



ASEAN  
STUDIES  
CENTER

FACULTY OF SOCIAL & POLITICAL SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITAS GADJAH MADA

# **NOTHING LEFT TO KNOW: STAMFORD RAFFLES' MAP OF JAVA AND THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF EMPIRE**

**WORKING PAPER NO. 3 - NOVEMBER 2014**

# NOTHING LEFT TO KNOW:

## STAMFORD RAFFLES' MAP OF JAVA AND THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF EMPIRE

Working Paper No. 3 - November 2014

### Farish A Noor

Fellow at ASEAN Studies Center, Universitas Gadjah Mada

Head of the RSIS Doctoral Program, S Rajaratnam School of International Studies RSIS

Nanyang Technological University NTU

Working Papers are research materials published by ASEAN Studies Center, Universitas Gadjah Mada for the purpose of disseminating informations and analysis. Comments and Questions should be directed to [aseansc@ugm.ac.id](mailto:aseansc@ugm.ac.id)

## I. *Mapping and Power*: Colonial cartography in the service of Empire

The census, the map, and the museum: together, they profoundly shaped the way in which the colonial state imagined its dominion – the nature of the human beings it ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its ancestry.<sup>1</sup>

**Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.**

This paper looks at the role of colonial cartography, and the relationship between maps and colonial power. It focuses on one map in particular, the map of the island of Java, that appears in the work *The History of Java*<sup>2</sup>(1817) by Thomas Stamford Raffles, first Lieutenant-Governor of Java and the man credited with the discovery of many of its ancient ruins.

Much has already been written about Raffles and the divisive nature of his legacy is evident in the fact that he has as many admirers as well as detractors in the scholarly field.<sup>3</sup> The merits or demerits of Raffles the man, and his work *The History of Java*, are not, however, the subjects of this paper but rather the map that came with the book. The fundamental question I wish to address is this: Does Raffles' map of Java tell us more about the men who made it than it does about the island of Java itself? If maps can be read as more than pictorial representations of topography, then what else can be read off the map of Java that Raffles produced? My argument is that Raffles' mapping of Java went hand-in-hand with his colonial-capitalist objectives, and it reflected the mind-set of colonial functionaries and company men, for whom Java was never simply another island to be explored, but also a market to be dominated and controlled, a territory to be defended, a data-bank to be analysed and ordered, and a collection of antiquities to be categorised, inventorised and vaulted in a colonial museum.

---

<sup>1</sup>Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso Press, London. 1983. pp. 163-164.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Stamford Raffles, *The History of Java*, Black, Parbury and Allen, booksellers to the Hon. East India Company, and John Murray, London. 1817.

<sup>3</sup>For a critical assessment of Raffles' role in the colonisation of Java and the East Indies, see, for example: Tim Hannigan, *Raffles and the British Invasion of Java*, Monsoon Books, Singapore. 2012; C. E. Wurtzburg, *Raffles and the Massacre at Palembang*, in *The Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 22, part 1, 1949. Pp. 38-52.

We need to begin with the premise that maps are never simply maps. Here is where we encounter the puzzle of maps and map-making, and it is more an epistemic puzzle than a practical one. For if we were to start off with the Platonic premise that all forms of representation are merely that: *re-presentations* of things as they really are; then all representations are to be regarded as counterfeit. What, then, is a *map*? And how do maps *map* the world? Granted that all maps are necessarily the product of human agency, and are invariably tainted by subjective bias and the cultural perspectivism of the cartographer, they nevertheless need to correspond to some reality in order to fulfil their functions as maps that map. But as representations of the world, they merely stand for the thing that they represent. The early Wittgenstein would refer to this as the process of ‘mirroring’ or ‘modelling’ the world; though Heidegger would interject by noting that the world of the *thing-in-itself* can never be known directly, but only through a (flawed, limited and subjective) human perspective. Taken in broad strokes, the upshot of this argument is that a map of Asia therefore does not really ‘discover’ Asia, but it really *invents* Asia as it goes along. (Some might object to this argument on the ground that maps picture things as they are in the world, but that would miss the point: While it cannot be denied that things exist in the world, the more fundamental question is *how* those things come to be *regarded* as the things they *are* in the first place; which can only be a matter subjectively decided: Elevations of earth and rock exist, but whether they exist as mountains or hills is a matter of subjective human judgement, and lie not in the things-in-themselves.<sup>4</sup>)

Beginning from this premise – of the constructed nature of maps and their representations of reality – we need to revisit the history of representations of Java, and look at how Raffles’ map of it was the latest in a long series of attempts to know the other and close the epistemic gap.

---

<sup>4</sup>There is, in fact, *no universal standard* that distinguishes the difference between hills and mountains; and the criteria differs from country to country. The American designation of a mountain is any land mass that rises to the height of a thousand feet, while in the United Kingdom mountains need to be taller, up and beyond two thousand feet. One nation’s mountain is another nation’s hill, evidently.

## II. *The bottomless pool of data* : Knowledge, mapping and closing the epistemic gap

Imperialism after all is an act of geographical violence through which every space in the world is explored, charted and eventually brought under control.<sup>5</sup>

**Edward Said**

Once upon a time, the island of Java had no bottom. Or rather, Java had no southern coastline to speak of.

That the fertile and populous island of Java could have a barren southern coastline is something that strikes most scholars today as bizarre. Yet this was the impression of Java that is found in the map of the island by Petrus Bertius (b.1565-d.1629), whose map of Java was included in the portable atlas *CaertThresoor*, which was published by Jodocus Hondius in 1616.<sup>6</sup> Ten years earlier the cartographer had published another version of the same map, though the 1606 version features a slightly ‘fatter’ Java that was shorter in length from East to West.<sup>7</sup> Bertius’s map of Java, small though it was, was nonetheless detailed in many other respects: It features the kingdom of Bantam (Banten) that sat on the Western edge of the island, and lists a number of port-cities along the northern coastline from West to East. Some of the place-names that were added to the map remain recognisable until today, such as *Jappara* (Jepara), *Lafem* (Lasem), *Tubaan* (Tuban), *Gerriri* (Kediri) and the port-city of *Surabaia* (Surabaya).

The rest of Bertius’ map, however, was curiously vacant: With the exception of the place-name *Mataran* (Mataram) smack in the middle of Java, the entire southern coastline of Java was left blank. Interestingly, the small map that Bertius drew also features a charming vignette of a sailing ship coasting along the southern shore of Java; though presumably the crew on board were not very attentive and did not knock on any doors as they sailed past the island. Bertius’s Java was one with no

---

<sup>5</sup> Edward Said, quoted in: John McClure, *Late Imperial Romance: The Politics of Re-Enchantment*, Verso Press, London. 1994. p. 8

<sup>6</sup>Petrus Bertius, *Descriptio Iava*, in: Bertius, *Tabularum Geographicarum Contractarum*, Jodocus Hondius, Amsterdam. 1616.

<sup>7</sup>Petrus Bertius, *Descriptio Iava*, in: Bertius, *Tabularum Geographicarum Contractarum Libri Quinque*, Cornelium Nicolai, Amsterdam. 1606.

bottom end; and it lent the impression that for reasons known only to themselves the entire population of Java had decided to migrate to the north and settle there, leaving behind them the southern half of the island that was totally devoid of any human settlement.

Bertius's map may be flawed in many respects, but it was still a vast improvement compared to the earlier Ptolemaic maps by Munster, Magini and Mercator – whose work he emulated and whose maps he later copied and improved on.<sup>8</sup> The Munster, Magini and Mercator maps of 1540, 1542, 1595, 1597 and 1598 – all of which were drawn and published under the same general title-heading of *Tabula Asiae XI* (Table/Map of Asia XI- Southeast Asia) were even more economical in their epistemic claims: If Bertius had left southern Java empty in his 1616 map; Munster, Magini and Mercator did not even include Java in their maps at all.<sup>9</sup>

That Bertius' map of 1616 was an improvement of his map of 1606, and a huge step forward from the Munster, Magini and Mercator maps of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, tells us something about the advance of knowledge and the march of epistemology. But to fully appreciate the extent to which these advances were revolutionary in their import and challenging to the status quo, we also need to place these cartographers in their historical context: Grafton (1992) notes that for the first generation of geographers and cartographers of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the discovery of a world beyond the narrow confines of Christian Europe was a traumatic one for it challenged the Bible's account of creation and the spread of humankind across the world.<sup>10</sup> The discovery of America was already something that scholars and cartographers like Theodorus de Bry had to grapple with, for in the Old Testament's account of genesis and creation there was no mention of this undiscovered

---

<sup>8</sup>Munster's *Cosmographia* map of Southeast Asia that was published in 1540 and 1542, Mercator's map of 1595 and Magini's map of 1597 were all based on the *Geography* of the ancient Ptolemy, whose map of the world was drawn by conjecture (and guesswork) from oral accounts of land-bound journeys to the east. As such, all these maps featured the main terrestrial outline of Central, South and Southeast Asia, but were devoid of information about the sea-lanes, straits and seas that connected the regions together. Ptolemy's account, which was based on the testimonies of terrestrial travelers then, did not include any information of the islands further from the main Asian continent, and so there was no mention of islands such as Sumatra, Java, Sulawesi or the Philippines.

<sup>9</sup> Sebastian Munster did, it should be pointed out, produce a more accurate map of the Asian continent in the 1598 edition of the *Cosmographia*, and the accuracy of the map was due to the fact that it was no longer based on Ptolemaic sources but on some of the earliest reports by navigators to the Far East. In his 1598 map of Asia, Munster includes a reasonably accurate depiction of Sumatra, Java and Borneo as well.

<sup>10</sup> Anthony Grafton, *New World, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1992. Pp. 128-129.

continent. Men like de Bry could summarily dismiss the native Americans as Godless pagans and savages, but the same could not be said of the Asians whom the Europeans encountered in India, Persia, China and Southeast Asia, who had, by then developed their own polities and economies that could rival those of Europe anytime. This encounter with an Asia that was independent of European power and commerce was, as Chaudhuri (1990) points out, a startling one indeed that awakened the Western world from its long slumber during the Dark Ages.<sup>11</sup>

There was, during the same period, a craze in crazy maps; and one of the oddball characters responsible for such fanciful renderings of the world was Jean Baptiste Claude de Sales, whose map of Asia in his *Histoire du Monde Primitif* (1780) included an India and a Malay Peninsula that were both rendered as *islands*, cut off from the Asian continent.<sup>12</sup> De Sales may have been a friend of Voltaire, but that certainly did not lend any accuracy to the maps he produced.<sup>13</sup> Awareness of the constructed nature of the world found in maps may have been one of the factors that prompted the likes of de Sales to come up with his quirky maps that were merely fantastic creatures of his own invention. But by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the powers of Europe were beginning to gain an advantage over their non-European adversaries and rivals thanks to the advances being made in maritime technology, communications, astronomy and navigation. As Europe moved closer to the industrial revolution and grew covetous of lands and resources beyond its shores, map-making and colonialism were married together, and assumed the character of a more serious endeavour.

By the 1800s, as the kingdoms of Europe found themselves at war with Napoleonic France, the drive for Empire would spur Britain further afield, to take the war against France to the high seas and to rob France of its overseas colonies and dominions. While Napoleon extended his power across the European continent,

---

<sup>11</sup>K. N. Chaudhuri, *Asia Before Europe: Economy and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990.

<sup>12</sup> Jean Baptiste Claude IsoardDelisle de Sales, *Histoire du Monde Primitif, ou des Atlantes*, Privately published by the author, Paris, 1780.

<sup>13</sup> Jean Baptiste de Sales was known for his writings on philosophy and science. Though he never rose to prominence, he did compose a six-volume work on the philosophy of human nature. In his *Histoire du Monde Primitif*, he rejected the biblical account of the creation of the earth and argued that the earth was 140,000 years old. His account of the primitive world as described by the ancients was banned and burned, and de Sales was imprisoned – during which time he was visited by Voltaire, his friend.

Britain secured the seas and made them safe for British transport and commerce; and in due course this also allowed it to project its power further and more effectively than ever before. One of the instances of Britain's power-projection would be the British invasion of Java in 1811, and the period of British occupation of that island between 1811 to 1816 would witness the development of instrumental knowledge of the native Other as never before, resulting in one of the most complex, accurate and useful maps of Java that have ever been produced by any power.

### III. Mapping and the Need to Know

‘To some temperaments it is a matter of regret, perhaps, that the dark places of the earth are being so rapidly lit up.’<sup>14</sup>

**The Illustrated Guide to the Federated Malay States, 1910**

Wars and invasions happen to be good for the publishing industry. In the same way that today's 'war on terror' has launched the careers of countless aspiring scholars and paved the way for new pseudo-disciplines of the al-Qaedaology variety (not to be confused with alchemy, which is a science), the invasion of Java in 1811 by the combined forces of the British army and the British East India Company provided the catalyst for a flurry of frenzied research and publication. A second expanded and revised edition of William Marsden's *A History of Sumatra* was republished the same year (1811), while John Stockdale published his *Sketches, Civil and Military, of the Island of Java* in 1811 and again in 1812.<sup>15</sup> Marsden had, by then, quit the humid climes of Southeast Asia for England, but his work on Sumatra remained the best known and well-regarded, while Stockdale lived a colourful life and was accused of libel on several occasions, and was even charged with the dissemination of pornography.

---

<sup>14</sup>Illustrated Guide to the Federated Malay States. London, (Fourth Impression), 1923.pp.1-2.

<sup>15</sup>John Joseph Stockdale, *Sketches, Civil and Military, of the Island of Java and its immediate Dependencies, comprising interesting details of Batavia and authentic particulars of the celebrated Poison-Tree*.Printed for the author at 41 Pall Mall.London, 1812.



Marsden had not returned to Southeast Asia, and Stockdale had never set foot on Java – yet both works were on demand as the invasion of Java had generated an interest in Britain’s latest far-flung colonial acquisition. Interestingly, the second edition of Marsden’s (1811) work included a much better map of Sumatra than the first, while Stockdale’s work on Java included a detailed map of Java as well as an even more detailed map of the Sunda Straits and an equally impressive map of the city of Batavia. Having added Java to the British Empire, the British public obviously wanted to know where it was.

Prior to Britain’s invasion of Java the British public was very much in the dark about the goings-on there. The few reports that found their way back to England painted a somewhat bleak picture of the place, with one account lamenting the poor standard of amenities in Batavia and even claiming that there were competent doctors to be found.<sup>16</sup> Hardly any British cartographers or explorers were given permission by the Dutch to survey the land – something that Raffles himself lamented in his work.<sup>17</sup> Most of the maps of Java then were drawn from either earlier sources culled from the ancients or other European maps that were available on the market. Preliminary attempts to map Java had been done by the likes of Petrus Bertius – whose bottomless Java we have explored earlier, Jan Janson, Pieter van der Aa, Sanson d’Abbeville and Jacques-Nicholas Bellin (b.1703-d.1772), who was a hydrographer of the *Academie de Marine*. All of them had produced many different versions of their respective maps of Java, of varying degrees of accuracy.

By the standards of 1811, most of the early maps of Java were found wanting: Jan Janson’s 1650 map of *Insulae Java* added a little more detail to the southern coastline of the island, but remained blank on the question of the topography of Java.<sup>18</sup> It focused more on the coastal trading centres that lined the northern shores of the island but presented very little information about the hills, mountains or

---

<sup>16</sup>In the account of the *Voyage to Batavia* that was published in the Gentleman’s Magazine of 1808, the author described the state of Batavia in a disparaging manner. The ship had been struck by some unknown fever, and members of the crew and passengers began to wither away. Upon arrival at Batavia, the Englishmen asked for help from the Dutch, and the report continues: ‘The Dutchman came, and upon examination he pronounced that he was acquainted with the disease, but knew no mode of cure; in short, he recommended opium to make death easy. So much for medical help from Onrust; and in the whole city of Batavia, as I learned afterwards, there was but one Physician who deserved the name!’ Re: *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, Ed. Sylvanus Urban, J Nichols and Son, Fleet Street, London, March 1808. *Voyage to Batavia*, pp. 221-222.

<sup>17</sup>Raffles, 1817, vol.2, chapter IX, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup>Jan Janson, *Insulae Java cum parte insulae Borneo Sumatrae*, in: Jan Janson, *Atlas Atlantis Majoris*, 1650.

volcanoes there. Sanson d'Abbeville's Java (1700) had mountains in all the wrong places<sup>19</sup>; Van Keulen's *Insulae Java Pars* (1753) had mountains sprinkled randomly all over the place; while van der Aa's map of Java, from his *Indes Orientales* (1725), had no mountains at all, focused on the coastal settlements of Java (again) but offered little information about the contours of the land deeper into the interior.<sup>20</sup> Chatelain's *Carte de L'Île de Java: Partie Occidentale, Partie Orientale, Dressée tout nouvellement sur les mémoires les plus exacts* (1719) supplemented its topography with copious notes along the borders, and did at least acknowledge that some people lived along the southern shores of the island.<sup>21</sup>

Nicholas Bellin produced a substantial number of maps on Java and the East Indies in general between the years 1740-1760, though many of his maps were of a general nature and quite useless for navigators. His *Cartes des îles de Java, Sumatra, Borneo et les Detroits de la Sonde, Malaca et Banca* (1750) may have borne an impressive title, but was, for all intents and purposes, a decorative map rather than a precise instrument for maritime travel. Much more impressive was his *Nouvelle Carte de l'île de Java* (that was engraved by van Schley) and published in Antoine Prevost's *L'Histoire General des Voyages* (1750) that did at least include some useable information about the various provinces and kingdoms of the island, identifying the kingdoms of Banten, Surakarta and Jogjakarta.<sup>22</sup> But for the purposes of a military expedition with the intention of occupying such a vast island, such maps would simply not do. And if the invading force of the British army and the East India Company had no accurate map of Java to rely on, they would have to draw one themselves.

#### IV. *You've been mapped: Raffles' study of Java as an example of epistemic arrest.*

---

<sup>19</sup>Nicholas Sanson d'Abbeville, *Les Isles de la Sonde, Entre Lesquelles Sumatra, Java, Borneo*. In: *Description de l'Univers*, Halma, Amsterdam. 1700.

<sup>20</sup>Pieter van der Aa, *Indes Orientales*, in: Pieter van der Aa, *La Galerie Agreeable du Monde*, published by Van der Aa, Leiden. 1725.

<sup>21</sup>Chatelain, *Carte de L'Île de Java: Partie Occidentale, Partie Orientale, Dressée tout nouvellement sur les mémoires les plus exacts*, in: Chatelain, *Atlas Historique*, Amsterdam. 1719.

<sup>22</sup>Jacques-Nicholas Bellin, *Nouvelle Carte de l'île de Java*, in Abbe Prevost, *Histoire Generale des Voyages*, Pierre de Hondt, Hague. 1750.

Triangulation by triangulation, war by war, treaty by treaty, the alignment of map and power proceeded.<sup>23</sup>

**Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.**



**Figure 1: Raffles' Route in Java (ca. 1815)**

A prominent historian, Anderson (1983) has noted that prior to the coming of Western colonialism to Southeast Asia, Southeast Asian societies had developed and used two types of native maps that were meaningful and relevant to their own needs: The cosmological map and the travel guide-map:

‘The ‘cosmograph’ was a formal representation of the three worlds of traditional cosmology. The cosmography was not organised horizontally, like our own maps; rather a series of superterrestrial heavens and subterrestrial hells wedged in the visible world along a single vertical axis. It was useless for any journey save that in a search for salvation and merit. The second type, wholly profane, consisted of diagrammatic guides for military campaigns and coastal shipping. Organised roughly by the quadrant, their main features were written-in notes for marching

---

<sup>23</sup>Anderson, 1983, p. 173.

and sailing times, required because the map-makers had no technical conception of scale... Neither type of map marked borders.'<sup>24</sup>

The cosmological map that Anderson speaks of was common across Southeast Asia, and can be seen in the motifs of Javanese batik cloth that was produced then, until today: Patterns like *Lereng*, *Cuwiri*, *Wahyu Tumurun*, etc. repeat the cosmological ordering of the Javanese universe with the heavens above and hell below, and humankind residing in the material world of objects in between. The Javanese' understanding of themselves and their place in the world was complex, and apart from the cosmological worldview that placed them in the natural material world – where Gods and demigods were forever close and directing the affairs of human beings – the idea of 'Javaneseness' was itself fluid and hybrid. Java's long historical contact with the Indian subcontinent was evident in the material culture, language, myths and architecture of the people, who had, after all, constructed some of the largest Buddhist and Hindu temples the world had ever seen at Borobudur and Prambanan. Along with this awareness of their complex origins came an understanding of Javanese identity that did not equate its culture with any particular race – until the advent of the colonial racial census much later.

The Dutch, for their part, had not culturally modified the Javanese during their period of colonial rule either: Despite the efforts of some Dutch missionaries, the Dutch East Indies Company was a secular market-oriented venture where meddling priests were not welcomed and businessmen were left in peace to reap their profits. Java, by 1811, remained a predominantly Muslim island with a very small number of Christian conversions, and the Muslims of Java still held a strong affinity to their Hindu-Buddhist roots.<sup>25</sup> Both the island and its people had fuzzy borders then, and seemed comfortable enough living in a fluid and mobile world.

It is not, however, easy to invade a country with fuzzy borders; and this was certainly the case in 1811 when the practicalities of the age of sail meant that Java could only be taken through a landing on its beaches and a push inland. (Compared

---

<sup>24</sup>Anderson, 1983. pp. 171-172.

<sup>25</sup>Raffles devoted an entire chapter of his *History of Java* to the subject of the pre-Islamic history of the Javanese. See: Raffles, 1817, vol.2, chapter x, pp. 69-146. In the chapter he discussed the cosmology of the Javanese and provided a list of the Hindu rulers of Java, and the names of the most prominent Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms on the island, prior to the coming of Islam.

to the Japanese invasion of Java in 1941, when the Japanese attacked the island from sea and air.)

Britain's invasion of Java took place on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1811 when the troops that were under the command of Rear Admiral Sir Robert Stopford, Sir Samuel Auchmuty and Lord Minto attacked Batavia – then under the control of the Dutch governor Jansens. Here it should be noted that even before Java was invaded by the force assembled by Stopford, Auchmuty and Minto British ships were already blasting away at French and Dutch warships and privateers the year before, turning the Java sea into a watery battlefield.<sup>26</sup> Batavia fell on the 8<sup>th</sup>, but the fighting continued throughout the month until the Dutch and their French allies were pushed back into the interior and began their retreat to the East of the country. Lord Minto (Gilbert Eliot, Earl of Minto, Commander in Chief of the East India forces and Governor-General of India), consolidated his forces in Batavia and made that the base for British operations that were to follow. Minto's stay in Java, however, was not long; and in a matter of months he returned to India, after appointing the young Thomas Stamford Raffles as the first Lieutenant-Governor of the island. Over the next six years, Raffles was left in charge of Java and its dependencies, and it was during this period that he extended British rule across the island and further across the archipelago.

It ought to be remembered that in 1811 Stamford Raffles was a relatively unknown personality back in England. The British press, while reporting on events in India and Java, seemed more interested in accounts of British heroism and gallantry abroad rather than the opinions and ambitions of junior functionaries of the East India Company.<sup>27</sup> Even the poet-philologist and naturalist-explorer Dr. John Leyden – who had been roped into the Java expedition by his friend and mentor Lord Minto – was better known and esteemed than Raffles, and his Leyden's in Java – due to

---

<sup>26</sup> In 1810 the British sloop *Prometheus* reported that it has attacked the French privateer *Messilina* off the coast of Pelew, and in the same year a combined force of British marines and coastal artillery unit of the East India Company managed to storm the fortifications of Victoria, Amboin; and defeat the Dutch-Madurese garrison that were defending the fort. The despatch of Admiral Drury – then Commander of Forces in the East Indies – included the report by Captain Tucker, who took part in the attack and subsequent capture of Victoria and the whole of Amboyna, which noted that British losses in the attack 'were trifling'. Re: *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Ed. Sylvanus Urban, J Nichols and Son, Fleet Street, London, October 1810. pp. 361; 366-368.

<sup>27</sup> The 30 May 1812 edition of *The London Chronicle* featured, among others, a hair-raising account of how a single detachment of Light Dragoons (the 22<sup>nd</sup>), with only 97 men, managed to rout 2,500 enemy cavalry and infantry in Java 'with such irresistible impetuosity that that they absolutely rode over the horses and men of the enemy.' (*The London Chronicle*, 20 May 1812. p. 523)

'Batavian fever' – earned him lengthy praise and mournful obituaries in publications like *The Bombay Courier* and *The London Chronicle* in 1812. (General John Malcolm even dedicated a poem to Leyden's untimely passing in Batavia.<sup>28</sup>) Raffles probably realised that his promotion to the rank of Lieutenant-Governor was the thing that would either make or break his career, and that he had to demonstrate his achievements in tangible terms.

Raffles' map of Java was put together after the defeat of the Dutch and their French allies, and when the British began to extend and consolidate their hold on the island. But it has to be remembered that the map that came with *The History of Java* was only published in 1817, *after* the East Indies had been handed back to Holland and after the threat of a Napoleonic Empire had abated for good. However the work that went into making the map – the many excursions and forays into the interior of the island, the surveys of its mountains and plains, and the battles that were fought – took place during the period of British rule that lasted from 1811 to 1816. To this end, Raffles relied on the reports and surveys that were conducted by the many officers, surveyors and explorers that were on the payroll of the government and the East India Company, and some of them travelled to the other outer islands such as Sumatra, Sulawesi and Borneo (Kalimantan) to deliver their reports to him. While Raffles consolidated his hold on Java, men like J. Hunt were on the prowl in Kalimantan, feeding him with information about its history, resources and tales of pirates.<sup>29</sup>

The Raffles map itself ranks – until today – as one of the most impressive maps of Java ever made. Entitled *A Map of Java Chiefly from Surveys made during the British Administration Constructed in illustration of an Account of Java by Thomas Stamford Raffles, Esq.*, it was engraved by John Walker – who would later also engrave the

---

<sup>28</sup> General Malcolm's lengthy tribute to Dr Leyden appeared in the press in India as well as England, and it ended with a long poem which began thus:

*Where sleep the brave on Java's strand,  
Thy ardent spirit, Leyden! Sped,  
And Fame with cypress shades the land,  
Where genius fell, and valour bled.*

(*The London Chronicle*, 20 May 1812. p. 522)

<sup>29</sup> See: J. Hunt, *A Sketch of Borneo, or Pulo Kalamantan, as communicated to the Honourable Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, 1812.* in: Henry Keppel, *The Expedition to Borneo of the HMS Dido for the Suppression of Piracy*, London, Chapman and Hall. 1846. Vol II, Appendix II.

map for *A History of the Indian Archipelago* by John Crawfurd.<sup>30</sup> A steelplate engraving, it measures 45 inches by 22.5 inches; and was included in the first edition of Raffles' work in 1817. So popular was Raffles' work that it was translated into several languages, and later republished by John Murray in 1830. But what stood out from the text, and what captured the imagination of the British public then, were the engravings – copperplate lithographs and chromolithographs – that awakened the imagination of the public. Later in 1844 a special edition of the plates (by Daniels) was republished by Henry G. Bohn, which comprised *only* of the images from Raffles' book, without the text – but with an additional 22 plates that had not been published before. The most enduring element of the work, however, was Walker's map that was to be found in the 1817 edition (and all the translated versions of the book) as well as the 1830 and 1844 editions. The map of Java – reproduced again and again from the original 1817 plate – was perhaps the only constant feature in the recurring avatars of Raffles' work.

Exactly how many scholars have gone blind as a result of trying to read Walker-Raffles' map remains undocumented, though such a figure must surely exist. As far as detailed information goes, this was a map that left nothing to chance. Raffles' map includes more than three hundred and sixty five place-names for villages, towns, cities, ports and ancient monuments; along with more than a hundred and fifty major and minor rivers and streams that course along the landscape of Java. *Every single* mountain and volcano on the island was accounted for, and put back to their proper place.

Cognisant, perhaps, that the map was being produced for a British readership that was growing increasingly aware of their global power and role in world affairs, the map of Java in Raffles' work presents the reader with a Java that is *reachable* and thus *conquerable*. Far from fuzzy in its treatment of the contours of the island, Raffles' map provided the most detailed outline of the shoreline of Java from East to West; and shows the reader exactly where the best landing spots were: Four insets at the bottom of the map provide detailed descriptions of the harbours at Nusa

---

<sup>30</sup> In contrast to the map he did for Raffles, Walker's map of the Indonesian archipelago that came with Crawfurd's book was much less impressive: Java appears in the map, but with none of the detail that is to be found in the earlier map that appeared in 1817. See: John Crawfurd, *History of the Indian Archipelago, Containing an account of the Manners, Arts, Languages, Religions, Institutions and Commerce of its Inhabitants*. Archibald Constable, Edinburgh. 1820.

Kembangan, PelabuhanBatu (Wyn Coops Bay) and even Pacitan – birthplace of the 6<sup>th</sup> President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. A panopticon effect is achieved in the map by the inclusion of these small insets, for these smaller, precise maps add the impression of ‘zooming in and out’ as one surveys the length and breadth of the island, reminding us of the omnipresent gaze of the colonial surveyor for whom every beach, river, village and hamlet was of economic and strategic importance, and leaving no blank spaces anywhere on the map itself.

The scientific gaze is represented by another inset that appears at the top of the map, which features a mineralogical map of Java that was done by the scientist Dr Thomas Horsfield (that was done in 1812). The importance of this inset lies in the fact that it showed how Western scientists were then able to map not only the salient and obvious features of the Javanese countryside, but were able to penetrate deep into the earth itself to reveal its hidden mysteries. The implicit message to the Javanese was simply this: *That though they claimed to be the natives of their own land, the Javanese did not know it as well as the Europeans who could marshal the powers of science to uncover the unknown.* This fitted well with the tone and tenor of Raffles’ writings on the Javanese, whom he summarily regarded as a people steeped in history but who lagged behind in scientific development; a notion in keeping with the ‘myth of the lazy native’ that was being put together by Raffles and his contemporaries, and which would also justify and rationalise the divisive form of racial-ethnic segregation that was the hallmark of the plural economic model then being instituted in the colonies of Asia.

The contrast between Java’s ancient (pre-modern, unscientific) past and the present (modern, technologically-advanced) reality of British colonial rule is something that recurs again and again in the map: Raffles’ map maps out not only the past of Java (its monuments, ruins, deserted cities), but crucially it documents on the same landscape the accomplishments of the British: The new road that was built in 1815, and on a more personal note, the exact route taken by Raffles himself on his expedition across Central Java that same year (1815) are both represented on the map.

The new road from Batavia to Cirebon that was built by the British in 1815 ran closer to the northern coast, and was a more direct route compared to the older



Dutch road that went inland and coursed through many smaller towns and villages.<sup>31</sup> Its aim was to open a new channel of communication to Cirebon that was closer and faster, thereby *expediting the movement* of both troops and goods in times of war and peace. Raffles' inland expeditionary route, on the other hand, wound its way across the countryside and traversed mountains and valleys, stopping along isolated hamlets and ruins, and brought him to the ruins of Borobudur<sup>32</sup>, the slopes of Mounts Merapi and Merapu, the ancient royal capital of Surakarta, and all the way deep into East Java – establishing the fact that Raffles himself had traversed two-thirds of the island. The two routes are represented in the map in a strikingly different manner: Raffles' expeditionary path is marked out in *broken* lines; while the new road of 1815 is marked out in bold parallel *unbroken* lines. The first was a winding, circuitous path taken in the untamed jungles of the countryside; the second a relatively straight path that cut across the island like a knife. Thus while Java's past was represented by tiny vignettes and place-names of monuments like Borobudur and Prambanan, so were the latest (British) additions to the Javanese landscape added to the map. Placed side-by-side, Java's antiquity was ranked next to Britain's modernity.

The fact that the map features the roads that were built by the British during their occupation tells us something about the map's intention, which was more than simply mapping the land of Java. For starters, it charts the progress of British expansion across the island, from their main base at Batavia to the East of the island, and records the advance of British military power that also meant the expansion of the sphere of British rule and law. Secondly, the inclusion of the new road built in 1815 also tells us that the British were no idling away their time in Java, sipping cocktails while the natives laboured: This was a statement about British industry, in keeping with the East India Company's ethos of solid work and

---

<sup>31</sup>The new road built by the British in 1815 started in Batavia and stopped at only a few places such as *Crawang* (Krawang), *Chiasem* (Kiasem), *Pamanukan* (Pemanukan), *Pagindangan* and then met up with the older Dutch road at Galu before it ended at Cirebon. By contrast, the older inland road that was used during the Dutch period stopped at the following places on the way to Cirebon: *TanaAbang* (Tanah Abang), *Simplicitas*, *Buitenzorg*, *Gadog*, *Chis rua*, *Lui Malang*, *Tugu*, *Padarinchbang*, *Chipang*, *Chi Herang*, *Chi Jedil*, *Pagutan*, *Chi Blagong*, *Bayabang*, *Chi Chendo*, *Chi Langcap* (Cilacap), *Chi Tapas*, *Chi Rangjang*, *Chi Padu*, *Chi Harasas*, *Bajong*, *Bandung*, *Sindang Lair*, *Chi Nunuk*, *Chi Kro*, *Chi Langsar*, *Chi Baram*, *Sunedang*, *Cha Untung*, *Cha Chuban*, *Chambong*, *Cha Pelang*, *KarangSambanik*, *Chi Kru*, *Banjaran*, *Galuh*, *Banjaran* and *Plombon*.

<sup>32</sup>Raffles elaborates further on the temples of Borobudur and Prambanan in chapter 9 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> volume of *The History of Java*, pp. 6-68.

enterprise, and it cocked a snook at the Dutch in an implicit manner, suggesting that the Dutch administration had been lax when it came to the development of the logistical and communicative infrastructure of their colony. (Raffles had a low opinion of Dutch rule from the outset, and made this clear in his writings on the subject.<sup>33</sup>) Finally, by building such roads across the length of Java, the British were effectively projecting their own power across the island, and centralising power further at its political centre. (The new 1815 road meant that communication between Batavia and Cirebon was faster and more direct.) In effect, Raffles' map, with its detailed description of the new roads being built, was bringing the totality of Java – with its disparate and distinct ethnic communities, provinces and princely domains – into a singular unit, unifying them all within the rubric of a united colony. Here is where Raffles' map of Java fulfils several objectives at the same time. For the invasion of Java was a long-drawn and complicated process that encountered a number of military-strategic as well as political-legal challenges. For a start, this was an invasion of a colony that was already the territory of another colonial power, and it raised the question of *who* the land belonged to: the Dutch, or the Javanese? – A point that was raised by English critics of the invasion back in England, such as the radical tory writer William Cobbett.<sup>34</sup>

Raffles' map of Java was an implicit statement of political and epistemic ownership and control over the island, an attempt to literally place the stamp of the British Empire and East India Company on the entire land-mass. And as Anderson (1983) noted, among the many functions of colonial-era maps was the quasi-legal transfer of native lands into the hands of the colonising powers themselves: 'Fully aware of their interloper status in the distant tropics, but arriving from a civilisation in which the legal inheritance and the legal transferability of geographic space had long been established, the Europeans frequently attempted to legitimize the spread of their

---

<sup>33</sup>Reading *The History of Java*, one gets the impression that the Dutch could not do anything right in the eyes of Raffles. On the subject of Dutch rule, he wrote that 'the leading traits which distinguish the subsequent administration of the Dutch on Java' were 'a haughty assumption of superiority, for the purpose of impressing the credulous simplicity of the natives' combined with 'a most extraordinary timidity'. (Raffles, 1817, vol.2. p. 165.) The British exploration of the island, which was carried out to the furthest corners of Java, seemed intended to impress upon both the Dutch and Javanese the bravado and pluck of the British, who were hardly timid in their own ambitions.

<sup>34</sup> William Cobbett, *Conquest of the Empire of Java*, in: Cobbett's Weekly Political Register, Vol. XX No. 25. London, Saturday, December 21, 1811.

power by quasi-legal methods. Among the more popular of these was their “inheritance” of the putative sovereignties of native rulers whom the Europeans had eliminated or subjected. Either way, the usurpers were in the business, especially vis-à-vis other Europeans, of reconstructing the property-history of their new possessions.’<sup>35</sup>

The process of bringing Java under British control necessarily meant the eradication of the last vestiges of Dutch resistance, and the taming of local native power-centres that may have balked under the British yoke. If the map of Java by Walker-Raffles is so detailed, covering even the most remote parts of the island that had hardly been given the same attention before, it is due to the fact that Britain’s war against both the Dutch and the native rulers was spread across the island and fought out in every corner. *Total dominion* entails the necessity of *total war*.

*How* was Raffles’ map put together? *How* was its data collected and compiled? The modern reader who looks at Raffles’ map of Java sees an island that is fully-constituted as a singular, arrested entity. But what we fail to realise is the fact that the production of the map took six years, and that the information found on it was compiled stage-by-stage as the conquest of Java plodded along its own pace. A better impression of the *constructed-ness* of the map is gained when we consider how information about Java slowly reached England bit by bit during that period, and how this trickle of information eventually became a reservoir of data and knowledge about the area.

An example of this process of bricolage at work can be found in the account of the British advance to the east of Java that was featured in *The Gentleman’s Magazine* of February 1812, where under the heading of *Interesting Intelligence from the London Gazettes* we find reports from Java that had been sent by Rear-Admiral Robert Stopford, and Captains Beaver, Harris and Hillyar.<sup>36</sup> Admiral Stopford’s report to the admiralty office – that was reproduced in the magazine in full – detailed the plan of attack against the combined Dutch-French forces that took place at sea and on land. It gives a vivid account of the logistical preparations involved, the names of

---

<sup>35</sup>Anderson, 1983. pp. 174-175.

<sup>36</sup>*The Gentleman’s Magazine*, London, February 1812. Report of Rear-Admiral Robert Stopford, pp. 167-169; report of Captain Beaver, p. 169; report of Captain Hillyar, pp. 169-170; two reports by Captain Harris, pp. 170-171.

the ships that were used – *The Francis Drake, the Scipion, the Phaethon, the Dasher, the Nisus, the Illustrious, the President, the Phoebe, the Hesper (a sloop), the Lion, the Minden, the Leda, the Modeste*, etc. – as well as the number of soldiers involved in the expedition – a final total of 1,500 soldiers and marines, 600 sepoy, 50 cavalry and two batteries of artillery. Crucially, the report by Admiral Stopford and Captains Beaver, Harris and Hillyar mention the names of places that were, presumably, unknown to the readers back in England then: Batavia, Cheribon (Cirebon, where the French general Jamelle was captured as he was changing horses), Taggall (Tegal), Ledayo (Sedayu), Gressie (Gresik), Samarang (Semarang), and finally Sourabaya (Surabaya). Also mentioned in the reports was Sumanap (Sumenep) in Madura, where the British had managed to persuade the local ruler to abandon his alliance with the Dutch and hop on to the British side.

For the reading public back in England at the time, the names of places like Cheribon, Taggall, Ledayo, Gressie, Samarang and Sourabaya might as well have been on the dark side of the moon, for there was no way of knowing where they were, or if they even existed at all. The public did take comfort, however, in the thought that Britain's blitzkrieg across Java was a resounding success (as the news confirmed) and at every single one of these places, 'the French colours were hauled down, and the English hoisted in their place'.<sup>37</sup> Captain Harris, in his report of the successful action by the British in Madura, even added that by the end of the campaign there 'there is not a Frenchman or a Dutchman on the island left'.<sup>38</sup> It was this process of eliminating and erasing all traces of Dutch and French power across Java that also cleared the ground for its conquest by the British, and in turn the precise details of these places – their location, co-ordinates, the size of their populations, etc. – would come to be known, and finally incorporated in the grand map of Java that was being put together.

Coming to know all of Java, however, meant that the British had to deal with not only the pesky Dutch and their French allies, but also the Javanese. While Raffles' view of the Dutch was generally negative – he saw them as lazy and greedy, keen to hold on to their colony's wealth but lacking the courage to defend it – his view of

---

<sup>37</sup>*The Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1812, p. 169.

<sup>38</sup>Captain Harris' letter to the admiralty, dated 13 September 1811, in: *The Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1812, p. 171.

the Javanese was paternalistically condescending. The Javanese, in Raffles' view, were a once-civilised people who had fallen into a state of oriental stupor, blinded by superstition and hindered by their own taboos. If the Dutch were too lazy to work the land of Java to its full capacity, the Javanese were too scared to explore their own domain, surrounded as they were by ghosts from their past.<sup>39</sup>

The few Javanese rulers who did have the temerity to stand up to the British were swiftly dealt with, and the newspapers back in England did not only report on British victories over the Dutch, but over the native rulers too. The April 1813 edition of *The Gentleman's Magazine* featured the full report written by Colonel Rollo Gillespie to the Office of Commissioners of India (dated 25 June 1812); where he recounted the circumstances of the attack on, and subsequent defeat of, the Central Javanese Kingdom of Djogocarta (Jogjakarta).<sup>40</sup> Citing the 'defiance' of the 'insolent' Sultan who refused to accept the terms imposed by the British, Gillespie recounts in detail the campaign against the kingdom that culminated in the siege of the *krattan* (*kraton*, or palace) and its sacking after. Gillespie's report describes the fortifications of Jogjakarta, and praises the gallantry of many of the officers who took part in the battle – including John Crawford, for 'his talents and exertions'.<sup>41</sup> But it also describes the environs around Jogjakarta in some detail, and it is no wonder that in the final map of Java that Raffles produced later in 1817 *Yugjakerta* (Jogjakarta) and the surrounding localities of *Bantul Karang*, *Kamira Sewi*, *Jenu*, *Brambanan* (Prambanan) and others are so accurately depicted on the chart. The report ends with the proclamation by Stamford Raffles himself – issued earlier on 15 June 1812 – 'that the Sultan Hamangkubwana (Hamengkubuwono) the Second is deposed from his throne and government, because he had violated his treaties, and proved unworthy of the confidence of the British government' and that 'the Pangueran (Pangeran) Adipati, the late deposed prince, is now declared Sultan of the Kingdom of Mataram'.<sup>42</sup> And if the readers back home in England were curious

---

<sup>39</sup>Raffles repeatedly returned to the topic of Javanese taboos, including those linked to places that were considered sacred or dangerous. In his chapter on the history of Central Java, he recounts how and why the court of Mataram was forced to relocate to Kartasura: 'The Javans have a superstitious belief, that when once fortune had fallen on a place so generally as to extend to the common people, which was the case at Mataram, it will never afterwards prosper; it was therefore determined to change the seat of the empire.' (Raffles, 1817, vol.2. p. 189.)

<sup>40</sup>*The Gentleman's Magazine*, London, April 1813. *Intelligence from the London Gazettes*, pp. 364-366.

<sup>41</sup>*The Gentleman's Magazine*, London, April 1813. p. 366.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid*, p. 366.

to know what a Javanese prince looked like, then Raffles' *History of Java* would illuminate them with the hand-coloured plates by Daniels, which featured an array of Javanese personalities – including a prince in courtly dress – captured in a full-figure portrait mode, standing frozen like mannequins in a state of permanent, unnatural stasis.

In other parts of Java, the British were able to win over the local rulers and persuade them to hand over the reins of government in exchange for money: The Sultan of Banten, for instance, was happy to let the British map out the districts of West Java (in 1813) for a princely pension of ten thousand Spanish dollars per year.<sup>43</sup> (Raffles adds in his *History of Java* that the lands of Banten were soon put to productive use afterwards.) Madura was likewise mapped once the rulers had thrown in their lot with the British; Cirebon's environs were mapped once the British captured the rebel pretender BagusRangen, to the satisfaction of the ruler who was then obligated to the East India Company<sup>44</sup>; Central and East Java came under the regime of the cartographer and map-maker not long after the ruler of Jogjakarta Hamengkubuwono II was deposed.

From triumph to triumph, the British defeated or co-opted the Dutch, French and Javanese across Java and thus found themselves in the position of being the undisputed masters of the land. Java was theirs to survey, and this is what Anderson (1983) meant by the alignment of the map and power<sup>45</sup>: First victory, then pacification, then mapping, then instrumental knowledge: The fall and capture of places like Banten, Cirebon, Gresik, Surabaya and Jogjakarta meant that they were ready to be mapped, 'and by such measures, a much more regular, active, pure, and efficient administration was established on Java than ever existed at any former period of the Dutch company' Raffles smugly concluded.<sup>46</sup> To know the other really meant knowing the defeated.

The scientific gloss that can be read off Raffles' map of Java does not disguise the fact that this was a map of power and control; and the mapping of Java and the rest of Southeast Asia would continue in earnest long after the British had returned the

---

<sup>43</sup>Raffles, 1817.Vol.2. p. 267.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid, vol.2. p. 274-275.

<sup>45</sup>Anderson,1983.p. 173.

<sup>46</sup>Raffles, 1817.vol.2. p. 283.

island back to the Dutch, and in the decades to come much of the region would come under the order of knowledge and power of Empire. British, Dutch, French, Spanish, Portuguese and later American cartographers, geologists, ethnologists and socio-economic engineers would ultimately create their own accounts of the world of Southeast Asia, competing against each other to prove that theirs was the nation that commanded the most advanced tools and methods of scientific analysis; and in the process neglect, and sometimes deny, the local epistemologies, geographies and belief-systems of the native communities they ruled over.<sup>47</sup> Perhaps one of the most outstanding examples of modern colonial-cartography was the map later produced by Captain Elliot of the Madras Engineers division, who, in 1851, issued the *Chart of the Magnetic Survey of the Indian Archipelago, showing the Isoclinal Lines, or Lines of Equal Magnetic Dip, and Lines of Equal Magnetic Declination* across the whole of Southeast Asia. Having mapped the islands of the archipelago, and having accounted for all the hills, mountains, rivers, valleys and plains that lay there, Captain Elliot had mapped the magnetic lines that traversed the region – and thus mapped out that which was unseen to the naked eye. Science had triumphed, and Empire too; and there was nothing left to know.

---

<sup>47</sup>One of the very few British cartographers who gave any credit to local sources was Alexander Darymple, whose maps of Sabah, Palawan and the rest of the Sulu Archipelago were among the few that mention the names of local navigators in its acknowledgement. Darymple was unique in this respect, for most of the European cartographers of the time did not bother to thank or acknowledge the help of any of their local informants and assistants.

## V. *The Java map as British History. Raffles' Map as a Record of Empire*

The British may not have created the longest-lived empire in history, but it was certainly one of the most data-intensive.<sup>48</sup>

**Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and Fantasy of the Empire* (1993)**



Figure 2: Raffles' Map of Java (ca. 1815)



Stamford Raffles and his fellow company-men lived at a time when the accumulation of data went hand-in-hand with the accumulation of power. The data they collected was put to work in the service of Empire, and the end results came in

---

<sup>48</sup> Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and Fantasy of the Empire*, Verso Press, London. 1993. p. 4.



the form of geological surveys, ethnic-racial censuses, political reports, military briefings and maps of conquest. None of them doubted that imperialism was a good thing and that colonial-capitalism was a positive force for change. There is no need for us today to offer excuses for Raffles' conduct on his behalf, for in all probability he was a man of his time; and like the other men of his time whose company he kept, he was an imperialist and a colonialist who believed that racial differences were real; and that the different races were to be ranked in a hierarchical order where the superior races would govern the lesser ones. Raffles did not invent racism any more than he invented colonial-capitalism: he was simply the product of the hegemonic worldview and value-systems of his time, and a rather unimaginative company functionary to boot.<sup>49</sup>

Being a functionary of this global company with **militarized** capabilities meant that Raffles did what was expected of him: He sought out new territories that could be brought under the influence of both the British crown and the East India Company, and his goal was the glorification of the former and the enrichment of the latter; both of which he succeeded to do during his limited tenure as Lieutenant-Governor of Java. The map of Java that was among the results of the British entr'actet turned out to be one of the lasting legacies of his work; and if the locations and place-names that we find in Raffles' map are so accurate that the map lends the impression of being a catalogue of 'exotic places I have visited and bombed', that impression is almost entirely correct, for Raffles and his troops did indeed visit and bomb many of the places that are on the map. The eurocentric gaze of the map and its maker are evident in the manner that it appropriates the land of Java for the use of the company, and the way in which it negates the native Javanese understanding of their own relationship with the land and the cosmos surrounding it. In this sense, it was a truly *British* map, which tells us much about how the British viewed Java;

---

<sup>49</sup>Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, several pseudo-scientific theories of racial difference existed that were used to justify slavery and the exploitative practices of the Western colonial companies across Asia and Africa. Among them was the theory of polygenesis, propagated by the likes of Louis Agassiz, that argued that human beings evolved in different parts of the world – the related theory of geobiology – and as such were separate and distinct species. Nott and Gliddon's *Indigenous Races of the Earth* (1857) argued that the Malays of the archipelago were a different species from Africans, Chinese and other 'races' that were likewise the result of different processes of evolution that took place elsewhere. These theories were finally challenged by Darwin's theory of common human evolution that argued that all human 'races' were really the same race, and that the entire human race originated from one common genetic root. See: Adrian Desmond and James Moore, *Darwin's Sacred Cause: Race, Slavery and the Quest for Human Origins*. Allen Lane, London. 2009.

bringing us – as the poet T S Eliot put it – ‘back to where we started’, namely the colonial enterprise itself.<sup>50</sup>

Beyond the boast of military accomplishments that Raffles made in his work, there is also another not-too-subtle boast that can be read off the map as well: For if a map could deliver a two-finger insult to anyone, then Raffles’ map of Java was certainly doing that in the face of the Dutch and the Dutch East Indies Company under whose dominion Java had fallen long before the coming of the British. Raffles’ map, packed as it was with minute and precise details of the lay of the land, was also a way of establishing both *political and epistemic leverage* over a rival. By producing a map that was so rich in information and exact in its measurements, Raffles and his team of officers, surveyors and cartographers were basically saying to the Dutch that they had managed to do in six years (1811-1816) what the Dutch had failed to do in a century: that is, to know more, learn more, analyse more, document more and archive more of Java than any other Western power ever did or could.<sup>51</sup> [When Java was handed back to the Dutch in 1816, Dutch cartographers began mapping the island in earnest, but by then lasting impact of British rule could no longer be erased or ignored: Johannes van den Bosch’s map of 1818<sup>52</sup> and I. Dornseiffen’s map](#)

---

<sup>50</sup> Re: T S Eliot’s poem, *Little Gidding*, from *The Four Quartets*:

*We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.  
Through the unknown, unremembered gate  
When the last of earth left to discover  
Is that which was the beginning.*

<sup>51</sup> That Raffles had a low opinion of Dutch scholarship on Java and its antiquities in particular was evident in his work, and at one point he wrote bluntly that ‘the antiquities of Java, have not, until recently, excited much notice; nor have they been sufficiently explored. *The narrow policy of the Dutch denied to other nations the possibility of research; and their own devotion to the pursuits of commerce was too exclusive* to allow of them to be much interested by the subject. The numerous remains of former arts and grandeur, which exists in the ruins of temples and other edifices; the abundant treasure of sculpture and statuary with which some parts of the island are covered; and the evidences of a former state of religious belief and national improvement, which are presented in images, devices and inscriptions, either lay entirely buried under rubbish, or were left unexamined.’ (Raffles, 1817, vol.2, chapter IX, p. 6. *Emphasis mine.*) In effect, Raffles was plainly stating that until the arrival of the British the Dutch were somewhat philistine in their manners and lack of appreciation for Javanese culture, which was only rescued and made known to the world thanks to the labour of the British who discovered them. Implicit in this accusation is also the suggestion that the Javanese had also neglected their past, and were unable to appreciate their own history as much as the British.

<sup>52</sup> Re: Johannes van den Bosch, Map III-IV-V: Kaart van het Ryk van Bantam, Jacatra&Cheribon, op het eiland Java, in: J. van den Bosch, *Nederlandschebezittingen in Azia, Amerika en Afrika, in derzelvertoestandenaangelegenheidvoordit Rijk, wijsgeerig, staatshuis houdkundigen geographisch beschouwd*, Gebroeders Van Cleef, Amsterdam and The Hague, 1818.

of 1892<sup>53</sup> aspired to be as detailed as Raffles-Walker's map of 1817, but even they could not leave out the 'new Batavia-Cirebon' road that the British had built in 1815. The British had packed up and gone, but the impression they left on the landscape of Java was permanent.

Looking back at Raffles' map of Java that came with his *History of Java*, the modern reader is bound to be impressed by the final result of Raffles' labours. But it has to be remembered that this was an *imperial map* that was produced during the age of Empire; and its purpose was to assemble together all known and knowable units of data and organise them within a comprehensive order of knowledge and power that served the ends of racialized colonial-capitalism. If *entropy*– the explosion of disorganised data – would later be the bugbear that rocked the imperial archive as Richards (1993) has argued, there were no signs of it in Raffles' map at least: The map of Java that he produced left no room for hazy ambiguity: This was a map that connected the dots between the major power-centres and commercial centres of the island, locking them together into a communicating grid of inter-connected towns and cities, camps and barracks, outposts and stations, where imperial power could be projected to every corner of the island at a moment's notice.

Apologists of Raffles have taken up the man's case and pleaded that his was an enlightened model of paternalistic colonial-capitalism, elevated somewhat by the intention of opening up the economy of Java for the sake of commerce and subsequent development. **Those** apologists should not overlook the fact that the economic regime that Raffles set up was almost every bit as monopolistic as the Dutch before him, and that by the time he left the island the local economy was on the verge of ruin thanks to the scourge of tax-collectors, money-lenders and property speculators he had let loose amongst its populace<sup>54</sup>. The merits or demerits of Raffles' venture, however, were not the focus of this paper, but rather the map that he produced – which I would argue remains as one of the most exemplary models of colonial mapping that had been done at the time, and which would be emulated later by the next generation of colonial data-seekers and data-

---

<sup>53</sup>Re: Dr I Dornseiffen, *Atlas van NederlandschOost- en West-Indie*, Seyffardt, Amsterdam 1892.

<sup>54</sup>Hannigan, 2012.p. 312.

processors like John Anderson during his mission to the East Coast of Sumatra in 1823.<sup>55</sup>

Critics of Raffles have argued that his two-volume work *The History of Java* contained an embarrassingly long list of factual errors, and have even accused him of plagiarism.<sup>56</sup> Whatever strengths or faults may lie in the book, it cannot be doubted that the Raffles-Walker map that accompanied it was an impressive one indeed; *but it impresses us today with its bold statement of imperial ambition that was undisguised*. In this respect, regarding the map of Java that Raffles produced remains doubly instructive: For not only do we learn something about the geography and society of the island by pouring over its details, but by considering the manner through which the map organises the totality of Java into a single, coherent whole, *we see the workings of an imperial epistemology that reminds us how maps are truly expressions of power*.

---

<sup>55</sup>John Anderson, *Mission to the East Coast of Sumatra In MDCCCXXIII, under the direction of the Government of Prince of Wales Island*. William Blackwood, Edinburgh, and T Cadell Strand, London. 1826.

<sup>56</sup>Hannigan, 2012. pp. 238-239, f. 16.

## Bibliography:

- Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso Press, London. 1983.
- John Anderson, *Mission to the East Coast of Sumatra In MDCCCXXIII, under the direction of the Government of Prince of Wales Island*. William Blackwood, Edinburgh, and T Cadell Strand, London. 1826.
- Petrus Bertius, *TabularumGeographicarumContractarumLibriQuinque*, Cornelium Nicolai, Amsterdam. 1606.
- Petrus Bertius, *TabularumGeographicarumContractarum*, JodocusHondius, Amsterdam. 1616.
- Johannes van den Bosch, *Nederlandschebezittingen in Azia, Amerika enAfrika, in derzelvertoestandenaangelegenheidvoorditRijk, wijsgeerig, staatshuishoudkundigengeographischbeschouwd*, Gebroeders Van Cleef, Amsterdam and The Hague, 1818.
- K. N. Chaudhuri, *Asia Before Europe: Economy and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990.
- William Cobbett, *Conquest of the Empire of Java*, in: Cobbett's Weekly Political Register, Vol. XX No. 25. London, Saturday, December 21, 1811.
- John Crawford, *History of the Indian Archipelago, Containing an account of the Manners, Arts, Languages, Religions, Institutions and Commerce of its Inhabitants*. Archibald Constable, Edinburgh. 1820.
- Adrian Desmond and James Moore, *Darwin's Sacred Cause: Race, Slavery and the Quest for Human Origins*. Allen Lane, London. 2009.
- I. Dornseiffen, *Atlas van NederlandschOost- en West-Indie*, Seyffardt, Amsterdam 1892.
- The Gentleman's Magazine*, Ed. Sylvanus Urban, J Nichols and Son, Fleet Street, London, March 1808. *Voyage to Batavia*.
- The Gentleman's Magazine*, Ed. Sylvanus Urban, J Nichols and Son, Fleet Street, London, October 1810.
- The Gentleman's Magazine*, Ed. Sylvanus Urban, J Nichols and Son, Fleet Street, London, February 1812.
- The Gentleman's Magazine*, Ed. Sylvanus Urban, J Nichols and Son, Fleet Street, London, April 1813.
- Anthony Grafton, *New World, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1992.
- Tim Hannigan, *Raffles and the British Invasion of Java*, Monsoon Books, Singapore. 2012.
- J. Hunt, *A Sketch of Borneo, or PuloKalamantan, as communicated to the Honourable Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, 1812*. in: Henry Keppel, *The Expedition to Borneo of the HMS Dido for the Suppression of Piracy*, London, Chapman and Hall. 1846. Vol II, Appendix II.

*The London Chronicle*, Vol CXI, No. 8341. 20 May 1812.

John McClure, *Late Imperial Romance: The Politics of Re-Enchantment*, Verso Press, London. 1994.

Thomas Stamford Raffles, *The History of Java*, Black, Parbury and Allen, booksellers to the Hon. East India Company, and John Murray, London. 1817.

Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and Fantasy of the Empire*, Verso Press, London. 1993.

Jean Baptiste Claude IsoardDelisle de Sales, *Histoire du Monde Primitif, ou des Atlantes*, Privately published by the author, Paris, 1780.

John Joseph Stockdale, *Sketches, Civil and Military, of the Island of Java and its immediate Dependencies, comprising interesting details of Batavia and authentic particulars of the celebrated Poison-Tree*. Printed for the author at 41 Pall Mall. London, 1812.

C. E. Wurtzburg, *Raffles and the Massacre at Palembang*, in *The Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 22, part 1, 1949. Pp. 38-52.



ASEAN  
STUDIES  
CENTER

FACULTY OF SOCIAL & POLITICAL SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITAS GADJAH MADA

ASEAN Studies Center Universitas Gadjah Mada  
Faculty of Social & Political Sciences Universitas Gadjah Mada  
5th Floor Jln. Socio Justicia No. 1, Bulaksumur, Yogyakarta 55281  
Tel: +62 275 563 362 ext. 151 - Fax: ext. 222  
Email: [aseansc@ugm.ac.id](mailto:aseansc@ugm.ac.id) - Web: <http://asc.fisipol.ugm.ac.id>