

A PHILOLOGICAL STUDY AND ANALYSIS OF TAFSIR METHODOLOGY: The 19th-Century Palembang Malay Qur'an Commentary Manuscript by Masagus Muzammil

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Abstract

This study examines the manuscript of the Malay Palembang Tafsir written by Masagus Muzammil using a philological approach. This study focuses on two aspects: the philological aspects present in the manuscript and the analysis of the tafsir methodology employed. The research method applied is qualitative with a descriptive-analytical type, focusing on the Al-Qur'an manuscript" atau " using the Al-Qur'an manuscript as the primary source. Data collection techniques include literature studies, direct observation of the manuscript's physical and textual features, interviews with relevant sources (including descendants of the author), and documentation of manuscript conditions. The results indicate that the Malay Palembang Tafsir manuscript is written on European paper, which has its own distinctive characteristics. The tafsir is organized systematically according to the order of the mushaf, presented concisely, and employs non-conventional academic formatting. Furthermore, the references used are derived from previous tafsir texts, reflecting the existing tradition of interpretation. The findings reveal that the Malay Palembang Tafsir manuscript (c. 1860 CE), written on European paper with watermarks, is arranged according to the



mushaf order and presented in a global, non-academic format. It applies a Sufi and socio-community interpretive style, using the tafsir bi al-ra'yi method, with both textual and contextual approaches. Academically, this study exposes the methodological hybridity of Malay tafsir traditions and shows how the manuscript bridges classical Islamic scholarship with Southeast Asian hermeneutics, highlighting the adaptive and dynamic nature of 19th-century Malay-Islamic intellectual thought.

Keywords: Manuscript; Malay Tafsir; Palembang; Philology; Tafsir Methodology

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji naskah Tafsir Melayu Palembang karya Masagus Muzammil dengan pendekatan filologis. Fokus kajian dibagi menjadi dua topik utama: aspek filologis yang terdapat dalam naskah dan analisis metodologi tafsir yang digunakan. Metode penelitian yang diterapkan bersifat kualitatif dengan tipe deskriptif-analitis, menjadikan naskah Al-Qur'an sebagai objek utama penelitian. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi studi pustaka, observasi langsung terhadap kondisi fisik dan teks naskah, wawancara dengan narasumber terkait (termasuk keturunan pengarang), serta dokumentasi kondisi naskah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa naskah Tafsir Melayu Palembang ditulis sekitar tahun 1860 M di atas kertas Eropa yang memiliki ciri khas watermark. Tafsir disusun secara sistematis mengikuti urutan mushaf, disampaikan secara global, dan tidak mengikuti konvensi penulisan ilmiah modern. Penafsiran menggunakan pendekatan tafsir bi al-ra'yi dengan nuansa sufistik dan sosial kemasyarakatan (adabi ijtimai'), serta menggabungkan pendekatan tekstual dan kontekstual. Secara akademik, penelitian ini mengungkap hibriditas metodologis dalam tradisi tafsir Melayu dan menunjukkan bagaimana naskah ini menjembatani keserjanaan Islam klasik dengan hermeneutika Asia Tenggara, sekaligus menyoroti dinamika adaptasi pemikiran intelektual Islam Melayu abad ke-19.

Kata Kunci: Naskah; Tafsir Melayu; Palembang; Filologi; Metodologi Tafsir

Introduction

The 19th-century Malay Qur'anic commentaries remains understudied in Southeast Asian philology, despite their role in shaping Islamic intellectual traditions beyond the Arab world. One such work is the Tafsir Melayu Palembang by Masagus Muzammil, a rare manuscript housed at the Malay Manuscript Laboratory of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang. Written in the mid-19th century, this tafsir uses Malay-Jawi script and reflects a hybrid model of interpretation combining Sufi spirituality with social commentary.

Its study is crucial for understanding how local Islamic scholars adapted classical exegesis to vernacular contexts within the Malay world. This research analyzes the manuscript's codicological features and interpretative methodology using a philological approach.¹

Ancient manuscripts are vital historical sources that preserve rich insights through written language. In Islamic civilization, the Qur'an holds a central role in transmitting religious knowledge. Studying its manuscripts goes beyond textual reconstruction, involving analysis of rasm, qirā'at, waqf signs, and scribal features. In Indonesia, Qur'anic interpretations in various local languages and scripts such as Malay, Javanese, and Lontara reflect the archipelago's diverse and layered Islamic heritage.²

The evolution of Qur'anic exegesis in the region involved both oral and written traditions, shaped by a dynamic interplay of adoption and adaptation, wherein Islamic teachings were localized through integration with indigenous cultures most notably within the Malay-Islamic tradition.³

In South Sumatra, particularly in Palembang, numerous manuscripts written in Jawi script have been discovered, covering Islamic disciplines such as *fiqh*, *tauhid*, and *tasawuf*. Following the decline of Aceh in the 18th century, Palembang rose as a new center of Islamic intellectual activity, producing notable scholars such as Abd al-Samad al-Falimbani and Kemas Fakhuruddin. According to Azra, this intellectual flourishing was largely supported by the Sultans of Palembang, who played an active role

¹ Oman Fathurahman, *Filologi Indonesia: Teori dan Metode*, (Jakarta: Prenada Media Group, 2015).

² Jajang A. Rohmana, "Empat Manuskrip Alquran di Subang Jawa Barat (Studi Kodikologi Manuskrip Alquran)," *Wawasan: Scientific Journal of Religion and Socio-Culture* 3, no. 1 (2018): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jw.v3i1.1964>.

³ Dedi Kuswandi, Ris'an Rusli, dan Amilda Sani, "Kultur Masyarakat Melayu: Studi Etnografi Islam Melayu Nusantara Abad 18," *Reslaj: Religion Education Social Laa Roiba Journal* 6, no. 3 (2023): 1470–86, <https://doi.org/10.47467/reslaj.v6i3.5515>.

in promoting religious scholarship. Demonstrating a keen interest in Islamic knowledge, the sultans provided patronage for scholars and took deliberate steps to attract Arab intellectuals particularly from Hadramaut to settle in Palembang. These Arab migrants contributed to the translation and interpretation of key religious texts, a process encouraged and commissioned by the palace, thereby embedding Palembang more deeply within the transregional networks of Islamic learning.⁴

Several studies have examined Qur'anic manuscripts from various regions, such as Anggraini and Makmun (2022) on the Raden Soleh Lamongan mushaf, Asadullah on KH. Suhaimi Rofiudin's tafsir, and Hussin et al. (2016) on Sheikh Idris al-Marbawi. Others include Wanodya on *qirā'at*, Ma'ali and Asif (2020) on Bustanul Ulum, and Amroeni and Nasution (2022) on North Sumatra's oldest mushaf. Unlike these works, which mostly focus on Javanese, Bugis, or Arabic-based texts, this study highlights the unique blend of Sufi and social (*adabi ijtimai*) exegesis in a 19th-century Malay tafsir. Masagus Muzammil's use of vernacular Malay, Jawi script, and a dual textual-contextual approach reveals a hybrid tradition that remains underexplored, positioning Palembang as a vital yet overlooked center in the map of Southeast Asian Qur'anic scholarship.⁵

This study focuses on the 19th-century *Tafsir Melayu Palembang* manuscript by Masagus Muzammil, housed at the Malay Manuscript Laboratory of UIN Raden Fatah Palembang. Despite being preserved at its discovery site rather than its place of origin, the manuscript holds substantial historical and intellectual value, particularly through its 1860 CE colophon written in both numerals and words. As the first critical philological examination

⁴ Zulkarnain Yani, *Al-'Urwah Al-Wuthqa Karya Al-Falimbani: Tradisi dan Ritual Tarekat Sammaniyah di Palembang*, (Jakarta: Penamadani, 2011).

⁵ Rofiatul Amroeni, "Manuskrip Al-Qur'an Tertua di Sumatera Utara (Studi Kodikologi dan Tekstologi Manuskrip Al-Qur'an)," *Ibn Abbas* 4, no. 2 (2022): 265.

of this tafsir, the study addresses a significant gap in Southeast Asian Qur'anic exegesis traditions, especially those written in vernacular Malay. By combining codicological analysis with tafsir methodology, this research explores how local scholars localized Islamic knowledge, shedding light on the intersection between textual tradition and regional adaptation in Islamic intellectual history.

This research is qualitative.⁶ library-based research method with a philological approach. The primary source is the *Tafsir Melayu Palembang* manuscript by Masagus Muzammil, classified as a unique manuscript (no known copies exist). Data were collected through literature review, direct observation of the manuscript's physical and textual features, interviews with the author's descendants, and documentation. The analysis follows descriptive-analytical techniques, focusing on codicology (the study of manuscript structure and materiality) and textology (the study of textual content and interpretation). A standard critical edition method was applied to identify textual inconsistencies and restore the manuscript to a reliable reading form. This approach allows for a comprehensive reconstruction of the manuscript's historical, cultural, and intellectual context.

⁶ Kualitatif adalah mekanisme penelitian yang menyajikan data deskriptif berupa kata-kata tertulis dan lisan. Lihat Lexi L Meleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*, VIII (Bandung: Rosyda Karya, 1997).

Result and Discussion

Description/Profile of the Tafsir Manuscript

This tafsir manuscript, authored by Masagus Muzammil, is currently in the possession of Ustadz Kemas Haji Andi Syarifudin, M.Ag., and is preserved in the Malay Manuscript Laboratory at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang.⁷ The discovery of this manuscript represents a significant contribution to the study of classical Malay manuscripts. Beyond its historical value, it offers profound insights and messages to its readers. The manuscript comprises one volume (717 pages) covering Juz 16 beginning from the middle of Surah Al-Kahf through to Juz 30, concluding with Surah An-Nas.

In terms of preservation, the manuscript is stored in a tiered glass cabinet, reflecting the owner's dedicated efforts to protect and conserve this valuable heritage. The glass casing not only shields the manuscript from dust and physical damage but also allows it to be visually appreciated by visitors without direct contact an essential practice in the conservation of fragile historical materials.

The manuscript is written on European paper featuring watermarks and countermarks, indicating the use of high-quality materials. This choice of paper suggests that both the author and the owner placed great importance on the durability and prestige of the manuscript. It further underscores the manuscript's cultural and intellectual significance within the literary practices of its time.

Additionally, the manuscript includes a cover and a colophon at the end, which provides crucial information about the author and the date of composition. Colophons are valuable features in classical manuscripts, as they assist scholars in tracing provenance, authorship, and historical context. In this case, the presence of a colophon affirms the manuscript's authenticity and historical specificity. As such, it stands not only as a religious text

⁷ Wawancara langsung dengan Ustadz Kemas Haji Andi Syarifudin pada bulan Juli 2023 di Laboratorium Naskah Melayu, UIN Raden Fatah Palembang

but also as a vital source for understanding the social, political, and cultural milieu of 19th-century Malay Palembang.

In conclusion, the tafsir manuscript by Masagus Muzammil, currently held by Kemas Haji Andi Syarifudin at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, is more than a preserved artifact; it is a vital artifact documenting the intellectual legacy of the Malay Muslim tradition. Through its physical characteristics, careful preservation, and rich textual content, the manuscript offers a valuable lens through which future generations may explore and sustain the heritage of Islamic scholarship in the Malay world.

Aspects of Manuscript Codicology

The word codicology comes from the Latin term *codex*, plural *codices*, which means manuscript. *Codex* here is used to refer to a classic work in the form of a manuscript. In this case, Robson⁸ interprets codicology as a "lesson about manuscripts", while Baried states that codicology is the science of codes.⁹ The meaning of *codex* here is handwritten material, which explores the ins and outs of ancient manuscripts, such as: age, type of paper, ink color, author or copyist of the manuscript, illumination, illustration, type of writing, condition of the manuscript, and so on. While Fathurrahman claims that codicology is the study of books or manuscripts, especially after the printing press was invented, hence the word *codex* is used to refer to a book or manuscript.¹⁰ Specifically, *codex* here refers to the context of manuscripts, namely handwritten ancient manuscripts (manuscripts) as the main object of philological study.

In this study, the researcher will conduct a codicological study of the Palembang Malay Tafsir Manuscript written by Masagus Muzammil. This codicological study aims to analyze the

⁸ SO Robson, *Prinsip-prinsip Filologi Indonesia*, (Jakarta: Joint publication of the Language Development and Cultivation Center with RUL, 1994).

⁹ et al., *Pengantar Teori Filologi*.

¹⁰ Oman Fathurrahman, *Filologi Indonesia: Teori dan Metode*.

physical characteristics of the manuscript, including the types of materials used, writing techniques, and decorative elements found in the manuscript. With this approach, it is hoped that a deeper understanding can be obtained regarding the cultural and intellectual values contained in the manuscript, as well as its role in the tradition of writing and religious teaching in the Palembang region.

codicological aspects contained in the Palembang Malay Tafsir Manuscript:

1. Title of Manuscript

In the manuscript of the Qur'an manuscript, there is no explanation regarding the title of the manuscript¹¹. According to Andi Syarifudin, this manuscript is similar to the Tafsir Jalalain in Palembang Malay. The condition of the manuscript cover is no longer there and the condition of the Qur'an manuscript is incomplete. Therefore, the researcher identified this manuscript as the "Palembang Malay Tafsir Manuscript". The researcher named it MTBMP. This is because the location of the Qur'an manuscript is in Palembang, South Sumatra and is an archive of the Palembang Malay manuscript laboratory located at UIN Raden Fatah Palembang.

2. Name of scriptwriter and year of writing

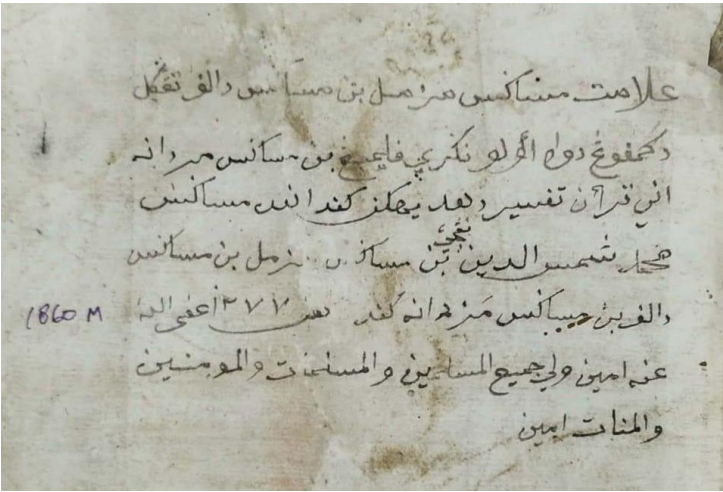
The Qur'anic manuscript is Masagus Muzamil bin Masagus Dalif bin Masagus Mardan. This commentary was written as a gift for his son, Masagus Syamsudin Nangcik bin Masagus Muzammil. This manuscript was written around 1860 AD, which is roughly equivalent to 1276-1277 Hijri¹². Masagus Muzamil, a prominent scholar, poured his knowledge into this manuscript to ensure that

¹¹ Small, K. E. (2011). *Textual Criticism and Qur'ân manuscripts*. Lexington books.

¹² El-Rouayheb, K. (2019). *The development of Arabic logic (1200–1800)* (Vol. 2). Schwabe Verlag (Basel).

the legacy of Islamic knowledge could be passed on to the next generation. This manuscript is one of the important historical pieces of evidence that show the dedication of the Masagus family in preserving religious knowledge.

Colophon Image



3. Paper Type

The media for writing ancient manuscripts in Indonesia are quite varied, such as paper or materials from leaves and plants, such as palm leaves, bamboo, daluang, rattan and so on. When identifying the type of paper used in the manuscript of the Al-Qur'an Mushaf , Patria Park, researchers observed that this manuscript uses paper made from ancient paper materials. The writing media in this manuscript uses European paper.

European paper was indeed popular at that time, because the paper material tends to be flexible and can accommodate various line drawing styles more easily, compared to lontar where the carving technique requires high skill and attention to detail if it is to be varied. One of the characteristics of European paper is generally a paper stamp, which can be seen by holding it up to the light. This watermark shows the quality of the paper used at that

time and is an important historical marker in various historical documents, both in Europe and North America.

The watermark on this manuscript reads "J. Honig & Zoonen " from a Dutch papermaking family active from 1737 to 1787. ¹³This watermark is often found on various historical documents, including several printings of the United States Declaration of Independence made by John Dunlap in 1776. The production of paper with this watermark was carried out by the Honig family company , which owned several paper mills in the Netherlands, such as De Veenboer and Herderskind .

Honig & Zoonen paper stamp



Honig & Zoonen paper was copied in the 18th, or early 19th century – not the mid or late 19th century. J Honig & Zoonen paper stamps have two variations, namely with shadow and without shadow¹⁴. What is meant by shadow is a kind of shadow along the vertical lines of the paper (chain lines) (see image). The shadow is a characteristic of older European paper ,

¹³ Ali Akbar, "Watermark, Origin, and Age of Manuscripts," Saturday, February 15, 2020, <https://quran-nusantara.blogspot.com/2020/02/kertas.html>.

¹⁴ Churchill, W. A. (2024). Watermarks in paper in Holland, England, France, etc. in the XVII and XVIII centuries and their interconnection. Brill.

namely the 18th century to the beginning of the 19th century. In addition, there is also paper with the J Honig & Zoonen stamp without shadow . According to Russell Jones , a European paper expert , the type without shadow was used in Nusantara manuscripts in the mid to late 19th century. The difference is due to changes in ¹⁵European papermaking technology .

Watermark Image



4. Physical Condition

According to philological theory, the condition of a complete manuscript refers to a manuscript that is still in perfect condition, without missing pages and in good physical condition. However, the physical condition of the Manuscript of the Al-Qur'an by Masagus Muzammil which will be explained is no longer intact. The manuscript has a cover , both at the beginning and the end. Based on the results of the search, it was found that several pages of the manuscript were missing, both at the beginning and at the end. This manuscript only contains juz 16, starting from the

¹⁵ Russell Jones, *European and Asian Papers in Malay Manuscripts. A Provisional Assessment.* (BKI, 1993).

middle of the Surah al-Kahf to juz 30, ending with the Surah an-Nas . These imperfections indicate that although the manuscript has historical and academic value, its physical condition has undergone significant degradation over time.

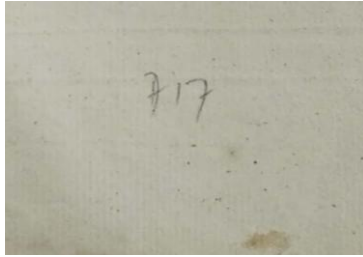
Front cover



5. Binding, Number of Drains, Sheets and Pages of Manuscript

The Qur'an manuscript is bound using thread and bark, a traditional technique that reflects ancient binding methods . The manuscript consists of a single volume with 717 remaining pages . The thread and bark binding technique shows an effort to maintain the sturdiness and durability of the manuscript, despite its current state of disintegration. This type of binding not only has functional value in keeping the pages together, but also provides insight into the practices and technology of manuscripts at the time of its creation. Further analysis of the binding structure may provide additional information regarding the period and origin of this manuscript.

Manuscript Page Number Image



6. Number of Lines Per Page , Page Numbering, and Transliteration Words

The writing in the Manuscript of the Al-Qur'an Mushaf has 13 lines , numbering is found on each page, but numbering in each verse is not found. In this manuscript there is also a diverted word located at the bottom of the manuscript which functions as a pointer to the word on the next page and as a marker for the page order.

7. Manuscript Size, Writing and Manuscript Weight

The manuscript of the Tafsir Al- Qur'an by Masagus Muzammil has an interesting size. Imagine a rectangle: the right side is 9 centimeters long, the same as the left side. The top is 7 centimeters wide, the same as the bottom . So, this manuscript has a symmetrical and neat shape. Its proportional size makes it easy for readers to read and enjoy the contents of the interpretation. The accuracy in determining the size shows concern for the comfort of the reader and the beauty of the manuscript.

8. Illumination

Illumination refers to decorative elements, typically framing manuscript pages that is usually provided by the author of the manuscript and forms a frame on the first, middle, and possibly last page. Generally, this illumination is found on the right and left edges, as well as the top and bottom, so that its shape frames or surrounds the manuscript.

The type of illumination found in the Tafsir Al- Qur'an Manuscript by Masagus Muzammil is quite simple but has its own uniqueness, namely only in the form of straight lines that form a frame on each page in black. Although there are no complicated ornaments or decorations, the frame lines give a neat and structured impression, indicating the importance of the contents contained therein.

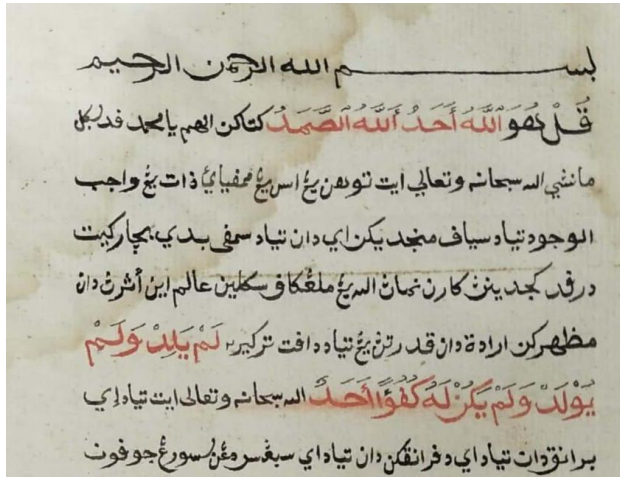
These illuminations reflect a minimalist approach that is probably intended to keep the reader's focus on the Qur'anic text explained in the commentary. Thus, despite its unobtrusive appearance, the illuminations still serve to emphasize and frame each page, giving a distinctive feel to Masagus Muzammil's work.

9. Types of Khat, Language and Script

The type of khat used in this Al- Qur'an manuscript is khat naskhi . This type of khat is one type of Arabic text writing that is often used by the general public. The most striking characteristic of khat naskhi is its series of easy-to-read sentences. So this type of khat is most often used in Arabic texts.

10. Text Color

In writing this manuscript, the use of color plays an important role and is done very carefully, using three different types of colors, namely black and red. Red ink was specifically chosen for writing the text of the Qur'an , which emphasizes the holy verses and makes them stand out more, while black ink is used for explanations or meanings of the verses, so that readers can easily distinguish between the original text and its interpretation.



In addition, the phrase " *bismillahirrahmanirrahim* " is written in black ink, which shows respect and simplicity in writing, and emphasizes the meaning contained therein. With this combination of colors, the manuscript not only becomes more visually appealing, but also makes it easier for readers to understand the content and context of each verse, creating a deeper and more meaningful reading experience. This structured use of color reflects the author's attention and dedication in presenting a work that is not only informative, but also aesthetic.

Interpretation Methodology: Methods, Nuances, and Approaches

The methodological aspect of interpretation refers to the “deep” construction related to the methodological principles applied in the interpretation process. In this context, the direction of study is divided into three main areas: (1) Interpretation Methods, which include the techniques and methods used to interpret the text; (2) Interpretation Nuances, which relate to the cultural, social, and spiritual contexts that influence the method of interpretation; and (3) Interpretation Approaches, which reflect the theoretical framework and perspectives used in understanding and explaining the meaning of the text. These three areas are

interrelated and provide a strong foundation in understanding the interpretation process comprehensively. ¹⁶

Masagus Muzammil's tafsir employs the *bi al-ra'yi* method, which emphasizes rational reflection (*ijtihād*) over strict reliance on transmitted reports (*riwāyat*). This methodological choice reflects a broader trend among 19th-century Malay scholars who sought to balance inherited tradition with reasoned interpretation. Muzammil's rationalist orientation is not detached from normative Islamic scholarship but is rather rooted in a locally adapted epistemological framework that privileges accessibility and ethical relevance.

The interpretive nuance in the manuscript is predominantly Sufi, interwoven with *adabi ijtimā'i* (social-ethical) concerns. Rather than pursuing legalistic or linguistic precision, the tafsir reveals a concern for spiritual transformation and communal morality hallmarks of classical Sufi exegesis. This corresponds to Annabel Keeler's typology of Sufi commentary, where the exegete seeks deeper inner meanings (*bāṭin*) beyond the surface of the text. Muzammil does not adhere exclusively to one interpretive mode but blends mystical reflection with references to lived social issues, suggesting a dual function for the manuscript: spiritual instruction and ethical guidance.

Furthermore, Muzammil's integration of rational exegesis with Sufi sensibilities mirrors the intellectual syncretism of 19th-century Malay Islamic scholarship, which combined elements of Mu'tazilite-influenced rationalism and local mysticism. This stands in contrast to the more rigidly *fiqh*-oriented interpretations found in contemporary Acehnese tafsirs, such as those by Abd al-Rauf al-Singkili, whose work exhibits a more doctrinal and juridical tone (Lombard, 2006).

In terms of hermeneutical approach, the tafsir demonstrates a dynamic interplay between textual and contextual

¹⁶ Islah Gusmian, *Khaṣanah Tafsir Indonesia: dari Hermeneutika hingga Ideologi*, (Jakarta: Teraju, 2003).

orientations. Although arranged according to the canonical tartīb al-muṣṣḥaf, Muzammil’s commentary is sensitive to the socio-religious context of his audience, embedding Qur’anic meanings within the moral realities of 19th-century Palembang. This hybrid approach reflects what Beatrice Gruendler (2011) terms the social function of Islamic manuscripts as not merely textual artifacts but as instruments of ethical formation and cultural negotiation.

Taken together, Muzammil’s tafsir positions Palembang as a crossroads of Islamic thought in Southeast Asia, where transregional scholarly currents converged with vernacular expression and communal values. The manuscript’s method and nuance exemplify the adaptive strategies of Malay-Muslim intellectuals in shaping a localized, yet cosmopolitan, Qur’anic hermeneutic.

Table of Methodological Aspects of the Manuscript of the Interpretation of the Qur'an by Masagus Muzammil

No	Methodological Aspects		Analysis
1	Method	1. Methods of Interpretation of History	
		2. Method of Interpretation of Thought	X
		3. Intertextual Interpretation Method	
2	Nuance	1. Linguistics	
		2. Social-Community	X
		3. Theology	

No	Methodological Aspects	Analysis
	4. Sufism	X
	5. Psychological	
3	Approach	
	1. Textual	X
	2. Contextual	

Systematics of Writing Tafsir Manuscripts in Malay Masagus Muzammil

The technical aspects of writing the interpretation of the Qur'an referred to here Here is a technical framework used by the author of the interpretation in presenting an interpretation work (external aspect). So, this aspect of writing is more related to the writing of the interpretation work, which is technical, not to the interpretation process which is methodological.

As for the technical aspects of the writing, it includes five important parts, the following description is a search for the parts in the technical area of writing the interpretation with a study of the knitting in each category. Among them are the first, Systematics of Presentation of Interpretation. Second, Form of Presentation of Interpretation. Third, Form of Writing. Fourth, Nature of the Exegete, and Fifth, Reference sources.

First , the systematic presentation is a series used in presenting an interpretation, technically it can be made into various systematics. In terms of the systematic presentation, it can be grouped into two parts, namely: systematic presentation sequence, and systematic presentation thematic.

In writing this tafsir manuscript Masagus Muzammil used a systematic presentation of the verses of the Qur'an as follows:

1. Translate literally into Malay
2. Interpreting the Qur'an according to *the rules Ottoman*

3. The meaning is explained after the text of the Qur'anic verse . Each verse of the Al-Quran is reviewed very simply, without any attempt to provide enrichment with other insights, so that the discussion carried out only emphasizes a concise and global understanding.
4. Presenting *reasons al-nuzul* , the number of verses, and their surah's.
5. Not much questioning of language, but more emphasis on meaning.
6. Avoids excessive detail on minor issues (*juz'iyyat*), or partial issues (*juz'iyyat*), but directly entering into universal issues (*kulliyyat*).

With the explanation above , it can be seen that the systematic presentation of the interpretation adopted by Masagus Muzammil is sequential based on the orderly arrangement of the surah's in the Uthmani Mushaf or *Tartib Al-Mushaf*, not based on the revelation or *Tartib. an-nuzuli*.¹⁷

According to researchers, it is possible to use the tartib systematics Mushafi was caused by the fact that Masagus Muzammil was greatly influenced by the Jalalain interpretation ideas , and also because the mawdhu'i systematics were not yet popular at that time. The tartib model Masagus Muzammil's mushafi begins with a surah's in Juz 16, precisely in the middle of Surah Al-Kahfi, and ends with Surah An-Nas . This work is considered incomplete, because only one volume was found covering Juz 16 to Juz 30, while Juz 1 to Juz 15 have not been found. This raises questions about the possibility of the existence of these juz in other locations or the possibility that they have been lost. Further research is needed to identify the existence and

¹⁷ Dedi Kuswandi dan Abu Maskur, "Metodologi Tafsir Ulama Nusantara di Tanah Pasundan (Telaah Atas Kitab Tafsir Rawdhat Al-'Irfân dan Malja' At-Thâlibîn Karya KH. Ahmad Sanusi)," *Al-Fahmu: Journal of the Science of the Qur'an and Interpretation* 1, no. 1 (2022): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.58363/alfahmu.v1i1.6>.

condition of the lost juz, as well as to understand the context and history of the tartib model of this mushafi .

Second , the form of presentation of the interpretation referred to here is a form of description in the presentation of the interpretation taken by the interpreter in interpreting the Qur'an . In this case, the form of presentation of the interpretation adopts as, al-farmawi ¹⁸divides the method of interpreting the verses of the Qur'an into four main categories, namely: the *tablili method* (detailed), the *ijmali method (global)*, *muqarin* method (comparative), and *mawdhu'i method* (thematic). These four methods can serve as a barometer to analyze the approach used by Masagus Muzammil in writing his tafsir. By using these four methods as a frame of reference, we can evaluate and better understand how Masagus Muzammil compiled his tafsir, as well as his contribution to the study of Al- Qur'anic interpretation as a whole.

Referring to the division above, in interpreting Al-Quran , Masagus Muzammil uses the global method (*ijmali*), by explaining the meaning of vocabulary (explanation of each mufradat), the overall understanding of the verse (*ijmali*), *the reasons al -Nuzul* , *munasabah* , the connotation of the sentence, the opinions regarding the interpretation of the verses, both those conveyed by the Prophet, the Companions, the Tabi'in , and other interpreters. This procedure is carried out by following the arrangement of the mushaf, verse by verse and surah by surah. His interpretation sometimes also includes the cultural development of the Prophet's generation.

Third, What is meant by the form of tafsir writing here is the writing mechanism which concerns the technical rules in the editorial preparation of tafsir literature. The rules in question are the procedure for citing sources, writing footnotes, mentioning books that are used as references, and other matters concerning

¹⁸ 'Abd al-Hayy. Al-Farmawi, *Metode Tafsir Mawdhu'iyy, Diterjemahkan oleh Suryan A. Jamrah, Judul Asli, Al-Bidayah Fi Al-Tafsir Al- Mawdhu'iyy: Studi Metode Mawdhu'iyyah* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 1994).

the construction. editorial . In this regard, there are two main things that are analyzed: (1) forms of scientific writing, and (2) forms of non-scientific writing.

Based on the analysis conducted, it can be concluded that the form of writing the interpretation manuscript carried out by Masagus Muzammil is a form of non-scientific writing. This can be seen from the characteristics of the writing style which tends to be narrative and does not prioritize systematic research methodology and standardized references . In addition, the use of simpler and less formal language indicates that this work is intended for a wider audience , not just academics. Thus, although this work has important value in the context of interpretation, it does not meet the criteria for scientific writing which usually involves critical analysis and argumentation based on data and sources that can be accounted for.

Fourth, in compiling an interpretive work, a person can do it individually, collectively (two or more people) or even by forming a special team or committee officially. This model is what is meant by the nature of the interpreter. In the context of the nature of the interpreter, interpretive works in Indonesia are broadly divided into two types: (1) individual, and (2) collective or team.

Judging from the process of compiling the interpretation manuscript carried out by Masagus Muzammil, it is clear that this interpretation was written directly and individually by himself. This personal writing process reflects the depth of understanding and emotional involvement of the author in the text being interpreted. In addition, this individual approach allows Masagus Muzammil to express his interpretation and views directly, without intervention from other parties. This can also be seen from the consistency of his writing style and choice of words that reflect his personality and unique perspective as an interpreter. Thus, this manuscript is not only a work of interpretation, but also a reflection of Masagus

Muzammil's thoughts and spiritual experiences in understanding the Qur'an .

At this stage, Masagus Muzammil is more dominant in using ratio in interpreting the verses of the Qur'an by still considering the narrations from the prophet even if they are few. Likewise, the status of narrations in his interpretation, Masagus Muzammil often includes hadiths with the quality of hasan, even dha'if . In the context of matters related to worship, dha'if hadiths can be used as motivation to practice good deeds as long as they do not contradict the Sharia.

Fifth, Reference sources are interpretation literature used as reference sources by interpreters, both in terms of language and generation. The interpretation literature can be in the form of Arabic interpretation works, Arabic literature that is used as a reference, English literature , Indonesian literature or other related works.

In this case, Masagus Muzammil in writing his interpretation did not provide a detailed explanation of the sources and references used, which could raise questions about the accuracy and credibility of the interpretation he presented. The absence of a clear explanation of the reference sources has the potential to hinder readers in understanding the context and rationale underlying the interpretation given. Without adequate information about the sources used, readers may have difficulty in evaluating the validity of the arguments and interpretations presented, which could affect their understanding of the text of the Qur'an . Therefore, it is important to emphasize the need for transparency in writing interpretations so that readers can better access and assess information.

Table of Technical Aspects of Writing Tafsir Manuscripts in Malay Masagus Muzammil

No	Technical Writing of Tafsir		Analysis
1	Systematic presentation of interpretation	1. Sequential Presentation	X
		2. Thematic Presentation.	
2	Form of presentation of interpretation	1. Tahlili (Detailed)	X
		2. Ijmali (Global	
		3. Muqarin (Comparative)	
		4. Mawdhu'i (Thematic)	
3	Form of writing	1. Scientific	X
		2. Non-Scientific	
4	The Nature of an Interpreter	1. Individual	X
		2. Collective	
5	Reference Source	1. Book of Interpretation	X
		2. Not a Book of Interpretation	

Philological and Islamic Studies Contribution of the Malay-Jawi Tafsir Tradition

Since its emergence in the 16th century and its gradual decline by the 1960s, Malay-Jawi tafsir has evolved within rich and diverse socio-cultural contexts. Its authors represented diverse intellectual traditions. Their commentaries reflect spiritual engagement while addressing communal needs. The tafsir manuscript by Masagus Muzammil exemplifies this tradition by presenting not only Qur'anic interpretation but also the ethical and mystical sensibilities of 19th-century Palembang society. This study reveals the hybridity of Sufi and socio-community exegesis in Malay-Islamic manuscripts, challenging the Arab-centric paradigm in tafsir studies. It demonstrates how localized Islamic knowledge production expressed in fluent, idiomatic Palembang Malay served pedagogical and spiritual purposes. The unique color-coding of red ink for Arabic script and black ink for Malay interpretations further reflects a didactic strategy to make the tafsir accessible to a broader audience, including non-Arabic-speaking Muslims.

Beyond its linguistic and aesthetic qualities, the manuscript contributes to philological studies by offering rare evidence of the convergence between oral transmission, regional language, and textual preservation in the Malay archipelago. In the context of Islamic studies, it provides insight into how Qur'anic knowledge was internalized and adapted through vernacular traditions, reinforcing the role of Malay as a unifying and instructional medium across ethnic and social divides in South Sumatra. Thus, this research not only recovers a valuable manuscript but also advances scholarly understanding of vernacular Islamic intellectual history, highlighting how Malay tafsir served as a medium for both spiritual formation and cultural continuity in Southeast Asia.¹⁹

¹⁹ Abdul Azim Amin, "Bahasa Melayu Palembang Mengadopsi Bahasa Arab Fusshah dalam Naskah Palembang Tahun 1842," *TAMADDUN: Jurnal Kebudayaan dan Sastra Islam* 18, no. 2 (2018): 1–25, <https://doi.org/10.19109/tamaddun.v18i2.2783>.

An Example of Tafsir Editing in Surah An-Naba

Since only a single manuscript of Masagus Muzammil's tafsir including the interpretation of Surah An-Naba' is extant, this study applies a standard edition method in editing the text, without recourse to comparative manuscript analysis..

Transliteration

سورة النبأ مدينة آياتها كلماتها حروفها بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

دغن نام ذات يغ واجب الوجود لذاته، لاكي مطلق درفد يغ مطلق، يغ دقيدكن دغن ليسان جبرائيل، يغ دمصدركن حق سبحانه وتعالى، كغد قلب نورالاعلى، يغ دفنجر درفد نورالاحاط، يغ ممدلاكي محيط فد سكلين عالم اين.

دغن لمفه كمراهنن سمفي كغد هما يغ كچل دان فاسير يغ سني²، تياد سوڻ درفد ملوكن كلكوڻ فد تيف² كتيك دان ماس، مك فد سكلين اثر دان مظهر إرادة دان قدرتن.

انيله لمفه فغنل سكل نبي دان ولي دان سكل مؤمن يغ تله دكسيه حق تعالى كغداڻ، مك دتجوكن سكلين فربنداهراءڻ، كغد برغسياف يغ دكهنديڻ، سرتا دغن فكرڻ.

سفرت فرمان الله تعالى:

وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

ترجمهن:

"فكركنله، الهم هي سكل يغ بر عقل، دلم كجدين توجه لافيس لاغيث دان افاي، دان درفداف كجدينڻ، دان بكيما كسدهنڻ".

سفرت فرمان الله تعالى:

فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِيَ الْأَلْبَابِ

Translation in the Malay language

Surah An-Naba', madaniyyah, ayat-ayatnya, kalimat-kalimatnya, huruf-hurufnya.

Dengan nama Zat yang wajib al-wujud bagi zat-Nya, lagi mutlak daripada yang mutlak, yang diikatkan dengan lisan Jibril, yang dimashdarkan oleh al-Haqq Subhānahu wa Ta'ālā, kepada hati cahaya tertinggi (qalb nūr al-a'lā), yang terpancar daripada cahaya meliputi (nūr al-ihāṭah), yang menerangi seluruh lingkungan alam ini.

Dengan limpah kemurahan-Nya sampai kepada yang kecil, dan yang halus seni, tiadalah sesuatu daripada kelakuan-Nya yang tiada berlaku pada tiap-tiap ketika dan masa, maka pada segala bekas dan segala tempat pernyataan kehendak dan kekuasaan-Nya.

Inilah limpah yang dikenali oleh segala nabi dan wali, dan segala mukmin yang telah didedahkan oleh Allah Ta'ālā kepada mereka, maka diperlihatkan segala rahasia-Nya kepada sesiapa yang Dia kehendaki, serta dengan fikirannya, sebagaimana firman Allah Ta'ālā: “Wa yatafakkarūna fī khalqī al-samāwāti wa al-ard” (ertinya: "Dan mereka memikirkan tentang kejadian langit dan bumi").

Maka fikirkanlah, wahai orang-orang yang berakal, akan segala kejadian lapis-lapis langit dan bumi dan dari manakah kejadiannya dan bagaimana kesudahannya, sebagaimana firman Allah:

“Fa'tabirū yā ulī al-albāb”

(ertinya: "Ambillah pelajaran, wahai orang-orang yang mempunyai akal").

Translation into English

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

Surah An-Naba', revealed in Madinah its verses, its words, its surah's.

In the name of the One whose existence is necessary by His essence, the Absolute beyond all absolutes, whose message is transmitted through the tongue of Jibril, originating from al-Haqq (The Truth), exalted is He, to the heart of the Supreme Light (*nūr al-a‘lā*), emanating from the encompassing light (*nūr al-iḥāṭah*) which surrounds and illuminates all realms of existence.

By His overflowing mercy, even the smallest and subtlest of creations are reached, for none of His actions are void of manifestation in every moment and every time, within all traces and reflections of His will and power.

This divine overflow is known to all prophets, saints, and to every believer to whom Allah has granted unveiling. To them, He disclosed the treasures of His secrets, according to His will and their capacity for reflection as expressed in His words: **“And they reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth”** (*Qur’an*, 3:191).

Therefore, reflect, O people of reason, upon the origin and structure of the heavens and the earth, their beginning and their ultimate return as Allah also says: **“Take heed, O people of understanding.”**

Conclusion

This study reconstructs the intellectual legacy of Masagus Muzammil’s 19th-century *Tafsir Melayu Palembang* through a combined codicological and methodological analysis. The manuscript, dated circa 1860 CE based on the colophon written in Jawi-Malay script, reflects a distinctive Palembang origin both linguistically and materially. It consists of a single complete volume (juz 16–30), leaving earlier sections (juz 1–15) unaccounted for an omission that warrants further archival research.

Codicologically, the manuscript displays local production practices layered with transregional influences, such as the use of European paper featuring J. Honig & Zoonen watermarks. Structurally, it contains 13 lines per page, with uniform margins, and is organized according to *tartīb al-muṣḥaf* surah by surah, verse by verse yet presented in a global (*ijmālī*) manner that departs from formal scientific tafsir conventions. The deliberate use of red ink for Arabic script and black ink for Malay interpretation further reveals its pedagogical intent for non-Arabic-speaking audiences.

Methodologically, the tafsir integrates the bi al-ma'tsūr interpretive model with strong Sufi and adabi ijtimā'i (social-ethical) nuances, underscoring its dual function as a text of spiritual guidance and communal reflection. This hermeneutic hybridity exemplifies how 19th-century Palembang served as a cultural and intellectual crossroads where global Islamic discourses were localized into Malay idioms.

The manuscript's interpretive accessibility prioritizing readability over academic formalism challenges dominant assumptions in Islamic studies about the "rigor" of vernacular tafsir traditions. Its existence affirms the depth and diversity of Qur'anic engagement in Southeast Asia, beyond the Arab-centric paradigms that dominate much of classical exegesis scholarship.

This study contributes to two broader fields: (1) the material culture of Islamic knowledge transmission in colonial-era Southeast Asia, and (2) the expansion of tafsir studies to include regional, vernacular expressions of Qur'anic thought. Future research may employ digital reconstruction techniques to recover the missing juz, or conduct comparative analysis with Acehnese and Javanese tafsir to map regional variations in Malay-Islamic hermeneutics. Ultimately, by bridging philology and Islamic studies, this research reaffirms the importance of so-called peripheral manuscripts as integral components in the global network of Qur'anic scholarship.

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