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Semarang 1652-1741: Para Bupatinya di Bawah Kuasa Mataram dan VOC, by Iqbal Rizaldin, Surabaya, Pustaka Indis, 2024, 264 pp., IDR 90.000 (paperback), ISBN 9786235618777

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SUBJECT

Book review

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Semarang, the capital of Central Java Province, has been one of the region's significant economic centres since ancient times. During the classical period, the Port of Bergota served as one of the gateways for transnational trade under the control of Mataram (Rukayah et al., 2023; Rukayah et al., 2022; Yuliati et al., 2023; Yuliati & Susilowati, 2023). The city also played an important role in Demak's political constellation, functioning as both a maritime and military agglomeration zone (Pigeaud, 1970). As a port city, Semarang became a coveted territory for parties seeking various forms of profit. Ki Ageng Made Pandan, the first regent of Semarang, was still related to Raden Patah. As the political centre shifted to Pajang and later Mataram, the descendants of Ki Ageng Made Pandan continued to serve as respected regents. However, this economic region experienced turbulence as a result of political dynamics following the decline of Sultan Agung Hanyakrakusuma's power and the succession of the throne by Amangkurat I, who also entered into economic and political compromises with the VOC.

Iqbal Rizaldin's *Semarang 1652–1741: Para Bupatinya di Bawah Kuasa Mataram dan VOC* (2024) highlights the domino effects of the dual authority of Mataram and the VOC within the geopolitical framework of Java. This 264-page book examines in detail the impact and dialectics surrounding the displacement of the first regental dynasty of Ki Ageng Made Pandan from power, which was subsequently replaced by royal confidants of Mataram as well as figures who possessed strong bargaining power in relation to the colonial authority of the VOC. The book is organised into five chapters and systematically explains the political intrigues of the VOC and Mataram from the reign of Amangkurat I to that of Pakubuwana II. The fifth chapter provides a broad chronological outline and the conclusion of the book's discussion.

Chapter I explains the integrative power of Sultan Agung up to the reign of Amangkurat I, which subsequently transformed the political landscape of Java's coastal regions. The coastal regents began to adopt an anti-Mataram stance because of patron–client relations, delegitimisation stemming from perceptions of a new dynasty, and *negaragung–pesisiran* sentiment (p. 29). Succession to the throne became a means of rotating offices, which Rizaldin likens to a "rotating trophy". Several ruling regents

operated within a system of mutual surveillance, or were monitored by supervisory officials from the palace (*umbul*), so that their relationship may be compared to two hands working together: the right hand spying on the left. The book explains that Martanata, as one of Amangkurat I's closest associates, had to collaborate with Wirasetia, who was disliked by the *susuhunan* and known to be close to the VOC (p. 44). Moreover, during Nayasentika's period, a reorganisation took place in which the regent was increasingly burdened with economic duties rather than exercising authority as a territorial ruler, as power over the smaller regions of Semarang came to be held by *umbul* officials (pp. 51–52). Although burdened with economic responsibilities as collectors of port taxes, the regents continued to serve as negotiators and diplomats who mediated between the VOC and Mataram in every encounter and conflict between the two powers, culminating in the Trunajaya rebellion and the fall of Amangkurat I's rule.

Chapter II explains how the regents resisted power under two mutually dictating pressures. After the death of Amangkurat I and the installation of Raden Mas Rahmat as Amangkurat II following Trunajaya's defeat, Mataram had to pay for its victory by pledging Semarang. Both Mataram and the VOC agreed to appoint Ingabehi Alad-Alad as regent (p. 71), making him, inevitably, a "puppet" of power through whom the two sides could reach compromises. The appointment of the regent was based not only on shared interests, but also on the economic fact that Semarang and the economic agglomeration along the *urut dalan* route from Ungaran to Salatiga generated substantial revenue, amounting to 6,800 rijksdaalders per year (p. 79). Ingabehi Alad-Alad was accused of disloyalty to Mataram owing to the unresolved boundary conflict between Mataram and Semarang, taxation problems, and the settlement of debts. He was consequently replaced by Sura Adimanggala I.

Chapter III recounts the period of Sura Adimanggala I's rule—known at the beginning of his career as Rangga Yudanegara—as an accomplished diplomat and royal confidant. Even in the early period of Sura Adimanggala I's administration, Mataram's distrust persisted, triggering the emergence of a rival regent. Despite facing pressure during the reign of Amangkurat II, Sura Adimanggala I also played an important role in the First Javanese War of Succession as the intermediary between Prince Puger, later Pakubuwana I, and the VOC. Under his rule, Semarang became one of the four pillars supporting Mataram in terms of both the economy and defence. Regional revenue was derived not only from the port, but also from indigo cultivation in Semarang's agricultural areas. During this period, the Duchy of Semarang may be regarded as a respected region, capable of standing with one foot in the economic interests of the VOC and the other in those of Mataram. Nevertheless, this period of brilliance eventually came to an end as Sura Adimanggala I grew older and his successor proved less capable.

Chapter IV discusses the struggle for power in Mataram and its consequences for the fluctuating authority of Semarang. Sura Adimanggala I was succeeded by Ingabehi Martayuda, who was appointed by the VOC without Mataram's knowledge. During Martayuda's tenure, the Second Javanese War of Succession broke out between Amangkurat II and his brothers: Prince Arya Mataram, Prince Blitar, and Purbaya. Martayuda's administration may be described as difficult, as he had to deal with the Second Javanese War of Succession, which was led by the king's brothers—fellow sons of Pakubuwana I, namely Prince Arya Mataram, Prince Balitar, and Prince Purbaya—

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against King Amangkurat IV. The existence of factions within the court ultimately provoked the king's hostility; Martayuda was punished and subsequently exiled by the *susuhunan*. This conflict of power was followed by further political intrigue when Astrawijaya, Martayuda's successor, proved unable to quell conflict in Semarang caused by ethnocentric tensions. This situation was further compounded by a dispute over management rights along the *urut dalan* during the reign of Pakubuwana II (pp. 162–163). The VOC seized the inheritance of Sura Adimanggala I (p. 165; a list of his wealth is included in the book, p. 256) in order to anticipate possible conflict. The conflict during Astrawijaya's rule reached its peak during the Chinese uprising in Batavia in 1740, when ethnic Chinese communities along the north coast of Java were accused of rebellion.

Rizaldin's book offers a new perspective on the instability of politics in the early colonial period. Rapid and highly political changes of power demonstrate that authority, particularly in coastal economic centres, could swiftly transform the political landscape of Java's central power. In presenting this argument, the author undertakes a rigorous synthesis of earlier historiographical sources, including works by previous historians (Budiman, 1978; Graaf, 1978; Rinkes, 1911), colonial archives, and New Javanese literary works such as *babad*. Nevertheless, the reading of figures in this book requires caution, since seventeenth-century sources offer different versions of certain individuals. For example, in local versions, the title Sura Adimanggala I is attached to Raden Suminingrat, while Yudanegara bears the title Kyai Adipati Suramenggala. In addition, the name Astrawijaya is known in local versions as Astrayuda.

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