

## ORNAMENT CHARACTER AND CULTURAL MANIFESTATION

### Illumination of Madurese Qur'anic Manuscripts

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#### Abstract

This study aims to discern the arrangement patterns of ornaments that give illumination a distinctive character in the Qur'anic manuscript in Madura. Employing a qualitative method and utilizing a history of the idea analysis process, this research reveals a significant correlation between the ornamental features in the Qur'anic manuscripts and the carving art patterns that flourished in Madura during the 19th century. The *per-samper* structure as an edge decoration, *onggelan* in the creation of floral motifs, and the incorporation of chakra motifs on the *ko-seko* (corner) attest to the representation of a unique carving culture inherent in Madurese art, as manifested in the illuminated Qur'anic manuscript. The illustrator forms simple patterns and image structures by omitting detailed ornaments. The simple shapes and patterns are identified as the impact of the abstraction model of art products through imitation. Nevertheless, the dominant aspect that shows a distinctive artistic tendency in the Madurese tradition is represented in the use of colors that are characteristic of Madurese color selection in their art products.

**Keywords:** culture representation, arts, illuminated quranic manuscript.

## **Karakter Ornamen dan Manifestasi Budaya: Iluminasi Manuskrip Al-Qur'an Madura**

### **Abstrak**

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi pola penyusunan ornamen yang membentuk iluminasi sebagai karakter spesifik dari salinan manuskrip Al-Qur'an di Madura. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan proses analisis menggunakan sejarah pemikiran. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa karakter ornamen dalam manuskrip Al-Qur'an di Madura sangat identik dengan pola dan gaya seni ukir yang berkembang di Madura pada abad ke-19. Struktur persamper yang menjadi hiasan pinggir, onggelan pada pembuatan motif floral, dan penggunaan motif cakra pada bagian ko-seko (siku) membuktikan representasi budaya ukir yang khas pada karakter seni Madura termanifestasi dalam iluminasi manuskrip Al-Qur'an. Ilustrator membentuk pola dan struktur gambar yang sederhana dengan meninggalkan ornamen detail. Bentuk dan pola yang sederhana teridentifikasi sebagai dampak dari model abstraksi produk seni melalui proses imitasi. Meskipun demikian, aspek dominan yang menunjukkan kecenderungan seni yang khas dalam tradisi Madura terepresentasi pada penggunaan warna yang representatif dengan karakter pemilihan warna masyarakat Madura pada produk-produk seninya.*

**Kata kunci:** representasi budaya, seni, iluminasi mushaf Al-Qur'an.

الطابع الزخرفي والمظاهر الثقافية: زخرفة مخطوطات القرآن الكريم المادورية

### **ملخص**

يهدف هذا البحث إلى التعرف على أنماط التركيب الزخرفي الذي يشكل الزخرفة كصفة خاصة لنسخ مخطوطات القرآن الكريم في مادورا. يستخدم هذا البحث المنهج النوعي مع عملية تستخدم تحليل الفكر التاريخي. وقد توصل هذا البحث إلى أن الحروف أو الأسماء الموجودة في مخطوطات القرآن الكريم في مادورا متطابقة إلى حد كبير مع أسلوب وأنماط الفن النحتي التي تطورت في مادورا في القرن التاسع عشر. إن هيكل بير سامبير (-) الذي يشكل زخرفة الهامش، وطريقة الأونجيلان ( ) في صنع الزخارف الزهرية، واستخدام شكل الدائرة ( ) على الكوسيكو (الزاوية القائمة) يثبت تمثيل ثقافة النحت المميزة لطابع الفن المادوري الذي يتجلى في زخرفة مخطوطة القرآن الكريم. تحتوي الصور على أشكال وأنماط بسيطة بعيدة عن التفاصيل الدقيقة. ويتم التعرف على أن هذه الأشكال والأنماط البسيطة حدثت بتأثير النموذج التجريدي للمنتجات الفنية من خلال عملية التقليد. ومع ذلك، فإن الجانب المهيمن الذي يظهر الاتجاهات الفنية الفريدة في التقليد المادوري يتمثل في استخدام الألوان التي تمثل طابع اختيارات الألوان للشعب المادوري في منتجاتهم الفنية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تمثيل الثقافة، الفن، زخرفة مخطوطات القرآن الكريم

## Introduction

Cultural characteristics seen in the patterns and styles of ornamentation in Qur'anic manuscript illuminations (Gallop 1991, 2004, 2012), are similarly found, though in a more reduced manner, in Madurese Qur'anic manuscripts. The rudimentary and unembellished decoration adheres to the rules of carving art derived from Madurese tradition, significantly impacted by Hindu-Buddhist and Chinese heritage (BA 1980: 9; Hakim 2017). This illustrates the integration of various cultural values into the process of reproducing the Qur'anic *mushaf*. Nonetheless, the ornamentation exhibits a deficiency in detail, precision, and deliberate placement, indicating that the copyists possessed inadequate abilities in carving or illustrating (Junginger et al. 2020). The selection of ornamentation in Madurese illuminations, in addition to cultural preservation, is influenced by socio-religious variables that navigate the convergence of art and religion (Bouvier 2002: 348). Within the Madurese Islamic society, the rigid demarcation between art and religion precludes the use of non-Islamic decorative elements in the Qur'an. Cultural representations are consequently restricted to patterns and themes that adhere to Islamic precepts in the production of illuminations.

Various studies have explored the mechanisms of cultural representation in the ornamentation of Qur'anic manuscript illuminations, revealing three main trends. First, the identification of forms and patterns in the codicological aspect. These studies focus on the identification of ornamental patterns, revealing both floral and geometric motifs rendered in varying degrees of complexity (Parwanto and Riyani 2023; Syariin and Jamaluddin 2021). Second, cultural representation in illumination. Researchers have linked these patterns to Indonesia's traditional heritage, arguing for cultural representation through motifs reflecting theological values (Azmi and Abdullah 2018), nature conservation through floral designs (Rahma Nst 2023), and broader cultural narratives (Izzah, Supriyanto, and Nur 2022). Third, the material composition of the illuminations. Scientific techniques such as carbon microprobe analysis and  $\mu$ -Raman spectroscopy have been used to examine the inks and pigments used, situating the manuscripts as cultural artefacts (Darzi et al. 2021; Haskovic and Ibragic 2022). Other studies analyse the composition of floral and geometric ornaments to infer their functional role in Qur'anic manuscripts (Al-Yassiry and Twajj 2020; Khasawneh 2020). In the context of Madurese manuscripts, Abdul Hakim (2017) identified ornamental patterns that closely resemble local carving motifs and positioned them as cultural representations. However, Hakim's approach focuses on the

alignment of motifs without considering the perceptions of the illuminator in creating regionally distinct ornamental identities. The lack of research into the perceptual factors that shape cultural identity in illumination highlights a gap in scholarship, leaving this critical dimension underexplored.

This research aims to fill a gap in the study of the perceptual structures that inspire illuminators to create ornamental designs. It does so by focusing on three main themes. The first examines the tendencies and patterns of ornament as foundational elements in the illumination of Qur'anic manuscripts in Madura. This section explores the variety of ornamentation descriptively in order to reveal the basic structures underlying Qur'anic manuscript decoration. The second is to identify similarities between the ornamental patterns in Qur'anic manuscript illumination and the decorative tendencies found in traditional Madurese art forms. The third is to explore the cultural identity of Qur'anic manuscript in Madura through comparison between artistic expression in decorative motif and the traditional preferences of art form. The cultural identity form has been identified to preferences of illuminators in selecting specific pattern for decorating Qur'anic scribes. The three aspects can be retrieved perceptual structure of illuminators to create ornamental designs in Madura's Qur'an.

This study is based on the argumentation that the perceptual structure of illuminators is influenced by abstraction to ornaments that exist in material heritage as artistic tradition of Madurese. This artistic heritage becomes a part of cultural memories that guide the illuminator to select specific models and patterns that are considered suitable for decorating the Qur'an. The cultural memories drive the illuminator to translate them into creative expression, resulting in new variations in the models and patterns with identical style to the carving art in the material heritage (Reid 1852: 504). The creative process is approached differently by artists who lack aesthetic sense and enthusiasm, relying instead on imitation motivated by visual similarity. This approach disregards the cultural values that underpin the creation of images in favour of focusing on the formal and technical reproduction of such images (Nilsson 2021). However, the forms and patterns of decoration in Madurese Qur'anic manuscripts change as a result of the transfer and adaptation of images by culturally aware individuals based on their understanding of art. This reflects changing cultural expressions.

This study uses qualitative methods to analyse the influence of differences in aesthetic intuition on the ornamentation seen in the illumination of Qur'anic manuscripts. This strategy is chosen for its ability

to abstract processes and reveal the deeper meanings of the ornamentation that enhances the illumination of the *mushaf* (Maxwell 2021). This study relies on two sources of data, primary and secondary. The primary source of data will be obtained from three manuscripts through the website [seamushaf.kemenag.go.id](http://seamushaf.kemenag.go.id) and the catalogue of illuminated *mushafs* published by the Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an 2015). Secondary data will be obtained from many literary sources, including studies of carvings, masks and relevant narratives that depict 19th century Madurese culture. The data collected will be examined using the triangulation model (Miles and Huberman 1984), which involves data reduction, analysis and inference. For further analysis, this study uses Arthur Lovejoy's intellectual history theory to analyse the similarity aspect to confirm the identical ornamentation between the illuminator's perception and the artistic material in Madurese culture (Lovejoy 2019). The comprehensive methodology is a support to identify the influence of aesthetic intuition on ornamentation in the illumination of Madurese Qur'anic manuscripts.

#### **Madura and art: Artistry within the framework of myth and acculturation**

Researching the history of art and culture in Madura before the reign of Arya Wiraraja is a challenging task. The archaeological evidence is scarce with a dominant source based on local myths, believed by the community for generations. The information that enough observes from Soelarto (n.d.: 7) argument that the art character in Madurese tradition become influenced form Majapahit kingdom. The other information is taken from folklore that believed by Madura's people to describe the history of his culture of art. In this story, the art identically of a pride from the origins that a sailor rides a boat to far through the vast ocean to Madura land. The pride of the boat has become a symbol that decorate their daily things. Sulaiman (1980: 9) argues that the ornament of boat is a part of ornament in the roofs of traditional houses, known as *tanean lajeng* (long yard), a symbol of pride and bravery. The difference model of pride was given by Madurese inland that the previous livelihood became a farmer. They prefer to use the plant motifs to ornament for decoration. This deferent symbolizes a distinct cultural identity influenced by socio-economic situations to express the artistic and cultural in Madura people.

Socio-economic factors and entrenched myths strongly influence artistic and cultural expression in Madura. A notable example is the customs of the Karduluk community, an important art centre in Sumenep.

They perpetuate the tradition of Sungging Prabangkara, an esteemed master carver. In this story, the king commissioned Prabangkara to create a portrait of the queen. Because his portrait depicted a private organ of the queen, he angered the king and was ordered to mend a flying kite. Prabangkara climbed up the kite by its string, but the king, consumed by animosity, cut the string while Prabangkara fell with his chisel. The falling chisels scattered all over Bali, Karduluk, Jepara and China, transforming these places into centres of creativity. In Karduluk, where his tools were discovered, it is believed that he acquired the talent for creativity (BA 1980: 25). This belief in innate artistic talent was institutionalised within the community, encouraging an instinctive approach to artistic expression. Sulaiman observes that the art produced in Madura is often executed without prior sketching, resulting in creations that are simple, bold and asymmetrical (BA 1980: 76).

Religious aesthetic expression makes distinctive patterns a manifestation of beauty in the Madurese people, created without sketching. Religious themes that are emphasised, including *meru*, *lingga*, *makara* and *swastika* patterns, characterise indigenous carvings manifest in numerous forms. This is evident in the motifs derived from external sources, inspired by sculptures transported from Java with Singosari-Majapahit artistic influence. The need to import artistic materials from Java was partly due to the shortage of andesite stone, the primary material for statue making, in the Madura region. There is also a strong Chinese influence, especially in the Sumenep region. Motifs such as the phoenix and the *qilin* are examples of this cultural interaction (Lombard 1996: 317). These influences are linked to Arya Wiraraja's historical links with China, which facilitated bilateral relations and the exchange of gifts (BA 1980: 19). Over time, the Chinese-inspired motifs were transformed into a unique Madurese style, known locally as *sekat pacenan* (Chinese style), which added to the creative diversity of the region.

### **Types of illumination in Madurese Qur'anic manuscripts**

Illuminations are ornamental features added to the margins of the handwritten text, characterized by various decorations enhanced with vivid colours (Hutchinson 1926). The addition of ornament decorated manuscripts has been known in Buddhist scriptures tradition in the 2nd century AD with palm leaf designs. The writing or calligraphy that was made before was enhanced with various ornaments and art to be more aesthetic and appear a cultural identity (Losty 2013: 15). The task of this making was separated between the scribe as the writer of the text and the

illuminator as the designer of the ornamentation. Ornamentation in this period focused on unique 'boxes' for embellishment and continued to develop with different models and styles of design. To facilitate collaboration, the scribe usually added framed parts to facilitate the illuminator to finish their work with ornamental artistry while allowing for autonomous work (Teall 1899). The separate work in writing and drawing for the production of the manuscript brings up distinct space between text and ornament that special character in manuscript illumination.

The ornamental structure bordering the main text is evident in the illumination of Madurese Qur'anic manuscripts, with typical placement at the key section. A double frame pattern is used. This style is typically characteristic of the illumination of Indonesian manuscripts placed at the beginning (surah al-Fātiḥah and al-Baqarah), middle (surah al-Kahf), and end (surah al-Falaq and an-Nās) of the Qur'an. The use of the double frame design has formed a unified visual composition, incorporating symmetrical patterns and aesthetic ornamentation into the fold of the manuscript. The text box in Madurese Qur'anic manuscripts was surrounded by a small, thick box with rectangular borders richly decorated with ornaments. While the basic style of ornamentation is in keeping with the wider Islamic tradition, Madurese identity is clearly expressed through the specific line techniques, colour schemes and motifs employed.

The ingenuity of the Madurese Qur'anic manuscript illumination is evident in the double frame technique with the fulfilment of the ornament in the border box. The ornament is drawn with repeated technique surrounding the text box. This ornament is bordered by other ornaments surrounded with rectangular ornaments decorated with decorative motifs. The upper and lower parts were completed with decorative crowns shaped as semicircles, ogival domes or triangles. The semi-circular crowns were often topped with tail-like decorations to enhance their visual appeal. The outer box is drawn in a style that varies from manuscript to manuscript.

Other ornaments surrounded with rectangular ornaments decorated with decorative motifs. The upper and lower parts were completed with decorative crowns shaped as semicircles, ogival domes or triangles. The semi-circular crowns were often topped with tail-like decorations to enhance their visual appeal. The outer box is drawn in a style that varies from manuscript to manuscript.

In some cases, the text box is surrounded by a more elaborate decorative frame that encompasses the entire ornament. Some have an additional rectangular box with elaborate ornamentation, while others have an outer frame bordered by two vertical rectangles with rounded



edges. All the ornamentation is enhanced by the striking, vibrant colour gradations typical of the Madurese style.



(a) (b) (c)  
**Figure 1.** (a) manuscript collection of Nyi Yun, Batang-batang Sumenep, Madura; (b) manuscript collection of Haji Faisol, Batang-batang Sumenep Madura; (c) manuscript collection of PTIQ Jakarta from Bangkalan Madura  
(Source: LPMQ Ministry of Religious Affairs)

Significantly, the blank spaces in the manuscripts, as exemplified by the Haji Faisol collection (figure 1.b.), indicate that the responsibilities of transcription and illumination were carried out by different individuals. This is consistent with Gallop's (2004) findings on Acehese Qur'anic manuscripts.

The identification of the illuminators as Madurese is evident in the preferences of the colour pigments used in the ornamentation of Madurese Qur'anic manuscripts. The use of striking colours, with blue, red, yellow, white, green and black dominating the ornamental visual, is an identical preference in Madurese art, especially in the production of batik colours. The combination of green and black was collided; it is evident in numerous manuscripts, often the predominant red is used more. The colouring of the crown and rectangular box frames serves as a basic background for the vibrant decoration (see figure 1). In many regions, the ornamentation is deliberately left uncolored to reveal the natural colour of the paper. This creates a contrast that accentuates the motifs and enhances the visual impact of the ornaments.

The contrasting accentuation of ornament in Madurese Qur'anic manuscripts was to bring the visual establishment to the main text. This function appears in Anja Grebe's (2006: 46) argument that the ornament in manuscript not only for decorative purpose, but persuasive function to



enhance the text and make connections between the text and the surrounding ornament in illuminated manuscript. The incorporation of decorative patterns and colours gives a manuscript a unique personality, even without explicit details in the colophon. Farouk Yahya (2021) determined the provenance of the Trengganu manuscript by examining the application of specific colours - gold, black, red, light blue and white - alongside the texture of the paper. This illustrates how the choice of colour serves as an indicator of a manuscript's provenance. The design and colour variations in Qur'ānic manuscript illuminations function as visual markers of regional identity that go beyond the verbal information documented in the colophon.

The identical styles of illumination structure in Madurese Qur'ānic manuscripts recall interconnected tradition on decorative patterns across different regions in Indonesia. The specific character is evident in elongated blocks filled with complex ornamentation, often bordered by rectangular or oval lines surrounding a text box with a full fill ornament. This character was used in various manuscripts in the archipelago. Gallop (2004) identified this character in the Acehese manuscript with the similar identification of ornamentation. Although this character is a representation of cultural heritage, like Timothy Berhren's (2005) identification of Javanese manuscripts in Yogyakarta, the similar patterns highlighted in illumination style. The distinction of illumination styles in Indonesian manuscripts is obviously in the detailing of ornamentation, which adopts the unique local art tradition as a cultural manifestation.

### **Cultural Memory in Madurese Qur'ānic Manuscript Ornaments**

Ornament is the main element in the illumination structure of the manuscript, reflecting the preferences of artistic tendencies of the illuminator. This duty is entrusted to skilled people who are capable of combining the complex structure of artistic style, allowing the cultural representation embodied in the ornament. The cultural manifestation is apparent from ornamental choices that were matched to artistic models and styles of the time (Kauffmann 2008: 479). The compatibility of artistic models with the cultural style in the time becomes a trait to identify the historical context of a manuscript's creation. Monika Jakubek-Raczkowska (2023) uses this connections model to analyse the ornamentation in the Gdańsk, Poland manuscript with remarkable precision, identifying specific ornamental patterns to their corresponding producing period. Therefore, the ornament in the manuscript, beyond the function of decoration, is also the element that embodies the cultural identity and transforms these

elements into vessels of collective cultural memory.

Cultural expression in the illumination of Madurese Qur'anic manuscripts is seen in several decorative styles that embody the aesthetic conventions of local architecture. An illustrative example is the application of finials to semi-circular arch troughs, often resembling buds (see figure 1). These bud-shaped finials act as vertex markers and are similar to the decoration characteristic of traditional Madurese buildings. The roof ornamentation of these houses generally consists of two horn-like projections at either end, forming a boat-like outline - a distinctive feature of coastal Madura (BA 1980: 10). Houses in the interior have a different characteristic, with botanical ornamentation representing livelihoods.



Figure 2. Variety of Madurese house top decoration  
(Source: Sulaiman BA [1980])

The bud-shaped finials on the semi-circular arches signify cultural influences in the pattern of ornamental choices to represent cultural identity. The cultural manifestation in the ornament can be used to identify the place where the manuscript was made.

The ornamentation characteristic of the Madurese tradition is prominently depicted in Qur'anic manuscripts through the use of *onggellan* in various styles. *Onggellan*, a decorative element traditionally applied to the *lenggi* (the bow of a boat), embodies the Madurese philosophy of *abental ombe', asapo' angen* (cushioned by the waves, covered by the wind) (BA 1981: 67).



Figure 3. Variety of *onggellan* style  
(Source: Sulaiman BA [1980])

The variation style of *onggellan* has transformation patterns adapted into intricate models with leaf-like motifs and borders as part of the illuminators' creative arrangements. The designs frequently used incorporated floral elements to enrich the ornament of *onggellan* to the decorated borders of text boxes. It is points that blend artistic heritage in

religious manuscripts through illumination.

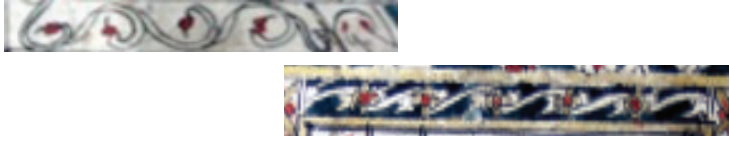


Figure 4. Variety of *onggelan* application  
(Source: LPMQ Ministry of Religious Affairs)

Another prominent ornament found in the head and tail areas resembles the ring netting commonly found in Madurese house decoration. This motif, known as *nyeor ondung* (BA 1980: 140), is characterised by simplicity and boldness and features plant stems. The *nyeor ondung* design creates many empty spaces called *lapadan*, with the motifs emanating from a base called *bonggol*. The variation style of the *nyeor ondung* motif uses a *jangoleng* pattern culminating in twisted leaves (BA 1981: 103). This *jangoleng* pattern is suitable for large spaces with an irregular and unpatterned style represented as *selanjengah ajelen alengleng apale'* (along creeping, twisting and curving) (BA 1980: 139). This motif gives a simple impression, with a minimum of foliage and abundant fruit imagery.



In some cases, the *ring-jaring* (ring net decoration) (Fig. 5) resembles the *Kala* motif, which is widely known for its symmetrical plant stylisations. The creation of the *jangoleng* motif follows the principle of *oleng sanyamana* (turning at will), resulting in its asymmetrical design. In addition, the *jangoleng* motif is often used as a fringe ornament, adding to its decorative versatility.

The ornamentation of the borderline in Madurese Qur'anic manuscripts, which functioned as an outer border, appears in the *les-lesan* or *per-samper* pattern. Its pattern is often decorated with *jangoleng* and *onggelan* motifs. In some manuscripts, the border is decorated with *banji kembang* in geometric patterns or jasmine flowers with accentuated

elongated leaves.



Figure 6. *Per-samper* ornament  
(Source: LPMQ Ministry of Religious Affairs)

The intersections of two blocks known as *ko-seko* are decorated with motifs resembling the jasmine flower. The jasmine flower ornament, often found in traditional Madurese house decorations in various *ko-seko* sections, is modified from a *chakra* ornament. Transformation of the *chakra* ornament used in Madurese ornament, sometimes formed by thin or broad leaves assembled to resemble a flower.

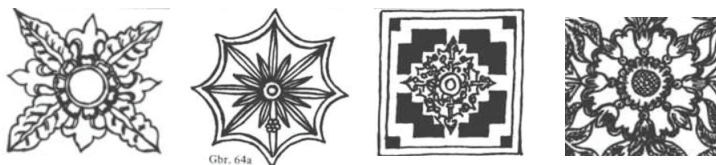


Figure 7. Variety of *chakra*  
(Source: Sulaiman BA [1980])

The *chakra* ornamentation is inspired by sculptural traditions deeply rooted in Madurese cultural tradition which is a result of intersections of artistic culture with Javanese tradition.

The manifestation of the carving ornament in the illumination retrieves the connection between the product of the art of carving and the illuminator of the Qur'anic manuscripts. The dominant aspect of similarity has proved that the art of carving inspired the creator of illumination. The thin modification of ornamental structure was influenced by the creativity of the illuminator to increase the establishment of the fusion of art forms in religious material. Aesthetic perception of illuminators also localized artistic patterns to new forms of ornament. The new transformation of ornamentation, in turn, creates a new cultural expression of beauty (Lovejoy 2017: 10). However, the creation of new ornaments based on inspiration or imitation often rejects the unique aesthetic values of the

original works. Nominalism, which is a process in the unification of ideas leading to the reproduction of similar artistic expressions in different contexts (Lovejoy 2017: 10), appears. Therefore, the detailed ornamentation in Madurese Qur'anic manuscripts is lacking.

The perception of illuminators to different form of art in Madurese culture plays an important role in accentuating ornament in Qur'anic manuscripts. Abstraction of the *ko-seko*, *jenggolong* and *per-samper* depended on the aesthetic skills of the illuminator to make ideal manifestation in the manuscript. The manifestation of cultural heritage in ornamentation of manuscript is rooted from perceptual experiences to strengthen cultural preservation and cultural memory within Qur'anic manuscripts (Wiener 1963). However, the difference in skill between the illuminator of Qur'anic manuscripts and the carver in establishing ornament obscures any objective standard of ornamental identity, making cultural attribution difficult. The illuminator's concern to embellish the manuscript through complex forms of ornamentation distorted the authentic idea of cultural ornamentation in Madurese art. Helene Bouvier (2002) claimed that aesthetic perception on art in Madura people is personal and shows a deep spiritual connection to philosophical values related to his inner experience. Despite the potential for value distortion, the cultural representation embedded in the ornamental choices is evident the manifestation of cultural heritage in the illumination of Qur'anic manuscripts.

### **Illuminators' Preferences in Madurese Qur'anic manuscript: Cultural Identity and Representation**

The ornamentation of Madurese Qur'anic manuscripts with aesthetic designs and patterns crafted to enhance visual appeal represents the cultural essence of the Madurese people. Its manifestation is evident in the decorations of cultural consciousness expressed through asymmetrical and simple floral stylizations. These specific characters of floral designs are identical to the traditional plant motifs found in Madurese carving art. Ornamentation commonly used in everyday life, particularly in the construction of houses, is prominently integrated into *Mushaf* illumination. Motifs such as roof patterns, ring-net (*ring-jaring*) vines, and elbow ornaments (*ko-seko*) are frequently found in the decorations that adorn the beginning, middle, and end of the Qur'an. Similarly, the ornaments traditionally used to decorate boats—essential to the livelihood of the Madurese—are also reflected in these illuminations.

The presence of patterns synonymous with carving and various other

art in illuminations forms serves as a reservoir of shared cultural memory. The abstraction of these designs, without elaboration in detail, emerges through the perception of artistic creations embodied in everyday objects, in line with aesthetic goals (Womack 2005: 26). Its indication, the imitation techniques in the abstraction of artistic design are applied. It means the illuminator lacked formal artistic expertise in carving art and relied on duplication techniques. The similarity aspect of pattern and design can be reliable in these techniques, excluding the deeper values, principles, and philosophies inherent in the original carving ornament. But the purpose of cultural preservation in the duplication technique can be reliable. Meltzoff (1988) and Carpenter et al. (1998) claimed that imitation of various ornaments is encouraged by a common purpose through common preferences in adopted specific cultural behaviour. In the case of Madurese Qur'anic manuscripts, the use of similar ornamental designs reflects copyists' efforts to enhance the visual appeal of the *mushaf*, drawing inspiration from cultural memory preserved in carvings embedded in everyday tools and objects.

The resemblance of the ornamentation in Madurese Qur'anic manuscripts to decorative patterns found on carved everyday objects suggests that the *mushaf* illuminators imitated structures and patterns without strict adherence to ornamental detail. The absence of *benangan*, misrepresentation of *kala* and inaccurate depictions of *chakras* reveal a lack of familiarity with the precise artistic principles of traditional decoration. The reliability of identical pattern and style in the visualization of ornament reinforces imitation technique as a central feature of ornamental production (Batteux 2015: 12). Similarly, the incorporation of ornamentation influenced by Hindu culture reflects a gap in the establishment of a distinct Islamic artistic identity in Madura (Bouvier 2002: 348). While the technical nuances of Madurese carving are overlooked in favour of visual similarity, this does not diminish the aesthetic function of the ornaments, thereby justifying their use as decorative elements (Rix and Emmitt 2022). The imitation technique used by illuminators to produce the ornamentation of Madurese Qur'anic manuscripts reflects the carving tradition embedded in their cultural environment.

The incorporation of decorations in Madurese Qur'anic manuscripts, serving just as decorative features devoid of philosophical significance, indicates that illumination embodies individual artistic expression. Andreea Stoicescu (2021) identifies a comparable trend in the application of ornaments in religious texts, ascribing it to personal expression rather than religious value orientation. Similar conclusions by Saba Qais al-Yassiry

and Imad Hmoud Twajj (2020) indicate that the main objective of illumination in the mushaf is artistic stabilization, accomplished through the simplicity of designs derived from various art forms. Likewise, Fuad Eyad Fuad Khasawneh emphasizes the impact of the copyist's aesthetic judgments on the structure and purpose of illumination in Qur'anic manuscripts (Khasawneh 2020). These examples of personal expression through ornamentation highlight the function of illumination as a decorative element that increases the aesthetic appeal of the Qur'anic mushaf.

The function of ornament in manuscript illumination, reflecting individual preferences, is the illuminators' abstraction and sensitivity to cultural art manifestation within their surroundings. Gallop (2004) showed that the ornamental uniqueness of the woven rope pattern in Acehese manuscripts is the illuminators' understanding of local artistic traditions in Acehese culture. The strength of the illuminators' perception of the artistic manifestation in the cultural material influenced its manifestation in the illumination, thus making it local. Therefore, Gallop (2012) showed the different identity of ornamentation used in different manuscripts in Java with their own uniqueness and creative character. The different decorative choices of the illuminators, shaped by their artistic interpretations, highlight the diversity of decoration in accordance with the cultural uniqueness of their region. Gallop's study of Malay manuscripts in the British Library collection reinforces the link between cultural memory and creative expression, revealing a diverse range of decorative forms (Gallop 1991).

The inclination of artistic method among Qur'anic illuminators has become a significant subject for subsequent scholarship grounded in hasty arguments. Nur Izzah et al. (2022) detected the similarities in the ornamentation of the Qur'anic manuscript Hj. Fatimah Siti Hartinah Soeharto and the artistic traditions of Indonesia. The influences of local artistry in Acehese manuscripts were studied by Niko Andeska et al. (2019) to highlight the connections between local creative tradition and manuscript ornamentation. The researcher's abstraction model to identify the connection between local traditional art and ornament in illumination, based on their similarity aspect. This analysis model can be observed by the perceptual mechanism and appear with the logical argumentation. However, other researchers have identified ornamental production in illumination by apologetic tendencies to connect this purpose with mystical tendencies. Riswadi Azmi and Mustaffa Abdullah (2018) connected the floral motifs with emblems of divine beauty, similarly to Nailan Rahma



(2023), who considered them as representations of the preservation of nature in line with divine intention. This study is in a position that the production of ornamentation in manuscripts is based on individual imitation of material arts without embodied mystical values, philosophies, and original purposes of cultural artistry.

The self-expression in ornamental embellishment based on imitation technique shown in the understated illuminations of Madurese Qur'anic manuscripts underlines their function as complementary aesthetic components. Philosophical and religious values in the absence of the illuminator's motif in the ornamental production of the Madurese Qur'anic manuscript. Bouvier (2002:348) claimed that the thick boundaries between religion and art in Madurese Islamic culture could only allow for acculturation by integrating one element into the other. The floral and geometric themes, which are inextricably linked to particular cultural frameworks, come from a cultural memory formed through repeated reproduction in many artistic expressions as part of integrating models. The process of integration depends on individual abstraction and its artistic interpretation to make the decorative embellishments in the Qur'anic manuscript decorative rather than religious expressions.

## **Conclusion**

The manifestation of cultural artistry in the illumination of Qur'anic manuscripts founded in this study depends on the illuminator's preferences for art surrounding the time of production. This is to strengthen the links between the artistic expression of the illuminator with cultural identity, founded in line with previous study. The rudimentary artistic expression in ornamental production suggests that the abstraction of art was rooted in imitating process to various carved products and mask art in Madurese tradition. The imitating mechanism to artistic products fails to fully convey the theological and mystical values embodied in Madurese traditional art. Omission of the fundamental values from the mystical tradition of Madurese art is evident in the function of ornamental in Qur'anic manuscripts, primarily as decorative purposes.

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Madurese tradition. The imitating mechanism to artistic product fails to fully convey the theological and mystical values embodied on Madurese traditional art. Omission of the fundamental values from mystical tradition of Madurese art is evident the function of ornamental in Qur'anic manuscripts primarily as decorative purposes.

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