

SYNCRETIC RITUALS IN SUNDANESE AGRICULTURE: A PHILOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE MELAK PARE MANUSCRIPT

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the physical characteristics and textual content of the *Melak Pare* manuscript, a significant cultural artifact within Sundanese heritage. The research aims to enhance public understanding of this manuscript by providing a detailed description and analysis. Employing historical methodology, including heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography, this research draws on primary data from the original *Melak Pare* manuscript housed at the Sri Baduga Museum in Bandung, as well as secondary sources such as books, scholarly articles, and related documents. The findings show that the manuscript is written on yellowed European-style paper that has been reinforced with Japanese tissue as a preservation measure. The script used is Arabic *Pegon*, resembling standard Arabic script yet exhibiting distinct compositional features unique to local usage. The content consists of agricultural mantras integral to traditional Sundanese agrarian practices. These mantras incorporate ritual actions and invoke Nyimas Puhaci Sanghyang Sri, widely known as Dewi Sri, alongside prayers modeled on Islamic traditions. The manuscript thus reflects a process of cultural assimilation, illustrating the emergence of a hybrid cultural form shaped by prolonged interaction between indigenous Sundanese and Islamic influences.

Keywords: *Manuscripts, Mantras, Melak Pare, Dewi Sri, Pegon*

ABSTRAK

Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengetahui bentuk fisik dan isi naskah *melak pare*, dikarenakan naskah ini merupakan salah satu kekayaan budaya sunda yang terdokumentasikan sehingga Masyarakat umum bisa lebih mengenal lebih dalam naskah ini melalui penjelasan yang dipaparkan. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi Sejarah yaitu heuristik, verifikasi, interpretasi, dan historiografi. Sumber yang digunakan ialah sumber primer berupa naskah asli *melak pare* dari museum sri baduga bandung serta sumber sekunder berupa buku-buku, artikel ilmiah dan sumber lainnya. Hasil dari tulisan ini mengungkapkan fisik naskah menggunakan kertas yang kondisinya sudah menguning dan dilapisi oleh tisu jepang sebagai langkah mencegah kerusakan yang lebih parah dan mengawetkan kertas eropa dan aksara atau huruf yang digunakan adalah arab pegon terlintas seperti huruf arab biasa tanpa perbedaan yang mencolok, tetapi mempunyai keunikan jika di cermati secara teliti susunannya bukan bahasa arab. sedangkan isi dari naskah merupakan mantra pertanian yang digunakan dalam proses budaya pertanian pada budaya sunda yang berisi gerakan – gerakan ritual dengan ditandai penyebutan Nyimas Puhaci Sanghyang Sri lebih dikenal dengan dewi sri dalam bacaan mantranya dan bacaan doa yang bercorak budaya islam sehingga menghasilkan asimilasi, yaitu lahir nya kebudayaan baru yang dihasilkan dari dua kebudayaan atau lebih yang berjalan bersama dalam jangka waktu yang lama

Kata kunci : *Naskah, Mantra, Melak Pare, Dewi Sri, Pegon*



INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has a very wide territory from Sabang to Merauke, of course giving birth to many diverse cultural patterns in the lives of its people from social culture, religion, economy and customs. This diversity is one of the factors in the rich history that Indonesia has. Evidence of history is the discovery of writings from the past which provide information for the present about how life used to occur, one of which is manuscripts. Manuscripts in the context of philology are all writing materials left over from the past or ancestors consisting of bark, palm leaves, paper and rattan. In Latin the manuscript is called a codex, in English it is called a manuscript and in Dutch it is called a handschrift (Supriyadi, 2011). The breadth of information in the manuscript makes it easier for researchers to dig up information and deepen their studies. The traditions that are currently still preserved by the people of each region cannot be separated from the regeneration carried out by their predecessors. Tradition is a culture that grows in a society that is repeated and regenerated to form behavior (Vansina, 2014).

One of the traditions that is still widely practiced in Indonesian society is *mantras* or spells. The term mantra comes from Sanskrit, namely sacred language in worship which is also interpreted as a form of thought that can be realized according to the content contained in the mantra. In Hinduism, mantras are sacred in religious ritual activities. Mantras are considered to be revelations from God which are pronounced in Sanskrit, associated with their use in Sanskrit and this is the most important part of ritual activities. Mantra functions according to various types. First, reciting mantras can protect against danger and thus create a feeling of security. Second, they can increase mental health and self-confidence for people who believe in mantras. Third, it is believed That mantras can ward off evil spirits in humans. Last, Mantras can be a complement to treatment for sick people (Noormaidah, 2017). In religious teachings, mantras have various meanings. Unseen mantras are what they are called in Hinduism and Buddhism and in Islam they are called dua or *ruqyah*. Mantras are a form of oral literature, a category of artistic expression conveyed through carefully selected language that reflects the thoughts, concepts, and worldviews of individuals or communities. According to Oktarina et al., oral literature can be classified into four functional categories. First, it serves an educational role within society by conveying ethical and cultural values associated with specific religious and cultural traditions. Second, it functions as an expression of social aspirations, particularly those related to prevailing norms and regulations. Third, oral literature may act as a medium for social critique or satire, often articulated through poetic forms such as verses, pantun, and songs. Fourth, it provides entertainment for the community(2018).

In contemporary society, oral literature, including mantras, is often perceived as irrational or incompatible with modern reasoning, a view that threatens its continued existence. Debates surrounding oral literature persist, particularly regarding whether such traditions should be preserved or abandoned. In many Sundanese communities, the forms of oral literature that endure are those that have undergone Islamization, resulting in texts that blend traditional elements with Arabic-influenced prayers. Nevertheless, a smaller segment of the population continues to ascribe spiritual significance to mantras, viewing them not only as expressions of devotion to God but also as a means of communicating with supernatural entities. For these practitioners,

mantras are believed to contain metaphysical energy accessible to those who recite them. (Mansur, 2010).

Moreover, Indonesia's geographic location along the equator, which produces only two seasons, dry and rainy, provides consistent rainfall and sunlight that support year-round agricultural activity. This environmental stability has historically shaped cultural practices across regions, including in western Java, where vast agricultural areas are deeply intertwined with local customs. Consequently, the practice of reciting mantras during agricultural cultivation remains embedded in many Sundanese-speaking communities of West Java, which have long embraced Islam and developed distinctive forms of religious expression. A comprehensive inventory has identified 1,432 Sundanese manuscripts preserved by individuals and in domestic or foreign collections; of these, 1,350 manuscripts are recorded in five institutional repositories, while an additional 42 held in *Kasepuhan* and the Cirebon palace remain unexamined (Suryani, 2016). Furthermore, from a philological perspective, a focused inventory has catalogued 76 manuscripts containing mantras and collections of prayers, of which 16 have been fully described.

Building on these findings, Sundanese-language manuscripts such as the *Melak Pare* text illustrate how agricultural practices, particularly rice cultivation, are accompanied by stages of ritual recitation characterized by an Islamic stylistic influence. This intermingling suggests that the manuscript was composed during a period when Islamic teachings had already permeated Sundanese cultural life. Following the spread of Islam, Sundanese communities responded in varied ways: some preserved their cultural traditions in their entirety, while others selectively abandoned practices deemed incompatible with Islamic principles (Dendi, 2020). Such processes of adaptation and negotiation are unsurprising, given that culture is a human creation that evolves in response to social and religious change. As a multiethnic nation, Indonesia encompasses diverse cultural expressions, and the Sundanese represent only one example of how local traditions are continually reinterpreted.

METHOD

This study employs a historical research methodology consisting of four key stages: heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The heuristic stage involves the systematic collection of both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained from the original *Melak Pare* manuscript preserved at the Sri Baduga Museum in Bandung, whereas secondary data were gathered indirectly through scholarly books, journal articles, news media, and other publications related to manuscripts, philology, and mantras. Following data collection, the study proceeds to source verification, or criticism, to assess the authenticity and credibility of the materials. This verification process includes external criticism, evaluating the material composition, authenticity, and dating of the manuscript, and internal criticism, which examines the reliability of the information contained in written, oral, or material sources. Subsequently, the interpretation stage involves analyzing and comparing the collected facts to construct a coherent and interconnected understanding of the historical context. The final stage, historiography, entails composing the historical narrative based on the evaluated sources, adhering to academic conventions regarding structure, terminology, citation, and writing format. Data collection was carried out

through library research and fieldwork, including direct examination of the manuscript at the Sri Baduga Museum. Additionally, the research required a transliteration process in which the *Melak Pare* text, originally written in Arabic Pegon script, was converted into Latin script to facilitate readability and further analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The object of this research is the Melak Pare manuscript. The origin of this manuscript has not been identified and who the original owner is and is in the collection of the Sri Baduga Museum, Bandung.



The observations conducted in this study yielded detailed descriptive data regarding the *Melak Pare* manuscript. Catalogued as Manuscript Number 07.124, the text is currently preserved at the Sri Baduga Museum in Bandung. The manuscript is written in both Sundanese and Arabic, reflecting the linguistic hybridity commonly found in Islamized Sundanese texts. It is inscribed on European paper that has become fragile over time and is now reinforced with Japanese tissue for conservation purposes. The manuscript comprises a total of 52 pages and measures approximately 11 × 17 cm, indicating a compact format typical of portable or utilitarian manuscripts used in ritual or agricultural contexts. The following is the transliteration of the text:

Paranti mimiti Melak tandur, Mimitina kudu ngaturan tuang heula ka Anu boga ieu susukan, sebab eta cai pang datangna ku tingkah polah aki atawa bapa, lamun mimiti macul dina poe ahad sartan kudu ngusap cueli 5 kali kidul ngetan 5 langkah, isuk-isuk atawa puku 6 lamun poe senen kudu ngusap kuping 4 kali, ngaler ngetan 4 langkah, pecat sawed atawa duhur. Lamun dina poe salasa kudu ngusap walikat tilu kali, ngaler bener 3 langkah pecat sawd atawa duhur. Lamun dina poe rebo kudu ngusap dada tujuh kali ngidul bener tujuh langkah pecat sawd atawa ashar. Lamun dina poe kamis kudu ngusap raray dalapn kali, ngetan ngidul dalapan langkah isuk- isuk atawa pukul dalapan. Lamun dina poe jumaah kudu ngusap embun embunan genep kali ngulon rada ngaler genep langkah pukul 6 isuk isuk atawa asar. Lamun dina poe sabtu ngusap dampal suku salapan kali, ngidul ngulon salapan langkah, pecat sawed atawa duhur. Tatapi lamun mimiti macula tawa tebar atawa tandur unggal poe oge kudu madep ngidul bae sabab lungsumna sri ti kidul. Lamun mimiti macul kudu ngadep ti ngidul maca istifhfar sapuluh maca solawat safuluh tuluy maca doa.

Mimiti Tebar Lamun mimiti tebar kukusan heula Pabéasan. Bul kukus sumereping banyu, sumereping badan, isun aci putih araning menyan, “ka Nyimas Cingkirik Manik Timbang Kasih, ka nu geulis ka Nyimas Puhaci Sangiyang Sri “Tuluy ka pabinihan mawa tamiang pugur dadap cucuk.mDatang ka pabinihan ningali ka wétan ka kalér ka kulon tetep ngidul.

Bul kukus sumereping banyu, sumereping badan, isun aci putih araning menyan (Dua kali,) "katiluna barengkeun jeung binih awurkeun sakuriling sing bunder rupakeun bali téa. Pikiran urang ulah rasa ngawurkeun paré di tegal atawa di sawah pikiran urang rumasa ngawurkeun sajeroning bali téa"

Maca deui: "Ashadu sahadat sri, cahaya tunggang ing Pangéran Sri" Maca deui: "Asyhadu tibaning rasa, allahu lai rasa illaha jatining rasa, illallahu kumpul salira Kangjeng Nabi Muhammad, wungkuling hurip"

Paranti Tandur

"Ngukusan heula Pabéasan, tuluy ka sawah mimiti madep ngidul ngukus. Geus ngukus maca istigpar sapuluh maca solawat sapuluh, Ceb sabaraha naktu urang jeung naktu poé". Geus tandurkeun, maca deui mantra: "mat putih bakaling sri, sri putih madep ngidul ngukus. Geus ngukus maca istigpar sapuluh, maca solawat sapuluh, Ceb sabaraha naktu urang jeung naktu poé." Geus nandurkeun maca: nyiuk caina,

"mat putih bakaling sri" "baeu bangget Nyimas Puhaci Sangiyang Sri, Dangdayang Terusnawati" Paranti Ngasuh Paré keur Beukah "Ahung larang lékwa, lénggang puhaci parapet hérang, saranggeuy nu hérang tineung, satikih nu tunggal tineung, sup cahaya sabulana"

Mimiti Mipit

"Lamun mimiti mipit kukusan heula Pabéasan. Bul kukus sumereping banyu," "Batara Sari api kaula pangdongkapkeun, mangka sumuk ka nu agung, dongkap ka nu seja, sumping ka nu sakti, ka Nyimas Puhaci Sangiyang Sri, Dangdayang Terusnawati, kaula amit dék mipit." "Tuluy ka sawah ideran heula, néangan paré papangantén geus panggih, selaku sangger beungkeut tuluy kukusan. Pun sapun ka luhur ka Sang Rumuhun" "kaula ngamitkeun asuhan hidep, Nyimas Puhaci Sangiyang Sri, Dangdayang Terusnawati"

"Pék nangtung ningali ka wétan, ka kalér ka kulon tetep ngidul, maca istigpar sapuluh maca solawat sapuluh" "Pék kukusan Mat hérang bakaling manusa, mat putih bakaling sri, sri putih bakaling nyawa" "anu mipit cahaya anu dipipit cahaya, anu mipit rasa anu dipipit rasa, iya rasa Rasulallah. Dibuat nguriling ka kénca, maca solawat ulah pegat-pegat. maca dua rasul."

Tamat wallahu alam.

Paranti Netepkeun di Leuit

"Kukusan heula Ti luhur tutuping rasul, ti handap ampar Muhammad, dat sampurnaning badan" "Dikir sing loba tuluy Du'a Rasul. Tamat" "Tuluy maca du'a Caracah"

Panalar Du'a Sulaiman

Allahuma ina daholatin pisurotin.

The text contains a series of traditional Sundanese agricultural rituals and mantras associated with rice cultivation. These practices include specific actions, gestures, directions, and prayers to be performed at each stage of farming: beginning cultivation (*melak tandur*), sowing seeds (*tebar*), planting (*tandur*), caring for the rice (*ngasuh pare keur beukah*), harvesting (*mipit*), and storing the rice in the granary (*netepkeun di leuit*). The mantras invoke Islamic elements, such as *istighfar* and *salawat*, alongside older indigenous deities and spiritual figures like *Nyimas Puhaci Sanghyang Sri* and *Dangdayang Terusnawati*. The text blends Islamic devotional language with pre-Islamic agrarian spirituality, reflecting a syncretic Sundanese worldview in which farming is treated as both practical labor and sacred ritual.

The *Melak Pare* manuscript outlines a detailed sequence of ritual practices and mantras to be performed during rice cultivation. The text begins by prescribing different bodily gestures and directional movements for starting fieldwork, each correlated with the day of the week. The farmer must face south—associated with the

descent of *Sri*, the rice goddess, and recite *istighfar*, *salawat*, and specific prayers before beginning to plow or plant. During the seed-sowing (*tebar*) stage, the farmer must first “steam” or ritually purify the rice seeds using symbolic elements such as white flour or incense, while invoking figures like *Nyimas Cingkirik Manik Timbang Kasih* and *Nyimas Puhaci Sanghyang Sri*. The sowing process must be carried out with mental focus, imagining rice being dispersed within a sacred circular boundary rather than merely scattered in the field.

Furthermore, the planting (*tandur*) phase requires further ritual steaming, recitation of Islamic prayers, and mantras such as “*mat putih bakal ing sri*,” which symbolically connect light, purity, and the spiritual essence of rice. In the stage of nurturing young rice (*ngasuh paré keur beukah*), the text includes poetic incantations to ensure the rice grows bright, unified, and spiritually protected. For harvesting (*mipit*), the manuscript instructs another sequence of purification rituals, circular movements around the field, and invocations addressed to *Puhaci Sanghyang Sri* and *Dangdayang Terusnawati*. The harvester must again face multiple directions while maintaining a southward orientation, reciting mantras that emphasize the luminous and life-bearing qualities of rice. Finally, when storing the rice in the granary (*netepkeun di leuit*), the farmer performs additional steaming rituals and recites devotional prayers, including *Du’a Rasul*, *Caracah*, and *Du’a Sulaiman*, marking the completion of the agricultural cycle. The text concludes with the phrase *wallahu a’lam*, underscoring the integration of Islamic framing within traditional Sundanese agrarian spirituality.

The Script itself constitutes an essential cultural marker that reflects the identity of a nation. Its use is governed by a writing system, or orthography, which enables the documentation of ideas and serves as a long-lasting substitute for spoken language. The Melak Pare manuscript, written in Arabic Pegon script, employs Arabic characters that were adapted to transcribe Javanese and Sundanese languages. This script is believed to have been developed by Sunan Ampel in the fifteenth century, although another view attributes its creation to his student, Imam Nawawi of Banten. Pegon writing expanded in conjunction with the spread of Islam throughout the Indonesian archipelago and became widely used in Islamic boarding schools during the Dutch colonial period (Rohman et al., 2022). Although Pegon resembles standard Arabic from a distance, it possesses distinctive orthographic features; its spelling system follows specific rules for representing speech sounds (Destiani, 2019). Despite its visual similarity to Arabic, the arrangement of letters is entirely different, making it unreadable to native Arabic speakers.

Furthermore, *Pegon* script was regarded as more accessible for expressing Islamic teachings than either Javanese or Latin script introduced by colonial powers. Written from right to left, its form aligns with the Javanese expression *mimi lam mituno*, meaning “side by side, equally from the right,” in contrast with Latin-based writing systems that proceed from left to right (Zamroji, 2014). As a product of cultural synthesis between Javanese and Arabic traditions, Pegon script historically played a crucial role in preserving scholarly works. Many significant texts, including *Suluk Sunan Bonang*, *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai*, and *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, were written in *Pegon*, either in their original versions or in later translations. However, the pressures of globalization and shifting literacy practices have increasingly marginalized the script, despite its importance in safeguarding intellectual heritage.

In addition to its script, the *Melak Pare* manuscript is notable for its use of European paper, manufactured during the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries (Fadliah, 2010). This paper is characterized by fine fibers produced through mechanical pulping techniques and was widely used by the VOC and the Dutch colonial administration for official documentation, treaties, Qur'anic manuscripts, royal correspondence, and certificates. Over time, however, the manuscript has suffered significant deterioration. Factors contributing to this damage include exposure to light, particularly ultraviolet radiation, which accelerates the decomposition of organic materials, as well as high humidity levels typical of Indonesia's tropical climate, which weaken paper fibers, promote mold growth, and trigger chemical changes in cellulose polymers. Temperature fluctuations further exacerbate degradation, causing brittleness and structural instability. To mitigate these risks and preserve the manuscript from further deterioration, conservators have reinforced its pages with Japanese tissue, a preservation method effective in preventing yellowing, brittleness, and mechanical damage (Putranto et al., 2022).

The spells (*mantras*) listed in the *Melak Pare* manuscript are included in the category of sound repetition poetry spells. Poetry is a type of literature whose language is bound by mantras, rhythm, and the arrangement of verses and lines, while repetition can be found in the pronunciation of syllables, words, mantra patterns, verses, ideas, flash and form while repetition can occur in assonance, rhyme, reference, sound, purwakanti. Repetition is an important thing in poetry and prose which is a unifying element in both types. The difference between poetry and prose is rhyme, rhythm and sonority of sound. In the *melak pare* script there are repetitions such as the words "*lamun dina poe*" and the words "*lamun mimiti*" and there are repetition sounds in Arabic. The difference between poetry and prose is that in poetry there is repetition while in prose it is more longitudinal (Suwatno, 2004).

The contents of the *Melak Pare* manuscript explain the rituals or activities carried out in the process of rice farming in the Sundanese. The contents of the text also explain the sequence of rice planting procedures carried out at that time including activities before work accompanied by prayer and breakfast, then the process of cultivating the rice fields by hoeing, then preparing seeds, and planting and caring for rice properly, accompanied by reading mantras and prayers. Ritual is maintaining and creating myths, social and religious customs that make a custom sacred. As an adjective, ritual is defined as anything that is related to sacred religious matters (Agus, 2006). In the mantra for cultivating plants that have cultural value with 4 interrelated elements, namely humans and themselves, God, nature, and between humans (Rukesi, 2017).

The first stanza of the text describes the movements in the rice farming process, such as the word *lengkah* (step), *ngusap* (wiping), *tandur* (planting seeds) and so on. This movement is a symbol in prayer, the primary form of symbolization is through language, but there is also through painting, dance, music, facial expressions, gestures, clothing, spatial planning and so on (Rosalia Monita Febrin, Ismunandar, 2017).

The word for cardinal directions is found in the pronunciation in the *melak pare* mantra text which consists of *ngidul* (southern), *ngaler* (northern), *ngulon* (western), *Ngetan* (eastern) which is one of the words that is often uttered in the mantra recitation ritual because the function of the mantra is rejecting reinforcements or misfortunes in farming which could come from all directions from the north, south, east or west (Zulaicha, 2019). Islamic culture in this text has become part of the mantras that are

read repeatedly, such as *sholawat* to the prophet Muhammad, *istigfar* and the words *alhamdulillah*. This indicates that the text describes the situation at that time when Islam had become part of the culture of Sundanese society. The Islamic religion is growing rapidly in Sundanese land and has penetrated all aspects of people's lives, including culture. The introduction of Islam in a peaceful and gradual manner as well as in an elaborate and accommodating manner made the Sundanese people accept Islam willingly so that its teachings influenced various aspects, one of which was agricultural culture, although at that time until now there are still cultures such as offerings and sacred days in planting rice is still used but Islamic culture has entered into the traditional process such as reading or chanting mantras (Sujati, 2018). Over a long period of time, cultural differences that coexist with each other will cause assimilation, namely the birth of a new culture resulting from two or more cultures working together for a long period of time (Zaidan, 2007).

Reading prayers such as the *shahada*, *istigfar* and *dhikr* in this text is a form of cultural value of asking for help from God, namely Allah, and protecting and directing human actions during the process of cultivating plants for success in rice cultivation (Rukesi, 2017). This text also shows that success and failure in the process of planting rice is God's will. The movements carried out were one of the cultural values believed in at that time. According to Syamaun, (2019), cultural values have a position as a regulator whose function is to regulate, direct human actions, speech and behavior in daily life, so that humans do not take actions that are detrimental to humans, nature and other creatures.

The closing of the manuscript contains the words Panalar Du'a Sulaiman. This shows Solomon's wealth. In the Koran, Surah An-Namal, verse 15, it is explained that Allah has increased the knowledge and advantages of His faithful servants (Zulihafnani & Husaini, 2022). Prophet Sulaiman, who is often associated with wealth and prosperity, is a hope for all mankind, so Solomon's prayer at the end of the text shows a hope for success in agriculture resulting in abundant harvests.

Said Nyimas Puhaci Sangiyang Sri. Or known as Dewi Sri. This figure is known in various regions with different versions of the story. According to research by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2018), there are several regional story groups, namely West Java, Central Java, Bali and Nusa Tenggara. In the West Java region, Dewi Sri or Nyimas Puhaci is the name for rice. It is because of this origin that respect for rice is very sacred, as in the *melak* pare script. The public respects the staple food of rice in the West Java and Banten regions throughout the processing process until use, from pre-planting to post-harvest, namely from before planting until putting the rice into the *leuit* (rice barn), becoming rice, cooking the rice, and eating it. During this process the Sundanese people were very respectful, careful, fostering togetherness and distancing themselves from greed. This phenomenon can be seen from nonverbal and verbal behavior, in the form of folklore passed down from generation to generation which is still visible today, this behavior is passed down through unconscious transference (Kalsum, 2010).

Apart from containing mantras and prayers, this text explains the process of the stages in rice farming that must be carried out by farmers, including *melak tandur* or *tebar* (spreading seeds), which is the process of spreading seeds in rice fields that have been hoed as a medium for the growth of seedlings which will later be planted. move to paddy fields that have been mapped. The next stage is the word *tandur* (harvesting

the seeds). This process is carried out on seeds that have grown into seedlings that have emerged in the form of small rice plants. This process is carried out by harvesting the seeds and tying them to the size of a fist and then transferring them to the rice fields which are the final medium for growth until harvest by planting 3-4 perforated seeds. The word *macul* (hoeing) is the process of cultivating the land by turning the bottom soil up and then leveling it and mapping it so that it is suitable for planting seeds. This process is carried out at the same time as seeding. In the last word there is the word *mipit* (picking) which is the harvesting process carried out on rice that is ripe and bearing fruit.

CONCLUSION

The *Melak Pare* agricultural manuscript, preserved on European paper and written in Sundanese *Pegon* Arabic script, represents a significant cultural artifact that reflects both the material and intellectual heritage of Sundanese society. Its fragile condition, necessitating reinforcement with Japanese tissue, underscores the vulnerability of traditional manuscripts and the urgent need for continued preservation efforts. Beyond its physical characteristics, the text offers invaluable insight into the ritual dimensions of Sundanese agricultural practices. It contains a series of *mantras* (spells), prayers, and prescribed bodily movements that structure every phase of rice cultivation, from initial field preparation to planting, nurturing, harvesting, and storage. Importantly, the manuscript demonstrates the deep interweaving of Islamic and indigenous Sundanese traditions. The invocation of Islamic formulae such as *istighfar* and *salawat* appears alongside references to Nyimas Puhaci Sanghyang Sri, also known as Dewi Sri, the pre-Islamic rice goddess central to agrarian cosmology. This coexistence illustrates a dynamic process of cultural assimilation, wherein longstanding agrarian beliefs were not replaced but rather reinterpreted through an Islamic lens. The resulting synthesis reflects the emergence of a hybrid cultural system produced through centuries of interaction and adaptation. Thus, the *Melak Pare* manuscript not only documents agricultural ritual knowledge but also serves as evidence of broader historical processes that shaped Sundanese religious and cultural identity. Its study contributes to our understanding of how communities negotiate continuity and change, and how textual traditions preserve the complex interplay between local customs and global religious influences.

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