ON THE ORIGIN OF TWO MANUSCRIPTS OF HIKAYAT RAJA PASAI

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Manuscript A of the oldest Malay chronicle *Hikayat Raja Pasai* dated 1814 or 1815) had been studied and edited in Malay, French and English many times since 1830 when it became part of the Royal Asiatic Society manuscript collection, while the second manuscript - B – dated 1797, of the British Library collection, became accessible to Malay students very recently - a century and a half later.

Both manuscripts could be compared only when their facsimiles became available in book editions (MS A) or online (MS B). Such a research initiated by E.U.Kratz (1989) comprised a comparative analysis of their textological characteristics: features of spelling and handwriting, lexical discrepancies, lacunas etc. In the present paper the main accent is made on reconsidering the colophons of the two codices, as well as the manuscripts’ history: its origin, names of the owner and/or the copyist, its target audience etc.

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The Story of the Kings of Pasai (*Hikayat raja Pasai*) is the earliest Malay chronicle and perhaps the earliest work written in Malay. It speaks about Samudera Pasai (North Sumatra), the first Malay kingdom that embraced Islam. The events described in the chronicle cover the period from the middle of the XIII to the middle of the XIV century.

Up to the end of the XX century the only available manuscript of the chronicle has been *Raffles Malay 67* from the Royal Asiatic Society collection1. The most recent edition of this manuscript comprising its transliteration, facsimile and textnotes was carried out by the British researcher Russell Jones2.

In 1986 the British Library acquired another manuscript (*Or.14350*) containing the text of the chronicle. Unfortunately, 17½ pages of it were lacking, so its text couldn’t be of much help for a proper critical edition. In 1989 E.U.Kratz published a thorough research article about this manuscript3. Thanks to Annabel Teh Gallop, Lead Curator of the Southeast Asian Studies department at the British Library, its digitised facsimile can now be consulted online4. In this paper, following Russell Jones, I will designate these two manuscripts with letters A and B respectively.

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1 We do not take into account here one more manuscript – a copy of Raffles 67 handwritten by E.Dulaurier in London in 1838 and published by him later in Paris, also in Jawi script (see Dulaurier Ed. (ed). Collection des Principales Chroniques Malayes. Premier fascicule. *La chronique du Royaume de Pasey*. Paris, 1849).


4 [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=or_14350_f045v-f083v](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=or_14350_f045v-f083v)
The MS A belonged to the collection of Th.St.Raffles (1781-1826), Lieutenant-governor of Java during the short period of British rule on the island (1811-1815). By Raffles’ request a considerable number of Malay manuscripts were copied and brought by him to England. In 1830, after his death, his widow, Lady Raffles, donated the collection to the Royal Asiatic Society.

At the end of the chronicle, on page 140 of the manuscript, the final date of copying is mentioned: Tamat hari Isnin, kepada hari / Dua puluh sa, kepada bulan/ Muharam, sanat zai/ Hijratulnabi / 1230.

The corresponding date of the CE is January 2, 1815. Just below, on the same page of the manuscript there are two more lines written in Javanese script: Sangking Kiai Suradimanggala, bupati sapu(pu) nagari Demak nagari / Bagor, warsa 1742, (“Received in Bogor from Kyai Suradimanggala, bupati Demak, in 1742”). According to the Javanese calendar, it corresponds to the years 1814-15. So this text was among the last copied for Raffles: most of the manuscripts of his collection were written no later than 1812. A. H. Hill, first translator and publisher of the chronicle, found possible that this note in Javanese was made at Raffles’ request before the original was returned to its owner5.

During the short period of British rule in Java, Kyai Suradimanggala, former bupati of Demak (Central Java) was appointed to a position of translator of Malay and Javanese at the Translation Service founded by Raffles in Buitenzorg (Bogor), and held this position from June 1814 till July 1815 when he came back to his duties as bupati of Semarang (Central Java). Kyai Suradimanggala's name is mentioned in 15 manuscripts from Raffles’ collection, and all of them, except two undated, were copied between September 13, 1814 and on July 29, 1815. According to Russell Jones, there is no doubt that MS A, as all the other manuscripts, was also copied at the scriptorium of the Translation Service.

There is no data about the origin of the source manuscript from which MS A was copied. G. Drewes supposed that it could originate from Palembang. After the attack of British troops on Palembang in 1812, the library of Sultan Badruddin has been plundered and, perhaps, some of the manuscripts were brought to Batavia6. Anyway, up to now no trace of this source manuscript has been found.

As to the MS B, the recent publication of its facsimile on the British library website became an essential help for researchers outside Britain.

Manuscript B is written by one hand and contains two texts. The first of them is Hikayat Raja Handak (written as Handik) Berperang dengan Nabi Allah, followed by a colophon. The second one is a version of Hikayat Raja Pasai. 17½ pages of its text are lost.


6 Drewes G.W.J. Directions for Travellers on the Mystic path. - Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde (VKI), p.81, c.198.
The final part of the text is also missing. Therefore the only information about the manuscript can be found in the intermediate colophon, following the first text of the manuscript (Hikayat Raja Handak). In the introduction to the first text the copyist addresses his audience - Malay, Makassarese and Chinese readers, men as well as women.

The manuscript’s copyist, Ence Usman, son of a Malay scribe (juru tulis) from Makasar, worked on behalf of a certain Ence Usep (Kari Telolo) from Kampung Belikang of Makasar. The copying took place at the house of a certain Ence Johar, in Kampung Melayu of Semarang. The colophon confirms the existence of close contacts between Malay communities all over Nusantara and their interest to Malay literature.

The source copy of Hikayat Raja Pasai could belong to Captain Abdullah (kapitan Melayu di Semarang), owner of the source manuscript of Hikayat Raja Handak, though the opposite is also possible. As E.U.Kratz points out, the two texts of MS B were copied by the same person and very close to each other in time (the first text was completed on the 8th of Sya’ban 1211 A.H. which corresponds to the 6th of February 1797).

According to E.U.Kratz, the introduction to the text of Hikayat Raja Handak is evidence of Chinese peranakan readers’ interest for Islamic texts. Thus he argues against a statement made by Teuku Iskandar who said that baba readers were not usually interested in such books since those texts did not simply mention them. Kratz suggested that ethnicity no longer mattered for scribes of religious texts when a peranakan became a Muslim. However, one can hardly call Hikayat raja Handak a religious text, but a cerita khayalan, as Liauw Yock Fang called it. Its plot, full of fantasy, is far departed from its historical background and follows the usual patterns of Malay fictional hikayat. See, for instance, how the copyist addresses his future readers: …maka jikalau adalah janggal suratannya / yakni kurang

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7 " Hai segala tuan-tuan laki-laki dengan perempuan / yang salah sekalian daripada bangsa Melayu dan Mengkasyar istimewa / pula daripada bangsa peranakan hendaklah kiranya tuan-tuan sekalian / membaca dengan suci tangan maka membukah daripada lipatannya surat (2) ini supaya jangan ini kenah kotor maka jikalau telah sudah membaca / taruhlah kepada tempat yang baik supaya ia boleh lamah dibaca / dibuat pengibur hati yang dikesiskan karena kerela amat sukar / serta tiada dengan mudah akan menulis syahadan lagi segala tuan-tuan / yang meminjam hikayat ini jikalau telah sudah daripada / perkataan daripada permulaannya datang kepada kesudahannya hendaklah / kiranya mengembalikan pulaq kepada orang yang empunya surat ini (Or.14350, f.1r.&v.)

8 “ bi-qalam al-faqir al-haqir bi'l-mu'tarif wa'l-dhanb wa'l-taqasir'afw a'l-raji Ence' Usman / menyurat / ini di dalam daera' negeri Semarang yakni anaknya Ence' juruh tulis Melayu di Mengkasyar. / [... ] Syahadan adapan namanya orang yang empunya surat ini bernama Ence' Usep / yakni Kari Telolo yang beristirahatu'l-khair di negeri Mengkasyar di dalam kampung Belikang / maka adapan surat yang disalin itu suratnya kapitan Melayu di Semarang yang / bernama Abdullah wa 'lalu'l-mustafina / tertulis atas tanah Syemarang dalam kampung Melayu kepada rumahnya / Ence' Johar kepada dulapan'hari bulan Sya'ban / tahun Alif hijrat 1211/ al-nabi salla 'lahu alaihi / wa sallama / tammat " (Or. 14350 f.45 v).

9 Idem., p.2
hendaklah kiranya tuan-tuan menambahi dia maka jikalau adah lebih daripada perkataan yang / patut hendaklah kiranya menggeratkan karena orang yang menyurat ini belum sampai akal pahamnya / lagi ia bebali dengan kebebalannya... In Malay manuscript tradition such a message to the audience was a usual thing in texts of fiction and fantasy.

Despite the evident historical background of Hikayat Raja Pasai (following Hikayat Raja Handak in the MS B), it contains a considerable part of legendary elements and narrative patterns proper to folk epics (the story of Tun Beraim Bapa). The oral version of the chronicle which survived in Aceh up to the XX c. confirmed its connection with Malay folklore. Thus, both texts of the MS B have at least one thing in common: they combine features of fiction and reality. This is probably the reason why the scribe did non hesitate to put them side-by-side in his manuscript.

It is important to note here that neither E.U.Kratz, nor Russell Jones did not call in question the identity of the scribe of MS B: for them the copyist was the person mentioned in the intermediate colophon. This kind of colophon is rather widespread in manuscripts of Arabic script where it marks the end of one text before the beginning of the next one. The fact is that the copyist could reproduce not only the text of the source manuscript, but also its colophon, as it often happened, for instance, in Persian manuscript tradition. According to the catalog of Malay manuscripts from the Leiden University Library, sometimes in a colophon the copyist specified two dates – that of the writing of the source manuscript and that of the ending of his own work.

If we assume that the intermediate colophon of the MS B was composed by the copyist of the source manuscript, both the dating of MS B and the identity of the scribe are called into question. As the last pages of the codex are lacking, the only thing that we know about him is that the scribe found it possible to put Hikayat raja Handak and Hikayat raja Pasai under the same cover.

According to the intermediate colophon, MS B (or its source copy) was written in Semarang. No more than seventeen years later MS A was copied for Raffles from a source copy belonging to Kyai Suradimanggala, bupati of Demak (and, subsequently, of Semarang). As Annabel Gallop points out, at this time Semarang was one of the main centers of Malay written culture. The scribal activity was centered in such districts as the already mentioned Kampung Melayu, Kampung Tawang and Kampung Pakujan.

The copyist mentioned in the intermediate colophon of MS B, Ence Usman, has been one of these scribes coming to Semarang from other parts of the Malay world. The only thing

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we know for sure is that on the 8th of Sya’ban 1211 A.H. he copied the text of Hikayat raja Handak from a manuscript belonging to a local Malay. Several versions are possible here.

1. THE SCRIBE OF MS B WAS ENCE USMAN. After the copying of Hikayat raja Handak (followed by an intermediate colophon) Ence Usman continued his work and copied the text of Hikayat raja Pasai. There is no information available about the source copy of the chronicle.

2. THE SCRIBE OF MS B WAS NOT ENCE USMAN but someone who copied his manuscript including the intermediate colophon. In such a case both the dating of MS B and the scribe’s identity are called into question. It is possible that a) there was one source manuscript written by Ence Usman which included Hikayat raja Handak +colophon+ Hikayat raja Pasai, or b) there were two source manuscripts: first, that of Hikayat raja Handak +colophon, written by Ence Usman, and second, that of Hikayat raja Pasai (source unknown).

If the scribe of MS B was not Ence Usman, it is hardly possible to define the place of its copying. It could be done in Makassar where a local scribe used the copy written by Ence Usman as a source text and added to it the text of Hikayat raja Pasai. The same thing could happen in Semarang shortly before Ence Usman took away his own copy to Sulawesi.

Presumably, both texts of Hikayat Raja Pasai (from MS A and B) can be traced back to the same version of the chronicle and, perhaps, to the same source manuscript. Unfortunately, the missing final part of MS B does not allow us to make further conclusions about its origin. However that may be, the connection of the chronicle to Java seems most probable.

Some additional data confirm the Javanese roots of the MS A. After the two colophons written in Malay and Javanese (p. 140-141) and a list of place-names mentioned in the Hikayat Raja Pasai, follows a list of Majapahit vassal-states (not mentioned in the text of the chronicle). It has a striking resemblance to the similar list of countries found in cantos 13-15 of Nagarakertagama (1365), Old-Javanese poem praising the Golden Age of Majapahit Empire under Hayam Wuruk.

The title of the list reveal the scribe’s (or his patron’s) desire to extol this great power’s heyday, comparing it with Pasai’s decline: Bahawa ini negeri yang takluk kepada Ratu Majapahit kapan zaman pecahnya negeri Pasai, ratunya bernama Ahmad... For some reason he found it necessary to end his writing by displaying the glory of Majapahit. The fact that this list of countries was written after the colophon where Kyai Suradimanggala was mentioned allows us to suppose that the scribe of MS A added it on his own initiative or, perhaps, that Kyai Suradimanggala allowed him to do so. It is difficult to say, therefore, whether these lists were a part of the source manuscript belonging to Kyai Suradimanggala, or they were added to the new manuscript later, at the time of its copying for Raffles.