
THE HISTORY OF A HISTORY: THE VARIANT VERSIONS OF THE *SULALAT AL-SALATIN*

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R. Roolvink started an article, thirty-six years ago, with these words: “We can see the slow progress that sometimes affects a scientific field when we look at the editions of the *Sejarah Melayu*, or under its Arabic title, the *Sulalat-us-Salatin*. Even though about a hundred and seventy years have elapsed since a translation was published in English and a hundred and sixty years since the Malay text was printed for the first time, no critical edition has been attempted until now; its language and style have not been seriously studied; and the question of when the text was written is still open” (Roolvink 1998, 21 [article dated 1981]). The situation is the same today, with the difference that no fewer than seven new editions of the text have been published since 1981, without bringing real progress in our understanding of it.

In his handbook *History of Malay Literature*, R. O. Winstedt (1939) qualified the *Sulalat al-Salatin* (hereafter *SS*) as “the most famous, distinctive, and best of all Malay literary works.” His judgment has kept all its value to this day: the *SS* is still regarded as the unequalled jewel of Malay literature. This kind of judgment is, of course, hyperbolic and unfair, but it is true that the *SS* is a remarkable text of inexhaustible wealth.

Henri Chambert-Loir, Directeur d’Etude Emeritus at École Française d’Extrême-Orient, writes, “I am most indebted to my colleague Ernest Thrimbe for commenting on this article and offering editorial suggestions. I also thank Annabel Teh Gallop for providing me with a copy of Pui Huen Lim’s bibliography (1983).”

Eighteen editions of the *Sulalat al-Salatin* have been published since the nineteenth century, six of which have been published in Kuala Lumpur and Malacca during the last twenty years, the latest in 2016. But what does publishing the SS mean? The present essay endeavors to unravel the question of the variant versions of the text. Is there one SS, or various states of one text, or various texts of a corpus? Is it possible to trace back the history of the first stages of the text before the one we know? Can we define the relationship between the different versions we have today? How do they derive from one another? Is one more original, more authentic than the others? Should we rather refer to one or another?

Sulalat al-Salatin is the title inscribed in the text itself; it is the title chosen by the author. The text, however, is more often quoted under the title *Sejarah Melayu*, translated into English as *Malay Annals*. It is commonly admitted that the title *Malay Annals* is an invention of John Leyden (1821) and *Sejarah Melayu* an invention of Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir (1841) (e.g., Roolvink 1998, 23; Braginsky 2004, 95). This is not quite exact: the first chapter of Leyden's *Malay Annals* (the first English translation, published in 1821) is already called "*Sajarah Malayu*," twenty years before Abdullah. But that title goes back even further: it is used in two manuscript copies of the SS, one made for Raffles in 1807, probably in Pulau Pinang, known as Raffles 35; the other made in Malacca in 1814 and called "Farquhar 5" (Abdul Rahman 2008, 7). It is also used by the chamberlain (*wazir*) of Siak principality, Dato' Seri Pikrama Raja, in a letter to Raffles on December 19, 1810 (Ahmat Adam 2016, lxxxix). Abdul Rahman (*ibid.*) suggests that the title *Sajarah Melayu* was used by Malay scribes who were in contact with Europeans.

Fifty years ago, in 1967, three states of the text were known: the Winstedt, the "short" version, and the "long" version. Roolvink's 1967 article constitutes a significant milestone in that regard, as it tries to trace back the genesis of the text and it clarifies the typology of the versions. For him, the manuscript Raffles Malay 18, i.e. the unique copy of Winstedt's version, is representative of the first draft of the SS and thus the two other versions are derived from it; they are both the product of a revision made in the second half of the eighteenth century. The situation is rather clearer today than in 1967, as the Winstedt version is now represented by two new editions (Muhammad Haji Salleh 1997; and Abdul Rahman Haji Ismail in Cheah Boon Kheng 1998); the short version by one (Ahmat Adam 2016); and the long version by two (A. Samad Ahmad 1979; and Putri Minerva Mutiara 1993).

Manuscripts

Roolvink (1967) knew twenty-nine manuscripts. Pui Huen Lim's bibliography, sixteen years later (1983), lists forty manuscripts (more exactly, thirty-nine manuscripts and the microfilm of one lost manuscript) and gives a catalogue reference for each of them. The eleven additional manuscripts in comparison with Roolvink's list only underscore the relative numerical importance of the "long" recension. I cannot identify Lim's KITLV MS 631, as that number seems not to exist anymore; it might be the present KITLV Or. 79 (Iskandar 1999, 766). To that list of forty manuscripts, we now have to add five more manuscripts that came to light since then, namely Hocken Library (University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand; see Ché-Ross

2002), SOAS MS 27537 (Ricklefs et al. 2014, “Addenda,” 253), Cambridge Ancient India and Iran Trust Malay 1 (Ricklefs et al. 2014, 290), and British Library Or. 14734 and Or. 16214 (Ricklefs et al. 2014, 304, 308). Therefore a total of forty-five manuscripts, but, in fact, only forty-three because, as we will see, two of them are actually not versions of the SS. (The figure forty-four proposed by Ché-Ross (2002, 30) does not take into account the above additions and retains four long-lost manuscripts.) Among those forty-five manuscripts (Lim’s forty plus five) stand fourteen unclassifiable or unusable manuscripts, viz:

- Incomplete manuscripts (eight): London RAS Raffles 35, 39, 68, 76, Leiden Cod. Or. 1760, Leiden KITLV Or. 64, Jakarta Mal. 11, and Edinburgh Or. 459. These manuscripts are discarded straightaway by Roolvink (1967, 308): “Because of their fragmentary character these manuscripts are not of primary importance to the question of the variant versions of the *Sejarah Melayu*.” In fact, it would be useful to know to which recension they belong and whether some are copied on the same models or copied on each other. Raffles 35, 39, and 68, respectively dated 1807, 1812, and 1808, end abruptly at the same place of the narrative, when Sultan Mansur Syah moves to a new palace. Abdul Rahman (2008, 2) suggests that Raffles 35 and Farquhar 5 are copies of the same model, even though the first is incomplete. Moreover, it is possible that the text of incomplete manuscripts, as fragmentary as they are, would be useful for a critical edition. It would also be interesting to scrutinize these manuscripts in order to see what disappears most frequently in them: the beginning, the end, a quire in the middle? It must have happened, in the transmission of the versions we have, that similar losses occurred and gave birth to a makeshift “restoration,” out of memory. The manuscript DBP 86 has lost several of its initial pages and this led to another kind of restoration by its editor (A. Samad Ahmad 1979; see below). A comparison limited to the two pages of the preamble of the text suggests that the manuscripts known as Raffles 35, 39, and 68 belong to the “short” recension.

As for the manuscript Leiden KITLV Or. 64 (probably the same as Lim’s KITLV MS 587), it contains the Latin transcription of three chapters (Iskandar 1999, 753).

- Manuscripts of other texts (two): I quote for the record two manuscripts because they are listed in Pui Huen Lim (1983, 662), even though they are not manuscripts of the SS: (a) RAS Maxwell 105, which contains data similar to the SS in a much abridged form (see: Roolvink 1967, 306; Ricklefs et al. 2014, 149; Braginsky 1995, 95, 99; Ceridwen 2001); and (b) SOAS MS 297496, ff. 2–21, which contains notes by C. O. Blagden on the genealogies found in the SS (Ricklefs et al. 2014, 169).

- Copies unusable from a philological point of view (more precisely, for an edition of the text; two manuscripts): Leiden Klinkert 5 and Cod. Or. 6669 (two copies of Abdullah’s edition). On the contrary, the copies of W 191 (below) cannot be discarded because W 191 is today illegible. Ahmat Adam (2016, xxxvi) talks of eleven manuscripts that would be copies of other manuscripts, but of which ones is obscure.

- Manuscripts of an unknown recension (two): KL DBP MSS 93 (Ibrahim 1973, 531); and, according to Lim (1983, 661), the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka in Kuala Lumpur owns (owned in 1983) the microfilm—Mk 172(b)—of a manuscript of the Museum Negara Kuala Lumpur that was lost.

The thirty-one other manuscripts are listed in the following section. Let's note, for the sake of students who, in a utopian future, would work on a critical edition of the SS, that there are, in the Leiden KITLV Special Collections, Collectie R. Roolvink, six unpublished documents, probably typed, emanating from Roolvink's work on the SS: transcriptions and notes with regard to the SS (nos. D Or. 637-113, 637-114, 637-115, 637-119, 637-120, and 637-121).

Versions and Recensions

We thus have thirty-one usable manuscripts of the *Sulalat al-Salatin*. I regard them as versions of a limited number of recensions. For Roolvink (1967), there were two recensions: I and II. I is Raffles 18 (henceforth R18), while II exists in two "versions": short and long. This is due to the fact that there was no edition of the long version at the time and Roolvink could only judge it through W. G. Shellabear's edition. I think that the short and long versions have to be regarded as distinct recensions because each is represented by several witnesses that, together, present characteristics clearly distinct from the witnesses of the other taken together. Thus we have three recensions (I, II, III), as will be abundantly demonstrated by the comparisons below. However, I will report on what has been regarded so far as five "versions" of the SS, plus three hybrid editions, as follows.

First, the recension diversely called the "Blagden," "Winstedt," "Raffles 18," "Malacca" (by Winstedt, in a note of *JMBRAS* 18, 2, as opposed to the "Johor version"), "of Tun Bambang" (by Cheah Boon Kheng [article of 1998], as opposed to that of Tun Seri Lanang), and "of Raja Bongsu" versions—and which I call "recension I." It is only contained in the manuscript R18, which dates from the 1810s (it has a watermark dated 1812), and the manuscript Cod. Or. 1704, which contains the first half of the text only (this manuscript is not dated; it has been copied by Muhammad Sulaiman at the Batavia General Secretariat; probably copied on the same model as R18—see Voorhoeve 1964, 257–58) and which is reputed to be identical to R18. This recension is summarized by Winstedt in the introduction to his edition (1938) and by Brown at the head of the chapters of his translation (1952). More-detailed summaries are found in the handbooks by C. Hooykaas (1947, 257–76), Teuku Iskandar (1995, 260–68), and Liauw Yock Fang (2011, 447–60). Its text has eight more chapters after the execution of Tun Ali Hati, which marks the end of the following recension; it ends soon after the opening of negeri Johor, between 1530 and 1536, by Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah.

The text of R18 has no colophon except the phrase "*wa katibuhu Raja Bongsu*" ("this has been written by Raja Bongsu"), which has been interpreted as "written" or "copied" or even "commissioned" by Raja Bongsu, i.e., Yang Dipertuan Dihilir Raja Abdullah and Sultan-to-be Ma'ayat Syah (1571–1623, r. 1613–23), and would refer to the version revised in 1612. If the heir apparent Raja Bongsu had written the text he most certainly would have added a colophon. Perhaps he has copied it, in an incomplete way, and has hastily added that enigmatic phrase, unless he was forced to stop copying before having finished and wrote the phrase in a hurry, e.g., if he was interrupted by Aceh's attack on Johor in 1613 (Roolvink's hypothesis, 1998, 32).

Whatever the case may be, the inscription of Raja Bongsu's name is an indication that the manuscript comes from Johor.

This version of R18 has been edited by Blagden (1925: the last eight chapters only, starting with page 169 of the manuscript), then by Winstedt (1938) and translated by C. C. Brown (1953), and then edited again by Muhammad Haji Salleh (1997) and Abdul Rahman Haji Ismail (in Cheah Boon Kheng 1998). Thus it has been edited four times, but in a very imperfect way. Brown's excellent translation has the merit of comprising philological notes, a summary of each chapter, and an index.

Early in the history of the study of the text, Winstedt ("The Date," 1938) stated that the R18 version was anterior to 1536 for the reason that the last mentioned event (the Portuguese attack on Pekan Tua) dated from 1535, while the attack on Muar, the following year, is not mentioned. Winstedt even imagined that the manuscript ends abruptly because the author died in that latter combat and that the manuscript was saved by a survivor. So, this text would be the core of the *Sulalat al-Salatin*, the "story brought from Goa," written before 1536, and which was to be edited in 1612 with an introduction posterior to that date.

The text of R18, in reality, does not stop in 1535 but in the following year: Abdul Rahman (2008, 27) remarks that the Portuguese attack of 1536 is, indeed, not related, as noted by Winstedt, but the signing of a truce that followed that attack, thanks to the successful mission of Tun Amat Ali, is related. Thus, the attacks of 1535 and 1536 have been concatenated into one, and the text ends in 1536 or slightly after. But the text as it is is actually incomplete for two reasons. First, as we have just seen, there is no colophon; second, more importantly, the ending of the text does not fit a "History of the Malacca Kings." The above-mentioned truce represented the end of an important phase in the history of the Malay Sultans, so that it could have been an acceptable ending, but the story actually goes on to relate the trivial anecdote of a minor disagreement between Sultan Alauddin of Malacca and Sultan Muzaffar Syah of Pahang, which cannot serve as a conclusion to the SS.

The text of R18 is incomplete, but the manuscript itself is not: it does not end abruptly at the bottom of a page. Thus, it is possible that the text was composed until that point of the narrative only, because the author was interrupted, but it is much more probable that the manuscript model of R18 had lost its end pages. Whatever the case may be, we have no means to figure out where the original text stopped.

Winstedt's argument is clearly spurious, and it was challenged as early as 1949 by M. G. Emeis, who affirmed that R18, just like Shellabear's text, was "a revision made in Johor of the *hikayat dari Goa*," not the *hikayat* itself (Emeis 1949, 469). However, Winstedt's opinion has been accepted by most scholars (except Roolvink 1967; and Iskandar 1995, 212, 258), who regard this version as written in 1536 and as the origin of the other versions (e.g., Braginsky 2004, 101–2). Nobody ever thought of dating the "short" version at ca. 1515 because that is where it stops. It seems certain actually that R18 derives from the version established in 1612, just as it is stated in its preamble. Winstedt's theory was in line with the main philological trend of the time: the focus on an original text that was corrupted by its transmission over time, an original that was better than any other version and that the philological method had to restore. Talking of the modifications brought to that initial text, C. A. Gibson-Hill

wrote: “the work was merely amended, extended, and messed about (i.e., *perbaiki!*)” (1956, 137). Then, Winstedt’s theory, transformed into an axiom accepted by (almost) everyone, had an influence on the development of studies because it led to the assumption that there were two versions of the text: that of 1536 and that of 1612 (see, e.g., Josselin de Jong 1961, 1), the first being more authentic and therefore better.

We have, in fact, three recensions, all stemming from the 1612 version, but beyond that, the relationships among these three recensions is obscure: we don’t know when, how, and why the three recensions developed in different directions. How to explain the addition, omission, or permutation of episodes; the transformation of names; or the rewording of phrases—which are alternatively corrections and corruptions?

Second, the “short” recension, which I call “recension II,” represented by nine manuscripts, two of which are copies of Abdullah’s edition. Those manuscripts are: RAS Raffles 80, RAS Farquhar 5, SOAS 36495, SOAS 36499, Jakarta W 189 (Ml. 690), Singapore National Museum DP 0037 (410 pages in three volumes, ends with the execution of Tun Ali Hati, one of the manuscripts used by Shellabear; see Wan Ali 1993, 1), Leiden Klinkert 5 and Cod. Or. 6669 (the two copies of Abdullah’s edition already mentioned above), and, lastly, the St-Petersburg Krusenstern manuscript. The comparative analysis of the preamble (below) suggests that the above-mentioned fragmentary manuscripts known as Raffles 35, 39, and 68 belong to this recension. In his edition of the Krusenstern manuscript, Ahmat Adam (2016) asserts that this manuscript belongs to the “Raffles” or “Winstedt” recension; as witnesses of that recension are rare (one complete and one containing half the text), a new manuscript would be welcome. Unfortunately, Ahmat’s arguments are untenable; it will be abundantly demonstrated below that that manuscript belongs to recension II. Manuscript K was copied in 1798, which makes it the oldest extant manuscript of the *Sulalat al-Salatin*, albeit by a few years only. It was copied by three scribes, apparently in a hurry. (A detailed review of Ahmat Adam’s edition appeared in *Archipel* 94, 2017.)

The second recension contains thirty-four chapters and ends on the execution of Tun Ali Hati. As this name will show up several times, it may be useful to explain who this personage is. He is one of the favorites of Sultan Ahmad, who lost Malacca to the Portuguese and then fled successively to Pagoh, Pahang, Bentan, and lastly Kopak. This sultan despises the high officials and only mixes with his young friends. On that pretext, his father, Mahmud Syah, has him killed and climbs back on the throne. He demands the allegiance of Ahmad’s favorites, but one, Tun Ali Hati, refuses to present himself and declares insistently that he prefers to be killed—which is done.

This recension has been translated by Leyden (1821), then published by Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munshi in Singapore (1841). Subsequently, Abdullah’s edition was edited by Edouard Dulaurier (1849, the beginning of the text only) and again in Leiden (by H. C. Klinkert, with omissions, 1884), then much later transcribed by T. D. Situmorang and A. Teeuw (1952). It has also been translated into French by Aristide Marre (1874, 1896) and Marcel Devic (1878), and later into other languages (German, Chinese, Tamil, Russian, Polish).

This recension is known as that of Abdullah, but it was actually published for the first time in the guise of a translation (Leyden 1821) on the basis of a manuscript that

is lost today, while Abdullah is one editor among others, just as today's philologists. Abdullah's edition has been the sole version of this recension published until 2016, but we now have the edition of another version (Revunenková 2008; Ahmat Adam 2016); a critical edition is still to be hoped for. We don't know the print-run, probably very limited, of Abdullah's edition. Only three copies of it remain in the world today (at Leiden KITLV; the US Library of Congress in Washington, DC; and Kuala Lumpur National Library; see Proudfoot 1993, 464; a reproduction of one page is found in Ibrahim 1986, 20). Its date of publication is not known with certainty, either: there exist two contemporary manuscript notes that mention 1841 and 1840, respectively, as its date of publication (Ibrahim 1986, 14–15). The first note seems to be the most reliable as it has obviously been written by someone knowing well the book and its contents; therefore, I will retain the date of 1841.

Because it was the first one published, this recension was for a long time considered as the “standard” text (see: Shellabear 1896, preface; Roolvink 1998, 24). Roolvink (1970, xxvi) has stated that this recension, and the long recension as well, date from the second half of the eighteenth century, but that claim has no foundation at all.

This recension is called “short” because it ends about fifteen years before recension I (even though the latter is only known through an incomplete manuscript) and nearly a hundred years before recension III. It ends on an insignificant episode (the execution of a courtier for disobedience, as mentioned above), which does not constitute an acceptable ending for a text of that nature. It should end on some landmark in the history of the dynasty—for instance, the end of a reign or the creation of a new settlement. I will be arguing here that all the versions of the *Sulalat al-Salatin* we know are incomplete or stem from incomplete versions. This sounds somewhat shocking, but the comparison with other historical texts leaves no doubt. The *Hikayat Siak* (see below) ends with the death of the Sultan of Sukadana Abdul Jalil Syah (Raja Akil) and the designation of his son (Raja Anum) to succeed him; recension III of the SS ends on the foundation of a new settlement (see below); the *Hikayat Raja Pasai* ends on the massacre of the Javanese who had come to taunt the local ruler; the *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa* (apart from an additional list of kings) ends on the Islamization of the country and the enthronement of a new ruler; and the historical part of the *Hikayat Patani* ends with the death of the fourth queen, which marks the end of the inland dynasty. These endings are exemplary. It seems, on the contrary, that recension I (Abdullah's text) originates from an incomplete manuscript, which has been “authenticated” by an ulterior copyist by adding a colophon to it. Recension II as we know it is not a shortened version, but a recension stemming from an incomplete text.

Third, the “long” recension (which I call “recension III”), represented by sixteen manuscripts (by far the greatest number of manuscripts), viz. RAS Maxwell 26; John Rylands University Library (Manchester) Malay 1; Leiden Cod. Or. 1703, 1716, 1736, and 3210; KITLV 631; Jakarta W 188 (Ml. 689); W 190 (Ml. 691); Kuala Lumpur DBP MSS 86, 86A, and 86B; Hocken Library in Dunedin NZ; Cambridge Ancient India and Iran Trust Malay 1; and British Library Or. 14734 and Or. 16214. The edition by A. Samad Ahmad (1979) is based on the manuscript of the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka DBP 86; the digital copy of this manuscript accessible on the internet¹ shows a

¹ <http://www.sabrizain.org/malaya/library/index.htm>

manuscript in a very bad condition; if such is really the case, the edition known as manuscript 86 owes much in fact to manuscript 86A. We will see later on that the *Bustan al-Salatin* (book II, chapter 12) represents a version of the beginning of the SS until the reign of Sri Tri Buana, which is close to recension III.

This recension prolongs the narrative beyond the end of both recensions I and II: the two published manuscripts (D and W, below) end on an epilogue that corresponds point by point to the preamble (*mukadimah*) of the text: Tun Sri Lanang is appointed as chamberlain (*bendahara*); Sultan Ala Jalla Abdul Jalil Riayat Syah dies, replaced by his son Raja Mansur (Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah), but the latter neglects the government; then the *bendahara* designates Raja Abdullah to rule under his own tutelage; Raja Abdullah resides “di seberang Pengkalan Rama” (and is called “Raja Seberang”); and the sultan has a new palace built at Pasir Raja and settles in it. This is precisely the situation in 1612. We have not only a coherent ending, but also four of the major names of the preamble: Tun Sri Lanang, Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah, Raja Seberang, and Pasir Raja.

It is impossible to date this recension precisely. The two manuscripts DBP 86 and W 190 (editions D and W) have an identical colophon: it is explained that the copyist has used as a model a manuscript belonging to his father, who died in an event that we know happened in 1673. That date gave rise to a misunderstanding: it was concluded (e.g., Teuku Iskandar 1995, 257 fl.) that the prototype of those two manuscripts was posterior to 1673, or even that the text stopped in 1673 (e.g., Andaya 1975, 18). In fact, that date concerns neither the two manuscripts nor the text; rather, it regards the owner of the prototype manuscript. A manuscript belonging to someone who passed away in 1673 is anterior to that date; it can even be older by decades—it can date from 1612 as well as 1672. Roolvink (1998, 30) conveys another misunderstanding: the suggestion that the *Hikayat Johor* might be a sequel to the long version of the SS because it starts precisely in 1673, whereas this would be plausible if the long version ended in 1673, while, as we have seen, it ends in 1612. As for our two manuscripts, the first (DBP 86) is dated 1808, while the second (W 190) is not dated. The date 1673, however, is important: it means that the text of recension III, as it is recorded in manuscripts D and W, which contain the two mentions of Goa (in the *mukadimah* and in the narrative of a diplomatic mission) is anterior to 1673 and therefore largely anterior to the establishment of the Bugis in Riau (ca. 1720), which was for Roolvink (1967) the starting point of the redaction of this recension.

According to Roolvink (1970, xxvi), both recension III and recension II date from the second half of the eighteenth century. He states (1998, 29) that the episode of Malacca’s mission to Goa, which brings back a boy who is to become the famous Hang Tuah, “was undoubtedly introduced into this version by a Bugis historian at the court of the Raja Muda of Bugis origin,” that is, the Yamtuan Muda of Penyengat. This would also hold true (1998, 33) of the two additions to the *mukadimah* (the Arabic eulogy borrowed from the *Bustan* and the mention of the “story brought from Goa”), “and others,” but this is not supported by any evidence. Several of the manuscripts kept today come from the palaces of the sultans or the Yamtuan Muda(s) of Riau (e.g., the manuscript of the Hocken Library and that in Manchester), but this only means that the long version was well known in Riau in the nineteenth century, not that it originated there. We have no indication that the Yamtuan Muda(s) have ever revised,

even less composed, this recension. In fact, recension III is older by at least a century than the time proposed (and still uncontradicted) by Roolvink.

This recension remained unpublished for a very long time, except for the passages included in the critical apparatus of Dulaurier (1849, extracts from Leiden's manuscript Cod. Or. 1716) and in Shellabear's edition (1896; see below). It was edited by A. Samad Ahmad in 1979 (transcription of the manuscript DBP MSS 86), and then by Putri Minerva Mutiara in 1993 (transcription of the Jakarta manuscript W 190); these two versions differ by a great number of details, but they are fundamentally identical; they end on the same colophon (identical again with that, transcribed in Ché-Ross 2002, of "Thomson's manuscript" in the Hocken Library), followed in DBP 86 by the additional colophon of the last copyist. Here, too, a critical edition would be very much needed.

Fourth, a version extended until the nineteenth century, contained in five manuscripts, viz. Jakarta W 191 (Ml. 44), Leiden Cod. Or. 7304, RAS Malay 138, Cod. Or. 6342, and SOAS MS 27537 (Ricklefs et al. 2014, 253). According to Roolvink (1967, 309), Teuku Iskandar (1999, vol. I, 409) and Barnard (2003, 3), these five manuscripts constitute one version only, because the last four are merely copies of W 191: the last three are actually identical typed Jawi copies of W 191 made for Winstedt. According to Muhammad Yusoff Hashim (1992, 4–13; 2015, v–xxv), Jakarta W 191 is ruined to the point of being unreadable. This version is called "S," below.

These manuscripts contain a reworked version of the *Sulalat al-Salatin* followed by a history of the Malacca Strait from the point of view of Siak; it is the *Hikayat Siak* mentioned several times in the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*—it could also be called *Hikayat Raja Akil*. It has been edited by Muhammad Yusoff Hashim (1992, 1998, 2015) in two parts, under two different titles: the "*Sejarah Melayu versi Siak*" (2015), that is, the first part (about 60 percent) of the text corresponding to the SS, on the one hand; and the "*Hikayat Siak*" (1992), that is, the rest, on the other. This division is artificial (it does not exist in the manuscripts themselves) and it ruins the purpose of the author, who did his best to link the history of Siak to that of Malacca. We will see that the text of the first part belongs to recension III as recorded in manuscript D (DBP 86) but is a revised version of it. The text of S starts directly with the story of Iskandar Zulkarnain, without any *mukadimah*, which may mean that the first pages of the manuscript have gone missing (Winstedt, "The Preface," 1998). It does not end "with the Portuguese attack on Johor in 1535" (as in Andaya 1975, 4), which would mean like in R18, but exactly at the same point as recension III, with the erection of a new palace at Pasir Raja.

The manuscript Cod. Or. 7304 utilized by Muhammad Yusoff Hashim has 647 pages (not "folios" as said in Muhammad Yusoff 1992: *passim*). The colophon specifies that it was written (*menyurat*) by Tengku Said (he is a descendant of the fifth generation of Raja Kecil; see his genealogy in Muhammad Yusoff 2015, ix), at the request of *Tuan Fandarwola* (H. von de Wall), *esti residen komisi* (assistant resident) of Sikudana, in 1272, between Ahad 23 Safar and Isnin 8 Rabiulakhir (November 4 to December 18, 1855). Then that text was copied by one Muhammad Nuruddin Aceh, in Batavia, in 1310 (according to a note on the first page: "*Inilah cetera Raja Iskandar Zulkarnain tertulis di dalam negeri Betawi kepada 24 Yuni 1893*"). From this, Muhammad Yusoff draws the conclusion that Tengku Said is the author of this version, and as his

name is not mentioned in W 191 and its copies, he also concludes that W 191 is the model of Cod. Or. 7304 (Muhammad Yusoff 1992, 7, with a mind-boggling stemma on 8). Tengku Said belonged to the royal family; he used to copy official documents (Muhammad Yusoff 1992, 76). Muhammad Yusoff's assertion is accepted in handbooks (Iskandar 1995, 573), whereas it seems obvious that Tengku Said did not write those 647 pages in forty-five days: he simply copied them (which, with regard to Malay manuscripts, is already very fast) at the request of H. von de Wall. The latter also received from Tengku Anum, around 1853–55, a manuscript of the *Syair Perang Siak* (Kl 154, see Muhammad Yusoff 1992, 75); he may have received both manuscripts at the same time. Von de Wall had served in the colonial administration, in Borneo, from 1834 to 1855 (in particular in Sukadana in 1834–45), but at the end of 1855 he had already been appointed, with the rank of assistant resident, to compile a dictionary of the Malay language, a task for which he collected a great number of manuscripts, the majority of which are kept today in the National Library in Jakarta. It is in this context that he collected a copy of the *Hikayat Siak* (Putten and Al Azhar 1995, 4–5). Thus, we don't know the author of that version, but he is probably a kind of alter ego of Tengku Said. Tengku Said was another courtier familiar with the history of the local dynasty, knowing the SS by heart, and capable of composing a more-than-six-hundred-page text—in other words, a local erudite comparable to the author of the SS himself.

The text of this “*Sejarah Melayu*” (this is how it is called in the colophon) was used in the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* (the first version of which dates from the end of 1866; the author, Raja Ahmad, utilizes a “*siarah Siak*,” or “*sejarah sebelah Siak*,” which most probably is this *hikayat*), by a Dutch author, E. Netscher, in an article of the *Tijdschrift van het Bataviaasch Genootschap* of 1870 (Muhammad Yusoff 1992, 15), then by various scholars in the late-twentieth century (R. Roolvink, V. Matheson, Leonard Y. Andaya, and then by Timothy P. Barnard 2003, who uses it and comments at length upon it).

The second part relates the history of Johor since Alauddin Riayat Syah II (1528–64), son of Mahmud Syah, until Abdullah Ma'ayat Syah (1615–23); the assassination of Mahmud Syah II (Marhum Mangkat Dijulang, without descendants) in 1699; the assassination of his successor, Abdul Jalil Syah (the *bendahara* who had taken over the throne); the rise of Raja Kecil (Sultan Abdul Jalil Rahmat Syah 1718–40s, “Marhum Buntan”), who creates the Siak sultanate in 1723; the history of Siak; the struggles for power after Raja Kecil's death; the takeover of power by a line of sayyids in 1791; the wandering of the Malay princes until Raja Akil (Raja Kecil's great-grandson, or *cicit*), who puts himself at the service of the Dutch (he is appointed major, takes part in the attack on Palembang in 1811–12, is vilified in the *Syair Perang Menteng*, creates the Sukadana sultanate—“Nieuw Brussel”—with the help of the Dutch in 1827, and is enthroned by the governor general as Sultan Abdul Jalil Syah), dies in 1849, and is replaced by his son Tengku Anum, with the title Panembahan Anum Kesuma Negara. The story of Raja Akil occupies pages 530–647, about 18 percent of the text. Thus the text ends around 1850.

This version of the SS is not regarded as a recension because it remained isolated without giving birth to a family of versions. We will see that it is an eccentric version of recension III.

Fifth, the recension contained in a manuscript, Amsterdam Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen SED 902/556 (Iskandar 1999, 905; a photocopy of it is kept at the Leiden University library, i.e., Cod. Or. 14.319, a typescript in Latin characters known only through its mention by Roolvink (1965, 1967), and which contains a totally different version from Palembang. (Another related manuscript is KITLV Or. 79; see Iskandar 1999, 766.)

The part corresponding to the SS ends abruptly on the conquest of Malacca by the Portuguese, while a second volume relates the history of Palembang until 1812. According to Roolvink (1965, 130), "... this Palembang version of the *Malay Annals*, which contains neither the pantuns nor the Javanese passages and omits many passages found in the printed texts, and sometimes, but very rarely, has passages not found elsewhere, and as a rule has a redaction independent from the known texts, is a drastically rewritten text done by a clever editor" I consider this text like the previous one, that is, as a revised version of one of the above recensions, not a recension in itself. Roolvink (1965) quotes one episode only, which happens to originate from recensions II or III (i.e., manuscript A, 168; and manuscript D, 146).

Sixth, Shellabear's edition (1896), which results from a mixing of the short and long recensions, but does not contain the complete text of the latter. This edition is among the oldest published and it was for a long time the best known because, among other things, it was used in the schools of the Straits Settlements. (At the time Blagden published a fragment of the R18 version, in 1925, he only had Shellabear's edition for comparison.) It is everywhere treated as one of the versions of the SS, just as Winstedt's or Abdullah's versions, whereas it is, in fact, a hybrid text created by a European editor at the end of the nineteenth century. Until today, it has been taken into account in all commentaries on the SS. Cheah Boon Kheng is the only scholar to say: "Shellabear's text ... is actually a corrupt text and utterly useless. By mixing up two texts, Shellabear has added further to the problems of interpolations by previous copyists as well as to numerous discrepancies of facts and stories. It is time to discard the Shellabear text which, unfortunately, has been widely circulated in schools and universities" ("The Rise and Fall," 1998, 106). He is entirely right, with the tiny caveat that Shellabear's text represents, in addition to the short version, some manuscripts that are otherwise unknown. I will consider Shellabear's edition on occasion only in the comparison of the recensions below.

Shellabear details his sources in the preface to the first edition published in Jawi in 1896. He has chosen as a basis Abdullah's text (recension II), which he has amended and to which he has added various passages, in particular, a final unpublished section of forty-nine pages, on the basis of three manuscripts, which, however, he does not edit in their entirety. One of those manuscripts is kept today at the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, in Kuala Lumpur, and was also used by A. Samad Ahmad in his own edition (1979, 298). Shellabear's edition was published two years later, in 1898, in Latin characters and reprinted many times.

Seventh, there are two more hybrid versions from the 1950s, both elaborated by Indonesian academics. One, that of Tardjan Hadidjaja (1951), is based on Shellabear's edition as well as Abdullah's text in Klinkert's transcription. Two, that of Datuk Madjoindo (1959), is based on some Jakarta manuscripts, Abdullah's text (both in the original edition [1841] and in Situmorang and Teeuw's transcription), and

Shellabear's edition. Thus, these two editions are again the result of mixing up versions of recensions II and III.

Shellabear's version, therefore, is not a real recension, neither are the two last-mentioned Indonesian editions. Siak and Palembang versions (fourth and fifth, above) are new versions of the *SS* created on the basis of one of the three recensions: recension III for the *Hikayat Siak* and probably also for the *Hikayat Palembang*. Thus, properly speaking, there are only three recensions: the Raffles, the short, and the long recensions—or recensions I, II, and III. It cannot be asserted unequivocally that the unpublished and unstudied manuscripts do not represent different recensions, but that seems unlikely because they are described in catalogues as belonging to the short or long recensions.

The Philological History of the Text

These three recensions reflect the development process of the text, its evolution with time. The elaboration of editions and their successive publication, what could be called the philological history of the text, is different, and it has influenced the way the *SS* is known and perceived. Leyden's translation (1821) represents the very first publication of the *SS*; it consecrated the short recension. Twenty years later, the first edition, that of Abdullah (1841), made the Malay text of the same recension known. This edition was poorly distributed, but it was known through Dulaurier's (1849) and Klinkert's (1884) editions; by Marre's (1874, 1896) and Devic's (1878) translations; and, above all, much later, by the transcription of Situmorang and Teeuw (1952). Another version of that recension has been recently published, by E. Revunenková in 2008 and by Ahmat Adam in 2016.

The most popular edition, however, was that of Shellabear (Jawi 1896, Rumi 1898), before the publication of any study of the text (Winstedt's first articles appear in the 1920s), so that it has always been regarded as one version of the text and for a long time has represented the long version, the first edition of which was only to be published in 1979. The editions published before that of Shellabear were all of a very limited distribution and reserved to the Orientalists milieu. Shellabear's edition, by contrast, was used in schools and reprinted many times. Lastly, the recension represented by R18 was known through the transcriptions of Blagden (partial, 1925) and Winstedt (1938), followed much later by that of Muhammad Haji Salleh (1997) and Abdul Rahman Haji Ismail (in Cheah Boon Kheng 1998).

Three recensions, each one represented by a few manuscripts, seem to present a very simple situation. And yet, the way the various manuscripts relate to each other and the way the various editions have been elaborated remain obscure. A few comments on two versions of the short recension will serve as illustration.

The first is Leyden's translation. We don't know of what manuscript (lost today) it is the rendition, but we do have information on the way the translation was made. James Low, an officer of the English East India Company mainly stationed in Penang, reported in 1849 that he had acquired a manuscript of the *SS*, in which a reader (identified in 1976 by Cyril Skinner as John Crawford) had noted that "Ibrahim the Moonshee" himself had told him that he had brought to Calcutta (at the end of 1810)

a copy of the SS he had done in Malacca and he had worked on that text with Leyden. Low wrote: “Ibrahim read the book to the Doctor and explained the meaning to him, and he wrote down what he seems to have considered as worthy of notice” (Skinner 1976; and Matheson Hooker and Hooker 2001, 33). Matheson et al. note (2001, 35) that Leyden had long been familiar with that mode of translating and had become a master in noting down an oral discourse. Thus, his interpretation of the text is more Ibrahim’s than his own, while the translation was not an attempt to be literal. All the same, that translation was the very first publication of the text and it played a very important role in the way it was known and perceived: “It was through Leyden’s translation, rather than the original Malay text, that British impressions of Malay history were developed. ... It would not be an exaggeration to compare the influence of Leyden’s translation of *Sejarah Melayu* during the nineteenth century with that of C. C. Brown during the twentieth century” (Matheson et al. 2001, 37–38). “Ibrahim the Moonshee” is Ibrahim bin Fakir Kandu, a scribe of Chulia origin who was employed by Raffles and about whom we have some information (see: Teeuw et al. 2004, 16–18; and Annabel Teh Gallop 2015).

The second version of the short recension I wish to comment upon is that of Abdullah. This remarkable figure was the first editor of the text (which makes him one of the very first Malay philologists, on par with P. P. Roorda van Eijsinga and D. Lenting) and he added a very interesting preface to his edition. He says notably that he has no consideration for the historical content of the text and that he only publishes it as an example of good Malay: “Truly there are not many useful things in it as the author of this history claims, but the reader should know that the reason why I endeavoured to print it is because of its language” (Situmorang and Teeuw 1952, xxix). He also declares that he has produced the edition by correcting the text of one manuscript by comparison with a few others (*ibid.*, xxviii). This method, radically different from that of the Malay copyists of the day, is the same as that of Winstedt, working a hundred years later, and still is used by the majority of Malay philologists today. Abdullah says nothing of the manuscripts he utilized and it is impossible to judge whether his text is the transcription, here and there amended, of one manuscript, or the combination of a few. Abdul Rahman (2008, 4) has brought forward the hypothesis that Abdullah used the manuscript Farquhar 5, which was copied in Malacca in 1814.

But this role of Abdullah is put in jeopardy by the declarations of two of his mentors, the Christian missionaries Thomsen and North. First, the Dane C. H. Thomsen, in a report of October 1829 to the London Missionary Society (his employer), sums up his activities, including the preparation for printing of the “*Sajara Melayu* or *Malay Annals*,” and specifies that for that edition, “what was superficial has been expunged and that which was deficient has been supplied” (Milner 1980, 113). Second, in his manuscript note of 1843 included in the manuscript of the *Sulalat al-Salatin* kept at Harvard University’s Houghton Library, Alfred North (an American sent in 1836 to Singapore by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions) claims the paternity of the edition, “with the help of my very accurate moonshi Abdullah ben Abdulkadir,” by way of collating six manuscripts (“this collation of mine”), just as he has written the preface (Proudfoot 2002). And so it is that the achievement of editing the SS, which is unanimously recognized as Abdullah’s work, is claimed by two Western missionaries as their own. Abdullah himself has

mentioned his editing work in his memoirs, but in an extremely succinct way: “*perkerjaanku mengecapkan kitab Sejarah Melayu*” (“I was occupied printing an edition of the *Sejarah Melayu*”) (*Hikayat Abdullah* quoted by Ibrahim 1986, 14). When Thomsen wrote the above-mentioned report, he was suspected of neglecting his duty and lacking talent (Milner 1981, 47). It is therefore possible that he exaggerated his role in the preparation of the edition. If we take his testimony at face value, however, it means that the 1841 edition had been prepared at least twelve years earlier under the supervision of Thomsen, then probably revised by North, unless Thomsen, urged to justify himself, presented as accomplished a task that was a mere project, or again that the work was done, but then ignored and started all over again by North.

As for North’s note, it is not sure either that it is perfectly correct. Perhaps “North exaggerated his own role to show off to people in America” (Putten 2006, 417). Nevertheless, Proudfoot (2002, 117, 136) regards the 1841 edition as well as its preface as the result of the collaboration between North and Abdullah (e.g., “their preface,” 136). The matter is not so important regarding the edition of the text, but it would be interesting to know if the ideas expressed in that preface are North’s or Abdullah’s.

A comparison of Leyden’s and Abdullah’s texts could provide an image of the diversity of versions of recension II. The few comments above show that the differences between those two texts may have extremely diverse causes. We will see examples of passages in Leyden that are identical to the long version and different from Abdullah’s text.

The History of the Text

Winstedt (1938, 1939), Roolvink (1967, 1998), Wolters (1970), and Vladimir I. Braginsky (2004), among others, have reflected on the history of the text, but this has only resulted in hypotheses that often look like postulates. There are two ways to consider the history of a text like the *SS*. First, to investigate whether the text we know (in the guise of various recensions and versions) is the result of an evolutionary process, that is, whether previous states of the text have existed; this is the history of the text before the state we know. Second, to try and reconstruct the process by which the (assumed) original text generated the said recensions and versions; this is the history of the text we know. It is the first question that I will consider in this section.

Roolvink’s thesis, fifty years ago, was that “The *Sejarah Melayu* has developed from a *kinglist* which mentioned *periods of reign with dates* and gave concise information about the individual rulers. This *kinglist* subsequently became enlarged by various stories and otherwise historically relevant material which was inserted into it in suitable places, but at the same time it lost its dates” (1967, 306). This thesis has been refuted by Teuku Iskandar (1995), and then, in a more detailed and categorical way, by Braginsky (2004, 95–103). There is no indication that the text ever developed in that way; the matter is closed.

Still, it is legitimate to surmise that the text we know is the result of a gradual elaboration over time: other historical works (like the *Hikayat Banjar*, the *Ceritera Asal*, or the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, for instance) are known to have been revised and extended from

one period to another, while others (*Hikayat Patani*, *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa*, and *Misa Melayu*) are composite texts. More often than not, in the Malay world, historical texts were edited, revised, updated, and manipulated.

Many authors—particularly Winstedt, Roolvink, Wolters, Teuku Iskandar, Braginsky, and Ahmat Adam—have formulated hypotheses on the genesis of the text. They generally agree to assert that the text was elaborated by stages. Blagden had already affirmed that “there is little doubt that it [the SS] was founded on earlier records, which have not survived” (1925, 11). For Winstedt (1939/1969), the first draft was composed by a man who had known Malacca before 1511; about this, Winstedt quotes the date of 887 AH (1482 CE) mentioned in manuscript R68 as that when the assembly was held that decided the revision of the SS (“The Preface,” 1998, 60; 1969, 159).

W. Linehan (1947, 107) has the strange idea that “the first written material (pedigrees etc.) which formed a basis for the chronicle that ultimately emerged as the *Malay Annals*, though in the Malay language, must have been expressed in an Indian alphabet or an alphabet derived from an Indian such as the Old Javanese script”—which would mean before 1467, date of the Pengkalan Kempas tombstone (i.e., the date when the Jawi script was fully adopted). What an alphabet, Indian or Arabic, has to do with the composition of the text is obscure. Linehan has another, interesting, suggestion: when Sultan Mahmud spent a year in Pahang after having fled Malacca in 1511, he brought with him an early copy of the SS, and it was subsequently expanded in Pahang and enlivened with “local colour” (1947, 116).

According to Gibson-Hill, “we know that the *Malay Annals* were not compiled in his reign [Alauddin Riayat Syah reigning in Batu Sawar in 1612] ... The *Annals* were compiled during the reign of the previous Ala'u'd-din, sultan Mahmud's son who reigned from 1529 to about 1564” (1956, 137). This assertion comes from the conviction that the Winstedt version dates from 1536.

For Teeuw (1964, 232), a first draft might have been written under Sultan Muzaffar Syah, around 1450. For Wolters (1970, 91), it is “improbable” that no chronicle was written during the Srivijaya period. For Teuku Iskandar (1995, 211, 257 fl.), a text has been written under the sultans Muhammad Syah, Muzaffar Syah, and Mansur Syah (1458–77), then largely elaborated under Sultan Mahmud (1488–1511/1528). For Braginsky (2004, 187), it was started in 1436, when Muhammad Syah converted to Islam (as stated by Wolters 1970: 149, 163), then revised in 1484 under Mansur Syah, then revised again in 1536 (following Winstedt). This is the text that was brought to Goa (in India, in Perak, or in Sulawesi), then brought back to Johor, where it was revised in 1612, before producing the other versions.

Going further than all other authors, including Roolvink, Ahmat Adam claims that the author of the “*hikayat Melayu*” (Malay story; the kernel of the SS) lived during the reigns of Muhammad Syah (1423/24–1444/45) and Muzafar Syah (1444/45–1458/59) (lxxvi); later on, the text was revised during the reigns of Mansur Syah (1458/59–1477) and Alauddin Riayat Syah (1477–81); later again, a new version was elaborated at the time of Alauddin Riayat Syah II (1528–64); that is the model of R18 (lxiv). Further back in time, an embryo of the text, in oral or written form, existed long before. A first attempt at compiling a genealogy of the Malay kings (*salasilah raja-*

raja Melayu) was done at the time Sumatra passed under Javanese domination, “around the middle of the fourteenth century or earlier” (xxxvi, xlv–xlvi, lxxiv).

The multiplicity of these various hypotheses tends to discredit them all. To say that a historical text covering a period of 150 years has been written under such-and-such sultan because he is abundantly or flatteringly treated is not convincing. As for the argument of the vividness of portraits and anecdotes, it is inappropriate because a great number of those elements are factually false. In the case of an oral society (we will dwell on orality later) such as Malacca, hundreds of stories must have spread and stayed in memories during decades or even centuries, and it is not necessary to imagine that the text was revised every twenty years. A much more thorough analysis, from a linguistic, stylistic, and political angle, would be needed to allow one to ascertain that the text was not composed in one go. To speculate that a dynastic text was committed to writing at the time of Srivijaya, as do Wolters and Ahmat Adam, amounts to making assumptions on a literary corpus we know strictly nothing about. The passage of the *Bustan al-Salatin* concerning the Malacca, Pahang, and Siak dynasties, which was apparently composed thirty years after the SS, shows that complex royal genealogies have always been memorized.

People have assumed the existence of previous stages of redaction for two reasons. The first, intuitive, is that some passages must have been fresh in the author’s memory; this is an impression without any tangible foundation, which will never be possible to prove. The second reason is that one moment in the history of Malacca was so crucial that it necessitated the redaction of a text. But how are we to judge that a time was more crucial than another? How to evaluate the urgency of a text in a culture as poorly known as that of Malacca? These judgements are typically made in hindsight. It is with such an argument that Wolters (1970, 149, 163, 244) states that a text was written in 1436: the ruler had just realized that he could not count on commerce with China any more, he had to attract the Moslem trade, and he ought to rebalance his alliances, notably with Java. This situation would be at the origin of the redaction of a dynastic text in 1436, which is also the date of his conversion to Islam: “Now more than ever he needed to define his regional role, and the definition had to take into account his ancestry, his present claims to his subjects’ allegiance, and his vision of Malacca’s future” (ibid., 163). But if we accept the idea that a text was written that year, the reason would be elsewhere: a change in political alliances and commercial ties is no revolution. The real revolution resides in the ruler’s conversion: whatever its causes—maybe purely political and commercial, as depicted by Wolters—the conversion, nevertheless, was effective, and it represented a radical upheaval of all aspects of life, from the conception of the world to social norms, laws, rites, and daily behavior. Then, certainly, a dynastic myth should be composed, or revised, to bring history in line with the new religion, that is, to give the rulers an Islamic origin. Other dynastic myths, such as those of the kingdoms of Banjar in South Borneo (Ras 1968, 133) and Bima in Sumbawa (Chambert-Loir 1985, 47–56, 87–96), were revised in that way in the aftermath of the conversion to Islam. In the initial myth of Malacca, Indian elements are numerous and complex (see, among others, Winstedt 1928; Ras 1968, 119–29; Wolters 1970; and Rajantheran 1999). Their sources and the paths of their transmission still need to be studied, but it is clear that they are by far predominant. For that reason, the foundation myth of the Malay dynasty had probably not been

created when Islam was firmly entrenched in Malay society; rather, it is a Hindu-inspired myth that has been modified after the conversion to Islam.

There is one more objection to Wolters's hypothesis. If a text had been written in 1436, this means that the reigning ruler was falsely designating himself as the first converted king, whereas his father (or grandfather, depending on sources), named Iskandar Syah in Chinese and Portuguese sources, had, in fact, already converted before him (Wolters 1970, 161, 164). According to d'Albuquerque (*Commentaries*, vol. III, 77; and Pires 1944, 239–42), the ruler had converted after having married the daughter of the king of Pasai, who was already a Muslim. That type of fiction is perfectly possible, but it seems rather improbable that it was composed at a time when everyone still knew the reality.

Fiction is, indeed, over-present in the *Sulalat al-Salatin*, in the form of events and anecdotes either invented or distorted. The comparison of versions shows discrepancies that look like mistakes made in the recounting of relatively recent events. The end section of the text posterior to the execution of Tun Ali Hati, for instance, shows striking differences in the relation of local events less than one century old (for example, the abduction of the sultan of Kampar by the Portuguese, ca. 1515). Such differences may arise from two different ways to record the past. Collective memory does not function in a homogeneous way; a mistaken or false version of some event may be accepted by certain social groups as historical truth, while other groups have the authentic version. But these differences can also be the result of a political project, that is, modifications subsequently made to the text in order to deliberately bend its political significance. The tendency, which seemed natural to English scholars at the beginning of the twentieth century (Blagden 1925; Winstedt 1939), to consider the SS as a political text that had been subjected to political revisions, has practically disappeared from modern studies. The SS, in fact, is indeed a political text and it has to be read as such—not what the text explicitly says about wars, embassies, treatises, and the like, but what it expresses through allegories. Today's tendency is to see the text as representing the essence of Malay culture, beyond regional ambitions and conflicts (e.g., the genealogical claims of Pahang and Perak). Such a tendency derives, in Malaysia, from the utilization of the text to serve a pan-Malay patriotic design, and, outside Malaysia, by an essentialist conception of regional literatures, according to which every Malay text is the expression of Malay culture at large. The comparison of the available versions would be extremely useful for a political reading of the SS. It is striking that the most audacious and brilliant analysis of the text ever made—albeit limited to the first six chapters of R18—is that of a historian, Wolters. He showed how the major events of Srivijaya's late history—the Chola attack in 1025, the loss of hegemony to Jambi/Malayu ca. 1080, the subjugation to Pagarruyung, the Javanese attacks of 1275 and 1391, the popular [or Chinese?] insurrection in Palembang ca. 1397, the Siamese attack of 1398, and, finally, subjugation to China—were transmogrified into their quasi-opposites in a novelistic context.

The existence of a version of the *Sulalat al-Salatin* anterior to the one we know is stated in the text itself: it is the "*hikayat Melayu yang dibawa dari Goa*" (the Malay story brought from Goa) that was to be revised in 1612. A *hikayat* designates a text elaborated, complete, but this phrase is only found in recensions II and III, where it is

part of the addition to the preamble (*mukadimah*), so that it was introduced in 1612 or later, either as a memory (the redactor knew that the 1612 version was based on an existing text), or a mere invention intended to glorify the role of Goa in Sulawesi. Traces of that *hikayat Melayu* can perhaps be detected in the final text of the SS as we know it. For instance, the six-page passage of R18 about the regal regulations instituted by Sultan Muhamad Syah (in Abdul Rahman's edition, 122–28), with its exceptional, perhaps unique, use of “*kamu*” as an address to the readers and its final invitation to readers to improve it, looks very much like it was borrowed from another text, which could be a draft of the SS. The long passage about Pasai that is not directly related to Malacca (*ibid.*, 105–17) may also be inherited from an earlier draft.

The name of Goa in the preamble of the SS has given rise to a lengthy debate as to which Goa: in India, Pahang, or Sulawesi? I think the last word belongs to Raimy Ché-Ross (2004, 40–43), and it is most certainly the city in Sulawesi.

From the above it follows that we have only fragile assumptions that a text anterior to 1612 ever existed. It seems logical to assume, however, that the first draft of the SS, whatever its form, was composed before the fall of the city in 1511. One can hardly imagine the Malay court—weakened, wandering, and fleeing before the successive attacks of the Portuguese—conceiving a myth to its own glory during the period 1511–1612. In 1612, things are different: the court settles solidly in Johor and a peace agreement has been signed with the Portuguese. The ruler may then feel the need of a text confirming his legitimacy and supremacy over the other Malay states. But if the genealogical narrative that constitutes the core of the text and its rationale, with its numerous mythological elements of Indian origin, had been created in 1612, those elements would not be so distorted and incomplete. It seems more probable that the 1612 text is the result of the revision of a more ancient text. Thus, we are led to regard as probable one (certainly not all) of the dates listed above.

We are now going to investigate the second aspect of the history of the text: the way the versions we know derive from a unique, original text.

Comparison of the The Variant Versions

It is assumed that there was a unique, original text. There are actually other ways to envision the origin of the text we know. We may imagine, for instance, that a draft, more or less stable, has been first circulated orally and put into writing in two or more different ways by different scribes. Or, the *bendahara* ordered two scribes to collect stories about the past and they produced, at the same time, two initial versions of the *Sulalat al-Salatin*. Or, a first draft, finished or not, was sent to Pahang and Bintan, and revised locally. Or, the author (the *bendahara* or a scribe under his supervision) composed (wrote or dictated) two or more versions as he collected more facts and anecdotes. And so on. These hypotheses are plausible, but the preamble of recensions II and III talks of “improving” (*perbaiki*) an existing elaborated text (*hikayat*). Moreover, the literal similarity of some passages in all versions suggests that they all derive from one original.

This original text is not better or more valid than any other ulterior state of the text, but it would certainly be interesting to know it. It would be impossible to try and reconstruct the detail of its wording, but one could try and reconstruct its contents.

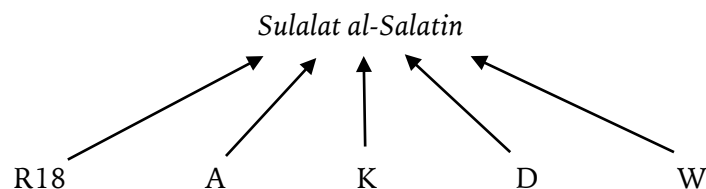
The aim of this section is to compare the versions we know (and in some cases a few unpublished manuscripts) in order to establish the relationships among them and with the recensions, and the way they derive from the original text. A comparison of some versions was made by, among others, Winstedt ("The Date," 1938), A. Samad Ahmad (1979, 295–311), and Braginsky (2004, 101–3, 133–35, n. 11). These comparisons were made in a very partial way, with a particular aim, which does not help us to draw conclusions about the relationships among those versions. A minute comparison of the known versions has never been undertaken. It would be a long and difficult task because the versions sometimes differ to a considerable extent by their episodes (their presence, order, or formulation), the names of the characters, the attribution of a deed to one figure or another, the mention or omission of one element (from one word to one page), and again by their vocabulary and their orthography. Versions on the same recension differ by a myriad of details, while differences among recensions require a complex system of notation. The very definition of the pertinence of similarities and differences is a constant problem. Similarities on a lexical level, even sometimes a narrative one, can stem from a common ancestry and thus attest the belonging to one group, but it can also be the result of a convergence, when two scribes introduce the same word at the same place of the text, simply because it fits with the context. Convergence can affect other elements of the text. For instance, the formula *qālū innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rājiūn* (we belong to God and to Him we return), which is found in R18 after the announcement of the death of the Muslim rulers, with three exceptions, and which never appears in A and only exceptionally in K and D, is probably an addition diversely made by individual scribes. We can easily imagine that they felt compelled to add it, whereas it is rather improbable that a scribe would have deleted it from his model.

It has to be borne in mind that when we try to reconstruct the history of the text and to represent it by a genealogical tree (a stemma), we start from the bottom of the diagram (the most recent witnesses) to climb back to the top (the original text). Indeed, to talk about the text of a recension actually is to talk (by metonymy) about its representation in a recent manuscript. Recensions are represented by one or several versions, each of which is represented by one or several manuscripts. Each manuscript in its turn is represented by one or several editions. Most of those editions are transcriptions of individual manuscripts. However, an edition cannot be regarded as an exact and final representation of a manuscript. There are four editions of the last eight chapters of manuscript R18 (Blagden, Winstedt, Muhammad, and Abdul Rahman), and those four editions differ from one another by a host of details. In the same way, there are four editions of version A (Abdullah, Dulaurier, Klinkert, and Situmorang and Teeuw) that are not identical, either. The three main recensions of the SS are represented by about thirty manuscripts, only five of which have been edited. When we try to reconstruct the history of the text we start from the editions of those five manuscripts, which not only are all faulty (some tremendously so), but which also provide texts that may be two hundred years distant from the archetype of the relevant recension.

The stemma we can build illustrates two relatively recent concepts in the history of Western philology: the text's mobility/versatility (French *mouvance*, *mobilité textuelle*) and variance (French *idem*), which refer, respectively, to the works of medievalists Paul Zumthor (1972) and Bernard Cerquiglini (1989). Dutch philologists (A. Teeuw, Willem van der Molen) have signaled the benefit Malay—and, more generally, Indonesian or Nusantaraian—philology could draw from the experience of specialists of Dutch Middle Ages literature. Similarities between Malay classical literature and French poetry of the Middle Ages is no less striking. Many remarks by Zumthor about the former (e.g., 1972, 71–72) are exactly applicable to the latter. Mobility is understood (here) as the way the text transforms itself continuously through time and space, while variance is understood (here) as the range of the text's variation. The two concepts are similar, but the first expresses the transformations of the text in physical time and space, and the second in textual space. The concept of variance has been used in the context of Malay historical texts as early as 1985: “the text's variance is not regarded here as a sum of errors, that is, deviations from a norm, but on the contrary as the sum of all possible texts. In the same way as other Malay historical *hikayat*, the *Ceritera Asal* is neither a fiction nor a chronicle: it is a demonstration and as such it had to evolve according to periods of time and to the context of its narration” (Chambert-Loir 1985, 84).

A stemma is not only a philological tool allowing (at best) one to reconstruct the archetype of known versions; it helps also to apprehend the history of the text, its reception, and its manipulation between memory and oblivion, between faithfulness to a historical model and new political needs, and between the scruple of conservative copyists and the imagination of inventive clerks. This is an exemplary literary issue: how did such an emblematic text as the SS evolve, how have new versions been elaborated over about two centuries of transmission, how has each of these versions illustrated a political stance, and how can the SS be regarded as one text when there exist several versions largely different from each other? The SS is abundantly quoted in historical studies, but which SS?

The SS is known today in the form of about thirty manuscripts, only five of which have been edited, while hundreds of other manuscripts have been lost. Each of those five manuscript-texts (R18, A, K, D, and W) is a textual realization of the work, which has actually no other existence (Zumthor 1972). The stemma we will finally build (see below) shows those realizations as stemming from the original work: that is the diachronical aspect of the transmission of the SS. But from a textual point of view, the stemma has to be inverted, because it is the known versions that constitute the text:



Comparisons

I take into account the following versions:

R18 in the edition of Abdul Rahman Haji Ismail (1998);

A (the short recension, i.e., Abdullah's text) in the edition of Situmorang and Teeuw (1952);

K in the edition of Ahmat Adam (2016);

L (John Leyden's translation) in the 2001 reprint;

D (the long recension) in the edition of A. Samad Ahmad (1979);

W (the long recension), more rarely, in the edition of Puteri Minerva Mutiara (1993);

Sh. (Shellabear's edition) in the 1982 edition, on occasion; and

Bustan al-Salatin in the edition of Jelani Harun (2004).

In the comparison of the first three chapters I also use the edition of the relevant paragraph of the *Bustan* by Winstedt (1920, i.e., the transcription of a private manuscript, lost today, starting with the descent of the three princes on Bukit Seguntang, i.e., chapter III, below). The two editions of the *Bustan* are identified as BJ and BW.

I use the following abbreviations for manuscripts to facilitate legibility: R18, R35, R39, R68, and R80 to designate the manuscripts Raffles 18 (as noted previously), 35, 39, 68 and 80; F5 is Farquhar 5; M26 is Maxwell 26; and L designates Leyden's translation (1821). In the comparison of variants, I use double vertical slashes to isolate portions of texts where various manuscripts have different readings, while single vertical slashes isolate those readings, e.g., the sequence “||R18 Ahad | ALDW Kamis | R68 Isnin||” means that in a specific location R18 has “Ahad,” while the versions ALDW have “Kamis,” and R68 has “Isnin.”

I made a great number of comparisons on specific elements of a diverse nature. All point to a few fundamental oppositions that lead to the classification of the versions into a few groups and families, and to the drawing of a stemma of a few branches, but they also show minor oppositions that contradict this stemma because they are caused by contaminations and interpolations—which I will deal with later on—that prevent one from refining the classification in more detail. This results from the nature of textual transmission in Malay because, among other things, it produces a considerable “noise.” The term “noise” is commonly used (Ian Proudfoot proposed the term “white noise”) to designate the disorder caused by insignificant variants, which consist in a myriad of tiny differences in wording due to the scribes' carelessness as well as their license to modify their model. For that reason, the collation (the word-by-word comparison), which is at the basis of classical philology and particularly of stemmatology, gives mediocre results, the majority of variants being unusable.

The comparisons that have been made occupy dozens of pages and are practically unreadable if one does not have in mind the detail of the relevant passages. Thus I will present a limited number of examples and in as succinct a way as possible.

1. Literal comparisons (“collations”) are based on the available editions. It should be kept in mind then that these are defective to the point of impairing our judgment. As an example, in a thirty-one-word sentence at the end of the duel between Hang Tuah and Hang Kasturi, the three editions of R18 present variant readings on three words. Manuscript W has rarely been considered in the collations because its transcription is totally unreliable. Furthermore, all editions are the transcription, supposedly faithful, of one manuscript, with the exception of Abdullah’s edition (the fundamental version of recension II), about which we neither know to what extent it represents one manuscript nor what liberties Abdullah allowed himself in amending the text. Many comparisons show a certain autonomy of A vis-à-vis the other versions (K and L), but that autonomy often seems to result from the creativity of a scribe, who might be Abdullah himself. For instance, in the episode where the Pasai minister (*wazir*) goes to fetch his king, who is prisoner of the court of Siam, manuscripts R18, K, and D have the readings “naik ke kapal” and “persembah,” as compared to A’s “naik kapal” and “persembahan.” One can easily imagine Abdullah making those two corrections.

2. None of the published manuscripts is the copy of another known one.

3. There are several lacunae in R18. For example, (a) part of the portrait of Sultan Mahmud’s brother Zainal Abdin, (b) the episode of Ali Manu Nayan and Tun Hasan Temenggung, (c) the redaction of Kitab *al-Durr al-Manzum*, (d) the Pasai chess player, and (e) during the second Portuguese attack, Sultan Ahmad valiantly participates in the battle and repels the Portuguese to the sea. These lacunae—from one paragraph to one page—prove that R18 cannot be at the origin of the other versions. This, however, does not mean with certainty that recension I cannot be at the origin of recensions II and III, even less so because most of these passages may well be additions in the other versions.

4. Among the innumerable variants that oppose R18 to the other versions taken together, the shifting of episodes (e.g., the execution of Tun Ali Hati; immediately afterwards, Mahmud chooses his son Muzaffar as a successor) are the most decisive: they indicate that one of the two versions (R18 and AKLDW) is the deformation of a mutual model represented by the other.

5. The texts’ endings. There are four cases:

- R18 ends abruptly, eight chapters after the execution of Tun Ali Hati (ca. 1535);
- AKL-F5 end with that execution (ca. 1515);
- DW go on after the execution (until 1612), but are different from R18; and
- S goes on much further, until 1849–50.

This point is a major marker of the existence of three recensions.

6. Regarding manuscript K, the assertions of Ahmat Adam, in the introduction to his edition (2016), that K represents the same version as R18, are groundless. The fact that K ends with the execution of Tun Ali Hati is almost sufficient to prove that this version belongs to recension II. Comparisons show without any doubt that K is close to A, even though minor elements also class it alternatively with R18 or D. Therefore, K is a version of recension II different from the ones already known (A and L). Albeit on superficial grounds, Revunenková had reached a similar conclusion: “In the contents, number of stories, and composition, the Krusenstern manuscript is similar to the Abdullah b. Abdulqadir Munshi and Shellabear editions, and reflects the publication version of the work, but the textual features indicated above make it possible to consider the Krusenstern manuscript a mixed text, where two stages of its existence were reflected—authorial and publication” (2006, 63).

7. Reigns’ durations. The durations (in years) of reigns of the Malay kings are diversely recorded in the manuscripts:

King	R18	A	L	K	D	B
Sri Tri Buana	48	∅	∅	∅	∅	
Sri Pikrama Wira	15	∅	∅	∅	∅	
Sri Rana Wikrama	13	∅	∅	∅	∅	
Sri Maharaja	12y 6m	∅	∅	∅	∅	
Iskandar Syah	3 + 20	32 + 3	32	32 + 3	32 + 3	32
Makota	2	∅	∅	∅	∅	
Muhammad Syah	57	∅	∅	67	67	
Abu Syahid	1y 5m	1y 5m	1y 5m	1y 5m	1y 5m	
Muzaffar Syah	40	42	42	42	42	
<i>Age of Mansur enthroned</i>	17	27	27	27	27	
Mansur Syah	73	∅	∅	∅	∅	
Alauddin Riayat Syah	33	∅	∅	∅	∅	
Mahmud Syah						

It can be seen that, out of eleven reigns’ durations mentioned in R18, three only are mentioned in the other versions (ALKD), namely, those of Iskandar Syah, Abu Syahid, and Muzaffar Syah. In the first case, ALKD differ from R18 and are clearly faulty, while among ALKD, L differs from the other three but is identical to B (*Bustan*). In the second case, all manuscripts have the same number. In the third, ALKD are again different from R18.

It is most improbable that the original text did not contain those durations and that the two groups R18 and ALDK added them independently from each other. It seems, on the contrary, that the durations were in the original text and that R18

retained them, while an ancestor of ALKD lost most of them and distorted two more. Conversely, the formula noted earlier, *qālū innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rājiūn*, which appears in R18 after the announcement of the death of Muslim rulers, with the exceptions of the sultans Ibrahim, Mansur, and Mahmud, and which never appears in A and only exceptionally in K and D, is probably an addition to the original text made individually by some scribes. This is linked to the process of Islamization of the text, a theme that is diligently avoided in the studies of the SS. Islam is strikingly accessory in this text dealing with the history of a sultanate, mainly after its conversion to Islam. In the words of Anthony Johns, “All the references to Islam are superficial in character...” (1975, 41). At the same time, Islam is present throughout the text in formulas and details, part of which must have been progressively added, and in different doses in the various versions. The spiritual messages (*wasiat*) that sultans deliver on their deathbeds are commonly regarded as a reflection of the political morals that prevailed in Malacca in the fifteenth century, whereas they may very well be additions made more than a century afterwards. Sultan Mahmud, the last sultan of Malacca, gives no *wasiat* in R18; we don’t know what version may have had the archetype of recension II because the narrative stops before Mahmud’s death in the versions we know (AKL). But the sultan does give a *wasiat* in recension III (DW and Shellabear). This is an indication that *wasiats* were added by later copyists.

8. The *Bustan al-Salatin*

One point of comparison comes from a different text. Book II, chapter 12, of the *Bustan al-Salatin* explicitly has for its source the SS, alternatively designated as *kitab masirat Sulalat al-Salatin* (Braginsky 2004, 101), *Sirat al-Salatin* (Nuruddin 2004, 319), and *Masirat-us-Salatin* (Abdul Rahman 2008, 6). It needs, indeed, to be considered that there is not one *Bustan al-Salatin* but variant versions; consequently, the comparisons below are not absolute.

In that chapter (*fasal*), chapter II of R18 is partly reproduced, chapter III summarized, and the following chapters reduced to a genealogy. The *Bustan* was composed in 1638–40 by Nuruddin al-Raniri. We need to ponder over this date for a moment. Ann Grinter (1979) and Paul Wormser (2012), who are among the extremely rare scholars who studied the totality of the work, reached the conclusion that chapters 11, 12, and 13 of book II were written by an author other than Nuruddin, long after the main body of the book or even after Nuruddin’s death. Chapters 11 and 13 mention events that happened in 1679 and 1678, respectively (Wormser 2012, 33, 151, 210, 215). It follows that no date can be ascribed to the chapter of the *Bustan* relative to the SS: chapter 12 might be posterior by one or several decades to the date of redaction of the body of the text. The evidence provided by the *Bustan* loses all value if chapter 12 dates from ca. 1670, which happens to be contemporary or posterior to the date of recension III as we know it (manuscripts D and W have a model anterior to 1673). But, in fact, chapter 12 does not seem to be more recent than the body of the text, as are chapters 11 and 13. Indeed, its aim is to glorify Sultan Iskandar Thani (r. 1636–41) by showing that his ascendancy goes back to the Malacca dynasty both in paternal and maternal lines. Thus, it was most probably written during the reign of that sultan, and we can retain the common estimate that the passage related to the SS dates from 1638–41.

Braginsky (2004, 100–101, 133–35) was the first to carry out a detailed comparison (in eighteen precise and conclusive points) of the *Bustan* with SS versions R18, A, and D. It shows that the relevant passage (*Fasal yang kedua belas pada menyatakan segala raja-raja di negeri Melaka dan Pahang*, “Chapter 12 regarding the kings of Malacca and Pahang”; B, below) is for the vast majority of its information identical to AD in opposition to R18. This is perfectly clear. In some details B is closer to D than A. However, in three places B agrees with R18 against AD, namely: (a) in the preamble, the *Bustan*, like R18, does not mention the name of the *bendahara*, the assembly of nobles, and the *hikayat* from Goa; it gives the day as a Sunday; and it quotes the memory of the elders as the author’s source; (b) the descent of three princes on Mount Seguntang and their becoming rulers of Minangkabau, Tanjung Pura, and Palembang; and (c) the king of Palembang (Sang Purba Buana) becomes king of Bintan (but, contrary to all other versions, by marrying the queen) and then of Singapura. From this comparison, Braginsky concludes that there were already two versions of the SS ca. 1640: R18 (because it is postulated as dating from 1535) and a prototype of AD, and that the author of the *Bustan* utilized the second. In fact, the said author talks of the *Bustan* as a unique text; the one he knew was a prototype of AD (recensions II and III), and this tells us nothing about the existence, or not, of recension I (R18).

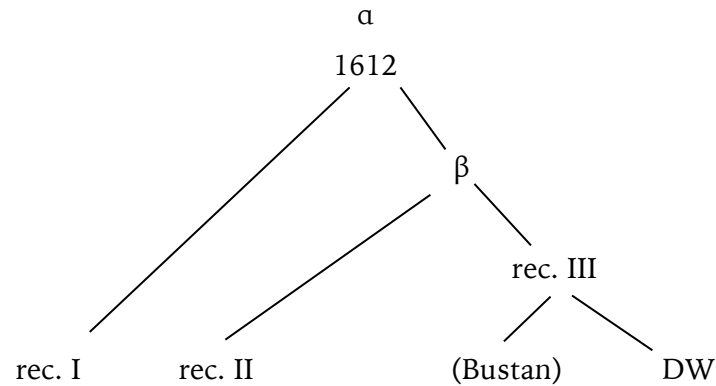
Moreover, the *Bustan* shows huge differences with the various recensions of the SS. The text of the *Bustan* (II, 12) is narrative until the reign of Sang Purba Buana, and then practically reduced to a mere royal genealogy along three lines: that of Malacca until Raden Bahar, i.e., Muzaffar Syah (1564–70), son of Alauddin and grandson of Mahmud, with whom the Johor branch of the Malacca dynasty dies out (thus slightly after the end of R18); then the lines of Pahang (which stem from Sultan Mansur Syah); and then those of Siak (which stem from Sang Sapurba Hindi). The aim of this genealogical section is to show that Iskandar Thani’s ascendancy goes back to the Malacca dynasty through his father as well as his mother.

There are, in this summary of the greater part of the SS (until Sultan Mahmud’s death), so many differences with the other versions and so many obvious errors, that B must be regarded as a version distinct from A and D inside the constellation AD. It seems that there had already been, between 1612 and the redaction of this *fasal* 12, a major disruption in the transmission of the text. The most attractive hypothesis is that the author of *fasal* 12 did not resort to a manuscript of the SS but, rather, to his knowledge of the text, that is, to his own memory.

The text of the *Bustan* as a summary of the SS shows what was essential in the eye of the author, who represents, evidently, a privileged audience. The *fasal* reflects a genealogical conception of history; it can also be seen that the loss of Malacca is not a crucial, not even an important event (just like in the SS) and that Sultan Ahmad of Malacca is not mentioned (that figure has probably never reigned; see Chambert-Loir 2005). Moreover, the author of the *fasal* makes use of sources other than the SS, among them the *Shahnama* of Firdusi, and this from the very beginning as he gives Iskandar’s ascendancy on twenty generations, which is found neither in the SS nor in the Malay *Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain*.

The proto-recension II-III is regarded in the *Bustan* as “the” SS. It is already, in its structure, identical to the witnesses we know today, even though this observation

concerns the beginning of the text only. Thus it is clear that a prototype of recension II-III did exist ca. 1640. We cannot guess whether recension I existed, too, but we know that I and II-III are independent and that the split between the two happened before ca. 1640. The version of the SS (only partial and eccentric) present in the *Bustan* can evidently not be at the origin of recensions II-III. It stems from one of their prototypes, and as it is closer to D than A, it stems from the prototype of recension III. Therefore, we have the following schema:



This stemma is only a starting point: it ramifies in various ways afterwards. It is between points α and β that the prototype of II-III gains an addition to the *mukadimah*, loses the durations of reigns, and undergoes a modification regarding the three princes descended on Mount Seguntang.

9. *Mukadimah*

The text of the SS opens on a preamble of a few pages (often referred to as the “*mukadimah*,” even though that word is not used in the text itself), and which presents significant differences among the various versions. In the short and long versions (II and III), the preamble is almost three times longer than in R18 due to a long addition at the beginning: an exordium in Arabic and Malay, and a paragraph in which the author names himself and mentions the model of his work. R18 is the only version that has the short preamble, thus there is a clear opposition between R18 and AKD, although there are also differences within the second group.

The differences among the various versions of the *mukadimah* have been noted by Winstedt (1938) and a few authors afterwards. Thanks to these various comparisons and to the editions available today, more numerous than in Winstedt’s time, we can carry out a more precise comparison relative to Winstedt’s. The comparison below is based on the existing editions as well as the analyses by Winstedt (“The Preface,” 1998) and Abdul Rahman (2008) for some unpublished manuscripts. (Abdul Rahman gives the text of the *mukadimah* in R35 and F5, as well as a comparative chart of some twenty elements of the *mukadimah* in six manuscripts and three editions.)

The *mukadimah* is made up of three sections:

(A) An exordium in Arabic and Malay. The exordium at the beginning of version A is not transcribed in Situmorang and Teeuw's edition. It is reproduced in Dulaurier (1849), while the 1884 edition (Abdullah 1884, edition realized by H. C. Klinkert) contains the Malay translation only. Dulaurier's edition, for the portion of text it covers, is considered more reliable than that of Klinkert, but it transpires that here Dulaurier has (silently) reproduced the long Arabic and Malay eulogy of the long version (which he probably borrowed from Leiden's Cod. Or. 1716), while A (which I could not consult) only contained a very short eulogy, as it is transcribed in Klinkert's edition. We thus have:

||R18 five lines | AK-R35-R39-R80-F5 thirteen identical lines | DW-M26 about thirty lines||.

(B) A paragraph absent from R18 alone. In short, AKLDW and the other manuscripts have:

This is what I report: in an assembly, a noble told me he knew that a *hikayat Melayu* had been brought from Goa [K-R35-R39-R68-R80-F5-(L) add. *oleh Orang kaya Sogoh*] and he desired to have it edited for the benefit of our descendants. Then I trembled all over my body, I, the *bendahara* ||ADW Tun Muhammad | KL-R35-R39-R68-R80-F5-M26 Tun Mahmud||, named Tun Sri Lanang [genealogy over seven generations], a Malay residing in Batu Sawar, Malacca [L-R39-R68-R80 have "in the presence of" the *bendahara*]. N.B. According to Winstedt ("The Preface," 1998, 59; Wilkinson 1933), in the 1612 version, the *bendahara* was probably mentioned as author, perhaps also by name, but the ostentatious genealogy must have been added by someone else after his death.

(C) A second paragraph containing information in three parts: at such a date, during the reign of sultan so-and-so in such a place, the order of such a person to compose the text was conveyed. But these elements give rise to the following variants:

||R18 A`lam | ADWK demikian katanya||, on the ||R18 Ahad | AKLDW Kamis | R68 Isnin|| 12 Rabiulawal of the year ||R18-K-R35-R39 Dal-awal | ALDW, R68 Dal||, ||R18-AKLD 1021 | M26-Malay 1 1020||, *waktu duha* (AKDW add. *pada ketika syamsu*), during the reign of (AKL add. Marhum yang Mangkat di Aceh, DW Ø) Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah (AKDW add. genealogy over six to nine generations) at a place named ||R18-K-R35-R39-R80-F5 Pasir Raja | AL Pasai | D-Cod. Or. 12026-Malay1 Pekan Tua | W pegunungan Buasa||, then || R18-KDW *dewasa itu* | AL-R35-R39-R80-F5 Dewa Sa'id/Sa'it|| Seri Nara Wangsa bernama Tun Bambang anak Seri Agar, Raja Patani, came and delivered the message ||R18-W Ø | AKD to me|| of Yang Dipertuan Dihilir (AKDW add. Sultan Abdullah Ma'ayat Syah ibn al-Sultan Ala Jalla Abdul Jalil Syah), praise in five Arabic sentences translated into Malay, *yaitu* (that is), I desire that the *bendahara* compose a ||R18 *pertuturan* | F5 *peri perturunan* | ADW *peri peristiwa dan peraturan* | K *hikayat Melayu*|| of the Malay kings together with their customs for the benefit of our descendants.

According to Abdul Rahman (2008, 5), manuscript D (i.e., DBP 86) has 1020 (like W), not 1021, but that manuscript actually has nothing as it lost its first pages. A. Samad Ahmad's transcription is 1021, from manuscript DBP 86A.

Again, according to Abdul Rahman (*ibid.*, 5), Malay 1 also gives the Christian year (“*Hijrah Nabi Allah Isa*”) as 1603. It is remarkable that fragments of this *mukadimah*, notably the assembly of nobles and the order to compile a text about the genealogy and the customs of Malay kings for the sake of future generations, has been reproduced at the beginning of the “Kedah Annals,” the *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa*.

Sequel of the paragraph:

Then I [self-belittling in two Arabic sentences translated] decided to undertake it and I begged [|R18 the *taufik* of Tuhan and the Prophet | ADW the *taufik* of Tuhan, the *harap* of the Prophet and the *ampun* of the Companions | K the *taufik* of Tuhan, the *harap* of the Prophet and the *afwah* of the four Companions|]. I then composed it, Arabic sentence [|R18 by collecting the memories of the elders | AKDW in order to please His Lordship|], and I named it *Sulalat al-Salatin*, that is, the history of kings [AKDW add. *hadzihi duraru’l-akhbar wa ghuraru’l-amthal, inilah mutia segala cetera dan cahaya segala peri umpamaan*]. May anyone who reads it not examine it in an absolute [*sempurna*] way [K *jangan dimudah-mudahkan*], because the *hadis* intimates to think of the greatness of God, not His essence.

This *mukadimah* is a fundamental point of comparison. It has been interpreted by Winstedt (“The Preface,” 1938) as a proof that R18 is more ancient than the other versions. A. Samad Ahmad (1979, 305), on the contrary, argues that R18 has deliberately eliminated elements that were in its model. In fact, it seems undeniable that R18 has the original preamble, whereas AKDW (recensions II and III) have an expanded version. Indeed, the double preamble of AKD is redundant: the two parts give two different explanations of the origin of the text and the articulation between the two is difficult to interpret. We are most certainly dealing with an original text onto which ulterior additions were grafted: the preamble has not been truncated (by shifting from AKDW to R18), but, indeed, developed (in the reverse direction). Such was already Linehan’s opinion: “The Shellabear Preface appears to consist of two introductions written at different times, the one superimposed upon the other” (1947, 112).

The oppositions of variants above can be summed up as follows. The major opposition is, of course, that of R18 against all other versions, the latter being identical or diverse. The date of 1612 is not when the SS was composed (the way colophons give the date when the copying of a manuscript was finished), but when the decision was taken to compose it, or rather, to revise it. Moreover, the mention of two sultans also supplies temporal information: the prince who is Yang Dipertuan Dihilir in R18 is Sultan Abdullah Ma’ayat Syah in AKDW, which means that he has become sultan, while his brother and predecessor is Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah in R18 and Marhum yang Mangkat di Aceh in AKL (though not in DW), which refers to his death in Aceh. This points at the situation in Johor in the early 1610s.

The mention of Sultan Alauddin as being alive in R18 and deceased in the other versions seems to correspond to two stages in the redaction of the SS. First, the decision taken by that sultan, in 1612, to have the text compiled. Second, the decision taken by his successor, Sultan Abdullah Ma’ayat Syah (also called Sultan Abdullah

Hammat Syah; see Andaya 1975, 24–35), to resume the redaction after the death of Sultan Alauddin. This episode raises one more enigma. A commonly accepted version of the events relates that an Acehese fleet raided and destroyed the regal city of Batu Sawar in June 1613 and brought back to Aceh as captives Sultan Alauddin, his brother Raja Bongsu, and a number of courtiers, and that Sultan Alauddin died soon after in Aceh, which is confirmed by the title designating him in this passage of the SS: Marhum Mangkat di Aceh (see, e.g., Hooykaas 1947, 276; Iskandar 1967, 42; Iskandar 1995, 249; and Liauw 2010, 445). Whereas C. A. Gibson-Hill (1956), basing himself on the testimony of a number of European eye witnesses, has demonstrated that only Raja Bongsu and his followers were taken prisoners, while Sultan Alauddin managed to escape and took refuge in Bintan. Alauddin was still active in politics (he signed a contract with the Portuguese in Malacca) but he could not prevent his brother from replacing him on the throne of Johore. He was still alive at the end of 1615. Modern historians, or rather specialists of literature, may have picked the erroneous version from the wrong source, but how to explain that Sultan Alauddin could be given the posthumous name Mangkat di Aceh if he was not dead there? One possibility is that he was captured and brought to Aceh at the time of another Acehese expedition, after 1615.

Several oppositions testify to the existence of the two recensions II (AKL) and III (DW) within a proto-recension II-III by opposition to recension I (R18) (see, e.g., Ahad/Kamis, Syamsu, Sultan Alauddin Riayat's genealogy, the memories of the elders, the name of Yang Dipertuan Dihilir, Marhum yang Mangkat di Aceh).

The still unpublished manuscripts for which we have only fragmentary information seem to cluster in the following way: R35, R39, R68, R80, and F5 constitute a family with KL within recension II (see exordium, Orangkaya Sogoh, Muhammad/Mahmud, Dal/Dal-Awal, Pasir Raja), while M26 is alternatively associated with DW or AK.

Two very strong oppositions point at the versatility of K: first, ||Pasir Raja | Pasai | Pekan Tua | pegunungan Buasa||, where we have ||R18-K-R35-R39-R80-F5 vs AL vs D vs W||; second, ||dewasa itu | Dewa Sa'id||, where we have ||R18-KDW vs AL-R35-R39-R80-F5||.

One example only ("in the presence of" the *bendahara*, instead of "by" the *bendahara*) suggests the existence of the family L-R39-R68-R80.

The opposition ||A Muhammad | KL Mahmud|| should probably not be interpreted as a sign of the existence of a group KL within recension II, but rather like the result of an "amendation" performed by a scribe, perhaps Abdullah himself.

10. The first three chapters

These three chapters occupy about forty pages in the editions (i.e., about a sixth of R18). As I cannot reproduce the summary and the notation of their variants because it is much too long, I will limit myself to evoking succinctly their content. The first three chapters of R18 and A are so different that one can wonder what should be explained: their differences or their similarities? However, the literal similarities are so obvious and so numerous (e.g., the episodes situated between the departure for Bintan and the

foundation of Singapore are remarkably similar in the two versions) that we are not dealing with two independent relations of the same events, some of them very ancient. Thus, these two versions undoubtedly derive from the same original. This raises two questions. First, is it possible to reconstruct that original, or at least to determine, for each element of the narrative (event, anecdote, name, character, vocabulary), which version is faithful to the original? Second, can we figure out how so numerous, so varied, and so important discrepancies happened?

The first chapter evokes the reign of Iskandar Zulkarnain and his descendants, starting with his marriage to the daughter of the king of India, whom he has vanquished and converted. This narrative shows no literal similarity with the *Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain* and no direct borrowing from it (I am referring to Soeratno's 1992 edition). The elements of the legend of Iskandar Zulkarnain stem from another source or simply from the author's personal knowledge of it. One singular detail is found in manuscript K only: Iskandar goes to see the rising sun; then, "*setelah berapa lamanya Raja Iskandar di negeri Asih [a-sh] melihat matahari ...*" (K, 14). Given that "a-sh" is an archaic spelling of Aceh, this mysterious "Asih" is probably Aceh, which otherwise is not mentioned in the SS outside the preamble.

Iskandar's descendants cover twenty-two generations up to Tursi Biradaras/Tersenit Berderas. It is in this genealogy that the first differences among the various versions crop up: AKD have a few variant readings and sum up eleven generations in one sentence. A descendant of Iskandar at the tenth generation, i.e., Tursi Biradaras/Tersenit Berderas, marries the daughter of an Indian king (Raja Amdan Nagara). In AKLD, it is his son, Raja Suran, who governs the sequel of the narrative, whereas in R18 it is a new king, Raja Syulan, descendant of Nusyirwan Adil, king of Nagapatam in Keling, so that there is a rupture: Iskandar Zulkarnain exits the story. In both cases, the key character is now Raja Syulan/Raja Suran. He is the one who visits the abyss (a deed of Iskandar in the Islamic tradition) and it is from him that Malay dynasties originate, through three princes who appear on Bukit Seguntang, in Palembang. Iskandar Zulkarnain is thus dispossessed of one significant episode of his heroic epic, and, in R18, he is even deprived of any role in the genesis of the Malay dynasty. Either this is in conformity with the original text, which in that case failed to Islamize the myth of the origins (Iskandar's figure has indeed been placed at the head of the myth, but without any follow up); or, on the contrary, the genealogy presents a continuous line from Iskandar up to the first Malay king and AKLD have the original reading, which means that R18 presents a serious deviation at the beginning of the narrative and cannot be regarded as a faithful representative of the original text. This passage is fundamental in the SS because it is there that the mythical genealogy of the kings of India and Persia is articulated to that of the Malacca dynasty. Yet the sequel of this element is different in the three recensions.

Chapter II relates the reigns of Raja Syulan and Raja Culan. Raja Syulan/Suran (probably figuring the Chola king Rajendra Chola I) leaves to conquer all countries of the east and west (*masyrik maghrib*). He conquers two unidentified countries on the Malay Peninsula, reaches Temasik, abandons the plan to conquer China, undertakes a visit to the abyss, marries the princess of the ocean, begets three sons, and travels back to land.

On his return, this king (it is now Raja Culan in R18, but still Raja Suran in AD) has engraved in stone, in the “language of Hindustan,” the tale of his adventure, and buries it together with a treasure, unless he introduces the treasure into the stone, or again he has the inscription engraved on a rock and the treasure shut in it. (Only the *Bustan al-Salatin* has a clear interpretation, namely, the second one.) The inscription and treasure are intended for his descendant who will conquer the Orient. This anecdote should have a sequel, but the stone is never discovered in the SS, and the *Bustan* is the only “version” of the SS in which Raja Suran mentions the name of that descendant: Arwuban (Nuruddin 2004, 324). It is tempting to relate this story to the actual “Singapore stone” that was discovered in 1819 but then blown up in 1843 and of which only a slab remains, bearing an inscription that may be in Sanskrit or Old Javanese, from a period between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries (see Miksic 1985, 13-14, 40-42).

The third chapter relates how one of Raja Culan’s sons becomes king of Palembang, then of Bintan, and later founds Singapura. Raja Culan’s three sons descend magically on Mount Seguntang, in Palembang. In R18 and D, the three princes are kings, whereas in AKL, only the oldest is king, his two brothers being mere seconds (his *panakawan*, says Ras 1968, 122). Their names mark an opposition ||R vs AKL vs D||, that is, the opposition between the three recensions, with the indication that, within recension II, A and L constitute a family distinct from K. Thereafter, in R18 and D, the oldest becomes king of Minangkabau under the name of Sang Suparba; the middle one king of Tanjung Pura (Sang Maniaka); and the third of Palembang (Sang Utama), soon anointed under the name of Sri Tri Buana. It is thus the youngest that founds the Malay dynasty. In A, the oldest is enthroned as king of Palembang under the name of Sang Suparba Tramberi Teribuana, while the other two are married to two local women and disappear from the story. Thus it is the oldest brother that founds the Malay dynasty. He has two sons: Sang Maniaka (who becomes king of Tanjung Pura) and Nila Utama (who becomes king of Bintan). Then, Sang Suparba becomes king of Minangkabau and disappears from the story; it is his youngest brother, Nila Utama, who takes over. D is here eccentric: the three brothers are crowned, but it is the oldest who is called Sang Si Perba and enthroned; yet, it is he who becomes king of Minangkabau. The kingdom of Tanjung Pura requires an explanation. It is of paramount importance for the author of the SS (or of that part of the SS), as it stands on the same level as Palembang and Minangkabau, at a time (the end of the fourteenth century) when Palembang is the seat of Malay royalty and Minangkabau the kingdom (centered in Pagarruyung) that has become its suzerain. Two locations have been proposed for Tanjung Pura. First, a harbor on the northeast coast of Sumatra, between Aru and Deli (Wolters 1970, 238; Brown 1970, 206); and second, a harbor on the west coast of Borneo (Hooykaas 1947, 220). But Ras (1968, 187–96, with map) has the last word: it is the ancient capital of the kingdom of Banjar, in the southeast of Borneo, quite far inland from today’s Banjarmasin.

The three versions represented by R, AKL, and D are thus totally different; it is clear that we are facing three recensions and not two as has been often repeated until now. Is it possible to know which of these three versions is in conformity with the original text? This looks improbable because none of them conforms to reality; the original text created a myth to answer a precise need (that is, to confer to the Malay dynasty an origin conforming both the local legends and the Islamic religion). If that

myth is recorded in one of the three versions, then the other two, derived from the collective memory, have no immediate reason to be less valid. Yet, can we evaluate the logic of this myth in the three versions?

I am eliminating upfront version D, which shows various incoherences in the whole passage and in which the king anointed (the one who is the object of the *ciri* ceremony) becomes king of Minangkabau and immediately exits the story. According to R18, it is a descendant of Nusyirwan Adil who is at the origin of the Malay dynasty, and the first king is the youngest of the three brothers. It is tempting to give preference to version A because the emblematic figure of Iskandar Zulkarnain seems more important than that of Nusyirwan (the *Bustan* has not retained the name of the latter in the relation that the three princes make of their ascendance) and because an eldest brother seems more appropriate for the role.

In R18 the genealogy goes through Cendana Wasis, daughter of Onangkiu and granddaughter of the king of Lenggui (formerly Gelanggui), in the Malay Peninsula. Her son (Raja Culan) marries the daughter of the king of the ocean and has three sons, the youngest of whom is the first Malay king. We thus have the union of a local mythic principle (the princess of the sea, representing the chthonian world and symbolizing fertility) and of two historic royal lines (a Persian king and a Malay princess). The identity of the Lenggui kingdom, unidentified until today, is of course paramount. The fact that the Malay dynasty stems from a youngest son is disconcerting, as it makes the first king inferior to those of Minangkabau and Tanjungpura.

In A, the genealogy follows a different path. Princess Wanang Kiu (Onangkiu) has no significant descendancy; rather, it is the marriage of her husband to the princess of the ocean that produces the three sons, the eldest of whom this time is at the origin of the Malay dynasty. This seems more satisfactory. However, A also contains what looks like an error. Raja Suran's first marriage (with a woman initially called Zaris Gangga, then Derkengka) had already produced three brothers, who are the replicas of the three others but bear the names of the three princes of Bukit Seguntang in R18. Thus, there is an erroneous redundancy. This likely error does not mean that recension II is entirely faulty; it is still possible that it retained from the original version several elements more exact than those of R18.

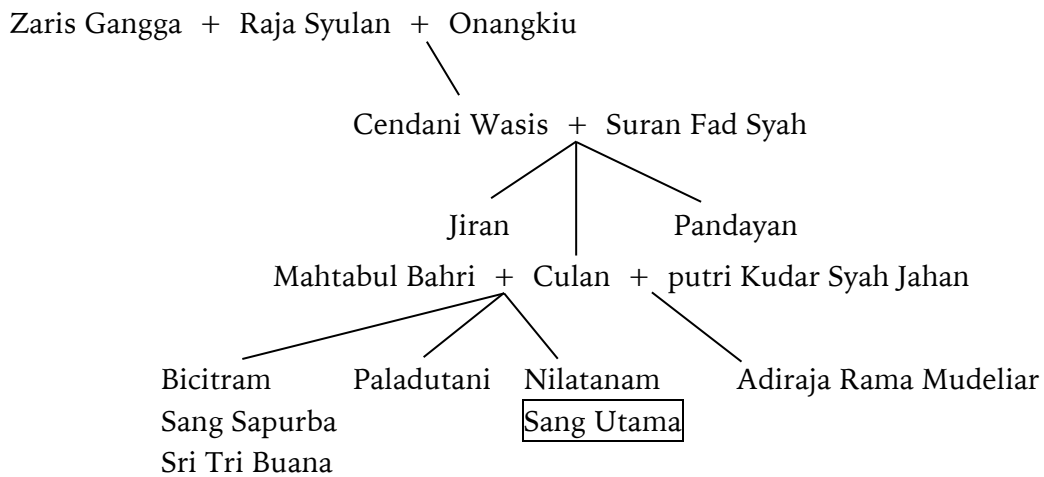
This fragment of the genealogy is illustrated on the next page.

In the Bintan episode, in chapter 3, the opposition between RD (Sri Tri Buana is made king) and AK (it is his son who is made king, he himself becomes king of Minangkabau) shows an agreement between recensions I and III (R18 and D) that tends to indicate that those versions are original, while AK incorporates an invention.

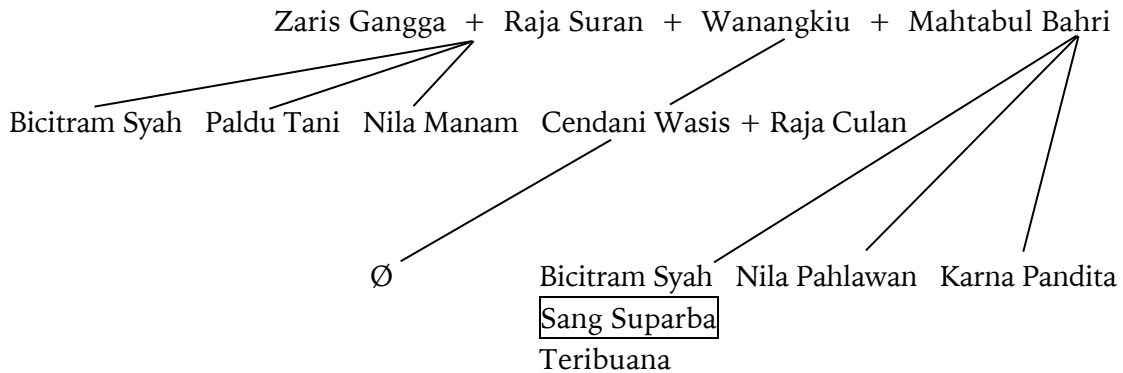
We thus have three versions of the same myth, which all seem partially corrupt. Versions AKL (recension II) seem more valid than the others, but without any certitude. This passage is one of the most divergent of the whole text of the *SS*, precisely because it is a mythical relation, the logic of which has become more and more obscure with time. One of the elements of the myth is the union, at the origin of the Palembang dynasty, of the chthonian world (the princess of the ocean) and the celestial world (the three princes "descended from heaven"). All the elements of the myth have a function, including the characters, with the exception of the two local

women, Wan Empuk and Wan Malini. Nobody seems to have questioned the origin and the role of these two women. There are a few such elements, in the mythic section of the SS, that have lost their function, so that their signification is not legible any more. Another such character is the princess born from the foam (Putri Tanjung Buih, who appears magically and is adopted by the king), who is given in marriage to a secondary personage (a Chinese emissary) and disappears from the story. (On this last element, see Ras 1968, 81–99, which also contains a comparison of some of the mythic elements in the SS with those found in other Malay texts.)

Manuscript R18: Descendants of Raja Syulan, king of Nagapatam and descendant of Nusyirwan Adil



Manuscript A: Descendants of Raja Suran, king of Amdan Negara and descendant of Iskandar Zulkarnain



What do the variant readings tell us about the grouping of the versions?

There are five variation types, differing with respect to formulation (words and turns of phrases), the episodes, the characters, the names, or minor information.

Those of the first type are more problematic than the others, because many similarities may be fortuitous and thus prove to be of little use for the grouping of versions; I therefore give priority to the other four variables. First, regarding the episodes, they produce four types of meaningful variants: shifting, substitution, deformation, and addition/omission. An example of shifting is that the founding of Bija Nagara is in the middle of a chapter in R18 and at the end of it in AKLD; an example of substitution is that the three princes who descended on Bukit Seguntang become kings of Minangkabau, Tanjung Pura, and Palembang in R18, whereas in AKL the first becomes king of Palembang while the two others exit the story; an example of deformation is how in R18-D, among the three princes descended on Bukit Seguntang, the three are kings riding elephants, whereas in AKL one only is a king, riding an ox; and an example of addition/omission is in AKLD, where Sang Suparba adopts a girl magically emerged from foam, an episode absent from R18.

Second, characters produce additions and substitutions. An example of the first is from AKLD, where Raja Suran kills King Gangga Syah Johan and then marries his sister Zaris Gangga; this latter character is absent from R18. An example of character substitution is that two brothers in R18 (Kudar Syah Jahan and Suran Fad Syah) correspond to three brothers in AKLDB (Raja Hiran, Raja Suran, and Raja Pandin). Another example is how the Indian king who launches his armies against the Malay Peninsula is Raja Syulan of Nagapatan in R18, but Raja Suran of Amdan Nagara in AKLD.

Third, the modification of names produces many strong oppositions.

Lastly, the addition/omission of minor information singles out one or more versions when compared to the others. For example, AKLD have one more link than R18 in Iskandar Zulkarnain's genealogy, but they omit nine other links; and KLD have it that the city of Lenggui/Ganggayu is located "upstream from Johor."

The comparative analysis of the first three chapters vividly demonstrates that the main oppositions are, hierarchically: R vs AKD; AK vs D; and A vs K. That is, the opposition of recension I against II and III together; then the opposition of recension II against III; and then the distinction of A and K within recension II.

D has four singular episodes that are avatars of episodes occurring elsewhere and under other forms in R18 and A. It seems clear that this is the result of confusion of the redactor(s) of D, who vaguely remembered such episodes but ignored their original location. These episodes are: mention of Tajitram Syah (his name is reminiscent of Bicitram Syah, who has a role in A but not in D); Putri Tanjung Buih is married to a Chinese figure (avatar of an episode in A); from their offspring arise the social categories *perawangan* and *pedaraan* (avatar of a detail that occurs earlier in R18 and A); and Sri Tri Buana decides to erect a city in Bemayam (avatar of the founding of Malacca).

Before examining the other oppositions, it should be noted that their identities are not obvious (some could fall into one category or another) and, above all, that they don't all have the same weight: some are decisive, others almost insignificant. We have:

R vs AKLD (fourteen cases) and R vs AKL (ten cases), which indicate the singularity of R18 compared with recensions II and III. The latter two recensions form a group, within which we have the following oppositions: A vs KL (two cases), A vs KLD (three cases), AK vs D (two cases), and AL vs K vs D (one case), which show a certain amount of autonomy within each version (each manuscript). The singularity of D manifests itself by the oppositions of D vs all other manuscripts (ten cases) and R18 vs AKL vs D (one case). Lastly, in one case the opposition R18-D vs AKL implies that R18 and D (recensions I and III) have retained the original version, while recension II (AKL) deviated from it. It is an important case: according to R18-D, it is the youngest of the three brothers, namely Sang Utama/Nila Utama, who becomes king of Palembang under the name of Sri Tri Buana and later founds Singapura, while in AKL it is the eldest (Sang Suparba) who becomes king of Palembang, but it is his son who founds Singapura.

11. The *ciri*

The *ciri* is a text of a few lines, absolutely incomprehensible, that a personage of surnatural origin pronounces during the consecration of a king. The *ciri* seems to have first been a eulogy, in Sanskrit, of the king to be enthroned, which was read by a priest. According to Wolters (1970, 124), the *ciri* was part of the consecration ceremony (*abhisheka*) celebrated in 1391, by which the king founder of the Malay dynasty, named Sri Tri Buana in the SS, was identified as Avalokiteshvara.

Then the text became corrupt across the ages, while its use was extended to high officers of the kingdom. Some kind of *ciri* was still in use relatively recently, in Perak (Maxwell 1881; Hooykaas 1947, 215; and Winstedt 1946, 197–98, who observed that it disappeared in 1939: “In place of the *chiri* the Sultan read a modern oath in Malay and signed it”) and not long ago in Brunei for the installation of officers (it is inscribed on a loose leaf in a Brunei *syair* in the B. L. manuscript Or. 14549; see Ricklefs et al. 2014, 304). The *ciri* is read on three occasions in the SS: first, when Sang Suparba (or Sri Tri Buana) is anointed by Bat as king of Palembang; second, but in II only, when the same is made king of Singapura; and third, among the royal customs instituted by the first Muslim ruler, Sultan Muhammad Syah.

But the text of the *ciri* is not quoted in all three recensions: see the chart below.

Rec.		Page	Name 1	Text 1	Page	Name 2	Text 2	Page	Name 3	Text 3
I	R18	19	∅	yes	25	∅	∅	53	ciri	∅
II	A	24	ciri	∅	40	ciri	∅	86	ciri	∅
	L	24	cheritra	yes	44	panegyric	∅	100	cherei	yes
	K	34	ceritera	yes	53	ciri	∅	104	ciri	yes
hybrid	Sh.	18	ciri	∅	29	ciri	∅	58	ciri	∅
III	D	21	ciri	yes	38	∅	∅	72	ciri	∅
	W	24	curai	yes	42	∅	∅	71	x	x
?	S	16	ceritera	∅	30	∅	∅	57	∅	∅

Note: The pages of R18 are those of the manuscript, while all others are pages of the editions. In the second occurrence in L, the word “panegyric” is actually “panegyriized.” Both *ciri* texts in L are in Bengali characters. Leyden knew several Indian languages; he says himself that he speaks Bengali (Bastin 2002, 106), whereas it was evidently in Jawi in the manuscript he used. In W, the third occurrence of the *ciri* belongs to a lacuna, but it is probable that W’s prototype has the same text as D. Considering the chaos of that edition, the word “*curai*” in W, page 24, may be a mistranscription of “*ciri*.”

In the short recension represented in Abdullah’s edition (and reproduced in Shellabear’s), the *ciri* is three times mentioned but not quoted. Incidentally, the first mention is interesting because the text explicates the meaning of the word *ciri*: “Then Bat stood up and praised the king; his praise was made of all kinds of honorific words,” which is, indeed, a good definition of the *ciri*. The second mention says that “the *ciri* made of most beautiful words is read before the king”; it is read out from a piece of paper that is subsequently put on the head of the person installed (Brown 1970, 218 fn. 219). And the third mention talks of “a *ciri* of exquisite formulation.” Leyden aptly translated the second occurrence by saying that the king “was panegyriized by Bat’h” (Leyden 1821, 44).

A few conclusions can be drawn from the chart above. First, Sh. (Shellabear) probably reproduces the text of A. Second, manuscript S has a unique version. I believe S is a text written from memory (see below); this fits well with the fact that the *ciri* is not quoted in any of the three passages: the author knew the three episodes, but had not memorized the text of the *ciri* in pseudo-Sanskrit, and he summed up the third passage in a few lines. The fact that S shares the word *ceritera* with KL is a reason to group S with recension II, whereas S is more often closer to III. This also fits with a text written from memory, but it can also be the result of a convergence, if two scribes introduced the same word at the same place because it was fitting. Sh. and S are two peripheral versions. Let’s see the three recensions.

The most striking oppositions concern recension II: in the second passage, the *ciri* is mentioned in this recension only; and in the third passage, the text of the *ciri* is quoted in this recension only. It is not possible to know whether this results from an addition to the original text in II, or an omission in the two other recensions.

Within recension II, three items oppose A to KL: (1) ||A *ciri* vs KLS *ceritera*||; (2) the text of the first *ciri* is given in KL and not in A; and (3) idem for the text of the third *ciri*. The first opposition may be the result of a convergence, if several scribes reacted in the same way, independently of each other, when faced with the same interrogation: in front of an unknown word spelled <cyr> they expanded it with a few letters to produce a familiar word (*ceritera*, “story”) that fits with the context. Version S gives a meaning to that word: “*serta ia membaca ceritera asal keturunan duli baginda itu*” (“and he read the story of the origins of His Highness”; Muhammad Yusoff 2015, 16). Incidentally, his explanation supports the idea that the word *ciri*, as it was foreign to some Malay scribes, does not have in this context its common modern meaning of “hallmark, characteristic.” Hooykaas (1947, 214) suggests an etymology from Sanskrit *charya*.

The two other oppositions can also be explained as a deviation from the prototype of recension II, either by an addition in KL (but this would suppose that KL constitute a family within AKL, and we will see that this is improbable) or by an omission in A. The fact that, in the first case, A is the only version (I discard Sh. and S) that does not quote the text of the *ciri* supports the latter hypothesis.

12. The first rulers of Malacca

The various versions have the following names:

- R: Sultan Iskandar Syah, Raja Kecil Besar, Raja Tengah
- AD: Sultan Iskandar Syah, Raja Muda, Raja Tengah
- KS-Sh.: Sultan Iskandar Syah, Raja Besar Muda, Raja Tengah, Raja Kecil Besar

From the above we see that the first Muslim ruler was Raja Tengah in RAD and Raja Kecil Besar in KS-Sh. This part of the text presents the opposition ||R vs AD vs KS-Sh.||, a strange one because Sh. is a combination of the “short” and “long” recensions (A and D), so that the group AD-Sh. should always be compact. The opposition ||AD vs Sh.|| here probably comes from the differences among the versions of the “long” recension respectively represented by D and by the manuscripts used by Shellabear. The fact that K is different from R18, A, and D, but probably similar to a version of the long recension, points to the singularity of K and suggests that it might be a hybrid version. The agreement among RAD (i.e., the first Muslim ruler is Raja Tengah) indicates that such is probably the original reading.

13. Javanese poems

During Sultan Mansur Syah’s visit to Majapahit for the purpose of marrying the king’s daughter, Hang Tuah inspires the awe of the crowd and poems are composed about him; an officer does the same, to a lesser degree. RKDS have nine short poems (*guritan*), one song (*nyanyi*), and one more poem, whereas A only has the first two poems and the last. In this passage, particularly difficult for the copyists because it is partly in Javanese, RKDS can be said to be identical. We thus have a strong indication of A being autonomous, and, again, K cannot stem from A.

14. The reign of Sultan Mansur Syah

The long passage related to Sultan Mansur Syah (from fifty to ninety pages in the various versions) is examined here from the point of view of its organization. It can be divided into twenty-one episodes, only sixteen of which are found in R18. I don’t give the identification of the episodes: they seem obvious enough to be unquestionable and, above all, the examination is not about the episodes’ content but, rather, their respective ordering in the various versions. If we start from R18 (Abdul Rahman’s edition, 145–96), we have sixteen episodes in the natural order 1 to 16. In recension II (A, 108–87), the sequence is significantly different, to wit, 1, 6, 17, 2, 3 beginning, 5, 7, 3 end, 4, 18, 8, 9, 19, 10, 11, 14, 13, 20, 15 and 16. We see that episode 12 is missing (it moved to another reign) and that A contains four additional episodes (17–

20). In K (133–228), the sequence is exactly the same as in A. In recension III (D, 90–161; W; and S, 68), the sequence is the same as in A, with a few little differences, namely: 1, 6 beginning, 21, 6 end, 17, 2, 3 until Hang Tuah's exile, 5, 7, 3 end, 4, 18, 8, 9, 19, 10, 11, 14, 13, 20, and 16. This recension contains an additional episode (21, the embassy to Goa, which brings back Hang Tuah).

I started arbitrarily from R18, because this version has fewer episodes. If I had started from A or D, the impression would be different: we would have the feeling, not that AKD add to the text, but that R18 reduces it. The possibility must be kept open that the episodes present in AKDS but not in R18 did exist in the 1612 redaction and have been eliminated from R18.

The main conclusion of this comparison is to oppose categorically R18 and AK-DS. K is identical to A; DS only differ by the addition of one episode—this, it must be clear, from the point of view of the ordering of the episodes only, while otherwise the versions differ in various ways in their wording, and from that point of view, K is even closer to A than to DS. The opposition ||R18 vs AKDS|| is strengthened by a few minor oppositions.

Considering the respective sequences of R18 and AKDS, there is no obvious reason to assert that one is more exact or coherent than the other. In the two groups (R18 and AKDS), the twenty-one episodes constitute invariable units, with two exceptions: episode 3, which is one unit in R18, is split into two in AKDS, reflecting the span of time between Hang Tuah's exile and his return; and episodes 5 and 7, split in R18, are united in AKDS as one coherent story. The passing from one option to the other is conceivable either way, even if, for those three episodes, AKD's option looks slightly more logical than R18's.

An interesting opposition occurs in episode 3, where we have ||R18-D vs AKS||: in recensions I (R18) and III (D) Hang Tuah is guilty of having an affair with a concubine of the sultan, while in recension II (AK) and version S he is a victim of slanderous accusations of such an affair. If this episode is not pure invention, one version has to be exact and the other false, and it happens that the agreement between R18-D indicates that these two versions (recensions I and III) must have the original reading (i.e., guilty). In that case, the modification carried out in recension II (Hang Tuah is not guilty) goes along with the progressive glorification of that hero as it is known outside the text of the SS. Version S may have performed the same modification independently, all the more so because S goes further in asserting that Hang Tuah is slandered by Hang Jebat himself. About this episode, it may be useful to recall a hypothesis formulated some eighty years ago that deserves our attention today. According to Winstedt (1969, 160), the passage in which Hang Tuah is sent to a safe place instead of being killed is inspired from an episode of the Malay *Ramayana* in which Laksamana hides Hanuman, whereas Rama has ordered his (Hanuman's) execution.

Lastly, it needs to be noted that the autonomy of recension III is confirmed by minor oppositions. For example, first, in episode 3, recension III (DWS) is the only one in which the officer who rebels against the sultan and is killed by his friend Hang Tuah is Hang Jebat—like in the *Hikayat Hang Tuah* and the *Tuhfat al-Nahfis*—whereas in R18-AK the officer is Hang Kasturi; second, in episode 6, Malacca attacks Pahang in

R18-AK but Indrapura in DS; and third, in episode 21, DS have a story (the embassy to Goa) that is found in no other version. Moreover, the autonomy of K manifests itself (among others) in the division of episode 4 into two sections, so that we have ||R18 vs ADS vs K||.

15. Tun Fatimah

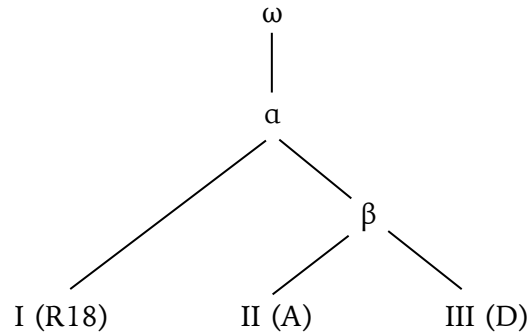
According to R18, Tun Fatimah is married to Sultan Mahmud, but she misses her father (the executed *bendahara*) so much that she never smiles any more. Here A introduces two poetic quotes; KDWS reproduce them and add their (corrupted) Persian original. When a Malay text contains Malay verses, it seems difficult to imagine that a later scribe would add their Persian original. In the case of a quotation in a foreign language, the evolution process, apparently, should go in the sense of a diminution, not an expansion. In the specific case of this short passage, where all versions clearly stem from the same source, we are thus tempted to conclude that recension III (DWS) and K represent a first stage after the original text (K's testimony here is essential); that A represents a second stage, where the Persian quotes have disappeared (perhaps because, why reproduce something that is not understood?); and R18 represents yet a third stage, where the translation has disappeared, too. But this hypothesis has to be rejected. Voorhoeve gives the example of a scribe who added quotations in Hindustani when copying a manuscript; the quotes "were inserted by the scribe at the Secretariat to add some *couleur locale* to the story and to show his knowledge of Hindustani" (1964, 266).

16. The final part of the text

We have seen that A is incomplete, either because the text has lost its end, or its redaction was interrupted. The execution of Tun Ali Hati happens in R18 on page 169 of the manuscript (Abdul Rahman's edition, 271) and, in D, on page 259. Recensions I and III extend the narrative by about twenty years (R18) and a hundred years (DW), respectively, but for their common part (from ca. 1515 to 1536), these two extensions are totally different. Blagden noted this and concluded: "It looks rather as if the two recensions had been supplemented, but independently of each other and by different hands" (1925, 11).

A few comparisons made on passages disseminated in that part do, indeed, show that the two texts present no literal similarity, and that, when they relate the same episodes, don't seem to derive from the same source. Therefore, in contrast with the whole body of the text until the death of Tun Ali Hati, where, despite innumerable differences, all versions clearly derive from the same source (one original text), the two final parts of I and III are radically divergent. There is a rupture in the text of the SS at the very point where A ends. The two longer versions (R18 and D) contain two final sections, one of which, at least, must have been created by a posterior redactor, to fill up the lacuna caused by the loss of the initial ending. Three possibilities present themselves: the two versions have a new ending, or only R18 does, or only D does. In other words: (a) the three recensions ended ca. 1515; A remained as such, while R18 and D invented two endings independently from each other, then R18 lost a part of it,

or was only written up to 1535; (b) R18 and A ended ca. 1515, then R18 invented an ending (complete or not), while D always had the original ending up to 1612; or (c) R18 has the original ending (truncated), while D lost its ending, like A, and reinvented it.



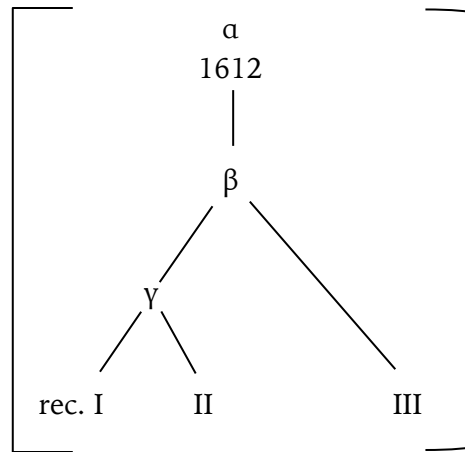
In the case of a stemma of the type shown above, the first case supposes that the initial text of the SS lost its end section somewhere between ω and α ; R18 and D (but not A) composed new endings, then R18 lost part of its own. A slightly different hypothesis is that an incomplete version of the SS (up to ca. 1515) circulated and gave birth to the versions we know. In the second case, an ancestor of R18 and A lost its end section, while D kept its own; the stemma shows that this is impossible. In the third case, an ancestor of A and D, between α and β , lost its end section, D invented a new ending, and R18 lost a part of its own end section (or has been composed incompletely). This third hypothesis seems to be the most plausible, but can it be demonstrated?

Version D presents the particularity of ending in 1612 that precisely echoes the preamble. Indeed, after the episode of Tun Ali Hati, D relates the reigns of Muzaffar Syah, Abdul Jalil Syah, Ala Jalla Abdul Jalil Riayat Syah, and Alauddin Riayat Syah. The latter builds the palace of Pasir Raja, while his brother Raja Abdullah is Yang Dipertuan Dihilir, i.e., the sultan-to-be Abdullah Ma'ayat Syah—therefore, until ca. 1612, not even 1613 (Roolvink 1998, 29). The ending of recension III is thus perfectly coherent with regard to the project formulated in the preamble: to relate, in 1612, the history of the Malay kings. If recension III were the product of a truncated text ending with the death of Tun Ali Hati, to which a new ending had been added, we may imagine that the narrative would have been extended until the time of that new redaction, at least after the death of Alauddin Riayat Syah. The authenticity of D seems thus possible and even probable.

If the end section of recension III is original, then the last eight chapters of R18 are an ulterior creation. This means that R18 lost its end at exactly the same place as recension I (the execution of Tun Ali Hati), and as this can hardly be the fruit of chance, it follows that I and II have a common ancestor in a point (γ) located below the splitting-point (β) of II and III (see next diagram).

This diagram is placed between square brackets to show that it is merely a provisory hypothesis. The original final section is transmitted until D, whereas it is

lost in γ . This stemma is, in reality, impossible, because it is in irreconcilable contradiction with the kinship, both in wording and in content, which has been demonstrated above, between II and III. Recensions II and III are very close in their formulation; thus, it is their common ancestor, to the exclusion of I, that has undergone a rewriting, including a modernization of the language. As for the content, the kinship of II and III indicates that their common parts (e.g., the additions to the *mukadimah* or the elements quoted in the *Bustan*) are found in β , and this entails that the entire beginning of I would have been remodeled in order to get rid of these parts, which is certainly impossible.



Therefore, we are led to conclude that the end section of D is an ulterior creation and that R18 probably has the original ending. The fact that the end section of D, composed in a second stage of redaction after 1612, has been conceived in order to end exactly in 1612 implies that it is not much posterior to that date. Recension III as we know it (through D and W) is somewhat “modern” in its language, but as a text it was probably composed very soon after 1612. It was known in Aceh in 1640 and has apparently been the most popular version, notably in Riau, until the nineteenth century.

17. Collations

Collations (word-by-word comparisons) were carried out in limited number only because of the handicaps mentioned above and because they provide no new conclusions. It seems that, in the relevant passages, there is an average of one variant for every five words.

The major conclusions are the following, in order of importance. The singularity, or even the eccentricity, of D; the singularity of R18; a few idiosyncrasies of A and K; the kinship of A and K in the group AKD; and, lastly, the agreement of K and D by opposition to A (in some passages, K is closer to D than to A).

There remain a number of isolated oppositions that may point at the original reading, but which don't help to establish the relationships among the versions. For

instance, in the scene of the duel between Hang Tuah and Hang Kasturi, the opposition R18-D vs AK in one sentence (*Hang Kasturi pula bertikam dinding pintu, lekat kerisnya vs keris Hang Kasturi pula lekat tertikam pada dinding pintu itu*) indicates that the original reading may be the first one, but says nothing about the place of the four manuscripts on a stemma.

Mnesic Stages

The diverse types of comparison presented above have produced simple and strong oppositions (e.g., R18 vs ADK), which can easily be explained on a stemma. Step by step, we are led to multiply the branches of the stemma in a logical, more-or-less irrefutable, way. However, a great number of oppositions, major as well as minor ones, seem to contradict the stemma. This type of perturbation occurs constantly in the transmission of Malay texts and it is commonly ascribed to a “contamination” or “horizontal tradition,” that is, the borrowing of a word or passage from a source other than the manuscript that was used as a model, or to an “interpolation” (the introduction of a foreign element into the text), which seem to justify that two manuscripts distant on the stemma suddenly have an identical reading by opposition to the closest manuscripts. Here are a few examples: the durations of reigns, lost or distorted all along the text (perturbation on the AD branch); huge differences of B (*Bustan*) with AD and a few similarities with R18 (perturbation before B or at the time of its redaction); the identity of the king (Syulan or Suran) at the origin of the Malay dynasty, showing a fundamental contrast between the groups R18 and AKDL; the intervention, in D alone, of the djinn king Asmaghiah Peri in the episode of Raja Suran in the abyss; and four peculiar episodes in D, in the first three chapters, which are avatars of episodes occurring in other places and under other forms in R18 and A.

Some perturbations can be the result of a convergence (see above), but this only applies to a limited number of similarities and is mostly limited to vocabulary. The recourse to several models is also theoretically possible if a copyist utilizes more than one manuscript as his model—but this is practically never attested in the Malay tradition—or, if several copyists share the task of copying a text and for that purpose make use of several models (K is copied by three copyists [see the review of Ahmat Adam 2016, in *Archipel* 94, 2017]; Or. 14734 in the British Library is copied by two [Ricklefs et al. 2014, 304])—but in that case the similarity of the final text with one or the other versions would be spread in a systematic way over the various parts of the text, e.g., the first fifty pages belonging to one version and the following fifty to another.

Therefore, it seems that, in a case such as that of the SS, where some thirty manuscripts have to be taken into account, no stemma will ever be able to account for those perturbations if we don’t consider the role of mnesic stages, which precisely bypass stemmas’ rigor. I define “mnesic stage” as the case when a scribe does not use a manuscript as a model, but knows the text by heart and reproduces it out of memory. He then often alters the text and commits mistakes, and as he also knows a score of anecdotes, some similar, some different, on the history of the Malay dynasty, he eventually modifies elements (words, names, facts, anecdotes) of the narrative

following other elements that he has in mind. These mnesic stages can account for textual mutations that written transmission cannot explain.

Linehan (1947, 111) once tried to explain a scribal mistake bearing on two words by a succession of modifications (errors and corrections) carried out by successive copyists. Following that hypothesis, the process that transformed the common locution “*dewasa itu*” into the fictitious figure of “Dewa Said” necessitated eight successive modifications. Linehan’s argumentation is perfectly logical, although it is impossible to assert that things happened that way. This example illustrates the infinite complexity of the process that would try to explain the transformation of a narrative over several pages, if it is scriptural, whereas it is remarkably simple if it is mnesic. The reign of Mansur Syah (point 14 in the above comparison) is a good example. If we suppose that R18 is a faithful copy of the archetype, then the ordering of the episodes in A is disturbed (or the reverse, that makes no difference). It is almost impossible that this happened on the basis of a written text. This would mean that the copyist has read the whole manuscript, has decided to move several episodes around, and then copied them in this new sequence by jumping from one place to another in his manuscript model. This is practically unimaginable: the disordering can only have happened from a model known by heart, that is, a mnesic stage.

One cannot talk about orality in this matter, as the text is not read, recited, uttered, or heard (except internally), and that is precisely where memory functions in a totally different way from the written word. In a text (a manuscript), episodes are situated at a certain distance from each other; one has to perform a physical act, sometimes difficult, to jump from one to another by turning the pages while the eyes try to locate such-and-such passage; in the memory, on the contrary, episodes are juxtaposed, so to speak, outside any kind of spatial constraint; they are all present together and all instantly retrievable, regardless of their sequence in the narrative.

Version S (the history of Siak), as much as we know, was composed before 1855 by an individual, probably a Sukadana noble. The first part is a reworked version of the SS, a version that shows a myriad of differences, both major and minor, with the other versions. It should be possible to demonstrate that that version has been composed out of memory and not on the basis of a written text. The same process has probably occurred with an ancestor of versions A and D.

A mnesic stage produces a paraphrase of the text, in which the formulation is more or less modified, elements (long and short) may be moved from one place of the text to another and from one period to another, and foreign elements may be introduced. A mnesic stage can affect the totality of the text or a part of it only. It bypasses the logic of the stemma; if a reading is found in one manuscript, it may be known by another scribe who may introduce it into another version, any where, any time.

A mnesic stage automatically brings about the “updating” of the language and, above all, of the orthography. For that reason, the archaic character of R18, noted among others by Blagden (1925, 11, 16), shows that this version has undergone no mnesic stage, at least not long after its redaction.

Such mnesic stages are typical of an oral culture, while they are almost unimaginable in a society entirely conditioned by written culture. Malacca and Johor

were, indeed, oral societies. Texts (historical, literary, judicial, religious) did exist in Malacca. The SS evokes three books (manuscript ones): first, it is reported that Sultan Muzaffar Syah (in the 1440s) ordered the redaction of a *Kitab Undang-Undang* (R18, page 61); second, an ulema brings from Mekka, in the 1460s or 1470s, a religious treatise, the *al-Durr al-Manzum*; and third, the anecdote is well known of Sultan Ahmad, in 1511, lending a manuscript of the *Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain* to his officers.

We are at the heart of the Malay world, where a written culture, in Old Malay, then in “classical Malay,” developed during an indefinite period between the seventh and the fourteenth centuries—in any case, long before the advent of Islam and the adoption of the Arabic alphabet, and thus when memory was not the only guardian of historical, literary, technical, and other knowledge. But this absolutely does not mean that we are in a written-culture society, as Malacca would be in the 20th century. Winstedt presents the author of the SS as a man familiar with seven foreign languages, knowing a quantity of texts and legends from various origins, “versed in the esoteric knowledge of the Sufi mystics of Pasai and Malacca,” a “pundit”; and a kind of erudite representative of Malacca’s “cosmopolitan culture,” and “perhaps ... a half-caste Tamil” (1969, 159–62). Braginsky talks of “the unusual erudition of its author” and “an erudite historiographer” (2004, 189, 191). I take this term “erudition” in the sense of “local erudite,” a man who knows his own society better than anybody else (among local erudites of the Malay world one could mention as examples Abdullah Munsyi, Ranggawasita, and Hasan Mustapa), but not, certainly not, an erudite in the European sense. If we restrict ourselves to the word of the text, the author of the SS knew a great variety of stories characteristic of the cosmopolitan society of an emporium, but as regards facts and knowledge, he knew very little beyond his village.

The mnemonic dimension must have played a role, first, because manuscripts were rare; and second, because text memorization was common. In fifteenth-century Malacca, manuscripts were restricted to a small “elite.” All “texts,” written or not, that is, all that is called “Malay literature,” were listened to, not read (with the exception of religious and judicial texts, which lie outside the scope of this essay). This is well known, but is never taken into account in studies of said texts, which are dealt with as if they were fixed textual entities (complete and immutable). People, for instance, constantly talk about “the” SS, assumed to be the one *Sulalat al-Salatin* everybody knows, whereas the SS has always been known by Malays in various, often fragmentary, forms. In an oral society of this type, the role of memorization and recitation was essential—which, as a consequence, produced a great fluidity of the texts.

The preamble of versions A and D alludes to an initial written text: “*ada hikayat Melayu dibawa oleh orang dari Goa*” (“a Malay hikayat has been brought from Goa by someone,” A, p. 1). A *hikayat* could be oral as well as written, but a *hikayat* that has been brought from somewhere is a written text. The author immediately declares that he endeavored to update that text, not on the basis of other texts or any written documents, but based on the elders’ memories (*segala riwayat orang tuha-tuha dahulu kala*, “all the stories of the men of bygone days”). We thus have at the origin of the SS as we know it (or rather, in this instance, the various versions of the SS as we know them) an initial written text, a compiler, and a multifarious source: the memories and knowledge of the elders.

Recourse to collective memory is regularly recalled in the text of the SS by the phrases “*pada suatu riwayat*” (“according to one story”) and “*kata setengah riwayat*” (“some stories say”), which imply that one version of that story is not necessarily more valid than another. For instance, “... *Raja Syulan nama rajanya. Kata setengah riwayat bahawa Raja Syulan itu daripada anak cucu Raja Nusyirwan Adil*” (“Raja Syulan was the name of the king. According to some accounts he was a descendant of Raja Nusyirwan Adil,” R18, page 8); “*Pada satu riwayat, Bendaranglah yang meretangkan batu rantai yang di Singapura itu*” (“According to one tradition it was Benderang who made the boom across the river that still exists at Singapura,” R18, page 35; Brown 1970, 29); “*Adalah pada suatu riwayat Merah Silu pergi berburu ...*” (“According to one account Merah Silu went hunting,” D, page 52); and “*Pada suatu riwayat baginda itu [Raja Majapahit] daripada anak cucu Putra Semaranggrat*” (“One version has it that His Highness was a descendant of Putra Semaranggrat,” K, page 42). Other passages signal that a story is not exhaustive. For example, R18, chapter 2, tells the story of an Indian king, which ends with these words: “If the story of Raja Syulan were told in its entirety, it would be as thick as the *Hikayat Hamzah*”; and chapter 4 ends with: “The relation of the war between Singapura and Jawa is extremely lengthy; if it were told in detail, listeners would get bored; this is why we shorten it: prolixity does not appeal to the wise” (Abdul Rahman’s edition, 77, 95).

The source of the text is the elders’ memory, a fragmentary and sometimes self-contradictory memory, not a fixed, established oral tradition. The SS is thus a text lacking any authorial authority. The scribes and copyists who introduced significant variants made it according to their knowledge of various versions of existing anecdotes or even new anecdotes, which have every reason to be regarded as as pertinent and legitimate as the ones belonging to the original text.

It is to that recourse to memory that the text acquired its fluidity, its mobility (*mouvance*) that we observe constantly when shifting from one version to the next. The differences among the versions are the result of various causes, one of which is the existence of these diverse *riwayat*: according to R18, the Indian king who goes on an expedition against the Malay Peninsula is Raja Syulan, king of Nagapatam and founder of Bija Nagara; but according to A, it is Raja Suran, that is, the king of another country and another generation. There are two versions of the same story and nothing indicates that one is superior to the other.

In the Malay world, the existence of an oral tradition concomitantly with a written one is something everyone knows about but which is systematically ignored in philological studies. Oral traditions (e.g., epic, historical) have existed throughout the Malay world until a very recent date; their functions and functioning are varied but also present many common features. Literature on that topic is enormous, but comparative studies and syntheses are very poor, if not to say nonexistent. Tenas Effendy (1989, 267) has contributed a precise testimony in the Malay field for a very recent period:

Perhaps there are people who doubt the elder people’s faculty of memorizing *syair* and other texts. But if they come to Riau, there still are to this day old people who know by heart folk stories that are recited in rhythmic prose like *Nyanyi Panjang*, *Kobat*, and *Kayat*. *Nyanyi Panjang* for instance is a piece of the oral literature of the Petalangan people which is recited during one to seven

nights in a row. That story, made up of formulaic and rhythmic prose, they know by heart. I once recorded it, then I transcribed it just as it was. It transpired that the story covered more than 300 pages. It is admirable that not a small number of old people know dozens of stories of the *Nyanyi Panjang* type and can recite them as fluently as people read. So, their capacity of memorizing is obvious, even more so because they learned them by listening only: those stories are not written; they are transmitted orally from one generation to the next.

An evidence of historical memory in Malacca is the fact that the first Portuguese authors who wrote about that city immediately after the victory of 1511, Afonso de Albuquerque and Tomé Pires (see: Albuquerque 1875; Pires 1944; Pintado 1993), could reconstruct a part of the local history, back to the period preceding the creation of the city (e.g., the story of Raja Suran in the kingdom of the abyss, or the three princes of Bukit Seguntang), thanks to stories collected from inhabitants of the city. Their information, sometimes remarkably precise, is in some cases identical to that of the SS and in other cases more authentic; this proves that the collective memory of those citizens went back more than one century.

In the frame of his study of the signification of the SS, Wolters (1970, 222) recorded the opinion of a specialist of Borneo: “Mr. Tom Harrisson tells the author that Iban family memories, even when they extend back to time as much as three hundred years, can be regarded as reliable in matters of concern to the families.” More recent authors have commented in more detail upon the historical memory in various societies of Borneo. Bernard Sellato (1984/1993), talking about ethnic groups from the center of the island, has established the increased role of historical memory along with sedentarization: if the collective memory of small nomad groups does not exceed one century, that of sedentarized groups can be reliable up to two and a half centuries. And Mika Okushima (2008), about the Kayanic people, talks of genealogies of chiefs and nobles that extend to forty generations.

Mnesic stages, it has been said, can be partial. Most often, it seems, the text of the SS was transmitted scripturally, one manuscript being the copy of another. We know that this process was not homogenous: some scribes strove to reproduce their model faithfully; although they introduced errors and a certain amount of small variations in formulation as well as orthographic idiosyncrasies (the “noise” of the transmission), they did not modify it deliberately in any significant way. Others, on the contrary, performed additions, subtractions, and permutations, or updated the text. These interventions represented partial mnesic stages, which created sudden discontinuities in the transmission of the text, which are located at the intersections of the stemma’s branches.

There are obvious examples of such partial mnesic stages. A Samad Ahmad chose to edit a manuscript (DBP 86), the first eight pages or so of which are missing; he restored the relevant passage by transcribing another manuscript (DBP 86A). Facing the same situation, a scribe of yore would have restored them from his memory. That is exactly what the R68 copyist did: Winstedt has shown that this manuscript has a singular preamble, “possibly due to a village copyist having to compose something in place of a missing page” (“The Preface,” 1998, 60). Indeed, the elements of the original preamble are reproduced in a distorted and confused way.

Another example in relation to the SS, that of a very short text necessitating a particular effort of memory, concerns the *ciri* as it was still in use in Perak in the nineteenth century. That version of the *ciri* was a short text, totally unintelligible, which was inscribed on a sheet of paper regarded as a royal treasure. When the sheet disappeared, the text was restored, long after, by a man supposed to know it by heart (Maxwell 1881, 2).

Regarding the style of text, it would be necessary to carry out a linguistic analysis of the various versions in order to locate them in time and space. The superficial impression is that A is more modern than R18, and D even more modern.

Soon after the publication of R18 by Winstedt (1938), Emeis (1949) compared Winstedt's and Shellabear's editions of one passage at the beginning of the text and concluded, in contradiction of Winstedt's opinion, that the second was superior to the first from the point of view of style. Superior in the sense of more in conformity with the criteria of "classical Malay" as known from other texts of the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries. The comparison is, indeed, convincing. In the very short passage quoted (about one page in Abdul Rahman's edition), Shellabear's text (i.e., the text of A or D, which are identical here with minute differences and a small lacuna in Emeis, probably caused by a "*saut du même au même*") is amended, sentence by sentence, to make it more in line with the classical model. Emeis bluntly states that the language of R18 is "sloppy" (*slordig*, p. 469; the word is used four times). This type of judgment is, in fact, questionable, because our knowledge of the evolution of written Malay between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries is deficient, so that all judgments on style are eminently intuitive—without mentioning that they systematically come from foreign scholars. To qualify R18's language as sloppy is risky, but it is clear that in the relevant passage, the text of AD (recensions II-III) represents an effort to improve the text of R18, according to contemporary criteria. This undertaking is comparable to the work accomplished by Raja Ali Haji in the 1860s, when he revised the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* written by his father (Matheson 1971; Matheson Hooker 1991); or that of a clerk at the General Secretariat in Batavia, in the early nineteenth century, editing ancient fables for publication, as observed by P. Voorhoeve: "The copyist at the General Secretariat who made the revised version followed his original sentence by sentence, but in almost every sentence he made some grammatical correction or showed off his literary taste and his knowledge of foreign words. The whole text of the "Bunga Rampai" was embellished by him in this manner" (1964, 265).

The text of recension III as it is recorded in D and W is more prolix than RAK; it gives sometimes the feeling of being quite modern and even novelistic in style. The whole Palembang episode is replete with additions, errors (e.g., the name of Tajitram Syah), and literary flourishes, as if it were retold by a voluble storyteller, which is typical of a mnemonic stage. Some passages look anachronistic from a linguistic or cultural point of view, for instance, the episode of Sri Tri Buana wishing to marry the daughter of Demang Lebar Daun but not daring to tell the father sounds romantic; Raja Suran telling his minister to get prepared to move, adds: "*dan tafahus segala yang sakit dan yang kekurangan makanan*" ("and take care of those who are ill or need food"); Sri Tri Buana decides to leave Palembang, "*kerana Palembang baginda tiada berkenan*" ("because he disliked the place," 28); a Bintan minister tells the queen: "*adalah pada pendapat hamba*" ("in my opinion," 30); and the same minister conveys to King Sri Tri

Buana the queen's invitation: "*tuanku dipersilakan paduka bonda masuk ke negeri, itu pun jikalau ada dengan tulus ikhlas duli tuanku*" ("Your Highness is invited by the queen to enter the country, well, if you wish," 30).

These considerations on the language and style of versions D and W, however, do not concern the antiquity of recension III, to which they belong. There is no reason to think that recensions II and III are younger, or much younger, than recension I. The three recensions may have the same degree of authenticity (identity with the original) up to the execution of Tun Ali Hati. Only the versions of II and III that reached us have been modernized in their style to some degree afterwards. One mnemonic stage or one prolix scribe is enough to metamorphose the idiom and style of a text. For that reason, the difference in idiom between R18 and D is not a matter of chronology (R18 more ancient than D) but of linguistic register (R18 in classical style, D more idiomatic).

Stemma of the *Sulalat al-Salatin*

The opposition between R18 and a common ancestor of AKLDW implies a two-branch stemma. This in itself may look somewhat dismaying because of the criticism put forth by the French medievalist Joseph Bédier in a famous study. He observed that the vast majority of editions of French Middle Ages literary texts offered two-branch stemmas: "In the philological flora there are trees of one species only: the trunk always divides into two main branches and two only [...] One bifid tree has nothing strange, but a grove of bifid trees, a wood, a forest?" (1970, 11–12). That is, indeed, rather improbable, because it would mean that the original text produced two copies, each of which produced no more than two copies, etc. In the case of the SS, however, a bifid stemma is not overly strange, considering the paucity of known versions.

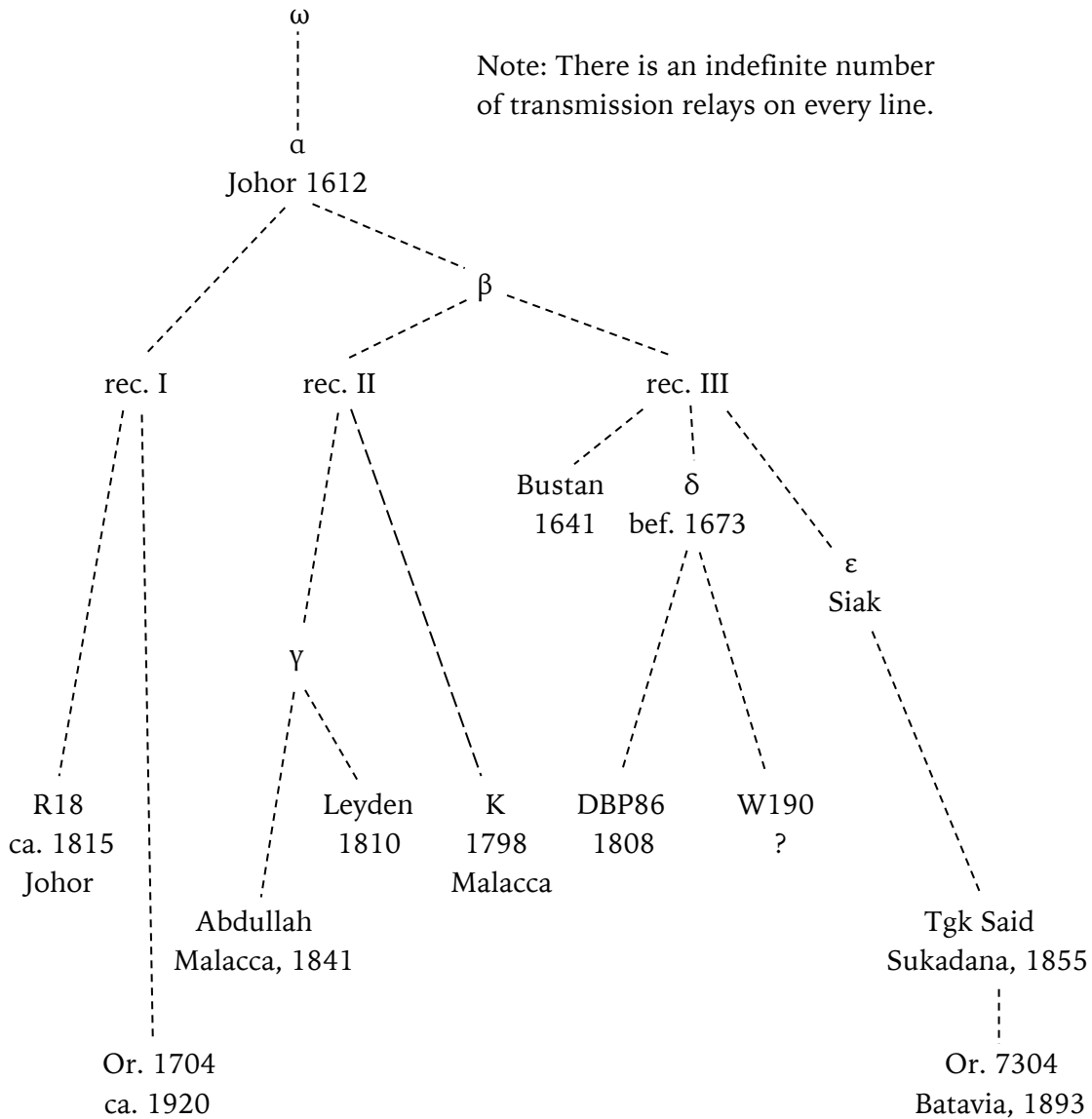
On the second branch, the opposition between AKL and DW leads to a new partition (recensions II and III). The *Bustan* belongs to recension III. Within recension II, AL and K constitute two distinct families. K is either (most often) in agreement with A (recension II) or with D (recension III), or again isolated. Summing up, I propose the stemma on the following page.

It is in β , or between α and β , that an ancestor of II-III gets additions to the *mukadimah*, as well as a great number of elements peculiar to these two recensions, and loses its final section.

There are a few other manuscripts that we know belong to recensions II or III, but we cannot place them precisely on the stemma as long as they have not been analysed.

A few toponyms have been inscribed on the stemma. It is actually possible that the three recensions have a regional character: Johor, Malacca, and Riau, for instance. This question could perhaps be solved by a linguistic analysis of each of them. Brown (1970: xiii-xiv) has observed several similarities between the language of R18 and the northeast (Kelantan-Terengganu) variety of Malay, and he suggested that the author or a copyist originated from that region. We should not conclude from this, as does Abdul Rahman in the introduction to his edition (1998), that Tun Bambang is the author (because he was a man from Patani), but perhaps we can see the indication

that the text was composed, or rephrased, by a man from Pahang, maybe in Pahang itself.



A few dates have been inscribed on the stemma, too; they come from the texts themselves. It would be most desirable to date the splitting points represented by the nodes of the stemma. It may be possible to build hypotheses on the emergence of anecdotes regarding one kingdom or another; there are also in the text a few allusions to contemporary situations, but contemporary with what? For instance, at the end of the relation of the fall of Malacca, it is said that the Portuguese “turned the royal demesne into a fort; which fort is here to this day” (Brown 1970, 164). The said fort, several times modified, was finally blown up by Lieutenant William Farquhar in 1807, during the English rule (Abdullah has given a vivid relation of the event), but the

allusion in the *SS* is most probably not related to such a late period. Rather, “to this day” probably means some time during the Portuguese rule, that is, before 1641.

When a stemma like this one accounts for three recensions, an element of the text (a reading, an episode) is supposed to be authentic if it figures identically in two versions located on independent branches. For instance, when recensions I and III agree against II, we may conclude with some certainty that they represent the original version, from which recension II stepped away. The case of Hang Tuah being guilty or slandered regarding an affair, as discussed earlier, falls into that category because R18 and D are opposed to AKL: he is guilty in I and III, whereas he the innocent victim of slander in II. What could be the original version of that episode? Did recension II exonerate him of a crime he had committed (in the original version of the *SS*), or did recensions I and III charge him with a crime he did not commit? It is impossible to know it with certainty, but the stemma pleads for the first hypothesis and this goes in the sense of the construction of Hang Tuah’s legend, which resulted in the famous eponymous *hikayat*. If such is the case, recension I has kept the original version, in conformity with its reputation of ancient version, and it is interesting to see that the “long” recension (III) is more faithful to the original than the “short” one (II). But it happens that, in the same episode, recension III is the only version in which the rebel and rival of Hang Tuah in the famous duel is Hang Jebat, not Hang Kasturi. That twist seems to contradict the previous conclusion and raises a new question: why prefer one rebel to another? The rebel is also Hang Jebat in the *Hikayat Hang Tuah* and the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*. The *Tuhfat* is at least one century younger than recension III (the first version of the *Tuhfat* dates from 1866; recension III is anterior to 1673) and the *Hikayat Hang Tuah* is younger as well. It is thus those two texts (*Tuhfat* and *Hikayat*) that are inspired from recension III, not the reverse. This is in accordance with the fact that the version of the *SS* known in Riau in the nineteenth century (where the *Tuhfat* was written) was recension III, and this again is reinforced by the evidence that out of thirty-one manuscripts of the *SS*, half belong to recension III. About the successive innovations that produced the different versions of the duel, it should be noted that S, which I believe to be the result of a mnemonic stage, has an invention with a novelistic tinge: Hang Tuah is slandered by Hang Jebat himself (S, 94).

Conclusion

The above stemma is not surprising in itself, but it illustrates some findings that are different from the commonplaces accepted until now with regard to the three recensions. I will sum up the main ones.

R18 is an incomplete version, it does not date from 1535, it is not the “*hikayat dari Goa*,” and it is not at the origin of A and D. R18 stems from the 1612 version, like the other two recensions. Blagden, the first editor of (a part of) R18, observed “the archaic spelling which suggests the seventeenth century rather than the nineteenth” of the totality of the text (1925, 11). This archaic spelling precludes the intervention of any mnemonic stage in the transmission of R18 (except immediately after its redaction), as it supposes a high degree of fidelity in the act of successive copies; it is thus an indication of antiquity and entails that the text has undergone no major mutation. Therefore, even though several of Winstedt’s assessments about the nature of that

manuscript have to be amended, yet we are led to regard R18 as an ancient version. This does not mean that R18 represents faithfully the initial version of the SS. Certain passages (e.g., Hang Tuah's exile; the final part after the end of recension II) seem to conform to the original, but others (e.g., Iskandar Zulkarnain is not at the origin of the Malay dynasty, the latter stems from a younger brother; the alliance with the princess of the abyss has no follow up) raise doubts about the originality of this version.

A is not a short version but a truncated one. An ancestor of recensions II and III lost its end section after the episode of Tun Ali Hati's execution, around 1515. Recension II remained in that condition (in the witnesses we know), while recension III created a new ending up to 1612. As for recension I, it lost its own end section after an event dated 1536 (unless it was only written up to that point), but the section between ca. 1515 and 1536 (between the ending of recension I and its own) probably conforms to the original version.

Roolvink's theory that recensions II and III ("short" and "long") could be the result of a revision conducted in Riau in the middle of the eighteenth century is not supported by any evidence. The fact that recension III ends precisely in 1612 tends to prove the contrary; in any case, that recension is anterior to 1673 and even probably anterior to 1640.

Teuku Iskandar (1995, 260) asserts that recension II originates from recension III. Roolvink (1967, 311) is of the reverse opinion. The comparisons above show that in reality these two recensions are independent from each other: neither derives from the other.

The stemma can be of some use to reconstruct the archetype of a recension. A critical edition of the three recensions together would be illegible, but a critical edition of each of the three recensions with a synoptic chart of their essential differences would be most useful. Shellabear's edition ought to be definitively put away in the archives of the philological history of the text and never be used any more. There are still many manuscripts that should be scrutinized, but there is no need to edit them. What we have now are academic or pseudo-academic editions replete with lengthy and cryptic lists of variants that are of no use to the average reader. A good, simple, and reliable edition of one version, together with the commentary necessary to its comprehension, intended for a wide audience, especially an Indonesian and Malay one, would be infinitely more profitable.

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Abbreviations

Bijdragen : *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde*

JMBRAS : *Journal of the Malayan/Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*

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