

Majapahit Heritage in the Cultural System of the Sultanate of Demak Bintara

Ali Romdhoni¹, Noorsafuan Bin Che Noh², Nur Cholid¹, Endah Sri Hartatik³, Wasino⁴

¹ Universitas Wahid Hasyim, ✉ ali_romdhoni@unwahas.ac.id

² Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin

³ Universitas Diponegoro

⁴ Universitas Negeri Semarang

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Abstract: Although historical researchers do not doubt the identity of the Demak Bintara Sultanate as an Islamic kingdom, there are old cultural systems that continue to be used by generations of the Demak Bintara Sultanate. This article aims to study the legacy of Majapahit in the cultural system of the Demak Bintara Sultanate. The research method used in this article is historical, examining secondary sources on the history of Majapahit and Demak Bintara. The results of this study indicate the existence of a social and political system that prevailed when Majapahit still existed until the establishment of Demak Bintara. Majapahit and Demak Bintara operated a mandala political system, a pattern of relationships among kingdoms in a region with a large kingdom as the center. In addition, the pattern of relations between the clergy and rulers in the Majapahit and Demak Bintara eras shows similarities. The rulers maintained good relations with the clergy to gain political support and power. On the other hand, the kings provided various facilities to the clergy for educational needs and religious rituals. Majapahit and Demak Bintara also had an orientation as maritime kingdoms. These findings imply that the cultural heritage identities of Majapahit and Demak Bintara that can be found today are not necessarily different. This refutes some people's assumption that the Demak Bintara generation always purified any cultural heritage of Majapahit.

Abstrak: Meskipun identitas Kesultanan Demak Bintara sebagai kerajaan Islam tidak diragukan oleh para peneliti sejarah, namun demikian terdapat sistem budaya lama yang terus digunakan oleh generasi Kesultanan Demak Bintara. Artikel ini bertujuan mengkaji warisan Majapahit dalam sistem budaya Kesultanan Demak Bintara. Metode penelitian yang digunakan dalam artikel ini adalah metode sejarah dengan mengkaji sumber-sumber sekunder tentang sejarah Majapahit dan Demak Bintara. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan adanya sistem sosial dan politik yang berlaku pada masa Majapahit masih eksis sampai berdirinya Demak Bintara. Majapahit dan Demak Bintara menjalankan sistem politik mandala, yaitu pola hubungan antar kerajaan di satu wilayah dengan satu kerajaan besar sebagai pusatnya. Selain itu, pola hubungan antara para agamawan dan penguasa di era Majapahit dan Demak Bintara menunjukkan kesamaan. Para penguasa menjaga hubungan baik dengan kaum agamawan untuk mendapatkan dukungan politik dan kekuasaan. Di sisi lain, para raja memberikan berbagai fasilitas kepada agamawan untuk kebutuhan pendidikan dan ritual agama. Majapahit dan Demak Bintara juga memiliki orientasi sebagai kerajaan maritim. Implikasi dari temuan ini adalah identitas warisan budaya Majapahit dan Demak Bintara yang masih bisa dijumpai hari ini tidak selalu berbeda. Hal ini membantah anggapan sebagian orang bahwa setiap budaya warisan Majapahit selalu dibersihkan oleh generasi Demak Bintara.

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INTRODUCTION

The history of the Majapahit Kingdom (1294-1527 AD) and the Demak Bintara Sultanate (1475-1588 AD) have been incorrectly portrayed as two kingdoms with no relationship to the cultural system. Majapahit and Demak Bintara indisputably have their own different and hostile cultural systems. Majapahit was a kingdom ruled by kings who adhered to Hinduism and Buddhism. They were even referred to as “pagan king” (Olthof, 1941, p. 29) (Al-Fadhal, 1994, p. 25). Meanwhile, the Demak Bintara Sultanate was led by a Muslim king (sultans) and had scholars (Walisongo) who were famous as royal advisors (Hendro *et al.*, 2021).

The periods of these two kingdoms coincided. It is a fact that some of the political actors of Majapahit and Demak Bintara lived in the same era. Majapahit figures of the late period interacted with Demak Bintara's political elite of the early period. Raden Fatah, the first king of Demak Bintara, was the son of Prabu Kertawijaya, the seventh king of Majapahit (Hasyim, 2021, p. 4). Sunan Ampel was a teacher for Javanese scholars and had an aunt who was married to the king of Majapahit at the time (Olthof, 1941, p. 20). The political and scientific system that was in place during the Majapahit period remained in effect until the establishment of Demak Bintara (Denys Lombard, 2005b, p. 28).

Demak Bintara (1475-1588 AD) was the inaugural Islamic kingdom in Java, the third Islamic kingdom in the archipelago, and the fourth Islamic kingdom in Southeast Asia (Slamet Muljana, 2007, p. 194). Raden Fatah was formally enthroned by Sunan Giri, with the presence of other saints, including Sunan Bonang, Sunan Kalijaga, Sunan Derajat, Sunan Gunung Jati, Sunan Muria, Sunan Kudus, Sunan Wisi, Sunan Manyuran, Sunan Ngudung, Sunan Melaya, and Sunan Kertayasa (Hutomo, 1984, p. 162).

During the inauguration of Raden Fatah as king, the Javanese saints convened at the Ampelgading or Ampeldenta Islamic boarding school, which Sunan Ampel led at the time of his demise. At this assembly, the saints deliberated on the optimal figure to assume the role of leader of the people or king of Java. They ultimately reached a consensus to select Raden Fatah as the leader of the growing Muslim community in Java (Al-Fadhal, 1994, p. 25).

As an Islamic kingdom, Demak Bintara exhibited a distinctive identity. The government of Demak Bintara was based on Islamic values, which served as the foundation for the kingdom's legal system (Anafah, 1970, p. 100). The creation of a

new social system was initiated by Demak Bintara, which entailed the implementation of Islamic values within the context of Javanese society (Romdhoni, 2021a, p. ix). The second king of Demak Bintara, Sultan Trenggana, enacted a legal code known as the Salokantara. This legislation integrated Hindu-Javanese and Islamic legal traditions (Denys Lombard, 2005a, p. 54). During the reign of the sultans of Demak Bintara, social activities were conducted in accordance with the guidelines of Islamic law (*fiqh*). These activities included marriages, commercial transactions, criminal justice, politics, and religious worship (Saksono, 1995, p. 127).

Subsequently, the sultans of Demak Bintara and the saints collaborated to establish communities and disseminate the tenets of Islam throughout Java and beyond. They disseminated the faith to other regions within the archipelago, including Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Ternate, and Hitu (Hendro *et al.*, 2021, p. 1). During the reign of Demak Bintara, Java Island became not only the center of Islamic royal government but also the centre of education and the spread of Islam in the archipelago. The students who studied Islam with the saints were not solely from Java; they also came from the islands of Maluku, Kalimantan, Nusa Tenggara, and Arabia. It is evident that Demak Bintara was an Islamic kingdom established by Raden Fatah with the assistance of religious scholars (*ulama*; *wali*) in Java.

Prior to his ascension to the throne of Demak Bintara, the youthful Raden Fatah and a cohort of fellow students, including Raden Ainul Yakin (Sunan Giri), Raden Makdum (Sunan Bonang), Raden Ibrahim (Sunan Derajat), Raden Jakfar Shadik (Sunan Kudus), and Raden Umar Said (Sunan Muria, also known as Sunan Kalijaga), engaged in the study of Islam under the tutelage of Sayid Rahmat (Sunan Ampel) at the Ampeldenta boarding school in Surabaya, Indonesia. The students of Sunan Ampel subsequently became renowned scholars who disseminated Islamic teachings throughout Java, collectively known as the Walisongo (Al-Fadhal, 1994, p. 25). In addition to the aforementioned individuals, Zainal Abidin, King of Ternate (1486-1500 AD), also engaged in religious studies with Sunan Giri (Prabu Satmata) on the island of Java (Irnawati Gani Arif, 2017, p. 5).

In addition to Sultan Zainal Abidin of Ternate, Pati Tuban of the Hitu Sultanate also studied Islam under Sunan Giri's guidance. Pati Tuban was the eldest son of Jamilu, who was among the most prominent figures in the Hitu Sultanate. Pati Tuban

and Zainal Abidin pursued their studies together in Java. Subsequently, these two sons of rulers from Maluku proceeded to disseminate the Islamic faith throughout the region. Subsequently, under the guidance of Zainal Abidin, the Ternate kingdom adopted an Islamic system of governance, with the monarch assuming the title of Sultan (Hidayat, 2022, p. 123).

Zainal Abidin's decision to transform the Ternate kingdom into a sultanate, subsequent to his study of Islam with the saints in Java, can be inferred from an analysis of the system of government employed by the Demak Bintara sultanate. Sultan Zainal Abidin engaged in studies with the saints in Java, who also provided counsel to Raden Fatah in the establishment of the sultanate of Demak Bintara. It is evident that the kingdom of Demak Bintara had established an Islamic system of governance, as had the kingdom of Ternate under the leadership of Sultan Zainal Abidin. The Islamic system of government employed by the Demak Bintara and Ternate realms can be attributed to the influence of the saints in Java.

While the historical community agrees that the Sultanate of Demak Bintara was an Islamic kingdom, it is notable that successive generations of the Sultanate of Demak Bintara utilized the old system of the Majapahit era. The Majapahit and Demak Bintara empires both employed a mandala political system, which can be defined as a power network structure centred on the main kingdom and encompassing the surrounding kingdoms (Trinanda, 2023, p. 119). In both the Majapahit and Demak Bintara eras, kings sought to establish cordial relations with religious leaders to secure their endorsement and legitimise their authority. This pattern had been observed as early as the Majapahit period (Coèdes, 1975, p. 145). Furthermore, both kingdoms demonstrated a profound interest in the maritime realm of the archipelago, encompassing shipping and trade (Mahamid, 2023, p. 33).

In the context of the relationship between the Sultanate of Demak Bintara and the Majapahit Kingdom, several studies have addressed the support provided by King Brawijaya V to his son, Raden Fatah. This support is understood to have played a role in the establishment of Demak Bintara in 1477 AD. Additionally, Raden Fatah's title, as recorded in historical sources, has been variously rendered as *Sultan Fatah Syeh Alam Akbar Panembahan Jimbun Abdul Rahman Sayyidin Panatagama Sirullah Khalifatullah Amiril Mukminin Hajjuddin Khamid Khan Abdul Suryo Alam* (Putri, 2021). The Majapahit and Demak Bintara empires

were oriented towards the maritime region in the archipelago (Mahamid, 2023); Demak Bintara succeeded Majapahit and marked the beginning of the Islamic era in Java (Romdhoni, 2021a); the role of the saints in establishing Demak Bintara and Islam as the basis of state and government is also a topic of interest (Hasyim, 2021).

Other research on Demak Bintara discusses the strategy employed by Demak Bintara in developing its territory. This involved the establishment of cooperative relationships with Islamic centers situated along the coast of Java Island. This resulted in the formation of a federation, or commonwealth, with Demak Bintara serving as its leader. Islam served as a unifying force among the Islamic kingdoms under the Sultanate of Demak Bintara (Pianto, 2017). The Ternate Sultanate government exhibited parallels in its system and structure to that of Demak Bintara, with a temporal proximity and a shared foundation in the teachings of saints in Java (Asmiah, 2023, p. 231).

This article focuses on the examination of the legacy of Majapahit within the cultural system of the Sultanate of Demak Bintara. As defined by Edward Burnett Tylor, the cultural system encompasses a range of elements, including knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and other abilities and habits acquired by humans as members of society (Tylor, 1871, p. 1). This research will collate evidence from a range of sources to examine the legacy of Majapahit in terms of social and political systems, the pattern of relations between religionists and rulers, and the orientation of Majapahit and Demak Bintara as a maritime state. The findings of this historical research have implications for contemporary Indonesian society. A group of people's long-term use of cultural and scientific systems demonstrates their utility and resilience. The essence of these systems is their benefit to the public, and their survival in society is contingent upon their ability to produce positive outcomes.

METHOD

This article employs the historical method with a qualitative approach, specifically the analysis of literary sources pertinent to the subject matter under investigation. The historical method is a research approach that progresses through five stages (Kuntowijoyo, 2013, p. 69; Wasino and Endah Sri Hartatik, 2020; Wasino and Hartatik, 2017:254-255). The initial step is to identify the topic, which in this case is the legacy of Majapahit in the cultural system of the Sultanate of Demak Bintara. Secondly, the research sources were collected, namely *the*

Babad Tanah Djawi, *Babad Demak Pesisiran*, *Babad Jaka Tingkir* or *Babad Pajang*, books and research reports (such as the writings of Graaf (1987) and Lombard (2005), as well as articles in journals that discuss the relationship between Majapahit and Demak Bintara. The third stage is verification, which entails assessing the credibility of the sources. The fourth stage is interpretation, which involves the analysis and synthesis of the sources. The final stage is the writing up of the research findings, which sets out to narrate the legacy of Majapahit in the cultural system of Demak Bintara.

The *Babad Tanah Djawi*, *Babad Demak Pesisiran*, and *Babad Pajang* are significant historical sources for the study of the archipelago's kingdoms, particularly those of Java. *Babad Tanah Djawi* provides a detailed account of the formation of the kingdoms of Java, including the rise of Majapahit and Demak Bintara. *Babad Tanah Djawi* offers a Javanese historical account from a Javanese traditional perspective, elucidating the relationship between Majapahit and Demak Bintara and reflecting the social, political, and cultural views of Javanese society during that period (Olthof, 1941; Meinsma, 1874).

Babad Demak Pesisiran provides a detailed account of the history of Demak Bintara, a coastal settlement in northern Java. In addition to its historical narrative, the text also addresses the transition of power from the Majapahit empire to Demak Bintara (Hutomo, 1984). *Babad Pajang* provides a detailed account of Demak Bintara's ascendancy to the former Majapahit elite in *Pajang*. This source describes a political force that sought to legitimate its power by associating itself with the heirs of Majapahit (Sastronaryatmo, 1981).

A review of existing literature reveals that books and research reports contribute to the historical analysis of Majapahit and Demak Bintara. This researcher employed a synthesis of these sources to produce a comprehensive study.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAJAPAHIT AND DEMAK BINTARA

The rule of Demak Bintara constituted an extension of the Majapahit period. The inaugural monarch of Demak Bintara was the son of Prabu Kertawijaya, the seventh king of Majapahit. Raden Fatah was able to ascend to the throne of Demak Bintara with the support of the Javanese saints. While Javanese history records that Raden Fatah ascended to the throne of Demak Bintara by battling his own parents, the author's analysis suggests that it is more likely that Raden Fatah did not engage in such a

conflict with his father. Kertawijaya reigned until 1451 AD, while the saints enthroned Raden Fatah as Sultan of Demak Bintara in 1475 AD. Consequently, at that juncture, the monarch of Majapahit was not Kertawijaya.

The causes of the decline and eventual collapse of the Majapahit empire can be attributed to a combination of internal conflicts and external pressures. The rise of Muslim merchants along the north coast of Java, driven by economic expansion through trade, also played a significant role. However, it is important to note that the collapse was not primarily due to an attack from Demak Bintara. Moreover, Raden Fatah and the senior Javanese wali, Sunan Ampel, had familial ties with the king of Majapahit, including both family relations and teacher-student relationships. Therefore, the Majapahit elite and the founders of Demak Bintara still maintained familial connections. This study identified three legacies of the cultural system that prevailed in the Majapahit era and continued until the establishment of Demak Bintara. The initial legacy is that Demak Bintara perpetuated the mandala system, which Majapahit also employed in the execution of its power politics. The second legacy pertains to the relationship between the monarch and the spiritual leaders. The third legacy is the vision of a maritime kingdom.

The Sultanate of Demak Bintara (1475-1554 AD) constituted a continuation of the Majapahit Kingdom (1294-1527 AD) in the archipelago (Romdhoni, 2021a, p. 101). Raden Fatah, the inaugural monarch of Demak Bintara, was the son of Prabu Kertawijaya, the seventh king of Majapahit (1447-1451 AD) (Hasyim, 2021, p. 4). The Javanese saints inaugurated Raden Fatah as king of Demak Bintara (Walisongo). Sunan Ampel, the most senior Javanese wali, was a relative of the king of Majapahit (Olthof, 1941, p. 20).

However, Olthof's version of *Babad Tanah Djawi* (Olthof, 1941, p. 29) presents a narrative in which Raden Fatah ascends to the throne of Demak Bintara by defying his own parents. Additionally, *Babad Demak Pesisiran* chronicles the conflict between the Demak Bintara army and the Majapahit forces (Hutomo, 1984, p. 28). In contrast, Meinsma's version of *Serat Babad Tanah Jawi* does not mention any direct conflict between Raden Fatah and the Majapahit king (Meinsma, 1874, p. 29). Similarly, *Babad Jaka Tingkir* or *Babad Pajang*, translated by Moelyono Sastronaryatmo (1981), does not narrate the hostility between Raden Fatah and the king of Majapahit. Conversely, the formidable Majapahit monarch counselled his progeny to

endorse Raden Fatah as the monarch of Java (Sastronaryatmo, 1981, p. 17).

As documented in *Babad Tanah Djawi* (1941), Raden Fatah spearheaded an armed campaign against the forces of Majapahit. Raden Fatah's troops were ultimately victorious against the Majapahit Kingdom. Subsequently, Raden Fatah returned to Demak Bintara. In Demak Bintara, Sunan Ampel bestowed upon Raden Fatah the title of king, thereby establishing him as the successor to the Majapahit Kingdom. However, prior to Raden Fatah's inauguration as king of Demak Bintara, Sunan Giri would assume the role of interim king, thereby creating a temporal distance between the Majapahit government and the Sultanate of Demak Bintara. Sunan Giri served as king for a period of forty days. Thereafter, Raden Fatah was inaugurated as king of Demak Bintara with the title *Senopati Jimbun Abdurrahman Panembahan Palembang Sayidin Panatagama*. Ki Wonopolo was appointed as a patih with the title Patih Mangkurat (Olthof, 1941, p. 30).

Babad Demak Pesisiran indicates that Raden Fatah was enthroned as king following the death of Sunan Ampel. At that time, the saints were present in Ampelgading to pay their respects to the deceased Sunan Ampel, namely Sunan Bonang, Sunan Kalijaga, Sunan Derajat, Sunan Gunung Jati, Sunan Muria, Sunan Kudus, Sunan Wisi, Sunan Manyuran, Sunan Ngudung, Sunan Melaya, and Sunan Kertayasa. Sunan Giri initiated the selection process for a suitable candidate to become the king of Java, a figure who would lead the Muslim community in Java. The assembled saints at Ampelgading unanimously agreed to choose Raden Fatah as the new Muslim king (Hutomo, 1984, p. 162).

Meinsma's version of *Serat Babad Tanah Jawi* (Meinsma, 1874, p. 29) and *Babad Pajang* (Sastronaryatmo, 1981, p. 17) does not state any dispute between Raden Fatah and the King of Majapahit, in contrast to Olthof's *Babad Tanah Djawi* (Olthof, 1941, p. 29) and *Babad Demak Pesisiran* (Hutomo, 1984, p. 28). Nevertheless, all four versions of this Javanese historical source elucidate that Sunan Giri held a significant role, namely that of the leader of the saints subsequent to Sunan Ampel.

Sunan Giri was a charismatic individual who commanded a great deal of respect. In addition to his role as a religious leader, he also served as a political leader (king) in the traditional sense (Denys Lombard, 2005a, p. 43). Sunan Giri's authority is evidenced by his role in the inauguration ceremony of Raden Fatah as king of the Sultanate of Demak

Bintara. Sunan Giri was the saint who presided over the sacred ceremony, which was observed by other saints.

In light of the aforementioned paragraphs, it seems reasonable to conclude that Raden Fatah would not have gone against his own father. Even if there was a dispute between Majapahit and Demak Bintara, it was certainly not during the time Raden Fatah's father was king. Raden Fatah's father, Prabu Kertawijaya, held the title of king of Majapahit until 1451 AD. Meanwhile, Raden Fatah was enthroned as Sultan of Demak Bintara by the saints in 1475 AD. The decline of the Majapahit kingdom is dated to have occurred between 1513 and 1528, and it is unlikely that an attack from Demak Bintara was the primary cause. The decline of the Majapahit capital was attributable to internal strife. It occurred concurrently with the economic expansion of Java's northern coast, facilitated by Muslim merchants Field's commercial activities (Coedès, 1975, p. 242).

In regard to the relationship between Demak Bintara and Majapahit, there is evidence that Raden Fatah and the senior Javanese saint Sunan Ampel had familial ties to the king of Majapahit. These connections enabled them to establish cordial relations. Sunan Ampel (Sayid Rahmat), Prabu Kertawijaya, and Raden Fatah were related to each other (Olthof, 1941, p. 20). Thus, all three had a positive relationship between Raden Fatah, the walisongo, and Prabu Kertawijaya, encompassing both familial and pedagogical aspects.

The prominent saints or scholars in the era of the Demak Bintara Sultanate were students of Sunan Ampel, including Raden Fatah. For the saints in Java, Sunan Ampel served not only as an instructor in Islamic law (sharia) but also as a spiritual mentor. Sunan Ampel's most senior disciple and, concurrently, his deputy was Sunan Giri. As a result, Sunan Giri was held in high esteem by the other disciples of Sunan Ampel. Additionally, Sunan Giri presided over the ceremony of Raden Fatah's appointment as Sultan of Demak Bintara (Al-Fadhal, 1994, p. 27). Subsequently, the disciples of Sunan Ampel assumed the role of Islamic teachers. They subsequently became renowned figures and disseminated their teachings throughout the archipelago. Some of them assumed positions of authority, while others provided assistance to the Sultan of Demak in the administration of the government.

POLITICAL SYSTEM

By the 15th century, the Sultanate of Demak had become the most prominent social and political

Table 1. Raden Fatah's genealogy

No	Name	Title
1	Kertarajasa Jayawardhana (Raden Wijaya; Prabu Suruh)	King Majapahit I
2	Jayanegara (Prabu Anom; Kala Gemet); son of Wijaya	King Majapahit II
3	Tribuwanatunggadewi (Sri Brawijaya I); daughter of Wijaya, married to Sri Kertawardana.	King Majapahit III
4	Hayam Wuruk (Brawijaya II); son of Tribuwanatunggadewi	King Majapahit IV
5	Kusumawardhani (Brawijaya III), married by Wikramawardhana (Hayam Wuruk's nephew)	King Majapahit V
6	Rani Suhita (Brawijaya IV); daughter of Kusumawardhani, married to Hyang Parameswara had no descendants.	King Majapahit VI
7	Sri Kertawijaya (Raden Alit; Brawijaya V); son of Wikramawardhana by a concubine; father of Raden Fatah.	King Majapahit VII

Sources: *Babad Tanah Djawi*; *Babad Pajang*; Muljana (2007); Musthofa (nd)

entity in the archipelago. The political authority of Demak Bintara was acknowledged by the kingdoms situated in Kalimantan, Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, and the Maluku Islands. Sultan Fatah and Sultan Pati Yunus, the inaugural and second kings of the Demak Bintara Sultanate, played a pivotal role in confronting Portuguese colonialism in the Malay region. Sultan Trenggana, the third king of the Demak Sultanate, played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Banjar Kingdom (1526-1905 AD). Guided by the Walisongo, the Demak Bintara Kingdom facilitated the introduction of Islam to the people in Banjarmasin (South Kalimantan) and Kotawaringin (Central Kalimantan) (Rahmadi, 2020, p. 267).

The kingdoms in Kalimantan, Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, and the Maluku Islands acknowledged the political authority of Demak Bintara. The Sultanate of Demak Bintara played a pivotal role in establishing the Kingdoms of Banten and Cirebon.

In 1512 and 1521, troops from Demak Bintara engaged in combat with Portuguese forces in Malacca (Romdhoni, 2021b, p. 16). In 1527, troops from Demak destroyed the Portuguese fleet at Sunda Kelapa (Rokhman, Yuliana and Zulkarnain, 2016, p. 45).

In 1550, the King of Demak Bintara provided assistance to the King of Johor in their conflict with the Portuguese in Malacca. In 1564, Demak Bintara provided assistance to the third Sultan of Aceh, Alauddin Syah (r. 1537-1568 AD) in his campaign against the Portuguese in Malacca (Graaf, 1987, p. 43) (Wijaya, 2022, p. 222). In 1564 and 1568, it provided assistance to the Hitu people in their efforts to resist Portuguese colonization (Hidayat, 2022, p. 91). Furthermore, Demak Bintara provided assistance to the Sultanate of Ternate in the Maluku Islands. During the tenure of Sultan Trenggana, Demak Bintara provided assistance in the formation of the Banjar Kingdom (Rahmadi, 2020, p. 267). During this period, Java became the center of political power and the spread of Islam throughout the archipelago (Ngationo, 2018, p. 19).

In the context of the political system, the Demak Bintara Sultanate had implemented a *mandala* system to facilitate the functioning of its political apparatus. The *mandala* system represents a traditional political concept that originated in the kingdoms of Southeast Asia. The term "*mandala*" is derived from Sanskrit and signifies a circle or center. During the Hindu-Buddhist era in Southeast Asia, which spanned from the fifth to the fifteenth century, the *mandala* system constituted a pattern of power. The kings who ruled over these territories were primarily economic rulers. The *mandala* system served not only as an administrative instrument but also as a framework that encompassed a profound understanding of a region's cultural, social, and economic aspects (Trinanda, 2023, p. 119).

The term "*mandala* political system" describes a circular or network-shaped power structure. The center of power is surrounded by smaller areas that are in a hierarchical relationship with the center of power. The defining characteristics of the *mandala* political system include the following: firstly, the center of power is divided into two distinct sections, namely the center and the periphery. The primary kingdom exerts control over the surrounding minor kingdoms, ensuring their continued subordination to the center. Secondly, the influence of the central power is diminishing in regions that are more distant from it. Thirdly, the relationship between the centre and the periphery is subject to change at any given moment. In the

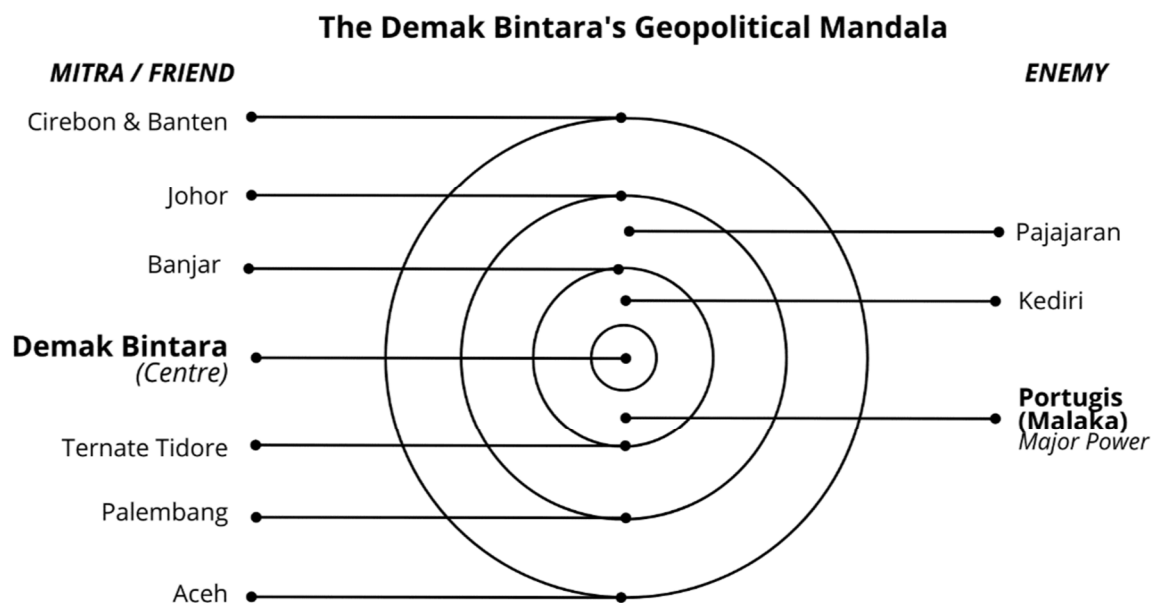


Figure 1. Demak Bintara and its surrounding kingdoms in a *mandala* political system

event of a decline in the power of the center, the subordinate regions could potentially engage in rebellion. Fourth, a network of cooperation and diplomatic relations exists between kingdoms, facilitating logistical assistance for war, marriage, and taxes. Geographical boundaries do not constrain Fifth, the power network in the mandala system. The mandala system has been observed in the political history of various kingdoms in Southeast Asia, including Srivijaya, Majapahit, Demak Bintara, Ayutthaya (Thailand), as well as in the kingdoms of Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos (Man *et al.*, 2022, p. 213).

According to Trinanda (2023), the *mandala* system represents a political strategy for territorial expansion, with the overarching objective of facilitating economic growth and the welfare of the people within the kingdom. A king engaged in warfare to expand his power. Defeated regions were then compelled to demonstrate loyalty or face destruction. The *mandala* system was also utilized to organize the government bureaucracy. Small kingdoms that had become subservient and autonomous were designated as mandalas. The highest king in the central government was referred to as a maharaja.

A similar phenomenon occurred during the Majapahit period. In 1350, Hayam Wuruk (Rajasanagara), the most prominent monarch of Majapahit, expanded his domain to encompass the southern reaches of the Malay Peninsula. Majapahit

proceeded to organize a series of smaller states, which were then subjected to its rule (Cœdès, 1975, p. 235). Additionally, the Kingdom of Singhasari employed the mandala political system and was the forerunner of Majapahit, as evidenced by the Pama-layu expedition led by King Kertanegara.

In the Srivijaya era, the mandala concept reflected the central power's influence on surrounding autonomous regions. This influence was exerted through various forms of relationships, including alliances, trade, and the granting of protection. In addition to their role as local leaders, the kings in the mandala region also functioned as economic controllers within their respective areas (Trinanda, 2023, p. 119) (Man *et al.*, 2022, p. 213). In the *mandala* system, the relationship between states is determined by the power dynamics of the victorious king. All countries within the mandala system must navigate similar challenges. The diplomatic policy of interstate relations is centered on the political and economic benefits of the most powerful king. In a mandala, friendly and hostile inter-kingdoms are integral to the political dynamics (Chowdhury, 2020, p. 47).

The preceding paragraphs illustrate that Demak Bintara maintained the mandala system that Majapahit also employed in its political maneuverings. Demak Bintara, Majapahit, Singhasari, and Airlangga were mandala centers of power, exerting influence over the surrounding kingdoms.

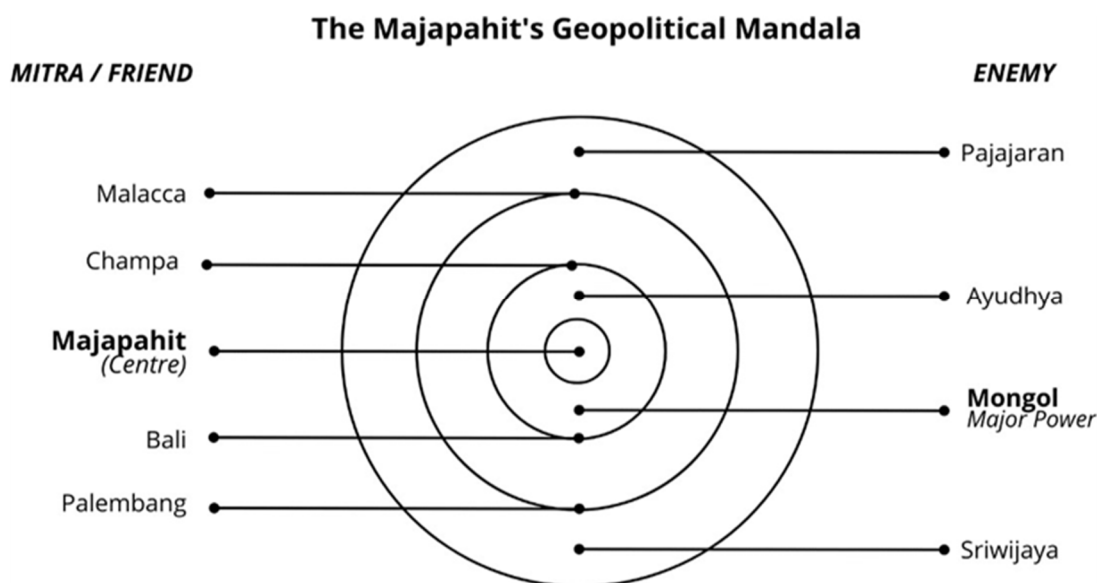


Figure 2. Majapahit and its surrounding kingdoms in a mandala political system

THE RELATIONSHIP OF KINGS AND SPIRITUAL LEADERS

By the end of the fifteenth century, the elite of the Sultanate of Demak Bintara had assumed control of the trade system along the northern coast of Java and Sumatra. However, the greatest legacy of the Sultanate of Demak Bintara was its role in the Islamization of the population on the northern coast of Java. This process was facilitated by the efforts of religious leaders, including Sunan Bonang, Sunan Giri, Sunan Kudus, and Sunan Gunungjati, who provided guidance and support to the king of Demak Bintara in this endeavor (Denys Lombard, 2005a, p. 54).

In the context of Islam, a wali is a person who has attained a certain level of spiritual elevation and has demonstrated unwavering devotion to the tenets of their religion. In addition to their profound knowledge of religion, a wali is endowed with insights into social and political matters. Moreover, they are bestowed with privileges that are not typically accessible to the general public (Romdhoni, 2021b, p. 87).

During the Islamic kingdom in Java, the sultanate of Demak Bintara, the saints held a significant role. They possessed two charismatic abilities. Firstly, they held a position of leadership within the political entities or monarchies. Secondly, they held a position of authority as religious leaders within the community (Abdul Chalik, 2016, p. 146). The saints occupied a prominent role, both within society and at the royal court. A king highly sought after the counsel and assistance of the saint

(Zamzami, 2018, p. 20). The role of a guardian in Demak Bintara was analogous to that of a Brahmin in the Majapahit period (Wahyudi, 2021, p. 202).

In the Majapahit era, the role of guardian was assumed by members of the Brahmin caste. A Brahmin was responsible for matters of religion and occupied the highest social rank in society during that period. The Brahmins were subordinate to the nobility, including knights, politicians, and the monarch. In order to run a government organization, a king would seek permission, guidance, and support from the Brahmins. As a result, the Brahmins were held in high regard by the kings. The rulers rewarded the Brahmins with territory to develop education and religion. A Brahmin would typically establish a religious educational institution and teach his students. This was already the case during the time of King Airlangga (Denys Lombard, 2005b, p. 28).

The saints of the Demak Bintara Sultanate were the principal figures in the dissemination of Islamic teachings. Sunan Bonang and Sunan Giri established religious centers, known as pesantren, which also served as centers of political activity. Earlier, Sunan Ampel also presided over Islamic teaching centers and maintained cordial relations with Majapahit. In both Demak Bintara and Majapahit, religious education centers served as a source of spiritual support for the state. The guardians themselves constituted a kind of legislative body responsible for appointing and supervising the government, which was vested with executive power by the king (Fahmi, 2022, p. 834).

Sunan Bonang was regarded as the preemi-

ment saint (Raja Pandita) within the pantheon of Islamic saints. Sunan Giri held the position of spiritual leader and was vested with the authority to appoint sultans. Raden Fatah was invested with this spiritual authority's title of Sultan of Demak Bintara (Sastronaryatmo, 1981, p. 9). The three figures constituted a unified entity within the governmental organization, which was oriented towards the dissemination of Islam throughout the archipelago (Denys Lombard, 2005b, p. 36). In light of the authority vested in Sunan Giri to appoint a king, as well as the position held by Sunan Bonang above that of Sunan Giri, it can be posited that Demak Bintara was a kingdom led by holy men or saints (Wahyudi, 2021, p. 209). In the governmental hierarchy of the Sultanate of Demak Bintara, the populace was expected to adhere to the directives issued by the monarch, who, in turn, was obliged to comply with the recommendations put forth by the guardians. The guru-disciple bond and the tenets of royal law constrained the king's fidelity to the guardians.

The Ternate Sultanate's leadership structure resembles that of Demak Bintara. In the political system of the Ternate Sultanate, the sultan occupies the highest position of power. Additionally, the sultan is Tubaddilur Rasul or Rasul's successor, who is responsible for leading the religious area. The Sultan of Ternate serves as Islam's high priest, head, and protector (Asmiah, 2023, p. 231).

The Kingdom of Ternate implemented an Islamic system of government, with the monarch bearing the title of sultan during the tenure of Zainal Abidin (Hidayat, 2022, p. 123). Zainal Abidin was a student of Sunan Giri (Irnawati Gani Arif, 2017, p. 5). The government system of the Ternate Kingdom was influenced by the Demak Bintara kingdom. Both received guidance from the saints in Java.

At this juncture, It can be concluded that the Demak Bintara Sultanate government was led by a Muslim king (sultan) who received guidance from the ulama (guardians). The sultan was the head of the government of the Islamic kingdom, while the scholars were responsible for educating the community by introducing Islamic religious values. The guardians facilitated the introduction of Islam to the community through the educational institution of the boarding school (Pondok Pesantren) (Saksono, 1995, p. 132).

During the reign of the Sultanate of Demak Bintara, Java Island became the epicenter of the dissemination of Islam throughout the archipelago (Ngationo, 2018, p. 19). Islam subsequently dissem-

inated from Java to Banjar, Sulawesi, and Maluku. Java Island became a destination for those seeking to learn more about Islam. It is evident that not only the indigenous populace of the archipelago but also individuals hailing from Arab countries sought guidance and instruction in Islam from the saints in Java. For example, there is the account of three individuals who journeyed from Arabia to engage in studies with Sunan Ampel, who is now venerated in Surabaya, Indonesia. The three men were Sayid Muhsin, Sayid Ahmad, and Khalifah Husain (Al-Fadhal, 1994, p. 86).

By the conclusion of the Majapahit Kingdom, the Ampeldenta Islamic boarding school, led by Sunan Ampel, had become the primary center for Islamic learning in the archipelago. The students of Sunan Ampel included Raden Paku, Sayid Qasim, Sayid Abdul Jalil, Sayid Amir Husain, Sayid Amir al-Haj, Raden Sa'id, Amir Hamzah, Raden Fatah, and Raden Husain. They engaged in the study of shari'a, thariqat, and hakikat under the guidance of Sunan Ampel (Al-Fadhal, 1994, p. 27).

During the period of the Demak Bintara Sultanate, the activities of the government and Islamic proselytization were conducted concurrently. The Sultans assumed the role of state leaders, while the llamas became the leaders of Islam. Every significant regional center, in terms of both government and religion, in the archipelago exhibited a mutually reinforcing relationship. The leaders of these areas were students of Sunan Ampel, who received their education at the Ampelgading Islamic boarding school (Musthofa, no date, p. 3). The spread of Islamic values occurred concurrently with the process of changing rulers. Following Raden Fatah's ascension to the throne of Demak Bintara to continue the Majapahit dynasty, Islam developed rapidly in Java and its surrounding regions.

The preceding paragraphs demonstrate that kings cultivated positive relationships with spiritual leaders during both the Demak Bintara and Majapahit eras. In the Majapahit era and earlier, a king required political support from spiritual leaders or Brahmins. During the Demak Bintara era, the saints were directly involved in the governance of the state. The process of spreading Islam and expanding the kingdom's territory was inextricably linked. This pattern of cordial relations between religious leaders and rulers is a legacy of Majapahit that endured into the Demak Bintara era.

MARITIME EMPIRE

Since the 7th century AD, the archipelago has been the site of diplomatic relations between neighbor-

ing countries and their respective kingdoms. As the epicenter of political and governmental affairs, the decisions made by the kings had a profound impact on the social, cultural, political, and economic spheres of the people. Srivijaya (670-1025 AD) was the inaugural maritime kingdom to engage in maritime trade, facilitating commercial relations with neighboring countries, including Arabia, China, Persia, and India (Mahamid, 2023). The Sriwijaya Kingdom was centered in Palembang, Sumatra, Indonesia, which controlled the maritime trade routes in the Malacca Strait, and became a center of Buddhist learning (Coedès, 1975, p. 84).

In the 13th century, the archipelago gave rise to Majapahit, which inherited the maritime traditions of Sriwijaya. The Majapahit empire, centered in Java, exerted control over maritime trade throughout the archipelago. Majapahit established trade relations and expanded its influence to the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra (modern-day Indonesia), Burma (Myanmar), Siam (Thailand), Champa (Vietnam), Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and India (Tedjowasono, 2019, p. 31). Majapahit was established by Wijaya in 1293 with the objective of regulating maritime trade, following the decline of trade activities in Sriwijaya. Majapahit sought to exert control over the Nusantara trade routes from the Java Sea as its center (Mahamid, 2023, p. 40).

Therefore, Majapahit was a maritime kingdom in the archipelago that was established subsequent to the era of Sriwijaya. In addition to exerting control over the majority of the archipelago, Majapahit also dominated trade networks extending to Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and the islands of Maluku. Majapahit established diplomatic relations with prominent maritime nations from beyond its immediate vicinity, including China and India (Wardhana, 2020, p. 373).

The Majapahit empire not only exerted control over the maritime trade route but also maintained the potential wealth of agrarian natural re-

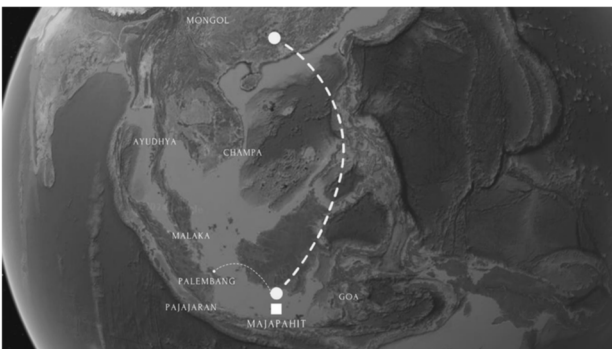


Figure 3. The influence of the Majapahit Kingdom.

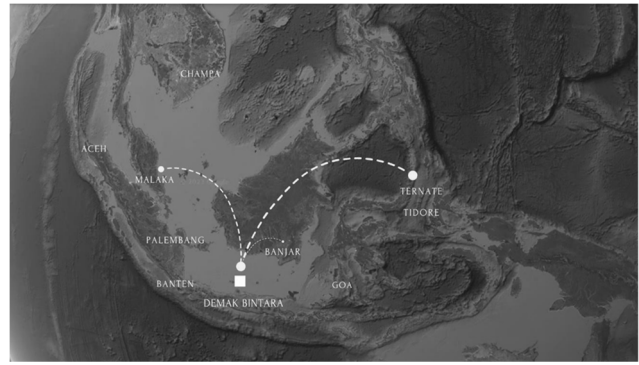


Figure 4. The influence of the power of the Sultanate of Demak Bintara.

sources, in the form of agricultural and plantation products. Rice, pepper, cloves, and nutmeg were among the most sought-after commodities exported by the Majapahit kingdom, particularly by the Chinese trading fleet. In lieu of these commodities, Chinese traders provided gold, silver, and copper. To attract international merchants and buyers, Majapahit regulated the circulation of goods and ensured the security of trade activities, imposing the death penalty for rebels on land and sea. In 1369, pirates from Sulu (Philippines) and China created chaos in the sea area. Majapahit subsequently laid siege to the southern Chinese sea area to stop the terror (Mahamid, 2023, p. 41).

In addition to maintaining a substantial maritime force to safeguard subordinate territories, the Majapahit empire also possessed a sophisticated naval weapons industry. This strategic advantage enabled Majapahit to not only serve as a lucrative trading hub but also to regulate and control the market effectively, ensuring a steady supply of highly sought-after trade commodities from external sources (Pradhani, 2018, p. 192).

In the 15th century, circa 1475 AD, the archipelago saw the rise of a maritime kingdom that inherited the legacy of Majapahit. Raden Fatah, a descendant of Majapahit King Brawijaya V, established the Sultanate of Demak Bintara. In addition to promoting Islamic teachings, Demak Bintara also engaged in maritime trade until the mid-16th century (Denys Lombard, 2005a, p. 54). Raden Fatah expanded his kingdom by constructing robust port cities, a strategy previously employed by Demak Bintara's two predecessors, Srivijaya and Majapahit. Prior to its establishment as a formidable Islamic kingdom, Demak Bintara had already secured control of several ports along the northern coast of Java, including Jepara, Tuban, and Gresik, which were under the influence of Muslim merchants. At that time, it was still under the rule of Majapahit (Mahamid, 2023, p. 33).

Demak Bintara can be considered Majapahit's heir to the maritime strategy. The port of Demak Bintara was strategically positioned for world shipping and trade, situated between the crossing paths of two other important ports in the archipelago. It was a requisite for vessels sailing from the port of Malacca to Maluku and vice versa to first pass or transit through Demak Bintara. Java Island was also a prominent producer of rice. The circulation of spices from the Moluccas and pepper from Lampung also passed through the port under the control of Demak Bintara. Until the port of Malacca was controlled by the Portuguese in 1511, it still relied on rice shipments from Java (H. J. De Graaf and Pigeaud, 2001, p. 89).

The preceding paragraphs demonstrate that Demak Bintara inherited the maritime vision of the Majapahit kingdom, which in turn had been shaped by the maritime traditions of the Srivijaya empire. The elite of Demak Bintara demonstrated a profound interest in the management of the archipelago's maritime potential. The inaugural maritime state to emerge in the archipelago was Sriwijaya. These maritime kingdoms were instrumental in the establishment of the Nusantara trade network with foreign countries, including Arabia, China, and India (Zuhdi, 2020, p. 131).

The political diplomacy and trade relations established by Sriwijaya, Majapahit, and Demak Bintara with various countries in Southeast Asia, including the Sultanate of Malacca (Malaysia), Ayutthaya (Thailand), Campa (Vietnam), the Chinese empire, and India, represent a significant achievement in the region's history. The distinctive character of the maritime kingdoms in the archipelago was their engagement in shipping and trading activities. The political and economic power of the maritime kingdoms was contingent upon their ability to navigate the maritime world and engage in a range of marine activities, including inter-island trade, shipping, and fisheries that drew upon the resources of the seabed. In a manner similar to that observed in the cases of Srivijaya, Majapahit, and Demak Bintara, these kingdoms were compelled to possess robust sea fleets and exert control over maritime trade routes and key ports. The necessity for a formidable sea fleet arose from the imperative to safeguard trade interests, uphold the security of sea lanes, and pursue territorial expansion (Pradhani, 2018, p. 192).

In addition, maritime kingdoms require the establishment of trade networks to stimulate the growth of ports engaged in international trade. Consequently, maritime kingdoms must be robust

or seek protection from more powerful states. Furthermore, it is prudent to cultivate cordial relations with neighboring countries. The inhabitants of maritime kingdoms are receptive to foreign cultures. They have long been accustomed to interacting with individuals from diverse regions and backgrounds, initially for commercial purposes. The three kingdoms above made significant contributions to Southeast Asia's maritime history, particularly in fostering connections between cultures and regions through trade and maritime activities.

It is a matter of historical record that there was in fact another maritime empire in the vicinity of our region, namely the Sultanate of Malacca on the Malay Peninsula. Malacca flourished as a maritime trade hub during the 15th and 16th centuries, becoming one of the most significant ports in Southeast Asia during that period. However, for certain reasons, the author has chosen to limit the scope of this research and exclude the Sultanate of Malacca from the present study. Despite this, the author is fully aware that the Sultanate of Malacca was the largest maritime empire of its time.

CONCLUSION

This article examines the legacy of Majapahit in the cultural system of the Sultanate of Demak Bintara. The study identified three legacies of the cultural system that prevailed in the Majapahit era and continued until Demak Bintara was established. The initial legacy, Demak Bintara, perpetuated the *mandala* system that had been employed by Majapahit in its pursuit of political authority. The *mandala* system represents a network structure of political power, with the main kingdom situated at its center and surrounding kingdoms positioned in a hierarchical relationship to it. The Demak Bintara, Majapahit, and Singhasari and Airlangga kingdoms were mandala centres of power that exerted influence over the surrounding kingdoms. The *mandala* system is evident in the political history of Southeast Asian kingdoms, including Srivijaya, Majapahit, Demak Bintara, Ayutthaya (Thailand), and the kingdoms of Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos.

The second legacy pertains to the relationship between kings and spiritual leaders. The kings of Majapahit and Demak Bintara fostered positive relations with spiritual leaders with the objective of legitimizing their authority. A king required political support from the Brahmin or Ulama class. During the Demak Bintara era, the saints were directly involved in the governance and supervision of the state. The expansion of the Islamic faith and the

expansion of the kingdom's territory were concurrent processes. This pattern of cordial relations between the king and spiritual leaders is a legacy of Majapahit that persists in the Demak Bintara era, even into the modern era.

In the era of the Majapahit government, the Brahmin was responsible for matters of religion and occupied the highest social class in society. In administering a government organization, a king sought the counsel, direction, and assistance of the Brahmins. The Brahmins were held in high regard by the kings and were rewarded with territory to develop education and religion. The Brahmins educated students through their educational institutions. This condition had already occurred during the time of King Airlangga. In the Demak Bintara era, the brahman position was assumed by the guardians, who were the leaders of the Islamic teaching center.

The third legacy is the vision of a maritime kingdom. Demak Bintara inherited Majapahit's maritime strategy. The elite of Demak Bintara devoted significant attention to the management of the archipelago's maritime potential, establishing strategic ports for international shipping and trade. The earliest kingdom to establish a maritime state in the archipelago was Srivijaya. Maritime kingdoms constructed the Nusantara trade network with foreign countries, including Arabia, China, and India.

The findings of these three studies suggest that the cultural heritage of Majapahit and Demak Bintara may not be as distinct as previously thought. This challenges some scholars' assumption that the Demak Bintara generation invariably cleanses any Majapahit cultural heritage due to differing beliefs. It is recommended that future research should focus on identifying the traces and heritage of Majapahit and Demak Bintara that exist in various regions across the archipelago.

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