REFLECTION OF SUFI POCUT DI BEUTONG IN ACEH’S MANUSCRIPT

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Abstrak


Kata Kunci: Naskah; Wanita Sufi; Aceh.

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Abstract

This paper intends to describe the Sufis woman in Aceh, known as Pocut di Butong contained in the manuscript. The long history of Sufism in Aceh provides a crucial role for the people of Acehnese. Aceh, also known as Serambi Mecca, at that time of Islamic law was implemented. The existence of Sufi or carriers of Sufism is so essential that these teachings continue to develop. Sufi in Aceh have been popular with men for their disregard for women. Among female Sufis, their existence is minimal and not written in any history. The most often mentioned is Rabiah al-Adawiyah, but more female Sufis still need to be published, and it is different if the character is male. This study is a manuscript review of ‘Munajat Perempuan Sufi Aceh Pocut di Beutong’ regarding the existence and role of a female Sufis with the initial Pocut di Beutong. The study results show that the poems in the book ‘Munajat Wanita Sufi Aceh’ explain that the existence and role of Pocut di Beutong was very significant at that time. This can be seen from the history recounted in the book regarding how Pocut di Beutong also helped defend the land of Aceh in different ways, such as praying, teaching, developing practice, and attempting to get closer to Allah. This is just as important as Cut Nyak Dien and other female heroes going to war.

Keywords: Manuscript; Sufis Woman; Aceh.

INTRODUCTION

Humans are creatures that are given reason and feeling that become the basis when they act. Humans have feelings and tendencies to be remembered when they are gone. Human creates an imprint on himself through the story of today. Not all the stories but personal experiences that are felt could be advice for other humans to be great at living life. In other words, today's story is a personal experience with the power of 'hikmah' for those who read or hear the story so humans can behave appropriately. Messages obtained or received by humans are usually conveyed in oral or written form through folk stories, legends, hikayat, and others.

Talk about hikayat, Aceh is a land filled with exciting stories and history. Experts even mention that knowing Aceh's history is an effort to learn Indonesian history. In the past, many Islamic figures were born in this land. Such as Abdurrauf As-Singkili, Nuruddin Ar-

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1 Sudirman, Kronologis Para Sultan Aceh (Banda Aceh: Balai Pelestarian Nilai Budaya Aceh, 2016) P. i.
Raniry, Hamzah Fansuri, and others. These figures preach Islamic teaching using *hikayat*, usually told verbally and in media such as poetry. These figures lecturing Islam are well known for their characteristics, namely islamization without coercion and applying Sufistic values so that the socio-culture in Aceh undergoes neat and effective change.²

The poem or *hikayat* composed by several well-known figures from Aceh has characteristics called *suluk*, commonly understood as an essay containing *tasawwuf*’s teaching.³ The development of thought in Aceh has been born since the beginning of Islam entered the archipelago. It only that development occurred in the 17th century. The existence of these Sufism figures can be felt today because of their compositions, which have been preserved from generation to generation until now. Through these writings, many people throughout the archipelago know their track record and existence.

The presence of all Sufi figures cannot be verified because not all of them explain who they are in some poems or *hikayat* they compose. Many anonymous essays are commonly found in historical museums, and who owns them cannot be identified. Poetry with a Sufism pattern is also usually the way for a Sufi to pray and express their feelings about God because understanding *tasawwuf* is an effort to strengthen the relationship with the creator, cleanse the heart from darkness and nourish religious beliefs.⁴

In the early years of the development of *tasawwuf*, it was not only male figures who played a role in teaching and preaching. Women also have a significant role and become teachers of Sufism, like Rabiah al-Adawiyah, who has many students.⁵ Then there is Aisyah al-Ba’uniiyyah, who is also famous for writing poetry. Aishah wrote more than a dozen books in poetry. In her writings, Aishah is similar to Rabiah al-Adawiyah, who explains her love for the divine and the Prophet Muhammad.⁶

The female Sufi figures described above are very well-known. Many of their biographies and essays have been published by famous publishers. However, on the other

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²Ansusa Putra dan Aulia Rijal, Sufi Role In Transforming Nusantara Socia-Culture: Historical reflections And Contemporary Discourse, p. 287-288.
side, there are anonymous figures whose whereabouts are unknown, but writing and poems about them exist. In a study of the history of *tasawwuf* in Aceh, there is no record of a female Sufi figure. Even their tracks are not legible at all. The thought is that there are stories that explain their munajat to God written on paper and make it proof that this Sufi exists. In this research, the figure of a Sufi woman whose name has never been mentioned before is very different from other heroines who are prominent everywhere, such as Cut Nyak Dien, Cut Meutia, etc. The existence of a female Sufi figure needs to be studied because it expands knowledge and new understanding in the field of *tasawwuf*. Then, not only that, during the war and the period of defending Aceh, the Sufi figure participated in the war in another way, it must be disclosed so that the public knows that Aceh also has this female figure.

This is not just speculation, and there is actual evidence, namely artifacts in tombstones that still exist today. A written work still preserved today tells of a Sufi figure named Pocut who is in Beutong, a sub-district of Sakti, Aceh. The *Hikayat* explains the Sufi stories of Acehnese women during the time of the war of *Laksamana* in *Perang di Tiro*. Then, further explanation about who the *Laksamana* is not written in the poem. This study is considered necessary because the Sufi is a woman who should be enshrined in more appropriate literature and enshrined in Aceh’s history.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A study cannot be perfect if no literature review presents examples of similar studies so one can see what and how the similarities and shortcomings appear between the two studies. As for this research, several previous studies serve as an overview of this research, including:

1. The book entitled "Munajat Perempuan Sufi Aceh Pocut di Beutong", subtitled by Mohd. Kalam Daud and Nurul Husna. The book is written in Indonesian, and the poems are composed by Pocut di Beutong. At the beginning of the work, it is also stated how the form and the estimation of the poem are worked out. Although only

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a little is explained about the character Pocut di Beutong, this book is the only work that can be used as a reference for the poems written by Pocut di Beutong.

2. An article entitled Translation Strategies Used in Indonesian Translation of Acehnese Poem "Munajat Perempuan Sufi Aceh Pocut di Beutong" by Nurul Fadhilah, published in the International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change. The article focuses on the strategy for translating poetry by Pocut di Beutong, written initially as pegon and translated into Indonesian. Nevertheless, this research reveals the historical contextual side, which describes the situation at that time using the poetic language of the Munajat Pocut di Beutong. In addition, in the analysis of the poem, one can see the image of the figure of Pocut di Beutong, who reflects an intellectual and religious woman. The poem is considered an essential part of Aceh's literary knowledge because it is on par with other well-known tales in Aceh, such as the Hikayat Malem Diwa and The Hikayat War of Sabi.

3. Titled Book of Memahami Sejarah Tasawuf di Aceh by Cut Zahrina, published by Balai Pelestarian Nilai Budaya Aceh in 2018. This historical information series explains how Sufism entered Aceh and spread widely to modern times. Several figures are also mentioned as pioneers of Sufism in Aceh, such as Hamzah Fansuri and others. In addition, the trace and practice of the figure are also explained in full. However, the book does not mention the existence of a female Sufi figure or female Sufi companion. Making this book a library review and supporting reference proves that the existence of Pocut di Beutong has not been touched at all.

4. Ansusa Putra and Aulia Rijal’s article titled Sufi Role in Transforming Nusantara Socio-Culture: Historical Reflections and Contemporary Discourse. The article explains a lot about the nature of Sufi and its relation to culture. It is also explained that during the 17th and 18th centuries, many Sufis wrote about philosophical, metaphysical, and rational theology literature, which only measured a little in any era in Southeast Asia. This was once done by Hamzah Fansuri, known as a Sufism expert from Aceh.
who used Malay rationally and systematically philosophically. The article shows that, in Aceh from ancient times, several expert figures of Sufism enabled Pocut di Beutong to follow their milestones.

5. The article entitled Format Historiografi Islam Nusantara by Salam and Lukmanul Hakim. This article describes the theme of the hikayat, which became one of the methods for spreading Islam in the past, starting from the stories of the Prophet, who became stories in the archipelago. It is a common thread that the hikayat in the study of Islamic history in the archipelago is heavily influenced by Islamic history. Moreover, many hikayat are indeed written in Malay, which makes this Islamic historiography have characteristics; one is the taking over of pre-Islamic stories, including Hindu and Buddhist heritage, which are then adapted to Islamic teaching. This article also explained the usual theme in historical writing, for example, the work of writing local history, such as the Aceh region.12

6. A scientific by M. Iqbal Maulana entitled Spritualitas dan Gender: Sufi-Sufi Perempuan was published in Jurnal Living Islam in 2018. This explains women in the history of Sufism, which emphasizes that women also significantly contribute to tasawwuf even though the number of Sufi women recorded in the texts is far less than men. Some notes about female Sufi figures have been preserved through oral tradition. Some are reported in writing, such as the attribute of al-Safwa composed by Abdurrah, an al-Sulami, but only in passing the name of the female Sufi figure is mentioned. This article also mentions that although the names of female Sufis are mentioned, the most frequent appearance of female Sufis is found in an anonymous form.13

7. The article entitled Tasawuf Sebagai Upaya Bembersihkan Hati Guna Mencapai Kedekatan Dengan Allah was published in 2016.14 In this article, much is explained about the characteristics of a Sufi and how it is usually taken to become a Sufi. Besides, Fahrudin also described the spiritual stages for people who want to carry out

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the practice of *tasawwuf* in their lives to be able to achieve closeness to Allah. The explanation in the article is very consistent with the things that a Pocut di Beutong did who tried to get closer to Allah, such as the hope and fear that are felt and then written into poetry. This is to the theory of Sufism that Fahrudin explained in his article.

Based on several previous studies that have been found, there needs to be literature that discusses the history of Pocut di Beutong, whether it is about biography or Pocut’s role in di Beutong during her lifetime. However, there is a study regarding the transliteration of the poems that talk about Pocut di Beutong, which will be used as the focus of this study.

**METHOD**

In this study, the data collection process uses the historical method. The steps are:

1. **Heuristic**

   Heuristic is an attempt to find the historical source. This historical source can be in the form of a written source, oral source, or material source. In this research, the heuristic source is the source collection through the work of a literacy expert on ‘Perempuan Sufi Pocut di Butong’ and interviews with script expert figures related to poetry and manuscript collector-written sources from books, scientific journals, and other writings.

2. **Source Criticism**

   Source criticism is the effort of the researcher to assess the historical reference found. Through this method, the data to be obtained will follow the facts and problem studied. In analyzing oral sources, this research will be carried out in several ways to find valid and appropriate data, such as looking at the informant’s age, which is closest to the incident period. Then, the analysis of oral sources can be seen from the credibility and authenticity of existing sources and the validity of the text and content of existing documents.

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18 Helius Sjamsuddin, *Metodologi Sejarah*, p. 84.
3. Interpretation

The next step is interpretation, which attempts to understand and look for a relationship between one historical fact and another. Then, the historical data that has been found can be completed and only contradicts some of the historical facts found.19

4. Historiography

The last step is that the result of the interpretation will be written as a historical narrative. Historiography can be defined as the imaginative and critical reconstruction of the past based on existing facts.20 Historiography is the final step of this research, which is carried out by compiling and presenting a report on the reduced topic.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Existence of Pocut di Beutong as Female's Sufis

The limited historical writing regarding the contribution and involvement of women in Sufism's text cannot be used as an excuse that women do not have a role and position in the development and spread of Sufism's teaching. The concept of equality between men and women cannot be seen from the schematic arrangement in the Al-Qur'an and hadith alone. Pocut di Beutong, as a role of female Sufi and other female heroes such as Cut Nyak Dien, Cut Meutia, Tengku Fakinah, and others, proves that women also have the same opportunity to occupy these positions.

The existence of this Sufi figure is as important as the female hero character mentioned above. As a Sufi in times of war it was certainly not easy, teaching religion and 'bermunajat' for joint victory is as important as fighting directly with the invaders. In this case, the existence of Pocut di Beutong should be informed to the public.

The book of ‘Munajat Perempuan Sufi Aceh Pocut di Beutong’ tells that the female Sufi with the initial Pocut di Beutong was true. However, the author of the book does not explain or mention himself. The book is a transliterated ‘Kitab’ from the original Aceh language in Arabic Malay. Actually Mohd. Kalam Daud, one of the translators, said that

Pocut di Beutong wrote the book. This can be seen from the choice of title given by the translator. However, this was denied by TA Sakti, Kehati Award 2001 recipient from Yayasan Keanekaragaman Kehidupan Hayati Indonesia, who argues that the poems were written by someone else who told about Pocut di Beutong. This is based on the impossibility of a Sufi writing about himself. Sufi’s poetry is usually filled with praise and prayer offered to God. So it is so improbable if the Sufi wrote a story about himself.

However, there is debate about this. There are two versions of the book of ‘Munajat Perempuan Sufi Aceh. The first opinion from philologists stated that the poems were written by Pocut di Beutong when she was meditating on a rock in the middle of Sungai Lala. The second opinion stated that Pocut di Beutong did not write the writing of poems, but someone else wrote about Pocut di Beutong. Further, another philologist mentioned that in understanding the text one must pay attention to explicit and implied words, it can be assumed from the translator of an academic with a background in Arabic Education and Fiqh, that poems about Pocut di Beutong in ‘Munajat Perempuan Sufi Aceh’ written by Pocut. The same thing is mentioned by another philologist, according Istiqomah, the poems in that book truly showing that the writer is Pocut di Beutong, but it is also necessary to study the work more deeply.

Even though this debate arose, the result remains that the existence of Pocut di Beutong is real. Traced by the Founder of the Aceh Manuscript House, that Pocut di Beutong is a descendant of Sayyid Arkam and the only female character found in 18th-century Acehnese literature.

The basic theme of Sufistic poetry is the love of God, which occupies a central position in Sufi. Sufi’s thought from the beginning of the development of Sufism to the last period.

23Interview with Herman, Philologist, on 16 August 2023.
24Interview with Nurdin AR, Philologist, on 16 August 2023
25Interview with Istiqomah, Philologist, on16 August 2023
26Interview with Cek Midi, Founder of Rumah Manuskrip Aceh on 16 August, 2023.
written by another person who wrote voluntarily as a tribute to the figure of Pocut di Beutong as a worship expert, a respectable family who chose to draw closer to God during wartime or indeed Pocut di Beutong who asked to write her story in a hikayat syair.\(^{28}\)

The argument by TA Sakti also mention about reinforced by the presence of a poem in the manuscript which explain that the writer is an immigrant and the owner of the manuscript is Pocut di Beutong.\(^{29}\)

![Picture 1. Taken in the book Munajat Perempuan Sufi Aceh page of 136.](image)

Related to the poem explained by TA Sakti the book was written by dagang hina or perantau hina, who did not want to give her name. At the same time, the manuscript's owner is Pocut di Beutong. The author praises to Pocut di Beutong as payung tempat bernaung dari kepanasan. Such mata air di atas gunung, seumpama awan yang menaungi dunia. Compared with a Sufi's characteristic, it is impossible for Pocut to praise herself (Sakti, 2023).

The text of this poem has high debate power among Acehnese philologists. Manuscripts with European paper in the style of Khat Khufi's writing make it a treasure trove for the treasury of philological scholarship. The originally manuscript entitle' Munajat Sufi\(^{30}\) which is interpreted by some philologists that the writing was not written directly by Pocut di Beutong.

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\(^{28}\) Interview with TA Sakti, Writer in Tanjung Selamat on 4 June 2023.

\(^{29}\) TA. Sakti, Kalam Penutup tentang Pak Kalam Daud, (ed) Ansari Hasyim dalam serambinews.com, Published on Thursday, 16 Februari 2023.

\(^{30}\) Interview with Cek Midi, Founder of Rumah Manusrip Aceh on 16 August, 2023.

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The Role of Pocut di Beutong Reviewed From Aceh’s Manuscript

The role of Pocut di Beutong as a Sufi can also be analyzed from the poetry of the Munajat Perempuan Sufi. Previously to her name, Pocut was a person of high caste in Aceh. Cut or Pocut is one of the titles for women passed down among the Acehnese nobility, for male title, it is usually called Teuku.  

Then, the village of Beutong Pocut was once famous for the many descendants of the Prophet Muhammad (Ahlul Bait) who lived there. So, it is not surprising that a Sufi woman comes from Beutong village, Sakti regency. For the Pocut di Beutong's tomb itself, its existence has been confirmed and is still being guarded. In the last two years, the Ahlul Bait or Habaib has regularly visited the tomb. A visit to the tomb is considered a form of appreciation and respect for Pocut di Beutong as a scholar and Sufi person of her time. If one looks at this, Pocut di Beutong was very influential and pious. Maybe so different from the heroines in general who go directly to war. Pocut di Beutong was trying to maintain the nation's security by bertawasul and bermunajat to Allah.


32Interview with Cek Midi, founder of Rumah Manuskrip Aceh pada 16 Agustus, 2023.
It can be seen from the poems that Pocut di Beutong is one of the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, who greatly glorified the Prophet Muhammad and always prayed. Then, in another poems:

![Image](Munajat Perempuan Sufi Aceh page of 82)

In this poem, it was prayed by Pocut that she wanted to meet the Prophet Khaidir. Then, on the next poem, on page 133, Pocut recites blessings on Thursday and Friday. This proves that the will was conveyed to the public then. The position of Pocut di Beutong is so important and meritorious.

Then, on the next page, 134 to 135, the poems talk about the encounter Pocut di Beutong and with Prophet Khaidir at Pante Geulumpang in wartime of Laksamana Di Tiro. The poems also imply that Pocut di Beutong is a waliyullah with high maqam tasawwuf.

**CONCLUSION**

Pocut di Beutong, a Sufi woman whose whereabouts are unknown, but the poetry that has been translated shows that her existence as an Acehnese female Sufi figure and an important figure gives a new insight into the scientific treasury and also the history of Aceh. Previously, people only knew and remembered female heroes who participated in the war, such as Cut Nyak Dien, Cut Meutia, Tengku Fakinah, et al. However, with the book of Munajat Perempuan Sufi, the community can also recognize that Pocut di Beutong contributes to maintaining peace in Aceh differently. The role of Pocut di Beutong in Aceh’s manuscript is greatly important and deserves to be remembered. It is not surprising that the existence and role of Pocut di Beutong must be published to the public. In addition to these poems that show her existence and role, the existence of the tomb’s Pocut in Beutong Village is also a sign that Pocut di Beutong is an influential person.
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