Towards Broadening the Audience: 
The Role of Authors and Publishers of Jawi Kitabs from the 19th to 20th Century in Southeast Asia

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1. Introduction

During the 19th and 20th centuries, insular Southeast Asia began to experience a fresh wave of Islamization, marked by both a considerable increase in the number of pilgrims to Mecca, and the increase of Islamic schools (pesantren, pondok, dayah and so on) in local villages. The demand for Islamic textbooks called “kitabs” also increased in proportion to the number of the students of those schools. The technique of printing, which had just been introduced into the Islamic world in the early 19th century, spurred on the business of publishing kitabs in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Kitabs first began to be published in Singapore and Bombay in the latter half of the 19th century. At almost the same time, Arabian merchants in the Middle East entered the business of publishing kitabs targeted at Muslims in Southeast Asia. They published kitabs for selling at their bookshops in the Middle East and exported them to Java, where fellow Arabic traders opened bookshops. In the 20th century, these fellow traders also began to publish kitabs in Java by themselves, tailoring the variety of kitabs to the requirements of the local society. In the process, new types of kitabs were born. They were concise and more oriented to the common urban people who had not received training in Islamic schools, focusing on rules of how to lead one’s daily life as a “virtuous” Muslim [Sugahara 2009: 11]. Islamic knowledge, which until then had been relatively closed inside the pesantren became more accessible, and was disseminated through the printed kitabs.

As a consequence the tradition of manuscripts gradually disappeared, since the manuscripts were superseded by the published kitabs throughout Southeast Asia. This paper examines the influences that the publishing business that flourished from the 19th to 20th century came to exert on the variety of kitabs read in Southeast Asian society.

Proudfoot collected data on the books published in Singapore and described their publishing history until the early 20th century [Proudfoot 1993], while Heer compiled a list of authors of Jawi kitabs in English (or kitab Jawi in Malay), and the titles of their kitabs. Most were published in the Middle East [Heer 2010]. Our analysis focuses on the difference of place of publication, based...
on the data of these two catalogues and the publication list of the publisher, namely Mustafa al-Babi al-Halaby wa Awladahu of Cairo, a copy of which was acquired during the author’s research in 2011 in Egypt. Mustafa al-Harabi is the name of the most famous publisher and bookshop of Jawi kitabs in Cairo. It was founded by Ahmad al-Halaby in 1859, and they later began to publish Jawi kitabs. This publisher still has a list of their kitabs published during the period spanning the 1920s to 50s. Surprisingly, their kitabs continue to be reprinted with the original publishing years still printed on the covers, though the original prints of the same kitabs do not indicate the original year of publication any more. These kitabs listed by al-Harabi were collected for the Sophias kitab collection, and the bibliographic data is scheduled for publication in the next catalogue, following the Southeast Asian kitab catalogue compiled by Kawashima in 2010 [Kawashima et al. 2010].

In this paper, we define Jawi kitabs as books on Islamic dogma that were written, translated, and commented upon by Southeast Asian authors, or which are published for the Muslims in Southeast Asia. The languages used are both Arabic and local languages written in the Arabic script (Jawi or Pegon).

2. Kitabs used in Pesantrens in the latter half of the 19th century

In the latter half of the 19th century the number of the pesantrens in Java and Madura amounted to about 15,000-20,000 with more than 200,000 pupils. According to Van den Berg [Van den Berg 1886: 518-519], 4/5 of the number of religious schools reported in the Annual Reports of 1885 (about 15,000) were intended for children, while another 1/5 of the schools taught the tenets of Islam at a basic level. He estimated that there were at most only a few hundred schools where people could study fiqih and theology.

Van den Berg analyzed about 50 Arabic kitabs widely known and used in the schools of Java and Madura. They were reported to have been published in the Middle East, but students also transcribed the kitabs by themselves. The kitabs were classified as follows: 16 fiqih (32%), 14 nahwu (28%), 3 tafsir (6%), 7 tasawwuf (14%), and 10 tawhid (20%). He mentioned in particular the “Sapuhah (Safinat al-Naja), Sollam (Sullam al-Tawfiq),” and “Sittin (Masa’il al-Sittin / Sittin Masalah)’ as the main fiqih textbooks. Safinat and Sullam were translated into many languages including Malay, Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese and also the Iranian language. They are commonly used in many schools even now, although Sittin in contrast has been nearly forgotten. Safinat was authored by Salim bin ‘Abd Allah bin Somair from Hadramaut. He first lived in Singapore and then moved to Batavia, where a few years later he died (1270H/ 1854M). He was famous for a time as a great opponent of Islamic mysticism, when tasawwuf such as Naqibbandiyah, Shattariyya and Qadiriyya prevailed in the local society. The Sullam al-Tawfiq was authored by Saifuddin bin Al-Husain bin Tahir from Hadramaut, who died in 1271H [Van den Berg 1886: 526-527]. These two kitabs are rather new compared to other kitabs, most of which were written from the 12th to the 16th century. Among the classical kitabs, titles such as Fath al-Qarib, Minhaj al-Qasim, Fath al-Mubin and Fath al-Wahhab, Minhaj al-Talibin, Muharrar, and Tuhfat al-Mahajj were listed as fiqih kitabs much used at that time.

As tawhid textbooks, Jawharat al-Tawhid, Kifayat al-Ilmwan, Fath al-Mubin, Alkidat al-Sama, Shub al-Iman and as tasawwuf textbooks, Hikam, Illya, Bidayat al-Hidayah, Minhaj al-Abidin were listed. These are all classical Islamic books written in Arabic. The students put the glosses in local languages in the textbooks as explained by teachers during class, also in the Arabic script.

3. Kitabs published in Singapore and Bombay

In the latter half of the 19th century kitabs began to be published in Singapore and Bombay. Such kitabs were called “Jawi kitabs” because they were written in local languages, mainly Malay, but gradually other local languages such as Javanese and Sundanese written in the Arabic script were also included. Singapore was a meeting point of the political and economic networks connecting the West and the East, and it was the main port for the outward-bound journey to Mecca. The relatively lenient press regulations in British-ruled Singapore allowed a vibrant Islamic press to flourish. Newspapers and magazines destined for all of Southeast Asia were published there [Laffan 2003]. Bombay was also an important publishing place, because Bombay publishers often cooperated with their Singaporean partners as printers after the 1890s.

The publishers of the kitabs in Singapore were Javanese from the north coast of Java (pesisir). The names of H. Said bin H. M. Arsyad of Semarang, H. M. Siraj bin H. M. Salih of Rembang, his brother H. M. Sidik bin Salih, and H. M. Taib bin H. M. Zain of Pati are listed as successful publishers by Proudfoot. At that time one fifth of the Muslims who lived in Singapore were Javanese, and some opened businesses in Singapore with the title of Haj after the pilgrimage to Mecca. The published books were sent to agents in the various areas of Southeast Asia. The pesantrens were one category of agents [Proudfoot 1993: 31-36].

According to McGlynn, the number of books listed in the catalogues prepared by the publishers in Singapore rose to as high as 140 [McGlynn 1998: 47]. The catalogues issued by the publishers in Bombay included at least 50 to 60
books written in Malay or Javanese,⁴ which which were also published in Singapore [Salim 1991]. Sugahara 2009. The kitab that is listed as the earliest published in Singapore is the Sabit al-Muhadad by Arsyad al-Banjar (who died in 1812). It was published in 1859. It is a fiqh book based on the Sirat al-Mustakim by Nur al-Din Muhammad ibn 'Ali Janji ibn Muhammad Hamid al-Raniri (who died in 1658, and is hereafter referred to as Nurdin ar-Raniri). This original book was also published in 1861. Other kitabs that were published included works authored by locally prominent ulamas such as Abd al-Samad al-Palembangi (who was born in 1704), and who wrote the Hidayat al-Salikin and the Sair Saliqin, and Isma'il b. 'Abd Minangkabawi (who died in 1747), and who wrote the Khayat al-Ghalam. The most popular were the kitabs authored by Daud b. 'Abd Allah Fatani (who died in 1847, and is hereafter referred to as Daud Patani). The Bab Nikah, Furu al-Mas'il, Durr al-Thamin, Siqat Dua puluh, Ghayat al-Taqrub, Kashf al-Ghammah, Sultan al-Mubtadi were all kitabs published under the name of Daud Patani. Traditionally these kitabs had been transcribed by hand, and distributed through the network of the pesantren community in insular Southeast Asia. Since appearing in printed form they began to circulate in larger numbers and at inexpensive prices. These books are now recognized as classical vernacular kitabs.

The Arabic textbooks used in the pesantren also began to be published in various formats. Some texts were printed with the glosses or translations in local languages between the lines or in the margin, while others were summarized into local languages and published as abridgements.

For example, the Safinat al-Naja' which was a basic fiqh textbook widely used in Java and Madura as mentioned in section 2 was published in Singapore and Bombay. According to the description of Proudfoot, this kitab went through several editions during the period spanning 1870 to the 1900s. It is a compendium of Islamic Shafi'i law written in Arabic with a Malay interlinear translation. The number of pages per copy is about 40-50, depending on which edition is used. The edition of 1906 was printed into 10,000 copies and sold at a price of $0.05 per copy [Proudfoot 1993: 450-451]. The popularity of the Safinat is understandable. Since it was used in the first class of many pesantren, it became one of the best selling kitabs. Besides the Safinat, other textbooks used in the pesantren such as the Fath al-Mu'in and the Fath al-Wabab, were also published here.

As a textbook on the tawhid, the Umm al-Barahin by Muhammad bin Yusuf al-Samusi (died in 1490) was one of the most popular kitabs, and several of its commentaries and translations were published in Singapore and Bombay in the 1890s. For example, the Siraj al-Hadi by Muhammad Zayn al-Din ibn Muhammad Badawi al-Sumbawi, the 'Aqidat al-Najaf by Zayn al-Abidin ibn Muhammad al-Fatani, the Scharh Umm al-Barahin by Muhammad Zayn ibn Jalal al-Din al-Ash, and the Jawharat al-Tawhid by Ibrahim al-Laqani were also popular. In particular, the Javanese translation by Muhammad ibn Salih ibn Umar al-Samarri (hereafter, Salih Darat) was repeatedly printed from the 1880s to the 1900s.

As a tasawwufi kitab, the Hidayat al-Salikin – a translation of Ghazali's Bidayat al-Hidayah by Palembangi as mentioned before – was very marketable. The Hidayat was repeatedly published from 1872 until 1912 in Singapore and Bombay, although it was a large kitab having about 140-245 pages per copy. The Hikam by Ibn 'Ata' Allah and the Ihya 'Ulhun al-Din by Ghazali were also bestsellers. The Hikam was translated, and Saleh Darat of Semarang summarized the Ihya into Javanese. Both books enjoyed popularity in Java. The Javanese summary of the Ihya entitled Munqiyat tashking Ihya 'Ulhun al-Din, began to be published in 1893 by M. H. Sidik in Singapore and Karim in Bombay, and it remained in press until 1906, and on each occasion as many as 1000-3000 copies were printed despite its being a large book with 200-300 pages per copy. The number of copies was considerably higher when compared with other kitabs, of which printed copies were 600 at the most. It can be said that Al-Ghazali already boasted a considerable readership in Java at that time.

4. Publication of kitabs intended for the ordinary people

The business of kitab publication that began in Singapore brought forth various types of kitabs, and increased the numbers of the kitabs circulating in Southeast Asia. Kitabs were no more limited to the circles of the pesantren. Rather, people outside those circles also now had the opportunity to see or read them. New types of kitabs intended for ordinary people without the experience of studying at a pesantren began to be composed and published.

The most famous kitab authored by Saleh Darat, namely the Majmu'at al-Shari'at al-Kafiyyat li al-'Awwam (Collection of Islamic Laws on the Duties of the Populace, hereafter referred to as Majmu'a) aimed at a rural public ignorant of Islam and Arabic. It is a Javanese kitab dealing with the basic Islamic code of conduct (fiqh). Saleh Darat desired to promote a genuine understanding of Islam.

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¹ Pegan means Javanese written with Arabic scripts. However, kitabs published in the local languages, not only Malay but also Javanese and Sundanese, are all called Jawi Kitabs (Kitab Jawi).

² According to [Proudfoot 1993: 479], Siraj al-Hadi.
among his countrymen, and so he composed the *Majmu‘a* as a compact reference book on how to lead an upright Muslim life, a compendium on which villagers could rely. He pays attention to the particulars of daily life in the Javanese village, and explains the customs and attitudes that are against Islam.

The *Majmu‘a* was published in Singapore in 1892, 1894 and 1898/1899 by Haji Muhammad Shidik and subsequently in Bombay in 1906 and in 1916/1917 by Al-Karimi [Proudfoot 1993: 327-328] [Salim 1991]. Remarkably, this book continued to be published in Java in the 20th century. A copy in KITLV, in the Netherlands, provides evidence that Al-Mesiry in Surabaya published it during the years 1934/35, and after the bankruptcy of Al-Mesiry, Rajah Muriah (Pekalongan) and Toha Patra (Semarang) bought the copyright. The *Majmu‘a* was available everywhere and was bought by the ordinary people at the daily assembly of the community in mosques or mushollahs. Women in particular, who could not study at the pesantrens, were eager to read the *Majmu‘a*. As Saleh Darat’s books are well suited for people without education who seek instruction about Islamic dogma, it is undeniable that his books have succeeded in exerting a wider influence over Javanese Muslim society than many other works.

Besides the *Majmu‘a*, Saleh Darat published the *Fasalatan*, a *kitab* dealing with various basic prayers. It came out in 1893 simultaneously in Singapore and Bombay. This *kitab* was a rather thin book of 40-60 pages. In 1905 a Sundanese version was published in Singapore under the title *Kitab Fasalatan Bahasa Loghat Sunda*. Of the edition of 1906, 10,000 copies were printed and sold for the price of 0.05 per copy in Bombay [Proudfoot 1993: 230-231]. One of the reasons why the *Fasalatan* was so popular was because it was useful as a manual for daily prayers. Like the *Majmu‘a* this *kitab* was intended for ordinary people, and not for students of pesantrens. The anonymous *Kitab Rukun Sembahan* written in Jawi, dealing with various prayers was published in diverse versions successively in 1879, 1885, 1889, 1893, 1895, and the Javanese version was published in 1911 in Singapore. The different editions of this *kitab* had about 116-120 pages.

These three types of *kitabs* were not used in the pesantrens as textbooks, precisely because they were intended for ordinary people. What it is remarkable is that such *kitabs* began to be published in Singapore and Bombay, because this indicates a rather high concern for Islam even among ordinary people, at the end of the 19th century. It is interesting to note that local people apparently cared about religious practices and how to live as virtuous Muslims. Hence they began to use concise manuals and reference books in order to perfect religious practices without entering Islamic schools, although they would do so together with friends or neighbors in the urban local community, and not alone in their rooms. The increasing sales of the *Manasik Haji dan Umrah*, a manual for the pilgrimage (hajj) to Mecca, also show a growing interest in Islam among the local ordinary people. On the other hand, one should not forget that *kitabs* such as the *Mujarrabat* and the *Taj al-Muluk* were also added among the bestsellers. There unite various wisdoms on the lives, often including pre-Islamic elements. Both of them were intended for the wide audience. *Majmu‘a* warned the people against superstitions in society. However, *Mujarrabat* was also published in the same place and its popularity showed no signs of diminishing.

New types of *kitabs* oriented to a more general audience were created in Singapore, to the extent that many people became more and more familiar with *kitabs* conveying Islamic knowledge. *Kitab* publishing blossomed during the period spanning the 1860-1900s in Singapore. Around the end of the 19th century however and through the 1890s, the publishers began to transfer their offices to Bombay, and Singapore gradually lost its status as a center. Printing Jawi *kitabs* continued in Singapore until the 1910s, but in the early 20th century Middle Eastern publishers supplanted Singapore.

5. *Kitabs* published in the Middle East

As early as the 1870s publishers of the Middle East entered into the business of publishing *kitabs* destined for Muslims in Southeast Asia (called Jawah in Arabic) because the Jawah were increasing their presence in the Middle East. Publishing began in Bulak, Cairo [Wijoyo 1997: 322]. Later, *kitabs* were also published in Mecca and Istanbul, but Cairo remained the center of the publication business. The publishers in the Middle East printed not only *kitabs* in Arabic, but they also printed Jawi *kitabs* to be sent to Singapore, and from Singapore for further distribution in the Archipelago.

The Jawi *kitabs* are written mainly in Malay, although some are written in Javanese (in the Arabic script, Pegon). This new competition forced the Singapore publishers to reduce their business. By contrast, the publishing business in Cairo ran smoothly until the 1930s, and continued to do so until the 1950s.

The most famous and prolific author of Jawi *kitabs* in Cairo is undoubtedly Muhammad ibn ‘Umar ibn ‘Arabi al-Nawawi al-Jawi al-Bantani (1813-1897, hereafter Nawawi Banten). He was born in Banten and settled in Mecca to study and teach there. Throughout his life he wrote many *kitabs* in Arabic, namely comments, summaries, synopses and translations of the Arabic classical *kitabs*. He died in Mecca and not in his hometown. His *Fath al-Mujib bi-Sharh Mushkitasar al-Khatib* published in Bulak in 1276H (1859M) is one of the earliest Jawi *kitabs* published in the Middle East. It was published in Mecca and
Cairo repeatedly. His other kitabs which were printed and which can be found in the lists of Nicholas Heer and al-Halabi amount to 32, and like his Faith al-Mujib they were repeatedly printed in Cairo and Mecca until the 1930s. This number exceeds the kitabs of other authors.

The Mīraj al-Miṣrī by Nawawi Banten is a commentary on the Sūrat al-Baqara, which was one of the popular fiqh textbooks written by the above-mentioned Sajji ‘Abd Allah from Hadramaut. The Maraqī (Mīraj) al-Uḥdāyib is a commentary on the Bīdāyat al-'Iṣdāyib, the famous book on tawwuf written by Ghazali. These two kitabs were published 15 to 16 times during the period spanning 1859-1900. The Kaskhī al-Shajā‘a, a commentary on the Sāfīnāt al-Najī‘a, the Faith al-Mujib, a summary (mokhtasar) of the Khawāb and the Qīat al-Habīb al-Gharīb, a commentary on the Taqrib fi al-Fiqh written by Ja‘far al-Fārabi, were also repeatedly printed at least eight times, in the period spanning 1859-1900 [Wijoyo 1997:105].

Nawawi Banten wrote kitabs also in fields other than fiqh and tawwuf, on naḥw, tawhid, hadith, da‘a‘a and so on, namely the Kaskh al-Mūṣṭa‘īyāh, a commentary on the Aḥādīth, a commentary of the ‘Aqīdah al-Awam, and the Dhawā‘al-Yaqīn, a commentary on the Umm al-Barā‘iin, the Durar al-Bahā‘iyāh, a commentary on the Qissat al-Mīraj by Ja‘far al-Barā‘iin.

Nawawi Banten mainly wrote commentaries on popular classical Arabic kitabs, and he also introduced various Arabic classics other than the most popular ones. He followed the tradition of the manuscripts by printing the commentaries or translations together with the original Arabic texts. The commentaries were those he had used in class, and presumably it was his intention to educate the students from Southeast Asia studying in the Middle East through improving their readability of the basic Arabic classic books. He got quite a readership in the Middle East in view of the number of editions, though his kitabs were hardly ever published in Singapore and Bombay. He also wrote a commentary on the Umm al-Barā‘iin, a popular tawhid textbook, and a commentary on the popular Sāfīnāt al-Najī‘a in Arabic. On the other hand, commentaries by other αλ‘αμας, written in Malay, were published in Singapore.

Next to Nawawi Banten, Daud Patani was prolific author who wrote many kitabs in Malay. More than 10 kitabs written by him were published in Cairo and Mecca. Regrettably, we cannot find the exact publishing year. We only know that his books were already published in the 1930s. Daud Patani also moved to the Middle East from his homeland of Patani. Contrary to Nawawi Banten, the kitabs written by Daud Patani were published in Singapore as well. But the number of the kitabs published in the Middle East was much larger than in Singapore, although his writings were very popular there. Besides Nawawi Banten and Daud Patani, ‘Abd al-Hamid Quds ibn Muhammad ‘Ali ibn ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Khatib, Isma‘ir ibn ‘Abd al-Mutallib al-Ashri, Muhammad ‘Abdul ibn ‘Abdul al-Banjari, Muhammad Zayn ibn Jalal al-Din al-Ashi, Zayn al-Abidin ibn Muhammad al-Fatani were famous authors. They all also studied and taught in the Middle East, where they wrote many commentaries, summaries, synopses and translations of Arabic classical kitabs.

During the years 1870-1930, the number and variety of kitabs published in Cairo steadily increased every year and reached a high level, thanks to the enthusiasm of the Southeast Asian ulamas who lived there. It is especially remarkable to note that the category of the tawhid kitabs has relatively many titles, most of which are not to be found either in the lists of the Singapore-Bombay kitabs, or in the lists of kitabs used in Java and Madura.

We can give numerous examples, such as the Daqa‘iq al-A‘kābīr fi Dhikr Jannat wa al-Nar written by Ahmad ibn Muhammad Yunus Lingga, the Faith al-Muta‘ājīkīrīn written by Uthman ibn Shihab al-Dīn Pontianak, Faith al-Rahman fi ‘Aqīdah al-Ismī‘ written by ‘Abd al-Qadir ibn Sabir al-Mandaillīng, the Mīṣāh al-Jannāh written by Muhammad Tayyib ibn Mas‘ūd al-Banjarī, the Mīṣāh al-Murid written by Zayn al-Abidin ibn Muhammad al-Fatani and the Siraj al-Huda written by Muhammad Zayn al-Dīn ibn Muhammad Badawi al-Sumbawī and so on. At the same time, we see that these authors come from various regions in Southeast Asia, such as Lingga, Pontianak, and Sumbawa. Many of these kitabs are still published in Southeast Asia, as is shown by the catalogue compiled by Kawashima [Kawashima et al. 2010].

Many Jawi kitabs issued in Singapore and Bombay were published in the Middle East as well, in particular kitabs authored by famous αλ‘αμας such as Nuradin ar-Ranirī and Palembangi. The Tarjumān al-Mustafī‘ī, the first Malay tafsī‘īr of the Qur’an written by ‘Abd al-Ra‘ūf ibn ‘Ali al-Jawi al-Fansuri al-Sīnskī (1615-1693) was published in Istanbul (in 1834) and Bulaq (in 1885). This is possibly because many Jaws who used Malay as a common language lived there.

Besides newly published kitabs, classical tawhid kitabs such as the Ihīf al-Murid, the Kifayat al-Awam, the Shu‘b al-Ismī‘, the Jauhar al-Tawhid, the Sīrat Daqa‘iq, the Faith al-Mahbīb and the Tuhfet al-Raghibīn were also published.

6. Concluding remarks

From the late 1920s to 1930s, Jawi kitabs began to be published in various towns on the North Coast of Java. Two of the oldest bookshops and publishers were
Salim Said ibn Nabhan in Surabaya, and Al-Mesiriyya (Tokto Mesir) which was established by 'Abdullah bin 'Afif in Cirebon [Bruijessen 1995] [Sugahara 2009: 23]. They were Arabs who opened bookshops in areas where many Arabs lived (Kampung Arab) near the city's mosques. At first, they only ordered books from Singapore, Bombay, and Egypt, but gradually they began to publish books themselves and to sell them to the Indonesian and Malay Islamic audience.

What these Arabic publishers did was to reprint the best selling kitabs published in Singapore and Bombay. Unfortunately we have very limited data on the years of publishing in Java. However, some kitabs maintained in the library of Leiden University and the National Library of Indonesia, still have the publication year on the book cover. For example, the Majmu'a written by Saleh Darat was reprinted by Al-Mesiriyya in 1935, and the Munjiyat sa'akin Ibya' Ulum al-Din written by the same author was reprinted during the periods 1929/1930 and 1934/35. The Lata'il al-Taharat and Jawharat Tawhid were also reprinted by Al-Mesiriyya, while the Fasalatan was reprinted by Salim Nabhan in 1933 [Sugahara 2009: 28-32].

The places of publishing Jawi kitabs have changed since the end of the 19th century from Singapore and Bombay via Middle East to the North Coast of Java. The Arabic kitabs that had been used only in the community of Islamic schools became more accessible through modern ways of publishing. Southeast Asian Muslims could learn about Islam by buying the comparatively inexpensive published kitabs, without having to attend the pesantren. Jawi kitabs written by famous ulamas during the 17th to 18th centuries in Southeast Asia could be read outside the community of pesantren. The kitabs intended for a wide audience also acquired more readers, as ordinary people began to show more interest in Islam. These best-selling books in Singapore continued to be published in Southeast Asia, now mainly along North Coast of Java, while publishing in Singapore lost in importance. The Majmu'a continues to be sold by Toha Putra, Semarang.

On the other hand, at the turn of the 20th century in the Middle East kitabs containing commentaries and translations of the classical Arabic textbooks were increasing in number. Southeast Asian Muslim scholars living there wrote them, and they were more oriented towards students who were studying Islamic dogma. At present the business of publishing kitabs in Mecca and Cairo has almost disappeared, although Al-Halabi still has a bookshop. However, the kitabs published in the Middle East are now also published in Southeast Asia, mainly in Indonesia. The kitabs published in Singapore, Bombay, and the Middle East in former times, now enrich the variety of kitabs published in many places in Southeast Asia.

References


Photo 1: Storehouse of Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi wa Awladulu.

Photo 2: Inside the storehouse.