

# The Difference of Illumination Characteristics of the *Sharaf al-Anām* in British Library and Leiden University Library

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## Abstract

*Sharaf al-Anām* is a prominent *mawlid* text traditionally recited during the commemoration of Prophet Muhammad's birth. This text enjoys widespread composition and utilization across the Muslim world, including Southeast Asia. The manuscript of *Sharaf al-Anām* is typically adorned with decorative ornaments encircling the text. This study investigates the ornamental illumination of two *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscripts housed in the EAP British Library and the Digital Collections of Leiden University Libraries. The former manuscript originates from Sri Lanka, while the provenance of the latter remains unidentified. Both manuscripts present Arabic text with interlinear Malay translations and are aesthetically decorated with diverse styles and patterns. The study analyzed the structural features, ornamental patterns and color designs of the illuminations in these manuscripts. It further explores the potential influences that may have contributed to the presence of such illuminations. This study found notable distinction as observed in the illumination characteristics between the *Sharaf al-Anām* in the EAP British Library collection and that in the Digital Collection of Leiden University Libraries. The comparison suggests that factors such as the provenance of the manuscripts, the artistic quality of the illuminator and the inherent creativity in the work may have contributed to this

distinction. This study underscores the importance of these factors in understanding the diversity and richness of manuscript illumination in the Muslim world.

**Keywords:** *Manuscripts, Sharaf al-Anām, Illumination, Style and Patterns*

### **Abstrak**

*Sharaf al-Anām merupakan kitab maulid terkenal yang biasa dibacakan dalam rangka memperingati kelahiran Nabi Muhammad SAW. Teks maulid ini disusun dan digunakan secara luas di seluruh dunia Muslim, tidak terkecuali di Asia Tenggara. Umumnya naskah Sharaf al-Anām dihiasi dengan ornament yang menghias di sekeliling teks. Artikel ini membahas tentang iluminasi dua naskah Sharaf al-Anām yang masing-masing berada dalam koleksi EAP British Library dan Digital Collections Leiden University Libraries. Naskah pertama berasal dari Sri Lanka, sedangkan naskah kedua tidak diketahui asal usulnya. Kedua naskah tersebut berbahasa Arab dengan terjemahan interlinear ke dalam bahasa Melayu. Iluminasi dalam naskah-naskah ini dihias dengan sangat indah dengan gaya dan motif yang berbeda-beda. Ciri khas kedua iluminasi Sharaf al-Anām dianalisis dari segi struktur, ornamentasi motif, dan warna. Kemudian, faktor-faktor yang mungkin mempengaruhi karakteristik iluminasi di kedua naskah tersebut dikaji. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa dalam hal karakteristik iluminasi, terdapat perbedaan yang mencolok antara Sharaf al-Anām dalam koleksi EAP British Library dan Sharaf al-Anām dalam Koleksi Digital Perpustakaan Universitas Leiden. Berdasarkan perbandingan dua naskah, faktor yang mungkin mempengaruhi karakteristik tersebut adalah asal usul naskah dan kualitas seni dan kreativitas. Studi ini menekankan pentingnya memahami faktor-faktor ini untuk lebih memperkaya khazanah iluminasi naskah di dunia Islam.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Naskah, Sharaf al-Anām, Iluminasi, Gaya dan Motif.*

### **Introduction**

*Sharaf al-Anām*, translated as “The Noble Man,” is a renowned *mawlid* text traditionally recited during the commemoration of Prophet Muhammad’s birth. The term *Sharaf al-Anām* is derived from the Arabic words ‘Sharaf’, meaning noble, and ‘anām’, thus collectively signifying “noble man” (Saputra, 2020). This text was composed by the Andalusian scholar al-Shaykh al-Imām Shihāb al-

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Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Qasim al-Māliki al-Bukhārī al-Andalusī al-Mursī al-Lakhmī al-Masyhūr al-Ḥarīrī, more commonly known as al-Ḥarīrī, around the tenth century (Akmaluddin, 2020).

The influence of Ṣḥaraf al-Anām spread across Arab regions in the late twelfth century, impacting various languages and cultures (Weinrich, 2022). Since then, this *mawḥid* text has been widely adopted and used among Muslim communities worldwide, including Malay communities in Southeast Asia. It is recited during specific occasions and ceremonies as a form of religious practice (Khoiri & Faristiana, 2021). Like other *mawḥid* texts such as Dalā'il Khayrāt (Yahya, 2021), the text of Ṣḥaraf al-Anām is typically adorned with beautiful decorations and embellishments. These illuminations serve not only as aesthetic enhancements but also as representations of local cultures embodied in each form and decoration.

Research on the Ṣḥaraf al-Anām has primarily focused on the social context of *mawḥid* celebrations (Tarobin, 2015; Zubaedi et al., 2021), the composition and transmission of *mawḥid* texts (Ricci, 2023; Weinrich, 2022), with less attention given to the study of text illumination. This research aims to fill this gap by exploring the characteristics of illumination in the Ṣḥaraf al-Anām manuscripts housed in the EAP British Library collection and the Digital Collection of Leiden University Libraries.

The selection of these two Ṣḥaraf al-Anām manuscripts for the study is based on several reasons. Both manuscripts are written in Arabic with interlinear translations into the Malay language, indicating that the writers of the manuscripts are Malays, despite the manuscripts being kept in regions outside Southeast Asia, such

as Sri Lanka. Additionally, both manuscripts are aesthetically decorated with different styles and patterns, which can help clarify the origin of the manuscript as the patterns from each region have their own unique characteristics. The illumination also provides insights into the relationship between art and religious practices.

## **Literature Review**

### **Illumination and Its Characteristic in Manuscripts**

Manuscripts are not simply artifacts; they hold significant value as products of a tradition intrinsically linked to creativity and cultural attitudes. The creativity involved in their creation, such as the materials used for the script and the images within it, is a fascinating subject of study (Chambert-Loir & Fathurahman, 1999). The scriptwriter conveys the message or mandate of the text not only through the writing or characters but also through the decorations or images depicted in the text. These decorations, commonly known as illuminations, serve not just as ornaments or beautifying elements, but also carry messages and wisdom deeply rooted in the text.

Illumination refers to the enhancement or brightening of the page through the use of special lettering techniques, coloring patterns, decorative embellishments or other devices (Kumar & McGlynn, 1996). It is created not merely for aesthetic purposes, but also serves other functions such as preserving traditions and developing knowledge that is functional in certain fields (Syarif & Kurniawati, 2018). Illumination can help clarify the origin of a manuscript, as the patterns from each region have their own unique characteristics. Furthermore, illumination can be useful in

determining when a manuscript was written or copied, as each era has a distinct style (Safari, 2011).

Illumination, serving as both a form of verbal and visual communication, plays a crucial role in the content of a manuscript (Widodo et al., 2012). It is an integral part of a manuscript, enhancing the text and imbuing the manuscript with high-value art and profound meaning, as evidenced by the motifs characterizing each object of illumination (Firdausa & Limbong, 2022; Izzah et al., 2022; Mu'jizah, 2009). In essence, the presence of illumination underscores that manuscripts were designed to be both read and appreciated.

Given the prevalence of illumination in manuscripts, comprehensive research on illuminated manuscripts is warranted. Illumination provides insights into the time and place of writing, and occasionally, even the author's name. The patterns present in the illumination can serve as indicators of the characteristics and local wisdom of a region at a specific time (Mu'jizah, 2009). This suggests that works of art, including illumination, do not emerge abruptly; there is a historical context behind the creation of each work of art. The art of illuminated manuscripts encapsulates the worldviews and experiences of the creators of the illumination (Ikram, 2019; Aisyanarni, 2013).

In Malay manuscript cultures, illumination is predominantly found in *muṣḥaf* (copies) of the Qur'ān, prayer books, theological treatises and royal letters (Folsom, 1990; Gallop, 2004; Gallop & Arps, 1991; Mu'jizah, 2009). Generally, these manuscripts are aesthetically decorated with a variety of styles and patterns. In Malay illuminated manuscripts, numerous styles and patterns are

employed, each with different structures. The styles of illumination in Malay manuscripts encompass the following (Gallop, 2004):

- a. *Single Headpiece*, a type of decoration that is located at the top of the text at the opening or beginning of the manuscript.

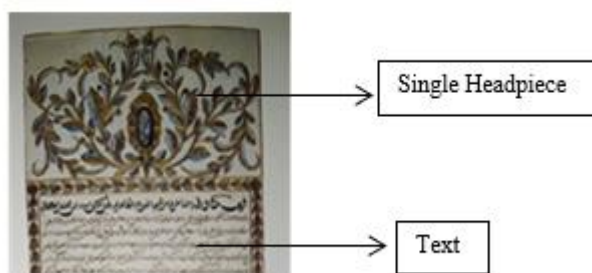


Figure 1. Farewell letter from Sultan Cakra Adiningrat in Madura to van der Capellen  
(Source: Golden Letters: Writing Traditions of Indonesia).

- b. *Double Frame*, this style surrounds the text on two facing pages. It is usually symmetrical across the two pages.



Figure 2. Manuscript *Sharaf al-Anām* page 4 and 5 (EAP British Library)

- c. *Tailpiece*. This style of decoration is in the form of a triangle tapering downward at the end of the text or on the last page of the manuscript.
- d. *Four-Sided Style*, this decoration is on the four sides of the text. Illuminations in the four-sided style generally have simple and complex structures and motifs.



Figure 3. *Sharaf al-Anām* Manuscript page 20&39 (DC Leiden University Libraries)

The types of illumination patterns are:

- a. *Archway patterns*: these designs are usually decorated with leaves, vines and flowers arranged on it. The shape of the dome is between lines that resemble gate lines.
- b. *Plant patterns*: this design is usually identical to plant species such as tendrils, leaves and flowers such as roses, lotuses, tulips, *asoka* and ylang-ylang.
- c. *Animal patterns*: there are several animal designs that appear in illuminations such as peacocks, sparrows and phoenixes.
- d. *Celestial Object patterns*: these designs are objects in the sky such as stars and the moon.

### **Illuminated Manuscripts of *Sharaf al-Anām* in EAP British Library and Digital Collections Leiden University Libraries**

*Sharaf al-Anām* is a prayer book that is predominantly illuminated with decorative ornaments surrounding its text. This book, which contains praises for Prophet Muhammad, the history of Prophet Muhammad, and prayers typically recited with tone and rhythm, is used in certain occasions and ceremonies as a form of religious practice (Khoiri & Faristiana, 2021). It is widely preserved among Muslim communities worldwide, including Malay communities in Southeast Asia. This study focuses on the illumination of the *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscripts in two distinct institutions.

The first manuscript, *Mawlūd al-Nabī Sharaf al-Anām*, is part of the EAP British Library collection and is catalogued under the number EAP609/5/4. This manuscript features an interlinear translation from Arabic into Malay. The first two pages and the last two pages of the manuscript are adorned with fascinating embellishments. They are illuminated with geometric designs, leaves, and flowers in red and green colors. The EAP British Library reveals that this manuscript was created in 1892 (1309 AH), as evidenced by the writing on page 4 of the manuscript, which is written in Arabic numerals as 1309 AH. The front and back covers of the manuscript, illustrated in Figure 4, further showcase these details.

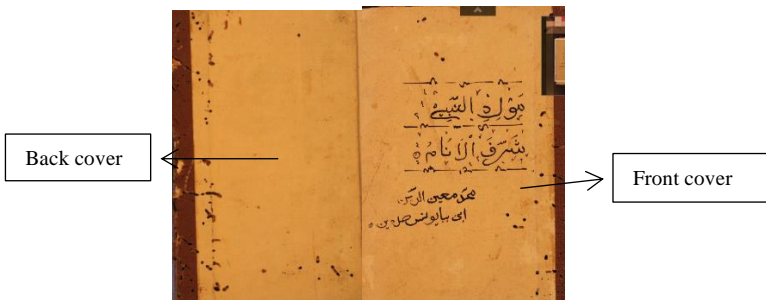


Figure 4. *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscript (EAP British Library)

The original material of the manuscript exhibits fragile physical characteristics. Despite pages having fallen out or detached in the middle, and the binding being connected yet loose, the writing within the manuscript remains readable. The dimensions of the manuscript are 15cm in length, 10cm in width, and 0.6cm in height. The original material of this book is a bound manuscript consisting of 110 folios. The custodial history of the manuscript reveals that this mawlid book was gifted to M.M Saldin by his maternal grandfather in 1910. The owner of the original material or



manuscript was Jayarine Sukanti Iyne. This manuscript was digitized by the Australian National University and funded by the Endangered Archives Programme.

This manuscript is a part of Project EAP609, which involves the digitization of Malay writings in Sri Lanka. The project encompasses a range of materials written in Malay in Sri Lanka from around the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The project includes manuscripts, printed books, prayer books, wedding invitations, personal letters, family records, poems and songs. These diverse materials attest to the varied ways in which the Malay language was used in Sri Lanka.

The second manuscript is from the Digital Collections of Leiden University Libraries. In the collection, this manuscript is referred to as *Mawlid (Mawlūd) Sharaf al-Anām*. The manuscript is in Arabic with an interlinear translation into the Malay language. It is part of Snouck Hurgronje's private collection that was digitized by Leiden Library. The origin of the manuscript is unascertained. However, it is likely of Malay-Indonesian origin due to the presence of an interlinear translation into the Malay language. Additionally, there are random scratches on a blank page that write in Malay language "bab ini pada menyatakan rukun sembahyang" (this chapter is on requisites in prayer). This suggests a connection to Malay-Indonesian culture and practices.



Figure 5. Cover of the manuscript of *Sharaf al-Anām* (DC Leiden University Library)

The illuminated manuscript of the *Shāraf al-Anām* from DC Leiden University collection has beautiful coloring patterns and decoration. There are several parts of the pages that are illuminated; out of 60 sheets only on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 33<sup>rd</sup>, 36<sup>th</sup>, 37<sup>th</sup> and 39<sup>th</sup> versions in the collection. In the description of this collection says that this manuscript is the work of al-Bukhārī. Apparently, the name of al-Bukhārī is referred to the author named al-Shaykh al-Imām Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Alī ibn Qasim al-Mālīki al-Bukhārī al-Andalusī al-Mursī al-Lakhmī al-Masyhūr al-Ḥarīrī (Weinrich, 2022).

## Method

This research is a codicological study focusing on the decoration and illumination aspects of the *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscript. It employs a qualitative research design to analyze the characteristics of the illumination in the *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscripts housed in the EAP British Libraries collection and the Digital Collections of Leiden University Library. The analysis involves generating narratives and variations of patterns from the observed illumination aspects.

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Primary sources are collected by accessing the *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscript in the EAP collection (<https://eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP609-5-4>) and the Digital Collections of Leiden University Libraries (<http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:3183775>). A comparative analysis of the illumination patterns between the illuminated *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscript in the EAP British Library collection and the Leiden collection is conducted based on the case study of these two manuscripts.

In addition, the author utilizes literature study and documentation techniques as part of the data collection process. The literature study involves collecting secondary sources related to the topic of study from journal articles, research reports, and others. The documentation technique used in this study takes the form of images and decorations. This comprehensive approach ensures a thorough examination of the illumination characteristics in the *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscripts.

## Result and Discussion

### Illumination Characteristics of *Sharaf al-Anām* in EAP Collection



Figure 6. *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscript (EAP British Library)

## Double Frames

Illumination in this manuscript is only located on a few parts of the page, namely on pages 4, 5, 110, and 111 respectively. As figure 7 illustrates, the illumination in this edition of *Sharaf al-Anām* takes in the form of a double frame. The double frame surrounds the text on two facing pages. It is usually symmetrical across the two pages. Some of the illumination structures in the double frames style are simple and some are complex. In this collection, the illumination does not take in the form of single headpiece, double headpieces and tailpiece. The details of double frames component in this *Sharaf al-Anām*, including their structure, ornamental motifs and color designs are described below.

### *Structure*

In general, the distinctive attribute of structure of double frames in this manuscript *Sharaf al-Anām* can be summarized as below (see Figure 7):

- The double frames appear in the first two pages and the final two pages,
- there are two rectangular lines, one for text block, another for decoration frame,
- the text block of *Sharaf al-Anām* in EAP British Library is arranged into one column,
- the text block on each page is surrounded by a decorated rectangular border,
- the text block in the first two pages is smaller than in the other pages, yet the text block in the final two pages is smaller than that of the first two pages

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- in the first two pages namely 3 and 4, the motifs around the text are in the forms of unusually plant/vegetal motifs consisting of vines, leaf, and flower

in the last two pages namely 107 and 108, the motifs around the text take in the form of geometric motifs comprising of square, semi-circle and geometric flowers.



**Figure 7.** Double Frame. Manuscript *Sharaf al-Anām* page 4&5 (EAP British Library). The double frame structure in this page consists of: A-rectangular line separating text and decorated frame; B-text block; C- rectangular line for decoration frame border; D- the decoration in the form of floral and vine motifs.

### ***Ornamentation***

The ornamental motifs can be observed in this double frame of *Sharaf al-Anām* as follows (see Figure 8, 10 and 11):

- The decorative rectangular border around the text block made up of two dominant motifs that is plant and geometric motifs
- The plant/vegetal motifs are consisting of vines, leaf, big flowers and tiny flowers
- The geometric motifs are consisting of square, semi-circle and geometric flowers.



Figure 8. *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscript (EAP British Library)

Plant patterns are frequently observed and are particularly prominent in Malay illuminated manuscripts (Aisyanarni, 2013). This prevalence is likely due to the human connection with nature, specifically flora. Plants are often interpreted as a reflection of life, an expression of the embodiment of the universe, and the birth of a shape (Cirlot, 1971). The illuminated manuscript *Sharaf al-Anām*, housed in the EAP British Library collection, features several types of plant motifs, including vines, leaves and floral motifs. Interestingly, the dominant motifs in the illuminated manuscript *Sharaf al-Anām* are flowers, which are rarely found in Malay illuminated manuscripts. It is hypothesized that these flowers are cannonball flowers (*Couroupita guianensis*), commonly known as ‘sal’ in Sri Lanka (Rodrigo, 2020). The presence of this flower in the illumination may be attributed to the Sri Lankan origin of the manuscript, where the cannonball flower is considered significant (Rodrigo, 2020). This highlights the influence of local flora on the artistic expressions found in illuminated manuscripts.



Figure 9. Cannonball flower (source: Flora of Sri Lanka website)



Figure 10. The detail decorative of flower in *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscript (EAP British Library)

In Islamic art, geometric patterns are common features covering of surface of certain objects. The use of these patterns is thought to reflect the language of the universe and allow the believer to be thoughtful about life and the magnificence of creation (Hussain, 2009). Islamic art portrays nature and artifacts based on the spiritual characteristics rather than their material and physical attributes, and this includes the use of patterns. The meaning of complex geometric designs conveys the impression of never-ending repetition, which helps believer to understand the infinity nature of God. These geometric patterns also can be observed in the illuminated manuscript of *Sharaf al-Anām* in the British Library EAP collection despite its simplicity.



Figure 11. *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscript page 110 & 111 (EAP British Library).

### ***Color Designs***

The illumination motifs in the *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscript are notably colourful, with a palette dominated by red, dark green, orange, and yellow. In the first two pages of *Sharaf al-Anām*, the rectangular line is rendered in orange, the vines and leaves in dark green, the ‘cannonball’ flower in orange, and tiny flowers in red. Black colour is sparingly used, primarily in the midrib of the leaf. In contrast, the last two pages feature a square in orange, semi-circles in a variety of colours including yellow, orange, and green, and geometric flowers in a combination of black, orange, and green. The harmonious interplay of these colours contributes to the manuscript’s aesthetic appeal, demonstrating the intricate artistry involved in its creation. This vibrant use of colour not only enhances the visual appeal of the manuscript but also adds depth and dimension to the depicted motifs. The color harmony decorated in this manuscript is indeed astonishing.

### **Illumination Characteristics of *Sharaf al-Anām* in Digital Collections Leiden University Libraries**

Similar to the illuminated manuscript of *Sharaf al-Anām* in the EAP British Library collection, the illumination on this *Sharaf al-Anām* also adopts the form of double frames. However, this collection further incorporates single headpieces, double



headpieces, and tailpieces. In terms of structure, ornamental motifs and colour designs, the illumination in the *Sharaf al-Anām* in the Digital Collection of Leiden University Libraries exhibits a higher level of sophistication compared to that of the EAP British Library collection. Moreover, the number of illuminated pages in this collection surpasses that of the EAP British Library collection.

The following discussion explores the details of the structure, ornamental motifs, and colour designs in the double frames, single headpiece, double headpieces, and tailpieces. This comprehensive analysis will provide a deeper understanding of the intricate artistry and cultural significance embodied in these illuminated manuscripts.



Figure 12. *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscript (Digital Collection Leiden University Libraries)

### Double Frames

In this collection, double frame can be observed in the page 1, 2, 31, 32, 61 and 62. The characteristic of double frames structure in this *Sharaf al-Anām* can be outlined as follows (see Figure 12 and 13):

- the text block in this *Sharaf al-Anām* is arranged into one and two columns. There is decorated central panel between two columns lengthways down the column

- In the first two pages, there is phrase *lā ilaha illa Allāh Muḥammad Rasūlullāh* with black background above text block columns.
- The column (above and below text block) is surrounded by the ornamental motifs in the form of archway patterns and floral patterns
- In each page, the decorative finial is flanked by two ‘flags’ in the top-right and top-left corner
- In page 31 and 32, there is phrase *Ya Nabī salām ‘alayka Ya Rasūl salām ‘alayka, Ya ḥabīb salām ‘alayka ṣalātullāh ‘alayka* with red ink above the textblock columns.
- The finial is not flanked by two ‘flags’ in the page 31 and 32. The finial is much simpler than that of page 1 and 2. However, the structure of these two pages is in general similar to the page 1 and 2.
- The upper section of the double frame representing as a model for the single headpiece.
- Tower section of the double frame representing as a model for the lower section of the tailpiece.

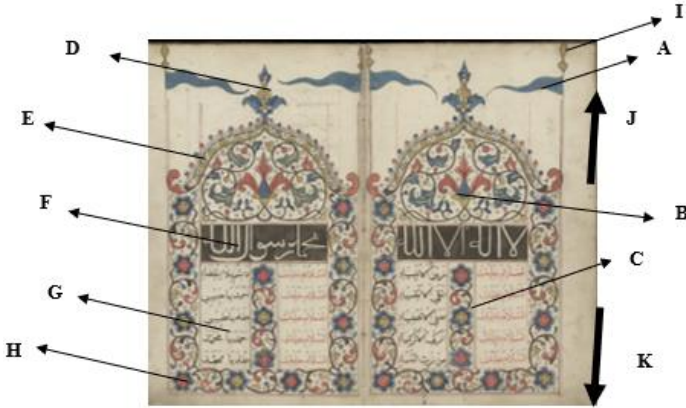


Figure 13. *Sharaf al-Anām* page 1 and 2. Characteristic elements of double frame structure in the illuminated *Sharaf al- Anām* in the digital collection of Leiden University Libraries: A- ‘flag’ on the top-right corner ; B- the decoration above the text block consisting of flowers and tendrils ; C- decorated central panel between two columns ; D- finial that flanked by two ‘flags’; E- archway patterns; F-phrase above the text block column; G- two columns, text block; H- decorated frame surrounding the text block; I-finial above the ‘flag’; J- the upper section of the double frame that represents as a type for the single headpiece; K- lower section of the double frame that represents as a type for the lower section of the tailpiece (Digital Collection Leiden University Libraries).



Figure 14. *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscript page 31 and 32. The illumination is quite similar to that of page 1 and 2, except that this page has no ‘flag’ on the top corner (Digital Collection Leiden University Libraries)

The illuminated manuscript of *Sharaf al-Anām* is unique, particularly due to its double frame structure, a feature that is seldom seen in Malay illuminated manuscripts. This manuscript beautifully combines structure, ornamental motifs and colour designs, embodying the concept of art. The objective of creating *Sharaf al-Anām* extends beyond mere reading; it is also intended for visual appreciation. This aligns with Farouk Yahya's study on Illustrated and Illuminated Manuscripts of *Dalā'il Khayrāt* from Southeast Asia (Yahya, 2021), further emphasizing the manuscript's artistic and aesthetic value.

### ***Ornamental Motifs***

The ornamental motifs can be observed in the form of double frame of *Sharaf al-Anām* as follows:

- The archway patterns. This motif is often present in the illuminated manuscript, mostly the border frame of the text block is in the form of lines that form a gate motif with or without decoration. Nevertheless, the archway motifs used in the manuscript are decorated in the form of bud and vines motifs.
- The plant/vegetal patterns are consisting of vines, leaves and flowers. The dominant motif in this illumination is flower that resembles roses.
- The illumination in the form of flower also appears in some pages in the decorated panel lengthways separating two columns (see Figure.15)



Figure 15. Decorated central panel separating two columns in *Sharaf al-Anām* page 33-34. (Digital Collection Leiden University Libraries)

In essence, the ornamental motifs used in the decoration of *Sharaf al-Anām* are dominated by the plant motifs consisting of flowers, buds and vines.

### **Color Designs**

The illuminated *Sharaf al-Anām* predominantly features blue and red, with subtle accents of brown, black, and yellow. The illuminator employs different colours to distinguish various elements within the illumination. For instance, flowers are depicted in blue with a smaller red area at the center. Buds are adorned in a variety of colours, alternating between red, brown, and yellow. Vines are illustrated in black and brown, while the arch element is rendered in brown. Leaves are portrayed in blue, red and yellow. Decorative finials combine blue and yellow, and the ‘flags’ are depicted in blue.

### **Single Headpiece**

The single headpiece in the *Sharaf al-Anām*, generally part of the double frame elements, is a decorative feature positioned at the top

of the text, marking the opening or beginning of the manuscript. In the *Sharaf al-Anām* found in the Digital Collection of Leiden University Libraries, the single headpiece can be observed on pages 6 and 64. The characteristic features of the single headpiece are as follows:

- The text block is surrounded by a border. Above the text block is a decorated central panel.
- Above the decorated central panel is single headpiece in archway patterns
- Finial is flanked by two ‘flags’, other finials are above the ‘flag’



Figure 16. *Sharaf al-Anām* page 6. The structure of illumination in this page: A-single headpiece in archway patterns, the ornamental motifs consisting of bud and tendrils.; B- a decorated central panel separating the text block and headpiece; C- text block (Digital Collection Leiden University Libraries)

## Double Headpieces

In addition to the single headpiece, the *Sharaf al-Anām* also features double headpieces. These are essentially single headpieces

mirrored on both facing pages of a double-page spread. Specifically, these double headpieces can be observed on page 62. While the structure of double headpieces is similar to that of single headpieces, the key difference lies in their presentation across a two-page spread. Double headpieces are a common feature in illuminated manuscripts from the Malay-Indonesian world, particularly those originating from the Malay peninsula and 19<sup>th</sup>-century Batavia (Teh Gallop, 2004).



Figure.17 *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscript page 61 and 62. A model of double headpieces (Digital Collection Leiden University Libraries)

## Tailpiece

The tailpiece, a decoration typically in a triangular shape that tapers downward, is often found at the end of the text or on the last page of a manuscript (Gallop, 2004). In this *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscript, tailpieces can be observed on several pages,

specifically pages 5, 30, 63 and 68. Interestingly, the tailpieces in this manuscript come in two shapes: triangular and rectangular.

The triangular tailpieces, which occupy a larger portion of the page, are found on the last pages of the manuscript, specifically pages 30 and 68. On the other hand, the rectangular tailpieces, which occupy a smaller portion of the page, are located at the end of the text on pages 5 and 63. The tailpieces in this *Sharaf al-Anām* are adorned with motifs of vines, leaves, and buds.

Here are the characteristic features of the tailpieces in this manuscript:

- The triangular tailpiece occupies a larger portion of the page, with the text block positioned above it.
- Pages featuring a rectangular tailpiece are usually divided into two columns. The tailpiece can be found at the end of the text, occupying either a larger or smaller portion of the page, depending on the text. This rectangular shape is accompanied by a decorated central panel situated in the middle of the columns, above the rectangular shape.





Figure 18. Sharaf al-Anām page 30. The decoration of tailpiece in a triangular shape (Digital Collection Leiden University Libraries).



Figure 19 Sharaf al-Anām page 5. The decoration of tailpiece in a rectangular shape (Digital Collection Leiden University Libraries).

## **Factor Influencing the Illumination in *Sharaf al-Anām* Manuscripts**

When it comes to the illumination and its characteristic features, there is a marked distinction between the *Sharaf al-Anām* in the EAP British Library collection and the *Sharaf al-Anām* in the Digital Collection of Leiden University Libraries. The comparison between the two manuscripts reveals that the origin of the manuscripts, artistic quality and illuminator creativity are significant factors. The paper and physical size of the manuscript pages also influence the style of illumination (Gallop, 2004). However, due to the lack of information about the paper and physical manuscript of *Sharaf al-Anām* in the collections, especially in the Digital Collection of Leiden University Libraries, we have excluded the paper and physical size of the page as a factor influencing the illumination in this study.

### **Origin of the Manuscripts**

The origin of a manuscript can be inferred from the type of illumination used, as each region has its own characteristic illumination (Safari, 2011). As stated in the literature review, the *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscripts in the EAP British Library collection and the Digital Collection of Leiden University Libraries originate from different regions, despite sharing the same text genre. The former manuscript was found in Sri Lanka, while the origin of the latter is still uncertain.

The illumination on the *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscript in the EAP British Library is quite unusual, with the first two pages and final two pages decorated with geometric designs, flowers, leaves and

vines in dominant colors of orange, red and green. These unique elements in the illumination likely represent the nature of Sri Lanka, where the manuscript was found. Sri Lanka is known for its diverse flora, supported by a variety of ecosystems including tropical rainforests, dry forests, mountains and coasts.

The nature of Sri Lanka and South Asia at large may have inspired the illuminator of the *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscript. The plant patterns, like the cannonball flower depicted in the manuscript, are uncommon in Islamic Malay illuminated manuscripts. Additionally, the dominant color used in the illumination aligns with the color palette predominantly used by Sri Lankan artists, which falls within the spectrum of yellow and red (Nishanthi, 2021). This color palette is rarely seen in illuminated Malay manuscripts. Therefore, this *Sharaf al-Anām*, with an interlinear translation into the Malay language, was likely written and illuminated by Malays living in Sri Lanka, as the illumination of the manuscript reflects the characteristic features of the region.

On the other hand, the origin of the *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscript in the Digital Collection of Leiden University Libraries remains unknown. However, the structure of the double frame, the two-column format and the central panel in this manuscript resemble the illumination in the Ottoman and Persian manuscript tradition (Jackson, 2017, 2020). In fact, the style of illumination in Ottoman manuscript tradition, especially the Qur'an, has influenced the style of illumination in Southeast Asian Islamic manuscripts, particularly the Qur'an (Akbar, 2015).

Moreover, the dominant colors used in this illuminated *Sharaf al-Anām* are blue and red, with small touches of brown, black and

yellow. The blue color is also used to denote flowers with a smaller area of red in the middle of the flower. This blue flower decoration is frequently found in the illuminated Ottoman and Persian manuscripts (see Jackson, 2017, 2020), but is rarely found in the Malay manuscript tradition. Thus, this *Sharaf al-Anām* is likely of Southeast Asian origin, written and illuminated by a Malay who adopted the style of illuminated Ottoman and Persian manuscripts.

### **Artistic Quality and Creativity**

The decoration in the illuminated manuscripts of *Sharaf al-Anām* in each collection exhibits varying levels of creativity and sophistication. The illumination of *Sharaf al-Anām* in the EAP British Library is much simpler than that of *Sharaf al-Anām* in the Digital Collection of Leiden University Libraries. In the former manuscript, the double frames appear in the first two pages and the final two pages, with less accurate decoration on each page. On the other hand, the illumination in the latter manuscript is more sophisticated. Double frames, single headpiece, double headpieces and tailpiece can all be observed in this manuscript. Furthermore, the creativity of the illuminator of this manuscript is evident in the accuracy of its ornamentation.

### **Conclusion**

This paper examines the illumination characteristics of two *Sharaf al-Anām* manuscripts, one from the EAP British Library and the other from the Digital Collection of Leiden University Libraries. A comparative analysis of their structure, ornamentation, and color reveals diverse artistic expressions within the same genre of religious text.

The Sharaf al-Anām manuscript from the EAP British Library features a simpler double frame structure. The first two pages are adorned with unusual plant motifs, including vines, leaves and flowers. The final two pages, on the other hand, showcase geometric motifs such as squares, semi-circles, and geometric flowers. The color palette is dominated by red, dark green, orange, and yellow. The Sharaf al-Anām manuscript from the Digital Collection of Leiden University Libraries also employs a double frame structure, but with additional elements like single headpieces, double headpieces, and tailpieces. This manuscript exhibits a higher level of sophistication in terms of structure, ornamental motifs, and color designs. It also has more illuminated pages than its EAP British Library counterpart. The text block in this edition is formatted into two columns, accompanied by a decorated central panel. The dominant colors used are blue and red, complemented by touches of brown, black, and yellow.

This study also identifies the origin of the manuscript, artistic quality and creativity as key factors influencing the illumination characteristics of the two Sharaf al-Anām manuscripts. However, further research is needed to uncover the hidden meanings of the decorations in each manuscript and to ascertain the origin of the Sharaf al-Anām manuscript from the Digital Collection of Leiden University Libraries.

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