That these comments can apply equally well to Dighājīni as to Southeast Asian Qur’āns reflects the meeting points in Dīghājīni and Malay tastes in manuscript art.

To return to the original parameters of this study, namely the art of the Malay Qur’ān, a few years ago I wrote of...

...the deep and mutuality of these discussions runs through the ' delay and movement of the ' Quraṣh and the ' Rabbamadrid.' The art of the Qur'ān in the 18th and 19th centuries shows a trend in the use of the Qur'ān as a holy book, as in the 18th century the Qur'ān was the main text for the study of Islamic law. In many of these manuscripts, some Qur’ānic verses are indicated by a red line, which is a feature of the Qur’ān as a holy book.

As it has now been accepted that the Qur’ān is a question of Dīghājīni rather than the products of an indigenous Southeast Asian artistic school, these words can now be withdrawn with no regrets — as this clarification in fact strengthens the initial hypothesis of a coherent Malay style of Qur'ānic art which prevails throughout the island world of Southeast Asia.

Notes


2. This article has been a long time in gestation. During the course of my research, I have been greatly assisted by the help and advice of numerous colleagues, and I particularly would like to thank Michael Laffan, Muhammad Isah Waley and William Clare-Jones-Smith for their continuous interest and support, and I am beholden to Anni Shivadas — without whose research and publications the world would not have been brought to fruition — for his comments, and to Elin Ekeren for his encouragement.

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For help with the Arabic calligraphy, I am deeply grateful to Muhammad Isah Waley, Michael Laffan and Ali Ali Abcar; all remaining errors are entirely my own. The article on the 14 Qur’āns discussed in this paper are now in the British Library, and I would like to express my appreciation and support for Colin Baker and Graham Shaw in building up this unique collection over the past few years.


5. An earlier suggestion that "Kota Batin" might refer to the city of Côtobato on the west coast of Mindanao, of the sultanate of Maguindanao (Gallop, "On the periphery of the periphery? The art of the Qur'ān in the Brunei southern Philippines zone") (paper presented at 2004 Workshop on Southeast Asian Literatures and Cultures, London, 26 May 2004), can be discounted as the name "Côtobato" only came into common use relatively recently, following the Spanish capture of the city in 1616 (R. C. Issel, Maguindanao, 1886–1888: the Career of Datu Uso of Buyungan [Ibaca, 1971], p. 1, fn. 2).


7. Often written in the Hispanicized form Maguindanao. The Maguindanao are the second largest Muslim ethnic group found on the island of Mindanao, after the Maranao.


9. Almost dating from a later period, a very interesting comparable study is Mitori Kawashima's analysis of terms of self-identification among Philippine Muslims writing in indigenous languages in the 20th century: the word filsūl does not occur in any Tagalog, Maranao or Maguindanao sources but is found in the other Arabic sources cited, published in Cairo in the 1960s by a group of Philippine Muslim students, in the term al-Muslim al-filsūl, "Philippine Muslims", or al-dīth al-filsūl, "Muslims of the world".

A. T. GALLOP, From Caucasian to Southeast Asia: Dīghājīni Qur’āns


11. The only known Southeast Qur’āns with the sura "al-Tabība" arranged across the two initial pages are the two 18th-century Qur’āns from Banten (Gallop, A. Abcar, "The art of the Qur’an in Banten: calligraphy and illumination," Archiv LXXII, 2004, p. 104).

12. The location of decoration in the middle of a Qur’ān manuscript from Southeast Asia is a critical indicator of its regional origin; for example illustrated central pages in Qur’āns from Aceh are always located at the start of Juz’ 16, while in Qur’āns from Jawa they are found at the beginning of sura "al-Kahf" (Gallop, "The art of the Qur’an in Southeast Asia", Word of God, Art of Man: The Qur’an in its Creative Expressions: Selected Proceedings from the International Colloquium, ed. by S. U. Oman (Oxford, 2007), pp. 199–200).


16. For example, the seal of Sultan Muhammad ‘Abid al-din of Sulut (1735–1757) reads al-mutawatiri bi-kulluh Allah al-Malak al-‘alā al-mashhur Muvahhidun ‘Abid al-din. "He who holds fast onto the rope of God, the Caliph of the Muslims, the Most High Ghulam of Allah al-Malik al-‘alā al-mashhur Muvahhidun ‘Abid al-din." This style of "Imperial" seal was for all the early 16th-century Turkish seals, in one category all the inscriptions conform to the formula al-walid bi al-Malik al-I X B, where X is a Divine Name and where Z ism with X (C. Römer, Osmanische Festbesetzungen in Ungarn zur Zeit Murus III. Dargestellt hand von Petitionen zur Stellvertreterverwaltun (Wien, 1995), SS. 112–5).


18. For an exploration of the Islamic writing tradition in the southeast Philippines, see the forthcoming work by Krutz.


Illustrations

Front cover:

Back cover:
Plate 3. Qur’ān A 2 B. 497v—498r.

Inside the text:
Fig. 1. Qur’ān A 3, beginning of sūrat Maryam. Paper, 35 x 22 cm, 547 ff. Filipinnes (7), 1821. The British Library, Lib. BL 16058, ff. 274v—275r. Courtesy of the Library.
Fig. 2. The same MS, bismall at the start of sūrat al-‘Ikhlās F6v. 395v.
Fig. 3. The same MS, beginning of sūrat al-Zukhrūf. F7v-—439v.
Fig. 4. The same MS, beginning of juz‘ ‘amma, sūrat al-Nāḥāya. F572v—528r.
Fig. 5. Qur’ān B 10, beginning for sūrat al-Dalīl with a brown background and a black pen, Paper, 36 x 22 cm, 432 ff. 1888. The British Library, Lib. BL 15695, f. 32v. Courtesy of the Library.
TEXT AND ITS CULTURAL INTERPRETATION

1

A. Kudelin

ARABIC LITERATURE: POETICS AND STYLISTICS. VIII: FORMULAIC EXPRESSIONS IN SIRAT ‘ANTAR

Works in the sirat genre, which have received the name “folk romances”, that is not quite correct, but convenient for scholarly purposes, make up an extensive branch of the Medieval heroic-romantic epic of the Arabs. In the first half of the 20th century, when European orientalists began to take a serious interest in them, numerous data was accumulated on the most popular Arabic “folk romances” and about their performance and performers [1]. Later, a systematic historical-cultural study of works of the sirat genre began [2]; in most of the latest works about the Arabic “folk romance”, historical-cultural issues still dominate [3], while insufficient attention is given to issues of pure literary criticism [4]. Some of them have been studied poorly, while others have never been examined at all. The latter include the issue on the features of the language of the Arabic “folk romance” as an element of technique of oral performance [5]. This is what we shall discuss in our work.

Thanks to the works of European scholars of the 19th century, who observed public performances of sirat in large cities of al-Sjām and Miṣr, we have valuable information about Arab storytellers, the manner of their performance and their repertoire.

For example, it is well-known that in the first 150 years, professional storytellers in Egypt performed several “folk romances”, while each storyteller specialized in performing a certain “romance”. Performers of the same “romance” joined groups, like departments of an organization. The group of sirat al-Hilāl, the group of mshahidhīs performed sirat al-Zahir Baybars, and the group Antariyya performed sirat ‘Antar. The first two “romances” were told “by heart”, while the last was read from a book. Verses, which are interspersed in the “romance” with prose fragments, were recited in a sing-song voice to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument. The storyteller emphasized the most important parts of the story by a change in voice, mimicry and gestures. There is also information about the place where the sessions were held, the reaction of the listeners to the story, the payment to the storytellers, etc [6].

The reports of Lane and Clot-bey make it possible to propose the existence of well-known and firmly established principles of professional mastery and professional training of storytellers, handed down from generation to generation preserving the “folk romances” and their reproduction in each performance session in a traditional, generally accepted form over the course of several centuries. Arab storytellers (and as far as two of the groups are concerned this is in no doubt) possessed the technique of oral creation.

Arab “folk romances”, as was already noted, are characterized by a combination of prose and poems. Their ratio changes from “romance” to “romance”, but usually the percentage of prose is much higher. In sirat ‘Antar poems make up less than 10% of the entire text: in the majority of other “folk romances”, as we saw from a brief look at them, the percentage of poems is approximately the same. Only one exception is known — sirat al-Hilāl. According to Pantold’s calculations, in printed publications prose makes up 63% and poems 37%, and in the Berlin manuscripts the ratio is 51.5% and 48.5% accordingly [7]. Thus, poems make up a relatively small part of the text of most “romances”, although they perform important functions [8].

The poems were evidently borrowed from the divān of famous poets [9] and were inserted into the “romances” as a foreign element. Their language is more complex than the prose language of the sirat [10], and it is likely that the storytellers performed them by heart [11] or from a manuscript.

For these reasons, in examining the language of the sirat as an element of oral technique, we will restrict our attention to the prose language of the “folk romance” about ‘Antar.

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