



The History of Sunan Bonang Mandala in The Lasem Chronicle (Carita Lasem)

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Article History	Abstract
Received January 21, 2024	<i>This article aims to reveal the existence and origins of the establishment of the Sunan Bonang Mandala as narrated in the Carita Lasem text or the Lasem Chronicle. This descriptive-qualitative research employs content analysis methods to analyze the content and socio-historical context within the Lasem Chronicle text. Through content analysis and comparison with other historical data, this research concludes the strong hypothesis of the existence of the Sunan Bonang Mandala in Bonang Village, Lasem District, Rembang Regency. Sunan Bonang. As local historiography, the Lasem Chronicle shows the existence of an Islamic educational center led by Sunan Bonang in the 15th century AD. This text also emphasizes Sunan Bonang's position as a state saint whose missionary territory covers the areas of Tuban, Lasem, and their surroundings. Furthermore, the origins of the establishment of the Sunan Bonang Mandala in the Lasem Chronicle also depict a pattern of Islamic Mandala establishment during the Wali Songo period, where the establishment of Mandala is inseparable from the role of local sovereigns, simultaneously illustrating a positive pattern of sovereign-religious leader relations in the Islamization process in the Nusantara.</i>
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INTRODUCTION

The discourse on the history of Islamization in Indonesia, particularly in Java, is intricately linked to the historical narrative of *Wali Songo*. The term “*Wali Songo*”, meaning the nine holy teachers or *sunan*, refers to a number of key Islamic propagators whose missionary networks spanned across the Nusantara. They were religious scholars and

sufi teachers whose local wisdom succeeded in rapidly Islamizing the Nusantara community in the early 15th century AD. The existence and role of the *Wali Songo* have become a collective memory among Javanese Muslims, especially among traditionalist Muslims. The community regards the *sunan* as *waliyullah* or beloved ones of God, figures worthy of emulation and veneration. Visiting the tombs of these *sunan* has become an important pilgrimage in their



religious life. Daily, hundreds or even thousands of pilgrims visit the *sunan's* tombs seeking blessings (*barokah*). Pilgrimage to the tombs of famous figures like the *sunan* has become a popular tradition in Indonesia, particularly on Java Island (Romdhoni 2015). However, not all pilgrimage sites are tombs. Some sites resembling tomb complexes are memorial markers (*petilasan*), commemorating significant events related to the *sunan* that occurred at those locations (Quinn 2022).

Despite this, the existence and role of the *Wali Songo* in Islamization were once questioned for their historical validity by modernists who considered them merely mythical figures. This skepticism was tied to the limited historical records related to the *Wali Songo* and the mystical stories surrounding them, which some found implausible. The collective memory that developed in the community generally took the form of hagiography, lacking historiography that could be academically verified.

However, the reality is quite the opposite: the *Wali Songo* and their student networks left literary and artifact traces. Hundreds of local historiographic manuscripts like *babad* (Chronicles) and *suluk* (Sufi works) provide historical insights into the identities and lives of the *sunan* during their lifetimes. Artefactual remnants such as mosques and *petilasan*, as mentioned earlier, can serve as physical evidence of the *sunan's* existence at certain places and times. Even traditions attributed to specific *sunan* figures can also serve as historical evidence of the *Wali Songo*. Thus, the opportunity to present more transformative historical research and academic historiographic works is very feasible.

One trace of the *sunan's* existence that can be further explored is their role as educators. As religious leaders, the *sunan* needed mediums to teach Islam to the community, either through traditional literary works or educational institutions with all their components. One physical trace of the

educational activities developed by the *sunan* is the *mandala* institution.

As an Islamic educational center, *mandala* dynamically contributed to the rapid Islamization of the Nusantara in the 15th century AD. Martin van Bruinessen argues that *pesantren* (its form and components have been known since the 19th century to the present) only existed in the 18th century AD. However, the existence of *pesantren* in the 19th century was not without a foundational model (Bruinessen 2020). Pre-Islamic educational models like *mandala* likely inspired the *pesantren* model, or more broadly, *pesantren* is a dynamic development and formation of culture over hundreds of years from the *mandala* institution. Religious or cultural transformation is not a linear, simple, and static process but a complex, dynamic, and flexible one (Iswanto 2018). The same applies to the existence of *mandala*, which reflects a form of cultural-religious transformation in the Nusantara. At the same time, Islam and Muslims were increasingly accepted by society and the Majapahit Kingdom. Even some royal families had converted to Islam and, together with the Sunans, tried to spread and implement Islamic law in society (Nur Khalik 2020). The social changes preceding the fall of Majapahit were utilized by the *sunan* to spread Islam. Through creative and enjoyable educational presentations, the Sunan succeeded in Islamizing the Javanese community while maintaining positive relations with people of other religions (Fadli 2020).

The existence of *mandala* sites has not been widely researched. One famous *mandala* legacy of the Wali Songo is the Sunan Giri Mandala, known as Giri Kedhaton. This *mandala* even became a significant Islamic political entity in the 16th century AD (Wahyudi 2021). Another suspected *mandala* site is the Sunan Bonang Mandala in Bonang Village, Lasem District, Rembang Regency. This site can be an evidence of the Islamic missionary and educational activities led by Sunan Bonang and other *sunan* figures. As a senior *sunan*

alongside Sunan Giri, Sunan Bonang was known as an Islamic legal expert (*faqih*) and *tasawwuf* scholar who was a reference not only for other Sunan figures but also for the community at large (Saksono 1995). In the well-known history among Javanese society, Sunan Bonang is widely known through his story with his student Sunan Kalijaga in the Jatisekar Forest, northeast of Lasem (Kertapradja and Meinsma 2014). However, the existence of sites like *mandala* located not far from the tomb complexes of the *sunan* is often overlooked by pilgrims. Due to the lack of information and local historical literacy, tracing the history of several *mandala* is as challenging as tracing the history of the Sunan themselves.

Interestingly, in the Lasem area, there is a local historiography titled *Carita Lasem*. *Carita Lasem* or the Lasem Chronicle (*Babad Lasem*) is a local chronicle consisting of nine episodes narrating the history of the Lasem and its surroundings, from the Majapahit era to the colonial era. The content of the Lasem Chronicle is believed to originate from the oral history of the Lasem community, passed down through generations, although it is possible that in the past, the historical stories of Lasem were written in manuscript form. In 1858 AD, this collective memory of Lasem's history was composed by a Lasem aristocrat named Raden Panji Kamzah under the name *Carita Lasem*. In 1978, Raden Panji Karsono, a descendant of Panji Kamzah, transcribed this chronicle text into Latin script. In the mid-1960s, Panji Karsono's descendant named Mbah Guru initiated the transcription of the Lasem Chronicle, which was even ready for publication in print in 1978. However, the print publication of the Lasem Chronicle was only realized in 1985 by the publisher Pembabar Pustaka Semarang (Wijaya 2023). In this printed version, the Lasem Chronicle text was united and became the initial part of the Pustaka Vedha Badrasanti, a Buddhist religious guide still used as a religious reference by the Buddhist community on the north coast of Java, including Lasem,

Rembang. The Lasem Chronicle text was reprinted by the Rembang Regency Library and Archives Office in 2016. However, in this new printed edition, several diacritical marks in the text were omitted.

Regarding the suspected existence of the Sunan Bonang Mandala site in Bonang Village, Lasem, this Lasem Chronicle text becomes interesting and historically significant because it provides a description that can prove and explain Sunan Bonang's educational activities and the origins of his *mandala* in the Bonang Lasem area. Moreover, the suspected existence of the Islamic Sunan Bonang Mandala site in Lasem is closely intertwined with the history of the Lasem and the discovery of several Hindu-Buddhist *mandala* complexes around Mount Argasoka Lasem before the Islamic era. How does the Lasem chronicle narrate the history of Sunan Bonang's Mandala in Bonang Lasem?

This research aims to uncover the existence and origins of the establishment of the Sunan Bonang Mandala as narrated in the Lasem Chronicle. Additionally, in this research, the historical records presented in the Lasem Chronicle are compared with other historical records, both in manuscript research and archaeological findings. Through text comparison and research findings, it is known how the missionary activities of Sunan Bonang as a religious leader and his relationship with the local ruling class contributed to the establishment and development of the *Mandala* he led on the coast of Bonang Village, Lasem, Rembang. In this research, the term *Mandala* is used to refer to the traditional educational institution developed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies on the figure of Sunan Bonang typically emphasize a number of literary manuscripts associated with him. For instance, Schrieke and Drewes have conducted research on the manuscripts known as *Het Boek Van Bonang* or *Primbon Bonang* (Drewes 1968, Schrieke 1916). Another example is Widyastuti, who conducted philological research on works

related to Sunan Bonang titled *Suluk Wujil* (Widyastuti 2001). Although not specifically analyzing the existence of Sunan Bonang Mandala, the edited texts presented in the study provide important clues regarding the location of Sunan Bonang Mandala in this research.

The concept of *mandala* as a socio-religious center that developed in Southeast Asia has been analyzed by several researchers, concerning its origins, functions, and characteristics in the Nusantara region (Dellios 2003, Purwanto and Titasari 2020, Santiko 2012, Williams 2007). Several studies can help us understand the philosophical basis and practical dynamics of *mandala* in the lives of Nusantara society, both during the Hindu-Buddhist period and the Islamic period. Regarding the *mandala* in the Islamic era, for instance, Wahyudi's research further analyzes the role of *mandala* or Pesantren Giri Kedhaton and the figure of Sunan Giri as centers of power legitimization for their surrounding regions (Wahyudi 2021). Other research conducted by Ahmad Baso even offers conceptual ideas regarding the history of establishing *pesantren* during the early days of the Sultanate of Demak based on the study of Babad Cirebon manuscripts (Baso 2019b).

Previously, Agus Sunyoto in his book provided valuable reviews regarding several potential locations of *mandala* or centers of education and propagation led by Sunan Bonang, such as Demak, Tuban, and Lasem (Sunyoto 2016). Agus Sunyoto's review serves as an initial reference for research analyzing the history of Sunan Bonang Mandala. In 2020, the Archaeological Office of DIY Province conducted documentation of several archaeological sites in Lasem District, Rembang Regency. In the publication, several archaeological sites were mapped, including the Pasujudan Sunan Bonang complex, *ndalem*, and the tomb of Sunan Bonang, categorized as cultural heritage sites. However, this research only provided preliminary archaeological data regarding the identity of the sites (Lasem in historical context). The

existence of these sites and their associated traditions have been previously studied by Triwahyono and Sukari, who researched the tradition of *Penjamasan Bende Becak* and the Haul of Sunan Bonang (Triwahyono and Sukari 2022). Additionally, Nur Huda conducted a living hadith study on the tradition of pilgrimage to the tomb of Sunan Bonang practiced by the local community (Huda 2020).

Recent research by Candrika has uncovered intriguing findings regarding pre-Islamic *mandala* traces in Lasem. Based on philological and archaeological data, several sacred religious sites from the Hindu-Buddhist period have been recorded and discovered in the western slopes of Mount Argasoka (Ngargapura) area. These findings indicate a geographical spatial pattern based on cosmological aspects, similar to the Pawitra area and Mount Lawu in East Java. Sites such as Candi Gebang, Candi Pucangan, and Pratan Pamulang suggest the existence of Mandala-Kadewaguruan in the past, intended for the Hindu-Buddhist community of Lasem who sought to deepen their religious knowledge (Wijaya 2023). This finding is intriguing because, in addition to referring to the Lasem Chronicle texts, it can explain the socio-historical relationship regarding the adaptation of Hindu-Buddhist *mandala* patterns into Islamic *mandala*, as represented by Sunan Bonang Mandala in Lasem in this research.

The Lasem Chronicle text itself has been studied several times. One such study is by Rizkiananingrum, who conducted a structural and contextual analysis of the Lasem Chronicle (Rizkiananingrum 2014), as well as Attamimi's research on the content of religious moderation in the Lasem Chronicle (Attamimi 2021). This research itself is an extension of Nabil's article, which was presented at the International Conference on Religion, Science and Education in 2021 (Fahmi 2022), with the addition of new data and further analysis. Based on the review above, it is evident that no research has specifically analyzed the historical narrative of the existence and establishment of Sunan

Bonang Mandala in the Lasem Chronicle text. Nevertheless, the aforementioned studies provide essential complementary and comparative data, which can be used to deepen the content analysis in this research.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The term "*mandala*" refers to the traditional political concept adopted by pre-colonial kingdoms in Southeast Asia. As an intellectual tradition in Southeast Asia, the *mandala* concept combines two main foundational elements: the Hindu-Buddhist religious diagram and the traditional Southeast Asian doctrine of international relations, derived from ancient Indian political discourse. *Mandala*, as a term for traditional political formation in Southeast Asia, was initially adopted by 20th-century Western historians such as O.W. Wolters and I.W. Mabbett to describe the unique governance system implemented in the region. Unlike the conceptions prevailing in Europe and China, where states had defined territorial boundaries and permanent bureaucratic apparatuses, in the *mandala* concept, governance was determined by its center rather than its boundaries. This state concept comprised several vassal states without the need for administrative integration (Dellios 2003). Practically, the *mandala* represents a concept of political leadership, where a single 'divine king' serves as the center, surrounded and protected in tributary relationships by a "circle of kings" who owe loyalty and service to the central ruling king (Williams 2007).

Therefore, vassal states enjoyed extensive autonomy while remaining under the protection and political-military patronage of the main ruling state, which bestowed its greatness upon its subordinate states. Interestingly, the position of the central state could change and be replaced, with vassal states orbiting around new centers of power that became the new *mandala* center. Originally used by Hindu adherents in India, this concept spread and was adopted by Hindu-

Buddhist kingdoms in Southeast Asia, as well as later by Islamic kingdoms. In Java, this concept was adopted primarily by the Majapahit Kingdom and subsequent Islamic Javanese kingdoms. Here, the hierarchical structure involved a ruling king at the Keraton (palace), surrounded by the realm of *negara agung*, and further out, the realm of *mancanagari*. Sovereigns in the outer circle of the palace replicated various symbols and central government mechanisms, making them minor kings that depicted a hierarchy of power that seemed natural to the Javanese people (Rommelink and Rommelink 2022).

As mentioned earlier, *mandala* not only has political dimensions but also religious ones. As a symbol of self-meditation, contemplation of the universe, and the struggle to overcome final obstacles towards nirvana (heaven), another practical implementation of *mandala* is seen in the form of Hindu-Buddhist religious education centers known as *Kadewaguruan*. *Mandala* sites are typically located away from settlements in secluded places such as forests, hilltops, or coastlines. Led by a *mahārishi* or *dewaguru*, *Mandala* serves as the primary destination for people to deepen their religious knowledge and become future religious scholars (Santiko 2012). Within the *mandala*, activities proceed autonomously, ranging from teaching and learning activities, various religious ceremonies, literary writing, to activities related to sustenance and livelihood (Purwanto and Titasari 2020). In the Javanese society's view, the existence and continuity of spiritual *mandala* are closely linked to the support of the ruling king. The patronage provided by Javanese kings for the existence and continuity of *mandala* in their kingdoms represents a form of religious responsibility and spiritual duty (*dharma*) that must be fulfilled by the king (Moertono 2018). In the *mandala*, *wiku* (students) study Hindu-Buddhist religious education and receive training to potentially become monks. With the existence of *mandala* and the educational activities provided by monks and students within it, the aspiration to

realize a prosperous state or kingdom, both materially and spiritually, can continue to be fulfilled. When Islam spread in the Nusantara region, particularly in Java, the concept of Hindu-Buddhist mandala also underwent a change in orientation.

The Islamicization of the Nusantara, which accelerated in the 15th century CE, cannot be separated from the role of Islamic missionaries (*wali*, *sunan*) who employed various humanistic approaches to propagation. They utilized an accommodative approach, where forms of cultural traditions and even concepts of educational institutions that had developed within society were adapted and underwent a process of re-inculturation to support the spread of Islam. One of the cultural forms adapted by these Islamic missionaries was the *mandala*. Through *Irfani*-Sufistic reasoning, the *sunans* creatively and flexibly adapted the *mandala* education model, transforming it into an Islamic educational institution. As a form or system of traditional Hindu-Buddhist religious education at that time, the Sunans adapted and integrated it into traditional Islamic educational institutions along with all their normative guidelines and traditions (Irawan 2018). As a complex focused on spiritual or religious development, within the *mandala* there are hamlets or villages as places of learning, and dormitories as residences for the students (*santri*) (Sunyoto 2016). The *mandala* model became commonly known in the 19th century AD as the *pondok-pesantren* education model. Therefore, the Islamic *mandala* model developed by the *sunans*, with all its cultural heritage, serves as the prototype for contemporary Indonesian *pesantren* (Bruinessen 2020).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a descriptive-qualitative study. Given that the primary source of this research is text-based, the method of content analysis is used to analyze the content of the Lasem Chronicle text according to the research objectives. In this study, the primary source

used is the 1985 printed version of the Lasem Chronicle published by Penerbit Pembabar Pustaka. The selection of this text version is based on accessibility reasons and the authenticity of its content, as it refers to copies of the manuscript by Mbah Guru. Analysis of the primary source is then compared with other historical sources, such as manuscripts, archaeological data, as well as old and contemporary research and historiography related to the history of Sunan Bonang and his *mandala*. The data obtained is analyzed using content analysis method. This method examines the content of documents or transcripts, considering the historical and cultural context, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the thought model based on the analyzed text (Yusuf 2014).

In this research, the analysis begins with defining the concept of *mandala*, followed by a content analysis of the Lasem Chronicle, which narrates the history of Sunan Bonang's *mandala*. Subsequently, the content analysis of the Lasem Chronicle is elaborated and compared with its historical data. Finally, the historical significance of the findings is formulated to enrich the narrative of Sunan Bonang and his leadership of the *mandala*.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Mandala Islam: The Rise of a New Spiritual Center

One interesting aspect of traditional educational institutions like *mandala* is their role not only as centers of religious learning but also their status as social and religious hubs within the community. Similar to the role of *pesantren* in contemporary society, *mandala* in the past represented a respected and recognized religious authority. In this regard, *mandala* served as a distinct spiritual area that stood and developed independently. Their existence even became a crucial religious element in legitimizing the political authority of local sovereigns. Therefore, although led by religious leaders, the political significance of a *mandala* was difficult to overlook, and

religious leaders also transformed into social leaders for the community they served.

As the center of social and spiritual life, the *mandala* complex occupies a particular tax-free area called *sima*-land or *perdikan* during Islamic times. In the past, a king had the authority to impose taxes on certain lands within the kingdom where his subjects resided. However, inhabitants within the *sima*-land or the *mandala* complex were exempted from paying taxes. Not only that, they were also exempted from the obligation to serve the king, as required of the kingdom's general population. This privilege was a manifestation of the king's righteous conduct, known as *dharma*, for the continuity of religious activities in his realm. The king's benevolence was closely linked to the concept of welfare and prosperity in the Javanese kingdom, which focused on both the material and spiritual achievements of its people, aiming to create balance in the lives of all elements of the kingdom (Moertono 2018). With the privileges mentioned above, both in the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods, *mandalas* could develop into independent, autonomous institutions.

The process of establishing *mandala* during the Islamic period typically began with local sovereigns granting *sima* or *perdikan* to Islamic missionaries. This tax-exempt land grant also signified permission and approval for these religious figures to propagate Islam among the people in their realm. This scheme can be observed in the establishment of Sunan Ampel Mandala in Ngampel Denta, Surabaya, which was initiated with a land grant from King Brahwijaya V, the sovereign of the Majapahit kingdom (Halim 2021). It is worth noting that kingdoms along the Southeast Asian coast were generally open to the presence of foreign religious adherents. In the context of the Majapahit kingdom, the existence of several Muslim graves in Trowulan and the mysterious tomb of Fatimah binti Maemun in Loran have long been cited as evidence of the presence of Muslims in the Majapahit kingdom before the 15th century CE.

The second scheme for establishing Islamic *mandala* involved transforming existing pre-Islamic *mandalas* into Islamic ones. This transformation process is documented in the Banten Chronicle (*Sajarah Banten*), which narrates the Islamization process led by Maulana Hasanudin (son of Sunan Gunungjati) among Hindu adherents in the *mandala* of Gunung Pulosari. As a result, around 800 people declared their conversion to Islam, and the previously existing Hindu *mandala* subsequently transformed into an Islamic one (Baso 2019a).

Although *Mandala* Islam is often associated with *tanah sima*, not all of them were established on tax-exempt land granted or protected by a local sovereign. This is exemplified by the establishment process of Sunan Giri Mandala, which began with the clearing of land or forest (*babad alas*). Sunan Giri founded an Islamic *mandala* on a hill or mountain known as *Giri Kedhaton*. In Javanese, "*giri*" means mountain, explaining Sunan Giri's title as the *sunan* stationed on the mountain. A similar phenomenon occurred in the founding of the Demak Bintoro Pesantren (Baso 2019b). The phenomenon of land clearing itself became a new trend in Java in the 14th century CE. As the Majapahit Kingdom approached its downfall, some religious leaders began to distance themselves from the king and started the practice of clearing land independently (Lombard 2005). Thus, tentatively, we can conclude that the existence of Islamic *mandala* does not solely depend on the status of *sima*-land or *perdikan*, but rather on the region's role as an autonomous spiritual center. As an authoritative religious institution, *mandala* also serves as a local socio-political center, where its presence provides political legitimacy to a kingdom. *Mandala* serves as a spiritual pillar for the state, and the *sunans* function akin to a legislative body with the authority to appoint, oversee, and safeguard the governance carried out by the king or sultan as the executive authority (Baso 2019a).

Just like the concept of political *mandalas*, Islamic *mandalas* developed by the

sunans also adhere to a similar coordination pattern. The *Wali Songo* adopted the concept of *nawadewata* cosmology (the nine main gods in Hinduism) and the concept of Islamic cosmology (the nine levels of spiritual attainment in *sufi* tradition), which ultimately enabled them to establish their existence as the nine saints. This aspect captured the attention of the Hindu-Buddhist community at that time (Sunnyoto 2016). In this context, the Islamic preaching and educational activities employed by the *Wali Songo* (the nine saints) followed a pattern where eight *sunans* were led by one *sunan*, and the eight Islamic *mandalas* under these *sunans* surrounded and reported to the central *mandala* (the ninth *mandala*). By the 15th century, this structure materialized in the form of the Demak Bintoro Sultanate and its sovereign, serving as the focal point for Islamic preaching and education activities.

Although further research is needed, traces of Islamic *mandalas* can be found not far from the complexes of the tombs of the *Sunans*, such as the *Mandala* of Sunan Giri in Giri Kedhaton, the *Mandala* of Sunan Gunungdjati in Sumbing-Gunungdjati Mountain, and particularly the *Mandala* of Sunan Bonang, which is the main focus of this research. Giri Kedhaton subsequently advanced further by transforming into a type of Islamic theocratic kingdom, led by a hereditary dynasty of spiritual leaders with the *Sunan* as the leader in matters of religion and politics.

Interally, during their time in the *mandala*, a student not only studied religious sciences such as *fiqh* and *aqidah*. The *mandala* also served as a center for *sufi* education and practice (*zawiyah*). In the *mandala*, students also received training in social skills. They were instructed in reading, writing, literature, and ethics (Halim 2021). The uniqueness of Islamic *mandalas* also lies in their indigenous ethical education 395 (Irawan 2018). In addition to literacy and ethical education, *mandalas* are also aimed at the development of various sciences and technologies, such as *pangadyan* (political science), *kabhayan panglayar* (maritime and navigation sciences),

mahawanetha (land transportation sciences), *bahudenda* (law and jurisprudence), and also the art of goldsmithing (Baso 2019b). As a result, the *mandalas* developed by the *sunans* follow the footsteps of pre-Islamic *mandalas*, which not only served as religious centers but also indirectly became civil powers contributing to the socio-cultural development of the surrounding communities.

The Council of the *Wali Songo* represents an organized group of Islamic missionaries. The *sunans* and their network of disciples strategically and massively carried out the Islamization of the Nusantara region through various methods and approaches to preaching. Each *sunan* had their respective roles, including the division of preaching locations where they were tasked with spreading Islam to the local communities. Although the detailed boundaries of each *Sunan's* preaching area need further exploration, the division of duties among them is evident from the manifestation in their respective titles. This is because the naming convention of bestowing the title of *sunan* generally reflects the location where a saint resided, preached, or was assigned to preach. For instance, Raden Paku, titled *Sunan Giri*, preached in the *Giri* area of Gresik and its surroundings; Ja'far Shadiq, titled *Sunan Kudus*, operated in the region of Kudus and nearby areas; Syarif Hidayatullah, titled *Sunan Gunungdjati*, was active in the Sumbing-Gunungdjati Mountain area of Cirebon and its surroundings up to Banten; and other *sunans* in their respective preaching areas. It is within these preaching areas that we can also find traces of Islamic *mandalas*, such as the sites of *Giri Kedaton* (*Sunan Giri*) and *Astana Sumbing-Gunungdjati* (*Sunan Gunungdjati*).

The Origin of Sunan Bonang's Mandala in the Lasem Chronicle

As part of the Majapahit kingdom, Lasem was also within the orbit of the Majapahit *Mandala* centered in Trowulan. In several local historiographies such as the *Carita Lasem*, *Nagarakretagama*, and *Pararaton*, Lasem is mentioned as a vassal kingdom within the

grand state of Majapahit, led by a sovereign titled *bhre* who was often a relative of the Majapahit sovereigns in Trowulan (Muljana 2012). Not only politically, but traces of the *mandala* concept can also be found religiously in Lasem, through the discovery of various temple sites and hermitages on the western slopes of Mount Argasoka in Lasem.

What about the Islamic *mandala* during the time of Sunan Bonang? Among the nine parts of historical narratives found in the *Carita Lasem* text, the name and story of Sunan Bonang are not extensively narrated. Briefly, the existence of Sunan Bonang, known in the Lasem Chronicle by his original name Makdum Ibrahim, can be found in the first and second parts of the text. In the first part, his identity as the brother of Princess Malokhah or Nyai Ageng Maloka, his appointment as the spiritual leader in Lasem, and his entrusted task to safeguard the tomb of Princess Cempa are briefly described. The second part narrates the relationship of teacher and disciple between Sunan Bonang and Raden Said, who later became known as Sunan Kalijaga.

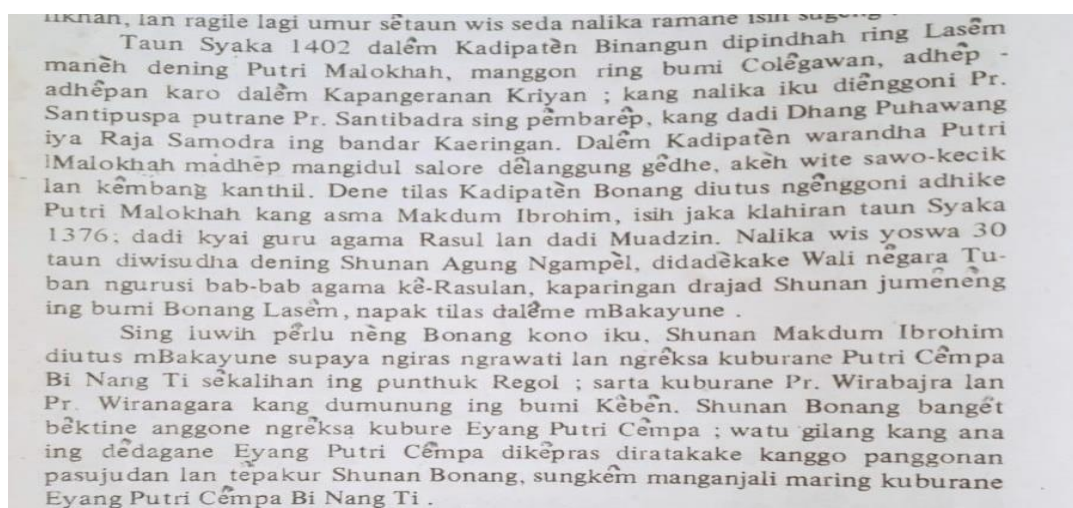
In this study, the origins of the Sunan Bonang Mandala's existence are found in the first part, as presented in the Figure 1.

(Binangun) palace was mandated to be occupied by Princess Malokhah's younger brother, Makdum Ibrahim. Makdum Ibrahim, a young man born in 1376 in Saka, was an Islamic religious teacher and muezzin. At the age of 30, he was graduated by the great Sunan Ngampel and ordained as *Wali Negara* or saint for the Tuban state who took care of various Islamic religious affairs, obtaining the title of Sunan who was based in Bonang, Lasem, which is a trace of his older sister's former palace.

"Sunan Makdum Ibrohim's presence in Bonang is mainly due to the task given by his older sister to care for and protect the grave of Princess Cempa, Bi Nang Ti, in Punthuk Regol, as well as the graves of Prince Wirabajra and Prince Wiranagara which are located in Keben. Sunan Bonang was very devoted to carrying out his duties in caring for Princess Cempa's grave. Sunan Bonang levelled the Gilang stones around the tomb as a place to prostrate and pray..."

Figure 1

Fragment from *Carita Lasem* text that contains Sunan Bonang's Story in Lasem



Translation: "In 1402 Saka, the Duchy of Lasem palace was moved back to Lasem (the old capital of Lasem), precisely in the Cologawen area...The former Bonang

From the excerpt in Figure 1, several pieces of information can be gleaned. Firstly, it relates to the relocation of the royal palace, the administrative center of Kadipaten (duchy)

which was originally located in Binangun, back to Lasem or the former city area of Lasem (around the center of Lasem District), specifically to the area of Cologawen by Princess Malokhah, the sovereign of Lasem Duchy at that time. The area of Cologawen itself is now located in Gedongmulyo Village, Lasem District, where the complex of the tomb of Princess Malokhah is situated.

Secondly, it pertains to the existence and role of Raden Makdum Ibrahim or Sunan Bonang, who was the younger sibling of Princess Malokhah, serving as the Wali Negara Tuban, a leader and Islamic religious teacher stationed in Bonang Lasem, with the responsibility entrusted to him to oversee the tomb of Princess Cempo (Princess Campa) and her family. Thirdly, it concerns the status of the former residence of Lasem Duchy in Binangun, which was handed over to Sunan Bonang for his occupancy. The points contained in this excerpt from the Lasem chronicle serve as indications of the existence of Islamic preaching and education in the Lasem region and its surroundings, led by Sunan Bonang, with the region of Bonang, Lasem as the center of his spiritual activities.

Regarding the status of the former complex of the Binangun palace which transformed into a center of Islamic education, it is not explicitly stated in the Lasem chronicle. Nevertheless, the transformation of this former palace complex into what this article terms as the Islamic *mandala* is reinforced by Sunan Bonang's status as the *Wali Negara* tasked with overseeing Islamic preaching and educational activities in the Tuban, Lasem, and surrounding areas. The Lasem chronicle even highlights Sunan Bonang's strong commitment to rapidly spreading Islam in the Tuban to Lasem region (Kamzah 1985).

In the Lasem chronicle, it is recounted that Sunan Bonang was born in the year 1376 Saka, which corresponds to the year 1455 AD. This information differs by only 10 years from Schrieke's estimation, which places Sunan Bonang's birth around 1465 AD. According to the chronicle, Sunan Bonang was appointed as

Wali Negara at the age of 30, indicating that he assumed the role of *Sunan*, a leader in the Islamic community, around the year 1488 AD.

The relocation of the Binangun palace occurred in the year 1402 Saka, equivalent to 1480 AD. Therefore, it is more plausible that the development and transformation of the former Binangun palace into the Islamic mandala took place as early as 1488 AD, when Sunan Bonang held his position as a spiritual leader, although it may have started as early as 1480 AD. Thus, Sunan Bonang's Mandala existed as a center of Islamic education at the end of the 15th century. Unfortunately, there are no records or historical recordings documenting the continuation of the Mandala in Bonang after Sunan Bonang's passing.

Furthermore, as narrated in the transcript above, Sunan Bonang was entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing the tomb of Princess Campa. He even smoothed out a shining stone near the tomb to serve as a place for his prayers and supplications to God, now known as *Pasujudan* (place of prostration) Sunan Bonang. With Sunan Bonang's status and duty as a *sunan* residing in the Bonang area of Lasem, the existence of a representative place for the establishment of Islamic education and propagation among the community logically became crucial. The complex of the former Binangun palace, now known as the *ndalem* complex and the tomb of Sunan Bonang, along with the *pasujudan* Sunan Bonang complex and the tomb of Princess Campa, can strongly be presumed to be the site of the former Islamic *Mandala* where Sunan Bonang served as its spiritual leader.

Looking for Sunan Bonang Mandala

As mentioned in the preceding subsection, the Lasem chronicle serves as a compelling local historiography that provides supplementary information regarding the dynamics of Sunan Bonang's missionary activities and their traces in the Bonang area of Lasem. Until today, the existence of the *pasujudan* complex and the *ndalem* of Sunan

Bonang can be found in Bonang Village, Lasem District, Rembang Regency. Archaeologically, these two site complexes can be categorized into two groups: tomb sites and historical sites (*petilasan*). The tomb of Princess Campa, located adjacent to the *pasujudan* site of Sunan Bonang, falls under the tomb category. Meanwhile, the *Pasujudan* Sunan Bonang site, along with the *ndalem* complex of Sunan Bonang located less than 1 km from the *Pasujudan*-Princess Campa tomb complex, belongs to the historical site category.

The *pasujudan* stone is a place believed to be associated with religious activities conducted by Sunan Bonang. This site consists of 4 natural stone blocks, two of which have been trimmed. One of the stones bears a footprint imprint attributed to Sunan Bonang. As for the *ndalem* complex of Sunan Bonang, it comprises a walled compound divided into several sections, containing 17 tombs and a *pendopo* building. This site is better known as the *daleman* or *ndalem* site, a residence. The presence of this complex of buildings is part of the historical site of Sunan Bonang and is believed to be the former complex of Sunan Bonang's *pesantren* (Riyanto, Mochtar, Priswanto et al. 2020). In this complex lies the tomb of Sunan Bonang, unmarked, surrounded by a perimeter wall. Although not as famous as Sunan Bonang's tomb in Tuban, the complex remains a popular pilgrimage site many pilgrims visit. Adjacent to the *ndalem*-tomb site are the Sunan Bonang Mosque (renovated) and several ancient wells attributed to Sunan Bonang. About 1 km from this site is also the tomb of Sultan Mahmud from Minangkabau, who is purportedly a disciple of Sunan Bonang. Sultan Mahmud is one of the ancestors from the Kiai in the Lasem region. The existence of these sites serves as supporting evidence for the presence of the mandala of Sunan Bonang, as previously recorded in the Lasem Chronicles and other texts.

The existence of Sunan Bonang and his *mandala* is further corroborated by several other texts and manuscripts. As mentioned in the Lasem chronicle above, Raden Makdum

Ibrahim was appointed as the Wali Negara of Tuban and given the title *sunan*, based in Bonang Lasem, at the age of 30. Sunan Bonang's position implies the extent of his missionary activities, encompassing the regions of Tuban and Lasem and their surrounding areas. Tuban and Lasem refer to the Duchy of Tuban and the Duchy of Lasem during the late Majapahit era and the early establishment of the Demak Bintoro Sultanate. Both duchies were followers of the Majapahit Kingdom (Riyanto et al. 2020). Both regions were neighboring duchies that during the Islamic period became focal points for the spread of Islam in the northern coastal areas of Java.

Regarding Sunan Bonang's status as a religious leader in the Tuban-Lasem region, it is also reiterated in the manuscript *Babad Demak Pesisiran*. In this manuscript dating from the 16th-17th century, it is mentioned that Raden (Makdum) Ibrahim resided in Bonang and became the religious leader in the Tuban and Lasem regions.

"Ibrahim nulya pinemah ngimami Lasem Ian Tubin oning Bonang // adhedhukuh . tumulya ambientur tapa," (Hutomo, Hudiyono, Djamaiudin et al. 1984).

Translation: "(Raden Makdum) Ibrahim was tasked with being an imam in Lasem and Tuban. In the area of Bonang (Lasem), he settled there and later went into meditation."

After his meditation, which can also be interpreted as the completion of his process of deepening religious knowledge and spiritual practice, Raden Makdum Ibrahim was then appointed as a saint with the title Sunan Bonang. The *mandala* of Sunan Bonang in the village of Bonang subsequently became a frequent destination for students and the community seeking religious education (Hutomo et al. 1984). Similar narratives are also found in the manuscript *Babad Tanah Jawi*, Drajad version (18th-19th century AD), housed in the Pesantren Tarbiyatut Thalabah, Paciran Lamongan.

Since early on, Sunan Bonang was intimately familiar with the Bonang area in Lasem. According to local oral history, during his childhood, Raden Makdum Ibrahim was taken by his father, Sunan Ampel, to perform seclusion and spiritual retreat (*uzlah* and *khalwat*) in the Bonang-Binangun area (Ulum 2019). Therefore, the Bonang area was familiar territory for Raden Makdum Ibrahim. Moreover, his older sister, Princess Malokhah, married Pangeran Lasem and resided in the Binangun Palace.

The existence of the *mandala* and Sunan Bonang's missionary activities in Bonang Village can also be found in other manuscripts. The 18th-century *Suluk Wujil* manuscript provides detailed information that the Sunan Bonang's *mandala* was located in Bonang Village, Lasem. The opening part of the *Suluk Wujil* recounts the story of Sunan Bonang and his disciple named Wujil. The first verse reads:

Translation: "Then it was told of someone named Wujil. He said to the revered figure, named *Ratu Wahdat*, while prostrating himself at the feet of *Sang Mahamuni*, who resided in Benang...", (Widyastuti 2001).

In the excerpted translation of the first verse above, Sunan Bonang, mentioned with one of his titles, *Ratu Wahdat*, is depicted residing in Benang (Bonang). The identity of this place is further elaborated in the eighth verse, as follows:

Translation: "...As the sun sets, day turns into night. Wujil gathers firewood for a bonfire under the asceticism of the sage, at the edge of the sea, known as *Dukuh Benang* (Bonang). The place is silent, desolate, devoid of edible fruits, with sustenance only from the tumultuous waves crashing against the coral rocks forming a frightening cave," (Widyastuti 2001).

The excerpts from the *Suluk Wujil* manuscript provide a more detailed description of the location of Sunan Bonang's *mandala* or hermitage. Particularly in the eighth verse, we can conclude that the *mandala*

is situated on relatively high ground near the coastline and is relatively secluded. Geographically, this description aligns with the location of Bonang Village, specifically the complex of *pasujudan* and the *ndalem*-tomb of Sunan Bonang, which administratively is now located in Bonang Village, Lasem District, Rembang Regency. The location of Pasujudan near the coastline today is approximately only 150 meters away. Its position on the outskirts of the center of the Kadipaten Lasem or Lasem Duchy also distances the *mandala* of Sunan Bonang from the bustle of the community. Pasujudan Sunan Bonang is indeed situated on a hill, where pilgrims must climb hundreds of steps to reach the site of *pasujudan*, which is not far from the northern coast of Java island. Additionally, the elevated location of *pasujudan* bears resemblance to the layout of several sacred structures such as Hindu and Buddhist mandalas, which are typically situated on hills or mountains.

Another older manuscript (from the 15th-16th century), Or.1928 or commonly known as *Het Boek van Bonang*, mentions that this literary work was written by Prince Bonang. At the end of the text;

"Tammam carita cinitra, kan pakreti Paneran in Bena," (Drewes 1969).

Translation: "End of the book, the author of which is the Prince of Bonang (Bonang)," (Drewes 1969).

The last line confirms that the author of the manuscript is Prince Bonang, interpreted by Schrieke as the figure of Sunan Bonang (Drewes 1969). This is interesting considering that Sunan Bonang is referred to as "*pangeran*," based on the name of the region Bonang. The name "*Pangeran Bonang*" is also mentioned in *Babad Demak Pesisiran* and the *Kropak Ferrara* manuscript. Furthermore, not only Sunan Bonang but other *sunans* like Sunan Giri and Sunan Kalijaga are also referred to with the title "*pangeran*" (Drewes 1978). The bestowal of the title "*pangeran*" upon Raden Makdum Ibrahim is not unusual

due to his familial connections with the Tuban Duchy and The Lasem Duchy. Additionally, "*pangeran*" can also denote a local sovereign whose political authority is narrower compared to a higher-ranking local sovereign (in this case, Adipati or Duke of Lasem). In this context, Sunan Bonang held the status of a socio-religious leader for the Muslim community in the Bonang area and its surroundings.

For comparison, according to the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* manuscript, after unsuccessful efforts to spread Islamic teachings in Kediri, Raden Makdum Ibrahim journeyed to Demak in response to Raden Patah's call to serve as the imam of Demak Mosque. Following his tenure as the imam of Demak Mosque, Raden Makdum Ibrahim is said to have settled in Lasem (Sunyoto 2016). After moving to Lasem, Raden Makdum Ibrahim chose the village of Bonang as the location for his new activities. In the village of Bonang, he established the *pasujudan* site and a *pesantren*. Some of Sunan Bonang's works, particularly the *Suluk Wujil* as mentioned earlier, are based on the narrative of this prostration (*sujud*) (Muthari 2016). From the name of this village, Raden Makdum Ibrahim earned the title Sunan Bonang, indicating his position as a *sunan* who conducted preaching activities in the area of Bonang, Lasem. The village where he resided later transformed into an Islamic mandala, a center for Islamic preaching and education in that region.

In a report written by Fokkens, until the year 1886 AD, the village of Bonang was still recorded as one of the "*desa perdikan*," where the community was specifically tasked with maintaining the tomb of the *Soesoehoenan* (*Sunan*) in Bonang (Fokkens 1886). This is interesting, because despite the coastal areas like Lasem-Rembang being under Dutch VOC control since the 18th century, the management of religious sites like the sacred place of Sunan Bonang in Lasem remained under the spiritual patronage of the Islamic Mataram Dynasty, particularly its branch, the Surakarta Hadiningrat Kasunanan located in Surakarta.

This situation also reflects the views held by some Javanese society and indigenous officials who still regarded the Javanese kings (Sunans of Surakarta and Sultans of Yogyakarta) as symbols of their traditional leaders, rather than the colonial government.

The spiritual affinity between the Mataram Dynasty and the Lasem region can also be interpreted from documentary photos showing Sunan Pakubuwono X (sovereign of the Kasunanan Surakarta, 1893-1939) paying respects at the tomb of Nyai Ageng Maloka or Princess Malokhah in Lasem in 1933 AD. The selection of this tomb site, among others visited by Sunan Pakubuwono X during his visit to the Residency-District of Rembang, likely signifies the historical and spiritual significance attributed to Princess Malokhah, the elder sister of Sunan Bonang and former sovereign of the Lasem Duchy.

In more recent literature, such as the *pesantren* books from the late 20th century like Kiai Bisri Mustofa's "*Tarikh al-Auliya*," it is mentioned that the preaching activities of Sunan Bonang were located in the Tuban region (Mustofa 1952). Meanwhile, the book "*Ahla al Musarah fi Hikayat al-Auliya' Al-'Asyrah*" by Kiai Abu Fadhol Senori Tuban narrates that Sunan Bonang retired to devote himself to worship on Mount Gadhing, near the coast, where he continuously engaged in spiritual practices (*riyadhah*) and struggle (*mujahadah*). He was later recognized as a saint with the title Sunan Bonang (As-Senori 1961). Although the term "*Gunung Gadhing*" requires further investigation for its exact location, its description as a highland area near the coast, as mentioned in the *Suluk Wujil*, once again provides clues to the activities of Sunan Bonang's Mandala in Bonang Lasem. Despite being brief, historical records in both books mentioned above serve as evidence that Sunan Bonang's religious teachings in the Tuban-Lasem, Rembang region remain a collective memory cherished by the *pesantren* community along this coastal area.

Numerous historical sources and archaeological findings within the complex of

Figure 2
Pasujudan and Ndalem-tomb Complex of Sunan Bonang in Lasem Rembang.
Sources: Personal Documentation



pasujudan and *ndalem-tomb* Sunan Bonang corroborate the information found in the Lasem chronicle. Furthermore, archaeological discoveries such as various Hindu-Buddhist *mandala* sites around the western slopes of Mount Lasem increasingly confirm efforts to adapt and continue the ancient *mandala* tradition in a new format as centers for Islamic religious teachings and education.

Besides the textual and artefactual evidence, the social-religious significance of the former Sunan Bonang Mandala complex is reflected in the pilgrimage activities and commemoration of Sunan Bonang's death anniversary (*haul*) in Bonang Lasem. The "haul" is held in Bonang Lasem for one week during the month of Dzulqa'dah. Additionally, on the 10th of Dzulhijjah, there is a tradition called "*penjamasan*" (purification) of the Bonang heirloom, known as *Bende Becak*. This heirloom, believed to be a legacy of Sunan Bonang, attracts many attendees hoping to receive blessings from the Sunan (Triwahyono and Sukari 2022).

Regarding the *Bende Becak*, this heirloom takes the form of a small *bonang* or *gong*, which is a component of the *gamelan* musical instrument. Like other sunans, Sunan Bonang also utilized cultural approaches such as wayang performances, songs, and Javanese music as mediums to spread Islamic teachings among the community. Sunan Bonang is credited as the creator of the *bonang* musical

instrument, the name of which is strongly believed to have been derived from the name of the village where Sunan Bonang preached (Sunyoto 2016). As the efforts to develop Islamic culture in the Indonesian archipelago, Sunan Bonang played a significant role in formulating scholarly principles and refining various types of gamelan, songs, and chants (Saksono 1995). Several literary works related to Sunan Bonang were written or transcribed within this *mandala*. For instance, *Suluk Wujil* explicitly sets its narrative within the *mandala* of Bonang Village, as previously explained.

The *mandala* of Sunan Bonang also served as a *zawiyah*, a place for learning *tasawuf* (Islamic mysticism) and practicing *tarekat* rituals. The existence of *pasujudan* confirms the *mandala* of Sunan Bonang as a place for prayer and sufi meditation. The sufism activities of Sunan Bonang are also reflected in several literary works of the *suluk* genre containing sufi teachings, such as *Suluk Wujil*, *Suluk Kalipah*, and *Kidung Bonang* (Drewes 1968). *Suluk Wujil* is indeed a notable example of early Javanese Islamic literature that portrays spiritual quest and teachings (Fanani 2018). Not only did Sunan Bonang teach sufism in a normative sense, but he is also strongly believed to have been a *mursyid* (spiritual guide) of *Thariqah Syattariyah* and possibly *Thariqah Naqsyabandiyah*. One of his notable disciples was Sunan Kalijaga (Fahmi 2023, Sunyoto 2016). The additional

notes provide insights into the educational activities that took place in Sunan Bonang Mandala. Beyond being a center for Islamic preaching and education in general, Sunan Bonang Mandala served as a place for students to learn and practice Sufi rituals and meditation, develop culture, and compile and transcribe Islamic literary works (Figure 2).

Epilogue: Synergy between Sovereign and Scholars

The brief excerpt from the Lasem Chronicle provides several key points crucial for the historiography of Sunan Bonang. Firstly, as a local historiography, the Lasem Chronicle offers additional historical records regarding the existence of Sunan Bonang as the spiritual leader positioned in the Bonang Lasem region, encompassing areas from Tuban to Lasem and its surroundings. Secondly, the chronicle provides textual confirmation regarding the existence of *mandala* or spiritual centers led by Sunan Bonang. It also addresses the probable origin of the name Bonang itself, likely derived from the village of Bonang in Lasem. Various archaeological findings, other local historiographies, and collective memories and traditions of the community further underscore the historical significance of the Lasem Chronicle.

Thirdly, the historical records on the origins of Sunan Bonang Mandala offer a theory on the development of an Islamic *mandala*, which essentially served as the embryo of the *pesantren* model known since the 19th century. This is linked to the involvement of local sovereigns in establishing the Islamic mandala of Sunan Bonang, particularly Princess Malokhah, who once ruled the Lasem Duchy. During her reign, she donated the former complex of the duchy palace to Sunan Bonang, her younger brother.

In contrast to the origins of other Islamic *mandalas* developed by other Sunans, Sunan Bonang's mandala did not merely receive moral support but material support in the form of land grants and the former duchy palace complex. This support differs somewhat from

Sunan Ampel, his father, who was only granted tax-exempt land by the Majapahit sovereign. This complex was given to Raden Makdum Ibrahim for Islamic proselytization, exceptionally after he was appointed as the *wali negara* of Lasem and Tuban. With the donated land and buildings, Sunan Bonang developed it into a new religious *mandala*.

Rather than showing weakness, the donation of land and buildings can be seen as Sunan Bonang's strategic intelligence in maximizing the use of assets for his religious activities. Before his sister, Princess Malokhah, ascended the throne, Raden Makdum Ibrahim already knew Prince Wiranagara – the crown prince of Lasem – who later became the husband of his sister. The social-religious dynamics that took place in the Lasem Duchy during the late Majapahit Kingdom period, brought Prince Wiranagara to study Islam at Pesantren Ngampelgadhing. At the *pesantren*, he studied under Sunan Ampel, and eventually, he was betrothed to the daughter of Sunan Ampel, Princess Malokhah (Kamzah 1985). Sunan Bonang and Princess Malokhah were both the children of Sunan Ampel from his first wife, Raden Ayu Candrawati, also known as Nyai Ageng Manila, the daughter of the Regent of Tuban, Arya Teja. It was through their mother's lineage that Sunan Bonang also had familial ties to the ruling family of Tuban. Following their marriage, Raden Makdum Ibrahim also developed a close relationship with the Lasem Duchy, particularly through his sister and brother-in-law, Prince Wiranagara, who soon became the new sovereign Lasem. In his book, Unjiya even mentions Prince Wiranagara's request to Raden Makdum Ibrahim to settle and assist in the process of Islamic proselytization and education in the Lasem region. This request and the active support for Islamic activities by the sovereign of Lasem are also linked to Lasem's new status as Islamic government, marking a new era of Islamization (Unjiya 2014).

Historically, the role of rulers in the Islamization of the Nusantara is often associated with royal marriages or military

invasions. The marriage of a local ruler to a Muslim was not always followed by a conversion of his people due to differences in beliefs between the ruling class and the general public. As for military invasions, political backgrounds are more common than religious reasons. This argument is based on the fact that when several sultanates in Java had sufficient military strength, the various regions they controlled had already been Islamized by the Sunans. Thus, the narrative in the Lasem chronicle provides an additional example of the role of sovereigns in the Islamization process in Nusantara, involving moral support (blessings, permission) and material support such as granting tax-exempt land and even buildings to religious groups.

Considering the relationship between Sunan Bonang, Prince Wiranagara, and Princess Malokhah, their support for Sunan Bonang cannot simply be seen as familial generosity. Instead, it signifies a positive relationship between religious leaders and local political sovereigns. Their relationship transcends familial ties to encompass broader social-religious relations, where sovereigns and religious leaders are linked through intellectual-religious networks to advance the Islamization movement in the Lasem region. Support from the ruling class also demonstrates that *walis* could effectively and flexibly enter the Javanese court environment, garner sympathy, and gain support from local sovereigns.

As mentioned above, this historical narrative and various traces of Islamic mandala serve as evidence of the strategic intelligence of the Sunans in Islamization efforts, transforming and enculturating pre-Islamic educational institutions into centres of Islamic preaching and education deeply rooted in their Indigenous traditions. These legacies continue to be passed down through *pesantren* in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes a significant historical narrative regarding the *mandala* of Sunan Bonang as recorded in the Lasem Chronicle. This local historiographical text provides a historical overview of Sunan Bonang's status as the state religious leader whose preaching and educational activities encompassed the regions of Tuban, Lasem, and surrounding areas. As a religious leader, Sunan Bonang played a pivotal role in accelerating the Islamization process along the northern coast of Java, particularly in the Lasem Duchy region. The activities of Sunan Bonang in preaching and education are evidenced by traces left at the Sunan Bonang Mandala site in Bonang Village, Lasem Subdistrict, Rembang. Through content analysis of the Lasem Chronicle and comparison with other historical data, the existence of a center of Islamic education or *mandala* led by Sunan Bonang at this location becomes increasingly evident.

The complex encompassing *pasujudan*, *ndalem* and tomb of Sunan Bonang continues to be a pilgrimage destination for the people of Lasem and its surroundings. The Lasem Chronicle presents valuable historical notes by providing clues about the origins and development of the *mandala* of Sunan Bonang. In the Lasem Chronicle, the establishment and development of the *mandala* as a center of Islamic education in the 15th century were inseparable from the role of the local sovereign. This historical narrative can complement theories regarding the establishment of *mandalas* or *pesantrens* attributed to the Wali Songo, where the unique relationship between the sovereign (of Lasem Duchy) and the religious leader (Sunan Bonang) fostered moral and material support from the state to support the Islamization movement in Nusantara.

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