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The Ornaments Of Langgar Bubar, Kudus: Type And Placement

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Abstract

Fine arts have been known since prehistoric times, as seen in the caves in Maluku. During the historical period, under the Hindu-Buddhist influence, it could be seen in the temple reliefs, such as Borobudur Temple, and statues depicting Hindu gods. The decline of Majapahit, a Hindu-Buddhist kingdom on Java island, was followed by Islam's rise in the 16th century. Centers for the spread of Islam emerged on the island of Java, including Kudus. This paper aims to describe the decoration of Langgar Bubar, a sacred building that functioned as a worshipping place around the 16th century. Langgar Bubar, which means a small unfinished mosque in Javanese, is located near Menara Kudus Mosque complex. The building condition now is partially collapsed. Langgar Bubar has distinctive features: its decorative ornaments are fully carved on the brick walls. This paper discussed the type and placement of the ornaments. The method is by collecting the data from literature and survey studies, classifying data analysis, and giving the interpretation. It reveals that the ornaments do not describe living things, as it is in line with the teachings of Islam. Langgar Bubar is a cultural heritage that illustrates the continuity of cultures from Hindu to Islamic period.

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Keywords: early presence of Islam, Kudus, ornaments, Langgar Bubar

INTRODUCTION

The early period of Islam on the island of Java, in the 16th century, is marked by its archaeological remains spread around the northern coastal areas. Remains such as tombs, mosques can be found in Banten, Cirebon, Demak, Kudus, Lamongan, Tuban, and Gresik.

Kudus is a district in Central Java, bordered in the east by Pati Regency, in the south by Grobogan and Pati Regencies, in the west by Demak and Jepara Regencies, and the north by Jepara Regency. Kudus Regency has a significant position because it preserves archaeological remains from the early period of Islam. Cultural heritage traces

of early Islamic heritage in Kudus include Menara Mosque complex, the tomb complex of Sunan Kudus, the tomb complex of Sunan Muria, and small mosques around Menara Mosque complex such as Langgar Dalem, Langgar Bubar / Bubrah, Loram Mosque, Jipang Mosque, and Hadiwarno Mosque. Menara Mosque is also known as Al-Aqsa Al-Manar Mosque, which Sunan Kudus built (Jaffar Sadiq) in the 16th century (Research & Team, 2005: 4-15; Department of Culture and Tourism of Kudus Regency, 2005: 87-92).

This paper discussed one cultural heritage among the many archaeological sites in Kudus, namely, Langgar Bubar, especially from decorative arts. The aspect was chosen because it has a unique feature compared to other small mosques around Menara Mosque complex. The building was full of ornaments carved on brick walls.

Previous studies had been conducted on Menara Mosque and other small mosques in Kudus. Zaimu Azzah reviewed the functional aspects and the location of the Menara Mosque and the small mosques (langgars) around it for her thesis in archaeology at Gadjah Mada University. Judging from its function as a place of worship, some were small-scale, and some were large-scale (Azzah, 1988). Other research focused on the *paduraksa* gate as a component of the mosque, and langgars around Menara Kudus Mosque. It became an indication of the antiquity of Islamic culture in Kudus (Inagurasi, 2006: 111-115). Those mosques were located in the western part of the city, also called the old Kudus city. Over time, the development of the Kudus city went towards the east, called the new (modern) Kudus city. The old and the new Kudus city are separated by Gelis River (Adrisijanti, 2006: 483-484).

The decorative aspect of Langgar Bubar has never been discussed before, especially the type and placement. The goal is to disseminate information and knowledge about the diversity of decorative arts in the early days of Islam in the archipelago based on the study of Langgar Bubar in Kudus in the 16th century.

METHOD

This paper is an archaeological study that seeks to reveal the art of the past using cultural data of of Langgar Bubar. The method used is analytical descriptive, beginning with the data collection stage, both literature and survey studies, where the collected data is classified, analyzed, and interpreted. The archaeological remains from the early Islamic period in Java were also found in other sites, such as Mantingan mosque in Jepara. The data was then compared to describe the ornamentation on Langgar Bubar.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Decorative Aspects Of Langgar Bubar

Langgar Bubar or also called Langgar Bubrah is located at Sunan Kudus Road in Tepasan Sub-village, Demangan Village, City District, Kudus Regency, Central Java. It is located southeast of Menara Kudus mosque. In Javanese, Langgar means a small mosque or *surau*, and Bubar or Bubrah means unfinished or abandoned. Langgar Bubar is a small unfinished mosque that became a cultural heritage object owned by the government of Kudus Regency (Kudus Regency Culture and Tourism Office, 2005: 90).

Langgar Bubar is now in ruins. The structure of the two terraces remains where the building is located on the upper terrace. The observable parts are the foundation, walls, and ornaments, while the roof is already gone. The floor plan is rectangular, measured by 6.30 m long, 6 m wide, and 2.75 m high. The width of the building area is 37.80 m². Langgar Bubar consists of the walls, entrances, rooms, and niches. The four walls are made of bricks, without *lepa*, and the entrance gate is on the right side of the eastern wall. The wall corner of this building is similar with the angle of a temple building in the form



Picture 1. *Langgar Bubar*, Kudus, east side. (Source: Pusat Penelitian Arkeologi Nasional, 2005).

of protruding parts at every corner (*pelipit*). Langgar Bubar also has a room and a niche (Picture 1). The niche is a small room extended from the west wall and used as a place for the imam to lead the prayers.

Decorative ornament is the most prominent feature of Langgar Bubar. All four walls were carved with ornaments, varying from high to deep reliefs. Its type and placement distinguish the ornaments in Langgar Bubar. The description of each type is as follows. First, the medallion ornament on the hexagonal panel consists of three vertical layers upwards, and inside, the panel area contains the leaf tendril motif (flora). Second, the medallion ornament on the three hexagon panels was arranged horizontally and had woven motif. Third, the ornaments of three rectangular panels in a horizontal row contained ornaments with a cross motif or a plus symbol. These ornaments were carved on the outer south wall (Picture 2).

Fourth, the lines of hexagonal and quadrangle medallions on the top and bottom sides. The top level consists of three hexagon medallions with woven motifs in a horizontal row. On the bottom level, the ornaments are cross motif or plus symbol and flower petal (rosette) carved in a square area and arranged in a horizontal row. These high carvings decorations are on the east wall, to the right side of the entrance (Research Team, 2005)



Picture 2 (left). Ornaments on the southern wall. **Picture 3 (right).** Ornaments on the eastern wall, located at the right side of the entrance (Sumber: Pusat Penelitian Arkeologi Nasional, 2005).

The fifth ornament is the hexagon medallions with tendrils of leaves (flora) and rosette motifs on a square panel located at the corners of the west and south walls. The upper wall had already collapsed, so only two visible panels were left. The hexagonal and square panels are bordered by the ornamentation of leaf tendrils (flora) (Picture 4). The sixth ornament is a circular motif inside the rectangular and square panels. These ornaments are carved at the bottom of the wall (Picture 5). The seventh ornament is a puppet or human-figure-like in a pentagonal panel and carved on the eastern wall at the right side of the entrance.



Picture 4
Ornaments at
corner of the



(left).
the
south

and west wall. **Picture 5 (right).** Ornaments at the bottom of the wall. (Source: National Archaeological Research Center, 2005).

As described before, Langgar Bubar's placement is on a two-level terrace, the lower and upper ground terrace. Langgar Bubar was built on the upper ground terrace, and its ornaments were also carved on the lower ground terrace. The motifs are circles and cross symbols carved into a brick structure on a square panel.




DISCUSSION




Identification Of The Early Islamic Sacral Building Arts

There are six types of ornaments in Langgar Bubar which are (1) tendrils of leaves (flora) or curls on a hexagon (panel) area; (2) woven motif; (3) cross sign or + symbol;

(4) rosette (flower petal), (5) round motif (circle), (6) wayang or human figure-like but disguised. The ornaments were carved on the walls and did not depict living creatures. There were only a few wayang or human-figure-like compared to numerous other motifs. The types of decorations in Langgar Bubar are shown in the table below.

Table. Types of Ornaments in Langgar Bubar, Kudus

No	Type of Ornament	Location	Photo
1	Ornaments with a leaf tendril motif (flora) inside a hexagonal panel	The outside part of the east wall, at the right side of the entrance, and the corner of the east and west walls	
2	Medallion ornament on the three hexagon panels was arranged horizontally and had woven motif	The outside part of the east wall, at the right side of the entrance, and the south wall	
3	Ornament of three rectangular panels in a horizontal row contained ornaments with a cross motif or a plus symbol	The outside part of the east wall, and at the corner of the south and west walls	

4	Ornament of rosette motif (flower petal) inside a square panel	The outside part of the east wall, and at the corner of the south and west walls	
5	Ornament of a circular motif inside a rectangular and square panels	The outside part of the north and west walls, and on the lower ground terrace	
6	Ornament of puppet or human-figure-like in a pentagonal panel	The outside part of the east wall, and at the right side of the entrance	

Ornaments on Langgar Bubar were also found in other sites from the same period, such as the tomb of Sunan Kudus, Kudus tower, the mosque and the tomb of Queen Kalinyamat, in Mantingan, Jepara, and Sendang Duwur in Lamongan, East Java (Sulistyanto, 2019: 32; Munandar, 2020: 76-80). Those ornaments are often found in archaeological remains of the Demak Kingdom in the 16th century. The name Bubar or Bubrah is pretty common, for example, Candi Bubrah in Jepara (Sulistyanto, 2019:26). There is yoni on the east side of Langgar Bubar where its two long stones had various motifs of lotus (*padma*) flowers and divine figures carved on one side (Research Team, 2005). The same remains were found at Prawoto Site, Pati, Central Java, a site thought to be a resting place from the Demak Kingdom period (Inagurasi, 2001: 57).

In the early 16th century, Kudus was the center of Islamic religious activity. Kudus, which means sacred, came from the Arabic "Al-Quds" or Baitul Mukadis. It was then declared as a holy place by Sunan Kudus, who was previously an *imam* of the

congregation in Demak. Tajug was the city's original name before changing to Kudus (Graaf et al., 2001:111). In Kudus, mosques, and langgars of any size embodied the sacred buildings derived from the holy name (al-Quds).

As Kudus is the only city in Central Java using an Arabic name, Sri Soejatmi Satari then compared the name with one mentioned in the book of Nagarakertagama. In the 14th century, Majapahit Kingdom stated some places as *sima*. It is where an area and its inhabitants are exempted from taxes or changed from the original use with the intention that the residents become responsible for maintaining its secrecy (Suhadi, 1993:1-2, 209). Other *sima* lands such as Demak, Lasem, and , Juwana can still be traced to this day, except for one name, Suci. Kudus and Suci have the same meaning, so it is assumed that Suci refers to Kudus. National Archaeological Research Center (Puslit Arkenas) in 1978 excavated Punden Site (Pundisari), in Hamlet Karangrejosari, Jurang Village, Kudus district, 10 km north of Kudus City. In addition, Punden also means a sacred place. The excavations found many terracotta fragments of *kala* heads and hills decorated with floral ornaments, dormitories or pavilions, elephants, and caves. These fragments are miniatures of sacred buildings for places of meditation. There were substantial similarities between the name Suci and the terracotta fragments of sacred buildings (Satari, 1981).

The variety of Langgar Bubar's decorations differs from those in the sacred Hindu temples, which do not recognize ornaments depicting living creatures such as *dwarapala*, *kala*, and god figures. As Langgar Bubar is a holy place for Muslims, its ornaments are categorized as ornamental decoration, meaning they are limitless to any form, applicable to buildings. It is to beautify and add to the "authority" of a sacred building (Munandar & Aris, 2020: 81). Ornaments are decorative elements that add to the aesthetics. Its primary function is aesthetic as a decoration, and the goal is to beautify the object's appearance so that it becomes a work of art. The function is shown through the harmoniously integrated form, color, texture, material, and elements of art. The ornament making is sometimes inseparable from the intent and purpose, so it also has a symbolic function (Hartanti et al., 2014:533). Carved ornaments are pretty common in past cultural remains, such as statues, temples, mosques, and tombs. The function of the decoration Langgar Bubar is to fill and beautify the building. It is also a form of human attention to sacred buildings that Muslims worship.

CONCLUSION

Even though it is small, Langgar Bubar is rich with its various ornamental decorations and becomes evidence of the richness of art in the early Islam period in Java. Langgar Bubar complements the other contemporary decorations, including Mantingan Jepara mosque, Menara Kudus Mosque, and Sunan Sendang Duwur Tomb in Lamongan. The wall materials of Langgar Bubar were made of bricks similar to those in Menara Kudus mosque and Mantingan Jepara mosque. The lack of living creature figures accommodated the Islamic teachings. Still, there is continuity of decoration from the previous period.

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