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Article

Early Islamic Manuscript Art in Southeast Asia: An Illuminated Qur'an Section from Java

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Abstract

The subject of this article is a small manuscript in Leiden University Library (UBL Acad. 19), written on *dluwang* or Javanese treebark paper. The volume contains parts of the Qur'an and various supplications, with decorated frames around the Qur'anic text and drawings of Burāq and other creatures on the first page. As first noted by Petrus Voorhoeve in 1980, Acad. 19 looks and feels like a 'rather old' manuscript, and recent radiocarbon dating (Gallop, Scheper, and Dee 2025) has confirmed with 95% certainty that the *dluwang* was made before 1634. This article has attempted to hone the date estimate further through a detailed palaeographical, paratextual and codicological study. The manuscript bears annotations probably in the hand of Willem Leyel of Denmark, who served in the Dutch East India Company in Batavia. Leyel most likely acquired the manuscript in Java by the early 1620s, when it was already old enough for some of the double-thickness *dluwang* folios to have separated into two thin leaves, with subsequent losses of text. This suggests that the manuscript may have been written several decades earlier, perhaps around 1600. As such, the illuminated frames around the text and the polychrome drawings on the first page may be some of the earliest known examples of manuscript illumination in maritime Southeast Asia, and valuable witnesses to early Islamic art in Java.

Keywords

Radiocarbon dating, *dluwang*, Javanese treebark paper, Java, Willem Leyel, illumination, Islamic art, Burāq, Qur'an manuscript, supplications

An early Qur'an section from Java

The subject of this article is a small manuscript volume in Leiden University Library (UBL), written on *dluwang* or Javanese treebark paper, containing a selection of Qur'anic surahs. My attention was first drawn to Acad. 19 in 2003 because in Petrus Voorhoeve's famously terse *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts in the Netherlands* (1980), where entries are usually accorded no more than the shelfmark and catalogue references, in the section on 'Parts of the Qur'an from Indonesia', Voorhoeve had highlighted both the likely age and the presence of decoration in this small volume: 'from Java, eighteenth c. or older; with curious drawings of al-Burāq and birds on the cover' (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1: UBL Acad. 19, fol. [1]'. The first page of the manuscript, with a drawing of Burāq and other sketches.

Acad. 19 is part of the collection which has been on permanent loan in Leiden University Library since 1856 from the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen) in Amsterdam. The description in the Inventory of the Academy manuscripts compiled by Jan Just Witkam describes the volume as follows: 'al-Qur'an from Java. Incomplete text. Contains sura's 1, 32, 36, 44, 55, 56, 76. These are followed by prayers, and excerpts from the Qur'an: Q. 78:11–84:10, 87:13–88:13; 89:7 till the end of 109. At the end a page is missing'.¹

In fact, following the first sequence of Qur'anic surahs listed by Witkam ending with Q. 76, *Surat al-Insan*, is a textual fragment not mentioned by either Voorhoeve or Witkam, heralded by a decorative border, comprising three lines written in Javanese in Javanese script (Fig. 2), which have been read by Tim Behrend.²

¹ Witkam 2006, 11.

² T. Behrend, personal communication, 29 August 2018. Behrend's further comments on the individual *aksaras* in the text are given in the next three footnotes.



Fig. 2: UBL Acad. 19, fols [16]^v–[17]^r. The end of *S. al-Insan* (Q. 76), followed by three lines in Javanese.

*pésabah*³ *gara*⁴ *l(?)ana*⁵ *kanj ngawal* || *satus\ kanj ngakir wolun puluh, tanginni* || *sujud tas\ be pitu pulu sékét*
 [pesabah?] Tuesday always, at the beginning, || 100, at the end, 80, rising [and] || prostrating tasbeh 70 50

According to Behrend, the text seems to be instructions for some sort of *tafakur* or *zikir* exercise that combines a physical component and recitations using prayer beads (*tasbeh*). These instructions are followed by six pages of prayers, supplications and Qur’anic quotations, written in more than one hand, and in a noticeably more cursive style,⁶ after which come the Qur’anic excerpts starting at Q.78:11 as listed by Witkam above.

³ ‘The initial three syllables are clearly written but what they are supposed to mean is elusive. The Arabic words *fī ṣabḥ* (في صبح) come to mind, giving ‘at dawn on Tuesdays always ...’, but the stretch is too far, especially for the *pe* = *fī*. The form of the third *aksara*, *ba*, is anomalous in that it is smaller than other letters and is raised, making it quite marked. No idea what that could signify.’ T. Behrend, 29.8.2018.

⁴ ‘I don’t think I’ve seen *gara* = *anggara* (Tuesday) before, but it is very possible.’ T. Behrend, 29 August 2018.

⁵ ‘The reading of *lana* is uncertain because the *la* is so different from the other instance of the *aksara* at the end of the line (*ngawal*) and in the second line (*wolun*). It might also be *ngana* or *gana*, but the initial *aksara* as written is even farther from *nga* and *ga* as used elsewhere than the *la*. The letter might have the last stroke/hump crossed out, thus accounting for its odd shape.’ T. Behrend, 29 Aug. 2018.

⁶ The first two pages have been transliterated and translated in the Appendix by Majid Daneshgar.

Acad. 19 is known to have originated, like most of the Academy Oriental manuscripts, from the private collection of Joannes Willmet (1750–1835), who had purchased it from the collection of D. A. Walraven (1779–1804), professor of Oriental languages at Amsterdam⁷, and hence it could only be said with certainty that the manuscript pre-dated 1804. Along with two other dluwang manuscripts in Leiden University Library, Acad. 19 was submitted for radiocarbon dating in 2022, which revealed a 42% probability that the dluwang sample came from 1468–1528, and a 53% probability it came from 1553–1634.⁸ Thus, radiocarbon dating has now confirmed with 95% probability that the substrate of the manuscript dates to before 1634.

This article will present a close codicological examination of the small volume, in order to clarify both the original textual contents of the book, and narrow further the likely date range suggested by radiocarbon dating to around 1600. Attention will also be focussed on the decorated frames around the Qur'anic text, and the illustrations on the first page, which for this dating may represent some of the earliest known examples of illumination in an Islamic manuscript from Southeast Asia.

The paratextual trail to Willem Level

Acad. 19 is a small volume consisting at present of 32 folios of dluwang; as the volume is unfoliated page references will be given in square brackets. The text is written in black ink, with the Qur'anic text in a very careful hand with a pronounced horizontal stretch, with 11 or 12 lines per page. The pages have been prepared for writing with guide lines dry-ruled with a sharp point. The Qur'anic text has been checked carefully, and there are a number of marginal emendations, with corrections of spelling, or missing words indicated with a caret in the appropriate place and then supplied in the margin. While some of the marginal corrections may be by the same scribe, a lengthy addition in the margin on fol. [5]^r is in a different hand.

In addition to the marginal annotations in Arabic in black ink, there are also a number of paratexts in dark brown ink in what appears to be a European hand, mainly at the start of a surah, giving above the basmalah the surah name and number of verses in Arabic script, and in the margin the number of the surah in roman numerals. In the first half of the manuscript, these numerals are topped with an overline, with a very deliberate small 'kink' or notch upwards (Figs 3–5). In the second half of the manuscript the roman numerals have been written more formally, upright and with serifs, and without the notched overline, but the surah heading added to LXXIX (Q. 79) is in the same distinctive small hand and brown ink.

It is not unusual to find annotations in European hands in early Qur'an manuscripts in European collections, reflecting the long scholarly interest in the Qur'an in the West,⁹ and through palaeographical analysis it is sometimes possible to trace connections between manuscripts. In

⁷ Witkam 2006, 4, 11.

⁸ Gallop, Scheper, and Dee 2025, 17.

⁹ For manuscripts of the Qur'an now held in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, which were owned, copied or annotated by European scholars from the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries, see Small 2014, 94–107.

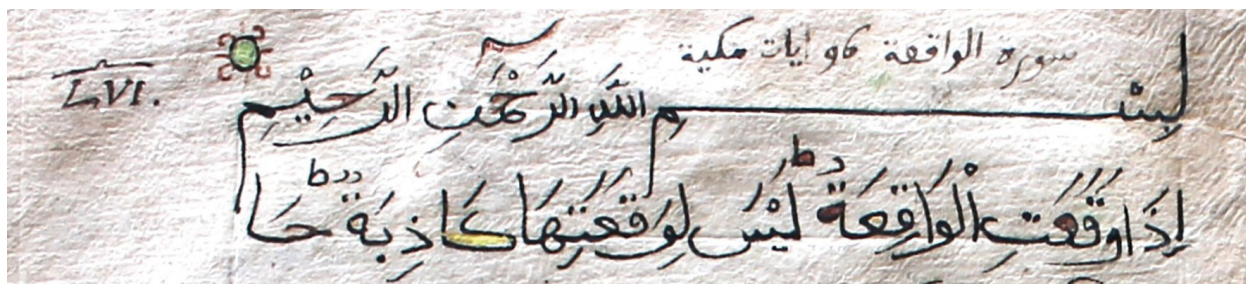


Fig. 3: UBL Acad. 19, fol. [13]^r. Beginning of *S. al-Wāqī'ah* (Q. 56), annotated LVI with notched overline, and with the surah heading written above the bismillah.

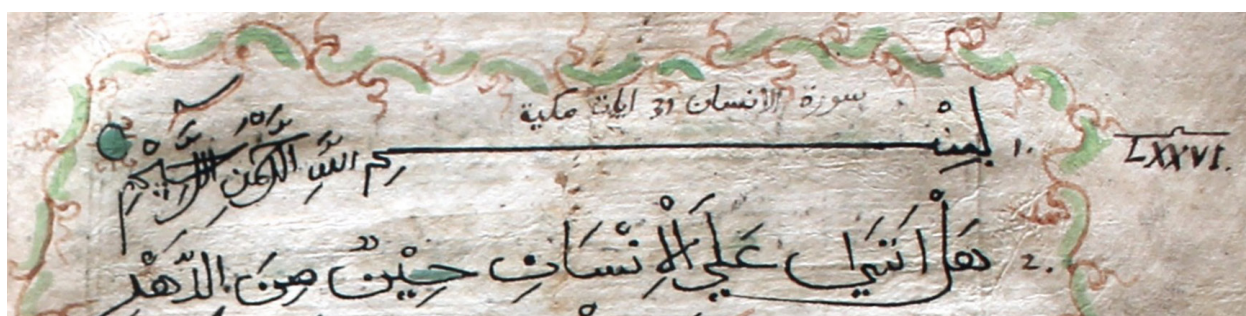


Fig. 4: UBL Acad. 19, fol. [15]^v. Beginning of *S. al-Insān* (Q. 76), annotated LXXVI with notched overline, and with the surah heading written above the bismillah.



Fig. 5: UBL Acad. 19, fol. [1]^v. Beginning of *S. al-Fātiḥah* (Q. 1), annotated in the margin I with notched overline, sig. sur. *Praestantia* ('the surah is called "Excellence"'), A. 28,4 (read by P. Babinski).

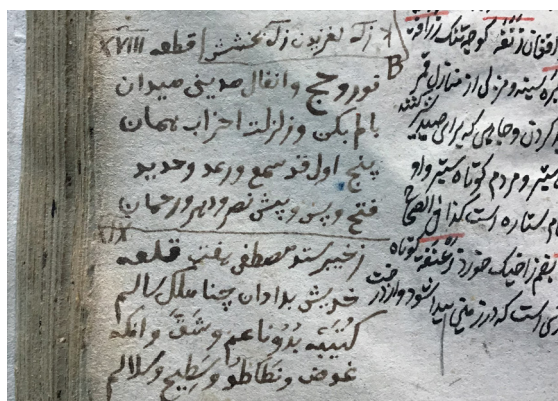


Fig. 6: Bodleian Library, MS Marsh 329. Two examples of Leyel's marginal annotations, numbered XVIII and XIX with notched overlines, in an Arabic-Persian dictionary. Photograph by P. Babinski.

this case, the distinctive upwards notch in the line above the surah number, combined with the ductus and slant of the numerals and of the Arabic script, led Paul Babinski to suggest that the annotations in Acad. 19 were probably made by the Danish official Willem Leyel (c.1593–1654).¹⁰ Leyel, who served in the Danish East India Company and knew Persian well, appears to have worked closely with the Leiden scholar Jacob Golius.¹¹ The connection was perhaps facilitated by Golius's student Johann Elichman, a German orientalist who is known to have been in Denmark.¹² The identification of Leyel as the annotator of this small volume from Java was due to the presence of the same notched overline, in a similar hand and even in the same brownish-coloured ink, seen by Babinski in Bodleian MS Marsh 329, an Arabic-Persian dictionary from the collection of Golius with marginal notes by Leyel (Fig. 6). According to Babinski, another feature in Acad. 19 which may hint at a connection with MS Marsh 329 is the marginal annotation on the first page 'A. 28, 4' (Fig. 5), suggesting a reference to page 28, line 4, in another manuscript referred to by the letter 'A'. This annotation recalls the numbering of pages and lines in MS Marsh 329, as well as possible codes for references to other manuscripts.¹³ Annotations in the same hand as in MS Marsh 329, writing in Danish, German, Persian and Arabic, are also found in another Bodleian manuscript, MS Marsh 267.¹⁴

Willem Leyel was born around 1593 in Denmark at Elsinore, where his father, who was of Scottish ancestry, was mayor.¹⁵ The earliest official reference locates him in Batavia around 1619, having apparently already been in the service of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) for some time. In Batavia Leyel married a Dutch widow, Alhed Lübbers, who had a daughter, and had two sons with her. He also appears to have lived in Persia, which must have been after June 1623 when the VOC first established a trading station there, and in 1626 he was in Bengal, before returning to Denmark in 1627. Back in Copenhagen Leyel earned the trust of King Christian IV and in 1636 was appointed a director of the Danish East India Company. During this period Leyel may also have undertaken at least one or more trading voyages out to Tranquebar on the Coromandel coast of India, including in the *St Anna* from November 1635 to January 1637, but the archival evidence is hard to reconcile.¹⁶ What is clear is that in 1639 Leyel set off from Copenhagen on being appointed governor of the Danish trading settlement, Danborg, at Tranquebar, but only arrived in 1644 after a long voyage beset by delays and obstacles. The following year, Leyel personally led the annual trading voyage to Southeast Asia, departing on 20 October 1645 and calling at Banten, Makassar (staying for four months), Cirebon and Batavia, before arriving back in Tranquebar on 3 September 1646.

¹⁰ P. Babinski, personal communication, 18 November 2022.

¹¹ Jacob Golius (1596–1667) was an orientalist and mathematician who in 1625 had succeeded Erpenius as Professor of Arabic in Leiden.

¹² Leyel's papers in the Danish National Archives included correspondence in Dutch with Golius and Lodewijk de Dieu around 1639–1640 (P. Babinski, personal communication, 16 July 2024).

¹³ P. Babinski, personal communication, 16 July 2024.

¹⁴ P. Babinski, personal communication, 18 November 2022.

¹⁵ Biographical information on Willem Leyel from Bredsdorff 2009, 19–20, 156–160; Wirta 2018, 40–45.

¹⁶ Bredsdorff 2019, 34–35.

In 1648 Leye was ousted from his post in Tranquebar and returned to Denmark. Although Leye eventually succeeded in clearing his name he must have been left almost destitute, for in 1654 he petitioned the king and received an annual grant of provisions in view of his long service, but died later that same year.

On the evidence of the archives in Copenhagen, in addition to Danish, Willem Leye was fluent in Dutch, German, Portuguese, English and Persian. The Leiden orientalist Ludovicus de Dieu (1590–1642) wrote appreciatively in 1639 about information on Persian passed on to him by Leye, who ‘while he still lived in Persia, learned to speak, read and write the Persian language’.¹⁷ It is known that Leye made a visit to the Netherlands in 1634¹⁸, and it may have been on this occasion that Leye shared his manuscripts with scholars in Leiden, including the two manuscripts in the Bodleian mentioned above.¹⁹ Leye’s linguistic and literary interests clearly continued during his second long sojourn in Asia, for an inventory of his possessions in Tranquebar immediately prior to his departure on the voyage to Banten in 1645 included a Malay and Portuguese dictionary compiled by Heman Clausen, ‘6 Moorish books’ perhaps referring to Arabic, and an unspecified number of ‘Persian books’.²⁰

Although Leye was in Java at least three times – once for a considerable period around 1619, and latterly in 1645 and 1646 on his trading voyage from Tranquebar – after his final return to Europe in 1648 in straightened circumstances there is no evidence of any bibliographic activities. It is therefore most probable that the small manuscript bearing his annotations was acquired during his earlier stay in Batavia, and was brought to the Netherlands around 1634 when Leye was communicating with orientalist scholars in Leiden.²¹

Material aspects of an early dluwang manuscript from Java

Acad. 19 has no external cover or binding at present, and there are no signs that one was ever present. The volume consists of eight quires sewn together, with the three original sewing stations still visible along the spine (Fig. 7). The manuscript is unfoliated or unevenly numbered, but there currently appear to be 32 folios (leaves) of dluwang with 62 written pages, with each folio measuring 21.5 × 16.5 cm. The beginning of the manuscript is intact, with the current first leaf clearly representing the original first folio of the book, with the text starting on the verso (fol. [1]v). However, the last folio of the original volume, which evidently would have contained the concluding surahs of the Qur’an, Q. 110–114, is missing.

¹⁷ Wirta 2018, 45.

¹⁸ Bredsdorff 2009, 26.

¹⁹ Babinski 2020, 70.

²⁰ Bredsdorff 2009, 155.

²¹ It is also possible that Leye might have acquired this manuscript from Java through merchant networks in the 1630s, while he was actively involved in philological studies. However, manuscripts from Southeast Asia were always very much rarer in orientalist circles than those in Arabic or Persian from the central Islamic lands or India, and it is more likely that the acquisition of this small book can be placed during Leye’s relatively lengthy stay in Java around 1619.



Fig. 7: Spine of UBL Acad. 19, showing the quires stitched together at three stations.

Acad. 19 is written on dluwang, generally referred to as ‘Javanese paper’, which is the smoothly beaten bark of the paper mulberry tree (*Broussonetia papyrifera* Vent.). There are a number of detailed studies of the manufacture of dluwang based on contemporary practice in Java and Madura,²² but little is known about earlier usage or modes of production, save what can be gleaned from a study of older manuscripts themselves. The radiocarbon dating showing that the dluwang used in Acad. 19 dates with 95% from before 1634 means that this is a very early example of a dluwang manuscript. Sheets of dluwang are made by beating with a grooved mallet sections of tree bark which have been soaked in water. In Acad. 19, on the folios can be seen clearly long regular horizontal lines, as well as a few vertical lines, which may reflect the grooves of the mallet, or perhaps the serrations on a small piece of coconut shell used to rub the wet sheets of bark.²³ Similar grooves can also be discerned on two other early dluwang manuscripts in Leiden University Library: Or. 1928, of a similar date to Acad. 19, and the somewhat older Or. 7056,²⁴ but in neither of these manuscripts are the grooved indentations as pronounced as in Acad. 19. On the other hand, in British Library Sloane MS 2645, a dluwang manuscript containing an Arabic legal text with Javanese interlinear translation, with a colophon dated 1623, there are no such indentations and the folios are very smooth and shiny, as if the sheets have been polished or burnished, and this is typically the case for most later dluwang manuscripts.

Accounts of the manufacture of dluwang report that sometimes several layers of bark can be pounded together to make stronger or larger sheets.²⁵ In most nineteenth-century dluwang manuscripts, any such layering is hardly discernible from the folios of dluwang themselves. In Acad. 19, however, the folios were consistently made by beating together two layers of tree bark, for in time many of these folios have split or separated (or partially separated) into two very thin sheets. Thus, for example, the first double opening of two pages with writing on fols [1]^v– [2]^r is followed by a double opening of blank sheets, which actually represent the two inner sides of folio 2 which have separated out (Fig. 8). Therefore this blank double-page spread, which can be referred to as fols [2a–2b] is followed overleaf with another double opening of two pages with writing, namely fols [2]^v– [3]^r.

An understanding of the ‘double thickness’ nature of the dluwang folios in Acad. 19 is of critical importance in helping to explain certain lacunae in the text, especially in the second half of the

²² See Teijgeler 2016; Ekadjati and McGlynn 1996.

²³ Teijgeler 2016, 21.

²⁴ For the results of the radiocarbon dating of Or. 1928 and Or. 7056, see Gallop, Scheper, and Dee 2025.

²⁵ Teijgeler 2016, 12; Ekadjati and McGlynn 1996, 116.

manuscript.²⁶ Thus, at present, fol. [25]^v starts with Q. 87:13 and ends with Q. 88:13, and faces a blank page (Fig. 9), while fol. [26]^v starts with Q. 89:7 (Fig. 10). What has evidently happened is that fol. [26] has split into two sheets, and the first (recto) sheet which would have contained text – almost certainly, Q. 88:14–89:6 – has been lost.

This separation of the folio into two halves, and subsequent loss of the first half with writing, must have happened before the manuscript came into Leyel's hands, for his annotation at the top of fol. [26]^v reads *LXXXIX: 7* (Fig. 10). This is one of only two marginal annotations for the surah number in Roman numerals which also includes the verse number, implying that the first verses of the surah have been lost, for all other such marginal numeration is given at the start of the surah. The other example is on fol. [20]^v, where the start of the text at the top of the page is annotated *LXXVIII: 11*, suggesting that this folio too has lost half with its recto side, which would have held the first ten verses of *Sūrat al-Naba'*, Q. 78:1–10. There are also almost certainly losses of at least two and possibly four 'pages' (i.e. split sides of a folio) containing Q. 84:11–87:12. Reconstructing the likely amount of text lost clarifies that the second half of this manuscript must have originally contained the whole of *juz' amma*, the final 30th part of the Qur'an, Q. 78–114, although now the final folio is completely lost.

The separation over time of 'double thickness' folios of *dluwang* has only been noted in other very old manuscripts. For example, the same process of separation of folios can be seen in British Library Or. 6622, a *primbon*, acquired in 1905 but of which it was said 'the MS seems to be of considerable antiquity'²⁷. The feature of double thickness folios which have split open is not seen at all in the numerous later *dluwang* manuscripts dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries preserved in libraries today.

For at least four folios in Acad. 19 to have 'de-laminated' and separated into two sides, with the loss of one side of each containing text, in addition to the loss of the final folio, before the manuscript came into Leyel's possession by around 1620, suggests the manuscript was certainly not new at that time. It may thus be possible to nudge the likely date of writing back by one or two decades from the point of acquisition, to around or just before 1600, still in full accordance with the results of the radiocarbon dating of this manuscript.²⁸

The shifting back of the likely date of Acad. 19 to around 1600 or earlier is especially significant in view of the numerous decorative elements, which may therefore represent some of the earliest known examples of polychrome illumination in a manuscript from maritime Southeast Asia. These elements will be discussed below in two sections: firstly, the decorated frames around the Qur'anic text, and secondly the pictorial figures on the first page.

²⁶ See also the description by K. Scheper in Gallop, Scheper and Dee 2025, 11, 13, Fig. 3a.

²⁷ Ricklefs, Voorhoeve, and Gallop 2014, 54.

²⁸ Gallop, Scheper, and Dee 2025, 19, Fig. 7.

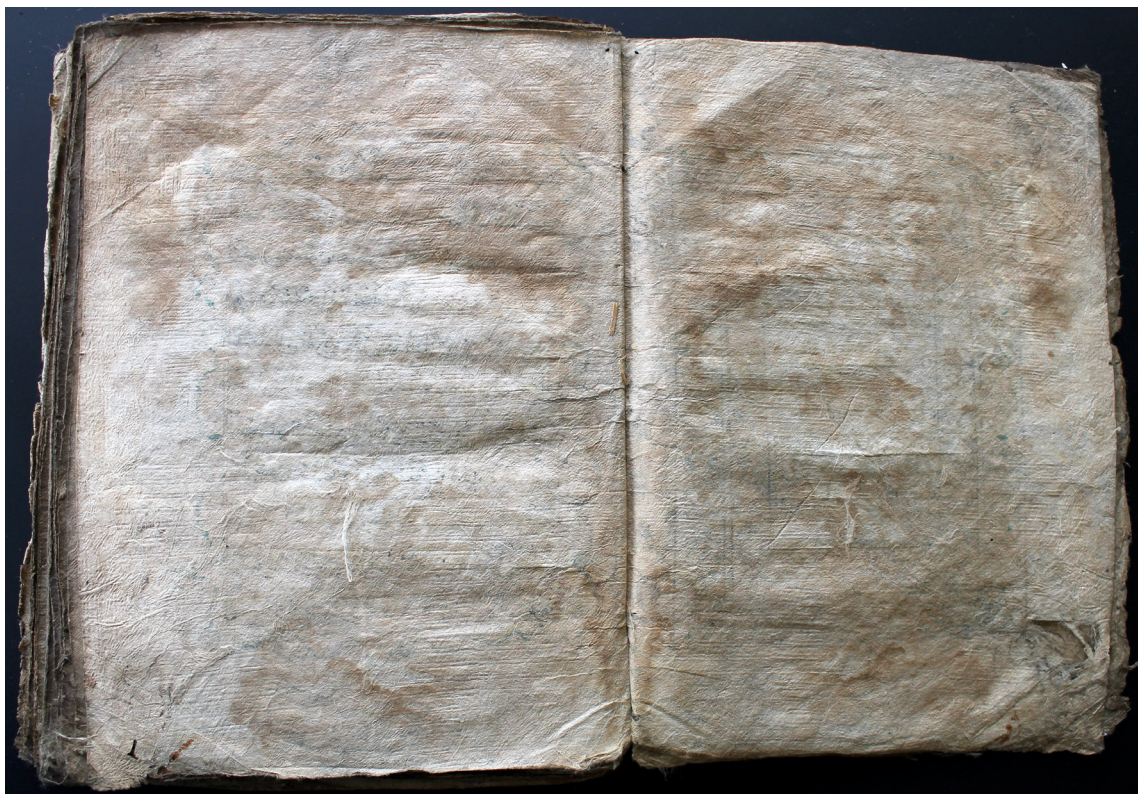


Fig. 8: UBL Acad. 19, fols [2a–2b]. Following the illuminated frames on fols [1]^v–[2]^r are these two blank pages, which represent the split inner sides of fol. [2].



Fig. 9: UBL Acad. 19, fols [25]^v–[26b]. The blank page on the left, fol. [26b], probably represents the inner side of fol. [26]^v, while the other half of the leaf, namely fol. [26]^r, bearing text, has been lost.



Fig. 10: UBL Acad. 19, fols [26]^v–[27]^r. The right-hand page contains the annotation at the top LXXXIX: 7, indicating that the preceding page, i.e. fol. [26]^r, had been lost before this annotation was written.

Decorated frames around the Qur'anic text

Around 1,500 Qur'an manuscripts from Southeast Asia are known today, many of which are illuminated, dating from the early seventeenth to the early twentieth century.²⁹ However, the great majority – probably around 90% – can be attributed to the nineteenth century, originating primarily from the east coast of the Malay peninsula and the islands of Sumatra, Java and Sulawesi. Far fewer manuscripts are known from earlier periods, although during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries two relatively sophisticated centres of production can be discerned, at the court of Banten in west Java³⁰ and associated with the Sulawesi diaspora³¹.

The statistics above were collated for Qur'an manuscripts, understood as manuscript volumes created to include the full text of the Qur'an (even if such volumes might have survived incomplete). For the very earliest period of surviving manuscripts from maritime Southeast Asia, from the first half of the seventeenth century and earlier, so few Qur'ans are known that the net can be widened slightly to include manuscript volumes containing selections of the Qur'an, such as Acad. 19. Even

²⁹ In his Ph.D. thesis, Ali Akbar (2016, 54) documented 1,075 Qur'an manuscripts from Southeast Asia. Since then, digitisation programmes funded by the Endangered Archives Programme and DREAMSEA have brought increasing numbers of Qur'an manuscripts to light.

³⁰ Gallop and Akbar 2006.

³¹ Gallop 2024.

so, no more than ten such Qur'anic manuscripts are known, and only two of these are decorated. The first is a Qur'an copied on dluwang dated 1625, with a single pair of initial illuminated frames in colours and gold, held in a private collection in Bali.³² The other Qur'an, also copied on dluwang, and with colourful but less refined initial illuminated frames (Fig. 11), is held in Paris in the Bibliothèque nationale as Arabe 489 and may also date from the first decades of the seventeenth century.³³ The proposed early dating of this Paris Qur'an is based both on palaeographic features and the watermark of the endpapers of the European binding dating to the 1640s,³⁴ suggesting that the manuscript was brought back to Europe and bound probably before 1650.

Acad. 19 is thus quite remarkable in having illumination on several pages. There is a substantial double frame on the first double opening, followed by four further pairs of relatively ornate frames and four more pairs of simpler text frames, as well as a number of smaller decorative elements, all of which will be described below.

Around the first two facing pages of text on fols [1]^v–[2]^r, with *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah* (Q. 1) on the right hand page, and the beginning of *Sūrat al-Sajdah* (Q. 32) on the left, is a double decorated frame consisting of two concentric rectangular borders on each page (Fig. 12). The outer border contains a repeating four-leafed kawung pattern³⁵ interspersed with small floral motifs. The inner border has the same kawung pattern in the two vertical panels, while the horizontal panels at top and bottom contain scrolled floral and foliate motifs. On both pages, the inner margin between the rectangular borders and the gutter of the book is filled with a large scrolling floral and foliate vine, which extends above and below the edge of the rectangular borders; on the right-hand page the ground around this vine is coloured red. From the two outer corners of the borders, a bud motif in black ink extends towards the corners of the page. The palette is green, yellow, red and black, in that order of precedence. The artist appears to have applied the yellow pigment first, followed by the green, and then used the red and black to outline the various motifs. Within the text box on each page, reddish tendrils or cloud bands had been drawn between the lines but have now almost entirely faded from view.

The following four pairs of facing pages of text have undulating polychrome frames drawing on the same palette, and generally prioritising green. On fols [2]^v–[3]^r the frames on each page are of wavy lines in green and yellow outlined in black, with foliage added to the vertical outer border on the left-hand page only (Fig. 13). The next two pages, fols [3]^v–[4]^r, have frames of foliate vines in green and yellow with red flowers; fols [4]^v–[5]^r have green foliage outlined in red (Fig. 14); and fols [5]^v–[6]^r have a foliate vine in green and yellow (Fig. 15), all with black outlines.

The next four pairs of facing pages, from fols [6]^v–[10]^r, have much simpler text frames of alternating scrolls in green pigment outlined with red ink (Fig. 16). This style of text frame is also

³² Akbar 2012.

³³ Déroche 1985, 147–148.

³⁴ The watermark is a five-spiked fool's cap known to have been used in 1640 (Laurentius and Laurentius 2023, no. 280) and 1644 (Churchill 1935, no. 341), with the countermark 'P R'.

³⁵ The kawung pattern is an ancient motif very familiar from Javanese batik textiles, and at one time was reserved for royalty (Kerlogue 2021, 104).

found on fols [10]^v, [15]^v and [21]^v, where the frame is of yellow pigment outlined in green. Other decorative elements are found on fol. [11]^r which has traces of red foliate forms in the outer vertical margin; on fol. [17]^r where a decorated horizontal panel separates the end of the Qur'anic text from the *zikir* fragment in Javanese; and fol. [28]^v which has some yellow flourishes in the outer margin.

There are also smaller elements of illumination which embellish the text itself. The verse markers are small hand-drawn circles of black ink, coloured in yellow or green, adorned with curls or petals in red ink arranged in a '4 + 4' pattern; for example, with four straight rays interspersed with four curled petals or pairs of dots. Another form of illumination is the adding of colour (green, yellow or red) to certain letter forms: to the space between the top stroke and body of *hā'* (and *khā'* and *jīm*), and to the space between the base line and body of *kāf*, and in the 'eye' of letters such as *waw*, *fā'*, *qāf*, medial *'ayn* (or *ghayn*), and *ṣād* and *ḍad* (Fig. 17). These coloured embellishments are found in almost all parts of the Qur'anic text except in the final pages of the manuscript.

Some aspects of the decoration of Acad. 19 differ markedly from that found in later Qur'an manuscripts. In illuminated Southeast Asian Qur'ans from all parts of the Malay Archipelago, decoration is usually confined to double frames at the start of the Holy Book, often also at the end, and sometimes in the middle, leaving the majority of text pages plain. This is the case for the early seventeenth century Bali and Paris Qur'ans mentioned above, which both have only one pair of illuminated frames marking the start of the text. Acad. 19 is therefore notable for its multiple decorated frames around many pages of the Qur'anic text.

Another unusual feature is the undulating wavy outline of the text frames on the interior pages. In most Qur'an manuscripts, ordinary interior pages are not illuminated, but when there are text frames on interior pages, these are invariably a series of two or three plain ruled lines, the colour scheme of which may reflect regional origin.³⁶ Qur'ans from Java generally have two or three ruled black lines as text frames, as can be seen also in both the Bali and Paris Qur'ans. Even larger illuminated frames with undulating arched outlines are usually constructed on a clearly defined inner frame of rectangular lines. It is therefore the absence of a rectangular support for the undulating wavy lines of the interior text frames in Acad. 19 which stands out as worthy of comment.

A contrast can also be noted in both the palette and method of application of pigments. In illuminated Javanese Qur'ans predominantly from the nineteenth century, the palette is extremely variegated, with blue playing a major role alongside red and yellow, supplemented by ochre, brown, green and black as well as gold occasionally.³⁷ However, in Acad. 19 the dominant colours are green and yellow, with a reddish-brown pigment playing a secondary role, and this colour scheme is echoed in that of some other early manuscripts from Java. In terms of technique, in nearly all later illuminated Southeast Asian Qur'ans, the decorative scheme is carefully outlined first in black ink, and then coloured in. In Acad. 19, though, the application of colour appears to be much more fluid, with pigments applied directly to the paper in loose strokes, and only subsequently

³⁶ Cf. Gallop 2007, 195; the description of Javanese text frames can now be more correctly described as generally only in black.

³⁷ Gallop 2012, 219.



Fig. 11: Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arabe 489, fols 1^v–2^r. Illuminated frames at the start of the Qur'an, in a palette of green, yellow, red, dark blue and black ink.



Fig. 12: UBL Acad. 19, fols [1]^v–[2]^r. The beginning of the text, with double decorated frames of two concentric rectangular borders, with a floral kawung pattern in green and yellow with touches of red and black ink.



Fig. 13: UBL Acad. 19, fols [2]^v–[3]^r. Double decorated frames of wavy lines in green and yellow outlined in black, with a more elaborate outer vertical border on the left-hand page.



Fig. 14: UBL Acad. 19, fols [4]^v–[5]^r. Double decorated frames of thick foliate vines in green with touches of yellow, outlined in red and black.



Fig. 15: UBL Acad. 19, fols [5]^v–[6]^r. Double decorated frames of thick foliate vines predominantly in green and yellow, with a hint of red and black outlines.



Fig. 16: UBL Acad. 19, fols [6]^v–[7]^r. Simpler text frames of alternating scrolls in green pigment outlined with red ink.



Fig. 17: UBL Acad. 19, fol. [3]'. Detail of a verse marker, of a black ink circle with a red dot in the middle, with a red fourfold pattern of petals. In addition, red pigment has been added to the space between the top stroke and base of the letters *khā'* and *jīm*, and yellow pigment to the space between the arm and base of *kāf*.

delineated in sweeping cursive lines of red or black. This technique can also be discerned in the Paris Qur'an, though not in the more meticulous Bali Qur'an where the decoration is of a higher technical calibre, including the use of gold.

The multiple illuminated frames in Acad. 19 are highly significant as being amongst the earliest known examples of polychrome illumination in a manuscript from maritime Southeast Asia, and, indeed, of Islamic manuscript art from Southeast Asia. The manifold differences between the illuminated elements in Acad. 19 and those in most other Qur'an manuscripts from Java may partly stem from the fact that Acad. 19 is not a complete Qur'an, but rather a compilation of selected surahs of the Qur'an along with *zikir* prayers and supplications, and it is often the case that private devotional manuscripts may be decorated in a more individualistic and less conformist style than copies of the full Qur'an. Another possibility is simply that Acad. 19 may be considerably older even than the Bali and Paris Qur'ans, and there are thus very few comparators. In this context, an important area for further exploration is a small number of concertina fold or *lepihan*³⁸ manuscripts, a format associated with the oldest dluwang books from Java. Three such manuscripts are known, and all have decorated borders along the vertical edges of each page.³⁹

³⁸ cf. Jakl 2015.

³⁹ See UBL Or 11.092, in Javanese in Javanese script, reproduced in Drewes 1969, Plate 1, and UBL Or 8657, which is a photocopy of a print from microfilm of two manuscripts from East Java in Javanese in both Javanese and Arabic script. I

Figural illustrations

Drawings of people and animals in Islamic manuscripts from Southeast Asia are extremely rare, with illustrated Javanese manuscripts generally only known from the eighteenth century onwards.⁴⁰ Therefore, significant though the decorated frames around the Qur'anic text are, perhaps the greatest artistic interest of Acad. 19 lies in the many sketches found on the first page. Most prominent in the middle, as highlighted by Voorhoeve, is an image of Burāq, the Prophet's flying steed on his night journey (*isrā'*) from Mecca to Jerusalem (Fig. 18). As noted by Christiane Gruber (2015, 40), in early Islamic texts the steed al-Burāq is described simply as a white animal smaller than a mule and larger than a donkey, and it is only from the thirteenth century onwards that clear references to a human head appear. The gender was ambiguous, though the use of grammatically feminine Arabic nouns (*dabba*, beast of burden, and *baghla*, mule) to refer to the steed, and post-fourteenth century paintings that depict Burāq with female attributes, seem to have given rise to the idea common today that the creature was female.⁴¹ This Javanese drawing, however, gives Burāq an unambiguously male wayang-style head in profile, with a long tapered black beard, and elaborate headdress. The steed is depicted in flight, with two large wings and an almost equally large black tail and its hoofed hind and fore legs raised. The colouring is predominantly green, with touches of yellow, red and black.

To date only one other early depiction of Burāq is known from Java, in a compilation of Javanese theological treatises in Arabic script, perhaps dating from the eighteenth century or earlier (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. or. quart. 163 [Fig. 19]).⁴² The presence of the well-executed drawing in this volume is surprising, as the Prophet's night journey and ascension (*mi'rāj*) are not mentioned at all in the text. Drawn on European paper and captioned in Javanese script *punika Burak*, 'this is Burak', the steed is also depicted as a male, in three-quarters wayang-style profile with a moustache and small wispy beard, with an ochre body and green wings – notably of the same green hue as found in Acad. 19 – standing on a red carpet against a backdrop of scrolled cloud forms. This manuscript is written on 'old Dutch import paper with unclear watermarks and some leaves of thin Javanese treebark paper'.⁴³ A scrutiny of the digitised version of this manuscript suggests that the dluwang used shares some of the characteristics of the writing support of Acad. 19, such as pronounced horizontal grooves on the surface, especially marked on the front and back covers, and the apparent presence of 'double thickness' leaves of dluwang suggested by two uneven

am indebted to Roberta Zollo for discussions on the antiquity and wide spread throughout Asia of the concertina-fold book format, and for alerting me to the importance of Or 8657.

⁴⁰ Pigeaud 1967, 1.285 links the development of illustrated Javanese manuscripts, mostly with stylized characters portrayed in wayang style, with the increasing availability of good-quality European paper from the mid-eighteenth century onwards; Pigeaud also highlights the likely influence of European prints and illustrations in printed books. On the other hand, there is no tradition of illustration in Malay manuscripts, which can probably be linked to widespread Islamic concerns about the portrayal of living creatures within official contexts; an easing of such attitudes is only discerned in the late nineteenth century as the manuscript era drew to a close (cf. Gallop 2005, 176).

⁴¹ Gruber 2015, 41.

⁴² See Pigeaud 1975, 205–206.

⁴³ Pigeaud 1975, 205.

top edges of the blank folio between folios 17 and 18.⁴⁴ It is therefore possible that these elements of the manuscript are substantially older than the eighteenth-century dating suggested by Pigeaud.⁴⁵

The drawing of Burāq on the first page of in Acad. 19 is surrounded by a number of other sketches. Immediately below are three birds with trailing tails of long feathers, coloured in green and red, flying towards a central sun-like orb with wavy red rays. All three birds have snakes in their beaks, although that on the left is outlined only in red ink which has faded and is barely apparent now (Fig. 20). At top left is a creature with scaly body and clawed legs (Fig. 22). At top right (its body partly obscured by the old paper label with number '19') is a long-beaked bird with traces of yellow pigment on its body, with a large snake in its mouth (Fig. 23). Along the bottom right side of the page are two simurgh- or dragon-like birds with long scaly necks and wings, again with a snake (or a fish?) in their mouths (Fig. 24). The bottom left quadrant of the page is too damaged to discern any sketches, but to the left of the trio of coloured birds is a fowl lightly sketched in black ink, also with a snake in its mouth. The similarity in colouring for Burāq and the birds and the palette of the decorated frames around the Qur'anic text suggests that these drawings are contemporaneous with the writing of the manuscript rather than later paratextual additions.

Although these sketches surrounding Burāq are in varying stages of completion and are now so faded as to suggest random doodles, the fact that they are all of winged creatures with snakes in their beaks suggests a unifying thread or literary allusion. Garuda catching Naga in his talons is a common motif in Javanese art (see Fig. 25), but the birds in these sketches are hardly eagles, and the snakes lack the crown normally seen in Javanese depictions of nagas. The creature in the bottom right quadrant is more similar to a Persianate or Chinese dragon than any known Javanese *antaboga* (serpent dragon). Indeed, the theme of these sketches recalls a drawing from a 1598 manuscript of the *Razmnāmah*, 'Book of War' – the Persian translation of the *Mahābhārata* commissioned by Akbar – where Babhruvahana, son of Arjuna, battles the snakes in the nether regions by using arrows which turned into the natural enemies of the snakes such as storks and peacocks, and thereby obtains the jewel which saved Arjuna's life (Fig. 26).⁴⁶

For this early period of the development of Javanese Islamic art, when so few other witnesses on paper survive, in the search for sources studies of contemporaneous artworks in other media may offer some clues. Thus Sinitic and Vietnamese links have been traced in the feline guardian figures carved in stone and wood at early Islamic grave sites in Java by Hélène Njoto (2018), and manifold Chinese references in the palace architecture and landscaping of the sixteenth-seventeenth century Keraton Kasepuhan in Cirebon have been identified by John Miksic (2005). In Acad. 19, Chinese imagery is indeed probably the ultimate source of the cloudbands around the Burāq figure, while the delicate trailing tail feathers of the three birds recall depictions of Chinese phoenixes or derivative Persianate simurghs. Yet just as dragons in fourteenth-century Shirazi miniature paintings can

⁴⁴ <https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN770185444&PHYSID=PHYS_0039&DMDID=&view=overview-toc> (accessed 31 October 2025).

⁴⁵ Pigeaud 1975, 206.

⁴⁶ On the *Razmnāmah* see Sims-Williams 2016.

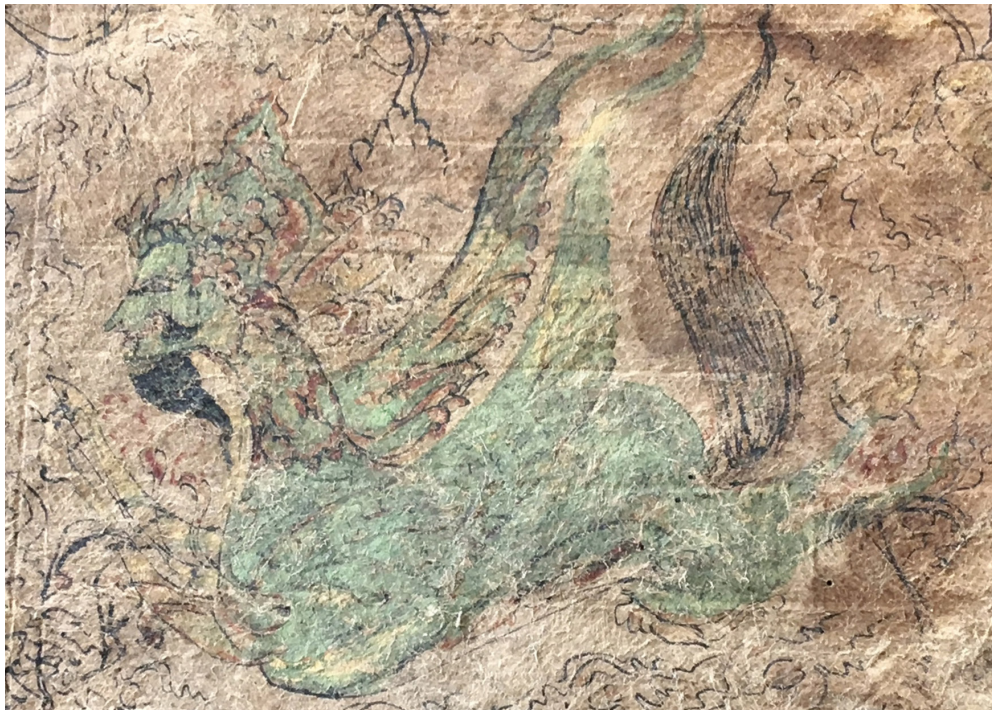


Fig. 18: UBL Acad. 19, fol. [1]'. The winged Burāq with a wayang-style bearded male face, coloured in green with touches of yellow, red, and black, drawn in the middle of the first page.



Fig. 19: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. or. quart. 163, fol. 54'. Drawing of Burāq, from a compilation of Javanese prose treatises on Islamic theology, law and mysticism, c. eighteenth century or earlier.



Fig. 20: UBL Acad. 19, fol. [1]^r. Drawing of three birds, all with snakes in their beaks and delicate trailing tail feathers, coloured in green with touches of red, in the middle of the first page. To the left is another bird in black ink, also with a snake in its beak.



Fig. 21: Art Gallery of South Australia, 928C18, Gift of John Watson 1992. Stoneware wall tile with bird holding a blossom in its beak, made in Hai Duong, Vietnam, early fifteenth century, found in Trowulan region, East Java.

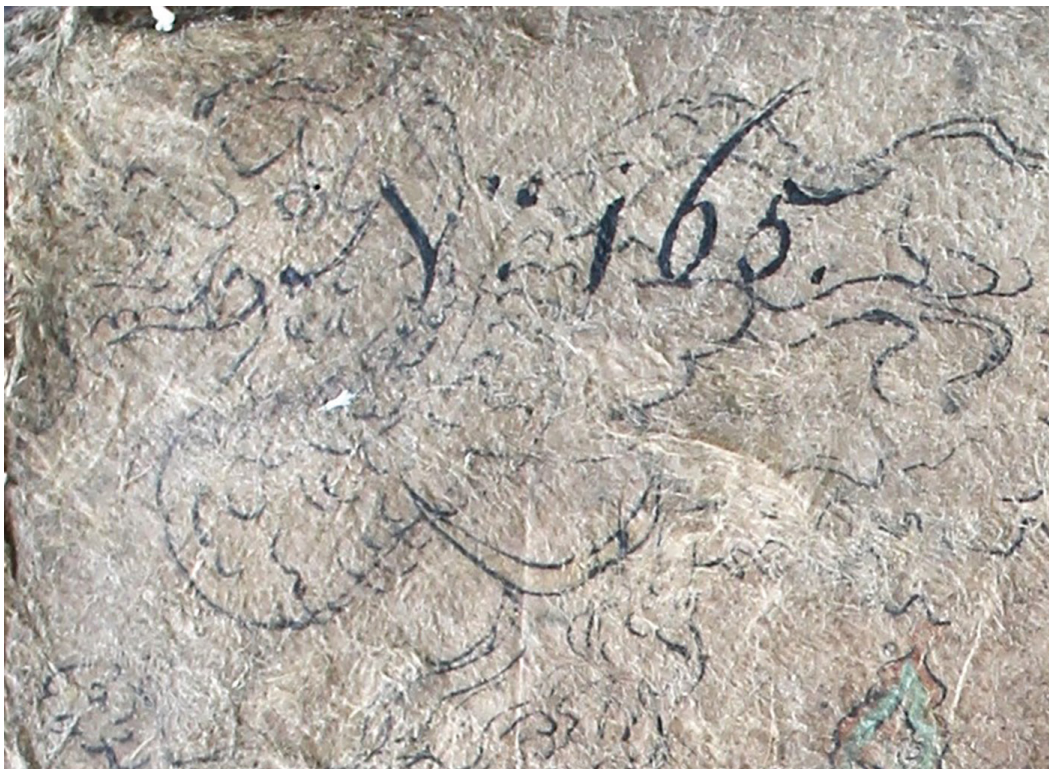


Fig. 22: UBL Acad. 19, fol. [1]^r. Sketch of a scaly bird, at top left of the first page.



Fig. 23: UBL Acad. 19, fol. [1]r. Sketch of a bird with a snake in its long beak, at top right of the first page.



Fig. 24: UBL Acad. 19, fol. [1]r. Along the lower right side of the first page (rotated in this view) are two long-necked dragon-like birds, each with a snake or fish in their beaks.



Fig. 25: British Library, MSS Jav 89, fol. 193^v. Garuda, with a small bird in its beak, grasping a naga in its talons, from *Serat Damar Wulan*, Javanese manuscript, late eighteenth century, from around Cirebon.



Fig. 26: British Library, Or 12076, fol. 71^r. The battle between the birds and the snakes. *Razmnāmah*, Mughal India, 1598. Artist: Sangha.

most likely be traced to Chinese prototypes on Yuan jars,⁴⁷ the inspiration for the birds on Acad. 19 may have come from ceramics, such as the long-tailed phoenix-peacock on early fifteenth-century Vietnamese architectural tiles found at the Majapahit capital of Trowulan and at the Great Mosque of Demak (Fig. 21).⁴⁸

On the first page of Acad. 19, all the creatures depicted, however sketchily drawn, have a fluidity – especially the ethereal elegance of al-Burāq captured in mid-flight – which contrasts with the generally more static examples of later Javanese manuscript art reflecting the stylized conventions of the wayang shadow puppet theatre (as in Figure 25). Thus, these sketches, dating from around 1600 or just before, may afford us a rare glimpse of the naturalism of drawings from the early period of Islamic art in Java.

Conclusion

As first noted by Voorhoeve in 1980, Acad. 19 looks and feels like a ‘rather old’ manuscript, even though available information on the provenance of the manuscript could only trace its history back to 1804 at the earliest. That intuition was tested scientifically through the radiocarbon dating of a small sample of dluwang from the edge of one of the pages, which confirmed with 95% certainty that the dluwang was made before 1634.⁴⁹ This article has attempted to add nuance and to hone the date estimate through a detailed palaeographical, paratextual and codicological study of the manuscript. These investigations reveal that the manuscript bears annotations probably in the hand of Willem Leyel of Denmark, an employee firstly of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in Batavia, and then of the Danish East India Company. Leyel is known to have been in the service of the VOC in Batavia for some time already by 1619, and eventually returned to Denmark in 1627 after periods in Persia and Bengal. Although Leyel visited Southeast Asia again in 1646 on a trading voyage from the Danish factory at Tranquebar on the Coromandel coast of southern India, it is most likely that Acad. 19 was acquired during his earlier stay in Java by the early 1620s, as it was around 1634 that Leyel was known to have worked with orientalist scholars in Leiden, and his annotations are also found in other Arabic and Persian manuscripts from this period.

A detailed examination of the material substrate of the manuscript, which is dluwang, namely beaten and polished tree bark from Java, reveals that each folio (or bifolium) was made by beating together two thin sheets of dluwang. In time, these two layers have split, in some cases completely. Thus, what would originally have been one folio of dluwang with writing on both sides, the recto and the verso, has now become two thin leaves of dluwang, with writing on the recto of the first leaf with a blank verso representing the inside surface, and a second leaf with a clean blank recto and writing on the verso. Awareness of the make-up of these folios is of crucial help in understanding the current composition of the manuscript, which appears to contain a number of ‘blank pages’, which are in fact the split inner sides of the original folios, and it also leads to the realisation that

⁴⁷ Titley 1983, 43.

⁴⁸ Bennett 2011, 224–225.

⁴⁹ Gallop, Scheper, and Dee 2025, 17.

a number of ‘pages’ or half-folios have been lost from the manuscript. It is now clear that the manuscript originally contained, in the second half, the complete *juz* ‘*amma* or final 30th section of the Qur’an, consisting of surahs 78 to 114, rather than simply a selection of Qur’anic excerpts as implied by the inventory description.

The paratextual annotations by Leye can now be read to reflect the fact that by the time the manuscript came into his possession in the 1620s certain ‘pages’ were already missing, which implies that the manuscript was already quite old by that date. This allows us to postulate a date of writing several decades before Leye acquired the manuscript around the 1620s at the latest, thus backdating the manuscript to around 1600 or even slightly earlier. This earlier dating is still in accordance with the graph presenting the radiocarbon dating outcomes for Acad. 19, with the second and more significant period of probability peaking around 1600.⁵⁰

This early dating lends greater significance to the decorated elements in the manuscript. Acad. 19 is remarkable in having several pages of illumination, with a substantial double frame at the start of the text, followed by seven further sets of elaborate coloured text frames, as well as a number of smaller decorative elements. These multiple decorative frames on interior pages differ markedly from illuminated frames generally found in later Qur’an manuscripts from Java, primarily for their wavy outlines unanchored by any rectangular base, as well as for their palette and less restrained technique of application. Even more unusual and striking are the figural illustrations on the cover. Most prominent is the elegant depiction of Burāq, the steed of the Prophet Muhammad on his night journey to Jerusalem, but this is surrounded by a number of other artistically impressive though now faded sketches of birds and creatures, all with snakes caught in their beaks, suggesting a still unidentified literary or mythical frame of reference. Throughout the manuscript, both in the illuminated frames around the Qur’anic text and on the figures on the front page, the dominant colours are green with yellow, which is very different from the colour profile of later illuminated Qur’an manuscripts from Java, where the most prominent colours in a very variegated palette are red followed by blue. The shade of sage green in Acad. 19 is very distinctive, and also appears in other relatively old manuscripts from Java probably dating from the seventeenth century, including the Paris Qur’an (Fig. 11) and the illustration of Burāq (Fig. 19). Further investigation may help to show whether or not the dominant presence of this pigment in manuscripts could be regarded as evidence of relative antiquity.

This article has aimed to show how a detailed codicological and contextual study of Acad. 19 in Leiden University Library has succeeded in refining the dating range provided by radiocarbon dating to around 1600 or slightly earlier. As such, the illuminated frames around the text, and the polychrome drawings on the first page, may be regarded as valuable witnesses to early Islamic art in Java, as well as being some of earliest known examples of manuscript illumination in Southeast Asia.

⁵⁰ Gallop, Scheper, and Dee 2025, 19, Fig. 7.

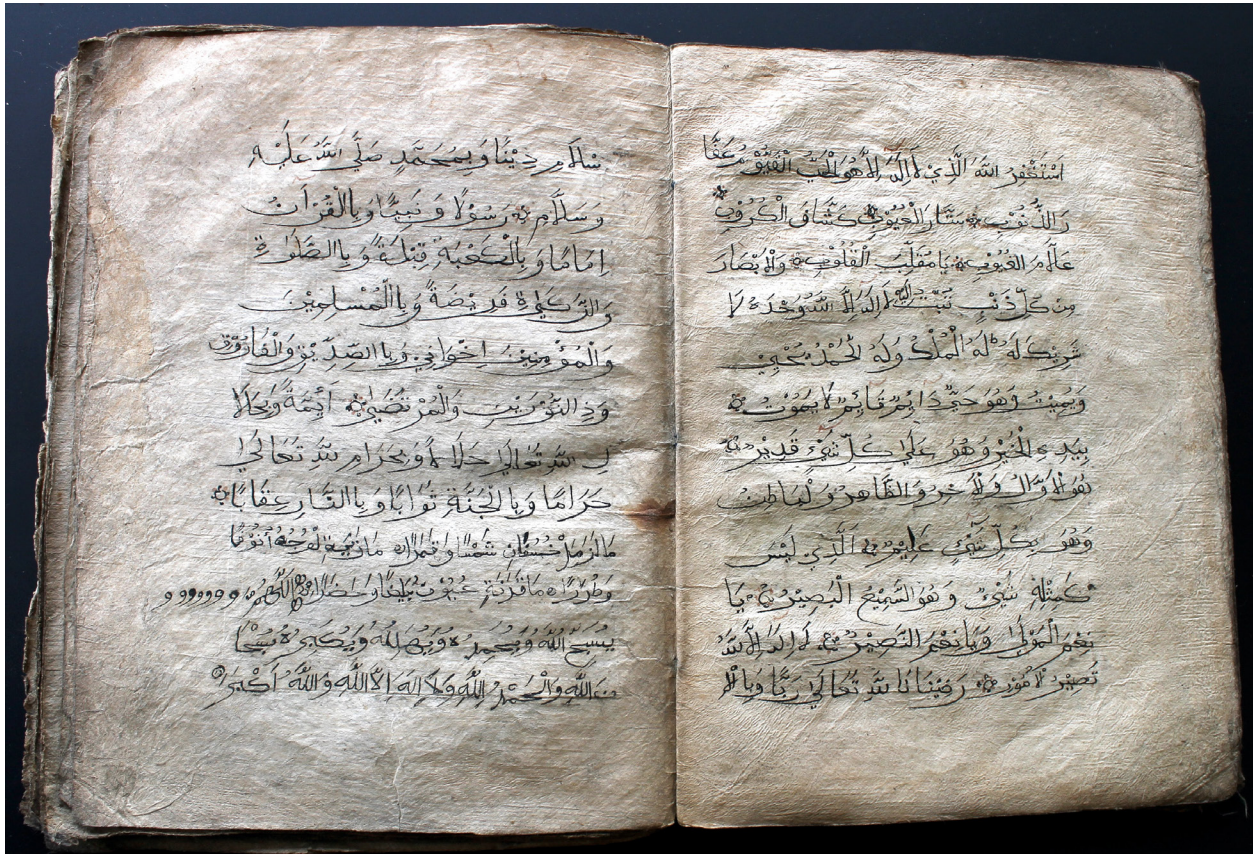


Fig. 27: UBL Acad. 19, fols [17]^v–[18]^r. First two pages of supplications.

Appendix

The focus of this article is a codicological analysis of Acad. 19. However, the resultant very early dating of around 1600 also enhances the significance of the non-canonical contents, especially in light of the clear linkage of the manuscript with *zikir* practices in Java involving a set of physical exercises. There are six pages of supplications, prayers and Qur'anic verses in this manuscript on fols [17]^v–[20]^r, written in several different hands, immediately following the three lines in Javanese on *zikir*, and preceding the final section of the Qur'an, the *juz* 'amma. The first two pages of supplications, fols [17]^v–[18]^r (Fig. 27), are presented below by Majid Daneshgar, to give an idea of the type of supplications in use in Java at that time.⁵¹ In the manuscript, phrases are separated by small decorative markers, which are represented below by asterisks (*).

⁵¹ For more supplications in another manuscript from Java perhaps of a similar age, see Daneshgar 2025.

Supplications in UBL Acad. 19, fols [17]^v–[18]^r, transliterated, annotated and translated by Majid Daneshgar

Fol. [17]^v // *Astaghfirullāh al-ladhī lā ilāha illā huwa al-Ḥayy-ul-Qayyūmu Ghaffār al-dhunūb*⁵² * *Sattār al-‘uyūb* * *Kashshāf al-kurūb*⁵³ * *Allām al-ghuyūb* * *Yā Muqallib al-qulūb* * *wa l-abṣār min kulli dhanb* [.../sic] *Lā ilāh^a illā Allāh waḥdahu lā sharīka lah, Lah^u ‘l-mulk^u wa lah^u ‘l-ḥamd,*⁵⁴ *Yuhyī wa yumīt, wa huwa Ḥayyun, Dā’imun Qā’imun lā yamūt* * *bi-yadihi ‘l-khayr, wa huwa ‘alā kulli shay’in Qadīr*⁵⁵ * *Huwa al-Awwal^u wa l-Ākhir, wa l-Zāhiru wa l-Bā’in, wa huwa bi-kulli shay’in ‘Alīm* (Q. 57:3)⁵⁶ * *[Al-ladhī] kamithlihi shay’ [un?]* *wa huwa al-samī‘ al-baṣīr* (Q. 42:11)⁵⁷ * *Yā ni‘m al-mawlā wa ni‘m al-naṣīr* * *Alā ilā Allāh taṣīr al-umūr* (Q. 42:53) * *Raḍīnā bi-llāh ta‘ālā Rabb, wa bi* // fol. [18]^r // *l-Islām dīnan, wa bi-Muḥammadin ṣallī Allāh ‘alayh wa-sallām* * *rasūl^{an} wa nabīyyā* (Q. 19:51), *wa bi l-Qur‘ān Imāman, wa bi l-Ka‘ba Qibla, wa bi l-ṣalāt wa l-zakāt farīda, wa bi l-muslimīn wa l-mu‘minīn ikhwaniyy* [sic], *wa bi l-Ṣiddiq wa l-Fārūq wa Dhī l-Nūrayn wa l-Murtaḍā* * *a’imma, wa bi-ḥalāl Allāh ta‘ālā ḥalālā* [sic], *wa bi-ḥarām Allāh ta‘ālā ḥarāmā* [sic], *wa bi l-jannati thawāb, wa bi-l nāri ‘iqāb*⁵⁸ * [...] *shams^{an} wa qamar^{an}* * *Allāhumma^a * Yusabbiḥ Allāh wa yaḥmaduhu wa yuḥalliluh^u wa yukabbiruh^u*⁵⁹ *Subḥān Allāh wa l-ḥamd^u-li-llāh wa lā ilāh^a illā Allāh wa Allāh^u Akbar*⁶⁰*

Fol. [17]^v // I seek forgiveness from God, the Magnificent, whom there is none worthy of worship but Him, the Living, the Subsisting, and the Forgiver of sins * Concealer of defects * Unveiler/Detector/Healer of anguish * the Knower of the unseen * O Controller/Transformer of the hearts and eyes from sins [.../sic] * None has the right to be worshipped but God alone, Who has no partner. His is the dominion and His is the praise.⁶¹ He brings life and He causes death, and He is living, [the Everlasting, the Perpetual] and does not die. In His Hand is all good, and He is Able to do all things * ‘He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Immanent: and He has full knowledge of all things’ (Q. 57:3) * ‘whom there is nothing whatever like unto Him, and He is the

⁵² This is widely seen in the Sunni traditional book: *Jami‘ al-Tirmidhi* 3577 <<https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi:3577>> (last accessed on 10 December 2025).

⁵³ Also related to a common prayer (‘Abbas litany): *Yā kāshif al-karb* (‘O He who removes hardships’): <<https://www.duas.org/hzabbasdua.htm>> (last accessed on 10 December 2025).

⁵⁴ Also see: *Sahih al-Bukhari* <<https://sunnah.com/bukhari:6403>> (last accessed on 10 December 2025).

⁵⁵ This is related to *Hisn al-Muslim* 209 <<https://sunnah.com/hisn:209>> (last accessed on 10 December 2025).

⁵⁶ This is from a supplication book ‘For one afflicted with doubt in his faith’ from *Hisn al-Muslim* 135 <<https://sunnah.com/hisn:135>>; most of the Qur’anic verses are translated based on *Saheeh International, Mustafa Khattab, and Yusuf Ali* at: <www.Quran.com> (last accessed on 10 December 2025).

⁵⁷ Apart from the term *alladi*, the rest is found in the Qur’an.

⁵⁸ The first line of this supplication is found in different hadith collections like *Mishkat al-Masabih* 2399. <<https://sunnah.com/mishkat:2399>> (last accessed on 10 December 2025).

⁵⁹ This supplication might be related to this <<https://sunnah.com/ibnmajah:1356>> (last accessed on 10 December 2025).

⁶⁰ This phrase and the last one are related to <<https://sunnah.com/hisn:265>> (last accessed on 10 December 2025).

⁶¹ It can also be translated as ‘Sovereignty belongs to Him and all the praise is due to Him’: <<https://myislam.org/la-ilaha-illallah-wahdahu-la-sharika-lahu/>> (last accessed on 10 December 2025).

One that hears and sees (all things)’ (Q. 42:11)* ‘O the Most Excellent Patron and the Best Helper * Behold (how) all affairs tend towards Allah!’ (Q. 42:53) * // fol. [18]^r // We are pleased with Allah as Lord, with Islam as religion, and with Muhammad, God’s peace and blessings be upon him, as Messenger and Prophet, and with the Qur’an as leader [showing the right direction], and with Ka’ba as *qibla* [prayer direction], and with daily prayer and almsgiving as obligatory rule, with Muslims and Believers as brothers, with the most faithful one [Ṣiddiq is an epithet of the Caliph Abū Bakr] and the distinguisher [Fārūq is an epithet of the Caliph ‘Umar] and possessor of the two lights [*Dhū l-Nūrayn* is an epithet of the Caliph ‘Uthmān] and well-approved [Murtaḍā is an epithet of the Caliph ‘Alī] as Imams, with what God has allowed, with making the lawful of God lawful, and with what God has forbidden | with making the unlawful of God unlawful, with Paradise as reward, and with Hell as punishment. * ... the Sun and the Moon’ [...] * O God * To say *Subḥān Allāh* [to glorify God], to say *Al-ḥamd^u-li-llāh* [to praise God], to say *lā ilāh^a illā Allāh* [to confirm God’s Unity] and to say *Allāh^u Akbar* [to confirm God’s Greatness] * Glorified is God, and The praise is for God, and There is none worthy of worship but God, and God is the Most Great.

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