

**PHILOLOGY (*TAHQĪQ AL-MAKHṬŪṬĀT*) IN NUSANTARA AND ARAB
WORLD: A HISTORICAL STUDY**

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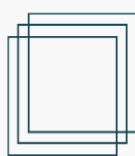
Abstract

This study aims to review the history of the development of philology in Nusantara the Arab world. Philological activity in Arabia is not something new, but it has been going on before Islam came, then Islam strengthens these scientific activities. This research is library research that uses a qualitative descriptive method. The results of this study indicate that in the classical period, there was an intersection between Eastern and Western cultures, resulting in a study of ancient texts from both cultures which impacted the progress of science and civilization. Although Arabic philology experienced a setback in the Middle Ages, in the modern era, scientists have begun to awaken awareness to revive the spirit to explore ancient texts in various areas in the Arab and Islamic regions. Nusantara as part of the Islamic world also has a wealth of manuscripts that need to be explored. Historically, philology that developed in the Arab and Islamic worlds did not only refer to the study of ancient texts and then presented them in a new face, but also included the translation and study of the culture of a nation through the legacy of old texts.

Keywords: manuscript, Nusantara, philology.

1. Introduction

It is commonly known that the Islamic world has an extraordinary wealth of knowledge. The knowledge inherited from past classical scientists has been a source of inspiration for the development and advancement of Islamic civilization. In pre-Islamic times, the Arabic people were not good at writing. However, after the arrival of Islam, they started to do many written works and spread all over the world. These ancient Arabic manuscripts scattered in Islamic areas demand a rework for modern scientists so that they can take advantage of the works of their predecessors. For modern philologists, it has become a link in channeling the results of the thoughts of classical scientists so that people can understand and use them perfectly today.



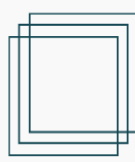
Philology is the knowledge of literature covering language, literature, and culture. This definition develops from the notion of “love” for words to “a love of knowledge”. Philology does not only talk about textual criticism and explanatory comments. It also investigates the culture of a nation based on texts. The object remains the same (manuscript). From philological research, we can find out the cultural background that produces these literary works like beliefs, religion, and customs based on a nation's life (Supriadi, 2011). In the Arabic tradition, philological activities are called *taḥqīq*. This term has never previously been used to describe a scientific activity related to text research. It is usually defined as *ihkām al-syai'* (viewing or judging something). Later, after the development of text criticism, the word *taḥqīq* was used to translate the word criticism (English) or *critique* (French) (Fathurahman, 2015).

Philology is the knowledge of literature. It includes the fields of language, literature, and culture. The term philology is defined as a science that examines culture based on language and literature and the spiritual development of the nation and its characteristics. In Arabic, philology is the science of *Taḥqīq al-Nuṣūṣ*. al-Zamakhsyari explained in his book *Asās al-Balāghah* that *taḥqīq* of a text or manuscript means exploring the true essence contained in the text, knowing the news, and being sure of its truth. Therefore, *taḥqīq* in language means real knowledge and knowing the essence of writing. (Ridlo, 2020).

If we examine deeply the meaning of *taḥqīq*, it does not represent the meaning of philology in the actual tradition. *Taḥqīq* may be part of it. From the linguistic aspect, philology in the Arabic tradition does not yet have an equivalent term. Some people prefer to translate it using the *tadkhil* system, namely *Filūlūjiyyah*. Some call it *Fiqh al-Lughah*. However, the latter term has many challenges (Luthfi, 2016). According to Abd al-Ghaffar Hilal, *Fiqh al-Lughah* is the study of Arabic from lexical, grammatical, and linguistic aspects (Hilal, 2001). Therefore, the term *Fiqh Lughah* is much broader than *Taḥqīq*, although both of them aim to study the culture of a nation through its language.

There have been some studies related to Arabic philological theories. Arif Hidayatulloh in his work entitled "Development of Philology in the Middle East Region" found that Egypt was a pioneer in the world of manuscripts in the Middle East. Although being the pioneer, it is rather difficult to trace the results of philological work in Egypt from the third to the 12th century. The claims of some researchers that Arab-Islamic scholars were the first to lay the foundations for philological theory may be true, considering that the theories and methods of *taḥqīq* have been carefully built by many hadith experts long before the Western scientists began their literary revitalization projects (Hidayatulloh, 2019).

Khabibi Muhammad Luthfi (2019) in his article entitled “*Kontekstualisasi Filologi dalam Teks-Teks Islam Nusantara*” in 2016 explained that the concepts, methods, and significance of *Islam Nusantara* philology are almost the same as philosophy in



general. The only difference is the object of study. Abdullah Ridho (2020) in his article entitled "*Filologi Sebagai Pendekatan Kajian Keislaman*" in 2020 stated that a philological approach is an approach to religious studies that focuses on religious texts or sources. This aims to find out the culture and spirituality of this religion. Meanwhile, the researcher has conducted a study of the development of philology in the Arab world and the Archipelago.

2. Research Methods

This is literature research using a qualitative descriptive method. The relevant data come from some references related to philology. This research tries to examine the development of philology in classical Arabic, modern Arabic, and the Archipelago. In Arab and in this country, philological activities cannot be separated from the contact between Eastern and Western cultures. There are still few studies regarding Arabic philology by Indonesian experts. There are common philological activities on Arabic manuscripts using Indonesian traditional languages like Javanese and Malay.

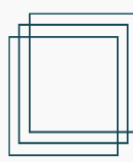
3. Results and Discussions

1. Development of Philology in the Classical Arabic Period

In the Islamic tradition, the essence contained in the meaning of philology has been applied for a long time to verify the validity of religious texts by commentators to study the possibility of variations in non-Osmani versions of Al-Qur'an like the Mushaf Abdullah bin Mas'ud, or the manuscripts of Ubay bin Ka'ab, which had been set aside along with others at the discretion of Caliph Uthman bin Affan. However, *taḥqīq* in the Arab-Islamic tradition did not only function to criticize handwritten texts but also printed books. It is because this term is associated with three other words, namely *al-naṣ* (printed and handwritten texts), *al-makḥūṭāt* (manuscripts), and *al-turās* (cultural heritage) (Fathurahma, 2015).

The history of the development of Arabic philology is greatly influenced by the development of manuscript studies in the Middle East. Middle Eastern countries got philosophical ideas and exact sciences from the ancient Greeks since the time of Iskandar Zulkarnain who had instilled a culture in Egypt, Syria, and other places. Since the fourth century, some cities in the Middle East already had universities. There were also centers of sciences from Greece like Gaza as a center for oratory studies, Beirut in the field of law, Edessa in Greek culture in general, and Antioch. Due to ecclesiastical divisions in Edessa in the fifth century, many philologists decided to move to the Persian regions.

Emperor Anusyirwan welcomed them warmly and gave them scientific positions at the Jundi Syapur Academy, a center for the study of philosophy and medicine. In this institution, many Greek manuscripts were translated into Syriac and later into Arabic (Nicholson, 1953).

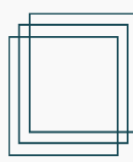


The city of Harra in the Mesopotamia region was once the center of the study of Greek manuscripts. Local people there, known as the Sabeans, included a tribe classified as ancient and proficient in Arabic. Therefore, the residents of this city studied the writings of Plato, Ptolemy, and Galea. Many of these texts were translated into Syriac and Arabic (Baried, et.all, 1985).

This new chapter in the history of classical manuscript studies found its momentum at the end of the golden age of the Roman tradition in the fourth century AD. It was when the transmission and translation of Greek texts took place significantly in the Eastern world. One of the languages used to translate the works of Greek scientists was Syriac. It was a language existing since the first century AD. It was widely used by people living in the Fertile Crescent area. In the context of a modern state, this region includes Iraq, parts of Iran, Kuwait, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Israel, and Palestine. The Ancient Greeks had long instilled their culture in the Middle East region. From the eighth century onwards, people in the region slowly began to use Arabic to translate literary and religious Greek texts (Rokhmansyahm 2018).

After the arrival of Islam, philology in the Arab world grew rapidly. Arabic linguists paid so much attention to the safety of the texts. Therefore, they set better and clearer methods. Arabic philology is not the invention of modern Arabs or orientalist who conduct investigations into Arabic scientific treasures. It is because Islamic scientists have been familiar with this scientific method. The rules set by scholars some centuries ago to reach the truth in hadith are in harmony in substance and orientation with the methodological knowledge discovered by European scientists in the following period. Many linguists and poets practice some principles used by modern scientists in ascertaining the validity of the Prophet Muhammad's hadith (Diyab, 1993).

During the Abbasid dynasty during the reign of Caliph al-Mansur (754-775), Harun al-Rashid (786-809), and al-Makmun (809-833), there was a rapid development of the study of Greek manuscripts and science. This growth reached its peak performance during the reign of al-Mamun. In his palace, several scientists from other countries gathered to study geometry, astronomy, engineering, and music. They received good service by establishing a study center named *Bait al-Hikmah* equipped with a library and observatory (Nicholson, 1953). At that time, there were three famous translators, namely Qustha bin Luqa, Hunain bin Ishaq, and Hubaisyi. All of them were Christians. Among the three people, Hunain was the most knowledgeable because he could speak Arabic, Greek, and Persian. His native language was Arabic. Since he was 7, he was already a translator into these languages. He got his excellent linguistic skills probably because he lived in a multilingual area. He established a translation agency in the city of Baghdad. However, it is not clear whether the translation works were carried out from the Greek texts or the Syriac translation. At that time, many Greek manuscripts were still stored in his area, and Hunain himself diligently searched for old Greek manuscripts from Egypt, Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia.



Hunain compiled a list of Greek manuscripts translated into Syriac, and a list of those translated into Syriac and Arabic together with the names of the translators and for whom they were translated.

Besides, he also made a list of untranslated Greek manuscripts. Hunain's criticism of people's translations was very sharp. He pointed out places where the translation was inaccurate. He explained the reasons for the inaccuracy caused by the fact that the text on which the translation was based was damaged and corrupt or because of the translator's lack of knowledge of Greek. Hunain also conducted text criticism by using many accessible texts. Thus, there will be clear identification of the philological methods used at that time (ninth century) in the Middle East regions. Besides conducting studies on Greek texts, philologists in the Middle East region also apply philological theories to texts produced by writers from these areas (Baried, et.all, 1985).

The Middle East nations are known for having old documents containing great values like the writings of the Arabs and Persians. Before the arrival of Islam, there had been many works in prose and poetry like *Mu'allaqāt* and *Qaṣīdah* on the Arabs. After Islam developed and expanded in areas outside of Arab countries, Islamic mystical literature developed rapidly in Persia in the 10th to 13th centuries. Some famous mystical literary works are *Mantiq al-Ṭair* composed by Farid-al-Din al-'Aththar, *al-Maṣnawī al-Ma'nawī* by Jalal al-Din al-Rumi, and *Turjumān al-Asywāq* written by Ibn al-'Arabi. The poems of the famous Persian poet, Umar Khayyam, as well as the stories of One Thousand and One Nights, are still popular in the Western world and have been translated into Western and Eastern languages.

The arrival of Westerners in the Middle East region paved the way for philological activities toward these works. That is why the contents of the texts became well-known in the Western world. Many of them attracted the attention of Western orientalists. They studied many texts and manuscripts sent to many study centers and manuscript collections in Europe. Philological studies of these texts are mostly carried out in Eastern cultural centers in the European regions. The results of these studies are in the form of theories on Arabic, Persian, Syrian, and Turkish culture and literature, and so on (Hidayatulloh, 2019).

The expansion of the Umayyad dynasty into Spain and Andalusia in the 8th to 15th centuries started a new dimension for the study of writings from the Middle East that came to mainland Europe. Greek science which had been absorbed by the Arabs returned to Europe with Islamic nuances. There was much popular Arab and Persian literature during the period of the Umayyad dynasty in Europe. The texts were reviewed in science and research centers in European countries. The writings of al-Ghazali, Ibn al-Arabi, Ibn Sina, and others became interesting lectures and research materials.



One of the most famous Orientalists was Albertus Magnus. He was a philosopher who studied Aristotle's thoughts through the writings of al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and al-Ghazali. He taught in Paris in the 12th century. In the 13th century, Roger Bacon and Raymon Lull studied Arabic and Persian to study Greek philosophy. Likewise, Pope Clement ordered that Arabic, Hebrew, and Chaldean languages must be taught in universities in Rome, Bologna, Paris, and Oxford as the means for studying the sciences written in the texts of those languages. In the 13th century, at the center of study in Montpellier, the writings of Ibn Rushd and Ibn Sina were translated into Latin (Baried, et.all, 1985).

2. Development of Philology in the Modern Arab Era

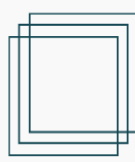
By the 17th century, there was a good development in the study of Arabic and Persian classical texts in Europe, especially at Cambridge and Oxford. The Arabic studies were led by some well-known teaching staff like Thomas Adams, Archbishop Laud, Edward Pococke, and Abraham Wheelock. Besides Arabic and Persian scripts, they also studied Turkish, Hebrew, and Syriac writings. In England, many experts examined Arabic and Persian literary works like the stories of One Thousand and One Nights, Sufi poetry, and stories from Persia and Turkey. Umar Khayyam's poems have been translated into European languages and have been adapted into English (Nicholson, 1953).

At the end of the 18th century, Silvester de Sacy established a center for the study of Eastern culture in Paris under the name Ecole des Langues Orientales Vivantes. Many European experts studied texts from the Middle East regions. From this place, leading European orientalist were born and quality essays were published on the writings of writers in the Middle East as mentioned earlier. Among them was Etienne Quatrenere (1782-1857), who was in charge of Manuscripts Orientaux in Paris and had translated *al-Maqrizi's Tārīkh al-Mamālīk* and Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* in French and published their texts in Arabic. De Shme, the compiler of the Arabic manuscript catalog at the Bibliotheque Nationale de Paris, translated *Dīwān Imru al-Qais* into French. De Sacy was the father of orientalist in Europe because, from the Ecole des Langues Orientalis Vivantes, there were many European orientalist born and had many works on the study of the Middle East writings (Baried, et.all, 1985).

The development of philology in the modern Arab era was inseparable from the revival of Arabic scholarship and civilization after the dark period during which the Arab countries were under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. The modern Arab revival started in the early 19th century AD due to two factors, namely: 1) the awareness to grow Arab nationalism to achieve an independent life with the advancement of language, literature, and traditions; and 2) contact between West and East through the sending of student delegations to Europe, the presence of Western professors in Arab institutions, and the participation of some Eastern researchers in international scientific conferences. *Jam'iyyah al-Ma'ārif* started attention to philology in Egypt.

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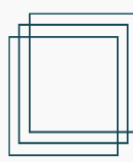
This institution was established by Ali Pasha Mubarak. This association was chaired by Rifa'ah Tahthawi and immediately became an official institution in 1868. This institution tried to revive history and literature books and published poetry diwan during the golden age of Arabia in the East and Andalusia.

Next, *Syarikah Ṭab 'al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah* was established in 1898 to republish classic books. Among its members were Hasan Pasha Ashim, Ahmad Pasha Taimur, and Ali Beik Bahjat. In 1902, *Lajnah Nasyr al-Mukhaṣṣaṣ* chaired by Sheikh Muhammad Abduh had some members like Hasan Ashim, Abd al-Khaliq Tsarwat, and Muhammad al-Najjari. This committee succeeded in reviving classic books such as *Asrār al-Balāghah* and *Dalā'il al-I'jāz* by Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani, and *al-Mukhaṣṣaṣ* by Ibn Sidah which consisted of 17 volumes. Egypt was not only the country that paid attention to ancient manuscripts in the Arabic peninsula (Diyab, 1993).

At first, the Arabs did not have an agreed method for publishing ancient manuscripts. Therefore, many scientific institutions and official committees tried to develop their methods for publishing manuscripts. *Majma' al-'Ilmī al-'Arabī bi Dimasyq* was the first scientific institution to develop methods for publishing ancient manuscripts. This institution tried to publish the book *Tarikh Madīnah Dimasyq* which had 80 volumes. Because the purpose of having *taḥqīq* on a book was to present the correct text, the scientists must focus on editorial differences and ensure their correctness. Comments given by *taḥqīq* experts must be brief for easy reading. Next, a philologist must confirm the names of the characters by affixing *syakl*, providing explanations for difficult words, setting aside *takhrīj* for hadiths, and giving periods, commas, question marks, and exclamation points so that the text were clearer when read. The philologist must also put brackets for the verses of the Qur'an and provide page numbering.

Meanwhile, an official commission that compiled philological methods functioned to conduct *taḥqīq* of Ibn Sina's book *al-Syifā'*. This committee tried to explore and collect *al-Syifā'*'s manuscripts. They selected manuscripts considered close to the author's thoughts and perfectly reflected his thoughts. They also paid attention to mentioning differences in narrations and favoring those that had come from Ibn Sina by paying attention to other writings. They mentioned historical differences and explained the meaning of linguistically difficult words in footnotes. Of course, they also checked punctuation because the publication of work must be in line with current conditions and methods. It seemed that there were similarities between the method compiled by *Majma' al-'Ilmī al-'Arabī bi Dimasyq* and the committee that carried out the philology of *al-Syifā'* (al-Munajjad, 1987).

Attention to the rules of publishing ancient manuscripts also came from individual scientists like Dr. Muhammad Mandur and Prof. Abd al-Salam Harun. Dr. Muhammad Mandur has briefly discussed the rules for publishing classic manuscripts in two articles published by *al-Ṣaqāfah* magazine. Both articles aimed to criticize the publication of the book *Qawānīn al-Dawāwīn* by Dr. Aziz Suryal Athiyah. Meanwhile,



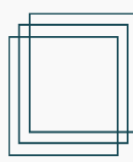
Prof. Abd al-Salam Harun wrote a book entitled *Tahqīq al-Nuṣūṣ wa Nasyruhā* which became his teaching materials for the students at *Dar al-'Ulum*. This book contains a lot of knowledge. He discussed how Arab culture reached them, and also discussed papers, writers, and writings. He also talked about the main points of the manuscript, the modern components, and the things needed by a beginner in publishing a manuscript (al-Munajjad, 1987).

Currently, there are some things that a philologist must do before conducting philological work on ancient manuscripts. The most crucial ones are confirming the title of a manuscript, ensuring its attribution to the original author, sorting the manuscript according to the systematics compiled by the author, copying or rewriting the original manuscript, comparing some similar manuscripts, and making adjustments to the ancient manuscripts with today's writing rules. Before publishing a manuscript, a philologist should also include a biography of the scriptwriter and information regarding the importance of the *tahqīq* manuscript (Abdullah, 2019).

3. Development of Philology in Nusantara

Indonesia has been an integral region of Islamic civilization since a long time ago although some experts have different opinions about the period of the arrival of Islam. This region, like other Asian countries in general, has had a high civilization for a long time and has passed on its culture to its descendants through various media, including written media in the form of texts. This archipelago region consists of many ethnic groups. Each has a distinctive cultural form without leaving the distinctive characteristics of the national culture. The wealth of this archipelago is shown by the many old manuscripts currently found in some centers for the study of Eastern culture. The desire to study traditional texts has been growing began since the presence of Western colonialists in the 16th century. The first ones who knew about the existence of old manuscripts were traders.

They valued the manuscripts as the merchandise that brought huge profits, as they were familiar with on the European continent and around the Mediterranean Sea and other areas that had been bustling with trade in ancient manuscripts. They collected the manuscripts from individuals or certain places like *pesantren* or temples. They brought them to Europe and sold them to individuals or institutions that already had collections of old manuscripts (Baried, et.all, 1985). The presence of evangelists sent by the Nederlandsche Bijbelgenootschap (NGO) to Indonesia with the provision of linguistic knowledge has encouraged the growth of old text research from various regions of the archipelago. At first, they studied the manuscript to get to know the language and broadcast and translate the Bible. Later on, some of them were interested in studying the manuscript to understand its contents and then interested in editing it so that the contents of the manuscript could be familiar to a wider group. Edits of important texts could reveal some elementary things about their contents (Baried, et.all, 1985).



Based on some search results, some countries have confirmed that they have collections of Indonesian manuscripts like the Netherlands, England, Malaysia, France, Germany, Russia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and others. Also, it seems that other institutions in foreign countries should be suspected of having collections of Indonesian old manuscripts. It is because they once had historical and scientific links like Dar al-Kutub Library and the Library of Al-Azhar University in Cairo. Among the various categories of Indonesian manuscripts, Islamic scripts have a relatively large number. This is not too surprising, because when Islam came to this region, the culture of writing was relatively well-established. Thus, when there was contact between Islam and the culture of writing, there were also activities for writing religious texts (Fathurahman, 2015).

In the 20th century, many religious texts were published in Malay and Javanese scripts. Theologians could study them easily and then they would produce scientific works in that field. These religious texts were commonly called literature books. Some editors of the texts were Naguib al-Attas on Hamzah Fansuri's writings entitled *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri* (1970) using the critical method. P. Voorhoeve edited Nuruddin al-Raniri's *Twee Maleise Geschriften van Nuruddin al-Raniri* (1955) using text criticism in facsimile form. A. Johns conducted editing based on several unknown manuscripts entitled *Malay Mysticism* (1957) in Latin letters and translated them into English. The last was S. Soebardi who conducted editing based on *Serat Cebolek's* manuscript entitled *The Book of Cebolek* (1975).

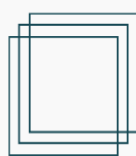
Besides publishing edited manuscripts, there were a lot of manuscripts reviews for discussing the contents based on various disciplines. The reviewers include C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze entitled *Samsuddin van Pasai* (1945) based on the writings of a *tasawuf* scholar from Aceh named Syamsuddin. J. Doorenbos had a review entitled *De Geschriften van Hamzah Pansoeri* (1933) based on the writings of Hamzah Pansuri, a *tasawuf scholar* from Aceh. P. J. van Leeuwen had a review entitled *De Maleische Alexanderroman* (1937) based on the script *Hikayat Iskandar Zulkamain*. Ph.S. van Ronkel had a review entitled *De Roman van Amir Hamzah* based on the script *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*. The last was W.H. Rassers who had a review entitled *De Panji Roman* (1922) based on various manuscripts of the Panji story from Indonesian literature (Baried, et.all, 1985). The Islamic texts dominantly contained the teachings of Sufism.

4. Conclusions

The development of philology in the Middle East since the pre-Islamic era greatly influences the history of philology in the Arab world. It's just that after the arrival of Islam, Arabic, and Islamic philology experienced rapid development, especially in the era of the Abbasid dynasty. There was contact between Eastern and Western cultures, resulting in a study of ancient texts from both cultures which significantly affected the progress of science and civilization.

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Even though Arabic philology experienced a setback in the middle ages, in this modern era, scientists have a stronger awareness of the need to revive enthusiasm for exploring ancient texts in various regions in the Arab and Islamic countries. Indonesia is part of the Islamic world also has a wealth of manuscripts should be deeply studied. Historically, the philology development in the Arab and Islamic worlds does not only refer to the study of ancient texts and then presents them in a new face, but also includes the translation and study of the culture of a nation through the inheritance of old texts.

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