

**2nd International Conference on Alfred Russel Wallace- His Predecessors and Successors. Naturalists,
Explorers and Field Scientists in South-East Asia and Australasia**

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**Monsoon, Mosquitoes and Malaria in the Malay Archipelago: Alfred Russel Wallace's
Journey (1854–1862)**

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While most historians used Alfred Russel Wallace's malaria attack as a dramatic context that inspired him to develop his theory of evolution, few have ever probed into the history of Wallace's struggle against malaria. Although quinine was available for prophylaxis and the treatment of malaria, the scientific correlation between monsoon, mosquitoes and malaria had not yet been established when Wallace explored the Malay Archipelago between 1854 and 1862. The purpose of this paper is two folds: (1) to investigate the life of young Wallace during his eight years enduring hardship and diseases, while exploring the tropics, an inhospitable region for most European explorers and settlers. His struggle against malaria will be discussed in detail from the medical history perspective with every effort made to avoid the presentist trap. (2) to investigate how "old and respected scholar" Wallace constructed knowledge about the tropics, which he presented in popular articles as an appealing "legendary paradise" for European settlers. Wallace's positive opinion on the quality of life in those regions contrasts sharply with his struggle to overcome malaria, some forty years ago while exploring the area. The paradox between past personal hardship and his participation in the promotion of tropical regions as a welcoming place for Europeans settlement will be discussed. This research is situated in the flourishing years (from 1820 to 1898) of medical breakthroughs that offer new scientific paradigms about pathogenesis, diagnosis, prophylaxis and treatment of malaria. The social history method using Wallace's various publications as primary sources will be adopted.