

A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF RELIGIOUS MALAY MANUSCRIPT WRITINGS BEFORE 1800

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Abstract: *The arrival of Islam to the Malay Archipelago is the core reason for the existence of the Jawi script. By using the Jawi script, the expansion of religious Malay manuscripts or Malay-Islamic Kitab writings began to bloom and was estimated in the 12th century. Objectives of this study are (i) to study a brief history of religious Malay manuscript writings before the year 1800, and (ii) to identify Malay authors and their religious Malay manuscript writings based on time-frame production. This article is presented by using qualitative methodology by gathering data from books, journal articles, paperwork, and websites. The result of this study shows that there are two phases of religious Malay manuscript writing which are the first phase is 'The Translation Phase' from the 12th to 16th century, and the second phase is 'The Individual Writing Phase' from the 17th to 18th century.*

Keywords: *Religious manuscript, Malay manuscript writing, Malay Archipelago*

Introduction

Islam had brought significant impact on the development of Malay writing and education. Malays were introduced to various disciplines of knowledge such as theology, philosophy, mysticism, logic, law, and many more. Therefore, many Malay scholars were born, and they began to stimulate the process of knowledge transfer by translating and writing religious manuscripts in Jawi script as early as the 12th century. Jawi script was designed to be used specifically in Malay language writing (Hashim Musa, 2006). It was invented by Malay scholars by accommodating and combining the Arabic alphabet into the Malay script. All twenty-nine Arabic letters and six new letters (*ca, pa, ga, va, nga, and nya*) were applied by Malay scholars in their writings (Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (1969), Mahayudin Haji Yahaya (1994); Muhammad Bukhari Lubis et.al (2006). According to Farhanah Abdullah and Asyraf Ab Rahman (2017), the Jawi script is more compatible with the Islamic terms that originated from Quran and Hadith sources. Therefore, the Jawi script was chosen as a crucial medium and widely used in Malay religious manuscript writings. In this article, two main objectives will be highlighted, which are to study a brief history of religious Malay manuscript writings before

the year 1800, and to identify Malay authors and their religious Malay manuscript writings based on time-frame production.

Literature Review

A literature review is a comprehensive summary of previously published works on a topic. It surveys scholarly journal articles, books, reports, conference proceedings, and other sources relevant to the research topic. Some previous studies reviewed the history of religious Malay manuscript writing in the Malay Archipelago are “Contribution of Jawi Script and Jawi Writings to Islamic Discourse” by Farhanah Abdullah and Asyraf Ab Rahman (2017). The article tends to highlight the historical development of the Jawi script by focusing on the contribution of a religious Malay manuscript known as ‘*Aqa'id al-Nasafi*’ and Jawi magazine titled ‘*Pengasuh*’ to the Islamic discourse among the Muslim community. Later in the year 2018, Mohd Puaad bin Abdul Malik et al. researched on “Kitab Jawi dan Pengilmuan Masyarakat Melayu”. Their finding shows that Jawi scriptures plays an important role in the Malay community and have their own distinctive identity and excellence and can serve as knowledge tool in the Malay world’s development. Besides, Rahimin Affandi et al. (2019) in their article “Kitab Jawi Sebagai Karya Kearifan Tempatan Melayu: Analisis Sejarah Intelektual” illustrate the importance of Kitab Jawi as the most important product of local Malay Islamic wisdom in terms of the formation of Jawi writings, and the constructs of science that were awakened by previous Malay scholars. Meanwhile, a discussion on the involvement of foreigners and locals in Kitab Jawi was conducted by Zakaria bin Mustaffa and Abdul Syukur Mohd Ali (2012) in their paperwork titled “Penyelidikan Manuskrip Melayu Berunsurkan KeIslaman”. In 2018, Che’ Razi Jusoh and Aliza Elias examine the polemic of the oldest known Kitab Jawi between ‘*Aqa'id al-Nasafi*’ and *Bahr al-Lahut* written in the 12th century in their article “Timeline of the Malay Jawi Works: A Revisit to the Oldest Known Malay Manuscript”. Finding reveals some methodological issues need to be resolved in comparing both treatises. Besides, another work related to the history of religious Malay manuscript is “Sejarah Perkembangan Penulisan Jawi” Rosni Wazir (2012). In her paperwork, a discussion focused on the Islamic-Jawi writings from the 12th century to the 21st century. And the latest article referred is “Perkembangan Penulisan Kitab Fiqh Jawi: Suatu Pengenalan Terhadap Manuskrip *Kitab Talkhis al-Falah fi Bayan Ahkam al-Talaq wa al-Nikah*” by Abdul Karim Pardon and Mohd Anuar Mamat (2020). This article focused on a Jawi manuscript in the field of Fiqh titled *Talkhis al-Falah* based on the Syafi’i mazhab that was produced in the 18th century.

Methodology

This article is a brief discussion of the history of religious Malay manuscripts written in the Malay Archipelago before the year 1800. Generally, the methodology applied in this study can be described as a qualitative study in the manner of library research. For the data collection, a historical method has been applied to obtain historical facts about the development of religious Malay manuscripts from the 12th century to the 18th century. It was gathered from books, journals, paperworks, and websites related to the topic.

Discussion of the Finding

Religious Malay Manuscript Writing Chronology

Religious Malay manuscript writing is believed to have begun since the arrival of Islam to the Malay Archipelago. However, most of them are believed to be destroyed due to a lack of awareness about how to care for and preserve those manuscripts. Also, many manuscripts were missing because they were brought to the west by the colonials. They were either bought or

stolen from locals during their colonial period. No specific proof of any first religious Malay manuscript writing or Malay-Islamic *Kitab* can be determined. Based on the previous study, it can be said that religious Malay manuscript writing can be divided into two phases; the first phase is 'The Translation Phase' and the second phase is 'The Individual Writing Phase'.

1st Phase: The Translation Phase

The 12th Century

Even though Islam had long been in the Malay Archipelago, religious Malay manuscript is believed to have been produced as early as the 12th Century. It is believed that *Bahr al-Lahut* is the oldest religious Malay manuscript in the Malay Archipelago (Mahayudin Yahaya, 1998). But no fact can be found to pin the exact written or completion date of this manuscript and all copies found are just duplicate copies (Wan Mohd Shaghir, 1998; Siti Hawa Salleh, 1997; Abdul Rahman Abdullah, 2000).

The 15th Century

Kitab Durr al-Manzum which was found in Malacca belongs to the 15th century time frame together with *Umm al-Barahin*. Also in the same period in Pattani an Arabic writing named *Umm al-Barahin*, and a medical manuscript named *Sia-Sia Berguna* by Shaykh Safiyuddin al-'Abbasi al-Fatani were traced (Wan Mohd Shaghir, 1999).

The 16th Century

A religious Malay manuscript titled '*Aqa'id al-Nasafi*' has been found in Aceh that belongs to the 16th century period. It was written by Abu Hafs Umar Najmuddin al-Nasafi and later translated by an unknown writer in the year 1590 (al-Attas, 1988). Meanwhile in Pattani, Shaykh Faqih Ali b. Wan Muhammad Al-'Abbasi al-Fatani translated *Tarikh Fatani* into the Malay language in the year 1500 (Wan Mohd Shaghir, 1996; 2000). Initially, Islamic writing activities were not so popular maybe because of factors like foreign Islamic scholars with language skill barriers and limited local Malay scholars to participate in Islamic writing or translation (Mahayudin Yahaya, 1994; Harun Mat Piah, 2000). Most were only relevant to be categorized as freely written translation by local Malay scholars meant for locals who do not know Arabic (Mana Sikana, 1983; Ismail Hamid, 1986).

2nd Phase: The Individual Writing Phase

The 17th Century

After the translation phase, local Malay scholars started to produce their religious manuscripts during the end of the 16th Century and early 17th Century. It includes both Malay and Arabic languages. The earliest Malay language religious manuscript is the *Kitab Risalah* which contains the *shahada*. Islamic writing patterns during this time were simple and easy to understand for the Malays and implement in their practices. The title was usually about basic topics of Islam such as shahada, prayers, fasting, zakat, and pillars of Hajj (Zuber Usman, 1963, 1975; Ismail Hamid, 1986; Mustafa Daud, 1994).

Among the earliest writers ever traced was Faqih Wan Musa al-Fatani in Pattani. He produced three Arabic manuscripts such as:

- i) *Ilm Mantiq*
- ii) *Ilm Saraf*
- iii) *al-Sawab fi al-Bayan*

In Kedah, a scholar named Ahmad b. Aminuddin al-Qadhi wrote:

- i) *'Ilm Tawhid* (the year 1622)

The peak of Malay writing activities occurred in Aceh between the end of the 16th century and the early 17th century. It was the Golden Age of Aceh Dar al-Salam kingdom. This so-called Malay-Islamic knowledge centre had managed to produce several local intellectuals who writes many religious Malay manuscripts in the Jawi language. Among them are:

Shaykh Hamzah Fansuri:

- i) *Syarab al-'Asyiqin*
- ii) *Asrar al-'Arifin*

Syams al-Din Al-Sumatera-i:

- i) *Mir'ah al-Mu'minin*
- ii) *Jawahir al-Haqa'iq*
- iii) *Syarah Mir'ah al-Qulub*

An Islamic scholar from Gujerat, India had visited Aceh. His name is Shaykh Nuruddin al-Raniri (d.1644). He was opposing the previous Malay scholar and had documented his arguments and debates against Hamzah Fansuri in his writings titled:

- i) *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*
- ii) *Bustan al-Salatin*
- iii) *Akhbar al-Akhirah*
- iv) *Lata'if al-Asrar*

Meanwhile, a Malay scholar named Shaykh Abdul Ra'uf al-Sinkili (d.1693) produced the first tafsir writing in the Malay language and other Islamic knowledge, such as:

- i) *Tarjuman al-Mustafid* (y.1675)
- ii) *Mir'ah al-Tullab*
- iii) *'Umdah al-Muhtajin*
- iv) *Majmu' al-Masa'il*

Later, two of his disciples, one was Tg. Baba Daud and Shaykh Yusuf Tajul Khalwati al-Maqassari or al-Mankatsi (d.1699) from Bugis/Makassar produced several writings as below:

Tg. Baba Daud

- i) *Syarab al-'Asyiqin, Asrar*
- ii) *Risalah Mas'alah*
- iii) *al-Mubtadi li Ikhwan al-Mubtadi*

Shaykh Yusuf Tajul Khalwati al-Maqassari:

- i) *Fath al-Rahman*
- ii) *Asrar al-Salah*
- iii) *al-Risalah al-Naqsyabandiyyah*

In the Malay peninsula, two authors traced are known as Kerani Muhammad Hasyim bin al-Ghani from Penang and Bukhari al-Jauhari (Siti Hawa Salleh, 2000). They were famously known as the great thinkers of Malays and their contribution to the Malay writing development was said to be a new era in the Malay writing history in the region. As a result, their debates of

discussions and intellectual polemics had become a trend at that time thus resulting in rapid production of writing and copying of Islamic books. Their writings are:

Kerani Muhammad Hasyim:

- i) *Tafsir al-Hasyimi* (y.1686)

Bukhari al-Jauhari:

- i) *Taj al-Salatin* (y.1603)

The 18th Century

The production of religious writings in the Malay peninsula was not bad either. In Terengganu, a scholar named Shaykh Abdul Malik (d.1739M) or known as Tok Pulau Manis wrote four writings about fiqh knowledge, together with a tafsir translation in the Malay language (Ismail Che Daud, 2001; Abdul Rahman Abdullah, 1997). They are:

Shaykh Abdul Malik:

- i) *Syarah Hikam*
- ii) *al-Kifayah*
- iii) *Risalah al-Naql*
- iv) *Risalah Kaifiyyat al-Niyyah*
- v) *Tafsir al-Baydawi*

Two Muslim scholars from Pattani, one was Shaykh Abdul Rahman b. Abdul Mubin Pauh Bok al-Fatani and Shaykh Abdullah b. Abdul Mubin al-Fatani had written:

Shaykh Abdul Rahman b. Abdul Mubin Pauh Bok al-Fatani:

- i) *Manhal al-Safi fi Ramz Ahl al-Sufi* (y.1709)
- ii) *Mir'ah al-Haq*

Shaykh Abdullah b. Abdul Mubin al-Fatani:

- i) *Tanbih al-Ghafilin* (y.1770)

Meanwhile, in Aceh, the religious Malay writing continued. Shaykh Faqih Jalaluddin bin Kamaluddin al-Asyi authored three writings. His writing activities later were continued by his son, Shaykh Muhammad Zain b. Faqih Jalaluddin al-Asyi. Their writings are:

Shaykh Faqih Jalaluddin bin Kamaluddin al-Asyi

- i) *Hidayah al-'Awwam* (y.1727)
- ii) *Manzar al-Ajla ila Martabah al-'A'la* (y.1739)
- iii) *Safinah al-Hukam* (y.1740)

Shaykh Muhammad Zain b. Faqih Jalaluddin al-Asyi:

- i) *'Ilm al-Tawhid* (y.1702)
- ii) *Bidayah al-Hidayah* (y.1757)
- iii) *Kasyf al-Kiram* (y.1757)

In Palembang, three Islamic scholars were found here. They are Shaykh Abdul Samad al-Falimbani (d.1832), Shaykh Syihabuddin al-Haj bin Abdullah al-Jawi, and Shaykh Muhammad ibn Kemas Fakhrudin al-Falimbani (d.1763). Shaykh Abdul Samad al-Falimbani was famous

for his tasawwuf books. His books were widely used and became one of the main tasawwuf references in the Malay Archipelago:

Shaykh Abdul Samad al-Falimbani:

- i) *Zahrah al-Murid* (y.1765)
- i) *Al-'Urwah al-Wuthqa*
- ii) *Ratib Samman*
- iii) *Siyar al-Salikin ila 'Ibadah Rab al-'Abidin* (y.1778)
- iv) *Hidayah al-Salikin fi Suluk Maslak al-Muttaqin* (y.1778)
- v) *Sayr al- Salikin fi Tariqah al-Safat al-Safiyyah* (y.1788) and many other.

Whereas Shaykh Syihabuddin al-Haj b. Abdullah al-Jawi had written a religious manuscript about aqidah and its title was:

- i) *Syarh 'Aqidah al-Iman* (y.1748)

While the third Islamic scholar, Shaykh Muhammad ibn Kemas Fakhruddin al-Falimbani (d.1763) had written:

- i) *Bahr al-'Aja'ib*
- ii) *Hikayat Shaykh Muhammad Seman*.

These efforts were later continued by an ulama' from Banjarmasin called Shaykh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari (d.1227H) with his writings titled:

- i) *Tuhfah al-Raghibin* (y.1774)
- ii) *Luqtah al-'Ajlan* (y.1778)
- iii) *Sabil al-Muhtadin* (y.1780)
- iv) *Risalah Qawl al-Mukhtasar* (y.1781)

Next, it was followed by Shaykh Muhammad Nafis b. Idris b. Hussin al-Banjari with his writings:

- i) *Al-Dur al-Nafis* (y.1785)
- ii) *Majmu' al-Asrar*

And finally, in Jawa Barat, two Malay scholars were identified to contribute to religious Malay manuscript writing. They are Shaykh Abdul Muhyi Karang Pamijahan (d.1738) and Ki Agus Ki Agus Muhammad Mizan. Besides, a Kelantanese ulama named Shaykh Ibn Mu'ti b. Shaykh Muhammad Salih al-Jawi al-Kalantani continued religious Malay manuscript writing by producing the first religious writing in Tajwid knowledge. Their writings are:

Shaykh Abdul Muhyi Karang Pamijahan:

- i) *Martabat Tujuh*

Ki Agus Ki Agus Muhammad Mizan:

- i) *Kitab Seribu Masalah*

Shaykh Ibn Mu'ti b. Shaykh Muhammad Salih al-Jawi al-Kalantani:

- i) *Mir'ah al-Qur'an fi Tashil Ma'rifah Ahkam al-Tajwid li al-Mulk al-Wahhab* (y.1779).

Table 1 below explains the religious Malay manuscripts written by Malay scholars from the 12th century to the 18th century:

Table 1: Religious Malay Manuscripts produced in The Malay Archipelago

No.	Title	Author
The 12th Century: The Translation Phase		
1	<i>Bahr al-Lahut</i>	Unknown
The 15th Century		
2	<i>Durr al-Manzum</i>	Unknown
3	<i>Umm al-Barahin</i>	Unknown
4	<i>Sia-Sia Berguna</i>	Safiyuddin al-'Abbasi al-Fatani
The 16th Century		
5	<i>'Aqa'id al-Nasafi'</i>	Unknown
6	<i>Tarikh Fatani</i>	Faqih Ali b. Wan Muhammad Al-'Abbasi
The 17th Century: The Individual Writing Phase		
7	<i>'Ilm Mantiq</i>	Faqih Wan Musa al-Fatani
8	<i>Ilm Saraf</i>	
9	<i>Al-Sawab fi al-Bayan</i>	
10	<i>'Ilm Tawhid</i>	Ahmad b. Aminuddin al-Qadhi
11	<i>Syarab al-'Asyiqin</i>	Hamzah Fansuri
12	<i>Asrar al-'Arifin</i>	
13	<i>Mir'ah al-Mu'minin</i>	Syams al-Din Al-Sumatera-i
14	<i>Jawahir al-Haqa'iq</i>	
15	<i>Syarah Mir'ah al-Qulub</i>	
16	<i>Tarjuman al-Mustafid</i>	Abdul Ra'uf al-Sinkili
17	<i>Mir'ah al-Tullab</i>	
18	<i>Umdah al-Muhtajin</i>	
19	<i>Majmu' al-Masa'il</i>	
20	<i>Syarab al-'Asyiqin, Asrar</i>	Tg. Baba Daud
21	<i>Risalah Mas'alah</i>	
22	<i>Al-Mubtadi li Ikhwan al-Mubtadi</i>	
23	<i>Fath al-Rahman</i>	Yusuf Tajul Khalwati al-Maqassari
24	<i>Asrar al-Salah</i>	
25	<i>Al-Risalah al-Naqsyabandiyyah</i>	
26	<i>Tafsir al-Hasyimi</i>	Kerani Muhammad Hasyim
27	<i>Taj al-Salatin</i>	Bukhari al-Jauhari
The 18th Century		
28	<i>Syarah Hikam</i>	Abdul Malik bin Abdullah
29	<i>al-Kifayah</i>	
30	<i>Risalah al-Naql</i>	
31	<i>Risalah Kaifiyyat al-Niyyah</i>	
32	<i>Tafsir al-Baydawi</i>	
33	<i>Manhal al-Safi fi Ramz Ahl al-Sufi</i>	Abdul Rahman b. Abdul Mubin Pauh Bok
34	<i>Mir'ah al-Haq</i>	
35	<i>Tanbih al-Ghafilin</i>	
36	<i>Hidayah al-'Awwam</i>	Faqih Jalaluddin bin Kamaluddin al-Asyi
37	<i>Manzar al-Ajla ila Martabah A'la</i>	

38	<i>Safinah al-Hukkam</i>	
39	<i>'Ilm al-Tawhid</i>	Muhammad Zain b. Faqih Jalaluddin al-Asyi
40	<i>Bidayah al-Hidayah</i>	
41	<i>Kasyf al-Kiram</i>	
42	<i>Zahrah al-Murid</i>	Abdul Samad al-Falimbani
43	<i>Al-'Urwah al-Wuthqa</i>	
44	<i>Ratib Samman</i>	
45	<i>Siyar al-Salikin</i>	
46	<i>Hidayah al-Salikin</i>	
47	<i>Sayr al- Salikin fi Tariqah al-Safat</i>	
48	<i>Syarh 'Aqidah al-Iman</i>	Syihabuddin al-Haj b. Abdullah al-Jawi
49	<i>Bahr al-'Aja'ib</i>	Muhammad ibn Kemas al-Falimbani
50	<i>Hikayat Shaykh Muhammad Seman</i>	
51	<i>Tuhfah al-Raghibin</i>	Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari
52	<i>Luqtah al-'Ajlan</i>	
53	<i>Sabil al-Muhtadin</i>	
54	<i>Risalah Qawl al-Mukhtasar</i>	
55	<i>Al-Dur al-Nafis</i>	Muhammad Nafis b. Idris b. Hussin al-Banjari
56	<i>Majmu' al-Asrar</i>	
57	<i>Martabat Tujuh</i>	Abdul Muhyi Karang Pamijahan
58	<i>Kitab Seribu Masalah</i>	Ki Agus Ki Agus Muhammad Mizan
59	<i>Mir'ah al-Qur'an fi Tashil Ma'rifah</i>	Ibn Mu'ti b. Shaykh Muhammad Salih al-Jawi
	<i>Ahkam al-Tajwid</i>	al-Kalantani

Conclusion

Previous Malay scholars had played an important role in the religious Malay manuscript writing growth and development in the Malay Archipelago. They were actively involved in the Jawi manuscript writing from the 12th century until the 18th Century. They came from three different countries like Indonesia, Southern Thailand, and Malaysia. Besides, they produced various types of religious Malay manuscript writing such as *aqidah*, *tafsir*, *hadith*, *fiqh*, *tasawwuf*, *saraf*, *tajwid*, and *mantiq*. Conclusively, religious Malay manuscript writing in the Malay Archipelago has undergone two phases of development; they are 'The Translation Phase' and 'The Individual Writing Phase' beginning from the 12th to 18th century.

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