PURBAWIDYA
p-ISSN: 2252-3758, e-ISSN: 2528-3618 ■ Terakreditasi SINTA 2
berdasarkan SK Dirjen Riset dan Pengembangan KEMENDIKTISAINTEK Nomor: 10/C/C3/DT.05.00/2025
Vol. 15 (2), November 2026, pp 1051 - 1077 ■ DOI: https://doi.org/10.55981/purbawidya.2026.16267
© 2026 Author (s) Published by Penerbit BRIN,
(https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0).

PENDOPO SI PANJI BANYUMAS: A STUDY OF ICONOGRAPHY AND ICONOLOGY IN THE CONTEXT OF BANYUMAS CULTURE

Sidik Fauji[1*)], Fariz Nizar[2)], Naufal Kresna Diwangkara[3)]
[1]Department of Islamic Civilization History, Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab and Humanities,
Profesor Kiai Haji Saifuddin Zuhri State Islamic University Purwokerto
Jl. A. Yani No.40 A, Banyumas, 53126, Indonesia
[2]Department of Architecture, Faculty of Science and Technology,
Profesor Kiai Haji Saifuddin Zuhri State Islamic University Purwokerto
Jl. MT. Haryono, Purbalingga, 53372, Indonesia
[3]Department of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, Jenderal Soedirman University
Jl. Profesor Dr. HR. Boenyamin No.708, Banyumas, 53122, Indonesia
**e-mail: sidikfauji@uinsaizu.ac.id (corresponding author)*

Naskah diterima: 24 Juni 2026 - Revisi terakhir: 25 September 2026
Disetujui terbit: 22 Oktober 2026 - Terbit: 11 November 2026

Abstract

This study analyzes and interprets the symbolic meanings of the visual elements of Pendopo Si Panji Banyumas through iconographic and iconological approaches. Using a qualitative case-study method grounded in observation, in-depth interviews, literature review, and visual documentation, and validated through source and triangulation method, the analysis follows Erwin Panofsky's three-stage framework: pre-iconographical description, iconographical analysis, and iconological interpretation. The findings show that the decorative motifs of Pendopo Si Panji—including the Pajajaran motif, the Majapahit ukel motif, the lotus motif, triangular forms, and symbolic numerical elements—embody meanings of nobility, spirituality, harmony, resilience, cosmic order, and Islamic values. At the iconological level, the *pendopo* reflects core characteristics of Banyumas culture: simplicity, openness, egalitarianism, and cultural syncretism arising from the interaction of local, Hindu-Buddhist, Islamic, and colonial influences. Historically, Pendopo Si Panji has functioned as a symbol of political legitimacy, cultural continuity, and regional identity since its establishment by Tumenggung Yudanegara II and its 1937 relocation to Purwokerto. It should therefore be understood not merely as a traditional architectural structure but as a living cultural heritage that preserves collective memory, articulates local wisdom, and strengthens Banyumas's cultural identity amid contemporary social change.

Keywords: Pendopo Si Panji; iconography; iconology; Banyumas culture; cultural heritage

INTRODUCTION

The terms iconography and iconology, often paired in encyclopedias and art dictionaries, both refer to the descriptive and classificatory study of visual images in order to interpret the meanings they convey, whether explicit or implicit (Riyanto et al. 2023). Etymologically, iconography derives from the Greek *eikon* (“image”) and *graphein* (“to describe or write”), denoting the identification and classification of what is visually represented, while iconology combines *eikon* with *logos* (“reasoned account”), denoting

the interpretation of the deeper cultural, historical, and ideological meanings that those images carry (Panofsky 1955, 26–54). From an analytical perspective, then, iconography identifies visible forms and symbols, while iconology delves into deeper layers of meaning by connecting them to their underlying social, cultural, and historical contexts. Ornaments can be understood as symbolic representations of culture that serve to convey cultural and historical knowledge, ethical values, and worldviews from one generation to the next (Olaniyan, Egunjobi, and Adegoke 2024, 9). This shows that ornamentation is not merely decorative, but also serves as a medium of visual communication that embodies a system of signs and the collective meanings of society. The *pendopo* can be understood as a manifestation of Javanese society's philosophical ideals, serving as a space for social interaction, collaboration, and reflection. It is not merely a physical structure, but also embodies the values of community, respect for ancestors, and harmony with nature (Purnomo, Maharlika, and Utami 2023), which, from an iconological perspective, reflects Javanese cosmology, which emphasizes the balance between humans, nature, and the spiritual realm. The use of visual semiotics—including calligraphy, geometric patterns, and various symbolic ornaments—in traditional architecture reflects the social values, religious beliefs, and historical narratives that have developed within a society (Wu et al. 2025), so that every visual element in architecture can be interpreted as a cultural text that captures the identity, ideology, and historical dynamics of the community it serves.

Research on other cultural symbols emphasizes the need for documentation and analysis to preserve and interpret their meanings for broader audiences (Hamidon et al. 2025). This aligns with the potential need for a structured analysis of the Pendopo Si Panji Banyumas to prevent the loss of its cultural significance. In this context, the absence of systematic documentation not only risks the erosion of symbolic meanings but also limits the transmission of cultural knowledge across generations, particularly in the face of modernization and cultural homogenization. Studies on Javanese and other regional traditions emphasize the integration of local philosophies and cultural identity into symbolic interpretations (Magiman, Alli, and Abu Bakar 2026), suggesting that symbols should be understood as embedded within living cultural systems rather than as isolated visual elements. However, there is no evidence of similar efforts specifically for Pendopo Si Panji motifs, leaving a gap in understanding their unique cultural significance. This gap indicates not merely a lack of data, but also a missed opportunity to articulate how Banyumasan cultural identity is visually constructed and communicated through architectural ornamentation. Studies on symbols in cultural heritage, particularly as manifested in traditional art, have examined the important role these symbols play in preserving identity and collective memory. However, the connection between these symbols and broader historical and ideological frameworks is often not explicitly articulated (Pilay and Neves 2020). Consequently, symbolic analysis that neglects historical and ideological dimensions risks producing interpretations that are descriptive rather than critical.

Because this study reads architectural ornament as a bearer of cultural meaning, it is first necessary to establish why architecture—and not only painting or sculpture—is a legitimate object of iconographic and iconological analysis. Panofsky himself extended his method beyond panel painting to build form, arguing that architecture functions as a bearer of meaning in the same way as other visual arts, with its ordering systems, proportions, and ornamental programs capable of expressing intellectual and symbolic content beyond mere structural function (Sherer 2020). Within Indonesian scholarship, this extension has already been applied productively to traditional buildings and public art: Purnomo, Maharlika, and Utami (2023) conducted an iconographic-iconological reading of the ornamentation of Pendopo Dalem Wuryaningratan to reveal the symbols and images of Javanese nobility embedded in its decorative program, while Riyanto et al. (2023) applied the same Panofskian framework to interpret the iconography and iconology of murals in Solo. These precedents demonstrate that a pendopo's decorative motifs—like those of Pendopo Si Panji examined here—are not incidental embellishment but a structured visual text open to the same iconographic and iconological reading applied to painting, provided the analysis proceeds through Panofsky's three stages rather than stopping at architectural description alone.

Several previous studies have examined Pendopo Si Panji Banyumas as well as iconographic and iconological studies on other cultural objects. In his thesis on Banyumasan Javanese traditional architecture at the Si Panji Replica Pendopo, Budi Tjahjono K. (2015) highlighted its distinctive architectural characteristics, particularly the Joglo Tajug roof design, which represents the cultural identity of Banyumas. Although the study provides a comprehensive description of the *pendopo's* architectural aspects, it stops at this descriptive level and does not proceed to the iconographic and iconological reading outlined above—that is, it does not treat the building's ornamental program as a system of signs to be interpreted within its historical and cultural context. This is precisely the gap the present study addresses.

A similar study was conducted by Widyandini and Nursruwening (2010), who examined traditional Javanese architecture in the old town center (Kota Lama) of Banyumas, including Pendopo Si Panji. Their research focused primarily on the form and architectural characteristics of the building; however, it did not address the relationship between the *pendopo's* visual elements and the underlying cultural values of Banyumasan society.

Therefore, there is a gap in the research regarding the interpretation of symbolic meaning through the analysis of visual signs and the cultural context in which they were produced. This gap underscores the urgency of employing integrative approaches—such as iconography and iconology—that are capable of bridging visual analysis with socio-historical context, thereby generating a more comprehensive and meaningful understanding of the cultural symbols embedded within Pendopo Si Panji Banyumas.

This study addresses that gap directly: Pendopo Si Panji Banyumas has long served as a vehicle for Banyumasan cultural values, yet—as the review above shows—its architectural forms has been documented while its symbolic content has not been

systematically interpreted. Left unexamined, this symbolic layer risks being reduced to decorative detail rather than recognized as a source of historical and cultural knowledge. This study therefore offers a systematic analysis based on iconography (the mapping of signs) and iconology (the interpretation of meaning within a cultural context), thereby providing a more comprehensive interpretation. This study aims to uncover and explain the symbolic meanings contained in the visual elements of the Pendopo Si Panji Banyumas through an iconographic and iconological analysis.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the researcher employs a qualitative descriptive method. Qualitative research is a method that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from individuals and observed behaviors (Moleong 2007, 4). This approach is chosen because it can explore meanings, symbols, and cultural interpretations in depth within a social context (Aspers and Corte 2019). Furthermore, qualitative research is highly relevant in cultural and architectural studies as it enables the analysis of symbolic meanings and subjective experiences (Wa-Mbaleka and Ekoto 2025). Because Pendopo Si Panji is a standing, functioning heritage building embedded in the ongoing cultural life of Banyumas—rather than a buried or abandoned site to be excavated—this study is methodologically closer to a qualitative case study with an ethnographic orientation than to archaeological fieldwork: cultural-historical information was elicited through direct observation and interviews with knowledgeable members of the living community, consistent with ethnographic and heritage-studies approaches to documenting still-functioning monuments (Moser and Korstjens 2018; Busetto, Wick, and Gumbinger 2020).

Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and literature review. Field observation was used to obtain a contextual understanding of the research object directly (Moser and Korstjens 2018). The first step was observation, conducted by visiting the research site, namely Pendopo Si Panji Banyumas, on June 21, 2025. This observation aimed to gain a real depiction of the physical condition, architectural features, and supporting elements of the *pendopo*, and it was also the occasion on which the visual documentation reproduced in Figures 1–6 of this article was recorded.

Subsequently, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with several Banyumas experts related to Pendopo Si Panji. In-depth interviews are an essential qualitative research technique for comprehensively exploring informants' perspectives, experiences, and interpretations (Busetto, Wick, and Gumbinger 2020). The first interview was conducted with Teguh Trianton (author of the book *"Identitas Wong Banyumas"*) on July 12, 2025.[1] The researcher obtained explanations of the historical aspects of the *pendopo's* establishment, its philosophical values, and its role in shaping Banyumas' cultural identity. Another interview was conducted with Parsito (Public

[1]Teguh Trianton, 48 years old, Banyumas Cultural Expert, interviewed July 12, 2025.

Relations Officer of Banyumas Regency) on August 11, 2025.[2] He provided an institutional perspective regarding the practical functions of Pendopo Si Panji as a center of governance, a reception space, and a venue for official and cultural activities.

To complement the field data, the researcher collected references on Pendopo Si Panji from written sources and visual documentation, such as photographs. This literature review is important for constructing a conceptual framework and strengthening the analysis through previous studies (Snyder 2019).

To ensure data validity, the researcher applied triangulation techniques. Triangulation was conducted by comparing various data sources and methods to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings (Flick 2018). After the data were collected and verified, the researcher analyzed them using Erwin Panofsky's iconographic theory, which includes pre-iconographical description, iconographical analysis, and iconological interpretation (Panofsky 1955, 26–54). The iconography-iconology approach is widely used in visual and cultural studies to reveal symbolic meanings and the historical context of an object (Kress and van Leeuwen 2020).

To examine the decorative elements of Pendopo Si Panji, the analysis was conducted through Panofsky's iconographic stages, which are not only descriptive but also interpretative and contextual within a cultural-historical framework. At the pre-iconographical stage, the analysis focuses on the visual and textual aspects of the artwork by considering the principle of historical correction of style, namely, identifying forms, motifs, colors, and ornamental compositions empirically as a sphere of practical experience before assigning symbolic meaning (Li 2024). In the context of Pendopo Si Panji, this stage enables the researcher to interpret decorative elements as representations of basic Banyumasan cultural forms that remain denotative, while avoiding premature overinterpretation.

At the iconographical stage, the analysis focuses on themes and concepts by applying the principle of historical correction of types, linking visual elements to cultural sources such as local mythology, symbols of power, and traditional Javanese values. At this stage, decorative elements are no longer understood merely as visual forms but as symbols with specific historical references and representational conventions (Li 2024).

At the iconological stage, the analysis aims to uncover intrinsic meaning through synthetic intuition based on the history of cultural symptoms, thereby interpreting decorative elements as manifestations of the worldview of the supporting community. This stage requires integrating interdisciplinary knowledge—history, anthropology, and the humanities—to interpret deeper symbolic values, as iconology seeks to reveal intrinsic meanings that reflect a society's mental structures and culture (Bühren and Jasiński 2024).

Thus, the application of Panofsky's three stages not only elaborates the forms and meanings of the decorative elements of Pendopo Si Panji in a layered manner but also

[2]Parsito, 58 years old, Public Relations Officer of Banyumas Regency, interviewed August 11, 2025.

situates them within the dynamics of Banyumas culture as a living and historical symbolic expression.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Historical Context of the Pendopo Si Panji Banyumas

Before proceeding to the iconographic and iconological analysis, this section establishes the historical setting of Pendopo Si Panji. Consistent with Panofsky's method, iconological interpretation requires situating visual forms within the historical and cultural conditions from which they emerged (Panofsky 1955, 26–54); the following account provides that context rather than constituting a historical study in its own right.

The Si Panji Pendopo was first built in 1706 by Tumenggung Yudanegara II, who served as the 7th Regent of Banyumas from 1707 to 1743 (Soedjito 1983). The *pendapa* served not only as the center of governmental activities but also as a symbol of Banyumas's political and cultural authority. The name "Si Panji" attached to the hall holds both symbolic and historical significance. The naming was done to commemorate the son of Tumenggung Yudanegara II, Panji Gandasubrata, who was also known as Bagus Kunthing. From childhood, Panji Gandasubrata was raised at the Kartasura Palace by his grandmother, Raden Ayu Bendara (Ricklefs 2012).

In 1816, the administrative structure of Banyumas Regency underwent a significant change, marked by the division of the administrative region into two separate entities: Banyumas Kasepuhan, centered in Banyumas under the leadership of Raden Adipati Cokronegara, and Banyumas Kanoman, based in Patikraja and led by Raden Tumenggung Martadiredja (Ricklefs 2012).

Following the death of Raden Tumenggung Martadiredja, leadership of Banyumas Kanoman passed to his son, Adipati Martadiredja II. It was during his reign that the administrative capital was gradually relocated. First, in 1831, the administrative center was moved from Patikraja to Ajibarang, although this lasted only a short time, until 1832 (Soemardjan 2009). Subsequently, in 1832, Adipati Martadiredja II again moved the administrative center from Ajibarang to Purwokerto, which eventually developed into the administrative and governmental center of Banyumas Regency to this day (Nordholt 2023).

As the 20th century began, the Pendopo Si Panji underwent significant changes. During the reign of Adipati Aryo Sujiman Gandasubrata (Carey 2007), the 20th Regent of Banyumas (1933–1950), a pivotal event occurred that transformed the status and function of this *pendopo*. This was related to a policy of the Dutch colonial government that abolished the status of Purwokerto Regency on January 1, 1936. This decision resulted in the relocation of the administrative center of Banyumas Regency from the old town of Banyumas to Purwokerto, which was subsequently designated as the new capital.

The crucial decision to relocate the capital was finally made during the administration of Kanjeng Raden Adipati Ario (KRAA) Sudjiman Mertadiredja Gandasubrata, who served as Regent of Banyumas from 1933 to 1950. Based on

geographical and infrastructure considerations, Purwokerto was selected as the new location for the regency capital. The location of Purwokerto was considered more geographically strategic, situated in the center of the administrative region of Banyumas Regency, while also offering advantages in terms of transportation connectivity, particularly due to the presence of a railway line that facilitated the movement of people, goods, and government services. The reactivation of the Pendopo Si Panji in Purwokerto was officially inaugurated on January 7, 1937 (Lombard 1996), marking a new chapter in the history of Banyumas Regency's government while solidifying Purwokerto's role as the center of governmental, economic, and cultural activities in the Banyumas region.

One of the most important elements of the relocation was the Pilar Si Panji (Sutrisno 2002), which is traditionally regarded as a symbol of the strength, legitimacy, and continuity of the Banyumas government. To this day, the people of Banyumas firmly believe that the Pilar Si Panji must not be carried across the Serayu River. This posed a unique challenge, as the geographical route from the old city of Banyumas to Purwokerto requires one to cross the Serayu River. Faced with this dilemma, local leaders and community figures ultimately made a decision that was deemed the wisest solution while remaining in harmony with the cultural values held by the community.

It was decided that the process of relocating the Pilar Si Panji would not involve crossing the Serayu River directly, but rather by transporting it to the upper reaches of the Serayu River, specifically to the main spring known as the “Bima Lukar” Spring in the Dieng Mountains. From this sacred point, the Si Panji Pillar (Sutrisno 2002) was then carried around the Serayu River, so that the journey to Purwokerto could be made without having to cross the river. This process not only reflects respect for traditional beliefs but also demonstrates the integration of cultural rituals, political symbols, and geographical adaptation within the governance dynamics of Banyumas.

To this day, the people of Banyumas still widely recognize the name Si Panji as the distinctive name for the regency hall that stands proudly in the heart of Purwokerto. This building serves not only as a center for administrative activities but also as a ceremonial space for various official local government events. The fact that the Si Panji Pendapa has endured and been well maintained demonstrates the high regard the people of Banyumas hold for its historical value and the symbols of traditional authority associated with the building.

Analysis of the Pre-Iconographic Stage of the Pendopo Si Panji Banyumas

The pre-iconographic stage, as defined by Erwin Panofsky, focuses on the visual description of what is immediately visible in an artwork, without delving into symbolic or deeper cultural meanings. This stage is concerned with the primary or natural meaning, which includes both factual elements (e.g., objects, figures, and their arrangements) and expressive qualities (e.g., gestures, emotions) (Silva and Dias 2025). Pre-iconography encompasses an initial response to the textual aspects contained within the boundaries of artistic motifs. Artistic motifs themselves refer to primary meanings formed through a combination of factual and expressive meanings. Artistic motifs often embody a synthesis

of factual and expressive meanings, serving as a "vocabulary" of cultural, emotional, and symbolic communication. They anchor identity, evoke emotional responses, and convey layered meanings that resonate within specific cultural and historical contexts (Babakamal 2025). Factual meanings are understood through the identification of forms that are visually apparent in art objects, whether static or changing through specific actions or events. Visual forms, including static objects (e.g., sculptures, paintings) and dynamic elements (e.g., actions or events), serve as vehicles for expressing cultural, social, and ideological values (Hasan Al Fahmawee 2022). This process involves observing and recognizing the configuration of pure formal elements, including lines, shapes, colors, materials, and production techniques. The symbolic meanings of colors, shapes, and lines play a significant role in influencing perception and design decisions. These elements are often studied to understand their psychological impact and cultural significance (Mirtalipova, Yunuskhodjayeva, and Kamilova 2019). Furthermore, this identification involves recognizing naturally occurring objects, such as humans, animals, plants, and tools. In architectural studies, this approach aligns with visual morphological analysis, which emphasizes the importance of interpreting physical elements as the foundation for an initial understanding of spatial meaning (Rapoport 1990).

Meanwhile, expressive meaning is derived from a deeper observation of the art object through an empathetic approach. Empathy plays a central role in deriving meaning from art by enabling viewers to connect with the emotions and intentions embedded in the artwork. This connection often involves a process of "feeling into" the art object, where the observer projects their emotions or inner states onto the artwork, creating a shared emotional experience (Mansur and DeFelipe 2023). This process involves the researcher's ability to recognize familiar patterns and a sense of familiarity with the objects and events depicted in the artwork. Thus, the researcher seeks to identify the relationship between visual forms and the events being represented. This relationship allows the artwork's expressive quality to come to the surface, so that this aspect can be interpreted as the character or body language of the object depicted. The relationship between the observer and the artwork plays a crucial role. Observers often perceive expressive qualities as "perceptual structures" that arise from their interaction with the visual elements of the artwork, much like interpreting body language in real life (Parovel 2025). This approach is relevant to the phenomenological perspective in architecture, which emphasizes sensory experience and emotional engagement in the reading of space (Pallasmaa 2012). Through this approach, researchers can capture a richer, deeper symbolic meaning from existing visual elements (Panofsky 1955, 26–54).

A pre-iconographic analysis of the Pendopo Si Panji Banyumas focuses on a visual description of the building's appearance without delving into deeper symbolic interpretations. Typologically, this structure is a typical Javanese open pavilion featuring a symmetrical, single-peaked *limasan* roof supported by a row of wooden columns. Its primary structure features large columns *(saka)* standing on stone bases, while overlapping beams and wooden trusses serve as both connectors and roof supports. Stone bases are commonly used in traditional architecture to support wooden columns (Omar

2019). These bases provide durability and protect wooden elements from environmental damage, such as humidity and rain. Treatments like polymerization of hydrophobic monomers or fluorination reduce wood's hydrophilic nature, improving water resistance and dimensional stability (Pouzet et al. 2019). In terms of materials, the use of exposed natural-colored wood and clay roof tiles creates a warm and simple aesthetic, while the floor, slightly raised above ground level, defines the boundary between the outdoor space and the main hall. While wood offers warmth and simplicity, it is prone to discoloration and degradation when exposed to sunlight and environmental factors. Protective treatments, such as UV stabilizers or coatings, can enhance its longevity while preserving its natural appearance (Liu et al. 2025). Architecturally, this design embodies the principles of adaptive tropical vernacular architecture, particularly in its approach to natural ventilation and protection from heat and rain—hallmarks of traditional Javanese architecture (Oliver 2006).

In terms of composition, this *pendopo* stands on a spacious, open plot of land, oriented toward the city's public space. The surrounding courtyard reinforces its monumental character and provides an area for communal activities. The presence of columns arranged at regular intervals creates a visual rhythm and a sense of order. The repetition of architectural elements, such as columns, contributes to rhythmic unity. This rhythmic arrangement helps organize space visually and temporally, fostering a sense of balance and coherence (Abdulhussain, Abbas, and Haddad 2023). At the same time, the open interior space, devoid of walls, fosters an egalitarian atmosphere and facilitates gatherings. From a spatial perspective, this pattern of openness can be understood as a manifestation of the concept of social space in Javanese culture, which emphasizes inclusivity and collective interaction (Geertz 1973). The building's actual function is also evident: it serves as a multipurpose space for official events, community gatherings, and even artistic performances involving a broad audience, demonstrating that physical form and social function are closely intertwined.

The expressive meaning of this *pendopo's* form can be perceived through the authority and openness conveyed by its wide roof span and spacious interior. Architectural forms often carry symbolic and expressive meanings that go beyond their functional purpose. These meanings are shaped by structural systems, spatial organization, and cultural context; for example, the relationship between structural elements like roofs and enclosures can define the spatial and expressive value of a building (Lee 2026). The structural symmetry and regularity of the columns evoke a sense of order and balance, while the predominance of wood and traditional architectural forms underscore the continuity of local heritage. Wood has been a predominant material in traditional architecture due to its availability, durability, and cultural significance. It is often used in structural and decorative elements, as seen in Malay, Anatolian, and Eastern Black Sea vernacular architecture (Zain, Norita, and Andi 2022). From the perspective of architectural semiotics, these elements can be interpreted as visual signs representing the values of harmony, hierarchy, and social order in Javanese culture (Eco 1976).

Chronologically, secondary sources present varying accounts: some cite its establishment in the late 16th century by Duke Wargautama II (Mrapat), while others date it to the period 1706–1743 during the reign of Duke Yudanegara II, with the important note that the building was relocated to Purwokerto in 1937. These visual facts and chronological data are still recorded as factual information, without further interpretation regarding symbolic or historical-political meanings, as such matters fall under the realms of iconography and iconology. Iconology, on the other hand, delves deeper into the cultural, historical, and symbolic meanings underlying visual representations; it interprets the broader context and intrinsic meanings of the subject matter (Sartini 2024). Nevertheless, these discrepancies in historical data also indicate the dynamic construction of historical narratives, which, in architectural studies, is often influenced by processes of cultural and local political reinterpretation (Waterson 1990).

Iconographic Analysis of the Pendopo Si Panji in Banyumas

As established in the Introduction, the ornamental program of a *pendopo* constitutes a legitimate object of iconographic analysis in the same sense as painting or sculpture (Sherer 2020), and prior studies of Javanese *pendopo* ornamentation provide a direct precedent for this reading (Purnomo, Maharlika, and Utami 2023). Before turning to the individual motifs of Pendopo Si Panji, it is useful to situate them within the broader typology of Indonesian decorative art. Indonesian wood-carving traditions conventionally classify decorative motifs according to the historical kingdom associated with their style of origin—commonly distinguishing, for instance, Pajajaran, Mataram, and Majapahit styles (Prabowo 2019)—alongside plant-derived forms such as *ukel* and *lung-lungan* and other conventional patterns. The most comprehensive early documentation of this typology remains Van der Hoop's (1949) survey of Indonesian ornamental design, which catalogued geometric, floral, faunal, and figural motifs across the archipelago and remains a foundational reference for identifying and naming traditional Indonesian ornament. The analysis below identifies the motifs found on Pendopo Si Panji within this established typological convention.

Iconographic analysis is a stage aimed at identifying the secondary meanings contained within a work of art. Iconographic analysis focuses on the descriptive and classificatory study of images to understand their direct and indirect meanings. It often involves identifying symbolic elements and situating them within broader historical or cultural frameworks (Horton and Gray 2022). This process involves reading and interpreting the meanings of the textual aspects examined in the previous stage. Textual analysis is used to explore cultural representations, societal norms, and power relations, making it a valuable tool in fields like science communication, education, and media studies (Jurgens et al. 2024). At this stage, these aspects are then linked to broader themes and concepts. To fully understand these relationships, careful observation of visual forms and the themes and concepts manifested through customs and practical experience is required. The study of visual culture benefits from interdisciplinary approaches that integrate art history, design studies, and cultural theory. These approaches help uncover

the relationships between visual forms and the socio-political or historical contexts in which they are produced and consumed (Rampley 2019). Furthermore, this process also requires the ability to observe and understand the relationships that emerge between the concepts and themes present within the artwork. Such understanding can be derived from various visual images, relevant literary sources, and the allegories contained within the artwork (Panofsky 1955, 26–54).

To achieve a sharp iconographic analysis, a framework of confirmation is required, underpinned by a corrective principle known as 'historical typology'. Historical typology is a methodological approach that categorizes phenomena based on their structural and substantive characteristics rather than superficial resemblance. It emphasizes understanding historical phenomena as interconnected wholes within their spatio-temporal contexts (Bobkova and Istoriya 2025). The concept of historical typology refers to specific historical conditions that influence conventions regarding themes or concepts expressed in the form of visual objects and specific events. Visual analytics approaches explore how historical time and events are represented visually, raising questions about the separation of idealized images of time from contingent, context-specific views. This highlights the evolving conventions of visualizing historical moments (Davis, Bevan, and Kudikov 2013). These conditions apply within a specific temporal and geographical context. By employing a typological approach, iconographic analysis can be more focused and accurate, as it enables researchers to identify the conventions that shape the themes and concepts of the artwork in question (Panofsky 1955, 26–54).

At the iconographic stage, the analysis of objects focuses on the formal conventions found in the composition of images, narratives, and symbolism employed in works of art. Panofsky's own three-stage method—pre-iconographic description, iconographic analysis, and iconological interpretation—remains the foundational framework for understanding these layers of meaning in artworks (Panofsky 1955, 26–54; see also Cerna and Vidaurre Arenas 2024 for a contemporary application). This approach is undertaken by combining literal knowledge with the corrective principles of historical-typological interpretation. Historical interpretation often extends beyond literal understanding to include connotative meanings; postmodernist approaches, for instance, emphasize deconstruction and the influence of power relations in shaping historical narratives, suggesting that literal knowledge alone is insufficient for comprehensive historical analysis (Egorov and Kamenev 2018). In this way, the discussion is directed more towards specific themes and concepts manifested through the actions or representations of objects and events. In this context, the concept, according to W. Gulo, is understood as something abstract, yet referring to something concrete (Herdriyana 2009).

Therefore, the analysis of artistic concepts can be viewed as a philosophical endeavor aimed at identifying the creative thoughts and ideas that underpin the formation of a work of art. This process involves breaking down the elements present in a work of art into smaller components and then determining the characteristics and functions of each

of these components. Structural analysis can enhance creative thinking and provide instrumental skills for creating new artistic works, as it helps artists and designers understand the compositional aspects of art (Pylypchuk 2024). Based on this perspective, humans acting as agents in the process of creating a work of art or cultural artifact play a crucial role in shaping the concepts underpinning the realization of that artifact. Artworks and cultural artifacts serve as extensions of self-identity and collective memory. They anchor personal and cultural narratives, shaping how individuals and societies understand themselves (Gargaro et al. 2018). Consequently, to understand the themes and concepts contained within a work of art, it is necessary to trace the historical background that underpins the decision to create the work. Art accumulates layers of meaning over time, reflecting the social, economic, and political trends of its era. For instance, contemporary art often incorporates themes of activism, market dynamics, and participatory citizenship, which are rooted in historical developments (Wagner 2024). In the case of Saka Si Panji, this research focuses on efforts to understand the historical background underpinning the selection and naming of the Pendapa Si Panji. By understanding the historical aspects that influenced this decision, it is hoped that a broader insight can be gained into the themes, concepts, and symbolic meanings conveyed by this artifact.

The Visual Elements and Cultural Significance of the Si Panji Banyumas Pendopo



Figure 1. *"Decorative Motifs of the Pajajaran Ukel in the Pendopo of Si Panji"*
(Document of Fauji 21 June 2025)

The Pajajaran motif, as shown in Figure 1, is located at the center of the ceiling of the Pendopo Si Panji. Following the typological convention introduced above (Prabowo 2019), this decorative style is classified as Pajajaran because it corresponds to the ornamental idiom widely found in West Java as a product of the Pajajaran Kingdom's courtly culture. In traditional Sundanese historiography (the *Carita Parahyangan* chronicle tradition), the Pajajaran Kingdom—the Sunda Kingdom centered at Pakuan Pajajaran—is conventionally dated from 670 CE, when Tarusbawa founded it following

the decline of Tarumanagara, to 1579 CE, when its capital fell to the forces of the Sultanate of Banten under Maulana Yusuf; some historians instead date its founding to 932 CE on the basis of the Kebon Kopi II inscription, so the exact starting point remains a matter of historiographical debate, though the 1579 end date is well attested. Its cultural legacy persists symbolically in modern Sundanese arts, such as *tembang Sunda, degung*, and *tari tayub*. These arts, originally aristocratic, have been democratized and adapted to reflect regional identity rather than class distinctions (Spiller 2024). Many relics of this style can still be found today at the Tomb of Sunan Gunung Jati. The tomb is part of the Astana Sunan Gunung Jati complex in Cirebon, West Java, which reflects a blend of Sundanese, Javanese, Islamic, Hindu, and Buddhist cultural influences. This acculturation is evident in the design and aesthetics of the site, including its symbolic gates and ceramic embellishments (Santosa and Hendryana 2025). In this decorative motif, rounded shapes are evident as all the carved forms are expressed as circles or convex shapes. The Pajajaran decorative motif consists of:

- Main leaf: the main leaf or large lobe is convex or rounded. This is a key feature of the decorative pattern.
- *Angkup*: in this decorative motif, the shape is convex or rounded. Shoots usually grow from the top of the *angkup* stem.
- Horn: In this Pajajaran decorative motif, there are small leaf shapes growing on the surface of the main leaf or within a large recess. This is a distinctive feature of West Java, reflecting the presence of horned animals, namely the rhinoceros.
- *Endhong*: leaves that grow behind the main leaf, arranged in tiers from the base to the top of the main leaf. They also serve to fill in empty spaces.
- *Simbar*: on the main front leaf, specifically behind the midrib, small leaves grow in rows pointing upwards; these are commonly known as *simbar*. This further enhances the grandeur of the Pajajaran decorative style.
- *Benangan*: sloping in shape, rising from the bottom to the top, and ending at the main spiral.
- Fragments: as is typical of carving motifs, fragments serve to embellish or add fluidity to the form of the fragmented leaves.
- Bracts: Small leaves that grow around the main leaf; they also serve to complement or fill in empty spaces.



Figure 2. *"Majapahit Ukel Motif"* (Document of Fauji, 21 June 2025)

The Majapahit Ukel motif is located in the upper center. Consistent with the typological convention noted above (Prabowo 2019), this decorative motif is classified in the Majapahit style; its form, inspired by plants, also carries a sacred or symbolic function. Plant motifs were extensively used in architectural decoration, such as in the Al-e Buya mosques, where they reflected pre-Islamic and Islamic cultural beliefs (Jansoz and Sodaei 2021). Plants are a source of life for other creatures, a gift of great value in relation to human life; across societies, plants hold immense cultural, spiritual, and symbolic value and are integral to traditions, rituals, and the preservation of biocultural diversity (Walsh, Wolkis, and Maunder 2024). Reading this recurring plant-derived form through Panofsky's iconological method of synthetic intuition (Panofsky 1955, 26–54)—which integrates field observation with the comparative motif literature cited above—the *Lung-lungan (ukel* motif) can be interpreted as an expression of glory and nobility, consistent with the courtly associations of plant ornamentation described above.

Essentially, every human being possesses three main elements, which encompass all the elements within a person. These three elements are the spiritual (foundation), the intellectual (power), and the emotional (burden). The spiritual foundation is also seen as essential for moral development, cultural heritage, and internal balance, emphasizing its role in personal and societal growth (Šordan 2013). The spiritual reflects the relationship between humans (servants) and God the Creator; this means that everything rests upon a single entity, namely God the Creator. Intellectuality reflects humanity's relationship with the Messenger of Allah SWT, namely the Prophet Muhammad SAW; this means that God sent a Messenger to teach various laws and ways of thinking so that He might lead humanity out of darkness and onto the path of light. Prophethood is seen as a divine institution that bridges the relationship between Allah and humanity, with the Prophet serving as an intermediary to convey divine knowledge in a comprehensible manner (Çelik and Gür 2023). According to Plato, by contrast, the human body, ontologically speaking, consists of three parts: the head, the chest, and the abdomen. Within each part

of the body resides a level of the soul: reason is located in the head, the will in the chest, and desire in the abdomen.



Figure 3. *"Lotus Flower Motif"* (Document of Fauji 21 June 2025)

The lotus flower motif, as shown in Figure 3, is found on the lower side of the ceiling of the Pendopo Si Panji. In Islam, particularly in the teachings of Sunan Drajat, the lotus flower is depicted as a *'tunjung kang tanpa telaga'*—a lotus that can thrive without a pond. It is a flower that no longer depends on the mud of worldly existence; in other words, the lotus represents a spiritual attainment that has transcended the limitations of the finite world. In broader cultural contexts, the lotus has been adapted into religious architecture and art, symbolizing purity and enlightenment. For instance, in Javanese mosques and Christian churches, lotus motifs are reinterpreted to reflect inter-religious aesthetics and spiritual ideals (Wiyono et al. 2026). Similarly, in Tang Dynasty art, the lotus was a prominent symbol of purity and enlightenment within Buddhist iconography (Xinxuan and Zhang 2025). Philosophically, this expression depicts the essence of the perfect human being (insan kamil), who is regarded as a reflection of the Absolute Being. Insan Kamil is seen as the manifestation of divine attributes, embodying the essence of God's qualities. This ideal human being achieves spiritual and moral perfection through self-cultivation and submission to God (Lubis and Nasution 2025). The lotus flower, as a decorative motif, takes three forms: *padma, utpala*, and *kumuda*. However, the form most commonly used in ornamentation is the *padma*. It features a red flower bud.

Iconographically, the repetition of lotus flowers combined with vines on the ceiling suggests the transformation of natural forms into an ornamental language. Iconologically, their placement at the top of the space can be understood as a symbol linking natural beauty to the idea of spiritual attainment. The lotus, which grows from a muddy environment yet produces a pure flower, serves as a metaphor for humanity's journey toward liberation from worldly attachments and the attainment of moral and spiritual perfection. From this perspective, the lotus motif can be linked to the concept of **insan kamil**—the ideal human who attains perfection through self-cultivation and surrender to God, thereby becoming a reflection of divine attributes (Lubis and Nasution,

2025). Thus, the presence of the lotus motif on the ceiling of the Pendopo Si Panji does not merely serve to beautify the architectural space but can be interpreted as a representation of the ideas of purity, self-transformation, and the human journey toward spiritual perfection.



Figure 4. *"Triangle Pattern Ukel"* (Document of Fauzi 21 June 2025)

The Pajajaran-motif *ukel* is situated at the top and appears on both sides. This decorative motif, whose form is inspired by plants, also serves a sacred or symbolic function. The "Tree of Life" motif in Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist art symbolizes life, protection, and nurturing, reflecting its sacred essence (Gill 2003). In Islamic art, plant motifs such as palm trees and pinecones symbolize divine unity, resilience, and growth, often reflecting spiritual and cultural values (Alghamdi and Al-Ashwal 2025). The fern has a curve at the tip of its young leaves, forming a circle. This circle symbolizes the cycle of human life—sometimes up, sometimes down; sometimes happy, sometimes sad; the elderly cherishing the young, and the young respecting the elderly: that humans will always be grateful for life's trials, which ultimately reach their end with death. Ferns, as they are commonly known, can grow almost anywhere—in forests, on the coast, on rocks, and even on dry ground. In the same way, people must be able to survive wherever they find themselves.

At the iconological level, the overall composition of Pajajaran motifs in the photograph can be understood as a representation of a worldview that positions nature as a medium for conveying the values of human life. The stylization of plants, the repetition of forms, bilateral symmetry, and the prevalence of spiral patterns indicate that nature is not merely imitated visually but is transformed into a symbolic language. Plants that grow and flourish serve as an analogy for human life; spiral forms symbolize cycles and change; while the fern's ability to thrive in diverse environments serves as a metaphor for human resilience. From this perspective, carvings can be understood as a visual representation of values regarding how humans should live their lives: being able to adapt, endure trials, respect intergenerational bonds, and recognize that life follows a cycle that ultimately leads to death. Thus, the beauty of the ornamentation in these carvings cannot be separated from its symbolic function, as the decorative forms simultaneously serve as

a medium for articulating the worldview and cultural values of the communities that created them.



Figure 5. *"Majapahit Ukel Motif"* (Document of Fauji 21 June 2025)

The Majapahit Ukel motif is also found on the upper sections of the pillars, as shown in Figure 5. There are four on each main pillar. These decorative motifs, whose forms are inspired by plants, also serve a sacred or symbolic function. In Art Nouveau, plant motifs symbolized the seamless connection between humans and nature. These motifs, inspired by native flora, were used in architecture, fashion, and interior design to evoke energy, movement, and natural beauty (Dowell and Bertoncino 2019). Plants are a source of life for other creatures. *Lung-lungan (ukel motifs)* carry symbolic meanings of glory and nobility. The number four appears to represent cosmic order and stability, as seen in the four phases of the moon and the four cardinal directions of the earth: north, south, east, and west. The four cardinal directions and their associated deities were integrated into broader cosmological systems, such as the yin-yang and Five Phases theories, during the Han dynasty. This integration further reinforced the number four as a symbol of balance and universal order (Lázár 2026). We have expressions such as 'the four corners of the earth'.

Iconographically, the carvings on the upper part of the pillar in the photograph depict a relatively symmetrical arrangement of floral motifs flanking the central section. The curved, upward-reaching tendrils convey a sense of growth, movement, and continuity, while their placement on the pillar integrates them seamlessly into the architectural structure. Iconologically, the presence of four motifs on the main pillar can be understood not merely as decorative repetition, but as an affirmation of the ideas of balance, order, and spatial harmony. The number four can be associated with the concept of the four cardinal directions that encompass the entire space, while the ever-expanding, winding vine motifs can be interpreted as symbols of growth, continuity, and glory. Thus, these carvings can be interpreted as a representation of the relationship between natural elements, architectural structures, and cosmological perspectives, in which the beauty of plants simultaneously serves as a symbolic language to convey ideas about the order and balance of life.

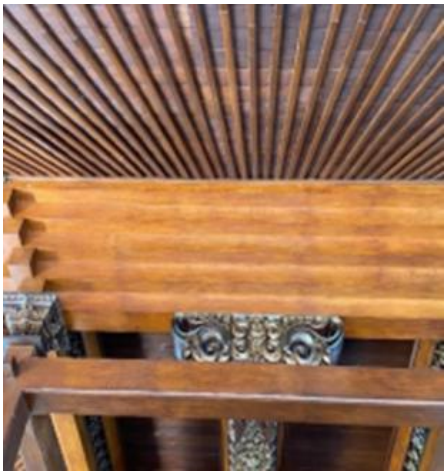


Figure 6. *"Step"* (Document of Fauji 21 June 2025)

There are five steps. In Islam, the number five is considered sacred as it represents the five pillars of Islam: the Shahada, prayer, fasting, zakat, and the Hajj. The Five Pillars are not only acts of worship but also serve as a unifying framework for Muslims worldwide, transcending cultural and socio-political differences. They provide a shared sense of religious identity and community (*Ummah*) (Alzeer and Abuzinadah 2024). The number five, therefore, symbolizes the completeness and structure of Islamic practice.

At the pre-iconographic level, the number five is evident in the arrangement of five vertical steps that guide a person from a lower position to a higher one. Visually, the presence of the staircase signifies movement, stages, and a process toward a goal. In an iconographic reading, the number five can be associated with the concept of Khamsah or the Five Pillars of Islam: the shahada, salat, zakat, fasting, and the hajj. These five pillars form the primary foundation of a Muslim's religious practice and serve as a unifying framework for the Muslim community across various cultural and socio-political contexts. As noted by Alzeer and Abuzinadah (2024), the Five Pillars of Islam function not only as ritual obligations but also shape the religious identity and sense of community (*ummah*) among Muslims. Thus, the five steps in the photograph can be interpreted iconologically as a representation of a gradual spiritual journey, in which each stage implies a process of strengthening faith and practicing Islamic teachings. The staircase leading upward can also be read as a metaphor for ascent, elevation, and humanity's approach to God. In this context, the number five does not merely denote a quantity but conveys ideas of order, foundation, structural perfection, and a religious journey. If the staircase is part of the architecture of a place of worship or a building with a religious function, this meaning becomes even stronger because its architectural form interacts directly with the religious practices and experiences of the community.

An Iconological Analysis of the Pendopo Si Panji in the Context of Banyumas Culture

According to Atmono (2013), the main characteristics of Banyumas art and culture are openness, simplicity, and harmony. These values are reflected in the decorative patterns of the Pendapa Si Panji, which emphasize a sense of simplicity. This is evident from its exterior, which features no conspicuous ornamentation.

The simple exterior of the Pendapa Si Panji (as shown in Figure 7) also somewhat diminishes the sense of grandeur of this *pendapa*, making it appear more down-to-earth. The low pitch of the roof further reinforces its character of simplicity. This is in keeping with the egalitarian nature of the people of Banyumas, who are not fond of hierarchical distinctions within society. In addition to its simplicity, the pendapa reflects a sense of openness, much like other typical Javanese *pendapa*s, which lack walls on their sides (Tjahjono, Rukayah, and Endrianto 2015).

The simplicity and openness of the *pendopo* reflect the egalitarian ethos of Banyumas society. The *pendopo*, which has no walls, creates an open space that serves as a hub for community activities, ranging from meetings and artistic performances to social gatherings. This demonstrates that traditional architecture plays a role in shaping open and egalitarian patterns of social interaction.

The second characteristic of Banyumas culture is that it was formed through a fusion of various influences, not only from Sundanese culture, but also from ancient Javanese and medieval Javanese cultures, which were steeped in animism and dynamism. It was only later that Hindu-Buddhist, Islamic, and, finally, colonial influences entered the picture. According to Santosa (2018), ancient Javanese culture is characterized by urban planning that uses a north–south axis as a sacred axis, similar to the urban planning patterns found across Java in general. Meanwhile, traces of Sundanese cultural influence in Banyumas can be seen in Yudanegara II's use of the term 'Bale Bapang' (Sundanese) to refer to the *pringgitan* structure behind the Pendapa Si Panji, although its actual form resembles a traditional village house (Javanese). However, as there is no other supporting evidence, it is difficult to confirm that traditional Sundanese architecture, particularly the Babancong, influenced the roof of the Pendapa Si Panji (Tjahjono, Rukayah, and Endrianto 2015). This is because the roof of the Pendapa Si Panji is not a Tajug Pokok—which is synonymous with the Babancong—but rather a variant of the *tajug* known in traditional Javanese architecture as the *Tajug/Masjidan Lawakan*. Indeed, according to Nix (1949), such a variant of roof shape is not found in traditional Sundanese architecture.

The third characteristic is that within Banyumasan culture, there is a concept of divinity expressed through the principle that 'culture frames religion'. This means that the understanding of divinity is embedded within the local cultural context, as found in the arts, traditional expressions, folklore, and so on. Consequently, this allows the traditional architecture of the Pendapa Si Panji to employ the sacred form of the *tajug* to frame the concept of divinity, rather than the opulent form of the *joglo* (Tjahjono, Rukayah, and Endrianto 2015). The choice of the Tajug as the roof emphasizes the religious dimension rather than the symbolic opulence of the *joglo*. The Tajug is closely associated with mosques and Islamic sacredness, yet within the Banyumas context, it is integrated with local cultural values. Consequently, the architecture of the Pendopo Si Panji demonstrates

a process of syncretism between religious values and the distinctive local wisdom of Banyumas.

According to Priyadi (2013), another characteristic of the Banyumas people, apart from their distinctive style of speech known as *'Cablaka'*, is that they possess two contrasting traits: they are both affirmative and critical, which can be somewhat confusing to those unfamiliar with this. The affirmative trait is evident in the loyalty shown by the Banyumas people towards their superiors. Meanwhile, the critical character is seen when a superior makes a mistake or acts unjustly; in such cases, the people of Banyumas will adopt a critical stance and stage a protest in the form of indirect (symbolic) resistance. This can be classified as the fourth characteristic, as it lies outside the three cultural characteristics of Banyumas according to Atmono's theory. This fourth characteristic could serve as an alternative explanation for the emergence of the *tajug* form in the Pendapa Si Panji. This seems more plausible than the theory of Sundanese cultural influence.



Figure 7. *"Tajug Masjidan (the uppermost part of the roof)"*
(Source: Tim Ahli Cagar Budaya (TACB) Kabupaten Banyumas, n.d.)

Alternative 1: the shape of the *tajug* on the Pendapa Si Panji represents an expression of loyalty to Sunan Paku Buwana II, who was also in the process of building the Surakarta Palace; or, conversely, Alternative 2: the shape of the *tajug* on the Pendapa Si Panji represents a form of criticism or covert resistance towards Sunan Amangkurat, his successor.

The *tajug* form at the Pendopo Si Panji is not merely a symbol of sacredness, but also has a political context within 18th-century Java. During the shift of the center of power from Mataram to Surakarta, architectural symbols served as a means of political communication. Thus, the choice of the *tajug* form for the Pendopo Si Panji can be interpreted as a statement of Yudanegara II's political stance towards the new center of power in Mataram.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the symbolic meanings of Pendopo Si Panji Banyumas can be understood through a systematic application of Erwin Panofsky's three-stage

iconographic-iconological framework. The analysis was developed from field observation, visual documentation, in-depth interviews, and relevant literature, with the findings compared across sources and methods through triangulation. The analytical process proceeded from the identification of visible forms to the recognition of their conventional meanings and, finally, to their interpretation within the historical and cultural context of Banyumas. This methodological sequence enables the study to move beyond a descriptive account of architectural ornamentation toward an interpretation of the cultural meanings embedded in *the pendopo*.

At the pre-iconographical stage, the visual documentation of Pendopo Si Panji was examined by identifying its observable architectural and ornamental features, including the Pajajaran motif, Majapahit *ukel*, lotus motif, triangular forms, the arrangement of four motifs on the pillars, and the five-step staircase. At this stage, the forms, composition, repetition, spatial position, and architectural relationships of the motifs were established as the primary visual data before assigning deeper symbolic meanings. This stage provided the empirical basis for the subsequent interpretation rather than treating the motifs directly as predetermined symbols.

At the iconographical stage, the identified forms were then related to established ornamental typologies, cultural conventions, historical references, religious concepts, and traditional Javanese values. The Pajajaran and Majapahit *ukel* motifs, lotus ornament, numerical elements, and other decorative forms were therefore interpreted not solely according to their visual appearance but by comparing them with relevant cultural and historical sources. Through this process, the motifs were associated with concepts of nobility, spirituality, purity, resilience, balance, cosmic order, and Islamic religious values. The identification of these meanings was thus based on the relationship between visual forms and their established cultural conventions, consistent with Panofsky's principle of historical correction of types.

At the iconological stage, the meanings identified in the previous stage were synthesized with the historical circumstances and cultural characteristics of Banyumas. The interpretation demonstrates that the ornamental and architectural elements of Pendopo Si Panji cannot be separated from the cultural interaction among local traditions, Hindu-Buddhist heritage, Islamic values, and later colonial influences. The simplicity of the building, its openness, egalitarian spatial character, the use of the *tajug* roof, and the symbolic treatment of its ornaments collectively indicate a cultural worldview in which religious and historical meanings are negotiated through local Banyumasan values. This interpretation is supported by the study's integration of historical information, interview perspectives, visual observations, and relevant literature, in accordance with Panofsky's requirement that iconological interpretation uncover intrinsic meaning through the synthesis of cultural and historical evidence.

The methodological process therefore shows that the visual elements of Pendopo Si Panji function at several interconnected levels of meaning. The pre-iconographical reading establishes what is visually present; the iconographical analysis explains what the identified forms conventionally signify; and the iconological interpretation explains how

those meanings relate to the worldview and cultural conditions of Banyumas. Through these three analytical stages, the study demonstrates that the Pajajaran motif, Majapahit ukel, lotus, numerical elements, and architectural forms collectively articulate values of nobility, spirituality, harmony, resilience, order, and religiosity, while the overall architectural configuration expresses simplicity, openness, egalitarianism, cultural syncretism, and a dynamic relationship with political authority.

Historically, this interpretation is further connected to the establishment of Pendopo Si Panji by Tumenggung Yudanegara II and its relocation to Purwokerto in 1937. These historical processes reinforce the pendopo's significance as more than an architectural structure: it functions as a medium through which political legitimacy, cultural continuity, collective memory, and regional identity are expressed. The iconological reading also indicates that the *pendopo* embodies the dialectical character of Banyumas society, in which loyalty toward authority can coexist with critical attitudes toward power. Thus, the findings demonstrate that Pendopo Si Panji is a living cultural heritage whose architectural and ornamental elements preserve and communicate Banyumasan cultural values across historical periods.

Accordingly, the contribution of this study lies not only in identifying the symbolic meanings of individual motifs but also in demonstrating, through Panofsky's sequential analytical procedure, how visual forms can be connected to their conventional meanings and subsequently interpreted as expressions of a broader cultural worldview. This approach provides a methodological basis for understanding Pendopo Si Panji as a cultural text in which architectural form, ornament, history, religion, and Banyumasan identity are mutually interconnected.

AI DECLARATION

The author states that artificial intelligence technologies—namely ChatGPT and Grammarly—have been used to assist with language editing, help draft an outline and organize ideas, and aid in exploring the literature. Regarding the exploration of the literature, the author cross-checked the information against the original sources. All generated output has been reviewed, verified, and revised by the author. The author takes full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, integrity, and overall scientific substance of this article.

REFERENCES

Abdulhussain, Laheib A., Kais Abdulhusien Abbas, and Ahmed Talib Hameed Haddad. 2023. "Rhythm Phenomenology in Architecture and Building Design." *International Journal of Construction Supply Chain Management* 13 (1): 17–36. https://doi.org/10.14424/ijcscm2023130102.

Alghamdi, Nawal Abdulrahman, and Najib Taher Al-Ashwal. 2025. "Reviving Architectural Ornaments in Makkah: Unveiling Their Symbolic, Cultural, and Spiritual Significance for Sustainable Heritage Preservation." *Buildings*. https://doi.org/10.3390/buildings15101681.

Alzeer, Abdulaziz H., and Jude Abuzinadah. 2024. "Beyond Borders: Exploring the Mental, Emotional, and Spiritual Significance of Hajj." *Annals of Thoracic Medicine*. https://doi.org/10.4103/atm.atm_72_24.

Aspers, Patrik, and Ugo Corte. 2019. "What Is Qualitative in Qualitative Research." *Qualitative Sociology* 42 (2): 139–60. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-019-9413-7.

Atmono. 2013. *Mengenal Kesenian Rakyat Banyumas*. Banyumas: Dewan Kesenian Kabupaten Banyumas.

Babakamal, Yadollah Heydari. 2025. "Typology and Analysis of Animal Combat and Hunting Motifs in Qajar Art." *Paykareh*. https://doi.org/10.22055/pyk.2025.19926.

Bobkova, Marina. 2025. "The Particular Methodology of Historical Science." *Novaya i Noveishaya Istoriya*, no. 4. https://doi.org/10.31857/S0130386425040159.

Bühren, Ralf van, and Maciej Jan Jasiński. 2024. "The Invisible Divine in the History of Art. Is Erwin Panofsky (1892–1968) Still Relevant for Decoding Christian Iconography?" *Church, Communication and Culture* 9 (1): 1–36. https://doi.org/10.1080/23753234.2024.2322546.

Busetto, Loraine, Wolfgang Wick, and Christoph Gumbinger. 2020. "How to Use and Assess Qualitative Research Methods." *Neurological Research and Practice* 2 (1): 14. https://doi.org/10.1186/s42466-020-00059-z.

Carey, Peter. 2007. *The Power of Prophecy: Prince Dipanagara and the End of an Old Order in Java, 1785–1855*. Leiden: KITLV.

Çelik, Ahmet, and Eyüp Gür. 2023. "The Evaluation of Al-Māwardī's Aʿlām Al-Nubuwwah as a Defense of Prophethood." *Cumhuriyet Ilahiyat Dergisi*. https://doi.org/10.18505/cuid.1330880.

Cerna, Derli Romero, and Carmen V. Vidaurre Arenas. 2024. "Recovery and Resignification of Religious Iconography in Francisco de Goya's *Desastres de La Guerra* (Disasters of War) Series." https://doi.org/10.5209/eiko.87556.

Davis, Stephen Boyd, Emma Bevan, and Aleksei Kudikov. 2013. "Just in Time: Defining Historical Chronographics." In. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4471-5406-8_17.

Dowell, Angie G., and Denise Bertoncino. 2019. "Art Nouveau and the Symbolic Blurring of Women's Spatial and Corporeal Environments: The Contradiction of Organic Inspiration in Fashion and Interiors." In. Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9781848881600_003.

Eco, U. 1976. *A Theory of Semiotics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Egorov, A.K., and E.V. Kamenev. 2018. "Power of Language and Language of Power as Postmodernist Context of Historical Research." https://doi.org/10.21638/11701/spbu02.2018.212.

Flick, Uwe. 2018. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. New York: SAGE.

Gargaro, Silvia, Michela Cigola, Arturo Gallozzi, and Antonio Fioravanti. 2018. "Cultural Heritage Knowledge Context: A Model Based on Collaborative Cultural Approach." In

Proceedings of the International Conference on Education and Research in Computer Aided Architectural Design in Europe.

Geertz, C. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Gill, Brinda. 2003. "Eternal and Enduring: Indian Textile Motifs."

Hamidon, Nor Azlin, Nur Yuhanis Mohd Nasir, Mohd Faizal Md Nor, Mohamad Nazzri Ahmad, Maizira Abdul Majid, and Marzudi Md Yunus. 2025. "The Philosophy of Traditional Malay Ornamentation in Architecture: Preservation of Meaning and Culture." *Alam Cipta* 18 (Issue): 91–108. https://doi.org/10.47836/AC.18.S3.PAPER07.

Hasan Al Fahmawee, Emad Al Dein. 2022. "Semiotics As An Approach To The Analysis Of Symbolism In Islamic Architectural Arts." *Architecture and Engineering*. https://doi.org/10.23968/2500-0055-2022-7-2-03-19.

Herdriyana, Husen. 2009. *Metodologi Kajian Artefak Budaya Fisik: Fenomena Visual Bidang Fisik*. Bandung: Sunan Ambu STSI Press.

Hoop, A.N.J. Th. à Th. van der. 1949. *Indonesische Siermotieven = Ragam-Ragam Perhiasan Indonesia = Indonesian Ornamental Design*. Batavia: Koninklijk Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen.

Horton, Ian, and Maggie Gray. 2022. "Iconography and Cultural History in Comics Studies." In *Palgrave Studies in Comics and Graphic Novels*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-07353-3_3.

Jansoz, Hamidreza, and Bita Sodaei. 2021. "Influence of Ornamental Motifs of the Sassanid Period on the Ornamentation of the Vegetable-Islamic Painting of the Mosques of Al-e Buya: Case Studies of the Paintings of the Georgiere Mosque, Nain Mosque, and Zawarrah Mosque." *Journal of Archaeological Studies* 13 (2). https://doi.org/10.22059/jarcs.2020.292326.142805.

Jurgens, Anna-Sophie, Lucy Darragh, Paul Peace, Rita Agha, and John Noel Viana. 2024. "Studying Science in Pop Culture through Textual Analysis. An Introduction to Examining Science in Visual Texts — Street Art, Comics and (Animated) Film." *Journal of Science Communication*. https://doi.org/10.22323/2.23030401.

Kress, Gunther, and Theo van Leeuwen. 2020. *Reading Images*. 3rd ed. London; New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003099857.

Lázár, Marianna. 2026. "Animating the Cosmos: The Azure Dragon, White Tiger, Vermilion Bird, and Dark Warrior in Han Tomb Art and Thought." *Journal of East Asian Cultures*. https://doi.org/10.38144/TKT.2026.5.

Lee, Jeong Houn. 2026. "A Study on Tectonic Architectural Form — Focusing on Kim Chung Up's French Embassy." *Journal of Asian Architecture and Building Engineering*. https://doi.org/10.1080/13467581.2026.2637364.

Li, Min. 2024. "Analysis of Viewing Paintings from the Perspective of Iconography." *Journal of Contemporary Educational Research* 8 (7): 297–303. https://doi.org/10.26689/jcer.v8i7.7764.

Liu, Wenwen, Lili Li, Zhiying Luo, De Liu, and Ximing Wang. 2025. "Research Progress on Photodiscoloration Mechanism and Functional Regulation in Wood." *Progress in Organic Coatings* 208:109532. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.porgcoat.2025.109532.

Lombard, Denys. 1996. *Budaya, Nusa Jawa: Silang*. Jakarta: Gramedia.

Lubis, Faizal Hamzah, and Faiz Albar Nasution. 2025. "Transhumanism and the Islamic Concept of Human Perfection: A Theological Inquiry." *Pharos Journal of Theology*. https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.106.514.

Magiman, Mohamad Maulana, Hassan Alli, and Fauziah Abu Bakar. 2026. "Revealing the Symbolic Role of Buket Philosophy and Cultural Motifs in Social Development in Sarawak." *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 13 (1). https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2026.2623392.

Mansur, Samira Schultz, and Javier DeFelipe. 2023. "Empathy and the Art of Leonardo Da Vinci." *Frontiers in Psychology*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1260814.

Mirtalipova, Nargiza Khasankhodjayevna, Khayriniso Mallayevna Yunuskhodjayeva, and Kholida Hafizovna Kamilova. 2019. "The Role of Attributes in Special Types of Clothing." *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering*. https://doi.org/10.35940/ijrte.C4694.098319.

Moleong, Lexy J. 2007. *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Revisi. Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya.

Moser, Albine, and Irene Korstjens. 2018. "Series: Practical Guidance to Qualitative Research. Part 3: Sampling, Data Collection and Analysis." *European Journal of General Practice* 24 (1): 9–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375091.

Nordholt, H. S. 2023. *Decentralisation and Local Politics in Indonesia*.

Olaniyan, O.M., F.B. Egunjobi, and A. Adegoke. 2024. "African Traditional Arts and Ornamentation in the Architecture of the Cultural Centre Ibadan." *Environmental Technology and Science Journal* 14 (2): 9–15. https://doi.org/10.4314/etsj.v14i2.2.

Oliver, P. 2006. *Built to Meet Needs: Cultural Issues in Vernacular Architecture*. Oxford: Elsevier.

Omar, Huda Salah El-Deen. 2019. "The Marble Bases of Kunya Ark and Tash-Hauli Palaces in Khiva during the 13th AH/19th AD Century." *Journal of the General Union of Arab Archaeologists* 4 (2): 47–89.

Pallasmaa, J. 2012. *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*.

Panofsky, Erwin. 1955. *Meaning in the Visual Arts*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books.

Parovel, Giulia. 2025. "Dynamics and Expression in Visual Perception and Art: Emotions as Relational Structures." In *Handbook of Gestalt-Theoretical Psychology of Art*. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781032694467-10.

Pilay, Lourdes, and Marco Neves. 2020. "A City's Cultural Heritage Communication Through Design." In, 115–24. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-32415-5_9.

Pouzet, M., M. Dubois, K. Charlet, A. Béakou, J.M. Leban, and M. Baba. 2019. "Fluorination Renders the Wood Surface Hydrophobic without Any Loss of Physical and Mechanical Properties." *Industrial Crops and Products* 133:133–41. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indcrop.2019.02.044.

Prabowo, R. Adi. 2019. "Eksistensi Dan Revitalisasi Ragam Hias Tradisional Jawa Pada Aneka Bentuk Ukir Kayu." In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Art, Design, Education, and Cultural Studies (ICADECS)*. Malang: Universitas Negeri Malang.

Priyadi, Sugeng. 2013. *Sejarah Mentalitas Banyumas*. Yogyakarta: Ombak.

Purnomo, Agus Dody, Febry Maharlika, and Wahyu Dwi Utami. 2023. "Symbols and Images of Javanese Nobles at the Pendopo Dalem Wuryaningratan." *ARTEKS: Jurnal Teknik Arsitektur* 8 (1): 21–30. https://doi.org/10.30822/arteks.v8i1.1521.

Pylypchuk, Oksana. 2024. "The Impact of Structural Analysis of Works of Fine Art on Enhancing the Creativity of Artists and Interior Designers." https://doi.org/10.5209/aris.95402.

Rampley, Matthew. 2019. *Exploring Visual Culture: Definitions, Concepts, Contexts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Rapoport, A. 1990. *The Meaning of the Built Environment*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Ricklefs, M.C. 2012. *Islamisation and Its Opponents in Java: A Political, Social, Cultural and Religious History, c. 1930 to the Present*. Singapore: NUS Press.

Riyanto, Bedjo, Nurhayatu Nufut Alimin, Apika Nurani Sulistyati, and Novia Nur Kartikasari. 2023. "Rebirth Public Creativity and Reconciliation Conflict towards Mural in Solo, Indonesia (Iconography-Iconology Analysis)." *Cogent Arts and Humanities* 10 (1). https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2023.2167319.

Santosa, B. 2018. "Karakter Sosial Masyarakat Banyumas Dalam Perspektif Antropologi Budaya." *Jurnal Antropologi Indonesia*.

Santosa, Imam, and Husein Hendryana. 2025. "Cultural Dynamics Revealed: Aesthetic Exploration Of Symbols And Meanings In The Design Of The Nine Gates Of Astana Sunan Gunung Jati Cirebon." *Journal of Islamic Architecture*. https://doi.org/10.18860/jia.v8i4.26924.

Sartini, Bruno. 2024. "IICONGRAPH: Improved Iconographic and Iconological Statements in Knowledge Graphs." *Lecture Notes in Computer Science*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-60635-9_4.

Sherer, Daniel. 2020. "Panofsky on Architecture: Iconology and the Interpretation of Built Form, 1915–1956, Part I." *History of Humanities* 5 (1). https://doi.org/10.1086/707699.

Silva, Gislene Rodrigues da, and Célia da Consolação Dias. 2025. "Reputación de Marcas de Lujo: Un Estudio Iconológico de Los Recursos Visuales Utilizados En Situaciones de Cancelación." *Ibersid* 19 (2): 55–65. https://doi.org/10.54886/ibersid.v19i2.5078.

Snyder, Hannah. 2019. "Literature Review as a Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines." *Journal of Business Research* 104 (November): 333–39. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039.

Soedjito. 1983. *Sejarah Kabupaten Banyumas*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.

Soemardjan. 2009. *Perubahan Sosial Di Yogyakarta*. Jakarta: Perubahan Sosial di Yogyakarta.

Šordan, Zdravko. 2013. "Religious Communication as Creation."

Spiller, Henry. 2024. "'A Name Is All That Remains': Twenty-First-Century Traces of Sundanese Royal Courts in Modern Sundanese Performing Arts." In. Brill Academic Publishers. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004695443_003.

Sutrisno, Slamet. 2002. *Arsitektur Tradisional Jawa*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.

Tjahjono, Budi, R Siti Rukayah, and Edward Endrianto. 2015. "Arsitektur Tradisional Jawa Banyumasan Pada Pendapa Duplikat Si Panji Di Kota Lama Banyumas." *Teodolita: Media Komunikasi Ilmiah Di Bidang Teknik*.

Wa-Mbaleka, Safary, and Christian E. Ekoto. 2025. "Qualitative Research in the Online Settings: Learning from the Field of Education." In *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research Quality*, 136–51. London: Sage Publications. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529674354.n9.

Wagner, Christiane. 2024. "Historical and Aesthetic Awareness: (De)Colonial Art and Image." https://doi.org/10.5209/eiko.88891.

Walsh, Seana K., Dustin Wolkis, and Mike Maunder. 2024. "Plant Conservation." In *Encyclopedia of Biodiversity*, 3rd ed. Elsevier. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-822562-2.00339-X.

Waterson, R. 1990. *The Living House: An Anthropology of Architecture in South-East Asia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wiyono, E., N.Y. Damayanti, A.H. Destiarmand, and Y.Y. Sunarya. 2026. "Inter-Religious Aesthetics of Lotus Flower Ornaments in Mosque and Church Architecture in Java, Indonesia." https://doi.org/10.62476/ndi.101292.

Wu, Liyue, Qinchuan Zhan, Yanjun Li, and Chen Chen. 2025. "Palazzo Farnese and Dong's Fortified Compound: An Art-Anthropological Cross-Cultural Analysis of Architectural Form, Symbolic Ornamentation, and Public Perception." *Buildings* 15 (15): 2720. https://doi.org/10.3390/buildings15152720.

Xinxuan, Xie, and Mei Zhang. 2025. "Cultural Iconography in Tang Dynasty Floral Pattern: A Semiotic Perspective on Philosophical Influence." *Cultura: International Journal of Philosophy of Culture and Axiology*.

Zain, Zairin, Norita Norita, and Andi Andi. 2022. "Physical Elements of Heritage Buildings: Study of the Kadariah Palace in Pontianak City, West Kalimantan." *Wiadomosci Konserwatorskie*, no. 72, 89–100. https://doi.org/10.48234/WK72KADARIAH.