

# An Initial Report on the Search for the Missing Gamelan Heritage

*of the Sumenep Palace, Madura,  
East Java-Indonesia*

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## Abstract

This research endeavors to locate the long-lost heirloom gamelan from the Sumenep Palace. Since the abolition of aristocratic status in 1883, the Sumenep Palace has lost political and economic legitimacy. To maintain the luxurious lifestyle of the aristocratic court, valuable items, including gamelans, were sold. The heirloom gamelans in the Sumenep Palace are believed to have been gifts from the Mataram Palace, often exchanged during various events, such as marriages. Employing an investigative ethnographic approach, this study gathered data through in-depth interviews with cultural practitioners, palace descendants, and private collectors; direct observation of remaining artifacts; and analysis of historical documents and archival records. As a result, the Gamelan Kyai Mega Remeng, over 200 years old, was discovered in the possession of a Chinese descendant, strongly suspected to be one of the missing gamelans from the Sumenep Palace. The gamelan's discovery tells a narrative of the harmonious relationship between the Sumenep Palace and Islamic Mataram in Java, extending beyond conflicts such as war, violence, and betrayal.

**Keywords:** *Gamelan Heritage, Cultural Investigation, Sumenep Palace, Lost Heirloom, Mega Remeng, Ethnomusicology*

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## Introduction

Gamelan is the most popular traditional musical instrument in Java (Indonesia) and has a long history. Initially, gamelan instruments consisted only of gongs and a type of metal xylophone (Pranoto, 2013). However, today, the gamelan is the world's largest percussive musical instrument (Supanggih, 2009). Some of the gamelan instruments are *gong*, *kempul*, *kenong*, *gambang*, *demung*, *saron*, *saron penerus*, *slenthem*, *bonang barung*, *bonang penerus*, *drums*, *rebab*, *gender*, and *kethuk*. Gamelan developed and existed within the walls of the Mataram (Islamic) palace in Java. Gamelan works (commonly called; *gending*), dedicated to the king. So great was the king's majesty and position in Java that his name was mentioned as the composer of the music, even though the real creator was an employee who worked as a court musician (Waridi, 2005).

Playing gamelan (also known as *karawitan*) inside the palace walls is a prestigious profession. These musicians are called *pengrawit* or *niyaga* (Puguh et al., 2020). They get ranks in the form of titles attached to their names, such as (from low to high): *Raden Lurah* (R.L.), *Raden Ngabehi* (R.Ng.), *Raden Tumenggung* (R.T.), *Kanjeng Raden Tumenggung* (K.R.T.). The ranks are based on his ability to play the gamelan. In other words, the gamelan instrument becomes a marker of the hierarchy of a musician's strata or status. For example, *garap* instruments with a more difficult level than other instruments, such as *rebab* and *gender*, are played by high-ranking musicians, namely K.R.T. The rank will also determine how much and how little income one gets from the palace.

The gamelan then became a sacred heirloom. At the Mataram Kasunanan Surakarta Palace, there are *Gamelan Sekaten* named *Kyai Guntur Madu* and *Kyai Guntur Sari*. *Monggang* gamelan instruments are named *Kyai Udanarum*, *Kyai Patolan*, *Kyai Singakrura*, *Kyai Banjar*. The *Gamelan Kodhok Ngorek* is called *Kyai Jatingarang*. *Gamelan Ageng* sets (complete) are *Kyai Kadukmanis*, *Kyai Manisrengga*, *Kyai Kuthawindu*, *Kyai Windusana* and *Kyai Kancil Belik*. In Mangkunegaran, there are several heirloom gamelans named *Kyai Kanyutmesem*, *Kyai Segorowindu*, *Kyai Udan Riris*, *Kyai Baswara*. The same thing happened at the Mataram palace, the Yogyakarta Sultanate. Gamelan became a symbol that strengthened the legitimacy of a king (Becker, 1980). Because of its position, gamelan has also become a means of political diplomacy, as gifts or offerings, and even booty when conquering other kingdoms.

*Gamelan Kyai Kanyutmesem* at Puro Mangkunegaran, an example. Sumarsam (2018:86) says that the Sultan of Kartasura, Paku Buwana II, presented *Gamelan Kayutmesem* to his son-in-law, the Regent Ponorogo. However, due to conflicts and wars (1740), the gamelan was fought over and became spoils, which Mangkunegara finally had. *Gamelan Kyai Kancil Belik* in the Yogyakarta Palace also originated from the Surakarta Sunanate shortly after the Giyanti agreement, as a sign of respect and brotherhood. The addition of the name "kyai" to the gamelan shows its high and respectable degree or position (Hananto, 2020). The name is also used by someone who has excelled in Islamic religious knowledge in Java (Lukens-Bull, 2008).

To expand the palace's influence, East Java also did not escape the control of the Mataram Palace in Central Java, which was led by Sultan Agung (Aryanto et al., 2019). Surabaya and its surroundings were successfully defeated in five years of war (1620-1625). The treasures and princesses of the Surabaya kingdom became booty brought to Central Java. Realizing the importance of Surabaya's position as a port city, Sultan Agung brought the son of the

king of Surabaya named Pangeran (prince) Pekik to Mataram. Pangeran Pekik was married off to Sultan Agung's sister, after which he was returned to Surabaya as the new king there with the title Sunan Pekik (Ras, 1987). As a result, Surabaya became a strong ally of Mataram. Furthermore, with Sunan Pekik, Sultan Agung succeeded in defeating Giri (Gresik) in 1636. Sumarsam (2018:102) notes that Gresik has a variety of gamelan that is more or less the same as Mataram. This shows that the gamelan is given as a gift and, at the same time, a sign or symbol that Gresik is in the power of Mataram.

Madura was also successfully controlled by Sultan Agung to widen the followers of the Islamic Mataram kingdom (Burdah, 2017). During the conquest, a young Madurese prince named Prasena was brought to Mataram to be adopted by Sultan Agung. As an adult, he was appointed to be the ruler of Madura with the title Cakraningrat I (De Graf & Pigeaud, 1985:215). Cakraningrat I was even married off to Putri Pajang, Sultan Agung's younger brother. Madura and Mataram's relationship was harmonious, marked by marital ties (Raffles, 1978:325), although there were frequent rebellions and wars between the two. One of the buildings of the Madura palace that have survived to this day is in Sumenep. Its status is the kadipaten (Duchy); in 1296, it was under the Singosari kingdom; in 1559, it was under the Demak kingdom's power. The Mataram Sultanate fully controlled it in 1624 under Sultan Agung (Husson, 1997). The palace building itself was made gradually, and its peak was in 1791 on the land belonging to the Somala Addition, the ruler of Sumenep at that time. Building placement structure is identical to that of the Mataram palaces in Surakarta and Yogyakarta, although in a smaller scope (Murwandani, 2007).

Due to history narrating Madura and Mataram's close relationship, many similar artistic events were encountered, including the use of gamelan in important royal events. Munardi (1983:3) states that several gamelan instruments in the Sumenep palace are the result of gifts or offerings from the Sultan of Java to maintain the Mataram Palace's legitimacy. Furthermore, Bouvier (2002:61) explains that the relationship between the Sumenep Palace and the Islamic Mataram Palace (Kasultanan Surakarta) is very likely to encourage the entry of types of arts such as gamelan. However, the ancient gamelan explanation in the Sumenep Palace is rarely discussed, covered with various political issues, such as war and rebellion. As a result, no reference mentions the names of the gamelan in the Sumenep Palace. When researchers came to the Sumenep Palace to see the gamelan used as a witness to the harmonious relationship between Madura and Java, it turned out that the gamelan had long since disappeared or was not there. This research later became investigative work, attempting to trace where the gamelan was located.

## Methods

This research employed an ethnographic approach combined with investigative methods to trace and analyze the existence of the long-lost heirloom gamelan of the Sumenep Palace. The ethnographic approach facilitated comprehensive documentation of field phenomena, including cultural aspects, individual behaviors, and the historical context surrounding the subject of study (Sharma & Sarkar, 2019). This approach allowed the present study to construct a holistic understanding of the gamelan's journey by connecting disparate events, from the reasons for its disappearance to its current condition, echoing Denzin's (2020) principles of interpretive comprehensiveness. Our application of this method followed a structured, diachronic process, inspired by Weir's (2013) framework. The process began with a comprehensive literature review, followed by the identification of key informants,

and culminated in direct field tracking. The coherence of these stages enabled us to intertwine data threads, ultimately forming a coherent narrative of the gamelan's historical traces, a goal consistent with the narrative-building emphasis in Madison's (2020) work.

To support the ethnographic approach, this research also implemented a rigorous investigative method. This method emphasized precision, patience, and systematic rigor in uncovering information that had been concealed, forgotten, or deliberately withheld from public knowledge (Lucero et al., 2018). The investigation process was strategically directed towards discovering new data through a multi-stage process of verification and triangulation. The researchers drew from a wide array of sources [including oral histories, private collections, and scattered archival fragments] an approach that aligns with Proske & van Gelder's (2009) advocacy for source diversity in historical investigation. This involved cross-referencing anecdotal accounts from elderly community members with brief mentions in colonial-era documents and the physical evidence presented by the gamelan instruments themselves. The investigative trail was often non-linear, requiring the researchers to follow leads that moved between the past and present, connecting the object's biography to the social histories of its various owners and custodians over time.

The researchers were fully aware of the profound sensitivity of the information involved, which potentially caused concern or pressure for informants and related parties, especially given the potential implications regarding ownership and cultural patrimony (Wiesand, 2016). Therefore, the approach to informants and the local community, particularly during the interview process, was conducted with utmost care and cultural respect. Relationships were built gradually through repeated, informal engagements to foster genuine trust and ensure the data collection process proceeded ethically and without causing negative impacts or social discord (Mathers et al., 2000). This often meant prioritizing the comfort and agency of the informant over the immediate acquisition of data, allowing them to control the pace and depth of disclosure. Furthermore, informed consent was an ongoing process rather than a single event, continuously reaffirmed as the nature of the inquiry evolved and deeper, more sensitive layers of the gamelans' histories began to surface.

In-depth field observation served as a key component of this investigation, employed specifically to gather data on aspects that interviews alone could not reveal, such as the physical condition of the gamelan and its storage context. Following Baker's (2006) model of immersive fieldwork, observational activities extended beyond the Sumenep Palace and its museum to other suspected locations, including private collections. All data from interviews, observations, and document tracing were then analyzed qualitatively. The goal of this analysis was to reconstruct the historical narrative of the gamelan's journey and understand its shifting value and meaning, an endeavor that resonates with the ethnomusicological and cultural biography approaches seen in the work of scholars like Sumarsam (1995) and Sugiyarto et al., (2020).

## Results and Discussion

Investigation: Tracing the whereabouts of the Sumenep Palace Gamelan

Tracing the heirloom gamelan in the Sumenep Palace is not an easy matter because there is no archaeological evidence in the archaeological sites in Madura, even though during the Majapahit era, temples were built in the Talang and Jamburingin (Sumenep) areas. Since Kertanegara (1268–1292) took office, the lines of political communication between Java and

Songenneb/Sumenep have become increasingly clear. What was later informed that the gamelan culture in Madura was inseparable from the gamelan culture, especially during the Majapahit and Mataram periods. Such relations are written in the *Nagarakertagama* book (Rifai, 1993:14-20).

Important information can be used as a milestone in the historical traces of political and cultural relations (gamelan) between Java and Madura when there was a drama of the aristocratic marriage procession of the Surakarta palace with the daughter of the Madura Palace. Pigeaud (1938) rated this as the most spectacular wedding procession until the XX century. The *Babad Madura* describes the importance of the gamelan for the inclusion of a convoy of soldiers from the Surakarta Palace to pick up the prospective empress from Madura. Gamelan here is more intended as a piece of tribute music to something paraded and serves as entertainment in the middle of a long journey (Sastronaryatmo, 1981).

The refinement of the musical character of the gamelan music in Sumenep that has developed to this day seems to be evidence of the historical journey that explains the relationship of intense political and cultural communication with Mataram in the past (Hidayatullah, 2017:129). Almost all bronze gamelan circulating in Madura originated from Java, especially from Central Java. Based on data from Dutch researchers (Buys, 1926), the form of the gamelan in Madura (especially the palace) is not much different from the gamelan in Mataram (Surakarta). The difference is limited to the *rancangan* –container- (shape and carving on the wood for hanging the gong). Furthermore, J. S. Brandts Buys (1928) once informed the heirloom gamelan called *Kyai Retna Dumilah* but in the Bangkalan area (West Madura).



Figure 1. *Kyai Retna Dumilah Gamelan* in Bangkalan Regency. Photo taken from Brandts Buys 1928 documentation.

Some views, such as the admission of Darus, gamelan players and cultural observers (personal communication, June 20, 2021) and Slamet Riyadi, observers and players of Sumenep gamelan (personal communication, June 20, 2021), state that the gamelan in the Sumenep Palace has more or fewer similarities to gamelan in Bangkalan and other Madura areas, as



long as it is still is in the musical area of the Mataram Palace. Generally in *slendro* harmony with instruments consisting of; one *gong* and one *kempul*, *kendang*, *bonang*, *gambang*, *gender*, *demung*, *saron*, *saron penerus*, *kenong*, *penembung*, *rebab*, and *slenthem*. *Kyai Retna Dumilah* is currently unknown. The researchers tried to trace it by tracing various sources and interviewing several sources that were considered competent. Still, until this initial report was written, the *Kyai Retna Dumilah* had not been found. The gamelan has most likely changed hands repeatedly by being traded from one person to another, making traces of the gamelan even more difficult to detect.

Meanwhile, several ancient gamelans from the palace in Sumenep, especially *Se Reong*, are also difficult to trace due to various problems that occur within the palace walls. Since the *swapraja* movement occurred or the status of nobility and the kingdom was abolished, the palace no longer had the capital to meet life necessities, including daily ritual and cultural activities. Rifai (2007:36) explains that the Dutch abolished the aristocratic status of the indigenous Madurese rulers, and the Dutch took back control of their government, at first Pamekasan (1858), then Sumenep (1883), and Bangkalan (1885). The rest, the native rulers, were made regents who were paid and supervised very closely.

Gamelan is considered antiques that can bring financial benefits. One by one, the existing gamelan instruments were bought and sold to collectors of rare goods. According to Darus, not only gamelan, ceramics, lamps, and palace floors are also items that are being hunted at high prices. Almost all informants are unable to explain in detail the scope of the history and life of the gamelan within the palace walls, so questions such as: do the *pengrawit* within the palace wall bear the title of nobility like in the Mataram palace? What procession is played for the gamelan? How is the gamelan viewed or placed in the cultural-ritual structure of the palace? This question, until this initial research was completed, has not been clearly answered.

In mid-June, 2022, researchers came to the Sumenep Culture and Tourism Office, greeted by Sukaryo (Head of the Sumenep Culture Section), who then met key resource persons, Achmad Darus and Rifai. In chats and discussions, an initial conclusion was drawn that the heirloom gamelan in the palace at this time did not exist. However, several instruments can be seen and observed. These gamelan instruments are part of the procurement carried out by the relevant Dinas in recent years. The researchers was then directed to the Sumenep Palace Museum, which is located next to the palace. In a room at the back of the museum, several gamelan instruments are dusty, unkempt, and no longer intact on the right and left sides.

Based on figure 2 below, one of the instruments that can still be seen as a whole is a *bonang* with a *slendro* barrel, together with a *rancangan* (a place to put or hang gamelan metal plates), *demung*, *saron* and *slenthem*, *kenong*, and *gender*. When the researchers asked where the invisible gamelan metal plates were, the source said that the plates had been stolen one by one. In other words, the previous procurement of gamelans was also likely lost, stolen, or traded. The researchers also did not get clear information about the perpetrator, how the theft could be carried out, and any "inside" or "outside" parties? All these questions are sensitive and full of presumptions.



Figure 2. The new gamelan in the palace pavilion, which was later moved to the museum, many of which are missing, and the condition is getting worse.

According to Darus and Bambang (the head of the community service for RRI Nusantara II Sumenep), from the 1970s to the early 2000s, the Sumenep Palace had held a routine event every nine in the morning on Sundays, namely *klenengan* or musical performances. Gamelan groups around Sumenep are regularly invited and take turns being invited to perform. The presence of a musical group is no longer for important ritual ceremonies, as is the case in the Mataram or Yogyakarta Palace, but as part of a treat for guests visiting the palace, both state guests and tourists.



Figure 3. Gamelan performance at the Sumenep Palace Pavilion. Generally, gamelan devices like this are private property and are even better maintained.

At that time, Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI [radio of the Republic of Indonesia]) Nusantara II Sumenep took up intense recording and broadcasting live gamelan concerts at the palace. This is intended so that the work of gamelan music (musical composition, *klenengan*) is not limited to being enjoyed and heard in the palace area but spread throughout the archipelago. Information that RRI Sumenep took an important part in broadcasting gamelan music at the Sumenep Palace, then brought researchers to visit the institution the following week. Upon arrival at RRI Sumenep, the researchers was greeted by the Head of the Broadcasting Section, Jhoni Akbar (61 years). The researchers was introduced to Sunarto (64 years), a broadcaster in the *klenengan* program entitled *Manasuka Gending Madura*. The conversation was continued with a more specific theme, related to the live broadcast of *klenengan* performances at the palace.

Jhoni explained that RRI Sumenep felt that he had an important responsibility to maintain and preserve traditional culture, including gamelan music in the palace. Therefore, the recording of gamelan music is carried out by bringing broadcast equipment to the venue. The public's appreciation is quite good, and these broadcast programs are often the part that is being waited for. This was evident when cultural broadcasts (gamelan music) were performed, and the editorial staff received several calls and letters. To Jhoni Akbar, the researchers specifically asked about data in the form of photos or documents stored in RRI Sumenep related to the *klenengan* broadcast at the palace. Unfortunately, most of the data referred to have been damaged or lost due to the RRI Sumenep building's burning in 1989. These data were not yet digitized at that time, so that the photos, cassettes, tapes, and LPs were burnt. The cassette material that was saved from the fire was then digitized into mp3 and wave audio files. The researchers was granted access to digitized audio archives from RRI Sumenep, comprising a collection of 390 recordings of musical repertoire (*gending*) from well-known *klenengan* groups in Sumenep. An analysis of the archive's contents revealed several classical or old gamelan music works, such as *Tallang*, *Puspo*, *Angling*, and *Rarari*.

Unfortunately, researchers have no longer found old *Giroan Gending* or large repertoire *gending* types. The ancient *giroan gending* referred to as *Gending Nangnong*, *Lamongan*, *Menjangan Pelar*, *Pan-sampanan*, *Andimaya*, *Gerisik* (Gresik [?]), or *Arjuna Mangsah*. Great repertoire such as *Sekar Ganggong* and *Ram-eram*. Researchers also had the opportunity to be invited to see the gamelan collection of RRI Sumenep behind the main building of the former office. Almost the same as in the Sumenep Palace Museum, the gamelan collection of RRI is also not well maintained. The gamelan is kept in two narrow, dusty rooms with conditions piled on top of each other, a sign that gamelan is rarely used.

Figure 5 shows that the gamelan is relatively new, which completely imitates Java, with two tunings: *pelog* and *slendro*. Including *rancangan* and carving on the *gayor* (wood, hanger for gong instruments). The number of *kempul* instruments (rows of hanging gongs) is also large, and one-note consists of one *kempul*. Meanwhile, the old gamelan in Madura only consisted of one *kempul* and one large gong. RRI Sumenep also keeps other older gamelan instruments, only with *slendro* tunes, which have been owned since the 70s. The gamelan is colored yellow, with very simple ornamentation. Even at the end of the *balungan* instrument design (*demung* and *saron*), a zinc layer is used as a cover or connector for the resonator. This explains that the old gamelan owned by RRI Sumenep is a representation of gamelan from grassroots culture.





Figure 4. Gamelan collection of RRI Sumenep, not well maintained.



Figure 5. Rancangan of the saron instrument which is coated with zinc, while the metal of the music (blades) is made of iron.

At the time when the researchers was allowed to see the complete collection of the RRI Sumenep gamelan in Figure 6 the *slendro* barrel consists of five blades (for *balungan*) and ten *pencu* (for *bonang*), the tones start from 1 (*ji*), 2 (*ro*), 3 (*lu*), 5 (*ma*), 6 (*nem*). There is an indication that the gamelan is old with five notes because the newest gamelan usually consists of six notes with one addition of the small 1 (*ji*) note. In Madurese gamelan, especially Sumenep, ambitus tends to be lower than gamelan in Java, although the range of vocal tones is much higher or shrill. This can be seen from *Gending Miskalan* or *Gending Yang-*

*layang* (West Madura) or *Jula-juli* (Surabaya). In Sumenep, the tone gong is 6 (*nem*) and 2 (*ro*), while in Java, the tone gong is 5 (*ma*) and 1 (*ji*) are more common. For more details, see the following illustration.

| <i>Jula-juli Surabayan</i>      | <i>Miskalan Sumenep</i>            |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| . 6 . 5 . 6 . 2 . 6 . 5 . 2 . ① | . 1̇ . 6 . 1̇ . 3 . 1̇ . 6 . 3 . ② |
| . 2 . 1 . 2 . 6 . 2 . 1 . 6 . ⑤ | . 3 . 2 . 3 . 1̇ . 3 . 2 . 1̇ . ⑥  |

Figure 6. Differences in the tones of the gamelan Sumenep and Surabaya in the same musical sentence.

Gamelan produced outside the palace walls, on average, has simplicity in its physical form. For example, for example, not using excessive carving and paint accents. In fact, the gamelan is often painted one color only, as in the gamelan collection of RRI Sumenep *laras slendro* above. The metal plates are also not made of bronze and brass, and local people prefer iron as the main material. Iron was chosen because it was considered cheaper and affordable by the public. Besides, because it is made of iron, the resulting sound quality tends to be specific, resonates short, feels noisier, and "shrill."



Figure 7. Bonang instrument made of slab-iron material.

Jhoni Akbar said that the bronze gamelan was presented at RRI because it was considered better than the iron gamelan, more durable, and more classy like in the previous Sumenep Palace. Meanwhile, he himself admitted that if there were a discordant tone (false) of the bronze gamelan, it would be quite difficult to find a gamelan tuner in the Sumenep area.

An ability that most people in Sumenep don't have. Because they are better able to repair gamelan than iron, it is possible if the Sumenep Palace, to preserve the gamelan a long time ago (because the gamelan is made of bronze), brought in a gamelan tuner from "Java" when there was a breakdown in tone (discord).

### The Encounter With Mega Remeng's Heirloom Gamelan

After meeting with Slamet Riyadi (a local observer and performer of the *Dungdung* music, Sumenep), researchers received information about a rare gamelan's existence. Then the researchers was introduced to Edi Setiawan, a flamboyant cultural observer of Chinese descent. From Edi, researchers got information about Gamelan *Se Reong*'s whereabouts, one of the palace heirloom gamelan that has been transferred to the hands of a new owner, thought to be of Chinese descent. The possession of gamelan or historical objects in the hands of people of Chinese descent is not new. It is even suspected that many have happened since ancient times when aristocrats fell into poverty. Chinese people became buyers of gamelan at low prices for collection or resale.

After going through a long and winding process, the investigative path finally met the researchers with Indra Suhartono, a Chinese descendant, an old gamelan owner in Karang Dhuwak village, Kota District, Sumenep Regency. According to growing information, he owns the *Se Reong* gamelan. Researchers have to lobby long enough to be allowed to see the gamelan. Finally, Indra explained that the gamelan in his collection was not *Se Roeng*, but *Kyai Mega Remeng*. Indra said that *Mega Remeng* was actually older than *Se Reong*. Indra owns the gamelan because he inherited it from his family. There are five generations of families who have cared for the *Mega Remeng* gamelan, and the last one now is him. If each family has an age range of 50 years, then the *Mega Remeng* gamelan belongs to Indra's family for more than 200 years.



Figure 8. Indra Suhartono, owner of Gamelan Mega Remeng.



Researchers are allowed to see a collection of rare gamelan belonging to the heir, Indra Suhartono, albeit on a limited basis. Gamelan *Mega Remeng* is kept in the dark and stuffy room. The positions of the gamelan are stacked against one another. It looks dusty and rarely cleaned. In some corners, incense and flowers appear as offerings, supposedly reserved for heirlooms. The gamelan has a *slendro* tone. Like the old gamelan in general, in *balungan*, there are only five blades, and *bonang* in one *rancangan* consists of 10 plates. *Mega Remeng* is made of the best quality bronze, even according to the owner's admission, there is a mixture of gold in it. *Rancangan* is dark brown in color with a relatively large shape compared to gamelan in general. According to Indra, the design's actual color is red, but his grandfather repainted it with dark brown, which is said to add to the sacred aura of the gamelan. The red color in the *Mega Remeng* gamelan is actually synonymous with the conspicuous favorite color style of the Madurese (Hartatik et al., 2010). Indra has documentation in photos when the gamelan is colored (painted) red and played by musicians during a rehearsal for performance.



Figure 9. *Rancangan* of Gamelan *Mega Remeng* when colored red.

In figure 10, not all *Mega Remeng* instruments are used, such as *kempul*, *kenong*, and *penembung*. Most likely, the use of some gamelan instruments is only used for limited concerts; in Javanese, it is called *gadhon* (Fitrianto, 2019).. In its complete formation, there is an instrument called *penembung* (smaller than *kenong*, but bigger than *bonang*), an instrument that is currently rarely found in gamelan sets. Only the old gamelans had such a *penembung* instrument. There is also the *kecrek dalang*, a metal disc piled up and then beaten with a bat, producing a *crek-crek* sound. The shape of the *kecrek* also indicates its position as an ancient gamelan, considering that the *kecrek* or *kecer* currently has a flat shape and is hung in the *wayang* box. However, the *kecrek* of *Mega Remeng* gamelan model has a relatively large size, and its use is stacked and placed on the floor (not hanging).



Figure 10. The penembung instrument (top) and kecrek (bottom).

*Mega Remeng* can be indicated as a means of cultural exchange (music) between Madura and Java. *Mega Remeng* is classified as a luxury item, with consequences for its owner's image and the place where the gamelan is played. This kind of “expensive” gamelan was played at exclusive places and events in the past, one of which was at the palace. Indra confirmed that the gamelan came from the palace and was played on certain occasions according to his father and grandfather. Indra did not want to provide more information regarding how his family got the *Mega Remeng* gamelan. Knowing that the gamelan from the Sumenep Palace was still there, the related Culture and Tourism Office attempted to buy it at a high price to return it to the palace. However, Indra Suhartono did not want it.

In figure 11 (number 3), the *bonang* instrument only consists of five-blades (*pencu*), namely the *slendro* barrel with a tone sequence of 1,2,3,5,6 (*ji, ro, lu, ma, nem*). The characteristics of the old gamelan can be seen from the limited number of blades, which can be seen from the *bonang* instrument. The *Kyai Mega Remeng* gamelan instrument's form and type are similar to the *Kyai Retna Dumilah* gamelan, the documentation from Buys 1926 above (see figure 1). In other words, both in Sumenep and in Bangkalan in general, the heirloom



gamelan has the same characteristics. The most striking difference is the musical style in performing it. In West Madura, particularly in the Bangkalan and Sampang areas, it tends to have louder and more upbeat musical accents, while in Sumenep, it is more subtle. This is possible because the level of influence of the Sumenep Palace has survived, while the palaces in Bangkalan (Sampang and Pamekasan) can no longer be found. The smooth musical character shows the intense interaction between the Sumenep Palace and the Mataram Kingdom in Surakarta (Yogyakarta?). This can be seen from the name of the gending and the style of play; for example, *Gending Gresik* (Sumenep) is almost similar to *Gending Kebo Giro* (Surakarta), *Gending Puspa* (Sumenep) is almost similar to *Gending Puspawarna* (Surakarta), *Gending Pangkor* (Sumenep) is similar to *Gending Pangkur* (Surakarta), *Gending Ular Kambang* (Sumenep) is similar to *Gending Uler Kambang* (Surakarta), and so on.



Figure 11. Gamelan Kyai Mega Remeng. Captions with photo figures (instruments); 1. Gambang, 2. Penembung, 3. Bonang Barung, 4. Demung, 5. Saron, 6. Kenong, 7. Kendang, 8. Siter.

The musical style that is quite visible is the exploration of *garap* instruments such as *siter*, *gender*, *bonang*, and *gambang* (and the *suling* –flute-). Meanwhile, for *balungan* instruments such as *demung*, *saron*, and *saron penerus*, which often reinforce accents at the tempo so that they sound loud, this does not happen in the Sumenep style. Such a symptom is almost the same as the gamelan *klenengan* (concert) in Surakarta, which performed *gedhe* (large) gending, relying more on the musicians' creativity in exploring the musical instruments. Unlike in West Madura (Bangkalan), the *balungan* instrument has more role because the repertoire demands a loud character.



Figure 12. The *garap* instruments for Kyai Mega Remeng; Gambang (above) and Gender (bottom, far right). Also visible are the offerings in dried flowers in a round container.

The *kempul* and gong instruments consist of one each. *Kempul* is usually pitched 5 or 6. The *kempul* instrument serves to emphasize the song's sentence, while the gong instrument is a sign that the *gending* has been going on for one round and so on. Gamelan work or *gending* is a musical cycle, presented repeatedly, and to know that the work has gone through one cycle and so on, the gong instrument becomes an important marker (Perlman, 1997). The drums in Sumenep music tend to be played softly, not loud like in Bangkalan and Madura in general. The *kendang* (drum) instrument seems to only give a simple accent, as in the *gending gedhe* repertoire in Surakarta.



Figure 13. Some of the drums, gong, and *kempul* instruments in *Mega Remeng* gamelan. According to Indra, the skin membrane in the *kendang* instrument has been changed several times.

This is possible because the main quality of Sumenep's *gending* can be measured by each instrument's musical achievement in giving a "wrap" to the vocals or the vocals (singing). The vocals in the Sumenep *gending* are different from the vocals in Surakarta or Javanese *gending* in general, which are called *sindhenan* (Sutton, 2001). In Java (Surakarta), the vocal *sindhenan* is a form of literary work that is sung. The meaning and meaning of the lyrics are often not clearly understood, even by the singer (Benamou, 2018). While the vocals in Sumenep's *klenengan* are, on the contrary, vocal lyrics can be understood by the owner community, usually alluding to the name of a guest or listener known by the singer, to be sung as part of the lyrics (Setiawan, 2020).

Since the main achievement is delivering the lyrical message to the listener, as far as possible other musical instruments should be sounded no louder than the singer's vocal voice. Musical instruments seem to be the "background" of the vocals. In such a context, it is often difficult to clearly know the song's sentence in the *gending* being played, seems to float, or sounds relying on indecisiveness. This musical incident occurred because the *demung* and *saron* instruments were not beaten loudly – these instruments were replaced by a *slenthem* (bass character) that echoed like *kempul*. Zaini, Madura musical teacher at Surabaya (personal communication, September 3, 2017) said that the Sumenep *gending* is an attempt to imitate the *gending* in Surakarta but is closely influenced by the local culture surrounds it, giving rise to a unique impression. On the one hand, it is seen as a replica of Surakarta's *gending*, but on the other hand, it is still strongly influenced by the existing local musical style. The result was the *gending* that grew into a musical identity known as the Sumenepan style.

Another evidence of Surakarta's influence (palace) is the name on the heirloom gamelans in Madura. In *Gamelan Kyai Retno Dumilah*, for example, the name *Retno* is not known in the Madurese linguistic structure but has a Javanese flavor, which means gold or diamond. Interestingly, the name *Retno Dumilah* is synonymous with the first female regent figure in the Madiun Regency who came to power in 1686 (Suharji, 2017). Kurniawan, Suyitno, and Rakhmawati (2020) tell that in 1590, Mataram, led by Sutawijaya, attacked the Duchy (*Kadipaten*) of Purabaya led by Retno Dumilah. In the end, the *Kadipaten Purabaya* was taken away, *Retno Dumilah* was edited by Sutawijaya and brought to the Mataram Palace. As a warning to the existence of Purabaya from Mataram, on November 16, 1590, the name *Purabaya* was changed to *Madiun*. The name has survived and is in use today. Is *Gamelan Retno Dumilah* a form of appreciation from the Mataram palace for the first female regent in Java? Or as proof of Sutawijaya's affection for *Retno Dumilah*, a gamelan set with the same name was necessary? Ideally, *Gamelan Kyai Retno Dumilah* is in Madiun, so how did the gamelan get to Madura? These questions will not be answered in this study and are trying to be answered in follow-up research.

While the name *Gamelan Mega Remeng* is actually synonymous with the name of the Sumenep Regency icon, namely Flying Horse, also named *Mega Remeng*, according to the legend of the Sumenep community, the horse has wings, which is the favorite pet of Joko Tole, the founder of Sumenep (Amil et al., 2019). The same name between the gamelan and the icon of Sumenep Regency explains that the *Mega Remeng gamelan* is old, which, according to Darus (personal communication, June 24, 2017), is probably the result of an offering from the Mataram Palace to Sumenep as part of its allies. Many suspects that the palace heirloom gamelans, including *Mega Remeng*, were the gamelan played during the wedding procession between Pakubuwana IV, the King of Kasunanan Mataram Surakarta, and a daughter from Madura. In fact, it is said that the marriage process took place by making a voyage from Surakarta to Madura via Bengawan Solo on a large boat called *Kyai Rajamala* (Sumardjoko, 2018). Of course, the marriage did bring the king and his troops and gifts (commonly called *mas-kawain*), usually in the form of luxury items, such as clothing, gold, and gamelan is no exception.

Another indication is that the heirloom gamelans are made of bronze of the highest quality. One proof of this is that the pitch or tone is still "clear," not false, which means that it is played carefully. Meanwhile, in Madura, especially Sumenep, there is more iron than bronze (Setiawan, 2020). Almost 75 percent of the gamelan in Sumenep - and Madura in general - are made of iron. In fact, it is not only made of iron, and the surrounding community tries to imitate the sound of the palace gamelan, which is manifested through a wooden gamelan called *Galundhang* (Hidayatullah, 2019). Zaini and Darus said that if there were a bronze gamelan with good quality, it would likely be imported from outside Java, especially Surakarta. Sumarsam (2014), Raffles (1978), and de Groot (1852) provide another alternative understanding that, in fact, Gresik, an area near Madura in the 18th century, was an excellent center for gamelan making. But it must also be understood that Gresik, better known as Giri, at that time was under the authority of the Islamic Mataram palace. In other words, the making of gamelan in Gresik has likely been civilized according to the Mataram palace's wishes, either as a palace collection or as a gift for another palace.



## Conclusion

The relationship between Mataram and the Sumenep Palace as allies (although wars often marked it) led to cultural exchanges. Generally, a larger culture can influence a smaller culture. The conquest of Madura and accompanied by the traffic of aristocratic marriages between the two kingdoms resulted in a similarity in art, including the form and style of the musical-work-gamelan. *Gamelan Kyai Mega Remeng*, which the local community believes is one of the valuable relics of the Sumenep Palace, represents that, through gamelan, we can see traces of historical events built not always through war and power, but also cultural exchange, and art bridging this.

*Gamelan Kyai Mega Remeng* is made of bronze, a material for metal musical instruments rarely found in Madura because it relies more on iron. If these bronze gamelans were damaged (for example, false or discordant), they had to be repaired (tuning system) outside Madura, precisely in Java, and Surakarta became one of the important references. This shows that the gamelan culture from bronze is not the original music culture of Madura but was imported from Java. The bronze gamelan at the Sumenep Palace (*Mega Remeng*) indicates that the gamelans were a form of a gift from Mataram as part of a distant ally. Unfortunately, the palace heirloom gamelan can no longer be found because they are traded for the sake of supporting the court aristocrats who have experienced bankruptcy, both politically and economically. The gamelan changed hands, and researchers found traces of the heirloom's majesty through *Kyai Mega Remeng*. The gamelan is now owned by a Chinese descent person, who has kept it for five generations of the family. This incident proved that *Mega Remeng* was already old, more than 200 years.

Through *Mega Remeng*, it can be read further, the history of music culture in Madura, one of which is formed from the Mataram Palace's music culture. The gamelan is the first door to unravel the ties between the two kingdoms further. In-depth investigations to trace the existence of other gamelans are urgent to be carried out, as an effort to erase the narrative of the historical burdens developed between Madura and Mataram, which are identical to bloodshed, war, betrayal, and various other matters characterized by conflict. The presence of *Gamelan Kyai Mega Remeng* shows that the relationship between the two kingdoms was built based on love for peace and harmony, especially in the context of their musical culture.

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