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**A STUDY OF COLONIAL INSCRIPTIONS IN STOVIA SALEMBA:
THE MARKER OF MEDICAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT
IN DUTCH EAST INDIES**

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ABSTRACT

STOVIA serves as a starting point of medical education in Indonesia and is interesting for historical study, especially after the discovery of inscriptions. This inscription consists of different letters and languages and, despite its limited information, clearly plays a pivotal role as a means of communication in its era. Inscriptions are considered the most reliable data source as they are made in their era and need to be studied, transliterated, and translated. This paper reviews two inscriptions found in STOVIA Salemba: the groundbreaking and the building inauguration and appreciation for one of the directors of STOVIA, dr. J. Noordhoek Hegt. This study was conducted to extract the information from the inscription to allow the community learns from its content. This paper also discusses the role of the colonial inscription as the marker of medical institution development in the Dutch East Indies.

KEYWORDS: STOVIA, inscription, material culture, medical

INTRODUCTION

The Dutch East Indies in the 19th century suffered from various contagious diseases, including typhoid, cholera, and dysentery, among others, and health problems became one of the government concerns at that time. In 1847, Banyumas and Purwokerto suffered from a plague the Dutch East Indies government's limited medical team and the people's traditional method could not overcome, resulting in high fatalities. Addressing this problem, the Head of Health Affairs, Dr. W. W. Bosch, suggested the government train some natives to be the doctor assistants (Hanafiah, 1976).

Along with Queen Wilhelmina's Ethical Policy in September 1901, stated during her annual speech (Van Niel, 1984), the Dutch government experienced the most fundamental policy direction in its history. The Dutch government stated three principles of this new policy: education, emigration, and irrigation. The most prominent impact of the ethical policy is its education programs. This policy had given birth to schools, including middle, teacher-training, and high schools for Indonesian natives.

Sekolah Dokter Djawa (School of Djawa Doctor) is one of the results of Ethical policy in the education sector. Established in 1851, this Dutch East Indies' first medical school aimed to train young aristocrats to be vaccinators.

This school underwent several reorganizations and name changes following the school

and Dutch East Indies' purposes. As this school accepts all students from all Dutch East Indies territory, the school changed its name to School tot Opleiding van Indische Artsen (STOVIA). The school was originally taken for three years, it was then reorganized and extended to five years, and in 1908, this medical school was taken for nine years (Scherer, 2012). STOVIA graduates were called Indische Artsen (Hesselink, 2011).

STOVIA serves as a starting point of medical education in Indonesia and is interesting for historical study, especially after the discovery of an inscription. This inscription consists of different letters and languages and, despite its limited information, clearly plays a pivotal role as a means of communication in its era. The historical writing on Indonesia during the Dutch era heavily relies on written sources in the form of documents and buildings. Written sources could be in the form of diaries, reports, and letters made in the same era, which are called as an archive.

Meanwhile, the written sources in the form of objects or buildings are commonly called colonial inscriptions. Written sources that can be used for historical writing are the Dutch archive and colonial inscription, the clear evidence of the historical traces in the past. An inscription can be defined more simply as a written artifact, commonly containing past sources (Susanti, 2005). From this viewpoint, the inscription can be seen as a written source. Meanwhile, from the physical aspect, it could be seen as the material culture.

Inscriptions are considered the most reliable source of data as they are made in their era and need to be studied, transliterated, and translated. This study was conducted to extract the information from the inscription to allow the community learns from its content. Inscriptions from the colonial era are relatively more readable as they use Latin letters. The language used includes Portuguese, Dutch, and English. Inscriptions with Latin words are usually found in memorial stones, monuments, churches, houses, forts, and warehouses. There are two inscriptions in STOVIA Salemba: the groundbreaking inscription and the inauguration and appreciation inscription for dr. J Noordhoek Hegt, one of the STOVIA directors.

RESEARCH METHOD

The present study was categorized as historical research, a method applied to Test and critically analyze the past records and historical objects. Louis Gottschalk (1975) suggests four steps in applying a historical method:

1. Heuristic

Heuristic is the first stage in searching and collecting required information relevant to the problem being studied. In other words, it is an activity of searching and collecting historical material and evidence. This study collected the sources of data and documented them.

2. Criticism

Historical criticism involves a critical judgment of the obtained historical data and facts. These historical data and facts have been processed to be historical evidence. Source verification in historical research comprises two categories: external and internal criticism. The external criticism is made by verifying the physical aspects, including materials, forms, size, and letters, and comparing them to the inscription from the same era. Meanwhile, internal criticism is made by verifying the content of the inscription by looking closer at the sentences, words, and language aspects used.

3. Interpretation

In this stage, the historical facts obtained from relevant archives, books, and field studies are interpreted. In this regard, the inscription contents are linked to the chronological, biographical, and geographical phenomena that occur.

4. Historiography

Historiography is the last stage of historical research, in which the interpreted data are written. The inscription is narrated by accumulating all data and artifacts.

DATA AND DISCUSSION

a. The Inscription of STOVIA Salemba Groundbreaking Ceremony

Today, the groundbreaking ceremony inscription of STOVIA is placed in the Indonesian Medical Education and Research Institute (IMERI), Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Indonesia. This ± 50cm x 40cm rectangle belongs to one of the collections of the IMERI museum.



Figure 1.

The Inscription of STOVIA Salemba Groundbreaking Ceremony
(Source: Authors' documentary)

This inscription was written using Dutch language with Latin letters. The writing of the inscription reads:

“DEZE GEDENKSTEEN
IS GELEGD DOOR
GRAVIN van LIMBURG STIRUM
GEB JONKVROUW van SMINIA

26 AUGUSTUS 1916”

Which can be loosely translated to English as:

“This memorial stone is placed
by the wife of van Limburg
Stirum of van Sminia noble family
in 26 August 1916.”

- **Groundbreaking ceremony of STOVIA Salemba building**

Over time, STOVIA, which was located next to a military hospital, was considered less representative of medical education. Hence, the Dutch East Indies government built a new building in Salemba. The governor-general of the Dutch East Indies gave huge attention to the progress of the building. On 26 August 1916, the first stone laying ceremony of STOVIA Salemba was represented by Caroline Maria Rolina van Sminia, the wife of governor-general of Dutch east Indies, Johan Paul Graaf van Limburg Stirum. This memorial stone was laid at the partially completed wing building. This memorable moment seems to be hardly forgotten by STOVIA students who attended the ceremony (De Waart, 2014).



Figure 2.

STOVIA Salemba Groundbreaking Ceremony by Mrs. Van Limburg Stirum (Source: KITLV)

This ceremony was also reported in daily newspapers, Deli Courant and Het Vaderland: EERSTE STEENLEGGING:

zaterdag heeft mevrouw van Limburg Stirum onder veel plechtigheid en met speeche van den hoofdingenieur Kasten en dr. de Vogel een gedenksteen gelegd voor het nieuwe gebouw van de

STOVIA. Het werk, gebouw met ziekenhuis en groot laboratorium, zal aan totale inrichting vier miljoen kosten.

Which can be loosely translated to English as:

On Saturday, Mrs. Van Limburg Stirum Laid a memorial stone for the new STOVIA building with many ceremonies and a speech from chief engineer Kasten and Dr. de Vogel. The work of this building with a big hospital and laboratory is going to cost about four million.



Figure 3.

News on the groundbreaking ceremony in Deli-Courant
(Source: Deli Courant and Het Vaderland)

On 5 July 1920, the learning activities were moved to Salemba, and the old building was entirely set as a dormitory. The preparatory class was done in six classrooms on the upper floor. A drawing class was also prepared on that floor. Previously, these rooms were used for botany and animal science (a big building was also prepared for practicum, in addition to a museum, small laboratory, and teachers' room). Among the preparatory subjects, natural science was placed in the theoretical learning class on the upper floor, separated from practicum rooms, the darkroom, and the teachers' room on the lower floor. The Chemistry subject was located in a large room with an amphitheater, equipped with a large education laboratory, teachers' room, and warehouses. Like other rooms, the educational drugstore and workshop were also located on the lower floor. The other wing was used for physiology and chemical physiology. Despite the efforts to expedite the

process, this project faced serious obstacles due to difficult material transportation from Europe due to war. On 5 July 1920, only a few rooms could be used.

b. The *Ter Herinnering aan dr. J. Noordhoek Hegt* Inscription

This colonial inscription is attached to the wall of the front lobby of the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Indonesia, at Jalan Salemba Raya no. 6, Central Jakarta. This inscription was written on a rectangular marble of $\pm 100\text{cm} \times 65\text{cm}$. This inscription is assumed to use a marble produced by an Italian marble company, Marmi Italiani, that had Batavia and Surabaya branches. In one of the advertisement columns on *Het nieuws van den dag voor Nederlandsch-Indie*, “Marmi Italiani” opened its branch in Batavia in September 1907 in Pintoe Besar Batavia. This marble company was known to provide high-quality materials for memorial stones and house decoration in the Dutch East Indies.



Figure 4.

Advertisement on Marmi Italiani branch company
(Source: *Het nieuws van den dag voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, 27 September 1907)

This inscription was written using old Dutch Language with Latin alphabet. The writing of the inscription reads:

“TER HERINNERING AAN
DR. JOH. NOORDHOEK HEGT
GEBOREN 10 MRT 1868 BATAVIA
OVERLEDEN 30 SEPT 1915 DEN HAAG
DIRECTEUR DER S.T.O.V.I.A
VAN 9 NOV 1908 TOT 28 FEBR 1915

WD. HOOFDINSPECTEUR VAN DEN
BURGERLYKEN GENEESKUNDIGEN DIENST
VAN 1 MAART 1915 TOT 5 AGUSTUS 1915
AAN WIENS INITIATIEF EN GROOTE
TOEWYDING DEZE GENEESKUNDIG-
ONDERWYS GEBOUWEN.
WELKE 5 JULI 1920
IN GEBRUIK WERDEN GENOMEN.
TE DANKEN ZYN.”

Which can be loosely translated to English as:

“TO COMMEMORATE DR. J. NOORDHOEK HEGT
WHO WAS BORN IN BATAVIA, 10 MARCH 1868
AND DIED IN DEN HAAG, 30 SEPTEMBER 1915.
HE WAS THE STOVIA DIRECTOR FROM
9 NOVEMBER 1908 TO 28 FEBRUARY 1915.
HE ALSO OFFICIATED THE HEAD INSPECTOR
OF GENERAL HEALTH AGENCY FROM
1 MARCH 1915 TO 5 AUGUST 1915.
HE WAS THE ONE WHO TOOK THE INITIATIVE
AND DEDICATED TO THIS EDUCATIONAL BUILDING,
INAUGURATED ON 5 JULY 1920.
THANK YOU.”



Figure 5.

Inscription of STOVIA building inauguration and dedication of the director dr.J. Noordhoek Hegt (Source: Authors' documentary)

Based on the inscription content verification, some words were written using the old Dutch language, such as “burgerlyken” (now written as burgerlijken), “Toewyding” (now written

as toewijding), onderwijs (now spelled onderwijs), and zyn (now spelled as zijn).

Applying the external verification, this inscription could be compared to another written source in its era, namely the inauguration charter of Technische Hoogeschool te Bandoeng, which is now known as Bandung Institute of Technology. Written on 3 July 1920 and signed by the Governor-General of Dutch East Indies, J.P. J. P. Graaf van Limburg Stirum, This charter is the same as STOVIA inscription in terms of language and letters. Today, this written source is located in the Rectorate Building Institute of Technology, Jl. Tamansari 64 Bandung.



Figure 6.

Technische Hoogeschool te Bandoeng Inauguration Charter
(Source: *De ingenieur in Indonesie*, 7 December 1955)

- **Dr. J. Noordhoek Hegt**

Noordhoek Hegt officiated as STOVIA director in 9 November 1908. Previously, from October 1899 to April 1903, he was a commissioned medical officer who taught general pathology and diagnostics in STOVIA. Starting in late 1902, he was appointed to be a director officer. In April 1903, he was appointed to be the director of the State Pasteur and Smallpox Institute.

However, he still devoted himself to medical education for future physicians in the Dutch East Indies. Under his leadership, STOVIA exhibited a significant development (De Waart, 2014).



Figure 7.

STOVIA Director, dr. J. Noordhoek Hegt inscription.

(Source: Buku Perkembangan Pendidikan Kedokteran di Weltevreden: 1851—1926)

At that time, Hegt planned to build a new school building next to the government's hospital in Salemba, i.e., *Centraal Burgerlijke Ziekenhuis (CBZ)*, to replace an old polyclinic in Glodok. In 1909, the board of directors led by Hegt organized several discussions related to the building of the new medical school. A land in Salemba that was originally prepared for a Law School was used for the new STOVIA building, thanks to the persistent efforts of dr. Noordhoek Hegt. The planning and building process of STOVIA in Salemba were done by many teachers based on their respective fields after long discussions In 1914 and 1915. Finally, a public work engineer, H.von Essen, was appointed to be the architect of the building (De Waart, 2014).

The country's medical education exhibited significant progress under Hegt's leadership, both in terms of learning materials and methods. The first cholera vaccination in Dutch East Indies was firstly done by STOVIA students together with dr. A.H. Nijland after an agreement with Noordhoek Hegt. On 16 September 1911, Noordhoek Hegt was permanently appointed as the school director. Along with dr. de Vogel as the Head of General Health Agency and dr. Hoekstra as the inspector of middle education, Noordhoek Hegt became a member of the preparatory commission for medical education method improvement and the establishment of the second medical school in Surabaya. In his memoir, A. De Waart (2014) states that as a member of the commission, he managed to ensure the government about two important points:

- a. An adequate learning outcome for preparatory students can only be achieved through a 7-year medical class.
- b. MULO school, as the introductory class of the medical subjects, should follow a special preparatory class, and when the government intends to change this preparatory class with

MULO education, the medical education should be done in eight years. This was because students needed to learn the Dutch language, exact sciences (stereometry, goniometry, trigonometry), botany, and animal science.

c.



Figure 8.

Dr. J. Noordhoek and STOVIA students

(Source: Buku Perkembangan Pendidikan Kedokteran di Weltevreden: 1851—1926)

Based on Hegt's suggestion, in 1913, the government opened an introductory class, i.e., Nederlandsch Indische Artsen School (NIAS), in Surabaya and designed a 7-year medical school curriculum. In the same year, STOVIA was opened for students from all ethnic backgrounds, regardless of their gender and sources of funding.

As the head inspector officer, Hegt still exhibited his critical contribution to the school by accelerating the school building plan in Salemba. Despite his great spirit for the new institution, he could not attend the official groundbreaking ceremony of the main building. The groundbreaking ceremony was held on 26 August 1916 by Gravin van Limburg Stirum, representing her husband, Johan Paul Graaf van Limburg Stirum, the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies.

In 1915, Hegt returned to the Netherland and passed away in Den Haag on 30 September the same year. Thus, STOVIA lost its figure with admirable performance and responsibility. This institution was reputable and without dr. J. Noordhoek Hegt, medical education and institutions in the Dutch East Indies found it difficult to achieve such advanced development.

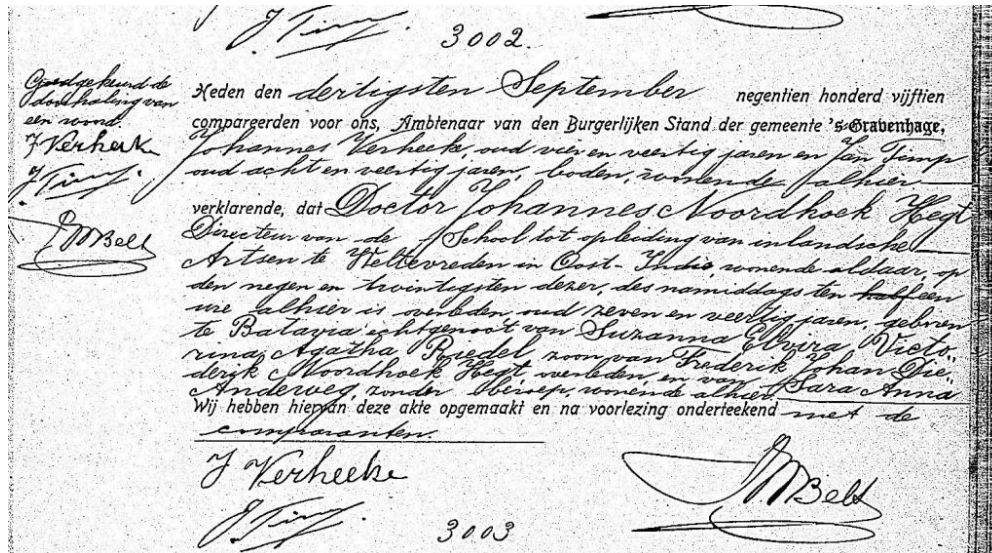


Figure 9.

Death Certificate of dr. J. Noordhoek Hegt from Den Haag Civil Death Certificate
(Source: openarch.nl)

- **Ornaments: Rod of Asclepius**

At both sides of the inscription is the symbol of a staff entwined by two serpents, commonly known as the rod of asclepius. Asclepius is a renowned Greek healer, and due to his healing skills, he is considered as the god of medicine. In Greek mythology, it was told that he was the son of Apollo, a multitalented handsome god associated with the field of medicine. Asclepius is depicted as an old man holding a wooden staff entwined by a serpent (Cartwright, 2013). Greek and ancient romans glorify Asclepius as the god of healing and medicine. They believe that Gods do not only create, but also heal diseases (King, 2001).

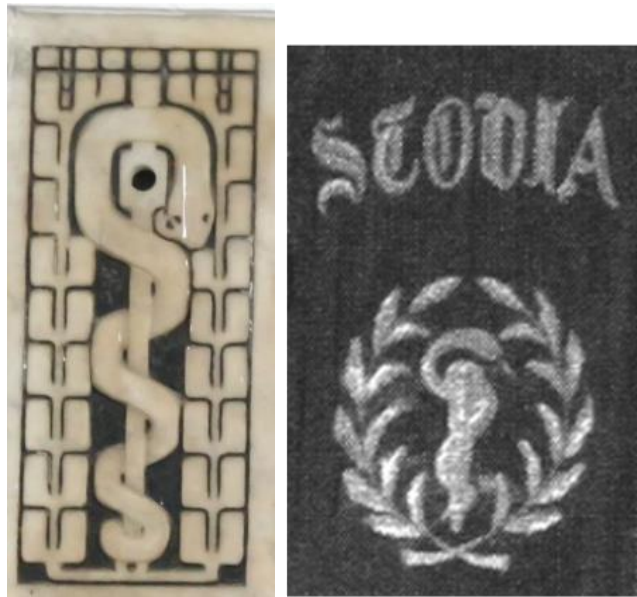


Figure 10.

Rod of Asclepius on the inscription and flag of STOVIA
(Source: Reproduction Documentation of Museum Kebangkitan Nasional)

To date, the rod of Asclepius is still used as the symbol of the medical field. In Indonesia, its use was introduced by STOVIA, a medical school that taught western medical science to natives. The STOVIA flag also presents the rod of Asclepius circled by a wreath. This symbol is also found in the hat of STOVIA uniforms. The rod of Asclepius was then adopted in various organizational logos in medical fields, such as the Indonesian Medical Association.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of two colonial inscriptions in STOVIA Salemba, the materials of the historical writing on medical development in the Dutch East Indies could be considered complete and complement each other. The colonial inscriptions analyzed in this study were the groundbreaking and the STOVIA building inauguration and dedication inscriptions for J. Noordhoek Hegt. This is supported by some archives, including a photograph of the event, civil death certificate issued by the Den Haag government, and newspaper articles in that era, i.e., *Deli Courant* and *Het Vaderland*.

This paper also discusses the role of the colonial inscription as the marker of medical institution development in Dutch East Indies, STOVIA. Due to advancement in the medical field, STOVIA, as the education and research institution, was moved to Salemba. After that, STOVIA, CBZ, and medical laboratory are inseparable. To date, STOVIA still plays a pivotal role in the history of medical education in Indonesia by transforming into the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Indonesia.\

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