

Ulu Manuscripts at the Leiden University Library

Muhammad Haidar Izzuddin

In my quest to unravel the rich cultural tapestry of Sumatra, I have had the privilege of exploring the manuscript collection of UBL. With the generous support of the Lingling Wijadharma Fellowship of the library's Scaliger Institute, I was able to study the Ulu manuscripts, handwritten books from the highland communities of southern Sumatra.

The manuscripts

The library has an extensive and varied collection of Ulu manuscripts, covering a wide range of materials and textual genres. This collection also includes transliterations and copies of Ulu manuscripts from various

institutions, providing a comprehensive resource for students and scholars alike. The Ulu manuscript collection of UBL consists of 136 manuscripts: 36 bamboo manuscripts, one bark manuscript, and 99 paper manuscripts. This is a substantial collection of manuscripts, especially when compared to the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia, which has only 40 Ulu manuscripts.

The bamboo manuscripts include bamboo strips/*gelumpai* (bamboo strips held together with string) and bamboo stem/*surat boloh* (bamboo manuscripts with one or more internodes). *Kaghas* manuscripts are made of tree bark folded into a leprelo shape. Paper manuscripts include sheets



Fig. 1. *Gelumpai* manuscript containing questions and answers about the *Jajuna* bird, life and nature, and a receipt for a buffalo purchased from a village chief. UBL, Or. 12.281.

of paper, books, and leprellos with handwritten texts in Ulu script. From my observations, the Ulu manuscripts of UBL are well cared for and preserved. They are stored in specially designed boxes and folders. Moreover, depending on the type of manuscript, the staff hand out gloves before you handle the manuscripts.

Collection history

The origins of the Ulu manuscript collections at UBL trace back to the late 19th to mid-20th century AD. The acquisition of these manuscripts stemmed from various donations, with the initial collection efforts attributed to the linguist H.N. van der Tuuk in the 1880s. His contributions, including copies and transliterations archived under the shelfmarks Or. 3263 and Or. 3387, likely entered the library around mid-1896. Subsequent donations from individuals such as G.K. Niemann in the early 1900s, L.C. Westenenk in 1934 and 1935, M.G. Emeis, W.F. Lublink Weddik, and E.M. Uhlenbeck further enriched the collection. Another collection of bamboo manuscripts, notable for its size, was posthumously donated by J.A.W. van Ophuijsen (Or. 12.242 – Or. 12.263). Additionally, the collaborative efforts of M.A. Jaspan and P. Voorhoeve since 1969 have significantly contributed to the collection's expansion and preservation.

Enriching metadata

In my search for the Ulu manuscripts in the library's collections, I took a multi-pronged approach. First, I used the online catalogue. Using keywords, titles, and subject headings, I was able to identify some relevant material. However, the metadata and manuscript descriptions provided by UBL, particularly for the Ulu manuscripts, proved to be rather limited. Fortunately, I was able to use older printed catalogues such as the one compiled by Iskandar (1999) and Witkam's *Inventory of the Oriental Manuscripts of the Library of the University of Leiden* (2007) to locate all Ulu manuscripts.

My work in identifying and describing these manuscripts will result in a catalogue. I hope that the metadata I create and share with the library will make it easier for future users to identify Ulu manuscripts in the collection. This, in turn, could encourage the use and study of this important cultural heritage of South Sumatra.

Tips for exploring the manuscript collection of UBL

For those who would like to explore the manuscript collection of UBL, I offer the following tips:

1. Familiarize yourself with the library's online catalog and database to search for relevant manuscripts and materials related to your research interests.
2. Utilize keywords, titles, and subject headings to narrow down your search and identify material that align with your research objectives.
3. Take advantage of the library's digitization efforts to access rare and fragile manuscripts online, allowing for a more convenient and comprehensive study of the texts.
4. Make use of the metadata and manuscript descriptions provided by the online and digitized catalogues to gain insights into the manuscripts' provenance, content, and thematic significance.
5. Consider reaching out to the library staff and experts in Indonesian Studies for guidance and assistance in navigating the Ulu manuscript collection effectively.

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Finding Traces of Hoesein Djajadiningrat at the Leiden University Library

Mohammad Refi Omar Ar Razy

The purpose of my research at the Leiden University Library was to collect additional sources for my doctoral thesis. My research aims to explore knowledge production, knowledge transmission, and intellectual networks through a case study of Hoesein Djajadiningrat.¹ Hoesein was born on 8 December 1886 in Kramatwatu, Banten. In 1904, he went to the Netherlands to study at the Department of Oriental Literature at the Leiden University. There he was taught directly by Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, the renowned Islamologist and Arabist. He graduated seven years later, becoming the first Indonesian to receive a doctorate, with a dissertation entitled *Critische Beschouwing van Sadjarah Banten* (1913). He published on a wide range of topics related to history, Islamic studies, and literature, and he became an important figure in both Dutch and Indonesian social and academic circles.

In search of relevant sources for my research, I visited several Indonesian libraries and archives, including the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia, the Library of the Republic of Indonesia, the Rekso Pustoko Library, and the Sonobudoyo Library. I found many of Hoesein's works from after his return to the Dutch East Indies, including his contributions about Java. In the Rekso Pustoko Library, I was able to access his correspondence with Mangkoenagoro VII of Surakarta and his wife Partini. Most of these letters discuss the promotion of Javanese

culture through the Java Instituut. However, much of Hoesein's correspondence with his former teachers in Leiden is held in the Leiden University Library. From 1912 to 1935, Hoesein exchanged letters with his supervisor Snouck Hurgronje. With a total of 81 letters between them (shelfmark D H 1105, folders 1 and 2), their correspondence shows how the relationship between supervisor and student continued after Hoesein's return to the Dutch East Indies.

The bulk of their correspondence concerns the *Atjèhsch-Nederlandsch woordenboek* ("Acehnese-Dutch dictionary", 1934), which Hoesein worked on after his return. In 1914-1915, he travelled to the Koetaraja area of Aceh, now Banda Aceh, to learn the Acehnese language. He was

accompanied by two local informants, Tengkoë Noerdin and Hadji Aboebakar. The informants helped him by explaining grammar, suggesting words for the dictionary, and collecting relevant data. Tengkoë Noerdin and Hadji Aboebakar also copied manuscripts of Acehnese *hikayat* ("story", a narrative genre in Malay and Acehnese textual traditions), that they came across during their travels.² Some of these are now in the UBL Special Collections, including *Hikayat Atjeh*, *Hikayat Prang Sabi* and *Hikayat Peulandok Kence*. Most of the entries in the dictionary were derived from the language of the *hikayat*, which differs from spoken language in sentence structure and word usage. By examining a large number of *hikayat*, Hoesein was

able to study how the words were used and thereby discover their meaning.

In addition to Hoesein's letters to Snouck Hurgronje, the library also holds letters from Hoesein to other intellectuals such as R.A. Kern, F.S. Eringa, and Salim Al-Attas. Overall, the library has an extensive collection of materials relating to Hoesein and other important figures in Indonesia, making it a vital resource for my research. The collection contains a wealth of materials resulting from the direct or indirect interaction between Indonesia and the Netherlands, all of which are well preserved. This collection has allowed me to discover important pieces that complement the resources I already have. I believe it would be beneficial for Indonesian researchers with similar interests to explore the collection. Given its importance, I highly recommend that any Indonesian researcher visit Leiden University Library, whether for a short or longer stay, to take advantage of this valuable resource.

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Notes

- 1 A biography of Hoesein is currently being written by Marieke Bloembergen (KITLV) and Tom van den Berge.
- 2 Kees Groeneboer, "Herman Neubronner Van der Tuuk and Nineteenth-Century Language Study in Southeast Asia," *Kekal Abadi*, 2002, 21(2); C.D. Grijns, "Van der Tuuk and the study of Malay," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 1996, 152(3), 353-381; Andries Teeuw, "Van der Tuuk as Lexicographer," *Archipel*, 1996, 51(1), 113-133.



Fig. 1. Letters by Hoesein and Snouck Hurgronje. Hoesein enclosed a picture of himself and two of his friends in Switzerland in a letter to his former professor. He visited the country on his return journey to Indonesia. UBL, DH 1105 folder 1.