

A COMPARISON STUDY ON ORNAMENT OF RUMOH ACEH IN ACEH BESAR AND UMAH PITU RUANG IN ACEH TENGAH

Zulhadi Sahputra¹ & Muhammad Heru Arie Edytia²

^{1,2} *Architecture and Planning Department, Faculty of Engineering,*

Universitas Syiah Kuala

zulhadi.sahputra@unsyiah.ac.id

muhammad.heru@unsyiah.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the diversity of ornaments used in traditional house in Aceh Besar and Aceh Tengah. The diversity of ornaments was viewed through four approaches, including: the location of ornament used in traditional house, types of ornament, the basic form of geometric, and the function. The location of ornaments used in traditional houses is divided into three parts, lower part (the feet of the building), middle part (the body of the building), and top (the head of the building). The type of ornament described the category of ornament. The basic form of ornament is a study that described the geometric type of ornament. Finally, the ornament function is to explain the aesthetic, meaning, and technical functions of using ornamentation. Rumoh Aceh and Umah Pitu Ruang are cultural assets and local identities of Aceh with all its local wisdom. This study was conducted as an effort to preserve the existence of ornaments in Aceh traditional house, especially in Aceh Besar and Aceh Tengah.

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Keywords: *Ornament, Comparison, Rumoh Aceh, Umah Pitu Ruang*



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INTRODUCTION

Background

Aceh is one of the provinces in Indonesia which has a diverse culture, customs, ethnicity and language.



Figure 1. Map locations of Aceh Province

Source: Wikipedia, (2020)



Figure 2. Map locations of Rumoh Aceh in Lambunot Village, Aceh Besar and Umah Pitu Ruang in Kemili Village, Aceh Tengah

Source: Edytia, (2020)

One of the diversities is the diversity of local languages. In Aceh Province, there are 13 tribes and each tribe have its own customs, different languages such as; Aceh, Gayo, Aneuk Jamee, Singkil, Alas, Tamiang, Kluet, Devayan, Sigulai, Pakpak, Haloban, Lekon, and Nias. Beside the diversity of languages, Aceh Province also has a variety of traditional houses, traditional clothes, traditional ceremonies, dances, traditional weapons, handicrafts folk songs, and culinary.

This diversity is also reflected in architecture of Aceh traditional house. Traditional house is a cultural asset and the identity of the Acehnese people, which is a symbol of the embodiment of technology, social and cultural system for the traditional Acehnese society. Aceh traditional architecture is an architecture and built system that has grown and developed in a traditional society that still influence the behaviour and values of life collectively.

The Aceh traditional house has unique construction characteristics, not only in terms of shape, structure, function and decoration but also in method of construction. During its development, the form and construction process of Rumah Aceh has undergone acculturation or changed gradually to adapt to technology development.

Nevertheless, Aceh traditional house with all its uniqueness is starting to be less in demand so that its existence began to experience extinction. In addition, the existence of utoeh (an expert builder of Aceh traditional house) has also begun to retire because these skills are taught from generation to generation directly in the field without good documentation.

Therefore, it is necessary to re-establish information and knowledge related to Aceh traditional architecture as a learning for the next generation. It gives the existence of Aceh traditional house which is starting to extinct.

One element of the diversity of Aceh traditional houses that can be observed is in the type of ornaments used. The use of motifs and ornaments is vital to be studied and maintained continuously as a representation of local culture. Therefore, this study focuses on a comparative study of ornamentation used between Rumah Aceh in Aceh Besar and Umah Pitu Ruang in Aceh Tengah as case study.



Figure 3. Motif and Ornaments used in Craft and Traditional House

Source: Sahputra, Zulhadi; Heru Arie Edytia, Muhammad; Mirza (2018)

Aceh Besar and Aceh Tengah are two out of 23 urban districts in Aceh Province. The diversity of language, culture among the community in the districts is reflected in the diversity of motifs and architectural ornaments in these traditional houses.

From this study, it is expected that information about Aceh traditional house can be studied more comprehensively and able to be disseminated to engage community interest in maintaining and preserving Aceh traditional house.

CASE STUDY

This study aims to describe the diversity of ornaments used in a traditional house in Aceh Besar and Aceh Tengah. The traditional Aceh houses that were used as case studies are Rumoh Aceh in Lambunot Village, Aceh Besar and Umah Pitu Ruang in Kemili Village, Aceh Tengah. Umah Pitu Ruang is a traditional house of the Gayo tribe that inhabits Aceh Tengah which consists of seven rooms.

These two case studies were chosen because geographically these two areas have different characteristics. Lambunot Village, Aceh Besar is a lowland rural area close to the capital city of Aceh Province, while Kemili Village, Takengon is located in highland with an altitude of about 1200 m above sea level. This condition indirectly affects the character of traditional houses in the local area. Furthermore, rumoh Aceh in Lambunot

Village, Aceh Besar and Umah Pitu Ruang in Kemili Village, Aceh Tengah represents a traditional house that still preserve the ornaments.



Figure 4. Rumah Aceh in Lambunot Village

Source: Sahputra (2020)



Figure 5. Umah Pitu Ruang in Kemili Village

Source: Sarita (2020)

This study describes the diversity of ornaments through four approaches. These approaches are (1) location of ornaments used in traditional house, (2) type of ornament, (3) basic form of ornament geometric, and (4) function of ornaments. The location of ornaments used in traditional houses was divided into three parts, lower part (the feet of the building), middle part (the body of the building), and top (the head of the building). The types of ornament described the category of ornament. The basic form of ornament describes the geometric type of ornament. Finally, the ornament function explains the aesthetic, meaning, and technical functions of using ornamentation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Basically, the ornaments used in Aceh have similarities between one region and another. The difference lies in the creativity and technique of the ornament motif design by the carver of each region. Ornament is a manifestation of artistic value in the form of painting or carving that makes decoration in traditional houses, clothes, household utensils etc. All of which are based on the noble philosophy of the community.

Creativity in designing ornament is inseparable from the behaviour patterns of the Acehnese people. The art of Acehnese ornament is a cultural product inherited from the traditions of its ancestors who have undergone a long journey. It eventually forms a cultural identity from local wisdom for its community. Experience and lessons learned from nature and supported by the creativity of the community have allowed the emergence of the ornamental art that contains an aesthetic and ethical value. These values are full of tradition that is prevailing in Acehnese culture.

The art of Aceh ornament is resulted from a cultural process that survived and has a strong relationship with the tradition. Ornamental art for Acehnese people is not only a language of image but also a manifestation of the soul. It contains a deep meaning and philosophy of life that is rooted in the community. Ornamental art has function, educational, moral, and spiritual values. The carving arrangements are taken from surrounding related to the life of the Acehnese people.

In the context of architecture and decorative arts, ornament is a decoration used to beautify building or object elements. However, a few ornaments created have the aim of symbolically expressing a certain value according to certain norms (customs, beliefs, and other social systems). According to Aryo Sunaryo (2009), the presence of an ornament has 3 (three) functions, namely (1) aesthetic function, (2) symbolic function, and (3) technical / constructive function.

The aesthetic function is an ornament function that aims to beautify the appearance of a form (object) or building. It is called as a passive ornament because it only functions as an aesthetic function. Symbolic function is a function of ornament that was made not only to have a function as an

aesthetic but also has certain values or symbols based on certain norms (customs, religion, social system) to local communities. In traditional architecture, ornament is an architectural element that functions as a medium for expressing the meaning and identity of an area.

While the technical / constructive function is an ornament structurally as a technical function to support, connect, or strengthen the construction of a form (object) or building. It is called as an active ornament which is not only to decorate an object but also as supporting construction or strengthening specific object.

Based on decorative motifs or form patterns, Aryo Sunaryo (2009: 15) simply groups them into 2 types of ornaments, namely (1) geometric motif ornaments and (2) organic motif ornaments. Geometric motifs generally use elements such as lines and planes. Geometric motifs developed from repeating dots, lines, or planes from simple to intricate patterns. Several types of geometric ornament motifs commonly found in the archipelago including:

- 1.Meander motif ornament: an edge ornament with a winding line as the basic shape.
- 2.Twisted motif ornament: an ornament in the form of spiral curved lines or hooks.
- 3.Slope motif ornament: an ornament that has a basic shape or pattern of parallel oblique lines.
- 4.Banji motif ornament: an ornament that has a basic shape of crossing curved lines similar to the shape of a propeller.
- 5.Kawung motif ornament: an ornament formed from intersecting circles.
- 6.Tumpal motif ornament: an ornament that has a basic triangular shape.



Figure 6. Geometric Motif Ornaments

Source: Aryo Sunaryo (2009)

Organic motif ornaments consist of:

1. Human figure motif ornaments.

Following are four types of human figure motifs commonly found in Indonesia, namely:

- a. Whole figure motif: a depiction of a human figure in areas that are relatively untouched by foreign influences. In general, it still continues the "primitive" style as a depiction of ancestors and is a continuation of monumental art forms in prehistoric times.
- b. Kedok and kala motif: the depiction of very important parts of the human body such as the head and face.
- c. Mamuli motifs and other body parts: a depiction that describes certain organs.
- d. Wayang motif: a depiction of ancestral spirits and characters in the epic Ramayana and Mahabharata.



Figure 7. Human Figure Motif Ornaments

Source: Aryo Sunaryo (2009)

2. Animal motif / ornaments (fauna)

Types of animal motif ornaments are animals that can be found in Indonesia according to the environment of each region. This type of motif is divided into several groups, including:

- a. Poultry motifs: chicken, duck, and bird motifs.
- b. Water and reptile animal motifs: fish, snake and dragon motifs.
- c. Land animal motifs: buffalo, horse, elephant, lion, and other animal motifs.

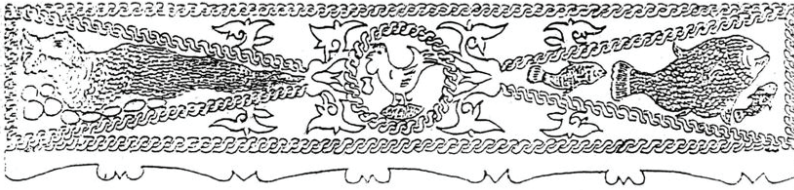


Figure 8. Animal Motif / Ornaments (fauna)

Source: Seni Rupa Aceh (1996)

3. Plant motif ornaments (Flora)

Currently, plant ornaments are a major part of the ornamentation in Indonesia. Generally, flora motifs emphasize the beauty aspect of decoration, so that not all types of motifs contain symbolic meanings. The forms of floral motifs that are often used include:

- a. Flower motif
- b. Leaf motif
- c. Tree motif
- d. Seed and fruit motif
- e. Shoots motif
- f. Tendril motif



Figure 9. Flora Motif / Ornaments

Source: Seni Rupa Aceh (1996)

4. Nature and landscape motif ornaments

Natural motifs and landscapes are made by taking inspiration from the nature such as:

- a. Sun motif
- b. Moon motif
- c. Star motif
- d. Cloud motif

- e. Mountain motif
- f. Water motif
- g. Landscape motif

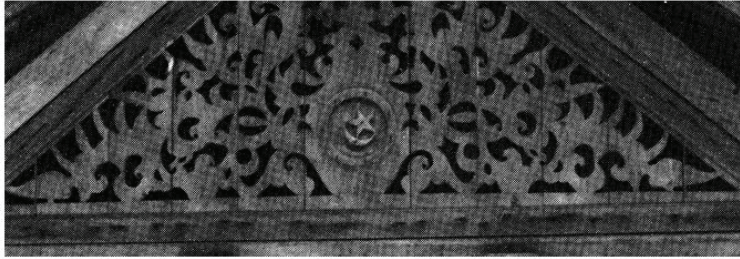


Figure 10. Nature Ornaments (Star and Moon)

Source: Tangan-Tangan Terampil Seni Kerajinan Aceh (1989)

5. Technology, calligraphy and abstract motif ornaments

- a. Technology motif: motif made of objects that contain technological values,
- b. Calligraphy motif: Initially, it was developed from grave tombstones and applied to mosques and other buildings. This motif can be in the form of composition of Arabic letters, often combined with interwoven motifs that form plant tendrils,
- c. Abstract motif, is a motif with unrecognizable form compositions.

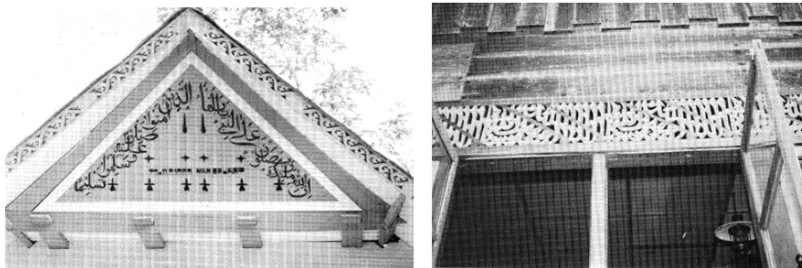


Figure 11. Calligraphy Ornaments

Source: Tangan-Tangan Terampil Seni Kerajinan Aceh (1989)

Aceh culture is mostly influenced by Islamic culture. Therefore, most of the motifs, ornaments, and design of Acehnese handicrafts are translations of Islamic culture. According to Leigh (1989) the motifs / ornaments used in Aceh are influenced by Islamic culture. Motifs / ornaments in Aceh are divided into 5 categories, including: (1) geometric motifs (2) flora life motifs (3) bird life motifs (4) animal life motifs, and (5) Islamic motifs. The most common ornaments used in Acehnese houses are flora motif ornaments.

In general, the most widely used ornaments in Aceh are flora. Flower motifs and vine stem motifs are the source of development inspiration for Acehnese ornamental design. Meanwhile, human figures and animal motifs are not allowed in Islam. It can symbolize idols. Although there are some animal ornaments, it usually has been abstracted into geometric shapes.

In Aceh Tengah, the term ornament is often referred to *kerawang* which is a decoration in the form of carved motifs or decorative styles applied to a Gayo traditional house in Aceh Tengah (Salihin et al., 2019).

The motif of Acehnese ornament and its development is dynamic. It can be seen from the change in Hindu motifs to become more Islamic ones. The diversity of Acehnese ornaments reflects traditional (regional) elements and has also undergone renewal, so that there are similarities ornaments to other regions in Indonesia.

Basically, the ornaments in Aceh as a whole have similarities between one region and another. The difference lies in the creativity of the ornament carver of each region.

METHOD

The method used in the comparative study of Rumoh Aceh ornament in Aceh Besar and Umah Pitu Ruang in Aceh Tengah was observation and examination on the ornament diversity based on the ornament hierarchy, including:

- 1.Ornament used location;
- 2.Type of ornament;

3. Basic form of ornament, and;
4. Function of the existing ornaments in the traditional houses.

DISCUSSIONS

Ornament Location

Based on the location, the ornaments are divided into 3 main parts, including: (1) lower part (the feet of the building), (2) middle part (the body of the building), and (3) top (the head of the building).

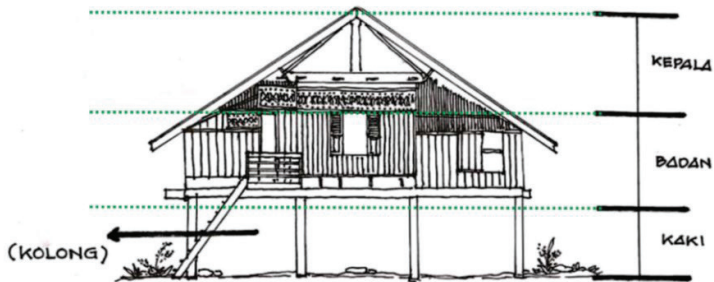


Figure 12. Tectonic Construction Rumoh Aceh

Source:Zulhadi Sahputra, Era Nopera Rauzi (2020)

The feet of building are the main structure (column) of the Rumoh Aceh and Umah Pitu Ruang, the body of the building consists of elements of walls, windows and doors. Furthermore, the head of the building consists of roof elements, tulak angin, and lisplang.



Figure 12. Rumoh Aceh and Umah Pitu Ruang

Source: Sahputra & Sarita (2020)

Based on the field study, at the bottom, column of Rumoh Aceh in Lambunot does not use ornaments but Umah Pitu Ruang uses ornament at its column. This is one of the unique differences between umah pitu ruang in Aceh Tengah and rumoh Aceh in other regions, including Aceh Besar.

On the body, these two traditional houses are divided into three elements: wall, window, and door. Rumoh Aceh uses ornaments on the upper walls, while the windows and doors have no ornament. Whereas in Umah Pitu Ruang, the front wall and door are dominated by ornament, while the windows and walls on the other side have no ornament.

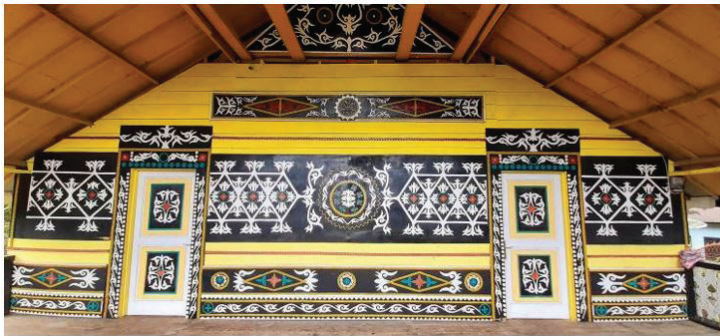


Figure 13. Umah Pitu Ruang Ornaments

Source: Sarita (2020)

Table 1. Ornament Hierarchy of Rumoh Aceh and Umah Pitu Ruang

| Rumoh Aceh | | Umah Pitu Ruang | |
|------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|------|
| head | -tulak angén -lisplang | -tolak angin -lisplang | head |
| body | -upper wall -lower wall | -front wall -front door | body |
| feet | -none | -coloumn | feet |

Source: Sahputra (2020)

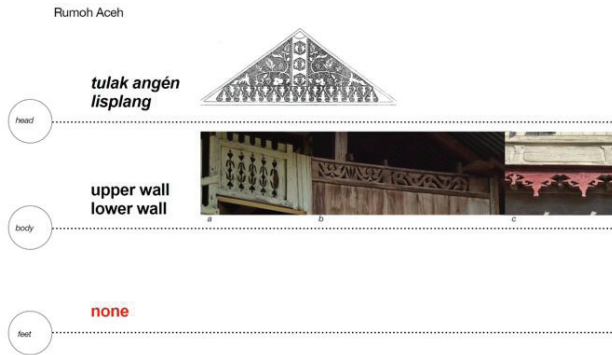


Figure 14. Ornament Hierarchy of Rumoh Aceh

Source: Edytia (2020)



Figure 15. Ornament Hierarchy of Umah Pitu Ruang

Source: Edytia (2020)

The presence of ornaments at Rumoh Aceh is sometimes influenced by the social status of the owner. This also applies on the number of ruweueng (space between columns) in Rumoh Aceh. The higher the social status, the greater the number of spaces between columns and the diversity of types of ornament.

In ancient times, the people of Aceh consisted of 4 (four) social statuses (class), including the following:

1. king
2. ulee balang.
3. scholars or religious leader

4. commoners

Based on space in between columns (ruweueng) arrangement, Rumoh Aceh owned by commoners has three spaces in between 12 columns (ruweueng) while Rumoh Aceh owned by ulee balang has four spaces in between 15 columns or ruweueng. In addition, Rumoh Aceh is owned by scholars or religious leaders and king that have five spaces in between 18 columns (ruweueng) and six spaces in between 20 columns (ruweueng) or more consecutively.

Types of Ornament

The types of ornament used in Rumoh Aceh and Umah Pitu Ruang are plant motif / ornament (flora) and nature. The motives of vegetable / flora / fauna life are often transformed into religious values interpreted as plants of the paradise garden of Muslims. The plant has meaning in the Islamic conceptual framework of the paradise garden, human survival, and the development of human intellectual (Leigh, 1989).

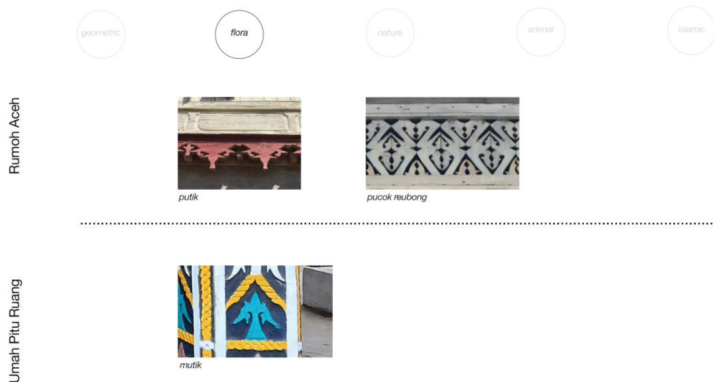


Figure 16. Flora ornament in Rumoh Aceh and Umah Pitu Ruang

Source: Edytia (2020)



Figure 17. Nature ornament types in Umah Pitu Ruang

Source: Edytia (2020)

There is something interesting about the type of ornament in Umah Pitu Ruang in Aceh Tengah. The geographical condition of Aceh Tengah located in the highlands makes Aceh Tengah referred to as "the country above the clouds". This has inspired artists or carver in Aceh Tengah to develop typical ornaments, namely emun. Emun, in the term of Aceh Tengah language means cloud.

There are many types of emun ornaments in Aceh Tengah namely: (1) emun berangkat (paraded cloud), (2) emun mupesir / scatter cloud, (3) emun beriring / marching cloud, (4) emun berkune / asked cloud, and (5) emun bertumpuk (stacked cloud) (Dafrina, 2018).

Basic Form of Ornament Geometry

In tracing the finding of the geometry of Acehnese ornament, there is a mathematical logic in the created patterns. Basically, Acehnese ornament geometry is a simple repetition of geometry (iterated), recursive, movement, rotation, scale, and mirroring and combined with one another in various scales and positions.

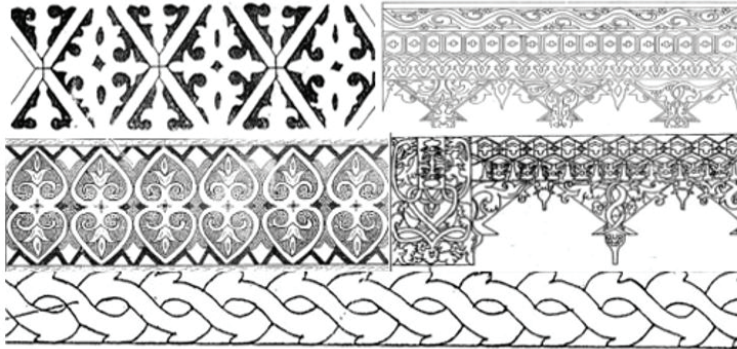


Figure 18. Repetition in Aceh ornaments

Source: Author

The study of the basic form of ornament geometry is used in Rumoh Aceh and Umah Pitu Ruang that is intended to uncover the similarities and differences between the two types of ornaments. Generally, the basic geometric forms of ornament in Rumoh Aceh and Umah Pitu Ruang are repetition of triangles, circles and squares.

Rumoh Aceh
Sulur



Umah Pitu Ruang
Emun Beriring



Figure 19. Basic form repetition of Rumoh Aceh and Umah Pitu Ruang

Source: Edytia (2020)

Ornament Function

In general, the function of ornament in Rumoh Aceh and Umah Pitu Ruang is an aesthetic function. In some parts, it is not only seen as an




aesthetic function but also as technical functions and comfort functions, e.g. ornament on the upper walls and *tulak angen*.



Figure 20. Rumoh Aceh and Umah Pitu Ruang Ornamen Function


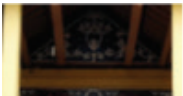
Source: Sahputra & Sarita (2020)

Table 2. Ornament Function of Rumoh Aceh

| | | | |
|-----------|---|---|--|
| aesthetic |  |  |  |
| technical | structure (kandang) | <i>tulak angen</i> (ventilation) | ventilation |
| meaning | flora (growing up) | flora (growing up) | flora (growing up) |

Source: Sahputra (2020)

Table 3. Ornament Function of Umah Pitu Ruang

| | | | |
|-----------|---|---|--|
| aesthetic |  |  |  |
| technical | structure (column) | <i>tulak angen</i> (ventilation) | wall and ventilation |
| meaning | emun berkune (branching clouds) | | |
| | democracy, responsible, signing | emun berkune (branching clouds) | |
| | democracy, responsible, signing | emun beriring (marching cloud) | |
| | togetherness, association, unity | | |

Source: Sahputra (2020)

Furthermore, ornament functions as a meaning. The meaning in the

ornament is understanding of a language, and a symbol (Dafrina, 2018). The ornaments in Rumoh Aceh and Umah Pitu Ruang have different meanings and philosophies as they depend on the beliefs and customs applied in the local community. Umah Pitu Ruang has more philosophical meanings, such as: (a) emun berangkat: symbol of solidarity in unity, (b) emun beriring: the shadow of the cloud viewed as a tangle, (c) emun mupesir: a metaphor of addition to the population with the expansion of the new territory, (d) emun mutumpuk: the gathered cloud which has a meaning as a deliberative assembly to discuss important issues, (e) puter tali: twisted rope to tie an object, and (f) pucuk rebung: symbolizes the process of fostering and educating the young generation in Gayo in building the nation, etc. (Salihin et al., 2019)

CONCLUSION

Rumoh Aceh and Umah Pitu Ruang are cultural assets and have local identities of Aceh that represent a lot of local wisdom. Its existence must be maintained and studied so that the knowledge could be shared to and learned by public.

Based on the results of the discussion, the ornaments in Rumoh Aceh and Umah Pitu Ruang have similarities in terms of basic form. Meanwhile, in terms of form, the ornaments in Umah Pitu Ruang have their own characteristics, which are generally different from the ornaments in other areas. Ornaments in Rumoh Aceh are mostly dominated by plant / flora motifs, while the ornaments in Umah Pitu Ruang have distinctive characteristics of using clouds / emun on every part of the house. Furthermore, Umah Pitu Ruang's ornament has more meaning and philosophy than the ornament in Rumoh Aceh.

Finally, this paper aims to preserve the existence of ornaments in Aceh traditional house, Rumoh Aceh and Umah Pitu Ruang, especially in Aceh Besar and Aceh Tengah and as reference for further research development.

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