ANCIENT TOMBS AND MOSQUES IN JAVA: 
COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND COSMOLOGY

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Abstract

The development of Islam in Java is closely related to the tomb as a material culture that can be studied in archeology. Through the study of tombs, it can be revealed how Islam is developed. In general, the placement of the remaining tombs of the Islamic sultanate in Java can be divided into two locations, namely tombs that are on hills or mountains, and the tombs that are in flat areas. This article discusses the meaning of placing tombs in flat areas studied through the view of Javanese cosmology. Data sources used came from two places, namely the Great Mosque of Demak and the Great Mosque of Kudus. In addition, the study of pilgrimage activities in both places became the focus of the research to see how people now interpret the tombs. The results of the study show that placement of the tombs is related to the microcosm, which is the process of human creation in Islamic cosmology. The activity of pilgrimage to the existing tomb complex is a tradition that is closely related to the meaning of respect for the buried figure.

Keywords: collective memory, cosmology, java, tomb, mosque

Preface

Artifacts, ecofacts, and features are basic symbols that came from the past (Hayden, 1993: 71). Tomb is one of the archaeological data sources in the form of features. Besides being a feature, the tomb has a role of a material culture as a result of human culture which has certain cultural values for certain communities. Besides having cultural values, tombs as archaeological data also contain important information that is used in research and studies that are archaeological.

The development of Islam in the archipelago left a large number of tombs or tomb complexes of the Islamic sultanates. Mostly, placement of the tombs of the sultans or guardians still have continuity aspects with pre-Islamic culture, that is the use of hills or mountains as place of tombs that are considered sacred. In addition to the place in a rather high place, there is also a tomb complex which is flat but slightly elevated, as well as prehistoric buildings or temples. Furthermore, the final type of placement is based on the pattern of grave placement for the most respected figure, namely in the center, at the back, or the highest (Ambary, 1998: 100).
placement of the tomb that has been described, what attracts attention turns out to be that the tomb or grave complex which is located in one complex with the old mosque, is often found in Java. This placement certainly has the same meaning as the meaning found in the elevation of the tomb. One example of a tomb complex that is in one complex with the building of the ancient mosque include the tomb complex in the Great Mosque of Demak and Great Mosque of Kudus.

Great Mosque of Demak

This mosque is the mosque of the kingdom of Demak, founded in 1401 S (1479 AD). This determination is based on candra senkala (symbolic dating) located on the west side of the mihrab wall, which is a turtle ornament that shows the head, body, four legs and tail. This decoration is interpreted as a number in 1401 S or 1479 AD (Soekmono, 1981: 78). The Great Demak Mosque is located in Kauman Village, Demak District, Demak Regency, Central Java Province. In the north, south, and west of the mosque there is a settlement which borders the mosque, while the east of the mosque borders the Sultan Patah highway and the town square.

The Great Mosque of Demak is located in the center of the city which integrates with the square on the front. In addition, the mosque is also surrounded by Muslim settlements on the west and south, and it is called Kampong Kauman. The square which is in the east of the mosque, besides integrating with the mosque as a yard, also has other functions, such as being used for traditional ceremonies and also the party of the people in relation to the holidays. Next to the square is an area called kampung siti hinggil.

The entrance to the main hall of the mosque from the east side has three doors, namely in the middle and on the left and right of the middle door. Building elements in the mosque complex consist of grave complexes, open spaces, boarding schools, and ponds (formerly used as wudhu ponds). The tomb is placed in the west part of the main room or in front of the mihrab. Inside, there are decorations in some tomb and some are not decorated at all. The people who were buried inside the mosque complex included Raden Patah (the first Demak king), Pangeran...
Sabrang Lor (the second king), Sultan Trenggana (third king) and his wife, Sunan Prawata (fourth king), Arya Panangsang, and Sunan Ngudung (Isnaeni, 1996: 60).

Overall, the Great Mosque of Demak has a very significant influence on the development of Islam in Java. Demak mosque and kingdom became the forerunner of the development of Islam in Java and was used as inspiration for the development of Islam in other regions of Java. Because of this enormous influence, often people have a tradition that considers when worshiping at this mosque it can be compared to worship to Mecca.

**Great Mosque of Kudus**

Kudus is one of the commercial cities on the northern coast of Java. The Holy Name comes from the word al-Quds / al-Aqsa which means the Holy City. The name was historically given by Sunan Kudus after returning from the pilgrimage after he visited a place called Baitil al-Quds (Isnaeni, 1996: 85). Great Mosque of Kudus was founded in 1549 by a man named Ja'far Sadiq, or better known as Sunan Kudus. The real name of the mosque is actually al-Manar, whose inscriptions are found on the mihrab, as well as the year of its creation.

![Great Mosque of Kudus](Assilmi, 2015)

Figure 2.
Great Mosque of Kudus (Source: Assilmi, 2015)

Unlike the Great Mosque of Demak, the location of the Great Mosque of Kudus is not in the city center adjacent to the square or palace. The environment around the mosque is only surrounded by Muslim settlers that are often known as Kampung Kauman.

This mosque has a function not only as a place of worship, but also as a boarding school and also a pilgrimage to the tomb which is west of the mosque. In general, the mosque complex consists of three parts, those are the main building of the mosque, open spaces which become pilgrim lines, and the grave complex (Isnaeni, 1996: 86). The first part is the main building as a place to pray, consisting of porch, wudhu place, boarding school, main hall, and mosque tower. Like mosques in Java, the mosque's plan is square with an overlapping roof and surrounded by open spaces. At the front of the mosque there is a porch which is a transition space to the main room.
The second part is the route for pilgrims in the south to go to the tomb in the western part of the mosque (in front of the mihrab). This section consists of three parts, namely the open space, marked by the gate on the front and the temple in the middle. The last part is called bale tajug which is the place of registration before the pilgrims enter the tomb complex.

The third part is a burial area which is located in the front and west of the mosque building, divided into seven areas separated by a dividing wall and connected by a gate between one another. The last area is the grave area covered with Sunan Kudus. The number 7 which is the number of gates in the grave area is often described as the seven levels experienced by the Prophet Muhammad when he experienced the events of Isra Mi'raj (Isnaeni, 1996: 87).

Although this mosque has undergone physical changes, overall the Great Mosque has contributed greatly to the development of Islam and the development of mosque architecture in Java. The existing development has given an illustration of how the combination of pre-Islamic culture is contained from various elements of the building. In addition, the placement of the space in the mosque complex is clearly a reflection of Javanese thinking at the time.

**Cosmology of Ancient Tombs and Mosques in Java**

The cosmological view of Javanese society is heavily influenced by the thoughts and views of Hindu-Buddhists. This influence caused the king to be considered as a sacred manifestation of the entire territory of his power, and the palace was seen as a microcosm in the world of this macrocosm.

Josef Prijotomo explained that there is a dual system in the view of Javanese cosmology. The dual system is described as two opposing pairs, which ultimately causes disorder.

![Cosmology of Ancient Tombs and Mosques in Java](Image)

**Figure 3:**
Javanese cosmology dual system (Source: Prijotomo, 1984)
Thus, the center point plays an important role as a balancer for each sis. The balancing process causes the center to become an opposing energy, and Javanese society is symbolized as infinite unity in diversity. It is the dual system that is interpreted by Prijotomo as two interactions between energies, namely energy associated with the earth (terrestrial forces) and energy associated with heaven (celestial forces) (Prijotomo, 1984: 30). In the view of Islamic society in Java, the Islamic cosmos itself consists of seven layers of heaven, earth, and hell. Heaven is considered as the throne of Allah and Ka'bah is considered as the earth which is the central position between heaven and hell (Isnaeni, 1996: 47). Through this, the Islamic community in Java believes that all these layers of heaven, earth and hell are connected by a vertical axis, and that axis is the center of the world and the center of the universe.

Based on the existing case studies, it appears that the place of the tombs in the Great Mosque of Demak and the Holy Mosque of Kudus are in front of the mihrab or the wall of the Qibla direction. The tomb is the tomb of people who have great influence, namely the guardian and king. For Javanese people, the king is a representative of God in a world that with cosmic power is able to bring peace and order in the world. Whereas the guardian, is considered as a teacher with spiritual power capable of directing life in a more orderly direction according to what is desired by God. So that the roles of both are very large and are considered as messengers of God in the world. When you see the tomb, what is actually the background of the tomb and why is the tomb located in front of the mihrab?
From Eliade's explanation (1959), it can be seen that mosques and tombs are part of a sacred place. Through this sacred place, Javanese people believe that they can communicate with God and also the spirits who died. Through the rituals they do in this place, it shows how they try to communicate with God. The prayer ritual is a way of communicating with God, while the ritual of pilgrimage is an action taken to communicate with the soul of the deceased.

As a sacred space, the mosque has building elements which of course have different levels of sacredness. This difference makes the orientation in this space act as a center point. Mihrab which is the place of priests as leaders in the prayer service, can be said to be the center point because it is from this mihrab that the person who is called the imam leads the pilgrims to worship, communicate with God. Mihrab also serves as a marker for the location of the Ka'bah. Due to its role as the mecca of Muslims throughout the world and the universe, Ka'bah can be seen as a macrocosm. So that the axis of the mihrab-Ka'bah is an orientation in the mosque. Inside there is order, it can be seen as a microcosm and macrocosm. Therefore, the axis that connects mihrab and Ka'bah is the axis mundi (cosmic pillar) for the Islamic community in Java.

If we recall the dualistic system of the Javanese cosmology system, this system can be applied to the intersection of the axis between the axis of the mihrab-Ka'bah and the boundary wall of the mihrab or the western wall of the mosque as the direction to the Qibla. The axis of the mihrab-Ka'bah can be described as terrestrial forces (east-west), which is the energy that works in humans since he was born to death. Whereas the direction axis of the Qibla is described as celestial forces (north-south), representing heaven and hell.
The relationship between terrestrial forces is clearly seen by the division of elements in the mosque complex. Because this terrestrial forces is a human journey from birth to death, the condition of the division of building elements in the mosque follows the journey. So that it can be said that this east-west direction can be seen as a process of human creation until finally humans die. It can be said that the gate of the mosque has the role of limiting the external environment to the environment inside so that this gate has a function as the beginning of the process of human creation.

Due to terrestrial forces as human life from birth to death, in each division the existing space shows each obligation or ritual that must be carried out by humans, including their efforts to unite with God and become perfect humans.

Sufi teachings state that there are 3 stages in which a human can reveal the mystery of God, namely shari'a, tariqa, and haqiqa. These three stages are an obligation that must be lived if a human being wants to understand the mystery of God and merge with Him (Woodward, 1999: 7-9). Of course the process of living it must be able to withstand the lust that exists in him. When a human is born, there is a process of character formation to be baligh and can be accepted by his worship. In this process, it is depicted by the presence of the gate of the mosque and the front of the mosque where there is usually a place or pond for wudhu as a form of human purification before carrying out its obligations.

In the second stage, the main hall of the mosque as a prayer room is considered as a place for humans to carry out these obligations, and humans carry out these obligations when humans are still living in the natural world. The purpose of this obligation is none other than for humans to draw closer to God.

In the process of integrating with God, man must be able to overcome the conflict between lust and soul that is in him. Islamic society in Java realizes that when humans are still in the world they cannot unite with God because they still have different substances. They believe that this process of joining with Allah can only be achieved by the way of humans entering another path, the path of death. Through this path of death, they believe in the return of humans to the Creator.
Based on the idea that humans can communicate and merge with God if humans are able to find "the path to the upper world", and the path is found on the cosmic pillar (axis mundi), then the axis of the mihrab-Ka'bah as a universal pillar can be considered as the axis that can connect man with God. By placing the tomb on the axis of the mihrab-Ka'bah, the soul of the deceased is believed to be able to communicate and unite with Allah.
Figure 6:
The mosque as a microcosm, the process of human creation.

Associated with the rituals performed by the Islamic community on Java, such as pilgrimage or "nyekar", based on the cosmological aspect it is an effort from them to communicate and unite with Allah. Because the buried people have a great influence while still alive, the buried person can be seen as a perfect human picture. For those who perform this ritual, perfect humans are human beings who can later communicate and unite with God. Therefore, through a pilgrimage to the tombs, it is expected that the soul of the deceased person can help convey their prayers and desires, because the deceased person is considered to have merged with Allah.

In addition to the cosmological meaning that is contained, the pilgrimage or blossoming ritual can also be seen in terms of traditions carried out from generation to generation. This activity makes pilgrimage a form of collective memory that occurs among followers.

"Tradition of Pilgrimage" at Islamic Old Tombs in Java

Pilgrimage is a visiting activity of a place which by the general view of the community (pilgrims) is usually believed to contain holy and sacred elements (KBBI, 1988: 1,018). In Europe, pilgrimage is also referred to as "pilgrim" in English, which comes from the Latin, pereginus, which means people who are kris-kras, crossing across fields and regions. This broad understanding of the community said the pilgrimage can refer to activities visiting places, especially tombs, such as the tomb of the prophet, guardians, heroes, relatives, and so on.

In Islam, pilgrimage which means visiting the tomb of the beginning was not
recommended by the Prophet Muhammad. The words of the Prophet said that if Adam's child died, then all his relationships would be broken with the world, except: the deeds that did not break up, the knowledge practiced, and the prayers of the righteous children. At the time of the Apostle, many grave pilgrimage activities were very close to shirk (cuddling or associating partners with God). But the prohibition changed its status to recommendation, with the aim of pilgrimage only to pray for the buried person and so that every human being is aware of death so that he is expected to always draw closer to God.

What happened to the graves or the old cemetery complex in Java is different from the religious creed. Some of the tomb complex, especially the tombs of kings or sultans and guardians, especially in Java, still get certain treatment from some people. Some of the tombs are considered sacred and sacred, sometimes even mistakenly used as a place to ask for something. Of course Islam does not recognize mourning rites or death warnings outside the standard procedures for the treatment of bodies until the funeral. However, this can certainly be included not in the level of the aqeedah, but rather a tradition that takes place in Javanese culture which is a tribute to ancestors, so the term tomb is also called *pasarean* (bed), or *kasunyatan* (tranquility).

Agus Sunyoto (2007) argues that the pilgrimage is actually far from being shirk. Conversely, the pilgrimage is an activity that contains spiritual meaning (to) recall, strengthen faith, realize mortality in the world, and obtain safety (Sunyoto, 2007: 27). The meaning of a pilgrimage that can mean remembering is very interested in being studied through the idea of collective memory. Because this pilgrimage activity is not only related to individual activities, but also the existence of certain social group activities.

"Tradition of Pilgrimage" as Collective Memory

The important thing from a monument or building is not just its physical form, but the events that occur in the building. The events can also vary, some that only happen once in a lifetime or even what often happens. There are very important events that can change our lives and make an impression in memory. However, it is the most common occurrence that gives character to the place (Alexander, 1979).

Memory is the result of a cultural process, which is to remember something to always be remembered (Hallam and Hockey, 2001: 1). In the cultural process, memory is something that exists or happened in the past to be remembered or remembered in the present or the future, so memory is also a way of showing past human existence in the present and the future (Hallam and Hockey, 2001: 3).

Halbwachs (1992) states that memory will always be closely related to collective experience, and includes groups of people. Memory also awakens / remembers the togetherness of the group of people which refers to previous events, where usually this process will find a unique moment that forms a collective identity. This is what is called collective memory.

In collective memory, individuals are placed in a range of time and space so that they can communicate with each other. Collective memory is not something that already exists, but rather a form of social construction. Collective memory as a binding and forming of a group rests on the individual memory of group members (Coser, 1992: 22). According to Halbwachs, reality,
data, and various texts as an objective representation in individual memory will always be reinterpreted along with the development of time, value and views of each individual as a group member. On the contrary, the meaning and re-selection of objective data refers to the needs and interests of the group in which the individual is a member. This fact shows the existence of various groups and that one particular individual can become a member of several groups at once (Soegiarto, 2013: 34). Through such things memory cannot necessarily work if it is not associated with social factors, such as family, belief traditions, culture, and place.

In academic studies, pilgrimage is almost always included in the category of "popular religion". In the past, this category of popular religion often had negative connotations because it was interpreted as a religious practice that was too simple and contained pre-Islamic rituals that were said to deviate from the official teachings of religion (Sunyoto, 2007: 27). However, if in the perspective of "popular religion" which is often confronted with elite religion, there is injustice, because many religious figures who have played a major role in their religious traditions each draw their spiritual experience from this popular religion (Bisri, 2006: 212). Pilgrimage is one of the media to achieve this spiritual experience. This experience is very important to improve the quality of faith in God. Pilgrimage is not identified with tours that occur in modern times. In pilgrimage activities, there are meanings that can lead to increased obedience of the servant to the Creator. For laymen, a pilgrimage to the guardian's tomb or sultan may often be associated with searching for "something". Though the pilgrimage to the graves of guardians or sultans can be more than that, depending on the level of awareness of the pilgrims and their knowledge of the guardian or sultan who is buried (Bisri, 2006: 213). During his lifetime, the guardian or buried figure was a person who was in power, or politically influential. They are considered as saints because they play a role in spreading religious teachings by mastering scriptures that are believed to be sourced from God. These saints are certainly given the advantage of being supernatural, as a provision for spreading God's religion. In addition, its legitimacy is considered a representation of God.

The purity of the guardian or sultan was not only believed when he was alive, but also carried away to death. Therefore, it is not surprising that respect for the guardian continues to be carried out at the last place of restoration or in the tombs where he is buried. Such perceptions and beliefs continue to be handed down from generation to generation, so that what is built in the community is called the "pilgrimage tradition".

It is clear that this pilgrimage tradition is a collective memory. Pilgrimage tradition is a social construction, in which the individual's memory is related to reality, data, and various texts about the guardian or sultan during his lifetime are reinterpreted along with the development of time, values, and views of each individual who experiences it so that it develops into a collection of individuals who collectively. The figure of a guardian as a saint and a representative of the Creator in the world is reinterpreted by his individual followers when the figure of this guardian has died and is buried. This reinterpretation is carried out by more than one individual so as to form a collective memory of respect for the guardian or sultan.
Conclusion

Tombs as material culture have meaning that can be expressed based on various archaeological studies. The location of the Islamic tomb complex which is common in Java is indeed located on hills or plateaus. Given that this is due to the existence of cultural concepts that still take place from pre-Islamic times. In addition, there are also tombs or grave complexes that are one part with the old mosque, generally on the west side of the mosque outside the mosque building, which after reviewing the meaning of the placement turns out to be a mosque and its tombs related to the microcosm, the process of human creation.

The activity of pilgrimage to the existing tomb complex is a tradition that is closely related to the meaning of respect for the buried figure. Apart from those who consider that this activity is often associated with the search for "something", it is dominantly that the "pilgrimage tradition" is a part of collective memory that is interpreted as a tribute to the guardian or buried figure.

References


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