

## CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES ON ANCIENT MANUSCRIPT

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### Abstract

*This research aims to determine ancient manuscript conservation activities. This research method uses a descriptive literature study approach. Data collection methods include reading, taking notes, and processing the contents of reading materials such as books, dictionaries, and journals. Researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the topic they are researching before conducting field research. By using valid and trustworthy sources, researchers can ensure that the research results they obtain have high validity and reliability. The results of this research show the importance of carrying out good conservation so that ancient manuscripts can be accessed and used by the public as a source of knowledge. Ancient manuscript conservation activities can be carried out by fumigation, removing acidity from the paper, repairing the manuscript (Lamination), as well as encapsulation and reproduction. These steps can be taken to prevent damage and protect ancient manuscripts that have cultural heritage value. Thus, conservation of ancient manuscripts not only aims to preserve cultural heritage, but also to ensure the continuity of research and scientific development in the future. Apart from that, conservation efforts carried out well will also provide long-term benefits for future generations, so that the knowledge contained in ancient texts can continue to be passed on and make a significant contribution to the development of society. Therefore, it is important for experts and related institutions to continue to support and carry out ancient manuscript conservation activities with full responsibility.*

**Keywords:** Conservation, Ancient Manuscripts, Conservation of Ancient Manuscript

## INTRODUCTION

Ancient manuscripts are an inseparable part of our cultural heritage that must be maintained and preserved as a source of information in history and science. Ancient manuscripts include various types of documents covering various aspects of people's lives, including medicine. According to the Cultural Heritage Law No. 5 of 1992, Chapter I Article 2, ancient manuscripts are documents written by hand or typewriter and have never been printed or made into books for more than 50 years.

The cultural heritage of this nation must be maintained and preserved both physically and non-physically. In terms of physical aspects, ancient manuscripts need to be preserved, cared for, and stored properly according to applicable procedures and policies. In terms of non-physical aspects, ancient manuscripts can be maintained in various ways, including transliteration, translation into other languages, and changes in media format. Ancient manuscripts have important information value for society and therefore conservation is needed. Managers of ancient manuscripts must be aware of maintaining the preservation of the contents contained as high information value, so that conservation of ancient manuscripts is needed. Based on the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (2002), Conservation is an effort to preserve, maintain, guard, and protect. In Indonesia, the community has various tribes and cultures, so that each tribe and culture has its own characteristics and uniqueness. As a diverse society, it certainly has important records as a memory of the history of life that is written on sheets or sheets of paper or manuscripts. In the past, people in each region made notes on sheets of paper or on tree trunks.

These notes or sheets from the community in the past must be preserved by the managers of ancient manuscripts. However, the conservation of ancient manuscripts has become less of a concern for managers of ancient manuscripts towards saving the high information value of ancient manuscripts. There are still shortcomings in the field such as lack of human resources and others. As stated in the first previous study by Ichsan and his colleagues in a study entitled "Preservation Activities of the Merpati Pos Magazine Collection at the Indonesian Post Library," the results of the study indicated that the preservation that had been carried out on the Merpati Pos Magazine collection at the Indonesian Post Library was considered quite good, although there were still shortcomings in terms of human resources, funds, budget, and preventive measures taken, (Ichsan, et al., 2012). Second, previous research expressed by Harida with the research title "Conservation of Library Materials Through Binding at the UPT Proklamator Bung Hatta Bukit Tinggi Library". The results of the study showed that the Bung Hatta Proklamator Bukit Tinggi Central Library conserved the binding of library materials with glue and binding stitches on the back of the book (library materials). The librarian did not press on the damaged book on the back but rather sawed the book to enter the glue into the pores of the book, (Harida, 2013). The third study was conducted by Machsun with the research topic "Preservation and Conservation Strategy of Library Materials at the Archives and Library Service of Trenggalek Regency".

Preservation and conservation are steps to preserve library materials that are not carried out seriously at the Archives and Library Service of Trenggalek Regency. The results of the study stated that preservation and conservation at DISSIPUS Trenggalek have been carried out for a long time, but still use limited tools so that the damage to library materials which is quite severe requires cooperation with third parties for repair. Preservation and conservation activities are not only carried out through the repair process but also maintenance and prevention, (Machsun,

2020). The difference between this study and other studies is the method used and the scope of the study and the results of the study based on a literature review relating to conservation activities in ancient manuscripts.

Conservation of ancient manuscripts is very important, because ancient manuscripts are one of the cultural heritages that need to be preserved so that they can continue to be a source of knowledge. Conservation of ancient manuscripts also helps in maintaining the identity and history of a nation. With good conservation efforts, future generations can continue to learn and appreciate this valuable cultural heritage, so it is necessary to write an article entitled "Conservation Activities on Ancient Manuscripts". The purpose of writing this research is for conservation activities on ancient manuscripts and to strengthen efforts to preserve and understand cultural heritage. This is expected to motivate the community to participate in maintaining and preserving ancient manuscripts. Thus, the existence of ancient manuscripts can continue to be preserved and our cultural heritage is maintained for future generations.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study applies a descriptive method using a literature study approach. The descriptive method collects its own data by reviewing documents, observing behavior, and interviewing informants, (Creswell, 2012). The descriptive method aims to describe events and incidents that are the focus of the study without applying special treatment to the events. The variables investigated in this study can be a single variable or more than one variable, (Juliansyah, 2017). In the literature study method, researchers collect data from various literature sources such as technical manuals, theories, and relevant literature.

The data obtained from this literature is used as reference material and a basis for the research being conducted, (Hartono, 2016). The literature study method provides an opportunity for researchers to explore research topics without having to make direct observations, (Subagiya, 2023). By utilizing existing data, researchers can develop a solid theoretical framework to answer the research questions posed. In addition, this method also allows researchers to explore different perspectives and broaden their understanding of the topic being studied. Literature study can provide a strong foundation for the research conducted, as well as enrich the researcher's understanding of the topic, (Subagiya, 2023). In addition, the literature study method can also help researchers to identify knowledge gaps that still exist in the literature, so that researchers can direct their research to previously untouched areas, (Titi et al, 2023).

In addition, by referring to existing literature, researchers can gain valuable insights to better design their research, (Fadia et al, 2022). Thus, literature study is an important initial step in the process of compiling quality research. Data sources in this study use books, dictionaries, journals related to the discussion of the research topic, (Muhammad et al, 2023). Thus, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the topic they are researching before conducting field research. By using valid and reliable sources, researchers can ensure that the research results they obtain have high validity and reliability. Data collection in this study was carried out by reading, recording, and processing the contents of reading materials such as books, dictionaries, and relevant journals, (Apriani, 2021). Thus, researchers can gain a deep understanding of the topics they are researching before moving on to the field research stage. In addition, the use of valid and reliable sources also helps reduce bias and increase the accuracy of research results, (Saleh, 2017). Thus, the theory triangulation carried out in this study

provides a strong foundation to support the conclusions drawn. To increase the validity of the study, source triangulation techniques were applied, comparing findings from academic journals, industry reports, and policy documents. This approach is in line with Flick's (2018) recommendations for document-based descriptive research.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Ancient Manuscript Conservation Activities

Active conservation includes placing documents in acid-free boxes, coating documents with buffers and acid-free tissue paper, mass deacidification, and sterilization of library materials from all kinds of pests and dirt. Active conservation involves all actions that are aimed directly or indirectly at extending the life of conservation objects, (Rachman, 2017). In addition, cleaning the manuscript and re-storing it according to storage instructions, (Sukersa, 2016). Efforts that can be made in manuscript/ancient manuscript conservation activities include fumigation, removing paper acidity, repairing manuscripts and encapsulation, and reproduction, (Mortoadmodjo, 2009).

#### a. Fumigation

Spraying with chemicals in the storage room of ancient manuscripts so that insects and termites will not land on the sheets of paper or in the storage cabinets of ancient manuscript collections.

#### b. Removing acidity from paper

To inhibit the acidification process that occurs in paper, deadification is a preservation technique used on library resources. Various chemicals are used in the papermaking process, and the paper itself can turn acidic if exposed to outside air.

#### c. Manuscript Repair (Lamination) and Encapsulation

Talk about how to repair damaged manuscripts by covering the damaged parts with additional paper attached to the back of the document. Damaged manuscripts can be repaired by cleaning dust, using 70% alcohol and letting it evaporate, then repairing the damaged parts with additional paper. Because the additional paper is clearly visible, the purpose of this action is to increase the life of the manuscript without sacrificing its information value.

#### d. Reproduction

Reproduction is a preservation method that involves making copies or duplicates of library materials in the form of photocopies or microfilms. The goal is to procure and add to collections that are vulnerable to damage, so that these library materials can be preserved. Reproduction is one of the efforts made to care for rare and easily damaged library materials, (Almah, 2012).

In addition, there are active conservation methods that include five actions, namely: cleaning documents, storing damaged or vulnerable documents in special boxes, maintaining document humidity, coating with a protective layer, and using a protective layer. I will explain in more detail about these five methods below, (Rachman, 2017).

##### 1) Document Cleaning

Document cleaning activities are activities to lift/clean dirt and dust particles from the surface of documents. Dirt and dust that stick to documents can cause abrasion that weakens paper fibers.

- 2) **Placing Damaged/Easily Damaged Documents in a Special Box**  
Library materials that are susceptible to damage should be stored in a special box that can be made using acid-free cardboard.
- 3) **Document Humidification**  
Documents in the form of paper that have been rolled up for years (example: a collection of maps in a tube) will sometimes be difficult to open when removed from the storage tube. Sometimes, there are also documents that crack because the water content is so low. For this reason, documents need to be removed from the storage tube occasionally and straightened before finally being stored again
- 4) **Lamination**  
The document lamination process involves the use of special acid-free tissues to restore the perforated paper surface. Washi tissues such as hosokawa-shi, hon-minoshi, and sekishu-banshi are types of tissues that are often used. Washi tissue is a traditional Japanese handmade product that can be used for writing, origami, umbrellas, and many other decorative projects. It is also used as a lining for sliding doors.
- 5) **Use of protective coating**  
The use of protective coating is necessary to protect documents from various causes of external damage. Some methods of using protective coating include the following:
  - a) **Encapsulation**  
Encapsulation is a technique for protecting sheet documents (newspapers, special archives) by covering the document using two sheets of mylar plastic. Double-sided tape can be applied to the ends of the plastic sheet, so that if the plastic is damaged, it can be replaced. Encapsulation is appropriate for fragile or frequently used document sheets.
  - b) **Document Folders**  
Sheet documents can also be put into special folders or envelopes that can be made yourself using cardboard or acid-free paper.
  - c) **Slipcases**  
A slipcase is a protective layer for documents such as books that are usually made of thick cardboard. Slipcases can be used to protect serial library materials such as encyclopedias.

These activities are very important to prevent damage to ancient manuscripts and ensure that every ancient manuscript can be accessed by the public who need information and want to increase their knowledge. All actions, whether carried out directly or indirectly, aim to extend the life of ancient manuscripts. This conservation is given training in advance regarding the stages and methods of implementation to avoid mistakes (Fikri, 2022).

In addition, the acidity of the paper also needs to be removed so that the manuscript can last longer. Manuscript repair and encapsulation are also needed to protect the manuscript from physical damage. Manuscript reproduction is also important so that the information contained in the manuscript can be stored and not lost forever, (Kurnia, 2012). All of these techniques have the same goal, namely to ensure that ancient manuscripts remain authentic and can be accessed by future generations. With reproduction, valuable information contained in the manuscript can be widely distributed and will not be lost just like that. In addition, manuscript repair and encapsulation also help in maintaining the physical preservation of the manuscript so that it is well maintained. Thus, these efforts are very important to preserve the cultural heritage and

knowledge contained in the ancient manuscript. In this way, valuable cultural heritage can continue to be preserved and enjoyed by future generations. This process also helps in maintaining the authenticity of ancient manuscripts so that they are not damaged or lost due to the ravages of time. With protection and restoration efforts, we can ensure that the valuable knowledge contained in the manuscript remains accessible and can be studied by many people. Through these steps, we can ensure that valuable cultural heritage will not be lost and will continue to be presented to future generations. In addition, efforts to preserve cultural heritage also play a role in maintaining the identity and cultural values of a nation. In this way, we can ensure that future generations will continue to have strong roots in their ancestral culture. Thus, cultural heritage is not only a part of the past, but also a living and growing part of society. Through awareness of the importance of preserving cultural heritage, we can create a harmonious relationship between the past, present, and future. This can also help build a strong sense of pride and national identity amidst the increasingly rapid flow of globalization. By understanding and appreciating cultural heritage, we can enrich our life experiences and inspire future generations to maintain and develop the values that have been inherited by our ancestors.

Thus, cultural heritage is not only a symbol of the past, but also a source of strength and inspiration for a better future. Through the maintenance and preservation of cultural heritage, we can create a harmonious relationship between the past, present, and future. This not only strengthens the sense of national pride and identity, but also becomes a source of inspiration for future generations. Thus, cultural heritage is not only a symbol of the past, but also a guide to creating a better future for our nation. By understanding and appreciating our cultural heritage, we can see the values contained in it and apply them in our daily lives. Thus, cultural heritage is not only something that is preserved physically, but also as a legacy of local values and wisdom that can guide us towards a better future. Through collective efforts in preserving cultural heritage, we can ensure that future generations will continue to appreciate and care for the heritage that we have passed on to them. In this way, cultural heritage will continue to live and inspire society to continue to develop and progress towards a better direction.

## CONCLUSION

Conservation is an important effort in maintaining and protecting the authenticity of ancient manuscripts. Therefore, conservation activities are needed on ancient manuscripts, so that ancient manuscripts can be protected from damage to the contents of ancient manuscripts. Ancient manuscripts that have been well conserved can help preserve the cultural and historical heritage contained in the information contained in ancient manuscripts. In addition, ancient manuscripts can also produce sources of knowledge that are useful to the community. Thus, it is important to maintain ancient manuscripts and preserve the contents of ancient manuscripts for the sustainability of information to the community.

## SUGGESTION

For further research development, there are several important aspects that can be further explored related to the conservation of ancient manuscripts. Given that this research is still limited to library research, future research can use a qualitative or quantitative approach with direct data collection in the field. This will provide a deeper understanding of conservation practices that actually occur in various institutions. In addition, research on the use of technology in the conservation of ancient manuscripts is very relevant. Studies on digitization

and digital storage systems also need to be carried out to optimize efforts to preserve ancient manuscripts. In addition, the human resource aspect also needs special attention, including research on the development of the competence of ancient manuscript conservators.

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