

his journal ensured that a cult-like admiration continued into the high imperial age. But from the beginning Martyn had critics in India, followed by some commentators in Britain, who resented his over-zealousness, apparent aloofness and his sharp critiques of some innocent pleasures enjoyed by Company officials. More latterly there have been attempts to reconcile these portraits by drawing on contemporary evidence for some more human, life-asserting qualities. For his part, Ayler leaves it very much to a reading of the letters in their entirety to resolve the ‘character’ issue, but feels they now ‘reveal him as a man, and not merely as a hagiographic cipher’ (p. 57). He urges that the complete letters improve on previously available sources, to uncover the “warp and woof” of Martyn’s daily life to suggest “a brilliant, self-critical and devout man with an underlying genial and warm-hearted temperament” (p. 58). Yet, for this reader, substantially the same single-patterned cloth finally comes off the loom. For the Martyn of the newly added letters seems much the same figure, so certain of the uniqueness of the Christian truth as to be harshly critical of all non-Christian religious practices and practitioners, and yet at the same time strangely indifferent to most other aspects of his Indian environment, if slightly more appreciative of the Persia he travelled quickly through. The availability in one volume of all the letters now known to have been penned by Henry Martyn will provide to those searching either for his soul or for his biblical scholarship an extremely useful, fully annotated source-book for further exploring his evangelical context, pre-fixed as this volume is, by a stimulating introductory chapter.

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THE TURKIC-TURKISH THEME IN TRADITIONAL MALAY LITERATURE: IMAGINING THE OTHER TO EMPOWER THE SELF. By VLADIMIR BRAGINSKY. pp. 303. Leiden, Brill, 2015.
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As I was closely involved in the genesis of this book, a note on the background might be appropriate. In 2012, the British Academy-funded research project ‘Islam, Trade and Politics across the Indian Ocean’, exploring links between the Ottomans and Southeast Asia, convened a conference in Banda Aceh. For the conference, *From Anatolia to Aceh: Ottomans, Turks and Southeast Asia*, the project co-directors Andrew Peacock and I commissioned a paper from Vladimir Braginsky on the many references in Malay literature to ‘Rum’, the evocative toponym signifying the eastern Roman empire centred on Constantinople, and subsequently Istanbul and the Ottoman world in general. Braginsky agreed, but in the course of preparing a paper found much more material than originally anticipated, which eventually yielded two articles (Braginsky 2012, 2013) as well as the chapter in the resultant conference volume (Braginsky 2015). The present book is the final result of this endeavour, incorporating and reworking all three earlier publications.

The book investigates references to the Turkic-Turkish theme in traditional Malay literary works of the fourteenth to nineteenth centuries. The terms ‘Turks’ and ‘Turkic’ refer to the Turkic peoples of Central and Inner Asia and the Pontic-Caspian steppes, while ‘Turkish’ is used for Ottoman Turks. The texts discussed relate closely to the two periods of historic contact between the Malay peoples and the Ottoman empire: ambassadorial exchanges between Istanbul and Aceh in the mid-16th

century, and various appeals made in the nineteenth century to the Ottoman caliph for succour against infidel aggressors. Nonetheless, the author emphasizes that his interest is not that of a historian, whose aim is to reconstruct an actual chain of events, but that of a literary scholar, who ‘prioritises the reconstruction of an image (or images) of the event as it has been engraved on the social mind’ (p. 4). From the references documented, the book sets out to investigate how knowledge of the Turkic–Turkish ‘other’ was imagined, contextualised and localised in Malay literary works, and what the agendas were of the Malay authors, and how these were realised.

The Malay texts dealing with the Turkish–Turkic theme are discussed in four chronological groupings, presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 looks at works of the late fourteenth to mid-seventeenth centuries which either feature Turkic characters, or where the action takes place in Istanbul. The texts range from translations from Persian (*Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyah*, *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*, *Hikayat bayan budiman*) and Arabic (*Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain*), to the *Bustān al-Salāḥīn* by the Gujerati theologian Nuruddin al-Raniri, which though written in Malay in Aceh in the early seventeenth century was mostly based on sources from the Middle East. Thus in his epic journeys from west to east, Iskandar Zulkarnain (Alexander the Great) encounters various Turkic groups, including the Khazars and Turkmen, although it is unlikely that Malay audiences would have discerned that these disparate tribes were united by a supra-ethnic thread. The rather random collection of references brought together is seen by Braginsky as signifying texts typical of the early stage of Islamisation, when literary imagery aimed to familiarise newly-converted communities with the historical, epic, ethical, and political traditions of the *umma*.

Chapter 2 presents texts dating from the mid- or late-seventeenth century relating to the sixteenth-century Acehese embassies to Turkey, including legends of the canon Lada Secupak and sections of the *Hikayat Aceh* and *Hikayat Hang Tuah*. The texts from Aceh are shown to be attempting through various literary devices to redress the memory of the historical humiliation suffered by the Acehese, who were forced to wait for excessively long periods in Istanbul before being granted a royal audience, and eventually had to return to Aceh with only paltry assistance from the Ottomans. The *Hikayat Aceh* takes revenge by portraying the Ottoman emperor as the one who was forced to send ambassadors to Aceh to obtain a rare medicine to cure his illness. Aceh’s great rival Johor thereupon set about appropriating elements of these Aceh texts for the *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, whilst inverting and subverting their message by ascribing to the admiral Hang Tuah a triumphant journey to Istanbul, with nary a hint of any problem encountered.

The large third group comprises texts from the early seventeenth to early nineteenth centuries that feature either a Turkish ruler, Raja Rum (in Chapter 3), or notables from Rum (in Chapter 4). On the one hand, in fantastic narratives such as *Hikayat Inderaputera*, *Hikayat Isma Yatim*, *Hikayat Si Miskin* and *Hikayat Indera Nata*, Raja Rum is an imaginary figure. On the other hand, in Malay chronicles including *Sejarah Melayu* and *Tambo Minangkabau*, the Raja of Rum is refashioned as none other than Iskandar Zulkarnain, the progenitor of the ruling houses of the Malay world. Chapter 4 presents Malay texts where royal ancestry is traced from Turks of a lesser status than the ruler: a prince of Rum in the Kedah text *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa*, and a nobleman of Rum in Jambi (*Hikayat negeri Jambi*, and especially the later *Silsilah keturunan raja Jambi*).

In Chapter 5 we encounter the final group of texts, dating from the late nineteenth century, comprising works about the two Russo–Turkish wars of the 1850s and 1870s, including the Malay *Hikayat Istanbul*, *Hikayat perang Istanbul* and *Syair Perang Stambul*, and the Acehese *Hikayat Eseutamu*, with special attention given to the *Hikayat peperangan al-maulana sultan Istanbul*. The works were composed in both prose and poetic forms, against the backdrop of the introduction of the printing press and nascent journalism. Introducing much new, realistic knowledge of Turkey into the Malay realm, all these texts are underpinned by the concept of a global binary opposition of two worlds, of righteous believers and

deviant infidels, and are imbued with the doctrine of *jihād*, either offensive or defensive, with varying ethical implications for conduct in war (pp. 170–171).

The book concludes that the Turkish-Turkic theme has been present throughout the course of Malay literature, and has always been used for politico-religious purposes, in a variety of different literary ways. The dominant image of the Turks in the Malay imagination is as exemplars of political and military might, Islamic zeal and learning, and skillful statecraft, with the Ottoman sultan at the apex as caliph of all Muslims. Thus a yearning for connections to Rum, either through links of vassalage, or imagined kinship, is a centuries-old seam that runs through the gamut of Malay literary works.

A postscript discusses two out-of-scope but nonetheless extremely interesting related early twentieth-century Malay texts. The first is a Perak genealogical chart (featured on the front cover of the book), showing the descent of the Perak and Ottoman sultans as two branches both emanating from Yāfith, son of Nūḥ (Noah), and a third branch of Islamic saintly personages starting with Adam. The second is a Malay text on Ottoman history, *Ḥadīqat al-azhār wa'l-rayālīn*, by Sheikh Ahmad al-Fatani, the director of the Ottoman printing press in Mecca. Appendices give 1) the originals of quoted texts in Malay and Acehnese; 2) genealogies of the Malay dynasties of Malacca and Minangkabau; 3) a note on Rum and the Sultan of Rum in Javanese literature; 4) a full summary of the *Hikayat peperangan al-maulana sultan Istanbul*; and 5) a detailed listing of the Ottomans in the Perak genealogy mentioned above. There is a Bibliography and an Index.

The book contains many detailed synopses of texts and translations of excerpts of texts, neatly inset so as to allow the reader to differentiate easily between these elements and the argument. As some of the Malay texts are still unpublished, the inclusion of these elements is of great value, and also provides a vivid introduction to the Malay literary world. The language and style of the book is fluent, and chapter and section headings are evocative and enticing.

The book's title suggests a fairly narrow focus limited to Malay texts dealing with the Turkic-Turkish theme, and the introduction too confirms the author's stern intent to restrict discussion only to these texts, or even only to the portions of certain texts such as the *Bustān al-Salāḥīn* or *Hikayat Aceh* which actually pertain to this theme. But this is where the substantial footnotes come into their own, and they are not infrequently used here to record the author's views on a wider network of texts. A masterly example is on pp. 80–81, n. 10, where the author sets out his latest thoughts on a matter of perennial interest to all scholars of Malay literature, namely the relationship between, and chronological ordering of, the variant versions of the *Sejarah Melayu*.

Those familiar with Vladimir Braginsky's work will know that his writing demands close attention, and a willingness from the reader to follow obediently along the markers carefully laid out along the path. If you step aside, beware: as Hansel and Gretel found, it is hard to retrace your steps in the forest, and to pick up the argument again at a subsequent stage. But if you keep faith in your guide, you are eventually rewarded with an edifice of wondrous proportions, as impressive as the seven-tiered palace in the *Hikayat Inderaputera* (which we now recognise reutilised in the *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, p. 61), which does indeed account for, and ties together—with logic that is certainly involved yet sound, and arguments that are all conceivable—the sum total of references to the Turkic-Turkish theme in Malay literature. The complexity of the structure is most pronounced in Chapters 3 and 4, in the discussions of the *Tambo Minangkabau*, *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa*, and the Jambi chronicles.

Such a meticulous and elaborate construction does demand discipline, not just from readers but also from the texts themselves (on p. 118, the Kedah chronicle *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa* is chided when it “confuses the internal and external circles of the dynastic space”, unlike the better-behaved *Tambo Minangkabau*). And yet it is hard to imagine another intellectual and literary system that could equally account for the disparate range of Malay textual references that Braginsky has woven together in this web. One example illustrates this well: in the extraordinary work that is the *Hikayat Merong*

Mahawangsa, the name of the new state is the Persian construct *Kedah Zamān Tūrān*, ‘Kedah, land of Tūrān’ or ‘Turanian Kedah’. By way of eleven pages examining the depiction of Tūrān in texts ranging from the Malay *Hikayat Bakhtiar* and *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* to the Persian *Shāh-nāma*, it is shown that the grounds for this naming is that while both Kedah and Tūrān are endowed with favourable Predetermination (*qaḍāʾ*), both have to endure a number of trials and tribulations, until the guidance of Islam releases them from the chain of disasters caused by the vicissitudes of fate (*qadar*) (p. 129). Hence through the imagining of Kedah as a second Tūrān, the Malay state was empowered to emulate its eventually stable and prosperous Turkic Other.

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