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Songkabala in *al-'Urf* Perspective on Pinisi Vesselbuilding in Coastal Sulawesi

Mustaqim Pabbajah^{1*}, Abdul Hayyaqdhah Ashufah², Zehratul Eitriya³

¹Universitas Teknologi Yogyakarta, Indonesia. E-mail: mustaqim_pabbajah@uty.ac.id

²Université Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah, Morocco. E-mail: ashufah.abdulhayyaqdhah@usmba.ac.id

³Yayasan Pendidikan Khaerul Munif Makassar, Indonesia. E-mail: zehratileitriya@gmail.com

* Corresponding Author

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Abstract

Pinisi vessel are cherished local heritage found in South Sulawesi up to the present day. Therefore, this research provided a comprehensive portrayal of *songkabala* ritual and conducted an in-depth analysis in Bulukumba, Indonesia. In the broader sociological framework, the intricate interplay between the local Bulukumba culture and Islamic law was analyzed. To examine *songkabala* rituals, theories such as *al-'urf*, symbolic interactionism, and legal sociology were established. This method presented an understanding of qualitative research, using data sources gathered through systematic observation, insightful interviews, and meticulous documentation. Data analysis was conducted through the stages of selection, formatting, and conclusion. The results showed that *songkabala* was a ritual preserved for making pinisi vessels in Bulukumba tradition to ward off disasters faced when sailing. The ritual was performed with four stages, including *annakbang*, *kalabiseang annattara*, *appasili*, and *ammosi*. Based on *al-'urf* theory, *songkabala* activities could be accepted as a good tradition for Indonesian Muslim communities because they preserve good local traditions, and not violating fundamental principles in the doctrine of Islamic teachings. The research suggested the need to analyze local traditions with a broad religious perspective, preventing negative justifications and perversion.

Keywords: Songkabala; Pinisi Vessel; *al-'Urf*; Customary Law; Islamic Law.

Abstrak

Perahu pinisi merupakan warisan lokal yang masih dipertahankan produksinya di Sulawesi Selatan hingga saat ini. Penelitian ini memberikan gambaran yang komprehensif mengenai ritual *songkabala* dan melakukan analisis mendalam di Bulukumba, Indonesia. Dalam kerangka sosiologis yang lebih luas, interaksi yang rumit antara budaya lokal Bulukumba dan hukum Islam dianalisis. Untuk mengkaji ritual *songkabala*, teori-teori seperti *al-'urf*, interaksionisme simbolik, dan sosiologi hukum

digunakan. Metode ini menyajikan pemahaman tentang penelitian kualitatif, dengan menggunakan sumber data yang dikumpulkan melalui observasi sistematis, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi yang cermat. Analisis data dilakukan melalui tahapan seleksi, pemformatan, dan kesimpulan. Dalam penelitian ditemukan bahwa *songkabala* adalah ritual yang terus dilestarikan dalam pembuatan *pinisi* (kapal) hingga hari ini dalam tradisi Bulukumba. *Songkabala* bertujuan untuk menangkal bencana yang mungkin dihadapi ketika berlayar. Ritual *songkabala* dilakukan dengan empat tahap ritual, yaitu *annakbang*, *kalabiseang annattara*, *appasili*, dan *ammossi*. Berbasis pada teori *al-'urf*, aktivitas ritual *songkabala* dapat diterima sebagai tradisi yang baik bagi masyarakat muslim Indonesia, yaitu melestarikan tradisi lokal yang baik, dan tidak melanggar prinsip fundamental dalam doktrin ajaran Islam. Penelitian ini menyarankan perlunya menganalisis tradisi lokal dengan perspektif agama yang luas, untuk mencegah pembenaran negatif dan penyimpangan.

Kata kunci: Songkabala; Kapal Pinisi; al-'Urf; Hukum Adat; Hukum Islam.

Introduction

Pinisi vessel is a local wisdom considered the identity of the Bugis-Makassar tribe in the marine and shipping field (Rozaki, 2022), becoming a world heritage nationally recognized and internationally recorded as a local community copyright (Akhmad et al., 2020). This vessel was previously the 'connector' of trade, as well as political and cultural communication between the Bugis-Makassar ethnic group and other islands throughout the archipelago (Perdana & Buana, 2023). In this context, the ethnic group are commonly considered master sailors, reliable voyagers, and conquerors of the archipelago seas. Furthermore, Bulukumba is one of the coastal regions known as the birthplace of the master sailors in South Sulawesi (Akhmad et al., 2022). This area is identified as the *Butta Panrita Lopi*, the land of expert vessel builders (Ramadhani et al., 2018). On December 7, 2017, the innovation and creativity of the land led to the listing of pinisi as an intangible heritage by UNESCO, strengthening Indonesia identity as a maritime nation.

As a cultural artifact, pinisi is inseparable from the stories, tales, sagas, and traditions strengthening its existence (Amar et al., 2020). According to the *Lontarak I Babad La Lagaligo* manuscript, pinisi vessels were in existence since the 14th century AD (Asfar et al., 2021). This analysis stated that the vessel was initially established by the crown prince of the Luwu Kingdom (Sawerigading) from the strong and sturdy welengreng tree (God tree). The vessel is also a cultural manifestation of the local Bonto Bahari community knowledge in adapting to its environment (Kurniasari et al., 2013). Furthermore, the birth of fishermen understanding is characterized by the physical surrounding, due to its cultural production and accumulation through experience (Andrews et al., 2021). This understanding is constantly evaluated and reinvented via the features of the moving marine environment.

The previous reports on the establishment of pinisi are also inseparable from rituals and folklore related to spiritual power, showing a strong relationship between religion and

societal culture (Juhansar et al., 2021). Moreover, the Bugis-Makassar tradition recognizes the *songkabala* ritual, a series of ceremonies performed to release the pinisi ship into the sea (Pabbajah, 2020). This ceremony is quite lengthy due to its commencement the night before the release of the ship (Sabri, 2015). The community also initially conducts the *appasili'* rite that is more accurately considered the rejection of bala, namely expelling evil aura for sea safety (Irman, 2021). This is often accompanied by another Barazanji performance the following day, concluding with the *ammossi* procession where the customary leader designs a navel at the center of the boat keel (bottom part) (Sohrah et al., 2023). In this context, the navel is expected to express the launch of a pinisi vessel ready for release to sea. The release process is subsequently carried out traditionally, with hundreds of people dragging the vessel using a mine.

The study prioritizes an argument, where the acculturation of religion and local traditions remains progressive in the socio-religious practices of local communities. This shows that the establishment of petahun pinisi is full of religious and cultural values, as a product of local tradition. The establishment is also inseparable from the entry of Islam into Bugis-Makassar land, where dialogue and adaptation of native customary values and spirituality remain very strong. Since the adaptation process is known as the *al-'urf* theory, the coexistence of Islamic dialogue and adaptability with local values is allowed. Therefore, this study aimed to explain the present management level of the *songkabala* tradition practiced by coastal communities in Bulukumba. This explanatory analysis is conducted because the tradition is often generationally transmitted since the first generation of pinisi vessel builders.

Methods

A descriptive-qualitative approach was used to obtain valuable data, due to its consideration as a broad method, where the analyzed object was observed to acquire relevant information. This was because the approach often contained the present explanation of an object or group of people. Furthermore, Ara Village, Bontobahari District, Bulukumba Regency is the experimental location implemented, where a cultural method was conducted.

This method was often used to determine the connection of the field outcomes to the traditions of the local community. A literature and field study were also implemented for the acquisition of relevant information. This prioritized the usage of observation, interview, and documentation during the field analysis. The data obtained were subsequently processed and analyzed through three stages, namely reduction (selection), presentation, and conclusion.

Results and Discussion

Songkabala Ritual Process in Making Pinisi Vessels

In general, *songkabala* is a tradition carried out to reject bad luck, disasters, or disasters that will befall (Indawati et al., 2022). *Songkabala* has been known for a long time in Bugis culture. The belief in the importance of safety rituals has been a tradition passed down from generation to generation from ancestors in the land of Sulawesi. The ritual is familiarly known as *songkabala*. In the context of making a pinisi vessel, this traditional event is intended to ensure that the boat owner receives safety from God. The *songkabala* tradition is an integral part of the local cultural wealth that has been passed down from generation to generation as an ancient culture and belief that is believed to this day (Pabbajah, 2012). As a coastal community that carries out fishing activities in earning a living, mystical things are often associated with a disaster that occurs on the ship used to earn a living. Therefore, the purpose of performing a ritual is based on an attitude of high awareness, not just to obtain abundant sustenance from certain businesses, but also to prevent damage that is expected to befall humanity (Sohrah et al., 2023). Because of its extraordinary magical value, the rituals performed are regulated by certain rules and are formal, so they cannot be done hastily or carelessly. Because of this, some people believe that making sacrifices is important. On the other hand, there are people who believe that there are hidden symbols and meanings that must be discovered.

Pre-Ritual for Making a Pinisi Vessel

The following sequential stages were implemented in the production process of a pinisi vessel, each performing the rituals serving as the assurance of safety against malevolent forces:

a. *Annakbang Kalabiseang* (keel felling) ceremony

In the Konjo language, 'Lunas's felling' or '*annakbang kalabiseang*' was the cutting down of the trees matching specific standards for quality wood in the construction of pinisi vessels. This prioritized the customary need for *Panrita lopi* (Shipbuilders) to perform a ritualistic act before commencing the falling process, including the presentation of offerings to the tree. The keel (*kalabiseang*) was also a significant and primary component implemented in the vessel construction. These components were positioned and joined together with the boards to construct the boat hull during the installation process (Akhmad et al., 2021).

The keel-cutting ceremony was subsequently performed by initially selecting and determining auspicious dates, specifically the fifth and seventh days. In the Ara culture, the fifth and seventh days were considered *Naparilimai Dallena* and *Najalangi Dalle'na*, showing good fortune possession and constant favorable circumstances acquisition,

respectively. This proved that the determination of a favorable day enabled the preparation of the required ceremonial arrangements by the ship workers (*sawi*). From this description, the preparations included the acquisition of the essential items, namely an axe and a chicken, which served as offerings to the spiritual entity. The ritual also started with a prayer, accompanied by the act of positioning the axe in an upward orientation. This activity was repeated three times, with the constant presence of favorable fortune continuously symbolized. Based on the interview sessions with traditional leaders, the following outputs are obtained,

"In addition to being rooted in the beliefs of the Ara traditional community, the determination of auspicious dates for keel felling also considers the Islamic calendar, specifically focusing on the fifth and seventh days. For instance, either the fifth or seventh day of the specific month. However, keel felling was subsequently discontinued due to the unavailability of ironwood in the local vicinity. This shows that ironwood is sourced from Kalimantan, Papua, and Southeast Sulawesi, to continue the keel construction process."

The *Annakbang Kalabiseang* Ceremony was a ritualistic practice focusing on seeking permission from the Divine Being. This act was commonly conveyed through various forms, methods, and behaviors, accompanied by prayer recitations. The phrase, '*Pattimbonnako buttayya*', was not also characterized by a clear meaning or context in academic discourse, leading to the following question, "*Is the loss of direction a possibility?*" Furthermore, '*Batelamunnako*' prioritized a phrase or word requiring continuous Islamic faith, due to the belief that Allah was responsible for the provision of assistance and support. This prayer stated that the connection of the community to the natural environment led to relevant support and development, specifically through the soil and rain. The role of Lukmanul Hakim was also a focal point in facilitating the relevant growth process. From this context, the prayer absolutely focused on the acknowledgment of Allah divine authority and expressed gratitude for the harvest and implementation of His resources. In addition, the *panrita lopi* proceeded to observe the axe earlier placed in an upright orientation, whose balance showed the feasibility of commencing the felling process. This was inconsistent with the downward position of the instrument, which represented the absence of authorization from the sovereign entity governing the woodland (God) (Dewi, 2016). The following statements were provided regarding an interview with one of the *panrita lopi* elders (Punggawa), H. Muhammad Idris Daeng Sarika,

"The panrita lopi is showing a growing tendency to relinquish their traditional practices. This shift can be attributed to the escalating impact of Islam, as well as the reliance on imported timber from Kalimantan, Papua, and Southeast Sulawesi for constructing keels. One point that I would like to mention is that we have not conducted a keel-cutting ceremony due to the unavailability of ironwood in our local vicinity. This is because the ironwood required for construction has been sourced from regions such as Kalimantan, Papua, and Southeast Sulawesi" (Sarika, 2022)

The 93-year-old man also stated that the strong influence of Islam led to the abandonment of the keel felling ritual, as described in the following statement,

“The significance lies in the fact that our actions are now attributed to the divine being, Allah Ta'ala since the advent of the religion of salvation, Islam”. (Sarika, 2022)

Based on the interview sessions, the *annakbang kalabiseang* ceremony was stopped within the Ara community due to the unavailability of ironwood. This was because the essential wood was obtained from Kalimantan, Papua, and the Southeast. Therefore, the importance of prioritizing the interpretation and symbolism of auspicious dates should be significantly considered in keel felling, specifically the fifth and seventh days of every month.

b. *Annattara Kalabiseang* Ceremony (keel cutting)

The *annattara* ceremony was the initial thanksgiving ritual associated with vessel construction. According to Arif Saenong scholarly work on technology and culture, ‘*annattara*’ represented a specific trimming and flattening of the keel ends. This ritual process was carried out for the subsequent attachment of connectors at both the front and back sections, including a marriage sign, specifically a vessel keel composed of three blocks. From this context, the central block (*kalabiseang*) and the connecting beam represented a lady and a man, respectively. However, the exclusive implementation of a solitary block for keel construction was common for *panritas*. This showed that the keel and setting were metaphorically considered female and male figures, respectively. In the interview with Iwan, a 39-years old vessel builder, the following explanations are provided,

“The act of cutting the keel includes the provision of offerings in the form of delicious food. This is accompanied by the cutting of a pair of hen combs, specifically the female and male, which are then applied onto the keel beam. As a symbol in the construction of a ship, the incorporation of sweet food is also expected to imbue the vessel with positive attributes benefiting its owner. Similarly, the implementation of chicken blood wards off any potential misfortune during the shipbuilding process. In this case, the interpretation of chicken blood as a symbol of hope is associated with the belief that its use will prevent any future bloodshed on the vessel. Chicken blood is also a representative of purity and virginity notions.” (Iwan, 2022)

Based on Bugis-Makassar beliefs, the *annattara* ceremony was commonly performed on Wednesdays, which was considered the most auspicious day (Syamsidah et al., 2023). The ritual was also conducted during the sunrise and the simultaneous rise of the sea water, to strengthen the constant augmentation of auspiciousness and the enduring occurrence of fortuitous events. In addition, a 65-years old ship owner, H. Baso, was interviewed, providing the following explanations,

“During this ceremonial practice, the individual responsible for the vessel performs preliminary arrangements, prioritizing the procurement of specific items. These items include a duo of mature male and female chickens, Ambon bananas, sugar, coconut, assorted traditional pastries, and incense. The crew members of the vessel also engage in preparing the necessary equipment for future implementation, such as chisels,

hammers, drills, saws, and other similar implements. Regarding the initiation of the ceremonial procession, the *panrita* individuals assume a seated posture at the eastern-facing right extremity of the *kalabiseang* close to the vessel proprietor. The saws (laborers) were also in attendance, positioned behind the retainer, with the mustard candidates and the ship captain placed behind the vessel owner. (Baso, 2022)

All items were subsequently positioned in the anterior section of the *kalabiseang* during the assembly of the ceremonial equipment, including the *paddupaan* (incense). When the appropriate moment was determined, the commencement of the ceremony was initiated through the ignition of incense, a task entrusted to the retainer. In this case, the courtier proceeded to implement the chisel for smoking purposes with the commencement of the incense smoke ascent. The chisel was also positioned in a perpendicular pattern along the boundary line after the *kalabiseang*. This led to the recitation of incantations and the *basmalah* without any movement of the tongue. Furthermore, a solemn pledge was provided using three sacred sentences, namely a, i, and u, briefly focusing on the pronunciation of the letter "u". This was accompanied by striking the chisel with a hammer on multiple occasions and the wood chips of the carving activity were divided into two portions and extracted through the *panrita lopi*. From this context, one portion was allocated to the *sambalu*, with the *panrita* retained for personal use in the other half. In addition, the *panrita* placed the wood chips into their mouth, presumably for chilling purposes.

Panrita also proceeded to place the artwork within a receptacle containing a bottle of homemade ivory coconut oil, crafted by the vessel proprietor. This showed that the bottled coconut fruit was harvested from the tree, specifically through a position above the leaf midrib and confronting a specific direction. In this case, the apex of the *kalabiseang* was continuously cut with a saw until a fractured output was obtained after a previous chisel marking. Moreover, a cavity was established and represented the female reproductive organ. This was accompanied by the fabrication of a connecting beam having a similar size as the previously established aperture. The beam was subsequently attached to both ends of the keel and the bricks produced served as the male reproductive organs. Before establishing the connection, the *panrita* initiated the ceremonial process by placing the gold, steel, rice, and a small quantity of chicken feces enveloped within cotton into the keel. From this context, the substances possess symbolic representations similar to the maternal uterus. This showed that gold, iron, and rice were commonly associated with success, power, and prosperity, respectively. Chicken feces also possessed properties capable of counteracting the effects of black magic, specifically when a threat was posed to the ship captain. Additionally, the usage of cotton represented the ship owner aspiration for a constant wealth inflow.

Both sides of the connection formed to the desired shape were subsequently joined using *kalabiseang* when the materials were introduced into the pre-prepared hole. In this context, the connected keel was coated with *baruk* to prevent water ingress. The two superior extremities joined together were also coated with the blood obtained from the previously prepared rooster comb. This showed that the ceremonial practice culmination was represented by the courtier moistening the facial region with kettle water. Furthermore, the ship proprietor distributed monetary contributions to the servants, including alms and the adoption of handshakes as conveyance media. These processes were subsequently persistent, with bananas and confectioneries provided to all attendees. The selection of small portions from each food variety was also carried out by the courtier. These portions were commonly wrapped in banana leaves and ceremoniously placed beneath the keel of the ship, serving as an offering to the *bantilang*, a sacred site associated with shipbuilding. From the descriptions, the combination of three wooden beams should be essentially understood, accompanied by the significant consideration of two sottings representing the second pillar of Islam. These sottings were similarly relevant to the establishment of designated prayer hours.

Main-Ritual for Making Pinisi Vessels

a. *Appasili* Ceremony (eliminating negative things around)

In the Bugis-Makassar language, '*appasili*' was the elimination or purification of undesirable elements present in the surroundings, prioritizing both living and non-living entities. This ritual process was identified within the construction of pinisi vessels, for protection against potential reinforcements encountered on maritime journeys. The *appasili* procedure was also commonly conducted on the evening preceding the *ammossi* rite and was implemented to reduce the risk of ship owners being confronted by catastrophic events. Moreover, the ritual ceremony prioritized various traditional culinary offerings among an assortment of other confectioneries, such as layer cake, *gogoso*, *onde-onde*, *songkolo* (sticky rice), and *loka labbu* (long banana).

The event was subsequently scheduled on specific days regarding the customs observed by the Bugis-Makassar traditional community. This proved that the customary practice of *Appasili* frequently included the recitation of *barazanji*, preceded by a communal lunch unifying community from all segments of society. The ritual recitation was also performed on the vessel deck, with participants positioned in a confrontational arrangement. From the description, a retainer was specifically summoned to perform *songkabala*, with the solemn recitation of a sacred incantation directed toward a frying pan filled with water and a selection of unique leaves. These leaves were immersed and agitated in the incantation water (*songkabala*) contained within the pan. Furthermore, the

vessel body was moistened by distributing water through vigorous shaking with a collection of leaves, showing that the bundled foliage included *jasang-dinging*, *tahatinappasa*, and betel plants. Regarding the completion of the ritual, the attendees were provided with customary cuisine potentially prearranged.

According to H. Abdul Hamid (Hamid, 2022), a frequent performer of the *appasili* ceremony, the present execution of the ritual expressed a heightened Islamic essence. This proved that the prevalence of Islam among the *panrita lopi* community prioritized its significant effect. The Imam of the Miftahul Khaer Mosque also stated that the chair verse was recited seven times throughout the ceremony, with blessings invoked upon the Prophet. In addition, the water recited through a cluster of leaves was eliminated.

b. *Ammossi* Ritual (central gift)

The *ammossi* ceremony was the culminating phase within the ritualistic process of constructing a pinisi vessel. In the Indonesian language, '*ammossi*' represented the anatomical structure known as the navel, the final developed component during the construction process. The implementation of *ammossi* also included the preparation of different ritual equipment, such as a 2-meter-long white fabric, a pair of mature hens, Ambon bananas, coconuts, brown sugar, a cauldron, a gold ring, a sarong, clothing, and a censer. These different pieces of equipment were strategically positioned within the designated location, with the central region of the vessel keel serving as a relevant space for ritualistic performances. Regarding the recitation of the mantra, the *panrita* proceeded to the regulation of breathing and vocalizing the sacred sentence without interruption. At a precise stage within the recitation, the *kalabiseang* was also cautiously carved by an axe.

The *Ammossi* processions were subsequently characterized by the ritualistic act of the *panrita* washing, which was performed at the uppermost part of the established *possi* hole. In this context, the drilling cuttings and water mixture were acquired in a receptacle and transferred into a designated container with *pannatta* and *pammossi* flakes. This showed that the vessel oil within the receptacle was suspended on the *bangkeng salara*, positioned directly beneath the *katabang*. Based on the conclusion of the rite, an invitation was extended to all the community participating in the consumption of the previously baked cakes. The vessel owner also provided alms to the *panrita lopi*, including the supply of a chicken, cauldron (*pappisalingi*), and rite-specific ring.

Meaning and Values in Songkabala Traditional Rituals

The *songkabala* tradition was a ceremonial practice performed in Ara Village, Bonto Bahari District, Bulukumba Regency, to construct a pinisi vessel. This ritual possessed significant cultural importance among the local community, with the steps containing

various symbolic connotations, including the keel-cutting ceremony, the *appasili*, and the *ammossi*.

a. *Annakbang Kalabiseang* (keel felling) ceremony

The keel felling ritual was the process of seeking permission from the creator, as described in the following prayer recited by a retainer. "*Pattimbonnako buttayya Katuhoannako bosiya Batelamunnako Lukmanulhakim Allah taala anta'bangko.*" This recitation was significant because the existence, sustenance, and presence of the creator were facilitated, provided, and established by the fertile soil, nourishing rain, and deliberate act of planting, respectively. Therefore, the underlying motivation for the cultivation of Lukmanul hakim was driven by the belief in the divine authority of Allah, which led to subsequent removal.

b. *Annattara* Ceremony (keel cutting)

The *annattara* ceremony was the process containing the significance acquired in the retainer prayer during the execution of the ritual known as "*Dalle mambua'ilau Sibuntulangko sicini.*" In this context, the retainer often expressed the desire to respectfully communicate with their mother. The phrase, "*Fortune comes in the East*", also showed that relevant opportunities and success were mostly found in the eastern regions. Furthermore, the encounter between the retainer and mother led to a mutual exchange of glances, evoking joy and contentment within both individuals and stopping the cognitive processes of the mind. This ceremony was primarily performed to provide favorable circumstances, renown, resilience, and economic success for the proprietor and commanding officer of the vessel. The second basic aspect of Islam prioritizing the observance of the five daily prayers was also commonly represented by three keel blocks and two sottings. In this case, the significance of the vessel block depended on the integration and incorporation of Islamic ideals as the foundational principles guiding the execution of the ceremony.

c. *Appasili* Ceremony

The *appasili* ritual was the act of declining more support or assistance in many efforts, ranging from the construction to the direction of vessels in open waters. The significance of the ritual was also predominantly designed by Islamic influence, as described by its ritualistic agenda containing the recitation of *barazanji*.

d. *Ammossi* Ceremony

The *Ammossi* ceremony was the presentation of a central position to the vessel. This showed that the center was considered an essential component providing significant support for both the ship owner and the skipper. 'Ammossi' was also the conception of a

vessel embryo, solely serving as a symbolic representation of upholding tradition, without any inclusion of supernatural beliefs beyond the realm of Allah (Badulu, 2022).

Based on the observation outputs, a connection was established between GH Mead symbolic interactionism and Max Weber theory of social action. This proved that the focus of Mead on the significance of meaning and symbols prioritized the essential role in social interactions. The concept of meaning also included several forms of communication, such as signs, gestures, and words. Meanwhile, symbols were commonly understood for semiotics, as entities capable of substituting or representing other elements. Therefore, community often depended on the implementation of pre-established symbols, to facilitate interpersonal interactions.

The cultural practice of *Songkabala* frequently representing the rejection of reinforcements was also deeply incorporated throughout Indonesian society for a significant duration (Sohrah et al., 2023). This showed that the formation of the practices was evidently designed by valuable regional customs before the arrival of Islam. New influences were also incorporated into the rites performed against malevolent forces. The combination of cultural practices was continuously supported by the monotheistic objectives of relevant teachings, slightly shifting the rejection of evil from ancestral spirits to Allah, the supreme authority over all aspects of existence. Furthermore, the *Songkabala* tradition was a ceremonial practice performed in Ara Village, Bonto Bahari District, Bulukumba Regency, to construct a pinisi vessel. This tradition contained both cultural and symbolic significance, with the ritual phases including symbolic meanings, keel cutting ceremony, as well as the *appasili* and *ammossi* rites. Regarding the beliefs of the Ara community, the presence of *songkabala* produced favorable outcomes for ship owners and *lopi panrita*, enabling the construction and direction of vessels on the open waters. Meanwhile, the Quranic provisions lacked comprehensive explanations concerning the symbolic significance and consequential implications contained in the execution of the *songkabala* tradition.

Al-'Urf's View of the Songkabala Tradition in Vessel Making

Islamic law is responsible for upholding tradition as an expression of local wisdom, whose preservation depended on the correlation with sharia principles (Zahid, 2022). As a recognized method of legal determination within the framework of sharia, *al-'urf* considered the significance of customs and traditions in governing societal affairs (Efrinaldi et al., 2022). In addition, tradition often assumed a significant role in guiding actions and strengthening communal identity (Amir & Lewa, 2021). According to contemporary reports, *al-'urf* was considered a valid source for conducting legal *istinbāt*, specifically when a notion was not explicitly mentioned in the Quran and hadith (Rosyid &

Kushidayati, 2022). This stipulated that the preservation of the legal method was not obligatory when contradicting the primary source of Islamic law, leading to the disregard of basic principles and a blatant rejection of the sharia policy implementation (Najib, 2020). Previous analyses and theoretical evaluations also suggested that the determination of Sharia provisions should be examined through *al-'urf* across multiple categories (Bunaiya et al., 2021). In this case, validity, objectivity, and source attribution were highly prioritized.

Firstly, *al-'urf* was categorized into two different types during its legitimacy consideration, namely *'urf ṣahīh* and *'urf fāsid* (Putri, 2020). This showed that the practice of *'urf ṣahīh* was expressed as a positive phenomenon when adopted by a community. In this context, the existence of the practice did not serve as a justification for permitting or engaging in actions considered haram (Mursid et al., 2023). Meanwhile, *'urf fāsid* was a prevailing societal practice granting permissibility to actions explicitly prohibited by Allah in Islamic teachings.

Secondly, *al-'urf* was classified into two categories regarding the location of its entity or substance, namely *'urf qaulī* and *'urf fi'lī* (Khallaf, 2004). This proved that the concept of *'urf qaulī* was related to the habitual use of language or speech in daily interactions, allowing individuals to understand intended meanings without explicit clarification. In this case, effective communication was strengthened within a community. Meanwhile, *'urf fi'lī* represented a customary practice enacted by communal actions.

Thirdly, *al-'urf* was categorized into three types according to relevant sources, namely *al-'urf al-'ām*, *al-'urf al-khās*, and *al-'urf al-syar'ī* (Su'eb, 2018). This showed that the phenomenon of *al-'urf al-'ām* was commonly considered a prevalent cultural practice and was widely recognized by community throughout various global societies. The concept of *al-'urf al-khās* also represented a customary practice effectively-identified among individuals in specific regions. Meanwhile, *al-'urf al-syar'ī* was a specific pronunciation implemented by the *syara'* (Islamic law) to facilitate different significance (Yumarni et al., 2021).

In a comprehensive analysis of the different *al-'urf* categories authenticating *songkalaba*, the data of previous interviews were examined. These interviews included a resource person providing a detailed explanation of the *songkabala* ritual process. The activity of reinforcing the pinisi vessel was also executed in multiple stages, with the various forms of rituals presently analyzed from the perspective of *al-'urf* (Sobaya et al., 2023). The *songkabala* ceremony commenced with the ceremonial act of felling the tree designated as the keel. This was accompanied by the processes of keel cutting, *appasili*, and *ammossi*. Furthermore, *al-'urf* was the ceremonial process known as *'urf Amali*, prioritizing a customary practice observed and performed by the inhabitants of Ara Village,

located in the Bonto Bahari District of Bulukumba Regency. This supported the perspective of Abdul Wahhāb Khallāf, where relevant cultural habits were portrayed through verbal expressions, behavioral patterns, and restrictions.

The *Songkabala* tradition of constructing pinisi vessels was subsequently classified within the 'urf *khāṣ* category, specifically the *al-'urf* applicable to specific locations and circumstances. This cultural practice was exclusively observed by specialized populations, specifically those in Ara Village. In this case, the custom was precisely associated with the construction of pinisi vessels by the Ara people. From both positive and negative perspectives, the analysis of the *songkabala* ritual stages was classified as 'urf *ṣahīh*, due to its harmonious consistency with Islamic law principles. Based on H. Muhammad Idris, the dynamic nature of conditions periodically led to the discontinuation of specific rituals, such as the keel-cutting ceremony. This proved that the feasibility of the ritual phases was not evaluated according to customary practices (*al-'urf*), as only three cultural steps were available for assessment. In a thorough analysis of prevailing theories (Yakar, 2018), the interview sessions with H. Idris were incorporated, regarding the subject of *songkabala*. From this context, an explanation was provided on the ritual stages to enhance the bonds among the residents of Ara Village. This enhancement was achieved by collective gatherings and general societal communication, as a means of following the orders of Allah and strengthening a stronger brotherhood. Moreover, the comprehensive exposition of the ceremonial schedule was classified as 'urf *ṣahīh*, showing its compliance with Islamic principles.

In the construction of pinisi vessels, the ritual process of the *songkabala* tradition produced various outcomes. This showed that the tradition was specific to Ara village and classified as 'urf *'amali* (Baydar, 2021), due to being a customary practice observed by the local community. The custom was also incorporated into the 'urf *khāṣ* category (Alimuddin & Maulidah, 2021), regarding its limited applicability to specific locations and conditions. From this context, the categorization of *al-'urf* expressed inherent similarities regarding relevant objects and scope. However, persistence was observed in analyzing the symbolic meaning of the tradition through positive or negative connotations. This led to the recommendation of additional observations by incorporating Quran and hadith arguments, as well as the interviews with courtiers and pinisi vessel owners. Regarding the merits and demerits, the evaluation of the *songkabala* tradition was subsequently approached through its symbolic significance within both pre-Islamic and post-Islamic societies. This was because the cultural practice had a long-standing historical presence and was considered the rejection of reinforcements. The implementation of various instruments, methods, protocols, and symbolic frameworks within *songkabala* was also a respected heritage generationally transmitted by the forebears of the Ara Village

populace. From the *al-'urf* perspective, several activities were prioritized within the ritualistic series, namely the presence of offerings, incense burning, and gratitude events (*abbaca doangan*).

In the analysis of H. Muhammad Idris, 'offerings' previously expressed the presentation of gifts to the guardian of a tree, to seek deliverance from the spirits of ancestors and deities. These offerings were commonly provided for the derivation of divine protection and favor, although the introduction of Islam led to the adjustment in the interpretation of indigenous practices. In this context, the provision of offerings was presently a symbolic gesture to seek salvation from Allah. Subsequent analyses also stated that the provisions had stopped and were modernly observed within the contemporary keel-felling tradition exclusively, showing the ineffectiveness of its implementation. Moreover, the middle-aged people explained that incense burning was only conducted to enhance olfactory sensations during the ritualistic practice. From the description, the offering prayers were prioritized regarding various delectable delicacies on Thanksgiving, to express thankfulness to Allah for presenting several blessings upon the ship owner (great riches). Since the inception of the Islamic religion, the use of fragrance was also mandated, specifically in the burning of incense, to deodorize sacred spaces and community. This was consistent with the presence of perfume at the Grand Mosque and the practice of burning *bukhūr* or comparable substances.

The ritual process of constructing pinisi vessels in Ara Village was subsequently expressed as an *'urf ṣahīh* because each ritualistic stage solely depended on Allah, the Creator and Ruler of all natural elements. In this context, 'offerings' were previously considered the act of presenting tributes to the guardian of a tree, to specifically seek deliverance from ancestral spirits and deities. However, the introduction of Islam caused a great shift in the significance of the tradition. The *songkabala* ritual process of constructing pinisi vessels also prioritized the symbolic importance supporting *'urf ṣahīh*, because each ritualistic stage was only dedicated to Allah, as the absolute Creator and Sovereign of the natural world. This was consistent with the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence about the *songkabala* procession, where supplications were presented to seek protection and safety. From the description, the concept of similar traditional practices did not contradict Islamic principles when the affected prayer recipient was appropriately specified. Based on verse 18/27 of Surah al-Kahf, Prophet Muhammad was instructed to recite the revelations presented to him, specifically using the Holy Quran. This showed that the words of the concerned subject were immutable, with the search for solace only depending on appropriate adoption.

The inhabitants of Ara Village also believed that *songkabala* served as a supplication directed towards Allah, seeking protection. This was due to perceiving prayer as an act of worship regarding the teachings of Allah. The perspective was also consistent with QS. Jonah 10/106, which stated that "Avoid worshiping anything besides Allah, as ignorance often led to people being classified among the transgressors." The implications of *songkabala* were also dependent on the underlying intention, as stated in the hadith transmitted by Umar Bin Khatab. In this context, actions often prioritized the purpose of an individual, leading to the acquisition of relevant and supportive outcomes. This showed that the followers of Allah and His Messenger migrated to Islam while those traveling for worldly reasons relocated to a specified settlement, as described by HR. Bukhari.

Based on the hadith, the significance of purpose was explained in every action or activity. This showed that everyone was capable of obtaining a response regarding their original intention. *Songkabala* also became impermissible when performed to seek a higher authority different from Allah for protection against harm. However, supplications and trust should only be provided to Allah for safety in all ramifications. The phenomena of *Songkabala* were subsequently observed through the motivations of its practitioners, due to prioritizing the issues of belief, *aqidah*, monotheism, and religion (Muslimin, 2018). This proved that Islam did not oppose any novel concept or idea when consistency was observed with the basic principles and ethos of Muslim beliefs. The essence of the religion also supported a propensity for progress, as change was not synonymous with the wholesale abandonment of all traditions. Meanwhile, the adaptation of traditions was considered, to address prevailing social challenges or the substitution of existing cultures with novel alternatives. This method was informed by the principles of upholding long-standing customs while adopting beneficial contemporary practices.

Conclusion

The *Songkabala* tradition was reported to serve as a symbolic means used by the residents of Ara village in the Bonto Bahari sub-district of the Bulukumba district, to safeguard boat-building culture. The implementation was characterized by a meticulous execution including a multitude of ritual stages that passed down through countless generations. Furthermore, the infusion of Islamic influences into the indigenous practices of Ara village engendered a harmonious blend of cultural aesthetics. The Ritual process from the perspective of *al-'urf*, could be categorized into two parts. First, according to its object, *songkabala* was included in *'urf 'amalī* as a custom and was only carried out by the people of Ara village. Second, in terms of scope, the tradition was categorized as *'urf khāṣ*, because the concept was only performed in Ara village. The symbolic meaning of the *songkabala* ritual in the view of *'urf* could be categorized into *'urf ṣahīh*. The categorization

was because the people no longer believed that the tradition would bring salvation and ward off future misfortune. However, the rituals and equipment were considered as a symbol for making a pinisi boat while preserving intangible culture authorized by UNESCO. The tradition also functioned as a communal gathering point, enhancing social cohesion and preserving the interconnectedness of the people.

This research made a valuable contribution to religion and culture within the context of Indonesia, with a particular focus on Islam. Furthermore, it analyzed how the *Songkabala* process related to the construction of Pinisi vessels remained consistent with religious principles. The cultural tradition showed a commitment to maintaining religious and cultural heritage. Local people also maintained their belief in ancestral spirits and the supernatural world but changes in meaning arose after embracing Islam. In the past, the tradition of rejecting bad luck rituals was carried out with offerings to the gods or guardians of the sea. However, this practice was transformed into an expression of gratitude for the successful completion of a Pinisi vessel, with each ceremony meticulously observing Islamic values. It was essential to acknowledge that this study had limitations, primarily pertaining to the scope of available data.

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