



Agricultural mantra culture in the study of the Melak Pare Manuscript

Usman Supendi¹, Solehudin², Eva Sopiah³, Syifa Nuraidah⁴, Fikri Arsyad⁵, Dandie Hambaliana⁶

^{1,2,3,5,6} UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia

⁴ KH Badruzzaman Islamic College, Garut, Indonesia.

* Corresponding Author: usman.supendi@uinsgd.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords:</p> <p>Cultural wisdom; Dewi Sri; Local manuscript; Pegon script; Sundanese tradition.</p> <hr/> <p>Article history:</p> <p>Received 2025-05-29 Revised 2025-08-02 Accepted 2025-08-04</p>	<p>This study aims to explore the physical structure and content of the Melak Pare manuscript, which documents the agrarian traditions of the Sundanese people within the framework of local and Islamic spirituality. Employing a historical methodology that includes heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography, the data were gathered through literature reviews and field research on the original manuscript housed in the Sri Baduga Museum, Bandung. The findings reveal that the manuscript is written in Arabic Pegon script on fragile European paper now preserved with Japanese tissue. The content consists of agricultural mantras and prayers structured around stages of rice farming rituals—from hoeing and seed sowing to planting, maintenance, and harvesting. The inclusion of istighfar, shalawat, and invocations of Dewi Sri (Nyimas Puhaci Sangiyang Sri) demonstrates cultural assimilation between Islam and local beliefs. Symbolic references to cardinal directions, bodily movements, and ritual timing reflect a rich Sundanese agrarian cosmology imbued with spiritual significance. This research contributes to the preservation of local philological heritage, revitalization of agro-spiritual values, and advancement of interdisciplinary approaches to traditional manuscript studies.</p> <p>Contribution: This study contributes to the preservation of local philological heritage by documenting the physical and textual features of the Melak Pare manuscript, revitalizes agro-spiritual values by highlighting the integration of Sundanese agrarian traditions with Islamic spirituality.</p>

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1. 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 (Dendi, 2020). 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, 1985).

One of the traditions that is still widely practiced in Indonesian society is mantras, formulated as sentences or words that bring about magical powers, incantations and charms (Pamungkas et al., 2024). 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 (1). Reciting mantras can protect against danger and thus create a feeling of security (2) can increase mental health and self-confidence for people who believe in mantras (3) it is believed to be able to ward off evil spirits in humans (4) as 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 prayers or ruqyah. Mantra is included in oral literature, where literature itself is a work of art expressed in carefully chosen language which relates to the ideas, concepts and ideas of an individual or person. Oral literature is classified into 4, namely (a) Active functions as an educator in society because it contains noble values that apply in a particular society related to its culture and religion. (b) a form of social aspiration regarding the applicable rules (c) used as a medium for satire in the form of poetry, pantun and songs (d) as entertainment for society (Oktarina et al., 2019).

For most of today's society, oral literature, including mantras, is considered unreasonable and beyond reason, thus posing a threat to the existence of oral literature. Oral literature raises pros and cons in society between preserving and abandoning oral literature, and most of the oral literature currently developing, especially in the Sundanese region, is that which has been infiltrated with Islamic culture, the contents of which are prayers mixed with Arabic. However, a small number of people still believe that mantras, apart from being something spiritual with God, are also used to communicate with supernatural things for people who believe in them because they are considered to contain meta-energy powers for those who say them (Suryanegara, 2017).

Indonesia's geography is located on the equator which makes it an area that only has 2 seasons, namely summer and rainy season, which is an added value for the world of agriculture because every year it has sufficient rainfall and sunlight for cultivating crops every year. Including the western part of Java Island which has a very large agricultural area, so it cannot be separated from culture or customs in its activities, one of which is reciting mantras in its agricultural cultivation activities. The western part of Java, which partly speaks Sundanese and has been a Muslim for a long time, has its own characteristics in the mantras it contains. As a result of the inventory, there were 1,432 Sundanese manuscripts held by individuals in the community, in domestic and foreign collections. The number of 1350 registered in 5 institutions and 42 manuscripts in Kasepuhan and the Cirebon palace is unknown because they are not yet open for examination (Darsa et al., 2020). In terms of philology, after a special inventory was carried out, there were 76 manuscripts in the form of mantras and collections of prayers. And 16 manuscripts have been found and described.

Sundanese language manuscripts include the Melak Pare manuscript, which explains the process of the stages in planting rice accompanied by the recitation of mantras/prayers with an Islamic style, this indicates that the manuscript was created at a time when Sundanese culture had been infiltrated by the Islamic religion. After the arrival of Islam, there were some communities that retained their entire culture and there were also those that eliminated their culture if it was not in accordance with Islamic teachings (Dendi, 2020). Culture is a human creation so its rejection and creation is a natural thing because Indonesia is a country and region that has a variety of ethnicities and ethnic groups and Sundanese are one of them. According to Irohyadi, if you want to control Indonesia you must control West Java and if you want to control West Java you must control offer.

2. METHOD

This study uses a historical approach by applying four main stages in historical methodology: heuristic, verification, interpretation, and historiography. The first stage is heuristic, which is the process of collecting data sourced from the original manuscript of *the bitter melon manuscript* obtained from the Sri Baduga Museum, Bandung, as a primary source. In addition, secondary data is collected through literature studies that include books, journals, magazines, and online media relevant to the study of philology and mantras. Once the data is collected, the next stage is source verification or criticism. In this stage, all sources obtained are tested for

authenticity and credibility through two types of criticism: external criticism that assesses the material, the physical authenticity of the manuscript, and its proofreading; as well as internal criticism that traces the consistency and truth of the content of the manuscript, both written and oral (Kosambi, 2023).

Furthermore, the interpretation stage is carried out to interpret and connect various historical facts that have been discovered, so as to form a complete and coherent understanding of the content and context of the manuscript. The final stage is historiography, which is the preparation of historical narratives based on sources that have been criticized and interpreted. In this process, writing is carried out by paying attention to scientific principles such as the use of appropriate terms, writing systematics, and accurate inclusion of sources. The data collection technique was carried out through literature studies and fieldwork, especially manuscript search at the Sri Baduga Museum. As part of philological analysis, *the manuscript of the melak pare* script written in Arabic Pegon script was transliterated into Latin through the process of transliteration, so that the content was easier to understand and access to today's readers.

3. RESULTS 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.

Figure 6



The results of observation of the manuscript under study show a number of important information related to its identity and physical condition. This manuscript is recorded with catalog number 07.124 and is stored at the Sri Baduga Museum, Bandung. The language used in the manuscript is a mixture of Sundanese and Arabic, written on European paper which is now in a fragile condition and has been reinforced with coating of Japanese tissues as a conservation effort. This manuscript consists of 52 pages, with a physical size of 11 x 17 cm. Based on the results of the transliteration, the content of the manuscript describes the ritual procedures that must be carried out before starting farming or planting activities. Each day has specific rules that include body movements, step direction, execution time, and body parts to be touched, for example on Sunday you have to rub your back five times while walking south-east for five steps, while on Monday you have to rub your ears four times in a north-east direction, and so on. Apart from that, there is also a general instruction that when starting to hoe or plant, one must face south because it is believed that *the lungsumna sri* or the descent of fertility blessings comes from the south and it is recommended to recite istighfar and salawat ten times each, followed by the opening prayer. This text not only contains technical instructions on agriculture, but also shows the fusion of spiritual values and traditional agricultural practices of the Sundanese people.

Table 2
Transliteration of the Manuscript "Melak Pare"

Part	Contents of Transliterated Text
Paranti Mimiti Melak Tandur	Paranti mimiti Melak tandur, Mimitina kudu ngaturan tuang heula ka Anu boga ieu susukan, sabab 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 pukul 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

	<p>lengkah, pecat sawd atawa ashar. Lamun dina poe kamis kudu ngusap raray dalapan 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 istifhar sapuluh, maca solawat sapuluh, tuluy maca doa.</p>
<i>Mimiti Tebar</i>	<p>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. Datang 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.</p>
<i>Maca deui</i>	<p>“Ashadu sahadat sri, cahaya tunggang ing Pangéran Sri.” “Asyhadu tibaning rasa, allahu lai rasa illaha jatining rasa, illallahu kumpul salira Kangjeng Nabi Muhammad, wungkuling hurip.”</p>
<i>Paranti Tandur</i>	<p>“Ngukusan heula Pabéasan, tuluy ka sawah mimiti madep ngidul ngukus. Geus ngukus maca istigfar 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 istigfar 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.”</p>
<i>Paranti Ngasuh Paré keur Beukah</i>	<p>“Ahung larang lékwa, lénggang Puhaci parapet hérang, saranggeuy nu hérang tineung, satikih nu tunggal tineung, sup cahaya sabulana.”</p>
<i>Mimiti Mipit</i>	<p>“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 istigfar 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 Rasulullah.” Dibuat nguriling ka kénca, maca solawat ulah pegat-pegat. Maca dua Rasul.</p>
<i>Tamat</i>	<p>Wallahu a'lam.</p>
<i>Paranti Netepkeun di Leuit</i>	<p>“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.”</p>
<i>Panalar Du'a Sulaiman</i>	<p>Allahuma ina daholatin pisurotin.</p>

The text in the *Melak Pare* manuscript that has been transliterated and compiled in the table above shows how closely related agrarian rituals are and the spiritual beliefs of the traditional Sundanese people. Each stage in the farming process from clearing land (*macul*), sowing seeds (*sowing*), planting (*tanduring*), caring for plants

(*ngasuh*), to harvesting (*mipit*) and storing results is accompanied by very specific readings, movements, step directions, and implementation times. All of these elements not only reflect the technical guidance of agriculture, but also demonstrate a belief system that places harmony between humans, nature, and supernatural forces as the key to successful life (Wright, 2021).

The prayers that are read, such as the recitation of *istigfar*, *solawat*, and mantras that mention sacred names such as "Nyimas Puhaci Sangiyang Sri" and "Dangdayang Terusnawati", indicate that the agricultural process is seen as a sacred activity, not merely a worldly work. In fact, the direction of the step that must be taken is often to the south interpreted as a symbol of respect for the direction of fertility, which in Sundanese tradition is known as *lungsurna sri ti kidul*. The entire manuscript holds a very deep local wisdom: how nature is read as a spiritual space, and how agrarian work becomes a form of devotion to the Divine (Eamon, 2020).

Thus, this manuscript is not only important as a cultural document, but also as historical evidence that the traditional Sundanese people have a complex and spiritual knowledge system in managing natural resources. He combines empirical practice with ritualistic dimensions that form the typical structure of the archipelago's agrarian cosmology. In the contemporary context, this text can be read as a source of alternative thinking for agricultural practices that are more sustainable, ethical, and based on local spiritual and ecological values (Thompson, 2017).

Physical Manuscript

The physical manuscript of *Melak Pare* is one of the important relics in Sundanese cultural treasures that contains the values of agrarian rituals conveyed orally and in writing through the traditional script system. One of the main aspects that marks the speciality of this manuscript lies in its use of the Pegon script, which is an Arabic script that has been modified to write regional languages such as Javanese and Sundanese. In the context of the history of the archipelago, Pegon is not only a means of communication, but also a marker of cultural identity as well as an Islamic da'wah media that is adaptive to the local environment (Shapiah et al., 2023).

A script is basically a sound symbol that is organized in a certain writing system or orthography. It serves as a substitute for speech that can last beyond time (Cruttenden, 2021). The Pegon script in *the Melak Pare script* shows unique characteristics that distinguish it from the standard Arabic script. Although from a distance it looks similar to Arabic letters, the content written is not in Arabic, but in local languages such as Sundanese which have undergone phonetic and orthographic adjustments. Therefore, even if the Arabs could recognize the shape of the letter, they would not be able to read it correctly without understanding its distinctive sound system. This reflects the creative process carried out by Nusantara scholars in developing scripts that are in accordance with the needs of delivering da'wah, education, and writing literary works in the pesantren environment and local communities (Asrori et al., 2025).

The Pegon script itself is believed to have been first developed by Sunan Ampel Bada around 1400 AD, or according to another version, by his disciple, Imam Nawawi from Banten (Choeroni et al., 2019). The spread of this script is rapid along with the spread of Islamic teachings in the archipelago, especially through a network of Islamic boarding schools and other religious institutions. In the traditional teaching system, the Pegon script was chosen because it was considered more familiar and in accordance with the way of thinking and speaking of the local people than the Latin script introduced by the colonizers (Anderson, 2023). In addition, in terms of writing direction, the Pegon script is written from right to left, the same as the Arabic script, which is referred to in Javanese terms as "mimi lam mituno" (side by side, same from the right), in contrast to the modern Latin writing system or Javanese script written from left to right.

The use of the Pegon script is also one of the fortresses for the preservation of the scientific treasures of the archipelago's scholars. Many important works such as *Suluk Sunan Bonang*, *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai*, and *Hikayat Hang Tuah* were written in this script (Nurozi et al., 2020). In other words, the Pegon script is not only a technical tool, but also an intellectual cultural heritage that records local thought and wisdom. Therefore, the existence of *the Melak Pare manuscript* in the Pegon script strengthens its position as an authentic document that reflects the interaction between Islam, agrarian culture, and local Sundanese wisdom.

In terms of materials, *Melak Pare* manuscripts are written on European paper which was generally produced in the 15th to 16th centuries AD. This type of paper is known for its good quality because it goes through the pulp milling process with a machine, so as to produce fine and durable fibers. At that time, European paper was widely used in the archipelago, especially by the Dutch colonial government and the VOC for administrative needs such as treaties, official documents, mushaf, and correspondence between kingdoms (Rohmana, 2023). The use of European paper in this manuscript indicates that the author or owner had access to the relatively advanced resources of his time.

However, over time, the condition of the manuscript deteriorated. As is common with old documents in the tropics, the *Melak Pare* manuscript is now in a fragile state and is beginning to weather. This damage is caused by various environmental factors, one of which is exposure to light, especially ultraviolet light, which can trigger chemical processes and decompose the structure of organic matter in paper (Andrady et al., 2023). In addition, high air humidity in Indonesia also accelerates the degradation of manuscripts. Too humid air causes the paper to absorb water, so it becomes weak, easily torn, and can even become a fungal nest. Extreme temperature fluctuations also accelerate damage, as temperature changes can disrupt the chemical stability of cellulose, the main paper-forming substance.

To overcome the threat of damage, the conservator has made rescue efforts through paper coating using Japanese *tissue*. This technique is quite common in the world of manuscript conservation because Japanese tissues have the characteristics of being lightweight, flexible, and long-fibered, so they can protect the surface of the manuscript without damaging the original. The goal is to keep the manuscript from yellowing, brittle, or crumbling when touched or exposed to air. This step is important not only in terms of physical preservation, but also as a form of respect for the intellectual and spiritual content contained in it (Pirnazarov, 2024).

The physical condition of the manuscripts and Pegon scripts used also gives us a rich picture of how writing technology, written materials, and cultural values work simultaneously. In the framework of philological studies, this opens up a wide space of study, not only in the content of the text but also in the physical and visual forms of the manuscript (O'Connor, 2021). Philologists are not only in charge of reading the text, but also examining the ink, paper materials, binding structure, and socio-cultural context behind the text (Nanni, 2024). In the context of *Melak Pare*, we can see that the Pegon script is a tool for the preservation of collective memory related to agrarian cosmology and spiritual practices of the Sundanese people.

Through an understanding of this physical aspect, we are reminded that a manuscript contains not only text, but also cultural artifacts that store various layers of information: the history of writing, the path of dissemination, the social status of the author, and even colonial intervention in the provision of paper and stationery (Boyes et al., 2021). With a cross-disciplinary approach between history, anthropology, Islamic studies, and archival conservation, the *Melak Pare* manuscript can be revived, not only as a dead document on display in museums, but as part of a living legacy that inspires the present generation in recognizing the identity and wisdom of its ancestors.

Thus, an exploration of the physical manuscript of *Melak Pare* shows that every stroke of the letter, every piece of paper, and every pronunciation of the mantra holds a deep and high-value layer of meaning. Preservation efforts do not stop at physical conservation alone, but must be followed by interpretation, digital documentation, and knowledge dissemination to the wider community (Masenya, 2023). Because in a manuscript like this, we find traces of cultural identity, local spirituality, and the adaptability of the Indonesian nation to the changing times.

Contents of the Manuscript

The spells 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/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), steaming, hanging (standing), 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 & Ismunandar, 2017).

The word for cardinal directions is found in the pronunciation in the *melak pare* mantra text which consists of *ngidul* (south), *ngaler* (north), *ngulon* (west), *Ngetan* (east) 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 Qur'an, 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.

According to the results of research by (Kwary et al., 2018), the narrative about Dewi Sri has various versions spread across regions such as West Java, Central Java, Bali, and Nusa Tenggara. In the West Java region, the name Nyimas Puhaci is synonymous with the form of rice or rice itself. Therefore, the respect for rice in Sundanese agrarian tradition is not only as a staple food, but also as a sacred entity that embodies the presence of Dewi Sri in the midst of people's lives. In the context of the *Melak Pare* manuscript, this respect is manifested through prayers, mantras, and special rituals that accompany each stage of the farming process: from the selection of planting time, seed sowing and transplanting seeds, to storing crops in *leuit* (rice barns).

The attitude of the Sundanese people towards rice that is full of care, gratitude, and togetherness is a reflection of traditional values that have been inherited from generation to generation. These values are not only contained in the text, but also in nonverbal and verbal behavior, which are part of the collective culture. This tradition is conveyed through the mechanism of unconscious cultural inheritance or unconscious transference (Kalsum, 2010), which makes respect for nature and natural products part of daily life.

The *Melak Pare manuscript* not only contains elements of mantras and prayers, but also explains in detail the stages in farming that must be passed by farmers. The first stage is *planting* or *stocking*, which is the distribution of seeds on land that has been hoed as a medium for the initial growth of rice seedlings. These seeds will later be transferred to the ploughed rice fields. The next stage is the *planting process*, which is to move the seedlings that have grown into small plants and plant them back into the rice fields. It is usually done by tying the seedlings in the number according to the palm of the hand and then planting 3-4 seedlings in one hole.

The *macul* or hoeing process is carried out to turn the bottom soil upwards, level it, and map it so that it is ready for planting. This stage takes place at the same time as the seeding process. Meanwhile, the *mipit process* refers to the final stage, namely the harvest of rice that has matured and bears fruit. All of these stages are practiced by combining physical work and spiritual practices, such as reciting *istighfar*, *shalawat*, and certain prayers at a predetermined time based on the day, cardinal direction, and footsteps (Ludwig, 2015). This shows how close the relationship between agrarian activities and the spiritual life of the Sundanese people is.

Thus, the figure of Nyimas Puhaci Sangiyang Sri in this manuscript is not only a symbol, but also a moral and spiritual guide in sustainable agricultural practices. It is a representation of the values of balance between

man, nature, and the Creator. This tradition shows that before the modern ecological discourse developed, the Sundanese people had already had ecological wisdom embodied in local rituals, literature, and beliefs (Widianingsih et al., 2023). The existence of *the Melak Pare* manuscript is concrete evidence of how these values are recorded, inherited, and carried out collectively by the community as part of a complete cultural identity.

4. CONCLUSION

The study of the Melak Pare manuscript reveals that it is not merely a piece of ancient text but a living record of the agrarian and spiritual knowledge systems of traditional Sundanese society. Written in Pegon script, a modified form of Arabic adapted to local languages, the manuscript illustrates a meaningful cultural fusion between Arab-Islamic literacy and indigenous epistemologies. The text, which includes mantras, prayers, and ritual procedures for rice cultivation, suggests that agriculture was viewed not only as an economic activity but also as a sacred practice that unites humans, nature, and the divine within an integrated system of values. The manuscript also reflects a dynamic process of cultural assimilation, where Islamic elements were harmonized with local beliefs. The figure of Nyimas Puhaci Sangiyang Sri, or Dewi Sri, revered as a symbol of fertility, remains central to the narrative while being reframed through the lens of Islamic monotheism via the recitation of istighfar, shalawat, and devotional prayers. The ethical values embedded in the text, such as respect for rice, movement rituals based on cardinal directions, and time-specific farming practices, reveal a deeply rooted ecological knowledge that remains relevant to discussions on sustainable agriculture today.

This research contributes in three major ways. First, from a philological perspective, it enriches academic understanding of local manuscripts that have been largely overlooked. Second, from a cultural angle, it reconstructs traditional agricultural wisdom that offers valuable insights for alternative approaches to modern agroecological discourse. Third, from a spiritual standpoint, it revives a cosmological perspective in which labor and devotion are integrated acts that sustain both community and environment through balance, intention, and reverence.

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