

Annabel Teh Gallop

## The Boné Qur'an from South Sulawesi

### Introduction

A recent survey of the Islamic manuscript art of Southeast Asia established that the most distinctive styles of illumination were associated with certain specific regions of the archipelago, for example Aceh on the northern tip of Sumatra, or the East Coast of the Malay Peninsula, encompassing the states of Terengganu, Kelantan and Patani.<sup>1</sup> A third artistic school appeared to be linked with south Sulawesi, but what set this school apart from, say, the Acehnese style, is not only the small number of examples known and the artistic variation between them, but also the extraordinarily far-flung provenances or locations of the known manuscripts, ranging from Sumatra and the Malay peninsula to Java, Brunei, Mindanao, Bima and Ternate as well as Sulawesi. All these factors led to the hypothesis that this might be a diasporic artistic school rather than one necessarily located in Sulawesi itself, a reasonable suggestion in view of the substantial and influential communities which migrated outwards from south Sulawesi in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The southwest arm of the orchid-shaped island of Sulawesi (*Celebes* in old European maps) is home to the Bugis and Makassarese, as well as a number of other ethnic groups. Islam came relatively late to south Sulawesi, with the conversion of the king of the Makassarese kingdom of Gowa in 1605.<sup>2</sup> During the seventeenth century, Makassar was a flourishing international port, home to Muslim traders from throughout Southeast Asia, as well as to Portuguese, English and other European merchants. Such a honeypot proved irresistible to the Dutch East India Company (VOC), who, allied with the neighbouring Bugis kingdom of Boné, seized Makassar in 1669. The turbulent political situation in south Sulawesi that ensued led to significant waves of migration of Makassarese and Bugis to other parts of the Malay Archipelago.<sup>3</sup> After the fall of Makassar, numerous Makassarese princes and their entourages settled in south Sumatra, in Banten on the west coast of Java and also along the north coast of the island. The following century, an exceptional family of five Bugis brothers migrated

westwards, becoming kingmakers and kings in many part of the Malay world. In Johor and Riau, they ruled as Viceroys alongside the Malay sultan; in Selangor they established a sultanate; in Pontianak on the west coast of Borneo they granted recognition to a new royal line of Arab descent; and they married into the royal families of Siak, Kedah, Perak and Terengganu.

It is the elite nature of the Makassarese and Bugis exiles who settled throughout the archipelago that distinguishes them from the many other migrant groups, and begins to explain how such a distinctive and influential diasporic school of manuscript art might have evolved.

### **The Sulawesi Diaspora Style of Manuscript Illumination**

The “Sulawesi diaspora geometric style” of illumination is manifest primarily in Qur’an manuscripts. As in other schools of Islamic manuscript art from Southeast Asia, the artistic identity of these Qur’ans is primarily reflected in the double illuminated frames that enclose the text at the beginning of the Qur’an and at the end, and sometimes also in the middle. In this particular artistic school, the overall impression of the double frames is of a strongly geometrical composition made up of rectangles, circles, semi- or part-circles, and triangles. These uncompromising straight or circular outlines can be contrasted with the sinuous curves, undulating ogival arches and wispy foliate tendrils associated with many other styles of Islamic illumination from Southeast Asia and even prominent in other Qur’ans from Sulawesi. The palette is bold and dark, centred on black, brown, red and ochre, lightened with “reserved white”, an effect achieved through leaving uncoloured parts of the white paper background.

Of the approximately twenty manuscripts from all over Southeast Asia which share this style of illumination, three stand out for their grandeur and impressive scale of artistic enterprise. Moreover, each has a noble status, being linked to the highest levels of the court, and – exceptionally for Southeast Asian Qur’ans – each has a detailed colophon. Naming each after their place of creation, these three manuscripts are the Kedah Qur’an dated 1753, now held in Riau; the Ternate Qur’an dated 1772, still held in Ternate in Maluku today; and the Boné Qur’an dated 1804, now in the Aga Khan Museum Collection (cat. no. 80). And like the proverbial “youngest brother” in a fairy tale, it is the Qur’an now held in the AKM collection that is the finest exemplar of the genre.

The Boné Qur’an is an important manuscript because of its relatively good condition, complete state and ambitious scale, and for its full colophon locating the creation of the manuscript in south Sulawesi, making it in many ways the “anchor” manuscript of this artistic school. The colophon on f. 518v, set within an illuminated frame, reads:

And thus ends the production of the most supreme Qur’an, this bountiful and glorious book, on Tuesday in the month of Ramadan the bountiful, at the time of the afternoon prayer, on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Ramadan the blessed, in the town of Laiyka, in the reign of our lord the Sultan Ahmad al-Salih, Sun of the Community and of the Faith, may God extend his reign and kingdom and perpetuate his justice and power in the port of the land of Boné, in the year one thousand of the Hijra of the Prophet the year 1219 one thousand and two hundred and nineteen, for he who is most excellent and

upright, in the writing of the poor weak mendicant, who confesses all his sins and faults, he who depends on the mercy of his all-bountiful Lord, Ismā'īl, son of 'Abd Allāh, the Malay, Makassar being his origin and his birthplace, and the Shāfi'ī his school of law, and the Naqshabandī his brotherhood, may God's forgiveness be on him and his descendants and the whole community of Muslim men and women, amin.<sup>4</sup>

Thus the copying of the manuscript was completed on 25 Ramadan 1219, equivalent to 28 December 1804, by a scribe named Ismā'īl ibn 'Abd Allāh in the city of "Laiyka" (l.y.y.k.a) – most probably referring to Laikang in Jeneponto on the south coast of south Sulawesi<sup>5</sup> – in the reign of Sultan Ahmad al-Sālih Shams al-Milla wa-al-Dīn of the kingdom of Boné.

This ruler, usually known in Indonesian sources as Sultān Ahmad al-Sālih Shams al-Dīn (r. 1775–1812) was one of the most eminent rulers of Boné. Uniquely in Southeast Asia, the Bugis and Makassar court elites had a tradition of keeping detailed personal official diaries, and Sultān Ahmad al-Sālih's diary for the years 1775 to 1795 has survived in the British Library and was recently the subject of a doctoral study by Rahilah Omar. The diary – which is written in the Bugis language and script – shows that from the 1780s onwards the sultan took an increasing interest in religion and Sufism;<sup>6</sup> he was a member of the Khalwatiyya brotherhood and author of a mystical tract, *Nūr al-Hādī*. The diary records various religious activities at the court, including the copying of Qur'ans and other Islamic texts, and it is here that we find the following entry on 3 February 1789: "La Balada has finished illuminating the Qur'an, as I [had] instructed him [to do]".<sup>7</sup>

These few words have a significance far greater than might be supposed: they are so far the only known reference in a vernacular Southeast Asian text to the illumination of a Qur'an manuscript. While they cannot refer to the present manuscript, which was copied in 1804, they do show the personal interest and involvement of the sultan in the writing and decorating of Qur'an manuscripts. Although the colophon of the Boné Qur'an does not expressly state that the manuscript was copied for Sultān Ahmad al-Sālih, in view of the scale of the endeavour and the eulogy to the Sultan in the colophon, it is highly possible that this manuscript is representative of the fine Qur'ans produced at the court of Boné during his reign.

### The Boné Qur'an

The Boné Qur'an (current accession number AKM 00488) is a large manuscript, in a brown leather binding which seems to be of European manufacture. It is written on 529 folios of Dutch paper watermarked "J Honig & Zoonen" (the watermark can be read on f. 50), each measuring 34.5 x 21 cm. The foreedges are stained purple, an embellishment unusual in Southeast Asian manuscripts.

Apart from preliminaries and end matter, the Qur'anic text occupies 513 folios (ff. 6v–518r). There are three sets of double illuminated frames on two facing pages marking the beginning, middle and end of the text. All other pages contain eleven lines of writing within a series of ruled frames, in the following colour scheme (from the innermost to the outermost frame): red – black – thick yellow – black – black. The Qur'anic text is written in strong black ink, with reading (*tajwid*) marks in red and blue ink. Almost every page is further adorned with

marginal ornaments and textual annotations, which will be discussed further below. The palette used for the illumination of this Qur'an is red, brown, ochre, yellow, blue, green, black and reserved white. The pigments appear to be mineral-based; the green has corroded and damaged its paper support; otherwise the manuscript is in reasonably good condition.

### Double Illuminated Frames in the Qur'anic Text

The Boné Qur'an has three pairs of illuminated frames in the Qur'anic text. The first pair encloses *Sūrat al-Fātiha* on the right-hand page and the beginning of *Sūrat al-Baqara* on the left (ff. 6v–7r); the frames in the middle mark the beginning of *Sūrat al-Kahf* (ff. 249v–250r); and those at the end enclose *Sūrat al-Falaq* on the right-hand page and *Sūrat al-Nās* on the left (ff. 517v–518r).

The initial and final sets of frames are almost identical in composition, and could be described as textbook examples of the Sulawesi diaspora geometric style of illumination (fig. 1). Within these illuminated frames, the small text blocks on each of the two facing pages are flanked by decorative vertical borders, the main one containing a repeating pattern of concave diamond-shaped cartouches, formed by rows of abutting semicircles with floral embellishments. Above and below the text block and its two flanking vertical borders are horizontal panels comprising a large number of concentric rectangular decorative frames enclosing a rectangular panel containing details of the Sura. The Sura headings and attributes are dramatically presented in reserved white lettering against a black background. The letters often have floriated terminals, and this style of writing has been termed “floral calligraphy”,<sup>8</sup> to describe letters which are themselves embellished ornamentally, rather than simply being set against an ornamental background.

The densely-layered frames around the Sura panels are a highly distinctive feature of the Sulawesi diaspora style; in the double frames at the end of the Boné Qur'an the Sura headings are enclosed with seven sets of double-ruled coloured frames, with a further five double-ruled horizontal borders above and below. To give an idea of the complexity of this design, on f. 517r, between the heading for *Sūrat al-Falaq* and the *Basmala* at the start of the Sura in the text block below are twelve coloured bands, each separated by double-ruled black lines, arranged as follows (each slash sign represents a ruled black line; see fig. 2):

// yellow // red /black/ orange // a continuous foliate scroll in reserved white against alternating squares of dark green and red // orange // red // blue // red // brown // a



Fig 1



Fig 2

Figure 1. Illuminated frames at the end of the Qur'anic text, typical of the Sulawesi diaspora geometric style (ff. 517v–518r).

Figure 2. Multiple coloured frames surrounding the heading of *Sūrat al-Falaq* (f. 517v, detail).



Fig 3

Figure 3. Double frames marking the start of *Sūrat al-Kahf* (ff. 249v–250r)

repeating pattern of diamonds with a circle in the middle, set in almond-shaped cartouches on a red ground // brown // red //

The whole composition on each page – text block, flanking vertical panels, and multi-layered horizontal panels above – is further framed on the two vertical sides by narrow decorative columns that are extended above and below the boundary of the horizontal panels. At top and bottom, emerging from each of the rectangular horizontal panels, is a large demi-circle flanked by two such smaller part-circles. From the midpoint of the outer vertical border on each page protrudes a triangular arch, flanked by two pyramidal compositions of three part-circles.

An outer decorative frame bounded by a blue border hugs the three outer edges of each page, uniting the double-page spread, with a sophisticated composition of alternating floral motifs with finials stretching outwards to the edge of the paper. On closer inspection, the “white” floral motifs between the brown flowers are actually mirror-image patterns created out of the spaces left on the page itself. At each of the four inner corners is an arc-shaped floral pattern in reserved white on a black ground.

This description of the initial and final pairs of frames in the Boné Qur'an could serve as a template for the Sulawesi diaspora geometric style of double illuminated frame, and reproductions of other Qur'an manuscripts from the same artistic school show how closely this model was adhered to even across great distances within the Malay archipelago.<sup>9</sup> However, the middle frames in the Boné Qur'an (fig. 3) are rather different, and reveal how an expert illuminator, supremely confident in his mastery of this style, could produce a design faithful to the spirit of the strict architectural rules, yet innovative in its interpretation.

In these frames at the start of *Sūrat al-Kahf*, many of the elements we expect to see are immediately apparent: the vertical borders flanking the text block; the Sura headings in striking reserved white floral calligraphy against a black ground, surrounded by multi-layered rectangular frames; and the extended flanking vertical columns, with integral protruding triangles on the outer sides flanked by pairs of pyramidal circular constructs. But the vertical columns have in fact been extended at right angles to form a border enclosing the entire structure on each page (an effect reinforced by making the triangular side arches an integral part of this frame), with a semi-circular dip at top and bottom, and a pair of smaller demi-circles clinging on like molluscs. Thus the standard semi-circles and flanking smaller part-circles emerging from the horizontal panels at top and bottom are merely evoked, rather than being presented in their classical form.

### The Divisions of the Qur'anic Text

Apart from the division into Suras, the text of the Qur'an can be partitioned in a number of ways, using a range of different criteria, which received marked preferences in different places



and at different times. For example, in many Qur'ans from the western and central Islamic lands, groups of five and ten verses are indicated with marginal ornaments, but such divisions are never encountered in Southeast Asian manuscripts. From the tenth century onwards, manuscripts of the Qur'an can be found in multi-volume sets ranging from two to seven, ten, thirty or sixty volumes. The most usual division of the Qur'anic text is into thirty parts of equal length known as *Juz'* (pl. *Ajza'*), to facilitate the reading of the entire Qur'an over a single thirty-day month, notably the fasting month of Ramadan, and Chinese Qur'ans of a certain period are almost always found in thirty-volume sets. However, most Southeast Asian Qur'ans consist of a single volume or *mushaf*.

One of the most striking and unusual features of the Boné Qur'an is a marked interest in conventional divisions of the Qur'an and the quantitative portioning of the text. The Boné Qur'an is complete in a single volume, but within this volume reference is made to many different ways of dividing the text. These divisions are signalled with the aid of a range of visual markers, which are in turn ornamented in a variety of standard ways. This is art at its most functional, its primary purpose being to help the reader navigate through the Holy Book, but at the same time the iconographic repertoire of the ornamental devices is a key defining feature of the Sulawesi diaspora style. The main textual divisions and their associated graphic signs will be discussed below, working from the largest portions of the text to the smallest.

### **Division into Two**

The beautiful pair of double frames which adorns the beginning of *Sūrat al-Kahf* in the Boné Qur'an could be regarded as a visual indicator of the middle of the manuscript. This choice of location for illuminated frames in the middle of the Qur'an is characteristic of the Sulawesi style, and also of illuminated Qur'ans from Java, but different preferences are expressed in other parts of Southeast Asia. In Qur'ans from Terengganu and Patani it is always the beginning of *Sūrat al-Isrā'* which is enclosed with double decorative frames, while in Acehnese Qur'ans it is the exact halfway point of the Qur'an, namely the beginning of the sixteenth *Juz'* in the middle of *Sūrat al-Kahf*, at Qur'an 18:75.

But based on a reckoning of words, there is another recognized mid-point of the Qur'an: the words *wa-l-yatalattaf*, "and let him behave with care and courtesy", in *Sūrat al-Kahf*, Qur'an 18:19. These words are often enhanced decoratively in Southeast Asian Qur'ans, notably those from Java, and sometimes also in manuscripts from the East Coast. In the Boné Qur'an, too, they are accorded special treatment: on f. 251v, the words *wa-l-yatalattaf* are highlighted in bold black ink outlined in red, and in the margin a black roundel with small decorative petals is inscribed in reserved-white lettering: *nisf*

Figure 4. Marginal roundel and highlighted words marking the exact midpoint of the Qur'anic text (f. 251v).



Fig 4



Fig 5

*kalimāt Allāh min al-Qur'ān al-'azim*, “half of the words of God in the Supreme Qur'an” (fig. 4).

### Division into Three

The division of the text of the Qur'an into three equal parts of ten *Juz'* each is signified by the placement of a single headpiece and decorative frame round the whole page at the start of the eleventh *Juz'* (f. 172v) and the twenty-first *Juz'* (f. 340v); the start of the first third of the text of course being marked by the double frames at the beginning of the Qur'an. These single illuminated frames are highly unusual, for threefold division has never been encountered in a Southeast Asian Qur'an before (fig. 5).

### Division into Seven

Another conventional division of the Qur'anic text is into seven equal portions, to aid the recitation of the Holy Book within one week. While seven-volume Qur'ans are rare, a famous example is the Qur'an of the Mamluk Sultan Baybars completed in 705 H (1305/6 CE), now held in the British Library.<sup>10</sup> However, the sevenfold partition of the Qur'anic text is not common in the Malay world, and divisions into seven have not been noted in a Southeast Asian Qur'an manuscript until now. In the Boné Qur'an, each seventh of the text is marked in the margin with a calligraphic roundel. For example, on f. 220v is a roundel composed of the words *sab' al-thālath min al-Qur'ān al-'azim*, “the third seventh of the Supreme Qur'an”, in blue ink, surrounded by a double halo of red dots (fig. 6).



Fig 6

Figure 5. Single-page frame marking the start of the final third of the Qur'an (ff. 340v-341r).

Figure 6. Marginal inscription marking the third seventh of the Qur'an (f. 220v, detail).

Figure 7. Two pages of the Boné Qur'an, showing on the left-hand page the heading for *Sūrat al-Hijr* in red ink set into frames, and in the margin a *Hadīth* explaining the benefits of reading this Sura; the start of the fourteenth *Juz'* is marked in the margin with a calligraphic composition and in the text with a composite roundel and a line inscribed in bold black ink. On both pages variant readings are inscribed diagonally in the margins (ff. 222v–223r).

### Division into Thirty

It is common practice in Southeast Asian Qur'ans to mark the start of a *Juz'* with a marginal ornament, and the shape and ornamentation of these *Juz'* markers can be almost as sure a guide to regional provenance as the large illuminated frames. In the Boné Qur'an the start of a *Juz'* is indicated in three ways. Most prominently, in the margin is placed a calligraphic composition in red ink giving the number of the *Juz'* against a background of dots (reminiscent of *jāli* calligraphy), with the outer perimeter defined by a series of small petals and rays. The exact point in the text marking the end of the previous *Juz'* is marked with a composite coloured petalled roundel highly characteristic of many Southeast Asian illuminated manuscripts.<sup>11</sup> Finally, the first line of the *Juz'* is highlighted in bold in black ink, shadowed along one perspectival plane in red ink (fig. 7).

### Subdivisions of a Juz'

Subdivisions of a *Juz'* – namely *hizb* (half), *rub'* (quarter) and *thumn* (eighth) – are marked in the margin with a petalled floral marker, and with the appropriate point in the text indicated

with a dotted or composite roundel. These marginal ornaments all begin life in the same form, as a round medallion comprising three concentric double-ruled circles. Within the innermost circle the appropriate label (*hizb*, *rub'* or *thumn*) is written in reserved white against a black ground (fig. 8). Each of the concentric circles is decorated, often with a pattern of intersecting circles cutting across two or more bands; this can be seen very clearly in a *thumn* marker which has inadvertently been left uncoloured (fig. 9). The outermost circle is adorned with either eight or ten “petals”, from the tips and intersects of which emanate four dots of red or blue ink and a small arc, imparting an impression of circular motion to the petalled ornament, rather like a spinning wheel.

Despite adhering rigidly to the same basic shape and principles of composition, a quintessential feature of an aesthetic which permeates the Malay archipelago is a manifold delight in infinite variations on a standard theme, and of the hundreds of petalled marginal ornaments in the Boné Qur'an, no two are identical.

### **Sura**

The Sura headings are set in cartouches within two-tiered rectangular panels, with the same ruled frames as the text frames on each page. In the top cartouche, in red ink, is the title of the Sura and its place of revelation, whether Mecca or Medina. In the lower cartouche, written in blue ink are the labels for the number of verses (*āyāt*), words (*kalimāt*), letters (*hurūf*) and chronological position of revelation (*tanzil*) of the Sura, while the numerical coefficients are written in red ink (fig. 7). This attention to the statistical components of each Sura is a characteristic feature of Sulawesi diaspora style Qur'ans, and has also been seen in Qur'an manuscripts from Banten in West Java, but is not usual in most Southeast Asian Qur'ans.

### **Ruku'**

*Ruku'*, places for bowing or inclining the head, are marked in Qur'an manuscripts in the margin with the letter 'ayn. Marginal 'ayns are a common feature of Qur'ans illuminated in the Sulawesi diaspora style, as well as in some other Southeast Asian Qur'ans, especially in manuscripts from Java. In the Boné Qur'an, marginal 'ayn markers are placed within exactly the same petalled ornaments as are used to mark portions of a *Juz'*.

### **Sajda**

There are fifteen places in the Qur'an where readers should prostrate themselves, signified by the word *sajda*. In the Boné Qur'an, these places are marked in the margin with the word *sajda* in



Fig 7



Fig 8



Fig 9

Figure 8. Petalled marginal ornament inscribe *rub'*, indicating a quarter of a *Juz'*, a thirtieth part of the Qur'anic text (f. 252r, detail).

Figure 9. Marginal ornament inscribed *thumn* (eighth) inadvertently left uncoloured (f. 411r, detail).





Fig 10



Fig 11

Figure 10. Illuminated pages at the end of the Qur'an, containing the colophon on the right-hand page and a prayer on the left (ff. 518v–519r).

Figure 11. The final pages of the Boné Qur'an, with a chart of Qur'anic statistics by Muhammad ibn Mahmūd al-Samarqandī on the left (ff. 528v–529r).

red, with the exact point in the text indicated with a small roundel with a dotted halo.

### Verses

In the Boné Qur'an, verse or *āya* markers are black circles which have been coloured in with yellow ink. In Southeast Asian Qur'ans, circles or coloured roundels are the standard means of marking the separation between verses; the rosettes and whorls of other Islamic traditions are all but unknown in this region.

Enumerated above are the ways in which partitions of the Qur'anic text have been indicated graphically in the Boné Qur'an. While all the divisions are conventional in the context of the broader history of the study of the Qur'an, some of those highlighted in the Boné Qur'an are rarely notated in other Southeast Qur'ans, or even in other examples from the Sulawesi diaspora school. The culmination of this evident interest in the statistical composition of the Qur'an is revealed on the final page of the manuscript, which contains an elaborate illuminated chart entitled at its base *Bayān al-a'dād allatī ta'allaqat bi-al-Qur'ān al-majīd*, "Elucidation of the numbers of the constituent parts of the glorious Qur'an", attributed in a bow-shaped panel above to Muhammad ibn Mahmūd al-Samarqandī (fig. 11). A fan-shaped structure comprises a chart recording the number of instances of each letter in the Qur'an (for example, *alif*: 148,893; *bā*: 11,427, and so forth.). From the base of the chart spring statistics of, for example, the number of places for bowing, or of recitation signs such as pauses, and for the numbers of

Suras, verses, words and letters according to different authorities. Muhammad ibn Mahmūd al-Samarqandī, who lived c. 600 H (1203/4 CE), wrote a number of works on the recitation of the Qur'an.<sup>12</sup> The chart in question is found in his *Mabsūt fi al-qirā'āt al-sab' wa-al-madbūt min idā'āt al-tab'*, and can be seen in a manuscript of the work dated 1082 H (1671/2 CE) in the British Library (Or. 8464, ff. 44v–45r).

### Supplementary Textual Material

The vast majority of Southeast Asian Qur'an manuscripts, however ornate, begin with *Sūrat al-Fātiha* and end with *Sūrat al-Nās*, with no other textual material present in the volume. Colophons are very rare: for example, out of over one hundred East Coast Qur'ans inspected,

only four colophons were found. When any additional material is encountered, it is most usually a prayer to be recited on the completion of the reading of the Qur'an.

The Boné Qur'an is exceptional in the quantity and variety of additional textual material found in the manuscript. There are six folios preceding the Qur'an proper, with notes on recitation (*tilāwat*) and on the seven canonical schools of variant readings (*qirā'āt al-sab'*). In the Qur'an proper, in addition to all the textual division markers described above, the margins are frequently full of other annotations, including the variant readings, presented diagonally in contrasting colours of blue and red. At the start of each Sura, in the margin is written a prophetic tradition (*Hadith*) which recommends the reading of that particular Sura; the conventional opening words ("Said the Messenger of God, may the blessings and peace of God be upon him") are always presented in an elaborate *tughra*-like calligraphic composition in red ink, with the text of the tradition in blue ink (fig. 7). There are also many other annotations which have not yet been fully identified. Immediately following the end of the Qur'an is a page containing the colophon, followed by fourteen pages of prayers; one page containing a *qasida* by 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Ma'mūn; a further four pages of prayers; and then an end page, followed by the chart of statistics discussed above.

These preliminaries and end matter are adorned with a considerable array of illuminated elements. There are four single page frames with decorative headpieces (ff. 2v, 519v, 523v, 526v) similar to those which mark the eleventh and twenty-first *Juz'*. Perhaps most striking, in mirrored positions immediately preceding and following the Qur'anic text, are two double pages with eight-lobed cartouches against a ground of red hatching, with above and below large calligraphic panels in reserved white on a black ground. The first pair (ff. 5v–6r) contains notes on recitation, while the second pair (ff. 518v–519r; fig. 10) has the colophon on the right-hand page and a prayer on completion of the Qur'an on the left-hand page. On the final two pages, there is an unusual illuminated composition on the right-hand page (f. 528v), comprising a text panel with three lobed petals on the outer sides, against a square ground of red hatching. The fan-shaped chart of al-Samarqandī sits – or rather balances precariously – on a base of floral scrolls in black ink that has a distinctly European feel to it, as if copied from a stamped printer's ornament marking the end of a chapter in an early printed book. Similar black-ink scrolls adorn a chart at the beginning of the manuscript (f. 2r).

### The Kedah and Ternate Siblings

As is clear from the above discussion, the Boné Qur'an is a magnificent manuscript, conceived and executed on an ambitious artistic and intellectual scale. But it would not be possible to contextualise this manuscript without considering its two "elder brothers", created in the same idiom but separated by decades and hundreds of miles. The Kedah Qur'an, produced half a century earlier on the northwest coast of the Malay peninsula, is currently held in the Great Mosque of the Sultans of Riau, on the island of Penyengat in Riau, Indonesia. Although this would originally have been a superb manuscript, and is calligraphically arguably finer than the Boné Qur'an, the use of black irongall ink, which has since corroded, has more or less destroyed every single page of the book. The preliminary folios are all but lost, and only a surviving

fragment of a fine illuminated page with notes on recitation suggests a parallel with the illuminated frames of the Boné Qur'an immediately preceding the Qur'anic text. There are numerous prayers at the end of the volume, and the final double-page spread contains the colophon in Arabic on the right-hand page, set into a lobed roundel, with on the left-hand page the same statistical chart of Muhammad ibn Mahmūd al-Samarqandī.

According to the colophon, copying was completed on 25 Ramadan 1166 (26 July 1753) in the village of Padang Saujana in the port (*bandar*) of Kedah during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Jīwa Zayn al-'Ādilīn Mu'azzam Shāh (r. 1710–1778) by a scribe named Alī ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jāwī al-Būqisī al-Wājū'ī (i.e. a Muslim from the Malay-speaking world, a Bugis from Wajo' in Sulawesi) from "t.n.gh" (unfortunately damage to the manuscript has made his place of origin illegible), of the Shafī'ī school and the Naqshbandiyya tarikat, a subject of Sultān 'Alā' al-dīn ibn al-Marhūm Opu. This latter regnal name was the official title of the Bugis Viceroy of the kingdom of Johor-Riau, whose court was situated on Penyengat, whither the manuscript was brought at some stage after completion. It is interesting to note that the Boné Qur'an was also completed on 25 Ramadan, suggesting a particularly auspicious association with that date in the holy month of Ramadan.

The third manuscript on a similar scale is the Ternate Qur'an, now held in the Museum Babullah, Ternate. This is a highly revered Qur'an which is kept in a special room together with the royal regalia, and which can only be accessed with the permission of the present Sultan of Ternate himself.<sup>13</sup> Like the Boné Qur'an, the manuscript starts with several pages on recitation, with notes on orthography, pauses, and the study of different Suras, but without the elaborate decorative frames and charts of the Boné Qur'an. Immediately preceding the Qur'anic text is a colophon in Arabic. At the end are two illuminated pages, one containing a *waqf* statement in Malay establishing the status of the Qur'an as a charitable endowment, and the other the statistical chart by al-Samarqandī. The colophon gives the name of the writer as Haji 'Abd al-'Alīm ibn 'Abd al-Hamīd, Imam of the city of Ternate, and the date of completion of the manuscript as 9 Dhu'l-Hijja 1185 (14 March 1772). It is interesting that the *waqf* statement is written in Malay: this is the only portion of text in any of the three manuscripts in the *lingua franca* of the archipelago. Although the manuscript itself is full of proof of the proficiency in Arabic of the literati of Ternate, the Malay inscription was probably inserted to ensure that its *waqf* status was fully understood by a broader audience; the text stresses the inalienable charitable status of the manuscript and that it "cannot be sold or given away or inherited".

The similarities between all three key manuscripts – from Kedah, Ternate and Boné – are remarkable. This is immediately visible in the illumination, not only in the trademark double frames, but also in the single headpieces which adorn the prayers; the colophon page with the inscription in an illuminated roundel with calligraphic panels above and below; and the chart at the end of Qur'anic statistics by al-Samarqandī. All three manuscripts also share the same abundance of marginal annotations, with variant readings and *Hadith* accompanying the start of each Sura. But there are also a few distinct differences in the content of the preliminaries and end matter, and while the Ternate and Boné Qur'ans share the same red calligraphic marginal *Juz'* markers, the Kedah Qur'an has decorative roundels topped with a finial. Both the similarities and the differences

suggest that all three manuscripts are at least second or third generation descendants from a prototype dating probably from the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century.

These three manuscripts are choice representatives of a remarkable school of Islamic manuscript art from Southeast Asia. There is no suggestion that these are artistically the finest manuscripts from the Malay world, for that accolade belongs indubitably to the peerless Qur'ans created at the court of Terengganu. In purely aesthetic terms, the Sulawesi style Qur'ans are notable more for their vigour, self-confidence and unswerving rigour to an architectural model which prevailed wherever these manuscripts might have been created throughout the Malay archipelago, rather than for their artistic finesse or deluxe production (for gold is never used in the illuminated frames in Sulawesi style Qur'ans). Probably the most impressive aspect of these Qur'ans is that they embody the high levels of Qur'anic learning prevalent in the court circles in which they were created. The sheer abundance of supplementary textual material found in these manuscripts speaks of environments steeped in the Qur'anic sciences and familiar with a wide range of classical Arabic sources. And of the three manuscripts, it is the Boné Qur'an in which all these qualities are manifest in the most highly developed form, and which can be regarded as theologically the most complex Southeast Asian Qur'an manuscript yet known.

**Acknowledgements:** I first studied the Boné Qur'an when it appeared in the London saleroom of Christie's in King Street in 2004, but for a chance to examine it in detail in Geneva in June 2008 I would like to thank Benoît Junod of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. For access to the Kedah Qur'an in the Mesjid Raya Sultan Riau in Pulau Penyengat in July 2007 I am grateful to Raja Abdul Rahman, Jan van der Putten and Aswandi. For sharing his notes and photographs on the Ternate Qur'an, and for his continuing critical input, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Ali Akbar. I am also indebted to my colleague Colin Baker, head of the Arabic collections in the British Library, for his patience and help with my myriad queries. Notwithstanding this bounty of assistance, any errors are solely my responsibility.

1 Annabel Teh Gallop, 'The Spirit of Langkasuka? Illuminated Manuscripts from the East Coast of the Malay Peninsula', *Indonesia and the Malay World* 33/96 (2005), 113–182.

2 Leonard Y. Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka: A History of South Sulawesi (Celebes) in the Seventeenth Century* (The Hague 1981), 32.

3 Leonard Y. Andaya, 'The Bugis-Makassar Diasporas', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 68/1, 119–138.

4 The full transliterated text is as follows:

wa-kāna al-firāgh min tahsil al-Qur'ān al-'azim hādihā al-mushaf al-karīm al-majīd nahār al-thalāthah min shahr [R]Jamadān al-karīm sayyid al-ashhār fi waqt al-'asr madat al-khamsa wa'ashrūn yawma min shahr [R]Jamadān al-mubārak fi balad Laiyka [l.y.y.k.a] fi zaman mawlanā al-Sultān Ahmad al-Salih Shams al-milla wa-l-din khalladahu Allāh mulkahu wa-sultānahu wa-ayyad 'adlahu wa-sultānahu fi bandar balad Būni fi 'ām al-alf min hijra al-nabawiyya sanat 1219 alf wa-mi'atayn tisa'at 'ashr sanat 'alā sāhibiha afdal al-salāt wa-azki al-taslim bi-khatt al-faqir al-haqir al-da'if al-mu'taraf bi-al-dhanab wa-l-taqdir al-rāji ālā ghafūr rabbihī al-karīm Ismā'il ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Jāwī al-Mankāsari nasaban wa-mawladan wa-al-Shāfi'i madhhaban wa-al-Naqshabandi tariqatan ghāfar Allāh lahum wa-li-wālidayhim wa-li-jami' al-muslimin wa-l-muslimāt āmin.

5 With thanks to Ian Caldwell for this identification (personal communication, 16 June 2008). As the Southeast Asian phoneme 'ng' is not found in Arabic, the toponym 'Laikang' would tend to be written 'Laika' or 'Laikan' in Arabic.

6 Rahilah Omar, *The history of Boné AD 1775-1795: the diary of Sultan Ahmad as-Salleh Syamsuddin*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis (University of Hull 2003), 252.

7 *Ibid.*, 226, quoting from British Library, Add.12354, f. 106r.

8 Ali Akbar, 'Menggalikan khazanah kaligrafi Nusantara: telaah ragam gaya tulisan dalam mushaf kuno', *Jurnal lektur keagamaan* 2/1 (2004), 57–72.

9 Gallop, 'The spirit of Langkasuka', 166–167.

10 Colin F. Baker, *Qur'an Manuscripts: Calligraphy, Illumination, Design* (London 2007), 30, 44.

11 For examples of similar composite roundels in manuscripts from the East Coast of the Malay peninsula, see Annabel Teh Gallop 'Islamic manuscript art of Southeast Asia', in James Bennet (ed.), *Crescent Moon: Islamic Art & Civilisation in Southeast Asia* (Adelaide 2005), 158–183, esp. 179, plate 37.

12 C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur* (Leiden 1937), 727; Peter Stocks, *Subject-guide to the Arabic manuscripts in the British Library* (London 2001), 9.

13 This manuscript was studied by Ali Akbar in 2008, and the following notes are based on his unpublished writings and photographs (see Ali Akbar, *Mushaf Sultan Ternate tertua di Nusantara: Menelaah ulang kolofon*, forthcoming).