PREFACE

The history of the past twenty years of the compilation of the Catalogue of Malay and Minangkabau manuscripts in the Library of Leiden University, the first volume of which is herewith published, is a tenuous and complicated one. It must have been in 1976 or 1977 that the Indonesian scholar Dr. Teungku Iskandar was invited to compile the work. Funds had been made available through the Cultural Treaty between Indonesia and The Netherlands through the good services of Professor A. Teeuw and the Bureau of Indonesian Studies (BIS). That funds had become available so easily and with the mutual consent of the two parties in the Treaty was the result of a renewed interest in the Dutch collections of Indonesian manuscripts in general and those in the Library of Leiden University in particular. In 1971 His Royal Highness Prince Bernhard of The Netherlands had transferred, during the Royal visit to Indonesia, one original manuscript from the Leiden library to the Indonesian government. This was in fact one of the finest and rarest pieces in the Leiden collection, Cod.Or. 5023, containing among other texts the then unique copy of the Old-Javanese Nagarakertagama, a manuscript which was part of the Lombok collection. In the past twenty-five years several more manuscripts of this text have been discovered, however. Returning the then unique manuscript to Indonesia was meant as a symbolic gesture but even that caused a public outcry in Holland, and a heated public discussion about whether or not objects of art and science should be returned to the country of origin started both in Indonesia and The Netherlands. The Nagarakertagama manuscript - needless to say - is now well cared for in the vaults of the Perpustakaan Nasional in Jakarta, where I have seen it in 1991. All rumors about the manuscript being in use as pusaka in the presidential household, or as having been split up and kept in fragments by rich generals, are simply untrue.

For manuscripts, in contradistinction to pieces of art or architectural parts, it does not matter so much where they are kept as long as their contents are easily available to all interested scholars. At the same time, the scholarly world does not benefit from frequent transfer of collections. With these two ideas in mind I started several projects in the mid-1970's in order to make the Leiden manuscripts better available to Indonesian scholars. One of these projects consisted of microfilming a representative selection of Indonesian manuscripts and depositing copies of these films in the Arsip Nasional and the Perpustakaan Nasional in Jakarta. In the period between 1975 and 1979, some 3,000 microfilms of Leiden manuscripts were sent both as a negative and a positive film to Indonesia. Another project serving that purpose and financed by the Cultural Treaty was the Catalogue of Malay manuscripts.
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That Dr. Iskandar in the end did not complete his catalogue had several reasons which it is beyond my responsibility to try to define, but it was certainly not due to any incompetence. On the contrary, Dr. Iskandar stood firmly in the Indonesian manuscript tradition from a very young age onwards, and he had expanded his knowledge by an academic education in Indonesian studies which he had crowned by the publication of his Ph.D. thesis De Hikajat Atjeh in 1958.

Right from the beginning, circumstances were not favourable for the Malay catalogue. The organisation of the project was never discussed with the University Librarian, then Mr. J.R. de Groot, and the supervision of the project was entrusted to Professor R. Roolvink, who had a conflictuous history as a curator of Oriental manuscripts in the Leiden library when he was parachuted into that position from 1964-1969. There was no supervising board for the project and no responsibilities or duties for the cataloguer were defined. Even the organisation of the catalogue was unclear. The question whether it should be a short catalogue with references only to the earlier catalogues by Juynboll and Van Ronkel, or whether it should be an extensive and self-contained new catalogue, was never answered, or even put. A checklist of all Malay materials in the Leiden library was never made. My own position as a curator of Oriental manuscripts, a post which I have held since November 1st, 1974, was somewhat precarious, as I had entirely been left out of the project by its organizers and I nevertheless somehow felt responsible for the progress and completion of this enterprise. But there remains more to be said.

Dr. Iskandar wrote his descriptions down by hand, and an assistant, usually a student, typed these for him and kept a register of titles and authors, at least for some time. After a number of years, there were only the handwritten descriptions by Dr. Iskandar. These circulated among a number of learned readers, who all gave their comment. As an outsider to all this I was amazed that no one of these readers had any practical experience in making a manuscript catalogue. But my opinion was never asked, and I was never considered as an expert, not being a student of Indonesian languages myself. Professor G.W.J. Drewes was asked to look at the English. Dr. Russell Jones came several times from London to Leiden in order to make a survey of the watermarks encountered in the manuscripts described and to stress the importance of watermark research to Professor Drewes. Professor Roolvink was still involved and occasionally gave comment. Dr. J. Noorduyn, the Secretary of the Royal Institute of Ethnology and Linguistics (KITLV) in Leiden, was involved in that the funds for the project were under his supervision, but his involvement gradually grew, and at his invitation several editors in succession were asked to work on Dr. Iskandar's notes. I remember Mrs. I. Farjon, who made a first effort to edit the text, and Mr. H. Zwart, who has been typing out Dr. Iskandar's handwritten descriptions. And even more people may have been involved.
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The project had by then (around 1983) fully migrated to the Royal Institute and had disappeared beyond my official horizon. It is not impossible that this overkill of external expertise and well-meant help has contributed to the stagnation of the project.

By that time, Dr. Iskandar had finished working full-time for the Malay catalogue since he was asked to compile a new Indonesian-Dutch dictionary. It was obvious, but at the time apparently only to me, that this new task of Dr. Iskandar's would hinder his final work on the Malay catalogue considerably. In the end, Dr. Iskandar did not complete that work either and the dictionary was eventually, and after much delay, published in 1990 by A. Teeuw and I. Supriyanto. The scope of Dr. Iskandar's contribution to that project can be read in Teeuw's preface to the dictionary. Before the publication of the dictionary, Dr. Iskandar had gone to work in Brunei, and the completion of the Malay catalogue was further away than ever. In 1991 Dr. Noorduyn retired from his function as Secretary to the Royal Institute and at long last I was asked to take over all materials of the project and deposit them in the University Library, with the implicit request that I somehow should see to it that the catalogue would be published. In fact the project had now come to a complete standstill. I thought it important that this cul-de-sac should be broken wide open, as I had in mind to publish it as soon as possible in the series Codices Manuscripti, a series of manuscript catalogues which is published by Leiden University Library. After consultation with Professor H.J.M. Maier, the chair holder of Malay in Leiden University, it was decided that an overall editing with comparison with the original manuscripts was necessary. Funds for one year salary were found with BIS and Mr. E.P. Wieringa first made a project plan and then started working in 1993 under my direct supervision. Instead of just editing the text of Dr. Iskandar, it was decided that additions should also be made in the bibliographical references, which were by now severely outdated, and in the description of the contents of the manuscripts wherever this was necessary or advisable. This resulted in an entirely new text for a first volume written by Dr. Wieringa, which had become approximately three times the size of Dr. Iskandar's original work as it had been handed over to me by Dr. Noorduyn.

In the meantime it proved to be impossible to appropriately credit Mr. Wieringa for his work on the title-page of first volume of the catalogue. After lengthy consultations between Dr. Iskandar and the University librarian it was decided, in the summer of 1996, that Dr. Iskandar and Leiden University Library should proceed with their projects of a Malay manuscript catalogue along separate paths. In the meantime funds had, again, become available through the Cultural Treaty between Indonesia and The Netherlands, now through the good services of Professor Maier. Dr. Wieringa was not available anymore for the completion of the project as he had found an academic position in Münster, Germany. Recruiting started
in September 1996 and Mrs. Joan de Lijster-Streef was appointed as cataloguer of the Malay manuscript collection from December 1st, 1996. Her first task has been to make Wieringa’s text ready for publication. All Dr. Wieringa’s descriptions are based on autopsy of the manuscripts, while references were made to the Catalogus by H.H. Juynboll (Leiden 1899) and the Katalog by Haji Wan Ali (Kuala Lumpur 1985). The present work is the fruit of the sole intellectual effort by Dr. Wieringa. It was made ready for publication by Mrs. Joan de Lijster-Streef and myself. My own, original, contribution to the present works lies in the exact checking of the data of the numerous letters and documents. The individual description of these letters and documents, now for the first time, is a feature by which this catalogue distinguishes itself from all its predecessors.

The present volume contains descriptions of the earliest collections of Malay manuscripts in the library of Leiden University. It contains descriptions of a considerable number of manuscript volumes, but slightly less than the number described by H.H. Juynboll in his catalogue which was published in 1899. The present descriptions, however, differ considerably from those of Juynboll’s. Less emphasis is laid on the contents, as the older collections are well-known in scholarly literature, and more codicological and physical details are added. The latter are features that remain almost entirely unmentioned in the old catalogues.

The format of the descriptions in this and the following volumes of the Catalogue is as follows:
I. General remarks: 1. class-mark; 2. title of the work or short description of the contents of the volume.
II. Physical description of the manuscript: 3. size in cm.; 4. number of pages; 5. number of lines to the page; 6. ink used, rubrication, etc.; 7. paper and watermark; 8. scribe; 9. date and place of copying; 10. owner or commissioner; 11. provenance.
III. Description of the contents: 12. author; 13. copied from which model; 14. other manuscripts known (selectively enumerated); 15. discussion on contents and comparison with other texts (selective); 16. references to earlier catalogues.

As illustrations are often much more eloquent than text, it was decided that the catalogue should be lavishly illustrated. The selection of the illustrations is, again, the fruit of Dr. Wieringa’s effort. A number of indexes concludes the present volume. At the end of the project, cumulative indexes will be published.

Leiden, June 1st, 1998

Dr. Jan Just Witkam
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