

Mandala and Support Ruler in Islamization on the North Coast of Java (Case Study of Mandala Sunan Bonang)

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Abstract: Islamization in the nusantara began to experience acceleration in the 15th century AD when the saints, sunans, and another spreader of Islam used various da'wah approaches. One of the approaches used is the educational approach by acculturating the pre-Islamic education model called the mandala. Based on several archaeological findings and local historiographical sources such as manuscripts, many Islamic mandalas were developed by the Walisongo and their networks during this period. This study aims to reveal further the significance of the role of mandalas in the process of Islamization on the north coast of Java and the role of local rulers behind the growth and development of Islamic mandalas. With the case study of Sunan Bonang's mandala (Mandala Sunan Bonang) in Bonang Village, the researcher uses a historical approach and Islamic studies to reveal the socio-historical aspects of Mandala-based Islamic education activities. The text of Carita Sejarah Lasem, which is the primary source of this research, and other historiographical sources, was analyzed using the content analysis method. This study concludes that in the 15th-16th centuries AD, the mandala had an essential role as the basis of Islamic da'wah and education for the community, especially on the north coast of Java. The development of mandalas in several areas, which is exemplified by Sunan Bonang's mandala, also shows the active support of local rulers for the process of Islamization in Nusantara society.

Keywords: History of islamic education, islamization of the nusantara, mandala, ruler support, sunan bonang.

Introduction

When discussing the process of Islamization in the nusantara, it is difficult not to mention the role of *Walisongo*. For the Javanese people, in particular, the figure of the Sunans is highly glorified. Hundreds and even thousands of pilgrims flock to the tombs of the sunans while hoping for blessing (*barokah*). The practice of visiting the graves of famous figures, such as the sunans, has become a popular tradition in Indonesia, especially Java (Romdhoni, 2015). The existence and progress of the Sunans are also recorded in various ancient historical sources, such as manuscripts, various artifacts, and historical sites such as *petilasan*.

Compared to ancient tombs or mosques, the shrines of a Sunan or wali during his life are rarely the destination or stopping point of the pilgrims

who usually through the burial complex of the saints. Conditions that are not very well maintained and the lack of information or knowledge of the public make the existence of these historical sites begin to be forgotten. The historical sites that the Sunans left were a silent witness to the existence of da'wah and the struggle of the guardians to build the Islamic civilization of the Nusantara. One type of *petilasan* is a mandala site or an ancient *pesantren* which is strongly suspected to be related to the educational activities of the Sunans.

These Islamic mandalas dynamically contributed to the acceleration of the Islamization of the archipelago in the 15th century AD. Martin van Bruinessen argued that Islamic boarding schools (in their forms and components known in

the 19th century until now) had not been established before the 18th century AD. In the 19th century AD was not without a model basis. Pre-Islamic education models such as the mandala are thought to inspire the *pesantren* model. Furthermore, the *pesantren* results from the development and formation of a dynamic culture in the mandala education model for hundreds of years (Bruinessen, 2020). Religious or cultural transformation is not a linear, static and straightforward process, but a complex and dynamic process and is not rigid (Iswanto, 2018). The same thing applies to mandalas, which reflect a form of transformation of religious culture in the archipelago. At the same time, Islam and Muslims began to be widely accepted by the people and the Majapahit Kingdom. Even several royal families have converted to Islam (Nur Khalik Ridwan, 2020). The sunans used the social changes before the fall of Majapahit to preach. Through creative and fun educational presentations, *Walisongo* succeeded in converting Javanese society relatively quickly and without bloodshed (Fadli, 2019).

Based on archaeological findings and local historiographical sources such as manuscripts, there were many Islamic mandalas developed by the *Walisongo* and their networks. In the historical records of the nusantara, especially in the Islamic period, some mandalas have become points of interest for some critical events. One of the famous Islamic mandalas is the *mandala* Sunan Giri "Giri Kedhaton" which became an Islamic political entity reckoned with in the 16th century AD (Wahyudi, 2021). Another Islamic mandala site remains the Sunan Bonang *pasujudan* complex in Bonang Village, Lasem (Riyanto, Mochtar, Priswa, Alifah, & Taniardi, 2020). The site can be proof of the existence of Islamic da'wah and the education of Sunan Bonang and other sunans in spreading Islam in the nusantara. Sunan Bonang is a member of the *Walisongo* who is elder to Sunan Giri, after the death of Sunan Ampel. He was not only a faqih, but also an expert in sufism who became a reference not only by other sunans but also to the society in general (Saksono, 1995). In the famous history of Javanese society, his figure is known as the teacher who awakened Sunan Kalijaga in the

Jatisekar Forest, which is in the northeast of Lasem (Hutomo, Hudiyo, Djamaudin, & Astuti, 1984).

Mandala Sunan Bonang is interesting considering its location on the north coast of Java and in the middle of two duchies during the Majapahit era, the Duchy of Lasem and the Duchy of Tuban. In Lasem (now the area covers a broader area of Rembang Regency), *Mandala Sunan Bonang* became a spiritual center for the surrounding community in the 15th century AD. Centers for religious studies in Java since before the establishment of the *Demak Bintara* sultanate, such as the Sunan Bonang mandala, grew into social communities. The sunan's mandala has become a learning destination for *santri lelana* from various regions (Romdhoni, 2021). Interesting, considering that in the 21st century AD, the Rembang area (including Lasem) was still considered a *santri* area and a destination for students from various Indonesians to study religion. Based on Emis data from the Dirjen Pendis Kemenag in 2021, a total of 129 *Pesantren* exist in Rembang Regency (Direktoral Jenderal Pendidikan Islam Kemenag, 2021).

The existence of *Mandala Sunan Bonang* is also interesting to study further because it can provide additional knowledge regarding the role of local rulers in Islamization on the north coast of Java. Interestingly, in the Lasem area, the *Carita Sejarah Lasem* (CSL) text is already known, a source of local historiography that has also recorded Sunan Bonang's da'wah activities. The CSL text tells of important events in Lasem from the middle of the early 14th century to the end of the 19th century. It consists of nine episodes or sections whose stories overlap and often repeat (norm). This chronicle was composed by Raden Panji Kamzah in 1858 on the collective memory of the Lasem people, as well as (possibly) a long-lost manuscript (Kamzah & Karsono, 2012). The use of oral history can be a historiographical narrative because it can democratize history by bringing narratives of people and communities that are usually not in the archives into conversation with the political and intellectual elite who generally write history (Jessee, 2011). In other words, by reading oral history, aspects can give us an exciting alternative to construct and imagine 'history' outside the texts

(read: historical documents), which are understood conventionally (Beard, 2017). In this case, the recorded oral history, such as the CSL text, can fill in the gaps in the history of Islam Nusantara that already exist in chronicle books and other conventional histories. This study aims to reveal further the significance of the role of mandalas in the process of Islamization on the north coast of Java and the role of local rulers behind the growth and development of Islamic mandalas. With a case study of the *Mandala Sunan Bonang* in Bonang Village, the researcher examines the existence of the mandala in some historical sources, including CSL texts.

Materials and Methods

This research itself is library research, with a historical approach in Islamic Studies. The researcher uses the integration-interconnection scientific paradigm to help analyze the reality of Islamic religiosity on the coast of Rembang in a critical and comparative period (historical-empirical) (Abdullah, 2020). With a case study of *Mandala Sunan Bonang* in Bonang Village (Lasem), the researcher uses this approach to reveal the socio-historical aspects of Mandala-based Islamic education activities. To help understand the socio-historical context of *Mandala Sunan Bonang*, the researcher also uses other historical sources, such as ancient manuscripts, colonial archives, contemporary books and historiography, previous research, and oral history. The primary source that the researcher uses is the Javanese Carita Sejarah Lasem transcript which has been edited and published by the Kantor Perpustakaan dan Arsip Kabupaten Rembang. This story of the history of Lasem was composed by Raden Panji Kamzah in 1858 (Kamzah & Karsono, 2012). The CSL text is a valuable source of local history that describes the history of the Rembang area from the Majapahit Kingdom to the Dutch colonial period. The narrative content in this CSL text will then be compared with narratives in other historical sources. The implementation of research using the historical approach itself has five stages: topic selection, source collection, verification,

interpretation (analysis and synthesis), and finally writing (Kuntowijoyo, 2018).

The data obtained were then analyzed by the method of content analysis. This method is used to analyze documents or transcripts that have been written with recorded verbal communication, such as newspapers, books, chapters in books, newspaper headlines, essays, interviews, articles, and historical documents and the like. The advantages of using this analytical model are the availability of historical values or cultural understanding over time through text analysis, the availability of understanding towards complex human thinking models, and the use of language (Yusuf, 2014).

Results and Discussion

The History of Mandala: The Spiritual Center of the Indigenous Archipelago

At first, Mandala was closely related to educational activities in the pre-Islamic period. Mandala itself is a unique spiritual area that stands independently in an area. In Mandala, the *wiku* (students) study Hindu-Buddhist religious education and obtain cadre to become monks or sages later. When Islamization in the archipelago began to accelerate in the 15th century AD, the saints and sunans became the main actors behind the acceleration. The propagator of Islam, who is generally Sufis, uses various approaches: the educational approach. With *irfani-Sufistic* reasoning, the Sunans can creatively and flexibly adapt the mandala education model and make it an Islamic educational institution. As a complex that focuses on spirituality and spiritual development, in Mandala, there is a *dukuh* as a place of study and an *ashrama* as a student residence (Sunnyoto, 2016). This mandala model, which, in the 19th century AD, was commonly known as the Pondok-Pesantren education model. So that the Islamic mandala model developed by the Sunans, with all their cultural treasures, is a prototype for pesantren today.

As a particular area, the mandala complex has unique features. The specialty lies in the location of the Mandala, which stands on *sima* land, or *tanah*

perdikan (in Islamic times). Sima land itself is a type of land that is exempt from land tax. In ancient times, a king had the authority to tax some of the royal land occupied by the people. Specifically for sima land, the tax obligation is abolished. Even those who lived in the sima land or the mandala complex had the freedom to serve (devoted) to the king. This privilege comes from the land of *Sima* which is donated by the king (dharma) to the religious circles. By being granted a special status, religious circles can maximally carry out religious activities, including religious education for students and the royal community. This king's charity cannot be separated from the concept of the welfare and prosperity of the kingdom, which is not only based on material (physical) achievements but also the development of spirituality (spiritual) to create a balance of life (harmony) for all elements of the kingdom (Moertono, 2018). Armed with the privileges above the Mandala, they can develop into independent, autonomous, and independent institutions in pre-Islamic and Islamic times.

Regarding the process of forming a mandala, especially in the Islamic era, it generally begins with the giving of sima land or fief land to figures who spread the religion of Islam. Giving the land also means blessing to spread Islam to the community. This scheme can be seen in the process of establishing the Mandala or Raden Rahmat pesantren in Ngampel Denta, Surabaya, which was initiated by the granting of land from King Brahwijaya V, the ruler of the Majapahit kingdom (Halim, Prihananto, Huda, Anshori, & Busthomi, 2021). The second scheme occurred in taking over the existing pre-Islamic mandalas, which were later converted into Islamic mandalas. *Sajarah Banten* manuscript narrates converting 800 teachings in the mandala of Gunung Pulosari by Maulana Hasanudin, son of Sunan Gunungdjati. The Hindu mandala was then transformed into an Islamic mandala (Baso, 2019b). Although it is often associated with sima land, not all Islamic mandalas stand on sima land. For example, in the process of establishing the *Mandala Sunan Giri*, which began with land clearing (*babad alas*). Sunan Giri then established a pesantren on a hill (Giri) known as *Giri Kedhaton*. This phenomenon also occurred in

the establishment of the Pesantren *Demak Bintoro* (Baso, 2019c). The Chronicle of Alas itself became a new phenomenon in the 14th century AD, nearing the end of the Majapahit Kingdom, the clergy began to move away from the king and continued the politics of clearing their land (*babad alas*) (Lombard, 2005). So that while it can be concluded that the extension of the Islamic mandala does not lie in the status of the sima land or its fief, but in the status of the area, which is a spiritual center that is independent and independent.

As an authoritative religious institution, the mandala also becomes the center of local politics, where its existence becomes its political legitimacy for a kingdom. The mandala becomes the spiritual support for the state, and the sunans (wali council) themselves become the legislative "institution" that appoints, supervises, and oversees the government-run by the king/sultan as the holder of executive power (Baso, 2019a). As for internally, while in the mandala, a student does not only study religious sciences such as fiqh and creed. Mandala is also a center for tasawuf or *zawiyah* education (practice). In the Mandala, students are also taught social skills. The students were also taught to read and write, literature, and etiquette (Halim et al., 2021). One of the uniqueness of the Islamic mandala lies in its indigenous ethical education (*aguk irawan*). In addition to literacy and ethics education, the mandala is also intended for the development of science and technology, such as *pangadyan* science (political science), *kabhayan panglayar* science (shipping and marine science), *mahawanetha* science (land transportation science), *bahudenda* science (law and marine sciences). Judiciary, and goldsmithing (Baso, 2019c). As a result, the mandala indirectly also helps develop the socio-cultural aspects of the surrounding community.

Mandala Sunan Bonang in Bonang Village

Like other wali or sunans, Raden Makdum Ibrahim or Sunan Bonang divides "dakwah" duties in a particular area. His da'wah area covers the north coast of Java which stretches from the Rembang-Tuban area and the surrounding areas. So, where is the location of Sunan Bonang's da'wah center or mandala? In the CSL text, the first chapter explains

that Sunan Bonang was appointed as the guardian of the state of Tuban and the surrounding areas, with Bonang Village (now in Lasem District, Rembang Regency, Central Java) as the center of his da'wah. "*Nalika wis yoswa 30 taun diwisuda dening shunan agung ngampel, didadekake wali negara Tuban ngurusi bab-bab agama ke-rasulan, kaparingan drajad shunan, jumeneng ing bhumi Bonang Lasem, napak tilas daleme mbakyune,*" (see CSL: page 11. He occupied the former palace of Binangun in the abandoned village of Bonang after his older sister (Nyai Ageng Maloka) moved the center of power of the Duchy of Lasem to the Cologawen area (near the current center of Lasem District). Sunan Bonang also made the complex seclusion and meditation (Sufism activities). In the CSL as follows: "*..Watu gilang kang ana ing dedagane Eyang Putri Cempa dikepras diratakake kanggo panggonan pasujudan lan tapakur.*" Raden Makdum Ibrahim's status then grew stronger after being ordained as mayor of Lasem and earning the title Sunan Bonang.

The existence of *Mandala Sunan Bonang* in Bonang village can also be found in other manuscripts. The *Suluk Wujil* manuscript from the 18th century AD also mentions that the mandala or pesantren of Sunan Bonang is located in Bonang, Lasem. At the beginning of the suluk, it is stated: "*Inilah ceritera si Wujil Berkata pada guru yang diabdinya Ratu Wahdat, Ratu Wahdat nama gurunya Bersujud ia ditelapak kaki Syekh Agung Yang tinggal di desa Bonang Ia minta maaf Ingin tahu hakikat dan seluk beluk ajaran agama aampai rahasia terdalam.*" Bonang Village is also a quiet place not far from the beach (Widyastuti, 2001). This description is geographically compatible with the location of Bonang Village, especially the Sunan Bonang *Pasujudan* complex in Lasem District, Rembang Regency, which is located not far from the northern coast of Java.

Another older manuscript (15-16M century), the Or.1928 manuscript or commonly called *Het Boek van Bonang* states that Prince Bonang wrote the literary work. At the end of the manuscript, it is stated, "*..tammam Carita cinitra, right pakreti Paneran in Benang*". The last line confirms that the scriptwriter is Prince Bonang, which Shrike interprets as the figure of Sunan Bonang (G. J. W.

Drewes, 1969). This is interesting considering that the figure of Sunan Bonang is called the Prince, which is based on the name of the Bonang area. The mention of the name of the Prince of Bonang can also be found in the *Babad Demak Pesisir* and the *Kropak Ferrara* manuscript. Not only Sunan Bonang, other Sunan names such as Sunan Giri and Sunan Kalijaga are also called with the title of Prince (G. J. W. Drewes, 2002). The embedding of the title of Prince on the figure of Raden Rakhmat is not something strange because he is still related to the families of the Tuban duchy and Lasem duchy. In addition, the Prince can also mean a local ruler (Bonang Village) whose political power status is not as extensive as the local ruler (Adipati Lasem).

Raden Makdum Ibrahim's status as an imam for the Lasem-Tuban area is also found in the *Babad Demak Pesisir* manuscript. The manuscript from the 16-17 century AD states that Raden Ibrahim lived in Bonang and became a priest in the Tuban and Lasem areas (ngimani Lasem Ian Tubin oning Bonang). After being imprisoned, he was later appointed as a *wali* named Sunan Bonang. *Mandala Sunan Bonang* in Bonang Village was crowded with students and people who wanted to study religion (Hutomo et al., 1984). A similar narrative can also be found in the *Babad Tanah Jawi* version of Drajad's (18-19th century AD) collection of the British Library. For the record, the Tuban and Lasem areas are indeed directly adjacent. What is meant by the Tuban state and the Lasem state are the Duchy of Tuban and the Duchy of Lasem at the end of Majapahit rule and the beginning of the establishment of the *Demak Bintoro* Sultanate. The two duchies became vassals of the Majapahit Kingdom (Riyanto et al., 2020). The families of the two duchies have a close kinship.

According to *Hikayat Hasanuddin*, after successfully carrying out da'wah in Kediri, Raden Makdum Ibrahim went to Demak at Raden Patah's call to become the imam of the Demak Mosque. After no longer serving as the imam of the Demak mosque, Raden Makdum is said to have lived in Lasem (Sunyoto, 2016). After moving to Lasem, Raden Makdum Ibrahim chose the village of Bonang as his new place of activity. In the village of Bonang, he founded a *pesujudan* (place to do

uzlah) and a pesantren. As mentioned earlier, some of Sunan Bonang's works, especially *Suluk Wujil*, take the background story in this pesujudan (W.M., 2000). From the name of this village, then Raden Bonang received the title Sunan Bonang, namely Sunan, who resided and preached in the Bonang area (as the center) and its surroundings.

In the CSL text version, during Pangerah Wiranegara, the duke and his brother-in-law, Raden Makdum Ibrahim, built a mosque not far from the fence of the Lasem duchy in Bonang Binangun. The mosque is now known as the Bonang mosque, located not far from Pasujudan Sunan Bonang. Even the duke and his wife Nyai Ageng Maloka asked Raden Makdum Ibrahim to stay in Lasem to spread Islamic teachings (Unjiya, 2014). So, was Sunan Bonang's presence in Bonang Village a decision of Sunan Bonang himself or a request from the Lasem Duchy family? What is clear is that Sunan Bonang was already familiar with the Bonang area, Lasem. According to local oral history, when he was young, Raden Makdum Ibrahim was invited by his father, Sunan Ampel, to do *uzlah* and seclusion in the Bonang-Binangun, Lasem (Ulum, 2019). Thus the Bonang area is not a foreign area for Sunan Bonang. Moreover, his brother, Nyai Ageng Maloka, married Prince Lasem and resided in the Binangun Palace. In the book *Ahla Al Musamarah fi Hikayat Al-Auliya 'Al-Asyrah* by Kyai Abu Fadhool Senori Tuban, it is narrated that Sunan Bonang is alone to worship on Mount Gadhing, near the beach, and continually undergoes *riyadhah* and *mujahadah*. He was later known as a Wali with the title Sunan Bonang (As-Senori, 1961). As for the Book of *Tarikhul Auliya* by KH Bisri Mustafa, entitled *Tarikhul Auliya*, Sunan Bonang only mentioned preaching in the Tuban Region (Musthofa, 1952).

At the end of the 15th century AD, Sunan Bonang developed his Mandala in Bonang Village as a center for Islamic *da'wah* and education in the Rembang-Tuban area and its surroundings. Sunan Bonang also made his mandala a center for cultural development. Sunan Bonang used *wayang* performances and Javanese songs and music as a medium to convey Islamic teachings to the public. Sunan Bonang is also called the inventor of Bonang, one of the gamelan instruments, whose

name is taken from the title and the name of the village where Sunan Bonang preaches (Sunyoto, 2016). To develop Islamic culture in the archipelago, Sunan Bonang also played a role in creating scientific rules and rules and improving all kinds of gamelan, songs, and songs (Saksono, 1995). Several literary works attributed to Sunan Bonang are also likely to be written or copied in this mandala. *Suluk Wujil*, for example, even explicitly takes a mandala setting in Bonang Village as the location for his storytelling.

Mandala Sunan Bonang has also become like a *zawiyah*, used to learn and practice Sufism. Literary case works attributed to or based on Sunan Bonang, especially in the *Suluk* (Sufism) genre, include *Suluk Wujil*, *Suluk Kalipah*, and *Kidung Bonang* (G. Drewes, 1968). *Suluk Wujil* even includes an excellent example of early Javanese Islamic literature featuring spiritual pursuits and teachings (Fanani, 2018). Not only does he teach Sufism scientifically, but Sunan Bonang himself is allegedly also a *mursyid* of *Tariqah Syathariyah* (and *Naqsyabandiyah*), where one of his students is Sunan Kalijaga (Sunyoto, 2016). In 1886, the village of Bonang (Bonang Wetan), still called one of the *perdikan* villages, where the community was assigned to take care of the tomb of the late Soesohunan in Bonang (Jr., 1886). Until now, at the Sunan Bonang pasujudan complex in Bonang Village, Lasem pilgrims can still find his pasujudan stone, the Sunan Bonang mosque, several old wells left by Sunan Bonang, and his grave (*petilasan*).

Support of Lasem Rulers in Islamization of the Nusantara

The history in the CSL text can be an alternative narrative related to the history of the formation of the Islamic mandala. Unlike the other mandalas, Sunan Bonang received moral support and material support in the form of *tanah perdikan* and the former palace building, which was later converted into an Islamic mandala building.

In the text of the CLS, it is narrated: "*Taun syaka 1402 dalem kadipaten binangun dipindah ring Lasem maneh dening putri malokhah, manggon ring bumi cologawen...Dene tilas kadipaten Bonang dienggoni adhike putri malokhah kang asma makdum ibrahim....dadi kyai guru agama rasul lan dadi*

muadzin," (see CSL: pages 10-11). In the text, Raden Makdum Ibrahim occupied the village of Bonang and started building a mandala from scratch, and made use of the abandoned Binangun palace complex. The complex was donated to Raden Makdum Ibrahim for Islamic da'wah after being appointed as the mayor of Lasem and Tuban.

In addition to preaching, in particular, Sunan Bonang was also given the task of guarding the grave of Putri Cempo and the family of the Lasem Duchy, which was located not far from the former Binangun palace. In the CLS text, it is narrated: *"Sing luwih perlu neng Bonang kono iku, Shunan Makdum Ibrahim diutus mbakyune supaya ngiras ngrawati lan ngereksa kuburane putri cempa Bi Nang Ti sekaliyan ing punthuk regol, serta kuburane Pr. Wirabraja dan Pr. Wiranagara...Shunan Bonang banget bektine anggone ngereksa kubure Eyang Putri Cempa,"* (see CSL: page 11).

Armed with building grants and the status of Bonang village as a fiefdom land, Raden Makdum Ibrahim or Sunan Bonang can maximally carry out Islamic da'wah and education with Bonang as the center. The village of Bonang was later developed into an Islamic Mandala, which became one of the leading destinations for students from various regions to study religion. While preaching in the Duchy of Lasem, Sunan Bonang was not alone. He collaborated with Prince Wiranegara and his wife Nyai Ageng Maloka (Princess Malokhah), also Sunan Bonang's sister. Prince Wira Negara himself was a Sunan Ampel whom his son-in-law later took. Both Sunan Bonang and Nyai Ageng Maloka are the sons and daughters of Sunan Ampel from his first wife, Raden Ayu Candrawati. She holds the title Nyai Ageng Manila, daughter of the regent of Tuban, Arya Teja. From his mother's line, Sunan Bonang also had a relationship with the Tuban duchy family.

Discussion

The Mandala Sunan Bonang site in the village of Bonang is very important because it is proof of Sunan Bonang's real existence in spreading Islam on the coast of Rembang (Lasem)-Tuban. The history of the existence of Mandala Sunan Bonang can be found in several historical documents, such as ancient manuscripts and texts, contemporary

books, to oral history. The evidence is the existence of collective memory with various components of society for the contribution of the saints in Islamizing the nusantara. Not only the role of the guardians of religious circles, but ancient texts such as the CSL text also show that local authorities played a role in the process of Islamization in the nusantara.

So far, the role of rulers (politics) in the chapter on Islamization of the nusantara is often associated with marriage events or even militaristic invasions. The marriage of a local ruler with a muslim woman, followed by the ruler's conversion to Islam, cannot automatically encourage the process of Islamization in society. The royal family generally embraces the Hindu-Buddhist religion, while the lower society still holds local beliefs. As for the militaristic invasion, it is necessary to prove the main motive further, whether the mission is Islamization or is it limited to an effort to hegemony the region (regional expansion). The argument is based on when several sultanates in Java had sufficient militaristic strength, the various regions under their rule had already been converted to Islam by the wali-Sunan. Therefore, the narration in the CSL text shows the real role of the rulers who have more impact in the process of Islamization of the nusantara, namely moral support (blessing) and material support in the form of giving fiefdoms of land to religious circles.

Regarding the history of the formation of mandala Sunan Bonang, the CSL text also provides an alternative narrative related to the material support of the Lasem rulers for Sunan's da'wah in Bonang village. The active support of the Lasem rulers was not only in donating Bonang village land as a fief but also the former building of the Binangun palace for the development of mandala Sunan Bonang. After being developed by Sunan Bonang, the Mandala soon became a religious reference centre (authority), especially for the people of the north coast of Java. Like other mandalas, Mandala Sunan Bonang is also a centre for developing the archipelago's cultural treasures such as literature and other social skills and *zawiyah*, a centre for tasawuf education (*thariqah*).

It is just that, although the role of the ruler is no less important, the main actors in the process of

Islamization of the nusantara are still the saints, sunans, and other spreaders of Islam. With their Irfani-Sufistic reasoning, the saints could creatively and wisely utilize pre-Islamic cultural tools, such as mandalas, to support the process of Islamization in the nusantara. The saints succeeded in implementing the *qaidah ushul fiqh*, *al-Muhafadhotu 'ala Qodim as-Sholih wa al-Akhdzu bil Jadid al-Ashlah* in their da'wah mission. The existence of support from the ruling class also showed that the walis could effectively and flexibly enter the Javanese court circles and gain the sympathy and support of the local rulers. The support and even the privileges obtained can then be used optimally to make the mission of Islamization in the nusantara successful.

Conclusions

This study concludes that in the 15th-16th centuries AD, the mandala had an essential role as the basis of Islamic da'wah and education for the community, especially on the north coast of Java. The Sunans, Saints (Sunan) and another spreader of Islam succeeded in redesigning the Hindu-Buddhist education model and developing it into an Islamic educational institution with all its values, ethics, and culture. The development of mandalas in several areas, which is exemplified by Mandala Sunan Bonang, also shows the active support of local rulers for the process of Islamization in nusantara society. The Lasem rulers, in this case, provided not only moral support (blessing) but also material support to support the Islamization process carried out by Sunan Bonang along with the coastal areas of Rembang to Tuban.

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