

Rencana Ulasan/*Review Article*

The Battle for Junk Ceylon edited by C. Skinner

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pages.

I am happy at being given the opportunity to review *The Battle For Junk Ceylon* otherwise known as *Syair Sultan Maulana* which has been edited by Professor C. Skinner. As a student of traditional Malay literature, I welcome the publication of another work of transliteration as well as its translation in English and the elucidation of the various aspects of the text. The shortage of edited texts such as this presents a number of difficulties in my courses on Malay traditional historiography and on the editing of Malay manuscripts. Here we have another text that can be used to illustrate what should and should not be done when editing a traditional manuscript. And because I come from Kedah, I feel pleased that another text from that northern state has caught the attention of yet another scholar, thus putting Kedah once more on the map as far as the production of traditional texts is concerned.

It must be pointed out that only after he had completed his work on the *Syair Sultan Maulana* did Skinner discover that Muhammad Yusoff Hashim's (MYH) edition of the same syair was ready for publication or was already published in Kuala Lumpur. MYH had submitted his study of the syair for his Master's degree at the Department of History, University of Malaya in 1976 and in 1980 the University of Malaya Publishers published it. Thus it is obvious that MYH started working on the syair much earlier than Skinner. Apparently Skinner had not followed one of the unwritten rules in the field of philology namely to check whether the text he had chosen to work on was being studied by another researcher so as to avoid reduplication and redundancy.

The difference between the two editions is that MYH's edition covers various aspects of the syair while Skinner concentrates only on the historical aspect. MYH divides his study of the syair into six chapters excluding the syair itself. The introduction in chapter one deals with the problems and responsibility of a researcher when editing a traditional historical text; Malay historical texts in prose and syair; traditional influences and motifs; symbolisms and anachronisms in the historical texts and finally the syair as a form of traditional poetry. In chapter two MYH presents the historical background of the text dealing in detail the social and political situation in Kedah in the nineteenth century and the relations Kedah had with Siam, Burma and Petani. Chapter three proves the validity of the historical facts mentioned by the Malay author in the syair. The author and his text are discussed in chapter four and chapter five looks

at the syair as a historical source. The language, the spelling of words in the syair, the influences of foreign languages, the local influences and the transliteration system are presented in chapter six. MYH also attempts to explain a number of words by giving their meanings and the way they are spelt in the syair. Nevertheless, there are instances where the words are wrongly read and the given meanings are not contextually correct. Where Skinner provides the English translation of the syair, MYH offers the production of the Jawi facsimile of the verses beside the corresponding romanized lines. This makes it easy to check and detect the editor's misreading and wrong spelling of some of the words. Still the facsimile production of MYH's edition is not wholly dependable as will be pointed out later in this review.

It is inevitable that in preparing this review I have made use of MYH's edition for checking and cross checking. In doing so I feel that it is my commitment to mention whatever comments necessary on MYH's edition as well. I have obtained a copy of the syair from the Kedah Historical Society which was made from the copy kept at the University of Malaya library. It is the copy of the same text that both Skinner and MYH use for their editions.

In his foreword Skinner explains that in his study of the text, he focusses on the historical aspect. He successfully achieves this objective by adhering truthfully to various detailed explanations which would please all historians interested on this aspect of Kedah history.

Arranging his work in three chapters, Skinner delved into the historical background paying particular attention to the relationships that existed between the four states involved - Siam, Burma, Kedah and Petani. Chapter two deals with the military background since the syair is about a war. More detail notes on the various aspects of war such as strategies, tactics, types of arms, spoils of war etc. are also given. Chapter three deals with the text itself. Each verse is accompanied with an English translation on the opposite page which thus facilitates reading and checking. There are more notes and explanations on various points connected with the syair, its transliteration and the translation of the verses. The original Jawi handwritten script of 82 pages is rearranged into 1102 quatrains.

Skinner gives a lengthy discourse on the historical background of the syair, touching upon the long established, much mentioned relations which existed between Kedah, Siam, Burma and Petani. As if to verify the report of the Malay author, Skinner uses a number of official British and Siamese records of the same event. It is right of him to doubt the author because it is well known that the authors of traditional Malay histories tended to exaggerate the facts turning them into fantasies, though not without cause or reason. But in this syair the author frees himself of any myth or legend that so commonly decorate traditional works on history. The syair as a vehicle of historical literature does not allow the author ample space and time for legends and folklores. The references made by Skinner to Siamese historical records seem to substantiate whatever is illuminated by the Malay author.

Skinner exemplifies the position of the *syair* as a historical source. Besides describing the events of war, he also draws the reader's attention to the tactical moves in the Malay art of war, the various types of arms used in the battle, the mode of transport and the hierarchy of the fighters. On the literary aspect, Skinner agrees with Koster's structural scheme of the so called "Heroic-Historical *Syair*" and quotes the type-scenes drawn by him. Though the development of the *Syair Sultan Maulana* matches with the structural scheme introduced by Koster, very little is focussed on any one character or his heroic deeds. There is hardly anyone in this *syair* to be regarded as a hero. A number of names are mentioned but the author treats them with equal brevity, describing their deeds or behaviors. Thus I am rather reluctant to categorize this *syair* as "Heroic-Historical" for it is in fact more historical than heroic. I would prefer to call it just "narrative" or "historical" *syair* : terms suggested by Bottoms, Skinner and Kassim Ahmad.

Although Skinner deals satisfactorily with the historical aspect, his analysis fails to enhance the human aspect found in the text. It cannot be denied that Kedah had long been a vassal of Siam. It also cannot be denied that Kedah was never pleased with this relationship for Kedah was forever at the beck and call of Siam whenever the latter needed men, arms and food. Throughout history, whenever chance prevailed, Kedah tried to free herself from this bondage. Failure to do so magnified Kedah's disgust and discontentment which found expressions in other forms : authors would create their own explanations as to why Kedah was under Siamese sovereignty or why she had to send the *bunga mas* to Siam. In the *syair* a number of verses implies this uneasy attitude but Skinner in his discussion does not mention it. Datuk Maharaja Lela's action is a manifest of this feeling. Verses 631, 633 and 635 portray this attitude of the Kedah Malays towards the Siamese.

...
lainnya Siam haram zadah
perahu tiada memberi faedah
(Verse 631)

...
kurung seperti rumah kera
(Verse 633)

Itupun apil dibubuh serta
meniru perahu Melayu semata
(Verse 635)

Verses 573 - 591 relate how the religious and illusive Tengku Idris succeeded in getting himself out of the campaign after convincing himself that it was a war between two infidels : Siam and Burma.

Not only the Siamese ships are said to be inferior to the Kedah ships but even their soldiers are pictured as less heroic. Verse 665 puts forth the

Laksamana as the person who saved the whole situation and verse 709 highlights the fact that the Malays only had two casualties. Verse 728 describes them as being more active than their Siamese counterparts. In battle the Siamese are said to lag behind but they would come to the front to loot the Burmese stockades.

Skinner's translation is "aimed at a hypothetical English reader with an interest in the history of Malaya but with little or no knowledge of Malay." Generally the editor achieves a very good standard of translation and succeeds in maintaining the poetic structure of the original *syair*. However parts of the translation does not do justice to the original text and may even be misleading to a would be reader whose knowledge of Malay is limited and whose familiarity with the Kedah dialect is non-existent.

Among the 1102 verses there are some lines that have been literally translated while others are wrongly translated through misreadings. There are instances where misreadings of words result in a wrong translation, thus giving the unsuspecting reader a totally different picture. Mistakes are also caused by the editor's lack of understanding of the idiomatic expressions and his inability to recognize the dialectal features. The editor also fails to distinguish some of the Siamese loan-words in Kedah Malay found in the *syair*. There are cases where a reader's expectation of an explanation is not fulfilled by Skinner. I also find it necessary to comment on the transliteration and the spelling system.

1/ Idiomatic expressions

25c: Skinner translates *berkira* as *making calculations* when in this context it refers to *discussions* or *exchange of ideas*. I would change the translation from Skinner's *in making calculations ... to in giving ideas he was virtually unrivalled*.

I consider the editor's translation of 29c and d confusing for it does not offer the exact meaning of what the author intends.

*jika siapa hemat yang kelam
ke dalam perutnya masuk menyelam*

is translated as

*anyone who chanced to forget himself
would have a sword plunged into his belly.*

My suggestion is

*anyone who confronts unsolved problems
would consult him for his ideas.*

It is not *one who forgets himself* but *one who faces darkness* i.e. one who has no idea or solution. *To plunge into his belly* is to ask him for ideas because it is believed that a man's wisdom is in his heart and his heart is where he thinks - not in his head - *berfikir dalam hati*. To a Malay the heart is in the stomach. It is not strange for a Malay to say *ingat dalam perut*. To have a sword plunged into his belly would be something else.

171d : *kerjanya tiada menanti sarab* is translated as *they were not the sort of men to hang about*. My suggestion is *they worked not just for the fee* because *sarab* is for *sarap/sarapan* which means specifically *breakfast* and it can also mean *food* in general or *payment*.

179d : *kerja raja disambil dan samar* is explained by Skinner as “expressing a (guardedly) unfavourable view of his character.”

The line does not reflect an unfavourable view but ideally what it should be. In Malay (Muslim) culture man’s first obligation is to Allah and other things come second. When the author writes this line he sees the position of the *raja* in conjunction with Allah and not with the people. The character referred to here is Tengku Idris who is described as pious and religious. To him performing the duties to the *raja* is secondary.

*amalnya menurut nahi dan amar
kerja raja disambil dan samar*

which is translated as

*in all things he followed God’s commandments,
although he was less than whole-hearted in
serving his sovereign*

should be changed to

*because he followed God’s commandments
he regarded serving the king as secondary.*

190c & d : *sekalian menyunjung anugerah pakaian
diraba di duli berderai deraian*

A Kedah reader would read d as *diraub di duli berdirai-diraian* and would find Skinner’s translation of c and d

*the recipients placed the gifts on their heads
and then, one after the other, they pressed them against
the Sultans’s feet*

a bit hilarious. Skinner is too literal here in his translation. *menyunjung anugerah* does not mean they put the gifts on their heads; instead it means the people are grateful for the presents. They do not touch the Sultan’s feet with their heads but touch the Sultan’s feet with their hands as in *salam* and bring the palms of their hands to their faces. This is different from *menyunjung duli* of the olden days (prior to Islam) when the act of abeissance involved putting the Sultan’s feet on the servant’s head. This has been modified to prostrating while *menyunjung titah* means to fulfill the orders of the Sultan.

In 461b the author uses the word *kawan* in an ironical way but the editor translates it literally. Thus *berapa mati dicencang kawan* is translated as *several were cut down by their own comrades* when it should be *and several were chopped up by the enemy*.

702d : Being unfamiliar with the phrase *bersifat udang*, I consulted those who know. Prawns have the habit of moving away backward when disturbed. So Skinner's translation of the line as *both of them lacked staying power* may be appropriately changed to *in the battlefield they absconded*.

The same phrase appears in 708b and is translated as *having no staying power*. The line *juga bersifat udang* could be changed to *some of them preferred to retreat*. For both lines *they backed away like frightened prawns* should be perfect.

2/ Misreading of words

39c : I read *singkatnya* in *singkatnya tiada lagi berulang* as *sanggitnya* meaning friction. Wilkinson : rubbing two hard bodies one against another; touching of two surfaces such as the side of a ship and the wharf. In this context the word refers to the friction between the sultan and the two brothers.

MYH spells the word out as *s-ng-k-t-ny*.

47b : *jadi kapit mebembari* : practically each time the last word occurs, Skinner transliterates it as *mebembari*. I believe the word is *menyembari* from *sayembari* / *sayembara* meaning to contest, to be side by side : *menandingi; mengiringi*.

MYH writes both *menyembari* and *membembari* and gives the meaning as *saburi atau buat kacau bilau* which is out of context.

75d : Skinner writes *dirajangkan* / *direjangkan* as *diracakkan* while MYH opts for *dirajakkan* though in his notes he suggests that it should be *direjangkan*. Apparently Skinner mistakes it for *dirancakkan* because he translates it as *to be speeded up*. It is clear here we are faced with the incorrigible habit of the scribe who refuses to differentiate a *nga* from a *qaf* with the clear dottings. The reader is expected to note the difference himself. MYH however gives the meaning of *dirajakkan* (*direjahkan*) as *merempuh atau berjalan ke hadapan*. Wilkinson gives the meaning of *rejang* as an astrological term, the name of a series of symbols (one for each day of the month) which are supposed to represent the influences affecting the fortunes of the day.

216a : *palungnya* is read by Skinner as *peluangnya* while MYH writes it as *pelungnya*.

260c : In the text it is clearly written *muafakat satu* but Skinner writes *muafakat tu* claiming that there is a sign of cancellation by the scribe. It is possible that Skinner is disturbed by the two dots belonging to *ya* of the previous line. It is possible also that MYH and I cannot see the cancellation because we use a photostat copy of the syair when Skinner makes use of the original handwritten manuscript.

316c : Skinner and MYH both write *diguntarnya* but my reading is *digentarnya*.

326c : The syair shows clearly *sekalian* but Skinner writes *segala*.

353c : *meninggal perahu terlalu jihat* is translated as *we were very wary about disembarking*. I am inclined to read *jihat* as *cahmat* which is the old and the local form of *syahmat* meaning to be caught unprepared and having to use all faculties to escape or get out of harm's way as in the game of chess. MYH copies it down as *jehmat* and suggests that it should actually be *cemat* but I cannot locate the word *cemat* in the dictionaries with the required meaning.

420a : For Skinner's *ngelancar* I read *ngelincir*.

421a : Skinner's *Mal* in *Mal rentaka konon sebabnya* should be *Hal. mal/mail/mai* as explained by the editor in his notes do not exist in the Kedah dialect in that context.

636c : I cannot deny that there is the word *rok* meaning overgrown shrubs. This word is commonly used in Baling, Sik and other districts in Kedah that have a close affinity with the Siamese community. But in this line the word is *rupa* and not *rok* : *seperti benteng rupa bangunnya*. Skinner's translation of the line as *it looked like a rough breastwork of felled trees* should be changed to *it resembled a wall*.

637c : Another bone of contention here is Skinner's *temin* as opposed to MYH's *timbun*. I read it as *timbun* and *temin* in out of context in *diletak seperti temin kerebatan*.

826b : Skinner and MYH have *berbembar* in *tampil berbembar banjar setara* when I prefer to read it as *berjambar*.

870a : Although it is written as *meriam tertukur* elsewhere in the syair, in this particular line it looks like *meriam tertokah*, the last letter being *ha* rather than *ra*. *tokah / tongkah* means to be joined together or to be in twos. MYH writes *mariam tertokoh*.

890a : *Sematanya jenis harta rambu* : another possible reading for *rambu* is *rumbu*. It means useless assorted items, things of no value. In another line the author clarifies that among other things, what they looted were faded clothing and tattered mosquito nets.

rambu as read by Skinner and MYH is also possible but not with the meaning Skinner gives in his translation. Skinner translates the word as *bulky items* when it means to wander aimlessly - *merambu*. If we read it as *rambu* the line means *all sorts of things were collected during their*

wandering. Another meaning for *rambu* is tinsel, tassels, strips of cloth that are hanged.

895c : Skinner's *menyesal* in *datang menyesal lalu dibongkar* should be *menyebel*. Skinner claims that there is a dot under the *sin* but he does not change it to *ba*. Skinner's translation of the line as *frustrated they unloaded it* should be changed to *when out of temper* (or *when in tantarum*) *they unloaded it*.

900a : Where Skinner writes *tinggal*, MYH has *tunggil*. In place of both I would like to put *tanggal*. The author is describing the condition of the bodies at the battle front. So the line should read *kebanyakan tanggal mayat mereka*. Skinner's translation as *Most of the Burmese left dead there* should be changed to *Most of the bodies were mutilated*. The next line *kena meriam dengan rentaka* endorses my reading.

1000d : Both Skinner and MYH write *berkolang karak* when definitely it is *berguling garak* : to be lying haphazardly, thrown all over the place; nothing to do with heaving or forward backward motion as explained by the editor. Thus Skinner's translation as *when their ships went aground, heaving and rolling* should be changed to *the ships went aground, stuck all over the place* or *the ships ran aground strewn haphazardly on the shore*.

1095b : For Skinner's *ditukar* I read *ditukas* while MYH opts for *ditugas*. Both *ditukar* and *ditugas* are unsuitable in this context because there is such a word as *ditukas* meaning to charge a person of doing something bad like adultery or in this case of disloyalty (*derhaka*) without evidence. But looking at the translation, it is possible that Skinner's *ditukar* is a misprint.

.1074c : *sahaja dipajang dari selama* : *dipajang* should be *dipacang* / *dipancang*. *dipacang* is to be earmarked for favour later.

1088b : Although the *syair* shows clearly *t-w-n* for *tuan*, Skinner writes *Tuhan*. Even if *kepada Tuhan penghulu segala* sounds acceptable, I think the author refers to the Sultan and not Tuhan as chief of all chiefs. If my reading is correct the translation should be changed from *of God, the Lord of the universe*, to *of Your Highness, chief of all the chiefs* and *he* in *c* be changed to *you*.

3/ Mistakes in translation

5c : *nenda* is translated as *uncle* when it should be *grandfather*. Skinner translates *paduka* as *aged* when it is *revered*.

209b : The editor has changed *brass* (*suasa*) to *gold* though it does not affect the historical aspect of the text.

260d : Skinner writes *Ka Longlah jadi matamata* and translates it as *the Commissioner was to act as Superintendent*. First, *Ka Long* should be *Kaluang* / *Ka Luang* as Skinner writes in the English translation or sometimes as *Kun Luang*. It is a title for a court official of lower ranking than a commissioner (also 272a). Secondly, *matamata* cannot be *superintendent* but a spy or a member of the reconnaissance team.

286c & d : *kubu dan sagur semua dibilang
perintahnya khusus tiadalah walang*

These two lines are translated as:

*he took note of every stockade and every war-boat
paying particular attention to detail and being
quite unflustered.*

My choice would be :

*taking notes of every stockade and boat of war
his orders were specific and very clear.*

338d : *kerja yang lain hendak dikira* is translated as *while we planned our next move*. I suggest *other assignments had to be considered*.

344d : For *masuk kubunya bagai dijangka* which is translated as *making straight for their stockades*, I would like to add *as expected*.

356b & c : *seorang tak boleh menjadi raja
akan jadi umpama baja*

Skinner translates the two lines as :

*no single commander was allowed to give orders
a man before whose iron will all must bow*

It may be more poetic but it does not retain the gist of the original verse. I wonder if Skinner will accept my suggestion:

*no single commander could give orders
lest his words become worthless*

The keyword here is *baja* which means rotten fish, manure or something which is worthless or unheeded. Is it possible that Skinner takes the word *baja* to be *waja* and translates it as *iron will*?

398d : Skinner translates *akhirnya mati tiada berjirat* as *and the only result would be a nameless grave*. My choice is *in the end we'll die without a grave* or *in the end we'll die with no grave at all*.

430d : Sometimes the editor sacrifices the real meaning of a line in order to be more poetic. When I would opt for a simple *we went astray like orphans* for *keadaan seperti anak piatu*, Skinner offers *like veritable orphans of the storm*.

436d : *tulang pun habis menjadi abu* is translated as *even our bones would have been ground to dust* when my version is *even our bones would have been burnt to ashes*.

450b : I believe *hinggi* is a misprint for *hingga*. *hinggi kubu dianjaknya pergi* is translated as *and brought their stockades nearer and nearer* when *dianjaknya pergi* should denote further and further away.

534d : Certain Malay words are difficult to translate and still keep the explicit meaning. This is the case with the word *kepunan* in *kalau berperang kepunan saja* which is translated as *if he were to fight, it would be to the death*. My version is *if he were to fight, it would be such a waste*. The word *kepunan* / *kempunan* still plays a big role in the Malay way of life. It is an excuse or a reason to have things done for the sake of saving a person from feeling *kempunan* or missing it and to avoid regrets. If a sick person or an expectant mother longs for something, nothing is spared to obtain it so that he/she will not feel *kempunan*.

In this verse the author mentions that when Paduka Seri Raja left on the campaign, he had not even started his services to the Sultan. If he were to fight and die in the battle, it would be very much regretted.

In 609d the word *kepunan* is used again in *kerja berperang kepunan sahaja* meaning *to fight in battle for him is just a dream*. We have to look at the whole verse in order to understand it.

*Akan Seri Raja Diraja
niatnya hendak berbuat kerja
mari tak sampai berbalik sahaja
kerja berperang kepunan sahaja.*

Skinner's translation is :

*Seri Raja Diraja
had been determined to see active service
he did not intend to come all this way and then tamely
return home
he had set his heart on fighting.*

My version for c and d is :

*did not reach his destination for he had to turn back
to fight in the battle remained a dream.*

Seri Raja Diraja suffered the feeling of *kempunan* because he had set out determined to participate in the battle. He was sent back because he fell ill.

There are many beautiful verses in the syair and not a few with explicit sense of humour. An example of one that is beautiful yet simple is 707. But very often the beauty of the verse could not be maintained in the translation of all the lines. In this verse 707d *ada yang ramai bersama kawan* perhaps could be changed from *and many were supported by the presence of their comrades* to *and many took refuge with their friends*.

714a : *daulat* is translated as *star, veneration, grace or majesty* may be better alternatives.

726d : *duduk seperti perangai ketam* is translated as *as they sat there on their benches like a cat on hot bricks* which is very English. I would like to remain closer to the crabs by suggesting that they were *moving sideways, stealthily like crabs, looking for a chance to escape*.

750b : I prefer the translation to be *they must have another stockade there surely* instead of Skinner's *on which stood another stockade, plain for all to see* for *di sana pun ada kubunya tentu*.

803d : *sampan pun karam berenang tak larat* is translated by Skinner as *the boats sank and the men in them struggled in vain to reach safety*. My option is *the boats sank and the men were too exhausted to swim*.

833d : The author mentions *datuk* and not *datuk nenek* in *nama datukrtya diangkat pulih* which is translated as *bringing fresh glory to the renown won by his ancestor*. My version is *reestablishing his grandfather's glory*.

844d : *bunyi meriam tiadalah jarang* is translated as *and was never far from the sound of the cannon*. Adhering more to the text, I would prefer *he was always firing the cannon* or *firing the cannon without interval*.

856a : Skinner translates *anak saudara* as *cousin* when it should be *nephew*.

911c : *disuruh berkawal sambil merawak* is translated as *patrols were ordered to go out and search around*. *merawak* is not to search around but to aimlessly shoot once in a while (to let the enemy know that you are alert). MHY writes *r-a-w-q* in the transliteration of the syair but offers *rawak* in the notes with its meaning as *kena tidak kena sahaja*.

Another difference between Skinner's and my reading of the line occurs in 919a *sudah luka baharulah senang* which he translates as *they weren't satisfied till someone had been wounded*. His translation indicates that they would not be satisfied until somebody had been killed or disabled. My understanding of the line is that they were relieved when someone was wounded because it meant they had a chance to stop fighting and rest while the wounded was being taken care of. It was during this interval too that the others went looting.

4/ Dialectal features

Skinner admits that the spelling used in the syair by the author contains a number of features which betray its Kedah origin. But in his edition he does not attend to these features for two reasons. I accept his first reason for ignoring these features because his focus is on the historical aspect. I

find his second reason unacceptable. Although MYH has elaborated upon these features, his comments and explanations on the transliteration and the dialectal features are below the expectation of a philologist. In many cases he spells the word out the way it is written by the author without any explanation. I should add that besides the spelling used, the author also uses some words which exist only in the Kedah dialect and these words have been ignored by both editors.

108b : *gemira* for *gembira*.

Skinner mentions that this common feature in the Kedah dialect pronunciation and all other dialectal features are explained in his edition of the *Hikayat Perintah Negeri Benggala* but I find the explanation inadequate. It is true that "in nasal clusters the nasal occasionally 'swallows' the following (homorganic) stops" as exemplified in this syair by:

108b	<i>gemira</i> for <i>gembira</i>
115c &	<i>memantu</i> for <i>membantu</i>
352b	
136d	<i>memalas</i> for <i>membalas</i>
163d	<i>Kemoja</i> for <i>Kemboja</i>
179d	<i>samar</i> for <i>sambar</i>

But the change of the bilabial also occurs when it is not preceded by a nasal sound. In the Kedah dialect there are numerous examples to show this feature:

<i>banyak</i>	becomes	<i>manyak</i>
<i>binatang</i>	"	<i>menatang</i>
<i>bacang</i>	"	<i>macang</i>
<i>bangkit</i>	"	<i>mangkit</i>
<i>bendera</i>	"	<i>menera</i>
<i>benci</i>	"	<i>menci</i>
<i>Benggala</i>	"	<i>Mengala</i>
<i>Benggali</i>	"	<i>Mengali</i> etc.

The conclusion that can be drawn from these words is that in the Kedah dialect when a bilabial (b) is preceded or followed by a nasal (or an affricate as in *bacang*), the bilabial is often replaced by *m*.

In his explanation on this feature, MYH does not relate it to the word *gemira* in the syair.

136c : *mengacum kepada Raja Senggora* is translated as *uttered threats against the Governor of Songkhla* when it should be *reporting lies to the Governor of Songkhla*.

mengacum / acum : stirring up anger by tale-bearing; repeating to one person what another person has said about him; to excite enmity by slander (Wilkinson).

150c : *menyunjung* for *menjunjung*.

This is another influence of pronunciation on the writing of the syair. 874d has *menyangkit* for *menjangkit*. Another example to be cited is *senyata* for *senjata*. This is a case where an affricate preceded by a nasal becomes nasalized.

294a : *menyemberang* for *menyeberang*.

Based on the explanation for 108b, *menyemberang* here is the hyper-correct form of *menyeberang*. In 59d the author writes *amuk-ambukan*; *ambukan* is the hyper-correct form of *amukan*.

313b : Though the author uses *bergentai* for the standard form of *bergentas*, the correct dialect form should be *bergentaih*. It is obvious *bergentai* is used for the sake of the rhyme.

641c : Both Skinner and MYH read the word as *tutup* in *menjadi tutup sekalian orang* which does not make any sense at all. The word is not *tutup* but *tunak* (now *tinak*) which means *bertubi-tubi*, *bertekun*, *bersungguh-sungguh* or *pulun* (Kedah dialect): to work hard at something; to attend to something quickly and with zest. The minute the orders were given the men concentrated on the preparation of war. Skinner's translation as *he was the general in overall command of the expedition* should be changed to *everybody became busy and involved*.

654d : *perahu berlabuh bertua2ran* is translated as *the ships anchored in a V-Shaped formation*. Skinner translates it so because he takes the word *bertuar2an* to be based on *tuar*, a funnel or V-shaped fish-trap. The word is actually *toran*, *bertoran*, *bertoran-toran* meaning to be arranged line by line or one row after another in large numbers. It can refer to anything: plates, cars, mats etc. It may be acceptable if the ships are to sail out in the V-shaped formation but not to be anchored that way.

This line should be translated as *the ships anchored row after row* or *the ships anchored arranged in lines*. The same word appears in 797b.

748b : *tetapi perangnya sebagai teteh*

teteh should be spelt *titih*, a Kedah variation for *titis*. The author uses this form in order to maintain the rhyme.

768c : *melihat kawan tinggalnya jeruh* is translated as *but when he saw his allies lagging behind all over the place*.

In his notes Skinner suggests that *jeruh* should actually be *jerah* and that *jeruh* is the dialect pronunciation of *jerah*. I do not believe either *jeruh* or *jerah* exist in the Kedah dialect. Kamus Dewan: *jerah*: to be many, in abundance and Winstedt gives *jeruh* as to mean slope. In Siamese *jeruh* is to be infected by plague germs. It is possible that the word is *ceruh*/*ceroh*: Its original meaning is a second pounding of rice to get rid of the scum.

It also means to be less in number. So the line should mean *he saw only a few of his allies left*.

This explanation does not apply to the same word *jeruh* in 787c : *peluh keluar memancar jeruh*. Here *jeruh* could have been changed from *jerah* which means in abundance.

806a : *sagurnya lari berkelabut*.

I agree with Skinner that *kelabut* is the Kedah dialect variant of *kelang-kabut*. *kelang-kabut* is sometimes changed to *kelam-kabut* and *kelang-kelibut*.

870d : *Meriam tertukur dua serangkai
panjangnya ada sepuluh jengkal
membawak dia seolah bekal
di belakang kawan duduk menugal*.

Skinner writes the standard form *menugal* though the author uses the dialect form *menukal*, pronounced *menukai*. In this verse we witness how flexible the author is in combining the standard and the dialect forms of pronunciation. Though *serangkai* can never be *serangkal*, *jengkal*, *bekal* and *menugal* become *jengkai*, *bekai* and *menugai/menukai* in Kedah pronunciation.

931d : *hingga diperebut harta kelengkap* : In this line there are two words that must have encouraged MYH to decide that the author is ignorant in the usage of affixes. There are *di* and *pe* in *diperebut* and there is a need of suffix *an* in *kelengkap* to make it *kelengkapan* meaning apparatus or equipment.

J.J. Ras in 1963 made his final year students at the University of Malaya fill in some questionnaires and immediately discovered that Kedah dialect speakers do not make much use of affixes as compared to speakers of other Malay dialects. I should add that Kedah dialect speakers do use affixes but differently. *diperebut* and *kelengkap* in this line prove the point. *kelengkap* has the same meaning as *kelengkapan* but to a Kedah speaker *kelengkapan* is too bookish. In certain words prefix *pe* is necessary in Kedah dialect when it is unnecessary in other dialects like in:

<i>peRabeh</i>	: <i>habiskan</i>	: to consume or to finish.
<i>peRambat</i>	: <i>hambatkan</i>	: being chased away.
	<i>kena peRambat</i>	= <i>dihambatkan</i>
<i>pelaRi</i>	: <i>dilarikan</i>	: being taken away.
	(note it does not refer to a runner in the Kedah dialect).	

There are many examples in this syair of words similar to *kelengkap*, i.e. used without suffix *an*:

ketumbuk, kesakti, penolong, perniaga, penglihat, kebakti.

It does not mean that suffix *an* is not used at all because this suffix does occur in some terms, i.e.:

kebanyakan, kebesaran, kesebutan, kesakitan, kekenalan, keteguhan, kesampaian and *perasan* (from *perasaan*).

There are also in the syair *digemar* for *digemari*
dinaiknya .. dinaikinya

and an extreme case of affix consciousness in *diberatikan* and *dibaikikan*. Being fully aware of his tendency to be economical, in some cases, in the usage of affixes, sometimes the Kedah author or speaker ends up using more affixes than necessary in his effort to achieve literary sophistication. And this becomes a sort of morphological hyper-correction.

I would like to suggest that Skinner's translation of 931d as *all that could be done was to plunder the captured vessels* be changed to *all they did was squabble over the plunder and equipment*.

968d : *ke manakah pulak ia meralam* is correctly translated as *I wonder where they disappeared to?*

The word *meralam* in Skinner's transliteration should be *merelam* meaning to vanish or disappear. I do not believe it is related to *relap/merelap* or *relit/merelit* (meaning to glitter, glisten or shine like jewellery or shining clothes) as suggested by Skinner. In a more expressive phrase the word *relam* is used in *tungap relam* and even *mampus tungap relam* to indicate total disappearance of a person, normally with a tinge of disgust.

MYH gives *meralam* as to mean *berjalan melindungi diri* which is not what is meant here.

1081a : *Jika dibaca di tengah mualak*.

The author writes *maklak* but the editor transliterates it as *mualak* which is another form for *maklak*. MYH gives the meaning of *ma'lak* as *cara terang-terangan* but the exact meaning of the word is the one given by Skinner in his translation which is *public*. The more popular version of this word is *laklak* where public is *orang laklak* and an outsider or a foreigner is termed *orang lak asing*.

5/ Siamese loanwords and influence on pronunciation

464c : *Berma mengepung berkati juta*.

Though the author writes *yuta*, Skinner transliterates it as *juta*. He is rather inconsistent here because at other places he keeps closely to the text. Skinner's puzzle over *yuta* is solved when it is noted that when a Siamese speaks Malay he normally pronounces *j* as *y*.

<i>raja</i>	becomes	<i>raya</i>
<i>gajah</i>	"	<i>gayah</i>
<i>jalan</i>	"	<i>yalan</i> etc.

By writing *yuta*, the author submits himself to the influence of the Siamese pronunciation of the sound.

506c : *mengantar kerua diusahakan* is translated as *in ferrying across all the Siamese families*.

kerua/kerwa is another Siamese word which means kitchen. The word is also used to mean people of the kitchen, people of the house or family, referring normally to women and children only. Obviously it does not include soldiers or dignitaries but ordinary people.

543d : *mendapat segala puak puraya*.

Though he attempts to translate the word *puraya* as *the crowd*, in his notes Skinner admits that he does not know the word. *puraya* is a combination of *pu* and *rai*. In Siamese *pu* means people or person while *rai* is rogue or people of bad character. In Malay it would be *penyangak* or *orang tak ketahuan*. *Purai* becomes *puraya* for the sake of rhyme. It has nothing to do with *purak-peranda* as suggested by the editor. No explanation by MYH.

811c : *supaya jangan memberi ramukan*
(*kerja hendak disegerakan*).

Skinner's *ramukan* is *remukan* in MYH's edition. MYH even goes to the extent of suggesting that it should be *rembukan*. The word is *ramkan* which in Siamese means to be uneasy, worried or disturbed (*rimas, gelisah, semak perut*).

So Skinner's translation of *c* as :

this was so as not to leave behind anything that might be of use
should be changed to :

so as not to cause us worry.

812d : *Bàliau lari menyusur hutan*.

We are entangled with another Siamese word here. Skinner regards *baliiau* as the contemporary *beliau*. In fact here the Siamese root word *liau* has been given the Malay prefix *be(r)* and *berliiau/beliiau* means to turn. Normally it is used as *liau kanan, liau kiri* - to turn right and left as one runs in escape. One may also say *liau sana, liau sini* meaning wandering all over the place or to travel aimlessly. From the same root word we have *liun/liyun* - to go around the further way so as to avoid something or somebody. It also means to parade and show off as in *liun pi mai (liun pergi mari)*. So Skinner's doubt as whether the word *beliau* as honorific pronoun was already in use at the time of the syair is confirmed, at least in this context.

6/ Incorrect transliteration

272a & d : For the transliteration of certain words or titles, Skinner does write correctly in the English translation but not in the Malay version. *Ka Long* should be *Ka Luang* in 272a and *Long* should be *Luang* in 272d.

283a : *Disuruh sulu Tanjung Jambu.*

The word *s-w-l-w* should be *solo* and probably originates from *suluh/soloh*. Pronounced *solo*, it has its own distinct meaning from *suluh* which is pronounced *suluh*. The scribe drops the *h* at the end in *solo* because a Kedah speaker pronounces it without the *h*. Other words that undergo the same dialectal treatment are :

<i>bomoh</i>	pronounced	<i>bomo</i>
<i>bodoh</i>	"	<i>bodo</i>
<i>contoh</i>	"	<i>conto</i>
<i>jodoh</i>	"	<i>jodo</i>

But it does not apply to *paruh* and *baruh* as given by MYH.

838a : Skinner writes *Said Muhammad* instead of *Sayyid* or *Syed Muhammad*.

841b : Both Skinner and MYH writes *baik* in *berani baik melawan Berma*. I notice a slight indication of *lam* in the word that could change it to *balik*. That makes the line *berani balik melawan Berma*.

861a : *Ada pun akan Lebai Lang Didik.*
The man's name should be *Lebai Long Didik*.

7/ The transliteration system

Skinner's insistence on preserving the characteristics of some of the original spelling causes more confusion to a reader rather than helps him when he reads the *syair*. Throughout the text Skinner writes *pekari* when it should be *pegari*. However it is not his error for the scribe seldom distinguishes a *g* from a *k* by putting the necessary dot. The same applies to *gahara*, *guling*, *guri* etc. Other cases where the distinguishing dots are often missing are in:

sy as opposed to *s* as in 1102d where Skinner writes *sair* instead of *syair*.
qaf as opposed to *p* as in 641c where *tunak* is misread as *tutup*.

The scribe uses both forms *pekari* and *pegari* in the *syair*. Likewise

<i>pestari</i>	"	<i>bestari</i>
<i>pinasa</i>	"	<i>binasa</i>
<i>seteraya</i>	"	<i>sente-<i>raya</i></i> etc.

I feel that as the editor, Skinner should decide which form of the words to use in his transliteration. Explanations can be given in the notes as to why a particular form has been chosen.

The scribe's usage of *alif* to denote both *a* and *e* retained as *a* by the editor in many cases is another source of confusion. Often we come across:

<i>lasa</i>	when it should be written as	<i>lesa</i>
<i>cala</i>	"	<i>cela</i>
<i>dami</i>	"	<i>demi</i>

<i>kati</i>	"	<i>keti</i>
<i>dikarasi</i>	"	<i>dikerasi</i>
<i>membala</i>	"	<i>membela</i>
<i>bersala</i>	"	<i>bersela</i>
<i>cakap</i>	"	<i>cekap</i> etc.

The opposite also occurs that is when words should be written with *e* they are written with *a*, as in :

<i>beginda</i>	when it should be written as	<i>baginda</i>
<i>diserenta</i>	"	<i>diseranta</i>
<i>melempara</i>	"	<i>melampara</i> .

85d : *katanya Kedah hendak diserenta* is translated as *and talked of launching an attack upon Kedah* when it should be *and talked of bringing disgrace to Kedah* (or cowering her; bringing her down like taming an animal which has gone wild or berserk). The word is *diseranta*.

214a : *Berlayar bersusun melempara* is correctly translated as *the fleet sailed off, one squadron after the other*. May be I should add *without order*. The editor admits he does not know the word *melempara* but guesses that it means scattered, dispersed. He also correctly (unknowingly) suggests that it may be the same as *cempeta*. The word is *melampara* and not *melempara*.

Often when *pasti* occurs, the editor writes it as *pesti*. Both Skinner and MYH are not consistent in their method of transliteration especially where *alif* is concerned. In 66c both editors insist on *mendakat* although there is no *alif* after *dal* in the Jawi script. Perhaps they both have a misprint in each of their edition : in 406c Skinner has *tempil* for *tampil* and in 1002c MYH has *tenggalam* for *tenggelam*.

8/ Spelling mistakes

A number of words are wrongly spelt:

<i>tentara</i>	for	<i>tentera</i>
<i>membaiikki</i>	"	<i>membaiiki</i>
<i>letakkan</i>	"	<i>letakkan</i>
<i>senentiasa</i>	"	<i>senantiasa</i>
<i>tahta</i>	"	<i>takhta</i>
<i>mengganggu</i>	"	<i>menanggung</i>
<i>faidah</i>	"	<i>faedah</i>

Or is it again the transliteration system?

9/ The writing system

Although Skinner uses the current Malay-Indonesian spelling and writing system (except for certain words in which he wants to retain the original spelling of the author), he is not consistent. He ignores the use of hyphens in words like *beramuk amukan*, *terkira kira*, *berabut rabutan* and *terkapa kapa*. Skinner uses the numeral 2 to indicate reduplication in words like

sehari2, kalau2, terbayang2, berjenis2, berkisi2 etc. although that system has not been in use officially in Malaysia and Indonesia since 1972. Sometimes Skinner writes *didalam, disana, dikepala, diperinggan* etc. without separating *di* from the word.

For many words Skinner uses *é* (e taling) as if to distinctly guide the reader how the *e* in the word should be pronounced. To list a few there are:

boleh oleh pètah bénténg mérah téja
tersékah céga pèsari ségéra lésa menderita

In the six examples in the first line the sign is correctly denoted but the sign in the six examples in the second line should be *è*. Anyway there is no need to use these signs anymore. Any reader who finds it necessary to read this *syair* should be in the position to distinguish whether it should be read as [ə] or as [ɛ].

10/ General

There is a number of comments to be made on some aspects of the *syair* which cannot be put under any of the nine topics discussed above.

22d : *pulas tiada kepada ia*. This line is translated as *there was nothing shifty about him*. The word *pulas* needs to be explained because though normally it means to twist, in this context it coincidentally combines the meaning of *tipu* and *malas*. When one is lazy, he uses every trick to get out of an assignment - *tipu muslihat*. MYH writes it as *polos* which is out of context.

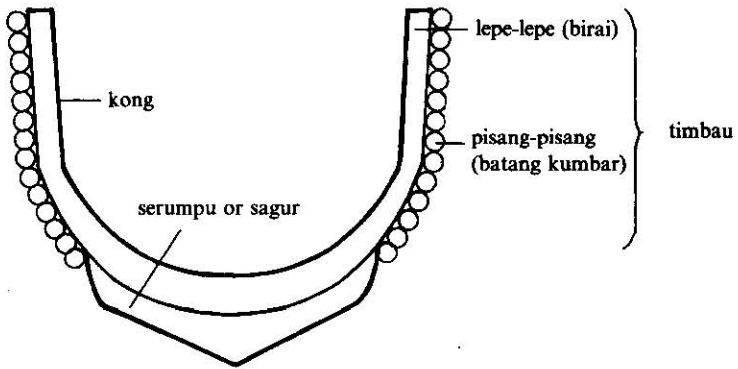
180d : *masing2 dengan saksama*. In his notes Skinner mentions that after the word *masing* the word *perahu* has been written and partially erased in the original Jawi text. *masing perahu dengan saksama* appears clearly written with no trace of erasure in both MYH's facsimile as well as in the copy that I have. The word *perahu* does not appear blurred either. Again I must admit that MYH and I have to be satisfied with only a copy of the original and not the original text itself.

202a : *Kepada waktu toleh tenggala* is translated as *It was approaching midday*. I have long been acquainted with the term *tulih tenggala* and the time referred to by this term is more mid-morning than mid-day. It is more correct to write it as *tulih* and not *toleh*, the way the Kedah speakers pronounce it. (also 262c).

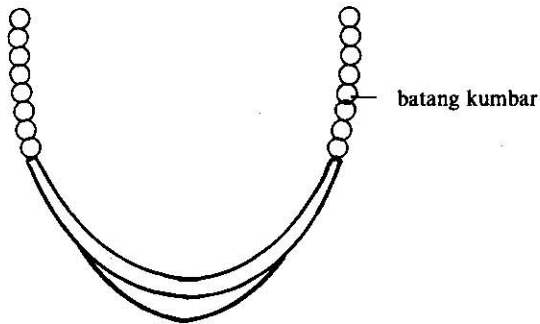
231c : *dengan kumbar kecil besarnya*. The *kumbar* gunwales - *perahu kumbar* - may need a bit more explanation than just referring the reader to Burkill or Low. The *kumbar* poles or piths were used in the structure of the *perahu* to provide it better buoyancy, thus preventing it from sinking. A rough diagram of the boat (not used in Kedah anymore) would be something like this:

However a slightly different version of the *perahu kumbar* is currently in use in Ambon, East Indonesia. The *kumbar* poles are used to heighten the boat by fixing them above the gunwales in order to (1) keep water out in rough weather and (2) increase the capacity of the boat.

241d : *senjatanya rentaka besi karatan* is translated as *with a few rusty swivel-guns*. *besi karatan* is actually consecrated iron or iron that has been kept rusty for a long time. Malay gun or *keris* makers specially look for *besi karatan* to make the best guns and *keris*. The translation should be *with a few guns made from rusty iron*.



(Source: Muhammad bin Din (70) Kuala Kedah fisherman)



(Source: James T. Collins)

324d : *seperti petik kawan kedera* is translated as *with the hissing sound, like a shoal of mullet*. Skinner has taken *petik* as an onomatopoeic word to describe the 'hissing' sound of a shoal of fish near the surface of the water. He is right but it is not a hissing sound. It is like the sound that one gets when the thumb and the middle finger are flicked hard. It is less resonant than the sound produced when the tongue is flicked against the roof of the mouth. This particular sound is the one produced by mullets (*kedera*) flicking their tails.

When a fisherman hears this sound, he immitates it with his hands. The response he gets from the fish enables him to judge the size of the shoal. A big shoal of mullets produces the *tek* sound synchronically, resembling the sound of bullets falling into the sea, as realized by the author. The sound which is not synchronic but spread here and there, termed *petik perus*, signals that it is a small shoal. This knowledge helps the fisherman in his catch.

Different types of fish produce different sounds, louder or softer. The fisherman distinguishes the type of fish from the sound produced and immitates the sound accordingly.

terubuk (clupea kanagurta): clap the tip of the right hand fingers on to the palm of the left hand. The *terubuk* is a bigger fish than the *kedera* and its bigger tail produces a sound less resonant than that of the *kedera*.

tamban (clupea spp.) : by softly clapping two fingers.

mekrui (I fail to get its scientific name): by clapping hard two fingers.

Another term used by the fishermen besides *petik* is *kirap*. *Petik* and *kirap* are used for all types of fish. But for some reasons or other, for the mackerel (*temenung/kembung*) only *kirap* is used.

The apt description drawn by the author reveals that he was an experienced seaman.

467c : Skinner translates *malam thalatha jim tahunnya* as *Monday night, in the third year of the cycle*. Using the same calculation I find *tahun jim* to be the fifth year of the cycle and the third year is *tahun alif* but I am not very certain about this.

861 : *Ada pun akan Lebai Lang Didik
senjata diharabnya sebilah badik
mereka berperang sangatlah cerdas
tampil pun hingga habis disidik*

*As Lebai Lang Didik
he relied upon his trusty dagger
clever at making a show of fighting
but he saw to it that everything was clear before he advanced.*

- 862 : *Cik Mat Pompong tiada disangka
dipandang kepada sikap mereka
lagi anak orang yang baka
tetapi tiada menahani luka*
*Cik Mat Pompong rather surprised us
when we saw the show he was putting on
for he came of good stock
but once he was wounded, he's had enough.*
- 876 : *Akan Seri Derama Wangsa
martabat lebai mereka di bangsa
tetapi kerjanya sama termasa
perangnya tiada berupa lasa*
*As for Seri Derama Wangsa
he was inclined to set himself up as a religious authority
but he took a full part in the battle
and had no hesitation about joining in the fray.*

Skinner is of the opinion that *mereka* in 861c, 862b and 876b has not been used as a third plural pronoun. Consequently he has taken it to be from the root word *reka* with the prefix *me* meaning to create the impression of or to make a show of as he has presented in the translation of the verses quoted above. I have to disagree with him here because I believe *mereka* is used by the author as nothing else but as a third singular pronoun, just as *kami* and *kita* have been used elsewhere as first singular pronouns, even when they normally represent a plural meaning. It is just a form of speech or style of writing chosen by the author. Thus the translation of the lines concerned should be changed accordingly.

953d : *habislah ikhtiar kepada budi* has been translated as *displaying a certain short-sightedness*. In his notes Skinner conjectures what this line may mean and I have to disagree. It is not that "the options (ikhtiar) were restricted by the (mental) attitude (budi) he adopted" but rather because since they had done their duties in the battle, they could not be reprimanded for leaving to catch fish or to enjoy a swim elsewhere, even when there was still a lot to be attended to after the enemy had been defeated. The commander was at his wit's end. He had no heart to complain about their behaviour. He was under their obligation because they had performed well in the battle. They had that advantage over him.

1036c : *habis dipapas Siam j-h-a-l-y-h*. Neither Skinner nor MYH finds it necessary to comment on the word *jehalih* which is used to represent *jahiliah*. It is not the scribe's mistake. The author has purposely transformed the word in order to maintain the rhyme. The word is never pronounced *jehalih* even in the Kedah dialect but exactly *jahiliah* (which is quite bookish, so it is seldom used, unless in a formal way) or *jahey* for

jahil. MYH suggests that *jehalih* is the local (Kedah) version for *jahiliah* but that is not so.

1065a : *Karena Siam menaruh pingitan*

1067d : *pingit Siam hilanglah berang*. I agree with Skinner's comments on the word *pingitan* in these lines and would like to add that the word implies that the Siamese authority was treating the Sultan of Kedah like a woman - with mistrust and suspicion over the earlier incident. The accusation and suspicion was crushed when the Kedah contingent proved its loyalty by fighting fiercely against the Burmese as portrayed in verse 1067.

The use of Javanese words in the syair other than *pingit*, like *adipati*, *anom*, *bupati*, *lelakon*, *dalang*, *menira*, *gamelan* etc. is the result of the Javanese *wayang kulit* often performed at the Kedah palace and the reading of '*hikayat Jawa*' during the time of the syair.

11/ MYH's facsimile production and readings

I come across numerous differences in the reading and the transliteration of the syair in MYH's edition. I will refer only to the major ones and especially those which occur because of the way the facsimile is produced. The original format of the syair with the two lines written side by side with a break in the middle is arranged in a quatrain in MYH's edition. In rearranging the lines MYH has lifted the dots of some of the letters. It is also obvious that MYH uses the facsimile for his transliteration and not a copy of the syair; otherwise some of these mistakes can be avoided.

181d : *baik bulang in seperti ayam yang baik bulang* is transliterated by MYH as *balik tulang*. He takes the dots of *ya* in *terbilang* of the second line to be that of *ta* in his *tulang*.

840d : The name of *Wan Hanafi* becomes *Wan Khanafi* because MYH has lifted the dot of *jim* in *senjata* in the previous line.

Where Skinner has to be very certain about his reading because he has to translate the line, MYH gets away with some unrecognizable readings without offering any explanation. Some of these are:

75c : for Skinner's *marah tu jika (mine juga) takutnya bukan*, MYH has *marah tujuh takatnya bukan*.

83c : For *digoknya taruh dengan sengsara*, MYH writes *dikokta (?) tauh(k) dengan sengsara*.

190d : For Skinner's *diraba di duli berderai deraian*, MYH writes *dirabak duli berderai-deraian*.

After convincing himself that the Kedah author is ignorant in the usage of affixes, MYH takes the liberty of adding his own to certain words like in:

455c	<i>ikhtiar</i>	changed to	<i>berikhtiar</i>
1077c	<i>kebakti</i>	"	<i>kebaktian</i>

without recognizing the facts I discuss in 4. (931d) under dialectal features. Adding the affixes here can be considered a philological malpractice, similar to the two cases shown below:

786a : *Dami dihala muka ke darat*. Skinner has *dami* for *demi* while MYH writes *ramai*. In Appendix G (4) Skinner accuses MYH of tampering with the *dal* as to make it look like *ra* in his facsimile. Although it looks like a perfect *ra* in MYH's edition, in my copy of the syair, it is a *dal*. MYH denies altering the *dal* but the difference is discernible. Anyway *ramai* is out of context.

1012d : *mematutkan sair sehingga tammat*. Skinner writes *sair* while MYH has *syair*. Though the scribe has no dots over the *sin*, I notice there are dots to make it a *sy* in MYH's facsimile. In the reproduction of the last page of the syair, Lampiran 1 (b), 432, the dots are not to be seen.

MYH's numbering of the verses is also not practical especially when the reader has to refer to the notes. He divides the verses into various parts according to the events and starts the numbering of the verses fresh for each part. Even if the verses are divided into different parts, the numbering should be continuous right from the first verse of the syair.

Another mistake by MYH is to misread *sanat 1825* in John Crawford's note at the back of the syair as *sanat 1325* though the figure 8 looks like 3. In such a case as this, a researcher can always rely on other sources to confirm the reading, rather than allow himself to drift a long way arguing to endorse his own misreading. The word *sanat* seems to cause MYH some anxiety whereas it is obvious that the scribe of that line uses it as an alternative for the word *tahun* or year.

CONCLUSION

After studying both editions of the syair, I feel that there is need for a certain standardized method of transliteration of a Jawi text. A general guide in text editing is also necessary especially for those who are not trained in philology. Inconsistencies can then be avoided and the result achieved would leave less room for criticisms. Teeuw, Ras, Kratz, Sweeney and others have expressed their ideas concerning the editing of Malay manuscripts and textual studies which can be very useful to any would be editor.

To edit any traditional work either prose or syair involves a great deal of time, considerable research and deep dedication. I am certain working on the *Syair Sultan Maulana* has given Professor Skinner a lot of satisfaction as all researchers would understand. The edition itself is a magnanimous task involving the detailed understanding of no less than 4408 lines of the syair, strewn with numerous archaic terms, dialectal

features and words of Siamese origin which are neither easily detectable nor understood as they do not occur in the standard Malay. It thus goes to prove that a more intimate knowledge of the community dialect which produces the text can be of great assistance to an editor. The problem can also be made less acute if the researcher avails himself with informants who can contribute meaningfully towards this end. Skinner could have gone a long way in his pursuit of understanding the syair had he included some knowledgeable Kedah Malays in his list of informants. Work on this edition is made doubly complicated when the editor, for the sake of those who do not read Malay, embarks on translating the syair as well. Accepting the fact that no translation can satisfy every reader and that whatever one offers, there is yet another choice, the translation of this syair is highly commendable.

This edition of *The Battle For Junk Ceylon* is another monument of Skinner's diligent effort in the study of Malay traditional texts. His numerous detailed notes are extremely useful especially to students of history. The contribution made by this scholarly edition can never be doubted. The importance of the syair as a historical source has already been stressed by the editor. He has stated from the beginning that this study is solely based on the historical aspect.

However, no one can deny that this syair is much more a work of literature and its contribution in the literary field cannot just be overlooked. The richness of style in the language, its abundance of archaic vocabulary and host of dialectal features cannot just be ignored. A work such as this syair, for that matter any traditional work, from any region is worthy of study from the literary aspect for it will further enhance our knowledge of the history and development of the language. Certain features of the language and its usage found and discussed by other researchers, based on other texts are also present in the *Syair Sultan Maulana*. For instance a feature discussed by Brown in the introduction to his translation of the *Sejarah Melayu* (JMBRAS Vol. 25, 1952) is also prevalent in this syair i.e. *kutum, tapayan, hipun, kepunan* etc. A feature in syair composition as put forth by Teeuw when he discussed the *Syair Sinyor Kosta* is also found here. The marked reduction and difference in the morphological structure of the language used in this syair are due to another reason if compared with the *Syair Sinyor Kosta*. In the latter, the language is suggestive of the Baba-Malay and bears the influence of the cosmopolitan nature of the locality and society. In the former, it is a reflection of the influence of the Kedah dialect. Poetic licence allows the author of the *Syair Sinyor Kosta* to use *kah* instead of *kan* to maintain the rhyme. The author of the *Syair Sultan Maulana* finds his tools in his own dialect (verses 126, 201, 313 & 74).

Thus this syair would still be a paradise for a linguist or a philologist for there is so much left untapped by the editor. It should be realized that any edition of a syair such as the *Syair Sultan Maulana* is of great interest

not only to historians but to historiographers, linguists, philologists, dialectologists, lexicographers or just students of Malay literature.

Anak China bermain ceki
Ada merah ada putih
Seumur lopak menjadi perigi
Anak Kedah hendak melebihi.

(Wilkinson & Winstedt : *Pantun Melayu*)

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Obituary

The Editorial Board wishes to express its deepest regret to the untimely demise of the late Professor C. Skinner who passed away suddenly in mid December 1986 but not before reading Siti Hawa's review regarding his work which was sent to him. In his letter (written at Monash University, Australia, on December 9, 1986) to the Editor-in-Chief, *Akademika*, regarding Siti Hawa's article on his edited work "The Battle for Junk Ceylon", Professor C. Skinner hoped to pass on his comments before the end of the year. Those comments would forever remain unknown to readers in this part of the world and the academic world elsewhere.

As a true scholar, however, Professor C. Skinner managed to squeeze, within the limited space of an aerogramme, a few general and preliminary comments regarding Siti Hawa's review of his work. He was of the opinion that the article has two shortcomings.

Firstly, he felt that the writer misses the main point of his edition, viz, the military aspects of a South-East Asian campaign in which there was virtually no European intervention at all. This he pointed out after analyzing the content of the article and finding it to contain only three lines or approximately 0.2 percent being focussed on his main point. On that basis, he felt that "it would be more intellectually honest to treat the article as an essay of its own right or perhaps retitile it 'Linguistic Aspects of the Shair Sultan Maulana - its editors and its translation'" as Siti Hawa also criticizes Muhammad Yusoff Hashim as well.

Secondly, it contains a few inaccuracies which in the words of Professor C. Skinner "... (one of which, on page one, impugns my reputation as an 'honest scholar')." Nevertheless he found the article to be full of interest, recommended it to be published in an academic journal and would like the Editorial Board to pass on his congratulations to Siti Hawa on her article.

The Editorial Board.

