

# Decorative Motifs as Identity of Austronesian Speakers in South Minahasa: Preliminary Analysis of Decorative Patterns of Pottery at Lansot Site, Tomohon City, North Sulawesi Province

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## ABSTRACT

Migration of Austronesian speakers in a certain area usually makes an adaptation in a colonization in a new area and even innovations are born from here. As immigrants from Taiwan (Out of Taiwan) who migrated to the archipelago (Indonesia) they have passed through a series of islands at the northern tip of the Republic of Indonesia such as the Miangas Islands, Karakelang Island, in the Talaud Islands. The traces can be found from the distribution of artifacts he left, including at the Lansot site, Tomohon city, North Sulawesi Province. These traces, among others, are found in the distribution of pottery found at sites of former transit stops, both temporary and long-lived. The problem is whether there are characteristics that constitute the identity of the community, considering that there are similarities in the decorative motifs of the pottery found in almost all sites along the migration route. What is the role of the pottery in the context of the waruga grave? The results of the preliminary analysis on the decorative pottery motifs on this site indicate that there are traces of the speaker's identity on one of the pottery decorative motifs with jagged edges which are in the same context as, pots with round bottoms, jars, porcelain objects, beads, spearheads, and waruga. This complements the existence of a cultural continuity from the fusion of cultures that developed in the late neolithic, paleometallic and megalithic periods in North Sulawesi, known as waruga buildings.

**Keywords:** *Decorative motifs, jagged edges, Lansot site, identity, Austronesian, North Sulawesi.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Austronesian culture is known as a culture brought by Austronesian-speaking people from Taiwan who migrated to other islands around it to Melanesia and also to the Archipelago (Indonesia). Many factors cause a group of people to migrate, such as the need for land, access and existence, geographical environment, economy, etc. However, this paper will not focus on the reasons why people migrate, but will discuss what adaptations and innovations occur during migration and stopovers in areas that are among other things the final destination. Austronesian speakers from Taiwan migrated to the Asia Pacific region through other areas such as the Philippines, the Talaud Islands and finally to Sulawesi, especially to the Minahasa area in North Sulawesi.

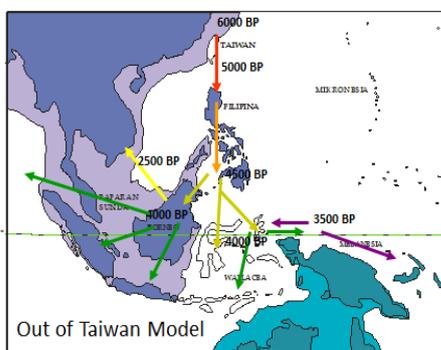
One of the theories that discusses the migration of the Austronesian people is the 'Out Of Taiwan' theory which among other things states that the origins of the Austronesian people are from Taiwan who migrated from their original area in Taiwan to the Archipelago in 6000-5000 BC, to Kalimantan. in 4500 BC, south Sulawesi in 4000 BC. North Sulawesi is estimated at 1000-2000 BC, and reached the Asia Pacific in 3500 BC (Blust 2013), (Bellwood 2000a), (Tanudirjo 2011), (Bullbeck 2008). Robert Blust is a linguist who has proven the spread of Austronesian languages through language studies.

Of course, this migration is not carried out simultaneously, but is carried out in several stages. This

is evidenced by the absolute dating data by previous researchers which is not the same at each site. This stage shows that there is a period of human occupation of the traces left through different dates according to the stages and conditions.

However, the results of the study show that before the Austronesian people came to the archipelago, in the local area (Nusantara) already lived people from the Austromelanesoid race who first lived in caves, niches, in the interior of the archipelago. So that Austronesian-speaking people who come from the Mongoloid race have met and interacted with people who have Austromelanesoid races and even lived together in one area. The results of archaeological research prove that at the Tiger Cave site in Oku, South Sumatra, there is evidence of the skeletons of these races being in one cultural layer (Widianto 2019); (Prastiningtyas, D.; Sofwan N.; M.L Herbiyamami; Fauzi M.R.; Ansyori, M.; Matsumura 2016).

This stage indirectly indicates the time or when an area was occupied by Austronesian speakers. In other words, the adaptation or growth and development of Austronesian culture in one location is not uniform, as for example, in the Karama River, South - West Sulawesi which is considered the oldest evidence in the archipelago with red slip pottery (Anggraeni, et.al. 2014) 3800- 3600 BP, Kalimantan 4000 BP, Leang Tuo Mane'e (Kep. Talaud) 3600 BP; then in the Tiger Cave South Sumatra-2000 BP, in Leang Mendale North Sumatra – 3000 BP, and in Pasemah South Sumatra it is estimated around the 6th-7th century AD etc. So that the influence of Austronesian culture has lasted since prehistoric times, until historical times. On that basis, Truman Simanjuntak divided the phases of the distribution of Austronesian speakers into categories; Prehistoric Austronesian, 2000 BP, Proto-historic Austronesian 2000 BP – 4-5th Century AD, Austronesian history including the Classical period of the Hindu-Buddhist period, to the present Austronesian which has a period of time from independence even to the present (Simanjuntak 2015:1-76); (Prasetyo 2019).



**Figure 1** Out of Taiwan model of Austronesian distribution, Source: (Tanudirjo 2013)

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Meanwhile, the spread of Austronesian speakers to the islands of Java and Sumatra as well as the Peninsular Malaysia and Vietnam occurred in the period  $\pm$  500 BC. (Tanudirjo 2014; (Tanudirjo 2006). In Indonesia, the distribution of Austronesian does not directly indicate that the origin of the population of the archipelago is Austronesian-speaking people, but the results of archaeological research show that before the Austronesian people migrated to the archipelago in several stages, in the archipelago other tribes had settled. According to research, these tribes have DNA from the Austromelanesoid race, as shown in the findings of the skeletons in the Tiger Cave site. (Simanjuntak 2015; Simanjuntak 2020), where the skeletons of these individuals are in a grave context.

Each stage has a distinctive trail, which is closely related to nature and its environment and some can still be traced. As one of the innovations, this cultural imprint is often needed as an identity for the supporting community. In this case, the attribute of decorative motifs on the artifacts produced becomes something important to know the level of technology mastered and the background of the role in it. These motifs can be seen in the artifacts produced, especially in pottery artifacts.

The cultural innovations of Austronesian speakers that reached the archipelago became the high-light forerunners of cultural forms that were considered to be derivatives of Austronesian culture, such as language (Austronesian), megalithic remains, outrigger boats with astrology, agriculture with culinary in the form of food from tubers. tubers, pickaxes, neolithic axes, red-slip pottery, remains of dentated-stamped pottery known as lapita, as well as pottery with inlaid stamps combined with jagged edges. (Blust 2013); (Tanudirjo 2013); (Simanjuntak 2015); (Bellwood 2000b).

Lapita pottery has a distribution to the eastern region of the Melanesian region, while the jagged stamp pattern is to the west. At several Austronesian-style sites in North Sulawesi and its surroundings, the distribution of the pottery was also found. The problem is the distribution of pottery to the North Sulawesi region, several sites in the Talaud Islands, and in the Minahasa region, for example the case at the Lansot site, Tomohon city, this has not been widely discussed. This research on pottery with these characteristics makes it interesting to find out what the role behind its manufacture is, in addition to the red slip that has previously become a feature of pottery from Austronesian speakers.

## 2. METHOD

This research is qualitative in nature through the interpretation of pottery artifact data which is the result of excavations and surveys and has gone through a series of preliminary analyzes. Excavations and surveys were carried out at the Lansot site, and its surroundings in the Tomohon Municipality area. Comparative analysis of similar pottery artifacts from other sites in Sulawesi was also carried out to do a synthesis before entering the interpretation stage.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Red slip pottery and jagged stamp decorative motif

Evidence of transit activity or traces of settlement of Austronesian speakers, is found at the Lansot site. This site is located on the edge of the highway that connects the city of Manado and the city of Tomohon. If we go to the city of Tomohon from Manado by four-wheeled vehicle for  $\pm 2$  hours, then we will pass this site precisely in the Municipality of Tomohon, North Sulawesi province. Astronomically this site is located at coordinates  $124^{\circ} 48' 48.783$  E,  $1^{\circ} 18' 20.254$  N at an altitude of 771 meters above sea level. This site is a flat piece of land covering an area of about 2 hectares at the foot of Mount Lokon. Above it there is a distribution of waruga which is partially buried in the ground. In addition, there is a distribution of blue, white and polychrome pottery and porcelain shards.

As is known, Austronesian typical pottery findings that are often the subject of discussion are plain pottery findings with red slips. The site with this pottery finding which is quite often discussed by experts before is a cave / niche site originating from the Talaud Islands area, precisely in Leang Mane'e, with a date of 500 BC (Ono, Harry Octavianus Sofian, et.al. 2019); (Ono daS.Soegodho 2004); (Tanudirjo, Daud Aris, 1995; Tanudirjo 2001). This pottery finding is in one context with the finding of shells in quite a large number. This proves that there are traces of temporary settlement activities and at the same time marine activities of Austronesian-speaking migrants at that time.

Another discovery at Leang Buide on the island of Salibabu also displays several pottery that varies, there are red slips and there is also pottery with decorated stamps and a combination of cut/slice and cut with the edges decorated with triangular or jagged motifs. According to Daud Tanudirjo, the jagged stamping decoration technique is the result of innovation by Austronesian speakers in the Melanesian Islands and is a special feature that distinguishes the Austronesian community in this region from other relatives in Southeast Asia (Tanudirjo, 2002:9). In fact, these motifs are also found in the distribution of caves/alcove sites in

the Talaud Islands, such as the Antil and Muruít sites which have been explored in the research of the Archeology Center of North Sulawesi in recent years. Furthermore, these motifs are found in many other areas of Sulawesi, such as in sites around Lake Matano both on the shores of the lake and in the lake itself which is obtained by diving.

Judging from the shape of the shards of pottery with decorative motifs like this, it is a form of container with variations in size that can be traced by measuring the diameter of the shape of the edge of the shard. Usually the decoration does not always fill the surface of the container, but on the neck slightly below the lip and on the top or side of the lip itself. This motif is usually combined with a tera net motif or with a rope stamp. This decoration is not full in all the containers although this is the result of innovation in the Melanesian Islands, and it is possible that this motif was maintained as a sign of brotherhood or as part of their identity. Although this motif is a marker of identity, other motifs are still maintained such as the tera net motif, rope pattern, and other geometric patterns such as vertical lines, horizontal lines, curved, round, dots, etc. This combination makes pottery containers look beautiful. Like a legged container for serving. The jagged stamp pattern is usually placed on the edges of the legs of the container and the edge of the serving container.



Figure 2 Findings from the surface survey of the Lansot site, jagged terra ornamental pottery. Source: Triwurjani



Figure 3 The jagged tera motif is from the Lansot website. Results of excavations and surface surveys. (Source: Triwurjani).



Figure 4 Other geometric decorative motifs (decorated ropes, lines, tendrils and zigzag motifs) that are still continue to use. (Sumber: Triwurjani).

Pottery findings from Lake Matano, especially in legged containers, have the same pattern, especially in the decorative technique which is a combination of stamp, puncture, scratch and cut techniques (Triwujani 2018). The technique of making it by hand (hand model) does not use a rotating wheel. This trail can be seen from the shape of the edges that are not flat but wavy and the shape of the base is asymmetrical. Decorative motifs that seem detailed, of course, require other tools and it is easy to suspect that the tool is made of metal, which has a sharp and pointed part on one side. Thus it is easy to do the technique of stab, scratch, cut/slice, press and chop. Meanwhile, pottery decorated with red slips is not widely found.



**Figure 5** Matano pottery, legged crucible fragment (Source: Triwujani 2018).

The results of dating analysis at the Matano site, Sorowako, East Luwu Regency, show the numbers from the 8th-10th century AD which is a tradition that continued from the neolithic period to the paleometallic period. Presumably the paleometallic period here is also the same situation as the Lansot site. Likewise, the decorative pattern and the technique of making it are still done by hand and do not use rotating wheels. This is evidenced by the absence of traces of seriation on the broken pottery containers. The technique of smoothing the surface of the pottery container with cement by rubbing it with stones or other objects is also found in Matano proponents (Triwujani 2018). This process can smoothen the surface and at the same time minimize pores, as well as beautify the appearance of the container.



**Figure 6** Pottery pot (pot) spit 8, Lansot Site. (Source: Triwujani).

At the Lansot site at spit 8, intact pottery was found in the form of a wide-mouthed pot with the local name belanga or 'kure' (Wenas 2007). The edges are given a jagged tera motif and on the body there is a

decorative rope motif made by pressing techniques by beating with a decorative rope. This pottery container has dimensions of mouth diameter: 29 cm, base diameter: 27cm and height: 27cm.

### 3.2. Functions of Pottery by context

Determining the function of an artifact cannot be separated from the context of other artifacts found in the same space, as well as the environment of the site where the artifact is located. Several cultural remains besides pottery, were also found at the Lansot Site, including porcelain ceramic objects, metals, beads and others found in archaeological excavations. In addition, in the Lansot site, there are also distributions of Waruga, or stone grave containers used by the Minahasa community in the past. In connection with this subject, the pottery containers found at this site are thought to function as grave supplies, as are several other finds, in the form of Chinese ceramics from the 18-19th century AD Ching Dynasty (Qing), metal (weapons) and beads. While the waruga object in this case is used as a grave / grave container.

The existence of pottery with jagged stamped decorative motifs which are often found scattered in Lansot sites, may be besides being a popular motif because it continues to be used as an identity for the existence of supporters of the same culture, namely the culture of Austronesian speakers who at that time their movement had arrived in Minahasa in general, and the Tomohon region in particular. This is indicated by the finding of pottery with a jagged tera stamp motif which also shows a relationship with his brother from the Talaud Islands (Karakelang, and Salibabu) and then spread again to Tomohon, (Penelitian 2018) (Penelitian 2019) and extends even to the southern Sulawesi region, in this case the site of Lake Matano.

Another pottery finding is a lid with a jagged decorative motif with a diameter of 13 cm wide, 5 cm high. The diameter of the handle is decorated with jagged edges with a diameter of 8 cm. The old workmanship feature is still being used with the tera net motif and jagged decorative motifs, with cutting and chipping techniques.



**Figure 7** Pottery from the Lansot site(above) and below the pottery from the Matano site.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Pottery with jagged stamped motifs is spread over several transit sites for Austronesian-speaking migrants in eastern Indonesia, including Lansot, Matano, Antil Alley (Karakelang), Muruut (Salibabu) niche, Talaud Islands. Thus the Lansot site is part of the Austronesian stopover on the island of Sulawesi. The technique of making by hand is still maintained, as well as less than optimal combustion or even over heat. However, the element of decorative motifs as an identity is maintained.

The detail skills in this motif show the craftsmanship and thoroughness of the craftsmen, with a fairly high artistic taste that can be used as local wisdom, for some areas in Indonesia, especially in Sulawesi.

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