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discretion of publishers who needed to pay little heed to their audience, indeed who had an agenda for changing the taste and composition of the audience and ample means to support the endeavour. The Baba press was commercial in an embryonic way, lacking sustained output and marketing networks. In contrast to both of those other categories, the Muslim press was a sustained commercial enterprise in the hands of poorly capitalised commercial printers and booksellers, whose survival depended on their ability to sell what their customers wanted. Consequently the Muslim press gives us a much clearer impression of popular reading habits and the realities of cultural entrepreneurship.

REPertoire

It was the custom of the Muslim publishers and booksellers to classify their books into the three broad classes of kitab, hikayat and syair. The former two categories were not hard and fast: the term kitab is replaced by surat in some cases, as is hikayat by cerita, kitab, and occasionally surat, only syair form a truly distinctive category by virtue of their distinguishing verse form. But in general the three broad classes are used consistently and may be taken to represent meaningful categories in the minds of those who sold books, and presumably of those who read them too.

The class kitab encompasses books used for all kinds of study and reference. Most often it refers to books dealing with the recitation and study of the Quran, prayer, theology, religious law and ancillary matters. It may also include reference books of a general nature, such as letter-writers, vocabularies and school books.178

It is kitab of the former kind, treating religious subjects, which launched the early Muslim press. For the first decade of Singapore Muslim printing from 1860-1870, the majority of the titles published comprised basic religious texts such as might be studied under an advanced teacher in a pondok-pesantren. Kitab appearing in this first decade were, in order of appearance, Sabib al-Mukaddim, Bidayat al-Mubtadi, Usul al-Din, Tanbih al-Ikhwan, Sirat al-Musakim, Kawaal al-Islam, and Taj al-Muluk. Also figuring among the earliest output of Muslim printers were two popular Islamic guides in verse form, Syair Mekkah, a guide to the pilgrimage, and Syair Hakikat, a collection of moral advice for the young. This list of kitab corresponds quite closely with a short list of the most favoured religious works among the Malays in the first half of the nineteenth century which is given by Newbold, probably on information from Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir. All the works in Newbold’s list, except the Quran itself, are known to have been published during the first two decades of printing activity in Singapore, several in two editions.179 Brumund confirms that Sirat al-Musakim was the foremost kitab used by Javanese ‘priests’ mid-century.180

In later decades, the number of kitab published in Singapore increases steadily to peak at about 1900. During the 1890s some 38 kitab are known to have been printed. These included works in Malay and Javanese, sometimes in the form of an Arabic text with interlinear Malay or Javanese glosses, or what is known in Javanese as the ‘bearded’ (jenggotan) format.181 In these works Javanese is written in the modified Arabic script (pegon), almost invariably with all vowelling indicated: in only a couple of

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instances is the text ‘buld’ (gundil).182 Between 1890 and 1910 nearly twenty such Javanese kitab were published in Singapore.183

The heavy weighting towards works of religious instruction indicates an important impetus for the establishment of an Islamic press. As many of these kitab were works of considerable bulk, their production was a major undertaking. In the early decades of Muslim printing they undoubtedly formed the greater part of the printed output of Muslim publishers. Indeed, they remained a staple activity of Singapore Muslim publishers throughout the period of the survey. It is doubtful though that the printing of kitab was a very profitable undertaking, and indeed it may not have been intended to be so. It is suggestive that the first kitab definitively printed in Singapore happens to have been printed as a charitable bequest (wakaf),184 a practice which continued throughout the period.

But it is in the publication of syair and hikayat that the commercial face of Muslim printing is most clearly shown. If we consider not the bulk of printing but the number of editions coming from the presses, already by the 1870s the majority were syair and hikayat. This trend continued, so that even at the peak of kitab printing in the 1890s a vastly greater number of new and reprinted syair and hikayat were being issued, to the extent that the extensive kitab production was overshadowed.185 The highest turnover for indigenous publishers clearly lay in the recreational area. The ten most frequently reissued titles were seven syair — (in order) Abdul Muluk, Siti Zubaidah, Haris Fadillah, Juragan Budiman, Unggas, Kiamat, Degan, and three hikayat — Miskin Marakarnah, Muhammad Hanafiah, and Dermoah Taksiah.

Syair were undoubtedly the most popular form of literature in the nineteenth century. So popular was this genre that works of prose were versified to supply the easy reading for the public clamoured.186 The popularity of syair is explicable in terms of the style of language used, which is more direct, less inflected, and with shorter and simpler syntactic structures than is characteristic of prose. Thus, although syair are marked by some poetic conventions in the choice of vocabulary (especially in finding rhyme words), their language is in general closer to common speech than is the rather artificial style of literary prose. The result is a more effective vehicle for conveying information to a wide audience than were the contemporary forms of prose.

syair ini digarankan olehmu
sekalain orang mencari ilmu
di dalam kitab banyak yang jenam diikarangkan syair baharu bertemu187

Nor must it be forgotten that in this early stage of the use of printing written works were intended to be read aloud, in the manner of the manuscript. Both prose and verse were consumed more often by ear than by eye.188 The simple predictability of the syair’s structure was a great aid to aural comprehension, as well as supporting musical accompaniment.189 Syair were to be read aloud with vigour and style, according to the concluding verses of one moderately popular text:
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membaca dia jangkalan pelahan
suara yang elok jangkalan ditahtan
supaya dengar taman dan kawan.

The audience revels in the sweet voice of the singer. If his or her rendition is not dull but lively and polished, the reciter may look forward to tokens of appreciation — tea, cigarettes, and sweets:

jangan dibaca perlahan-lahan
supaya terdiri orang sekalian
baca olehmu dengan petau
sepuhnya suka sambil tertawa
dapatlah upahan teh dan kahwa
serta rokok pang'an nan halal.

Such readings were a common form of evening entertainment. Furthermore the most popular saiyar are known to have formed the basis of theatrical performances, among them Abdul Muluk, Siti Zubaidah, and Ken Tabuhan — as well as the prose Miskin Marakarmah.

Texts of religious significance were also read aloud publicly. Foremost among these are accounts of the Prophet's life, in the various versions known as Maulud, and the very frequently reprinted prose epic Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiah. The latter is a popular account of the birth, life and death of the prophet Muhammad, and of the violent and tragic story of Ali and his sons Hassan, Hussain and Muhammad Hanafiah. It was read publicly during the ten days of Asyura. It opens with an explicit address to both readers and listeners, printed on its title page.

Highest on the list of titles which appealed most to book-buyers were romantic adventures. The saiyar Abdul Muluk, Siti Zubaidah, Haris Fadillah, Juragan Budiman, and the hikayat Miskin Marakarmah are all of this nature. These tales are rich in pathos and catharsis. They draw on conventional themes of the separation of lovers, the birth of a child of good fortune in forest exile, the intermediacy of a fairy godmother or forest hermit, episodes of disguise and mistaken identity, all culminating in a battle in which a lost kingdom is regained, the lovers are reunited, and prosperity and happiness return. A popular additional ingredient is the depiction of the strong heroine who, through steady devotion, wit, resourcefulness and valour on the battle-field, rescues her husband from captivity. This is common to all four of the most popular saiyar. Miskin Marakarmah is rather different. It shares the love of disguise and revelations of true identity, the fairy godmother, the loss and regaining of a kingdom, the ups and downs of fortune, and the hero saved from an ogre by his wife-to-be; but the focus is on adventures of the prince. With Dermah Tasiah the woman's role is again foremost: a wife suffers grievously when driven out by her husband but remains steadfast in great tribulation and is returned to her husband by Jibrail with admonitions against divorce. It is worth remarking that the titles of Zubaidah, Juragan Budiman, and Dermah Tasiah are all provided by the names of their heroines.

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These most popular saiyar are also notable for their strongly Islamic flavour. Although drawing upon themes which are common to a stock of Malay and Javanese literature, they are distinguished by their setting, which is not in the mythical Anta Beranta (as is Miskin Marakarmah), nor in Janggala and Kuripan (as is Ken Tabuhan), but in imagined Muslim worlds centred on Barbary and Hindustan or Iraq, Yunnan and Cambay. Even more weight is lent to this Islamic colouring by the didactic works which also figure among the most popular printed texts. The titles of Suyur Unggas Berooh IIma Akhirat and Suyir Kiamat indicate the didactic nature of the texts. The remaining text in the top ten, Suyir Dagang, is an allegorical poem by the early Malay mystic Hamzah Fansuri expressing the spiritual pilgrim's lonely anguish.

The popularity these works achieved in the market place demonstrates the appeal of their values and, probably, also the style in which they are presented. The Islamic horizons of most of these books, the social values their stories embody, and perhaps the mercantile environment which they often depict or assume, — these must be seen as aspects of a popular Islamic culture which flourished where these books were sold.

MARKETING

Like Baba and European printing in the British-protected areas of the archipelago, Muslim printing was concentrated in Singapore. Unlike Baba and European printing, however, Muslim printing was distributed from Singapore throughout the archipelago. Singapore was the hub of native shipping movements throughout the archipelago and a collection point for the pilgrimage to Mecca. These factors, and the laissez-faire disengagement of the British administration from cultural affairs, led to the emergence of Singapore as the focal point of Muslim culture in Southeast Asia.

From earliest times, Singapore Muslim printing was concentrated on the north-eastern outskirts of the town in Kampung Gelam around the Sultan Mosque, and in particular in the short street running down from the main gate of the mosque, then known in Malay as Lorong Mesjid Sultan and in English as Sultan Road, but now called Bussorah Street. Other printers' shops adjoined in Baghdad Street, a block to the north in North Bridge Road, or further to the south-west in Arab Street, Haji Lane and Bali Lane. At its peak Muslim printing was concentrated in the hands of printers in adjoining or closely adjacent shops just outside the gate of Sultan Mosque. It was of course in this area in the community gathered on Fridays, and in this area too that the pilgrims using Singapore as a stopover in their course to Mecca congregated. This was a neighbourhood of bustling commercial activity whose shops then, as now, specialised in tailoring, and selling cloth and religious accoutrements. These included imports from India, the Middle East, and beyond. Merchandise included everything from songkok and haji caps, to Kashmiri cloths and tweeds, to medicines and imported perfumes, as well as printed goods: amulets (azimat), printed verses and formulae (wafak), pictures of religious scenes and portraits of contemporary Muslim leaders (gambar). The leading publisher, Haji Muhammad Said, advertises that he not only sells books of various kinds but undertakes book binding, and takes orders for
jackets cut in the Turkish style, does copper inlay work, and sells a range of medicines concocted by a friend. In this context, a book is a luxury consumer item.

In his study of the periodical press in Singapore, Roff noted that it was largely in the hands of Jawi Peranakan, that is, acculturated Muslims of Indian extraction. This is not true of the Muslim book press. Jawi Peranakan publishers made a small contribution rather late in the evolution of the press, notably through the Jawi Peranakan Press and the Denodaya Press (which put out Baba as well as Tamil and Malay works). But these are peripheral. Rather, it is publishers of Javanese extraction who dominate. The imperfect evidence we have tells us that more than half the individuals known to be Muslim Malay-language publishers in Singapore were Javanese immigrants or of Javanese ancestry. More specifically they hailed from the Javanese north coast pasir, from the region about Semarang. Others, whose ancestry is not clear, worked closely in cooperation with Javanese publishers. In fact the role of the Javanese is greater than suggested merely by the ethnic background of individual publishers, for the known Javanese publishers also tended to be more prolific. Of the top four publishers, three are Javanese. The foremost of these was a family headed by Haji Muhammad Said b. Haji Muhammad Arsyad of Semarang. Haji Muhammad Said and his sons account for about 200 editions published over a period of 45 years from 1873 to 1918. The second most prolific publisher, Haji Muhammad Siraj b. Haji Muhammad Sulih of Rembang put out about 80 editions over much the same period. Haji Muhammad Taib b. Haji Muhammad Zain of Pati Negara was responsible for 53 editions. Yet at this time about one-fifth of the Singapore Muslim population was Javanese. The Javanese community were exceeded in numbers by the Kling (Tamil Muslims), and by a more stable population of less urbanized Malays. Evidently book publishing was disproportionately the preserve of the Javanese community in Singapore.

Retail sales of books were made directly from the publisher’s premises, which were in some cases substantial bookshops. There are often exhortations at the end of published books inviting readers to come to the publisher’s premises to buy books either already in stock or in the press, promising competitive prices, or clear print and strong covers. Haji Muhammad Said kept about 100 titles in stock in his shop; Haji Muhammad Amin kept closer to 200 titles in stock; the largest Singapore retailer, Haji Muhammad Siraj, advertised 120 titles in a catalogue in 1897-98, but this was far from a complete listing of his stock.

Direct retail sales were also possible through the mails. The use of mail order became more feasible late in the nineteenth century as the reach and variety of postal services between the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States, Johor, and the other unfederated states improved, with the parcel post in 1884, money orders in 1885, and the move to carriage by rail during the 1890s and 1900s. Services between the Straits Settlements and the Netherlands Indies improved in parallel, with the Netherlands Indies post office opening special branches in Penang and Singapore in 1878. As the mails carried the first Malay newspapers, they also carried advertisements by book

sellers, with instructions for ordering by mail. Haji Muhammad Siraj b. Salih developed this marketing technique to its fullest. His regular and extensive advertisements in Jawi Peranakan in the years 1889-91 detail prices, postage costs, and give instructions for ordering by mail. He also advertised these facilities in free book catalogues which were sent on request to any inquirer. The mail-order instructions from the 1897-98 catalogue are informative:

The kiamb, hikayat, syair and newspapers listed in this catalogue may be bought for the prices listed beside each title, paid in cash. Customers abroad wishing to buy these books should forward payment in advance together with the postal charges listed alongside each price. Money from abroad may be sent as bank orders or postal money orders as well as in the form of currency notes. We definitely do not accept stamps as payment for books. Money sent from anywhere in Java, Sumatra or other places using Dutch currency should be converted at the rate of 1.25 Javanese rupees to 1 Singapore dollar. All correspondence and payments should be sent to the address given above. Alternatively, the address in English is: H.M. Sirat, 43 Sultan Road, Singapore.

Publishers also used agents to sell books on their behalf. The extreme case of this system of marketing was developed by the Penang publisher Haji Puith b. Syaihik Abu Basiry. In Bustamam 1895 he listed 17 agents, covering the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, Aceh, the east coast of Sumatra, Singapore, and south-west Kalimantan; two years later in Ganjya Mara 1897 he had 26 agents, extending the net to Bangkok as well. Another Penang publisher had an agent in Colombo. In Singapore it was again Haji Muhammad Siraj b. Salih who has the best developed network of agents, with representatives in Johor, Muar, Malacca, Penang, Delli, Sandakan, Batavia and later also in Taiping and the Kinta. In most cases the agents would have taken orders rather than stocking a range of books.

Among the bookseller’s agents were vernacular school inspectors, the so-called ‘visiting teachers’. These rare individuals bridged the intellectual worlds of the government vernacular school and the Quran school and pondok-pesantren alongside which many government schools had developed. One such dextrous individual was Syaihik Nasir b. Ahmad Bakhodhar of Perak. He was an agent for both Haji Puith in Penang and Haji Muhammad Siraj b. Salih in Singapore. He was highly regarded by the colonial educational authorities, who promoted him to head the Teacher Training College at Taiping, while at the same time he personally arranged the reprinting of Majnuk al-Fawaid 1902†, a compendium of Islamic teachings which might be used in the more advanced Quran schools.

The government provided free vernacular education but pupils were expected to buy their own textbooks. Booksellers like Haji Muhammad Siraj might supply them in lots to teachers for resale to their pupils. However few books prescribed for use in the government curriculum were actually put out by Muslim publishers (in contrast to the good use made in schools of the Muslim newspaper press).
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Mail-order, the appointment of agents, and using the structures of the government school system are the more formal channels of distribution. Alongside them were informal channels, which are by definition harder to describe.

It is evident that the considerable number of printed treatises on Islamic law, books on religious history, and books of elementary religious instruction were bound for use in Muslim places of learning. Yet such kitab are not so avidly advertised as syair and hikayat. Kitab titles are seldom mentioned in the notices inserted in publishers in their books advising readers of titles planned or in stock, which are nearly always mostly syair and hikayat. Similarly, entrepreneurial bookseller Haji Muhammad Siraj b. Salih includes relatively few religious books in his extensive newspaper advertising and none at all in his stocklist of 1897-98, despite the fact that he was contemporaneously publishing Malay kitab. This suggests that kitab publication lay somewhat outside the purely commercial domain. One way in which this may be true is evident in the printed texts through occasional statements acknowledging that costs of publication have been defrayed through individual wakaf. Furthermore, most kitab must have been sold not through formal commercial channels but through contacts in the Islamic teaching networks which were central to the experience of traditional learning. The manner in which books circulated along the lines of these networks is not well attested because of the personal nature of the contacts required. An illustration of what might be involved relates to Muhammad b. Abdullah Suhaïmi. A scholar and teacher, Suhaïmi is known to have published a couple of Arabic treatises in Singapore, which he used to promote the Ghazzaliyyah tarikat. He was a native of Wonsoso near Yogyakarta in Central Java. After a period in Mecca, he took up residence in Singapore where he became a controversial scholar and took charge of the Kampung Bahru mosque. Meanwhile he kept in touch with disciples promoting his teachings in the Wonsoso district, both by letter and through personal visits. To the leader of these disciples Suhaïmi gave a parcel of books to sell. This disciple wrote to Suhaïmi in Singapore to pay his respects after Ramadhan in 1902, remarking fl 25 (about $20) from book sales, and explaining that further books had been sold on credit while others were still unsold. The links between kitab publishing and Islamic educational institutions become more evident in the period of the survey, with the rise of more formally organised madrasah. Some elementary readers and books of religious instruction were published by a foundation in Singapore for subsidised use in madrasah, and upon the opening of the Madrasah al-Iqbal al-Islamiyah in Singapore in 1908, Syahik Salim b. Awad Basharih commissioned two kitab at the Al-Imam Press which were probably included in its curriculum.

A recurring feature of the notices placed by publishers in the colophons of their books is the mention of sales in bulk (berkodi-kodi), for which they offered substantial though unquantified discounts. When considering who the bulk purchasers of books might be, it is worth recalling that Singapore was the focus from which radiated the informal shipping lines of the archipelago. This was the shipping in native hands, with native craft in large numbers bringing their local produce to Singapore for sale and returning with cloth, manufactures and other consumer luxuries — among them books.

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We gain a glimpse of the farther extremity of just one of these lines of regular communication in a note by a Dutch administrator and literature in the Moluccas:

Every year Makers prows call in at Bandas on their way to the Aru islands, bringing a multitude of articles for the native market. Their arrival is awaited with longing, as the natives hope then to be able to make a selection from a stock of kitab, ceritera and syair. In this way I came into possession of the syair of which a Dutch translation follows [viz. Syair Perang Aceh, which was published in Singapore] ... At the end of another lithographed syair I have found an announcement placed by Haji Muhammad Siraj [sic. = Siraj] in Singapore which informs syair aficionados that these can be obtained from him.

No doubt it was through such informal though persistent contacts that many of the books published in Singapore found their way round the coasts of the archipelago.

Such links must have been particularly strong with the pasisir of northern Java, given the family connections of the major Singapore printers and their close involvement with local shipping, for which it will be recalled some were ticket agents. Yet the dynamics of this connection are still little understood. By chance we know that the Leiden University copy of Fatuh al-Arifin 1870 had been bought by a Bencoolen man living in Batavia within a year of its publication in Singapore. We know too that there was an upsurge of Javanese-language publication in Singapore during the 1890s. It was then that Haji Muhammad Siraj published kitab on behalf of clients in Semarang and Surabaya. Although not all Javanese-language material was necessarily destined for Java, the great increase in such material printed must betoken a response to new opportunities or new demands — indeed this rise in Javanese-language publishing in Singapore prefigured a similar burst of activity in Bombay a decade later. But little is known of how Singapore books were distributed in Java. We have seen that in the 1890s Haji Muhammad Siraj enrolled Albrecht & Rusche, leading booksellers in Batavia, as agents — though this was probably mainly for handling newspaper subscriptions. Zwemmer, though not mentioning Singapore imprints specifically, reports that in about 1920:

In all of the larger cities, Batavia, Weltevreden, Bandoeng, Soerabaya, Samarang, Cheribon, Djojakja, Solo, Padang, Palembang, Medan etc., there are Arabic bookshops with a large supply of standard Moslem literature. Some of the bookellers publish extensive catalogues. Some of this [Nauphanda and Shahata] literature we found on sale at railway stations in the hands of book-vendors. At small towns, e.g. Blora, we found Indian book-sellers from Bombay carrying on a brisk trade in lithograph Korans and cheap amulets.

And Drewes recalls:

As recently as the 1920’s and the 1930’s, the only bookshops catering for the indigenous population were run by Arabs, who imported religious literature in Arabic character from Egypt, Bombay, and Singapore.
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PRODUCTION

The activity of the Singapore presses from which these books flowed grew and changed over the survey period. The print industry developed from an embryonic form in the 1860s, in which it essentially undertook a multiplication of the manuscript tradition, to its mature form as a mechanised typographic press blessed with new understanding of the book as a literary commodity.

Experiments, 1860-1880

During the first two decades, the printing enterprise in Singapore was still in a pioneering phase. Indicative symptoms are the lack of concentration of printing in the hands of a few successful commercial printers, and the close relationship of print to the manuscript culture it was replacing.

The major Singapore printers of the period were Haji Muhammad Nuh b. Haji Ismail ah al-Badawi of Juwana (19 items in this period), Haji Muhammad Said b. Haji Muhammad Arsyad of Semarang (12 items), Syaikh Haji Muhammad Ali b. Haji Mustafa of Purbalingga (9 items), Haji Muhammad Salih of Rembang (7 items), Haji Muhammad Tahir (7 Items) and Encik Muhammad Sidin (5 items).

This concerns about half the number of printers known from the period, and two-thirds of the extant works whose printers are known. These proportions indicate that printing was not concentrated in a few hands. Indeed, publishing activity was spread even more widely than these figures suggest because of the significant number of joint publications during this period. Encik Muhammad Sidin and Haji Muhammad Yahya b. Haji Muhammad Salih, for instance, put out several items together. The extreme cases are three works jointly put out by a triparite partnership. Other examples are frequent. Even in those publications put out over the name of a single publisher, there is characteristically a full acknowledgement of those who have contributed to the publication: copyists, owners of the text, owners of the press, printers, sellers. All this is indicative of an industry which has not yet been 'shaken out', and which, except for Haji Muhammad Nuh's contribution, still ran on a rather ad hoc basis. This of course is just what one might expect in the tentative early stage of a pioneer industry, when the potentials of a new technology are being explored but have not been systematically commercialized.

The aim of the printers and scribes who collaborated in early lithographic production was to reproduce the form of the manuscript. This is occasionally evident in the layout of a book which lacks title page or pagination, for instance.

Ken Tabuhan 1868 is one early work which straddles the blurred boundary between lithographic and manuscript. In this work, rubrication was added by hand after the text had been printed. Not only did this reproduce a common manuscript style, but achieved the effect by applying lithographic technique to part of the conventional process of scribal copying, laying down first the body text and returning to insert rubrication later. The debt of early lithography to scribal practice is also evident in the prominent mention which early lithographed books give to their copyists. These copyists turned their manuscript skills to preparing the transfer sheets which are reproduced by lithography. It is notable that

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the two principal copyists of the period were both Terengganu men, namely Husain b. Encik Musa orang Terengganu (10 items in this period) and Yusuf b. Tengku Ibrahim Terengganu (7 Items). A reason for favouring writers from Terengganu was the reputation of the Terengganu manuscript hand, as indeed is indicated by a more insistent mention of their place of origin than is the case with other copyists. The next two most frequently acknowledged copyists are, if not from Terengganu, at least from other Malay states. They are Haji Abdul Samad b. Ahmad of Kelantan (4 items) and Tengku Raden Ali b. Tengku Raden Muhammad (also 4 items). None of the copyists is evidently of Javanese extraction, in strong contrast to the printers.

The picture thus emerges of an infant industry in which Javanese are the entrepreneurs, and in which peninsular Malays provide the skilled labour. This is printing in its experimental stage, still very closely linked to the manuscript tradition.

Expansion, 1880-1900

These characteristics of the industry were to change in the following two decades, which may truly be called the heyday of Muslim publishing in Singapore. During the 1880s the amount of printing increases very greatly, as we have seen, and the earlier rather unstructured printing industry gives way to a more concentrated and consistent endeavour. Most activity now falls into the hands of five principal printers, namely Haji Muhammad Said b. Arsyad, Haji Muhammad Siraj b. Salih, his brother Haji Muhammad Sidik b. Salih, Haji Muhammad Amin b. Abdullah, and Haji Muhammad Taib b. Zain. (See the accompanying Table of Editions.) As a few leading printers become established, the industry becomes somewhat more institutionalised. Printing is now less frequently credited to ad hoc alliances of individuals, and more frequently takes place under business names, such as Matbaah Haji Muhammad Amin. Reflecting both this institutionalisation and a second-generation Singapore population, printers are now less likely to identify themselves with ethnic or geographical epithets. At the same time the typical product of the Singapore printers is becoming less like a manuscript. Cheap paper, of Indian or more probably Japanese origin is substituted for the good quality European paper used in many early lithographs; books are ready bound, again unlike many early lithographs; and less care is taken with the calligraphy, though more expertise is evident in laying out the printed sheets.

The salient features of the Muslim printing of this period can be exemplified by focussing on three active individuals.

Haji Muhammad Said b. Haji Muhammad Arsyad Rembang operated from two shops, one three doors down from the gate of Sultan Mosque, at 51 Sultan Road, another a further four doors down at 47. He was far and away the most prolific publisher during this heyday of Singapore Muslim printing. The long list of multiple editions under his name in the accompanying Table of Editions is indicative.

Said began publishing in 1870, and continued through a long and active lifetime as Singapore's most successful commercial printer. His surviving output from the 1870s is not extensive, but during the 1880s he became a consistent and prolific publisher. As the Table of Editions suggests he concentrated upon popular syair and hikayat. He seems
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<td><strong>Sayid</strong></td>
<td><strong>to have been less concerned with kitab printing than his competitors. This made him the most determinedly commercial of all Singapore printers. Said was first and foremost a press operator. He probably did not himself transcribe any of the books he printed. Early in the 1880s he employed the Terengganu copyist Hasan b. Ishak,253 and later Encik Ibrahim (whose work will be discussed below), Muhammad of Riau,254 and Burhan.255 However, while he may have engaged copyists to prepare his books, Said does seem to have done nearly all his own printing.256</strong></td>
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<td>Haji Muhammad Siraj b. Haji Muhammad Salih Rembang was the son of another of Singapore’s early Javanese printing families. His father Haji Muhammad Salih was a minor printer in the 1870s, as was one of Siraj’s brothers, Yahya. Siraj made a somewhat later start but went on to become the second most prolific of the Singapore printers. His shop and printing premises were located at 43 Sultan Road, a few doors down from Said’s shop. As he tells us at the end of one of the syair he published: Haji Muhammad Siraj namanya diri di Kampung Gelam Singapura negeri mengcang syair demikian peri inilah kerja sehari-hari.258</td>
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| 3. | **In 1891, his successful business employed a staff of ten.259** |
| **His output was only half that of Said, but he eclipses Said in other fields, for Siraj was the great retailer of printed books and the most promiscuous entrepreneur. During the years 1889-1891, Siraj was acting editor of the newspaper Jawi Peranakan and used the opportunity to advertise his bookshop’s wares at length and with maximum prominence. For weeks on end the whole front page of the newspaper was taken up by Siraj’s advertisement. Like other publishers, he also made catalogue broadsheets available free on request. The purpose of the advertisements and catalogues was not just to attract customers to the shop, but also to instigate orders either through the small network of agents which Siraj had developed, or through the mail.** |

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| **Case Study: Siraj’s Printing Business** |
| **Siraj’s forte was the organisation of collaborative enterprises. Perhaps only one third of the extant publications bearing his name are unambiguously his own sole productions. In the majority of cases he was a collaborator, sometimes with copyists,** |

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more often with printers. Siraj made occasional use of the working Singapore copyists, Ibrahim,262 Muhammad Hasan b. Haji Muhammad Jin,263 and Burhan;264 but unlike Said, Siraj was a copyist-editor in his own right. Indeed he is explicitly acknowledged as the copyist of a number of works printed on others’ presses, including several major kitab in Javanese pegon.265 More significant were his collaborations with other printers. Not surprisingly he worked most closely with his brother Sidik. In fact Sidik began work from Siraj’s premises. He went on in 1891 to open a shop next door to Siraj at 42 Sultan Road and began running his own press to which he gave a florid Arabic title.266 Sidik became a second-echelon Muslim printer in his own right, as the Table of Editions shows. The works which Siraj published on Sidik’s press were in the main bulky Javanese kitab.267 His other most frequent collaborator was a near-namesake, Haji Muhammad Siraj b. Haji Yahya, commonly known as Haji Siraj al-Jawa, who printed 11 works for Siraj during 1900-1902 over in Palembang Road.268 Others with whom Siraj collaborated were (in chronological order) Termidi,269 Said,270 Uthman,271 Taib272 and Amin.273 At one time his relation with Taib seems to have been particularly close, as an advertisement for his bookshop was issued over both his own name and that of Taib.274

Siraj was also able to cast his net wider than this cluster of lithographic publishers in Kampung Gelam. If clients desired letterpress printing, he could arrange that. For the Dar Al-Adab Club he contracted with the American Mission Press to print a set of football rules combining letterpress text and lithographed diagrams.275 To supply the school market, he used the Jawi Peranakan-owned Denodaya Press, under Makhmun Sahib, to print a typeset jawi version of the Hikayat Sultan Ibrahim,276 which was used as a school reader. Like Said, Siraj arranged an outlet in Penang. He did so not by seconding a family member there, but through his favoured strategy of collaboration. In 1887 he forged links with the major Penang publisher and bookseller Haji Putih b. Syaikh Abu Basyir. Siraj printed books on behalf of Putih, put out parallel editions for himself and Putih, and used Putih as an agent for his bookselling business.277 He also undertook printing commissions from Malacca.278 In another direction, in 1889, Siraj marketed a few of his books in Batavia through Albrecht & Rusche.279 His contacts reached further into the archipelago, as he arranged the publication of religious works for clients in Semarang, Macassar, Palembang, and Pariaman.280

Unlike Said or Siraj, Encik Ibrahim Riau was not a very significant printer in his own right. He is interesting for other contributions to publishing. His shop lay just beyond the circle of greatest publishing activity in Sultan Road, at 720 North Bridge Road, across from the Istana between Jalan Kubur and Jalan Kledek. The other second-tier printers similarly worked from premises just beyond the Sultan Road precinct. Haji Muhammad Taib’s shop was a few blocks south-west at 31 Kampung Bali Lane, while Haji Muhammad Amin worked from various shops in Bali Lane and then nearer the Sultan Road area at 6 and 7 Baghdad Street.

Ibrahim’s name is linked to 95 editions, of which all but 19 are syair. Ibrahim may have worked as a copyist of manuscripts in Riau before moving to Singapore.281 If so, he continued this trade in Singapore in 1861 by copying two syair for litho-


graphy at the press of Haji Termidi.282 During a brief period 1885 to 1888, Ibrahim operated as a publisher in his own right, printing some 14 editions on his own press.283 However, toward the end of this short period he took on lithographic copying for Said, Siraj and Taib; and from 1889 onward, Ibrahim no longer printed and published independently on his own press. Rather, over the next twenty years, Ibrahim became the leading lithographic copyist in Singapore, working with most of the active lithographic printers of the day. Ibrahim, it seems, assumed the role described by Hurgronej who reported that Singapore printers generally retained ‘a destinate haji or some other person with a good writing hand’ in their service, and had them copy out for lithographic transfer, works of which the printer had a copy and for which he knew there was demand.284 The loss of Ibrahim’s skills upon his death was remembered by Singapore publishers as a considerable setback to their industry.285

Ibrahim’s work with Said was considerable, beginning in 1886 and continuing until he ceased to be active about 1910. He is identified as the copyist of 44 of Said’s lithographed editions.286 In reality he will have worked on more than this, for he sometimes failed to put his name to lithographic copies which we know were his because he is recorded as author/editor in the copyright registration. With Siraj, he did much less, being known to have written up only 7 editions between 1886 and 1901 (— recall that Siraj was himself a lithographic copyist, and undoubtedly worked up most of his own material).287 With other, less prolific printers, Ibrahim did proportionately more work: 12 editions with Taib over six years,288 10 editions with Sidik over three years,289 though only 3 with Amin in a connection which lasted only two years.290 Ibrahim’s involvements from time to time with most of the major publishers confirms the pattern of close collaborative relationships also evident with Siraj’s activities.

The extant evidence simply will not let us untangle the web of transactions which lies behind the production of these books.291 There are sometimes colourful imprecations directed against those who would pirate printed books or even copy them by hand — manuscripts were still being copied, sometimes from printed books — but there is rarely a sense of working copyright. The Table of Editions above shows the same titles recurring in several printers’ lists. Many of these books were cheap syair already in the public domain, in which proprietary rights were of no great moment. Even with more substantial works, new books were recopied from old; editions were jointly produced; and sometimes a single imprint might be issued as two editions. The only recorded formal transaction involving the transfer by sale of intellectual property concerned Miskin Marakarmah, a rare case in which a local Muslim publisher was printing for the Government school market and therefore had more regard for the Western conception of copyright.292 Closer to the norm was collaboration of the kind found in the 1886 editions of Panji Semiram. Two editions of this text appeared within days; a third just less than a year later. The list of persons implicated runs the gamut of major active figures: Haji Muhammad (a minor printer), Ibrahim Riau, Haji Muhammad Said, Haji Muhammad Tahir, Haji Muhammad Siraj and Haji Muhammad Sidik.293 However the producers of such books generally felt no need to publish details of those who had contributed to the various processes of production.
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So, despite the concentration of printing among a small number of publishing houses in the decades 1880-1900, Muslim book publishing remained an informally organised cottage industry, conducted in the main by men living and working in close proximity, many from strikingly similar backgrounds, some of whom were kinsmen. They were colleagues as well as competitors.

Displacements, 1900-1920

The third phase of Malay Muslim printing in Singapore is one of decline and reorientation. This period sees the marginalisation of the cottage industry which had been so productive in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The nature of the changes is partly revealed through the continuing history of the Said family enterprise. In the new century the leading role passed to Said’s sons. As we have seen, a branch office in Penang had been put in the charge of Majahid by 1898. Meanwhile in Singapore the family shop moved to 82 Arab Street (about 1908) and operations largely fell upon the shoulders of the remaining sons: principally Abdullah, with Muhammad, Khalid and Hamzah taking subsidiary roles. Moreover the nature of those operations was changing. Whereas their father had been above all a printer, both Majahid and Abdullah became increasingly occupied with retailing books rather than with producing them. Even when they did publish, their books were much more likely to have been printed outside the family, their role becoming that of coordinating the various phases of the production and marketing of the book. As Siraj was not as active after 1901, Abdullah effectively assumed Siraj’s mantle as a bookseller, though not as a printer. As Siraj had done, so now Abdullah issued free price-lists to interested inquirers. One is known to be extant. It was not printed by Abdullah; he contracted its typographic printing to Matbah al-Ahmadiyah. The Said family’s shift out of manufacture into retailing reflects deep changes in a maturing industry.

Around the turn of the century, the position of Singapore book printers was greatly weakened as the markets of Singapore and its hinterland were invaded by imported books printed in Bombay and Mecca. This was not altogether a new phenomenon. As we noted earlier, the earliest Malay-language publishing in other Muslim lands probably took place in Bombay and possibly Cairo in 1876 and 1880. By 1886 tariqat handbooks printed in Javanese pegon in Cairo were circulating in Java along with their Arabic-language counterparts. The Malay books printed in Mecca from 1884 had reached Singapore by 1887. Singapore’s most active bookseller, Haji Muhammad Siraj, then signalled his entry into the retailing of Middle East imprints by announcing that he had just received a shipment of the first Malay-language books printed in Mecca: ‘kitab printed in Mecca in the Malay language comprising various titles written by Syaikh Daud Putani and Syaiikh Arsyad Banjar which have been issued within the last two years.’ In the same year Siraj issued a flurry of notices that he had for sale books in the Arabic and Javanese languages as well as in Malay, explaining further that these included Meccan, Istanbul and Singapore imprints. In 1894, Snouck Hurgronje commented that...

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... it must not be forgotten that over the last decade the Malays have made brisk use of typographic and lithographic presses in Istanbul, Cairo, Mecca and Bombay, and that countless Malay books printed in those places have gained a far wider distribution in the archipelago than the generally pitifully poor Singapore imprints (with due regard for honourable exceptions like Si Miskin). Just the other day, for instance, I received a chest full of new Malay imprints from the abovementioned places; and in the case of Mecca, they are regularly imported here to Batavia.

It is also from 1894 that we have the first evidence of direct links between Singapore and the prolific presses of Bombay. An edition of Hilal al-Salikin lithographed in that year in Bombay included in its colophon a notice that it was available for purchase from Muhammad Siddik, 182 Arab Street, Singapore. The availability of books from Mecca and beyond led to new demands being placed on Singapore publishers. One response was the reprinting in Singapore of books which had first been printed elsewhere. But the continuing challenge to the Singapore printers was, as Hurgronje implied, the greatly superior quality of the imported books.

It is not, however, until the turn of the century that the full impact of this invasion is evident in the Singapore trade. It was then that direct links opened between Singapore publishers and booksellers and Bombay printers. The first instance of such a connection dates from 1905 when, working from his office at 15 Arab Street, Singapore, Ismail b. Syaiikh Badal began printing Javanese and Sundanese kitab using presses in both Singapore and Bombay concurrently. In Singapore he placed some printing with Muhammad Idris, who himself later published Primbunan Sembukang 1914 in Riau asserting that its place of publication was Singapore, Penang and Bombay. Another Bombay publisher, Alihba Sharafali, printed titles for a Semarang publisher in 1899. They went on to publish Malay language titles on his own behalf, and eventually set up an office in Singapore at 75 Arab Street some time before 1921. Thereafter he published in Singapore while continuing to print in Bombay.

By the second decade of the twentieth century books from Cairo and Bombay were flooding into Southeast Asia. The internationalisation of the Malay book trade was fully evident by 1912 when Haji Muhammad Said’s sons advertised that they stocked books printed in Mecca, Istanbul, Russia, Egypt and Bombay. Of course not all these books were in Malay, or Javanese, but a great many were, and by this time the number of copies of Malay books printed in Bombay alone had far outstripped the local Singapore production. Among the titles printed in India and the Middle East, kitab are particularly well represented. The impact on local printing was such that, from a peak about 1900, kitab publishing in Singapore swiftly fell back to the level of the 1870s, i.e. to about half the peak rate. Moreover, as imprints from Mecca, Cairo, Istanbul, and Bombay were of superior quality, or emanated from the high places of Islam, they were held in greater esteem than the local products. This is evident from the terms in which they were advertised.

The close of this survey sees the Singapore booksellers still operating their own lithographic presses, but with declining vigour. Overbeck, who, alone of contemporary
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scholars, took an interest in the popular Muslim press, records that the industry had fallen into a parlous state by the 1920s. New books were not being published, and booksellers were pessimistic about demand for their product. They informed Overbeck that lithographic book production had become a dead art. \(^{310}\) The cottage industry was dying. But high-quality lithographic publishing continued to thrive. By 1926 two major publishers new to Singapore had put out competing editions of Syair Siti Zubaidah, formerly a mainstay of the cottage lithographers. The new publishers were Sulaiman Mart'e, formerly based in Surabaya, who did his printing in Egypt, \(^{311}\) and Alibhai Sharafali, printing in Bombay. Both had the capacity to supply fine lithographs of the type familiar in Malaysia and Singapore in recent times. These were an immense technical advance over the old Singapore lithographs, the results of a leap in technical competence achieved by sending printing offshore.

Contemporaneous with the internationalisation of the book market was a technological development in Muslim printing in Malaysia-Singapore which was to have far-reaching effects. That was the adoption of typography. There had been typographic publications by Muslim publishers throughout the period of this study but they were rare until the 1890s. \(^{312}\) Early commercial printing had been almost wholly lithographic. As already mentioned, lithography provided an easy transition from the techniques of manuscript copying to printing, and reproduced a familiar graphic form. For kitab in particular, lithography conveniently reproduced interlinear glosses, dependent commentary and the like, using customary devices of text layout and script size to express hierarchies of textual authority. \(^{313}\) Lithography is so redolent of the prestigious old manuscript tradition that copies of the Quran are invariably printed by lithography or similar techniques to this day. But during the 1890s, attitudes began to change. While typeset jawi was still locally the preserve of the newspaper press \(^{314}\) and the schoolroom, typeset kitab began to arrive in numbers from Mecca. \(^{315}\) From about the turn of the century a small but increasing proportion of Singapore Malay books were printed using the letterpress rather than lithography. Apparently, the advantages offered by typography were becoming more widely appreciated, so that by 1915 lithographic printers were feeling the pinch: Haji Muhammad Said had Miskin Marakarmah 1915 printed typographically at the Methodist Mission Press, explaining that while previously the work had always been lithographed, this edition had been produced in cleaner and neater typeset print in response to persistent inquiries from purchasers. \(^{316}\) In the twenty years 1880-1900 one tenth of Muslim-published editions were typeset; for 1900-1920 the proportion rose to one quarter.

The technology of typography had implications for the organization of the industry. The economics of typography and lithography differ significantly. With typography, high overheads resulting from capital costs of equipment and the employment of skilled staff make idle time expensive. Not until the first newspaper was launched was there sufficient regular work to justify a letterpress. Even for the proprietors of this newspaper, Jawi Perankan, operating overheads, including the need to renew costly type fonts, was crippling. \(^{317}\) This restriction was critical in view of the still-limited

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market for Muslim books: compared with the circulation of manuscripts, the output of the early printing presses may have been enormous, but it was not enough to keep even one press fully occupied, much less the several which produced lithographic printing. The shift into typography therefore implies a change of scale which takes printing beyond a cottage industry on the small plan of the lithographers. The new typographic presses were government run (and therefore immune from capital constraints) \(^{318}\) or associated with the production of newspapers or magazines (in which rapid mass production may cover overheads). \(^{319}\) Their status as formal business enterprises, rather than personally-conducted cottage industries, is symptomatically revealed in the names of the new presses, which are invariably impersonal: Matbaah al-Ikhwan, Matbaah al-Utrah, etc. Further, the new capital-intensive technology induced functional specialization. Press operators were no longer major book retailers. \(^{320}\)

The publishers who had led in lithography did not altogether spurn the new technology, but the occasions on which they used it were rare. Said, Amin, and Idris published a mere handful of typeset books. \(^{321}\) On the other hand there was no reluctance by the new presses to rely on the old lithographers, who were the largest established retailers, as wholesale and retail agents. We find Siraj specified as an agent for the sale of publications by the Johor and Riau government presses and the Denodaya Press run by the Jawi Perankan, Mahkduhm Sahib b. Ghulam Mahyiddin Sahib. \(^{322}\)

The changes of technology, organisation, and a broadening conception of the market during this period are perhaps encapsulated in the example of the Matbaah al-Islam. Matbaah al-Islam was a typographic press which operated, as a firm, with support from the Riau government. It situated itself in the international market a little vaingloriously, as ‘the biggest Muslim press in Southeast Asia’. \(^{323}\)

Penang & beyond

Beyond Singapore, Muslim publishing began later and was less prolific. As more diffuse regional communications and the economic development of the hinterland reduced the primacy of Singapore as the central node of peninsular communications networks, Penang emerged as a subsidiary centre. Penang had as its hinterland the western Malay states and the east coast of Sumatra, which prospered as tin mines and plantations were opened up at the turn of the century. Among books published in Penang before 1920 were one commissioned from Perak, \(^{324}\) and another from west Sumatra. \(^{325}\)

Muslim printing in Penang is less well attested than in Singapore. Even so it certainly never approached the same quantity. Only one work is known to have been printed before the 1880s, on a still unidentified press. \(^{326}\) It was not until the 1890s that local printing was well under way, only to decline sharply again in the 1910s. Even at its peak during 1880-1910, Penang’s output is quite low. For this period, the number of editions is only 32, one-twentieth the number published by Muslim printers in Singapore in the same period. The number of active publishers is correspondingly small. Indeed fully half of these 32 editions were published or co-published by one leading Penang bookseller, Haji Putih b. Syaikh Abu Basyir, a Jawi Pekan of northern Indian extraction.
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We have earlier seen that during the high tide of Penang publishing, the two major publishers of Singapore established retail outlets in Penang: Said by opening a branch of the family shop about 1892, which was later run by his son Majahid; and Siraj by entering a loose arrangement with Haji Puth. Like their Singapore counterparts, Puth and Majahid operated from premises near the Malay Mosque, in the adjacent Acheen and Armenian Streets. While Majahid confined his activities mainly to bookselling, Puth was a great innovator who contributed in several capacities: as translator, editor, and publisher, as well as retailer. Puth made two prose translations from Hindi (Ganja Mara 1886, 1897; Bustaman 1895, 1900) which he had lithographed at three Penang printeries, the Muhammadiah Press, Freeman Press, and Kim Seck Hean Press. In addition, he published jointly with Siraj a Malay verse version of another popular Hindi theatrical piece (Indera Bebra 1889, 1896), this work being printed in Singapore. Haji Puth also commissioned new editions of other titles already available in Singapore from Siraj.

Despite the close connections of Majahid and Puth with Singapore, the organisation of Penang publishing and printing differed from that prevailing in contemporary Singapore. In Penang there was a sharp transition from nineteenth century lithography to twentieth century typography. With the exception of a couple of works printed by the Penang and Straits Printing Co., all nineteenth century Muslim publishing was lithographed, including newspapers. In 1900 the Criterion Press brought out the first newspaper in typeset Jawi. Thereafter only typeset books are known to have been published for the remainder of the survey period. The rapidity and completeness of this change result from the absence of vertically-integrated printer-bookellers in Penang. Unlike Singapore, where the lithographers carried on after typography had become a feasible alternative, in Penang publishing and printing had always been separate functions. One lithographic press, the Muhammadiah Press (later Freeman Press) was in Muslim hands, but it neither published nor reprinted books in its own right. In fact, most of Penang’s Muslim books were printed on Chinese-run presses. The Kim Seck Hean Press put out a lithographed Jawi newspaper, produced fine lithographed texts for Wilkinson to use in schools, and reprinted a title for the Penang bookseller Haji Puth which had earlier been printed at the Freeman Press. When Jawi typography became accessible, publishers had no vested interest in the old technology: their choice was between one Chinese-owned lithographic press and another Chinese-owned letterpress which could do the job as well and almost as cheaply.

The lack of vertical integration in early Penang publishing also explains why its publications bear some of the same characteristics as their Singapore counterparts of twenty-five years previously. Akidat al-Munajzin 1893, for instance, is depicted as a collaborative effort involving separate credits to all who contributed: printer, commissioner, censor, typesetter, and owner of the text. As with the early Singapore kitab publications, it was apparently conceived as an ad hoc collaborative work of high moral value. Also like the early phase of Singapore Muslim publishing, Penang publishing concentrated on the printing of religious manuals and tracts. Most of the works which did not emanate from Haji Puth fall into this category, amounting to about half of all Penang publications for the period.

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As literacy spread and communications became more diffuse in the twentieth century, a multiplicity of smaller centres of publication emerged in the peninsular Malay States. The Penang model was replicated again and again on a smaller scale. The early concentration on books of religious teaching was repeated. Similarly too, the functions of publishing and printing were separate, with printing often undertaken at Chinese-owned printeries. The single important exception to this arrangement was the quasi-governmental press of the Majlis Ugama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Kelantan.

The situation in Penang and on the Peninsula confirms the peculiarity of Singapore, which alone had a sufficiently large market for Muslim books early enough to give the opportunity for Javanese entrepreneurs to establish a few viable Muslim printing houses while appropriate technology was still simple and affordable, and before competition from general commercial printeries and large overseas printers made such a venture foolhardy.

THE PRINT THRESHOLD

The immensity of the increase in the raw materials of literacy during the nineteenth century is hard to comprehend. In the early nineteenth century manuscripts were expensive and hard to come by; by the end of the century, books were cheap and actively marketed. Print allowed an explosion in available written material. Estimates of the number of literary Malay manuscripts extant in identified collections range around 4,000 to 5,000; it has been further speculated that all told, including manuscripts in private hands, there may be 10,000 Malay literary manuscripts extant. Even if these figures are considerably awry, it hardly matters when we put them beside the output of the press. In 1890, the first year for which we have orderly data for output of printed works, one Muslim printer registered ten titles for copyright. In all, these ten registered titles accounted for 10,000 printed books. In other words, the number of books produced by one Singapore printer in one year equaled the estimated number of all the surviving literary manuscripts copied over four centuries. And this is for the registered titles of but one printer; it takes no account of the registered titles of other printers, nor of the fifty or so titles known to have been published by Muslim printers that year but not registered. Including these titles, we are looking at the production of over 50,000 books for the year. In other words, during 1890, the estimated number of surviving literary manuscripts was equalled in book production by Singapore printers every two weeks. And this still ignores all Malay books printed elsewhere; and ignores newspapers.
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Figure 4
Malay-language printing, Singapore-Malaysia
(millions of pages annually)\textsuperscript{335}

This chart plots trends in the annual publishing output of books and newspapers in Malay measured in millions of pages. The categories of publications are (1) all Malay-language books, including mission and Baba publications; (2) books which might be read by a Muslim audience, i.e. books published by Muslim publishers plus school-books published by government and missions; (3) newspapers.

This sudden and immense acceleration of the production of literary material cannot be correlated in any reasonable way with an increase in literacy. The history of literacy in the region in the nineteenth century is largely undocumented.\textsuperscript{336} Conditions of increasing urbanisation, new commercial opportunities, and the deeper penetration of the cash economy into the urban hinterland during the latter part of the nineteenth are all congenial to the advance of literacy. Yet even in the early decades of the twentieth century the effects of government-sponsored mass-literacy are only beginning to be felt, and still tend to be an urban phenomenon. In his study on The Origins of Malay Nationalism, Roff asserts that the nineteenth century audience for newspapers was "the small elite group of literate Jawi Peranakan, Arabs, and Malays in the towns and some of the Malay-speaking Straits Chinese."\textsuperscript{337} Although the audience must have been wider for printed books, which were a cheaper and less radically innovative medium, Roff's assessment cannot be far off the mark.

Given that the great upsurge in commercial book production during the 1880s and 1890s was not accompanied by a commensurate rise in literacy rates, then other factors were also in play. Part of the likely explanation for the phenomenon is that even at the low levels of literacy obtaining in the nineteenth century, there was an unfulfilled capacity for the consumption of literary material. This unfulfilled capacity stemmed in part from the costliness of books produced by manuscript copying. Printing reduced the cost of physical reproduction to about one-tenth of what it had been.\textsuperscript{338} But no less important than cost was access. Manuscript literature was not in an established market, and, being relatively scarce, manuscripts were not easy to locate. Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir's description of his encounter with manuscripts in Kelantan in the 1830s is indicative:

I met Inche Ha, the Raja Bendahara's man, and asked him to try to get the Story of Gemala Bahrain for me. He said that he had a bundle of Malay manuscripts put away, belonging to a relative; he would see what was in the bundle and bring it to me, so that I could choose. I offered to go to his house to inspect the manuscripts, as I was in a hurry to sail, but he said there was no need; he would bring them to me. Then he went home, and later came with a basket wrapped in cloth. I opened it and found manuscripts on the subject of religion and prayer. And there were two chapters of the Story of Isma Dewa Pekemra Raja, very well composed; ... And there was one book called Khoja Malim. I borrowed the books from Inche Ha; I asked him to let me take them to Singapore for copying, after which I would return them with a suitable present. Meanwhile I gave him a fine handkerchief of Indian cotton, worth 4 ruppes. He was delighted and told me that after copying what I wanted I could send the manuscripts back by Inche Buntal.\textsuperscript{339}

Several points are instructive here. Abdullah failed to find the particular text he had in mind; indeed his expectations do not seem to have been very high. This is not very surprising given that his strategy to locate the text had to rely on the very limited social connections at his disposal, specifically his acquaintance with one of the Raja Bendahara's henchman who had earlier been assigned to protect their party. Further, Abdullah's eagerness to copy odds and ends from the basket of old manuscripts to which he did gain access there in distant Kelantan says much about the general availability of texts in the environs of Singapore.\textsuperscript{340} The arrangements for the procurement, borrowing and return of these miscellaneous manuscripts were negotiated ad hoc and further relied on a series of personal relationships: the Raja Bendahara under whose protection Abdullah's party visited Kelantan, his henchman Encik Ha, Encik Ha's relative who owned the manuscripts, and another acquaintance Encik Buntal who would return them. Manuscript reproduction is shown by this example to be time-consuming not simply because each copy had to be made by a separate process of scribal copying, but also because procurement of the text could also prove taxing. Printed books, by contrast, were market commodities, stocked and promoted for sale. Once printed and sold, copies circulate in relative abundance. A visit to a bookshop, or to a market stall, or an order from a publisher's catalogue offered a much greater chance of success in obtaining a desired title, and a much more straightforward way of obtaining a wide range of reading material. Manuscripts were later sold incidentally by book sellers,\textsuperscript{341} but the very existence of the bookshop (and indeed the notion of a market in books) was a by-product of the copious and continuous supply of material which printing provided. Printing thus had the twin effects of substantially reducing the price of written material and simultaneously removing impediments of access. The results demonstrated how dramatically elastic the demand for literary material was.

The upsurge in consumption of literary material is thus an aspect of the transformation of text into commodity. Traditionally access to manuscript material had been governed by cultivated social relations, not the promiscuous transactions of the
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market-place. Manuscripts of religious texts were copied in the pondok-pesantren under a teacher’s eye, and duly authorised. Access to other manuscript texts had been guarded for reasons of prestige by courtiers or for reasons of livelihood by professional reciters. Even owners of manuscripts of recreational literature which brought no remuneration or social cachet might be reluctant to lend. Furthermore literary transactions, being conceived as social in nature, were not properly conducted as commercial transactions. The owner of a borrowed manuscript would not expect to be repaid in money. As we just saw, Abdullah b. Abdul Kadir recompensed the owner of the manuscript he borrowed with a gift, not in money. And when the copying was done, he planned to return the manuscripts with a further gift. But while Abdullah accepted the convention that a social transaction was involved here, and a gift was the fitting way to return the favour granted by the owner of a manuscript, in his own mind he tended to translate the dealings into commercial terms (as he did with much else), quantifying the cash value of the gift. The reluctance of some manuscript owners to lend stems from the same conflict of values. On the one hand recognising the compelling force of social obligation to lend, they feared that their valuable property would be damaged or simply not returned. Only if the manuscript was lost, could they legitimately claim monetary compensation. The deeper intrusion of the commercial values of the urban market-place into manuscript transactions is evident in the commercial manuscript lending libraries of the early nineteenth century, with set fees calculated by the night. Printing ultimately undid these social bonds. It undermined the professional reciter’s oligopoly or the ruling house’s monopoly, and began to release the private owner of a text from entanglement in what had come to be seen as fraught social relations. As publishers of the new printed syair asked, why risk ill-feeling by lending or borrowing when a syair can be bought for a few cents?

With the advent of commercial printing, the flood of available printed matter began to sweep literature from its social moorings. If hitherto the scarcity of written literature and the conditions of its manuscript transmission had embedded texts in social relationships, the new technology of multiple reproduction released these ties by placing copies of the text in the market-place and the school-house. It was futile to struggle against this intrinsic quality of the new technology. Once a text had been reproduced in several hundred copies, or even one hundred copies, its erstwhile custodians could no longer feasibly regulate access to it. The ambivalence of the custodians of tradition to the new technology is nicely captured in a Riau court publication, *Perjalanan Sultan Lingga 1894*, a journal of royal peregrinations, including photographs of the royal party, was committed to print to achieve maximum publicity: di dalam matbaah dimasukkan dia supaya berhamburan seluruh dunia

Yet the Riau court also vainly attempted to keep control of the text by forbidding its reproduction on any other press, avowing that to do so would be a sin and lèse-majesté (dosa . . . derhaka). The reality was that once in print a text was readily accessible to any individual who had a small cash sum. Books were advertised and sold alongside patent medicines and bolts of cloth. Texts of the devotional exercises of the religious brotherhoods were published as pamphlets. Histories of Malay ruling houses, Hikayat Marong Mahawangsa, Sejarah Melayu, and Misa Melayu were put into the hands of common schoolboys by Christian missionaries and the colonial Education Department. Klinkert observed how the Sejarah Melayu, which had formerly been kept in the Riau palace wrapped in golden silk and read on ceremonial occasions to the accompaniment of cannon salutes, had been transformed by print into a school text used in the government Malay schools in nearby Singapore. The *Tuhfat al-Nafs* was saved from this fate, for its text was still within the control of the Riau ruling house. Of widest impact was the more subtle process of bringing popular recreational texts more often before the eyes of listeners. These great changes were tantamount to bringing the into being of a new literature by the printing press.

This new literature was not only created by transforming old texts; new texts were also created especially for print. The diversity of literary material available was enhanced by the printing of Baba and Mission material, both unknown before the advent of print, and by translations from Hindi, English and Arabic. The translation of literary and religious works into Malay has a venerable history, but its pace now accelerated and the results were given more immediate and wider distribution. Due to differences in dialect, script and interest, not all varieties of literary material reached all Malay-reading audiences — in this regard literature contrasts strongly with the developing commercial theatre which spanned linguistic and cultural barriers much more effectively. But the mere consciousness that print-literature was so diverse was itself significant, for it further detached the generalised phenomenon of printed literature from particular social contexts of the kind which inevitably envelop a manuscript or a performance.

(Once texts had become commodities, removed from the particularities of their social context, it became possible for the first time to think of literature as an abstract category comparable to our modern understanding of the term. The first implicit statement of the new concept was the bookseller’s catalogue. Explicit statements, in the guise of literary criticism and literary history, would follow much later. A term for this new concept would be invented when, in Sweeney’s words, “the term ‘sastra’ was semantically ‘refilled’ to accommodate the Western concept of ‘Literature’.”)

Needless to say, this technologically-induced transformation of literature was an uneven process. It applied in a society marked by very uneven distribution of literate skills, and operated through several means of reproduction in print. Indeed an interesting insight into the progress of change can be gained by comparing the application of the two print technologies of lithography and typography. We have noted that lithography was at first favoured by commercial printers for its continuities with manuscript reproduction, both in graphic form and as an industrial process. Typography on the other hand was associated with innovation in communications media, particularly in the form of the newspaper, and with a greater leap into commodity manufacturing. It had the smack of modernity about it. In a revealing foreword to his polite letter-writer Pelita Menyurat 1913, Muhammad b. Muhammad Ali Sambas remarks that he decided against litho-
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graphy and in favour of typography for his book because Muslims deserved the best, and in this modern age typography was more in tune with the new ways of thinking. It is no surprise, then, to find that innovation in literary forms should be better represented in the repertoire and style of typographically-printed books.

Typographic works characteristically had contemporary reference and were authored by contemporary writers. In the period of the survey, the repertoire of Muslim typographic presses was dominated by two classes of texts which figure less prominently in the lithographer’s lists. One class comprises moral admonition; the other comprises reportage and semi-contemporary history. The former have a contemporary reference in being at least implicitly addressed to current religious neglect. It is in the field of history, though, that the contemporary orientation of typography is most clearly evident. Historical subjects were also important to the lithographed tradition, but they are history of a particular kind. Lithographed histories are the traditional histories of early Islam like the great story of Muhammad Hangatiah, and are set in the historical-cum-legendary Middle East of early Islam, or are adventure romances like Abdul Malik unanchored in time and loosely located in place. In lithography, locally situated histories are almost wholly ignored and recent events scantily reported.

Typography, by contrast, thrives on the recent history of local events (e.g. Pangeran Kahar 1867, Johor 1911) or world events (e.g. Napoleon I 1888, Matanati Menamcan 1906). Maier noticed these two kinds of history when he dealt with the contrast between the old story of Kedah, Marong Mahawangsa 1898, which remained close to the manuscript tradition and conveyed a legendary antiquity, and Salastah Kedah 1911, which offered a consciously new history of Kedah “with dates and with many a story about British Glory.” Marong Mahawangsa 1898 was lithographed (though not by a Muslim publisher: its local subject matter did not interest any commercial lithographer, but rather a European school inspector). The new Salastah Kedah 1911 was printed typographically. In general the move from lithography to typography signals a marked transformation of consciousness: a shift from a timeless past without location to a far more specific sense of time and place. Further, this shift can be related to the influence of another use of typographic print. Both the leading classes of new typographic literature — the moral admonitions and the narratives of recent history — show an affinity with the periodical press in its functions as a mirror of the times, commentator on contemporary mores, and a reporter of the passage of contemporary events.

Another principal mark of the new literature is that the author began to achieve prominence as a named individual. This was to some extent simply a by-product of the importance of moralising works in the typographic repertoire. Traditionally the author’s name had been highlighted only in the case of kitab, for the reason that the authority of a kitab text rests upon the standing of the teacher. The sense that a book of religious teaching must be attributed to authoritative figures is ironically evident from the apologetic nature of the attribution in Masa’il al-Mahati: “written by scholars of yore whose names have not been passed down.” Contemporary popular works of moral exhortation relied less upon the author’s authority to establish their credibility. In other genres, identification of the author seems to be a way of signalling the novelty of a recent creation.

This is no doubt one reason why translator’s names are featured in the book versions of the latest Hindi stage-shows. Identifying authorship also becomes a way of locating the register of the work in the widening landscape of printed literature. Thus, to an extent, the prominence of authors in the new typographic literature flowed from the kinds of works which predominated in type. Yet it was more than this. Again it is the histories which furnish the clearest evidence of a change in attitude toward authorship. All but one of the works of history and semi-contemporary reportage published in typography were by named contemporary authors, while all but two of the comparable lithographed works were anonymous. In fact the association of typography and named authors was so strong that the only significant group of typographic texts which were anonymous was government publications. (Government publications, though, convey a powerful implicit authoritative authorship.) The means used to establish the presence of the author were indication of the author’s name on the title page, or inclusion of an author’s preface, or more elaborate devices. The most recent Islamic work included in this survey, Siraj al-Anam 1921, forcefully established its translator’s presence by opening with his portrait photograph.

An equally elaborate expression of the author’s authoritative contemporary presence is found in the Salastah Kedah 1911, in which the author not only named himself on the title page in such a way as to establish his credentials as a Kedah courtier, but further indicated the page number within the book upon which he appeared as a participant in the events described.

Interestingly, both the latter devices for author promotion assume individual reading: the former implies visual consumption; the latter implies either non-sequential reading or sequential reading with a concurrent awareness of the non-textual structure of the book (specifically the page numbers). We have seen already that print allowed reading to be taught in European schools as a process of the private decoding of text. An effect of private reading was to markedly depersonalise the literary transaction. In days when oral and manuscript literary consumption prevailed, the heart of the literary experience lay in the exchange between reciter and listeners. The reading of print by an individual was no longer a social transaction but an interior mental process. The reader’s immediate relationship was now with a text. Moreover, as if to emphasise the social deprivation brought by private reading, typography sterilised even the graphic form of the text. It made the form of the text mechanical, and its manufacture an industrial process — recall here the impersonal names adopted by typographic presses. The rise of the author might be understood as a counterweight to this development, a means of retaining a personal exchange, albeit now an imagined exchange, as the vehicle for literary communication. The pains taken to establish the presence of the author of the text are symptoms of this adjustment. The demise of the reciter had parallels in other uses of texts. Analogous changes occurred as the teacher tended to lose ground before the author of the text, or indeed the text itself.

The prevalence of individual reading also has implications for style. When the primary act of reception was the hearing of a text, styles of expression which worked well for the ear flourished. We have noted the advantages of the syair as a genre for
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performance, and the consequent popularity of this genre among audiences still used to hearing rather than seeing texts. Print ushered in the syair mania of the late nineteenth century, but "while seeming initially to strengthen the old, was gradually undermining it."378 As the text becomes more often something seen, so the forms of expression better adapted to this mode of reception gain ground.379 The very qualities which made verse an effective aural medium became weaknesses: its low density of information, its reliance on the conventional, and its syntactic amorphousness. The measured conventional prose of the classical hikayat shares these qualities to a lesser degree, for the same reason of aural effectiveness. These qualities are less marked in the unmeasured prose style pioneered by Abdullah b. Abdul Kadir, promoted through schools, and made familiar through the newspaper press. The virtues of this new style are not aural; rather, aided by new conventions of punctuation, they make for more efficient visual reception.380 In the upshot, it is no surprise to find that verse is strongly represented in lithography, while prose gains ground in typography. For the period of this survey just over one-half of all the editions put out by Muslim lithographers were in verse, while for typographers the proportion of verse is just less than one-quarter.

An understanding of these developments shows how misleading the notion of "transitional" Malay literature can be when it attempts to draw a single line from classical to modern prose. The idea that there is a "transitional" Malay literature, in which Abdullah b. Abdul Kadir figures prominently, and which bridges the stylistic gulf between classical and modern prose can be seen as a vast simplification of the cross-currents and turbulence surrounding the arrival of print.381 Rather it is now clear that the rise to prominence of the author, the interest in contemporary reportage, and preference for prose are all linked to a complex of changes, at the heart of which lies print, and specifically typography.382 Together they supply the preconditions for the emergence of modern 'creative' prose fiction in the 1920s.383

In the period of this survey there is an almost complete disassociation of the repertoire of books produced by the two methods of lithography and typography. Despite the relatively late adoption of typography, only 11 of the 85 Singapore Muslim publications produced by typography had previously been lithographed.384 The dichotomy is captured in a pair of publisher's notices. One inserted in the anonymous lithographed traditional romance Pegan Madi 1903 asked for old manuscripts which had not yet been put into print; the other inserted in the newly translated typeset Siraj al-Anam 1927 offered to buy new original manuscripts.385 Though their chronology should not be ignored, these notices are separated by more than just time.

The emergence of parallel print technologies with distinctive output, and very different demands for capitalisation and industrial organisation, coincided with and reinforced a divergence in the uses of literacy. Lithography was not rapidly displaced by typography and the new prose. Looking at recreational literature, Overbeck's view in 1934 was that "Malay prose fiction has hardly entered Malay life."386 Despite the collapse of the local lithographic press, lithography continued to flourish in more sophisticated forms, though its repertoire did not develop, remaining frozen in the religious and popular literature of the nineteenth century. The two print technologies can be related to a cultural dualism which emerged as a product of uneven progress from aural consumption of manuscript literature to a mature print culture. This dualism has other dimensions, like urbanisation, education, literacy rates, and reading practices.387 It seems to mirror differences between 'Kuam Tua' and 'Kuam Muda', conservatives and reformers.388 In Rolf's formulation:

the terms 'Kuam Muda' and 'Kuam Tua' came to refer to unanalyzed social conflict of considerable complexity. To be 'Kuam Muda' was to espouse modernism ... ; to be 'Kuam Tua' was to be in favour of all that was familiar, unchanging, and secure.389

The traditional-minded remained true to the manuscript-in-print, to the old works lithographed. The innovators, those who learned to read in government schools or madrasahs, who read newspapers, turned increasingly to the new literature in typography.390

It was through the medium of the new madrasah therefore, and indirectly by their publication of newspapers and other literature used in these schools, that the Kuam Muda made most of its impact on Malay society.391

Figure 5
The New Reading
(millions of pages annually)392

Figure 5 is drawn from the perspective of Muslim Malay readers, plotting only material printed in the Jawi script. It provides a perspective on the rise of the new styles of reading associated with schoolbooks and newspapers, suggesting the increasingly rapid pace of change in the twentieth century.
INTRODUCTION

figures, probably some 800,000 adults in Dutch territories were literate in Malay by 1920, compared with 175,000 in British territories.\textsuperscript{396} In very broad terms the developments in the Netherlands Indies were comparable with those taking place in Malaysia-Singapore. The availability of the same printing and transport technologies, a comparable monetisation of the economy, and the stimulus of exposure to a European presence were all common factors. However we have observed in the Singapore-Malaysia case how the available technologies were applied selectively by various classes of Malay language users with differing cultural allegiances, and indeed served to some extent to delineate cultural interest-groups. The interactions between printing technology and cultural politics had rather different outcomes in the Netherlands Indies.

The outstanding feature distinguishing developments in the Netherlands Indies from those in the Straits Settlements has already been alluded to; that is, the early emergence of a printed literature in Romanised Malay. Translations of European novels appeared from 1875.\textsuperscript{397} Even more striking is the very early appearance of newspapers in Romanised Malay, the first being published in 1856.\textsuperscript{398} These first ventures were the initiative of Dutch and Eurasian authors, translators and printers. From the 1880s the Peranakan Chinese of Java also became major contributors.\textsuperscript{399} This pattern of development can be related to the social and political context in which the new printing occurred. Liked the Straits Settlements, urban Java represented a plural society in which the Malay language functioned as a communicative bridge. However, there were significant differences, which centre upon the different contributions of the comprador classes in each case. A major factor in the substantial presence of Malay-speaking Eurasians and Chinese was the Dutch administration’s long-standing practice of utilising ‘low’ Malay in the Roman script as a language of administration.\textsuperscript{400} In the field of publications, this emphasis is evident in the considerable number of translations of regulations, notices, government service manuals and the like into Malay, and it doubts accounts for the early appearance of newspapers in the Roman script. The upshot was that the first Malay-language newspaper, \textit{Soerat Kabar Bahasa Melajue}, thought Roman script the appropriate medium in which to convey commercial intelligence to an audience of Chinese, Arab, Malay, and Indian traders on the north coast of east Java.\textsuperscript{401} We have noted that the British government in the Straits Settlements made little use of Malay in either Roman or Jawi script. In short, during the nineteenth century there was a convergence of interests in the Netherlands Indies between mission, government, and Eurasian and Peranakan compradors in the development of a new literature in Romanised Malay — or as it was known, Malay in Dutch script.\textsuperscript{402} The contrast between these developments in urban Java and those in the Straits Settlements are most evident when we compare Malay-language publications by the Chinese in both places. In Java, the Chinese Peranakan were much more numerous (in absolute terms rather than as a proportion of the population) than their counterparts in the Straits Settlements. One straightforward consequence is that the struggling Baba literature of Singapore is matched by a vastly greater literature in Java, so ably documented by Salmon’s \textit{study of Literature in Malay by the Chinese of Indonesia}. The influence of the comprador communities was not, however, a function of size alone, but
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also their degree of assimilation; and this in turn was strongly conditioned by the standing of Peranakan and Baba communities both in relation to the local culture, and in relation to non-Peranakan Chinese.\textsuperscript{403} On the first count, the fact that most Chinese Peranakan and Eurasians were not Muslims was less a barrier to cultural integration in Java than in more uniformly Muslim areas elsewhere in the archipelago. On the second, the Peranakan Malay-speakers were a well-to-do majority of Chinese in Java, with an attendant self-confidence in cultural definition, while in the Straits Settlements, as in the rest of the Netherlands Indies, Malay-speaking Babas became a culturally defensive minority vis-à-vis the majority of Chinese-speaking recent arrivals \textit{(sinkeh, totek)}.\textsuperscript{404}

The different situations are reflected in the far wider diversity of subjects upon which literature by Javanese Peranakan touched. Salmon has demonstrated that it comprised an eclectic melange of translations from Chinese traditional, didactic, popular and contemporary works, of syair, and by the turn of the century, a few original prose works. In the Straits Settlements, as we have seen, the limited Baba publishing effort was single-mindedly directed to resuscitating a Chinese heritage through translations of Chinese historical romances. In Java, Chinese Peranakan publications contributed to a burgeoning indigenous Roman-script literature which addressed a multi-racial audience. By contrast, in the Straits Settlements, the boundaries circumscribing Baba culture were less permeable. The Baba translations of Chinese historical romances were virtually the only commercially published Roman-script books, and were closed to non-Chinese Muslim readers of Malay, still walled to the Jawi script.

In form and content, the Roman-script literature of the Netherlands Indies represented a radical break with manuscript literacy. Aside from a small number of older works transliterated into Roman script, the major categories of Romanised literature were new to Malay — translations, original contemporary compositions, and the newspaper press.\textsuperscript{405} It is in this literature that recent scholarship has identified the 'ancestors' of modern Indonesian literature.\textsuperscript{406} On the other hand Baba publishing in the British-administered areas never attained much bulk or variety and exercised no lasting impact on the broader development of Malay print literacy. Rather, it is the typographically printed Jawi books and newspapers of Singapore and Malaysia which can be considered the antecedents of modern Malaysian literature, in a more subtle modulation of forms.

The notion that something is an antecedent, however, implies that it has a latent quality not yet fully realised. To pursue too keenly the nineteenth century antecedents of late twenty-century national literatures is to run the risk of reading back into the past conditions and categories which obscure the realities of the time. In fact this highlights an ambiguity in nineteenth century developments. How much weight should be given to the division created by separate colonial administrations? It is undeniable that on both sides of the Straits of Malacca, colonial government policy exercised leverage on the cultural development of the plural societies over which they ruled, both through the school system and through the mutual co-option of administration and comprador classes. We have already noted the coincidence in time of the Straits government's first commitment to vernacular schooling and the British forward movement marked by the

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Pungkor Engagement. Similarly Dutch interest in the promotion of Malay in the Roman script bears comparison with other strategies designed to gain control of communications and transport in the archipelago, notably in the area of shipping.\textsuperscript{407} It was the institution of widespread vernacular schooling early in the twentieth century that gave this leverage real purchase in both British and Dutch territories. The establishment of vernacular government school systems required and invited strategic decisions on cultural policy. In the British territories, as we have seen, the government promoted reading matter which was new both in style and in content, which bolstered European prestige and the feudal order, and acted as an antidote to the Muslim commercial press. In the Netherlands Indies the alternatives were more stark. The expansion of government schooling meant that urban Java increasingly set the agenda. In the mid-nineteenth century the sparse government and mission schooling offered in the Outer Islands, conducted in Malay, used both Arabic and Roman script in Muslim areas, and Roman script in Christian areas, but already by the latter part of the century, the weight of Batavia was firmly behind the Roman script.\textsuperscript{408} By the time of the great expansion of second class vernacular schools in the early twentieth century, the presumption of the Batavia-based administration was that Malay would be written in the Roman script.\textsuperscript{409} Through the vastly expanded school system and through a vigorous program of literary publication, the government entrenched the Roman script as the vehicle for the new Malay writings of the colonial power and those who lived in its shadow. The conscious exercise of policy in the twentieth century thus put the seal on a development which stretched back to the alliance of Dutch, Eurasian and Peranakan interests around the middle of the nineteenth century.

Yet, as in the Straits Settlements and Malay States, so in the Netherlands Indies, the influence of the colonial administration, its cultural agents and its collaborators was not evenly felt. Least affected, or most resistant, were indigenous Muslims, assigned to the native class and thus legally denied the role of comprador, who valued the pilgrimage to Mecca above homage to Batavia.\textsuperscript{410} Some among them saw use of the Roman script by the Batavia-led media as emblematic of its subservience to the interests of the colonial authority.\textsuperscript{411} These were the heirs of the Muslim manuscript tradition, whose education was gained in the pondok-pesantren, readers of \textit{Syair Abdul Muluk}, \textit{Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiah} and \textit{Kitab Maulud}, who, like their brethren across the Straits of Malacca, remained faithful to the lithographic extension of the old tradition. As little printing of this nature was undertaken in the Netherlands Indies during the nineteenth century, here lay a major market for the Singapore lithographers (and subsequently for their twentieth-century successors in Bombay and Cairo).\textsuperscript{412} It is easy to fall in with the perspective imposed by colonial administrative boundaries, which were to harden into national boundaries, and to view Singapore in the nineteenth century as an offshore printing location supplying a specialised traditional market in Java and the Outer Islands of the Netherlands Indies. But this does scant justice to nineteenth century realities, especially when we recall that the principal lithographers in Singapore were of Javanese extraction.

For nineteenth publishing, then, it makes most sense to see two major concurrent streams of Malay-language publishing in Southeast Asia. One was led by the Dutch
administration and its allies, focused on the administrative centre at Batavia. It had a
dual counterpart under the British government in the Straits Settlements. The other
stream involved those not so enmeshed in the colonial superstructure — for whom the
Straits of Malacca were a passage to Mecca, not a political boundary — and whose
presses were located at the communications node of the archipelago, Singapore.

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NOTES

Clark’s Penang Free School and Popular Guide to Romanised Malay, Penang: The Gazette Press,
1869; W. Robinson’s An Attempt to Elucidate the Principles of Malay Orthography, Fort
Mariborough: Mission Press, 1823; or H.H. Hudson’s The Malay Orthography, Singapore: Kelly &
Walsh, 1892. Note, though, the inclusion of the Straits Settlements Government’s Alphabetical List
of Malay Proper Names (i.e. Proper Names 1890) and of The Travellers’ Malay Pronouncing
Handbook (i.e. Traveller’s Handbook) which, though clearly not intended for a Malay audience, earns its place as
a vocabulary.
3 See further Hamidy, “Kegiatan Percetakan Riau”, p. 72
4 So, in the British Library collection, they are bound with Malacca publications, and were put
through the press by missionaries active at Malacca.
6 Malay-language books printed (and nominally published) by Kelly and Walsh in Shanghai are treated
as Singapore publications, and Catholic missionary publications printed in Hongkong are treated as
Penang publications — because obviously not intended for issue at the place of printing. The same
applies to Methodist Mission Press books printed at Yokohama on plates made in Singapore.
A good example of the tenaciousness of definitions of place of publication is provided by Acara
Manusia 1891 which sold in Singapore, printed in Leiden by Brill, but published formally in Johor
when its financier, Hermann Katz, presented a copy to the Sultan of Johor.
7 In particular this applies to a considerable stock-list of Malay kiab advertised for sale by Haji
Muhammad Amin in 1894: see Terasal 1894.a
9 Dating is most often a problem with the ‘Kiab Jawi’ as the dates they give are often those of
composition or translation, not of publication. See Mohd. Nor, Kiab Jawi, pp.3-4. Local reprints of
Mecca or Cairo publications may pass unidentified, van Bruinsse, “Kiab Kunang”. No undated
publications of Persama Press, Penang, or of Sulaiman Mari’e, Singapore, have been included.
10 Proudfoot, “Pre-war Malay Periodicals”, pp.1-2 outlines the Straits Settlements and Malay States
provisions. For the legislation, see International Copyright Act 1886 (25 June 1886) at Straits
Settlements Government Gazette, 12 October 1886, pp.1725-1731, and Books Registration Ordinance
No.15 of 1886 at 25 November 1886, pp.2077-2029, with notifications 31 December 1886, pp.2223-
2324; Book Registration Order-in-Council No.17 of 1895, Perak, 4 November 1895, The Laws of
Perak 1877-1896, p.388; Book Registration Enactment No.6 of 1898, Selangor, The Laws of
Selangor 1877-1899, p.655; Printing and Books Enactment 1915 (Draft) Federated Malay States
Government Gazette, 8 June 1915, pp.914-918. The Perak and Selangor legislation did not provide
for published memoranda of registration. See further Lim, “Retrospective National Bibliography”,
pp.15-33. In addition a small number of relevant Bombay registrations are taken from the quarterly
Catalogue of Books Published in the Bombay Presidency.
11 Mainly because of lax application of the law. In a few cases there may have been political reasons
for not submitting to registration: the syair Perang Aceh, although frequently published, was never
registered, perhaps because of its anti-Western content.


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12 Two major reservations must be heeded, however. First, as we have already noted with the list of books in stock in *Terasalh 1894 a.*, it is by no means certain that the books listed for sale by any publisher are all his own publications, or indeed even locally printed books. With titles advertised as forthcoming, we can perhaps be more confident that they represent the activities of the publisher responsible for the advertisement. We cannot be confident at all, however, that these titles ever appeared. Many are indeed found in library collections. Others are not: did they fail to eventuate, or is it simply that they have escaped collection and preservation? On the grounds that this doubt is always alive, that it is interesting and useful to have an idea of what publishers were planning even if their plans did not come to fruition, and that some of the proposed titles or editions might be yet be found — for these reasons, titles known only through advertisement have been included in the inventory if they have adequate support in the notices. For this purpose, a comprehensive survey of publishers’ advertisements has been made, though only a very small number of the total are as cited relevant bibliographical references.

13 Published as quarterly appendices to the *Notulen van het Bataschaats Genootschap* (NBG).

14 Prooffoot, "Major Library Holdings".

15 See Gallop, "Early Malay Printing", p.93. The whole collection is described in *Bibliotheque de M. l'Abbé Forre*.

16 Distribution of unique editions in the larger collections, with further break-down into (a) Muslim publishers’ works, (b) Christian mission publications, (c) government publications, and (d) Baba publications:

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17 Of 480 registered works relevant to this survey, 17% were found in neither BL nor NLS, 80% were found in BL, and 50% in NLS.

18 See *Quran 1854*, also *Quran: al-Kitab 1920*. Finely lithographed Quars were imported from Bombay. Cf. van Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning", pp.230-231.

19 *Compare Pelajaran darith Isa a (Mission spelling), Benda Jiva 1894 (Catholic spelling) Bunga Rampai 1896 (Government spelling); Shellabear, "Christian Literature", p.383-384.

20 Mission and Baba treatments are discussed below. Register is implicit in the title of a Malay Muslim work; thus the names of books mubad or hakayat and cerita have expectations of style as well as content. Note also *Benih Bahaah 1917*, referring to ‘bahasa Melaya yang biasa dipakai dalam tanah Melaya’. *Laautan Akal 1907* advertises its non-literary style as *‘bahasa Melaya yang senang’.*

21 Cf. Thomas, *Like Tigers around a Piece of Meat*.

22 *Place of publication.*

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25 Hurgronje, *Ambtelijke Adviesen*, 2:1387; "waar hadji en gooro ... als de Engelschman". For Araba resident in the Netherlands Indies a bitter grievance was their legal classification as Foreign Orientals, subject to pass laws, while the Japanese were given European privileges, ibid. 2:1622 etc.

26 The chart is based on the number of editions published per year, excluding periodicals, and treating multi-volume works as multiple items. The trend is plotted on a moving five-year average.

27 On the Christian presses, see Byrd, *Early Printing in the Straits Settlements*.


30 This is evident in two ways: first, looking at the five years before and after registration, the increase in editions is 105%, while the proportion of known extant Muslim publishers’ editions actually registered is only 20%, i.e. accounting at most for 38% of the increase; and secondly, the apparent decline in output during the twentieth century coincides with an increasing proportion of registered works, of 30-40%


32 Bloomfield, "Bone and the Beginning of Printing in Malaysia".

33 de Graaf, *Indonesia*.


35 From the beginning all branches of the European press were closely related. Already in 1818 the Malacca Mission Press had published a constitution for Bencoolen (*Undang-Undang Adat 1818*). To encourage the London Missionary Society, Raffles gave the Mission Press all public documents (Haines, "Protestant Missions", p.179; *Pages from Yesteryear*, p.2). A short time later the Singapore Chronicle press was publishing mission tracts. Kealborry’s press was sold to Fraser and Neave about 1882 (cf. *Pages from Yesteryear*, p.5). The new mission Press set up by the Shellabear as the American Mission Press, later known as the Methodist Publishing House became, with Kelly and
EARLY MALAY PRINTED BOOKS

Walsh, a principal publisher of government school books. It was sold in 1927 to become the Malayal Publishing House (Means, Malayal Mosaic, pp.50-51, 135).

36 This goes beyond the sharing of works between mission stations run by the same society, as the early Benson, Batavia, Malacca, Singapore, and Penang stations of the London Missionary Society. Note the RUL copy of Cermis Mota 1839-39 emanating from the Netherlands Bijbelgenootschap which has been marked up and cut out, apparently cannibalised for another publication, perhaps the Batavia edition of 1866. The same work was published in Java in 1877. Reprints of same material were mainly in the same script in the Straits Settlements and in both jawi and rumi in Batavia: e.g. Jalan Selamat Penang, 1838, in jawi parallel Pengadilan akan djalal selamat, Batavia, 1837 in rumi. Chijs, Catalogue ... Bataviaasch Genootschap, p.346.


38 Cf. Tisdall, “Singapore as a Centre for Moslem Work”.

39 Winship, “Early Thai Printing”: see Bible: Genesis 1823 and other early works in the Index of Languages other than Malay.

40 Tract: Bagus 1827 and other works listed in the Index of Languages other than Malay.

41 See the Index of Languages other than Malay for details.

42 See the Index of Persons and Institutions, s.v. Fukuin Press, Yokohama.

43 Annual Report on Education, SS, 1886, §4. The subsidy was unimportant, and stemmed from the ineffectual method of distributing school texts. In 1894, for instance, the press cost $2,600 to run but only $1,100 was received from the sale of books. Books were sold in bulk to teachers, who had to recoup the books to their pupils, and recover “the price, or as much as they can, afterwards from their pupils”. Ismoner Report 29 in Wong & Gwee, Official Reports on Education, p.22.

44 Jalan Kenpadaan 1881, Sile 1886, Penimpin Johor 1895, Permaluan J日报社 1897.

45 Annual Report on Education, SS, 1899, §13. Most was given to Kelly and Walsh: Abdullah 1911-15, 1914-15; Aid to the Study of English 1896, 1891, 1891, 1903; Bagis Akal 1919; Empat Serangkai 1908; Hisap 1818, 1819; Hinggan Cabil 1901; Sultan Keputra 1914; Malay Reader: Standard II 1899 a, b, 1902, 1904; Malay Reader: Standard III 1920; Malay Reader: Standard IV 1901, 1906, 1916, 1917; Misal Hung Rumi 1918 a, 1912; Niehaa Sahih 1919; Pelajaran Bahasa Melayu (No.1) 1900, 1901, 1903; Pelampos Akal 1919, 1920; Pelajaran Abdullah 1903, 1904, 1913 b; Penimpin Kenpadaan 1903 a, b, 1904, 1906, 1907, 1917, 1918; Penimbau Akal 1920; Peperangan Dunia 1917; Pohon Pelajaran 1901 a, b, 1912, 1916; Reliun Bacaan 1919, 1920; Serba Neka 1916; Sultan Ibrahim 1899 b, 1903, 1911; Sungei Penang 1920, Tawarik Melaya 1918, 1919; Victoria 1904-05; Vocabulary: Pringte 1895, 1900, 1901, 1902.

While the text-book work given to the American Mission Press was less copious (Alphabat a 1900s, b 1910s; Bastan al-Salatin 1899-1900; Exercises in Arabic 1901; Genala Hijmak 1906, 1907; Horn Tukh 1909, 1914; Malay Reader: Standard IV 1927; Permaluan a 1900s; Primer a 1900s; Sejarah Melaya 1896, 1898, 1903; Straits Vocabulary 1901) and later Methodist Publishing House (Anak Kunai Kenpadaan 1896; Bayan Budiman 1920; Empat Serangkai 1916; Exercises in Arabic 1907, 1910, 1916, 1917; Hints on Decimals 1916; Ilmu Alam 1918; Jalan Belajar 1911; Jaya Waras 1918; Jisoffai dan Sejarah 1911; Johor 1911, 1914, 1920; Missin Marakumah 1915; Nalas Poly 1901 a, 1907; Pencarian Hai 1911; Primer 1916; Raffles 1919; Rah sia Mengajar 1914; Victoria 1908), it was the publisher of the government’s Malay Language Series (q.v. Index of Persons and Institutions).

Very little work went to others, like the Kim Seok Hean Press of Penang (Marong Mahawangsa 1898; Cendawan Pailah 1900; Indera Mengindari 1900) or Singapore Muslim printers, as Denolaya

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Press (Sultan Ibrahim 1908 a) and Haji Muhammad Majahid (Alif Lailath wa Lailath 1903) or the Singapore Press under Thomas Trusty (Alif Lailath wa Lailath 1892-94).

The American Mission Press and its successor, the Methodist Publishing House printed few books for local publishers (Abu Bakar 1896; Hajj dan Umrah 1900; Manufjkal ul-Isaa 1901; Peraturan Bola Sepak 1895; Undang-Undang Cakoh 1901 and perhaps Johor 1911, c 1914, 1916, 1920 and Undang- Undang Tujah Jihah 1902). Beyond that, their few Malay works were directed primarily to a European audience (Dictionary: Shellabear 1916; Pelandak 1915 a; Penirgan Hai 1911; Straits Dialogues 1914; Traductions 1900; Trilingual Vocabulary a 1908; Trilingual Vocabulary 1901; Trilingual Vocabulary 1904), not forgetting the publications of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (q.v. Index of Persons and Institutions). Similarly, Kelly and Walsh’s issues extend beyond school texts only to dictionaries and the like (Dictionary: Wilkinson 1901-03; Dictionary: Wilkinson 1919; Dictionary: Winsted 1914-15, 1917; Dictionary: Winsted 1920; Handbook for Miners 1916; Handbook of Malay 1900, 1913; Vocabulary: Gurrard 1905; Vocabulary: Swettenham 1905, 1908, 1909-10, 1911, 1914).

See notes to Pemimpin Pengasuhan 1899, 1917. Another case is Abdullah 1911-15 (volume 2).


See Proudfoot, “Formative Period”, p.110

An early exception being Undang-Undang Singapura 1823. The Straits Government did later have translations of important notices published in the Malay newspapers. Note also Hadiah 1894; Kanun 1901; Pesyangan Kenasahan 1838; Personon Tuan Hazim 1837; Police Act a 1856; Surat Abdul Samad 1876; Hucap Afl Khan a 1915; Undang-Undang Cakoh 1862; Undang-Undang Cakoh Bari 1888; Undang-Undang Kapal 1916; Undang-Undang Polis 1848; Undang-Undang Polis 1860; Undang-Undang Sarawak 1840s.

Ahkam Johor 1913; Enactments 1910; Peraturan Gambir 1894; Peraturan Hasi 1894; Peraturan Jenasah 1895; Police Carcism 1911; Undang-Undang Asas 1818; Undang-Undang Cakoh 1917; Undang-Undang Jenaah 1914; Undang-Undang Pinol Kod 1907; Undang-Undang Teribb Maahah 1917; Warta Kerajaan Perak 1897*. Also in this category are the Johor ceremonial handbooks Asuran Daraj 1897; Daraj Kerubah 1897; Makahat Johor 1897. The Riau Government similarly printed official materials: Jadaal Tawabim 1895, 1897; Perhimpunan Plaskat 1899; Rubah Ubara 1894; Sunyacaraya 1856; Tawan Penghiahon 1955; Undang-Undang Polis 1893; Furubak Makmur 1895.

E.g. Hadiah Besor 1894 (in English, Malay, Chinese, Tamil), Undang-Undang Kapal 1916 (in English, Chinese, Malay).

Means, Malaysia Mosaic, p.48-50. Shellabear financed a new press by a loan of £100 to be repaid in printing.


A Brunei chief minister came to inspect the Singapore mission press under Ira Tracy, Missionary Herald, vol.31 (1835), p.240. The Singapore New Testament 1831 was a major achievement in
technical terms and attracted some interest: at Malacca, Medhurst was sent for by the 'raja' for a discussion in his house, where a number of learned natives were assembled, with a Malay Bible open before them.' It had been given to one of those present in Singapore. Medhurst, in Missionary Herald, vol.26 (1830), p.218 (excerpted from the Missionary Chronicle, London, April 1830)

“Besides all this, there is every reason to believe that many of the books circulated were far from being intelligible, and very imperfect in point of style.” Brown, Propagation of Christianity, quoting Malcolm’s Travels in South-Eastern Asia. Also Hunt “Translation of the Bible”, pp.28-41 on Abdullah’s prompting efforts to get the missionaries “to do justice to their own scriptures in the language of the Malays.” (p.41)

So, ironically, illiterates would take the scripture tracts to ulama to have them read. Cf. Abeel, “Journal”, p.164.

Milne, A Retrospect of the First Ten Years of the Protestant Mission to China, p. 167, cit. Haines, “Protestant Missions”, p.176. The opinion is well based, see Indo-Chinese Gleaner, no.17 (July 1821), pp.145-146.

Examples of such school books printed in Singapore are: Arithmetic 1824 a; Spelling Book 1824; Mengeja Bahasa Melayu 1827; Pelajaran 1827; Pelajaran 1828; Mengeja Bahasa Melayu 1831; Reader 1831 a; Pelajaran Bahasa Melayu (No.1) a 1838, b 1838; Reader a 1839; at Malacca: Arithmetic 1824 b; Jumlah Pesalan 1827; Mengeja Bahasa Melayu 1837; Menolog Segala Klasik 1818 a, b, c, 1819; and at Penang: Arithmetic 1825; Ilmu Hias 1825; Mengeja Bahasa Melayu 1837; Pelajaran 1832, 1835 a, b, c, d. The catechisms are listed under that heading in the Description.

Haines, “Protestant Missions”, p.200.


Singapore Institution Free School Report, 1839-40, pp.11-12. E.g. Bucuan Kanak-Kanak 1840; Ilmu Kejadian a 1841; Ilmu Kepandaian a 1840; Pelajaran Bahasa Melayu (No.1) a, b 1838; Reader a 1839; Sentences 1842; Tabiat Jenis-Jenis Kejadian 1841.


Haines, “Protestant Missions”, p.219.

Means, Malaysia Mosaic, p.48.

Means, Malaysia Mosaic, p.47; Shellabear, “Life”, p.26: “the tract 'A Gift, will you take it?' led to my conversion…”. I took it to my quarters in Fort Blockhouse, and sitting alone in the dining-room of our 'Officers' Mess', I immediately read through its 27 small pages. Then I at once knelt down right there at the dining room table and told God that I would receive His great gift, and be His follower.”

On the vast scale of output, note also Kilgour: “The Bible in the Netherlands Indies”, p.176; the British and Foreign Bible Society alone had to 1933 distributed 25,140 Bibles in Malay, 64,483 New Testaments, and 962,815 scripture portions.

See for instance, the catalogue in Orang yang Cari Selamat 1905. 'This very work recalls the fine instance of multiple register in the translations of Bushman's Pilgrim's Progress which at different times appeared in several different guises. The direction of the earliest translation, by Beighton, is conveyed by the flavour of its Arabic title, Sufar al-Zafid, which sets the tone for a religious work in the minds of a Muslim — and hence predominantly Malay — audience. Somewhat later another translation, possibly by Keebarny, appeared as Orang Cari Selamat. This more neutral title was published both in javi and in rumi in magazines directed to a broad Malay-reading public, both native-born and Baha. Finally, an adaptation by Shellabear appeared in low Malay as Orang yang Cari Selamat. The audience to which this work was directed is clear from the illustrations showing figures of Chinese appearance and dress, quite in the style of the Chinese legendary romances (reproduced in Pages from Yesteryear, p.28).”

See Bible: Matthew 1896. See M. McMahon in The Index of People and Institutions.

See Keebarny and Shellabear in the Index of People and Institutions. Note that Keebarny's older translation continued to be printed after the preparation of Shellabear's revision. See also Brown, Propagation of Christianity, vol.3, p.537; Hunt, "Translation of the Bible", p.36 and passim.

Buckley, Anecdotal History, pp.321-322; Byrd, Early Printing in the Straits Settlements, p.16


Including the government publications Police Act a 1856 and Kanon Polis 1860.

Means, Malaysia Mosaic, p.12; Pages from Yesteryear, p.5

Medhurst, “China”, pp.572-573


Typography had also been brought into disrepute by the interpenetration of the early Mission editions according to Bishop McDougall: see Saint, A Flavour for the Bishop, p.26.

Abdullah 1849 (414pp.); Dunia 1850 (238pp.); Perjalanan Orang Mencari Selamat 1854 (267pp.); Pengasuh Segala Remah a 1850s (probably multi-volume); Benua Asia 1855 (235pp.); Ilmu Kepandaian a 1855 (135pp.); Tekj-Tekj Terbang 1855 (380pp.); Dunia 1856 a (238pp.).


See Bustan Arifin 1820-22, vol.2 no.6, preface p.2 (quoted in Description below).

Pengasuh Segala Remah a 1850s is an interesting compromise between the new printing technique and the manuscript tradition, for its head-words are outlined in print and filled in by hand in ink. This replicates the practice of manuscript copying in which after a page had been copied up in black ink, the rubrication would be added in blank spaces.

Note, though, that North's Reader a 1839 in printed javi was reportedly also read outside the schoolroom: Singapore Institution Free School Report, 1839-40, p.11.


Chelliah, Educational Policy of the Straits Settlements, pp.64, 65.


Gallop, “Early Malay Printing”, p.109