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**THE ANCIENT KINGDOM OF PANAI
AND THE RUINS OF PADANG LAWAS
(NORTH SUMATERA)**

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THE ANCIENT KINGDOM OF PANAI AND THE RUINS OF PADANG LAWAS (North Sumatra)

HISTORICAL SOURCES AND INTERPRETATIONS

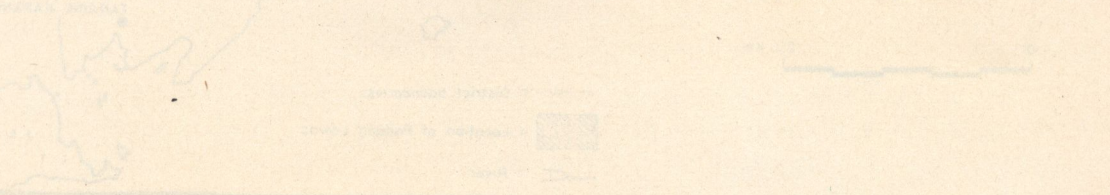
The first historical reference to the ruins of the ancient kingdom of Panai occurs with certainty in the Tondo chronicle of 1570, the *Annals of the Kings of the Kingdom of Tondo*, which records the arrival of a Panai prince in Tondo in 1570. The prince is identified as the son of the Panai king, and his arrival in Tondo is described as a significant event. The chronicle also mentions the Panai king's efforts to expand his kingdom and his relations with other neighboring states.

"Panai" is a name that has been used in various contexts in the history of North Sumatra. It is often associated with the ancient kingdom of Panai, which was a powerful state in the region. The name "Panai" is also found in the names of various places and people in the region, suggesting a widespread influence of the kingdom. The ruins of Padang Lawas are believed to be the remains of the Panai kingdom, and their discovery has provided valuable insights into the history and culture of the region.

There are differences of opinion about the exact location of Panai and various interpretations of the name. Some scholars believe that Panai was located in the area of Padang Lawas, while others believe it was located elsewhere. The discovery of the ruins of Padang Lawas has provided a strong case for identifying the site as the remains of the Panai kingdom.

Rumbi Mulia

It is a great pity that the ruins of the Panai kingdom were not discovered earlier. The discovery of the ruins of Padang Lawas has provided a unique opportunity to study the history and culture of the Panai kingdom. The ruins are well-preserved and provide a clear picture of the architecture and art of the kingdom. The discovery has also provided valuable insights into the political and social structure of the kingdom.



This is a revised and corrected version of a paper originally presented at the 7th Conference of the International Association of Archaeologists of Southeast Asia, Singapore, August 22-26, 1977.

MAP OF SUMATRA



THE ANCIENT KINGDOM OF PANAI AND THE RUINS OF PADANG LAWAS (North Sumatra)*

HISTORICAL SOURCES AND INTERPRETATIONS

The first historical reference to the name of the ancient kingdom of Panai¹⁾ occurs with certainty in the Tanjore inscription of the Cola king Rajendra I, dated 1030/1031 A.D., describing the attack made by sea against the Sailendra ruler Sangrama — Wijayottungavarman, King of Kadāram. It mentions that, after the attack on Srivijaya and the capture of the king, Panai was singled out for the next attack and temporarily overrun by Rajendra Cola of Coromandel.

"Panṇai", as the inscription runs was "watered by rivers". Nilakanta Sastri's translation reads "Panṇai with water in its bathing ghāts", which has been explained further by Wheatley (Wheatley 1961 : 199) "since Panṇai means cultivated land in the Tamil language, this phrase may simply mean *the well-watered fields (of Srivijaya?)*". Plainly, he doubted the existence of a state named Panṇai.

There are differences of opinion about the correct location of Panai and various interpretations have been made. Coèdes (Coèdes 1964 : 142) explained it as "Panai on the east coast of Sumatra, facing Malaca". Generally most scholars accepted that the Panai of the Tamil inscription must have been located near the mouth of the Barumun river near Labuhanbilik. But some scholars are of the opinion that Panai is clearly the Panai of Central Sumatra, associated with the well known monuments of Padang Lawas.

It is a great pity that apart from the name nothing else is said about the kingdom so that more evidence about the accurate location is lacking and only archaeological research could assist in solving the problem. It is moreover not certain whether the states mentioned in the inscription as the various possessions of the king of Srivijaya were dependencies or only tributaries to Srivijaya at that time.

* This is a revised and extended version of a paper originally presented at the 7th Conference of the International Association of Historians of Asia, Bangkok — August 22 — 26, 1977.

Chinese sources

Another external source of information about the kingdom of Panai is provided by the Chinese annals. Although in endeavouring to identify which name could correspond to Panai its needs to be considered that most probably Panai was not directly on the Chinese trade routes. If we may presume that Panai was inhabited by the Batak people, who lived deeper inside Sumatra in a territory hardly accessible to foreigners, references would be very few and vague.

There are scholars who suggest that already in the 6th century the kingdom of Panai existed and that it must have ranked as a principal state amongst the various kingdoms of Sumatra about the year 1000 A.D. Schnitger was of the opinion that Pu-ni or Po-li mentioned in the Chinese annals stands for Panai²⁾.

According to Chinese records P'o-li in the fifth and sixth centuries was one of the tributary kingdoms³⁾. Scholars working in this field however have different opinions about where P'o-li was located. It has been placed in Kalimantan, on the northern coast of Sumatra, on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula, at Asahan in Sumatra and on the island of Bangka; Pelliot even identified it with Bali. Nevertheless most scholars place P'o-li in Sumatra. I Tsing, the Chinese pilgrim who lived for some years in Sumatra mentions P'o-li vaguely east of *Barus* but places it deeper in the interior. Hsü Yün-ts'iao finally identified it with *Panai* having in mind the archaeological remains of Padang Lawas⁴⁾.

In support of this opinion, it seems that P'o-li of the sixth century was a Buddhist kingdom.

Barus, the old harbour on the west coast

I Tsing knew of Barus and it may be expected that he had a reasonable knowledge of the geography of Sumatra. Moreover, Chinese accounts of the 8th century state that Srivijaya was divided into two kingdoms with separate administrations. The western one was called Lang-p'o-lu-ssu and had much gold, mercury and camphor (Wolters 1967:191). It is usually accepted that Barus in the north of Sumatra is meant.

As early as the 7th century camphor was already presented as tribute to the Chinese emperors. It was highly valued and regarded as a luxurious and costly substance. I Tsing mentions the habit of the monks of putting camphor into water for washing their mouths.

The camphor tree grows in some areas in Sumatra, the southern Malay Peninsula and Kalimantan, but not in Java. The Chinese records of the camphor trade provide a valuable source of information.

The Chinese name for camphor is P'o-lu (perfume) which is a transcription of "Barus" and the famous "kapur Barus" (= camphor) is eagerly sought after among the species

of Southeast Asia. Is it possible that the trade name for camphor derived from the name of the camphor port of Barus on the north western coast of Sumatra?

Owing to their great economic value the jungles of Sumatra must have played an important role in stimulating foreign interest. Aromatic resins even found a place in the so called Persian trade. The port of Barus on the Bay of Tapanuli must have been the centre of the camphor trade which gave the west coast its importance. Barus was thus inevitably associated with the name of the most valuable sort of camphor.

Arab sources

The Arabs of the 9th century knew of *Fansur* as a famous camphor producing area. Almost certainly Fansur is the name of a place in the immediate neighbourhood of Barus. An Arab merchant visiting Fansur in the first half of the 10th century reported that "tailed man-eaters" lived between Fansur and Lamuri (Aceh). He could only have referred to the Bataks who inhabited the area in the hinterland of Barus.

References to "tailed men" in northern Sumatra often appear in literature. An explanation is available in the habit of the men wearing their hair hanging down their backs, vanishing into the forest for months in search for camphor yielding trees. To this day these tappers can be observed coming out of the forest with a bag slung over their shoulders in which the harvest has been collected. Their long hair hanging down their backs could easily be mistaken for a tail⁵). That the search for resin and benzoin has always been a means of livelihood in the Batak country is shown in the folk songs of the Batak people⁶).

The name Fansur probably derived from the Malay word *pancur*, meaning "spring", and referred to the area near the river at Barus.

An interesting account of Fansur is given by *Shaykh Abu Salih al-Armini* in an Arab text concerning the history of the churches of Egypt and some neighbouring countries of which the original text is in the Bibliothèque National de Paris⁷). It contains the following quotation: "Fansur: there are many churches in that place, all belonging to the Nestorian church and this was the situation there. From this place originates the kapur Barus (camphor) which appears when the tree is tapped. In the town is found a church named "The Holy Virgin Mary".

Archaeological remains confirm the statements made by Abu Salih in his account of the churches and monasteries of the early 12th century⁸). Critical investigations have proved that Abu Salih's records are correct. Thus his account of the Nestorian community in Fansur has been accepted: the oldest Christian community in Indonesia was already settled in the 7th century in the neighbourhood of Barus. Evidence of the church may be found in the name of a place called Gianju Maria (Mary's pledge) near Pansur⁹).

Early Batak history

The area of North Sumatra from Lake Toba down to the border of Minangkabau is inhabited by the ethnic group called the Bataks. Heine Geldern has recently attempted a reconstruction of early Batak history from the 7th century based on Chinese records of a kingdom P'i-k'ien in pre T'ang times¹⁰). He refers to Pelliot's "Histoire des Leang" 1903 and the passage about this kingdom. He implies that P'i-k'ien was not the name of the entire island but only a region of the island which may correspond to the coast of Sumatra in the environs of Barus, the old harbour of the Batak people. The country, is described in the Leang History as rich in gold, situated in the mountains, and the inhabitants are said to eat their enemies.

The king of P'i-k'ien had the curious name of "the king with the big neck" and is described as a vigorous, formidable person endowed with supernatural powers and immortality. Heine Geldern saw a parallel between this big-necked priest king and the legendary *Si Singa Mangaraja* (the great lion king) of the Batak people.

The population were said to eat foreigners and cannibalism is often mentioned as one of the most striking customs of the Bataks, for which they acquired notoriety, though this habit in ancient days was not the prerogative of the Bataks only.

Although Heine Geldern's opinion has not been shared by other scholars because of the meagre evidence on which it is based, it is generally agreed that a Batak kingdom must have existed in the hinterland of Barus as early as the 7th century.

Panai as a kingdom in the 10th to 14th century.

About 1000 A.D. Panai must have emerged as an important state in Sumatra, otherwise the Cola king would not have raided it in 1025 A.D. It seems that the expedition had no lasting effects and Panai must have shaken off any further obligation to the invaders. In the following centuries it flourished independently and displayed great activity in building large temple compounds, known as the once so mighty and imposing temples of Padang Lawas.

However, though these temples have yielded various inscriptions, there is no mention in them of the name of a kingdom, or king or other reference to historical facts. They mostly concern religion and magic related to Tantric cults. Since these inscriptions date from the 11th to the 14th century, these Tantric doctrines fit with what we know of the religious zeal of contemporary kings such as Kartanegara in East Java and Adityavarman in Central Sumatra, even the great Mongol emperor Kublai Khan.

The only internal source found in Indonesia that mentions the name of the kingdom of Panai, is the *Nāgarakṛtagāma*, the panegyric written in 1365 A.D. by the court poet of Hayam Wuruk, king of Mojopahit.

In recording Mojopahit's power over the other islands, called by him "the Nusantara", he listed Panai among the possessions of this renowned empire. This is the last recording of Panai; no more later evidence has come to light and it seems to have sunk entirely into oblivion.

The name of Panai has survived in various forms; it is the name of a river, a district, a god in the ancient Batak religion and the name of a Batak *marga* (clan).

The *Batang Pane* (Panai river) is the northern tributary of the Barumun river, flowing into the Straits of Malacca. Along this river are found the remains of brick buildings, formerly solemn temples towering above the wide plain of Padang Lawas.

The district of Pane lies in the Simalungun territory, east of Lake Toba, bordering the Karo Highlands. According to legend the raja of the district possessed a sacred *parpaneian* (divination book) which he consulted before every important decision. As a result he was successful in all his campaigns and therefore named the land Pane after his "par-pane-an".

Pane na Bolon is the name of a god, a deity of the underworld. It is assumed that the lightning seen in the eight direction of the world throughout the year is Pane na Bolon, the lightgod of the underworld who moves around the middleworld starting from the east.

The *marga Pane* belongs to the group of the Angkola Bataks of south Tapanuli. The most important characteristic of the Batak people is their system of the "marga" (clan), which existed long before Hindu influence affected the region. Till now the Batak community has maintained a very strict system of relationship in which everybody belongs to a clan, the so called *marga*, a patrilineal group originating from an ancestor who is considered to be the patriarch (usually a mystical ancestor). Formerly these margas were territorial units but with the advance of civilization they broke into numerous subdivisions and were no longer restricted to certain areas.

Obviously the *marga Pane* has never occupied the present district of Pane in north Tapanuli nor the land where the river Pane flows. Nor is there any relation between the river Pane in south Tapanuli and the district of Pane.

The question then arises where the state of Panai was that was attacked by the Cola king in the 11th century and which area did it occupy when it had to submit to Mojopahit in the 14th century?

During the time between these two events the building of the temple complexes of Padang Lawas took place.

• Coedès located Panai on the east coast of Sumatra near the ending of the river in Labuhanbilik. But the river that flows into the Straits of Malacca has never been called the Panai river, but always the Barumun river.

If we assume that Panai was a territory inhabited by the Batak people, then we must look further inland. As matter of fact the Bataks have never showed any tendency

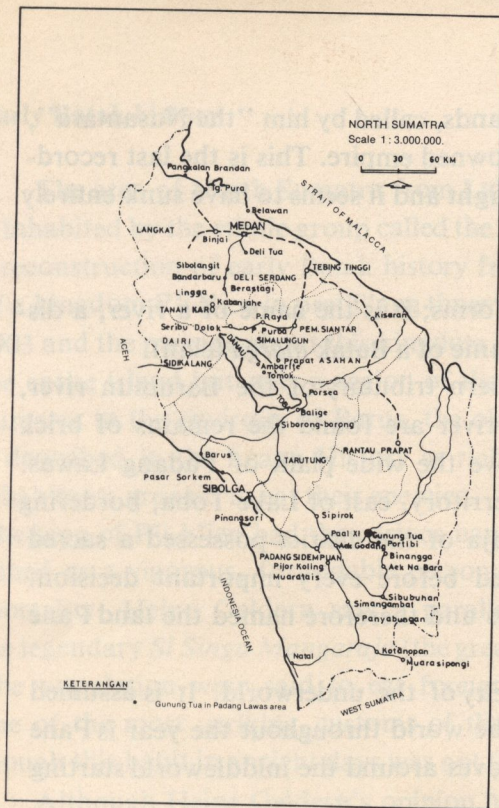


Fig. 1 Map of North Sumatra

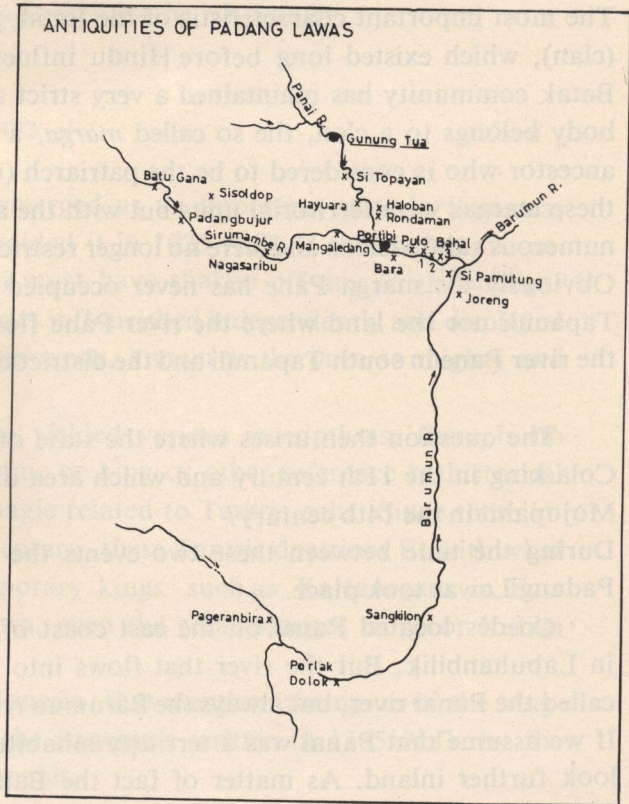


Fig. 2. Sites of principal antiquities in Padang Lawas.

to settle on the east coast. On the contrary, they have always tended towards the west coast. Evidence for this is provided by the camphor trade already recorded in the Chinese annals. The Chinese associated camphor with the name of Barus, the old harbour of the Batak region on the west coast, which served not only the trade in camphor but also in benzoin. Batak legends say that one must go to the bay of Sibolga for salt which was produced in Raso Garam (taste of salt) a name still used for Sibolga. The Bataks in the interior lacked especially salt. Did they get it in exchange for their camphor products?

In 1088 a Tamil merchant guild erected an inscription at Lobuk Tua in the Fansur region close to the camphor producing country of northern Sumatra. This gives further evidence of great activity on the west coast, which undoubtedly influenced the Batak area.

One of the easiest transinsular routes runs from Sibolga east to Padang Sidempuan then across the low pass in the Bukit Barisan (the mountain-chain running from north to south Sumatra) to Padang Lawas. And since Padang Lawas is inhabited by the ethnic group of Batak, there must have been a relation between the Panai kingdom and the Batak people in the hinterland of Barus. The sites of Padang Lawas are nearer to the west coast than to the east, so that Barus and Sibolga could have served as the ancient ports of Padang Lawas. A small island near Barus is still called Panai.

Bosch (O.V. 1930 : 147) mentioned the influence of South India in Tapanuli and assumed that Panai derived from the Tamil word "pannai" meaning cultivated land or colony. However, the assumption that Panai must have been a Tamil colony does not fit in with the attack of the Cola king. Why should he raid his own colony? It is quite obvious that Bosch's assumption that Panai was a colony of South Indian merchants settled near the river on the much navigated coast of the Straits of Malacca, is not acceptable.

The state of Panai must have existed long before the attack of the Colas. Another objection against the view that South Indian merchants had a hand in the building of the temples of Padang Lawas is that Sivaism has always been the dominant religion in the Cola kingdom, which conflicts with the evidence of the Tantric Buddhist cults at Padang Lawas.

Systematic research and archaeological excavations have scarcely begun so that so far it has not been possible to establish the true location of the kingdom of Panai.

THE RUINS OF PADANG LAWAS

Of the antiquities in Sumatra the sculptures and buildings of Padang Lawas (the Great Plain) are among the most interesting. The remains of at least sixteen temple compounds are scattered on the upper course of the Barumun river and its northern

tributary, the Panai river (Fig. 2). Unfortunately, the *biaros* (= Sanskrit vihara, i.e. monastery) as they are called by the population have been very neglected and have never been the object of thorough investigation. After the second world war several superficial explorations were undertaken by the Archeological Survey in order to rescue and safeguard what was left. But up to the present systematic research and excavations have scarcely begun¹¹⁾.

The centre of the archaeological remains is the village of Portibi (= Sanskrit *prithivī*, i.e. the earth) near Gunung Tua¹²⁾, the principal settlement of Padang Lawas or more correctly Padang Bolak (= lawas, lwas, luas, i.e. extensive). The plain covers approximately 1500 square km stretching like a carpet of *alang-alang* grass without end. A dry wind blows constantly creating an unusual treeless landscape¹³⁾.

The ruins are called *biaro*, which is the name for the temples of the Hindu/Buddhist period in Sumatra. But while in India *vihāras* are monasteries for the accommodation of monks living together in communities connected with a sanctuary, in Sumatra the *biaro* is the sanctuary itself. An inscription of Si Topayan mentions "*barbwat biyara*" referring to the foundation of a sanctuary for the king.

Among the various temple ruins only a few are easily accessible: Biaro Bahal I, II, III, Pulo, Bara, Si Topayan and Si Pamutung. The temple compounds consist of a walled-in courtyard with the principal temple surrounded by smaller temples, stupas and terraces. Whether the temple terrain was divided by inner walls into two or more courts, as is the case in Java and Bali, cannot be ascertained any more. Access to the courtyard is afforded by a gate with steps at both sides, probably provided formerly with a wooden door. The *biaros* are facing east and built of bricks measuring in length 27 — 28 cm, in height 16 — 18 cm and in width 4,5—5 cm.

The main temples are more or less the same, a terraced foot with a cubical body and a superstructure topped by a *chatra*, the honorific umbrella. Slight variations occur in Si Pamutung and Bahal I. On the whole the temples are sparsely decorated and only a few reliefs can be observed on the walls. Worth mentioning are the dancing *yaksas* and grinning lions depicted at Bahal I and Pulo.

Sculptures are found near the temples but most of the statues are lost except a few specimens and even those are sometimes in a deplorable state. The damaged condition of nearly all these antiquities; especially of the deities, must be ascribed to intentional demolition.

The religion of the sanctuaries

Buddhism had reached the area at an early time, as is confirmed by the reports of Chinese pilgrims. It later took root as Mahāyāna in Tantric form. However, it also developed into a complete fusion of Sivaism and Buddhism. Often a king already obtained deliverance during his lifetime through the practice of Tantric teachings.

The demonic character of Tantrism with its horrible rituals, involving human sacrifice suited the old Batak religion in which sorcery and the conjuring of spirits played an important role. The doctrines of Tantric Buddhism seem to have fallen into fertile soil in Padang Lawas (Bosch, O.V. 1930). The population eagerly accepted the new Tantric doctrines, readily recognizing their old indigenous elements and customs in these rites. However since our knowledge concerning Tantrism in Padang Lawas is still vague we can only guess at their secret meaning.

One of the main mystic symbols of Tantrism is the *vajra*, found in almost all the temples. In Bahal II an image of *Heruka*, the god of Vajrayana was represented. It is one of the rare examples of the god of all Bhairavas, who is seldom depicted. The sacred image is dancing on a corpse, in the right hand holding the vajra and in the left a skull. Clashed against his body is a staff trimmed with ribbons. This staff in particular as an attribute, must have been regarded by the Bataks as the counterpart of their magic staff, the *tunggal panaluan*. The magic wand, a stick carved with ancestral figures with a hole in the centre in which the magical substance is placed, is the attribute of the *datu* (priest), used to exorcise ghosts and evil spirits. In 1930 the image was found smashed to pieces and it may be assumed that it was done intentionally. The image, though badly damaged, could then be put together to have it photographed, but in 1976 it disappeared and not even fragments were found.

Biaro Si Pamutung

The most important monument among these sanctuaries is Si Pamutung¹⁴⁾ near the confluence of the Panai and Barumon rivers. It is the largest of the shrines and must have been the principal temple of Tapanuli. According to legend the founder known as Si Pamutung (= the Tempestuous, the Ferocious) could be killed by no means except his own dagger.

To reach the temple one must cross the Barumon river and walk 4 km through along-along grass, the height of a man. The ruins are left to their fate. Unlike on Java, the local population do not wish to be associated with the biaros and pretend not to be aware of their existence.

Entering the courtyard, which measures 46 x 61 m, the visitor can only see the main temple rising above the trees and scrub. (*Pl. 1*). A tree encircling the walls within its roots has prevented the temple from falling down. Of the smaller monuments only mounds covered with grass and creeping plants are visible.

The temples are all built of brick, with the exception of one terrace built of natural stone. Strangely enough besides being constructed of sandstone it shows the typical Central Javanese profile of the 9—10th century. The staircase is flanked by two big crocodile heads with human noses. *Makaras* replaced by crocodiles can be observed in Java too.



Pl. 1 *Biaro Si Pamutung: grass is growing everywhere (photo 1976)*



Pl. 2. *Bronze Buddha image seated in meditation: height 12,5 cm*



Pl. 3. Stone fragment; Bhairavi with hands in añjali mudra. Biaro Si Pamutung

Fragments of these chatras have been found near the staircase and are very similar to those of mainland Southeast Asia. Most remarkable are two lifesize figures, carved on either side of the portal, at the entrance to the temple chamber. They were still visible in 1930 but have now vanished.

Makara heads terminate the stair balustrades and are flanked by threatening guardian figures. On the wings of the projecting staircase are carved panels depicting dancing yaksas with bulging eyes and tusks coming out of their mouths. They are wearing garments of which the front tail hangs down to the ground between their legs (Pl. 5). On the walls of the basement on the north side squatting lions, grinning fiercely, are represented.

In the temple court several rectangular terraces, most probably once shaded by roofs resting on wooden pillars are arranged. These terraces must have served as meeting places, for placing offerings and for the magic preparations of the Tantric ritual orgies.

North of the main temple (Fig. 4) lies a monument which must have been a stupa on an octagonal base. Facing the main temple and directly in front of the entrance is a *pendopo* terrace. Two smaller terraces stand south of the *pendopo* terrace. The entrance itself with steps on either side is not exactly in the centre of the east wall, but slightly to the south. The surrounding wall is about 1 m in height and 0.97 m thick.

Bahal II is a smaller compound of which only the main temple still exists. Headless guardians (*dvarapalas*) are found among the grass and a headless image of a sitting elephant. (Pl. 6)¹⁷. The *Heruka* discussed above has vanished without trace.

Bahal III.

Only a shapeless mass of bricks and trees indicate the main temple and fragments of stones on which carving can be vaguely discerned are strewn around. Guardian figures have been found near their pedestals showing how these images were mounted once.

Biaro Pulo

This sanctuary is build on a small hill reinforced with stones. The main temple the only part that is left was formerly a threefold stupa. The basement had casements decorated with reliefs of dancing figures. Fortunately, of the eleven reliefs five were found in an almost complete state and sent to the museum in Jakarta where they are still on display. They are extremely interesting and have no counterpart elsewhere in Indonesia.

The figures are represented dancing frantically as if intoxicated. But though they



Pl. 4. Biaro Bahal I near Portibi; dancing yaksas on basement



Pl. 5. Biaro Bahal I; reliefs depicting dancing yaksas



Pl. 6. *Dvarapala and sitting elephant, headless; Biaro Bahal II*



Pl. 7. *Head of a dvarapala, Central Museum. Probably belonging to dvarapala of Bahal I.*



Pl. 8. Remains of Biaro Si Topayan with inscribed pedestals (photo 1976)



Pl. 9. Biaro Si Topayan, photo 1920 (O.D. no. 4172).

have human bodies two of them have respectively a bull's and an elephant's head. The weird creatures are only clad in a small loincloth, ornaments on their breasts and big ear ornaments recognizable as *yaksas*. Their curly locks, wide open eyes and protruding tusks characterize their demoniacal nature. Placed around the basement of the building they were designed not only to protect the temple against intruders, but they also served to illustrate the Tantric rituals in which savage dancing was accompanied by passionate music and laughter.

Biara Si Topayan

Biara Si Topayan consists of two terraces, with a little courtyard between them. The western terrace has a staircase on the east side formerly guarded by *makaras* and *dvarapatas* (Pl. 9). Two square pedestals without a hole in the centre but with inscriptions on them refer to the foundation of the sanctuary. The pedestals are still in situ but not much is left of the terraces or sculptures (Pl. 8).

Biara Bara

Bara lies on the other side of the Panai river from Portibi. Formerly this site was called Aek Biara. That Bara derives from biara is also revealed by the Bara of the well known Bara-budur. When the main temple was cleared a pedestal appeared, decorated with rosettes in lozenges and a border with the so called "recalcitrant spirals" (an ornamental design favoured in Central Javanese art) (Pl. 13). *Naga* pedestals usually belong to Sivaitic temples. Was Bara a Sivaitic sanctuary amid the Tantric cult of Padang Lawas?

The antiquities of Si Mangambat more to the south, where stone ornaments and kala heads have been found was undoubtedly a Sivaitic temple but dating from much earlier, probably from the 8th or 9th century.

Kinds of antiquities

A number of antiquities have been found in temple courtyards as well as in the surroundings.

Stambhas, decorated columns, appear in comparatively large numbers. They were probably erected in association with biaros and were sometimes used for inscriptions (Porlak Dojok, Sorik Merapi). Those pillars on whose capitals a religious symbol is represented fit into a corresponding hollow in a pedestal.

A stambha from *Hayuara* (Pl. 10) is decorated with reliefs. The upper part shows four *kala* heads connected by a string of pearls hanging down from their mouths, while a second string connects their heads in a straight line. Underneath the heads are several scenes depicting a celestial being floating in the sky. Seated in a niche are two human beings with arms clasped together and between them a child is kneeling,



Pl. 10. Stambha from Hayuara with decorated reliefs.



Pl. 11. Stambha found in Hayuara; used as a threshold of a villager's house.



Pl. 12. Lotus pedestal; Hayuara.



Pl. 13. Naga pedestal from Bara.



Pl. 14. *Lion from Bara*



Pl. 15. *Lion from Biaro Si Pamutung.*



Pl. 16. *Makara from Biaro Si Pamutung.*

resting its head on the lap of one of them. It looks as if opposite the child is another kneeling figure. The scenes are not yet identified.

Another stambha was discovered in 1976, placed upside down and used as the threshold of the house of one of the villagers in Hayuara (Pl. 11). The lower part shows *kala* heads connected with each other by a double string of pearls hanging down from their mouths. The upper part is partly damaged but four lions with the appearance of monkeys can be discerned. Above their heads is a border decorated with tendrils; the top of the stambha is flat.

Pedestals, used as bases for these stambhas are found separately.

A lotus pedestal was found standing in an open field under a tree in Hayuara (Pl. 12). On a round base are three rows of lotus petals, a flat top with a hole in it, in which a round terminal should fit. The square foot is decorated with reliefs, depicting two human figures.

Lions or *simhas* serve as guardians at the portals of temples, terraces, and stupas. The animals are sitting on their hind legs, their front legs stretched to support the upright body. The mane of a lion of Si Pamutung (Pl. 15) is stylized into a fringe forming a collar around the neck. The front paws resemble the claws of a bird. Another lion of Bara (Pl. 14) has the same treatment of the mane but the fringe forms a double collar. The posture is a little different as if the lion is going to leap.

Makaras form an important element among these antiquities. These monster heads terminate the balustrades of temples. Compared with the Javanese makaras, the makaras of Sumatra are huge in size. Unique in style, they hold in their jaws richly dressed men, who are sometimes standing upright or kneeling and bearing sword and shield. There is obviously a similarity to the Cham and Khmer makaras and Stutterheim has pointed out that they show some affinity with certain makaras from Bali.

The makara from Si Pamutung (Pl. 16) has a peculiar forearm like a human being ending in a paw with claws. Behind the upturned trunk and the eye the ear is shaped in the form of a leaf.

Dvarapalas (door-keeper) or guardians are in a category of their own in the art of Padang Lawas. They are extremely interesting, posted on either side of the staircase, charged with the task of protecting the building.

They differ in size, large *dvarapalas* being as high as 1,50 m and smaller ones about 0,80 m; sometimes standing, kneeling on one knee or bending a knee slightly. Their demonic features with bulging eyes and open mouth with fangs showing in the corners, were designed to keep off intruders. Decorated with serpents, wound around their powerful figures as armlets, anklets, bracelets or encircling the upper torso as *upavita*, they are clad in the way usual in Sumatra: a *kain* of which the end



Pl. 17. *Dvarapalas from Biaro Si Pamutung, headless, seen from the front.*



Pl. 18. *Dvarapalas from Biaro Si Pamutung, headless; seen from the back.*



Pl. 19. Stone fragment found in Biaro Pulo, probably from small dvarapala.



Pl. 20. Small dvarapala from Biaro Bahal I, height 80 cm, now disappeared.

is tucked between the legs and secured behind so that it fits the body like short pants (Pl. 17, 18). A long drapery folded in a knot at the waist hangs down like a long tail between the legs, in front as well as behind.

The *dvarapalas* are always portrayed raising a threatening left hand with the forefinger pointing upwards and a weapon in the right hand. The reverse is observed in Java where the guardians threaten with the right hand, the fore-and middle finger upraised and a weapon in the left hand.

The elaborately arranged coiffure is sometimes adorned with strings of coiling snakes as seen on the head of a *dvarapala* from Bahal I (Pl. 9) now in the Central Museum in Jakarta.

Inscriptions

A number of short inscriptions and dated sculptures related to the sanctuaries of Padang Lawas are reported.

INSCRIPTION	PRESENT LOCATION	DATE	
1. Gunung Tua	Central Museum no. B. 626 d.	1024 A.D. 1039 A.D.	(Kern, Krom) (Damais)
2. Si Joreng Belangah	Central Museum no. D. 165	1179 A.D. 1179 A.D.	(Bosch) Damais)
3. Porlak Dolok	in situ	1245 A.D. 1213 A.D.	(St. Callenfels) (Damais)
4. Si Topayan	in situ	1235 A.D. ?	(Goris) (Damais)
5. Aek Sangkilon	Central Museum no. 6146	14th c.	(Stutterheim)
6. Tandihet	Central Museum no. 6149	end 13th c.	(Stutterheim)
7. Lobuk Tua	Central Museum (part) in situ (part)	1088 A.D.	(N. Sastri)
8. Sorik Merapi	Central Museum no. D 84.	1372 A.D. 1242 A.D.	(Bosch) (Damais)

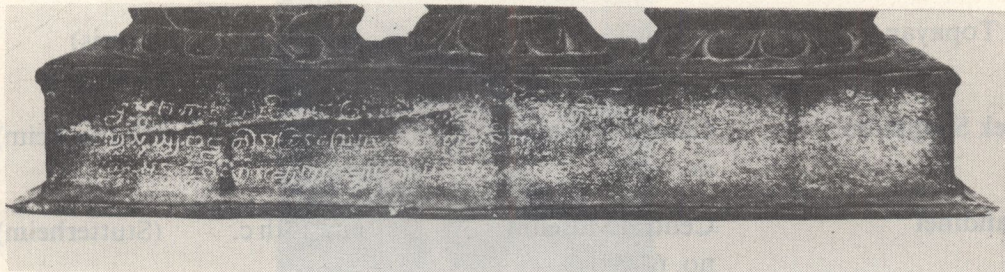
1. The *Gunung Tua* inscription is found on the back of a bronze statue of a four-armed *Lokanātha* standing between two seated *Tārās*. One of the *Tārā* has disap-



Pl. 21. *Bronze Lokanātha flanked by Tārās, from Gunung Tua; now Central Museum; Front side.*



Pl. 22. *Bronze Lokanātha from Gunung Tua, reverse side.*



Pl. 23. *Pedestal with inscription, bronze Lokanātha from Gunung Tua.*

peared, the other holds a flower in her hands (*Pl. 21, 22*). According to Krom the characters of the inscription are similar to the Old Javanese script of Central Java, which also applies to the style of the image.

The inscription on the back of the pedestal (*Pl. 23*) records that the statue has been made (*barbwat*) by the master smith (*juru pāṇḍai*) Surya from which it may be concluded that the image was made locally. It runs "juru pāṇḍai suryya barbwat bhatāra lokanātha". Bosch (O.V. 1930) dated it 1024 A.D. and stated the language to be Sanskrit with some Malay words. Damais however, revised the date to 30—3—1039 A.D. (EEI III, IV — 1952, 1955) and called the language Old Malay interspersed with Sanskrit words.

2. The inscription of *Joreng Belangah* is written on a stone plaquette and consists of two lines in the Old Javanese script of Central Java, interpreted by Bosch as 1101 Saka, corresponding to 1179 A.D. Damais offers the exact date 26—4—1179 A.D. In the right hand corner a skull with a crescent moon is depicted, a *candrakāpala*, which was also the seal of the Kadiri king Kamesvara I (± 1115 — 1130 A.D.).

3. In *Porlak Dolok* a pillar was found of which the top was carved into a Ganesa head. The script which is similar to the Old Javanese script of Central Java, announces the year read by Stein Callenfels as 1245 A.D. (O.V. 1920). A few more lines are written in South Indian characters. Damais however, deciphered the date as 25—10—1213 A.D. and read the title as "Paduka Sri Maharaja". Unfortunately the name of the king is no longer visible. The language according to Damais is Old Malay.

4. The *Si Topayan* inscription is inscribed on two pedestals and refers to the foundation of the sanctuary there. The script with curious edged forms is a forerunner of the Batak script (Stein Callenfels) and the language Old Malay. According to Goris several words of the second inscription indicate a *candra sangkala* corresponding to 1235 A.D. (O.V. 1930 : 234). Damais however doubted the existence of a chronogramme.

5. A gold plate 5 × 13 cm was found by Schnitger in 1935 in the main temple of *Aek Sangkilon*. In the centre is a square with a vajra and the syllable "hum"; above and underneath are lines of Nāgarī script (*Pl. 24*). According to Stutterheim (J.B.G. IV, 1937 : 159) these refer to the consecration of a Yamari image. The script is very similar to the inscription of Muara Takus and could be dated in late 14th century. The gold plate is kept in the Central Museum (no. 6146).

6. From *Tandihet* another very similar gold plate also with a vajra square, 4,5 × 12,5 cm has come to light (*Pl. 25*). Stutterheim deciphered the inscription as a rendering of various sounds imitating ritual laughter intoned during Tantric ceremonies. This terrific laughter is preserved in the inscription: *hahahahā hūṃ hūhūhai ho*



Pl. 24. Gold plate from Aek Sangkilon,
5 × 13 cm; Central Museum.



Pl. 25. Gold plate from Tandihet,
4,5 × 12,5 cm; Central Museum.

hauhaha. The plate is dated to the 13th century and is kept in the Central Museum (no. 6149).

7. In the village of *Lobuk Tua* near Barus, four inscribed stones have been found. Apparently three of the stones originally formed a hexagonal column with writing on three sides. The inscription, written in Tamil, records the gift of a merchant guild called "the thousand and five hundred", a South Indian commercial partnership well known in Asia. Nilakanta Sastri (TBG 1932) dated it 1088 A.D. The stones are in the Central Museum. The other stone, inscribed in Old Javanese characters, is still in situ and has not yet been published.

8. From *Sorik Merapi* west of Kota Nopan have come four small stone columns now in the Central Museum (D. 53, 65, 83 and 84). One of them (D. 84) revealed in Old Javanese script the date 1372 A.D. (Bosch, O.V. 1930). Possibly the old east-west trade route ran through Siabu, Sorik Merapi to the Padang Lawas region. Damais gives the date as 9—9—1242 A.D. and says the language is Old Malay.

The art of Padang Lawas

The art of Padang Lawas might never have played a role as a disseminator of culture, but it succeeded in creating a purely local art form with its own identity. It is an art which may seem simple and coarse, even brutal, lacking the graceful flowing lines of Javanese art, but it possesses a frankness of expression which well served the needs of the religious cults of that time.

The art of Padang Lawas was essentially religious and closely connected with magic, a conception entirely different from the viewpoint of the classical Javanese art. The temples were thought of as a source of magic power, where magic practices and sorcery could be performed. These conceptions and the persisting influence of the ancestor cult affected artistic development. As a result, there is an archaic stiffness and the forms designed from a frontal viewpoint are primitive and lacking in spirituality and delicate restraint.

Final remarks

To-day, the Padang Lawas region is a poor lonely and barren land, along-along grass reaches a man's height, making it impossible to grow anything. At one time however, the plain must have been covered with dense forests and running rivers. As a result of the ruthless destruction of all the timber, which was probably also used for producing the enormous number of bricks needed for building the temple complexes, the region changed into the desolate and infertile plain it is now.

Elephants must regularly have visited the temples in the past and caused damage by rubbing against the temple walls. But even they have now disappeared and only herds of buffaloes graze undisturbed amongst the debris of the temples.

If in the near future more intensive research and excavations were undertaken, it should yield more comparative material which would undoubtedly contribute to a deeper appreciation of the art of Padang Lawas.

7. In the village of Lingsi, Padang Lawas, four inscriptions were discovered. Apparently, three of the stones originally formed a hexagonal column with a square top. The inscription written in Tamil records the gift of a village called "the thousand and five hundred", a South Indian village, to the king who will be known in Asia. The inscription (TIG 1932) dated 1022 A.D. The stone is in the Central Museum, Indragiri, inscribed in Old Javanese characters. It will in situ and has not yet been moved.

8. Four stone inscriptions were found near Nopjan have come from small stones now in the Central Museum (IG 27, 83 and 84). One of them (IG 27, 84) is now in the Central Museum, Indragiri. (Bosch, O.V. 1900, Padang, the old name of Indragiri, and the date 1022 A.D. Bosch, O.V. 1900, Padang, the old name of Indragiri, and the date 1022 A.D.) and says the language is Old Javanese. The west face of the stone is inscribed in Old Javanese characters. The inscription gives the date 1022 A.D. and says the language is Old Javanese.

The art of Padang Lawas

The art of Padang Lawas might never have played a role as a distinctive culture, but it succeeded in developing a purely local art form with its own identity. It is an art which may seem to be simple and even brutal, but in the actual drawing lines of Javanese art, but it conveys a bankness of expression which will meet the needs of the religious art of the time.

The art of Padang Lawas was essentially religious and closely connected with magic, a conception entirely different from the viewpoint of the classical Javanese art. The temples were thought of as a source of magic power, where magic practices and sorcery could be performed. These conceptions and the persisting influence of the ancestor cult affected art in development. As a result, there is an archaic stiffness and the forms designed from a frontal viewpoint are primitive and lacking in spatiality and delicate refinement.

Final remarks

To-day, the Padang Lawas region is a poor lonely and barren land, along along grass reaches a man's height, making it impossible to grow anything. At one time however, the plain must have been covered with dense forests and running rivers. As a result of the ruthless destruction of all the timber, which was probably also used for producing the enormous number of bricks needed for building the temple complex, the region changed into the desolate and infertile plain it is now.

Elephants must regularly have visited the temples in the past and can be seen in herds of buffaloes grazing in the fields.

I am deeply grateful to Dr. J.F.H. Villiers, Director of the British Institute in South-East Asia, who was helpful enough to read my article and correct my imperfect English.

List of Illustrations

Map of Sumatra

- Fig. 1. Map of North Sumatra
Fig. 2. Sites of principal antiquities in Padang Lawas.
Fig. 3. Groundplan of Bahal I; A = main temple, B = stupa, C.D.E. = terraces
Fig. 4. Reconstruction of the main temple, Bahal I.
Pl. 1. Biaro Si Pamutung; grass is growing everywhere (photo 1976)
Pl. 2. Bronze Buddha image seated in meditation; height 12,5 cm
Pl. 3. Stone fragment; Bhairavi with hands in añjali mudra.
Biaro Si Pamutung
Pl. 4. Biaro Bahal I near Portibi; dancing yaksas on basement
Pl. 5. Biaro Bahal I; reliefs depicting dancing yaksas
Pl. 6. Dvarapala and sitting elephant, headless; Biaro Bahal II
Pl. 7. Head of a dvarapala, Central Museum. Probably belonging to dvarapala of Bahal I.
Pl. 8. Remains of Biaro Si Topayan with inscribed pedestals (photo 1976)
Pl. 9. Biaro Si Topayan, photo 1920 (O.D. no. 4172).
Pl. 10. Stambha from Hayuara with decorated reliefs.
Pl. 11. Stambha found in Hayuara; used as a threshold of a villager's house..
Pl. 12. Lotus pedestal, Hayuara.
Pl. 13. Naga pedestal from Bara.
Pl. 14. Lion from Bara
Pl. 15. Lion from Biaro Si Pamutung.
Pl. 16. Makara from Biaro Si Pamutung.
Pl. 17. Dvarapalas from Biaro Si Pamutung, headless; seen from the front.
Pl. 18. Dvarapalas from Biaro Si Pamutung, headless; seen from the back.
Pl. 19. Stone fragment found in Biaro Pulo, probably from small dvarapala.
Pl. 20. Small dvarapala from Biaro Bahal I, height 80 cm, now disappeared.
Pl. 21. Bronze Lokanātha flanked by Tārās, from Gunung Tua; now Central Museum; Front side.
Pl. 22. Bronze Lokanātha from Gunung Tua, reverse side.
Pl. 23. Pedestal with inscription, bronze Lokanātha from Gunung Tua.
Pl. 24. Gold plate from Aek Sangkilon, 5 × 13 cm; Central Museum.
Pl. 25. Gold plate from Tandihet, 4,5 × 12,5 cm; Central Museum.

Acknowledgement of plates :

- Pl. 1,4,5,6,10 — 19 Photograph by Mr. Jazir Marzuki
Pl. 7,21,22,23 Photograph by Mr. Waluyo.
Pl. 2,3 Reproduction Schnitger, 1936.
Pl. 9,20,24,25 O.D. (Oudheidkundige Dienst, Archaeological Service).

NOTES

- 1) The Tamil inscription spelled the name Pannai. The Nāgarakṛtāgama mentions it as Pane, as in the Batak language. In the Indonesian language it is usually written as Panai or Panei.
- 2) F.M. Schnitger, "Forgotten kingdoms in Sumatra", 1939 says: "The great Panai empire is mentioned for the first time in the 6th century in the Chinese annals under the name of Poeni or Poli" (p. 85).
- 3) Wolters, O.W., "Early Indonesian Commerce", Appendix C. Chinese transcriptions of the names of the tributary kingdoms. P'o-li, on other occasions rendered as Po-li.
- 4) Hsü Yün-ts'iao "Notes on 'Tan-tan'", JMBRAS 20,1 (1947) p. 47-63
- 5) The area of camphor yielding trees has shrunk considerably. Tappers are now collecting benzoin. The benzoin of Tarutung, south of Lake Toba rates among the best benzoin in Indonesia.
- 6) The Bataks around Lake Toba are renowned singers. Their folksong repeatedly mention "bona ni seko" meaning trees producing sweet aromatics.
- 7) "The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt and some neighbouring countries, attributed to Abu Salih, the Arminian", edited and translated by B.T.A. Evetts. Oxford Clarendon Press 1895. Reprint London 1969.
The transcription is as follows :
"Fansur, fiha 'idda biya' wa-jami' min biha min al-Nasara Nasathirah (Nusthuri), wa hal fiha kadhaliha. Wa hiya allati yasala minha alkafur, wa hadha al-sinf yanbuka min al-khashab. Wa hadhihi al madinat biha bi'at wahidat 'ala ismi Sittna al-Sayyadatu al-Adhra al-Thahirah mar'at Maryam".
- 8) UNESCO report "Monuments of Nubia", 1966 mentions the imposing remains of the Church at Qasr Ibrim, which confirm the account of Abu Salih.
- 9) "Sejarah Gereja Katolik Indonesia", Jakarta 1974.
(History of the Catholic Church in Indonesia).
- 10) R. Heine - Geldern, "Le pays de P'i-k'ien, le roi au grand cou et le Singa Mangaradja". BEFEO, 1959, Tome XLIX, Fasc. 2 p. 361 — 401.
- 11) In 1978 the Directorate of History and Archaeology started the clearance of the temple compounds of Biaro Bahal I, II, III, Si Pamutung, Si Joreng Belangah, Si Topayan, Bara dan Pulo. But restoration has not yet begun.

- 12) Gunung Tua must originally have been spelled *Gunung Tuah* (tuah = fortune, invulnerable) as in the name Hang Tuah. Gunung (= hill, mountain) recalls the title "King of the Mountains", the imperial title of the dynasty of the Sailendras. In Khmer, Kurun Bnam (= King of the Mountains) was the title of the earliest rulers. Modern Phnom derives from bnam (= mountain). In ancient time the title "King of the Mountains" must have been the title of the rulers of the region, possibly claiming descent from the ruling dynasty of the Sailendras. Up to the present names and titles using "gunung" as a honorific are much favoured by the Batak population, though the meaning is no longer understood.
- 13) It is no coincidence that the marga Harahap who formerly occupied the Padang Bolak area are called "*bayo and boru angin*" meaning the sons and daughters of the wind.
- 14) In the Batak language all names begin with the article "si". Even the biaros are referred to as Si Topayan, Si Joreng Belangah, Si Pamutung, Si Mangambat.
- 15) The image now belongs to the study collection of the Institute of South Asian Archaeology, University of Amsterdam. It is on display in the Museum of the Tropical Institute in Amsterdam.
- 16) Satyawati Suleiman, "The archaeology and history of West Sumatra", 1977, p.2. "In Indrapuro, a small town near the border of Bencoolen a small Bodhisattwa head was excavated".
- 17) In 1936 the two dvarapalas were still complete; only one headless dvarapala was found in 1976.

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