

Form and Meaning of the Nommensen Missionary Monument

Harley S. P Pannjaitan¹, Rosita Ginting², Asni Barus³

^{1,2,3}University of Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Harley S. P Pannjaitan

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20240447>

ABSTRACT

The Nommensen Missionary Monument is a form of honouring or remembering the missionaries who played a role in spreading certain religions or beliefs to areas where the religion was not previously known. The theory used in analysing the data is the semiotic theory proposed by Charles Sander Peirce. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative method. In this study found the results of 30 types of motif forms, functions and meanings of motifs on the Nommensen Missionary monument, among others, namely, Sumatra Forest Motifs, Huta Sikkola Topas King's House, Batang Toru River and Hariara Tree, War between villages, Nommensen Tells the Bible, Nommensen Prostrates and Prays, makes a cooperation agreement, Nommensen Gathers the King, Shaman Poisoning Nommensen's Food, Buffalo Herder, Mamele Sombaon, Nommensen Baptises Four Couples, Women Pounding Rice, Huta Dame Village in Saitnihuta, Ari Robu Event after Sowing Samai, First Branch of the Church in Saitnihuta, Evangelising Church in Pansurnapitu, Nommensen and Johanes Preaching, Sombaon Natumair, Miss Needham Guiding the Mothers, Pansurnapitu Seminary, Pearaja Church, Election of Elder Candidates, HKBP Campus, Graduates, Cross, Angels, Statue of God, Colours on Monuments.

Keywords: *monument, religion, semiotics, Batak*

1 INTRODUCTION

Missionary monuments are a form of honoring or remembering missionaries who played a role in spreading a particular religion or belief to areas where the religion was not previously known. Missionary monuments are often built to honor the contribution and dedication of missionaries in introducing new religions to local communities. Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945), considered monuments as symbols that play an important role in constructing human meaning and understanding of the world. For him, Monuments are visual representations that connect conceptual abstractions with concrete experiences. Roland Barthes (1950-1964), argues that Monuments are signs or symbols that carry specific cultural and ideological meanings. According to him, monuments also have the symbolic power to influence people's perspectives and thinking. David Bosch (2006), describes missionaries as people who are called and sent to spread the message of religion to areas that have not been reached or have not been given access to certain religious teachings. For him, missionaries are religious ambassadors who preach the gospel and inspire others to embrace their faith.




2. RESEARCH METHODS





The research method is a series of procedures or strategies known as thesis research methods to collect, analyze, and research questions in. This thesis must be interpreted using data. According to Sugiyono (2019: 2), research techniques can be seen as a scientific way to collect reliable data with the aim of finding, creating, and confirming certain information that can then be used to understand, resolve, and forecast problems. The method used in this article is a qualitative descriptive research method to study the Nommensen Missionary Monument. The techniques used in collecting data with the triangulation method (Moleong, 2017: 35) are 1) interviews with informants who are expert staff of Monument guards. 2) observations made at the research site and 3) documentation in the form of pictures of this research object. The data analysis methods used in this article are: 1) all data







that has been collected are clarified according to the object of study. 2) After all data is clarified, the data are analyzed by the established study, namely, how the form, function, and meaning of the symbols contained in the Nommensen Missionary Monument. 3) Based on the collected data, researchers try to find the core data and then draw conclusions. Research conclusions need to be verified by double-checking, by looking back at the data obtained in the field and information.






3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION







Based on the results of the research, the Nommensen Missionary Monument has 30 different motifs, meanings, and functions. Figurative motifs are motifs that describe certain forms or objects, such as humans, animals, plants, or other objects. Figurative motifs are often used on monuments to convey a certain message or meaning.






No	Motive Form	Motive Function	Motive Meaning
1	<p>Sumatran Forest Motif</p>  <p>The Sumatran forest is a zending mission to the Land of Batak, sometimes the road travelled is too steep and slippery, there are roots hanging from large trees making it easier to travel in steep places.</p>	<p>An overview of Batak's natural and cultural wealth.</p>	<p>Biodiversity and various types of flora and fauna that live in Sumatra's forests, such as trees, flowers, birds, tigers, and other animals. Sumatran forests also have important economic and social values for the people of Indonesia.</p>
2	<p>Motif of King Huta's House</p>  <p>The first place was a stopover and the beginning of his mission before he started in Silindung.</p>	<p>As a residence for the chieftain or king of the Huta.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a visual manifestation of the philosophy, beliefs, and values of the Toba Batak people. - Identity and Pride. - Balance and Harmony. - Strength and Leadership.
3	<p>Sikkola Topas Motif</p>  <p>Sikkola Topas is a school built by</p>	<p>The school motif is a means of educating the Batak community about education.</p>	<p>Describes a school built with natural materials, namely bamboo, as the walls and roof are made of bamboo.</p>


	<p><i>Nommensen that is integrated with his house. It is very simple, the columns are made of round wood and the walls are made of bark and bamboo.</i></p>		
4	<p><i>The motif of the Batang Toru River and the Hariara Tree</i></p>  <p><i>The crossing path of Nommensen and his entourage.</i></p>	<p><i>The river is home to a wide variety of animals and plants, and the tree is considered a sacred tree where the spirits of the ancestors reside.</i></p>	<p>The river symbolizes life, fertility, and prosperity. The hariara tree symbolizes strength, protection, and wisdom.</p>
5	<p><i>Motive of Warfare between Villages</i></p>  <p><i>They passed through two warring villages but survived. After exchanging greetings and Nommensen explaining his mission, the villagers hosted the group at the home of King Ompu Gumara in Banjarnahor village.</i></p>	<p><i>It symbolizes the challenges Nommensen faced in spreading Christianity in Batak land. At that time, the Batak people still adhered to animism and dynamism.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fighting over resources, such as land, water, or livestock - Political or power rivalry. - Grudges
6	<p><i>Nommensen's Motive for Preaching the Bible</i></p>  <p>Nommensen knew that it was very difficult to explain the trinity, sin, etc., at the beginning of the preaching of the Word of God to unlearned labourers.</p>	<p>This motif also serves to educate the public about the history of the spread of Christianity in Batak land.</p>	<p><i>To convey a message about the importance of education and knowledge.</i></p>
7	<p><i>Motif of Nommensen Prostrating and Praying.</i></p>  <p>In this motif Nommensen prays "Lord, this is the place I dream of, let me offer my life for them, that they may be Your eternal possession".</p>	<p>To show his sincerity in spreading Christianity to the Batak people. Nommensen believed that prayer was the most effective way to communicate with God and ask for His guidance.</p>	<p><i>Nommensen's sacrifice to spread the gospel.</i></p>
8	<p><i>Nommensen's Motive for Making Agreements with Kings.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To get permission to spread Christianity. - To gain the support of the Batak kings. - To avoid conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shows that Nommensen respects the customs and traditions of the Batak people. - Demonstrates that

	 <p>In this motif, the kings helped to defend Nommensen's mission.</p>	with the Batak kings	<i>Nommensen respects the customs and traditions of the Batak people.</i>
9	<p>Nommensen's Motive for Gathering the Kings</p>  <p>In this motif Nommensen questioned all the kings "Who among you agrees and who does not agree to give the land where my house stands, I will write it down on this big book".</p>	<i>So that the Batak people who are still Pelbegu do not disturb their residence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Nommensen managed to establish a good relationship with the leaders of the Batak community.</i> - <i>Unity and harmony.</i> - <i>Hope and optimism</i> - <i>Change</i>
10	<p>Motive of the Shaman Poisoning Nommensen's Food.</p>  <p>In this motif, a shaman feels challenged and will kill him.</p>	<i>So that Nommensen died and his sending mission failed in its spread</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>As a form of resistance to the spread of the Gospel.</i> - <i>As an attempt to maintain the customs and traditions of the Batak people</i>
11	<p>Motif of a Buffalo Herder</p>  <p>A Batak traveller riding a buffalo. Buffaloes are important animals for the Batak people.</p>	<i>Buffaloes are used as labor animals for ploughing rice fields and for the community to move around.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Fertility and prosperity.</i> - <i>Social status.</i> - <i>Sacrifice and compassion</i>
12	<p>Mamele Sombaon Motif</p>  <p>a Batak traditional ceremony performed to ask for protection from ancestral spirits. The Mamele Sombaon ceremony is carried out by making offerings to the ancestral spirits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>To strengthen the relationship between humans and the gods or ancestors.</i> - <i>Mamela sombaon is performed as an expression of gratitude to the gods or ancestors for the blessings that have been given, such as health, bountiful harvests, safety, and good fortune.</i> 	A traditional Batak ceremony performed to ask for protection from ancestral spirits.
13	<p>Nommensen Baptises Four Husbands and Wives</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Baptism is a sacrament that symbolizes cleansing from sin and new birth</i> - <i>Being freed from sin</i> 	Nommensen succeeded in carrying out its mission

	The motif symbolises Nommensen's success in spreading Christianity in Tanah Batak.		
14	<p>Women Pounding Rice</p>  <p>The motif of women pounding is symbolic of the life of the Batak people. Rice is the staple food of the Batak people. The process of pounding rice is one of the important activities in the life of the Batak people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Batak people are a hardworking people - Rice is the staple food 	This activity is one of the daily activities of the Batak people in processing rice into rice.
15	<p>Huta Dame (friedensdorf) village in Saitnihuta</p>  <p>Nommensen succeeded in establishing the first Christian village in the Land of Batak.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One of the first Christian settlements in Batak land - This motif depicts traditional Batak houses built in the European style. 	This motif depicts a peaceful and prosperous village.
16	<p>Ari Robu Event Motif After Sowing Samai</p>  <p>A tradition that has long been carried out by the Batak people to ask for a good harvest.</p>	<i>Ari Robu for the Batak community is a means of maintaining good relations with ancestors</i>	a traditional ceremony performed to invoke the protection and blessings of ancestral spirits so that rice plants grow well and produce a bountiful harvest.
17	<p>Church in Saitnihuta First Branch</p>  <p>The first Christian church was built in the Land of Batak, by Missionary Nommensen in 1864.</p>	A place where Christians gather to worship, pray, and listen to the word of God.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A symbol of the spread of Christianity in the Land of Batak. - A symbol of the unity of the Batak people - A symbol of Batak's history and culture
18	<p>Evangelical Church Branch in Pansurnapitu</p>  <p>The Evangelical Church Branch in Pansurnapit is symbolic of the development of the spread of Christianity in the Land of Batak.</p>	The church is not only a place of worship but also a means for the community to gather, share, and support each other.	It is one of the oldest churches in Indonesia and an important symbol for the Batak Christian community.
19	Nommensen and Johannes Preaching	Tanah Batak menjadi Tanah Kristen.	Nommensen and Johannes delivered Christianity to the Batak people

	 <p>This motif depicts the two missionaries preaching to the Batak people.</p>		
20	<p><i>Sombaon Natumair</i> (Rain Request Ceremony)</p>  <p><i>Sombaon Natumair</i> is a traditional Batak ceremony performed to ask for rain. This ceremony is usually performed during the long dry season.</p>	<p>The aim is to ask God Almighty to send down rain.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A traditional ceremony - a symbol of belief and religiosity
21	<p>Miss Hester Needham Tutors the Mothers</p>  <p>Miss Needham is teaching Batak mothers how to read and write. This motif symbolizes Miss Needham's role in advancing the education of Batak women.</p>	<p>Fight for their rights in society</p>	<p>Paved the way for Batak women to get a proper education.</p>
22	<p>Pancurnapitu Seminary</p>  <p>Pancurnapitu Seminary is evidence that education has begun to develop in the Land of Batak</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The most reputable theological higher education institution in Indonesia. - Producing qualified teachers and doctors 	<p>This motif depicts not only a seminary building, but also other symbolic meanings, such as religious propagation, education, unity, and cultural preservation.</p>
23	<p>Pearaja Church</p>  <p>This church is the mother church of Huria Kristen Batak Protestan (HKBP).</p>	<p>Batak communities can meet each other, exchange ideas, and establish social relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Symbolises religious, educational, and cultural change - A reminder of the resilience, unity, and rich cultural heritage of the Batak people
24	<p>Election of Elder Candidates</p>  <p>In this motif, Nommensen prepared pastoral care for the congregation. Each village needed sintua (elders). From the beginning, Nommensen aspired and planned that his congregation would be able to stand on its</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To select people who have good spiritual qualities - Elders should be people who fear God, have strong faith, and live by Christian teachings to ensure the quality of church services. 	<p>An elder is a church leader who has the duty and responsibility to lead and manage the church.</p>

	own without the help of German missionaries.		
25	<p>HKBP Campus</p>  <p>This motif depicts the HKBP Pearaja Campus which consists of various buildings, such as church buildings, school buildings, and dormitory buildings. evidence that education has begun to develop in the Land of Batak.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving the quality of life of the Batak people. - Play a role in the spread of Christianity, but also in other areas, such as education, health, and social care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic empowerment programs and non-formal education programs - The campus offers various programs to preserve Batak cultures, such as Batak language teaching programs and Batak arts and culture programs.
26	<p>Graduates</p>  <p>Graduates symbolize the results of educational endeavors. This motif is proof that education has provided positive results for Batak society.</p>	<p>Use their knowledge and skills to build Batak communities and promote the welfare of society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opening up new opportunities for the future. - Completing their formal education, usually at university.
27	<p>The Cross</p>  <p>This cross is a symbol of Christianity, which was brought by Missionary Nommensen to the Land of Batak.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - symbolizes the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross to atone for the sins of mankind. - Symbolises Dr I.L. Nommensen's sacrifice and service to the Batak people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ - suffering, salvation, forgiveness, and victory
28	<p>Angels</p>  <p>Angels are spiritual beings that are often depicted as symbols of goodness, peace, and hope.</p>	<p>as a protector of humans from evil and harm</p>	<p>Kind and loving beings are often portrayed as strong and mighty.</p>
29	<p>Statue of God</p>  <p>The Lord Jesus Christ is depicted as a loving and forgiving figure, who has provided salvation for mankind.</p>	<p>As a symbol of God's presence in the world</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being a symbol of belief - Being an object of worship for religious people to express gratitude
30	<p>Colours of the Nommensen Missionary Monument</p>	<p>The Nommensen Missionary Monument</p>	<p>The colour of the monument is to create beauty and</p>

 <p>The Nommensen Missionary Monument is dominated by gold white and grey colours.</p>	<p>uses bright and bold colors to attract attention and create a cheerful and hopeful atmosphere.</p>	<p>meaning to the monument.</p>
---	---	---------------------------------

4. CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that the Nommensen Missionary Monument has a history that is very influential on the Batak community until now when the Batak people still adhere to the religion of animism and dynamism. The Nommensen Missionary Monument has different meanings through the motifs found on the monument. The monument has 30 different motif forms, 30 motif functions, and 30 motif meanings in it.

5. REFERENCES

1. Agustini, Maulisa, et al. Makna Simbol Tugu Kilometer Nol Kota Sabang (Analisis Teori Roland Barthes)". 2018. PhD Thesis. UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.
2. Anshori, Muslich, and Sri Iswati. Metodologi penelitian kuantitatif: edisi 1. Airlangga University Press, 2019.
3. Boangmanalu, J. Praeses Pdt. Cyrellus Simanjuntak: pendidik, misionaris, dan motivator. BPK Gunung Mulia, 2008.

4. David Bosch (2006), menggambarkan Misionaris sebagai orang yang dipanggil dan diutus untuk menyebarkan pesan agama ke wilayah yang belum terjangkau atau belum diberikan akses kepada ajaran agama tertentu
5. Hadi, Sumasno. "Pemeriksaan Keabsahan data penelitian kualitatif pada skripsi." Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan 22.1 (2017).
6. Hutahaean, Wendy Sepmady, and M. Th SE. Sejarah Gereja Indonesia. Ahlimedia Book, 2021.
7. Priadana, M. Sidik, and Denok Sunarsi. Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif. Pascal Books, 2021.
8. Simanjuntak, Junihot M. Filsafat Ilmu dan Penalaran Teologis. Penerbit Andi, 2022.

How to cite this article: Harley S. P Pannjaitan, Rosita Ginting, Asni Barus. Form and meaning of the Nommensen missionary monument. *International Journal of Research and Review*. 2024; 11(4): 428-435. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20240447>
