

ISLAMIC MANUSCRIPT CULTURE AND TRANSREGIONAL MUSLIM INTELLECTUAL NETWORKS IN MINDANAO AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

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Abstract: This article addresses a significant gap in the historiography of Islam in Mindanao, southern Philippines, by examining the intellectual and religious networks that shaped Muslim scholarly traditions in the region during the nineteenth century. Although Islamic institutions and practices had long been established in Mindanao, the extent of their intellectual connections with broader Muslim scholarly circles has remained insufficiently explored. The present study focuses on a recently identified corpus of Islamic manuscripts discovered in the Mindanao region by scholars such as Annabel Teh Gallop, Oman Fathurahman, and Kawashima Midori. These manuscripts once belonged to a prominent Maranao scholar, Shaykh Aleem Ulomuddin Said, and constitute an important body of primary sources for understanding the intellectual history of Islam in the region. The collection comprises texts written in Malay, Arabic, and Maranao and encompasses a wide range of Islamic disciplines, including Qur'ānic studies, ḥadīth, tafsīr, Sufism (taṣawwuf), ritual prayer, amulets (ajimat), theology and creed (‘aqīdah), as well as Arabic morphology.

Employing a qualitative research design combined with philological analysis of the manuscript materials, this study investigates the intellectual content and transmission patterns reflected in these texts. The findings demonstrate that the manuscripts reveal extensive scholarly linkages between Muslim communities in Mindanao and other centres of Islamic learning within the Malay world, particularly Aceh, Banten, Cirebon, and Minangkabau. Furthermore, the materials indicate connections with the wider Islamic intellectual sphere in the Middle East, including Mecca, Medina, and Yemen, mediated in part through the transregional Sufi network of the Shaṭṭāriyah order. These connections contributed to the circulation of religious knowledge and played a crucial role in shaping Islamic intellectual traditions in Mindanao well into the nineteenth century.

Keywords: Mindanao; Islamic manuscripts; Muslim intellectual networks; Shaṭṭāriyah; Malay world; nineteenth-century Islamic scholarship.

Introduction

Islamic studies in Southeast Asia have expanded significantly in recent decades, particularly in the field of philology and manuscript studies. Within the broader regional context, Southeast Asia represents a strategic area for the historical diffusion and development of Islam among diverse local communities. Several factors explain the region's importance in the spread of Islam. First, research by Anthony H. Johns demonstrates that societies across the Southeast Asian archipelago maintained deeply rooted indigenous traditions and ritual practices, which facilitated the gradual internalisation of Islamic teachings within existing cultural frameworks (Johns, 1975a). Second, the region historically functioned as a crucial node along maritime trade routes connecting multiple parts of the world,

including the Silk Road trading networks (Andaya, 2021; McKinnon, 2014; Ricci, 2010; Tibbetts, 1957). Consequently, each society in Southeast Asia developed distinctive Islamic characteristics shaped by local cultural contexts. The resulting forms of Islam differ from those in the Middle East, as Islamic teachings in Southeast Asia have undergone processes of cultural accommodation and localisation. Several scholars (Houben, 2003a; Johns, 1975b; Reid, 1993) argue that Muslim communities have existed in the region since the early centuries of Islam, although the institutionalisation of Islamic polities and communities is often traced to northern Sumatra around the thirteenth century (Alatas, 1985; Clark, 1995; Gallop et al., 2015). From that period onward, the spread of Islam intensified and can be traced through historical artefacts such as literature, customary traditions, and manuscripts, while trade activities, political alliances, and military encounters also contributed to its expansion (Reid, 1993).

The development of Islam in Southeast Asia was closely connected to the wider Islamic world, particularly the Middle East. As noted by Azyumardi Azra, Islamic intellectual traditions in regions such as Java were deeply linked to scholarly centres in the Middle East (Azra, 2015). This connection suggests that the evolution of Islam in Southeast Asia cannot be separated from intellectual exchanges with the Arab world. Nevertheless, Mona Abaza argues that relations between these regions experienced certain discontinuities, especially regarding formal institutional structures (Abaza, 2007). In contrast, Vincent J. H. Houben emphasises that the two regions remained intellectually connected through the use of Arabic as the principal medium for transmitting and translating classical Islamic texts (Houben, 2003b). Scholars further highlight that cosmopolitan Muslim intellectual networks were largely centred in the Haramain—namely Mecca and Medina—as well as in Hadhramaut in Yemen (Alatas, 1997; Azra, 2015;

Freitag, 1999). Evidence of these connections can be found in the discovery of tombs belonging to descendants of Hadhrami migrants throughout Southeast Asia (Waterson, 2009). Since at least the seventeenth century, these regions have played a major role in shaping Islamic intellectual and cultural patterns across Southeast Asian Muslim societies.

Educational mobility to the Haramain and Hadhramaut produced generations of Southeast Asian Muslim scholars who later became influential religious authorities in their home regions. Some Javanese scholars, for example, authored numerous works in fields such as Sufism, Islamic jurisprudence, theology, Qur'ānic exegesis, and ḥadīth studies. These texts were written in both Arabic and local languages, including Jawi Malay (Riddell, 1997, 2001). Surviving manuscripts demonstrate that these works significantly influenced the formation and development of Islamic intellectual traditions throughout Southeast Asia. According to Michael Feener, the scholarly credentials of Southeast Asian Muslim scholars were even recognised in the Middle East. One example appears in the Yemeni manuscript *Al-Nafas al-Yamānī*, a biographical dictionary authored by the Arab scholar 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Sulaymān al-Ahdal (d. 1250 H./1835 CE), which includes the biography of the Sumatran scholar Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani. Such documentation demonstrates the existence of transregional intellectual networks linking scholars in Sumatra and the Arabian Peninsula during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Feener, 2015).

Literary transmission also played an important role in sustaining these networks. Ronit Ricci highlights how religious knowledge circulated through multilingual literary traditions. Her study of the text *Buku Seribu Pertanyaan* ("Book of a Thousand Questions") traces its transmission from Arabic into Tamil, Javanese, and Malay versions, illustrating how Islamic ideas travelled across linguistic and cultural boundaries (Ricci, 2009). Such translation processes

indicate that Islam in Southeast Asia developed into a civilisational sphere characterised by dynamic exchanges of knowledge across space and time. The translation of Arabic manuscripts into local languages often reflected specific cultural contexts, resulting in diverse textual traditions across the region. One of the most visible outcomes of these processes was the widespread adaptation of Arabic script for writing various Austronesian languages, including Malay, Acehnese, Gayo, Minangkabau, Sundanese, Javanese, Bugis-Makassar, Gorontalo, Ternate, Buton, Tausug (Sulu), Maranao, Iranun, and Maguindanao.

Among the Maranao people of Mindanao in the southern Philippines, Arabic-script manuscripts played a particularly important role in shaping socio-religious life. These manuscripts became part of broader struggles to maintain Muslim identity within a predominantly non-Muslim national context and were closely linked to cultural and political developments in the region. Certain technical terms appearing in Maranao manuscript traditions illustrate this linguistic hybridity. For instance, terms such as *stem Iranon*, *stem Arabic*, and *send* refer to specific writing traditions in Arabic script used within Maranao literature. According to Midori Kawashima and colleagues, *stem Iranon* and *stem Arabic* denote forms of Arabic script commonly used in regional documents, while *send* refers specifically to Maranao literary texts written using Arabic characters (Kawashima et al., 2011, p. 2).

Given the complexity of these textual traditions, philological methods are essential for reconstructing historical contexts that may not be immediately evident from artefacts alone. As noted by Carlquist, philological analysis enables scholars to uncover historical information embedded within textual materials that might otherwise remain hidden (Carlquist, 2017). Artefacts therefore require contextual interpretation to explain the circumstances of their production and the socio-cultural environments in which

they emerged (Urbrock et al., 2018). Despite the significance of these sources, the history of Islam and Muslim intellectual networks in Mindanao has received relatively limited scholarly attention. Earlier scholars—including Peter G. Gowing, Cesar Adib Majul, and Jan Stark—already observed that the study of Islam in the southern Philippines remained underexplored, particularly by Muslim scholars themselves (Gowing, 1975; Majul, 1999; Stark, 2003). Even influential works on Southeast Asian Muslim scholarly networks, such as those by Azyumardi Azra, largely focus on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century scholars from regions such as Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula, with little reference to Muslim intellectuals from the Philippines (Azra, 2004a). Similarly, genealogical studies of Malay-world ‘*ulama*’ by Haji Wan Mohd Shaghir Abdullah rarely include Islamic texts originating from Mindanao. This absence suggests that both textual artefacts and oral historical narratives from the region have yet to be systematically examined. In addition, prolonged ethnopolitical tensions and the Bangsamoro separatist conflict in Mindanao have further complicated efforts to investigate Muslim intellectual history in the southern Philippines (Macapagal et al., 2018).

This article seeks to address this scholarly gap by examining Islamic manuscripts discovered in Mindanao and analysing their significance for understanding Muslim intellectual networks in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It argues that these manuscripts demonstrate that Muslim communities in Mindanao were actively connected with wider Islamic intellectual networks in Southeast Asia, including those in Aceh, Cirebon, and Banten (Fathurahman, 2012). Moreover, these networks extended beyond Southeast Asia to the broader Islamic world, particularly to scholarly centres in the Haramain—namely Mecca and Medina—as well as to Hadhramaut in Yemen (Clarence-Smith, 2017; Fathurahman, 2016; Gasim, 2017). Through these connections, Mindanao formed part of a broader

transregional network of Islamic scholarship that linked Southeast Asia with the wider Muslim intellectual world.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach to investigate the intellectual and historical significance of Islamic manuscripts originating from Mindanao in the southern Philippines (Miller et al., 2018). The research applies a philological method to analyse manuscript materials, focusing on textual content, linguistic features, and historical context in order to reconstruct patterns of knowledge transmission and scholarly networks (Andrews, 2013). The primary sources examined in this study consist of Islamic manuscripts preserved in the Al-Imam As-Sadiq (AS) Husayniyyah Library located in the Biaba Damag district of Marawi City.

This collection was assembled by the Maranao scholar Shaykh Aleem Ulomuddin Said and represents an important repository of Islamic intellectual heritage in the region. The corpus analysed in this research comprises forty-three manuscript volumes and eighteen manuscript bundles. Data collection was conducted through systematic documentation of the manuscripts, including processes of close reading, data reduction, and thematic categorisation. The analytical procedure followed an inductive approach in which textual information extracted from the manuscripts was organised and interpreted to identify patterns relevant to the study's objectives (Dufour & Richard, 2019). Through this methodological framework, the research aims to illuminate the historical context, intellectual content, and scholarly connections reflected in the manuscript tradition of Mindanao.

Revealing Islamic Manuscript Heritage in Mindanao

The presence of Islamic manuscripts in Mindanao, southern Philippines, is relatively rare when compared with

the more extensively documented manuscript traditions of neighbouring regions such as Indonesia and southern Thailand. Nevertheless, the discovery of such manuscripts provides valuable insights into the historical development and intellectual dynamics of Islam in Southeast Asia. Owing to its strategic geographical position within maritime trade routes, Mindanao formed part of the wider commercial networks that connected Muslim merchants and scholars across the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. Since at least the fourteenth century, these trade routes facilitated cultural and religious exchanges that contributed to the dissemination of Islamic teachings across the region (Clavé, 2013). Within this context, it is plausible that Muslim communities in the Philippines developed sufficiently advanced religious learning to produce written Islamic texts, reflecting both local scholarly activity and participation in broader intellectual traditions.

Despite these possibilities, the existence of Islamic manuscripts in Mindanao and the wider southern Philippines has received comparatively limited scholarly attention. Unlike the well-documented manuscript traditions of the Malay world, there has been no comprehensive publication that fully examines Islamic manuscript collections from Mindanao or situates them within the wider history of Islam in Southeast Asia. Yet, considering the region's position within transregional Muslim trade networks that connected archipelagic Southeast Asia from at least the fourteenth century onward (Clavé, 2018), it can be assumed that Muslim communities in the Philippines maintained close religious and intellectual ties with neighbouring Muslim societies. The circulation of goods, ideas, and religious texts within these networks provides evidence of the existence of written Islamic traditions that connected Mindanao with other centres of Islamic scholarship in the region.

Although research on Muslim intellectual networks in Mindanao remains limited, several important efforts to document Islamic manuscripts have been undertaken. One notable study was conducted by William G. Clarence-Smith, who examined the historical presence of Arab migrants from Hadhramaut in Yemen and their interactions with Muslim scholars in Mindanao. His findings suggest that the Philippines has often been overlooked within broader studies of Arab–Southeast Asian connections, as patterns of Hadhrami influence there diverged from those observed in other parts of the region. According to Clarence-Smith, the complex demographic composition of the southern Philippines contributed to this difference. From the nineteenth century onwards, Mindanao became home to various migrant communities, including Armenians and Ottoman Syrian immigrants who arrived through Latin America. These groups interacted with local populations and formed Syro-Lebanese communities that included Lebanese Christians and Oriental Jewish merchants. Some Arab migrants eventually integrated into Filipino society and became involved in commercial activities ranging from small-scale trade to agriculture, mining, export commerce, real estate, and textile production destined for American markets (Clarence-Smith, 2004, 2017).

Earlier documentation of Islamic manuscripts in Mindanao can be traced to the work of Najeeb Mitry Saleeby, one of the first scholars to examine historical sources related to Muslim societies in the southern Philippines. In his influential study *Studies in Moro History, Law, and Religion*, Saleeby reported the existence of local manuscripts containing *tarsila* (genealogical records), legal codes, and *khutba* (sermons) (Saleeby, 1905). These manuscripts were obtained from several Muslim leaders in Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago. In his subsequent work *The History of Sulu*, Saleeby also recorded genealogies of local rulers (*datus*) and scholars, tracing their lineage to the descendants of Abū

Bakr, a companion of the Prophet Muḥammad (Saleeby, 1908). However, the manuscripts documented by Saleeby were primarily concerned with local historical and legal traditions rather than classical Islamic disciplines such as Qur'ānic studies, ḥadīth, or fiqh.

More recently, Filipino researchers Riwarung and Salivio produced a catalogue entitled *A Catalog of the Maisie Van Vactor Collection of Maranao Materials in the Arabic Script* housed at the Gowing Memorial Research Center. This collection contains fifteen Islamic manuscripts written in Arabic–Malay and later translated into the Maranao people language (Riwarung & Salivio, 2011). Although modest in number, these manuscripts represent an important starting point for identifying sources that reflect the intellectual traditions of Muslim communities in Mindanao.

Further research into Islamic manuscripts in the Philippines has been undertaken by Annabel Teh Gallop of the British Library, who examined handwritten Qur'ānic manuscripts originating from Mindanao. Her study revealed that some Qur'ān manuscripts associated with the Philippines are incomplete because portions of them were preserved in collections held by the United States Military Academy Library at West Point (Gallop, 2011). These manuscripts are particularly noteworthy because they contain Arabic text accompanied by translations in Malay–Maranao. In parallel with Gallop's work, Midori Kawashima and Oman Fathurahman have conducted collaborative research aimed at locating and documenting Islamic manuscripts in Mindanao. Their findings indicate that many manuscripts were written, copied, translated, and preserved privately by descendants of their original owners (Kawashima & Fathurahman, 2011).

Historical circumstances have also contributed to the scarcity and fragmentation of manuscript collections in the region. According to several studies, conflicts between American forces and Muslim communities in Mindanao

during the colonial period resulted in the confiscation of numerous manuscripts, many of which were transported to the United States without systematic scholarly documentation. Additionally, prolonged armed conflicts in Mindanao led to the destruction or deterioration of many manuscripts, either during military operations or through the displacement of their custodians.

Recent efforts to document surviving manuscripts have been supported by local research initiatives, including projects associated with the Al-Imam As-Sadiq (AS) Husayniyyah Library and the Sheikh Ahmad Basher Memorial Research Library of Jamiat Muslim Mindanao in Matampay, Marawi City. The collection of the Al-Imam As-Sadiq Husayniyyah Library was originally assembled by the Maranao scholar Shaykh Aleem Ulomuddin Said and is currently maintained by his family, including his wife and his son Baquir Said. Known as the Ulomuddin Said Collection, this archive represents one of the most significant repositories of Islamic manuscripts in Mindanao.

The manuscripts preserved in this collection are particularly noteworthy for their use of the Maranao–Malay language and their textual structure, which closely resembles patterns found in Malay and Javanese manuscripts elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Similarities in marginal notes, textual layout, and linguistic features suggest strong intellectual connections between Muslim scholars in Mindanao and those in other parts of the Malay world, including Aceh, Banten, and Cirebon. These parallels indicate that Muslim intellectuals in Mindanao participated in broader transregional networks of Islamic learning that linked the southern Philippines with scholarly communities throughout Southeast Asia.

Documenting the Islamic Manuscripts of the Ulomuddin Said Collection

The manuscript collection preserved in the Al-Imam As-Sadiq (AS) Husayniyyah Library is located in Karbala village, within the Biaba Damag district of Marawi City, Mindanao, in the southern Philippines. The name “Karbala” in this context refers merely to a local village designation and should not be confused with the well-known Shi‘i religious site in Karbala. The manuscript collection consists of forty-three bound volumes and eighteen bundles of manuscripts locally referred to as *bungkos*. The term *bungkos* denotes manuscripts wrapped in cloth—often resembling a sarong—used to store multiple textual fragments together. These manuscripts are written in three languages: Arabic, Malay, and Maranao. A close examination of the physical characteristics of these texts, including script, marginal annotations, and textual layout, indicates strong similarities with manuscript traditions found in other parts of the Malay world, suggesting that Islamic manuscripts from Mindanao maintained intellectual connections with Muslim scholarly communities in regions such as Aceh during the nineteenth century.

From the perspective of textual content, the Islamic manuscripts of Mindanao contribute to the broader understanding of Muslim intellectual networks in Southeast Asia, as discussed in studies of transregional scholarly exchanges by Azyumardi Azra (Azra, 2004a). Comparable patterns have also been identified in research on Acehese manuscripts and genealogical (*silsilah*) texts associated with the Shaṭṭāriyah Sufi order in Aceh and Java (Fathurahman, 2016; Gallop et al., 2015). These parallels suggest that Muslim scholars in Mindanao maintained close intellectual and educational connections with teachers and centres of learning not only in Southeast Asia but also in the Middle East and the Indonesian archipelago.

In comparison with other manuscript collections in the Malay world, however, the number of manuscripts in the collection associated with Shaykh Aleem Ulomuddin Said

remains relatively small. Many volumes contain only three to fourteen textual fragments. By contrast, manuscript traditions in Aceh include more than one thousand Islamic manuscripts written in Arabic, Malay, and Acehnese, with at least 280 manuscripts containing 367 identified texts already catalogued (Chambert-Loir, 2010). Similarly, in Minangkabau, ninety-nine Islamic manuscripts have been identified in the Surau Shaykh Abdul Wahab Calau in Sijunjung, West Sumatra. Comparable examples also appear in Malaysia, including a nineteenth-century copy of the devotional text *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt* composed by the Moroccan scholar Imam al-Jazuli and preserved in the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur (Barakat & Rusli, 2021). Additional Qur'ānic manuscripts from the region are likewise preserved in Malaysian museum collections (Trevathan & Razak, 2010). Compared with these richer traditions, the corpus of Islamic manuscripts in Mindanao appears limited in number. Nevertheless, the Ulomuddin Said collection remains highly significant for understanding the religious and intellectual history of Muslims in the southern Philippines. One notable feature is the presence of multilingual marginal annotations in Arabic, Malay, and Maranao, which illustrates the strong local intellectual foundations shaping the production and transmission of these texts.

The thematic composition of the manuscripts further illustrates their intellectual diversity. As shown in the categorisation of forty-three manuscripts, the collection includes works on Qur'ānic studies (2 manuscripts), ḥadīth (2), tafsīr (1), fiqh (9), Sufism (10), prayers and amulets (11), theology and creed (7), and Arabic grammar and morphology (1). These categories indicate that the manuscript tradition in Mindanao covered a broad spectrum of Islamic disciplines similar to those studied in other parts of the Malay world.

The use of the Maranao language is also evident in certain manuscripts. For instance, in the first bundle of the first manuscript, several Maranao terms appear alongside Arabic and Malay text, including *ig* (water), *lupa* (earth), *apoy* (fire), and *ndo* (wind). These terms represent the elemental components of the universe, interpreted within Islamic cosmology as originating from the primordial light (*nūr Muḥammad*) associated with the Prophet Muḥammad. Other marginal notes include inscriptions such as: *Amanaton giyaan miyakowa iMambuay ibn Sheikh Muhammad Said*, written vertically in blue ink, apparently functioning as a form of textual classification or ownership note within the manuscript bundle.

Another bundle (pack 10 of the first manuscript) contains a paratextual note indicating that the text discusses aspects of Shāfiʿī jurisprudence. Although the author of this annotation remains unknown, the fragments appear in the same three languages – Arabic, Malay, and Maranao. From a material perspective, the manuscript paper resembles that used in Javanese Islamic manuscript traditions. The brownish paper appears similar to *daluang*, a traditional writing material made from the bark of the *saeh* tree (*Broussonetia papyrifera*), which historically served as a medium for manuscript production in Java (Daneshgar, 2021; Jákl, 2016). In addition, several marginal annotations exhibit linguistic features associated with Javanese scribal traditions, suggesting that the manuscript – or at least portions of it – may have circulated between Java and Mindanao through scholarly travel or student networks.

Another prominent theme within the collection is the discussion of Sufi doctrines. Ten manuscripts address aspects of mystical teachings, particularly the concept of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (Unity of Being), a philosophical idea that frequently appears in discussions of Qurʾānic interpretation, ḥadīth studies, tafsīr, and even jurisprudence. The presence of such themes indicates the depth of Islamic intellectual

engagement in Mindanao. Scholars such as Michael Feener and Michael Laffan have noted that Sufi traditions played a central role in the spread of Islam across Southeast Asia, often reflected in medieval texts and hagiographical works that refer to scholars with the patronymic designation *al-Jāwī*, meaning “from the Javanese world” (Feener & Laffan, 2005). Other researchers—including Anthony H. Johns, Martin van Bruinessen, and R. S. O’Fahey—likewise argue that Sufism significantly shaped Islamic religious life throughout the Malay world (Bruinessen, 1994; Johns, 1995; O’Fahey, 2004). The broader intellectual networks connecting Southeast Asia with the Middle East have also been examined comprehensively by Azyumardi Azra in his studies of transregional ‘ulamā’ networks (Azra, 2004b).

Beyond Sufism, the most prominent category in the Mindanao manuscript collection concerns prayers and amulets, represented by eleven manuscripts. This predominance may reflect local religious practices and socio-historical conditions in Mindanao, where ritual prayers and protective charms often played important roles in everyday religious life. Given the region’s history of conflict, certain manuscripts contain prayers and talismans intended either to protect individuals from harm or to defend against enemies during wartime. For example, one manuscript bundle includes instructions for prayers designed to immobilise enemies who are described as tyrants, aggressors, or destroyers. The text warns that misuse of such prayers—particularly if directed against innocent individuals—would cause the harm to return upon the user. Comparable traditions of prayer manuals and talismanic texts have also been identified in manuscript collections from the Sultanate of Bima in West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia (Feener, 2019; Mursyid, 2020; Sila, 2018).

Islamic Manuscripts and Muslim Intellectual Networks in Mindanao

The formation of Muslim intellectual networks in Mindanao, Philippines, can be understood through the transmission of Sufi teachings and scholarly lineages reflected in the manuscript tradition associated with the collection of Shaykh Aleem Ulomuddin Said. According to the findings of Oman Fathurahman, the intellectual connections linking Mindanao with other parts of the Malay world are closely related to the genealogy of the Shaṭṭāriyah Sufi order, which has historically been prominent in regions such as Minangkabau, Aceh, and Java (Fathurahman, 2016). Nevertheless, the genealogical transmission of the Shaṭṭāriyah order in Southeast Asia developed through different regional lineages. Since the seventeenth century, the order has been associated with several prominent scholars, including Abd al-Ra'uf al-Fansuri, Ibrahim al-Kurani, Ḥasan al-'Ajmi, and Ṣāliḥ Khaṭīb. Evidence from the Mindanao manuscripts suggests that the Shaṭṭāriyah network in the region was transmitted not through the well-known lineage of Abd al-Ra'uf al-Fanṣūrī but rather through the intellectual chain associated with Ibrahim al-Kūrānī.

This lineage is indicated by repeated references to Javanese scholars from Banten whose names appear frequently in the Ulomuddin Said manuscript collection. These scholars are portrayed as *murshid* (spiritual guides) of the Shaṭṭāriyah order. One prominent figure mentioned in the manuscripts is Shaykh Ḥājj 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Qaḥḥār al-Shaṭṭārī, an eighteenth-century scholar believed to have lived around the 1750s–1760s. Within the manuscripts, he is referred to as “our teacher,” indicating a position of spiritual authority within the Shaṭṭāriyah lineage. His name appears prominently in a circular marker drawn in black and red ink on the opening page of one manuscript, accompanied by the phrase: *ta'lif shaykhinā al-Shaykh Ḥājj 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Qaḥḥār al-Shaṭṭārī Banten*. Based on Fathurahman's hypothesis, the manuscript may have been copied by a Shaṭṭāriyah student in Mindanao during the period of the

Banten Sultanate, particularly during the reign of Maulānā al-Sultān Abū al-Naṣr Zayn al-‘Āshiqī (1753–1773). The student responsible for copying the text may have possessed both Arab and Bantenese lineage and was involved in translating and reproducing several Arabic and Javanese works, including *Mashāhid al-Nāsik fī Maqāmāt al-Sālik* and *Fath al-Mulūk* (Kemper, 2019; van Bruinessen, 1995).

Additional textual evidence supports the presence of Shaṭṭārīyah networks connecting Mindanao with Java. A Malay manuscript from the Elang Panji collection, digitised by the Indonesian Research and Development Centre for Literature, Religious Heritage, and Organisational Management (Puslitbang LKKMO), contains references to the same scholarly lineage. The text describes the transmission of *dhikr* practices and spiritual initiation (*talqīn*) in both the Shaṭṭārīyah and Naqshbandī orders and records the activities of ‘Abdullāh, a disciple of Kyai ‘Abd al-Qahhār al-Shāfi‘ī al-Shaṭṭārī, who is said to have initiated members of the royal court in Cirebon into these Sufi traditions. Such references illustrate the interconnected nature of Sufi networks across the Malay world.

Another Bantenese scholar mentioned in the Ulomuddin Said manuscripts is Shaykh ‘Abd al-Shakūr of Banten, described in the text as a “perfect teacher” and an eminent spiritual authority. A passage within the manuscript praises him as a great *walī* in Banten who studied under the renowned scholar Maulana Malik Ibrahim. The manuscripts also mention one of his students, ‘Abd al-Mu‘min Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Banten, indicating the continuation of this scholarly lineage. A marginal note further refers to Shaykh ‘Abd al-Jalāl, identified as a *qāḍī* (judge) from Banten during the late sixteenth century (van Bruinessen, 1995). These references collectively demonstrate that the relationship between Muslim communities in Mindanao and those in Java extended beyond simple cultural contact; rather, it involved

formal scholarly and spiritual networks that legitimised the transmission of Islamic knowledge.

The manuscripts also reveal that the dominance of texts concerning prayers and amulets in the Mindanao collection may be related to the teachings transmitted through Shaṭṭārīyah networks. According to Martin van Bruinessen, Sufi teachers in the Malay world often transmitted forms of esoteric knowledge such as *ilmu kebal* (invulnerability), *ilmu tabarruk* (seeking blessings), and other mystical sciences associated with spiritual protection. One manuscript in the Ulomuddin Said collection describes the transmission of such knowledge through a chain of teachers from Java and Banten to Mindanao. It recounts that teachings concerning spiritual protection, resistance to weapons, and other mystical practices were transmitted from Karang, to Surabaya, and then to a Bantenese scholar in Karang Tanjung who later instructed a Mindanao scholar named Haji Basaruddin.

Although the available sources do not provide detailed biographical information about all individuals mentioned in these manuscripts, additional evidence of Shaṭṭārīyah networks appears in a manuscript containing a *silsilah* or genealogical chain (*sanad al-sādah al-shaṭṭārīyah*). This document identifies several local scholars from Mindanao as members of the Shaṭṭārīyah order, including Muḥammad Jalāl al-Dīn al-Bansayānī, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Qārī al-Tarākaī, and ‘Abd al-Qahhār al-Balābagānī. The text further states that Muḥammad Jalāl al-Dīn al-Bansayānī received an *ijāzah* (spiritual authorisation) for the Shaṭṭārīyah order from Haji Muḥammad Ṭāhir, a descendant of the renowned scholar Muhammad Tahir al-Kurani, son of Ibrahim al-Kūrānī.

Muḥammad Ṭāhir played a significant role in transmitting his father’s scholarly legacy in both Sufism and ḥadīth studies. His influence extended beyond Southeast Asia to the Indian subcontinent, where one of his students

was the prominent Indian scholar Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (1703–1762). As noted by Azyumardi Azra, Muḥammad Ṭāhir was recognised as a distinguished scholar proficient in ḥadīth, Islamic jurisprudence, and Sufism, and he authored more than one hundred treatises across these disciplines (Azra, 2004b). Within the Mindanao manuscript tradition, Muḥammad Ṭāhir is portrayed as a central figure in the spread of Islamic teachings in the region, particularly in Marawi and surrounding areas such as Bansayan, Taraka, and Balabagan.

The manuscripts also suggest that Muslim intellectuals in Mindanao maintained connections with scholars in Aceh in northern Sumatra. These connections are reflected in references to influential Acehnese scholars such as Abd al-Ra'uf al-Fansuri, Nuruddin al-Raniri, and Muḥammad Zain ibn Faqīh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Āshī. Through these networks of teachers, disciples, and manuscript transmission, Mindanao emerged as part of a broader transregional system of Islamic intellectual exchange that linked the southern Philippines with major centres of Islamic scholarship in Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

Conclusion

The Islamic manuscripts preserved in the Alim Ulomuddin Said Collection at the Al-Imam As-Sadiq (AS) Husayniyyah Library in Biaba Damag, Marawi City, provide important evidence that Mindanao was not a peripheral region in the history of Islam in Southeast Asia, but rather an integral part of the wider Malay-Islamic intellectual network. The manuscripts demonstrate clear intellectual and spiritual connections between the Lanao region of Mindanao and major centers of Islamic learning in the Malay world, particularly Aceh, Banten, and Cirebon.

These findings challenge the tendency to view Islamic intellectual developments in the southern Philippines as isolated from the broader scholarly traditions of the Malay

world. Instead, the manuscript evidence shows that scholars in Mindanao actively participated in regional networks of knowledge transmission, drawing upon both Middle Eastern scholarship and the works of Southeast Asian 'ulamā' from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Such citation practices indicate that the intellectual tradition in Mindanao was embedded within a transregional circulation of Islamic knowledge that linked Southeast Asia with the Middle East.

More importantly, the manuscripts reveal that Southeast Asian scholars themselves functioned as authoritative references within this network, highlighting their significant role in shaping Islamic scholarship beyond local contexts. The intellectual patterns reflected in these texts also help explain the development of Islamic thought in the nineteenth century in Mindanao and its surrounding regions.

Therefore, the Alim Ulomuddin Said manuscript collection should be regarded as a crucial source for reconstructing the history of Islamic intellectual networks in the southern Philippines. Further research on these materials is essential to deepen our understanding of the historical connections between Mindanao, the Malay world, and the broader Islamic scholarly tradition.

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