

# Identification of Damage to Ancient Manuscripts at Bandar Cimanuk Indramayu Museum as an Effort to Formulate Manuscript Preservation Strategies

Ute Lies Siti Khadijah<sup>1</sup>, Lutfi Khoerunnisa<sup>2</sup>, Edwin Rizal<sup>3</sup>, Kusnandar<sup>4</sup>, Nurmaya Prahatmaja<sup>5</sup>

{Ute.lies@unpad.ac.id<sup>1</sup>, Lutfi12002@mail.unpad.ac.id<sup>2</sup>, Edwin.rizal@unpad.ac.id<sup>3</sup>, kusnandar@unpad.ac.id<sup>4</sup>, nurmaya.prahatmaja@unpad.ac.id<sup>5</sup>}

Universitas Padjajaran<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

**Abstract.** One of the relics that are considered as tangible results of the written evidence that still exists is the manuscript. The text contains a document of thoughts, feelings, and knowledge of a nation that produces the text itself. Therefore, the text is also a cultural product that can relatively provide information about the perspectives, attitudes, and behavior of a nation that lived in its day. Thus, Herman Soemantri (1979: 1) says that ancient manuscripts are a source of knowledge that can support our efforts in studying, knowing, understanding, and then presenting the development of the nation's culture. Most ancient manuscripts are kept in palaces, royal families, communities, libraries and museums. This study uses a qualitative descriptive methodology by describing various facts found in the field. The results of this study describe the various conditions of the ancient manuscripts in Bandar Cimanuk Museum. This research is expected to provide an overview of what can be done to preserve ancient manuscripts in Bandar Cimanuk Museum.

**Keywords:** Ancient Manuscripts; Manuscript Identification; Bandar Cimanuk Museum

## 1 Introduction

An ancient manuscript is one of the ancestral relics that are written telling about the culture, habits, and customs of a people in an area and even a nation. Containing the thoughts and feelings of the people written in the past, ancient manuscripts have high historical value. "Ancient manuscripts are handwritten containing information about the national culture of important value for national culture, history, and science" [1]. In the ancient texts, there are noble values conveyed by ancestors from generation to generation, from one generation to the next so that the values to be conveyed will remain eternal. Every region in Indonesia has ancient manuscript documents including those in Indramayu, West Java. Until now, the number of ancient manuscripts found in Indramayu, West Java is about 200 pieces and the manuscripts are stored in various places, and one of them is stored in Bandar Cimanuk Museum, Indramayu. Bandar Cimanuk Museum is a historical museum located in Indramayu

district. The museum, which was established in 2015 at the initiative of culture lovers who are members of the Indramayu Historia Community Foundation and in synergy with the Indramayu Regency government, is one of the museums that stores heritage in the form of ancient manuscripts of various ages. The materials used as writing instruments for ancient manuscripts are divided into several types, including palm leaves, daluang, erofah paper, and lined paper. The languages and scripts presented in ancient manuscripts that can be found at the Bandar Cimanuk Museum, Indramayu include Arabic, Old Javanese, and Chinese scripts. With the ancient manuscripts, the community, especially the next generation, can find out the various relics and history that their ancestors went through. The content of ancient manuscripts in Indonesia is quite varied. In general, the content contained in ancient manuscripts includes various aspects contained in human life such as social, political, economic, religious, cultural, language and literary issues.

The existence of cultural variations in the ancient manuscripts is influenced by various things, namely the cultural context in each region, the purpose of making the manuscript, and the spirit at the time the ancient manuscript was made. Some of the ancient manuscripts are still kept individually or entrusted to people who are considered elders by the community. There are still many people who are taboo and are reluctant to open their ancient manuscripts because they are considered sacred. Unfortunately, many people do not know how to properly care for ancient manuscripts. In an interview with the museum administrator, the executor of the Museum and Antiquities of the Indramayu Regency Culture and Tourism Office, Suparto Agustinus said that many ancient manuscripts were in poor condition due to maintenance and storage factors. "Ancient manuscripts are cultural heritage and are rare items, so their treatment of course requires special treatment so that they can still be used as literature studies and can be preserved for future generations"[2] (Rahman 2019). Departing from these issues, this study aims to identify the damage to ancient manuscripts contained in the Bandar Cimanuk Museum. This is expected to be a literature review for further research as an effort to formulate a strategy for preserving these manuscripts.

## **2 Methodology**

The research design used in this study is a qualitative research with a descriptive approach. This research method is used to get a clearer picture of the damage to ancient manuscripts at Bandar Cimanuk Museum. According to Moleong (2010: 132) the research subject is an informant, which means people in the research setting are used to provide information about the situation and condition of the research setting or in other words the research subject is the person who is observed as the research target [4]. As for determining the number or number of informants in a study, purposive techniques are usually used. While the understanding of the object of research is the thing or aspect that becomes the point of attention of a study. The point of interest is in the form of substance or material that is researched or the problem is solved using the relevant theories. The subjects of this study were Mr. Tarka Sutarahardja, Mr. Nang Sadewo, and Mr. Dartin Yudha, as administrators of Bandar Cimanuk Museum, Indramayu, while the object of this research was a collection of 7 ancient Arabic Pegon and Javanese manuscripts at Bandar Cimanuk Museum. The data was taken through observation and interviews with resource persons which were then analyzed in 3 stages; reduction, data modeling, verification.

### **3 Results and Discussion**

#### **3.1 Identification of Damage to 7 Ancient Manuscripts at the Bandar Cimanuk Museum**

From the results of observations and interviews conducted by researchers with resource persons Mr. Nang Sadewo, as the head of Bandar Cimanuk Museum, Indramayu and Mr. Tarka Sutaraharja as collectors of ancient manuscripts at Bandar Cimanuk Museum, Indramayu on October 6, 2019 and January 22, 2020, that the manuscripts The ancient manuscripts in Indramayu are stored in two places, namely in Bandar Cimanuk Museum and in the house of the owner of the manuscript. The collection of ancient manuscripts in Bandar Cimanuk Museum, Indramayu is a donation from Mr. Tarka Sutaraharja and the legacy of Sheikh Abdurahman's family. In addition to ancient manuscripts, this museum has other collections, namely ancient coins, working tools of the ancient Indramayu people, replicas of Wiralodra's heirlooms. The manuscripts contained in Bandar Cimanuk Museum, Indramayu, until today have 4 types, namely palm leaves, daluang, erofah paper, and lined paper. The difference in the media used marks the time span of the discovery of the written media. In this study, there are 7 ancient manuscripts that are the focus.

#### **3.2 Arabic Grammar Script**

This manuscript explains Arabic grammar (Nahwu Science and Sharf Science) and tells of certain tattoos or talismans in the form of dhikr and lafadz Allah. This manuscript was first discovered in 2018 by Nang Sadewo, chairman of the Indramayu Historia Foundation and assisted by the Javanese Script Studio in a prayer room in the Paoman area, Indramayu. This manuscript is one of the relics of Sheikh Abdulmanan, the Thoriqoh Qodhoriyah Naqhsabandiyah scholar in Indramayu. The manuscript was written using the Arabic Pegon script, in the range of 1700 to 1,800 AD (18th century). The form of this manuscript is rectangular, measuring 26 cm x 19 cm, the number of pages is 368 pages, and it is made of dull white daluang paper. The physical condition of this manuscript is not good, it is not well maintained, the front and back covers are complete but the condition is about 50% damaged, there are some torn and perforated pages, and there are also some unreadable pages. The text in this manuscript is written in black ink and almost everything looks faded.

#### **3.3 Various Kinds of Prayers**

This manuscript contains various kinds of prayers, including a prayer to be given a light heart, a prayer to be liked by someone, and a prayer to be able to defeat the enemy. This manuscript is a relic of Sheikh Abdulmanan, one of the Thoriqoh Qodhoriyah Naqhsabandiyah scholars in Indramayu. This manuscript was written in the range of 1700 to 1,800 AD (18th century), which was written using the Arabic Pegon script. This manuscript was first discovered in 2018 by Nang Sadewo, chairman of the Indramayu Historia Foundation, assisted by the Javanese Script Studio, in a prayer room in the Paoman area, Indramayu. The shape of this manuscript is rectangular with a size of 18 cm x 25 cm, the number of pages is 211 pages, and made of dull white daluang paper. The physical condition of this manuscript is not good, it is not well maintained, the front and back covers are missing, some pages are torn and have holes, the edges of the pages are not neat and some pages cannot be read clearly. In this manuscript there is an image of a dragon, the font size is not the same

and the text in this manuscript is written using black ink and red ink, but in some parts of this text the ink looks faded.

#### **3.4 Hashiyah al-Mihī al-Shībīnī ‘alā Sharḥ al-Ramlī li sittīna mas’alah min al-furūdh al-wājibat**

This manuscript contains an explanation of 60 religious problems which are answered based on the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad and information from scholars, including the hadith regarding the virtues of studying and the obligation to study Islamic law such as monotheism, fiqh, and the Qur'an. This manuscript is one of the relics of Sheikh Abdulmanan, the Thoriqoh Qodhoriyah Naqhsabandiyah scholar in Indramayu. The manuscript was written in 1563-1564 AD and was written using the Arabic Pegon script and was first discovered in 2018 by Nang Sadewo, chairman of the Indramayu Historia Foundation and assisted by the Javanese Script Studio, in a prayer room in the Paoman area, Indramayu. This manuscript is rectangular, measuring 26 cm x 19 cm, the cover is made of bark, the number of pages is 392 pages, and it is made of dull white erofah paper. The physical condition of this manuscript is good, well maintained, the front cover and back cover are complete, but some pages are torn, there are blank pages, all pages can be read properly. The text in this manuscript is written in black ink and some of the text is written in red ink.

#### **3.5 Tashrīf al-Zanjān**

The Tashrīf al-Zanjānī manuscript explains the Arabic grammar (Science Sharf and Nahwu) written by Abdul Wahab bin Ibrahim al-Zanjānī around 1257 AD. This manuscript was written using the Arabic Pegon script and was first discovered in 2018 in a prayer room in the Paoman area, Indramayu by Nang Sadewo, chairman of the Indramayu Historia Foundation and assisted by the Javanese Script Studio. This manuscript is rectangular, measuring 26 cm x 22 cm, the cover is made of bark, the number of pages is 218 pages, and is made of dull white erofah paper. The physical condition of this manuscript is not good, it is not well maintained, the front and back covers are complete but damaged about 40%, some of the pages at the beginning and at the end of this manuscript are torn, all pages can be read, but there are some blank pages. The text in this manuscript is written using black and red ink, in some text the ink appears faded, but still legible, besides that there are several pages whose text is written in a diagonal position.

#### **3.6 Mughnī al-muḥtāj ilā ma'rifati ma'ānī alfādzi al-minhāj**

The Mughnī al-muḥtāj ilā ma'rifati ma'ānī alfādzi alminhāj manuscript explains the contents of the Matan Minhāj al-Thālibīn book which is about the laws of Islamic jurisprudence consisting of prayer, law and buying and selling procedures, inheritance law, divorce, child custody, and so on. This manuscript is one of the manuscripts left by Sheikh Abdulmanan, the Thoriqoh Qodhoriyah Naqhsabandiyah scholar in Indramayu. This manuscript, which was written in 676 AD, was written using the Arabic Pegon script and was first discovered in 2018 by Nang Sadewo, chairman of the Indramayu Historia Foundation and assisted by the Javanese Script Studio, in a prayer room in the Paoman area, Indramayu. This manuscript is rectangular, measuring 17 cm x 22 cm, the cover is made of bark, the number of pages is 134 pages, and is made of dull white erofah paper. The physical condition of this manuscript is not good, it is not well maintained, the front and back covers are complete but

some parts are torn, the sides of the manuscript are also not neat and torn, the complete number of pages has several blank pages, but all the manuscripts can be read properly. The text in this manuscript is written using black and red ink, but in some texts the ink used looks faded.

### **3.7 Bratayudha Manuscript (War of Jaya Binangun)**

This manuscript tells about the war of Pramakawi and Jaya Binangun, which was copied by Surlaksana in 1900 AD or 1319 H. At first, this Ki Gonda manuscript belonged to Ki Mustofa (puppet puppeteer), then bequeathed to Dalang Sumyuk, 1900 and then bequeathed again to Dalang Gonda . This manuscript is from Dadap Lama Village, Kab. Indramayu and written using Javanese script (kawi). This manuscript is rectangular, measuring 21.3 cm x 17.7 cm, totaling 416 pages, and made of dull white erofah paper. The physical condition of the manuscript is not good because it is weathered, not maintained, there are no front and back covers, the edges of the manuscript are not neat and some are torn, there are several blank pages and there are also some texts that cannot be read clearly. The text in this manuscript is written using black ink and red ink, and in some parts of the text the ink appears faded.

### **3.8 Sattariyah Manuscript**

The Sattariyah manuscript contains the teachings of monotheism and its explanations as well as prayers that are said to ward off reinforcements and to avoid the devil's disturbance. Apart from that, this text also explains about the spirit of Idhafi, the early Jauhar, and the kalepasan and the waḥdatul wujūd. This manuscript also explains how the concept of human creation comes from the Prophet Muhammad's nr and the biological creation of the human body. The Sattariyah manuscript is a legacy from Sheikh Abdulmanan, one of the Thoriqoh Qodhoriyah Naqhsabandiyah scholars in Indramayu. Manuscripts made in the range of 1700 to 1,800 AD (18th century), were written using the Arabic Pegon script. Nang Sadewo (chairman of the Indramayu Historia Foundation) and the Javanese Literacy Studio, found this manuscript in a prayer room in the Paoman area, Indramayu in 2018. The shape of this manuscript is rectangular, measuring 17 cm x 22 cm, the number of pages is 258 pages, and made dull white erofah paper. The physical condition of this manuscript is classified as poor, not well maintained, does not have a front cover and back cover, the edges of this manuscript still look neat, but there are some parts of the manuscript that have holes so that it cannot be read clearly. On some pages there are pictures or diagrams. The text in this manuscript is written using black ink and red ink, but in some texts the ink appears faded, but can still be read.

## **4 Conclusions**

An ancient manuscript is one of the ancestral heritage that is written telling about the culture, habits, and customs of a people in an area and even a nation that has a high historical value. Therefore, its treatment certainly requires special treatment so that it can still be used as a literature review and can be preserved for future generations. Bandar Cimanuk Museum as one of the museums that has a collection of ancient manuscripts has more responsibility in maintaining and preserving ancient manuscripts. With all the limitations that become the problems, many ancient manuscripts are damaged. 6 of the 7 ancient manuscripts studied in

this study were physically damaged. As an alternative, the researcher suggests to the management of Bandar Cimanuk Museum to carry out conservation, preservation, reproduction, and even digitization activities. This is done as an effort to preserve ancient manuscripts.

### **References**

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