

WHERE HISTORY MEETS PILGRIMAGE The Graves of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Maqassari and Prince Dipanagara in Madura

George Quinn

The Australian National University, Canberra

Abstract: This paper focuses on two pilgrimage sites in eastern Madura, the supposed graves of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Maqassari and Prince Dipanagara. It contrasts the scholarly history of these two figures with the stories that have grown up around them in eastern Madura. The Madurese stories of the two figures have shown remarkable resilience in the face of radically different stories that draw their authority from modern scholarship and Indonesian nationalism. The “true” burial places of the two figures are in the city of Makassar, but their “alternative” graves in Madura are sites of vibrant stories that give expression to local history, local story-telling conventions, local nationalist aspirations and the authority of Islam. The vitality of the alternative graves with their alternative origin stories raises several interesting questions about the connection between sites of religious importance and the construction of local identity and history.

Keywords: Pilgrimage, local history, authority of Islam, nationalist credentials.

Introduction: The Multiple Burial Places of Sheikh Yusuf and Prince Dipanagara

Sheikh Yusuf al-Maqassari (1627 – 1699) and Prince Dipanagara (1785 – 1855) occupy honoured places in the annals of Indonesian Islam. They are also revered in the mythic scaffolding of Indonesian nationalism. Although they lived long before the idea of “Indonesia” was conceived they are both official National Heroes (*Pahlawan Nasional*) of the Republic of Indonesia. Today Prince Dipanagara lies buried in a modest street side cemetery in the northern quarter of

central Makassar, while Sheikh Yusuf rests in a picturesque mausoleum at Sungguminasa in the southern suburbs of the same city.¹ The two burial places are busy centres of pilgrimage, visited by tens of thousands of fervent pilgrims – almost all of them Muslims – every year.

But a number of people believe that Dipanagara and Yusuf lie in other graves – their “true” resting places. Just outside the north wall of the Asta Tinggi royal burial ground on the outskirts of Sumenep in eastern Madura lies what many believe to be the true grave of Prince Dipanagara. Some fifteen kilometres away on Poteran Island to the south east of Sumenep lies the grave of one “Sayyid Yusuf”, a site thought by many to be the true grave of Sheikh Yusuf al-Maqassari.² The existence of these alternative graves, with their alternative origin stories, raises several interesting questions about the connection between sites of religious importance and the construction of local identity and history.

Yusuf Al-Maqassari and Dipanagara in Scholarly History

The life stories of Sheikh Yusuf al-Maqassari and Prince Dipanagara are among the most reliably documented of Java’s pre-twentieth century Islamic figures, though there are still many gaps and mysteries in their biographies. Sheikh Yusuf was born in 1627 – some accounts say 1626 – into the nobility of the newly Islamised state of Gowa centred on Lakiung, Makassar, in south Sulawesi.³ After initial

¹ The GPS coordinates for Sheikh Yusuf’s mausoleum are: 5°11’18.49”S 119°26’43.72”E. Dipanagara’s grave is at: 5°7’36.90”S 119°24’53.70”E. Both sites are clearly visible on Google Earth.

² The GPS coordinates for Dipanagara’s Madurese tomb are: 6°59’45.87”S 113°50’37.56”E, and Sheikh Yusuf’s Madurese grave is located at: 7°03’55.35”S 113°56’31.87”E. The roof of Dipanagara’s burial chamber is clearly visible on Google Earth. Yusuf’s grave is hidden under trees, but the nearby reception pavilion and the small parking area for visitors are both visible.

³ The short account of Sheikh Yusuf’s life that follows is based mostly on Azyumardi Azra and Martin van Bruinessen. See Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformation in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern ‘Ulama’ in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Sydney: Asian Studies Association of Australia in association with Allen & Unwin and the University of Hawaii Press, 2004), pp. 184-185; Martin van Bruinessen, “The tariqa Khalwatiyya in South Celebes,” in Harry A. Poeze and Pim Schoorl (eds.), *Excursions in Celebes. Een bundel bijdragen bij het afscheid van J. Noorduyin* (Leiden: KITLV, 1991), pp. 251-269. Azra and Lukmanul Hakim Darusman give extended lists of scholarly studies on the life of Sheikh Yusuf. See Azra, *The Origins of*

religious studies in his homeland, he left to study abroad at the age of 19, going first to Banten then to Aceh and later to Gujarat in India. He went on to pursue religious studies in Yemen, the Haramayn (Mecca and Medina), Damascus and possibly Istanbul. His interests were broad, but he concentrated on *shfi* mysticism (*tashammuf*). He attained expertise and leadership status in the Qadiriya, Naqshabandiya, Khalwatiya, Shattariya, Rifa'iya and Ba'alawiya *shfi* brotherhoods (*thriqah*). Through his writings and his pupils, and (in some instances) through his personal presence, he was later instrumental in propagating these movements in the islands of Southeast Asia.

Around 1672 (but possibly in 1664) he returned to Java⁴ after 28 (possibly 20) years of study and teaching abroad. He settled in the bustling trade centre of Banten where he married into the royal family, became the city's chief judge (*qadi*) and ultimately took command of one faction in Banten's army. He was drawn into the intrigues of the Bantenese palace. These flared into war in 1682. Siding with his long-time friend and father-in-law, the aging *Sultan Ageng*, Yusuf found himself in conflict with *Sultan Ageng's* son and pretender to Banten's throne, *Sultan Haji*. The latter formed an alliance with the Dutch of nearby Batavia who, seeing an opportunity to exploit division in their Bantenese rivals, eagerly intervened. In 1683 Dutch troops routed and captured *Sultan Ageng*. Banten, while remaining nominally independent, fell under the stifling overlordship of the Christian foreigners.

Sheikh Yusuf retreated into the interior of West Java to conduct a short but vicious rearguard campaign against the infidel enemy. In the course of the campaign he forged alliances with Muslim leaders in the hinterland, reputedly including the influential Islamist opponent of Dutch hegemony, Sheikh Abdul Muhyi, the famous "*hadji carang*" of Dutch reports. Using trickery Dutch forces managed to capture him at the end of 1683, though there are conflicting reports about the exact

Islamic Reformism, 184-185; Lukmanul Hakim Darusman, "Jihad in Two Faces of Shari'ah: Sufism and Islamic Jurisprudence (Fiqh) and the Revival of Islamic Movements in the Malay World" (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia, 2008), pp. 243-245.

⁴ Local tradition in South Sulawesi records that he returned first to Makassar but became fed up with the dissolute ways of local Muslims and moved to Banten. This tradition may well be true but there is little reliable documentary evidence to support it.

nature of the “trick”. According to Azyumardi Azra,⁵ the Dutch captured Sheikh Yusuf’s daughter. They came to his hiding place with the captive and offered to pardon him if he surrendered. Yusuf agreed to this but the promise was not honoured and the following year he was exiled to Dutch territories in Ceylon (Srilanka).

While in Ceylon he devoted himself to writing religious texts that poured from his pen in fluent, correct Arabic. They were disseminated across the Islamic world by Muslim pilgrims from the islands of Southeast Asia stopping off in Ceylon on their way to and from Mecca. Alarmed at Yusuf’s continuing influence, in 1694 Dutch authorities moved him to their colony at the Cape of Good Hope where he died in 1699.⁶ In 1705, after requests to the Dutch by the ruler of Gowa, Sheikh Yusuf’s remains were returned to Sulawesi.⁷ Today his tomb is easily the most important site of Islamic pilgrimage in Sulawesi.

Prince Dipanagara was born in 1785 into the aristocracy of the Sultanate of Yogyakarta⁸, a state that had been established just 30 years before when the remnants of Mataram were chopped into the jigsaw mosaic that constituted the states of Surakarta and Yogyakarta.⁹ The death of Yogyakarta’s able founder, Hamengkubuwana I, in 1792 triggered turmoil in the court that was to last, in one form or another, for 40 years.

⁵ Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism*, p. 98.

⁶ Today South African Muslims – especially the so-called Cape Malays – venerate him as the founder of their community and his shrine in Cape Town is a major place of local pilgrimage. But it is by no means certain that his body lies in South Africa, although many local people believe it does.

⁷ According to some, only the sheikh’s finger was returned to Sulawesi. See Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism*, p. 103.

⁸ This short account of Dipanagara’s life is drawn mostly from Carey as well as from Ricklefs and Sagimun. See Peter Carey, *The Power of Prophecy: Prince Dipanagara and the end of an old order in Java, 1785-1855* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2007); M.C. Ricklefs, “Dipanagara’s Early Inspirational Experience,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal Land en Volkenkunde*, vol. 130 no. 2-3 (1974): pp. 227-258; M.C. Ricklefs, *Mystic Synthesis in Java: A History of Islamization from the Fourteenth to the early Nineteenth Centuries* (Norwalk: Signature Books, EastBridge, 2006); M.D. Sagimun, *Pahlawan Diponegoro Berdjjuang: Bara Api Kemerdekaan Nan Tak Kundjung Padam* (Jakarta: Departemen P. P. dan K, 1960)

⁹ The Treaty of Giyanti (1755) brought into existence the states of Surakarta and Yogyakarta. A third state, the Mangkunagaran principality, was added in 1757 with the Treaty of Salatiga.

At the age of around twenty Dipanagara withdrew from the intrigues and impiety of court life to undertake religious studies and meditative asceticism. Like many young nobles of the time he studied in *pesantren* schools, visited mosques, and meditated at sacred sites, most of them located in the region between the city of Yogyakarta and the south coast of Java. In later years he recorded some of these experiences in an autobiography written in Javanese verse, a text known as the *Babad Dipanagara*. Very likely massaged by the prince to provide a retrospective rationale for the events of his turbulent life, the *Babad Dipanagara* describes how the prince studied Islamic texts and communed with figures from Java's pantheon of spirit guardians. The *Babad Dipanagara* suggests that Dipanagara was influenced by the idea of a Caliphate that emerge in the Ottoman Empire under the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid (ruled 1774-1789) and by Islamic notions of messianism. When the Java War broke out in 1825, Dipanagara saw his struggle against the Dutch as an Islamic "holy war" (*prang sabil*). He often appeared in the garb of a Middle-Eastern warrior wearing a turban and flowing white robes. He adopted elaborate titles and an Arabic name that reflected his view of himself as a leader dedicated to the purging of injustice from Java and the restoration of a purer, more authoritative form of Islam. He built much of his campaign around the remarkably widespread support he received from rural *kyai*, *ulama* and *santri*.

In March 1830 Dipanagara came to Magelang for what he thought were "negotiations" with the Dutch on resolution of the conflict. There, in violation of diplomatic practice and in violation of undertakings that had been made to him, he was arrested.¹⁰ He was removed to exile in Manado and was later shifted to a prison in Makassar where he died in 1855. Today he lies buried in a modest street side cemetery in the northern quarter of central Makassar. His grave is an important place of pilgrimage, not only for those who venerate him as a defender of Islam but also for those who see him in more secular terms as an early fighter for freedom from colonial domination.

¹⁰ Peter Carey gives a nuanced and detailed account of Dipanagara's arrest. He suggests that Dipanagara may have been aware of his impending arrest. See Carey, *The Power of Prophecy*, pp. 677-699. But the prevailing view in Indonesia today is that Diponegoro was the victim of an almost unbelievably dishonourable act of perfidy on the part of the Dutch. See for example Sagimun, *Pablawan Diponegoro Berdjung*, Ch. 10.

The Story Behind Sheikh Yusuf's "Real" Grave in Madura

At his "other" grave on Poteran Island Sheikh Yusuf is known as *Sayyid* Yusuf. *Sayyid* is a title borne by Arab descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. The account of the grave's origin¹¹ focusses on Sultan Abdurrahman of Sumenep – an historical figure who reigned from 1811 to 1854. The story goes that the Sultan was about to leave for Bali to preach Islam. It was evening when he left the Sumenep palace and he had to spend the night at the nearby harbour of Kalianget. About 12 midnight he saw a bright bar of light rising into the sky from the middle of the forest on the island that lies a short distance across the water from Kalianget. The Sultan felt sure that there must be a very special person at the source of the light. The following day, after the midday *ṣubḥ* prayer, he left his ship and made his way to the place where he had seen the light the previous night. There he found a grave. He uttered a greeting: *Al-salam `alaykum* (Peace be upon you) and an answer came back *Wa`alaykum al-salam* (And peace be upon you too). But, there was no-one in sight. The sultan wanted to know who had answered him so he undertook a "request prayer", asking who it was who had emitted the light and replied to his greeting. As he sat cross-legged in prayer a *sukum* leaf engraved with letters fell into his lap. On the leaf was written the answer to his request, the name *Hadha Mawlana Sayyid Yusuf bin `Ali bin `Abd Allah al-Hāsani* Sultan Abdurrahman stuck his staff into the earth. A *nangger* tree later grew there that today looms over the site on the north side of the grave.

He then took leave of *Sayyid* Yusuf, asking permission to continue his journey to Bali, expressing the hope that his journey would be blessed by the Lord, and that he would return safely. He boarded his

¹¹ Related to me by a member of the custodial staff during a visit I made to the site on March 18, 2001. The story is very similar to that given in Jappie and also closely similar to the story that visitors to the site can buy on a sheet of paper titled *Riwayat Singkat Kuburan Sayyid Yusuf* (*Sayyid* Yusuf's Grave: Its Story in Brief). This latter "official" account is endorsed by the Head of the custodial staff at the Asta Tinggi royal burial ground. Evidently the two sites are jointly administered. See Saarah Jappie, *Makam Syekh Yusuf di Madura: Sejarah Lisan dan Persepsi Masyarakat Talango*. (Malang: Australian Consortium for In-Country Indonesian Studies (ACICIS)/ Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, 2006), pp. 43-44. Downloadable from: http://www.acicis.murdoch.edu.au/hi/field_topics/saarahjappie.pdf

ship and set sail. But the ship refused to leave the harbour... it kept turning in circles. So it had to berth again, and in commemoration of this incident the sultan bestowed the name Poteran on the island (*poter* means “to turn”, “to spin”, “to turn back” in Madurese). After he had thus renamed the place the ship was able to sail to Bali without further problems.

Before leaving he had vowed that if he returned safely he would build a *cungkep* roof (locally called a *pendopo*) over Sayyid Yusuf's grave. The voyage was successful and he returned safely. In fulfilment of his vow he built a small house over the grave, open at the front with a tiled roof. But the following morning he was astonished to find that the saint's grave had moved out from inside the newly built structure and was now lying adjacent to it in the open. It appeared that Sayyid Yusuf did not want his grave to be roofed.

Today the grave is known as the *Asta Sayyid Yusuf* (*asta* is a Madurese term meaning “royal tomb”). It is simple in appearance: an oblong, tiled pedestal open to the sky with headstones swathed in white cloth at each end, an iron-pike fence around it, and beyond the fence a narrow tiled yard bounded by a low perimeter wall. Against one inner side of this wall stands a tall cupboard stuffed with religious books. Outside the wall lies another more spacious tiled area also bounded by a square perimeter wall. A gnarled tree writhes above the gravesite with a tall straight *nangger* tree nearby. Outside the outer perimeter wall to the east stands a small brick and plaster structure with a tiled roof, open at the front – the “*pendopo*” that Sayyid Yusuf declined to occupy.

Visitors can access the site from the city of Sumenep about 12 kilometres away. Take a mini-bus to the harbour of Kalianget and from the harbour compound take a ferry across the 350 metres of water to the small town of Talango on Poteran Island. From the dock in Talango you can take a pedicab (*becak*) or walk to the *Asta Sayyid Yusuf* which is less than one kilometre away. If you are walking, go about 200 metres straight up the main street from the dock and turn right at a sign pointing the way to the *Asta Sayyid Yusuf*. Walk another 500 metres along this road until you reach a turn-off to the right that leads 100 metres down a side road to the site. Visitors report to the site office near the entry point, entering their name and details in a visitors book and making a cash donation.

There is some dispute about who precisely is buried in the Asta Sayyid Yusuf, indeed whether anyone is buried there at all.¹² For most local people and most pilgrims there is little doubt that the occupant of the grave is the great scholar of Islam Sheikh Yusuf al-Maqassari, though few can give a clear account of how he came to be buried on Poteran Island and few would claim that he actually lived and worked in Madura. An inscription that greets visits at the entrance to the *asta* complex reads “The tomb of Sayyid Yusuf, a propagator of Islam who came from Mecca with the name Sayyid Yusuf and died in the 15th century.”¹³ This sums up the view that Sayyid Yusuf was an Arab and a descendant of the Prophet who travelled from his Middle-Eastern home by way of Palembang and Surabaya to initiate the propagation of Islam on Madura long before Sheikh Yusuf al-Maqassari was born. But a *manaqib* story – a story relating miraculous deeds of a holy person – that is read out during the *haul* commemoration of Sayyid Yusuf’s death asserts that he was born in 1784 and died in 1836,¹⁴ long after the lifetime of Sheikh Yusuf. Another view is that the *asta* is one of several burial sites of Sheikh Yusuf, while some say that Sayyid Yusuf and Sheikh Yusuf are different people altogether who happen to have the same name.

Yet another view holds that the *asta* is not a true grave with corporeal remains in it at all, but a commemorative site (*patilasan*) imbued with charismatic power thanks to a visit there by Sheikh Yusuf. At a glance it is plausible that Sheikh Yusuf might once have passed through Kalianget or Talango. In the 17th century the tiny harbour might well have been an initial stopping point for boats crossing the Java Sea from Makassar on their way to Surabaya and places further west, a crossing Yusuf must have made.

The Story Behind Prince Dipanagara’s “Real” Grave in Madura

The tradition that Dipanagara stayed for a time in Sumenep seems to be an old one. The Madurese-language *Babad Songenep* – a complex

¹² Saarah Jappie’s fine short study sets out in some detail, and compares, the various strands of story and the interpretations put upon them. See Jappie, *Makam Syekh Yusuf di Madura*.

¹³ *Asta Sayyid Yusuf. Salah seorang penyebar agama Islam yang berasal dari Mekah bernama Sayyid Yusuf wafat abad ke-15*. The inscription is signed by the Bupati of Sumenep K.H. Moh. Ramdhan Siraj, SH and dated October 31, 2001.

¹⁴ Born the 12th of Jumad al-Thani in 1198H, died the 15th of Rabi’ al-Akhir in 1252H.

of traditional histories about the rulers of eastern Madura – makes a brief reference to it in a version written by Raden Werdisastra in 1914. According to this version of the *babad*, Sultan Abdurrahman (known as Panembahan Adipati Natakusuma II in his youth, and after his accession to the throne, known by the royal title Sultan Pakunataningrat I) was an ally of Dipanagara during the Java War. The sultan succeeded in bringing Dipanagara to Sumenep after his arrest by the Dutch. There the former rebel leader isolated himself and meditated at the graves of holy men. Because of this the Dutch Governor-General had him shifted to Manado in 1830.¹⁵

Another Dipanagara story appears in a photocopied “history book” written by the Head of the Asta Tinggi royal burial ground Abdul Rasyid in 1984. Again, Sultan Aburrahman is the real hero. In this account the Sultan was asked by the Dutch colonial government to arrest Dipanagara. The Sultan agreed to do this because he wanted to marry Dipanagara to one of his daughters. Sultan Abdurrahman met with Dipanagara’s mother and explained to her what he planned to do.¹⁶ She gave the plan her blessing and bestowed her shoulder sash (*selendang*) on the Sultan. She told the Sultan that when he saw a white deer in the forest, that deer would be Prince Dipanagara. Sultan Aburrahman succeeded in capturing Prince Dipanagara using the sash. The prince was taken to Sumenep where he was kept in the residence of Prince Ami in the Kepanjin quarter of the city.¹⁷ Some relics of Dipanagara’s stay are today venerated at the Asta Tinggi burial ground, most notably a flat stone kept in the precincts of the burial ground that is thought to have been where Prince Dipanagara performed his prayers.¹⁸

¹⁵ Raden Werdisastra, *Babad Sumenep*, transl. R. Moh. Waji Sastranegara (Pasuruan: PT Garoeda Buana Indah, 1996), pp. 365-366.

¹⁶ The appearance of Dipanagara’s mother in this story seems to be a confused recollection of the fact that the prince’s *grandmother*, Ratu Kedhaton (died 1809) was of Madurese royal descent, see Carey, *The Power of Prophecy*, p. 70. (Dipanagara’s mother, Raden Ayu Mangkarawati, was most likely born at Tembayat near Yogyakarta.)

¹⁷ A local tradition related to me by a resident of Sumenep claims that Prince Ami (*Pangeran* Ami) married Dewi Ratih, a daughter of Prince Dipanagara, and their descendants still live in the vicinity.

¹⁸ R.B. Abdul Rasyid, *Diklat Sejarah Bindara Saeed* (Sumenep: Asta Tinggi Kuburan Raja-Raja di Sumenep, 1984), p. 8.

In March 2001 a different story was related to me by Moh. Toyib, a local resident related by marriage to descendants of the Sumenep aristocracy. As in the story of Sayyid Yusuf of Poteran Island and in other stories about Prince Dipanagara, it is Sultan Abdurrahman of Sumenep who is the real hero. According to the history that old people have handed down by word of mouth from former times, after Dipanagara was arrested in Magelang in 1830 he was held for a time in Batavia (today's Jakarta). Sultan Abdurrahman went to Batavia and asked the Dutch Governor-General of the time, Johannes van den Bosch, to remand Dipanagara in the Kalimo'ok Fort at Kalianget near Sumenep. This the Governor-General agreed to do. After Dipanagara arrived at Kalimo'ok Fort, a prisoner there by the name of Jiddin from the village of Giring in the sub-district of Manding was substituted for him. Jiddin was a thief of great cunning and he was able to pass himself off as the prince. Subsequently he was delivered into Dutch custody and was taken by them to Manado, and later interned in Makassar. Meanwhile the real Dipanagara lived out the remainder of his days in secret in Sumenep under the protection of Sultan Abdurrahman.

There is a more elaborate version of this story. To protect himself and confuse his Dutch adversaries during the Java War, Dipanagara divested himself of the title "Pangeran Dipanagara" and passed it on to one of his senior generals, a certain Turkijo Jokomatturi. Bearing this title, and assuming the identity of Dipanagara, Turkijo Jokomatturi together with Dipanagara's son Dipanagara Muda (more properly called Dipanagara Anom, Dipanagara The Younger) led the campaign against the Dutch to the west of Yogyakarta. Meanwhile Dipanagara himself adopted the title Assayid Abdul Hamid, and together with his spiritual teacher Syahrif Anshori, pursued his military campaign in the eastern half of Java, including in Madura.¹⁹

¹⁹ These events and titles appear to be garbled recollections of what actually happened. According to Carey Dipanagara conferred the title of "Pangeran Dipanagara" on his eldest son, and asked only to be addressed by his new title of "Pangeran Abdulhamit". See Carey, *The Power of Prophecy*, pp. 151-152. Units of Dipanagara's elite personal guard were given names in imitation of the elite janissary battalions of the Ottoman Turkish army. Among these was the Turkio brigade. In the Madurese story the name Turkio morphed into the name of a (fictional) individual officer, Turkijo Jokomatturi. Sheikh Abdul Ahmad bin Abdullah al-Ansari, also known as Ahmad Ansar Sharif, was one of Dipanagara's most trusted advisors until his capitulation to the Dutch in 1828, see Carey, *The Power of Prophecy*, p. 627 and p. 787.

When the Dutch arrested Dipanagara in 1830, they did not know that they had been double-crossed and their captive was in fact Turkijo Jokomatturi masquerading as Dipanagara. He was taken into custody together with Dipanagara's son, Dipanagara Anom. Sultan Abdurrahman of Sumenep went to Batavia and asked the Dutch Governor-General to send "Dipanagara" and Dipanagara Anom to Kalimo'ok Fort in Sumenep. Because Sultan Abdurrahman was well regarded by the Dutch his request was granted. At Kalimo'ok Fort a local prisoner, the thief Jiddin, was substituted for Dipanagara Anom. So it was Turkijo Jokomatturi and Jiddin who were later exiled to Manado then to Makassar, while the real Dipanagara and his son, plus a number of other followers including Syahrif Anshori (usually spelled Sharif Ansari) and Dipanagara's daughter Dewi Ratih, remained at large in Sumenep, sustained, protected and hidden by Sultan Abdurrahman.

An extraordinary narrative has grown up concerning Dipanagara's life in the years after his supposed escape to Madura, a narrative sometimes couched in pseudo-scholarly terms with references to inscriptions, texts, holy places and archeological remains, and buttressed with endorsements from high-ranking local officials. According to one eddy in this narrative current,²⁰ Dipanagara was escorted from Batavia to Sumenep by guards of Sultan Abdurrahman. He stayed in Sumenep from April to November 1830 and during this short time established eight elite squadrons of guardian troops, each called a "Ji", and each consisting of 12 men. The names of these "Ji" are still remembered today and the burial places of their commanders still venerated.

In November 1830, according to this account, Dipanegara shifted to Bangkalan in west Madura, the reputed place of origin of his mother's family. Again he set up several units of clandestine supporters, one of which was led by Mbah Jugo who today is venerated at a shrine high on the slopes of Mount Kawi near Malang, East Java. The prince himself secretly visited Mount Kawi to organise renewed resistance and was behind unrest in Kedu and Semarang in the years after 1830. He later returned to Sumenep where he settled in

²⁰ "Benarkah Makam Pangeran Diponegoro di Madura?" *Buana Minggu*, November 30, 1986; December 7, 1986; December 14, 1986.

the vicinity of the Asta Tinggi royal burial ground, turning it into a headquarters protected from Dutch scrutiny by its sanctified status.

In order to keep the long-running deception concealed from the Dutch, Dipanagara and his followers were all buried in simple graves outside the walls of the Asta Tinggi complex. Today the site can be reached by turning right before the entrance to Asta Tinggi and following a dirt track that takes the visitor around the outer wall to the rear side of the complex. Dipanagara's grave lies in a small compound bounded by a low wall just outside Asta Tinggi's high north wall, separated by no more than twenty metres from the impressive Italianate cupola inside Asta Tinggi that houses (among others) the grave of Sultan Abdurrahman. Dipanagara's grave is one of two small and very simple graves inside a recently built house-like structure with a lockable front door and pane glass windows.²¹ The grave is marked with an inscription in Arabic script that reads "Abdul Hamid Antawirya Amirul Mukminin Panatagama Sidamukti ing Tapa" (Abdul Hamid Antawirya, Prince of the Faithful, Regulator of Religion, Accomplished in Meditation).²² Sharif Ansari's grave is a just a few metres to the north of Dipanagara's small compound, while the prince's daughter "Dewi Ratih", who is said to have headed a clandestine corps of female fighters in Sumenep, lies under a *cungkep* roof outside the east wall of the Asta Tinggi complex.²³

Conclusion: Why Are The Madurese Stories Resilient?

The Madurese stories of Sheikh Yusuf and Prince Dipanagara have shown remarkable resilience in the face of radically different stories that draw their authority from modern scholarship and Indonesian nationalism. There seem to be four main factors that have sustained the Madurese stories and continue to lend them vitality: the imperatives of commerce, the pleasure of traditional story-telling, the

²¹ At the time of my most recent visit to Asta Tinggi in November 2003 I was not able to find out who is buried in the grave adjacent to Dipanagara's. Probably – so a bystander told me – it was one of the prince's wives.

²² Abdul Hamid (also Ngabdulkamit and other variations) was the name adopted by Dipanagara during the Java War, and Antawirya was the name bestowed on him when he reached adulthood in 1805.

²³ Visitors walk past Dewi Ratih's grave on the path leading to the rear of Asta Tinggi. The GPS coordinates of the site are 6°59'48.22"S 113°50'39.61"E. It too is visible on Google Earth.

desire to revitalise eastern Madura's nationalist credentials, and the authority of Islam as expressed in the practice of local pilgrimage.

The Commercial Imperative

Religious pilgrimage is a significant source of income in the economy of eastern Madura. Sayyid Yusuf's grave and the Asta Tinggi royal burial ground are the region's two top pilgrimage attractions. Reliable and comprehensive statistics on visitor numbers at the two sites are difficult to come by, but there is some rough-and-ready data that indicates how commercially significant they are. For example, the visitors' book in the office of the custodian (*juru kunci*) at Sayyid Yusuf's burial ground shows that in April 2005 a total of 10,229 pilgrims visited the site. Of this number around 70% came from outside Madura.²⁴ At Asta Tinggi, which on the whole is a less important destination for religiously motivated pilgrims, data from the East Java Archeological Service (*Dinas Purbakala Provinsi Jawa Timur*) indicates that in 2005 a total of 15,437 pilgrims visited the site over the year though probably only a minority of them would have visited Dipanagara's grave behind the rear wall.²⁵

Like all destinations in the domain of spiritual tourism (*wisata spiritual, wisata ziarah*) the viability of the two sites as commercial operations rests in part on the promotion of their exotic stories and the perception that they are places charged with unique and significant history.

²⁴Jappie, *Makam Syekh Yusuf di Madura*, pp. 34-35. April 2005 coincided with the Islamic month of Rabi' al-Awwal during which the Prophet's birthday (*manlid*) is celebrated, so visitor numbers would have been greater than in most other months. Nevertheless, these figures suggest that in 2005 the annual number of visitors to the grave of Sayyid Yusuf must have been close to 100,000. This is confirmed by my own examination of the visitors' book during a visit in March 2001 and the comment by Bapak Kolil, the custodian present on the day of my visit, who estimated that 200-300 people visit the site each day.

²⁵David Armstrong, *Tingkat Kunjungan Wisatawan ke Situs Purbakala di Jawa Timur: Data Selama 18 Tahun 1988 – 2005* (Malang: Program ACICIS, Fakultas Sosial dan Ilmu Politik, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, 2006), p. 45. Armstrong's figures indicate that visitor numbers at Asta Tinggi were much higher during the 1980s and 1990s, peaking at 183,195 in 1994. The Asian Financial Crisis of 1997 hit tourism and travel very hard throughout Indonesia and, because a majority of visitors to Asta tinggi come from Java, was probably responsible for the sharp decline in visitor numbers between 1997 and 2001. Nevertheless, since 2001 visitor numbers seem to be recovering strongly.

Traditional Story Telling

The stories are also pleurably traditional in character, imbued with popular tropes and motifs that have their roots deep in local conventions of narrative. There are magic weapons, messages from the dead, disguise, haunted forests, tricksters, powerful figures from distant lands, humans transformed into animals and many more. Interestingly, the accounts of Yusuf and Dipanagara that have emerged from scholarly research seem ready-made for transformation into this kind of fantastic “literature”. In particular, there is an astonishing pattern of similarity in the lives of the two men that is almost literary in character. Even the summaries of their lives given earlier in this paper – ultra-brief though they are – illustrate this dramatically. Both Yusuf and Dipanagara were born into the aristocracies of their respective states and received a strongly Islamic education. Both became disillusioned with the impiety of court life and left their respective courts to pursue study and meditative austerities in the domain of Islamic mysticism in the wider world.²⁶ Both later became embroiled in court intrigues – Yusuf in the court of Banten and Dipanagara in the court of Yogyakarta. Both led bloody military campaigns against the Dutch. Both relied on support from alliances with Muslim religious figures in rural areas. Both were arrested by the Dutch through acts of deception. Both were exiled, first to one place then, after some years, to another. While in exile both wrote works with religious and biographical elements in them. Both died in exile, and both are today buried in Makassar.

It may be that these similarities are no more than coincidental. It may also be that they are a more-or-less inevitable consequence of similar historical determinants (the collision of Islam, Dutch imperialism and local court culture), and that such life stories marked by similar events may be replicated in other historical figures from Indonesia’s past. Nevertheless the similarities lend an air of “literariness” to scholarly accounts of the two men’s lives. Perhaps it is the telling of history in terms of what appear to be repetitive, and

²⁶ There is a strong tradition that suggests Yusuf became embittered by the irreligious character of court life in Gowa after his return there from overseas. This led him to move to the more pious environment of Banten, see Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism*, p. 94.

therefore literary, formulae that in part has made it possible for more fantastic narrative fabrications to easily grow up around the two men.

The Nationalist Credentials of Eastern Madura

The Madurese stories are also “political” in character, intended, so it seems, to rehabilitate Sultan Abdurrahman and to draw eastern Madura more dramatically into the history of Indonesia’s anti-colonial struggle. The long reign of Sultan Abdurrahman (ruled 1811 to 1853) is still remembered as a period of peace and relative prosperity in Sumenep, but it was also a time of total acquiescence to Dutch colonial control. According to Pigeaud,²⁷ the 19th century rulers of the Madurese princely states “were staunch supporters of the Dutch administration”. A Madurese militia corps – the *Barisan Madura* – was formed in 1831 with the support of Sultan Abdurrahman and was incorporated into the Dutch East Indies army. Sultan Abdurrahman himself is reputed to have been an expert in languages and literature. He translated a stone inscription found in Bali into Malay for Stamford Raffles, the British Governor of Java from 1811 to 1815, for which service it is said he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Letters.²⁸ Around 1830 the Governor-General of the Netherlands East Indies is said to have inducted him into the Order of the Netherlands Lion (*Orde van de Nederlandse Leeuw*) with the rank of Commander.²⁹

But in the Madurese story of Prince Dipanagara’s exile, Sultan Abdurrahman plays a heroic role, giving sanctuary to Dipanagara and his followers, sponsoring anti-Dutch resistance and brazenly hoodwinking the colonial rulers. The story seems intended to repair the image of Sumenep in the post-independence era and to rehabilitate the reputation of Sumenep’s rulers, many of whose descendants continue to occupy prominent places in the social, religious, political and commercial life of eastern Madura.

The stories also revel in the deception that the Madurese inflict on the Dutch. The Dutch captured Yusuf and Dipanagara through trickery but the Madurese are able to have the last laugh – at least in

²⁷ Th.G.Th. Pigeaud, *Literature of Java, Volume I* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), 136.

²⁸ Abdurachman, *Sejarah Madura Selayang Pandang* (n.p.: n.p., 1971?), 39.

²⁹ See “Benarkah Makam Pangeran.” I have been unable to verify from official British or Dutch sources whether Abdurrahman actually received a doctoral degree or the royal Dutch honor.

popular story – and “pay back” their foreign tormentors with some tricks of their own. In the Dipanagara story, the compliance that marked Madurese society through most of the colonial era is reconstructed as a veneer behind which the rulers of Sumenep worked to undermine foreign rule. In the Sheikh Yusuf story, Sultan Abdurrahman is not a meek puppet of the Dutch but forms a spiritual alliance with an Islamic saint who fought fiercely against Dutch power. In this way eastern Madura is moved from the remote and quiescent margin of Indonesian nationalism towards the nationalist mainstream.

The Authority of Islam

Above all, perhaps, it is the authority of Islam and the practice of local pilgrimage that give credibility to the local stories. In religious discourse, particularly in the practice of pilgrimage, miraculous events are normal, religious faith is capable of validating even the most fantastic stories. To question the truth of events that are narrated in a religious context means often to question the truth – or at the very least, the social authority – of the religion itself, and this is difficult for many believers to do.

It is also religious faith that makes it possible for many Muslims to reconcile in their minds the scholarly, “factual” accounts of Yusuf and Dipanagara with the decidedly fantastic local accounts. How, for example, do pilgrims accept that Sheikh Yusuf Al-Maqassari and Prince Dipanagara may simultaneously lie in more than one grave? The notion of multiple gravesites is made credible by the Islamic concept of the *alam barzakh*, the realm where souls await judgement day. The *alam barzakh* is a timeless domain in which there is no distinction between past, present and future, and geographical distance has no meaning. In this realm the dead may reside simultaneously in different places, and they can be as much alive today as they were in the distant past.

So paradoxically, perhaps, it seems that the higher public profile of Islamic piety in Indonesia today may be strengthening the capacity of local traditions to survive, provided they manage to find a place within that piety. Although modernist Islam emphasises its “rational” character, it also makes possible the reconciliation of local and global, of factual and fantastic. In eastern Madura, Sheikh Yusuf Al-Maqassari and Prince Dipanagara stand at this interface. []

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