

Research Article

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Manuscripts and Philological Studies in Indonesia

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Abstract

This essay is based on the fact that Indonesia is a country with an abundant presence of ancient manuscripts. The manuscript is an ancient cultural heritage that contains various things about life in the past. Research on a manuscript aims to determine the history and culture of a nation and then to find the relevance of it with the present life. Furthermore, it can also be used in the future. Nowadays, the manuscript is one of the ten objects of Indonesian cultural advancement that has been set in the constitution, Article 5 Law Number 5 of 2017 concerning the Advancement of Culture. Therefore, it deserves to get more attention from many parties.

Keywords: Culture; manuscripts; philology; the law of advancement of culture

1. Introduction

Ancient manuscripts are invaluable cultural products of a nation. In it, there are noble values that our ancestors wanted to convey from generation to generation, so that, in the end, these values will continue to be eternal.

Manuscripts as cultural heritage can also be stated as past documents, a type of document that contains various kinds of information about life in the past [1]. Even in Indonesia, the existence of these manuscripts is a source of reference for the history of the development of kingdoms in the archipelago. For example, the *Nagarakretagama* book which tells about the Majapahit kingdom and the *Carita Parahiyangan* text which tells about the Sunda kingdom [2].

Indonesia is a country with an abundance of ancient manuscripts. Soebadio in Djamaris [3] states that Indonesia is a giant treasure for ancient manuscripts, most of tells are written in local letters and languages. The manuscripts are very diverse in terms of material, form, content, language, and script used. In terms of the material used as a base for writing manuscripts, several types can be found, including those made of palm leaves, animal skins, bark, reeds, ivory, wood, paper, and cloth [4].

The study of manuscripts has the aim of knowing the text as perfectly as possible to then place it in the historical context of a nation [1]. So, by doing research on a manuscript, we can find out the history and culture of a nation and then look for its relevance to the life we live now, and furthermore we can utilize it for life in the future.

The science that studies manuscripts and the intricacies of manuscripts is philology. Philology is a discipline that studies manuscripts based on the physical aspects and the content of the manuscript. The study of the content of a manuscript is called textual criticism or textology, while the study based on the material in the manuscript is called codicology.

Philological research cannot be carried out if it has not obtained a real object in the form of a manuscript. In terms of ownership, there are manuscripts that are still private collections (passed down from generation to generation) that are scattered in the community and some that have been managed and become collections in museums and libraries.

In West Java, the existence of ancient manuscripts is scattered in various regions, both individually owned and those that have become museum collections. Ancient manuscripts that have become museum collections include the West Java State Museum (Sri Baduga Museum) in Bandung, Wisma Karya Museum in Subang, Cigugur Museum in Kuningan, and the last one in the Sumedang area, precisely at the Prabu Geusan Ulun Museum [5].

2. Methods

This research is document research (content analysis). The author tries to analyze documents in the form of textbooks to find out the content and meaning contained in these documents. The method used is descriptive analysis, namely by describing the facts which are then followed by analysis [6].

3. Discussion

3.1. *The Manuscript as an Object of Philological Study*

In studying a manuscript, a systematic and in-depth study is needed, and the science that studies the past through manuscripts is philology. As stated by Baried [1], philology is a discipline that bases its work on written material and aims to reveal the meaning of the text in terms of culture. So, when researching a manuscript, we will know and understand as far as possible the culture of a nation; understand the meaning and function of the text for the user community in the past; and reveal old cultural values as an alternative to cultural development to be applied in everyday life and the future.

The object of philological research itself is divided into two concentrations, namely those that focus on the study of manuscripts (manuscript materials, characters, writing tools, writing ink, etc.) studied in codicology [4], then those that focus on the study of texts (something abstract, can only be imagined, contains ideas or mandates, etc.) studied in textology [1]. However, research on both is unity and interrelated because understanding of classical texts can only be done through manuscripts which are the means of storing them.

The manuscripts found in the archipelago are very diverse in terms of material, form, content, language and script used. In terms of materials, the manuscripts were written using various tools and materials that varied according to the spirit of the times. Initially, the manuscripts and writing tools were made by utilizing materials available in the surrounding nature. The materials used as writing mats for manuscripts include; paper, bark, palm leaves, reeds, ivory, wood, and cloth [4].

Each material used in making manuscripts greatly affects the character and identity of the manuscript. That is because manuscript materials and tools continue to develop and each material is a symbol of the spirit of its era. Similarly, the stationery used to write manuscripts continues to evolve, from using goose feathers to the most recent use of pens. Each region usually has its own characteristics.

The content of manuscript texts in the archipelago also varies. In general, the contents of the manuscripts have covered various aspects of life such as social, political, economic, religious, cultural, language and literary issues. This is influenced by various things such as the socio-cultural context of each region, the purpose of making the manuscript itself, and the spirit of the times. More specifically, the content of a manuscript can be in the form of saga, history, teachings of a science, medical literature, culinary literature, valuable letters, etc.

In terms of form, manuscripts in Indonesia are divided into several forms such as prose, rhythmic prose, poetry and drama [3]. In Sundanese society, manuscripts in the form of poetry are known as *wawacan*. *Wawacan* according to Sundanese terminology is a form of bound poetry that contains verses to be chanted. This form of bound poetry is also known as Pupuh. Then in terms of the language used,

a manuscript is written in various regional languages such as Javanese, Sundanese, Malay, Aceh, Batak, Minangkabau, Bugis, Makasar, Banjar, and Wolio, usually depending on the area where the manuscript was found.

Similarly, the scripts used are Balinese, Javanese, Sundanese, Jawi (Arabic-Malay), Pegon, Bugis, Makasar, Karo, Mandailing, Rejang, Toba, Lampung, and Kerinci. Of the various script forms mentioned, there are script forms that are the result of assimilation with external script forms, namely Jawi or Pegon script. The manuscripts that use Pegon letters themselves are many in Indonesia, their existence cannot be separated from the entry of Islam into the archipelago, especially Java, De Graaf calls it the term Islamic-Javanese civilization [7]. Texts with Islamic nuances were usually born in Islamic boarding schools, which Poerbatjaraka called “pesantren literature” [7]. The spread of Sundanese manuscripts in the form of *wawacan* and using pegon script is also inseparable from the influence of Javanese literature that entered the Sundanese land through the noble society in the 17th century and the development of Islam in the archipelago.

The function of the script is not limited to conveying messages. In Nusantara manuscripts, various types of characters are used as a means of recording culture through historical records or cultural documents. In the life of the Sundanese community in West Java, the script has been used since the middle of the 5th century AD. Throughout its history, various types of letters such as; Palawa, Old Sundanese, Javanese Sundanese, Arabic, and Latin have been used in making a document regarding cultural development in Sundanese society. Thus, the use of these letters played an important role in the birth of Sundanese manuscripts in the archipelago [5].

Furthermore, manuscripts are seen as the result of literary creative culture, because the texts contained in the manuscript are a wholeness in the disclosure of the message of a manuscript. In this sense, the text is a layer in the manuscript that can be studied based on the message contained in the text content of a manuscript. The message contained in the text is functionally related to the philosophy of life and to other art forms. Judging from the content of its meaning, the discourse in the form of texts in the manuscript carries out certain functions in its society. By imagining the mind and the form of norms that apply, the text in a manuscript can itself be perceived as a message or content as its content, [1, pp. 4-5].

Thus, the text can be said to be the content or content in a manuscript that is abstract, so that it can only be imagined. In this case, the text consists of the content and pattern structure applied to a literary work. Content is the ideas or messages that the author wants to convey to the reading public. The structure is a series of stories in the text that can be read and understood from various approaches to plot, character, language style, and so on. Broadly speaking, texts are divided into three groups, namely

1. oral (unwritten) text;
2. handwritten manuscript text; and
3. printed texts.

Texts are specifically studied by the discipline of textology. Textology is a discipline that studies the intricacies of texts. Research in textology, among others, examines the incarnation and decline of the text of a literary work, its interpretation and understanding [1].

A manuscript is also seen as a literary work because the text contained in it is a whole that expresses a message, which can be a philosophy of life or other forms of art [1].

The study of manuscripts has the aim of knowing the text as perfectly as possible and then placing it in the historical context of a nation [1]. So by researching a manuscript we can find out the history and culture of a nation and then look for its relevance to the life we live now, and furthermore we can utilize it for life in the future.

However, research on manuscripts is not easy. A manuscript in the tradition of copying in the community is done by handwriting so it is very possible if there is text diversity in several manuscripts with the same title (variant). Many factors cause this to happen, both intentional and unintentional

factors. Intentional factors are usually related to the insight of the copyist himself. While unintentional factors occur due to carelessness or the background and peculiarities of each copyist. So it is certain that a text in general does not escape the process of change, destruction, adjustment, development, and renewal. Therefore, it is necessary to trace a text so that the manuscript has a unified text that is free from writing errors (in single manuscripts), or restores and tries to approach the text into its original form (in plural manuscripts).

This activity in philology is known as text criticism. The text is seen as an authentic text to be studied more deeply from various aspects and perspectives, as long as the study still heeds the norms as a literary work. Therefore, text criticism can be interpreted as an effort to consider various issues both in terms of advantages or weaknesses, it can also be seen in terms of the peculiarities possessed by a text itself.

3.2. *Textual criticism*

In studying a manuscript there are several methods used. Plural manuscripts can be studied through intuitive methods, objective methods, combined methods, and grounding methods, while in analyzing a single manuscript there are two methods that can be used, including:

1. Diplomatic edition, which is publishing one manuscript without changes.
2. Standard edition, which corrects minor errors adjusted to the existing provisions so as to obtain a manuscript that is easy to read and free from errors.

So, it can be concluded that the diplomatic method is used to produce identical copies of a manuscript in order to maintain the purity of the text. Errors and other things contained in the text do not need to be corrected, just given suggestions and comments on the improvement of the text. For example, the holy book.

Standard editions are used for manuscripts that are not considered to have a special position in the community of its users. The text of the manuscript can be an ordinary story, not a sacred story so it does not need to be treated specially [3]. Djamaris also explained that the things that need to be done in a standard edition are as follows.

1. Transliterating the text.
2. Correcting text errors.
3. Making correction notes.
4. Making comments and interpretations.
5. Dividing the text into sections
6. Compiling a glossary.

Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that the standard edition single manuscript method is a method of editing texts on manuscripts with ordinary text positions (not considered sacred and special) by making various improvements in accordance with the rules used, based on adequate and accountable reference sources, so as to obtain an edition of the text that is free from errors and can be understood by the general public.

3.3. *Transliteration*

Then, the important thing when already having data or research objects in the form of manuscripts, after carrying out the identification stage is to transliterate them, because ancient manuscripts generally use a distinctive type of script in accordance with the spirit of the era. Manuscripts scattered in the Sundanese region generally use the Sundanese Kuna script (*kaganga*), Sundanese Javanese (*cacarakan*), Javanese priangan (*hanacaraka*), and Arabic-Sunda/Arabic-Malay (pegon).

The term transliteration itself in philology means the replacement of writing from letter by letter from one alphabet to another [1]. Transliteration is very important because at this stage there are many things that must be considered as Djamaris [3] said that the things that need to be considered in doing

transliteration are spelling and the special characteristics of the manuscript language. When doing transliteration, as much as possible is required to maintain the purity of the old language in the manuscript, especially word writing. This is in accordance with the opinion of [1] that transliteration guidelines are required to maintain the characteristics of the original text as long as it can be done, because the responsible interpretation of the text is very helpful for readers in understanding the content of the text. So it can be concluded that the transliteration process is the foundation or initial foothold that is the key to the success of manuscript research as a whole.

3.4. The Development of Manuscripts in Indonesia

Manuscripts in Indonesia are scattered in various regions. On Sumatra island, manuscripts are found in Aceh, Batak, Minangkabau, Kerinci, Riau (including Lingga and Singkep Islands), Siak, Palembang, Bengkulu, and Lampung. In Bengkulu Province, ancient manuscripts are called Ulu manuscripts. This name refers to the script used in these manuscripts, namely the Ulu script. Ulu manuscripts found in the Bengkulu region are written in various mediums such as bark, bamboo (both logs and pieces or slats of bamboo called (*gelumpai*), buffalo horns, paper, and animal skins [8]. In Kalimantan, manuscripts are found in Sambas, Pontianak, Banjarmasin, and Kutai. In Java, manuscripts are found in Banten, Jakarta, Pasundan, Cirebon, Yogyakarta, Surakarta, along the Pantura coast (Brebes to Gresik), Madura, and the mountainous areas of central Java and East Java. In Sulawesi, manuscripts are found in Bugis, Makassar, Buton, and Kendari. Whereas in Bali, manuscripts are still being made (especially those made of lontar material), in West Nusa Tenggara, manuscripts are found in Lombok and Sumbawa Besar (Sumbawa, Dampo, and Bima) and in the Eastern Indonesian archipelago, manuscripts are found in the Ternate and Maluku areas [4]. Besides being privately owned, many of these manuscripts have also become museum collections. According to the head of the National Library (Perpusnas), Muhammad Syarif Bando, when opening the Nusantara Manuscript Festival IV, said that the number of ancient manuscript collections at the National Library has reached 11 thousand written in various regional languages.

Currently, manuscripts are one of the ten objects of Indonesia's cultural promotion that have been stipulated in the Cultural Promotion Law No. 5 Article 5 of 2017. Therefore, it is fitting to get more attention from various parties. A small thing that can be done by the general public is to conduct an inventory. The easiest way can be by reporting the existence of the manuscript to related parties such as the regional cultural office, museum, or the nearest Cultural Heritage Preservation Center.

4. Conclusion

Manuscripts as a legacy of the past and one of the invaluable cultural products, have an important role in efforts to find the character and identity of the nation. The manuscripts contain noble values that our ancestors wanted to convey from generation to generation so that in the end the value will remain eternal. So by researching a manuscript, we can find out the history and culture of a nation and then look for its relevance to the life we live now, and furthermore, we can utilize it for life in the future.

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