

OTTOMAN-SUMATRAN RELATIONS, 1849-1904

BY

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this research is to examine diplomatic relations between the Ottoman Caliphate and the Sultanates of Aceh, Riau, and Jambi on the island of Sumatra between 1849 and 1904. In this context, the impact of the Pan-Islamism policy developed by the Ottoman Empire in Sumatra is an important development in these relations, involving examination of the factors of Hadramis, Ottoman Consuls, the Pan-Islamist press, Indonesian hajis, and *khutbahs* etc. The relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the Sumatran Sultanates in the second half of the nineteenth century has not been paid sufficient attention in the existing literature. This study addresses this academic gap by providing a holistic and comprehensive understanding of the relations between these states and peoples based on official archival documents. After analysing this relationship, the study answers why historical relations between Istanbul and Sumatra were ruptured in the sixteenth century and why they were largely dormant until 1849. The historical-analytical method is employed in the thesis. In the diplomatic relations that occurred in the period between 1849-1904, the original letters exchanged by the rulers are examined, and the dynamics in the establishment of these relations are determined with the help of these documents. It is very important to consider the methods used by the Ottomans in these relations, because of the role of the Ottoman Sultans as universal Islamic caliphs, and how this legacy was reinvigorated in the context of anti-colonial resistance against Western empires, particularly the Netherlands in the context of Sumatra. In brief, the study focuses on the diplomatic relations developed between the Ottoman Empire and the Sultanates of Aceh, Riau, and Jambi, and examines how these diplomatic relations evolved later on, and took the form of a Pan-Islamist relationship during the critical period of 1849-1904. The result of this study, the Ottoman Empire established a diplomatic relationship with these Sultanates on the island in the second half of the nineteenth century and it was concluded that the Caliphate had an impact on Sumatran people since the 1880s. This research emphasizes the need for an alternative historical approach for studying this relationship, as well as Pan-Islamism developments occurring in the Malay World.

مُلخّص البحث

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة العلاقات الدبلوماسية بين السلطنة العثمانية وسلطنات الملايو في كلٍّ من آتشيه ورياو وجامبي في جزيرة سومطرة ما بين عامي 1849-1904م؛ إذ تُمثّل سياسة الوحدة الإسلامية التي طورتها السلطنة العثمانية في سومطرة تطوراً مهماً في هذه العلاقات، وتضمّن البحث دراسة أثر عوامل عدة على هذه العلاقات من مثل الحضرميين، والقناصل العثمانيين، والصحافة الإسلامية، والحجاج الإندونيسيين، والخطباء، وما إلى ذلك؛ ويُلحظ أن العلاقة بين السلطنة العثمانية وسلطنات سومطرة في النصف الثاني من القرن التاسع عشر الميلادي لم تحظ باهتمامٍ كافٍ في الأدبيات المتوفرة، وعليه؛ يحاول البحث سدّ هذه الفجوة الأكاديمية من خلال عرض وافٍ وتحليل شامل للعلاقات بين هذه الدول والشعوب؛ بناء على الوثائق الرسمية المؤرشفة؛ ليُجيب البحث عن سبب تمزق العلاقات التاريخية بين إسطنبول وسومطرة في القرن السادس عشر الميلادي، وأنها كانت خاملة إلى حد كبير حتى عام 1849م، وقد توسّل البحث منهج التحليل التاريخي، ففيما يخص العلاقات الدبلوماسية ما بين عامي 1849-1904م؛ فحص الباحث الرسائل الأصلية التي تبادلها الحكام؛ لتحديد التحركات التأسيسية لهذه العلاقات، وكان من المهم جداً في هذا البحث النظر في الأساليب التي استخدمها العثمانيون في هذه العلاقات؛ لدور السلاطين العثمانيين المهم خلفاء إسلاميين عالميين، وفي كيفية تنشيط الإرث العثماني في سياق المقاومة المعادية للاستعمار ضد الإمبراطوريات الغربية، وبخاصة في سياق الاستعمار الهولندي لسومطرة، ومن ثم؛ يُركز البحث على العلاقات الدبلوماسية التي نشأت بين السلطنة العثمانية وسلطنات الملايو في كلٍّ من آتشيه ورياو وجامبي، ويدرس تطوّر هذه العلاقات الدبلوماسية حتى اتخذت شكل علاقة وحدة إسلامية ما بين عامي 1849-1904م، وقد بيّنت النتائج أن السلطنة العثمانية أقامت علاقات دبلوماسية مع هذه السلطنات في النصف الثاني من القرن التاسع عشر الميلادي، واستنتجت الدراسة أن كان للخلافة تأثير في شعب سومطرة منذ ثمانينيات ذلك القرن، مما يؤكد الحاجة إلى نهج تاريخي بديل لدراسة هذه العلاقات والتطورات الإسلامية الشاملة التي تحدث في عالم الملايو.

APPROVAL PAGE

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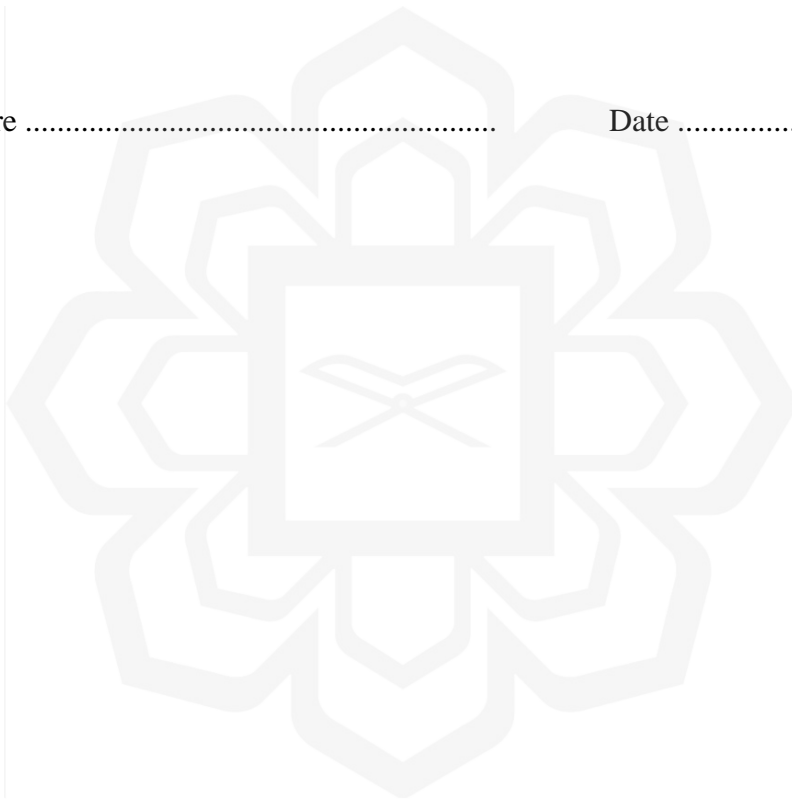
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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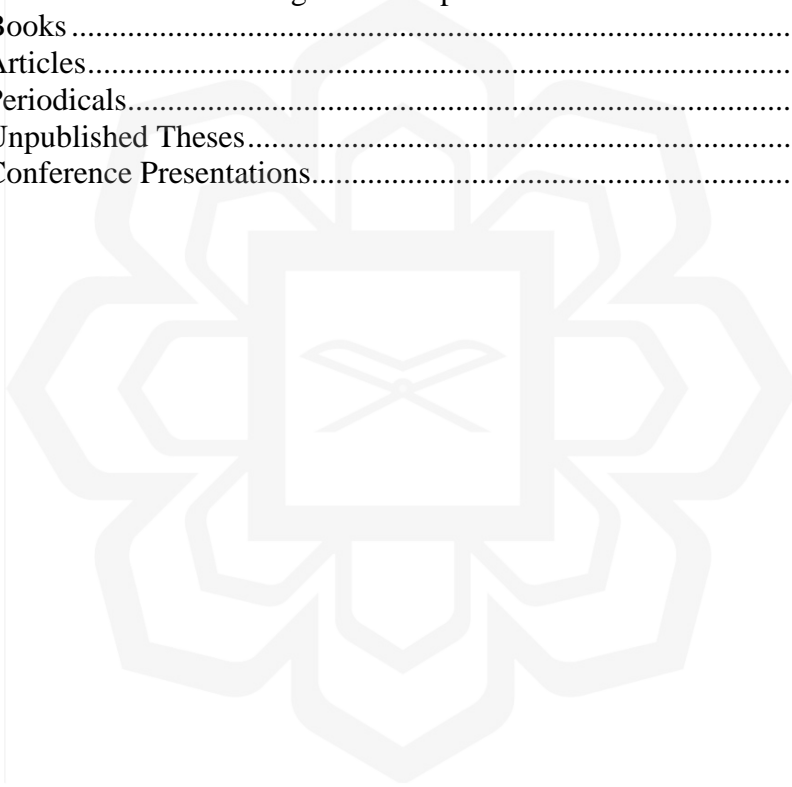
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BOA	<i>Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi</i> (Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry)
DİA	<i>Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi</i> (The Encyclopaedia of Islam of Diyanet)
DVNS. MHM	<i>Mühimme Defteri</i> (Imperial Orders)
GAM	<i>Gerekan Aceh Merdaka</i> (Free Aceh Movement)
IUM	International Islamic University Malaysia
ISAM	Center for Islamic Studies, Istanbul
ISTAC	International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization
JMBRAS	Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
JSEAH	Journal of Southeast Asian History
JSEAS	Journal of Southeast Asian Studies
TDV	<i>Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı</i> (Turkey Diyanet Foundation)
VOC	<i>Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie</i> (Dutch East India Company)



TRANSLITERATION TABLE

Arabic Transliteration Scheme (According to IIUM Thesis Manual)

Consonant

Arabic term	Transliteration	Arabic term	Transliteration	Arabic term	Transliteration
ء	‘	ز	z	ق	q
ب	b	س	s	ك	k
ت	t	ش	sh	ل	l
ث	th	ص	ṣ	م	m
ج	j	ض	ḍ	ن	n
ح	h	ط	ṭ	ه	h
خ	kh	ظ	ẓ	و	w
د	d	ع	‘	ي	y
ذ	dh	غ	gh		
ر	r	ف	f		

Vowel

Arabic term	Transliteration	Arabic term	Transliteration
ا	a	ا +	É
ي	i	ي +	Ê
و	u	و +	Ë
اِي	ay	او	aw

The transliteration above is not applied when the context calls for localized terminology derived from Arabic terms, such as Aceh Darussalam Sultanate, ulama, and adat.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Aceh, Riau, and Jambi Sultanates in Sumatra in contemporary history, along with renewed interest in the Pan-Islamist history of the Ottomans in Turkey and Southeast Asia itself. Existing works on the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Sumatra have generally focused on the sixteenth century. In this study, the aim is to examine the modern period of 1849-1904, as this relationship has received less research interest, despite its more immediate historical significance.

The relations between the Ottoman Empire and Sumatra Island in the Indonesian Archipelago had many dimensions, including in diplomatic, military, religious, and commercial terms. In this work, these relations examined in two main chapters, which are diplomatic (*political relations*) and the Pan-Islamist connections. Diplomatic or political relations constitute the first part of the study, which were the most fundamental relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the Sultanates of Aceh, Riau, and Jambi. In the second part, the research focuses on the impact of the Ottoman Caliph on the Sumatran people, which assumed religious, nationalistic, and cultural dimensions.

Inter-state relations are generally based on diplomacy and military aid in political history. This *relationship* can also be explained as being based on political ties established during the sixteenth century. In general, the Aceh Sultanate requested the military and the diplomatic assistance from the Ottomans against the colonial powers, and the Ottoman-Aceh envoy traffic formed based on this relationship from the

sixteenth century.¹ The first relationship established between Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566), *Kanuni Sultan Süleyman*, and Sultan Alâeddin Ri'ayat Shah al-Qahhar (1537-1571) were the most vigorous and powerful Sultans of the Ottoman Empire and the Acehne Sultanate respectively. The relationship they established between their own imperiums had profound and long-lasting effects that are still visible now. Diplomatic and military relations became more formalized and frequent during this period.

The Ottoman Empire's initial relations with the Aceh Sultanate on Sumatra Island that began in the mid-sixteenth century subsequently fell into effective abeyance for centuries. One of the questions addressed by this study is to explore why this extended period of non-relationship between the two states became entrenched. This second period of the relationship, which started again in 1849,² is analysed for the reasons underlying the resurgence of relations.

Apart from diplomatic and military contacts, the Ottoman Empire and the Acehne Sultanate had cultural, commercial, religious, and educational relations. The underlying rationale for the Ottoman Empire's relationship with the Aceh Sultanate was that it was the seat of the caliphate and the nominal supreme political authority of the Islamic world. This factor assumed increasing importance in Turkish and Acehne society in the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth due to the burgeoning anti-colonial movement, and awareness of the potential of Pan-Islamic resistance to European imperialism.

¹ C. R. Boxer, "A Note on Portuguese Reactions to The Revival of The Red Sea Spice Trade and the Rise of Atjeh, 1540-1600," *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Dec. 1969), pp. 417-418; Anthony Reid, "Sixteenth Century Turkish Influence in Western Indonesia," *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Dec. 1969), pp. 395-414; Ahmet Asrar, *Kanuni Sultan Süleyman ve İslam Alemi* (Istanbul: Hilal Yayınları, 1972); Razaullah Şah, "Açı Padişahı Sultan Alâeddin'in Kanunî Sultan Süleyman'a Mektubu," *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi* (Ankara, 1967), pp. 373-409.

² The Ottoman Archives of the Prime Ministry (**Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri**); BOA, İ.HR, 66/3208. See Also; BOA, İ.HR, 67/3270.

In the second half of the nineteenth century (the period of most concern to this study), the Sultans of Aceh,³ Riau,⁴ and Jambi⁵ requested military aid from the Ottoman Empire and asked to be a vassal of it; the diplomatic response reveals the cautious approach of the Ottomans and how they wished to avoid direct confrontation with European powers. When Dutch forces invaded these Sultanates, these Sultanates' diplomatic efforts were an essential feature of relations with the Ottomans due to the venerable and longstanding connections between the two geographical regions.⁶

In addition to diplomatic relations that occurred during the period 1849-1904, the second category of the relationship is examined under the heading of 'the impact of the Ottoman Caliphate on Sumatra' in this study. Although these relations seem to be duller compared to political ties, they could have been more useful and profound for the peoples of these regions. The dimensions include religion (mainly in terms of Pan-Islamism), cultural affiliations, and nationalistic sentiments. The following factors, which play a vital role in the realization of this effect on this island, are also examined separately: Hadramis, Ottoman Consuls, the Pan-Islamic press, pilgrims (Hajjis), and the *khutbah*.

The study is limited to the eponymous period of 1849 to 1904 because the initial relationship that began in the middle of the sixteenth century became dormant for approximately three centuries. This second period of the Ottoman-Sumatra relations started again in 1849 when the Sultan of Aceh requested help from the Istanbul government, and therefore the start date of this study was determined as 1849. Although

³ BOA, İ.HR, 66/3208. See; BOA, İ.HR, 67/3270.

⁴ BOA, A. MKT.MHM, 134/32. See also, Cezmi Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği* (Istanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat Yayınları, 1992), p. 93.

⁵ BOA, Y. PRK. HR, 26/67. See; Anthony Reid, "Nineteenth Century Pan-Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Feb. 1967), p. 275.

⁶ Anthony Reid. "Sixteenth Century Turkish Influence in Western Indonesia" (1969), p. 398.

Aceh lost their war against the Netherlands in 1903,⁷ the Riau and Jambi Sultanates remained in contact with the Ottoman Empire until 1904.⁸ As a result, with the Dutch Government occupying the entire Sumatra in 1904, this year was chosen as the cut-off point for this work's historical analysis.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, apart from the Aceh Sultanate situated on the western side of Sumatra Island, the Ottoman Empire had also established relations with the neighbouring sultanates of Jambi and Riau. These relations established because these local sultanates appealed to the Ottomans for assistance against the Western forces in Sumatra. Envoys used to come at regular intervals from Sumatra to Istanbul in this century. This information verified by archive sources⁹ and *hikayats* (Indonesian scholars wrote epics and history books).

The nineteenth-century witnessed the political decline of both the Ottoman and Sumatran Sultanates, especially Aceh, and the diplomatic engagements between them were ultimately unfruitful in attempting to avert the apocalypse of European colonial domination, although the diplomatic and economic assistance the Ottomans extended to Sumatra should not be underestimated. The situation was more or less similar throughout the nineteenth and first quarter of the twentieth century, with the Ottomans

⁷ C. Snouck Hurgonje, *The Acehnese*, Vol. I (Leiden: Brill, 1906).

⁸ Barbara W. Andaya, "From Rum to Tokyo: The Search for Anti-Colonial Allies by the Rulers of Riau 1899-1914," *Indonesia*, Vol. 24 (1977), pp. 130-131.

⁹ For example, "correspondence comprising a letter in Malay (in Jawi script) from the Acehnese Sultan, Mansur Shah, to the Ottoman Sultan 'Abd al-Madjid, dated 15 Rabi' al-Awwal 1265 H/ 8 February 1849 CE; a second letter, in Arabic, from Mansur Shah to 'Abd al-Madjid, written the following year, 3 Jumada al-Awal 1266 H/ 17 March 1850 CE; and a letter in Arabic from Mansur Shah's envoy, Muhammad Ghauth, to Hasib Pasha, Ottoman governor of the Hijaz, also dated Jumada al-Awal 1266 H/ March-April 1850 CE. Among these documents are also letters of introduction and financial guarantees written in Arabic for Muhammad Ghauth, along with the envelope and lists of the gifts of spices, pepper and cloth which had been sent on three previous occasions to Istanbul, but which appear never to have arrived." See: Ismail Hakkı Kadı, A.C.S. Peacock and Annabel Teh Gallop, "Writing History the Acehnese embassy to Istanbul, 1849-1852," *Mapping the Acehnese Past* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2011), p. 163.

exerting some balance against the inexorably increasing encroachment of the colonial powers.

The long-distance between Istanbul and Sumatra undoubtedly impeded relations from assuming the vibrancy both parties would have preferred. Nevertheless, we hope that the neglect of the study of Ottoman engagement with Southeast Asia will be redressed by this study. We believe that this work will contribute to the Ottoman history literature by analysing the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and these most distant Islamic states, with clear relevance for modern Turkish and Southeast Asian peoples' collective memory and contemporary political consciousness.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to Western historians, the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Sumatra was based on material interests, mainly trade. Jorge Santos Alves, in his article entitled *Aceh-Ottoman Relations, the 1550s-1570s* summarised this view thus:

Various authors have pointed out, one of the aspects of Aceh's foreign policy during this period was active involvement in the spice route between the port at the sultanate's capital and the Red Sea ports, through the Maldives. Spice exports from Southeast Asia (especially pepper) to commercial centers controlled by the Ottomans formed one of the essential pivots of this.¹⁰

Another Western author with this idea is Andrew Peacock. At a conference given at the University of Malaya on November 11, 2017, he alluded to colonial aims in Ottoman relations with this region.¹¹ On the other hand, Turkish historians and archival sources point to a different reason. According to these sources, the Sumatran sultanates understood that they could not fight alone against their enemies, and they had to seek

¹⁰ Jorge Santos Alves, "Aceh-Ottomans Relations, 1550s-1570s," *From Anatolia to Aceh – Ottomans, Turks and Southeast Asia* (Leiden: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 48.

¹¹ Andrew Peacock, "Pan-Islamic Plot or Colonial Paranoia - Ottoman Activities in Southeast Asia, c.1850, 1916," *Conference at University of Malaya* (11.11.2017).

help elsewhere, but there was no country in the vicinity of Sumatra in a position to help them. All local sultanates and polities were riddled with European colonial domination or interference. Finally, in this case, the Aceh sultanate firstly pleaded for help from the most significant Islamic state, the Ottoman Empire, *Devleti Aliyye-i Osmâniyye*.¹² Examining first-hand Ottoman and local sources affirm this concept. This study intends to compare and to conclude regarding these contradictory views on the motivations of Ottoman engagement with the help of original documents.

The second issue is that the Ottoman-Sumatra relations began in the sixteenth century (with the Sultanate of Aceh); therefore, most of the works on this subject had focused on the sixteenth century and not the later periods. On the other hand, upon examination of Ottoman archival documents, it was apparent that many original documents were related to the nineteenth century, which remains to be seriously analysed and researched by historians.

Another critical shortcoming of the existing works is that they are chiefly concerned with diplomatic relations. In the nineteenth century, besides diplomatic ties, there were many efforts aimed at establishing Pan-Islamist relationships. For example, thousands of *khutbah* samples were sent to Sumatra and Java to be read in the name of the Ottoman Caliphate.¹³ Another issue is that pilgrims, Ottoman Consulates, and the Pan-Islamic press helped foster the development of Pan-Islamist relations between the two geographies, and to foment anticolonial resistance.

¹² Razaulhak Şah, "Açı Padişahı Sultan Alaeddin'in Kanuni Sultan Süleyman'a Mektubu," p. 373.

¹³ BOA, Y. A. HUS. 386/52.001.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the identified research problem, this study answers the following questions:

1. Why were relations between Istanbul and Sumatra established in the sixteenth-century ruptured until 1849?
2. What was the nature of the relationships between the Ottoman Caliphate and the Acehese Sultanate?
3. What are the main dynamics behind the Riau and Jambi Sultanates in Sumatra to establish diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire?
4. How identified factors led to the spread of the Ottoman Pan-Islamist ideas on Sumatra?

Under the guidance of these questions, this work attempts to outline the significance of the Ottoman-Sumatra relations during the second half of the nineteenth century in the broader context of imperialism and resistance.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Generally, this work aims to examine and have an in-depth discussion of the relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Acehese, Riau, and Jambi Sultanates in the period 1849-1904. Specifically, the aims of this study are as follows:

1. To examine the main reason behind the rupture of the relations for approximately three centuries between the Ottoman Empire and Sumatra.
2. To discuss the nature of relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Acehese Sultanate in the second half of the nineteenth century.
3. To examine the influencing factors which pushed to Riau and Jambi Sultanates to establish diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century.

4. To analyze the factors impacting the spread of the Pan-Islamist ideas based in Istanbul among Sumatran people.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is deemed significant for three major reasons. Firstly, reviews on the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Sumatra Island in the nineteenth century have not been extensive. Even though there are some serious works related to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries on this relationship, equivalent scholarship has not been devoted to the nineteenth century. The Ottoman Empire had relations with these sultanates from 1849 to 1873 and during the reign of the last *de facto* Caliph, Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876-1909).

Secondly, although a few articles have been written on the subject, they generally used similar primary sources. Unlike other studies on the topic, this study will use both Indonesian, Turkish, English, and Ottoman primary sources. Apparently, most of the primary sources lacked the use of many articles and books, but this study is going to include many new documents and information on the subject matter.

Finally, this study not only examines the diplomatic and military relations between the Ottoman Empire and Aceh, Riau, and Jambi Sultanates, but also considers the impact of the caliphate on Sumatra. The reign of the Caliph of Abdulhamid II (1876-1909) was essentially defined by his interest in Pan-Islamism, to reverse (or at least delay) European colonial encroachment throughout the Islamic world. The Ottoman Archives have many documents related to the influence of the Caliphate on the Malay World, and these documents contain particularly interesting information about the

Dutch oppression of local Muslim society.¹⁴ Hence, the outcome of this work might also become an enlightening reference for other researchers on the subject matter as a source of information on the relations between the two states.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Several limitations need to be acknowledged and addressed regarding the study. The foremost limitation of this study lies in the availability of translations and classifications of the primary documents of the local Sumatran and Turkish archives. Generally, this study has its limitations because of the lack of translated manuscripts from the Ottoman languages.¹⁵

On the other hand, the Ottoman Archives are more organized and accessible in comparison to those for the Acehnese or the other sultanates of Sumatra and Indonesian. However, all of the Ottoman documents were written by hand, and most of the materials are illegible and have yet to be translated. The use of Ottoman Turkish (using Arabic script) stopped after the Turkish language revolution in 1928, and the Ottoman language has not been used officially (or taught in schools) since.

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

The secondary sources in this study consist of several pivotal books, articles, and conference papers which were written by experts in this topic, such as Anthony Reid, Jan Schmidt, Ismail Hakkı Kadı, Annabel Teh Gallop, Azyumardi Azra, and Ismail

¹⁴ Look For some arcival documents with the serial numbers: BOA, HR. SYS. 551/2; BOA, Y. PRK. BŞK. 55/41; BOA, Y. A. HUS. 297/35-1; BOA. Y. A. HUS. 297/35-2, BOA, Y. A. HUS. 297/35-3.

¹⁵ The Ottoman language or Ottoman Turkish (*Lisân-ı Osmânî*) was used in Ottoman territories. It borrows extensively from Arabic and Persian, and it was written in Arabic alphabet. Most official Ottoman documents were written by hand (as in Europe) during the nineteenth century. All documents from Ottoman Archive are given serial numbers in citation as BOA.

Hakkı Göksoy. While most professional historians strive to adopt a balanced and dispassionate view, the nature of source materials used generally enables a division of perspectives into pro-Western and pro-Muslim views. Different conclusions can be reached about the Ottoman-Malay World relations based on Western and Muslim sources.

1.7.1 Literature Based on Western Sources

This study examines sources in two separate categories: those written generally by Western writers, with the help of Western sources, and the second group of works written by Eastern sources (including the Ottomans). In this context, the studies in this first group are examined under this title. The main works to be discussed in this section are as follows.

Anthony Reid's *Sixteenth Century Turkish Influence in Western Indonesia*¹⁶ is an essential work by a prolific scholar of the Malay World. The article is an authoritative source about the Ottoman-Aceh relationship as it is the first systematic work related to the topic. Although it only focuses on the sixteenth century, as the title suggests, it establishes the broader framework of relations. The writer used Portuguese, Indonesian, Turkish documents as well as English sources. Besides, he introduced Saffet Bey's article¹⁷ and translated some Ottomans documents related to the Aceh Sultanate.

Anthony Reid's *Rum and Jawa: The Vicissitudes of Documenting a Long-Distance Relationship*¹⁸ was published in 2015 by Oxford University Press. It has four

¹⁶ Anthony Reid, "Sixteenth Century Turkish Influence in Western Indonesia," *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, Vol. 10, no 3 (1969) pp. 395-414.

¹⁷ Saffet Bey, "Bir Osmanlı Filosunun Sumatra Seferi," *Tarihi Osmanî Encümeni Mecmuası*, no: 10; 604-14; pp. 678-83.

¹⁸ Anthony Reid, "Rum and Jawa: The Vicissitudes of Documenting A Long-Distance Relationship," *From Anatolia to Aceh – Ottomans, Turks and Southeast Asia* (Leiden: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 25-44.