

# **THE HISTORICAL TRAILS AND INSPIRATION OF RADEN MAS SAID IN GIRILAYU KARANGANYAR ON THE VARIETY OF MBOK SEMOK BATIK MOTIFS**

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## **Abstract**

Religious moderation is an important principle in building a harmonious and inclusive religious life. In the context of Nusantara Islam, moderate values are not only manifested in worship practices and social interactions, but are also reflected through art and architecture. The Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Surakarta is a concrete example of cultural acculturation that is full of spiritual and aesthetic meaning. This article aims to examine how batik motifs applied to mosque ornaments reflect messages of religious moderation. With a hermeneutic approach and symbolic analysis, this study examines three main motifs: Lung-lungan, Buket Ukel Tanahen and Kawung—as representations of the values of balance, openness, and tolerance in Islamic teachings. The results of the study show that batik motifs are not merely visual decorations, but also an effective medium of cultural da'wah in strengthening the narrative of Islam rahmatan lil 'alamin in public spaces. a visual narrative of Islam that is friendly to culture, open to diversity, and strong in principle. These symbols reinforce the message that religious moderation is not only a verbal teaching, but is also embedded in the cultural and aesthetic expressions of Islam Nusantara.

**Keywords:** Religious Moderation, Islam Nusantara, Batik Motif, Sheikh Zayed, Mosque

## **INTRODUCTION**

Batik is an Indonesian cultural heritage that has gained international recognition. It is not only regarded as a decorative fabric, but also as a representation of identity and local wisdom (Wang *et al*, 2019). Batik has been a fundamental aspect of Javanese culture since the Majapahit era, serving as a means to express social, spiritual, and aesthetic ideals. Every batik motif symbolizes a deep significance, depicting the intricate connection between mankind and the natural world, together with the cultural customs and historical context associated with it (Vickers, 2013). Within this particular framework, batik functions not only as a cultural artifact, but also as a means of transmitting messages and philosophical beliefs about life (Febriani *et al*, 2023).

Raden Mas Said, also known as Kanjeng Gusti Pangeran Adipati Arya (KGPAA) Mangkunegara I, is a prominent individual in Indonesian history who fulfilled the roles of both a warrior and an artist. Raden Mas Said, known for his unwavering determination to resist VOC colonization, also played a significant role in advancing the art of batik in the Solo Raya region. He not only advocated for independence, but also endeavored to safeguard and advance the indigenous culture, encompassing batik, which has now become an integral aspect of Javanese heritage.

The principles espoused by Raden Mas Said, such as *Mulat Sarira Angrasa Wani* (the bravery to self-reflect) and *rumangsa melu andarbeni* (experiencing a sense of possession), act as a wellspring of motivation for numerous batik artists, including Mbok Semok, a batik craftsman residing in Girilayu, Karanganyar. Mbok Semok's artistic creations not only safeguard the customs of batik, but also convey the principles of perseverance and the philosophical teachings of Raden Mas Said through modern batik designs that are abundant in significance. These works embody the ethos and principles advocated by Raden Mas Said, rendering them pertinent to the contemporary social and cultural milieu.

The objective of this research is to investigate and examine the historical evidence of Raden Mas Said's role as a trailblazer in the advancement of batik in Girilayu. Additionally, it attempts to delve into the philosophical significance embedded within the batik patterns created by Mbok Semok (Sachari *et al*, 2020). We will employ a methodological approach that prioritizes historical research to thoroughly investigate the creative processes and sources of inspiration for each batik motif. This will involve conducting literature studies and interviews. This study will also emphasize Mbok Semok's impact on the local economy by preserving batik traditions and her contributions to establishing batik as a medium for reflection that bridges the gap between the current generation and the historical struggle.

This research aims to offer comprehensive insights into the role of Mbok Semok's batik motifs as a means of connecting history and culture. To have a deeper appreciation for the cultural significance of batik, it is important to have a thorough understanding of

the historical context and philosophical principles that inform each pattern. Furthermore, the objective of this research is to enhance public consciousness regarding the significance of conserving batik culture, which is a fundamental component of the nation's identity.

In essence, this publication serves as both a contribution to the advancement of knowledge and a plea to recognize and safeguard the cultural heritage that has become an irreplaceable aspect of the nation's identity. Through emphasizing the contributions of Raden Mas Said and Mbok Semok in the historical context of batik, our aim is to motivate forthcoming generations to uphold and advance the art of batik, recognizing its significance as an invaluable cultural heritage.

Previous Studies related to this research are the study on The Development of Girilayu Batik Motifs as Revitalization Strategy for Fashion Products through Workshop and Socialization, (Nurchayanti et al. 2024); the study on The Growth of Laweyan Batik Entrepreneurs in Surakarta: In The Perspective of Social Economic History (*Pertumbuhan Pengusaha Batik Laweyan Surakarta: Suatu Studi Sejarah Sosial Ekonomi*) , (Baidi 2006) ; the Study on The Role of *Estri* Mangkunegaran's Soldiers in the Era K.G.P.A.A. Mangkunegara 1 (*Peran Prajurit Estri Mangkunegaran Pada Masa K.G.P.A.A. Mangkunegara I (1742-1795)*), (Anjani, Yunianto, and Purwanta 2023); the study on The Development Girilayu Batik and It's Influence on Society in Girilayu Matesih Karanganyar (*Perkembangan Batik Girilayu dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Masyarakat Girilayu, Matesih Karanganyar*), (Ningrum, Musadad, and Isawati 2022).

## METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a qualitative methodology with a literature review approach. Each source, consisting of books and articles, provides descriptions of the historical origins and influences of Raden Mas Said in Girilayu Karanganyar on the diverse range of Mbok Semok batik designs. Danandjaja (1997) suggests that literature study can involve analyzing articles, books, and literary sources that are still pertinent to the issue. Subsequently, in order to obtain precise outcomes, a comprehensive interpretation

analysis can be performed to uncover the goals and solutions to the study issues that occur.

Sugiyono (2017) defines the qualitative descriptive method as a research approach rooted in post-positivism philosophy. It is employed to examine the state of the research subject, rather than conducting experiments. In this method, the researcher plays a crucial role in collecting data through triangulation. This approach involves researchers use many data collection methodologies to gather data from a single source. The data analysis process is based on induction, and the outcomes of qualitative research place greater emphasis on the significance of generalization. Two primary methodologies employed in the research are historical theory and semiotic theory. The historical philosophy, spearheaded by Leopold von Ranke, highlights the significance of precision and impartiality in revealing historical truths via primary sources. The semiotic theory created by Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes is used to examine the symbols found in batik motifs. Saussure sees language as a system of signs with meaning, while Barthes emphasizes that symbols can take on different visual forms. The integration of these two methodologies seeks to uncover the latent symbolism and societal significance ingrained within the batik patterns, while also exploring their connection to the historical narrative of the Karanganyar community and the challenges faced by Raden Mas Said.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Historical Legacy of Batik by Raden Mas Said and the Prajurit Estri Mangkunegaran**

Raden Mas Said, also known as Pangeran Sambernyawa, is a prominent figure in Indonesian history, namely in the fight against Dutch colonization. He was born on April 7, 1725 and is acknowledged as the founder of the Mangkunegaran principality. He is renowned for his courage in spearheading the resistance against the VOC (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie). Raden Mas Said formed the Prajurit Estri Mangkunegaran, a women's army, as part of his efforts to save his kingdom. This force consisted of proficient women who held military talents on par with those of male soldiers, while also participating in domestic pursuits such as arts and batik.

The Prajurit Estri served not only as warriors but also served as a symbol of the power and significance of women in the history of resistance in Indonesia. They proved that women could make substantial contributions in several fields, encompassing both the military and cultural realms. Their mastery of the technique of batik functioned as a method to safeguard tradition and cultural heritage, so strengthening the role of women in society. Raden Mas Said vigorously advocated for the advancement of batik as an essential component of the cultural legacy that requires protection and conservation.

The batik created by the Prajurit Estri and the neighboring Mangkunegaran community exemplifies cultural opulence and embodies the principles of perseverance. By engaging in the art of batik, they preserved cultural customs and passed down this artistic tradition to the succeeding generation, including the abdi dalem in Matesih Karanganyar. The historical legacy of Raden Mas Said and the Prajurit Estri Mangkunegaran symbolizes the dynamic relationship between struggle, art, and cultural identity in Indonesia, highlighting the significance of women's contributions to the nation's history.

### **History of the Variations of Mbok Semok Batik from Girilayu**

Batik is a culturally significant heritage of Indonesia that encapsulates profound philosophical significance. This cultural artifact ultimately functions as a distinct indicator of identity for a specific region or country. These features serve as indications that distinguish one culture from another, indicating the esteemed local knowledge (Poon, 2020).

Local wisdom encompasses three interconnected forms: cognitive patterns, societal norms or values, and complementary products that strengthen these elements. The batik-making technique is a manifestation of local wisdom through objects. Batik is widely acknowledged as an integral part of Indonesian culture and is the predominant artistic medium in the country (Nurcahyanti *et al*, 2019).

The origins of batik in Indonesia may be traced back to the Majapahit Kingdom, where hand-drawn batik, known as batik tulis, gained popularity in the 18th century. Stamped batik, or batik cap, arose in Indonesia after World War I. The evolution of batik may be traced back to the Pajang Kingdom, when it was extensively recorded by Kyai Henis.

This tradition continued during the Mataram Kingdom, which later divided into the Solo and Yogyakarta kingdoms. Artisans have down the custom of batik from one generation to another in order to safeguard ancestral legacy and provide crucial economic sustenance for families. One may find a producer of court batik in Surakarta in the Kauman and Laweyan localities, as well as in Karanganyar, namely in the Matesih Girilayu region. The batik made in this region continues to uphold its traditional royal batik craftsmanship, while also witnessing the emergence of contemporary- themed batik (Nurchayanti et al, 2020).

### **History And Philosophy Of The Tri Dharma Monument**

The Tri Dharma Monument is a commemorative structure erected to honor the resistance of Raden Mas Said, also known as Pangeran Sambernyawa, against the Dutch army and their allies during a tumultuous age. President Soeharto officially opened this monument on June 8, 1971. It is located in a revered spot, thought to be the place where Raden Mas Said received the divine inspiration for the establishment of the Mangkunegaran state. The monument functions as a reminder of both the physical challenges faced and as a representation of the principles of leadership and accountability that all government officials are expected to adhere to.

The Tri Dharma Monument represents a philosophical concept that includes three essential teachings known as Tri Dharma. These teachings are "Rumangsa Melu Handarbeni" (having a sense of responsibility), "Wajib Melu Hanggondeli" (being obligated to protect), and "Mulat Sarira Hangrasa Wani" (feeling courageous after self-reflection). These teachings highlight the significance of a collective feeling of ownership and accountability between leaders and the populace. Within this framework, the monarch assumes the dual role of both a ruler who is served and a servant of the people, while the population is anticipated to actively participate in safeguarding and upkeeping their land. This fosters a symbiotic relationship and enhances social cohesion throughout the community.

The embodiment of these Tri Dharma principles is seen in the joint commitment made by the founders of the Mangkunegaran palace and the nobles during the coronation



of KGPAA Mangkunegara I. This vow contains directives to conserve and exploit the Mangkunegaran land for the advantage of future progenies. This suggests that the teachings imparted by Raden Mas Said were not only applicable during his time, but also possess a lasting influence that is anticipated to be transmitted to future generations. The Tri Dharma Monument serves as a representation of a collective dedication to protecting and conserving cultural and historical legacy.

The Tri Dharma Monument serves not only as a historical landmark but also as a source of inspiration for batik craftspeople in Girilayu, who have created significant batik patterns. The Tri Dharma batik motif symbolizes the uncomplicated lifestyles of the community and their commitment to traditional principles, while also representing the essence of unity and collaborative effort. Hence, the Tri Dharma Monument serves as both a commemoration of historical challenges and a cultural emblem that instills principles of solidarity, bravery, and societal accountability in forthcoming cohorts. It is expected that the community will persist in recalling and implementing the teachings encompassed in the Tri Dharma in their everyday lives, as a result of this heritage.

### **Variety of Tugu Tri Dharma Batik Motifs**

Batik Tugu Tri Dharma is a culturally significant and historically valuable art form that originated from the village of Girilayu in Karanganyar Regency. This pattern serves not only as a visual depiction but also as a manifestation of the historical significance of Raden Mas Said, commonly referred to as Mangkunegara I. Tugu Tri Dharma symbolizes teachings and philosophies that prioritize humanitarian principles, kinship, and mutual collaboration, which are essential aspects of Javanese culture in a historical context. Therefore, this batik transcends its material nature and serves as a means of storytelling that establishes a connection between previous and current generations.

The production of Batik Tugu Tri Dharma entails representing diverse natural resources discovered in Girilayu, including fruits and other organic components. This pattern is intricately crafted, blending non-geometric components that mirror the exquisite and varied aspects of nature. Historically, this batik exemplifies the way in which local communities harness their natural resources to produce artworks that

possess both aesthetic appeal and economic significance. The annual durian festival in the region serves as a prime example of the symbiotic relationship between local culture and economy.

The presence of Batik Tugu Tri Dharma in a contemporary setting showcases the ability of batik craftsmen to adapt and innovate. While upholding traditional values, this batik has also adapted to meet current demands by being applied on blangkon and other accessories. This exemplifies the continuous cultural changes, wherein tradition and modernity may harmoniously coexist. Hence, Batik Tugu Tri Dharma functions not only as a representation of cultural heritage, but also as a means of communicating contemporary societal messages and ideals.

### **Batik Mbok Semok Elevates the Economy of the Community**

Batik Mbok Semok is a variant of batik art that has its origins in Girilayu Village, situated on the slopes of Mount Lawu in Matesih, Karanganyar. Not only does this batik painting serve as a cultural treasure, but it also plays a vital function in bolstering the local economy. The female batik workers in Girilayu, referred to as "Mbok Semok," are dedicated to producing modern patterns while upholding traditional designs that have been in existence since the time of Mangkunegaran I. Through government assistance in the form of training and workshops, these skilled craftsmen have gained more self-reliance and the ability to promote and sell their products independently, eliminating the need for batik entrepreneurs in Solo.

Batik Mbok Semok's presence has a substantial beneficial influence on the local economy. There is an estimated population of one thousand batik makers in Girilayu Village, of which around 300 have obtained certification. These skilled craftsmen consistently acquire knowledge and refine their skills to develop fresh patterns and enhance their methods of promoting their products. As a result, Batik Mbok Semok not only provides revenue for the artists but also generates employment opportunities for the local population, thereby contributing to the reduction of unemployment rates in the area (Akagawa *et al*, 2018).

Moreover, Batik Mbok Semok serves as a representation of the local culture and



a source of community pride (Ratten, 2016). By engaging in partnerships with institutions and actively participating in a range of regional and national events, this batik has garnered recognition and respect in a wider market. The endeavors of the batik craftsmen in Girilayu to conserve culture and enhance the economy exemplify the ability of traditional art to acclimate to evolving circumstances and maintain its significance in a contemporary setting. Therefore, Batik Mbok Semok not only safeguards cultural legacy but also enhances the economic viability of the Girilayu community (Gatut *et al*, 2010).

## CONCLUSIONS

The article "Historical Footprints and the Inspirational Struggle of Raden Mas Said in Girilayu Karanganyar" highlights the significant influence of Raden Mas Said, the inaugural ruler of Mangkunegaran, in molding the batik tradition of the Solo Raya area. His endeavors in developing Girilayu as a hub for batik artistry not only conserved ancient methods but also sparked a distinctive range of patterns that depict indigenous plants, animals, and historical stories. The study emphasizes the profound correlation between cultural history and community identity, demonstrating the ongoing impact of Raden Mas Said's legacy on modern batik artisans.

Moreover, the results support the use of a comprehensive strategy to maintain and enhance the sustainability of Girilayu batik. This involves promoting cooperation between craftsmen and local government, improving training programs, and investigating creative techniques such as batik cap and printing. Through participating in shows and broadening their market reach, the artists may secure the sustainability of their craft while also making it more available to a broader audience. In conclusion, this study highlights the need of conserving and rejuvenating traditional batik as a crucial element of Indonesia's cultural legacy, guaranteeing its pertinence for future cohorts.

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