


Bustān al-Salāṭīn: Representation of Malay Islamic Civilization (Aceh) in the 17th Century

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Keywords:	Abstract:
<i>Bustān al-Salāṭīn</i> ; Aceh sultanate, Malay world, al-Ranīrī, Islamic civilization.	<i>Bustān al-Salāṭīn</i> is a traditional Islamic text that tells about the history of Malay Islam, especially Aceh. Written in the 17th century by <i>Shaykh al-Islām</i> named Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī (d. 1659), who was then under the rule of Sultan Iskandar Thani (1636-1641). This article discusses how <i>Bustān</i> represents the formation of the Aceh sultanate government system, the sultan who was in power when this manuscript was written, their political behavior, to the evidence of artifacts found based on information in the <i>Bustān</i> manuscript. The manuscript also contains 17th-century intellectual discourse as a marker of the early development of Islam in the Malay world. Reform of Muslim religious practices to change wujudīyah Sufism. The preparation of <i>Bustān</i> was based on socio-religious conditions in the Aceh sultanate was advancing in the fields of politics and Islamic intellectual development. This article argues <i>Bustān</i> is not only a traditional Malay Islamic ancient text but more than that which can be proven archaeologically whose existence still exists today. Besides that, <i>Bustān</i> contributed to the pilgrimage tradition of the 'auliyā' where this practice is common in Java and other parts of the Muslim world.

Kata kunci:	Abstrak:
<i>Bustān al-Salāṭīn</i> ; kesultanan Aceh, dunia Malayu, al-Ranīrī, peradaban Islam.	<i>Bustān al-Salāṭīn</i> adalah sebuah naskah tradisional Islam yang bercerita tentang sejarah Islam Melayu khususnya Aceh. Ditulis abad ke-17 oleh Syaikh al-Islām bernama Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī (w. 1659) yang saat itu bawah kekuasaan Sultan Iskandar Thani (1636-1641). Artikel ini membahas bagaimana <i>Bustān</i> merepresentasikan pembentukan sistem pemerintahan kesultanan Aceh yang berkuasa saat naskah ini ditulis, perilaku politik mereka, hingga bukti artefak yang ditemukan berdasar informasi di dalam naskah <i>Bustān</i> . Naskah tersebut juga berisi wacana intelektual abad ke-17 sebagai penanda awal Islam berkembang di dunia Melayu. Reformasi praktik keagamaan umat Islam untuk mengubah sufism <i>wujudīyah</i> . Penyusunan <i>Bustān</i> didasarkan pada kondisi sosial keagamaan yang pada saat itu kesultanan Aceh maju di bidang politik dan perkembangan intelektual Islam. Artikel ini berargumen bahwa <i>Bustān</i> bukan saja naskah kuno tradisional Islam Melayu, melainkan lebih dari itu yang dapat dibuktikan secara arkeologis yang keberadaannya masih ada sampai sekarang. Disamping itu <i>Bustān</i> berkontribusi pada tradisi ziarah para 'auliyā' dimana praktik ini lumrah terjadi di Jawa dan belahan dunia Muslim lainnya.

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1. Introduction

Bustān al-Salāṭīn (meaning Garden of the Sultans) is one of the traditional Malay written texts that explain the history of Aceh in the 17th century. This paper contains the history of Islam and the Malay Muslim tradition in Aceh, which was written by the prominent ‘ulamā’, namely *Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī* (d. 1658). *Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī* is known for his ideas against the *wujūdīyah* Sufism (Van Nieuwenhuijze, 1948), from 2 earlier Malay ‘ulamā’ Melayu, namely *Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī* (d. 1630) and *Hamzah Fansuri* (d. 1527) (Quddus, 2019; Sirry, 2019; Tuncer, 2021). Although only writing *Bustān* is an integral part of historical evidence of civilization in Malay, especially in Aceh, which held the control of Islamic rule in the Malay world (Southeast Asia).

This article examines *Bustān al-Salāṭīn* as historical evidence with a strong text approach. It differs from the history of other Malay texts, such as *Hikajat Atjeh*, whose work was completed almost simultaneously (Iskandar, 1959). Although, at the same time, in terms of historical context, *Bustān al-Salāṭīn* is more complete than *Hikajat Atjeh*, especially in terms of the Islamization adopted in Aceh and Malaysia. Apart from *Hikajat Atjeh*, there is *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* and *Sejarah Melayu* (Hill, 1960; Kratz, 1989), which are more on the political side of Malay culture by considering aspects of local traditions. It is stated that the Malay rulers were closer to Hindu-Buddhist elements than pure Islam (Winstedt, 1938b). In comparison, *Bustān* is more concerned with studying Islam that connects other dimensions, such as geography, which places Aceh as the ‘center of civilization’ at the global level of Malay. From the textual and linguistic side, *Bustān* presents a straightforward narrative and precise articulation and is detached from myths such as those in *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* and *Sejarah Melayu* (Winstedt, 1938a).

The focus of the discussion in this article on the history of Aceh is seen in how *Bustān* narrates the historiography of the formation of the Aceh sultanate and the process of Islamization in the middle of the royal political tomb until 1636-1641 during the reign of *Ratu ṣafiyat al-Dīn* (Gin & Tuan, 2015a, p. 189). This article is devoted to the politics of power, which is the main subject of *Bustān*. The reason for the focus of this discussion is that the parties listed in *Bustān* have a solid desire to Islamize royal politics in Aceh, which is in line with the mission of the Sufi tarekat *al-Ranīrī* as *Shaykh al-Islām* in the Aceh Sultanate. By highlighting several issues, such as the construction of the ‘Islamic’ sultanate government in the *Bustān* text as part of the significant project of political Islamization carried out by Sultan Iskandar Thani (1636-1641) (Ito, 1978).

This article has a solid basis for filling in the gaps in previous research, like Wormser (2012) (reviewed by Ricklefs), which shows *Bustān*’s position in positioning Malay culture with Islam (Ricklefs, 2013). Meanwhile, Harun (2004) focuses more on Islamizing the text in the *Bustān* script (Harun, 2004). However, Harun’s findings do not mention the complete history of Aceh. This research is more similar to Burhanudin (2021) where *Bustān* is the historiography of the Aceh sultanate (Burhanudin, 2021), so this research strengthens Burhanuddin’s findings that *Bustān* as an explanation of Aceh’s history is also a legacy of the Aceh sultanate where Aceh was the center of the Malay world. The difference between this study and Burhanudin’s findings, this article reveals *Bustān* as a history in ancient Malay (Aceh) manuscripts, but also archaeological evidence, which is described in the discussion that follows in this article.

2. Methods

Bustān is an ancient Malay Islamic manuscript that can be studied using philological methods (Nichols, 1990) because only with authentication philology and the aesthetic value of *Bustān* can be revealed comprehensively based on historical evidence as culture, artifacts, and traditional values passed down from generation to generation, as a basis for modern civilization (Sluiter & Rosen, 2012).

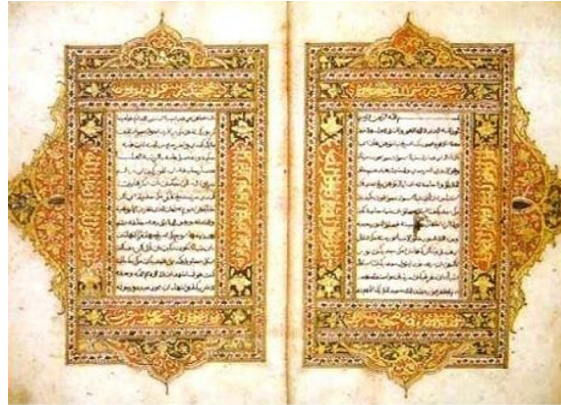


Figure 1. Front page of the *Bustān al-Salāṭīn* manuscript written in Arabic-Malay

With a qualitative approach (Miller et al., 2018) and the main source is the Malay Islamic ancient text (*Bustān*), this data mining uses paratext help to help clarify the condition of the sultanate of Aceh and other Malay worlds when Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī wrote this manuscript. According to Allen, paratexts are texts that are recorded around the main text of *Bustān* as an explanation of the substance of the meaning of the main text (Allen, 2020; Allen & Royle, 2020). In the process of data credibility, this study uses source triangulation (Cutcliffe & McKenna, 1999; Patton, 1999; Thurmond, 2001).

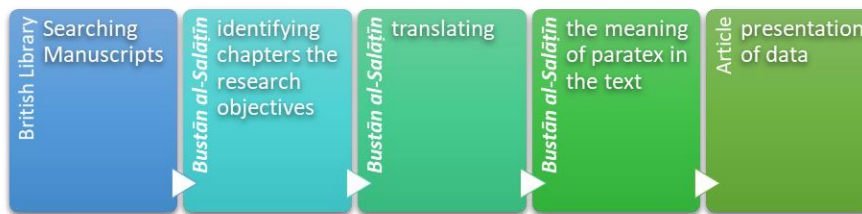


Figure 2. Data Collection Process

Data collection for this research was conducted through the following stages: (a) searching for manuscripts in the *British Library* collection, (b) identifying chapters in *Bustān* according to the research objectives; (c) translating the *Bustān* text; (d) the meaning of paratext in the *Bustān* text; (e) presenting data into articles. The sources used for triangulation are *Hikajat Atjeh*, *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai*, and *Sejarah Melayu* are other Malay works that can help clarify and sharpen findings from the *Bustān* manuscript.

3. Results and Discussion

a. Biography of Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī and His Works (*Bustān al-Salāṭīn*)

Under his last name as a nickname for him, who was born in *Ranir*, which is an old port city on the coast of Gujarat, India. Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī comes from the Hadrami family in Aidarusiyyah Tarim, Yemen. Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī’s contact with Malay culture was through his mother, who was an indigenous Malay. It was from Malay that Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī connected with intellectual networks of ‘ulamā’ from Southeast Asia (especially Java) and the Middle East (such as Mecca and Medina) (Laffan, 2011). It was against this background that Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī focused more on his intellectual career in Malay Islam than on his hometown of Gujarat, India.

After wandering, in 1621, Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī arrived in the archipelago with his readiness to seek knowledge and then lived in Pahang. There, he studied Malay literature and languages such as *Sulālat al-Salāṭīn* and *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* (Chambert-Loir, 2017; Fathurahman, 2012; Feener et al., 2011a).

By living in Pahang, Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī also learned about the culture of the Malay kingdom between Aceh and Malacca, which was an autonomous kingdom within the Kingdom of Johor, Malaysia (Wilkinson, 1932). This experience of living in Pahang made Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī develop his career as a ‘Muslim scholar’ by serving, among others: as a religious advisor in the kingdom of Aceh, head of the office of Shaykh al-Islām replacing Shams al-Dīn al-Sumantrānī (d. 1630) in 1673.

Bustān al-Salāṭīn is a monumental work written by Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī, who started working in 1638 after a year. He served Sultan Iskandar Thani (Ricklefs, 2013). In the preface to *Bustān*, Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī writes a prologue that reads:

“*mengarang (lah) sebuah kitab (buku) dalam bahasa Melayu (Jawi) yang menceritakan upaya masyarakat di bumi untuk mengisahkan perbuatan raja-raja Melayu di masa lalu dan masa mendatang*” (Grinter, 1979).

Meaning: “composing a *kitab* (book) in Malay (*Jawi*) which tells of the efforts of the people on earth to narrate the actions of the Malay kings in the past and the future”

Table 1: Composition of *Bustān al-Salāṭīn*

Book Number	Chapter	Contains
Book I	-	The story of the creation of the universe
	1	The creation of Adam and the stories of the Prophets after him
	2	Persian ancient ruler
	3 – 7	History of ancient kings before Islam
Book II	8	The story of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH
	8 – 10	Caliph of Islam and Sultan of Arabia and Persia
	11	Islamic Sultanate in India
	12 – 13	Islamic Sultanate in Malay

As a unique ancient manuscript, *Bustān* has several chapters that explain the creation of nature, man (Adam), the history of pre-Islamic Islam, the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, the caliphate of Islam in Arabia and Persia, India, and Malay, all of which are explained in books I and II. While book III contains adab or goals for didactic by providing examples in the history of Islamic leadership as exemplary Islamic leaders, such as the caliph (*al-khulafā’ al-rāshidūn*) and the sultans after him (Harun, 2004). There are similarities with *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* in terms of political ideas through Malay texts and literature (V. I. Braginsky, 2005; Burhanudin, 2001; Sutherland, 1995). Both *Tāj al-Salāṭīn* and *Bustān al-Salāṭīn* these two writings provide guidelines for Muslims to choose and educate to become elite (best) leaders and rulers based on Islamic principles.

b. *Bustān al-Salāṭīn*, the Kings of Aceh, and the Establishment of the Sultanate System

Some literature states that the first Islamic ruler to establish a sultanate in Aceh was Ali Mughayat Shah (died 1530), who was named the Aceh Sultanate *Dār al-Salām* (Darul Salam) (Khan, 2013). In the *Bustān* text, Ali Mughayat Shah is allegedly the first sultan to invite the public to follow the teachings of Allah and His Messenger through the al-Qur’ān and Ḥadīth (Feener et al., 2011b). Although, the complete discussion of *Bustān* is its relation to the formation of a government in the Islamic sultanate, as found in the works of modern scholars (Abdullah, 1989; Reid, 1988a), even Puerta-Vílchez analyses that *Bustān* was influenced by the treasures of the Alhambra court in Granada, Spain. in the 11th century where aesthetics in art, architecture and literature were so admirable, that the formation of government and royal landmarks in the Malay world was inspired by political architects in Granada (Puerta-Vílchez, 2021). However, *Bustān* is not the only work that mentions this narrative. There is still *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* and *Sejarah Melayu*, as mentioned in the introduction (Hill, 1960; Kratz, 1989). Even Jones Russell, in *The Texts of the Hikayat Raja Pasai: A Short Note*

mentions that Samudra Pasai was the first Islamic kingdom in Aceh ‘*di negeri bawah angin*’ or ‘in the wind’s land’ (Jones, 1980).

Although the same, the *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* differs from *Bustān*, which emphasizes the mystical side of the ruler in a country after meeting the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. *Bustān* also commented on his concern for Ali Mughayat Shah, who became ruler by defeating the kingdoms of Pidie (1521), Samudra Pasai (1524), and Daya (1520) (Andaya, 2001; Auni, 1993; Hadi, 1999). These three kingdoms are the most substantial basis for forming the Sultanate of Aceh, with Ali Mughayat Shah as the founder and first king (Iskandar, 2007; Lombard, 1986a; Wilkinson, 1932).

The way *Bustān* mentions Islamic civilization in Aceh through Ali Mughayat Shah shows a different side from Hikajat Atjeh, who said that Ali Mughayat Shah was part of the Lamuri royal family was divided by establishing the Sultanate of Aceh as a unifier (Iskandar, 1959). The two claims from *Bustān* are not entirely justified because several scholars find Lamuri was a powerful kingdom that was a rival to the Aceh kingdom (Ibrahim et al., 2022; Montana, 1997). Regardless of the debate, Ali Mughayat Shah himself was a member of the Lamuri royal family, so he inherited ‘noble blood’ before finally becoming the ruler of Aceh.

Besides Ali Mughayat Shah, *Bustān* also describes the figure of an influential sultan in the Aceh kingdom because *Bustān* emphasizes the power side more than the side of mysticism or Islamic Sufism, as in the history of Islam in Java (Salim, 2013). As in Java, the term *keraton* (palace) is another name for an Islamic sultanate with a royal government system where the ruler is a sacred, noble figure with an established narrative of Sufism and mysticism (Anggraeni Dyah & Zein, 2020; Woodward, 2011). The two rulers were *Sultan Salahuddin* (reigned 1530-1539 AD) and *Sultan Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Shah* (reigned 1537-1571 AD). In *Bustān* the two sultans (especially Sultan Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Shah, who is more prominent in *Bustān*) made significant contributions to the revitalization of government, such as the management of *Dār al-Salām* on aspects of legal and customary regulations, governance of urban development, starting diplomatic relations. With the Ottoman Empire in Turkey, which was an Islamic superpower. Sultan Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Shah was the first sultan to inflame the spirit of war in the Acehnese people to fight against the Portuguese invaders in Malacca (Rusli et al., 2020). Even according to Annabel Teh Gallop’s findings, Sultan Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Shah received help from the Ottoman Sultanate in Turkey, jointly attacking the Portuguese (Teh Gallop, 2004). The figure of Sultan Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Shah is so particular that in *Bustān* he is nicknamed “Marḥūm Qahhār” which means: “Sultan Conqueror” (Braginsky, 2015).

The fame of Sultan Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Shah was continued by his son, Sultan Hussain (ruled 1571-1579), who held the title ‘*Ali Ri’ayat Shah* after his father’s name. In *Bustān*, he is described as “a pious sultan, gentle to the poor, and loves the people and glorifies ‘ulamā’” (Raniri & Iskandar, 1966). During the time of ‘Ali Ri’ayat Shah, openness to knowledge was also a program of the sultan where *Bustān* mentioned a ‘ulama’ from Mecca who was of the Shafi’i school named Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn visited and taught Sufism to students in the sultanate (Laffan, 2011, pp. 14–15). *Bustān* also commended ‘Ali Ri’ayat Shah for his service in forming alliances with Muslim kingdoms in Java and other Malays against the Portuguese invaders in Malacca in 1573-74 (Hadi, 1999; Reid, 2004; Ricklefs, 2008).

However, *Bustān* does not always show the good side of the ruling sultans in Aceh. There is also mention of the wrong side of some sultans, for example, *Raja Seri Alam* (r. 1579) a brother of ‘Ali Ri’ayat Shah. *Raja Seri Alam* is described in *Bustān* as a hot-tempered person, incapable of managing the court and having no influence on his position as a sultan. Likewise, the successor of *Raja Seri Alam*, Sultan Zainal ‘Abidin bin Sultan ‘Abdullah is described as a ‘cold-blood killer’ (Raniri & Iskandar, 1966, pp. 32–33). *Bustān* does not explain why the two sultans are negative. But in *Hikajat Atjet* the figure of *Raja Seri Alam* is generous and likes to spend his life worshipping in the

mosque. Of course, this is in stark contrast to the character in Bustān. Meanwhile, Sultan Zainal ‘Abidin bin Sultan ‘Abdullah is described as a person who likes to splurge, lives in luxury, desires to establish hostility, and does not think about the fate of the sultanate (Iskandar, 1959, pp. 97–98).

Hikajat Atjeh’s comparative description of the two sultan figures above proves that the narratives made in *Bustān* favor the sultan, who has a negative character. This shows that there are certain social classes that Bustān glorifies, which evokes the feeling of elitism among the aristocrats. Kathirithamby-Wells referred to him *orang kaya*, meaning “rich people,” which denotes the elite in terms of economic and social strata. Kathirithamby-Wells found this pattern to occur in kingdoms in Southeast Asia where social strata were seen from the economy so that the *orang kaya* had authority among the rulers (Kathirithamby-Wells, 1986). According to Reid, the *orang kaya* could govern collectively, and a wave of inclination toward the rich increased in Aceh and Patani when they became successful traders (Reid, 1988b).

As the author of *Bustān al-Salāṭīn*, Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī was attracted to the idea of a robust and influential ruler who had a positive image of Malay society and an appearance of piety. The view of Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī is based on an Islamic political paradigm that wants a ruler with these characteristics. The view of Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī follows Sunni political thought, where chaos in the kingdom resulted from *fitnah* (slander), which showed that a strong sultan did not hold the leadership. Even Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī was more inclined to the wise sultan than the pious sultan (Enayat, 2005; Gin & Tuan, 2015b; Rosenthal & J, 1958).

In the 17th century, especially in Aceh, the idea of an authoritative sultan seemed to be an icon of the sultanate's power. In *Bustān* itself, a weak sultan is a person who does not have religious solid knowledge and high political experience. Politics in the Sunni tradition emphasizes aspects of strong leadership driven by strong religious knowledge (Kayane, 2020). The depiction of the sultan as “tempered”, “cold-blooded killer”, and “spree” shows a strong involvement in the political ideas of the Sunni leadership. Bustān is dedicated to the authoritative and influential sultan in Aceh. The aesthetic aspect of Bustān also shows that a strong sultan would decorate his kingdom like the landmark Alhambra palace in Granada, with all the rules and charming governance.

c. Taman Ghairah, Darul ‘Ishki and Geginongan

That *Bustān* raises is the question of Iskandar Thani’s level of power. Puerta-Vílchez is a landmark of the Alhambra palace in Granada in a beautiful hilly mountain area filled with shady gardens, adding to the cool eyes to see (Puerta-Vílchez, 2021). Bustān mentions “Taman Ghairah” which is one part of the kingdom that represented the Sultanate of Aceh in the 17th century. Until now, the Taman Ghairah still exists as evidence of historical artifacts. Bustān al-Salāṭīn means *Taman Para Sultan* (the Garden of Sultans) in the sultanate complex of Aceh with an area of 1000 *depa* (*depa* is the equivalent of half a meter) overgrown with shady trees and fruit. It was named Taman Ghairah because the purpose of making this park was to increase the excitement of the sultans to feel at home in the palace and add inspiration when taking care of the people amid various kinds of socio-religious polemics. Taman Ghairah faces the palace and is connected to a gate made of stone called the *Pintu Biram Indra Bangsa*. In the center of the park, there is *Darul ‘Ishki* or a river flowing cool water from the *Jabal al-‘Ala* mountains emanating from black stones (Raniri & Iskandar, 1966, p. 48).

Another function of *Darul ‘Ishki* is also as a meditation medium for the sultans and palace dwellers. There is another object name *Bustān* along with *Darul ‘Ishki*, which is mentioned as *gunongan* or *gegunongan*. In Bustan’s sentence, it is stated:

“Di sisi kanan sungai *Darul ‘Ishki*...”

“Ada sebuah taman yang sangat besar nan indah... bernama *Medan Khairan*; dan di pusara tengah taman itu terdapat sebuah gunung, di atasnya ada sebuah menara untuk meditasi, yang diberi nama *Geginongan Menara Permata*” (Raniri & Iskandar, 1966, p. 49).

“Di Gegunongan ada gua (*guha*) dengan pintu yang dilapisi perak; di sisinya terdapat kandang baginda (*kandang baginda*), bagi mereka yang ingin masuk ke dalamnya diminta untuk membacakan doa (*ṣalawah*) kepada Nabi Muhammad” (Raniri & Iskandar, 1966, p. 50).

Translation:

“On the right side of the Darul ‘Ishki river...”

“There is a very large and beautiful garden... called *Medan Khairan*; and in the central tomb of the garden, there is a mountain, on top of which there is a tower for meditation, which is named *Gegunongan Menara Permata*”.

“In Gegunongan there is a cave (*guha*) with a door covered in silver; on his side, there is the king’s cage (*kandang baginda*), for those who want to enter it are asked to read a prayer (*ṣalawah*) to the Prophet Muhammad”.



Figure 1. Ghairah Park (from far)
Source: (Norhayati, 2017)



Figure 2. Ghairah Park (from near)
Source: (Norhayati, 2017)



Figure 3. *Darul 'Ishki* in Taman Ghairah
Source: (Norhayati, 2017)

In modern research, several archaeologists mention *gegunongan* as a manifestation of Aceh’s cultural forms. Them Wessing (1988) mentions that gunongan is a ‘symbolic mountain’ which is one part of the palace courtyard (garden) as a feature that this is the beautiful garden of the Aceh sultanate (Wessing, 1988, pp. 157–194). Meanwhile, Brakel noted *gegunongan* was deliberately formed as a mountain, as in the Hindu view of the mountain of the Gods (*Mahameru*) (Brakel, 1975, p. 60), or the center of the universe, the gods lead the world (Fadhil & Fakriah, 2021; Fakriah, 2021).



Figure 4. *Gekonongan*, a mountain-like building in Taman Ghairah
Source: (Norhayati, 2017)

Brakel, like Linehan and Sumukti, is more inclined towards Hindu buildings because of the shape of the mountain, like a *pewayangan* (puppet) (Linehan, 1951; Sumukti, 1997). However, Shiraishi disagreed with the three because the *gekonongan* and Taman Ghairah were bright white like bright white blood (Shiraishi, 1990, p. 47) as mentioned in Hikajat Atjeh (Iskandar, 1959, p. 116). Apart from the archaeological analysis, *gekonongan* and Taman Ghairah are manifestations of the power of the ‘Sultan’ in Aceh. Reid asserted that the era of Ala’uddin Ri’ayat Shah had given birth to an ‘absolute’ system of government, culminating in the Iskandar Muda era (1604-1636) (Iskandar, 1980; Lombard, 1986b). This is a sign of the rise of Islam in the Aceh Malay region, which is oriented towards the sultanate system (Burhanudin, 2006), with the Sufism foundation that the sultan must be a “perfect human” (*insān al-kāmil*) as a title of praise for the ‘almighty’ sultan who has achieved the highest degree in royal social and political discourse (Reid, 2004). So that, Wessing’s findings state *gekonongan* is the pinnacle of veneration for Sultan Iskandar Muda as a place of meditation in holding his *insān al-kāmil* title (Wessing, 1988, pp. 177–178).

During the era of Sultan Iskandar Thani, when Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī wrote the *Bustān* script, the function and existence of the Taman Ghairah were still enforced in the royal order. This further added to the sultans' power that their piety and Sufism led to a social legitimacy that served as what Lowe called the ‘*magnetic levitation*’ of the ‘idol’, namely the sultan. Lowe even mentions the Middle Ages as the peak of levitation in civilization (Lowe, 2016). Of course, this is reasonable because at the time of Iskandar Thani the supremacy of power based on the principles of Islamic *Sharī’ah*, was marked by the conferment of Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī as Syaikh al-Islām (guru bangsa, ‘ulamā’, atau head of ‘ulamā’) replaced the two former Malay ‘ulamā’ terdahulu yaitu Shams al-Dīn al-Sumatrānī and Hamzah Fansuri (Quddus, 2019; Sirry, 2019; Tuncer, 2021) with their thoughts on *wujūdīyah* (Van Nieuwenhuijze, 1948). Thus, meditation in the Taman Ghairah is a Sufistic practice for spiritual sharpening with the principles of *Sharī’ah* also used.

d. Pilgrimage of ‘*Auliyā*’ in *Bustān al-Salāḥ*

Besides discussing the Taman Ghairah and other loci, *Bustān* also discusses Islamic pilgrimage practices such as visiting the graves of the ‘*auliyā*’ (*wali* or holy people). In *Bustān*, pilgrimages seem to be another major focus of Iskandar Thani after he constructs the Taman Ghairah. His spiritual odyssey was not only limited to meditation on the *gekonongan*. He had the gift to visit the graves of the ‘*auliyā*’ as a spiritual complement to becoming a sultan. *Bustān* mentions Iskandar Thani is not alone in doing this pilgrimage, unlike the meditation at the *gekonongan*, which a sultan himself carried out. However, Iskandar Thani invites the people of Aceh to join him on a pilgrimage when the harvest season has arrived. Iskandar Thani did two things: as an expression of gratitude to God for having

been given a bountiful harvest and as logistical support for the kingdom for supplies during pilgrimages (Raniri & Iskandar, 1966, pp. 52–53). For a pilgrimage to the graves of these *‘auliyā’* Iskandar Thani set Pasai as his destination. During his search, Bustān mentions that Iskandar Thani said:

“Pasai adalah negeri metropolitan yang ramai penduduk dan kegiatannya. Di sana banyak orang suci yang memimpin negeri tersebut. Kami ingin berziarah ke makam ‘auliyā’ dan penguasanya (raja-raja Pasai)” (Raniri & Iskandar, 1966, p. 52).

Translation: “Pasai is a metropolitan country full of people and activities. Many saints lead the country. We want to make a pilgrimage to the tomb of ‘auliyā’ and its rulers (Pasai kings)”

In Islamic anthropology, the Malay Archipelago, and other places in the Muslim world, such as the Middle East, are places where people make pilgrimages to the graves of holy people (wali or *‘auliyā’*). This practice is a kind of obligatory ritual for Muslims outside of their religious obligations, such as praying (*ṣalāt*), issuing *zakāt* (a kind of staple food) for the poor, fasting in the month of Ramaḍān (*ṣiyām*), going on pilgrimage (*hajj*) (Eickelman & Piscatori, 2013; Hitchcock, 2005). The practice of pilgrimages to the tombs of the saints is often done by Javanese Muslims. Wali Songo is a religious tourism site most visited and minimised by Muslim communities from various regions (Fox, 2001). So important is the pilgrimage to the grave of *‘auliyā’* that Muslims flock to do it every year, month, and week. Their goal is to ask for blessings from the gravesite because it is suspected that the *‘auliyā’* who have died are close to God so that their existence can provide benefits for the fulfillment of all desires (Jamhari, 2000, 2001). Besides the motive of seeking blessings (ngalap berkah), there is another purpose for this practice to become a tradition outside of religion. As did Sultan Agung, the greatest ruler in the Mataram kingdom (r. 1613-1646) made a pilgrimage to the tomb of Sunan Bayat around 1633 (Doorn-Harder & de Jong, 2001). Sultan Agung made a pilgrimage to Sunan Bayat’s tomb was coloured by political elements divided into two: the crushing of royal rebels that Sultan Agung carried out in 1630 before his pilgrimage to Sunan Bayat. Second, Sultan Agung wanted to convert the Javanese calendar system from *Saka* to the *Javanese-Islamic* calendar. For these two reasons, the Sultan wanted to gain legitimacy as a *‘pious sultan’* in the eyes of the Javanese people (Ricklefs, 2008, pp. 52–55).

Iskandar Thani’s pilgrimage to Pasai can be seen from the political context and the context of spiritual piety. As it is known that Samudra Pasai was known long before the sultanate in Aceh as an Islamic solid kingdom, so it was popularly referred to as the city of *‘Serambi Mecca’* (Kartomi, 2010, p. 87). Likewise, Ibn Battuta, who has a strong desire to make a pilgrimage to Sultan Malik al-Zahir (Gibb, 2017), shows that Pasai is an important city in the world of pilgrimage in Malay. Iskandar Thani’s strong motive behind his pilgrimage to Pasai was the religious and political acknowledgment of 15th century Malacca, the most powerful Islamic empire in the region at that century. In the Malay History text, the rulers of Malacca asked the *‘ulamā’* of Samudra Pasai to resolve their religious problems (Winstedt, 1938a, pp. 126–129).

Thus, Iskandar Muda’s pilgrimage to Pasai had a strong spiritual reason, namely wanting to show that the sultan respected the *‘ulama’* and *‘auliyā’* in Pasai, who had made significant contributions to Islamic civilization. For this reason, Iskandar Muda has a strong authority in legitimizing himself as the ruler of Islam. In Bustān, it is clearly stated that Iskandar Thani’s pilgrimage to Pasai wanted his political power in the territory of the Aceh sultanate over the local ruler (Pasai). Bustān also mentioned that the political power of the Acehnese rulers was showed by various visits to Pasai (after Iskandar Muda), where the Acehnese rulers received a warm welcome from the local Pasai rulers including in the areas of Gunong Idahan, Indera Dunia, Pidie, Shahr Deli, Merdu

‘Ishki, Jemper and Pesangan (Raniri & Iskandar, 1966, pp. 54–56). Because when visiting these places, the sultans in Aceh will receive strong recognition from other regions as “true rulers of Aceh”.

In *Bustān* Iskandar, Thani's pilgrimage is narrated as follows:

“Perjalanan spiritual ini berlanjut ke Pasai. Menghabiskan satu malam di istana Pasai, keesokan harinya pergi berziarah ke makam *sharif* dan ‘*auliyā*’ *illāh* (para wali-wali Allah), di mana ia membaca surat al-Fatiḥah untuk memberikan doa kepada keduanya. Dan menyalakan *dian* atau *istanggi* (lampu minyak). Pada hari yang sama, ia mengunjungi makam serupa di negeri Samudra dan melakukan ritual yang sama. Samudra menjadi tujuan akhir kunjungannya. Selanjutnya, ia melakukan perjalanan kembali ke Aceh Dar al-Salām melalui rute yang sama saat berangkat berziarah” (Raniri & Iskandar, 1966, pp. 56–57).

Translation: “This spiritual journey continues to Pasai. He spent one night at Pasai palace, and the next day went on a pilgrimage to the tombs of the *sharif* and ‘*auliyā*’ *illāh* (the saints of Allah), where he recited Surah al-Fatiḥah to offer prayers to both of them. And light a *dian* or *istanggi* (oil lamp). He visited a similar grave in the Ocean's land on the same day and performed the same ritual. The ocean became the final destination of his visit. Next, he traveled back to Aceh Dar al-Salām via the same route when he left for pilgrimage.”

Iskandar Thani's visit appears to be the final episode of his political career as the Sultan of Aceh. *Bustān* described it as the beginning of Aceh's famous political power decline. The kingdom of Johor, which was captured during the reign of Iskandar Muda, separated itself separately, and its power grew independently (Auni, 1993). In addition, the support from the VOC made Johor even more aggressive in attacking Pahang (Iskandar Thani's ancestral kingdom) (Khan, 2010). *Bustān* explains that Iskandar Thani was helpless, doing nothing when he heard of the attack (Roolvink, 1981). He was only disappointed with the attitude of Johor, who had bad intentions toward Aceh, even though Aceh was good friends with Johor (Raniri & Iskandar, 1966, p. 58). Not long after, Iskandar Thani fell ill and died in February 1641, which caused unstable conditions in Aceh and the rest of the other Malay world next to Aceh (Bassett, 1969; Reid & Ito, 1999). This impacted the leadership of the next Aceh sultan.

4. Conclusion

Bustān al-Salāṭīn is a traditional Malay manuscript that presents historical trends of Islamic civilization from the side of ancient manuscripts studied in the modern era where Islam was narrated so prominently about the Sultanate of Aceh in the 17th century. In *Bustān*, the epic about Islam adopted to form a sultanate in local Aceh, the behavior of its elite rulers (the sultans), and the ideas and governance of the state under the auspices of religion. As a monumental work in the 17th century, *Bustān* departs from other classical Malay texts, such as *Hikajat Atjeh*, *Sejarah Melayu* and *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai*. As a work written by *Sheikh al-Islām Aceh* (Nūr al-Dīn al-Ranīrī), it should strengthen the supremacy of Sultan Iskandar Thani's power based on an Islamic solid Sharī'ah and replace *wujūdīyah* Sufism. The preparation of *Bustān* was based on the socio-religious conditions of the Aceh's sultanate was advancing in the fields of politics and Islamic intellectual development. *Bustān* is recognized as a contributor to the early Malay literary tradition, especially Aceh, because this region was the forerunner to other Malay kingdoms. *Bustān* is the embodiment of Islamic civilization in Aceh in the past to contemporary Aceh known as the “veranda of Mecca”. Finally, *Bustān* is not only a traditional Malay Islamic ancient text but more than that as evidence of historical narratives as evidenced by Taman Ghairah, Darul ‘Ishki, and Gegunongan, whose existence is still exists today. Besides that, *Bustān* contributed to the pilgrimage tradition of the ‘*auliyā*’ where this practice is common in Java and other parts of the Muslim world.

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