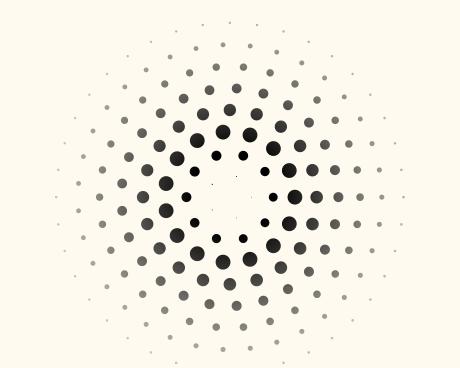
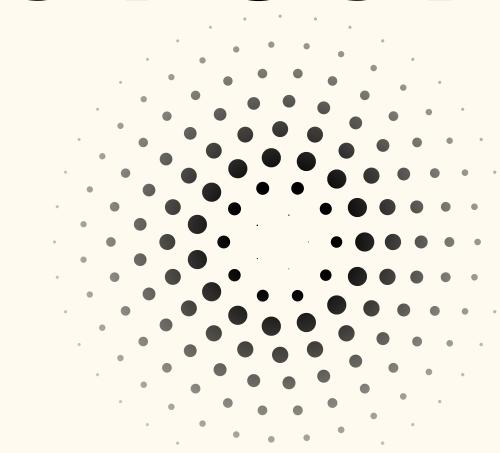


Why has Indonesia never won a Nobel Prize?

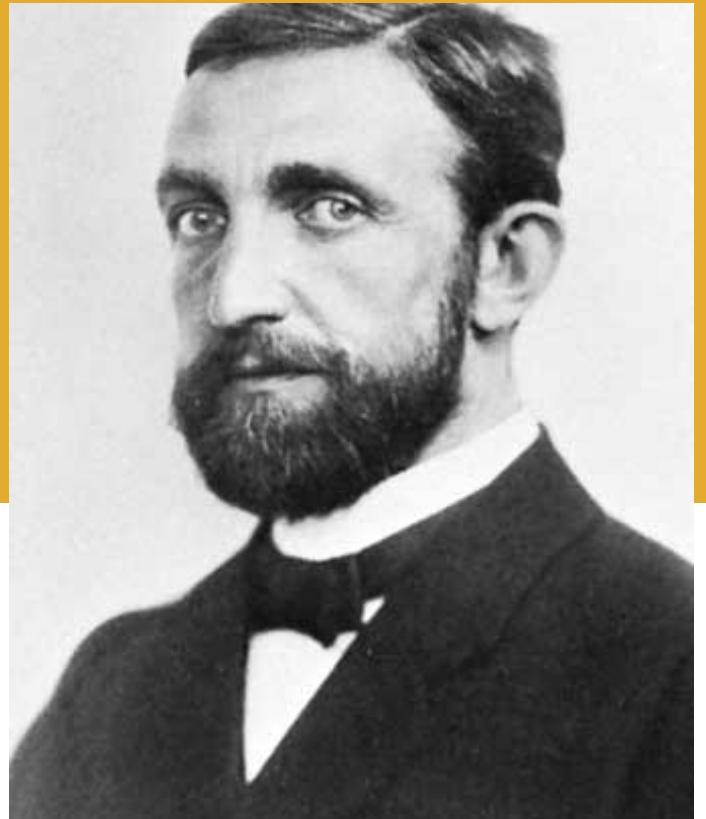
AN ENQUIRY INTO INDONESIA'S LACK OF RESEARCH CULTURE AND THE FAILURE OF ITS POST-MERDEKA UNIVERSITIES



Peter Carey

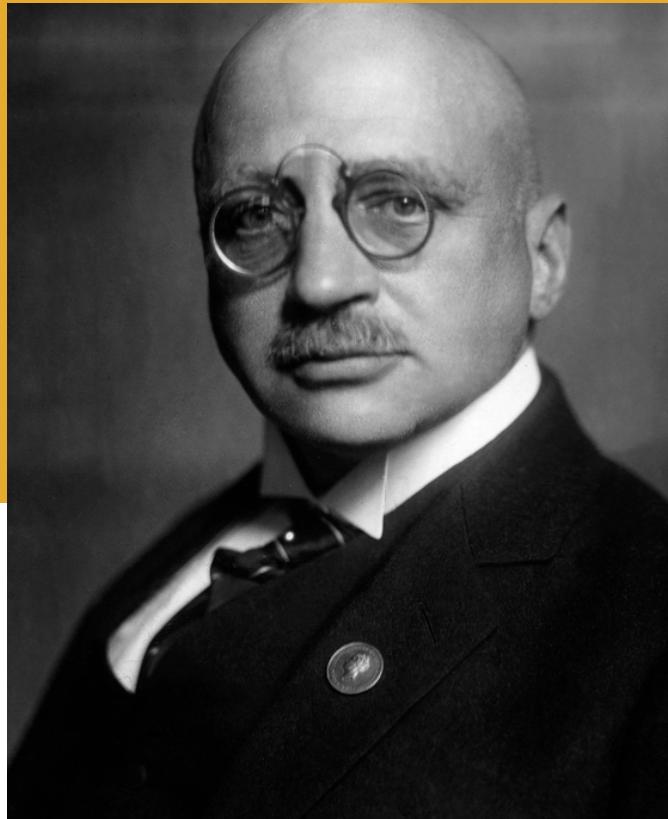
Fellow Emeritus, Trinity College, Oxford
Adjunct (Visiting) Professor FIB-UI

Physics



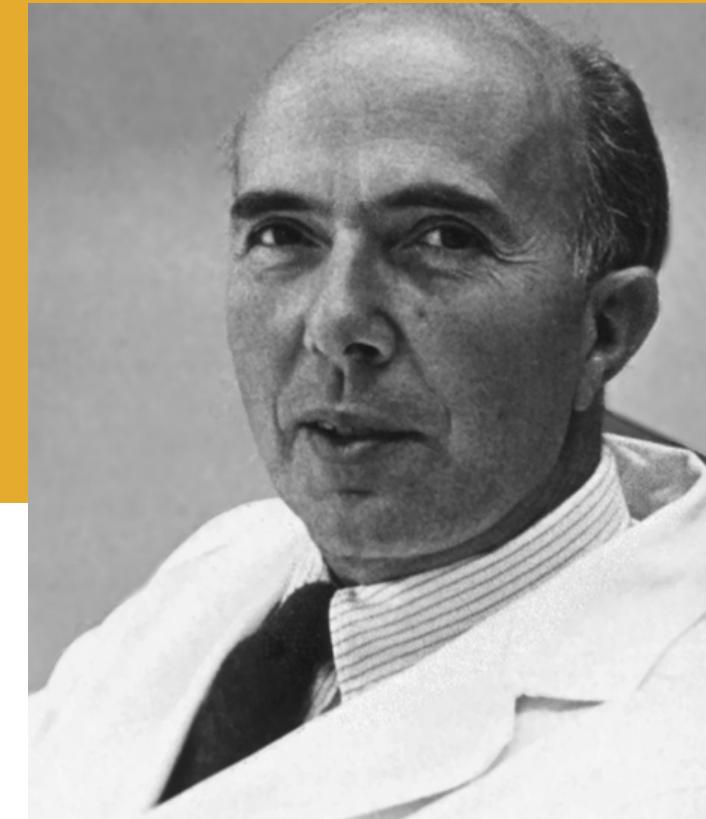
Philipp Lenard

Chemistry



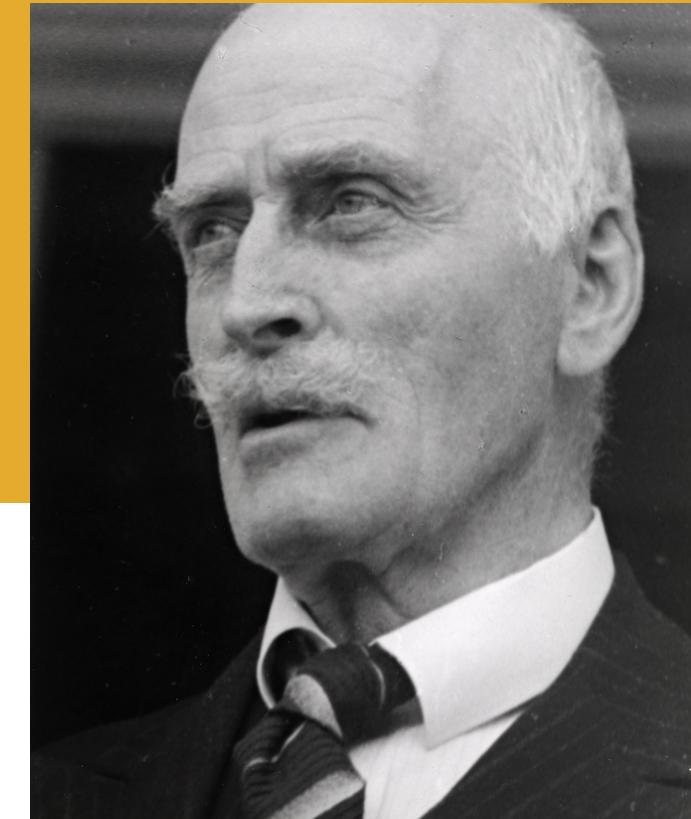
Fritz Haber

Medicine



Renato Dulbecco

Literature



Knut Hamsun

Peace



Carl von Ossietzky

Nobel Laureates

The Nobel Prizes are five separate prizes that, according to Alfred Nobel's will of 1895, are awarded to "those who, during the preceding year, have conferred the greatest benefit to humankind."



BIG ZERO

Why is it that Indonesia, alone amongst the ten largest countries in the world (now ranked fourth after the US with 280 million people), is the only country not to have won a Nobel of any category since merdeka (independence, 1945)?

		Population	Nobel Prize Winners
1	China	1,439,323,776	9
2	India	1,380,004,385	12
3	United States	331,002,651	403
4	Indonesia	273,523,615	0
5	Pakistan	220,892,340	2
6	Brazil	212,559,417	0*
7	Nigeria	206,139,589	1
8	Bangladesh	164,689,383	1
9	Russia	145,934,462	32
10	Mexico	128,932,753	3

* Peter Medawar was Brazilian born, but renounced citizenship at 18 (1933) to dodge military draft. Won Nobel Prize in 1960 as British citizen.

Christiaan Eijkman

DUTCH PHYSICIAN

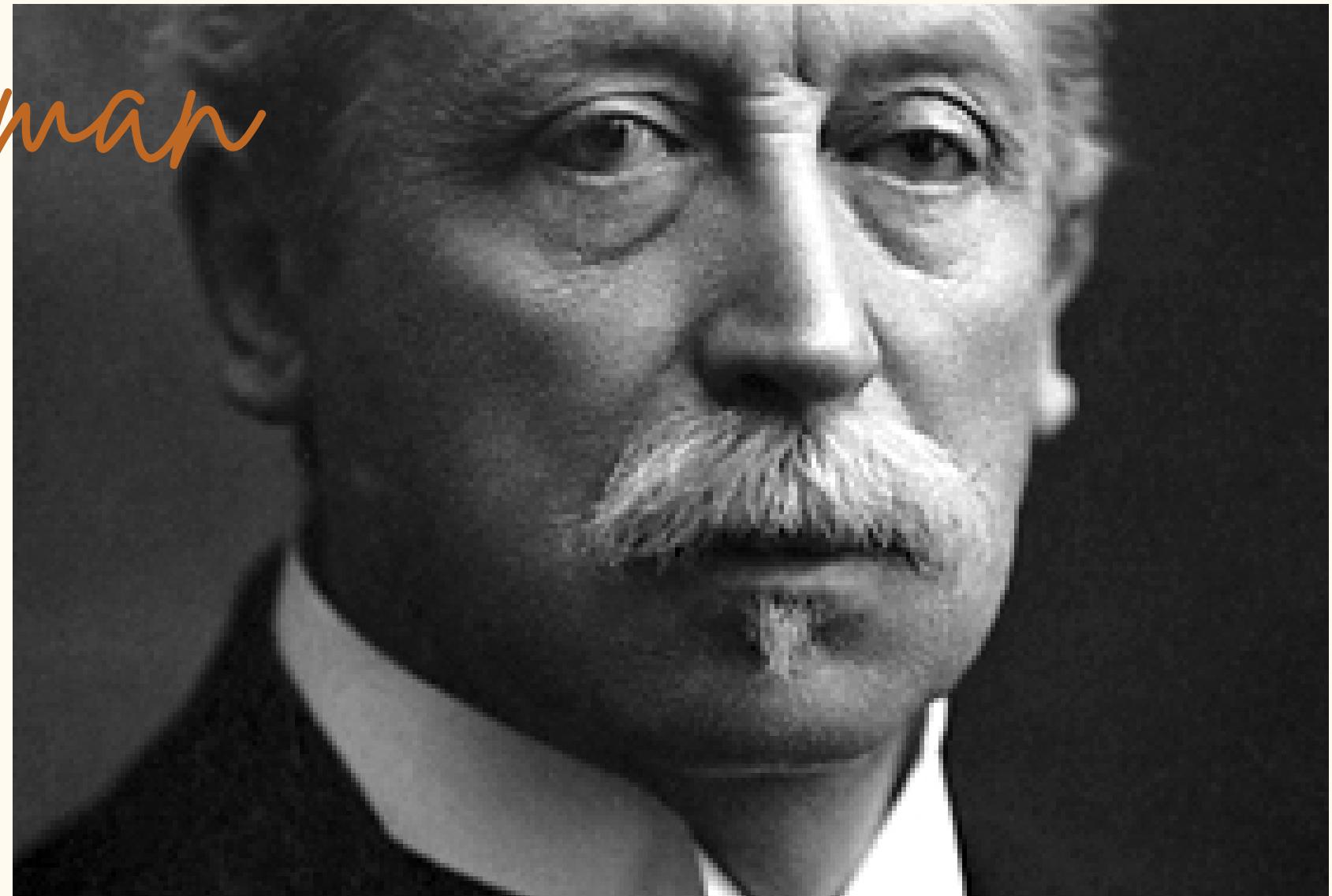
Sent to the Dutch East Indies to study beriberi, and discovered that the real cause of beriberi was the deficiency of some vital substance in the staple food of the natives, which is located in the so-called “silver skin” (pericarpium) of the rice.



Milled (white) rice



Unmilled (brown) rice
This is not Red Rice.



Christiaan Eijkman
Nederlander

Achmad Mochtar

INDONESIAN SCIENTIST

Studied various strains of leptospirosis, One of which (leptospira icteroides) he confirmed to be the origin of Yellow Fever (Mochtar 1927).

Executed (beheaded) by the Kempeitai in the massacre of 900 romushā (forced labourers) in their transit camp in Klender between Jakarta and Bekasi in August 1944 as the result of a failed tetanus vaccine experiment.



Achmad Mochtar
Indonesian

Indonesia's international profile: **BIG ZERO**

A photograph of two climbers standing on a rocky mountain peak. They are silhouetted against a bright sky. One climber holds a long pole with a small Indonesian flag at the end. Another climber stands next to him, also holding a flag. In the background, a large, dark mountain range is visible under a clear blue sky.

Why is it that Indonesia, alone amongst the ten largest countries in the world (now ranked fourth after the US with 280 million people), is the only country not to have won a Nobel of any category since merdeka (independence, 1945)?

Burma

SOFT POWER

All of Indonesia's neighbours with Nobel Prizes have been able to orbit themselves by projecting their soft power globally. It was the same with Daw Suu's democracy campaign in Burma beginning in July 1988 and continuing on through her nearly 16 years under house arrest at her 52 University Avenue residence in Rangoon (post-1992 Yangon).



The Nobel laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi defended Myanmar from accusations of genocide inflicted upon the Rohingya Muslims in The Hague



Aung San Suu Kyi

Meeting the Norwegian Nobel Committee in Oslo, 15 June 2012, 20 years after she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 1991 to Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar (Burma) for her non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights.

vietnam

SOFT POWER

Vietnam's star as a slayer of colonial powers (France, Dien Bien Phu, 1954) and the David to the Goliath of the United States, which was fought to a standstill by the time of the Paris Peace Accords in December 1973, made both the country and its leader—Ho Chi Minh (1890-1969)—household names in the West.



President Ho Chi Minh

Visit to Indonesia (27 February-8 March 1959)



Lê Đức Thọ

In 1973 Le Duc Tho became the first and only person ever to refuse a Nobel Peace Prize. The prize had been awarded jointly to Tho and Henry Kissinger for their work negotiating a ceasefire in the Vietnam War.

Philippines

SOFT POWER

As for Maria Ressa and the Philippines, the People Power Revolution which toppled the Marcos dictatorship in February 1986, and the country's status as a former US colony with English as its default setting, made it more accessible compared with Indonesia, whose national language—Bahasa Indonesia—despite being in the top twelve in terms of the number of speakers (over 300 million) is not global.



Philippines' President Rodrigo Duterte (in office 2016-22), center left, waves with his Indonesian counterpart Joko Widodo during their visit at Tanah Abang Market



Maria Ressa

Ressa, the chief executive and co-founder of Rappler was awarded the Nobel peace prize in 2021 for her work to “safeguard freedom of expression” and was praised for exposing abuses of power and growing authoritarianism under then Philippine president, Rodrigo Duterte.

East Timor SOFT POWER

Even tiny East Timor could punch far above its weight given its lusophone inheritance which translated into support from major powers in the developing world like Brazil and its former colonial master, Portugal, post-January 1986 an EU member. It was thus greatly able to enhance its international appeal.

None of these possibilities existed for Indonesia.



Catholic Bishop of East Timor, Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo, and José Ramos-Horta in Oslo



Timorese resistance leader Jose Ramos-Horta, who received the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize in Norway, has been the target of death threats, with resistance sources inside the Indonesian-occupied territory of East Timor warning him that an attempt on his life was being prepared.

In 2021, East Timor voted to abstain in a United Nations resolution which aimed to condemn the military dictatorship in Myanmar which ousted the democratically elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

Indonesia

POTENTIAL NOBEL PRIZE



Jusuf Kalla

(born 1942; in office 2004-2009; 2014-19) one of the architects of the 15 August 2005 Helsinki agreement, which brought the long-running conflict in Aceh (1976-2005) to an end (Aspinall 2005), were not given sufficient support by official Indonesian sources.

Maybe his profile as a non-English speaker also made Kalla insufficiently appreciated by the Nobel Peace Prize committee.



Pramoedya Ananta Toer

He was put forward on more than one occasion for the Nobel Prize in Literature on the basis of his *Buru Quartet* (1980-88).¹ But far from helping, the Indonesian Government went out of its way to torpedo his chances on account of his left-wing politics, namely his membership of LEKRA (*Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat*), a cultural and literary association closely aligned with the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI).

¹ Pramoedya's *Buru Quartet*, written during his 14-year imprisonment (1965-1979), for the most part post-1971, when he was being held on the prison island of Buru in Eastern Indonesia, was loosely based on the life of the pioneering Indonesian journalist Tirto Adhi Soejo (1880-1918). The quartet comprises a series of four linked novels, *Bumi Manusia* (This Earth of Mankind), *Anak Semua Bangsa* (Child of All Nations), *Jejak Langkah* (Footsteps) and *Rumah Kaca* (House of Glass), and were published in stages after Pramoedya's return from Buru between 1980 and 1988.

The logo consists of the word "Merdeka!" written in a flowing, golden-yellow cursive script. A vertical exclamation mark is positioned to the right of the text.

POST-INDEPENDENCE CHALLENGES

Since Sukarno's Old Order (1945-66),
when there was an ongoing international cultural programme involving Indonesia and the former
communist-ruled states of Eastern Europe,
no attempt has been made to make the country better known abroad.
So, Indonesia lacks instant name recognition unlike many of its near neighbours.

EDUCATION

Indonesia has been a member of the G20 group of Nations since its inception in 1999, and it currently (2022) ranks no.14 by GDP (USD1.186 trillion) immediately behind Spain and Australia and just before its former colonial power, the Netherlands. According to the McKinsey Global Institute (MGI, 2012) it will move from its current place to seventh by 2030, and some informed observers even see the potential of Indonesia becoming the fifth largest economy in the world by that date immediately behind the US, China, India and Japan (p.c. HE Ambassador Moazzam Malik, British Embassy, Jakarta, 6 November 2017).

There is a yawning gap between Indonesia's position as a burgeoning world economic power and its capacity to project its soft power in the world.

Much smaller countries in the Southeast Asian region like Singapore, Burma (Myanmar), Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Malaysia are better known globally than Indonesia—and at least three of these countries (Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia) currently (2022) have much larger numbers of foreign expats living and working in-country: 3.41 million in Singapore or 64 percent of its 5.454 million inhabitants; 7 million in Thailand or around 10 percent of its 71.6 million population; and 2.1 million in Malaysia or 6.5 percent of its 33.57 million citizens. Compare this with Indonesia's picayune 92.000 registered foreigners (0.03 percent of the population) of whom just 65.000 hold work permits (0.024 percent).

It is almost as if Indonesia—the cross-roads of Southeast Asia in Denys Lombard's famous phrase (Lombard 1990)—wants to hold foreigners at bay by making the process of registration and application for work visas intentionally complicated and expensive.

ALEXITHYMPIA

Fully 90 percent of all articles in refereed journals overseas are written either by non-Indonesians or by Indonesians who have taken foreign citizenship (Reid 2011).



the morning after the 12 November massacre of 250+ Timorese mourners at the Santa Cruz in East Timor by the Indonesian army when the Indonesian Embassy in Washington DC told its staff not to take any phone calls but to leave all explanations to the US State Department regarding what had been dubbed the “Santa Cruz Massacre”.



INDONESIA'S RESPONSE TO GLOBAL CHALLENGES?

This puts Indonesia in the invidious position of being the one major country in the world least able to explain itself to the outside world, which greatly limits Indonesia's ability to engage globally.



Commodities



2 minute read · November 30, 2022 11:14 PM GMT+7 · Last Updated 4 months ago



WTO backs EU in nickel dispute, Indonesia plans appeal

Reuters



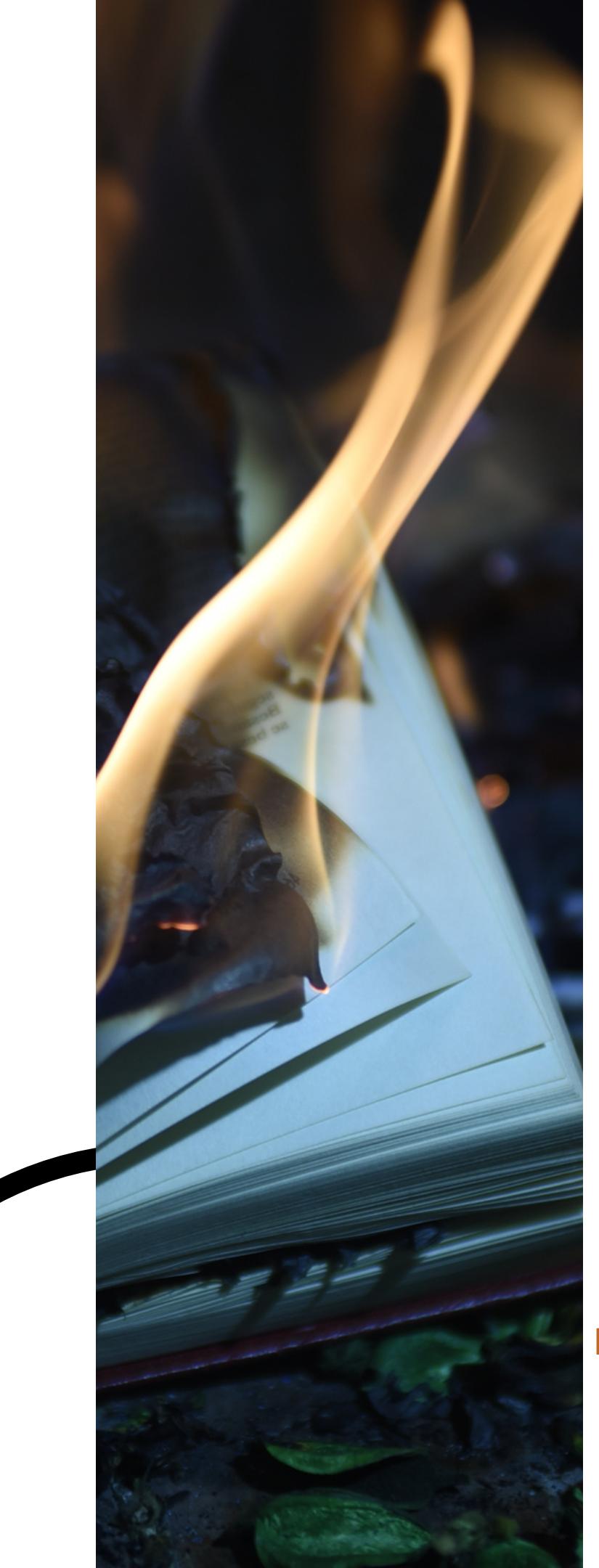
Indonesian President Joko Widodo gestures as he delivers his remarks during the annual meeting of Indonesia's central bank with its financial stakeholders in Jakarta, Indonesia, November 30, 2022.
REUTERS/Willy Kurniawan

JAKARTA, Nov 30 (Reuters) - The World Trade Organization ruled in favour of the European Union in a dispute over a ban on nickel ore exports with Indonesia, prompting Indonesia's president to say his country would appeal.

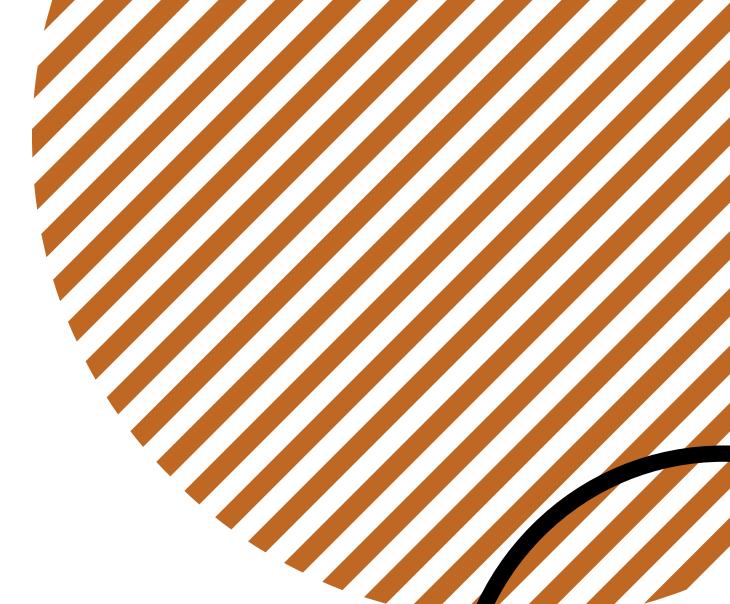


In this context, it is hardly surprising that a 2013 AusAid Report concluded that

**“NOT ONE OF INDONESIA’S
3,000 PLUS INSTITUTIONS HAS
AN INTERNATIONALLY
RESPECTABLE STANDING”**



+ **not a single
campus or
university library
has its resources
online**



**Financiers are not a
problem**

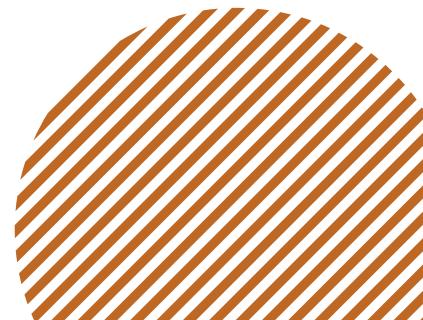
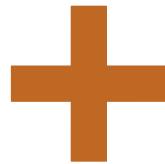
INDONESIAN LIBRARY

a treasure of knowledge



KATAK DI BAWAH TEMPURUNG

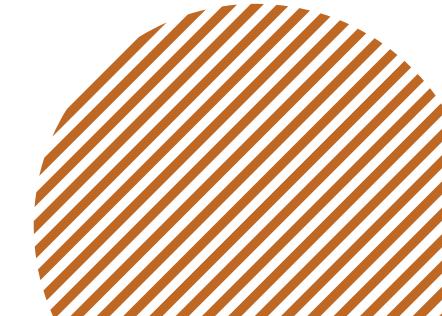
If Indonesia is to go forward it needs to go beyond navel gazing and the “frog beneath the coconut shell” mentality. During the present decade, when it has a brief demographic window, namely the advantage of a young population and the opportunity for rapid economic growth (by 2030 it will begin to experience a predominantly ageing population), it needs to embark on a post-1867 Meiji style “self-strengthening” program.





STASIS

NO ACADEMIC RESEARCH CULTURE



SALARIES

The starting salary for newly employed lecturers is IDR4-6.000.000 (USD267-400) a month while basic professorial salaries range from IDR8-17.000.000 (USD534-1.135).



This is too low and is almost certainly a major disincentive for academic staff to engage in research and writing.

Instead, they must endeavour to supplement their income by taking on much better paid project work both for the Government and the private sector

CIVIL SERVICE STATUS

Since Indonesian academics employed by state universities are deemed to be civil servants *per se* then perhaps they have to become PNS (*Pegawai Negeri Sipil*) as a matter of course in order to work in a state institution.



If Indonesian state universities are to be reformed then this practise of insisting on all academic employees being PNS has to stop.

The purpose of a university is not to produce *ambtenaren* and office boys, but original thinkers, scholars and public intellectuals who can push back the frontiers of knowledge and engage meaningfully with wider society and government.

They need to be in a position to criticise government policy and come up with new and original solutions to the manifold challenges facing the country. At the moment, Indonesia is singularly bereft of such individuals and the root cause of this must surely be found in the civil service mentality of the majority of Indonesian academics.

SABBATICALS

There is currently no provision for sabbatical leave which is well-nigh mandatory internationally – usually one term for every two years in harness – meaning that most academic staff in international universities have one full year of sabbatical leave every six years.

There is not even a term in the Indonesian language for 'sabbatical.'

Indonesian academics are like the proverbial banana tree—they fruit once—usually when they publish their thesis as a monograph on completion of their doctorate—and then die—namely, they don't develop any further meaningful research projects during their entire academic careers.

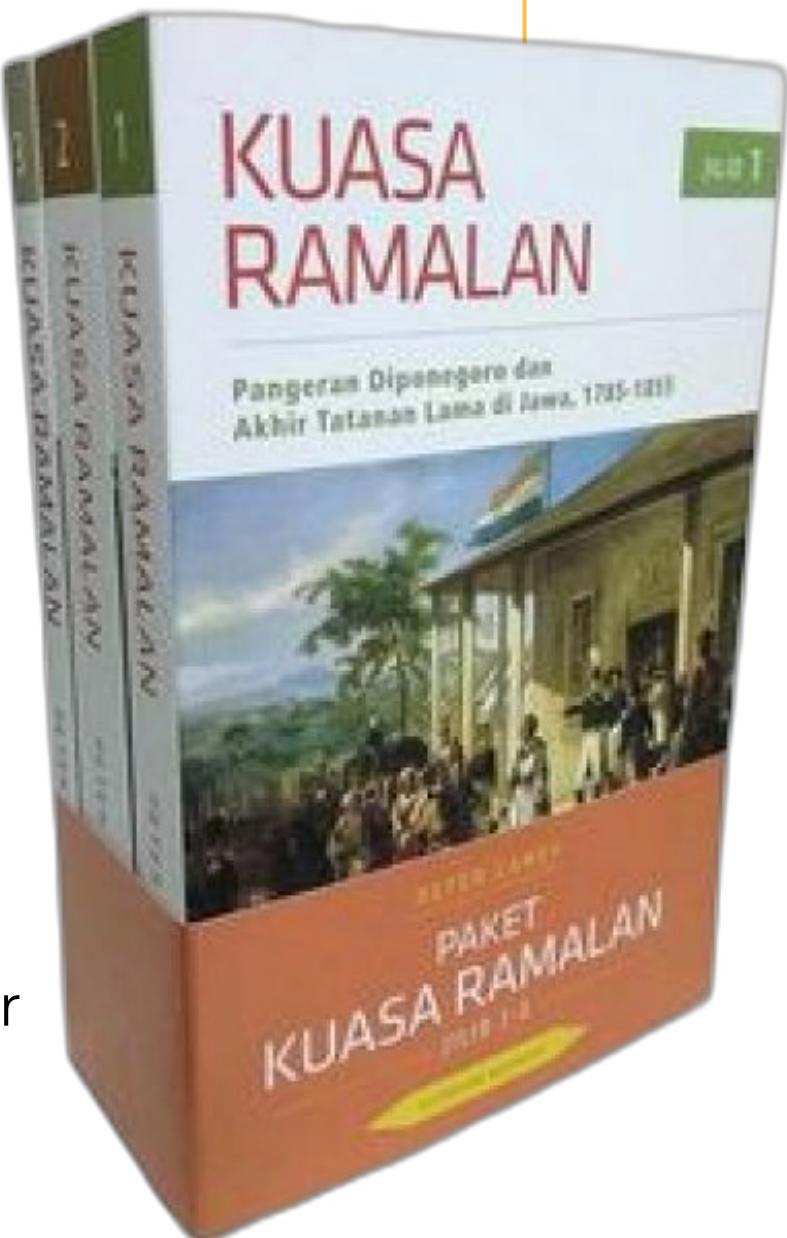
I do not have a single colleague working full time on seventeenth or eighteenth century Indonesian / VOC (*Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie*) (1602-1799) history even though the Indonesian State Archives (ANRI) containing over two million pages of letters and documents from the former Dutch East India Trading Company are just a short 20-minute train ride from the Depok campus

If UI was a major university in the developed world like Oxford, Harvard or Leiden and it had such an archival gold mine on its doorstep there would be a large number of young doctoral candidates and post-doc students using these archives.

PEER GROUP REVIEW

The lack of peer review is a major barrier to the development of a scientific community and an Indonesian scholarly tradition.

These circumstances have not only inhibited the development of a much needed and non-existent peer culture in Indonesian scholarship, it also will continue to undermine the regional competitiveness of Indonesian state universities in the higher education market.



In March 2012, I published a major–three-volume–study of the Indonesian national hero, Prince Diponegoro (1785-1855), the country’s equivalent of Oliver Cromwell, George Washington and Napoleon Bonaparte.

One would have thought that such a doorstopper of a book would elicit a number of informed and critical reviews, as well as a painstaking checking and rechecking of my use of the Dutch, British and Javanese archival sources and works of historical literature (*babad*).

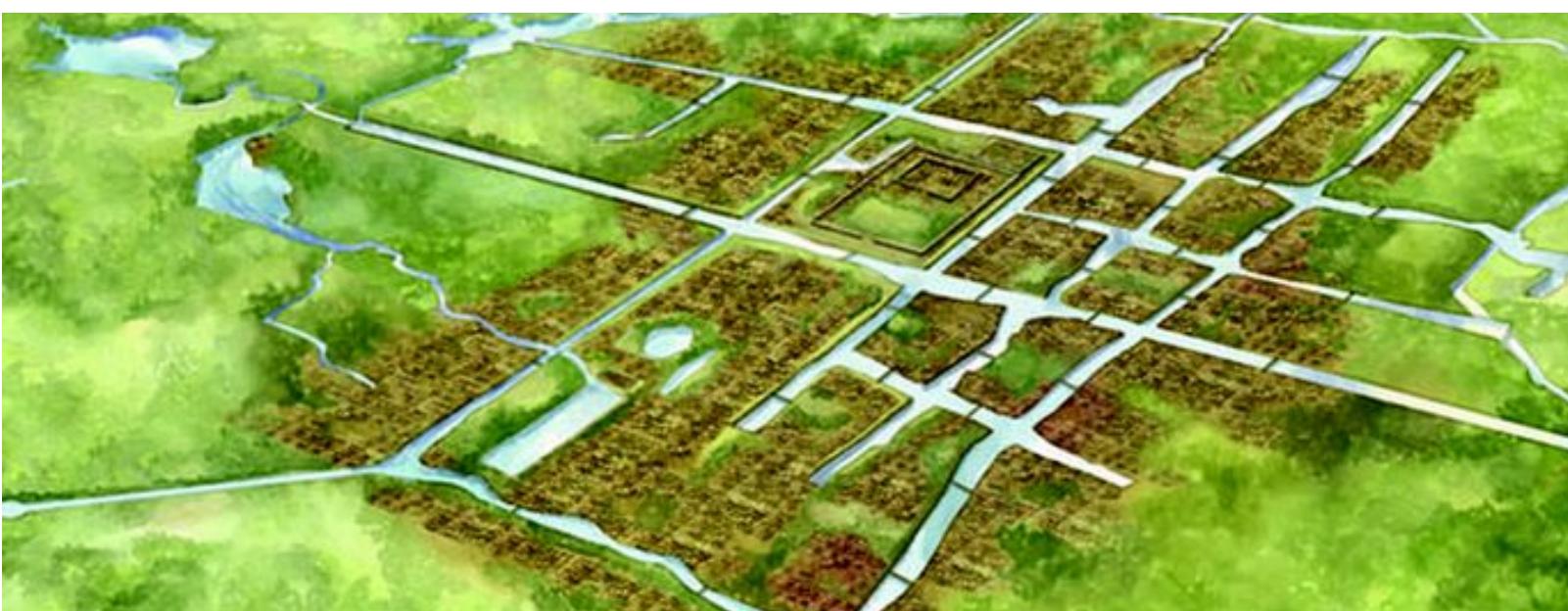
Instead, there was just a deafening silence, from the Indonesian academic community at least.

Very much the same lament can be found in the Global Development Network (GDN) Working Paper on “Reforming Research in Indonesia” (February 2016) which laments that “basic research, which is essential in preventing myopic policymaking, has been consistently undermined by a non-existent peer culture.



ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WIDER INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY

The Global Development Network (GDN) Working Paper's recommendation for providing institutional support for academic mobility is essential to bring Indonesian academics out of their proverbial "coconut shell".



The lack of academic mobility reinforces the “frog under the coconut shell” mentality where major ideas developed by Indonesian academics are not shared or ventilated in international scholarly gatherings.



The case of the 2013 debate between Indonesian archaeologists, the late Professor Mundardjito (1936-2021; Puslit Arkenas) and Professor Aris Munandar (born 1959; FIB-UI), regarding the presence or otherwise of an elaborate canal system being evident in the royal capital of the Majapahit Kingdom (1293-c.1527) in Trowulan being a case in point.

This bold but controversial theory should have been presented to an international gathering of archaeologists of the calibre of Roland Fletcher, and its validity tested in open discussion on its scientific merits. Only in this fashion can the boundaries of scholarly knowledge be extended and confirmed.



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Looking ahead, if the Indonesian intelligence community (BIN) is concerned with the future strategic position and defence of their country, then it needs to look to Indonesia's control over its "soft power", namely its ability to make its voice heard in the world, to punch its weight culturally and intellectually and to have a situation where 90 percent of the articles and monographs written on Indonesia abroad in refereed journals are written by WNI not by foreigners (or Indonesians who have taken foreign citizenship) as at present.

On this, there can be no compromise.



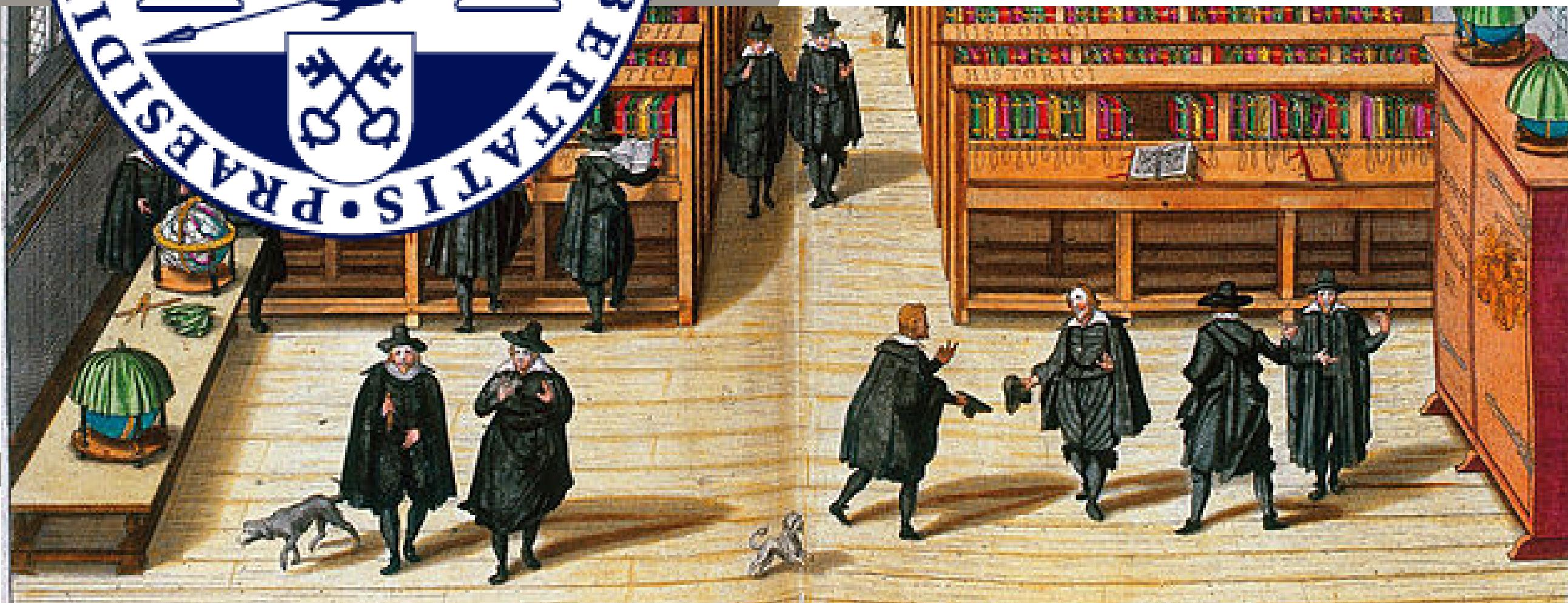
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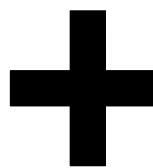
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long-term storage of
large amounts of
books, archives and
manuscripts;
newspapers, academic
papers and theses;
(colonial) archives,
photos, films, audio
recordings**



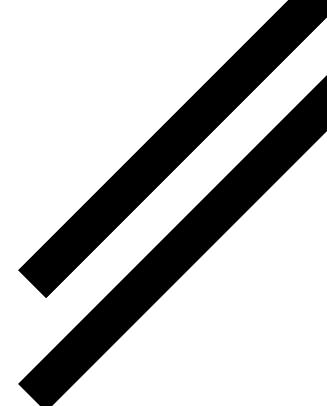
**Scientific Heritage
Collections
long-term
developments in
Geophysics, Medicine,
Biodiversity and
Astronomy**

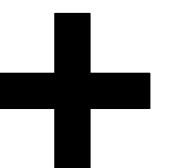


**Cultural Heritage
Collections
may constitute both
tangible and
intangible heritage**



COLLECTION AREAS





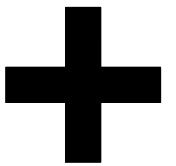
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MATUR NUWUN

Peter Carey

Oxford Historian of Trinity College (1979-2008)
Adjunct Professor at Universitas Indonesia (2013 to present)

