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## BATIK CRAFT INNOVATION AND ITS INFLUENCE IN CENTRAL JAVA<sup>1</sup>

*Hieronymus Purwanta*

PhD (History)

Department of History Education

Sebelas Maret University

Jalan Ir. Sutami 36, Kentingan, Jebres, Surakarta, 57126, Indonesia

[hpurwanta@staff.uns.ac.id](mailto:hpurwanta@staff.uns.ac.id)

ORCID: 0000-0003-1532-1133

*Musa Pelu*

PhD (History)

Department of History Education

Sebelas Maret University

Jalan Ir. Sutami 36, Kentingan, Jebres, Surakarta, 57126, Indonesia

[musapelu@staff.uns.ac.id](mailto:musapelu@staff.uns.ac.id)

ORCID: 0009-0001-7455-8168

This research analyzes the development of the batik craft industry in Central Java, initiated by Ki Ageng Henis in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It addresses the following questions: (1) How did Ki Ageng Henis pioneer the batik craft industry in Laweyan? (2) How did the batik craft industry in Central Java evolve up to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century? (3) What impact did the introduction of the copper stamp have on the batik craft industry in Central Java? The findings reveal that Henis successfully innovated batik crafts, transforming them into a valuable trading commodity. This innovation spurred social change in Laweyan, marked by the emergence of a new class of batik entrepreneurs. The growth of Laweyan's batik industry inspired traders along Java's north coast to establish their own batik craft industries. Port cities such as Semarang, Kaliwungu, Pekalongan, and Lasem became prominent centres of batik production, incorporating diverse influences from ethnic entrepreneurs into new motifs. The introduction of copper stamp technology further accelerated production, significantly increasing output and positioning stamped batik as a key export commodity of the Dutch East Indies.

**Keywords:** batik crafts; batik entrepreneurs; handmade batik; Laweyan; stamped batik

### *Introduction*

Batik is a traditional Indonesian art form, particularly prominent on the island of Java, that involves creating intricate designs on cloth. The primary material used in this art is wax, typically derived from beehives, applied with a tool known as a *canting*. While batik has gained popularity worldwide and its techniques have evolved to include stamps and screen printing, the use of wax remains a defining feature of the process. Today, batik crafts are recognized by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage [Larasati 2021; Selamet 2018].

The evolution of batik as a folk craft and its global spread can be traced to Ki Ageng Henis, who passed away in 1570. Through his innovation and entrepreneurship, Ki Ageng

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Henis transformed batik into an economic venture in the village of Laweyan, Surakarta. The Solo River facilitated the trade of batik to other regions within the Demak Sultanate. After Ki Ageng Henis's death, his employees continued the batik business, establishing it as a thriving trading commodity. This success led to the rise of a new social class in Laweyan, known as batik entrepreneurs. Over time, Ki Ageng Henis's innovations catalyzed the development of the batik craft industry in other cities across Java and Madura. The entrepreneurs involved were not only ethnic Javanese but also Hadrami, Chinese, and even Dutch traders.

From economic and cultural standpoints, Ki Ageng Henis's contributions were significant. In earlier times, batik cloth was typically reserved for the royal family [Balik et al. 2023]. The exclusivity of batik is evidenced in various historical inscriptions. For example, the Kayu Ara Hiwang inscription describes how King Rakai Warak of the Ancient Mataram Kingdom, in 823, presented batik cloth with the *gañja haji pātra sisi* motif as a gift to Pu Sanggrāma Çurandara, the ruler of Watu Tihang [Sarkar 1959; Maziyah et al. 2016]. The nobility's monopoly on batik is further illustrated through temple reliefs and statues. For instance, the floral motifs found on the Loro Jonggrang Temple reliefs in Central Java, dating back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century, highlight its restricted use [Totton 2005]. Similarly, the Ganesha statue at the Panataran Temple in East Java, built in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, also features batik patterns [Kusrianto 2022].

Batik crafts, as a quintessential Indonesian cultural product, have been widely studied, particularly in batik centres in Java. Abdullah and Wardoyo examined the history of batik craft development in the Yogyakarta Sultanate during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century [Abdullah and Wardoyo 2020]. Their findings revealed that Yogyakarta's batik craft industry experienced fluctuations in the number of entrepreneurs and workers. In Surakarta, known as the epicentre of innovation, research spans various disciplines, including history, architecture, and tourism. From a historical perspective, studies focus on the diachronic development of the batik industry in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, a period when Indonesia was under Dutch colonial rule [Sariyatun 2005; Soedarmono 2006]. Architecturally, research has explored the adaptation of Javanese architectural models to accommodate the needs of the batik industry and showrooms within the homes of Surakarta's batik entrepreneurs [Mirsa 2021]. From a tourism perspective, efforts have been made to develop batik centres as educational tourism zones, where visitors can learn batik techniques firsthand [Krisma & Kristiyani 2023].

Studies of the batik industry in other regions primarily focus on the influence of Surakarta and Yogyakarta, as well as the adaptation of batik to local cultures. For example, a study on Madurese batik noted that a Madurese nobleman appeared highly dignified when wearing *parang* batik, traditionally associated with Javanese nobility [Rakhmawati 2016]. Over time, the development of Madurese batik adopted distinct ethnic characteristics, with its Javanese identity becoming less apparent. In terms of colouring, Madurese batik is renowned for its vibrant hues, including light blue, red, green, and yellow. Its motifs are deeply rooted in Madurese culture, featuring designs such as *Malete Seto'or*, *Ramo*, *Kar Jagad*, and *Tong Centong* [Suminto 2015].

A similar pattern is observed in research on the development of the batik industry in the Central and East Java provinces. The primary focus is on the emergence of new motifs and colours as regional innovations influenced by Surakarta and Yogyakarta batik traditions. For example, Patria's research highlights the introduction of Dutch batik motifs along the north coast of Central Java, detailing the pioneering work of Carolina Josephina von Franquemont and Carolina Catharina van Oosterom in Semarang [Patria 2016]. The fusion of Javanese culture with other ethnic characteristics is also evident in studies of Basurik batik motifs [Riyanti et al. 2012] and Lasem batik [Aryani & Aiman 2021].

Despite the various studies conducted on this subject, none have thoroughly examined the transformation of batik from a palace craft to a trading commodity from a historical

perspective. This study aims to trace the origins of the batik craft industry as a trading commodity in Laweyan.

The historical exploration will address three key issues. First, it will examine the role of Ki Ageng Henis in pioneering the batik craft industry and establishing a batik entrepreneur village in Laweyan, which was predominantly operated by women. Second, it will discuss the development of the batik craft industry in various ports along the north coast of Central Java up to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Lastly, it will investigate the impact of copper stamp technology on the batik craft industry in Central Java.

### ***Methodology***

This paper aims to reconstruct the emergence and development of the batik craft industry in Surakarta from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The method employed is the historical method [Gottschalk 1986]. The sources were collected by examining both traditional and modern historiography, as well as records from the sultanate and colonial officials. Reports on the batik industry and its labour from various departments of the Dutch colonial government are valuable primary sources. The content is codified from these sources by distinguishing between facts, opinions, and myths. The factual content of these sources serves as the primary foundation for reconstruction, while the opinions help to understand the spirit of the times and any subjectivity bias.

On the other hand, the content of sources, particularly in traditional historiographies, often takes the form of myths-narratives that depict the supernatural powers of certain figures. These myths are viewed as representations of esoteric culture, a characteristic feature of Indonesian society from ancient times to the present. However, the content derived from these myths is generally not used in historical reconstruction. Instead, source criticism is primarily employed as internal criticism, which involves comparing the content of one historical source with information from other sources.

The analysis used the theory of innovation and entrepreneurship. This theory is crucial as it effectively explains the emergence and development of the batik craft industry in interior Java during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. At the time, Java was dominated by a subsistence agricultural economic system [Scott 1976] and traditional aristocratic culture [Lombard 2005; Vlekke 1961, 46–47]. In a subsistence agricultural and aristocratic society, socio-economic development can only occur with the emergence of entrepreneurs who possess strong character and a willingness to innovate [Schumpeter, Backhaus 2003]. In this context, the strong character of an entrepreneur is defined by their ability to recognize, use, and cultivate opportunities, whether in the form of products, production methods, marketing, sources of raw materials, or business organizations [Ziemnowicz 2013].

According to Śledzik, the role of entrepreneurship in economic development extends beyond having innovative ideas; it also requires the courage to take action and the perseverance to follow through on those actions to ensure the realization of those ideas [Śledzik 2013]. Opportunities for entrepreneurship consist of several components: the type of opportunity, the process of discovery and implementation, and the individual who pursues it [April 2022]. In the modern industrial world, the owner of an idea and its executor may be different individuals. However, in the pre-modern Javanese craft business, the owner of the idea was typically also the one who executed it. Therefore, the experience gained from executing opportunities serves as a valuable lesson for entrepreneurs regarding the creation, discovery, and exploitation of opportunities [Wright et al. 2008]. From this viewpoint, the more successful experiences and wider business networks entrepreneurs possess, the more willing they are to seize opportunities [Aghion 2018].

### ***Ki Ageng Henis's Innovation in Batik***

Ki Ageng Henis was the youngest child and only son among seven siblings of an esotericism teacher, Ki Ageng Selo, in what is now Grobogan Regency. After his father passed

away when he was young, Henis grew close to his mother and older sisters, who played a significant role in his upbringing. One of the most influential aspects of Henis's early life was his older sisters' mastery of batik techniques, a skill typically associated with women.

Henis's expertise in batik became a crucial asset when he travelled to Laweyan, a small village in present-day Surakarta. Upon his arrival, he was captivated by the local trading activities centred around threads and woven cloth. The village head, Ki Beluk, welcomed him warmly, inspiring Henis to settle in the northern part of Laweyan Market [Shodiq 2017].

The idea of starting a batik craft business took root when Henis noticed the availability of *mori* (plain white cloth), the primary raw material used in batik. He sought Ki Beluk's assistance in acquiring the necessary batik-making equipment. After obtaining the tools, Henis began creating batik and selling his products to traders from other regions who visited Laweyan Market via the Kabanaran River port. His creations were well-received, with many traders even placing orders for batik cloth intended for nobles in their hometowns.

The batik-making process is intricate and time-consuming, typically requiring around 20 days. This process can be broken down into seven stages [Sariyatun 2005; Soerachman 1927]. Raffles noted that "in the ordinary course, the process of batik took about ten days for common patterns and from fifteen to seventeen days for finer and more intricate designs" [Raffles 1817, 189].

To meet the increasing demand for batik cloth, Henis recruited local women and taught them the art of drawing batik, enabling them to become his employees. He transformed his home into a centre for the batik craft industry. Henis instructed his employees in all aspects of the batik-making process, including pattern creation, heating, applying beeswax to the *mori* cloth, and finishing the products. Over time, Henis's batik craft flourished and gained popularity at Laweyan Market. Economically, batik also stimulated trade in the area, and Laweyan Market became known not only for trading threads and cloth but also for its batik offerings.

From the perspective of innovation and entrepreneurship theory, Henis was an innovator. Batik, traditionally worn as a *bebed* (sarong) by men and as a *jarik* by women among Javanese nobility and royal officials, has a long history of development [Rouffaer & Juynboll 1899]. Henis transformed batik production from a palace craft, primarily used for the subsistence of kings and officials, into a folk craft featuring products available for free trade. Now, anyone with the means could purchase and wear it. This innovation not only enhanced the production system but also established batik as a trading commodity. During this period, Laweyan emerged as the sole production centre and marketplace for batik within Javanese cultural communities.

Although everyone could formally buy and wear batik, cultural barriers prevented ordinary people from doing so. These limitations confined batik consumption to the noble class. In response to this restricted market, Henis created batik motifs that were more accessible to ordinary people. One of his most famous designs is known as *Sidoluhur* [Javanologi 2022], derived from the Javanese words *sido* (successful) and *luhur* (noble). The name *Sidoluhur* signifies "becoming noble" and was intended to encourage ordinary people to embrace honorific traditions, particularly during marriage ceremonies. In these wedding rituals, the bride wears the *Sidoluhur* batik as a symbol of her transition into a noble and esteemed individual through marriage [Taufiqoh et al. 2018].

Henis's batik craft industry experienced significant growth when the area became the centre of power for the Pajang Sultanate [Subagtio & Dwiyani 2020]. The political shift from the coastal region of the Demak Sultanate to the interior Pajang Sultanate in 1568 led to a corresponding change in economic activities. Traders who had previously operated at the Port of the Demak Sultanate began moving upstream to the Solo River. This

bustling economic activity in the Pajang Sultanate's capital was marked by the emergence of three new river ports – Semanggi, Nusupan, and Beton – in addition to Kabanaran [Prayitno & Qomarun 2007].

Traders came not only from the Solo River basin and other parts of Java but also from abroad, including Hadrami and Chinese merchants who had previously been active at various ports along Java's north coast. The Hadrami traders established their community around Semanggi and Nusupan, particularly in the Jenes River basin, while the Chinese traders built their community near the Pepe River [Bazher 2020].

This period marked the peak of Henis's batik craft industry. In addition to supplying batik to the palace and its officials, Henis's batik products were widely purchased by regional rulers who came to report to the Sultan of Pajang. The relocation of economic activity from Demak to the upstream Solo River transformed Laweyan batik into a valuable commodity for inter-regional and inter-island trade throughout the archipelago. Local traders, along with Hadrami and Chinese merchants, distributed Laweyan batik cloth to various trading centres across the archipelago. At the same time, inter-regional and inter-island traders brought essential materials for the batik craft industry, such as *mori* cloth from India, beeswax from Palembang, and *soga* from Sulawesi [Sariyatun 2005].

### ***The Emergence of the Batik Entrepreneur Class in Laweyan***

Ki Ageng Henis passed away in 1570, at the height of the batik craft industry he pioneered. He had one biological son, one adopted son, and one nephew who lived in Laweyan. However, none of Henis's family members were interested in continuing the batik craft industry. Instead, the three young men preferred to take on leadership roles in the Pajang Sultanate's military. When Pemanahan, Henis's biological son, was granted a territory known as the Mataram Principality in 1578 [Ricklefs 2001, 46], all of Henis's family chose to participate in this new venture. No one remained in Laweyan to continue the batik business, and even Henis's wife moved to Mataram.

The absence of a family member willing to continue Henis's business did not lead to the extinction of the batik craft, which had become integral to Laweyan's identity. His trusted employees kept the craft alive and began developing their own businesses. Over time, they emerged as new batik entrepreneurs who contributed to Laweyan's cultural and economic growth in the years to come. From the perspective of innovation and entrepreneurship theory, this transition from former employees to entrepreneurs exemplified the diffusion of business practices – a process in which a single business model spreads and evolves into many.

The emergence of these batik entrepreneurs created a new class within the social stratification of Laweyan society. The first class consisted of the head and other officials who governed the Laweyan fief, collectively referred to as the noble class. The second class included the batik entrepreneurs, who were considered wealthy within Javanese rural communities. Inheriting Henis's model, a defining characteristic of these entrepreneurs was their practice of employing batik craft workers in their homes, effectively turning their residences into production areas [Widayati & Surya 2021]. The third class comprised the *ulama* – individuals with deep knowledge of Islam who administered mosques and oversaw matters related to marriages and deaths within the Laweyan community. The lowest social class consisted of ordinary people, including batik craft employees, small traders at Laweyan Market, and farmers.

The emergence of a new class of batik entrepreneurs presents an intriguing aspect of Javanese society. A notable phenomenon is that the majority – specifically, 75 % – of batik entrepreneurs are women. Research conducted by Wahyono et al. found that, in 2014, over 75 % of batik entrepreneurs in Laweyan were women, who were affectionately referred to as "*Mbok Mas*" [Wahyono et al. 2014, 44]. This nickname serves as an honorific title, akin to a noble designation within the family of the Surakarta Sultanate.

The central role of women in the batik industry in Laweyan is a natural development. First, the tradition of women as batik crafters has been passed down through generations. Historically, nearly all batik crafters from the kingdom and sultanate eras were women, with Ki Ageng Henis being a notable exception. Second, women hold key positions in batik craft businesses, particularly in Henis's house. As a result, Laweyan women are often well-educated and well-prepared to be prominent figures in the batik industry.

In this industry, women take on various managerial roles. They determine the types and quantities of batik to be produced, handle marketing, manage distribution, analyze batik trends, and oversee business finances. Meanwhile, husbands typically focus on sourcing materials – buying *mori*, wax, dyes, and other equipment – and supervising the work of employees.

The division of labour between husbands and wives in the Laweyan batik industry has been traditional and has persisted over generations. For instance, the daughter of a batik entrepreneur, named Mas Rara, was first taught the art of making batik [Wahyono et al. 2014]. This skill is essential for assessing the quality of the batik produced by employees. Subsequently, daughters are invited to assist in distributing goods to various traders, customers, and individuals, thereby gaining firsthand experience in the bargaining process and understanding the pricing of different batik motifs. This interaction with customers is crucial, as it helps build trust, which is vital when they assist their parents in selling merchandise.

The transfer of batik business skills is not limited to one child; it applies to all children. Over time, while not all children may become batik entrepreneurs, the skills they acquire and the experience gained from assisting their parents will prove invaluable for starting and managing any business in the future.

### ***The Emergence of Batik Industrial Centres in Other Cities***

The batik industry underwent rapid development after the capital of the Mataram Sultanate was moved to Surakarta in 1745, as trade along the Solo River became increasingly busy. Many traders brought various raw materials and purchased batik cloth simultaneously. Hadrami traders were recognized for importing cloth from India, while Chinese traders supplied batik production materials, such as beeswax and *soga*, which were becoming harder to find in Surakarta. In return, they exported rice, agricultural products, and batik cloth – items that were in high demand in various port cities. During this period, Laweyan batik gained popularity and was often referred to as Surakarta batik since it was the only batik craft industry in the Surakarta Sultanate.

As the 19<sup>th</sup> century began, marked by Indonesia's transition from a VOC colony to the governance of the Dutch Kingdom, several port cities along the north coast of Java established their own batik industries. Notable locations included the residencies of Pati, Semarang, and Pekalongan. Unlike Surakarta and Yogyakarta, the batik craft industry on Java's north coast was managed by various ethnic groups – including Javanese, Hadrami, Chinese, and Dutch. Initially, skilled batik crafters were brought in from Surakarta and Yogyakarta to teach local women the art of batik drawing. As a result, the north coast batik industry closely mirrored the methods used in Surakarta and Yogyakarta, with the motifs remaining fundamentally the same.

In Semarang, currently the capital of Central Java province, the traditional practice of employing batik crafters from Yogyakarta continued up to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with these artisans residing in factory complexes. According to Angelino's 1930 notes, Semarang had just six batik businesses: five focused on handmade batik and one on stamped batik, employing a total of 101 workers [Angelino 1930, 253]. This data indicated that the batik industry in Semarang struggled to develop and primarily catered to the local market, lacking the competitive edge found in other batik centres along the north coast, such as Pekalongan and Lasem. Additionally, the Director of Education, Religion, and

Industry remarked that the batik craft industry in Semarang resembled more of a hobby [Abendanon 1904].

The most successful batik craft industry on the north coast of Java developed in Pekalongan. Pekalongan batik even grew into the most famous brand in the Dutch East Indies. This rapid development was fuelled by Hadrami traders supplying *mori* as raw material for batik, along with various other equipment, to women in villages under an agreement to sell the results to them [Angelino 1930, 211]. Hadrami traders, who once dominated inter-island trade in Indonesia before the arrival of Europeans, used their networks to sell Pekalongan batik.

The trademark of the batik industrial centres on the north coast of Java emerged through the creation of distinctive motifs and colours, which combined local, Chinese, and Western cultural influences. Salma researched batik craft centres in Pekalongan and found that ethnic origin influenced batik motifs [Salma 2013]. The influence of Hadrami culture can be seen in batik motifs that use calligraphy and pieces of Al-Quran verses, known as the Basurik motif, which holds significant popularity among communities in Sumatra [Riyanti et al. 2012]. Dutch batik entrepreneurs created bouquet motif batik decorated with chrysanthemums and grapes. Other Dutch batik motifs were inspired by European fairy tales, such as wolves, mermaids, and Roodkapje (the red hood) [Patria 2016].

On the other hand, Chinese influence can be seen in the batik featuring dragon, Hong bird, and butterfly motifs that characterize the Lasem batik industry [Aryani & Aiman 2021; Maghfiroh et al. 2023]. The bright colours typical of European and Chinese batik influenced ethnic Javanese batik entrepreneurs on the north coast of Java, prompting them to produce brightly coloured batik with Yogyakarta and Surakarta motifs. Angelino even explained that they further diversified their production by creating additional items, such as handkerchiefs, tablecloths, and chair covers [Angelino 1930].

Inter-island trade spread batik throughout the Dutch East Indies, leading to the development of the batik craft industry outside Java. Kerlogue noted that various types of decorative fabric, including batik, were also found in Jambi (Sumatra) [Kerlogue 2005]. Effiyaldi observes that, according to local collective memory, batik entered Jambi at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the arrival of Haji Muhibat and his family, who brought batik-making skills with them [Effiyaldi 2020]. This collective memory suggests that batik, as a trade commodity, had reached Jambi and later became the basis for developing local motifs. The study by Riyanti et al. shows that Jambi emerged as one of the most important markets for Basurik batik [Riyanti et al. 2012].

Europeans, such as the British and Dutch, attempted to imitate the batik craft in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century but failed because their colours were not durable [Daubanton 1922, 23–24]. From the perspective of handmade batik crafters in Surakarta and Yogyakarta, these imitations were referred to as “Dutch batik” to emphasize that they could never truly capture the Javanese spirit [Van Musschenbroek 1877]. The development of batik by foreigners was even considered a mistake, as it stripped away the essence of Javanese art [Kats 1923].

The batik craft industry also flourished in the capitals of the Surakarta and Yogyakarta Sultanates. In these two cultural centres, the growth of the batik industry was influenced by a cultural resistance to batik being treated as a mere trading commodity. The rulers of Surakarta and Yogyakarta sought to preserve the exclusivity of batik cloth as royal attire. To achieve this, they created specific motifs and employed intricate processes to produce high-quality batik. This effort was culturally significant in maintaining royal authority, exemplified by the exclusive use of the *Parangrusak* and *Sawat* motifs, which were reserved solely for the Sultan.

Historians believe that the palace’s focus on developing arts and rituals was intended to showcase the greatness and majesty of the sultanate, compensating for the loss of political power under Dutch colonialism. Soeratman notes that the decline in political

power in the Sultanate of Surakarta led to an increasingly elaborate and grand palace life-style, characterized by splendour in social order, power structures, ceremonies, customs, and etiquette [Soeratman 2000].

Typical palace clothing was produced by batik crafters, often the wives of royal officials in the religious sector, who lived near the Royal Mosque in an area known as Kauman village. These women were seen as honest and highly committed, which was intended to ensure that palace batik would not enter the trade market. However, this effort ultimately failed. In Yogyakarta, the wives of religious officials began using their batik-making skills to earn additional income, fulfilling orders from traders [Abdullah & Wardoyo 2020]. A similar pattern occurred in Kauman, Surakarta [Naomi 2012]. In fact, Kauman in Surakarta became widely recognized as a leading centre of the batik craft industry, surpassing Laweyan, where batik was first developed as a trading commodity. Kauman is known for producing the highest-quality batik, catering to a middle-to-upper-class market. In contrast, Laweyan is ranked second, primarily serving a lower-middle-class market.

The authorities' inability to maintain a monopoly on batik production allowed the industry to expand into various parts of Surakarta, such as Kauman, Pasar Kliwon, and Keprabon. Similarly, in Yogyakarta, batik production centres flourished in Kauman, Karangjajen, and Prawirotaman. This growth in Surakarta encouraged Hadrami and Chinese ethnic groups to become involved as suppliers of raw materials and equipment, such as *mori*, synthetic dyes, wax, and indigo [Sariyatun 2005]. Hadrami traders also established businesses in synthetic dyes and imported fabrics from India [Soerachman 1927]. Table 1 below illustrates this dynamic.

**Table 1. Chinese businesses in raw materials and support for the batik industry**

Name/Shop	Raw Material	Place
Kwik Tjing Gwan	White cloth and indigo	Singosaren
Tan Kiong Wa	White cloth and indigo	Coyudan
Sie Boen Tik	White cloth and other batik materials	Coyudan
Tin Ing Siang	White cloth and other batik materials	Coyudan
Sie Sik Hok	White cloth and other batik materials	Coyudan
Lie The Tjian	White cloth and synthetic dye	Coyudan

Source: [Sariyatun 2005, 51]

The involvement of Hadrami and Chinese traders in supplying raw materials for the batik industry marked the decline of the local fabric industry, which relied on handmade weaving techniques. Consequently, batik entrepreneurs in Surakarta began using imported *mori* cloth and synthetic dyes provided by foreign traders [Druk 1923; Koningsberger 1929]. Chinese traders monopolized the supply of materials for the batik industry, having earned the trust of Dutch importers. Druk noted that importers sourced goods from Europe using a consignment system, which minimized their risk of loss [Druk 1923]. The importers' primary responsibility was to ensure timely payment from Chinese traders, who acted as distributors. In addition to gaining the trust of importers, Chinese traders also secured the confidence of native authorities, specifically the Sultanates of Surakarta and Yogyakarta [Padmo 2005]. This trust enabled Chinese traders to monopolize the supply chain for the batik industry.

### *The Use of New Technology*

In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the invention of the copper stamp revolutionized the batik craft industry. Ngabei Resodipo Djiwangono, a batik entrepreneur in Kauman, was the first to adopt this technology. Lewis explains, "The stamps used are made of thin strips of copper about half an inch wide, set on edge, with short pieces of wire for the dots, all



soldered to an open metal base of the same material, but of heavier strips” [Lewis 1924]. Initially, the technology was kept secret to prevent imitation by other entrepreneurs. However, this secrecy was short-lived as the introduction of stamped batik to the market created a significant stir [Angelino 1930, 95]. Soon after, other batik entrepreneurs began ordering the copper stamp technology from Ngabei Resodipo Djiwangono, allowing them to imitate and adapt their local batik motifs for the new production method.

The discovery of the copper stamp evolved through a relatively long process. One of its origins was the development of fabric dyeing technology using stamps in India. This technology was introduced to Java by Hadrami traders but initially failed to gain traction. Raffles noted that although stamping technology produced coloured cloth, its quality was significantly inferior to that of imported Indian fabrics. According to his observations, stamped cloth produced in Java faded after just two washes [Raffles 1836]. Despite its initial shortcomings in fabric dyeing, stamping technology inspired modifications and adaptations for use in the batik craft industry. These modifications involved creating a copper plate with a specific pattern or design for batik production [Rouffaer & Juynboll 1899, 214]. Stamped batik was produced by pressing the waxed stamp onto a plain white cloth. Early stamped batik patterns were typically square, with the design repeated across the entire surface of the fabric.

The introduction of copper stamps revolutionized the batik production system. This new technology significantly accelerated the production process while reducing the number of crafters needed. Producing a single piece of handmade batik cloth typically takes around 15 days. In contrast, with copper stamps, a worker could complete 20 or more pieces of cloth daily [Lewis 1924]. This innovation made batik cloth more affordable for lower-income groups.

Research by the Department of Industry found that batik production using copper stamps does not change the stages of batik making. From this perspective, copper stamps merely replace the canting used in handmade batik. The research also revealed that at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the manufacture of batik stamps in Laweyan did not involve the initial process of washing the cloth. This was because cloth factories had developed to produce clean white cloth, allowing stamping to be done directly [Soerachman 1927]. As a result, production costs and time were reduced, enabling selling prices to be competitive with other batik factories.

The discovery of the copper stamp led to the development of new batik companies in Surakarta. Batik was no longer a business exclusively owned by ethnic Javanese; ethnic Hadrami, Chinese, and even Europeans also began to enter the market, particularly around Kauman and the city of Surakarta. The period from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century marked the peak of the Surakarta batik business’s glory. The number of batik entrepreneurs is shown in Table 2. On the other hand, the industrial centre in Laweyan remained entirely controlled by ethnic Javanese.

**Table 2. Number of batik entrepreneurs in Surakarta in 1930**

No.	BATIK ENTREPRENEURS	TOTAL
1.	Javanese	236
2.	Hadrami	88
3.	Chinese	60
4.	Europeans	3

Source: [Soedarmono 2006, 49]

Significant developments also occurred on the north coast of Java. One of the impacts of using copper stamps was the emergence of new batik industrial centres, one of which was in Kaliwungu, west of Semarang. The Kaliwungu batik craft business was founded

by Haji Muhsar, who had previously worked at a stamped batik company in Solo, Surakarta. After acquiring sufficient capital and skills, he returned home and established a stamped batik factory in Kaliwungu. As Haji Muhsar's business grew, his neighbours began to imitate him. Angelino's report noted that by 1880, more than 150 stamp factories were operating in Kaliwungu, almost all of which were managed by indigenous entrepreneurs. Onderzoek explained that the large factory in Kaliwungu could produce 200–300 pieces of stamped batik per month, with a profit of *f* 0.25–0.80 per piece [Afdeeling Handel En Nijverheid 1907, 37]. However, the batik industry in Kaliwungu withered before it could fully develop. In 1885, a major fire struck the factory complex, destroying the entire business. Even though batik entrepreneurs attempted to recover, their efforts were thwarted by another fire in 1925, which ultimately brought an end to the Kaliwungu batik industry [Angelino 1930].

The use of copper stamps, which could double production, encouraged batik entrepreneurs to expand their market to other islands in Indonesia and abroad. Entrepreneurs in the Rembang and Pekalongan residencies became the leading suppliers of batik outside Java, surpassing Surakarta and Yogyakarta. They even exported batik to Singapore, Penang, and Sri Lanka. The quantitative data on Pekalongan batik exports can be seen in Table 3. Batik exports were conducted through the large port of Semarang, as many ports along the north coast of Java had significant limitations [Vleming Jr. 1925].

**Table 3. Pekalongan batik exports**

Year	To ports outside the toll area	To ports within the toll area		
	Weight of exported batik in kg	Value of exported batik in guilders	Weight of exported batik in kg	Value of exported batik in guilders
1919	139.783	855.707	37.066	294.413
1920	139.676	758.905	14.058	158.057
1921	112.790	506.324	3.069	10.332
1922	232.953	1.354.913	40.198	183.662
1923	366.420	2.224.320	105.758	560.025
1924	379.824	2.685.418	119.900	581.969
1925	507.135	3.998.975	182.231	1.460.932

Source: [Angelino 1930, 213]

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a shift in the players of the batik industry on the north coast of Java, including in Pekalongan. Chinese entrepreneurs gradually replaced Hadrami businessmen, whose role in the batik industry declined. Today, Chinese entrepreneurs dominate the high-quality batik market, while Hadrami entrepreneurs control the low-quality batik industry. Another important phenomenon is that the batik industry has become a key part of Pekalongan's identity, with more than 1,100 batik factories. However, most of them are small businesses that are entirely dependent on Chinese entrepreneurs. As a result, the saying emerged that Pekalongan would not be Pekalongan without its batik factories.

This success did not translate into improved welfare for the crafters. Kielstra criticized that Chinese and Hadrami entrepreneurs, particularly Chinese batik entrepreneurs, exploited crafters and reduced their positions to workers dependent on their employers [Kielstra 1904]. This criticism is true to some extent, particularly in that, since the introduction of copper stamps, indigenous entrepreneurs no longer played a role in distributing batik outside the north coast of Java. Indigenous entrepreneurs became disconnected from the market, leaving them unaware of the needs or prices of batik in inter-island and export markets. All information about the batik market remained in the hands of Chinese and Hadrami entrepreneurs. Indigenous batik entrepreneurs were reduced to brokers or intermediaries between batik crafters in rural areas and Chinese and Hadrami entrepreneurs.

However, overall, the batik industry on the north coast of Java did contribute to improving community welfare [Angelino 1930, 218]. Kerchman even stated that wealthy native people were born in Pekalongan [Kerchman 1930, 326].

Criticisms of the labour conditions in the batik craft industry apply only to certain areas. The worst conditions were found in Lasem, in the Rembang residency. Economically, the Lasem batik industry established a brand that was accepted by the market and brought financial benefits [Maghfiroh et al. 2023], although these benefits were smaller than those in Pekalongan. However, in terms of the production system, exploitation of batik crafters by business owners was prevalent. Chinese entrepreneurs provided women in villages with white cloth to make batik with predetermined patterns. Abendanon explained that entrepreneurs gave advances to women batik crafters in villages, with the obligation to hand over their batik cloth for minimal wages, no more than 5 cents per day [Abendanon 1904, 90]. The same system was used to recruit women who worked in batik factories, where they were forced to work and live in the factories for years to pay off debts [Angelino 1930, 280]. Chinese batik entrepreneurs punished crafters who violated contracts by expelling them from their villages on the false pretext that they had committed adultery with male workers at the batik factory [Lestari & Wiratama 2018].

### **Conclusion**

Ki Ageng Henis's strong personality played a pivotal role in transforming batik crafts into a thriving trade commodity. For generations, batik cloth had been monopolized by the royal palace, with production limited to fulfilling internal needs. Ki Ageng Henis's entrepreneurial spirit was ignited by the bustling trade activity and the availability of *mori* cloth at Laweyan Market. Seizing this opportunity, he developed the batik craft industry to produce batik cloth for trade. The positive response from traders soon established Laweyan as the centre of the batik industry and a key hub along the Solo River trade route.

Ki Ageng Henis's innovation was carried forward by his employees, leading to the emergence of a new social class in Laweyan society: batik entrepreneurs. This new class was characterized by female batik craft entrepreneurs. Financially, these women represented the "nouveaux riches", making them outliers in the traditionally agrarian and patriarchal Javanese society.

The success of Laweyan's batik entrepreneurs inspired Hadrami and Chinese traders to establish batik craft industries along the north coast of Java. They brought skilled batik crafters from Surakarta and Yogyakarta to train local women. Consequently, batik industries emerged in key port cities on Java's north coast, including Cirebon in West Java; Pekalongan, Semarang, and Lasem in Central Java; and Surabaya and Madura in East Java.

The batik production system made significant progress with the introduction of copper stamp technology. This innovation drastically increased production while reducing costs, enabling exports to various Asian countries. These exports demonstrated that batik had evolved from being an inter-island trade commodity to becoming an export commodity.

Innovation and entrepreneurship are essential for the growth of batik craft businesses. The local cultural characteristics and the unique challenges faced by each batik craft industry centre have driven diverse innovations. Pekalongan has emerged as the most developed batik craft centre, supported by a strong entrepreneurial culture. In contrast, batik crafts in Surakarta and Yogyakarta have stagnated, remaining heavily influenced by a subsistence agrarian culture.

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FIGURES



Fig. 1. The Centres of the Batik Craft Industry in Java in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century



Fig. 2. Batik Crafters in Laweyan.

Source: available at:

<https://www.cxomedia.id/home/20220428130456-36-174740/no-place-like-laweyan>  
(accessed September 5, 2024)



Fig. 3. Batik Sidoluhur Motif.

Source: [Mirsa 2021, 9]



Fig. 4. Chinese batik.

Source: *Batik Prabuseno*, available at: [www.batikprabuseno.com](http://www.batikprabuseno.com) (accessed September 5, 2024)



Fig. 5. Dutch Batik: Little Red Riding Hood Motif.

Source: [Suyani 2013, 79]



Fig. 6. Batik production with copper stamp technology.

Source: [Daubanton 1922, 12]

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I. Пурванта, М. Пелу

### Вплив інновацій у мистецтві батика на його розвиток у Центральній Яві

У статті проаналізовано процес інноваційного розвитку мистецтва батика в Центральній Яві, започаткованого Кі Агенгом Генісом у XVI столітті. Зокрема, порушено такі питання: 1) У який спосіб Кі Агенг Геніс зніціював розквіт мистецтва батика в Лавейні? 2) Як розвивалося мистецтво батика в Центральній Яві до початку XIX століття? 3) Який вплив мала поява мідного штампа на мистецтво батика в Центральній Яві? Зазначено, що Геніс успішно інтегрував новітні технології в мистецтво батика, перетворивши його на цінний товар. Своєю чергою це привело до фундаментальних соціальних змін у Лавейні, зокрема до появи нового класу підприємців, які займаються виробництвом і продажем виробів з батика. Стрімкий розвиток мистецтва батика в Лавейні надихнув торговців північного узбережжя Яви на створення власних ремісничих центрів з виготовлення батика. Такі портові міста, як Семаранг, Калівунгу, Пекалонган і Ласем, стали провідними хабами виробництва батика завдяки просуванню оригінальних мотивів, створених з урахуванням впливових ідей “етнічних” підприємців. Крім того, запровадження технології мідного штампа прискорило виробництво, суттєво збільшивши обсяги випуску і перетворивши штампований батик на ключовий експортний товар Нідерландської Ост-Індії.

**Ключові слова:** мистецтво батика; підприємці, які займаються виробництвом і продажем виробів з батика; ручний батик; Лавейн; штампований батик

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