



## NOMINATION FORM

### PART A – ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

#### **Summary**

*Please highlight uniqueness and universal value of proposed documentary heritage:*

The Sejarah Melayu or the Malay Annals are unique in that they constitute the only available account of the history of the Malay Sultanate in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century. They are in the nature of what may be termed as historical literature conveying a historical narration on the origins, evolution and demise of a great Malay maritime empire, with its unique system of government, administration and politics.

The Annals have universal appeal as they relate to a major transformation in the lives of the people of the Malay Archipelago from a Hindu-Malay matrix to an Islamic – Malay culture. Being an *entrepot* port, Melaka made rapid progress on account of its cosmopolitan population comprising merchants from India, China, Arabia, Portugal and various other nations of the world. They contributed to the social, economic and political evolution of the Malay Kingdom.

The Annals are therefore a vital source of information for scholars in various fields including sociology, anthropology, economics, politics, international relations, linguistics and literature.

#### **1. Identity and Location**

##### **1.1 Name of documentary heritage:**

Sejarah Melayu ( The Malay Annals)

##### **1.2 Country:**

Malaysia

**1.3 State, province or region:**

Kuala Lumpur

**1.4 Address:**

Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka,  
(Institute of Language and Literature)  
P.O. Box 10803,  
50926 Kuala Lumpur  
MALAYSIA

**1.5. Name Of Institution:**

Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka  
(Institute of Language and Literature)

**2. Legal Information**

**2.1. Owner (name and contact details):**

The Malay Documentation Centre,  
Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka,  
(Institute of Language and Literature)  
P.O. Box 10803,  
50926 Kuala Lumpur  
MALAYSIA

Tel : 603- 2481011

Fax : 603-2484208

**2.2. Custodian:**

Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka,  
(Institute of Language and Literature)

**2.3. Legal Status:**

**(a) Category of ownership:**

Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka  
(Institute of Language and Literature)

- (b) **Details of Legal and Administrative provisions for the preservation of the documentary heritage**  
Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (Amendment and Extension) Act 1995
- (c) **Accessibility**  
Open to the public
- (d) **Copyright Status:**  
Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka,  
(Institute of Language and Literature)

#### **2.4. Responsible administration:**

The collection is managed by the Librarian, and is housed in the Malay Documentation Center. The materials are well maintained. The manuscripts are microfilmed for the twin purposes of ensuring both preservation and access.

### **3. Identification**

#### **3.1 Description and inventory**

The Sejarah Melayu or Malay Annals consist of 2 manuscripts

- a. Sejarah Melayu (ms86)
- b. Sejarah Melayu (ms86a)

The Annals presents a romanticised the history of the Malay Sultanate in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century. It is regarded as the finest historical literary work in the Malay language written in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

The Annals are prefaced by a celebration of the greatness of Allah, the Prophet and His Companions. It begins with a geneological account of the first Sultan of Melaka who is said to be descended from Raja Iskandar Zulkarnain (Alexander the Great).

The Annals dwell at large on the founding of Melaka and its rise to power; its relationship with neighbouring kingdoms and distant countries; the advent of Islam and its spread in Melaka and the region as a whole; the origin of the Cham community in Melaka; the history of the royalty in the region including that of battles both lost and won, marriage ties and diplomatic relationships; the administrative hierarchy that ruled Melaka, the greatness of its Rulers and administrators, including Tun Mutahir the great Prime Minister of Melaka, and the Admiral Hang Tuah, a great Malay legendary hero.

The Annals conclude with the account of Melaka's defeat by the Portuguese forces, resulting not only in the downfall of Melaka, but also in the eventual emergence of Malay Sultanate in the other parts of the country, including Johor and Pahang.

### **3.2 Bibliographic/Registration details:**

- a. Sejarah Melayu, [303 pages]; complete, 32 x 22 sm. Non dated. Bound with some pages torn. Writing style is legible, attractive and neat. Penned in black ink.
- b. Sejarah Melayu, [474pages]; incomplete, 20 x 16 sm. Non dated. Bound with some pages torn. Written in black ink, some of the words are in large size for emphasis.

Bibliographic details of the manuscript have been printed in the Catalogue of Manuscripts at the Malay Documentation Centre, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1999. (Revised edition).

### **3.3 Visual documentation, if appropriate:**

Manuscript (a) has been copied on both microfilm and microfiche. Some of the pages have been photographed.

Manuscript (b) is available as bound volume, with some of the pages photographed.

### **3.4. History:**

The Annals which were originally written in 1612 constitute a lengthy account of the history of the Malay Sultanate and Melaka from circa 1400 A.D. to the early 16<sup>th</sup> century.

This is stated in the early part of the Annals as follows ;

“The occasion of the composition of the work is stated by the author to be the following. *“ I happened to be present at an assembly of the learned and noble, when one of the party observed to me, that he heard of a Malay story, which had been lately brought by a nobleman from the land of Goa,.....This happened in the morning of the fifth day of the week, and 12<sup>th</sup> of the month of Rabiul-awal, in the year Dal, and of the Hejrah 1021.”* (Translated).

According to R. O. Winstedt the Annals were composed on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1612 (*The Malay Annals or Sejarah Melayu*; Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, vol. 16, Parts 3, December 1938).

### **3.5. Bibliography:**

Catalogue of Manuscripts at the Malay Documentation Centre, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1999 (edited version). The homepage provides a catalogue or list of manuscript collection either in printed form, or online catalogue through the webpage (<http://www.dbp.gov.my/pdm99/msscscat.htm>).

### **3.6. Names, qualifications and contact details of the independent people or organizations with expert knowledge about the values and provenance of the documentary heritage:**

- Professor Abu Hassan Sham, Lecturer, Faculty of Malay Literature, Academy of Malay Studies, University of Malaya
- Datuk Professor Dr. Siti Hawa Haji Salleh, Lecturer, Department of Malay Literature, The National University of Malaysia
- Professor Muhammad Haji Salleh, University science Malaysia (National Laureate)
- Committee of the Malay manuscripts, DBP 1982/1983

## **4. Assessment against the Selection Criteria**

### **• Influence**

The Malay Annals have had a great influence on the history, culture and development of the Malay civilization, which had to confront major cultural transformation through the centuries on the road to becoming a modern nation. Throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Melaka was identified with two dominant influences i.e. that of the Melayo-Hindu and the Malay-Islamic cultures. However, in the course of history, assimilation with the other races such as Chinese, Indian, Portuguese as well as minor groups like the Chams has served to enrich the Malay culture. Melaka began to develop as a center of administration, commerce and religion. To date, the racial assimilation and integration has laid a strong foundation for the country. Malaysia has developed ties of friendship and co-operation with various other countries within the region such as Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand; as well as countries beyond the region.

Melaka exerted a strong influence in the area of politics and administration. The concept of sovereignty (*daulat*) as applied to the absolute powers wielded by the monarchy was clearly understood and applied. The Annals also defined the positions of responsibility occupied by the rulers and administrators within an established system of hierarchy. The customary ceremonial practices of the court were formalised. They form the basis for the official ceremonies and protocols being observed to this very day in the royal courts of the various states.

Melaka became a leading maritime power in the Malay Archipelagos. She established her identity internationally as a sovereign state, and became an imperial power in her right in the region. Her power was due to her economic strength, encouraged by Chinese trade in Melaka. Chinese merchants could trade in Melaka. Trade missions were sent to China. Family ties between Melaka and China were forged. These relations had two important political and economics consequences. Firstly, the existence of Melaka was recognized.

Secondly, it helped in the control of sea traffic, which formed the basis of prosperity. Melaka also assisted China in exchanging its products with the west. Due to the political and economics conditions, Melaka and China were dependant on each other. Apart from trading activities outside the region, it was noted that Melaka conducted trading with ports located in the South including Palembang, Java, Sulawesi and Majapahit.

In short, Melaka maintained a strong relationship with other countries so as to promote its economics activities while providing a competitive environment to attract traders and investors from within and outside the region

Melaka also had its own laws and regulations, thus securing the overall harmony of the community as a whole.

84 different languages were spoken by its inhabitants. Malay became the *lingua franca*. A language of culture and literature, it was used both inside and outside the Palace

Melaka also became an Islamic leader in the region. The port of Melaka was inhabited by foreigners - Arabs, Indians, Javanese, missionaries, traders and so on. Cambay, Khorassan, Kashmir, and Mecca were all familiar names to the Malay buyers of foreign merchandise.

Thus, the spread of Islam in the Malay Archipelago attracted commercial interactions between the local communities and immigrants of India, China, Arabia, as well as from other parts of the Malay Archipelago.

- **Time**

The Annals describe the golden era of the Malay Sultanate. Being historical literature in the form of narrative-prose, it portrays the history of the Melaka Sultanate from the period of the foundation of Malacca (estimated around 1400) right through to the period after 1511 (conquest of Melaka by the Portuguese)

- **Place**

The Annals reveal the socio-economic condition of the Malays and the other races at a certain point in time. The Sejarah Melayu narrates the discovery of important places such as Melaka, Singapura, and Petani (southern Thailand).

- **People**

The Annals reveal an insight into the social stratification of Melaka community, which includes royal dignitaries, administrators, noble men as well as court officials and ordinary people.

The Annals state that Melaka existed as early as the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D. and became a commercial center about 1400 A.D owing to the immigrations of Malays from Singapura or Temasik. The maritime states along the shores of the Straits of Melaka host a natural geography and nautical advantages to facilitate trading between the East and West of the Malay Archipelago. Thus, Melaka became a center of international trade in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

- **Subject/Theme**

History relating to various fields of knowledge such as literature, economics, diplomacy, religion and politics.

- **Form and Style**

The manuscripts in our custody are written on traditional paper in old Jawi script. Black ink was generally used, with certain words written in red.

- **Social Values**

The Annals portray the way of life and history of Melaka before 1511. It throws light on the culture, tradition, customs, social values and norms of Malay society.

- **Integrity**

The Annals provide proof of the existence of the Malay Sultanate, thus constituting an invaluable source of information on the Malay Empire which lasted some 111 years spanning the course of the fifteenth and early part of the sixteenth century. The historical evidence is further strengthened and reinforced by various other contemporary writings.

Recent studies on Sejarah Melayu shown that at least 29 copies of Sejarah Melayu have been copied, based on the original manuscript. The literature found in other forms are as follows, i.e :

1. Written in Jawi, various versions
2. Compiled or edited versions
  - a. Munsyi Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir, (Jawi) 1831
  - b. Dulaurier, 1849 - 1856
  - c. W.G Shellabear, 1896
  - d. R.O Winstedt, 1938
  - e. T. D. Situmorang and A.E. Teeuw based on Munsyi Abdullah version, 1952
  - f. Dato Madjoindo (Jawi) Jakatrta, 1959
  - g. Abdul Samad Ahmad, Kuala Lumpur, 1979
3. 29 copies located as follows :
  - a. 12 copies in the Netherlands
  - b. 11 copies in the United Kingdom
  - c. 5 copies at the Indonesia Cultural Board, Jakarta
  - d. 1 copy in Leningrad, Russia

In fact, from the contents of the text we can derive knowledge on Malay society during the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Although the text was written after the downfall of Melaka, it succeeds in preserving, projecting and reflecting a number of ideas about Melaka society.

- **Rarity**

It is the finest historical literary work in the Malay language written in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. is the only oldest handwritten text that is still surviving in the country of its origin.

## **4.2. Contextual assessment**

As it is regarded the finest historical literary work in the Malay language, The Malay Annals has been used as a text for the study of Malay Literature.

## **4.3. An evaluation of the authenticity**

The Malay Annals provides proof and as a source of information on the Malay Sultanate.

## **5. Management Plan**

### **Statement of the significance of the documentary heritage:**

The documentary heritage is of inestimable value on account of the fact that it is the only oldest handwritten text that is still surviving in the country of its origin.

### **Access policy and procedures:**

Microfilm and photostated copies are available for research purposes. However, permission is granted to refer to the original under strict supervision. Photocopying from the record is strictly prohibited.

### **Preservation and managerial policies to control the physical environment of the manuscripts:**

The manuscripts are preserved under preservation conditions as follows:

- (1) Temperature: 18-22 degrees centigrade
- (2) Humidity : 50-55%
- (3) Sunlight: no sunlight is allowed

## **6. Consultation**

### **6.1. Details of consultation about the nomination**

- (a) owner**- Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka,  
(The Institute of Language and Literature)
- (b) custodian** - Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka,  
(The Institute of Language and Literature)

## **7. Nominator**

### **7.1. Name:**

Dato' Haji A.Aziz Deraman

### **7.2. Relationship to the documentary heritage:**

Director-General

### **7.3. Contact person (if appropriate):**

Dato' Haji A.Aziz Deraman  
Director-General

### **7.4. Contact details:**

Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka,  
(Institute of Language and Literature)  
P.O. Box 10803,  
50926 Kuala Lumpur  
MALAYSIA  
Tel: 603-2481011  
Fax: 603-2484208

## **PART B - SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION**

### **8. Assessment of Risk**

The manuscripts are arranged according to the manuscript numbers. They are bound, well preserved and kept in the fire resistant cabinet. Preventive measures against fire, rain, etc are taken to ensure the safety of these manuscripts.

### **9. Preservation Assesment**

#### **• Present physical state:**

Well preserved and bound.

#### **• History of preservation:**

The manuscripts are written on traditional paper. Fragile and brittle documents have been deacidified, repaired and laminated. Some part of the manuscripts have been microfilmed and made accessible to researchers in the form of microfische.

- **Current preservation policy in relation to proposed nominated documentary heritage:**

Well preserved in accordance to international standard.

- **Person or organisation responsible for preservation:**

Dewan Bahasa and Pustaka  
(Institute of Language and Literature)