QUR’ANS FROM JAVA

A key feature of some illuminated Qur’ans from Java and Madura is that the design of one side of a page is exactly symmetrical with the other side of the page. The difference with decorated frames in Qur’ans from other parts of the Malay world is that they usually have decoration only on the three outer sides of each decorated frame on a page, and are therefore symmetrical about the central fold of the book. In Java the decoration is along all four sides of the decorated frame.

The difficulty of allocating a defined set of stylistic elements as the ‘Javanese style’ has much to do with the diversity of the island and that its interior region had started to develop as a centre of learning and religious activity as early as the mid-8th century. As a result, Java’s manuscript tradition was one of the most established in the archipelago. There were many different centres of production, including Yogyakarta, which had its own manual for manuscript illumination. This was meant as a handbook for students of Javanese literature and as a guide for manuscript illumination. Although little is known about how the production process of these hubs developed, what may be suggested is that each had its own stylistic characteristics, contributing to the present difficulty in defining specific elements as distinctive of the Javanese style.
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Qur’an
Java
19th century AD / 13th century AH
38 x 26 cm
1998.1.3641

One of the largest Southeast Asian Qur’ans in the IACC collection. Although it uses rather less gold than the Sultan Zainal Abidin example from Terengganu, it was unquestionably made for a patron of considerable means.
Qur'an
Java
19th century AD / 13th century AH
33 x 21.5 cm
2004.2.2

The paper of this Qur'an has a watermark of three crescents, a shield with a crescent inside, and the letters V&G. It is thought that this type of paper was the product of Andrea Galvani's atelier.
The paper watermark features a lion enclosed in a roundel topped off by a crown, a motif that dates to the 19th century. The surah headings are in red, a highly distinctive characteristic of Qur’ans from Southeast Asia.
لا يوجد نص يمكن قراءته بشكل طبيعي من الصورة المقدمة.
Qur’an
Java
19th century AD / 13th century AH
29.8 x 19 cm
2004.2.1

One of the characteristics of Javanese Qur’ans is the widespread use of indigo. This was one of the trade items that the Dutch cultivated in the 1800s to satisfy demand from Europe.
Qur’ān
Java
19th century AD / 13th century AH
35.2 x 20.5 cm
2004.2.5

Japanese Qur’āns have a number of unusual features. Among these is the marginal ‘ayn mark, which as an indicator for sujud (prostration). Other than in Java, such marks are not commonly found in Southeast Asia.
QUR’ANS FROM MINDANAO

The southern Philippines has a different artistic tradition from much of the rest of Islamic Southeast Asia. This might be explained by the greater cultural influence of China, as opposed to influences from the Indian Ocean which were so prevalent in the more westerly parts of the Malay world. For example, one of the stylistic distinctions of Qur’ans from the southern Philippines is that the whole of the Surah al-Fatihah spans the first two facing pages, both of which are enclosed in an illuminated frame. In the other regions discussed, the norm is that the Surah al-Fatihah is contained only on one page of a two-page illuminated frame.\textsuperscript{11}

\textit{th century AH}

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\textit{yn mark, which as an indicator for sajid
\textit{an in Java, such marks are not commonly
\textit{a}
The decorative style of Qur’ans from the Philippines puts them in a school of their own. There are few extant examples, and this Qur’an is especially unusual in that it is signed and dated. The colour palette is distinctive, making prominent use of blue.
REGIONAL VARIETY

Although the IAMM manuscript collection is a rich resource of Qur’ans, it also contains a wide variety of other works. Some of these are still religious in nature, while others range from legal precepts to accounts of ruling dynasties and medical references. The latter, in particular, were popular and commonly consulted, providing advice in the form of prose and poetry on conditions ranging from diseases and toothaches to being possessed by ‘jins’. Other works in the IAMM collection include scrolls or wooden boards bound together to form a book. Some texts appear in a variety of languages. Instead of being restricted to Arabic, there are regional manifestations such as Jawi, Bugis, Javanese, Acehnese and Champa.
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Qur’an
Terengganu
19th century AD / 13th century AH
42 x 33 cm
1998.1.3468

The design of this Qur’an, which dates from the reign of Sultan Zainal Abidin of Terengganu, suggests possible influence from China. This is indicated by the presence of cloud-shaped text boxes.