

The Concept and Criteria of Justice in the Hikayat Pahang

Shameem Rumaisaa Wan Suhaimi

Raja Zarith Sofiah Centre
for Advanced Studies on Islam, Science and Civilisation.
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.
54100, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
s.rumaisaa@gmail.com

Tatiana A. Denisova

Raja Zarith Sofiah Centre
for Advanced Studies on Islam, Science and Civilisation.
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.
54100, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
denistat@yahoo.com

<https://doi.org/10.22452/usuluddin.vol54no1.5>

Abstract

As a part of the Malay Islamic civilization and intellectual tradition, Malay Muslim historiography serves as an important source for the Malay conceptual understanding of history. This includes the concept and criteria of justice. To date, no study has analyzed the concept and criteria of justice in the Hikayat Pahang, even though it is an important Malay Muslim text that illustrates the conceptual understanding of a twentieth-century Malay Muslim author. This article aims to analyze the concept and criteria of justice in the Hikayat Pahang by applying the method of textual analysis to its contents. The findings reveal that the author understood the didactic nature of history as seen in the narrations, which reflect the levels of personal justice (attitudes, skills, and duties of the just ruler), collective justice (criteria of prosperity and decline of the state), and divine justice (principle of tawhid and the concept of history as a divine plan). These criteria illustrate that the concept and criteria of justice in the Hikayat Pahang are not only limited to the secular and worldly aspects, but also include the spiritual aspects as well. Therefore, it reflects the worldview of Islam and the influences of the local traditions.

Keywords: Malay Muslim historiography; Hikayat Pahang; criteria of justice; concept of justice; personal leadership

Introduction

One of the most important aspects of the Malay Islamic civilization¹, which includes the Malay Islamic intellectual tradition, is Malay Muslim historiography.² Thus, Malay Muslim historiography serves as an important primary source to study the Malay conceptual understanding of history throughout the years. This includes the concept and criteria of justice, which are among the main conceptual elements in Malay Muslim historiography.

One of the texts in which it is possible to analyze the conceptual elements found in Malay Muslim historiography is the twentieth century's Hikayat Pahang. Previously, there have been studies on the Hikayat Pahang, which focuses on the themes of power and war in its contents³, as well as studies on the text as a source in understanding the Malay political system and thinking during the pre-colonial period⁴. However, there has not been any study on the concept and criteria of justice. Therefore, this article aims to extract the concept and criteria of justice in the Hikayat Pahang by conducting a textual analysis of its contents. Based on this textual analysis, it will be possible to demonstrate the author's understanding of the concept and criteria of justice.

¹ Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Islam dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu: Suatu Mukaddimah mengenai Peranan Islam dalam Perabadian Sejarah Melayu-Indonesia, dan Kesannya dalam Sejarah Pemikiran, Bahasa dan Kesusasteraan Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), 1999); Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Preliminary Statement on a General Theory of the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago* (Kuala Lumpur: Ta'dib International, 2018).

² The main definition of historiography is the writing of history based on the scientific method of inquiry, which involves the critical analysis of primary sources and their composition into a narrative. It is also the theoretical basis and conceptual background of the study of history, Tatiana A. Denisova, *Marginalia: on Malay Muslim Historiography* (Kuantan: Al-Sultan Abdullah History & Civilisation Research Centre (AL-ASAR) and Raja Zarith Sofiah Centre for Advanced Studies on Islam, Science and Civilisation (RZS-CASIS, 2022)), 28-31. Hereafter cited as *Marginalia*. See also Tatiana A. Denisova, *Sumber Historiografi Alam Melayu: Koleksi Peribadi John Bastin (Edisi Terkini)* (Kuala Lumpur: Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, 2020), 11-13. Hereafter cited as *Sumber Historiografi Alam Melayu*.

³ Arba'iyah Mohd Noor, "Memburu Kekuasaan: Peperangan dalam Hikayat Pahang dan Syair-syair Pahang," in *Kedaulatan dan Kekuasaan Melayu dalam Teks Sastera*, ed. Jelani Harun and Rogayah A. Hamid (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2019).

⁴ See the chapters titled "Allegiance: The Pahang War" and "A Ceremonial Raja" in Anthony Milner, *Kerajaan: Malay Political Culture on the Eve of Colonial Rule (Second Edition)*. (Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development Centre, 2016).

Conceptual Elements in Malay Muslim Historiography

Malay Muslim historiography is a part of the Islamic historiographical tradition.⁵ Therefore, the concept of history found in Malay Muslim historiography reflects the Islamic concept of history.⁶ Among the main conceptual elements include the concept of history as a divine plan, the didactic nature of history, the principles of truth-telling, the humanistic aspect of history, as well as the set of facts and the periodization.⁷ The uniqueness of Malay Muslim historiography within the context of the Islamic historiographical tradition can be observed in the way Malay Muslim historians understand and represent these common conceptual elements.⁸ Specifically, Malay Muslim historians have their own approaches in understanding and representing them which are influenced by their local traditions and worldview.⁹

⁵ For a more detailed discussion on Malay Muslim historiography, see Denisova, *Marginalia*, 56-66.

⁶ Denisova, *Marginalia*, 56-57. For further discussion on the Islamic concept of history and the Islamic historiographical tradition, see Tatiana Denisova, *Sumber Historiografi Alam Melayu*, 15-23. See also al-Tabari, *The History of al-Tabari*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989); Ibn Khaldun, *An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015); Tobias Andersson, *Early Sunni Historiography: A Study of the Tarikh of Khalifa b. Khayyat* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2019).

⁷ Denisova, *Marginalia*, 56-57.; Tatiana, *Sumber Historiografi Alam Melayu*, 15-23; al-Tabari, *The History of al-Tabari*; Ibn Khaldun, *An Introduction to History*; Tobias, *Early Sunni Historiography*.

⁸ For discussions on the general characteristics of Malay Muslim historiography, see Hussain Othman, "The Characteristics of the Malay Historiography" (10th Southeast Asian Studies Regional Exchange Program: Southeast Asia, A Global Crossroads, SEASREP 10th Anniversary Conference, Chiang Mai, 8-9 December 2005). Hereafter cited as "The Characteristics of the Malay Historiography".

⁹ The prominent Malay Muslim scholar, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (1931-2026), explained how every civilization has its own worldview, and how worldview influences one's conception and conceptualization of knowledge and the sciences. See Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1995), ix. Hereafter cited as *Prolegomena*. For the definition of worldview as "a comprehensive concept or theory of the world in existence and the role of mankind in it," which influences the historian's concept of history, selection of sources, interpretation of facts, and formulation of conclusions, see Denisova, *Marginalia*, 30-31. For discussions on the influence of worldview on Malay Muslim historiography, see also Muhammad Yusoff Hashim, *Pensejaraan Melayu: Kajian Tentang Sejarah Melayu Nusantara* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1992), 15.

The set of facts that were chosen by Malay Muslim historians in their writing of history are arranged according to a specific periodization. This periodization can be based on general periods of historical events or based on the reign of specific rulers. Another important element in Malay Muslim historiography is the aim of truth-telling which demonstrates its intellectual nature and differentiates it from works of literature.¹⁰ Although works of literature may contain historical information, they are not limited to the telling of truth.¹¹ On the other hand, even though Malay Muslim historiography may include quasi-historical elements, it does not compromise the principle of truthfulness of the text since these elements were included to serve a specific purpose.¹² Therefore, the worldview of the historian significantly influences his chosen set of facts and periodization, and what he considers to be true in their historical writing.¹³

The aspect of personal leadership in relation to royals and nobles has a specific importance in Malay Muslim historiography. This fact reflects the humanistic conceptual element in Malay Muslim historiography whereby its subject matter is focused on the history of man rather than society.¹⁴ Man (rulers, spiritual

¹⁰ For R. O. Winstedt's definition of literature: "Literature strictly came into being with the art of writing, but long before letters were shaped, there existed the material of literature, words spoken in verse to wake emotion by beauty of sound and words spoken in prose to appeal to reason by beauty of sense." See R. O. Winstedt, "A History of Malay Literature," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 17.3 (135) (1940), 1. For further information on the differences between historiography and literature, see Denisova, *Marginalia*, 29-30 and Tatiana, *Sumber Historiografi Alam Melayu*, 23-27.

¹¹ Winstedt, "A History of Malay Literature," 1; Denisova, *Marginalia*, 29-30; Tatiana, *Sumber Historiografi Alam Melayu*, 23-27.

¹² Tatiana A. Denisova, *Refleksi Historiografi Alam Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 2011), 4-5, 17-18. See also Tatiana, *Sumber Historiografi Alam Melayu*, 26-28.

¹³ The influence of the historian's worldview in their concept and writing of history have been discussed by prominent Western historians such as Arnold J. Toynbee (1889-1975), Edward Hallet Carr (1892-1982), Franz Rosenthal (1914-2003) and R. Stephen Humphreys, see Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History (Volume I)* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), 1:1-9; Edward Hallet Carr, *What is History?* (New York: Random House Inc., 1961), 5; Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography (Second Revised Edition)* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 8; R. Stephen Humphreys, *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry (Revised Edition)* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), 91.

¹⁴ Al-Attas defines man (*insan*) as a new and special creation intended to be the Vicegerents (*khalifah*) of Allah Almighty on earth. For a detailed discussion on the nature of man (*insan*), see Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *On Justice and the*

leaders, etc.) is understood to be the agents or movers of history and because of that, Malay Muslim historiography included descriptions and narrations concerning the legitimation of the Sultan's power as well as the elements of panegyric.¹⁵

Another conceptual element in Malay Muslim historiography is the concept of history as a divine plan which is based on the Islamic concept of *tawhid*.¹⁶ This means that all events in human history, which includes events which occurred in the physical as well as the spiritual realm, have already been predetermined by Allah Almighty.¹⁷ The fact that Malay Muslim historians understand history as such further demonstrates that Malay Muslim historiography follows the worldview of Islam and its traditions.¹⁸ This can be observed from narrations which described the characteristic of depending on Allah Almighty through acts of worship. Some examples of these acts of worship include performing the five compulsory prayers, praying for the help of Allah Almighty when experiencing wars and hardship, and celebrating *Mawlid* or the birth of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). These reminders to remember Allah Almighty also reflect the didactic nature of Malay Muslim historiography which shall be further explained in relation to the next concept.

Nature of Man: A Commentary of surah al-Nisa' (4):58 and surah al-Mu'minin (23):12-14 (Kuala Lumpur: IBFIM, 2015), 31-57. Hereafter cited as *On Justice*. For more detailed explanations on man as the main subject matter of history as reflected in the 'great man' idea of history, see Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Historical Fact and Fiction* (Johor Bahru: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Press, 2011), 72.

¹⁵ Panegyric refers to a text or a speech of praises directed towards an individual or a thing. For more information on the elements of panegyric in Malay Muslim historiography, see Denisova, *Sumber Historiografi Alam Melayu*, 26.

¹⁶ Tatiana, *Marginalia*, 32-34, 41-48. For further reading on the concept of history as a divine plan in Islamic historiography, see Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 3-65.

¹⁷ Tatiana, *Sumber Historiografi Alam Melayu*, 15.

¹⁸ Al-Attas wrote that "the worldview of Islam encompasses both *al-dunya* and *al-akhirah*, in which the *dunya*-aspect *must* be related in a profound and inseparable way to the *akhirah*-aspect, and in which the *akhirah*-aspect has ultimate and final significance." See, al-Attas, *Prolegomena*, 1. For a detailed discussion on the worldview of Islam and its comparison with the Western secular worldview, see previous reference, 1-39.

In general, one of the main characteristics of Malay Muslim historical writing is the idea of justice¹⁹ and its implementation within the context of describing local history. This emphasis on justice serves as another evidence and reflection of the didactic elements and nature of Malay Muslim historiography. Specific concepts which reflect the didactic elements include the criteria of an ideal ruler and a prosperous state, as well as the concept of rewards and punishments from Allah Almighty which follows the implementation or lack of justice by the ruler.²⁰ Therefore, Malay Muslim historians are writing history as a lesson for their future readers. Aside from the fact that the emphasis on the concept of justice reflects the didactic nature of Malay Muslim historiography, it can be observed that it also reflects the concept of history as a divine plan.

One of the Malay Muslim historical texts in which we can observe the reflection of the concept of history is the Hikayat Pahang. For this reason, the Hikayat Pahang serves as a good example in demonstrating the conceptual elements in Malay Muslim historiography especially with regard to the concept and criteria of justice. Before proceeding with a textual analysis of the concept and criteria of justice in the Hikayat Pahang, it is relevant to firstly introduce the existing manuscripts of this text and to summarize its contents.

The Hikayat Pahang: Its Manuscripts and Contents

The Hikayat Pahang is estimated to be written in Pahang around the early twentieth century and its periodization spans approximately from 1806 until 1928. It consists of 41 chapters and

¹⁹ The concept of justice has been formulated and constructed by al-Attas as “a state of being, a condition of things being in their proper places”. See Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *On Justice*, 13. For his in-depth discussion on the concept of justice, see *ibid.*, 1-23.

²⁰ Denisova, *Marginalia*, 65. For discussions on responsibilities of the Possessors of Command and the Keepers of trusts, see al-Attas, *On Justice*, 4-7. These concepts, which reflect the didactic elements in Malay Muslim historiography, can also be found in the *Sejarah Melayu*, see Othman Hussain, “The Characteristics of the Malay Historiography,” 10-12. See also P. E. De Josselin De Jong, “The Character of the Malay Annals,” in *Malayan and Indonesian Studies: Essays presented to Sir Richard Winstedt on his eighty-fifth birthday*, ed. John Bastin and R. Roolvink (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 239. Hereafter cited as “The Character of the Malay Annals.”

each chapter has the title of *alkisah cetera* which is followed by the respective number of the chapter. The author of this Hikayat is presently unknown but it is agreed among historians that the author is likely a noble from Pahang whose patron was Bendahara Wan Ahmad (1836-1914).²¹ Bendahara Wan Ahmad is a significant figure in the history of Pahang as he later became Sultan Ahmad al-Muazzam Syah who ruled Pahang from 1863 until 1914. As shall be observed later, Sultan Ahmad occupies a central place throughout the narrations in the Hikayat Pahang and he is also a key figure whom the author ascribes the characteristics of a just ruler.

Although the original manuscript of the Hikayat Pahang has yet to be found, there are several existing manuscripts in both the *Jawi* and Romanized scripts which are believed to be copied from the original manuscript. The most well-known *Jawi* manuscript is located at the library of the University of Malaya and it is known as MS. 937 which is preserved in microfilm no. 204.²² It has the dimensions of 28 cm by 28 cm and it consists of 71 pages.²³ Another *Jawi* manuscript is kept at the Museum of Sultan Abu Bakar, Pekan (or also known as the Pahang Museum) which consists of 96 pages and has the dimensions of 20.5 cm by 33 cm. This *Jawi* manuscript is less known as compared to the manuscript located at the library of the Universiti Malaya.

Besides these *Jawi* manuscripts, there are two other Romanized and typed manuscripts of the Hikayat which are located at the National Archives of Malaysia and the Pahang Museum respectively. Both manuscripts consist of 217 pages and possess the dimensions of 18 cm by 25 cm.²⁴ The Romanized

²¹ According to Dato' Haji Zakaria bin Hitam, who was an expert in Pahang culture and literature, and interviewed by Muhammad Yusoff Hashim on the 16th of June 1986 at Teluk Cempedak, Pahang, the author of the Hikayat Pahang is Haji Muhammad Noor. Haji Muhammad Noor was depicted in the Hikayat as one of the loyal followers of Tun Ahmad. See Muhammad Yusoff Hashim and Aruna Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang Darul Makmur: 1800-1930* (Petaling Jaya: Tempo Publishing (M) Sdn. Bhd., 1992), 12, hereafter cited as *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*.

²² See Kalthum Jeran, ed., *Hikayat Pahang* (Petaling Jaya: Penerbit Fajar Bakti Sdn. Bhd., 1986), iii-v; repr., (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2016), v-vii; Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 6-7.

²³ Kalthum Jeran, *Hikayat Pahang*; repr., v-vii; Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 6-7.

²⁴ Jeran, ed., *Hikayat Pahang*, v-vii; Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 6-10.

manuscript located at the National Archives was compiled by A. Savarimuthu on the 5th of July, 1963, and was checked by K. Rasiah on the 12th of July, 1963.²⁵ Out of all these manuscripts, only the *Jawi* manuscript located in the library of the Universiti Malaya, and the Romanized manuscript located at the National Archives, have been studied, transliterated, edited, and published.²⁶

As mentioned earlier, Sultan Ahmad is the main protagonist of the *Hikayat Pahang* and this fact is a reflection of the humanistic concept as among the main conceptual elements in Malay Muslim historiography. Sultan Ahmad's significant role can be observed in the way the author narrated his whole life starting from his birth until his death, and how the watershed events narrated in the *Hikayat* are centered around him. Furthermore, it can also be seen in the periodization of the plots as well as the chosen set of facts.

The date of the narration begins with the reign of Datuk Bendahara Seri Maharaja Ali (r. 1806-1857) who was the father of Wan Ahmad (Sultan Ahmad).²⁷ This is followed by an in-depth narration concerning the Pahang civil war between Wan Ahmad and his brother Wan Mutahir (d. 1863), which occurred after the death of Bendahara Ali. This narration contained descriptions of various information including the involvement of royals and nobles from other kingdoms (for instance, the Sultan of Johore and Terengganu), war attires and weapons that were used, and the economic situation of Pahang at that time. Therefore, it can be seen that the author focused on the involvement of Wan Ahmad in the Pahang civil war as an event which he considered to be a major

²⁵ Jeran, *Hikayat Pahang*.

²⁶ Kalthum Jeran was the first to study, transliterate, and edit the *Jawi* manuscript located at the library of the Universiti Malaya, and she combined it with the Romanized and typed manuscript kept at the National Archives of Malaysia. This edition was first published by Penerbit Fajar Bakti Sdn. Bhd. in 1986, which was then reprinted in 1992 and 1997 by the same publisher. In 2016, it was reprinted by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, and this is the latest publication, see Kalthum Jeran, ed., *Hikayat Pahang*. Besides the edition by Kathum Jeran, another edition and transliteration of the *Hikayat Pahang* was written by Muhammad Yusoff Hashim and Aruna Gopinath, which was published by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka in 1992. Unlike the edition by Kalthum Jeran, this edition only utilized the *Jawi* manuscript of the library of the Universiti Malaya, see Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*.

²⁷ For further information on the contents of the *Hikayat Pahang*, see also Muhd. Yusoff Ibrahim, *Pensejarahan Melayu 1800-1960* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1994), 11-13.

event in the history of Pahang. The importance of this war in the eyes of the author can be attributed to the fact that it marked the beginning of Wan Ahmad's ascend as the ruler of Pahang.

The author of the Hikayat then proceeded with a narration of Wan Ahmad's victory, his ascend to the throne, as well as his change of title from Datuk Bendahara Siwa Raja to Sultan. Other significant events chosen by the author to be included in the Hikayat are all events related to Sultan Ahmad, and majority of which occurred during his reign from 1882 until 1914. These events include Pahang's involvement with the Klang War (1867-1873), the beginning of British colonial intervention, the appointment of the first British Resident in Pahang (1888), as well as the revolt of the Orang Kaya of Semantan (1891-1895).²⁸ Aside from that, the Hikayat also contains descriptions of the conditions of society and the involvement of the Sultan as the one who ensures the prosperity of his people. These descriptions which are based on specific criteria, illustrates whether just ruling and prosperity existed in Pahang at the time. The *Hikayat* then concludes with the death of Sultan Ahmad, who was then succeeded by his sons, Sultan Mahmud (1868-1917) and Sultan Abdullah al-Mu'tasim Billah (1874-1932).

The contents of the Hikayat Pahang reveals some key information concerning its purpose and the approach of the author. Firstly, it demonstrates that this text serves as an official document

²⁸ For further reading on the history of Pahang, see William Linehan, "A History of Pahang," *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 14.2 (125) (1936): 1-257; R. G. Cant, *An Historical Geography of Pahang (Monographs of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, No. 4)* (Singapore: Times Printers Sdn. Bhd., 1972); Buyong Adil, *Sejarah Pahang* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka & Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1984); Aruna Gopinath, *Pahang 1896-1914: Sultan Ahmad's Struggle and Failure in his Quest for Power and Political Survival (Volume I of Kertas Takberkala)* (Kuala Lumpur: Department of History University Malaya, 1985); Aruna Gopinath, *Pahang 1880-1933: A Political History* (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (MBRAS), 1991); *Pahang: Sejarah dan Budaya*, ed. Noraziz Selat (Pekan: Lembaga Muzium Negeri Pahang, 2000); Suzana Haji Othman, *Perang Bendahara Pahang 1857-63: Pensejarahan Semula Menelusuri Peranan British* (Shah Alam: Karisma Publications Sdn. Bhd., 2007); Farish A. Noor, *From Inderapura to Darul Makmur: A Deconstructive History of Pahang* (Kuala Lumpur: Silverfish Books Sdn. Bhd., 2011); Haji Othman, *Sejarah Pergolakan dan Pergelutan Bendahara Johor-Pahang 1613-1863* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2018); Ahmad Farid Abd Jalal and Yusuf Adam Broughton, *Pahang Dalam Catatan Kolonial* (Kuantan: Pusat Kajian Sejarah & Tamadun Al-Sultan Abdullah, 2022); Abu Talib Ahmad, *Sejarah Negeri Pahang Hingga 1945* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2024).

to prove the legitimation of Sultan Ahmad as the rightful ruler of Pahang. In relation to that, it shows that the focus of the *Hikayat* is on the individual man and his personal leadership rather than on society. To demonstrate to his readers that Sultan Ahmad is the rightful ruler of Pahang, the descriptions in the text follows some precise criteria of just leadership which consequently reflects the author's understanding of the concept of justice and leadership. This concept of justice and leadership in the *Hikayat Pahang* shall now be analyzed.

The Concept and Criteria of Justice in the Hikayat Pahang

As we have discussed previously, the *Hikayat Pahang* is an important part of Malay Muslim historiography and it serves as an official document to prove the legitimation of Sultan Ahmad as the rightful ruler of Pahang. Hence, there is a focus on the humanistic and didactic aspects of history including the concept of justice. Based on the textual analysis, there are three levels of justice namely personal justice, collective justice, and divine justice. In this hierarchy of justice, it should be noted that the lowest level is personal justice whereas the highest level is divine justice.²⁹

The first level of justice that will be discussed is personal justice.³⁰ It is the lowest level of justice and it refers to the personal leadership which reflects a 'just ruler'. The *Hikayat Pahang* contains several descriptions regarding the characteristics of Sultan Ahmad as well as his father, Datuk Bendahara Seri Maharaja Ali. The characteristics of these rulers as described by the author of the *Hikayat Pahang* demonstrates what constitutes the criteria of a 'just ruler' according to the Malay Islamic tradition. These criteria are as follows.

²⁹ This concept reflects the general concept of justice and its levels as formulated and constructed by al-Attas, see al-Attas, *On Justice*, 2-3.

³⁰ On the meaning of personal justice, al-Attas wrote: "As regards man's relation to his own self, it refers to his origin; his Covenant with God his Creator and Lord; his acceptance of responsibility and accountability; his knowledge and his freedom of choice between alternatives of good and evil made known to him by God; his purpose in creation; and his ultimate destiny." See al-Attas, *On Justice*.

Table 1: The Criteria of a Just Ruler

Quotations	Criteria of a Just Ruler
<p>Melihatkan Datuk Bendahara menghadap Yang di-Pertuan dengan takzimnya, tawaduk tiada seorang bandingnya, daripada tingkah lakunya, elok, manis, bersabda dengan lemah-lembut perkataan, tiadalah boleh disifatkan. Hairanlah sekalian mendengar sebab segala mengerja itu ada semuanya dibawa hukum syarak, adat-istiadat di dalam kanun. Semua kalimah itu dibawa dalam bersabda. Apatah lagi faham dan resam.³¹ [Alkisah cetera yang pertama]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humble. • Politeness in speech. • Knowledgeable in laws and customs.
<p>Masa itu sangatlah makmurnya negeri Pahang itu. Sekalian perintahnya adil. Datuk Bendahara Seri Maharaja, dua mufti dan kadi yang besar-besar iaitu Tuan al-Haji Abdul Syukur dan Tuan Sanggang dan beberapa yang di bawahnya, hari-hari menghadap raja menyembahkan hukum syarak. Dan raja pun mengaji kitab bagi hukum-hukum sembahyang lima waktu, tiadalah khali. Istimewa pula dengan orang besar-besar, pegawai negeri, bermesyuaratkan sekalian hukum-hukum dan adat hingga tiada khali.³² [Alkisah cetera yang kedua]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledgeable in laws, customs, and religion. • Possesses knowledge of <i>fiqh</i> regarding prayers.
<p>Maka di dalam hal itu, baginda pun berkasih-kasihlah dengan segala cucundanya; selalulah berangkat ke Pulau Ganchung melihat segala cunda-cunda bersemayam di atas takhta dengan kesukaan, aman dan makmur.³³ [Alkisah cetera yang ketiga]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loving to his family.
<p>Syahadan lagi, tersebutlah Tun Ahmad, putera Datuk Bendahara Seri Maharaja, yang tersebut di dalam fasal yang kedua itu pun, sudah besar. Sangatlah baik, manis tingkah lakunya kepada</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respectful towards his servants.

³¹ See alkisah cetera yang pertama in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 52.

³² See alkisah cetera yang kedua in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 55.

³³ See alkisah cetera yang ketiga in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*.

<p>segala hamba sahayanya; dan ayahanda dan bondanya sangatlah kasih sayangnya. Tambahan pandai membela orang, mengambil hati juak-juak. Sekalian sehari makin ramailah orangnya. Ia pun sudah cukup umur, lima belas, kesukaan hendak berniaga. Maka bermohonlah pada Seri Paduka ayahanda bondanya. Dan diizinkanlah maksudnya. Dan ia pun berangkat mudik ke Hulu Pahang, berniaga dengan orang-orang, kepala yang di bawahnya. Tiga empat puluh buah perahu sekali mudik.³⁴ [Alkisah cetera yang ketiga]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defends his people and possesses skill in gaining their support. • Possesses skills in conducting trade.
<p>Maka, dari masa itu kehadapan, taatlah menghadap. Tiap-tiap masa pergi balik Kemaman ke Terengganu. Dan baginda pun bertambah-tambahlah kasih sayangnya kerana sangat elok tingkah lakunya, halus manis berkata-kata di majlis, dengan lemah-lembut perangnya; tambahan budi dan bahasanya. Bersetujulah dengan segala orang besar-besar dan anak raja-raja waris negeri. Banyaklah yang mendatang sembah pada Yang Maha Mulia Baginda Omar. Maka bertambah-tambah kasihnya. Di dalam pada itu, berdatang sembahlah dia, minta pertolongan hendak balik ke Pahang kerana mengambil benarnya. Maka dengan segeranya baginda menjawab, “bolehlah Encik Engku Ahmad bermuafakat dengan Encik Buruk Penghulu Kemaman. Katakan, dengan titah beta, dibenarkan Encik Buruk Kemaman menolong Encik Engku Ahmad balik, melanggar Pahang.”³⁵ [Alkisah cetera yang keempat]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respectful. • Politeness in speech. • Possesses skills in negotiation.
<p>Datuk Bendahara Siwa Raja, bila hilir, Sayyid Idrus dan Encik Lambak itu menghadap. Tetapi adapun Datuk Bendahara Siwa Raja ini raja yang bijaksana dan terus pandangannya,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligent. • Knowledgeable in matters of warfare.

³⁴ See *alkisah cetera yang ketiga* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 56.

³⁵ See *alkisah cetera yang keempat* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 58-59.

<p>“ini tentulah tipu Haji Husin sahaja.”³⁶ [Alkisah cetera yang ketujuh]</p>	
<p>Ketika itu bolehlah dikatakan raja sendiri menjadi Imam Perang; memakai pedang, senapang, berhias seluar sampak, baju pokok Bulang Hulu atau tarbus, dan hebat dipandang, tiada bandingnya. Tambahan berani dan tawakal di dalam peperangan yang tiada bandingnya, iaitu pandai mengambil hati, manis bersabda pada segala hamba pengiringnya. Kerana itulah sekalian yang mengerjakan itu redalah hati, tiada hingga lagi.³⁷ [Alkisah cetera yang ketujuh]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brave. • Strong faithfulness and dependence on Allah Almighty. • Skilful in motivating his followers.
<p>Inilah hamba maklumkan di dalam hikayat cetera yang kedua puluh tiga ini: fasal Raja-raja Pahang yang sudah hamba lihat. Tiadalah berjumpa seperti raja ini; berani dan tawakal, bijaksana, pandai mengikatkan peperangan; mengambil hati sekalian hulubalang, dan lemak manis tutur katanya kepada hamba sahayanya. Jikalau orang penakut jadi berani; orang lemah jadi kuat semuanya melawan musuh. Apatah lagi bagi hulubalang, panglima perang tibalah selalu akuan sama. Jadi diibaratkan orang, berhantu. Apakah dibakar kemudian datanglah selalu hantunya. Maka raja inilah kemenyannya kepada bakar hulubalang, panglima-panglima.³⁸ [Alkisah cetera dua puluh tiga]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brave and intelligent. • Strong faithfulness and dependence on Allah Almighty (<i>tawakal</i>). • Skilful in motivating his followers. • Knowledgeable in matters of warfare. • Politeness in speech.
<p>Maka di dalam hal itu, Tuk Syahbandar dan Encik Lambak dan serta sekalian orang-orangnya balik daripada lari, menyerahkan diri, seperti benang putih. Raja pun terimalah</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sincerely forgiving those who betrayed him after they sought forgiveness.

³⁶ See *alkisah cetera yang ketujuh* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 63.

³⁷ See *alkisah cetera yang ketujuh* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 64.

³⁸ See *alkisah cetera dua puluh tiga* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 84.

dengan ikhlasnya. ³⁹ [Alkisah cetera dua puluh lima]	
---	--

The textual analysis based on the descriptions of personal leadership demonstrate that the criteria of a just ruler in the *Hikayat Pahang* can be categorized in terms of the ruler's personal attitudes, skills, and duties. In terms of the ruler's personal attitudes, the author emphasized that a just ruler should be humble, polite, respectful, loving, sincere, brave and intelligent. In relation to that, he must treat his family members and his people kindly as this will facilitate him in attaining their loyalty.

Next, the just ruler should be skilled in matters of trade, warfare, laws and customs as well as, being knowledgeable in matters of religion. This can be observed in how the author of the *Hikayat* emphasized that a just ruler is expected to be well educated in Islamic knowledge especially concerning Islamic theology and jurisprudence. Specifically, Sultan Ahmad was described as a ruler who possessed these qualities. For instance, the author demonstrated to his readers that Sultan Ahmad's understanding of Islamic theology can be seen in his strong faithfulness and dependence on Allah Almighty in all of his affairs. The constant reference to Sultan Ahmad shows that the *Hikayat Pahang* functions as a panegyric addressed to a precise Sultan.⁴⁰ However, since Sultan Ahmad is associated with possessing the criteria of a just ruler, the *Hikayat* provides less information on what constitutes as the criteria of an unjust ruler.

These criteria of a just ruler demonstrate that in the Malay Islamic tradition, the ruler's duties are not only restricted to the secular and worldly affairs, but includes the spiritual affairs as well. Since the criteria of being well educated in Islamic knowledge is regarded of utmost importance for a just ruler, it can also be concluded that he has the responsibility of ensuring that his people are faithful vicegerents of Allah Almighty. This is achieved

³⁹ See *alkisah cetera dua puluh lima* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 88.

⁴⁰ This function of the *Hikayat Pahang* as a panegyric addressed to a precise Sultan can also be observed in other Malay Muslim historiography, such as the *Hikayat Aceh*, which also includes the criteria of a just ruler. See Tatiana Denisova, "Konsep Keadilan Dalam Historiografi Melayu Islam Kurun Ke-13 Sehingga Ke-19," *Afkar* 8 (2007), 156-160. Hereafter cited as "Konsep Keadilan".

by ensuring that they follow the rulings of Islam, such as by performing the five compulsory daily prayers.

On the other hand, with regard to the secular and worldly affairs, a just ruler must ensure that his people are safe and protected from enemies. Besides that, he is also responsible for ensuring that they are not experiencing hunger and are able to sustain their lives. Therefore, it is highly relevant for a just ruler to be skilled in secular and worldly matters such as trade, warfare, laws, and customs to make sure that his people are protected from enemies and the economic conditions in Pahang are in a good condition. The results of the fulfillment of such duties towards the society will be further explained in relation to the level of collective justice.

The second level of justice is collective justice.⁴¹ This refers to the prosperity of the state as experienced by the society and its people which reflects the contributions of a just ruler. The author’s descriptions concerning the prosperity of Pahang illustrates its criteria according to the Malay Islamic tradition. The criteria of prosperity as narrated in the Hikayat Pahang are as follows:

Table 2: The Criteria of Prosperity

Quotations	Criteria of Prosperity
Masa itu sangatlah makmurnya negeri Pahang itu. Sekalian perintahnya adil. Datuk Bendahara Seri Maharaja, dua mufti dan kadi yang besar-besar iaitu Tuan al-Haji Abdul Syukur dan Tuan Sanggang dan beberapa yang di bawahnya, hari-hari menghadap raja menyembahkan hukum syarak. Dan raja pun mengaji kitab bagi hukum-hukum sembahyang lima waktu, tiadalah khali. Istimewa pula dengan orang besar-besar, pegawai negeri, bermesyuaratkan sekalian hukum-hukum dan adat hingga tiada khali. ⁴² [Alkisah cetera yang kedua]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religious knowledge is discussed within the palace.

⁴¹ On the meaning of collective justice, al-Attas wrote: “As regards man’s relation to God and to His creation, it refers to his vicegerency, his duty to God, his responsibility toward the physical environment and the creatures that inhabit it, and also his accountability to the Creator Who entrusted the responsibility to rule over it with knowledge and justice.” See al-Attas, *On Justice*, 2-3.

⁴² See *alkisah cetera yang kedua* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 55.

<p><i>Alkisah cetera dua puluh enam</i>, pemerintahan kerajaan Pahang pada zaman itu sangatlah adilnya dan murah. Maka sekalian jenis perniagaan keluar masuk dalam negeri Pahang serta daerahnya, sekali-kali raja tiada mengambil cukai dan bia, <i>free</i>. Hatta apiun sekalipun, lepas, <i>free</i>. Menderhaka sekalian orang-orang berniaga sekalian bangsa, dikecualikan, sebuah Sungai Kuantan sahaja tempat santapan raja. Maka diambillah hasilnya. Di dalam Pahang keluar getah, kayu gaharu, rotan, damar dan teh serta emas, tiada terhingga banyaknya.</p> <p>Maka masyhurlah khabar pada sekalian negeri, makmurlah. Segala orang berniaga sampai tahun genap, dibebaskan, tiada bercukai. Dan hukum denda pun tidak. Ialah mendirikan agama sembahyang Jumaat dan sembahyang lima waktu.⁴³ [<i>Alkisah cetera dua puluh enam</i>]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The arrival of traders from outside of Pahang. • No trading tax is imposed. • Local products such as rubber, wood and rattan are widely available. • Fines and punishments are not imposed. • The five compulsory prayers and Friday prayers are conducted.
<p><i>Alkisah cetera dua puluh tujuh</i>, kata sahibulhikayat, aman dan makmurlah negeri Pahang. Sekalian jenis makan-makanan semuanya murah. Orang-orang di dalam negeri banyaklah kaya; bertambah-tambah hamba dan sahayanya, duduk di dalam bersuka-suka. Beras dua puluh lima gantang seringggit; dan padi dua ringgit seratus gantang. Sekalian jenis buah-buahan tiap-tiap tahun menjadi sebab pemerintahan adil dan murah.⁴⁴ [<i>Alkisah cetera dua puluh tujuh</i>]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost of food such as rice is cheap. • Fruits are widely available.
<p>Di dalam pada itu, Yang Maha Mulia pun masukkan kompeni, kerana ia suka mendatangkan hasil dan meramaikan negeri.⁴⁵ [<i>Alkisah cetera tiga puluh enam</i>]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presence of many trading companies. • Increased population.

⁴³ See *alkisah cetera dua puluh enam* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 90.

⁴⁴ See *alkisah cetera dua puluh tujuh* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 93.

⁴⁵ See *alkisah cetera tiga puluh enam* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 134.

The criteria of prosperity can be summarized based on three perspectives namely social harmony, economic development, as well as the aspects of demography. From the perspective of social harmony, the state and society are only considered prosperous when it is safe from the threats of enemies.⁴⁶ Once the threat of enemies has been eliminated as a result from the just ruler's fulfillment of his responsibilities, it becomes possible for religious and intellectual activities to thrive. This can be seen in the author's inclusion of discussions on religious knowledge in the palace and the conduct of prayers as among the criteria of prosperity.

One of the elements of prosperity is the peacefulness and the security of the state which leads to economic development. This condition of economic development provides the opportunity for the Sultan to not impose trading taxes and fines in Pahang which consequently attracts traders from neighboring regions. The flourishing of trade activities ensures that food supplies are widely available and affordable and thus, prevents hunger and famine. Since the people are not experiencing hunger and disease, there is also an increase in the population of Pahang. This signifies that the aspects of demography also constitute as one of the criteria of prosperity.⁴⁷ Therefore, it is observed that, like the criteria of a just ruler, the criteria of prosperity in the Hikayat Pahang also includes both the spiritual aspects as well as the secular and worldly aspects.

Among the elements of the concept of justice is the understanding and formulation of the idea of injustice.⁴⁸ As discussed earlier, the state of prosperity is the consequence of the

⁴⁶ The responsibilities and duties of the just ruler in ensuring the well-being of his realm were also mentioned in the *Sejarah Melayu*, see De Jong, "The Character of the Malay Annals," 237.

⁴⁷ The aspect of increased population as one of the criteria of prosperity (*kemakmuran*) can also be found in the *Sejarah Melayu*. See Denisova, "Konsep Keadilan," 164-165.

⁴⁸ On the meaning of injustice, al-Attas wrote: "Oppression is wrongful exercise of power which is ultimately caused by ignorance of the order of proper place leading to a condition of injustice which is none other than displacement of the right order." See al-Attas, *On Justice*, 6-7.

actions of a just ruler. On the other side, the sins of unjust ruling will lead to the decline of the society. Since the idea of injustice also has some common criteria of what people at the time understood as good or bad, it is relevant to analyze the criteria of decline as it also reflects the concept of justice in Malay Muslim historiography.⁴⁹ The following are the criteria of decline according to the Hikayat Pahang.

Table 3: The Criteria of Decline

Quotations	Criteria of Decline
<p>Demikianlah putera-puteranya, ialah dalam kasih-kasihannya. Kerana didatangkan fitnah yang demikian, maka Engku Muda pun murkalah akan paduka adinda. Akan halnya, tidak sekali-kali fitnah itu, hanyalah aniaya Engku Sayyid dan Engku Temenggung sahaja: dikatakan hendak mengambil kerajaan Pahang. Sebab itulah sangat-sangat murkanya. Seri Paduka ayahanda sudah tua, dinasihatkan kepada paduka anakandanya, Engku Muda, “jangan bercerai adik-beradik, bermuafakat baik-baik. Ambil Ahmad ini, bela, suruh apa-apa yang patut. Jadikan pegawai di bawah anakanda,” bersabda sendiri dan menyuruh orang besar-besar memberi nasihat pada Engku Muda itu. Tiada terpakai nasihat itu kerana dia yakin akan persembahan Engku Sayyid dan Engku Temenggung. Dengan takdir Allah, peredaran dunia, negeri pun hendak rosak.⁵⁰ [Alkisah cetera yang ketiga]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict between siblings within the ruling family.
<p>Maka di situ terlalu lama peperangan di buntut Pulau Temai itu. Dengan kelamaan, harga garam \$1 satu ling dan tembakau \$1 setahil dan apiun \$100 satu buku; itu pun payah dapat. Kain-kain payah dicari. Inilah seksa</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inflation. • Rising cost of food. • Scarcity of cloths.

⁴⁹ The concept and criteria of injustice can also be found in other Malay Muslim historiography, such as the *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, *Sejarah Melayu*, *Hikayat Aceh*, *Hikayat Siak*, and *Tuhfat al-Nafis*. See Denisova, “Konsep Keadilan,” 187-202.

⁵⁰ See *alkisah cetera yang ketiga* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 56-57.

<p>pihak di sebelah hulu, yang ditanggung oleh orang besar sekaliannya.⁵¹ [Alkisah cetera dua puluh satu]</p>	
<p>Lepas peperangan, sekalian orang-orang hulu dua tahun lapar besar, tiada dapat perhumaan; setahun dimakan tikus, setahun panas. Maka raja pun mengurniakan bantuan beras berpuluh-puluh laksa banyaknya. Ialah sekalian keadilannya itu membalas kebaktian isi negeri.⁵² [Alkisah cetera dua puluh enam]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Widespread hunger. ● Drought and lack of rain.
<p>Sampai tujuh bulan lamanya peperangan, sangatlah azabnya sekalian orang-orang, kerana makanan kurang. Tetapi padi ada banyak jadi. Tetapi kesusahan sangat, kerana tiada berhenti peperangannya malam siang, berkelahi, tiada boleh mencari apa-apa berjalan jauh sebab perbuatan orang Rawa Mendeling, berpintas-pintas. Itulah kerjanya.⁵³ [Alkisah cetera dua puluh lapan]</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scarcity of food. ● Continuous fighting.

The above list illustrates that the criteria of decline reflects the opposite side of the criteria of prosperity. If the criteria of prosperity are associated with the conditions of social harmony, economic development and increased population, the criteria of decline are associated with the conditions of political instability, economic decline and reduced population. This can be observed in the author’s description of the decline of Pahang when it experienced continuous conflict which led to inflation. Furthermore, a period of drought also contributed to the scarcity of food sources which caused widespread hunger and diseases and consequently, a decrease in its population.

Based on these criteria, a question can be raised concerning the reason for Pahang’s decline. As previously established, the Hikayat Pahang does not contain information regarding the criteria of the unjust ruler who would contribute to

⁵¹ See *alkisah cetera dua puluh satu* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 79.

⁵² See *alkisah cetera dua puluh enam* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 90.

⁵³ See *alkisah cetera dua puluh lapan* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 100.

this decline since Sultan Ahmad is described as a just ruler. Thus, there is no unjust ruler who will lead Pahang and its people to its decline. The answer to this question may be found in the final part of this analysis which concerns the criteria of divine justice in the Hikayat Pahang.

Another observation that can be made from these descriptions on the criteria of justice and the just ruler is that it reflects the political situation in the kingdom. Since this text was written by the order of the patron or Sultan, the same criteria can be applied to some precise individual which may include some elements of exaggeration. Even though the elements of panegyric do not necessarily indicate the actual contributions of the Sultan, the analysis of these set of criteria show that they are similar throughout the whole of the Malay Islamic tradition.⁵⁴ Therefore, these set of criteria does not only demonstrate how the Malay people of that time understood what is considered to be just or unjust, but they also show the manner in which it was described and narrated in the writing of history.

The third and highest level of justice is divine justice.⁵⁵ It refers to one of the most important didactic elements found in Malay Muslim historiography which involves advices and warnings for believers and proper Muslims to manage their lives in accordance with the teachings of Islam and to return to their Creator. Specifically, it reflects the concept of divine rewards and punishments from Allah Almighty which follows as a consequence from either just or unjust rule. It also relates to the principle of *tawhid* and the concept of history as a divine plan whereby all historical events have been predetermined by Him. This aspect clarifies the choosing of facts and the set of events by

⁵⁴ See the article by Tatiana Denisova on the concept of justice in Malay Muslim historiography from the 13th century until the 19th century, Denisova, "Konsep Keadilan," 141-206.

⁵⁵ On the meaning of divine justice, al-Attas wrote: "As regards God in relation to His creation, it refers to His Oneness (*tawhid-wahdaniyyah*), His Lordship (*rububiyyah*), His Divinity (*uluhiyyah*)." See al-Attas, *On Justice*, 2.

the author. The following passages from the Hikayat Pahang are some examples which reflect the criteria of divine justice.

Table 4: The Criteria of Divine Justice

Quotations	Criteria of Divine Justice
Maka angin utara serta turun. Dengan pertolongan Tuhan, daulat raja, sangat teduh di laut. Satu hari satu malam, sampailah di Kuala Pahang, masuk singgah di Kampung Marhum. ⁵⁶ [Alkisah tersebutlah cetera yang kelima]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good weather is determined by God
Di dalam itu juga, dengan kedapatan muafakat segala orang besar-besar, hulubalang, diangkat gelar Panglima Encik Engku Ahmad itu gelar Datuk Bendahara Siwa Raja Ahmad, bagaimana istiadat dan gelaran raja-raja di atas balairong seri, cukup dengan tertib. Maka sekalian isi pekan, itu ketika, (itu) berdoalah kepada Allah <i>subhanahu wa taala</i> minta jugalah menang peperangan itu; haraplah raja ini juga memerintahkan negeri Pahang ini. ⁵⁷ [Alkisah tersebutlah cetera yang kelima]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praying to God for Datuk Bendahara Siwa Raja Ahmad to win the war and become the ruler of Pahang.
Maka dengan daulat tuah raja, Haji Abdul Hamid dan Tuk Abu Bakar selamatlah sampai, membawa ubat bedil dua puluh lima tong. Ia bertawakal <i>alallah</i> di dalam menempuh musuh waktu malam di Kuala Lui. ⁵⁸ [Alkisah cetera dua puluh dua]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependence on God in facing enemies.
Maka dengan takdir Allah taala, di dalam dua hari lamanya, sampailah ajal Tuan Haji Hussin dengan tiada sakit. ⁵⁹ [Alkisah cetera dua puluh dua]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Death as a divine plan.
Tuan Kadi pun membaca doa, nyaring suara bunyi dan panjang doanya; berseru-seru mendoakan Yang Maha Mulia Sultan Ahmad al-Muazzam Shah, empunya kerajaan Pahang, kekal peroleh di atas takhta kerajaan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praying for Sultan Pahang to serve as the ruler of Pahang

⁵⁶ See *alkisah tersebutlah cetera yang kelima* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 60.

⁵⁷ See *alkisah tersebutlah cetera yang kelima* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 61.

⁵⁸ See *alkisah cetera dua puluh dua* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 80.

⁵⁹ See *alkisah cetera dua puluh dua* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 82.

selama-lamanya serta zaman umurnya. Inilah serunya. ⁶⁰ [Alkisah cetera tiga puluh empat]	throughout his life.
Masuk tiga bulan, dengan takdir Allah wa taala, penyakit cacar pun datanglah. Banyak orang yang sudah kena. Maka Yang Maha Mulia pun dukacitalah kerana sekalian puteranya kena. ⁶¹ [Alkisah cetera tiga puluh lima]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The spread of disease has been predetermined by God.
Maka titah Sultan, “saya ini sangatlah tiada bersetuju kiranya di bawah naungan lain. Tetapi apa boleh buat, sudah takdir Tuhan di atas hamba-Nya; melainkan inilah saya memanggil sekalian Datuk-datuk. Jikalau sudah Datuk-datuk fikirkan begitu, saya pun menurutlah, kerana bukan lawannya kita dengannya. Maka kepada hari (ini), tetaplah di dalam mesyuarat kita, diikut kehendak Tuan Gabenor.” Maka sultan pun bertitah pada Tuan Hitam, “buatlah surat; satu pada Tuan Gabenor dan satu pada Sultan Johor, bagaimana keputusan di dalam mesyuarat negeri ini.” ⁶² [Alkisah cetera tiga puluh enam]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The outcome of historical events has been predetermined by God.

Based on the textual analysis, the criteria of divine justice in the Hikayat Pahang clearly reflects the elements of *tawhid* and the concept of history as a divine plan. The author’s narration of Sultan Ahmad and the people of Pahang praying to Allah Almighty with the strong belief that He will ease their affairs when facing their enemies, and by blessing them with good weather shows that they understood the influence of divinity in the unfolding of events. Besides that, it also illustrates the active role of the Sultan as a spiritual leader and a proper Muslim whose prayer for the wellness of the state could be accepted by Allah Almighty.

These criteria of divine justice strengthen the understanding that to be a proper ruler, the Sultan must also be a proper Muslim and only then is he able to fulfill his duties and ensure the prosperity of the state. It also affirms that the connection between

⁶⁰ See *alkisah cetera tiga puluh empat* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 128.

⁶¹ See *alkisah cetera tiga puluh lima* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 130.

⁶² See *alkisah cetera tiga puluh enam* in Hashim and Gopinath, *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang*, 136.

being a just ruler and the prosperity of a state is a representation of the divine aspects of history. This divine aspect is represented by the cycle whereby the prayers from a just ruler, who is also a proper Muslim, for the prosperity of his state is accepted and granted by Allah Almighty.

To reflect the divine justice, the author of the *Hikayat* described negative events and the decline of Pahang as among the challenges from Allah Almighty. Hence, this decline is not seen as a consequence of the personal actions and characteristics of the ruler but rather as the unfolding of His Will. This answers the earlier question on how Pahang came to experience decline even though there is no mention regarding the criteria of the unjust ruler. An example of this approach can be seen in the description concerning the British proposal for the appointment of the first Resident in Pahang.⁶³ In describing this event, the author narrated how Sultan Ahmad disagreed with the proposal but that he is unable to go against it if it is the Will of Allah Almighty. Instead, Sultan Ahmad convinces his followers to accept the proposal and ordered a letter to be sent to the British Governor and the Sultan of Johor to notify them of this agreement.

Conclusion

The textual analysis on the contents of the *Hikayat Pahang* reveals the importance of justice as among the main conceptual elements of Malay Muslim historiography. The concept of justice as reflected in the didactic aspects can be observed in the author's emphasis on the personal leadership of Sultan Ahmad, the conditions of Pahang and its people as a result of his leadership, and the elements of divinity throughout his narration on the history of Pahang. The inclusion of this set of facts not only illustrates that there exists a representation of the three levels of justice, namely personal justice, collective justice, and divine justice in the *Hikayat Pahang*, but also that specific criteria of justice can be found in the text.

The criteria of a just ruler, the criteria of prosperity and decline, as well as the criteria of divine justice found in the text, are reflections of the three levels of justice. The prosperity of the state and divine rewards from Allah Almighty can be obtained as

⁶³ Refer to the last quotation in Table 4: The Criteria of Divine Justice.

a consequence of a just ruling. On the other hand, the logical explanation for the decline of the state and the incurring of divine punishments should be related to unjust ruling. However, it was observed that although the Hikayat Pahang includes the criteria of decline, there is less information on the criteria of the unjust ruler. Instead, the author described the decline of the state as a challenge from Allah Almighty rather than as a result of unjust ruling. Therefore, this demonstrates the function of the Hikayat Pahang as a panegyric to Sultan Ahmad, who was depicted as a just ruler. All of these criteria of justice represent the completion of the cycle of justice from the personal level, to the collective level, and finally, to the divine level.

It can be further concluded that the concept and criteria of justice in the Hikayat Pahang are not only limited to the secular and worldly affairs, but also include the spiritual affairs as well. This is observed in the way that the criteria involving religiosity and knowledge are deemed as important and that the criteria of prosperity are also associated with the increase in religious and knowledge activities. As such, the concept and criteria of justice in the Hikayat Pahang are in line with the worldview of Islam and are also influenced by the local traditions. Furthermore, this illustrates the author's understanding of the didactic nature of history and historiography in the way that the Hikayat was also written as a lesson for future generations, aside from serving as an official document for the legitimation of Sultan Ahmad.

References

- Abd Jalal, Ahmad Farid, and Yusuf Adam Broughton. *Pahang Dalam Catatan Kolonial*. Kuantan: Pusat Kajian Sejarah & Tamadun Al-Sultan Abdullah, 2022.
- Adil, Buyong. *Sejarah Pahang*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka & Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1984.
- Ahmad, Abu Talib. *Sejarah Negeri Pahang Hingga 1945*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2024.
- Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib. *Historical Fact and Fiction*. Johor Bahru: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Press, 2011.

- _____. *Islam dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu: Suatu Mukaddimah mengenai Peranan Islam dalam Perabadan Sejarah Melayu-Indonesia dan Kesannya dalam Sejarah Pemikiran, Bahasa dan Kesusasteraan Melayu*. Kuala Lumpur: Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), 1999.
- _____. *On Justice and the Nature of Man: A Commentary of Surah al-Nisa' (4):58 and Surah al-Mu'minin (23):12-14*. Kuala Lumpur: IBFIM, 2015.
- _____. *Preliminary Statement on a General Theory of the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago*. Kuala Lumpur: Ta'dib International, 2018.
- _____. *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of the Worldview of Islam*. Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 1995.
- Al-Tabari. *The History of al-Tabari*. Translated by Franz Rosenthal. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989.
- Andersson, Tobias. *Early Sunni Historiography: A Study of the Tarikh of Khalifa b. Khayyat*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2019.
- Cant, R. G. *A Historical Geography of Pahang (Monographs of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, No. 4)*. Singapore: Times Printers Sdn. Bhd., 1972.
- Carr, Edward Hallet. *What is History?* New York: Random House Inc., 1961.
- De Jong, P. E. De Josselin. "The Character of the Malay Annals." In *Malayan and Indonesian Studies: Essays presented to Sir Richard Winstedt on his eighty-fifth birthday*, edited by John Bastin and R. Roolvink. London: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- Denisova, Tatiana. "Konsep Keadilan Dalam Historiografi Melayu Islam Kurun Ke-13 Sehingga Ke-19." *Afkar* 8 (2007): 141-206.

- Denisova, Tatiana A. *Marginalia: On Malay Muslim Historiography*. Kuantan: Al-Sultan Abdullah History & Civilisation Research Centre (AL-ASAR) and Raja Zarith Sofiah Centre for Advanced Studies on Islam, Science and Civilisation (RZS-CASIS), 2022.
- _____. *Refleksi Historiografi Alam Melayu*. Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 2011.
- _____. *Sumber Historiografi Alam Melayu: Koleksi Peribadi John Bastin (Edisi Terkini)*. Kuala Lumpur: Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, 2020.
- Gopinath, Aruna. *Pahang 1896-1914: Sultan Ahmad's Struggle and Failure in his Quest for Power and Political Survival (Volume I of Kertas Takberkala)*. Kuala Lumpur: Department of History University Malaya, 1985.
- _____. *Pahang 1880-1933: A Political History*. Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (MBRAS), 1991.
- Haji Othman, Suzana. *Perang Bendahara Pahang 1857-63: Pensejarahan Semula Menelusuri Peranan British*. Shah Alam: Karisma Publications Sdn. Bhd., 2007.
- _____. *Sejarah Pergolakan dan Pergelutan Bendahara Johor-Pahang 1613-1863*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2018.
- Hashim, Muhammad Yusoff. *Pensejarahan Melayu: Kajian Tentang Sejarah Melayu Nusantara*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1992.
- Hashim, Muhammad Yusoff and Aruna Gopinath. *Tradisi Pensejarahan Pahang Darul Makmur: 1800-1930*. Petaling Jaya: Tempo Publishing (M) Sdn. Bhd., 1992.
- Hikayat Pahang*. Edited by Kalthum Jeran. Petaling Jaya: Penerbit Fajar Bakti Sdn. Bhd., 1986.
- Humphreys, R. Stephen. *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry (Revised Edition)*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991.

- Ibn Khaldun. *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*. Translated by Franz Rosenthal. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015.
- Ibrahim, Muhd. Yusof. *Pensejarahan Melayu 1800-1960*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1994.
- Linehan, William. "A History of Pahang." *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 14.2 (125) (1936): 1-257.
- Milner, Anthony. *Kerajaan: Malay Political Culture on the Eve of Colonial Rule (Second Edition)*. Petaling Jaya: Strategic Information and Research Development Centre, 2016.
- Mohd Noor, Arba'iyah. "Memburu Kekuasaan: Peperangan dalam Hikayat Pahang dan Syair-syair Pahang." In *Kedaulatan dan Kekuasaan Melayu dalam Teks Sastera*, edited by Jelani Harun and Rogayah A. Hamid. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2019.
- Noor, Farish A. *From Inderapura to Darul Makmur: A Deconstructive History of Pahang*. Kuala Lumpur: Silverfish Books Sdn Bhd, 2011.
- Othman, Hussain. "The Characteristics of the Malay Historiography." 10th Southeast Asian Studies Regional Exchange Program: Southeast Asia, A Global Crossroads, SEASREP 10th Anniversary Conference, Chiang Mai, 8-9 December 2005.
- Pahang: Sejarah dan Budaya*. Edited by Norazit Selat. Pekan: Lembaga Muzium Negeri Pahang, 2000.
- Rosenthal, Franz. *A History of Muslim Historiography (Second Revised Edition)*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968.
- Toynbee, Arnold J. *A Study of History (Volume I)*. London: Oxford University Press, 1948.
- Winstedt, R. O. "A History of Malay Literature." *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 17.3 (135) (1940): 1-243.

