

mentioned language families plus Hungarian and explains the ubiquitous element *-r* found in many ethnonyms and also, among other things, in the name *Magyar*, as going back to a Proto-Turkic plural suffix, which, ultimately, goes back to **-s*.

Stefan Georg
University of Bonn

SOUTHEAST ASIA

TH. C. VAN DER MEIJ:

Indonesian Manuscripts from the Islands of Java, Madura, Bali and Lombok.

(Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 3 Southeast Asia, volume 24.)
xliii, 575 pp. Leiden: Brill, 2017. €168. ISBN 978 90 04 34811 0.
doi:10.1017/S0041977X19000971

Until recently, researchers working with Southeast Asian manuscripts taught themselves how to understand their material as they went along, leaning on catalogue descriptions and the unwritten lore of more experienced colleagues. For a long time the only methodological overview of the field was Stuart Robson's *Principles of Indonesian Philology* (Dordrecht: Foris, 1988), which defended the importance of textual study and outlined how to go about producing an edition, but deemed beyond the scope of the book "the auxiliary subjects" of codicology and palaeography (p. 45). Gallop and Arps' amply illustrated *Golden Letters: Writing Traditions of Indonesia* (Jakarta and London: Yayasan Lontar and the British Library, 1991) made it abundantly clear that there is in fact something to see here, and that illumination, hand, binding, writing media, and so on are essential aspects of the study of manuscripts from island Southeast Asia. Since then, further illustrated catalogues (e.g. Pudjiastuti and Hanstein (eds), *Catalogue of Indonesian Manuscripts: Collection Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin*, Jakarta: Museum Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2016) and studies of extra-textual aspects of Southeast Asian texts (e.g. Yahya, *Magic and Divination in Malay Illustrated Manuscripts*, Leiden: Brill, 2016) have appeared, while Fathurahman's *Filologi Indonesia: Teori dan Metode* (Jakarta: UIN Jakarta Press, 2015) has extended Robson's work to include a chapter on codicology and palaeography. Van der Meij's book is a substantial contribution to this developing field within island Southeast Asian manuscript studies, presenting an abundance of information on verse metres, chronograms, colophons, library stamps, bookbinders' seals, and the like. Packed with surprising details and presented in an accessible and sometimes chatty style, the book is the result of hands-on study of many hundreds of manuscripts.

The book's introduction delineates its scope – note that, despite "Indonesian" being in the title, it is actually more narrowly focused on "the traditions of Central and East Java and the Javanese-inspired worlds of West Java, Bali, Madura and Lombok" (p. 1). In practice, this means that it covers manuscripts in varieties of Javanese, Sundanese and Balinese, and Sasak, and excludes Arabic, Malay, Chinese and European languages (p. 3). (The exclusion of Malay and Arabic, while understandable for practical reasons, is something of a pity, since it perpetuates an artificial segregation of what may have been a highly multilingual literary culture, as the examples of interlinear translation on pp. 26 and 27 indicate.)

Binding, watermarks and paper are also ruled beyond the book's remit. The first chapter, under the generous heading "Manuscripts", covers subjects ranging from illustration and illumination, size, "authentic" vs "fake" manuscripts, assessments of value, and how the numbers of surviving exemplars may relate to a text's popularity with readers. This chapter provides an overview of issues in Javanese and "Javanese-inspired" manuscript studies, giving a sense of the richness of the tradition that will be particularly eye-opening to those working on other manuscript cultures. Chapters 2–8 treat more unified topics: access to manuscripts, manuscripts written on *lontar* and *gebang* leaves, verse and verse metre, mistakes and corrections, dating and calendars, colophons, and miscellaneous information on dating and ownership. Eight substantial appendices cover such topics as names of metres, verse schemes, and a table calibrating Javanese and Arabic years to the Gregorian calendar, which will no doubt prove useful to researchers. The inclusion of a large number of images is especially welcome, but it is unfortunate that the photographs in the MyBook paperback version (the print accompaniment for users of the e-book) are in black-and-white only and are often obscure.

The book incorporates and applies some of the key recent interventions in the field, including the critique of Eurocentric assessments of value and the recognition that basing our understanding of these manuscript cultures entirely on collections assembled under colonial auspices may distort our view. The book draws on many manuscripts in less well-known institutional collections, including the palaces of Cirebon, Yogyakarta and Surakarta, and in private hands. Van der Meij warns that digitization efforts currently underway in Indonesia are likely to transform our view of the field, noting that the Arabic-derived *pegon* script may in fact turn out to be the dominant script in Java (p. 136). His insistence that, especially in the case of Balinese, we are dealing with a living tradition (p. 30), where texts could move from manuscript to print to *lontar* and back again (pp. 47, 103), and that oldest does not necessarily mean best or most interesting (p. 46), is salutary.

Rather than providing a theoretical or methodological framework, or advancing a particular thesis, this book is a field guide to Javanese, Sundanese, Balinese and Sasak manuscripts. It will enable the researcher encountering a given manuscript for the first time to begin to decipher what he or she is looking at. As such, it is a valuable reference work for scholars and students.

Mulaika Hijjas
SOAS University of London

EAST ASIA

FANG LITIAN:

Chinese Buddhism and Traditional Culture.

(Chinese Perspectives). [vi], 234 pp. Abingdon: Routledge, 2019. £130. ISBN 978 1 138 85519 9.

doi:10.1017/S0041977X19000983

This book represents, according to a note on p. [iv], an attempted English version of a work entitled in Chinese *Zhongguo Fojiao yu chuantong wenhua* 中国佛教与传统文化, by Fang Litian 方立天, published by Shanghai People's Publishing House in 1988. Fang's work has become a steady seller over the past three decades. A 2008 version from Joint Publishing in Hong Kong is still on sale there today, with a blurb