

MAS

Prayer and Piety

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Texts on the Aceh War Flags in
the Christoffel Collection (MAS)



**Prayer and Piety – Texts on the Aceh War Flags
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Prayer and Piety

Texts on the Aceh War Flags in the Christoffel Collection (MAS)

The subject of this study concerns three objects held in the Museum aan de Stroom (MAS) collection in Antwerp (Belgium). They are recorded in the database as AE.1996.0012.0001, AE.1996.0012.0003 and AE.1922.0001.0824. Specifically, these are three Aceh war flags from the collection once held by Hans Christoffel, a Dutch soldier of Swiss descent. Christoffel was active as a high military official in the Aceh War from the end of the nineteenth century up until the early twentieth. It is probable that he confiscated these flags from the Aceh people in one of the many military campaigns that he led. There are five Aceh war flags in Christoffel's collection, but these three captured greater attention owing to the richness of their textual elements as opposed to the visual aspects that are a standard feature of Aceh war flags. These texts had remained a mystery for a long time, with the cataloguer describing no more than the flags' visual elements without supplying any description of the texts found throughout them. In filling this gap, I will be providing transliteration, translation and some preliminary thoughts concerning these texts.

AE.1996.0012.0001

AE.1996.0012.0001 displays in stark red the legendary bifurcated sword of 'Alī known as *Dhū l-Fiqār* (also *Dhū l-Faqār*),¹ the sun and the crescent moon. As Zahamri observed in six Aceh war flags from the Aceh War of 1873–1904, these objects are the norm in Aceh war flags.² Although not described in the catalogue, our flag also displays the symbols of the star³ and four eight-pointed geometric designs known as Solomon's ring. In the Islamic world, these designs function as talismans.⁴



Figure 1

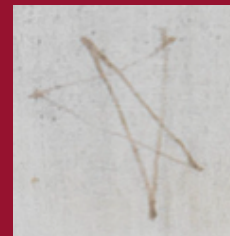


Figure 2: a symbol of the star



Figure 3: a symbol of the sun



Figure 4: a symbol of the crescent moon



Figure 5: Solomon's ring

The Absolute God

Moving on to the textual elements, there are five identifiable texts in this flag. The first is *huwa* (lit. *He*), the masculine third-person singular pronoun. This third-person pronoun indicates hiddenness and remoteness. The Sufis (Muslim mystics) take the nuances as a reference to the hidden Essence of God. This usage is first identified in the QS. 112:1 “Say: He is God, the One and Only”. This verse identifies the Divine Names of God: *Huwa*, *Allāh* and *Aḥad*.

As far as the writing is concerned, its design is in the form of a long circular line between *hāʾ* and *waw*. This manner of writing is intentional rather than the result of clumsiness. A similar writing method is in evidence in various manuals of Sufi orders in Java. In these manuals, *huwa* refers to the spiritual relationship between God and humans. The framework of this relationship is called the ‘Science of the Breath’ (Jv. *ilmu napas*). This ‘science’ is based on the mystical hermeneutics of a word. When a word is spoken individually by ending (Ar. *sukūn*) at *waw*, it creates the sound ‘*hūʾ*’. Human exhalation has a similar sound. The long sound of the *ū*, indicating the long exhalation, is then identified in the circular line of *hāʾ* connecting to the *wāw*. This circular path is believed to be the same as that of the passage of air in the body when inhaling and before exhaling. Taking this as the logical basis, breathing is considered identical to reciting God’s Hidden Essence and remembering Him. In addition, given that no human being can live without taking a breath, human beings are always in a state of remembering and pronouncing Him. This state is known as *ṣalāt al-dāʾim* (lit. ‘perpetual prayer’).⁵

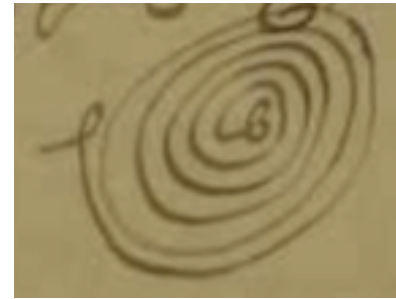


Figure 6: the word *Huwa* as shown in our flag

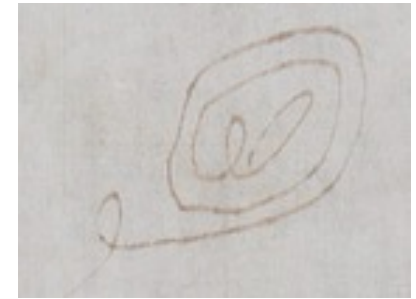


Figure 7: BR. 31, page 217, the symbol of *huwa* shown in the context of the Science of the Breath

The Names of Angels

The second text gives the names of the angels. The angels are invoked for their intermediary function in asking for God's intervention.

Transliteration:

Yā Jabrā'īl Yā Mikā'īl Yā Isrāfīl Yā 'Izrā'īl

Yā Nūrā'īl Yā Aṭfā'īl Yā Sarṭā'īl Yā Farā'īl Yā Ṭamrā'īl

Yā Ruqā'īl Yā Maṭrā'īl Yā Raqrā'īl Yā Luqā'īl Yā Allāh Yā Rasūlallāh tammat

Translation:

O Gabriel O Michael O Isrāfīl O 'Izrā'īl

O Nūrā'īl O Aṭfā'īl O Sarṭā'īl O Gharā'īl O Ṭamrā'īl

O Ruqā'īl O Maṭrā'īl O Raqrā'īl O Luqā'īl O God O The Messenger of God – end

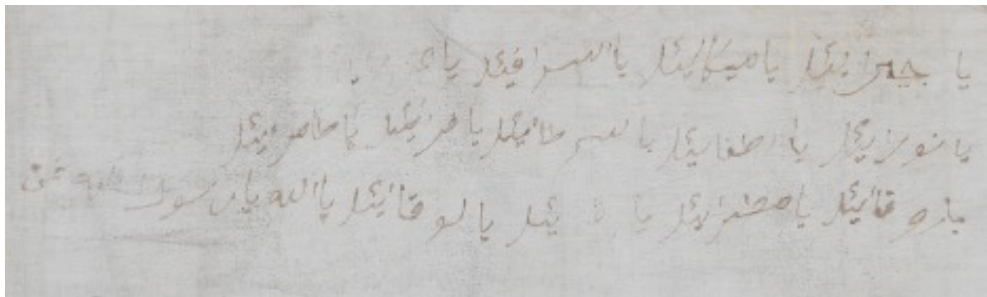


Figure 8: the names of the angels

The Numeric Magic Square

The third text is the numeric magic square. It is also known as the 'budūḥ' magic square. It is widespread as a type of talisman in the Islamic world.⁶ Its usage is varied and includes the provision of protection. However, it is rare, as far as I know, to see magic squares inscribed on war flags. In this case, the aim is to protect the community identified under the flag. The influence of this magic square in Southeast Asian Islam might be attributed to access to Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad al-Būnī's (d. 622/1225 or 630/1232) *Shams al-ma'ārif al-kubrā* ('The Great Version of the Sun of Esoteric Knowledge').⁷ In this work, al-Būnī provides details on how to compose talismanic designs. Many of those designs are in the form of magic squares. There are several extant manuscript copies of the work in the Malay-Indonesian world.⁸

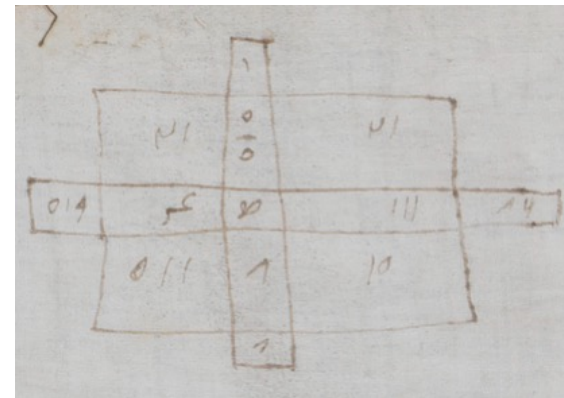


Figure 9

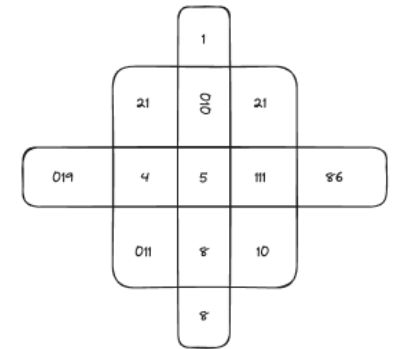


Figure 10

The Names of the Aceh Sultāns and Sultānahs

The fourth text is that of the names of rulers of the Aceh Sultanate. This practice may be as a show of loyalty to the kingdom, with the writer of the names demonstrating that he is subject to these rulers. However, when comparing Christoffel's collection with the six Aceh war flags observed by Zhamri, it would seem that a written record of the rulers' names is quite rare.⁹ Rulers' names do not appear on any of the flags he studied. I have not found any examples from among the Aceh war flags held at the MAS other than AE.1996.0012.0001 and AE.1922.0001.0824.

Transliteration:

Hādhā ismu Sultān Sayyid Ibrāhīm wa-nā'ib minhu Sultān Sayyid al-Mukammā[ī] wa-nā'ib minhu Sultān marḥūm Jamālu 'l-'Ālam wa-nā'ib minhu Sultān marḥūm Makūtā 'Ālam Iskandar Muda wa-nā'ib minhu minhu min Sultān marḥūm Dāru 'l-Salām wa-nā'ib minhu Sultān marḥūm Tāju 'l-'Ālam wa-nā'ib minhu min Sultān marḥūm Nūru 'l-'Ālam wa-nā'ib minhu min Sultān[ah] Ṣafiyyatu 'l-Dīn Sāh wa-nā'ib minhu min Zakiyyātu 'l-Dīn Sāh rahmatu 'llāh 'alayhim 'ajma'in wa-sallam [ta]slīman kathīran tammat

Translation:

These are the names of the kings: Sayyid Ibrāhīm, and his successor is Sultān Sayyid al-Mukammāl, and his successor is Sultān marḥūm Jamālu 'l-'Ālam, and his successor is Sultān marḥūm Makūtā 'Ālam Iskandar Muda, and his successor is Sultān marḥūm Dāru 'l-Salām, and his successor is Sultān marḥūm Tāju 'l-'Ālam, and his successor is Sultān marḥūm Nūr a' - 'Ālam, and his successor is Sultāna Ṣafiyyatu 'l-Dīn Sāh, and her successor is Sultāna Zakiyyātu 'l-Dīn Sāh, may the peace and bountiful mercy of God be upon them all – the end.

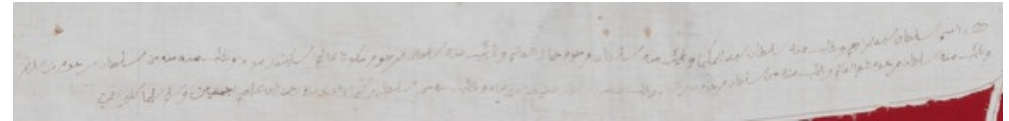


Figure 11: the names of the rulers

Three Invocations of Blessings (Barakāts)

The fifth text contains three invocations of significant figures to pray for God's blessings (*barakāt*) and intercession (*shafā'at*). Some important figures of the early Muslims are usually summoned upon in the barakāts. The name most often summoned is the Prophet and his four rightly guided caliphs. However, *Betara Guru*, a non-Islamic figure, is also summoned by this flag. This is interesting because Betara Guru (lit. 'the divine Master') is known as a mythical figure from Hinduism. In Javanese chronicle literature he is believed to be the ancestor of the Javanese kings.

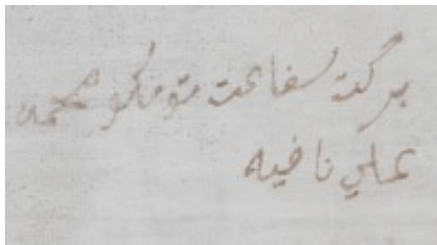


Figure 12: the first invocation

First

Transliteration:

Berkat safā'at tuwanku Muḥammad 'Alī
Nāfiyah

Translation:

By the blessing and intercession of my Lord
Muḥammad 'Alī Nāfiyah

Second

Transliteration:

Berkat shafā'at tuwanku kawan ter 'ālim.

Translation:

By the blessing and intercession of my
Lord, a friend of the most knowledgeable.



Figure 13: the second invocation

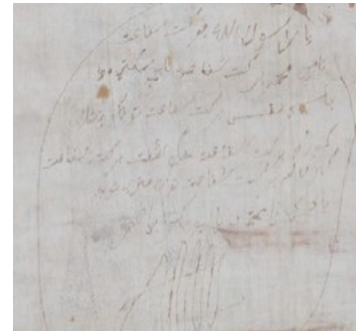


Figure 14: the third invocation

Third

Transliteration:

Yā Rasūla 'llāh berkat safā'at Nābī Muḥammad
berkat safā'at nābī sekitar duwa belas laqsa berkat
safā'at Tuwanku Betara Guru berkat safā'at ḥakīm
empat berkat safā'at kerbaulah(?)¹⁰ berkat shafā'at
tuwan putri Tujuh Yā 'Alī Yā 'Uthmān Yā Abū
Bakr Yā 'Umar.

Translation:

O the Messenger of God, by the blessing and
intercession of the Prophet Muḥammad, by the
blessing and intercession of around 120,000
prophets, by the blessing and intercession of my
Lord Betara Guru, by the blessing and intercession
of the four jurists, by the blessing and intercession
of the buffalo(?),¹¹ by the blessing and intercession
of the seven princesses, O Alī O 'Uthmān O Abū
Bakr O 'Umar.

AE.1996.0012.0003

Unlike the previous flag, AE.1996.0012.0003 displays hardly any visual elements apart from the star located in the circle. It does contain references to some verses from the Qur'ān. All these references are in Arabic without the vowel marks (Ar. *ḥarakāt*). This practice shows that the writer was able to read the Qur'ān without the *ḥarakāt* and was probably someone who knew the Qur'ān by heart (Ar. *ḥāfiẓ*). It opens with the *basmala*, *bi-smi 'llāhi 'l-raḥmāni 'l-raḥīm* ('In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate'). It continues with six texts. Five texts are quotations from various verses of the Qur'ān, and one text can be categorized as prayers and supplications. I have provided below the transliteration and translation of these texts. Otherwise, explained differently, all translations of the Qur'ānic verses are from *The Koran Interpreted* by Arthur John Arberry.



Figure 15

Q 2:246

The first verse is Q al-Baqarah 2:246.

Transliteration:

'a-lam tara 'ila 'l-mala' i min banī 'isrā'īla min ba'di mūsā 'idh qālū li-nabiyyi
'l-lahumu 'b'ath lanā malikan nuqātil fī sabīli 'llāhi qāla hal 'asaytum 'in kutiba
'alaykumu 'l-qitālu 'allā tuqātilū qālū wa-mā lanā allā nuqātīla fī sabīli 'llāh wa-qad
ukhrijnā min diyārinā wa-'abnā' inā fa-lammā kutiba 'alayhimu 'l-qitāl tawallaw
'illā qalīlan minhum wa-'llāhu 'alīmun bi-'l-ẓālimīn

Translation:

Hast thou not regarded the Council of the Children of Israel, after Moses, when they said to a Prophet of theirs, 'Raise up for us a king, and we will fight in God's way'. He said, 'Might it be that, if fighting is prescribed for you, you will not fight?' They said, 'Why should we not fight in God's way, who have been expelled from our habitations and our children?' Yet when fighting was prescribed for them, they turned their backs except a few of them; and God has knowledge of the evildoers.

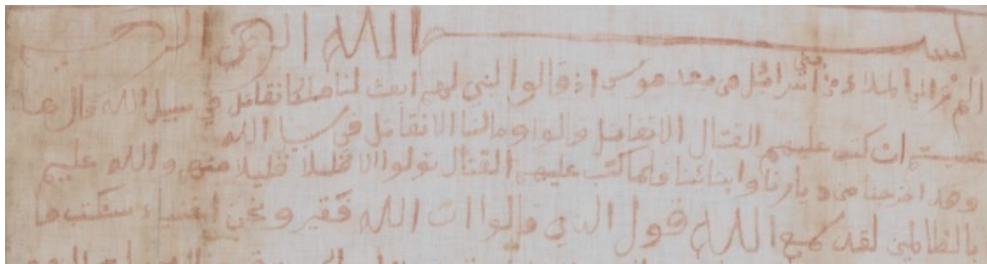


Figure 16: the Q 2:246.

Q 3:181

This is then followed by Q Āl 'Imrān 3:181.

Transliteration:

La-qad sami'a 'llāhu qawla 'lladhīna 'inna 'llāha faqīrun wa-naḥnu 'aghniyā'u
sanaktubu mā qālū wa-qatlahumu 'l-'anbiyā'a bi-ghayri ḥaqqin wa-naqūlu dhūqū
'adhāba 'l-ḥarīqi

Translation:

God has heard the saying of those who said, 'Surely God is poor, and we are rich.'
We shall write down what they have said, and their slaying of the Prophets without right, and We shall say, 'Taste the chastisement of burning'.

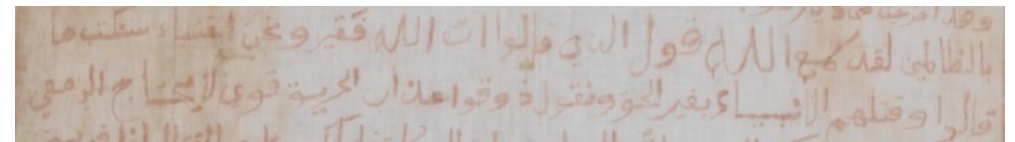


Figure 17: the Q 3:181

Q 4:77

It is then followed by the phrase *qawiyyun lā yaḥtāju 'ilā ma* 'ī. The last word is grammatically incorrect. The grammatically correct structure is *qawiyyun lā yaḥtāju 'ilayya* ('the Powerful [i.e. God] does not need me'). It seems that the author mixed up the Arabic with the Malay structure. In Malay, the word 'bersama' (Ar. *ma* 'a) has two meanings: *dengan* ('with') and *kepada* ('to'). Both indicate the position of the following word as the object of the previous verb. In the case above, the Malay equivalent would be, *Yang Maha Kuat tidak butuh kepada/dengan saya*.

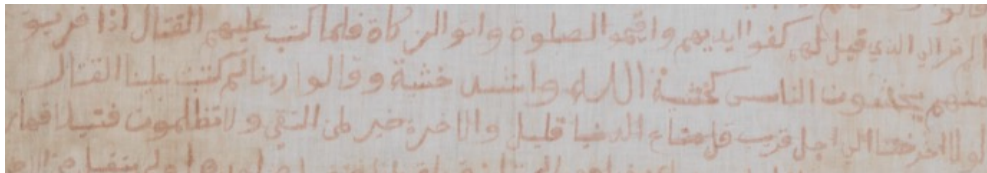


Figure 18: the Q 4:77

Following this phrase is Q al-Nisā' 4:77.

Transliteration:

'a-lam tara ilā 'lladhīna qīla lahum kuffū 'aydiyakum wa-'aqīmū 'l-ṣalāta wa-'ātū 'l-zakāta fa-lammā kutiba 'alayhimu 'l-qitālu 'idhā farīqun minhum yakhshawna 'l-nāsa ka-khashyati 'llāhi aw 'ashadda khashyatan wa-qālū rabbanā li-ma katabta 'alaynā 'l-qitāla law-lā akhkhartanā 'ilā ajalīn qarībin qul matā'u l-dunyā qalīlun wa-'l-'ākhīratu khayrun li-mani 'ttaqā wa-lā tuẓlamūna fatīlan

Translation:

Hast thou not regarded those to whom it was said, 'Restrain your hands, and perform the prayer, and pay the alms'? Then, as soon as fighting is prescribed for them, there is a party of them fearing the people as they would fear God, or with a greater fear, and they say, 'Our Lord, why hast thou prescribed fighting for us? Why not defer us to a near term?' Say: 'The enjoyment of this world is little; the world to come is better for him who fears God; you shall not be wronged a single date-thread'.

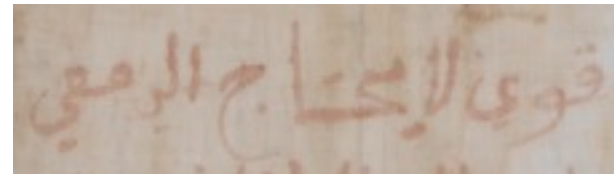


Figure 19: the non-Qur'ānic phrase.

Q 5:27

This is then followed by the phrase: *Qahhār liman ṭagā wa ‘aṣā* (‘He is the subduer towards those who have transgressed in wrongdoing and disobedience’) before continuing with Q al-Mā’ida 5:27.

Transliteration:

wa-’tlu ‘alayhim naba’a ’bnay ’ādama bi-l-ḥaqqi ’idh qarrabā qurbānan fa-tuqubbila min ’aḥadihimā wa-lam yutaqabbal mina ’l-’ākhari qāla la-’aqtulannaka qāla ’innamā yataqabbalu ’llāhu mina ’l-muttaqīn

Translation:

And recite thou to them the story of the two sons of Adam truthfully, when they offered a sacrifice, and it was accepted of one of them, and not accepted of the other. ‘I will surely slay thee,’ said one. ‘God accepts only of the god-fearing,’ said the other.

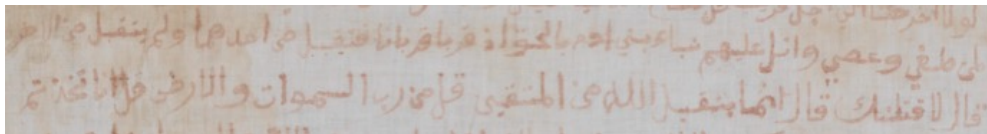


Figure 20: the Q 5:27

Q 13:16

This continues with Q al-Ra’d 13:16. The author has missed the phrase *قُلْ لِلَّهِ الْفُلُ* (quli-llāh, ‘Say: Allāh’).

Transliteration:

qul man rabbu ’l-samāwāti wa-l-’arḍi quli ’llāhu qul ’afa-’ttakhadhtum min dūnihi awliyā’a lā yamlikūna li-anfusihim naf’an wa-lā ḍarran qul hal yastawī ’l-’a’mā wa-’l-baṣīru ’am hal tastawī ’l-ẓulumātu wa-’l-nūr ’am ja’alū li-’llāhi shurakā’a khalaqū ka-khalqihi fa-tashābaha ’l-khalqu ‘alayhim quli ’llāhu khāliqu kulla shay’in wa-huwa ’l-wāḥidu ’l-qahhār

Translation:

Say: ‘Who is the Lord of the heavens and earth?’ Say: ‘God’. Say: ‘Then have you taken unto you others beside Him to be your protectors, even such as have no power to profit or hurt themselves?’ Say: ‘Are the blind and the seeing man equal, or are the shadows and the light equal? Or have they ascribed to God associates who created as He created, so that creation is all alike to them?’ Say: ‘God is the Creator of everything, and He is the One, the Omnipotent’.

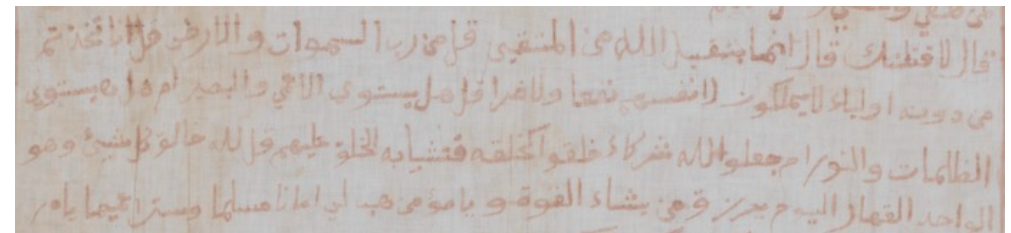


Figure 21: the Q 13:16

Prayers and Supplications

Several texts follow the last verse. The first is a supplication that God provide the sustenance of power.

Transliteration:

al-yawma yarzuqu man yashā'u 'l-quwwa wa-yā mu'minu hablī 'īmānan musliman wa-sitran 'amīman yā muhaymin

Translation:

Today, God provides sustenance and power to those He will. O the Giver of Faith, give me the belief, the submission and the complete shield – O the Protector.

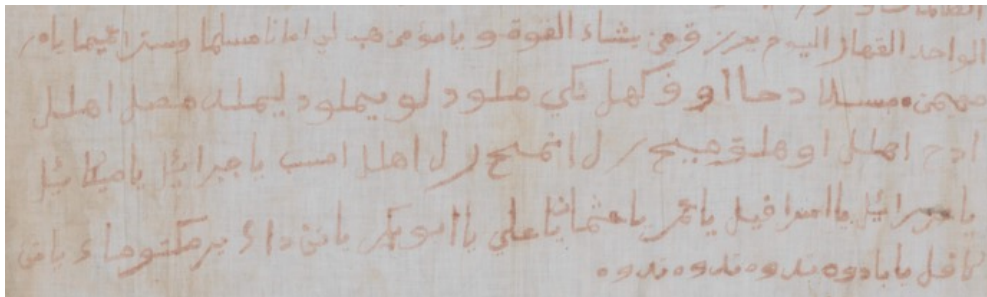


Figure 22: the prayers and supplications

The subsequent text is unreadable. It is in Arabic script but not in the Arabic, Javanese or Malay languages. For me, its composition seems like a mantra in the Javanese tradition, often composed of unknown words.



Figure 23: the circle and accompanying text

Next, this is followed by mention of the five angels and the four caliphs.

Yā 'Izrā'il [sic. Jabrā'il] Yā Mīkā'il Yā 'Izrā'il Yā Isrāfīl Yā 'Umar Yā 'Uthmān Yā 'Alī Yā Abū Bakr.

Several words with no clear meaning then follow. They read, 'Yā nan Dā' bermaktumā' Yā nan kapāl Ya bādūh tudūh tudūh.'

Finally, we come to the end section with a text following the circle (see Figure 23). It reads: *lā 'ilāha 'illa 'llāh 1312818*. This number might indicate a colophon. If cut and structured from year to date, it then reads 1312-8-18, corresponding to 14 February 1895. The circle is connected to a vertical text running from the bottom upwards.

Transliteration:

kāf-hā-yā- 'ayn-ṣād kāf-hā-yā- 'ayn-ṣād lā 'ilāha 'illa 'llāh muḥammadu 'l-rasūlu 'llāh, lā 'ilāha 'illa 'llāh muḥammadu 'l-rasūlu 'llāh lā ḥawla wa-lā quwwata 'illā bi-'llāhi 'l-'aliyyi 'l-'aẓīm

Translation:

Kāf-Hā-Yā- 'Ayn-Ṣād [twice], there is no god but God, and Muḥammad is the Messenger of God [twice], there is no power to be obedient, nor is there any strength to stop sinning except by the help of God, the Highest, the Greatest.

AE.1922.0001.0824

The last flag displays visual and textual elements similar to those found in AE.1996.0012.0001. It contains the word of the Absolute God (*huwa*), magic squares, the names of the rulers and several barakāts.



Figure 24

The Absolute God



The first text is the Absolute God (*huwa*).
(See discussion of this word above.)

Figure 25: the word for the

The Names of Angels

The second text contains the names of angels.

Transliteration:

Yā Jabrā'īl Yā Mīkā'īl Yā Isrāfīl Yā 'Izrā'īl
Yā Nūrā'īl Yā Aṭfā'īl Yā Sarṭā'īl Yā Qarā'īl Yā Ṭaramṭā'īl Yā Rūqā'īl
Yā Maṭrā'īl Yā Waqtamā'īl Yā Qaṭrā'īl Yā Luqā'īl Yā Ilāh Yā Rasūlallāh tammat

Translation:

O Gabriel O Michael O Isrāfīl O 'Izrā'īl
O Nūrā'īl O Aṭfā'īl O Sarṭā'īl O Qarā'īl O Ṭaramṭā'īl O Rūqā'īl
O Maṭrā'īl O Waqtamā'īl O Qaṭrā'īl O Luqā'īl O god O The Messenger of God end

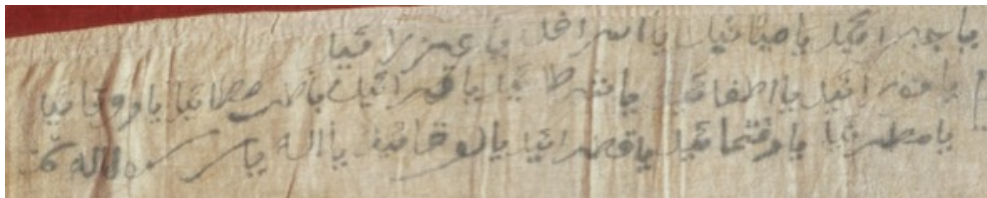


Figure 26

The Numeric Magic Square

The third text is that of the numeric magic square.

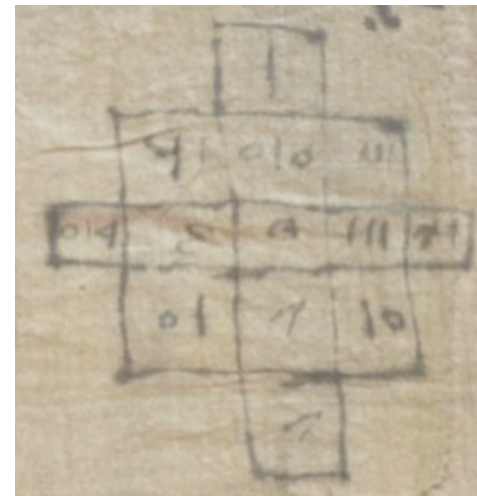


Figure 27

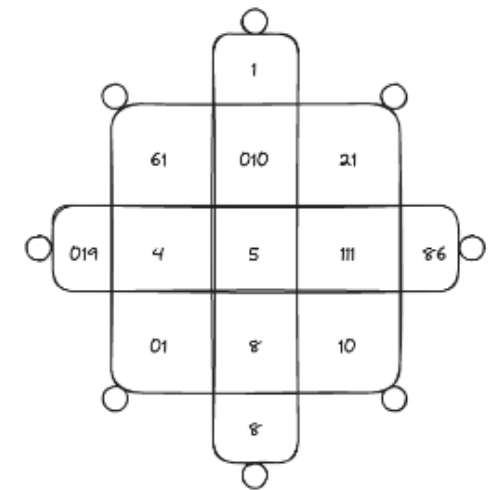


Figure 28

The Names of the Aceh Sultāns and Sultānahs

The fourth text contains the names of the rulers of the Aceh Sultanate.

Transliteration:

Hādhā ismu Sultān Sayyid Ibrāhīm wa-nā'ib minhu Sultān Sayyid al-Mukammā[1] wa-nā'ib minhu Sultān marḥūm Jamālu 'l-'Ālam wa-nā'ib minhu Sultān marḥūm Makūtā 'Ālam Iskandar Muda wa-nā'ib minhu minhu min Sultān marḥūm Dāru 'l-Salām wa-nā'ib minhu Sultān marḥūm Tāju 'l-'Ālam wa-nā'ib minhu min Sultān marḥūm Nūru 'l-'Ālam wa-nā'ib minhu min Sultān[ah] Ṣafiyyatu 'l-Dīn Sāh wa-nā'ib minhu min Zakiyyātu 'l-Dīn Sāh rahmatu 'llāh 'alayhim 'ajma'in wa-sallam taslīman kathīran tammat

Translation:

These are the names of the kings: Sayyid Ibrāhīm, and his successor is Sultān Sayyid al-Mukammāl, and his successor is Sultān marḥūm Jamālu 'l-'Ālam, and his successor is Sultān marḥūm Makūtā 'Ālam Iskandar Muda, and his successor is Sultān marḥūm Dāru 'l-Salām, and his successor is Sultān marḥūm Tāju 'l-'Ālam, and his successor is Sultān marḥūm Nūru 'l-'Ālam, and his successor is Sultāna Ṣafiyyatu 'l-Dīn Sāh, and her successor is Sultāna Zakiyyātu 'l-Dīn Sāh, may the peace and bountiful mercy of God be upon them all – the end.

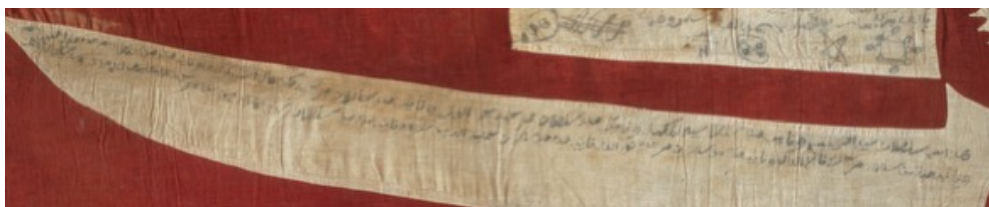


Figure 29: the names of the rulers

Three Invocations of Blessings (Barakāts)

The fifth text contains three invocations of significant figures to pray for God's blessings (*barakāt*) and intercession (*shafā'at*).

First

Transliteration:

Lā 'ilāha 'illa 'llāh Muḥammadu 'l-rasūlu 'llāh ashhadu an lā 'ilāha illa 'llāh wa-ashhadu anna Muḥammadan rasūlu 'llāh. Yā 'Umar Yā 'Uthmān Yā 'Alī Yā Abū Bakar Yā Allāh rasūlu 'llāh āmin. Yā Allāh he yang Engkau memelihara akan muslimīn. He Sulaymān qutub empunya yang memhukumkan sekaliyan perang sabilillāh kamu empunya yang mendirikan sekaliyan ḥak Allāh. Yā waliyyu 'llāh berperang sabīli 'llāh [*unreadable*] empunya perkara menghukumkan perang sabīli 'llāh yang turun di keridaan Allāh memerintahkan perang sabīli 'llāh membawa akanku [*unreadable*] sekaliyan muslimīn membawa akanku sekaliyan mu'min suka [*unreadable*] inilah permana Allāh ta'ālā he pawa[?] yang mara muslimīn qawm yang muslimīn qawm yang mu'minīn berhimpun sekaliyan anaq ra'yat yang nyala sekaliyan ḥākim meraja aṣal buwah memerintahkan bapa diberi iman bapa demang ikut meraja salahan ashi ya menteri yang dia pesuruhan menteri dan qādī sekaliyan manusiya segala raja maka dan sekaliyan berhimpun sekaliyan raja yang tunduk kepada sekaliyan Muhammad raja memanggil anaq qawm asa iya [*unreadable*] raja mengaku anaq ra'yat bernama 'Uthmān bertata Sulaymān memerintah tuwan putra maqa serta sekaliyan ra'yat sekaliyan qawm muslimīn raja memberi bicara akan berhimpunkan perang sabilillāh permana Allāh sayyid nabi sekaliyan duwa belas laqsa yang boleh maqa serta sekaliyan qawm muslimin angkat perang sabilillah nabi sekaliyan duwa belas laqsa he raja sekaliyan duwa belas laqsa turunlah

pahlawan semuwa jawah [*unreadable*] tuwaku Shaykh Ibrahim mahakan ra'yatmu.
Luqmahi [a symbol] afanu [a star] ra'yat [a square] Raja Sulaymān [a star]

Translation:

There is no god but God, and Muḥammad is the Messenger of God. I bear witness that there is no god but God and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of God. O 'Umar, O 'Uthmān, O 'Alī, O Abū Bakar, O God, Messenger of God, amen. O God who protects those who submit. O Solomon, the Pole, who establishes the law on the war in the path of God, you have fulfilled God's rights. O the friends of God, who do the war in the path of God, you have taken the war in the path of God to achieve the pleasing of God. They are commanding the war in the path of God to bring joy to me, all Muslims and all believers. This is the priceless [*gift*] from God the Highest. O the [*unreadable*] who [*unreadable*] the Muslims, the community of the Muslims and the community of the believers, gathered around you all the children of the nation who light up the sages who rule over the root. They are commanding the father to gain faith. The local leaders, the ministers, the religious leaders and even all the people join under the King of Aceh. All kings who submit to Muḥammad, the King calls all the children of the nation. The King claims to be an ordinary person named 'Uthmān crowned as Sulaymān. The King commands the prince. So, all the children of the nation, the community of the Muslims, the King mandated to join in the war on the path of God, the priceless gift from God. The Prophet, together with all 120,000 prophets, all the Muslims join the war in the path of God. The Prophet, 120,000 prophets, and all 120,000 kings come as heroes of the archipelago. My lord Shaykh Ibrahim, make your people glorified. Luqmahi, [*a symbol*], afanu, [*a star*], the People, [*a square*], King Solomon, [*a star*].

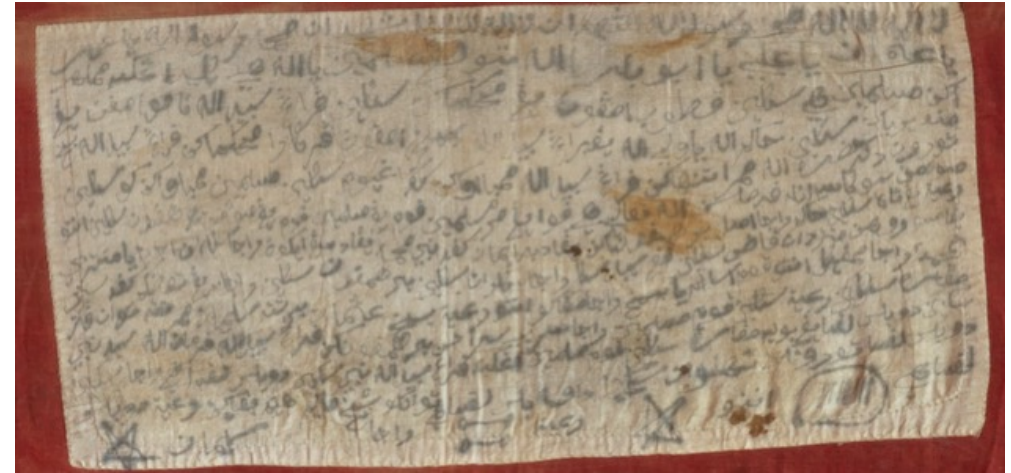


Figure 29: the names of the rulers

Second

Transliteration:

- 1 [unreadable] sampaikan [unreadable] pengasih [unreadable] tuwanku [unreadable] berkat shafā'a
- 2 tuwanku Si Raja Malim [unreadable] menurunkan ra'yat [unreadable] Luqmān berkatnya [unreadable]
- 3 keramat selalu qutūb junūb [unreadable] hatinya menurunkan padanya berkat shafā'at Shaykh [unreadable]
- 4 junūb hatinya junūb matanya berkat doa Shaykh Bushayrī kakinya terikat jarinya berkat doa
- 5 tuwan Shaykh Sumambrabat [unreadable] sekaliyan [unreadable] 'Umar berkat 'Uthmān berkat keramat bara jahīm
- 6 berkat shafā'at sira(?) Bā Mu'mīn berkat shafā'at Muḥammad tunggal Sulṭān Rajangun marhum yang berkat
- 7 shafā'at raja kalāmullāh [unreadable] raja kala Allāh upaling yang dawahama kalimat
- 8 berkat keramat ngun marḥūm Sulṭān 'Alī 'Abdullāh marḥūm yang memberi duwa liwa lima alat
- 9 mendirikan asma Allāh bulan Muḥammad yang buka berkat diya semuanya
- 10 [unreadable]

Translation:

- 1 [unreadable] bring [unreadable] joy [unreadable] my lord [unreadable] blessings and intercession
- 2 my lord the King Malim [unreadable] to the people [unreadable] the blessings of Luqmān [unreadable]



Figure 31: the second invocation

- 3 the sacred of the poles [unreadable], the impure heart receives the blessings and intercession of Shaykh [unreadable]
- 4 impure hearts and eyes by the blessings of Shaykh Bushayrī's supplication. The feet are knotted on the fingers by the blessings of the supplication
- 5 the lord Shaykh Sumambrabat [unreadable] together with [unreadable] 'Umar, the blessing of 'Uthmān, the blessing of the sacred fires of the hell.
- 6 by the blessings and intercession of you, Bā Mu'mīn, by the blessings and intercession of Muḥammad, the one Sulṭān Rajangun, by the blessings and berkat
- 7 intercession of the King of the Word of God [unreadable] The King of Time, God [unreadable]
- 8 by the blessings and sacred of the late Sulṭān 'Alī 'Abdullāh the one who gave two flags and five tools
- 9 erecting the name of God, the moon of Muḥammad was opened by his blessing
- 10 [unreadable]

Third

Transliteration:

- 1 [unreadable] sakti duwa belas laqsa [two unreadable words] bapa fir'awn
bapaknya kan duwa belas laqsa ibu kamu itu
- 2 turunkan sakti duwa belas laqsa manusa yang semuwa ini muslimin tuwanku
Ḥusayn [unreadable] katakan perang sabilillah he tuwanku [unreadable] katakan
- 3 perang sabilillah berhimpunkan muslimin ra'yat angkatan perang sabilillah
karena tuwanku [unreadable] berdiri dalam bumi kalangan menjabatkan alam
perang sabilillah jikalau memang iku tuwanku Ḥusayn
- 4 Ḥasan Muḥammad perang sabilillah segala Malaikat empat puluh [a symbol]
yang memagangkan apinya ya Isrāfīl sharī'at agama Allāh hé Malā'ikat empat
memerintah agama perang sabilillah hé tuwanku Muḥammad Dāwud
- 5 he tuwanku Muḥammad [unreadable] hé tuwanku 'Izrā'īl [unreadable]
Muḥammad Ismā'īl memerintahkan perang sabilillah hé segala nabi sakti duwa
belas laqsa akan tolongkan muslimin [unreadable] muslimin [three unreadable
words]
- 6 [two unreadable words] perang sabilillah hé seribu serangan yang menolaqkan
muslimin hé sakti duwa belas laqsa dihadapan muslimin hé bernama
[unreadable] akan perang [two unreadable words] ya Muḥammad 'alayh al-
salām [unreadable] ra'yat
- 7 yā [unreadable] memanggil [unreadable] memanggil akan sekaliyan ra'yat
perang [symbol of Solomon's ring] [two unreadable words] penghulu ratu
Allah [unreadable] junud abdi [three unreadable words] [a symbol] sabilillah
[unreadable] turunkan ra'yat duwa puluh [three unreadable words]
- 8 [unreadable] turunkan ra'yat dari empat langit duwa belas laqsa dimahari [two
unreadable words] muslimin [a star] turun empat sakti duwa puluh menurunkan

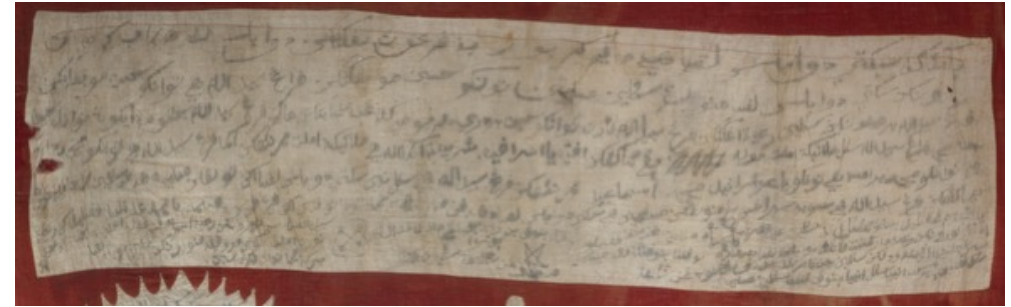


Figure 32: the third invocation

- sakti duwa puluh laqsa
- 9 siraja jamma yang menurunkan sekaliyan jin [three unreadable words] dengan
shafā'at dengan shafā'at shahīd [unreadable] berkat [unreadable] tuwan putri
[unreadable]
 - 10 berkah anbiyā' segala anbiyā' menyatu [unreadable] sekalian muslimin

Translation:

- 1 [unreadable] the magical power of 120,000 [two unreadable words] father
Fir'awn the father of 120,000 of your mother
- 2 sending down the magical power of 120,000 humans who are all Muslims. My
lord Ḥusayn [unreadable] decreed the Holy War. O, my lord [unreadable] decree
- 3 The Holy War unite the Muslims, the people and the army of the Holy War
because my lord [unreadable] stands in the world of those high officials [who
decree] the Holy War if they are my lords Ḥusayn
- 4 Ḥasan and Muḥammad. The Holy War of all the forty angels who hold of the
fire of the War. O Isrāfīl, the sharī'a of the religion of God. O the four angels
command the Holy War of the religion. O my lord Muḥammad Dāwud
- 5 o my lord Muḥammad [unreadable], o my lord 'Izrā'īl [unreadable] Muḥammad

- Ismā'īl decree the Holy War. O all the 120,000 prophets help the Muslims [unreadable] Muslims [three unreadable words]
- 6 the Holy War. O the thousands of attacks against the Muslims, o the 120,000 magical powers in front of the Muslims, o the one named [unreadable] war [two unreadable words] O Muḥammad 'alayh al-salām [unreadable] the people
- 7 O [unreadable] call [unreadable] call all the people to war [two unreadable words] the king of the king of God [unreadable] the eternal soldiers [three unreadable words] the Holy War [unreadable] send down to the people twenty [three unreadable words]
- 8 [unreadable] send down from the four [layers of] heaven 120,000 fed [two unreadable words] the four Muslims. The twenty magical powers descend to the 200,000
- 9 the King of Jamma who descended all the djinns [three unreadable words] with the intercession of the martyr [unreadable] the blessing [unreadable] the Queen [unreadable]
- 10 the blessings of the prophets. All prophets united [unreadable] all Muslims.

Two Texts in the Image

The sixth text contains two texts placed within two symbols: the sun and the crescent.

Text in the Sun

The first is the text within the sun.

- Crossing: Allāh (God)
- Four names of the angels:
 - o Jabrā'īl
 - o 'Izrā'īl - ilāh Muḥammad
 - o Isrāfīl - Jā'ī
 - o Mikā'īl



Figure 33: the text in the sun

Text in the Crescent

The second part is the text in the crescent. It mentions the name of the dog of the People of the Cave (Ar. *aṣḥāb al-kaḥf*), Qiṭmīr. Therefore, the names following it are probably the names of the People of the Cave. The story of People of the Cave is mentioned in the Qur'ān (Q *al-Kahf* 18:9-26). A group of youths who believed in the unity of God (*tawḥīd*) feared persecution from their disbelieving people. So, they took refuge in a cave where God made them sleep for 309 years. When they awoke they found themselves safe as their oppressors had already died and had been replaced by believers. These verses were invoked in this instance to pray for God's Power so that He might help the oppressed against their oppressors whenever He should so will it.

Transliteration:

[The first two lines are unreadable.]

Wa huwa Qiṭmīr Yā Ghilbā'īl Yā Ghahā'īl Yā 'Aqṣarā'īl Yā Qatfaṭā'īl Yā Haṭṭā'īl
Yā 'Alqā'īl Yā 'Ilmā'īl.

Translation

And he is Qiṭmīr O Ghilbā'īl O Ghahā'īl O 'Aqṣarā'īl O Qatfaṭā'īl O Haṭṭā'īl O
'Alqā'īl O 'Ilmā'īl



Figure 34: the text in the crescent moon.

Conclusion

Taking all these texts into consideration, we can conclude that, for the Acehnese, war can be a religious duty and a form of piety. This claim is evidenced by how these war flags became the medium for prayers. The Acehnese who held these flags wrote their prayers to God concerning the war situation. The method of prayer ranged from the recitation of verses from the Qur'ān and the drawing of talismanic designs to magic squares and the invocation of religious and supernatural figures to invite God's blessings and intercession. The last element shows how, for the Acehnese, the result of a war was to be determined by the Will of God. They believed that it was crucial to request God's help and blessings in the war. Taking these findings, we can say that, for the Acehnese, the war flags were not only a symbol of identity but also a means of demonstrating their belief and religiosity.



Figure 34: the text in the crescent moon.

Notes

1 For a comprehensive study of this sword, see Francesca Bellino, ‘Dhū L-Faqār’, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online* (Brill, 2021), <https://referenceworks.brill.com/display/entries/EI3O/COM-26006.xml>.

2 Mohamad Zahamri, ‘Ikonografi Zulfikar Dalam Sejarah Hubungan Turki Dan Nusantara’, *SUHUF* 4, no. 1 (29 June 2011): pp. 119–23.

3 The star is the first symbol of the ‘Seven Seals of Solomon’, widespread in Southeast Asian Islam as a talismanic design

4 For a comprehensive study on the Seven Seals of Solomon and Solomon’s Ring as talismanic designs in the Malay-Indonesian world, see Farouk Yahya, *Magic and Divination in Malay Illustrated Manuscripts* (Brill, 2015). For a specific example of the usage of the star as a talismanic design in the Islamic word, see Liana Saif, ‘Magic and Divination Lost in Translation: A Cairene in a Maltese Inquisition’, in *Magic in Malta: Sellem Bin al-Sheikh Mansur and the Roman Inquisition*, 1605, ed. Dionysius A. Agius, Alexander Mallett and Catherine Rider (Brill, 2022), p439

5 For discourse on the ‘Science of the Breath’ in Javanese Sufism, see, for example, MSS. Leiden Cod. Or. 6461: p. 45, Cod. Or. 7385: f. 20r and National Library of Indonesia Br. 31: p. 217.

6 For a general discussion on magic squares in the Islamic world, see Emilie Savage-Smith, ‘Magic Squares’ in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online* (Brill, 2023). For a general discussion on magic squares and their use in the Malay world, see Yahya’s *Magic and Divination in Malay Illustrated Manuscripts*.

7 For al-Būnī, see Constant Hamès, ‘al-Būnī’ in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three Online* (Brill, 2011).

8 For the list of the manuscripts, see Farouk Yahya, *Magic and Divination in Malay Illustrated Manuscripts* (Brill, 2015), p. 88

9 Mohamad Zahamri, ‘Ikonografi Zulfikar Dalam Sejarah Hubungan Turki Dan Nusantara’, *SUHUF* 4, no. 1 (29 June 2011): pp. 119–23.

10 I am not sure of this reading. It reads k-r-b-w-l-h. The closest word that comes to my mind is “kerbaulah”, but to invoke the buffalo (Ml. *kerbau*) in this context makes no sense to me. I do not know of any relationship that can be deduced from among the Aceh people with regard to the buffalo.

11 See note 10 above.

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