

Sacred Sovereignty and Cultural Memory: Constructing Malay-Muslim Identity in the *Hikayat Patani*

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Abstract

The *Hikayat Patani* serves as a critical textual artifact that articulates Malay-Muslim identity through the dynamic interplay of sacred sovereignty, cultural memory, and narrative resistance. This study employs close textual analysis and historical contextualization to examine how the text constructs political legitimacy by synthesizing Islamic orthodoxy with indigenous Malay traditions while resisting external domination. Drawing on theories of cultural memory and Islamic historiography, the research demonstrates how the *Hikayat Patani* mythologizes history, sacralizes kingship, and asserts autonomy through strategic narrative techniques. Findings reveal that the text operates not merely as a historical record but as an active instrument of identity preservation, embedding Islamic governance, royal rituals, and mythic symbolism to reinforce Patani's distinctiveness against Siamese and colonial incursions. The study highlights the text's enduring relevance in contemporary Southern Thailand, where its narratives continue to inform Malay-Muslim

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resistance and cultural revival. Funded through academic research grants in Southeast Asian studies, this project contributes to broader discourses on decolonial historiography and the political function of premodern texts.

Keywords: Hikayat Patani, Malay-Muslim Identity, Islamic Historiography, Cultural Memory, Narrative Resistance

Introduction

The *Hikayat Patani* stands as one of the most significant literary and historical texts of the Patani Sultanate, a once-flourishing center of Islamic scholarship and Malay culture in Southeast Asia (Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970). More than a dynastic chronicle, it represents a dynamic intersection of religion, politics, and culture, serving as both a record of the past and an active narrative through which identity, legitimacy, and memory are negotiated (Milner, 2008). By blending historical events with mythic motifs and Islamic ideals, the text constructs a collective consciousness for the Patani Malay Muslim community, one that remains relevant in contemporary identity discourses.

Situated in present-day Southern Thailand, the Patani Sultanate emerged as a pivotal nexus of trade, Islamic learning, and Malay cultural production (Aini, 2024; Islahuddin et al., 2021). The *Hikayat Patani* captures this complexity, reflecting the Sultanate's dual role as a regional power and a custodian of transregional Islamic values. Its narrative operates on multiple levels: as a political manifesto legitimizing authority, a cultural archive preserving traditions, and a symbolic resistance text against external domination (Andaya, 2001; Reid, 1988). This multifaceted function underscores its importance as a living document rather than a static historical relic.

Central to the text's ideological project is its strategic deployment of Islamic symbolism. The rulers of Patani are meticulously portrayed as paragons of piety and justice, embodying *Sunni* orthodoxy while adapting to local Malay socio-political structures (Marohabutr, 2008; Syukri, 2005). Frequent references to

Islamic institutions, from mosque foundations to royal oath-taking rituals serve to sacralize political authority, positioning the Sultanate within the broader *umma* while reinforcing its regional sovereignty (Milner, 1982). This synthesis of universal Islam and vernacular kingship reflects a broader pattern in Malay court literature, where legitimacy derives from divine affiliation.

Equally critical is the text's codification of Malay cultural memory. Royal ceremonies, linguistic idioms, and oral storytelling traditions are not merely decorative elements but active mechanisms of identity formation (S.H. Haji Salleh, 2010b). The *Hikayat Patani* elevates these practices to the level of sacred tradition, ensuring their transmission across generations. For instance, descriptions of coronation rituals or diplomatic customs function as cultural pedagogy, embedding social values while distinguishing Patani's identity from neighboring polities (Collins, 1998).

The text's mythic dimensions further amplify its ideological potency. Narratives of rulers with supernatural abilities, divine genealogies, and prophetic dreams transcend mere folklore (Cassirer, 1946). Instead, they mythologize history, transforming empirical events into a teleological narrative of Patani's sacred destiny (Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970). This mytho-historical approach, common in premodern Southeast Asian texts, serves a critical function: it collapses time, linking contemporary audiences to a glorified past while reinforcing communal resilience.

Composed during periods of Siamese encroachment and political decline, the *Hikayat Patani* also functions as an act of cultural resistance (Ishii, 1998; Marohabutr, 2008). Its emphasis on Patani's Islamic and Malay distinctiveness operates as a counter-narrative to

external domination, asserting autonomy through textual means. The text aligns with broader Malay literary traditions, where historiography becomes a tool for preserving sovereignty in the face of territorial and cultural erosion.

This study argues that the *Hikayat Patani* is a discursive battleground where Malay Muslim identity is constructed, affirmed, and contested through narrative. Drawing on theories of cultural memory (Assmann, 2011), and Islamic historiography (Robinson, 2003), it employs close textual analysis to explore how the text navigates three central tensions: between history and myth, local tradition and universal Islam, and political pragmatism and sacred idealism.

Through attention to narrative structure, symbolic language, and intertextual references within the broader corpus of Malay court literature, the analysis reveals how the *Hikayat Patani* encodes a resilient vision of communal identity. By situating the text within its historical moment while unpacking its literary strategies, this study sheds light not only on Patani's self-conception but also on the enduring power of Islamic-Malay texts to shape memory, authority, and belonging in contemporary Southern Thailand.

Literature Review

The *Hikayat Patani* has long been recognized as a significant historical and literary work, offering insights into the Patani Sultanate's political, cultural, and religious dynamics. Foundational studies by Teeuw and Wyatt (1970) and Winstedt (1969) established the text's dual role as both a historical chronicle and a cultural artifact, though their focus on dynastic narratives often overlooked its identity-shaping function. Milner (1982) expanded this by framing Malay texts

as tools for political and cultural legitimization, while Andaya (2001) and Che Man (1990) highlighted its role in defending Malay-Muslim identity against external pressures, particularly Siamese and colonial incursions. Despite these contributions, early scholarship tended to isolate historical or political analysis from the text's deeper symbolic and religious dimensions, leaving gaps in understanding how it actively constructs collective identity.

Regional scholars have enriched this discourse by exploring intersections of culture, religion, and resistance. Marohabutr (2008) examined the *Hikayat Patani* as a reflection of Patani's Islamic scholarly traditions and political resilience, while S.H. Haji Salleh (2010a, 2010b) and Islahuddin et al. (2021) emphasized its performative and oral dimensions as vessels of cultural memory. Porath's (2011) work further contextualizes the text within the Malay-Thai political world, revealing its strategic narratives of sovereignty. However, these studies often treat Islamic and mythic elements as static symbols rather than dynamic tools for identity formation. Malek's (1995, 1994) historical analysis complements this by tracing Patani's socio-political evolution, yet a sustained examination of the text's narrative strategies, balancing myth, history, and religious discourse remains underexplored.

Theoretical insights from global scholars open new avenues for understanding the *Hikayat Patani* beyond its regional context. Assmann's (2011) concept of cultural memory offers a compelling framework to explore how texts become repositories of identity through repetition, ritualization, and symbolic transmission. Likewise, Robinson's (2003) work on Islamic historiography provides tools to examine how Islamic historical narratives balance factual record with

spiritual purpose. Yet, these theories have rarely been applied to Malay texts in a sustained way. Most current scholarship either isolates Islamic themes from cultural traditions or treats mythic motifs as relics of premodern thinking. There is a marked absence of studies that bring these dimensions together to interrogate how *Hikayat Patani* actively constructs and reaffirms a resilient Muslim identity in the context of political decline, cultural resistance, and colonial disruption.

This study seeks to fill that gap by offering a close textual analysis that brings Islamic historiographical thought into dialogue with Malay literary forms and cultural memory. Its novelty lies in examining *Hikayat Patani* not merely as a historical document or cultural artifact, but as a dynamic narrative that negotiates tensions between myth and history, sacred and secular, local tradition and transregional Islam. By synthesizing perspectives from Western and Malay scholarship, and by applying a multidimensional lens to the text's symbolic structure and narrative strategy, this research highlights how the *Hikayat Patani* functions as a living discourse of identity. It contributes a fresh interpretation that bridges the divide between classical Malay literature and contemporary debates on belonging, resistance, and Muslim selfhood in Southern Thailand and beyond.

Research Methodology

This study employs qualitative textual analysis as its primary research method, focusing on a close reading of the *Hikayat Patani* to uncover how it constructs and communicates Malay Muslim identity. Textual analysis is central to this study, as it allows for a detailed examination of the narrative structure, language, and

symbolic elements within the text. Barthes (1977) emphasizes that textual analysis uncovers the underlying meanings and cultural codes embedded in a narrative, which are essential for understanding how identity is constructed. The aim is not merely to interpret the content at face value but to examine how the text generates meaning, negotiates power, and encodes cultural memory within its literary and religious registers. Drawing on interpretive traditions from literary studies, Islamic historiography, and cultural memory theory, this method seeks to unpack the layered dimensions through which identity is discursively constructed.

The primary source for this study is the English translation and critical edition of *Hikayat Patani* by Teeuw and Wyatt (1970), which remains the most accessible and authoritative version in academic discourse. Rather than relying on comparative classical texts, this study concentrates exclusively on *Hikayat Patani* as a distinctive narrative that reflects the unique socio-political and religious context of the Patani Sultanate. Insights from both Western and Malay scholars such as Bradley (2009), Porath (2011), S.H. Haji Salleh (2010a, 2010b), Islahuddin et al. (2021), Marohabutr (2008) and others are incorporated to illuminate the historical depth, cultural symbolism, and interpretive richness of the text, helping to situate it within broader conversations on Islamic legitimacy, memory, and identity formation in the Malay world.

The analysis is guided by three interrelated theoretical frameworks. First, Assmann's (2011) theory of cultural memory provides a lens to examine how the *Hikayat Patani* functions as a repository of identity, where rituals, genealogies, and sacred traditions are inscribed to ensure intergenerational transmission.

Second, Robinson's (2003) work on Islamic historiography offers insights into how the text balances historical record with spiritual purpose, embedding notions of divine legitimacy, sacred time, and Islamic ethics within the political narrative. Third, postcolonial literary theory, particularly as articulated by Edward Said (1979) and regional scholars studying Southeast Asian resistance literature, is employed to explore how the *Hikayat Patani* responds to external domination, whether Siamese, colonial, or epistemological through symbolic acts of cultural sovereignty.

The textual analysis proceeds through a structured process. Key episodes are identified and annotated based on recurring themes, such as the sacralization of kingship, the role of Islam in legitimizing rule, mythic genealogies, ritual performances, and expressions of cultural autonomy. These themes are then examined for their narrative structure, intertextual echoes with other Islamic-Malay traditions, and symbolic language. Attention is paid to how myth and history are woven together to assert continuity and resilience, how religious discourse affirms communal identity, and how narrative strategies encode resistance during periods of political decline or cultural pressure.

By combining close reading with a multidimensional interpretive lens, this methodology enables a deeper understanding of how *Hikayat Patani* constructs a resilient vision of Malay-Muslim identity. Rather than treating the text as a passive historical record, this approach emphasizes its role as an active agent in shaping memory, authority, and belonging in the Patani region and beyond.

Results

1. An Overview of *Hikayat Patani*

The rich literary heritage of Patani, a once-thriving Malay-Muslim kingdom, has helped to preserve its political and cultural past. Patani literature, especially historical writings, is essential to recording the sociopolitical development and identity of the area. *Hikayat Patani* is the most well-known work in this tradition and is an essential resource for comprehending the history of the region, its rulers, and the larger sociocultural dynamics. According to S.H. Haji Salleh (2010), *Hikayat Patani* is a literary work that describes the Patani State in the past. In particular, a Malay country that is now a part of Siam, Thailand. However, the author's name is not mentioned in this *hikayat*.

A. Teeuw and D.K. Wyatt split this *hikayat* into two manuscripts before its publication. The first manuscript was discovered in Washington, D.C., at the Library of Congress with the title; "History of Patani, a Kingdom of the East Coast of the Peninsula of Malacca, Near the Siamese Boundary". According to Teeuw and Wyatt (1970), at the end of the original manuscript was written "Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir 1839, Singapore".

Tamat al-kalam. Bahwa tamatlah kitab undang-undang Patani ini disalin dalam negeri Singapura kepada Sembilan hari bulan Syaaban tahun 1255 sanat, iaitu kepada enambelas hari bulan oktober tahun Masihi 1839 sanat. Tamat adanya. Adapun yang empunya kitab ini Tuan North adanya (Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970).

Meaning:

The end of al-Kalam. This Patani principles book was completed and copied in the state of Singapore on the ninth of Shaaban in the year 1255 AH, which

is the sixteenth of October in 1839 AH. It's finished. As for the owner of this book is Mr. North

According to S.H. Haji Salleh (2010), the passage suggests that North brought this manuscript back to Washington after obtaining it from Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir. It is possible that Abdullah acquired this manuscript during his 1839 trip through Kelantan. The second manuscript was from the Skeat collection housed at the Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Oxford. This collection is in the possession of H. W. Emanuels. This manuscript was entitled "*Salahsilah Negeri Patani*" (Historical Notes About Patani) (S.H. Haji Salleh, 2010a). According to Teeuw and Wyatt (1970), this manuscript was in the form of a lined book, measuring 21 x 17.5 cm and containing 67 pages written in pencil. Teeuw and Wyatt used both manuscripts to compile the *Hiyakat Patani* published by the Koninklijk Instituut Voor Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970.

Based on the text from Teeuw and Wyatt (1970), the story itself combines historical narrative, folklore, and legend. It starts with mythical beginnings and moves through the founding and growth of the Sultanate of Patani, emphasizing significant occasions, historical figures, and customs. Not only is it a chronicle, but it also uses narrative to support the legitimacy of the Sultanate and its leaders. *Hikayat Patani* was written in classical Malay and offers insights into how historical memory was created and passed down orally before being recorded in writing. It also reflects the rich literary tradition of the region.

2. Sacralization of Kingship: Islam as the Foundation of Political Legitimacy

The *Hikayat Patani* meticulously constructs the image of Patani's rulers as divinely sanctioned leaders, blending *Sunni* Islamic orthodoxy with indigenous Malay political traditions (Milner, 1982). This synthesis is not merely a historical record but a deliberate ideological project to legitimize royal authority through religious sanctification (Andaya, 2001). The text follows a pattern common in Malay court literature, where rulers are depicted as both temporal leaders and spiritual figures (S.H. Haji Salleh, 2010b). This duality reflects what scholars term the "Islamization of sovereignty," where Southeast Asian rulers adopted Islamic symbols while retaining local governance structures.

A key strategy in this sacralization process is the depiction of royal rituals, such as oath-taking ceremonies and mosque foundations as sacred acts that bind political authority to divine will (S.H. Haji Salleh, 2010a; Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970). The text emphasizes the Islamic dimensions of these rituals, portraying them as essential to the ruler's legitimacy (Marohabutr, 2008). For instance, mosque construction is framed not just as an architectural project but as a spiritual duty aligned with *Sunni* traditions of pious rulership (Syukri, 2005). Malay scholars highlight how royal ceremonies in the *Hikayat Patani* are narrated as acts of devotion, merging governance with Islamic piety (Islahuddin et al., 2021). This intertwining elevates the sultanate beyond secular rule, embedding it within a divinely ordained cosmological order (Milner, 2008).

The text further mythologizes Patani's rulers through narratives of prophetic dreams and supernatural abilities (Cassirer,

1946). These motifs transform historical figures into archetypal heroes whose authority transcends human limitations (Winstedt, 1969). The *Hikayat Patani* frequently describes rulers receiving divine visions, a trope also found in other Malay chronicles like the *Sejarah Kerajaan Melayu Patani*. Scholars interpret these elements as part of an Islamic literary tradition where dreams signify *barakah* (divine blessing) and reinforce sacred legitimacy (S.H. Haji Salleh, 2010b). According to Porath (2011), by framing kingship in these terms, the text constructs a theopolitical ideology resistant to external challenges.

This sacralization also functions as resistance against Siamese and colonial domination (Che Man, 1990). Islamic historiography often employs religious symbolism to assert autonomy in the face of encroachment (Robinson, 2003). The *Hikayat Patani*'s insistence on divine legitimacy counters Siamese claims over the region (Ishii, 1998). The text's emphasis on Islamic governance distinguishes Patani from Buddhist neighbors, reinforcing a distinct Malay-Muslim identity (Marohabutr, 2008). Thus, sacralization is not just theological but a political strategy to preserve ideological sovereignty.

The text's portrayal of kingship reveals a negotiation between universal Islam and vernacular Malay traditions. Cultural memory thrives on such symbolic syntheses, where identities are codified into enduring narratives (Malek, 1994). The *Hikayat Patani*'s rulers embody both Islamic ideals and Malay sovereignty, creating a resilient model of legitimacy (Andaya & Milner, 1996). This narrative strategy actively shapes collective consciousness, ensuring Patani's identity endures in contemporary Southern Thailand.

3. Cultural Memory and Identity Formation: Myth, History, and Collective Consciousness

The *Hikayat Patani* artfully merges historical events with mythic narratives to construct a teleological vision of Patani's past, one that positions the sultanate within a divinely ordained trajectory. The text's portrayal of Patani's founding rulers incorporates supernatural elements, such as divine interventions and auspicious omens, which elevate their legitimacy beyond mere political succession (Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970). Such techniques align with what Cassirer (1946) identifies as the "mythicization of history," where collective memory is shaped through symbolic storytelling. By blending fact and legend, the *Hikayat Patani* ensures that Patani's past is remembered not as a series of random events but as a purposeful unfolding of Islamic destiny.

Beyond its mytho-historical framework, the text meticulously documents royal customs, linguistic idioms, and oral traditions, serving as pedagogical tools for transmitting Malay-Muslim identity across generations (M. Haji Salleh, 2018; S.H. Haji Salleh, 2010b). Descriptions of coronation rituals, for example, are not merely ceremonial but encode ethical and religious values, instructing future rulers on the Islamic ideals of justice and piety (Marohabutr, 2008). The use of elevated court language (*bahasa istana*) further reinforces social hierarchies while embedding Islamic terminology into everyday discourse (Collins, 1998). These narrative choices reflect what Assmann (2011) terms "cultural memory," where texts act as living repositories of identity, ensuring continuity amid political change. The *Hikayat Patani* thus functions as both a historical record and a didactic manual, shaping the worldview of its audience.

As a cultural archive, the text actively preserves Patani's distinctiveness against external influences, particularly Siamese domination, by foregrounding its Islamic and Malay heritage (Aini, 2024). The detailed accounts of diplomatic exchanges, for instance, highlight Patani's autonomy by contrasting its refined court protocols with the perceived inferiority of neighboring polities (Porath, 2011). This rhetorical strategy aligns with postcolonial theories of resistance literature, where marginalized communities assert sovereignty through narrative (Said, 1979). The *Hikayat Patani's* emphasis on Patani's Islamic scholarship and literary traditions further distinguishes it from Siamese Buddhist hegemony, reinforcing a sense of cultural pride (Fathy al-Fatani, 1994). In this way, the text operates as a bulwark against assimilation, ensuring that Patani's identity remains legible despite external pressures.

The interplay of myth and history in the *Hikayat Patani* also serves to collapse temporal boundaries, linking contemporary audiences to a glorified past. By recounting the exploits of legendary rulers, the text fosters a sense of communal resilience, suggesting that Patani's decline is temporary and reversible (Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970). This cyclical view of time, common in Islamic historiography, contrasts with linear colonial narratives that frame Patani as a conquered territory. The text's mythic elements such as prophecies of future revival, thus function as psychological resistance, sustaining hope amid political subjugation (Malek, 1994). Through these devices, the *Hikayat Patani* transforms memory into a tool of survival, ensuring that Patani's identity endures even in periods of crisis.

The *Hikayat Patani's* construction of cultural memory reveals its enduring relevance in contemporary identity politics. The text's

narrative strategies mythicization, pedagogical documentation, and resistance rhetoric, continue to resonate in Southern Thailand, where Malay-Muslim communities still invoke Patani's golden age to assert their rights. S.H. Haji Salleh (2010b) argues that such texts are not relics of the past but active participants in modern discourses of belonging. By preserving Patani's distinct identity through literary means, the *Hikayat Patani* exemplifies how cultural memory can transcend time, offering a blueprint for communal resilience in the face of ongoing marginalization.

4. Narrative Resistance: Asserting Autonomy Through Textual Strategies

The *Hikayat Patani* weaponizes cultural specificity to resist Siamese hegemony, particularly through its meticulous documentation of Islamic judicial autonomy. Where Siamese chronicles portrayed Patani as a vassal, the text spotlights independent *Qadi* courts administering *Sharia* (Syukri, 2005), and vibrant scholarly networks with Yemeni and Malay ulama (Azra, 2004). This aligns with Asad's (2003) concept of "discursive tradition," where the act of inscribing Islamic governance in *Jawi* script itself constitutes resistance.

Intertextuality amplifies this defiance. The text deliberately mirrors the *Sejarah Kerajaan Melayu Patani's* sovereignty motifs, like the sacred oath (*sumpah setia*) sworn on the Quran while innovating with Patani-specific symbols like the *Cik Siti Wan Kembang* legend (S.H. Haji Salleh, 2010b). These narrative choices create a double resistance: against Siamese erasure and pan-Malay cultural homogenization. The chronicle's strategic silences are equally potent; its omission of Siamese suzerainty rituals subverts dominant historiography through absence (Spivak, 1988).

Mythic temporality sustains this resistance into the present. By framing Patani's 17th-century golden age as both historical fact and cyclical destiny (e.g., prophecies of the "just ruler's return"), the text operates a temporal manifesto (Liow, 2010). Contemporary activists replicate this strategy, quoting the *Hikayat*'s revival prophecies in social media campaigns, demonstrating how premodern textual strategies still fuel modern identity politics (Sathian, 2022).

Discussion

1. Negotiating History and Myth: The Text as a Living Discourse of Identity

The *Hikayat Patani*'s sophisticated interweaving of historical events with mythic narratives transcends conventional historiography, creating an emplotted version of the past that serves specific ideological functions (White, 1978). Rather than presenting objective facts, the text strategically incorporates supernatural elements and Islamic eschatology to construct a teleological narrative of Patani's destiny (Robinson, 2003). This approach reflects a distinctly Malay-Muslim historiography that, as S.H. Haji Salleh (S.H. Haji Salleh, 2010b) observes, prioritizes meaning over factual precision, transforming raw events into morally instructive stories. The chronicle's account of Patani's foundation, replete with divine signs and auspicious portents, exemplifies how myth operates a symbolic mediation between the community and its historical consciousness (Ricoeur, 1984). Through such narrative strategies, the text constructs what Assmann (2011) describes as "connective structure" that binds generations through shared symbolic language.

This blending of historical and mythic registers serves crucial psychological and political functions for the Patani community, particularly during periods of external domination (Marohabutr, 2008). By presenting the sultanate's history as divinely ordained, the text fosters social memory, a collective understanding of the past that reinforces present identity (Connerton, 1989). The *Hikayat Patani's* frequent references to rulers receiving divine dreams or supernatural assistance create mythic consciousness that transcends temporal political realities (Cassirer, 1946). This narrative approach proves particularly potent in colonial and postcolonial contexts, where subaltern communities often preserve identity through alternative historical imaginaries (Chatterjee, 1993). The text's mytho-historical framework thus functions as a hidden transcript, maintaining a counter-narrative to dominant historical discourses (Scott, 1990).

The Islamic dimensions of this historical construction merit particular attention, as they distinguish the *Hikayat Patani* from purely local chronicle traditions (Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970). The text carefully situates Patani's rulers within an Islamic cosmology, presenting them not just as political leaders but as inheritors of prophetic tradition (A. Milner, 2008). This reflects the *Islamicate* mode of historiography, where temporal events gain meaning through their connection to sacred history (Hodgson, 1974). The chronicle's emphasis on mosque construction, Islamic justice, and scholarly patronage transforms what might be ordinary political history into what Robinson (Robinson, 2003) calls "sacred biography." Such narrative choices align with what Islamic scholars' term *sira* tradition, where historical accounts serve didactic religious

purposes (Khalidi, 1996). Through these techniques, the text sacralizes Patani's past while ensuring its relevance to Muslim audiences across temporal and spatial boundaries.

The *Hikayat Patani's* approach to history and myth reveals sophisticated understanding of cultural memory's role in community survival (Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995). Unlike Western historicism that privileges factual accuracy, the text employs oral historiography techniques, repetition, formulaic structures, and symbolic embellishment to enhance memorability (Vansina, 1985). This method proves particularly effective in preserving identity during what Nora (1989) terms "lieux de mémoire" crises, when physical institutions of memory are threatened. The text's cyclical narrative structure, where historical patterns repeat with divine intervention, creates mythic time, offering psychological refuge from linear historical decline (Eliade, 1954). Contemporary scholars note how these very narrative strategies continue to inform Patani's modern resistance literature, demonstrating traveling nature of cultural memory across generations (Islahuddin et al., 2021).

The *Hikayat Patani's* negotiation of history and myth challenges conventional academic boundaries between "fact" and "fiction" in historical writing. The text exemplifies what Andaya (2001) terms "historiographical sovereignty", the right of communities to construct their past through culturally specific narrative modes. Its continued relevance in contemporary Southern Thailand, where historical narratives remain politically charged, demonstrates time-lag of cultural meaning, where premodern texts gain new significance in modern identity struggles (Bhabha, 1994). The chronicle's endurance as a subjugated knowledge, officially marginalized but culturally vital,

speaks to the power of alternative historical discourses. As modern Patani Muslims navigate complex political realities, the *Hikayat Patani* persists not as relic but a contrapuntal narrative, offering both memory of past greatness and blueprint for future identity preservation.

2. Islam and Vernacular Kingship: Balancing Universal and Local Identities

The *Hikayat Patani* exemplifies the sophisticated negotiation between *Sunni* Islamic orthodoxy and indigenous Malay political traditions, creating a distinctive model of Islamicate kingship (S.H. Haji Salleh, 2010a). Unlike rigid doctrinal interpretations, the text presents Patani's rulers as both guardians of Islamic law (*syariah*) and practitioners of Malay *adat* (customary law), synthesizing these systems into a cohesive governance framework (Marohabutr, 2008). This approach mirrors other Malay courts, where rulers strategically adopted Islamic titles like *Khalīfatullāh* (God's Caliph) while retaining pre-Islamic rituals of sovereignty, such as the installation ceremonies described in the text (Islahuddin et al., 2021; PELETZ, 2018). By framing the sultan as simultaneously the *ulama's* patron and the *adat's* custodian, the *Hikayat Patani* constructs a hybrid legitimacy that appeals to both transregional Muslim and local Malay audiences (Yoffee & Cowgill, 1988).

Central to this synthesis is the text's sacralization of kingship through Islamic symbolism, which anchors Patani's regional authority within the universal *umma* (Fathy al-Fatani, 1994). The chronicle meticulously documents how rulers performed Friday prayers in grand mosques, hosted Quranic recitations, and consulted with Arab and Indian scholars, thereby positioning Patani as a node in the global Islamic network (Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970). Yet, as S.H. Haji

Salleh (S.H. Haji Salleh, 2010b) notes, these Islamic acts were seamlessly integrated with Malay court protocols, such as the use of royal regalia (*alat kebesaran*) and the language of *daulat* (divine royal power), creating a vernacularized Islam unique to the Malay world. This duality is a cosmopolitan locality, where universal religious ideals are inflected through distinct cultural idioms to maintain political relevance.

The text's narrative strategies actively resist binary categorizations of "Islamic" versus "local" traditions, revealing instead a dynamic discursive field (Che Man, 1990). For instance, the *Hikayat Patani* describes oath-taking rituals where Malay nobles swore on the Quran while invoking animistic symbols like *keris* (daggers) and *air sembahyang* (ritual water), a syncretism that scholars argue strengthened communal cohesion (Osman, 1989). Such practices, far from being contradictory, exemplify the Islamization of Malay civilization, where pre-Islamic elements were reinterpreted through Islamic epistemology (Wan Daud, 1998). The chronicle's portrayal of rulers as both *Sayyidina* (a term denoting prophetic lineage) and practitioners of *ilmu kebatinan* (esoteric knowledge) further underscores this synthesis (Azra, 2004), challenging purist narratives that dismiss Malay Islam as inauthentic.

This negotiated identity remains politically salient in contemporary Southern Thailand, where Patani's legacy informs modern Malay-Muslim resistance. The *Hikayat Patani's* model of vernacularized Islam resurfaces in grassroots movements that frame cultural preservation from *silat* (martial arts) to *wayang kulit* (shadow puppetry) as acts of religious fidelity (Hadiz, 2016). As Saat (Saat, 2018) observes, this reflects a broader Southeast Asian pattern where Islamic identity is articulated through localized narratives rather than Arab-

centric paradigms. The text's enduring relevance thus lies not in its historical accuracy but in its paradigm of adaptive sovereignty, a lesson for modern communities navigating globalization's homogenizing pressures.

3. The *Hikayat Patani* as a Symbolic Act of Resistance and Continuity

The *Hikayat Patani* operates as a sophisticated form of epistemic resistance, challenging external domination through its narrative construction of sovereignty. By asserting Patani's Islamic and Malay identity through carefully curated historical and mythic narratives, the text counters Siamese and later colonial attempts to erase the sultanate's political legitimacy (Che Man, 1990). This aligns with what Scott (1990) terms "weapons of the weak," where subaltern communities employ cultural production as resistance. The text's meticulous documentation of royal lineages and Islamic governance directly contests Siamese claims of suzerainty, reasserting Patani's autonomous history (Andaya, 2001). Through these narrative strategies, the *Hikayat Patani* transforms from mere chronicle to political manifesto, preserving the idea of Patani's sovereignty even during periods of subjugation (A. Milner, 2008).

The text's resistance function manifests particularly in its treatment of cultural and religious boundaries (Marohabutr, 2008). By emphasizing Islamic institutions such as mosques and *pondok* or *madrasahs* as central to Patani's identity, the text creates a symbolic bulwark against Buddhist Siamese cultural influence (Liow, 2009). This strategy reflects "cultural capital" accumulation, where marginalized groups assert value in their distinct traditions. The *Hikayat Patani*'s detailed accounts of Malay court rituals and

Islamic scholarship serve to mark Patani's difference from its neighbors, reinforcing community cohesion (Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970). Such narrative choices demonstrate how premodern texts could function as tools of soft resistance, maintaining identity under external pressure.

In contemporary Southern Thailand, the *Hikayat Patani's* emphasis on cultural distinctiveness retains profound political relevance (Aini, 2024). Modern Malay-Muslim activists frequently reference the text's historical narratives to support claims for cultural rights and autonomy (Porath, 2011). This phenomenon illustrates how cultural memory, once codified in texts, can be reactivated centuries later to serve contemporary political needs (Assmann, 2011). The text's enduring significance challenges prevailing views on the supersession of premodern chronicles by modern nationalism, highlighting instead their adaptive resilience within contested political landscapes (Satha-Anand, 2019). In this way, the *Hikayat Patani* continues to shape identity politics in Thailand's southern border provinces, serving as both historical record and living political document.

The mechanisms through which the text maintains continuity deserve particular examination. Unlike static historical records, the *Hikayat Patani* employs what Connerton (1989) calls "incorporating practices", narrative techniques that ensure intergenerational transmission of memory. Its rhythmic prose, formulaic descriptions of royal ceremonies, and repetition of key Islamic motifs all facilitate oral preservation (S.H. Haji Salleh, 2010b). These literary strategies create "travelling memory," allowing the text's resistance narratives to remain culturally mobile across time.

The inclusion of prophetic visions about Patani's future revival particularly exemplifies this, offering hope during periods of decline while ensuring the text's continued relevance (Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970). Such features transform the chronicle from passive record to active participant in identity maintenance.

The legacy of the *Hikayat Patani* ultimately challenges conventional distinctions between premodern and modern resistance. Its narratives demonstrate how cultural texts can sustain oppositional consciousness across centuries, resisting regimes of truth imposed by dominant powers. Contemporary scholars note how the text's motifs reappear in modern Patani literature, political discourse, and even educational curricula (Bradley, 2009). This continuity underscores the importance subaltern voice in colonial and postcolonial contexts. Far from being a relic of the past, the *Hikayat Patani* remains a living testament to how marginalized communities weaponize their historical narratives against cultural erasure, offering a case study in long-term resistance through textual means.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The *Hikayat Patani* exemplifies the powerful intersection of religion, politics, and cultural memory in constructing Malay-Muslim identity. Through its strategic blending of Islamic symbolism, mythic historiography, and vernacular kingship, the text articulates a vision of Patani's sovereignty that resists temporal and political erosion. By sacralizing authority, preserving cultural memory, and asserting autonomy through narrative resistance, it functions not just as a historical document but as an active framework for communal belonging, one that remains relevant in contemporary Southern

Thailand. The text's narrative strategies, including its mythologization of history and synthesis of Islamic and Malay traditions, reveal identity as a dynamic process negotiated through storytelling and symbolic representation. This adaptive resistance, balancing universal Islamic ideals with local cultural practices, demonstrates how premodern texts serve as both shields against cultural erasure and tools for ideological resilience, offering crucial insights into the enduring power of historical narratives in modern identity struggles.

Future research should examine how the *Hikayat Patani's* narratives are employed in current socio-political contexts, particularly in Southern Thailand's identity movements. Investigations into its role in oral traditions, digital activism, and educational curricula could uncover new dimensions of its living legacy, while comparative studies with other Malay-Muslim chronicles would illuminate broader patterns of resistance historiography in Southeast Asia. Such scholarship would not only deepen our understanding of premodern texts in postcolonial identity politics but also provide valuable perspectives for cultural preservation and conflict resolution.

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