

## **Diplomatic Ties between the Ottoman Empire and the Malay Sultanate from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

Syaimak Ismail,\* Muhammad Saiful Islam,\*\*  
Noor Syahidah Mohamad Akhir\*\*\* & Azhar Abdul Rahman\*\*\*\*

### **Abstract**

Malaya began its relationship with the Ottoman Turkish Empire in the 15th century, during the time of the Melaka-Sultanate. This relationship continued even after the arrival of colonialists and the fall of the Ottoman Turkish Empire. At first, their relations were focused on politics and economics. These two kingdoms were considered to be the powerful Islamic forces that influenced Europe and Asia. The Sultan of Melaka visited Turkey several times to strengthen their relationship and even took an oath of allegiance to the Ottoman Turkish Empire, promising to defend Islam in Asia. After the fall of Melaka, the Ottoman Turkish Empire provided war aid through Aceh to help Melaka regain control of the seized kingdom. The Ottoman Turkish Empire also influenced the Malay community's thinking and struggle to resist colonialism in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Malay community even took the Ottoman Turkish Empire as a model for freeing Malaya from Western threats. This paper will examine the initial relationship between the Melaka Malay Kingdom and the Ottoman Turkish Empire, particularly from a political perspective, and the type of influence that catalysed the Malays' spirit to continue to rise and defend Malaya from external threats. This research will focus on document analysis and descriptive writing methods. The relationship between Malaya and the Turkish Government lasted until the Islamic caliphate fell in 1923. Furthermore, Ottoman Turkey was a significant Islamic government that the Malays expected to obey, as it acted as a power that was always concerned with Islam and the country as an Islamic state.

**Keywords:** Melaka, Malay Sultanate, Ottoman Turkish Empire, relationship

### **Introduction**

During the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, two Islamic kingdoms were established in different parts of the East and West. In 1299, the Ottoman Government conquered the city of Constantinople, which was the political centre of the Byzantine Roman Government. Meanwhile, the Eastern kingdom of Melaka flourished. The growth and prosperity of these two kingdoms led to the development of economic, diplomatic, and religious ties that had a global impact on Islam. The relationship between the Melaka Malay Sultanate and the Ottoman Turks began in the 14th century with trade activities. Many Ottoman Turk traders came to Melaka at that time before moving on to Maluku and Aceh.<sup>1</sup>

The Ottoman Turkish Empire was a major power from 1299 to 1923, and its influence was primarily felt in the Anatolian region of Turkey. The empire was centred in Istanbul and flourished as an Islamic caliphate. Its origins can be traced back to the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, and it reached the pinnacle of its power during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Ottoman Turks were widely regarded as the successors of the Bani Abasia caliphate and were revered by Muslims across the globe as protectors of the Islamic faith. The empire's legacy includes significant contributions to architecture, art, literature, and science, as well as its unique legal and administrative systems, which were based on Islamic law.<sup>2</sup>

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\* Syaimak Ismail (PhD), (corresponding author), Senior Lecturer, Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Perlis Branch, Perlis, Malaysia. Email: syaimakismail@gmail.com.

\*\* Muhammad Saiful Islam (PhD), Senior Lecturer, Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Kedah Branch, Kedah, Malaysia. Email: saifulislam@uitm.edu.my.

\*\*\* Noor Syahidah Mohamad Akhir (PhD), Senior Lecturer, Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Kedah Branch, Kedah, Malaysia. Email: noorsyahidah9177@uitm.edu.my.

\*\*\*\* Azhar Abdul Rahman (PhD), Senior Lecturer, Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Perlis Branch, Perlis, Malaysia. Email: azharabdulrahman@uitm.edu.my.

<sup>1</sup> Eminec Dingec (1947), *Xvi. Yuzyilda Osmanli Ace Iliskileri*, *Turkic: Turkish Studies International for The Languages Literature and History of Turkish*, p. 965.

<sup>2</sup> Abu Hanifah Haris (2020), "History of the Ottoman Empire and Its Contributions in Socio-political Aspects from 14th Century until 20th Century," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun*, Vol. 15, No. 1, pp. 85-107.

**Map 1: The Territory of the Ottoman Turkish Empire**



Tom Pires, a historian and expert in empires, makes a clear distinction between the Roman Empire and the Ottoman Turkish Empire. However, after the Ottomans conquered Constantinople, the Eastern people began to refer to the Roman Empire as the Ottoman Empire. This shift in perception and nomenclature highlights the significant impact of the conquest on the cultural and political landscape of the time.<sup>3</sup> The Malay community holds the King of Rome in high esteem, recognising him as a symbol of great influence and authority. The title “King of Rome” is rooted in history and originally referred to the Ottoman Turkish Sultan, who held the position of ruler in an Islamic kingdom during his time. The Sultan was a prominent supporter of the Islamic caliphate, which helped to solidify his power and influence in the region. The Malay community’s admiration for the King of Rome likely stems from his reputation as a strong, capable leader who was able to maintain stability and order within his kingdom. Despite the passage of time, the legacy of the Ottoman Turkish Sultan continues to endure, and his impact on the Malay community remains significant to this day.<sup>4</sup>

The Ottoman Empire, founded by a Central Asian nation in Anatolia, made significant contributions in various fields during its first two centuries, particularly between the 14th and 16th centuries. The government played a pivotal role in the socio-political arena, leading to the emergence of the strongest Islamic kingdom and defender of Islam in the 16th century. It defeated the Mamluk kingdom based in Egypt and controlled its subjugated colonies, including the three Muslim holy cities. Additionally, the Ottoman Empire emerged as one of Europe’s great powers, particularly in Eastern Europe, after defeating the Byzantine Empire (Eastern Rome) and challenging and dominating several territories of Eastern European great powers such as Bulgaria, Hungary, Habsburg (Austria), and Wallachia (Romania).<sup>5</sup>

The Malay Sultanate of Melaka was a powerful Islamic kingdom in Southeast Asia that successfully expanded its colonies and spread Islam to the conquered states. It all began with Melaka’s conquest of Kampar and Siak, which became a link to Melaka’s subsequent conquest of the Eastern part of Sumatra. Melaka captured several other kingdoms, including Inderagiri, Palembang, Jambi, Lingga, Tungkal, and Pahang. Many areas and regions, such as Pahang, Sening Ujung (Sungai Ujung), Jeram, Langat, Inderagiri, Palembang, Jambi, Lingga, Tunggal, Siam, Brunei, Bentan, Kampar, and Siak, were successfully conquered and placed under the rule of Melaka. The sea area of South Sumatra had special defences that were closely guarded to expand and secure the traffic area in the waters of the Straits of Melaka. Every state under the rule of Melaka was required to send tribute to the Sultan of Melaka.<sup>6</sup>

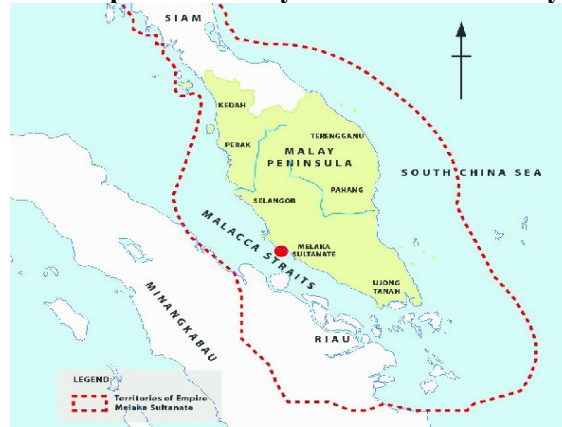
<sup>3</sup> Armando Cortesao (1944), *The Suma Oriental*, Singapore: Asian Educational Services, p. 142.

<sup>4</sup> Jacob. M. Landau (1990), *The Politics of Pan Islam Ideology and Organization*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Abu Hanifah Haris (2020), “History of the Ottoman Empire,” p. 2

<sup>6</sup> Yusof Ibrahim (1976), “Melaka 1400-1511 Beberapa Aspek Sejarah Kemasyarakatannya,” Seminar Sejarah Melaka, p. 16.

**Map 2: The Conquest Territory of the Melaka Malay Sultanate**

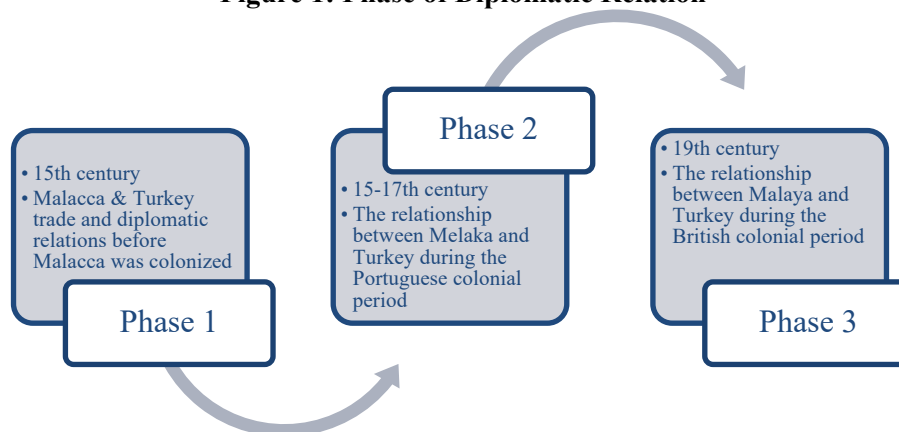


Trade played a pivotal role in the economic strategy of the Malay Sultanate of Melaka, establishing it as an esteemed force within Southeast Asia’s commercial sphere. The city-state was strategically situated, amplifying its significance and leading to widespread embrace and propagation of Islam since the port assembled global traders. It was at this juncture that preachers were directed by the Sultan to foster Islamic learning in accordance with religious mandates across Melaka, helping cement its reputation as an epicentre for disseminating Islamic teachings. During the 15<sup>th</sup> century, after the decline of the Samudera Pasai Kingdom, Melaka was seen by many Asian Malay states not only as a thriving trade hub, but also as a central location for spreading the fundamental principles of Islam across Asia. As a result, numerous scholars visited Melaka to engage with merchants and denizens, thereby bolstering their faith and contributing to da’wah, which refers to spreading divine messages under Islamic guidelines. This contribution was notably appreciated by historian D.G.E Hall.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, numerous individuals of diverse ethnic backgrounds were effectively transitioned into Islam. Additionally, they had the opportunity to explore Islamic teachings at state-sponsored locations for religious learning such as royal residences and mosques.<sup>8</sup>

### Phases of Diplomatic Relations between Malacca and Turkey

Based on the research carried out, the relationship between Malacca and Turkey can be divided into three stages (see Figure 1). Phase 1 refers to the relationship before the Portuguese occupied Malacca, which was mostly diplomatic and commercial in nature. Phase 2 represents the relationship between Malacca and Turkey during Portuguese colonialism, which was focused on maintaining existing diplomatic relations. Finally, Phase 3 pertains to the relationship between Malaya and Turkey during the British colonial period. Malaya, especially Johor, looked up to Turkey as an independent reference apart from the colonialists.

**Figure 1: Phase of Diplomatic Relation**



<sup>7</sup> D. G. E. Hall (1996), *A History of Southeast Asia*, London: McMillan & Co, p. 196.

<sup>8</sup> S. Q. Fatimi (1963), *Islam Comes to Malaysia*, Singapore: Malaysia Sociological Research Institute, p. 83; Syed Farid Alatas (1985), “Notes on Various Theories Regarding the Islamization of the Malay Archipelago,” *The Muslim World*, Vol. LXXV, p. 170.

### ***Phase I Relations between the Malacca Malay Sultanate and the Ottoman Turkish Empire***

The Malay Sultanate of Melaka, under full implementation of Islamic tenets on economic, legal and political fronts was highly regarded by the Ottoman Turks.<sup>9</sup> Dominating South-East Asia during that period, Melaka had substantial power over most regional countries. Consequently, a commercial rapport between these two governing bodies already existed at this point in history.<sup>10</sup> Portuguese documents stipulate traces of Turkish presence throughout the formation stage of the Malay Sultanate where they noticeably engaged in trade activities within the region – with their significant annual arrivals comprising five trading vessels to dock Melbourne port at least once yearly.<sup>11</sup>

According to Tom Pires, Turkish merchant vessels frequented Melaka over multiple rainy seasons. Their cargo was diverse and involved the procurement of spices, pearls, ceramics, perfumes, gold and silk products along with tin and avian feathers originating from Banda Island.<sup>12</sup> After gaining control over Constantinople by overthrowing Byzantine rule in 1453 AD., it became apparent to the Turkish administration that controlling spice trade routes into Europe could significantly bolster their economic powerbase. Following this astute observation made by Sultan Muhammad Al-Fatih - also known as Mehmed II or Mehmed the Conqueror - an active diplomatic engagement began between themselves and Islamic territories that were key players in global spice markets at that time; these included predominantly Southeast Asian regions like the Malay Sultanate of Melaka coupled with kingdoms situated on Indian subcontinent such as Bijapur, Gujarat & Bengal which had a mixed rabble populace comprising Sunnis-Shias-&- Hindus under its umbrella.<sup>13</sup>

Melaka's location on the Malay Peninsula made it a strategic point in the spice trade during the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The Ottoman Empire, which had control of the spice commodity in Europe, recognised the value of Melaka's location and established trade relations with the Sultanate of Melaka. The Ottomans were able to obtain spices from Melaka and sell them to European governments at a premium price. Due to the Ottomans' monopoly on the spice trade, other European governments had no choice but to obtain spices from them. This allowed the Ottomans to accumulate significant wealth and power, which they used to expand their empire. The Ottomans also established a strong diplomatic relationship with the Sultanate of Melaka, which helped them maintain their control over the spice trade for centuries to come.<sup>14</sup> According to Turkish records, the Ottoman Empire considered the port of Melaka to be crucial for obtaining spices. The majority of the imported spices were acquired from this port.<sup>15</sup>

As the world's most important port at the time, the Islamic kingdoms reaped the benefits of the spice trade traded in Melaka.<sup>16</sup> As a result, Melaka is considered the focal point for all wealthy Muslim traders worldwide. During their stay in Melaka, Turkish traders, including Indian, Arab, and Persian traders, learned how to deal with monsoon conditions, use stars in navigation, and use magnets and compasses.<sup>17</sup> The Turks were not only present in the Malay islands for trade, but they also served as preachers responsible for spreading Islam in the Malay realm, particularly in Aceh. In addition to this, Turkish Muslims played a significant role in introducing some Islamic scientific works that spread throughout the Malay world, particularly in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>18</sup>

During the 15th century, Melaka had a great relationship with the Ottoman Turkish Empire, which was considered a significant power in Europe. The ruler and people of Melaka respected the Ottoman Turkish Empire greatly. According to the people of Melaka, the Ottoman Turkish caliph was known as the King of Rome and was considered a representative of God. The Ottoman Turkish Empire was the most powerful and feared Muslim government at the time. According to Saffet Bey's paper "Bir Osmanlı Filosunun Sumatra Seferi," the fame of the Ottoman Turkish Empire could be heard worldwide, and

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<sup>9</sup> Liaw Fock Fang (1982), *Undang-Undang Melaka*, Singapore: The Hague, p. 64.

<sup>10</sup> Dingec (1947), *Xvi. Yuzyilda Osmanli*, p. 965.

<sup>11</sup> Cortesao (1944), *The Suma Oriental*, p. 269.

<sup>12</sup> Cortesao (1944), *The Suma Oriental*, pp. 368 & 370.

<sup>13</sup> Pius Malakandhatil (2010), *Maritime India: Trade Religion and Polity in the Indian Ocean*, Delhi: Primus Books, p. 110.

<sup>14</sup> Spices were essential because, in addition to being used to flavour food, they were also used in medicine, particularly to treat soldiers who were at war. Furthermore, spices are the best preservatives for providing resistance to food that has been transported for months so that it does not spoil. See Malakandhatil (2010), *Maritime India*, p. 110.

<sup>15</sup> Jan Sihar Aritonang (ed.) (2008), *A History of Christianity in Indonesia*, Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, p. 15.

<sup>16</sup> After the fall of Melaka, Aceh took over the role of Melaka as a trading centre. These traders from Turkey then moved to Aceh to get trading materials, especially spices. Ahmad Dahalan (2014), *Sejarah Melayu*, Jakarta: Gramedia, p. 165.

<sup>17</sup> Ernest Small (2006), *Culinary Herbs*, N.R.C. Research Press, p. 15.

<sup>18</sup> Azyumardi Azra (2013), *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad ke 17 dan 18*, Jakarta: Kencana Prenamedia Group, pp. 9-10.

almost all Muslim countries had pledged allegiance to the Ottoman Government. The Muslim world saw the Ottoman Turkish Empire as the true protector of the Muslim world in general, which was confirmed in Malay literary writings.<sup>19</sup>

During the time when Melaka was the centre of Islam in Southeast Asia, Sultan Mansur Shah received advice from the Treasures and Admiral to establish close relations with the Ottoman Turkish Empire. The Ottoman Turk caliphate was also pleased to meet the Sultan of Melaka, who was ruling and famous at the time.<sup>20</sup> During the reign of Sultan Mansur Shah, the first diplomatic relationship was established between the Sultanate of Melaka and Sultan Muhammad al-Fatih in 1471. The initial relationship was built on trade activities but later developed into a strong friendship bond through diplomatic relations between the two kingdoms.<sup>21</sup>

Maintaining the strength of Islam was a common goal which further strengthened the bilateral relationship between Turkey and Melaka. During that time, Turkey ruled the West and Melaka maintained Islam's power in the East. Cooperation and brotherly relations between the two great powers were based on the Bai'ah to protect Islam. Turkish records indicate that this bond was further strengthened when Sultan Mansur Shah married his son, Sultan Alauddin Riayat Shah, to Fatih, the daughter of Sultan Muhammad.<sup>22</sup>

Marriage is a positive reflection of preserving the relationship between two kingdoms. It occurs not only on a micro level but also on an inter-empire level, with the royal family and dignitaries participating in the union. According to Ramlah Adam, marriage among relatives is a strategy to avoid war or competition for influence among the ruling class. Blood ties resulting from royal marriages can also serve as a platform for both kingdoms to expand their trade activities. The bilateral relationship between the Islamic kingdoms grew more potent because of these marriages.<sup>23</sup>

Melaka had a strong diplomatic relationship with the Ottoman Turkish Empire during that time. Whenever Sultan al-Fatih was involved, Melaka's ruler would use the name Mansur Pasha, indicating Sultan Mansur Shah's recognition of the Ottoman Turkish Empire. The term Pasha was commonly used by Ottoman Empire ministers. During his sermons, the Sultan of Aceh always made sure to mention the name of the Ottoman Sultan (padişah), particularly when praying for the Ottoman Turks.<sup>24</sup> When referring to the Sultan, he is addressed as Pasha. This term was used by Sultan Mansur Shah as a sign of respect towards the strength and power of the Ottoman Turkish Empire. It also symbolised the positive diplomatic relations that had been established between the two empires.<sup>25</sup>

Kassim Ahmad's *Hikayat Hang Tuah* provides a detailed account of Hang Tuah's mission as an ambassador of Melaka to Istanbul. His primary objective was to acquire firearms, including cannons and ammunition, from the Government. Hang Tuah embarked on this critical mission, which is a testament to the importance of firearms in warfare during that era. The account highlights the strategic significance of Melaka's diplomatic relations with Istanbul and showcases Hang Tuah's diplomatic prowess.<sup>26</sup> After the initial Portuguese assault on Melaka, where cannons were deployed against local forces, a relocation to Turkey for fuel acquisition became necessary. This offensive is chronicled extensively in Malay history due to its devastating impact resulting in numerous fatalities among the population of Melaka - with some experiencing terrible aftermaths including amputations.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Affan Seljuk (1995), *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları. Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Malay-Endonezya Takımadalarındaki Müslüman Krallıkları İlişkileri*, İstanbul: Dergi / Süreli Yayın, p. 112.

<sup>20</sup> Kassim Ahmad (2008), *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka & Yayasan Karyawan, pp. 490-491.

<sup>21</sup> Zafer Ozcanl (2015), *Intizar Anne*, İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, pp. 57-58.

<sup>22</sup> Ozcanl (2015), *Intizar Anne*, pp. 57-58.

<sup>23</sup> Ramlah Adam (n.d.), *Hubungan Luar Kesultanan Melayu Melaka dengan Kawasan Sekitar dan Antarabangsa*, Kuala Lumpur: UM, pp. 5-6.

<sup>24</sup> Eaman Mohamed Abbas (2007), *Sultan Abdul Hamid II dan kejatuhan Khilafah Islamiah: Peranan Gerakan Nasionalis dan Golongan Minoriti*, Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Salam, pp. 55-56.

<sup>25</sup> Razaulhak Şah (1967), *Açe Padişahı Sultan Alaeddin'in Kanuni Sultan Süleyman'a Mektubu*, Ankara, Ankara Üniversitesi Dil. Tarih Coğrafya Fakültesi Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi, pp. 374-375.

<sup>26</sup> Kassim Ahmad (2008), *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, pp. 490-491.

<sup>27</sup> A. Samad Ahmad. (1970), *Op.cit.*, h. 245. Ahmat Adam, (2016). *Op.cit.*, h. 323.

*Setelah datang ke Melaka, maka dibedilnya dengan Meriam.  
Maka segala orang Melaka pun terkejut mendengar bunyi  
Meriam itu, katanya, Bunyi apa yang seperti guruh itu?*<sup>28</sup>

Ottoman Turkey is considered by many historians as a progressive Islamic government due to its pioneering role in the development and use of firearms technology. The Ottomans were not only the first Islamic country to possess and use firearms, but they also introduced this technology to other Islamic nations, including those in Asia and Africa. The use of firearms enabled the Ottoman Turks to expand their territories, protect their borders and maintain their power for centuries. The Ottomans constantly improved their firearms and created new techniques for using them, which led to the development of a well-trained and formidable army. Moreover, the Ottoman Empire established a sophisticated system for the production and distribution of firearms, which made them accessible to a larger number of soldiers. This system also helped to stimulate trade and industry, which contributed to the economic growth of the empire. Overall, the Ottoman Empire's contribution to the development of firearms technology had a significant impact on the military, economic, and political history of the Islamic world and beyond.<sup>29</sup> The relationship between Ottoman Turkey and Melaka was a natural one. Ottoman Turkey was a powerful European kingdom renowned for its firearms manufacturing, while Melaka was a bustling trading hub with connections to ports worldwide. This led to the two kingdoms becoming aware of each other's greatness, and diplomatic relations were established between their respective kings.<sup>30</sup>

### ***Phase 2 Relations between Malacca and Turkey During Portuguese Colonisation***

Certainly, here's the revised text:

The cordial relationship between Melaka and Turkey was interrupted by the Portuguese occupation of the city. During this time, Turkey came to Melaka's aid, helping to restore its sultanate sovereignty. The relationship between the two nations has had a significant impact on their fraternity, religion, economy, and trade. This relationship has been viewed with concern by the West, as it involves two major Islamic powers establishing diplomatic relations that could potentially strengthen Islam's position in the world. The Portuguese, who saw themselves as threatened by Ottoman Turkey's reliance on Melaka's spices, were motivated to eliminate the Islamic influence brought by Turkey. To this end, they worked hard to block some of the Ottoman Turks' preferred supply routes, such as India and Melaka. The Portuguese occupation of India and Melaka was successful in impeding the Ottoman Turkish economy.<sup>31</sup>

The Portuguese aimed to destroy the powerful Islamic state and identified Melaka as their primary target due to its strategic location and its significance as an Islamic centre for spreading Islam throughout Asia. Melaka was also a prosperous port with high income, thanks to the growth of trading activities. The Portuguese became aware of Melaka when the King of Portugal discovered Indian traders bringing spices from Melaka and trading them in Venice. These factors prompted the Portuguese to act quickly to gain control of the spices on the main route to the East.<sup>32</sup>

During Sultan Mahmud Shah's reign, Melaka apprehended the Portuguese spy representative who had revealed their plan to attack Mecca but had altered the target to attack and capture Melaka earlier than anticipated.<sup>33</sup> In 1511, Afonso de Albuquerque led a Portuguese attack on Melaka, a strategic trading hub in the region. The Portuguese were aware of Melaka's significance in the lucrative spice trade, as well as its trade connections. The Portuguese had plans to attack Mecca, a holy city for Muslims, and a significant trading centre. However, during the siege of Melaka, the Sultan's forces arrested a Portuguese envoy, leading to a breakdown in relations between Melaka and the Portuguese. This

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<sup>28</sup>A. Samad Ahmad. (1970), *Op.cit.*, h. 245. Ahmat Adam, (2016). *Op.cit.*, h. 323.

<sup>29</sup> Salih Özbaran (1989), *Askeri Tarih Bülteni*, Ankara: Süreli Yayın, p. 40; Salih Özbaran (2004), *Yemen'den Basra'ya Sınırdaki Osmanlı*, İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, p. 41.

<sup>30</sup> Due to several internal problems that plagued the Ottoman Turkish Government at the time, the Ottoman Turkish Government needed the opportunity to assist Melaka when the Portuguese attacked it. Sultan Bayezid fell gravely ill in 1511 and died the following year. The two princes, Prince Salim and Prince Ahmad fought for the throne in a sibling feud. During that time, the Shia Shafawi government also attempted to spread Shia Dakyah to Turkey. So, Turkey worked hard at the time to defend itself against Shia attacks. Salih Gulen (2010), *The Ottoman Sultans: Mighty Guests of the Throne*, Emrah Sahin (trans.), New York: Blue Dome Press, pp. 80-89.

<sup>31</sup> Gulen (2010), *The Ottoman Sultans*, p. 79.

<sup>32</sup> Yahaya Abu Bakar (2016), *Catatan Awal Hubungan Portugis dan Melaka*, Bangi: UKM, p. 227.

<sup>33</sup> M. J. Pintado (ed.) (1993), *Portuguese Documents on Malacca Vol. 1 (1510-1511)*, Kuala Lumpur: National Archives of Malaysia, p. 81.

*Diplomatic Ties between the Ottoman Empire and the Malay Sultanate from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries* incident may have changed the Portuguese's priorities, focusing their efforts on capturing Melaka before any plans to attack Mecca could be realised.<sup>34</sup>

The fall of Melaka to the Portuguese in 1511 was a significant turning point in the history of Southeast Asia. It allowed the Portuguese to establish a strong presence in the region, and they would control Melaka for over a century until the Dutch captured the city in 1641. The Ottoman Turkish Empire was aware of the Portuguese threat to Melaka, and they immediately dispatched military aid to attack the Portuguese there, through Aceh.<sup>35</sup> The Ottoman Turks provided weapons and military experts to Aceh with the intention of attacking the Portuguese in Melaka. As a result, a series of wars ensued in an attempt to reclaim Melaka that continued for a long time. The heir of Melaka frequently planned with the support of Aceh. Although the Portuguese had gained complete control of Melaka on June 15, 1539, the Aceh Turks eventually rose up against them.<sup>36</sup> In 1566, the Ottoman Turks dispatched two big ships carrying five skilled weapon makers to Aceh. The Portuguese were constantly apprehensive about the strong alliance between the Muslim Malay government and the Ottoman Turks. This is because the Ottoman Turkish Empire's every aid package was linked with religion.<sup>37</sup>

It is incumbent upon Muslims to extend benevolence towards requests made by other followers of Islam, in deference to Allah and His prophet (PBUH).<sup>38</sup> In 1566, two vessels and several arms representatives were dispatched by the Ottoman Empire. By February 16, 1568, Melaka had sought military reinforcements from Calicut and Japara in order to antagonise the Portuguese forces occupying their land. The impending attack was led by Sultan Alauddin, who stood as the successor of power. Joined with troops of Acehnese army alongside men from Melaka Malay Sultanate they formed an intimidating force comprised of approximately 15,000 members including about four hundred Turkish soldiers and aided a further contribution made up nearly 200 large copper cannons ultimately aiding them also in defence tactics and infrastructure deployment methods. The teachings that originated from Turkish arsenal specialists enabled the Malay army to adeptly manufacture weapons raising it might manifold. Turkey's expertise is reflected today mainly through its massive cannons. Furthermore, the proactive engagement comingled with extensive training provided by this weapon experts have earmarked newfound growth surges within Indonesia starting from regions such as West Sumatra, encompassing Bali, cutting across Java and finally culminating at Sulawesi.<sup>39</sup> As a token of gratitude for the Ottoman Turkish Empire's assistance, several merchant ships filled with spices and pepper were presented to the Ottoman Turkish Sultan. This was done to show appreciation for providing weapons to fight against the colonisers.<sup>40</sup>

### ***Phase 3 Relations Between Malaya and The Turkish-Ottoman Kingdom During the British Period***

Although Malaya was colonised multiple times, it never completely severed diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Turkish Empire. The descendants of the Melaka Malay Sultanate continued this relationship by retreating to the Johor kingdom.<sup>41</sup> Following the Portuguese victory in the war to reclaim the kingdom of Melaka, the fall of Melaka and the establishment of the Johor Sultanate marked a significant shift in the political landscape of the Malay Archipelago. This event was the start of a new era, where Johor became a prominent Malay kingdom in the region. The period is crucial in

<sup>34</sup> Othman (1989), *Melaka: Sejarah Awal Negara Kita*, Shah Alam: Marwilis Publisher&Distributors Sdn Bhd. h. 56.

<sup>35</sup> Dingec (1947), *Xvi. Yuzyilda Osmanli*, p. 970.

<sup>36</sup> According to Pinto, after the Portuguese repeatedly attacked Aceh, they sent a ship full of pepper to Turkey, and in return, Turkey sent the ship backfilled with firearms. Furthermore, it is recorded that Turkey has also sent 300 soldiers to Aceh. Within 70 days, nine attacks were used with the help of skilled, high-ranking Turkish warriors. At the same time, they were assisted by Turkish engineers in helping the Acehnese Government to oppose the Portuguese. Fenaos Mendes Pinto (trans.) (1989), *The Travels of Mendes Pinto*, London: University of Chicago Press, p. 15; Dingec (1947), *Xvi. Yuzyilda Osmanli*, p. 966.

<sup>37</sup> Dingec (1947), *Xvi. Yuzyilda Osmanli*, p. 970.

<sup>38</sup> Şah (1967), *Açe Padişahı Sultan Alaeddin'in Kanuni Sultan Süleyman'a Mektubu*, Ankara, pp. 374-375.

<sup>39</sup> Anthony Reid (2000), *Charting the Shape of Early Modern Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, p. 23. Also, His Majesty requested assistance from Goa, Kedah, and Johor to attack the Portuguese. The remains of the Aceh royal palace indicated evidence of the use of weapons, particularly cannons proved am evidence. Furthermore, the Acehnese flag was designed in the shape of the Turkish flag. Anthony Reid (1969), "Indonesia Diplomacy A Documentary Study of Atjehnese Foreign Policy in the Reign of Sultan Mahmud 1870-1874," *JMBRAS*, Vol. 42, No. 2, p. 75.

<sup>40</sup> Dingec (1947), *Xvi. Yuzyilda Osmanli*, p. 970.

<sup>41</sup> After the fall of Melaka to the Portuguese in 1511, Sultan Mahmud Shah, the last ruler of the Melaka Sultanate, fled to several locations to establish a new base for his kingdom. One of the places where he initially sought refuge was the neighbouring kingdom of Johor. Sultan Mahmud Shah took refuge in Johor, a neighbouring Malay sultanate. This allowed the Melaka Sultanate, through its royal descendants, to continue its existence and resist the Portuguese occupation. Sultan Mahmud Shah's presence in Johor was pivotal in the region's history. The state of Johor, under his influence, maintained claims to be the legitimate successor to the Melaka Sultanate. The ties between Johor and the fallen Melaka Sultanate helped preserve Malay culture, traditions, and royal heritage in the face of Portuguese colonial rule. Mardiana Nordin (2000), "Pensejarah Melayu Johor Sehingga Awal Abad ke 20: Sepintas Lalu," *Jurnal Sejarah*, Vol. 8, No. 8, p. 78.

comprehending the intricate political and cultural interactions that shaped Southeast Asia during the age of European colonialism.

The Sultan of Johor and his brother married a Turkish woman with the consent of Sultan Abdul Hamid II in 1879, which strengthened the relationship between the two countries.<sup>42</sup> The subsequent visit unfolded in 1893 when Sultan Abu Bakar aimed to forge diplomatic ties with Turkey.<sup>43</sup> Welcoming the initiative, Sultan Abdul Hamid II hosted the Johor's Sultan and conferred upon him a medal during his stay.<sup>44</sup> This award endorsed their intimate bond which was further fortified through marital alliances between Khadijah Hanim and Sultan Abu Bakar along with Ungku Abdul Majid's marriage to Turkish lady Ruqayyah Hanim.<sup>45</sup> Undeniably, the role of Ottoman Turkish caliph resonated significance within Malaya's Muslim society as he is renowned globally among his followers as Amir al-Mukminin and Caliph. Every printed interpretation book of Al-Quran harbours prayers specifically directed towards this revered figure praying for divine security over believers' regiment until Judgement Day so they may deter adversaries.<sup>46</sup>

In Malaya, scholars such as Sheikh Wan Muhammad Zain al-Fatani always recite these prayers during ceremonies and Friday prayer time. Written texts extensively cover the bilateral relationship between the Ottoman Turks and the Malay community, highlighting the significant influence of the former on the leaders and people of Malaya. The Ottoman Turk caliphate is widely recognised as the caliphate of all Muslims worldwide.<sup>47</sup> The poems authored by Na Tien Pet illustrate the close relationship between the Sultanate of Johor and the Ottoman Empire, which had a significant influence on the former. This influence is evident in various aspects, such as the palace decor, dress code, titles, and even flag symbols. This event is also documented in the history of Johor and highlights the impact and perception of the Ottoman Empire on the Malays. The poem portrays the progress and peace that the people of the Ottoman Empire enjoyed during the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II. The conferring of titles from the Ottoman Empire to the Sultan of Johor and other dignitaries is a testimony to the strong bond between the two nations.<sup>48</sup>

During the mid-nineteenth century, the Ottoman Turkish Empire established the Pan-Islamism movement. Its primary objective was to unite Muslims around the world and utilise this unity as a powerful tool against Western powers. Pan-Islamism became prominent in the Ottoman Empire, especially during the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909). The central idea of this movement is to promote loyalty and solidarity among Muslims under the leadership of the Sultan of Ottoman Turkey, who holds the role of the caliph as the leader of Muslims across the world.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Nurul Wahidah Fauzi (2018), "Peranan Arab Hadhrami Di Dalam Mempengaruhi Politik Istana Kerajaan Johor Pada Awal Abad Ke 20 M," *International Journal of West Asian Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 13; Ramlah Adam (1992), *Dato Onn Jafar Pengasas Kemerdekaan*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, pp. 5-6.

<sup>43</sup> As a whole, the state of Johor experienced several levels of Government and its sultanate. After the administrative centre of the kingdom was established in Hujung Tanah in 1528 by Sultan Alauddin Riayat Shah (1528-1564), this kingdom was held directly by his descendants, who were also inherited from the Malacca sultanate until 1699. The second stage of Johor's Government showed the transition of state power from the heir of the Melaka sultanate to the Bandahara family. When Sultan Mahmud Syah II died and was killed without leaving behind descendants, the institution of the sultanate was taken over by Bandahara Tun Abdul Jalil with the title of Sultan Abdul Jalil Riayat Syah IV (1699-1718). The Bandahara dynasty held the reins of the Johor government for several generations to fulfil this second stage. Mardiana (2000), "Pensejarahan Melayu Johor Sehingga Awal Abad ke 20: Sepintas Lalu," p. 75.

<sup>44</sup> Yaakub Isa (1982), *Syair Tanah Melayu iaitu Cerita Perang Pahang dan Johor Bahru dlm Beberapa Aspek Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Pahang*, Pahang: Lembaga Muzium Negeri Pahang, p. 105.

<sup>45</sup> The marriage between Sultan Abu Bakar and Khatijah was not blessed with children. In contrast, his brother Engku Abdul Majid's marriage to Ruqayyah Hanum was approved for two children, namely Ungku Abdul Aziz, the fifth Johor Menteri Besar and Ungku Abdul Hamid, Head of the Translation Bureau (father of Ungku Abdul Aziz, former Vice Chancellor). University of Malaya). Following the death of Tengku Abdul Majid, Ruqayyah later married Sayyid Abdullah al-Attas, a wealthy merchant from Betawi, Jakarta. This marriage was blessed with a son, Sayyid Ali al-Attas (father of Syed Hussien and Syed Naquib, two famous local scholars). After divorce with Sayyid Abdullah, Ruqayyah then married Dato' Jaafar. Seven children were born in this marriage, including Onn (the founder of Umno and father of Perdana. The third minister is Tun Hussien Onn). Nurulwahidah Fauzi (2018), "Peranan Arab Hadhrami Di Dalam Mempengaruhi Politik Istana Kerajaan Johor Pada Awal Abad Ke 20M," *International Journal of West Asian Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 13.

<sup>46</sup> Ermy Azziaty Rozali (2016), *Turki Uthmaniah Persepsi dan Pengaruh dalam Masyarakat Melayu*, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka: Kuala Lumpur, p. 109.

<sup>47</sup> Bernard Lewis (1965), "The Ottoman Empire in the Mid Nineteenth Century: A Review," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 1, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> Na Tien Pet (2001), *Syair Almarhum Baginda Sultan Abu Bakar di Negeri Johor*, Johor: Yayasan Warisan Johor; Ermy Azziaty Rozali, Wan Kamal Mujani and Azmul Fahimi Kamaruzaman (2016), "Relation between the Ottoman Empire and the Johor Sultanate: Perception and Influence," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 7, No. 2, p. 407.

<sup>49</sup> Sultan Abdul Hamid II was convinced that this idea of Pan-Islamism was able to prevent Western powers such as Russia, Germany, France and the British from continuing to attack and overthrow Islam throughout the world. Accordingly, Pan-Islamism is planned to reform Islam. Herbert Adam R. Gibbon (1972), *Modern Trend in Islam*, New York: Octagon Press, pp. 10-11.



The Pan-Islamism movement, which was fully supported by the Ottoman Turkish Empire, attracted the attention of all Muslim countries, including Malaya. The movement was seen as a stronghold to protect the positions of the Malays and Malay kings from the colonial threat. Sultan Abu Bakar officially visited Turkey to show his support for the movement. In the spirit of Pan-Islamism, religious schools were established in Malaya, and Malay newspapers such as *al-Imam*, *Desa Nesan*, *Lengkongan Bulan*, *Neracha*, and *Tunas Melayu* published articles from foreign newspapers, which were widely translated and brought the movement to the attention of the Malay community. The newspapers also defended the movement founded by the Ottoman Turkish Empire, claiming that the Turkish government was substantial, and its society had noble personalities. According to the newspapers, all Muslims had to obey the Turkish caliph, as the West tried to discredit Ottoman Turkey and overthrow the Islamic government at the time.<sup>50</sup>

The spread of the Pan-Islamism movement led to the rise of Malays in Malaya against the colonialists. The influence of this movement was deeply rooted in the Malays' spirit and was evident in their use of Ottoman Turkish symbols like the red fez or tarbus. The use of the colour red on the flag, crescent moon, and silver stars was similar to the Turkish flag. Many Malay leaders, such as Dato' Bahaman, Tok Gajah, and Mat Kilau, rose against the colonialists. Some leaders even requested military assistance from the head of the Ottoman Turkish Navy when he stopped in Singapore, but the effort failed as the British discovered it and thwarted their plan.<sup>51</sup>

The Malay community had strong faith in the Ottoman Turks' ability to help them fight against the colonialists who based their power on Islam. However, the colonists prevented the Pan-Islamism movement from spreading by prohibiting the Muslim community in Malaya from receiving any information about the Ottoman Turkish caliph in the early twentieth century. This included banning newspapers that extensively reported on the Ottoman Turks from being published, which prevented information from reaching the Malay community. As a result, the Malay community gradually lost connection with the Ottoman Turks until the caliphate's demise.

## Conclusion

The relationship between Turkey and the Malay Sultanate of Melaka began in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and flourished during the reign of Sultan Mansur Shah. This relationship was initially established through trade, and the two kingdoms further solidified their bond through diplomatic ties that resulted in royal marriages. Consequently, when the Portuguese attacked Melaka, the Ottoman Turkish Empire provided military equipment through Aceh to support the recapture of Melaka from the Portuguese. The Portuguese's domination not only affected the position of Muslim countries but also disrupted the economy of the Turkish empire, which acted as the primary distributor of spices in Europe. The Portuguese planned to seize Melaka to prevent the Ottoman Turkish Kingdom from continuing to expand into Europe.

When the Portuguese conquered Melaka, the Ottoman Turks did not forget about it. They provided war aid through Aceh to defeat the Portuguese. The Ottoman Turkish Empire was considered a powerful entity representing the Islamic world, and the Islamic community in Malaya respected the Turkish caliphate. As a result, the Malay community always welcomed and accepted all Ottoman Turk encouragement and movements. Malay newspapers played an important role in conveying all Ottoman Turk-related information, making sure that the Malay community remained enthusiastic against colonialism while expressing their support for the Ottoman Turks.

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<sup>50</sup> Abdul Aziz Mat Ton (2000), *Politik al-Imam*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, pp. 280-281.

<sup>51</sup> Barbara W. Andaya and Leonard Andaya (1982), *A History of Malaysia*, Hong Kong: McMillan Press, p. 163.

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