



Interconnection and Global Cooperation of *Alam Melayu* in Malay Historiography

Nabila Yasmin

nabilayasmin@uinsu.ac.id

*Fakultas Ilmu Sosial/Sejarah Peradaban Islam
Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara*

● *Received: 13.02.2023*

● *Accepted: 01.06.2023*

● *Published: 01.07.2023*

Abstract: *Alam Melayu* has been historically recognized as a significant geographical point that connects the Western and Eastern worlds. It is a strategic location in which trade and other activities occur between nations. The geographical characteristics enhance the establishment of relations and cooperation in various aspects such as economics, intellectual religion, politics, and culture. Therefore, this research aimed to describe the forms of contact and collaboration between *Alam Melayu* and foreign nations mentioned in Islamic Malay historiography. Content analysis and historiographical approach were applied as part of the methodology. Furthermore, some of the selected primary sources included the works of *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, *Sejarah Melayu*, and *Hikayat Aceh*. This early Islamic Malay historiography provided a fundamental, historic overview, alongside the openness and connection of *Alam Melayu* to culture and trade from the outside world.

Keywords: *Alam Melayu, Interconnection, International, Malay Historiography*

Abstrak: *Alam Melayu* secara historis diakui sebagai titik geografis penting yang menghubungkan dunia Barat dan Timur. Ini adalah lokasi strategis di mana perdagangan dan aktivitas lainnya terjadi antar negara. Karakteristik geografis meningkatkan terjalinnya hubungan dan kerjasama dalam berbagai aspek seperti ekonomi, intelektual agama, politik, dan budaya. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bentuk-bentuk kontak dan kerjasama antara *Alam Melayu* dengan bangsa asing yang disebutkan dalam historiografi Melayu Islam. Analisis isi dan pendekatan historiografi diterapkan sebagai bagian dari metodologi. Selanjutnya, beberapa sumber primer yang dipilih antara lain karya *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, *Sejarah Melayu*, dan *Hikayat Aceh*. Historiografi Melayu Islam awal ini memberikan tinjauan sejarah yang mendasar, di samping keterbukaan dan hubungan *Alam Melayu* dengan budaya dan perdagangan dari dunia luar.

Kata Kunci : *Alam Melayu, Interkoneksi, Internasional, Historiografi Islam*

1. Introduction

To achieve glory in the future, it is necessary for a nation to study and review its historical accounts, materials, and inherited treasures. This is because history provides advice and lessons including the developmental background of the culture and life of a nation. *Alam Melayu*, another name for *Melayu*, located in *Bilad Jawi*, translated as the Archipelago, in Southeast Asia, has a rich and varied historical heritage. As a renowned cultural center, the Archipelago possesses various valuable heritage, including objects, spoken and written. These historical artifacts provide extensive information and insight into the cultural conditions of *Alam Melayu* in the past.

One of the historical works that greatly contributes to the writing and reconstruction of history in *Alam Melayu* is the heritage in written form. Historical writings are relics capable of informing thoughts, feelings, and information about various aspects of life that once existed. Works containing information about the past were either derived from a socio-cultural background that no longer exists or that is not the same as the background of people living currently. The contents of *Alam Melayu* texts contain information across fields such as language, law, religion, history, philosophy, morals, politics, economics, medicine, etc¹.

All forms of activity, cooperation, and interconnection of a nation can be traced through past historiographical works. Likewise, the traditional Islamic historiography of *Alam Melayu* provides rich information about trade, shipping, politics, intellectual-religious, and other activities that have taken place in this archipelago. Many written works were produced by thinkers and writers, which enabled historians to fairly reconstruct the past. These traditional historiographical works include *Sejarah Melayu*, *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, *Hikayat Aceh*, *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*, *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiah*, *Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain*, *Tajussalatin*, *Bustanussalatin*, *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa*, *Silsilah Raja-raja di Negeri Kutai*, *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, *Syair Perahu*, *Hikayat Patani*².

This research focused on three works of Malay historiography only, namely *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, *Sejarah Melayu*, and *Hikayat Aceh*. The contents were analyzed and themes discussed related to the historical interconnection and cooperation between *Alam Melayu* and the outside world. Furthermore, this research described the forms of interconnection and cooperation carried out by the Malay community as highlighted in these works.

2. Methods

This research applied both historical and philological methods. The historical method involved topic selection, source gathering, source verification, interpretation, and writing (historiography)³. As part of historical auxiliary science, philology is also highly necessary in the study of historical texts or historiographical works. Philology is defined as a discipline that bases its work on written materials and expresses the meaning of texts from a cultural perspective⁴. Furthermore, the source text was analyzed during this research, and the primary sources used include *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, *Sulalatussalatin/Sejarah Melayu*, and *Hikayat Aceh*.

a. *Hikayat Raja Pasai* (HRP) is a saga related to the history of the land of Pasai and reflects the earliest periodization in Islamic Malay historiography. There is no

¹ Siti Baroroh Baried, *Pengantar Teori Filologi* (Yogyakarta: Badan Penelitian dan Publikasi Fakultas, Universitas Gajah Mada, 1994).

² V.I Bragisnky, *Yang Indah, Berfaedah Dan Kamāl: Sejarah Sastra Melayu Dalam Abad 7-19* (Jakarta: INIS, 1998).

³ Kuntowijoyo, *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Bentang Pustaka, 2005).

⁴ Baried.

date information available on this hikayat. However, historians estimate that it was written either between 1280-1400 AD or the same as 680-800 Hijriyah ⁵. There are three manuscripts: the first and most famous is the MS Raffles Malay manuscript N.67 kept at The Royal Asiatic Society, London (Manuscript A). The second was copied directly from Manuscript A which was also copied by a French academic named Edouard Dularirer in 1838 and kept at the Bibliotheque Nationale Paris, No. Mal.-Pol.50. Meanwhile, the third manuscript was discovered in 1986 in London, and purchased by the British Library in 1986 (Manuscript B) (Denisova, 2011; Jones, 1999).

- b. *Sejarah Melayu* is a Malay text that contains the history of Malacca from the 15th to 16th centuries. Neither the date, year of appearance nor author of this *Sejarah Melayu* can be ascertained. According to the opinion of several researchers and historians, this saga was compiled by the Treasurer of the Malacca Sultanate named Tun Sri Lanang. There are 29 manuscripts of this saga with three versions. Moreover, copies of the saga manuscripts are scattered in Southeast Asia and abroad, such as in St. Petersburg, London, and Leiden ⁶.
- c. *Hikayat Aceh* (HA) is a historical text written between 1606-1636 during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda. This saga was a form of offering and praise to a highly renowned king known as Sultan Iskandar Muda. This work is highly significant as it describes the tradition of writing history based on Islamic literature and genres from other nations. According to T. Iskandar, *Hikayat Aceh* was written according to the way of *Akhbarnama*, namely works written to honour the Great Moghul-Akbar ⁷.

3. Results and Discussion

The Southeast Asian region was historically known as *Alam Melayu* before its division into distinctive nations. The term *Alam Melayu* is translated into English as The Malay Archipelago and covers areas such as Sumatra, Java, Sulawesi, Maluku, Papua, Ternate, Kalimantan, Peninsular Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, and the Philippines. This is based on the process of Islamization in the Archipelago mentioned by Arnold Thomas Walker ⁸. Due to its highly strategic geographical location, it constituted a stopover and port for other nations who arrive with the aim of trading. Furthermore, *Alam Melayu* is renowned for its diverse natural resources

⁵ Tatiana Denisova, *Refleksi Historiografi Alam Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Malaya, 2011); *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, ed. by Russel Jones (Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Karyawan, 1999).

⁶ A. Samad Ahmad, *Sulalatus Salatin Sejarah Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: DBP, 2008); Denisova, *Refleksi Historiografi Alam Melayu*.

⁷ Teuku Iskandar, 'Hikayat Aceh' (Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Karyawan, 2001); Denisova, *Refleksi Historiografi Alam Melayu*.

⁸ T.W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam: A History of Propagation of the Muslim Faith* (London: Constable & Company, 1913).

which attract the attention of other nations. Its geographical location also established an advantage for external and neighboring cultures.

Based on an epigraphic, archaeological, and toponymic analysis of travel records, scientists concluded that *Alam Melayu* was one of the oldest centers of human culture. According to R. Braddell and F.W. Douglas, the first seafarers to arrive were the Sumero-Akkadians (4000-3000 BC) from Mesopotamia. The remains from archaeological excavations in Johor, a state in present-day Malaysia, and Sarawak, prove that from the 7th to 5th centuries BC, Phoenician traders transited through *Alam Melayu* and other ancient Arab lands. Sheba and Hadhramaut were also trading partners with *Alam Melayu* since ancient times. The Malay Archipelago was renowned in Mesopotamia, ancient Egypt, and Babylon as a center of culture and trade since ancient times. Furthermore, based on John Bastin's collection, Professor Tatiana studied the Historiographical Resources of *Alam Melayu*. John Bastin's Personal Collection also highlighted the role of the Archipelago in human history⁹.

Fundamental information on the interconnection and cooperation between *Alam Melayu* and the outside world is also presented in historiographical works written around the 14th to 17th centuries. These artifacts and historical relics provide an avenue for new interpretations in reconstructing historical writing. Historiographical works such as *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, *Sejarah Melayu*, and *Hikayat Aceh* were passed down by their predecessors and do not constitute only literary works. However, these texts highlighted the cultural activities of the people in **the Archipelago** who lived in the 14th to 17th centuries. This cultural activity is manifested in various forms such as intellectual-religious, political, and economic.

The information recorded in these works highlighted the access and openness of the outside world to the Archipelago. This provides an opportunity to develop a new culture that is more established and varied. For example, in the intellectual-religious field, the openness of the Pasai Kingdom (as mentioned in *Hikayat Raja Pasai*) in receiving a messenger from Mecca named Sheikh Ismail can be understood as a mission to spread Islamic da'wah. This text adds significant references to the process of Islamization in the Archipelago, specifically in Samudera Pasai. Furthermore, in terms of trade, this text records the activities of the Portuguese (Feringgi) conducting their trade in Malacca. This research summarized several forms of global interconnection and cooperation between *Alam Melayu* and the outside world based on three historical texts, namely *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, *Sejarah Melayu*, and *Hikayat Aceh*.

⁹ Tatiana Denisova, *Sumber Historiografi Alam Melayu Koleksi Peribadi John Bastin* (Kuala Lumpur: Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, 2020).

Table 1. Forms of Interconnection and Global Cooperation of Alam Melayu in Malay Traditional Historiography

Forms of Interconnection and Cooperation	Text	Source	Mentioned country
In the Intellectual field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Adapun kapal ini dari Makkah dan nama nakhodanya Syeikh Ismail disuruhkan oleh khalfah Syarif di Makkah ke negeri bernama Samudera.</i> As for this ship from Mecca and the name of captain, Sheikh Ismail, was ordered by the caliph Sharif in Mecca to a land called Samudera. - <i>Adapun akan Tun Abul Fadil itu terlalu sekali alim, lagi baginda tahu pada segala ilmu pendeta dan beberapa pendeta yang datang dari atas angina hendak bersoal dengan baginda itu, tiada sangkal daripada terlalu sangat/bijaksananya. Maka masyhurlah wartanya ke benua Semerkendi</i> Tun Abul Fadil was too pious due to familiarity with all the priest's knowledge. Some priests who came from above the wind wanted to ask the king, and they observed his great wisdom. Therefore, Tun Abul Fadil was famous for his message to the Semerkendi continent. - <i>Hatta maka Sultan Mahmud Syah hendak menyuruh ke Pasai,</i> 	<i>Hikayat Raja Pasai</i>	Mecca-Arab Country Continent Semerkendi/ Samarkand

	<p><i>bertanyakan masalah perkataan antara Ulama Mawara' al Nahr, dan Ulama Khurasan, dan Ulama benua Irak. Maka baginda hendak menyuruhlah; serta baginda mesyuarat dengan Bendahara dan segala Orang Besarbesar, "Bagaimana kita menyuruh ke Pasai itu? Jikalau bersurat, tiada dapat tiada tewas kita; kerana orang Pasai jikalau bersurat, 'salam dibacakannya</i></p> <p>Hatta then Sultan Mahmud Syah would order messengers to Pasai, inquire about the matter of speech between the Ulama Mawara' al-Nahr, the Ulama of Khurasan, and the Ulema of the Iraqi continent. Therefore, the king consulted with the Treasurer and all the bigwigs, "How do we send to Pasai? If it is written, we cannot help but die; because the Pasai people if they write a letter, read 'greetings'</p>		
In the field of Trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Hatta beberapa lamanya Sultan Malikul Saleh dalam negeri itu kerajaan, maka datang sebuah kapal dari benua Keling beniaga dan ada seorang dalam kapal itu tahu ia melihat asap emas</i> Hatta for some time Sultan Malikul Saleh was a kingdom in that country. A ship came from the trading Keling continent and someone on the ship saw golden smoke. - <i>Hatta datang sebuah kapal Feringgi</i> 	<i>Hikayat Raja Pasai</i>	Keling Continent

<p>dari Goah. Maka iapun bermiagalah di kota Melaka. Maka dilihat Feringgi itu negeri terlalu ma'mur dan bandarnya terlalu ramai. Maka segala orang Melaka pun berkampung melihat rupa Feringgi</p> <p>Hatta arrived in a Feringgi ship from Goah, and conducted business in Melaka city. Feringgi's view is that the country is too prosperous and the airport too crowded. Therefore, all the people of Melaka flocked to see Feringgi's face</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Maka Sultan Mahmud Syah pun hendak menyuruh ke Benua Keling membeli kain empat puluh bagai, pada sebagi empat helai kain, pada sehelai kain empat puluh balai bunganya. Maka Hang Nadim dititahkan baginda ke Benua Keling</i> <p>Sultan Mahmud Syah also visited the Rivet Continent to buy forty pieces of cloth, four strands of cloth for each piece of cloth, and forty strands of flowers for one piece of cloth. Therefore, Hang Nadim was ordered by the King to the Keling Continent</p>	<p>Melayu</p>	<p>Keling Continent</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Jika ada saudaraku yang di Aceh menaruh kuda tizi yang lain atau kuda bangkas dari Mekah atau dari Istanbul</i> <p>When any of my brothers in Aceh put other tizi horses or fast horses from Mecca or from Istanbul</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Syahdan pada ketika itu juga dititahkan</i> 	<p><i>Hikayat Aceh</i></p>	<p>Arabia and Istanbul</p>

	<p><i>sultan menyurat suatu marsum, ya'ni setemi yang sampai kepada Basyah yang di negeri Yaman yang bernama Mansur Hallab. Maka ada yang tersebut dalam marsum itu: Hai Basyah Mansur Hallab, segera kau suruhkan sebuah kapal ke negeri Aceh Daru as Salam mencarai ubat akan daku daripada minya kapur dan minyak tanah itu</i></p> <p>Syahdan at that time was also ordered by the sultan to write a letter to Basyah, who was in the country Yemen, whose name was Mansur Hallab. As stated in the morgue: Hi Basyah Mansur Hallab, immediately send a ship to the land of Aceh Daru as Salam to seek medicine for me from lime oil and kerosene.</p>		
In the field of politics (diplomacy), war	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Maka segeralah Barang Laksamana kembali mengadap raja, maka berdatang sembah ia,"Ya Tuanku Syah Alam, adapun perahu itu datangnya dari Benua Siam, Talak Sejang nama penglimannya datangnya disuruhkan raja benua Siam hendak meminta ufti negeri kita ini; jikalau ada sampai seperti maksudnya, maka kembalilah ia dan jika tiada sampai kehendaknya nescaya diperanginyalah akan negeri kita ini, ya Syah Alam."</i> <p>And admiral immediately returned to face the king, and people came to worship him, "My Lord Syah</p>	Hikayat Raja Pasai	Siamese continent

	<p>Alam, as for the boat coming from the continent of Siam, Talak Sejang, the name of the leader, was sent by the king of the continent of Siam. He wanted to ask for ufti for our country; if it is up to what he intended, then he will return and if not, our country will surely be fought, O Shah Alam."</p>		
	<p>- <i>Alkisah maka tersebutlah perkataan raja benua China, setelah kedengaranlah khabar kebesaran raja Melaka ke benua China, maka raja benua China pun mengutus ke Melaka bingkisan jarum sarat sebuah pilau, lain daripada sutera benang emas kimka dewangga, serta beberapa benda yang gharib-gharib. Setelah datang ke Melaka, maka disuruh Sultan Mansur Syah jemput surat dari benua China itu, diarak seperti adat menyambut surat dari benua Siam.</i></p> <p>Once upon a time, those were the words of the King of the Chinese continent, after hearing the news of the greatness of the King of Melaka. The king of the Chinese continent also sent a parcel of needles laden with an ark, other than silk gold thread kimka dewangga, as well as several bizarre objects. After arrival at Malacca, Sultan Mansur Syah was ordered to pick up letters from the</p>	<p><i>Sulalatussalatin/Sejarah Melayu</i></p>	<p>China country</p>
			<p>Siamese continent</p> <p>Arab country</p>

	<p>Chinese continent, paraded as is customary to welcome letters from the Siam continent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Setelah Sultan Mansur Syah mendengar bunyi surat itu terlalulah sukacita baginda, maka baginda pun memberi nugerahi persalin kepada Tun Telanai dan akan Menteri Jana Putera dan segala utusan Siam. Setelah datang musim yang baik, maka utusan yang menghantar itu pun bermohonlah. Maka Sultan Mansur Syah memberi persalin serta membalas surat kiriman akan raja Siam; maka utusan Siam pun kembalilah mengadap PraCau.</i>- After Sultan Mansur Syah heard the sound of the letter, His Majesty was happy, and presented gifts to Tun Telanai and to Minister Jana Putera and all Siam delegates. After the auspicious season came, the messenger who sent it begged. Therefore, Sultan Mansur Syah replied to the letter sent to the king of Siam, then the Siamese envoy returned to meet PraCau.- <i>Maka masyhurlah kebesaran negeri Melaka dari atas angina datang ke bawah angin. Maka oleh segala Arab dinamainya Malaqat</i>- Therefore, the greatness of the land of Melaka became famous and spread like the wind. Therefore, all		
--	---	--	--

	the Arabs called it Malaqat.		
	<p>- <i>Maka ada pada zaman itu sultan Syahr Nuwi di negeri Siam menyuruhkan sebuah kapal kepada Syah Alam, dua orang antusan. Daripada antaranya seorang bernama Maha Teba, seorang bernama Maha Mantri. Maka ada dibawanya oleh kedua antusan itu beberapa hadiah yang mulia-mulia dan yang indah-indah. Maka apabila sampailah mereka itu ke Aceh Dar as Salām kemudian daripada dua tiga harimaka surat dan segala hadiah diarak mereka itulah.</i></p> <p>Therefore, it was at that time that Sultan Syahr Nuwi in Siam ordered a ship to Shah Alam, for two envoys. Among them is a person named Maha Teba, and Maha Mantri. The two envoys brought some noble and beautiful gifts. When arrived at Aceh Dar as Salam, two or three days later, the letters and all the gifts were paraded by them.</p> <p>- <i>Maka pada masa Syah Alam takhta kerajaan, maka pada suatu masa datang antusan daripada raja Portugal dua orang, seorang bernama Dong Dawis dan seorang bernama Dong Tumis membawa surat dan membawa bingkis daripada raja Portugal.</i></p> <p>Therefore, during the reign of Shah Alam on the royal throne, one day</p>	<i>Hikayat Aceh</i>	Siamese country
			Portugal

	two envoys came from the king of Portugal, one named Dong Dawis and Dong Tumis carrying letters and carrying gifts from the king Portugal.		
--	--	--	--

4. Conclusion

Due to its strategic geographical location, the opportunity for trade, relations, and cooperation with other nations is highly possible for *Alam Melayu*. The various forms of interconnection and cooperation with the outside world can be traced through Malay historiographical works. Furthermore, this cooperation is realized in various forms such as in the intellectual-religious field, politics, trade, etc. The information recorded in this historiographical record highlights the historic characteristics of Malay society, including the connection to the outside world.

References

Ahmad, A. Samad, *Sulalatus Salatin Sejarah Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: DBP, 2008)

Arnold, T.W., *The Preaching of Islam: A History of Propagation of the Muslim Faith* (London: Constable & Company, 1913)

Baried, Siti Baroroh, *Pengantar Teori Filologi* (Yogyakarta: Badan Penelitian dan Publikasi Fakultas, Universitas Gajah Mada, 1994)

Braginsky, V.I, *Yang Indah, Berfaedah Dan Kamāl: Sejarah Sastra Melayu Dalam Abad 7-19* (Jakarta: INIS, 1998)

Denisova, Tatiana, *Refleksi Historiografi Alam Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Malaya, 2011)

— — —, *Sumber Historiografi Alam Melayu Koleksi Peribadi John Bastin* (Kuala Lumpur: Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, 2020)

Iskandar, Teuku, 'Hikayat Aceh' (Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Karyawan, 2001)

Jones, Russel, ed., *Hikayat Raja Pasai* (Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Karyawan, 1999)

Kuntowijoyo, *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Bentang Pustaka, 2005)