

## Ornaments on Candi Bajang Ratu in The Trowulan Culture Conservation Site

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### Abstract

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The aim of this study is to explore the reasons why Candi Bajang Ratu were built, based on the ornamental and decorative elements found on those in the Trowulan cultural heritage area. This research uses field research techniques to observe the detail on cultural heritage objects, in the form of the ornamental and decorative items carved on or attached to the object. Scientific methods such as anthropology and history are also employed. The results of the study found that each temple (candi) has different functions according to the carvings and other decorative elements attached to the structure. A previous expert opinion states that Candi Bajang Ratu is a burial place; the results of investigations into the ornamental and decorative elements on this candi indicate that Candi Bajang Ratu was built out of respect to Raja (King) Jayanegara, a figure from the Majapahit kingdom.

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**Keywords:** heritage, history, ornaments, candi, Bajang Ratu

### 1. Introduction

The site of the Majapahit kingdom, now known as the Trowulan cultural heritage site, is the only urban site from the classical times in Indonesia. Wardenaar's research, undertaken in 1815, and contained in Raffles's book entitled "History of Java" (1817), states that in addition to the Trowulan and Sooko sub districts, the former site of the City of Majapahit has been identified as reaching the areas of Mojoagung and Mojowarno, in Jombang district. The former site of the City of Majapahit was built in an area which has three mountain ranges, including Mount Penanggungan, Welirang and Anjasmara (Kusumajaya et al, 2013).

Stutterheim's (1931) study on the Majapahit kingdom concluded that the layout of the palace in Majapahit was described as being similar to the Yogyakarta and Surakarta palaces. In addition, the study states that the types of buildings contained in the palace complex are similar to the buildings found in castles (*puri*) in Bali. The results of excavations at the Trowulan site show that this area has an accumulation of various archeological objects. This area was not only the site of the palace but there were also ceremonial sites, religious sites, sacred buildings, industrial sites, graveyards, rice fields, markets, and canals and reservoirs. On this site can be seen what remains of the Majapahit kingdom today, most of which is in the form of architectural works such as candi<sup>4</sup> and the ruins of buildings that may have been residential settlements and palace complexes. Although the candis and architectural ruins of the former Majapahit kingdom are scattered over a considerable radius and distance, in some cases they have a specific identity, form and pattern. One of these forms is ornamental, as shown by the reliefs which are carved as decorative elements on the candi themselves, and these carvings have their own symbols, meanings and philosophies. Candis were built as symbols of the universe and as the location of the gods. They are also believed to represent a mountain, the *stana* of the real gods, namely Mount Mahameru (Soekmono, 1973). Paeni (2009), speaking about Indonesia's cultural history, states that a candi is defined as an ancient building made of stone, in the form of a place of worship, for storing the ashes of the bodies of kings or Hindu and Buddhist priests.

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<sup>4</sup> Some books refer to a candi as a temple. However, the authors do not agree with the use of this term, and consider that a candi is not a temple. Therefore, the authors use the term candi in this paper.

On the other hand, when studying the origin of the word “candi,” it comes from the Kawi language, namely “cinandi,” which means buried. The meaning of buried (cinandi) in this context is not referring to a corpse or someone’s ashes, but various objects, such as pieces of different metals and agate, accompanied by offerings which are considered to be symbols for physical items belonging to the king who is now re-united with his goddess (Soekmono, 1974). Whereas in Sanskrit, “candi” is the term for Durga or the goddess of death Candika, while “candigreha” or “candikargha” or “candikaya” are names given to the place used for the worship of the goddess (Tjahjono, 2009). Kusumajaya et al (2013) explained that in the beginning, a candi was a warning sign made of stone, either in the form of a pile of stones or a small building that was erected above a place for burying bodies. Wardenaar made an analysis of a candi as a tomb, by taking the example of Candi Jalatunda on the slopes of Mount Penanggungan. A stone chest was found there that had nine small boxes inside it, similar to the *demata nawa sanga* in Bali. Based on the description above, it can be concluded that a candi has two functions, namely as a place / temple of worship and the burial site of a king/ high priest to glorify the king or nobleman who has died (Tjahjono, 2009).

The aesthetics of a candi are almost always because a geometric composition is used, for the processing of visible expressions, plans, and details. The line is very instrumental in shaping the aesthetics of each candi's details. Overall a candi symbolizes the macrocosm or universe so that it is given decorative motifs related to the natural world, such as flowers, such as lotus, animals, and gods that all have their own meaning and symbolization (Paeni, 2009). The ornamental and decorative elements which form part of building a candi seem to increase the element of religious philosophical values that are a major part of the function of a candi; this seems different from ordinary houses which show modern elements which are limited to living quarters that do not have the benefit of certain philosophical arts. Sunaryo (2009) states that the presence of a piece of decorative art acts not only as a filler for the empty and meaningless parts, but also reflects the past. Various forms of decoration actually have several functions; some are purely aesthetic while others have symbolic and constructive engineering functions. So, the motifs on a candi are not just for decoration, but rather they show symbolic values and social identities.

With the stipulation of the Trowulan geographical area as a cultural heritage site, we need to understand the decorative elements which form the details of the aesthetic-forming elements, and need to trace the symbolic functions and identities that reflect the architectural functions of the candis in the Trowulan area. This study explores the ornamental motifs and decorative styles used on Candi Bajang Ratu, one of the candi found in the Trowulan cultural heritage area, to discover the meanings of the motifs, and finally trace the purpose of a candi, based on the variety of its ornamental decoration.

## 2. Method

This research uses a field research technique because it allows for more in-depth observations of an object in the field, in this case in the form of cultural heritage objects. Primary data will be more easily collected by recording the objects being studied using photographs and videos, and measuring the objects in the research’s locus. In the initial stage, the function and history of the existing candis was described by the variety of ornamental carvings and decorative items on them, then their association with the representations of Hindu or Buddhist beliefs on each candi were explored. The next step is to analyze the ornamental markings using the hermeneutic method. This method is used to interpret cultural works in the form of symbols (Ricoeur, 2014). Furthermore, a comparative study was conducted by comparing the decorative items on Candi Bajang Ratu with Hindu cultural items found in Bali (Adri, 1991).

## 3. Two Styles of Candi in Indonesia

Soekmono (1991), an expert on the candis in Indonesia, stated that the candis built in Java had two styles, namely the Central Javanese style and East Javanese style. According to him, the Central Javanese style has the following important characteristics: (a) the shape of the building, (b) the roofs are steps, (c) the doorways and niches are decorated with the *Kala-Makara*, (d) the reliefs appear rather high and the paintings are naturalist in style, and (e) the location of the candi is at the center of the yard. The important features of the East Javanese style are: (a) the shape of the building is slender, (b) the roof is a combination of levels, (c) the *Makara* is absent, and the doors and niches only have the head of Kala, (d) the reliefs arise only a little and the paintings are mostly symbolic (like shadow puppet – *wayang kulit*), and (e) the location of the candi is at the rear of the yard.

In terms of the carved reliefs and decorative items on the walls of the candi, if carefully studied there are more detailed differences to be found. In principle, on the candi in Central Java the relief work is high and naturalistic, but there are a number of other characteristics that are also specific. Indirectly, Soekmono (1991) explains the existence of the different functions between the candis built in the old classical period, which are found mainly in Central Java, and the candis of the young classical period in East Java. The candis built during the old classical period were for the purpose of worshipping the gods, while those built in the young classical period, especially those built around the Singasari and Majapahit eras, were intended to be dedicated to the worship of ancestors. Therefore, candis are clearly religious monuments that are sacred because they are intended as mediums for communicating with *Adikodrati* (the supernatural).

#### 4. Result

The name Candi Bajang Ratu comes from the Javanese language. *Bajang* means not finished or dwarf, while *Ratu* means king. The name is thought to be associated with the reign of King Jayanegara, which was relatively short because of the emergence of many rebellions against the Majapahit kingdom. The experts believe that this candi is located in the Majapahit royal complex. It is made of red stone with unique and attractive carved reliefs.

Generally, the reliefs on the roof of a candi are motifs that symbolize the upper world (*swahloka*) and lower (*bhurloka*). This description of the two lives that are put together is an embodiment of the harmony between human life in the middle world (*bwahloka*). Therefore, the building of Candi Bajang Ratu indicates the aesthetic concepts of Javanese Hinduism, which emphasize a sense of beauty related to the cultural and religious environment, in other words it is a picture of the world and the natural reality.

In terms of the preparation of the symmetrical and symbolic motifs of the esthetic forms, Candi Bajang Ratu symbolizes the unity present in the life of the various religious Majapahit communities, namely those following Javanese, Hindu and Buddhist beliefs. When viewed vertically, Candi Bajang Ratu consists of three parts, namely the bottom, the body and the head. In addition, this candi also has wings and a wall fence on both sides (Figure 1).

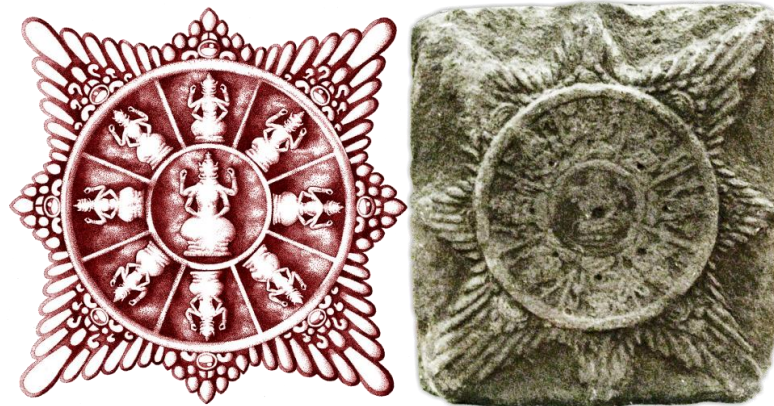


Figure 1. Candi Bajang Ratu

##### 4.1 Ornaments on the head of the Candi

On the head of Candi Bajang Ratu, there are ornamental carvings in the form of animals, in combination with natural objects including the Kala flanked by lions, sun reliefs, dragons in the form of large snakes with legs, and eagles. In addition, there are also reliefs with spiral plant motifs.

The sun relief is a symbol of the Majapahit kingdom which is now known as *Surya Majapahit*. The sun symbol in the Majapahit-Hindu belief is called Surya. This symbol is also related to the lotus or lotus flower, which is believed to be good and signifies prosperity. In the concept of Hinduism in Bali, this symbol is known as the *Devata Nawa Sanga* (nine gods of the wind) (Figure 2).



**Figure 2. Dewata Nawa Sanga Symbol (Left) and Sun Relief Symbol in Candi Bajang Ratu (Right)**

The *Kala* carving, found at the head of the entrance is thought to be a symbol representing *Kalagemet* which is another name for Jayanegara. At each candi there are ornaments or decorations like this. This ornament is also called *Kala-makara*. *Kala* means a terrifying giant, whereas *makara* means an animal form in Hindu mythology which consists of a mixture of elephant, crocodile, and fish forms. The head of the *Kala* is carved on top of the entrance to the candi, while the *makara* is at the bottom of the entrance. *Kala* and *makara* reliefs are a unity so that they are often referred to by one name, namely *Kala-makara*. This decoration was allegedly always deliberately carved at the entrance, to guard the sanctity of the candi, because of its frightening shape. The giant head is thought to be grinning, which is expected to frighten the evil spirits that will try to enter the candi.

In comparison, the decoration that is usually placed above the entrance to holy places in Bali is also believed to be a symbol of the head of the *Bhutakala* (which means space and time). Everyone who sees the *Bhutakala* carving (in Bali called the *Karang Boma*) is expected to realize that he or she is limited by space and time.

#### 4.2 Ornaments on the Candi's Body

The shape of the reliefs on the body of the candi illustrates the Ramayana story. This depicts the story of the Ramayana in the form of a fight between a giant figure and an ape. This decoration does not explain the function of the candi, but based on the study of archeology, this does allow the time period of the establishment and construction of Candi Bajang Ratu to be estimated (Kusumajaya, 2013).

The Ramayana is a story that became a role model for the rulers of the Majapahit kingdom. This is thought to be the reason for carving the story of the Ramayana epic on Candi Bajang Ratu. In this candi, there are also carvings that tell of the journey of the main character, namely Rama, on his way to meet his death and hence to reach heaven. In the Ramayana story it is mentioned that there was a bird, named Sri Tanjung, who ushered the spirits of the Ramayana figures into heaven.

Based on the Kertagama book, it is stated that Candi Bajang Ratu was established in conjunction with the death of King Jayanegara. Therefore, it is strongly suspected that there is a connection between these forms of reliefs and Jayanegara. A Sri Tanjung relief is found carved into the body of Candi Bajang Ratu. Based on this story, it is suspected that the Sri Tanjung relief (Figure 3) is thought to explain the function of Candi Bajang Ratu, which is as the entrance to a sacred building which is believed to commemorate the death of King Jayanegara. However, that building has not yet been found.



Figure 3. Sri Tanjung Relief

#### 4.3 Ornaments on Bottom of the Candi

At the bottom of the candi there are reliefs whose angles are not clearly identified, due to erosion. It is estimated that the reliefs are in the form of reptile animal motifs and spiralized flowers. The placement of these various ornamental reliefs serves to fill the space on the flat slabs of stone, so that they add aesthetic pleasure. The combination of ornamental motifs with the basic shapes of plants (flora) and *kekarangan* (fauna) has aesthetic value, which accentuates the harmony of nature. Plant motifs (*pepatraan*) accentuate soft and smooth expressions, while animal motifs show fierce, scary, and haunted impressions. The combination of the two suggests that there was an effort to complement each other so that there is a decorative and balanced aesthetic impression.

#### 5. Conclusion

By making direct observations in the field, and interpreting the existing decorative features with the hermeneutical method, and comparing them with Hindu cultural artefacts in Bali, we can interpret the decorative reliefs on Candi Bajang Ratu. Candi Bajang Ratu has various items that are there to show beauty, or symbolic meanings and social identity. At the head of the candi there is a symbol representing beauty in the form of spiral plants. As a part of beauty, these decorative motifs are carved to fill-in the flat stone slabs. The placement tends to be symmetrical, which also adds aesthetic elements to Candi Bajang Ratu. The sun relief is a symbol of the power of the Majapahit kingdom, and all its prosperity. Decorations in the form of the *Kala-makara* are symbols of unity and also show the limitations of space and time. Symmetrical shapes on the wings (gates) can also function as symbols of the release of someone who has died, namely King Jayanegara. The candi's solid leg with carvings of wild animals symbolizes that this candi is intended to be very sturdy, strong and authoritative, to match the character of Jayanegara. The function of social identity is indicated by the *Kalagemet* carving, which is representative of King Jayanegara. The form of the gate can also show social identity, in the form of the borders between regions.

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