Malay-Indonesian Islamic Studies

Texts and Studies
on the Qur'ān

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Peter G. Riddell (Melbourne 2017; Family Collection)

پیٹرک ریڈل

Malay-Indonesian Islamic Studies

A Festschrift in Honor of Peter G. Riddell

Edited by

Majid Daneshgar
Ervan Nurtawab

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Acknowledgments

We have enjoyed working with a large number of people who helped us turn vision into reality, thanking a prominent scholar of Islamic Studies whose works significantly changed the discourse and widely affected a large number of younger scholars.

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Last and by no means least, we are greatly indebted to our wives, children and families, who bore our absence for purposes of editing with patience and good humour.

The editors
June 2022

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Context, and Interpretation (2019). He is currently working on a monograph titled *Preaching Pious and Learned Rulership in Medieval Islam: Ibn al-Jawzī's Political Thought* (under contract with Edinburgh University Press).

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Peter G. Riddell's Contribution to Malay-Indonesian Islamic Studies

Majid Daneshgar and Ervan Nurtawab

While the world's theology and religious studies and history departments turned their attention to the Middle East and Central Asia during the cold war and after the horrendous 9/11 incident, there were very few scholars with a universal perspective seeing Islam as a viable phenomenon moving, living and growing everywhere and shifting its shape according to new contexts. Professor Peter Gregory Riddell is one of those scholars whose studies have affected various disciplines.[1] He linked the Middle East to the Far East and Southeast Asia through both land and ocean routes. For him, reading Islam as a "phenomenon", "religion", "culture" and "perspective" should not be seen only through a select number of materials written in Arabic. He was instrumental in establishing this fact: that public and scholarly knowledge about the world of Islam without considering the Malay-Indonesian World is lame—a region embracing the highest number of Muslims on earth should have been viewed more closely. This became possible through the works of Peter and his colleagues whose aim was to bring the inestimable history of the Malay-Indonesian World from the margins to the center. There have been American, European and Malay-Indonesian scholars of Southeast Asia, but Peter was instrumental in bringing Malay Islamic theology and theological evidence under the canopy of Islamic Studies while working in Indonesia, the United Kingdom and Australia and developing his research at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and L'École Pratique des Hautes Études/Sorbonne (Paris).

Of course, his works should be seen along with those of his PhD supervisor, Professor Anthony Johns, both of them coming from Australia and shedding new light on the history of Islam. These two scholars made Australia the main hub for the global transregional study of Islam; the "Australian School of Islamic Studies" flourished through the works of Peter. This would not have been an easy task when a large number of scholars viewed Islam as the sole product of the Arabian Peninsula (and Persia) without the contribution of for-

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1 A number of scholars having a universal perspective of Islam and Islamic studies are among our contributors in this volume, too.

eigners from the Far East. For a long time, no one had given or paid particular attention to the connection between Islam in the Malay Archipelago and the Middle East. There are still very few departments dedicated to Islam in the Malay-Indonesian World. This is not to mention what the situation could have been in the 1980s when Peter studied one of the first known Malay commentaries on the Qurʾān, *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* by ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Sīngkilī (d. c. 1693) from the late 17th century. The role played by ʿAbd al-Raʾūf can be likened to that of al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) and his *tafsīr* in the Arabic Zone with its translation in the Persianate region. ʿAbd al-Raʾūf is one of the main symbols of Malay-Indonesian Muslim history and cultural heritage. He is known as the first figure commenting on and translating the whole Qurʾān into the Malay language. He is as significant as Ferdowsī (d. 1020 or 1025 CE) and Saʿdī (d. c. 1291 CE) for Persian speaking communities, all of whom saved and/or reformed the language, literature and moral codes of their community. In the same way, more accurate information about ʿAbd al-Raʾūf could affect Malay culture. Peter went through every single page of *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* (printed editions and manuscript copies) and challenged the whole former literature in the Arab World, Ottoman Empire and European circles. According to the latter group, *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* was the direct translation of al-Bayḍāwī's commentary on the Qurʾān. Egyptian and Turkish printing houses, perhaps consulting with Malay residents of Cairo, also reprinted it as the Jawi translation of al-Bayḍāwī's *tafsīr*. In this context, Peter emerged as a corrective; he demonstrated that the aforementioned commentary and important symbol of Malay Islamic literature was actually not what Malays, Europeans, Ottomans, orientalists and Egyptian printing houses had been assuming for centuries. Peter showed that it was *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, another popular commentary, which had chiefly been used by ʿAbd al-Raʾūf. Peter also reformed global Islamic knowledge and stated that it was actually commentary of *al-Jalālayn* which was widely used throughout Central, South and Southeast Asia connecting Muslims from the Middle East to the Malay-Indonesian World.

To correct the literature of a lesser examined field, one should be equipped with many forms of skill and knowledge. Peter was trained as a philologist, linguist, historian, theologian, and was also quite familiar with anthropological, ethnographic, psychological and sociological methods and approaches. No wonder that he was able to reform and redirect the literature. He is one of the few scholars of Islam whose philological expertise covers Aramaic, Indo-European, and Austronesian languages. It is no easy feat to have competence in working with classical and modern Arabic, Hebrew and Malay-Indonesian languages, and also deliver lectures about ancient Malay-Indonesian literature in English, French and Indonesian, among others.

Peter's area of study was not limited to commentaries on the Qurʾān. Over the last decades, he elevated the area of Qurʾānic codices, manuscript studies, theological discourse and Muslim-Christian studies. Peter had great familiarity with Arabian and Persian culture and interacted with different communities in the Middle East and Africa for several years. But important to say, Peter knows his mother tongue quite well … he is a master of English phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Historians and philosophers have now begun to realize that one should first know one's own language well before analyzing the other's language, culture and history.[2] This may explain why his textual and linguistic analyses of different languages are as accurate as his English studies.

Peter promoted a particular perspective in studying Islam; for him an inclusive perspective should be practiced throughout the world. To complete his studies, Peter used various forms of language and materials from different cultures, communities and periods. Through reading his long list of publications, one would realize that for Peter the decolonization of Islamic Studies is plausible only if one re-reads the history of religion everywhere and along with each other. Peter has demonstrated that Islam in Malaysia, Islam in Indonesia or in Southern Thailand is as significant as Islam in Arabia, Iran, Turkey, Turkistan, Bengal, Nigeria, South Africa and South America. Readers of his works are offered a transparent and realistic picture of different religious communities over the course of history.

Walking in university and college corridors in Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and Indonesia one may hear the name of Professor Peter G. Riddell and one of his magnificent books *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses* from 2001. This book came out during a chaotic period. An army of scholars, scientists and journalists had invested a lot of time and energy to redefine "Islam" as an ideology, doctrine, politics, science, etc. But they were too busy with the "Islam of the Middle East", overlooking how Middle Easterners and Malay-Indonesians used to live, work and study with each other for many centuries, shaping each other's culture and Islam. Peter, here, emerged as a pioneer emphasizing an integrated Islamic system of life, being influenced by both Muslim and non-Muslim communities. The significance of his book was to the extent that it has been cited widely in materials in Arabic, Malay, Persian, Urdu, Turkish and is still used as a textbook in the European context. It is one of the most reliable works about the history of Islam in Southeast Asia.

Peter's works also show his competence in Biblical, post-Biblical, Qurʾānic and post-Qurʾānic literature. While speaking to him, it came to our attention

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2 Such concerns are also evident in recent projects by the Iranian philosopher, Javād Ṭabāṭabāʾi and his critique of "the University".

that he knows the Qurʾān and its disciplines (viz., *ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*) better than some Muslims—reciting verses by heart with accurate pronunciation of Arabic words, and analyzing their structure and meaning—which gives you an impression that he is an Arabist, too. This is also evident in one of his recent books, *Malay Court Religion, Culture and Language: Interpreting the Qurʾān in 17th century Aceh* (Brill 2017). In this book, Peter provides one of the first ever deep analyses of Qurʾānic recitation systems, which is rarely done in scholarly and Islamic discourse. This book also proved that Malays had begun translating and interpreting the Qurʾān before ʿAbd al-Raʾūf, at the turn of the 17th century. In so doing, he focused on a rare manuscript (Camb. Ms. or. Ii.6.45) preserved in the Cambridge University Library which belonged to the Dutch Professor and Arabist, Thomas Erpenius (d. 1624). The manuscript is a Malay commentary on Chapter 18 of the Qurʾān, *Sūrat al-Kahf*, originally related to a Biblical story dedicated to the People of the Cave. His chapter, *Reading the Qurʾān Chronologically: An Aid to Discourse Coherence and Thematic Development* on the history and chronology of the Qurʾān, dedicated to his colleague and co-editor, the late Andrew Rippin (d. 2016), is a purely historical analysis of Qurʾānic structure and formation. It deals with Peter's critical reading of the German philologist Theodor Nöldeke (d. 1930) and various Muslim scholars about the chronology of Qurʾānic chapters.

Through the academic journey and career of Peter, Islam like other religions and belief systems is manifested as a phenomenon that has evolved throughout history, over centuries, and changes its form and format contextually and absorbs alien culture while it keeps moving and growing regardless of its geographical region. For Peter, Islam and Islamic studies are transregional and geographically interconnected from West to East and vice versa.

Peter spent a substantial amount of time living outside Australia with over 17 years living in Asia, Middle East and Europe. He was also the initiator and founder of important projects with a global reputation. For example, he was founding director of the Centre for Islamic Studies and Muslim-Christian Relations, London School of Theology (1996–2007), and founding director of the Centre for the Study of Islam and Other Faiths, Melbourne School of Theology (2008–2014). He also established the Indonesian language program in the first year of operation of Phillip College, Australia in 1976, the Iran/Australia postgraduate student exchange program in 1990, and designed the West Bank/Australian Women and Children Rehabilitation and Development Project, 1994–1995, among many others.

His impact as a postgraduate supervisor should be highlighted: significant work with many students who themselves have become prominent in the field (significant academics in their own right in Australia, UK, USA, Indonesia). With

more than twenty-five PhD students and twenty-five major research masters, Peter has enriched the academic context with well-grounded scholars, thinkers and critics.

Beyond all these professional activities, Peter is a lovely, friendly, kind, supportive, responsive, prompt and gentle mentor, colleague, co-author and co-editor, animal lover and musician … he plays guitar as beautifully as he writes articles and books. With his excellent sense of humor, you would always enjoy speaking to him and exchanging laughs. For many of us, he is one of the best friends, best advisors and colleagues with whom we can always share our personal and academic stories—he is always available nicely, patiently and supportively.

We, as editors of this Festschrift, would like to specially thank our senior and junior colleagues and friends who accepted the invitation to come on board and write chapters in honor of Professor Peter G. Riddell, and celebrate his important contribution to the field. We know how busy all have been during the pandemic, dealing with various sorts of uncertainties, life entanglements, homesickness, family issues, health challenges, etc. This volume would not have been possible without their kind and prompt support and attention, for which we are truly grateful.

We hope that Peter, his supportive wife Anna, and their children, Rachel and James, relatives and friends enjoy reading this work written in homage to his great achievements and career.

1 Book Organization

This volume contains three parts with twelve chapters by junior and senior scholars who are well familiar with the significance of Peter's contribution to the field. **Part 1** deals with "manuscripts and inscriptions", as the main elements shaping Peter's studies and on which Peter's research has had a lasting impact. This part begins with a chapter by Annabel T. Gallop about all known Qurʾān manuscripts from Southeast Asia held in British collections, which is compatible with Peter's contribution to Malay-Indonesian Islamic studies. Chapter Two by A.C.S. Peacock addresses Arabic Texts in Buton (Southeast Sulawesi) in the light of the La Ode Zaenu Manuscript Collection, through which unknown works with valuable features are brought to light. The Third chapter is the result of a team work project based on the Maritime Asia Heritage Survey agenda led by R. Michael Feener. Majid Daneshgar, Gregorius Dwi Kuswanta, Masykur Syafruddin and Feener, himself, have (re-)examined a rare Persian inscription in Bireuen, Aceh from the 15th century, whose existence invites scholars

to revise the literature about Sufism in the Malay-Indonesian World. **Part 2** covers "Qurʾānic commentaries, translations and theological concepts", a theme frequently examined by Peter over the last decades. It begins with chapter Four by Johanna Pink who examines the popularity of a pre-modern commentary, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* in Indonesia and the way it is offered to the market by publishers and translators. She also looks at various versions of *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* produced in Indonesia and how they may have contributed to the Indonesian religious context. Chapter Five deals with reading and studying the Qurʾān in Aceh, where the oldest known Qurʾān commentaries were also produced. In this chapter, Edwin P. Wieringa goes through a versified translation of the Qurʾān in the regional Acehnese language by the religious scholar and poet Teungku Haji Mahjiddin Jusuf (1918–1994). Chapter Six authored by Majid Daneshgar is about a rare and old manuscript of *tajwīd* and *tafsīr* kept in the Marburg University Library, Germany. Through this chapter, the formation of Islamic sciences in the Malay-Indonesian world is discussed. Han Hsien Liew writes Chapter Seven, which is about the concept of anthropomorphism in *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* by ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Singkilī's (d. 1693) and his treatment of Qurʾānic verses related to the bodily attributes of God. This part ends with chapter Eight by Farouk Yahya's transregional analysis of the magical uses of the Seven Sleepers in Southeast Asia. This chapter aims to shed light on the role played by sacred figures and texts in the occult practices of the region. Our **Part 3** is about the "critical reading of culture and identity", important questions that Peter often raised in his lectures and works. It begins with chapter Nine by Mulaika Hijjas who critically examines "recent framings of Jawi as inherently Islamic". Chapter Ten is authored by Khairudin Aljunied who reviews the relationship between reason and rationality in Southeast Asia in the light of a modern discourse put forward by Harun Nasution (1919–1998). Chapter Eleven by Michael Laffan deals with Raden Mas Kareta and the intersections of voc Chamber of Enkhuizen and Muslim networks crisscrossing the Indian Ocean. Chapter Twelve by Julian Millie on "Narrative Paratheater" examines Islamic ritual in which participants give representation to elements from narratives in embodied performances. The author's analysis reveals the difficult position of paratheatrical embodiments, rendered inaccessible by the division of the spheres of contemporary public life.

On Citation Style:
**Authors were free to choose their own citation format throughout their chapters.

PART 1

Manuscripts and Inscriptions

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Peter G. Riddell (Canberra, August 1990, Family Collection)

Qurʾān Manuscripts from Southeast Asia in British Collections

Annabel Teh Gallop

1 Peter Riddell and the Qurʾān in the Malay World

One of the main themes of Peter Riddell's research and publications over many decades is the transmission of Islamic learning in Southeast Asia, seen through the prism of the study of the the Qurʾān and its interpretation in the Malay world. Particular nodes of interest have been Aceh and the significant seventeenth century, which seemed to mark a new stage in the development of Qurʾānic exegetical activity in the Malay Archipelago. Throughout, Peter has anchored his work in the study of manuscripts, both for the texts they contain and as material objects which root their contents in place and time, thus necessitating a careful consideration of both philological and codicological aspects. It was Peter who published an account of the 'oldest known surviving Qurʾān from the Malay world', which had been presented by the 'Bishop' of Johor to the Dutch Admiral Cornelis Matlieff de Jonge on 20 July 1606 and is now held in the Rotterdam Municipal Library (Riddell 2002). Another significant manuscript which has played a central role in Peter's research is a small book from the Erpenius collection held in Cambridge University Library, containing a commentary on the *Sūrat al-Kahf* copied in Aceh around 1600, representing the 'sole surviving evidence of extended Qurʾānic exegetical activity in Malay dating from the period of dominance of Ḥamza Fanṣūrī and Shams al-Dīn al-Samaṭrāʾī, prior to the reformist campaigns of al-Rānīrī' (Riddell 2017: 48). Peter's doctoral work was on the landmark composition later in the 17th century of 'the second oldest example of extended commentary in Malay', namely the first full Malay commentary on the Qurʾān, the *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* by ʿAbd al-Raʾūf of Singkil, completed in Aceh around 1675. Peter's thesis on the *Tarjumān* was based on a careful consideration of all then-known and accessible manuscripts, selecting the oldest as the basis for his study of *Juzʾ* 16 (Riddell 1984; 2001: 131; 2017: 48).

This article, which arose out of a survey of all known Qurʾān manuscripts from Southeast Asia held in British collections, focuses on four relatively old manuscripts which touch on some of Peter's core interests: writing traditions of Aceh, early manuscripts of the Qurʾān, and Qurʾānic exegesis in the Malay

world. The discussion also takes into account and builds on publications by the two editors of this volume, both of whom acknowledge a huge debt to Peter's work, and are contributing to the transference of an intellectual tradition.

2 Qurʾān Manuscripts from Southeast Asia in British Public Collections

The seminal catalogue of *Indonesian manuscripts in Great Britain*, first published by M.C. Ricklefs and P. Voorhoeve in 1977 and recently updated,[1] has served as the starting point for countless studies on all aspects of writing cultures of the Malay world. The most glaring lacunae, however, is the absence of manuscripts written solely in Arabic, arguably the bedrock of scholarly traditions throughout island Southeast Asia since the coming of Islam.[2] Over the past two decades a methodical search has thus been conducted for Qurʾān manuscripts from Southeast Asia in British public collections, which has involved trawling through published catalogues of Arabic manuscripts, and visting libraries and museums. In view of the great age and significance of the Erpenius collection at Cambridge, which also testifies to a scholarly interest in and appreciation of Arabic-script books in British pedagogical institutions even four centuries ago, it is surprising to find that it was not until the early 19th century that the first complete Qurʾān manuscript from Southeast Asia entered a British institution. Indeed, by the final decade of the 20th century there were no more than four full Qurʾān manuscripts and three volumes containing parts of the text in the UK.

The scope of the search was limited to complete copies of the Qurʾān, or parts of the Qurʾān occupying a single volume, but not extracts from the Qurʾān within larger compendia. Thus not included is the earliest known complete copy of a chapter of the Qurʾān from the Malay world, a copy of *Sūrat al-Mujādila* (Q.58) in another volume from Aceh compiled by Peter Floris in 1604 also in the Erpenius collection at Cambridge (Riddell 2017: 12). Nor are manuscripts in private collections included, such as the fine 19th-century Aceh Qurʾān in the Khalili collection in London (Stanley 1999). In this context, mention should be made of a beautiful illuminated Patani Qurʾān sold at auction at Bonhams in London in 2014, now in the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (2014.4.1). The manuscript has a 19th or early 20th century European

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1 Ricklefs & Voohoeve 1977; Ricklefs, Voorhoeve & Gallop 2014.

2 Cf. Gallop 2020.

TABLE 1.1   Qur'ān manuscripts from Southeast Asia in British collections, by date of institutional acquisition

	Institution	Shelfmark	Contents	Origin	Provenance
1.	Royal Asiatic Society	Arabic 4	Qur'ān	Java	Pole, 1830
2.	SOAS	MS 12096	Qur'ān, Juz' 19–20	Sumatra	Marsden, 1835
3.	SOAS	MS 12176	Qur'ān	Sumatra	Marsden, 1835
4.	British Library	IO Islamic 3048	Qur'ān, Juz' 23–24	Java	No information
5.	British Library	Add.12312	Qur'ān	Java	Crawford, 1842
6.	British Library	Add.12343	Qur'ān	Java	Crawford, 1842
7.	John Rylands Library, University of Manchester	Arabic MS 54 (821)	Qur'ān, Juz' 4	Aceh	Brill, 1897
8.	Bristol University Library	DM 32	Qur'ān	Mindanao	Welchman, 1936
9.	British Library	Or. 15227	Qur'ān	Patani	Christie's, 1996
10.	British Library	Or. 15406	Qur'ān	Aceh	Smitskamp, 1998
11.	British Library	Or. 15877	Qur'ān	Madura	Christie's, 2001
12.	British Library	Or. 16034	Qur'ān	Aceh	Probsthain, 2004
13.	British Library	Or. 16877	Qur'ān	Java	Jones, 2012
14.	British Library	Or. 16915	Qur'ān	Aceh	Mohtashemi, 2014

full black leather binding, and is inscribed on the spine *The Koran*, suggesting a long sojourn in a British personal collection. This is thus a very rare example of a Qur'ān manuscript collected from the Malay peninsula during the British colonial presence in the region. Other leads proved to be disappointing. For example, a Qur'ān held in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge (R.14.59), had been described by Palmer (1870: 174) as 'The Qur'ān. A carelessly written copy in a Malay hand, with tawdry coloured borders' and half a century later by Browne (1922: 153) as 'carelessly written in what appears to me a Malay hand'. This manuscript was inspected on 2 May 2003, and on palaeographic and art–historical grounds a Southeast Asian origin could be discounted. While the palette was not dissimilar, the predominantly geometrical decorated panels—rectangular, containing ovals and circles—were not familiar, and the manuscript is most likely to originate from the Indian Ocean littoral.

To date, 14 Qur'ān manuscripts from Southeast Asia have been identified in British institutions, with 11 volumes of the full Qur'ān, and three comprising

parts (see Table 1.1 and Appendix). The majority—eight Qurʾāns and one part—are in the British Library, and have all been fully digitised and also relatively frequently published in books, exhibition catalogues and blog posts. The Qurʾān from Mindanao, donated to Bristol University Library by Canon Welchman in 1936 and one of only two Qurʾān manuscripts from the Philippines held in European collections, was recently discussed in an study of Mindanao Qurʾāns (Gallop 2022). The focus of this article will therefore be on four relatively early Qurʾān manuscripts acquired by British institutions in the 19th century, held in SOAS and the Royal Asiatic Society in London, and the John Rylands Library in Manchester. Although at first glance a somewhat motley group, when subjected to close scrutiny each is able to yield insights into aspects of the transmission of the Qurʾān in Southeast Asia.

3   A Qurʾān Manuscript from the Royal Library of Aceh

The John Rylands Library at the University of Manchester holds a slim volume, Arabic MS 54 (821), containing *Juzʾ* 4 of the Qurʾān (Q.3:86–4:27). Described as an 'Achinese manuscript', this is the first item listed in an unpublished handwritten catalogue compiled before 1898 of the Indonesian manuscripts in the library formed by Lord Lindsay, 25th Earl of Crawford and Balcarres (1812–1880) and continued by his son Ludovic, the 26th Earl (1847–1913).[3] In the catalogue, the manuscript is said to be 'From Prof. de Hollander's collection. Taken at the capture of the *Kĕraton* of Acheh, the former seat of the Sultans of this realm in 1874'. This is almost certainly the 'Atchinese' manuscript acquired for the Bibliotheca Lindesiana from C.M. Pleyte at Brill in 1897, at a time when Ludovic Lindsay had become interested in acquiring Southeast Asian manuscripts.[4]

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3   See Ricklefs & Voorhoeve (1977: xxiii) for a reference to this catalogue; a photocopy is held in the British Library (Catalogue n.d.). The description of this manuscript in the catalogue was most likely contributed by C.M. Pleyte himself.

4   See Hodgson 2020: 1021. According to Elizabeth Gow, Manuscript Curator and Archivist at the John Rylands Library, John Hodgson found two references to this manuscript in the Lindsay Library Letters at the National Library of Scotland: 'The first is in a letter dated 19 August 1897 from J.P. Edmond who bought from C.M. Pleyte at Brill three manuscripts for £5.15/-: "One was a Maghrabi, the second Atchinese, the third a Bugi which had an Arabic translation with it." (Library Letters July–August 1897, f. 222). On 26 February 1898, Pleyte forwarded to Edmond a case containing Buginese, Maghrabitic and Achinese MSS bought in September 1897, and also Batak and Burmese MSS "which were to be sent on approval", with his catalogue. The bill was £50.7.5. for the books, £1.7.11. for the case (Library Letters, Jan-Feb 1898, f. 325) … The Buginese/Arabic manuscript is almost certainly Buginese MS 4. The Maghribi likely to be Arabic MS 19 (792). The "Atchinese" is almost certainly this manuscript. I've realised

J.J. de Hollander (1817–1886), was a scholar of Malay and professor at the Royal Military Academy in Breda, and it can be surmised that this manuscript would have come into his possession through military contacts following the Dutch invasion of Aceh in 1874, when the palace compound (*dalam*) was attacked and razed, and the new Dutch seat of administration built on its site.

As I came to prepare this article, all known Qur'ān manuscripts from Southeast Asia in British collections listed in the Appendix had been personally inspected except for that in Manchester. When the coronavirus pandemic meant it would not be easy to arrange a personal visit, the John Rylands Library very kindly and ingeniously organised an online viewing session via Zoom, whereby a member of the library staff held the manuscript book and opened it, page by page, so I could study it, and also capture screenshots.[5]

The volume was full of surprises, for many codicological feature suggested that this manuscript was not created in a Southeast Asian idiom (Figure 1.1). While the use of Italian paper with the *tre lune* (three crescents) watermark is very common in 19th-century Islamic manuscripts from Sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian Ocean littoral,[6] and also in Aceh, the leather binding (though possibly a later addition) was unusual,[7] as was the large and rather ungainly hand of the text, while the verse markers consisted of small hand-drawn red circles, some in solid colour, rather than the compass-drawn circles usually found in Qur'āns from the Malay world. Perhaps most decisive was the use of a particular calligraphic device: the shadowing in red ink of the long deep bowls of letters such as *nūn* and *tā'*, or the wide tails of *yā'* and *wāw*. This shadowing effect is not encountered in the Malay world, but is very common in manuscripts from Yemen and Oman (and related areas southwards along the Swahili coast), where it is especially used between the horizontal elements of the letter *kaf*. Also notable in this volume was the graphic layout of the title on the first page,

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that the shelfmark [i.e. Arabic 54] was allocated when [it] was transferred into the Arabic MS sequence (presumably by Mingana), which explains why it is higher than some later JRL acquisitions. The manuscript had been accessioned under the Crawford shelfmark "Atchinese MS 1". I attach an image of the page from the accession list—as this is the only "Achinese" manuscript, it seems probable that it is also the one purchased from Pleyte.' (pers. comm., 27.5.2021).

5 I would like to express my gratitude to Elisabeth Gow and Caroline Hall for organising this viewing session on 2 June 2021.

6 Biddle 2017.

7 With thanks to Jake Benson for inspecting the paper and binding, which may be Indian, and is possibly an example of *remboitage*—the addition of a binding from a different source to enhance a book—commissioned by Lord Lindsay; a note confirming the resewing and rebinding of the manuscript is tipped in inside the volume (pers. comm., J. Benson, 7 Jun. 2021).

al-Juzʾ al-rābiʿ min Kitāb Allāh al-ʿazīz, 'The Fourth Part of the Book of God, the
Most Mighty One', set within a ruled panel at the top of the page, with a match-
ing panel below containing benedictions on the prophet, *wa-ṣallā Allāh ʿalā
sayyidnā Muḥammad wa-ālih wa-ṣaḥḥibih wa-sallam*, 'And God be propitious
to our lord Muhammad and his family and his companions and bless [them]'
(Figure 1.2). The final page has, after the end of the Qurʾānic text, a similar use
of inset double red ruled frames to enclose the prayer: *Ṣadaq Allāh al-ʿaẓīm wa-
ballagh rasūl al-karīm wa-al-ḥamd lillāh rabb al-ʿālamīn*, 'True is God, the Most
Supreme One, and He made come the noble messenger, and praise be to God,
Lord of the Worlds' (Figure 1.3).

     The prayer commencing *Ṣadaq Allāh* is very commonly found at the end
of Qurʾān manuscripts in many parts of the world. Examples from the Indian
Ocean world include copies from Zanzibar,[8] Yemen,[9] Oman,[10] Malabar[11] and

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8   Qurʾan, Swahili coast, 19th century, held in Wakf wa Wangazija (WAWAZA), Zanzibar, digi-
     tised copy: EAP1114/1/123, p. 246.
9   Leiden University Library, Cod. Or. 25.183, f. 276ʳ (digitised).
10   See website 'Islam in Oman: Quranic manuscripts' http://www.islam-in-oman.com/en/
     mediathek/manuscripts.html.
11   Qurʾan, from Mopla, Malabar, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Is 1603, ff. 430ᵇ–431ᵃ.
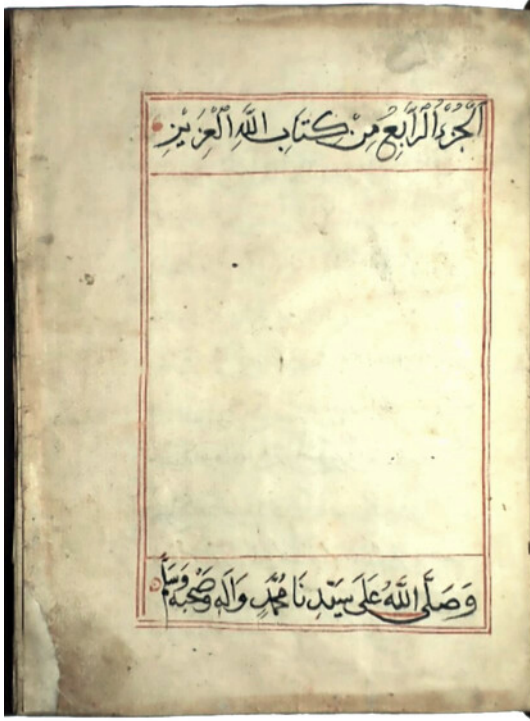
FIGURE 1.2   Title page of the manuscript, identifying
                Juz' 4 in the panel at the top, with a bene-
                diction for the prophet below. John Rylands
                Library, Arabic MS 54 (821)

the Maldives,[12] and even a Qur'ān copied by a German scholar in the 17th
century.[13] Nonetheless, it should be stressed that the vast majority of predom-
inantly 19th-century Southeast Asian Qur'ān manuscripts contain no further
formally-inscribed texts aside from the Qur'ān itself, not even prayers or bene-
dictions. Colophons and ownership notes are very rare and fragmentary, and
when found are often simply casually annotated or scribbled on outside cov-
ers. The only notable exception in the Malay world to these bare-boned works
are older Qur'ān copies from Banten or of the Sulawesi diaspora school, dat-
ing from the 18th century or earlier, which are often richly annotated, both
with paratexts in the margins and with copious additional texts at beginning

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12   Qur'an, held in the Maldives, digitised by Maldives Heritage Survey: MLE-NMM-MS5-NMM
      Qur'an 1.
13   Qur'an, copied by Jacob Vogeley (d. 1712) in 1663, Marburg, Ms or 01 (Toma 1979: 35–43;
      with thanks to M. Daneshgar for a digitised copy of this MS).
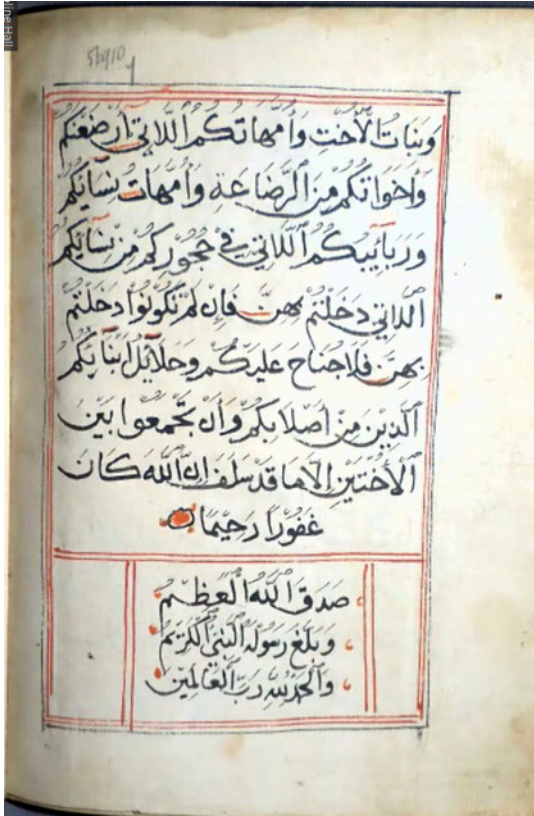
FIGURE 1.3 Final page of the manuscript, ending with the *Ṣadaq Allāh* prayer inset in red ruled frames. John Rylands Library, Arabic MS 54 (821)

and end such as prayers, colophons, and notes on variant readings. Thus, the *Ṣadaq Allāh* prayer is occasionally found in Sulawesi diaspora Qurʾāns. Most pertinently, it occurs in two examples presented in exactly the same graphic form as found in the John Rylands manuscript: inset in a broad central column bounded by thin frames of two red lines, within outer text frames of red-red-blue lines. The first example is in the earliest known dated Sulawesi diaspora geometric style Qurʾān, dated 1677, now held in the National Library of Malaysia (MSS 4333) (Figure 1.4), while the other is in a Qurʾān in the Sang Nila Utama Museum in Pekanbaru, Riau (07.001.2007)[14] (Figure 1.5), with a

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14 In the Pekanbaru manuscript, the prayer begins *Ṣadaq Allāh al-ʿalī al-ʿaẓīm*. In Iran, this

FIGURE 1.4   Sulawesi style Qur'ān, dated 1677, end pages with the *Ṣadaq Allāh* prayer at top right in the same inset frames as in the John Rylands manuscript. National Library of Malaysia, MSS 4333

colophon dated 1740, and identifying the Shāfiʿī scribe, Ibrāhīm bin Aḥmad bin al-Amīn al-Khalīl, as originating from, and being born in, Zabid (*al-Zabīdī bal-adan wa-mawlidan*). Zabid is situated on the Red Sea coast in Yemen, and has a long history of scholarly links with the Malay world.[15] It can be noted that in this Pekanbaru Qur'ān, with a Yemeni-born scribe, we also see the calligraphic practice of 'shadowing' in red ink noted above. One other closely related Qur'ān

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form of the prayer was apparently 'systematically added to Qurʾānic manuscripts after the emergence of the Safavid empire (early 16th century), when the Persian Shīʿī scholar, al-Majlisī (d. 1111/1699), added some *ḥadīth* about the validity of this "ending phrase" in his voluminous *Biḥār al-anwār* (ed. al-Sayyid Ibrāhīm al-Miānjī and Muḥammad al-Bāqir al-Bihbūdī, 3rd edn. (Beirut: Dār al-Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth, 1403/1983), vol. 57: 243)'; the presence of Zaydi Shīʿīs in Yemen in the vicinity of Zabid might account for this form of the prayer in this MS (pers. comm., M. Daneshgar, 13 Oct. 2021).

15   MAPESA 2016; see also a letter from *Jawi* pilgrims to the Ottoman governor of the Hijaz, Hasib Paşa, 1850, of which two of the signatories have the name *Zabidi* (Gallop & Porter 2012: 48, Kadi & Peacock 2020: 665).

FIGURE 1.5   Final page of the Sulawesi style Qurʾān dated 1740, copied by Ibrahīm from Zabīd, with
the *Ṣadaq Allāh* prayer inset in ruled frames. Sang Nila Utama Museum, Pekanbaru, Riau,
07.001.2007

manuscript is a single volume containing *Juzʾ* 25, probably an 18th century
royal manuscript from Banten (LUB Or. 5678), where the final page with the
Ṣadaq Allāh prayer has a not dissimilar layout with an inset central ruled panel
(Figure 1.6).[16]

These considerations on the presence of this prayer, and its specific graphic
treatment, appear to suggest that linkages in the Qurʾān manuscript copying
tradition between the Malay world and Yemen, mediated across Indian Ocean,
were particularly resonant in the 17th and early 18th centuries. These links are
generally less evident though in the 19th century, when much larger numbers of
Qurʾān manuscripts were produced in Southeast Asia, and by which time dis-
tinctive local styles of presentation of the Qurʾān in book form had developed
in regions such as the East Coast of the Malay peninsula, Java and also in Aceh
itself.

Almost nothing is known to remain of the royal library of Aceh, greatest of
all Malay sultanates in the 17th century, and at the time the literary, theological

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16   Illustrated in Gallop & Akbar 2006: 155.

FIGURE 1.6   Final pages in a manuscript of *Juz'* 25, probably a royal manuscript from Banten, 18th century, with the *Ṣadaq Allāh* prayer on the left-hand page. Leiden University Library, Cod. Or. 5678

and intellectual powerhouse of the Malay world. Although the grandeur of the sultanate had certainly dissipated slowly in the intervening years, in 1815 the *Adat Aceh* could still be compiled from 17th-century sources held in the royal archives. When the Dutch invaded in 1874, the young Sultan Mahmud and his court were able to withdraw to Keumala—perhaps carrying some of the most important books—but others were necessarily left to be seized or destroyed in the fighting. Five manuscripts from the palace of Aceh are listed in the KITLV collection,[17] and six further items have now been identified in Dutch museum collections.[18] To this meagre total can now be added the manuscript presented here: a part of the Qur'ān, created in a Yemeni tradition, and testifying to long links between Aceh and the Indian Ocean world, which continued into the 19th century.

17   KITLV Or. 108-Or. 112, now in Leiden University Library (Iskandar 1999: 776–778).
18   In the Museum Volkenkunde, Tropenmuseum and Wereldmuseum (pers. comm., M. Shatanawi, 18 Nov. 2021).

4   Two Qurʾān Manuscripts from the Marsden Collection at SOAS

William Marsden (1754–1836) served in the East India Company factory in
Bengkulu on the west coast of Sumatra from 1771 to 1778, initially as Writer and
later as Sub-Secretary and then Secretary to the administration at Fort Marl-
borough.[19] After arriving back in London in 1779 he never travelled again to
Southeast Asia, but continued to work on Malay studies. He is most famous for
his *History of Sumatra* which first appeared in 1783 with a second edition in
1784 and a revised third edition in 1811, and his *Dictionary and Grammar of the
Malayan language* of 1812, alongside other papers.[20] In 1827 he published *Biblio-
theca Marsdeniana*, a catalogue of his books and manuscripts, which were later
bequeathed to King's College, London. Soon afer the formation of the School
of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at London University in 1916, the Orien-
tal manuscripts in the Marsden collection were, with others, transferred to the
new institution.

Reflecting Marsden's wide-ranging linguistic and philological interests, the
'Catalogue of Manuscripts' in *Bibliotheca Marsdeniana* lists 165 items under 17
broad linguistic headings, ranging from Armenian and Bugis to Ethopic and
Scandinavian, the largest single category being the 30 'Malayan' manuscripts.
The heading 'Arabic. Syriac' lists 15 items, and includes five manuscripts of the
Qurʾān. Marsden's descriptions for all the manuscripts in the catalogue are
extremely brief, giving merely an outline of the contents and the size of the
volume in a few lines, and with no information at all on provenance. The diffi-
culty, therefore, is ascertaining which, if any, of these Qurʾān manuscripts might
originate from Southeast Asia, since it is well known that Marsden continued
actively to build up his collection of manuscripts after his return to England; in
his *Memoir* he describes, for example, how he acquired a rare Arabic grammar
after scouring a bookseller's catalogue.[21] Two of the Qurʾāns which can immedi-
ately be ruled out of having any Malay connection are one in a European hand
(MS 43251) and a copy in a Kufic-style script (MS 12217).

Another of the items is a small booklet, MS 12096, containing *Juzʾ* 19 and
20 of the Qurʾān (Q. 25:21–29:45) (Figure 1.7). It is written in a neat confident
hand with 11 lines per page in black ink, with *surah* headings in red, without
text frames or verse markers, but with *Juzʾ* and divisions thereof marked in the
margin in red ink. On the front cover is pasted a paper label inscribed 'Extracts

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19   For an outline of Marsden's life and career, see the introduction by John Bastin in Marsden
      (1986: vi, fn. 5); for more detail see Carroll 2019: 71ff.
20   See, for example, the list of Marsden's publications in the bibliography in Carroll 2019: 88.
21   Marsden 1838: 72, cited by Mulaika *forthcoming*.

FIGURE 1.7   Qur'ān part, containing *Juz'* 19–20. SOAS MS 12096, ff. 1ᵛ–2ʳ

from the Koran employed in administrating oaths' (Figure 1.8). This manuscript
is described in his catalogue by Marsden (1827: 301) as 'Extracts from the *Korān*,
particularly the Chapter of the Spider. 8vo. (This book having been long used
in the administration of Oaths, the cover is soiled by the betel-stained lips of
true Believers.)'

In his *History of Sumatra*, Marsden describes in some detail the administra-
tion of justice and the taking of oaths: 'Oaths are usually made on the koraan,
or at the grave of an ancestor, as the Mahometan religion prevails more or
less' (Marsden 1783: 189).[22] Betel-chewing is a common habit throughout the

22   The revised 1811 edition paints a more contrasting picture between coastal areas where
     the Qur'an was used for the swearing of oaths, while in interior regions sacred heirloom
     objects (*pusaka*) played the same role. 'The people near the sea-coast, in general, by long
     intercourse with the Malays, have an idea of the *Korān*, and usually employ this in swear-
     ing' (Marsden 1986: 242).

FIGURE 1.8   Label inscribed 'Extracts from the Koran employed in
administering oaths', on the front cover stained with
betel-juice. SOAS MS 12096, front cover

Malay world, and Marsden's description of the use of this Qur'ān in his cata-
logue appears to be based on personal observation from his Secretarial duties
at Fort Marlborough. It is even likely that this manuscript was one actually
used in the court in Bengkulu, and then brought back to London by Marsden
in 1779.
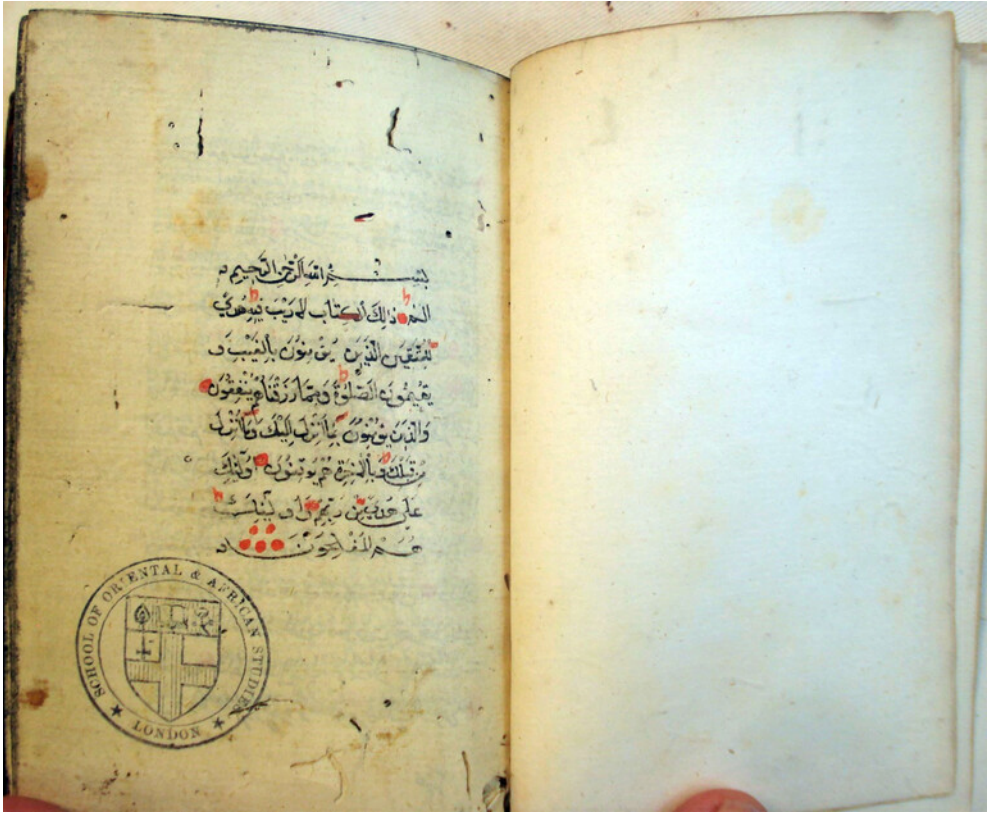
FIGURE 1.9   Qur'ān, *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, lacking first page with *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*. SOAS MS 12176, f. 1ʳ

More intriguing is another small volume, MS 12176, described by Marsden simply as 'The Koran (neatly written, but worm-eaten). 8vo size' (Marsden 1827: 301). This is an almost complete copy of the Qur'ān, lacking just the first page containing the *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* (Figure 1.9). The text is written in black ink in a small fluent hand with a pronounced slant to the left, with 15 lines per page, on highly burnished European paper which is severely worm-eaten. There are no text frames, and in the first part verses are separated with small hand-drawn solid red marks (Figure 1.10). The great significance of this manuscript is due to the presence of a colophon, giving the date of completion most probably as mid-Jumadilakhir 993, equivalent to mid-June 1585 (Figure 1.11). If a Southeast Asian origin could be confirmed, this would make MS 12176 the oldest known dated Qur'ān from Southeast Asia.

Unlike the case of the betel-stained Qur'ān MS 12096, where comments on and about this particular manuscript could be correlated with Marsden's remarks in the *History of Sumatra* to support a Bengkulu provenance, MS 12176

FIGURE 1.10   Qur'ān, with red roundels for verse markers, and red ink shadowing between the horizon-
tal lines of the letter *kāf*. SOAS MS 12176, ff. 75ᵛ–76ʳ

offers fewer clues. However, Mulaika Hijjas has recently discussed the evo-
lution in Marsden's thoughts on Malay literature between the first and third
editions of his *History of Sumatra*, which she has attributed primarily to his
access to a much greater number of Malay manuscripts in the intervening
years, supplied by a network of widely-travelled colleagues.[23] Thus while in
1783 Marsden's comments on Malay literature were limited to "[t]heir books
are for the most part, either transcripts from the Alcoran (*koraan*) or legendary
tales (*kabar*)" (Marsden 1783: 163) and "[t]hey are expert at writing, in the Ara-
bic character, but their literature amounts to nothing more, than transcripts
of the *koraan*, and *cabar* or historic tales" (Marsden 1783: 276), in the 1811 edi-
tion these remarks were greatly expanded, both in length and range of content,
and also tone of appreciation. What this exercise has highlighted, of relevance

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23   Mulaika, *forthcoming*.

FIGURE 1.11   Final pages of the Qur'ān, with colophon. SOAS MS 12176, ff. 274ᵛ–275ʳ

to the present enquiry, is that the 1783 edition suggests that during Marsden's time in Sumatra, his acquaintance with manuscripts was essentially limited to copies of the Qur'ān and occasional copies of (Minangkabau) *kaba*. This strengthens the likelihood that on Marsden's departure for London in 1778—by which time he was already planning some form of scholarly output[24]—he might have brought with him one or more copies of the Qur'ān, as scarce examples of Sumatran writing culture, one of which may already have been nearly two centuries old at the time, hence its 'worm-eaten' appearance.[25]

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24   Cf. Carroll 2019: 72.

25   It should be noted that Marsden's catalogue includes another manuscript described in almost identical terms, but smaller in size: 'The Koran (neatly written, but worm-eaten). 12mo size' (Marsden 1827: 301). However, this manuscript is not currently identifiable in the SOAS collections (Gacek 1981 only lists four Qur'an manuscripts from the Marsden collection, rather than the five listed in Marsden 1827: 301).
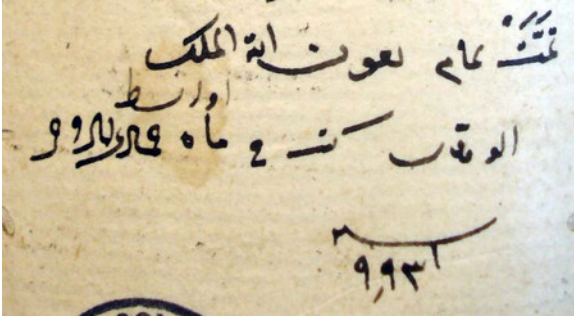
Codicologically, there are certainly a number of unusual features in MS 12176 not usually seen in the Malay world: the top, bottom and fore edges are stained black; every tenth verse is marked in the margin with the word *ʿashar* in red; and shadowing in red ink of the letter *kāf* recalls Yemeni and Omani usage. Yet while MS 12176 shares little visual affinity with the majority of much later Southeast Asian Qurʾān manuscripts, nor does it display many similarities, in either hand or graphic layout, with the next earliest known cluster of Qurʾāns from the Malay world, dating from the early 17th century.[26]

In 2011 I shared some photographs of this manuscript with Andrew Peacock, and asked for his comments on the colophon (Figure 1.12), which he read as:

> *tammat tammām bi-ʿawn Allāh al-Malik al-Wahhāb kutiba fī ⟨awāsiṭ⟩ māh-e Jumādā al-ākhir sanat 993*, 'completed; completed through the help of God, the King, the Giver of Gifts, written in the middle of the month of Jumādā al-ākhir, the year 993'.

The first word, *tammat*, is fully vocalised and dotted, but thereafter no diacritics are found. Andrew described the colophon as 'a rather illiterate odd Arabo–Persian mix, which suggests that a Middle Eastern provenance can (probably) be ruled out … The lack of the verb and the odd intrusion of Persian *māh* instead of Ar. *shahr* for month suggests someone not at home in either language', leading to the suggestion of an origin in either India or Southeast Asia. Andrew concluded that there was nothing to contradict a Southeast Asian origin, and that there were even some slight linguistic hints which might support this conclusion.[27]

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26   For a palaeographical consideration of some of these early 17th century Qurʾans, see Akbar 2019: 384.

27   "However, the confusion of *tammam* for a noun (it is an adjective, should read *tammam shud* in Persian or *tamma* in Arabic) might reflect Austronesian grammar where

The precise date itself is surprisingly difficult to decipher. At first glance the strangely-formed letters following *Jumādā* may be read either as a-l-[a]-w-l-á, *al-ulā*, or as a-l-[a]-w-l, *al-awwal*, albeit in both cases missing *alif*; mid-Jumadilawal 993 would be equivalent to mid-May 1585. Alternatively, the letters after the definite article could also be read as a-kh-r, giving *al-ākhir(a)*. Despite the evident objections to reading the *wāw*-like letter as *alif*, in fact the 'head' of the letter *khā'* is exactly the same shape as the 'head' of the *jīm* of *Jumādā*, favouring the latter reading. As for the year, the numbers are strangely interspersed with a short diagonal stroke below, and a vertical line like *alif* on the right. Nevertheless, as the numerals 993 are so unambiguously written, this is accepted as the year, and the date of the colophon can therefore most probably be read as mid-Jumadilakhir 993, equivalent to mid-June 1585.[28]

I had first inspected this manuscript in 2002, and at a workshop at SOAS in 2006 raised the question as to whether this was indeed the oldest known Qur'ān manuscript from the Malay world (Gallop 2006). In the meantime, I had discussed it with Ali Akbar, who noted this discovery in an article (Akbar 2004: 57), and the description of this manuscript as the oldest known dated Qur'ān manuscript from Nusantara has subsequently been repeated in a number of widely-read Indonesian publications (Bafadhal & Anwar 2005: vii). Nevertheless, after Andrew's reading confirmed the presence of Persian elements in the colophon, in view of the still limited evidence on the extent of Persian linguistic usage in the region, I tended towards caution, and over the past decade have refrained from including this manuscript in discussions on early Qur'ān manuscripts from the Malay world.

However, just in the past few years a number of important publications have substantially redressed our awareness of the extent of usage of Persian in the Malay world. Studies by Arash Khazeni (2018) have served as an important reminder of the prominent role of Persian as an official diplomatic language in Arakan into the 18th century, while Andrew Peacock's publication (2018) of official documents in Persian from Melaka, Aceh and Burma into the 19th century emphasized the continuing knowledge of and facility with the language in Southeast Asian chanceries. Most recently, Majid Daneshgar (2021a, 2021b) has highlighted the presence of Persian linguistic elements in Southeast

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the boundaries are less fixed … on folio 1, line three ends with a *wa-*; *wa-* technically is part of the next word, and as the copyist takes care not to break up words mid line (common practice in Ottoman, for example), it is rather bad form. I have noticed this is very common in Southeast Asian Arabic mss", pers. comm., A. Peacock, 18 Jul. 2011.

28   With many thanks to A. Peacock for further thoughts on the date (pers. comm., 13 Dec. 2021).

Asian Islamic manuscript texts to a substantially greater extent than previously realised. I thus feel the balance of probability has now tipped, and that this small volume from the William Marsden collection in SOAS, MS 12176, can indeed be regarded as probably the oldest known dated Qurʾān manuscript from the Malay world.

5   A Qurʾān Manuscript in the Royal Asiatic Society: Translation or *tafsīr*?

The Royal Asiatic Society (RAS) holds a Qurʾān manuscript (Arabic 4) with a full interlinear Malay translation, which according to an inscription in the volume was 'Presented by Admiral C.M. Pole, Bart., June 19, 1830'. Sir Charles Moris Pole (1757–1830) was a naval officer and ultimately Admiral of the Fleet who was also at various times Governor of Newfoundland, Governor of the Bank of England and a Member of Parliament. While in the navy Pole served in the East Indies Station from 1773 to 1778, but thereafter does not seem to have had any contact with or scholarly interest in Asia, and it is thus most likely that the manuscript came into his possession during this early period. It was presented to the Royal Asiatic Society just three months before Pole's death on 6 September 1830.

The manuscript is a large volume, in a contemporary European brown leather binding. On the first two pages the small text blocks were set in wide borders with outer and inner frames and corner pieces of ruled red-black-red lines; the sketchy foliate patterns in black ink which fill parts of the frame may be a later addition. However, these first two folios have suffered severe damage, and in rebinding what remains of the first folio was reversed, and so *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* now occupies f. 1ʳ rather than f. 1ᵛ as it should have done, facing the beginning of *Sūrat al-Baqarah* (Figure 1.13). Each subsequent page contains nine lines of Arabic text in a careful wide hand with the Malay text sloping beneath in a much smaller, very fine, hand (Figures 1.14–15). Text frames are of one or two ruled red ink lines; *sūrah* headings are in red ink and set in rectangular panels with red ink frames; and verses are separated with small gold roundels outlined in black. One unusual feature of this manuscript is that alongside *sūrah* headings are reading instruction in Malay in the margin, of the form *Ini kepada siang Ahad*, 'This is for Sunday noon'. Such notes in Malay can be seen in prayer books such as copies of the *Dalāʾil al-khayrat*, but have never been encountered before in a Qurʾān manuscript from the Malay world. The text ends with the *Ṣadaq Allāh* benediction set in a red frame, and is followed on the next page by a prayer (Figure 1.16). The laid paper is probably of Asian manufacture: the hatched mold marks are visible but there are no visible chainlines or watermarks.
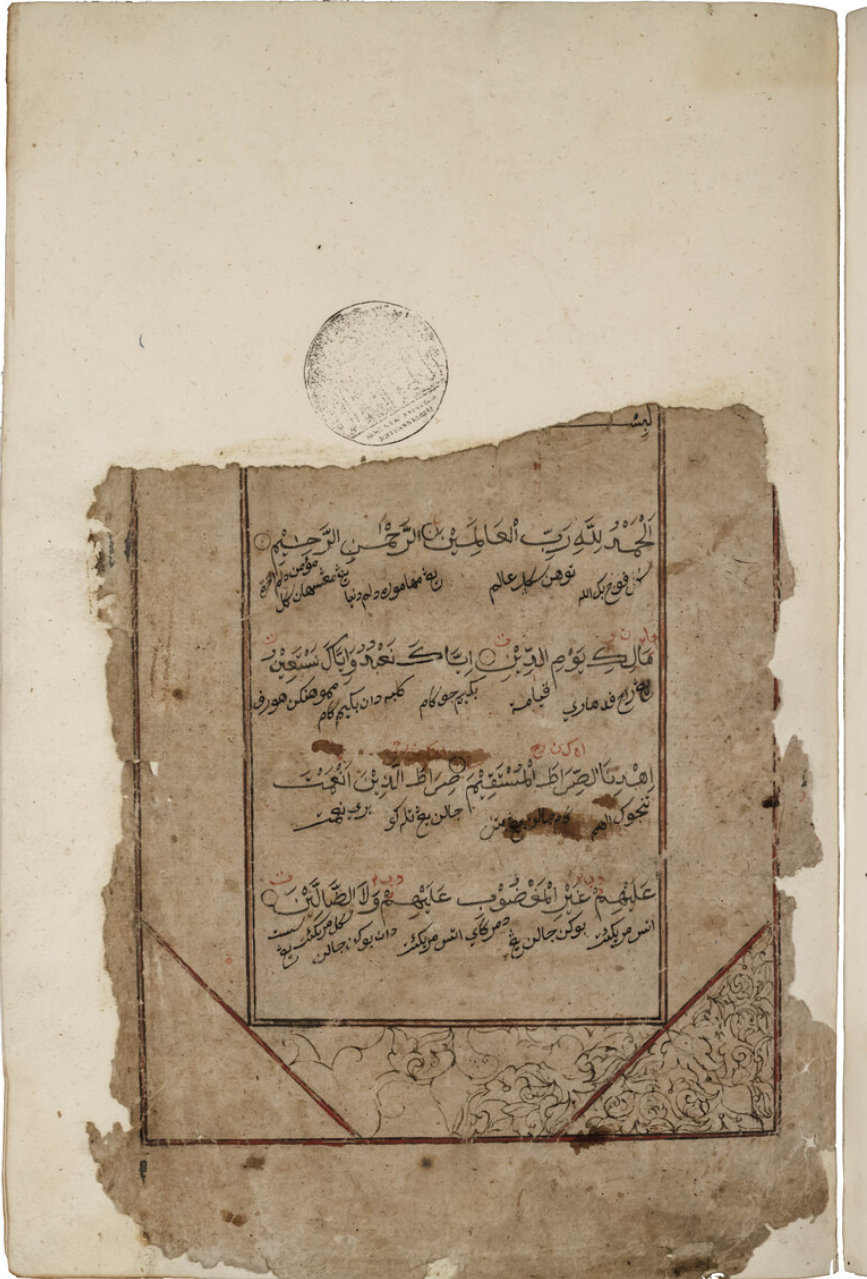
FIGURE 1.13   *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*, the damaged first page of the Qur'ān. Royal Asiatic Society, Arabic 4
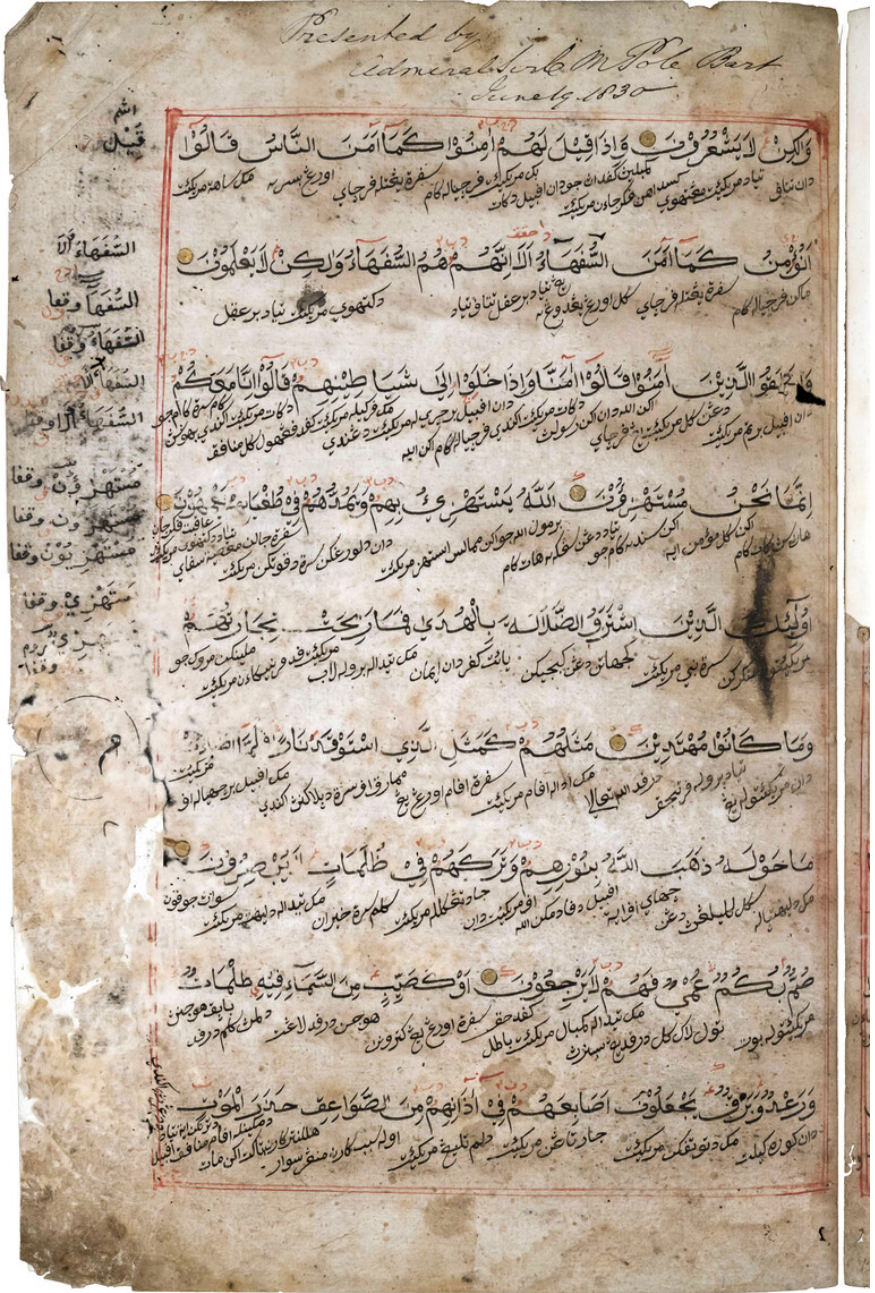
FIGURE 1.14   *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, with the inscription naming Adm. Pole as the donor on the top of the left hand page. Royal Asiatic Society, Arabic 4

FIGURE 1.15   Beginning of *Juz' 16, Sūrat al-Kahf*, v. 75. Royal Asiatic Society, Arabic 4

At first glance, the regional origin of RAS Arabic 4 is hard to establish, for the fragments of decoration, text frames and graphic layout cannot easily be correlated with the few well-known styles of Qur'ānic manuscript art from Southeast Asia. The most unusual aspect of this manuscript is the presence of the interlinear Malay translation, as such Qur'āns are very rare in the Malay world. A survey of around one thousand Qur'ān manuscripts from Southeast Asia yields just five with interlinear translations in Malay, 11 in Javanese and two in Makasar (listed in Table 1.2), as well as a few others in Cham and Thai. The relatively low number in Malay is especially striking in view of that language's role as a *lingua franca* in the archipelago. Of the four other manuscripts in Malay, two are from Banten now in the National Library of Indonesia (Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia, PNRI A.51 and PNRI W.277), one is in a private collection in Palembang, and another is held in the Malay Studies Cultural Centre (Pusat Maklumat Kebudayaan Melayu) on the island of Penyengat in Riau.

The RAS manuscript was initially identified with the help of the four-volume *World bibliography of translations of the Holy Qur'ān in manuscript form* (Sefer-

FIGURE 1.16   Final page of the Qurʾān, with *Sūrat al-Nās*, and with a panel at the bottom containing the benediction: *Ṣadaq Allāh taʿālā balagh rasūl Allāh al-ʿAẓīm*. Royal Asiatic Society, Arabic 4

cioğlu 2000). The second, third and fourth volumes of this work are devoted to, respectively, translations in Turkish, Persian and Urdu, while the first volume lists 293 manuscripts in 58 European, African and Southeast Asian languages, including 16 in Malay, seven in Javanese, two in Makasar and one in Thai. The larger number for Malay found in this volume is due to the very broad interpretation of 'translations' employed by Sefercioğlu, embracing not only complete and partial Qurʾāns with interlinear translations as well as fragments found in larger volumes, but also *tafsīr* or Qurʾānic commentaries, and even *tafsīr* with interlinear translations or further commentaries.

Sefercioğlu's approach naturally raises the question of the relationship between Qurʾān manuscripts with interlinear translations, and works of *tafsīr*. In his pioneering works, Peter Riddell traces a gradual chronological development, in both quantitative and qualitative aspects, in the field of Qurʾānic exegesis in Malay: "So by the middle of the 17th century, the Malay world was actively producing Qurʾān manuscripts, translations of certain verses, and at the very least exegesis at the level of the *Sūrah*." The second half of the

17th century saw the composition of the first full Malay commentary on the Qur'ān—the *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* by 'Abd al-Ra'ūf—but the next major Malay work of Qur'ānic exegesis identified by Riddell does not appear for another 250 years, when the *Tafsīr Nūr al-Iḥsān* was published by Muhammad Said bin Umar of Kedah in 1925–1927. Thereafter no fewer than 40 commentaries were produced in Malaysia alone during the course of the 20th century (Riddell 2017: 3).

This framework is anchored firmly on evidence of 'extended Qur'ān exegetical activity in Malay' (Riddell 2017: 48), but the question nevertheless arises as to how less 'extended' efforts at Qur'ānic interpretation, in the form of the few Qur'ān manuscripts with interlinear translations in Malay—which can certainly be dated to this long interregnum—might fit into this exegetical framework. During Marsden's sojourn in Bengkulu from 1771 to 1778, the few manuscripts he encountered were mostly copies of the Qur'ān and *tafsīr*. In his *Dictionary* entry for *Koran* published in 1812 he notes: 'It is likewise called *moshaf* and *kitāb* or the Book, and when interlined with a translation or paraphrase, *tafsīr*' (Marsden 1984: 243).

Ervan Nurtawab (2020) has recently proposed that Qur'ān manuscripts with interlinear translations should certainly be regarded as *tafsīr*, as they were evidently created with the explicit intentions of explicating the meaning of the Qur'ān. This was explored in a study of the two 18th-century Banten Qur'āns mentioned above (A.51 and W.277), both with exactly the same Malay translations, where Ervan identified elements of interpretation and presentation of variant views over and above the pure translation of the Arabic text, demonstrating the exegetical intent of the Malay texts. As case studies, Ervan selected five verses from *Sūrat al-Kahf*, and compared these with the equivalent passages in *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*, to demonstrate that the Banten manuscripts represented exegetical activitiy in Malay independent of 'Abd al-Ra'ūf's work (Nurtawab 2020: 186).

In order to try to contextualise RAS Arabic 4, the Malay translations in Arabic 4 will be compared with those from the same five verses of *Sūrat al-Kahf* from the Banten Qur'ān A.51. In the passages below, the English translations from the Qur'ān are from Abdullah Yusuf Ali (2000); the Malay texts from A.51 are from Nurtawab (2020: 184–185); and the readings and translations from RAS Arabic 4 are my own. While the Malay text in A.51 is fully vocalised, allowing the identification of the strongly Javanese-influenced form of Banten Malay with frequent *ě pěpět* instead of *a* in final syllables (Nurtawab 2020: 180), Arabic 4 is written in Jawi without vowels and has therefore been transliterated as standard Malay. In the text of Arabic 4, words not found in A.51 are underlined; lacunae compared to A.51 are indicated by * at the appropriate place.

Minor comments on orthography are footnoted;[29] more substantive comments are noted below the relavant verse.

Q.18:11: Then We drew (a veil) over their ears, for a number of years, in the Cave, (so that they heard not);

PNRI A.51: *maka kami tutupi talinga marika itu supaya tiada didĕngĕr marika itu sawara dan kami kĕraskĕn atas marika itu tidur dalĕm guha itu babarapa tahun lamanya kata satĕngah adalah tidur marika itu dalĕmnya tiga ratus sambilan tahun lamanya maka tiap-tiap satahun dibalikkĕn ⟨ addition in the margin ⟩ marika itu supaya jangan dimakan tanah tatapi pada marika itu saparti siang hari jua.*

RAS Arabic 4: *maka kami tutup telinga mereka itu[30] supaya tiada didengar mereka itu* **suatu** *suara dan kami keraskan atas mereka itu // tidur dalam guha[31] itu berapa tahun lamanya kata setengah adalah tidur mereka itu dalamnya tiga ratus sembilan tahun * maka tiap2 setahun dibalikkan* **Allah** *mereka itu supaya jangan dimakan tanah tetapi pada mereka itu seperti siang hari juga.*

Translation of RAS Arabic 4: Then We closed their ears so that they would not hear any sounds, and We deepened their sleep in the Cave, for a number of years; some say that their sleep lasted for 309 years, and every year Allah turned them over so that [their bodies] did not decay, but for them it was as if it was just the next morning.

Q.18:16: When ye turn away from them and the things they worship other than Allah, betake yourselves to the Cave: your Lord will shower his mercies on you and dispose of your affair towards comfort and ease.

PNRI A.51: *bermula kata satĕngah marika itu akĕn satĕngahnya apabila kamu cĕrailah marika itu dan yang disembah maka teguhilah ibadah kamu kapada Allah dan tiada ada kami[32] sembah malainkĕn Allah karana kami tiada dapĕt maninggal ibadah ⟨ addition in the margin ⟩ kapadanya maka barbunilah kami ka dalĕm guha supaya dianugrahai tuhan kamu akĕn kamu rahmatnya dan supaya dimudahkĕn daripada kamu razki kamu akĕn kuat kamu*

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29   In RAS Arabic 4, Malay *ga* (Persian *gāf*) is always written without dots and hence is indis-
        tinguishable from *kāf*, and *pa* is always written with one dot.
30   Consistently spelt conjoined, m-r-y-k-ʿ-t (مريكت).
31   g-w-h.
32   Both *kamu* and *kami* have the same spelling in Jawi, k-a-m (كام), but the diacritics in A.51
        may have indicated this final vowel.

RAS Arabic 4: *bermula kata setengah mereka itu akan setengahnya apabila kamu cerailah mereka itu dan yang disembah mereka itu maka teguhilah **oleh kamu dan tiada (1)** ibadat kamu kepada Allah ** ada **yang** kamu sembah melainkan Allah karena kamu tiada dapat meninggal**kan** ibadat kepadanya maka berbunilah kamu ke dalam guha supaya dianugerahai tuhan kamu akan kamu rahmatnya **dalam negeri kedua** (2) dan supaya dimudahkan daripada kamu rezeki kamu akan kuat kamu*

Translation of RAS Arabic 4: Some say, to some of them, 'When you turn away from them and the things they worship, strengthen yourself and **halt** (1) your religious obligations to Allah, for there is [none] that you worship apart from Allah, and it was because you could not abandon your religious obligations to Him that you took yourselves to the Cave, so that your Lord will shower his mercies on you in both worlds (2) and provide you with sustenance for your strength' (Figure 1.17).

Comment: (1) The scribe of RAS Arabic 4 has made a bad error in misplacing the words *dan tiada*, to the extent of undermining the meaning of this verse. (2) This is a rare example of additional gloss not found in A.51, namely that Allah would shower his mercies on them in both worlds, meaning the worlds of the jinn and the men.

Q.18:18: Thou wouldst have deemed them awake, whilst they were asleep, and We turned them on their right and on their left sides; their dog stretching forth his two forelegs on the threshold: if thou hadst come up on to them, thou wouldst have certainly turned back from them in flight, and wouldst certainly have been filled with terror of them.

PNRI A.51: *dan pada sangka kamu jaga dalĕm guha bahuwasanya marika itu tidur dalĕmnya dan kami balikkĕn marika itu ka kanannya satahun sakali dan ka kirinya pun satahun sakali kata satĕngah dalĕm satahun dua kali dan anjing marika itu tidur dalĕm pintu guha manghuncurkĕn tangannya pada sama tĕngah pintu jikalau angkau lihat marika itu maka masa ini niscaya barpaling lari marika itu dan amat takut angkau daripada hitu marika itu dan bĕsar tubuh marika itu*

RAS Arabic 4: *pada sangka kamu **mereka itu** jaga dalam guha bahwasanya tidur mereka itu dalamnya // dan kami balikkan mereka itu ke kanannya setahun sekali dan ke kirinya pun*[33] *setahun sekali kata setengah dalam setahun dua kali dan anjing mereka itu tidur di pintu guha mehunjurkan tangannya pada sama tengah pintu jikalau melihat engkau **kepada** mereka itu **kepada** masa*
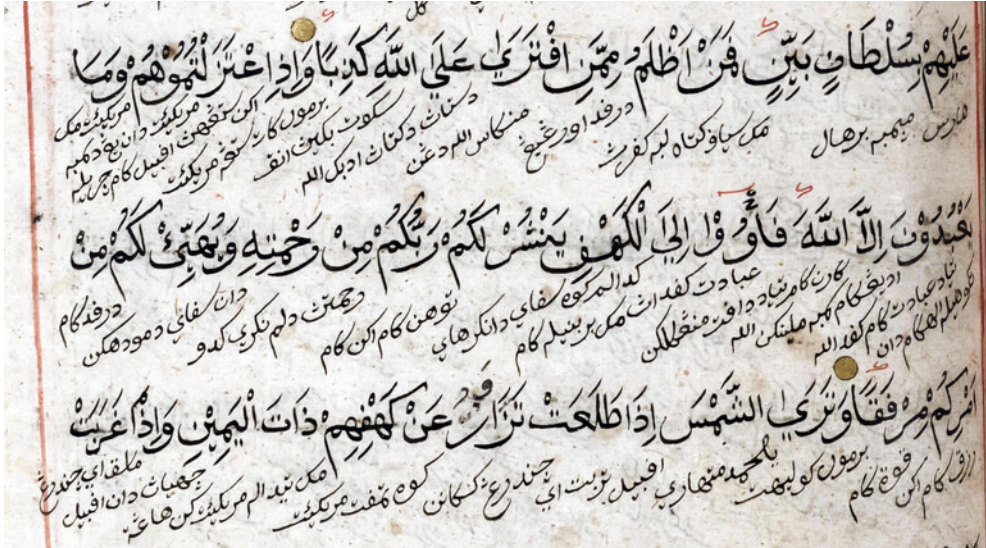
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33   p-w-a-n.

itu niscaya berpaling lari mereka itu dan amat takut engkau daripada hebat mereka itu dan besar tubuh mereka itu

Translation of RAS Arabic 4: You would have thought them awake in the Cave, whilst they were asleep within, and We turned them on their right once a year and also on their left once a year, some say twice a year, and their dog slept in the doorway stretching his front paws across the threshold; if you had seen them at that time you would certainly have turned and fled from them, and you would have been filled with terror at their might and the size of their bodies.

Q.18:24: Without adding, 'So please Allah!'. And call thy Lord to mind when thou forgettest, and say, 'I hope that my Lord will guide me ever closer (even) than this to the right road.'

PNRI A.51: *malainkĕn sĕbut olehmu insya Allah dan sĕbut tuhanmu apabila lupa angkau manyĕbut insyā Allah dĕngĕn insyā Allah kata olehmu ya Muhammad bahuwasannya hampir tuhanku akĕn manunjuk daku daripada sagala ininya yang amat damping kapada agama yang sabĕnĕrnya*

RAS Arabic 4: *melainkan sebut * olehmu insya Allah **ta'ala** dan sebut **olehmu** tuhanmu apabila lupa engkau menyebut insya Allah * kata olehmu ya Muhammad bahwasanya hampir tuhanku akan menunjuk daku daripada segala itunya yang amat damping kepada agama yang sebenarnya*

Translation of RAS Arabic 4: Without you saying, 'So please Allah the Almighty!'. And call upon your Lord whenever you forget to say 'So please Allah', you should say 'O Muhammad, may my Lord closely guide me closer even than this to the right religion.'

Q.18:62: When they had passed on (some distance), Moses said to his attendant: 'Bring us our early meal, truly we have suffered much fatigue at this (stage of) our journey.'

PNRI A.51: *maka tatkala sampailah keduanya berjalan kepada batu majmaʿ al-baḥrayn itu maka kata Musa akan Yusaʿ marilah bawa makanan kita makan bahwasanya kita perolehlah dalam pelayaran kita ini lelah*

RAS Arabic 4: *maka tatkala sampailah keduanya berjalan **daripada** batu yang majmaʿ al-baḥrayn (1) itu maka kata Musa akan Yusaʿ marilah bawa makanan kita makan bahwasanya **telah** kita perolehlah dalam pelayaran kita ini * (2)*

Translation of RAS Arabic 4: When they had both journeyed on from the *majmaʿ al-baḥrayn* stone [where two rivers meet], Musa said to Yusaʿ, 'Bring us food so we may eat, for we have been [fatigued] (2) in this our voyage.'

Comment: (1) In both A.51 and Arabic 4 the stone *majmaʿ al-baḥrayn* is left unexplained in the Malay text; (2) the final word *lelah*, 'fatigued', is omitted.

Without commenting on any exegetical elements, the above comparisons show clearly that, apart from some minor variations, RAS Arabic 4 contains a copy of exactly the same Malay translation as found in the two Banten Qur'ān copies. Although A.51 and W.277 are so closely related they may even derive from the same scriptorium, W.277 uses the more standard canonical reading (*qirāʾāt*)[34] of ʿĀṣim transmitted by Ḥafṣ, while A.51 utilises the relative uncommon reading of Nāfiʿ transmitted by Qālūn, with variant readings presented in the margins, and was thus probably aimed at an audience more advanced in the Qur'ānic sciences (Nurtawab 2020: 177). RAS Arabic 4 uses the reading transmitted by Ḥafṣ, and can therefore can be linked more closely to W.277 than to A.51.

In view of the congruence of the Malay texts, it may be possible to tentatively attribute Arabic 4 to the environs of Banten for a number of reasons. Firstly, two of the four other known Qur'ān copies with interlinear Malay translations are from Banten, as are three of the 11 with Javanese translations, highlighting the association of Banten with this pedagogical tradition. Although A.51 and W.277 were fully vowelled and Arabic 4 is not, it should also be recalled that the royal chancery of Banten produced countless diplomatic missives written in Malay

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34   On canonical readings (*qirāʾāt*) of the Qur'an see Riddell 2017: 85–88.

in unvowelled Jawi script in the 17th and 18th centuries (cf. Pudjiastuti 2007). Secondly, the relatively poor decoration of the initial pages contrasts with the fine hand, recalling the conclusion reached in a study of the art of the Qurʾān in Banten: 'Banten was truly a state where calligraphy was favoured over illumination' (Gallop & Akbar 2006: 133). The consistent use of gold verse markers, though, from beginning to end, is very rare in Southeast Asia, but notably has been recorded in two other Banten Qurʾāns.[35] Furthermore, the use of Asian paper, the presence of the *Ṣadaq Allāh* prayer, the unusual graphic layout, and the date of Admiral Pole's Asian encounters, all support an early dating in the 18th century, at a time when the sultanate of Banten was flourishing as a centre for Islamic scholarship (cf. Nurtawab 2020: 179).

TABLE 1.2   Qurʾān manuscripts from Southeast Asia with interlinear translations

	Language	Location	Qurʾān	References
1.	Malay	Jakarta PNRI A.51	Banten, 18th c.	Gallop & Akbar 2016: 135; Nurtawab 2020
2.	Malay	Jakarta PNRI W.277	Banten, 18th c.	Gallop & Akbar 2016: 138; Nurtawab 2020
3.	Malay	London RAS Arabic 4	[Banten], 18th c.	Sefercioğlu 2000: 129
4.	Malay	Palembang, Collection of Kemas Andi Syafruddin		Mustopa 2017: 87
5.	Malay	Penyengat, Pusat Maklumat Kebudayaan Melayu & Mesjid Raya 124	[Sulawesi style] 2 vols	Akbar 2013: 11
6.	Javanese	Jakarta PNRI A.54	Banten, 18th c.	Gallop & Akbar 2016: 138
7.	Javanese	Masjid Agung Banten	Banten, 18th c.	Gallop & Akbar 2006: 139 (Mushaf B)
8.	Javanese	Sumedang, Museum Prabu Geu-san Ulun (with zoomorphic calligraphy)	West Java	Kemenag 2018
9.	Javanese	Sumedang, Museum Prabu Geu-san Ulun	West Java	Kemenag 2018
10.	Javanese	Garut, Museum Cagar Budaya Candi Cangkuang	West Java	Kemenag 2018

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35   PNRI A.50 and A.52 (Gallop & Akbar 2006: 134, 136).

TABLE 1.2   Qur'ān manuscripts from Southeast Asia with interlinear translations (*cont.*)

	Language	**Location**	**Qur'ān**	**References**
11.	Javanese	Tanah Datar, Collection of Mas-rizal Mansur, C/TD_LK 03/MM	Java	Kemenag 2018
12.	Javanese	Masjid Agung Surakarta	Java	Kemenag 2018
13.	Javanese	Yogyakarta, Museum Sonobu-doyo, C2	Yogyakarta	Kemenag 2018
14.	Javanese	Yogyakarta, Widyabudaya W300, W300a	Yogyakarta	Lindsay, Soetanto & Feinstein 1994: 208–209
15.	Javanese	Leiden UB Cod.Or. 2097	Java, from Taco Roorda	Sefercioğlu 2000: 79
16.	Javanese	Leiden UB Cod.Or. 5697	Banten	Sefercioğlu 2000: 79
17.	Makasar	Leiden UB NBG Boeg 52 a–e	Makasar script	Sefercioğlu 2000: 119
18.	Makasar	Leiden UB NBG Boeg 36	Arabic script	Sefercioğlu 2000: 119

6   Early Qur'ān Manuscripts from Southeast Asia

Over a thousand Qur'ān manuscripts from Southeast Asia have been documented to date, of which the great majority—perhaps around 80%—date from the 19th century. These Qur'āns generally proclaim their regional identity clearly through characteristic patterns of illumination, page layout, calligraphy and sometimes bindings, with distinctive clusters known from the East Coast of the Malay peninsula, Java, South and West Sulawesi, Mindanao, West Sumatra and notably Aceh. In studying Qur'ān manuscripts from the Malay world of this period, it is relatively easy to ascertain provenance with a brief visual inspection of the book.

The situation is much less clear-cut for earlier centuries, as the Qur'ān manuscripts discussed in this article show. It is not just that smaller numbers of manuscripts afford fewer comparable examples; it also appears that a hallmark of the early period is the fluidity of manuscript traditions, with scribes, materials and probably even books themselves traversing borders. The theological networks linking Southeast Asian courts to the holy cities of the Middle East mediated through the Yemen are manifested most clearly in the Sulawesi-style Qur'ān from Pekanbaru copied by a Zabīd-born scribe in 1740. These linkages help our attempts to locate the volume in the John Rylands Library, Arabic MS 54 (821), containing *Juz'* 4 of the Qur'ān (perhaps originally part of a 30-

volume set?), from the palace of Aceh. This may have been copied in the Yemen and brought to Aceh, or copied in Aceh by a Yemeni scribe in a Yemeni idiom, some time probably in the late 18th or early 19th century.

Such possibilities need to be borne in mind in considering the small Qurʾān from the Marsden collection in SOAS, MS 12176, dated to June 1585 and tentatively presented as the oldest dated Qurʾān manuscript from the Malay world. The historical and codicological contexts are supportive of the proposal that Marsden brought this manuscript back to London from Sumatra in 1778, at a time when it was already nearly two centuries old. But the graphic differences between this and all other known early Southeast Asian Qurʾāns leaves open the possibility here too of influences and actors from beyond the archipelago in the making of this manuscript.

In contrast, while the impressive Qurʾān in the Royal Asiatic Society, Arabic 4, with a full interlinear Malay translation, also lacks close visual comparators, on palaeographical, aesthetic and linguistic grounds there are no queries about the Malay-world credentials of this manuscript. It joins a small but important group of Qurʾān manuscripts with interlinear translations in Malay and Javanese that highlight the existence of a vigorous manuscript centre with exegetical interests at the court of Banten in the 18th century.

Appendix: Catalogue of Qurʾān Manuscripts from Southeast Asia in British Collections

The following information is given about each manuscript:

Holding institution. Shelfmark. Title / contents. Origin if known. Number of folios; height × width in cm. Paper. Lines per page; ink; hand. Text frames of ruled lines (listed from inside outwards). Verse markers. Surah headings. Marginalia. Decoration, and colours used. Annotations / further texts. Binding and covers. Provenance. Bibliographical references.

Abbreviations used:

DF—double decorated frames; SF—single decorated frames; MO—marginal ornaments; S.—*Sūrah*; f. ff.—folio, folios.

Bristol University Library
DM 32

Qurʾān, incomplete at end. Mindanao.

36.5 × 23 cm. Cream fibrous locally-made paper. 15 lines per page; black ink. Text frames are black-black ruled lines; no *surah* headings; verse markers are black circles or red roundels outlined in black. Marginalia: MO for *Juzʾ*, *niṣf*, *rubuʿ*, *thumn*, and *ʿayn* for *rukuʿ*. Decoration: simple black ink DF at beginning; at end, only left-hand page surviving of DF, containing *S. al-Falaq*, in pale red, black ink, reserved white. The first few folios are replacement pages in a less competent hand. Unbound sewn textblock, with wooden outer covers. Given by Canon William Welchman, 1936 (entered into register of accessions on 17 March 1936, as being from the Philippines). Gallop 2012: 60, Fig. 43; Gallop 2021: 42 (wrongly gives accession date as 1934).

British Library, London
Add. 12312

Qurʾān. Java.

200 ff.; 30 × 21 cm; text block 19.5 × 13 cm. Burnished Javanese paper (*dluwang*), in excellent condition. 17 lines per page; black ink; in a neat, vigorous hand. Text frames are triple-ruled black lines. Verse markers are red circles with a black dot in the middle, 6 mm diameter. *Surah* headings are in red ink, often with multiple knotted *ta marbuta*. Marginalia: *Juzʾ* are marked with semicircles in black ink on the outer vertical text frames of both facing pages, labelled in red ink: [right page] *al-Juzʾ al-…* / [left page] *min al-Qurʾān al-ʿazīm*, and the start of the *Juzʾ* is marked in the text with three stacked red circles. *Rukuʿ* are marked with a pyramidal construction of parallel lines in red and black ink, above the letter *ʿayn* in red with the *rukuʿ* number. Decoration: 2 DF, ff. 1ᵛ–2ʳ, *S. al-Fātiḥa* and beg. of *S. al-Baqarah*, double frame in red and black ink; ff. 94ᵛ–95ʳ, beg. of *S. al-Kahf*, double frame in black ink. *S. al-Fātiḥa* is repeated at end. Colophon on f. 200ʳ: *hādhā al-qurʾān* [*kh*]*atam bad b.ṣ.r fī al-yawm Saptu wa-Allāhu aʿlam*, 'this is the Qurʾān completed after … on Saturday, and God knows best.' f. [i]ᵛ: (in brown pen) *A religious work in the Pegon*; (in pencil) *It is a copy of the Coran, in Arabic written in Java*. Original dark brown full leather Islamic binding with flap, fastened with a metal clasp; multiple frame bands with a central medallion and corner pieces. Purchased by the British Museum from John Crawfurd, 1842. Gallop & Arps 1991: 100; Baker 2007: 90–91.

Add. 12343

Qurʾān. Java.

190 ff.; 36.5 × 25 cm; text block 27.5 × 18 cm. Javanese paper (*dluwang*). 17 lines per page; black ink; in a cursive hand with a forward slope. Text frames are black-black-space-black-black lines. Verse markers are red circles, 7 mm diameter. *Surah* headings are in red, often with multiple knotted *tāʾ marbūṭa*. Marginalia: *Juzʾ* are marked with semicircles in black ink on the outer vertical text frames of both facing pages, inscribed: [left page] *al-Juzʾ al-…* / [right page] *min al-Qurʾān al-ʿazīm*, sometimes with the first few words of the *Juzʾ* in red in the text. *Rukuʾ* are marked by *ʿayn* in the margins, sometimes labelled *awal*. Decoration: 2 DF in black ink: ff. 1ᵛ–2ʳ, *S. al-Fatihah* and beg. of *S. al-Baqarah*; ff. 189ᵛ–190ʳ, *S. al-Nās* and *S. al-Fātiḥa*. NB: ff. 88ᵛ–89ʳ, beg. of *S. al-Kahf*, is set in a reduced text block. Annotations: f. 1ʳ: *punika syarat Nifūn abdi dalem paʿulu sila*; f. 191ʳ: (in pen) *A Legend in the Pegon*; (in pencil) *This is a copy of the Coran, in Arabic, written in Java. J.M.* British Museum maroon half-leather & buckram binding. Purchased by the British Museum from John Crawfurd, 1842.

Or. 15227

Qurʾān. Patani or Kelantan.

307 ff.; 22.3 × 16.5 cm; text block 13.5 × 8.6 cm. Italian paper, watermarks of moon face in shield (throughout), 'AG' [Andrea Galvani] (f. 140). 15 lines per page; black ink; a very fine small neat hand. Text frames are black-thick yellow-black-black-red lines. Verse markers are yellow (occasionally green) roundels outlined in black; 3 mm diameter. *Surah* headings are in rectangular frames, reserved in white against five coloured panels, alternating either green and red or blue and red. Marginalia: beautiful coloured MO for *Juzʾ*; *maqraʾ* written in red ink in a tiny hand; catchwords at the end of every quire. Page layout follows Ottoman *ayat ber kenar* model with exactly 20 pages for each *Juzʾ*. Decoration: six DF and one SF frames in the Patani style, mostly in red, yellow, green and dark blue: f. 1ᵛ: monochrome SF in black ink; DF ff. 3ᵛ–4ʳ: *S. al-Fātiḥa* and beg. of *S. al-Baqarah*; DF ff. 148ᵛ–149ʳ: beg. of *S. al-Kahf*; DF ff. 222ᵛ–223ʳ: beg. of *S. Yāsin*; ff. 303ᵛ–304ʳ: monochrome DF in black ink, enclosing empty text blocks; DF ff. 304ᵛ–305ʳ: *S. al-Falaq* and *S. al-Nās*; ff. 306ᵛ–307ʳ: monochrome DF in black ink, enclosing empty text blocks. Annotations/texts: f. 1ᵛ, *tatkala surat Quran ini pada bulan Syawal*, 'this Qurʾān was written in the month of Shawwāl'; f. 2ʳ: prayer in Arabic. Original dark brown cloth binding, lined with black (probably Thai) end-papers, with intricate sewn headbands in red, green & brown thread. Acquired at auction at Christie's King Street, 25 April 1996, *Islamic art and Indian miniatures*, lot 43. Gallop 2005: 146, 161; Baker 2007: 92–93.

Or. 15406

Qurʾān. Aceh

315 ff.; 28.5 × 20 cm; text block 22 × 13 cm. Italian paper, watermark of 3 crescents. 15 lines per page; brown-black ink; typical Acehnese hand. Text frames are red-black-red-black lines. Verse markers are ochre roundels with black outlines, 6 mm diameter, with some composite 5-roundels marking important text divisions. *Surah* headings are in red ink, set in rectangular frames. *Marginalia*: catchwords. Decoration: three monochrome DF in the 'Acehnese' style in brown ink: ff. 1ᵛ–2ʳ, *S. al-Fātiḥa* and beginning of *S. al-Baqarah*, without side arches or wings; ff. 147ᵛ–148ʳ, beginning of *Juzʾ* 16 (f. 147ʳ in brown and black ink, f. 148ʳ damaged); ff. 313ᵛ–314ʳ, *S. al-Falaq* and *S. al-Nās*, without side arches or wings. Colophon in Malay on f. 315ʳ: *Inilah Qurʾān milik Teungku Ti orang baruh duduk pada nenggeri Lam Kubu tetapi Qurʾān ini diwakaf pada tangan Teungku {Abd} Abdul Kadir Lam Siwi akhir kalam tamma*, 'This is the Qurʾān belonging to Teungku Ti, from the hills, who resides in the state of Lam Kubu, but this Qurʾān has been bequeathed for charitable purposes to the hands of Teungku Abdul Kadir of Lam Siwi, end.' Modern binding of marbled paper boards and buckram spine, with new endpapers; some ff. heavily repaired, and ff. 140–145 bound upside down. Purchased from Smitskamp, Leiden, 1998. Gallop 2004: 225.

Or. 15877

Qurʾān. Madura.

297 ff.; 29.5 × 19.5 cm; text block 22 × 14.5 cm. Javanese paper (*dluwang*); gilded fore edges. 13 lines per page; black ink; a vigorous, cursive hand, sloping to the left. Text frames are three black lines. Verse markers are small red circles, 7 mm diameter. *Surah* headings are in red ink, within ruled black frames, often with knotted *ta marbutah*. Marginalia: *Juzʾ* inscribed in the margin in red ink, and marked in the text with a decorative red circle; with illuminated MO on the facing page. All the decoration, in red, pink, green and gold, is recently added, probably late 20th c.: f. 1ʳ: illuminated frontispiece, with a round panel in red inscribed in gold: *Pangeran Paku Ningrat karaton 1793 Sumeneb*, 'Pangeran Paku Ningrat, the palace of Sumeneb, 1793' (AJ 1793= AD 1865); 3 DF, ff. 1ᵛ–2ʳ, *S. al-Fātiḥa* and beg. of *S. al-Baqarah*; ff. 147ᵛ–148ʳ: *S. al-Kahf* (not the beginning); ff. 296ᵛ–297ʳ: *S. al-Kafirun* to *S. al-Nās*. The front and back endpapers of cream European paper each contain small illuminated panels in red, ochre and black, inscribed: (front) *bismillāh al-Raḥman al-Raḥīm*; (end) *al-ḥamd li l-lāh*, i.e. the beg. of *S. al-Kahf*, evidently taken from another MS. At the end on f. 297ᵛ *S. al-Fatihah* is repeated, followed by a long colophon in a mixture of Arabic and Javanese giving the date: *qala tahun jasragha* [*j–s–r–gh*] *wulan ĕni tanggal 22 dinten soma panca wala kumala*, 'in the year *jasragha* the month *ĕni*, the 22,

on Monday, [in the *wuku*] *panca wala kumala*'; the *abjad* value of the word *jas-ragha* is 1263 (*ghayn* = 1000, *rā* = 200, *sīn* = 60, *jīm* = 3), and 1263 AH = 1846/7 AD (with thanks to Titik Pudjiastuti for the reading, 7.5.02, and Nur Ahmad for interpreting the date, 20.5.21), copied by ʿAbd al-Laṭīf in the hamlet (*dusun*) of Larangan in the village (*kampung*) of Puri. Black leather Javanese binding, with multiple frame bands and gilded central medallion and cornerpieces. Acquired at auction at Christie's South Kensington, 13 December 2001, *Asian decorative arts*, lot 18. Gallop 2017: 113.

Or. 16034

Qurʾān, Aceh. Lacking beginning, text starts at *S. al-Baqarah*, Q.2:93.
261 ff.; 32 × 21.5 cm; text block 21 × 13 cm. Italian paper, watermark of 3 crescents; some old tears and repairs. 15 lines per page; black-brown ink; typical Acehnese hand. Text frames are red-black-red-black lines. Verse markers are yellow or orange roundels outlined in black, 6 mm diameter, with composite roundels at the end of the final *sūrah*s. *Surah* headings are in red ink; only from f. 224ʳ onwards *surah* headings are set in ruled red frames; first line of each *Juz'* in red ink. Marginalia: marks in red for *thumn*, *rubʿ* and *niṣf*, some other marks in pencil; catchwords on every folio. Decoration: 2 DF in the Acehnese style in red, yellow, black and reserved white: ff. 119ᵛ–120ʳ, beginning of *Juz'* 16; ff. 260ᵛ–261ʳ, enclosing empty frames at the end. Dark blue cloth covers, with an intricate cut-out paper pattern glued onto the back cover. Purchased from Arthur Probsthain, London, 2004. Gallop 2004: 225.

Or. 16877

Qurʾān, Java.
322 ff.; 32 × 20 cm; text block 22 × 12 cm. Dutch paper, watermarked Hollandia with 'A B' (on the basis of the watermark, Russell Jones dates this MS to ca. 1852–1860). 15 lines per page; black ink; not very elegant hand. Text frames of three black lines. Verse markers are red circles, 5 mm diameter. *Sūrah* headings in red ink, some with crudely-knotted *ta marbuta*, set in ruled frames. Marginalia: *Juz'* inscribed in the margin in red, with composite red circles in the text and the first words of the text; occasional *maqra'* and *ʿayn*. No decoration, but ff. 1ᵛ–2ʳ and ff. 145ᵛ–146ʳ (beg. of *Sūrat al-Kahf*) set in small frames. Annotations of charitable bequest (*waqf*) on f. 322ᵛ: *bahwa ini Qurʾān waqabnya Enciʾ Musa bin Enciʾ / waqab fi al-masjid Sunan Giri*. Original red leather stamped and tooled binding with envelope flap. Purchased in 2012 from Russell Jones, who had acquired it in Yogyakarta in the 1960s.

Or. 16915

Qurʾān, Aceh.

255 ff., English paper, watermarked 'J Whatman 1819 Balston & Co', 'V E I C', 33×20.5 cm; text block 21×11.5 cm. 15 lines per page; black ink; typical forward-sloping Acehnese Qurʾān hand, catchwords on each folio. Text frames of red-black-red-black lines. Verse markers are yellow roundels outlined in black, 5 mm; *surah* headings in red ink. The first line of each *Juzʾ* is in red and set within red-black-red ruled ink frames, with an elaborate MO. Other MO mark *thumn, rubʿ, nisf*, with a composite 4-roundel in the text. Decoration: 3 DF: ff. 2ᵛ–3ʳ (S. *al-Fātiḥa* and beg. of S. *al-Baqarah*); ff. 132ᵛ–133ʳ (beg. of *Juzʾ* 16); ff. 254ᵛ–255ʳ (S. al-Falaq and S. al-Nās). Annotations/texts: f. 1ᵛ, prayer, and a mnemonic poem (*nazam*) made up of the first words of each *Juzʾ*; f. 255ᵛ, a prayer on completion of the Qurʾān. Brown cloth cover with paper cut-out decorative border pasted down on both front and back, inscribed *lā ilāha illā Allāh* on front and repeated word *Allah* on the back. Loose full Islamic brown leather cover with envelope flap and stamped frame bands and medallions. Purchased in 2014 from Amir Mohtashemi, London, who had recently acquired it at auction in Germany from a deceased estate.

IO Islamic 3048

Qurʾān, *Juzʾ* 23 & 24 (Q. 36:27–41:46).

28 ff.; 20×13 cm; text block 14×8.5 cm. Javanese paper (*dluwang*). 13 lines per page; black ink; in a simple hand. No text frames or verse markers. *Sūrah* headings are in black ink. Marginalia: *Juzʾ* marked in black ink in the margins. Paper covers. Annotations: f.c.: *3048 / Loth 39 / Arabic language / zabān-e ʿarabī*; b.c.: *No. 20 Prayers*. Provenance unknown; most likely from British administration of Java 1811–1816. Loth 1877: 7 (no. 39).

John Rylands Library, University of Manchester

MS Arabic 54 (821)

Qurʾān, *Juzʾ* 4 (Q. 3:86–4:28).

17 ff.; 21.5×16 cm. Italian paper, watermark of 3 crescents. 11 lines per page; black ink, large ungainly hand. Text frames are red-red-blue ruled lines. Verse markers of red hand-drawn circles or roundels. *Surah* headings are in red ink and set in red frames. Marginalia: *rubʿ* and *thumn* inscribed in red in the margins; catchwords on each folio. Annotation: *Uit den Kraton te Atjeh, 1874—de Hollander*, from the palace of Aceh, 1874, and then the collection of Prof. de Hollander. Purchased from C.M. Pleyte at Brill in 1897 by Lord Ludovic Lindsay. Mingana 1934: 51, no. 54; Catalogue [n.d.]: [1].

Royal Asiatic Society, London
Arabic 4

Qurʾān, with interlinear Malay translation.

352 ff.; 33×25 cm; text block 27×17.5 cm. Brownish laid paper with squarish mold marks but no watermarks or chain lines; badly waterstained in parts with losses. 9 lines per page; black ink; the Arabic in an accomplished wide hand, with the Malay in a fine, small hand, hanging diagonally to the left. Text frames are double-ruled red lines from ff. 1–6, and thereafter single red lines. Verse markers are gold roundels outlined in black, with silver roundels outlined in black from *S. al-Nāziʿāt* onwards; the silver has now tarnished and contracted to a grey/black mark against an orange background. *Surah* headings are in red, enclosed in rectangular red frames, with simple knotted *tāʾ marbūṭa* in some headings, with some marginal reading instructions, eg. *ini kepada siang Selasa*, 'this on Tuesday noon'. Marginalia: *Juzʾ* are marked vertically in red ink, and the complete first line of the text written in red; one *rubʾ* MO. Decoration: ff. 1ʳ & 2ʳ, *S. al-Fatihah* and beg. of *S. al-Baqarah*, simple DF in red and black ink; but both folios are badly damaged with most of f. 2 now missing, and f. 1 bound in back to front so that the beginning of *S. al-Fātiḥa* is now on f. 1ʳ, not f. 1ᵛ. Annotations/texts: flyleaf and f. 3ʳ: 'Presented by Admiral C.M. Pole Bart. June 19 1830'; ff. f. 352ʳ: prayer; f. 352ᵛ: prayer, and doodles with part of a letter opening in Malay to *qadim paduka kakanda Encik' Zainuddin yang ada dengan istirahat al-khair di dalam negeri Semarang*, 'to esteemed older brother Encik' Zainuddin, who resides peacefully in Semarang'. Half-leather European binding with marbled boards. Codrington 1892: 502 (no. 4); Sefercioglu 2000: 129. This manuscript has now been fully digitised in honour of Peter Riddell. https://royalasiaticcollections.org/ras-arabic-4/

School of Oriental and African Studies, London
MS 12096

Qurʾān (Q. 25:23–29:44). Sumatra.

40 ff.; 16.5×10 cm; text block 12×6.5 cm. Dutch paper, with vertical chainlines, watermarks 'R' (f. 5) and 'Pro Patria' (f. 8). 11 lines per page, with *mistar* lines evident; black ink; small hand. No text frames or verse markers. *Surah* headings in red ink. Marginalia: *Juzʾ, rubʿ, niṣf* and *thumn* inscribed in red, with a red mark in the text. Label on front cover: *'Extracts from the Koran employed in administering oaths'*; inside front cover: *Allahumma rabbuna taqal*. Modern cloth binding. Bequeathed by William Marsden to King's College London in 1835. Marsden 1827: 301; Gacek 1981: 161.

MS 12176

Quran. [Sumatra]

275 ff.; 13.5 × 9 cm; text block 9.5 × 5.5 cm. Burnished laid paper, with vertical chainlines, watermark noted but illegible on f. 271, badly wormholed. 15 lines per page; black ink; very fine small hand. No text frames. Verse markers of red roundels in the early part of the MS only (up to f. 97), with some clusters of three red dots. *Surah* headings only present up to *S. al-Tawba*. Marginalia: *Juz'* inscribed in the margin in red, also *'ashar* for every ten verses; catchwords on each folio. The first folio is missing, and the MS starts with *S. al-Baqarah* set in a reduced textblock on f. 1ʳ. Colophon on f. 275ʳ: *tammat tammām bi-'awn Allāh al-Malik al-Wahhāb kutiba fī ⟨awāsiṭ⟩ māh-e Jumādā al-ākhir sanat 993*, 'completed; completed through the help of God, the King, the Giver of Gifts, written in the middle of the month of Jumādā al-ākhir, the year 993' (mid-June 1585). The brown full leather binding is not original. Bequeathed by William Marsden to King's College London in 1835. Marsden 1827: 301; Gacek 1981: 158.

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The Arabic Manuscripts of the La Ode Zaenu Collection, Buton

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The Arabic manuscript tradition of Indonesia remains largely unknown. Since colonial times, scholars have directed to their energies to the 'indigenous' languages of Southeast Asia—Malay, Javanese, Makassarese and others, while Arabic has largely been dismissed as a sacred language unintelligible to Indonesian audiences beyond small circles of the 'ulama'. Yet in fact, in parts of Indonesia there was a substantial tradition of Arabic literacy. Arabic of course enjoyed a prestigious status as the language of the Qurʾān and Islamic law and scholarship, but from the sixteenth century, at least, it was a language of statecraft and diplomacy in Southeast Asia.[1] It was also used for composing original works, primarily in the field of Sufism. One reason for the neglect of this literary tradition is that such locally produced works often had only limited circulation outside of the regions where they were composed. The prime centres of Arabic textual production were Aceh, Banten, and Buton in Southeast Sulawesi.[2] Buton is particularly striking example of the pronounced localism of this Arabic literary tradition. Although during the nineteenth century a substantial number of Arabic works were composed there, none of these—to the best of my knowledge—is preserved in any library outside Buton. Even the National Library of Indonesia in Jakarta, with its substantial collections of Arabic manuscripts, does not preserve a single example of these Butonese Arabic works.[3]

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1 See A.C.S. Peacock, "Three Arabic letters from North Sumatra of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 44/129 (2016): 188–210.

2 This literary tradition is discussed in detail in my forthcoming monograph on Arabic in seventeenth and eighteenth century Southeast Asia.

3 The Arabic manuscripts in Jakarta are catalogued in R. Friederich & L.W.C. van den Berg, *Codicum Arabicorum Societatis artium et scientiarum Bataviae catalogu*s (Batavia-Den Haag: Wijt & Nijhoff, 1873); Ph.S. van Ronkel, *Supplement to the Catalogue of the Arabic Manuscripts preserved in the Museum of the Batavia Society of Arts and Sciences* (Batavia: Albrecht / The Hague: Nijhoff, 1913). See also the summary of titles in T.E. Berhrends, *Katalog Induk Naskah-Naskah Nusantara, Jilid 4: Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor, 1998), 3–22.

This localism obviously makes it extremely difficult to trace the contours of the Arabic literary tradition in the region. In Buton, all manuscripts are in private hands, and access to some of them has at times been problematic, while the manuscripts themselves change ownership and collections are dispersed through inheritance. Any conclusions, then, about Arabic textual production and consumption in Indonesia must therefore be regarded as highly provisional. However, two recent digitisation initiatives by the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme (EAP) and DREAMSEA (Digital Repository of Endangered and Affected Manuscripts in Southeast Asia, a collaboration between the University of Hamburg and Syarif Hidayatullah University, Jakarta) have for the first time provided easy access to a substantial number of Butonese Arabic manuscripts. In a previous publication, I have discussed the manuscripts of the Abdul Mulku Zahari collection, based both on my personal inspection of the manuscripts in Buton and those digitised by the EAP,[4] while in this article I focus on the manuscripts of the La Ode Zaenu collection, digitised by DREAMSEA.[5] I aim to identify the manuscripts—a task that is rendered problematic given that most lack title or end page—and offer some further reflections on Butonese Arabic manuscript culture. The La Ode Zaenu collection contains Butonese works not held in the Abdul Mulku Zahari collection, while its manuscripts give further insights to the circulation of manuscripts between the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Buton. First, however, I provide some brief historical and cultural background.

1 Buton, Sufism and Arabic

The island of Buton lies off the Southeast Sulawesi mainland, and, together with surrounding islands such as Muna and the Wakatobi archipelago, comprised a sultanate that survived until 1960.[6] It lies in a strategic location con-

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4 A.C.S. Peacock, "Arabic Manuscripts from Buton, Southeast Sulawesi, and the Literary Activities of Sultan Muḥammad ʿAydarūs (1824–1851)," *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 10 (2019): 44–83. See also https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP212, 'Locating, documenting and digitising: Preserving the endangered manuscripts of the Legacy of the Sultanate of Buton, South-Eastern Sulawesi Province, Indonesia (EAP212)'.

5 See https://dreamsea.co/.

6 For a more detailed bibliography for the background see my previous study, Peacock, "Arabic Manuscripts from Buton." Among the principal works on Buton and its religious and literary culture that should be mentioned are Abd Rahim Yunus, *Posisi Tasawuf dalam Sistem Kekuasaan di Kesultanan Buton pada Abad ke-19* (Jakarta: INSIS, 1995); Abdul Mulku Zahari, *Darul Butuni Sejarah dan Adatnya* (Bau-Bau: CV Dia dan Aku, 2017; 1st ed. *Sejarah dan Adat*

trolling one of the main passages between eastern and western Indonesia, although Buton produced few exports of its own. According to traditional accounts, the first Butonese ruler to convert to Islam was Lakilaponto in 1542 who took the title "Murhum". If true, the Islamisation of Buton thus preceded that of the main Sulawesi kingdoms of Makassar and Bone. Relatively little is known of the early history of the Buton sultanate, but it is clear that Sufism came to play a major role in political life. While this was true of other regions of Indonesia too, its influence was especially pronounced in Buton. In the seventeenth century, sultan Ihsanuddin Dayan (r. 1597–1631/2) reformed the *adat* laws of the sultanate by integrating them with the Sufi theory of *Martabat Tujuh*, "the Seven Grades of Being," originally propagated by the Indian scholar Muḥammad b. Faḍlallāh al-Burhānpūrī (d. 1029/1620) in his famous treatise *al-Tuḥfa al-Mursala ilā Rūḥ al-Nabī* ("The Gift Sent to the Spirit of the Prophet Muḥammad"). In this Butonese reinterpretation of this concept, derived from the thought of Ibn ʿArabī, each political office (the holding of which was restricted to specific social strata) reflected a different grade.

A second distinctive feature of Buton was that the sultan came to be chosen by election from among the male members of the royal family.[7] It seems that personal piety and learning were among the characteristics that were rewarded by the electors, a luxury they were probably able to indulge during the stability of the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries when Buton was essentially a self-governing vassal of the Dutch, with only limited interference in its internal affairs. As a result, in the nineteenth century sultan Muḥammad ʿAydarūs (r. 1824–1851) was able to devote himself to scholarship, producing numerous works in Arabic and Wolio, the local courtly language. Indeed, by the nineteenth century if not earlier, a trilingual literary culture existed on Buton. Wolio was the main tongue of poetry, much of which concentrated on Sufi and religious themes. Malay was used for statecraft, as well as a local prose historiographical tradition and religious works from the wider Malay world. Arabic was the main language of Butonese prose Sufi texts, while it was also the tongue of imported texts on fields such as Islamic classics on *fiqh* and the religious sciences. The literature of Buton was predominantly, but not exclusively religious, and the court was the main centre of literary production. Apart from Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, his sons Haji ʿAbd al-Hādī and Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ wrote works in Wolio and Arabic, while the Wolio religious poet Abdul Ghani was

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fy Darul Butuni, Jakarta, 1977); Falah Sabirin, *Tarekat Sammānīya di Kesultanan Buton: Kajian Naskah-Naskah Buton* (Ciputat: YPM, 2011).

7   See Yunus, *Posisi Tasawuf*, passim

closely associated with the court.[8] An especially strong influence on these Arabic works was the Sammaniyya *ṭarīqa*, which had recently spread to Southeast Asia owing to its propagation by the famous Sumatran scholar ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Palimbani (d. after 1788).

2 The Manuscripts of Buton and the La Ode Zaenu Collection

As noted above, at the time of writing all Butonese manuscripts are in private hands. The most important single collection is that of Abdul Mulku Zahari, currently held by his son, Pak Mujazi. Abdul Mulku Zahari was a descendant of Muḥammad ʿAydarūs 's secretary, ʿAbd al-Khāliq, and was himself secretary to the last sultan of Buton. The collection comprises approximately 300 manuscripts, of which 87 have been digitised by the Endangered Archives Programme; microfilm copies of all of them are said to have been deposited in the Arsip Nasional in Jakarta, and a catalogue has been published.[9] The manuscripts include a number in Muḥammad ʿAydarūs 's own hand, or else formerly owned by him. This is, then, a collection closely associated with the Butonese court; it contains 111 texts in Jawi-script Malay, 55 in Latin script Malay/Indonesian, 88 in Arabic and 71 in Wolio.

La Ode Zaenu was, as his name suggests, descended from the Butonese aristocracy, and died in 2010. He is said to have been imam of the royal mosque (Masjid Istana) in Buton in the 1980s.[10] Although I have not been able to discover his exact dates, he published a book on Buton's history in 1984.[11] He inherited manuscripts from his mother in law, Wa Ode Ahifa, and is also said to have collected manuscripts himself.[12] His manuscripts are currently under the care of his son Wa Ode Zulifah. The collection represents the interests of a local scholarly family, and its contents differ markedly in language and subject coverage from that of the Abdul Mulku Zahari collection although an exact comparison is difficult. While DREAMSEA has numbered the manuscripts from 1 to 124, it would not be accurate to claim the collection contains 124 manuscripts. Most

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8   See Peacock, "Arabic Manuscripts from Buton," 64, and for Muhammad Nuh see below.

9   Achadiati Ikram et al, *Katalog Naskah Buton koleksi Abdul Mulku Zahari* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor, 2001).

10 https://dreamsea.co/6000-pages-of-ancient-manuscripts-undergoing-preservation-in-bu ton/.

11 La Ode Zaenu, *Buton Dalam Sejarah Kebudayaan* (Surabaya: Suradipa Surabaya, 1984) (*non vidi*).

12 https://kumparan.com/faisal-yusuf-1607620158005299367/khazanah-nusantara-manuskr ip-doa-dan-azimat-dari-baubau-1uloOnLiJWW.

are fragmentary, and none have bindings, but it is clear that some of the individually numbered digitised manuscripts actually belong together and would originally have formed a single manuscript. Conversely, in other instances, two completely different manuscripts have been bound or recorded together; while on some occasions these may represent *majmūʿa*s, on others it is likely that they are pages from completely different manuscripts that have been put together by chance. None of this is the fault of the DREAMSEA team, of course, but rather reflects the difficult conditions of preservation. Unfortunately, the accurate reconstruction of the manuscripts probably requires in person inspection.[13] Nonetheless, a very rough impression of the proportions of the collection may be obtained. Twenty-six manuscripts are in Malay or are bilingual Arabic-Malay texts; only two are in Wolio; and the rest are entirely in Arabic. Thus around 80% of the collection appears to be in Arabic, although the Malay manuscripts seem to have been less prone to being divided up, so this is probably an overestimate. Nonetheless, it is clear that Arabic is the predominant language of this collection, with Malay in a poor second place, and Wolio barely represented. This contrasts with the clear prevalence of Malay in the Abdul Mulku Zahari collection (52% if we include the Latin script texts), with roughly equal proportions of Arabic and Wolio texts (27% and 21% respectively). Doubtless this predominance of Arabic reflects the interests of a scholarly family, but it is worth underlining that the contours of literary culture and its preservation are contingent not just on local circumstances but the interests of the owner. Thus generalisations about manuscript culture on the basis of a limited number of collections can only be made with extreme caution.

A list of the titles that can be identified is given in the Appendix. As one might expect, the La Ode Zaenu collection contains the standard Arabic texts a religious scholar would need. Al-Ghazzī's famous manual of Shāfiʿī *fiqh*, *al-Fatḥ al-Qarīb*, which circulated widely in Southeast Asia, is present in several manuscript fragments.[14] Also in *fiqh*, we have several copies of commentaries on Bā Faḍl's *al-Muqaddima al-Ḥaḍramiyya*, a text which was highly popular in Southeast Asia.[15] Sibṭ al-Mardīnī's *Sharḥ al-Raḥbiyya fī ʿilm al-farāʾiḍ*, a commentary on the work on inheritance law by al-Raḥbī (d. 579/1183), is represented by two fragments.[16] Al-Miṣrī's *ʿUmdat al-Sālik*, a Mamluk era legal manual, and the *Fatāwā* of Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Ramlī (d. 957/1550) confirm

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13   This was not possible at the time of writing owing to the pandemic.
14   MLZ 22, 67, 88d, 93, 94, 108, 111b, 112.
15   MLZ 27a, 28, 61a.
16   MLZ 89c, 98.

the importance of Shāfiʿī *fiqh*.[17] Moving onto the religious sciences, there are several fragments of al-Suyūṭī's famous Qurʾān commentary, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, which circulated widely in Southeast Asia, and was rendered into Malay, as Peter Riddell has studied (although here only the Arabic is represented).[18] Credal works include al-Sanūsī's famous *ʿaqīda* which was extremely widely circulated in Southeast Asia, and a commentary on al-Shaybānī's credal poem.[19]

Grammar is represented by several copies of or commentaries on the *Ājurrū-miyya*[20] and al-Jurjānī's *al-ʿAwāmil fī l-Naḥw*,[21] both very common elementary texts. So far all these texts present few surprises: they are largely introductory texts that one might expect to find in any Shāfiʿī scholar's library, and the only evidence of local tastes is in *al-Muqaddima al-Ḥaḍramiyya*, which although a Yemeni work does seem to have been especially popular in Southeast Asia. Rather more surprising are the two fragments of the work by the Ottoman scholar Birgevi Mehmed Efendi (d. 981/1573), *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya*.[22] This conservative text, which aimed to promote piety shorn of *bidʿa* (innovations) and criticised many aspects of Sufi practice, was highly influential in the Middle East, manuscripts of it are rarely attested in Southeast Asia, although an adaptation of it was found in the Palembang court library in the early nineteenth century.[23] The presence of this text on Buton is testimony both to Birgevi's enormous influence, but also Buton's links with the Middle East.

The range of Sufi texts is rather more limited than the Abdul Mulku Zahari collection. Several manuscripts represent al-Ghazālī's *Bidāyat al-Hidāya*,[24] a popular elementary work on piety. Interest in al-Ghazālī is also suggested by a bilingual Arabic-Malay manuscript (MLZ 83) offering text and translation of Ibn Qudāma al-Maqdisī's (d. 620/1223) *Mukhtaṣar Minhāj al-Qāṣidīn*, an abridgement of Ibn al-Jawzī's summary of the *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-Dīn*. However, there do not appear to be any manuscripts of works by Ibn ʿArabī, nor, per-

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17   MLZ 75a, 78.

18   For the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* in the Malay world see Peter Riddell, *Transferring a tradition: ʿAbd Al-Raʾuf Al-Singkili's rendering into Malay of the Jalalayn commentary* (Berkeley: Berkeley: Centers for South and Southeast Asia Studies, 1990).

19   MLZ 16, 30.

20   MLZ 25, 28b. 41f, 102.

21   MLZ 32, 73d.

22   MLZ 43, 86.

23   G.W.J. Drewes, *Directions for Travellers on the Mystic Path: Zakariyyaʾ al-Anṣārī's* Kitāb Fatḥ al-Raḥmān *and its Indonesian Adaptations* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977), 202; on Birgevi see Katharina A. Ivanyi, *Virtue, Piety and the Law: A Study of Birgivī Meḥmed Efendī's* al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya (Leiden: Brill, 2020), esp. 117–159.

24   MLZ 37, 75b, 95, 116.

haps more remarkably, this Indian interpreter Burhānpūrī, whose *al-Tuḥfa al-Mursala* conceptualised the 'Seven Grades of Being' system that fundamentally influenced Butonese political structures. There is, however, a fragment of the work on the perfect man, *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, by ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī which shows strong influence from Ibn ʿArabī.[25]

The most interesting aspect of the collection is unquestionably the works produced by local scholars it contains. A few manuscripts reflect the influence of Arabic texts by Nusantaran authors from outside Buton. A single copy of a work by the Sulawesi scholar Yūsuf al-Maqāṣīrī (d. 1111/1699), the *Safīnat al-Najāḥ* reveals the existence of a completely different textual tradition of this work to that generally known under this title.[26] However, despite Yūsuf al-Maqāṣīrī's connections in the region, which are referred to in the Malay *silsila* of a *dhikr* manuscript which connects him to local Khalwatis,[27] there are perhaps surprisingly no other works by him in this collection. Other Indonesian authors represented include Shaykh Muḥammad al-Nawāwī al-Bantanī (d. 1314/1897), who spent most of life and wrote all his works in Arabia.[28] Nonetheless, it is intriguing that there are so far not more Indonesian Arabic texts, for example by ʿAbd al-Raʾūf Sīngkilī, or al-Maqāṣīrī in particular, given these are known to have been widely read in Sulawesi, spawning local imitators. The reason may lie in the fact that Indonesian Arabic works tend to be overwhelmingly preoccupied with debates about the Sufi concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (Unity of being), which, with a couple of exceptions, is largely absent from this collection. One of these exceptions is al-Jīlī's *al-Insān al-Kāmil*, and another is a work by Muḥammad al-Makkī, who despite his name, is probably a local author, hitherto only the other known copy of this work appearing in a collection of works by Yūsuf al-Maqāṣīrī and other largely Sulawesi authors from the sultanate of Bone.[29] Some of the Malay manuscripts in the La Ode Zaenu collection also show an interest in Sufi metaphysics.[30] However, the locally produced Butonese works, while frequently dealing with Sufism, show little interest in *waḥdat al-wujūd*, and instead concentrate on *dhikr* and *ḥadīth*.

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25   MLZ 45.
26   MLZ 7; s.v. in Appendix for references; on the author see also Azyumardi Azra, "al-Maqa-ssari, Yusuf", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 15 February 2022 http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_36206, although note that the spelling of the name given by Azra is wrong.
27   MLZ 105.
28   MLZ 26.
29   Jakarta, National Library, MS A 108.
30   MLZ 30, 120.

Indeed, the prominence of local Butonese works in this collection, in particular the compositions of Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, is especially striking. While twenty-five titles of works produced outside of Southeast Asia have been identified, in total twelve works are from Buton and another three are by the above mentioned Southeast Asian authors. Thus nearly a third of the identified Arabic works in the collection are composed in Buton, primarily in the fields of *ḥadīth* studies and Sufism. Clearly, some caution is needed, as we do not know what texts have been lost from the collection; on the other hand, it seems likely that a decent proportion of the unidentified texts are from Buton. The La Ode Zaenu collection thus suggests the existence of a distinctive Arabophone articulation of Islam, in which Middle Eastern texts had an important role, but so too did their distinctive local Butonese reinterpretations. Indeed, even in the field of *ḥadīth*, which is well represented in the library, many of the manuscripts seem to be derived from a *ḥadīth* collection compiled by Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, the *Durrat al-Aḥkām*, rather than one of the canonical collections. Several of these are otherwise unattested elsewhere, and are described below, offering new insights into nineteenth century intellectual culture on Buton.

3   Previously Unknown Butonese Arabic Works

In an earlier article I provided information about nine Arabic works by Muḥammad ʿAydarūs that preserved in the Abdul Mulku Zahari collection.[31] The La Ode Zaenu collection not only provides additional copies of some works preserved there, but a number of works which are otherwise unattested, and my discussion here thus complements my earlier list:

1.   Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Durrat al-Aḥkām fī Sharīʿat Sayyid al-Anām* (The Pearl of Judgemnets on the Prophet's Law) (La Ode Zaenu MLZ 18, MLZ 55b, and probably numerous other fragmentary manuscripts, fig. 2.1).[32]

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31   Peacock, "Arabic Manuscripts from Buton." I note here one difference which I am at present unable to explain, but which is certainly worthy of further investigation. Although attributed to the same author by explicit statements in the texts, works by Muḥammad ʿAydarūs unique to the La Ode Zaenu collection are written in a notably less accurate Arabic than those in the Abdul Mulku Zahari collection, including grammatical mistakes even in their titles.

32   Examples such manuscripts are MLZ 40, 42, 96, 113, 115, 117. Given the lack of a complete manuscript of this work against which to compare them, it is difficult to be certain, but

FIGURE 2.1 Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Durrat al-Aḥkām*. MLZ 18, fol. 1ʳ

the similarities in style and method to the extant parts of the *Durrat al-Aḥkām* strongly suggests they comprise part of this large text.

This is one of Muḥammad ʿAydarūs's major works, a *ḥadīth* collection based on the canonical collections of Bukhārī, Muslim and the *Sunan* of Bayhaqī, composed in 1260/1844. The texts of the manuscripts that preserve its introduction vary slightly, most notably over the number of *ḥadīth* included, which is given as two thousand in MLZ 55 and four thousand in MLZ 18. A complete manuscript of the *Durrat al-Aḥkām* has not been preserved, but it is highly likely that numerous other identified fragments of *ḥadīth* works in the La Ode Zaenu collection are in fact portions of the *Durrat al-Aḥkām*, as the arrangement of *ḥadīth* in them bears clear affinities with the system used in the securely attributed parts of the *Durrat al-Aḥkām*.

In his introduction, Muḥammad ʿAydarūs explains the circumstances of the work's composition. It is interesting to note that the *Durrat al-Aḥkām* was composed while he was sultan, indicating that he maintained his role as a religious teacher and scholar while in office (1824–1851).

يقول العبد الفقير الحقير الراجي رحمة رب المعين محمد عيدروس قايم الدين ابن الفقير بدر الدين البطوني بلداً والبادية مسكنة غفر الله له ولوالديه والمشائخة والجميع المسلمين لما كانت هجرة النبي عليه افضل الصلاة والسلام وازكي التحية والا كرام الف ومائتين وستين سنةً طلب مني بعض الاحباﺋﻲ رحمهم الله تعالي ان الف له مختصرا في الاحاديث سيد البرية والاحاديث اصحابه الذين كانوا يحدثون الناس افعاله السنية وفي اقوال العلماء العالمين والصلحاء الزاهدين فاجبت إلى ذلك وان لم يكن اهلاً لذلك مستعينا بالله وتوكلا عليه لا ملجا ولا منجا منه الّا اليه وهو حسبي و نعم الوكيل واساله الستر الجميل و جمعت له نحو اربعة الاف³³ حديثا او زايداً عنها بعضها معدودة و بعضها غير معدودة وكلها مرويات في الكتب الاحاديث المعتبرة كصحيحي البخاري ومسلم وسنن البيهقي الكبرى وغيرها واذكره محذوفة الاسانيد كلها وقدّمت للمناسبة اول هذا المختصر ايات القرآنية التي تدل علي وجوب اتباعه في اقوال وافعال صلي الله عليه والسلم وعلي آله واصحابه واتباعه

The poor, humble servant who hopes for the mercy of God who assists, Muḥammad ʿAydarūs Qāʾim al-Dīn son of Badr al-Dīn from the land of Buton, a resident of Baadia, may God forgive him, his parents, his shaykhs and all the Muslims. When it was the year of the hijra of the Prophet—

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33   The text of MLZ 18 reads الان, an obvious mistake. MLZ 55b has الفين.

upon him be the best prayers and peace and the purest greetings and honour—1260, some of my friends, may God have mercy on them, asked me to compose an abridgement on the *ḥadīth* of the Lord of Mankind and his Companions who related *ḥadīth* about his glorious deeds, and on the sayings of the knowledgeable scholars and the ascetic righteous ones. I consented to this, even if I am not qualified, seeking God's aid and trusting in Him, for there is no refuge or salvation save in Him, for God is sufficient, and is the best trustee, and I ask him to veil [my sins]. I gathered around 4000 *ḥadīth* or more, some numbered, some unnumbered but all of them transmitted in the respectable books of *ḥadīth* like the *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, the Great *Sunan* of al-Bayhaqī and others. I relate all of them with the *isnād*s omitted, and I prefaced this abridgement with Qurʾānic verses that prove the necessity of following [the Prophet] in his words and deeds, peace and blessings be upon him, on his family, Companions and followers.

2. Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Sirāj al-Muttaqīn* (Lamp of the Pious) (MLZ 41b, 63b, 68a)

Modelled on al-Nawāwī's famous *ḥadīth* collection *al-Arbaʿūn*, this treatise provides forty *ḥadīth* covering the basics of faith, including the *shahāda*, reading the Qurʾān, the sunna, piety, repentance and entrance into paradise. The main sources are given as the famous *ḥadīth* collections of Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Ṭabarānī and al-Tirmidhī. The introduction provides no information about the circumstances of its composition but clearly names the author, as Muḥammad ʿAydarūs invariably does in his works: *yaqūlu al-ʿabd al-faqīr al-ḥaqīr Muḥammad ʿAydarūs Qāʾim al-Dīn ibn al-faqīr Badr al-Dīn al-Buṭūnī*. The lack of any reference to his royal status is characteristic, and appropriate for a work of piety.

3. Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Uṭūr al-Miskiyya fi al-Aḥādīth Khayr al-Barriyya* (sic) (Musk Perfume on the Prophet's Hadith) (MLZ 41b)

Another collection of forty ḥadīth. In his introduction, Muḥammad ʿAydarūs explains that he has composed 'an agreeable treatise on forty ḥadīth covering the rules of religion and containing the morals of the virtuous' drawing on the *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. As with the *Durrat al-Aḥkām* and the *Sirāj al-Muttaqīn*, the *isnād*s are abridged. At the end of each *ḥadīth* Muḥammad ʿAydarūs provides the source who related this *ḥadīth*, e.g. *rawāhu al-Bukhārī wa-Muslim* or *rawāhu Muslim wa l-Tirmidhī*.

4.   Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Targhīb al-Murīd* (The Wakening of Desire of the
      Aspirant Sufi) (MLZ 41c)

In the introduction, this short text is described as 'a brief work on the virtue
of knowledge, scholars and teachers' (*nubdha fi faḍl al-ʿilm waʾl-ʿulamāʾ wa-
l-mutaʿallimīn*). Only three pages can be securely attributed to it, although
it is entirely possible that other fragments of the text survive among the La
Ode Zaenu manuscripts. The extant portions of the text provide *ḥadīth* on the
theme of knowledge (*ʿilm*). The title indicates that it was perhaps destined for
an audience of the author's Sufi *murīd*s, but there is nothing explicitly Sufi
about the text.

5.   Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Rīḥat al-ʿitriyya fī Faḍl Sunna al-Nabawiyya* (sic)
      (Perfumed Scents on the Virtue of Prophetic Sunna) (MLZ 68b).

The title of this work is somewhat confused. The manuscript, of which only
three pages appears to be extant, gives the title in the introduction as *al-
risāla al-qudsiyya fi faḍl sunnat al-nabawiyya* but the first two words have been
crossed out and replaced with *Rīḥat al-ʿitriyya*. Despite the similarity of its title,
this work is distinct from the *ʿUṭūr al-Miskiyya*, although it shares its preoccu-
pation with *ḥadīth*. No work with either title appears in Muḥammad ʿAydarūs's
will.[34] Owing to the fragmentary state of the work, it is not possible to be
entirely definitive about its contents, but it is evident from the title that it aimed
to promote the practice (*sunna*) of the Prophet, probably through apposite
ḥadīth.

6.   Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Shummūmāt al-Wurrād fī Tartīb al-Awrād* (New-
      comers' Scents in the Arrangement of Litanies) (MLZ 76, fig. 2.2, fig. 2.3)

The introduction of this work gives an interesting account of the circumstances
of its composition that sheds fresh light on the intellectual culture of early nine-
teenth century Buton:

فيقول العبد الفقير الحقير الراجي رحمة رب المعين محمد عيدروس قايم الدين ابن الفقير بدر الدين
البطوني بلداً والبادية مسكنة طلب مني بعض الاحبابي من العرب حفظه الله من الشدايد
والكرب الشيخ احمد بن محمد المقري نسبا واليماني بلداً والوصابي محلاً والشافعي مذهباً ان اصنع
له رسالة في الاذكار لما ورد في الاحاديث والاثار فاجبته الي ذلك

34   See Peacock, "Arabic Manuscripts from Buton," 52, n. 38.

> The poor humble servant, who seeks the mercy of God who assists, Muḥammad ʿAydarūs Qāʾim al-Dīn son of the poor Badr al-Dīn, from the country of Buton, resident of Baadia,[35] says: one of my Arab friends—my God protect them from calamities and misfortune—Shaykh Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Muqrīʾ in lineage, from Yemen, a resident of Wusab and Shāfiʿī in legal school asked me to make for him a treatise on dhikr, on account of what has been related in *ḥadīth* and works of old. I agreed to that.

This short passage thus suggests that there was a community of Arabs resident on Buton, of whom Shaykh Aḥmad was one representative. It also presents an intriguing inversion of the relationship between Middle Easterners and Southeast Asians that typically appears in scholarship:[36] here the Yemeni shaykh is depicted as seeking religious knowledge from the Butonese scholar. Indeed, this is not the only evidence for Shaykh Aḥmad's interest in Muḥammad ʿAydarūs 's works, for he was also the owner of a manuscript of the *Sabīl al-Salām* which is today preserved in the Abdul Mulku Zahari collection.[37] Unfortunately at present no other information is available about Shaykh Aḥmad. However, the presence of an Arab community with scholarly interests and their close links to the sultan may be a factor in the importance of Arabic as a literary language on Buton. It cannot, however, be the full story, for Arab communities, predominantly Hadramis were found across Southeast Asia, but seem generally to have become indigenised and adopted Malay rather than Arabic as their literary language.

As for the *Shummūmāt al-Wurrād* itself, the work discussed *dhikr*, a major concern of the Sammaniyya *ṭarīqa* that was favoured by the Buton court. It is divided into an introduction dealing with the virtues of *dhikr*, and several chapters (*fuṣūl*). The introduction is based partly on *ḥadīth*, but there is also a reference to the exposition of al-Qushayrī's *Risāla* by al-Marṣafī (d. 930/1524), the *Manhaj al-Sālik ilā Ashraf al-Masālik*, which is cited as a source for the thirty-five praiseworthy characteristics of *dhikr*.[38] No sources are given for the exposition of *dhikr* in the surviving chapters of the work, which is incomplete.

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35 Baadia is the village outside Bau-Bau where Muḥammad ʿAydarūs built a mosque and a palace.

36 For example, Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern ʾUlamā' in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004).

37 Peacock, "Arabic Manuscripts from Buton," 60, 65, fig 4a.

38 MLZ 76, fol. 3ᵛ; for the author see Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur* (Leiden, 1942), vol. 2, 332.
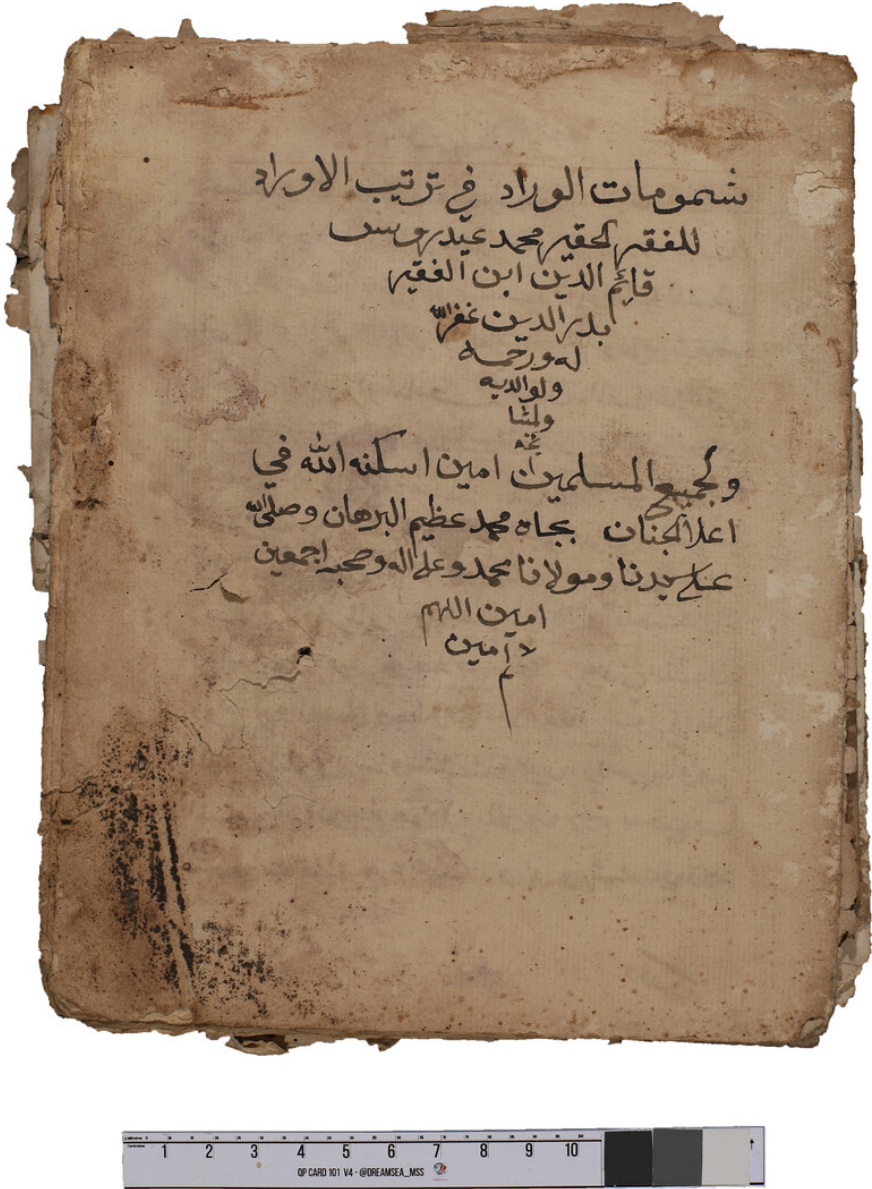
FIGURE 2.2 Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Shummūmāt al-Warrād fi Tartib al-Awrad*, MLZ 76, fol. 1ʳ
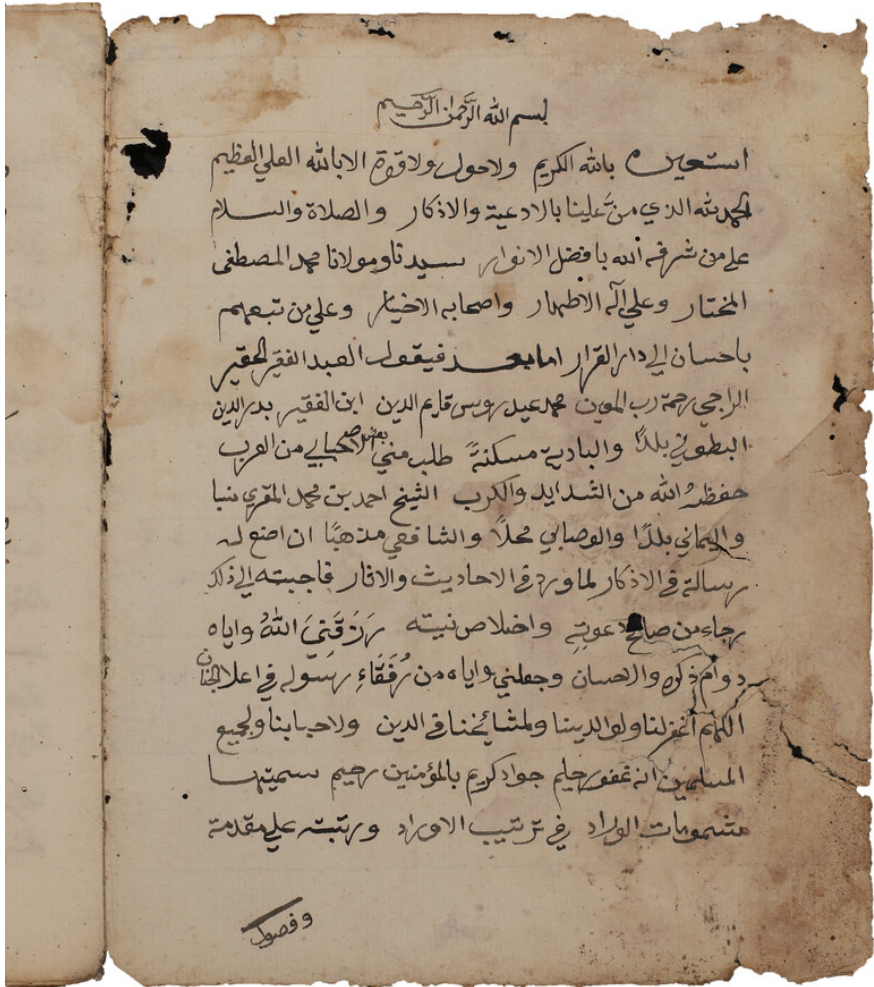
FIGURE 2.3 Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Shummūmāt al-Warrād fi Tartib al-Awrad*, MLZ 76, fol. 1ᵛ

7. Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Mukhtaṣar fī ʿUlūm al-Dīn* (Abridgement on the Religious Sciences) (MLZ 88a).

This manuscript is a composite of two works by Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, an extract from the famous Shāfiʿī *fiqh* text by al-Ghazzī, *al-Fatḥ al-Qarīb*, and ʿAbd al-Ṣamad's *Anīs al-Muttaqīn*. It is the two works by Muḥammad ʿAydarūs that are of the most interest. The first, otherwise unattested, is preserved in a frag-

ment of a single folio on fol. 2ᵛ, and represents an otherwise unknown work evidently dealing with *dhikr*, the *Mukhtaṣar fī ʿUlūm al-Dīn*. After the normal praise of God, it starts:

فيقول العبد الفقير الحقير الراجي رحمة ربه القدوس هذه مختصر مختصرة في اصول الدين فيما

لا بد علي المكلفين وفي فضائل الاذكار واداب ذكر الذكرين وفي فضائل الصلاة والسلام علي

النبي سيد المرسلين وفي فضائل العلم والعلماء واداب المتعلمين

> The poor humble servant who seeks Holy God's mercy says: this is an abridgement on the fundaments of religion, dealing with what is obligatory for its adherents, the virtues of *dhikr* and the behaviour of those who utter *dhikr*, the virtues of prayer and peace be upon the Prophet, Lord of Messengers, and the virtues of knowledge and the scholars, and the behaviour of the learned.

The second treatise is a fragment of the *Tanqiyat al-Qulūb*, till now known only in a single other copy held in the Abdul Mulku Zahari collection. This has been digitised by the British Library's Endangered Archives programme.[39] Although the La Ode Zaenu manuscript is only a fragment of this extensive text, in which Muḥammad ʿAydarūs most fully expressed his vision of the integration of piety and politics, it is a significant one, as it preserves the introduction intact, which is severely damaged in the Abdul Mulku Zahari manuscript. A third fragment of this work is preserved in MLZ 11a.

8.   Untitled work probably by Muḥammad ʿAydarūs (MLZ 64)

Damage to the first folio means the incipit cannot be read completely, but the extant portions read: *fa-yaqūlᵘ al-ʿabd al-faqīr ila Allāh al-malik al-ḥaqq al-mubīn Muḥammad … n al-faqīr Bad ….* It seems the missing parts of the text are likely to have contained Muḥammad ʿAydarūs's name (probably in addition to his *laqab* Qāʾim al-Dīn which usually appears on his works) and that of his father, Badr al-Dīn (compare for example the introduction to the *Durrat al-Aḥkām* given above). Unfortunately the portion of text containing the title of the work has been destroyed, but it deals with credal matters (*ʿaqīda*) and is divided into three chapters (*fuṣūl*) and a conclusion. The present manuscript contains the three chapters, but the conclusion appears to be missing. The first

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39   For a discussion of this text see Peacock, "Arabic Manuscripts from Buton," 73–76; the EAP digitised manuscript is catalogued as EAP212/2/.

chapter deals with God's oneness (*waḥdāniyya*), based largely on quotations from Qurʾān and ḥadīth; the second chapter discusses Islam, faith and charity (*al-islām wa-l-īmān wa-l-iḥsān*), while the third is devoted to 'encouragement of following the Prophet's sunna' (*fī l-taḥrīḍ ʿalā itbāʿ sunnat sayyidnā rasūl allāh*), again drawing the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*.

9. (?) Muhammmad Nūḥ b. Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *ʿilm al-Sulūk bi-Faḍl al-Mulūk* (The Science of Wayfaring by the Virtue of Kings) (MLZ 47, fig. 2.4). This short treatise covers only two folios, but its importance derives from the fact that it belonged to a hitherto unknown son of Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, who identifies himself as "ibn al-faqīr Qāʾim al-Dīn al-Buṭūnī", the titles used by Muḥammad ʿAydarūs. Given the placement of the owner's name on the title page, in the usual position where we would find that of the author, it is possible that Muḥammad Nūḥ was not just the owner but also the author. We know of two other sons of Muḥammad ʿAydarūs who wrote works connected with Sufism. Haji ʿAbd al-Hādī travelled to Mecca in the company of a prominent Wolio court poet, Haji ʿAbdul Ghanī, and himself composed a Wolio verse work on Sufi teaching, *Kaokabi*. Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, who ruled as sultan between 1871 and 1885, wrote the *Ibtidāʾ Sayr al-ʿĀrifīn*, an adaptation of Ibn ʿArabī's *al-Anwār fī mā yamnuḥuhᵘ ṣāḥib al-khalwa min al-asrār*, as well as *Tanbīh al-Ghāfil wa-Tanzīh al-Maḥāfil*.[40] Muḥammad Nūḥ's *ʿilm al-Sulūk* continues this tradition of the composition of Sufi texts, discussing the issue of the soul (*al-rūḥ*), arguing that the latter is separate from, and created four thousand years before, the body. This concept of the soul evidently owes much to neo-Platonic thought as developed by Ibn al-ʿArabī and his successors, although the extreme brevity of this treatise does not allow the author to develop or explain this idea fully.

4   The origins of the Manuscripts

The manuscripts in the La Ode Zaenu collection date from the late seventeenth to early twentieth centuries, although the majority are doubtless nineteenth century. Few of the earlier owners of the manuscripts can be identified, but it is worth noting that in addition to the *ʿilm al-Sulūk* belonging to the sultan's son Muḥammad Nūḥ, the latter was also the owner of at least one other manuscript in the collection, Muḥammad Makkī, *Waḥdat al-Wujūd fī Bayān al-Maʿrifa* (fig. 2.5).[41] This suggests that at least some of the manuscripts may have made

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40   Peacock, "Arabic Manuscripts from Buton," 64.

41   MLZ 100.
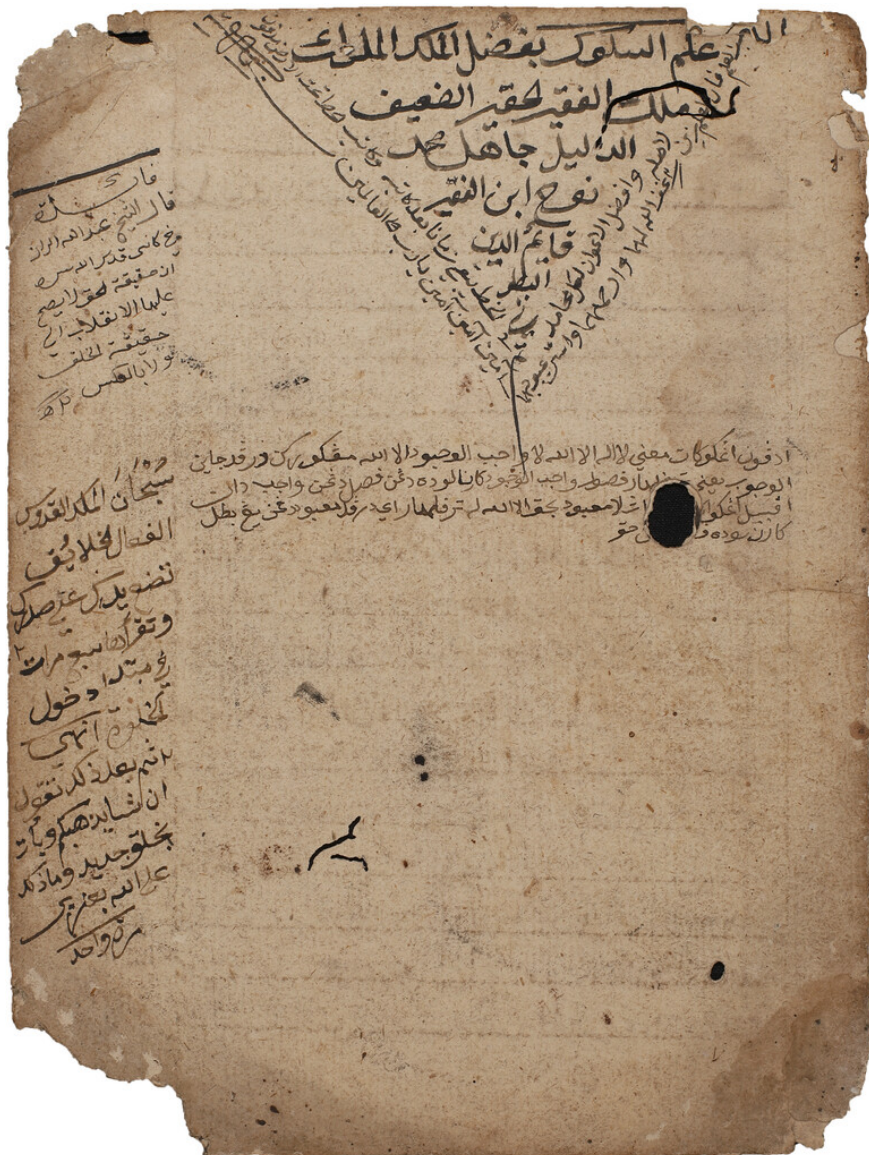
FIGURE 2.4 *ʿIlm al-Sulūk bi-Faḍl al-Mulūk*, property of Muhammmad Nūḥ b. Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, MLZ 47, fol. 1ʳ

their way from the court to this private, scholarly collection. Such exchanges are also attested in Abdul Mulku Zahari collection, where some of the manuscripts were formerly owned by Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, and then entered the possession of his secretary, ʿAbd al-Khāliq, the ancestor of the present owners. Given the importance of the sultan's scholarly credentials in Buton, such an exchange is hardly surprising. It is also underlined by the relationship between sultan Muḥammad ʿAydarūs and a local Yemeni scholar mentioned in the *Shummūmāt al-Wurrād*. Most of the manuscripts lack a colophon, but the majority were almost certainly copied on Buton.

However, the manuscripts also provide occasional clues to wider regional and even international connections. The Khalwati *silsila* in the Malay dhikr manuscript (MLZ 105, fig. 2.6) suggests a connection between Buton and Makassar, and that it was through Makassar, the major regional capital, that new religious developments reached the island. The connection with mainland South Sulawesi is reinforced by MLZ 66, a Malay Sufi text entitled *Shuhūd al-Raḥmān* composed in "Langa Bugis" in 1212/1798. Further afield links to Melaka on the Malay peninsula are attested in MLZ 75, a collection of Arabic works on *fiqh*, Sufism and grammar copied in 1236–1237/1821–1822 by a certain ʿAbd al-Raḥmān bin ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Bā Riḍwān, whose name suggests he was a Hadrami (fig. 2.7). On fol. 100ʳ, bearing the date of 1238, is a list of Melaka notables, mentioning the Kapitan Melayu al-Ḥājj Abū Bakar bin al-Ḥājj ʿUthmān, Shaykh Aḥmad bin Muḥammad Bā Riḍwān, Enci Qāsim the Penghulu of Bukit Cina (the well-known district of Melaka), and the copyist ʿAbd al-Raḥmān bin ʿUmar bin Muḥammad Bā Riḍwān (fig. 2.8). The association of these individuals with Melaka is attested in another source, the legal documents of the Melaka Records in the British Library, dating to the period between 1780s to 1820s. The Kapitan Melayu Ḥājī Abū Bakar is mentioned in one of these,[42] and the Bā Riḍwān family appears in another.[43] This is, then, clearly a Melakan manuscript that is preserved in Buton.

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42   British Library, IOR R/9/12/41: Estate papers of the late Intije Naphisa, 29 Apr 1824–16 Jan 1827 [e] Statement by Abdul Wahid bin Abdul Rahim, deputy Kapitan Melayu to Haji Abu Bakar, certifying that the division of estate of Encik Napisah bin(ti) Uthman was carried out according to Islamic law, with two-thirds to her son Abdul Halim and one-third to her daughter Fatimah, dated 18 Jumadilakhir 1242 (Wednesday 17 January 1827 AD) in Melaka. I am very grateful to Annabel Teh Gallop for this information.

43   British Library, IOR R/9/22/52, f. 273 [No. 1126] Record of the sale of the female slave called Naimah and her son Durin by Shaykh Salam ibn Ahmad Bā Riḍwān to Tambi Muhammad Arifin for $50, witnessed by Shaykh Muḥammad bin Ahmad Bā Riḍwān and Tuan Sayyid Muḥammad bin Alwi bin Samiah; scribe Shaykh ʿUmar bin Muḥammad Bā Riḍwān; dated Jumat 15 Rejab 1224 (Saturday 26 August 1809 AD). I am very grateful to Annabel Teh Gallop for this information.

FIGURE 2.5 Muḥammad Makkī, *Waḥdat al-Wujūd fī Bayān al-Maʿrifa*, property of Muhamm-
mad Nūḥ b. Muḥammad ʿAydarūs. MLZ 100, fol. 1ʳ

FIGURE 2.6A   Khalwati silsila in Malay *dhikr* manuscript, MLZ 105 fol. 12ʳ

FIGURE 2.6B   Khalwati silsila in Malay *dhikr* manuscript, MLZ 105 fol. 12ᵛ

FIGURE 2.7 Colophon showing the name of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Bā Riḍ-
wān and the date of 1236–1237/1821–1822. MLZ 75, fol. 99ᵛ
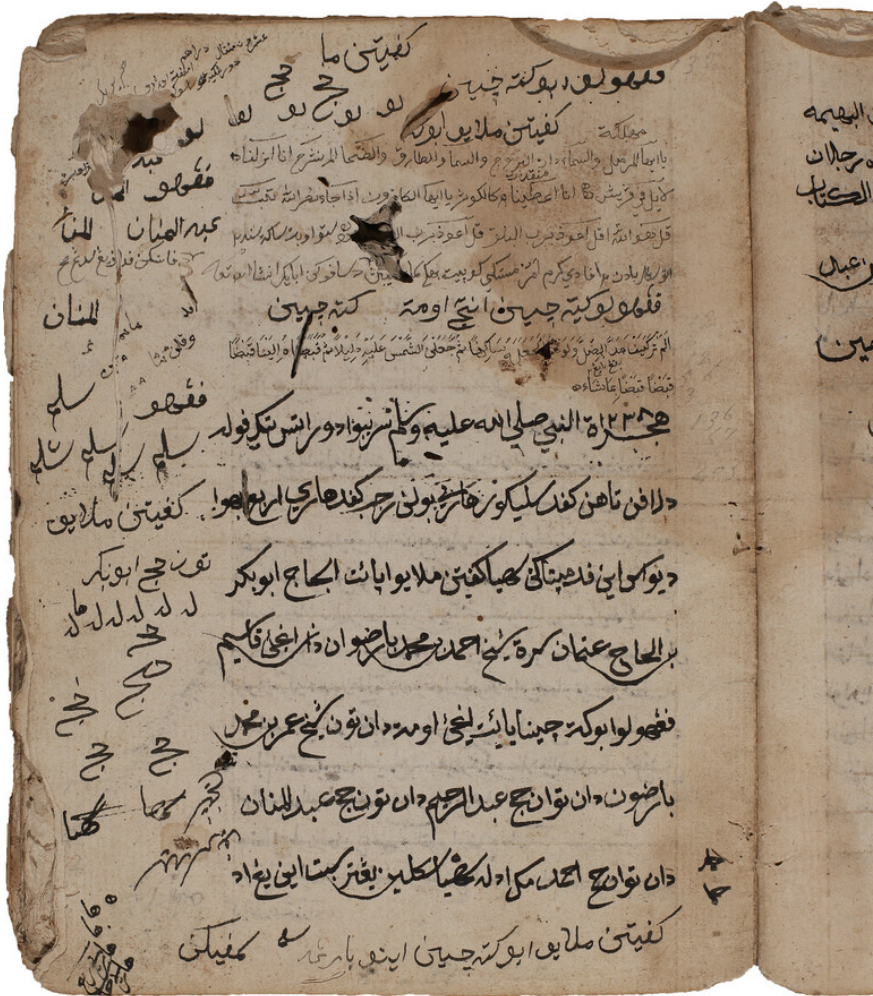
FIGURE 2.8 List of Melaka notables, mentioning the Kapitan Melayu al-Hajj Abu Bakr bin al-Hajj ʿUthman, Shaykh Aḥmad bin Muḥammad Bā Riḍwān, Enchi Qasim the Penghulu of Bukit Cina (the well-known district of Melaka), and the copyist ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Bā Riḍwān. MLZ 75, fol. 100ʳ

Given the importance of Melaka's commercial links, it is perhaps not surprising to find the occasional manuscript from there making its way to Southeast Sulawesi, although it does attest Buton's regional connections. It is, however, the oldest manuscript in the La Ode Zaenu collection that is the most intriguing in this regard. MLZ 43, a section of Birgevi's aforementioned *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya*, was copied by Rajab bin Muḥammad in 1081/1670 in 'the madrasa of Sultan Sulaymān' (fig. 2.9). While there are probably numerous madrasas associated various sultan Sulaymāns, the obvious conclusion would be that this manuscript was copied in the Süleymaniye madrasa in Istanbul, part of the vast Külliye built by Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520–1566). This supposition is confirmed by the presence of marginal notes in Turkish on fol. 1ʳ explaining Arabic vocabulary (fig. 2.10).[44] It is highly unlikely that such notes would have been added in an Arab province of the Ottoman empire, meaning that an Istanbul origin for this manuscript is probable.

5   Conclusion

The La Ode Zaenu collection represents a distinctive local intellectual culture, in which Butonese Arabic works played a major part in intellectual life. In this sense, the collection merely confirms what we know from the Abdul Mulku Zahari collection. However, as noted above, that collection was one with close connections to the court, being in the possession of the sultans' hereditary secretaries. While we do not know exactly how or when the La Ode Zaenu collection was assembled, it seems to represent the holdings of a scholarly family; it is not clear if the position of imam of the Masjid Istana that La Ode Zaenu held was hereditary, but it is highly likely to have been. It is a reasonable hypothesis that the collection was assembled by previous generations of imams. With the emphasis of elementary Shāfiʿī *fiqh* and grammar texts that we observe, it was evidently, at least in part, intended to furnish the basic tools for a local religious scholar.

If this hypothesis is correct, the collection presents a striking contrast in its contents with other such scholarly libraries from Southeast Asia that are now being documented. Annabel Gallop has studied the eighteenth century collection of Tengku Sayid Jafar from Selangor, now held in Deventer.[45] While

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44   *Al-ijāra* is glossed in Turkish as *ikarı kirayla vermek*.
45   Annabel Teh Gallop, "The Library of an 18th-Century Malay Bibliophile: Tengku Sayid Jafar, Panglima Besar of Selangor," in Olly Akkerman (ed.), *Social Codicology: the Multiple Lives of Texts in Muslim Societies* (forthcoming).
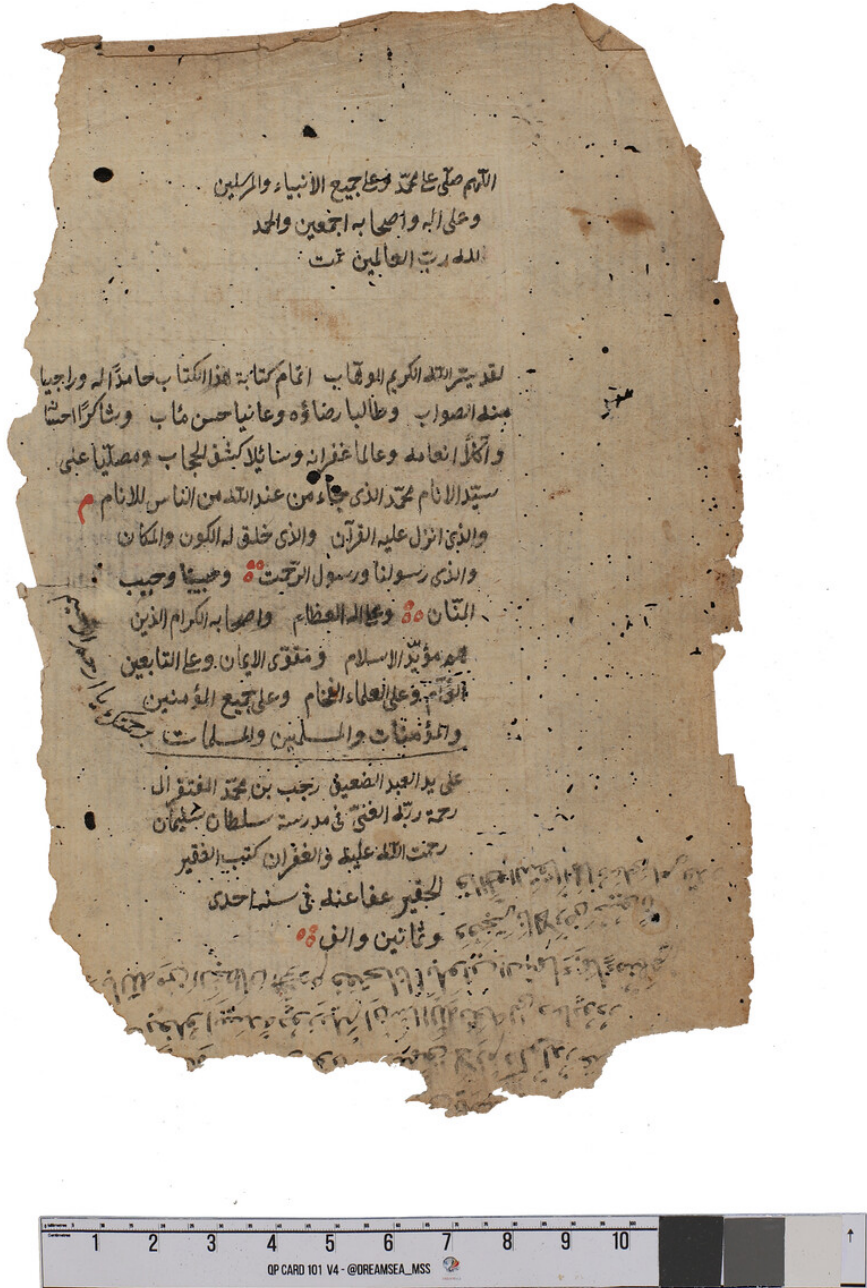
FIGURE 2.9 Birgevi's *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya*, copied by Rajab b. Muḥammad in 1081/1670 in 'the madrasa of Sultan Sulaymān', MLZ 43, fol. 43ʳ

FIGURE 2.10   Birgevi's *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya*, showing annotations in Turkish, MLZ 43, fol. 1ʳ

constituting a 'small theological library', all its Arabic texts are ones 'familiar from libraries throughout the Islamic world'.[46] Here, however, many of the texts are unfamiliar, otherwise unknown local productions, even in fields such as *ḥadīth*. Works like Muḥammad ʿAydarūs's *Durrat al-Aḥkām* draw heavily on canonical works such as the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, but apparently it was thought necessary to rebrand them by putting a local imprint on them. Moreover, the La Ode Zaenu collection suggests that these works were used not just in immediate court circles but also among local scholars. The latter, of course, had close links with the court too; indeed, as the story of the Yemeni Shaykh Aḥmad suggests, the court was in many ways the religious epicentre of the sultanate. The centrality of the court in religious life was reflected in the composition of Arabic works by the sultan and his descendants, and this contributed to forming a unique intellectual culture where these locally produced texts played a prominent role in studies of *ḥadīth* and Sufism. Nonetheless, as argued above, the contents of the collection also reflect Buton's connections with a broader religious—and doubtless commercial—world that stretched across the Indian Ocean and beyond, ultimately to Istanbul itself.

Appendix: The Contents of the La Ode Zaenu Manuscript Collection

A   *Arabic Works Composed by Authors from Buton and Indonesia*

MLZ 5 ḥadīth collection, possibly Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Durrat al-Aḥkām*.

MLZ 6 Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Sirāj al-Mubtadīn fīʾl-Sulūk sabīl al-Muttaqīn*.

MLZ 7 *Safīnat al-Najāt*; this treatise must be by Shaykh Yūsuf al-Maqāṣīrī (d. 1109 /1699) as on fol. 6ᵛ the author refers to his shaykh, Ayyūb al-Khalwatī. However, the text differs substantially from the *Safīnat al-Najāt* published by Tudjimah.[47] The text concerns the relationship between shaykh and *murīd*, a common theme of al-Maqāṣīrī's works.

MLZ 11 a) a fragment of Muhummad ʿAydarūs's *Tanqiyat al-Qulūb* dealing with sultanic justice [fol. 1ʳ–10]; b) fol. 11ʳ–37ʳ second unidentified work on prayer [*salat*].

MLZ 18 Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Durrat al-Aḥkām*.

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46   Ibid., p. 9.

47   Only an Indonesian translation has been published, see Tudjimah, *Syekh Yusuf Makasar: Riwayat dan Ajarannya* (Jakarta, Universitas Indonesia 1997), 194–204. It seems the original Arabic manuscript of the version translated by Tudjimah has been lost. This issue is further discussed in my forthcoming book on Arabic in Southeast Asia.

MLZ 23 fragment of Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Sabīl al-Salām*.

MLZ 26 Shaykh Muḥammad Nawawī ibn ʿUmar al-Bantanī, *Qūt al-ḥabīb al-gharīb: Tawshīḥ ʿalā Fatḥ al-Qarīb al-Mujīb;* b) ḥadīth collection, possibly Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Durrat al-Aḥkām*.

MLZ 40 fragment of a ḥadīth collection, probably Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Durrat al-Aḥkām*.

MLZ 41 a) fol. 1ʳ–8ᵛ unidentified text on Fridays also present in MLZ 71; b) fol. 9ʳ–18ʳ Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *al-ʿUṭūr al-Miskiyya* (complete) c) fol. 18ᵛ–24ʳ) Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Sirāj al-Muttaqīn* (complete) c) fol. 24ᵛ–25ᵛ Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Targhib al-Murid* (complete) d) fol. 26ᵛ–27ᵛ Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Sabīl al-Salām* e) fol. 26ᵛ–46ʳ unidentified ḥadīth collection e) fol. 47ʳ–58ʳ Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Sabīl al-Salām* f) fol. 58ᵛ–65ᵛ al-Kafrawī, *Sharḥ al-Ājurrūmiyya* g) fol. 66ʳ–71ᵛ ḥadīth.

MLZ 42 ḥadīth collection, probably Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Durrat al-Aḥkām*.

MLZ 46 Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Kashf al-Ḥijāb*.

MLZ 47 Muḥammad Nūḥ b. Qāʾim al-Dīn [Muḥammad ʿAydarūs] *ʿIlm al-Sulūk bi-faḍl al-Mulūk*.

MLZ 49 Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Ḍiyaʾ al-Anwār*.

MLZ 55 a) fol. 1ʳ–15ᵛ Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Sabīl al-Salām* (fragment); b) fol. 15ᵛ–21ᵛ Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Durrat al-Aḥkām*.

MLZ 59 Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Sabīl al-Salām*.

MLZ 61 a) Fol. 1ʳ–4ᵛ Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *Kitab al-Minhaj al-Qawīm Sharḥ al-Muqaddima al-Ḥaḍramiyya* b) fol. 5ʳ–12ᵛ Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Sabīl al-Salam* (fragments) c) 13ʳ unidentified fiqh and ḥadīth texts.

MLZ 63 a) 1ʳ–15ᵛ an unidentified work on ḥadīth b) fol. 16ʳ–19ᵛ Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Sirāj al-Muttaqīn* (fragment).

MLZ 64 untitled work probably by Muḥammad Aydarūs, in 3 *faṣl*, dealing with the basics of Muslim belief and practice.

MLZ 68 a) fol. 1ʳ–6ᵛ Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Sirāj al-Muttaqīn* (fragment); b) fol. 7ʳ–8ᵛ Muḥammad al-ʿAydarūs, *Rīḥat al-ʿitriyya fi fadl sunnat al-nabawiyya* (fragment).

MLZ 74 a) fol. 1ʳ–12ᵛ ḥadīth, possibly Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Durrat al-Aḥkām*; b) fol. 13ᵛ–19ᵛ, Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Sabīl al-Salām*.

MLZ 76 a) fol. 1ʳ–9ᵛ Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Shummūmāt al-Warrād fi Tartib al-Awrad*; b) fol. 10ᵛ table of contents of a book of dream interpretation c) fol. 13ʳ–13ᵛ *Qawāʿid al-Qawāʿid fī-mā abad min al-ʿAqāʾid*. An abridgement of al-Ghazālī's credal work, *Qawāʿid al-ʿAqāʾid* d) fol. 14ᵛ–18ᵛ ḥadīth e) fol. 19ʳ–20ᵛ treatise on the esoteric meanings of letters of the Arabic script and divine names f) fol. 21ʳ–49ʳ extracts from ḥadīth collections, possibly including Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Durrat al-Aḥkām*.

MLZ 88 a) fol. 2ᵛ Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Mukhtasar Mukhtasara fi ʿulum al-Din*; b) fol. 1ʳ, 3ᵛ–10ᵛ Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Tanqiyat al-Qulūb*; c) fol. 11ʳ–d) fol. 21ʳ–41ᵛ al-Ghazzī, *al-Fatḥ al-Qarīb* e) fol. 43ᵛ–47ᵛ ʿAbd al-Samad b. *al-faqih* Husayn ʿAbdallah, *Anīs al-Muttaqīn*.[48]

MLZ 91 Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *al-Ḥabl al-Wathīq*, completed 1252/1836.

MLZ 92 untitled fragment of Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Sabīl al-Salām*.

MLZ 96, a) fol. 1ʳ–6ᵛ ḥadīth, probably fragment of Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Durrat al-Aḥkām* b) fragment of Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Sabīl al-Salām*.

MLZ 97 fragment of Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Sabīl al-Salām*.

MLZ 100 Muḥammad Makki, *Waḥdat al-Wujūd fi Bayān al-Maʿrifa;* property of Muḥammad Nūḥ b. Muḥammad ʿAydarūs.

MLZ 111 a) fragment of Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Sabīl al-Salām*; b) al-Ghazzī, *al-Fatḥ al-Qarīb*.

MLZ 113 ḥadīth collection, probably Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Durrat al-Aḥkām*.

MLZ 115 ḥadīth collection, probably Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Durrat al-Aḥkām*.

MLZ 117 ḥadīth collection, probably Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Durrat al-Aḥkām*.

MLZ 123 untitled fragment of Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Sabīl al-Salām*.

MLZ 124 fragments of ḥadīth collection, probably Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Durrat al-Aḥkām* and Muḥammad ʿAydarūs, *Sabīl al-Salām*.

B   *Arabic Works from the Middle East or of Unknown Author.*

MLZ 2 *Kitāb al-Adhkār*, author unidentified. This is not the famous work by al-Nawāwī of this title; the extant parts of the text, comprising chapter 8 of a larger work, deal with the 'defects of the tongue'—calumnies and slanders, and seems to be abridged from al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*.

MLZ 4 Arabic magical text dealing with talismans and *ʿilm al-wafq* (the science of magic squares).

MLZ 8 Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Kurdī al-Madanī, *al-Ḥawāshī al-Madaniy-ya ʿalā Sharḥ al-Muqadimma al-Haḍramiyya*.

MLZ 9 fragment of an unidentified work on prayer.

MLZ 13 a work on prayers and invocation of God, with extensive poetical quotations, including verses (fol. 5ʳ) from the famous Khalwati Muḥammad al-Bakrī (d. 1162/1749); some *ʿilm al-wafq* at end.

MLZ 16 a commentary on the credal poem *Naẓm al-Shaybāniyya fi'l-Tawḥīd*.

MLZ 17 unidentified text on faith (*īmān*) in question and answer format.

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48   This work has sometimes erroneously been attributed to ʿAbd al-Samad Palimbani, see Mohammed Hussain Ahmad, *Islam in the Malay World: Al-Falimbānī's Scholarship* (Kuala Lumpur, IIUM Press, 2017), 260–261.

MLZ 19 unidentified text on names of the spirits (*asmāʾ al-arwāḥ*).

MLZ 21 unidentified text on *dhikr*.

MLZ 22 al-Ghazzī, *al-Fatḥ al-Qarīb*.

MLZ 24 collection of ḥadīth on moral behaviour.

MLZ 25 commentary on *al-Ājurrūmiyya*, possibly Ibn Maʾmūn al-Maghribī's *al-risala al-maymūniyya fī tawḥīd al-Ājurrūmiyya*.

MLZ 27 a) al-Suyūṭī, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* b) Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *Kitab al-Minhaj al-Qawīm Sharḥ al-Muqaddima al-Haḍramiyya*.

MLZ 28 a) fol. 1ʳ–8ᵛ ḥadīth on moral behaviour; b) fol. 9ʳ–18ᵛ *al-Ājurrūmiyya*.

MLZ 30 al-Sānūsī, *al-ʿAqīda al-Ṣughrā*.

MLZ 31 Qurʾān *juzʾ ʿamma*.

MLZ 32 al-Jurjānī, *al-ʿAwāmil fiʾl-Naḥw* (interlinear).

MLZ 35 ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī, *Mukhtaṣar Tadhkirat al-Qurṭubī al-musammā tadhkira bi-umūr al-mawtā waʾl-akhira*.

MLZ 36 fragment of a work on the Prophet, his miracles and attributes. The work must have been composed after the 17th C as on fol. 2ʳ the *Fatāwā* of Aḥmad al-Ramlī (i.e. Khayr al-Dīn Ramlī d. 1082/1671) is quoted.

MLZ 37 al-Ghazālī, *Bidāyat al-Hidāya*.

MLZ 39 al-Jazūlī, *Dalāʾil al-Khayrāt*.

MLZ 43 Birgevi, *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya*, copied in madrasa of sultan Sulayman, almost certainly in Istanbul, note existence of Turkish glosses on fol. 1ʳ. Copyist Rajab b. Muḥammad, 1081/1670.

MLZ 44 fragment of al-Suyūṭī, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*.

MLZ 45 ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, *al-Insān al-Kāmil* (*bāb* 11–12).

MLZ 51 extract from al-Nawāwī, *Riyāḍ al-Ṣaliḥīn*.

MLZ 52 Shaykh Abuʾl-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī, *Kitāb Shams al-Maʿārif*.

MLZ 53 Abridged collection of ḥadīth based on *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*.

MLZ 54 fragment of *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, with abridged isnads.

MLZ 57 Qurʾān, *Sūrat al-Anbiyāʾ*.

MLZ 58 *Kitāb Khawāṣṣ al-Qurʾān*, dealing with magical and divinatory properties of Qurʾānic verses.

MLZ 67, Abū Shujāʿ al-Ghazzī, *al-Fatḥ al-Qarīb* (*fiqh*).

MLZ 70 text on washing before prayers (*wuḍūʾ*), unidentified.

MLZ 71 ḥadīth on ritual practice, covering washing (*ghusl*) on Fridays, the virtues of seeking knowledge on Fridays and visitation of graves of parents on Fridays. The same text is represented in MLZ 41a.

MLZ 72 a) fol. 1–12b text on pillars of Islam and ritual purity (*ṭahāra*)—perhaps introductory parts of a fiqh work (unidentified); b) collection of 40 ḥadīth (unidentified).

MLZ 73 fragment of al-Suyūṭī, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*.

MLZ 75 a) Ibn al-Naqīb al-Miṣrī (d. 769 AH), *ʿUmdat al-Sālik wa-ʿuddat al-Nāsik* (fol. 2ʳ–99ᵛ), copied by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Bā Riḍwān, 25 Shawwal 1237/July 1822; b) Abu Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Bidāyat al-Hidāya* (fol. 101ᵛ–141ᵛ); c) al-Zanjānī, a text on grammar possibly his *Kitāb al-Taṣrīf* copied Muharram 1237/October 1821 (fol. 142ʳ–160ᵛ; lacks beginning); d) al-Jurjānī, *al-ʿAwāmil fi'l-Naḥw*, Muharram 1237/October 1821, copied by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Bā Riḍwān (fol. 161ʳ–165ᵛ); e) al-Ḥarīrī, *Mulḥat al-Iʿrāb*, verse treatise on grammar, copied by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad Bā Riḍwān, Jumada II 1236/March 1821 (fol. 167ᵛ–180ʳ). As discussed above, the manuscript is probably from Melaka.

MLZ 78 parts of *Fatāwā* of Shihāb al-Din Aḥmad al-Ramlī.

MLZ 79 Qurʾān fragment.

MLZ 86 fragment of Birgevi's *al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya*.

MLZ 89 a) fragment of Sufi treatise b) ḥadīth c) Sibṭ al-Mardīnī, *Sharḥ al-Raḥbiyya fi ʿilm al-farāʾiḍ*.

MLZ 93 al-Ghazzī, *al-Fatḥ al-Qarīb* (fragment).

MLZ 94 al-Ghazzī, *al-Fatḥ al-Qarīb* (fragment).

MLZ 95 *Bulūgh al-Ghāya fi Tahdhīb Bidāyat al-Hidāya*, commentary on al-Ghazālī's work *Bidāyat al-Hidāya* by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Buḥayri Wāʾil b. Ḥāfiẓ, copied in 1210/1795–1796 by Muḥammad al-Zajī *mansha'an* waʾl-Ghamrī *muhājiran*. It is not clear to where these two nisbas refer.

MLZ 98 Sibṭ al-Mardīnī, *Sharḥ al-Raḥbiyya fi ʿilm al-farāʾiḍ*.

MLZ 99 Ibn Sīrīn, *Kitāb al-Aḥlām* on dream interpretation.

MLZ 102 *al-Ājurrūmiyya*.

MLZ 107 al-Suyūṭī, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* (fragment).

MLZ 108 fragment of Ghazzī, *al-Fatḥ al-Qarīb*.

MLZ 112, fragment of al-Ghazzī, *al-Fatḥ al-Qarīb*.

MLZ 114 advice on prayers and intercessions to get what one wants.

MLZ 116 fragment of al-Ghazālī, *Bidāyat al-Hidāya*.

MLZ 123 unidentified, treatise on piety (possibly related to *Anīs al-Muttaqīn*).

C   *Wolio, Malay and Bilingual Arabic-Malay Manuscripts*

MLZ 1 Malay letter of introduction for an envoy to the governor in Makassar, dated 1252/1836.

MLZ 14 Malay cosmology.

MLZ 20 Malay work on Martabat Tujuh (Seven Grades of Being).

MLZ 33 *Qawaʿid Melayu*, according to the colophon: a Malay work on prayers and zakat owned by Sulayman, copied in 1251/1836.

MLZ 34 Malay prayers and devotion.

MLZ 38 Wolio and Malay charms.

MLZ 48 Malay short text on sharia.

MLZ 62 Malay work on herbal medicine, prefaced by some magical formulae

MLZ 66 *Shuhūd al-Raḥmān*, a Malay Sufi text dealing with relations between the shaykh and the *murīd*. Composed in Bugis territory between Makassar and Mandar in 1212/1798 by an unidentified author. The colophon (fol. 9ᵛ) reads: Tatkala selesai faqir mengarang kitab di negeri Langa Bugis antara Mandar dan Mengkasar pada bulan Syawal hijrah Nabi ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam sanah 1212 fasammaytuhu Shuhūd al-Raḥmān wa ṣallallāhu ʿalá sayyidinā Muḥammad wa ālihi wa ṣaḥbihi sallama.

MLZ 69 Wolio and Malay, prayer and divination.

MLZ 77 Arabic-Malay vocabulary and grammar.

MLZ 80 An Arabic creed dealing with faith (*īmān*), in question answer format, with interlinear Malay translation.

MLZ 81 Malay, *Kitab al-Tahara*, the book of ritual purity. Probably the beginning of a fiqh work, heavily damaged by iron gall.

MLZ 82 Malay Sufi text dealing with the path to God.

MLZ 83 Arabic-Malay bilingual. Najm al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Qudama al-Maqdisī (d. 689/1290), *Kitāb Mukhtaṣar Minhāj al-Qāṣidīn*, an abridgement of Ibn al-Jawzī's summary of al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*.

MLZ 84 Malay text on prayer.

MLZ 85 miscellaneous unconnected texts in Malay.

MLZ 87 Arabic grammar, with interlinear Malay translation.

MLZ 90 Malay text on *dhikr* and prayers.

MLZ 104 Malay *fiqh* text on marriage.

MLZ 105 Malay texts on *dhikr*, with at fol. 12ʳ⁻ᵛ Khalwati *silsila* connecting shaykh Muḥammad Fadil al-Maqāṣīrī al-Khalwati to Abu'l-Fath ʿAbd al-Basir al-Ruffani, to shaykh Yūsuf al-Maqāṣīrī.

MLZ 106 Malay texts dealing with ritual practice (*ʿibāda*) and Sufism.

MLZ 109 Malay *fiqh* text on ritual purity (*ṭahāra*) *and marriage law.*

MLZ 110 Malay texts dealing with God's attributes (*ṣifāt*) and proofs of his existence (*wājib al-wujūd*).

MLZ 118 Malay text dealing with ritual cleansing, practice and prayer.

MLZ 120 Malay Sufi text commenting on the ḥadīth *man ʿarafa nafsahu ʿarafa rabbahu* and related matters.

MLZ 121 Malay questions and answers on credal matters.

MLZ 122 Malay texts on Sufism and *fiqh*.

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A 15th-Century Persian Inscription from Bireuen, Aceh: An Early 'Flash' of Sufism before Fanṣūrī in Southeast Asia

Majid Daneshgar, Gregorius Dwi Kuswanta, Masykur Syafruddin and R. Michael Feener

Aceh[1] has long been recognized as a major historical center of Islamicate culture in Southeast Asia, and its rich surviving source base of manuscripts, gravestones, and other standing monuments have attracted the attention of some of the leading scholars in the field for more than a century. Peter Riddell's work has made major contributions to this body of scholarship, starting with his pioneering work to untangle the Arabic textual sources of the oldest surviving Malay-language commentaries on the Qur'ān: Ms Or. Ii.6.45 kept in the Cambridge University Library is the oldest known commentary[2] and the *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* by 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Sīngkel.[3] His work on these two texts—produced near the start and the finish of the 17th century, respectively, shed considerable light on the intellectual milieu of Muslim scholarship in the Aceh Sultanate. In this contribution to Prof. Riddell's *Festschrift*, we continue on in this spirit to identify some of the broader Muslim textual traditions circulating through northern Sumatra, but during an even earlier period of the 15th century. This essay focuses not on manuscripts, but on texts transmitted via the more durable support of stone on a pair of grave markers at Bireuen that have recently been systematically documented by the Maritime Asia Heritage Survey (MAHS).[4] Those objects have preserved lines in both Arabic and Persian that open up a new vista onto the cultural dynamics of an early period of the

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1 An earlier version of this article was presented in Paris at the European Association for Southeast Asian Studies (EuroSEAS) 2022, conference.

2 Peter G. Riddell, *Malay Court Religion, Culture and Language: Interpreting the Qur'ān in 17th century Aceh* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

3 Peter G. Riddell, "The Sources of 'Abd al-Ra'uf's Tarjuman al-Mustafid", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2 (247)/57 (1984): 113–118.

4 The MAHS is led by R. Michael Feener (PI), with Patrick Daly and Noboru Ishikawa (Co-PIs), and based at Kyoto University's Center for Southeast Asian Studies. Its open-access archive of database records, photographs, orthophotomaps, 3D models, oral history interviews, architectural drawings and digitized manuscripts is available online at: R. Michael Feener (ed), *Maritime Asia Heritage Survey:* https://maritimeasiaheritage.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp.

history of Islam in Southeast Asia. Understanding the content and contexts of early Persian inscriptions from Sumatra both contributes to our understanding of the complexities of Islamization in the region, and opens up new questions for exploration about the range and depth of cultural engagements on the eastern frontiers of an expanding Persianate world in the 15th century.[5]

1   Some Persian Inscriptions in Indonesia: An Overview

Inscribed gravestones have commanded a prominent place in studies of the early history of Muslim societies in the Archipelago.[6] This has particularly been the case in northern Sumatra, where studies have been made of stones from Pasai,[7] Peudada,[8] Pedir,[9] Daya[10] and Lamri,[11] as well as the sultanate of

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5   Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974); Bert G. Fragner, Die "Persophonie": Regionalität, Identität und Sprachkontakt in der Geschichte Asiens (Berlin: Verl. Das Arab. Buch, 1999). The concepts of the "Persianate World" coined by Hodgson and of "Persophonie" coined by Fragner have recently attracted increased attention from a new generation of scholars. See, for example: Nile Green (ed.) *The Persianate World: The Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca* (California: University of California Press, 2019), Abbas Amanat, and Assef Ashraf (eds). *The Persianate World: Rethinking a Shared Sphere* (Leiden: Brill, 2018); Andrew CS Peacock, and Deborah Gerber Tor (eds), *Medieval Central Asia and the Persianate World: Iranian Tradition and Islamic Civilisation* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017); Mana Kia, *Persianate Selves: Memories of Place and Origin Before Nationalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020). For a reappraisal of Persian elements in the formation of Muslim traditions in Southeast Asia in particular, see: Claude Guillot, "Persia and the Malay World; Commercial and Intellectual Exchanges," *Studia Islamika* 27.3 (2020): 405–442.; Majid Daneshgar, "Persianate Aspects of the Malay-Indonesian World: Some Rare Manuscripts in the Leiden University Library" *Dabir* 8 (2021): 51–78.

6   Elizabeth Lambourn, "Tombstones, Texts, and Typologies: Seeing Sources for the Early History of Islam in Southeast Asia," Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 51/2 (2008): 252–286; R. Michael Feener, Patrick Daly, E. Edwards McKinnon, Luca Lum En-Ci, Ardiansyah, Nizamuddin, Nazli Ismail, Tai Yew Seng, Jessica Rahardjo, and Kerry Sieh "Islamisation and the formation of vernacular Muslim material culture in 15th-century northern Sumatra", *Indonesia and the Malay World* 49/143 (2021): 1–41.

7   Claude Guillot and Ludvik Kalus, Les Monuments funéraires et l'histoire du Sultanat de Pasai. Vol. 37 (Paris: Cahier d'Archipel 37, 2008).

8   L. Kalus and C. Guillot, "Note sur le sultanat de Peudada, fin xve-début xvie s." Archipel 83 (2012), 7–15.

9   Claude Guillot and Ludvik Kalus, "Note sur le sultanat de Pidir. Début du xvie siècle [Épigraphie islamique d'Aceh. 3]." Archipel 78/1 (2009): 7–18.

10   Ludvik Kalus and Claude Guillot, "La principauté de Daya, mi-xve–mi-xvie siècle [Épigraphie islamique d'Aceh 6]", *Archipel* 85 (2013): 201–236.

11   Feener, et al. "Islamisation and the formation of vernacular Muslim material culture in 15th-century northern Sumatra".

Aceh.[12] These materials have revealed aspects of the cosmopolitan circulations of commerce and culture that linked northern Sumatra with the broader Muslim world and beyond since the 13th century.[13] In their study of Pasai inscriptions, Kalus & Guillot have, for example, called particular attention to the presence of 'Bengali Turks' at Pasai and their role in conveying cultural elements from the expanding Persianate world of that time to influence the development of court styles in Sumatra.[14] Indeed, there are several known Persian inscriptions dating from the long 15th century in Sumatra that hint at the extent of interactions with Persianate literary culture on that Indonesian island even before the rise of Aceh sultanate at the turn of the 16th century.

1.1   *In Barus*

The earliest such inscriptions might be those found at Barus, on the west coast of Sumatra. One, which has been tentatively dated to 772 H./ c. 1370 CE[15] (or perhaps to 972 H. /c. 1564 CE[16] is from the tombstone of a Muslim woman whose name also has been given diverse readings. Kalus reads one element of the name as being the Malay word "*Tuan*" (sic. توهن), however the text may actually be read as Persian, rather than Arabic with the addition of a Malay word.[17] Another stone from Barus presents more obviously Persian elements: the gravestone of one Shaykh Maḥmūd which shows the date of 829 H./1425–1426 CE. The headstone is inscribed with a couplet from the *Shāhnāmah* (*Book of Kings*) of Ferdowsī (d. c. 1020 CE) addressing the subject of mortality and the impermanence of 'worldly life':

جهان یادگار است و ما رفتنی؛

زمردم نماند بجز مردمی

12   Ludvik Kalus and Claude Guillot, "Cimetière de Tuan di Kandang. [épigraphie islamique d'Aceh. 8]," *Archipel* 88 (2014): 71–147; Ludvik Kalus and Claude Guillot, "Cimetières d'Aceh, Varia I", *Archipel* 91 (2016): 55–103; Ludvik Kalus and Claude Guillot, "Cimetières d'Aceh, Varia II", *Archipel* 93 (2017): 31–84.

13   See R. Michael Feener, "The Acehnese Past and its Present State of Study", in *Mapping the Acehnese Past* edited by R. Michael Feener, Patrick Daly, and Anthony Reed (Leiden: KITLV, 2011), 1–24; Riddell, *Malay Court Religion*, 2017.

14   Ludvik Kalus and Claude Guillot, *Les monuments funéraires et l'histoire du sultanat de Pasai à Sumatra, XIIIe–XVIe siècles* (Paris: Cahiers d'Archipel, 2008), pp. 69–74.

15   Ludvik Kalus (2003, 305, n° 1).

16   See; *Tijdschrift voor Indische taal-, land-, en volkenkunde* 70 (1930): 92.

17   Ludvik Kalus, "Les sources épigraphiques musulmanes de Barus", dans Histoire de Barus, Sumatra. Le site de Lobu Tua. II—Etudearchéologique et Documents (Paris: Cahiers d'Archipel, 30, 2003), p. 305, n° 1.

> The world is a perpetual remembrance and we all leave it in the end;
> People will leave nothing behind but their good deeds

We have examined various aspects of this complex inscription from Barus in a separate study.[18]

1.2 *Geudong*

An inscription found in Geudong (Aceh Province) is dated 847 H./1443–1444 CE marks the grave of a daughter of the Persian scholar Maualānā Starābādī/Estarābādī. The source of some Persian verse inscribed on that stone had not been identified in previous studies.[19] It is, however, actually that of Muḥammad bin ʿAlī Ghazāʾirī (d. c. 426/1034). The quatrain presented here is often cited as evidence of Muḥammad bin ʿAlī Ghazāʾirī's orientation and his devotion to the *ahl al-bayt* ('The People of [the Prophet's] House') Muḥammad, ʿAlī, Fāṭima, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn) as intercessors on the Day of Judgment. The place of Shīʿism and broader manifestations of devotion to the *ahl al-bayt* in the early history of Islam in Indonesia have and continue to be the subject of considerable scholarly debate.[20] For the purposes of the discussion in this paper, this quatrain, as well as the other Persian poetry quotations from Barus and Pasai, helps to establish something of the broader context for the inscription on the stone from Bireuen that will be discussed below.

1.3 *In Pasai*

Perhaps the most well-known Persian inscription in all of Indonesia is that on a tombstone at Candi Uleeblang in Pasai. The inscription was first published by Hendrik Karel Jan Cowan in 1940 and has since been cited in a numerous books and articles on the history of Islam in the Archipelago. The stone marks the grave of Nāʾinā Ḥusām al-Dīn (d. 823 H./1420 CE), and its inscription includes an incomplete ode (*ghazal*) by the Persian poet, Saʿdī on the theme of mor-

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18   Majid Daneshgar & R. Michael Feener, "A Rare Reading of Ferdowsi's *Shahnamah:* The 15th-century Persian Inscription on the Makam Shaykh Papan Tinggi," (forthcoming).

19   See, Claude Guillot and Ludvik Kalus, Les monuments funéraires et l'histoire du Sultanat de Pasai à Sumatra (XIIIe–XVIe siècles) (Paris: coll. Cahiers d'Archipel, 37, 2008), 301–302, nº TSA 21. Graves, inscriptions and manuscripts including the name of Starābādī/Estarābādī are found in Mecca as well as India, too. This issue will be addressed by Daneshgar and Feener in a forthcoming study.

20   For a critical overview of these debates, see: R. Michael Feener and Chiara Formichi, "Debating 'Shiʿism' in the History of Muslim Southeast Asia," in Chiara Formichi and R. Michael Feener (eds) *Shiʿism in South East Asia*: ʿAlid Piety and Sectarian Constructions (London: Hurst & Company, 2015), pp. 3–16.

FIGURE 3.1   The gravestone of Nāʾina Ḥusām al-Dīn (d. 1420)
             PHOTOGRAPH BY R. MICHAEL FEENER

tality. The stone itself was quarried and likely carved in Cambay.[21] Here again we seem to have evidence of some admiration for celebrated works of Persian poetry in 15th-century Sumatra, albeit not necessarily a level of local engagement given the overseas origin of the object.

1.3.1   Teungku Sareh Inscription

Of a less literary nature is another Pasai tombstone (grave XVIII) from Teungku Sareh Cemetery, dated to 844 H./1440 CE. This one includes only a handful of Persian terms, rather than quotations of poetry, and is inscribed on local stone from Aceh—rather than on an object imported from Gujarat. This stone was introduced by Elizabeth Lambourn in 2004 and later studied by Guillot and Kalus as well.[22] Here we propose a different reading of the Persian terms in this inscription and the deciphering of the date, indicated here in red:

<div dir="rtl">

1.   عَطاءُاالله

2.   بن اسمعیل شب[23] دو

3.   شنبة نهم[24] ماة ربیع الاول

4.   «سنة 844»

</div>

1.   *ʿAtāʾullāh*
2.   *bin Ismāʿīl shab-e do-*
3.   *Shanbat nohom-e māt-e Rabīʿ al-Awwal*
4.   *sanat 844*

1.   ʿAtāʾullāh
2.   son of Ismāʿīl, the night of Mon-
3.   day the ninth of the month of Rabīʿ al-awwal
4.   [in] the year 844

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21   H.K.J. Cowan, "A Persian inscription in north Sumatra", *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 80/1 (1940): 15–21.

22   Elizabeth Lambourn, "The formation of the batu Aceh tradition in fifteenth-century Samudera-Pasai," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 32/93 (2004): 211–248.; Guillot and Kalus (2008), pp. 298–299, n° 8.

23   Both Lambourn and Kalus read this word as "شه" (Shah).

24   Lambourn did not provide a reading for, "نهم" (*nohom*/the ninth), though this was detected by Guillot and Kalus in 2008.

FIGURE 3.2 The Teungku Meurah Cemetery (MAHS-IDN-ACH-BRN-JUA-S-001) in Bireuen
PHOTOGRAPH BY MARITIME ASIA HERITAGE SURVEY

Lambourn's posited that the text of the inscription may have been produced or commissioned by a Persian speaker. However, the use here of a *tāʾ marbūṭa* (ة) instead of simple *hā* (ه) at the end of the word *māh* (the month) may indicate that the engraver was perhaps not fully familiar with original Persian orthography. Also we propose that *shab-e doshanbeh* or *shab-e doshanbat* (شب دوشنبه/شب دوشنبة) should not be understood literally as "the night of Monday." As traditionally in Persian (and other languages including Malay) the latter part of a day can be referred to as the evening of the day that follows. As such, "the evening of Monday" would indicate sometime late in the day on Sunday, thus correlating to the inscribed date of 9 *Rabīʿ al-awwal* 844 H. / Sunday 16 August 1440 CE. This may indicate that some in Pasai were familiar with such Persian usage in the 15th century—while also reflecting Malay conventions of referring to an evening with reference to the day that follows—i.e. *malam senin* ('evening of Monday') to refer to the latter part of Sunday. It thus might also be the case that a Malay speaker preparing the Persian text did so following conventions with which he was already familiar.

This aspect of the inscription may be especially important to consider as reflecting the same calendrical conventions used in the Persian inscription from Bireuen discussed below. Both of them are located in relative proximity to each other in the present-day province of Aceh, and their calligraphic styles are similar to some extent as well.

2 A Persian Inscription from Bireuen

Not far from Pasai, in Bireuen, is the site[25] of another gravestone bearing a Persian inscription that also dates to 844 H./1440 CE. The Teungku Meurah Cemetery is a plot along the eastern side of the highway, bounded on all other sides by rows of shops and homes, and continues to serve as the family cemetery of Mr. Munzir. Several new graves can be found in its southwest corner, but to the east of there are a number of older burials, including six marked with ancient tombstones. These older funerary monuments take the form of slabs reminiscent of those known from older sites in Pasai. One of the graves (MAHS-IDN-ACH-BRN-JUA-S-001-F-0005) is marked with head and footstones that feature textual inscriptions. The first known photos from this site was taken by De Vink in 1912 and reproduced in 1917.[26] Those photos of what De Vink designated as Tomb 1 were used by Kalus and Guillot for their publication of the inscription and the basis of their French translation,[27] as they did not visit the site themselves.[28] This grave is marked with a pair of stones, oriented toward the *qibla* with a headstone at the north and footstone on the south. Interactive 3D models of both the head and footstone have been produced for the MAHS archive and are available online.[29] These new digital renderings form the basis of the interpretation presented below.

Both of these rectangular slabs feature textual inscriptions, most of which were recognized by Guillot and Kalus as Arabic texts from the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*. Those elements of the inscription are comprised of excerpts from canonical sources that are not uncommon in Muslim epigraphy of the period in Southeast Asia and beyond. The epitaph and a poetic quotation in Persian on the stones, however, are considerably rarer, and pose further challenges of

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25 This site (MAHS-IDN-ACH-BRN-JUA-S-001) is on Tgk. Chik Di Tiro Road (Bireuen-Takengon highway km.1), Gampong Bireuen Meunasah Tgk Di Gadong, Kota Juang District, Bireuen Regency, Aceh Province (GPS: 5.1954 / 96.702421). In September 2021, it was systematically documented by the *Maritime Asia Heritage Survey* Indonesia Field Team: Multia Zahara, Ahmad Zaki, Greg Kuswanta, Ario Wibhisono, Sofiani Sabarina, Fauzan Azhima, and Sari Novita.

26 They were included in the eleventh and twelfth list of De Vink's photos from Aceh for the Netherlands Indies Archaeological Service. *Oudheidkundig Verslag*, 1917.

27 Ludvik Kalus & Claude Guillot, "Cimetières de Sumatra, Varia (Épigraphie islamique d'Aceh 12)," *Archipel* 94 (2017): 13–50. https://doi.org/10.4000/archipel.443

28 Ibid.

29 Headstone: https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/teungku-meurah-cemetery-headstone-ee6 4f2c6c88449d5b92cce58bb9965bc.
Footstone: https://sketchfab.com/3d-models/teungku-meurah-cemetery-footstone-c8 5ab6484b3b4bd0899ab3979893969d. We thank Alexandru Hegyi for producing the high-definition images used in our illustrations of these stones.

FIGURE 3.3   South face of the footstone (MAHS-IDN-ACH-BRN-JUA-S-001-F-0005A)
PHOTOGRAPH BY MARITIME ASIA HERITAGE SURVEY

FIGURE 3.4 North face of the footstone (MAHS-IDN-ACH-BRN-JUA-S-001-F-0005A)
PHOTOGRAPH BY MARITIME ASIA HERITAGE SURVEY

identification and interpretation. Here we use the enhanced documentation of these objects produced by the Maritime Asia Heritage Survey to build upon the pioneering work of De Vink, Guillot and Kalus to suggest revised readings of those parts of the inscription, and to contextualize this source material within broader discussions of the early history of Islam in Southeast Asia.

The foot stone bears the epitaph. Guillot and Kalus read the name of the deceased as "*tuān* Mund" (توهن مند), reflecting their similar reading of the Malay word *tuan* in the inscription from Barus discussed above.[30] Prior to Guillot and Kalus' publication, Teungku Taqiyuddin Muhammad from the Center for Information of Samudra Pasai Heritage (CISAH) and MAPESA[31] had read the inscription in situ, arriving at a different rendering of the name of the deceased as 'Yuhān Mīn'.[32] We argue here that further consideration of the Persian text on the reverse of this same stone (discussed below) prompts a consideration of elements of Persian in the epitaph section of the stone as well. Within this context the second element of this 'name' (more properly 'title') may actually be read as the Persian *mand* (مَند) meaning 'Lord, Holder, Owner, Possessor.'[33] Usage of this Persian term was adopted into languages ranging from Hindustani to Mongolian, reflecting broader dynamics of the late medieval Persianate world. At the same time, the connotations of this Persian term seem to reflect in some similar valences that of the Malay *tu(h)an*—perhaps thus presenting something of a similar honorific combination in two languages.[34] In consideration of this proposed Persian reading, we would thus interpret the epitaph as:

هذاالقبر توهن مند

نقلت من الدنيا يوم الخميس اثنا

عشر يوما من شهر ذوالحجة

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30   Kalus & Guillot, "Cimetières de Sumatra, Varia" (2017): 13–50.

31   Masyarakat Peduli Sejarah Aceh (MAPESA) is a local NGO (LSM / *Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat*) dedicated to the study and publica awareness of Aceh's Islamic heritage. They regularly publish reports and studies of historical sites, artefacts, and manuscripts its website: https://www.mapesaaceh.com.

32   The results of his work were presented online in a contribution to the MAPESA website "Bireuen 600 Tahun Silam Bukan Legenda," https://www.mapesaaceh.com/2021/'4/bireuen-600-tahun-silam-bukan-legenda.html.

33   Viz., *Borhān-e Qāṭṭʿ* and *Dehkhoda Dictionary*.

34   One might conjecture that توهن is possibly a misspelling of "Ta-hanᵃ" meaning castle, territory and "guard". See, W. Yates, *A Dictionary, Hindustani and English* (Calcutta: The Baptist Mission Press, 1847), 163. *Tuhan-mand* might then be glossed as the ruler of a particular territory or even a fortified settlement one who is a guard or owner of a ruling territory. Such a reading, however, remains conjectural—and indeed would seem to be rather a stretch.

> This is the grave of the Tuhan-Mand[35]
> who has passed from this world
> on Thursday, the 12th day of Dhū l-Ḥijjah

The reverse of this stone bears a somewhat harder-to-read Persian text. The execution of its calligraphy bears similarities to that of the stone at Teungku Sareh discussed above, and which was also inscribed in the same year (844 H). It would not be too farfetched to consider the possibility that both stones were produced within a shared milieu of material cultural production, if not indeed by the same workshop. The selection and presentation of the text of this inscription furthermore indicates a considerable familiarity with Persian literature by at least some in 15th-century Sumatra.

We propose here that the text can be transcribed and translated as:

الف) سنت[36] أَربعَ وأربعونَ ثمانمائة

ب)   روزت بستودم و نميدانستم؛ شب با تو غنودم و نميدانستم

پ)   ظن بردا بدم بمن[37] كمن من بودم؛ من جمل تو بودم و نميدانستم

A)   *Sanat arbaʿa wa-arbaʿūnᵃ thamān-miʾat*

B)   *Rūzat be-sutūdam-o na-mīdānestam; shab bā to ghonūdam-o na-mīdāne-stam*

C)   *Ẓann bordā bodam be-man ke-man man-būdam; man jomlᵃ to būdam-o na-mīdānestam*

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35   Equally, in Hindustani literature the name of شهمند/*shahmand* is found that can be defined as the one holding the kingdom or ruling authority. Other Indo-Mongolian names which are fallen in the category of the holders of social, political, mystical and scholarly authority (viz., Khān, Khājeh and Shāh) are found in the following sources as follows:

   See: Johann August Vullers, *Ioannis Augusti Vullers Lexicon Persico-Latinum etymologicum: cum linguis maxime cognatis Sanscrita et Zendica et Pehlevica comparatum, e lexicis persice scriptis Borhâni Qâtiu, Haft Qulzum et Bahâri agam et persico-turcico Farhangi-Shuûrî confectum, adhibitis etiam Castelli, Meninski, Richardson et aliorum operibus et auctoritate scriptorum Persicorum adauctum* (Bonnae ad Rhenum: Impensis Adolphi Marci, 1864) T: II, 482–485. For names, see Abuʾl Fazl-i Mubaraki Allami, *Akbar-Nāma* (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1872 and 1878), I; also Khāfī Khān, *The Muntakhab-al Lubāb*, ed. Maulavīs Kabīr al-Dīn Aḥmad and Ghulām Qādir, Vol. II (Calcutta: The College Press, 1870).

36   This writing of سنت instead of سنة to indicate 'year' is not uncommon in pre-modern Persian texts.

37   The version of these lines attributed to Rūmī adds here the word بخود

A)   The year eight hundred forty-four (844 H./ 1440 CE)
B)   "By day I praised You, but never knew it; by night slept with You without realizing
C)   Fancying myself to be myself [self]; but no, I was You and never knew it."[38]

Following the date of the epitaph above is a quatrain of Persian poetry that has not been recognized in the work of scholars who have published previously on this gravestone. It is, most likely, a variant reading of lines generally ascribed to Rūmī (d. c. 1273CE) from his *Kuliyyāt-e Shams*,[39] though it has been ascribed by some to Awḥad al-Dīn Kirmānī (d. c. 1238).[40] In either case, however, the form of the poem inscribed on the gravestone at the Teungku Meurah Cemetery presents a slight variant of the most common wording of the third line—a reading which to our knowledge has been most widely transmitted through its inclusion in the text of the *Lamaʿāt* ('Divine Flashes') of Fakhr al-Dīn ʿIrāqī (d. 1289). Fakhr al-Dīn's collection of mystical poems was widely popular across the Persianate world of the medieval and early modern periods.[41] The postulation of the transmission of this particular verse by Rūmī via its anthologization in Fakhr al-Dīn's work is—at least—coincidental with the manuscript evidence we have of a "very old anthology of poems" from Aceh that was produced sometime after 1450 and which draws chiefly upon the work of ʿIrāqī.

   Moreover, the placement of these particular lines on this gravestone is rather unusual in relation to the more common subjects of death, judgement and/or the afterlife that tend to dominate early Muslim epigraphy in Southeast Asia. Here we are presented with Persian-language expressions of Sufi metaphysics—perhaps the earliest surviving evidence for such in Southeast Asia.

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38   Based on the English translation of Chittick: Fakhr al-Dīn ʿIrāqī, *Divine Flashes*, trans. and Introduction by William C. Chittick and Peter Lamborn Wilson. Preface by Seyyed Hossein Nasr (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

39   Rūmī (nd. ii: no. 1424): 1333 Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Mawlavī, *Kuliyyāt-e Shams-e Tabrīzī be-enḍemām-e Sharḥ-e Ḥāl-e Mawlavī*, ed. Badīʿ al-Zamān Forūzānfar (Tehran: Ședāy-e Muʿāṣir, 2004), II: no. 1242: 1333.

40   Ḥāmid ibn Abī al-Fakhr Awḥad al-Dīn Kirmānī, *Divan-e Rubāʿiyyāt*, ed. Aḥmad Abū Maḥbūb with an Introduction by Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Bāstānī Pārīzī (Tehran: Surūsh, 1366/1987), no. 184: 119.

41   For more on ʿIrāqī and his *Lamaʿāt*, see: Peter Lambourn Wilson, William C. Chittick, & Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Ed. Trans.) *Divine Flashes* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

FIGURE 3.5 Headstone (MAHS-IDN-ACH-BRN-JUA-S-001-F-0005B)
PHOTOGRAPH BY MARITIME ASIA HERITAGE SURVEY

3 Sufism in 15th-Century Sumatra

The Sufi cosmology reflected in the Persian poetry of the Teungku Meurah inscription is that of the 'Unity of Being' (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), Sufi interpretations of this doctrine were widespread across the medieval Muslim world, even while fiercely contested at a number of particular times and places.[42] In the historiography of Islam in Southeast Asia, the earliest proponent of *waḥdat al-wujūd* has generally be identified as Ḥamza Fanṣūrī (16th/17th century).[43] Ḥamza's Malay-language writings drew upon, *inter alia*, the work of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī[44] (d. 1492), including his commentary on ʿIrāqī's *Lamaʿāt: Ashiʿat*

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[42] For a broad contextualization of these debates, see: A.D. Knysh, *Ibn ʿArabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999). On proponents and critics of *waḥdat al-wujūd* in Southeast Asia in particular: A.H. Johns, *The Gift Addressed to the Spirit of the Prophet* (Canberra: The Australian National University, 1965); Syed Muhammad Naguib Al-Attas, *Raniri and the Wujudiyyah of 17th Century Acheh* (Singapore: Malaysian Branch, Royal Asiatic Society, 1966); Aliefya M. Santrie, "Martabat (Alam) Tujuh: Suatu Naskah Mistik Islam dari Desa Karang, Pamijahan," in Ahmad Rifaʾi Hasan (ed), *Warisan Intelektual Islam Indonesia: Telaah atlas Karya-Karya Klasik* (Bandung: Mizan, 1987), 105–129; Nabilah Lubis, *Seeks Yusuf Al-Taj Al-Makasari: Menyingkap Intisari Segala Rahasia* (Bandung: EFEO & Penerbit Mizan, 1996); Oman Fathurahman, *Tanbih al-Masyi, Menyoal Wahdatul Wujud: Kasus Abdurrauf Singkel di Aceh Abad 17* (Bandung: EFEO & Penerbit Mizan, 1999); Oman Fathurahman, "Ithaf al-dhaki by Ibrahim al-Kurani: A Commentary of Wahdat al-Wujud for Jawi Audiences", *Archipel* 81 (2011), 177–198.

[43] For debates over the dating of Ḥamza's life, see: Claude Guillot, and Ludvik Kalus, "La stèle funéraire de Hamzah Fansuri," *Archipel* 60/4 (2000), 3–24; Vladimir I. Braginsky, "On the Copy of Hamzah Fansuri's Epitaph Published by C. Guillot & L. Kalus," *Archipel* 62/1 (2001), 21–33.

[44] Jāmī's work served as a source for Sufi works written by Southeast Asian ulama for centuries. A 17th-century copy his *al-Durrah al-Fākhirah* was even made by the renowned Yūsuf al-Maqassārī, and preserved in the Sprenger Library, Berlin. For more on Jāmī and his *al-Durrah al-Fākhirah*: Nicholas Heer, *The Precious Pearl: al-Jāmī's* al-Durrah al-Fākhirah *together with his glosses and the commentary of ʿAbd al-Ghafūr al-Lārī* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979) and Heer, Nihcolas. 2013. "Two Arabic Manuscripts in the Handwriting of Shaykh Yūsuf al-Tāj," (2013): http://hdl.handle.net/1773/4881; and on its reception in the Malay world: Mohamamd Nasrin Nasir, "Nūr al-dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī in Sufi writings in Malay," in *Jāmī in Regional Contexts: The Reception of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's Works in the Islamicate World, ca. 9th/15th–14th/20th Century*, edited by Thibaut d'Hubert and Alexandre Papas (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 196–223. Paul Wormser, "The Recreation of Jāmī's Lavāʾiḥ by Ḥamza Fanṣūrī," *Jāmī in Regional Contexts: The Reception of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's Works in the Islamicate World, ca. 9th/15th–14th/20th Century*, edited by Thibaut d'Hubert and Alexandre Papas (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 367–377.

al-Lamaʿāt ('Rays of the *Flashes*'),[45] and thence influenced subsequent developments of Sufism in Southeast Asia. Debates over *waḥdat al-wujūd* in Southeast Asia over the centuries that followed, and particularly those centered around the vehement critiques of Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī in 17th-century Aceh[46], have attracted considerable scholarly attention for decades. To date, however, little was known to modern historians of engagement with Sufi metaphysics in the region prior to the work of Ḥamza Fanṣūrī. One major exception to this may be in one of the earliest Malay Islamic manuscripts kept in Leiden University Library (Or. 7056). A recent carbon-dating report on its material suggests a "70.5% probability that this bark was collected for processing between 1450–1521 CE,"[47] dating then from not long after the Teungku Meurah inscription. It is also nearly contemporaneous as other manuscript witnesses kept in Iranian collections.[48] That Malay text presents a collection of earlier Persian materials, including passages from Fakhr al-Dīn ʿIrāqī (a.k.a. Hamadānī), Saʿdī, Rūmī, and others.[49] The deciphering of the Persian inscription from the Teungku Meurah cemetery presented in this paper thus offers a further glimpse into the introduction of Sufism even earlier in the 15th century. It attests to the local production of textual inscription drawing on Persian literary tradition, present-

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45   Vladimir I. Braginsky, "Universe-man-text: The Sufi concept of literature (with special reference to Malay Sufism)", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde* 149 (2) (1993): 201–225.

46   Discussions of al-Rānīrī's work, and his entanglement in Islamic scholarly debates and court power struggles have attracted the work of a considerable number of modern scholars. E.g., Gerardus W.J. Drewes, "De herkomst van Nuruddin ar-Raniri," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde* 2de Afl (1955): 137–151; Wormser, *Le Bustan al-Salatin de Nuruddin ar-Rānīrī: Réflexions sur le role culturel d'un étranger dans le monde Malais au XVIIᵉ siècle* (Paris: Cahiers d'Archipel, 2012). Petrus Voorhoeve, "Van en over Nuruddin ar-Raniri," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde* 107/4 (1951): 353; P. Voorhoeve. 'Short note: Nuruddin ar-Raniri,' *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 115 (1959): 90. Muhammad Naguib Al-Attas, *Rānīrī and the Wujūdiyyah of 17th century Acheh* (London: Monographs of the Malaysian Branch, Royal Asiatic Society, III, 1966).

47   But there is also a 24.9% chance it was collected 1586–1623 CE, which is also quite old in the terms of Malay Islamic manuscripts. See: Majid Daneshgar (2022).

48   One of the oldest copies is kept in the Malek Library and Museum, Tehran, n. 2055, from the 9th century AH/15th century AD. See, Fakhr al-dīn ʿIrāqī, *Lamaʿāt*, edited by Muhammad Khᵛajavi (Tehran: Mulavi, 1363/1984).

49   Alessandro Bausani noted that this Malay anthology includes a fragment that appears to have been lost to the standard recensions of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī's *Masnavī*, identifying lines that may "be placed somewhere in section 1: 3743 of the Masnavi". See, Alessandro Bausani, "Note sui vocaboli Persiani in Malese-Indonesiano", *Annali dell'Ist.Univ. Orientale di Napoli* 14 (1964), 1–32. Majid Daneshgar, "An Old Persian-Malay Anthology of Poems from Aceh" *Dabir* 7 (2020), 61–90.

ing in stone a glimpse of elements of a Persianate literary culture in Southeast Asia at least a century prior to the literary career of Ḥamza Fanṣūrī.

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Qur'ānic Commentaries, Translations and Theological Concepts

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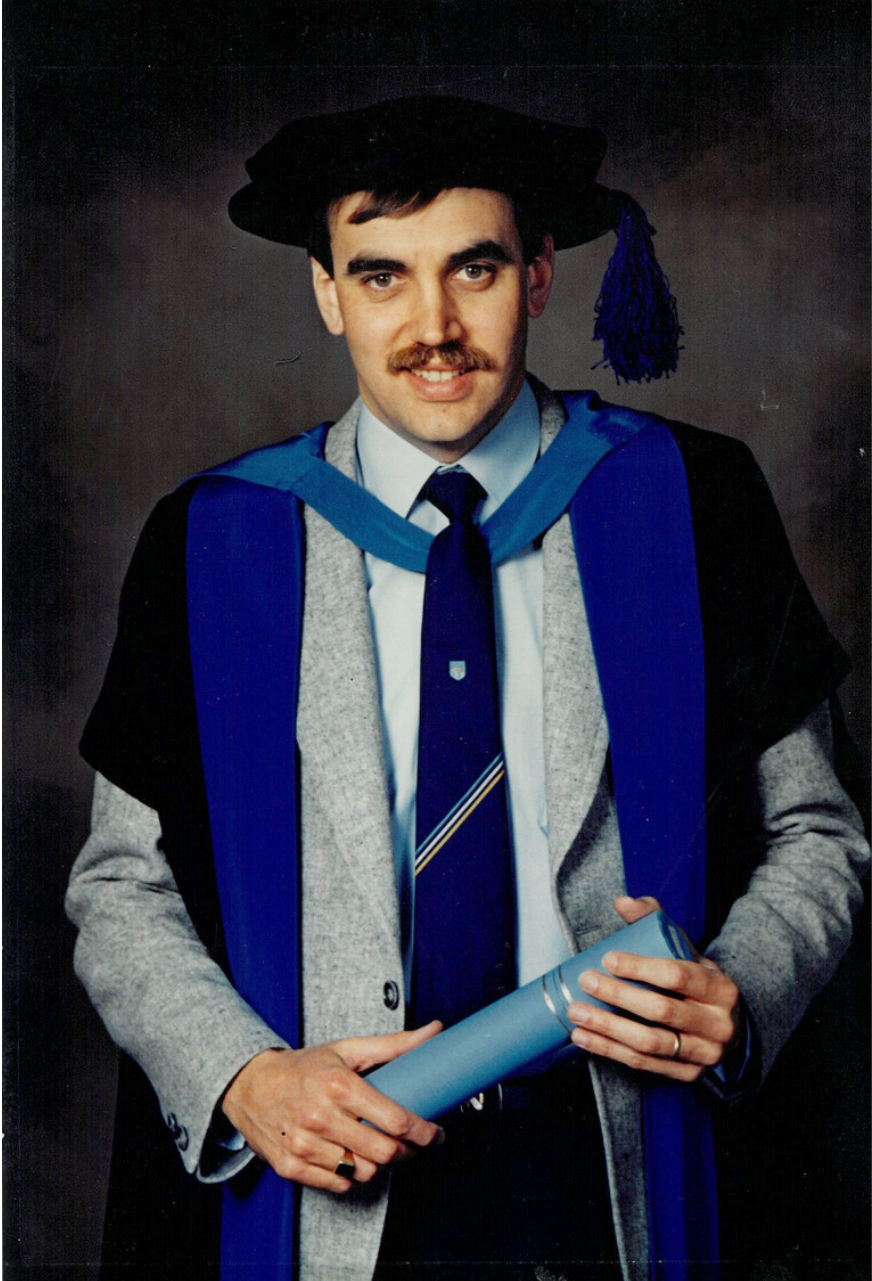
Peter G. Riddell, PhD Graduation (Australian National University 1985, Family Collection)

Eight Shades of Ibn Kathīr: The Afterlives of a Premodern Qur'ānic Commentary in Contemporary Indonesian Translations

Johanna Pink

1 Introduction

> If you want to understand the interpretation of the Qur'ān without frowning in confusion when you read it, this book is your best choice![1]

This blurb, taken from the back cover of a 2016 Indonesian translation of the Qur'ānic commentary of Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), might seem somewhat surprising, given that it advertises a six-volume box set of books by a fourteenth-century Damascene scholar who specialized in *ḥadīth* and history, and not so much in providing guidance for the easily-confused average Muslim. However, the branding of Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* as a beginner's guide to Qur'ānic exegesis is ubiquitous today and undergirded by an astonishing amount of publishing activity. The Mamluk scholar's work of exegesis has been printed in countless Arabic editions, many of them abridged, and translated into numerous languages, including Azeri, Bengali, Dutch, English, French, German,[2] Indonesian, Kurdish, Persian, Russian, Turkish, Urdu. It is available in app stores in multiple versions and languages, and many Islamic bookstores offer it for sale as one of the most authoritative works of *tafsīr*, if not *the* most authoritative.[3] What is even more striking is the fact that Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* has been translated into many of these languages not once but multiple times. In the Indonesian language, there are no less than eight different translations of this work, all of them

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1 *Mudah Tafsir Ibnu Katsir* (Jakarta: Pustaka Maghfirah, 2nd edition, 2017), back cover.

2 Johanna Pink, "„Ein unerlässliches Standardwerk, dass [sic] zweifelsohne jeder Muslim lesen sollte". Ibn Kathīrs Korankommentar auf Deutsch," in *Transkulturelle Hermeneutik I: Vorträge auf Einladung des Walter Benjamin-Lehrstuhls für deutsch-jüdische Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft an der Hebräischen Universität Jerusalem*, ed. Michael Fisch and Christoph Schmidt, Lecture Series for the Promotion of German-Language Cultural and Literary Studies 12 (Berlin: Weidler, 2020), 143–192.

3 Johanna Pink, *Muslim Qur'ānic Interpretation Today: Media, Genealogies and Interpretive Communities* (Sheffield: Equinox, 2019), 51–61.

covering the entire Qur'ān. This indicates a substantial commercial interest on the part of Indonesian Islamic publishers. Ibn Kathīr's Qur'ānic commentary seems to in high demand in the archipelago.

This chapter will look at the strategies of publishers and translators in editing, translating, and promoting the *tafsīr* of Ibn Kathīr in Indonesia. I will discuss the presentation and marketing of the printed editions as well as methods of abridgment and translation. I will subsequently ask what they tell us about the intended use and target group of the *tafsīr* and the makeup of the Indonesian religious field.

2 A Mamluk Scholar's *tafsīr* and Its Rise to Fame in the Twentieth Century

While Ibn Kathīr's Qur'ānic commentary is a magisterial work, at the time of its completion there was nothing to indicate that it might once become the most famous and popular Qur'ānic commentary in Sunni Islam. It was firmly grounded in the *tafsīr* tradition but Ibn Kathīr's exegetical method also reflected his dissatisfaction with some of the dominant trends in Mamluk Islamic learning.[4] Born in Buṣrā around 701/1301, Ibn Kathīr moved to Damascus as a young man where he studied the *fiqh* of his own Shāfiʿī school. At the time, there was a segment of the Shāfiʿī scholarly community with strong traditionalist leanings. They favoured the study of *ḥadīth* over *kalām* and were at odds with the politically more powerful Shāfiʿī Ashʿarīs. Ibn Kathīr became part of this trend.

He was the author of a large number of works in various disciplines including *fiqh*, *ḥadīth* and history. Most of them were targeted at specialists in their fields.[5] This is also true for his *tafsīr*.[6] Like all exegetes, Ibn Kathīr admitted to the existence of different opinions on a given exegetical problem but he also reduced the polyphony of voices by carefully selecting those that he included.

4 This has already been noted by Norman Calder in his seminal essay on *tafsīr* as genre: "*Tafsīr* from Ṭabarī to Ibn Kathīr. Problems in the description of a genre, illustrated with reference to the story of Abraham," in *Approaches to the Qur'ān*, ed. G.R. Hawting and Abdul-Kader Shareef (London: Taylor & Francis, 1993), 101–140.

5 Younus Mirza, "Ibn Kathīr, ʿImād al-Dīn," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/ibn-kathir-imad-al-din-COM_30853.

6 See Calder, "*Tafsīr*," for a fundamental description of the genre, and Walid Saleh, *The formation of the classical Tafsīr Tradition. The Qur'ān Commentary of al-Thaʿlabī* (*d. 427/1035*) (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 14–16, for its characterization as a "genealogical tradition".

Unhappy with many earlier exegetes' lack of discretion when listing the whole range of exegetical traditions at their disposal, he aimed to focus on authentic *ḥadīth*s and well-attested traditions about the prophet's companions and their successor generation while indicating his distrust of stories of Jewish or Christian origin (*isrāʾīliyyāt*) about the biblical material in the Qurʾān.

In order to corroborate this methodology, Ibn Kathīr cited his famous teacher Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Taymiyya (661/1263–728/1328) in the introduction to his *tafsīr*, emphasizing the need to primarily rely on the text of the Qurʾān and on authentic traditions about the Prophet, his companions and their successors, rather than later authorities.[7] Ibn Kathīr strove to avoid the type of scholastic theological exegesis that was prominent in the *madrasa* teaching of his times, represented by the voluminous *tafsīr* by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209).[8] He also steered clear of a substantial part of the narrative material on earlier prophets, especially concerning biblical figures. That said, Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* did not constitute a break with the exegetical tradition. It was embedded in scholarly discourses and disputes of its time and was directed at other scholars, rather than students, let alone a general public.

While Ibn Kathīr's Qurʾānic commentary was transmitted throughout the centuries and was counted as a respectable work of exegesis in its author's area of specialization, namely, *ḥadīth* scholarship, it was far from being among the most popular works of the genre. It was too extensive and scholarly to be taught in *madrasa*s, nor was it the subject of glosses or meta-commentaries. In an environment in which scholasticism, rhetoric, and esoteric approaches to knowledge were at the core of Islamic religious learning and the recourse to the opinions of the earliest generations of Muslims was a niche interest at best, it would have been surprising if Ibn Kathīr's Qurʾānic commentary had elicited more than passing interest.[9]

This changed dramatically in the twentieth century when reformist trends emerged in the Arab world, particularly in Syria and Egypt, that were critical of the scholasticism and esotericism of Islamic scholarship and demanded a

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7   On the history of the term *isrāʾīliyyāt*, see Roberto Tottoli, "Origin and Use of the Term *Isrāʾīliyyāt* in Muslim Literature," *Arabica* 46 (1999), 193–210. On Ibn Taymiyya's hermeneutical project, see Walid Saleh, "Ibn Taymiyya and the Rise of Radical Hermeneutics: An Analysis of *an Introduction to the Foundations of Qurʾānic Exegesis*," in *Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, ed. Yossef Rapoport and Shahab Ahmed (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 123–162.

8   Mirza, "Ibn Kathīr"; Younus Mirza, "Was Ibn Kathīr the 'Spokesperson' for Ibn Taymiyya? Jonah as a Prophet of Obedience," in *Journal of Qurʾānic Studies* 16 (2014), 1–19.

9   On the characterization of "post-classical" Islamic learning, see Ahmed El-Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics: How Editors and Print Culture Transformed an Intellectual Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020), 31–62.

return to the sources of Islam. This was often embedded in larger contests for authority and legitimacy within the rapidly changing political context of the time that was marked by the demise of the Ottoman Empire.[10] For some proponents of this reformist trend, the teachings of Ibn Taymiyya, including the radical return to the authority of the Qurʾān and the Sunna that he demanded, played a major role in their struggle against the dominance of traditional religious scholars and Sufi sheikhs.[11]

While Ibn Taymiyya had not left behind a complete *tafsīr*, his disciple Ibn Kathīr had. As a result, the publication activities of the reformist trend that at some point came to be labelled as "Salafi" had a deep impact on the field of *tafsīr*, elevating Ibn Kathīr to an unprecedented position of authority.[12] In 1936, the Ḥanbali mufti of Damascus commissioned the printing of Ibn Taymiyya's *Muqaddima fī uṣūl al-tafsīr* which started to shape the perspective of Sunni scholars and intellectuals on Qurʾānic hermeneutics to a remarkable degree. At this point, it had already ceased to be an obscure, barely known treatise because, as mentioned before, it was part of the introduction to Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* which had been published in 1924 by none other than Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (1860–1935) with a grant from the Āl Suʿūd. This was probably the first edition of a premodern *tafsīr* that focused on usability for readers outside the *madrasa* sphere. Unlike earlier prints of Qurʾānic commentaries that had adopted the layout of manuscripts, this edition used paragraph breaks, headers and verse numbering, making Ibn Kathīr's Qurʾānic commentary accessible to readers who did not know the Qurʾān by heart.[13]

However, there are limits to the appeal of Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* to Muslims without a background in Islamic learning. It is a massive work; one recent

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10   For some of the relevant developments and their protagonists, see Itzchak Weismann, *Taste of Modernity. Sufism, Salafiyya, and Arabism in Late Ottoman Damascus* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Martin Riexinger, *Sanāʾullāh Amritsarī (1868–1948) und die Ahl-i Ḥadīs im Punjab unter britischer Herrschaft* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2004); Claudia Preckel, "Islamische Reform im Indien des 19. Jahrhunderts. Aufstieg und Fall von Muḥammad Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Ḥan, Nawwāb von Bhopal," in *Die islamische Welt als Netzwerk. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen des Netzwerkansatzes im islamischen Kontext*, ed. Roman Loimaier (Würzburg: Ergon, 2000), 239–256.

11   El Shamsy, *Rediscovering the Islamic Classics*, 182–191.

12   Walid A. Saleh, "Preliminary Remarks on the Historiography of *tafsīr* in Arabic: A History of the Book Approach," *Journal of Qurʾānic Studies* 12 (2010), 6–40, at p. 10; Mirza, "Ibn Kathīr." For the history of the term Salafism, see Henri Lauzière, *The Making of Salafism. Islamic Reform in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016). For a more extensive discussion of the convergence of Salafi ideas and the promotion of Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr*, see Pink, *Muslim Qurʾānic Interpretation Today*.

13   Saleh, "Preliminary Remarks on the Historiography of *tafsīr* in Arabic."

unabridged Arabic version consists of seven volumes with more than 4,500 pages.[14] Moreover, it has many features typical of premodern Qurʾānic commentaries that makes it hard to digest to readers unfamiliar with the genre. Ibn Kathīr cites countless, often very similar traditions with full chains of transmitters (*isnād*), of course without providing bibliographic references that would make it easy for readers to identify his sources. He alludes to legal or theological debates that he assumes his readers can easily situate, and he frequently proposes conflicting explanations without evaluating them or resolving the conflict. As would have been expected of any Mamluk scholar writing a *tafsīr*, he quotes poetry and discusses semantic details. His work is not structured by chapter headings, nor does it have paragraph breaks.

In short, Ibn Kathīr's Qurʾānic commentary is far from being a simple, accessible textbook that offers guidance (*hidāya*) for believers. But that was how Muslim intellectuals and activists from the Salafi spectrum and beyond more and more frequently expected the Qurʾān to function in the early twentieth century. The paradigm of reading the Qurʾān for ethical guidance was promoted by Islamic reformers such as Muḥammad ʿAbduh as well as mass movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood.[15] This increased the demand for a reliable Qurʾānic commentary because the Qurʾān, by itself, is ill-suited to be used as an Islamic instruction manual. But Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr*, for all the religious prestige and authority it was accorded by its modern proponents, had never been meant to assume that function either.

This was what motivated Aḥmad Shākir (1892–1958), one of the prominent editors of Islamic classics in the first half of the twentieth century, to work on an abridged version of Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr*. Its publication was not complete at the time of his death; only in 2002 did another editor finalize the work, based on Shākir's manuscripts.[16] By that time, a host of alternative abridged versions of Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* in Arabic had already been published, ranging from moderately shortened editions that merely reduced the length the *isnād*s of traditions to completely rewritten works that aim to summarize Ibn Kathīr's thoughts in modern Arabic. New versions continue to hit the market.[17] The same is true for

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14   Ibn Kathīr, ʿImād al-Dīn Ismāʿīl b. ʿUmar, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm* (Ad-Dammām: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 2010).

15   See Pink, *Muslim Qurʾānic Interpretation Today*, 14–26.

16   Shākir, Aḥmad, *ʿUmdat al-tafsīr ʿan al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr: Mukhtaṣar tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm*, ed. Anwar al-Bāz (Mansura: Dār al-Wafāʾ, 2nd edn., 2005), 1:5–7.

17   The history of the Arabic editions of Ibn Kathīr has yet to be written. In this chapter, I will only mention those that have been used by Indonesian translators of Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr*.

the astounding number of translations of Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* into a wide variety of languages, including Indonesian.

3 A Short Publication History of Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* in Indonesian

The Islamic market for printed books has grown tremendously in most Muslim-majority countries since the 1970s, despite the simultaneous flourishing of other media such as audio and video tapes and the internet. Mass literacy has expanded the circle of potential readers while desktop publishing has significantly lowered the bar for professional publishing. As a result, Islamic books have become a commodity for publishers with commercial interests, often with print runs that far exceed those of literary classics.[18]

When we look at the website of Gema Insani, one of the largest Islamic publishers in Indonesia, we find that most of their best-selling titles are children's books, advice literature, and editions of the Arabic Qurʾān (*muṣḥaf*), which are doubtlessly more easily marketable than multi-volume works of *tafsīr*. However, one of their five main categories of products is called *maraji*, or religious reference works. It includes many translations of premodern Arabic works, such as an abridged edition of the *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, the complete *ḥadīth* collections by al-Nasāʾī, Ibn Māja, and al-Tirmidhī, and works by al-Shāfiʿī, al-Nawawī, al-Suyūṭī, and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, mostly in abridged versions. And, of course, Gema Insani offer their own translation of Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr*. While the production and distribution of translations of Islamic "classics" has not yet received much attention from researchers within or outside Indonesia,[19] there clearly is a market for such works, and Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr*, with its eight translations into Indonesian, is a big part of it.

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18 Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson, "Print, Islam, and the Prospects for Civic Pluralism: New Religious Writings and their Audiences," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8 (1997), 4362, at 46–47, 49.

19 Existing studies on Islamic book printing in Indonesia focus on modern ideological trends, both in original Indonesian works and in translations from Arabic, as well as novels and advice literature; see C.W. Watson, "Islamic Books and their Publishers: Notes on the Contemporary Indonesian Scene," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 16 (2005), 177–210; Akh. Muzakki, "Cultivating Islamic Ideology: Print Islam in Post-independence Indonesia (a Preliminary Study)," *Studia Islamika* 14 (2007), 419–446. There is also a market for textbooks in Arabic script for students of religious schools that has attracted some attention but neither Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* nor translations into the Indonesian language in Latin script are part of that market which favours the shorter *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*; see Martin van Bruinessen, "Kitab kuning," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam THREE*, https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/*-COM_35640, accessed 22 October 2020.

Publication of translations of Ibn Kathīr's Qurʾānic commentary in the Indonesian language started in the 1980s. This was a time during which publishing in general, and Islamic publishing in particular, expanded significantly in Indonesia, responding to the general rise in literacy, the establishment of a capitalist economy and the emergence of an affluent urban middle class that was disenchanted with politics but increasingly interested in religion. Already in the mid-2000s, there were at least several hundred Islamic publishers, most of them on Java, much in contrast to publishing activity in the early twentieth century which had had important centres on Sumatra. Nearly half of all publishing enterprises in Indonesia today specialize in Islamic print media. They offer a wide range of books, sold in big bookstores as well as street stalls and small stationery shops, with print runs that are typically significantly higher than those of, for example, non-religious prose literature. Translations of Arabic works have taken an important place in their portfolio from an early time onwards. The choice of works was often based on suggestions from students returning from the Arab World and Pakistan, with the result that modern authors affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood were featured prominently. In addition to that, from the late 1990s, premodern works of Islamic scholarship were translated more and more frequently in order to make them accessible to a broader public, beyond the students of Islamic schools. Many Islamic publishing houses, with the exception of those that address a target groups of liberal Muslim intellectuals, prioritize translations of Arabic works over original Indonesian works since Arabic religious literature enjoys great prestige and is therefore a valuable commodity.[20]

The publication of Ibn Kathīr translations in Indonesia matches those general patterns of Islamic publishing in Indonesia that have been described in previous studies. A close look at their publication history also allows us to identify some new trends that have occurred since the mid-2000s, when the most recent significant study on the topic was published.

The first translation of Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* was printed during the earliest stage of Islamic publishing activities in Indonesia, probably in 1981, by the small Surabaya-based publisher Bina Ilmu, with many subsequent editions in

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20 Watson, "Islamic Books;" Muzakki, "Cultivating Islamic Ideology." See also Greg Fealy, "Consuming Islam: Commodified Religion and Aspirational Pietism in Contemporary Indonesia", in *Expressing Islam: Religious Life and Politics in Indonesia*, eds. Greg Fealy and Sally White (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2008), 15–39. More about the commodification of Islamic books will be said further below.

Indonesia and also in Malaysia.[21] The next wave of translation and publishing activity occurred in the *reformasi* period after the end of Suharto's reign in 1998, when the previously tight government control of religious expression was relinquished. It included an abridged edition of Ibn Kathīr by one of the largest and oldest Islamic publishers in Indonesia, the above-mentioned Gema Insani (1999),[22] as well as the only unabridged translation into Indonesian by the publisher Sinar Baru Algensindo from Bandung (2000–*c*. 2007).[23] All three publishers—Bina Ilmu, Gema Insani, and Sinar Baru Algensindo—offer a mix of original Indonesian and translated books that include anything from Arabic Muslim Brotherhood texts to works on Sufism and books by proponents of early Islamic modernism such as Muḥammad ʿAbduh. They thus seem to target an unspecific Muslim audience that is religious but not exclusively committed to a particular ideological trend.

This is in marked contrast to those publishers that, starting the 2000s, printed Ibn Kathīr translations as part of a Salafi program that has a heavy focus on Saudi authors. For example, Pustaka Imam Asy-Syafi'i describes itself as a publisher that spreads the true teachings of the Sunna, based on the understanding of the *salaf*, by producing translations of Arab and especially Saudi authors with a focus on Salafi doctrine and *dakwah*. Their abridged Ibn Kathīr edition, first printed in 2001, is based on the work by a descendant of Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (1703–1792).[24] In 2006, Pustaka Ibnu Katsir, a publisher with a similar agenda, including the promotion of face veiling for women, fol-

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21 *Terjemah Singkat Tafsir Ibnu Katsir* (Surabaya: Bina Ilmu, 2012), tr. Salim and Said Bahreisy. For the date of what was presumably the first edition, see https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/ Record/3022866, accessed 10 November 2020. I will subsequently cite all editions by the name of their publisher since citing them by author, who is invariably Ibn Kathīr, would be impractical as well as misleading, given the generally high level of editorial interference with his text. Since the titles of the translations are often identical and the translators are not always named, the publisher is the most distinctive and constant feature.

22 *Ringkasan Tafsir Ibnu Katsir* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 10th edition, 2020), tr. Syihabuddin. For the date of the first edition, see the foreword and the editions listed on Google Books. On Gema Insani, see Watson, "Islamic Books," 185–186, 194–196; Muzakki, "Cultivating Islamic Ideology," 428.

23 *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir, juz' 1* (Bandung: Sinar Baru Algensindo, 2000), tr. Bahrun and Anwar Abubakar. For the complete edition, see https://www.sinarbarualgensindo.com/product -category/ kutubus-salaf-dan-tafsir/, accessed 17 October 2022, as well as the mobile phone apps discussed below, for example at https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id =com.barakahapps.tafsiribnukatsirpro&hl=en_US, accessed 24 September 2020.

24 *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir* (Bogor: Pustaka Imam Asy-Syafi'i, 4th edition, 2005), tr. M. Abdul Ghif- far E.M. et al.

lowed with a translation of the abridged Arabic edition by the Indian-born sheikh Muḥammad al-Mubārakpūrī that is distributed by the Riyad-based publisher Dār al-Salām.[25]

In 2015, the publisher Insan Kamil printed a fairly extensive translation of Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* that is part of a publishing program focusing on prototypical Salafi authorities such as Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Kathīr and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (1292–1350), *ḥadīth*, the lives of the prophet's companions as well as contemporary Saudi authors. When compared to the two previously mentioned publishers, the Salafi orientation is just as obvious, but there is a noticeable shift from correct doctrine towards practical piety: the portfolio has a focus on prayer books, advice literature, and especially on works about gender issues and family ethics that target women. Another novelty is the fact that Insan Kamil's Ibn Kathīr translation has no named translator; it has been prepared by an editorial team instead. Moreover, it is more aggressively marketed than previous editions, with a direct imperative to buy it on the back cover.[26]

Both aspects—the aggressive marketing and the translation by an anonymous editorial team—appear to reflect a recent trend towards commodification that is mirrored in two editions from the 2010s by Islamic publishers that do not specifically follow a Salafi agenda, Jabal and Maghfirah. The focus of Jabal is on prayer books and Arabic Qurʾāns, and accordingly, their translation of Ibn Kathīr, which was first printed in 2012, is typeset and marketed as a *muṣḥaf* with added commentary, contained in one thick volume.[27] The Jakarta-based publisher Maghfirah offers a wide range of titles, mostly translated from Arabic, with a focus on Egyptian and Saudi authors who convey conservative messages in a modern garb. The Saudi ʿĀʾiḍ ʿAbdallāh al-Qarnī's (b. 1959) self-help book "Don't be sad" (*Lā taḥzan*) is a big hit, as it is for Insan Kamil. Maghfirah's 2016 Ibn Kathīr edition[28] is the most aggressively marketed of all translations of this Qurʾānic commentary. Entitled "The Easy *tafsīr* by Ibn Kathīr", it has bullet point lists on the front and back cover that praise the edition's strengths: the authenticity of its *ḥadīth* material, the comprehensible language, and the fact that it covers the entire Qurʾān, making it the best way to understand the Qurʾān without hardship or confusion. It also contains a gift certificate to be filled by the buyer, indicating an envisaged target buyer who is looking to present it to a pious friend or even love interest. The

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25   *Shahih Tafsir Ibnu Katsir* (Jakarta: Pustaka Ibnu Katsir, 17th edition, 2017), tr. Abu Ihsan al-Atsari.

26   *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir* (Surakarta: Insan Kamil, 6th edition, 2019).

27   *Ringkasan Tafsir Ibnu Katsir* (Bandung: Jabal, 5th edition, 2020).

28   *Mudah Tafsir Ibnu Katsir* (Jakarta: Maghfirah, 2nd edition, 2017).

portfolio and self-description of Maghfirah[29] as well as the introduction and presentation of their Ibn Kathīr edition reflect a combination of religious and entrepreneurial spirit that seems characteristic of contemporary Islamic publishing in Indonesia. Everything about the Maghfirah translation, which is the most recent edition of Ibn Kathir's *tafsīr* on the Indonesian market, suggests that certain Salafi convictions, such as the pre-eminence of the first three generations of Islam whose understanding of the Qurʾān contemporary Muslims must follow, have become broadly marketable in Indonesia. They have merged with the longstanding prestige of the *turāth* ("heritage") of classical Islamic literature which, according to the publisher, today's *umma* must draw on in order to properly understand Islam. This framing allows for the inclusion of broader trends beyond a narrowly-defined Salafi-Wahhabi approach but is bound to privilege Arabic works over Indonesian ones.[30]

4   The Indonesian Ibn Kathīr: An Imperfect Perfect Exegete

Most modern editions of Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* position Ibn Kathīr as the preeminent exegetical authority but, paradoxically, at the same time consider his work to be in need of revision, sometimes even rewriting. The Indonesian Islamic publishing market is no exception. Seven of the eight Indonesian translations of Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* are abridged versions of his commentary, but some also contain additions. The translations therefore differ vastly in length. The shortest one is also the earliest one, that by Bina Ilmu. The Gema Insani and Jabal editions have also been massively shortened. On the other end of the spectrum, the only complete translation is the one by Sinar Baru Algensindo. From among the abridged versions, the translations produced by Salafi publishers retain the highest proportion of Ibn Kathīr's original text, especially the Insan Kamil edition.

The influence of the Arabic Islamic publishing market on the Indonesian one is substantial, as is the prestige that Arab contributors provide. Six of the eight translations—with the exception of the complete one by Sinar Baru

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29   See https://maghfirahpustaka.id/tentang-kami/sekilas-sejarah/, accessed 10 November 2020.

30   For example, obtaining a copy of the seventeenth-century Malay *tafsīr* of ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Singkilī (d. 1105/1693), the most famous premodern work of *tafsīr* written in one of the languages of modern Indonesia, proved to be a major challenge whereas the translations of Ibn Kathīr were easily available, at least within Indonesia, through bookstores and online orders.

Algensindo and the near-complete one by Insan Kamil—are based on an abridged Arabic edition.[31] The Arab editor is frequently highlighted in the publisher's marketing. For example, Pustaka Imam asy-Syafi'i displays the name of the editor, ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Isḥāq Āl al-Shaykh prominently on top of the cover. Gema Insani has the name of the editor, the Syrian Salafi sheikh Muḥammad Nasīb al-Rifāʿī (1912–1992), on the cover in a position that makes it appear as if al-Rifāʿī is the author and Ibn Kathīr's name is simply part of the title of the *tafsīr*. On the back cover, Gema Insani sing the praises of his edition and point out that it was based on encouragement from "Middle Eastern ulama." The extensive front matter includes any number of endorsements from Arab ulama, mainly from Saudi Arabia but also from a range of other countries. Pustaka Ibnu Katsir not only invokes the authority of Sheikh Ṣāfī al-Raḥmān al-Mubārakpūrī (1942–2006), the head of the editorial team, but also that of the modern *ḥadīth* scholar Muḥammad Nāsir al-Dīn al-Albānī (1914–1999) "and other *ḥadīth* scholars" on the cover. Even Insan Kamil, who publish a near-complete translation that is not based on an Arabic abridged edition, invoke the authority of Arab scholars such as ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Saʿdī (1889–1957), Ibn al-ʿUthaymīn (1929–2001) and Aḥmad Shākir (1892–1958) on the back cover, and the front matter contains a "certificate of accuracy" by a Cairo-based "Dār Ibn al-Haytham." This creates the somewhat surprising impression that modern Arab scholars and institutions are needed to lend additional authority to the work of a classical exegete, and in some cases, such as the Gema Insani edition, they even appear to trump the exegete's authority.

This is related to a dilemma faced by most publishers: While endorsing Ibn Kathīr as a supreme exegetical authority, they simultaneously see the need for correcting his exegesis. Such need for correction is surprisingly often explicitly stated, for example by saying that Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* had to be "purified" or "authenticated."

This is in spite of the praise that is heaped upon this *tafsīr* in cover texts and introductions. According to their own statements, the publishers agree with

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31   The Arabic editions used are the following: Muḥammad Nasīb al-Rifāʿī (ed.), *Taysīr al-ʿalī al-qadīr* (Beirut: Dār Lubnān, 1980) by Gema Insani; ʿAbdallāh b. Muḥammad Āl al-Shaykh, *Lubāb al-tafsīr min Ibn Kathīr* (Cairo: Dār al-Hilāl 1994) by Pustaka Imam Asy-Syafi'i; Jamāʿa min al-ʿulamāʾ bi-ishrāf al-Shaykh Ṣāfī al-Raḥmān al-Mubārakfūrī (eds.), *Al-miṣbāḥ al-munīr fī tahdhīb tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* (Riyadh: Dār al-Salām, 2000) by Pustaka Ibnu Katsir; Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Ṣābūnī (ed.), *Mukhtaṣar tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Qurʾān al-Karīm, 1973) by Jabal; and Ṣalāḥ al-Khālidī (ed.), *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr: Tahdhīb wa-taḥqīq* (Amman: Dār al-Fārūq, 2008) by Maghfirah. The edition by Bina Ilmu seems to be based on al-Ṣābūnī's edition as well, with further abridgments and without acknowledging the source.

each other in that the foremost reason for its excellence is its *ḥadīth*-based method that conforms to Ibn Taymiyya's paradigm of studying the Qurʾān through the Qurʾān, *ḥadīth*, and the traditions about the companions and successors. It is authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) and does not confound readers with *isrāʾīliyyāt* and weak traditions. Some editors claim that Ibn Kathīr was the first to interpret the Qurʾān through the Qurʾān (*tafsīr al-Qurʾān bi'l-Qurʾān*). Many of them also point out that his *tafsīr* is useful, helps people understand the Qurʾān and is the most authoritative reference work in Qurʾānic exegesis. This is not only relevant in an academic but also in a practical sense: Muslims are expected to follow the first generations, instead of merely learning about them, and Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* is portrayed as a tool to achieve that goal; it provides guidance in addition to knowledge. Some publishers praise Ibn Kathīr's clear and logical method and the careful way in which he weighs exegetical opinions against each other (*tarjīḥ*). While several forewords point to Ibn Kathīr's great expertise in a variety of fields besides *tafsīr* and *ḥadīth*, especially *fiqh*, but also *ʿaqīda*, history, and language, Gema Insani cites the Arab editor al-Rifāʿī with the opposite opinion, namely, that Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* is *not* muddied by other disciplines, which is probably a jibe against the likes of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. This is only a minor disagreement, however. The editors are unanimous in their assessment of Ibn Kathīr as a great and authoritative exegete, or even *the* greatest and most authoritative. Several of them undergird this with statements from other authorities such as Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (849/1445–911/1505), Muḥammad al-Ṣābūnī (1930–2021), or "the curricula of Islamic universities in many countries."

More words are spent on arguing the need for revision and explaining the changes that have been made.[32] Based on the explanations given by the publishers and editors in the introductions and cover texts, it is possible to identify some trends. The main reason given for the need to revise Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* is related to *ḥadīth*s: "weeding out" weak *ḥadīth*s is the most common self-stated aim, often with reference to authorities such as al-Albānī on whose opinion this process is based. The desire to delete redundant *ḥadīth*s and shorten or delete *isnād*s is nearly as common a goal. Three editions moreover mention the removal of *isrāʾīliyyāt*. Salafi themes are thus very prominent.

Other types of text that fell victim to abridgment are only mentioned by individual editors, such as *qirāʾāt*, minority opinions and dogmatically unacceptable interpretations, especially about the attributes of God. Here, we see clear differences between the editions. For example, Maghfirah is concerned with removing technicalities such as discussions of *qirāʾāt*, whereas Pustaka

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32 Except in the only translation that is truly complete, by Sinar Baru Algensindo.

Imam asy-Syafi'i even claim that they added technical information missing from the original work, including *qirāʾāt*, the sources of *ḥadīth*s, and a commentary on some missing verses.

Gema Insani and Maghfirah are explicitly concerned with improving the clarity of the *tafsīr* and making it comprehensible to non-specialist readers. Maghfirah even praise their abridged edition for having restructured Ibn Kathīr's commentary, despite the fact that they also raise the somewhat doubtful claim that Ibn Kathīr's language is simple and easy to understand for contemporary lay readers even without editing. In any case, the accessibility of the text to average Muslim readers is a key concern for these two publishers.

Based on the picture of Ibn Kathīr that the publishers and editors paint and on their description of their revisions, it is possible to identify the following four approaches:

1. Heavily abridged editions for readers with a general interest in the Qurʾān that do not subscribe to a particular ideological agenda nor display a marked concern with the methods of exegesis, translation and abridgment (Bina Ilmu, Jabal). They present Ibn Kathīr as a nondescript premodern exegetical authority and do not frame the method of abridgment in terms of Ibn Kathīr's supposed shortcomings.

2. A complete edition that has been published in thirty inexpensive booklets and seems to target students in Islamic schools or universities (Sinar Baru Algensindo). It has the same non-critical approach to Ibn Kathīr as the aforementioned editions.

3. Editions focused on a guidance-oriented approach (Maghfirah, Pustaka Imam asy-Syafi'i). The editors state their goal as helping Muslims understand the Qurʾān according to the understanding of the *salaf*, which requires simplification. In their framing, the main shortcoming of Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* is its length and complexity. They do mention the presence of "unnecessary" material in his *tafsīr* but the focus is on simplification, rather than correction.

4. Salafi editions whose publishers treat Ibn Kathīr's commentary as an imperfect *tafsīr* in need of revision or at least additional explanation especially in the one area they give him most credit for, which is *ḥadīth* scholarship. Even Insan Kamil, who claim to deliver an unabridged translation (although this is not entirely true), frame their edition as particularly valuable because al-Albānī's evaluation of *ḥadīth*s has been added. Even more strikingly, Pustaka Ibnu Katsir's translation of Mubārakpūrī's edition carries the correction and authentication in the title: *Shahih Tafsir Ibnu Katsir*. Their entire marketing is based on the premise that this edition contains nothing but authentic and correct *ḥadīth*s that have been

sifted both by Mubārakpūrī's team and once again by the Indonesian publisher, based on additional sources. The potential inclusion of weak *ḥadīth*s or a mix-up between *ḥadīth*s and traditions on persons other than the prophet are seen as serious threats here. Going even further, Gema Insani's edition that is based on al-Rifāʿī's highly abridged Arabic edition boasts the direct interference with doctrinally problematic content, citing all the Salafi buzzwords: the *ʿaqīda* of the *salaf*, *tawḥīd*, the avoidance of *bidaʿ* and so forth. It is particularly in this category that Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* is framed as an important but inherently problematic work.

Of course, the editors' and publishers' statements about their methods of revising and translating Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* do not provide conclusive evidence of the criteria that actually guided their work. Some of these statements are rather detailed and others extremely short and vague, and even those that are detailed should not be taken at face value. This is not the place for a detailed analysis of the minutiae of translation, revision, annotation, restructuring and abridgment that the editors and translators of each of the eight Indonesian versions of Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* have undertaken. It is clear, however, that none of them give readers the full story regarding the extent of the changes they have made, as the next section will show.

5   The People of the Elephant: Modes and Pitfalls of Abridgment and Translation

1   Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the people of the elephant?
2   Did He not utterly confound their plans?
3   He sent ranks of birds against them,
4   pelting them with pellets of hard-baked clay:
5   he made them [like] cropped stubble. (Q 105)[33]

Ibn Kathīr's interpretation of *Sūrat al-Fīl* (Q 105) is relatively lengthy and the range of sources he draws on is diverse, going far beyond the simplistic *ḥadīth*-versus-*isrāʾīliyyāt* dichotomy that his modern editors are so fond of. Ibn Kathīr, who was also the author of a famous universal history, is first and foremost interested in the purported historical background of the *sūra*, namely, the campaign of the Christian King Abraha from Yemen against Mecca in the year of Muḥammad's birth, which ended in Abraha's defeat through divine interven-

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33   The translation is based (with adaptations) on M.A.S. Abdel Haleem, *The Qurʾān* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 437.

tion. In Ibn Kathīr's interpretation, this shows God's blessing to the Quraysh and was a sign of Muḥammad's impending mission. Ibn Kathīr then presents in detail the story of the campaign based on Ibn Isḥāq's (d. 150/767) prophetic biography, including some poems that were allegedly recited by characters in the story. He supplements Ibn Isḥāq's narrative with additional, and sometimes conflicting, information from other sources.

In the next section of his commentary, he lists around twenty short traditions on early Islamic authorities about the meanings of individual words, phrases and grammatical constructs in the *sūra*. This includes a brief discussion of the nature of the birds that were pelting stones or stone-hard pellets at the invaders. He then moves to the conclusion of the story, provides some additional details about persons featuring in it, discusses (and rejects) an alternative version of the narrative according to which Abraha himself did not take part in the campaign, and quotes three pre-Islamic Arabic poems about the event. Only at the end does he cite two short *ḥadīth*s, one from al-Bukhārī and one that is contained in both *ṣaḥīḥ* collections. According to these *ḥadīth*s, Muḥammad mentioned the campaign of the people of the elephant and the *sūra* that describes it on two different occasions. Ḥadīth scholarship is thus only a marginal part of Ibn Kathīr's commentary on *Sūrat al-Fīl*.[34]

The way in which Indonesian editions edit, abridge and present Ibn Kathīr's commentary on this *sūra* is an interesting case study because the bulk of the commentary is free of *ḥadīth*s, weak or otherwise, and of stories of Jewish or Christian origin, nor does it discuss doctrinal matters. As such, most of the elements that the editors, publishers and translators of the Indonesian editions explicitly consider problematic are not present here. At most, the commentary contains a few differences of opinion among historians and a few variants of traditions on the meanings of particular terms or expressions.

The Indonesian editions display a vastly divergent level of interference with the source text, of course, depending on their length and general editing strategy.[35] Yet some clear patterns emerge when we break down Ibn Kathīr's commentary into segments and systematically compare the extent to which the Indonesian editions abridged or changed Ibn Kathīr's interpretation.

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34   Abū l-Fidāʾ Ismāʿīl b. ʿUmar Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm* (Riyadh: Dār Ṭība, 1999), 8:483–490.

35   Ranking them according to the extent of abridgment, from the most complete to the most abridged edition, results in the following order: Sinar Baru Algensindo, Insan Kamil, Pustaka Ibnu Katsir, Pustaka Imam asy-Syafiʾi, Maghfirah, Jabal, Gema Insani, Bina Ilmu. In addition, the Maghfirah and Gemai Insani editions are based on Arabic editions that have not only abridged but also partly rephrased and even rearranged Ibn Kathīr's original text and thus massively interfere with his wording and the structure of his argument.

First of all, from the thirty-seven segments that I identified, there are only two—and rather short ones, at that—which survive unscathed in all editions: a prayer in the form of a poem of only two couplets' length by Muḥammad's grandfather ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib and the second of the two ḥadīths in the end. In the first case, this is probably because ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib seemed like an important personality even to those editors who did otherwise not think much about deleting the bulk of the historical narrative in the commentary. As for the *ḥadīth* in the end, it concerns a statement of Muḥammad at the occasion of the conquest of Mecca and is contained in the collections of Muslim and al-Bukhārī, which obviously means that no editor considered its authenticity doubtful or its presence in the commentary superfluous. Every other segment of this *tafsīr*, which in the Arabic edition I used covers eight pages, has been abridged or deleted by at least one editor, and usually by several of them. This is even true for the first of the two prophetic *ḥadīth*s mentioned at the end, which is missing in two of the Indonesian editions, maybe because Ibn Kathīr had already cited it in his commentary on a previous *sūra*.

Some types of content are deleted at a conspicuous frequency, in the vast majority of editions. On top of the list are the pre-Islamic Arabic poems: all but the unabridged edition by Sinar Baru Algensindo delete some or most of them. Another poem, this one ascribed to a participant in the battle, Nufayl, is shortened in half the editions and completely deleted in one of them. It seems as if the editors consider poetry superfluous, difficult to read, difficult to translate, or all of those things—unless the poem in question is framed as a prayer by ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib as mentioned above.

The editors are also decidedly unenthusiastic about the lengthy section that contains semantic and grammatical explanations. Here, Ibn Kathīr basically lists a large number of concise opinions that have been transmitted from early Islamic authorities. While only one edition completely eliminates it, most editors shorten it significantly and delete a substantial part of the opinions. They are particularly prone to doing so in the last part of the section when the traditions cited by Ibn Kathīr are less of a philological and more of a mythological quality, for example describing the birds that attacked Abraha's army. In one tradition, Ibn Kathīr cites Ibn ʿAbbās, Mujāhid and ʿAṭāʾ as having likened those birds to phoenixes (*ʿanqāʾ mughrib*). This is omitted by all but the Sinar Baru Algensindo and Insan Kamil editions. In these two editions, the translators clearly suspect that the Indonesian readers might not know what a phoenix is. The Insan Kamil edition therefore adds a description, whereas the Sinar Baru Algensindo translators render it as "an eagle (*burung garuda*) that is known in the Maghreb"—which is most likely a misreading of the Arabic attribute

mughrib as *maghrib*. The translations are full of such misunderstandings, more on which will be said below.

Most editions significantly shorten Ibn Kathīr's historical narrative, especially towards the end. Many of them are skeptical of variants, alternative narratives to that of Ibn Isḥāq, and differences of opinion, for example regarding the number of elephants in the invading army. A brief excursus explaining the name and further fate of the elephant herder is eliminated by nearly all editors, and even more unpopular is Ibn Kathīr's discussion of an alternative historical opinion according to which Abraha was not part of the army. It is fairly clear that from the point of view of the Arab and Indonesian editors, an important part of what constituted *tafsīr* and historical scholarship to Ibn Kathīr – a large corpus of sources, philological detail, discussions of opposing views, and conflicting opinions – is deemed to be unimportant or confusing to contemporary readers. The Maghfirah edition goes so far as to eliminate all references to alternative opinions.[36]

It is not always clear whether the translators even recognized the way in which Ibn Kathīr, who assumed that his readers were familiar with the genre conventions of *tafsīr*, added to his main narrative variants or additions that go back to different sources. For example, when telling the story of the reason for Abraha's campaign against Mecca, Ibn Kathīr narrates Ibn Isḥāq's account, according to which the Quraysh were angry because Abraha had built a church in Sanaa that was meant to replace the Kaaba as the main site of pilgrimage on the Arab peninsula. Subsequently, one of the Quraysh entered Abraha's church and defecated in it. This angered Abraha and he vowed to destroy the Kaaba. Ibn Kathīr then interrupts the flow of the story by adducing a different version going back to Muqātil b. Sulaymān who claims that some Quraysh lit a fire in the church and due to the prevalence of strong winds that day, it destroyed the church. After this insertion, Ibn Kathīr returns to the main narrative, describing Abraha's preparation for the afore-mentioned campaign. That this is the campaign he vowed to undertake in response to the defecation, and not a part of the story about the fire, would not necessarily be clear to anyone unfamiliar with the genre conventions and Ibn Kathīr's use of sources, and it is not clear to the majority of translators either. Two editions simply omit Muqātil's version, thereby eliminating the problem, but in five of the remaining six, it is not recognizable as an alternative version or insertion and is seamlessly connected to the subsequent part. The Sinar Baru Algensindo edition even connects the story of

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36   In the Maghfirah edition, it is also conspicuous that every single opinion or variant that is attributed to Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767) is deleted, probably because al-Khālidī, the Arab editor, considered him untrustworthy.

the fire with the beginning of Abraha's campaign by saying that it was "because of this incident" ("karena peristiwa itulah") that Abraha readied his army, an expression that is not part of the source text. The translators' lack of understanding of Ibn Kathīr's method is bound to create confusion because readers are now confronted with two mutually exclusive narratives that are presented as parts of the same story.

In the same context, many translators' surprisingly limited command of Arabic becomes obvious. Only two out of eight editions correctly translate the Arabic verb *aḥdatha* as "to defecate": Bina Ilmu has *buang air besar* and Maghfirah has *membuang hajatnya*.[37] The remaining translators were apparently unfamiliar with the term and tried to derive the meaning from better-known semantic fields connected to the root *ḥ–d–th*: "to cause a riot" (Gema Insani, Pustaka Ibnu Katsir, Insan Kamil), "to destroy the interior of the church" (Pustaka Imam asy-Syafi'i), or "to talk" (Jabal), which makes no sense at all. Half the translators also misunderstand Ibn Kathīr's expression *baʿḍuhum* as denoting "some of them [the Quraysh]" when, in this context, it clearly means "one of them."

Another example where the majority of translators have difficulties understanding the source text is Ibn Kathīr's introductory paragraph about the relevance of the story. He says about the People of the Elephant *wa-kānū qawman Naṣārā wa-kāna dīnuhum idh dhāka aqrab ḥālan mimmā kāna ʿalayhī Quraysh min ʿibādat al-awthān.* The sentence is somewhat elliptic but from the context, it is clear that he means "they were Christians, and their religion was at that time closer [to Islam/ the true religion] than the worship of idols practiced by the Quraysh." He goes on to argue that, despite the religious superiority of the attackers, God granted the victory to the Meccans as a portent of Muḥammad's birth and in order to protect his family. Out of six translations that contain this segment (the Jabal and Bina Ilmu editions having deleted it), five translate it as meaning that the Christian faith of Abraha's people was at that time close, or closer, or closest, to the idol worship practiced by the Quraysh, which completely defies the logic of Ibn Kathīr's argument. Only Pustaka Ibnu Katsir translate this line correctly.

Furthermore, several editions suffer from sloppy typesetting or transliteration. The most egregious case of the latter is the Insan Kamil edition where Ibn Kathīr is said—on the back cover, no less—to be "an exegete from Baṣra" while he was, in fact, not from Baṣra in Iraq but from Buṣrā in Syria; and the important

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37   Maghfirah had it easier because the Arab editor whose edition they rely on, al-Khālidī, explains the term.

early transmitter al-Suddī is misspelled as as-Sadi, which reveals the translator's lack of familiarity with the material. In the Sinar Baru Algensindo edition, names are frequently mixed up; for example, Muḥammad b. Kaʿb becomes Muḥammad b. Isḥāq and Ibn Hishām becomes Ibn Hāshim.

All in all, it is thus safe to say that the quality of the translations is rather low. There is no single edition that is free of the types of errors discussed here.

6   The Marketability of Books in the Age of Apps

Why would eight different publishers go to the trouble of producing voluminous editions of a premodern Qurʾānic commentary yet dispense with the effort needed to ensure adequate quality? Obviously, none of these editions is based on a quest for academic rigor, yet publishers must consider them commercially viable. And the fact that every single one of the translations has seen more than one edition[38] and that none of them were out of stock in 2020[39] does attest for a lasting commercial viability.

Why, though? Despite the relative importance of Islamic publishing, Indonesia is not exactly famous for its book culture.[40] And would people in the beginning of the 2020s not simply use electronic versions, especially smartphone apps?

During two searches in September 2020 and January 2022, Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* was available on Google Play Store (but not in Apple's App Store[41]) in multiple Indonesian versions. In 2020, there were eight, two of them in a Pro version that cost a small fee, and most of them with ads. Their content was identical,

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38   I do not have reliable data for all editions, given the somewhat chaotic nature of the Indonesian book market and the fact that libraries do not normally collect such works, but based on the copies I could acquire, the Pustaka Ibnu Katsir translation has seen as many as seventeen editions, the Pustaka Imam asy-Syafi'i translation thirteen, the Gema Insani translation at least ten, and most of the others between four and six. The Maghfirah translation, first published in 2016, was already reprinted in 2017.

39   At least six out of the eight translations have been reprinted in 2016 or later: Pustaka Imam asy-Syafi'i 2016, Gema Insani 2020, Pustaka Ibnu Katsir 2017, Jabal 2020, Maghfirah 2017, Insan Kamil 2019.

40   See, for example, Monika Griebeler, "A Land without Readers," *Qantara.de*, 29 May 2015, https://en.qantara.de/content/literature-in-indonesia-a-land-without-readers, accessed January 1, 2022.

41   Apple has significantly higher standards for uploading apps to the app store, but it is not a particularly significant provider on the Indonesian market: in January 2022, Android had more than 90% market share in the country. See https://gs.statcounter.com/os-market -share/mobile/Indonesia, accessed January 1, 2022.

namely, an occasionally faulty and probably pirated OCR version of the Sinar Baru Algensindo edition that was arranged by sūra and verse number and in most cases searchable but otherwise not particularly well-designed or functional. By January 2022, a few of those versions had disappeared and there were some new ones, including two that contain scans of the Imam asy-Syafi'i edition as PDF files, which are available all over the internet[42] and probably also pirated. The app format offers no added value to this content at all. This is somewhat different with an app that purports to offer a "thematic" version of Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr*.[43] It contains a list of topics for each of which a small number of segments of Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* of individual verses may be consulted. All of them are, again, based on the Sinar Baru Algensindo translation.

None of these apps are very professional nor have they been developed with a thought to realizing the full potential offered by this type of media. Apparently, while some quick money might be made by placing smartphone apps of an existing digital version of a text on the market, there has been no attempt to move significantly beyond what the printed versions of Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* offer, let alone to produce new translations specifically for the internet.

The investment in Ibn Kathīr apps is evidently low, and this might be because there are certain functions of a book that an app cannot fulfil and that buyers of this Qur'ānic commentary are looking for. According to Muzakki, books continue to be important media in Islamic publishing because they better represent the normative-dogmatic claims of Islam than, for example, music or films. They embody longevity, rather than ephemeral impressions.[44] Books are a commodity, a physical object that can increase the prestige of its owner and serve as a status symbol.[45] Watson argued in 2005 that some of the output of Islamic publishing houses, targeted at students of universities and urban *pesantren*, might be meant for display on a bookshelf, rather than reading.[46] Regarding the translations of Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr*, their physical properties and presentation corroborate that suspicion, at least in most cases. Six out of the eight editions come in multi-volume, glossy, hardcover box sets, decorated with Arabic writing and made to impress. There are two exceptions. The unabridged Sinar Baru Algensindo edition consists of thirty inexpensive softcover book-

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42   The fourth edition (2005).

43   *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir Tematik* by Peddy Nesa.

44   Muzakki, "Cultivating Islamic Ideology," 426–427.

45   This has been shown for Kazakhstan in Wendell Schwab, "Islam in print: The diversity of Islamic literature and interpretation in post-Soviet Kazakhstan," PhD diss., (Indiana University, 2011).

46   Watson, "Islamic Books," 206–207.

lets, conforming to the parts (*ajzāʾ*) of the Qurʾān. They resemble textbooks for students of Islamic schools, and the target group probably consists of students with a limited budget and an interest in reading an extensive *tafsīr*.[47] The somewhat opposite case is the Jabal edition which is highly abridged and presented more as an extension of the Qurʾānic text than an independent *tafsīr* work, for which reason it comes in one thick volume. These two editions might actually be meant to be perused by their buyers, rather than put on a shelf; for the others, this is not as clear.

The suspicion that the production of quality content might not have been a key consideration for publishers is undergirded not only by the low quality of the translations but also by the relatively careless way in which the pages hidden inside the glossy cover have been produced. For example, the Bina Ilmu translation comes on low-quality paper and the pages are bound in the wrong order. The text of the Gema Insani edition seems to have undergone an inaccurate OCR. None of this would be important to buyers who are primarily aiming to place the books on a bookshelf. The gift certificate with which the Maghfirah edition is equipped points to buyers who are looking to impress the recipient, who in turn might be hoping to impress others.

7 Conclusion

The Indonesian translations of Ibn Kathīr's Qurʾānic commentary have been produced in a climate characterized by the increasing commodification of religion. In a social context in which Muslims express their religious identity through purchasing and displaying certain goods, buying a multi-volume *tafsīr* may be a performative act that increases the buyer's status, and producing such works may consequently become profitable for publishers. This is dependent on the visibility of the product. Without such visibility, it would lose its performative value, for which reason apps are not suitable to assume the functions of the printed books. The increasing visibility of religious status objects further drives the Islamization of society that has contributed to the rising demand for such items in the first place.[48]

And yet, whether or not buyers actually read these books, their content matters. It is no coincidence that it is Ibn Kathīr's name that adorns the cases of so many multi-volume box sets by various Islamic publishers. Modern editors and

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47   The publisher generally has many university textbooks in its portfolio, including books for non-Islamic subjects such as pomiculture and pedagogy.

48   Fealy, "Consuming Islam," 16, 26–30.

publishers have successfully positioned Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* as a source of guidance, as the marketing and framing of the Indonesian translations show. Ibn Kathīr's work has been transformed from a specialist, encyclopedic Qurʾānic commentary to a textbook for a mass market.

It is by no means certain that all the publishers discussed in this chapter were cynically using substandard translations of Ibn Kathīr's Qurʾānic commentary to fleece Muslim readers, as parts of my analysis might suggest. Some of them, while lacking professionalism, appear to have a genuinely religious agenda. That agenda is in line with Salafi ideas about the purity of the first generations of Islam and the precedence of ḥadīth over the reasoning of later-generation scholars.

However, my findings somewhat complicate the hypothesis, described in previous research, that the Wahhabi-Sufi divide is a defining feature of the Indonesian book market.[49] It would be tempting to situate the Ibn Kathīr editions on the Wahhabi side of this dichotomy. This, however, would be too simplistic. While three of the publishers of Ibn Kathīr translations clearly have a Salafi-Wahhabi agenda in the sense of promoting literature that conforms to the state ideology of Saudi Arabia (at least in the shape in which it was expressed before the mid-2010s), others lean towards Muslim Brotherhood literature, and some have no clear ideological agenda at all.

According to Fealy, producers who want to reach a mass audience "need to pitch their messages to have broad appeal and thus avoid narrow or exclusivist imagery and language." They therefore tend to "avoid messages based on a narrow definition of what constitutes a 'good' Muslim."[50] Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr* seems to have been successfully positioned in that middle ground, as an embodiment of Arabic-Islamic scholarship and a central work of guidance. Despite differences between the ideological stances of the publishers, the eight Indonesian editions of Ibn Kathīr's Qurʾānic commentary have much in common in terms of marketing and their framing of Ibn Kathīr's methods and merits. Specifically, all of them place the quest for pure and authentic sources about the exegesis of the *salaf* at the center of what a "good" *tafsīr* should do.

This suggests that some key ideas of Salafism have become a central part of "Muslimness" in Indonesia. They are certainly not unrivaled; the Indonesian book market offers many alternatives to Ibn Kathīr's *tafsīr*, from premodern and contemporary, Indonesian, Arab, and South Asian exegetes, and new translations continue to hit the market. But when looking for a full *tafsīr* on the web-

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49   Watson, "Islamic Books," 190–191.
50   Fealy "Consuming Islam," 28, 35.

site of Gramedia, Indonesia's largest bookseller, the Maghfirah translation of Ibn Kathīr comes up first, before the works of Muhammad Quraish Shihab's (b. 1944), Hamka (1908–1981), the Jalālayn and al-Ṣābūnī.[51] The translations of Ibn Kathīr are everywhere. Purchasing the Damascene scholar's work has become an easy way for contemporary Indonesian Muslims to express their religiosity, and this was only possible because publishers, editors and translators made the choice to abridge, simplify and commodify it.

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An Unfaithful Translation for the Faithful: Indonesian Islamic Gatekeepers on the Free Poetic Acehnese Translation of the Qur'ān by Teungku Haji Mahjiddin Jusuf (1918–1994)

Edwin P. Wieringa

1 Introduction

In a fairly recent handbook of Islamic theology, its editor has no qualms about stating that "[t]heology can rightly be described as one of the most neglected subdisciplines within Islamic studies" (Schmidtke 2016:5). For Peter Gregory Riddell, however, who is a believing and practicing Christian, "the historical diversity of Muslim opinion about how God relates to the world and how Muslims relate to God" (Lange 2016:15) has always been at the center of his scholarly interests, concentrating his investigations on Muslim theological discourse in insular Southeast Asia, which, despite being home to the greatest number of Muslims in the world, continues to be perceived and neglected as merely the periphery of the *Dār al-Islām*. Sketching an impressive overview of the history of Islamic religious thought in the Nusantara region in his marvellous survey *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian world: transmission and responses* (Riddell 2001), which is set between the bookends of the thirteenth and the late twentieth century, his most recent work has focused on the earliest known Qur'ānic interpretations in Malay originating from the seventeenth-century sultanate of Aceh (Riddell 2017).

The days of the sultanate are now long since over: after a long and bitter war, the last sultan of Aceh surrendered to the Dutch colonial government in 1903 and was exiled in 1907. In the post-colonial era, Aceh is the westernmost province of the Indonesian Republic, also known in administrative parlance as *Daerah Istimewa Aceh* (Aceh Special Region) and *Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam* (State of Aceh, Abode of Peace). In this chapter I will be looking at the most recent part of the honouree's timeline, by focusing upon a poetic translation of the Qur'ān in the regional Acehnese language (henceforward referred to as TQB), composed in twentieth-century Aceh by the religious scholar and poet

Teungku Haji Mahjiddin Jusuf (1918–1994).[1] After a rather lengthy process of versifying the Qurʾān, an edited publication of his rendition came out posthumously in 1995, encompassing the complete text of the Qurʾān in nearly one thousand printed pages. My contribution can be seen as a small addendum and celebratory nod to Peter Riddell's opuscules, which provide overviews of Indonesian Qurʾān translations (Riddell 2009; Riddell 2014).

The published edition of the Acehnese translation, entitled *Al-Qurʾan al-Karim dan terjemahan bebas bersajak dalam bahasa Aceh* (The Noble Qurʾān and its free poetic translation into Acehnese), which was brought out in 1995 by the Centre for Research and Study of Islamic Culture of the Regional Acehnese Government, is a Romanization of Jusuf's handwritten manuscript in (adapted) Arabic script (*Jawoe*), edited by a team of local scholars.[2] This group worked in close consultation with the translator from Ramaḍān 1413/April 1993 until Ramaḍān 1414/March 1994, but the poet would not enjoy the pleasure of seeing his writing in print; he died on 14 March 1994.

The following pages will interrogate in more detail the adjectives 'free' and 'poetic', which were chosen by the editorial team to describe and qualify the nature of the TQB. What do these modifiers imply? The crucial question is: how free is free? Which liberties did Jusuf allow himself to take and why? In what way was the theologian-poet forced to take liberties with the Qurʾān, which Muslims consider as the Book of God, bound by the metrical verse rules of traditional Acehnese poetry? The brouhaha over the controversial poetic translation of the Qurʾān into Indonesian by Hans Bague Jassin in 1978 lends this issue particular force. Because of the commotion resulting from Jassin's disputed rendering, the adjective 'poetic' attached to a Qurʾān translation became a lodestone for mistrust among Indonesian Muslims. It is against the backdrop of this profound suspicion of poetic Qurʾān translations per se that the Indonesian linguist Benny Hoedoro Hoed (2011:71) views Jusuf as a "brave innovator".

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1 *Teungku* (abbreviated as Tgk.) is an Acehnese title for religious scholars, but as Durie (1985: 129) notes, it is "also used as polite title for any adult Acehnese". Imran Teuku Abdullah (1991:755) provides the same explanation but with many examples of its use. References to Jusuf's translation will be to its second, improved edition, published in 2007, abbreviated as TQB.

2 According to Bilmauidhah (2011a:86 n. 183), the original manuscript autograph version is kept in the Library and Museum of the Ali Hasjmy Foundation in Banda Aceh under the call number "No. 08/NKT/YPAH/92". However, the manuscript catalogue by Fathurahman and Holil (2007:34) mentions "81/NKT/YPAH/1994" as the older categorization, while the new call number is "22/TF/7/YPAH/2005". Regardless, this manuscript of 772 handwritten pages is incomplete, only covering sūras 1 until 22:5 (Fathurahman and Holil 2007:34).

The TQB has attracted quite some attention in Indonesian Islamic discourse, but (rather unsurprisingly) this local interpretation of Islam's Holy Book seems to have gone unnoticed outside its country of origin. Yet the Qurʾān rendered in traditional Acehnese poetry is of obvious interest for Islamic studies, especially the subdiscipline of Islamic theology, as the human effort to translate the "Word of God" (*kalām Allāh*) has traditionally met much scepticism among religious authorities because of the dogma of the "inimitability (and hence miraculousness) of the Qurʾān" (*iʿjāz al-Qurʾān*). The doctrine of the essential untranslatability of the Qurʾān raises a crucial general issue for all non-Arabophone Muslims, namely "to what extent does the localization and interpretation of Arabic allow the language of the Qurʾân to become 'domesticated,' and to what extent does it remain distant?" (Zimmer 2000:36).

Although the editors of Jusuf's work praise the latter's excellent command of both the target and the source language, they nevertheless display a noticeable uneasiness about the Acehnese vernacularization of the Qurʾān, which, willy-nilly, gives priority to Acehneseness, all the more so as a poetic rendition attempts to reflect the aesthetic dimension of the Qurʾān's language by using traditional Acehnese metrical verses, and hence *ipso facto* moving away from a literal interpretation. The decision of the editors to put the description "free poetic translation" upfront in the title (TQB xxii), seems to serve as a caveat to the faithful that this vernacularization of the sacred text does not adhere to the doctrinal ideal of exact equivalence between source and target text.

As will become clear in the course of this chapter, the poetic format of the Qurʾān translation implies theological issues arising from the constraints of metre, or to use a philological term, *metri causa*. All examples concerning theological worries are taken, firstly, from the editors of the TQB who, in the introduction of the book, address problematic interpretational issues, and secondly, from Indonesian Islamic academics who have commented upon Jusuf's rendition. The editors of the TQB clearly act as gatekeepers of Islamic learning, expressing a deep anxiety about possible misunderstandings that might arise among general 'lay' readers due to the poetic liberties resulting in an 'unfaithful' translation (pun intended). However, the same claim to religious authority on the part of scholars as 'the knowers' is made by Indonesian Islamic academics in their critical reviews of the TQB. Their fault-finding prioritizes content over form to such an extent that poetic conventions in Acehnese literature are mostly disregarded. But then, the stakes could not be higher: as the Islamologist Massimo Campanini (2011:2) reminds us, the Qurʾān is "the essential document on which the whole of Islam is based". Or, as phrased by the Muslim scholar Tarif Khalidi (2009:ix), introducing his own (prose) trans-

lation of the Qurʾān, it is "the axial text of a major religious civilization" and "the divine arbiter of Muslim life".

This article proceeds as follows: I first briefly provide some background information on the Acehnese language and orthography. Next, Jusuf's life and works will be introduced, after which the editorial process of his Qurʾān translation will be discussed. Then, I will look into the assessments of senior Acehnese ʿulamāʾ followed by those of junior Indonesian prospective religious scholars. Finally, I will draw attention to the unique position of Jusuf's work within Acehnese literature, ending this paper with a short comment on a non-theological but rather worldly reason that may explain the general anxiety among religious scholars regarding whether the Qurʾān can be or ought to be translated.

2　A Technical Remark on Dialect and Orthography

The Acehnese language has several dialects (Zulfadli 2014:32–38), but the *Jawoe* script does not indicate dialect variation because it does not distinguish most of the important phonological contrasts (Durie 1985:4). However, this is not necessarily a disadvantage: just as in the case of the *Jawi* spelling for Malay, it could be argued that the 'defective' nature of a modified form of Arabic script allows for variation in pronunciation and writing which accommodates the needs of communities with different dialects (Kratz 2002; van der Putten 2019). Conversely, Latin script does not provide the ambiguity appreciated by speakers from different dialect backgrounds.

The 1892 Latin orthography developed by Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936) was the spelling system which the latter's protégé and pupil Hoesein Djajadiningrat (1886–1960) adopted for his standard 1934 Acehnese-Dutch dictionary (Djajadiningrat 1934). This spelling system has serious limitations but although outdated, it has remained influential. For example, in the 1994 catalogue of Acehnese manuscripts kept in collections outside Aceh, a modernization of this colonial spelling system was adopted (Voorhoeve and Iskandar 1994).[3] Due to wartime circumstances, Snouck Hurgronje's linguistic work had been restricted to his observations of the dialect of Banda Aceh, but this dialect does not have the prestige of the North Acehnese variation which has long since been regarded by the Acehnese people as the "normal and standard

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3　It should be noted that both Petrus Voorhoeve (1899–1996) and his Acehnese informant and assistant Teuku Iskandar (1924–2012) were firmly rooted in the Leiden philological tradition and greatly influenced by Snouck Hurgronje.

variety of Acehnese" (Zulfadli 2014:366). In the post-colonial era, the dominance of Indonesian as the national language greatly influenced the Acehnese language (Zulfadli 2014:19), which consequently caused confusion about the correct way of spelling Acehnese words. For example, the Acehnese word *seunang* ("happy"), known in Indonesian as *senang* (idem), was spelled *seenang* or *sénang*. An official orthography (*Ejaan Bahasa Aceh yang Disempurnakan*) was determined in 1980 (Yulia 2009:11).

However, the editors of Jusuf's Qurʾān translation decided to introduce a new approach to the orthographic standard (Yulia 2009:11), opting for the North Acehnese dialect and rendering Arabic loanwords in accordance with this 'standard' Acehnese pronunciation. For example, *shaiṭān* ("devil, Satan", Indonesian *setan*) is rendered as *chetan* (rather than Djajadiningrat's *tjèëtan* or *tjòëtan* or the alternative colonial spelling *sèëtan* in Kreemer 1931) and *fāʾida* ("benefit, usefulness"; Indonesian *faedah*) is written as *phaedah* (rather than Djajadiningrat's *paʾidah*). I will adhere to the orthography as used in the 2007 edition; when citing from other Acehnese texts, I will use the orthography as used in those sources.

3   To the Manner Born

Jusuf's translation, which uses Acehnese literary and poetic techniques to convey the liturgical beauty of Qurʾānic Arabic, is the result of a long process, covering four decades, from the first idea and the composition of first try-outs in the 1950s to the edited printed version of 1995. It could be said that Jusuf was ideally suited to performing this task, born on 16 September 1918 in Peusangan, North Aceh, into a religious family, following in the footsteps of his father, Tgk. Fakir Jusuf, scholar of the religious sciences (*ʿālim*) and composer of traditional Acehnese poetry.[4] After his basic religious education in North Aceh, Jusuf continued his studies at the *Madrasah al-Muslim* (in Matang Gelumpang Dua) until 1937, where general subjects were offered alongside religious ones. Thereupon he moved to West Sumatra, studying at the Padang-based *Normaal Islam* college until 1941. The latter institution was "the first Islamic school to use Arabic as its main medium of instruction and some 20% of the teaching hours were spent on Arabic" (Taufik Abdullah 2009:243). Upon his return to Aceh, Jusuf became head of the above-mentioned *Madrasah al-Muslim* until

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4   My sketch of Jusuf's biography is based upon the data in the first edition of TQB (xi–xiii), reprinted in TQB (xix–xxi), and on the biographical dictionary of Shabri and Sudirman (2007:51–57).

1946 when he was appointed as head of the subdistrict Peusangan. He moved to Banda Aceh (then still called Kutaraja) in 1948 as head of religious education for the provincial government in Aceh.

Having been taken prisoner in 1953, accused of being involved in the *Darul Islam*-inspired "Rebellion of the Islamic Scholars" in Aceh,[5] Jusuf first began his Qurʾān translation on 25 November 1955, as a means of passing the time in jail (Shabri and Sudirman 2007:55), starting with three sūras, namely *Yā Sīn* (Q 36), *al-Kahf* (Q 18) and *al-Inshirāḥ* (Q 94),[6] which were subsequently published in instalments in the local (Banda Aceh) newspaper *Duta Pantjatjita* between January and February 1965. After his release, Jusuf held several leading positions in the Ministry of Religious Affairs, where he was responsible for religious education in Aceh, retiring in 1974. Apart from his career as civil servant, Jusuf for some time was a member of the Acehnese provincial parliament for the Islamic political party *Masyumi* (banned in 1960 by President Sukarno), acted as *imām* of the Baiturrahman Grand Mosque in Banda Aceh, and was extraordinary lecturer at the IAIN (State Islamic Institute) Jamiʾah Arraniry, also in Banda Aceh. It is said about his preaching, held in the framework of *dakwah* (aptly described as "Islamic religious intensification activities" by van Heeren 2012:116) that he knew how to captivate his audience by his eloquence spiced with Acehnese poetic quotes (Shabri and Sudirman 2007:56).

In the 1950s, Jusuf wrote some textbooks and reading material in Arabic for classroom use on *tafsīr* and on Arabic, and textbooks written in *Jawoe* for learning Acehnese. He also composed several *hikayat* (narrative poems), but these manuscripts in *Jawoe* remained unpublished. A biography of his father, written in 1984, was circulated in stencilled format only within limited circles. After a rather long pause, Jusuf resumed his translation of the Qurʾān in 1977, finishing the entire text in 1988. Not much is known about Jusuf's translation process, but a comparison between the final draft and the parts previously published in *Duta Pantjatjita* shows that the initial version was much freer and much more of a *tafsīr* (TQB xxi).

For the interpretation of the text, Jusuf stated that he had mainly consulted the Qurʾān commentaries of Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144), and al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923). This choice of mainstream exegeti-

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5   Van Dijk (1981:269) uses "Aceh, the Rebellion of the Islamic Scholars" as the title of chapter six of his monograph on the *Darul Islam* movement in Indonesia.

6   An anonymous referee declared his/her unfamiliarity with the name *al-Inshirāḥ* for Q 94. However, it is commonly used in Indonesia, see e.g. the well-known commentator M. Quraish Shihab (2002:351) who provides the name of "al-Insyirah", and also "asy-Syarh" and "Alam Nasyrah", which all refer to its first verse.

cal works needs no further comment as we are dealing here with well-known authoritative classical Sunnī elucidations. For comparative purposes, he used four twentieth-century Indonesian Qurʾān translations, namely those by Ahmad Hassan (1887–1958), Mahmud Yunus (old spelling: Mahmoed Joenoes, 1899–1982), H.B. Jassin (1917–2000), and the Indonesian Ministry of Religion. The latter institution officially sponsored an Indonesian translation of the Qurʾān in order to provide a 'standard' interpretation, which makes it an obvious book of reference. Since its publication in 1967, however, it has not stopped the proliferation of multifarious translations and commentaries (Feener 1998: 63), which is a process that continues.

A very practical reason for turning to the publications of the reformists Ahmad Hassan and Mahmud Yunus could be the straightforward manner of their Indonesian translations. The translation of the Cairo-educated Minangkabau reformer Mahmud Yunus, which first appeared in 1938 as *Tafsir Koerän Indonesia*, is short and concise (Feener 1998:35).[7] Ahmad Hassan was one of the chief figures of the literalist movement *Persatuan Islam* (Islamic Union, or Persis), whose *Tafsīr al-Furqān* first appeared serially, starting in 1928, but was finally published in complete form in 1956. Michael Feener (1998:61) characterizes this work as "actually more of a straight translation than work of tafsîr proper as what little non-literal interpretation there is comes only in the form of short footnotes." Jusuf's own translation is completely devoid of any annotations. Importantly, both Hassan's and Yunus's popular translations were specifically "intended to assist lay Muslims to better understand religious belief and practice" (Federspiel 1994:47), which was also Jusuf's aim.

At first sight, the use of Jassin's *Bacaan Mulia* (The Glorious Reading) would seem to be warranted as it claimed to be a 'poetic' translation.[8] Jassin, also occasionally nicknamed "the Pope of Indonesian literature", was a celebrated literary critic and documentarian who wished to give Indonesian readers a feel for the aesthetic beauty of the Qurʾān and hence prioritized a translation in verse rather than traditional plodding prose. In Jassin's view, a poetic version would do better justice to the text's perceived rank as the greatest literary masterpiece of all time. Jassin's iconic status as Indonesia's best-known man of letters notwithstanding, he had no theological training or in-depth knowledge of the Qurʾān at all, and because he did not even master Arabic, his work was questioned as derivative, being utterly dependent on others. Jassin not only drew on

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7　Jeffrey Hadler (2009:138) notes that Yunus's was the most popular Qurʾānic exegesis in West Sumatra and that Yunus himself mentioned that he had written his *tafsīr* as early as 1921.

8　According to Bilmauidhah (2011a:99), Jassin's poetic version served as a new inspiration for Jusuf.

previous Indonesian translations and commentaries but also on translations of such Western Orientalists as Blachère, Arberry, and Paret (see the list of references in Jassin 1978:28–29), which in the eyes of his distractors further dwindled his credibility as a *bona fide* translator. Despite an official endorsement by the Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs, which praised the literary aspects of Jassin's translation (Jassin 1978:ix–x), this novel and most unconventional literary approach, coupled with Jassin's status as an ignoramus in Qurʾānic and Islamic studies, made his translation a rather controversial work which has drawn considerable flak from conservative circles (Rahman 2005 and Keane 2018).

By contrast, Jusuf could hardly be dismissed as an ignorant trespasser as he belonged to the Muslim scholarly elite, and the accomplishment of his poetic translation is lauded in Indonesian-language publications as being part of a venerable exegetical tradition of Acehnese *ʿulamāʾ* beginning with ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Singkilī's seventeenth-century *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* (Shabri and Sudirman 2007:55; Saleh 2012). After a scrupulous peer review process by an Acehnese editorial team, Jusuf's translation was posthumously brought out on 17 August 1995, commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Indonesian independence. Released in a limited print run, it was soon unavailable to the general public.

Since the end of the last century, however, ICT (Information and Communications Technology) has tremendously changed the way of accessing books, resulting in making the 1995 edition available to all internet users worldwide. The trigger for this was the devastating 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, which hit Aceh most terribly. In the wake of this catastrophe, the Royal Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV) initiated a project to digitize a major part of the literature on Aceh kept in its library. As a result, the first published edition of 1995 has been digitized based on a copy from its collection (shelfmark M 2006 A 2126), which is freely accessible of the website of Leiden University Libraries (persistent URL: http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:130032). However, it should be noted that as late as 2021, the internet penetration in Aceh stood at only 56.49 per cent.[9] Hence, on the ground, it was perhaps more relevant that a revised second edition of 12,000 copies was published in 2007, funded by the Agency for the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Aceh and Nias.[10] The second edition used a modernized spelling and contained several

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9   See https://acehsatu.com/10-provinsi-dengan-akses-internet-tertinggi-dan-terendah-bel
      ajar-online-aceh-di-nomor-ini/ (accessed 16 February 2022).

10   It was sent to institutions in Aceh as well as to universities and libraries in Indonesia and
      abroad (Malaysia, Egypt, Canada, Taiwan, and the Netherlands), see https://www.nu.or.id/
      post/read/11005/al-quran-berbahasa-aceh-dikirim-ke-luar-negeri (22 February 2021).

linguistic improvements (TQB xvii). Yet this second edition also seems to have remained largely unknown beyond the State Islamic University Ar-Raniry in Banda Aceh.[11]

4   From Manuscript to Print

The preface, in which the editorial team explains the reason for choosing the title of The Noble Qurʾān and its free poetic translation into Acehnese, indicates several interpretational difficulties (TQB xxii–xxxiii). For example, the following rendition of Q 6:143 was deemed infelicitous (TQB xxv):

Na lapan pasang keubiri dua   There are eight pairs, two sheep
Kameng pih dua takheun ci peugah   and also two goats, say it

As this phrase, translated by Arberry as "Eight couples: two of sheep, of goats two. Say: …", was not entirely clear in Acehnese, the editorial team changed this into:

Lapan binatang meupasang-pasang   Eight animals forming pairs
Keubiri, kameng takheun ci peugah   sheep, goats, say it

Furthermore, the Qurʾānic text contains several references which are specific for an Arabic environment, such as camels, dates, and thirst in the desert (TQB xxiii). The editors cite the beginning two verses of Q 95 (*al-Tīn* or the Fig) as an example of localization which attempts to make a text closely conform to the culture of the targeted readership. The Qurʾānic text opens with the oath

Wat-tīni waz-zaitūni   By the fig and the olive
wa-Ṭūri Sīnīna   and the Mount Sinai

This was originally translated by Jusuf as follows:

*Demi **boh ara** dengan boh zaiton*   By **the *ara* fruit** and the olive fruit
*Buket Thursina **nyang meuseujarah***   and the Mount Sinai, **which is historic**

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11   See the rather polemical article by Rudy Fachruddin (2020), which discusses the 'scandalous' translation of the Bible into Acehnese, considered to be an insult to the Acehnese people who are all Muslim.

The term *ara* is a generic name, both in Acehnese (Djajadiningrat 1934, I:72) and Malay (Stevens and Schmidgall-Tellings 2004:52), for trees of the fig type, but the editors of the TQB firmly judged that the *ara* fruit is not identical to the Arabic type called *al-tīn*. Asked for an explanation, Jusuf pointed out that the olive (*boh zaiton*) was known in Aceh, at least through the use of olive oil, but the *tīn* fruit was not, so that he had opted for *boh ara*.[12] Moreover, he explained that a disyllabic word was needed in order to fulfil the poetic requirement that the verse line had to consist of ten syllables (TQB xxiii). Apparently, the editors nevertheless favoured a more 'faithful' translation, hence slightly altering the translation and thereby ignoring poetic metre.[13] It now reads *Demi tin* (*boh ara*) *deungon boh zaiton*, putting *boh ara* as a gloss between brackets. Although the editors do not further comment upon the cited second verse, we can also observe another departure from the original text, namely the additional phrase *nyang meuseujarah* ("which is historic"). The addition of the relative clause introduced by the complementizer *nyang* ("which") is used *metri causa*, functioning as a 'line filler' (unaltered in the edited text).[14]

It turns out that the 'inexactitudes' are mostly caused by poetic requirements. Another example of domestication is the Arabic term *ṣarḥ*, occurring in Q 40:36, generally translated in English as "(tall) tower", which has been rendered as *geudong nyang meugah* ("building which is great").[15] The editors explain that the Acehnese phrase denotes a great building with stairs, hence implying tallness, while Jusuf had answered that the choice of words was necessitated by end rhyme: the final word *meugah* sounds the same as the last word *bagah* in the alternating line (TQB xxviii).

At the end of Q 3:95, when it is stated about the Prophet Ibrāhīm that he was never an idolater, the Acehnese translation meticulously follows the original text with the line *Ibrahim nyan kon ureueng nyang muchrek* ("Ibrahim was never an idolator").[16] However, Jusuf added the line *Bah that jibalek le kaphe*

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12   However, both *zaitun* and *tin* are part of the modern Indonesian lexicon.

13   Jassin's Indonesian translation similarly has *Demi pohon ara dan pohon zaitun* "By the fig tree and the olive tree" (Jassin 1978:869). The official Indonesian translation is literal, namely *Demi* (*buah*) *Tin dan* (*buah*) *Zaitun* "By the fig (fruit) and the olive (fruit)" with a footnote explaining the meaning of the *tin* fruit (Irwan 2012:1301).

14   On the relative clause marker *nyang* (which; who), see Asyik (1987:328 ff.).

15   Cf. Steingass (1892:785) "a castle, a lofty building especially one erected by Nebuchadnezzar near Bābil". Also https://corpuscoranicum.de/kontexte/index/sure/28/vers/38/intertext/224/redirect/1: "ein hoch aufragendes Schloss".

16   The negative word *kon* is a shortened form of *bukon* (Djajadiningrat 1934, I:817) and is an emphatic negation (Djajadiningrat 1934, I:229). xxx The word *muchrek* is easily recognizable as a rendering of Arabic *mushrik*.

jadah ("Even though the infidel bastards turned their back on him"). As he explained to the editors, this addition was made *metri causa* (requiring a line with the ending -*ah*), which thereupon was accepted as a "comment" (QTB xxvii).

The editors had more difficulties with the translation of Q 3:93, which reads:

Bandum makanan Bani Israil	All food of the Children of Israel
Haleue dum Neubri keu jih le Allah	was lawful, given by Allah
*Meuleungkan nyang **jipeuhareuem keudroe***	Except for what was made unlawful by themselves

Although Jusuf had explained that the phrase *jipeuhareuem keudroe* ("made unlawful by themselves") had entered the translation *metri causa*, the editors noted that the verbal expression *jipeu-hareuem keu-droe* (*hareuem* means *ḥarām*) implied that the Children of Israel acted as agent, whereas the verse indicated that Yaʿqūb, also known as Israel, was intended.

In the case of the "mysterious letters" (*ḥurūf muqaṭṭaʿāt* "disconnected letters"), which are combinations of Arabic letters figuring at the beginning of 29 out of the 114 sūras, Jusuf added the following comment (TQB xxv):

Tuhan nyang teupeue meukeusud ayat	The Lord knows the meaning of the verse
Sabab Hadharat hana Neupeugah	He did not tell it for a reason

The editors opined that this addition was not a translation of the *mutashābihāt* verses of which only God knows the meanings but they retained it as an exegetical comment, while in consultation with the poet, they inserted the mysterious sets of letters (*alif lām mīm* and so on) in the Acehnese text, followed by the poet's comment (TQB xxv). Acehnese scholars have declared that Jusuf's glossing of the *mutashābihāt* verses is in accordance with common scriptural commentary in Islam (Umar and Rahman 2020:96–98). Theological niceties apart, I think that the insistence upon printing the mysterious sets of letters on the page betrays the mindset of print-age persons used to "sight-reading" or reading prose texts in silence rather than pre-print traditional Acehnese culture in which poems were chanted.[17] Put differently, Jusuf's "comment" on the mysterious letters first and foremost had its grounds in poetical requirements. By contrast, the modern gatekeepers of orthodoxy

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17   Cf. the comments of Amin Sweeney (1988) and Ian Proudfoot (2002) on the effects of print technology on Malay literary culture.

only focus upon the 'faithfulness' of the translation, while completely ignoring the oral-aural features of Jusuf's rendition, which was intended to be recited aloud.

A problematic point concerning the theological wish to stick to the letter of God's Word is the rendering of oath formulae containing the negative Arabic particle *lā* ("no; not"), namely of the type of *fa-lā ʾuqsimu bi-* …, such as in Q 56:75, of which Arthur J. Arberry (1983:562) provides the translation "No! I swear by the fallings of the stars". The "puzzling feature" of these oaths is that "positive oaths can have negative form": *fa-lā ʾuqsimu bi-mawāqiʿi l-nujūmi … ʾinnahu Qurʾānun karīmun* literally means "I do not swear by the setting-places of the stars … indeed it is a noble Qurʾān", while intending the exact opposite, namely "I do swear that it is" (Carter 2015:41). The editors objected to Jusuf's literal rendering, which was as follows (TQB xxvi):

Han **Lonmeusumpah** *ngon teumpat bin-tang*	**Not do I swear** by the places of the stars
Teumpat-teumpat nyang di langet luah	the places which there are in the wide sky

The editors discussed the matter with Jusuf but as the poet died before a solution could be reached, it was decided to alter the translation and bring it into conformity with most *tafsīr* works (TQB xxvii), namely:

Ulon meusumpah *ngon teumpat bintang*	**I swear** by the places of the stars
Teumpat-teumpat nyang di langet luah	the places which there are in the wide sky

Ironically, the poet in this exceptional case was more literal than his peer reviewers who simplified the text (*ʾuqsimu* "I swear"), so as not to confuse lay readers.

5   Rules of Rhythm and Rhyme

The TQB is governed by rhythm and rhyme consisting of quatrains in which each line generally has ten syllables (Khadijah and Lani 2016:78–80; Humaira 2018:131). It is composed in *nalam* which, as Snouck Hurgronje (1906, II:77) explains, is "the Achehnese pronunciation of the Arabic *naẓm*, meaning poetry". This metre is also known as *rajat* or *rajab* (Djajadingrat 1934, II:462; Abdullah 1991:61), which also goes back to Arabic, namely *rajaz*. Because of linguistic differences between Arabic and Acehnese, it is impossible to apply the formulas of Arabic metre, but the Acehnese understand *nalam* (or *rajat/rajab*) as a

close imitation of the Arabic model (Snouck Hurgronje 1906, II:77).[18] As Snouck Hurgronje (1906, II:78) observed, "[a]ll works composed in *nalam* deal with religious subjects", while Imran Teuku Abdullah (1991:62) notes that it is a very special poetic form of limited use. It is normally intended for group recitals and is, for example, sung by children to memorize the basic tenets of Islam (Abdullah 1991:62). As claimed by Khadijah and Razali Cut Lani (2016:123), *nalam* works have a strong emotional appeal and are much liked in Aceh. Together with its Arabic and Islamic connotations, this metre seems to be particularly apt for translating the Qurʾān.

According to Khadijah and Razali Cut Lani (2016:78), in their overview of traditional Acehnese literature, the favourite type of Acehnese rhyme is when the syllable at the end of a line rhymes with the syllable in the middle of the next line. They provide an example featuring this internal rhyme, in which *nyaw**ong*** ("soul") at the end of the first line rhymes with *bung**ong*** ("flower") in the middle of the next half-line. In this particular example, the second internal rhyme is held constant: *teurim**ong*** ("receive") rhymes with *nyaw**ong*** ("soul"). In addition, there is an end rhyme in the *abab* pattern. This poetic *memento mori* ("remember death"), which is still quite popular in Aceh, is phrased as follows:[19]

*Alah hai tuboh ingat keu nyaw**ong***	O body, remember the soul
*Alah hai bung**ong** ingat keu mala*	O flower, remember the withering[20]
*ʿOh mate tuboh bumoe teurim**ong***	Upon death, the earth will receive the body
*Teuma di nyaw**ong** Tuhan pareksa*	Thereupon, the Lord will examine the soul

Jusuf's rendition of the iconic phrase known as *basmala* demonstrates his poetic acumen, using both *abab* end rhyme and the 'zigzag' rhyme pattern (Humaira 2018:6):

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18   For further details, see Snouck Hurgronje (1906, II:77–78); Djajadiningrat (1934, II:131; 462); Abdullah (1991:61–62); Khadijah and Lani (2016:123–176). Khadijah and Lani (2016:126–135) include a fragment of the TQB (Q 2:27–48), together with Indonesian translation, as an example of a *nalam* work.

19   Regarding its popularity, it is e.g. sung on YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v =GytmvLixI9g&ab_channel=ZULFIKARTGK) and chosen as motto (in slightly different wording) in a short sermonizing column on the rather short human life span by H. Ameer Hamzah in the Indonesian-language daily *Waspada* (Wednesday, 25 November 2009, pages 1–2).

20   The word *bungong* means "flower" (Malay *bunga*). Flowers are well-known for symbolizing human mortality. The Indonesian translation by Khadijah and Lani (2016:78) of the second line repeats "body" (*tubuh*) of the first line (*Wahai tuboh ingat untuk mati*), but I am not certain whether this is on purpose or by accident.

Ngon nama Allah lonpuphon surat	With the name of Allah, I begin [this] *sūra*,
Tuhan Hadharat nyang Maha Murah	the Lord God, who is all-benevolent,
Tuhanku sidroe geumaseh that-that[21]	My Lord, the One who is most merciful,
Donya akherat rahmat Neulimpah	He confers His mercy in this world and the next.

Although Acehnese *'ulamā'* have acknowledged Jusuf's literary quality, their recurring criticism is that the poetic rendition is not entirely faithful to the original text, which in my opinion is tantamount to saying that the poet failed to square the circle. They have pointed to the risk that readers who are not versed in Islamic theology may sometimes misunderstand the Qur'ān on account of the poetic format. For example, Hisyami (bin) Yazid (b. 1949), indicated that the phrase *lonpuphon surat* (I begin [this] *sūra*) is an addition which could be a possible cause of misinterpretation by those who wished to read a literal translation (interviewed in 2019 in Umar and Rahman 2020:94).[22]

Another example of non-literal translation concerns the dietary prohibition of Q5:3, namely "Forbidden to you are carrion; blood, …" (*ḥurrimat 'alaikumu l-maitatu wad-damu*), which slightly elaborated the subject matter by adding the attribute of redness to blood:

Ka geupeuhareuem bangke keu gata	Forbidden (*ḥarām*) to you are carrion
*Meunan cit juga darah **nyang mirah***	and also blood **which is red**

Although the critics are well aware that this poetic addition (*inventio*) owes its existence to a metrical need, namely to fill out a line, they are occupied with the petty distinction that the adjectival description could wrongly imply that consuming blood was not *ḥarām* if it was no longer red (Kurdi 2010:193).

Drawing attention to Q 39:71, another point of criticism was the rendition of "its keepers" (*khazanatuhā*):

Nyang kaphe bandum geuparoh teuma	The infidels will then all be driven
Dalam nuraka geuyue jak bagah	into hell, summoned right away.
Meutamon-tamon keunan dum teuka	Arriving there in their throngs,
Pinto nuraka teuma geupeuhah	the gates of hell will open.

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21   As Mark Durie (1985:41) explains in his grammar, the reduplication *that-that* (very very) has "the effect of emphasizing a greater degree—greater than one might think".

22   For his profile, see https://semende.wordpress.com/2009/01/23/h-hisyami-bin-yazidlc-ma g/ (accessed on 17 February 2022).

Ube na pinto bandum geubuka   All gates of hell will be opened;
*Le **ureueng jaga** geutanyong bagah*   the **people guarding** the gates will ask:
(…)   (…)

The crux here is that "its keepers" (*khazanatuhā*) has been translated as *ureueng jaga*, which means "keeper, watchman", but theologically the problem is that *ureueng* always refers to humans (cf. Malay *orang* idem), whereas Islamic tradition identifies the Guardians of Hell with the Angels of Punishment, often identified with the nineteen angels of Hell (Kurdi 2010:194).

The general sceptical stance toward a poetic translation, which is expressed by Tgk. H. Muhammad Yusuf bin A. Wahab (popularly known as Tu Sop Jeunieb), b. 1964, chairman of the Association of *'Ulamā'* of Islamic Boarding Schools in Aceh (*Himpunan Ulama Dayah Aceh* or HUDA), is that a correct interpretation of the sacred text as agreed upon by the *'ulamā'* is essential, whereas beautiful language and poetic requirements are just embellishments which never should cause misunderstandings (interviewed in 2019 in Umar and Rahman 2020:95).[23]

The Acehnese scholar Fauzi Saleh (b. 1974) expresses his appreciation for Jusuf's work, but at the same time he emphasizes that it still remains a work of human fallibility, warning against the danger of *taḥrīf* or scriptural falsification (interviewed in 2019 in Umar and Rahman 2020:95), i.e. "perverting the language through altering words from their proper meaning, changing words in form or substituting words or letters for others" (Lazarus-Yafeh 2012).[24] According to Saleh, the TQB should have contained footnotes in order to avoid possible misunderstandings (cited in Umar and Rahman 2020:95). Citing credible references is the normal way of conveying authority in an academic setting. However, this insistence on annotating the translation, which is in accordance with academic citation techniques developed for the printing press, is unfeasible for a poetic rendition that is intended to be sung.[25]

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23   For his profile, see https://www.suaradarussalam.id/2020/12/profil-tusop-jeunieb-ulama
      -aceh-huda.html (accessed on 17 February 2022).

24   For his academic career, see https://uin.ar-raniry.ac.id/index.php/id/posts/fauzi-saleh-rai
      h-gelar-guru-besar-ilmu-fiqh-uin-ar-raniry (accessed on 17 February 2022).

25   Bilmauidhah (2011a:135) who notes the absence of notes in the TBQ on account of its poetic
      format, points to Jassin's solution to add explanations in the translation within brackets. I wonder whether Jassin may have been inspired by the German prose translation by Rudi Paret (1901–1983), but the latter's (prose) version had resulted into a "brackets-and-question-marks-studded monstrosity" (Bauer 2021: XX) which was a far cry from a literary masterpiece.

Needless to say, there are also Islamic scholars for whom the positive quali-
ties of the TQB predominate. Tgk. H. Faisal M. Ali, b. 1968, vice-chairman of the
Consultative Assembly of '*Ulamā*' (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama* or MPU),
lauded Jusuf's translation as a successful transformation of the Qurʾānic mes-
sage into the Acehnese language, bringing it close to Acehnese culture without
any distortion of the verses (interviewed in 2019 in Umar and Rahman 2020:95–
96).[26] Furthermore, Al Yasaʾ Abubakar, b. 1953, professor of *uṣūl al-fiqh* at the
State Islamic University Ar-Raniry in Banda Aceh, commented on the transla-
tion of the *basmala* (cited above) that it conformed to the common interpre-
tation as established by the '*ulamā*' (interviewed in 2019 in Umar and Rahman
2020:95–96).[27]

6   Assessments by Junior Religious Scholars

Indonesia houses many institutes of Islamic higher education and the TQB has
been the subject of some senior theses by students aspiring to become the next
generation of religious scholars. There is potentially a big market for this "grey
literature" but for practical reasons only those students' works that were freely
and permanently available online were accessible to me, namely Kurniawan
(2002), Bilmauidhah (2011), Humaira (2018), which are very sympathetic to
the TQB, and Rahmah (2016) which rather exceptionally harshly takes Jusuf to
task.[28] Praising the Acehnese character of the TQB, Kurniawan (2002:14) states
in his bachelor thesis at the IAIN Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta that the "original
meaning of the Qurʾān" has not been altered in the localizing process. He cites
the translation of Q 110 (*sūra an-Naṣr*, Help) as an example of the closeness to
the original text:

1	*Meunyo ka teuka bantuan Tuhan*	When God's help comes,
	Ngon keumenangan Neubri le Allah	with the victory given by God,
2	*Meuduyun-duyun takalon insan*	people will be seen in throngs,
	Jitamong dalam agama Allah	entering God's religion,

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26   Biographical details in http://www.harianmoslem.net/2018/07/sosok-tgk-h-faisal-m-ali-ss
      osi-semua.html (accessed on 17 February 2022).

27   For his profile, see https://www.lamurionline.com/2020/05/prof-dr-al-yasa-abubakar-ma
      -khatib-idul.html (accessed on 17 February 2022).

28   Bilmauidhah wrote her thesis in the framework of the postgraduate program of the UIN
      Syarif Hidayatullah in Jakarta, which is publicly available in the form of an article (Bil-
      mauidhah 2011b). An edited version of her thesis was published locally as a book (of 200
      pages) in Aceh, which I could acquire during a visit to Banda Aceh in September 2018.

3	*Takheun teuseubeh watee nyan rijang*	[then] extol God immediately,
	Tapujoe Tuhan ate ngon babah	praise God with heart and mouth,
	Talakee ampon laju tatobat	ask forgiveness and repent;
	Teurimong tobat cit sipheuet Allah	accepting repentance is an attribute of God.

In his concluding assessment, Kurniawan (2002:96–99) is very positive about Jusuf's rendition which he characterizes as *Tafsīr al-ʿĀm* or general commentary aimed at a broad audience of lay readers who may understand the text more easily because of the use of their own language which also attempts to bring out the aesthetic beauty of the original.

Bilmauidhah (2011a) discusses the poetic style of the TQB in some detail, drawing attention, among other things, to Jusuf's literary technique of borrowing Indonesian vocabulary to fulfil the rules of rhythm and rhyme, such as the disyllabic words *bawah* ("under, below"), *indah* ("beautiful"), and *sudah* (temporal marker indicating that an action has occurred) at the end of a line for the sound /ah/ (Bilmauidhah 2011a:111–112).[29] In fact, however, this is a conventional method: Djajadiningrat (1934, II:890) provides the example of *sohsah*, which is a variant of (Malay) *susah* ("trouble; sorrow; anxiety; burdensome"), but in Acehnese poetry the metathesis *sahsoh* is also used for rhyming purposes. Jusuf several times uses (variations of) the Malay/Indonesian expression *dengan susah payah* ("with great effort") as the final words in a line (*ngon susah payah*).[30] Bilmauidhah (2011a:111–112) also notes the use of such modern Indonesian words as *penghidupan* for expressing "sustenance" (*Jeuet **penghidupan** keu gata mudah*, Q 15:20), but apart from poetic convenience, I think that the general dominance of the national language also plays an important role here. A brief glance will readily result in quite a few examples, such as *peumimpin* (from Indonesian *pemimpin* "leader"; twice in TQB 285) and *kawom phamili* (from Indonesian *kaum famili* "family; relatives"; TQB 285; both words are not listed in Djajadiningrat 1934).[31] Bilmauidhah argues that the literary style, which intends to emphasize the text's beauty, does not change the Qurʾān's meaning and message, succeeding in conveying the text to a non-Arab audience. She even recommends a translation of the TQB into the national lan-

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29   Such borrowings are not new: Djajadiningrat already includes both *indah* (1934, I:621) and *sudah* (1934, II:842) in his dictionary.

30   See *Nyang tajak mita **ngon susah payah*** (Q 9:24); (*Nyang ka jipuga **ngon sosah payah***) (Q 15:84); *Nanggroe pih jarak **sosah ngon payah*** (Q 16:7); *Dawok keurija **sosah ngon payah*** (Q 90:4); *Usaha leugat **ngon sosah payah*** (Q 94:7).

31   Of course, *kawom* (from Arabic *qaum*) is included in Djajadiningrat (1934, I:682–683), but not its combination with *famili* (from Dutch *familie*).

guage Indonesian, so that this monumental work may become accessible to a much wider public (Bilmauidhah 2011a:184).[32]

Dara Humaira (2018) deals specifically with the aesthetic aspects of the TQB in her case study of Q 81 (which only consists of 29 verses). As Humaira (2018:132) correctly explains, the poetic format of the TQB with its literary requirements obviously must lead to an exegetical translation in which the Qurʾān meaning is paraphrased, as in the first verse of Q 103, namely *wa al-ʿaṣr* ("By the declining day", tr. Abdel Haleem; "By the afternoon!", tr. Arberry), which is rendered as *demi na masa dilee ngon dudoe* ("By the time past and future"). This translation does justice to the interpretations of *al-ʿaṣr* in *tafsīr* works, which explain it as "time" or "the flight of time".[33] According to Humaira (2018:132–133), Jusuf's poetic translation cannot possibly cover the extraordinary beauty of the Qurʾān (which is an unsurprising judgement as well as a proper confession of faith), but because poetry is very much valued in Acehnese society, the TQB has a strong emotional power which succeeds in bringing the meaning and message of the Qurʾān closer to the Acehnese people. As she points out, the TQB is part of a long tradition in which Islamic knowledge is disseminated by poetic means, whereas propagandistic poems of the Aceh War preached *jihād* against the (infidel) colonial Dutch intruders, inciting motivation to defend Islam (Humaira 2018:133).[34] In her concluding assessment of the TQB, Humaira (2018:133) praises it as "an Indonesian cultural asset".

By contrast, in her 2016 bachelor thesis at the UIN Syarif Hidayatullah in Jakarta, Dalipah Rahmah is most critical about the translation quality of the TQB. The sharp disagreement is perhaps due to disciplinary training or bias: whereas Kurniawan, Humaira, and Bilmauidhah completed their theses in the Faculty of Theology (*Fakultas Ushuluddin*), Rahmah delivered her thesis within the framework of Arabic Translation Studies in the Faculty of Humanities (*Fakultas Adab dan Humaniora*). Rahmah (2016:46–68) discusses 25 alleged flaws, but in my opinion she is overly concerned with insignificant details, apparently with the intention of finding faults. A few examples may make this clear. Her first point is the translation of the name of Sūra 68, *al-Qalam* ("The Pen"), namely *Kalam*, which she discards on two grounds (Rahmah 2016:46).

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32   Cf. the Malaysian Islamic scholars Zabidi and Haqqi (2020:158) who are so enthusiastic about the 'strenghts' of the TQB that they would welcome a translation of the TQB into Malay. They raise the rather curious objection that its language and poetic form are its only 'weakness', as this turns it into a closed book for those who do not understand Acehnese.

33   Cf. Abdel Haleem (2018:435) who uses a footnote, informing that "[o]ther interpretations (…) include 'Time' and 'The Flight of Time".

34   About the lasting legacy of nineteenth-century Acehnese war propaganda, see Wieringa (2017).

Firstly, she states that the transliteration is not in accordance with official transliteration rules of the Ministry of Religion which prescribe that the Arabic letter *qāf* should be rendered into Latin script as /q/. Secondly, citing the official monolingual dictionary of the Indonesian language (*Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* or KBBI), she argues that *kalam* means "word", esp. the word of God, which is completely different from "pen".

However, her verdict is in my opinion unfounded: firstly, the official rules of the Ministry of Religion concern the transliteration of Arabic texts, whereas the word *kalam* is an Indonesian/Acehnese translation and not a transliteration; secondly, the Arabic loanword *qalam* or pen entered Indonesian and Acehnese but is officially written as *kalam*. The word *qalam* is not even included in the online version of the KBBI. In fact, the KBBI lists the following different meanings for the homonym *kalam* in the Indonesian language:

> *kalam*¹ word (of God) (from Arabic *kalām*);
> *kalam*² pen (from Arabic *qalam*);
> *kalam*³ penis (from Arabic *qalam*);
> *kalam*⁴ black sand (from Tamil *kaḷam*).[35]

Rahmah (2016:78) further opines that *zalim* rather than *lalem* would have been a better choice, because *zalim* would be more popular in society. This criticism is in my view petty: the spelling *lalem* is in accordance with the pronunciation of the Arabic loanword *ẓālim* (see Djajadiningrat 1934, I:870 under *la'lém*; cf. Malay/Indonesian *lalim*, which is a variant of *zalim*), but I suspect that this is also problematized against the backdrop of the wished-for principle of insisting on maximum closeness to the original.[36]

Furthermore, Rahmah (2016:78) criticizes the translation of the Arabic phrase *innā kunnā ẓālimīna* ("truly, we were evildoers") in Q 68:29 into *Tanyoe*[37] *lalem that **hana ban peugah*** ("we were[38] very unjust, **indescribably so**") as too

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35 See the online version of the KBBI (kbbi.web.id) under *kalam*. Stevens and Smidgall-Tellings (2004:439) group the second and third *kalam* together (which linguistically makes more sense), adding yet another *kalam*, namely as a variant of *kalem* or "calm" (from Dutch *kalm*). For the etymologies, see Jones (2007:140).

36 Bilmauidhah (2011a:139–145) also discusses *lalem*, but in relation to the shift in meaning from Arabic *ẓālim*.

37 *Tanyoe* is a shortened form of *geutanjoe* (Djajadiningrat 1934, II:972). As Durie (1985:117) explains, *geutanyoe* "derives originally from *geuta (cf. Malay *kita* 'we, inclusive') and the demonstrative *nyoe* 'this'".

38 As Acehnese verbs are not marked for tense, an English translation "are" would also be possible.

verbose, because in her opinion the addition *hana ban peugah* ("indescribably so") is superfluous. However, she is apparently oblivious to the poetic rules which prescribe that the line must have ten syllables with the end rhyme of *-ah* here. The use of such a 'filler' is a typical device in traditional Acehnese poetry: for example, in the romantic work *Hikayat Nun Parisi* (Anzib 1981:173) the statement "I am pleased/delighted" is expressed with the 'verbose' line *Hate lon seunang hana ban peugah* (My heart is pleased, indescribably so). In fact, Jusuf had already used the same filler to end a line in no less than thirteen cases.[39] The stock phrase "beyond words/description" or "cannot be described" is comparable to the expression *tiada(lah) dapat dikata, tak/tiada dapat dikatakan*; *tidak terkira* (or *tidak terkira-kira*, which is less common), which has the same meaning and also typically occurs at the end of a line in traditional Malay poetry. For example, *Baginda murka tiada terkira*, which is translated by Skinner (1985:71) as "His Majesty was extremely annoyed" and *Murka ⟨baginda⟩ jangan dikata*, translated by Skinner (1985:159) as "... His Majesty, who was extremely annoyed". The wonderful online research tool of Ian Proudfoot's Malay Concordance Project (hosted at https://mcp.anu.edu.au/) provides many more examples.

In addition, Rahmah (2016:65) criticizes that the Arabic word *sālimūna* in Q 68:43 is translated as *mantong teuga* ("still strong"). Translating the Acehnese description rather freely into Indonesian (*dalam keadaan kuat*, i.e. "in a strong condition"), she thereupon sums up the meanings of the Indonesian word *kuat*, which are listed in the official monolingual dictionary of the Indonesian language, concluding that they do not fit in this context. The translation *sehat* ("healthy") would in her opinion have been preferable (which also happens to be the choice of the official governmental translation). However, this criticism treats the Acehnese translation as an ordinary prose text: Malay/Indonesian *sehat* is known as *sihat* in Acehnese, but only has two syllables. Moreover, the Acehnese word *teuga* can very well denote the condition of not being ill, as is

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39   This phrase occurs at the end of the following lines: Q 8:50 *Geupohjih leugat hana ban peugah*; Q 10:9 *Ni'mat ngon seunang hana ban peugah*; Q 10:10 *Leupah that ni'mat hana ban peugah*; Q 18:21 *Kuasa-Neuh that hana ban peugah*; Q 24:30 *Nyan gleh that keu jih hana ban peugah*; Q 26:189 *Haro-haro that hana ban peugah*; Q 33:51 *Ngon halim-Neuh that hana ban peugah*; Q 35:22 *Kuasa Tuhan hana ban peugah*; Q 40:2 *Nyang that Peurkasa hana ban peugah*; Q 58:9 *Raya that deecha hana ban peugah*; Q 100:4 *Jikeupong abee hana ban peugah*; Q 103:2 *Insan dum rugoe hana ban peugah*; Q 108:1 *Kamoe bri le that hana ban peugah*. The search for this filler was greatly facilitated by the use of the digitized version of the first edition. However, it should be noted that in the first edition sometimes the spelling *hanaban peugah* is used.

testified by a saying cited in Djajadiningrat (1934, II:1005), namely *han saket le jih, ka teuga* ("he is not ill anymore, he is strong again").

Concerning the theonym, Rahmah (2016:51) considers the usage of terms other than Allah problematic. She glosses the Acehnese term *Po* in Indonesian as *Tuhan* ("Lord") and taking her cue from the official monolingual Indonesian dictionary, she states that *Tuhan* is a general term for "God" which is used by non-Muslims, whereas this dictionary defines *Allah* (Indonesian spelling) as the term of reference for "God" used by the majority of Muslims. This criticism seems to be borne out by Dalipah Rahmah's disciplinary background which wishes a translation to be as Arabic as can be.[40] However, such criticism is tone-deaf to Acehnese language and poetry: any dictionary will provide the term *Po* but also *Tuhan* as common words for God in Acehnese (cf. Daud and Durie 1999:16).[41]

In this connection, Acehnese versifiers face the same problem as their Javanese counterparts: as G.W.J. Drewes (1966:298) once pointed out, "In poetry the choice of a particular name is often dependent on the rules of prosody, as these names frequently occur at the end of a line." The Javanese poetic lexicon provides such words for God as *Yang Widi* (Divine Providence), *Yang Sukma* (the Supreme Soul), and *Yang Manon* (the Seeing One), irrespective of the original meanings. In a similar vein, we notice in the TQB the line *Nyang Maha Raya Agong ngon Meugah* ("the Most Exalted Supreme God"), which closes the poetical rendition of Q 28:52. However, not only end rhyme but also the rule concerning the number of syllables in each verse line decides what word to use. For this reason, Q 92:20 for example, which speaks of *rabbihi l-aʻla* ("his Lord the Most High"), is expressed as *Nyang Maha Manyang **ngon Maha Murah*** ("the Most High **and All-Benevolent**"), in which the poetic addition *ngon Maha Murah* ("and All-Benevolent"; five syllables) is needed (1) to fill the line with the prescribed ten syllables and (2) to have the sound /ah/ as the prescribed end rhyme. A theological demand or imperative to exclusively use the word Allāh or Allah to denote God would leave no room for poetic manoeuvre.

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40   One is also reminded in this context about the "Allah" controversy in neighbouring Malaysia, in which the word "Allah" became a hotly disputed issue, when non-Muslims were officially prohibited to use this Arabic term for God. This highly politicized issue, which was brought to court between 2008 and 2009, has lasted until now, see e.g. the report by Adam (2021). For its background, see Neo (2014:751–768).

41   Admittedly, Rahmah's point that *Tuhan* is much more general is also true for Acehnese. As Djajadiningrat (1934, II:1214) explains, *Tuhan* not only can mean "God" or "the Lord", but also "deity" and even "idol", but as Bilmauidhah (2011a:137–138) explains, *Tuhan* is solely used in the TQB as a synonym of Allah. Such other theonyms as *Potallah* and *Hadharat* are categorized as "naturalisations" (Bilmauidhah 2011a:165–167).

7 Reciting the Qurʾān: Orality and Writing

The TQB appears to be unique in being the first poetic rendition into Acehnese of the complete Qurʾānic text. While several *Hikayat teujuit* exist, which are instruction manuals in Acehnese metre for the proper way of reciting the Arabic letters and words of the Qurʾān (Voorhoeve and Iskandar 1994:248–249), Acehnese translations of the Divine Word hitherto had been restricted only to small fragments connected to ritual contexts.[42] A very popular example in this connection is the *Carah Kulhu*, which is a rather short prose commentary of the 112th *sūra*.[43] The latter *sūra*, which is also known as *al-Ikhlāṣ*, is believed by Muslims all over the world to possess "supernatural protective potencies" (Ngom 2016:260 n. 30). The colonial collections have quite a few manuscripts of the *Carah Kulhu*, which, according to Voorhoeve and Iskandar (1994:247), were used as amulets to make "skin invulnerable to iron". The anthropologist John Bowen (2012:13–15) observes similar usage among the neighbouring Gayo people, noting that *sūra* 112 was recited by some Gayo men "as a way of keeping bullets away from them" in their struggle for independence in the 1940s against the Dutch colonial power. The Aceh War of the late colonial period must have increased the popularity of these particular verses in Acehnese manuscript literature.[44]

The colonial archive of Leiden University Library still preserves two copies of an anonymous and undated liturgical translation of the *Fātiḥa*, which was probably made because the first *sūra* is recited in full during the *ṣalāt* or ritual

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42 Voorhoeve and Iskandar (1994:248–249) use the term *teujuit*, but Djajadiningrat (1934, II:928) only includes "tadjoeit" and "tadjoewit". It originates from Arabic *tajwīd*, signifying the system of rules regulating the correct recitation of the Qurʾān. Apart from poetic Acehnese *tajwīd* manuals, it was also common in Aceh to use Arabic treatises on reciting the Qurʾān, generally with interlinear Malay translation, see e.g. manuscript KIT 674/813, kept in the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam (described in Iskandar 1999, II:886). Furthermore, there are many multiple-text manuscripts in prose from Aceh, written in Acehnese, Arabic, and Malay, which deal with different Islamic topics, inter alia citing the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth* in Arabic with Malay translation, see e.g. VMB 3600/10061 (formerly belonging to the Ethnographic Museum Justinus van Nassau in Breda, but since 1993 part of the Ethnographic Museum in Leiden), described in Iskandar (1999, II:928).

43 *Carah* is derived from Arabic *sharḥ* or commentary, whereas *Kulhu* is the name of *sūra* 112 (Arabic *qul huwa*).

44 Fakhriati (2016:47 n. 5) refers to a *ḥadīth* relating that the Prophet Muḥammad recited *sūra* 112 during war. As this Acehnese scholar also points out, the protective function of *sūra* 112 has a wide scope, *inter alia* believed to be a remedy against eye problems and to keep thieves away (Fakhriati 2016:47–48).

prayer.[45] Another manuscript containing a prose Acehnese translation of *al-Fātiḥa*, kept in the Ali Hasjmy collection in Banda Aceh, supports this hypothesis. According to the anonymous translator of the latter version, *al-Fātiḥa* is the most important of all sūras and is claimed to keep God's wrath away.[46] The poetic Leiden copy is preceded by the so-called *taʿawwudh* (also known as *istiʿādha*), in Arabic and Acehnese, i.e. the phrase beginning with *aʿūdhu biʾllāhi min …* ("I take refuge with Allāh against …"). It ends with *amīn*, which is not a part of *Al-Fātiḥa* but is commonly said after the first *sūra*. The text reads as follows:[47]

Lon lakee padok deungon Allah	I seek refuge with Allāh
nibak syoytan rajim bisoe[48]	from the accursed wicked Satan.
Lon lakee tulong ngon nama Allah	I ask for help with the name of Allāh,
nyang that murah geunaseh dudoe	who is merciful as well as compassionate.[49]
Sigala pujoe milek Allah	All praise belongs to Allāh,
nyang peurintah dum alam nyoe	who rules all the worlds;
Lagi nyang murah ngon geumaseh	who is furthermore merciful and compassionate;
rahmat habeh keu mokmin dudoe	[His] mercy is completely reserved for the believers.
Nyankeuh raja uroe akhirat	King of the Last Day, you see,[50]
hana sapat na sibagoe	there is nothing to compare with [Him].
Ulon ibadat keu Gata teuntu	I certainly worship You;
kamoe Tabantu bek syoytan	we are helped by You, so that Satan will be without power.
peudaya	

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45 This is the manuscript Cod. Or. 6561(1), kept at Leiden University Library, originally from the collection of G.A.J. Hazeu (listed in Voorhoeve and Iskandar 1994:246). The other copy is Cod. Or. 7242(1) from the Snouck Hurgronje legacy (Voorhoeve and Iskandar 1994:247).

46 See the description of the undated manuscript 59B/Q/22/YPAH/2005 (new call number) / 50/NKT/YPAH/92 (old call number) in Fathurahman and Holil (2007:18).

47 I follow the romanization of Leiden Cod. Or. 6561(1) made by Imran Teuku Abdullah (2009:224). Although I am aware that certain phrases have a 'standard' Anglophone translation, e.g. "Guide us to the straight path", which could also have been applied to the Acehnese rendition, I have tried to remain as close as possible to the Acehnese text.

48 Q 16:98. The word *bisoe* means "bad; wicked; naughty" (Djajadiningrat 1934, I:201).

49 *Geunaseh* (based upon *gaseh*) is explained in Djajadiningrat (1934, I:455) as "loving (his fellow humans); compassionate; piteous".

50 The interjection *nyan keuh* "there!" is mentioned in Durie (1985:270) and means "there, you see" (Daud and Durie 1999:114).

Tapeutunyok ret[51] *nyang teupat*	Point us to the correct road,
nyang jeuet seulamat iman kamoe	which may save our faith:
Ret si alladzi[52] *nyang Tabri nekmat*	the road of those to whom grace is given by You,
Beu roh teumpat ceuruga dudoe	so that their souls will later reside in Heaven.
Nyang bek Tabri ret si alladzi	Not the road given by You to those
nyang Gata beunci nuraka dudoe	who are hated by You [ending up] later in Hell.
Lom bek tabri ret si alladzi	Furthermore, not the road given by You to those
mucheurek[53] *ngon kaphe jalan*	who are idolators and infidels on the way of loss.
rugoe	

The Acehnese philologist Imran T. Abdullah (2009:230) views this older rendition as "plain" or "unadorned",[54] whereas the TQB in his opinion has much more the character of a *tafsīr*.[55] Although Abdullah does not further elucidate this point, a brief look at the way Jusuf renders the second verse, namely *al-ḥamdu li-llāhi Rabbi l-ʿālamina* ("Praise belongs to God, Lord of the Worlds"), may illustrate Jusuf's exegetical expansion which specifies the term *al-ʿalamin*:

Sigala pujoe bandum lat-batat[56]	All praise from all and sundry,
Bandum nyan meuhat milek Potallah	all of this only belongs to our Lord Allah,
Nyang peujeuet alam timu ngon barat	who created the Eastern and Western world,
Bandum lat-batat peuneujeuet Allah	the entire lot is Allah's creation.

It could be argued that Jusuf incorporates his gloss of *al-ʿalamin* in the poetic rendition, whereas translators of print prose versions make use of footnotes.[57]

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51   The pronunciation of this word is different in Acehnese dialects, see Daud and Durie (1999:7).

52   The expression *si aladi* is explained in Djajadiningrat (1934, I:29 under *aladi*; from the Arabic relative pronoun *allaḏī*) as "those who", used in utterances by '*ulamā*'.

53   Normally spelled *muchrek*.

54   Imran T. Abdullah (2009:230) uses the term *lugas*, i.e. "without any adornment, unadorned, simple, plain; bare, plain (facts); to the point, pertinent, relevant; businesslike; objective; impersonal, without any ulterior motive" (Stevens and Schmidgall-Tellings 2004:596).

55   The characterization of the TQB as "tarjamah tafsiriyyah" (exegetical translation) is common, see e.g. Bilmauidhah (2011a:129) and Saleh (2012:385).

56   Djajadiningrat (1934, I:906) explains *lat-batat* as "all possible living beings and lifeless beings, all possible sorts, the whole lot".

57   For example, M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (2008:3) uses a footnote to explain that "*Al-ʿalamin* in Arabic means all the worlds, of mankind, angels, animals, plants, this world, the next, and so forth". In his discussion of this verse, Saleh (2012:385) acknowledges that it is not easy to find an apt Acehnese term for *al-ʿalamin*.

Yet Jusuf's rendition of the *Al-Fātiḥa*, known in Acehnese as *Patihah*, but translated in the TQB as *Peuneuhah* (Opener), still closely follows the original text, covering its seven verses in no more than five couplets.

8 Conclusion: Injunction Against Creative Interpretation

There is a broad discussion on different styles of Qurʾān translation in Indonesia today, pitting the merits of 'literal' or 'faithful' translations against "such translations that aim at rendering the meaning, rather than the exact wording" of the Qurʾān (Pink 2020:354). The general sentiment among most Indonesian Islamic gatekeepers who have concerned themselves with the TQB is ambivalent, namely an appreciation of the artful endeavour by one of their venerable peers mixed with deep-seated concerns about the reception by lay readers. It is noticeable that the discerning religious scholars who prioritize the meticulous rendering of the Arabic text can only cite a few examples of perceived problematic issues in the target language. In fact, their discussion is not so much about the way in which the learned exegete-poet deals with translating the Qurʾān as about how ordinary individuals might misinterpret it. The problem seems to boil down to the fact that the TQB puts the Qurʾān into the hands of theologically uneducated people who—unlike its learned translator Jusuf and his peer group—do not know Arabic and have no access to supporting information from approved authoritative commentaries. There is a much broader ideology of religious authority at work here, sharply distinguishing between the elite 'literate' experts and the 'illiterate' masses, in which academically trained professionals see their position as the exclusive definers of the faith challenged. Although a vernacular Qurʾān can never replace the original text entirely, it can be perceived as a possible threat which may wrest control from the hands of the religious scholars.

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An Old Malay Manuscript of *Tafsīr* and *Tajwīd*: Formative Islamic Sciences in Nusantara

Majid Daneshgar

Former studies confirm that the oldest known commentaries on the Qurʾān in the Malay-Indonesian world were produced in the seventeenth century. This information reached us through the long journey of Peter G. Riddell which began in the 1980s. He showed us that there are known to be two main exegetical works, *Tafāsīr*, which were written in Malay for the sake of local readers: one having some basic relationship with the circle of Sufi Wujūdiyyah figures, while the other is closer to the group of reformists who added more theological and legal spice to their Sufi teachings. The first commentary is the Cambridge *Tafsīr* manuscript Ii.6.45 dates from the first decade of the 17th century,[1] and the second, *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* dates from the late 17th century.[2] Covering only Chapter 18 of the Qurʾān, the anonymous copy in Cambridge University Library is known as the first extant *sūra*-based Malay commentary of the Qurʾān; *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* by ʿAbd al-Raʾūf being the second Malay *tafsīr* covering the whole Qurʾān. Although different in terms of approach and background, they are two essential interpretive materials from 17th century Aceh. Nonetheless, we have at present no information about further *tafsīr* material produced in this century. One may wonder, did Malay-Indonesians rely merely upon two commentaries within a one-hundred-year timespan? This is despite the fact the seventeenth century was one of the most important and fruitful periods in Malay-speaking Southeast Asia. The epoch was replete with religious and political upheavals, too, when scholars began to systematically marginalize their rivals, label other scholars as *Zandīq* (heretic?), and burn literary works in holy sites. A possible response to such waves of demonization and "otherness" could either be support or a counterattack from those who followed the mainstream

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1 Peter G. Riddell, "Camb. ᴍs Or. Ii. 6.45: The Oldest Surviving Qurʾanic Commentary from Southeast Asia," *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 16/1 (2014): 120–139; Peter G. Riddell, *Malay Court Religion, Culture and Language Interpreting the Qurʾān in 17th Century Aceh* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

2 E.g., Peter G. Riddell, "The Sources of Abd al-Raʾūf's Tarjuman al-Mustafid," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 57/2 (247) (1984): 113–118.

path or those who were part of the resistance front. Either way, my mind can conclude that there should have been more Islamic or Islamized works from this chaotic but important period. This conjecture moves closer to a hypothesis when one comes across a number of valuable and less-examined manuscripts kept in Marburg University Library, mostly brought by the brothers Nikolaus Wilhelm Schröder (d. 1798) and Johann Wilhelm Schröder (d. 1793), who used to stay in the Netherlands, from where, supposedly, most of their manuscript materials were gathered. Among their collections—which will be introduced in a forthcoming study—there is a manuscript including various Islamic treatises. One of them is a *tafsīr* material, which deserves to be seen in line with the 17th century *tafsīr* tradition, explored by Riddell.

The existence of different forms of commentary in the Malay-Indonesian world (i.e., from short to long versions), would suggest that their *tafsīr* production was shaped through a gradual process, from micro to macro, that is, from the verse-based interpretation in the formative period of Islamization (15th and 16th centuries), to the *sūra*-based interpretation of the Qurʾān during its classical period (early 17th century), which later ended up with a full interpretation of the Qurʾān from the late seventeenth century onwards. Moreover, we have to rely upon incomplete archives, which demonstrate that foreign *tafsīr* materials, viz., Arabic commentaries or Arabic with Malay interlinear translations, could have been produced or circulated across the Archipelago from the late 17th century. On this subject, Ervan Nurtawab contends that the Arabic copy of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* (A213), kept in the National Library of Indonesia in Jakarta, dated 1084/1673, is the oldest one known from the Archipelago.[3] Although I do think that this copy was brought to the archipelago at a later date, some additional notes confirm that it was circulating among local inhabitants in the eighteenth century.[4] Instead, another manuscript, EAP144/3/12, from the Surau Lubuk Ipuh Collection digitized through the Endangered Archives Programme, may be one of the important and possibly pioneer local copies of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* in Arabic with Malay interlinear translation made by Sayyid Hasan of Rambai in Medan of Sumatra. Sayyid Hasan's work seems comprehensive as it is supported with a number of glosses (*ḥawāshī*) citing different commentaries such as *Tafsīr al-Baghawī* (e.g., ff. 94, 228, 231) *Tafsīr al-Bayḍāwī* (fl. 94, 228), *Tafsīr al-Khāzin* (fl. 169), and *Tafsīr Jāmiʿ al-Bayān* by al-Ṭabarī (e.g., fl. 193), among others. But the eighteenth century was a period in which vari-

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3   Ervan Nurtawab, "*Jalalayn* Pedagogical Practice: Styles of Qurʾan and *Tafsir* Learning in Contemporary Indonesia," (PhD diss., Monash University, 2018), 10–12.

4   See, P.S. Van Ronkel, Supplement to the catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts preserved in the Museum of the Batavia Society of Arts and Sciences (Batavia: Albrecht, 1913), 13.

ous forms of local Qurʾānic commentaries were produced.[5] This is also evident through another important *tafsīr* copy preserved in Pondok Pesantren Tegalsari, Ponorogo, Indonesia (EAP061/3/56), produced in 1144/c. 1731.[6] Nonetheless, *tafsīr* production became a local tradition which more forcefully continued its progress in the 19th and early 20th centuries.[7]

It took a long time for Malay-Indonesians to become self-generators of their own *tafsīr* materials, and the manuscript in the Marburg University Library is one of the early attempts at the time when Malays were about to attain their independence in Islamic sciences (*ʿulūm al-dīn*).

1   The Marburg Manuscript

Marburg University Library houses the manuscript Ms_Or_17, which includes archaic elements having the potential to contribute to our knowledge about the early status of Islamic teachings among Malay-Indonesians. This manuscript, along with a few other Malay-Indonesian manuscripts in Marburg, was once in the possession of two famous German scholars, the Schröder brothers, the sons of the prolific scholar and polymath Johann Joachim Schröder (d. 1756). The main owner of this manuscript, Nikolaus Wilhelm Schröder, used to stay in the Netherlands where he was in contact with scholars of Leiden and Groningen to familiarize himself with their academic affairs.[8] In 1743, he began his work as librarian and professor of oriental (and other?) languages in Marburg. Later on, in 1745 he moved to Groningen where he worked as a professor Oriental

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5   Ervan Nurtawab, "Qurʾanic Readings and Malay Translations in 18th-Century Banten Qurʾans A. 51 and W.277," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 48/141 (2020): 169–189.

6   Although this might have been partially produced by non-native residents of Indonesia, it was circulating among Indonesian families for long time. See earlier folios.

7   See, R. Michael Feener, "Notes towards the History of Qurʾanic Exegesis in Southeast Asia," *Studia Islamika* 5/3 (1998): 47–76; Johanna Pink, "Tradition, Authority and Innovation in Contemporary Sunnī *tafsīr*: Towards a Typology of Qurʾan Commentaries from the Arab World, Indonesia and Turkey," *Journal of Qurʾanic Studies* 12/1–2 (2010): 56–82. Majid Daneshgar, "The Study of Qurʾān Interpretation in the Malay–Indonesian World: A Select Bibliography," *The Qurʾan in the Malay-Indonesian World: Context and Interpretation*, edited by Majid Daneshgar, Peter G. Riddell and Andrew Rippin (London and New York: Routledge 2016), 21–36.

8   See, Vincent Jonkheid, *Havezate Mensinge en haar bewoners* (Uitgeverij kleine Uil, 2015); and Friedrich Karl Gottlob Hirsching, *Historischliterarisches Handbuch berühmter und denkwürdiger Personen, welche im achtzehnten Jahrhundert gelebt haben* (Verlag Schwickert, 1808, Bd. 11, 1. Abteilung), S. 170.

[and Foreign] Languages and later died in 1798.[9] He was a professional grammarian and philologist whose works were printed frequently in the 18th and 19th centuries. He catalogued his oriental collection in 1740. His main contact in the Netherlands in general and in Leiden in particular was his mentor and father-in-law, Albert Schultens (d. 1750), an Arabist, philologist and pastor.[10] It is highly probable that Ms_Or_17 was obtained by Nikolaus when he was in Leiden in the 1740s.[11]

Apart from Nikolaus W. Schröder's visit to Leiden before 1750 and compilation of his collection during this period, the date of the Ms_Or_17 was estimated by Adnan Jawad al-Toma, the cataloguer of the Marburg University Islamic manuscripts (whose effort to list and describe Marburg manuscripts should be admired), to be in the 11thAH/17th AD century.[12] Besides al-Toma's claim, Ms_Or_17 includes particular physical and orthographic features which direct us towards an opinion that it could have been produced before the 18th century.

The manuscript is a collection of various treatises, most of them in Arabic with interlinear Malay translation. An indication about the content of the work has been written in Latin by Nikolaus Wilhelm Schröder, himself (fl. 3)

> *Codex I. In hoc Codice continentur|*
>
> *1. Leges quomodo quaeque vox in Sūra prima Corani pronuntianda|*
>
> *2. Elegans Tractatus Grammaticas in specie agens de literis quiescentibus|*
>
> *3. Variatio quorundam verborum per vocales, per tempora, numeros, personas, item participia, et infinitivos, cum usitatas formas, tum etiam possibiles.*

> The Codex I includes|
>
> 1. Reading and Recitation rules for the first chapter of the Qurʾān [which is actually titled as "Tajwīd Fātiḥah"]

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9   Siegfried, "Schroeder, Nicolaus Wilhelm," In *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* 32 (1891), S. 524–525.

10 Johann Georg Meusel, *Lexikon der vom Jahr 1750 bis 1800 Verstorbenen teutschen Schriftsteller* (Leipzig: Bey Gerhard Fleischer, dem Jüngern, 1812), xii: 457–458.

11 A number of 17th-century Turkish manuscripts in the Netherlands belonged to Nikolaus Wilhelm Schröder. See, Jan Schmidt, *Catalogue of Turkish Manuscripts in the Library of Leiden University and Other Collections in the Netherlands* (Leiden: Brill, 2012). Another Marburg manuscript is a Qurʾān copy produced by Jacob Vogeley (1631–c. 1712), German scholar and book collector at Marburg, which includes important notes by Jacobus Golius (1596–1667), an Arabist and Mathematician at Leiden.

12 Adnan Jawad al-Toma, *Die arabischen Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Marburg* (Marburg: Universitätsbibliothek, 1979), 101.

2. An elegant treatise on grammar, dealing specifically with quiescent/taciturn letters [which is actually entitled "Risāla tataʿalaqᵘ bi l-Tajwīd" (a Treatise of Qurʾānic Readings and Recitations)]

3. The variation of certain words by vowels, by tenses, numbers, persons, also participles, and infinitives, with common forms and also possible forms.[13]

Compiling these treatises dealing with Qurʾānic readings, recitation and grammar may signify that it was produced and read in pedagogic circles, where people were interested in learning about Islamic principles. Nonetheless, further elements confirm the antiquity of the manuscript:

a. This manuscript was copied on a local Javanese paper known as dluwang/ daluang "hand-made from the beaten bark of the paper mulberry tree, Broussonetia papyrifera, called pohon saeh in Indonesia",[14] which was applied for scholarly and writing purposes from the late 14th century. Among the oldest known manuscripts written on this type of paper, we may name *Tanjung Tanah Code of Law*, which is known as a non-Islamic manuscript from Kerinci in Sumatra, Indonesia from the 14th and/or 15th century,[15] as well as manuscript Or. 7056 housed in Leiden University Library, a Persian-Malay anthology of poems from mid-15th and/or 16th century.[16]

b. The manuscript includes old spelling and orthography, which are comparable with the Malay manuscripts of Erpenius kept in Cambridge University Library and other Malay manuscripts in the Bodleian Library of Oxford examined by Van Ronkel[17] and William Shellabear,[18] or those of Leiden University Library examined by Bausani,[19] and Daneshgar.[20]

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13   The list of further treatises was partially completed by al-Toma.

14   Annabel T. Gallop, "Malay Manuscripts on Javanese Paper", *Asian and African studies blog* https://blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/2014/07/malay-manuscripts-on-javanese-paper.ht ml Accessed 09.10. 2021.

15   E.g., Uli Kozok, "A 14th Century Malay Manuscript from Kerinci", *Archipel* 67/1 (2004), 37–55.

16   Majid Daneshgar, "An Old Persian-Malay Anthology of Poems from Aceh" *Dabir* 7 (2020), 61–90.

17   P.S. van. Ronkel, "Account of Six Malay Manuscripts of the Cambridge University Library", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde* 46/1 (1896), 1–53.

18   Wiliam G. Shellabear, "An Account of Some of the Oldest Malay MSS. Now Extant", *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 31 (1898), 107–151.

19   Alessandro Bausani, "Un manoscritto persiano-malese di grammatica araba del xvi secolo". *Annali dell'Instituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli* 19 (1969), 69–98.

20   Majid Daneshgar, "A Very Old Malay Islamic Manuscript: Carbon Dating and Further Analysis of a Persian-Malay Anthology", *Indonesia and the Malay World* 50/147 (2022), 161–172.

Among the ancient orthography of our Marburg manuscript, there is بلۍ for the modern spelling of بک (*bagi*), کام for کامي (*kami*), جوا for جوا (*jua*), کونکۡ for کونکۡ (*kauanugeri*), کوانکۡ for قيامة (*kiamat*), قيامت for قيامة (*pinta*).

c. The manuscript includes an ending phrase in Persian, suggesting that the text was originally written by someone familiar with Persian, either inside *or* outside the Archipelago. The text of the "Treatise of Recitation" ends with the Persian phrase *Tamām Shod* ("has been finished"). Given the ascending influence of Persian literature and sources in Southeast Asian religious circles up until the early seventeenth century, it may be said that the text entered or was copied in the Malay-Indonesian world in that century. As far as the current literature shows, a large number of Islamic materials including Persian phrases arrived there before the theological reformation initiated by Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī who condemned Ḥamza Fanṣūrī's mystical trends. Although al-Rānīrī's work includes Persian notes and accounts, they were taken through original Arabic sources.[21] Of course, there is some evidence showing that some Malay-Indonesian works on Sufism, philosophy and logic were written based on Persian prototypes or include Persian texts,[22] but very few local Qurʾānic and exegetical tradition works were inspired by Persian or Persianate sources after the mid-17th century.

d. Given the interlinear nature of the text and its prototype inspired by Arabic and Persianate materials, it seems to me that it could have been produced in an earlier period of Islamization, when various forms of religious direction were shaping the region. This can be supported with two pieces of evidence. First, the main interlinear parts of Ms_Or_17 are two treatises of *Tajwīd* on reading and eloquent recitation of the Qurʾān, and one folio of a Islamic traditional report (fl. 7) about the creation of the universe, planets and stars, heaven and hell, Adam and Satan. The second reason is related to my former argument in point c. that the second treatise of *Tajwīd* has been copied in the light of Persianism. Moreover, the majority of *Tajwīd* material with pedagogic qualities in the Malay-Indonesian world have a strong connection with Arabic prototypes, copied on Euro-

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21　Vladimir Braginsky, *The Heritage of Traditional Malay Literature* through Jelani bin Harun. "Nuruddin al-Raniri's Bustan al-Salatin: A Universal History and Adab Work from Seventeenth Century Aceh" (Ph.D. Thesis, SOAS, University of London, 1999).

22　See, Majid Daneshgar, "Persianate Aspects of the Malay-Indonesian World: Some Rare Manuscripts from the Leiden University Library" *Dabir* 8 (2021), 51–78.

pean and Chinese papers, and more importantly, produced since the mid-18th century.[23] However, substantial similarities with our Ms_Or_17 can be found in Or. 5469 and Or. 5686, both written on dluwang/daluang, held in Leiden University Library.[24]

2   Gradual *Tafsīr* Production

2.1   *From Verse to Full Interpretation*

So far, our knowledge about initial *tafsīr* production in the archipelago is limited to only a few manuscripts. As Riddell demonstrated, the oldest known copy of a *sūra*-based manuscript, Camb. Ms. Ii.6.45, could have been produced at the turn of the 17th century, when Persianate and Sufi Wujudiyyah materials were still circulating in the region, mainly in Aceh. Interestingly, as I have demonstrated before, the Malay-speaking Muslims' interest in interpreting Qurʾānic verses emerged from a mystical tradition. One of the most important materials confirming this issue is "a very old Malay anthology of poems" kept in Leiden University Library, Or. 7056. After being carbon-tested, it became evident with "a 70.5 % probability that this bark was collected for processing between 1450–1521 CE (or AD). But there is also a 24.9 % chance it was collected 1586–1623 CE."[25] Either way, it was clearly produced during the ascendancy of Persian materials in the Malay-Indonesian world. This manuscript includes one of the first known interlinear interpretations of the Qurʾān: apart from obvious references to the Persian *Tafsīr* of *ʿArāʾis al-Bayān fī Ḥaqāʾiq al-Qurʾān* ('Brides of Explanation of the Qurʾanic Truth') by Rūzbihān Baqlī al-Shīrāzī (d. c. 1209), the most direct interpretation of the Qurʾān is that of Q 27:88, by Fakhr al-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī. Not only is the Arabic verse directly and independently translated from Arabic to Malay, the Persian commentary of al-ʿIrāqī is also translated into Malay. This may be considered the first "verse-level" translation and interpretation of the Qurʾān in the Malay-Indonesian World (fl. 8):

وترى الجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَهِيَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ

كوليهت سكل بوكت ڤدبڃرام كو سڠك ديم اى ايت برلاک سڤرت كلكون آون اى

---

23   Or. 3331, Or. 3370 (ff. 93–121), Or. 7085:2 (ff. 111–112) in the Leiden University Library.

24   Witkam Vol. 6, 115 and 185. J.J. Witkam, *Inventory of the Oriental Manuscripts of the Library of the University of Leiden* (Leiden: Ter Lugt Press), vi: 115 and 185.

25   Daneshgar, "A Very Old Malay Islamic Manuscript".

Kaulihat segala bukit, pada bicaramu kausangka diam ia itu berlaku seperti kelakuan awan ia

You see the mountains, you think they are motionless, [whereas] they act like clouds do

Translation of Qurʾānic verses is also found in the works of Malay thinkers, Fanṣūrī (from the 16th or early 17th century) and Shams al-Dīn al-Samaṭrāʾī (d. c. 1630). Riddell deemed that "these works themselves are not of an exegetical nature, but rather deal with the authors' own understanding of important issues such as the nature of God, the World, Man and the relationship between all three".[26] However, and unlike the renditions of Fanṣūrī and al-Samaṭrāʾī, Or. 7056 includes a Malay translation of foreign interpretations of the Qurʾān by Rūzbihān Baqlī (as a Sufi *mufassir*) and al-ʿIrāqī (as a Sufi poet).

As Qurʾānic verses were translated and interpreted into Malay from the mid-15th century (i.e., Or. 7056), and Qurʾānic chapters (*suwar*; *sūra*s) were produced in the early 17th century (i.e., Cambridge copy of Ii. 6. 45), we may thus conclude that Malays were gradually becoming more and more engaged with Qurʾānic interpretation. They would have begun the journey with mystical commentaries and then learned about the theological and pedagogical ones. Besides, reading and understanding the Qurʾān needed to be done by someone familiar with Arabic grammar (*ʿilm al-ṣarf*), recitation rules (*al-tajwīd*), translation and commentary (*al-tafsīr*). The Marburg Ms_Or_17 may suggest that Malay-Indonesians were becoming well-equipped with foundational classical Islamic sciences before the 1670s when *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* had not yet been produced as a direct translation of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*.[27]

I have already shown that one of the first Arabic grammatical works read in the Archipelago was the Persian-Malay translation of "Marāḥ al-Arwāḥ" ('The Souls' Place of Rest') by Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Masʿūd, from the late 7th AH/13th AD or early 8th AH/14th AD century, whose work was widely translated and used by Muslim thinkers, including al-Suyūṭī (d. c. 1505). Its old manuscript in Leiden University Library, Or. 1666, written on dluwang/daluang, includes very old orthographic forms, and is in Persian-Malay, which altogether correlates with its copying date of 990/1581.[28] This period would be simultaneous

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26   Peter Riddell, "Earliest Quranic Exegetic Activity in the Malay Speaking States," *Archipel* 38/1 (1989): 107–124 (esp. 112).

27   On Riddell's analysis of *Tarjuman al-Mustafid*'s compilation date, see: Riddell, "Earliest Quranic Exegetic Activity".

28   Edwin Wieringa, *Catalogue of Malay and Minangkabau Manuscripts: in the Library of Lei-*

with early Malay reading and production of the Qurʾān. On this subject, Riddell demonstrated that the "Oldest known Quran codex" produced in the Malay-Indonesian World belonged to the sixteenth century.[29]

Local involvement with Arabic grammar and Qurʾān production should be seen in the light of the Malays' ability to read the Qurʾān. According to classical categories of religious sciences, reading the Qurʾān lies in the classification of *ʿulūm al-Qurʾān*, with various subfields including *tajwīd* (or *waqf* and *ibtidāʾ*) and *tafsīr*. As such, my understanding is that the oldest known commentary on the Qurʾān, Camb. Ms. Ii.6.45, could have been produced when Islamic sciences, as a scholarly discipline, were taking shape in the Malay-Indonesian world. Interestingly, the Marburg Ms_Or_17 includes further information which allows us to assess the gradual formation of *tafsīr* in the Malay-Indonesian world.

2.2 Ms_Or_17's Hidden Malay Tafsīr

In between the two main *tajwīd* treatises of Ms_Or_17, there are a number of pages, one of which has not been identified in former catalogues. It is clearly a pure Malay translation and commentary of Chapter 1 of the Qurʾān (without interlinear rendition) by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī, the master of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, who produced the famous *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*. It should be noted that al-Maḥallī first began writing his commentary on the second part of the Qurʾān (from *sūrat al-Kahf* Q 18 to *Sūrat al-Nās* Q 114), and then returned to the first part. "Due to his death in 864AH/c. 1460, he could only complete the commentary of Q 1, *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*, [and the beginning of chapter 2] and was not able to accomplish the rest of the first part. [His disciple] Jalāl al-Din al-Suyūṭī, then completed the rest of the commentary in 870 [c. 1466] (from *al-Baqara* until *Isrāʾ*) and placed al-Maḥallī's commentary on Chapter 1 at the end of every single chapter".[30] As such, a widely circulated part of the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* was al-Maḥallī's commentary on Chapter 1. This is also evident in an indigenous Arabic-Javanese copy of *al-Jalālayn* (Or. 1886, Leiden University Library), which clearly considers the interpretation of Q 1 in *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* as the main work of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī:

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den University and Other Collect ions in the Netherlands (Leiden: Legatum Warnerianum in Leiden University Library, 1998), 28.

29   Peter G. Riddell, "Rotterdam MS 96 D 16: The Oldest Known Surviving Qurʾan from the Malay World," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 30/86 (2002), 9–20.

30   Morteza Karimi-nia, "Tafsīr al-Jalālayn", *Encyclopedia* of the World of Islam (Tehran: Encyclopedia of the World of Islam, n.d.) 1: 3703. Also Yoones Dehghani Farsani, "al-Jalālayn, Tafsīr", *The Centre for the Great Islamic Encyclopaedia* (Tehran: Centre for Iranian and Islamic Studies), 1398/2019.
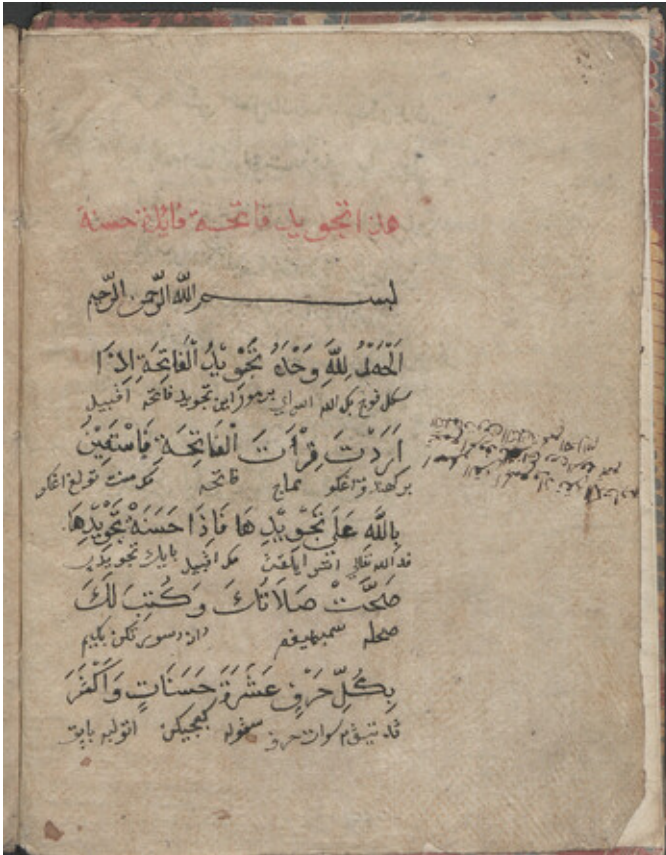
<div dir="rtl">

إنتهي تفسير سورة الفاتحة من قطعة الشيخ جلال الدين المحلي [الشافعي]

</div>

The end of the commentary on the first chapter *al-Fātiḥa* from the work
of al-Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī al-Shafiʿī

Traditional reports about the existence of al-Maḥallī's commentary on chap-
ter 1 at the end of every other chapter of the Qurʾān in *al-Jalālayn*, may explain
why there is an independent Malay commentary by al-Maḥallī on *Sūrat al-
Fātiḥah*. The name of al-Maḥallī as the interpreter of Chapter 1 is clearly men-
tioned in Ms_Or_17. Whether being an independent chapter or a part of a larger
volume, I tend to consider the production date of this manuscript copy as
being in the late 16th up until the mid-17th century, and before *Tarjumān al-*

Mustafīd. This may contribute to my question: how would it be possible not to notice further exegetical activities among Malay-Indonesians when the region was highly affected by various forms of Islamic trends and debates, especially in the 17th century? This point may invite readers to reconsider the literature; that "*al-Jalālayn* was used after the bloody conflict between al-Raniri and the Wujudiyyah followers".[31] Were Malays familiar with parts of *al-Jalālayn* before *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*?

The Ms_Or_17 full Malay rendition of Q1, without any Arabic exegetical words from al-Maḥallī, suggests that the producer or the scribe was living in an environment where people were becoming familiar with local exegetical tradition, through which Malay speaking communities used to present their own interpretation *excluding* an interlinear tradition (like the Cambridge copy, Ii.6.45). This is despite the fact that other Malay-Indonesian *tafsīr*s from 18th-century Banten, like A.51 and W.277 preserved in the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia, also examined by Ervan Nurtawab, actually "utilised the *Jalālayn* as a reference for making its interlinear Malay translation".[32]

Placing this Malay commentary between two treatises about reading and recitation techniques would not be accidental. The first treatise on *Tajwīd* or "how to recite chapter one of the Qurʾān" (ff. 1–6) is an extract of *al-Qaṭar/al-Qaṭr al-Maṣrī fī Qirāʾāt Abī ʿAmr b. ʿAlī al-Baṣrī*, for recitation techniques (Fig. 6.1). It was well-known across the Muslim regions, produced by a Shāfiʿī scholar, al-Shaykh al-Imām ʿUmar bin Qāsim Muḥammad bin ʿAlī al-Anṣārī al-Maṣrī al-Nashshār (d. 938/1531),[33] who was an expert in Qurʾānic readings and sciences. This treatise on reciting the Qurʾān was written based on the method of Abū ʿAmr al-Baṣrī (154/770AD), whose reading (*Qirāʾāt*) style of the Qurʾān made inroads into the Malay-Indonesian world through translation of Qurʾānic commentaries. As far as I have checked in the existing secondary literature, catalogues and special collections in libraries I have visited, I assume that this would be one of the first manuscripts of reading and recitation (*tajwīd*) produced in the archipelago. The handwriting of the Arabic-Malay text clearly shows that it was written by someone unfamiliar with Arabic. Also, being a select part from the book of al-Anṣārī al-Maṣrī, confirms that a native Malay intentionally selected the part on recitation rules, after which a full Malay commentary of Q1 is placed.[34]

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31   Thanks to Nurtawab for drawing my attention to this point.

32   Nurtawab, "Qurʾanic Readings and Malay Translations in 18th-Century Banten".

33   According to Carl Brockelmann, he died in 900/1495. Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur* (Leiden, Brill, 1936), II: 119.

34   Some other Arabic-Malay manuscripts in Marburg are extracts of the longer treatises. I have a new work on Arabic-Malay manuscripts of the Marburg University Library.
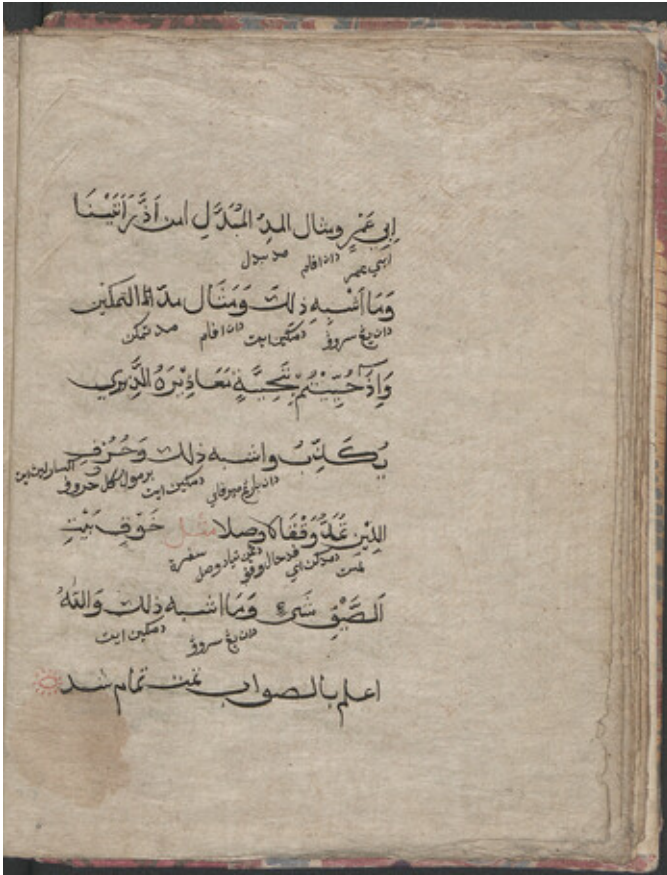
FIGURE 6.2   Fl. 19. MS_Or_17, Another Treatise on *Tajwīd* (II), ending
              with a Persian phrase
              COURTESY OF MARBURG UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

The second *Tajwīd* treatise (ff. 9–19), coming after our Malay commentary, is longer than the first, and is anonymous. It is similar to a collection of popular Qurʾānic readings with an emphasis on those of Ḥafṣ and Abū ʿAmr. But this work ends with a Persian phrase, which, as I demonstrated above, confirms that it was perhaps written when Persian Islamic works were still playing a crucial role in Islamic teachings in the Malay-Indonesian world (Fig. 6.2). It may also be said that this work (or its prototype) could have been brought to the Archipelago from India, as there are similar treatises now kept in Rampur (N. 538) and Bankipore (N. 18) libraries in India.[35] All these factors together,

35   Also, see al-Toma's *catalogue*.
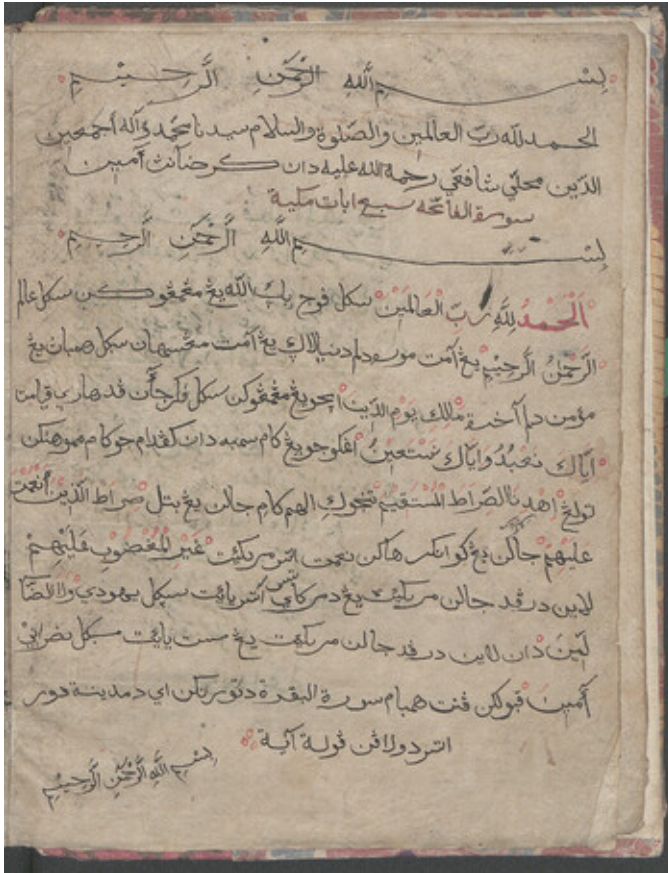
FIGURE 6.3 Fl. 7. MS_Or_17, Commentary on *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* in Malay
COURTESY OF MARBURG UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

along with a bilingual supplication of the *Tarāwīḥ* prayer (fl. 23), further notes on Arabic morphology and grammar (ff. 24–31) as well as some minor instructions for making ablution (*wuḍū'*) (fl. 33) confirm that the manuscript includes treatises with pedagogical purposes, and that it was read by people who wanted to become acquainted with principles of Islamic rituals, prayers, reciting the Qurʾān and reading *al-Fātiḥa*, etc.

Having three distinct parts, two *Tajwīd* treatises and one Malay *tafsīr* of Q1 (Fig. 6.3), proves that these two branches of Qurʾānic sciences were supported by and fed into each other, and their life and continuity were dependent upon the other.

2.3   *Edition, Romanization and Translation of the Malay* **Tafsīr al-Fātiḥa**
While editing the text, I compared the writing style of Ms_Or_17 (fl. 7) with
the available copies and folios of Camb. Ms. Ii.6.45, *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*
(Leiden Or. 7596)[36] and Arabic-Malay (Leiden Or. 3224a) or Arabic-Javanese
copies of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* in Leiden University Library (Or. 1886).[37] More-
over, I compared it with a folio, which probably belonged to al-Rānīrī (Leiden,
Or. 8414 (8)).[38] Although the result of the comparison could be delivered on
another occasion, what came to my attention is that the old orthography used
in ᴍs_Or_17 is comparable with those of Ii.6.45 and to some extent Or. 8414. I
will highlight some orthographic similarities and differences below in the foot-
notes. However, it should be noted that the translation style is neither similar
to that of *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* nor to Arabic-Malay or Arabic-Javanese trans-
lations of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*.[39]

<div dir="rtl">

بِسْـــــــــــمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمدلله ربّ العالمين والصّلوة والسلام سيدنا محمّد وآله وآله أجمعين [...] [جلال] الدّين محلّي شافعي رحمة

الله عليه دان كرضاننڽ. آمين

</div>

*Bism/Bisim Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm. Alḥamdulillāh Rabb al-ʿālamīn wa l-
ṣalāt wa l-salām [?] Sayyidinā Muḥammad wa ālih ajmaʿīn [...] [Jalāl] al-Dīn
Maḥallī Shāfiʿī Raḥmat Allāh ʿAlayh dan keridaannya. Āmīn*

In the Name of God, The Compassionate, the Merciful.

Praise to the Lord of the Worlds, and peace and greetings upon our Master
Muḥammad and all his household [...] [Jalāl] al-Dīn Maḥallī Shāfiʿī, God's
mercy upon him and God be satisfied with him.

---

36   I also went through a Javanese but anonymous *tafsīr* copy, Or. 23.476, in Leiden Univer-
        sity Library, which is to some extent similar to *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* (edition 1951), and
        includes in/direct references to classical commentaries such among others as *al-Bayḍāwī*.
        Further examination is required to reach firm answers.

37   Also, I went through the Or. 25.300 manuscript, which is a bilingual *tafsīr* (Arabic-Java-
        nese) and copied by "Muhammad" in Tuban (Tuban Regency, Java). Further manuscript
        copies (in the Leiden University Library) which deserve to be examined are Or.1315; Or.
        3224 (a-b); Or. 8789 (vol. 2); Or. 14.204a–b; Or. 14.210a–d; Or.25.300 (Arabic-Javanese); Or.
        25.312 (bought from Indonesia); Or.26.332 (belonged to G.F. Pijper).

38   This work was originally written in 1054/c. 1645, almost a decade before al-Rānīrī's death.

39   It should be noted that some verses are translated differently in comparison with other
        Malay versions of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, which needs to be examined in the future.

<div dir="rtl">سورة الفاتحه سبع آيات مكية</div>

Sūrat al-Fātiḥa Sabʿa Āyat Makkiyya

"The Opening" Chapter, Seven Verses, Meccan [Revealed in Mecca]

<div dir="rtl">بِسۡـــــــــــــمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ</div>

Bism/Bisim Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm

In the Name of God, The Compassionate, the Merciful

<div dir="rtl">الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْن سكل فوج بكِ الله يغ مغمغوكن سكل عالم.</div>

Alḥamdulillāh-i Rabb al-ʿālamīn: Segala puji bagi Allah yang mengemungua-kan[40] segala alam[41]

Praise be to God who created the whole Universe

<div dir="rtl">الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ يغ آمت موره دلم دنيا لاكِ يغ آمت مغسهان سكل همباﭞ يغ مؤمن دلم آخرة</div>

Al-Raḥmān-i al-Raḥīm-i: yang amat murah dalam dunia lagi yang amat men-gasihani segala hamba-Nya yang mukmin [di] dalam akhirat

Who is most generous in the world, who is most merciful with all His servants, those who are believers/believe in the Hereafter

<div dir="rtl">مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ ايجويغ مغمغوكن سكل فكرجأن فد هاري قيامت</div>

Mālik-i yawm al-Dīn: ia jua yang mengemunguakan segala pekerjaan pada hari Kiamat[42]

He is the One who rules over all things on the Day of Judgement

---

40   This may be a nasalization form of "mengemukakan".

41   According to *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*, this phrase is translated as:

<div dir="rtl">سكل فوج ثابت بكَ الله توهن يغ ممڤياي سكل مخلق</div>

    Segala puji sabet bagi Allah Tuhan yang mempunyai segala makhluk
      Moreover, in a large number of Malay translations of *tafsīr al-al-Jalālayn*, the term "al-ʿālamīn" is literally translated as "segalan[ya]". Also, Or. 8414 (8) presents "segala" as "سكل".

42   This translation is partially based on the original version of al-Maḥallī's *tafsīr* in which he

<div dir="rtl">

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ جويغ اغكو جويغ كام سمبه دان كڤد ام جو كام ممومهنكن تولغ

</div>

Iyyāk-a naʿbud-u wa-iyyāk-a nastaʿīn-u: Engkau jua yang kami sembah dan kepada-Mu jua kami[43] memohonkan tolong

That [it is] [you] who we worship and who we seek assistance (from)

<div dir="rtl">

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ تَنجوكِ الهم كامِ جالن يغ بتل

</div>

Ihdinā al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm-a: Tunjuki[44] oleh-Mu kami jalan yang betul

Show us the path that is straight (the right one)

<div dir="rtl">

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ جالن مريكيئت يغ كوانكرهاكن نعمت اتس مريكيئت

</div>

Ṣirāṭ al-ladhīna anʿamta ʿalayhim: jalan mereka itu yang kauanugerhakan[45] nikmat atas mereka itu

The path of those who bestowed the grace upon them

<div dir="rtl">

غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ لاين درڤد جالن مريكيئت يغ دمركاي تسس [46] (sic) اَتس يايئت سڬل يهودي

</div>

Ghayr al-maghḍūbi ʿalayhim: lain daripada jalan mereka itu yang dimurkai sesat atas yaitu/yaitu atas segala Yahudi

A different/another path from those who are angered due to their going astray, i.e., the Jews

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introduces "the Owner" (*Mālik*) as the "owner of all affairs and events" on the Day of Judgement. This is also evident in other Malay translation of this *sūra* in Leiden, e.g., Or. 3224a, fl. 3:

<div dir="rtl">

[ومن قراء «مالك» فمعناه مالك الامر كله في يوم القيامة] دان بارغسياڤ مميجاكن «مالك» مك معنان ممڤباﯕي سكل ڤكرجن سكلينث ڤدهاري قيامة]

</div>

43　"jua kami" is also spelled as "جو كام" in Or. 8414 (8).

44　Although modern translation use "tujukilah".

45　Another form of "kauanugerakan".

46　سست

وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ دان لاين درڤد جالن مرئكئت يغ سست يايئت سكل نصراني

Wa la-al-ḍāllin-a: dan lain daripada jalan mereka itu yang sesat yaitu segala Nasrani

And a different path from those who are astray, i.e. the Christians

أَآمين قبولكن ڤنت همبام

Āmīn, kabulkan pinta hambaMu

Amen, accept the request/prayer of your servant

سورة البقرة دتورنكن اي دمدينة دوراتس دولاڤن ڤوله آية

Sūrat al-Baqara, diturunkan ia di-Madinah dua ratus dua lapan puluh ayat

Chapter *al-Baqarah*, revealed in Medina, two hundred, eighty-two[47]

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bism/Bisim Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm

In the Name of God, The Compassionate, the Merciful

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47 However, the 2nd chapter includes two hundred and eighty-six verses.

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Navigating Anthropomorphism in Malay Islam: *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*'s Treatment of the Bodily Attributes of God

Han Hsien Liew

1 Introduction

It is now widely recognized that the conversion of Southeast Asian communities to Islam intensified intellectual exchange between the Malay-Indonesian world and the traditional centers of religious learning in the Middle East. As ideas traveled between these two regions, so too did debates. Peter Riddell's seminal works on Malay Islamic literature have done much to shed light on the ways in which religious debates and controversies that originated in the medieval Islamic Middle East were "imported" into the intellectual milieu of Southeast Asia, especially in the Sultanate of Aceh.[1] One such controversy concerning the monistic Sufi doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd* ("the unity of being") took Aceh by storm mainly in the seventeenth century.[2]

This essay examines the case of anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*), another theological controversy which raged on for more than five centuries in the Middle East. Like the *waḥdat al-wujūd* controversy in Aceh, debates over anthropomorphism spilled over into the social and political spheres. But by the time Aceh had become preoccupied with the *wujūdiyya*, the flames igniting the anthropomorphism debate and controversy had largely died down in the Middle East. Anthropomorphism also did not seem to leave any long-term imprints

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1 See in particular his following works: "Controversy in Qurʾānic Exegesis and its Relevance to the Malayo-Indonesian World," in A. Reid (ed.), *The Making of an Islamic Political Discourse in Southeast Asia* (Melbourne: Monash University Press, 1993), 59–81; *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses* (Honolulu: University of Hawaiʾi Press, 2001); "Variations on an Exegetical Theme: *Tafsīr* Foundations in the Malay World," *Studia Islamika*, vol. 21, no. 2 (2014): 259–292; "Classical *Tafsīr* in the Malay World: Emerging Trends in Seventeenth-Century Malay Exegetical Writing," in M. Daneshgar, P.G. Riddell, and A. Rippin (eds.), *The Qurʾān in the Malay-Indonesian World: Context and Interpretation* (London: Routledge, 2016), 25–38; *Malay Court Religion, Culture and Language: Interpreting the Qurʾān in 17th Century Aceh* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

2 Riddell, *Malay Court Religion*, 18–48.

on Malay Islamic intellectual life as did *waḥdat al-wujūd*. Nevertheless, considering the centrality of texts in the transregional transmission of knowledge between Muslim societies, it would still be worthwhile to consider the extent to which the problem of anthropomorphism grazed Islamic theological discourse in Southeast Asia.

This essay addresses the issue of anthropomorphism in Malay Islamic literature by closely analyzing ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Singkilī's (d. 1693) treatment of Qurʾānic verses related to the bodily attributes of God (*ṣifāt Allāh*) in his *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*, the first extant commentary (*tafsīr*) on the entire Qurʾān written in the Malay language. Comparisons will also be made with the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, which constitutes the primary source of *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*.

2   Anthropomorphism in Islam: An Overview

Theologically speaking, the term "anthropomorphism" refers to the likening of God to humankind or the attempt to ascribe human traits to God. The human attributes involved can be either physical (e.g., speaking of God as having eyes, ears, hands, etc.) or behavioral (e.g., God as knowing, seeing, judging, etc.). In Islam, anthropomorphism is covered by the Arabic term *tashbīh*, which entails "careful deliberation on spatiality, directionality (especially aboveness) and confinement."[3] Its polar opposite is *taʿṭīl*, the attempt to divest God of human attributes.

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3 L. Holtzman, *Anthropomorphism in Islam: The Challenge of Traditionalism (700–1350)* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 14. For other studies of anthropomorphism in Islam, see B. Abrahamov, *Anthropomorphism and Interpretation of the Qurʾān in the Theology of al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm* (Leiden: Brill, 1996); Abrahamov, "The *Bi-lā Kayfa* Doctrine and Its Foundations in Islamic Theology," *Arabica*, vol. 42, no. 3 (1995): 365–379; J.M.S. Baljon, "Qurʾanic Anthropomorphisms," *Islamic Studies*, vol. 27, no. 2 (1988): 119–127; G. Böwering, "God and His Attributes," in *The Encyclopaedia of the Quran* (*EQ*) (Brill Online, accessed 10 August 2021); N. El-Bizri, "God: Essence and Attributes," in T. Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 121–140; C. Gilliot, "Attributes of God," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd edn. (*EI3*) (Brill Online, accessed 10 August 2021); D. Gimaret, *Dieu à l'image de l'homme: les anthropomorphismes de la sunna et leur interprétation par les théologiens* (Paris: Cerf, 1997); L. Holtzman, "Anthropomorphism," in *EI3* (Brill Online, accessed 10 August 2021); R. Martin, "Anthropomorphism," in *EQ* (Brill Online, accessed 10 August 2021); J. van Ess, "Tashbīh wa-Tanzīh," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn. (*EI2*) (Brill Online, accessed 10 August 2021); van Ess, *Theology and Society in the Second and Third Centuries of the Hijra: A History of Religious Thought in Early Islam*, trans. J. O'Kane and G. Goldbloom, 5 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2016–2020); W.M. Watt, "Some Muslim Discussions of Anthropomorphism," in *Early Islam: Collected Articles* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), 86–93.

It remains unclear when exactly Muslim theologians and philosophers began to grapple with the problem of anthropomorphism. According to Richard Martin, the spotty evidence points to the early second/eighth century as the period when debates began to take a distinct shape, spearheaded by theologians who argued against anthropomorphism.[4] What is more certain, however, is that early debates centered on the Qurʾān, which contains a plethora of verses that speak of God in anthropomorphic terms. Such verses speak of God's face, eye(s), hand(s), side (*janb*), and shank (*sāq*). Equally ambiguous are verses suggesting that God mounts or ascends His throne. Yet the Qurʾān also states that "There is nothing like [God]" (Q 42:11) and that "No one is comparable to Him" (Q 112:4).[5] The problem of anthropomorphism was compounded by the use of ḥadīths portraying God with human bodily attributes (*aḥādīth al-ṣifāt*)[6] in exegetical literature to explain the anthropomorphic Qurʾānic verses (*āyāt al-ṣifāt*).[7]

The main players involved in the controversy and debates over anthropomorphism were the Muʿtazilites, the Ḥanbalites, and the Ashʿarites. Presumably, it was the Muʿtazilites who ignited the debate in the early second/eighth century with their rigorous denunciations of the traditionalist scholars' anthropomorphic interpretations of *āyāt al-ṣifāt* and wholesale acceptance of *aḥādīth al-ṣifāt*. For the Muʿtazilites, such an approach to scripture was downright distasteful. They rejected the entire corpus of *aḥādīth al-ṣifāt* and insisted on the use of *taʾwīl* or metaphorical/figurative interpretation to interpret Qurʾānic verses that speak of the bodily attributes of God. Using *taʾwīl*, expressions such as God's hands were rendered in abstract terms as His "grace" (*niʿma*) and

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4 Martin, "Anthropomorphism," in *EQ*.

5 Translations of Qurʾānic verses in this essay are drawn from *The Qurʾan: English Translation and Parallel Arabic Text*, trans. M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010) and *The Study Quran: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary*, trans. S.H. Nasr, C.K. Dagli, M.M. Dakake, and J.E.B. Lumbard (New York: HarperOne, 2015), with slight modifications.

6 For example, "Our Lord will lay bare His shank (*yakshifu rabbunā ʿan sāqihi*), and every male and female believer will prostrate before Him" (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *kitāb tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, *bāb yukshafu ʿan sāqin*, no. 4919) and "On the Day of Resurrection, God will place the heavens on one finger (*ʿalā iṣbaʿin*), the earths on one finger, the mountains and trees on one finger, oceans and moist earth on one finger, and the rest of creation on one finger. Then He will shake His fingers and say, 'I am the King! I am the King!'" (*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *kitāb ṣifat al-qiyāma wa-l-janna wa-l-nār*, no. 2786a). Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb and Muḥammad Fuʾād ʿAbd al-Bāqī (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Salafiyya, 1980), vol. 3, 315; Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Muḥammad Fuʾād ʿAbd al-Bāqī (Cairo: ʿĪsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-Shurakāʾuhu, 1955–1956), vol. 5, 2147.

7 Holtzman, *Anthropomorphism in Islam*, 26.

God's face as His "essence" (*dhāt*). Any connotations of God possessing a body akin to that of human beings were rejected. Underlying *taʾwīl* was a rationalist approach to theological issues. But in the eyes of the traditionalists, *taʾwīl* ran the risk of calling into question the word of the Qurʾān itself and was regarded as heretical.[8]

On the other end of the spectrum were those who unquestioningly accepted the anthropomorphic conceptions of God found in Qurʾān and ḥadīth. Most of them were traditionalist ḥadīth transmitters (*muḥaddithūn*) and followers of the Ḥanbalite school of law and theology. They firmly maintained that the formula of *bi-lā kayfa* ("without asking how") ought to be applied to the transmission of *āyāt al-ṣifāt* and *aḥādīth al-ṣifāt* as a safeguard against further questions about the anthropomorphic connotations of these texts.[9] Above all, they saw their theological approach as protecting revelation from being encroached upon by rationalistic arguments. To their rationalist opponents, however, they were nothing less than vulgar anthropomorphists (*mushabbih*) and corporealists (*mujassim*), hence deserving of the derogative name *ḥashwiyya* which carried connotations of being unsophisticated simpletons.[10]

A middle-ground approach can be observed among the Ashʿarites. In one of his credal writings titled *al-Ibāna ʿan Uṣūl al-Diyāna*, Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 935), the eponymous founder of the Ashʿarite school of theology, asserted that God's attributes should be affirmed without asking how (*bi-lā kayfa*), which some scholars have taken to mean that he was a traditionalist in his approach to anthropomorphism.[11] Yet, as Livnat Holtzman has shown, a closer reading of other Ashʿarite writings reveals that al-Ashʿarī's approach combined the doctrine of *bi-lā kayfa* with figurative readings of anthropomorphic texts. This was an approach with which a Muʿtazilite would find much to agree.

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8   For general surveys of the Muʿtazilites, see R. El-Omari, "The Muʿtazilite Movement (I): The Origins of the Muʿtazila," in S. Schmidtke (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 130–141; D. Bennett, "The Muʿtazilite Movement (II): The Early Muʿtazilites," in Schmidtke (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, 142–158; S. Schmidtke, "The Muʿtazilite Movement (III): The Scholastic Phase," in Schmidtke (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, 159–180; D. Gimaret, "Muʿtazila," in *EI2* (Brill Online, accessed 11 August 2021).

9   Holtzman, *Anthropomorphism in Islam*, 187–193; Abrahamov, "The *Bi-lā Kayfa* Doctrine."

10   Holtzman, *Anthropomorphism in Islam*, 201–202, 328–329. The most detailed study of the term *ḥashwiyya* remains A.S. Halkin, "The Ḥashiwyya," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 54, no. 1 (1934): 1–28.

11   Holtzman, *Anthropomorphism in Islam*, 234–235. For an example of scholarly readings of al-Ashʿarī as a traditionalist and of later generations of Ashʿarites as deviating from his approach to anthropomorphism, see Watt, "Some Muslim Discussions of Anthropomorphism," 88–90.

But while the Muʿtazilites only applied *taʾwīl* to *āyāt al-ṣifāt*, al-Ashʿarī and his Ashʿarite successors expanded its application to *aḥādīth al-ṣifāt*. This approach allowed Ashʿarite theologians to have it both ways—accepting *aḥādīth al-ṣifāt* which were widely regarded as authentic among the traditionalists but avoiding a literal reading of these texts.[12] Later Ashʿarites would call this approach *tanzīh* (transcendence), arguing that God transcends any expressions used by humans to describe the things of this world.[13]

The problem of anthropomorphism was not confined to the intellectual realm; it had social and political ramifications as well. Up until the fall of the Abbasid caliphate in 1258, Baghdad was the stronghold of traditionalism, as evidenced by the strong following the Ḥanbalites commanded among the populace. This made Baghdad an anomaly as other regions of the medieval Islamic world were dominated by the Ashʿarites and the Māturīdites, a theological school widespread among the Turks.[14] The doctrinal fervor of the Ḥanbalites reached fever pitch in the tenth century, during which we frequently hear of mobs and raids led by their leader al-Barbahārī (d. 941). The populist nature of Ḥanbalite activism played a role in the inclusion of *aḥādīth al-ṣifāt* into the Islamic canon. The huge social influence of the Ḥanbalites in Baghdad was such that the Abbasid caliphate, which a century prior had briefly flirted with Muʿtazilite ideas, now became a supporter of traditionalist causes. Abbasid support of the traditionalists culminated in the promulgation of the Qādirī Creed by the caliph al-Qādir (r. 991–1031), in which rationalist Muʿtazilite ideas were deemed to be heretical and the blood of Muʿtazilites liable to be shed.[15] Although the Abbasid state did not proactively persecute the Muʿtazilites, Ḥanbalite populism exerted real pressures even on those who were suspected of harboring Muʿtazilite beliefs. A case in point is Ibn ʿAqīl (d. 1119), a Ḥanbalite scholar who was accused of being a Muʿtazilite and forced to recant his views

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12   Holtzman, *Anthropomorphism in Islam*, 223–248.

13   It is also important to note briefly the contribution of the Sufis to this debate, though a more detailed discussion lies outside the scope of this essay. The Sufis were quite varied in their interpretations of the anthropomorphic verses. Al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), an Ashʿarite himself, tended more toward the Ashʿarite approach of *bi-lā kayfa*, whereas Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240) called for a mix of imagery and abstraction to understand the *āyāt al-ṣifāt*. The use of *taʾwīl*, Ibn ʿArabī argues, reduces God to an abstraction, while solely relying on sensory perceptions and images leads to polytheism and anthropomorphism. See K.Z. Sands, *Ṣūfī Commentaries on the Qurʾān in Classical Islam* (London: Routledge, 2006).

14   On the Māturīdites, see W. Madelung, "The Spread of Māturīdism and the Turks," in *Religious Schools and Sects in Medieval Islam* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1985), 109–168.

15   G. Makdisi, *Ibn ʿAqīl et la resurgence de l'Islam traditionaliste au XIe siècle (Ve siècle de l'hégire)* (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1963), 299–310; Holtzman, *Anthropomorphism in Islam*, 272–278.

after threats were made on his life.[16] The problem of anthropomorphism continued to divide the Ḥanbalites over the next century, as shown in the theological tracts of another Ḥanbalite, Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1201), who accused his Ḥanbalite colleagues of subscribing to crude anthropomorphism. Ibn al-Jawzī's theological views earned him hostility from his peers and played a part in his banishment to Wasit for five years.[17] In Mamluk-era Cairo and Damascus, where Ashʿarism dominated the social scene, a completely different situation is observed. It was in this intellectual milieu that the Ḥanbalite Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) was put on trial and arrested on charges that he corrupted the masses with his anthropomorphist views.[18]

2.1 *ʿAbd al-Raʾūf's* Tarjumān al-Mustafīd *and the* Tafsīr al-Jalālayn

The historical value of *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* lies not only in the fact that it remains the earliest Malay commentary on the entire Qurʾān, but also in the light it sheds on which classical Arabic commentaries were in widespread use in late seventeenth-century Southeast Asia.[19] As Riddell has shown in numerous studies, the core of *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* is the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* in Malay translation, jointly composed by the "two Jalāls," Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī (d. 1459) and his student Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 1505). It draws sparsely from two other *tafsīr* works—al-Bayḍāwī's (d. 1319) *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa-Asrār al-Taʾwīl* and al-Khāzin's (d. 1340) *Lubāb al-Taʾwīl fī Maʿānī al-Tanzīl*. Readers will also encounter additions by ʿAbd al-Raʾūf's student Dāʾūd Rūmī, which include more extensive material from al-Bayḍāwī and al-Khāzin.[20]

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16 Makdisi, *Ibn ʿAqīl*; Holtzman, "The *Miḥna* of Ibn ʿAqīl (d. 513/1119) and the *Fitnat* Ibn al-Qushayrī (d. 514/1120)," in Schmidtke (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, 660–678.

17 M. Swartz, *A Medieval Critique of Anthropomorphism: Ibn al-Jawzī's Kitāb Akhbār aṣ-Ṣifāt* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

18 Holtzman, *Anthropomorphism in Islam*, 313–328.

19 Riddell, "The Use of Arabic Commentaries on the Qurʾān in the Early Islamic Period in South-East Asia: Report on Work in Progress," *Indonesia Circle*, vol. 51 (1990): 3–19.

20 For Riddell's works on *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*, see "The Sources of ʿAbd al-Raʾūf's *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*," *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 57, no. 2 (1984): 113–118; *Transferring a Tradition: ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Singkilī's Rendering into Malay of the Jalālayn Commentary* (Berkeley: Centers for South and Southeast Asia Studies, University of California at Berkeley, 1990). See also A.H. Johns, "The Qurʾān in the Malay World: Reflections on ʿAbd al-Raʾūf of Singkel (1615–1693)," *Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 9, no. 2 (1998): 120–145; Johns, "'She Desired Him and He Desired Her' (Qurʾan 12:24): ʿAbd al-Raʾûf's Treatment of an Episode of the Joseph Story in *Tarjumân al-Mutafīd*," *Archipel*, vol. 57, no. 2 (1999): 109–134; E. Nurtawab, "The Problems of Translation in *Turjumān al-Mustafīd*: A Study of Theological and Eschatological Aspects," *Studia Islamika*, vol. 18, no. 1 (2011): 33–65.

The *Jalālayn* was written in two phases. Al-Maḥallī first wrote his part of the commentary covering *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* (Q 1) and from *Sūrat al-Kahf* to the end of the Qurʾān (Q 18–114), but died before completing the work. Six years after his death, his student al-Suyūṭī completed it by providing commentary for the remaining *sūra*s, from *Sūrat al-Baqara* to *Sūrat al-Isrāʾ* (Q 2–17). Looking at al-Suyūṭī's autobiography, the *Jalālayn* seemed to have already attained widespread fame while he was still a young scholar.[21] Its popularity owed much to the brief and concise nature of its commentaries, making it an ideal pedagogical text for *tafsīr* novices.[22] It also draws eclectically from a wide range of religious sciences without overwhelming the reader with too much scholarly detail. Moreover, if compared to other popular exegetical works—such as those by al-Baghawī and al-Zamakhsharī—the *Jalālayn* is relatively uncontroversial.[23]

The *Jalālayn*'s user-friendly format made it ʿAbd al-Raʾūf's *tafsīr* of choice to be rendered into Malay for pedagogical purposes. ʿAbd al-Raʾūf was also writing when Aceh had just emerged from a period of heated religious conflict revolving around the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*. As such, he might have regarded the controversy-free *Jalālayn* as an ideal source text for composing a Malay *tafsīr* of a similar nature.[24]

Given *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*'s status as the earliest known Malay commentary on the entire Qurʾān, it is worthwhile to examine how ʿAbd al-Raʾūf renders the *āyāt al-ṣifāt* from Arabic into Malay. As uncontroversial as the *Jalālayn* is, it also employs figurative interpretation when explaining most *āyāt al-ṣifāt*.[25] Since *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* takes its cue from the *Jalālayn*, instances where they diverge can be quite revealing of ʿAbd al-Raʾūf's theological positions.

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21   E.M. Sartain, *Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī: Biography and Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), vol. 2, 155–157.

22   Ervan Nurtawab, "*Jalalayn* Pedagogical Practice: Styles of Qurʾan and *Tafsīr* Learning in Contemporary Indonesia" (PhD Diss., Monash University, 2018), 8–11.

23   Riddell, "The Use of Arabic Commentaries," 15.

24   Riddell, *Malay Court Religion*, 61, 83, 121.

25   This might reflect the theological views of a young, Ashʿarite-inspired al-Suyūṭī. According to Holtzman, a more traditionalist approach to anthropomorphism can be observed in his *al-Durr al-Manthūr fī l-Tafsīr bi-l-Maʾthūr*, a *tafsīr* work written later in his life. Holtzman, *Anthropomorphism in Islam*, 361.

3   The *Āyāt al-Ṣifāt* Addressed in This Essay

An exhaustive study of how *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* treats all Qurʾānic verses that pertain to the bodily attributes of God is beyond the scope of this essay. To keep this present endeavor within bounds, I have picked out thirty Qurʾānic verses for analysis and comparison between *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* and the *Jalālayn*. These verses mention God's face (*wajh*), eye or eyes (*ʿayn* or *aʿyun*), hand or hands (*yad* or *yadān*), shank (*sāq*), and side (*janb*). There is also a set of verses that imply God's movement in space, and might therefore be read as compromising His omnipresence. For instance, God is said to mount, ascend, or establish Himself on His throne (*istawā ʿalā l-ʿarsh*) (Q 25:59). Another verse mentions that He "comes (*jāʾa*) with the angels" (Q 89:22).

TABLE 7.1   God's side

Verse number	Translation
Q 39:56	… and your soul says, "Woe is me for having neglected what is due to God [lit: in the side of God, *fī janb Allāh*], and having been one of those who scoffed!"

TABLE 7.2   God "comes"

Verse number	Translation
Q 89:22	When your Lord comes with the angels, row after row (*wa jāʾa rabbuka wa-l-malak ṣaffan ṣaffan*).

TABLE 7.3   God's shank

Verse number	Translation
Q 68:42	On the Day when the shank is laid bare (*yukshafu ʿan sāqin*), they will be invited to prostrate themselves but will be prevented from doing so.

TABLE 7.4   God's face

Verse number	Translation
Q 2:115	The East and the West belong to God: wherever you turn, there is the face of God (*wajh Allāh*). God is all pervading and all knowing.
Q 2:272	Whatever charity you give benefits your own souls, provided you do it seeking the face of God (*ibtighāʾ wajh Allāh*).
Q 6:52	Do not drive away those who call upon their Lord morning and evening, seeking nothing but His face.
Q 13:22	… who remain steadfast through their desire for the face of their Lord ….
Q 18:28	Content yourself with those who pray to their Lord morning and evening, seeking His face.
Q 28:88	Everything will perish except His face.
Q 30:38	So give their due to the near relative, the needy, and the wayfarer—that is best for those who seek the face of God.
Q 55:27	All that remains is the face of your Lord, full of majesty, bestowing honor.
Q 92:20	… save for seeking the face of his Lord, the Most High.

TABLE 7.5   God's eye or eyes

Verse number	Translation
Q 11:37	Build the Ark under Our eyes (*bi-aʿyuninā*) and with Our inspiration.
Q 20:39	I showered you with My love and planned that you should be reared under My eye (*ʿalā ʿaynī*).
Q 23:27	… and so We revealed to [Noah]: "Build the Ark under Our eyes and with Our inspiration."
Q 52:48	Wait patiently [Prophet] for your Lord's judgement: you are under Our eyes. Celebrate the praise of your Lord when you rise.
Q 54:14	We carried [Noah] along a vessel of planks and nails that floated under Our eyes ….

TABLE 7.6   God's hand or hands

Verse number	Translation
Q 3:73	[Prophet], tell them, "All grace is in God's hand (*bi-yad Allāh*): He grants it to whoever He will—He is all embracing, all knowing."
Q 5:64	Truly, His two hands are outstretched (*yadāhu mabsūṭatān*): He gives as He pleases.
Q 38:75	God said, "Iblīs, what prevents you from bowing down to that which I have created with My two hands (*bi-yadayya*)? Are you too high and mighty?"
Q 39:67	On the Day of Resurrection, the whole earth will be in His grip (*qabḍatuhu*). The heavens will be rolled up in His right hand (*bi-yamīnihi*).
Q 48:10	Those who pledge loyalty to you [Prophet] are actually pledging loyalty to God Himself. God's hand is placed on theirs (*yad Allāh fawqa aydīhim*).
Q 57:29	The People of the Book should know that they have no power over any of God's bounty and that bounty is in the hand of God alone: He gives it to whoever He will.

TABLE 7.7   God mounting/ascending/establishing Himself on His throne

Verse number	Translation
Q 7:54	Your Lord is God, who created the heavens and the earth in six Days, then mounted the throne (*istawā ʿalā l-ʿarsh*).
Q 10:3	Your Lord is God who created the heavens and earth in six Days, then mounted the throne, governing everything.
Q 13:2	It is God who raised up the heavens with no visible supports and then mounted the throne.
Q 20:5	The Merciful mounted the throne.
Q 25:59	He who created the heavens and earth and what is between them in six Days, and then mounted the throne—He is the Merciful.
Q 32:4	It is God who created the heavens and the earth and everything between them in six Days. Then He mounted the throne.
Q 57:4	It was He who created the heavens and the earth in six Days and then mounted the throne.

While the verses listed above have expressions that mention a particular bodily attribute of God, some of these expressions are metaphorical in themselves.[26] For instance, the face of God (*wajh Allāh*) could be understood as referring to God Himself. As for the expression *ibtighāʾ wajh Allāh* ("seeking the face of God"), one finds parallel expressions in the Qurʾān such as *ibtighāʾ riḍwān Allāh* ("seeking the approval of God"; 57:27), *ibtighāʾ raḥma min rabbika* ("seeking mercy from your Lord"; 17:28), and *ibtighāʾ marḍāt Allāh* ("seeking the satisfaction of God"; 2:207 and 2:265).[27] Being in God's hands could be read as being in His control and charge.[28] Similarly, being under God's eye could mean being under His care or supervision. It is for these reasons that Baljon argues, "the Qurʾān itself justifies the application of *taʾwīl*."[29] Be that as it may, the anthropomorphic connotations of these expressions were not always simply overlooked; some exegetes did interpret them anthropomorphically, as we shall see later.

In the following section, I will compare ʿAbd al-Raʾūf's interpretation of these verses with that of the *Jalālayn*, with occasional references to al-Bayḍāwī and al-Khāzin, as well as other Sunni and Twelver Shīʿī exegetes. Although ʿAbd al-Raʾūf's *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* was intended as a "translationese" rendering of the *Jalālayn*, its rendering of the *āyāt al-ṣifāt* did not always adhere fully to the *Jalālayn*'s glosses.[30] Moreover, ʿAbd al-Raʾūf's glosses and renderings of certain anthropomorphic expressions were not always consistent across different Qurʾānic verses containing similar expressions. These inconsistencies might indicate some sense of discomfort on ʿAbd al-Raʾūf's part with the anthropomorphic connotations of these verses.

4 ʿAbd al-Raʾūf's Renderings of the *Āyāt al-Ṣifāt* in *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*

The expression "in the side of God" (*fī janb Allāh*) in Q 39:56 has often been understood metaphorically as implying human obedience (*ṭāʿa*), and this is the case as well in *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* and the *Jalālayn*. Both render "in the side

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26   This paragraph draws heavily from the following works: Baljon, "Qurʾanic Anthropomorphisms," 125–126; Böwering, "God and His Attributes," in *EQ*; van Ess, *Theology and Society*, vol. 4, 442–447.

27   Baljon, "Qurʾanic Anthropomorphisms," 125–126.

28   Baljon, "Qurʾanic Anthropomorphisms," 124.

29   Baljon, "Qurʾanic Anthropomorphisms," 126.

30   Riddell, *Transferring a Tradition*, 64–66; *Malay Court Religion*, 61–62.

of God" as "obedience to God"—*taat akan Allāh taʿālā* in the former, *ṭāʿatihi* in the latter.[31] Other glosses from al-Bayḍāwī and al-Khāzin show a similar understanding of the expression, albeit with additional interpretations of God's side as God's claims (*ḥaqq*) and God's essence (*dhāt*).[32] Al-Khāzin supplies an opinion that reads the phrase as God's command (*amr*), which was a common, though clumsier, interpretation among the Muʿtazilites.[33]

The image of God coming with the angels, as expressed in Q 89:22 ("When your Lord comes with the angels, row after row"), could be read as compromising God's omnipresence since in order to "come," He has to move from one space to another. The anthropomorphic implications of this verse did not go unnoticed by Sunni scholars, as al-Khāzin tells us:

> Know that this verse is among the *āyāt al-ṣifāt* which the pious forebears and some of the later generations generally pass over in silence. They did not speak about these verses and only engaged with them in the manner in which they were revealed without asking how God did this and that (*takyīf*), ascribing human attributes to God (*tashbīh*), and interpreting them metaphorically (*taʾwīl*). They said, "It is incumbent upon us to believe in them and to engage with their literal meanings (*ẓāhir*)." Some of the later scholars and most of the theologians interpret them metaphorically. They said, "It is established by rational demonstration that movement is impossible for God. Thus, it is necessary to interpret this verse metaphorically." According to a metaphorical interpretation of this verse, it is said that your Lord's command will come with the reckoning and the requital. It is also said that your Lord's command and judgment will come. It is said as well that the proofs of your Lord's signs will arrive, and He will make the arrival of these signs emphatic.[34]

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31 ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Singkilī, *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*, ed. Muḥammad Idrīs ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Marbawī (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1951), 465; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, ed. Ṣabrī Muḥammad Mūsā and Muḥammad Fāiz Kāmil (Beirut: Dār al-Khayr, 2010), 464. Translations of the *Jalālayn* are drawn from *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, trans. Feras Hamza (Louisville: Fons Vitae-Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, 2008), 445, with slight modifications.

32 ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿUmar al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār al-Tanzīl wa-Asrār al-Taʾwīl*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Marʿashlī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1998), vol. 5, 46; ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Khāzin, *Lubāb al-Taʾwīl fī Maʿānī al-Tanzīl*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad ʿAlī Shāhīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 2004), vol. 4, 62.

33 On the Muʿtazilite understanding of God's side, see van Ess, *Theology and Society*, vol. 4, 444–445.

34 Al-Khāzin, *Lubāb*, vol. 4, 427.

Largely owing to the influence of Mu'tazilism, Twelver Shī'ī exegetes writing from the Buyid period (945–1055) onward adopted metaphorical interpretations of the verse.[35] Abū Ja'far (al-Shaykh) al-Ṭūsī (d. 1067), for instance, glosses "your Lord comes" as God's command (*amr*), punishment (*'adhāb*), or judgment (*qaḍāʾ*) having arrived, a reading closely followed by Abū 'Alī al-Ṭabrisī (d. 1153).[36]

In 'Abd al-Ra'ūf's paraphrasing of the verse, he provides a reading of "God comes" that tends closer to the metaphorical reading favored by the theologians: "The affairs of your Lord and all the angels come, row after row" (*dan datang pekerjaan Tuhanmu dan segala malaikat pun bersaf-saf*).[37] The *Jalālayn*'s gloss of the verse is largely similar but adds a brief grammatical discussion about *ṣaffan ṣaffan*:

> "When your Lord," that is to say, His command, "comes with the angels, row after row." *Ṣaffan ṣaffan* is a circumstantial qualifier, meaning "standing in rows" or "made up of many ranks."[38]

'Abd al-Ra'ūf's translation of the Arabic word *amr* is rather awkward. *Amr* is itself rich in meaning, denoting "command," "authority," "affair," or "matter."[39] It is very likely that the *Jalālayn* had in mind "command" instead of "affair" or "matter" when substituting "your Lord" with *amr*. Ironically, this seems to have been lost in translation in 'Abd al-Ra'ūf's attempt to provide a literal translation of the *Jalālayn*, hence the awkward phrasing in *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*.

Perhaps more controversial is the statement "On the Day when the shank is laid bare" (*yukshafu 'an sāqin*) in Q 68:42. 'Abd al-Ra'ūf's interpretation of it is a faithful rendering of the *Jalālayn*'s gloss. In the *Jalālayn*, it is glossed as "an expression denoting the severity of the predicament ('*ibāra 'an shiddat al-*

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35   The pre-Buyid Shī'ī exegete al-Qummī (d. tenth century) passes over "your Lord comes" without comment. 'Alī ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī, *Tafsīr al-Qummī*, ed. Al-Sayyid Ṭayyib al-Mūsāwī al-Jazā'irī (Qom: Mu'assasat Dār al-Kitāb li-l-Ṭibā'a wa-l-Nashr, 1983), vol. 2, 421. On the influence of Mu'tazilism on classical Shī'ī exegesis, see C. Gilliot, "Exegesis of the Qur'ān: Classical and Medieval," in *EQ* (Brill Online, accessed 11 August 2021).

36   Abū Ja'far al-Ṭūsī, *al-Tibyān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, ed. Aḥmad Ḥabīb Qaṣīr al-'Āmalī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, n.d.), vol. 10, 347; Abū 'Alī al-Ṭabrisī, *Majma' al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Beirut: Dār al-Murtaḍā, 2005), vol. 10, 272–273.

37   *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*, 597. The same can be said of al-Bayḍāwī. See *Anwār*, vol. 5, 311.

38   *Jalālayn*, 593; trans. Hamza, 614. On the *Jalālayn*'s treatment of grammatical issues and variant readings, see H. Bobzin, "Notes on the Importance of Variant Readings and Grammar in the *Tafsīr al-Ǧalālayn*," *Zeitschrift für Arabische Linguistik*, vol. 15 (1985): 33–44.

39   E.W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1968), 96–97.

amr) during the reckoning and the requital on the Day of Resurrection: one says 'the war has laid bare its shank' to mean that it has intensified."[40] ʿAbd al-Raʾūf adheres to the *Jalālayn*'s gloss but omits the brief linguistic discussion: "when affairs become severe because of the reckoning and requital on the Day of Resurrection" (*hari yang sangat pekerjaan pada hari kiamat karena berkira-kira dan membalas*).[41] ʿAbd al-Raʾūf's clunky Malay translation is due to his effort to translate the Arabic of the *Jalālayn* word for word into Malay, yielding a translation that is "Arabic in syntax and Malay in vocabulary."[42] It is obvious here that ʿAbd al-Raʾūf and the *Jalālayn* both understood "when the shank is laid bare" in a metaphorical sense, drawing on classical Arabic linguistics.[43]

As outrageous as it might sound, the expression could also be understood in the literal sense of God baring His shank. Although the verb *yukshafu* is in the passive construction in this verse, some did read it as an active verb, *yakshifu*, implying that it is God doing the baring.[44] Al-Suyūṭī, for instance, in his later *tafsīr* work *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, begins his commentary on Q 68:42 by introducing two *aḥādīth al-ṣifāt* whose anthropomorphic purport is undeniable: "Our Lord will lay bare His shank, and every male and female believer will prostrate before Him" (from the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī) and "'On the Day when the shank is laid bare,' meaning that God the Almighty and Glorious will lay bare His shank."[45]

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40 *Jalālayn*, 565; trans. Hamza, 562.

41 *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*, 567.

42 Riddell, *Transferring a Tradition*, 77.

43 Similarly, al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār*, vol. 5, 237 and al-Khāzin, *Lubāb*, vol. 4, 327. The same is true of post-Buyid Twelver Shīʿī exegetes like al-Ṭūsī and al-Ṭabrisī, whose interpretations—citing authorities popular among Sunni exegetes: Ibn ʿAbbās, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Mujāhid, Saʿīd ibn Jubayr, Qatāda, and al-Ḍaḥḥāk—are similar to their Sunni counterparts. See al-Ṭūsī, *Tibyān*, vol. 10, 87; al-Ṭabrisī, *Majmaʿ*, vol. 10, 74. A more Shīʿī-specific take on the verse can be observed in al-Qummī's gloss, which states that on the Day of Judgment, "affairs which have been concealed and that which has been usurped from the family of Muḥammad will be laid bare." Al-Qummī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 2, 383.

44 Van Ess, *Theology and Society*, vol. 4, 447. Indeed, there were traditionalist scholars who went at lengths to add a performative dimension to this verse. One such scholar even recited Q 68:42 while stroking his shank saying, "a shank like my shank that you see." Holtzman, *Anthropomorphism in Islam*, 269.

45 Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr fī al-Tafsīr bi-l-Maʾthūr*, ed. ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Cairo: Hajar, 2003), vol. 14, 642. Al-Khāzin also mentions the first ḥadīth, but proceeds immediately to provide a figurative opinion from the *muḥaddith* al-Khaṭṭābī saying that it is possible to read this ḥadīth as God laying bare His power (*qudra*). See al-Khāzin, *Lubāb*, vol. 4, 329.

We now come to the anthropomorphic phrases I have examined using a cluster of Qur'ānic verses. These are verses that mention God's face, throne, eye or eyes, and hand or hands (Tables 7.4–7.7). Among them, the late Josef van Ess argues that "[t]he least outrage was caused by God's face, due to the fact that the Qur'ān already used the word quite metaphorically in the phrase *ibtighāʾa wajhi llāh* 'having God before one's eyes'; theologians could easily say that there was no difference in meaning between 'God's face' and God himself."[46] Van Ess's claim bears out in classical works of *tafsīr*. In some instances, God's face (*wajh*) is understood as referring to Himself.[47] In others, it is glossed as God's divine essence (*al-dhāt*), an interpretation likely inspired by the Muʿtazilite hermeneutical principle of reducing God's attributes to His essence.[48] A more common mode of interpretation was to gloss God's face metaphorically as His reward (*thawāb*), His approval (*riḍā* or *riḍwān*), or the direction of prayer (*qibla*).[49] In sum, classical commentaries on God's face generally tend toward the metaphorical.[50] They are also by and large controversy-free, if al-Khāzin's commentaries can be of any indication. Al-Khāzin, who often includes differing opinions when commenting on *āyāt al-ṣifāt*, does not do so for God's face. His glosses for these verses are also unusually terse.

'Abd al-Raʾūf's treatment of God's face not only leans metaphorical; for most part, he also adheres quite faithfully to the *Jalālayn*, albeit with slight variations. Where the *Jalālayn* renders God's face in Q 2:115 as "the direction of prayer with which He is pleased" (*qiblatuhu allatī raḍiyahā*), 'Abd al-Raʾūf follows suit in his Malay translation (*qibla-Nya yang telah dikerelai akan Dia*).[51]

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46   Van Ess, *Theology and Society*, vol. 4, 443. See also Baljon, "Qurʾanic Anthropomorphisms," 125–126.

47   Abū l-Ḥasan al-Māwardī, *al-Nukat wa-l-ʿUyūn fī Tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, ed. al-Sayyid ibn ʿAbd al-Maqṣūd ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya and Muʾassasat al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiyya, 1992), vol. 1, 177; vol. 2, 118; Abū l-Faraj ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-Masīr fī ʿIlm al-Tafsīr*, ed. Muḥammad Zuhayr al-Shāwīsh (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2002), 440 and 1379; al-Khāzin, *Lubāb*, vol. 3, 374.

48   Maḥmūd ibn ʿUmar al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ʿan Ḥaqāʾiq al-Tanzīl wa-ʿUyūn al-Aqāwīl fī Wujūh al-Taʾwīl*, ed. Khalīl Maʾmūn Shīḥā (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifa, 2009), 812; al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār*, vol. 1, 102; vol. 4, 207; vol. 5, 172; al-Khāzin, *Lubāb*, vol. 3, 374; vol. 4, 227.

49   Al-Māwardī, *Nukat*, vol. 4, 317; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-Masīr*, 1095; al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār*, vol. 1, 161; vol. 3, 186 and 279; al-Khāzin, *Lubāb*, vol. 1, 73; vol. 2, 116; vol. 3, 16 and 392; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 1, 567; vol. 8, 427; al-Ṭūsī, *Tibyān*, vol. 1, 424–425; al-Ṭabrisī, *Majmaʿ*, vol. 1, 264.

50   The clearest indication of this trend is al-Māwardī's commentary on "Everything will perish except His face" in Q 28:88. He provides six interpretations for God's face in this verse, all of which steer clear of anthropomorphism. They include *mulk* (dominion), *ʿulamāʾ* (religious scholars), *jāh* (rank), and *ʿaml* (deeds). Al-Māwardī, *Nukat*, vol. 4, 272–273.

51   *Jalālayn*, 18; trans. Hamza, 17; *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*, 19.

While the *Jalālayn* understands God's face in Q 28:88 ("except His face") and Q 55:27 ("the face of his Lord") as referring to God Himself (*illā iyyāhu*; 28:88) or His divine essence (*dhātuhu*; 55:27), ʿAbd al-Raʾūf renders it as God's essence (*dhāt*) for both verses.[52] For three of the nine verses surveyed (2:272, 30:38, and 92:20), the *Jalālayn* consistently interprets God's face as His reward (*thawāb*).[53] The same level of consistency is observed in *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*, where the word *pahala* (reward) is used to render God's face.[54] The remaining three verses are where ʿAbd al-Raʾūf and the *Jalālayn* part ways. The *Jalālayn* does not paraphrase God's face for Q 6:52, 13:22, and 18:28, but it adds the clause "not any of the transient things of this world" (*lā shayʾan min aʿrāḍ al-dunyā*) to highlight the permanence of God or His face.[55] ʿAbd al-Raʾūf diverges from the *Jalālayn* by rendering God's face as God's approval (*kerelaan*) in two instances (13:22 and 18:28) and as "the face of which God has approved" (*wajah yang dikerelai Allāh taʿālā*) in another (6:52).[56] It is noteworthy that never once does the *Jalālayn* render God's face as God's approval. But given that the expression "seeking the face of God" (*ibtighāʾ wajh Allāh*) parallels "seeking the approval of God" (*ibtighāʾ riḍwān Allāh*) in Q 57:27 and "seeking the satisfaction of God" (*ibtighāʾ marḍāt Allāh*) in Q 2:207 and 2:265, ʿAbd al-Raʾūf must have drawn inspiration from these passages in reading God's face as God's approval in Q 13:22, 18:28, and, to some extent, 6:52.

The Qurʾānic verses with God's eye (*ʿayn*) or God's eyes (*aʿyun*) are consistently glossed and paraphrased in both *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* and the *Jalālayn*. Of the five verses surveyed, four contain the phrase "under Our eyes" (*bi-*

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52   *Jalālayn*, 396 (28:88) and 532 (55:27); trans. Hamza, 375 (28:88) and 523 (55:27); *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*, 397 (28:88) and 533 (55:27).

53   *Jalālayn*, 46 (2:272), 408 (30:38), and 596 (92:20); trans. Hamza, 44 (2:272), 386 (30:38), and 619 (92:20).

54   *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*, 47 (2:272), 409 (30:38), and 600 (92:20).

55   *Jalālayn*, 133 (6:52), 252 (13:22), and 297 (18:28); trans. Hamza, 119 (6:52), 221 (13:22), and 266 (18:28).

56   *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*, 134 (6:52), 253 (13:22), and 298 (18:28). The earliest extended commentary on the Qurʾān contained within Cambridge MS Or. Ii.6.45 also renders Q 18:28 figuratively as "(Be constant) O Muḥammad (like those who worship God with you morning and afternoon, who seek) sincere devotion to God, not because of world[ly considerations] [*yang dikehendaki mereka itu ibadatnya tulus akan Allāh, tiada karena dunia*]." The author goes on to provide the occasions of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*) for the verse, followed by another paraphrase of it. In the paraphrase, the author appears to ignore the phrase *wajhahu* altogether: "[R]emain steadfast, O Muḥammad, together with the believers who follow you in worshipping God." For the romanized text and English translation of Q 18:28 in MS Or. Ii.6.45, see Riddell, *Malay Court Religion*, 190–193. On the historical significance of MS Or. Ii.6.45, see Riddell, *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World*, 150–160.

a'yuninā) and one "under My eye" ('alā 'aynī). The *Jalālayn* consistently uses the phrase "under Our watch" (*bi-mar'ā minnā*) to paraphrase "under Our eyes," while the singular "under My eye" in Q 20:39 is understood as "My guardianship" (*ri'āyatī*). It also adds an additional phrase denoting God's protection (*ḥifẓ*) that varies slightly across its commentaries of these verses.[57] 'Abd al-Ra'ūf's renderings of the verses are equally consistent. The term "Our protection (*peliharaan*)" is used to render four of these verses, paired with "Our sight" (*penglihat kami*) in one instance (11:37) and "My support" (*kebelaanku*) in another (20:39). "Under Our eyes" in Q 52:48 is rendered as "with Our help" (*dengan pertolongan kami*).[58] Although there is slightly more variation in *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* than in the *Jalālayn*, it is safe to say that both authors understand God's eyes metaphorically as conveying His supervision and protection.

While the metaphorical readings of God's eyes seem largely innocuous in light of 'Abd al-Ra'ūf's and the *Jalālayn*'s interpretations, we should not take them for granted, as there were indeed scholars who insisted on God possessing an eye in a literal sense. We see this in al-Ash'arī's *Ibāna* where he writes, "[We confirm] without asking how (*bi-lā kayfa*) that He has an eye, according to what He said 'under Our watchful eyes' [11:37]."[59] While some scholars did not go this far, they nonetheless urged caution when commenting on such verses. In *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, al-Suyūṭī largely quotes metaphorical interpretations in his glosses of Q 11:37. But he also includes a statement from the Kufan *muḥaddith* Sufyān ibn 'Uyayna (d. 813): "Whatever God has used to describe Himself, reading it is equivalent to interpreting it (*qirā'atuhu tafsīruhu*). It is not permitted for anyone to comment on it in Arabic or Persian."[60] These statements suggest that the case of God's eye(s) was not as controversy-free as the commentaries of 'Abd al-Ra'ūf and the *Jalālayn* might have us think and that a metaphorical interpretation was not the only option available to exegetes.

As for the hand or hands of God, two of the verses examined need not be understood in a literal sense. Being "in God's hand" (3:73 and 57:29) could mean being in His possession, care, or control, an idiomatic expression not foreign to English speakers today.[61] It is much harder, however, to overlook the

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57   *Jalālayn*, 225 (11:37), 314 (20:39), 343 (23:27), 525 (52:48), and 529 (54:14); trans. Hamza, 195 (11:37), 287 (20:39), 318 (23:27), 511 (52:48), and 518 (54:4).

58   *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*, 226 (11:37), 315 (20:39), 344 (23:27), 527 (52:48), and 530 (54:14).

59   Quoted in Holtzman, *Anthropomorphism in Islam*, 235.

60   Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 8, 40.

61   Baljon, "Qur'anic Anthropomorphisms," 124; van Ess, *Theology and Society*, vol. 4, 445; Böwering, "God and His Attributes," in *EQ*.

anthropomorphic connotations underlying the other six verses. Two speak of God as possessing two hands (5:64 and 38:75), one of His right hand (39:67), while another of His placing His hand above the hands of others (48:10) reminiscent of the hand-clasp in the oath of allegiance (*bay'a*). Indeed, there were individuals who recited Q 38:75 and 39:67 accompanied by hand gestures that suggest an anthropomorphic reading of these verses.[62] Nevertheless, most medieval exegetes tried to avoid implying that God possesses literal hands.[63] Commenting on "His two hands are outstretched" in Q 5:64, al-Khāzin saw it prudent to invoke two sides of the debate on the nature of God's hands. The first view, espoused by most Sunni scholars and some theologians, opines that God's hand is one of His essential attributes (*ṣifāt dhātihi*) like hearing (*al-sam'*) and sight (*al-baṣar*). One should recite these expressions as they appear in the Qurʾān and Sunna without asking how, neither ascribing human attributes to God nor divesting Him of His attributes. The second view, which argues in favor of metaphorical interpretations, is the one commonly encountered among the theologians and the people of *taʾwīl*. Such interpretations include understanding God's hand(s) as His blessing (*ni'ma*), power (*qudra*), or dominion (*mulk*).[64] The metaphorical interpretations provided by Twelver Shīʿī exegetes for Q 5:64 are by and large similar to their Sunni counterparts, though al-Ṭūsī and al-Ṭabrisī also add the possibility of God's hands expressed in the dual as connoting the blessings of worldly (*al-dunyā*) and religious affairs (*al-dīn*) or the blessings of this world (*al-dunyā*) and the afterlife (*al-ākhira*).[65]

Among the six verses examined, the *Jalālayn* does not paraphrase or gloss God's hand as mentioned in two of these verses.[66] For the remaining verses, the *Jalālayn* leans toward the figurative. It explains that "His two hands are outstretched" in Q 5:64 is a "hyperbole for the attribute of generosity" and that the dual form of *yad* is intended "to imply abundance since the utmost that an affluent person can give freely of his wealth is when he gives it with both

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62 Holtzman, *Anthropomorphism in Islam*, 160–161.

63 For instance, al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār*, vol. 2, 135; vol. 5, 34; al-Khāzin, *Lubāb*, vol. 1, 260; vol. 2, 60; vol. 4, 48; vol. 4, 156; al-Māwardī, *Nukat*, vol. 2, 51; vol. 5, 134–135.

64 Al-Khāzin, *Lubāb*, vol. 2, 60–61. There were scholars who found this to be linguistically awkward. Ibn Qutayba (d. 869) argued that replacing "hands" with "blessings" would result in "His blessings are both outstretched," which did not make logical sense. See Holtzman, *Anthropomorphism in Islam*, 198.

65 Al-Ṭūsī, *Tibyān*, vol. 3, 581–582; al-Ṭabrisī, *Majma'*, vol. 3, 307–308, 310. Al-Qummī does not gloss "His two hands."

66 *Jalālayn*, 59 (3:73) and 541 (57:29); trans. Hamza, 56 (3:73) and 535 (57:29).

hands." Similarly, the notion that the heavens will be rolled up in God's right hand in Q 39:67 is paraphrased as the heavens being rolled up "by His power" (*bi-qudratihi*).[67]

ʿAbd al-Raʾūf's reading of these verses suggests some awareness of and discomfort with their anthropomorphic undertones. In only one instance (Q 38:75: "… that which I have created with My two hands [*bi-yadayya*]") does he render "with My two hands" in a fully metaphorical manner as "with My power" (*dengan qudrat-Ku*).[68] For the remaining verses, he wavers between translating the expression "God's hand(s)" directly as *tangan Allāh* and rendering it somewhat awkwardly as "the hand of God's power" (*tangan qudrat Allāh*).[69] The awkward expression of *tangan qudrat Allāh* cannot be explained away by ʿAbd al-Raʾūf's attempt to faithfully render the Qurʾān and the *Jalālayn* into Malay as it does not appear in both these sources. In fact, among the six verses surveyed, the only instance where the *Jalālayn* uses the word *qudra* is for Q 39:67 when glossing "God's right hand." The frequent use of *qudrat* in *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* suggests that ʿAbd al-Raʾūf might have scanned the *Jalālayn*'s glosses of the "hand(s)" verses and decided that *qudrat* was the most appropriate term to use when rendering God's hand(s). Yet he might also have decided that it would be unwise for him to render the expressions in a fully metaphorical sense. This could explain his literal translation of *yad Allāh* as *tangan Allāh* in some cases and his somewhat awkward rendering of it as *tangan qudrat Allāh* in others.

The Qurʾānic verses that mention the throne of God have generated a significant amount of debate, especially those in which God "mounts the throne" (*istawā ʿalā l-ʿarsh*), also known collectively as *āyāt al-istiwāʾ*.[70] The expression *istawā ʿalā l-ʿarsh* could be read literally as God having ascended or sat Himself on His throne. If so, it suggested that God was fixed in space and not omnipresent.[71] One can indeed sense a tremendous level of discomfort among medieval exegetes when it came to explaining *istawā ʿalā l-ʿarsh*. Al-Suyūṭī, for one, devotes much space in his commentary on Q 7:54 to reports that caution against commenting on this expression, including one related on the authority of the Prophet's wife Umm Salama: "The 'how' [of God mounting the throne] cannot be understood, but the act of mounting cannot be ignored. Affirming it

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67 *Jalālayn*, 118 (5:64) and 465 (39:67); trans. Hamza, 106 (5:64) and 445 (39:67).

68 *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*, 458.

69 *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*, 60 (3:73), 119 (5:64), 466 (39:67), 513 (48:10), and 542 (57:29).

70 Van Ess, *Theology and Society*, vol. 4, 455–459; G. Vitestam, "ʿArsh and Kursī: An Essay on the Throne Tradition in Islam," in E. Keck, S. Søndergaard, and E. Wulff (eds.), *Living Waters: Scandinavian Orientalistic Studies Presented to Professor Dr. Frede Løkkergaard* (Copenhagen: Museum Tucsulanum Press, 1990), 369–378.

71 Vitestam, "ʿArsh and Kursī," 371.

is belief; denying it is unbelief" (*al-kayf ghayr ma'qūl wa-l-istiwā' ghayr majhūl wa-l-iqrār bi-hi īmān wa-l-juḥūd bi-hi kufr*).[72] Yet metaphorical interpretations remained popular. For al-Bayḍāwī, the expression in Q 7:54 meant that "[God's] command ascended the throne or that He took possession of it (*istawā amruhu aw istawlā*)."[73] But perhaps intending to placate theologians who were worried that this interpretation would contradict God's omnipresence, al-Bayḍāwī proceeds immediately to qualify this statement: "According to our fellow scholars [likely the Shāfi'ite-Ash'arite theologians], *al-istiwā' 'alā l-'arsh* is an attribute of God, without asking how. The fact that God possesses such an attribute is meant to depict him as free from sedentariness and being fixed in place (*al-istiqrār wa-l-tamakkun*)."

Al-Khāzin provides an extensive discussion of *istawā 'alā l-'arsh*. After citing al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī's statement that "no human knows exactly what the *'arsh* is except by its literal name (*bi-l-ism 'alā l-ḥaqīqa*)," he refutes the interpretation of *istawā* as "to be established" (*istaqarra*) by mustering opinions from past Sunni authorities who thought that one should not inquire into *al-istiwā' 'alā l-'arsh*.[74] He also cites Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's (d. 1209) refutation against those who read *istawā* as "taking possession" (*istawlā*). According to al-Rāzī, reading *istawā* as *istawlā* implies that at a certain point in time God did not have possession of something; the correct view is that God never ceases to be in possession of all things.[75]

'Abd al-Ra'ūf's glosses of *āyāt al-istiwā'* differ quite substantially from the *Jalālayn*'s. The *Jalālayn* avoids controversy by refusing to interpret the expression *istawā 'alā l-'arsh* in all of the *āyāt al-istiwā'*. The only gloss one finds in the *Jalālayn* for this expression is "an *istiwā'* befitting of Him (*yalīqu bi-hi*)," which

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72 He also relates two similar anecdotes in which a man asked Mālik ibn Anas how God sat down on His throne. Mālik started to sweat anxiously but managed to respond with a statement that appears quite similar to the one uttered by Umm Salama. Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, vol. 6, 421–423. Interestingly, this anecdote is also cited in al-Ṭabrisī's Shī'ī *tafsīr*, *Majma'*, vol. 4, 202.

73 Al-Bayḍāwī, *Anwār*, vol. 3, 16. For a similar gloss, see al-Māwardī, *Nukat*, vol. 2, 229 and al-Ṭūsī, *Tibyān*, vol. 4, 422. Drawing on the authority of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, al-Ṭabrisī takes the verse to mean that God's command mounted the dominion (*al-mulk*), meaning that His dominion has been established and kept in order after the creation of the heavens and the earth. Al-Ṭabrisī, *Majma'*, vol. 4, 201. Despite al-Ṭūsī's and al-Ṭabrisī's metaphorical readings of *istawā 'alā al-'arsh*, we should not assume that the Twelvers leaned metaphorical by default. Al-Qummī, for instance, glosses the expression as "He ascended the throne with His power" (*'alā bi-qudratihi 'alā al-'arsh*). Al-Qummī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 1, 236.

74 Al-Khāzin, *Lubāb*, vol. 2, 207–208.

75 Al-Khāzin, *Lubāb*, vol. 2, 208–209. Ibn al-Jawzī (*Zād al-Masīr*, 500) cites this opinion in his commentary on Q 7:54 and attributes it to the lexicographers (*al-lughawiyyun*).

hardly explains the phrase.[76] 'Abd al-Raʾūf's readings of *istawā ʿalā l-ʿarsh*, on the other hand, are more varied:

TABLE 7.8   'Abd al-Raʾūf's Rendering of Āyāt al-Istiwāʾ in Tarjumān al-Mustafīd (TM)[77]

Verse	TM (Malay)	TM (English)
Q 7:54 Your Lord is God, who created the heavens and the earth in six Days, then mounted the throne (*istawā ʿalā l-ʿarsh*).	Bahwasanya Tuhan kamu itu Allāh taʿālā yang telah menjadikan tujuh petala langit and bumi di dalam enam hari daripada segala hari dunia kini. Kemudian maka diqaṣad-Nya atas ʿarsy-Nya.	Truly your Lord is Almighty God who created the seven skies and earths in six days of the days of this world. Then He set His intention for His throne.
Q. 10:3 Your Lord is God who created the heavens and earth in six Days, then mounted the throne, governing everything.	Bahwasanya Tuhan kamu Allāh yang menjadikan tujuh petala langit dan bumi pada sekira-kira enam hari daripada segala hari dunia. Kemudian maka tetap Ia atas ʿarsy dengan tetap yang patut dengan Dia.	Truly your Lord is God who created the seven skies and earths in approximately six days of the days of this world. Then He established Himself on His throne with an establishing befitting of Him.
Q 13:2 It is God who raised up the heavens with no visible supports and then mounted the throne.	Allāh taʿālā jua yang meningkatkan tujuh petala langit dengan tiada tiang yang kami lihat akan dia. Kemudian dari itu maka disahaja-Nya atas ʿarsy dengan sahaja yang patut dengan Dia.	It is Alrighty God who raised the seven skies without pillars that we [can] see [with our own eyes]. Then He set His intention for the throne with an intention befitting of Him.
Q 20:5 The Merciful mounted the throne.	… Tuhan yang bernama Rahman atas ʿarsy tetap Ia dan nyata dengan tetap yang berpatutan dengan Dia.	… the Lord who is named Rahman on the throne, established and visible with an establishing befitting of Him.

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76   *Jalālayn*, 157 (7:54), 208 (10:3), 249 (13:2), 312 (20:5), 365 (25:59), 415 (32:4), and 538 (57:4); trans. Hamza, 139 (7:54), 181 (10:3), 218 (13:2), 285 (20:5), 341 (25:59), 393 (32:4), and 532 (57:4). Feras Hamza translates this as "a presiding befitting of Him."

77   *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*, 158 (7:54), 209 (10:3), 250 (13:2), 313 (20:5), 366 (25:59), 416 (32:4), and 539 (57:4).

TABLE 7.8 ‘Abd al-Raʾūf's Rendering of Āyāt al-Istiwāʾ in Tarjumān al-Mustafīd (TM *(cont.)*)

Verse	TM (Malay)	TM (English)
Q 25:59 He who created the heavens and earth and what is between them in six Days, and then mounted the throne—He is the Merciful.	Ia jua yang menjadikan tujuh petala langit and bumi dan antara keduanya pada sekira-kira enam hari dunia. Kemudian maka nyata Tuhan yang ber-nama Rahman itu atas ‘arsy dengan nyata yang layak dengan Dia.	He who created the seven skies and earths and what is between them in approximately six days of this world. Then the Lord who is named Rahman was visible on the throne with a visibility befitting of Him.
Q 32:4 It is God who created the heavens and the earth and everything between them in six Days. Then He mounted the throne.	Allāh taʿālā jua yang menja-dikan tujuh petala langit dan bumi dan yang antara keduanya di dalam enam hari, pertama menjadikan itu hari Ahad dan akhirnya hari Jumaat. Kemudian dari itu maka tetap Ia dan nyata atas ‘arsy dengan nyata yang berpatutan dengan Dia.	It is Almighty God who created the seven skies and earths and what is between them in six days, the first of which is Sunday and the last of which Friday. Then He established Himself and was visible on the throne with a visibility befitting of Him.
Q 57:4 It was He who created the heavens and the earth in six Days and then mounted the throne.	Ia jua Tuhan yang menjadikan tujuh petala langit dan bumi pada enam hari daripada segala hari dunia, awal harinya Ahad dan akhirnya Jumaat. Kemudian dari itu maka mengeras Ia dan nyata Ia atas kursi dengan yang berpatutan dengan Dia.	It was the Lord who created the seven skies and earths in six days of the days of this world, the first of which is Sunday and the last of which Friday. Then he firmed Himself and was visible on the throne with that which is befitting of Him.

For six out of seven verses listed above, ‘Abd al-Raʾūf includes the *Jalālayn*'s gloss of "with a … befitting of Him." While the *Jalālayn* does not paraphrase or explain the tricky verb *istawā*, ‘Abd al-Raʾūf does make an effort to para-phrase it, though he does so using five different Malay verbs—*qaṣad, tetap, nyata, sahaja, mengeras*. It is worth noting that these verbs do not connote God undergoing a physical motion of ascending or sitting on His throne, unlike more straightforward verbs which could have been used to render *istawā*, such

as *duduk* (to sit) or *naik* (to ascend). Yet the use of *tetap* and *nyata* suggests that ʿAbd al-Raʾūf does not want to convey the sense that God was not physically there on the throne either, an argument favored by the Muʿtazilites. It could be that he is trying to strike a middle ground between crude anthropomorphism and a completely metaphorical reading of *istawā ʿalā l-ʿarsh*. Be that as it may, the sense of uncertainty and discomfort is more palpable here than with the other *āyāt al-ṣifāt*. Since the *Jalālayn* was written in Arabic for an Arabic audience, it could get away with not explaining or paraphrasing *istawā ʿalā l-ʿarsh*. This was not the case for ʿAbd al-Raʾūf. In translating the expression for an audience with little or no knowledge of Arabic, he is in effect interpreting it in a way that exegetes like al-Khāzin and al-Suyūṭī had insisted on avoiding.

5   Conclusion

It is hard to draw neat conclusions about ʿAbd al-Raʾūf's views regarding anthropomorphism. Based on the *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* alone, we might conclude that he is an anti-anthropomorphist since he glosses and paraphrases most of the *āyāt al-ṣifāt* in a metaphorical manner. However, the thrust of this argument becomes blunter if we recall that the *Jalālayn*, which constitutes the core of *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*, also adopts a metaphorical reading of these verses. ʿAbd al-Raʾūf's metaphorical renderings of expressions such as "God's side" and "God's eye(s)" adhere closely to the *Jalālayn*. Yet ʿAbd al-Raʾūf's Malay rendering of the *Jalālayn* is not always literal, as Riddell has shown.[78] In the case of the *āyāt al-ṣifāt*, points of divergence between *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd* and the *Jalālayn* are clearly perceived for verses that mention God's face, hand(s), and throne.

Although the problem of anthropomorphism had become much less relevant to Malay Islamic intellectual life by ʿAbd al-Raʾūf's time, we can still sense faint echoes of it in *Tarjumān al-Mustafīd*. This is most clearly perceptible in his readings of God's hands and God's mounting of His throne. Not only does he diverge significantly from the *Jalālayn* in his renderings of these attributes of God, but his glosses and paraphrases also sound more uncertain for these two expressions than for others. His use of five different Malay terms to render the verb *istawā* in *istawā ʿalā l-ʿarsh* and his wavering between *tangan Allāh* and the awkward *tangan qudrat Allāh* betray a sense of discomfort with the

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78   Riddell, *Transferring a Tradition*, 64–66; *Malay Court Religion*, 61–62.

anthropomorphic connotations of these expressions. It would thus be worth-while for future studies of anthropomorphism in Malay Islamic writings to start with these two clusters of Qurʾānic verses.

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Talismans with the Names of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus/*Aṣḥāb al-Kahf* in Muslim Southeast Asia

Farouk Yahya

The sūra al-Kahf in the Qurʾān addresses the Christian legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. In this story, seven young men sought refuge from religious persecution by hiding in a cave. They fell into a deep slumber and miraculously woke up centuries later. The tale is popular in many parts of the Christian and Islamic worlds, and can be found in a variety of languages including Greek, Syriac, Latin, Arabic, Persian, Malay and Acehnese.[1]

Among Muslim societies, the names of the Seven Sleepers, together with their dog, Qiṭmīr, were invoked as talismans. They are inscribed on amulets as well as other objects such as seals, letters and talismanic shirts. This chapter will examine the magical uses of the names of the Seven Sleepers in Southeast Asia. Such practices can help shed light on the role played by sacred figures and texts in the occult practices of the region.

Before delving into the Southeast Asian material, a brief look into the background of the legend of the Seven Sleepers will help provide some context.

1   The Christian legend of the Seven Sleepers

The legend is set in Ephesus (now in Turkey) during the third century. The gist of the story is as follows: During the reign of the Roman emperor Decius (r. 249–251), Christians were being persecuted. Seven young Christian men refused to renounce their faith and sought refuge in a cave. They fell into a deep sleep, and the emperor ordered the cave to be sealed up with them inside. The names

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1 There have been many studies on the various traditions of this legend across cultures. Among the major publications are Ignazio Guidi, *Testi orientali inediti sopra i Sette dormienti di Efeso* (Rome: Reale Accademia dei Lincei, 1885); P. Michael Huber, *Die Wanderlegende von der Siebenschläfern: Eine literargeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1910); Louis Massignon, "Les Sept Dormants d'Éphèse (Ahl-al-kahf) en Islam et Chrétienté," *Revue des Études Islamiques* 12 (1954): 59–112; 13 (1955): 93–106; 15 (1957): 1–11; Francis Jourdan, *La tradition des sept dormants* (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 1983).

of the youths and their story were inscribed on lead tablets and placed at the entrance of the cave. Much later, during the reign of Emperor Theodosius II (r. 408–450), the cave was unsealed and the youths woke up, thinking they had been asleep only for a night. One of them went to Ephesus to purchase some food. He was surprised to see Christianity being practiced freely there, and when trying to pay, the merchants of the city observed that his coins were from the earlier Decius era. To prove his story, he led the people of Ephesus back to the cave, where they found the remaining youths and the lead tablets that confirm their identity. Their miraculous awakening after such a long slumber was seen "as providing living evidence of the resurrection of the body".[2]

The origins of the legend are unclear, but it was already circulating in Syriac during the fifth and sixth centuries. A manuscript containing the tale, now in St Petersburg, could be dateable to the late fifth century;[3] and in the sixth century the story was composed as a liturgical homily (*memra*) by Jacob of Serugh (d. 521).[4] During the same period it was translated from either Syriac or Greek into Latin by Gregory of Tours (d. c. 594),[5] who later included a shorter account in his book *Liber in Gloria Martyrum* ("Book of the Glory of the Martyrs"; chapter 94).[6] The original version of the legend however was probably in Greek—Ernest Honigmann argues that the story originated with Stephen, Bishop of Ephesus, in 448 in order to legitimise his authority—even though the earliest extant Greek manuscripts containing the tale date later to the ninth century.[7]

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2 Peter G. Riddell, *Malay Court Religion, Culture and Language: Interpreting the Qurʾān in 17th Century Aceh* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 52.

3 St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, N.S.S.4; on this manuscript, see Michel van Esbroeck, "Le manuscrit syriaque Nouvelle Série 4 de Leningrad (vᵉ siècle)," in *Mélanges Antoine Guillaumont*, ed. R.G. Coquin (Geneva: Patrick Cramer, 1988), 211–219; Michel van Esbroeck, "La Légende des Sept Dormants d'Éphèse selon le Codex Syriaque N.S.4 de Saint-Pétersbourg," in *VI Symposium Syriacum 1992*, edited by René Lavenant (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1994), 189–200; Marco Tondello, "The Story of the Sleepers of Ephesus According to the Oldest Extant Text: Manuscript N.S.S.4," *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 71, nos. 1–2 (2019): 29–92.

4 Sebastian Brock "Jacob of Serugh's Poem on the Sleepers of Ephesus," in *"I Sowed Fruits into Hearts" (Odes Sol. 17:13): Festschrift for Professor Michael Lattke*, ed. Pauline Allen, Majella Franzmann and Rick Strelan (Strathford: St Paul's, 2007), 13–30.

5 Gregory of Tours, "The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus," trans. William C. McDermott, in *Monks, Bishops, and Pagans: Christian Culture in Gaul and Italy, 500–700*, ed. Edward Peters (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), 197–206.

6 Gregory of Tours, *Glory of the Martyrs*, trans. Raymond van Dam (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988), 117–119, see also chapter 29 on 47–48.

7 Paul Peeters, "Le texte original de la Passion des Sept Dormants," *Analecta Bollandiana* 41 (1923): 369–385; Ernest Honigmann, "Stephen of Ephesus (April 15, 448–Oct. 29, 451) and

The numbers and names of the Sleepers vary. Typically, seven youths are listed, but most Syriac texts (such as that of Jacob of Serugh) mention eight. There are many variations regarding their names, but they can be broadly divided into two sets. One set comprises the following names (albeit with variations amongst the texts): Maximilianos (who was the leader of the group), Iamblichos (the one who went out to buy food after they had awakened), Martinos, Dionysios, Ioannis, Exakoustodianos/Konstantinos and Antoninos (i.e. what Michael Huber refers to as the "Iamblichos series"); while the second set comprises the names Achilleides, Diomedes, Eugenios, Stephanos, Probatos, Sabbatos and Quriaqos (the "Diomedes series"). In some texts (such as that of Gregory of Tours), both sets of names are found together.[8]

A burial complex (comprising a church and a crypt) near Panayır Dağ, just outside Ephesus, has traditionally been associated as the location of their cave. Indeed archaeological excavations conducted by Franz Miltner during the 1920s have found evidence of the veneration of the Sleepers there, in the form of inscriptions and graffiti by pilgrims dating to the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries.[9] More recently a Byzantine wall painting of the Sleepers, dateable to the eleventh–twelfth century, has also been uncovered at the site.[10]

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the Legend of the Seven Sleepers," in *Patristic Studies*, ed. Ernest Honigmann (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1953), 125–168. A painting of the Seven Sleepers is found in the Byzantine Chludov Psalter Constantinople, mid-ninth century, Moscow, State Historical Museum, MS Gr. 129, fol. 29; see Massignon, "Les Sept Dormants," (1955): pl. XX; Yuri Piatnitsky, "The Cult of 'The Seven Sleepers of Ephesos' in Byzantine and Postbyzantine Painting," in *100 Jahre österreichische Forschungen in Ephesos. Akten des Symposions Wien 1995*, ed. H. Friesinger and F. Krinzinger (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1999), 361–366: pl. 50, 3.

8   For a discussion of the names, see Huber, *Die Wanderlegende*, 91–96, 491–509; Brock, "Jacob of Serugh's Poem," 16–17; Tondello, "The Story of the Sleepers of Ephesus," 42, 72, no. 1.

9   Camillo Praschniker, Franz Miltner and Hans Gerstinger, *Das Cömeterium der Sieben Schläfer*, Forschungen in Ephesos 4, 2 (Baden: Rudolf M. Rohrer, 1937). The complex actually predates the legend, being established during the third century; see Norbert Zimmermann, "The Seven Sleepers of Ephesos: From the First Community Cemetery to a Place of Pilgrimage," in *Ephesos from Late Antiquity until the Late Middle Ages*, ed. Sabine Ladstätter and Paul Magdalino (Vienna: Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut, Verlag Holzhausen, 2019), 257–271.

10   Norbert Zimmermann, "Die wieder erwachten Sieben Schläfer in Ephesos. Zu einem neu entdeckten Bild im Sieben-Schläfer-Zömeterium," in *Contextus: Festschrift für Sabine Schrenk*, ed. Sible de Blaauw, Elisabet Enss and Petra Linscheid (Münster Westfalen: Aschendorff, 2020), 244–256.

2   The Islamic Tradition

By the seventh century, the legend of the Seven Sleepers was also transmitted into the Islamic tradition.[11] It is mentioned in the 18th sūra of the Qurʾān, which is titled al-Kahf ("The Cave") after the story, which appears in verses 9–26: "Or dost thou think that the Companions of the Cave and of the Inscription were wonders among Our signs" (18:9).[12]

It is a predominantly Meccan sūra, which also contains other stories including Moses' encounter with al-Khiḍr, and Alexander the Great's fight against the inhabitants of Gog and Magog. In his translation of the Qurʾān, ʿAbdullah Yūsuf ʿAlī remarks that the sūra "may be called a lesson on the brevity and mystery of Life."[13]

In the sūra, the Sleepers are referred to as the "Companions of the Cave" (Aṣḥāb al-Kahf) and of "the Inscription" (al-Raqīm; see further discussion below), and they are not named. The account in the Qurʾān appears to have been based on Jacobite Syriac sources, which were probably circulating in Mecca during the seventh century.[14] Indeed the Qurʾān does not actually give the legend in full, but merely alludes to it—as if assuming its audience was already familiar with it—and highlights some of the points of contention relating to certain details of the story.[15] These include the exact number of Companions (three, five or seven; "My Lord knoweth best their number. It is but few that know"; 18:22), and the length of time in which they were in the cave (309 years; "Allah knows best how long they stayed"; 18:26).

A major difference with the Christian tradition however is the inclusion in the Qurʾān of a dog as a companion to the youths, which "stretched his forelegs at the entrance" (Q 18:18) and is referred to in the discussion on their number (Q 18:22). Nevertheless, while it is true that Christian versions of the legend typically do not mention the animal, it was not unknown. The canine is mentioned

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11   For the Seven Sleepers in the Islamic tradition, see the studies in footnote 1, and the following: R. Paret, "Aṣḥāb al-Kahf," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition*, vol. 1, ed. P. Bearman et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 691; Roberto Tottoli, "Men of the Cave," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, 6 vols, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2001–2006), vol. 3, 374–375.

12   All translations of the Qurʾān are based on the Yūsuf ʿAlī translation; *The Holy Qurʾān: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary*, rev. and ed. Presidency of Islamic Researches, IFTA (Medina: King Fahd Holy Qurʾān Printing Complex, 1990).

13   ʿAlī translation; *The Holy Qurʾān*, 815.

14   Sidney Griffith, "Christian Lore and the Arabic Qurʾān: The 'Companions of the Cave' in *Sūrat al-Kahf* and in Syriac Tradition," in *The Qurʾān and Its Historical Context*, edited by Gabriel Said Reynolds (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 109–137.

15   As observed by Griffith, "Christian Lore," 119–120.

in a sixth-century Latin pilgrim guide of the Holy Land, *De situ terrae sanctae*, by Theodosius (fl. 518–530), which not only provides the names of the youths but also that of their dog (Viricanus) and their mother (Caritina in Greek, Felicitas in Latin).[16] Whether this passage is indeed part of Theodosius' original work or is a later addition (perhaps due to Arab influence) is uncertain.[17]

The location of the cave also differs. Instead of Ephesus (Arabic: Afsis), Muslims associated other sites with the Sleepers, particularly Afşin (Afsus, formerly Arabissos) and Tarsus in Turkey, as well as other locations across the Islamic world such as in Afghanistan and Jordan.[18] There has indeed been a long-standing interest in the final resting place of the Sleepers. Works such as the *al-Āthār al-bāqiya* ("Vestiges of the Past") by al-Bīrūnī (d. 440/1048) and the *Muʿjam al-buldān* ("Dictionary of Countries") by Yāqūt (d. 626/1229) report of expeditions carried out during the reigns of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (d. 13/634) and the Abbasid caliphs al-Muʿtaṣim (r. 218/833–227/842) and al-Wāthiq (r. 227/842–232/847) to caves where undecayed corpses were said to be those of the youths.[19]

Over the centuries, discussions of the legend appeared in the various types of works. These include Qurʾānic commentaries or exegesis (*tafsīr*), particularly under the section on the sūra al-Kahf, such as in the *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm* ("Exegesis of the Great Qurʾān") by Ibn Kathīr (c. 701/1301–774/1373).[20] The legend also appears in historical works, such as the *Taʾrīkh al-rusul wa al-mulūk* ("History of the Prophets and Kings") by al-Ṭabarī (224/839–310/923)[21]

16   Huber, *Die Wanderlegende*, 497.

17   Peeters, "Le texte original," 372–373; Huber, *Die Wanderlegende*, 496–499.

18   Franz Babinger, "Die Örtlichkeit der Siebenschläferlegende in muslimischer Schau," *Anzeiger—Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 104 (1957): 87–95; Massignon, "Les Sept Dormants;" Oya Pancaroğlu, "Caves, Borderlands and Configurations of Sacred Topography in Medieval Anatolia," *Mésogeios* 25–26 (2005): 249–281; Anna Tozzi Di Marco, "The Mediterranean Cult of the Seven Sleepers: Counter-Narrative vs Official Representation in Islamic Devotion," in *The Mediterranean Other—The Other Mediterranean*, ed. Medardus Brehl, Andreas Eckl and Kristin Platt (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2019), 169–190.

19   Abū l-Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī, *The Chronology of Ancient Nations*, trans. C. Edward Sachau (London: William H. Allen & Co., 1879), 285–286; Guy Le Strange, "The Muslim Legend of the Cave of the Sleepers," *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* 20, no. 4 (1888): 271–278.

20   Ismāʿīl ibnʿUmar ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1420/2000), 1146–1152.

21   Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul wa al-mulūk / Annales quos scripsit Abu Djafar Mohammed ibn Djarir al-Tabari*, 13 vols, ed. M.J. de Goeje (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1879–

and stories of the prophets, such as the *ʿArāʾis al-majālis fī qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* by al-Thaʿlabī (d. 427/1035)[22]—in these types of texts the legend is often placed amongst a group of stories that come after the life of Jesus. It may also be included in works on geography and cosmography, such as Yāqūt's *Muʿjam al-buldān*, and the *ʿAjāʾib al-makhlūqāt wa-gharāʾib al-mawjūdāt* ("Wonders of Creation and the Oddities of Existence") by al-Qazwīnī (c. 600/1203–682/1283), where it is discussed in the section on "Mountains" under the heading of "Mount Raqīm" (*Jabal al-Raqīm*).[23] It is worth mentioning that in the encyclopaedia *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-ṣafāʾ* ("Epistles of the Brethren of Purity"), probably compiled in Baghdad during the mid-fourth/tenth century, the "Epistle on Resurrection and Rising" (38) gives a reinterpretation of the story whereby the Sleepers are associated with the seven planets.[24] In addition, the legend may also feature as one of the auguries in a type of divination book known as the pictorial *fālnāma*.[25]

Manuscripts of histories, stories of the prophets, cosmographies and *fālnāma* may be illustrated, and thus we find images of the Sleepers from the early fourteenth century onwards, as exemplified by the Ilkhanid Qazwīnī in the British Library (probably Mosul, c. 1300);[26] the Edinburgh *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh* ("Compendium of Chronicles") by Rashīd al-Dīn (c. 645/1247–718/1318) (Tabriz, 714/1314–1315);[27] and various Safavid *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*[28] and *fālnāma*[29] from the

1901), prima series, vol. 2, 775–782; *The History of al-Ṭabarī* (*Tārīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk). Volume IV: The Ancient Kingdoms*, trans. Moshe Perlmann (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987), 155–159.

22   Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Thaʿlabī, *ʿArāʾis al-majālis fī qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ, or "Lives of the Prophets"*, trans. William M. Brinner (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 689–714.

23   Huber, *Die Wanderlegende*, 225–226; Stefano Carboni, *The Wonders of Creation and the Singularities of Painting: A Study of the Ilkhanid London Qazvīnī* (Edinburgh: Edinbugh University Press, 2015), 256–257.

24   Godefroid de Call̲ataÿ, "Astrology and Prophecy: The *Ikhwān al-ṣafāʾ* and the Legend of the Seven Sleepers," in *Studies in the History of the Exact Sciences in Honour of David Pingree*, ed. Charles Burnett, Jan P. Hogendijk, Kim Plofker and Michio Yano (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 758–785.

25   Such as one in New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1935, 35.64.3; see Massumeh Farhad and Serpil Bağci, eds., *Falnama: The Book of Omens* (Washington DC, London: Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Thames & Hudson, 2009), 160–161, cat. 42, 260.

26   Or.14140, fol. 58ʳ; see Carboni, *The Wonders of Creation*, 136, fig. 5.15.

27   Edinburgh University Library, Or.MS.20, fol. 23ᵛ (reconstructed manuscript fol. 25ʳ); see Sheila S. Blair, *A Compendium of Chronicles: Rashid al-Din's Illustrated History of the World* (London: Nour Foundation, 1995), fig. 64.

28   Rachel Milstein, Karin Rührdanz and Barbara Schmitz, *Stories of the Prophets: Illustrated Manuscripts of the* Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ (Costa Mesa: Mazda, 1999).

sixteenth century (Figure 8.1). The Sleepers are typically depicted in a cave, huddled together asleep, often within a circular composition—an iconography that can be traced to Byzantine paintings of the legend, such as in the Menologion of Basil II, dateable to the late tenth–early eleventh century.[30]

Works such as *tafsīr*, world histories and stories of the prophets often attempt to elaborate upon the Qurʾānic narrative and explain some of its ambiguities (for instance on the exact number and names of the Companions and their dog) by referring to earlier sources, some of which may be contradictory. In his *Tārīkh al-rusul* as well as in his *tafsīr*, al-Ṭabarī cites Ibn Isḥāq (d. c. 151/768) who gives nine names—Makslimīnā, Maḥsmilīnā, Yamlīkhā, Marṭūs, Kasuṭūnus, Bayrūnus, Rasmūnus/Daynamūs, Baṭūnus and Qālūs.[31] In the eleventh century, al-Thaʿlabī relates in his *ʿArāʾis al-majālis* an account attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad's cousin and son-in-law ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661) which names six youths—Tamlīkhā, Makslamīnā and Muḥsilmīnā whom the king (i.e. Decius) appointed as ministers and who were placed on his right hand, and Marṭaliyūs, Kashṭūs and Sādaniyūs who were on his left— and mentions that the name of the dog was Qiṭmīr.[32] Later in the same text, however, he cites Ibn ʿAbbās (d. 68/687–688), another cousin of the Prophet and a pioneer exegete of the Qurʾān, as a source who provides seven names for the youths, one of whom was a shepherd:

> Abū ʿAlī al-Zuhrī told me, transmitting it from Ibn ʿAbbās regarding His word, "*It is but few that know*," (18:22) saying, "I am one of those few. They were Makslamīnā, Tamlīkhā, Martaliyūs, Baynūs, Sāwamūs, Dāwanūs, and Kashṭūs, who was the shepherd, while the dog's name was Qitmīr, a spotted dog, bigger than a Qalaṭī, and smaller than a Karakī."[33]

It is evident that the names given here are based on the Greek/Syriac "Iamlichos series". It is also worth noting that Tamlīkha is derived from Yamlīkha (i.e. Iamlichos), as found in other accounts such as al-Ṭabarī's, due to the misplace-

29   New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1935, 35.64.3; see Farhad and Bağci, *Falnama*, 160–161, cat. 42, 260.

30   Zimmermann, "Die wieder erwachten," 253–254; for Byzantine and Postbyzantine images of the Seven Sleepers, see Piatnitsky, "The Cult of 'The Seven Sleepers of Ephesos'," and pl. 51, 1 for the Menologion of Basil II, Vatican Library, Vat.gr.1613.

31   Al-Ṭabarī, *Taʾrīkh al-rusul*, prima series, vol. 2, 777; *The History*, 156; *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī: Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āya al-Qurʾān*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Muhsin al-Turkī, 26 vols (Cairo: Dār Hajar, 1422/2001), vol. 15, 165–166.

32   Al-Thaʿlabī, *ʿArāʾis al-majālis*, 694–696.

33   Al-Thaʿlabī, *ʿArāʾis al-majālis*, 696.

FIGURE 8.1   The Seven Sleepers in a pictorial *fālnāma*, probably Qazvin, Iran, 1550s. New York,
Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1935, inv. no. 35.64.3
IMAGE IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

ment of the two dots of the letter *yāʾ* from below the line to above it, resulting in the letter *tāʾ*.[34] In addition, although the dog is commonly referred to as Qiṭmīr, some sources provide further variants of the animal's name, such as Rayyān, Ḥamrā, Natwā, Qiṭmūr and Qiṭfīr as reported by al-Thaʿlabī.[35]

Another area of discussion in the texts revolves around the meaning of the term "al-Raqīm". In the tenth century for instance, al-Ṭabarī in his *tafsīr* reports that it refers to the name of either a village or a valley.[36] In the eleventh century, in his *ʿArāʾis al-majālis* al-Thaʿlabī relates the term to a story of three men who were trapped in a cave, and managed to escape after recounting their good deeds.[37] The general consensus however—both amongst medieval and modern-day scholars—is that it means "Inscription", i.e. the inscribed tablets placed at the entrance of the cave, as the root word—*r-q-m*—means "to write".[38]

Tafsīr may also discuss the benefits of reciting the sūra and on the magical properties of the names. In the fourteenth century, Ibn Kathīr in the introduction to his discussion on the sūra quotes a number of hadith regarding the former. For instance: "Whoever memorizes ten verses from the beginning of sūra al-Kahf will be protected from the Antichrist (*Dajjāl*)," and "Whoever recites the beginning and the end of the sūra al-Kahf, he has a light from his feet to his head. And whoever recites it all, it will be for him a light between the earth and the sky." There is a particular emphasis on the benefits of reciting the sūra on Fridays, for example: "Whoever recites the sūra al-Kahf on a Friday, he is protected for up to eight days from every temptation, and if the Antichrist appears, he will be preserved from it."[39] These led to the sūra being recited on Fridays, especially during the congregational prayer, in various parts of the Islamic world.[40]

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34   Annabel Teh Gallop, "The Amuletic Cult of Maʿrūf al-Karḫī in the Malay World," in *Writings and Writing from Another World and Another Era*, ed. Robert M. Kerr and Thomas Milo (Cambridge: Archetype Press, 2010), 167–196: 175, footnote 15.

35   Al-Thaʿlabī, *ʿArāʾis al-majālis*, 696.

36   Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 15, 157.

37   Al-Thaʿlabī, *ʿArāʾis al-majālis*, 689–690.

38   Roberto Tottoli, "Raqīm," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān*, 6 vols, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: Brill, 2001–2006), vol. 4, 351–352.

39   Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, 1144–1145; see also Massignon, "Les Sept Dormants," (1954): 70–71; Venetia Porter, "Amulets Inscribed with the Names of the 'Seven Sleepers' of Ephesus in the British Museum," in *Word of God, Art of Man: The Qurʾān and Its Creative Expressions*, ed. Fahmida Suleman (Oxford: Oxford University Press in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2007), 123–134: 124–125.

40   Massignon, "Les Sept Dormants," (1954): 69–70.

The talismanic properties of the names of the Seven Sleepers are discussed in the fourteenth-century *tafsīr* by al-Nīsābūrī (d. 728/1328).[41] In his discussion on verse 22 of the sūra al-Kahf, al-Nīsābūrī lists various uses of the names, such as for putting out fires, stopping a child from crying, planting crops, and helping with difficult childbirth. He gives the following names for the Sleepers: Yamlīkhā, Makshalīniyā, Mashlīniyā (who were the companions on the right side of the king, i.e. Decius, who is not named in the text), and Marnūsh, Dabarnūsh and Shādhunūsh (who were on the left), plus the shepherd whose name was Kafashṭaṭūsh. These names had previously appeared two centuries earlier in one of al-Nīsābūrī's sources—al-Zamakhsharī's (d. 538/1144) commentary known as *al-Kashshāf* ("The Revealer"), where they are attributed to ʿAlī (although al-Zamakhsharī does not name the shepherd).[42] Al-Nīsābūrī writes:

> This is indicated by various things, including what was narrated on the authority of ʿAlī, peace be upon him, [which is] that they were seven, whose names are [to be] read as: Yamlīkhā, and Makshalīniyā, and Mashlīniyā—these were the companions by the king's right hand; and to his left were Marnūsh, and Dabarnūsh and Shādhunūsh. He consulted these six in his affairs, and the seventh was a shepherd who followed them and his name was Kafashṭaṭūsh. The name of their city was Afsūs, and the name of their dog was Qiṭmīr, some say Rayyān.
>
> On the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās: [Invoking] the names of the Companions of the Cave [is] suitable for seeking [something], escaping, and putting out a fire: they are to be written on a rag and thrown into the middle of the fire. For the crying of a child, they are to be written and placed under the child's head in the cradle. For ploughing, they are to be written on paper, and raised on a stick erected in the middle of the field. For palpitations,[43] tertian fever and headaches, for riches and prestige, for entering into the presence of the mighty, they are to be tied on the right thigh; and for difficult childbirth, on her left thigh. [They may also be invoked] for protecting money, for seafaring, and to escape from being killed.[44]

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41   Niẓām al-Dīn al-Nīsābūrī, *Gharāʾib al-Qurʾān wa Raghāʾib al-Furqān*, 6 vols. (Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiah, 1416/1997), vol. 4, 412.

42   Maḥmūd ibn ʿUmar al-Zamakhsharī, *The Kashshaf ʿan Haqaiq al-Tanzil*, ed. W. Nassau Lees, Khadim Hosain and ʿAbd al-Hayi, 2 vols (Calcutta: W. Nassau Lees, 1856), vol. 1, 796; see also Huber, *Die Wanderlegende*, 95.

43   Could also be a throbbing ache, e.g. toothache.

44   I am grateful to Owen Wright for his help with this translation.

A variant of this passage appears in the eighteenth-century *al-Futūḥāt al-ilāhīyya bi-tawḍīḥ tafsīr al-jalālayn* ("The Divine Conquests Clarifying the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*") by Sulaymān ibn ʿUmar al-Jamāl (d. 1204/1790).[45] This work is an explanation on an earlier fifteenth-century popular *tafsīr* known as the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* ("The Commentary of the Two Jalāls") by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī (d. 864/1459) and his student Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505). In a discussion on the commentary in the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* on verse 22 of the sūra al-Kahf—specifically regarding the phrase *"wa dhakarahum sabaʿatan"* ("he mentioned seven of them")—al-Jamāl provides the names of the seven youths and their dog, and then reports the uses of writing down their names. His text is slightly different to al-Nīsābūrī's—planting crops is not mentioned, but it adds protection against the female demon Umm Ṣubyān as one of the uses. The names of the Sleepers are also different:

> His[46] saying ("And he mentioned seven of them"): These are Makslimīnā, Tamlīkhā, Marṭūnus, Nīnūnus, Sārbūnus, Dhūnwānus, and Filīstiṭiyūnus, who was the shepherd, and the name of their dog was Qiṭmīr, some say Ḥimrān, others Rayyān as aforementioned. Some of them said: Teach your children the names of the People of the Cave, for if they are written on the door of a house, that house will not catch fire; or [if they are written] on belongings, they will not be stolen, or [if they are written] on a ship, it will not sink. Ibn ʿAbbās, may God be pleased with him, said: The properties of the names of the People of the Cave are useful for nine things: For seeking [something], escaping, and putting out a fire—they are to be written on a rag and thrown into the middle of the fire, and it shall be extinguished by the permission of God Almighty. For the crying of a child, tertian fever, and headaches, tie it around the right arm; [this is also to be done] for Umm al-Ṣubyān, riding on land and sea, protecting money, cultivating the mind, and the salvation of sinners.[47]

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45   Sulaymān ibn ʿUmar al-Jamāl, *Futūḥāt al-ilāhīyya bi-tawḍīḥ tafsīr al-jalālayn*, 8 vols (Beirut: Dar Al-Kotob Al-Ilmiah, 2018).

46   Author of the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, i.e. al-Maḥallī or al-Suyūṭī.

47   Al-Jamāl, *Futūḥāt al-ilāhīyya*, vol. 4, 409. I am grateful to Liana Saif and Owen Wright for their help with this translation. See also Tewfik Canaan, "The Decipherment of Arabic Talismans," *Berythus* 4 (1937): 69–110: 90 [reprinted in *Magic and Divination in Early Islam*, ed. Emilie Savage-Smith (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 125–177: 146]; Porter, "Amulets Inscribed," 126.

Al-Jamāl's passage was repeated by later authors during the nineteenth cen-
tury. For instance, the text appears verbatim in Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-
Ṣāwī's (d. 1241/1825) *Ḥāshiat* ("Commentary") on the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*.[48]

Meanwhile, in Muḥammad Ḥaqqī al-Nāzilī's (d. 1301/1884) *Khazīnat al-asrār*
("Treasury of Secrets"), published in 1286/1869, both al-Jamāl's and al-Nīsābūrī's
texts have been combined.[49] Here the names of the Sleepers are based upon the
latter: Yamlīkhā, Makshalīniyā, Mashlīniyā on the right of king Daqyānūs (or
Diqyānūs, i.e. Decius, who is not named by al-Nīsābūrī), and Marnūsh, Dabar-
nūsh and Shādhunūsh on the left, as well as the shepherd Kafashṭaṭiyūsh [sic].
Al-Nāzilī writes:

> Chapter on the authentic hadiths and the statements of the commenta-
> tors regarding the characteristics of the names of the Companions of the
> Cave.
>
> Imam al-Nīsābūrī [on the authority of] ʿAlī b. ʿAbbās, may God be
> pleased with them both, said that: [Invoking] the names of the Compan-
> ions of the Cave is suitable for seeking [something], escaping, and putting
> out a fire: they are to be written on a rag and thrown into the middle
> of the fire. For the crying of a child, they are to be written and placed
> under the child's head in the cradle. For ploughing, they are to be writ-
> ten on paper, and raised on a stick erected in the middle of the field. For
> entering into the presence of the mighty, they are to be tied around the
> right thigh; and for difficult childbirth, around her left thigh. [They may
> also be invoked] for protecting money, for seafaring, and to escape from
> being killed. And God knows best what is right. Their names are like this:
> Yamlīkhā, Makshalīniyā, Mashlīniyā—these were the companions on the
> right hand of the king, the mighty Daqyānūs; Marnūsh, Dabarnūsh and
> Shādhunūsh—these were the companions on the king's left hand. And
> the king consulted these six in his affairs. The seventh was the shepherd
> who followed them and his name was Kafashṭaṭiyūsh. The colour of the
> dog was brown or yellow verging on red;[50] its name was Qiṭmīr. The pre-
> Islamic name of the city was Afsūs; its Islamic name is Ṭarsūs. [It is] close
> to the city known as Konya, to the east of it. This is how it is explained
> in the *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf*, the *Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, al-Qurṭubī, and the *Tafsīr al-*

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48   Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣāwī, *Ḥāshiat al-Ṣāwī alā tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, 3 vols (Cairo:
      Muṣṭafā-al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-awlāduh, 1345/1926), vol. 3, 9.

49   Muḥammad Ḥaqqī al-Nāzilī, *Khazīnat al-asrār* (Cairo: Dār al-kutub al-ʿArabiyya al-kubrā,
      1327/1909), 72.

50   Perhaps "tawny".

Basīṭ. In the hadith it is stated that the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, said: Teach your children the names of the Companions of the Cave, for if they are written on the door of a house, that house will not catch fire; or [if they are written] on belongings, then they will not be stolen, or [if they are written] on a ship, it will not sink. Their names were Yamlīkhā, Makshalīnā [sic], Mashlīnā [sic], Marnūsh, Dabarnūsh, Shādhunūsh, Kafashṭaṭiyūsh, [and] Qiṭmīr, according to copious sources [?]. Abū Saʿīd Muḥammad al-Muftī al-Khādim, may God have mercy on him, said: I saw the Companions of the Cave in a dream and told them: "We write your honoured names for good fortune and blessings in certain matters, but to no avail." They informed me that we should write their names in the form of a circle, with Qiṭmīr in the centre.[51]

These works would have played a part in the usage of the names as talismanic devices in the Islamic world, and variations of the texts have appeared in Southeast Asian languages such as Acehnese and Malay, as will be seen later.

The talismanic usage of the names of the Seven Sleepers can also be seen in material evidence. They are found for instance inscribed on a twelfth-century bronze mirror from Iran, now in the British Museum.[52] Here they are placed along the rim on the reflective side, together with other types of magical vocabulary such as magic squares and the series of signs known as the Seven Seals of Solomon. However it is quite likely that all these inscriptions were added later.[53]

The names were certainly popular during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, appearing on various amulets, objects, clothing and architecture, particularly in the Ottoman world. Their designs appear to have greatly influenced the Southeast Asian talismanic corpus, as we shall see.

3   The Seven Sleepers in Southeast Asia

The legend of the Seven Sleepers is also widespread in Muslim Southeast Asia, where they are commonly referred to as "Ashabul Kahfi". Their story would have been transmitted into the region with the spread of Islam. By the thirteenth century Islam was formally adopted by the kingdoms of North Sumatra, and soon spread throughout the rest of the region. Sadly, early objects in Southeast

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51   I am grateful to Owen Wright for his help with this translation.

52   Inv. no. 1963,0718.1; see Porter, "Amulets Inscribed," fig. 7.1.

53   Porter, "Amulets Inscribed," 127.

Asia that were made of perishable materials have generally not survived, due to the hot and humid climate of the region, insects, natural disasters and fire. Thus most surviving manuscripts and objects such as woodwork and textiles that feature the Sleepers only date from the nineteenth century onwards.

The earliest surviving evidence of the legend in the region is a Malay manuscript containing an exegesis on the Qurʾān, probably from Aceh in North Sumatra, dateable to around 1600, although most likely there were earlier works that have been lost. It is currently in Cambridge University Library (Ii.6.45) and arrived in Europe during the early seventeenth century, when it entered the collection of Thomas Erpenius (1584–1624), Professor of Arabic at Leiden University who collected a large number of Oriental manuscripts.[54]

What is relevant for our present discussion is that the contents of the manuscript focuses only on the sūra al-Kahf. In his study of this manuscript, Peter Riddell postulates a number of reasons for why this sūra might have been chosen. He suggests that: "the author of the work considered this account as being of direct relevant for his readers and as appealing to them in their search for means of intercession with God";[55] and that "… the rich narratives in *Sūra al-Kahf* lend themselves to the emergence of rituals and talismans."[56]

The main source of the commentary in this manuscript is the *tafsīr* by Husayn b. Masʿūd al-Baghawī (d. 515/1121, 516/1122 or 510/1117) known as the *Maʿālim al-Tanzīl* ("The Signpost of the Revelation"), which in turn is based upon a *tafsīr* by al-Thaʿlabī titled *al-Kashf wa-l-bayān ʿan tafsīr al-Qurʾān* ("Unveiling and Clarifying the Interpretation of the Qurʾān").[57] There the names of the Sleepers that al-Thaʿlabī provides are based on al-Ṭabarī's—Makslimīnā, Majslimīnā, Tamlīkhā, etc., although he only lists eight names, rather than nine.[58]

Variants of these names appear in the Cambridge manuscript on fols. 42ᵛ– 43ʳ, although only seven are listed.[59] The manuscript then provides further names for the youths on fol. 61ᵛ. Here the names are similar to the al-Zamakhsharī set that starts with Yamlīkhā, with the seventh person—the owner of the

54   Merle C. Ricklefs, Petrus Voorhoeve and Annabel Teh Gallop, *Indonesian Manuscripts in Great Britain: A Catalogue of Manuscripts in Indonesian Languages in British Public Collections. New Edition with Addenda et Corrigenda* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2014), 112; Riddell, *Malay Court Religion*.

55   Riddell, *Malay Court Religion*, 56.

56   Riddell, *Malay Court Religion*, 58.

57   Riddell, *Malay Court Religion*, 58.

58   Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Thaʿlabī, *Al-Kashf wa-l-bayān ʿan tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, 10 vols (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1422/2002), vol. 6, 155.

59   Riddell, *Malay Court Religion*, 168.

dog—being unnamed. The passage is then followed by another rather unusual set of names, such as Dharqaṭayūnus and Yuwānisabūsh, and mentions that the dog's name was Qiṭmīr.[60] All this shows that multiple sets of names of the Seven Sleepers were already circulating in Southeast Asia by the late sixteenth–early seventeenth century.

Meanwhile, on fol. 54ᵛ, the text presents further names for the dog: Rayyān, Bīthar, Būran and Ṣahbā.[61] As for "al-Raqīm", it suggests that the term could refer to the name of a hill (*bukit*), a country (*negeri*), their dog, or the tablet (*loh*) made of tin (*timah*) or stone (*batu*) that contains the names of the youths (fol. 4ᵛ).[62] The text also relates the "al-Raqīm" story of the three men who were stuck in a cave (fols. 4ᵛ–12ʳ).[63]

The legend continued to be popular in Aceh, appearing in works such as the earliest Malay commentary on the whole Qurʾān, the *Tarjumān al-mustafīd* ("Rendition For the One Who Derives Benefit") by Abdul Rauf Singkel (d. 1105/1693), written around 1675 in Aceh (here the Sleepers are not named),[64] as well as other *tafsīr*.[65] The Sleepers are also referred to in passing in the *Bustān al-salāṭīn* ("The Garden of Kings"), a work on universal history and a mirror for princes, composed between 1638 and 1641/42 by the Gujarati theologian Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī (d. 1068/1658) for Sultan Iskandar Thani of Aceh (r. 1045/1636–1050/1641), particularly in Books II (on prophets and kings) and III (on just kings and wise ministers).[66]

It also spread across the rest of Southeast Asia, often appearing in Stories of the Prophets in local languages such as in Malay and Javanese. In the latter, such collections of tales are usually known as *Serat Tapel Adam* ("Book of the Formation of Adam"), with the Seven Sleepers being referred to as "Seh Ngandul Kahpi", with the dog's name given as Patmir.[67]

60   Riddell, *Malay Court Religion*, 186–187.

61   Riddell, *Malay Court Religion*, 180–181.

62   Riddell, *Malay Court Religion*, 132–133.

63   Riddell, *Malay Court Religion*, 132–137.

64   This text is discussed in Riddell, *Malay Court Religion*.

65   A Malay manuscript titled *Kisah daripada Aṣḥāb al-Kahf* ("Story from the Companions of the Cave"), seems to be part of a *tafsīr* on verses 18:6 (incomplete as earlier pages are missing) to 25:77. The manuscript has a seal dated 1201/1787, and is now in Leiden University Library, Cod. Or. 6604; see Witkam, *Inventory*, vol. 7, [231].

66   Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī, *Bustan al-Salatin* (*Bab Pertama dan Kedua*), ed. Jelani Harun (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2004), 117–118; and *Bustan al-Salatin* (*Bab Ketiga*) *Kisah Raja-Raja yang Adil*, ed. Jelani Harun (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2004), 554.

67   A Malay manuscript of the Stories is *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ* ("Stories of the Prophets"), copied by an Encik Muhammad Syam of Lingga, nineteenth century, now in Jakarta, Perpustakaan

The legend sometimes appears as standalone stories, both in Arabic[68] and in vernacular languages such as Acehnese, where it is known as the *Hikayat Tamlikha* ("Tale of Tamlikha"), *Èelia Tujöh* ("The Seven Saints") or *Isem Tujoh* ("The Seven Names").[69] In the texts published by H.T. Damsté, based on two manuscripts now in Leiden University Library, the names of the youths are based upon the al-Jamāl set.[70]

A Malay version of the legend by Muhammad b. Ismail Daud al-Fatani (1260/1844–1333/1915), titled *al-Durr al-basīm fī aṣḥāb al-kahf wa al-raqīm* ("The Smiling Pearls: The Companions of the Cave and al-Raqīm"), was printed in Mecca in 1310/1892 (Figure 8.2). Here the names are similar to the al-Zamakhsharī set.[71]

In addition, the story of the three men of "al-Raqīm", who escaped from a cave after recounting their good deeds, also circulated independently.[72] Among the Batak, the two stories—of the Seven Sleepers and the three men of "al-Raqīm"—have been conflated, becoming a tale of seven men who recounted their good deeds.[73] As far as I am aware, none of these texts are illustrated.

It is also worth noting that the term *Aṣḥāb al-Kahf* may also be used in other contexts. In Java some religious boarding schools (known as *pesantren*) are named "Ashabul Kahfi". This and "Sahibul Kahfi" are also found as names of individuals, businesses and mosques in Indonesia and Malaysia.

Nasional Republik Indonesia, W67; while the Javanese version has been published by Kramadiwirya, *Serat Tapel Adam* (Batavia: Lange & Co., 1859). See D. Gerth van Wijk, "De Koranische Verhalen in het Maleisch," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 35, nos. 3–4 (1892): 249–345: 251; 36, no. 6 (1893): 531–699: 633–641, 698–699.

68   *Qiṣṣat Aṣḥāb al-Kahf* ("Story of the Companions of the Cave"), Indonesia, nineteenth century. Jakarta, Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia, W.287.

69   C. Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achehnese*, trans. A.W.S. O'Sullivan, 2 vols (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1906), vol. 2, 169–170; H.T. Damsté, "De legende van de Heilige Zeven Slapers in het Atjehsch," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* 98, no. 4 (1939): 407–488; Muhammad Usman, et al., *Hikayat Aulia Tujoh* (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1991); see also H.T. Damsté, "Nog iets over de Zeven Slapers," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 101, no. 4 (1942): 403–404.

70   Cod. Or. 7993 (Damsté's Text A), copied in Matang Keupula, Blang Awe, dated 12 Dhū al-Qaʻda 1329/3 November 1911; and Cod. Or. 7992 (and its transliteration, Cod. Or. 7994) (Damsté's Text B); see Witkam, *Inventory*, vol. 8, [431–432]. For a discussion on the names, see Damsté, "De legend," 486–487.

71   Printed in Mecca by al-Maṭbaʻa al-Mīriya in 1310/1893; a copy is in Leiden University Library, 8203 A 18. A manuscript copy is in Kuala Lumpur, Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, MSS 1668.

72   Damsté, "De legend," 409–410.

73   Damsté, "De legend," 410.
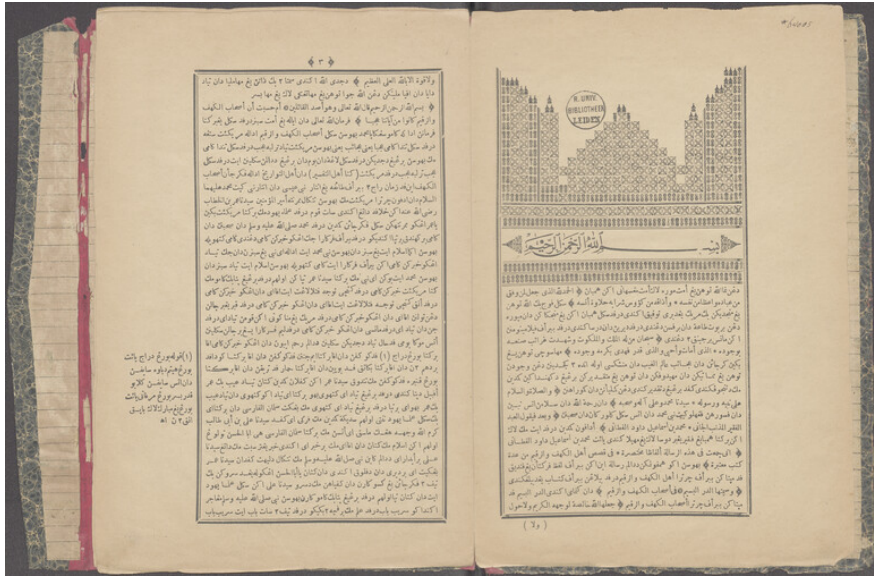
FIGURE 8.2   Muhammad b. Ismail Daud al-Fatani, *al-Durr al-basīm fī aṣḥāb al-kahf wa al-raqīm* (Mecca: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Mīriya, 25 Shawwāl 1310/11 May 1893), pp. 2–3. Leiden, Leiden University Library, 8203 A 18
WITH KIND PERMISSION OF LEIDEN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

4   Talismans with the Names of the Seven Sleepers in Southeast Asia

As in other parts of the Islamic world, in Southeast Asia the names of the Seven Sleepers may also be used for talismanic purposes. Historical, literary, anthropological and material evidence of this practice have been found in many areas within the region dating to the nineteenth and early twentieth century, but no doubt there are many other reports, manuscripts and objects that have yet to be identified.

The names appear in various contexts. They are found for instance in manuscripts on magic and divination where the talismanic benefits of the names are given. These texts are typically derived from the Arabic works cited earlier, specifically the eighteenth-century *al-Futūhāt al-ilāhīyya* by al-Jamāl (which may have circulated via al-Ṣāwī's *Ḥāshiat* which was popular in the region, rather than directly), and the nineteenth-century *Khazīnat al-asrār* by al-Nāzilī. At the same time, the talismanic application of the names can be seen in objects such as carved wood panels, textiles, seals and letters. The spread of these texts into Southeast Asia seems to have been fairly rapid. A seal from Tiro, Aceh, containing the names of the Seven Sleepers as found in al-Nāzilī's *Khazīnat al-asrār*, is dated 1309/1891 (see below), just two decades after the publication of the work.

Some of these talismans show Ottoman influence in their design. This is likely due to the movement of scholars and pilgrims between Southeast Asia and the Hijaz region, and may reflect developments in Ottoman lands. Indeed, as Porter has pointed out, "the names seem to appear in various contexts in the Ottoman period with some frequency; whether this is as a result of a deliberate surge of interest in the 'Sleepers' at this time has yet to be fully investigated."[74] It also appears to parallel the usage in Southeast Asia of other Ottoman talismanic designs, such as calligrams of the Lion of ʿAlī.[75]

However, it is important to note that the Indian Ocean transregional network is both extensive and complex, and thus instead of a single source of transmission, it is possible that the practice developed separately and concurrently along different parts of Southeast Asia. As there are a number of variations in the names of the Seven Sleepers, and the names may be arranged in several different visual forms, mapping the distribution of a set of names or a particular design can help us to make a more nuanced analysis on the spread of the practice within the region (see Maps 8.1 and 8.2). For instance, the present research has uncovered that the East Coast of the Malay peninsula (i.e. Kelantan and Terengganu) seems rather partial to a variant of the al-Jamāl set in which the series of names begin with Yamlīkhā (see Appendix). Nevertheless, the demarcation between regions is not so clear cut, with multiple sets of names being used in certain areas. Indeed, on some objects different sets of names are combined.

4.1   *Instructions for the Use of the Names*

The benefits of the names of the Seven Sleepers are discussed in the prologue of one of the copies of the Acehnese *Hikayat Tamlikha* (Leiden University Librarty, Cod. Or. 7993; Damsté's Text A), dated 1329/1911. Here the text seems to be a combination of both the al-Jamāl and al-Nāzilī passages, although with some differences. The sequence of the sayings attributed to the Prophet (preventing fire, theft and boats) and Ibn ʿAbbās (e.g. crying child, planting crops) as found in al-Nāzilī's text have been reversed; there is mention of Umm Ṣubyān (Ōmi Sébeuyan) which is found in al-Jamāl's text but not al-Nāzilī's; and further uses—such as winning an argument in the courtroom—have been added.[76]

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74   Porter, "Amulets Inscribed," 129.

75   Farouk Yahya, "Calligrams of the Lion of ʿAlī in Southeast Asia," in *Islamicate Occult Sciences in Theory and Practice*, ed. Liana Saif, Francesca Leoni, Matthew Melvin-Koushki and Farouk Yahya (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 454–526.

76   Damsté, "De legend," 418–419, 434–435.
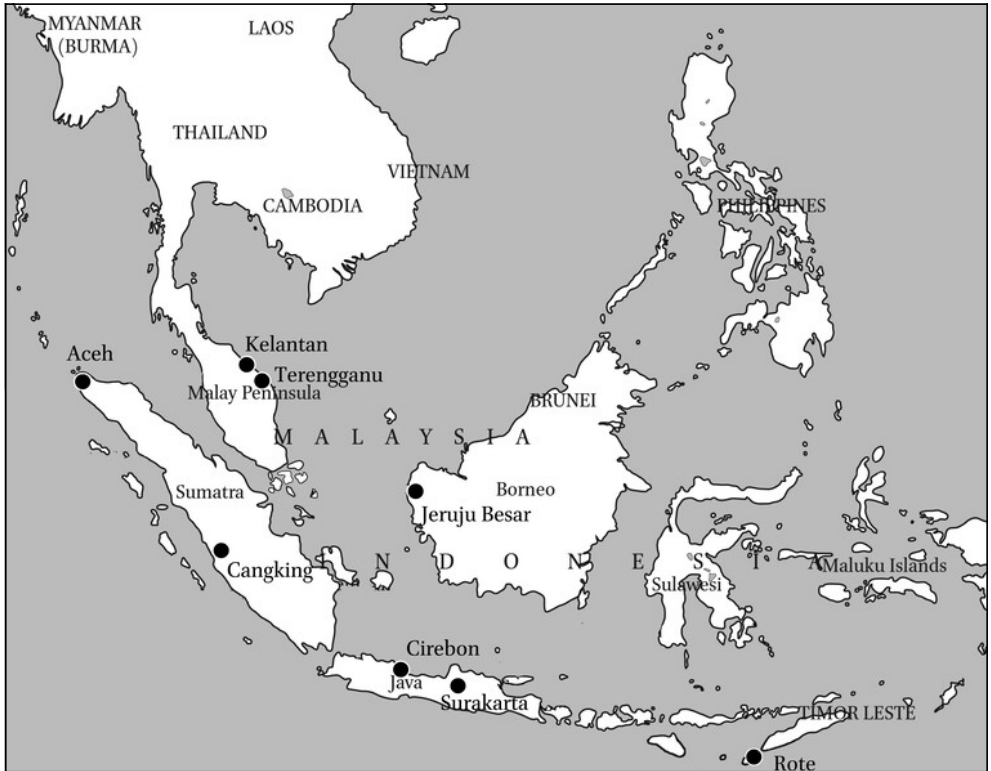
MAP 8.1   Locations where the names of the Seven Sleepers based on the al-Jamāl set have been found

A similar text in Malay—on the benefits (*faedah*) of the names of the Seven Sleepers—can be seen in a manuscript from Aceh, now in the Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia (MSS 4711, fol. 20ᵛ) (Figure 8.3).[77] Here, Diqyānūs has been made one of the Sleepers, and Qiṭmīr is not mentioned:

> *Inilah suatu faedah pada menyatakan nama Ashabul Kahfi.*
> *Bermula: Nama Ashabul Kahfi amat baik faedahnya. Telah berkata Rasulullah* SAW: *Perajar* [sic] *mereka itu anakmu akan nama Ashabul Kahfi. Maka bahawasanya nama Ashabul Kahfi jikalau engkau surat pada pintu rumah, nescaya tiadalah tertawan rumah itu. Dan mata benda tiada dijuri* [*dicuri*] *orang mata benda itu. Dan kapal atau perahu tiada karamlah perahu itu.*

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77   Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, *Katalog Manuskrip Melayu: Koleksi Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia Tambahan Kesembilan* (Kuala Lumpur: Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, 2016), 112–113.
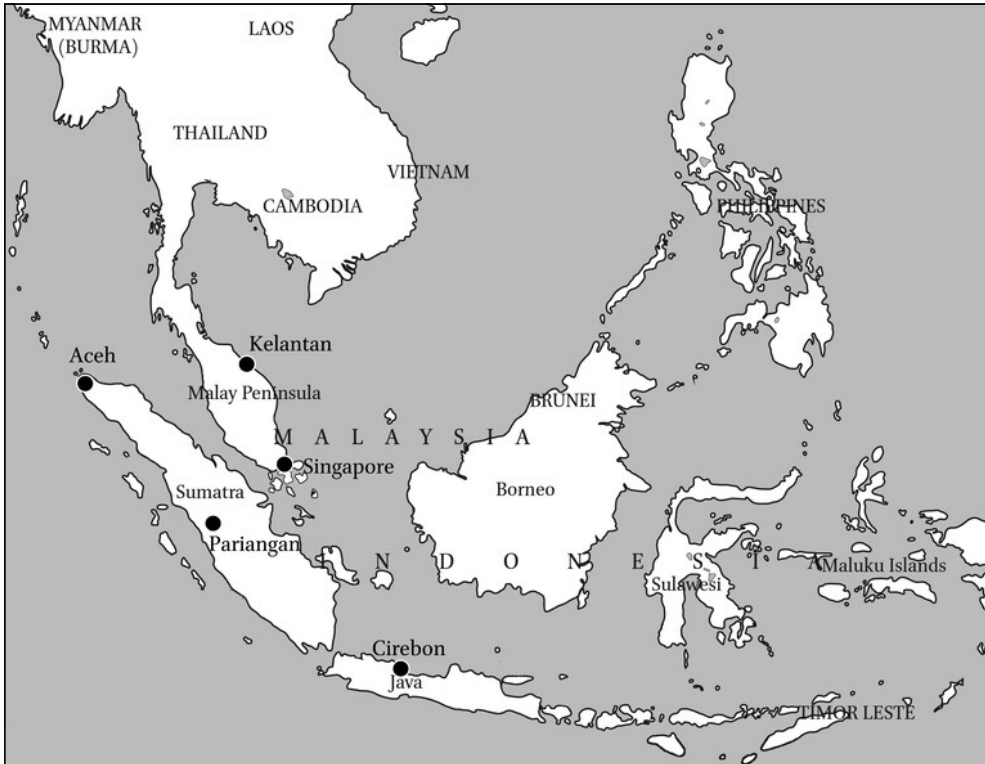
MAP 8.2 Locations where the names of the Seven Sleepers based on the al-Nāzilī set have been found

> *Dan telah berkata Ibn ʿAbbās* RA, *bermula: Nama Ashabul Kahfi amat baik manfaatnya. Setengah daripada: Jikalau engkau surat nama Ashabul Kahfi pada kertas dan melotarlah pada sama tengah api yang menyala, nescaya terpadamlah itu. Dan bagi kanak-kanak yang menangis, engkau surat pada kertas, digantung pada lehernya, nescaya diamlah ia. Dan bagi orang perhumaan, menyurat nama Ashabul Kahfi pada kayu, berdirilah kayu itu pada sama tengah humanya, nescaya terpelihara humanya itu. Dan [j]ika orang perempuan yang bunting tiga bulan atau lebih, dan bagi Umm Ṣubyān, nescaya terpeliharalah keduanya daripada cabul syaitan. Dan bagi orang yang batuk atau senak, diikatkan pada lengan kanan, nescaya sembuhlah ia. Dan bagi perempuan yang kesukaran keluar m-a-y-q [bayi?], diikatkan pada peha kiri, nescaya segera keluarnya, insya Allah taala.*

> *Bermula: Nama Ashabul Kahfi yang tersebut ini: Yamlīkhā, Makthalmī-nā, Mathlabīnā, Diqyānus, Marnūsh, Shādhunūsh, Dabarnūs.*

FIGURE 8.3 Malay text on the benefits of the names of the Seven Sleepers, Aceh, Sumatra, nineteenth century. Kuala Lumpur, Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, MSS 4711, fol. 20ᵛ
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These are the benefits of the names of the Companions of the Cave.

The names of the Companions of the Cave have great benefits. The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) said: Teach your children the names of the Companions of the Cave. For the names of the Companions of the Cave, if they are written on the door of a house, the house will not catch fire,[78] and [if they are written on] belongings, they will not be stolen, and [if they are written on] a ship or boat, it will not sink.

And Ibn ʿAbbās (may God be pleased with him) said: The names of the Companions of the Cave have great benefits. Some [say]: If you write the name of the Companions of the Cave on a piece of paper and throw it into the middle of a fire, it will be extinguished. And for the crying of a child, write it on a piece of paper, hang it around their neck, they will be silent. And for planting dry rice, write the names of the Companions of the Cave on a stick erected in the middle of the field, the crop will be protected. And if a woman is three months pregnant, and for [protection against] Umm Ṣubyān, both will be protected from attacks by evil spirits. And for those who have a cough or indigestion, tie it around the right arm, they will be cured. And for women who are having difficulty in giving birth [?], tie it around the left thigh, [the baby?] will be delivered immediately, God willing.

The names of the aforementioned Companions of the Cave: Yamlīkhā, Makthalmīnā, Mathlabīnā, Diqyānus, Marnūsh, Shādhunūsh, Dabarnūs.

A longer text appears in a manuscript taken as war booty from Aceh, now in Leiden University Library (Cod. Or. 8162; fols. 24ᵛ–26ʳ; repeated on fols. 31ᵛ–32ᵛ) (Figure 8.4).[79] It includes details of the story taken from al-Nāzilī, such as the positions of the Sleepers on the right and left hand of Decius, and the names of their city, although an alternative set of names is also given. At the end is a verse from the sūra al-Kahf (Q 18:10), which is also placed within a 3×3 square:

[fol. 24ᵛ] *Faedah ini syarah nama Ashabul Kahfi* … [extract from al-Nāzilī in Arabic] …

Yakni sabda Nabi ṣAW: Ajarkan olehmu segala anak kamu akan nama Ashabul [fol. 25ʳ] *Ashabul Kahfi. Maka bahawasanya jikalau disurat atas pintu kampung, nescaya tiadalah tertawan, dan jika disurat atas mata*

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78   *Tertawan* = "be conquered."

79   Jan Just Witkam, *Inventory of the Oriental Manuscripts of the Library of the University of Leiden*, 25 vols (Leiden: Ter Lugt Press, 2002–2019), vol. 9, [57–58].
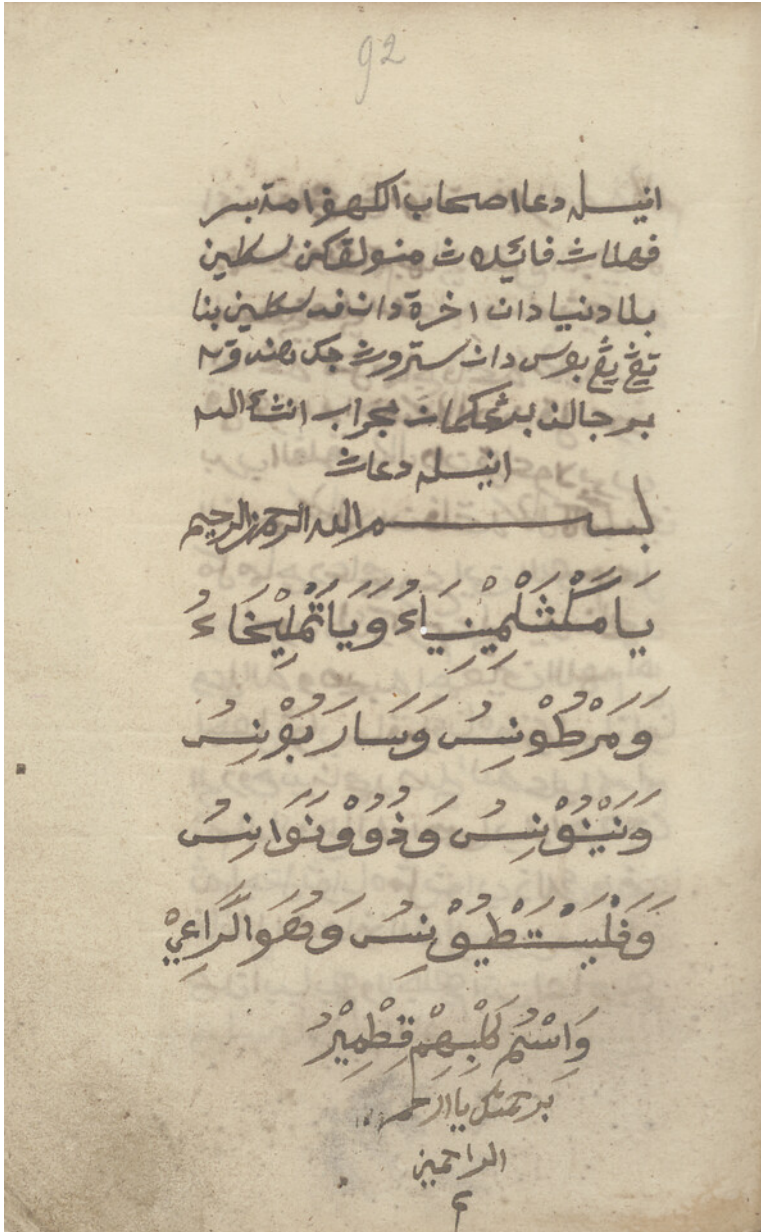
FIGURE 8.4 Malay text on the benefits of the names of the Seven Sleepers, Aceh, Sumatra, nineteenth century. Leiden, Leiden University Library, Cod. Or. 8162, fols. 25ᵛ–26ʳ

benda, nescaya tiadalah dicuri, dan jika disurat atas kapal, nescaya tiadalah karam. Kata Ibn ʿAbbās RA, berbuat khasiat nama Ashabul Kahfi itu memberi manfaat atas sembilan perkara. Pertama: Bagi meminta sesuatu. Kedua: Bagi orang yang lari. Dan ketiga: Bagi memendamkan yang tertawan, maka iaitu disurat pada kertas, maka diluturkan ke dalam sama tengah api itu; maka padamlah api itu dengan izin Allah taala. Dan yang keempat: Bagi budak menangis, maka disurat pada kertas, dihantarkan di bawah kepala dalam bantal. Dan yang kelima: Bagi pengawal suatu, seperti tanaman, maka disurat pada kayu, maka didirikan pada sama tengah perhumaan. Dan yang keenam: Bagi demam muthallathah. Dan ketujuh: Bagi syaitan Umm al-Ṣubyān. Dan yang kedualapan: Bagi orang yang sakit [fol. 25ᵛ] *kepala, diikatkan pada lengan kanan. Dan kesembilan: Bagi orang yang berlayar ke dalam laut tepelihara* [sic] *daripada berenang dalam air. Dan kesepuluh: bagi orang yang kesukaran beranak, dihikatkan pada peha kiri. Dan kesebelas: pesaka*[?] *kaya dan kemegahan. Dan kedua belas: bagi mengadap raja-raja dan segala hakim, disurat pada kertas, digantung pada peha kanan. Dan ketiga belas: Bagi bertambah-tambah akal. Dan keempat belas: Tepelihara daripada dibunuh.*

Maka nama mereka itu inilah: Yamlīkhā, Makthlimīnā, Mathlīnā—maka mereka itu yang tiga itu sahabat yang di kanan Raja Diqyanus al-jabbār; Marnūs, Shādhunūs, Barnūs—maka mereka itu yang tiga itu sahabat yang kiri raja itu. Bermula: nama anjing itu Qiṭmīr. Bermula: Nama negeri mereka itu Afsūs pada masa jahiliyah, Tarsūs pada namanya. Dinaqal daripada Tafsīr al-Kashshāf *karangan Syeikh al-Zamakhsharī. Dan setengah daripada barang yang telah dijawab* [fol. 26ʳ] *dijawabkan, nama Ashabul Kahfi apabila disurat pada dinding rumah yang kemasukan syaitan, nescaya sembuh dengan izin Allah taala. Dan iaitu inilah dinaqal daripada* Tafsīr Wāḥidī*: Makthlīnā, Yamlīkhā, Marṭūnus, Sārmūs, Dhuwābarānus, Binūnus, Akafṭaṭumūnus, dan nama anjing mereka itu Qitmir. Kata setengah adalah itu tersurat pada pintu guha Ashabul Kahfi. Berkata ia dan adalah baginya beberapa khasiat yang baik, tiada dapat dihinggakan. Dan iaitu: Rabbanā ātinā min ladunka raḥmatan wa hayyiʾ lana min amrīnā rashadan* [Q 18:10]. *Inilah rupanya.*

[fol. 24ᵛ] These are the benefits of the name of Companions of the Cave … [extract from al-Nāzilī in Arabic] …

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) said: Teach all your children the name of [fol. 25ʳ] Companions of the Cave, for if they are written on the door of a village,[80] it will not catch fire; or if they are written on belongings, then they will not be stolen, or [if they are written] on a ship, it will not sink. Ibn ʿAbbās (may God be pleased with him), said: The names of the Companions of the Cave are useful for nine things. First: For seeking something. Second: For escaping. And third: For putting out a fire—they are to be written on a piece of paper and thrown into the middle of the fire, and it shall be extinguished by the permission of God Almighty. And fourth: For the crying of a child, they are to be written on a piece of paper and placed under the child's head in the pillow. And fifth: For controlling something, like crops, they are to be written on a stick erected in the middle of the field. And sixth: For tertian fever. And the seventh: For the devil Umm al-Ṣubyān. And eighth: for headaches, [fol. 25ᵛ] tie it on the right arm. And ninth: For sailing into the sea, will be kept safe from being[81] in the water. And tenth: For difficult childbirth, tie it on the left thigh. And eleventh: For riches and greatness. And twelfth: For entering into the presences of kings and judges—they are to be written

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80   *Kampung* = "village", whereas "house" would be *rumah*.
81   *Berenang* = "swim."

on a piece of paper, tie it on the right thigh. And thirteenth: For increasing intelligence. And fourteenth: For protection from being killed.

Their names are like this: Yamlīkhā, Makthlimīnā, Mathlīnā—these three were the companions on the right hand of the king, the mighty Diqyānūs; Marnūs, Shādhunūs, Barnūs—these three were the companions on the king's left hand. The dog's name was Qiṭmīr. The pre-Islamic name of the city was Afsūs; its Islamic name is Ṭarsūs. Quoted from the *Tafsīr al-Kashshāf* by Shaikh al-Zamakhsharī. And some that have been answered, [Fol. 26ʳ] [if] the names of the Companions of the Cave are on the house in which evil spirits have entered, it will be healed with the permission of God the Exalted. And this is what is quoted from *Tafsīr Wāḥidī*: Makthlīnā, Yamlīkhā, Marṭūnus, Sārmūs, Dhuwābarānus, Bin-ūnus, Akafṭaṭumūnus, and their dog's name was Qiṭmīr. Some says these were inscribed at the entrance of the cave of the Companions of the Cave. It is said that they have a number of unlimited benefits. And that is: "Our Lord! Bestow on us mercy from Thyself, and dispose of our affair for us in the right way!" [Q 18:10]. This is what it looks like.

Another manuscript from Aceh, formerly in the Snouck Hurgronje collection, now in Leiden University Library (Cod. Or. 7313, fol. 92ʳ),[82] gives different benefits to the names of the Sleepers, including protection against wild animals (Figure 8.5):

[Fol. 92ʳ] *Inilah doa Ashabul Kahfi, amat besar pahalanya. Faedahnya menolakkan sekalian bala dunia dan akhirat, dan pada sekalian binatang yang buas dan seterunya. Jika hendak-hendak berjalan barang ke mana mujarab, insya Allah. Inilah doanya:*

Bismillāhiraḥmāniraḥīm. Yā Makthalmīnā, wa yā Tamlīkhā, wa Marṭū-nis, wa Sārabūnis, wa Nainūnis, wa Dhuwūnawānis, wa Falyastaṭyūnis. Wa huwa al-raʿī wa ismu kalbihim Qiṭmīr. Biraḥmatika yā arḥama al-rāḥimīn.

[Fol. 92ʳ] This is the *duʿāʾ* of the Companions of the Cave, its reward is great. Its benefit is to repel calamities in this world and the hereafter, and against all the wild beasts and enemies. If planning to travel anywhere, it is effective, God willing. This is the *duʿāʾ*:

In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. O Mak-thalmīnā, and O Tamlīkhā, and Marṭūnis, and Sārabūnis, and Nainūnis,

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82   Witkam, *Inventory*, vol. 8, [159–161].

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انيله دعا اصحاب الكهف وامتبسر
فهلاش فائده ش منولقكن لسكلين
بلا دنيا دان اخرة وان ندد سكلين بنا
تيغ يغ بوس دان ستروش جك ندد وم
برجالن بدتكم ان مجراب انشا الله الم
انيله دعاش

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

يَا مَكْسَلْمِينَا وَيَا تَمْلِيخَا

وَمَرْطُونِس وَسَارَبُونِس

وَنِينُونِس وَذُوفُونَوَانِس

وَفَلِسْتَطِيُونِس وَهُوَ الرَّاعِي

وَاسْمُ كَلْبِهِمْ قِطْمِيرُ

برحمتك يا ارحم الراحمين

FIGURE 8.5 Malay text on the benefits of the names of the Seven Sleepers, Aceh,
Sumatra, nineteenth century. Leiden, Leiden University Library, Cod.
Or. 7313, fol. 92ʳ
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and Dhuwūnawānis, and Falyastaṭyūnis, who was the shepherd, and the name of their dog was Qiṭmīr. By Your mercy O Most Merciful.

The texts could also be in Arabic. A Minangkabau manuscript in the collection of Surau Parak Laweh in Pariangan, West Sumatra, dated 1316/1898–1899 features the names of the Seven Sleepers from the al-Nāzilī set, together with Qiṭmīr (fol. 2ᵛ).[83] They are preceded by a short text in Arabic that says that the names are to be written on paper and placed at four corners of the house.

In a couple of nineteenth-century manuscripts from Aceh—such as one in Leiden University Library (Cod. Or. 7314, fol. 3ᵛ[84]) and another in the Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia (MSS 3853, fol. 214ᵛ[85])—the names appear on their own, without any explanations or instructions (Figure 8.6). This suggests that the manuscript owners would have already known how they could be used, and the names were written down merely as an aide-mémoire.

4.2   *The Names Written in the Form of Horizontal Lines*

The advice to write the names of the Seven Sleepers on doors might lie behind the practice of carving their names onto doorways and windows in the East Coast of the Malay peninsula. A wooden house at the Akademi Nik Rashiddin in Bachok, Kelantan, has a carved panel above the doorway with the names of the Seven Sleepers arranged over two horizontal lines, with the date 1333/1914–1915 (Figure 8.7).[86] The names are taken from the al-Jamāl set, but are difficult to read, and are placed in an arch-like arrangement. The first two names in the set—Yamlīkhā and Makshalimīnā— are placed at the right-hand side of the bottom row. The names Marṭūnis, Nīnūnus and probably Sārbūnish and Dhūnwānush continue in the top row. The series ends at the left-hand side of the bottom row with Filīsṭiyūnis and Qiṭmīr, together with a further unidentified word.

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83   Digitised by the British Library Endangered Archives Programme, EAP144/4/3, https://eap .bl.uk/archive-file/EAP144-4-3.

84   Witkam, *Inventory*, vol. 8, [161].

85   Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, *Katalog Manuskrip Melayu: Koleksi Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia. Tambahan Kelima* (Kuala Lumpur: Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, 2008), 132–134.

86   Farish A. Noor, Eddin Khoo and David Lok, *Spirit of Wood: The Art of Malay Woodcarving: Works by Master Carvers from Kelantan, Terengganu and Patani* (Singapore: Periplus, 2003), 84.

FIGURE 8.6 The names of the Seven Sleepers, probably Aceh, Sumatra,
             nineteenth century. Kuala Lumpur, Perpustakaan Negara
             Malaysia, MSS 3853, fol. 214ᵛ
             COURTESY OF PERPUSTAKAAN NEGARA MALAYSIA

Detached carved wooden panels, now kept in museums, would have simi-
larly been placed above doorways. One currently in the Jabatan Muzium
Malaysia collection, dated 1324/1906–1907, is at first glance similar to the Kelan-
tan door above and its design could probably be traced to the same source
(Figure 8.8).[87] The names of the Seven Sleepers are placed over two lines of text

87   Inv. no. E138.1980.ADP1(a)659; see Dzul Haimi Md. Zain, ed., *Manifestasi Tulisan "Jawi"*
      (Kuala Lumpur: Kementrian Kebudayaan, Kesenian dan Warisan Malaysia (KeKKWa),

FIGURE 8.7   Carved wooden panel above a doorway of a house with the names of the Seven
Sleepers, Kelantan, Malay peninsula, 1333/1914–1915. Bachok, Kelantan, Akademi
Nik Rashiddin

PHOTO: KHAIRULANWAR RAHMAT

in an arch-like arrangement, with Tamlīkhā and Makslimīnā at the right-hand
side of the bottom row, and Qiṭmīr on the left-hand side. Yet there are a cou-
ple of major differences. Firstly, names from the al-Nāzilī set also appear, either
as a replacement (Kafashṭīṭyū[s] replacing Filīsṭiyūnis), or in addition (Mash-
līniyā, Marnūs, Dabarnūs), resulting in a total of ten names. This amalgamation
indicates that not only were both sets of names circulating in the region where
the panel was made, but that both were equally thought to be valid. Perhaps it
was believed that by combining the two sets, the efficacy of the panel would be
enhanced.

Secondly, a Qurʾānic verse from sūra al-Saff, "Help from God and a speedy
victory. So give the glad tidings to the Believers" (61:13), has been added on the
left-hand side. This verse invokes God's aid in ensuring victory and has mili-
taristic connotations, although it can also be benedictory. In the East Coast of
the Malay peninsula where this panel was probably made, this particular verse

Jabatan Muzium Malaysia, 2006), 145. Many thanks to Muhammad Azam Adnan for his
help with this panel.

FIGURE 8.8 Carved wooden panel with the names of the Seven Sleepers, probably Kelantan,
Malay peninsula, 1324/1906–1907. Kuala Lumpur, Jabatan Muzium Malaysia col-
lection, inv. no. E138.1980.ADP 1(a)659
COURTESY OF JABATAN MUZIUM MALAYSIA
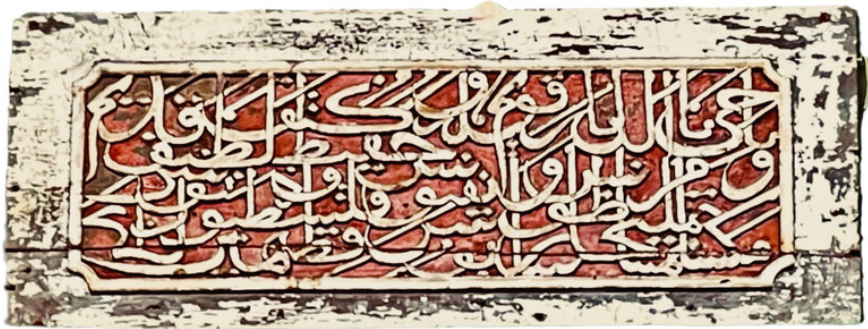
FIGURE 8.9 Carved wooden panel with the names of the Seven Sleepers, probably Tereng-
ganu, Malay peninsula, nineteenth–early twentieth century. Kuala Terengganu,
Muzium Negeri Terengganu
PHOTO: KHAIRULANWAR RAHMAT

is often found in the form of the calligram of the Lion of ʿAlī, also found on wood
panels as well as flags and textiles. It is also worth mentioning that in Kelan-
tan, these calligrams are believed to represent Qiṭmīr. The reason and history
behind this association is a potential avenue for future research.[88]

Another wood panel, now in the Muzium Negeri Terengganu, places the
names of the Sleepers over three/four lines of text (Figure 8.9). In addition,
similar designs whereby the names are arranged in horizontal lines can also
be found on textiles from the region, demonstrating its use on different media.

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88   Riddell, *Malay Court Religion*, 58. Many thanks also to Wan Hilwanie Ariff and Adela
Askandar for this observation. On these calligrams, see Farouk, "Calligrams of the Lion
of ʿAlī," 496–506.

FIGURE 8.10   Pair of carved wooden panels with the names of the Sleepers in the form of
mirror writing, Mosque of Bukit Bayas, Kuala Terengganu, Malay peninsula,
nineteenth century
PHOTO: ALEX LEE YUN PING

This can be seen, for instance, in a pair of embroidered velvet pillow ends from
Terengganu, now in the John Ang collection (Figure 8.20).

4.3   *The Names Written in the Form of Mirror Writing*

The names appear in the Mosque of Bukit Bayas, in Terengganu, built probably
in the early twentieth century. The mosque features pierced wooden panels
along its walls, some of which are calligraphic. A pair of wooden panels that
flank one of the windows feature the names of the Seven Sleepers, but in a dif-
ferent form from the previous examples (Figure 8.10).

Here, the names are in the form of mirror-writing, whereby they are doubled
symmetrically along the vertical axis, with one side being a mirrored represen-
tation of the original. It can be challenging to decipher the names contained
in this panel, but Qiṭmīr is relatively easily identifiable in the bottom row.
Although it is now part of a mosque, the calligraphic panel actually has more
secular origins. According to Tan Huism, "the mosque was built with parts of an
older palace building, Istana Ku Ja" and that the carved panels "were presented
as a gift to Hajji Wan Ahmad bin Wan Hitam, when he became mufti around
1940."[89]

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89   Tan Huism, "Qurʾānic Inscriptions on Woodcarvings from the Malay Peninsula." In *Word*

So far this is the only known example of the names of the Seven Sleepers arranged as mirror-writing. However, it is worth noting that in another Terengganu palace, Istana Tengku Nik, built in 1305/1888 during the reign of Sultan Zainal Abidin III (r. 1299/1881–1337/1918), is a carved wooden panel with part of a verse from the sūra al-Kahf: "Our lord! Bestow on us mercy from Thyself, and dispose of our affair for us in the right way!" (18:10) inscribed in mirror-writing.[90]

The use of mirror-writing in Terengganu woodwork and its relation to sūra al-Kahf and the Seven Sleepers is an area of research that requires further study.

4.4   *The Names Written in the Form of a Circle*

Indeed, the names of the Sleepers seem to be appear relatively more frequently in Terengganu, compared to other parts of the peninsula. The reasons behind its popularity in this area is unclear, and require further research.

For instance, also in the collection of the Muzium Negeri Terengganu is a talismanic brass belt buckle (*pending*) (Figure 8.11). In the middle of the buckle is a hexagram or six-pointed star, containing a series of numbers whose meaning has yet to be deciphered. It is surrounded by the names of the four Archangels (Jibrāʾīl, ʿIzrāʾīl, Mikāʾīl and Isrāfīl) and the four Rightly Guided Caliphs (Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, and ʿAlī). The names of the Seven Sleepers (including Qiṭmīr) are arranged in a circular pattern around them. These are similar to those of the al-Jamāl set, but with Kafashṭaṭūnus instead of Filīstīṭiyūnus. On the outer rim of the buckle are the *basmala* and Qurʾānic verses, including one from sūra Ṭā Hā: "(All) faces shall be humbled before the Living, the Self-Subsisting, the Sustainer. Hopeless indeed will be the man that carries iniquity (on his back)" (20:111).

Thus here, the names of the Seven Sleepers are part of a wider magical vocabulary, used in conjunction with other sacred names and verses, in order to provide protection and well-being to the wearer of the item.

Other circular designs make use of the al-Nāzilī set of names, similar to the Minangkabau manuscript above. A seal that belonged to an Abdul Samad al-Tirawi (of Tiro), Aceh, dated 1309/1891, is of this type.[91] The names of the Sleepers are arranged in a circle around the rim of the seal, while the name of the owner and the date are placed in the middle.

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     of God, Art of Man: The Qurʾān and Its Creative Expressions, edited by Fahmida Suleman (Oxford: Oxford University Press in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2007), 205–215: 213, note 10.

90   Tan, "Qurʾānic Inscriptions," 210, fig. 12.4.

91   Jakarta, Museum Nasional Indonesia, E.225; see Gallop, "The Amuletic Cult," 176–177.

FIGURE 8.11   Talismanic belt buckle with a hexagram and the names of the four Archangels,
the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs and the Seven Sleepers, probably Terengganu,
Malay peninsula, nineteenth–early twentieth century. Kuala Terengganu,
Muzium Negeri Terengganu
PHOTO: KHAIRULANWAR RAHMAT

One variation of this circular design places Qiṭmīr in the middle of the composition instead. This practice could be traced to al-Nāzilī's *Khazīnat al-asrār*, which cites Abū Saʿīd Muḥammad al-Muftī al-Khādim who said that the Seven Sleepers had suggested the design to him in a dream.[92]

It is discussed for example in a thesaurus titled *Pelajaran Bahasa Arab, Melayu dan Bugis* ("Lessons on Arabic, Malay and Bugis"), composed by Syeikh Muhammad Amin b. Haji Abbas al-Bugisi, published in Singapore in 1893 (Figure 8.12).[93] Here, Muhammad Amin writes that it is a powerful talisman that can be used for healing, business and agriculture, followed by a drawing of the design, which features the names of the youths from the al-Nāzilī set:

> *Inilah nama-nama segala Ashabul Kahfi, iaitu azimat amat besar terlampau makbul pada tiap-tiap suatu-suatu. Seperti dibuat tangkal karena*

92   See translation above.
93   Muhammad Amin b. Haji Abbas al-Bugisi, *Pelajaran Bahasa Arab, Melayu dan Bugis* ([Sin-
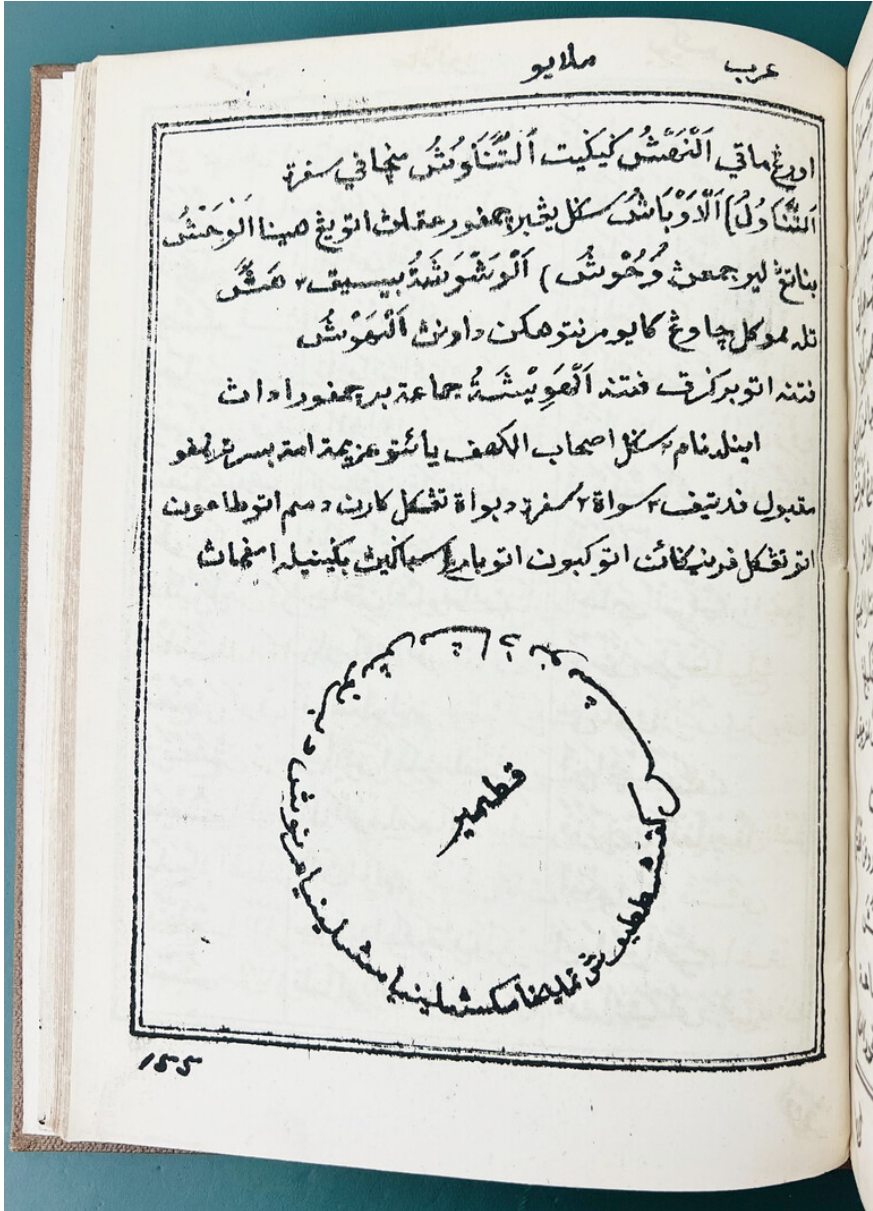
FIGURE 8.12 Talismanic design with the names of the Seven Sleepers. Muhammad Amin
b. Haji Abbas al-Bugisi, *Pelajaran Bahasa Arab, Melayu dan Bugis* (Singapore,
1893), 155. London, British Library, Asia, Pacific & Africa 14629.d.3
PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR

gapore]: [s.n.], [1893]); see Gallop, "The Amuletic Cult," 175–176. A copy is in London,
British Library, Asia, Pacific & Africa 14629.d.3.

demam atau taun, atau tangkal perniagaan, atau kebun atau barang seba-
gainya. Beginilah umpamanya.[94]

These are the names of the Companions of the Cave; it is a tremendous
and super-effective amulet for all purposes. For example it can ward off
fever or pestilence, or [it] can protect trading concerns or plantations and
other such things. It goes like this.[95]

Apart from secular works, this talisman also appears in religious texts. It can be
seen for example in a manuscript of the *Dalāʾil al-khayrāt* ("Guidelines to the
blessings") by al-Jazūlī (d. c. 870/1465), probably copied in Jeruju Besar, western
Borneo, dated 1310/1892, now in the Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia (MSS 3793)
(Figure 8.13).[96] Here, the talisman is placed on one of the pages containing var-
ious *duʿāʾ* and notes that precede the *Dalāʾil al-khayrāt*. It is drawn in purple
pencil, with Qiṭmīr in the middle. Unlike the Muhammad Amin example, how-
ever, here the names of the youths appear to have been based on the al-Jamal
set. This demonstrates how a particular talismanic design could comprise dif-
ferent textual contents.

This particular talisman appears together with other types of magical in-
scriptions and designs in a type of talismanic batik textile that may be at-
tributed to Cirebon, Java, or Sumatra, characterised by a very dark indigo blue
background with the text in white or cream (waxed), and the presence of a
number of shapes that Fiona Kerlogue suggests might represent wings.[97] In a
piece of cloth now in the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (inv. no. 1998.1.4029),
the four double wings in the middle are accompanied by the names of the four
Archangels, while the four single wings in the corners are accompanied by the
names of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs (Figure 8.14).[98] The rest of the textile
is filled with various esoteric inscriptions, designs and squares placed within
compartments.

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94   Muhammad Amin, *Pelajaran*, 155.
95   Based upon translation by Gallop, "The Amuletic Cult," 176.
96   Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, *Katalog Tambahan Kelima*, 103; Farouk Yahya, "Illustrated
      and Illuminated Manuscripts of the *Dalāʾil al-khayrāt* from Southeast Asia," *Journal of
      Islamic Manuscripts* 12, nos. 3–4 (2021): 529–581: 545–546.
97   Fiona Kerlogue, "Islamic Talismans: The Calligraphy Batiks," in *Batik Drawn in Wax*, ed.
      Itie van Hout (Amsterdam: Royal Tropical Institute, 2001), 124–135: 134.
98   Lucien de Guise, ed., *The Message and the Monsoon: Islamic Art of South East Asia* (Kuala
      Lumpur: Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, 2005).
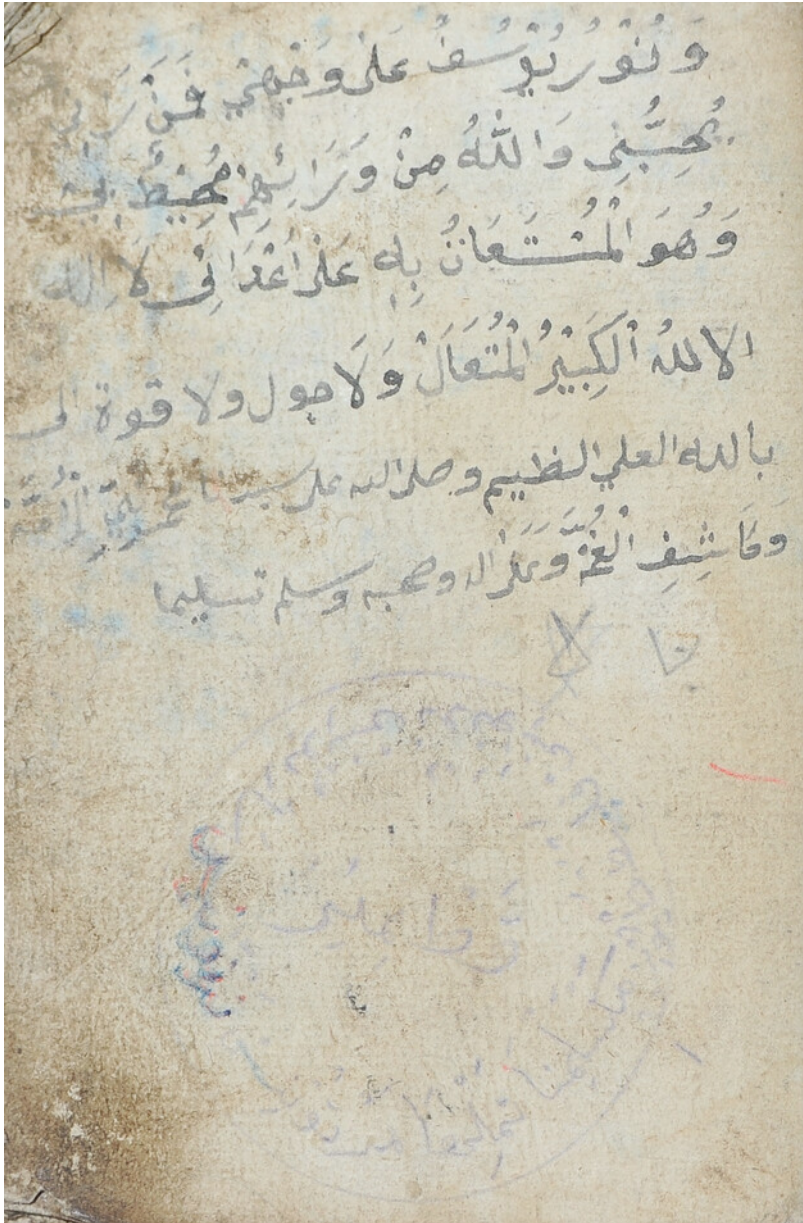
FIGURE 8.13 Talismanic design with the names of the Seven Sleepers underneath
a *duʿāʾ*, in al-Jazūlī, *Dalāʾil al-khayrāt*, probably Jeruju Besar, west-
ern Borneo, 1310/1892. Kuala Lumpur, Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia,
MSS 3793, fol 2ʳ
COURTESY OF PERPUSTAKAAN NEGARA MALAYSIA

FIGURE 8.14A   Talismanic batik cloth, probably Cirebon, Java, or Sumatra, early twentieth
century. Kuala Lumpur, Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, inv. no. 1998.1.4029
© ISLAMIC ARTS MUSEUM MALAYSIA

FIGURE 8.14B   Detail of circular design of the Seven Sleepers
© ISLAMIC ARTS MUSEUM MALAYSIA

The names of the Seven Sleepers—arranged in a circle with Qiṭmīr in the middle—appears in one of these compartments, next to a design that resembles a pair of fronds, and sandwiched between rows of disconnected letters and a 10 × 4 square containing the *shahāda* (amongst other texts). Thus here, like the belt buckle earlier, the names of the Seven Sleepers work in conjunction with other talismanic inscriptions and designs to confer benefits to the user.

This type of cloth may also be made into talismanic vest, such as one now in the Tropenmuseum collection (inv. no. TM-5663-18) and another in the Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore (inv. no. 1997-04181).[99] In both examples the names of the Seven Sleepers are placed between the four single-wing shapes, directly in the chest of the wearer. Whether this placement has a special significance is unclear.

Many of the texts on these types of textiles, including the names of the Sleepers, are difficult to read or illegible. This brings up the issue of literacy among the batik makers, but perhaps a more important consideration would be the function of the inscriptions. Although the presence of Arabic script may signal to others the sacred nature of the textiles, the texts would have been difficult to decipher when worn, regardless of their legibility. Instead, we may see them as being directed towards God or His intercessors, in order to invoke them for their aid.[100]

A circular design with Qiṭmīr in the centre can also be found in architecture, as can be seen in the *mihrab* (prayer niche) of the eighteenth-century Great Mosque of Surakarta in Java (Figure 8.15), the subject of a study by Tawalinuddin Haris.[101] The *mihrab* is shaped as a semi-circular arch, supported by two square columns, with two further round columns on each side. In the middle of the arch is a *tughrā*, the official signature of the Ottoman sultans. Next to it are the numbers 1332 and 1270, which might represent the *hijri* dates for the *mihrab*,[102] in which case they are equivalent to 1913–1914 and 1853–1854 respectively. The former places the construction of the *mihrab* within the reign of Pakubuwana X (r. 1310/1893–1358/1939), who had commissioned an expansion the mosque.[103]

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99   For the Tropenmuseum vest, see Kerlogue, "Islamic Talismans," 133; Mirjam Shatanawi, *Islam at the Tropenmuseum* (Arnhem: LM Publishers, 2014), 228–229. I am grateful to Syed Hafiz Nasir for bringing the Singapore vest to my attention.

100   Kerlogue, "Islamic Talismans," 135; Farouk, "Calligrams of the Lion of ʿAlī," 460.

101   Tawalinuddin Haris, "Inskripsi Ashabul Kahfi pada Mihrab Masjid Agung Surakarta," *Ṣuḥuf* 5, no. 1 (2012): 97–115.

102   According to Haris, "Inskripsi Ashabul Kahfi," 101.

103   Haris, "Inskripsi Ashabul Kahfi," 106–107.

FIGURE 8.15A   *Mihrab* of the Great Mosque of Surakarta, Java, late nineteenth–early twentieth century

On top of the two round columns on the sides are decorative shapes in the form of a vase, with a fan above, topped by a star-shaped medallion. They resemble diagrams or charts found at the end of Southeast Asian Qurʾāns of the Sulawesi style. These charts contain statistics on the composition of the Qurʾān (e.g. number of letters, etc), and are based on a thirteenth-century diagram titled *Bayān al-aʿdād allatī taʿallaqat bi-al-Qurʾān al-Majīd* ("Elucidation of the Numbers of the Constituent Parts of the Glorious Qurʾān") by Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Samarqandī (fl. c. 600/1203–1204).[104]

The contents in the decorations of the Surakarta *mihrab* however are different. The medallions feature the names of either Allāh or Muḥammad, while the fans contain Qurʾānic verses and *ṣalawāt* (blessings), underneath of which are

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104   Annabel Teh Gallop, "The Boné Qurʾan from South Sulawesi," in *Treasures of the Aga Khan Museum: Arts of the Book and Calligraphy*, ed. Margaret S. Graves and Benoît Junod (Istanbul: Aga Khan Trust for Culture and Sakip Sabanci University & Museum, 2010), 162–173: 170.

FIGURE 8.15B   Detail of decoration next to the *mihrab* with the names of the Seven
Sleepers
PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR

circles containing the names of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.[105] What is interesting for our present purposes are the vases, which have the names of the Seven Sleepers placed within a lotus flower motif. The petals contain the names of the youths from the al-Jamāl set—Makslimīnā, Tamlīkhā, Marṭūnus, Nīnūnus, Sārbūnus, Dhūnwānus, and Filīstiṭūnus [sic]—arranged in a circular pattern with Qiṭmīr at the centre.

It is unclear why the names of the Sleepers are placed at the *mihrab*. Haris has suggested that perhaps it is because *mihrab*s resembles caves in terms of their look and function.[106] The Prophet Muḥammad was in a cave when he received the Revelation from God through the angel Gabriel. Similarly in Indonesia, caves were also used by ascetics for spiritual rituals and meditation.

The presence of the *tughra* indicates some degree of Ottoman influence in the *mihrab*, and thus, by extension, on the practice of inscribing the names of the Seven Sleepers, at least in Surakarta. Haris notes that Pakubuwana x had placed the *tughrā* motif in other locations in the mosque, and among the inscriptions in the *mihrab* is the name Sayyid Sirājuddīn al-Balqīnī, who may have been from the Balkans.[107] However the *tughrā* also frequently appears on Indonesian calligraphic batiks, where it has apotropaic connotations.[108] The presence of the *tughrā* motif and the names of the Sleepers, as well as other inscriptions on the *mihrab*, may similarly perform a protective function.

4.5   *The Names Written in the Form of a Six-Pointed Star*

Indeed there are a number of similarities in the design of Southeast Asian talismans featuring the names of the Seven Sleepers with those from the Ottoman world. For instance, a common Ottoman design sees the names being shaped into a six-pointed-star or hexagram (also known as the Seal of Solomon).[109] Here, the names of the youths used are typically from the al-Nāzilī set. Together with Qiṭmīr, they form a circular pattern with certain letters being elongated to form the star. The text in the middle of the star varies between designs. For instance, a gold amulet (*māskeh*) in the British Museum contains the inscription *mā shāʾallāh* ("As God wills") in its centre.[110]

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105   For the inscriptions on the *mihrab*, see Haris, "Inskripsi Ashabul Kahfi," 101–104.

106   Haris, "Inskripsi Ashabul Kahfi," 111.

107   Haris, "Inskripsi Ashabul Kahfi," 112.

108   Kerlogue, "Islamic Talismans," 127–128, 131.

109   See for instance Halûk Perk, Osmanlı Tılsım Mühürleri (Istanbul: Halûk Perk Müzesi Yayinlari, 2010), 95–103.

110   Inv. no. 1994,0915.888; Porter, "Amulets Inscribed," fig. 7.4.

FIGURE 8.16
Paper amulet, probably Syria, nineteenth century
AFTER SELIGMANN, "DAS SIEBEN-
SCHLÄFER-AMULETT," FIG. 4

A paper amulet with a similar design was published by Siegfried Seligmann in 1914 (Figure 8.16).[111] In Syria and Egypt this talisman was often hung in reception-rooms, "to tie fortune to the house and keep bad luck at bay" ("*um das Glück an das Haus zu fesseln und das Unglück fernzuhalten*").[112] In the middle of the design is one of the names of God in the form of mirror writing— "*Yā Fattāh*" ("O Opener"), "an incantation that opens the gates of happiness" ("*eine Beschwörungsformel, welche die Pforten des Glückes öffnet*"). It was considered to be the most effective for protection: "On a seal, the talisman protects the secrecy of correspondence, on a sabre blade the life of the fighter/warrior, and on jewellery the beauty of the wearer" ("*Dieser Talisman schützt auf dem Siegel das Briefgeheimnis, auf der Säbelklinge das Leben des Kämpfers, auf dem Frauenschmuck die Schönheit der Trägerin*").[113]

We find similar designs in Southeast Asia. It appears for instance in a single-sheet manuscript in the Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia (Pt. 127 No. 82) that contains various *duʿāʾ* and two seal impressions. The seal on the right-hand side of the page has the names of the Seven Sleepers in the shape of a six-pointed star (the impressions of the names are unclear to determine which set they belong to). In the middle is written "*Yā Allāh*" ("O God"). Whether this manuscript was produced in Indonesia, or somewhere in the Ottoman Empire (perhaps the Hijaz), is unclear.

This type of star-shaped talismanic design can also be found on talismanic shirts. In such cases they are again part of a wider magical vocabulary, used in conjunction with other sacred names and verses, in order to confer protection

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111 S. Seligmann, "Das Siebenschläfer-Amulett," *Der Islam* 5, no. 4 (1914): 370–388: fig. 4.
112 Seligmann, "Das Siebenschläfer-Amulett," 378.
113 Seligmann, "Das Siebenschläfer-Amulett," 378.

FIGURE 8.17   Talismanic shirt, Rote, nineteenth century. Jakarta, Museum
                        Nasional Indonesia, inv. no. 3376
                        AFTER NAPITUPULU AND SULISTIYONO, *ARCHIPEL*, 156, CAT.
                        141

and well-being to its wearer. A talismanic shirt, now in the Museum Nasional
Indonesia (inv. no. 3376), is said to have originated on the island of Rote (or
Roti) and probably dates to the nineteenth century (Figure 8.17).[114] Talismanic
inscriptions and designs are written in black ink on a plain white cotton back-
ground. They include the *shahāda*, Qurʾānic verses, and the Names of God. Also
on the front are three mirrored pairs of the calligrams of the Lion of ʿAlī.

In between the calligrams are two circular medallions with star patterns.
The one on the right is composed of the sūra al-Ikhlāṣ (112), while the one on
the left is a rare example of a star pattern made from the names of the Seven

114   On this shirt, see Intan Mardiana Napitupulu and Singgih Tri Sulistiyono, eds., *Archipel.*
         Indonésie, les royaumes de la mer (Ghent: Snoeck, 2018), 156, cat. 141; Farouk, "Calligrams
         of the Lion of ʿAlī," 506–508.

Sleepers from the al-Jamāl set. In its middle is the name of God "*Yā Ḥāfiẓ*" ("O Preserver").[115]

4.6   *The Names Written in the Form of a Calligram*
Another Ottoman connection with Southeast Asia can be seen in the practice of composing calligrams in the form of ships. As mentioned earlier, it is reported that writing the names of the Seven Sleepers on ships was thought to prevent them from sinking. According to an account reported by Carl Iken in 1822 this was because the Seven Sleepers had boarded a ship; this is supposedly mentioned in a verse in the Qurʾān. As a result they became the protectors of shipping, and are invoked as patron saints of storms and weather.[116] Ship/boat-shaped calligrams composed from the names of the Sleepers were especially popular in the Ottoman world, being hung on walls, as well as associated with Noah's Ark.[117]

Calligrams in this form are also found in Southeast Asia. One example from West Sumatra, now in the Bodleian Libraries, is shaped as a side-wheel paddle steamer carrying the Dutch flag (Figure 8.18).[118] The text in black ink at the bottom of the composition gives the date and name of the calligrapher: Abdul Wahid from Kota Lawas, who composed it in Cangking in 1283/1866.

The hull of the ship carries the names of the Seven Sleepers of the al-Jamāl set, with the words *Ahl al-Kahf* on the prow. On one of the masts is the name Qiṭmīr, but here the calligrapher has added two other names of the dog as found in al-Jamāl's text—Ḥimrān and Rayyān—a highly unusual addition. The names of the Four Archangels are found on the other two masts of the ship. Two 4×4 magic squares containing the numbers 1–16 are placed at the bottom right and left corners of the composition. The square on the bottom right is surrounded by a Qurʾānic verse from sūra al-Anbiyāʾ, "We said, 'O fire! Be thou cool and (a means of) safety for Abraham!'" (21:69), which links this talisman to another power of the names of the Seven Sleepers as found in al-Jamāl's work—the ability to extinguish fires.

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115   The same inscription "Yā Ḥāfiẓ" is also found in the middle of the amulet published by Canaan, "The Decipherment," fig. 6. However here the names of the surrounding Sleepers are unclear, but they may instead correspond to the al-Nāzilī set.

116   Carl Jacob Ludwig Iken, "Über die Legende von den Sieben Schläfern," in *Touti Nameh*, trans. Carl Jacob Ludwig Iken (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1822), 288–311: 289.

117   On these calligrams, see Malik Aksel, *Türklerde dinî resimler: Yazı-resim* (Istanbul: Elif Kitabevi, 1967), 65–70.

118   Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Ms.Arab.e.58; see Farouk Yahya, "*Jimat* in Form of a Ship," in *Power and Protection: Islamic Art and the Supernatural*, ed. Francesca Leoni (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2016), 36–37, cat. 105.
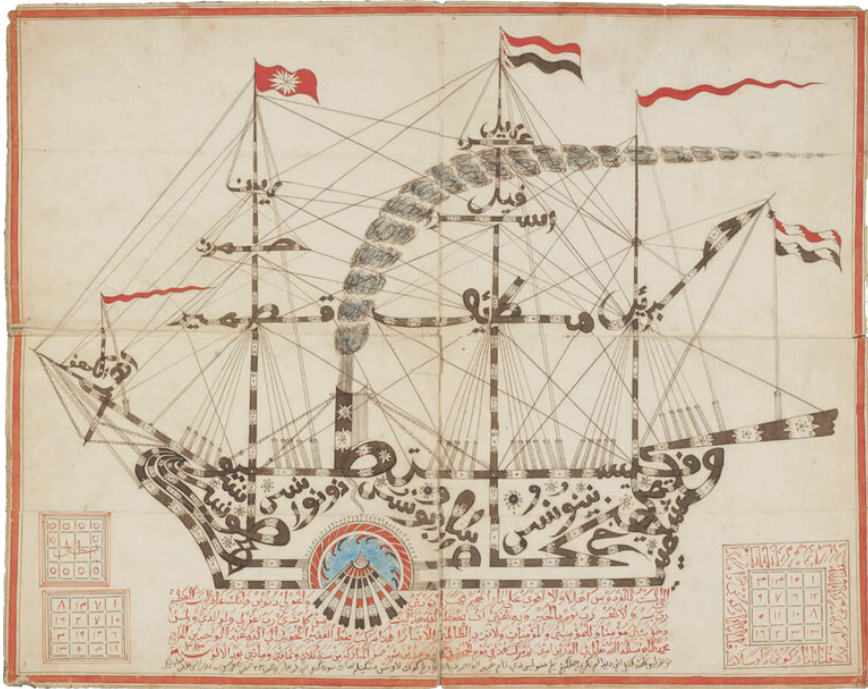
FIGURE 8.18   Calligram of a ship with the names of the Seven Sleepers and Archangels,
                Cangking, Sumatra, 1283/1866. Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, Ms.Arab.e.58
                AFTER FAROUK, "*JIMAT*," 37.

4.7   *The Name Qiṭmīr*

The name of the Sleepers' dog, Qiṭmīr, was also believed to have power of its
own, often used for ensuring the safe arrival of letters. The practice of writing
Qiṭmīr on envelopes is attested by the French jewel merchant and traveller Jean
Chardin (1643–1713) in the second volume of his account of his travels in Iran,
published in 1711. In it he describes a practice among the Persians of writing
the name of the dog three times on the envelope of a letter. He adds that this
practice arose because, according to a story, "when God took the Sleepers up
into Paradise, the dog attached itself to the robe of one of these Sleepers and
was thus taken up to heaven as well" ("*quand Dieu les enleva en paradis, le chien
s'attacha à la robe d'un de ces dormants et fut ainsi enlevé au ciel*"); God then put
the dog in charge of delivering letters and looking after travellers' belongings.[119]

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119   Jean Chardin, *Voyages du chevalier Chardin en Perse*, 10 vols (Amsterdam: Jean Louis de
       Lorme, 1711), vol. 2, 301.

Similar practices could be found in Southeast Asia. Annabel Gallop has found that here it is closely related to the practice of writing the name of a ninth-century Sufi saint from Baghdad known as Maʿrūf al-Karkhī (d. 200/815–816). Instructions for the use of both names can be found in Malay manuscripts of the *Kitab Terasul* (Guide to Letter-Writing), such as one from Brunei or Sarawak in Borneo, dateable to the second half of the nineteenth century.[120] Here, the author advises the scribe to write the names of Qiṭmīr or Maʿrūf al-Karkhī on the "diagonal sides of the address of the letter" (*"pada tiap-tiap siring penjuru alamat surat"*), for letters to "very important people or those of royal blood or people of good standing or of similar status" (*"orang besar-besar atau raja-raja atau orang baik-baik atau sama taranya"*).[121] As such, we find letters with both names, such as one from Sultan Ahmad Zainuddin of Jambi (r. 1302/1885–1317/1899), Sumatra, dated 1305/1888.[122] It is also worth noting that the name Maʿrūf al-Karkhī is always written as disconnected letters for esoteric purposes.[123] Furthermore, apart from Qiṭmīr, it is also often combined with the talismanic word *budūḥ* (or its numerical equivalent, 2 4 6 8).[124]

As Gallop has found, a clue to the connection between Qiṭmīr and Maʿrūf al-Karkhī can be found in Benjamin Frederick Matthes' 1860 publication on texts from Makassar in South Sulawesi, *Makassaarsche chrestomathie*. According to Matthes, it seems that—at least in Makassar—the figure of Maʿrūf al-Karkhī had been conflated with the Seven Sleepers. According to one account, the saint fell asleep in a cave after a long tiring journey, and woke up 500 years later with his dog Qiṭmīr at the entrance.[125]

5   Contemporary Usage

Finally, the use of the names of the Seven Sleepers as talismans is still practiced in Southeast Asia today. In an article published in 2015, Mohd. Nizam Sahad reports of a paper talisman containing sacred and magical inscriptions including a magic square and the name Qiṭmīr, displayed at a barber shop in

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120   Cambridge University Library, Add 3790; see Gallop, "The Amuletic Cult," 184–185 and fig. 17.

121   Gallop, "The Amuletic Cult," 184.

122   Leiden, Museum Volkenkunde, 03–243; see Gallop, "The Amuletic Cult," fig. 13.

123   Gallop, "The Amuletic Cult," 181.

124   Gallop, "The Amuletic Cult," 179 ff. On *budūḥ*, see Farouk Yahya, *Magic and Divination in Malay Illustrated Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 203.

125   B.F. Matthes, *Makassaarsche chrestomathie* (Amsterdam: Frederik Muller, 1860); see also Gallop, "The Amuletic Cult," 191–192.

FIGURE 8.19   Stickers with the names of the Seven Sleepers purchased from a Malaysian
online shopping portal in 2022
ITEMS IN THE AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

Penang.[126] According to the owner, it was acquired from a madrasa and is used
to increase business and for protection.

We can find items such as stickers and other forms of merchandise with
the names of the Seven Sleepers being sold on online shopping platforms in
Malaysia and Indonesia. Some feature the names arranged in a circular pattern
with Qiṭmīr in the middle, similar to the earlier nineteenth–early twentieth
century examples (Figure 8.19).

There have also been various discussions online on the permissibility of
using such objects. In general these are disapproving of the practice, as it might
lead to polytheism (*shirk*).[127]

6   Conclusion

To conclude, talismans featuring the names of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus
from Southeast Asia appear on a variety of media such as wood, paper, metal-

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126   Mohd. Nizam Sahad, "Penggunaan Azimat Pelaris Perniagaan Menurut Perspektif Akidah
Islam," *Melayu: Jurnal Antarabangsa Dunia Melayu* 8, no. 1 (2015): 18–44.

127   Chempaka Chenta, "Rajah Ashabul Kahfi yang Membawa Kesyirikan," 1 March 2018, https:
//telegra.ph/RAJAH-ASHABUL-KAHFI-YANG-MEMBAWA-KESYIRIKAN-03-01
(last accessed 7 December 2021); Aly Reza, "Kontroversi Kaligrafi Rajah Qithmir: Menghina
Tuhan atau Sebatas Analogi?," 13 Mei 2020, https://mojok.co/terminal/kontroversi-kaligra
fi-rajah-qithmir-menghina-tuhan-atau-sebatas-analogi/ (last accessed 7 December 2021).

work and textiles. The names vary, but can generally be divided into two sets: one based on al-Jamāl's text and the other on al-Nāzilī's. There are also a variety of designs—they may be written as straight horizontal lines, or arranged in a circle, sometimes with Qiṭmīr in the middle, or in the form of a star. They can also be made in the form of calligrams or as mirror-writing.

The names may also be used in conjunction with other sacred vocabulary, often in the case of clothing such as in talismanic shirts. On the other hand, the name Qiṭmīr has special power of its own and can appear without the others.

The examples discussed in this chapter demonstrate the connections between Southeast Asia with the rest of the Islamic world, both in terms of literature that explain their function (such as in *tafsīr*) and in their design. Talismans featuring the names of the Sleepers are still used in the present day, with some examples harking back to earlier designs, although there is some controversy regarding their use.

Appendix

This is a selected list of manuscripts and objects containing the names of the Seven Sleepers, grouped according to the set or series used.

Names Beginning with Makslimīnā

A. **Based on the al-Ṭabarī set (ninth–tenth century): Makslimīnā, Maḥsmilīnā, Yamlīkhā, Marṭūs, Kasuṭūnus, Bayrūnus, Rasmūnus/Daynamūs, Baṭūnus, and Qālūs:**

1. Commentary of sūra al-Kahf, probably Aceh, c. 1600. Cambridge University Library, Ii.6.45, fol. 42ᵛ–43ʳ: Maksalmīnā, Makhsalmīnā, Yamlīkhā, Marṭūnus, Bayratūs, Dabunūnus, Taṭyūnus; also Diqyānus. Another set of names in no. E1 below.

2. *Kisah daripada Aṣḥāb al-Kahf*, included in a *tafsīr* of verses 18:6 (incomplete) to 25:77, Indonesia, with a seal dated 1201/1787. Leiden University Library, Cod. Or. 6604, fol. 1ʳ: Maksalmīna … [illegible] … [illegible] … Marṭūnus, Bayrūnus … [illegible] … Yuwāsubūnus; also Duqyānūs (sic; on fol. 1v).

3. Collective volume of religious texts, Aceh, nineteenth century. Leiden University Library, Cod. Or. 7314, fol. 3ᵛ (formerly Loan Snouck Hurgronje, Mal. 87). Makthalmīnā, Mathlayīnā, Timlīkhā, Marnūsh, Dabarnūsh, Shārnūsh, Marṭūsh; also Qiṭmīr. Another set of names in no. B5 below.

B.   **Based on the al-Jamāl set (eighteenth century): Makslimīnā, Yamlīkhā/ Tamlīkhā, Marṭūnus, Nīnūnus, Sārbūnus, Dhūnwānus, and Filīstiṭiyūnus:**

1.   Talismanic sheet, Cangking, Sumatra, 1283/1866. Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, Ms.Arab.e.58 (Figure 8.18). Makshlimīnā, Tamlīkhā, Marṭūnus, Nīnūnus, Sārbūnus, Dhūnwānus, Filīstiṭiyūnus; also Qiṭmīr. Names in the form of a ship calligram.

2.   Al-Jazūlī, *Dalā'il al-khayrāt*, probably Jeruju Besar, western Borneo, 1310/ 1892. Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, MSS 3793, fol. 2ʳ (Figure 8.13). Maksaliminā, Tamlihā, Marṭūnis, Nīrnūnis, Sārbūnis, Dhūnwānis, Falyastaṭyūnis; also Qiṭmīr. Names in a circular pattern with Qiṭmīr in the middle.

3.   Talismanic shirt, Rote, nineteenth century. Museum Nasional Indonesia, inv. no. 3376 (Figure 8.17). Sathā(?), Tamlīkhā, Marṭūnus, Fīnūnus, Rābūnus, Dhūwanuanus, Filīstūnus; also Qiṭmīr. Names in a six-pointed star pattern.

4.   Collective volume of religious texts and on talismans and divination, Aceh, nineteenth century. Leiden University Library, Cod. Or. 7313, fol. 92ʳ (formerly Loan Snouck Hurgronje, Mal. 86) (Figure 8.5). Makthalmīnā, Tamlīkhā, Marṭūnis, Sārabūnis, Nainūnis, Dhuwūnawānis, Falyastaṭyūnis; also Qiṭmīr.

5.   Collective volume of religious texts, Aceh, nineteenth century. Leiden University Library, Cod. Or. 7314, fol. 3ᵛ (formerly Loan Snouck Hurgronje, Mal. 87). Makthalminīyā', Tamlīkhā', Marṭūnis, Nainūnis, Sārabūnis, Falyastaṭuyūnis, Dhūnawānis; also Qiṭmīr. Another set of names in no. A3 above.

6.   Magic and divination manuscript, probably Aceh, nineteenth century. Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, MSS 3853, fol. 214ᵛ (Figure 8.6). Maksalmīnā', Tamlīkhā, Marṭūnis, Nainūnis, Sārbūnis, Dhūwunawānis, Falyastaṭiyūnis; also Qiṭmīr. *Innallāha alā kulli shai'in qadīr* ("Indeed, God has power over all things") repeated twice underneath the names.

7.   *Mihrab* of the Great Mosque of Surakarta, late nineteenth–early twentieth century (Figure 8.15). Makslimīnā, Tamlīkhā, Marṭūnus, Nīnūnus, Sārbūnus, Dhūnwānus, Filīstiṭūnus; also Qiṭmīr. Names in a circular pattern (in the form of a flower) with Qiṭmīr in the middle.

8.   [Probably] Talismanic shirt, probably Cirebon, 1900–1940. Tropenmuseum, inv. no. TM-5663-18. Makslimīnā, Tamlīkhā, Marṭūnus … [the rest illegible]; also Qiṭmīr.

C. **Based on the al-Jamāl set (eighteenth century) but with Kafashṭaṭyū-**
nus (from the al-Nāzilī set) instead of Filīsṭiyūnus:

1. *Hikayat Tamlikha*, Aceh, nineteenth–early twentieth century. Leiden University Library, Cod. Or. 7992, fol. 31; Damsté, "De legend," Text B, 487: *Inilah azimat* Maksalmina, Tamlikha, Marṭunis, Nabunis (or Banunis), Sarinus, Duwirasu, Kafṣṭaṭunis. Another set of names in no. D2 below.

2. Collective volume of religious texts and on talismans, Aceh, nineteenth century. Leiden University Library, Cod. Or. 8162, fol. 26ʳ; repeated on fol. 32ᵛ (Figure 8.4). Makthlīnā, Yamlīkhā, Marṭunus, Sārmūs, Dhuwāba-rānus, Binūnus, Akafṭaṭumūnus; also Qiṭmīr. Another set of names in no. F3 below.

3. Belt buckle, probably Terengganu, nineteenth–early twentieth century. Muzium Negeri Terengganu (Figure 8.11). Makslamīnā, Yamlīkhā, Mar-ṭūnus, Siyārnūs, Dhūnwānus, Bīnūnus, Kafasiṭaṭūnus; also Qiṭmīr. Names in a circular pattern.

4. Pair of velvet pillow ends embroidered with raised gold ribbon embroidery (*tekat gem*), Terengganu, early twentieth century. Kuala Lumpur, John Ang collection (Figure 8.20). Makslimīnā, Tamlīkhā … [illegible] … Kashfūṭaṭ; also Qiṭmīr. Names in horizontal lines.

Names Beginning with Yamlīkhā

D. **Based on the al-Jamāl set (eighteenth century) but names begin with**
Yamlīkhā:

1. *Hikayat Tamlikha*, copied in Matang Keupula, Blang Awe, Aceh, 1329/1911. Leiden University Library, Cod. Or. 7993; Damsté, "De legend," Text A, 426, 448: Tamlékha, Makeusalémina, Mareutunih, Nununih, Sareubunih, Paliaseutatiunih; 465: Tamlékha, Makeusalémina, Mareutunih, Nununih, Sareubunih, Dawōnuanisu, Paliaseutatiunih.

2. *Hikayat Tamlikha*, Aceh, nineteenth–early twentieth century. Leiden University Library, Cod. Or. 7992; Damsté, "De legend," Text B, 474–475: Tam-lékha, Makeusaimina, Mareutuanòïh, Nununòïh, Sireubunòïh, Paleuia-seutatiunisu. Another set of names in no. C1 above.

3. Wooden door, Kelantan, 1333/1914–1915. Akademi Nik Rashiddin (Figure 8.7). Yamlīkhā, Makshalimīnā, Marṭūnis, Nīnūnus, Sārbūnish(?), Dhūn-wānush(?), Filīsṭiyūnis; also Qiṭmīr. Names arranged in horizontal lines.

4. Wooden panel, probably Terengganu, nineteenth–early twentieth century. Muzium Negeri Terengganu (Figure 8.9). Yamlīkhā, Makslimīnā, Marṭūnus, […] Filīsṭiyū[nus?]; also Qiṭmīr. Names in horizontal lines.

5. Collective volume of divinatory techniques and *duʿāʾ*, Aceh, nineteenth century. Leiden University Library, Cod. Or. 8722, fols. 177ᵛ–178ʳ. Tamlīkhāʾ,

Maksalimniāʾ, Murṭūnisū, Nainūnisu, Sarbūnisu, Dhunūnisu, Falyastaṭiyūnisu; also Qiṭmīr.

E.   Based on the al-Jamāl set (eighteenth century) but names begin with Yamlīkhā, and Kafashṭaṭiyūsh instead of Filīstiṭiyūnus:

1.   Wooden panels at the Mosque of Bukit Bayas, Kuala Terengganu, nineteenth century (Figure 8.10). Yamlīkhā, Makslimīnā, Marṭūnus, Nīnūnus, Sārbaṭiyus(?), Kashfūṭaṭ; also Qiṭmīr. Names in the form of mirror writing.

F.   Based on the al-Zamakhsharī set (twelfth century): Yamlīkhā, Makshalīniyā, Mashlīniyā, Marnūsh, Dabarnūsh, Shādhunūsh and an unnamed shepherd:

1.   Commentary of sūra al-Kahf, probably Aceh, c. 1600. Cambridge University Library, Ii.6.45, fol. 61ᵛ: Yamlīkhā, Maksalmīnā, Malsalmīnā, Marnūs, Dabarmūs, Shādnūsh. Followed by Maksalmīnā, Tabyūnus, Yamlīkhā, Kasafūṭaṭ, Dharqaṭayūnus, Yuwānisabūsh; also Qiṭmīr. Another set of names in no. A1 above.

2.   Muhammad b. Ismail Daud al-Fatani, *al-Durr al-basīm fī aṣḥāb al-kahf wa al-raqīm*, Mecca: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Mīriya, 25 Shawwāl 1310/11 May 1893 (Figure 8.2); Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, MSS 1668, fol. 7ʳ. Tamlīkhā, Makslimīnā, Maslīnā, Martlinūs, Kastus, Shādinūs; also Diqyānus.

3.   Collective volume of religious texts and on talismans, Aceh, nineteenth century. Leiden University Library, Cod. Or. 8162, fol. 25ᵛ, repeated on fol. 32ʳ (Figure 8.4). Yamlīkhā, Makthlimīnā, Mathlīnā, Marnūs, Shādhunūs, Barnūs; also Qiṭmīr and Diqyānus. Another set of names in no. C2 above.

G.   Based on the al-Nāzilī set (nineteenth century): Yamlīkhā, Makshalīniyā, Mashlīniyā, Marnūsh, Dabarnūsh, Shādhunūsh and Kafashṭaṭiyūsh:

1.   Seal of Abdul Samad al-Tirawi, Tiro, Aceh, 1309/1891. Museum Nasional Indonesia, E.225. Yamlikhā, Makthlamīna, Mathlīna, Marnush, Dabarnūsh, Shādhunūsh, Kafashṭaṭiyūsh; also Qiṭmīr. Names in a circular pattern.

2.   Muhammad Amin b. Haji Abbas al-Bugisi, *Pelajaran Bahasa Arab, Melayu dan Bugis*, Singapore, 1893 (Figure 8.12). Tamlikhā, Makshlīnia, Mashlīnia, Marnush, Dabarnūsh, Shādhunūsh, Kafashṭaṭiyūsh; also Qiṭmīr. Names in a circular pattern with Qiṭmīr in the middle.

3.   Magic and divination manuscript, Surau Parak Laweh, Pariangan, West Sumatra, 1316/1898–1899. Endangered Archives Programme, EAP144/4/3,

fol. 2ᵛ. Yamlīkhā, Makthalīnā, Mithlīnā, Marnūsh, Dabarnūsh, Shādhu-
nūsh, Kafashṭaṭiyūsh; also Qiṭmīr.

4. Magic and divination manuscript, Aceh, nineteenth century. Perpusta-
    kaan Negara Malaysia, MSS 4711, fol. 20ᵛ (Figure 8.3). Yamlīkhā, Mak-
    thalmīnā, Mathlabīnā, Diqyānus, Marnūsh, Shādhunūsh, Dabarnūs.

5. [Probably] Batik textile, probably Cirebon, early twentieh century. Isla-
    mic Arts Museum Malaysia, inv. no. 1998.1.4029 (Figure 8.14). Mashlīni-
    yā(?) … Kafashṭaṭiyūsh(?) [many of the names are illegible]; also Qiṭmīr.

H. Combination of the al-Jamāl and al-Nāzilī sets:

1. Wooden panel, probably Kelantan, 1324/1906–1907. Jabatan Muzium Ma-
    laysia, E138.1980.ADP1(a)659 (Figure 8.8). Tamlīkhā, Makslimīnā, Maslīni-
    yā, Marnūs, Dabarnūs, Shārbū[nus](?), Marṭū[nus](?), Dhūnwānus, Nīn-
    ūnus, Kafashṭīṭyū[nus?]; also Qiṭmīr. Names arranged in horizontal lines.

I. Unidentified:

1. Collection of *duʿāʾ* with two seal impressions, Indonesia or the Hijaz, nine-
    teenth century. Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia, Pt. 127 No. 82.
    Names illegible.
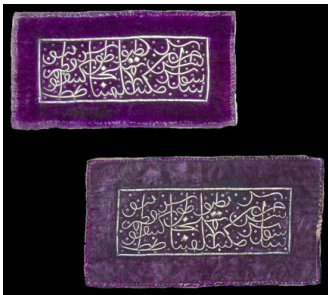
FIGURE 8.20
Pair of velvet pillow ends embroidered with raised gold
ribbon embroidery (*tekat gem*), with the names of the
Seven Sleepers, Terengganu, Malay Peninsula, early
twentieth century. Kuala Lumpur, John Ang collection
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PART 3

Critical Reading of Identity and Culture

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Peter G. Riddell and Anthony Johns (The 66th Wedding Anniversary of Tony and Yohanni Johns, Canberra, July 2022)

Is Jawi Islamic?

Mulaika Hijjas

The Jawi script has been used to write the Malay language in maritime South-east Asia since at least the 14th century and up to the present day. It is derived from Perso-Arabic script, and played a major role in the Islamisation of the region by facilitating the transfer of texts and ideas. However, this article demonstrates that Jawi was never an exclusively Islamic script—except, perhaps, at the beginning of the 21st century. Before this time, it was used to set down a wide range of writings, including of course Islamic *kitab* but also secular romances, multiethnic advertising, and much else besides. This article argues in favour of a more historicised understanding of the Malay manuscript tradition, and against presentist conceptions of religion and culture. It critically examines recent framings of Jawi as inherently Islamic, such as the 2019 controversy about the teaching of Jawi in Malaysian schools, and the assertion by Akademi Jawi Malaysia that "Bahasa Jawi Bahasa Islam," to show that this idea is modern rather than a reflection of the actual Jawi textual tradition. In doing so, the article draws on Riddell's extensive work on the Malay manuscript tradition and on religious tolerance and Islam.

1   Introduction

During the short-lived Pakatan Harapan government, a furore erupted in Malaysia over the Ministry of Education's plans to introduce Jawi to the primary school curriculum. The Ministry was then headed by Dr Maszlee Malik, a protégé of Prime Minister Mahathir. Maszlee's PhD (from Durham University) on Islamic public administration and his teaching position at Universiti Islam Malaysia apparently led some to suspect him of of pursuing a programme of covert Islamisation of the school curriculum.[1] That the proposed pages had in

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1   For an indication of the contours of public reception to him, see "Academics' movement backs Maszlee Malik as education minister despite apprehension," *Aliran* (21 May 2018), accessed at https://aliran.com/civil-society-voices/academics-movement-backs-maszlee-malik-as-education-minister-despite-apprehension/.

fact been prepared under the previous (Barisan Nasional) government largely went unremarked, as did the fact that Jawi already featured in the Standard Five curriculum.[2] The largest outcry came from Chinese educational groups, under the umbrella organisation the United Chinese School Committees Association, or Dong Zong, which contended that the teaching of Jawi script amounted to Islamisation.[3] Their view was that Jawi was not just a script but a metonym for Islam, and that teaching it to primary school students in the government school system was attempted conversion by stealth. Social media was awash with frankly Islamophobic allegations and Islamist counter-allegations. The backlash against Dong Zong came from such places as Persatuan Pengguna Islam (the Islamic Consumers Association), which urged the government to "make haram" the use of Jawi script on the packaging of non-Muslim products.[4] According to this perspective, not only was Jawi inherently Islamic, it was so Islamic that it could be besmirched were it to be used by non-Muslims. Eventually the Ministry of Education bowed to the pressure and made the Jawi content unassessed and at the discretion of individual schools—a rather unthinkable outcome under previous governments, and likely an indication of the underlying fragility and fractiousness of the Pakatan Harapan coalition. Given that education has long been a highly charged arena in Malaysian politics and society[5] and that inter-religious and inter-racial relations have been under strain for some time, it was perhaps no surprise that Jawi sparked such outrage. But a closer look at the pages in question, and at the question of whether Jawi is in fact Islamic in terms of the historical record, shows the extent to which the controversy was more fantasm than reality.

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2   "Make use of opening for further consultation on Jawi: Kit Siang," *The Sun Daily* (13 August 2019). Accessed at https://www.thesundaily.my/local/make-use-of-opening-for-further-cons ultation-on-jawi-kit-siang-BB1254605.

3   "Dong Zong insists khat lessons is Islamisation, starts petition," *Malaysiakini* (12 August 2019). Accessed at https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/487483 By December, the organisation had backtracked from this view, and issued a policy booklet focusing more on *khat* (calligraphy) and on the self-government of Tamil- and Chinese-medium schools, rather than on Jawi per se. See *Isu Tulisan Jawi: Mempertahankan Hak Lembaga Pengelola Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan* (Kajang: Persekutuan Persatuan-Persatuan Lembaga Pengurus Sekolah Cina Malaysia, 2019). Accessed at: https://www.dongzong.my/v3/Figures/jawi/jawi%20bm/mobile/index.html.

4   This of course begs the question of what a Muslim product is. The Association's position is apparently a product made by a Muslim. NurulSyaida, "Produk Bukan Islam Guna Tulisan Jawi Kelirukan Pengguna" (22 August 2019), accessed at https://www.ppim.org.my/produk -bukan-islam-guna-tulisan-jawi-kelirukan-pengguna-malaysia-gazette-22-08-2019/.

5   See e.g. Tan Yao Sua and R. Santhiram, *Educational Issues in Multiethnic Malaysia* (Petaling Jaya: SIRD, 2014) and Tan Liok Ee, *The Politics of Chinese Education in Malaya, 1945–1961* (Kuala Lumpur: OUP, 1997).

Jawi is an adapted form of the Perso-Arabic script and has been used in maritime Southeast Asia from at least the 14th century onwards for representing the Malay language. While it played a key role in the transfer of texts and ideas from the Islamic lands to the west to Southeast Asia, throughout its long history it has also been used for a range of purposes beyond Islamic proselytisation and scholarship. In the modern era, in the new nation states of Indonesia and Malaysia, Jawi was largely replaced by romanised script, or Rumi. It has occasionally been a subject of debate and controversy within the region, as a symbol of changing ideas about modernity and Islam. Beginning by examining the origins of the term Jawi, this article proceeds with a brief overview of scripts used for Malay as well as of the range of material produced in those scripts. It traces the role of colonial governments in exclusively identifying Jawi with the sphere of Islam, but also emphasises that Malay and Indonesian intellectuals took a leading role in making Rumi the default script after independence. The changing place of Jawi within the state-mandated Malay-language curriculum after Malaysian independence, examined next, suggests that the Ministry of Education sought to retain a space for Jawi as a part of Malay literature rather than as exclusively Islamic. It concludes with a discussion of a recent articulation of Jawi as exclusively Islamic, evoking Riddell's work on Southeast Asian Islam and religious tolerance, to suggest that the insistence on clear demarcating lines between Islamic and not-Islamic is thoroughly modern.

2   The Jawi Controversy of 2019

In one page of the proposed textbook that sparked the outrage, Cikgu Yazid teaches schoolchildren Chun Han and Aidil to read the word 'Malaysia' written in Jawi on stamps; in another, Gauri's older brother shows her the words 'ringgit Malaysia' and 'Bank Negara Malaysia' in Jawi on banknotes; in the third, a pupil learns to read the national motto ("Bersekutu Bertambah Mutu") in Jawi (see Figure 9.1). If this were intended as a way of Islamising the school curriculum and/or of asserting Malay supremacy, the pages certainly went about it strangely: they are notable for the ethnic and presumably religious diversity of the pupils depicted in them, and for the emphasis on symbols of secular nationalism. In this, these pages have much in common with Jawi textbooks used in mainstream Malaysian schools up to the early 1980s, when Jawi was still part of the Bahasa Malaysia curriculum (see Figure 9.2). *Belajar Jawi Cara Baru*, produced by the government publishing house Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka in 1983 for students in the third year of primary school, features passages about Salmah, Uzmah, Ah Mui and Kumari going to school together, and Ahmad and

FIGURE 9.1 Proposed pages of Jawi textbook (via Malaysiakini, https://www.malaysiakini.com/columns/504806)
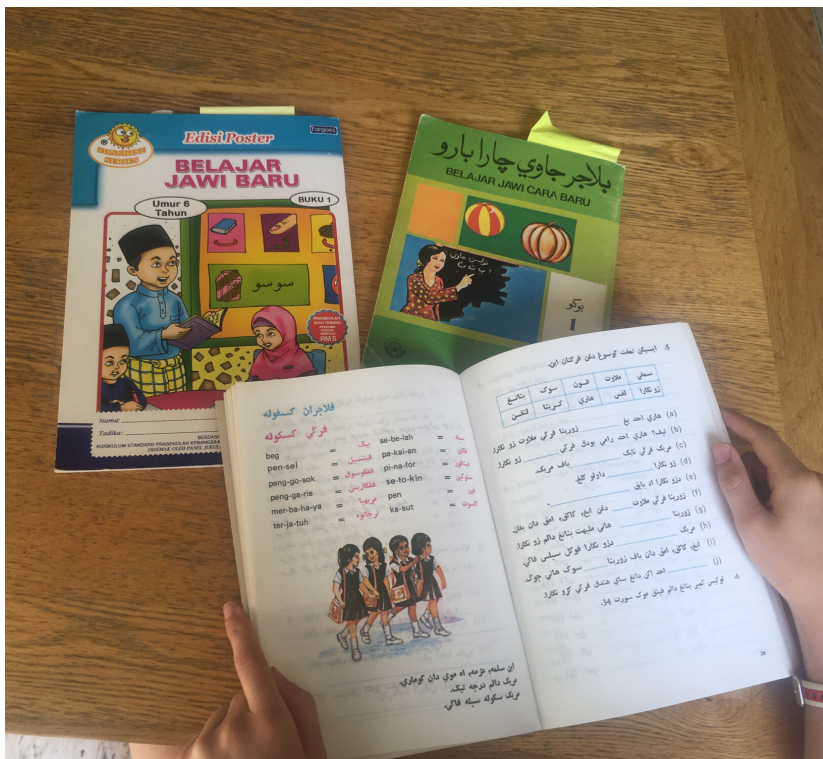
FIGURE 9.2 Jawi textbooks from 1983 (top and bottom right) and 2014 (top left)

Raju climbing a tree. On the cover it even has a picture of a dog, and a woman in Malay traditional dress but no headscarf.[6] In both state-issued textbooks, from 1983 and 2019, Jawi is not associated with Islam.

Just how much Malaysian society—and its perception of Jawi—has changed may be discerned in the contrast between this 1983 textbook and another published in 2014. Although "based on the standard preschool curriculum of the Malaysian Ministry of Education," the book is published by a private company, Penerbitan Fargoes, and appears to be intended for the now ubiquitous Islamic preschools. The man and boy on the front cover are wearing *songkok*, the felt hat worn by Malay Muslims, and the girl is wearing a *tudung* or headscarf. Among the vocabulary words introduced are Arabic ones intrinsically related to Islamic practice, such as *qārīʾ* (Qurʾan reciter), *zhohor* (the midday prayer), and *ṣalāt* (prayer). Furthermore, the guidance for teachers at the beginning of the textbook stipulates that the topics to be covered should include the *sīrah* or biography of the Prophet, Islamic ethics (*adab* and *akhlāk*), and to read and memorise the *sūrat al-Fātiḥah* and the *sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ*.[7] This, indeed, is an Islamic curriculum. The contrast between the 1983 Dewan Bahasa textbook and the 2014 Penerbitan Fargoes one is indicative of how much Malay society has transformed over the more than three decades that separate them, with a much greater emphasis on public expressions of Islamic piety, and much expanded expectations of proficiency in Islamic ritual and doctrine expected even of children. The 1983 textbook and proposed 2019 pages are rather identical in content and outlook (albeit with a stronger emphasis on nationalism in the latter). However, the difference in reception here is stark—while Jawi in the late 1970s and early 1980s was a minor and largely unremarked part of the Bahasa Malaysia syllabus, in 2019 it became a lightning rod for identitarian political frustration. Malaysian society as a whole had changed, with Islam—or rather performative Islamic piety—far more to the fore than ever. While public perception has oscillated between seeing Jawi as inherently Islamic or not, in the early 21st century it is, perhaps more than ever, seen less as a facet of Malay language and culture and more as a symbol of Islamic piety.

It is perhaps no suprise that Jawi was a spark for political controversy in 2019, at a point when the government had changed for the first time since independence, and the Malay majority felt both betrayed by the malfeasance of the previous administration and fearful of the erosion of their special privileges. The deep insecurity within some quarters of the Malay community also mani-

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6   *Belajar Jawi Cara Baru Buku Dua Untuk Darjah Tiga* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1983 [first ed.1974]), pp. 39, 65, front cover.

7   *Belajar Jawi Baru* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Fargoes, 2014), pp. 2–3.

fested itself in phenomena ranging from the offensive but relatively trivial, such as the Johor laundromat that banned non-Muslims from using its facilities "for reasons of purity,"[8] and the furore about a locally-blended spirit named Timah Whiskey, taken to be an abbreviation of the Muslim name Fatimah rather than the Malay word for tin,[9] to the more consequential, like the large demonstrations against the proposed ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), making Malaysia one of only 18 nations in the world positively in favour of racial discrimination.[10] The Chinese and Indian minorities, meanwhile, may have been more likely to protest over the reappearance of Jawi in the school curriculum under a Pakatan Harapan government rather than a Barisan Nasional one—this was felt to be the moment to press for equality, rather than acquiesce to a perceived erosion.

3 Origins and Usage of the Term 'Jawi'

The term 'Jawi' poses something of a puzzle, since it is derived not from anything to do with the Malay language but to the Arabic term for Javanese.[11] It is clearly an exonym, a name given by outsiders, and used by 'Jawi' people in their encounters with those outsiders. It is also, again obviously, an inaccurate name, since most people to whom it was applied were not Javanese. Feener and Laffan have traced the use of the *nisba* or onomastic 'al-Jāwī' in an Arabic source of the 15th century, and adduce several examples of Arab geographers in the 14th

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8   Shahirah Hamid, "What a royal rebuke and politicians' silence over 'Muslim-only' laundromat say about Malaysia," *South China Morning Post* (29 September 2017), accessed at https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/2113449/what-royal-rebuke-and-politic ians-silence-ov
      er-muslim-only?module=perpetual_scroll_0&pgtype=article&campaign=2113449.

9   "What's in a name? Controversy surrounds Timah whiskey over perceived namesake," Ian McIntyre, *The Vibes* (18 October 2021), accessed at https://www.thevibes.com/articles/news/44852/whats-in-the-name-controversy-surrounds-timah-whiskey-over-namesake.

10   Hew Wai Weng, "Himpunan 812 and a New Rivalry in Malay Politics," *New Mandala* (18 December 2018), accessed at https://www.newmandala.org/himpunan-812-and-a-new -rivalry-in-malay-politics/; "The ICERD Outrage," *Malaysiakini Special Report*, accessed at https://pages.malaysiakini.com/icerd/en/.

11   On the fluctuating distinction between Malay and Javanese see also Adrian Vickers, "'Malay Identity': Modernity, Invented Tradition and Forms of Knowledge," in *Contesting Malayness: Malay Identity across Boundaries*, edited by T.P. Barnard (Singapore: NUS Press, 2004), 25–55. A further question is why the modern Indonesian term for the script is not 'Jawi' but rather 'huruf Arab-Melayu'.

century using the term to include Sumatra and its people.[12] By the 19th century, Snouck Hurgronje could categorically state that the term 'Jāwah' "included in Arabia all people of Malay race, in the fullest meaning of the term; the geographical boundary is perhaps from Siam and Malacca to New Guinea. Muslims and non-Muslims in Mecca are called Jāwah, but the latter are all slaves."[13] At least according to Hurgronje, Meccan Arabs included non-Malay speakers and non-Muslims in the category 'Jāwah'. This is a formulation of Jawi identity based on perceived ethnic or geographical origin, rather than language or religion. The photographs included in Hurgronje's book further emphasise the racial rather than linguistic usage of the term, such as the portrait of islanders from Kei and Banda,[14] who would likely not have spoken Malay as a first language. Though one might query whether 19th-century Meccans had the same ideas of race as Hurgronje, the former were perhaps even less likely than the latter to be able to distinguish between, say, Sumatrans and Javanese on the basis of language. Hurgronje also points out the subordinate position of the Jāwah as compared to the Islamic peoples of the Middle East and South Asia: "In contrast to such peoples as the Egyptians, Turks, Persians and Indians, who have played a great role on the stage of Islam," Hurgronje writes, "the Jāwah step with modesty and reserve as if to proclaim with every footfall their conviction that they have not themselves earned their part in the blessings of Islam."[15] For Southeast Asian Muslims of Hurgonje's time, then, the adoption of a Jāwah identity might be seen as a way of entering—humbly, knowing one's proper place—the pantheon of Islamic peoples.

The usage of the term *bahasa Jawi*, 'Jawi language', is well attested in the Malay textual tradition, but always in the context of specifically Islamic discourse. Perhaps the earliest is found in the work of the late-16th-century Hamzah Fansūrī: "Hamzah of Shahrnawi is externally a Jāwī / [But] his essence is the pure light of Ahmad [= Muhammad]"; "His external appearance is impoverished and [he is a] Jāwī / But his essence is the Qurʾān of the Arab nation."[16] In Hamzah's usage here (somewhat prefiguring Hurgronje), Jawi is a humble,

12   R. Michael Feener and Michael F. Laffan, "Sufi Scents Across the Indian Ocean: Yemeni Hagiography and the Earliest History of Southeast Asian Islam" (*Archipel* 70 (2005): 185–208), pp. 192–193.

13   Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, *Mecca in the Latter Part of the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007 [1888–1889]), p. 231.

14   Angelo Pesce, ed., *Makkah a Hundred Years Ago: or, C. Snouck Hurgronje's Remarkable Albums* (London: Immel Pub., 1986), p. 88.

15   Hurgronje, *Mecca in the Latter Part*, p. 233.

16   "Hamzah Shahrnawi zāhirnya Jawi / Bātinnya cahya Ahmad yang sāfī"; "Zāhirnya miskīn lagipun Jāwī / Bātinnya Qurʾān yang bangsa ʿArabī" (Malay text in Drewes 15:13a and 44:48c, English translation mine). Accessed at mcp.edu.anu.

immanent identity contrasted to the transcendence of Arabic and Muhammad. Elsewhere, in his prose treatise *Sharāb al-ʿAshiqīn*, Hamzah explains that he is writing in *bahasa Jawi* "so that all Allah's servants who do not know Arabic or Persian may be able to study" his book.[17] Again, Jawi appears here as a subordinate Islamic language, a necessary resort for those Southeast Asian Muslims who cannot understand Arabic or Persian. Another typical example, about a century and a half distant from Hamzah, is found in the opening lines of *Kitab Futūḥ al-Shām*, which the translator noted is "in the Arabic language and which I transferred into the Jawi language."[18] The use of the term 'bahasa Jawi' seems to be most frequent in the context of translation from Arabic into Malay, when making a comparison between Islamic identities of the east and the west, and most often in *kitab* works (treatises on the subjects of Islamic education and practice, such as *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, and Arabic grammar, often in a mix of Arabic and Malay or other Southeast Asian languages). The Malay Concordance Project provides a number of other attestations of the use of *bahasa Jawi*, but all from a total of eleven *kitab* out of the several hundred texts in the corpus.[19] Indeed, it might be more accurate to consider *bahasa Jawi* linguistically as the subset of *bahasa Melayu* otherwise known as "kitab Malay." As Chambert-Loir notes, this term originates from Johns, and was characterised by Riddell as "a kind of Malay religious dialect" (not mincing words, Chambert-Loir himself calls it the "unholy mixture of Arabic syntax and Malay vocabulary").[20] The average Malay speaker has considerable difficulty understanding this mixture, marking *bahasa Jawi* out as a specialist dialect, quite distinct from *bahasa Melayu*. As we will see, while Jawi script was used for both 'dialects' (or perhaps more correctly termed registers)—the religious and the secular—it seems that the writers before the 20th century were clear that *bahasa Jawi* was a distinct realm, and not to be confused with Jawi script.

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17   *Sharāb al-ʿAshiqīn* 1/1. Text and numbering from Syed Muhammad Naguib al-Attas, *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansūrī* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1970), pp. 297–328. Accessed via Malay Concordance Project (mcp.anu.edu).

18   "Adapun ini kitāb *Futūḥ al-Shām* daripada kalām ʿArabī dan sesungguhnya kupindahkan baginya kepada bahasa Jawi." SOAS MS 11505, fl. 1 v.

19   The texts on the Malay Concordance Project are predominantly literary and historical works (as opposed to *kitab*). There are 115 usages of *Jawi* (including variations like *menjawikan*, and excluding *jawi-jawi*, a kind of tree, and the Minangkabau use of *jawi* to denote a kind of ox), compared to 621 usages of *bahasa Melayu* and variants thereof.

20   Henri Chambert-Loir, "Islamic Law in 17th-Century Aceh," *Archipel* 94 (2017), 51–96. P. 61.

4 Scripts for Malay

As is well known, the oldest surviving example of Jawi script is the Terengganu inscription from the beginning of the 14th century.[21] While Jawi was the most common way of writing Malay from perhaps the 15th century to the early 20th, it was never the only way of writing Malay. Before Jawi, several Indic-derived scripts were in use, such as in the Muara Tatang and Telaga Batu inscriptions (both 683 CE), and the Kota Kapur inscription (686 CE).[22] It is assumed that the adoption of Jawi was contemporaneous with that of Islam, but like conversion itself the process was likely a gradual one. At least one very early Malay Islamic text was *not* written in Jawi: the Minye Tujoh tombstone, dated 1380 CE, inscribed in the Malay language and 'Old Sumatran' script (with a related inscription nearby inscribed in Arabic script and language).[23] The Malay-language, Old Sumatran character-inscription is indisputably Islamic, referring to the hijrah of the Prophet and invoking God in both Arabic and Malay terms ("ilāhi yā rabbī tuhan samuhā"[24]). As Chambert-Loir has noted, Indic and Islamic scripts seem to have been in concurrent use at this period, and continued to be so for the following 150 years at least.[25] In places like Kerinci, in highland Sumatra, for instance, the local, Indic-derived script was used up to the second half of the 19th century, though the population had embraced Islam some two centuries prior.[26] Islamic texts continued to be written in pre-Islamic scripts at least as late as the 19th century—such as the four manuscripts of a Sufi poem written in South Sumatran *rencong* script studied by Braginsky.[27] On this evidence, script alone does not define what is Islamic. As a matter of historical record, 'non-Islamic' scripts were used for 'Islamic' purposes throughout the history of Malay writing.

21   For a comprehensive survey of the history of Jawi see Annabel Teh Gallop, "A Jawi Sourcebook: Introduction," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 43:125 (2015), pp. 13–39.

22   Arlo Griffiths, "The Corpus of Inscriptions in the Old Malay Language," in Daniel Perret, *Writing for Eternity: A Survey of Epigraphy in Southeast Asia* (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2018). Pp. 275–283.

23   Willem van der Molen, "The Syair of Minye Tujuh," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 163-2/3 (2007): 356–375. P. 356.

24   Van der Molen, "The Syair of Minye Tujuh," p. 371.

25   Henri Chambert-Loir, "Tulisan Melayu/Indonesia: Aksara dalam Perkembangan Budaya." In Henri Chambert-Loir. *Iskandar Zulkarnain, Dewa Mendu, Muhammad Bakir dan Kawan-Kawan: Lima Belas Karangan Tentang Sastra Indonesia* (Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia, 2014), pp. 185–206. P. 190.

26   Uli Kozok, "A 14th-Century Malay Manuscript from Kerinci," *Archipel* 67 (2004): 37–55. Pp. 42–43.

27   Vladimir Braginsky, … *And Sails the Boat Downstream: Malay Sufi Poems of the Boat* (Leiden: Semaian, 2007), pp. 112–161.

The reverse is also true—the 'Islamic' script was widely used for 'non-Islamic' purposes—and evidence for this exists in far greater volume. Large swathes of Malay literature in the manuscript age, written of course in Jawi, are difficult to characterise as Islamic. Panji tales, for instance, were a highly popular literary genre in the 19th century and earlier. Though they were composed and consumed by thoroughly Islamised communities, Panji tales—with their references to pre-Islamic deities like Betara Kala, characters who descend from the upperworld, heroines who threaten to commit ritual suicide—can hardly be said to be Islamic in either inspiration or ethics. Indeed, Malay-world *ulamā* at least from al-Rānīrī in the 17th century onwards occasionally condemned such literature as dangerous to readers' faith.[28] So while some critics may have identified texts like these as un-Islamic and exhorted readers to reject them, they did not (unlike Persatuan Pengguna Islam) demand that they not be written in Jawi.

In the age of print, starting from the rise in Malay lithographic printing in the late 19th century, Jawi publications in a range of genres flourished. Proudfoot's documentation of early Malay printing encompasses several streams of publishing in the Malay-language and in both scripts: Jawi- or (increasingly) Rumi-script Baba presses, the Jawi- and Rumi-script mission and colonial government presses, and the overwhelmingly Jawi-script Muslim presses. The designation 'Muslim' here denotes, as Proudfoot explains, the agents of the press ("Malay, Javanese, Jawi Peranakan, and other printers who share a common Muslim identity") rather than its output ("not all their publications were overtly Islamic, but a great many were").[29] As well as books there were also Jawi newspapers, the earliest extant being *Peredaran al-Shams wa'l-Qamar* in Singapore, of which only the 30 August 1877 issue survives.[30] Jawi was used by non-Muslim Malay speakers, such as by the Peranakan Chinese writer and publisher Yap Goan Ho, who published several lithographed Jawi books in the 1880s.[31] As Proudfoot remarks in his seminal survey of early Malay printing, before the late 19th century "Malay-speaking Chinese had been participants in Malay oral and manuscript culture. Their contribution to supposedly traditional Malay

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28　　Vladimir Braginsky, *The Heritage of Traditional Malay Literature* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004), pp. 383–386.

29　　Proudfoot, *Early Malay Printed Books*, p. 27.

30　　Gallop, Annabel Teh, "Rare Malay newspaper in the Wellcome Library." https://blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/2014/01/rare-malay-newspaper-in-the-wellcome-library.html.

31　　Claudine Salmon, "Malay Translations of Chinese Fictions in Indonesia." In Salmon, Claudine, ed. *Literary Migrations: Traditional Chinese Fiction in Asia* (*17th–20th Centuries*) (Singapore: ISEAS, 2013), pp. 248–276. P. 252.

manuscript literature is not susceptible to disaggregation."[32] That is, it is not possible to discern whether the reader of a lithograph of *Syair Siti Zubaidah* or *Syair Sultan Abdul Muluk*, titles popular within the Chinese and Malay communities alike, was a Muslim or not (let alone how good of a Muslim he or she was). Jawi was also used for Christian evangelical material, such as a Malay translation of the New Testament in 1889.[33] In the 1930s, there were Jawi advertisements for Tiger Beer, featuring a man in a *songkok* and *sampin* holding aloft a pint glass.[34] These last two examples, admittedly, might be interpreted as attempts by the West, represented by the Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap and Fraser & Neave, respectively, to lead Malay Muslims astray. The same cannot be said for Malay erotica in Jawi script that apparently thrived from the 1940s and 60s, and which was surely a home-grown product.[35] Advertising in newspapers from the 1950s, such as the advertisement for Kicap Cap Kuda Terbang, "much enjoyed by Malays, Chinese and Indians," indicates that the target audience were not just Muslims (see Figure 9.3). Major Malay-language newspapers in British Malaya and independent Malaysia continued to appear in Jawi, all the way up to 28 January 2006, when the final issue of the weekly *Utusan Melayu Mingguan* left the press.[36]

The reasons for the decline of Jawi commercial printing invite further research, but for the present purposes suffice to note that the increasingly self-conscious Islamisation of Malay society did not support Jawi-script newspaper sales. Quite the opposite, in fact. It can also be observed that as Jawi moved out of the secular sphere (romantic *hikayat*, advertising, erotic novels, newspapers) and survived only in the religious (*kitab*), there was a decrease in numbers of readers and in the kinds of topics thought suitable for Jawi. Up to the early 20th century, almost everything written in Malay was written using Jawi script. This included all forms of texts, from romantic tales to business letters and of course Islamic texts. Some manuscripts, including Islamic ones like *Syair Perahu* mentioned above, were written in scripts other than Jawi, such as *rencong*. After the mid-20th century, the situation was reversed. Secular and quotidian Malay text was overwhelmingly in Rumi, and almost the only material published in Jawi

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32 Ian Proudfoot, *Early Malay Printed Books* (Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Malaya Press, 1993). P. 22.

33 *Wasiat yang Baharu: yaitu Segala Kitab Perjanjian Baharu atau Injil* (Amsterdam: Nederlandsch Bijbelgenootschap, 1889) (Library of Congress BS 315.M25). With thanks to Darryl Lim for providing images and information about this publication.

34 https://www.malaysiadesignarchive.org/advertisement-tiger-beer/.

35 Nazir Harith Fadzilah, "Erotika Melayu," https://glamlelaki.my/gaya-hidup/13887/.

36 Ding Choo Ming, "Daripada Penghentian Utusan Melayu Kepada Nasib Tulisan Jawi," *Pemikir* 45 (2006).

FIGURE 9.3 Advertisement for Kicap Cap Kuda Ter-
bang (in *Majlis*, 4 August 1950)

were religious books. The conviction that Jawi is Islamic, held by both sides in the 2019 controversy, reflects precisely the conditions of the beginning of the 21st century, rather than an accurate or complete record of the history of Jawi as a whole.

5   Modernising Malay script

In both British Malaya and the Netherlands Indies, the introduction of Rumi script for Malay was initiated by colonial administrators towards the end of the 19th century. In both cases, literacy in Rumi was confined to the small cohorts of students educated in colonial schools, with far larger numbers literate in Jawi learned in traditional schools. Rumi was introduced for use in Malay schools in British territories in 1878, but, in the words of Chambert-Loir, it "was certainly restricted to the world of school, while in society in general Jawi continued to be used."[37] In the Netherlands Indies, similarly, colonial education policy introduced Roman script and standardised spelling, set out in Ophuijsen's *Kitab Logat Melajoe* in 1901. Nevertheless, as Fogg notes, "through the 1920s Muslim Indonesians were probably more likely to know *jawi* than romanised Indonesian."[38] In both the Netherlands Indies and British Malaya, colonial officials tended to have both disdain for and unease about Jawi, associating it with

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37   Chambert-Loir, "Aksara," p. 200.

38   Kevin Fogg, "The standardisation of the Indonesian language and its consequences for Islamic communities," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 46.1 (2015): 86–110. P. 90.

what they conceived to be traditional Islamic education, which they feared might foment anti-colonial resistance. The 1904 Annual Report on Education in British Malaya held that Jawi was "associated with the unintelligent study of the Koran," and claimed that Rumi was "associated in the Malay mind with the vigour and intelligence of white races," recommending that Jawi be "gradually discontinued."[39] On the eve of independence, another colonial deliberation on Malay education was perhaps more fateful for the future of Jawi. The 1951 Report of the Committee on Malay Education returned to the question of Jawi and Rumi in schools, firmly tying Jawi to the religious domain. Arguing that Malay children were "disadvantaged" compared to their non-Malay schoolmates, because the former had to spend additional hours in Islamic education classes in the afternoon, the report proposed that "a half-hour period in each school day should be set aside for the instruction of Muslim pupils in the principles of Islam, in the Koran, in the Arabic characters, and hence gradually in the Jawi script also; this instruction would be given by specialist religious teachers trained for the purpose."[40] Bringing Islamic education within the purview of the colonial education system, and thus neutralising any potential source of opposition to colonial rule, may have been a significant (if unspoken) policy objective. The report also mentions the benefits of removing the study of Jawi from non-Muslim students, whom it assumed would regard time spent acquiring Jawi as an "unreasonable" burden.[41] The subsequent 1956 Report of the Education Committee reiterated the choice of Rumi as the default script, "provided that arrangements are made for the learning of Jawi by Muslim pupils."[42] To this extent, then, the colonial regime encouraged the association between Jawi and Islam, and the segregation of non-Muslim students from Jawi. From being a multi-purpose script in use by a multi-confessional community, as it was in the hands of Yap Goan Ho in the 1880s, Jawi was on its way to becoming an Islamic script.

It must be emphasised, however, that neither the Dutch nor the British colonial regimes attempted to remove Jawi altogether. Colonial schools and administration largely favoured Rumi, but the place of Jawi in local textual economies remained. Fogg observes that under Dutch colonialism Jawi script retained its place, and that the "complete disappearance of *jawi* as a viable alterna-

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39   Qtd. in A.C. Milner, *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 251.

40   *Report of the Committee on Malay Education, Federation of Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1951), pp. xxx.

41   *Report of the Committee*, p. xxx.

42   *Report of the Education Committee* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Press, 1956), p. 5.

tive to romanised Indonesian occurred later but rather quickly, from roughly 1948 through 1956."[43] That is, this disappearance took place not at the hands of the Dutch, but those of the independent state of Indonesia, which required religious schools to teach Rumi, removed Jawi from the curriculum of secular schools, and erased Jawi from symbolic national uses such as on coins.[44] A similar, if tardier and less sweeping, process took place in postwar Malaya, with Malay intellectuals advocating for Rumi in the name of progress. This even took place in Jawi periodicals, as Amoroso points out, with the Jawi-script *Majalah Guru* running an article in 1947 arguing for both scripts as "the Malays' scripts."[45] Though Cik Pinah of Sungai Sumun lamented in the letters page of *Saudara* in 1936 that Jawi was falling into disuse as Malays pursued "Western civilisation that speeds off with its aeroplanes,"[46] this side of the argument appeared to be losing traction. There are even indications of a current of opinion against Jawi script on grounds that we might now call modernist Islamic. A *Saudara* leader article by Muhammad Arifin Ishak in 1937 went so far as to criticise "kitab Jawi" for being "endless in their religious rules and regulations, valid and invalid, halal and haram, sin and blessings—that is, the things that are an insult to the intelligence of informed people, and are completely unsuitable for the desires of the people of the present age. When might one reach the matters that are at the root of Islam, such as the sciences of tafsir, hadith, tashrik, ta'rikh and so on, if [we are] always [immersed] in [that] from youth to old age?"[47] While not calling for the abolition of the script, Muhammad Arifin Ishak is (perhaps more radically) attacking the corpus of texts written in Jawi, the traditionalist religious canon, and doing so because in his view it impedes Malay Muslims from accessing the higher echelons of Islamic learning. That Muhammad Arifin Ishak ignores the vast quantities of *tafsir*, *hadith*, and so on that in fact existed in Jawi script is perhaps a reflection of the inroads made by

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43   Fogg, "Standardisation," pp. 92–93.

44   Fogg, "Standardisation," p. 93.

45   Donna Amoroso, *Traditionalism and the Ascendancy of the Malay Ruling Class in Colonial Malaya* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2014), p. 184.

46   "mengejari tamaddun (peradaban) barat yang sedang laju dengan bahtera2 terbangnya itu," Cik Pinah, "Keadaan huruf dan persuratan Melayu," *Saudara* (22 January 1936), p. 4. Accessible at: mcp.anu.edu.au/N/SK/731.html4.

47   "'kitab Jawi', yang tiada berkesudahan syarat rukunnya, sah batalnya, halal haramnya, dosa pahalanya, iaitu perkara2 yang menjadi nista kepada akal fikiran orang yang berpengetahuan serta tiada munsabah serta tiada munsabah sekali2 bagi kemahuan kaum zaman ini. Bilakah boleh sampai kepada perkara2 yang menjadi akar umbi ugama Islam seperti ilmu tafsir, ilmu hadis, ilmu tasrik, ilmu tarikh dan lain2nya jika senentiasa demikian dari muda hingga ketua?" Muhammad Arifin Ishak, "Jalan keselamatan bagi orang-orang Melayu," *Saudara* (20 Feb 1937), p. 2. Accessible at: mcp.anu.edu

colonial education and by Kemalist ideas, seeking to do away with tradition in the name of progress towards Islamic modernity.[48]

The role of Malay intellectuals themselves, rather than colonial agents, in marginalising Jawi comes to the fore in the 1954 Kongres Bahasa (Language Congress). Responding to pressure from the group of young writers known as Angkatan Sastrawan '50 (themselves clearly influenced by Indonesia's Angkatan '45), the Congress declared in favour of both script systems.[49] In their recommendation to the Kongres Bahasa, the writers M. Asraf and Usman Awang presented a number of advantages of Rumi over Jawi, and just one disadvantage.[50] They took care to make a distinction between the script and Islam, stating "firmly that the question of script has no connection whatsoever with the question of the Islamic faith, because a person's position cannot and may not be established based on whether he or she knows Jawi script or not ... it is clear that anyone who tries to muddle up religion with script is in truth someone who is deliberately trying to confuse the thinking of the Malay people in general by putting on the mask of Islam."[51] In this view, script and religion are firmly separate; the Jawi script is declared technically unsuited to the Malay language, and is seen as an impediment to a modernised Islam. And it was this position that carried the day, and may have paved the way for what came to be enshrined in law.

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48   Amoroso, *Traditionalism*, p. 184 fn. 63.

49   Chambert-Loir, "Aksara," p. 200.

50   M. Asraf and Usman Awang, "Memorandum Mengenai Tulisan Rumi Untuk Bahasa Melayu" (27 March 1954), reprinted in *Memoranda Angkatan Sasterawan '50* (Petaling Jaya: Fajar Bakti, 1987), p. 20.

51   "Kami katakan dengan tegas bahawa soal tulisan tidak ada hubungannya sama sekali dengan soal agama Islam, kerana pendirian seseorang tidak dapat dan tidak boleh ditentukan dari tahu atau tidak tahunya dia akan tulisan Jawi ... nyatalah bahawa orang yang mencoba mencampurbaurkan soal agama dengan soal tulisan itu sebenarnya orang yang sengaja hendak mengelirukan pikiran rakyat Melayu umumnya dengan bertopengkan agama Islam." M. Asraf and Usman Awang, "Memorandum Mengenai Tulisan Rumi Untuk Bahasa Melayu," p. 20. Given M. Asraf's decidedly atheist poem "Syurga," which declares that "the great creator / is only opium" ("maha pencipta / hanya madat sahaja"), one might question whether he was arguing in good faith here. The poem originally appeared in the magazine *Mastika* in 1950—in Jawi (reprinted in A.M. Thani, ed., *Esei Sastera ASAS 50* (Kuala Lumpur; Dewan Bahasa dan Sastera, 1981), p. xxvi).

6   Jawi in the Curricula of Independent Malaysia

As is well known, Article 152 of the Malaysian Constitution, promulgated at Independence in 1957, declared Malay the national language of the new nation. The Constitution did not, however, specify script.[52] The status of Jawi vis à vis Rumi was addressed only in the National Language Acts 1963/67, which state that "[t]he script of the national language shall be the Rumi script: provided that this shall not prohibit the use of the Malay script, more commonly known as the Jawi script, of the national language."[53] Thus it seems clear that the default script for Malay—for official government business, including education—was to be Rumi, but that Jawi could continue to be used elsewhere. Jawi remained legally legitimate—for instance, literacy in Jawi and in Rumi were equally acceptable as a criterion for establishing the "adequate knowledge of Malay language" necessary for being granted citizenship.[54] Yet the privileging of Rumi in quotidian and official usage meant that by default Jawi retreated into the exclusively religious sphere.

There remained one place within the education system of independent Malaysia where Jawi retained a role: the Malay language curriculum. Colonial-era Malay-medium primary schools began with Jawi and gradually introduced Rumi. In postcolonial Malaysia, the reverse was the case. From 1957 to 1970, there were two streams of Malay language classes: Bahasa Melayu (for first-language learners) and Bahasa Kebangsaan (the 'national language,' for students with a different first language). While the syllabi of these two streams were largely identical, apart from the fact that Bahasa Melayu was about a year advanced from Bahasa Kebangsaan in terms of the difficulty of its content, two topics were not taught to the latter group: poetry and Jawi.[55] The utilitarian focus is rather evident here—apparently the national curriculum planners considered both poetry and Jawi superfluous to the requirements of non-Malays. After the communal riots of 1969, Malay was renamed Bahasa Malaysia,[56] and the two streams of Bahasa Melayu and Bahasa Kebangsaan

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52   *Federal Constitution* (Incorporating all amendments up to P.U.(A.) 2009), Part XII, 152 (1). Accessed at https://www.jac.gov.my/.../10_akta/perlembagaan_persekutuan/federal_cons titution.pdf.

53   Clause 9, National Language Act 1963/67 (Revised 1971). Accessed at http://www.commonli i.org/my/legis/consol_act/nla1963671971234/.

54   Saran Kaur Gill, *Language Policy Changes in Multi-Ethnic Malaysia* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014), p. 51.

55   Asmah Haji Omar, *The Teaching of Bahasa Malaysia in the Context of National Language Planning* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1976), pp. 37, 39.

56   Asmah Haji Omar, *The Teaching of Bahasa Malaysia*, pp. 1–2.

were merged. The revised syllabus introduced in 1970 included Jawi within the Bahasa Malaysia classes of all years of secondary school.[57] While it has not been possible to track the changes in educational policy regarding Jawi after 1970, at my government-curriculum primary school in Kuala Lumpur in the 1980s, I recall the occasional desultory Bahasa Malaysia class given over to Jawi, where we never progressed much beyond sounding out two-syllable words. By the time I was in secondary school, Jawi was no longer on the Malay language syllabus at all, and the only Malaysian students who acquired proficiency in it were enrolled at Islamic schools. This may have been a decisive, if unheralded, moment in the Islamisation of Jawi.

Jawi appears to have provoked occasional outcry during this period, such as when the opposition leader Lim Kit Siang fulminated against the teaching of Jawi in schools in 1984. Prefiguring the controversy of 2019, Lim argued that it was a "dangerous precedent … to make Jawi a compulsory subject, by making it part of Bahasa Malaysia. If this is not challenged, then in future, some over-zealous education officials would suggest that Islamic civilisation should also be taught as part of Bahasa Malaysia!"[58] In fact, as we have just seen, Jawi had been a compulsory part of the Bahasa Malaysia syllabus since 1970. As the Federal Territory Deputy Director of Education, Haji Zainal Bahaudin, remarked to the press at the time: "Everybody must learn Jawi as it is now taught as part of Bahasa Malaysia in the primary school syllabus. Previously Jawi was taught during religious classes and as such only Malay pupils were taught. Parent[s] should be clear that Jawi is now regarded as part of the academic subject and since Bahasa Malaysia is a compulsory subject, pupils—regardless of race—must study it."[59] Whereas Lim here assumes that Jawi is inherently associated with Islam, a precursor for "Islamic civilisation," Haji Zainal makes the case for Jawi as a part of Bahasa Malaysia, and, as such, the common curriculum—and one might go so far as to say the common heritage—of all Malaysians. In 1984 (as, in fact, in 2019) it is the Education Ministry that argues for Jawi as Malay, as distinct from Jawi as Islamic.

As scholarship on Islam and politics in Malaysia has repeatedly emphasised,[60] the state is under considerable pressure from groups within and with-

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57   Asmah Haji Omar, *The Teaching of Bahasa Malaysia*, p. 45.
58   Lim Kit Siang, "Education Ministry's regulation that Jawi is a compulsory subject violates Article 152 of Malaysian Constitution" (speech given at Selangor State DAP Committee Meeting, 1 June 1984), accessed at https://bibliotheca.limkitsiang.com/1984/06/01/education-ministry%E2%80%99s-regulation-that-jawi-is-a-compulsory-subject-violates-article-152-of-malaysian-constitution/.
59   Lim, "Education Ministry's regulation."
60   Patricia A. Martinez, "The Islamic State or the State of Islam in Malaysia," *Contemporary*

out to integrate a particular kind of Islam within the government appara-
tus. Fatefully enough, among the government bodies most zealously advocat-
ing for the increased Islamisation of Malaysian society is the Jabatan Agama
Islam Wilayah Persekutuan—also known by its acronym, JAWI.[61] Among JAWI's
notable interventions are the 2015 detention of the eminent scholar of Malay
literature, Kassim Ahmad, then aged 82,[62] and a 2016 raid on a transgender
beauty pageant.[63] As well as from factions within the state, the pressure to
Islamise Jawi also comes from civil society groups, both those that fear Islam,
such as Dong Zong, and those that champion it, such as Persatuan Pengguna
Islam. Indeed, Lim Kit Siang in 2019 recognised this. Recalling that he learned
Jawi while detained as a political prisoner in 1969, he asserted that it did not
"make me any less of a Chinese, and may have helped in making me more of
a Malaysian."[64] If by 2019 Lim had come to see that Jawi need not be equated
with Islamisation, he still needed to defend himself against misquotations (i.e.,
that he did not say one *had* to learn Jawi to be a Malaysian). Popular opinion
in many quarters still held it self-evident that Jawi *is* Islamic, the question to
which we now turn.

7   What is an Islamic Script?

The contemporary conviction that Jawi is an Islamic script is exemplified by a
pamphlet published recently by an organisation called Akademi Jawi Malaysia,
which has as its mission the 'revitalisation' of Jawi.[65] The pamphlet proclaims
that "The Jawi language is an Islamic language" ("bahasa Jawi bahasa Islam"),
explaining that an "Islamic language" is one that shares key "Islamic vocabu-

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     Southeast Asia 23 (2001), pp. 474–503; Meredith L. Weiss, "The Changing Shape of Islamic
     Politics in Malaysia," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 4 (2004), pp. 139–173; Johan Saravana-
     muttu, "Malaysia in 2020: Political Fragmentation, Power Plays and Shifting Coalitions,"
     Southeast Asian Affairs (2021), pp. 169–184.

61   https://jawi.gov.my/.

62   Ida Lim, "JAWI's detention, arrest of Kassim Ahmad was illegal, court rules," *Malay Mail*,
     21 December 2015, accessed at https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2015/12/21/
     jawis-detention-arrest-of-kassim-ahmad-was-illegal-court-rules/1027049.

63   Boo Su-Lyn, "JAWI raids transgender 'beauty pageant' for breaking fatwa," *Malay Mail*,
     4 April 2016, accessed at https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2016/04/04/jawi-rai
     ds-transgender-beauty-pageant-for-breaking-fatwa/1093293.

64   "'Learning Jawi to be a Malaysian' not my words: Kit Siang," (media statement, 5 August
     2019), accessed at https://dappg.org/learning-jawi-to-be-a-malaysian-not-my-words-kit-s
     iang/.

65   www.akademijawi.my.

lary," such as *insān*, *ʿādil*, and *ʿaql*, which originate in the Qurʾān. An Islamic language, further, is one that shares this key terminology, but also "benefits from" (*memanfaʾatkan*) the Arabic language and script of the Qurʾan.[66] One of the pamphlet's most revealing claims is the enumeration of Islamic languages: Arabic, Persian, Ottoman Turkish, Urdu, and Jawi, in that order. Clearly, the intention is to place Jawi in select company, even if ranking last. The absence of African languages of Islamic learning such as Hausa and Swahili indicates the exclusions that operate in this conception of Islam as a Middle Eastern and—latterly—Asian phenomenon. Also illuminating is the pamphlet's list of the "main Jawi-language intellectuals" ("ilmuwan utama bahasa jawi"): Ḥamza Fanṣūrī, Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī, ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Singkilī, Dāwūd al-Fatānī, Raja Ali Haji, Wan Ahmad al-Fatānī, Zaʿba, and Syed Naguib al-Aṭṭās. The majority of these men are of course *ʿulamāʾ*, representing an indeed distinguished but also very particular strand of Malay-language intellectual endeavour. Again, that which is omitted here—the authors of what are usually acknowledged as the major works of Malay literature, such as *Sulalatus Salatin*, *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai* and the like—provides an indication of the pamphlet's ideas of value. Indeed, the effect is to assert the difference between the Jawi language, *bahasa Jawi*, and the Malay language, *bahasa Melayu*, and the primacy of the former over the latter. In Akademi Jawi Malaysia's conceptual framework, the Jawi language is Malay *and* Muslim, and works in Malay must also be on Islamic subjects in order to be admitted into the canon. It may be that this unambiguous position—Jawi is Islamic and nothing else—would only be possible at this particular historical juncture.

The Islamisation of Malayness, of which Akademi Jawi Malaysia's conception of Jawi is one manifestation, is part of a long-standing process. This has been accompanied, as in much of the Muslim world, by the syariatisation of Islam, the privileging of discourses of law over those of, say, folk or Sufi practice. Much effort in studies of Jawi-script texts as now practiced in Malaysia is expended on demonstrating that Malay Islam was always a bastion of syariah-minded piety. This syariat-isation of Islam is to a great extent born out of the encounter between diverse Muslim societies and Western-mediated modernity, beginning with the intensification of colonial power around the late 19th century, turning towards an emulation of a Western model in the mid-20th, then towards a rejection of that model in the global Islamic revivalism of the 1970s onwards, and reaching a particular peak in the post-9/11 world. The very question of whether or not a script is 'Islamic' is highly anachronistic, and of

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66   *Risalah Bahasa Jawi* (Kajang: Akademi Jawi Malaysia, n.d.), p. 6.

limited meaning to societies that used Jawi widely. As scholars of Islamic intellectual and political history such as Ahmed, Aydin and Bauer,[67] have argued, the drawing of crisp lines separating the Islamic and the non-Islamic is an obsession of modernity, a result of the rationalisation of religion practiced both by Western epistemic regimes and Islamist responses to them.

For Islamic Southeast Asia, Riddell's work on the Malay manuscript tradition similarly shows that ideas of normative Islamic practice in the past were not the same as those of today. His emphasis on religious tolerance also indicates how the past may illuminate the present. Riddell's longstanding and meticulous study of the Islamic intellectuals of the 'Malay-Indonesian world' and their texts, from his doctoral dissertation on al-Singkilī to his indispensable guide to the Muslim intellectuals of Southeast Asia to his recent monograph on Acehnese Islam,[68] is marked by his own position as a Christian theologian. His commitment to taking seriously the diversity of ways in which Muslims have and continue to articulate their faith is evident in his own answer to the question of 'what is Islam?':

> Islam is a Hui Chinese peasant popping occasionally into his mosque, which resembles a pagoda and has the Islamic creed (*shahada*) on the wall in Chinese, not Arabic. Islam is equally a Javanese peasant going straight from Friday prayers to the rice fields, where he will leave an offering to the goddess of the rice, Dewi Sri. Islam is also a Lombok folk Muslim who tells me that Islam had only three pillars, not five.[69]

Alongside Riddell's stance that it is not up to Christians to decide who the 'real' Muslims are, one might also set the position of ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Singkilī, about whom Riddell has written so extensively. If, paradoxically enough, Jawi is more Islamic now than it has ever been, it remains possible to draw examples of tolerance from within the older Jawi textual tradition itself. In al-Singkilī's *Daqāʾiq al-Ḥurūf* (edited by Riddell's teacher A.H. Johns), we find a warning to Muslims

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67   Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); Cemil Aydin, *The Idea of the Muslim World: a Global Intellectual History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017); Thomas Bauer, *A Culture of Ambiguity: an Alternative History of Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021).

68   Peter Riddell, "ʿAbd al-Raʾuf al-Singkili's *Tarjuman al-Mustafid*: a critical study of his treatment of *Juzʾ* 16." (Ph.D. thesis), (Canberra: Australian National University, 2004); *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses* (Singapore: Horizon, 2001); *Malay Court Religion, Culture and Language*.

69   Peter Riddell, *Christians and Muslims: Pressures and Potential in a Post-9/11 World* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), p. 166.

themselves not to attempt to adjudicate who is a 'real' Muslim and who is not: "It is dangerous to accuse another of kufr. If you do so and it is true, why waste words on it, and if it is not true, the accusation will turn back on yourself."[70] This reticence to rush to judgement is not unique to al-Singkilī, but reflects what has been called "a remarkable disinclination to *takfīr* or anathematization in the history of societies of Muslims."[71] At the same time, Riddell has also been clear that intolerance has also occasionally been a feature of Islam in Southeast Asia. At a conference panel on Malay manuscripts I convened several years ago, Riddell listened attentively to a paper proposing the 17th century Nūr al-Dīn al-Rānīrī as a fine example of statecraft for modern Malaysia. His subsequent question—did the presenter feel that al-Rānīrī's execution of those he deemed heretics and the burning of their books in front of the great mosque of Aceh was something that should be emulated in the present day?—went unanswered. The religious tolerance propounded both by Riddell and al-Singkilī is more characteristic of the long and rich tradition of Malay-language textual production in Arabic script than it is of bureacratic Islam in modern Malaysia—more characteristic, that is, of Jawi rather than JAWI.

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71 Ahmed, *What is Islam?*, p. 106 fn 255.

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Reason and Rationality in Twentieth-Century Southeast Asia: Harun Nasution's Dynamic Interventions

Khairudin Aljunied

One of the most fascinating developments in the history of Southeast Asian Islam which Peter Riddell has beautifully surveyed in his classic, *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World*, has been the struggle for the restoration of reason and rationality in Muslim thought.[1] Impressed by the achievements of other civilizations and disenchanted with what was considered to be the intellectual backwardness of traditional Muslim scholars ('ulamā), Muslim reformers in Southeast Asia, much like their compatriots in other parts of the Muslim world, railed against the predominance of intellectual conformity (*taqlīd*), and argued for a restoration of the centrality of reason and the use of independent reasoning (*ijtihād*) in Islamic sciences. Reformers thus advocated for what they characterized as the liberation of the Muslim minds from the shackles of superstition, ignorance, and false understandings of the teachings of Islam. The continued relevance of Islam in the modern world—so they reasoned—could only be sustained through fresh, innovative and bold reinterpretations of the faith.[2]

Muslim reformers who so ardently promoted the revival of reason and rationality were, however, a diverse group. Three main reformist tendencies emerged in the twentieth century.[3] The first of these were reformists who advocated a form of 'scripturalist rationalism.' This reformist strain bracketed all forms of reasoning within the parameters of the sacred sources of Islam. For them, the project of regenerating Islamic thought demanded a critical re-evaluation of the meanings and messages of the Qur'ān and the Sunna, i.e., the

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1 Peter G. Riddell, Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses (Singapore: Horizon Books, 2001), 230–265.

2 Rationalist pulses in Southeast Asia paralleled with those in other parts of the Muslim world. See: Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 43–83.

3 John Walbridge, *God and Logic in Islam: The Caliphate of Reason* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 183.

body of traditions attributed to Prophet Muḥammad, to address contemporary challenges. Their methodology of reasoning was for the most part deductive. The second group adopted a diametrically opposite position, which could be described as 'utilitarian rationalism.' They used modern theories and methodologies developed by scholars in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences to shed new light on pre-modern sacred sources. They placed reason and revelation on equal footing, and at times even privileged rationality over religious scriptures in addressing the unprecedented challenges of modern Muslims.[4]

The thought of Harun Nasution (1919–1998), a respected intellectual and religious reformer in Indonesia which Riddell described as intellectually and morally courageous and "a powerful force on the Indonesian Islamic stage,"[5] can be located somewhere in between these preceding tendencies, among a third group of reformists. This third reformist tendency included prominent modernist reformers such as Syed Aḥmad Khan (1817–1898), Muḥammad ʿAbduh (1849–1905), Muḥammad Shiblī Nuʾmānī (1857–1914), Muḥammad Iqbāl (1877–1938), Fażlur Raḥmān Malik (1919–1988), Ḥasan Ḥanafī (1935–2021), Fāṭima Mernīsī (1940–2015), Naṣr Abū Zayd (1943–2010), and Abdullah Saeed (b. 1960). These reformers envisioned complementary roles for reason and revelation, wherein reason served as the driving force of a once-flourishing civilization that held the Islamic revelation as its guiding frame of reference for civilizational progress. Within this third reformist tendency, the productive complementarity and harmony between reason and revelation featured as a leitmotif of Harun Nasution's work. In what follows, I show that Nasution championed "dynamism in thought and rationality within the boundaries of revelation" (*faham dinamika dan kepercayaan kepada ratio dalam batas-batas yang ditentukan wahyu*) as a means of transcending the decline of Muslim intellectual life in Southeast Asia. In short, he called for the return of a "dynamic Islamic rationality."[6]

By "dynamic Islamic rationality," Nasution primarily meant a rethinking of the scope and nature of revelation (*waḥy*). Although the Qurʾān is considered an essential source of divine guidance, the authority of which is based on Islamic traditions, beyond any reasonable doubt, Nasution argued that the Qurʾān does not comprehensively address all worldly matters. Rather, the Qurʾān only offers detailed guidelines on devotional, legal, ethical, and theolog-

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4   Walbridge, *God and Logic in Islam*, p. 183.

5   Riddell, Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World, 233.

6   Harun Nasution, *Pembaharuan Dalam Islam: Sejarah Pemikiran Dan Gerakan* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 2003), pp. 206–209.

ical matters. Other aspects of life, such as statecraft, economics, and social orga-nization, are framed in more general terms. Harun thus distinguished between two types of Qurʾānic verses, i.e. those that are vague or ambiguous in their meaning (*ẓannī al-dalāla*), and those that have clear meanings (*qaṭʿī al-dalāla*). The preponderance of the former verses, he argued, indicated that Muslims are encouraged to engage in *ijtihād* to address various issues relating their earthly affairs. The Qurʾān itself emphasizes the primacy of the rational faculty, which it states was endowed upon humankind for them to discern the signs of God throughout creation (*al-ayāt al-kawnīyya*).[7]

To recover the original dynamism of Islamic rationalism, rethinking revela-tion would not itself suffice. Islamic interpretive traditions would also need to be revived. To that end, Nasution considered *ḥadīth* and *ijtihād* of the ʿulamā to be essential. However, he found that approaches to the Prophetic traditions (*Hadith*) and *ijtihād* had stagnated. Nasution cast doubt over the applicability some *aḥadīth* and the scholarship of past ʿulamā. These interpretive traditions were, to him, still open to critique. The contents of some *aḥadīth* could be deemed as dated or even doubtful in light of recent advances in knowledge. There was a similar situation regarding *ijtihād*. The legal opinions of the ʿulamā, Nasution argued, must not be viewed as binding and should instead be sub-jected to acute scrutiny toward a renewed form of *ijtihād*. Such *ijtihād*, Harun cautioned, must be guided by deep spirituality and a comprehensive under-standing of Islamic intellectual history. Failing that, the objective of elevating a dynamic Islamic rationality would be hijacked by Muslims with vested inter-ests and those with ahistorical views. This in turn would bring more harm than good to the masses.[8]

Thirdly, dynamic Islamic rationality could be realized when Muslims are able to move beyond the theological conundrum in Southeast Asian thought. In pursuit of this, Nasution sought to undo hegemony of Ashʿarite theology that he felt had given rise to fatalism and apathy among Muslims. The theory of acquisition (*kasb*), a key component of Ashʿarite theology, presumed that human beings have no control over their actions but that they instead "acquire" them from God, who as the sole creator has full control over all things. Harun reasoned that such a theology ushered a decline in creativity and innovation among Muslims globally. As an alternative, he insisted on the recovery of the theology of divine constants (*sunnat Allāh*). Drawing from selected facets of

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7   Harun Nasution, *Akal Dan Wahyu Dalam Islam* (Jakarta: Univerisitas Indonesia Press, 2011), p. 38.
8   Harun Nasution, *Islam Ditinjau Dari Berbagai Aspeknya, Jilid II* (Jakarta: Penerbit Universitas Indonesia, 2009), pp. 113–115.

Mu'tazilite thought and the ideas of many Muslim thinkers that subscribed to the ideology of free-will (*ikhtiyār*) and human capacity to reason, Harun stressed that this alternative theology would inject more intellectual and practical vigor among Muslims. They would be freed from the mistaken belief that God determines all human actions and thereby fate. The theology of divine constants—which is in opposition to fatalist and secularist theologies—would reclaim agency to Muslims and induce them to research, invent and pioneer ways of thinking and living.[9]

It is obvious from the above that Harun's project of reinstating dynamic Islamic rationality was primarily directed at intellectual elites and secondarily to other strata of the Muslim community, which also considered important in achieving his reformist goals. Contrary to the assertions of some observers, Nasution was not elitist in his approach to Islamic intellectual reform.[10] Evidence for this is found in the methods with which he presented his ideas, and the outlets which he chose to publish his works. Stylistically, Harun's prose is straightforward, jargon-free and accessible to the literate public. He made sure to include Indonesian translations of technical terms from Islamic religious discourse, which ensured that readers unacquainted with Arabic would be able to grasp his arguments.[11] With the exception of the published edition of his doctoral dissertation, all of Nasution's books were compilations of lectures and seminars delivered in universities, colleges, governmental bodies, and civil society organizations. His most influential book, *Islam Rasional* (Rational Islam), consists of short articles published in various newspapers and popular publishing outlets between 1970 and 1994.[12] He himself stated that his writings were not only directed to university students, but were intended to "benefit … readers outside the ambit of universities, who yearn to widen their knowledge about Islam."[13] To reinforce his ideas about dynamic Islamic rationality among readers from all walks of life, Harun frequently repeated the same points in multiple publications, and occasionally even reproduced whole passages from one book to another.

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9   Harun Nasution, *Islam Rasional: Gagasan Dan Pemikiran* (Jakarta: Penerbit Mizan, 1989), p. 112.

10   Muhamad Ali, 'Harun Nasution', *Oxford Islamic Studies Online* http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t343/e0316 (Accessed May 26, 2020).

11   Harun Nasution, *Falsafat Dan Mistisisme Dalam Islam* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 2014), p. v.

12   The doctoral dissertation was entitled, "The Place of Reason in 'Abduh's Theology" (PhD., McGill University, 1968). Nasution republished it as: Harun Nasution, *Muhammad Abduh Dan Teologi Rasional Mu'tazilah* (Jakarta: Penerbit Universitas Indonesia, 1987).

13   Harun Nasution, *Islam Ditinjau Dari Berbagai Aspeknya, Jilid 1* (Jakarta: Penerbit Universitas Indonesia, 2009), p. v.

Nasution's choice to address difficult ideas in ways that were accessible the layman was partly connected to his own intellectual formation. Born in North Sumatra, Indonesia, on September 23rd, 1919, to parents who were conversant in the Arabic language, Harun Nasution's early education was spent in Dutch elementary and secondary schools. He was later sent for further studies in Mecca, Saudi Arabia in 1936, to fulfil his parents' wish that he would become a religious scholar. The conservative environment that he encountered in Mecca, with its emphasis on rote learning and aversion to collaborative discussion, exasperated Harun. He stopped his studies and moved to Cairo, Egypt, to pursue his bachelor's degree in the Faculty of *Uṣūl al-Dīn* (Principles of Religion) at the Al-Azhar University, in Cairo. Harun was felt that the teaching environment at Al-Azhar was too conservative, even medieval. He finally obtained his degree at the American University of Cairo in 1952. Sometime during his education in Egypt, Nasution became conversant in French.[14]

Nasution's presence in Cairo at this time played a major role in his own intellectual formation. It was in this period that the conservative and reformist intelligentsia of Cairo rediscovered and extensively debated the ideas of the medieval Muʻtazilite school.[15] Consequently, Nasution read extensively from various streams of Islamic rationalist thought that were emerging among Cairene thinkers at this time. Among the thinkers that left the deepest impression on him by virtue of their captivating writing style and acute analyses of Islamic history were Aḥmad Amīn (1886–1954), Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsā (1889–1963), Muḥammad Abū Zahra (1898–1974), and ʻAlī Sāmī Al-Nashshār (1917–1980). Nasution was particularly animated by the writings of the Muʻtazilites and modern Muslim reformists, an enchantment that followed him throughout his scholarly career.[16] A brief spell as a diplomat for the Indonesian embassy in Cairo, and also in Brussels in the early 1960s, ended abruptly as Nasution fell victim to the fractious political climate that was emerging in Indonesia at that time. Harun subsequently returned to Egypt and was offered a scholarship to further pursue his studies at McGill University in Montreal. There, Nasution finally found the freedom and resources to pursue his interests in Islamic rationalism and completed his master's thesis on ideological contests among Muslim activists and politicians in postcolonial Indonesia. In quick succession, he wrote a PhD dissertation (completed in 1968) on rationalism in the theology of

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14   Nasution, *Islam Rasional*, pp. 53–54.

15   Marco Demichelis, "New Muʻtazilite Theology in the Contemporary Age: The Relationship between Reason, History and Tradition," *Oriente Moderno* 90, no. 2 (2010), pp. 418–419.

16   Nasution, *Islam: Ditinjau Dari Berbagai Aspeknya, Jilid 1*, pp. 38–39.

the Egyptian reformer, Muḥammad ʿAbduh (1849–1905). In it, Nasution asked the controversial question as to whether ʿAbduh was indeed a Muʿtazilite and surmised:

> According to al-Khayyāṭ, no one deserves the name of Muʿtazilism unless he believes in the five Muʿtazilī principles, namely God's unity, justice, the promise and the threat, the intermediary position of capital sinners, and the command of the good and the prohibition of evil [...] In other words, he [ʿAbduh] cannot be considered a Muʿtazilī according to the Muʿtazi-lah's [sic] own criterion. What then is ʿAbduh if he is neither a Muʿtazilī, nor an Ashʿarī, nor a Māturīdī? Has he an independent theological system and specific theological views just as the other theological schools have? Obviously he does not. In general, his system is that of the Muʿtazilah [sic], and his principal theological views are, almost all of them, similar to those of the Muʿtazilah [sic]. If he cannot be accepted as a Muʿtazilī, at least it must be said that he has a Muʿtazilī theological system with almost identical theological doctrines. In other words, his theology is to a great degree a Muʿtazilī theology ... The Muʿtazilī theology which affirms man's active role in life, not the Ashʿarī theology of passivity, provided the essential intellectual and religious basis for ideas of reforms that could bring about necessary change in outlook and way of life among his [ʿAbduh's] co-religionists.[17]

Indeed, ʿAbduh's approach to Muʿtazilism was a specter that never left Nasution's mind, and he eventually took it upon himself to embed ʿAbduh's rationalism in Indonesia. The elective affinities between the two men's ideas are so self-evident that it can be said Nasution continued and expanded ʿAbduh's reformist project in the Southeast Asian context. In that regard, Nurcholish Madjid has opted to describe Nasution's *true* ideological position as one of *Abduhisme* (ʿAbduhism), indicating an intellectual commitment to indigenize Muḥammad ʿAbduh's ideas in Indonesia specifically and, by implication, throughout Southeast Asia.[18] From this point of view, characterizing Nasution as a neo-Muʿtazilite a modern Muʿtazilite theologian (*mutakallim*) loses sight of the fact that he did not fully accept most of the fundamental tenets of Muʿtazilism.[19] Rather, following ʿAbduh's lead, Nasution selectively utilized aspect of

17   Nasution, "The Place of Reason in ʾAbduh's Theology," pp. 263–267.
18   Nurcholish Madjid, "Abduhisme Pak Harun," in *Refleksi Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam: 70 Tahun Harun Nasution* (Jakarta: Lembaga Studi Agama dan Filsafat, 1989), pp. 102–110.
19   Richard C. Martin, Mark Woodward, and Dwi S. Atmaja, *Defenders of Reason in Islam:*

Muʿtazilism that did not depart too far from mainstream Sunni thought. He even went so far as to censure the Muʿtazilites for certain authoritarian acts, which he concluded were partly borne out of their logic of reasoning.[20]

Considering these facts, I choose to characterize Nasution as a methodological Muʿtazilite. He was a scholar-reformer who selectively and strategically utilized Muʿtazilite ideas to provoke a reassessment of the status of reason in contemporary Islamic thought. To that end, he saw Muʿtazilite ideas as a useful means of encouraging Muslims to greater reliance on reason and free will, especially in connection to reforming Islamic societies. As far as my reading of his works reveals, he did not profess a dogmatic belief in Muʿtazilism, nor was he in favor of such thinking at the expense of mainstream Sunni Islam. To borrow from Binyamin Abrahamov, Nasution was by all counts a rationalist "who attacked the traditionalists and their doctrines on the basis of reason, claiming that much, but not all, of religious knowledge can be known through reason."[21] Alongside his written works, the primary way that he put this perspective into practice was through enacting educational reforms. In 1969, he returned to Indonesia to take up a lecturer position at the Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic Institute (IAIN), in Jakarta. He quickly rose up the university ranks and was appointed its rector from 1974 to 1982. With Nasution in charge, the university became known as a "reformist campus" (*kampus pembaharu*), the influence of which helped transform the curricula of other Indonesian Islamic universities.[22]

In this official position, Nasution remained wary of potential detractors, which were plentiful both during his life as well as posthumously. Cognizant of the dominance of traditionalist and conservative thinking in Indonesian universities, Nasution admitted that he had tactically delayed the publication of his PhD dissertation which appeared only close to two decades later.[23] His other books were republished several times and exposed students, scholars and the public alike to an array of Islamic thinkers and alternative articulations of Islam. The educational reforms that he introduced shaped the thinking of a

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Muʾtazililism from Medieval School to Modern Symbol (London: Oneworld Publications, 1997); R. Michael. Feener, *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

20   Nasution, *Islam: Ditinjau Dari Berbagai Aspeknya, Jilid I*, p. 35.

21   Binyamin Abrahamov, *Islamic Theology: Traditionalism and Rationalism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p. x.

22   Fatah Abd Syukur, "Harun Nasution: The Reform of Higher Islamic Studies," in *Reclaiming the Conversation: Islamic Intellectual Tradition in the Malay Archipelago*, ed. Rosnani Hashim (Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press, 2000), p. 239.

23   Nasution, *Muhammad Abduh Dan Teologi Rasional Muʾtazilah*, pp. v–vi.

new generation of Indonesian Muslim scholars, intellectuals, and activists who were just as conversant in Islamic scriptures as they were trained in social scientific theories, concepts, and methods. Nasution's unwavering commitment to avoid co-optation by political elites and Islamic movements earned him the respect of many Muslim intellectuals throughout Indonesia and Southeast Asia.[24] In this regard, Nasution accomplished his goal of making dynamic Islamic rationality an increasingly accepted current in Indonesian universities, where he hoped it would help to analyze and redress many challenges facing Muslims.[25]

1   Rethinking Revelation

How relevant is the Qurʾān in modern life? What kinds of knowledge can be derived from this foundational Islamic source? The responses of modern Muslim intellectuals to these questions can be grouped into a few scholarly positions. These are a Qurʾān-as-comprehensive approach, a Qurʾān-as-discursive approach, and a Qurʾān-as-constitutive approach. As Massimo Campanini states, all three positions aim "at discovering the Qurʾān's practical dimension, which is to say its function in modifying the structure of reality and revolutionising human relations."[26] Or, as Farid Esack neatly puts it, the intellectuals representing these three approaches are all scholarly and critical lovers of the Qurʾān,[27] who nonetheless differ in substantial ways.

Those who view the Qurʾān as a comprehensive text uphold the scripture as an ultimate and all-encompassing document, and conceive of it as the foremost source for the formulation of new forms of knowledge and the reformation of existing ones. For them, the Qurʾān is a totalizing text that addresses the full

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24   Saiful Muzani, "Muʾtazilah and the Modernization of the Indonesian Muslim Community: Intellectual Portrait of Harun Nasution," *Studia Islamika: Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 1, no. 1 (1994), p. 103.

25   Carlos Fraenkel, "Teaching Aristotle in Indonesia," *Dissent* 55, no. 3 (Summer 2008), pp. 27–34. Fauzan Saleh, *Modern Trends in Islamic Theological Discourse in Twentieth Century Indonesia* (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Mirjam Künkler, "How Pluralist Democracy Became the Consensual Discourse Among Secular and Nonsecular Muslims in Indonesia," in *Democracy and Islam in Indonesia*, ed. Mirjam Künkler and Alfred Stepan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

26   Massimo Campanini, *Modern Muslim Interpretations*, trans. Caroline Higgitt (London: Routledge, 2011). See also Abdullah Saeed, *The Qurʾan: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 219–235.

27   Farid Esack, *The Qurʾan: A User's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2005), pp. 3–6.

range of human life, knowledge and action.[28] One of principal movers of this group was the late Ṭāhā Jābir al-ʿAlwānī (1935–2016). He saw the Qurʾān as:

> the primary source and basis of all knowledge in the areas of human *fitrah* [sic] (innate nature) and of social and applied sciences. Indeed, every Muslim with specialist qualifications in any field of knowledge must turn to the Qurʾān for inspiration and guidance. A conscious and contemplative reading of the Book of Allah will enable him to amend, add to and reshape his store of knowledge. This will enable Muslims to rebuild the true Ummah [sic] of the Qurʾān.[29]

This Qurʾān-as-comprehensive approach forms the basis of various ideational undertakings that aimed to uncover modern scientific elements or information in the scripture. Another offshoot of this approach is the Islamization of Knowledge (IOK) movement that experimented with transposing an Islamic worldview onto modern systems and structures of knowledge. Together, these two overlapping movements have produced textbooks and treatises in many disciplines that are laced and interpreted by means of Qurʾānic verses, the end-goal of which is the creation of a modern generation of Muslims that will live by, think by, and eventually be governed by the dictates of the Qurʾān.[30]

The Qurʾān-as-discursive approach takes a radically different stance. Sometimes characterized as a postmodern approach, it views the Qurʾān as a culturally laden and aesthetically significant text. The Qurʾān, according to this point of view, is a literary artifact to be approached hermeneutically. Scholars adopting this approach maintain that the Qurʾānic text addresses the context in which it was revealed. Scholars belonging to this school of thought express deep reservations about age-old interpretations of the Qurʾān, which they see as ill-suited for modern life. Accordingly, they question modern exegetes who do not acknowledge the limited utility of Qurʾānic injunctions in the contemporary age. This interpretive movement advances a reconsideration of what they view as problematic issues found in the Qurʾān, such as polygamy, sla-

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28   Johanna Pink, *Muslim Qurʾanic Interpretation Today: Media, Genealogies and Interpretive Communities* (Sheffield: Equinox Publishing Ltd, 2019), p. 25.

29   Taha Jabir al-Alwani and Imad al-Din Khalil, *The Qurʾan and the Sunnah: The Time-Space Factor* (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1991), p. 15.

30   Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, *Al Tawhid: Its Implications on Thought and Life* (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1982). AbdulHamid AbuSulayman, *The Qurʾanic Worldview: A Springboard for Cultural Reform* (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2011).

very, the treatment of women, and the implementation of the Islamic corporal punishments (*ḥudūd*). This is of course primarily accomplished through the use of modern theories, methods, and ideologies to elucidate fresh analyses of scripture. Muḥammad Shaḥrūr (1938–2019)—a prominent albeit controversial proponent of the Qurʾān-as-discursive approach—explained it accordingly:

> We do not treat the legal verses of *the Book* as codified law but as signposts or ethical-legal markers that Allah asked human beings not to overstep. Traditional *fiqh* jurisprudence has regarded the legal verses as absolute law which allowed neither mitigation nor adaptation to changing social and cultural circumstances. Our theory of limits aims to regain the flexibility and elasticity in human legislation that was originally built into the divine text but which was removed by an overly rigid system of *fiqh* jurisprudence.[31]

The third approach—Qurʾān-as-constitutive—stands midway between the two other positions. This line of thinking considers the Qurʾān as an indispensable guide for Muslims, both as an authoritative ethical canon and a fundamental source of revelation. Nonetheless, this group of scholars does not consider the Qurʾān as an exclusive source of guidance for human knowledge and activity; instead, it is considered as one among other sources of divine inspiration. This does not however imply that the Qurʾān is relegated to a secondary or marginal position. Rather, scholars taking on the Qurʾān-as-constitutive approach emphasize the scripture's undisputed standing as God's definitive revelation to humanity, without necessarily over-exaggerating its intended function. They argue that there are other complementary signs (*āyāt*) of God alongside the Qurʾān, which though not of equal stature to the latter must nonetheless be seriously considered in order to provide interpretations of the Qurʾān that are more sensitive to historical context.[32]

Harun Nasution fits comfortably into this third strain of thought. Although he was not an exegete (*mufassir*) by training, Nasution's incisive insights stimulated new ways of thinking about the Qurʾān in Indonesia that diverged from traditional approaches.[33] In this regard, he argued that it was impossible for

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31 Muhammad Shahrur, *The Qurʾan, Morality and Critical Reason: The Essential Muhammad Shahrur* trans. Andreas Christmann (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 215.

32 Muhammad Abdel Haleem, *Understanding the Qurʾan* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999).

33 Izza Rohman, "The Pursuit of New Interpretive Approaches to the Qurʾān in Contempo-

someone like the Prophet Muḥammad—living as he was in a pre-modern society—to have authored a scripture like Quran, which contains within itself vast repositories of knowledge: "X-rays had not been discovered, the same is it with microscopes, cameras and other instruments of knowledge were unavailable for anyone to do scholarly research. Hence, there was no way Prophet Muḥammad could have known all this [knowledge found in the Qurʾān] by his own accord."[34] Coupled with its linguistic beauty, Nasution agreed with the mainstream Muslim belief that the Qurʾān is unmistakably God's word, free from any corruption or alteration from human beings. Consequently, he also agreed with the conventional view that no translations of the Qurʾān can be viewed as equal to or a substitute for the original Arabic text. All scholarly engagements with the Qurʾān, he argued, must therefore be based on the original text and not translations.[35] Nasution would have therefore agreed with another modernist scholar, Fazlur Rahman (1919–1988), who stated that "the Qurʾān is very much conscious that is an 'Arabic Qurʾān,'" and hence, "a full understanding of the meaning [of the Qurʾān] dependsf upon the linguistic nuances" of the original Arabic text.[36] This stress on the Arabic origins and integrity of Qurʾān is in turn linked to the mainstream Sunni doctrine of the uncreatedness of the Qurʾān. This is a significant point, as it meant that despite his interest in medieval Islamic rationalism, Nasution would nonetheless remain silent about the Muʿtazilite doctrine of the createdness of the Qurʾān (*khalq al-Qurʾān*). His seemingly neutral posturing can be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, it may imply that he did not agree with the notion that the Qurʾān was created. Alternatively, he may have remained silent on the issue to avoid possible attacks from traditional scholars. Either way, it indicates that—like Muḥammad ʿAbduh before him—Nasution's primary focus was on how the Qurʾān ought to be understood and applied in the world, rather than theological and philosophical debates on whether it was created or eternal.[37]

Repeatedly throughout his works, Nasution stressed that the absolute, eternal, and immutable nature of the Qurʾān does not imply that the scripture

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rary Indonesia," in *The Qurʾan in the Malay-Indonesian World*, ed. Majid Danesgar, Peter G. Riddell, and Andrew Rippin (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 83–125.

34   Harun Nasution, *Falsafat Agama* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1973), p. 19.

35   Harun Nasution, *Akal Dan Wahyu Dalam Islam*, p. 24.

36   Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qurʾan* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 1999), p. 105.

37   Nasution, *Falsafat Agama*, pp. 14–19. For a discussion of Abduh's stance on the createdness of the Qurʾān, see Ammeke Kateman, *Muḥammad ʿAbduh and His Interlocutors: Conceptualizing Religion in a Globalizing World* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), pp. 72–73, 148–149.

addresses all of the finer aspects of human life. In stressing this point, Nasution was not suggesting that the Qurʾān is incomplete or deficient. Rather, he intended to illuminate an oft-neglected aspect of the text, namely its encouragement of the use of reason. To that end, Nasution employed a "textual holistic" reading to build his argument, according to which the Qurʾān is treated as a unified and integrated text.[38] Most persuasive is his breakdown of the types of verses in the Qurʾān which clearly drawn from the work of Al-Ghazali (1058–1111). Out of "6,236 verses", only five hundred address principles of faith, ritual, and social life. One hundred and fifty verses address issues of knowledge and the natural environment. Nasution highlighted that no specific injunctions, models, or templates are given in such crucial areas as governance, finance, agricultural life, and science and technology.[39] Rather than providing detailed instructions in these areas, Nasution instead argued the Qurʾān's major task is to provide general ethical, legal, and philosophical principles through stories, parables and select commandments and prohibitions. The minutiae involved in the application of these principles, he argued, could instead be found in the Prophetic *Sunna* and through human reasoning. Nasution believed that by offering general rather than specific directives, the Qurʾān could remain relevant for all times and contexts.[40] In the same vein, a noted expert on the Qurʾān, Muḥammad Abdel-Haleem (b. 1930), agrees that the majority of the Qurʾānic text is concerned with the issue of creed (*ʿaqīda*).[41]

In his works, Nasution built upon such observations as this to argue that the purpose of the Qurʾānic revelation is to stimulate dynamic engagement into life on earth precisely by leaving particulars to be deliberated by ethically responsible human beings. He therefore criticized the Qurʾān-as-comprehensive as being grossly inaccurate in its assumption that "the Qurʾān contains everything and explains everything."[42] For Nasution, those who viewed the Qurʾān as a source of all knowledge lost sight of the texture of the Qurʾānic verses themselves. While the Qurʾān is without doubt God's revelation, many of its

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38   This is method common among modernist interpreters such as Farid Esack, Asma Barlas, Amina Wadud and Fazlur Rahman. See Shadaab Rahemtulla, *Qur'an of the Oppressed: Liberation Theology and Gender Justice in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 3.

39   Nasution, *Akal Dan Wahyu Dalam Islam*; Harun Nasution, "Kata Pengantar," in *Perkembangan Modern Dalam Islam*, ed. Harun Nasution and Azyumardi Azra (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1985), pp. 1–16.

40   Harun Nasution, *Islam Rasional*, pp. 27–28.

41   Muhammad Abdel Haleem, *Exploring the Qur'an: Context and Impact* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2017), p. 243.

42   Harun Nasution, *Akal Dan Wahyu Dalam Islam*, p. 31.

verses have ambiguous meanings (*ẓannī al-dalāla*). These ambiguities are not meant to mislead or confuse readers. Rather, it is God's way of challenging human beings to think and reflect on these verses and devise practical solutions thereby.[43] The famed Indonesian exegete Hajjī ʿAbd al-Malik Karīm Amrullāh, aka Hamka (d. 1945), a contemporary of Nasution's and a scholar to whom he was exposed in his youth, concurred with this assertion. Both Hamka and Nasution shared similar views about the necessity of reviving rationality through engagement with the Qurʾān. To that end, both men drew upon the exegesis of the Muʿtazilite thinker, Abū al-Qāsim Maḥmūd al-Zamakhsharī (1074–1144 CE) to promote their views about the importance of rationality in interpreting the Qurʾān. Hamka was, however, a subtler writer on this point than Harun Nasution, and stressed that the Qurʾān was not revealed as comprehensive or encyclopedic text, but instead encourages and exhorts its readers to research all branches of knowledge.[44]

As for Nasution, he took Hamka's point a step further by outlining forty-eight verses in the Qurʾān that touch on epistemological concepts. He identified such Qurʾānic terms as *ulū al-albāb* (those who think), *ulū al-ʿilm* (those who are knowledgeable), *ulū al-abṣār* (those who possess insight), *ulū al-nuhā* (those who are intelligent), *iqrā* (read), *ʿallāma* (teach), *al-qalam* (the pen), *yaʿlam* (knowing), *tafakkara* (thinking), *fahima* (understand), *tadhakkara* (reflection), *naẓara* (observation) and *ʿaql* (reason). All of these concepts and terms have been incorporated into the Malay-Indonesian languages, and they collectively emphasize the importance of reason and rationality as well as the esteem that learned and insightful people possess in God's eyes. With reference to this epistemological vocabulary, Nasution assailed the traditionalist *ʿulamā* for downplaying the role of reason. This attack was, however, somewhat misleading. In actuality, the traditional *ʿulamā* continued to use their rationality to unpack questions relating to theology, jurisprudence, and their scriptural exegesis (*tafāsīr*).[45] In fact, the premium they sometimes unconsciously placed on

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43   Ibid., p. 38.

44   Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar Vol. 1* (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1982). See Peter G. Riddell, *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses* (London: Hurst & Company, 2001), p. 275.

45   Abdullah Saeed pushes back on the supposed anti-rationalism of the *ʿulamā* in a bolder way: "We cannot deny that much of the *tafsīr* literature we have today is largely based on reason. If *tafsīr* is to be based *entirely* on tradition, it would be no more than a dry exercise in reading a Qurʾānic verse followed by explanatory hadith or reports from the Companions traced back to the Prophet. Accepting this view of *tafsir* would also mean rejecting much of the *tafsīr* literature." See Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qurʾan* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 67–68.

rationality is evinced in the use of jurisprudential tools such as *ijtihād*, *al-raʾī* (rational discretion), *qiyās* (analogical reasoning), and *al-istiḥsān* (juristic discretion).[46]

Nasution's rationalistic tendency extended even beyond the Qurʾānic text. He argued that not only could reason aid in the interpretation of ambiguous Qurʾānic verses, but it could moreover serve to uncover and interpret signs of God in nature, also known as the *āyāt kawniyya* (existential signs of God). Nasution saw these two hermeneutical fields as complementary to one another; he was, after all, convinced that the Qurʾān could only be more deeply understood when interpreted in tandem with natural phenomena. In this regard, there is a clear resemblance between his thought and those of the Iranian philosopher Seyyed Hossein Nasr (b. 1933), whom Nasution cited several times in his works. In his own writing on the subject, Nasution chose to adopt Nasr's idea that "nature is a fabric of symbols, which must be read according to their meaning and that the Qurʾān is the counterpart of that meaning in human words."[47] Nasution extended these insights by arguing that just as interpretation of the Qurʾān benefitted from investigation of nature, similarly nature could only be fully appreciated through the insights offered by divine revelation. In his view, reason stood midway between nature and revelation, and functioned as a bridge for interrelating the various signs of God.[48] In making this argument, Nasution indirectly downplayed an aspect of the Qurʾān-as-discursive approach that reduced the Qurʾān to a literary text with little value for modern sciences. Instead, Nasution viewed the ability to research and promulgate modern sciences as a fulfillment of the divine injunction for Muslims to serve as vicegerents (*khalīfa*) of God on earth. In his view, the decline of the Muslim civilization only occurred when the Qurʾān, the investigation of nature, and rationality were disregarded and forsaken.[49] He expressed his perspective accordingly:

> … it can be concluded that reason occupies an elevated place in Islam and is widely used, not only in the development of knowledge and culture, but also in the development of Islamic teachings. The Qurʾān decrees

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46   Harun Nasution, *Akal Dan Wahyu Dalam Islam*, p. 75.

47   Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Science and Civilization in Islam* (Lahore: Suhail Academy, 1987), p. 24.

48   Harun Nasution, *Teologi Islam: Aliran-Aliran Sejarah Analisis Perbandingan* (Jakarta: Universiti Indonesia Press, 2002), p. 102.

49   Nasution, *Islam Rasional: Gagasan Dan Pemikiran*. Nasution, *Akal Dan Wahyu Dalam Islam*, pp. 68–80.

the use of reason. It is not baseless then for writers, be they Muslims or non-Muslims, to hold the view that Islam is a rational religion. Some have termed it 'Islamic rationalism.' … At the same time, it is necessary to stress here that the use of the terms 'rational,' 'rationalism,' and 'rationalist' in Islam must be differentiated from the original usages of these terms, that is, pure rationality that is heedless of revelation, or placing reason higher than revelation, to a point that revelation can be nullified by reason. Within Islamic thought, as described above, be it in the fields of philosophy and theology, especially so in jurisprudence, reason can never negate revelation. Reason conforms to revelation. Revelation is considered as the absolute truth. Reason is used only to understanding revelation and never to counter revelation.[50]

In sum, Nasution's perspective on reason and revelation was one that included confessional, critical and dialogical elements.[51] He expressed his firm belief of the ultimate importance of the Qurʾān in any attempt at reforming Muslim intellectual life. This clearly positioned him as a critic of predominant ideas about the Qurʾān, which to him did not accurately reflect the original function of revelation. As such, scholars representing the Qurʾān-as-comprehensive and Qurʾān-as-discursive strains of thought remained his intellectual *bêtes noires* throughout his career. Even though he appreciated their commitment to analyzing the Qurʾān, he saw both groups as unable to fathom the dialogical character of revelation. To Nasution, revelation must be internalized and contemplated with the aid of reflexive reason for Muslims to reap the most out of the signs of God, both in the form of a canonical text and in realm of nature. His revisionist view of revelation is perhaps partly explained through Andrew Rippin's remark that many Muslim modernists seek to make the Qurʾān "not as a static text but as a dynamic entity constantly being (re-)formed by the community that interacts with it."[52] It is clear that Nasution believed that the Qurʾān needs no (re-)formation. Its formation was, after all, completed during the Prophet Muḥammad's lifetime. The dynamism of its interpretative tradition instead depended on the willingness of Muslims to read it with fresh eyes and with a receptivity to new interpretations.

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50   Harun Nasution, *Akal Dan Wahyu Dalam Islam*, p. 101.

51   By confessional, I refer here to his unapologetic view of the unaltered, divine, and timeless essence of the Qurʾān as the word of God.

52   Andrew Rippin, "Western Scholarship and the Qurʾan," in *The Cambrige Companion to the Qurʾan*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 246.

2   Islamic Interpretive Traditions

Nasution's rationale for reinvigorating Qurʾānic exegesis naturally extended to a reassessment of Islamic interpretive traditions. By "interpretive traditions" I am alluding here, *pace* Jonathan Brown, to the discourses surrounding the *Sunna*, Hadith, and *ijtihād*, to which Muslims refer to for their religious praxis and which are central to any understanding of Islam.[53] These interpretive traditions, in Nasution's estimation, have long been sanctified and ossified to the point of losing their vitality. In response, Nasution attempted to re-evaluate Islam's interpretive traditions in the light of historical exigencies and the changing present. He first directed his attention toward the Prophetic *Sunna* in a way consistent with the works of other modern Islamic reformers. As Daniel Brown has sharply notes, "because of the stature of the *Sunna* as the symbol of the authority of Muḥammad and as a source of continuity with the past, no doctrinal dispute, no legal controversy, no exegetical discussion can be carried on without reference to it. Even for those who seek to reject its authority, *Sunna* has proved too important to ignore."[54]

In his reassessment, Nasution preserved the status of the *Sunna* as the second most authoritative source in Islam. He argued that the straight path (*ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*) of Islam included only those schools of thought that embraced the Qurʾān and Prophetic *Sunna* as authoritative sources.[55] To reject the authority of the *Sunna*, especially the textualized version of it that is recorded in the Hadith collections, was tantamount to heresy. Curiously, however, Nasution was willing to include as authentic Muslims many groups that both Sunni and Shiʾite *ʿulamā* had traditionally viewed as heterodox. Among which are the Kharijites (*Khawārij*) and the Muʿtazilites. In a bold way, he explained that these groups' interpretations of Islam were legitimate insofar as they did not reject the authority of the Qurʾān and *Sunna* of the Prophet Muḥammad.[56] Placing these groups within the fold of Islam predictably attracted strong criticism. The former Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs, Mohamad Rasjidi (1915–2001), emerged as Nasution's most aggressive interlocutor. Rasjidi described his unconventional views as a byproduct of orientalist training. He

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53   Jonathan A.C. Brown, *Misquoting Muhammad: The Challenge and Choices of Interpreting Muhammad's Legacy* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2014), pp. 15–68.

54   Daniel W. Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 6.

55   Harun Nasution, *Akal Dan Wahyu Dalam Islam*, p. 37.

56   Nasution, *Islam Rasional: Gagasan Dan Pemikiran*, p. 33.

questioned Nasution's grasp of Islamic teachings and warned that his ideas would "endanger the young generation of Muslims."[57]

A closer examination of Nasution's standpoint regarding the Sunna indicates, however, that he did not in fact radically digress from the orthodox Islamic view. The Qurʾān and the Sunna were, to him, consistent with and mutually supportive of one another. Any apparent contradictions between them could, in his view, be attributed to two problems: either with the authenticity of particular *ḥadīth* traditions and/or a faulty opinion on the part of a given scholar. Harun directed his criticism towards both problems. He upheld the Sunna as Qurʾān's primary *tafsīr* (exegetical source).[58] Nonetheless, he decried the constrictive paradigm that considered the Sunna as something to be venerated and not rationally scrutinized. He lamented the excessive attention given by scholars to ritualistic, devotional, and customary aspects of the Sunna and their indifference toward other aspects that had universal, philosophical, and humanistic significance.[59]

Nasution traced the root cause of this limiting paradigm to a defective conception of the Hadith. While Nasution defended the Hadith as a textual embodiment of the Sunna, even so he considered the Sunna to be something broader than what was eventually textualized in written *ḥadīth* collections. The Prophetic Sunna included not only these recorded sayings and deeds of the Prophet, but also the interpretive processes of his companions and the ʿulamā who had, from time to time, made sense of the wider meanings, principles, and lessons that can be drawn from the Prophet's life, words and actions. In this regard, Nasution shared Fazlur Rahman's critique against the fixed idea that the Sunna is to be derived not only from *ḥadīth* traditions. "The living Sunnah [sic]," Fazlur Rahman contends, "contained not only the general Prophetic model but also regionally standardized interpretations of that model—thanks to the ceaseless activity of personal *ijtihād* and *ijmāʾ*."[60]

Following Rahman's lead, Nasution took issue with the content of the Hadith as well. This was in keeping with the introduction of new research methods during this period, by means of which Islamic scholars began to probe the method-

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57   Haji Mohammad Rasjidi, *Koreksi Terhadap Dr. Harun Nasution* (Jakarta: Penerbit Bulan Bintang, 1977), pp. 24, 145.

58   L. Ali Khan and Hisham M. Ramadan, *Contemporary Ijtihad: Limits and Controversies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), pp. 4–5. Jonathan A.C. Brown, *Hadith: Muhammad's Legacy in the Medieval and Modern World* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2009), p. 3. Nasution, 'Kata Pengantar', pp. 3–4.

59   Nasution, *Pembaharuan Dalam Islam: Sejarah Pemikiran Dan Gerakan*, p. 22.

60   Fazlur Rahman, "The Living Sunnah and Al-Sunnah Waʾl Jamaʾah," in *Hadith and Sunnah: Ideals and Realities* (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2003), pp. 129–189.

ology and substance of the Prophetic Hadith. From the issue of fabrication and forgery to the problem of historical specificity, modern Muslim scholars cast a shadow over the sophisticated methods that had been used in the early centuries of Islam to ascertain the veracity of particular *ḥadīth* reports. They advanced fresh approaches to the Hadith that enabled scholars to differentiate between those traditions were authentically part of the Sunna from those that were false, unreliable, illogical and scientifically absurd.[61] Harun allied himself with this new trend. He cited Aḥmad Amīn extensively, whom in his *Fajr al-Islām* (Dawn of Islam) put forth a factious challenge regarding the authenticity of many *aḥadīth*, even those found in the otherwise canonical compilations of Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī (810–870 CE).[62] By building upon Amīn's work, Nasution was therefore not categorically rejecting the Hadith nor did he intend to demolish all of the methods of *ḥadīth* authentication (*ʿilm al-ḥadīth*). Rather, he attempted to sensitize Muslims to the historical and personal subjectivities found in *aḥadīth*, from criticism of the chain of narrators (*isnād*), to that of the text itself (*matn*), as well as the complex historical contexts in which *aḥadīth* were narrated and the manner in which they were compiled by later scholars. Advances in modern linguistics offered modern Muslim scholars the tools necessary to scientifically compare the language used in various *aḥadīth*, and Nasution appealed his readers to consider these tools as a means of sifting out falsehoods and dubious narrations in the Hadith literature.[63]

Broadening Ahmad Amin's provocative challenge to modern Hadith scholars to totally reconstruct the science of Hadith, Nasution also challenged Muslim scholars to introduce new criteria of *ḥadīth* verification. Besides pointing to the merits of modern linguistic tools, he did not however propose any criteria of his own. Instead, Nasution merely stated: "If this idea [i.e., the introduction of new verification criteria] is accepted, the science of Hadith will continue to develop. The critique and investigation into the narrators by Islamic scholars in the classical age can be supplemented by contemporary critiques and investigations of Hadith. We will then be able to filter out the authentic from the inauthentic *aḥadīth*, or those that are doubtful."[64]

This example highlights the irony that, in many ways, Nasution did not always measure up to the rigorous standards he himself maintained in criti-

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61   Gualtherus H.A. Juynboll, *The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature: Discussions in Modern Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), pp. 139–149.

62   Ahmad Amin, *Fajr Al-Islam* (Cairo: Maktaba al Nahza al Misariya, 1955), p. 238.

63   Khaled Abou El Fadl argues with the same tenor about Hadith in *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2001), pp. 192–193.

64   Nasution, *Islam Rasional: Gagasan Dan Pemikiran*, p. 309.

cizing other scholars. In arguing that different theological, jurisprudential, and sectarian branches of Islam all occupy "the plane of truth" (*berada dalam kebenaran*) so long as they hold fast to the Qurʾān and Sunna, he cited a weak *ḥadīth* ("Differences of opinion among my *umma* is a mercy.") which the Muʿtazilites, Ẓāhirīs, Ḥanafīs, and modern Hadith scholars all brushed aside as fabricated.[65] This oversight was more than just an isolated instance of his careless citation of Prophetic traditions. Like the scholars whom he had derided, Nasution too utilized effective *aḥadīth*, regardless of their provenance, to bolster his arguments. Unlike some Hadith scholars who often uncritical of the problematic aspects of their sources, Nasution's primary failing was his frequent cherry-picking of those *aḥadīth* that were useful to his project of freeing the Sunna from outdated methodologies.

In Nasution's view, however, the onus of reinterpreting of the science of Hadith and the Sunna lay not on him, but on the *ʿulamā*, whom he considered to be resistant to all efforts at renewing Islamic thought (*pembaharuan pemikiran Islam*), a condition that had persisted for centuries. Why was this so? Nasution located the source of the problem in their reservations regarding the use of *ijtihād*. They placed strict limits on its use and saw it as only applicable for select jurisprudential matters. Nasution disagreed with the widespread concept of *ijtihād* as the "capacity to exert oneself to produce a legal opinion … [either by a jurist] devising an opinion … [in response to] an inquiry, or … through conveying a recorded opinion this jurist has the authority to convey, customized as it may be to the case of the questioner."[66] To Nasution, *ijtihād* instead meant the use of a variety of reasoning techniques and tools to analyze texts in relation to contexts. He conceptualized *ijtihād* as the third source of Islam (*sumber ketiga ajaran Islam*), after the Qurʾān and the Sunna. He therefore did not provincialize it within the sphere of Islamic law, but instead made the enterprising proposition that *ijtihād* is applicable to all areas of human knowledge and experience.[67]

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65   Nasution, *Teologi Islam*, p. 152. Rejection of the authenticity of this *ḥadīth* among modern Hadith scholars, as well as pre-modern Muʿtazilites, Ẓāhirīs, and Ḥanafīs is discussed in Amr Osman, *The Zahiri Madhhab (3rd/9th–10th/16th Century): A Textualist Theory of Islamic Law* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 152–153. Muhammad Saed Abdul-Rahman, *Islam: Questions and Answers—The Hadeeth and Its Sciences* (London: MSA Publication Limited, 2003), p. 159.

66   Ahmad Atif Ahmad, *The Fatigue of the Shariʿa* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

67   Harun Nasution, "Ijtihad: Sumber Ketiga Ajaran Islam," in *Ijtihad Dalam Sorotan*, ed. Haider Bagir and Syafiq Basri (Bandung: Penerbit Mizan, 1994), pp. 108–116. Harun Nasution, "Menyeru Pemikiran Rasional Muʿtazilah," in *Refleksi Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam: 70 Tahun Harun Nasution* (Jakarta: Lembaga Studi Agama dan Filsafat, 1989), p. 56.

This different conception of *ijtihād* points to how the term was more broadly contested in modern Islamic discourse. According to Anver M. Emon, "there are two kinds of *ijtihād* in the modern world: 'scholarship that addresses *ijtihād* in particular social settings or *ijtihād* as a reform strategy.'"[68] For his part, Nasution felt that the latter was underutilized. Most modern scholars considered the doors of *ijtihād* to be closed (*insidād bāb al-ijtihād*) throughout the Muslim world and that traditional scholarship had remained inert for centuries. Harun explained that the concept of the "closure of the door of *ijtihād*" was an exaggerated description rather than an accurate reflection of development of Islamic intellectual history.[69] He argued that contrary to popular opinion, attempts at revival and reform were evident throughout Islamic history, as evinced both in the writings of medieval Islamic scholars, such as Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Taymīyya (1263–1328 CE) and Shams al-Dīn Abū ʿAbdullāh Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (1292–1350 CE), and many other modern reformists. Many of these self-styled reformers were directly inspired by the *ḥadīth* that predicted that at the beginning of each century in the Islamic calendar, a renewer (*mujaddid*) would emerge who would bring new life into the religion of Islam.[70] Even so, during Nasution's life, the reality of the situation in the Southeast Asia was that intellectual conformity (*taqlīd*) reigned supreme, even if some reformist *ʿulamā* did produce some innovative works. Even so, these reformist *ʿulamā* chose to enclave *ijtihād* specifically within the Shafiʾī school of jurisprudence and narrowed their attention to other selected themes.[71]

The decision to marginalize *ijtihād* has attracted the attention of notable scholars of Islamic law, such as Khaled Abou El Fadl, who characterized it as emblematic of the authoritarian habits of Islamic interpretive communities. In his view, interpretive habits become authoritarian when interpretive communities, in this case the *ʿulamā*, believe that their version of truth is exclusive and supreme.[72] In the same vein, Nasution depreciated twentieth-century reformist *ʿulamā* in Southeast Asia for the scholarly habits which they cultivated unconsciously. Despite calling for a reformation of Muslim attitudes and practices, these reformers—and especially those linked to the Muḥammadiya

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68   Anver M. Emon, "Ijtihad," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Law*, ed. Anver M. Emon and Rumee Ahmed (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 196.

69   A comprehensive discussion on differing positions about the closure of the door of ijtihād is found in Shaista P. Ali-Karamali and Fiona Dunne, "The Ijtihad Controversy," *Arab Law Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (1994): pp. 238–257.

70   Nasution, *Islam Ditinjau Dari Berbagai Aspeknya, Jilid II*, pp. 15–17.

71   Ibid.

72   Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women*, pp. 540–541.

movement—were in Nasution's view still limited by ascribing to a narrow and premodern concept of *ijtihād*, which limited their proposed reformation of Islamic thought to peripheral issues. He also argued that the reformist *ʿulamā* paid disproportionate respect to the voluminous works of their predecessors, and that they did not chose to look beyond the largely premodern canon of Islamic religious scholarship. In Nasution's view, the trepidation of the traditionalist *ʿulamā* concerning *ijtihād* gave rise to parochialism, dogmatism, bigotry, and hostility toward advances in science and technology which they considered to be reprehensible innovations (*bidʿa*).[73] In such attacks against the traditionalist *ʿulamā*, Nasution tacitly implicated the *Nahdlatul Ulama* (Revival of the Ulama) movement, which remained highly resistant to the practice of *ijtihād* as recently as the 1990s.[74]

To imbue more dynamism into *ijtihād*, Nasution promoted a renewed form of *ijtihād* that possessed the following features. First, it would be guided by the moral principles set forth in the Qurʾān and Sunna. Scholars practicing such *ijtihād* would rise above literalist and legalistic approaches to the Sunna and attempt to situate Prophetic sayings and actions within the scope of modern conditions. Second, this renewed form of *ijtihād* would also engage with premodern instances of *ijtihād*, with a view to producing new methodology of the practice that is divested from past thinking. Nasution advocated this because he viewed premodern *ijtihād* as unduly conditioned by the historical circumstances of the *ʿulamā* of the time. Modernity, however, thoroughly diverged from the premodern past and as such required new modes of thinking and reasoning. Third, he proposed that a renewed form of *ijtihād* would also distinguish between aspects of Islamic thought that are immutable—such as divine unity (*tawḥīd*), the authority of the Qurʾān and Sunna, the importance of moral norms, the prohibition of liquor and all sorts of intoxicants—versus other fields that were variable, such as the role of women in society and the types of political system which Muslims should support and uphold.[75]

Crucially, Nasution also proposed that scholars following his renewed approach to *ijtihād* would celebrate differences in ideas and accept them as

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73   Nasution, *Islam Rasional: Gagasan Dan Pemikiran*; Nasution, 'Kata Pengantar', pp. 3–4. Muhammad Qasim Zaman observes the same "fear of ijtihad" in South Asia in his book *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. 182–183.

74   Nadirsyah Hosen, "Nahdlatul Ulama and Collective Ijtihad," *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 6, no. 1 (June 2004): pp. 5–26.

75   Nasution, *Islam Rasional: Gagasan Dan Pemikiran*, p. 87 and *Islam Ditinjau Dari Berbagai Aspeknya, Jilid II*, pp. 91–93.

equally legitimate, rather than being bound to a singular and exclusive school of thought. They would, he proposed, view all schools of theology, jurisprudence, and branches of Islamic studies as mutable and would seek a functional convergence between them. Analytical lapses and fierce contestations would inevitably arise between thinkers who employed *ijtihād* in different ways, but Nasution maintained that such errors and debates would invigorate the discourse and promote superior scholarship on the road to reforming Islam. He further proposed that the renewed form of *ijtihād* could benefit from the already established dialectical tools from the Islamic legal tradition, such as analogical argument (*qiyās*), inferential argument (*istidlāl*), custom (*ʿāda*), consensus (*ijmāʿ*), public good (*istiṣlāḥ*), and equity (*istiḥsān*), all of which could be used to formulate new, modern techniques.[76] Nasution envisaged that the *ʿulamā* following the renewed form of *ijtihād* would eventually pay less attention to ancillary issues (*furūʾ*), such as owning dogs, the permissibility of photography, music, feasting, and determining the end of Ramadan, to instead focus on resolving foundational problems involving educational reforms, addressing poverty, moral decadence, corruption, rampant authoritarianism, and environmental degradation. Engaging on these foundational issues entailed collective rather than individual efforts. The rapid expansion of various fields of study and the increased complexities of modern life demand that every problem must be approached by experts from different fields, including both the religious and secular sciences.[77] To borrow from Tariq Ramadan's parlance, Nasution yearned for "text scholars" (*ʿulamā al-nuṣūs*)" and "context scholars" (*ʿulama al-wāqiʿ*) to "henceforth work together, on an equal footing, to set off this radical reform."[78]

Finally, Nasution asserted that a renewed form of *ijtihād* must rest on the twin foundations of deep spirituality and a strong sense of history. Muslim scholars guided by pure hearts and possessing virtuous characters would naturally direct their attention to pioneering universally beneficial ideas for the sake of happiness in this world and the hereafter. Conversely, Muslim scholars guided by purely selfish materialism and the love of power would inevitably produce negative consequences. Nasution offered the Muʿtazilites as an example of this dynamic, in that their ninth-century attempt to force their rationalist doctrines upon the wider Muslim community led to their downfall and

76   Nasution, *Akal Dan Wahyu Dalam* Islam, pp. 101–105.
77   Nasution, *Islam Rasional: Gagasan Dan Pemikiran*, pp. 31, 56, 90–92, 383–392, 417–419. Nasution, *Islam Ditinjau Dari Berbagai Aspeknya, Jilid I*, pp. 15–25.
78   Tariq Ramadan, *Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 4.

marginalization from Islamic history. The same was it with the Kharijites, whose campaigns of violence and radical ideology that declared all other Muslims as unbelievers led to their own similar marginalization. These examples were not only historical but also highly rhetorical, considering that in Southeast Asia, both groups were looked upon as despised heretics.[79]

In line with this, Nasution emphasized the importance of Islamic intellectual history as a contextual prerequisite for his renewed form of *ijtihād*. His books are replete with references to major breakthroughs in the sciences by the greatest Muslim minds who practiced *ijtihād* from the seventh to the thirteenth centuries CE. Nasution did this cognizant of the fact that such histories were not purely academic pursuits. Instead, he correctly understood that promoting these histories can bring about real changes in contemporary approaches to Islamic interpretive traditions. He attributed Islam's past intellectual supremacy to the premium Muslim thinkers placed on the role of spirituality and ethics, which he viewed as a guide to their use of reason, and urged his contemporaries to recognize this lost intellectual heritage (*turāth*). He further enjoined them to recognize that Islamic civilization historically encompassed not just the spheres of law, social regulation, philosophy, aesthetics, politics, and culture, but furthermore included mystical and ethical dimensions (*akhlāq*), all of which must be studied to reform and revive dynamic Islamic rationality in modern times.[80]

3   Muslim Theology Reconsidered

Disputes over theology (*ʿilm al-kalām*) have raged among Muslim scholars since the earliest days of Islamic history. With the advent of modernity and European colonialism in the eighteenth century, modern Muslim reformers espoused new theologies as a means of freeing the *umma* (Muslim nation) from the negative effects of mysticism and superstition that were perceived as weakening Muslims' political power. From the vantage point of the reformers, Muslims were stifled by a pervading sense of fatalism and the notion that downfall of once-mighty Islamic empires was divine punishment. The prevailing belief, so powerful among Muslims from the eighteenth century onwards, was that God was the sole cause of this drastic turn of events, and that attempts at adopt-

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79   Nasution, *Islam Ditinjau Dari Berbagai Aspeknya, Jilid II*, p. 29. Nasution, *Teologi Islam*, p. 23.

80   Harun Nasution, *Islam Ditinjau Dari Berbagai Aspeknya, Jilid I*, pp. 50–87.

ing modern knowledge do little to alter what had been divinely preordained. In response to these popular attitudes, modern Muslim reformers promoted a theology of liberation, empowerment and rationality as a means of responding to the political decline of Muslim lands.[81]

As one such scholar interested in the restoration of rationality to Islamic religious discourse, Nasution felt that the reconstruction Muslim theological thought in the twentieth century was far from achieved. He divided Muslim theological thought in Southeast Asia into two trends, namely a secularist theology and a fatalist theology. Both theologies affected how Muslims carried out their daily lives, just as they both affected the ways in which Muslims imagined their future in a rapidly changing world.[82] Nasution may have well approved of Martin Nguyen's observation that, for Muslims, "theology encompasses the totality of one's being. It is reflected in our very way of living—our thoughts and feelings, our inclinations and dispositions, our intentions and actions, our habits and observances […] As such, theology—expressing simultaneously a state of being and the aspiration for faith—determines the nature of one's perpetually changing relationship with God."[83] Since theology affects one's view of God and of life in general, Nasution saw it necessary to discuss the deficiencies inherent to both of these theological trends. As for the former, Nasution castigated secularist theology, with its roots in European thought, for downplaying the role of religion in society. Such theology did not necessarily deny God's existence, but instead tended to view God as inconsequential to everyday life. Religious faith was viewed as a hindrance to progress and religious scriptures were regarded as having little relevance for modern life. Secularist theology maintained that human beings should define their own ideas of morality and social norms without recourse to divine dictates. Consequently, it privileged the material needs of life should over the spiritual and the metaphysical. Such a theology, Nasution inferred, would "predictably and soon enough lead to the destruction of societies."[84]

The fatalist theology intrigued Harun even more. It is a recurrent theme as well as a subject of critical appraisal in almost all his books. He viewed it

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81   Rotraud Wielandt, "Main Trends of Islamic Theological Thought from the Late Nineteenth Century to Present Times," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islamic Theology*, ed. Sabine Schmidtke (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 707–764.

82   Mohd Shuhaimi Ishak, *Islamic Rationalism: A Critical Evaluaiton of Harun Nasution's Thought* (Gombak: IIUM Press, 2009), pp. 39–51.

83   Martin Nguyen, *Modern Muslim Theology: Engaging God and the World with Faith and Imagination* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2019), pp. 17–18.

84   Nasution, *Islam Rasional: Gagasan Dan Pemikiran*, p. 41.

as the more influential of the two trends in Southeast Asian Muslim theology, considering it as having had a ubiquitous influence throughout the region since the thirteenth century. At that time, Muslim missionaries introduced a version of Islam to Southeast Asia that was based on Ashʿarite theology. As a belief system, Ashʿarism provided little room for philosophical and intellectual deliberations while emphasizing the notion that human beings do not act according to their own will. Instead, it maintained that humans acquire (*kasb*) their acts from what God bestows upon them. Nasution attributed to this type of thinking what he called an insularity in thought (*pemikiran sempit*), which resulted in declining creativity.[85] This situation was worsened, in Nasution's view, by the spread of a world-renouncing Sufism. Propagated through the work of organized mystical brotherhoods (*tarīqa*, pl.: *ṭuruq*), this particular type of Sufism popularized the belief that worldly life was the domain of non-Muslims. Conversely, these Sufis emphasized spiritual enlightenment at the expense of material progress. This strain of Sufism also propagated the Jabarīyya school of Islamic theology, which denied man's freedom of choice and affirmed that life was predestined by God.

For Nasution, the popularization of Ashʿarism, world-renouncing Sufism, and Jabarī theology had concrete socio-political consequences. For one, he argued that such theological schools made Muslims passive, as trust in God (*tawakkul*) became sufficient prerequisite for worldly success. He also denounced the prevalence of authoritarian rulers, who presented themselves as semi-divine figures that justified and enforced this claim through Jabarī theology and alliances with powerful Sufi orders. He further argued that the ill-effects of such fatalist theology was exacerbated by the rigidities of the Shāfiʿī school of jurisprudence taught by traditionalist scholars across Southeast Asia. Despite their apparent juridical pluralism, Nasution had a dim assessment of modernist Muslim movements, such as those associated with *Al-Irshād al-Islāmiyya* and the Muhammadiyah, which in his view did not sufficiently negate the influence Jabarī theology. After all, although these movements were generally inspired by Muḥammad ʿAbduh's reformist thought, they chose to sidestep ʿAbduh's rational theology.[86]

In examining these critiques offered by Nasution in his books, it is clear that his analysis of theological trends is often reductionist. While it is true that the Ashʿarite, Jabarīyya and Shāfiʿī ideas permeated Southeast Asia Islam, these

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85   Nasution, *Teologi Islam*, pp. 37–39, 160. Nasution, *Islam: Ditinjau Dari Berbagai Aspeknya, Jilid 1*, pp. 38–39.

86   Nasution, *Pembaharuan Dalam Islam*, pp. 206–209. Nasution, *Muhammad Abduh Dan Teologi Rasional Muʾtazilah*, p. 97.

ideas did not in fact lead to the decline of Muslim societies in the region. From the thirteenth to the eighteenth centuries, Islam grew rapidly in Southeast Asia, transforming the region into the home of one of the largest Muslim populations in the world. Powerful Muslim empires known for their cosmopolitan cities, advanced technology, state-of-the-art infrastructure, and vibrant commercial activities flourished. Moreover, and contrary to the thrust of Nasution's argument, the foundation of fatalist theology coincided with the production of large quantities of philosophical and scientific writings.[87] Therefore although theology may have been a factor explaining the decline of Muslim empires and societies, it was certainly not the determinative factor, as it is presented in Nasution's work.

Putting aside the question of the historical accuracy of Nasution's account, it can be safely argued that he intended his narrative of fatalist theology as justification for a new, alternative theology which he felt could reinvigorate intellectualism among Muslims. This he chose to call *teologi sunnatullah* or the "theology of divine constants," he also referred to as *teologi rasional* (rational theology) or *theologi liberal* (liberal theology). Central to this theology is the recognition of God as the originator of the natural laws of the universe.[88] Referred to as "divine constants," (*sunnat Allāh*) these include sunset and sunrise, the cycle of seasons, aging and death, innate properties of things such as the heat of fire, the coldness of ice, among others. In Nasution's conception, the divine constants governing the universe are timeless and cannot be changed, except by way of miracles or chance, two exceptions that are in themselves acts of God which occur in exceptional circumstances. It follows, then, that as the highest form of creation, human beings are given the freedom to act within the stipulated divine constants and given the power of reason and energies to derive the fullest benefit from the universe that is entrusted to them by God. The theology of divine constants hence stands midway between determinism and proponents of free will. In advocating such a theology, Nasution reiterated the views of the Andalusian Muslim scholar, Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad Ibn Rushd, or Averroes (1126–1198 CE), who as Majid Fakhry explains rejected "both the libertarian position of the Muʿtazilites and the deterministic position of their rivals. The alleged 'intermediate' position of the Ashʿarites is, for him, entirely meaningless."[89] In doing so, Nasution

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87   Howard M. Federspiel, *Sultans, Shamans, and Saints: Islam and Muslims in Southeast Asia* (Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), pp. 22–87.

88   Nasution, *Teologi Islam*, pp. 150–151.

89   Majid Fakhry, *Averroes (Ibn Rushd): His Life, Works and Influence* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2008), p. 105.

clearly distanced himself from much of Muʿtazilite theology, which to him was excessively influenced by the Hellenistic-Christian philosophical tradition.[90]

Harun explained that the theology of divine constants assigns a high priority to the use of reason. It compels Muslims to uncover the causes and effects behind all occurrences, hence a more scientific and empiricist approach to life. Adopted as a theological outlook, it would bring about the dynamism of thought and action necessary to construct new theories, methodologies and other research tools to explain how the universe functions.[91] Such intellectual dynamism, according to Nasution, flourished during the classical period of Islamic history. Ibn Rushd, who was the most illustrious advocate of the theology of divine constants, had himself been highly influential in Europe via translations of his philosophical treatises, which in turn produced the European Renaissance. Despite his posthumous influence, Ibn Rushd was tragically persecuted in his own homeland, his ideas suppressed, and the theology of divine constants marginalized.[92]

On the surface, it seems as if Nasution's theology of divine constants lacked metaphysical substance, given its central emphasis on the utilization of instrumental reason and intellectual methods to understand natural laws. In truth, he conceded that reason has its limitations, which should be admitted by all Muslim. The Arabic word for intellect (ʿaql) etymologically derives from the concept of binding something with a rope, implying that reason is linked to the heart and soul, rather than being an independent entity.[93] Hence, for Nasution, reason in Islam is not completely unlimited, but should instead be restrained or guided by external devices. These restraining devices are ethical guidelines and spiritual insight, both of which derive from God. Without these, he argued, and purely rational minds would perceive God's creations in purely self-serving ways. He therefore argued that the exertion of the intellect must be coupled with strengthening one's spiritual relationship with God in order to view creation in the fullest sense. Again some parallels can be drawn between Nasution's ideas and those of Hamka.[94] For his part, Hamka promoted the concept of guided reason, a type of rationality that is moderated by the

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90   Arthur R. Arberry, *Reason and Revelation in Islam* (London: Routledge, 1957), p. 69.

91   Harun Nasution, *Akal Dan Wahyu Dalam Islam*, p. 68. Nasution, 'Kata Pengantar', p. 6.

92   Nasution, *Islam Rasional: Gagasan Dan Pemikiran*, pp. 112–117.

93   Nasution, *Akal Dan Wahyu Dalam Islam*, pp. 5–13.

94   Nasution, *Islam: Ditinjau Dari Berbagai Aspeknya, Jilid 1*, pp. 30–31, 85; Harun Nasution, "Menyeru Pemikiran Rasional Muʾtazilah," in *Refleksi Pembaharuan Pemikiran Islam: 70 Tahun Harun Nasution* (Jakarta: Lembaga Studi Agama dan Filsafat, 1989), p. 10.

sacred sources of Islam, by good character, as well as by reference to changing material contexts and new forms of knowledge in order for Muslims to adapt effectively to a modernizing world.[95]

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that even though Nasution blamed world-renouncing Sufis for undermining the intellectual spirit of Muslims, he nonetheless praised Sufi scholars for their ability to produce an equilibrium between reason and spirituality. Although these Sufi scholars were too few to make a significant impact within modern Southeast Asian Islamic thought, in the classical age of Islamic history they had been the driving force behind growth of dynamic Islamic rationality. Sufistic concepts of *zuhd* (ascetism), *tawba* (repentance), *wara'* (religious scrupulousness), *ṣabr* (patience), *maḥabba* (love) and *ma'rifa* (gnosis) were, in Nasution's view, essential concepts with which Muslim scholars and the learned public must be acquainted.[96] He summarized their contributions accordingly:

> The Sufis viewed the sharpening of the intellect or *'aql* as not a guarantee for making a noble character. Human beings with intelligent minds can use their reason and their knowledge for evil ends. Because of this, they [the Sufis] focus their attention on the sharpening of the faculty that is centered on the heart … Hence, in Islamic teachings, what makes human beings righteous and just is not the sharpness of his reason but the purity of his heart. The pure heart is the guide for the sharp mind toward the straight path. The realization of justice therefore entails a balance between the development of the spiritual powers, reason and the heart.[97]

4   Conclusion

In his survey of the development of Islamic universities in Indonesia, Azyumardi Azra considers Harun Nasution as a transformational figure who helped broaden Islamic studies, converting it from a field that was limited to a specific school of thought into one that incorporated a diverse range of viewpoints. The upshot of Harun's contributions was a movement away from ideological sectarianism to a culture of intellectual pluralism. Additionally, Nasution—along

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95   Khairudin Aljunied, *Hamka and Islam*, *Hamka and Islam* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019), pp. 17–34.

96   Nasution, *Falsafat Dan Mistisisme Dalam Islam*.

97   Nasution, *Islam Rasional: Gagasan Dan Pemikiran*, pp. 70–71.

with other intellectuals such as Nurcholish Madjid and the former Indonesian Minister of Religious Affairs, Mukti Ali—produced a shift "from a normative approach [in Islamic studies] to a historical, sociological, and empirical approach. The normative approach to studying Islam, which tends to neglect human socio-historical realities, has led Muslims to see Islam as an idealistic religion."[98]

Such notable achievements should not obscure Nasution's failures and limitations. For one, he tended to overstate the importance of Muʿtazilite thought in its capacity to effect a dynamic form of Islamic rationalism. Hence, to the extent that Muʿtazilite thought can be a source of inspiration, it could not solve the backwardness of thinking in the Muslim world.

His insistence on the importance of reviving rationalism furthermore contributed to the misconception the early-modern Muslim world failed to progress intellectually, and denied the continuing role of rationalism in the Muslim world, which persisted for many centuries after the marginalization of the Muʿtazilite school. Nasution's overemphasis on the specific role of the Muʿtazilite school paralleled his similar overemphasis of the importance of modern Muslim thinkers who sought to revive Islamic rationalism. He devoted great attention to reformist intellectuals from the Arab world, Turkey and South Asia, but very little to those of Southeast Asian thinkers such as Syed Sheikh Syed Aḥmad Al-Hādī, Muḥammad Natsir, and Hamka. Ironically, these same scholars and others not only shared his call for a dynamic Islamic rationality, but in fact predated Nasution's work on that same topic. This lacuna in Nasution's work may stem from his perception that the Islamic reformist thinkers in Southeast Asia were not on par with their other Middle Eastern, Turkish and South Asian counterparts.

An inspiration to many Muslim reformers and, at the same time, a nemesis for traditionalists and conservatives, Nasution's writings cannot be ignored by scholars of Southeast Asian Islam. Like the Muʿtazilites and other Islamic rationalist thinkers whom he admired and selectively drew upon, Harun Nasution was an archetype of the Southeast Asian Muslim reformers who expanded the latitude of intellectual freedom in modern Islam and intellectually confronted the burden of decline in Muslim thought.[99] Even though his ideas did not translate into a mass movement, his independent spirit, his disassociation

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98   Azyumardi Azra, "From IAIN to UIN: Islamic Studies in Indonesia," in *Islamic Studies and Islamic Education in Contemporary Southeast Asia*, ed. Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad and Patrick Jory (Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Ilmuwan, 2011), p. 51.

99   Sari Nusseibeh, *The Story of Reason in Islam* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), p. 78.

with any political or social movements, and the consistency with which he promoted the idea of dynamic Islamic rationality have earned him avid followers among the Southeast Asian Muslim intelligentsia.[100] Today, Nasution's continuing influence is felt in networks of Muslim thinkers—globally and in Southeast Asia—who share his vision of presenting "a balance that could both appeal to the rationalist mind and also nurture the inner spiritual life … [and which would enable] Islam to stay relevant and responsive to the needs of the changing times."[101]

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100   Saleh, p. 197.

101   Masooda Bano, *The Revival of Islamic Rationalism Logic, Metaphysics and Mysticism in Modern Muslim Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), p. 4.

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Playthings of Destiny: Raden Mas Kareta, His Javanese Father and African Son

Michael Laffan

Reading Ronit Ricci's stimulating *Banishment and Belonging* with the history of Cape Town in mind, and more particularly the century and a half under the rule of the Dutch East India Company or VOC, I was struck by the mention at once similarly Dutch Colombo in 1806 of Raden Tumenggong Wirakusuma.[1] I knew Wirakusuma to be the adoptive son of Raden Mas Kareta, ordered banished to the Cape by the Dutch in 1750, and himself the son of another exile, Pangeran Arya Mangkunegara (d. 1739), sent by the Dutch to Ceylon in 1733 at the behest of his own brother, the then ruler of Mataram, Susuhunan Pakubuwana II (r. 1726–1749). Indeed, Kerry Ward drew attention to the connection between the princely Kareta and Wirakusuma in her *Networks of Empire*, and proposed that the naturalist Carl Peter Thunberg (1743–1828) saw the former at a religious gathering in Cape Town in 1772. As she further explained, Kareta gave an account of his life to the metropolitan VOC Chamber of Enkhuizen, the Netherlands, in 1778, and was eventually repatriated to Java with his family in 1787—though events surrounding his son would lead to their collective removal from that island rather than simply that of Wirakusuma, as the late Merle Ricklefs once suggested.[2]

What follows here, then, might be taken together with the recountings of Ward and Ricci as the spine of a larger intergenerational biography of exile that links Java to Lanka, the Cape, Madras, and the States General, though I would suggest one or two tweaks in the narrative and the potential linking of Kareta and Wirakusuma to yet another prominent exilic figure, Sayyid ʿAlawi,

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1   Ronit Ricci, *Banishment and Belonging: Exile and Diaspora in Sarandib, Lanka and Ceylon* (Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 121–122. I should note, too, that I have tended to adjust spellings of names for consistency and readability, thus Wirakusuma rather than Wirya Kusuma, or yet Wirakushuma as one Lankan scribe later had it, reflecting the Jawi orthography emerging on that island.

2   Kerry Ward, *Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company*. (Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 224–230; M.C. Ricklefs, *Jogjakarta under Sultan Mangkubumi, 1749–1792: A History of the Division of Java* (London: OUP, 1974), 270, 287–288. For a recapitulation of the affair, see below.

who came from much further west, but whose troubles began in Java too. This connection, I shall argue, would have made Wirakusuma of even more interest to the newly constituted royal court of Surakarta beyond his experience and claimed paternity. Still, I cannot claim to have a full account of the family or their associations, but rather a gathering of notes and dates, many secondary, that point to a set of interesting intersections of VOC and Muslim networks crisscrossing the Indian Ocean.

These are networks that Peter has plumbed, of course, studying the first fragments of a Qurʾān taken to the Netherlands and the major exegetical work and influence of the peripatetic ʿAbd al-Raʾuf of Singkel (1615–1693).[3] That said, ʿAbd al-Raʾuf's Acehnese patrons were yet to feel the existential threat of the VOC, or to suffer the anguish of exile undergone at Ceylon and the Cape by his contemporary Shaykh Yusuf (d. c. 1699) or yet that which is mapped out here for the scattered family of our first exile: Pangeran Arya, initially banished from Kartasura in 1728, near the beginning of his younger brother's disastrous reign.

1   Java and Ceylon: The Turbulent World of Mas Kareta's Childhood

Raden Mas Kareta—variously called Raden Mascar, Bagus Kareta, Mascaretta, or even Mas Kreti by his Dutch watchers, is not such a stranger to western scholarship. In 1856, the former colonial officer and sometime archivist P.A. Leupe (1808–1881) offered a note on the long displaced aristocrat, apparently the only exile to escape from the Cape and plead his case before some of the directors of the VOC in Holland.[4] This he did in 1778, when he was in his early forties, having taken a small boat out into Table Bay one morning and boarded a vessel of the return fleet, where he was soon identified as "Jan van Ceilon".[5]

There was some truth to his adopted moniker. Whereas Kareta had been born at Batavia in 1733 as the third son of Pangeran Arya, he had spent most of his first decade on Ceylon after arriving as an infant. Indeed, he should have been born there. Pangeran Arya had first been displaced from Kartasura when his brother's Chief Minster (*Patih*) Danureja had accused him in 1728 of an

3   Peter Riddell, "Rotterdam MS 96 D 16: The Oldest Known Surviving Qurʾan from the Malay World," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 30:86 (2002), 9–20; *Malay Court Religion, Culture and Language: Interpreting the Qurʾan in 17th century Aceh* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017).

4   P.A. Leupe, "Raden Mas Kareta in 1778," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* 5 (1856): 441–448.

5   For mention of his adopted name, see Kathleen M. Jeffreys (ed.), *Kaapse Archiefstukken*, 7 vols. (Cape Town: Cape Times, 1926–1938), 2 [1779]:222.

inappropriate sexual relationship with one of the royal women. Ordered sent to Ceylon by his aggrieved and doubtless insecure younger sibling, this sentence was delayed by uncertain residence at Batavia as a useful hostage of the VOC. Five years on, though, negotiations for a fresh treaty, led by the since disgraced Danureja's replacement, Pangeran Natakusuma, and the powerful Demang Urawan (a.k.a. Pangeran Purbaya, brother-in-law to Pakubuwana II), saw Pangeran Arya and family finally sent to Ceylon, where they arrived in November 1733.[6]

Pangeran Arya was hardly the only exilic member of the court of Mataram residing in Ceylon at the time, as Ricci explains. While he was initially ordered confined to the Dutch fort at Colombo, his old enemy Danureja, who had arrived on another ship at the same time, was kept in the nearby suburb of Wolvendahl, already known for its historic community of Javanese soldiers and their descendants.[7] Soon enough, though, Pangeran Arya would also be granted a house according to his station, perhaps like that which he had been granted in Batavia—or at least that is what his son Kareta later asserted in his memorial presented at Enkhuizen, in North Holland, as we shall see below.

Numerous relatives of Pangeran Arya had meanwhile long been held even further away again, at the northern port of Jaffna. These particular castaways of empire were the family of the ever-so-briefly sultan of Mataram, Amangkurat III (1703–1705). Deposed by his Dutch-supported uncle (the father of Pangeran Arya, Pakubuwana I), Amangkurat III had been sent from Batavia with his family back in 1708. Despite the presence of a retinue and some formal acknowledgement of his status in the form of an honour guard, he died in 1734 immiserated and disconnected from the affairs of his courtly home, as Ricci shows with regard to their pleas for information and distress about the loss of rank and identity.[8]

Amangkurat thus died on Ceylon not long after the arrival of his cousin at Colombo. Following further negotiations at Batavia, led by Natakusuma, the royal body and surviving "Ceylonese" princely family were repatriated to Kar-

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6   Based on documents in Colombo, Ricci proposes they arrived on the *Wesendijxhoorn*, though I found no ship of that name in the information collected by Bruijn and co. A possibility is the *Westerdijkshoorn*, which had its last outward return journey from the Netherlands after 1732, and was evidently kept for more localized transport, being finally laid up at Batavia in 1741. See Ricci, *Banishment*, 84; and J.R. Bruijn, F.S. Gaastra, I. Schöffer, and E.S. van Eyck van Heslinga eds., *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, 3 vols. (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1979), 2:422–423, voyage 2868.9.

7   Ricci, *Banishment*, 85n.

8   Ricci, *Banishment*, 49–55, 118–119.

tasura with much fanfare in April 1737. Unbeknownst to the Dutch they also carried back the long-absent regalia, being the sacred weapons and clothing that Amangkurat had spirited away with him to the centre of the Indian Ocean, and which Natakusuma had been urgently seeking as a means of restoring the prestige and order of the kingdom.[9]

Coincidentally, and of relevance to this larger story of exilic crossings, the Ceylonese princes, as they would be known, were accompanied, if not from Colombo, then on the last stages of their journey from Batavia, by an Arab teacher known as Sayyid 'Alawi. This teacher was a rising ally and religious mentor to both Natakusuma and Urawan, and an element of their program to engage with Islamic authority as an additional means of strengthening the state in the face of Dutch interference.[10] 'Alawi was soon a close adviser to Pakubuwana II and his queen (Urawan's sister) Ratu Kencana. This caused the VOC no small alarm in the lead-up to her tragic death after childbirth in 1738, during which time 'Alawi had been a constant comfort to the royal couple. But if the Dutch thought crisis averted with the queen dead and then Urawan forced into exile at Batavia on Dutch charges, they would soon be mistaken, as the events of 1741 would show. For in that year, in the wake of Urawan's further, and unrequested, sending to Ceylon, not to mention a cataclysmic anti-Chinese pogrom at Batavia in October 1740, the Islamic faction headed by Natakusuma would form an alliance with local Chinese forces and overwhelm the VOC garrison at Kartasura in July–August 1741.[11]

Following Pangeran Arya's demise at Colombo in 1739, some of his surviving family—8-year-old Kareta included—were returned to Java in late 1741. But they came only as far as the anxious VOC capital, reeling in the wake of the great massacre, and abuzz with rumors of the war that had commenced with the disaster at Kartasura. Indeed, the return of the body of another exile, Ki Panji Surenegara of Surabaya, along with the respectful treatment of his family and that of Pangeran Arya—given a house in the Ruby Bastion and

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9   Nationaal Archief, The Hague, 1.04.02, VOC 8972, S. Kinderman to Abraham Formieux, Colombo, 23 March 1737; M.C. Ricklefs, "The Missing Pusakas of Kartasura", in Sulastin Sutrisno et al. (eds.), *Bahasa–Sastra–Budaya: Ratna Manikam Untaian Persembahan Kepada Prof. Dr. P.J. Zoetmulder* (Yokyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1985), 601–630.

10   For more on 'Alawi see my far too long "The Sayyid in the Slippers: An Indian Ocean Itinerary and Visions of Arab Sainthood, 1737–1929," *Archipel* 86 (2013):191–227.

11   For the war, see Willem G.J. Remmelink, *The Chinese War and the Collapse of the Javanese State, 1725¬1743* (KITLV Press, 1994); and M.C. Ricklefs, *The Seen and Unseen Worlds in Java 1726¬1749: History, Literature and Islam in the court of Pakubuwana II* (St. Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 1998).

a fresh guard of honour—were intended to soften Pakubuwana II's hostile attitude to the Company.[12]

Such may not have counted for much. By late 1742, a much-weakened Pakubuwana II, forced to flee Kartasura after it was ransacked by Chinese insurgents and then Madurese forces, had returned to the Dutch side. He had soon sacrificed Natakusuma, much as he had let Urawan (and his own sister) go in 1738. Indeed, his latest *patih* was also destined to remain on Ceylon with his family until 1758, where they found some comfort in the ministrations of yet another teacher of Arab origin; Sayyid Musa 'Aydarus.[13]

By contrast, their previous Arab mentor, 'Alawi, still found ministering in the ruins of the Javanese capital in August 1743, was handed over by Pakubuwana with fewer obvious regrets. Blamed for the rumoured forced conversion of some of the Dutch captives in 1741, he was sent to the Cape in chains together with another religious scholar, Kyai Hajji Mataram, who did not long survive captivity on Robben Island. 'Alawi would languish on the windswept island for close to seventeen years. He probably heard little of the ensuing struggles back on Java leading to its patchwork partitioning between the rival successor capitals of Surakarta and Yogyakarta as per the terms of the 1755 Treaty of Giyanti.[14] And he probably did not hear for some time, either, that a young prince of the Kartasuran line, the nephew of his former patron, was eking out a living selling vegetables just across the water from him after 1751.

2   Exiled Again

Let us return to, and with, Kareta, who lived behind two sets of Dutch walls for the course of the Chinese War and then into his teenaged years. Doubt-

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12   Leupe, "Raden Mas Kareta," 448, citing Governor General and Council to Governor of North Coast, Batavia, 28 November 1741.

13   Ricci, *Banishment*, 107–109. 'Aydarus was reportedly the master of a "seminary" at Colombo who was later appointed head of the Moors and Javanese alike under the Dutch in 1760. See Sri Lanka National Archives (SLNA), X/3/20.

14   The nearest direct witness to events after his removal was Cakraningrat of Madura, who had tried to claim the throne of Mataram in 1742, though he had found himself sent to isolation at the Castle of Good Hope for his ambitions in 1746. He died in 1748, and is often confused with 'Alawi's peer, Hajji Mataram, buried on Robben Island. For discussion of the inventory of Cakraningrat's belongings, see Jean Gelman Taylor, "Belongings and Belonging: Indonesian Histories of Inventories from the Cape of Good Hope," in: *Exile in Colonial Asia: Kings, Convicts, Commemoration*, Ronit Ricci (ed.) (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2016), pp. 165–192, at 180–181.

less chafing against their own environs in the Indies, kept from the last leg of the return to a shattered court that none could have remembered, Kareta was among three of Pangeran Arya's sons accused in 1750 of a crime, now unclear. Two were named in Dutch documents of the day as Pangeran Tirta Kusuma and our Raden Mas, alias Bagus, Kareta (now aged 17).[15] Whereas Tirta Kusuma and a still younger brother (Raden Ceylon) were sent back to the island of the latter's eponymous birth, Kareta—described as their half-brother, assumedly by virtue of his mother's status as a secondary wife, and evidently seen as the more troublesome member of the family—was sent to the Cape.[16]

Kareta arrived at the Cape in January 1751 apparently with a small retinue, whereafter he was allotted a monthly allowance of 5 rixdollars (or 12.5 guilders).[17] Put into context, this was roughly the wage of a corporal—though he would only receive this limited largesse after lodging a request for pecuniary aid in 1756.[18] Hardly wealthy then, the young Kareta was still better off than the majority of detainees at the Cape, many of whom were the enslaved servants of the Company or its dependents. He would also have been marked by his being allowed some freedom of habitation, given that it appears, for now, that he was not among the exiles who shared a part of the Slave Lodge in the heart of the city, though he would have known many of its occupants, who rubbed cheek by jowl with the lowly constables, or "Caffers" as the Dutch then called them. The latter were often former convicts from Robben Island, forced into serving the Fiscal and meting out the more gruesome punishments in the town under his orders.

Kareta never had to suffer such indignities, though, and while evidently stretched financially, he was similarly never to see the privation of Robben Island where 'Alawi and others languished and gathered shells for lime kilns. Based on evidence noted by Ward and expanded upon by Jean Gelman Taylor, a well-behaved Kareta impressed the longstanding governor, Rijk Tulbagh (b. 1699, served 1751–1771), who supported his petitions, first for financial aid in 1756, and then for repatriation in mid 1765.[19] While the first request was granted

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15   Leupe, "Raden Mas Kareta," 445–446.

16   Leupe, "Raden Mas Kareta," 446.

17   Among the retinue was one Rombian, see: H.C.V. Leibbrandt (ed.), *Precis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope: Requesten* (*Memorials*) *1715–1806*, 5 vols. (Cape Town and London: Cape Times Ltd., 1905–1989), 3:985.

18   As Ricci also notes, a Bugis soldier at Ceylon was paid 3 rixdollars per month in 1745. See Ricci, *Banishment*, 182–183.

19   Western Cape Archives and Records Service (WCARS) C 134, 11 September 1756; and C 143, 29 January 1765; cf. Ward, *Networks*, 225; and Taylor, "Belongings," 179–180. With thanks, too, to Daiyaan Petersen for obtaining images of the originals.

by Batavia, having also had the passing support of Liebrecht Hooreman (1708–1774), Commander of the Return Fleet, the latter was ignored, with the VOC having princes enough to deal with in the wake of the Treaty of Giyanti.

Between his appeals to Batavia, Kareta appears at the Cape as a supplicant in a different and seemingly less impecunious form. In 1759, he manumitted a woman called Sara van Bugis, described as a slave of the Lodge (where they had met?), and her very young son Amsterdam, acting as guarantor together with a local burgher, Frans Lens.[20] In that year, too, Kareta joined with a Sara van Batavia—surely the same woman—to borrow at least 210 guilders from Joachim Nicolaus van Dessin. This was a debt recorded in the probate of Van Dessin's estate following his death in 1761; the year of ʿAlawi's arrival on the mainland.[21]

Evidently trusted, Kareta, Sara, and her young son Amsterdam made ends meet somehow—and to the regard of their fellow exiles over the coming decade as well. Our next likely glance of Kareta comes with the arrival at the Cape of the naturalist Thunberg in 1772, who in June observed a Javanese prince playing a violin in a crowded gathering for what he thought was the Muslim NEW YEAR. Indeed the whole ceremony seems to have occurred within the bounds of Kareta's apartment, if he was indeed, as Thunberg claimed, the principal man of the congregation:

> On the 28th of June, the Javanese here celebrated their new-year. For this purpose they had decorated an apartment in a house with cloths that covered the ceiling, wall, and floor. In front at some distance from the farthest wall an altar was raised, from the middle of which a pillar rose up to the ceiling, covered with narrow slips of gilt paper and silk alternately: from above downwards, ran a kind of lace between the projecting edges. At the base of the pillar were placed bottles with nosegays stuck in them. Before the altar lay a cushion, and on this a large book. The women, who were all standing or sitting near the door were neatly dressed, and the men wore night-gowns of silk or cotton. Incense was burned. The men sat cross-legged on the floor, dispersed all over the room. Several yellow wax candles were lighted up. Many of the assembly had fans, which they found very useful for cooling themselves in the great heat necessarily pro-

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20   Leibbrandt, *Requesten*, 3:966. See also Ward (Networks, 226) citing WCARS LM Requisition no. 114, 1759. Lens died in 1775. See Leibbrandt, *Requesten*, 2:690.

21   WCARS MOOC 8/10.76; Taylor, "Belongings," 179. Note that the account refers to 210 guilders as the remaining debt.

duced by the assemblage of a great number of people in a small space. Two priests were distinguished by a small conical cap from the rest, who wore handkerchiefs tied around their heads in the form of a turban. About eight in the evening the service commenced, when they began to sing, loud and soft alternately, sometimes the priests alone, at other times the whole congregation. After this a priest read out of the great book that lay on the cushion before the altar, the congregation at times reading aloud after him. I observed them reading in the Oriental manner, from right to left, and imagined it to be the Alcoran that they were reading, the Javanese being mostly Mahometans. Between the singing and reading, coffee was served up in cups, and the principal man of the congregation at intervals accompanied their singing on the violin. I understood afterwards, that this was a prince from Java, who had opposed the interests of the Dutch East-India Company, and for the reason had been brought from his native country to the Cape, where he lives at the Company's expense.[22]

Given the date, Thunberg had not been present for any New Year's celebrations, but had witnessed the festivities surrounding the Birth of the Prophet.[23] Such celebrations often include recital of the *Qaṣīdat al-Burda* [The Ode of the Mantle] of al-Būṣīrī (1211–1294), which may have been inscribed in the large book he saw, though it could well have been the Qurʾān he witnessed being quoted and celebrated by the audience, in a ritual known as *samāʿ*, and in ways well known in Banten at the time.[24] While Kareta was most likely the principal man of the congregation, doubtless famous for his familial connections, I strongly suspect that one of the two priests was the hardy ʿAlawi, who had served his royal uncle. He may even have encountered him as a boy at Colombo if his association with the Ceylonese princes had preceded their arrival at Batavia and triumphant return with him to Kartasura. After his removal to the mainland and his degrading momentary employment as a constable in 1761, ʿAlawi was probably housed in the Slave Lodge, though we know from Jim Armstrong's work that he was no longer at this address by July 1763 when he testified to the

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22   Carl Pieter Thunberg, *Travels at the Cape of Good Hope 1772–1775* (Cape Town: Van Riebeck Society, 1986), 47–48.

23   28 June 1772 equates to 27 Rabiʿ al-Awwal 1186. The Prophet's birthday falls on 12 Rabiʿ al-Awwal.

24   On the *samāʿ* tradition and indications of Jawi engagement with Persian culture, see Majid Daneshgar, "Persianate Aspects of the Malay-Indonesian World: Some Rare Manuscripts in the Leiden University Library," *Dabir* 8 (2021): 51–78.

Acting Fiscal about the death of his Chinese landlady, at which time he was named as an "Arab priest" by reputation if not active vocation.[25]

Even if 'Alawi was no longer alive at the time of Thunberg's visit in 1772, we have a likely overlap with Kareta and his own small family in the 1760s, during Amsterdam's formative years and when Kareta would so fruitlessly apply for repatriation. This latter attempt surely came after hearing word of the successes of his once arrested brother, by now Mangkunegara I (d. 1795), who kept a keen interest in his younger sibling, and who would later needle a hesitant Pakubuwana III to allow his return.

Perhaps the most exciting venture of Kareta's life occurred six years on in 1778, when the desperate prince—his previously named Dutch patrons and financial guarantors now dead—slipped out into the bay aboard a lighter or small fishing vessel. Such boats were usually manned at the Cape by Southeast Asians, enslaved and free, who were well known for their sailing skills. They must also have helped their highborn fellow clamber aboard the sides of one of the waiting Return Ships, perhaps as they delivered supplies, and while he was disguised, as he later revealed, in the blue jacket of a sailor.

The returning ship in question was the *Hoolwerf*, which had left Batavia in November 1777 and on which Kareta adopted the persona of "Jan van Ceilon" after revealing his presence after departing the Cape on 4 March 1778.[26] Surely put to work aboard in the following weeks, once arrived in Holland in June, Kareta pled his case before the Chamber of Enkhuizen. We find the following memorial submitted on the occasion. Once partially quoted by Leupe with reference to a copy in Jakarta, the version below was sent back to the Cape in July on the *Herstelder*, which arrived in November:[27]

> It was in the year 1726 [sic], when the Gentleman Mattheus de Haan presided over India [as Governor General], that my father Pangeran Arya Mangkunagara was exiled to Batavia by his own brother, Susuhunan Jaka, the Emperor (Keizer) of Java [Pakubuwana II], in order that he be sent to Ceylon by the Governor General and Counsellors of the Indies. Once arrived at Batavia, my father was kept under arrest at the Vierkantsche

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25   James C. Armstrong, "The Estate of a Chinese Woman in the Mid-Eighteenth Century at the Cape of Good Hope," *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 4,1 (2008): 111–126.

26   For the *Hoolwerf*, see *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping*, 3:506–507, voyage 8001.3. For mention of Kareta as adopting the name "Jan van Ceilon," see *Kaapse Archiefstukken* 2 [1779]:222. Ward (*Networks*, 224, 227) offers that Kareta must have had the support of Tulbagh and Hooreman for his actions, but both were by then dead.

27   *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping*, 2:686–687, voyage 4323.3.

Poort (the reason why the Emperor sent my father to Batavia before I was born remains a mystery to me), though he was released from his arrest at the request of the Governor General and Counsellors of the Indies, and given a fine home with a salary of 60 rixdollars per month and an honour guard by the door. He enjoyed this for a period of seven years, and thus until 1733, in which year the Emperor of Java sent an ambassador to the Governor General and Counsellors of the Indies, such that my father was indeed sent to Ceylon in banishment, with the further result that my father, together with my oldest brother, born on Java [i.e. at Kartasura] along with another, and then myself in that same year, had to leave for Ceylon, where he enjoyed exactly what he had had at Batavia. Indeed he was even granted a page (*rapportganger*) in addition, and had twenty servants in those days, dying in 1739.

My grandfather was Susuhunan Prabu [Pakubuwana I], Emperor of Java.

My father had six children by his wives, including two called Raden Mas Tirta Kusuma and Pangeran Dipati Mangkunegara, born on Java before 1726, then I was born at Batavia in 1733, [then came] Raden Mas Ceylon, Raden Mas Samsam and Raden Mas Rotto, [all three] born on Ceylon, with the latter [two] dying very young.

My father, who had died in 1739, was succeeded in all things by my eldest brother, Raden Mas Tirta Kusuma, also taking the name of Pangeran Arya Mangkunagara, while my second brother, now on Java, is Pangeran Dipati Mangkunagara [i.e. Mangkunagara I], being just two months old when his father was banished. He now has his own government and needs not pay any contribution to the Company.

These, my oldest brothers, went to Batavia in 1741 with myself and my brother Raden Mas Ceylon, two years after the death of my father. At that time the Emperor was at war with the Company, for which reason we were kept at Batavia, with the Company supplying us a house with two pages, both corporals, full rations, and 65 rixdollars per month.

Peace came soon after, with my brother and I both arrested in 1750, without knowing why, while my youngest brother remained with his mother. Some time after our arrest, we were each taken into exile on a separate ship, including my brother Raden Mas Ceylon. Pangeran Arya Mangkunagara and Raden Mas Ceylon were sent to Ceylon, while I was sent to the Cape of Good Hope, where I arrived on the 3rd of January 1751. A few years later my brothers got their freedom to go back to Java, where my oldest brother has since died, and where the younger [of the two older siblings] is still alive.

At the Cape of Good Hope I had to survive six years without any assistance from the Company, after which time I addressed myself to Governor Ryk Tulbagh, with the result that I obtained a small monthly allowance which he had recommended to the Council of Policy and for which he had written to the Council of the Indies, which allotted me 5 rixdollars a month.

This 5 rixdollars being insufficient to support me, I was forced to borrow money for certain things, at significant rates of interest, with which I speculated in order to derive some benefit for myself.

I attest that I never had any plan to escape. It was only in 1765, when I took recourse to Director General Hooreman, who was at the Cape in the course of his repatriation, and the Gentleman Tulbagh for their intercession, so that I might be delivered from my banishment and return to Batavia to serve the Company; yet it made not the slightest difference.

With this great disappointment then I was compelled to bide my time, though I could no longer declare my desire, being only to live and die in the Company's service. Thus I took the wicked and bold step to take a Dutch ship to the fatherland and to present myself to the great Gentlemen in person. On the 4th of March 1778 I went aboard the *Hoolwerff*, which was being repatriated by Your Excellencies' Chamber, having taken out a small vessel[28] at 11 that morning while wearing a blue jacket and carrying a sack in which I had my best clothes. Two days out from the Cape Roads, the roll was called, and I made myself known to the skipper.

Now safely arrived in the fatherland, and being granted permission to address myself to Your Honorable Sirs, of which I am so desirous, I find myself obligated to implore, in the first instance, that you will forgive my infraction, and to overlook it.

Further I express my desire that I might be freed from the Cape of Good Hope, where I have been forced to wander as an exile for twenty seven years, while my two brothers had long been released from their banishment, and that I might be appointed in the Company's service, so that I may demonstrate that my heart remains inclined to the Company, for which I would gladly offer my life and service. For such a boon to be granted, it is my intention to address you with my humble prayer that

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28   The printed transcript has "met een Kadriaih hejol gekoomen." A later source located by Ebrahim Salie—as yet uncited—claims that Kareta had made a living selling vegetables to visiting ships, which raises the possibility that the original word is some variant of *khudrawiyya*, from the Arabic for "greens", though this is perhaps a stretch. Certainly the buying and selling of vegetables would align with his stated usage of borrowed funds.

it might be commended to the Governor General and Counsellors of the Indies, that they might give me something, perchance some coastal lands of Java which I would gladly cultivate, or else that I could be appointed as an officer with this and no other company at Batavia.

Consider, Honorable Sirs, my birth, my life's lot, as well as that of my father and brothers, the reason for my departure from the Cape of Good Hope, and what the request should entail, placing myself in your Honorable and Respected Gentlemen's most mighty protection.[29]

While the masters of Enkhuizen sympathized with the apparent prince and his tale of woe, perhaps summarized from a Malay version, they advised that they had no documents relating to his case, and that it should therefore be decided by the presiding Gentlemen 17 in Amsterdam or the authorities in the Hague. The latter soon disclaimed any knowledge or jurisdiction as much as they could not refute the insistent arrival's claims.[30] Having already sent a copy of Kareta's testimony to the Cape on the *Herstelder*, the Chamber of Enkhuizen then sent additional word on the *Lam* in August, agreeing that the hopeful grandson of Pakubuwana I was not to be punished on his return, assumedly aboard the same vessel, which dropped anchor in January 1779, 28 years after his first African landing.[31]

That said, after Kareta's departure, the commissioners in Holland received copies of two resolutions originally made at Batavia, with that of 27 February 1750 reporting information that "Radin Mas Karetta, also known as Bagoes Kareta, the half brother of the arrested Pangeran Tirta Koesoema" had then been thought guilty of, or perhaps just involved in, a murder.[32] The Batavian authorities had determined that any potential involvement of the late Pakubuwana II's nephew in such a crime (albeit unprovable) could not go unpunished and had placed the less-elevated teenager under military arrest. The following month they affirmed that, regardless of the lack of any clear proof, his attitude and disrespect for authority rendered him a "dangerous sub-

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29   "Memorial addressed to the Enkhuizen Chamber of the Noble and Respected Directors of the E.I. Company given by Raden Mas Kareta, concerning his birth, ancestors, reason for departure from the Cape of Good Hope, and a request for your Excellencies to grant" in *Kaapse Archiefstukken*, 1 [1778]: 490–494. Note again that I have adjusted spellings of personal names to conform to Javanese and Indonesian standards. Insertions in square brackets are my own.

30   Leupe, "Raden Mas Kareta," 445.

31   The *Lam* arrived at the Cape on 8 January 1779, continuing on 3 February to Batavia, where it arrived on 23 May 1779. *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping*, 2:686–687, voyage 4325.3.

32   Leupe, "Raden Mas Kareta," 445–446.

ject", and thus ordered him banished to the Cape, to remain there "until the further disposition of this administration."[33] And that, as Leupe concluded in 1856, was that; with the hearsay of 1750 revived at Batavia and the Netherlands affirming the lingering punishment of a minor, but not quite forgotten, prince at the Cape in 1779.

Evidently still ill-disposed, and in dire financial straits as well, Batavia further reminded the Capetonians in late October 1779, and in a letter that arrived in January 1780, that the since-returned Kareta was to be kept under close supervision and that measures be taken lest he or his ilk come into contact with any foreign Europeans.[34] That risk became extremely high with the onset of war with Britain, declared in December 1780. With Kareta lodged somewhere in town, in April 1781, the castle took the precaution of clearing Robben Island of its swelling population of convicts and exiles, with the latter being taken aboard ships to be hidden in the more northerly Saldanha Bay.[35] These men included several recently-arrived aristocrats from the Moluccas, such as the Qadi Abd al-Rauf and Imam Abdullah of Tidore, with the former managing to escape to the British fleet that entered Saldanha Bay in July 1781, to be taken on to Madras and a pension while his ill-fated companion remained at the Cape for the rest of his life.[36]

Kareta would have had the occasion to meet the unlucky Abdullah after his trudging back to the Cape together with the rest of the exiles. Given the likely death of 'Alawi and his interment up on Signal Hill among the free Chinese by the end of the previous Gregorian decade, Abdullah was now effectively the most learned of all the exiles in Southern Africa. With his own education on Java and his claim to descent from the royal family of Cirebon, he should have been of interest to Kareta, though we do not currently have any direct evidence of their interaction. Rather he was a close confidante of yet another relatively free-roaming prince, Ahmad of Ternate, who had arrived with a retinue of his own in 1775—though their numbers had also been thinned by the raid on Saldanha Bay.[37]

Speaking of retainers, Kareta reappears in the records in November 1781, and in respect of another manumission. This was of Jeptha, an enslaved servant

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33   Leupe, "Raden Mas Kareta," 446.

34   *Kaapse Archiefstukken*, 3 [1780], 188.

35   WCARS C 159, 205–233, Resolution of Monday, 2 April 1781.

36   On the life and times of Abdullah, see Michael Laffan, *Under Empire: Muslim Lives and Loyalties Across the Indian Ocean, 1775–1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2022), chapter 1.

37   Laffan, *Under Empire*, 45–47, 57.

of long-standing who may have accompanied Kareta from Batavia alongside another man, the free or since freed Javanese called Rombian. Rombian made the connection to Kareta in a petition for departure on the *Voorschoten* with his own wife and two children in January of 1785, and thus in the wake of the war with Britain.[38] By this time the thirty-five years must have weighed heavily on the unescaped Kareta. The now 51 year-old may have released Rombian from service having had an inkling of his own impending return. This was finally allowed in October 1785 by his cousin Susuhunan Pakubuwana III (d. 1788), supporting the latest petition of Kareta's older brother, Mangkunagara I, whose heavily guarded court lay close by at Solo.[39] Once word finally reached the Cape, a once more impoverished Kareta—his local speculations surely crippled by the war with Britain—prepared to depart with his family, receiving the extraordinary allotment of 100 rixdollars from the Castle in February to assist with their passage, eight years after declaring himself the stowaway Jan van Ceilon.[40]

3   Back to Java

Kareta and family were not destined to remain long on Java or indeed the "home" court that they had never seen—if we recall that Kareta had been born at Batavia and taken to Ceylon as an infant, and that his own "Batavian" wife seems to have claimed an origin in Sulawesi given her alternate address as "Sara van Boegis". We hear little more explicit about Sara, though. After a three-month voyage, and then their move to Kartasura by early 1787, Kareta and his adoptive son, now known as Wirakusuma, were ordered to remove their Dutch wigs and clothes by the Crown Prince, Pangeran Dipati Anom (b. 1768), and to follow lives of piety.[41] While hostile watchers may have interpreted this as a moment of censure for their emulation of Dutch ways, it was more likely to

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38   For Jeptha, see Leibbrandt, *Requesten*, 3:980. For Rombian and family, Leibbrandt, *Requesten*, 3:985. I do not know whether Rombian's petition was granted. The *Voorschoten* departed the Cape on 23 February 1785. See *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping*, 2:710–720, voyage 4465.1.

39   Ricklefs, *Jogjakarta*, 270. Ricklefs's primary source was the secret correspondence between Solo, Semarang and Batavia for the month of April 1787 as found in the Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren, especially KA 3655, now designated NA 1.04.02 (VOC), 3763. Related documents are found under VOC 3653, 3703, 3705, and 3813.

40   Leibbrandt, *Requesten*, 2:789. Ward (*Networks*, 227) notes, based on a letter sent to Batavia in 1786 (WCARS A1657, 24), that Kareta returned to Java on the oddly-named *Selwonderlog*.

41   Ricklefs, *Jogjakarta*, 287–288; VOC 3763, W.A. Palm to J. Siberg, Surakarta, 19 April 1787.

have been one of recognition and elevation. For just as the Lankan returnees from Jaffna had been feted and rewarded with titles and followers in 1737—much like ʿAlawi's followers, the former *patih* Natakusuma and his wife, on their return in 1758—Wirakusuma was soon at the center of new clique sponsored by the Crown Prince whom Ricklefs has shown was himself adopting a pietistic attitude that he would carry forward into his reign as Pakubuwana IV (r. 1788–1820).[42]

While exile evidently imbued the returnee with authority and charisma, those at the court with long memories, such as the family of Natakusuma, should have connected the long absent Sayyid ʿAlawi to Wirakusuma's formation. Indeed, in a remarkable echo of history, where ʿAlawi had once comforted a dying Ratu Kencana and then a grieving Pakubuwana II in 1738, Wirakusuma seems to have caught the attention of their grandson in the wake of the death, once again in childbirth, of his own wife, Raden Ayu Pamekasan (d. 1785), and ensuing marriage to a cousin, the daughter of Pangeran Purbaya.[43]

According to the anxious Resident at Surakarta, W.A. Palm, the still unsettled prince made the recently-arrived Wirakusuma "the apple of his eye", while frequenting certain "former ministers" (*oude mantries*) and failing to present himself for ceremonies sanctioned by his (Dutch-dominated) father Pakubuwana III, such as the wedding of Raden Ayu Sophia. Worryingly too, the young "African" prince who had once worn a western coat and wig like his violin-playing stepfather was now honoured by another nobleman, Pangeran Kajoran, with a set of gamelan instruments—regalia of his own after a fashion.[44] He also gained a small following with whom he shared his religious knowledge, perhaps infused with the healing wisdom of ʿAlawi or else the more recent Abdullah Tidore.[45] Certainly a panicked Palm, who claimed to detect a rising hostility to Europeans at court, commenced his inquiries into the influence of this newly-sworn "pope" and his following, initially named as Amat Djelani (Ahmad Jilani), Kadje Tjokorio (Hajji Cokro) and Kiai Drumono (Kyai Darmono), sending some

42 Ricklefs, *Jogjakarta*, 287; M.C. Ricklefs, *Soul Catcher: Java's Fiery Prince Mangkunagara I, 1726–1795* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2018), 285–289.

43 VOC 3763, W.A. Palm to J. Siberg, Surakarta, 19 April 1787. Not to be confused with Urawan in the 1730s, this Pangeran Purbaya was the brother of Pakubuwana III. See Ricklefs, *Jogjakarta*, 286.

44 Ricklefs, *Jogjakarta*, 287, citing Palm to Semarang, 2 May 1787 from KA 3655 (OB 1788), now VOC 3763.

45 For Abdullah's later claim of Javanese princely connections, see WCARS BR 348, 60–64, Petition of Imam Abdulla, 4 December 1804, Notary G. Goetz, Extract of 19 December 1804, No. 14.

of their stolen papers to Semarang for analysis and preemptively recommending banishment for the sake of the future order of Java.[46]

His superior in Semarang, J. Siberg, readily agreed, returning the papers for further investigation and urging that the prince be counselled from his path lest his future crown pass to a younger brother.[47] On the 24th of April, a relieved Palm reported the arrest of Wirakusuma and his party of "dangerous subjects" and that the Susuhunan had counselled his wayward son.[48] On that occasion, too, Palm had collected yet more "magical texts" (*Jimats of Tover papieren*) as well as correspondence between Raden Dipati Jayadiningrat of Surakarta and Raden Dipati Danureja of rival Yogyakarta.[49] While the elite Jayadiningrat was also given a warning, it had also become evident that Wirakusuma was a figure of great interest in the religious milieu beyond the successor courts of Kartasura. One teacher, a Kyai Salam, had sent Wirakusuma a rather innocuous letter of admiration seeking his blessing—the only one translated in the reports of April—to accompany pious gifts of a goat with a white stripe on its chest and an oddly plumed hen.[50]

After the summary arrests, Palm ordered a proclamation to be shared with all the junior officials concerning their duties to the VOC. He also had the accused, to whose ranks one Cincing Gati was added, marched to Semarang with an armed escort drawn from the ranks of Company and Susuhunan alike.[51] Certainly the Susuhunan was not spared a role in this exercise of overweening paranoia, being prevailed upon to send a letter to Siberg on the 25th formally requesting the banishment of those arrested to the Cape or Ceylon.[52]

After his dispatch to Batavia, and with his (evidently opaque) books burned, Wirakusuma was accordingly marked for "permanent" (*eeuwig*) exile to Ceylon, sailing on the *Maria* with his mother, and his assumedly Capetonian wife, with whom he had by now had five children.[53] This time they were bound for

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46   VOC 3763, W.A. Palm to J. Siberg, Surakarta, 19 April 1787.

47   VOC 3763, J. Siberg to W.A. Palm, Semarang, 21 April 1787.

48   VOC 3763, W.A. Palm to J. Siberg, Surakarta, 24 April 1787 (first letter).

49   VOC 3763, W.A. Palm to J. Siberg, Surakarta, 24 April 1787 (first letter).

50   VOC 3763, Copy of translation of letter of Kyai Salam to Wirakusuma, appended to W.A. Palm to J. Siberg, Surakarta, 24 April 1787 (first letter).

51   VOC 3763, W.A. Palm to J. Siberg, Surakarta, 24 April 1787 (second letter).

52   VOC 3763, translation of letter of Pakububuwna III to J. Siberg, Surakarta, 25 April 1787.

53   The *Realia* for 13 July 1787 note: "De van Java overgezonden Raden Tommongong Wiero Coesomo, met zijn vrouw, moeder, vijf kinderen en stiefvader worden voor eeuwig naar Ceijlon gerelegeerd, en met het schip Maria derwaarts gezonden." See *Register op de Generale resolutiën van het kasteel Batavia, 1632–1805*, 3 vols. (Leiden: G. Kolff, 1882–1886.), 1,87.

the childhood home of his "stepfather" Kareta, who was also sent with them, and whom some of Surakarta's courtiers believed had once presented his claims to none other than the Prince of Orange, William v.[54]

4   Another Exile, Another Sort of Grandson

It does not appear from first sight that a surely heartbroken Wirakusuma and family were dispatched to the town of Colombo, where the long empty tomb of his grandfather Pangeran Arya was now celebrated for its remnant holiness. A March 1788 survey of exilic households residing in the town makes no mention of an assemblage that matches their group.[55] Rather it seems that Colombo castle was the site of initial deposition, or else one of the fortresses of more distant Galle, Jaffna, or Trincomalee. In all such places the standard VOC practice was for princely exiles to be placed in the ranks of the military, commanding recruits from Sulawesi and Madura. Indeed, in the wake of wholesale losses in the fourth Anglo-Dutch War, the company was trying to make use of new recruits from the east, exploiting the prestige of exiles among them for its own ends.

The authorities were probably in no rush to use so risky a proposition as Wirakusuma or his ageing stepfather. By his own account of 1806, given below, Wirakusuma only joined the ranks as a captain just prior to the British attack on the island in late 1795. With final defeat soon thereafter in the first weeks of 1796, any loyal VOC officials and defenders were ordered sent to Madras with their families by terms of the capitulation if they did not elect to sign on to British ranks.[56] Three years later, with yet another war in Southern India, Governor Frederick North (1766–1827, in office 1798–1805) had some of these captives returned and incorporated into his pet Malay regiment, which was expanded yet again to march up for service in a small redoubt overlooking the increasingly pressured ruler of the hinterland kingdom of Kandy.[57] Many of the "Malays" who departed for the highlands in 1803 did not return, though. Indeed they

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54   Ricklefs, *Jogjakarta*, 270.
55   SLNA 1/200, Raad van Politiek, March 8, 1788.
56   For the terms of surrender, see: G.C. Mendis, ed., *The Colebrooke-Cameron Papers* (*Documents on British Colonial Policy in Ceylon, 1796–1833*), 2 vols. (Geoffrey Cumberlege and OUP, 1956), 2:62–64.
57   SLNA 5/1, 28ʳ, North's report to the Court of Directors, Colombo, 26 February 1799. On the history of the Rifle Company, see B.A. Hussainmiya, *Orang Rejimen: The Malays of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment* (Bangi: Penerbit University Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1990).

were themselves the object of desire by the Kandyan ruler, who needed troops of his own, and who famously massacred the surrendered British members of the garrison at his capital in an echo of what had occurred to the Dutch caught outside the walls of Kartasura in 1741.[58]

Back down in Colombo the exilic families found the going tough. As at the Cape, their pensions were sharply curtailed or stopped. Even worse, from 1805 a new governor, Thomas Maitland (1760–1824, in office 1805–1811), who had little regard for his Malay soldiers, decided that all the voc servants and their prisoners were an unnecessary drain on the public purse and he sought their removal to Batavia—though Batavia would only convey the latter further east to Ambon in 1807.[59]

It is at this moment, then, that we have what is for now the final word from Wirakusuma, born to the once enslaved Sara of Batavia as Amsterdam but now claiming descent from the speculative and entrepreneurial Mas Kareta, whom he called "the Prince of the Cape" (Prins van de Kaap), thus making him the grandson of Pangeran Arya. Wirakusuma made this claim in late December 1806, when he offered his plaintive request to a very different grandfather, as the standards of polite epistolary practice decreed. This was Herman Willem Daendels of the new Batavian Government. Written out in Malay by a local scribe, it ran, somewhat repetitively, as follows:

> That your grandson (*cucunda*) Raden Tumenggong Wirakusuma ibn Mas Kareta, *Prins van de Kaap*, a man of the Susu[hu]nan originating from Surakarta and now in the Land of India called Ceylon, at the foreign port of Colombo, offers this sincere piece of paper and lowly gift from a pure and radiant heart on which is inscribed numerous respectful greetings decorated moreover with beauty and perfection and accompanied by most positive prayers especially that it might be conveyed by God, to whom is all Truth and Praise as the Almighty, to the base of the throne of his Excellency Lord Governor General and all members of the Council of India who have the running of the Lofty Company vested over Kota Intan, Batavia, and all the lands pertaining to it. It cannot be neglected to

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58   For the Kandyan kings' apparent interest in the Malays, evinced in 1800, see Robert Percival, *An Account of the Island of Ceylon, containing Its History, Geography, Natural History, with the Manners and Customs of its Various Inhabitants: to which is added, The Journal of an Embassy to the Court of Candy* (London: C. and R. Baldwin, 1803), 410. I also treat this at greater length in my *Under Empire*.

59   Alicia Schrikker, "Caught between Empires: voc Families in Sri Lanka after the British Take-over, 1806–1808," *Annales de démographie historique*, 122 no. 2 (2011), 127–147.

mention here that your grandson, Raden Tumenggong Wirakusuma, also directs his plea that God, Lord of the Mighty Throne, will bless him with true felicity on earth and enduring health and wellbeing.

That being said, your grandson Raden Tumenggong Wirakusuma, who has undergone the fate of God and his command engraved on the preserved tablet—whereby God the Almighty and Powerful ordained that he would be removed from the land of Java, The Frequented Abode (*al-Dār al-Ma'mūr*), being the *negeri* of Surakarta, such that he found himself in the land of Ceylon, the Abode of Error (*Dār al-Ḍalāla*) together with his family (*anak bininya*). Thus, this Raden Tumenggong Wirakusuma and family were in the *negeri* of Ceylon at the port of Colombo that was also under the command of the Company. Raden Tumenggong Wirakusuma remained in that aforementioned *negeri* for around 12 or 13 years. Then came war between the English and the Dutch Company, and even though I, Tumenggong Wirakusuma, had become a plaything of destiny, I thought upon and recalled the promises of my kings and forebears who had a great love for the Company. So Raden Tumenggong Wirakusuma reflected on his situation, being innocent and the like, and not knowing why this [feeling] emanated from himself for his King and the Lord General and all the Counsellors of the Indies, and equally from all [his] kin. Still I find myself in such exile because all is by the will of God and because of the calumny of people.

So it was again that Raden Tumenggong Wirakusuma, recognizing the situation of Raden Tumenggong Wirakusuma at the time when the English were about to make war with the Dutch Company, took up work at that time with the Company with the rank of captain over one hundred men in order to defend the Company. Thereafter [Governor Jan Gerard van] Angelbeek surrendered the office of Ceylon and all the people of the Company. All of the people of the Dutch Company were taken to Madras, along with Raden Tumenggong Wirakusuma. Having arrived at Madras, [we] were set aside for about three years before being taken back to the *negeri* of Ceylon, along with all the soldiers. Following this experience, some of the people had taken positions with the English company and others had not. Those Company servants who had not were given an allowance by the English to the amount of one and a half pesetas a month. Similarly the captains who had work got the same, one and a half pesetas, and Raden Tumenggong Wirakusuma [moreover] wishes to let the Lord General and the whole Council of the Indies know that those who did not receive this were only paid the amount given to a regular soldier.

Again, your grandson Raden Tumenggong Wirakusuma asks of the Lord General and all the Counsellors of the Indies that if they have any love and regard for their grandson Raden Tumenggong Kusuma, [they will] ask that he be taken from the *negeri* of Ceylon so that he might escape from the Abode of Error, and from the discord of the World to Come, and that he not be confined in poverty. Again, there is no regard for the Dutch Company that compares with that of the noble kings who are held in the *negeri* of Ceylon in such abject conditions and poverty for you, O Lord General, fully understands [the situation] of those who are present in this *negeri* of Ceylon. So your grandson Raden Tumenggong hopes most earnestly for the boon of the Lord General and the whole Council of India that they will take and remove him from this *negeri* of Ceylon to gain shelter under the Lord General and the whole Council of India, protected from the storms, O Lord General and Council, that you know so well.[60]

5   An End or a Beginning?

As with the 1765 request of his father—the presumably since deceased "Prince of the Cape"—Wirakusuma's petition seems to have fallen on deaf ears, with it being saved and consigned, eventually, to the library of Leiden University. There is no evidence that Wirakusuma or his family were shipped away to Ambon with the other impoverished royals in 1807. Indeed the implication of other manuscripts held in Sri Lanka today is that their descendants remained on the island and married into the families of Tamil-speaking fellow believers.[61] The Abode of Error would become home enough for the descendants of Jan van Ceilon and Sara van Batavia.

Curiously, too, neither the princely nor the religious claims of Wirakusuma appear to have had the traction in Sri Lanka that they would have had at the Cape, where Abdullah of Tidore is now recalled as an aristocrat who opted to remain and teach his benighted co-religionists. Arguably there was no possibility of return in the ways Wirakusuma had laid out either. There was no more Dutch company to serve, however earnestly one might put one's case, and the Batavian state's attempts to control Java would be stymied by Lord Minto's invasion in 1811. Henceforth the British crown would make claim upon claim on the

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60   Leiden University Library Cod.Or. 2241 I (24).
61   See Ricci, *Banishment*, 136n27, referring to British Library EAP609/10/1.

lives of Lanka's many peoples, with some looking not east but north and west to Egypt and the Ottoman Empire for succor. But that is another set of stories that both parallels and diverges from those of the Cape and Java.

Acknowledgements

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An Islamic Paratheater: Ritual Embodiment of Saintly Narratives

Julian Millie

Peter Riddell's groundbreaking works on the transmission and spread of Islam throughout Southeast Asia have been enabled by his remarkable textual skills, especially in Malay and Arabic. With these capabilities, he has been able to significantly add to knowledge of Southeast Asian Islam in subject areas including history, Qurʾānic interpretation and law. His work shows high awareness of the importance of narrative texts to the evolution of Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia. His most highly-cited work pays attention to how narratives of diverse kinds have figured in the spread and uptake of Islam, and his most recent monograph is a critical edition and translation of Qurʾān-based narrative (Riddell 2001; 2017). In this chapter, I wish to focus on narrative, ritual performance and Islam in Indonesia, focusing specifically on a religio-cultural context that has been the subject of some of the most impactful studies of Islam in Southeast Asia: the *selamatan* (ritual meal).

Here I wish to expand knowledge about the *selamatan* by observing it as a context for symbolic behavior of an embodied kind that I refer to as *paratheater* (defined below). To do so I bring together two domains of Indonesian Islam that are frequently separated: textual Islam, conventionally the field of the philologist and student of Islamic studies, and the *selamatan*, a phenomenon that has attracted the attention of anthropologists. My goals are twofold: firstly, to describe and analyse some features of the ritual setting of the *selamatan* that illustrate its importance for the textual legacies of Indonesian Islamic communities (a field of study in which Peter Riddell is a leader), and; second, I wish to make this paratheater a template for reflections upon the compartmentalization of religion and cultural genres in contemporary society, and the implications of that compartmentalization for ritual transcendence in the present. Critical practitioners within Indonesia's modern theatre have drawn attention to this compartmentalization, and bemoaned the distancing of the theatre from the authentic transcendence they identify in village ritual. In the latter stages of this chapter, I refer to the ideas and work of Indonesia's most prominent modern theatre practitioner, Rendra (1935–2009), as an example. A consideration of ritual paratheater can help us think about the shared notions

of transcendence aspired to within the fields of village ritual and the modern theatre, as well as the epistemological borders that separate these fields.

1   The *Selamatan*

Anthropologists have produced an impressive body of knowledge about Java's ritual meal, widely known as the *selamatan*. This is a gathering of people linked by kin, shared neighborhood or other bonds, generally held to mark events of various cycles, especially the phases of human life. In its simplest form, a *selamatan* consists of a statement of intention and an invocation and/or supplication (*doa*), followed by commensality and/or distribution of food as alms. The accumulated research has established the *selamatan*'s importance from diverse perspectives. Clifford Geertz's influential analysis, based on observation during the 1950s, identified it as a transaction with spirits that reinforced community solidarity and occupied the 'centre of the whole Javanese system'. Hefner described the reciprocal pattern of *selamatan* in highland East Java as a sphere of exchange facilitating the expression of social distinction. For Woodward, the *selamatan* was an observance in harmony with the sharia, and located Javanese ritual practice in patterns of Islamic observance evident in other parts of the Islamic world. Beatty has read contrasting attitudes to the *selamatan* as markers of borders between religious orientations, and the ritual meal itself as a means for accommodating the resultant diversity (Geertz 1960:10–15; Hefner 1985:217–235; Woodward 1988:54–89; Beatty 1992:25–50). In this article, I draw attention to the ritual meal as a space for creative performance of Islamic narrative. The chapter is based on my ethnographic work in the Indonesian province of West Java, the home of the Sundanese ethnic group, and on similar work performed by Bernard Arps (b. 1961) in the province of East Java.

I specifically focus here on those *selamatan* in which a narrative text of an Islamic hero is recited or sung. I am interested in two narratives that, in the nineteenth century, were in all likelihood the most popular Islamic texts on the island, and which continue to be the focus of ritual practice in contemporary Java. These texts are the tales of ʿAbd al-Qadir al-Jaelani and the story of the Prophet Yūsuf. The former, judging by the manuscript catalogues, appears to be one of the most frequently copied works in Sundanese, and has also been frequently printed.[1] The latter is the title most frequently found in the corpus

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1   The catalogue of Ekadjati and Darsa (1999) lists 32 MSS containing Jaelani tales, 41 of the narrative of Samaʾun, and 40 of Ogin Amarsakti. The figures are different for printed editions:

of Javanese manuscripts (Arps 1992: 153–154). In his review of the literature of Java, Pigeaud noted these two texts were the most popular written narratives of the nineteenth century in West and East Java respectively (1967: 98–99).[2] Both works are written in the verse forms conventionally used for lengthy narrative, known in Javanese as *tembang*, and in Sundanese as *dangding* or *tembang*.

The empirical part of this paper is derived from two field reports about a specific ritual behavior, practiced in Javanese and Sundanese village society, for which the Yusuf and ʿAbd al-Qadir narratives provide enabling scripts (Arps 1992; Millie 2009). I call this behavior 'narrative-based paratheatre'. It consists of the embodied performance of narrative content during ritual recitation or singing. Arps and I observed this behavior in variants of the *selamatan* known as *macaan* (Jav.: reciting) for the Javanese example, and *pangaosan Layang Seh* (Sund.: recitation of the Sheikh's Book) for the Sundanese. These rituals both display two simultaneous performances. One is by the specialist reader(s) or singer(s) of the narrative text, and involves the vocal performance of the narrative. A second, paratheatrical performance, is the simultaneous, embodied performance of narrative content by the participants in the ritual.

The term *paratheater* refers to theatrical performances intended to create more intimate connections between actor and spectator by doing away with features of conventional theatre such as the proscenium, costumes, props, etc.[3] I adopt it here because the nonverbal performances described below strongly resemble theatre in the conventional sense: the participants are performing known actions; they sometimes use props in doing so; the performances are scripted by the narrative text; the work takes place in the marked-off space of the ritual setting, and; the performance can take place in an atmosphere of entertainment or pleasure. At the same time, these performances are clearly not theatre in the conventional sense, but sit beside or adjacent to it (i.e. para-). For example, the roles taken by the ritual performers are not divided as those of the theatre are. It is true that the verbal delivery of the text is done by a

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there have been very few editions of Ogin and Hamza, in contrast to the many printed editions of Jaelani tales, see Millie (2009:197–199).

2 The former librarian of the Royal Netherlands Institute for Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, Sirtjo Koolhoff, once informed me that whenever a Dutch family with an Indies connection contacted the KITLV to offer a manuscript to the collection, the work involved was usually the story of Yusuf.

3 My understanding of the term "paratheater" is based mainly on writings about Jerzy Grotowski's (1933–1999) paratheater projects, see Slowiak and Cuesta (2007:33–35).

person understood as a specialist 'performer', but this work is done within an ensemble involving the reciter/singer and the participants who perform the paratheatrical embodiments. Other family members and neighbours attending the ritual might be considered as spectators upon the ensemble performance, but these are not separated from the 'performers', and are more accurately labelled as ritual participants than spectators. For these reasons, I acknowledge these embodiments as a kind of theatre, but recognise that they lack the framing conventions that divide performer and audience in conventional theatre.

The body of theoretical work most applicable to this study is the one created around the meeting point of performance analysis and ritual studies. Richard Schechner has argued against a strict separation between ritual and theatre as conceptual categories. He points out that both categories rely, to degrees that differ from ritual to ritual and theatrical performance to theatrical performance, on the efficacy/entertainment dyad (Schechner 2003:129–130). Although we might readily associate theatre with entertainment and ritual with efficacy, it is a rare ritual that contains no element of disinterested engagement (entertainment), and all theatre has efficacy goals of some kind. The explicit and deliberate mixing of religious efficacy and entertainment is what characterises the *selamatan* paratheater. The participants embody religious norms narrated in the ritual text but do so in an atmosphere of playfulness. They embody virtues such as self-denial and charity in shared activities that are sensory and material. The borders between efficacy and entertainment are rearranged and even dispensed with.

My analysis is intended to reveal the striking ways narrative texts have played an instrumental role in ritual practice in Java. Beyond that, I discuss a comparison that arises unavoidably out of my juxtaposition of ritual and theatre; the paratheatrical embodiments are things aspired to by contemporary theatrical practitioners wishing for an authenticity beyond the traditional proscenium setting. They aspire to the sharing of the work of efficacy through embodiment, and the shared spirituality that is expressed through it. But the contemporary Indonesian public sphere has developed an understanding of religion that excludes such embodied practice from the category of religion. And simultaneously, the modern theatre distances itself from religious orthopraxy. In other words, the practices observed by Arps and myself problematise categories of religious and theatrical performance. This reflection appears in the second half of the chapter, following my description of the two ethnographic reports, to which I now turn.

2   Paratheatre in the Yusuf Narrating of Banyuwangi

Bernard Arps (1992; 1992a) has given a detailed analysis of a ritual reading convention he observed in Banyuwangi, East Java, known as *macaaan*. A household will engage a troupe of amateur performers to recite the *Lontar Yusuf* (the Manuscript/Text of Yusuf) at a ritual celebration of a life-cycle event, or at some other occasion held to give thanks and/or supplicate. The performance, which commences after the evening ritual worship, and concludes with a feast eaten on the rising of the sun, is considered by the host and participants as a request for intercession (Javanese *supa'at*, most likely from the Arabic *shafā'a* meaning mediators or intercessors).

In fact, the ritual performance of the Yusuf narrative has formed two distinct streams in Banyuwangi, named by Arps as popular and conservative. This division relates to the differing position taken by the performers towards comedy, singing and dancing. In turn, these differing positions reflect anxiety in the community about the efficacy/entertainment dyad discussed above. The conservative *macaan*, which is the one I am focusing on here, involves singing the entire text as an act of supplication for life-cycle events and other needs. This is done in a relaxed, somewhat solemn atmosphere. In the popular *macaan*, the performers place less emphasis on the literal verbalization of the *Lontar Yusuf*, and greater emphasis on entertainment. After Indonesian independence, the popular *macaan* developed to the point where, by the time of Arps' research, it was far more popular than the conservative style (Arps 1992:47–48, 151–152).

The *Lontar Yusuf* is a lengthy narrative elaboration of the twelfth *sūra* of the Qur'ān, in which parts of the life-story of the Prophet Yūsuf (Joseph) are related. It is written in *tembang*, that is, in verse written according to a number of well-established stanza patterns, all of which are associated with a distinct melody. Arps aptly calls these patterns 'tunes connected to metrical skeletons' (Arps 1992: 310). Ritual participants are able to perform in the melodies corresponding to a particular 'metrical skeleton', changing the melody as the text moves to another of the 'metrical skeletons'.

The ritual takes place in a domestic setting, with the participants seated in a triangular arrangement. Within the triangle, the host has prepared a collection of offerings, consisting of objects, drinks and foods. The evening commences with a statement of the intention motivating the holding of the ritual, and a supplication in Arabic. After this, the singing commences.

A number of passages of the text are understood as triggers for performances by participants, such as the passage known as the '*Pangkur* of refreshments'.[4]

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4   *Pangkur* is one of the metrical formulas of *tembang* verse.

In the moments before the singing of this verse, in which Yusuf's meal with the newly-converted King of Jerusalem is narrated, young people carry out coffee and cakes for consumption by the gathering. These are eaten during an interval occurring after the singing of the verse. Not long after this, the appearance of the (rubricated) word *arum-arum* (fragrant) is the cue for another performance: water is perfumed with flower petals, after which it is called *banyu arum* (fragrant water). The *arum-arum* page of the manuscript, the stanzas of which mention fragrant waters, is 'bathed' in incense, after which the relevant stanzas are read. Straight after the reading of these stanzas, the participants take turn in drinking the water from a bowl. The water is highly valued by the host for curative purposes, and he or she retains any water remaining after the participants have drunk from the bowl. The water may be used to bathe the person whose life-transition is being celebrated at the gathering. In certain rituals, the text provides triggers for other performances: in *macaan* held to seek wellbeing for a bridal couple, a teeth-filing takes place at a passage in the text at which Yusuf's beautiful teeth are mentioned (Arps 1992:157–172). This ritual embodiment is aptly referred to by Arps as 'ritual interpretation' (Arps 1992:399).

Arps emphasizes the structuring role played by the embodied performances. The evening is managed so that these occur punctually during the night, and the textual cues are adhered to rigidly. The host takes care to prepare the necessary props in advance. Furthermore, the participants understand the paratheatre, especially the water preparation and consumption, as a core element of the ritual performance. In fact, for the host, the production of the fragrant water is one of the fundamental rationales for holding the event; the *lontar* reading is an instrument to that end.[5] This structuring effect is no less evident in the narrative paratheater performed by Sundanese Muslims in Java's west.

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5 The reading traditions described here provide important insights into the historical development of Islamic cultures in Java. In a highly compelling argument, Arps (1992a) observes that the ritual performances of the *macaan* are in fact a better match with the contents of the *Lontar Sri Tanjung*, a text of great popularity in Banyuwangi before the arrival of Islam. Arps contends that the Yusup narrative replaced *Sri Tanjung* at the ritual readings, and the *banyu arum* performances were attached, with less narrative appropriateness, to the Yusuf narrative. See, Arps, "Yusup, Sri Tanjung and fragrant water." In the manuscripts of the Sundanese *Wawacan Layang Seh*, we also find indications that the 'Abd al-Qadir narrative replaced another heroic narrative that was used in a pre-Islamic ritual recitation tradition (Millie 2009: 37–38).

3   Paratheatre in ʿAbd al-Qadir Narrating of North Bandung

The *pangaosan Layang Seh* is a Sundanese ritual recital tradition involving the lengthy singing of a narrative text, the *Wawacan Layang Seh* (Verse Narrative of the Sheikh). The text relates the saintliness of ʿAbd al-Qadir al-Jaelani, the famous *wali* (saint) of Baghdad (d. 561/1166) who is so prominent in the Islamic traditions of Java (Drewes and Poerbatjaraka 1938; Van Bruinessen 2000). Like the *macaan* described by Arps, the recitation takes place in the ritual setting of the *selamatan*, known in contemporary Bandung as *syukuran* (thanks-giving). In rituals of this kind, participants simultaneously express gratitude and supplicate for the future, which gives the rituals a dual character of supplication and celebration. Participants enjoy the host's largesse while helping them to supplicate for their intentions for the future. Hosts make efforts to create an extraordinary ambience. On especially significant occasions such as weddings or circumcisions, the interior walls of the room in which the gathering is taking place are covered in shiny, metallic paper, which gives the event an exciting, other-worldly atmosphere.

As noted, the *Wawacan Layang Seh* has been one of the most popular texts in West Java's Islamic textual tradition. *Wawacan* means a lengthy narrative written in *dangding*, the Sundanese equivalent of Javanese *tembang*.[6] Two renditions of ʿAbd al-Qadir's life and deeds have circulated widely in Sundanese, both of which are adaptations of Arabic originals (Millie 2009: 24–28). The dominant structuring principle of both of these is the division of the text into anecdotes, known as *hikayat* or *manqabah*, each of which narrates an example of ʿAbd al-Qadir's saintliness.

The ritual commences with a statement of the intention for which the evening is being held, and continues with the formulaic, intercessionary prayer known as *tawassul* (Millie 2008). After this, the reciter sings the text of the *wawacan*, usually for two to three hours, sometimes for longer. The gathering participates in the narrating at regular intervals by singing the *syahada* (Muslim creed and profession of faith) as a refrain. The evening always concludes with a feast.

The *Wawacan Layang Seh* provides a script for paratheatrical activities known to participants from previous performances. These are performed as the singer moves through the sequence of anecdotes. The ninth anecdote tells of ʿAbd al-Qadir's amazing feats of self-denial: after a lengthy period of fasting,

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6   The musical performance of verse narrative by the Sundanese took distinctly Javanese forms after the Javanese colonisation of the Priangan in the seventeenth century (Rosidi 1996:11–17).

he is visited by the prophet Khidir, who serves him a meal of milk, bread and butter (Millie 2009: 116–118). This anecdote is the focus of distinctive embodiments. It is conventional in some of the households of North Bandung to refrain from eating, chatting or smoking during the recital of the first eight anecdotes. On the recital of the ninth, the host serves warm milk along with bread and sugar. Except for the sugar, these foods are not part of the staple diet of the Sundanese, but are served because they are specifically mentioned in the text, and because they are regarded as 'Arab foods'. The first eight anecdotes are regarded as a period of symbolic self-denial, but after the ninth, participants are free to smoke, chat and eat during the recital.

A further ritual performance involves the fashioning of an amulet (*jimat*) out of string. White twine is provided to participants at the commencement of the ritual. A knot is tied in the string on the completion of each anecdote. Many participants use their big toe as an anchor for the tying of the knots. The convention is connected with one anecdote in which ʿAbd al-Qadir intercedes to help a woman have seven children, so long as she continues to wear an amulet around her neck. When she eventually takes it off, the children die, but the saint intercedes and Allah brings the children back to life. In one household where I attended the ritual, it is a convention to complete a knot precisely on the utterance of the words *hirup deui* (Sundanese: they came back to life). The amulet produced in this way has been valued in Sundanese Islamic tradition: the mystic and ethnographer Hasan Mustapa (1857–1930) wrote that it could be used to prevent worms in children and to ward off evils during pregnancy (Moestapa 1913:19–20).

The activities involving food are symbolic expressions of religious norms as well as exercises in playfulness. In one North Bandung household, the host distributes plastic bags to participants while the recitation is taking place. At the end of the reading, upon the utterance of a specific word, people compete in grabbing the food laid out before them, shoving what they seize into plastic bags provided by the host. I saw a young woman literally dive into the middle of the feastly spread to triumphantly claim the grilled chicken forming its centrepiece. The host regards this largesse as fulfilment of the Islamic principle of *sedekah* (Sundanese from the Arabic *ṣadaqa*, meaning alms). At the same time, however, the host creates a festive ritual environment in which the participants enact the symbolic meaning in playful ways (Millie 2009: 119–120).

The ritual embodiments just described are in fact becoming less frequent in contemporary West Java, for reasons I discuss below. Nevertheless, the ritual reading of ʿAbd al-Qadir's saintliness is currently growing in popularity under the name *manakiban* (*manāqib*, an Arabic word meaning noble or virtuous deeds, is also an Islamic hagiographical genre) (Pellat 1960). This is a compulsory observance for followers of West Java's largest and currently expanding sufi

order (*tarekat*), the *Qadiriyah wa Naqsyabandiyyah*, which has its main centre at a religious school at Suryalaya, Tasikmalaya. The style of performance implemented at Suryalaya implements more or less the same religious goals as the *pangaosan Layang Seh*, but does not facilitate the embodied expressions.

4 *Selamatan* and Ritual Performance

In order to understand what it is about the *selamatan* that creates such distinctive participation, I now make a quick summary of the features of the ritual setting that facilitate the narrative embodiments. Most obviously, both take place in a setting prepared according to local convention for the purposes of supplicating through intercessors. The ritual setting facilitates performances of narrative through reading as well as the more sensory modes of participation (eating, drinking, smoking, incense, singing). Readings of these texts could not possibly take place outside this setting and still retain the same character. For example, the ritual imbricates the narrative text in transformations affecting the state of material objects; water is transformed through the attainment of curative properties, and the knotting of a string gives it the power to ward off physical ills. In both cases these transformations and the associated embodiments correspond to cues contained in the narrative texts being recited.

Both cases evidence unusual creativity that implies a relaxation of social structure.[7] The act of tying string around one's toe would cause a serious loss of face in other social settings in West Java. The same can be said for the young woman's diving retrieval of the chicken, performed in front of her elders. In both examples, this creative symbolic expression can be interpreted through core ideological precepts of the social groups concerned: the sharing of food in the ninth anecdote of the *Layang Seh*, for example, represents the Islamic precept of mastery over one's bodily desires (*nafsu*). Simultaneously, from the host's perspective the provision of food means fulfilment of the obligation to give alms (*sedekah*), and also enables a display of privilege. Importantly, however, the embodiments have a dual character, for the normative meanings are invigorated by a disinterested, festive sense of play, which drives the ritual to the pole of festive play. The *macaan* and *pangaosan* are, after all, often held to celebrate successful life transitions, at which the host wishes to create a *ramai* (festively busy) atmosphere. Generous provision of food, drink and cigarettes

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7 I am here drawing upon the conceptual framework famously put forward by Victor Turner (1978).

helps to achieve this atmosphere, and participants attend the ritual recitations with the expectation of being well-fed at the conclusion of the event. Participants smile and laugh as they performed the string-tying, with some people taking obvious delight in the trivia and 'pointlessness' of it. The food grabbing is a flurry of movement performed with exuberance and noise.

Not surprisingly, such an atmosphere brings on contest about decorum and propriety, indicating unease about openly blending religious efficacy with enjoyment. The Banyuwangi example is a special illustration of this tension, for the contest has led to the ritual's bifurcation into two separate performance genres for reading the *Lontar Yusuf*. These two genres, which Arps describes as conservative and popular, move respectively towards opposite poles of Schechner's entertainment/efficacy dyad. In the conservative version, solemnity is elevated out of respect for the serious goals of the event result in a high level of solemnity, whilst the popular version creates a highly *ramai* (festive) state brought on by song, comedy and dancing (Arps 1992:150–153). In North Bandung, I found that musical styles created a similar unease. I was told by one concerned resident of the area that one of the most popular singers in the area had 'gone pop' by appropriating popular melodies into the ritual, in the process bringing an improper atmosphere to the occasion (Millie 2009:159–167).

A further determining feature of these ritual settings is the multivocality of the efficacy frameworks participants bring to the rituals. There are a number of explanations of the rituals' efficacy that participants might accept or reject: do the rituals commemorate saintly models of pious virtue? They do, for ʿAbd al-Qadir and Yusuf are regarded as people close to Allah, and this closeness is narrated and re-narrated in the texts that tell of their saintliness. This understanding is cherished in Islamic ritual around the world. And does the ritual enable Muslims to seek the intercession of these figures? If that is your belief, the ritual provides an affirmative answer. As stated above, in Banyuwangi, reading the Yusuf *lontar* is considered efficacious because it is a request for his *supaʾat* (mediation) (Arps 1992: 150). The performance of the *tawassul* (gifting of *al-fatihah* to mediators) before the recitations locate the ritual in a conception of intercession found throughout the Islamic world (Millie 2008). And do the embodiments occur within a ritual setting that makes communication with ancestors through incense and other ritual measures? Once again, if this is one's belief, the ritual confirms it. Is the ritual a response to the Islamic obligation to share resources with the less well-off? Clearly that is the case. Is the ritual efficacious because it enables the host to display their wealth? It does this also. And doesn't the ritual enable people to hear important aspects of Islamic history and doctrine that are recounted in the narrative texts? Without doubt it

does. Participants are free to embrace or reject these efficacies, and this multi-vocality explains the rituals' appeal to many.

A final point about the distinctive qualities of the *selamatan* for ritual is the way it enables sharing of the work of efficacy. The *selamatan* encourages the performance of embodied acts by ordinary participants. This is not ritual practice in which a learned person takes the lead role, and is entitled to take this role by virtue of their expertise in Qur'ān and Hadith. Textual/scriptural skills in the subjects of Qur'ān and Hadith are not prominent in the rituals. Rather, the specialised knowledges behind the ritual all support the sharing of efficacious work. The host prepares the feast and the 'hardware' for the embodiments. The singer/reciter constructs a performance in which the participants take turns to embody the text. In other words, the efficacious work is distributed throughout the gathering.

Not only the work is shared. The *benefit* is also shared in an explicit way. Some older participants I encountered in Bandung hold to an efficacy paradigm that shares the benefits across the gathering in quite a specific and concrete way. They told me that Allah's blessings (*barakah*) would splash on the gathering during the reading of certain anecdotes, which they knew by number. They describe the efficacious movement of *barakah* as flowing, pouring and gushing (Millie 2009:111). Notably, the benefit 'splashes' evenly across the gathering. In the *macaan*, the participants pass around a bowl and actually drink the water that has been transformed by the reading and its ritual. The water plays an instrumental role of distributing the benefit to the participants, subject of course to proper performance of the rites by the same people (Arps 1992:399). The enabling conditions for this, of course, are the features that distinguish the *selamatan* as a setting for ritual performance.

5   Ritual Paratheatre in the Present

For various reasons, ritual embodiments such as those described above are becoming more rare in contemporary Indonesia. One reason is the decline of the *selamatan* as a religio-spiritual technology. With the recent emergence of multiple options for Islamic consumption, families are less willing to dedicate the necessary resources to holding the ritual event. Perhaps more importantly, the ritual embodiments described above have less authority as worship and ritual nowadays than in the past. One sign of this was the attitudes of my academic colleagues in Bandung. Most of these appreciated the goals and distinctive ritual styles of the *pangaosan Layang Seh*, but nevertheless thought it belonged to an earlier period of Islamic society.

Behind this fading legitimacy is a massive and rather rapid change in widely-held dispositions towards technologies for supplicating. The notion that the favour of the Almighty can be sought and received in specific acts and words mandated by tradition has partly given way to a more immanent notion of divine power. A more contemporary notion is that Divine power is present in the universe, inviting humans to actualise it through action that creates mutual benefits for fellow citizens. This transition is sketched out most clearly in John Bowen's ethnographic study of Islamic life in the Gayo Highlands of Northern Sumatra (Bowen 1993). As Muslims began to realise their connectedness to communities outside of their immediate locality, a public consensus started to take shape that relegated transactional ritual to the private realm. The degree to which an aversion for overtly instrumental ritual has become a public value should not be overstated, for the public profile of some forms of instrumental ritual in fact increased after the commencement of electoral democracy in the early 2000s (Millie, Barton, Hindasah and Moriyama 2014). Nevertheless, the modernisation of Indonesia brought a marginalisation of the Islamic concepts underpinning transactional styles. Many ritual forms involving performance and localised notions of Islamic efficacy were recategorized as culture or custom (Kipp and Rodgers 1987).

Certainly, there is strong disapproval from Islamic elites about the religious foundations of the ritual. The twentieth century saw the emergence of schools of Muslim scholars who insisted Islam was a resource to be integrated rather then insulated from everyday life. For these scholars, ritual styles had no Islamic efficacy if they were not verified in revelation. For these scholars, the 'Abd al-Qadir rituals and indeed many of the ritual notions evident in the *selamatan* were lacking in religious justifications (Hefner 1985). Intercession through saints, localised notions of ritual efficacy, the role of food and material objects in ritual, the non-canonical textuality ... all these had no authority in the eyes of many modernist scholars. In fact, the 'Abd al-Qadir rituals became the subject of a small corpus of polemical literature (Millie 2009). These critiques gained a measure of influence within many communities, partly because they synergised with the emerging aversion for the excesses of overtly transactional ritual in public. As a result, we observe a weakening of the regeneration of the ritual embodiments by the younger generations in the households in which it has been customarily held.

Although it is true that the practices of worship and ritual in Indonesian Islam are ever-changing, it seems likely that the range of practices considered properly efficacious is narrowing, especially in public discourse (Hefner 2011). Increasing deference to textual norms denies religious legitimacy to many established ritual forms. This homogenisation is ironic, for the public's aspi-

ration for holism, that is, for the integration of Islam into everyday life has strengthened over recent decades.

So, at the same time that Indonesians have identified religious value in a narrowing range of practices and technologies, the desire to integrate Islam into everyday life has grown. These contrary processes make it important that we give attention to the distinctiveness of practices such as the *macaan* and *pangaosan Layang Seh*, and ask about the conditions in which they are enabled.

6   Fragmentation and Transcendence

My closing reflections concern the compartmentalization of human experience that is characteristic of contemporary societies, in the West as well as in Indonesia, and more specifically the rigidifying of ritual and theatre into mutually exclusive categories (Turner 1982). Although Islam has become a more prominent part of public life in Indonesia over recent decades, the fragmentation of spheres has also increased in severity: religious ritual and theatre, for example, are insulated from each other in spheres that, although they might be considered complimentary by some, are more often separated by powerful forces in contemporary society. What is interesting is the contemporary efforts to break down the borders between them, and the epistemological barriers that make this so difficult.

Indonesia's critical theatre movement has been a site for attempts to overcome this fragmentation. Indonesia's most successful and renowned theatre producer, Rendra (1935–2009), idealized the blending of ritual and performance he perceived in the pre-industrial cultural/religious practices of Indonesian societies. Rendra lamented the compartmentalization (*kotak-kotakan*) of contemporary Indonesian society, criticizing its transition from the 'totality' of religious and cultural expression he perceived in Javanese tradition (Rendra 1983:11–17). Cultural practices such as literature and theatre properly belong, in his view, within practices for the commemoration of the human life-cycle: 'Poetry and drama arose as essential components for the important ceremonies in the lives of humans, such as the ceremonies of birth, a child's first steps on the earth, circumcision, coming-of-age, tooth-filing, betrothal, marriage, harvest, building a home [etc.]' (Rendra 1999:17–18). In some of his works, Rendra has attempted to recover the creativity and egalitarian participation evident in the *macaan* and *pangaosan*. In fact, an early work performed by Rendra's theatre workshop was entitled *The Selamatan of the Children of Solomon*, the title being an attempt to involve 'spectators' more directly in the production (Noer 2000:264). Critics commented on the strong ritual and ceremonial elements of the production (Agusta 2005/1988:137–138).

Rendra was in fact part of a global movement, and is considered to have been directly influenced by the great innovator of paratheater, Jerzy Grotowski (1933–1999) (Soemanto 2003:114–115).[8] Grotowski had intended that his theatre would transcend the spectator-performer binary of the conventional Western theatre. We do not have to look too deeply to affirm that the *macaan* and *pangaosan* certainly resemble the creative vision of the Polish director. In the rituals and in his vision alike, the egos of actors and producers are renounced in the sharing of the work of efficacy; in both, hierarchies are obscured by the weak borders between actor and audience; in both, the rituals succeed over an elevated sense of communitas stimulated by sensory engagement; in both, a liminal space is created in which normative expression does not have precedence over playfulness; in both, the happenings dwell *within* rather than outside of the routines of everyday life and the struggle to obtain sustenance, and so on.

But there is a great irony to this aspiration to restage the holism and authenticity associated with ritual. If we look at Grotowski's statements about his own program, we find that he represents it by using a religious lexicon. Actors are to be 'holy' and 'saintly' in their renunciation of ego; the theatre must work to satiate 'genuine spiritual needs' rather than the inauthentic routines of theatrical patronage; a 'sacrum' must be constructed in the theatre; 'the sacred and its ritual function have disappeared and must be regained'; the theatre must create connection by working with the 'basic religious myths within spectators' knowledge' and so on (Grotowski 1968:27–54). But at the same time, all this is qualified by his insistence that the paratheater must be secular. The holiness of his own creation, he insists, must be a secular one. For the atheist Grotowski, even the *sacrum* was to be secular in nature.

Such resolute secularism is not so obvious in Rendra, but his high modernism located him at a similar distance from religious orthopraxy. What is striking here is the contrast between the strongly expressed aspiration for spiritual transcendence through performance, and the simultaneous sealing of the category of theatre from religion. In the previous section I described a similar process in the religious sphere: the category of religion is being sealed off from mixture with other genres of human performance. My conversation is perhaps too liberal for the way that it brings together disparate actors and contexts, but there is, I argue, a great lesson in the juxtaposition of the *sela-*

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8 The resemblances between Grotowski's program and theatrical traditions of Indonesia were acknowledged by the Balinese actor I Wayan Lendra, who attended a three-year program with Grotowski at U.C. Irvine in the early 1980s. He wrote, 'From the very beginning I felt there was something very Balinese about Grotowski's work …', (Lendra 1997:319).

matan's ritual embodiments with the reflections of the modern theatre about ritual authenticity. A great irony emerges in these more recent aspirations for transcendence, both from the religious and theatrical sides. The modern theatre ala Grotowski explains the transcendence to which it aspires in a religious lexicon, but insists on its secularity. At the same time, the contemporary religious sensibility of Indonesia resists the notion of efficacious practice within the *selamatan* because it is not encountered in the texts of revelation. The contemporary theatre practitioners and the *macaan/pangaosan* communities appreciate a common notion of transcendence through embodiment, but the categories to which they belong, religion and theatre, are constructed and affirmed in public discourse in ways that create strong borders between them.

7 Concluding Words

This offering to my friend and colleague Peter Riddell has been written with two goals. I have wished to expand knowledge about the *selamatan* by describing and theorising some of the distinctive properties of *selamatan* ritual, and specifically the narrative paratheater encountered in the ritual performance of Islamic saintly narratives. The second goal is to reflect upon the contemporary compartmentalization of society into discrete domains, and their effects upon the possibility of a transcendent ritual and theatre.

Peter's scholarly journey has covered some of the same territory traversed in the above (and continues to do so). He has focused upon Islamic textualities of the Malay world in a number of projects, wanting to know more about the distinctiveness that communities of the region have brought to their interpretations of textual traditions known widely outside of Indonesia. Arps and I have been travelers on a similar journey. In the discussion above, I have highlighted the similarities of our journeys. We were both taught by philologists, and dedicated ourselves to studying the riches of the written legacies of Indonesian societies. We both entered the field for our respective doctoral fieldworks suspecting that our scholarly predecessors had not gained much awareness of the contexts within which those legacies had their origins. Heading in different directions in Java, one to the east and one to the west, we both ended up at the *selamatan* as a critical setting for research on the culture of Islamic Java, and discovered that its generative potentials for practice extended far beyond the existing observations of anthropologists. In fact, the textual legacies of Indonesian Islam surely owe much more to the *selamatan* that has been recognized in the scholarly record. Hopefully, the above exposition illustrates a general truth

about the *selamatan*: it may be furtive but it is nevertheless captivating for its depth as a site of transcendence and a context for human creativity.

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