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## AESTHETICS OF PLAK-PLIENG GRAVESTONE OF LAMURI KINGDOM ACEH: A STUDY ACCORDING TO SUSANNE KNAUTH LANGER'S AESTHETIC CONCEPT

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### Abstract

The Lamuri Kingdom in Aceh has relics in the form of gravestones called "Plak-plied" stones, which are concrete evidence and records of the history of the kings who were buried with these gravestones. This Plak-plied gravestone is thought to be a gravestone made by local people during the reign of the Lamuri kingdom with a mixed population who emigrated from outside Aceh at that time. The Lamuri Kingdom was an Acehnese Hindu kingdom that existed in the 4th century, turned into Islam or a sultanate in the 9th century, and lasted until the 15th century. The Plak-plied gravestone, which is characteristic of the Lamuri royal graves, was rediscovered in 1890. Based on the date written on the gravestone found, the Plak-plied gravestone dates to the 12th century AD. Thus, the Plak-plied gravestone was made during the Islamic era, or when Lamuri became an Islamic kingdom. The type of research in this study is research using a descriptive method. The descriptive method is a method used to look for elements, characteristics, and properties of a phenomenon. The method begins with collecting data, analysing the data, and interpreting it. This descriptive research tries to reveal and explain the problems that occur in society, especially the problem of searching for symbolic aesthetics on the Plak-plied gravestones of the Lamuri kingdom of Aceh. The Plak-plied gravestone contains various symbolic elements that we can find using Susane K. Langer's theory. The findings of the symbolic aesthetic meaning found are divided into several parts according to Langer's aesthetic theory. On the Plak-plied gravestones of the Lamuri Kingdom of Aceh, symbolic aesthetics are found as a symbol of art. The implied value of this gravestone gives us an idea of the high artistic value that existed in past societies. In this way, we can see that the level of artistic taste of the people of Aceh in the past was very high. The discovery of the inscription on this gravestone also explains the glory days of a kingdom led by the owner of the gravestone. This day dates back nine hundred years. In this way, we can learn about the value of art in the past through the Acehnese civilisation and how they found materials for making sturdy gravestones and a variety of ornaments that were very complicated and beautiful.

**Keywords:** *Plak-plied, Gravestone, Lamuri, Aesthetics.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Lamuri Kingdom in Aceh has relics in the form of gravestones called "Plak-plieng" stones, which are concrete evidence and records of the history of the kings who were buried with these gravestones. This Plak-plieng gravestone is thought to be a gravestone made by local people during the reign of the Lamuri kingdom with a mixed population who emigrated from outside Aceh at that time. The Lamuri Kingdom was an Acehnese Hindu kingdom that existed in the 4th century, turned into Islam or a sultanate in the 9th century, and lasted until the 15th century. The Plak-plieng gravestone, which is characteristic of the Lamuri royal graves, was rediscovered in 1890. Based on the date written on the gravestone found, the Plak-plieng gravestone dates to the 12th century AD. Thus, the Plak-plieng gravestone was made during the Islamic era, or when Lamuri became an Islamic kingdom.

Said (2012) stated that "the truth about the existence of the Lamuri kingdom was the discovery of the Plak-plieng gravestone, which was physically different from other gravestones in the world, which could be seen in the beauty and complexity of the various motifs." The people around the Lamuri royal gravestone complex have known about this gravestone for a long time, although there was no visible care or maintenance in the form of cultural heritage until 2012. The uniqueness and beauty of the Plak-plieng stone are different compared to other gravestones in the archipelago, so people call it the Plak-plieng gravestone or Plak stone-plieng.

Ricklefs (2008) in the *Lentera* translation explains that "the Lamuri kingdom was at the northern tip of the island of Sumatra, namely at the tip of Aceh Besar; this is proven by the discovery of the ruins of Hindu-Buddhist buildings, a fort, the Plak-plieng gravestone complex with the words Lamuri kingdom, and a village called Lamreh, which, if connected by amelioration, could become Lamuri." Based on this explanation, we can learn about the Plak-plieng stone and the Lamuri kingdom as historical evidence through works of fine art that were able to survive for hundreds of years until they were discovered in modern times. Until now, the Plak-plieng stone has not been a basic source of thought about the splendour of works of fine art in the land of Aceh in the past. Acehnese society, both youth and academics, have not promoted or written down this work

as an inspiration for the modern era that gives Acehnese fine art its identity. The author's concern about the story and the discovery of Aceh's identity through this ancient masterpiece gave him the idea to write a literary document regarding the shapes and motifs that fully describe the Plak-plieng stones of the Lamuri kingdom. The Plak-plieng stone is said to be unique because it is very different from various other royal gravestones in Aceh.

In the book *Aceh Throughout the Century* by Said (2012), it is also explained: The discovery of the Lamuri stone, or Plak-plieng, was very helpful in finding the ruins of the Lamuri kingdom. The Plak-plieng stone, with a height of 160 cm and 90 cm, rises in the vicinity of the tomb complex in Lamreh Village, Mesjid Raya District, Aceh Besar Regency, Aceh Province. Lamreh Village is a change of word from Lamuri, which was once the trading centre of the ancient kingdom. The discovery of the village and gravestones is the forerunner of interesting discoveries that have not been physically and anthropologically researched in the changes that have occurred throughout this historical land range. Based on this explanation, traces of the Lamuri kingdom were found, as well as remains of fine art in the form of Plak-plieng gravestones, which became the basis for thinking about problems in ancient art objects.

The Plak-plieng gravestone referred to in this opinion is related to the ornamental form of the Hindu period, but the work is an Islamic tomb because of the Arabic inscriptions. The shapes and motifs inscribed on the Plak-plieng stone are benchmarks for past fine art in Aceh. The inspiration for making beautiful stone carvings comes from the behaviour of past artists in Aceh. Artists in each region today often inspire various works by entrusting several symbols of ancient regional works to each of their modern works of art, such as ornaments, monuments, or others that convey certain shapes or motifs that are meaningful to a region or the impression of the story of that region.

The shapes and motifs on the Plak-plieng gravestones convey symbolic value that can be seen explicitly or implicitly. The symbols presented are certainly difficult to express with the naked eye, so in-depth research is needed so that we can find various symbolic meanings hidden in the aesthetic value of the gravestone works of art. Plak-plieng

gravestones have strong artistic value in the aesthetics of art and culture, which can be seen through their carvings, so they need to be written down and published to every cultural actor in Aceh and around the world.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research uses a qualitative approach. Arikunto (2011:36) Qualitative is a way that makes it possible to find out the existence or conditions that are currently occurring or related to the course of past historiography in current documentation with verbal data in the form of physical evidence, interpretive evidence, and words. In accordance with Sugiono's explanation (2010:49), "qualitative research methods are methods for investigating objects that cannot be measured with numbers or other exact measures."

A qualitative approach is useful for researchers to explain, analyse, and interpret all information related to primary and secondary data in answering the problem formulation. This is in accordance with the opinion expressed by Sugiyono (2013:38), who stated that "a qualitative approach is a research process that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observed behaviour."

The type of research in this study is research using a descriptive method. The descriptive method is a method used to look for elements, characteristics, and properties of a phenomenon. The method begins with collecting data, analysing the data, and interpreting it (Arikunto 2011:39). This descriptive research tries to reveal and explain the problems that occur in society, especially the problem of searching for symbolic aesthetics on the Plak-plieng gravestones of the Lamuri kingdom of Aceh. Sugiyono (2013:214) stated that "descriptive research is actually required to carry out grounded research, namely finding theories based on data obtained in the field or social situations."

This research was conducted in Lamreh Village, Mesjid Raya District, Aceh Besar Regency. The reason for determining this location was based on considerations of the effectiveness and efficiency of the place where the Lamuri kingdom developed in the past, as well as the recorded history of Lamuri and the location of the Plak-plieng gravestone complex of the Lamuri Kingdom, Aceh. The choice of

location is also based on observations to directly determine the physical form of the research object.

After the data is collected, the data is processed using qualitative analysis techniques. This technique is used to find out how "visual art aesthetics and symbolic meaning on the plaque-plieng gravestones of the Lamuri kingdom of Aceh". The analysis technique is carried out in stages. This stage is carried out by reviewing all available data from various sources, namely observations (field observations) and interviews, so that the main things from the project being studied can be found that relate to the research focus. The steps in the data processing technique are as follows, as stated by Milles and Huberman (Sugiono, 2013:337-345): data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Visual Aesthetics of the Headstone Plak-plieng of the Lamuri Kingdom Aceh**

The Plak-plieng headstone has a specific or unique shape because it rises and tapers upwards. Plak-plieng gravestones from all over Lamreh Hill, Krueng Raya District, Aceh Besar Regency, based on interviews with Mr. Taqiyuddin, can be classified into four types based on their shape. The types of Plak-plieng gravestones are divided to make data collection easier. This division was carried out on several plaque-plieng gravestones that had inscription elements (story writing) and those that did not have inscriptions. This division is differentiated from the size of the Plak-plieng gravestone because there are large and small gravestone sizes. The four types in question are divided into two types because of their size and two more types because of the presence of inscriptions or additional shapes on the carvings.

We are familiar with the many motifs typical of the Aceh region and in general from the previous discussion, but according to the researcher's observations, the Plak-plieng gravestones contain floral motifs and Arabic writing. The floral motifs are observed based on carvings that resemble flowers, but this has not been discussed in detail about the flowers illustrated on the gravestone. The floral motifs that appear are very beautiful and arranged in vertical patterns and full-space patterns. This pattern is observed because of the

arrangement of floral motifs that can be seen through the plaque-pierced gravestones. The next carving that dominates is the writing or inscription that describes the identity of the tomb owner. The inscription is made in Arabic, with the time period and literary excerpts contained in it.

Observations covering the decorative motifs and carvings on the Plak-plieng gravestones shed light on the era of civilisation of the tomb owner, namely the Islamic era that entered due to the existence of Arabic inscriptions with names that were popular during the heyday of the previous Islamic sultanate and the style of decorative motifs made with motifs. flora. Floral motifs that are full, beautiful, and found on relics reflect the era when Islam entered because Islam does not apply motifs of living creatures other than plants to its works of art.

#### **a. Plak-plieng Gravestone Type A**

The visible shape of the Plak-plieng type A headstone is a headstone whose size is below an adult's thigh (less than 50 cm). This gravestone is shaped like a menhir or spearhead, but its size is larger because it has a higher volume of stone. Based on the shape, the size of this stone is only one type, but based on the motif, this gravestone has two different types. The shape of the Plak-plieng type A gravestone is similar to ancient Indian Hindu pagoda houses but is slightly less conical on the roof. The components observed in the shape of the Plak-plieng type A gravestone are the size, shape category, and other supporting elements that explain the complete characteristics of the small Plak-plieng stone. The small type A plaque-plieng gravestone is in the form of a block that stands upright with the head end in the shape of a temple roof or onion.

The stone carvings on the Plak-plieng type A gravestones are very complicated and beautiful. On the small-type A gravestone, there are various floral motifs arranged beautifully and various types of flora. Based on the researchers' observations, there is a tanjung/lotus flower motif or lotus flower in bloom; the other two sides are decorated with a motif of lotus in bud called Bungoeng Seureupeu. This motif can be seen through the arrangement of the motif, which is very different between the lotus flower (Seureupeu), blooming lotus, and Bungoeng

Glima.

**Figure 1. Plak-plieng Gravestone Type A**



Source: Researcher (2023)

#### **b. Plak-plieng Gravestone Type B**

The shape of the Plak-plieng type B gravestone is a block with a pyramid tip, or a mixture of a standing block and a pyramid located on top. The Plieng type B plaque gravestone has a unique gravestone shape with a variety of motifs. These motifs are usually known in various types, but in type B Plak-plieng gravestones, the decorative motifs are more beautiful and more complicated than in type A Plak-plieng gravestones.

The differences in these motifs can be seen through the curvature of the textures and motifs that decorate them, starting with flowers and various other engravings. The motifs that decorate the type B plaque-plieng gravestones are very beautiful, starting from the bungoeng glima motif, the lotus bungoeng motif, the jeumpa bungoeng motif, the taloe meuputa dua bungoeng motif, the sago bungoeng motif, and the cloud bungoeng motif. These motifs are arranged beautifully to decorate the entire surface of the Plak-plieng type B gravestone texture and give the impression that the stone was very luxurious at that time.

The motif on the Plak-plieng type B gravestone at the top is the Bungoeng Glima motif. This motif measures approximately 8 cm. This motif circles the top and blends with the bungoeng cloud motif. The bungoeng Glima motif in Indonesian is called the flower of the pomegranate fruit.

This motif is famous in various typical Acehese ornaments. The motif that is united on the left and right sides is the bungoeng cloud motif, or, in Indonesian, the cloud arch flower motif. The use of cloud motifs in Aceh is known because the clouds are beautiful with their curves, so to fill the entire area of carving texture in Acehese ornaments, it is usually assumed to be filled with curved cloud bungoeng motifs. At the bottom of the gravestone, on different sides, there is a bungoeng taloe meuputa dua motif. This motif is filled with standard squares or full squares in the middle of the square, and at the ends there is a woven mat motif that beautifies each top and bottom edge of the bungoeng taloe meuputa dua motif. The bungoeng taloe meuputa dua motif is known as a motif similar to sewing embroidery with references to creeping plants, so it is given the name flower because of the beauty of the twisting of the two ropes. The ends of this motif are curved so that the end of the string cannot be seen to beautify the curve of each corner of the decorative pattern of this motif.

**Figure 2. Plak-plieng Gravestone Type B**



**Source: Researcher (2023)**

### c. Plak-plieng Gravestone Type C

Type C Plak-plieng gravestones are Lamuri royal gravestones that are large in size, meaning they are taller and longer than small Plak-plieng gravestones and are above an

adult's thigh (more than 50 cm). The visible shape of the Plak-plieng type C gravestone is the same as the Plak-plieng type A and B gravestones but is larger in terms of size. The supporting composition of the shape is also the same because it comes from one period of civilisation and kingdom, namely Lamuri. Based on their shape, large Plak-plieng gravestones are divided into two types, namely C and D. These types are given because they have different sizes and different observational impressions, namely the shapes and motifs printed on the two types, so that you can immediately recognise the difference in shape. The specific shape of the Plak-plieng type C gravestone is in the form of a menhir, or a combination of a standing block placed on top of a pyramid or pyramid.

Plak-plieng gravestone C has a different carving pattern from other Plak-plieng gravestones. Not only in the shape and size, but also in the texture, which gives the impression of a motif on the surface of the gravestone. On the type C plaque-plieng gravestone, there are two parts, namely the decorative motif section at the top and the writing motif section at the bottom. The decorative motif on the top of the Plak-plieng type C gravestone has several similarities with the Plak-plieng type B gravestone; not all of them have the same except that the top part has the shape of a pyramid head and the bottom part has an inscription that says "Assulthan Sulaiman bin Abdullah bin al Basyir Tsamaniata wa sita mi'ah 680 AH (1211 AD)". Based on the carvings and decorative patterns, there are many similarities between the Plak-plieng type C and B gravestones. The similarities between the decorative motifs of Type C Plak-plieng and Type B Plak-plieng are in the name of the motif and the boldness of the motif carvings; however, the decorative arrangement is different, and there are several motifs added. like Bungoeng Seuleupok.

The motifs contained in the type C plaque-plieng gravestones are the Bungoeng Glima motif, the Bungoeng Seuleupo motif, the Bungoeng Awan motif, the Bungoeng Sagoe motif, the Bungoeng Puta Taloe dua motif, and the Bungoeng Awan Sitangkee motif. The top of the Plak-plieng type C gravestone had been cut off and was documented in the previous year. Based on an interview with Mr. Taqiyuddin from MAPESA, many of the Plak-plieng type C



and type B gravestones have had their bodies separated due to various disasters and natural phenomena, so documentation is still the main source for the original shape of the Plak-plieng gravestones. The top or head end of the type C plaque-plieng gravestone is shaped like a pyramid.

**Figure 3. Plak-plieng Gravestone Type C**



**Source: Researcher (2023)**

#### **d. Plak-plieng Gravestone Type D**

The shape of the tip of the Lamuri Kingdom type D plaque-plieng gravestone, which has different ends, is also determined by the script inscribed on it, so the height of the gravestone is due to the writing or inscription that explains the identification mark and year of the story of the tomb owner. Based on observations, the writing is long and covers Arabic literature that was developing in Aceh at that time. With regard to this problem, the resulting shape resembles an elongated or tall spear head with a stone at the tip, like the roof of an ancient Indian pagoda that curves like a thick liquid dripping.

The type D plaque-plieng gravestone has a significant form of a standing vertical block extending upwards with a roof tip in the shape of a temple roof. The texture of the shape on the gravestone has a decorative motif patterned around the gravestone and an inscription (story writing) at the bottom of the motif, which is marked with a grid area. For

more details, see the following image:

**Figure 4. Plak-plieng Gravestone Type D**



**Source: Researcher (2023)**

Based on an interview with Mr. Husaini from PPISB, the type D plaque-pling gravestone has a volume of 33750 cm<sup>2</sup> with a structural composition of limestone, white stone (CaCO<sub>3</sub>), and seashells and is located at the location of the right side of the Lamuri kings' tombs. There is an inscription in Arabic on this gravestone, namely, "This is the grave of a weak person, Malik Syamsyuddin. The month of Ramadan (822 Hijriah) The Plak-plieng type D gravestone has symmetrical similarities to the Plak-plieng type A gravestone in its carved motif, precisely in the middle of the type D Plak-plieng gravestone. In the type D Plak-plieng gravestone, there are two parts, namely the part with the writing at the bottom and the decorative carvings in the middle to the top. On the carved writing, there is an inscription written in Arabic, which means "inscribed." This is the grave of a weak person, Malik Syamsyuddin. The month of Ramadan (822 Hijriah) This article gives more of an impression of the gravestone through the story described in it.

The motif that decorates the Plak-plieng type D gravestone is the Bungoeng Seureupeu motif, or what is known as the blooming lotus, because there are large and small sizes so that there are differences between those that are blooming and those

that are almost blooming. Bungoeng Glima motif, Bungoeng Awan motif, and at the top there is a temple roof motif.

## **2. Aesthetics of the Gravestone Inscriptions of the Lamuri Kingdom Aceh**

Based on searches carried out in Lamreh, four types of Plak-plieng gravestones were found that had inscriptions or writing that could be read. The inscriptions are all written in Arabic script, which indicates that the gravestones that have inscriptions are gravestones that lived during the glory days of Islam. Plak-plieng gravestones have inscriptions all placed on the belly of the gravestone. The shape of the lower gravestone, which has four sides, also places each inscription on the four sides of the gravestone. Each side of the gravestone has a different inscription, so it has a different meaning. The inscription contains an identity, a fragment of a verse from the Koran, and a beautiful poetic message.

Only one headstone from Qadhi Isma'il's grave remains from the era; her partner's gravestone was not found. This gravestone is rectangular in shape at the top of the ground, and the further up it goes, the more conical it gets, but the top has been broken off. On each side of the gravestone, at the bottom there is an ornament with a floral motif; above it, a panel contains an inscription; and at the top again, the decorative reliefs with floral motifs, combined with thick arches, are very prominent and arranged. The inspiration for the relief of the arches appears to have been drawn from the shape of the wave roll. One thing that is observed on many gravestones from the history of Samudra Pasai from the first half of the 9th century Hijriah (15th century AD) is that khath naskhiy is more often used. However, in the second half of the century, new developments emerged in which the well-known rules of khath underwent changes so that khath was not only intended for correct, neat, and beautiful writing but also for painting.

In this new development, Khath can provide effects that produce an abstract image or painting. In the second half of the century, this kind of khath seemed to be very popular with calligraphy artists (khaththath) because it opened up greater space for them to express

the inspiration they got from the cultural environment they lived in. In the history of Arabic calligraphy, this khath is called Thughra'.

The Arabic calligraphy on the gravestone of Qadhi Isma'il, who died on Friday, 7 Shawwal 852 Hijriah, also displays the Thughra' khath. The calligraphy was created to express the inspiration for one of the most meaningful forms in the cultural life of maritime communities, namely the sea and the rolling waves on its surface. The tomb epitaph mentions Maulana Qadhi (our lord Qadhi). In Oral Al-'Arab, one of the meanings of maula is: guardian who takes care of your affairs. The title maulana—with the addition of dhamir al-mutakallim—which means our lord was used by the caliphs of the 'Abbasid dynasty and was very widely used, later, for the caliphs of the Fatimid dynasty, not only for caliphs but also for viziers (ministers).

On Qadhi Isma'il's gravestone, there is also an inscription of the Al-Qur'an verse Surah An-Nisa': 78. The meaning, as said by Shaykh Zadah (died 951 Hijriah), is: Wherever you are, death will find you; that is, there is no way for you to escape from it; then, death in a state that leads to eternal happiness is better than death in a state other than that. Buruj Musyayyadah. Said Al-Baidhawiy (died 691 Hijriah), "Buruj are tall palaces or forts. The original meaning of the word buruj is the houses around the palace, taken from the words in the sentence tabarajat al-mar'ah, when a woman has revealed herself. Shaykh Zadah added that because the word al-burj is taken from the word al-baraj, which means to appear, this word can be used for every palace and high fort because the meaning of "appear" there is real. And it is said syada bina'uh, asyadahu, and syayyadahu if someone has raised a building or has coloured the building and mixed it with syid, namely limestone.

Apart from the purpose of warning and advice, is the engraving of this verse also intended for other purposes, for example, to signal the relevance of the content of the verse to the reality of the local environment in the past, namely the existence of lime-coloured buildings and fortress walls in that place?

The context of the Lamreh and Kuta Leubok sites, as well as several historical heritage structures found on the surface, indicate the existence of a former city that is

almost similar to the description of the Koran in Surah An-Nisa': 78; musyayyadah constellations (tall, lime-coloured palaces or fortresses). It is hoped that serious archaeological research will be carried out in the future to reveal more about the historical city of the Lamuri Kingdom.

### **3.Gravestone plak-plieng from the Lamuri Kingdom of Aceh as a symbol of art.**

The plak-plieng of the Lamuri kingdom of Aceh is a marker for the owner of a grave, which is a stone. In the fine arts, a gravestone that has a certain shape and ornamental decoration is part of sculpture because it is a tridimensional, three-dimensional work of art. The Plak-plieng gravestone is a symbol of the art of the Acehnese people of the past, which describes how advanced civilisation was at that time so that it had the crafts and technology of craftsmen to produce works of art that were beautiful and sturdy and lasted for more than a thousand years. The implied value of this gravestone gives us an idea of the high artistic value that existed in past societies. In this way, we can see that the level of artistic taste of the people of Aceh in the past was very high. The discovery of the inscription on this gravestone also explains the glory days of a kingdom led by the owner of the gravestone.

This day dates back nine hundred years. In this way, we can learn about the value of art in the past through the Acehnese civilisation and how they found materials for making sturdy gravestones and a variety of ornaments that were very complicated and beautiful. Based on the phenomenon of elements of art from the past Acehnese civilisation that symbolically influence the essential value of art in the present, we need to relate it to aesthetic value as well. Langer's aesthetic theory is able to provide answers and descriptions of the symbolic value of the Plak-plieng gravestones of the Lamuri kingdom of Aceh as an implied symbolic meaning for future generations regarding the aesthetics of their art. Art is not only looking at the beauty of the gravestone in its shape and decoration but also the symbolic meaning behind the work of the past regarding the message and impression it conveys.

Langer wrote in his book *Problems of Art* as follows: "*In summary, then, it may be said that the difference between the art symbol and*

*the symbols used in art is a difference not only of function but of kind. Symbols occurring in art are symbols in the usual sense, though of all degrees of complexity, from simplest directness to extreme indireciness, from singleness to deep interpenetration, from perfect lucidity to the denses! over-determination"* (Langer, 1957).

Art forms, on the other hand, are forms of expression. It is not a symbol in the fully known sense because it does not convey anything beyond itself. Because it cannot be said unequivocally to have a meaning. What is intended is the meaning. This is a symbol in a special sense and has a constructed meaning; therefore, it cannot fulfil all the functions of the actual sita. The meaning seen in it is not like the meaning in the original symbol, which means it can be separated from the existing signal.

An artistic symbol is a symbol in itself, and its meaning is not incorporated into the values of the symbol separately. "*The art symbol is a single symbol, and its import is not a compound of partial symbolic values"* (Langer, 1957). The symbols in Plak-plieng gravestone art contain various meanings, such as purity, goodness, authority, femininity, masculinity, gentleness, firmness, and so on. The meaning of symbols on gravestones does not lie in the elements that create and articulate their organic form, but in the subject matter they contain. According to Langer, artistic symbols are symbols in a special sense because they serve several symbolic functions, although not all of them; in particular, they do not mean something else or point to something separate from them. According to the usual definition of "symbol," a work of art should not be classified as merely a symbol. However, this general definition is the most basic intellectual value, and according to him, the main function of these symbols is the power of formulating experience and presenting it objectively for reflection, logical intuition, recognition, and understanding.

The symbol of art is a metaphor, an image that is born, or the depth of a vague literal meaning. The symbol of art is an absolute image—an image that is otherwise irrational because it is literally indescribable—true consciousness, emotion, vitality, personal identity—the turmoil of life that he felt in reference to his spiritual capacity. "*The symbol in art is a metaphor, an image with overt or covered literal signification; the art symbol is*



*the absolute image—the image of what would otherwise be irrational, as it is literally ineffective: direct awareness, emotion, vitality, personal identity—life lived and felt, the matrix of mentality" (Langer, 1957:139).*

Art and works of art are two different topics. Art and value do not depend on the bearer. Art becomes real if it is attached to its bearer, so it is called a work of art or art object. Art is a quality that does not depend on its bearer. Works of art or art objects such as statues, paintings, and poetry are symbols of art itself. So art objects are carriers, or carriers of art itself; not only does a shape look neat and symmetrical, but asymmetrical elements are also found disharmony, thus presenting conflicting meanings of symbols. Conflict or irregularity in the arrangement of elements in a work of art does not mean improvement of meaning but will instead display a new order, providing richness, intensity, repetition, reflection, or a transcendent richness. The emergence of a new order or new balance displays another dimension to the meaning of the original symbol. But it functions in its natural symbolic style; it means something beyond what is expressed in itself.

#### **4.Gravestone plak-plieng from the Lamuri Kingdom of Aceh as a symbol of Expression.**

Life in the world certainly has certain limits and times for living. Every life must also end in death. In the past, Aceh had a culture of marking the graves of people who had died. Since ancient times, Aceh has used gravestones as markers and identities for each person who died. These gravestones have high artistic value with certain meanings that need to be explored more deeply to find the meaning of the art.

In his book *Problems of Art*, Langer (1957) wrote, *"The last humans live in a world of demonic powers. Subhuman or superhuman, gods or spooks or impersonal magic forces, good or bad luck that dwells in things like an electric charge, are the most impressive realities of the savage's world. The drive to urtic creation, which seems to be deeply primitive in all human beings, first begins its forms in the image of these all-surrounding powers. The magic circle around the altar or the totem pole, the holy space inside the Kiwa or the temple, is the natural dance floor. There is nothing*

*unreasonable about that. In a world perceived as a realm of mystical powers, the first created image is the dynamic image: the first objectification of human nature, the first true art".*

The Plak-plieng gravestone originates from the concept of the cultural diaspora, which is symbolised as a form of expression of inspiration and instinct regarding objectification of the visible enormity of nature. For humans at that time, an object was seen as what was imagined and desired to be created. Sinai's impulse to create decorative shapes and motifs on gravestones comes from imitating natural forms—not only what is seen with the eye but also what is seen with the heart.

Art imitates nature in a different form, as stated by Plato in his time. The new imitation technique proposed by Langer is a way of recreating the above aspects of an object that the artist derives from its emotive meaning. Even though it is exactly what is seen, it is never a derivative in the proper sense; this is a form of simplification, summary, or exact translation of what is known, thought, and felt.

Plak-plieng gravestones are not just a visual form but are able to present a "living form" from the construction of the elements that build them. The process of creating shapes and motifs on Plak-plieng gravestones originates from the emotions of combining various elements such as lines, planes, colours, rhythms, and shapes that arise from living tensions and resolutions that touch on the experiences of artists at that time who were in the pre-Islamic cultural period. Towards Islamic culture brought by various traders and royal relations.

The expression of size and decoration in the ornamental pattern was produced based on the thoughts of the people at that time who liked the types of shapes and motifs as well as the relationship between the kingdom and certain symbols that complemented the identity of the region at that time. The construction of these elements creates a "living form" so that the observer does not just see it flatly, but instead appears a fascination, an amazement that is difficult to express. The charm of expression in the beauty of the gravestones is also felt by observers of past progress in the region.

## **5. Gravestone plak-plieng from the Lamuri Kingdom of Aceh as a symbol of Legitimation and Leadership.**

In essence, every Lamuri royal gravestone has an identity written on it, which indicates that the owner was the ruler at that time or an influential person at that time. Based on this inscription, we can see that the Plak-plieng gravestone gives a symbolic picture that the legitimacy of power highly upheld civilisation at that time. The inscriptions also show various forms of position and the role of each gravestone owner in carrying out their duties of leading and working in the past kingdom.

Plak-plieng gravestones are not just objects of art or expressions of their creators. It turns out that the Plak-plieng headstone also functions as a symbol of legitimising the power of the community that owns it. A dynasty has its own gravestone, which is different from other family dynasties. The placement of gravestones in a sacred zone within the village or outside the village on the boundary between villages is intended as an indication of the boundaries of the king's territory. UleeBalang, in the civilisation of the Acehnese kingdom, was a regional ruler appointed by the king to lead a region under the king's authority. UleeBalang also has his own dynasty to carry out various duties for his family or parties recognised as part of the monarchical dynasty he controls. The placement of gravestones found in an area far from the village, such as on a hill or in the middle of the forest, apart from being intended to honour the spirit of a leader or religious leader, politically also functions as a claim to the territory of an area that can be monitored by a high hill. the. Gravestones can also function as land deeds (land documents) called Batee Jeurat, which function to protect land inherited from generation to generation from the ancestors of a dynasty in the Lamuri community and other kingdoms in Aceh.

Through the shape, decorative motifs, and inscriptions on the Plak-plieng gravestones, we can symbolically find that the Lamuri kingdom had a structured royal system. We can see this through the different types of shapes and identities printed on the gravestones. Based on the identity, we can see inscriptions with certain titles. Pieces of Koranic verses and carved poetry also depict each figure on the gravestone. In looking at

titles based on identity, we can also find various positions in the royal structure, such as Malik, Raja, Qadhi, and others, who all have long titles based on their achievements.

## **6. Gravestone Plak-plieng of the Lamuri Kingdom of Aceh as a Presentational Message Symbol.**

The Lamuri royal gravestones convey various symbolic messages that we can observe through their shapes, motifs, and inscriptions. The shape of the Plak-plieng gravestone is different from other gravestones in the archipelago. The difference is that the Plak-plieng gravestone is towering with a conical tip on its head, whereas other gravestones in the archipelago of the same era are rather wide in the middle. The symbolic message conveyed is that Lamuri's gravestone upholds something above and points towards the sky. Another message was also conveyed: the shape of the Plak-plieng headstone was a form of various architecture at the centre of Hindu and Buddhist civilisation at that time. So we find a symbolic message that the Lamuri Kingdom was a transition from the Hindu-Buddhist era to the Islamic Kingdom, with the cultural diaspora in the form of gravestones.

In general, Plak-Plieng gravestones are rectangular in shape and are erected vertically. At the base of the body, there is a slight break that tapers upwards, and at the top, there is a part called the head in the form of a flower bud, which generally has the characteristic of a four-petal flower. The base is generally slightly larger. big. There is influence from the form of Tamil Indian temples, which use the Dravidian architectural style. This artefact in the form of a monument can be said to be a cultural product built with the idea (concept) of a combination of signs that is based on the noble values of different cultures and religious backgrounds (Plang Plieng concept), including Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and local beliefs.

The decorative motifs that surround the ornamental patterns on the Plak-plieng gravestones are a form of cultural message that developed at that time. If we look at the variety of decorative motifs and see the arrangement of decorative patterns and carvings that are made, we can see how complicated this gravestone work of art is. Based on this explanation, the message conveyed symbolically is about art technology, which

was highly developed at that time, as well as a message about how noble a work of art is with a luxurious sense of beauty. The signs are in the form of symbols and icons that are carved in the form of iconoclasm of parrots, phoenix, dragons, buffalo or cows, lotuses, Omkara elements, as well as religious holy sentences (teachings of monotheism, hadith, words of wisdom, and others), as well as these holy sentences written in Arabic letters that have been adapted to local typical characters in an Arabic pattern. In terms of myth (connotation), the meaning of the bird figure is very prominent in the sagas, the heroic stories of Aceh. The parrot (cicem bayeun) is very popular; it is a helper for heroes and is actually a princess in disguise. The origin of the parrot in Acehnese designs is probably Persian. As for the dragon, which is usually interpreted as a representative of a snake representing the earth (underworld), apart from that, there are kala and makara, buffalo, anthropomorphic, Raja duek, which is displayed in an iconoclasm, lotus, lotus shoot, or bud, which can hardly be seen anymore in the stories. folklore at the end of the 19th century. The inscription on the Plak-plieng gravestone explains to us that the gravestone symbolically conveys a deep message to each generation in the form of a moral message, a message of life, and a religious message. We can symbolically interpret all of these messages through the translations that we can find.

In principle, the Headstone Plaque Pleng is very rich in religious, humanistic, and educational meaning. The wisdom of the ancestors seems to have been poured out so intelligently and beautifully through the hands of the carvers, who truly understood the values carved into the stone. The appearance of the Batee Jeurat Plak-pleng gives a signal that this death tent is not just a beautifully carved stone, but far from that, the calligraphic carvings are in the form of poetry, hadith, Al-Quran verses, and Sufi poetry, as well as monotheistic sentences (affirming Allah) clearly. has shown that there are important messages through certain symbols for the generations left behind to read. Various important messages relating to life and life in the afterlife are a very special matter. The dominant text written in Arabic letters at the foot of the gravestone is about the eternity of life.

## CONCLUSION

The Plak-plieng gravestone contains various symbolic elements that we can find using Susane K. Langer's theory. The findings of the symbolic aesthetic meaning found are divided into several parts according to Langer's aesthetic theory. On the Plak-plieng gravestones of the Lamuri Kingdom of Aceh, symbolic aesthetics are found as a symbol of art. The implied value of this gravestone gives us an idea of the high artistic value that existed in past societies. In this way, we can see that the level of artistic taste of the people of Aceh in the past was very high. The discovery of the inscription on this gravestone also explains the glory days of a kingdom led by the owner of the gravestone. This day dates back nine hundred years. In this way, we can learn about the value of art in the past through the Acehnese civilisation and how they found materials for making sturdy gravestones and a variety of ornaments that were very complicated and beautiful.

The Plak-plieng gravestone of the Lamuri Kingdom of Aceh is a symbol of expression. The Plak-plieng gravestone comes from the conception of the cultural diaspora, which is symbolised as a form of expression of inspiration and instinct regarding objectification of the visible awesomeness of nature.

The Plak-plieng gravestone of the Lamuri Kingdom of Aceh is also a symbol of the legitimacy of power and structured leadership. not just an art object or an expression of its creator. It turns out that the Plak-plieng gravestone also functions as a symbol of legitimising the power of the community that owns it. A dynasty has its own gravestone, which is different from other family dynasties.

The plak-plieng gravestone of the Lamuri Kingdom of Aceh is also a symbol of presentational messages. The Lamuri royal gravestones convey various symbolic messages that we can observe through their shapes, motifs, and inscriptions. The shape of the Plak-plieng gravestone is different from other gravestones in the archipelago. The symbolic message conveyed is that Lamuri's gravestone upholds something above and points towards the sky. Another message was also conveyed: the shape of the Plak-plieng headstone was a form of various architecture at the centre of Hindu and Buddhist civilisation

at that time. So we find a symbolic message that the Lamuri Kingdom was a transition from the Hindu-Buddhist era to the Islamic Kingdom with the cultural diaspora in the form of gravestones.

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