Regional Seminar on Islamic Libraries
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MALAY MANUSCRIPT CATALOGUING IN MALAYSIA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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Explicitly states on the need to establish within the Library “the National Centre for Malay Manuscripts for the acquisition, documentation and use of Malay manuscripts”
National Centre for Malay Manuscripts at PNM
Malay Manuscript

Previous: ‘written works, especially those written in Jawi and were produced as early as the late 15th century or around the 16th century and as late as the early 20th century’

Latest: ‘all kinds of hand written materials in any of the Malay languages using the Jawi script concerning the Malays and their civilization that are at least a hundred years old’
1. Handlists of Malay MSS (5)
2. Descriptive Catalogues of Malay MSS (9)
KATALOG MANUSKRIPT MELAYU
KOLEKSI PERPUSTAKAAN NEGARA MALAYSIA
TAMBAHAN KEENAM

KATALOG MANUSKRIPT MELAYU
KOLEKSI PERPUSTAKAAN NEGARA MALAYSIA
TAMBAHAN KESEMMAN

KATALOG MANUSKRIPT MELAYU
KOLEKSI PERPUSTAKAAN NEGARA MALAYSIA
TAMBAHAN KELAPAN
3. Catalogues of Malay MSS in Microform (3)
4. Catalogues of Malay MSS Abroad (6)
5. Union Catalogue of Malay MSS (1)
6. Exhibition Catalogues (3)
Guidelines for Malay Manuscript Documentation

- **Identification**
  - Name of institution that holds the manuscript.
  - Identification or call number of the manuscript.
  - Title of the manuscript. Arabic titles need to be transliterated accordingly.
  - Name of author and/or copyist.
  - Language of the manuscript.
  - Place of composition.
  - Date of manuscript. Hijri date should be converted to Gregorian calendar.
• Structure of manuscript

– Number of folios.
– Size of the manuscript in cm.
– Writing materials such as parchment, paper, tree bark and others.
– Collation of manuscript and number of quires.
– Catchwords and its location in the text.
– Rulings used in the text including text block and its size.
Issues in Cataloguing

• **Consistency**
  
  – Compliance with the guidelines in ms description.
  – Preparation of indexes
  – Transliteration of Arabic words (titles, authors, terms)
• Inaccuracies & Misattributions in MS Description

  – The work entitled *Durrat al-nadhirah tanbihan li durrat al-fakhirah* is also written as *Durrat al-nakhirah* (MSS 2026 & MSS 2172), *Darrat al-nadirah* (MSS 2144A), *Duratun Nazhirah* (MSS 3447A), *Durr al-Nazirah* (MSS 4528), and is only correctly transcribed in MSS 2983D.

  – The title for MS 764 is given as *Nazam nur la nama* in Romanized Malay. This is clearly a misattribution from its real title of *Nazam Nur al-Anam*. The correct title is transcribed in another copy held by the library (MSS 2730).
The title for MSS 4197B is given as *Tahrir al-ma‘ani ‘ala al-jazari*. However, this contradicts the title mentioned in the colophon transcribed in the same entry which states it as *Tajwid al-Quran*.

A Rejang calendar in MS 291 is simply catalogued as Petua.

MS 538 is given the title of Hadis Nabi. However, it is actually part of a work in jurisprudence beginning with the chapter on hunting and slaughter (*kitab al-sayd wa al-zaba’ih*).
Wan Zainal Abidin bin Wan Muhammad al-Fatani or Tuan Minal who is simply named as Zainal Abidin in MS 112, while in MSS 167 written as Tuan Mina Patani.

MSS 2998 (Tuḥfat al-ikhwan fi ṣadl al-rajab wa sya‘ban wa ramadan) is described as a work dealing with the levels of one’s faith. However, as can be seen from its title, the work actually deals with the encouragement and virtues of performing virtuous deeds in the months of Rajab, Sha‘ban and Ramadan.
Recommendations

• PNM through PMMe should strive to produce proper research catalogue for the Malay manuscripts in its collection. A good manuscript catalogue functions not only to inform user of its existence in a collection, but also represents a genuine research tool.

• Efforts should be made to update the existing union catalogue of Malay manuscripts after a lapse of more than twenty years since its first publication. Perhaps, this can be undertaken through PNM’s own digital library system (PERDANA) project or other similar platforms.
• PNM should also endeavour to develop in-house expertise in the field of Malay manuscripts amongst its staff (codicology, palaeography and philology). Also: revise the existing scheme of such librarians from managerial-based to research-based librarians as implemented in other important manuscript libraries such as the British Library, Universiteit Bibliotheek Leiden and others.

• Smart partnership and active collaboration with local researchers through research projects, academic attachments and others in various aspects of manuscript studies and its management (including description and cataloguing) should also be fostered.
Thank You

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