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RECONSTRUCTING THE HADITH TRADITION OF MINANGKABAU: Bibliography, Codicology, and Intellectual Networks in the Surau Taram Manuscripts

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Abstract

The intellectual tradition of Minangkabau demonstrates that surau served not merely as ritual spaces but also as intellectual institutions that played a

vital role in the transmission, interpretation, and production of hadith knowledge. This study examines six hadith manuscripts from Surau Taram to reconstruct their bibliographical structure, codicological features, and epistemological significance within the wider Islamic scholarly networks of the Malay–Indonesian world. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the research combines manuscript metadata analysis, codicological examination of digital images, and thematic mapping based on the EAP352/5 collection of the British Library. The findings reveal that the manuscripts, written on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European paper bearing *Pro Patria* and *HNH* watermarks, exhibit dense textual layouts, red-and-black rubrication, and pedagogical annotations, indicating their use as working texts in advanced hadith instruction. Thematically, they integrate discussions of *fada'il*, ethics, and ritual jurisprudence, reflecting a distinctive surau-based epistemology that differs from the traditions of Javanese *pesantren* and Acehnese *dayah*. These findings affirm the position of Surau Taram as a regional intellectual center linked to trans-local networks of Islamic scholarship. Furthermore, the study highlights the urgency of preserving these manuscripts through high-resolution digitization, codicological standardization, and future comparative research with manuscripts from the Haramain.

Keywords: Hadith Manuscripts, Surau Taram, Codicology, Islamic Intellectual Networks.

Abstrak

Tradisi intelektual Minangkabau menunjukkan bahwa surau tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai ruang ritual, tetapi juga sebagai institusi intelektual yang memainkan peran penting dalam transmisi, interpretasi, dan produksi pengetahuan hadis. Penelitian ini mengkaji enam manuskrip hadis dari Surau Taram untuk merekonstruksi struktur bibliografis, karakteristik kodikologis, dan signifikansi epistemologisnya dalam jaringan keilmuan Islam yang lebih luas di kawasan Melayu–Indonesia. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini mengintegrasikan analisis metadata manuskrip, pemeriksaan kodikologis terhadap citra digital, serta pemetaan tematik berdasarkan koleksi EAP352/5 milik British Library. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa manuskrip-manuskrip tersebut, yang ditulis pada kertas Eropa abad ke-18

dan ke-19 dengan cap air *Pro Patria* dan *HNH*, menampilkan tata letak teks yang padat, rubrikasi merah-hitam, serta anotasi pedagogis yang mengindikasikan penggunaannya sebagai teks kerja dalam pengajaran hadis tingkat lanjut. Dari segi tematik, manuskrip-manuskrip tersebut memadukan pembahasan mengenai *fada'il*, etika, dan fikih ibadah, yang mencerminkan epistemologi khas berbasis surau yang berbeda dari tradisi pesantren di Jawa maupun dayah di Aceh. Temuan ini menegaskan posisi Surau Taram sebagai pusat intelektual regional yang terhubung dengan jaringan transregional keilmuan Islam. Selain itu, penelitian ini menyoroti urgensi pelestarian manuskrip-manuskrip tersebut melalui digitalisasi beresolusi tinggi, standardisasi kodikologi, serta pengembangan penelitian komparatif dengan manuskrip-manuskrip Haramain pada masa mendatang.

Kata kunci: Manuskrip Hadis, Surau Taram, Kodikologi, Jaringan Intelektual Islam.

Introduction

Minangkabau has long been recognized as one of the principal centers for the dissemination and transmission of Islamic knowledge in the Malay-Indonesian world, particularly through the traditional surau system, which functioned as an institution for the intellectual and spiritual formation of society. The scholarly tradition of the region developed through a structured educational network that integrated the study of the Qur'an, fiqh, and Sufism and, in certain periods, evolved into a center for the spread of Islamic reformist ideas. Since the seventeenth century, the surau has served as an important institution in producing influential scholars whose intellectual networks extended to modern Malay regions such as Malaysia and Singapore, as well as to the major centers of Islamic learning in Mecca and Medina (Alfurqan, 2020, p. 86). This intellectual interconnectedness was manifested through the circulation of scholars, pedagogical methods, and religious manuscripts, which strengthened the role of the surau as a center for the production rather than merely the consumption of knowledge (Satria & Rivauzi, 2024). In this context, Islamic manuscripts, including hadith manuscripts, constitute material evidence that records the academic tradition of Minangkabau and provides important sources for understanding the development of religious authority and Islamic practices within society (Taufiqurrahman & Hidayat, 2021, p. 128).

Manuscripts occupy an important position in Islamic studies because they function not only as documentary media but also as epistemological instruments that reveal how classical texts were produced, interpreted, and transmitted from one generation to another. Through manuscripts, the development of knowledge, scholarly networks, and the relationship between intellectual centers and local regions in the history of Islam in the Nusantara can be reconstructed more comprehensively (Alfurqan, 2020, p. 91). Studies on the articulation of hadith within the socio-religious environment of Minangkabau have demonstrated that religious manuscripts functioned as authoritative sources in shaping the religious practices of society (Wendry et al., 2024, p. 563). Therefore, the continuity of a scholarly tradition is determined not only by the existence of educational institutions but also by the written heritage they produced.

Despite significant developments in Islamic manuscript studies in Indonesia over the last two decades, scholarly attention has largely focused on Sufi, fiqh, and Qur'anic manuscripts. Specific studies on hadith manuscripts remain relatively limited, both in quantity and analytical depth. Existing studies on Minangkabau manuscripts generally mention the presence of hadith texts only in passing and provide little discussion of their form, structure, and function (Taufiqurrahman et al., 2021, p. 135). Likewise, codicological studies of Islamic manuscripts from various regions of the Nusantara reveal the predominance of fiqh and Sufi genres, while hadith manuscripts constitute only a relatively small proportion of the corpus (Pudjiastuti, 2020, p. 120; Fauji et al., 2025, p. 72). Meanwhile, studies of the articulation of hadith in Minangkabau society have relied more heavily on printed texts and oral traditions than on manuscripts as primary sources (Wendry et al., 2024, p. 555). This situation reveals a significant gap between the importance of hadith in religious practice and the limited academic attention devoted to hadith manuscripts as material evidence of Islamic intellectual tradition.

Based on this background, the present study addresses three main questions. First, what are the codicological characteristics of the six hadith manuscripts of Surau Taram, and how do they compare with the general patterns of Islamic manuscripts from other regions of the Nusantara? Second, what bibliographical features and scholarly structures of hadith are reflected in their organization, themes, and relationship with other disciplines within the intellectual milieu of Surau Taram? Third, what contribution do the hadith manuscripts of Surau Taram make to the intellectual history of Islam in the

Nusantara and to broader Islamic scholarly networks? To answer these questions, this study employs a descriptive qualitative approach combining bibliographical and codicological methods to examine six manuscripts from the EAP352/5 collection of the British Library. Through this approach, the study seeks to strengthen the position of hadith manuscripts as part of the Islamic scholarly heritage of the Nusantara while also contributing to the preservation of vulnerable intellectual and cultural heritage.

Discussion

Surau Taram and the Minangkabau Tradition of Hadith Scholarship

The surau tradition in Minangkabau occupies a distinctive position as a classical Islamic educational institution that integrates worship, knowledge transmission, character formation, and the preservation of local culture. Studies on Islamic education demonstrate that the surau functioned not merely as a place for learning to recite the Qur'an but also as a center for the study of fiqh and Sufism, as well as a space for the internalization of customary and religious values that shaped the religious habitus of Minangkabau society (Manaf, 2012; Baharuddin, 2004, p. 127). These characteristics are reflected in the use of classical texts as the basis of the curriculum, the intensive teacher–student relationship, and the residential pattern of students within the surau environment. Consequently, the surau has been regarded as the prototype of Islamic educational institutions in West Sumatra before the emergence of madrasas and modern schools (Alfurqan, 2020, p. 83; Afdayeni, 2017, p. 23).

Among the old surau of Minangkabau, Surau Taram, located in Nagari Taram, Harau District, Lima Puluh Kota Regency, occupies an important position as a center of Islamic education and civilization. It is recognized as one of the oldest surau tuo and functioned not only as an educational institution but also as a producer and custodian of religious manuscripts (Afdayeni, 2017; Baharuddin, 2004, p. 147). Its manuscript collection, documented through the EAP352/5 project, contains texts on fiqh, Sufism, and particularly hadith, indicating the depth of the intellectual tradition cultivated within the surau. The existence of these hadith manuscripts suggests that the transmission of hadith in Minangkabau was not conducted in isolation but was integrated with the study of fiqh,

Sufism, and moral education, reflecting the epistemological character of local Islamic scholarship (Wendry et al., 2024, p. 125).

Figure 1 Surau Taram in Jorong Cubadak, Nagari Taram, Harau District, Lima Puluh Kota Regency,



Nevertheless, studies on Surau Taram remain limited. Existing research has primarily focused on the Qur'anic manuscript of Shaykh Ibrahim Mufti and its orthographic characteristics, while the corpus of hadith manuscripts preserved within the same intellectual network has received little scholarly attention. Yet the digital documentation of the EAP project reveals the existence of several manuscripts containing hadith materials, either explicitly or integrated with fiqh and faḍā'il literature. The imbalance between the extensive study of fiqh and Sufi manuscripts and the scarcity of research on the hadith manuscripts of Surau Taram highlights an important gap in current scholarship. Therefore, this study seeks to reconstruct the bibliographical and codicological characteristics of the hadith manuscripts of Surau Taram in order to elucidate the relationship between the surau educational tradition, manuscript culture, and the transmission of hadith within the intellectual context of Minangkabau. In doing so, Surau Taram can be situated more appropriately as one of the important nodes within the wider network of Islamic scholarship in the Nusantara.

Bibliographical Structure and Thematic Characteristics of the Surau Taram Hadith Corpus

Bibliographically, the six hadith manuscripts preserved in Surau Taram constitute a relatively coherent corpus in terms of provenance, copying milieu, and scholarly orientation. Originating from the Surau Taram (Surau Tuo Taram) collection and copied by local shaykhs between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries CE, these manuscripts document an important phase in the development of the Minangkabau surau tradition. The descriptions provided in the EAP352/5 collection indicate that the corpus encompasses texts on fiqh, comparative legal traditions, and hadith, all situated within the same intellectual environment. This finding supports broader studies on Minangkabau manuscripts, which identify the surau as one of the principal centers for the production and transmission of religious manuscripts in the Nusantara (Taufiqurrahman et al., 2021, p. 120).

Table 1. Bibliographical and Thematic Structure of the Six Surau Taram Manuscripts

Code	Manuscript Title	Century	Main Theme (Hadith)	Field of Knowledge	Origin & Current Location
EAP35 2/5/1	<i>Asbāb al-Nuzūl</i>	18th	Contexts of Qur'anic revelation, tafsir-related hadith reports	Tafsir–Hadith	Surau Taram, Harau – digital BL (EAP)
EAP35 2/5/2	<i>Hadits, Fiqh</i>	19th	Hadith as evidence for ritual law and social transactions	Fiqh–Hadith	Surau Taram, Harau – digital BL (EAP)
EAP35 2/5/3	<i>Hadits, Fiqh</i>	19th	Legal hadith, ritual ethics, rubrication of matn	Fiqh–Hadith	Surau Taram, Harau – digital BL (EAP)
EAP35 2/5/4	<i>Kitab Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān</i>	19th	Virtues of the Qur'an, <i>faḍā'il</i> , hadith reports	<i>Faḍā'il</i> –Devotional	Surau Taram, Harau – digital BL (EAP)
EAP35 2/5/5	<i>Hāsyiah on Fiqh</i>	19th	Commentary on fiqh, hadith-	Fiqh–Uṣūl–Hadith	Surau Taram, Harau – digital BL (EAP)

EAP35 2/5/6	<i>Hadits</i>	19th	based legal reasoning Collection of hadith on ethics, worship, and <i>faḍā'il</i>	Hadith– Ethics	Surau Taram, Harau – digital BL (EAP)
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From a thematic perspective, the corpus reveals a continuum of scholarly interests extending from hadith-based Qur'anic exegesis to jurisprudence and devotional literature. The manuscript *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* demonstrates the role of hadith in explaining the circumstances surrounding Qur'anic revelation, while the two manuscripts entitled *Hadits*, *Fiqh* integrate prophetic traditions into discussions of ritual law and social transactions. Likewise, *Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān* reflects a devotional orientation through traditions concerning the virtues of Qur'anic recitation and pious practices associated with the Qur'an. Such a configuration corresponds to findings from codicological studies of the Dawuhan manuscript collection, which indicate that the genres of *fiqh* and *faḍā'il* frequently developed in close textual association with hadith (Fauji et al., 2025, p. 132). In this respect, Surau Taram represents a distinct Minangkabau manifestation of a wider intellectual pattern found throughout the Islamic manuscript tradition of the archipelago.

The inclusion of a *Hāsyiah on Fiqh* further points to a more advanced stage of scholarly activity. In this manuscript, the commentarial tradition (*hāsyiah*) functions as a medium for elaborating legal arguments grounded in hadith and the principles of *uṣūl al-fiqh*. Its presence suggests that scholarly production at Surau Taram extended beyond the copying and study of primary texts to include higher levels of interpretation and commentary requiring considerable intellectual competence. Similar patterns, characterized by the coexistence of foundational texts and their commentaries, have been identified in studies of Islamic manuscripts from other regions of Indonesia and are generally regarded as indicators of the maturity of the kitab tradition (Fauji et al., 2025; Taufiqurrahman et al., 2021, p. 130). Consequently, the structure of the Surau Taram corpus reflects the existence of an internal hierarchy of learning within the surau environment.

Geographically and historically, all six manuscripts are closely associated with Surau Taram in Nagari Taram, Harau District, Lima Puluh Kota Regency, a locality long

recognized as an important center of Qur'anic learning and classical Islamic scholarship in Minangkabau (Sari et al., 2025, p. 136; Fauzan, 2022, p. 150). Today, the manuscripts survive primarily in the form of digital reproductions made available through the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme. According to the collection records, the manuscripts are classified as "critical and endangered," with many folios exhibiting severe deterioration due to the fragility of the European paper. This condition underscores the urgency of bibliographical and codicological investigation, since every detailed description contributes not only to scholarly knowledge but also to the preservation of the material memory of Surau Taram's intellectual heritage.

When compared with the broader landscape of Minangkabau manuscript traditions, which have predominantly emphasized Sufi literature, *ṭarīqa* histories, and Qur'anic manuscripts (Taufiqurrahman et al., 2021, p. 130), the existence of a corpus explicitly centered on hadith represents a distinctive feature of Surau Taram. This uniqueness becomes even more evident when considered alongside recent studies of the Qur'anic manuscript of Shaykh Ibrahim Mufti, which reveal a rich and multilayered tradition of Qur'anic writing and reading within Surau Tuo Taram (Sari et al., 2025, p. 127). The coexistence of Qur'anic, fiqh, and hadith manuscripts within a single institution portrays Surau Taram as a significant node in the network of Qur'anic and hadith transmission in Minangkabau. Accordingly, the bibliographical structure of these six manuscripts provides a strong empirical foundation for situating Surau Taram within the broader map of hadith heritage and Islamic intellectual history in the Nusantara.

Codicological Characteristics of the Surau Taram Hadith Manuscripts

The codicological analysis of the six hadith manuscripts from Surau Taram shows that all manuscripts use European laid paper, a finding that affirms Minangkabau's intellectual connection with global trade networks of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The presence of European paper in Southeast Asian Islamic manuscripts has long been understood as a strong indicator of the circulation of commodities and books through VOC trade routes and the scholarly networks linking the Nusantara and the Haramain (Gallop, 2017., p.20). This finding is consistent with the general tendency found in Minangkabau manuscripts, in which European paper began to replace the use of local *dluwang* from the late eighteenth century onward (Behrend, 2018., p.415).

Figure 2. British Library, EAP352/5 Collection: Fiqh-Hadith Manuscript.



Observing the manuscript shown in Figure 1, it illustrates the form of European paper used in the six Surau Taram manuscripts. The presence of European paper strengthens the hypothesis that the *surau* functioned as a scholarly node integrated into the global circulation of knowledge. This transmission corresponds with the intensive mobility of West Sumatran scholars to Mecca during that period, which encouraged transformations in the material, aesthetic, and structural dimensions of hadith manuscript writing.

Figure 3. British Library, EAP352/5/4 Collection: Kitab Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān.



The presence of two dominant watermarks, namely Pro Patria and HNH, constitutes a highly significant material indicator. The Pro Patria watermark was generally produced by eighteenth-century Dutch paper mills, particularly in the Zaandam area, and is commonly found in Malay and Jawi manuscripts (Wan Ali et al., 2020.,p.140). Meanwhile, the HNH watermark refers to German–Dutch paper producers who actively supplied the colonial market.

The watermark pattern in the Surau Taram manuscripts, as shown in Figure 2, demonstrates temporal consistency with the eighteenth–nineteenth-century dating estimated in the British Library digital catalogue. The presence of these European watermarks not only validates the chronology of the manuscripts’ production, but also strengthens the assumption of the involvement of VOC paper-import networks, as well as Minangkabau merchants who returned from Mecca carrying writing materials. This phenomenon confirms that Surau Taram existed within a transregional intellectual ecology, in which the circulation of ideas and writing media mutually reinforced the development of the local hadith tradition.

Figure 4. Visual Samples of Six Minangkabau Hadith Manuscripts from Surau Taram Showing Eighteenth–Nineteenth-Century Codicological Features.



Figure 3 shows the red-black rubrication system found throughout the manuscripts, indicating a pattern of textual emphasis commonly used in traditional hadith manuscripts. Black ink is used for the main *matn*, while red ink functions as a structural marker, a thematic separator, and an emphasis on technical hadith terminology. This practice corresponds to the writing conventions of hadith works in the eastern Islamic world during the eighteenth century, as noted by Gacek (2022, p.128), who explains that rubrication forms part of the visual grammar of Islamic manuscripts and serves to guide readers in navigating the text. In the context of Surau Taram, this rubrication system confirms that these manuscripts functioned as teaching texts, not merely as compilations. This point is important because it shows that the scholars of Surau Taram adopted pedagogical techniques comparable to those used in global centers of hadith learning such as the Haramain, Gujarat, and Aceh. Manuscript location: British Library, EAP352/5.

The absence of a permanent binding system and the presence of densely written pages, consisting of approximately 30–35 lines per page, indicate that these manuscripts were *working manuscripts*, namely manuscripts used in the process of teaching and learning rather than products of a formal scriptorium.

Figure 5. British Library, EAP352/5 Collection: Hadith, Fiqh Manuscript.



Manuscripts with high line density, as shown in Figure 4, are commonly found in *surau*, *dayah*, and *pesantren* environments, where texts were often recopied quickly by senior students and subsequently used as materials for *talaqqi* instruction (Azra,

2021,p.89). This physical characteristic strengthens the position of Surau Taram as an intensive educational center that placed hadith as an important component of its scholarly curriculum. The unstable physical condition of the manuscripts also confirms the urgency of digital preservation through initiatives such as the Endangered Archives Programme (EAP).

Taken as a whole, this codicological analysis demonstrates that the hadith manuscripts of Surau Taram are significant not only as textual sources, but also as material artifacts that reflect the dynamics of Minangkabau Islamic scholarship. The combination of European paper, VOC-era watermarks, pedagogical rubrication, and non-binding physical characteristics produces a new understanding of how the hadith tradition was circulated, taught, and contextualized in West Sumatra. This finding corresponds with theoretical discussions on the relationship between manuscript materiality and the transmission of knowledge, as emphasized in contemporary studies of material philology (Blecher, 2020,p.110). Thus, the codicological analysis of Surau Taram makes a significant contribution to mapping the intellectual history of Islam in the Nusantara through the hadith tradition, a field that has so far received limited attention in international academic research. Manuscript location: British Library, EAP352/5.

Surau Taram and the Intellectual History of Hadith Transmission in Minangkabau

Surau Taram occupied a strategic position within the intellectual geography of Minangkabau, functioning as one of the important nodes of hadith learning in the Luhak Nan Tigo region, particularly along the scholarly routes linking Padang Panjang, Tanah Datar, and Lima Puluh Kota. Within the Minangkabau tradition, the surau served not merely as a place of worship but as an institution for the transmission of knowledge that integrated *talaqqī*, memorization, and everyday religious practice. Since the seventeenth century, the surau has been recognized as a central institution in the formation of scholarly networks in West Sumatra (Azra, 2021, p. 48). Situated near important routes of intellectual mobility, Surau Taram benefited from the circulation of students, scholars, and texts, enabling it to develop as a center of hadith learning rooted in the Shāfiʿī tradition and shaped by the influence of Haramain scholarship.

The six manuscripts analyzed in this study demonstrate that Surau Taram functioned not only as a site of instruction but also as a center for the production and preservation of texts. Their codicological features—dense writing, pedagogical rubrication, and the use of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European paper—indicate that they were working manuscripts intended for intensive study rather than luxury copies. Such practices were characteristic of traditional Islamic institutions, where the copying and transmission of texts constituted essential mechanisms for preserving religious knowledge (Gacek, 2022, p. 56). Moreover, the manuscript tradition of Surau Taram appears to have been connected with other centers of learning in Minangkabau, including Surau Batuhampar and the intellectual legacy of Tuanku Nan Tuo, suggesting that it belonged to a wider scholarly network that combined local authority with Middle Eastern references.

A distinctive feature of Surau Taram lies in the integration of hadith with fiqh and Qur'anic exegesis, as reflected in the thematic composition of its manuscripts. Rather than functioning as an autonomous discipline, hadith served as a foundational source supporting Shāfi'ī jurisprudence and the interpretation of the Qur'an. The corpus contains materials relating to *faḍā'il*, *adab*, and ritual law, indicating that prophetic traditions were employed to reinforce both communal religious practices and moral education. Such an arrangement corresponds to the intertextual character of Islamic education in Southeast Asia, where the study of hadith was closely intertwined with other branches of religious knowledge (Behrend, 2018). Consequently, Surau Taram may be understood as a center of learning that combined Shāfi'ī orthodoxy with a locally grounded hadith tradition.

From the perspective of intellectual history, the development of Surau Taram cannot be separated from the broader transregional networks connecting Minangkabau scholars with the Haramain and other centers of Islamic learning. The mobility of scholars during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries created channels through which books, pedagogical methods, and religious ideas circulated between Mecca, Medina, Aceh, and West Sumatra (Gallop, 2017, p. 26). The use of European paper bearing Dutch watermarks further suggests that the growth of scholarship at Surau Taram took place within the context of expanding commercial and intellectual exchanges. These material and historical connections indicate that the hadith tradition cultivated in Surau Taram

was not an isolated local phenomenon, but rather a creative adaptation of wider Islamic scholarly traditions transmitted through mechanisms such as *ḥalaqah*, *muṭāla‘ah*, and manuscript copying.

The close relationship between hadith, fiqh, and tafsir found in the manuscripts also reveals an epistemic pattern comparable to that of classical Shāfi‘ī educational institutions in the Middle East. Within the Minangkabau context, however, this integration was shaped by the need to harmonize Islamic teachings with the cultural principle of *adat basandi syara’, syara’ basandi Kitabullah*. The thematic arrangement of the manuscripts, which ranges from ritual practices to ethical instruction, reflects an orientation toward the formation of moral and religious life rather than the pursuit of purely theoretical knowledge (Blecher, 2020, p. 45). In this sense, Surau Taram contributed not only to the education of scholars but also to the formation of a collective religious habitus that became one of the foundations of Minangkabau society.

Compared with several other surau that were more closely associated with Sufi or ṭarīqa traditions, the manuscript corpus of Surau Taram exhibits a pronounced emphasis on hadith and practical jurisprudence. This feature distinguishes it from institutions such as Surau Syattariyyah Ulakan and reflects the diversity of intellectual orientations that characterized Minangkabau Islam during the early modern period (Azra, 2021). Surau Taram thus emerged as a center of textual orthodoxy in the inland regions of Minangkabau, where hadith functioned as an essential source of religious legitimacy and legal authority.

Taken together, the geographical location, scholarly networks, curricular structure, and manuscript culture of Surau Taram reveal the existence of a coherent and integrated intellectual ecosystem. The surau functioned not only as a place of learning but also as a center for the production, preservation, and transmission of religious knowledge. The six manuscripts preserved today through the British Library’s Endangered Archives Programme constitute tangible evidence of this legacy and provide a strong basis for reconstructing the history of hadith scholarship in Minangkabau. More broadly, they demonstrate that the Minangkabau scholarly tradition was oriented not merely toward the reception of Islamic teachings but also toward their active organization,

interpretation, and preservation through practices of copying, teaching, and textual classification.

The characteristics of these manuscripts further indicate that hadith learning at Surau Taram did not exist in isolation but formed part of a broader epistemic framework in which *fiqh* and *tafsir* occupied complementary roles. Understanding this interrelationship is therefore essential for reconstructing the distinctive intellectual identity of the surau tradition and its contribution to the history of Islamic scholarship in the Nusantara.

Integration Model of Hadith, Fiqh, and Tafsir

The corpus of Surau Taram manuscripts reveals a distinctive model of epistemological integration in which hadith, *fiqh*, and *tafsir* are closely interconnected. Unlike Javanese pesantren, where *fiqh* often occupies the central position, or Acehese dayah, which historically emphasized the synthesis of Sufism and *sharīʿa*, Surau Taram displays a pattern in which hadith functions as the principal normative foundation for ritual law, Qurʾanic interpretation, and moral education. The thematic orientation of the manuscripts -covering *faḍāʾil*, worship, ethics, and devotional practices- demonstrates that prophetic traditions were not treated as an autonomous discipline, but rather as the basis for shaping religious life and communal practice. Such a configuration indicates that the surau functioned not merely as a ritual space but as an intellectual institution that unified textual authority, legal practice, and interpretation within a coherent educational framework.

This integration also reflects the broader epistemic orientation of Minangkabau Islam, where religious knowledge was organized to support the ideal of *adat basandi syaraʾ, syaraʾ basandi Kitabullah*. In this context, hadith served as a mediating authority linking Qurʾanic exegesis, Shāfiʿī jurisprudence, and the cultivation of ethical conduct. Consequently, the Surau Taram manuscripts provide evidence for a specifically Minangkabau model of hadith scholarship, one that combined classical Islamic orthodoxy with the practical demands of local religious life. Such a pattern not only distinguishes Surau Taram from other educational traditions in the Nusantara but also

demonstrates the existence of a structured epistemology in which the boundaries between disciplines remained fluid and mutually reinforcing.

Contribution to the Islamic Intellectual Heritage of the Nusantara

The significance of Surau Taram within the intellectual history of Islam in the Nusantara lies not merely in the survival of its manuscripts but in the scholarly activities reflected in them. The six manuscripts preserved in the EAP352/5 collection reveal a deliberate thematic arrangement rather than a random accumulation of texts. *Asbāb al-Nuzūl* employs hadith as a means of explaining the circumstances of revelation, the two Hadiths, Fiqh manuscripts utilize prophetic traditions as the basis for ritual and social law, *Kitāb Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān* represents a devotional dimension, *Hāsyiah* on Fiqh embodies the commentarial tradition, and the manuscript entitled Hadiths focuses on ethics, worship, and moral formation. Taken together, these texts constitute an integrated system of knowledge in which hadith, tafsir, *fiqh*, and moral instruction were inseparable components of the educational curriculum.

This thematic configuration represents an important contribution to the study of Minangkabau manuscripts. Previous scholarship has generally concentrated on mapping manuscript genres or describing codicological features without examining hadith manuscripts as a distinct corpus of knowledge. By reconstructing the internal relationship among tafsir, *fiqh*, *faḍā'il*, and ethical instruction, this study proposes a surau-based epistemological model of hadith transmission. In this respect, it extends the work of Taufiqurrahman and others, who emphasized philology, codicology, and paratexts as important approaches to Minangkabau manuscripts, but did not treat the hadith manuscripts of Surau Taram as an independent analytical corpus (Taufiqurrahman et al., 2021, p. 130).

A further contribution of this study lies in its treatment of codicological evidence as historical data rather than merely as physical description. Features such as European paper, Pro Patria and HNH watermarks, red-black rubrication, dense textual layouts, and the apparent absence of permanent binding collectively indicate that the manuscripts functioned as working texts used for teaching, copying, and repeated reading. In Malay manuscript studies, watermarks and paper types have long been employed to reconstruct

chronology and networks of circulation (Jones, 1993, p. 49; Yahya & Jones, 2020, p. 34). Likewise, Safitri, Limbong, and Nazarudin have shown that codicological evidence may correct or refine textual chronology by preserving traces of production and transmission unavailable from textual content alone (Safitri et al., 2022, p. 20). Accordingly, the material characteristics of the Surau Taram manuscripts not only confirm their eighteenth and nineteenth century dating, but also demonstrate Minangkabau's participation in wider networks of trade, scholarship, and manuscript circulation. The present study therefore moves beyond catalogue description toward a historical-material analysis of the hadith tradition.

Another dimension of novelty concerns the positioning of Surau Taram as an intellectual node with characteristics distinct from other Islamic educational traditions in the archipelago. Whereas Javanese pesantren are often characterized by the dominance of fiqh and commentarial literature, and many Acehnese dayah by the integration of Sufism and shari'ah, Surau Taram reveals a closer relationship between hadith, tafsir, ritual jurisprudence, and ethical instruction. Such a comparison allows Surau Taram to be understood not simply as a repository of manuscripts but as a center of knowledge production. While the study of the Dawuhan manuscripts by Fauji et al. demonstrated that codicology could illuminate the relationship between material form and local educational practice, the present study goes further by showing that hadith manuscripts themselves may be read as traces of curriculum orientation, structures of authority, and patterns of religious practice (Fauji et al., 2025). In this sense, the article introduces a new analytical category, namely the understanding of hadith manuscripts as expressions of the surau curriculum and as indicators of local epistemological traditions.

The implications of this study also extend to the field of manuscript preservation. The deteriorating condition of the Surau Taram manuscripts, manifested in fading ink, fragile paper, and unstable binding structures, threatens the loss of both textual and material evidence. Although digitization through the Endangered Archives Programme has ensured the survival of basic images, recent studies in digital philology emphasize that sustainable preservation requires more than digitization alone. Rich metadata, standardized descriptions, high-resolution images, and systems capable of documenting the relationship between text, materiality, and manuscript history are essential components of long-term preservation (Andrist, 2021, p. 37; Warren & Weijer, 2021, p.

49). Accordingly, this study proposes a research-based conservation framework involving watermark documentation, paratextual analysis, damage assessment, and the development of comparative databases linking the Surau Taram manuscripts with collections from the Haramain, Aceh, Java, and the wider Malay world.

Ultimately, preservation should not be understood merely as the storage of old objects. Rather, it constitutes an effort to safeguard the material evidence of a living scholarly tradition. The manuscripts of Surau Taram testify that the Minangkabau hadith tradition flourished through practices of teaching, copying, and intellectual exchange embedded within extensive regional and transregional networks. By combining bibliographical, codicological, and intellectual-historical approaches, this study contributes not only to the field of Islamic manuscript studies but also to a broader reconstruction of the intellectual history of Islam in the Nusantara.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the six hadith manuscripts from Surau Taram constitute significant material evidence for the continuity of the hadith scholarly tradition in Minangkabau during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when the surau functioned not only as a center for the transmission of religious knowledge but also as a site of knowledge production, preservation, and reinterpretation. Bibliographical analysis reveals that the thematic structure of the corpus—encompassing *faḍā'il*, *adab*, ritual jurisprudence, and Qur'anic exegesis—reflects a distinctive surau-based epistemological model characterized by the integration of hadith, fiqh, and tafsir within the framework of local Islamic education, while codicological evidence, including the use of European paper, the presence of *Pro Patria* and *HNH* watermarks, red-black rubrication, and densely written pages of approximately thirty to thirty-five lines, indicates that these manuscripts functioned as working texts employed intensively in teaching and learning activities. These textual and material features further demonstrate that Surau Taram occupied a strategic position within the intellectual history of Islam in the Nusantara as a regional node connected to wider scholarly networks through the circulation of paper, the mobility of scholars, and the adaptation of Middle Eastern traditions of learning. Academically, this study contributes to Islamic manuscript scholarship by moving beyond descriptive cataloguing toward an integrated bibliographical and codicological

analysis, proposing hadith manuscripts as traces of the surau curriculum and as evidence of a distinct local epistemic tradition, and establishing the Surau Taram corpus as an independent object of analysis within the broader landscape of Minangkabau manuscript studies, which have traditionally focused on Sufi, fiqh, and Qur'anic texts. Nevertheless, the study is limited by its reliance on the EAP352/5 metadata and digital images, whose restricted visual resolution does not always permit detailed paleographical and codicological examination, thereby highlighting the need for future research based on high-resolution TIFF images and comparative studies with manuscripts from the Haramain, Aceh, Java, and other Malay collections in order to reconstruct more fully the networks and intellectual exchanges that shaped the development of the hadith tradition in the Malay-Indonesian world.

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