The Rise and Fall of a Javanese Saint

By M.F. Laffan

It was with some surprise that I discovered that the book under review was not about a Muslim saint at all. Instead, a non-Muslim Javanese phenomenon known as the “Wall” (the Islamic term for a saint) is examined. The author, Dr. Andras Hernádi, explores the life and influence of Embah Wali, a charismatic figure who earned the respect of the crowds of people who visited his courtyard, a place where he preached with great authority and eloquence.

Embah Wali was a significant figure in Indonesian history, and his story is told in “A Quest for Justice: The Rise and Fall of a Javanese Saint.” Dr. Hernádi’s work provides a detailed account of Embah Wali’s life, including his role in the development of Islamic movements on Java. The book is a valuable resource for those interested in the history of Indonesian Islam and the role of saints in the region’s religious landscape.

Embah Wali’s influence extended beyond his lifetime, and his legacy continues to shape the way that Islamic spirituality is understood in Indonesia. Dr. Hernádi’s research is important not just for its historical insights, but also for its contributions to our understanding of the role of saints in contemporary Islamic societies.

The book is well-researched and thoughtfully written, and it offers a valuable perspective on the development of Islamic movements on Java. I highly recommend it to anyone interested in the history of Islam in Southeast Asia.

Reference:
1. See Mailrapporten van 1888, no. 57, 642, 278 and 240.