

## Bab 14

# The Islamic Collections in the Netherlands and the New Catalogue of Malay Manuscripts

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### Introduction

**T**ODAY exactly 421 years ago, on the 3rd of October 1574, the inhabitants of Leiden, then the second town in Holland, saw the end of their ordeal. They had survived a siege by Spanish troops which had lasted for over a year. But not all of them survived. Famine and the plague had decimated their numbers. Starved citizens, emaciated mothers with dying babies in their arms, had urged the burgomaster to surrender the town, but had managed to keep their spirits high. And, finally, by the turning of the winds the inundations had had their effect. Relief troops could reach the town by ships and rafts floating over the inundated fields. The trenches which the Spaniards had laid around the town were threatened and deserted by the formidable enemy. The relief of Leiden proved to be one of the major turning points in the armed uprising, started only six years earlier, by the protestant Dutch against the catholic Spaniards.

Local legend has it that the citizens of the liberated town as a reward for their brave conduct were given the choice between ten years of tax freedom or the foundation of a university. The citizens allegedly choose the latter, but this choice was at the same time highly opportune to the leaders of the revolt. Till then there had been in the northern part of the Netherlands (more or less coinciding with the present-day kingdom) no university. The nearest university was the one in Louvain (now Belgium), but that town was in firm Spanish and therefore catholic hands. The university that was founded, early in 1575 in Leiden, would give the liberated territories their first institution of higher education, a university where protestant theology and other subjects could be taught unhamperedly, and from where Spanish and catholic influences could be withheld. The foundation of the university was one more step towards the freedom for which the uprising had been started, and which in the end led to the complete withdrawal of the hated Spaniards. The Republic of the United Netherlands was founded and would exist for over two centuries.

Then, like today, a university brought together the accumulated learning in a country. When during the war of liberation it became expedient for the Dutch to go around the flanks of the Spaniards, they engaged in friendly relationships with the king of Morocco, directly to the south of Spain, and the Turkish sultan in Istanbul, to the east. It is a classic move in any warfare.

Such relationships coincided with the study of Islamic languages and culture by European scholars. Not only in the Netherlands, but in other European countries as well. Colonial and commercial expansion often goes hand in hand with an increase of knowledge about the conquered peoples and allied territories. But the reasons for the increasing Dutch interest in Islamic peoples were much more complex.

The expansion of Islam had always frightened the Europeans, and it still frightens them today. Having knowledge about the Muslim enemy had, already in the European Middle Ages, been a high priority. The first translation of the Koran, from Arabic into Greek, had been made as early as in the 9th century by Byzantine scholars. Not to provide a tool for studying Islamic theology but to prove by it the falsehood of the mission of the Arab Prophet. So, apologetic activities have, since a long time and continuing till today, been at the core of European learning of Islam.

More elements, equally essential, in the origins of oriental studies in Europe must be distinguished. In the Arabic language, and sometimes only in that language, a considerable number of texts of the Greek intellectual heritage have been preserved. This was the result of the large translation movement in the Islamic world, ever since the 8th century. In the 12th and 13th centuries, numerous Greek texts in Arabic garb were, often for the first time, introduced into Western Europe, by having been retranslated into Latin. There had been in this translation movement a prime interest in scientific texts: works by Aristotle rather than by Homer, technical texts rather than Greek theater. This road along which transmission of culture was effectuated, first from west to east and then the other way around, was well known at the time. One can safely assume that European scholars in the Middle Ages were fully aware - whether they liked it or not, of the Arab and Islamic origins of much of the learning that was taught in their universities.

Finally, the linguistic and etymological proximity of Arabic to Hebrew and Aramaic, holy languages to the Christians, was an incentive to the study of Arabic too, not for its own sake but as an auxiliary science in order to elucidate difficult passages in the Holy scriptures by etymological and grammatical comparison.

To sum up, four important reasons for the European interest in Islamic culture as it came about by the end of the sixteenth century can be distinguished. They often were active simultaneously and interactively with one another:

1. Diplomatic, commercial and military contacts with Muslim rulers.
2. Apologetic and missionary activities against and among the Muslims.
3. The Arab stage in the transmission of scientific and scholarly texts from the Greek heritage.
4. The study of Arabic as a tool for better understanding the original languages of the Bible.

Later on, from the early 18th century onwards, an unbiased interest in Islamic history, together with a genuine admiration for the literary, cultural and scholarly achievements of Islamic culture came to strengthen these four basic incentives for the study of Islam in Europe.

## Malay Manuscripts In The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, oriental manuscripts materials have always been kept in the library of the

University of Leiden, where oriental studies have come to be centralized in course of time. The Leiden library is the only institution in the Netherlands which is still active in purchasing manuscript materials, now for more than four centuries.

The study of Malay, and of other Indonesian languages, came relatively late in the Netherlands. There were less impulses to study Malay than there had been for the study of Arabic, Turkish or Persian. Diplomacy, colonial expansion and missionary activities were the most conspicuous. There had been, ever since the first involvement of the Dutch in the Archipelago an interest in the Malay language, but this had been, in the first two centuries of Dutch involvement, of a purely utilitarian nature and had hardly reached academic levels, and certainly not in as far that manuscripts were collected in an organized way. As the first Dutch study of Malay the grammar and dictionary compiled by F. de Houtman and published in Amsterdam in 1603 is always mentioned. No manuscripts seem to have been used for that work. Some manuscripts from Indonesia, mostly from Java, have indeed reached Dutch public collections quite early.

There is a Javanese primbon which came with the return journey of the first Dutch expedition to the East-Indies. It is a sixteenth-century manuscript on palmleaf, still kept in the Leiden Library (Or. 266). At the time, it was thought that its text was in Chinese, only proving that neither Javanese nor Chinese were then known in Leiden. Its first critical edition appeared as late as in 1881 (by J.G.H. Gunning). Another old manuscript from early-17th century Qur'an from the Moluccas is still kept in the municipal library of Rotterdam. But these are the exceptions. The Dutch minister and encyclopedic author on the Dutch East-Indies, Francois Valentijn (1666-1727), was, by the end of the 17th century, one of the first collectors of Malay manuscripts. His collection (of which he published a list) never counted more than some twenty titles, however. Several of these are now preserved in the National Library in Jakarta. Valentijn had sent several of his manuscripts to his learned friend, Adriaan Reland (1676-1718), who was professor at the University of Utrecht. These were dispersed after Reland's death. A few have been preserved and are kept in the collections of Leiden University and of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. Reland, whose name must be remembered as one of the first unbiased Dutch orientalist scholars, had a wide interest. Besides Arabic he was interested in Persia, both for the Islamic and the pre-Islamic period, and the languages of the Malay world. But all these early beginnings of the scholarly study of Malay manuscripts by Dutch scholars on a large scale.

That had to wait till the 19th and 20th centuries. When H.H. Juynboll published his catalogue of Malay manuscripts in 1899, he described in it some 320 manuscript texts. That was the total amount of manuscripts available a hundred years ago in the library of Leiden, where most Malay manuscripts in the Netherlands were held. By far the larger part of these had come in one collection to Leiden when the activities of the Royal Academy of Delft, where civil servants for the East-Indian service were educated, were discontinued in 1864. The printed books were sold to the Imperial Library of Berlin and the manuscripts were transferred to Leiden. There had been earlier acquisitions by the Leiden Library. Earlier in the 19th century, the General Secretary of the Dutch Governor-General was a true scriptorium of Malay manuscripts. Several of the products of this scriptorium have been preserved in Leiden. They can be recognized by the diligent, clear, almost unimaginative handwriting, on paper used in the Secretary for the production of official documents. All scribes, some of whom have been identified by name, were of Malay origin.

Another source of manuscript materials were the General State Archives in The Hague. It often happened that official documents in Asian languages which were received from indigenous rulers were sent to professors of Leiden University for translation. The translations were returned to the government and are now kept in the State Archives, but the originals remained in the Leiden library. Several hundreds of often beautifully ornamented letters dating from the late 18th century from rulers from all over the archipelago, and also from Malaysia, were acquired in this way. Yet another important source of Malay manuscript materials is the Legacy of H. Neubronner van der Tuuk (died 1894) which comprised several hundreds of original manuscripts commissioned by Van der Tuuk and of transcripts made by him.

When Ph. S. van Ronkel published his supplement to Juynboll's catalogue in 1921 there were some 503 new Malay and 264 new Minangkabau manuscript texts described. Many of these come from the collections made by Ch. Snouck Hurgronje (died 1936), who had given his extensive collections on loan to the library. Van Ronkel's catalogue was the last extensive catalogue published. Both catalogues are written in Dutch, which means that they can now hardly be used anymore outside the Netherlands. The most recently published survey of all Malay manuscripts in the Netherlands is the Handlist compiled by Haji Wan Ali Wan Mamat (1985). Most manuscripts mentioned in this Handlist are in the Leiden Library (pp. 16-66 and 75-90). The Handlist contains short references to the published catalogues and also lists all manuscripts which arrived after 1921 in the Leiden Library. In that respect the Handlist is presently the most complete survey till date of the ca. 1200 Malay manuscript texts in Leiden.

The acquisition of Malay manuscripts by the Leiden Library is still going on. Malay manuscripts are relatively rare on the international market, and usually rather expensive. Every now and then, however, whenever Malay manuscript materials present themselves on auctions or the art market, they are purchased by the library. Recently three Malay manuscripts of the Leiden library have been selected for reproduction in the facsimile series *Manuscripta Indonesica*. The following texts have appeared till date:

- *Hikayat Isma Yatim* by Ismail, followed by a shorter text (vol. 1 (1993)). The original manuscript (Leiden, Or. 1693) may be a product of the Malay scriptorium of Batavia.
- *Mukhtasar Tawarikh al-Wusta*, a short chronicle of the Riau region (vol. 2 (1993)). The original manuscript (Leiden, Or. 1999) was written in Arabic and Latin script. It bears the seal of Raja Ali, Viceroy of Riau.
- *Mystical Illustrations from the Teachings of Syaikh Ahmad al-Qusyasyi* (vol. 5 (1995)). The original manuscript (Leiden, Or. 2222) is a colourful piece of art. The facsimile is produced in black-and-white, and the entire manuscript with its coloured diagrams is made available on CD-ROM, together with the introductions. The entire book is made available on Internet as well: <http://oasis.leidenuniv.nl:82/or2vier.htm>

Since about 1977 the Indonesian scholar Dr. Teuku Iskandar has worked on an extensive new catalogue of the Malay manuscript collections in the Netherlands. Funds were made available through the treaty between Indonesia and The Netherlands of cooperation in Indonesian studies. Iskandar worked for some four or five years on the project, with secretarial help of several younger scholars, but his work was never completed. Other duties, such as the collaboration on the Indonesian-Dutch dictionary project, took most of Iskandar's attention. When he was appointed as a professor in Brunei it soon became evident that he would hardly have the opportunity to complete the book within the foreseeable future. The last supervisor to the project

was Dr. J. Noorduyn. In 1991 the typescript and cardboxes of Dr. Iskandar and collaborators were transferred to the University Library, and by then the project had come to a virtual standstill.

The incumbent professor of Malay in Leiden, Dr. Henk Maier, then took it upon himself to provide funds for the continuation of the project, albeit on a slightly different basis. A young scholar, Dr. Edwin Wieringa, was found to work for one year on what should become the first volume of the Malay catalogue. Wieringa took Iskandar's typescript as a starting point and enlarged it considerably. He added manuscripts of the old collections, which were only recently identified as Malay, to the list which had served as a starting point to Iskandar. He checked all data given by Iskandar, added numerous bibliographical references and added short contents of many texts. The contents of the sheaves with documents and letters in Malay were analyzed and all documents were described individually for the first time. Such activities had fallen outside the scope of Iskandar's cataloguing, and they constitute the original contribution by Wieringa to the project. The new catalogue should entirely supersede the two previous Dutch catalogues by Juynboll and Van Ronkel, and provide an entirely up-to-date description of the Malay manuscripts collection in Leiden and elsewhere in The Netherlands. It should therefore not merely contain references to the older Dutch literature on the subject, since the user group, especially scholars in Malaysia and Indonesia, would not be able firstly to find these publications, and then to read them. Another original contribution by Wieringa to the project is the selection of over one hundred illustrations for the first volume alone. From this it is clear that Wieringa had not acted as a mere secretarial help. On the contrary, in the end he had enlarged Iskandar's text by several times with his own scholarly contributions and made the new text, that is volume 1 of it, ready for publication by preparing an introduction and several detailed indexes. Volume 1 of the new Malay catalogue, which is written in English and which contains descriptions of slightly less manuscripts than Juynboll's catalogue contained, is now almost ready to go in print. A committee of two foreign experts was asked by the Leiden Library to determine, firstly whether the text prepared by Wieringa was fit to print, and secondly how the authorship of the work should be mentioned on the title-page. So since September 1994 the text of the first volume by Iskandar and Wieringa is more or less ready. My expectation is that the first volume of this new Malay manuscript catalogue will be published somewhere early in 1996.

The continuation of the project was approved in September 1994 by the mixed Indonesian-Dutch executive committee of the cultural treaty between Indonesia and The Netherlands. Organizational problems, I am afraid to say, have made it impossible till today to actually use the large allocated funds for the project. But I am optimistic in the sense that now that funds have been made available, the project will be continued before long.

## Bibliographical Remark

All catalogues of public institutions in The Netherlands which contain Islamic manuscript materials have recently been listed in Geoffrey Roper (ed.), *World Survey of Islamic Manuscripts*, Vol. 2 (London 1993), pp. 346-383: *The Netherlands*, by Jan Just Witkam. Since then the *Catalogue of Acehnese manuscripts in the Library of Leiden University and other collections outside Aceh*, compiled by P. Voorhoeve and T. Iskandar (Leiden 1994) has appeared. This catalogue contains descriptions of texts written in the Acehnese language only.

د فلهه اكن فول اكن زيمه دهيلس دهنى لاد اورى دان فنجولوكم دان دو عمل بيج بر فاكى بئغ امسى  
 تباد ترهه كات كتند ائيه كه منترى بيج كامنت ائيه دهنى سبل منترى ده ان سبل رعيه سبل سبلين بههنگن  
 سمهات دا بيج مفادى كندا كسره دهنى كيتا كات بجا يكا كه و نا يلكن كرجان راجات راج لقمان دنگري  
 مغول دكجه تراث ماكن مينم دان برماين م دان برسك سكاك مالم دان كينغ مكر راج لقمان ايشون دان  
 سالتن اكن سبل منترى م دان اورغ م كاي م سبلين مكر سبل منترى م سبلين ائيه ملنترن راج لقمان ملك  
 كدالم استان كسره ماكن دان مينم دان برسك سكاك فوليه درنگ سبل راميين راج م دكينه اورغ بيج مبله اكن  
 كندا انتن دان اورغ جيلهر اكن ايهن دان ستنله راج لقمان دنگري فول سوره دهنى عادلن دان مور  
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دان عادلن ايتوله اكن بلسن

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Illustrasi: *Hikayat Isma Yatim*, Cod. Of. 1693, Koleksi Perpustakaan Universiti Leiden, halaman 124

## Bab 15

# Towards a catalogue of Islamic Manuscripts in South Africa with special reference to the Melayu manuscripts at The Cape<sup>1</sup>

MUHAMMED HARON

## Introduction

IN the field of South African scholarship only a few individuals' names come to mind who have not neglected to record the contributions Muslims have made to the cultural life of South Africa; scholars such as Rochlin, Du Plessies, Van Selms, Kahler and Davids are amongst the more prominent persons who have studied the Muslims' socio-cultural contributions. Van Selms [1951; 1959], Kahler [1971, 1976], Valkoff [1972] and Davids [1990] are the scholars who highlighted the number of extant Islamic manuscripts which have been written in the community. Valkoff made a careful study of the Melayu-Portuguese tradition whilst Van Selms, Kahler and Davids tackled issues of the Arabic-Afrikaans linguistic movement.

Even though these individuals have attempted to locate and identify certain manuscripts in their original as well as lithographic form, no attempt has as yet been made to record all the extant manuscripts which are still circulating in the community nor is there any useful and comprehensive bibliographical article or catalogue available which provide the necessary details about the conditions and description of the manuscripts.

The concern of this article therefore is to locate, list, identify and describe the state and content of some of the extant manuscripts; the main objective is to help towards drawing up a comprehensive catalogue of Islamic manuscripts in South Africa. Before listing the manuscripts the article will discuss the interaction between the South African Muslim community and their manuscripts and in the concluding part provide a brief textual analysis of one or more of the texts entered in this tentative, limited bibliographical article. This article should be seen as a preliminary presentation of a much larger project on the subject. And it should also be viewed as an attempt to lay a foundation which should stimulate other South African researchers as well as those from abroad, to further explore this community's rich heritage.

## South African Muslims and Islamic Manuscripts

As early as April 1925 Mr Graham Botha, the then chief archivist at the South African Library,

# Tradisi Penulisan MANUSKRIP MELAYU



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