

# Women and Power Relations in Indonesian Classical Historiography: A Feminist Approach

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## Abstract

Classical historiography is frequently recounted in an elitist manner, predominantly emphasizing the contributions of the masculine elite, such as men who ascended to kingship, without adequately considering the roles of individuals behind significant events, particularly the contributions of women. Consequently, there is a need for a revised perspective in the writing of classical history that acknowledges the significant roles of women during the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom era, thereby enabling Indonesian classical historiography to more accurately reflect human experiences. This study employs a feminist approach to examine classical history with a focus on the roles of women. The objective is to develop a new perspective in classical history by utilizing auxiliary theories to enhance historical narratives. The study employs historical research methods, including heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography. Through the application of auxiliary approaches such as feminism, new insights have emerged, revealing that women made contributions in classical history that were equally significant as those of men. Notable examples include Gayatri Rajapatni, who played an intellectual role in the prosperity of the Majapahit Kingdom; Tribhuwana Tunggaladewi, who maintained Majapahit's hegemony by successfully quelling the Sadeng and Kēta rebellions during her reign; and Ratu Sima, whose wisdom was evident in her leadership of the Kalingga Kingdom. The findings of this research can be further explored through the development of additional classical historical research.

**Keywords:** Classical Historiography; Masculine Elite; Feminist Approach; Women's Role; Hindu-Buddhist Kingdom.

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## Introduction

Classical historiography reflects human events that occurred in daily life of a kingdom in past. This historiography describes the lives of ancient kingdoms that once existed in Indonesia, such as Majapahit and Sriwijaya. One of the challenges facing classical historiography today is its declining appeal among the younger generation. Based on the researcher's academic experience, during a discussion at the Universitas Gadjah Mada central library, a colleague expressed a lack of interest in studying the history of the archipelago's classical kingdoms. He argued that classical historical narratives often appear underdeveloped and monotonous, typically following a predictable pattern of emergence, expansion, golden age, and eventual

decline. This repetitive structure tends to reduce classical history to a linear and formulaic account of past kingdoms. Consequently, classical historiography is frequently perceived as rigid and unengaging, leading to diminished interest among contemporary readers.

The monotony of classical historical narratives is not merely a reflection of the events themselves but is driven by systemic historiographical factors. Scholars argue that the inherent weakness of classical history lies in its repetitive storytelling, specifically the redundant depictions of a kingdom's consolidation and zenith, which renders the narrative predictable. This structural redundancy inadvertently facilitates 'historical marginalization,' where diverse historical figures and eyewitnesses are sidelined. Such marginalization stems from the homogenization of narratives and the imposition of standardized accounts by political elites to sustain their hegemony (McGregor, 2008). Bambang Purwanto, a historian at Universitas Gadjah Mada, characterizes this phenomenon as "*pengingkaran yang menjerumuskan*" (misleading denial), a process that obscures the roles of minorities while disproportionately reinforcing the dominance of the majority (Purwanto and Adam, 2013).

This form of marginalization indirectly fosters chauvinistic entities that often overlook the contributions of marginalized communities and women in classical historical narratives. Women played roles that were equally significant as those of men in the past. Their roles were not merely passive, such as waiting for the king to return from hunting, but were much more substantial, as exemplified by Surastri Karma Trimurti, a woman who played a pivotal role in Indonesian history. Surastri Karma Trimurti, also known as Mak Sepet, was active as a journalist documenting Indonesia's past, particularly during the independence period and events in three regions (Soebagijo, 1982, p. 105). Additionally, Raden Ajeng Kartini contributed her thoughts on the use of opium in Java (Wahid, 2021, pp. 117-120). Thus, there are hidden facts that may not have been explored or may have been deliberately concealed from the public. Therefore, this paper aims to provide a new perspective on classical history.

Researcher should be aware that contemporary and colonial history offer a variety of narratives in historical writing using social science approaches such as gender perspectives. Similarly, classical history can be developed using a feminist perspective so that there is a development of historical narratives that are not too masculine, but it is difficult for classical history to gain attention from historians today. This is because of several things that have been explained by Bambang Purwanto and Asvi Warman Adam. These two historians have explained that historians have made insufficient efforts in creating new periodizations based on new factual findings. In addition, historians too often reproduce existing themes (Adam and Purwanto, 2013, p. 4). Therefore, classical historiography tends to be monotonous with themes whose plots are easy to predict, so it is not surprising that younger generation today is less interested in classical Indonesian history. Thus, there is a need for renewal in narrative of classical Indonesian historiography. Therefore, this study answer three important research questions: (1) How have classical histories of the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms in Indonesia been written, and to what extent have they emphasized masculine elites? (2) What factors have shaped the dominant patterns and purposes of these historical narratives? (3) How can alternative perspectives, particularly a feminist approach, provide a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of classical Indonesian history?

Several researchers have begun studying classical history through a feminist lens. For instance, Drake (2012), former Canadian Ambassador to Indonesia, authored "*Gayatri Rajapatni: Perempuan di Balik Kejayaan Majapahit*", arguing that women played a crucial role in the glory of the Majapahit Kingdom (Drake, 2012, pp. 80-87). Similarly, Darmosoetopo (2003), in his article "*Sima dan Bangunan Keagamaan di Jawa Abad IX-X TU*", provides an insightful

account of daily life in the Kingdom of Kalingga during the reign of Queen Sima, who was renowned for her wise and fair leadership (Darmosoetopo, 2003). In contrast, some classical historiographical works have largely overlooked women's contributions. For example, Muhammad Yamin (1986) describes the Pasaddeng incident (the Sadeng rebellion) by emphasizing the roles of Adityawarman and Gajah Mada, presenting a predominantly masculine perspective (Yamin, 1986, pp. 43–49). Meanwhile, Ahmad Zainollah (2015) implicitly acknowledges Tribhuwana Tunggaladewi's strategic role in addressing the same rebellion, although it is not the central focus of his discussion (Ahmad, 2015, pp. 106). Taken together, these studies suggest that women played significant yet often underrecognized roles in the course of classical Indonesian history.

This article is important because it presents a new approach to writing classical history by applying perspectives from social science theories, such as feminism, and by examining local contexts to bring previously marginalized figures and regions into focus. By incorporating new factual findings, classical history can become more engaging and explore fresh themes. Utilizing these new facts, combined with social science perspectives, allows for a deeper and more developed historiography that addresses both global and local dimensions. A feminist approach enriches classical historical narratives by highlighting the roles of women during the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms era, tracing their local contexts, and challenging their marginalization in traditional historical accounts.

## Method

This study employs the historical research method, comprising heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography (Gottschalk, 1985, p. 32). In the heuristic stage, literature was gathered from the Universitas Gadjah Mada Library and Universiteit Leiden, focusing on Indonesian antiquity. Primary and secondary materials include a photograph of the *Ardhanari* statue from the Universiteit Leiden collection and seminal texts such as *Het Oud-Javaansche Lofdicht Nagarakrtagama van Prapanca (1365 AD)* (Kern, 1919), *Riwajat Indonesia Djilid 1* (Poerbatjaraka, 1952), and Pitono Hardjowardojo's (1965) translation of the *Pararaton*. Additional sources include Boechari's collected inscriptions in *Melacak Sejarah Kuno Indonesia Lewat Prasasti* (Susanti et al., 2012) and Slamet Muljana's (2006) *Tafsir Sejarah Nagarakretagama*.

Source verification was conducted by triangulating the visual evidence of the *Ardhanari* statue with textual data. This process revealed a dichotomy in existing literature: while some sources exhibit strong masculine nuances and "historical patriotism," others have begun integrating feminist perspectives. A similar rigorous source criticism was applied by Alamsyah (2023, p. 631), who cross-referenced Dutch colonial archives with field observations to substantiate the existence of the *Pontang Kingdom in Jember*. In this study, the comparison between the *Ardhanari* iconography and classical texts serves as the foundation for constructing a feminist classical historiography.

The interpretation phase utilizes the *Ardhanari* statue to reflect social dimensions. As Purwanto (2008, p. 273) notes, visual artifacts such as photographs are instrumental in examining social dynamics and daily life in historical analysis. Furthermore, Purwanto (2006, pp. 36-48) argues that contemporary historiography has frequently marginalized women, necessitating a re-centering of the "human essence" in historical narratives. Consequently, this research adopts a feminist approach to reclaim the role of women in Indonesia's classical era. The findings suggest a pervasive "feminist essence" within ancient kingdoms, evidenced by female leadership and gender-equal political authority, offering a transformative perspective for Indonesian classical historiography.

## Historiography of Classical History in Indonesia

Classical history underwent significant historiographical developments during several periods of government in Indonesia. Classical historiography experienced chauvinistic undertones after independence until the 1970s with the aim of character building of the nationalism Indonesia. Then, auxiliary theories for history began to be applied during the New Order era, but historical writing was still very masculine. Indonesian historical writing began to diversify in the 2000s, especially after the 1998 reform movement which influenced freedom of thought and in turn Indonesian historical writing. Therefore, classical historiography also has the same opportunity to develop its historical writing.

### *Chauvinism in Classical Historiography*

Patriotic views in historical writing were common in the early days of Indonesian independence. This historical patriotism seemed to take advantage of classical historiography, as in Muhammad Yamin's work on the red and white flag which he claimed had existed for 6.000 years. Yamin (1954, p. 21) linked the Indonesian Red and White flag to the war flag of Singhasari Kingdom and said that every battle led by Kertanagara was accompanied by a red and white flag that was flown during the war and served as a means of channeling the fighting spirit of Singhasari troops. He also researched pre-literate Austronesian era which states that ancestors of Indonesia were indigenous inhabitants of region. Yamin's (1954) writing is a very interesting work because it requires a high level of literary imagination, but it would be even better if there were periodization boundaries with rational propositions so that history could be more rational. History serves as a portrait of the past whose absolute truth remains elusive; however, when refined through logical, critical, and chronological analysis within defined periodization, it yields a narrative that aligns with rational thought. Classical historiography necessitates this rigor because existing narratives are frequently steeped in mysticism, often derived from *poetical accounts, prophecies, chronicles, kakawin*, and ancient manuscripts, which are susceptible to anachronisms.

For instance, the Jataka identifies *Suvarnadwipa* and *Suvarnabhumi* as the "Golden Island," which Wolters (2017) interprets as Sumatra due to its historical status as a gold-producing region. Similarly, the *Mahaniddesa* describes *Javadvipa*, identified as Java Island (Wolters, 2017, pp. 20-21). Consequently, historical narratives of that era tended to sacralize regions, often resulting in excessive historical patriotism. Classical historical writings often discuss the territory of a kingdom and then link it to other territories to understand the trade that took place between these kingdoms. An example is *mitra satata* between Majapahit and its partners which is described as having international relations to protect and recognize sovereignty of each kingdom. Agus Aris Munandar as an archaeologist and professor at Universitas Indonesia once interpreted that *mitra satata* could be interpreted as friends who were equal to Majapahit which interpretation was based on stories such as Upu Daeng Menambun, Sang Hyang Siksakanda, Banjar, and so on (Munandar, 2018, p. 79). *Nagarakretagama pupuh* (stanza) 15 also provides information that Majapahit was friendly with Ayuthya, Darmanagari, Singanagari, Rajapura, and Marutma (Alamsyah, 2025, p. 60; Muljana, 2006, p. 346). In addition, Sriwijaya also had a vast territory extending to Malay Peninsula as described in *Ligor Inscription* in Thailand.

Sriwijaya was a kingdom believed to be located around South Sumatra. This kingdom covered an area roughly the same size as Majapahit. Muljana (2008, pp. 163-166) once explained that this kingdom located around South Sumatra reached its peak during the reign

of Balaputradewa whose territory covered almost all present-day Indonesia and several areas of Malay Peninsula. Furthermore, based on several inscriptions such as *Nalanda* and *Ligor* it is evident that Sriwijaya was a maritime empire before Majapahit. Therefore, these two kingdoms are popularly known as National Kingdoms 1 and 2 by historians such as Muhammad Yamin.

Based on the stories of Majapahit and Sriwijaya in the past, classical historical narratives were intended to foster nationalism. This nationalism was aimed at young people to instill a spirit of nationalism to maintain unity of Indonesia after independence, so that the lessons learned from past kingdoms could be applied to achieve coexistence in diversity. This is evident in Muhammad Yamin's narrative about "*6000 Tahun Bendera Merah Putih*" (6000 Years of the Red and White Flag). Thus, the narratives from around the 1950s to the 1970s were still chauvinistic, not scientific, and tended to be merely descriptive and narrative. Meanwhile, historical writing during the New Order era was more masculine in nature.

### *Masculinity in Classical History*

Masculine narratives in popular historical writing during the New Order era. The writing of these narratives used a mindset that tended to contain elements of myth and folklore which at that time was still very necessary due to limited sources, so that their validity and scientific nature were still questionable (Liem et al., 2000, p. 7). Meanwhile, Kuntowijoyo (2008, p. 6) said that these issues were considered valid if they had gone through historical research procedures. Because they had gone through several historical research methods, oral traditions like this were often used as historical sources in writing history of past kingdoms. Even so, classical historical writing still tended to be masculine.

The historical narratives described by historians in the pre-reform era, especially during the New Order were still very masculine. The narratives tended to highlight the role of men over women, as was the case with narratives about history of past kingdoms which tended to be very masculine. These narratives tend to highlight the role of kings in building a kingdom, such as Raden Wijaya as founder of Majapahit Kingdom which has been widely recounted by researchers such as Slamet Muljana, Nugroho Notosusanto, and other great historians. In fact, *Pararaton* only informs us of Raden Wijaya's resilience in establishing Majapahit Kingdom and Gajah Mada's success in crushing rebellion of Kutu, Sadeng, and Kĕta (Hardjowardojo, 1965, pp. 47 and 51). Many have argued that Raden Wijaya was founding figure of Majapahit Kingdom without acknowledging the role of those around him, such as Madurese people who participated in the process of building Majapahit (Public Dialogue in Lumajang on 22 March 2022). We must also not forget the role of Arya Wiraraja who successfully tricked Jayakatwang into granting Raden Wijaya amnesty and Tarik Forest so that he could plan his revenge against Jayakatwang (Muljana, 2006, pp. 119-121; Hardjowardojo, 1965, pp. 42-43).

The narrative tends to highlight only the roles of famous figures such as Hayam Wuruk and Gajah Mada. These two figures are considered to have contributed greatly to Majapahit's golden age. This narrative suggests that no other figures contributed to Majapahit's rise to glory. These narratives are indirectly male-centric that is they are historiographies that excessively use a male perspective, thereby eliminating the role of women in flow of classical Indonesian history. In fact, Tribhuwana Tungadewi as first female king of Majapahit (the third king of Majapahit) played an important role in maintaining hegemony and unity of Majapahit region from disintegration. Her success in crushing Pasaddeng (Sadeng rebellion) and Kĕta rebellion in 1331 AD was one of the epic achievements of women in that century (Zainollah, 2015, pp. 106-112; Muljana, 2006, p. 371). *Nagarakretagama* mentions "*ring agniṣwari*

*Çāka tang çatru çirṇṇa Sadeng mwan Kēṭālah dinon ing swabhrtya tēwēk ning jagadrākṣaṇa bwatnya sumrah ri sang mantry anāmā Madātyanta wijña*" which informs about Sadeng and Kēta 1253 Saka (1331 AD) which failed because it was crushed by Gajah Mada (Kern, 1919, pp. 126-127). This information appears masculine because it only informs about the role of men in crushing the two rebellions. Even so, this information is very useful because it explicitly shows who the ruling king was from the sentence "*ning jagadrākṣaṇa bwatnya sumrah ri sang mantry anāmā Madātyanta wijña*". This sentence informs us that there was someone who instructed Gajah Mada in carrying out his duties to maintain the stability of the kingdom, in which analyzed using the power of chronology indicates that the person who ruled Majapahit in 1253 Saka (1331 AD) was Tribhuwana Tunggaladewi. *Nagarakretagama* explicitly proves that women played an important role in ruling Majapahit Kingdom.

The Camunda inscription also provides information that Tribhuwana Tunggaladewi and Gajah Mada worked together to defend the sovereignty of Majapahit around East Java and Madura. The inscription informs us that women played a role during the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom in Indonesia not only Raden Wijaya, Hayam Wuruk, or Gajah Mada, but in fact the role of women is often omitted from historical writings. For example, the narrative about collaboration between Gajah Mada and Hayam Wuruk has become very popular, while the narrative about collaboration between Gajah Mada and Tribhuwana Tunggaladewi in 1331-1332 AD has received less attention from historians. In fact, women played an important role in glory of Majapahit Kingdom as stated in pupuh 49 of *Nagarakretagama* which reads "*sirāngratwakēn mwan rumakṣeng sakāryya*" which translates to "everything is under her supervision". Researchers suspect that intellectual actor who oversaw Majapahit Kingdom was Gayatri Rajapatni, because if we look at the complete text, we can find "*paningkah nira Çri-mahārājapatni sirāteki manggalaya ring rāt wiçesa sūtā mantu len potrakān rāja rājñi sirāngratwakēn mwan rumakṣeng sakāryya*" which translates to "... in accordance with the arrangements of great Rajapatni who was fortunate to have a daughter who took over power and a grandchild from her daughter, then had the opportunity to expand her government's supervision over all its affairs" (Kern, 1919, pp. 125-126). Researchers interpret that it was Gayatri Rajapatni who supervised and expanded this network, because Gayatri Rajapatni was the intellectual actor who strategized expansion of trade cooperation network and supervised the running of the government after her husband died (Raden Wijaya). This assumption was further strengthened after Earl Drake published his writing in a book entitled "*Gayatri Rajapatni: Perempuan di Balik Kejayaan Majapahit*" (2012). Therefore, the use of a more neutral and academic perspective is necessary to write a classic Indonesian historical narrative or at least one that is in line with the reality that once existed, using auxiliary theories.

Before the use of auxiliary theories in writing Indonesian history became widely known, historians who were colleagues of Muhammad Yamin often wrote history in a descriptive-narrative style, especially stories about the roles of historical figures during the kingdom era such as Gajah Mada. Muhammad Yamin even wrote a book entitled "*Gajah Mada: Pahlawan Persatuan Nusantara*" (Gajah Mada: Hero of Unification of the Archipelago) (1986) which describes history and role of Gajah Mada in Majapahit Kingdom in unifying archipelago (Yamin, 1986, p. 15). In the context of this study, Muhammad Yamin wrote an interesting narrative about Gajah Mada, because the writing contains biography of Gajah Mada as an important figure for Majapahit Kingdom using palm leaf manuscripts and inscriptions without interviewing Gajah Mada as if he had ever met him. It appears that Muhammad Yamin had a very high literary imagination, because at that time there had been no attempt to use auxiliary theories in classical historical writing, so it is not surprising that his writing

merely narrates without more rational and scientific explanations. For example, how Gajah Mada could be so clever in the art of government which is a phenomenon that needs to be questioned further, but historiography is still carried away by elements of historical patriotism in the early days of independence until the eve of reform. Thus, the use of auxiliary sciences is essential in writing classical history from another perspective of an event so that classical historiography can develop.

Soedjatmoko said in his speech at a history seminar in Yogyakarta 1957 that future of Indonesian history should not be chauvinistic because this would only result in ahistorical writing (Soedjatmoko, 1957, pp. 3-4). Therefore, freedom of thought is needed in the process of writing history not like history writing that is written to order, as was the case during the New Order era. Thus, classical historical writing still has its freedom, but it is still trapped in a masculine perspective that only highlights the role of Javanese kings without exploring the role of women behind emergence, development, and glory of a kingdom. For example, the narrative of Ken Dedes is only told as a beautiful woman in Tumapel region (later called Singhasari) without showing her role in overthrowing Ken Arok's power through her son, Anusapati. Even so, on the other side Ken Dedes played a role in legitimizing Ken Arok's power in Tumapel. This historical reality shows that it is no surprise that development of classical history can be more than just a masculine narrative, especially with the use of auxiliary sciences that have begun to introduce the concept of gender and give birth to gender history. r choice to go back to coffee shows how resilient and adaptable they are to changes and challenges in the agricultural industry, even though cultivating coffee and other crops took time and patience.

### *Sociology of Gender in Classical Historiography*

The history of Indonesia has become richer and more diverse since utilizing social science theory as an auxiliary science in writing Indonesian history. The use of this auxiliary science can provide a new perspective in writing about a historical object. For example, the history of badminton in Indonesia can be studied from an economic or political perspective which not only discusses the history of badminton in Indonesia but also looks at it from various angles so that historical writing can develop into critical-analytical writing. Colin Brown once wrote about influence of badminton on the citizenship of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia (Brown, 2006, pp. 71-93). Similarly, in classical historical writing, the writing will be more colorful if it utilizes auxiliary approaches and theories, especially in process of collecting sources or perspectives to examine the aspects being studied. This kind of heuristic process was once carried out by Earl Drake who wrote about Majapahit using a feminist perspective, highlighting the role of Gayatri Rajapatni in Majapahit as focus of his writing (Drake, 2012). Thus, classical history can be developed using auxiliary science perspectives, such as using a feminist approach to highlight the role of women in the past.

In its development, classical historical writing no longer emphasizes the role of men alone but has begun to highlight the role of women in the past of a kingdom. For example, Krisna Bayu Adji in collaboration with Sri Wintala Achmad wrote about the wives of kings in Java. The article explains that king's wives acted as intellectual actors in the king's administration and as a forum for consultation when a king sought advice on policies to be implemented in his kingdom, so that the role of women was not merely that of *kanca wingking isining omah* (household manager) (Adji and Achmad, 2017). This article proves the role of



women in science of government.

Historiography that uses a feminist perspective is also evident in Earl Drake's book about Gayatri Rajapatni. The book narrates Gayatri's role in teaching Gajah Mada about art of government (Drake, 2012, p. 6-7). This narrative had not previously been mentioned by Indonesian historians, so it can be said that this writing inspired emergence of historical themes that highlight the role of women in classical Indonesia. It seems that this book has inspired every historian in Indonesia, such as Adji and Achmad to explore the role of the king's wife in Java. Thus, classical historiography has undergone significant development, especially in terms of themes and a more flexible perspective on the past, so that historical narratives are not always about the active role of men as kings, but also about women who played an important role as intellectual actors and understood the science of government in a kingdom. Thus, classical feminism provides a new perspective in classical Indonesian historiography.

### **Feminist Classical History: A New Perspective**

Classical history cannot be separated from material sources as historical traces of the past. For example, Figure 1 shows Ardhanari statue as a manifestation of union of the gods Shiva and Parvati sitting on *padma* (a lotus). The statue symbolizes essence of male and female equality (Soekmono, 2017, p. 186). This symbolism indirectly explains to today's society that men and women have the same rights and obligations. This indicates that essence of feminism existed in classical times before emergence of the modern era, as seen in the writing of classical feminist history about the role of Gayatri Rajapatni as Prajnaparamitha who popular as Goddess of wisdom.



Figure 1. Ardhanari statue as a symbol of gender equality during the kingdom of Hindu-Buddhist era

Source: KITLV 34279. [https://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/discovery/fulldisplay/alma9939053526202711/31UKB\\_LEU:UBL\\_V1](https://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl/discovery/fulldisplay/alma9939053526202711/31UKB_LEU:UBL_V1)

This perspective is supported by an understanding of social science theory. Social science concepts provide ideas for developing academic thinking in classical historical writing. Contemporary historiography has been greatly influenced by social science theory as an



auxiliary science in history resulting in more neutral and scientific narratives (Liem et al., 2000, p. 7). Similarly, classical history writing can be explained using perspective of social science theory as an auxiliary science, as demonstrated by Boechari who is well-known as an archaeologist and epigraphist who successfully translated Pasar Legi Inscription one of Erlangga's relics. Boechari used a combination of archaeological and epigraphic knowledge to construct the past of the kingdoms in Indonesia (Susanti et al., 2012, p. 47). Apart from Boechari, Poerbatjaraka also utilized philology in his efforts to reconstruct the past, especially the kingdoms of Java and Sumatra (Poerbatjaraka, 1952, p. 17). The problem is that after the deaths of several experts such as those mentioned above, there are no longer any individuals capable of utilizing auxiliary sciences such as archaeology, epigraphy, and philology with the depth of knowledge possessed by these two experts. Even so, historical studies as a science with a foundation in social sciences as a tool of explanation are still used as they should be, although there are some shortcomings in previous studies due to their predominantly masculine nature.

### *Masculin: Perspective of Classical Old-Style History*

Classical historiography is still masculine in nature because it predominantly narrates the roles of kings of the past from growth, development, and glory to collapse of a kingdom discussed only from the male perspective without any explanation of the role of women. Ratu Sima of Kalingga Kingdom once received attention in Indonesian feminist classical historiography, but this only discussed how she strictly and wisely enforced the kingdom's rules in punishing her son who had violated the rules she had established (Darmosoetopo, 2003, p. 27). The rest of the writing constructs the roles of kings in Indonesia, especially during the New Order era when historical writing was biased towards the history of Javanese kings giving impression of being Javanese-centric which indirectly caused segregation in Indonesian historiography, such as marginalization of women in classical Indonesian historiography.

For example, in Majapahit historiography, the role of men in process of achieving its glory is often emphasized. The narrative of Raden Wijaya as founder of Majapahit is indeed historically accurate. Meanwhile, Kidung Panji Wijayakrama emphasizes that Majapahit was originally Tarik Forest which was given by Jayakatwang to Raden Wijaya at the request of Arya Wiraraja. The Kidung informs us that Raden Wijaya was assisted by the people of Madura in clearing Tarik Forest and when facing Tartar army led by Yikomusu, Shi Bi, and Gao Xing, ironically, only the role of Raden Wijaya is highlighted in classical historiography and narratives that tend to say little about the role of Madurese people in crushing Tartar forces in Java (Bowring, 2022, pp. 134-135). In fact, Raden Wijaya was not alone in his efforts to confront and expel the Tartar forces from Java. Although Kidung Harsawijaya mentions the coronation of Raden Wijaya as king of Majapahit in 1293 AD, the narrative is often written without any other reasons supporting Raden Wijaya's struggle like an undercover agent how Raden Wijaya managed to escape Jayakatwang's pursuit and build Majapahit. Such populist events are not mentioned, so classical historical writings tend to be chauvinistic and very masculine causing historical writings about establishment of Majapahit Kingdom to appear masculine and elitist.

Based on the Kudadu Inscription, it is mentioned that during his escape from Jayaktwang, Raden Wijaya and the rest of his troops were rescued by the people of Kudadu Village. The people of Kudadu Village provided Raden Wijaya and his remaining troops with shelter, rest, and food. In the context of this study, women played an important role in Raden Wijaya's escape, especially in providing food for him and his troops, but this event is not

recounted in classical historical narratives. In fact, women played an important role in the safety of Raden Wijaya and the rest of his troops so that they could reach Sumenep to meet Banyak Wide known as Arya Wiraraja. Therefore, a distortion of historical reality was found causing one of the events to be omitted. There are details that are important to examine, but the narrative written focuses too much on the role of elite which tends to be feudal-static, thus indirectly marginalizing the role of Kudadu village community in Raden Wijaya's struggle to establish Majapahit Kingdom. This distortion of historical reality has indirectly marginalized historical reality that once occurred because the narrative written is only intended for certain elites, thus causing what Hayden White calls a destructive cult (White, 2016, p. 9). In fact, with the discovery of new sources, new facts have emerged that can enrich the narrative of classical history writing. In other words, classical history writing does not have to stop at the stories of a masculine elite but can be developed from other new findings.

### *Feminist: New Style Perspective in Classical History*

Women in classical Indonesia played an important role in their time, as explained in the previous description of the role of women and the community of Kudadu Village who empathized with Raden Wijaya's group so that they could survive and continue their journey to Sumenep to meet Arya Wiraraja. Based on Kidung Panji Wijayakrama it is explained that Raden Wijaya and Arya Wiraraja made an agreement and devised a plan after arriving in Sumenep to plot revenge against Jayakatwang who had betrayed Singhasari. After that, Raden Wijaya founded Majapahit Kingdom which later became known internationally as *mitra satata*. The success of Majapahit as a great kingdom cannot be separated from the role of women, such as Gayatri Rajapatni who after Raden Wijaya's death served as a consultant to both Sri Maharaja Wiralandagopala Sri Sundarapandya Dewa Adhiswara (Jayanagara) and Sri Tribhuwana Wijayatunggadewi Maharajasa Jayawisnuwardhani (Tribhuwana Tunggadewi) when they held the reins of power in Majapahit to maintain stability. In addition, Gayatri played an important role in shaping and honing Gajah Mada's personality and knowledge of government. As a result, Gajah Mada became a charismatic figure and an expert in strategic planning (Drake, 2012, pp. 6-7). In fact, Gajah Mada has always been portrayed as Amangkubhumi who succeeded in uniting archipelago, but it is not explained how Gajah Mada acquired such excellent knowledge and skills in governance. Thus, women have their own role in shaping a person's character and expertise and it was this character education that led the Majapahit Kingdom to its glory.

Today, the glory of Majapahit is known to have occurred during the reign of Hayam Wuruk without considering condition of Majapahit in the previous period. Before Hayam, there were many rebellions from the beginning of Raden Wijaya's reign to Tribhuwana Tunggadewi. Another figure highlighted in classical Indonesian historical narratives is Gajah Mada. His name is known from Singhasari Inscription of 1351 AD and Prapancasarapura Inscription with inventory number D.38 which provides information about the existence of Gajah Mada, namely "*Rake Mapatih ring Majapahit pu Gadjah Mada*" which translates to Gajah Mada being known as the prime minister who successfully stopped all the rebellions that had ever occurred in Majapahit. Meanwhile, based on Kakawin Nagarakretagama pupuh 49 it is explained that when Ra Kembar rebelled because of a dispute with Gajah Mada, the incident caused Tribhuwana Tunggadewi to intervene with Majapahit army to quell it (Kern, 1919, pp. 126-127). This event proves the proactive role of women before Hayam Wuruk took power in Majapahit, but events like this are rarely recounted by historians. In fact, Tribhuwana Tunggadewi's role succeeded in maintaining Majapahit's territory from disintegration. A role

that was no less important than that of Hayam Wuruk, while the king with *abhiseka* Sri Rajasanagara (Hayam Wuruk) is described as the king who brought Majapahit to glory. Due to ignorance or deliberate intent, only the glorious story of Hayam Wuruk was written without mentioning the epic story of his mother who crushed Pasaddeng and Kēta rebellions in 1331 AD. This past-factum distortion indirectly caused marginalization in classical historical writing, namely by ignoring the important reality of women's roles and dominating the roles of men in classical Indonesian history. Not only in Majapahit narrative, but Ken Dedes also had her role.

Ken Dedes played a role in bringing Ken Arok to power and then overthrowing him as Akuwu in Singhasari. Ken Arok did not truly love Ken Dedes as has been told because Ken Arok married her to gain legitimacy over Tumapel. Ken Arok was just an ordinary person and if he declared himself the new Akuwu ruler of Tumapel no one would recognize him. Therefore, Ken Arok married Ken Dedes who was pregnant with Anusapati (Hardjowardojo, 1965, p. 28). By marrying Ken Dedes who was the queen of Tunggul Ametung, Ken Arok gained legitimacy as Akuwu in Tumapel in 1222 AD, but his position did not last long because after Anusapati grew up, Ken Arok was stabbed with Keris Mpu Gandring which Ken Arok had once made to kill Tunggul Ametung.

The Anusapati incident indirectly killed Ken Arok through Ki Pengalasan. The murder did not happen indirectly without cause and reason. Based on Pararaton which informs us that Ken Dedes told Anusapati about secret of her father's death who was killed by Sang Amurwabhumis (Ken Arok), then after learning the truth Anusapati held a grudge and planned to avenge his biological father. In this narrative, it appears that Ken Dedes played a central role in legitimacy and downfall of Sang Amurwabhumis, but no one has explored this in depth. In fact, there are still many unanswered questions, such as why Ken Dedes agreed to marry Ken Arok if it would ultimately lead to his downfall through Anusapati (Ken Dedes' son). If the narrative about the role of women in classical times is reviewed and developed, classical history can become more interesting because the storytelling is not monotonous as it is presented scientifically and it has been proven that with social science, classical history can gain another perspective from the female side.

## Conclusion

There are three perspectives that have been used in classical historical writing in Indonesia. Historians in the early days of independence used classical historiography with the aim of shaping Indonesian nationalism, but this goal instead resulted in classical historical writing that was chauvinistic, scientifically and rationally unjustifiable, and ahistorical. Classical history writing from the 1970s until the reform era tended to marginalize historical figures and actors resulting in emergence of a masculine and feudal-static view. This marginalization caused historiography to tend to be elitist and masculine without presenting the role of women as important figures in portrait of the past.

The narrative of women in classical stories of the past emerged after the reform. This feminist classical history writing is useful as a new perspective in classical Indonesian historiography with the help of a social science approach to feminism which indirectly creates a new way of processing facts from the past in classical Indonesian historiography. Feminist classicism has become a new perspective in Indonesian classical historiography, especially in terms of placing women in the past in their rightful place as figures who played an important role in advancing a kingdom. Thus, feminist classical historiography is a solution for Indonesian classical historiography as a form of Indonesian historical development.

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