



IDENTIFY TOURIST ATTRACTIONS OF AN ANCIENT BATH IN SOUTH MALANG

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Abstract. Ngawonggo is one of the recent ancient baths found in Tajinan, South Malang, East Java. This article depicts the initial identification of archaeological remains in Ngawonggo, Malang, East Java, Indonesia as a part of tourist attractions. The character of the remains of the building indicates its function in ancient times as *patirtaan* or holy baths. Motifs and decorative styles on the walls of buildings have shown that these relics originate from the Hindu Buddhist era. Qualitative approaches, using observation and documentation methods, have been used in this study. The results of this preliminary report are about the landscape of the location, the number of relics, and the variety of wall decorations which appear above the ground. Extensive scale research, including location mapping, excavation, etc., is possible in the future. Those reports are very essential for developing the tourist attractions of Ngawonggo sites and to raise historical awareness among the visitors.

Keywords: Ngawonggo; ancient bath; tourist attractions; Malang

1 Introduction

Malang has many historical sites that are important for cultural tourism. Recently, an ancient bath in South Malang is a new historical site that went public in 2017. It is called Ngawonggo sites located between the Tajinan and Wajak districts. This historical site remains surrounded by rice fields and bamboo trees. Today Ngawonggo is one of the most popular education destinations for locals [1].

Administratively, the Ngawonggo site is located in the Nanasan, Ngawonggo Village, District of Tajinan, Malang.



Fig. 1. Ngawonggo Site Location (marked with a yellow pin) Coordinates: 8 ° 04'47.6 "S 112°42'16.6" E (source: earth.google.com, 2019)

Between 25 June and 5 September 2019, an archaeological survey sponsored by the Faculty of Social Sciences, Universitas Negeri Malang, was made in Ngawonggo, Malang, East Java. A complex of *petirtaan* was studied. It was chosen because since it was published in public on April 24, 2017 [2], archeological reports have not been published that specifically address the site. This site has been named Ngawonggo, in accordance with the name of the village where this relic was found. The main purpose of the survey was to illuminate the material conditions about and around the site.

The primary objective of this research is to authenticate the historical significance of the Ngawonggo site through the analysis of archaeological data. This endeavor seeks to establish the Ngawonggo site as more than just a local tourist attraction; it aspires to transform it into an educational resource, with a particular focus on its contribution to enhancing the understanding of local history. Consequently, the Ngawonggo site can play a pivotal role in facilitating learning experiences that delve into the rich tapestry of regional history, thereby enriching the educational local history landscape. The **purpose** of this research is to explore more information about each tourist attraction in this ancient bath for better future tourism development and to raise the historical awareness among the tourist and the locals. This research aligns with prior studies, similar to the conservation of Selokelir temple [3], outdoor learning in an ancient cave of Tuban [4], and preservation of Banyuwangi culture [5].

2 Methods

This research employed a qualitative research approach and followed by the historical research methods (*metode penelitian sejarah*) with the overarching objective of reconstructing historical narratives from the past [6]. Data was collected by observation techniques, literature study, and interviews. Each method uses observation guidelines, field observation notes, and interview guidelines [7]. The observational methods entailed on-site visits to procure relevant data materials, such as the site's spatial characteristics and any remaining artifacts or significant statues. These findings were

subsequently integrated with the results of the literature review to ensure congruity and accuracy, forming the basis for a factual historical narrative (historiography). Additionally, the researcher conducted interviews with both local informants and archaeological experts, serving the purpose of uncovering data that might have eluded during the observation and literature study steps. This approach was aimed to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the subject matter. To fortify the analysis, data interpretation was enriched through the incorporation of diverse sources, thereby enhancing the depth and robustness of the study. The chosen analytical approach was primarily descriptive, involving the presentation and elucidation of issues in a textual format, ultimately elucidating the significance of identifying Ngawonggo as long broader historical-tourism context.

3 Result and Discussion

It is essential to conduct a thorough historical analysis of the Ngawonggo sites before they can be transformed into tourist attractions. Through a more comprehensive understanding of their historical significance, it is anticipated that we will gain insights into their potential as tourist destinations, facilitating their subsequent development into more refined and engaging tourism sites.

3.1 Ngawonggo Characteristic as Tourist Attraction

In short, tourist attraction is the central tourism product aspect that can trigger the interest and motivation of tourists to travel [8]. In order to ascertain the viability of a tourist attraction, it is imperative to conduct an initial assessment to discern its potential. Such potential may encompass various dimensions, including research and educational tourism, historical and cultural tourism, among others [9]. When examining the Ngawonggo site specifically, it becomes evident that its potential primarily lies in historical and cultural tourism. Consequently, the focus on historical and archaeological aspects emerges as a pivotal consideration in the endeavor to cultivate the site into a compelling and engaging tourist destination. Moreover, the Ngawonggo site has fulfilled the elements of *Benda Cagar Budaya* (Cultural Heritage Objects).

The support of cultural heritage objects is supported by the the existence of rectangular ancient building structures. Although this building is equipped with carvings and statues, it is commonly categorized as *petirtaan* or holy baths. According to [10], *petirtaan* comes from the word "patirthan". *Pa-tirtha-an* has the root word *tirtha* or *tirta* which means water. It means that the water has been purified and can make a person become holy. The holy water then called *tirtha nirmala* or *tirta amerta*, believed to be able to cleanse sins, cure various diseases, and is also believed to be the water of eternity. The community has believed that the gods have gulped *amerta* water. Therefore they are immortal and untouched by death. This reinforces the notion that with this Ngawonggo site it was used as a place of worship as well as a sacred bath. The characteristic of this site as an ancient bath is the main tourist attraction.

3.2 Geographical Aspects

Geographically, this site is located in the southeast of the city center of Malang. This area is located in a valley flanked by two mountains, Mount Semeru to the east and Mount Kawi to the west (see map 1 above). This site is also close to Mount Semeru, a mountain which has been sacred since the Hindu-Buddhist civilization on Java Island.

The sacredness of Mount Semeru is proven by the existence of Prasasti Ranu Kumbolo which is currently on the edge of Lake Ranu Kumbolo, Taman Nasional Bromo Tengger Semeru (TNBTS). According to archeologist Dwi Cahyono, in the Prasasti Ranu Kumbolo, there is an inscription '*ling deva pu kameswara tirthayatra*' which tells the Kameswara's spiritual journey [11]. It is possible to say that Kameswara was the king of Kadiri (reign 1182-1188 AD). In general, a king is said to use the title *Sri* or other titles commonly used at that time. But the inscription uses *Deva Pu* which is more suitable to use the title for a Brahmin or clergyman. The script used was not from the Kadiri era but rather to the Majapahit era, however this assumption requires further investigation. To be sure, Mount Semeru is a mountain that is sacred or sanctified. As the Ngawonggo Site, the Prasasti Ranu Kumbolo has mentioned the same function of building to purifying water.

Ranu Kumbolo can be categorized as a natural *Patirtaan*, consisting of water bodies in the form of springs, ponds, lakes, and rivers that are considered sacred and sanctified by the supporting community [10]. Mount Semeru has become the headwaters of many rivers in the Malang, Lumajang and Probolinggo areas. The river flowing upstream from Mount Semeru is mostly in the eastern and southeastern parts of Malang. One of the rivers flows through the lower part of the Ngawonggo site.

Residents around the site know the river by the name of Manten. The position of the river flow is parallel to the site (see photo 1). Streams are also located at the back-top of the site. This river is an artificial irrigation that functions for agricultural waters. Residents around the site said that the river was created in the colonial era. Perhaps at the time of the construction of this irrigation channel, the colonial government was not aware of the existence of historic sites beneath it. The observations concluded that the site sank approximately 1-1.5 meters below the ground, located approximately 1-2 meters from the irrigation river (see photo 2). Both of these are the reasons for the existence of this site only in 2017.



Fig. 2. Manten River streams beneath the Ngawonggo (source: Documentation of Affan, 2019)



Fig. 3. Position of the Manten River flow at the Ngawonggo Site (source: Documentation of Affan, 2019)

The overall direction of the site is still unclear. If the orientation is based on a row of statues, therefore the statue formation faces northwest. If it is determined based on the location of Mount Semeru, the statue formation turns to the mountain. Most likely the worship procedure always faces the statue (see photo 3). This means that at the time of worship carried out on this site, both orientations were Mount Semeru and statues. It can be concluded that this site places Mount Semeru as an orientation, both in terms of building architecture and worship activities.



Fig. 4. Position of the Manten River flow at the Ngawonggo Site (source: Documentation of Affan, 2019)



Fig. 5. Arca Ganesha (left) and Arca Rewanta (right) (source: Documentation of Affan, 2019)



Fig. 6. Measurement results of *Patirtaan 1* (source: Documentation of Affan, 2019)

The Ngawonggo site is adjacent to temples in Malang. The distance between the site and Kidal Temple in Tumpang District is approximately 6 km and 10 km from Jago Temple. This measurement is obtained by making imaginary straight lines between locations. The interpretation emerges is that there have been civilizations in locations around the site in earlier times. In addition, there is a fact that these sites were built at different periods (Medang, Kadiri, Singhasari, and Majapahit). This fact reinforces the interpretation of the existence of ancient civilizations in this mountain valley. This beautiful landscape around the ancient bath made the next level of tourist attraction.

3.3 Contemporary Condition of Ngawonggo

The site of Ngawonggo was first discovered by Rahmat Yasin (25), a local resident. There are three pools that are likely to be interconnected. Each pond has a wall with different sculptures. In addition to the bathing pool, 7 statues were also found that could still be recognized in their shape. In addition, there are also some patterned carvings on the walls of the pond. The number of identified ponds was 6 *patirtan*.

One of our informants is Dwi Cahyono, a historian specialized in archeology from Universitas Negeri Malang. During our interview, he argued that the site of Ngawonggo had existed since the 10th century AD, during the Medang Kingdom under Pu Sindok's leadership. Cahyono uses toponym analysis of Ngawonggo Village which is derived from the word "Kaswangga". The word Kaswangga itself is mentioned in the inscription of Wurundangan or Kanjempuan B issued in 944 AD when Pu Sindok led the Medang Kingdom [2]. If the assumption is used as a measure to calculate the age of this site, it is convinced that the site of Ngawonggo has been used by several authorities since the Medang period.

The Ngawonggo site consists of six main ponds. The initial identification results of the six ponds are described below. This ponds existence later can be described as history-cultural potential for tourism.

3.3.1 Patirtaan 1

In Patirtaan 1, there are a row of statues. The number of statues that can be recognized is 6 structures. One that was identified was the statue of Ganesha (see photo 4). Ganesha himself is the son of Lord Shiva. This proves that this site is related to worship activities for Shiva Hinduism. The existence of this statue shows the culture or art of statues making. Statue art is the work of humans and has a sacred aspect. In other words, art statues can be used to trace the religious life embraced and developed in the area [12].

Besides functioning as a sacred indicator, the statue of Ganesha itself also acts as a negative rejection. Cahyono revealed the statue of Ganesha in Petirtan 1 has a function of mitigation of danger. The existence of Ganesha is believed to be a god who is able to neutralize danger in certain areas. The presence of statues at the site shows that the structure of the bath is not a profane building. Profane building itself is an ordinary building and not purified.

3.3.2 Patirtaan 2

Patirtaan 2 is next to patirtaan 1. It is rectangular in shape and has a staircase. The walls are made of andesite stone. Researchers did not find any statues, reliefs or carvings on the wall. One part of the wall has been damaged and replaced by residents with artificial walls made of cement and stone. As a result, this patirtaan can be filled with water and is considered to look like its original form (observe Photo 6).



Fig. 7. Patirtaan Conditions and Measurement (source: Documentation of Affan, 2019)

3.3.3 Patirtaan 3

Patirtaan 3 is a few meters from Patirtaan 2. It is possible that Patirtaan 3 and 4 are actually integrated. But researchers counted two because there was a divider between the two. The walls of this patirtaan are made of andesite stone. Similar with patirtaan 2, local residents have built a wall of cement because the original wall has been damaged. It is possible that the size of this patirtaan is longer than can be seen today. Possible geographic symptoms that cause this part of the patirtaan to be eroded by water flow, given that the missing part is directly adjacent to the edge of the Manten River.

This patirtaan wall has relief. Relief motifs are plants and elephant motifs. Observation results show that there are niches like the trunk and elephant ears (see photo 7).



Fig. 8. Relief on the Wall of Patirtaan 3 (source: Documentation of Affan, 2019)

3.3.4 Patirtaan 4

Patirtaan 4 is located next to patirtaan 3. Bulkhead on patirtaan has a thickness of approximately 50 cm. It also has the same relief as in Patirtaan 3. In this patirtaan there are two water showers made by local residents. The purpose of this is to fill the water in patirtaan 3 and 4 so that they look like the original.

3.3.5 Patirtaan 5

Patirtaan 5 is a few meters from the patirtaan 4 position. Its condition is submerged underground as deep as 1.5 metres and is on a river bank slope. The part that was found was only one wall. While the rest may be carried by river currents. Researchers estimate that the shape of patirtaan 5 is the same as the other patirtaans which are rectangular in shape. This can be seen by the remaining wall at the end of the remaining wall. So that the corners form a right angle. Patirtaan 5, like patirtaan 4, is made of intact andesite stone and carved on its walls. The basic motif is relatively the same as the previous patirtaan, but the motif in patirtaan 5 has a rectangular ornamentation in the tendrils (see photo 8).



Fig. 9. Patirtaan Measurement Conditions and Results 5 (source: doc. Affan, 2019)

3.3.6 Patirtaan 6

Patirtaan 6 is located at the very end of the Ngawonggo site. Relief and shape is more complex than before, so it looks like a temple. The temple walls that were found on this patirtaan are only partially so that the walls are U-shaped. Researchers have not been able to confirm their original shape.

Relief on patirtaan can be observed and recognized, one of the reliefs is the Gana relief. The Gana reliefs began to emerge in the old classical temples of the central Javanese period, such as Dieng and Gedong Songo. In the oldest temple in Central Java today, Gana only appears in very few. The depiction of the Gana relief began to develop rapidly in the temples in Central-Southern Java around the 8th-10th century [13]. The existence of the Gana relief on Patirtaan 6 is one proof of when this site was built and included in the period group where the Ngawonggo Site is.

Each tourist attraction of this ancient bath had its own uniqueness and meaning. Based on all of the archaeological remains, it is clear that this ancient bath is part of cultural tourism. Cultural tourism is a destination that offers the tourist with art and culture attractions in some areas [14]. With good management, this destination is important to improve historical awareness of the tourist.

4 Conclusion

The Ngawonggo site is a historical heritage in the form of sacred houses or baths. This site are just known in public in 2017 and hence there still a little information can be found from the existence of this site. Administratively, this site is located in Nanasan Hamlet, Ngawonggo Village, Tajian District, Malang Regency, and geographically located in the Malang Valley which is directly adjacent to Mount Semeru. The site is in a riverfront area. The site is in the form of 6 bathing pools, each of which has physical and unique characteristics. The rich history of these six traditional bathing sites is a potential edu-tourism attraction purpose. The establishment of this site can be traced through the evidence attached to the site. The patirtaan shows the functions and patterns of life of the people supporting the culture of the Ngawonggo site and built by the Hindu community in the past and was probably built in the 10th century for generations. All of the tourist attractions of this ancient bath may trigger the tourists to explore more the value of cultural tourism and raise their historical awareness.

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