

Traces of the Heritage of Rantauprapat Kingdom (Oral History Review)

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Abstract *The Kingdom of Rantauprapat was a small kingdom that initially emerged in the upper reaches of the Bilah River. This research focuses on reconstructing the history of the Rantauprapat Kingdom through the utilization of historical relics found and historical research methods, as well as oral history methods. In particular literature, the starting point of the Rantauprapat kingdom is referred to as Poeldung. It is estimated that this kingdom existed from the late 18th century to the early 19th century, and it is known that the founder, named Patuan Bolatan, originated from Toba and was laid to rest behind the Sioldengan Village Castle housing. The existence of this kingdom became more evident during the reign of Patuan Bolatan's son, King Muda, around the mid-19th century. This was marked by the construction of the Palace in Sibuya, formerly known as "Lobu in Bendahara Street," which has left a legacy as an ancient tomb complex. The existence of this kingdom subsequently extended from the king's residence on Padi Street to the relics of shop houses with ancient building typology on Pasar Lama Street and Veteran, as well as a tomb belonging to the last king of Rantauprapat, located in the Paindoan TPU complex.*

Keywords: *Historical Relics, Historiography, Kingdom of Rantauprapat*

Abstrak *Kerajaan Rantauprapat merupakan suatu kerajaan kecil yang awal keberadaannya di hulu Sungai Bilah. Penelitian ini difokuskan merekonstruksi sejarah Kerajaan Rantauprapat melalui peninggalan sejarah yang ditemukan dengan metode penelitian sejarah dan metode sejarah lisan. Dalam beberapa literatur disebutkan tempat titik awal kerajaan Rantauprapat bernama Poeldung. diperkirakan kerajaan ini sudah ada sekitar abad ke 18 akhir hingga abad ke 19 awal yang diketahui pendirinya bernama Patuan Bolatan berasal dari Toba dan dimakamkan di belakang perumahan Puri Kelurahan Sioldengan. Keberadaan kerajaan ini terlihat lebih jelas di masa anak Patuan Bolatan sekitar abad ke 19 pertengahan bernama Raja Muda. Ditandai dengan dibangunnya Istana di Sibuya atau dahulu dikenal dengan istilah (Lobu di Jalan Bendahara) yang kini menyisahkan peninggalan berupa kompleks makam kuno. Eksistensi kerajaan ini kemudian meninggalkan rumah kediaman raja di Jalan Padi, peninggalan ruko-ruko bertipologi bangunan kuno di Jalan Pasar Lama dan Veteran serta sebuah makam milik raja Rantauprapat yang terakhir, terletak di kompleks TPU Paindoan.*

Kata kunci: *Peninggalan Sejarah; Historiografi, Kerajaan Rantauprapat*



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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia and its sovereign kingdoms have a long history. There were notable kingdoms such as Majapahit, Srivijaya, Mataram, among others. The emergence of these kingdoms, which almost always existed in various corners of the archipelago at that time, was undoubtedly influenced by the cyclical introduction of different religions. These religious influences, in turn, shaped the cultural patterns of these kingdoms in various aspects. From embracing ancestral beliefs to the adoption of religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity, the influence of kingdoms has played a significant role in shaping civilizations. Among these influences, the issues and religious symbols associated with a kingdom in historical facts have consistently led to changes in civilizations.. (Hidayat 2002)

There are several ways to ascertain the existence of a kingdom in a particular region. In Indonesia, this is commonly traced through historical remains such as inscriptions or other historical sources. For example, ancient manuscripts and oral historical accounts provide valuable insights. The types of artifacts discovered can also identify the cultures that have influenced the kingdom, including their arts and the religions they practiced. Nearly every province in Indonesia has a rich history of numerous kingdoms that flourished and thrived in their time. This is also the case with North Sumatra, which is one of the regions formerly known as East Sumatra.

In Sumatra itself, the reference to existing kingdoms that have embraced Islam is more commonly known as 'Kesultanan' (Sultanate). For example, there are the Sultanate of Deli, the Sultanate of Langkat, and others. However, the use of the term 'kerajaan' (kingdom) does not imply that it is no longer in use. In some historical records, the term 'kerajaan' is used to refer to a system of governance that is not larger in scale than a 'Kesultanan' (Sultanate). (Dalimunthe, 2021). Like one of them, the Nagur kingdom was one of the four kingdoms in Simalungun and is considered the oldest ancestral kingdom in the Simalungun region. Its descendants later established another kingdom around the 16th century. The Nagur kingdom is recorded to have fragmented and formed four different areas of authority, each representing a significant division of the original Simalungun clans, namely Sinaga, Saragih, Damanik, and Purba. (Rizmirani Yudhatyassih 2015). Although this kingdom later expanded and, like the power of the Sultanate of East Sumatra, there is a similarity with the Rantauprapat kingdom, not in terms of territorial control, but in terms of the confederation of rulers who once governed the region. These rulers were known as the 'raja tanah,' and they hailed from various sources, some associating them with Tapanuli and others with Toba, each with distinct origins.

About 260 km from the center of the Sumatra Province, there was a region that was once ruled by several Sultanates, one of which was named Labuhanbatu, with its capital in Rantauprapat. It was formerly under the control of the Bilah Sultanate. The Bilah Sultanate was

one of several significant Sultanates that held dominion over a considerable portion of the surrounding small kingdoms' territories. Among these kingdoms was the one situated in Rantauprapat. It stood under the name of the Rantauprapat kingdom, ruled by a titled king, and had a history of initially resisting being conquered by the Bilah Sultanate. (Sinar 2006).

In the past, Rantauprapat was not only a kingdom; it also played a significant role as a gateway for the influx of cultural values, even becoming a cornerstone of civilization that continues to endure in the city of Rantauprapat until today. Furthermore, the Rantauprapat region also served as an economic center in Labuhanbatu during that period. Hence, the Bilah Sultanate made efforts to control several areas of the Rantauprapat kingdom. One of the strategies employed in this conquest involved political marriages. Unfortunately, it is challenging to find a comprehensive account of this Rantauprapat kingdom and all its vital roles in the past. The history of this kingdom is relatively difficult to come across under a specific title solely dedicated to the city of Rantauprapat. The existing historical literature must include prominent titles pertaining to the sultanates of East Sumatra or literature discussing other Sultanates in regions geographically adjacent to the kingdom of Rantauprapat. Through previous research, some general discussions have also addressed historical remnants associated with the kingdom of Rantauprapat and the Bilah Sultanate, conducted approximately 7 years ago. Within those research findings, ancient tombs as relics of the kingdom of Rantauprapat and the contemporary trading center were also documented (Ningsih, Melay, and Kamaruddin, 2017). Additionally, there is a study concerning the post-independence development of the city of Rantauprapat in the year 2016. (Lubis 2008).

Referring to the Cultural Heritage Law Number 11 of 2010 and the Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 66 of 2005 concerning museums (Government of the Republic of Indonesia, 2010), historical artifacts in the form of building structures or cultural heritage sites serve several functions as explained in one of the sources. These historical remnants should receive significant attention to preserve their identity as part of the culture, particularly the civilization of diverse ethnic groups within a historically significant city. (Pemerintah Negara RI, 2010). Historical artifacts in the form of building structures or cultural heritage sites serve several functions, as explained in one of the sources. These historical remnants should receive significant attention to preserve their identity as part of the culture, particularly the civilization of diverse ethnic groups within a historically significant city. (Hambari 1991). This research employs the historical research method with an Oral History approach. This approach is chosen due to the limited availability of written sources that record the history of the Rantauprapat kingdom. Therefore, the oral history approach is utilized to unearth and reconstruct the history of the Rantauprapat kingdom through remnants of the kingdom, such as tombs, and other artifacts.

METHOD

The method used in this research is the historical research method, which involves several stages, such as heuristic, verification (source criticism), interpretation, and historiography. (Lubis 2008). To conduct structured research as intended, this study employs the approach of oral history, relying on the recollections of individuals who have witnessed, experienced, or felt the events being narrated. (Dienaputra 2013). Additionally, an archaeological perspective is also utilized to reconstruct the history of the Rantauprapat Kingdom through the examination of historical artifacts in the form of physical objects, showcasing the cultural influences that have affected these remnants. (Siregar 2019).

The location of this research is in the vicinity of Rantauprapat city, and the following details are provided:

- The Patuan Bolatan Tomb Complex
- Tomb Complex on Bendahara Street
- Tomb Complex at TPU Paindoan
- Former Shop-houses of the Royal Market Center of Rantauprapat Kingdom on Jalan Pasar Lama (Veteran Street)
- Locations of the former palaces of the Rantauprapat Kingdom on Bendahara Street and Padi Street.

However, the focal point of this research is Sioldengan Village, believed to be the site of the first palace and the burial place of the founder of the Rantauprapat kingdom. Additionally, there are other places to seek additional references, such as the libraries in Medan city and Tengku Luchman Sinar reading park, as well as the Labuhanbatu Regency Library. The research presents data using primary sources, which are the main or principal sources, including:

1. Oral sources from historical eyewitnesses, as well as descendants of the Rantauprapat King.

No	Name	Status	Age
1	Hj. Raja Puspa Dalimunthe	Descendants of the Rantauprapat King	90 years
2	H. Raja Abdul Malik Dalimunthe	Descendants of the Rantauprapat King	73 years
3	Hj. Raja Nurlela Munthe	Descendants of the Rantauprapat King	73 years
4	Wan Syamsul Bahri Siregar	Descendants of the Rantauprapat King	56 years
5	H. Syam Hasri, S.H	Community Figures	60 years
6	Dr. Ery Soedewo, M.Hum	Researchers at the North Sumatra Archaeological Office	48 years

2. The sources of artifacts consist of the Patuan Bolatan Tomb Complex around the Puri Housing area, the ancient tomb complex on Bendahara Street, and the ancient tomb in the Paindoan Public Cemetery.

In addition to that, this research utilizes secondary sources, including documentary sources such as the book 'Bangun Runtuh Kerajaan Melayu Sumatera Timur,' previous research theses conducted in Rantauprapat city with relevant themes, and similar historical books found in the Labuhanbatu Regency Library. Considering that this study adopts an Oral History approach, the classification of the source as primary or secondary depends on the position of the informant.

This can be accomplished through various steps, one of which is the proximity of the informant or narrator to historical events, which directly affects the level of source accuracy. If the informant is an eyewitness to historical events, having experienced, seen, or felt them firsthand, they can be classified as a strong primary source. However, if the informant recounts information passed down from family members who have experienced the historical events, they are considered a primary historical source but with diminished strength, similar to secondary sources. (Dienaputra 2013). The sources that have been detailed above are certainly not exempt from internal and external source criticism, as well as the need to establish connections to ascertain the actual facts amidst the abundance of opinions encountered in the field. Subsequently, gathering and interlinking these facts leads to the creation of a historical reconstruction as accurate as possible, ultimately aiming for a comprehensive historiography. (Laksono 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Reconstruction of Rantauprapat Kingdom History

In the past, the historical significance of Koto Rantauprapat was renowned due to its strategic location as a center near the provincial capital. During its time, Rantauprapat also served as a trading hub, as evidenced by the numerous old shophouses in the city center, not to mention its widespread fame for its palm oil plantations. Behind all of this, there must have been a well-organized system that contributed to and enabled Rantauprapat to achieve such accomplishments.

Through previous research, it was found that the Sultanate of Bilah played a role in the development of the city of Rantauprapat, despite the city initially having its own kingdom named the Kingdom of Rantauprapat. This led to a political marriage that allowed both forms of government systems to coexist. One of the examples of the civilization left by the Sultanate of Bilah during that time is the Grand Mosque of Rantauprapat. (Ningsih et al. 2017).



Figure 1. The Location of Rantauprapat City (Source: Regional Medium-Term Development Plan of Labuhanbatu Regency 2016)

As mentioned at the beginning of this discussion, this research employs an oral history approach. Therefore, every discovered artifact of the Rantauprapat kingdom will be corroborated with historical sources, namely, oral history and oral traditions.

Regarding the history of the origin of the name 'Rantauprapat,' there are several opinions. Among the most accurate ones, two stand out. One source claims that 'Rantauprapat' is derived from the words of many people who migrated to this region and eventually settled closely together, leading to the emergence of the phrase 'pabaenlah Rantau Prapaton.' This information was conveyed directly by a descendant of the Rantauprapat king, namely, Raja Abdul Malik Dalimunthe, who is the son of Raja Amran and the grandson of Raja Bendahara (Dalimunthe R. A., 2021).

Another opinion suggests that people who still use boats or water transportation often say 'merapat katapian,' and many of them are migrants. Thus, the area where many migrants 'merapat katapian/tepiian' became known as Rantauprapat. This opinion was conveyed by the grandson of the last king of Rantauprapat (Munthe, 2021). In the past, the name 'Rantau Prapat' was separated into two words. However, in recent years, it has been merged into a single word.

Through several literary sources, the genealogy of the Rantauprapat kingdom can be described in a simple manner. Considering the significance of the genealogy of the Rantauprapat kingdom, especially as the ruling ethnic group is the Batak ethnic group, which typically traces its lineage through the paternal side, this genealogy or 'Tarombo' serves as the foundation for oral traditions among the Batak people. (Naibaho 2019). However, it is noted that written Tarombo on specific media, such as charts on paper, cloth, and others, has not been found. This is due to significant events that occurred during the reign of noble figures, such as kings, which led to the immediate burning and destruction of genealogy charts by the family members. (Munthe, 2021). Although efforts have been made by descendants to reconstruct the genealogy charts, they have not been successful in finding them again, for one or two reasons.

The genealogy of the Rantauprapat kingdom began with the arrival of Raja Taromar from Toba, who settled in Labuan Jurung, located between the Sultanate of Bilah and Kota Pinang. (Sinar 2006). However, through different sources, it is stated that Labuhan Jurung is situated in Hulu Sungai Bilah, specifically in the Rantau Utara District (Anon 2021). Regarding the existence of Labuhan Jurung, comprehensive information is still needed to ascertain its exact location. After conducting research, it was found that the presumed location of Labuan Jurung is quite distant from the tomb of Patuan Bolatan, which is believed to be the oldest tomb in this historical site.



Figure 2. Patuan Bolatan Tomb Complex Consists of Three Tombs
(Source: Personal Document)

Then, Raja Taromar had children, one of whom was titled Patuan Bolatan, who later became the precursor to the establishment of the Rantauprapat Kingdom, estimated to have existed around the 18th to 19th centuries. Additionally, Raja Taromar also had a child who became the precursor to the establishment of the NA-IX-X Kingdom. One of the historical relics that can be linked to the existence of Patuan Bolatan is the ancient tomb complex located behind the Puri Lingkungan Mutiara Housing, in Sioldengan Village.



Figure 3. Patuan Bolatan Tomb Complex Consists of Three Tombs
(Source: Personal Document)

Tombs are one of the common relics found when discussing the traces of a civilization. In a civilization, tombs hold valuable artifacts that can be studied for their physical forms, which often indicate the social status, knowledge background, and cultural influences that shaped the life of the person buried within. There are three essential markers that need to be considered and are typically the subjects of research when studying tombs, especially if one wants to characterize a complete tomb. These markers include gravestones, enclosures or structures surrounding a tomb known as 'Jirat,' and a dome-like structure resembling a typical house with walls or a roof. (Sumanti and Nunzairina 2019).

Just like the relics of other kingdoms, the remnants of the Rantauprapat kingdom are also inseparable from its ancient tombs, which are connected to the genealogy of the Rantauprapat kingdom, its era, and other remains. The Patuan Bolatan tomb, which is predicted to be the origin or founding tomb of the Rantauprapat kingdom, is characterized by the presence of three graves visible within one enclosure without a dome. It is described to have six gravestones, consisting of two headstone gravestones that are wide in shape, and the middle and both foot sections of the tomb have elongated gravestones that extend upwards, while the interior of the tomb is filled with white stones.

Long before this tomb received attention from those who claimed to be the heirs, the surroundings of the tomb were once situated in an untouched forest. It is also recounted that this tomb had high walls and stairs, making it quite difficult to have a clear view inside the tomb complex. Additionally, this tomb complex does not have any inscriptions or manuscripts stating the identity of the buried individuals, the years of burial, or any other relevant information (Siregar 2019).



Figure 4. Gravestone of the Middle Tomb Section (Top) and the Right and Foot Section
(Source: Personal Document)

In recent years, inscriptions have been found on stones stating 'The late His Highness Patuan Bolatan, the King of Rantauprapat, around the year 1800.' These inscriptions were made

by individuals who claim to be descendants of the person buried in the Patuan Bolatan tomb complex. An archaeologist from the North Sumatra Archaeological Office stated through a virtual interview and discussion that the physical form of historical relics in the Patuan Bolatan tomb complex cannot be accurately predicted. According to the archaeologist, such tomb and gravestone forms have never been encountered or found similar in previous research conducted by them. These gravestones can be referred to as local or indigenous gravestones. To gain a deeper understanding, further investigation and excavation in the area are required to discover specific artifacts. (Soedewo, 2012).

Regarding those buried within the Patuan Bolatan tomb complex, there are various versions. Among them, some claim that the founder of Rantauprapat city and his two wives are buried in the complex. (Anon 2021). Furthermore, one individual who still maintains a kinship with Patuan Bolatan claims that the tomb is indeed the burial site of Patuan Bolatan, the grandfather of his father, Raja Puspa (the storyteller/informant), who is also known as Raja Bendahara. According to this account, three individuals are buried there, including a king, his wife, and their child, whose gender is unknown. (Dalimunthe R. P., 2021).

As narrated in the commonly circulated story within the Rantauprapat community, Patuan Bolatan was said to have met with the colonial Dutch and became a rebel when Sultan Bilah was dispatched to rule over the small kingdoms. It should be noted that the Dutch began engaging with the Sultanates in Labuhanbatu since 1862, an extended event linked to conflicts among the Sultanates that led the Dutch to participate impartially in those conflicts. By 1864, several Sultanates that felt indebted to the Dutch acknowledged and recognized the Dutch authority in Labuhanbatu. During those years, the Dutch started sending envoys to oversee movements, especially in the economic aspects, at specific positions in Labuhanbatu, precisely in some regions of the Sultanate. Meanwhile, the story of Patuan Bolatan is estimated to have taken place around the 1790s-1800s. (Anon 2021). As a comparative source, based on research notes referring to Dutch records, it is written that in the early years when the Dutch began to exert influence in Labuhanbatu and several regions of the Sultanate, they assigned Sultan Bilah to become the ruler of the following kingdoms: Napo-par, Masihi, Rumbaya, Masihi Jae, Masihi Julu, Batu Jonjong, Huta Baru, Padang Nabidang, Kuala Masihi, Aek Kopong, Pulo Hopur, Pulo Godang, Berangir, Pasang Lelah, Hatapang, Djapadang, Montong, Tardas, and Ujung Godang. (Pasaribu 2018). There is no such kingdom as Rantauprapat, or perhaps one of those kingdoms could potentially be the precursor to the Rantauprapat kingdom

However, in other records (exact year unknown), it is mentioned that the small kingdoms surrounding the Sultanate in Labuhanbatu once formed a confederation consisting of the kingdoms NA-IX-X, with its center located in the kingdom of Napor-Por. (Sumut, -). Meanwhile, the kingdoms of Natolu and Nalapan were centered in the kingdom of Rantauprapat (Sumut, -).

Moving not far from the Patuan Bolatan tomb complex, located approximately 1.6 km away, one will find the tomb complex on Bendahara Street in Lingkungan Mutiara, Sioldengan Village. Here, several ancient tombs can be found. In the past, before being reopened by the family of Raja Bendahara, this area was known to be haunted according to the confessions of local residents who lived nearby this tomb complex. (Asiah, 2021). Through this, it is also evident that there was once a period of abandonment or vacancy in this area, which was later reclaimed and inhabited by the descendants of Raja Bendahara.

The genealogy of Patuan Bolatan then descended to his children, Raja Muda and Raja Dunia (Anon 2021). This is where the Raja Muda, who became the precursor to the existence of the palace near Sibuya (Bendahara Street), which was formerly known as Lobu, resided. Through interviews with several informants, it is estimated that the Raja Muda who lived near Kampung Sibuya left a tomb which is now located on Bendahara Street. This tomb used to have no marker, only a mound without a gravestone and filled with white stones. (Dalimunthe R. P., 2021).



Figure 5. Tomb of Raja Muda: Original Form in the Shape of a White Stone Pile
(Source: Personal Document)

The genealogy of the Rantauprapat kingdom, descending from the Raja Muda, includes several offspring, namely Raja Sonja, Raja Maisyah, Raja Lembang, Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda, and Raja Bendahara Lelawangsa. Confirmed by one of the informants who is a descendant of Raja Bendahara, it is stated that one of the children of Raja Muda holds the title of Raja Payungan. (Dalimunthe R. P., 2021). There are reasonable differences of opinion in this matter due to the weakness of the sources, as the informants are elderly, and usually, the names or titles of nobles among the royal descendants are not singular but rather several. For example, like the Bendahara king whose real name is Raja Matlana, as inscribed on his tombstone.



Figure 6. Tomb of Raja Setia I: Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda I
(Source: Personal Document)

At the location of the tomb believed to be that of Raja Muda, there are other ancient tombs present. As narrated, there are two ancient tombs on Bendahara Street, one of which is located outside the fence across the street, identified by historical eyewitnesses as the oldest tomb, predicted to be the tomb of Raja Muda. (Dalimunthe R. M., 2021). Meanwhile, another tomb situated near the Badaruddin Mosque is also estimated to be the tomb of Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda I, who is the elder brother of Raja Bendahara Lelawangsa. (Anon 2021). The condition of this tomb also appears to be typologically younger compared to the tombs of Patuan Bolatan and Raja Muda. This tomb is seen to have a formed gravestone and is surrounded by a large border, although it still does not use a dome; however, it still resembles the typology of royal tombs. Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda I himself passed away around the year 1902, and then was succeeded by his son, Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda II.



Figure 6. Tomb of Raja Matlana, titled Raja Bendahara Lelawangsa
(Source: Personal Document)

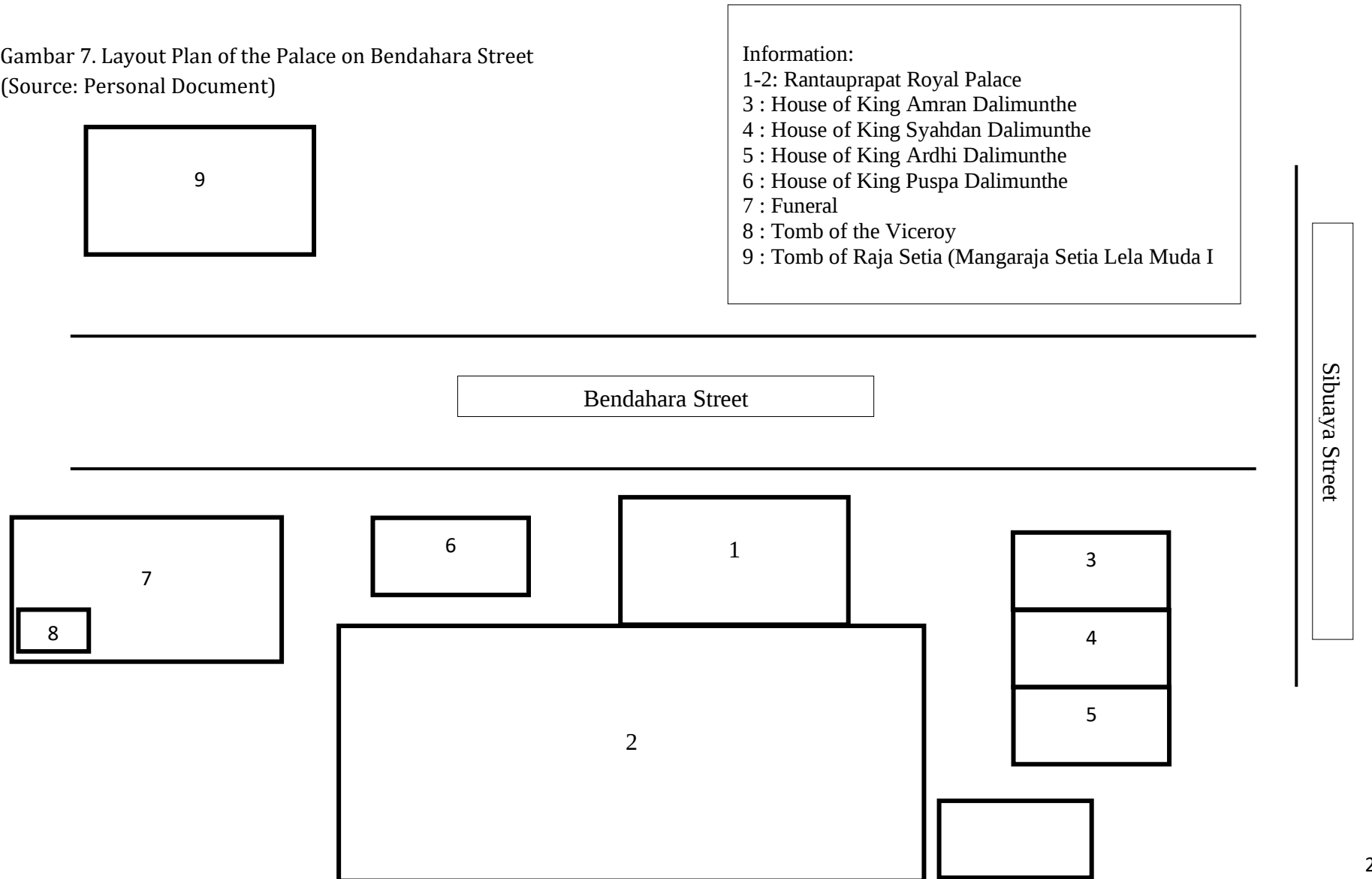
In addition to the aforementioned tombs, across the road, within a fence, lies the tomb of Raja Bendahara and his family. The distinction in the location of these tombs is explained by the

difference in clans they belong to. The burial complex of Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda I is of the Munthe clan, while the burial complex of Raja Bendahara is of the Dalimunthe clan. (Dalimunthe R. M., 2021). This is also related to the belief that only one clan is considered the true descendants of the Raja Rantauprpat. It is narrated that both clans have the same belief of originating from Poeldung, with slight differences between the two types of clans, namely Munthe and Dalimunthe.

However, according to several literature sources, it is recorded that the Dalimunthe clan, which has a kinship relationship with the NA-IX-X kingdom, belongs to the Tapanuli and Toba Batak ethnic groups originating from Pulodung. Subsequently, they migrated from Toba to Pulodung, with one of the ruling clans being Dalimunthe. (Pasaribu, 2018). In a different account, it is observed that the developments occurring in East Sumatra led to an increasing migration of inland people towards the direction of river streams, one of which was the Bilah River. As a result, many small kingdoms were established as a result of the efforts of land Marga (clan) kings originating from South Tapanuli, up to a distance of 30 km towards the Bilah River. (Sumut, -).

However, both the Munthe and Dalimunthe families fundamentally share a kinship relationship (Dalimunthe R. A., 2021). On Jalan Bendahara, which was formerly better known as Lobu or the residential village, this place also holds another historical tale, the remnants of the Rantauprpat kingdom, such as the palace. The palace is believed to be the first palace inhabited by Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda I, Abang Raja Bendahara, along with Raja Bendahara, and it was presumed to serve as the center of the Rantauprpat kingdom's administration at that time. Through the accounts of several informants who have encountered, experienced, or witnessed the Lobu Palace, a simple physical description of the palace layout can be presented as follows.

Gambar 7. Layout Plan of the Palace on Bendahara Street
(Source: Personal Document)



The description of the picture and the condition of the atmosphere at the Lobu palace during that time is conveyed as follows: Physically, the structure of the building appeared to be like a raised house with stone stairs. The material used for the house consisted of wood, approximately one and a half meters in height, with stone serving as the foundation. The walls were made of wooden planks, and the total area of the entire building was approximately 20×20 meters. (Dalimunthe R. A., 2021). On the left side, there is the residence of Raja Puspa (one of the informants and offspring of Raja Bendahara). Adjacent to Raja Puspa's house, there is a tomb that is believed to be the tomb of Raja Muda. On the right side of the palace, there are the houses of Raja Bendahara's children, namely Raja Syahdan, Raja Amran, and Raja Ardi. During that period, places of worship such as mosques, mushollas, or suraus were not yet established. The main building only had a designated area for prayers, and if there were significant events, they would be held in the courtyard of the main building. (Dalimunthe R. A., 2021).

Besides the accounts provided by the living offspring of Raja Bendahara, the existence of this palace is further elucidated by a historical eyewitness who was 9 years old in the year 1957. Both accounts from the descendants of Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda and Raja Bendahara independently corroborate the stories about the buildings, such as the palace in Lobu. These structures are believed to have been present during the time of their father (Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda I) and his brother, Raja Bendahara. It is noteworthy that the child of Raja Bendahara narrates that his father, Raja Bendahara, acquired the right to live in part of the inheritance from Raja Muda, which included the part in Lobu. The building in question has been passed down through generations as their dwelling, even after the division of the properties, which eventually became the possession of Raja Bendahara. (Dalimunthe R. P., 2021).

After that period, several years later, the buildings and the Lobu area were abandoned, and the focus shifted towards the current city center, including the establishment of the king's residence on Jalan Padi, adjacent to the economic hub of Rantauprapat. This abandonment of the Lobu area was due to one or two reasons, leading nature to reclaim the form of the deserted buildings and civilization. Additionally, during that time, the royal authorities faced the effects of people's resentment towards the nobility. Consequently, these buildings were completely destroyed around the 1960s..

The same goes for Raja Bendahara, who was the last king to occupy the palace in Lobu until his passing in 1961 at the age of 110, and was laid to rest in Lobu. Lobu, which once held many historical memories, now only preserves the complex of ancient tombs, remnants of the Rantauprapat kingdom. Although the area is currently inhabited by the descendants of the Rantauprapat kings, it is now known as Jalan Bendahara.



Figure 8. House and Old Well, Remnants of the Civilization
in the Residence of Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda II
(Source: Personal Documents and the Royal Family of Rantauprapat Kingdom)

The location of the palace situated on Jalan Padi cannot be accurately described. According to the eldest grandchild of the last Raja of Rantauprapat, despite holding the royal title, the living conditions for the last meetings were relatively modest. The house had a raised floor structure and consisted of 12 rooms, which were occupied by the king and his family members. The depiction of this house can only be seen from the front view through photographs and remnants of an old well. Similar to the palace in Lobu, there were no prayer rooms, small mosques, or grand mosques here. If they wanted to go to a mosque, they would visit the Great Mosque built by the Bilah Sultanate in 1933, which was the last one.

Discussing the historical aspect of the Great Mosque of Rantauprapat, its funding was derived from levying taxes under the orders of the Dutch, which were collected through the smaller kingdoms that were under the authority of the larger Sultanates, such as the Bilah Sultanate, to be contributed to the Rantauprapat kingdom. (Pasaribu, 2018). The connection between the Rantauprapat Kingdom and the Bilah Sultanate grew even closer through the implementation of a political marriage between Tengku Maharani, the daughter of the Sultan of Bilah, and the last king of Rantauprapat, Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda II. (Munthe, 2021).

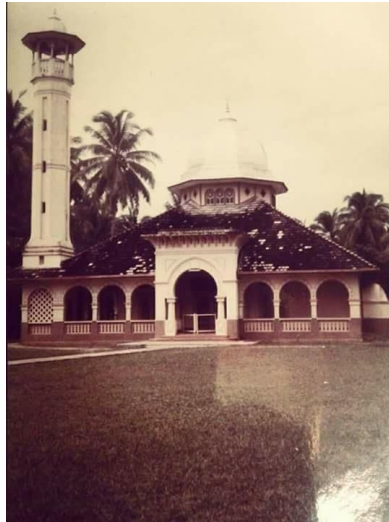


Figure 9. The New Great Mosque of Rantauprapat under construction
(Source: Personal Document of the BKM Masjid Agung Rantauprapat)

The political relationship that was initially based on orders from the Netherlands had some positive effects on one side. One of these effects was the construction of the Great Mosque of Rantauprapat, which also had another purpose: to win the hearts of the Muslim community towards the colonial government of the Netherlands (Hasri, 2021). Through records of the mosque's construction, which took place around 1933-1934, it was also gathered that the Bilah Sultanate had successfully occupied the territory of the Rantauprapat kingdom, coinciding with the Dutch government's relocation of its administrative center to Labuhanbatu, precisely in Rantauprapat. (Hamerster 1926).

Based on information from the informant, it was found that since 1902, Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda I, who resided in Lobu, was succeeded by his son, Raja Putoro, or Raja Putra, with the title of Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda II. During that period, the position of the palace shifted to Jalan Padi, and it remained in use by the last king until 1946. However, the authenticity of the building could no longer be maintained due to several reasons, including issues related to the structural integrity of the building's materials. Consequently, in 1970, the building underwent significant renovations. (Munthe, 2021).

Not far from the residence of the last Raja of Rantauprapat, there was the economic center of the Rantauprapat kingdom. In the city center and trading area, numerous shop-houses or commercial buildings could be found. Some of these belonged to kings from other kingdoms, while others were owned by the Raja of Rantauprapat. The shop-houses owned by the Rantauprapat kingdom were well-known as the "ruko 10 pintu" (10-door shop-houses). To reach this economic center, there were two routes, namely, the water route from Dermaga Paindoan and the route from Dermaga Pekan Lama. (Lubis 2016).

The physical structure of the shop-houses, which initially consisted of wooden planks, was later renovated and replaced with permanent stone buildings in 1940. This place, which served as the center of the economy, was not only a trading hub but also a lively gathering point for various cultures and diverse ethnicities, including both the local population and immigrants, including people of Chinese descent. The bustling atmosphere in the market of Rantauprapat city can be traced back to the reign of Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda I, and it became even more vibrant in the year 1902 after the passing of Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda I. His successor, Raja Putoro, who held the title of Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda II, took over the throne.



Image 10. The form of shop-houses in Rantauprapat in 1948 (left)

(Source:

https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/fotocollectie/detail?limitstart=7&q_searchfield=rantau%20prapat) and Overview of Shophouses that Still Exist on Veteran Street (Source: Googlemaps.com)

Those bustling times were also supported because, in the year 1931, the Dutch colonial government relocated its administrative center from Labuhan Bilik to Rantauprapat, situated upstream of Sungai Bilah. Two years after the renovation, the row of 10 shop-houses was rented out by the Rantauprapat royal authorities. These shop-houses also witnessed the abduction of the Raja Rantauprapat by the Japanese during the years 1942 to 1945, which inflicted physical and emotional torment upon the Raja at that time. The Raja's need for intensive medical treatment eventually led to the sale of the shop-houses in 1946, and as a consequence, the building's authenticity and historical significance have not been well preserved up to the present time (Dalimunthe R. A., 2021). Although later on, the government made efforts to begin protecting and preserving this building as a cultural heritage that should be safeguarded.

The passing of the last king of the Rantauprapat kingdom in the year 1946, then buried at TPU Paindoan, was according to one of his grandchildren's wishes. He wanted to be buried close to his people; hence, he chose to be laid to rest at TPU Paindoan instead of the family tomb at Jalan

Bendahara. The physical form of the tomb of Raja Putoro or Raja Putra, the last king of the Rantauprapat kingdom with the title of Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda II, is similar to the tombs of other nobles. However, it does not have a dome; instead, there is a large gravestone at the head and feet, with a slightly elevated mound. This tomb is also located adjacent to the tombs of other family members who were not buried at the family tomb at Jalan Bendahara.



Figure 11. Tomb of Raja Putra/Setia II: Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda II
(Source: Personal Document)

Regarding the Islamic status of the Rantauprapat kingdom, several predictions have been made. One of them is based on a literary source that mentions that some kingdoms upstream of the Bilah River (where Rantauprapat is located) did not initially embrace Islam, unlike many Sultanates that were already followers of Islam at their founding. (Sumut, -). The following opinion is based on the analysis of the tomb of Raja Muda, which initially was in the form of a raised mound of earth with a pile of white stones on top. Subsequently, in recent years, it has been developed with the construction of a surrounding wall (jirat) and tombstones typical of the 20th-century typology. Through virtual interviews conducted to analyze the representation of the tombs, an archaeologist stated that the simple form of the tombs is predicted to indicate that those buried there were devout followers of the Prophet's tradition (sunnah). Moreover, based on the testimonies of the informant, it was confirmed that one of the buried individuals was a king (Soedewo, 2012) The present family members also firmly believe that their ancestors buried in these various locations are an integral part of the historical legacy of the Rantauprapat Kingdom, and that these tombs include the resting places of people who embraced the Islamic faith.

CONCLUSION

Through the conducted research, it was found that the Rantauprapat kingdom, estimated to have existed from the late 18th century to the early 19th century, with its starting point upstream of the Bilah River as mentioned in one of the sources, possesses several historical relics.

These include the burial complex of Patuan Bolatan, considered the oldest burial complex and the inauguration site of the Rantauprapat kingdom. Additionally, there is a burial complex located in Jalan Bendahara, consisting of the burial sites of Raja Muda, Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda I, and Raja Bendahara Lelawangsa. Additionally, the probable location of the first palace, known as the Lobu Palace, which currently resides in Jalan Bendahara, was identified. Subsequently, the residence of the royal family was found on Jalan Padi. Regarding the economic center, it was situated not far from the royal residence on Jalan Padi, precisely located in Jalan Veteran and Pasar Lama. The royal family also owned assets in the form of ten doors, which held historical significance until the passing of the last king of Rantauprapat, after which he was buried in TPU Paindoan.

The utilization of oral history studies plays a significant role in excavating research data related to the traces of the Rantauprapat kingdom's remains. Considering the scarcity of available literature, oral history helps discover and supplement information about each historical relic, including the lineage of Patuan Bolatan as the reputed founder of the Rantauprapat kingdom. This includes the origins of Patuan Bolatan's arrival, the establishment of the foundation of the Rantauprapat kingdom, and the succession of the throne through his son, namely Raja Muda, until Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda I and Mangaraja Setia Lela Muda II. These accounts are narrated based on testimonies from historical eyewitnesses and experts (archaeologists), as well as the historical remnants of the Rantauprapat kingdom mentioned above. Therefore, the findings of this research, which have endeavored to reconstruct the historical aspects of the Rantauprapat kingdom by exploring its remaining relics, are expected to serve as a new foundation and reference literature for further investigations into the history of Rantauprapat specifically, as well as for research with similar themes.

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