

The Tradition of Pilgrimage to the Grave of Muslim Missionaries in Misool Island, Papua

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to reveal the meaning behind the grave considered sacred by the community. This paper attempts to explain the relationship between the pilgrimage tradition at the sacred grave and the fulfilment of the necessities of life, as well as the strong influence of traditional and religious values in determining the standards of values and norms prevailing in community on Misool Island, Raja Ampat. Through ethnographic works by tracing the existence of old grave on Misool Island, Raja Ampat, and by carefully listening to the explanations of community leaders verbally describing the history of the tomb, there are enough reasons to explain the close relationship between the values believed and practiced in the life of Misool society and the sacredness of some existing graves. This study explains the importance of the position of grave in connecting people's hope to the noblest Essence. The symbolizing of the grave as something extraordinary in this society also turns out to be a way to maintain the continuity of people's hope with the reality that many cultural and structural obstacles are encountered.

Keywords: Sacred, Islamic Grave, Misool Raja Ampat.

Introduction

When my son wanted to test the army, I went to Yefbi Island in front of Kapatcol to express my intention, and thank God, my son graduated from the army test and is studying now.

(Ibu Hatia Rumadai, 2020)

The preceding story demonstrates that the graves of Islamic figures on Misool Island serves as a medium for entrusting prayers in the hope that human wishes will be granted. Religious leaders' graves are frequently visited with the intention of praying (Eskandrani 2007; Huda 2020; Sani 2017), seeking blessings (Asmaran 2018), honoring the figures (Huda 2020; Mumfangati 2007) and following their behavior (Padmawijaya & Hidayat 2019), or other individual mystical motivations (Djuhan 2011: 180–182; Wasanjoyo 2019: 41–42). In many communities, visiting

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graves is a cultural practice that has been passed down from generation to generation. This practice has encouraged the society to care for and sanctify the graves in accordance with local customs and traditions. No exception in Muslim areas as a minority, the presence of Islamic figures' graves in Misool-Papua has a tradition of sanctifying graves. However, in the Misool area, this practice is distinct due to the sacredness carried out by the community around the grave, in addition to being driven by religious factors, the community's limited socioeconomic conditions, and a form of hegemony from religious authorities.

So far, literature of tombs and graves has explained a lot about the historical, archaeological, and religious aspects of a grave's *karamah*. From an archaeological standpoint, the graves of historical figures are studied in terms of materials related to the use of stones, tombstones, inscriptions, and decorative ornaments (Burhanudin 2016; Handoko 2016; Hasanuddin & Burhan 2017; Muhaeminah 1998; Rosmawati 2016; Suprayitno 2012). The analysis of archaeology of graves may serve as a marker for historical context and connectivity with other areas (Rosmawati 2016; Saberina 2018). The use of upright stones (*menhirs*) on the graves of Islamic figures is thought to be a continuation of the megalithic cult (Handoko 2016; Muhaeminah 1998). Several anthropological studies of community appreciation in pilgrimage rituals were discovered in the context of belief in the *karamah* graves of Islamic figures (Asmaran 2018; Latifundia 2016: 479–500; Mustaghfiroh, Hikmatul, Mustaqim 2014). This research focuses on the locations of graves on the island of Java, some on the island of Sumatra, and a little on the island of Sulawesi. Meanwhile, previous researchers were unconcerned yet on the existence of graves of Islamic figures in Muslim areas with minorities, such as Papua.

This article will complete the existing literature, particularly in the context of the Misool people of West Papua, in treating sacred graves physically as well as the rituals accompanying them. Not only describing the pilgrimage practices of the Misool society and its surrounding by expressing their beliefs and values, but this study also examines the points of convergence and divergence when compared to pilgrimage traditions in other regions. This paper will discuss three topics in order to explain this problem: first, the history of the grave; second, the rituals performed by the pilgrims and their meanings; and third, why the practice of visiting the graves of Muslim leaders in Misool is unique and continues to be practiced until today.

To address the issues raised above, this article employs some scientific concepts such as scalpels. The Hegemony of Antonio Gramsci (1995) becomes an important concept in understanding how Misool society experiences the dominance without coercion and violence mechanism. This hegemony may lead to surrender to the fate because the dominant values in the society gain legitimacy of power and also the main values in society (Saptono 1999; Siswati 2018: 21). In line with the community's hegemony, Stuart Hall's (1973) receptions, particularly those closely related to domination, have led to a uniform acceptance of the values produced by the society (Colpani 2022: 221–246). Surrendering to the fate and believing in what has been determined by the power certainly arise several assumptions, as stated by James Scott (1990) about the closed resistance of community groups, which when being contextualized to the situation of the Misool society, it turns out that the community is fighting back by anchoring hope not anymore on normative power structure (government) against one big hope in their lives, but prefers the *Jere* (sacred place) in which the Islamic figures eternally resided (Brown 2021).

This article's argument is based on the reality of the Misool people's belief in the sacredness of Islamic graves, which is motivated by three factors. First, the existing graves are the manifestation and symbolization of religious belief practiced in the community. Second, limited resources and access to basic necessities force people to rely on the sacred; and third, sacred graves serve as a medium to maintain religious authority and dominance in the midst of many conflicts of interest and emerging identities. The relationship between the people's customs that hold the sacred graves of Muslim leaders in Misool and the public trust can be explained and interpreted through these three factors as a way to survive in the midst of various obstacles and shortcomings they face.

Methodology

This study was carried out in four villages in Misool Island, Raja Ampat Regency, where the community sacred the graves. The four villages, Tomolol Village, Candles Village, Usaha Jaya Village, and Kapatcol Village are administratively located in the districts of West Misool and South Misool. The area of these villages is interesting to study because they are not only exotic in nature, but their people also have a lot of hidden intelligence. The information in this article was gathered by prioritizing ethnographic processes and direct observation of tomb locations. In-depth direct interviews with key informants were conducted to gather information on the tomb's historicity, sacredness, and the benefits to the community from its presence. For data collection purposes, the researcher stayed with the community for a short period of time to witness the various rituals and events associated with the tomb's existence. The data were collected using recording aids such as recorders, cameras, and field notes, and during the research, interview guidelines became a guide for asking questions that required specific answers from informants while still adhering to ethical and emic principles, so that a thick description could be obtained, and interpretations of field findings could be made.

The History of Islamic Presence in Misool Island

Some previous research findings have so clearly revealed the story and long history of Islam being present and interacting with the indigenous people of Misool. Saberina (2012) describes the Misool community's current Islam as the legacy of an Islamic spreader named Sheikh Abdurrahman bin Alwi Almisry, who came from Tidore and was present and picked up by the Matbat community. During the Hongi war, Islam came into contact with the Misool people and a lot of Misool people were suspected of being the members of Sultan Zainal Abidin of Tidore's troops (Saberina 2012).

The history of Islam in Misool can be described in two ways. The first is the version of the researchers who wrote down the history of meeting of the original inhabitants in Misool Island in the 13th century by referring to travel records written by Ibnu Battuta. According to several researchers, the Islamic spreading model in Misool is carried out in three ways: politics, culture, and kinship. The common pattern of Islamic spread existed in most parts of the archipelago (Dunn & Creek 2015; Pamungkas 2015; Timmer 2014; Yamin et. al. 2019). The second version is through oral history of the people in Misool Island who still keep in mind about their ancestors' historical memories about the early encounters of Misool Island's indigenous people with Islamic figures and spreaders that are quite diverse, with varied perspectives and points of view, at least as described by Mr. Amos Fadimpo in the followings;

Islam entered Misool on the island for the first time in front of Usaha Jaya village, but with a note that Islam entered it not for spreading the religion because if spreading Islam, all people of this village must be Muslims . . . So, at first, a pair of husband and wife met Sultan Zainal Abidin from Tidore when the seawater receded, then they promised to meet again. This Matbat couple told the villagers, and they came and waited at Kalodi. So, while waiting for the sultan's arrival, the people then made piles of stones for the noken (paludi) backing. While waiting, then people saw the sign of the Maleo bird flying. They knew the Sultan had come. The Sultan came for that purpose, which was to swear that the people of Misool should stop killing each other. Sultan came to this Misool around the 1513 AD (Amos Fadimpo).

Haji Ibrahim Lodji narrated in a different version:

As a matter of fact, Islam in Misool started from the visit of six Matbat people to Sailolol only wearing loincloths for an event. When they got there, they got a particular seat. At midnight after the event, the Misool went home, but there was one person left behind, sleeping in the corner. The host asked his people to take water and coconut skin and then pour it on the seat sat by the Misool people. The sleeping Misool listened to what the host said. The people previously leaving then remembered that their friend was left behind and then picked him

up. The person left behind then told his friends about the incident he had listened, which made them angry. However, one of them reminded his friends that their condition was not the same as the Sailolof people, so apparently, they needed to find someone who could teach them about religion. In short, the Misool people finally looked for people understanding the religion to Banda Island by kidnapping a religious leader and taking him to Misool Island. The first time process of Islamization was by circumcising the indigenous people of the Misool Island at the point of spears and machetes. The location of the first Islamization was in Goa Karamat. Then later, it was carried out in Nut Halam (Islamic Island), which is located in front of the Usaha Jaya village. So, the one who was buried in the sacred place is also *ama*, he is *pubapa punama*, he is *tete punama* from Hadramaut, Yemen. The book he brought was written from Istanbul, Turkey (Haji Ibrahim Lodji).

The stories told by the two key informants above raises one question about the Muslims who came to Misool. Did they come from Banda, Tidore, or Wajo, as Haji Abu Bakar Umkabu claimed, "So the Islam that is currently developing in Misool, especially in Lilinta village, was brought by our ancestors from Wajo. One of them named Salehuddin was buried behind the building, in front of the mosque."

Based on the description above, a general conclusion can be proposed: First, Islam was embraced by the indigenous people of Misool Island based on their inner awareness because they had received unfriendly treatment from the Sailolof people, so they looked for figures who could teach them religious knowledge (Islam), which was marked by a mass circumcision procession. Second, Islam known and practiced in Misool, particularly what is believed by people near the sacred graves, is a blend of Maluku and Sulawesi. Third, the informants confirmed the findings of researchers on the history of Islam in Misool brought by a prominent Islamic spreader from Yemen named Sheikh Abdurrahman bin Alwi Almisry, as well as the occurrence of cults and symbols representing the figures and places where he was buried. This practice is in line with the Sufi teaching model, which holds that certain *karamah* and the existing holy places can be used to ask for blessings from the Almighty.

The Sacred Graves

This article is primarily concerned with three graves. These are the three graves that the villagers always visit when they have problems, plan activities, or deliver specific hopes, such as enrolling in university, becoming a military or police officer, becoming a civil servant, or even taking part in a political event. The three graves have become an important means for the villagers to fulfill their desires. The graves can be described in the following ways.

Tomolol Sacred Grave

The sacred cave in front of Tomolol village, behind Usaha Jaya village, is a well-known site in Misool Island. In Misool Island, almost no one is unfamiliar with the location. The Tomolol Sacred Grave is thought to be the tomb of Misool Island's first Islamic spreader. The tomb location can be reached in approximately 30 minutes from the departure point of Tomolol village. The pilgrims from outside Misool Island who want to visit the tomb can do so by renting fiber (body) boats from the local people that have Jhonson or Honda brand engines with 15, 30, or 45 PK engine power.



Picture 1: Cliffs and rock clusters leading to the Tomolol grave area.
Ade Yamin and the Research Team December 2020

The pilgrims are picked up by solid rock clusters that form abstract shapes along the way to the grave area. Approaching the area, there will be a pile of stones called "Jou Mangofa" that extends like a barrier at the entrance gate. People say that Jou Mangofa was built to protect the existence of Islamic spreaders from the outside attacks. Climbing the stairs to the area, people can see the inscription of Allah's pronounciation, which is the result of natural creations and which locals believe is a form of *karamah* of the buried figure on the rock wall directly above the tomb. The tomb location has been very well maintained, and it is now used as a cultural site by the Raja Ampat local government. There are two tombs lined up on a rock near the location. One tomb is thought to be the one of Sheikh Abdurrahman Almisry, and the other to be the one of his wives, Boqi Taibah. The government has currently restored the tomb and added a touch of modern ornamentation in the form of stone tile installation and several other accessories, such as an iron fence around it, a bridge, and a public facility in the form of a urinal. There is also a nameplate as a marker for the identity of the tomb, which will help the visitors recognize the location's name.



Picture 2: Abdurrahman Almisry and his wife's grave, Boqi Taibah, December 2020
Yefbi in front of Kapatcol Village

The next tomb is a nameless tomb known as Yefbi Kapatcol, which has a contrasting appearance when compared to the sacred tomb in Tomolol, which has received full government attention and has become a favorite pilgrimage destination for the community, so the two tombs located at Yefbi Island in front of Kapatcol Village appear very unkempt. However, several unique stories have developed in the community about the existence of the two tombs, which also becomes a special place of pilgrimage for some families in Lilinta village.



Picture 3: Kapatcol Sacred Tomb, Ade Yamin and Ana Maria Fatimah Parera December 2020

Visiting the sacred tomb without a headstone in Yefbi Island, the lucky pilgrims will be greeted by the fragrance wafted from the top of the tomb. Some other pilgrims, who are less fortunate, will not be greeted with this fragrance. The tomb is round and rises about 60 cm above ground level; according to locals, this higher position develops on its own. Since a long time ago, the tomb has drifted from the sea and grown (up higher). The tomb circle has a diameter of about 3 meters. There is a stretch of white sand above the tomb. When the pilgrim sets foot on the white sand towards the tomb area, it appears from a distance that the tomb is not well maintained, but when the pilgrim arrives at the tomb, the white mound of the tomb appears to be very well maintained, with a very clean stretch of white sand on it, although there is no sheet of dry leaves piled on top of the tomb. The local people believe that this could be caused by the tomb's *karamah* (Rasmadi Suaib).

According to Mrs. Hatia Rumadai, Yefbi Kapatcol is a tomb that was washed away from Tidore Island, North Maluku and stranded on Misool Island. There are three tombs, one is in Waigama, one is in Yefbi Island in front of Kapatcol village, and the other is located in another island near Yefbi Island. Still according to Mrs. Hatia Rumadai, the tomb will indeed emit a very fragrant smell at certain times. Meanwhile, another informant said that based on the stories he heard, the tomb was indeed the one that was washed away and stranded. Different conditions can be seen in the second grave in Yefbi Island in front of the Kapatcol village. This tomb is a companion to the tomb above. It is in a very bad shape, which is very concerning. This tomb, however, is thought to have its own *karamah*. The tomb is overgrown with shrubs and is littered with rocks. Indeed, a village boy involved in data collection stated that when he was younger, his parents frequently invited him to take blessings at the tomb, especially when he faced significant life events such as taking school exams or traveling abroad. However, this tradition has experienced a slight shift in values, but the memories of the tomb's function remain embedded in the village community's mind.

Yefpale Lapale

The third tomb, which is also considered to have privileges by the community, is located in Yefpale Lapale Island, about 60 minutes by boat from Lilinta village to the South. The tomb is relatively in a good condition because it is still maintained independently by the family of Haji Abu Bakar Umkabu of Lilinta village. According to the informant, it is the tomb of Abdul Salis from Baghdad. Meanwhile, another informant stated that the one buried in the tomb was originally from India. The person buried was a religious leader who died on his journey and made a will that his body ought to be buried on the island.



Picture 4: Sacred Tomb of Lapale, December 2020

According to some sayings, the tomb has the privilege and virtues in terms of meeting people's needs for marine products. According to the informant:

Paitua came from Seram. Oh, with a sailboat. They stopped at the island on Friday night, delivered by Paitua Tipkabu, Paitua Bulan, and one more. Before Paitua died, he pulled the bag and then handed out two pieces of paper, which he put one on his chest, and he gave another to Paitua Bulan. While making a will, if he dies, there is no need to send him back to the village, but it is enough for him to be buried on the island (Haji Ibrahim Lodji).

The sheet of paper left by the late Abdul Salis above is currently intact but fragile and is in the care of Mr. Haji Abu Bakar Umkabu. This piece of paper is believed to have *karamah* that makes people easier to get seafood when the sea atmosphere is not friendly. Some local people stated that if they had difficulty in catching fish in the sea, they would take a handful of sea sand and place it in the grave while praying to make it easier to catch fish, so with the God's permission, after doing these activities, the sea will provide its contents in the form of abundant fish to the people who do it.

Misool Sacred Grave Rituals and Meaning According to Society

Seeing and listening to the pilgrims' explanations of sacred graves in Misool Island provides a unique story that is completely different from the ritual practices typically performed in other parts of Indonesia (Ginting 2018: 188; Hasanah & Zuraidah 2019; Muna & Fauzan 2020; Pataruka 2018:88). Rituals that typically involve a large number of elements and trinkets, such as ritual leaders, ritual equipment, and rigid rules in ritual processions, do not apply to the Misool community pilgrimage tradition. Someone who plans a pilgrimage does not have to include a figure who serves as a ritual leader. The pilgrims may carry out their own rituals. The ritual is also performed in an uncomplicated and rigid procession, with no various offerings. The fishermen's testimonies become the evidence and markers that the rituals performed at the sacred Yefpale Lapale tomb are very simple and do not require a number of long rituals and servitude.

Table 1
The Sacred Grave's Process and Ritual Trinkets

Statement	Informants	Coding
"So when we couldn't find any fish while looking for in front of Yefpale, just take a handful of sand and then pray to Allah SWT in front of the grave, then put the sand in the grave, with the God's permission, when we return to fishing, we will get a lot of sea catch."	Haji Abu Bakar Umkabu	No need to use ritual trinkets
Ah, if you want to go to the tomb to pray, you just go, each of you, like when we were still children, following our parents.	Armansyah Lodji S.Pd	It does not involve figures or tomb caretakers
When my son wanted to join the army, I didn't go there, but I intended and conveyed my intentions from this house to the grave in Yefbi Kapatcol. Thank God, the child graduated from the army test and is currently studying.	HatiaRumadai	It does not require a rigid ritual procession

The rituals performed at the sacred graves as described in table 1 are similar to the other ones performed at nearly all sacred graves on Misool Island. There are only minor differences in the materials and ritual equipment. The ritual in the sacred Tomolol tomb, for example, includes a ritual leader who will pray as well as additional attributes such as burning incense. Meanwhile, the rituals performed at Kapatcol village's sacred tomb are not so different from those performed at the sacred Yefpalelapale tomb, which are based on needs and do not even require ritual trinkets. A person with an intention may come to the grave and pray without bringing any offerings; he can simply pray and convey his wishes. The local people can pray in their own homes in certain circumstances by offering prayers through the intercession of *karamah* from the sacred tomb that was intended.

Meanwhile, as shown in table 2, the tombs that villagers continue to visit in Misool are interpreted directly by the community based on individual experiences tailored to the needs of each person participating in these cultural practices.

Table 2
The Society's Interpretation of the Sacred Graves

Statements	Informants	Coding
We believe in the Almighty, but we also believe in the Unseen . . . that where there is a grave, there is a lot of wood shells, but the grave is still clean, the leaves are also not there, I usually shovel a half of sand from the sack and put it in the grave and then pray, wish for a long life and health . . .	Haji Abu Bakar Umkabu	The <i>karamah</i> of the tomb may grant the pilgrims' wishes
In the past, when we wanted to go to school, wanted to go to college, or if there was a family who wanted to take a test, we came to this grave (Yefbi Kapatcol, which grave now is currently very poorly maintained and left scattered stones), cleaned the grave, read a prayer then went home.	Rasmadi Suaib ST	Means of connecting to public access are limited
Over there, when there are sick people, we pray there, besides, if we want to go down to the sea, we have to make <i>Samsom</i> , or open a garden, or want to chop wood... this is the goal so that those who do it will be safe from danger.	Ibu Habasia	The strong hegemony of traditional values and religious

Cultural and Structural Hegemony

The rituals performed by the Misool people on the existing sacred graves, in particular, provide three important contexts that reflect the Misool people's social, political, and economic realities. First, the sacredness of the graves represents a belief in the existence of a greater power outside people's lives. This power is thought to have the ability to bring about useful things, but it may also cause harm if the community no longer adheres to the values and norms passed down through tradition (Eskandrani, 2007, p. 235; Mustaghfiroh, Hikmatul. Mustaqim, 2014, p. 158; P, 2020, pp. 241–256; Widiani & Jiyanto, 2019, pp. 77–98). A belief in power outside oneself is a spiritual value that is universally associated with humanity.

Second, the sacredness of the graves is a manifestation of limited human resources in understanding life's realities due to a lack of access to knowledge. This constraint strengthens people's trust and confidence in things that cannot be explained by simple reasoning (Djuhan, 2011; Ismail, 2016; Pataruka, 2018, pp. 87–95; Wasanjoyo, 2019, pp. 180–182). Then, inadequate education, combined with the presence of religious hegemony in their lives, presents the third context, namely the preservation of religious and customary authority as a non-negotiable source of law and belief, with a strong coercive power over society. Pilgrimages with even simple rituals, such as those performed at the Misool tomb complex, reflect a strict control manifested in the standards of action and speech, about what can and cannot be done, as well as the possibility of social and customary punishments for violators. Several other sacred graves use control mechanisms in the form of myths that are not violated (Asmaran, 2018, pp. 143–160; Wasanjoyo, 2019, pp. 180–182).

Sacred Graves as an Alternative Solution

As a society that is entirely dependent on nature's generosity, the Misool people require a variety of resources to support their activities, primarily to meet their daily needs and to meet the aspirations of future generations. The resources, which are critical needs, face a variety of challenges both internal and external. In such cases, the presence of sacred tombs appears to be a catalyst for a lack of resources to meet needs. An informant's initial quote in this article clearly implies this. To fulfill his son's wish, the informant placed his faith in the *karamah* held by the person buried in the sacred tomb in front of the Kapacol village. Many other local people have had similar experiences, such as in order to pass school entrance exams, civil servant entrance exams, and other exams, many local people have high hopes for miracles and *karamah* from the existing graves. (Ginting, 2018, p. 180; Nihayah, 2018; Rohimi, 2019, pp. 161–171) Similarly, sacred graves are an important part of the success of efforts to meet the needs of daily life, which rely heavily on sources from the wealth of marine life.

Appreciation, glorification, and positioning of graves as important elements in the Misool community's life circle can practically be considered as an alternative solution to breaking the ice between the community and structural power. In facing many obstacles, the community proposes cultural solutions as a means of problem solving, although this cultural solution appears to be merely a suggestion for the community's efforts. There is a belief in the existence of the Almighty power outside themselves (Mustaghfiroh, Hikmatul, Mustaqim 2014: 143–150; Pataruka 2018: 87–95; Wasanjoyo 2019: 180–182). So, it would be unmistakable to conclude that, at this time, the sacred grave is the community's last option for hanging on a hope, after many attempts, efforts, and prayers have been made. This reality confirms what Berger (1991) stated, that public belief has served as a sacred canopy that not only serves as a guide in performing rituals, but has also constructed a way of life, values, and norms that must be followed, which in turn protects the community from a state of discomfort and meaninglessness (Berger 1991).

To conclude, the presence of sacred graves in Misool is not only a sign of the burial of important religious figures there. But more than that, the sacred grave exemplifies the gap between people's expectations, which depend all living activities on cultural values, with the government's power that moves structurally. The community's powerlessness in accessing various resources was not alleviated by the country's structural power. As a result, the sacred

tomb has been transformed from an inanimate object with symbolic meaning to a foundation of hope for meeting life's needs. Such circumstances, of course, not only distinguish the rituals performed to honor or glorify the tomb. However, it should be an auto critique, emphasizing the importance of closing the gap between people's habits that are based on cultural values and the government bureaucracy with a structural paradigm in specific contexts, as if there is a conflict between cultural values in society and structural values that exist in power.

This article has several weak points, including a lack of clarity in the historical tomb story, particularly regarding the exact time span of the tomb's existence. Furthermore, the ethnographic perspective used, which relies more on observations and interviews, is insufficient in exploring the relationship between community habits and government policies in managing the graves, and these three articles discuss tombs, despite their uniqueness, in the context of Papuan locality. However, in accordance with this, the grave localization in the context of this tradition should be contextualized in the global area so that they can contribute to the repertoire of knowledge in a broader way.

Finally, this article has brought a story about the existence of sacred tombs by the Misool people, which have different storylines and faces from those seen in sacred tombs throughout Indonesia. At the very least, the sacred tomb in Misool teaches a valuable lesson about the true meaning of the Indonesian people's religious traditions.

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