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## Wim van den Doel, "SNOUCK; Biografi ilmuwan Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje"

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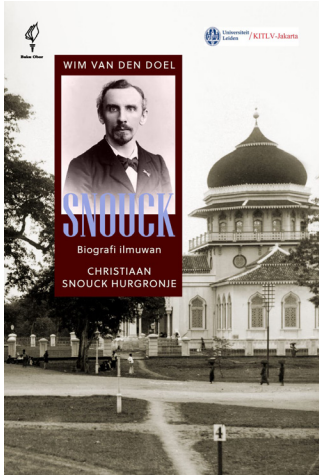
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Wim van den Doel, *SNOUCK; Biografi ilmuwan Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje*. Translated by Susi Moeimam, Nurhayu Santoso, and Maya Sutedja-Liem. Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia and KITLV-Jakarta, 2023, xvi + 554 pp. ISBN 978 623 321 217 5. Price: IDR 295,000 (softcover).



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For me and other scholars working on the history of Islam in Indonesia, the publication of the book recounting the socio-intellectual biography of Snouck Hurgronje by Wim van den Doel must be highly appreciated. As the leading scholar and the architect of the Dutch colonial policy on Islam, Snouck Hurgronje retains a special place in the historical memory of Indonesians. This is especially the case of the Muslims, among whom the controversial labels of being orientalist and anti-Islam spy are still alive. Unfortunately, without the support of scholarly works, this controversy has been growing, leading to the creation of what can be said to be the myth-based perceptions on this Dutch intellectual leader (*ilmuwan*).

The book first appeared in Dutch in 2021 and one year later (early 2023), thanks to KITLV-Jakarta, the Indonesian translation is now available under the title *SNOUCK; Biografi ilmuwan Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje*. As a socio-intellectual biography, the book begins (Chapter 1) with Snouck Hurgronje's formative years, which ended with him as an excellent graduate of the Faculty of Theology in Leiden University. Under the supervision of Professor De Goeje, his dissertation on the pilgrimage (hajj), *Het Mekkaansche feest* (1880), was greatly appreciated by contemporary Dutch and the European scholars. His stature as a scholar of Islam began to evolve, laying a firm foundation for Snouck Hurgronje to pursue an intellectual career in the Dutch colonial administration.

This began as he was officially tasked with monitoring the Muslims from the Netherlands East Indies who lived in Mecca (the *Jawa* community). In this book, his research stay in Mecca is singled out as a special episode in Snouck Hurgronje's life (Chapter 2). With the support of J.A. Kruijt, the Dutch Consul in Jeddah, including his training in Malay, this young Leiden scholar left for Mecca in August 1884. With the support of Raden Aboe Bakar Djajadiningrat, a Jawa from Banten, this Meccan experience provided Snouck Hurgronje with opportunities to have direct contact and personal communications with the

Jawa, while absorbing knowledge about the complexity of community life and Islamic learning in this city; all these first-hand data on Islam and Indies Muslims constitute the substance of the work he wrote after returning to The Netherlands in 1885, which appeared in an English translation, *Mekka in the latter part of the 19th century daily life, customs and learning; The Moslims of the East-Indian Archipelago* (1931).

Snouck Hurgronje completed his mission to Mecca and provided his, mainly, Dutch audiences with a new outlook on the Indies pilgrims, whom the Dutch suspected of being responsible for transmitting the anti-Dutch ideology of Pan-Islamism. He judged them to be unworldly scribes and teachers, most of whom desired nothing more than to serve Allah in peace. As a result, with the exception of Muslim fanatics, they should not be treated with uncalled for suppression. This premise formed the foundation for Snouck Hurgronje's service in the Dutch colonial government in the Indies (1889-1906), which is elaborated on in the next part of this book (Chapters 3 to 7).

Alongside his initial task of handling the issues related to the Banten protest of 1888 and Islamic courts (*priesterraden*), Snouck Hurgronje also began to make a serious study of the religious life of Indies Muslims. In July 1889, accompanied by Hasan Moestapa, he began a long journey to the cities in West and Central Java. In addition to collecting data about the '*ulamā*' – their areas of concern, their heirs, their teachers, and the sources of their learning (*kitab*) – he also observed how the Muslims practised their religious belief. All these data enriched Snouck Hurgronje's knowledge of Islamic practices, in which the encounter with local tradition (*adat*) emerged as a dominant issue.

Pertinently, this Islam-*adat* relationship was also paramount in the understanding of Aceh, the area where the Dutch were still embroiled in a struggle to seize control, and, as is discussed in Chapter 4, the supremacy of *adat* above *shari'a* was crucial. In his work on the people of this country, *The Acehnese*, 2 vols (1906), Snouck Hurgronje observes how little the Islamic doctrine affected the life of the Acehnese. Despite that fact that the '*ulamā*' were trained in the doctrine that *adat* (custom law) and *hukom* (religious law) should take their places side by side, the fact is that the greater portion of their lives was governed by *adat*, and only a small part by *hukom*. This disproportion was evidenced in the then prevailing social and political relationship between the *uleebalang* and the '*ulamā*', the watchdogs of *adat* and *shari'ah* respectively. This was to become the foundation for the rise of new line in the strategy in war over Aceh.

Snouck Hurgronje's vision happened to suit the thoughts of Governor-General Van der Wijck, and it materialized with the promotion of Van Heutsz to the position of the Governor of Aceh in 1898. Here, as can be seen in Chapter 5, knowledge and power intermingled. Snouck Hurgronje recommended and Van Heutsz implemented, in a decision to take the side of the *uleebalang* party, holding them in esteem so that they would accept the authority of the Dutch. The '*ulamā*' were another kettle of fish and an active war should be waged to crush them and drive them into the remotest corners of the interior of Aceh. In this endeavour, the Dutch military expedition, under the command of

Van Heutsz, succeeded. Commencing with the Pidie Expedition of 1898, they subdued other areas of Aceh. The *uleebalang* signed a 'short declaration' (*korte verklaring*), drafted by Snouck Hurgronje, pledging that they were subjects to the Netherlands Indies and would obey all its laws and regulations.

After his success in handling Acehnese affairs, the ideas of Snouck Hurgronje about Islam and *adat* were adopted as the principal guide for settling other issues in Gayo, Jambi, and Banjarmasin in South Borneo, contributing to the extension of Dutch power over more areas of the archipelago (Chapter 6). Besides securing Dutch power, Snouck Hurgronje was also concerned with emancipating the Indies people, expecting that they would be capable of adapting to new, nineteenth-century ideas stemming from the western tradition of liberalism. And, consistent with the idea of *adat* supremacy, Snouck Hurgronje assumed the aristocracy class would be the first group to be drawn into the colonial orbit.

This was reflected in his patronage of the Djajadingrat family of Banten. In addition to Achmad, his brothers – Hoesein and Hasan – were also recruited to participate in Snouck Hurgronje's colonial project of emancipation. Under Snouck Hurgronje's wing, Hoesein continued his studies in Holland. He was registered as a student of Leiden University in 1905, where Snouck Hurgronje was appointed professor in 1906 in the place of his teacher, De Goeje. In fact, this professorship signalled the end of the Indies episode of Snouck Hurgronje's career. Afterwards, while still being engaged in the socio-political affairs of the Indies, he became preoccupied with the academic life in the university, as well as with academic demands in Europe and the world.

After all the successes he accomplished, both as the scholar and the advisor to the colonial government, Snouck Hurgronje's life-story deserves to be presented in this biographical book. His life presents a portrait of an academic who dedicated his knowledge to the nation, the people, and humanity, regardless of the fact that the controversies which dogged his life still remain, being both admired and despised, as the title of the last chapter shows. With the support of abundant comprehensive and reliable primary sources, this book by Wim van den Doel should be highly valued.