

## Tracking and Preservation of Malay Islamic Manuscript Collection At Maahad Khalil Al-Islami (Pondok Bendang Bujur), Yala, Thailand

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### Abstract

Malay Islamic manuscripts represent a valuable heritage left by the wise scholars and ancient scientists, which needs to be preserved and utilized. Among the locations that hold this remarkable legacy is Southern Thailand, which includes the regions of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat. Maahad Khalil al-Islami in Bendang Bujur Village, Yala, Thailand, is a traditional Islamic education center that still houses a significant collection of manuscripts for study. This research provides a brief overview of Maahad Khalil al-Islami and identifies the efforts made to catalog the manuscripts for the benefit of humanity. The research methodology includes interviews and document analysis for data collection, followed by document analysis for data interpretation. The preliminary study revealed that Maahad Khalil al-Islami possesses approximately 18 manuscript copies, with a total of 1,117 pages. However, the majority of these are incomplete and somewhat disorganized. Most of them lack clear titles, except for seven manuscripts. Two of the manuscripts have been successfully verified and reissued through modern publishing. It is hoped that this noble effort will invigorate the preservation activities of these Malay Islamic manuscripts and benefit the wider community.

**Keywords:** Malay Islamic Manuscripts, Maahad Khalil Al-Islami, Yala, Thailand, Tracking

### Introduction

Malay Islamic manuscripts represent a valuable heritage left by the learned scholars and ancient scientists, and their preservation and utilization are of utmost importance. Among the locations that have preserved this remarkable legacy is Southern Thailand, which was once renowned for the glory of the Malay Islamic Sultanate of Pattani. The remnants of this heritage are still well-preserved, even though it has been under Siamese rule since the 19th century, including Malay Islamic manuscripts, also known as literary or religious manuscript

texts (Hasanulddin, 2014; 2018; 2022). One of the centers that houses these manuscripts is Maahad Khalil al-Islami, situated in Bendang Bujur Village in the Yala region of Thailand. It is a traditional Islamic educational center, more commonly known as Pondok Khalil Bendang Bujur. There is a significant collection of manuscripts stored here, making it a fascinating subject for study. This research provides a brief overview of Maahad Khalil al-Islami and the cataloging efforts made for these manuscripts to be utilized for the benefit of humanity.

### **History and Background of Maahad Khalil Al-Islami, Bendang Bujur, Yala Founding and Current Management Background**

The history of Maahad Khalil al-Islami began with the arrival of Sheikh Muhamad Hasan in Bendang Bujur, Yala. However, he only conducted educational activities at specific locations and had not yet initiated the construction of a religious school. His efforts were continued by Sheikh Wan Ismail, who built a mosque and established study classes within the mosque. Subsequently, his son, Sheikh Wan Syamsuddin, initiated the construction of the religious school by building a large hall. Students would study with him and stay overnight there. He passed away in the 1960s at an advanced age, around 100 years.

Maahad Khalil al-Islami is currently managed by a headmaster who also serves as a teacher, Tuan Guru Wan Ismail Khalil bin Wan Husin Yalaedai. He began his teaching career in Bendang Bujur in 1983. He continued his studies at Madrasah Asas al-Din, also known as Pondok Melayu Bangkok, from 1984 to 1985. He further deepened his religious studies, including Tauheed and Usuluddeen with Ayah Dir Sekam, Arabic grammar (Ilmu nahu) with Baba Abdullah al-Jarumi, Islamic Tasawuf with Pak Su Mat at Pondok Melayu Bangkok, Tuan Guru Haji Daud bin Haji Abdullah, and others. He also studied in Classes 9 and 10 at Nahdhatul Ulum Madrasah in Yala and completed the thanawi level. He completed his studies at Haji Harun Islamic School (now known as JISDA) in 1991-92. Subsequently, from 1992 to 2000, he pursued higher education in the Arab Republic of Egypt at the thanawi and university levels at the Faculty of Sharia, Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt. After completing his undergraduate studies, he returned to his homeland. He continued his postgraduate studies at two universities, Rajaphart and Thaksin University. After completing these studies, he continued informal education with Baba Haji Wan Abdullah al-Khalil.

### **Facilities Available**

Maahad Khalil al-Islami is equipped with an administration building, classrooms, and several small huts for student accommodation, commonly known as "tok fakir." Additionally, it has a prayer room (surau) and bathroom facilities.

### **Students**

The number of students at Maahad Khalil al-Islami is not fixed and is temporary. This is because most of them study at Jamiah Islamiah Sheikh Daud al-Fatani (JISDA) during the daytime. After completing their studies there, they return to Maahad Khalil al-Islami to continue their studies with the guidance of their teachers (Wan Ismail, 2022).

### **Cataloging Manuscripts at Maahad Khalil Al-Islami**

#### **Early Tracing and Manuscript Collection Background**

The first visit to Maahad Khalil al-Islami began in late February 2020, approximately three weeks before the Movement Control Order (PKP) was implemented due to the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. It involved several researchers from Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin

(UniSZA) and was accompanied by Ustaz Muhammad Ahmad, who serves as the director of a tahfiz school in Pattani and is also a lecturer at JISDA.

During this visit, the researchers were introduced to Tuan Guru Wan Ismail Khalil bin Wan Husin, who serves as the headmaster of Maahad Khalil al-Islami. They had the opportunity to visit the religious school's buildings and examine the collection of Malay Islamic manuscripts available. However, this initial visit concluded without further research or action regarding the manuscripts. It was more of an introductory meeting with the headmaster and the manuscript owners, aimed at exploring potential opportunities.

When the PKP was enforced, movement restrictions became very stringent, particularly for international travel. Nevertheless, the researchers took the initiative to start cataloging work based on the preliminary information they had obtained. They then proceeded to scan the Malay Islamic manuscripts that were successfully located. Subsequently, the scanned materials were sent to UniSZA researchers via email. Based on the results of the previous visit and initial meetings, Ustaz Muhammad agreed to gather all the manuscripts available at Maahad Khalil al-Islami and then scan them according to their titles. Tuan Guru Ismail, as the headmaster of Maahad Khalil al-Islami and the manuscript owner, generously granted permission for the manuscripts to be utilized for the benefit of humanity.

### Collections Obtained

At the initial stage, the researchers successfully acquired 18 Malay manuscript copies from various fields of knowledge, totaling 1,117 pages. These were obtained through email correspondence after scanning and categorization based on their respective fields of study or book titles.

Out of this total, only six manuscripts were identified with their titles. Here is the breakdown, along with their fields of knowledge:

Include the details of the identified manuscripts with their fields of knowledge.

Table 1

#### *Manuscripts with Titles at Maahad Khalil al-Islami*

Title of Book	Fields of Knowledge	Total of Pages
<i>Qira'at al-Quran</i>	Tajwid al-Quran	54
<i>Kitab Muhimmah</i>	Feqah	59
<i>Bughyat al-Tullab</i>	Feqah	162
<i>Tuhfat al-Ikhwān Fi Fadha'il Nisf Sya'ban</i>	Fadhilat/Adab	122
<i>Tuhfat al Raghabin</i>	Akidah	80
<i>Sullam al-Mubtadi</i>	Feqah	23

Source: Tuan Guru Wan Ismail, Headmaster of Maahad Khalil al-Islami, 2022

In general, all 18 manuscript copies cover various key fields of Islamic knowledge. Here is the breakdown

Table 2

*Number of Manuscripts by Field of Islamic Knowledge at Maahad Khalil al-Islami*

Fields of Knowledge	Total of Copies
Akidah	2
Feqah	10
Tasawuf	3
Tajwid al-Quran	1
Fadhilat/Adab	2
Total	18

Source: Tuan Guru Wan Ismail, Headmaster of Maahad Khalil al-Islami, 2022

### List and Description of Recent Manuscript Acquisitions

The initial list of 18 manuscript copies obtained was later subject to research and brief descriptions to detail the specifics of each manuscript. Subsequently, a series of workshops were conducted to review and verify the content of these descriptions throughout the year 2022. The series of workshops revealed that not all the manuscripts obtained at the initial stage could be described because most of them were incomplete. Furthermore, the manuscripts were not organized according to their actual titles, making it difficult for the research team to review and verify the existing manuscript copies and their descriptions.

As a result, a follow-up visit to Maahad Khalil al-Islami was conducted once the Covid-19 pandemic had gradually subsided, and the Movement Control Order (PKP) had been lifted. This visit took place from January 8 to 12, 2023. During this visit, the researchers examined the manuscript collection and conducted a screening of all available manuscript copies. The outcome of this visit found that only seven manuscript copies could be subject to further study, including the description and digitization processes. This was because they were nearly complete, while the remaining manuscripts were highly incomplete and scattered. Further study and collection, documentation, and similar purposes are required for the latter. In general, no complete manuscript copies have been obtained at Maahad Khalil al-Islami thus far.

The list of the seven most complete manuscript copies, along with brief descriptions, is as follows

#### Manuscript 1 (PPM05/01)

Author's Name : Syeikh Daud Bin Abdullah Al-Fatani  
 Manuscript Title : *Jawahir al-Saniyyah Fi Syarh 'Aqa'id Al-'Aliyyah Wa Al-Ahkam Al-Fiqhiyyah Al-Mardhiyyah Wa Tariq Suluk Tariqat Al-Muhammadiyah*  
 Field of Specialization : Theology and Jurisprudence  
 Manuscript Condition : Good  
 Status : Incomplete  
 Number of Pages : 41 pages  
 Number of Volumes : 1  
 Page Numbering Method : Word Pull

Starting Word : '*Wa ahkamu al-syariat ...*'  
Ending Word : ...'*Amal mereka itu maka...*'  
Language : Malay  
Number of Words per Line : 12  
Number of Lines per Page : 25  
Ink Color : Black and Red  
Calligraphy Style : Nasakh  
Number of Volumes : 1

**Additional Notes:**

A comparison with the printed version found that there are several incomplete pages, including:

- a) The sermon of the book (1 page)
- b) The end of the chapter about the Events of the Day of Judgment - the book On Declaring Iktikaf
- c) The beginning of the book *Iddah* until the end of the book.

**Manuscript 2 (PPM05/02)**

Author's Name : Syeikh Daud Bin Abdullah Al-Fatani  
Manuscript Title : *Sullam Al-Mubtadi Fi Ma'rifat Tariqat Al-Muhtadi*  
Field of Specialization : Jurisprudence  
Manuscript Condition : Damaged  
Status : Incomplete  
Number of Pages : 4  
Page Numbering Method : Word Pull  
Starting Word : '*Sembahyang itu bahawa ingatkan aku sembahyang atas mayat...*'  
Ending Word : '*Dan tiada sah puasa orang yang haid dan nifas dan wajib keduanya*'  
Language : Malay  
Number of Words per Line : 13-14  
Number of Lines per Page : 25-26  
Ink Color : Black and Red  
Calligraphy Style : Nasakh

**Additional Notes:**

- a) This manuscript is a part of the book *Sullam Al-Mubtadi Fi Ma'rifat Tariqat Al-Muhtadi*. This was identified after a comparison with the printed manuscript published by Matba'ah Bin Halabi, Pattani. The printing date is unspecified.
- b) The majority of the pages of this book are incomplete, except for the sections on Zakat and a small part of the section on Fasting.

**Manuscript 3 (PPM05/03)**

Author's Name : Syeikh Daud Bin Abdullah Al-Fatani  
Manuscript Title : *Idhah Al-Bab Li Murid Al-Nikah Bi Al-Sawab*  
Field of Specialization : Jurisprudence  
Manuscript Condition : Good  
Status : Incomplete  
Number of Pages : 25

Page Numbering Method : Word Pull  
 Starting Word : *'Itu mengambil kesukaan dengan dia dahulu daripada memberi kafarahnya...'*  
 Ending Word : *'...Telah selesai daripada menyalin naskah mubarak ini pada petang rabu 10 haribulan'*  
 Language : Malay  
 Number of Words per Line : 12  
 Number of Lines per Page : 24  
 Ink Color : Black and Red  
 Calligraphy Style : Nasakh

## Additional Notes:

a) This manuscript is a part of the book *Idhah Al-Bab Li Murid Al-Nikah Bi Al-Sawab*. This was identified after a comparison with the printed manuscript published by Matba'ah Bin Halabi, Pattani. The printing date is unspecified.

b) The majority of the pages of this book are incomplete, except for the sections on Nafaqah and Hadhanah until the end.

**Manuscript 4 (PPM05/04)**

Author's Name : Mansur Bin Isa Al-Ansari (Translated by Syeikh Abdul Mu'ti Bin Syeikh Muhammad Soleh)  
 Manuscript Title : *Mir'at Al-Quran Fi Tashil M'arifat Ahkam Tajwid Lil Malik Al-Wahhab*

Field of Specialization : Tajwid

Manuscript Condition : Good  
 Status : Incomplete  
 Number of Pages : 50  
 Page Numbering Method : Word Pull  
 Starting Word : *'Bismillahirrahmanirrahim...'*  
 Ending Word : *'...Barangsiapa mengaji al-Quran maka bahawasanya telah dimasukkan nubuwwwah antara dua lambungnya.'*

Language : Malay and Arabic

Dimensions (cm) : 65x9

Number of Words per Line : 14

Number of Lines per Page : 25

Ink Color : Black and Red

Calligraphy Style : Nasakh

## Additional Notes:

a) This manuscript is a translation from Arabic to Malay.

b) The manuscript begins with an introduction and ends with the merits of reciting the Quran.

**Manuscript 5 (PPM05/05)**

Author's Name : Syeikh Muhammad Arsyad Bin Abdullah Al-Banjari

Manuscript Title : *Tuhfah al-Raghibin Fi Bayan Haqiqah Iman al-Mu'minin Wa Ma Yufsiduhu Min Riddat Al-Murtaddin*

Field of Specialization : Theology

Manuscript Condition : Good

Status : Incomplete

Number of Pages : 67  
Page Numbering Method : Word Pull  
Starting Word : '*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim...*'  
Ending Word : '*...Maka diketahui daripada takrif itu bahawasanya dosa besar itu amat banyak yang ....*'  
Language : Malay  
Number of Words per Line : 9-10  
Number of Lines per Page : 19  
Ink Color : Black and Red  
Calligraphy Style : Nasakh  
Ownership/Provenance : Haji Muhammad Hasan

**Additional Notes:**

This manuscript is incomplete. It starts with an introduction and ends with a small section of the conclusion.

**Manuscript 6 (PPM05/06)**

Author's Name : Sheikh Abdul Samad Al-Falambani  
Manuscript Title : *Hidayat al-Salikin*  
Field of Specialization : Theology and Sufism  
Date of Composition : 1192 H  
Place of Composition : Mecca  
Date of Copying : Tuesday at Zohor time, 1238 H  
Place of Copying : Mecca  
Manuscript Condition : Good  
Status : Incomplete  
Number of Pages : 14  
Page Numbering Method : Word Pull  
Starting Word : '*Al-zaman la siyyaama al-mushtaghirina lil khilaf ....*'  
Ending Word : '*Pada negeri Mekah*'  
Language : Malay and Arabic  
Number of Words per Line : 8-10  
Number of Lines per Page : 19  
Ink Color : Black and Red  
Calligraphy Style : Nasakh

**Additional Notes:**

This manuscript is incomplete. It begins with the etiquettes of a Sufi and ends with the conclusion of the book.

**Manuscript 7 (PPM05/07)**

Author's Name : Syeikh Wan Hasan bin Syeikh Wan Abdul Mubin al-Fatani  
Manuscript Title : *Risalah al-Khalil fi Sahih Risalah al-Jidd fi al-Tibb wa al-Hikmah*  
Field of Specialization : Islamic supplications, prayers, and medicine  
Manuscript Condition : Good  
Status : Incomplete  
Number of Pages : 67  
Page Numbering Method : Word Pull  
Starting Word : '*Pandang ke bumi bumi akan hamparan ku..*'

Ending Word : '...Terlalu banyak kepada tahu itu..'  
Language : Malay and Arabic  
Number of Words per Line : 10-12  
Number of Lines per Page : 15  
Ink Color : Black  
Calligraphy Style : Nasakh

**Additional Notes:**

This manuscript is almost complete. It begins from the second page and continues to the end of the book. It starts with the merits of supplications and ends with the virtues of time.

**Verification and Modern Publication**

Maahad al-Khalil al-Islami has taken a significant step in the realm of Malay Islamic manuscripts. Rather than merely collecting and storing the existing collection, they have embarked on the journey of reevaluating and modern publishing, led by the Headmaster himself. The manuscripts that have been successfully evaluated and published so far are two: "*Risalah al-Khalil fi Sahih Risalah al-Jidd fi al-Tibb wa al-Hikmah*" by Syeikh Wan Hasan bin Syeikh Wan Abdul Mubin al-Fatani and "*Tuhfah al-Raghibin Fi Bayan Haqiqah Iman al-Mu'minin Wa Ma Yufsiduhu Min Riddat Al-Murtaddin*" by Syeikh Muhammad Arsyad Bin Abdullah Al-Banjari. Both works were published in 2021 and 2022 (Al-Banjari, 2022; Al-Fatani, 2021). These two manuscripts are also part of the seven-manuscript collection that researchers have gathered and documented based on the descriptions provided above.

**Conclusion and Closure**

This study has summarized that Maahad Khalil al-Islami has a remarkable history of local Islamic education, even though it currently serves only a handful of students. The initial objective of the study was to identify that the institution possessed approximately 18 manuscript copies with a total of 1,117 pages. However, most of them are incomplete and somewhat disorganized, with the majority lacking identifiable titles except for seven manuscripts. Two manuscripts have been successfully evaluated and republished through modern publications. It is hoped that these earnest efforts will invigorate preservation activities for these Malay Islamic manuscripts and provide benefits to the entire community.

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