

Illumination on The Javanese Script in Islamic Era: Local Wisdom of The Javanese Culture Tradition

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Abstract

Illumination on the Javanese script is one of esthetical form and considered as a special feature of specific Javanese tradition. It caused almost all the Javanese script had been illuminated. Illumination is used to beautify pages on the script and it is one of the parts that not separated from the evolution of Javanese script generally. Illumination includes the whole accessories or ornament of the script, such as: mark, framing (frame), gateway (textual gate), rubrication (signing by color), and calligraphy. The motives of the Javanese script illumination on the Islamic era are flora motive, geometries, creatures, building, tools, and imagery motive. In this case, Illumination has a sacred meaning and function, such as: (1) to beautify the form of script; (2) illumination can be considered as the realization of the religious service or good deed; (3) it has high value, noble and sacred. Illumination on the Javanese script in Islamic era is the special expression of Javanese people that is influenced by the local wisdom. The Javanese script in Islamic era, including the illumination, is the culture inheritance that can be classified as tradition literature and the description of Javanese culture on the era. Today, Illumination needs to be studied and discussed in order be able to explore the quality and superiority of the script as one of the Javanese culture heritage.

Keywords: illumination, script, Javanese and local wisdom

A. Introduction

The script of Islamic literature is one of the culture heritages on Islamic era. Those are the written tradition heritage found in anywhere of Indonesia archipelago, that began in the end of XVI century or XVII century. That period is the important age of the Islamic literature development (Kumar & McGlynn, 1996: 34).

Javanese culture influenced by Islam inherits many works of Islamic literature. Several works is taken from pre-Islam literature work, such as epic of Mahabarata and Ramayana. The tells from Persia and Arab, for instance the story of the prophets especially the prophet of Muhammad, and the story of the knights of Islam or other figures from Arab, Persia, and other places, also influenced to the Javanese script (Kumar & McGlynn, 1996: 173).

Many soft and high scripts of literature had been produced by intellectual around palace (Ricklefs, 1995: 77-84). Those scripts reflected on the interaction between palace culture and Islamic culture, which is known in other time as Suluk literature, wirid, primbon, and Roman of Java, such as: Menak Amir Hamsah, Menak Yusup, and Menak Ahmad Hanapi that had been translated from Melayu script (Simuh, 1996: 232-233).

There are many scripts of Java in Islamic era had been illuminated beautifully, become an interesting visual element on the script. Illumination or Wadana, sunggingan or rerengan can be interpreted as lightening or brightening by using of letter, ornament, or other forms (Kumar & McGlynn, 1996: 188-191). Illumination put on the difference pages, such as in the beginning, and in the middle. Generally, wadana is colorful, and full of decorative ornament that has a symbolic meaning.

Illumination on the Javanese script in Islamic era is indicated differences, for example the form, motive, and ornament, or its character and color. Any script has different motives, from the simple form till the form that has a high complexity. This variant is possible because the difference time of

writing, background of culture, available resource and technology they have, and structure of culture-social life of the people.

However, illumination on the Javanese script in Islamic era is influenced by the matters or thought from the age of pre-Islam, because most of Javanese literature is influenced by the thought of pre-Islam age (Ricklefs, 1995: 81). It can be viewed from the transformative thought development reflected on the literature script of Java-Islam. The Islamic thought of Sufism and mysticism acculturate with local mysticism that taking root by the strong faith of the people based on the Javanese Tradition.

Illumination can be called as the expression of the Javanese people that the form, motive, function, and the meaning are unique. As the culture production, illumination, of course, is not only a little ornament to beautify the script, but also to express or explore the meaning of certain cultures. Illumination is a symbol contains many messages, warnings, values, or meaning related with life's view or philosophy of the people created it (Gustami, 2008: 4).

Illumination of Javanese script tradition is a culture's tradition that has glorious values, or local wisdom that can be studied today for Javanese culture development interest. If it can work well, it was believed will be available and valuable resource for the Java cultures studies. Therefore, this paper tries to explore the illumination from the side of the form, motive, function, and meaning in the name of high local wisdom.

B. Script Illumination

Illumination is art of beautifying book or script by painting or drawing, ornament or colorful calligraphy and sometime overlaid by gold (Diringer, 1967: 21-22). The art of beautifying book and script has been developed since in the beginning of VIII century. Illumination is being an Islamic art that grown early and rapidly, and has an important meaning in the developing and extending Islamic aesthetic.

The art of illumination takes the progress rapidly in the middle of II Hijriyah, by applying the aesthetic rules tightly. This development happens when the education center and Islamic knowledge grow rapidly. Beside that, the using of paper in Islamic world also becomes the supporting factor of the progress, which continued to XIX Masehi. A thousand amazing scripts were produced in Islamic education center. Among the scripts produced, Al-Qur'an is the most familiar to be copied, translated, and illuminated beautifully (Sejelmassi, 1987: 30-32).

The illuminated pages are the pages considered as the special one, such as the beginning page or title, the first or the last page, or other important pages. While the cover is illuminated by geometries pattern overlaid by gold. Moreover, the title beautified by square ornament that lined the text or the content of the script, which is the side decorated by many beautiful motives. In other word, the part of script illuminated are the title, side of script or other side of the script. In this case, there are three kinds of motives used in illuminating, they are: geometries, flora, and calligraphy motives. They are arranged dynamically and combined by other elements mathematically, symmetrically, crucially, and harmonically. (Lings, 1976: 72-116; Sijelmassi, 1987:38; Dringer, 1967: 135).

Illumination, extremely rich of repeating, is one of the most important and original aspect of Islamic aesthetic. Illumination is viewed as a transcendental work of the art consists of immanent philosophical meaning (between a creature and the creator) and monumental philosophical meaning.

In Indonesia, involve the Java, illumination is guessed to growth in XV-XVI century, along with the Islamic script translation development by clergy, intellectual Muslim, or by student of traditional Muslim school in religious center, the center of Islamic education called Pesantren or Madrasah, and the Islamic kingdom (kesultanan) in Indonesia (Sodrie, 1983:417). The script translated such as:

Bustan as Salatin, Taj as Salatin, tafsir Al-Qur'an, Islamic Scientific law (Fiqh), and Hikayat Iskandar Dzulkarnain, Hikayat Amir Hamzah, and other Islamic scripts which is translated from Melayu.

Based on the setting process of writing, Ann Kumar and McGlynn (1996:199), divided the setting process of writing tradition into three categories: (1) the script in the village that has not enough beautiful illumination form; (2) the script in the town that has beautiful enough illumination form by various ornament and the using of media and good technique, and Europe paper; and (3) the script in the palace that involve the experts of the people of art, as a result the illumination has a beautiful form and high art values. While the script produced in the Pesantren area classified between both in the village and the town.

Based on the division of Ann Kumar and McGlynn, it is possible to many available scripts made in the palace. It showed from Kolofon explanation, and also from the beautiful illumination which rich of colors and motives, and sometime decorated by gold or Prada, and using the Europe paper. That scripts, such as Mushaf of Al-Qur'an from the palace of Surakarta, and the script under the title sejarah wiwit Nabi Adam Dumugi Ratu Ratu tanah Jawi that written on the Daluang paper by Mangkunegoro I in 1768. Other the palace, Pesantren as the Islamic education center also produced different illumination script.

Among those scripts, Al-Qur'an and literature script told the life of the prophet, Ulama, king, or the Islamic knights, for example: Serat Anbiya, Serat Tapel Adam, Serat Asmarupi, and Serat Menak are the scripts illuminated beautifully and differently.

Generally, the pages illuminated are the first page, the page of beginning of any chapter or Pupuh, the last page from the chapter or the last script, and the kolofon page consist of information out side the script, which placed in the beginning or in the last script. Illumination decorated one page or two pages faced each other.

Illumination on the Javanese script is one of the esthetical existent and considered as characteristic of specific Javanese tradition, because almost no script illuminated. Giving illumination possible related with the content or structure of the script. In this case, illumination is the realization or the respect of the important or sacred script that consist of advices or examples for Muslim's life.

Illumination used to beatify the script sheet and the part can not be separated from the evolution of the Javanese script. Because of the beauty, the Javanese script tradition considered as the most growth aesthetic tradition for along time by Ann Kumar and McGlynn (1996: xx).

C. The Form and Meaning of Java's Script Illumination in Islamic Era

Basically, the illumination consists of the whole ornaments on the script's sheet, including the ornament of the script's cover. But, according to Ann Kumar and McGlynn (1996: 188), illumination on the Javanese script entirely consists of five sets: (1) mark called Pepadan; (2) framing (frame) and gateway (textual gate) on the introduction and the last page of the script; (3) rubrication, that is signing by color or plating the word or title; (4) cursive calligraphy or beautiful writing; and (5) pictorial calligraphy of animal or ornament.

1. The ornament of mark (pepadan)



Illumination of Madyapada from several Javanese scripts.

The ornament of pepadan is the ornament as the mark, inside or outside the text. The ornament inside the text such as motive of flower, leafs, or geometries motive, as the pull stop, mark, short line, curve, and the text limit. There are two kind of specific mark on the text, that are a little pada and a big pada, that signed the beginning of the new pupuh or the next metrum or song, and in the beginning of first verse of the Pupuh. On the Mushaf Al-Qur'a, the text limit of verses generally is circle that has been numbered based on the series of the verses. The ornament of the mark outside the text usually is found in the Mushaf of Al-Qur'an. Generally, this ornament is placed beside the text or verses, in the form of circle, square, or rectangle, called by medallion. Medallion is decorated by flora motive or geometries to sign: the end of the juz, hizb, and ruku' (Syarif, 2003).

2. Framing/textual gateway

Framing or Wadana on Java script in Islamic era has different form. The framing form ornaments of the Java script in Islamic era are:

a. line ornament

This ornament is consist of the series of one line, double lines, three lines or more which is framing text in the script (quadruple-sorrounding), without the ornament.

b. The Frame ornament of repetition (wadana renggan)



Illumination in the form of renggan on the Mushaf of Al-Qur'an from Surakarta kingdom copied in the 1797-1798.

Wadana renggan always made couple placed in the side of verso and recto (two pages faced each other, contained flora motive, geometries, human, animal, and colored and laid (prada) by gold). Generally, frame arranged from several layer, from the inside to the outside part. On the up, down, left side and right side of the frame have the ornament of half circle usually called by the medallion or crown. This form used mostly on the Java script in Islamic era, especially in the Mushaf of Al-Qur'an.

c. The Frame ornament of temple or gate (wadana gapuran)



Illumination of wadana gapuran on the Babad sultan script or Mangkunegaran from Solo.

Wadana gapuran also made a couple on the pages faced each other, but sometime it figured only on one side or made in the side of recto and verso. This frame ornament is almost same with the building, gate, tower, or in the form of temple. This form can be found on the script from Surakarta or Yogyakarta.

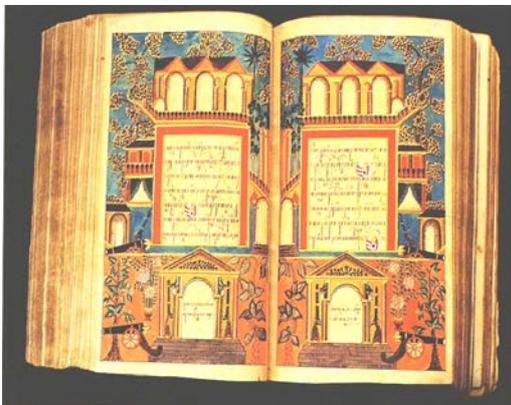
d. The frame ornament of garden miniature



Illumination of the script of Serat Anbiya collected by Museum Sonobudoyo Yogyakarta that copied by Ki Ahmad Ngali in 1844.

This frame ornament is almost same with garden miniature which is consist of hedge and gate, and trees. That illumination reminds us to painting miniature of Middle East or Persia, which generally showed garden, or building, or the activity surrounding the palace.

e. The frame ornament of Europe building motive



Illumination of building motive on the script of Serat Anbiya copied by Ki Ahmad Ngali in 1844, Museum Sonobudoyo collection

The ornament of this frame is the Europe building motive, such as illumination on the script Serat Anbiyah from Yogyakarta or Musem Sonobudoyo collection, and the script Serat Menak Lare Museum Rekso Pustoko Kraton Mangkunegaran Surakarta collection, written in the early of XIX century (Kumar dan McGlynn, 1996: Mulya, 2001; dan Syarif, 2003).

3. The ornament on the title or the text

The ornament also is in part of the texts for instance: title, text pieces, end text, etc. title or the beginning of the chapter decorated by various forms, by different motives. In the end of the text or script sometime also decorated by flowers as the sign of the ending and closing script.

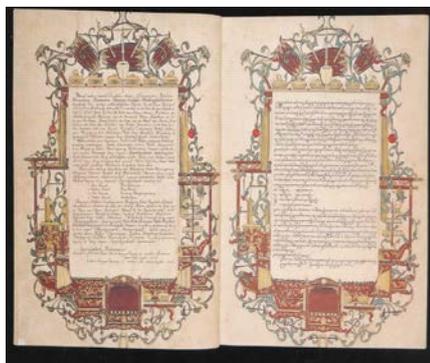
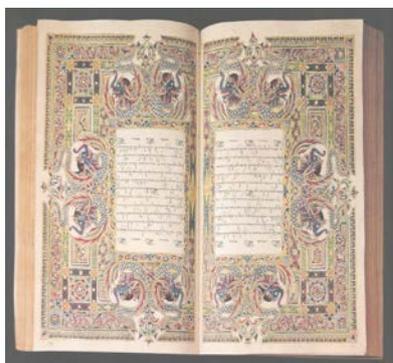
4. Calligraphy ornament

The using of calligraphy ornament, cursive calligraphy or pictorial calligraphy, found as a sign of sentences, which arranged by mark. This kind of calligraphy used to appropriate letter or alphabet used for text.

The structure of illumination on the java script in the Islamic era indicated a strong influence of the building motive, the building style of Java in Islamic era (temple, gate, Java mansion veranda, etc), or Europe building motive. Those building inspired to the form of illumination on the Java script in Islamic era, especially the script from Yogyakarta. This case associate with the setting or translating process of the script that done surrounding palace, therefore, the palace's elements influence the illumination.

Generally, the motives of Java script illumination in Islamic era are variable, such as:

- a. The flora motives consist of various leafs and flowers, stems, spiraling upward of plants, or creeping plant, and shoot motive.
- b. Geometris motive, such as: tumpal, belah ketupat, meander, swastika, spiral, circle or curve.
- c. Creature motive, such as: human, fauna motive (dog, dragon, etc).
- d. Imagery motive, such as giant motive, sometime with two dragon or dogs, identified as Kala Makara like in the temple building. The using of this motive is the influence of pre-Islam ornament to the Java script in Islamic area.
- e. Building motive, like: house, temple, tower, etc.
- f. Equipment motive, like ship equipment (bow ship and oar), war equipment motive, and Gamelan music equipment motive (Syarif, 2003).



Right: illumination on the Java script Serat Arjunawijaya of Yogyakarta palace collection contained a flora motive, geometries motive, and creature motive or imagery motive. Right: Wadana on the Java script Pakem Wirama copied in Yogyakarta 1932 at national library of Indonesia collection, which consists of gamelan music equipment motive.

In the Javanese script of Islamic era, the most important motive used is flora and geometries motive that found in the traditional Javanese house, carving, batik etc. This indicates, although the illumination is the art from Islam, but the motive used in illumination of Javanese script in Islamic era is the motive that comes from the original various java ornaments. According with Faruqi & Faruqi (1992: 405), that the motive used in any or different area that influenced by ethnic, and the condition of the area.

The appearance of dominant flora motive is natural and understandable. It related with the natural environment rich of kinds of plants, and spread evenly in any where. In any area have one kind of plant live healthy, and this is the specific characteristic in any area. Riches of these various plants become an inspiration of the script ornament, and it is known and gone on for along time before arrival of Islam.

Flora motive are from various traditional art, presented in illumination in the form of stillation. Stillation intended in order the form of motive more appropriate with the object and illumination function. By stillation, the forms of motive of illumination not become the natural forms, but the ornamental and decorative forms; it means they have characteristics of the ornament.

From the quality form or the level motive of stillation, there are differences forms of motive among the various illuminations. Like a difference illumination from Yogyakarta, flora motive distilled becoming beautiful and soft ornamental form. While on the various illumination of Surakarta, the motive appeared more natural and realistic.

The motive in single form or the pattern contained motives, arranged repetitive and linked or plait together become a suite symmetric motive. Moreover, from the arrangement, the technique used to arrange motive of illumination such as: (1) repetition of the same object produced suite motive symmetrically; (2) repetition by using two differences motives arranged stripe; (3) repetition motive by changing the position of motive by reflection and rotation; (4) combination of several techniques above.

The motive appeared in the form of stillation or abstraction and arranged repetitively and combined by geometries motive becomes good combination motive continuously. That combinations decorate the whole surface of illumination, like in the side or frame, crown (up), and medallion, encased and decorated the scrip appropriately and beautifully.

The colors often used in illumination are colors with the low intensity such as: dark red, black, and yellow or dark brown. The other colors like: orange, blue light, brown light, purple, green, and yellow, use to a little stage. Those colors refer to Javanese color conception, often used on wayang, batik, or ornament of architecture. The colored part is the motive and basic or background, coloring as the poster appearance. Gold considered as transcendent color also use in the certain part of the script, for example as an ornament body or frame. Sometime, illumination dominated by gold. It was considered as a transcendental symbol of god greatness.

Illumination makes the script more beautiful. But, it does not mean the text difficult to read, caused it is appropriated with the arrangement of the text. This indicates that the illumination is based on the basic design of illumination, for instance: harmony, compatible, and matching among the beauty and readable. The beauty of illumination is the description of the java art development at the time of the script was made. It is also the reflection of people knowledge write and decorated the script, or indicated the creativity and insight of religion and aesthetic principle.

The illumination of the Javanese script in Islamic era has a function and sacred meaning. This related with the function of Islamic art in java, as stated by Faruqi and Faruqi (1991: 40) that the ornament of Islamic art does not appear as work in order to emerge more beatify or just as supporting thing without meaning, but it is present to add a sacred function.

Illumination on the script has function: (1) to beautify the form of script; (2) illumination is the aesthetic effort and can be viewed as the charity realization or religious service, dzikir , praying, and thank god expression of Muslim in Java, especially the scripter; (3) becoming the script has more high values, becoming honor, and has sacred values.

Of course, illumination is not only the ornament to beautify script, but it possible has the more important role. Illumination consists of the ornament or various ornament assumed has a meaning related with the content of the script, and as the mirror of Muslim moral value in Java. Illumination has symbolic values related with the life view or philosophy of the people. Gustami said (2008: 4)

that the ornament has symbolic meaning related with the view or philosophy of life from the people created it, as well as a certain expectation of the people.

D. Illumination As Local Wisdom

Illumination as the aesthetic expression is the synthetic form of Islamic art and the Java art tradition. It means that the illumination on the Javanese script in Islamic era is the combination between pre-Islam Javanese culture and Islamic culture. It happens caused the Islamic attitude tolerance appeared. The existence of Islamic tolerance to the Javanese culture that developed based on the need, caused the elements of the culture of Java such as decoration art that not contradict with the Islamic precept or values still lived on and defended.

Although, the illumination is the art of Islam from the outside, it does not mean the forms of illumination adopted entirely by the people or Muslim in Java, especially by script translator or illuminator. The absorption was executed by selection and modification. The ability and creativity of Muslim in java in developing the illumination art shown from the forms of illumination on the Javanese script in Islamic era and the various ornament used is the forms and various ornament that was in Java for along time. Illumination has been modified and appropriated with the elements of the art if decoration in Java. Modification and adaptation has been executed by the Muslim Java, especially script translator and illuminator, can be categorized as a local genius or a local wisdom phenomena.

Therefore, the illumination on the Javanese script in Islamic era can be called as the people of Javanese expression. As Javanese culture product, illumination on the Javanese script in Islamic era, from the form, motive, function, or the meaning, influenced by local wisdom. According to Sedyawati (2007: 317), local wisdom is not only in the form of culture norms and values, but also the whole ideas, including technology, health service, and aesthetic.

Writing or translation tradition of Javanese script from the Islamic era has stopped caused the changing of the age. Those scripts have broken away from its heir at this time, or the development has stopped caused drastic change on the art patronage. Palace or kingdom, according to Claire Holt (1966: 387), is not the center of art anymore for the best artist, except at the certain level of traditional environment. Nevertheless, the Javanese script in Islamic era and its illumination is the culture heritage classified as the tradition literature. Illumination on the Javanese script in Islamic era is one of work of art that has high value, and has symbolic values related with the view and philosophy of life of Javanese people. Illumination on the Javanese script in Islamic era is a culture description of Java at the time.

Illumination need to be studied to explore the special quality of Javanese script as one of the Javanese culture heritage, which assumed as classic, and to be the basic or the frame of the script writing tradition before XX century. Study of illumination can be considered as the effort of searching historical track of Javanese people in the past which is rich of high cultural and spiritual value, and useful for the development of the art interest in Indonesia today.

The art of illumination on the Javanese script which is rich of various ornaments can be an inspiration source for the artist in creating works tends to the art in the past and today (Holt, 1966: 388). A creation of art came from the art tradition will strengthen the national prestigious and enrichment various arts in Indonesia.

E. Conclusion

As a closing can be concluded that illumination covers the whole ornament on the script pages, including: mark (pepadan), framing (frame), and gateway (textual gate), rubrication (signing by color), and calligraphy. The motive of Javanese script illumination in Islamic era are the flora motive, geometries motive, creature motive, building motive, equipment motive, and imagery

motive. Illumination is not only the ornament to beautify the script, but also has sacred function and meaning. Illumination on the script useful: (1) to beautify the form of script; (2) illumination is the esthetical effort and can be viewed as the realization of charity or religious service, dzikir, praying, and thank god expression of the Muslim, especially from the scripiter; (3) making the script has high values, greatness, and sacred.

Illumination on the Javanese script in Islamic era is the expression of Javanese people—it shown from the form, motive, function, and special meaning influenced by local wisdom. The Javanese script in Islamic era, including its illumination, is the culture heritage classified as tradition literature. The illumination on the Javanese script in Islamic era is a cultural description of Java at the time. Today, illumination needs to be studied to explore the special quality of the script as one of the Javanese cultural heritage.

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