

A Study on The Entry of Islam In Palembang And The Character of Its Society

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received: 31-03-2024

Revised: 18-04-2024

Accepted: 19-04-2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61930/jsii.v2i1>

Kata Kunci

Islam, Palembang, Corak Masyarakat

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini membahas tentang masuknya Islam di Palembang serta corak masyarakatnya. Sebagai salah satu kota tertua di Indonesia, Palembang pada masa lampau sangat menarik untuk senantiasa di kaji, eksistensi Sriwijaya sebagai Kerajaan Maritim Terbesar di Asia Tenggara, dan Palembang Darussalam sebagai salah satu kesultanan Islam di Indonesia menjadikan Palembang sebagai salah satu pusat kebudayaan dan peradaban besar. Masuknya Islam di Kota Palembang sangat unik dan menjadikan Palembang sebagai Serambi Madinah membuktikan bahwa Islam yang berkembang di Palembang sebagai Islam baik, dan mampu dengan cepat diserap masyarakatnya. Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan Sejarah dengan mengkaji sumber-sumber yang berbasis pada buku, makalah, jurnal, dan artikel ilmiah lainnya dan dianalisis dengan Historiografi. Hasilnya memperlihatkan bahwa Islam di Palembang memiliki sejarah yang sangat Panjang. Babak baru pun dimulai ketika Palembang menjadi Kesultanan. Pada masa ini masing-masing sultan berlomba-lomba untuk membumikan Islam di Palembang. Tarekat Samaniyah yang didirikan Syaikh Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Karim al-Samman (w. 1775 M) merupakan tarekat pertamayang sangat populer di Palembang.

ABSTRACT

Keywords

Islam, Palembang, Style of Society

This article discusses Islam's arrival in Palembang and the style of its society. As one of the oldest cities in Indonesia, Palembang in the past was very interesting to study. The existence of Sriwijaya as the most significant maritime kingdom in Southeast Asia and Palembang Darussalam as one of the Islamic sultanates in Indonesia made Palembang one of the centers of great culture and civilization. The arrival of Islam in the city of Palembang is unique. It makes Palembang the Veranda of Medina, proving that the Islam developed in Palembang is good and can be quickly absorbed by the people. The method used is a historical approach, examining sources based on books, papers, journals, and other scientific articles and analyzing them using historical analysis. The results show that Islam in Palembang has a very long history. A new chapter began when Palembang became a sultanate. At this time, each sultan competed to establish Islam in Palembang. The Samaniyah congregation, founded by Shaykh Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Karim al-Samman (d. 1775 AD), was the first congregation that was very popular in Palembang.

INTRODUCTION

The Islamic community of Palembang must be connected to the history of the arrival of Islam in the area. Besides that, history records that Palembang in the past and present is a strategic place; it used to be the center of the Srivijaya kingdom, which had a Buddhist spirit, then continued by the Palembang Darussalam kingdom, which had an Islamic spirit (Hikmawati, 2016, Gadjahnata & Sri Edi Swasono, 1986).

In general, there are several phases of the entry of Islam into Palembang; in particular, *the initial phase*, the arrival of Islam to the Palembang area, took quite a long time, namely around six centuries, until the Islamic kingdom emerged as the second *phase*. In this phase, acculturation occurred between Chinese, Middle Eastern, and Sriwijaya ships because Sriwijaya was a trade center. Apart from that, Sriwijaya ships also did the same thing in Islamic centers in the Middle East and China. According to Snouck Hurgronje, traders from Decca who connected the Islamic lands of India with the Indonesian archipelago had settled in many of the port cities of Sumatra, where they planted the seeds of the Islamic religion (Arnold, 2002)—furthermore, *Islamic development led to* the emergence of Islamic kingdoms in Aceh. A fundamental question arises as to why emergence did not occur in Palembang because of the waning prestige of the Srivijaya kingdom and the decline in trade caused by the increasing pace of natural resources (Gadjahnata & Sri Edi Swasono, 1986).

The development of Islam increased in Palembang when Ario Damar appeared, a Majapahit believer who was sent to take care of Palembang but secretly embraced Islam, changed his name to Ario Abdullah, and was assisted by Demang Lebar Daun, a local Buddhist official. The birth of Raden Fatah (Sultan Fatah) in Palembang, who was a descendant of the Majapahit Kingdom from his mother, Princess Campa, was an important starting point in the further development of this kingdom. Ario Abdillah, a Muslim, treats Princess Campa, his stepmother, according to Islamic rules and Shari'a and educates his half-sister (Jayanti, 2022). Raden Fatah was then given a wilderness area on the north coast of Java by his father, who developed the area into an Islamic kingdom called the Demak Kingdom.

This research will discuss Islam's arrival in Palembang and the style of its society, with the hope of opening a horizon of knowledge regarding religious history

in certain areas. It is also used as material for comparison, criticism, and evaluation of whether there are any weaknesses.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research is qualitative and based on library data. The approach used is historical, namely, the point of view of the object of study that will be researched scientifically based on its history (Afroni, 2019). According to Dudung Abdurrahman (1999), the historical approach is the investigation of a problem by applying the solution from a historical perspective; in this context, we want to see the arrival of Islam in Palembang and the style of its society. Data sources include books, journals, articles, papers, and similar scientific works relevant to the studied topic. After the data is collected, whether online or offline, it is tested for validity through triangulation and analysis. Data analysis begins by reviewing all available data from various sources. Next, historiography is carried out to recreate the totality of past events (Kartodirdjo, 1982).

DISCUSSION

1. Developer Profile

Palembang is the oldest city in Indonesia. This is based on the Kedukan Bukit inscription found on Siguntang Hill, west of Palembang City, which states the formation of a wanna, which is interpreted as a city that was the capital of the Srivijaya Kingdom on June 16, 683 AD. This calendar is also based on the sound of writing and calculations from the Caka calendar year, which is contained in the inscription in Bukit Kampung 35 Ilir, Ilir Barat II District (Dewi, 2018). So this date is used as a benchmark for the birthday of the City of Palembang with the Decree of the Mayor of the Regional Head of Level II of the Municipality of Palembang dated May 6, 1972, No. 57/Um/Wk/72. Palembang means a place to weigh gold. It is said that the estuary of the Ogan River was a place where people mined gold (Amin, 1986).

The Malay people also believe Palembang to be their ancestral land. Because this city is where the forerunner of the first Malay king, Parameswara, descended from Siguntang Hill. Then, Parameswa left Palembang with Sang Nila Utama, went

to Tumasik, and gave the name Singapore to Tumasik (Wargadalem et al., 2022). When Majapahit troops from Java were about to attack Singapore, Parameswara and his followers moved to Malacca on the Malaysian peninsula and founded the Kingdom of Malacca. Some of his descendants also opened new lands in the Pattani and Narathiwat areas (now southern Thailand). After contact with traders, Gujarati, and Persian people in Malacca, Parameswara converted to Islam and changed his name to Sultan Iskandar Syah (Patriansah, 2019).

Palembang has a sizeable Chinese community. The typical foods of this area are Palembang pempek, tekwan, model, celimpungan, maksuba cake, 8-hour cake, enggak cake, laksan, burgo, etc. Foods such as pempek or tekwan impress the "Chinese" taste of the people of Palembang. Apart from that, there is a unique village for Chinese people called Kampung Cina in the South Palembang area.

2. Islamic Society

Palembang is one of the cities (formerly a level II region with municipal status) and South Sumatra Province's capital. Palembang is the second-largest city in Sumatra after Medan. This city was once the center of the Srivijaya Kingdom before Majapahit destroyed it. Until now, the former area of the Srivijaya Kingdom still exists on Siguntang Hill.

According to history, Islam entered Palembang around 1440 AD and was brought there by Raden Rahmat (Rochmiatun, 2017), one of the nine famous saints on the island of Java. However, in that year, the influence of Hinduism was still firmly rooted here, so the progress of Islam could have been faster. Until the 19th century, Palembang's Muslims had little religious knowledge, limited to their skin, except for people who had daily contact with Arabs. However, in the first decade of this century, there was a renewal of religious life and da'wah that developed as reports from the Dutch East Indies government called attention to the ongoing expansion of Islam among the population—Perbegu—in various areas of Palembang (Arnold, 2002).

Islam in Palembang only began to develop in depth during the Palembang Darussalam Sultanate, specifically during the reign of Kyai Mas Endi, Prince Ario Kesuma Abdurohim, Sultan Susuhunan Abdurrahman, and Khalifatul Mukminin

Syahidul Imam (1659–1706 AD). On this basis, P de Roo de Faille, in his book from *The Palembang Sultanate*, argues that Banten's attack on Palembang in 1596 was a "holy" war for the sake of establishing the Islamic religion there (Niswah et al., 2022).

During the Sultan Sesuhunan period, Islam was spread as widely as possible. He built a mosque not far from the palace and had a beard. This mosque is called the Lamo Mosque. One of the famous scholars at that time was Khotib Komad. Sultan Sesuhunan himself is a leader who fears God. Since his reign, in the structure of the sultanate government, there has been a *penghulu* in charge of religious matters with the title of Pangeran Nata Agama.

The footsteps of Sultan Sesuhunan in spreading Islam, followed by sultans after him in succession. During Sultan Jayo Ing Lago (1706–1714), one of the famous scholars, Tuan Fakih Jalaluddin, taught the Qur'an and the knowledge of Ushuluddin. This great scholar still preached during the time of Sultan Agung Komaruddin Sri Teruno (1714–1724) and Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin Jayo Wikramo (1724–1758) until the end of his life in 1748. A month after the great scholar passed away, may God bless him, Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin, on June 25, 1748, built a mosque for the endowment of Muslims, which is still there and is known as the Great Mosque (Syarifuddin et al., 2021).

Ultan Mahmud Badaruddin Jayo Wirakmo's successor, Sultan Sesuhunan Ahmad Najimuddin Adi Kesumo (1758–1776), also mentioned his attention to the development of Islam, where he reorganized the government on Bangka Island, assisting Tumenggung as the head of government for the Islamic religion, *penghulu*, *imam*, and *Khotib*. The great scholar Sheikh Abdulsomad al-Pelimbani was born in Palembang during his time. During the reign of Sultan Muhammad Bahauddin (1776–1805), he actively developed Islam (1776–1799).

Sultan Mahmud Badaruddin II (1803–1821) played a very prominent role in the confrontation between the British and Dutch imperialists and colonialists, so his entire reign was occupied by confrontation and war. However, it cannot be forgotten that apart from being a political expert and warrior, his love of learning led him to own a library, master science, and study Islamic religion, thus greatly influencing the development of Islam in Palembang and its surroundings.

During the Palembang sultanate, Islamic Sharia was also enforced. The Koran and hadith are the government's constitution (Abdurrahmansyah, 2020). The aim is only one: to create a just and prosperous society blessed by Allah SWT (*baladun thoyyibatun wa rabbun ghafur*). At that time, people realized that Islamic law was not something to be afraid of. At that time, the Chinese people in Palembang could live safely and peacefully under the umbrella of the Palembang Darussalam Sultanate. The Palembang Darussalam Sultanate was founded to provide a correct way of life for the residents of the former Srivijaya, who lived by the law of the jungle and whoever was strong won.

1890, the public saw a polemic between Sayyid Usman bin Abdullah bin Aqil bin Yahya and Sheikh Ahmad Khatib Minangkabau regarding the new mosque incident. The new mosque management wants to hold Friday prayers in order to achieve optimal mosque function. According to Shafi'i scholars, several conditions must be met before Friday prayers can be held, including that each country can only have one mosque; if there is a call to prayer from the first mosque, it cannot be heard in the area of the second mosque if there is a river between the two rivers. If the old mosque is too small, both areas cannot be enlarged further (Ilyas, 2019; Majid, 1986).

The management of the Sultanate mosque asked Sayyid Usman for a fatwa and stated that he was not allowed to hold Friday prayers in the new mosque. In contrast, the new mosque asked for a fatwa from Ahmad Khatib, stating that he was allowed to hold Friday prayers in the new mosque. In the end, the two followers of the mosque each maintained their truth so that the two ideologies under Sayyid Usman and Sheikh Ahmad Khatib developed. Sayyid Usman developed his thoughts about religion in his book entitled *Syari'yatu Li Ahlil Majalisil Humiyyati Bitahqiqil Masa-lli Liyatamayyaza Lahumul Haqu Minal Baathili*, while Sheikh Ahmad Khatib was composing the book *Al-Dai al-Masmu* and the translation *Al-Manhaj al-Masyru* (Ilyas, 2019).

During the Palembang Darussalam Sultanate era, social stratification occurred in the Palembang Islamic community: *First*, Priyayi or descendants of kings or nobles. This position is obtained by birth or by the favor of the king. Priyayi is divided into three groups. *Prince, Raden, and Masagus*. Prince means the one who

rules; the king must always give this title, and no one who does not have a position gets it. The native-born sons of kings and the native sons of princes were usually bestowed with the title. *Radin* or *Raden* means high or chosen. The son of a prince's marriage to a prince's daughter was born a reader, and no one could usurp that title from him. Massages are worth a lot. This title is owned by a legitimate male child from the marriage of a prince or raden with a woman from the people's class.

The titles of the wives of the priyayi families were as follows: The faithful wife of the Sultan was called the Queen. The wives and daughters of princes and raden are called Raden-Ayu, meaning beautiful, chosen, and majestic. The wife and daughter of Masagus are called Mas-Ayu, the expensive beauty. The previous group and these three groups include the priyayi group. They had no property to inherit, but many of them were given several hamlets or clans by the king. Among the priyayi who do not have a village, they live by their crafts; they are makers of gold and silver items or have fine handicrafts; others trade and farm.

Second, people's groups. They are divided into three groups: Kiyai Mas (Kemas), Kiyai Agus, and ordinary people. Kiyai Mas is the son of Masayu's marriage to a man from the ordinary people. Kiyai Agus (Kiagus) is the son of a mantra and is of the lowest *raden* descent among ordinary people. They must participate in light and gentle work, not row or do manual labor (Rochmiatun, 2016).

The ordinary people are divided into groups: Miji, Senan, and people who mortgage themselves. People *Cities* in the capital have the same position as eye-making in the interior. They have some people who can be used to fight, others can do work or make works of art, and the King, Prince or Raden also use them. Each Miji has several named assistant troubles. Alingan means family. However, some people are not family members who join Miji because Miji defends his rights and provides assistance to him; for this reason, they help Miji with the obligations required of him. Senan people, or snow, were a group lower than the Miji, but the King did not use them to make and repair boats, houses, and row for the King. The third group is those who mortgage themselves to pay their debts. They are workers who are not directly related to the king but are often used as mobsters to take loans from the king (Aly, 1986).

Then, the people of Palembang were known as conscientious hand workers. Their way of working with wood was so perfect that building experts said they connected various parts with calculations based on skill and precision. Their ivory work is exquisite. Likewise, copper and iron are excellent in terms of work, and the latter two items are even more preferable to those from Java. They made household utensils from tin. They were experts in silver and gold work, especially in relief sculptures. They make rifle medicine, which is declared excellent by experts.

The women are no less ingenious in manual work. The best silks and cloths interspersed with gold threads were made here and sent everywhere, called Songket cloth. They were very good at embroidery, painting various shapes and flowers in gold on silk, and cartoons. However, they did not have literary experts. Even in this field, they are behind the Javanese, Minangkabau, and Sundanese people (Aly, 1986).

Nowadays, the above social stratification no longer applies, although descendants of the Palembang Sultanate often use these titles. However, in the current context, the people of Palembang generally understand that the Islamic religion is divided into several groups:

First, groups of people were still influenced by Perbegu traditions, which the Srivijaya and Majapahit Kingdoms abandoned. Many of these people live around Siguntang Hill (the area of the Srivijaya kingdom) and in inland areas. Apart from that, educationally, this community is also very backward. The group is not very clear regarding religious organizations, but Pangestu religious organizations such as Kejawen in Java.

Second, community groups have slightly abandoned their ancestral traditions and adherents of the Samaniyyah order. These Islamic communities are found in Islamic centers such as Islamic boarding schools in Langgar. In terms of community organizations, this group is affiliated with the community organizations Nahdatul Ulama, LDII, and GUPPI.

Third, a group of people who are no longer tied to the traditions of their ancestors but are heavily influenced by the Wahhabi movement in Saudi Arabia and the Padri in Padang. The majority of this community group resides in urban areas.

Many community organizations are affiliated with Muhammadiyah, Persisi, and al-Irsyad.

Islam is the religion of the majority of Palembang society. Of course, the spread of Islam cannot be separated from the services of the ulama and umara above and the role of Arab traders who introduced and spread Islam there. So it is not surprising that they formed their village, which is very famous: Al Munawwar village, which is an Arab community area.

Apart from that, the Islamic community in Palembang can now be proud because Islamic law can be implemented through regional regulations with Sharia nuances. This, of course, continues what has been implemented by the Palembang sultanate. Because, after all, as a living law inherent in the lives of Muslims, Islamic law has become part of the lives of the people, and Islamic law is naturally implemented and practiced by Muslims.

3. A Growing Congregation

Samaniyah, as a new tarekat, began to spread to Indonesia at the end of the 18th century AD. This Erekat, whose name refers to the name of Shaykh Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Karim al-Samman (d. 1775 AD), is a combination of methods. And readings from various Tarekat, Khalwatiyah, Qadiriyyah, Naqsbandiyyah, and Syadziliyyah. The Sammaniyah Order was the first to gain many followers in the archipelago. This order is prevalent in Aceh, South Sumatra (Palembang), and South Kalimantan and has played a role in the anti-colonial resistance there (Bruinessen, 1995).

Two figures who were very instrumental in the spread of the Sammaniyah order in Palembang were Abd al-Samad al-Falimbani, a scholar who authored two Sufism books in Malay, *Hidayah al-Salikin* and *Sair al-Salikin* (Yani, 2011). He also studied directly with Sheikh Samman himself. Other figures also played a role in the spread (worship) of Shaykh Samman, such as Muhammad Muhyiddin Syihabuddin al-Falimbani. He translated a book *manaqib*, which tells the miracles of Shaykh Samman in Malay, adding some stories concerning Sammaniyah followers from the archipelago (Bruinessen, 1995).

In Palembang and its surroundings, the Sammaniyah order still exists, although there are fewer adheres. The most prominent teacher is K. H. M. Zen Sukri. He received the order of Sammaniyah from his father, K. H. Hasan bin Azhari, who received it from his father, Kemas H. M. Azhari bin 'Abdullah, who also received it from his father, Abdullah bin Ma'ruf. The latter received this from Muhammad 'Aqib bin Hasanuddin al-Falimbani, who took the order from 'Abd al-Samad al-Falimbani. Besides his father, Kiai Zen, his uncle 'Abd al-Ghani bin Azhari was also a teacher of the Sammaniyah order, but he died without leaving a successor (Munir, 2015).

K. H. M. Zen Sukri is a very famous cleric in Palembang. He was one of the favorite students of Hasyim Asy'ari, the founder of Nahdhatul Ulama when he was studying at the Tebuireng Islamic Boarding School in Jombang in 1937. In 1939, he developed Ahlus Sunnah's teachings in his area and helped move NU in the Sumatra region. During the release, the message conveyed by Kiai Hasyim was only a warning. Your name is only Muhammad Zen Syukri, without any title, only the title Abdullah (servant of Allah), which is what you should expect from Allah.

As a cadre of Islamic boarding school ulama, he joined the NU organization in Palembang when he arrived in his hometown. As one of the Tebuireng students, especially as a student of Kiai Hasyim Asy'ari, he received a respected position in the management of NU Palembang, which was considered to have inherited adequate NU traditions, therefore, even though he was still relatively young, namely 21 years, he was confirmed as secretary of the Palembang branch of NU. With the organization he manages, he can teach religious knowledge, and his organizational experience while in Tebuireng can also be applied in his area so that NU Palembang continues to progress. So, in 1943, he was elected Chair of the Palembang Branch of the Tanfidziyah NU.

In 1950, he was honored as a teacher at the Great Mosque of Palembang, a mosque inherited from the Kingdom of Palembang Darussalam. Where the selection of kiai was rigorous, so it was not easy for someone to be accepted as a teacher at the Great Mosque if they were not truly qualified in their knowledge. There, he was tasked with teaching fiqh, monotheism, and especially Sufism; this was an outstanding achievement because not just any scholar could achieve this. Finally,

Zen Sayukri became the highest leader and imam of the Great Mosque until now. In this way, the understanding of Ahl Sunnah can continue to be developed.

CONCLUSION

From the proposition above, Islam in Palembang has a very long history before being accepted by society as an official religion. The history of the arrival of Islam in Palembang is the same problem as Sriwijaya in discussing history as a science. Even though Sriwijaya has more or less left behind written legacies that talk about it. However, because the main characteristics of facts are never complete and cannot speak for themselves, the consequence is that discussions about Srivijaya have multiple interpretations, and there is never one understanding. However, there is a common point that Sriwijaya, as the most prominent maritime kingdom, has many territories and is centered in Palembang.

After Sriwijaya collapsed, Palembang became an uninhabited area, so Ario Damar was sent to take care of it. This period also became a turning point for the development of Islam because Ario Damar himself had converted to Islam thanks to the services of Raden Rahmat, who also succeeded in spreading Islam in Palembang.

A new chapter began when Palembang became a Sultan. At this time, each sultan competed to establish Islam in Palembang. The procession only stopped when the sultan had to expel the Dutch from the area. It was also during this time that Islamic Sharia was enforced, and Islam was successfully spread to the interior, which, in previous times, still adhered to religion.

The Samaniyah congregation, founded by Shaykh Muhammad bin 'Abd al-Karim al-Samman (d. 1775 AD), was the first very popular congregation in Palembang. K. H. M. Zen Sukri is a scholar who is still spreading the word to the people of Palembang.

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