

# A Philological Review of the Banten Sultanate Business Letters in 17th - 19th Century

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## ABSTRACT

One of the products of the ancient culture created by the Indonesian ancestors is old manuscripts. Every kingdom is assumed to be a scriptorium, producing various royal manuscripts and documents. From a number of catalogues of these ancient manuscripts, the genre of the texts can be determined. This paper discusses a specific group of manuscripts: the business letters. So far, the ancient business letters have not been studied. The purpose of this study is to promote the local wisdom in the ancient Indonesian letters so that it will be known and made use of, not only for the significance of science, but also the knowledge of the ancient trade strategies. Based on the descriptions provided by the manuscripts, thirteen out of fifty letters from the Banten Sultanate were business letters. The problem of this study is how were the text and the character of these letters. To get accurate results, the thirteen business letters from Banten were examined in philological methods, with the texts critically edited. The results demonstrate that the business letters from the Banten Sultanate were international business letters written from the 17th to 19th centuries.

## Keywords

old manuscript, genre, Banten business letters, philology, critical edition

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## Background

One of the products of the ancient culture created by the Indonesian ancestors was handwritten, work in the form of old manuscripts. In this paper, the terms “old manuscripts” will simply be referred to as “manuscripts.”

The assumption that every kingdom or sultanate is a cultural center implies that it also functions as a scriptorium, i.e. the birth place of writing activities, either manuscript creation or reproduction. The results are various handwritten manuscripts and sultanate documents in the fields of literature, politics, religion, economics, and others. These handwritten manuscripts become the legacy of the Indonesian ancestors which remains valuable and relevant in today's era.

From the information contained in the various Indonesian manuscript catalogues, the various genres of texts – including history, law, literature, mythology, language, economy, politics, letters, technology, and others – can be determined. From all these genres, I was particularly interested in manuscripts containing texts on economy, especially business letters.

So far, studies on the Indonesian manuscripts have generally focused on old manuscripts with the aim of publishing, translating, and reviewing their contents. However, what about the letter manuscripts (hereinafter referred to as “letters”), particularly business letters? Have they been studied? Observations on various studies of these manuscripts reveal that the business letters, within the genre of economy, have not been discussed. The fact is that this genre is particularly crucial to unfold the strategies of the ancient kings in their dialogues on the economy of their kingdoms or sultanates. With that in mind, this study is written to ensure that the local wisdom presented by these letters will be known and made use of, not only for the significance of science but also for the knowledge of the

ancient trade strategies that may still be applicable today. To get a comprehensive understanding of the study, the existing works that have discussed the ancient Indonesian letters are presented in the following.

## Previous Studies on the Letters

In one of his works titled *The Legacy of Malay Letter*, Warisan Warkah Melayu, Gallop (1) describes one hundred Malay Nusantara (the Indonesian archipelago) letters found in England and originating from Aceh to Sumenep. The description in this book of the exhibition catalogue is divided into three sections. The first section presents the Malay correspondence. The second details about the art of the Malay correspondence. Gallop asserts that there are ten elements in the Malay art of correspondence (called the *Kitab Terasul*), and they are the shape or design and decoration, the stamp, the letterhead, the compliments, the body, the presents, the closing, the address, the envoy, and the letter-sending traditional ceremony. In the third section, Gallop categorizes the one hundred Malay letters into five groups, namely the letters from early 1500 to 1750, the Francis Light's collections from 1786 to 1794, the letters of Raffles from 1810 to 1824, the letters of Farquhar from 1818 to 1822, and the later letters from 1840 to 1900. There is an appendix at the end of the book, containing the text edition of the one hundred Malay letters that have been exhibited, as well as the letters of Munsyi Abdullah and King Ali Haji.

In another book of an exhibition catalogue, titled *Golden Letters Writing Traditions of Indonesia*, *Surat Emas Budaya Tulis di Indonesia*, Gallop and Arps (2) highlight the art of the beauty or illumination in the ancient manuscripts or letters originating from the kings and the high officials of various kingdoms in Indonesia. These ancient letters were referred to as the golden letters in the catalogue. There were

nineteen photo reproductions of these golden letters, sourced from different regions in Indonesia. A crucial fact presented in this catalogue is the historical information on the roles and activities of the English aristocrats and academicians who collected Indonesian manuscripts and letters, including Francis Drake, Sir James Lancaster, Thomas Stamford Raffles, Andrew James, William Laud, Francis Douce, William Marsden, John Leyden, John Crawfurd, and Colin Mackenzie.

Furthermore, Gallop wrote various articles on the artistry of the Indonesian letters, including "Musings on a piece of 'wallpaper': Some thoughts on early royal letters from Aceh" (3); "The 17th Century Indonesian Letters in the Public Record Office" (4), "Gold, Silver, and Lapis Lazuli: The 17th century royal letters from Aceh" (5), and "Illumination: the art of the Malay letters" (6).

Another researcher who studies the illuminated Malay letters is Mujizah. In her book, *Illuminasi dalam Surat-Surat Melayu Abad ke-18 dan 19* (Illumination in the Malay Letters of the 18th and 19th Centuries), Mujizah (7) exhibits fifty Malay letters whose contents have been described, reproduced, transliterated, and analyzed. According to Mujizah (8), the distinctive feature found in the Nusantara Malay letters is not only its illumination but also the information contained in the texts. This information can be used to help reconstruct a number of events from the past, in the fields of culture, economy, history, and aesthetics. At the end of her writing, Mujizah (9) asserts that letters were used as negotiation tools in political strategies within the Indonesian territories in the past.

Studies focusing on the contents of the letters are conducted by van der Putten and Al Azhar (10). In their works, *Di dalam Berkekalan Persahabatan: In Everlasting Friendship Letters from Raja Ali Haji*, they review one hundred and thirteen letters from King Ali Haji to von de Wall with a philological method. The textual edition is accompanied with detailed notes and a critical apparatus.

Another researcher who studied the letters is Van der Molen (11). He studied the letters with a different approach, that is codicology. The letters which he studied was the letter of Natakusuma from Sumenep dated on 18 Rabiulakhir, Dal to budho fan Settah, in Batavia. In his article, titled "Many Greetings from Madura: An exercise in the 18th century codicology," he discussed about the dated, paper (kind and size), Javanese script and text of the letter. He also displayed text edition of the letter with diplomatic and critical transliteration and translation to English version. From the codicology studied he has done, van der Molen could identified that the letter Natakusuma, an aristocrat in Sumenep – Madura wrote, was sent to Henrik van Setten, an assistant to the chief police of Batavia, on 29 May 1777.

On the other hand, Titik Pudjiastuti (12) in her article "Sepucuk Surat dari Banten" proposes to reexamine the information presented by Gallop and Arps (13) on the Banten letters from the collection of the Public Record Office of England, coded CO77/14. Based on codicological and philological reviews, Pudjiastuti manages to clarify Gallop and Arps' flaw that the letter presented in the *Golden Letters Writing Traditions of Indonesia, Surat Emas Budaya Tulis di Indonesia* is not the letter of Sultan Abdul Fatah but Sultan Abdul Kahar. Additionally, the purpose of the letter was not to request for aid to reclaim the throne of Banten.

Instead, it was an accompanying letter for the two envoys from Banten as they visited London. Furthermore, Titik Pudjiastuti (14) writes a book called *Perang, Dagang, Persahabatan: Surat-Surat Sultan Banten* (War, Trade, Friendship: Letters of the Sultan of Banten), which exhibits fifty-four letters from the Banten Sultanate. Philological and codicological reviews were conducted on these letters.

Another researcher that studies letters is Ricklefs (15). He discusses the common Malay language in four Banten letters written in the 17th century, while Suryadi discusses three letters from the Sultan of Buton (16) and a letter from a Gowa aristocrat (17) stored in the Library of Leiden University. Suryadi did a philological and historical study on these letters.

Jan van der Putten (18) on his dissertation titled "His Word is The Truth" studied of Haji Ibrahim letters, a Malay Letter writer from Tanjung Pinang. There were 89 Malay letters of Haji Ibrahim wrote during a period of fifteen years, from August 1858 until february 1873 showed and discussed by him. The main recipient of Haji Ibrahim letters was Herman von de Wall. From 89 Malay letters of Haji Ibrahim, 84 letters sended to Von de Wall where ever he was (in Tanjung Pinang, Bogor, Betawi, Melaka, Singapur, or Siak), three letters sended to his son, Haji Abdullah in Batavia and one letter to Raja Ali Haji in Pengujan. As a language official of German extradition who was stationed at Riau, Von de Wall used the Haji Ibrahim Malay letters to collect materials for standard Malay-Dutch dictionary.

From the above-mentioned works that study Indonesian letters, there are not many letters that explicitly discuss economic matters, particularly regarding trade. In *The Legacy of the Malay Letter*, only eleven business letters are presented, while in the *Golden Letters Writing Traditions of Indonesia, Surat Emas Budaya Tulis di Indonesia*, only two business letters are discussed. In the book *Illuminasi dalam Surat surat Melayu abad ke-18 dan ke-19*, seven out of fifty letters deal with business matters. Business letters are most frequently mentioned in *Perang, Dagang, Persahabatan Surat-Surat Sultan Banten*. In this book, thirteen out of fifty letters presented are business letters from Banten. In relation to this, the thirteen Banten business letters become the objects of this study, as the letters have not been studied extensively.

The description of the manuscripts reveals that the thirteen business letters from the Banten Sultanate are written in Arabic, Jawi, Pegon, and Hanacaraka scripts, in the Arabic, Malay, and Javanese languages. Based on this information, questions are raised regarding the identity of the Banten Sultanate's business partners, the time when the letters were written, the types of the merchandised goods, and the way the texts were written. To answer these questions, we performed philological studies on the thirteen business letters from the Banten Sultanate, in which the texts were edited, translated where necessary, and the contents discussed. The edited texts will be critically presented with square brackets [...] to add words or syllables to help with the comprehension of the text, round brackets (...) to remove incorrect word, syllables, or phonemes, and angle brackets <...> to replace the vowels or consonants that are inaccurate. Below are the thirteen business letters from Banten.

## The Business Letters of the Banten Sultanate

### 1. PRO Ext 8/2, f.126r

This is a Banten letter stored in the Public Record Office of London. The letter is one-page long with fourteen lines on each page. It is written in Arabic script, in Arabic language, and only the translated version is presented.

The names of the sender and the addressee are written on the first and second lines and on the carbon stamp at the right side of the letter.

1. Hazihi wara waraqatun fiha masturatun jalilatun waridatun min Sultani Abi al-Fath Sultan Banten nashara. Allahu 'ala Jami'I a'adhihi wa zaffarahu 'an kulli ma/

2. Yuzihi wa khallada mamalikahu ila jami 'i zurriyyatihi wa auladihi baqiyatan da 'imatan bidawami ayyami ad-dahri wa madadihi, yunhi zalika ila Sultan Charles sek(o)<e>n (sultan)/

... from Sultan Abul Fath, the Sultan of Banten... He delivers the letter to King Charles II

The purpose of the letter can be found in lines 7-8:

7. tursilu ilaina fi kulli markabin yusarifu ila baladina barudan wa jalilata madafi'a. Amma samanuhu al-madafi'i wa al-barudi wa al-jalilati in arsaltumuha ilaina fanu 'addiha ila /

8. al-kafitan al jalisi fi al-Bantani summa mimma nu' arrifukumbihi, ana radina alfa rida'in an yudabbira Sultanu Charles seken binafsihi al- matajirata fi tahti arrih/

...to ship cannons and gunpowders with every vessel that sails into our land. Should you decide to send them to us, we will pay the price and the costs to the captain in Banten. We would also like to notify that we are really willing if King Charles II himself wishes to manage the trade in [the land] below the wind...

The closing can be found in lines 12-13:

12. Wa al-wasilu ilaikum min hadiyyatina haqtu zahabin ahmara maudu 'atun fiha arba'atu almas fala tanzuruha liqillatiha wa khiffatiha, wa lakinnaha 'alamatu al-mahabbati/

13. bainana wa baina Sultan Charles seken. Kutibat fi yaumi al-Isnaini as sadisa 'asyara min syahri Jumadi as-sani wa al-khamisati wa as-sab'ina ba'da alfin min hijrati/

And we present you a gift of a small box made of red gold, which contains 4 pieces of diamonds. We hope that you would not see the small and lightness, but instead the token of affection between us and King Charles II. Written on Monday, the 17th day of the month Jumadilakhir in the year 1075 Hijriah...

The verso of the letter contains the English translation, along with an official seal of the Kingdom of England and the date received: Bantam, 26 December 1664.

### 2. PRO Ext 8/2, f.45

This is a Banten letter stored in the Public Record Office in London. It is a one-page letter with ten lines on each page. The letter is written in Arabic script, in Arabic language, and only the translated version is presented.

The names of the sender and the addressee are written on the third and fourth lines:

3. min hadrati man aqamahu Allahu liwilayati al-Bantan wa ikhtassahu bikafalati al- mamlakati fi tilka al-buldani, wa huwa hadratu as-Sultan Abu al-Fath/

4. Sultan Bantan, marsulatun ila amir ahli Inggris wa mali kihin , zada Allahu quwwa hu 'ala jami'i a'da 'ihi wa sabbata mamlakatuhu bitasbi ti maqa 'idihi /

...from someone appointed by Allah to rule over Banten... His Majesty Sultan Abu al Fath, the Sultan of Banten... to the ruler of the people of England...

The purpose of the letter can be found in lines 5-9:

5. Wa ba'du, fa inna nas 'alukum wa nastansurukum an tabi'u lana 'asyarata madafi'a kabiratin al-lazi kana tulu arba'atin minha/

6. biqadri wahidin wa salasina julailatan wa tulu sittatin minha bimiqdari tis 'atin wa isyrina julailatan kabiratan. Wa an tabi'u minna khamsa mi'atin/

7. istinggar al-lazi kana tuluha kulluha mustawiyatun, wa afwa huhu mustawiyatun wa an tabi'u minna ma'aha zurufa baru diha/

8. al-lazi kana launuha sauda'a. Wa an tabi'u minna mi'ata istinggar al-lati kana manfakhuha biz-zandi ai hajari an-nari wa -tuluha kulluha mustawiyatun/

9. wa afwahuha mustawiyatun. Wa an tabi'u minna wa tursilu kulla musimin ma'a nuzuli al-markabi baru dan wa julailatan wa arsalna ilaikum/

...we request that you be willing to sell 10 large cannons to us, 4 of which are 31 julailah long and 6 of which are 29 julailah long, in addition to 500 istinggar of identical size including their black gunpowder. And for you to sell us 100 istinggar with puffs made of flint...

The letter is closed in line 10:

10. Suhbata al-waraqah filfalan aswada mi'ata baharan wa zanzabila mi'ata hamlin. Wa zalika min rusumi al-mawaddahti wa al-musalahati.

Tammat/

...a friendly letter sent along with 100 bahar of black pepper and 100 baskets of ginger as expression of affection and peace.

The end.

The letter is undated, but it came from the same period and was written by the same sender and received by the same addressee as letter PRO Ext 8/2,f.126r. As such, it could be assumed that this letter was also written in 1664.

### 3. RL Malay (Arab) 4, C 23

Stored in the Royal Library of Copenhagen, Denmark, this one-page letter consists of thirteen lines and is written in Pegon script, in Malay language. The facsimiled version of this letter is published in the Catalogue of Indonesian Manuscripts, published by Naerssen F.H. van, Th. G. Th Pigeaud, and P. Voorhoeve (19).

The names of the sender and the addressee are stated in lines 1-2:

1. Ini surat menyatakan tulus dan ikhlas daripada paduka serri Sultan Abul-Fath di Banten yang mengempukan tahta pekerjaan dalam negeri Banten khallada Allahu mulkahu/

2. wa sayyara a'naqa a'adihi milkahu datang kepada raja Danamarka yang bernama Raja Krisstian anaq Raja Parraidarraai yang mengempukan tahta pekerjaan dalam negeri/

This letter passes on the goodwill and sincerity of His Highness Sultan Abul Fath of Banten to the King of Denmark, whose name is King Christian, the son of King Frederick...

The purpose of the letter can be found in lines 9-11:

9. hendaq meminta tanah dalam negeri Banten akan tempatnya Kapitan Danamarka duduk di Banten kerana hendaq biniaga di dalam negeri Banten sudahlah paduka serri sultan

10. memberi tanah yang dikehendaki oleh Kapitan Danamarka itu serta beberapa perjanjian paduka serri sultan kepada Kapitan Danamarka yang duduk di Banten itu seperti

11. yang tersurat di dalam surat perjanjian itu sebermula paduka serri sultan meminta kepada Raja Krristian jual-jualan obat bedil pada tiap-tiap masa kapal/

...to request for a plot of land in Banten to station the Danish Captain to <conduct> domestic trade in Banten. We request that you grant the land enquired by the Danish Captain... as written in the original agreement that your highness originally sent to King Christian for the sale and purchase of rifles with each vessel that sails to Banten, around 100 pikul ...

The letter is closed in line 13 with the sentence:

13. dahulu Kapiten Hadelar menitipkan lada kepada Angabehi Cakradana banyaknya lada itu seratus bahar dan tujuh puluh anem bahara.

Tammat/

...back then Kapiten Hadhelar entrusted Angabehi Cakradana with 176 bahar of pepper. The end.

The top margin of this letter displays a stamp with Javanese script: the Sultan of Banten 1082 H, which is equivalent to 1671 AD.

4. RL Malay (Arab) 5 C 63

Stored in the Royal Library in Copenhagen, Denmark, this letter is one-page long with sixteen lines, and is written in Pegon script, in Malay language. The script and text translation into English was conducted by Voorhoeve (20)

The names of the writer and the addressee are stated in lines 1-3:

1. Ini surat pada menyatakan tulus kasih dan ikhlas daripada paduka serri Sultan Abul-Fath(i) di negeri Banten khalada allahu mulkahu wa sultanahu/

2. wa abbada 'adlahu wa ihsanahu sampai kiranya kepada Raja Karistian Kuwaintus anak raja Parraidarraai yang mengempukan atas tahta segala kerajaan di dalam/

3. nagri Danamarka yang dikarunia Allah Subhanah kiranya dan ditambahi kebesyaran dan kemuliaan pada tiap-tiap masa siang dan malam dan yang dilebihkan/

This letter passes on the genuine affection and sincerity of his majesty Sri Sultan Abul-Fath of Banten... to King Christian V... for his throne over the territory of Denmark... The purpose of the letter can be found in lines 8-14:

8. Raja Kristian yag terma(d)<sy>(k)<h>ur dalam surat dan kitabatu itu dan telah diketahui kiranya oleh paduka sri sultan di Banten sebermula Raja Karistian/

9. Kuwaintus berkirim be(d)dil besar sepucuk telah diterimalah oleh paduka Sri Sultan dengan seribu tarima. Sabarmula lagi paduka sri Sultan memberi /

10. ma'lum kepada Raja Kristian akan hal ihwal lakunya Petor yang duduk di Banten yang bernama Petor Pahuli akan gantinya Petor Mikel itu maka dahulu paduka sri/

11. Sultan suruh menjual tembaga ke negeri Keling dua ratus dua puluh pikul dibawahnya oleh suruhan petor Mikel bernama kapitan Wilgak kaki kayu ke negeri Keling/

12. maka sekarang ini hendaq dihilangkan harga tembaga itu oleh petor Keling yang bernama Mangusyakub sama-sama muwafakat dengan petor Pahuli itu tiada/

13. memberi ma'lum kepada paduka sri sultan berapa sudah laku jual tembaga itu di negeri Keling. Adapun yang memberi ma'lum kepada paduka sri sultan/

14. akan harga tembaga itu di negeri Keling ada satu orang Danamarka duduk ia di negeri Keling bernama Ian Indirik itulah yag memberi ma'lum kepada /

...Sri Sultan explained to King Christian on the behavior of the Supervisor who resides in Banten, known as Supervisor Pahuli. The Sultan has ordered to sell 220 pikul of copper to the land of Keling to be delivered by Supervisor Mikel's man, namely Captain Wilgak Kaki Kayu... then now Supervisor Keling wishes to omit the mutually agreed price for the copper... Supervisor Pahuli failed to inform the Sri Sultan how much copper was already sold in the land of Keling... the one who informed Sri Sultan about the price at which the copper was sold in the land of Keling was a Danish man by the name Ian Hendrik. He was the one who informed the Sri Sultan on the price of the copper in the land of Keling...

The closing is written on 6-8 lines on the right side of the text as follows:

6. Tersurat dalam negeri Banten pada hari Isnen pada lima belas/

7. hari daripada bulan Dulkaedah pada tahun Dal awal/

8. seribu dualapan puluh lima tahun daripada hijrat nabi

... Written in the land of Banten on Monday on the fifteenth day of the month of Dhulkaidah in the year of Dalawal 1285 H (equivalent to 15 February 1675)

5. ANRI VOC Banten 18 (Banten 14.3)

Stored in the National Archive of the Republic of Indonesia, Jakarta, this letter is one-page long with eighteen lines and is written in Pagon script, in Malay language.

The names of the sender and the addressee are stated in lines 1-3:

1. Alamat syurat ini tandatangannya paduka tuan Siri Syultan Banten/

2. mangku yang suda tarima daripada tangannya tuan kumandur sipi[r] Nikulas/

This letter was signed by His Majesty the reigning Sri Sultan of Banten as received from the hands of the Commanding Officer Nikulasy

The purpose of the letter could be found in lines 3-13:

3. Mebum arta jumla pulu ribu syambilan ratusy anam balas riyal muda /

4. dan ampat pulu satu tangwang atawa tiga pulu dalapan ribu syaratus dalapan/

5. pulu tuju riyal tua dan ampat pulu satu tangwang pan bayaran daripada /

6. sagala barang masy-masyan dan peraq nyan tuan syultan suda kirimkan pada /

7. tuan urang basyar di tana Betawi nyan Kumpeni suda akan tarima /

8. tarsabut sagala masy-masyan reyal muda, 13195 dan 1 tangwan[g] atawa reyal pasymat 9896, 17 tangwan[g]/

9. dan sagala piraq, - 3227, -25 -, - 2420: 41,-/

10. jumla jadi riyal muda 16422, dan 26 tangwang atawa riyal pasymat, 12316, 58, tangwan[g]/

11. layin lagi daripada itu nyan tar/



12. sabut barang masy-masyan riyal muda, 34494, 15, -- 25870, 47, -/

13. jumla samwanya riyal muda, 50916, 41 tangwang atawa riyal pasymat, 38187, 41, tangwan[g]/

...money amounting to 5,916 riyal muda and 41 tangwang or 38,187 riyal tua and 41 tangwang as payment for all the gold and silver merchandise that have been sent by the Sultan as explained, with the gold totaling up to 13,195 riyal muda and... with a grand total of 16,422 riyal muda... other than that as stated

The closing of the letter is written in lines 14-18:

14. Banten di dalam kuta Intan satu /

15. ari bulan Nupember tahun 1781/

16. Abulmafakir Muhammad Aliuddin/

17. alamat Sultan, tanda yang suda menerima uang dari tangan Kumendur Mebum yang tarsabut

18. di dalam surat ini//

From Banten in Kuta Intan on the first day of November of the year 1781, Abul Mafakhir Muhammad Aliuddin, addressed to the sultan, receipt of the money received from Kumendur Mebum was mentioned in this letter.

6. Cod.Or. 2241 IIb.16 (Klt. 16/No. 541)

This Banten letter is stored in the Library of Leiden University, in the Netherlands. The letter is one-page long with ninety-one lines and is written in Jawi script, in Malay language. The description of this letter is also presented by Wieringa (21).

The names of the sender and the addressee are written on the first and second lines and on the red wax stamp at the right side of the letter:

1. Bahwa ini sahifah al-mukarramah yang aziz lagi dihiasi degan beberapa tabe yang mukasarah pada tiap-tiap ketika dan masa yaitu daripada paduka ananda sri sultan.../

2. tahta kerajaan negeri Banten lagi menyatakan tanda tulus dan ikhlas barang disampaikan Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala jua kiranya kepada ayahanda tuan Herman Wilem Daendles .../

letter from sri sultan Banten to the father of Mr. Herman Wilem Dendles...

The purpose of the letter can be found in lines 26-30, 49 – 50, 67 – 70, and 79-81:

26. bagaimana patut lekas dapat keuntungan Kumpeni dan keuntungan Raja apalagi kepada ra'yat-ra'yat adanya. Dan lagi paduka anaqanda sri sultan tiada sekali ambil khabar yang sampai/

27. habis kepada barang yag dihaturkan oleh Mangkubumi. Istimewah pada hal kebun-kebun lada adanya hanya memeriksa jua kepada lain-lain kepala yang patut kiranya dapat paham akan kebun-kebun/

28. lada itu adanya, maka mulanya paduka anaqanda sri sultan dengan sekalian sanaq saudara<h> pergi periksa liat kebun-kebun lada sendiri (di) ke bukit. Apalagi Mangkubumi dengan sekalian kepala-kepala yang lain

29. pergi jua sendiri ke bukit periksa kebun-kebun lada dari karena sebab seboleh-boleh yang bagaimana patut lekas dapat baik. Apabila ada baik yang itu tanaman lada ada jua jadi menambahi/

30. keuntungan Kumpeni dan keuntungan raja apalagi kepada sekalian ra'yat-ra'yat adanya. Dan lagi paduka anaqanda sri sultan masih jua melakukan dan menetapkan yang bagaimana patut /

49. walakin jikalau ayahanda tuan gurnadur jenderal dan segala raad van india telah akan berhitung yang sepikul seratus ampat puluh enam puntu adanya maka paduka anaqanda sri sultan minta.../

50. sampai gusar seboleh-boleh kasihan dan pertolongan ayahanda tuan Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala raden van india akan menghimpunkan harga yang tiap-tiap sepikul lima sepansemat dengan 51 istiwir adanya maka adalah /

67. Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala raden van india jua adanya. Demikian lagi ayahanda tuan gurnadur jenderal dan segala raden van india mem[b]eri ingat perjanjian dalam tahun Walandawi .../

68. dua lapan ratus ampat kapal-kapal senantiasa disuruh datang kepada kumendur kota Ispelwik membawah dan manarima rapor adanya, jika paduka anaqanda sri sultan.../

69. perintah kepada mangkubumi dan kepada kapal-kapal yang lain-lain menggenapi yang itu perjanjian adanya, lagi Mangkubumi dan kapal-kapal yang lain barang satu atau dua dari .../

70. yang itu janji sampai masa ini lazim senantiasa jua datang Mangkubumi kepada kumendur yang tiap-tiap satu minggu sekali membawah dan manarima rapor ...apalagi jikalau .../

79. jua adanya maka masa sekarang ini yang itu harga obat bedil ditentukan oleh ayahanda tuan Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala raden van india yang dua pipah berat seratus pujut dengan harga /

80. ampat sepansemat adanya maka dari itu paduka anaqanda sri sultan minta dengan kemurahan dan kasihan beserta pertolongan mudah-mudahan sampai di qabul diterima yang ini permintaan oleh .../

81. Gurnadur Jenderal dan segala raden van india supaya ditetapkan dan diteguhkan yang itu harga obat bedil dengan bagaimana harga yang seperti mana zaman masa paduka ayahanda /

for the profit of the company and the king... particularly with regards to the matter of the pepper plantations and should also inspect the others... should there be discrepancy in the amount received with the amount stated in the big book, we urge Your Highness Sri Sultan to command for an inspection in case of misappropriation by family members then such person shall be duly punished...

The closing of the letter is stated in lines 84-88 and 91:

84. dan ... dalam hari sabtu tujuh belas hari bulan Rabiul akhir paduka anaqanda sri sultan manarima surat yang terma(z)[sy]kur dalamnya yaitu akan.../

85. karena bingkisan lada dua ratus bahar yaitu tanda alamat berkasih-kasihan dan sahabat bersahabat dengan sepuluh pucuk mariam serta dengan sekalian pekakas/

86. baju kain kasut halus dan enam puntu benang mas dan benang perak dan dua puluh kilo pasmiyan lebar dan dua puluh kayu kain biru/

87. saputangan putih halus dan satu almari jepun dan dua kron gelas besyar beserta dua gebis irama warjawa adanya maka adalah paduka sri/

88. sultan menarima kasih yang mukasirin yang tiada boleh sekali dapat hinggangnya dan upamanya dari karena lebih pedih al-qulub melihat kepada ayahanda tuan Gurnadur Jenderal/

91. tersurat dalam hari sabtu sembilan hari bulan Jumadil awal dalam kota Intan Surosowan dalam tahun seribu dua ratus tiga

on a Saturday on the seventeenth day of the month of Rabiulakhir, his highness son of the Sri Sultan received a letter which mentioned... for a gift of 200 bahar of pepper, a token of affection and friendship with a gift of 10 cannons as well as fine silk fabric and 6 yarns of gold and silver threads... as written on a Saturday on the ninth day of the month of Jumadilawal in the city of Intan Surosowan in 1203.

7. ARA, Bantam Inv 1070 (982) Fol. 328

This Banten letter is stored in the Algemeen Rijksarchief (ARA), Den Haag, the Netherlands. The letter is one-page long with four lines, and is written in Javanese script, in Malay language.

The names of the sender and the addressee are written in line 1:

1. Surat Pangeran Arya Ranamangala adapun Kapitan hendak/

The letter of Prince Arya Ranamanggala [should] the Captain is willing...

The purpose of the letter can be found in lines 2-4:

2. badame biniyaga, sarat urang badame biniyaga andah/

3. sama b[e]tul jangan ada kuciwa barangkal<a>[i] ada kuciwa /

4. bukan badame namanya banyakiti juga namanya//

To carry a peaceful trading business, a requirement for a peaceful trade is to ensure fairness and that no one walks away disappointed, an occurrence of which would not equal to peace making but hurting.

There is no information related to the closing, but on the verso, there is information written in Latin script in Dutch language that this is a letter from Prince Arya Ranumanggala for Captain Moer, received on 26 December 1619 in Banten and sent to the Netherlands in 1620.

8. ARA, Bantam Inv. 1070- (982) Fol.329

This Banten letter is stored in the Algemeen Rijksarchief (ARA) in Den Haag, the Netherlands. The letter is one-page long with six lines, and is written in Javanese script, in Malay language.

The names of the sender and the addressee are written in line 1:

1. Surat Pangeran Arya Hupapatih adapun /

a. Letter from Prince Arya Hupapatih to the Captain

...

2. The purpose of the letter can be found in lines 2-6:

3. Kapitan hendak badame biniyaga sarat (u)[o]rang /

4. badame biniyaga hendak sama betul/

5. jangan ada kuciwa barangkala<a>[i] ada

6. kuciwa bukan badame namanya man[y]akiti

7. juga namanya//

to trade peacefully, a requirement for a peaceful trade is to ensure fairness and that no one walks away disappointed, an occurrence of which would not equal to peace making but hurting.

There is no information related to the closing, but on the verso, there is information written in Latin script in Dutch language that this is a letter from Prince Arya for Captain Moer, received on 26 December 1619 in Banten.

9. RL. B 245b (Jav. 20)

Stored in the Royal Library in Copenhagen, Denmark, this letter is one-page long with six lines and is written in

Javanese script, in Javanese language, and only the translated version is exhibited.

The names of the sender, the addressee and the purpose of the letter are stated in lines 1-6:

1. // penet// Petor Danamarka

2. (h)asrah sewaning /

3. gedong (h)ing Kyahi Narahita/

4. sasi Dulkahidah panglong/

5. ping lima kathahipun

6. 150//

The Danish Supervisor handed over the building rental [money] amounting to 150 to Kiai Narahita [for] the month of Zulkaidah [when] the time the moon was dark on the fifth day.

There is no closing in the letter; however, on the bottom margin of the text, there are notes in Latin script, in Danish language, stating that the letter was received in Denmark on 21 September 1642.

10. RL. B 245b (Jav 21)

Stored in the Royal Library in Copenhagen, Denmark, this letter is one-page long with four lines and is written in Javanese script, in Javanese language, and only the translated version is exhibited.

The names of the sender, the addressee, and the purpose of the letter are stated in lines 1-4:

1. // penet// Kyai Guru Sarayuda (h)ata[m]pa reyala sewa sasi/

2. kapitan Danamarka kalih belah kang satahun langkung pitung sasi/

3. natkalani (h)an[y]ahur (h)ingkang satahun (h)ing sasi reje(p)[b]/

4. (h)ing din(n)a rebo//

Kiai Guru Surayuda has received real [money] for month[ly] rental [from] the Danish Captain [covering] two months rental [for] one year and seven months while paying for the annual amount [on] the month of Rejep on a Wednesday.

There is no closing in the letter; however, on the bottom margin of the text, there are notes in Latin script, in Danish language, which state the letter was received in Denmark on 21 September 1642.

11. RL. B 244 b III (Jav.19)

This letter is stored in the archive section of the Royal Library in Copenhagen, Denmark within the Danish Chancery bundle of the 'diversi regnskabs-akter' group from 1617-1648. This one-page letter has seven lines and is written in Javanese script, in Javanese language, and only the translated version is exhibited. Naerssen F.H. van, Th. G. Th Pigeaud, and P. Voorhoeve. (22) believed that the alphabets used in this letter belong to a type of coastal Javanese alphabets and are the characteristics of the West Java idioms (Banten).

The names of the sender and the addressee are written in lines 1:

1. 1./penet// Kyai Dinda Supati (h)aprajangji kalayan pun kumendur lan pun /

a. Kiai Dinda Supati promised the Kumendur and the Supervisor

2. The purpose of the letter is stated in lines 2-6 and translated as follows:

3. petor (h)awade mariyos sa(h)antuk Kyai Dinda Supati bonten /

4. (h)awade liyan samados nem sasi punika yen salamet bonten /

5. keng(a)[i]ng awade liyan punika sakathahipun kawadeya dateng pun kumendur lan/

6. pun petor panahosipun kang sabara kalih puluh real kathahipun

7. wolung atus bara kang kecap kyahi sa(h)olihe duwe(h)aken hing sira kabeh/

...to sell pepper as much [as] possible, Kiai Dinda Supati will not sell to others within a period of 6 months, [if he wishes] to be safe, [he] will not be authorized to sell to other parties, [thus] meaning that it will only be sold to the Kumendur and the Supervisor despite the available quantities [at] the price of 20 real, altogether totaling 800 bara. The Kiai promises that all he has will be allocated to you.

The closing of the letter can be found in line 7: written finished

7. //titi//.

12. RL Malay (Jav.1) C 23

Stored in the archive section of the Royal Library in Copenhagen, Denmark this one-page letter has eight lines and is written in Javanese script, in Javanese language, and only its translated version is exhibited. On the top left margin, there is a stamp in red ink with the Chinese writing: hu feng, which means "sealed for protection" see Naerssen F.H. van, Th. G. Th Pigeaud, and P. Voorhoeve page 161 (23).

The names of the sender and the addressee are stated in line 1:

1. 1.// di Banten// Ki Ngabehi Cakradana surat kiriman kapada Raja Danamarka

2. In Banten. From Ki Ngabehi Cakradana, a letter to the King

3. of Denmark...

4. The purpose of the letter can be found in lines 2-6:

5. 2. sakarang suruan kapitan datang sama ka Banten bicara Sutan Banten /

6. 3. biniyaga sama tempat gedhong inilah sakarang sudah putus bicara dahulu/

7. 4. kapitan aderat titip marica sama saya saratus tuju puluh a(n)nem bara /

8. 5. saya sakarang sudah bayar kapitan inilah sudah putus raja tuanku orang /

9. 6. besar saparti matahari mas(u)hur sagala nageri ditakuti orang sama-samanya saya/

10. 7. minta tulung banyak-banyak kapada tu(w)an kasih panjang umur sama raja Danamarka/

The Captain's men have come to Banten to speak [with] the Sultan of Banten about business in this same building, but the discussion has now ceased. Captain Aderat has ordered from me some pepper with the quantity of 176 bara that has been paid for. This Captain is like the sun that is known and feared by the people, I sincerely request for your assistance, long live the King of Denmark...

The closing of the letter is found in line 8, where it was written: titi.

This letter is undated, but according to Naerssen F.H. van, Th. G. Th Pigeaud, and P. Voorhoeve (24), the letter is

estimated to have been written in 1672, judging from the name of the sender, Ngabehi Cakradana.

13. Cod.Or. 2241 III b.7 (no. 233)

This Banten letter is stored in the Library of Leiden University, The Netherlands. It consists of two pages, with nine lines on the recto and four lines on the verso. The letter is written in Pegon script, in Javanese, and only the translated version is exhibited. This letter has also been described by Wieringa (25) and Klinkert (26).

The names of the sender and the addressee are stated in lines 1-2:

1. Atur sembah kula pun Jaga Kewura kalih pun Pangeran Wiratama pun Ngabehi Pataran katur dateng

2. Ki Arya Nitinagara, kula ngaturi uning wonten kapal kapitanipun wasta Bargasy

1. The utmost respect for Ki Arya Nitinagara from myself, Jaga Kewura and Prince Wiratama as well as Ngabehi Pataran

2. The purpose of the letter is stated in the recto, lines 2-8:

3. ajeng numbas marica ning kula kalih pangeran jawab boten purun sade sabab/

4. kula budake tuan sultan kejapipun yen sira arep becik eneh /

5. sun kawa ing tuan sultan saking kula kalih pangeran ajrih kula catune /

6. kecap kula yen suka gusti kula ana surate ing kula sarta ana ingkang/

7. anggawa punggawa dalem iku sun parcaya yen ora na kang teka kongkonan/

8. saking boten isun ora sanggup aweh sabab sun wedi ing gustinisun/

Captain Bargas intended to purchase some pepper but the Prince and I responded that we are unwilling to sell as we are merely servants to the Sultan. Only if he demonstrates more sincerity shall I present this matter to the Sultan. This is because we and the Prince dare not to do so. [but] we shall explain that [should] you be willing, we have the letter in our possession...

The closing is written in the verso, lines 3-4:

3. dinten kemis tanggal ping 25 sasi muharam/

4. //tamat//

on Thursday, the 25th day of the month of Muharam. The end.

In the verso, we can find some information written in Latin script, in Dutch, which reveals that the letter was received in Batavia on 2 June 1802.

### The Implicit of the Explicit

Based on the above discussions of the textual edition of the Banten Sultanate business letters, we can determine the names of the Sultans and the high officials of the Banten Sultanate who were involved in trading activities. They are: Sultan Abu al Fath, Sultan Abu Nashar Ishaq Zainul Mutaqin, Arya Ranumanggala, Ngabehi Cakradana, Prince Wiratama, Jaka Kewura, Ngabehi Pataran, Prince Arya Hupaptih, Kiai Narahita, Ki Guru Surayuda, and Kiai Dinda Supati. We are also able to establish the names of the rulers or the high officials from other countries who became business partners of the Banten Sultanate, namely: the kings of England (King Charles I and King Charles II), the King

of Denmark, Christian V, Governor General of the Dutch East Indies, H.W. Daendles, Kumendur Nicolas Mijboom, Captain Moor, and the Danish Supervisor.

Based on the information written in these business letters, we are able to comprehend the international trading activities that took place in Banten during the 17th-19th centuries. Arya Ranamanggala's letter for Captain Moor, which was dated the year 1619, and the letter from Jaga Kewura, the Prince of Wiratama, and Ngabehi Pataran for Ki Arya Nitinagara, which was dated the year 1802, have provided us with a clear depiction on the economic condition of the Banten Sultanate at the time. According to Meilink-Roelofs (27) the prediction made by Pires that Banten would eventually become a prominent location and no less important than (the port of) Sunda Kelapa has thus been proven. In the 17th century, Banten grew in importance as an international trade hub. Banten was the layover port for vessels sailing from China and the cities in Northern Java that exported food and was passed by the spice trading routes. Meilink-Roelofs (28) said that a number of foreign nations, such as China, India, the Netherlands, England, and others, also actively traded with Banten, mainly for pepper.

From the contents of the texts, we could also determine the types of goods being traded between the Banten Sultanate and its business partners, they were weapons for war, such as cannons, rifles, and gunpowders; spices, such as pepper, nutmeg, and cloves; and mining resources, such as copper, gold, and silver.

From the contents of the letters, the various natures of the business letters from the Banten Sultanate can be determined, as follows:

1. Business letters as a form of requesting or placing orders, as revealed in the letters no. PRO Ext 8/2, f.126r and PRO Ext 8/2, f.45.
2. Business letters as a form of agreements (not selling goods without authorization from the Sultan), as revealed in the letter no. RL B. 244b III (Jav. 19).
3. Business letters as a form of permits (to rent a building), such as in the letter no. RP Malay (Arab) 4, C. 23.
4. Business letters as a form of receipts of payment for goods or building rent, as seen in the letters no. ANRI VOC Banten 18 (Bantam 14.3) and RL B 245 b (Jav.20).
5. Business letters as a form of warnings for an honest trading practice, such as in the letters no. Bantam Inv 1070 (982) Fol. 328 and ARA, Bantam Inv 1070 (982) Fol. 329.
6. Business letters as a form of reports, either financial report or report of fraudulent conduct in trading, as seen in the letters no. RL Malay (Arab) 5, C 63, Cod. Or. 2241 IIb. 16 (Klt 161 No. 541), RL Malay (Jav) 1 C. 23, ARA Banten Inv 1070 fol 328, and ARA Banten Inv 1070 fol 329.

Judging from how the letters were written, we could see the different methods of writing the business letters of the Banten Sultanate. First, there were letters that conform with how Kitab Terasul was composed, and second, there were letters that did not conform with how Kitab Terasul were composed. The business letters of the Banten Sultanate, which conformed with how Kitab Terasul were composed, were written by the sultans of Banten. The letters were written in a simple way and did not follow the rules of writing found in Malay letters, whereas Kitab Terasul were letters written by the Banten aristocrats.

## Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is clear that letters are considered as ancient manuscripts that still require to be further studied by philologists. Previous studies on letters have emphasized more on illumination or facimiled versions, and thus we need to have future research to delve into the study of the messages conveyed by the texts. That way, various messages contained in the letters can be unveiled, discovered, and fully understood by modern societies.

By taking an example from the thirteen business letters of the Banten Sultanate, we are able to learn about the proper ethics and letter writing practice from the kings or the high officials of the ancient kingdoms in the Indonesian archipelago. We could also observe that there are different natures of the Banten business letters based on their texts.

Through diction and ethics found in the texts, we could recognize the different writing methods employed by a king from a high official of a kingdom. From the 'sound' of the texts, we could also 'feel' how the relationship between the Banten Sultanate with the English, the Danish, and the Dutch different from each other.

Using the thirteen business letters of the Banten Sultanate as examples, we could firmly establish that the Banten Sultanate did have international business relationships in the past with foreign kings, particularly King Charles II of England, King Christian V of Denmark, and various Dutch high officials. Furthermore, the business transactions that took place in Banten were not limited to arms trade for war machineries and equipment, such as cannons and rifles, but was also carried out for spices, such as pepper, ginger, and others, as well as mining resources, such as copper, gold, and silver.

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