

A Note on Source Materials for the Biographies of Southeast Asian `Ulama

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The study of the history of Islamic thought and the social organisation of learning in Southeast Asia is rendered more difficult by the dearth of easily accessible sources and the absence, until very recently, of biographical dictionaries of `ulamâ this region such as we have for most other parts of the Muslim world. We are relatively well informed about a dozen or two of prominent `ulamâ (mostly sufi authors or, in this century, political leaders), but the thousands of others who have played influential roles remain very much in the shadow. As more and more Javanese and Malay manuscripts are being edited or summarily translated, interesting bits and pieces of information on individual `ulamâ and their roles are coming to light, and prudent use of the VOC archives may also yield valuable information, but for the time being we still have a very poor insight in who, before the end of the 19th century, the `ulamâ of Southeast Asia were, what sort of family backgrounds they had, how and what they studied, and what their relations with the courts and with village society were. For the late 19th and 20th century, it is easier to find information on not only the most prominent `ulamâ but also those of the second echelon. Especially during the past two decades, numerous biographies of `ulamâ of this period have been compiled and published, though not always easily accessible. The aim of this communication is to draw the attention of colleagues to source materials that are at present available.

Biographical dictionaries

As said, there were until very recently no biographical dictionaries of Southeast Asian `ulamâ, whereas they constitute an important literary genre in most other parts of the Muslim world.¹ Some

¹ For an overview of this literature and its various sub-genres see: H. Gibb, "Islamic biographical literature", in: B. Lewis & P.M. Holt (eds.), *Historians of the Middle East* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 54-58, and the discussion in R. Stephen Humphreys, *Islamic history: a framework for inquiry* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co., 1991), pp. 28-29, 187-208. A more detailed study of the genre is Ibrahim Hafsi, "Recherches sur le genre 'Tabaqat' dans la littérature arabe", *Arabica* XXIII (1976), 227-265, XXIV (1977), 1-41, 150-186; and a good guide to this literature is Paul Auchterlonie, *Arabic biographical dictionaries: a summary guide and bibliography* (Durham: Middle East Libraries Committee, 1987).

of the Arabic biographical dictionaries are nevertheless useful to Indonesianists because they contain information on the teachers with whom Indonesian `ulamâ studied in the Hijâz or occasionally elsewhere in the Middle East. When tracing the careers of Indonesian `ulamâ, I have often had occasion to use the biographical dictionaries by al-Ghazzî (10th/16th century), al-Muhibbî (11th/17th century) and al-Murâdî (12th/18th century), as well as the more modern encyclopaedia of Arabic authors throughout the ages by Kahhâla, and Ziriklî's biographical dictionary of prominent personalities in the Arab world past and present.² The last-named work in fact even mentions a few Indonesian `ulamâ who wrote in Arabic. One rather exceptional Indonesian, `Abd al-Samad al-Fâlimbânî, also receives attention in a work on Yemeni `ulamâ, al-Ahdal's *Al-nafs al-yamânî*.³ A biographical, or rather hagiographical, dictionary that is often used by Indonesian `ulamâ is Yûsuf al-Nabhânî's collection of miracle tales about great sufis.⁴

The first Arabic biographical dictionary that pays somewhat more adequate attention to Indonesian ulamâ is `Umar `Abd al-Jabbâr's work on the `ulamâ of the Hijâz in the 14th century of the *hijra* (i.e., roughly 1880-1980).⁵ This work gives, in 336 pages, some 135 brief biographies, in roughly alphabetical order, of `ulamâ who were active in Mecca during that period, including six Southeast Asian scholars. It is a very useful source, mentioning most of the teachers of Indonesians who studied in Mecca or Medina during the past century.

A similar work of more ambitious scope, and concentrating more specifically on Indonesian `ulamâ, is said to have been written by Shaykh Yasin of Padang (M. Yâsîn b. M. `Îsâ al-Fadânî), who until his death in 1991(?) was the dean of Dâr al-`Ulûm al-Dîniyya, the Indonesian traditionalist *madrassa* in Mecca. In spite of my efforts to find this work, I have never seen it.⁶ Shaykh Yasin was a prolific author, and some of his other works will be discussed below.

Another work containing much information on Indonesian `ulamâ was compiled by Siradjuddin 'Abbas, a former political leader of the Minangkabau traditionalist Muslim association

² Najm al-dîn al-Ghazzî, *Al-kawâkib al-sâ'ira bi-a`yân al-mi'at al-`ashira* (3 vols., Beirut, 1945, reprint 1979); Muhammad al-Muhibbî, *Khulâsat al-athar fî a`yân al-qarn al-hâdî `ashar* (4 vols., Bulâq, 1284/1867); Muhammad Khalîl al-Murâdî, *Silk al-durar fî a`yân al-qarn al-thânî `ashar* (4 vols., Bulâq, 1301/1883); `Umar Ridâ Kahhâla, *Mu`jam al-mu'allifîn, tarâjim musannifîn al-kutub al-`arabiyya* (15 vols., Damascus, 1957-61; reprint Beirut: Dâr Ihyâ' al-Tûrath al-`Arabî); `Umar Ridâ Kahhâla, *Al-mustadrak `alâ mu`jam al-mu'allifîn* (Beirut: Mu'assasa al-Risâla, 1406/1985); Khayr al-dîn al-Ziriklî, *Al-a`lâm* (Cairo, 1927-28; reprint in 8 vols. Bayrut: Dâr al-`ilm li'l-malâ'yîn, 1979).

³ `Abd al-Rahmân b. Sulaymân al-Ahdal, *Al-nafs al-yamânî* (San`â', 1979).

⁴ Yûsuf b. Ismâ`îl al-Nabhânî, *Jâmi` karâmât al-awliyâ'* (2 vols., reprint Bayrut: Dâr al-Fikr, 1989).

⁵ `Umar `Abd al-Jabbâr, *Siyar wa tarâjim ba`d `ulamâ'inâ fî'l-qarn al-râbi` `ashar li'l-hijra* (Makka: Mu'assasa Makka li'l-tabâ`a wa'l-i`lâm, 1385 AH²); originally published under the title *Durûs mâdi** al-ta`lîm bi'l-masjid al-harâm* (Dâr Memfis, 1379).

⁶ The book was described to me as *Tabaqât al-`ulamâ' al-shâfi`iyya*, which may be its actual title but could also be a mere description. There may be two different editions; towards the end of his life Shaykh Yasin was compiling material for a more comprehensive work, and according to some reports he actually completed that.

Persatuan Islam.⁷ This is the only biographical dictionary in Indonesian; it contains brief biographical notices of over 1100 `ulamâ of the Shâfi`î *madhhab*, in historical order, beginning with the Imâm Shâfi`î himself. For the 14th century of the hijra, the author gives almost exclusively biographies of Indonesian `ulamâ (around fifty). A more specialised biographical dictionary is `Alî b. Husayn al-`Attâs' *Tâj al-a`râs*, a two-volume work in Arabic that was published in Indonesia.⁸ It gives the biographies, or rather hagiographies, of several hundred Hadramî sayyids, most of whom were, like the author himself, established in Southeast Asia.

Bibliographical source materials

Another type of source, often containing important information on those `ulamâ who have written books, consists of the catalogues of oriental manuscripts. By far the most useful reference work on (Middle Eastern and Indian) `ulamâ whose writings or oral teachings have had an influence in Southeast Asia is Carl Brockelmann's survey of Arabic literature, which is based on a compilation of numerous such catalogues.⁹ This work is only partially superseded by Fuat Sezgin's magnum opus, the multi-volume *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, which is more thoroughly researched but only covers authors of the first four Muslim centuries. For information on the Arabic texts studied in Indonesia and on their authors, Brockelmann remains an extremely useful research tool. It should be supplemented, however, by Kahhâla's encyclopaedic work on Arabic authors that was mentioned above (note 2).

The Leiden university library contains numerous Arabic manuscripts originating from Indonesia, many of which were not yet catalogued when Brockelmann compiled his survey. There is not yet a complete descriptive catalogue, but the handlist compiled by P. Voorhoeve is always worth consulting; it often yields interesting bits of information.¹⁰ The same is true of the catalogues of the collection of the Bataviaasch Genootschap, presently in the National Library in Jakarta.¹¹

⁷ K.H. Siradjuddin 'Abbas, *Ulama Syafi'i dan kitab-kitabnya dari abad ke abad* (Jakarta: Penerbit Pustaka Tarbiyah, 1975).

⁸ `Alî b. Husayn b. Muhammad b. Husayn b. Ja`far al-`Attâs, *Tâj al-a`râs `alâ manâqib al-habîb al-qutb Sâlih b. `Abdallâh al-`Attâs*. 2 vols. Kudus: Menara Kudus, 1979.

⁹ Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur I-II, Zweite den Supplementsbänden Angepasste Auflage* (Leiden: Brill, 1943-1947); *Supplementsbände I-III* (Leiden: Brill, 1937-1942).

¹⁰ P. Voorhoeve, *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Leiden and Other Collections in the Netherlands* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1957, reprint 1980).

¹¹ R. Friederich & L.W.C. van den Berg, *Codicum Arabicorum in Bibliotheca Societatis Artium et Scientiarum quae Bataviae floret asservatorum Catalogum* (Batavia & The Hague, 1873); Ph.S. van Ronkel, *Supplement to the catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts preserved in the Museum of the Batavia Society of Arts and Sciences* (Batavia: Abrecht & The Hague: Nijhoff, 1913).

The catalogues of manuscripts in Indonesian languages (Malay, Javanese, Sundanese, etc.) yield less useful information than might be expected. Apart from the works of a handful of well-known sufi authors, texts of a religious nature are underrepresented in most public collections.¹² The inventorisation of private collections in Indonesia, with which a start has recently been made, will significantly improve our acquaintance with second-echelon authors of religious texts. Perhaps the richest private collection of religious manuscripts is that of the Acehese pesantren of Tanoh Abee, of which only a preliminary partial catalogue exists.¹³

Similar to the manuscript catalogues are the few extant studies of printed religious texts. Especially the catalogues of such works in regional languages (and therefore by implication by regional authors) are of interest in that they contain relatively much biographical information.¹⁴ There are also a few general surveys of specific types of religious literature.¹⁵

Isnâd collections

A related but different category of traditional literature yielding biographical information consists of collections of *isnâd*, the chains of teacher-disciple links along which scholarly texts were handed down. Several great `ulamâ of the past have written intellectual autobiographies that consisted of nothing but the names of their teachers, the works they studied with them, and their *isnâd* for these

¹² There are too many different catalogues to be listed here, but there are two useful overviews: Henri Chambert-Loir, "Catalogue des catalogues de manuscrits Malais", *Archipel* 20 (1980), 45-67; and Willem van der Molen, "A catalogue of catalogues of Javanese manuscripts", *Caraka* No.4 (1984), 12-49. The following more recent catalogues are worth consulting: Timothy E. Behrend, *Katalog Induk Naskah-naskah Nusantara, jilid 1: Museum Sonobudoyo Yogyakarta* (Jakarta: Djambatan, 1990); Jennifer Lindsay, R.M. Soetanto, and Alan Feinstein, *Katalog induk naskah-naskah Nusantara, jilid 2: Kraton Yogyakarta* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1994); Hj Wan Ali Hj Wan Mamat, *Katalog manuskrip Melayu di Belanda* (Kuala Lumpur: Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, 1985). For Sundanese manuscripts, see Edi Ekadjati et al. *Naskah Sunda: Inventarisasi dan pencatatan* (Bandung: Lembaga Kebudayaan Universitas Padjadjaran / The Toyota Foundation, 1983), and for Acehese manuscripts P. Voorhoeve's *Catalogus van de Atjehse handschriften in de Universiteitsbibliotheek te Leiden ten behoeve van het Instituut voor Taal- en Cultuuronderzoek van de Universiteit van Indonesië*, Leiden, 1949.

¹³ Wamad Abdullah & Tgk. M. Dahlan al-Fairusy, *Katalog manuskrip perpustakaan pesantren Tanoh Abee, Aceh Besar, Buku I* (Banda Aceh: Pusat Dokumentasi dan Informasi Aceh, 1980).

¹⁴ Thus the following reports prepared by the research desk of the regional Bureau of Religious Affairs in South Sulawesi: *Laporan penelitian penyusunan bibliografi beranotasi tentang kitab-kitab karangan ulama Indonesia di Sulawesi Selatan* (Ujung Pandang: Balai Penelitian Lektur Keagamaan, Departemen Agama R.I., 1981/1982); *Laporan hasil penelitian lektur agama dalam bahasa Bugis Makassar* (Ujung Pandang: Balai Penelitian Lektur Keagamaan, Departemen Agama R.I., 1983/1984). There is also a survey of works by `ulamâ in Patani: Virginia Matheson & H.B. Hooker, "Jawi Literature in Patani: The Maintenance of an Islamic Tradition", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 61 pt.1 (1988), 1-86.

¹⁵ Martin van Bruinessen, "Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic Script Used in the Pesantren Milieu", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 146 (1990), 226-69; most of the works mentioned in that article are in the KITLV library, and there is an accompanying catalogue. Howard Federspiel, *Popular Indonesian literature of the Qur'an* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1994).

works. In the case of `ulamâ who have come to occupy a central place in the international networks of learning, such works are constitute rich sources for the history and sociology of knowledge. This is definitely the case with the intellectual autobiography of Ibrâhîm al-Kûrânî, the earliest great teacher in Medina whom we know to have had numerous Indonesian students.¹⁶ A very useful work of reference is the compilation of such *isnâd* collections by the North African scholar `Abd al-Hayy al-Kattânî, *Fihris al-fahâris*.¹⁷

Shaykh Yasin of Padang, who for a long time was the dean of the Indonesian madrasa Dâr al-`Ulûm al-Dîniyya in Mecca and who enjoyed great respect among Indonesia's traditionalist `ulamâ, was known as a specialist on *isnâd*. His admirers even called him the greatest isnâd-expert of his time (*musnid al-`asr*). He published numerous books consisting of nothing but *isnâd* - his own, but also, in other works, those of other scholars such as his teacher, the Tunisian `Umar b. Hamdân (who also had numerous other Indonesian students), or the classical *fiqh* scholar Ibn Hajar al-Haytamî.¹⁸ These works are useful for the insights they give in the international contacts of the last few generations of `ulamâ, but a word of caution is necessary. I have repeatedly found that information implied by Shaykh Yasin's *isnâd* does not correspond with that of other sources, and I have grave doubts as to the historicity of a few key transmitters, less than a century removed from our own time, in these *isnâd*.

Modern studies based on these sources

Biographical dictionaries have been used in modern scholarship for several different purposes. The nature of the biographical information most commonly listed, i.e. teacher-disciple links, books studied, travels, and official functions, lends itself quite naturally to analysis in terms of intellectual networks. John O. Voll has pioneered this approach in a number of articles.¹⁹ The outlines of the

¹⁶ Ibrâhîm b. Hasan al-Kûrânî, *Al-amam li-îqâz al-himam* (Haydarabad, 1328H).

¹⁷ `Abd al-Hayy b. `Abd al-Kabîr al-Kattânî, *Fihris al-fahâris wa'l-athbât wa mu`jam al-ma`âjim wa'l-mashyakhât wa'l-musalsalât* (2 vols., reprinted with an additional volume of indexes, Bayrut 1402-06/1982-86).

¹⁸ M. Yâsîn b. M. `Îsâ al-Fâdânî, *Ithâf al-ikhwân bi-ikhtisâr matmah al-wijdân fi asânîd al-shaykh `Umar Hamdân* (Cairo, 1371/1952; reprint Bayrut/Damascus: Dâr al-Basâ'ir, 1406/1985); idem, *Ittihâf al-mustafîd bi-ghurar al-asânîd* (3rd ed., Jakarta: Attahiriyah, 1402/1982); idem, *Al-`iqd al-farîd min jawâhir al-asânîd* (Surabaya: Dâr al-Saqqâf, n.d.); idem (ed.), *Asânîd al-fiqhiyya [li-] Ahmad b. M. ibn Hajar al-Haytamî* (Bayrut: Dâr al-Basâ'ir al-Islâmiyya, 1408/1988). A disciple later published yet another collection of Shaykh Yasin's *isnâd*: M. Mukhtâr al-Dîn b. Zayn al-`Âbidîn al-Fâlimbânî, *Bulûgh al-amânî fi ta`rîf bi-shuyûkh wa asânîd musnid al-`asr al-shaykh M. Yâsîn b. M. `Îsâ al-Fâdânî al-Makkî* (N.p.[Mecca?]: Dâr Qutayba, n.d.).

¹⁹ John O. Voll, "Muhammad Hayya al-Sindi and Muhammad b. `Abd al-Wahhab", *BSOAS* 38 (1975), 32-39; idem, "Hadith scholars and tariqahs: An ulama group in the 18th century Haramayn and their impact in the Islamic world", *Journal of Asian and African Studies* XV (1980), 264-73; idem, "Linking groups in the networks of eighteenth-century revivalist scholars: The Mizjaji family in Yemen", in: Nehemia Levtzion & John O. Voll (eds.), *Eighteenth-century renewal and reform in Islam* (Syracuse University Press, 1987), pp. 69-92; idem, "Scholarly interrelations between South Asia and the Middle East in the 18th century", in: Peter Gaeffke & David A. Utz (eds.),

network connecting `ulamâ in the Hijâz with Southeast Asia in the 17th century were first sketched by Anthony Johns.²⁰ A more systematic and comprehensive analysis of this network, in the 17th and 18th century, was recently made by Azyumardi Azra.²¹ Azra's work represents an improvement on Voll's, in that he not only establishes the network of teacher-disciple links but also makes efforts to establish which ideas were communicated along these connections. He had recourse to numerous little-known sources, which makes his study also a useful introduction to the existing source materials for this period.

In an shorter article, Azra expands the time horizon of his thesis and gives information on numerous Southeast Asian `ulamâ who lived in the Hijâz.²² Snouck Hurgronje's celebrated study of Mecca in the late 19th century, based on direct observation, remains an essential source on these 'Jâwa' `ulamâ and is still unsurpassed.²³ The Indonesians who studied at al-Azhar in Cairo were studied by William Roff and Mona Abaza.²⁴ Finally I refer to my own studies of Indonesian `ulamâ, which may, besides whatever other merits they have, also serve colleagues as research tools, if only because of the indexes of personal names.²⁵

The countries of South Asia: boundaries, extensions and interrelations (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988). pp. 49-59.

²⁰ A.H. Johns, "Friends in grace: Ibrahim al-Kurani and `Abd al-Ra'uf al-Singkeli", in: S. Udin ed.), *Spectrum. Essays presented to Sutan Takdir Alisjahbana* (Jakarta: Dian Rakyat, 1978), pp. 469-485.

²¹ Azyumardi Azra, *The transmission of Islamic reformism to Indonesia: networks of Middle Eastern and Malay-Indonesian `ulamâ' in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries* (Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, New York, 1992). A revised version will be published by the KITLV Press in Leiden. For the time being, this study is most easily available in Indonesian translation: *Jaringan ulama Timur Tengah dan kepulauan Nusantara abad XVII dan XVIII* (Bandung: Mizan, 1994). The good index in this edition makes it a useful reference work on the `ulamâ of that period.

²² Azyumardi Azra, "Ulama Indonesia di Haramayn: pasang surut sebuah wacana intelektual-keagamaan", *Ulumul Qur'an* III no. 3 (1992), pp. 76-85.

²³ C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka. Band II: Aus dem heutigen Leben* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1889); English translation: *Mekka in the latter part of the 19th century* (Leiden: Brill, 1931). The fourth chapter deals with the Southeast Asians resident in Mecca and is especially informative about the `ulamâ. Snouck Hurgronje's posthumously published reports to the Dutch Indies government, *Ambtelijke Adviezen* (3 vols., edited by E. Gobée and C. Adriaanse, 's Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1957-1965) are also invaluable, containing much information on, mostly contemporaneous, events and personalities.

²⁴ W.R. Roff, "Indonesian and Malay students in Cairo in the 1920s", *Indonesia* (Cornell University) no. 9 (1970), 73-87; Mona Abaza, *Changing images of three generations of Azharites in Indonesia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1993); idem, *Islamic education, perceptions and exchanges: Indonesian students in Cairo* (Paris: Association Archipel, 1994).

²⁵ Martin van Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah di Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan, revised edition, 1994); idem, *Kitab kuning, pesantren dan tarekat: tradisi-tradisi Islam di Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan, 1995); idem, *NU: tradisi, relasi-relasi kuasa, pencarian wacana baru* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1994).

Who is who type compendia and encyclopaedias

Some Indonesian `ulamâ who played active roles in public and political life are listed in the various *Who is who* type publications. An early work of this type, compiled by the Japanese Military Governing Council (Gunseikanbu) in 1944, was recently reprinted.²⁶ One chapter of this 550-page list of prominent Indonesians (pp. 430-446) deals specifically with personalities in the field of religion, but the rubrics education and politics also contain biographical notices of `ulamâ and other Islamic leaders.

Biographical information on `ulamâ who in independent Indonesia became members of parliament can be gleaned from the various lists prepared by the political parties.²⁷ In the first years of Indonesia's New Order, the journalist O.G. Roeder compiled a *Who's who*, that lists over 1000 prominent persons, including some Muslim leaders, with a heavy emphasis on New Order personalities.²⁸ In the 1980s, the publishers of the weekly *Tempo* compiled three similar volumes in succession, with somewhat longer biographies than in Roeder's.²⁹ These works focus on contemporary persons who for a variety of reasons were in the limelight. There are nevertheless more `ulamâ among them than one might have expected.

National encyclopaedias obviously also contain entries about `ulamâ who played political or educational roles.³⁰ The new edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* has a only handful of entries that are directly relevant for Southeast Asia. The detailed index of proper names in this encyclopaedia, however, will probably prove useful to trace references to such Southeast Asian `ulamâ as are mentioned in the text of other entries. A companion to this reference work, concentrating on the biographies of `ulamâ in the periphery of the Muslim world, is being prepared in France, but so far only one fascicle has appeared.³¹ More useful are those encyclopaedias that concern themselves specifically with Indonesian Islam, of which there are now several. The

²⁶ Gunseikanbu, *Orang Indonesia yang terkemuka di Jawa* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1986).

²⁷ An example of such a list, prepared by the party Nahdlatul Ulama during Guided Democracy, is *Buku daftar riwayat hidup anggota-2 Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat dari Partai Nahdlatul 'Ulama* (Jakarta: Lapunu Pusat, 1971) (a photocopy of this publication was kindly provided by Greg Fealy).

²⁸ O.G. Roeder, *Who's who in Indonesia* (Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 1971).

²⁹ *Tempo, Apa & siapa: Sejumlah orang Indonesia 1981-1982* (Jakarta: Grafiti, 1981). The second and third editions, with the the years 1983-1984 and 1985-1986 in the title, appeared in 1984 and 1986. They contain numerous new biographies besides updates of those in the first edition.

³⁰ *Ensiklopedi nasional Indonesia* (pimpinan redaksi E. Nugroho) (18 vols. and 1 supplement vol., Jakarta: PT Cipta Adi Pustaka, 1988-91 and 1994).

³¹ *Dictionnaire biographique des savants et grandes figures du monde musulman périphérique, du XIXe siècle à nos jours*, sous la direction de Marc Gaborieau, Nicole Grandin, Pierre Labrousse et Alexandre Popovic. (Paris: Programme de Recherches Interdisciplinaires sur le Monde Musulman Périphérique, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales). The first fascicle (1992) contains 23 biographies of Indonesian `ulamâ and Muslim leaders.

encyclopaedia prepared under the auspices of Indonesia's Department of Religious Affairs covers Islamic history and religious sciences as a whole, though with an emphasis on Indonesia.³² It has several dozen entries on individual Indonesian `ulamâ, besides articles on Muslim organisations and institutions in Indonesia that also contain some biographical information. The selection and length of entries is unbalanced and, which is worse, some of the entries contain serious factual errors. This work should be used with great caution. A far more satisfactory work was prepared by a team of writers at the Jakarta State Institute of Islamic Studies.³³ It covers the same range of subjects as the preceding work, but is more balanced and on the whole more reliable. It contains well over a hundred biographies of Indonesian `ulamâ and Muslim leaders. A commercially published five-volume encyclopaedia, edited by the same persons as that of the Department, appeared around the same time.³⁴ In Malaysia, there exists a historical encyclopedia with a large number of biographical entries, which however contain no information that cannot also be found elsewhere.³⁵

Research reports and students' theses

Another category of sources consists of reports prepared by the research desk of the Department of Religious Affairs and its regional offices, by research teams at State Institutes of Islamic Studies (IAIN) or similar bodies. Such reports are typically stencilled or printed in very small numbers and not commercially distributed, which makes them hard to find. One of the earliest reports of this kind I have found is a series of biographies of Muslim leaders prepared by the Department's research desk, which contains some information not easily found elsewhere.³⁶

In the mid-1980s the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) carried out a research project on the world view of Indonesian `ulamâ. The voluminous research report in which some of the findings of this project were laid down contains studies of the activities and views of some 70 contemporary Indonesian `ulamâ in twenty different regions throughout the country.³⁷ A long

³² *Ensiklopedi Islam* (3 vols., Jakarta: Departemen Agama, n.d. [foreword dated 1987]). A slightly slightly revised edition, titled *Ensiklopedi Islam di Indonesia*, appeared in 1993.

³³ *Ensiklopedi Islam Indonesia*. Disusun oleh tim penulis IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, ketua Prof.Dr. Harun Nasution (Jakarta: Djambatan, 1992). This work is in one volume, but has about the same total number of pages as the preceding one (1027 as against 1064).

³⁴ *Ensiklopedi Islam*, pimpinan redaksi H.A. Hafizh Dasuki (5 vols., Jakarta: Ichtiar Baru van Hoeve, 1993).

³⁵ Mahayudin Hj. Yahaya, *Ensiklopedia sejarah Islam* (6 vols., Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1986-89).

³⁶ Pusat Penelitian dan Pengembangan Lektur Agama, Badan Litbang Agama, *Laporan penulisan biografi tokoh Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Departemen Agama, 1978/1979).

³⁷ *Penelitian tentang: pandangan dan sikap hidup ulama di Indonesia* (Research report. Jakarta: Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia, 1987).

bibliography (pp. 490-580) lists numerous biographies of individual ulama and hundreds of *kitab* written by Southeast Asian ulama.

In various parts of Indonesia, IAINs and other Islamic institutes have begun compiling biographical material on `ulamâ originating from their region or belonging to their ethnic group. Similar efforts were made in several of the Malay states of Malaysia (but contrary to the situation in Indonesia, Malaysian researchers found the means of properly publishing their results, some of which are listed in the next section). Staff members of the IAIN in Medan prepared three slim volumes with biographies of the most prominent North Sumatran `ulamâ.³⁸ Similar collections of biographies of local `ulamâ in South Sumatra came out of the Palembang IAIN.³⁹ The most satisfactory collection of local `ulamâ was prepared by staff of the IAIN in Padang, West Sumatra.⁴⁰ It contains the biographies of twenty Minangkabau ulama of the 19th and 20th centuries, including both traditionalists and modernists.

There are more such reports dealing with individual `ulamâ in various regions. Besides, there are now literally hundreds of theses by IAIN students (especially at the Tarbiyah and Ushuluddin faculties) that detail the lives and teachings of individual `ulamâ in their regions of origin. Unfortunately, there is as yet no central catalogue of such theses, let alone a central library where microfilms of all of them can be consulted.

Published group biographies

Finally there are a number of books containing portraits of `ulamâ from the same region of the same religio-political organisation. The most interesting of them, in many respects, is the volume on Islam and politics in Kelantan edited by William Roff.⁴¹ Several of the contributions in this work give valuable biographical information on Kelantan `ulamâ and, more importantly, attempt to assess their discourse, their mutual relations and their relations with the state. Kelantan and Terengganu are privileged in that there are several other good collections of `ulamâ biographies.⁴²

³⁸ Anon., *Sejarah ulama-ulama terkemuka di Sumatera Utara* (Medan: IAIN Al Jamiah, 1975); K.H. Ahmad Nasution & Srs Anwar Saleh Dauly, *Sejarah ulama terkemuka Sumatera Utara, seri III* (Medan: Lembaga Ilmiah & Penerbitan IAIN Sumatera Utara, 1982; Majelis Ulama Sumatera Utara, *Sejarah ulama-ulama terkemuka di Sumatera Utara* (Medan: IAIN Al Jamiah, 1983).

³⁹ *Ulama di Sumatera Selatan* (Palembang: Lembaga Research & Survey, IAIN Raden Fatah, 1981/1982); *Biografi singkat ulama di Sumatera Selatan* (Palembang: Lembaga Research & Survey, IAIN Raden Fatah, 1984/1985).

⁴⁰ M. Sanusi Latief (ed.), *Riwayat hidup dan perjuangan 20 ulama besar Sumatera Barat* (Padang: Islamic Centre Sumatera Barat, 1981). This report was produced as a proper book and printed in somewhat larger numbers, and therefore is more widely available.

⁴¹ William R. Roff (ed), *Kelantan: Religion, society and politics in a Malay state* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974).

⁴² Nik `Abdul`aziz bin Haji Nik Hasan, *Sejarah perkembangan `ulamâ Kelantan. Sejarah gerakan dan*

The Malay scholar Haji Wan Muhd. Shaghir Abdullah has spent a lifetime compiling information on and works by Southeast Asian `ulamâ, especially those writing in Malay. He published a number of full-length biographies (of Arshad al-Banjari, Da'ud al-Patani, Ahmad b. M. Zain al-Patani, Ismail Minangkabawi), several books with compilations of shorter bio-bibliographical essays, and a series of such essays in the *Jurnal Dewan Bahasa* (Kuala Lumpur, 1990). Furthermore he edited and published a number of Malay works by authors from Patani, giving special emphasis to his maternal grandfather Ahmad b. M. Zain al-Patani. His works do not measure up to present standards of critical scholarship and have to be used cautiously, but they present much material that is not easily accessible elsewhere.⁴³

In Indonesia, a few collections of biographies of leading `ulamâ in the organisation Nahdlatul Ulama have recently appeared. The most substantial of them has biographical notices on 26 leading NU ulama, most of them East Javanese but also including two ethnic Madurese and three from West Java; another brings together biographies of the first five *Rois Am* (the organisation's highest religious authorities), most of which had appeared elsewhere before.⁴⁴

There is, to my knowledge, no such collection of biographies of leaders of Muhammadiyah or other Muslim associations (as opposed to individual biographies of the major leaders, of which there are quite a few),⁴⁵ although the numerous general studies on these organisations contain rich biographical material. One well-known Muslim journalist and author, Solichin Salam, has collected the necrologies of nine prominent `ulamâ who died between 1984 and 1987 and reprinted them

perkembangan alam pemikiran Islam di jajahan Kota Bharu 1900-1940 (Kota Bharu, Kelantan: Pakatan Keluarga Tuan Tabal, 1977) [gives bio-bibliographies of the major, and brief notices on minor Kelantan `ulamâ of the late 19th and 20th centuries]; Nik Abdul Aziz bin Nik Haji Hassan (ed.), *Islam di Kelantan* (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1983) [contains several essays on Kelantan `ulamâ, rich in biographical detail]; Muhammad Abu Bakar (ed.), *Ulama Trengganu, suatu sorotan* (N.p.: Utusan Publications & Distributors, 1991) [Biographies of some twenty Trengganu `ulamâ, all of whom, with the exception of Tok Pulau Manis (d. 1736), lived in the 20th century].

⁴³ The titles of his most important compilations are: Hawash Abdullah, *Perkembangan ilmu tasawuf dan tokoh-tokohnya di Nusantara* [contains the biographies of eleven Sufi authors] (Surabaya: Al Ikhlas, n.d.[1980?]); H.W. Muhd. Shaghir Abdullah, *Perkembangan ilmu fiqh dan tokoh-tokohnya di Asia Tenggara* [Twelve biographies of Malay ulama who wrote fiqh works] (Solo: Ramadhani, 1985); Hj.W. Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah, *Khazanah karya pusaka Asia Tenggara* (2 vols., Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Fathaniyah, 1991), and a twelve-volume series titled *Penyebaran Islam & silsilah ulama sejagat dunia Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Pengkajian Khazanah Klasik Nusantara & Khazanah Fathaniyah, 1999-2001).

⁴⁴ Saifullah Ma'shum (editor), *Menapak jejak, mengenal watak: sekilas biografi 26 tokoh Nahdlatul Ulama* (Jakarta: Yayasan Saifuddin Zuhri, 1994), reprinted as *Karisma ulama: kehidupan ringkas 26 tokoh NU* (Bandung: Mizan, 1998); Humaidy Abdussami & Ridwan Fakla AS (eds.), *Biografi 5 Rois 'Am Nahdlatul Ulama* (Yogyakarta: LTn-NU & Pustaka Pelajar, 1995).

⁴⁵ There is one unpublished text with 15 biographies of mostly Muhammadiyah-affiliated `ulamâ based, but not necessarily born, in Yogyakarta: Moh. Koedoes Sosrokoesoemo, *Biografi para ulama Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta*, jilid I (typescript, Yogyakarta 1975). Ahmad Dahlan, Mas Mansoer and Haji Rasul are each the subject of several biographies, as is A. Hassan of the association Persatuan Islam (Persis). One recent book contains the biographies of five Persis leaders: Dadan Wildan, *Yang da'i yang politikus: hayat dan perjuangan lima tokoh Persis*. Bandung: Rosdakarya, 1997.

together with other writings.⁴⁶ More recently, a collection of extensive biographical notices on Indonesia's ministers of religious affairs was compiled.⁴⁷

Most of the other biographical material is in the form of brief notices or monographs devoted to a single person, dispersed in various media. Especially such journals as *Panji Masyarakat*, *Amanah*, *Mimbar Ulama* regularly carry biographical notices of `ulamâ and other Muslim leaders.

⁴⁶ Solichin Salam, *Butir-butir mutiara hikmah* (Jakarta: Kuning Mas, 1988).

⁴⁷ Azyumardi Azra and Saiful Umam, *Menteri-menteri agama. Biografi sosial-politik*. Jakarta: Badan Litbang Departemen Agama RI bekerjasama dengan PPIM-IAIN, 1998.