposed. There was Jesuit studies centre, the centre where Eredia was educated. However, its role was never been exposed as a centre for the Malay textual studies. Some scholars who believed that the text of *Sejarah Melayu* was preserved in Goa, India after the downfall of Malacca might look forward to see its function as a learning centre, in which the study of Malay texts is among its niches. However, with the absent of the evidence, their view so far could not be defended. See further A. Samad Ahmad (ed.), *Sulalatus Salatin, Sejarah Melayu*, (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1996), xxiii - xxvi.
27. *Sulalat al-Salatin Ya'ni Perteturun Segala Raja-raja*. Ed.Salleh, M., Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Karyawan dan Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. pp: xii.
28. Hussein, I., 1966. "The study of traditional Malay literature", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JMBRAS)*, 39(2): 1-22, p: 3.
29. Winstedt, R.O., 1961. "A history of classical Malay literature", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JMBRAS)* 31 (3), 1-261, pp: 98-103.
30. Al-Attas, S.M.N., 1975. *Comments On The Re-Examination Of Al-Raniri's Hujjatu'l-Siddiq: A Refutation*, Kuala Lumpur: National Museum of Malaysia, pp. 7-8. Al-Attas's views must not be taken as an exaggerated criticism. His sharp criticism upon Dutch scholars, such as Drewes in his book was put together in an academic way and based on a number of strong and precise arguments. One must read his book to the final words and as a comparison one must also read.

31. Drewes, 1974. "Nur al-Din Al-Raniri's Hujjat a;-Siddiq li daf' al-Zindiq, re-examined," in *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 47(2): 83-104.
32. The sources usually include the Hikayats, Kitabs, notes and other written and oral traditions such as the Malay pantun and syair. These sources often referred as the Malay classical literature. "The sources do exist, and were widely used by the older generation of writers - all of them fine Malay scholars mentioned above (such as Marsden, Leyden, Raffles, W.E. and C.N. Maxwell, Wilkinson and Winstedt)." See further Bottoms, J.C., 1962. *Malay Historical Works In Malaysian Historical Sources*, edited by Tregonning, K.G. Singapore: University of Singapore, 36.
33. Sir Richard Olof Winstedt was born on Aug. 2, 1878, at Oxford and died on June 2, 1966 in London. He was a director of education in British Malaya who shaped Malay education and produced an extensive body of writings on Malaya. See further his biography and writings in Bastin, J., *Sir Richard Winstedt and His Writings*. In *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, Eds Bastin, J. and R. Roolvink, 1-23.
34. Winstedt's inclination towards Malay history began when he produced in collaboration with Daing Abdul Hamid bin Tengku Muhammad Salleh in 1918 *Kitab Tawarikh Melayu*, the first scientific work on Malay history written in Malay language. See further Ahmad, Z. A., *Sumbangan Sir Richard Winstedt Dalam Penyelidikan Pengajian Melayu*. in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, Eds Bastin, J. and R. Roolvink, pp. 333. His interest from thereon developed further when his *Shaman, Saiva and Sufi* was published in 1925.
33. Tregonning, K.G., 1964. *A History Of Modern Malaya*, London: Eastern Universities Press Ltd., pp: 13.