

## Best Practices and Good Governance of Ottoman Empire in Acehese Manuscript of *Hikayat Eseutamu*

Fakhriati Fakhriati,\* Reza Perwira,\*\* Daratullaila Nasri,\*\*\* Maria Matildis Banda\*\*\*\* & Sri Musdikawati\*\*\*\*\*

### Abstract

Ancient manuscripts preserve local knowledge and connect the past, present, and future in a global context. Their legacy is considerable because they help in the scientific mapping of what the ancestors left behind. This study aims to analyze the content of an Acehese manuscript entitled *Hikayat Eseutamu*, which describes how the Acehese appreciated the Turkish kingdom in the past. This manuscript exhaustively elaborates on the best practices, good governance, and proper conduct of the Ottoman Empire. Using philological and historical approaches, this study analyzes the content of *Hikayat Eseutamu* manuscript, which was written in Acehese, and provides international information about the Acehese-Turkish relationship. The findings of this study show that the Ottoman Empire was able to convince the Acehese of the positive connection between diplomacy and social communication at both the governmental and public levels. This study is expected to have a long-term impact on state relations between Turkey and Indonesia.

**Keywords:** *Hikayat Eseutamu*, Aceh, Ottoman Empire, manuscript, good governance

### Introduction

*Hikayat Eseutamu*, an ancient manuscript from Aceh, provides historical details about specific locations, as well as the relationships and strengthening of bonds between peoples and countries. *Hikayat Eseutamu* manuscript written in ancient Acehese, has shown international significance because it sheds light on Indonesia's long-standing relationship with Turkey. However, it is not as highly valued intellectually as other local manuscripts, which account for at least 10,000 manuscripts written in local languages in Indonesia.<sup>1</sup> Only a few of these manuscripts have been studied. While they provide crucial historical references, most studies have simply noted their presence rather than exploring their contents.<sup>2</sup>

*Hikayat Eseutamu* (hereinafter HE) manuscript, as a historical document, encloses essential information on the relationship between Aceh and Turkey during the Ottoman Empire. Braginsky has remarked on this relationship, as seen in the individual and governmental references in ancient Malay and Acehese manuscripts, where the word "Turkey" appears more than forty times.<sup>3</sup> However, what has been explored in these manuscripts is unclear up to this point. *Hikayat Aceh* is the only ancient Acehese

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\* Fakhriati Fakhriati, Researcher, Organisasi Riset Arkeologi Bahasa dan Sastra, Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional, Jakarta, Indonesia. Email: fakhriati1406@gmail.com

\*\* Reza Perwira, Policy Analyst, Badan Moderasi Beragama dan Pengembangan Sumber Daya Manusia, Kementerian Agama RI, Jakarta, Indonesia. Email: abeefarouq@gmail.com

\*\*\* Daratullaila Nasri, Researcher, Organisasi Riset Arkeologi Bahasa dan Sastra, Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional, Jakarta, Indonesia. Email: 75dara@gmail.com

\*\*\*\* Maria Matildis Banda, Lecturer, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Udayana, Bali, Indonesia. Email: mbanda574@gmail.com

\*\*\*\*\* Sri Musdikawati, Lecturer, Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan, STAIN Majene, Sulawesi Barat, Indonesia. Email: srimusdikdarputri2020@gmail.com

<sup>1</sup> Voorhoeve, *Catalogue of Acehese Manuscripts in the Library of Leiden University and Other Collections Outside Aceh* (Leiden University Library: Legatum Warnerianum, 2004); T. E. Behrend, *Katalog Induk Naskah-Naskah Nusantara: Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia* (Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1998); Titik Pudjiastuti, "Manuscripts and Cultural Identity," *Wacana* 13, no. 1 (2011): 185-95. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.17510/24076899-01301009>; M. C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia Since C. 1200* (Stanford University Press, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> Edwin P. Wieringa, "Apa Gunanya Studi Naskah Nusantara pada Abad Ke-21," in *Dinamika Pernaskahan Nusantara*, ed. Mu'jizah (Masyarakat Pernakahan Nusantara, 2016), 60-77.

<sup>3</sup> Vladimir Braginsky, *The Turkic-Turkish Theme in Traditional Malay Literature* (Brill, 2015).

manuscript that has thoroughly been studied<sup>4</sup>; it recounts historical information on Aceh's relationship with the outside world, including Turkey.<sup>5</sup> HE is simply listed in the catalog, *Acehnese Manuscripts*.<sup>6</sup>

This study explored in depth the importance of Aceh's perception of Turkey regarding its political and social structure, focusing on the Acehnese perspectives on the best practices and good governance of the Ottoman Empire, as well as the lessons learned by the Acehnese. This affects the current relationship between the two nations. Knowledge of what happened in the past is significant because it demonstrates the tenacity of the relationship between Aceh and Turkey. The messages embedded in HE make moral statements about the relationship between these peoples and, as such, can be influential in establishing future relationships between Turkey and Indonesia. A study of this manuscript can bring back memories of the Sultanate of Aceh and the Ottoman Empire as allies.

### **Relationship between Aceh and Turkey in the literature**

Aceh's relationship with Turkey is both historical and sociological in nature. Historically, Turkey, which once supported the anti-colonial movement in Aceh, has maintained a sociological connection with Aceh to date. The Ottoman Empire and the Sultanate of Aceh had a long-standing relationship.<sup>7</sup> It began in the 16th century C.E. when Aceh Sultan Alauddin Riayat Shah al-Kahhar sought the Ottoman Turks' military assistance in opposing the Portuguese.<sup>8</sup> In *Hikayat Bustanu's-Salatin* written by Ar-Raniry,<sup>9</sup> the following is stated:

He, Sultan Alau'd-Din Ri'ayat Shah al-Kahar, created a system of government in Aceh Daru's-Salam. He sent emissaries to Sultan Rum in Istanbul to strengthen the Muslim religion. Sultan Rum sent a number of expert weapon makers, and large weapons were used. At this time, the first fortress of Aceh Daru's-Salam was built. Sultan Alau'd-Din fought for the first time against the pagans, going so far as to directly invade Melaka.

This text explicitly describes the close relationship that developed between Aceh and Turkey between the 16th and 19th centuries C.E. for religious and military reasons. For the Sultanate of Aceh, the Portuguese, who were entrenched in Melaka, impeded Aceh's plan to become the most advanced kingdom in western Nusantara (Indonesia). Concurrently, the Ottomans were the most powerful force in the Middle East and were heavily involved in the lucrative spice trade in the Indian Ocean. With their help, the Acehnese established an important Islamic center in Nusantara, influenced by Turkish culture.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to *Hikayat Bustan's-Salatin*, the official records of the Ottoman Imperial Council (Divan-I Humayun) state that a formal relationship between the Sultanate of Aceh and the Ottoman Empire began

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<sup>4</sup> Teuku Iskandar, *Hikayat Aceh* (Yayasan Karyawan, 2001); Afifuddin, "Meulanggeh in Hikayat Aceh," *International Conference on Art, Design, Education, and Cultural Studies (ICADECS)* (2019): 8-10; Vladimir Braginsky (2008), "Structure, Date and Sources of Hikayat Aceh Revisited: The Problem of Mughal-Malay Literary Ties," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde/ Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia* 162, no. 4 (2008): 441-67. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-90003662>; Putri Khalida Zia, Zulfadli A. Aziz, and Burhansyah "Analysis of Figurative Language in Hikayat Aceh Written by Muda Balia," *Research in English and Education (READ)* 3, no. 4 (2018): 231-42, <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1672-4623.2018.01>.

<sup>5</sup> Jelani Harun, "Bustan Al-Salatin, 'the Garden of Kings': A Universal History and ADAB Work from Seventeenth-century ACEH1," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 32, no. 92 (2007): 21-52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1363981042000263444>; Ermy Azziaty Rozali, "Aceh-Ottoman Relation in Bustan Al-Salatin," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5, no. 29 (2014): 93-100. <https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n29p93>; Nor Ashikin Binti Md Nor and Salmah Jan Binti Noor Muhammad, "Bustan Al-Salatin Panduan Kepada Pemerintahan Islam yang Adil oleh Golongan Pembantu Raja ~ Bustan Al-Salatin as a Guide to Justice of Islamic Government by King's Aides," *MANU: Jurnal Pusat Penataran Ilmu dan Bahasa (PPIB)*, MANU Bil., 26 (2017): 51-75. <https://doi.org/10.51200/manu.v0i0.1059>.

<sup>6</sup> Voorhoeve, *Catalogue of Acehnese Manuscripts*, 54-9.

<sup>7</sup> Desi Safriana and Elysa Wulandari, "The Historical and Religious Approach towards City Park Design in Banda Aceh, Indonesia Case Study: Krueng Neng Park (Taman Krueng Neng)," in *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering* 352 (2018): 2-8. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1757-899X/352/1/012062>; Hayatullah Zuboidi, "Kepentingan Utsmani Menjalin Hubungan Dengan Kerajaan Aceh Darussalam," *Jurnal Peurawi: Media Kajian Komunikasi Islam* 1, no. 2 (2018): 113-27; Anthony Reid, "Turkey as Aceh's Alternative Imperium," *Archipel*, 87, (2014): 81-102, <https://doi.org/10.3406/arch.2014.4458>; Giancarlo Casale, "Tordesillas and the Ottoman Caliphate: Early Modern Frontiers and the Renaissance of an Ancient Islamic Institution," *Journal of Early Modern History* 19, no. 6 (2015): 485-511, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700658-12342469>.

<sup>8</sup> Ermy Azziaty Rozali, "Aceh-Ottoman Relation in Bustan Al-Salatin," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5, no. 29 (2014): 93-100, <https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n29p93>; İsmail Hakki Kadi, "An Old Ally Revisited: Diplomatic Interactions Between the Ottoman Empire and the Sultanate of Aceh in the Face of Dutch Colonial Expansion," *International History Review* 43, no. 25 (2021): 1080-1097, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2020.1726433>.

<sup>9</sup> Reid, "Turkey as Aceh's Alternative Imperium," 10.

<sup>10</sup> Burhanudin, "Pasang Surut Hubungan Aceh Dan Turki Usmani: Perspektif Sejarah," *Studia Islamika* 23, no. 2 (2016): 373-89, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v23i2.3259>.

in 1567 C.E.<sup>11</sup> Sultan Sulaiman the Magnificent requested military assistance for Aceh from Turkey. To assist Aceh in its attack on the Portuguese, the Ottoman Turks provided warships, artillery, troops, and other necessary weapons.<sup>12</sup> This shows the significance of the shared religious/political identities of Muslim Turks and Muslim Acehese, as well as consciousness of the Muslim struggle in Southern Asia.<sup>13</sup>

Turkey supported Aceh not only out of a sense of brotherhood but also because of politics and economics. The Portuguese, who were enemies of the Acehese, threatened the freedom of passage of Turkish ships in the Red Sea, preventing them from trading with Mecca.<sup>14</sup> *Hikayat Bustan's Salatin* underlines the significance of Turkey's support in bolstering Aceh's military capability, while also highlighting the importance of the Ottoman Empire as the main Islamic Caliphate.<sup>15</sup> Aceh recognized Turkish superiority. In *Hikayat Meukuta Alam*, it is said that, politically, Aceh considered itself a part of the Ottoman Empire. The Sultan of Aceh acknowledged the Ottoman Sultan Utsmani as "a reflection of the Lord," who must always be obeyed and respected.<sup>16</sup> With this in mind, Aceh later became involved in Turkey's War of Independence.<sup>17</sup>

Aceh and Turkey were involved in the Indian Ocean spice trade. Aceh sent pepper to the Turkish port on the Red Sea. They traded in other commodities as well. Economic trade thrived hand-in-hand with the growth of the top-level diplomatic relationship between the two states.<sup>18</sup> Consumer goods, such as pepper and cloves, that came from Aceh stimulated the Ottoman Empire's interest in Southern Asia. Turkish textiles and carpets were exported to Aceh, where they were favored by the Sultan.<sup>19</sup>

When the Dutch invaded Aceh in 1873 in an attempt to annex the sultanate to their East Indies colony, the Aceh leaders, Sultan Aceh Daud Syah and Tuanku Hashim, secretly contacted the Ottomans, asking for help due to the atrocities perpetrated by the Dutch against the Acehese. They did so despite the fact that the political situation in Turkey made it impossible for them to help.<sup>20</sup> Even as the Ottoman Empire became unstable and ultimately disintegrated, its iconic place in history strongly impacted Islam in the Malay world. The Ottomans were seen as the great defenders of Islam, and many of their traditions and artifacts were highly valued by Malay Muslims. Malay World Islam is rooted in its Ottoman inheritance.<sup>21</sup>

Given their geographical proximity, Turkey and Aceh have a unique relationship. Turkey is at the crossroads of Asia Minor and Europe, whereas Aceh is located in Southeast Asia.<sup>22</sup> When Aceh was hit by a devastating tsunami in 2004, it provided a modern example of the longstanding relationship between the two countries. Turkey immediately dispatched emergency aid, recalling their shared history as the Ottoman Empire's protectorates.<sup>23</sup> Turkey played an important role in rebuilding schools and mosques and supporting children's welfare and housing projects.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ismail Hakki Göksoy, "Ottoman-Aceh Relations as Documented in Turkish Sources," in *Mapping the Acehese Past* ed. R. Michael Feener, Patrick Daly, and Anthony Reid (Brill, 2011), 65-96.

<sup>12</sup> R. Michael Feener, "The Acehese Past and Its Present State of Study," in *Mapping the Acehese Past*, ed. R. Michael Feener, Patrick Daly, and Anthony Reid (Brill, 2011), 1-24.

<sup>13</sup> Mehmet Ozay, "The Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam as a Constructive Power," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 1, no. 11 (2011): 282.

<sup>14</sup> Hayatullah Zuboidi, "Kepentingan Utsmani Menjalin Hubungan dengan Kerajaan Aceh Darussalam."

<sup>15</sup> Ermy Azziaty Rozali, "Aceh-Ottoman Relation in Bustan Al-Salatin."

<sup>16</sup> Hayatullah Zuboidi, "Kepentingan Utsmani Menjalin Hubungan Dengan Kerajaan Aceh Darussalam."

<sup>17</sup> Umur Korkut (2019), "The Discursive Governance of Forced-Migration Management: The Turkish Shift from Reticence to Activism in Asia," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 32, no. 4 (2019): 664-82. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fey053>.

<sup>18</sup> Annabel Teh Gallop, "Ottoman Influences in the Seal of Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah of Aceh (r.1589-1604)," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 32, no. 93 (2004): 176-90, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1363981042000320125>.

<sup>19</sup> A. C. S. Peacock, "The Economic Relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Southeast Asia in the Seventeenth Century," in *From Anatolia to Aceh*, ed. A. C. S. Peacock and Annabel Teh Gallop (Oxford University Press, 2015), 63-88. <https://doi.org/10.5871/bacad/9780197265819.003.0004>.

<sup>20</sup> Ismail Hakki Göksoy, "Ottoman-Aceh Relations as Documented in Turkish Sources."

<sup>21</sup> Amirulhakim bin Ahmad Nadzri, Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Wahab, and Aisyah Faizah binti Zaki, "Relasi Aceh dan Turki Dalam Islamisasi Dunia Melayu: Suatu Analisis," *Kontekstualita: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 30, no. 1 (2015): 25-47.

<sup>22</sup> Hayatullah Zuboidi, "Kepentingan Utsmani Menjalin Hubungan dengan Kerajaan Aceh Darussalam," 114.

<sup>23</sup> Ismail Hakki Göksoy, "Ottoman-Aceh Relations as Documented in Turkish Sources," Farish A Noor, *Rohingya Refugees: Turks to the Rescue*, RISIS Commentary, no. 122 (Singapore: Nanyang Technological University, 2015), 2.

<sup>24</sup> Alaeddin Tekin and Arshad Islam, "Turkish Waqf after the 2004aceh Tsunami," *Intellectual Discourse* 26, Special Issue (Waqf) (2018): 1047-64.

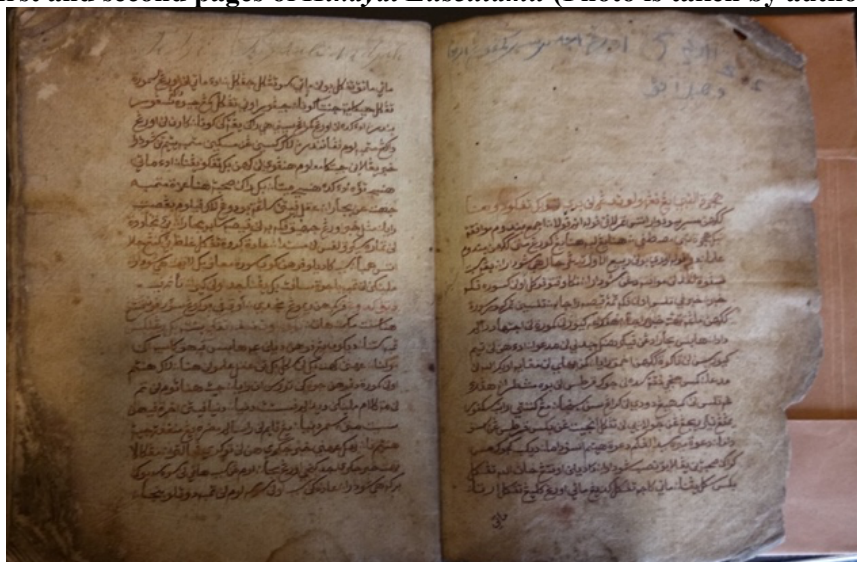
## Methods

This study focuses on analyzing the HE text housed in Leiden Cod. Or. 8194. This study employed two methodologies: philology and history. Philology is used to thoroughly analyze the text, enabling comprehension and citation of the content relevant to the research topic. History is beneficial for examining the historical content. The manuscript text used in this document is the Acehnese version of the history of the Turkish Empire. Consequently, employing the historical method for analysis is an appropriate strategy.

The data in this study were collected from several manuscripts referring to Turkey based on extant catalogs of Acehnese documents. These catalogs were written by Voorhoeve in 1994, T.E. Behrend in 1998, and Ricklefs in 2007.<sup>25</sup> However, research shows that the only original Acehnese manuscript of *Hikayat Eseutamu* that survived is that in the Leiden Library. HE is the only manuscript written in the local language that covers the entire history of Turkey's relationships from beginning to end. This manuscript was taken into consideration to obtain the text's most profound meaning. This manuscript was placed in a historical context, as discussed in the document.

HE is 17 cm x 22.5 cm in size. The text is 11 cm x 16 cm and 1.5 cm in width, with 202 pages. The actual text is shown in figure 1. The fine and rough lines are shadowed on European paper with a crescent moon watermark, as shown in figure 2. The paper was most likely made in Italy during the nineteenth century C.E.<sup>26</sup> The text was written in the nineteenth century C.E., or 1286H/1869M, as stated in the second verse of the first paragraph on page one. The title of the manuscript is not indicated, but it is mentioned on page three that the writer aims to tell a story about Istanbul: "*nama nanggroe Eseutamu yang saboh rasa Rum mulia...*"<sup>27</sup> (The country name is Istanbul as a part of glorious Rum). The text was written in Acehnese using Jawi script in the form of *Hikayat*. Each verse is denoted by a three-dot triangular sign (:.). The manuscript describes the Turkish Kingdom's greatness and glory from the 13th century C.E. onward, portraying its conquests and how it built its greatness on Islamic teachings. The Acehnese greatly respected the Ottoman Empire, referred to as Rum in this text. In this study, three categories were used to analyze HE. These categories correspond to the three aspects of Turkish life highly valued in the Acehnese perceptions of Turkey. These are best practices, good governance, and well-being. These categories help in evaluating and analyzing the text reflectively in relation to its historical context.

**Figure 1: First and second pages of *Hikayat Euseutamu* (Photo is taken by author; Fakhriati)**

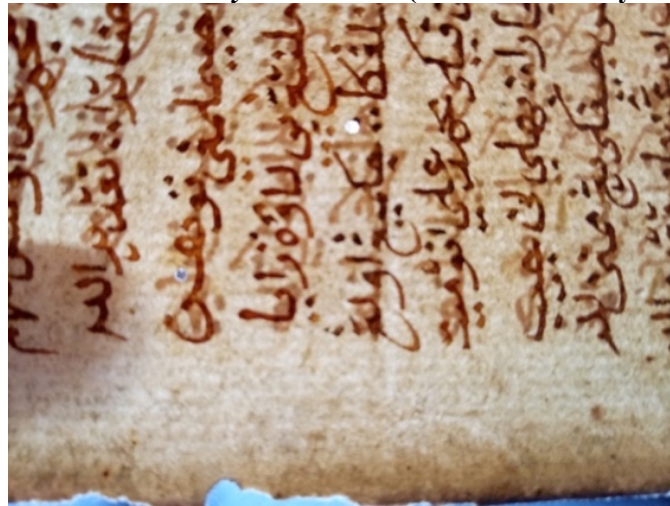


<sup>25</sup> Voorhoeve, *Catalogue of Acehnese Manuscripts in the Library of Leiden University and Other Collections Outside Aceh*; T. Behrend, *Katalog Induk Naskah-naskah Nusantara: Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia*; M. C. Ricklefs, P. Voorhoeve, Annabel Teh Gallop, *Indonesian Manuscripts in Great Britain: A Catalogue of Manuscripts in Indonesian Languages in British Public Collections* (Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2014).

<sup>26</sup> Adam Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts a Vademecum for Readers. Handbuch Der Orientalistik* (Brill, 2012).; François Déroche, *Islamic Codicology: An Introduction to the Study of Manuscripts in Arabic Script* (Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2004).

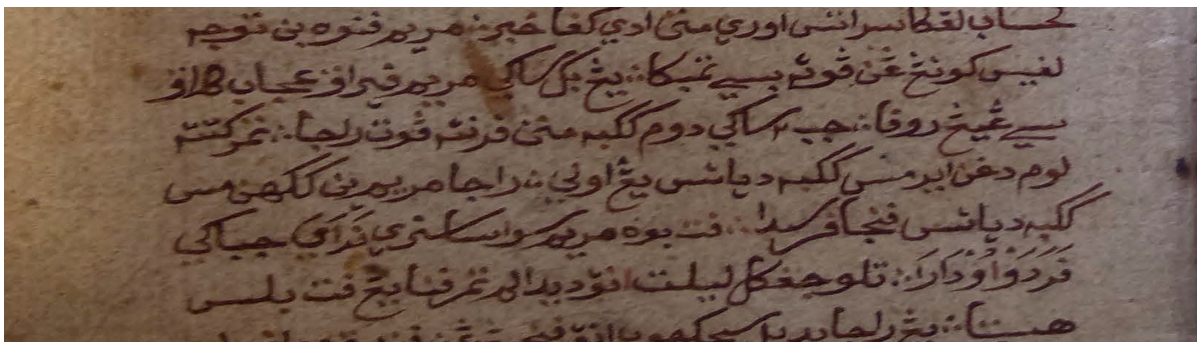
<sup>27</sup> Anonymous Author, *Hikayat Eseutamu* (n.d.): 3.

Figure 2: Watermark inside *Hikayat Eseutamu* (Photo is taken by author; Fakhriati)



## Results

Ancient manuscripts are a type of national iHeritage that preserves a significant amount of local wisdom that can communicate the past, present, and future. Turkey is well known for its long-standing relationship with Aceh. This relationship is featured in considerable detail in the traditional stories of Aceh. HE describes Acehese society's admiration for Turkey, as seen in the three themes of this critical document.



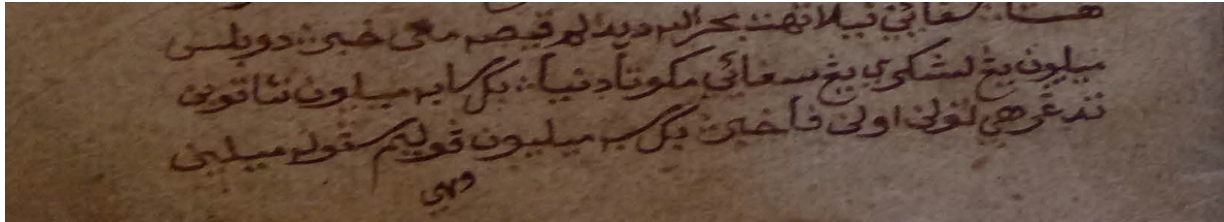
First, the manuscript portrays Turkey as a nation that implements "best practices" to expand and consolidate its political power. Aceh saw this as a fortifying defensive strategy. In HE, the following is written:

*There are yellow iron and copper cannons protecting the palace. At every corner of the palace there are silver cannons which are awe-inspiring to look at. The King has ordered that this be so. A cannon made from gold has been placed at the highest place in the palace. The King calls this the Golden Cannon. Other cannons shine. Also, at the base of the cannons there are strings of bullets extending for fourteen cubits....<sup>28</sup>*

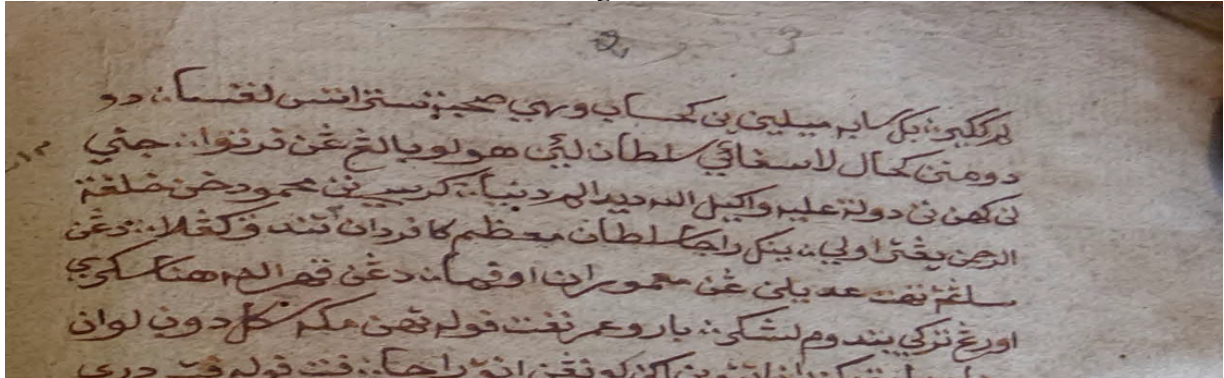
This story outlines the strategies used to control the territory, focusing on what was done to protect the palace from enemy attacks. The Acehese were impressed by the Turks' ability to defend their state and their people.

The Acehese followed the Turks' footsteps by uniting their citizens to strengthen their state. The presence of the royal paramilitary force and the motivation of the *jihād* movement against the pagan colonial enemy bolstered social solidarity. The Turkish government encouraged citizens to join the paramilitary, as evidenced by the following quote in HE:

<sup>28</sup> Anonymous Author, *Hikayat Eseutamu* (n.d.): 4-5. Mahmud Khan written in the text was a king in the Ottoman Empire.



Page 4

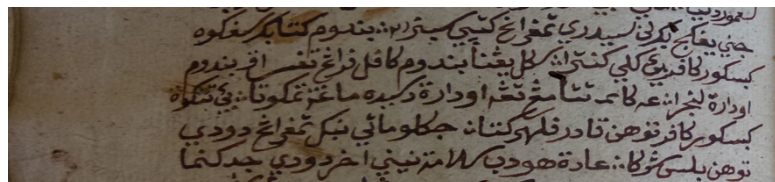


Page 5

*There are 1,200,000 paratroopers in the state, men and officers. God’s representative on earth, who sits on the throne is Mahmud Khan the Supreme Ruler. He is the great king who rules from the highest throne ensuring justice and prosperity, but even he cannot number all the Turks who serve in his army.<sup>29</sup>*

This manuscript shows that the defense of Turkey was influenced by the unity of its citizens who supported the government’s program to protect the state. A strong paramilitary force was important in maintaining the security of the country.

The willingness of the people to support the *jihad* movement against the infidel colonial enemy, encouraged by the Turkish King, was a source of strength for the state. This movement intended to stabilize the nation and its religion. In HE, it is said:



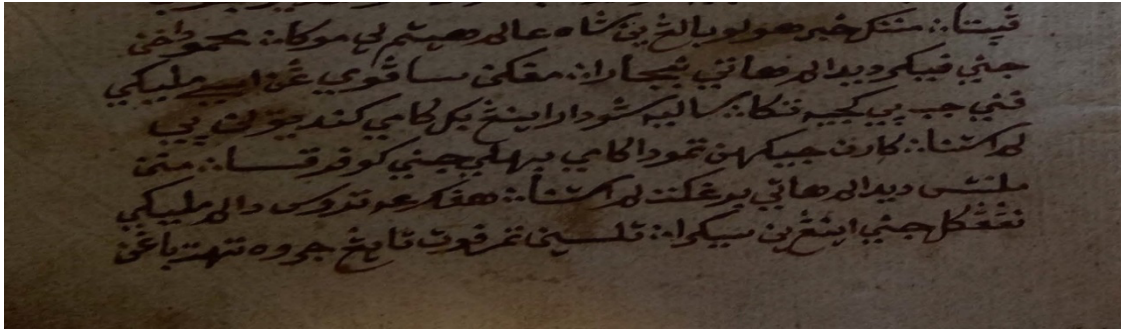
*All of you must take war seriously. You must destroy each and every warship. Fighting on land isn’t so difficult. Don’t be afraid of the infidel, because God will protect you. If you die in war, you will be rewarded in heaven. If you are alive when the war is over, you will be famous.<sup>30</sup>*

This quote shows the enthusiasm of the Turks to expand their sphere of influence, using religion to motivate their people to fight against the Dutch colonials. The Turkish King reiterated the belief of a heavenly reward for those killed in jihad and the assurance that the name of a jihad martyr would be remembered by the people.

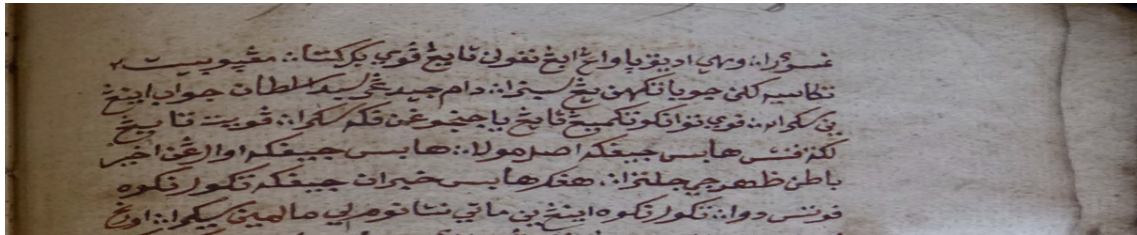
The leadership ability of the King was vital to the preservation of national sovereignty. His problem-solving ability was highly regarded. An example of his leadership ability is presented on pages 27-28 of HE.

<sup>29</sup> Anonymous Author, *Hikayat Eseutamu* (n.d.): 4-5.

<sup>30</sup> Anonymous Author, *Hikayat Eseutamu* (n.d.): 189.



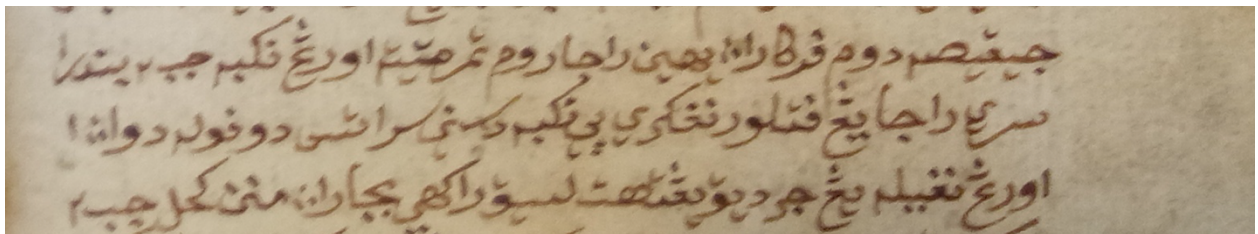
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Page 28

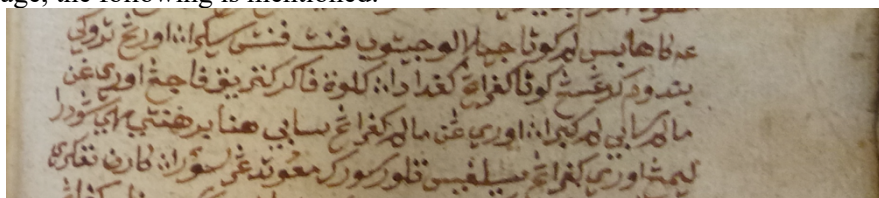
*Mahmud Khan thought deeply and questioned in his heart about what happened when a state seal was taken by a royal concubine. She apparently wanted to usurp power. He called her and asked her directly about what had happened to the seal. When she admitted what she had done, he had her strangled and immediately buried.<sup>31</sup>*

This text illustrates his resoluteness in solving issues that arose in the palace. He did not hesitate to condemn a person who had committed a crime or betrayed trust. His tactical skills in war were renowned:



*At that time, the King of Rum placed 120 men, according to their expertise and wisdom, in each of the places that he had defeated.<sup>32</sup>*

On another page, the following is mentioned:



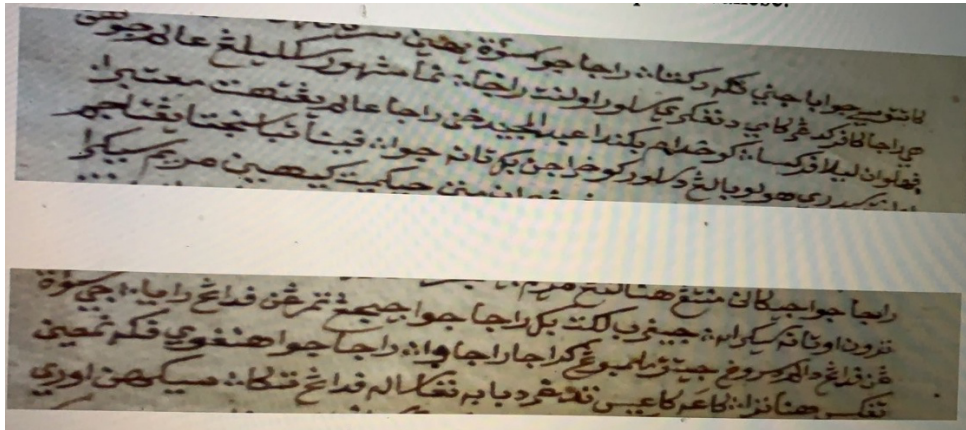
*All the Turks were urged to fight in Northern Aceh; from sunrise to sunset they were to pursue the infidel. The battle sounds could be heard for five days.<sup>33</sup>*

<sup>31</sup> Anonymous Author, *Hikayat Eseutamu* (n.d.): 27-8.

<sup>32</sup> Anonymous Author, *Hikayat Eseutamu* (n.d.): 200.

<sup>33</sup> Anonymous Author, *Hikayat Eseutamu* (n.d.): 177.

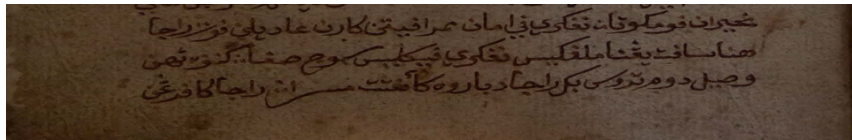
Furthermore, the King was able to conquer the Javanese:



*The most famous name of heroes in the world is King Abdul Majid Khan. He defeated the King of Java, who was slain by the sword. The King of Java and his people were unable to defend himself and his people.*<sup>34</sup>

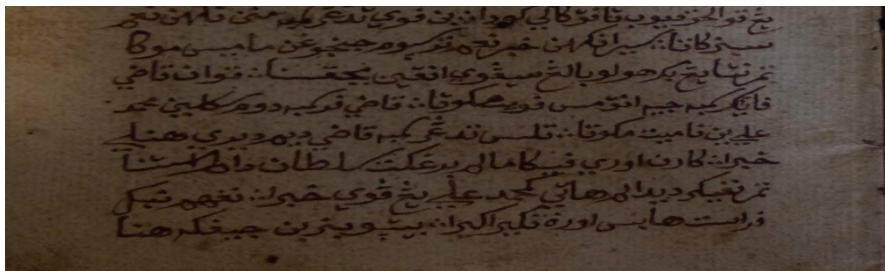
Several parts in HE illustrate the strategies used by the Turkish King to win his war. There were three main strategies: placing skilled leaders in conquered territories, cultivating a spirit of war, and emphasizing the need to be skilled with the sword.

Second, the State of Turkey was an example of good governance. In HE, five features of good governance can be found based on the attitude of the Monarch. Several quotations illustrate this. The first aspect of good governance was the belief that the King was just, clean of heart, and law-abiding:



*The safety of the state depends on the justice of its King. It is not mistaken to view a state as being clean and prosperous when its King is just.*<sup>35</sup>

The second aspect of good governance was the egalitarian attitude of the King who respected his people regardless of their background:



*When he spoke, the King smiled warmly and his face shone. He enquired from an officer who the person was who had come to him. The officer, Tuan Qadi, said that this person was special, that he was the son of a poor citizen called Muhammad Ali. Then, as night had fallen, the King returned to the palace, thinking about Muhammad Ali who brought good fortune to the country.*<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Anonymous Author, *Hikayat Eseutamu* (n.d.): 150.

<sup>35</sup> Anonymous Author, *Hikayat Eseutamu* (n.d.): 6.

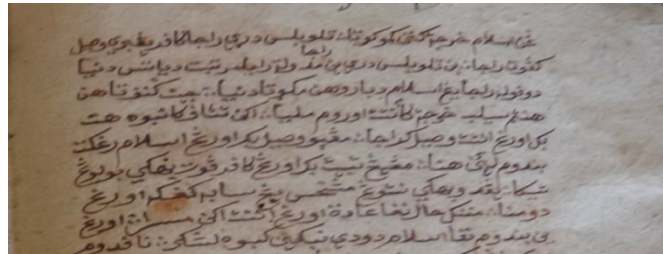
<sup>36</sup> Anonymous Author, *Hikayat Eseutamu* (n.d.): 29.



This text shows that the Turkish King was an intelligent person who handled situations wisely. He valued all people without considering their status. He valued those who did well and honored the state. The third aspect of *good governance* can be seen in the way even non-Muslim states were brought into Turkey's sphere of influence:



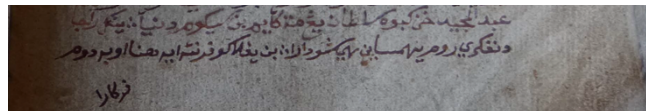
The end of Page 6



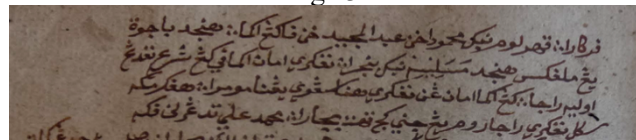
Page 7

*Infidel kings as well as Muslim kings were subjects of the Turkish King. Thirteen infidel kings were vassals of his, and they brought him tribute, while they acknowledged his authority. Twenty Muslim kings were also his vassals. Each year, they brought special tribute to him. Those who brought the tribute were honoured. That brought by the Muslims was not divided, but that brought by the infidels was divided into four. Two parts were given to the elders, and one part was given to the local people. This became a tradition. The infidels became Muslims and then joined the country's paramilitary.<sup>37</sup>*

The fourth aspect of good governance was the importance given to law and order:



Page 34

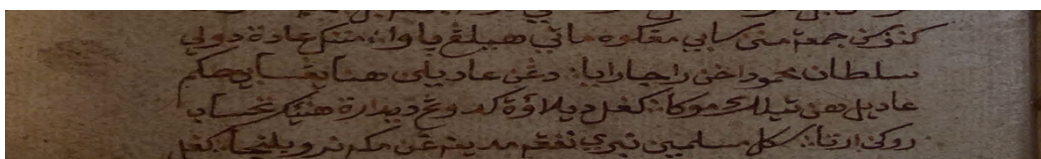


Page 35

*The King of Rum instituted laws that did not change. Mahmud Khan Abdul Majid Khan strengthened religious observance. Syariah law was enforced, with no exceptions. This has resulted in the nation's fame being the envy of the world.<sup>38</sup>*

The King had to be obeyed. No exceptions to the law were permitted. The enforcement of Syariah Law was key to the nation's good governance.

*Third*, Turkey was seen as a model state, as reflected in the way its people were protected. Three proofs of stability of the state can be found in HE. The first proof was the way the King spoke and acted justly without prejudice:

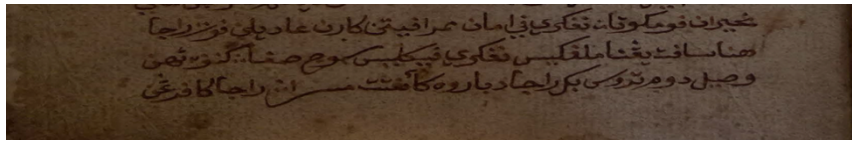


<sup>37</sup> Anonymous Author, *Hikayat Eseutamu* (n.d.): 6-7.

<sup>38</sup> Anonymous Author, *Hikayat Eseutamu* (n.d.): 34-35.

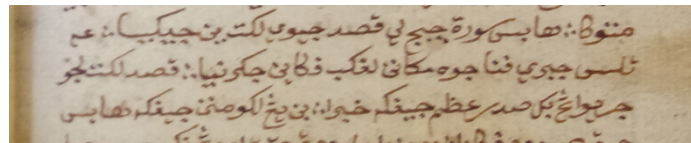
*This is the custom and tradition of Sultan Mahmud Khan, the great King. In his justice he did not differentiate between people. He had an uncountable number of ships in port. All Muslims wanting to go to Madinah and Mecca were assisted.*<sup>39</sup>

In another phrase, the following is stated:



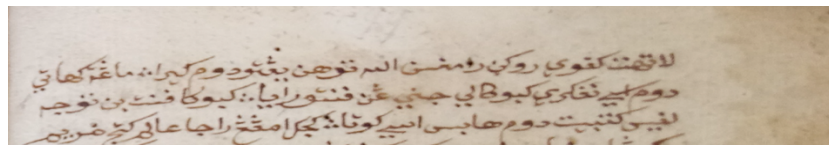
*The country was secure, due to the justice of the King. At the end of each year, tribute was given to the King.*<sup>40</sup>

The second proof was the way the King respected guests, regardless of where they came from:



*The family of the King gave food in abundance to the King's visitors from Aceh. This became a talking-point for the visitors.*<sup>41</sup>

The third proof was observed in the way citizens expressed their satisfaction with the King's attitude:



*The King brought back a huge bounty, which God had provided. All the people rejoiced. The King opened the doors wide. Line after line, to at least seven rows, of people came in to participate in the spoils.*<sup>42</sup>

HE clearly shows the admiration of the people of Aceh for Turkey and its influence on the lives of the Acehnese in their governmental and social structures. Turkey influenced the internalization of leadership values, community life, and behavior in the Acehnese society.

## Discussion

Aceh's relationship with Turkey affected not only state governance in Aceh but also how people lived. Aceh was an Ottoman vassal state from 1299 until 1922M.<sup>43</sup> At the elite level, this relationship was bidirectional. In 1516M, Sultan Alaididin Riayat Syah wrote to the Turkish King, in the Turkish language, concerning Aceh's confrontation with the Dutch. He requested military aid from the fellow Muslim Turks.<sup>44</sup> At the time, the Acehnese valued their traditional relationship with Turkey. In HE, it is feasible to see how the Acehnese adapted some of the Turkish political structures. The Turkish King and his high-ranking deputies exercised their authority by committing to good governance, universal peace, and welfare of people. According to HE, the King used his power to run the state and lead his people, while also carrying out a policy of empire expansion through good governance. This was critical to ensuring the nation's stability while remaining glorious, calm, and peaceful.

<sup>39</sup> Anonymous Author, *Hikayat Eseutamu* (n.d.): 6.

<sup>40</sup> Anonymous Author, *Hikayat Eseutamu* (n.d.): 6.

<sup>41</sup> Anonymous Author, *Hikayat Eseutamu* (n.d.): 199.

<sup>42</sup> Anonymous Author, *Hikayat Eseutamu* (n.d.): 201.

<sup>43</sup> A. C. S. Peacock, "The Economic Relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Southeast Asia in the Seventeenth Century," 63-8.

<sup>44</sup> Mehmet Ali Alacagöz, Mehmet Akif Terzi, and Ahmet Ergün, *Turki Utsmani-Indonesia: Relasi Dan Korespondensi Berdasarkan Dokumen Turki Utsmani* (Hitay, 2017).

Three factors contributed to the Acehese admiration for the Turkish people. *First*, the Turks' treatment of the Acehese ensured that they were welcomed by the Acehese. The Turks were always polite and respectful of the native Acehese, which fostered a bond between them. *Second*, the Turkish government supported the Acehese in their war against the Portuguese, which the Acehese eventually won. *Third*, they were brought together by sharing the same faith, Islam, and religious traditions.<sup>45</sup> Aceh and Turkey both benefitted immensely from this relationship. Aceh defeated the colonizing Portuguese with Turkey's help and support, and the Ottoman Empire expanded as a result of Aceh's support and Turkey's influence. Turkey became prominent as a world power. Aceh's relationship with Turkey facilitated Jambi, a state in western Sumatra, becoming an Ottoman vassal.<sup>46</sup>

This study differs from previous studies on the Turkish-Acehese relationship because it focuses primarily on the relationship between the governments of the two countries.<sup>47</sup> This study found that the relationships between Turkey and Aceh had a significant impact on the perceptions of the Acehese people. These relationships are not only at the governmental level but also at the popular level. Consequently, a large number of Turkish people came to Aceh.

HE was written in the form of *Hikayat* in the local Acehese native language, which became popular among the Acehese who were delighted to rehash it day after day. In doing so, the Acehese people maintained a popular attachment to Turkey. HE evolved into a mode of communication that touched the hearts of the Acehese. The part concerning how the Turkish King sought medicine, pepper, and gloves from Aceh had a considerable appeal.<sup>48</sup>

When the text of HE is recited, it can link the reader with the listeners, inviting them to reflect on the age-old relationship between Aceh and Turkey. The Acehese are invited to consider Turkey as a good role model. If the story of the relationship between these two states is limited to the political and governmental domains, it is incomplete. It takes on a much fuller meaning when the importance of *best practices, good governance, and good behavior*, as can be seen in the historical Turkish model, is presented in the context of this study. HE speaks about the relevance of historic intelligence as we look to the future, even though the writings here might not always be easy to read, and some of the script has faded.

## Conclusion

HE, an ancient local text written in a local language and unknown for many years, encompasses information on Turkey's long-standing relationship with Aceh from the perspective of the Acehese. Based on the text of HE, the Acehese were impressed by the Ottoman Empire's success in controlling the state and governing its people. The Acehese are encouraged to look to Turkey as a great role model. The story of these two states' relationship is limited to the political and governmental realms. It takes on a much fuller meaning when considering the importance of best practices, good governance, and good behavior, as evidenced by the historical Turkish model presented in this context. Even though the writings here are not easily readable and some of the script has faded, HE expresses the relevance of historic intelligence as we look to the future.

The text of the ancient manuscript *Hikayat Eseutamu* has been studied for this narrative. This study not only analyzes the text but also delves into the manuscript's structure, character of the writing, language style, and physical condition of HE. The manuscript contains historical information that can be used to reveal historical treasures. If this were to happen, the history of the relationship between Aceh and Turkey could be expressed in detail. Consequently, the content of an ancient manuscript written in an

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<sup>45</sup> This is an essential part of the Ottoman Empire protecting the entire Muslim community worldwide. As a comparison, the Ottoman travelers perceived the African local Muslims as an integral part of them. See Mustafa Serdar Palabıyık, "Ottoman travelers' perceptions of Africa in the Late Ottoman Empire (1860-1922): A discussion of civilization, colonialism and race," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 46 (2012): 210–11. DOI: 10.1017/S0896634600001552; Jajat Burhanudin, "Hubungan Asia Tenggara–Usmani dalam ArsipTurki," *Studia Islamika* 30, no. 2 (2023): 383–400, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v30i2.36296>.

<sup>46</sup> Relis (2020), "Stempel Turki Di Istana Silinduang Bulan, Bukti Hubungan Turki-Minangkabau Telah Terbuhul Sejak Dahulu Kala". *Minangsatu*, March 8, 2020, <https://minangsatu.com/stempel-turki-di-istana-silinduang-bulan-bukti-hubungan-turkiminangkabau-telaha-terbuhul-sejak-dahulu-kala> 6817

<sup>47</sup> M. Iqbal, N. Izzatusshobikhah, & I. A. Nuvitaning Sari, "Persekutuan Kerajaan Aceh Darussalam Dengan Turki Utsmani dalam Menghadapi Kolonialisme Portugis di Nusantara 1537-1571 M," *Batutah: Jurnal Sejarah Padaban Islam* 2, no. 1(2023): 12-30; Hayatullah Zuboidi, "Kepentingan Utsmani Menjalin Hubungan dengan Kerajaan Aceh Darussalam." Anthony Reid, "Turkey as Aceh's Alternative Imperium." Giancarlo Casale, "Tordesillas and the Ottoman Caliphate."

<sup>48</sup> Teuku Iskandar, *Hikayat Aceh*.

ancient local language can be used and is relevant today. Ancient manuscripts may contain pieces of a jigsaw puzzle of history from different eras. When these pieces of history are discovered and assembled, today's generation is enriched and these pieces of history can be life-giving.

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