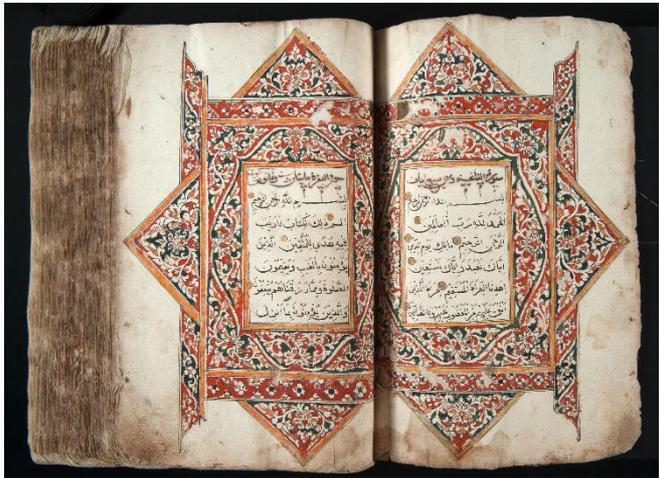


Provenance report regarding Handgeschreven Koran met rijk versierde folio's [Qur'an manuscript]

Mirjam Shatanawi

 <p><i>Photo: Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen. Coll.no. TM-1482-1</i></p>	Custodian	NMvW Tropenmuseum
	Current possessor	Dutch state
	Inventory number	TM-1482-1
	Material/technique	Paper; black and red ink
	Measurements	29.5 x 19 x 6 cm

Summary of findings

This Qur'an manuscript was looted during the flight of Teuku Umar and his followers on 13 August 1896, and donated to the Tropenmuseum in 1941. The donor, Karel Gisolf, included with his gift a note detailing the taking of the Qur'an. His account is supported by other sources that were found during the provenance research of the Qur'an. Teuku Umar (1854-1899) was one of the most important resistance leaders during the Aceh War. He is a national hero of Indonesia. Karel Willem Gisolf (1870-1953) was a civil administrator in service of the Dutch colonial government. Although the moment of looting is confirmed by the sources, the exact owner is uncertain, as Teuku Umar was in company of several others, and the manuscript itself does not contain marks of ownership.

Reconstruction provenance

After 1800 – before 1896

Manufacture of Qur'an manuscript

Annabel Teh Gallop, 'An Acehese Style of Manuscript Illumination,' *Archipel* 68 (2004): 222

Before 1896 – 1896

Teuku Umar or one of his fellow fighters

NL-HaNA, Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, 2.20.69, inv.no. 7490.

13 August 1896

KNIL column (J.W. Stemfoort)

NL-HaNA, Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, 2.20.69, inv.no. 7490.

1896 - 1941

K.W. Gisolf

NL-HaNA, Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, 2.20.69, inv.no. 7490.

1941 - present

Koloniaal Instituut (today NMVW Tropenmuseum)

Inventory card TM-1482-1, digitised in TMS.

Introduction and context

This Qur'an was donated to the Koloniaal Instituut (the current Tropenmuseum) as having belonged to Teuku Umar (1854-1899), the famous resistance leader of Aceh, and for decades considered to be the main adversary of the Dutch. He came from a lower-ranking noble (*uleebalang*) family that was indirectly related to the sultan's house of Aceh. Between 1884 and 1896, Teuku Umar alternately was an ally of the Dutch forces and their enemy. In 1893 he was put in command of a legion of soldiers fighting with the KNIL (The Netherlands East Indies Army). In March 1896 he turned (again) against the Dutch, leading to years of chasing him and, eventually, his killing in 1899.

In the colonial period, objects that belonged to Teuku Umar were much sought after by museums and private collectors. It was a matter of pride and prestige to own objects that were attributed to him. Therefore, there are quite a few of these items present in the museums in the Netherlands. In the collections of the National Museum of World Cultures, thus far eleven objects have been described as originating from Teuku Umar. Other museums in the Netherlands, like the Wereldmuseum and Museum Bronbeek, also own objects that belonged to Teuku Umar.¹ It is not certain that all of these items really belonged to Teuku Umar, because donors and sellers may have had reasons to attribute objects to Teuku Umar to enhance their value, while in reality this may not have been the case. Not all Teuku Umar objects in Dutch museum collections were looted; some are purchases or gifts from Teuku Umar or his relatives.

Object information

The Qur'an manuscript is in Acehnese style. The text is written in black and red ink on Dutch paper. The illuminations are in red, blue and yellow-orange ink. The binding is linen. Annabel Gallop, lead curator Southeast Asia at the British Library and an expert on Malay manuscripts, described Qur'an TM-1482-1 as follows:²

¹ For a provisional list of Teuku Umar objects in public collections in the Netherlands, see Bijlage A in: Caroline A. Drieënhuizen, 'Koloniaal collecties, Nederlands aanzien: De Europese elite van Nederlands-Indië belicht door haar verzamelingen, 1811-1957' (PhD thesis, Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam, 2012).

² Annabel Teh Gallop, 'An Acehnese Style of Manuscript Illumination,' *Archipel* 68 (2004): 222.

KIT 1482/1

Qur'an. 2 DF : beginning (*S. al-Fāihah* & beg. of *S. al-Baqarah*), no side wings; end (*S. al-Kāfirūn* to *S. al-Nās*), w.o. arches or side wings. Red, orange, dark blue, reserved white. 30 x 20.5 cm.

According to her, the manuscript is a typical illuminated Acehnese Qur'an, but without the 'side wings' or tendrils usually found flanking the arches on the outer vertical sides, in the opening frames, while the final illuminated frames are even simpler, without arches at all, only with horizontal and extended vertical frames.³ The pages after the frontispiece pages contain preliminary notes on recitation; these notes are not very common in Qur'an manuscripts. The layout, text frames, verse markers and cloth binding are all very typical for Aceh Qur'an manuscripts.

Acehnese Qur'an manuscripts rarely contain a colophon, detailing, for example, the name of the scribe, the commissioner, and the date of completion. Occasionally marks of ownership are found in such manuscripts. Like most other Acehnese Qur'ans, this Qur'an has no colophon nor mentions of ownership. Therefore, in the manuscript there are no indications of who owned the Qur'an before it was taken as loot by the KNIL.

Provenance report

The Qur'an was donated to the Koloniaal Instituut (the current Tropenmuseum) by K.W. Gisolf in 1941. From the correspondence it is clear that several other people mediated the gift on behalf of Gisolf: W. Snepvangers and G.W.A. Nieuwenhuijs, both affiliated with the Vereeniging van Indische Verlofgangers en Gerepatrieerden.⁴ With the Qur'an they sent a signed handwritten note in which Gisolf explains how the Qur'an came into his possession:⁵

"On a particular day between the 10th and the 20th of August 1896 (the date of which I cannot verify) this manuscript (Qur'an) came into my possession during a military expedition against the areas of Lepong and Lohong on Aceh's Westcoast. I was inspector in Oleh-leh, to which these areas were subject, and I was attached to the [military] staff. On that particular day (not verifiable), the gang leader Teuku Umar had taken refuge —overnight and in a hurry— in a coffee plantation in the mountains that was owned by the Kejuruan of Lohong, and to where he fled from the settlement (hamlet) Teue at the foot of the mountains. The flight —in company of his family and some followers— was on a very steep mountain path, and our troops were right behind him. They found the road scattered with all sorts of objects from his house, including this Qur'an. With rather great certainty we can assume that it belonged to Teuku Umar. The column commander gave the manuscript to me after his return in Teue."⁶

³ Email Dr Annabel Gallop to author, 12 August 2020.

⁴ Correspondence between B.J.O Schrieke (director Koloniaal Instituut) and G.W.A. Nieuwenhuijs, 26-27 May 1941. NL-HaNA, Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, 2.20.69, inv.no. 7506.

⁵ Correspondence between B.J.O Schrieke (director Koloniaal Instituut) and G.W.A. Nieuwenhuijs, 30 May-18 June 1941. NL-HaNA, Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, 2.20.69, inv.no. 7490.

⁶ "Op een niet nader door mij te verifieeren datum dan tusschen den 10en en 20en Augustus 1896 is op een militaire expeditie tegen de landschappen Lepong en Lohong ter Westkust van Atjeh ondernomen (ikzelf was als controleur te Oleh-leh waaronder genoemde landschappen resorteerden bij de staf ingedeeld) is het handschrift (quoran) in mijn bezit gekomen. Op den bewuste niet nader te bepalen datum had het bendehoofd Toekoe Oemar 's nachts in overhaaste vlucht vanuit de nederzetting (gehucht) Teue aan den voet van het gebergte de wijk genomen naar een koffietuin in de bergen van den kedjoeroean van Lohong. Die vlucht vergezeld van zijn gezin en eenige volgelingen vond plaats langs een zeer stijl boschpad en dicht op den hielen gezeten door onze troepen, die den weg bezaaid vonden met allerlei voorwerpen van huishoudelijken aard, waaronder de bewuste quoran. Met vrij groote zekerheid mag worden aangenomen, dat deze aan Toekoe Oemar toebehoorde. De colonne-commandant heeft mij bij zijne terugkomst in Teue het handschrift ter hand gesteld."

The military expedition against Lepong and Lohong, which Gisolf mentions in his note, took place between 9 and 14 August 1896. The goal was to chase Teuku Umar and his followers from Lepong and the surrounding areas. The commander-in-chief was Johannes Wouter Stemfoort (1844-1913), who was appointed as interim Civil and Military Governor of Aceh and dependences in June 1896.⁷ As column commander Stemfoort was responsible for the official report of the expedition, which had to be sent to the Generale Staf (General Staff) of the KNIL in Batavia and may have contained details about the loot taken. The Stemfoort papers in the National Archives in The Hague do not contain copies of the reports he sent.⁸ The archives of the Generale Staf remained in Indonesia after Independence; they were not consulted for research on this object. Therefore, no official report could be found to confirm Gisolf's account. However, several contemporary accounts of the expedition did appear in the Dutch news media and popular press that contain details supporting Gisolf's recollection of events.

Two weeks after the expedition, several Dutch newspapers published a detailed report, apparently written by one of the KNIL officers under the pseudonym Iksx.⁹ The report, which is in the style of an official report, contains a number of details that confirm Gisolf's recollection. First of all, there is a list of members of the column, including the staff members. It indeed mentions K.W. Gisolf, district officer (*controleur*) in Oleh-leh (present-day Ulee Lheue), as one of the expedition members. Gisolf's participation is confirmed by later reports of the expedition, such as the publication *Atjeh 1896* (1913), which also contains a detailed account of the expedition.¹⁰

It was unusual for a civil administrator like Karel Gisolf to join a military expedition. The reason for his participation was probably to be found in his close involvement in the Teuku Umar affair. Gisolf had been the first to report signs that Teuku Umar would turn against the Dutch.¹¹ Christoffel Deyckerhoff (1840-1911), the Governor of Aceh at the time, had refused to believe him. After the "desertion" of Teuku Umar, Deyckerhoff was dismissed from office and replaced by Stemfoort. Furthermore, when Teuku Umar was still in Dutch service, he had filed a complaint against Gisolf and chief *jaksa* (prosecutor) Mohammed Arif on account of offensive actions (*krenkende handelingen*) against himself and other people.¹² The accusations included physical abuse, such as kicking and beating people with a whip, and scolding and shaming Teuku Umar and his direct relatives. They were expressed in a letter to Governor Deyckerhoff, but revoked two weeks later.¹³ When investigated by the colonial authorities Gisolf denied the accusations of physical and verbal abuse.¹⁴ However, according to some, Gisolf's actions had made Umar turn against the Dutch. Gisolf's personal involvement with the case may also explain Stemfoort's decision to hand him the Qur'an as a keepsake. The KNIL did not have official regulations on spoils of war, but the unwritten rules stipulated that Stemfoort, in his position as commander-in-chief, had the right to decide what would be done with them.

⁷ NL-HaNA, Oorlog / Stamboeken Officieren KL, 2.13.04, inv.no. 618.

⁸ NL-HaNA, Inventaris van het archief van A. Seret (1916-2007) en enkele familieleden, 1847-1997. 2.21.205.55, inv. nos. 37-43.

⁹ 'Brieven uit Atjeh', *Samarangsch advertentie-blad*, 26 August 1896, <https://www.delpher.nl/nl/kranten/view?coll=ddd&identifier=ddd:011139463:mpeg21:a0025>.

¹⁰ A. Kruisheer, *Atjeh 1896*, vol. 2 (Weltevreden: Visser en Co., 1913).

¹¹ 'Atjeh', *De grondwet*, 6 February 1896, <https://www.delpher.nl/nl/kranten/view?coll=ddd&identifier=ddd:110620540:mpeg21:a0165>.

¹² *Koloniaal verslag van 1896. Nederlandsch (Oost-) Indië* ('s Gravenhage: Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 1896), 7.

¹³ Letters of Teuku Umar to Christoffel Deyckerhoff, 30 March and 12 April 1896. A. Kruisheer, *Atjeh 1896*, vol. 1 (Weltevreden: Visser en Co., 1913) bijlage II and IV.

¹⁴ NL-HaNA, Inventaris van het Ministerie van Koloniën 2.10.02/6239. Geheim Verbaal 8 augustus 1896 N14, Indisch Dépêche 14 april 1896 33/1, Proces Verbaal van verhoor van Controleur der 2e klasse K.W. Gisolf. https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/2.10.02/invnr/6239/file/NL-HaNA_2.10.02_6239_0661

Secondly, the reports contain a number of details that are similar to Gisolf's account. The newspaper reporting described that, according to some accounts, Teuku Umar had anticipated his flight and had spent a large sum to have a footpath cut to the inner lands. Such a path was normally used to search for rubber; it was narrow so that only one man could pass and on the edges was impenetrable jungle. Teuku Umar had hidden his guns and valuables along the path to safeguard them.¹⁵ The account of *Atjeh 1896* adds to this a note that the 4th squad as well as members of the 1st squad of the [3rd] battalion "found on their way all sorts of things that were thrown away or hidden by the fugitives, among them letters by Umar" (*de 4e compagnie en de sectie der 1* vonden op hunnen weg allerlei zaken door de vluchtelingen weggeworpen of verborgen o. a. brieven van Oemar*).¹⁶ This seems to confirm Gisolf's claim that the Qur'an was left behind during the flight of Teuku Umar, his family members and followers. However, based on these accounts, it is clear that Teuku Umar did not flee alone, but in the company of several others. Gisolf's assertion that "with rather great certainty we can assume that it belonged to Teuku Umar" cannot be definitively proven.

The backdrop of the Lepong and Lohong expedition was the end of the collaboration between Teuku Umar and the Dutch government in March 1896. As part of the collaboration agreement the Dutch government had allowed Teuku Umar to form a legion of about 250 fighters, which were armed and financed by the Dutch at the yearly cost of 101,000 guilders.¹⁷ Teuku Umar himself received a monthly allowance of 1,000 guilders, housing, gifts and privileges like honorary titles.¹⁸ In return, he had to fight on the Dutch side against the Acehnese resistance, which at the time consisted of a coalition of fighters headed by the ulama (Islamic scholars) and the Sultan of Aceh. Immediately after Teuku Umar ended the collaboration, the Dutch began to plot a strategy to find and eliminate Teuku Umar and his troops. This resulted in military actions in April and May, and a three-day campaign on 23-25 May against Lampisang, where Teuku Umar lived, resulting in the looting and burning down of his house and the destruction of the village.¹⁹ The KNIL did not capture Teuku Umar, who already had fled Lampisang. In the following months and years, the KNIL would chase Teuku Umar from each successive region where he found refuge. In February 1899, the KNIL killed Teuku Umar near Meulaboh.

From the information with the objects and colonial-period reporting, it is apparent that the looting of Teuku Umar's property took place on two major occasions: in May 1896 during the raid of Teuku Umar's house in Lampisang and during the Lepong and Lohong expedition of August 1896, when this Qur'an also was taken.²⁰ Most reporting relates to the raid of Teuku Umar's house in Lampisang. Former KNIL officer Anton Kruisheer (1870-1945) writes that "they found in Umar's house several small canons, furniture etcetera. These things were later taken, along with correspondence of Umar, and in various houses large stocks of rice were set on fire."²¹ Another officer, G.C.E. "Frits" van Daalen (1863-1930), wrote to his wife on 27 May 1896 that "Umar's house is beautiful and well furnished. He, however, had smashed a lot. Still our troops found many useful things that we have taken along, such as a huge music box worth 300 guilders, chairs, cupboards and liquor." Van Daalen

¹⁵ 'Brieven uit Atjeh'.

¹⁶ Kruisheer, *Atjeh 1896*, 1913, 2:77.

¹⁷ *Koloniaal verslag van 1894. Nederlandsch (Oost-) Indië* ('s Gravenhage: Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 1894).

¹⁸ Martijn Kitzen, 'The Course of Co-Option: Co-Option of Local Power-Holders as a Tool for Obtaining Control over the Population in Counterinsurgency Campaigns in Weblike Societies. With Case Studies on Dutch Experiences during the Aceh War (1873-c. 1912) and the Uruzgan Campaign (2006-2010)' (PhD thesis, Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam, 2016), 232.

¹⁹ Kruisheer, *Atjeh 1896*, 1913.

²⁰ These reports include accounts in the news media and popular press, as well as archival documents. For instance, the letters from G.C.E. van Daalen to his wife Christine Elisabeth de Lang Evertsen, which are part of the Special Collections of the Library of Leiden University (Collection H.T. Damsté).

²¹ Kruisheer, *Atjeh 1896*, 1913, 1:201. "In het huis van Oemar werden een paar kleine kanonnen, meubilair enz. aangetroffen, welke zaken, evenals eenige correspondentie van Oemar later werden medegevoerd, terwijl in verschillende huizen een groote voorraad padi aan de vlammen werd prijsgegeven."

himself managed to get his hands on a “beautiful Qur’an.”²² A third officer, writing under the initial H., recounts, “Teuku Umar’s house was razed to the ground. The valuable goods, such as an open carriage, a horse etcetera, were taken to Kuta Raja. Although ransacking was prohibited, the commanders sometimes turned a blind eye, when it concerned small things.²³ In those days, no column returned home without the majority of soldiers had [taken] one thing or another, be it chickens, ducks, goats, ceramics or tikars [mats]. Soon this was known to the Chinese salesmen, who sometimes [walked] for hours to meet the troops and buy all this stuff.”²⁴ At Lohong, reporting says, Teuku Umar had settled with his followers, in “a neatly furnished house for himself. The contents were as much as possible ransacked and, when we left, the house and the furniture that was not taken were all burned. At this occasion, cavalry captain De Lannoij furnished [his house] a bit more; a beautiful sink with marble countertop was his share of the booty and it is now standing next to the marvellous music box that [he] annexed in Lampisang.”²⁵

The reports mention European-style luxury items that were taken as booty, such as fine glass, porcelain, a white horse, a marble sink, a music box and a Japanese screen (that Umar had bought at auction from assistant resident Cornelis Kroesen). However, the items that ended up in Dutch museums were either Acehnese in style or visibly connected to Teuku Umar, such as European-style crystal drinking glasses engraved with his name. At least four of such drinking glasses ended up in museums in the Netherlands, and they all seem to be seized during the Lepong and Lohong expedition. The donor of one of the glasses (TM-2790-1), Gustave Adolphe Hansen (1852-1935), was the commander of the 3rd battalion, which played an active role in the expedition.²⁶ Hansen claimed to have found the glass in an army bag that Teuku Umar had left behind.²⁷ The third squad of Hansen’s battalion was reported to have discovered Teuku Umar’s house and inside it a large stock of rice and some fine glass and porcelain (“*de 3e compagnie was op een huis van Oemar gestooten met een grooten voorraad padi en eenig fijn glaswerk en porcelain*”).²⁸ In 1905, objects found during the chase of Umar’s widow Cut Nyak Dhien were sent by then Governor of Aceh, G.C.E. van Daalen, to the Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen (currently Museum Nasional Indonesia).²⁹ Among the objects originating from Teuku Umar, Qur’ans had a special status. At least four Qur’ans are in Dutch public collections.³⁰ Most of the Qur’ans were said to be looted during the Lampisang raid in May; this Qur’an (TM-1482-1) is the only one of the four to have been taken in August 1896.

²² Letter G.C.E. van Daalen to Christine Elisabeth de Lang Evertsen, 27 May 1896. Leiden University Library/Collection H.T. Damsté. I did not manage to locate the Qur’an. Possibly Van Daalen donated it to Snouck Hurgronje, as he used to do with other manuscripts, and it is now part of the Leiden University Library collections or the Museum Nasional in Jakarta.

²³ Until 1928, the KNIL did not have official guidelines, but individual commanders gave instructions to the troops, which sometimes included guidelines on looting. See G. Teitler, ‘Voorlopers van Het VPTL, 1928-1829: Een Terugblik,’ *Militaire Spectator*, no. 170 (2001): 268–74.

²⁴ ‘Atjeh-herinneringen,’ *De Preanger-bode*, 2 July 1910, Avond edition, <https://www.delpher.nl/nl/kranten/view?coll=ddd&identificer=MMKB08:000122816:mpeg21:a0001>. “Het huis van Toekoe Oemar werd met den grond gelijk gemaakt. De goederen van waarde, waaronder een open landauer, een paard enz. werden meegenomen naar Koeta-Radja. Ofschoon het rampassen verboden was, werd door de bevelhebbers wel eens een oogje dicht gedaan, waar het kleinigheden betrof. Zoo zag men in die dagen geen colonne thuis komen of de meeste soldaten hadden het een of ander, hetzij kippen, eenden, geiten, aardewerk of tikars. Dit was al heel spoedig aan chineesche handelaren bekend, die dan ook de troepen soms uren ver tegemoet gingen, om al die dingen op te koopen.”

²⁵ ‘Brieven uit Atjeh.’ “Te Lohong had Oemar een nieuwe nederzetting georganiseerd met een keurig net ingericht huis voor zich zelve; de inhoud werd zooveel mogelijk gerampast en bij ons vertrek werden het huis en de niet vervoerde meubels verbrand. Bij deze gelegenheid heeft de ritmeester de Lannoij zich weer een beetje ingericht; eene mooie waschtafel met marmeren blad was zijn aandeel in den buit en staat nu naast de prachtige speeldoois to Lampisang geannexeerd.”

²⁶ Kruisheer, *Atjeh 1896*, 1913, 2:63. See also http://nl.wikisage.org/wiki/3e_Bataljon_Infanterie.

²⁷ Inventory card TM-2790-1, digitised in TMS.

²⁸ Kruisheer, *Atjeh 1896*, 1913, 2:77.

²⁹ Bataviaasch Genootschap, *Notulen van de algemeene en directie-vergaderingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van kunsten en wetenschappen*, vol. XLIII 1905 (Batavia: G. Kolff & Co., 1906), 60–62.

³⁰ Caroline Drieënhuizen, “‘Het merkwaardige boek’: de koran van Teuku Umar in Nederland,” *Caroline Drieënhuizen.Wordpress*, 8 juni 2016, <https://carolinedrieenhuizen.wordpress.com/2016/06/08/het-merkwaardige-boek-de-koran-van-teuku-umar-in-nederland/>