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ACCESS TO MALAY MANUSCRIPTS*

Background

Our knowledge of written traditional Malay literature depends to a great extent on the Malay manuscripts that have been copied and collected particularly in the 19th century. These manuscripts, perhaps with the exception of the oldest among them, preserved in the Cambridge and Oxford University libraries, have undergone various deliberate changes at the hands of scribes. This in no way lessens their importance. However, in this paper we are only concerned with the survival of manuscripts and their accessibility to researchers.

Researchers have discovered that some of the texts mentioned in François Valentijn's list, published in 1726, no longer exist. But not all losses of ancient literary texts took place so early. Some of the texts referred to in Raja Ali Haji's *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, too, are no longer traceable. They are known to us from no other source.

Other manuscripts, while surviving the destruction of the Malay sultanates of Pasai, Palembang, Malacca, Aceh, and others, perished later. Some of them may have been too tattered to be of much practical use when found, and so probably were abandoned as waste materials. Still others were left to perish, as no one was interested in reading and copying them because writing-materials (paper, palm-leaves, etc.) were too scarce and expensive to be used widely. There were also instances of the deliberate destruction of manuscripts in those days. In Aceh, in the 17th century, works by Shamsuddin of Pasai were ordered to be burnt because of a theological controversy involving Nuruddin al-Raniri (Iskandar 1964:438). Similarly, manuscripts regarded as vehicles of

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objectionable cultural influences were often exposed to the danger of extinction when a new religion replaced the previous faith. Under the influence of orthodox court advisors, feudal rulers could impose censorship on or ban offensive texts. Owners of manuscripts in such circumstances were ready to destroy all works relating to prohibited subjects for fear of being implicated. Illiterate family members likewise might consider it safer to destroy all books in their homes than risk being caught in possession of the wrong books. All these factors contributed to the disappearance of numerous manuscripts from general circulation, with the result that other people were prevented from copying them. Until Europeans began collecting them and bringing them under their custody, it was rare for Malay manuscripts to survive even for two centuries (R. Jones 1985:11). In those days, when there were no copying machines, the circulation of manuscripts was indeed a problem-fraught business. Some manuscripts, however, fared better and survived longer than others. Works of popular literature were probably among the more fortunate. Together with the magico-religious manuscripts, which were sacred and considered to yield certain benefits, the manuscripts containing these were well preserved and re-copied when necessary. It was perhaps in this way that literary continuity was ensured.

Nearly all the manuscripts now preserved in Britain, The Netherlands, Malaysia and Indonesia, though constituting only a small proportion of what was actually produced, represent the final products of a long tradition of repeated copying and telling and re-telling which began as early as the 14th century. As most of the manuscripts contain no dates of writing, we are in the dark as to when the earliest Malay manuscripts were actually written. *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai*, which was believed to be the earliest Malay manuscript, composed at the court of Pasai in the 14th century, until Teeuw argued against this (Teeuw 1964), is known to us only from a copy prepared for Sir Stamford Raffles in 1815 (R. Jones 1980:167). The earliest examples of Malay manuscripts in Europe can be found in the collection of Isaac de St. Martin (d. 1696) (de Haan 1900). According to Brakel, the oldest Malay *hikayat* manuscripts extant in British institutions date no further back than the end of the 16th century (Brakel 1979:4). As nearly all the extant Malay manuscripts were written in the Jawi script, it can be assumed that Malay manuscript writing must have started sometime in the 14th century. Snouck Hurgronje, quoted by Drewes, proposed the year 1200 as the earliest date for the coming of Islam to Nusantara, where it was introduced by Muslim traders from India, with which Nusantara had been in contact for centuries previously (Drewes 1968 : 443).

Except in the case of works of known authorship, date and place of writing, such as *Tajus-Salatin*, written by Bohari al-Johari in Aceh in 1603, the precise origins of numerous manuscripts will remain a mystery for a long time to come. What is not a mystery, however, is that during

the period from the 14th to the 19th centuries many manuscripts were created and re-created, copied and re-copied. During that period, new and old manuscripts, new titles, and new versions of old texts existed simultaneously, without our knowing where, when and by whom they were produced. Despite numerous changes on their journey through the years, each of them still retains its distinctiveness as a unique text. The *Undang-Undang Melaka*, for instance, as Liaw concluded, is a hybrid text, consisting of six different individual texts which underwent numerous reconstructions at different times (Liaw 1976:31).

Acquisition of Malay Manuscripts

The Riau-Lingga Archipelago became an important source of Malay manuscripts, not only because it was the last stronghold of the feudal Malay empire but also because it was here that Dutch colonial administrator-scholars turned their attention for the collection of these materials in reaction to British administrator-scholars' similar pursuits elsewhere in Nusantara. Apart from preserving old texts, Riau-Lingga produced many new works in the form of local chronicles, works on customs and the Malay language, and so on, written by men of letters such as Raja Ali Haji and his relatives (Andaya and Matheson 1979:108). There were equally valuable and important manuscripts collected elsewhere. The early collections owe their existence to the love, patience, labour and curiosity of a number of European amateur collectors from different backgrounds. P. P. Roorda van Eysinga (1796-1856), for instance, first went to the East Indies as an army lieutenant in 1819. Here he developed an interest in the Malay language. The following year he was transferred to the civil service, and later on he began collecting and studying Malay literature. However, early European amateur manuscript collectors would probably not have succeeded in acquiring manuscripts of their interest had they not received the cooperation and assistance of the local people, including professional scribes, community chiefs and royal families. Their generous cooperation was a sign of a change in attitude towards the entire question of the possession of manuscripts, induced by profound changes in society as a whole. Prior to this, besides promoting literary and artistic activities, Malay feudal rulers had played an important role in shaping and influencing the cultural taste of their times by exercising absolute control over the circulation of certain manuscripts. They were always in a position to decide whether manuscripts were to be made available in sufficient quantity for people to copy and read. The well-known episode in the *Sejarah Melayu* of the Malay warriors who, nervous and excited on the eve of the expected Portuguese assault on Malacca in 1511, attempted to boost their morale by asking the permission of the Sultan to read the *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiah*, but were instead given the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*, may be interpretable as an illustration of the Sultan's absolute

control over the circulation of manuscripts, in particular dynastic historical ones, which were meant for edification and instruction, and works recording the origins of the dynasty and the accomplishments of the successive generations of rulers (Matheson 1980:183). It is perhaps through careful preservation in court libraries that the manuscripts survived long enough to be read and copied for generation after generation until they were finally copied and removed from circulation in the 19th century.

Commercial copying of Malay manuscripts did not exist until Europeans began offering money for them in the 19th century. Since then, dealers in Malay manuscripts have come into being and commercial copying of these materials on an unprecedentedly large scale began. Appended to Skinner's article of 1978 is a letter from Alfred North mentioning that, while commander Wikes was in Singapore in February 1842, he left some money with him to collect manuscripts (perhaps through Abdullah Munshi's father) to be sent to the United States of America (Skinner 1978:480). These manuscripts are now in the Library of Congress, Washington DC (see Teeuw 1967). Likewise, Munshi Abdullah mentions in his *Hikayat Abdullah* that his father had been given money and letters by Dutch officers at Batavia to collect Malay manuscripts. But, as manuscripts began to pour into the open market, they became more and more prone to corruption. Apart from editorial changes, many texts contain errors because they were copied in great haste, while others were copied without any understanding. Some manuscripts were even copied by Europeans themselves in the process of acquisition. The *Syair Perang Mengkasar* (now Cod. Or. 1621 at the Leiden University Library) is believed to have been copied by François Valentijn's wife, Cornelia, in Ambon during their stay there from 1707 to 1712 (Skinner 1963). The manuscript of *Hikajat Potjut Muhammad* in the Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology at Leiden (Or. 2479) is a transcription of Schmidt's copy, Cod. Or. 8666, in the Leiden University Library, which was originally copied by H. J. Schmidt himself from a manuscript in his possession (Drewes 1979:29). The manuscript of *Sja'ir Radja Siak* in the Museum Pusat, Jakarta (now Ms. Von de Wall 273), is believed to have been copied for the Genootschap by Von de Wall on his return to Batavia (now Jakarta) between 1855 and 1860 (Goudie 1980:239). In some cases, texts in Jawi script were transliterated into Latin characters. There are instances, too, of copiers not only transliterating the text from one script to another, but in the process also changing the text. The Achehnese manuscript of *Hikayat Ranto* in the Leiden University Library (Cod. Or. 8015(4)) was found to have been modified in more than fifty places by Snouck Hurgronje's clerk, T. Mohd Nurdin, in the process of preparation (Drewes 1980:2). Regardless of whether there are such changes or corruptions or of whether the texts have been transliterated or not, the manuscripts collected have

survived and are accessible to us as important documents in the study of Malay literature and culture.

These manuscripts, regardless of the initial motives of their collectors, were later donated, sold or bequeathed to various libraries and museums. For example, *Hikayat Seri Rama* in the Museum Pusat, Jakarta (Cohen Stuart 143), which was copied by Muhammad Cing Sa'idullah from a copy owned by Said bin Muin of Kampung Kamiwaran, was presented to the then Genootschap after the death of Cohen Stuart in 1875 (Ikram 1980:69). The shorter version of *Tuhfat al-Nafis* (now in the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde Library), copied at Penyengat from a copy in the possession of Yamtuan Muda in 1896, was a gift to A. L. van Hasselt, then Dutch Resident at Riau (Matheson 1982:xxiii). Most of the manuscripts in the Royal Asiatic Society Library, London, were copies made for Sir Stamford Raffles while he was Lieut.-Governor of Java (1811-1816), while some of the others were collected by him during this period (Voorhoeve 1964:257). *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai* (Ms. R. 67) was copied for Sir Stamford Raffles in 1815 (1814?) from a copy in the possession of Kyai Suradimanggala, Adipati of Demak (Yusof Iskandar 1971). Von de Wall, born in Germany in 1807, and deceased in Riau in 1873, collected (and perhaps copied?) Malay manuscripts from Borneo, Riau and the Malay Peninsula during the period of his stay there. His sizable collection of some 300 items is now in the Museum Pusat, Jakarta (R. Jones 1985:17). The School of Oriental and African Studies Library, London, acquired a dozen manuscripts, including *Hikayat Sultan Ibrahim ibn Adham* (SOAS Ms. No. 168214), from the Library of the Baptist College in Bristol in 1964. Jones concludes that Charles Evans may have procured the manuscript of the said Hikayat from a fellow-Englishman, brought it back to England in 1826, and subsequently deposited it in the Baptist College Library (R. Jones 1985:19). The *Undang-Undang Melaka* in the Leiden University Library (Cod. Or. 1705) was copied at the General Secretariat in Batavia. It belonged originally to the Royal Academy in Delft, established for the training of Dutch civil servants in 1843 (Liaw 1976:17). After this Academy closed in 1864, its manuscript collection was transferred to the Leiden University Library. The Royal Library at Berlin bought the Malay manuscript collection of Schoemann, who had spent the years 1845 to 1854 in Indonesia as tutor to the children of Governor-General Rochussen, travelling widely and collecting many manuscripts here, including *Hikayat Bandjar* (Tübingen, Schoemann V), which was believed to originate from Borneo (Ras 1968:214). The John Leyden collection of Oriental works was sold to the India Office Library in London in 1824 (Jones and Rowntree 1983). The John Crawford Malay manuscript collection (containing 24 items collected during the periods of Crawford's service in Penang and Jogjakarta and in the course of his journeys to Semarang, Celebes, Pon-

tianak and Singapore, from 1808 to 1816) was sold to the British Museum (now the British Library) in 1842 (Marrison 1981:8-10). More cumulative information on prominent British manuscript collectors in Nusantara and the whereabouts of their collections is available in the works of Ricklefs and Voorhoeve (1977) and R. Jones (1984). Information on early Malay manuscript collectors from other nations and on the vicissitudes of the items collected can be obtained from various academic dissertations and theses based on Malay manuscripts which were written since van Ronkel (1895), Rinkes (1909) and many others after them (Ismail Hussein 1974:31-75).

Manuscript acquisitions were in most cases matters of single transactions between individuals. There were large-scale acquisitions when the British captured the Jogjakarta *kraton* in 1812 (Carey 1980) and when the Dutch purchased the library of the royal court of Bantam after 1830 (Voorhoeve 1964). But the process of acquisition did not end after the items changed owners and moved to new homes once. In this connection, the account by Voorhoeve of the Malay scriptorium at the General Secretariat of the Dutch Government at Batavia in the early 19th century is very enlightening (Voorhoeve 1964). According to this account, manuscripts assembled there were sent to the Royal Academy at Delft, and these copies now form the nucleus of the Leiden University Library Malay manuscript collection. Through purchases, donations and other modes of acquisition, the collection of Malay manuscripts in the Leiden University Library grew from only 7 items in 1850 to 1168 in 1921 – a truly remarkable achievement (Ismail Hussein 1974:6). According to the notes of the *Inventaris Legatum Warnerianum* of the Leiden University Library, pages 39 to 42, 197 manuscripts were added to the library after the Royal Academy at Delft was closed (Mulyadi 1983:6). Copies of manuscripts made at the General Secretariat also flowed to other libraries in Europe, such as the National Library in Paris, the Royal Library in Brussels, the Royal Institute Library at The Hague, and Berlin (now Tübingen) (Voorhoeve 1964:256). Without question, the process of collection, preservation and reproduction of Malay manuscripts by the British and the Dutch, particularly in the 19th century, was due to the love for and interest in such cultural products acquired in the course of sustained activities and contacts in Nusantara over a period of some 300 years. It was perhaps such love and interest that induced H. N. van der Tuuk to copy the *Bustanus Salatin*, now in the Leiden University Library, (Cod. Or. 5443), that was originally written by Nuruddin al-Raniri in Aceh in 1638. He used two manuscripts (i.e. Ms. No. 42 and Ms. No. 8 of the Royal Asiatic Society Library, London), which in their turn were first copied for Sir Stamford Raffles in 1812 (Iskandar 1968). On-the-spot collection of Malay manuscripts by the British and the Dutch came to an end after Indonesia and Malaya achieved independence. Now there are only sporadic manuscript ac-

quisitions at auctions and from Oriental bookstores. The School of Oriental and African Studies Library is reported to have acquired a number of manuscripts collected by D. F. A. Hervey, a British administrator in Malaya in the late 19th century, through Kegan Paul, London (R. Jones 1979:26). Jones further reports that Sir Harold Bailey purchased six Malay manuscripts from W. Heffer and Sons Ltd., Cambridge, sometime in 1967 (R. Jones 1979:26). A copy of the *Syair Perang Mengkasar* was auctioned off at Sotheby's on 27 November 1974 (Brakel 1974:98).

Malay manuscript collections in various libraries and museums in Malaysia, though small by comparison with those in Britain and The Netherlands, are nevertheless of considerable importance (Chambert-Loir 1980b; Harun Mat Piah and Ismail Hamid 1983). They provide a picture of the types of manuscripts that were produced in Brunei and in parts of the Malay Peninsula in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Most of the known Malay manuscripts in North Borneo (now East Malaysia) originated from Brunei and the Limbang River area, whence they were brought to the Sarawak Museum in early 1941 by G. T. M. MacBryan, then Assistant Curator of the Museum (*Hikayat* 1983:5). Acquisition of traditional Malay manuscripts from Indonesia and Malaysia is not easy, as these materials are no longer reproduced today, and most libraries in any case are short of funds. However, there might still be some manuscripts hiding unnoticed in attics and mosques and private collections. The acquisition of materials like these involves a lot of detective work and requires time and patience, in contrast to the comfortable armchair acquisitions so successfully made by early European collectors. A rare recent example of such 'detective' work is that of Prof. de Josselin de Jong, who travelled the length and breadth of Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah and Pahang in search of Malay manuscripts in 1954 and succeeded in acquiring some from private holdings (de Josselin de Jong 1980).

Bibliographical Control

Malay manuscripts deposited in the various libraries and museums would surely have remained unknown and untapped had they not been carefully and painstakingly described. Documentation, in essence, is a descriptive process devised to bring unpublished and published materials under physical and intellectual control, so that these materials may be retrieved as and when they are needed. In bibliographical control, the contribution of Dutch and British scholars is outstanding. Through painstaking and meticulous scholarship, they have provided us with valuable guides through what hitherto had been an impenetrable jungle of manuscripts, and so have made physical access to the relevant manuscripts easier and faster. What merits particular recognition in this context are the respective reference tools left by Juynboll, van Ronkel,

Voorhoeve, Winstedt, Cabaton, and a few others. Bibliographical information on their catalogues is to be found in works by Ismail Hussein (1974), Ding (1979, 1981), Chambert-Loir (1980a), and Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia (1984a). Some of these names have since become household words to students and scholars of traditional Malay literature. These documentation works not only furnish scholars and libraries with improved knowledge of Malay manuscripts and their location, but also facilitate philological and historical research on Malay manuscripts immeasurably.

The earliest published reference to Malay manuscripts was by François Valentijn, a Dutch missionary-historian. He mentioned a number of Malay manuscripts known to him in the fifth volume of his gigantic work *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, published in 1726. Ten years later, G. H. Werndly, a Swiss scholar, appended a list of 69 Malay manuscripts to his work entitled *Maleische Spraakkunst*. Nevertheless, the oldest list of Malay manuscripts to have come down to us is an inventory of the collection belonging to Isaac de St. Martin published by de Haan (1900). The references it contains, specifying no more than the titles of the manuscripts, represented virtually all the information on Malay manuscripts available to Westerners in the 17th and 18th centuries. In fact, before van der Tuuk, van Ronkel, Overbeck, Blagden and other Orientalists began with the serious documentation of Malay manuscripts in libraries in Europe and the Museum Pusat in Jakarta, only the few manuscripts collected by those early British and Dutch administrator-scholars were known to a wide public. Now there are more than 86 catalogues which may be used for locating the known surviving manuscripts dispersed over many different countries (Chambert-Loir 1980a). The catalogues of Klinkert (1880), Juynboll (1899), van Ronkel (1921), Voorhoeve (1952) and Wan Ali (1985a) are guides with bibliographical information on Malay manuscripts preserved in The Netherlands. Similarly, van der Tuuk (1849, 1866, 1887), Nieman (1871), Blagden (1899), de Haan (1900), Greentree (1910), Winstedt (1920), Voorhoeve (1963, 1977, 1982), and Mohamed Taib Osman (1972) have provided important reference tools for Malay manuscripts deposited in the United Kingdom. Important sources of information on manuscripts available in Malaysia are the works of Howard (1966), Voorhoeve (1969), Ibrahim Kassim (1973), Abu Hassan Sham (1974), Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia (1984a), Chambert-Loir (1980b), and Harun Mat Piah and Ismail Hamid (1983). Miller has brought together information on 256 Malay/Indonesian manuscripts available in 12 university and state libraries and museums in Australia for the first time (1982). The existence of Malay manuscripts in Germany has become widely known since the publication of catalogues by Brockelmann (1908), Overbeck (1926) and Mohamed Taib Osman (1972). There is no denying that without these reference tools, either unpublished or

published as monographs or in scholarly journals, our knowledge of the wealth of Malay manuscripts and the bibliographical information on them would be sketchy and incomplete. As new materials are discovered and fresh information is brought to light as a result of academic research, the contents of these catalogues tend to be updated and past errors corrected. For example, Wan Ali tells how Umar Junus corrected some mistakes in the catalogue cards of Snouck Hurgronje's manuscript collection prepared by van Ronkel in 1899 (Wan Ali 1985b:78). Further useful information on corrections made by scholars of errors made by their predecessors can be found in an article by Ricklefs (Ricklefs 1969:243). Mistakes and confusions arose particularly because the early Orientalists/cataloguers adopted the contemporary common practice in identifying Malay manuscripts of looking for clues in the introductory and concluding pages. This approach is valid in some cases only. According to Goudie, the introductory note 'Inilah syaer cetera daripada Bandar Bengkalis di dalam negeri Siak masa berperang Tanah Johor' attached to Ms. KL. 153 of the Klinkert Collection, Leiden University Library, cannot be taken as an indication of the subject of the manuscript of the *Syair Perang Siak* (Goudie 1980:235). It is regrettable, however, that many such corrections are not made known to outsiders who lack the opportunity to visit the libraries concerned. As a result, mistakes continue to be repeated over and over again.

An interesting question which needs to be answered is 'how many Malay manuscripts are there?' Ismail Hussein estimates their number to be approximately 5,000, comprising 800 titles (Ismail Hussein 1974: 12). After many years of cumulative research, he has provisionally classified them as follows: 150 works of prose fiction, 46 on Islamic legends, 47 pertaining to history, 41 relating to law, 116 on poetry, 300 on theology and 100 on miscellaneous subjects. An estimate of the number of extant manuscripts can be made by examining and comparing the various catalogues. Chambert-Loir has estimated that there are 4,000 Malay manuscripts, unevenly distributed over 26 countries (Chambert-Loir 1980a). A few years after him, R. Jones, quoted by Ibrahim Ismail, estimated this number to be approximately 10,000 (*Symposium* 1982). This five-figure estimate seems plausible because there are still so many undescribed, unidentified and even as yet unknown manuscripts hidden in libraries, private homes and elsewhere. In spite of whatever their attempted coverage, no bibliography or catalogue can claim to be up-to-date or comprehensive at any time. It is unreasonable, therefore, to expect a bibliography to achieve what it has not aimed to achieve. Recently, the present writer was informed for the first time of the existence of over 1,200 Malay manuscripts relating to Islam in the Pusat Islam Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur (personal communication by Wan Alias, of the Pusat Islam Malaysia). Moreover, there are over a hundred Malay manuscripts in Sri Lanka (Hussainmiya 1978 and

1983; *Simposium* 1982), but bibliographical data on them have yet to be compiled. There are also some Malay manuscripts in India (Ibrahim bin Ismail 1986). Mohamed Taib Osman, furthermore, has pointed out that the eight boxes of Malay manuscripts collected and left at the Institute of Social Anthropology, Oxford University, by W. W. Skeat were sparingly described in a catalogue by Wainright and Matthews in 1965 (Mohamed Taib Osman 1972). Jones reports the discovery of yet another manuscript of the *Sejarah Melayu*, not related to Raffles Malay 18 in the Royal Asiatic Society Library in London, but similar to the version associated with Abdullah Munshi (R. Jones 1979:27). This brings the number of manuscripts of the *Sejarah Melayu* to more than 30, counting all the related texts (Roolvink 1967). Such new discoveries, besides filling in gaps in our knowledge of the spread, popularity and history of the various manuscripts, also tend to stimulate scholars and librarians to update existing catalogues. So Ricklefs and Voorhoeve in 1982 published additions and corrections to their earlier work of 1977. Prior to that, the catalogue of the Malay manuscripts of the Genootschap, originally published by van Ronkel in 1909, had been expanded by Poerbatjaraka and Voorhoeve, in 1950, while it was updated further in 1972. As the updating of existing catalogues in their entirety is expensive, it is common to find information on new manuscripts in journals and newsletters, for instance, which also serve as a clearing-house for the exchange of other information, documentation and other products of research. In recent years, the growing interest in the bibliographical control of Malay manuscripts has led to efforts to establish such control at a national level. The catalogue of Ricklefs and Voorhoeve (1977), along with its supplement (1982), and those of Miller (1982) and Wan Ali (1985a) have rendered the retrieval of the relevant manuscripts in British, Australian and Dutch libraries easier, faster and more efficient than before.

Catalogued Malay manuscripts in practically all libraries are arranged not according to subject matter, in the manner of printed materials, but by accession number or serial numbers assigned to their respective collectors or donors. This mode of organization is basically a device to facilitate shelving and retrieval. As a result, different manuscripts of the *Sejarah Melayu* in the Leiden University Library, for example, have been given the numbers Cod. Or. 1703, 1704, 1716, 1736, 1760, 3210, 6669, 12026, 12027 and 14319, and Kl. 5 and SED 902 respectively (Wan Ali 1985a). It is perhaps to satisfy the wishes of the donors that such manuscripts are identified by their names and kept separated from other collections. In the Royal Asiatic Society Library, London, the manuscripts once belonging to Sir Stamford Raffles (such as the *Sejarah Melayu*, coded 'Raffles Malay 18') are kept separately from those once belonging to Maxwell (such as *Tajus-Salatin*, coded 'Maxwell 13'). Be that as it may, it seems reasonable to suggest that, without some appro-

priate device for shelving them, it would be extremely difficult to retrieve these widely dispersed manuscripts quickly. As the years go by and collections grow larger, hopefully the libraries themselves will come to realize that a standardized classification should form the basis for the effective use of manuscripts. Admittedly, the subject classification method, which permits of both the multiple and the specific subject approach to library collections, has not been popular where manuscripts are concerned. Van Ronkel in 1909 classified the Malay manuscripts in the Genootschap library into different subject categories: tales, Islamic legends, history, law, poetry, and so on. But his is probably the only early example of such classification by subject matter. More recently, Ismail Hussein has divided 5,000 Malay manuscripts into eight subject classes corresponding to those identified by van Ronkel. Without appropriate subject classification, it is extremely difficult to know the contents of many titles, though they may be varied and all-encompassing. In pursuit of the objective of subject collocation, in the sense that all related manuscripts may be shelved together for easy retrieval and effective use, Harun Mat Piah and Ismail Hamid have suggested a classification of 110 manuscripts kept in the Museum of Brunei and another 135 items in the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Brunei according to a number of broad subjects (Harun and Ismail 1983). Though these manuscripts are still arranged according to their respective accession numbers, a subject classification as suggested by Ismail and Harun would help readers locate the required manuscripts much more easily. At present, manuscripts shelved next to each other in most libraries have no subject relationship whatever. If they do, such as the two manuscripts of the *Hikayat Raja Jumjumah*, Cod. Or. 3310 and Cod. Or. 3311, which are shelved next to each other, or *Hikayat Raja Jumjumah* I, Kl. 65, and *Hikayat Raja Jumjumah* II, Kl. 66, in the Leiden University Library, this is more a matter of coincidence than planning. Unfortunately, the present system is generally preferred because of its simplicity and ease of administration.

The descriptive information given in many of the existing catalogues varies considerably both in detail and in reliability. In some cases this is unavoidable, as the relevant information (such as the title, date, place or author) is hard to obtain. One way of improving the situation would be some standardization of procedures to ensure a certain degree of uniformity in the way different manuscripts are processed for cataloguing. In any event, in a viable system of bibliographical control of Malay manuscripts the following information may/must be included: (1) title and/or notes on contents, (2) name of author, scribe and/or previous owner(s), (3) date of composition and/or original writing, (4) type of script, (5) external dimensions of a page, (6) pagination or foliation, (7) writing-material used or details of the paper manufacture and date of the watermark, as the case may be, (8) indication of the

general condition of the manuscript, (9) enumeration of publications which make reference to the manuscript, (10) provenance of the manuscript, and (11) any miscellaneous notes deemed necessary, as is exemplified by Ricklefs and Voorhoeve's work of 1977. Such descriptive information is as important and valuable as are the manuscripts themselves. It is from such historical and external information that researchers may derive additional vital clues for establishing the history and the relationship of the various versions of a particular manuscript. Moreover, anyone interested in a particular manuscript may request it directly simply by reference to these notes without further searching.

Over the decades, great improvement has been made in the coverage, quality and modes of access. As a result, more and more manuscripts are being brought to the notice of the general public. At the same time the bibliographical information on them is becoming correspondingly more detailed and reliable in comparison with catalogues prepared in the past. Nevertheless, a serious effort will still have to be made to correct past mistakes and update old catalogues by including new acquisitions. These two tasks may be extremely time-consuming and expensive, but, considering the benefits that librarians and scholars alike would derive from improved information on collections, the necessary time and money would be well spent. At present, the exchange of bibliographical information generally is not really an 'exchange', but rather a one-way provision of information (Cook 1986). There are certainly libraries that are always willing to give whatever information they can, but there are others which are reluctant to cooperate. There is indeed a need for a universal list of Malay manuscripts (as proposed at at least two successive symposiums in Malaysia, in 1977 and 1982), if only to make the task of searching for manuscripts and locating the relevant holding libraries in a number of institutional catalogues less laborious and time-consuming. At present, a request for 20 manuscripts may have to be sent to 10, if not more, different libraries.

Problems of Availability

Some of the problems of access to dissertations, official publications and serials in Southeast Asia discussed by me elsewhere (Ding 1984a, 1984b, 1985) are relevant to the present discussion. By and large, the availability of any type of library material is determined not only by the nature of the initial acquisitions, processing and cataloguing, but also by the kind of organization and administration, the hours of service, and the quality and attitude of the staff of the library concerned. It further depends on the nature of the collection, the general bibliographical control, the in-house catalogues and guides, and the application of modern technology and the system of supply. These factors can greatly improve accessibility. By contrast, insufficient funds, lack of trained personnel, uncoordinated planning and restrictive rules and regulations

are among the factors that are likely to make accessibility even more difficult. As most of these problems are human rather than technological, it seems reasonable to suggest that the institutions concerned should try and find ways of improving mutual cooperation in order to overcome the very real problems that seem to restrict knowledge, let alone accessibility. From a historical perspective, the issue of the availability of manuscript literature may be considered on four different levels: the individual, institutional, national and international ones. All are inter-related. Before the coming of the Europeans, only Malay court writers and members of Malay royal families enjoyed direct access to manuscripts in court libraries. Later, these cultural products were acquired successively first by wealthy and interested local community leaders and later by European administrator-scholars. In consequence, materials tended to move about over wide areas as a result of changes of ownership and so to become more easily available. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, many European historical societies interested in exotic Oriental subjects began to make serious efforts to acquire them, either directly or indirectly. With the growth in scholarship and research in connection with these manuscripts, academic institutions also became actively involved in their acquisition, so much so that within a few decades their combined holdings of such manuscripts exceeded those of the historical societies. These collections have served as a nucleus for further collection activities until today. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Leiden University Library has the largest single collection of Malay manuscripts in the world, and is one of the major suppliers of copies of these materials. Notwithstanding the continued dissemination of knowledge and information about these manuscripts, the supremacy of the Leiden collection as a primary source of that information is likely to remain unchallenged for many years to come.

It is plain from the foregoing discussion that the various libraries have been somewhat individualistic in their management of Malay manuscripts. There is, for example, hardly any standardization in the catalogue descriptions of the materials. The physical arrangement of the individual items, too, tends to differ from one institution to another. Librarians tend to defend and justify existing systems. The arguments in favour of the status quo not only have to do with technical problems, they also relate to the actual physical condition of the manuscripts. Some items exist only in fragments, while others are haphazardly bound, or have their pages and leaves mixed up or missing altogether. These are formidable problems, which call for concerted action on the part of all concerned to solve them. The existing system is clearly inadequate to meet the demands of users, who tend always to place convenience of access to library resources above all other considerations. They expect the library to retrieve specific manuscripts quickly as and when they are needed. To be able to do that, the library needs to have a team of

qualified and well informed personnel, who are able to inform the inquiring reader at short notice that, for instance, the *Syaer Perang Mengkasar*, comprising 73 verses in six pages, forms the third and last part of Cod. Or. 1626 in the Leiden University Library. In other words, Cod. Or. 1626 also contains the *Hikayat Siburung Pingai* (11 pages) and *Hikayat Hari Kiamat* (18 pages) – a piece of information which may be of interest of the user (Skinner 1963:48). To help library staff to provide this kind of service, detailed and reliable documentation is necessary to retrieve the relevant folders or containers or the individual manuscripts, which may have been bound together haphazardly. In the absence of such documentation, non-specialist readers especially would either miss out on or have difficulty in locating such works as *Hikayat Darma Takisah* (leaves 38-47), *Hikayat Munajat Musa* (leaves 48-56) and *Hikayat Sheikh Mardan* (leaves 57-163), in Ms. Add. 3762 at the Cambridge University Library (Mohamed Taib Osman 1972:70), or copies of these elsewhere. A further example illustrating the difficulty of access to individual items bound together with other unrelated ones is provided by Cod. Or. 6051 in the Leiden University Library. This work contains the *Syair Mukomuko* (ff. 1-32), *Syair Hukum Menteri Yang Sembilan* (ff. 32-3), *Syair Hukum Peroatian Triamang* (ff. 33-4), *Syair Datuk Danau Seorang* (ff. 34-5) and *Syair Mimpi* (ff. 36-70, 79-81) (Kathirithamby-Wells and Muhammad Yusoff Hashim 1982:143). Due possibly to the lack of bibliographical control, the library staff at the Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague, and at the University of Amsterdam seemed to be unaware – until recently, at any rate – that there are Malay manuscripts in these libraries (Wan Ali 1985b:79). Wan Ali also found a few Malay manuscripts, which were miscatalogued as Arabic manuscripts, in the Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen Library.

In the past, scholars doing research on Malay manuscripts had to begin their searches in a few libraries in Europe. This was because Malay manuscripts in these libraries not only were well documented but also were easily available – though of course mainly to those able to visit the libraries in person. A systematic description of such materials elsewhere (except perhaps the Museum Pusat, Jakarta) was then unavailable. Now, scholars have access to the contents of a large number of Malay manuscripts preserved originally in the Leiden University Library and other libraries in Europe, in libraries and institutions elsewhere in the world because of improvements in bibliographical control and the advantages of modern reproduction facilities and communication technology. Similarly, Malay manuscripts in Nusantara have become more easily available to researchers in Europe and elsewhere. Nearly all the critical editions of classical Malay literary texts include one or two versions from manuscripts from libraries in this region. Mulyadi's edition, for example, includes two manuscripts of the *Hikayat Indraputra* from the Museum Pusat, Jakarta (i.e. Bat. Gen. 125 and Von de Wall 168), and one from

Kuala Lumpur (i.e. Ms. 37, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Library) among some 30 manuscripts discussed here (Mulyadi 1983:1-2). Earlier, Ras divided all the manuscripts of the *Hikayat Bandjar* which he knew existed into two main groups: those in Nusantara, mainly Jakarta, and those in Europe, the majority of which were kept in the Leiden University Library (Ras 1968:201).

It is well known that formerly a lot of searching was needed to find library materials, including Malay manuscripts. By the same token, most research students and scholars have only a vague idea of the relevance of a particular library's holdings for their research until they have actually visited it. Until that time, the usual channels of information are published catalogues and the reports of previous visitors. Again, the passive custodial role played by some keepers, curators or manuscript librarians may prove a formidable barrier to access. The complaint that manuscript librarians in certain libraries are more friendly and cooperative than their counterparts in other libraries or in other departments of the same library is common. To understand why they should be possessive and protective in their care of the manuscripts concerned, one requires a clear understanding of their roles and functions. Their attitude may be justified on the ground that special care and security precautions are necessary because the manuscripts are considered rare, valuable, fragile and irreplaceable if damaged or lost. To protect these sources, practically all institutions with a large collection of Malay manuscripts have placed them in separate areas and in closed access as a Special Collection. As they are non-circulating, moreover, the problems of access for both staff and readers are obvious and many.

As readers are not allowed to freely browse through library stacks in search of manuscripts on their own, accessibility of their contents depends solely on the availability and attitude of staffs. Except for some libraries with well-established collections in Europe and the Museum Pusat, Jakarta, for example, most libraries with small collections lack fulltime qualified manuscript librarians to manage such a collection and provide services for the readers. Another problem pertains to the availability of these materials in facsimile, photocopy or microform, especially where the original copies of the manuscripts concerned cannot be allowed to be handled by non-specialist readers because of fear that unskilful handling of the brittle pages would shorten the life expectancy of these. Librarians have persistently argued that it would be wasteful of the expense and trouble involved in preserving a document if it is then allowed to be destroyed or damaged through unrestricted use by readers. On the other hand, the fact that documents worth preserving lose much of their value to scholarship and research if they are not shared widely presents us with another dilemma. In any event, however, if there is no up-to-date, reliable and detailed in-house bibliographical control, inexperienced staff will often find themselves spending more

time and effort than is necessary in locating materials requested by readers visiting the library and in answering correspondence from those unable to come. As research on the basis of Malay manuscripts has become an international activity, there are requests for copies of known manuscripts from all over the world. The solution to these problems is the supply of facsimile, photocopy and microform copies.

The appearance of a large body of critical editions, translations and other research results in connection with Malay manuscripts in a variety of media and languages provides yet another important key to access. These materials have served not only to popularize Malay classical literature, but have also acted as a stimulant for further research. Regular series in which these works appear include the *Bibliotheca Indonesica* in The Netherlands, *Naskah dan Dokumen Nusantara* in Indonesia, *Siri Kajian Sastra DBP* in Malaysia, and the series published by Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa, Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, in Indonesia. As the principal outlets for current research activities, scholarly journals, too, play an important role in the publishing of edited texts of old manuscripts. Among them are *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, *Dewan Sastra*, *Journal of the Straits (later on Malayan and later still Malaysian) Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, *Archipel* and *Review of Indonesian and Malayan (later on Malaysian) Affairs*. Through these publications, hundreds of copies of individual texts are made available simultaneously in bookshops, libraries and elsewhere. The contribution of scholarship and research to the dissemination of knowledge about old Malay texts can be gauged by reference to the *Sejarah Melayu*. There are known to be some 30 manuscripts of this text available in a number of widely scattered libraries. However, there now also exists a rich collection of printed texts, editions and translations of the *Sejarah Melayu* in hundreds of copies world-wide. They are the products of the work of such noted scholars as Abdullah Munshi, H. C. Klinkert, Teeuw and Situmorang, Sir Richard Winstedt, C. C. Brown and John Leyden (Roolvink 1967:302). The *Sejarah Melayu* has also been translated into many languages, including Chinese, and is at present being translated into Japanese. The *Tajus-Salatin*, written by Bohari al-Jauhari in 1602, likewise has been studied by and popularized through the researches of Roorda van Eysinga as early as 1827, and van Ronkel in 1899 (Teeuw 1966:434). By the end of the 19th century, G. K. Nieman had edited and published a small part of the manuscript of *Adat Raja-Raja Melayu* (Farquhar Ms. 4, Royal Asiatic Society) in his *Bloemlezing uit Maleische Geschriften* (Sudjiman 1984:12). Further examples of translations, transliterations, critical editions and other research results and publications can be found in relevant bibliographies (Ismail Hussein 1974, 1978a and 1978b; Chambert-Loir 1975; UKM 1977). A major explicit aim of these works is to make Malay manuscripts more easily available, especially to people

who may never have the opportunity to consult the fragile, non-circulating originals in libraries. Anyone interested in the cultural and literary heritage of the Malays but having no knowledge of the Malay language, in particular the Jawi script, may now read these texts without any difficulty. Apart from their purely literary value, these works are important to anthropologists, linguists, historians and scholars of several other disciplines connected with Malay studies. All the people involved – editors, librarians and publishers – are to be commended for their painstaking labours, one way or the other. Of these, the contributions of researchers are the most significant, as they combine intellectual finesse of presentation with textual and linguistic analyses and notes, translation, transliteration and indexes. In some cases even the bare texts, published without any editorial comments or introduction, are equally important.

Nevertheless, the problem is that much of what has been published is now out of print, out of stock or otherwise unobtainable through the normal commercial channels. This fact further highlights the role and function of librarians and libraries. In this context, libraries will have to evolve systems capable of supplying materials requested by readers either direct or through inter-library loans. At present, the situation is complicated by many libraries invoking the 'copyright' clause printed in books to refuse photocopying, microfilming and other forms of inter-library service. Is such an attitude a result of the copyright claim asserted by editors and publishers with respect to the work by stating: 'All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher' (Matheson 1982)? This statement raises a number of questions. Why should we buy a book if we cannot utilize it? What is the use of a library acquiring books if they cannot be processed, stored, bound and retrieved when needed by readers? Can editors and publishers claim copyrights over the 'original texts' of unknown authors of unknown date? It is fair to argue that authors may invoke the copyright clause only in respect of introductory materials, content analyses and other contributions genuinely their own. Fortunately, there are not many books published with such a clause. Thus readers have access to Malay manuscript texts in a variety of media and languages. Texts in printed form, photocopies and microform are available in addition to those in manuscript form. Texts in Latin characters can be studied side by side with those in Jawi script. Critical editions of texts, furnished with footnotes, variant readings, commentaries and content analyses are available along with the bare texts themselves. It is expected that the wealth of publications concerning Malay manuscripts will increase correspondingly with the growth of international scholarly interest in them. However, it is not always easy to keep abreast of current

developments in research, as information on the activities concerned appears in a variety of media and in many different languages, and so will remain unknown to many. This problem arises mainly from the inadequate publicity given to unpublished dissertations/theses, to local newspaper and journal articles and to seminar papers presented in Indonesia and Malaysia. This may be due to the mistaken belief that such materials are ephemeral and of low standard. It is certainly no longer the case that the results of major research projects, particularly those in the context of provincial studies, will as a matter of course appear in English and other international languages and be published in international journals. Now the quantity and quality of publications in non-European languages have much improved as a result of the educational and socio-economic development of the countries concerned. Researchers should be aware of the necessity to direct their searches to as wide an area as the field of their interests and disciplines may require. Otherwise the information barrier will remain. It cannot be denied that the ease of access provided by various bibliographies and catalogues has made readers more selective in their requests. To make an exhaustive study of the *Tajus-Salatin*, for example, a researcher may now choose any manuscript from among Add. 12378, Cod. Or. 13295, Raffles Malay 17B, Raffles Malay 42B, Raffles Malay 64, Maxwell 17A, Maxwell 55, Malay 117, Ms. 21039, or Ms. 36565 (Mulyadi 1983:293), because all of these are preserved in various institutions in London and elsewhere.

The formation of special collections in libraries is not only done for the convenience of administration but is also a response to necessity (C. H. Jones 1984:440). Libraries tend to set up special collections of manuscripts as non-conforming library materials because of the methods involved in their acquisition, processing and servicing. It is not because the library does not know what to do with them. To ensure the integrity of such materials as part of the whole library system, procedures specific to the special nature and the requirements involved in the management of such collections had to be evolved. There is no question here of one set of techniques and practices of librarianship being right while others are wrong. What matters is that the basic conventions adopted by the library are respected if the special collection is to be managed effectively. Being different from other collections, special collections are not, and cannot be, open to free and unrestricted access because of the damages that may be done to a fragile manuscript as a result. This risk of damage can be considerably reduced by a systematic labelling of manuscripts and their folders, so that library staff are spared the unnecessary task of opening folders of manuscripts they are not looking for. Manuscripts on loan may usually be used in special reading-rooms and are not to be photocopied or moved about. Rules like these are regarded as restrictive to access. Furthermore, librarians enforcing such rules are often accused of being too bureaucratic and obstructive.

Be that as it may, this issue clearly points to a conflict between the need for special care and protection of particular manuscripts by library managements, and the desirability of easy access for readers. Sometimes readers are at fault, especially when they request manuscripts by using titles that are familiar only to them.

A special collection has other advantages over a general collection. It has the potential of fostering close relationships between readers and librarians. Through regular contacts, they tend to get to know one another better. The names of manuscript librarians such as Linsen, Andriessen-Luck, Yumsari and Hadisutjipto have become household words in the Malay manuscript world. Working together closely with readers, these librarians not only understand the users' problems and requirements better, but may also develop their own professional skills with each new problem and request from readers for more exhaustive information. Paradoxically, access to manuscripts in libraries with only a small collection is more difficult than that in a library with a large collection because of lack of qualified manuscript librarians. For various reasons, libraries with small collections tend to entrust this task to non-specialist library staff as an added responsibility. From sheer lack of specialization and training, such persons will find it difficult to perform this duty competently, though they may be very good librarians in other areas. To an unsuspecting reader, such an employee may appear uncooperative and unfriendly. As a result, many valuable and unique manuscripts may remain buried in their traditional isolation instead of being made readily available through improved accessibility.

Problems of handling single-title manuscripts are obviously fewer than those that may arise in connection with manuscripts (and microforms) with a multiplicity of different and vaguely related titles. It is never easy to remember their contents or location or whether they are kept in folders or on microfilms. Ignorance of the contents of microfilms or manuscript containers is apt to have at least two further consequences. Firstly, a library may thus be led to spend time, effort and money on interlibrary loans or acquisitions of materials which it already possesses. Secondly, its staff cannot avoid the trouble of opening folders and containers of manuscripts for which they are not looking. Besides, such unnecessary handling may easily cause damage. To minimize the problem of locating the relevant title in a bundle of manuscripts, we would suggest the use of a key-word title index, which is very much easier and faster than analytical cataloguing as a practical solution. Without reforms in the existing system, library staff and even readers are certain to continue to overlook such manuscripts as *Hikayat Bayan Budiman*, *Hikayat Mu'jizat Nabi*, *Hikayat Nabi Mengajar Anaknya Fatimah*, or *Hikayat Nabi Wafat*, which are all bound together with the *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiah* (text K), studied by Brakel (Brakel 1975:79-80), or, similarly, the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*, *Hikayat Tatkala*

Fatimah Bertanya kepada Dzulfakar, or *Cerita Umar Maya*, in Ms. Add. 3784 at Cambridge University (Mohamed Taib Osman 1972:73). Like books, manuscripts are merely repositories of information of various kinds. They form part of the human heritage. Because of their nature, they require supervised accessibility, extra physical protection and different methods of handling. But to keep them merely as 'objects' would defeat the whole point and function of preservation.

Like resource sharing, conservation of library manuscript materials has a vital contribution to make to the world of scholarship. Today, many Malay manuscripts are in danger of falling apart on account of a combination of factors, such as careless handling, harmful atmospheric conditions, excessive photocopying, the manuscript paper reaching the age of disintegration, and inadequate storage facilities. Wan Ali reports that many of the Malay manuscripts kept in special folders in the Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde Library, Leiden, have yet to be conserved (Wan Ali 1985b:78). Malay manuscripts in the Genootschap Library in what was Batavia (now Jakarta) suffered greatly from the usual neglect and the ravages of the climate and insects until about 1850 (Lian and van der Veur 1973). Though we cannot restore the original state of the paper in our effort to conserve the manuscripts, our immediate concern should really be the prevention of further loss, damage and other forms of physical deterioration of the surviving manuscripts. Though conservation is primarily the task of the individual libraries concerned, given the massive scale of deterioration of the 10,000 manuscripts all over the world, it is also a national and international obligation. It is well known that the problem of conservation of library materials hinges on two fundamental factors: the environmental and the human one. In the tropical regions of Nusantara, the climate and various kinds of micro-organisms constitute a major threat. Silver-fish, cockroaches, bookworms, and beetles can be found eating away and drilling holes in paper materials if left alone. Fumigation of the special collection areas as well as of the manuscripts themselves, installation and maintenance of air-conditioning facilities, periodical cleaning and the maintenance of appropriate environmental conditions are all vital to the survival of the manuscripts. Conservation is a relatively easier task in European countries with a temperate climate. It is partly due to the favourable environmental conditions that manuscripts on palm-leaves and tree bark collected by early European administrator-scholars have survived in good condition in such places as Cambridge and Oxford universities until today. But, generally speaking, the appropriate environmental conditions are not present in many new library buildings, because more attention is given here to the comfort of readers than to the needs of preserving library materials. Anyway, the principal point in the maintenance and conservation of manuscript materials is to preserve all the available evidence on the history of these materials and marks of

previous ownership. Manuscripts in the form of loose leaves should be kept in acid-free and insect-free folders, boxes or other containers, and should not be trimmed in the way the manuscripts acquired from Muhammad Bakir were trimmed in the Museum Pusat, Jakarta (Chambert-Loir 1984). Existing bindings should be repaired rather than replaced. Provided that they are well-preserved and are handled with meticulous care, some of the extant manuscripts may be expected to survive for a long time to come in their 'original' form.

As part of the continuous effort to prevent further deterioration of the manuscripts and at the same time to ensure that these materials are accessible to as wide a readership as possible, many libraries have started microfilming them. At the moment such microfilming is being done selectively and in a random and uncoordinated manner. On the other hand, there are manuscripts that cannot be reproduced in any form, let alone microfilmed. The wishes of donors and the need to check and collate the materials are the most common reasons for this. In any case, microfilming of loose-leaf manuscripts is a laborious and slow process. In the past, Malay manuscripts were in fact reproduced quite liberally by manual copying. This copying method came to be employed on a massive scale in the 19th and early 20th centuries. One of the reasons for such copying was to preserve or acquire the materials in question. Preservation of library materials through microfilming – which began slowly in the late 1930s – has now become quite common. A variety of microfilming projects are in progress in major libraries and archives all over the world. Together with photocopying, microfilming has rendered immeasurable services for the study and spread of Malay manuscripts over the past decades, thus offering a long-term solution to the problem of accessibility. It is expected that libraries will become progressively more inter-dependent in sharing microform resources because of the relatively low cost of production and distribution, and compactness and convenience of filing. After microfilming or microficheing, the negative becomes the source for all subsequent copies. At the same time, the original manuscripts can be preserved for posterity and the conflict between preservation and resource sharing may be resolved amicably. While thus preserving original manuscripts, the libraries concerned have made the contents easily available. Moreover, microfilming and photocopying facilities have enabled new as well as old-established institutions and libraries to progressively build up their own manuscript collections. Thanks to the new copying technology, numerous Malay manuscripts acquired by libraries in Europe over a period of centuries are now also available in libraries in Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia and elsewhere. A researcher in Kuala Lumpur, for instance, can carry out much of his research on the basis of Malay manuscripts in libraries in Kuala Lumpur, and does not now have to spend time and money travelling to widely scattered collections as his predecessors were obliged to a few decades

ago. But, despite the obvious benefits of the new technology, complaints are still heard. There are complaints from readers about the discomforts and the fatigue they have to endure when using manuscripts in microform. The answer to this problem seems to be to train readers in the use of microform materials. This is important, as an increasing number of libraries will switch over to materials in this format in the future. Nevertheless, one major problem of accessibility lies in the fact that in many libraries microforms are very often treated as 'stepchildren', and this is likely to remain so for years to come. They are usually neither catalogued nor classified, but are arranged by serial numbers and kept as yet another special collection. Perhaps because of this 'neglect', these materials are not quite as frequently used as they might be. As more and more microforms are added to the collection, a library probably has correspondingly less knowledge of what it actually possesses, thus setting in motion yet another vicious cycle with regard to accessibility.

Apart from the work of librarians, the personal assistance of scholars has contributed greatly to making Malay manuscripts more easily and widely accessible. Teeuw, Kratz, Voorhoeve, Drewes, Jones, Chambert-Loir, Liaw, Hussainmiya and Ismail Hussein are among the scores of scholars whose contributions are acknowledged in a variety of dissertations and other scholarly works. They have been helpful in providing copies of manuscripts from their personal collections, or from those of friends or libraries, to researchers who do not have the opportunity to travel. It is partly because of such personal assistance that researchers in many countries find it easier to acquire copies of manuscripts from overseas than to use interlibrary arrangements or consult scholars in their own countries. But there must be other reasons for this perhaps jealousy and suspicion? Is it because of institutional fear of losing pre-eminence as the library with the best manuscript collection in the country? Or is it because the libraries concerned do not have the necessary staff to handle these materials, or because there are legal problems involved in sharing materials through photocopying for academic research? Whatever the reasons, a closed-door policy would seem to run counter to the idea that materials in libraries, purchased and maintained with public money, are a national asset and should be shared. It is true that different types of libraries have different missions and different clients to serve. But the need for national coordination and the sharing of resources must take precedence over concerns of institutional autonomy and pride. Unfortunately, there is at present hardly any legislative authority to reverse the existing situation. As a result, most publicly funded university libraries, for instance, remain private bodies, giving priority to their own institution and staff and participating in cooperative projects with other libraries only in the expectation of reciprocal benefits (Humphrey 1983:20).

Conclusion

The importance of resource sharing cannot be over-emphasized, on the ground that in modern conditions no library can continue to function effectively in isolation, as some of the larger ones did in the past. The idea of local sufficiency of libraries has become obsolete and been replaced by that of an information network system capable of linking users to distant bibliographical centers and collections (Rutstein 1985:4). But improved access to the holdings of other libraries is not of much help in improving document delivery services, because of two main reasons. Firstly, manuscripts are not covered by interlibrary loan arrangements in most countries; and secondly, a large proportion of Malay manuscripts has not been reproduced in micro or photocopy form. Thus, they can only be made available in institutions which are widely dispersed. This means that very often researchers will have to travel to the manuscripts instead of the manuscripts travelling to them. In the spirit of scholarship and in the belief that every manuscript is equally important and that every library is but a part of an undefined whole, Brakel has searched and examined no fewer than 30 manuscripts of the *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiah* in the Cambridge University Library, Emmanuel College, the India Office Library, British Museum, Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris, Leiden University Library, Volkenkundig Museum at Breda, University of Malaya Library and Museum Pusat, Jakarta (Brakel 1975). Nevertheless, because of the wealth of their manuscript resources, and their efficient systems of supply, as well as good publicity, the Leiden University Library and the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies in particular have become the major sources for the international supply of Malay manuscripts. Over the centuries, most of the research on the basis of Malay manuscripts has been done at these places. This is not surprising, as it is here that a large stock of data, a wide range of facilities, and good teams of scholars and librarians are found. By contrast, researchers in other institutions are relatively handicapped in that their local library resources, facilities and services are limited. Consequently, very often much useful information would escape them were it not for the cooperation of scholars and libraries elsewhere.

So far there is no single center to which researchers may turn for full and complete information in connection with Malay manuscripts. Any plan for improving the library provision of Malay manuscripts in Malaysia, for instance, would have to take into account the relative strengths of existing collections in the various institutions. The prerequisite for such an approach is a systematic and co-ordinated strategy to ensure that one day a center capable not only of providing documentation services to stimulate user awareness but also of absorbing a high proportion of interlibrary loan demands will be formed (Anuar 1985:25). There seems to be no reason to question the appropriateness

of existing locations of manuscripts, be they in Malaysia, Leiden or elsewhere, so long as they are well preserved, organized and accessible. Original manuscripts may remain where they are, but the contents of the texts must be shared through the preparation and distribution of copies. The pooling of all manuscripts in a single center does not guarantee that these materials will be widely and easily accessible, especially if an appropriate system of supply and the required staff are not available.

In October 1984, the Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia was made to act also as a Pusat Manuskrip Negara for the acquisition and preservation of Malay manuscripts in Malaysia (Zaharah 1983:72). Being a government body, this Pusat Manuskrip Negara is in a good position to attract donations and bequests of manuscripts, for example from learned societies. But to be effective, this young institution needs all the support it can get from other institutions. At the present stage of development, the coordination of activities relating to Malay manuscripts kept in the various institutions is vital. Otherwise, the present random, uncoordinated and sporadic process of microfilming these materials will continue, only producing multiple copies of what is already available at other libraries, instead of making available as many different titles as possible. Again, without staff with the required expertise in organizing and handling such materials, neither the micro-production nor the photocopying facilities will ever fully solve the perennial twin problem of accessibility and availability of Malay manuscripts in Malaysia or elsewhere. A fresh look at the acute shortage of trained personnel in this field and at the necessity of training the present 'barefoot' librarians to provide an efficient service is of the utmost importance (Anuar 1985:32).

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