PROCEEDINGS
International Conference on Literature
Himpunan Sarjana-Kesusastraan Indonesia (HISKI)
E-ISSN 2988-4357

Queens in Thailand and Indonesia: Between fiction and history

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Abstract: *This research aims to analyze the representation of queens in literary and historical texts, uncover the relationship between fictional constructions and historical facts, and explain how these narratives shape the legitimacy of power, cultural identity, and collective memory of the community. This research uses qualitative methods with Julia Kristeva's intertextual approach, comparative-historical, and library research. The data were analyzed using Julia Kristeva's intertextual and comparative analysis. The results of this study indicate that the Hikayat Patani represents the Queens of Patani through a combination of historical facts, palace traditions, dynastic legitimacy, and mythological elements that reinforce the kingdom's political authority. In contrast, the narratives of Queen Kalinyamat and Queen Kencana Wungu emphasize political leadership, government strategy, diplomacy, and moral fortitude, supported by historiographical sources, although both have also undergone a process of idealization in literary and cultural traditions. A comparison of these two traditions demonstrates that fiction and history are not mutually exclusive entities, but rather complement each other in shaping the image of women as leaders, legitimizing power, and constructing the cultural identity of Southeast Asian societies. This study contributes to the development of comparative historiography, historical literary studies, and studies of women's leadership in Southeast Asia.*

Keywords: *Hikayat Patani; Queen Kalinyamat; Queen Kencana Wungu; historiography; women's leadership*

INTRODUCTION

Female leadership is no fringe phenomenon in Southeast Asian history. Numerous kingdoms in the region were ruled by women, either as sovereign rulers, regents for heirs to the throne, or the symbolic center of a dynasty. Their presence is recorded in court chronicles, foreign reports, inscriptions, chronicles, tales, performance stories, and oral traditions. However, each type of source carries its own unique interests and narrative conventions. Therefore, the queens that reach today's readers are never presented as completely neutral facts. They have been selected, crafted, and given meaning by the writers and communities that passed down their stories.

This problem is clearly visible in the history of Patani and Java. *The Hikayat Patani* tells the story of royal continuity, religious changes, dynastic conflicts, foreign relations, and the reign of queens. Among the best known figures are the Green King, Blue King, Purple King, and Yellow King. Their reign is often seen as an important part of Patani's heyday in the late sixteenth to mid-seventeenth centuries. However, *Hikayat Patani* is not a government archive in the modern sense. The text structures the past through the conventions of Malay historiography, genealogies, exemplary episodes, court reminiscences, and etiological explanations. Its historical value needs to be read together with its literary nature (Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970).

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How to cite (APA 7th): Islahuddin., Wiyatmi., & Sayuti, S, A. (2026). Queens in Thailand and Indonesia: Between fiction and history. *Proceedings 35th KIK*, *35*, 540-557. https://doi.org/10. 68634/kik.v35.151

Meanwhile, women who become queens are also found in Indonesian folklore, such as Queen Kalinyamat (Jepara, Central Java) and Queen Kencana Wungu (Dewi Suhita) (Wiyatmi, 2023). In Java, Queen Kalinyamat and Queen Kencana Wungu occupy different positions in the historical and literary spectrum. Queen Kalinyamat is associated with the rule of Jepara in the sixteenth century and is known through Javanese sources as well as Portuguese accounts of Jepara's maritime power and expeditions against Malacca (Hayati, 2010). Although the details of her life continue to be interpreted, her existence as a historical figure has a relatively strong foundation (Hayati, 2010). In contrast, Queen Kencana Wungu is primarily known through the story of Damarwulan, wayang performances, ketoprak, langendriya, and various modern adaptations (Astuti, 2023; Habibah & Hanidar, 2022; Supadma, 2011; Syarifah, 2019). His relationship with female Majapahit rulers such as Tribhuwana Tunggadewi or Suhita is better understood as a process of merging memory and imagination rather than a definite factual identification (Astuti, 2023; Habibah & Hanidar, 2022).

These differences in the status of sources raise fundamental questions. How do texts construct images of women fit to rule? What elements connect dynastic legitimacy, political skill, morality, and myth? Why do historically verifiable figures remain idealized, while literary figures can attain a seemingly historical status in popular memory? These questions cannot be answered by rigidly separating fiction and history. Traditional historiography operates through selection, narrative patterns, symbols, and values that make the past comprehensible to its reading community (Florida, 1995; Vickers, 2009).

This article aims to analyze the representations of Ratu Patani , Ratu Kalinyamat, and Ratu Kencana Wungu; to outline the relationship between literary construction and historical evidence; and to compare the functions of these narratives in the formation of political legitimacy, cultural identity, and collective memory. The novelty of this study lies in the comparison across Patani Malay and Javanese traditions, taking into account the historical significance of the characters. In this way, the term "queen" is not treated as a single category, but rather as a position shaped by different political contexts, textual genres, and cultural needs.

This study argues that the narratives of the queens serve two purposes simultaneously. First, they preserve memories of women's presence in Southeast Asian power structures. Second, they organize these memories to align with ideas about lineage, justice, loyalty, purity, steadfastness, and the safety of the kingdom. The combination of these two functions explains why fact, legend, and idealization are difficult to separate in the texts discussed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literary Historiography and Intertextuality

The study of hikayat and babad requires an understanding that traditional historiography is not a direct recounting of events. Such texts establish causal relationships, select protagonists, evaluate behavior, and link power to moral order. Pigeaud (1960-1963) and Robson (1995) show that Old and Middle Javanese works combine descriptions of politics, cosmology, praise, and court interests. In the Malay tradition, royal hikayat also incorporates genealogy, Islamization, conflict, and miracles as part of their explanation of the origins of power. Therefore, reading history requires

attention to both the information contained within the text and how it organizes that information.

Kristeva's concept of intertextuality helps explain this process. According to Kristeva (1980), a text is formed as a mosaic of quotations and the absorption and transformation of other texts. Intertextuality is not limited to direct quotations. It includes repetition of structures, transfer of characters, opposition of values, changes in the function of symbols, and the intersection of several discourses within a single text. In this study, intertextuality is used to explore three processes: transposition, namely the transfer of elements from one field of meaning to another; transformation, namely the change in the form or function of elements; and opposition, namely the formation of meaning through oppositions such as center-periphery, legitimate-rebel, female-male, history-legend, and order-chaos .

This approach does not imply that all sources have equal evidential value. Contemporary accounts, inscriptions, later chronicles, stage stories, and oral traditions vary in their distance from events (Kipping et al., 2014; Vansina, 1985). Intertextuality is used to understand the relationships between texts (Kristeva, 1980), while historical criticism assesses the date of writing, authorial interests, genre, consistency, and the possibility of cross-verification (Kipping et al., 2014). This separation of functions is important so that the cultural power of a legend is not mistaken for factual certainty (Kipping et al., 2014; Vansina, 1985).

Women and Power in Southeast Asia

Southeast Asian history demonstrates a social space that, in many contexts, enabled women to manage wealth, trade, family networks, and political power. Reid (1988, 1993) notes women's economic and social roles during the early modern trading period, while Andaya (2006) shows that women's bodies, fertility, marriage, and lineage had complex political and religious significance. This space does not mean that Southeast Asian societies were free from patriarchal structures. Women's access to the throne remained dependent on dynasty, succession circumstances, elite alliances, the ability to build support, and the way legitimacy was formulated.

In many narratives, female rulers are recognized through two overlapping patterns (Amirell, 2011; Khan, 2013). The first pattern emphasizes the continuity of royal blood. Women ascend to the throne because they are of legitimate lineage when male candidates are unavailable, young, or unable to unite the elite (Amirell, 2011; Khan, 2017). The second pattern highlights governing qualities such as wisdom, courage, self-control, diplomatic skills, and protection of the people (Amirell, 2011; Khan, 2013, 2017). Literary narratives then add moral or symbolic markers to help women's rule be understood within the prevailing values (Bradley, 2009; Habibah & Hanidar, 2022; Khan, 2013).

Studies of elite Javanese women also remind us that colonial accounts and national historiography often focused on kings, war, and male-dominated institutions. Consequently, women's political actions were often read through family relationships or stories of personal loyalty. Carey and Houben (2016) demonstrate the importance of revisiting sources to discover women's agency without disassociating them from the social constraints of their time. This perspective is relevant for Queen Kalinyamat, long

remembered for her asceticism and devotion, even though other traditions highlight her governmental and maritime capacities.

Queens Patani Study A Study of the Queens of Patani

Teeuw and Wyatt (1970) provided an important edition, translation and study of *Hikayat Patani*. The work positions the text as the main source for royal history as well as the product of a writing tradition that has layers and issues of chronology. Patani Studies emphasizing its position between the Malay and Siamese worlds, maritime trade networks, Islam, and regional rivalries (Bougas, 1994). From this perspective, the reigns of the queens cannot be explained simply as a succession of personalities at court. They relate to the dynasty's ability to maintain continuity amidst trade relations, diplomacy, and external threats.

Porath (2011) has studied *the Hikayat Patani, showing that from a mimetic perspective, the Hikayat Patani* reveals similarities when describing the rebellion of the king and queen of Patani against Ayutthaya. *The Hikayat Patani* also reveals Patani's superiority over the surrounding Malay kingdoms and territories. Halid (2018) has also conducted a study that shows the relationship between *the Hikayat Patani* and the history and development of the nobat (royal ensemble), namely to understand the function and role of the ensemble in the political culture and maneuvers of the Malay government that developed under Siamese influence.

The Green King, Blue King, Purple King and Yellow King are the most prominent series in Patani's memory. Color names create patterns that are easy to remember while also giving a sense of dynastic order. In intertextual reading Julia Kristeva (1980) argues that color patterns can function as identity codes that connect different figures within a symbolic era. However, researchers still need to distinguish the literary function of these patterns from chronological data, which must be examined through other sources.

Study of Queen Kalinyamat and Queen Kencana Wungu

Queen Kalinyamat occupies a space between Jepara's local history, the babad tradition, travelogues, and religious memory. Javanese historiography links her to the Demak Sultanate, Sunan Prawata, Arya Penangsang, and the Kalinyamat region. Portuguese sources mention the ruler of Jepara and a large fleet involved in the sixteenth-century attack on Malacca. These accounts provide the basis for reading Queen Kalinyamat as a maritime ruler and diplomatic actor, not simply a figure in a royal family drama (de Graaf & Pigeaud, 1976; Ricklefs, 2008).

Ratu Kencana Wungu is distinct because its primary evidence comes from the Damarwulan story cycle (Astuti, 2023; Habibah & Hanidar, 2022). In the story, the Majapahit kingdom is under threat from Menak Jingga of Blambangan (Syarifah, 2019; Utami, 2020). The queen grants a mandate to Damarwulan, who then defeats the enemy and restores order (Sasangka, 2016; Utami, 2020; Windayanto, 2025). The story's popularity through performances and adaptations has kept Kencana Wungu alive in cultural memory (Syarifah, 2019; Windayanto, 2025). However, the names, plot, and relationships between the characters cannot be directly matched with the Majapahit chronology (Habibah & Hanidar, 2022; Windayanto, 2025). Responsible studies need to refer to her as a literary figure who may have absorbed the memories of several female

rulers, not as a definitive portrait of a single historical figure (Astuti, 2023; Habibah & Hanidar, 2022; Windayanto, 2025).

In addition, another study was conducted by Nastiti (2016) examining the existence of three queens in ancient Javanese history who ruled between the eighth and fifteenth centuries AD, namely Īśanatunggawijaya (Ancient Mataram Kingdom), Śrī Tribhuwanattunggadewī Jayawiśńuwarddhanī, and Dewi Suhitā (Majapahit Kingdom). Sulityanto (2019), Hayati, et.al. (2000), and Supriyono (2013) studied its existence Queen Kalinyamat as queen in Jepara on the 16th century. Darini (2019) and Munandar (2015) discussed the role of women in the public sphere in Majapahit Kingdom; they are Gayatri, Tribuanatungga Dewi, and Queen Suhita. Wiyatmi (2023) examines the queen in folklore as a representation of Indonesian feminism, showing that feminism grants rights and voice to women not only in the domestic sphere but also in the public sphere, as a queen whose power is recognized.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative design combining literature review, intertextual analysis, and historical comparison (Kipping et al., 2014; Kristeva, 1980). The material objects of the study consist of three narrative groups: the Hikayat Patani as the primary text on the Patani queens; Javanese historiographic sources and records related to Queen Kalinyamat; and the Damarwulan story tradition featuring Queen Kencana Wungu (Habibah & Hanidar, 2022; Hayati, 2010; Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970). The formal objects are the representation of female leadership, legitimacy strategies, the link between fiction and history, and the function of cultural memory (Bradley, 2009; Windayanto, 2025).

The primary source for Patani is the Hikayat Patani in Teeuw and Wyatt's (1970) edition. Sources for the Javanese context include historiography on the kingdoms of Demak, Jepara, and Majapahit, translations of relevant Javanese texts, and documentation of the Damarwulan tradition (Habibah & Hanidar, 2022; Hayati, 2010; Kurniawan & Kriswanto, 2021). Secondary sources consist of books and articles on Southeast Asian history, women's history, traditional historiography, intertextuality, Patani, Jepara, and Majapahit. Sources were selected based on their relevance to the figures, proximity to the period under discussion, clarity of the text's origin, and contribution to verification or interpretation (Kipping et al., 2014).

Data collection was conducted through close reading and recording of narrative units. These units include mentions of genealogy, ascension to the throne, governmental actions, diplomatic relations, conflicts, political enemies, moral qualities, symbols of color or purity, and the story's conclusion. Each unit is described regarding its source, context, function within the plot, and its status as historical information, literary motif, or interpretation (Kipping et al., 2014; Kristeva, 1980). This classification is analytical, not absolute, because a single section of text can serve multiple functions simultaneously.

The analysis was conducted using Julia Kristeva's (1980) intertextual analysis as the basis for the four stages designed for this research. First, intratextual analysis identifies how each tradition constructs the queen figure. Second, intertextual analysis traces the transpositions, transformations, and oppositions that connect discourses of dynasty, religion, war, gender, and morality (Kristeva, 1980). Third, historical criticism compares the information with other sources and assesses the temporal distance and nature of the genre (Kipping et al., 2014). Fourth, comparative analysis compares four dimensions: the basis of legitimacy, the field of political action, the form of idealization, and the function of cultural memory.

The validity of interpretation is maintained through triangulation of sources and concepts (Kipping et al., 2014). Textual findings are not considered historical fact simply because they are repeated in tradition. Conversely, differences in sources are not immediately dismissed as errors but are examined as possible changes in interests, audiences, or genres (Kipping et al., 2014; Windayanto, 2025). This study does not aim to establish a new chronology. Its limitation is its reliance on available written and published sources; manuscript variants, local oral traditions, and contemporary performances have not been ethnographically analyzed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The comparative reading identifies three patterns in the representation of female sovereignty: dynastic continuity in the Patani narratives, the conjunction of ascetic authority and maritime leadership in accounts of Queen Kalinyamat, and the authorization of male heroism in the Kencana Wungu narrative. Across the three cases, succession, kinship, moral conduct, and the restoration of political order recur as grounds for recognizing a ruler's authority. The findings concern how the texts represent queenship; they do not establish that every narrated episode is a historical event.

The Queens of Patani and the Legitimacy of the Dynasty's Continuity

The Hikayat Patani places the kingdom's history within a sequence of origins, religious conversions, successions, conflicts, and relationships with other powers. Within this sequence, the accession of the queens does not appear as a break with the order, but rather as a way for the dynasty to maintain its continuity . The Green King appears as the figure who opens a phase of female rule, followed by the Blue King, the Purple King, and the Yellow King. This sequence provides a strong structure for the reader's memory : the kingdom remains central as long as the royal lineage can be maintained.

The Green King's representation relies on seniority and authority. He not only replaced the previous ruler, but also became the center of the restructuring of authority following dynastic tensions. The narrative positions the palace as a space where kinship relations and political interests are negotiated. Thus, the ruler's gender is not the sole factor in legitimacy. More crucial is the figure's ability to occupy a legitimate genealogical position and gain recognition from elite networks.

Syahadan, Marhum Bongsu's child is no longer a boy but there is also a girl. So King Ijaulah was crowned by people, that is the origin of the first female king in this Patani country (Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970: 100).

Under the Blue King, the Purple King, and the Yellow King, the continuity of the queen line created the impression that female rule had become an accepted pattern. The Blue King continued the Green King's leadership by improving several things the Green King had not done, including enhancing the kingdom's strategic position where it had not previously existed.

Arakian then King Biru was tabbed by people. Shahadan when Raja Biru was on the royal throne, the left herald became Kun, the right herald became Temenggung Seri Paduka Tuan (Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970: 106).

In contrast to the Blue King, when the Purple King ruled , Raja Ungu used the title Paduka Syah Alam when bequeathing and renounced the title Pera'cau as was the title used by previous female kings.

As for the Ungu King, who became king, he named himself Paduka Syah Alam, no one gave him the name Pera'cau (Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970: 107).

Meanwhile, Raja Kuning was the last Patani queen, the guardian of the continuity of the queen line, creating the impression that female rule had become an acceptable pattern.

So the people killed Raja Kuning , so people buried the body of Paduka Syah Alam and the people called Paduka Syah Alam Mahrum Pahang because he was married to the King of Pahang (Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970: 113-114).

The golden age and glory of the Patani kingdom was led by female queens from 1584 to 1649. During this period, the Patani kingdom was under the rule of female kings known as the Rainbow Kings (Abdul Aziz, 2015: 2). Bradley (2009) emphasized that the identifier 'king' was often used for women as well, indicating a shift in the concept of traditional Malay kingdoms to a more flexible Islamic political formation. Anwar and Muhammad (2016) also emphasized that women as general-political leaders, marked a change in the traditional Malay socio-cultural structure.

The factual and mythological elements in *the Hikayat Patani* do not exist as completely separate layers. Political episodes can be surrounded by omens, prophecies, meaningful coincidences, or moral judgments. This combination gives history a shape that can explain why a dynasty survived or declined. Consider the following excerpt.

Hatta between two months, then the country was done. So the king moved downstream to sit in the country he had created, and he called the country Patani Dar al-Salam. The base where the white horn disappeared (and its base) was at Gajah Gate to the upper reaches of the Kedi Bridge, (that's it. And) that base was where Encik Tani went up and down the merawa and entangled it (Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970: 70).

Braginsky (1998) explains that the presence of myths in Malay Islamic works shows a synthesis between old beliefs and Islamic teachings, known as the Islamization of myths, namely elements of local legends are given new meanings that are in accordance with the Islamic worldview. Apart from that, Bradley (2009) also interprets that the use of myths is not just to explain miraculous events, but to emphasize the moral and political legitimacy of kings who are considered sovereign by Allah's permission.

The power of the queens was also related to Patani's position as a trading kingdom. Court stability was necessary to maintain a network of ports, relations with merchants, and diplomacy with neighboring powers. Ports were a hallmark of a maritime kingdom and a center of trade. Consider the following text excerpt.

During that time, the Patani area was very happy and peaceful for all the people. If (not) comes from sailing, when the boat arrives at the Patani port, there will no longer be waiting for the boat at the port. Even if it is silver or gold, no one will take it (Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970: 136).

Although *the Hikayat Patani* does not always present administrative details, its descriptions of missions, marriages, wars, and external relations indicate that the queen's reign was situated within a regional political realm. This reading aligns with the understanding of Patani as a kingdom that moved between the Malay and Siamese spheres (Bougas, 1994).

However , the idealization of dynasty does not eliminate tensions. Continuity through women can be a source of stability while also signaling the fragility of succession. Marriage and family ties expand networks, but also open up competing claims.

Meanwhile, your son, named Raja Ungu, is married to Raja Pahang (Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970: 91).

The tale explores this tension through the opposition of legitimate and illegitimate, loyal and treacherous, center and periphery. The queen figure serves as a meeting point for these two images : the guardian of royal order and the ruler who continually faces threats to that order.

After several months of Hatta, Raja Kuning was married by Syah Alam to the Yang Dipertuan of Johor (Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970: 110).

Braginsky (1998) explains that the Malay-Islamic concept of power does not only depend on military strength, but also on the ability to establish social and kinship relations through sharia-legal political marriages. Harun (2015) also stated that the marriage between the kings of Patani and Pahang was not merely a family affair, but a symbol of Islamic political and cultural integration between two Malay kingdoms that were equal and sovereign. Islahuddin, et al. (2020) also emphasized that political marriage events are a moral and diplomatic representation, which shows the value of Islam in resolving conflicts and forming alliances between kingdoms.

Queen Kalinyamat between Personal Sanctity and Maritime Power

Popular narratives about Queen Kalinyamat often begin with the death of her husband, Sultan Hadlirin, and the conflict with Arya Penangsang. The asceticism associated with the queen is then read as an expression of grief, a demand for justice, and a political vow. Read simply as a story of a wife's loyalty, this episode narrows her agency. Within the narrative structure, asceticism also serves to transform personal suffering into a moral basis for political action. Chastity and self-control provide legitimacy for demanding the restoration of order.

In *the Legend of Queen Kalinyamat's Hermitage,* the queen's family tree and role as ruler of the Jepara Kingdom are recounted. The story centers on her journey to find a place to meditate after her husband and brother were murdered by Arya Penangsang.

"To fulfill her intention, Queen Kalinyamat left on a journey to find a place for meditation. She departed in a group led by Ki Suta Mangunjaya. They walked for days till they arrived at a mountain with five peaks. The place was named *Puncak Pandawa*. In time, it changed to *Pucang Pandawa*. They took a rest in that place. Ki Suta Mangunjaya ordered two of his best soldiers to explore and find a good place for

meditation…. Queen Kalinyamat liked the place and decided to do her meditation there. She put away all her jewelry in a cave nearby. She was willing to surrender all her wealth to whoever found it. The wealth that she left in the cave was called Donorojo. In time, the place was called Drojo Village…" (Istiana & et. al., 2017: 69)

This transformation brings together spiritual discourse and power. The woman's body withdrawing from the opulence of the palace becomes a sign of steadfastness, while the return to order validates her moral demands (Said, 2013). Such motifs are easily idealized because they are applicable to diverse communities: court traditions emphasize dynastic honor, religious traditions emphasize austerity, and local memories emphasize courage and justice (Said, 2013).

Beyond the tapa episode, accounts of Jepara reveal a broader political space. Jepara was an important port with the capacity to deploy ships and troops (Hayati, 2010; Supriyono, 2013). The expedition to Malacca demonstrated resources, networks, and strategic decisions that cannot be explained solely through moral symbolism (Hayati, 2010; Supriyono, 2013). Queen Kalinyamat emerged as a ruler who connected coastal land authority, trade, maritime power, and political solidarity against the Portuguese (Hayati, 2010; Supriyono, 2013). Foreign accounts do have their own perspectives, but their presence helps examine local traditions through different sources (Kipping et al., 2014; Supriyono, 2013).

During her reign, Queen Kalinyamat acted as a queen who ruled her kingdom and fought against the Portuguese colonialists (Hayati, 2010). In her 30-year reign in the 16th century, she brought Jepara to the peak of its glory (Hayati, 2010; Sulityanto, 2019; Supriyono, 2013). A Portuguese source by Meilink-Roelofsz stated that Jepara became the largest port city along the North Coast of Java, with a large and strong navy in the 16th century (Hayati, 2010; Said, 2017). In addition, Queen Kalinyamat was able to restore Jepara's trade that had fallen during the reign of Pati Unus. Under her reign, in the mid-16th century. In the 19th century, Jepara's trade with other places abroad became increasingly busy. Unfortunately, Queen Kalinyamat's extraordinary achievements are not told because folklore developed from a patriarchal culture that does not sufficiently appreciate the roles and struggles of women, such as Queen Kalinyamat (Wiyatmi, 2023).

Comparing sources yields a layered picture. The Babad tends to place Queen Kalinyamat within the Demak family conflict and the restoration of justice. In *the Babad Tanah Jawi,* Queen Kalinyamat's leadership is also de-emphasized. The narrative surrounding her case revolves around the main antagonist, Arya Penangsang, who caused the deaths of her husband and brother. Queen Kalinyamat is described as the third of five children of the Sultan of Demak, one of whom was Prince Prawata, who was murdered by Arya Penangsang. Sunan Kudus also sought the death of Sultan Pajang, whom she considered an obstacle to the Javanese kingdom (Olthof, 2017: 63).

Queen Kalinyamat therefore occupies the closest position to the intersection of historical fact and idealization. Her existence as a ruler is not solely dependent on a single literary work, but the meaning of her leadership is continually shaped by the story. Fiction, in this context, is not a free creation without basis. It functions as a structure, adding motifs, focusing conflicts, and assigning value to historical actions.

Queen Kencana Wungu and the Cultural Truth of the Damarwulan Story

Queen Kencana Wungu appears primarily as the ruler of Majapahit in the Damarwulan cycle. Its basic structure places the kingdom under threat from Menak Jingga, the ruler of Blambangan, who is depicted as the central antagonist. The court elite fail to resolve the crisis, and Damarwulan emerges from his lowly position and is given the opportunity to prove himself. The queen grants mandates and promises rewards, thus legitimizing the hero's actions with her authority.

"During the reign of His Majesty Brawijaya, Majapahit lives in peace and tranquility under the wise rule of the King. The people respect him and are very faithful to him. King Brawijaya has a beautiful daughter whose name is Princess Kencanawungu. One day, the King went out of the Palace accompanied by the vizier named Mahundra. The Princess and the people do not know this. They become worried and afraid of the disappearance of the King and Vizier. They try to find them but to no avail. The Princess feels very sad about her father's disappearance, and the kingdom becomes chaotic soon. The people deliberation and decided to raise Queen Kencanawungu to replace her father. She appoints a vizier by the name of Logender.

Vizier Logender is a blood brother of Vizier Mahundra. After Queen Kencanawungu rises to the throne, the kingdom becomes calm and safe again. The people feel happy because they have a beautiful, wise Queen." (Sayekti, 2010: 1-2)

Eventually, Damarwulan, son of Wazir Mahundra and son-in-law of Wazir Logender, took command, went to war, and defeated Minakjinggo. A major battle ensued, and many Majapahit regents and soldiers were killed.

Margana (2017) states that Sri Suhita (Kencanawungu) was appointed queen of Majapahit, replacing her father who decided to meditate. This decision was rejected by Bhre Wirabumi, one of Hayam Wuruk's sons. As a result, Bhre Wirabumi attempted to separate Blambangan from Majapahit. In the ensuing battle between Blambangan and Majapahit, Wirabumi was killed. Brandes (in Margana, 2017: 4) associates Bhre Wirabumi with King Menakjingga of Blambangan, who did not recognize Majapahit's sovereignty and wanted to marry Queen Suhita (Kencanawungu). Queen Kencanawungu rejected Menakjingga's proposal and sent Damarwulan to Blambangan to kill him. Ultimately, Queen Kencanawungu married Damarwulan and made him king.

The principal findings are summarized in Table 1, which distinguishes the narrative grounds of legitimacy, the distribution of agency, and the limits of historical inference in each case.

Table 1. Comparative Results on Female Sovereignty in the Selected Narratives

Case and material	Grounds of legitimacy	Distribution of agency	Scope of historical inference
Patani queens Hikayat Patani	Dynastic succession, recognition of royal lineage, titles, and marriage networks.	Queens occupy the throne and participate in court government and regional relationships.	Narrative evidence of represented succession and authority; individual episodes require independent corroboration.
Queen Kalinyamat Hermitage legend, babad account, and historical studies	Ascetic resolve and the demand for justice, alongside political and maritime leadership.	Personal withdrawal dominates the legend; maritime activity receives greater attention in historical studies.	Claims need to remain attached to their source type; legendary motifs and documented political actions are not interchangeable.
Queen Kencana Wungu Damarwulan narrative	Accession, restoration of order, and the authority to grant mandates and rewards.	The queen authorizes action, while Damarwulan performs the principal military deed.	The narrative has historical and cultural references, but identification with a specific historical queen remains uncertain.

Discussion

Legitimacy of Identity and Collective Memory

Table 1 shows that the three cases recognize female authority through different narrative arrangements. The Patani queens derive legitimacy primarily from succession and royal lineage. Kalinyamat's authority emerges through the conjunction of moral resolve and political leadership across different sources. Kencana Wungu exercises sovereignty by authorizing action, although the heroic plot gives Damarwulan the most visible military role. Female rule thus appears within several recognizable structures of authority rather than through a single model of queenship.

Legitimacy in all three cases is not simply justification after a figure has come to power. It is continually constructed through the repetition of stories (Erll, 2011). The names of the Patani queens, the ascetic practices of Queen Kalinyamat, and the mandate of Queen Kencana Wungu become nodes of memory easily transferred to local history books, ceremonies, the stage, popular media, and discourses of identity (Amirell, 2011; Erll, 2011; Habibah & Hanidar, 2022; Said, 2013; Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970). Repetition simplifies the complexity of the past, but also keeps the figures present (Erll, 2011).

In the context of Patani, a series of queens sustains the memory of a Malay kingdom with its own sovereignty, trade networks, and traditions of governance (Amirell, 2011; Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970). This memory is crucial because Patani's history is situated within the political framework of the modern nation-state (Jory, 2013). The hikayat provide a cultural language for remembering the time when Patani was a political center (Jory, 2013; Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970). The queens emphasize that this authority was not solely shaped by male kings (Amirell, 2011).

After everyone had gathered, Pera'cau left, accompanied by the treasurer and all the ministers and employees, and went home to **Tambangan** . After the next day, people were crossing the river. Once the river has gone down, the upstream water rises and then reaches Kuala Aru. So Pera'cau went downstream to the palace (Teeuw & Wyatt, 1970: 105).

In Jepara, Queen Kalinyamat serves as a source of regional identity, connecting the port, trade, maritime prowess, religion, and female leadership (Kusumawati et al., 2022; Supriyono, 2013). The modern emphasis on the armada and resistance to the Portuguese also brings local history into alignment with national narratives (Supriyono, 2013). This process can lead to greater appreciation for women, but it requires critical analysis to prevent historical complexity from devolving into unsubstantiated fetishism (Kipping et al., 2014; Kusumawati et al., 2022).

In the Damarwulan tradition, Kencana Wungu connects the audience with Majapahit as a symbol of Javanese greatness (Astuti, 2023; Habibah & Hanidar, 2022). What is passed down is not an administrative report, but rather a moral map of the center of power, threats, loyalty, and rewards (Habibah & Hanidar, 2022). Fictional characters can be powerful because they give emotional form to the past (Erll, 2011). In this sense, collective memory not only stores what happened but also what is considered worthy of remembering (Erll, 2011).

This comparative study demonstrates that women leaders serve as a platform for negotiation between heritage and contemporary needs. Narratives can be used to expand women's histories, strengthen local identities, or offer political role models. At the same time, readers need to distinguish cultural respect from historical certainty. A critical stance does not diminish the value of a character; it rather explains why and how she gained vitality.

Intertextual Transposition and the Relationship between History and Narrative

Kristeva's (1980) concept of intertextuality provides a framework for interpreting the differences summarized in Table 1. In this framework, texts absorb and transform earlier discourses rather than transmit meaning without alteration. Applied here, intertextual transposition describes how genealogical traditions, spiritual practices, political conflicts, and heroic conventions acquire new functions within narratives of female leadership. The framework directs attention to the transformation of inherited materials within each narrative.

In the Patani narratives, color-based royal names organize the sequence of queens into a recognizable dynastic pattern. Titles and marriage connections further differentiate rulers while preserving the continuity of the royal line. Read intertextually, such features convert personal designations and court relationships into signs through which political order can be remembered. The founding traditions and descriptions of port security give that order a wider cultural setting. As Table 1 records, these features support an analysis of represented legitimacy without making every narrative detail independently verifiable.

The coexistence of founding traditions and political episodes also suggests that myth and history need not operate as separate narrative layers. Braginsky's (1998) discussion of Malay-Islamic literary traditions helps explain how inherited cultural materials may acquire meanings within an Islamic worldview. Bradley (2009) likewise

directs attention to the moral and historical contexts of *Hikayat Patani*. Together, these perspectives support a reading in which extraordinary events and moral evaluations contribute to the intelligibility of sovereignty. They do not remove the need to distinguish literary meaning from evidence about particular events.

For Kalinyamat, ascetic withdrawal transforms personal suffering into a publicly meaningful claim to justice. Said's (2013) discussion provides a basis for examining the relationship between spiritual symbolism and authority. The maritime accounts add another strand by making trade, naval organization, and regional political relationships central to the ruler's image (Hayati, 2010; Supriyono, 2013). The resulting portrait is layered because different sources select and evaluate different aspects of her leadership. The source distinctions retained in Table 1 prevent these emphases from being collapsed into a single, undifferentiated biography.

Kencana Wungu demonstrates the particular importance of separating historical reference from historical identification. The Damarwulan story draws on the prestige of Majapahit, conflict with Blambangan, and the conventions of heroic restoration. Its representation of a powerful queen may engage memories of women in Majapahit politics, but resemblance does not establish that Kencana Wungu is identical to a particular historical ruler. Table 1 therefore treats her historical identity as uncertain. The relevant interpretive question concerns how the story reorganizes memories of authority, rivalry, and legitimate rule into an effective literary narrative.

CONCLUSION

The Queens of Patani, Queen Kalinyamat, and Queen Kencana Wungu demonstrate three distinct relationships between women, power, and narrative. *The Hikayat Patani* combines historical memory and the conventions of court chronicles to present the queens as guardians of dynastic continuity. The narrative of Queen Kalinyamat reconciles the historical foundations of Jepara's power with moral ideals of loyalty, asceticism, justice, and maritime courage. Queen Kencana Wungu primarily serves as a literary figure representing the legitimate center of Majapahit in the Damarwulan cycle.

This comparison emphasizes that fiction and history are not entirely separate domains in traditional historiography. Historical facts always enter into narrative structures, while fiction can harbor traces of political structures, regional conflicts, and social expectations. However, the two should not be equated. Source criticism is necessary to define the limits of factual claims, while intertextual analysis explains the changes and circulation of meaning.

The study's findings reveal four shared patterns: the legitimacy of female rulers is linked to a dynasty or legitimate center; political competence is interpreted through moral values; conflict is framed as an opposition of order and chaos; and narrative repetition transforms characters into symbols of identity. The differences lie in the form of agency, the type of evidence, and the medium of inheritance. The Patani queens figure prominently in royal chronicles, Kalinyamat in the intersection of local and foreign accounts, and Kencana Wungu in literature and performance.

Future research could compare manuscript variants, contemporary foreign accounts, oral traditions, pilgrimage sites, and modern performances. Such an approach would illuminate how the image of each queen changed across time, language, media,

and community interests. Studies should also pay attention to reader and audience reception so that collective memory is understood not only from the text but also from the social practices that brought it to life.

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