

## Behind the History and Cultural Value of The Kusmala Inscription at The Airlangga Museum Kediri

Rista Hartatik<sup>1</sup>, Ahmad Ruslan<sup>2</sup>, Sri Utami<sup>3</sup>, Afan Faizin<sup>4</sup>, Iwan Sugianto<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1'2'3'4'5</sup> Universitas Dr. Soetomo Surabaya

Corresponding Author: [1taataaarista@gmail.com](mailto:taataaarista@gmail.com)

### Abstract

*Culture is all the results of human work, feelings and creations, namely the entire complex way of life, including knowledge, belief, art, morals, customary law and all other abilities and habits acquired by humans as members of society. One of the cultural relics is the Kusmala inscription at the Airlangga Kediri Museum. Philology can be interpreted as love of words or it can also be a love of speaking, speaking with arguments. That is the reason why philologists always play around and like words and texts. This research is qualitative research. This research aims to examine the cultural values of the Kusmala inscription. Data collection was carried out using test and interview methods. This research aims to analyze the contents of the Kusmala inscription, as for the informant named Novi BMW. Research data analysis is descriptive. The results of this research discuss cultural values, as well as the meaning contained in the Kusmala inscription*

**Keywords:** *Philology, Cultural Values, Inscriptions, Airlangga Museum.*

---

### Article history

Received:  
16-11-2023

Revised:  
22-03-2024

Accepted:  
31-03-2024

Published:  
03-04-2024

---

### Introduction

Philology is a knowledge of literature in a broad sense which includes the fields of language, literature and culture (Baroroh-Baried, 1994). This opinion is strengthened by the definition of philology stated by Mulyani (2009), namely a discipline related to the study of cultural results (thoughts, feelings, beliefs, customs and values that have been passed down from generation to generation in social life) of humans in the past.

From the two opinions above, it can be concluded that the definition of philology is a study that includes the fields of language, literature and culture which relate to the results of human culture in the past. The definition of cultural results in question is in the form of thoughts, feelings, beliefs, customs and values that apply in a society. Therefore, philology is also included in the humanities disciplines.

---

According to its development, philology can be divided into two, namely traditional philology and modern philology. Mulyani (2009b: 6) explains several differences between traditional philology and modern philology. Traditional philology views variation as a form of corruption/error, while modern philology views variation as a form of creation. Apart from that, traditional philology aims to find texts that are close to the original, while modern philology aims to reveal the content of past cultural products contained in ancient manuscripts. Every scientific study has a research object. Likewise with the study of philology. The research objects of philology are manuscripts and texts. Manuscripts are cultural objects left behind by ancestors that contain ideas, thoughts and thoughts expressed in written form. One of the relics of ancient times is inscriptions.

Inscriptions are one of the oldest written sources in Indonesia, one of which is the Kusmala Inscription. The Kusmala Inscription or also called the Kandangan Inscription, is an inscription dating from 1350 AD. This inscription made from andesite is 122 cm high, 68 cm wide, 21 cm thick, and the thickness of the inscription plate is 31 cm. This inscription was found in Kandangan Village, Kandangan District, Kediri Regency, East Java.

This inscription mentions figures *pāduka bhaṭāre matahun śri bhaṭāra wijayarājasānanta wikramottunggadewa* which is identical to the character [Rajasawardhana](#) in the Nagarakretagama manuscript. Rajasawardhana served as Bhre Matahun, namely the husband of Indudewi alias Bhre Lasem, Rajadewi's daughter with Wijayarajasa. From this marriage, Nagarawardhani was born, who married Bhre Wirabhumih, son of Hayam Wuruk, king of Majapahit at that time (1351-1389).

Inscriptions are one of the oldest written sources in Indonesia. Inscriptions are edicts carved on stone, metal, tal leaves (rontal or lontar) and wood, and other materials, formulated according to certain rules and containing a gift or privilege issued by the king or royal official since the 5th century AD. and is a binding decision and has strong legal force and its determination is formalized with a ceremony (Bakker, 1972; Boechari, 1977). The inscriptions which are the object of research by epigraphers date from the 4th century AD to the 20th century AD, including inscriptions using Pallawa script and Sanskrit language, Prenagari script and Sanskrit language, Pallawa script and Old Malay language, Old Sundanese script and language, Old Javanese script and language, Old Javanese script and Old Balinese language, Latin script in Dutch and Portuguese. Most of the inscriptions from the classical era (Hindu-Buddhist era) are known to talk about *sīma*.

**Cultural Values:** Culture is interpreted as something that makes life better and more worth pursuing. To understand cultural values, you must first know the meaning of values and culture. Value is the essence of a thing, which makes it worth pursuing by humans. The values themselves are actually closely related to goodness, even though goodness is more attached to "things". Meanwhile, 'value' refers more to 'a person's attitude towards something or good things'.

Cultural values according to Koentjaraningrat (2000) are actually the crystallization of five main problems in human life, namely (1) the essence of human life, (2) the essence of human work, (3) the essence of human position in space and time, (4) the essence of human relationships with the natural environment, and (5) the essence of human relationships with each other. Whatever values a person or group of people have will determine their figure as a cultured human being. Koentjaraningrat defines culture as the totality of human ideas and works that must be familiarized with learning, along

---

with the entirety of the results of that culture and work. This definition emphasizes that culture requires a learning process to be able to generate ideas and works which then become habits. The habituation carried out through the learning process continues continuously from one generation to the next.

### **Method**

To obtain maximum and objective results, the author used several methods in this research. What is meant by research methods are procedures and ways of verifying data needed to solve or answer problems in research. In this research, the author uses a qualitative research method, which is a research method used to examine the condition of natural objects and is inductive based on factors found in the field and then constructed into a theory. The results are recorded, from interviews, observations, documentation and so on. Data sources in this research, data are divided into two types, namely primary data sources, namely sources that directly provide data to researchers, including Novi BMW, a historian or cultural activist at the Ministry of Education and Culture and secondary data sources, namely data sources that do not directly provide data. data to researchers, such as articles or online journals. In this research the author used several methods in collecting data, as follows: a) Interview method: obtaining information for research purposes by means of face-to-face questions and answers between the interviewer and the respondent/interviewee, with or without using a guide. interview. Novi BMW, historian or cultural activist at the Ministry of Education and Culture. Novi Bahrul Munib, 36 years old, Historian, S1, Javanese and Indonesian Languages, Jl. KH. Ridwan, etc. Jaten, Ds. Pagu, District. Wates, Kab. Kediri.

In using this method the author held direct questions and answers with related parties as stated in the primary data source which was adjusted to the discussion about the history and cultural values of the Kusmala inscription. The documentation method is a data collection method used to trace historical data. By using this method researchers can obtain documents in the form of images, for example; photographs, sketches, etc. Data analysis is carried out by organizing data, describing it into units, synthesizing, arranging into patterns, selecting and making conclusions. The data analysis process is carried out simultaneously with data collection, meaning that the author in collecting data also analyzes the data obtained in the field. In general, data analysis work includes 3 steps, namely: preparation, tabulation, and application of data in accordance with the research approach.

### **Discussion**

In this research, researchers obtained the contents of the Kusmala inscription which can be read in Latin: 1. //o// *swasti śaka warṣātita.1272. marga śiramāsa tithi pañcadaśi śukla pakṣa* 2. *ma.wa.ā.wara.pahāng irikā diwaśa ni (?) kasampurnna ni kang dawuhan śilamat i* 3. *kuśmala di rakryān dēmung sang martabun rangga sapu maka manggala rakaki ngamurwwa* 4. *bumi mapari wara rangga hawarawar ju.(mu) sang apañji pupon makana sang ājña* 5. *pāduka bhaṭāre matahun śri bhaṭāra Wijaya rājasānanta wikramottungga* 6. *dewa jāgaddhitahetu magawaya sukani para sāmya sakahawat lurah* 7. *wetan i daha samangkana*.

The cultural values contained in the Kusmala inscription are, 1) The value of measurement, reflected in the history of the Kusmala Inscription era, that people lived side by side with one another. So a harmonious attitude must be applied in social life, in

---

order to create a harmonious environment. 2) Environmental Care Attitude, this attitude is relevant to actions that always strive to prevent damage to the natural environment and repair this damage. 3) Social Care Cultural Values, namely attitudes and actions that always provide assistance to other people who need it. Helping each other, this is a good attitude to apply in social life today.

History of the Kusmala inscription, The inscription above is called Kusmala, published by the nobleman Bhre Matahun Sri Bhatara Wijayarajasananta Wikramottungga in the era of the leadership of Majapahit King Tribhuwanatunggadewi. Found in the Kandangan area. This inscription is made from andesite stone. It is 122 centimeters high and 68 centimeters wide. First discovered in Kandangan Village/District, Kediri Regency, the Kusmala inscription appeared in 1272 Saka or 1350 AD.

This inscription marks the completion of the construction of a dawuhan or reservoir in the Kusmala area around the foot of Mount Kelud. On the front there is a long row of carvings of ancient Javanese script and language and there is also a bell symbol with a lotus flower motif. These ancient objects are kept at the Airlangga Museum in the Selomangleng Cave area, Kediri City, East Java. Registered with number: 134/kdr/96.

Historian Novi Bahrul Munib or who is familiarly called Novi BMW from the Kadhiri Cultural History Conservation (PASAK) community, said that the reservoir was made by the Martabun named Rangga Sapu. He was ordered by Paduka Batara Matahun Sri Batara Wijayarajasananta Wikramottunggadewa as the uncle of Majapahit King Hayam Wuruk. From this inscription, said Novi, we can understand how ancient civilizations already had an awareness of the importance of controlling the environment, through managing water resources. Because water is a vital element of life, and if managed well it will bring prosperity to life itself. The Kusmala inscription is one of the Majapahit inscriptions that appreciates water management.

In the ancient Javanese civilization in Kediri, water was also quite vital, so there are many relics from ancient kings regarding water management, especially the eastern part of Kediri. The eastern part of Kediri is known as a fertile and prosperous region because of the volcanic soil as well as the well-organized irrigation. However, this area is also the foothills of Mount Kelud, which is potentially affected by the threat of lava floods due to volcanic eruptions. So environmental control is not only for meeting irrigation needs, but also for reducing disaster risks.

In ancient times, it was proven that ancient kingdoms were able to control the environment intelligently and creatively, so that water could flow long distances, channels were needed. The channel functions as irrigation and drainage. Irrigation is the distribution of water for rice fields, drainage for household and religious needs. In the construction of the water installation, sophisticated science and technology was demonstrated. An example of making whitewater is an underground water channel or tunnel. "In the Brumbung Village area, Kepung District, Kediri Regency there are Arung. The number reaches 12 Arung". The underground channel is a solution to overcome the mountainous land contour. Differences in land surface will affect the speed of water downstream. So if there is a high ground level, it will of course be difficult to drain.

According to Novi, in these conditions the role of undagi pangarum is very necessary. Because the special profession of underground water tunnel builders is that they have at least mastered mathematics, geology and physics. Because to dig a tunnel 5-7 meters deep with a length of up to 1 kilometer underground, of course requires special

skills. They made ventilation at several points so that there was sufficient oxygen, adjusted the slope level of the tunnel so that water could continue to flow, and also used techniques to deal with different types of soil when digging.

### **Conclusion**

Etymologically, the term inscription is a loan word from a term in the ancient Javanese-Bali language ꦥꦫꦱꦱꦠꦶ (*prasasti*) and (*pracasti*) which means "charter" or "document", this term is derived from a Sanskrit word प्रशस्ती (*prashasti*) which means "praise". In modern times, inscriptions can also refer to anything written or carved on stone or metal. Leluri or inscription traditions in modern times can be seen in the general custom of marking an inauguration, commemoration, respect, celebration, and so on. The Kusmala inscription is an effort to overcome flood disasters. The benefit of the embankment construction (ḍawuhan) for the surrounding community is that it makes it easier to obtain water for irrigation of rice fields and plantations, so that it can increase abundant agricultural products. This attitude is relevant to Environmental Care in the Concept of Cultural Education and National Character, namely actions that always strive to prevent damage to the natural environment and repair this damage. Apart from that, this incident is also related to the Cultural Value of Social Care, namely attitudes and actions that always provide assistance to other people who need it. Cultural values like this are very important to pass on to the younger generation. That's why it's important to invite the younger generation to study history. Because Cultural Values are a source of strength to drive a business, the more aware you are of historical values, the more you will have the power to develop the desired traits, character and abilities.

### **References**

- Baried, Siti Baroroh, dkk. 1994. *Pengantar Teori Filologi*. Yogyakarta: Badan Penelitian dan Publikasi Fakultas (BPPF) Seksi Filologi, Fakultas Sastra, Universitas Gadjah Mada
- Boechari. 1986. *Prasasti Koleksi Museum Nasional Jilid 1*. Jakarta: Proyek Pengembangan Museum Nasional.
- Boechari. 2012. *Melacak Jejak Sejarah Indonesia Kuno Lewat Prasasti: Kumpulan Tulisan Boechari*. Jakarta: Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia
- Harahap, N. (2021). *Filologi Nusantara: Pengantar ke Arah Penelitian Filologi* (Edisi Pertama). Jakarta: Kencana.
- Mulyani, Hesti. 2009. *Teori Pengkajian Filologi*. Yogyakarta: Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Daerah Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni UNY
- Koentjaraningrat. (2000). *Pengantar ilmu antropologi*. Jakarta: Radar Jaya Offset.