

# Report on the Documentation of the Architecturally Used Ceramics at the Mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati, Cirebon, Java, Indonesia

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*Wall with architecturally used ceramics. Hall Gedongan Raja Sulaeman, erected by Sultan Sepuh IX, Sultan of Cirebon from 1845 – 1853. Mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati, Area D.*

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## Foreword

I have been collecting European ceramics made for export to the Asian and Islamic markets for about a decade, primarily by acquiring objects directly from Asia as well as North and East Africa. Not surprisingly, the collection makes visible that there are distinct differences between markets for European ceramics in Asia and the Islamic world. The collection of documented objects spanning multiple, distinct markets that is the result of these collecting efforts also allows for a comparison and better understanding of the particular characteristics of each individual market.

Over time, many ceramic objects have been removed from their original Asian context undocumented, becoming an anonymous pot of which all we can say is that it may have been made for export. Further complicating things, these same types of wares, especially the European hand painted and sponged earthenwares, were also popular in a number of regions worldwide settled by Europeans and their descendants, such as the Americas and Australia, and wares for those markets have been mistaken for those for the Asian markets. Hence the importance of European ceramics from archaeological excavations, documented local collections of (European) ceramics, and architecturally used ceramics, such as discussed in this report.

Beyond providing an overview of the different European ceramics made for the various Asian and Islamic markets, the collection has proven its value as a reference collection for archaeological research in for example Arabia and Iran, where often small ceramic fragments that are difficult to identify could be matched with complete objects from the collection.

I became interested in the architecturally used ceramics at the mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati, an Islamic pilgrimage site of national importance in Indonesia, when a friend, Mrs. Poppy Harun, visited the mausoleum and, knowing of my interest, sent some photos. I had first met Mrs. Harun, a professional photographer, stylist and occasional dealer in antique ceramics who lives in Palembang, Sumatra, several years before, after I saw some of her photographs of antique European ceramics.

The resulting more than 800 photos from the project show a surprising abundance and rich variety of 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century Asian and European ceramics. My very limited previous knowledge of the site was based on images in S. Adhyatman's *Antique Ceramics found in Indonesia* (Adhyatman, 1990: fig. 81-86), as well as images taken by pilgrims that can be found on the Internet. These images primarily show the interior of the main hall where pilgrims gather as well as a much photographed wall of a building elsewhere in the complex. One of the surprises of this project's close scrutiny of the ornamentation was therefore that much more of the complex is decorated with architecturally used ceramics, and with probably well over 1,000 individual ceramics not counting the tiles, far larger quantity of ceramics than I expected.

It appeared that no systematic survey of the ceramics had ever been conducted, and the idea to document all the ceramics at the site at some future time when I would be able to visit the site in person was born. I filed the idea away until 2021, when, in the midst of the COVID pandemic, I decided that, with proper preparation, it should be possible to document the ceramics without having to visit the site, provided I could use the services of a trusted and knowledgeable in-country photographer such as Mrs. Harun. She was enthusiastic about the idea, so I decided to go forward with the plan. The following

report documents this work. I have been heartened by the interest this project received from around the globe.

As work on the identification of the many ceramics continues, the report will continue to be updated. It will also form the basis for articles for the American Ceramic Circle Journal and the Transferware Collectors Club Bulletin, as well a resource for other possible publications.

Jaap Otte

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## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Louise Cort, Curator Emerita for Ceramics at the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution, for her valuable advice and deep knowledge she shared on several instances during this project; Pariwat Thammapreechakorn, Senior Curator at Bangkok University, Thailand, for identifying many of the Asian ceramics at the site; Christiaan Jörg, Professor Emeritus at the University of Leiden, previously, Curator of Decorative Arts at the Groninger Museum, for his identification of some of the Chinese and Japanese porcelain; Hans Bonke, historian and archaeologist, for his help with the identification of the Dutch tiles; James Bennett, Curator of Asian Art and Material Culture, Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory, and Russell Kelty, Curator, Asian Art, Art Gallery of South Australia AGSA for offering feedback on the text; Russell Kelty for providing images of the ceramics in the historic ceramics storeroom at the complex; Sebastiaan Ostkamp, archaeologist, for introducing me to several ceramics experts; and Poppy Harun, who first drew my attention to the ceramics at the mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati. Mrs. Harun also was the photographer of the ceramics discussed in this report.

I am grateful for the generous support the project received through an American Ceramic Circle (ACC) Grant and a Transferware Collectors Club (TCC) Research Grant.

## Abstract

This report discusses the architecturally used ceramics at the mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati (died c. 1570), the great Islamic saint of Cirebon. The mausoleum, located outside of Cirebon, Java, contains probably over 1,000 ceramics from Asia and Europe from between c. 1650 and 2000. Already in 1722, Francois Valentijn mentions the Chinese and Japanese jars as well as Chinese and Dutch tiles present at the site. Urgent documentation was warranted due to the location of the site in one of the most seismically active areas on the planet in an open air site. For this project, new photography was commissioned, resulting in over 800 photographs. The most important ceramics, both in quality and quantity, are Chinese porcelain and stoneware from late Ming to the Republic (late 17<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> C), including several large jars and hundreds of small dishes. Other wares present are large Burmese and Thai stoneware jars from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to early 17<sup>th</sup> C., late Vietnamese stoneware, some important, large Japanese Imari porcelain jars from c. 1700 as well as a large quantity of Japanese Awaji stoneware from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, hundreds of Dutch tinglazed tiles, a large quantity of European refined white earthenware from England, Scotland, and The Netherlands c. 1820-1900, as well as several Indonesian red earthenware water containers. From the ceramics currently present at the site and their distribution can be concluded that multiple renovations and extensions took place between c. 1650 and 1900, during which time the site was developed from a number of successive walled but mostly empty courtyards to today's complex packed with buildings and tombs. It is likely that the large number of later 19<sup>th</sup> century ceramics were installed during a major renovation of the complex in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, using commonly available wares. As part of renovations or repairs, ceramics, especially tiles, from the complex may have been re-installed, while in some cases heirloom ceramics may have been used for repairs. The project aims to make the images publicly available for documentation and future research.

## Advice to the Reader

This report describes the architecturally used ceramics both by area within the complex which forms the mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati (p. 15-43), as well as per ceramic group (p. 44-62). The information is mostly repeated in both sections, hence the reader can suffice with reading the section most suited to his or her interests.

## Introduction

This project systematically documents, for the first time, the architecturally used ceramics at the mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati, also known as the Astana Gunung Jati grave complex. The mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati is an important example in Southeast Asia of the use of ceramics as architectural ornamentation. The in-situ ceramics are also important as an archive of trade connections with diverse places over a period of 400 years. Due to the fragility of the open-air site in one of the most seismically active areas on the planet there was an urgent need for visual documentation<sup>1</sup>.

This report does not do justice to the historical person of Sunan Gunung Jati and the historical, architectural and religious significance of the site, which can be counted among the most important on Java. The author does not have the expertise to discuss these topics in-depth and only provides a summary description. A discussion of the significance of the site in contemporary socio-religious life of Javanese Muslims can be found in *The Islamic Traditions of Cirebon* by A. G. Muhaimin (Muhaimin 1995).

The coastal town of Cirebon on Java, Indonesia, where the mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati is located, and the surrounding region were the gateway through which Islam came to Java. The mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati is the most important Islamic religious site in Cirebon, a sacred place with great spiritual status visited by thousands of pilgrims annually, primarily from Indonesia. As such, the monument receives large amounts of foot traffic, with the associated wear and tear, but also benefits from regular upkeep and maintenance. The upkeep is a two-edged sword though; on the one hand this avoids damage as a result of neglect, on the other hand maintenance in the first place serves to maintain the complex as a religious site, not historical preservation. For example, the periodic, somewhat careless, white washing of the walls has resulted in the surface of the architecturally used ceramics to be increasingly covered in white.<sup>2</sup> This is likely not a threat to the integrity of the ceramic vessels but does gradually decrease their visibility and would require considerable efforts to reverse. In another example, damaged or missing ceramic plates are being replaced by modern, contemporary ones, while the installation of one or more successive new tiled floors, likely without removing the older floors, has raised the surface level over time, covering ceramics at the bottom of the walls.

## Historical Notes on Sunan Gunung Jati

Sunan Gunung Jati (d. c. 1570), the great saint of Cirebon, is popularly credited with the Islamization of West Java in the early sixteenth century and is considered one of the Nine Saints (*wali sanga*), who are believed to have given Javanese Islam its distinctive cultural forms. He is also considered the common ancestor of the Muslim ruling families of the harbor states of Banten and Cirebon, which were carved out from the Shaivite-Buddhist kingdom of Pajajaran (Sunda) (van Bruinessen: 2014).

The little that is known about Sunan Gunung Jati likely combines a number of historical and legendary individuals, with little certainty about the historical Sunan Gunung Jati: he would have been born either in Egypt or in Pasai on Sumatra. According to legend, he stayed at Mecca and Medina for a few decades to study under well-known mystics and teachers before returning to Java. Implausible considering the early date, is the account that he founded the Islamic Sultanate of Cirebon, marked by his letter

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<sup>1</sup> See for example van Bommel, 1990: 61 for the disappearance of architecturally used ceramics on Bali as a result of earthquakes and the eruption of volcanos.

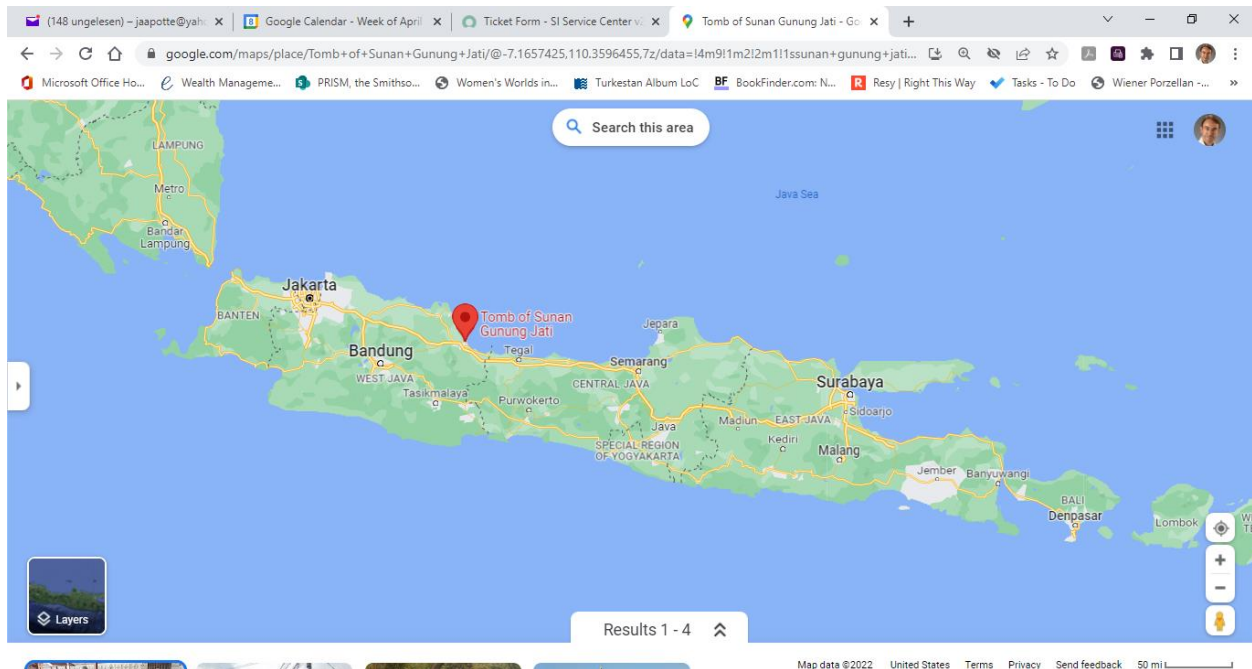
<sup>2</sup> A comparison with images taken by Russel Kelty in 2012 show a progressive covering of the ceramics in whitewash.

proclaiming Cirebon's independence from the kingdom of Pajajaran in 1482.<sup>3</sup> His death c. 1570 is accepted as historically accurate.

Cirebon was one of the earliest Islamic states established in Java, along with the Sultanate of Demak. Throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, the sultanate thrived and became a major regional center of trade and commerce, especially with China, as well as a prominent center of Islamic learning. During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as part of the colonial Dutch East India, trade contacts with Europe increased.

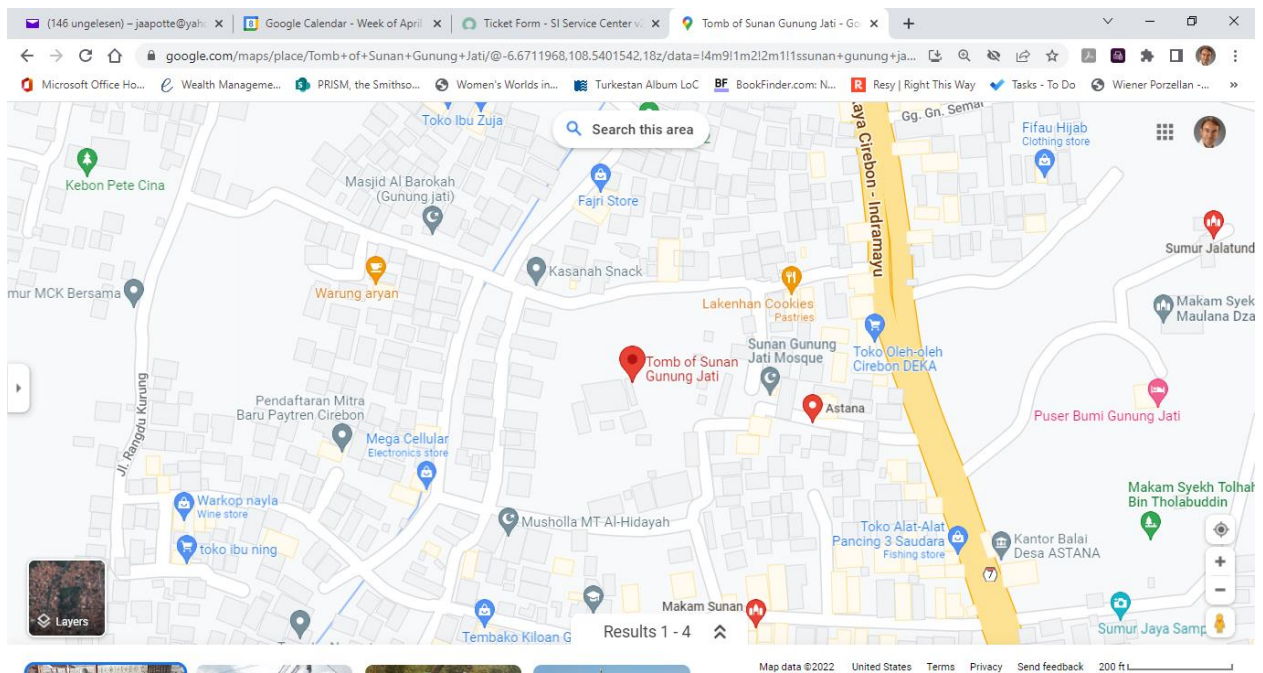
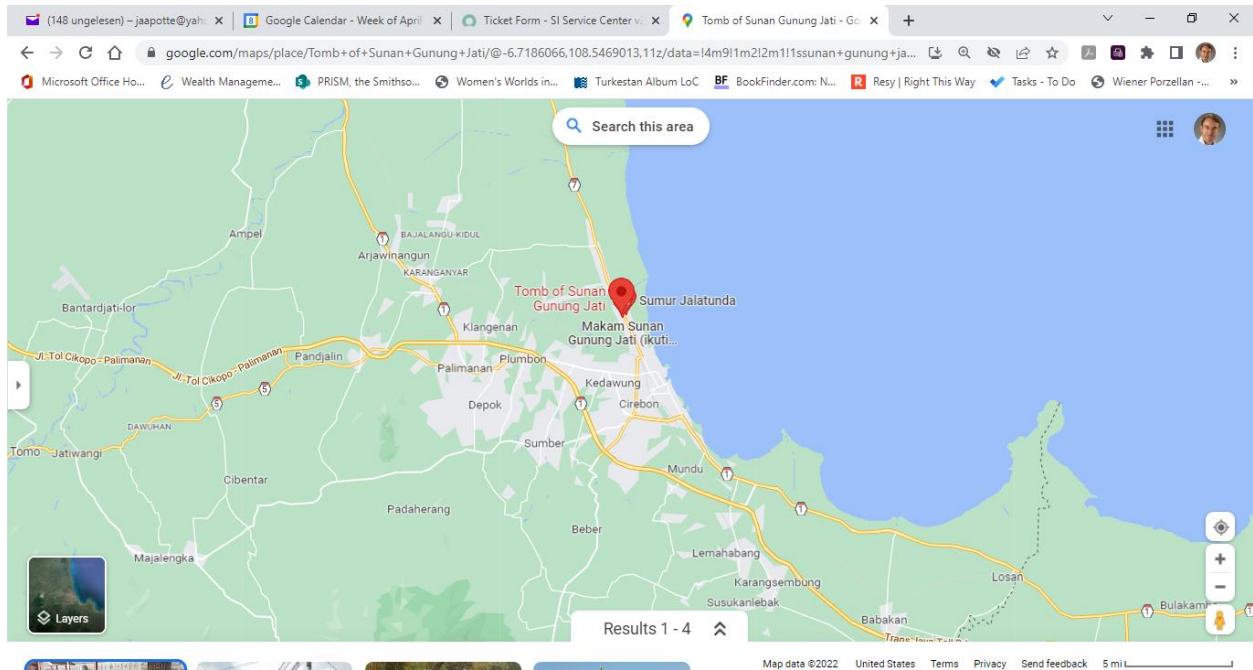
## Site Description

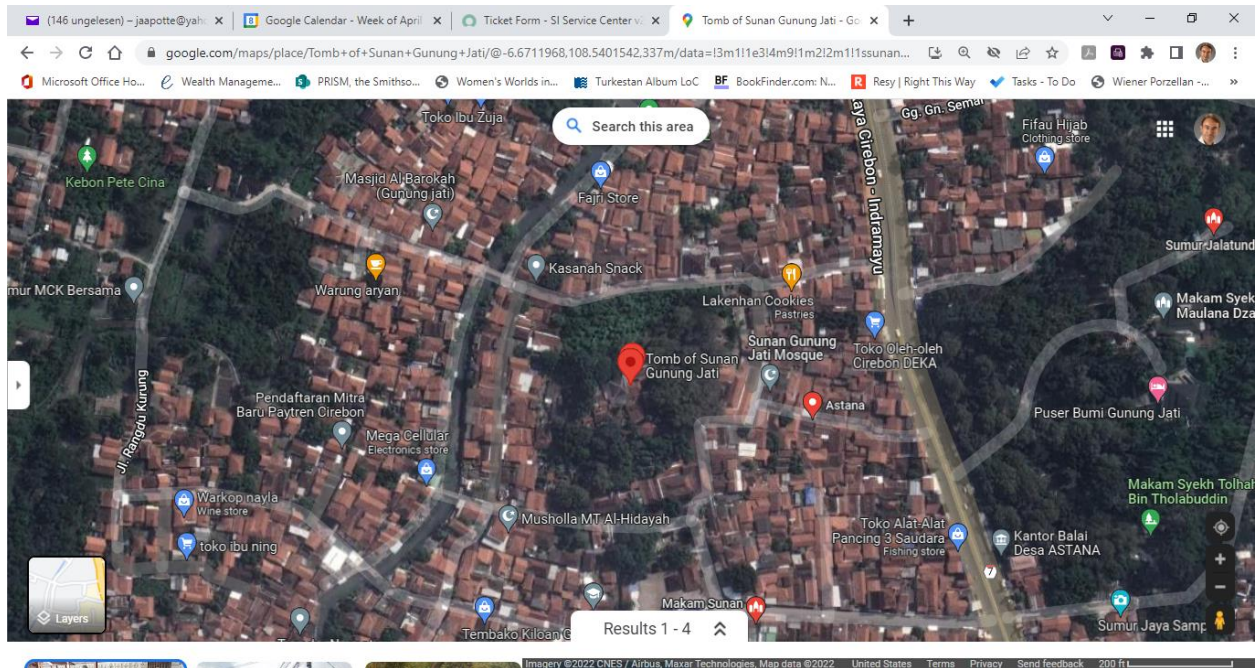
The mausoleum with the tomb of Sunan Gunung Jati is part of a complex located in the hamlet of Mount Sembung Astana, Astana Village, District of North Cirebon, on the north coast of Java. Other notable tombs in the complex belong to the Sultans of Cirebon and their relatives. The complex consists of several buildings and courtyards with hundreds of tombs.



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<sup>3</sup> See for example van Bruinessen: 1994 for an account of the complicated and uncertain history of early Indonesian Islam.





*Fig. 1-4: Location of the mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati. Courtesy Google Maps.<sup>4</sup>*

The Mount Sembung tomb complex was constructed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and added to over the following centuries. The current ceramics assemblage was believed to have been inserted during a renovation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, which this project proved to be only partially true, witnessed by the substantial number of ceramics from c. 1650 to 1850 still present. No evidence was found to support or counter the popular belief that the ceramics were donated by pilgrims.

<sup>4</sup> <https://goo.gl/maps/McAN9r2Kgz8Scub1A>

## Project Planning and Execution

The project has four activity phases:

1. Advance planning of the photo shoot:
  - a. Identification of the ceramics in-situ.
  - b. Securing of permission to do the project.
  - c. Creation of a Statement of Work.
  - d. A video meeting between the author and the photographer to discuss the Statement of Work.
2. Photography of the site and post-processing of the digital images.
3. Preparation of a report and article for publication.
4. Making the full resolution images available for future reference and research.

Phases 1 and 2 were completed as planned, while phases 3 and 4 are still in process when this report is written:

- 1) Planning Phase
  - a) A Statement of Work was sent to the photographer on August 13, 2021
  - b) A video call between applicant and the photographer to discuss project took place on September 7, 2021. The following topics were discussed:
    - i) File naming requirements
    - ii) Timing of photography: aim for 2<sup>nd</sup> half of October 2021
    - iii) COVID safety
    - iv) Confirmation of hiring of drone specialist. If no map exists of the complex, photographer will have one drawn based on drone photography so location of the ceramics can be documented in detail.
    - v) Copyright
- 2) All photography took place on October 26 and 27, 2021.
  - a) Photographer secured permission from the site's caretaker.
  - b) Photography proceeded as planned under favorable weather.
    - i) The site contains more ceramics than what applicant expected based on existing documentation, likely well over 1,000 single ceramics. As a result it was not feasible to photograph each ceramic item individually, as was originally planned, within the parameters defined in the agreement with the photographer.
  - c) Applicant received sample images during photoshoot, as well as overview photos and video recordings.
  - d) Applicant received over 800 final image files on November 16, 2021.
- 3) The final, underlying report was written during the spring and summer of 2022, while an article for the American Ceramic Circle Journal is planned for the Spring/Summer issue of 2023 and an article for the Transferware Collectors Club Bulletin is planned to be published subsequently.
- 4) Discussions with possible repositories for the images have been initiated.

# The Architecturally Used Ceramics at the Mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati

## Overview

The mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati is one of the more extensive and important examples of architectural uses of ceramics in Indonesia. The custom of affixing ceramics is associated with both Muslim and Buddhist religious sites in Indonesia: most comparable with the mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati are the mausoleums of Sunan Bonang in Tuban and Ki Gede Kebagusan outside of Cirebon, both of other Islamic saints on Java. These sites contain a large quantity of architecturally used 19<sup>th</sup> century ceramics.

Van Bemmelen provides an overview of historical primary sources as well as contemporary sites with architecturally used ceramics on Java and Bali and mentions that the practice also existed on Sulawesi and Kalimantan (Van Bemmelen 1990; Adhyatman 1990: Fig. 98, 108). Kelty states that the earliest architectural use of ceramics in Indonesia possibly dates to the late fourteenth to fifteenth centuries, in the form of North Vietnamese tiles likely specifically made in response to demand from Java. The ceramics decorations, tiles and subsequently also other ceramics, likely find their origin in low-relief decorations carved on stone walls such as the eleventh century *Gua Selomangleng* cave in Kediri, continued in the form of the terracotta reliefs on Majapahit structures from the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries (Kelty 2012: 66-71). The earliest mention of architecturally used ceramics in the Indonesian archipelago can be found in the log-book of Jacob Cornelisz. Van Neck, and dates from 1598-1600. He mentions that the two mosques at Bantam have brick walls inlaid with porcelain. According to Van Bemmelen, architecturally used ceramics had become an established practice in Bali at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Van Bemmelen 1990: 60).

The practice can also be found in other parts of Asia. Notable examples of extensive use are several Buddhist temples in Thailand (Atthasit 2015, 2017a and 2017b) and the secular architecture of Junagarh Fort, Bikaner, Rajasthan in India (Hoexter and Siddall, 2020). Architecturally used ceramics can also be found in Oman, Iran<sup>5</sup>, Afghanistan, and, connected through the Indian Ocean trade networks, on the coast of East Africa (Prita Meier, 2015: 708, Fig. 2, 3).

François Valentijn's (1666-1727) important and monumental work on the history of the Far East "Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien" published 1724-1726, contains a detailed description of the mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati (Valentijn, 1726: 14-16) and historical information about the person of Sunan Gunung Jati.

Of particular relevance here is Valentijn's detailed description of the first three squares or courtyards, likely coinciding with Areas A through E in Fig. 6. After describing how his many efforts to visit the mausoleum, and subsequently to get drawings, were unsuccessful, and how in 1722 he finally was able to acquire a drawing with the help of a close friend, he continues (see Attachment A for a transcription of the Dutch text):

The grave has approximately the height of the tower of the townhall of Amsterdam [171 ft/52 m.], or a bit less, being square in the front, but in the back, because it touches a half-round mountain, blind, and hence also half-round.

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<sup>5</sup> Personal communication Zeinab Afzali on May 11, 2022.

It has five stories, or squares, which one accesses by climbing several flights of stairs, of which the first [square] is the widest and biggest, and the last the smallest, though without a courtyard.

The first thing one sees of the grave complex, is a large fence separating it from the public road. After that, one reaches the first square by going up a flight of stairs with seven steps, through a small fence. Along this square, which is covered with pavers, and with a width and length of 100 steps [c. 28 meter; the VOC used the Amsterdam foot of 0,2831 meter as a unit of measurement<sup>6</sup>], is a wall or rampart five feet tall, covered on the front with white, and painted Chinese tiles, resembling Dutch tiles.

When one gets there [on the first square], one sees on each side of the entrance two precious unrivaled Chinese blue, and marvelous Japanese pots, with flowers in them, on top of the wall, and on the right hand side, another four, a few feet apart, and standing on the left hand side another three, between these last three two large trees provide shade.

Otherwise this first square is empty.

At the second flight of stairs, there is a wall of the same height, equally covered with small stones [tiles] and below at the foot decorated on the right hand side with seven, and on the left hand side with six large precious Chinese flowerpots (gifts from Islamic kings, that is, those of Bantam, Macassar, Palembang, and others, to this grave, in honor of this Holy man). Subsequently, after opening a second fence, one ascends five steps, and arrives then at the second square, which is a bit smaller than the first one.

On top of this wall one has on each side of the entrance again two pots, without flowers, and then on each side another three with flowers, arranged in such a way, that on the right hand side four large trees can be seen, between each of which has been placed a large pot, while on the left hand side one has first two pots, then two heavy trees, and then again a pot, and a tree in between, and another pot, and a tree, providing a very beautiful view, and pleasant shade.

Across this square towards the third [square], is a beautiful, neat road, on the right hand side, as well as on the left hand side are two beautiful indigenous houses where the rulers stay when they are there to make offerings. This square also on the left hand side first extends with an outward curve, and becomes quite a bit narrower towards the third square, following an inward curve towards the top [of the second square], while on the right hand side it [the square] becomes only gradually narrower towards the top. [It is likely that the square follows the natural contours of the hill.]

Against the foot of the third wall again can be found two beautiful pots with flowers on the right, and two on the left hand side at the end of the [second] square. Subsequently, one enters through the third gate with four steps, and arrives through a beautiful gate on the third square.

The third square again has a wall in the front, again covered in small stones [tiles], but no pots.

Up to this square (which is much smaller than the last two) the Dutch, and all Christians, are allowed to come, but not beyond.<sup>7</sup>

Because Valentijn based his description on the information he received in 1722 we know that Chinese and Japanese ceramics and Dutch and Chinese tiles were already present at that time. For a more

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<sup>6</sup> Communication from Hand Bonke on 31 July 2022.

<sup>7</sup> Translation by the author. The translation is as close as possible to the original text, with minor modifications to improve readability.

detailed discussion of the ceramics and tiles see below. Valentijn does not mention the architecturally used plates and dishes and it is therefore likely that these were not yet present at the site. Another large difference between the situation Valentijn encountered and today, is how built up the site has become. While Valentijn was quite specific about the few buildings that were present and the otherwise empty spaces of the courtyards, he only mentions two large buildings on the third square and the mausoleum itself at the top, today's complex contains many small and large buildings, and open space in between is mostly filled with graves. It is important to keep in mind that Valentijn based his description on information he received second-hand, nevertheless, the observations are likely fairly accurate. Although much has changed at the complex, for example, Valentijn specifically mentions that the sultans and their wives unsuccessfully tried to get buried at the site while today the complex is filled with graves, it's main layout in squares separated by walls and gates, with at least some of the ceramics Valentijn describes, is still intact.



Fig. 5. Mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati, c. 1722, according to Valentijn. Grave of Sheikh Ibn Moelana. - Graf-Stede van Sjeich Ibn Moelana. Matijs Balen (draughtsman), Gerard onder de Linden (publisher), J. van Braam (publisher). 1724. Cf. Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague, inv. nr. 693 C 6 dl XVII, after p. 266.

As mentioned before, the architecturally used ceramics at the mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati have not been well documented. The reason may be that they were assumed to primarily date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a period that has not received as much attention as older ceramics in Southeast Asia. Indicative for this lack of academic interest is that Sumarah Adhyatman in her large overview of antique ceramics in Indonesia only makes a minor reference of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Dutch tinglazed earthenware tiles at the site, although her book does include some images of the architecturally used plates and dishes (Adhyatman, 1990: 82).

The primary goal of this project is therefore to create a basis for research and reference by documenting the ceramics with high-quality digital photography and a detailed report containing a description and analysis, partially as a basis for future research.

### Location of the ceramics by Area

The description of the site partially relies on by A. G. Muhaimin's description (Muhaimin 1995: 177-185). The location of each area described below (A to G and Gate 2 to 9) is indicated on the aerial photograph in Fig. 5. The photograph shows the complex on an approximate North-South orientation. Areas are described in counterclockwise order, starting with Area A in the Southeast corner. *Attachment B* of this report, a pictorial guide to the location of the ceramics at the complex, provides a more detailed guide to the exact location of many of the ceramics than can be accomplished in writing.

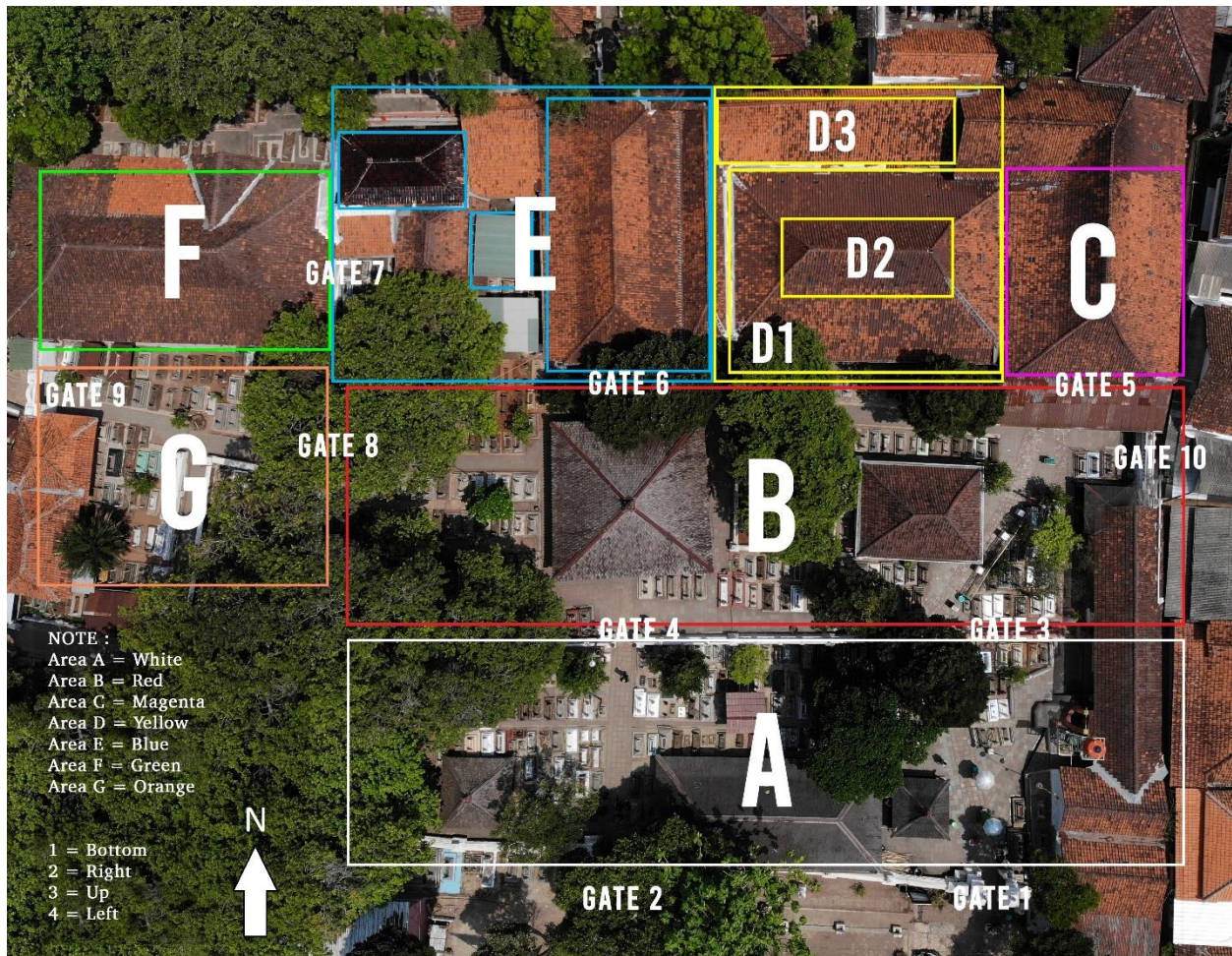


Fig. 6. Aerial photograph of the mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati with Areas A-G.

The actual tomb of Sunan Gunung Jati, located on a hilltop, as well as the tombs of several of the rulers of the Sultanate of Cirebon, lie in an adjacent area north of the area investigated for this project, and are inaccessible to the general public (Muhaimin 1995: Fig. 6.2). As a result, they could not be surveyed for ceramics or photographed, nor is it known if any ceramics are present (also see the section about Area E below).

#### Area A

Area A is a large rectangular courtyard in the Southeast corner of the complex, with Gates 1 and 2 in the South-facing wall providing access from the outside, and Gates 3 and 4 on the Northside connecting this area to the courtyard of Area B.

The majority of Area A consists of open terrain with paved surfaces and tombs. The area also contains five buildings and roofed structures of various dimensions, among which a ceramics storeroom described in more detail below. The architecturally used ceramics can be found in the walls surrounding the courtyard and Gates 2, 3 and 4. Gate 1 does not contain ceramics. The peripheral location of Area A seems reflected in the relatively less abundant ceramics decoration.

#### *Area A: The Ceramics Storeroom*

The storeroom (*gudang*) for the ceramics located in Area A holds ceramics which are according to tradition a collection of gifts from foreign countries to Sunan Gunung Jati. We don't know if the ceramics were moved into the storeroom immediately upon receipt, or if they were moved there from elsewhere in the complex at a later date, although the latter is more likely. Arguments for this are that Valentijn does not mention the storeroom in his description from 1722. Also, it is likely that some ceramics already present at the site had to be moved due to the construction of additional buildings inside the complex after 1722, and the storeroom may in fact have been constructed to store valuable, displaced ceramics.

The storeroom was closed at the time the photography took place, and the collections had been moved to an unknown location.<sup>8</sup> This section therefore relies on images which Russell Kelty kindly made available and which he took in 2011.



*Fig. 7. Interior of the ceramics storeroom in Area A in 2012, with each side of the plinth (left and right). Images courtesy of Russell Kelty.*

The storeroom holds ca. 60 large pots placed on a trapezoid, tiered plinth (Fig. 7).<sup>9</sup> The overview of Fig. 7, Left, shows the presence of a rare Japanese porcelain coffee pot with ribbed collar from c. 1710-1740 on the top shelf of the plinth. A similar coffee pot located in Area C is described in more detail below (p. 29, Fig. 18), while a third coffee pot is located in Area D3. Six images of individual pots allowed for more

<sup>8</sup> Personal communication from a caretaker of the shrine to Poppy Harun on October 26-27, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Personal communication from James Bennett and Russell Kelty on July 24-25, 2022.

precise descriptions<sup>10</sup>. Possibly the rarest item in the storage space, is a large water container or jardinière painted with underglaze blue and red, depicting the unusual topic of a tiger in a landscape (Fig. 8). The pot was made in Jingdezhen, China, Kangxi c. 1700, and therefore one of the pots that could have been already at the site at the time of Valentijn's description from 1722. Valentijn mentions the presence of multiple flowerpots in the first three squares of the complex:

“When one gets there [on the first square], one sees on each side of the entrance two precious unrivaled Chinese blue, and marvelous Japanese pots, with flowers in them, on top of the wall, and on the right hand side, another four, a few feet apart, and standing on the left hand side another three, between these last three two large trees provide shade.

[...]

At the second flight of stairs, there is a wall of the same height, [...] below at the foot decorated on the right hand side with seven, and on the left hand side with six large precious Chinese flowerpots (gifts from Islamic kings, that is, those of Bantam, Macassar, Palembang, and others, to this grave, in honor of this Holy man).

[...]

On top of this wall one has on each side of the entrance again two pots, without flowers, and then on each side another three with flowers [...].” (Valentijn 1722: 15-16)

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<sup>10</sup> Identification by Christiaan Jörg on 2 October 2022.



*Fig. 8. Water container or jardinière, underglaze painted blue and red with a tiger in a landscape, Jingdezhen, China, Kangxi c. 1700.*

A large pot is painted with underglaze blue “*ruyi*” motifs, Kangxi, c. 1700. This jar may again have been one of the flowerpots Valentijn describes (Fig. 9).



*Fig. 9. Pot, porcelain with underglaze painted "ruyi" motifs, Jingdezhen, China, Kangxi, c. 1700.*

A lidded porcelain Imari jar has a knob on the lid in the shape of a lion-dog (*shishi*), and was made at Arita in Japan, early 18<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 10).



*Fig. 10. Lidded jar, porcelain, Imari, Arita, Japan, early 18<sup>th</sup> century.*

An originally lidded famille rose jar was made in Jingdezhen, China, c. 1730-1750 (Fig. 11).



*Fig. 11. Vase, lid missing, porcelain, famille rose, Jingdezhen, China, c. 1730-1750.*

A stoneware storage jar with appliques of dragons was made in South China and dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century Fig. 12). See for a comparable example: Valdes a.o - A Thousand years of Stoneware Jars in the Philippines, Legaspi/Makati/Metro Manila 1992, cat. 100. A similar jar is located in Area E.



*Fig. 12. Storage jar, stoneware, South China, 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

A large vase, lid missing, is from Jingdezhen, China, and dates from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 13).



*Fig. 13. Vase, lid missing, Jingdezhen, China, first half of the 19th century.*

Sunan Gunung Jati's death c. 1570 predates the oldest jar that was examined by at least 100 years. Hence it is unlikely that any of the ceramics currently present were given during his lifetime, and the stories about the ceramics gifts to him by foreign rulers, already mentioned by Valentijn, must have attached themselves to the myths surrounding the holy man.

#### *Area A (other than the storeroom)*

The front of Gate 4 in Area A is decorated with 26 Chinese porcelain tiles, 20x20cm, decorated with the typical lotus and flower heads. These tiles were made in Jingdezhen for the Islamic market and from the

first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>11</sup> The same tiles are also present in a few other locations in courtyard A. It is plausible that these are the Chinese tiles Valentijn observed in 1722: “Along this square [the first square/Area A], [...] , is a wall or rampart five feet tall, covered on the front with white, and painted Chinese tiles, resembling Dutch tiles.” (Valentijn, 1726: 15)

The ceramics inserted in the courtyard walls are mostly arranged in a pattern consisting of one dinner-size European refined white earthenware plate or rice dish with a hand painted decoration surrounded with smaller saucers made of Chinese porcelain and stoneware. Commonly used to surround larger plates, and also ubiquitous in other areas of the complex, are small overglaze painted saucers with unglazed rim and the Chinese character Shou for Longevity in green in the center surrounded by five bats or butterflies in red. These were made at the Dehua kilns in Fujian province (19<sup>th</sup> century). Also common are small, green-glazed plates with lotus-petalled rim and molded all-over meander motif around a central chrysanthemum flowerhead design. These plates were also found in the Tek Sing Shipwreck which sank in the South China sea on February 6, 1822. They were produced at the Dongxi kilns in Fujian province and can be dated c. 1800-1825.<sup>12</sup> In at least one instance, four green glazed dishes surround an overglaze enameled dish with open lotus around a central lotus pod design. These lotus dishes were manufactured at the Anxi kilns in Fujian province and were also present in the Tek Sing and can be dated c. 1822.

One refined white earthenware plate with a glossy, bright yellow glaze and enameled floral decoration from England dates from ca. 1825-1835.<sup>13</sup> The plate has relief molded masonic symbols on the rim. British yellow glazed refined white earthenwares are more common in Area B, C and E. A dozen Dutch tiles from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century and with a variety of decorations can be found on Gate 3. These tiles, as in some other parts of the complex, were likely reused as part of a renovation.

A modern, likely earthenware, plate depicting a rather jolly cat is a replacement for a damaged or lost plate and demonstrates how the monument continues to evolve.

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<sup>11</sup> Personal communication by Christiaan Jörg on 11 September 2022.

<sup>12</sup> Both types of saucers have also been commonly used to decorate monumental buildings in Thailand built at the end of the reign of King Rama II (1809-1824) of Siam, contemporary with the early Daoguang reign (1821-1850). Personal communication from Pariwat Thammapreechakorn, May 2, 2022.

<sup>13</sup> The yellow in the glaze comes from antimony.



*Fig. 14. Unglazed red earthenware jars for the storage of water, Indonesia, 20<sup>th</sup> century.*

The courtyard also contains 10 large water pots. Seven of these are located under an overhanging roof and made of red-firing unglazed earthenware with a simple decoration consisting of two narrow bands on the shoulder of the pot (Fig. 14). These were likely made in Indonesia and date from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Potters in the Indonesian archipelago traditionally made unglazed earthenwares fired in open ovens. Their wares had excellent properties for storing water due to the cooling effect of the evaporation through the porous earthenware body (Loebèr, 1915: 65-83). One freestanding jar of unglazed red earthenware with an incised decoration on a pedestal has a lid and has been identified as having been made in Yixing, Jiangsu, and dates from the Qing dynasty, Daoguang reign (mid-19<sup>th</sup> century). One jar seems to be made of stoneware with iron glaze, with four knobs in the form of animal heads on the shoulder, possibly made in Guangdong during the Qing dynasty, Guangxu reign, dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century. This jar is placed on a brick(?) pedestal and enclosed in a wrought iron fence. Two identical red earthenware water jars, one with a lid, were likely made in Indonesia during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Area B

The rectangular courtyard indicated as Area B lies north of Area A and is similar in size. It is enclosed with a wall in which six gates allow for passage to the surrounding open spaces and buildings of the complex (Gates 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10). A handful of buildings are surrounded by paved surfaces and tombs. The overall appearance of Area B is that it has been better maintained and that more luxurious and

diverse ceramics have been used to decorate the space than in Area A – possibly indicating the higher status of this area which is closer to the actual tombs of Sunan Gunung Jati and the sultans of Cirebon and their families.

One 9-piece (Fig. 15) and one 12-piece sectioned serving tray function as center pieces on the lower part of a protruding column. Both sets, likely made of porcelain and decorated with sancai colors (green, brown and yellow), were likely made during the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, possibly in Fujian, China.<sup>14</sup> One 9-piece sectioned serving tray is made of overglaze enameled porcelain and was made in Guangdong of Fujian during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 21). One 9-piece sectioned serving tray is made of Famille Rose porcelain, and was also made in Guangdong of Fujian during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>15</sup> (Fig. 22).



*Fig. 15. Nine-piece serving tray with sancai colors, first half 18<sup>th</sup> century.*

Repeating patterns consist of a larger dinner plate surrounded by small dishes. Noteworthy is the North wall between Gate 6 and 8 with a band with a homogenous pattern of identical, English, refined white earthenware plates with a hand painted floral decoration in red, green and blue (c. 1840-1860), surrounded by small dishes, and with older yellow glazed English refined white earthenware medium sized plates (c. 1825-1835) on the top and bottom of the pattern (Fig. 16). The same dinner plates are also common in Area A and can be found in almost all other areas and make it plausible that a large quantity of this particular plate was acquired for the decoration of the complex. It is possible that

<sup>14</sup> Personal communication Christiaan Jörg on 11 September 2022.

<sup>15</sup> Personal communication Christiaan Jörg on 2 October 2022.

originally, the same plates were used to decorate the entire courtyard, and that the current diversity is the result of some of the original plates having been replaced over time.

Some dinner plates appear to be a random combination of English or Scottish hand painted and sponged refined white earthenwares, together with what are likely products from the Maastricht potteries with decorations such as “Timor”, a transfer printed pattern, and “Bladluster”, a hand painted decoration with leaves executed in orange luster. Obvious later replacements are Japanese transfer printed porcelain plates as well as Chinese porcelain plates from the second quarter to the third quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well as some modern blue and white printed plates.



*Fig. 16.*

The base of the walls is lined with older ceramics, including Dutch tinglazed earthenware tiles, often damaged. These are now partially below the surface level as a result of the courtyard’s surface having been raised over time. It is possible that these represent the remainders of older decorations, but it is also possible that older ceramics, sometimes fragments, have been reused in these less visible spaces.

Four large, red earthenware water jars placed under a roof are similar to the ones in Area A and were likely made in Indonesia during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Area C

Area C consists of a single, monumental building in the northeast corner of the complex called *Pasambangan*, a pillared hall which functions as the quarters for the caretakers of the complex (Fig. 17).



*Fig. 17. Interior of the hall with caretakers in traditional clothes.*

Situated in the open area above the South-facing ornamental entrance (Gate 5) is a rare Japanese porcelain coffee pot with a ribbed collar, c. 1710-1740 (Fig. 18).<sup>16</sup> Also present are five large, lidded blue and white jars, possibly Jingdezhen or the Gao Bi region, Guangdong, dating from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>16</sup> Personal communication Christiaan Jörg on 16 September 2022.



*Fig. 18. (Left) Porcelain coffee pot with ribbed collar, Japan, c. 1710-1740. (Right) Complete coffee pot, porcelain, Japan, c. 1710-1740, with replacement lid, Samson, France, late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Collection Groninger Museum; image courtesy Christiaan Jörg.*

The entrance is extensively decorated with Dutch tinglazed earthenware tiles and hand painted in blue or purple (manganese) with a variety of decorations, primarily maritime topics such as boats, mythical sea creature and sea monsters dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, landscapes in a number of styles dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as well as 18<sup>th</sup> century purple tiles depicting various biblical scenes. Also present are a small number of 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century tiles with flowerpots (Korf, 1979). Considering the mixture of tiles with different decorations and age, spanning a period of ca. 150 years, it is very likely that the tiles were originally installed elsewhere in the complex and re-installed sometime during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, the base of two large pillars flanking the entrance is decorated with a pattern consisting of a large porcelain Arita blue stencil ware dish from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century surrounded by four diagonally placed 18<sup>th</sup> century tiles and two small, oval green glazed stoneware dishes from Awaji and dating from the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Awaji ware), while the large central Arita dish on the second pillar is transfer printed (igezara) in blue with peonies and screens (Seton, 1992: 174-175), pointing to a re-use of the tiles in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The same types of Dutch tiles from the entrance to the building can also be found inside the structure. They are placed in pillar-like patterns combining a variety of tiles, interspersed with patterns with among others multiple refined white earthenware transfer printed Maastricht plates with a rooster (pattern

“Haan”, 1881-1929) at the base of an elevated platform. Also present is a dish identified as made by immigrant potters from Guangdong who operated kilns in Saigon and also in Songbe and Bienhoa provinces in the Saigon area from the 19th into early 20th century.<sup>17</sup> Two identical plates made of light blue pressed glass, part of a pattern including two Awaji dishes, four small Chinese porcelain dishes and a transfer printed Scottish plate in the center, are the only examples in this material at the complex, and likely date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 17 bottom left corner, Fig. 19).



*Fig. 19. Plate, pressed glass, second half 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

The plates and dishes used in Area C are characterized by their variety, including the use of some older, English, transfer printed refined white earthenwares from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which are also present in Area D (plates with Spode’s “Italian” pattern, an oval platter with a floral chinoiserie pattern ca. 1830-1835), an early 18th century, five-sided porcelain dish with overglaze enameled polychrome floral decoration from the Jingdezhen kilns (Fig. 20), Jiangxi, Qing, Yongzheng, as well as several late, green glazed saucers decorated with white slip and stenciled underglaze dark green decoration made at Fijian or Jingdezhen (Barry 2000: 24, Fig. 7).

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<sup>17</sup> Personal communication from Louise Cort on April 28, 2022.



*Fig. 20. Five-sided porcelain dish with overglaze enameled polychrome floral decoration from the Jingdezhen kilns, early 18<sup>th</sup> century.*

#### Area D

Area D1 and D2 cover one building located in the northeast quadrant of the complex, a hall called *Gedongan Raja Sulaeman*, which was erected by Sultan Sepuh IX, Sultan of Cirebon from 1845 - 1853, and later became his tomb. The area is surrounded by an open gallery (Area D2), which connects to a smaller, attached building to the north (Area D3). The homogeneous nature of the decorations in Area D1 and D2 make it likely that the decorations on the hall were added or extensively renovated in a relatively short time period sometime during c. 1880-1890, but a few older wares remain. In addition to several small overglaze painted saucers with the Chinese character Shou in green surrounded by bats or butterflies in red which can be found in most of the complex, there are a number of Canton blue-and-white dinner plates from the Dehua kilns in Fujian, Qing, 19th century as well as a large blue-and-white dish, Jingdezhen kilns, Jiangxi, Yongzheng (1723-1735). A large earthenware vase with enameled polychrome decorations depicting several Chinese figures in a garden on a white glaze and relief molded attached to a brick or stone pedestal was possibly made in Guangdong during the late Qing, late 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> early century.

The majority of European refined earthenwares in Area D2 are transfer printed and can be dated ca. 1880-1890. Most of these plates are decorated with a handful of patterns: "China", a Chinoiserie pattern from Robert Cochran & Co.'s Britannia Pottery in Glasgow, Scotland; an unidentified pattern depicting an arrangement of fruits and flowers in a pedestal bowl, a vase and a bird, printed in black and underglaze painting and with orange luster, likely British; a floral chinoiserie pattern known as "Toko"

and printed in brown and with orange luster, possibly Maastricht or another continental pottery, c. 1885-1890; an unknown pattern without a border, depicting a realistic river landscape with birds printed in teal, c. 1890, and the chinoiserie pattern “Classic Willow”, the most popular pattern of all times, which is also present in hand painted form on blue and white Chinese porcelain. An outlier is an English plate from c. 1820 in this area, with a bluish glaze, so-called pearlware, and an enameled polychrome floral decoration and relief molded butterflies or moths and garlands on the rim.

An estimated minimum of 200 Awaji or Minpei ware vessels are present in Area D1 and D2, in the form of small yellow and green glazed earthenware oval and square dishes, as well as some light blue and pale green round dishes, all embossed with a dragon. The Minpei wares are accentuating larger, mostly refined earthenware European plates, as well as some Minpei ware plates with sancai colors. Also present are several identical, late, green glazed porcelain saucers decorated with white slip and stenciled underglaze dark green decoration made at Fijian or Jingdezhen as well as other Chinese porcelain (Fig. 21).



*Fig. 21*

Area D3, together with Area E, is one of the key areas for ceramics at the complex because of the presence of some of the earliest ceramics at the complex. The North wall in Area D3 and Area E together form historically the North wall of the third courtyard Valentijn described in 1722, then still an open space. In today's situation, the courtyard has been partially covered and divided into multiple buildings, dividing the North wall between the narrow building of Area D3, which fills the gap between the old North wall and the hall erected by Sultan Sepuh IX (Area D1 and D2), and the North wall of the hall in

Area E. The ceramics present in Area D3 are more varied, older wares ranging from the late 17<sup>th</sup> to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, in addition to 18<sup>th</sup> century Dutch tinglazed earthenware blue and manganese landscape tiles.

Some of the large jars present in Area D3 may be the same ones Valentijn mentioned in 1722 and can be loosely matched to the location he indicates, although there remains some uncertainty about how Valentijn's description of the successive courtyards or squares matches the project's Areas A to G: "Against the foot of the third wall again can be found two beautiful pots with flowers on the right, and two on the left hand side at the end of the [second] square."

One large blue and white porcelain Kangxi jar with its characteristic flamed decoration around the rim dates from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 24).<sup>18</sup>



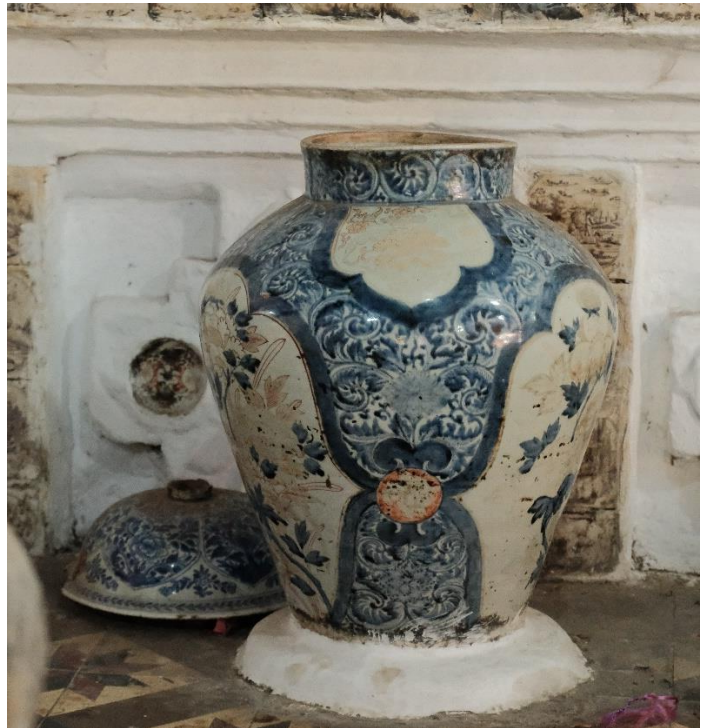
*Fig. 24. Jar, porcelain, underglaze painted blue, Jingdezhen, China, Kangxi, late 17<sup>th</sup> century.*

Four large, lidded porcelain jars in Area D3 were made in Arita, Japan and date from around 1700 (Fig. 26, 27, 28, 29). They are painted in blue while the areas left white were once decorated with email painted decorations which have worn off over time. This type of jar can be described as classical Imari wares made for export. It is no surprise to find early Japanese porcelain such as these jars here; there

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<sup>18</sup> Personal communication Christiaan Jörg on 16 September 2022.

was an active unofficial, private trade in porcelain from Japan in Batavia which came through the VOC-settlement on Deshima. Both the VOC and local traders bought porcelain in Batavia.<sup>19</sup>



<sup>19</sup> Personal communication Christiaan Jörg on 16 September 2022.

*Fig. 26, 27, 28, 29. Lidded jars, lids missing of three of the jars, porcelain, Imari, Arita, Japan, c. 1700.*

One of the earliest European refined white earthenware transfer printed plates in the complex depicts a British manor house in a rural landscape with two figures and a horse in the foreground and printed in a dark blue, typical for around 1820 (Fig. 22). The pattern, known as Cornucopia Flower Border after the border, was made by Davenport in Staffordshire, c. 1820<sup>20</sup> (Coysh Henrywood 1982: 94; Lockett Godden 1989: 140-141).



*Fig. 22*

English refined white earthenware saucers with underglaze polychrome sponged and handpainted decoration of a bird (peafowl) (c. 1830) (Deike 2005) and English refined white earthenware plates and oval platters with underglaze blue transfer printed patterns from c. 1820-1835 can be found here.

Aside from the ubiquitous polychrome saucers with the Chinese character Shou surrounded by five bats or butterflies from the Dehua kilns in Fujian and the green-glazed small and larger plates with lotus-petalled rim from the Dongxi kilns in Fujian (c. 1801-1825) the following wares are present:

- An overglaze enameled dish, Jingdezhen kilns, Jiangxi, Kangxi to Yongzheng (1662-1735)
- A porcelain coffee pot with ribbed collar (attached to the floor), Japan, c. 1710-1740.
- A hexagon shaped blue-and-white bowl, Jingdezhen kilns, Jiangxi, Qianlong (1736-1795)
- An overglaze painted saucer, Dehua kilns, Fujian, Qing, Jiaqing (early 19th century)

<sup>20</sup> TCC pattern number: 9459. <https://db.transferwarecollectorsclub.org/patterns/men-in-discussion/>

- An overglaze enameled saucer, Jingdezhen kilns, Jiangxi but painted in Guangzhou, Tongzhi (1862-1874)
- Several types of Famille Rose saucers, possibly from Fujian

#### Area E

Area E is mostly covered by several connected buildings. The main building, on the eastside, consists of a relatively large hall open to the outside on the south, west and east, with to the north a monumental wall with a gate called *Pesujudan*, which gives access to the sanctuary with the tomb of Sunan Gunung Jati. The space is the main destination for pilgrims visiting the sanctuary and is always crowded with pilgrims, which made the documentation of the ceramics in this area challenging (Fig. 23). The gate is the third of a series of nine gates standing in a straight line along an ascending pathway from south to north, connecting the area where pilgrims gather to the tomb of Sunan Gunung Jati at the top of the hill. The areas beyond the third gate are only accessible to pilgrims on Thursday night, while the areas that lie beyond the fourth gate are only accessible to the Sultans and their families as well as individuals who received special permission from the Sultans. As mentioned above, no photography was undertaken beyond the first gate.



Fig. 23. Main hall with gate *Pesujudan*.

One jar, now partially below grade level, originates from Toungoo or Kawkareik in the Kayin region in Burma and dates from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Three large, plain, grey stoneware jars with iron glaze, all still in use as water jars, have possibly been identified as Maenam Noi Ware from Central Thailand, Singburi province, Bang Rachan district, Choeng Klad sub-district, Maenam Noi kilns, dating

from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to early 17<sup>th</sup> century. These four jars are possibly the oldest ceramics documented at the complex, and there is a possibility that they were placed around the time of Sunan Gunung Jati's death c. 1570.

Four large jars have inserted spigots at the base. Two of these are late Ming (17<sup>th</sup> C.) glazed stoneware jars with relief molded decorations and multiple handles and possibly were made in Guangdong. The other two are blue and white jars made in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi, and date from the Qing dynasty, Yongzheng reign, early 18<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 25). A tall, free standing vase with relief molded dragons and highlighted in flown blue was possibly made in Guangdong, and dates from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Republic).



*Fig. 25.*

Many of the same types of ceramics which can be found in Areas A, B, C, and D are also present in the hall but ceramics from after 1870 are mostly absent. The hall seems to have retained important elements of its 18<sup>th</sup> century appearance. The hall, at the core of the sanctuary, is likely older than some other sections of the complex, and covers a courtyard that was still open at the time of Valentijn's description in 1722. The presence in the hall of ceramics which predate the dominant 19<sup>th</sup> century wares, other than the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century tiles, provide an important insight into the pre-19<sup>th</sup> century decorative scheme of the complex. Mixed in with patterns consisting of plates and dishes from the 1830-1840 period are several older wares. At least four recessed sections have a centrally placed Chinese earthenware dish with a turquoise or amber colored glaze, surrounded by four underglaze blue or enameled polychrome Chinese porcelain saucers (Fig. 30). Chinese turquoise and amber-glazed wares

were made from the late Qing to the Republican period. The recessed sections are interrupted by more prominent sections with a larger pattern comprised of a Chinese porcelain bowl with sancai glaze, late Kangxi, 1700-1720, Jingdezhen<sup>21</sup>, surrounded by a pattern of eight saucers, four of which can be identified as Chinese Imari porcelain from Jingdezhen, 1720-1750<sup>22</sup>, while the other four are made of British refined white earthenware with underglaze polychrome painted birds (peafowl), c. 1830-1840 (Fig. 31). Based on this information, it is likely that the original, 18<sup>th</sup> century decoration consisted of alternating turquoise and yellow dishes surrounded by four smaller Chinese porcelain saucers, interrupted by a section consisting of a sancai bowl surrounded by 8 Chinese porcelain saucers. The pre-19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese ceramics architecturally used ceramics were installed during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, before the extensive renovations of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but likely after c. 1722 when Valentijn described the space.



Fig. 30.

<sup>21</sup> Personal communication Christiaan Jörg on 2 October 2022.

<sup>22</sup> Personal communication Christiaan Jörg on 2 October 2022.



*Fig. 31. North wall around Area D3 retaining most of its late 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century appearance.*

Gate 6, which gives access to the hall, is decorated on both the inside and outside with an identical arrangement of six refined white earthenware plates transfer printed in blue with Arabic script, a total of 12 plates (Fig. 32). The outer rim of the pattern has the names of the first four caliphs in Islam and the

*shahada*, the Muslim profession of faith, certainly a suitable decoration for the entrance to the sanctuary. The plates were made at Copeland in Staffordshire, England, which registered the pattern in 1853 although it is also possible they are copies made by the Maastricht pottery of Petrus Regout from c. 1857. The same plates can be found inserted in the walls of the mausoleum of Sunan Bonang in Tuban, Java. (Chambert-Loir 1994: 198; V&A 2003; Otte 2019: 1652-1654) The plates make it likely that the gate was decorated c. 1853-1860.



Fig. 32. The inside of Gate 6.

Also inside the hall, the large moon and star decoration on each side of the *Gapura Kulan* gate were constructed out of cut up Dutch tinglazed earthenware tiles with a plate or dish for the round moon. On the right, this appears to be a dish made of polychrome decorated Chinese porcelain (late Swatow), while on the left a refined white earthenware plate with a blue transfer printed pattern called “Dragon” from the Maastricht pottery of Petrus Regout (c. 1851-1900) has been used. Many cut-up Dutch tiles are covering the protruding sections of the pillars flanking the gate.

To the west of the hall in area E stands a wooden hall called *Pelayon* or *Mande Layon* used as a resting place for corpses prior to burial. The ceramics present in this area are comparable to those in Areas A-D, with a mixture of wares dating from c. 1830-1840 and 1870-1890. One overglaze enameled dish made at the Jingdezhen kilns, Jiangxi, Qing, Yongzheng, dates from the early 18th century. A blue-and-white bowl was made at the Anxi kilns, Fujian, Qing, Jiaqing, in the early 19th century. Possibly unique at the complex, is a pudding(?) mold in the shape of a fish which appears to be made of porcelain.

Earthenware molds in the shape of a fish were common export items for the Indonesian archipelago towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in particular from potteries in Maastricht and Germany.

#### Area F

Area F in the northwest corner in a quieter part of the complex consists of a large hall by the name of *Gedong Kaprabon*, used when the Sultans and their families visit the area.

The ceramics in this area are mostly arranged with a centrally placed refined white earthenware plate from c. 1870-1890, surrounded by smaller Chinese dishes and plates c. 1830-1840 (Fig. 33). With the difference in age between the central plate and surrounding dishes, it is likely again that a renovation took place during the later 19<sup>th</sup> century where new plates were inserted to replace those from c. 1830. Damaged plates may have been replaced, but it is also possible that the changes were made to update the decorations for aesthetic reasons.



*Fig. 33.*

Although the European plates are generally speaking of the same types that can be found in other areas of the complex, with a combination of transfer printed and hand painted wares, there is a larger diversity in the decorations. This may be the result of a more haphazard sourcing of suitable ceramics and or a more gradual replacement, although some of the same patterns that can be found in other areas are also present here.

The most common transfer printed pattern in Area F is a polychrome chinoiserie pattern that was produced by a number of British and continental potteries and known under names such as “Tea House” and “Chinese Pattern”, and which can be dated c. 1860-1890 (TCC). Maastricht patterns present are “Vigo” (1863-1928), “Dragon” (1869-1954), “Toko” (1885-1932), “Pajong” (1887-1909) (Bogaers 1992). Also present are some plates with the Malay pattern name “Kotta Laut” made by the English (Staffordshire) pottery of William Adams V & Thomas Adams, 1882-c. 1890 (Furnis 1999: 85). Also present are a few earlier patterns from the same pottery, two plates with a pattern consisting of Arabic script, which can be dated c. 1860-1879 (Chambort-Loir 1990: 185-187; Otte 2019C: 12-14). Two Malay patterns created by the Scottish pottery of J. & M.P. Bell for the Southeast Asian market, “Pekin” (1889) and “Makassar” (1890) (Kelly 2006) make it likely that the renovations were completed in or shortly after 1890.

Also present are some Chinese porcelain saucers painted in blue with a Chrysanthemum and Flower Stalks (“Batik”) decoration, likely from Fujian, c. 1830-1840. Wares with this decoration have been excavated in Singapore (Barry 2000: Fig. 12, 13). These and other blue and white Chinese porcelains are mostly absent from among the architecturally used ceramics. A blue-and-white bowl was made at the Anxi kilns, Fujian, Qing, Jiaqing, during the early 19th century.

Mostly absent in Area F are the brightly colored yellow and green glazed Awaji wares, or any other brightly colored wares, which, combined with the less dense placement of the ceramics, makes for a more subdued overall decoration. Also almost completely absent are the Dutch tinglazed earthenware tiles which are ubiquitous in most of the complex. The absence of the Dutch tiles makes it likely that the hall was first decorated, and possibly constructed, during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Two unglazed red earthenware braziers in Area F were likely made in Indonesia during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Area G

Area G consists of a walled courtyard filled with tombs. Only the north wall and Gates 8 and 9 are decorated with ceramics. A band with a regularly laid out repeating motif consists of a centrally placed refined white earthenware or industrial porcelain dinner plate, with yellow glazed Awaji ware saucers above and below and green glazed Awaji ware saucers to the left and right, and diagonally placed small overglaze painted saucers the Chinese character Shou for Longevity in green in the center surrounded by five bats or butterflies in red from Dehua in Fujian. The dinner plates of which several were likely made in Japan, are more sparsely decorated than the older wares, with transfer printed floral decorations or small decals and can be dated c. 1890-1910 for the transfer printed wares and up to 1940 for the wares with decals. Gate 8 is decorated with two porcelain dishes with blue transfer printed decorations and a brown rim from Arita, Japan (*igezara*), late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> C. An older piece consists of a polychrome overglaze enameled dish from the Jingdezhen kilns, Jiangxi, Qing, Yongzheng, early 18th century.

## Description of the Ceramics by Ware

This section describes the different types of ceramics at the mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati, regardless of their location within the complex.

Table 1. Ceramic wares at the mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati by date.

	1500	25	50	75	1600	25	50	75	1700	25	50	75	1800	25	50	75	1900	25	50	75
Chinese porcelain																				
Chinese stoneware																				
Burmese stoneware																				
Thai stoneware																				
Vietnamese stoneware																				
Japanese porcelain																				
Japanese stoneware																				
Dutch tiles																				
European refined white earthenware																				
Indonesian red earthenware																				
Modern wares																				

### Chinese porcelain

Chinese ceramics, both porcelain and stoneware, are among the most used at the mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati, and certainly over the longest time period, from late Ming (17th C.) glazed stoneware jars to porcelain dating from the Chinese Republic (1911-1949).

Significant because they can be matched to Valentijn's description from 1722, are several large porcelain jars and porcelain tiles. Possibly the rarest item in the ceramics storage space in Area A, is a large water container or jardinière painted with underglaze blue and red, depicting the unusual topic of a tiger in a landscape (Fig. 8). The pot was made in Jingdezhen, China, Kangxi c. 1700, and therefore one of the pots that would have been already at the site at the time of Valentijn's description from 1722. Also from the ceramics storage room in Area A is a large pot painted with underglaze blue "ruyi" motifs, Kangxi, c. 1700. As with the previously described pot, this jar may have been one of the flowerpots Valentijn describes (Fig. 9). In Area D3, one large blue and white porcelain Kangxi jar with its characteristic flamed decoration around the rim dates from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 24).<sup>23</sup> In Area E, there are two large blue and white jars made in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi, from the Qing dynasty, Yongzheng reign, early 18<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 25). An originally lidded famille rose jar was made in Jingdezhen, China, c. 1730-1750 (Fig. 11).

The 26 Chinese porcelain tiles on the front of Gate 4, 20x20cm, are decorated with the typical lotus and flower heads. These tiles were made in Jingdezhen for the Islamic market and date from the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>24</sup> The same tiles are also present in a few other locations in courtyard A (Fig. 34).

<sup>23</sup> Personal communication Christiaan Jörg on 16 September 2022.

<sup>24</sup> Personal communication by Christiaan Jörg on 11 September 2022.

Valentijn: “Along this square [the first square/Area A], [...] , is a wall or rampart five feet tall, covered on the front with white, and painted Chinese tiles, resembling Dutch tiles.” (Valentijn 1726: 15).



*Fig. 34. Blue-and-white porcelain floor tile, Jingdezhen, first half 18<sup>th</sup> century*

The remaining 18<sup>th</sup> century wall decorations in Area D3 and Area E include patterns comprised of a Chinese porcelain bowl with sancai glaze, late Kangxi, 1700-1720, Jingdezhen<sup>25</sup>, surrounded by a pattern of eight saucers, four of which can be identified as Chinese Imari porcelain from Jingdezhen, 1720-1750<sup>26</sup> (Fig. 35).

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<sup>25</sup> Personal communication Christiaan Jörg on 2 October 2022.

<sup>26</sup> Personal communication Christiaan Jörg on 2 October 2022.



*Fig. 35.*

An overglaze enameled Famille verte dish is from the Jingdezhen kilns, Jiangxi, Kangxi period (1700-1720)<sup>27</sup> in Area D (Fig. 36). A few objects from the Jingdezhen kilns, Jiangxi date from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, Qing dynasty, Yongzheng period: a five-sided dish with overglaze enameled polychrome floral decoration in Area C, a polychrome overglaze enameled dish in Area G, and an overglaze enameled dish in Area E.

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<sup>27</sup> Personal communication by Christiaan Jörg on 2 October 2022.



*Fig. 36. Enameled dish, Jingdezhen kilns, Jiangxi, Kangxi to Yongzheng period (1662-1735).*

A large blue-and-white dish from the Jingdezhen kilns, Jiangxi, dates from the Yongzheng period (1723-1735) while a hexagon shaped blue-and-white bowl, Jingdezhen kilns, Jiangxi, is from the Qianlong period (1736-1795) and can both be found in Area D.

Prominently installed in Area B are four sectioned serving trays,. One 9-piece and one 12-piece tray, possibly porcelain, are decorated with sancai colors (green, brown and yellow) and likely date from the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and were possibly made in Fujian. One 9-piece sectioned serving tray is made of overglaze enameled porcelain and was made in Guangdong of Fujian during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 37). One 9-piece sectioned serving tray is made of Famille Rose porcelain, and was also made in Guangdong of Fujian during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>28</sup> (Fig. 38). Several types of Famille Rose saucers, possibly from Fujian, are also present throughout the complex.

<sup>28</sup> Personal communication Christiaan Jörg on 2 October 2022.



*Fig. 37. 9-Piece sectioned serving tray, overglaze enameled porcelain, Guangdong of Fujian, second half of the 19th century.*



*Fig. 38. 9-Piece sectioned serving tray, Famille Rose porcelain, Guangdong or Fujian, second half of the 19th century; the central dish is a refined white earthenware dish with yellow glaze, Staffordshire, England, c. 1830.*

Chinese porcelain from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is relatively rare at the complex, especially considering the vast quantities which were shipped to the Indonesian archipelago during this time. Area D contains a number of Canton blue-and-white dinner plates from the Dehua kilns in Fujian, Qing, 19th century. An overglaze enameled saucer with open lotus around a central lotus pod design in Area B comes from the Anxi kilns in Fujian province and were also present in the Tek Sing and can be dated c. 1825-1850 (Fig. 39). An overglaze painted saucer was made at the Dehua kilns, Fujian, Qing, Jiaqing (early 19th century). A blue-and-white bowl was made at the Anxi kilns, Fujian, Qing, Jiaqing, in the early 19th century (Area E). Also present are some Chinese porcelain saucers painted in blue with a Chrysanthemum and Flower Stalks ("Batik") decoration, likely from Fujian, c. 1830-1840. Wares with this decoration have been excavated in Singapore (Barry 2000: Fig. 12, 13). Unusually, a saucer from the Jingdezhen kilns, Jiangxi period but enameled in Guangzhou, Tongzhi dates from 1862-1874.



*Fig. 39. Overglaze enameled saucer with open lotus around a central lotus pod design, Anxi kilns, Fujian province c. 1801-1825.*

Used throughout the complex in large quantities are small overglaze painted saucers with unglazed rim and the Chinese character *Shou* for Longevity in green in the center surrounded by five bats or butterflies in red. These were made at the Dehua kilns in Fujian province (19<sup>th</sup> century) (Fig. 40). These saucers make up the most frequently used ceramic type at the complex and can be found in all areas that were investigated, except, importantly, in the main hall in Area E, which is predominantly decorated with ceramics from before 1850. These saucers are generally dated as 19<sup>th</sup> century, but their absence in the hall in Area E points to them having been installed during the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. Their ubiquitous presence in newer Areas F and especially G point to their installation during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This makes it likely that a large quantity was acquired during that time, with which both older sections of the complex were renovated as well as some new decorations were added.



*Fig. 40.*

Several late, green glazed saucers decorated with white slip and stenciled underglaze dark green decoration made at Fijian or Jingdezhen are prominent in Area D (Barry 2000: 24, Fig. 7).

Situated in the open area above the entrance to Area C are five large, lidded blue and white jars possibly from Jingdezhen or the Gao Bi region, Guangdong, dating from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Chinese stoneware and earthenware

Area D3 and the large hall where pilgrims gather in Area E contains the richest and oldest variety of Chinese stonewares and earthenwares in the complex. Two late Ming (17<sup>th</sup> C.) glazed stoneware jars with relief molded decorations and multiple handles were possibly made in Guangdong. Another two large jars are blue and white jars made in Jingdezhen, Jiangxi, and date from the Qing dynasty, Yongzheng reign, early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Also present in Area E are at least four Chinese earthenware dishes with a turquoise (3) or amber (1) colored glaze. Chinese turquoise and amber-glazed wares were made from the late Qing to the Republican period.

Common in several areas of the complex are small, green-glazed stoneware plates with lotus-petalled rim and molded all-over meander motif around a central chrysanthemum flowerhead design (Fig. 41). These plates were also found in the Tek Sing Shipwreck which sank in the South China sea on February 6, 1822. They were produced at the Dongxi kilns in Fujian province and can be dated c. 1825-1850.<sup>29</sup>



*Fig. 41. Small, green-glazed stoneware plate with lotus-petalled rim and molded all-over meander motif around a central chrysanthemum flowerhead, Dongxi kilns, Fujian province c. 1801-1825.*

In Area A, a freestanding lidded jar of unglazed red earthenware with an incised decoration on a pedestal has been identified as having been made in Yixing, Jiangsu, Qing dynasty, Daoguang period (mid-19<sup>th</sup> century). One jar appears to be made of stoneware with iron glaze, with four knobs in the form of animal heads on the shoulder, possibly made in Guangdong during the Qing dynasty, Guangxu

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<sup>29</sup> Both types of saucers have also been commonly used to decorate monumental buildings in Thailand built at the end of the reign of King Rama II (1809-1824) of Siam, contemporary with the early Daoguang reign (1821-1850). Personal communication from Pariwat Thammapreechakorn, May 2, 2022.

period (late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century). This jar is placed on a brick(?) pedestal and enclosed in a wrought iron fence.

A tall earthenware(?) vase with enameled polychrome decorations depicting several Chinese figures in a garden on a white glaze and relief molded attached to a brick or stone pedestal was possibly made in Guangdong during the late Qing dynasty, late 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> early century. A tall, free standing vase with relief molded dragons and highlights in flown blue was possibly made in Guangdong, and dates from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Republic).

#### Burmese Stoneware

One jar, now partially below grade level, was made in Toungoo or Kawkareik in the Kayin region in Burma and dates from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to early 17<sup>th</sup> century (Area E) (Fig. 42). This brown-glazed jar is heavily-potted, large, short-necked, wide-shouldered, and tapers to a small flat foot. The top two thirds are decorated in a brown glaze with thin, horizontal and vertical bands of yellow bosses. The shoulder has four equi-distant handles.

The Mon people of Lower Burma established states in Pegu and Martaban. In Martaban, they established large pottery kilns to produce storage vessels such as this example which were used across Southeast Asia and even India and the Middle East to transport commodities. These jars have been found in Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Borneo and India.



*Fig. 42. Burmese blackish-brown glazed jar, late 16<sup>th</sup> to early 17<sup>th</sup> century*

### Thai Stoneware

Three large, plain, grey stoneware jars with iron glaze, all still in use as water jars, have possibly been identified as Maenam Noi Ware from Central Thailand, Singburi province, Bang Rachan district, Choeng Klad sub-district, Maenam Noi kilns, dating from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

### Vietnamese Stoneware

A stoneware dish has been identified as made by immigrant potters from Guangdong who operated kilns in Saigon and also in Songbe and Bienhoa provinces in the Saigon area from the 19<sup>th</sup> into early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>30</sup>

### Japanese Porcelain

Four large, lidded porcelain jars prominently placed in Area D3 are from Arita, Japan and date from around 1700 (Fig. 18, 19, 20, 21). They are painted in blue while the areas left white were once decorated with email painted decorations which have worn off over time. This type of jar can be described as classical Imari wares made for export. It is no surprise to find early Japanese porcelain such as these jars here; there was an active unofficial, private trade in porcelain from Japan in Batavia which came through the VOC-settlement on Deshima. Both the VOC and local traders bought porcelain in Batavia.<sup>31</sup> A lidded porcelain Imari jar in the ceramic storage room in Area A has a knob on the lid in the shape of a lion-dog (*shishi*), and was made at Arita, early 18<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 10). A total of three large coffee pots c. 1710-1740 have been observed: in the ceramics storage in Area A, Area C, and Area D3 (Fig. 18).

Later Japanese porcelain and stoneware at the site primarily date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Examples of Japanese later porcelain are rare at the complex, unlike Japanese stoneware (see below). It is unclear what the reason is; large dishes with stenciled or printed decorations were a common item in the Indonesian Archipelago during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but comparable to the common blue and white Chinese porcelain from earlier in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there may have been a preference for more colorful wares to decorate the complex. Areas C and G are the only locations where these blue and white wares have been installed. Area C has a large porcelain Arita blue stencilware dish from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 43) and a large Arita dish with a transfer printed pattern (*igezara*) with peonies and screens (Seton, 1992: 174-175). Gate 8 in Area G is decorated with two porcelain dishes with blue transfer printed decorations and a brown rim from Arita, Japan (*igezara*), late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> C. Area E contains a few late 19<sup>th</sup> century or early 20<sup>th</sup> century Japanese Imari porcelain saucers.

Several of the dinner plates used in Area G were likely made in Japan, with transfer printed floral decorations or small decals (1900-1940).

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<sup>30</sup> Communication from Louise Cort on April 28, 2022.

<sup>31</sup> Personal communication Christiaan Jörg on 16 September 2022.



*Fig. 43. Large porcelain Arita blue stencilware dish from the late 19th century.*

#### Japanese Stoneware

An estimated minimum of 200 Awaji or Minpei stoneware vessels are present in Area D and D2, where they are a major component of the decoration of the hall, and later tomb, of Sultan Sepuh IX, Sultan of Cirebon. A substantial number of these vessels can also be found throughout most other areas of the complex. The wares probably date from the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It appears that a large quantity was acquired to decorate various parts of the complex. Most common are small yellow and green lead-glazed earthenware oval and square dishes (Fig. 21, 44, 45, 46), and, less common, some light blue and pale green glazed round dishes, all embossed with a dragon, and accentuating larger, mostly European refined white earthenware plates from the same period. The green and yellow oval dishes have been observed on Sumatra<sup>32</sup> and it is possible that some of the monochrome colored and sancai glazed wares excavated in Singapore are from Awaji (Barry 2000: Fig. 43; Barry 2007: Fig. 55).

<sup>32</sup> Collection Otte, provenance Sumatra.



Fig. 21, 44, 45, 46.

Also present are some Awaji ware plates with sancai colors, copying 18<sup>th</sup> century Qing ceramics (Fig. 47). The potteries on Awaji island specialized among others in the production of copies of older Chinese ceramics. It is plausible that these were specifically made for the Indonesian archipelago where there continued to be demand for traditional “heirloom” ceramics. Wares with sancai glaze, most often from Awaji, are known locally as *blambangan* and appear more common on Sumatra where they have a special status. More research is needed into the presence of Awaji wares in Southeast Asia.



Fig. 47.

#### Dutch Tinglazed Earthenware Tiles

Hundreds of Dutch tinglazed earthenware tiles are present, especially in Areas C, D3 and E, where they found monumental use in some of the most prominent parts of the complex. The tiles are hand painted in blue or purple (manganese) with a variety of decorations. The oldest tiles date from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and are decorated primarily with maritime topics such as boats, mythical sea creatures and sea monsters. Also present are a small number of 17<sup>th</sup> century tiles with flowerpots. The 18<sup>th</sup> century tiles are primarily decorated with landscapes in a number of styles, as well as 18<sup>th</sup> century purple tiles

depicting various biblical scenes. Some tiles can be identified as having been made in Rotterdam and Amsterdam or Haarlem.<sup>33</sup>

Information about the export of Dutch tiles can be found in cargo lists from VOC ships from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century in the Nationaal Archief in The Hague and the Arsip Nasional in Jakarta. The lists generally refer to tiles as “steentjes”, the same term Valentijn uses in his description of the mausoleum.

#### European Refined White Earthenware

One of the earliest European refined white earthenware transfer printed plates in the complex depicts a British manor house in a rural landscape with two figures and a horse in the foreground and printed in a dark blue, typical for around 1820. The pattern, known as “Cornucopia Flower Border” after the border, was made by Davenport in Staffordshire, c. 1820<sup>34</sup> (Coysh Henrywood 1982: 94; Lockett Godden 1989: 140-141) (Fig. 12). Also from c. 1820, is an English plate with a blue-ish glaze, so-called pearlware, and an enameled polychrome floral decoration and relief molded butterflies or moths and garlands on the rim.

Likely from a slightly later date, are several refined white earthenware plates in Areas A, B, C, D, and E with a glossy, bright yellow glaze and enameled floral decoration from England, ca. 1825-1835. The same type of yellow glazed ware has been excavated in Singapore (Barry, 2007: Fig. 56, 65), and a bowl of this ware was found on Sumatra (Otte 2019c: Fig. 2) (Fig. 48).



*Fig. 48.*

Present in multiple areas of the complex are English refined white earthenware saucers with underglaze polychrome sponged and handpainted decoration of a bird (peafowl) (c. 1830) (Deike 2005) (Fig. 49). This decoration has so far not been observed elsewhere in the Southeast Asia. It is likely that all saucers originate from one single maker and likely single shipment, and it is possible that wares with this

<sup>33</sup> Personal communication from Hans Bonke on July 17, 2022.

<sup>34</sup> TCC pattern number: 9459. <https://db.transferwarecollectorsclub.org/patterns/men-in-discussion/>

decoration were not commonly shipped to Southeast Asia. This peafowl decoration is more typically associated with the markets in the United States during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



*Fig. 49.*

Some English refined white earthenware plates and oval platters with underglaze blue transfer printed patterns from c. 1820-1835 can be found in Areas C and D, such as plates with Spode's "Italian" pattern, an oval platter with an unidentified floral chinoiserie pattern ca. 1830-1835 (Fig. 50).



*Fig. 50.*

Areas A and B still contain a relatively large number of identical, English, refined white earthenware plates with a hand painted floral decoration in red, green and blue (c. 1840-1860). It is likely that a large

quantity of this particular plate was acquired to decorate the two courtyards. The dating of these handpainted wares is less precise than some other European wares, but the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century date is somewhat out of line with the rest of the complex, although the Gate 6 in Area E is also decorated with plates from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (see below).

Gate 6, which gives access to the hall, is decorated on both the inside and outside with an identical arrangement of six refined white earthenware plates transfer printed in blue with Arabic script, a total of 12 plates (Fig. 32, 51). The outer rim of the pattern has the names of the first four caliphs in Islam and the *shahada*, the Muslim profession of faith, making these plates a suitable decoration for the entrance to the sanctuary. The plates were made at Copeland in Staffordshire, England, which registered the pattern in 1853 although it is also possible they are copies made by the Maastricht pottery of Petrus Regout from c. 1857. The same plates can be found inserted in the walls of the mausoleum of Sunan Bonang in Tuban, Java. (Chambert-Loir 1994: 198; V&A 2003; Otte 2019: 1652-1654) The plates make it likely that the gate was decorated c. 1853-1860.



Fig. 51.

The majority of European refined earthenwares in Area D2 are transfer printed and can be dated ca. 1880-1890. Most of these plates are decorated with a handful of patterns: “China”, a Chinoiserie pattern from Robert Cochran & Co.’s Britannia Pottery in Glasgow, Scotland (Fig. 52); an unidentified pattern depicting an arrangement of fruits and flowers in a pedestal bowl, a vase and a bird, printed in black and underglaze painting and with orange luster, likely British; a floral chinoiserie pattern known as “Toko” and printed in brown and with orange luster, possibly Maastricht or another continental pottery, c. 1885-1890; an unknown pattern without a border, depicting a realistic river landscape with birds printed in teal, c. 1890, and the chinoiserie pattern “Classic Willow”, the most popular pattern of all times, which is also present in hand painted form on blue and white Chinese porcelain.



*Fig. 52.*

From the c. 1880-1900 period are some dinner plates which appear to be a random combination of English or Scottish hand painted and sponged refined white earthenwares, together with what are likely products from the Maastricht potteries with transfer printed decorations such as “Timor” (1870-1934) and “Haan” (1881-1929) (Fig. 53), and “Bladluster”, a hand painted decoration with leaves executed in yellow luster.



*Fig. 53.*

The most common transfer printed pattern in Area F is a polychrome chinoiserie pattern that was produced by a number of British and continental potteries and known under names such as “Tea House” and “Chinese Pattern”, and which can be dated c. 1860-1890 (TCC). Maastricht patterns present are “Vigo” (1863-1928), “Dragon” (1869-1954), “Toko” (1885-1932), “Pajong” (1887-1909) (Bogaers 1992). Also present are some plates with the Malay pattern name “Kotta Laut” made by the English (Staffordshire) pottery of William Adams V & Thomas Adams, 1882-c. 1890 (Furnis 1999: 85) (Fig. 54). Also present are a few earlier patterns from the same pottery, two plates with a pattern consisting of Arabic script, which can be dated c. 1860-1879 (Chambort-Loir 1990: 185-187; Otte 2019C: 12-14). Two Malay patterns created by the Scottish pottery of J. & M.P. Bell for the Southeast Asian market, “Pekin” (1889) and “Makassar” (1890) (Kelly 2006) make it likely that the renovations were completed in or shortly after 1890.



*Fig. 54.*

#### Indonesian Red Earthenware

Several large water pots made of red-firing unglazed earthenware, undecorated or with a simple decoration consisting of two narrow bands on the shoulder of the pot, are present in Areas A and B (Fig. 14, 55). These were likely made in Indonesia and date from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Two identical red earthenware water jars, one with a lid, were likely made in Indonesia during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Potters in the Indonesian archipelago traditionally made unglazed earthenwares fired in open ovens. Their wares had excellent properties for storing water due to the cooling effect of the evaporation through the porous earthenware body (Loebèr, 1915: 65-83).



Fig. 55.

### Modern Wares

A modern plate, likely earthenware or stoneware, is depicting a rather jolly cat and is clearly a replacement for a damaged or lost plate (Fig. 56). Other replacements are Japanese transfer printed porcelain plates as well as Chinese porcelain plates from the second quarter to the third quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well as some modern blue and white printed plates.



Fig. 56.

### Research questions and hypothesis

The project aimed to test a limited number of basic hypotheses:

1. *The ceramics were affixed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century over a relatively short time period. This will be tested by analyzing the age of the ceramics.*
2. *The ceramics represent wares commonly available in the area during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This will be tested by, where possible, comparing the ceramics with other ceramics assemblages from the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Southeast Asia, primarily from archaeology, other documented sites and published collections.*
3. *Some ceramics were affixed at an earlier stage, for example the Dutch tinglazed earthenware tiles.*

#### Hypothesis 1: The ceramics were affixed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century over a relatively short time period.

The current ceramics assemblage is believed to have been inserted during a renovation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, which this survey partially confirms, although a substantial number of ceramics date from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Based on the large number of late 19<sup>th</sup> century ceramics it is highly likely that a major renovation of the complex did indeed take place during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, including the installation of ceramics in newer parts of the complex such as (Areas F and G) which may not have been decorated before.

Hypothesis 2: The ceramics represent wares commonly available in the area during the 2nd half of the 19th century.

The ceramics dating from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century certainly represent common wares in the Indonesian archipelago at the time. The same can be said about the ceramics from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as well as older ceramics. A good point of comparison are the ceramics from archaeological contexts, such as those excavated in Singapore (Barry 2000, 2007), as well as those from documented collections. For example, even the British yellow glazed refined white earthenware plates c. 1825-1835 present in multiple areas were likely relatively common throughout the Indonesian Archipelago (Barry, 2007: Fig. 56; Otte 2019c: Fig. 2). The one exception are the small Staffordshire dishes with peafowl decoration which so far have not been observed elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Conspicuously missing almost entirely is the common Chinese blue and white porcelain for everyday use, such as those found in the Tek Sing Wreck, which one would expect to be present among the ceramics from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Pickford & Hatcher, 2000). This may be an indication of their lower status as compared to the ceramics used to decorate the complex or a preference for more colorful wares for decorative purposes. More efforts are necessary to compare with other ceramics assemblages in Southeast Asia.

Hypothesis 3: Some ceramics were affixed at an earlier stage, for example the Dutch tiles.

It is clear from this survey that a large number of older ceramics are present at the site, including some that can be traced back to Valentijn's description from 1722. There are three possible explanations for the presence of the older ceramics, and all three may be true:

1. The single, older ceramics are remnants of decorations, some of which have now been partially or mostly replaced by newer ceramics. Evidence to support this explanation may be found in Area D3 and in the main hall in Area E which likely retained its 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century appearance with ceramics from this time period.

The 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Dutch tiles were likely installed within a few decades after they were made, considering the large quantity and homogeneous nature of their decorations, but it is possible that the tiles, after installation at the complex, were detached and re-installed to form novel decorations. The large jars, some of them from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, likely always retained their high status over time. This is expressed in the popular belief that these were important gifts to Sunan Gunung Jati himself and the safekeeping of some of the jars in a special storage room. Also Valentijn's detailed account of the jars and their location when he describes the complex in 1722 is a testimony to the high esteem in which these jars stood. Perhaps the biggest discovery, or surprise, is in fact that a substantial number of ceramics which must already have been present when Valentijn described the complex are still there today.

2. Individual, older, heirloom ceramics were used to make repairs during the more recent history of the complex. An argument for this is the presence of some older wares in what appear newer parts of the complex, such as a polychrome overglaze enameled dish from the Jingdezhen kilns, Jiangxi date from the early 18th century, Qing dynasty, Yongzheng period in Area G.

3. A last possibility is that ceramics were re-installed. Aside from the tiles, this seems at first sight a less likely explanation considering the fragility of most ceramics but has to be taken into consideration considering the ample evidence pointing towards this scenario. For example, it would explain how ceramics from different periods ended up being combined in regular patterns, not just individual replacements. This situation where ceramics from different time periods are combined is found in many parts of the complex and is more the norm than an exception; the only area of the complex that has ceramics from a relatively short period, is the hall erected by Sultan Sepuh IX in Area D with its

combination of European refined white earthenwares and Japanese Awaji wares from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, although also there a few older wares are present.

## Possible directions for future research

The collection of c. 800 photographs, recording an estimated several thousand ceramics, will allow for a future comparison with other sites with architecturally used ceramics, primarily in Indonesia and other locations connected through the Indian Ocean trade network. It will also allow for a comparison with ceramics from archaeological assemblages. The dozens of early large pots and jars, some of which may have been part of Valentijn's description from 1722, could be an area for future research into the earlier ceramics at the complex. Among the late 19<sup>th</sup> century wares, the Japanese Awaji wares for the Indonesian market deserve more research.

## Image repository for future research

At the time this report was written, discussions about a permanent repository for the images had been initiated with museums in the US, Europe, and Asia. Goal is to make the images available for future research through one or more public institutions, preferably under a CC0 or CCBY license.

## Conclusion

Based on the more than 800 images, a rough estimate of well over 1,000 ceramics, not including the many wall tiles, are present at the mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati. The initial plan was for all ceramics to be photographed individually, but this proved unfeasible within the logistical and financial parameters of the project due to the unexpectedly large quantity of ceramics. Hence, a more qualitative approach had to be adopted, with images showing larger sections of walls with ceramics as well as images of individual ceramics of each type.

When surveying the large variety of ceramic wares and their distribution throughout the complex it is possible to draw a handful of conclusions.

The age of the ceramics is likely evidence of multiple larger installations and renovations of parts of the complex throughout the last 350 years, and which can be dated with some accuracy. In each instance, it appears that larger quantities of particular kinds of ceramics from one or a handful of batches and or sources were acquired. These probably reflect what was locally available at that time. It is possible that the Dutch tinglazed earthenware tiles were ordered from Holland, but little is known about the trade in Dutch tiles to the Indonesian archipelago and it is therefore also possible that the tiles were acquired from stock that was locally available<sup>35</sup>. It also appears that smaller repairs were done in between these periods with whatever was available. The exception may be the precious, high-status large pots and jars

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<sup>35</sup> Cargo lists from VOC ships and the VOC journals for Batavia in the Nationaal Archief in The Hague and the VOC archive in the Arsip Nasional in Jakarta contain information about the export of Dutch tiles to Indonesia. Personal communication Hans Bonke on July 17, 2022.

which Valentijn already observed in 1722, which are more likely indeed to have been gifted, if not to Sunan Gunung Jati during his lifetime, then to the monument to the saint erected after his death.

Mentioned above is the possibility that ceramics for the decoration of the complex were donated by pilgrims, apparently based on oral history. This could apply to both the instances where larger quantities of identical ceramics are present at the site, presumably donated by a wealthier donor, and individual ceramics of which only one of a few are present at the site. It is even possible that older, heirloom, ceramics were donated, either to replace older ceramics that had been lost or damaged, or because they were deemed suitable because of the high status of heirloom ceramics in Indonesia (see e.g. Kozok 2014). For example, the early 18<sup>th</sup> century polychrome overglaze enameled dish from the Jingdezhen kilns, Jiangxi, Qing, Yongzheng, inserted in Gate 8 in a relative new area, is difficult to understand without the assumption that an heirloom was used.

It is also likely that certain, historically, high-status areas such as Area D3 and E were better preserved, while other more prominent, high-status areas in the complex were renovated more thoroughly, such as the tomb of Sultan Sepuh IX in area D1 and D2, while peripheral areas such as Areas A and B display more of a variety of wares with a longer date range.

Table 2: Common ceramic wares and types coinciding with the likely timing of major renovations at the mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati, 1650-1950

**1650-1750:**

- Dutch tinglazed earthenware blue painted tiles with maritime subjects (ships, fish, sea creatures and monsters) and flowerpots. These are still fairly ubiquitous throughout the complex, likely due to their sturdiness.
- Large jars and pots from Burma, Thailand, China and Japan
- A few Chinese porcelain plates and dishes

**1750-1800:**

- Dutch tin-glazed earthenware blue and manganese painted tiles with landscape and biblical subjects.
- Chinese porcelain and stoneware

**1820-1830:**

- Small, green-glazed stoneware plates with lotus-petalled rim and chrysanthemum flowerhead, Dongxi kilns, Fujian province
- Small saucers of refined white earthenware with a polychrome, underglaze painted bird (peafowl) from Britain
- Yellow glazed plates of refined white earthenware from Britain
- Refined white earthenware plates with transfer printed decorations

**1850-1860:**

- Underglaze hand painted British refined white earthenware plates

- Refined white earthenware plates with transfer printed Arabic script

#### **1880-1890:**

- Refined white earthenware European plates with transfer printed patterns
- Awaji green, yellow, and sancai glazed dishes

#### **1920-1940:**

- Industrial porcelain plates from Japan and China.

The grant applications to the ACC and TCC expressed the expectation that not yet documented wares would be discovered as a result of this survey's closer scrutiny of the decorations. The survey certainly surpassed the author's expectations in this respect. Being able to link Valentijn's description from 1722 to ceramics still present at the site was probably the most exciting discovery. The large quantity of Awaji wares opens a window on a class of ware in Indonesia that has been misunderstood, described as European or Chinese, and little studied. More generally, it was a surprise how many older ceramics are present at a site that was thought to contain primarily late 19<sup>th</sup> century ceramics as well as the overall larger than expected quantity of architecturally used ceramics.

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## Attachment A: Transcription of Valentijn's description of the first three courtyards of the mausoleum of Sunan Gunung Jati

(Valentijn, 1726: 15-16)

Het graf heeft ontrent de hoogte van de Stad-huis-toren tot Amsterdam, of wat minder, zynde van voren vierkant, maar van agteren, daar het tegen een berg met een half-rond aankomt, blind, en dus daar ook half-rond.

Het heeft vyf verscheide verdiepingen, of pleinen, tot welke men met verscheide trappen opgaat, van welke de eerste het breedste en grootste, en de laatste het kleinste, dog zonder plein, uitleverd.

Het eerste, dat men ontrent dit graf ontmoet, is een groot hek, om 't zelve van den gemeenen weg af te sonderen.

Daar na komt men aan den eersten opgang, daar men tot het eerste plein met zeven gemeene trappen opgaat, zynde in het midden door een hekje afgeslooten.

Langs dit plein, dat met klinkert belegd is, en een breedte van honderd treden van voren, of in 't vierkant, heeft, is in een muragie of borstwering van vyf voeten hoog, die van voren met witte, en beschilderde Chineesche tegelkens, even of 't Hollandsche waren, bezet is.

Als men 'er pas op komt, ziet men aan wederzyden van den ingang twee kostelyke weergalooze Chineesche blaauwe, en heerlyke Japansche potten, met bloemen 'er in, boven op dien muur, en ter regterhand 'er ook vier, eenige voeten van een, en ter linkerhand nog drie staan, tusschen welke drie laatste men twee groote boomen tot eene belommering heeft.

Vorder ziet men op dit eerste plein niets.

Aan den tweede opgang, heeft men diergelyk een muur van de zelve hoogte 'er voor, mede met zulke steentjes bezet, en beneden aan de voet ter regterhand met zeven, en ter linkerhand met zes groote heerlyke Chineesche bloempotten (geschenken van Mohhammedaansche Koningen, te weten, die van Bantam, Macassar, Palimbang, en meer andre, aan dit graf, ter eere van deze Heilige gedaan) vercierd.

Daar na gaat men hier, na 't openen van het tweede hekje, vyf trappen op, en komt dan op het tweede plein, dat een weinig smaller dan 't eerste is.

Boven op deze muur heeft men aan wederzyden van den ingang weer twee potten, zonder bloemen, en dan aan iederzyde nog frie met bloemen, dog zoo geschikt, dat ter regterhand zig vier groote boomen, tusschen ieder van welke een pot geplaatst is, vertoonen, dog ter linkerhand heeft men eerst twee potten, dan twee zware boomen, en dan weer een pot, en een boom 'er tusschen, en dan nog een pot, en een boom, dat een zeer fraey gezicht, en een schoone lommer geeft.

Van dit plein tot aan het derde, is een fraeye netgelegde weg, ter regterhand van welke men eene, gelyk men ter linkerhand twee fraeye Inlandsche wooningen heeft, tot verblyf der vorsten, alszy daar komen, om te offeren. Ook wykt dit plein ter linkerhand eerst met een ronde bogt wat uit, en loopt

daar na met een inbogt tot aan 't derde plein al vry wat in, loopende dan zoo rond op tot boven toe, daar het ter regterhand maar een weinig schuins op van beneden af loopt.

Ook heeft men dicht by derde muragie beneden, twee fraeye potten met bloemen ter regter, en twee ter linkerhand aan 't einde van 't plein staan.

Dan gaat men door het derde hekje met vier trappen op, en komt door een fraeye poort op het derde pleyn.

Het derde pleyn heeft van voren even zoo een muur, zynde wel mede met zulke steentjes bezet, dog geenszins met eenige potten vercierd.

Tot dit plein toe (dat veel kleender als de twee vorige is) mogen de Hollanders, en alle Christenen, dog hooger niet, komen.

## Attachment B: Pictorial Guide to the Location of the Ceramics