

Heritage Preservation of the Pulau Sawah Temple Complex in Dharmasraya Regency, Indonesia

Merlina Agustina Orllanda¹, Herwandi¹, Nopriyasman¹

¹Department of History, Faculty of Humanities,
Andalas University, Padang, West Sumatra – Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: pradana.bk@gmail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14710/ihis.v9i1.22960>

Abstract

The study focused on the preservation of the Pulau Sawah Temple complex under the management of Batusangkar Historical and Archaeological Heritage Conservation Agency (SPSP) Batusangkar to the Cultural Preservation Centre (BPK) III Region West Sumatra. The temple site had previously received inadequate attention, both from the community and the local government, even though it marked the heritage of the Buddhist Malay Kingdom. The situation improved when the SPSP was established and began operations, leading to increased attention and conservation efforts for the Pulau Sawah temple complex through various stages. Through primary and secondary source research, the study found that the conservation of the Pulau Sawah temple complex has involved numerous stakeholders. Various local stakeholders, supported by the Batusangkar SPSP as the precursor to the BPK III, have played a crucial role in the preservation process. Preservation efforts are not limited to collection management but are also supported by the management of the organisational structure of the institution responsible for the site complex. Therefore, the preservation of the temple structures on Pulau Sawah, which, when examined closely, can evoke the identity of Dharmasraya, is of great value and should be passed on to future generations.

Keywords: Pulau Sawah Temple Site; Historical and Archaeological Heritage Site; Preservation; Collaboration.

Introduction

The temple complex in the Pulau Sawah area was officially recognised by the Regent of Dharmasraya, Sutan Riska, on 8 March 2019, as a regency-level Cultural Heritage Site. This action is a form of appreciation by the Dharmasraya Regional Government through Regent's Decree No. 188.45/KPTS-/BUD/2019 for the historical value of the red brick configuration hidden among the rubber plantations and Siguntur grass. The sense of ownership towards this historical heritage reflects a commitment to fulfilling the government's mandate No. 38 issued in 2007, which focuses on cultural preservation. This aligns with the government's role in shaping a nation's cultural landscape and serving to preserve, promote, and regulate cultural heritage (Saputra, 2024, p. 25). Moreover, Sumatra Island boasts numerous cultural heritage sites with similar cultural and historical backgrounds, such as in Medan, Bukittinggi, and Siak. Additionally, various archaeological remnants are scattered across West Sumatra, including Dharmasraya Regency (Ginting, Rahman, Nasution, 2020). The Minangkabau cultural

heritage, as described by Mardatillah (2020), is shaped by various elements, including history, and is an element that should be appreciated by policymakers aiming to develop cities (Rashid, 2015, pp. 10-17).

One of the cultural heritage sites in Dharmasraya Regency that is quite important to preserve due to the vulnerability of its structure caused by natural factors is the Pulau Sawah Candra and Rahman Site (2023, p. 17). The Pulau Sawah Temple area is indicated as one of the relics of the Melau Dharmasraya Kingdom, specifically as a strategic administrative centre around the end of the 12th century. At that time, there was a connection between Java and Sumatra related to Pamalayu, the gift of the Amoghapasa Statue (1208 S/1286 CE) by King Kertanegara of the Singasari Kingdom to Sri Maharaja Srimat Tribhuwanaraja Mauliwarmmadewa (Istiawan, 2023, p. 46). The emergence of the Wangsa Mauli Dharmasraya Dynasty revealed that the Dharmasraya Malay Kingdom was not a continuation of Sriwijaya. Based on this, it is known that the story buried in the brick fragments in the Pulau Sawah area highlights Dharmasraya as a royal land (Marzali, 2023, p. 66-67).

It can be stated that several archaeological potentials at the Pulau Sawah Temple Complex have been influenced by Buddhist elements. At the Pulau Sawah II Site, a Buddha statue with the head and hands missing (1), a Buddha Gautama statue, another Buddha statue in a standing tribangga position on a base (missing), and other remnants were found (Taim, 2022, pp. 100-101). Considering the relatively young age of the temples, some indicate that the area was formerly used as a place of worship. That is evident from the presence of dormitories or learning spaces and areas for congregants. It is estimated that the designation of Pulau Sawah as a place of worship was supported by its environmental factors (R. W. Oetomo, Personal Communication, 14 May 2024).

The location of Sawah Island, not far from the riverbank on the north side of the Batanghari River, also contributes to the Buddhist atmosphere of the area. That location indicates that Pulau Sawah was previously a religious site, as described in the *Mānasāra Śilpaprakāsa* text (Taim, 2022, p. 100). Additionally, the Batanghari River basin in Dharmasraya Regency, which is indicated as a transportation route for the Pamalayu trade, was also utilised for religious activities such as worship, complete with supporting facilities. Therefore, the Pulau Sawah Temple Complex is significantly important to be preserved, particularly its architectural structures, to ensure that its knowledge, historical, educational, religious, and cultural values are not lost over time and can be passed down to future generations (Istiawan and Utomo, 2014, p. 28).

Various traces of Hindu-Buddhist relics at the Pulau Sawah Temple Complex demonstrate the uniqueness of the archaeological remains in Dharmasraya Regency, prompting numerous experts to conduct various studies on the site. L. C. Westenenk visited the Pulau Sawah complex in 1909 and discovered brick ruins on Pulau Sawah. He documented his observations in 1921, titled 'Memorie van overgave van den aftredenden resident van Benkoelen L.C Westenenk.' This initial research then attracted the attention of other researchers such as Schmitger, leading to further studies up until the post-independence period of Indonesia (Candra and Rahman, 2023, pp. 39-40).

Through the time, the Pulau Sawah Temple Complex in Dharmasraya Regency began to be treated like other heritage sites in the region. The complex was then specifically managed under the New Order government, specifically under the management of the Director of Protection and Preservation of Ancient Heritage. Since then, the Pulau Sawah complex has been managed by the Museum of Prehistoric History (Muskala) of the West Sumatra Regional

Office of the Ministry of Education and Culture since 1989 and has also been managed by the Batusangkar Archaeological Service (SPSP) since 1990 (Sugiharta, 2013, p. 60).

Based on the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture No.0767/O/1989 dated 7 December 1989, SPSP Batusangkar was established to carry out the tasks of protecting, developing and realising the utilisation and facilitating the preservation of past heritage in the working area. In its implementation, SPSP Batusangkar collaborates with other agencies within the Ministry of Education and Culture, local governments, and the local community. Therefore, in order to extend the lifespan of the brick structures at the Pulau Sawah Temple Complex, SPSP Batusangkar involved the role of the Dharmasraya Regency Government before it separated from the Sawahlunto-Sijunjung Regency and the Siguntur community (T. Hidayat, Personal Communication, 14 March 2024). However, the community residing within the temple complex has not yet developed a sense of ownership towards the heritage site, as they are perceived to lack sufficient awareness. As a result, cases of vandalism, theft, and the relocation of collections have occurred at the Pulau Sawah temple structures, indirectly threatening their preservation (T. A. P. Marhasinda, Personal Communication, 19 April 2024).

The preservation of the Pulau Sawah Temple site had not previously been a priority for the government due to a lack of coordination between the central and regional governments. Therefore, the involvement of SPSP Batusangkar has encouraged cooperation with various stakeholders. These consistent efforts were evident in the transformation of SPSP Batusangkar into the Centre for the Preservation of Historical and Archaeological Heritage (BP3), which later became the Cultural Heritage Preservation Office (BPCB) of West Sumatra, and is now known as the Cultural Heritage Preservation Office of Region III (BPK III) of West Sumatra Province, based on Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation Number 33 of 2022.

Based on the above description, this study focuses on the dynamics of SPSP Batusangkar as the forerunner of BPK III West Sumatra Province, which has played an important role in the preservation of the Candi Pulau Sawah site in Jorong Siguntur Ranah, Kenagarian Siguntur, Sitiung District, Dharmasraya Regency, West Sumatra Province.

Method

The arguments presented in this paper are based on findings and selection of facts from qualitative historical research. This research is descriptive and analytical in nature, using primary sources such as laws, archives, photographs and reports obtained from archival studies, literature studies and field studies. In addition to literature studies and field research, this study also uses interviews as part of its oral sources.

The sources obtained were critically reviewed, both internally and externally, to minimise subjectivity and ensure the authenticity and credibility of the sources (Herlina, 2008, pp. 25-55). This study also employs the Cultural Resource Management (CRM) and Sustainable Resource Management approaches to conduct a critical-empirical analysis of the effective and sustainable management of the Pulau Sawah Temple Complex, involving local stakeholders in Dharmasraya Regency (Smith and Clarke, 2004, pp. 10-15).

Batusangkar Historical and Archaeological Heritage Site (SPSP): Safeguarding West Sumatra's Cultural Legacy

Cultural resource management in Indonesia is generally better known among archaeologists and is always associated with the conservation of cultural heritage in the form

of archaeological remains, such as artefacts, monuments, structures, sites and areas. On the other hand, the arrangement of a site area also faces various challenges in the conservation process at sites and monuments, as well as cultural heritage areas. This is because management is not only limited to determining the area to be protected, but also determining the boundaries of the area, which is not easy to do (Putranto et al., 2024, pp. 2-3).

Looking at the history of cultural preservation in Indonesia, preservation efforts began with the establishment of the Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indie in 1913. This archaeological institution was tasked with researching and preserving historical relics in the Dutch East Indies as an effort to protect historical and archaeological artefacts. Following the proclamation of Indonesian independence, the Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indie was nationalised as the National Archaeological and Heritage Agency (LPPN). Over time, the LPPN evolved into the Centre for Archaeological and Heritage Research in 1974, and the Directorate of History and Archaeology was renamed the Directorate of Protection and Development of Historical and Archaeological Heritage (Ditlinbinjarah). In accordance with the Decree of the People's Consultative Assembly No. IV/MPR/1978, the institution is tasked with the restoration, maintenance, preservation, and protection of the nation's cultural heritage. This legal foundation also established the development and promotion of cultural values contained in historical and archaeological heritage to preserve the nation's identity, strengthen national pride and self-esteem, and reinforce the spirit of national unity. Additionally, the Directorate of Historical Heritage Utilisation (Ditlinbinjarah) uses Article 32 of the 1945 Constitution as its constitutional basis for rescuing, protecting, nurturing, and maintaining all heritage sites throughout the entire territory of the country (T. Hidayat, Personal Communication, 14 March 2024).

Ditlinbinjarah was officially established in 1980 and began with four Technical Implementation Units (UPT) of the Directorate of History and Antiquities located in Yogyakarta, Trowulan, Gianyar, and Makassar. However, the institution faced various challenges following Indonesia's independence, prompting the Minister of Education and Culture at the time, Fuad Hasan, to issue a decision regarding the organisation and operational procedures for historical and archaeological heritage sites on 7 December 1989. This was related to the protection of the nation's cultural heritage, which had been hindered during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia. The establishment of the four UPTs was followed by the establishment of five UPT branches, including SPSP Aceh, SPSP Batusangkar, SPSP Jambi, SPSP West Java, and SPSP Central Java. Based on the Minister of Education and Culture's Decision on 7 December 1989, the Borobudur Study and Conservation Centre in Magelang, along with the West Sumatra SPSP, was established to establish these institutions.

After being established in 1989, SPSP Batusangkar began operations in 1990. The choice of location for the office in Batusangkar was related to the location of the Pagaruyung Kingdom, which has many classical relics, such as those of King Adityawarman, Islam, the colonial era, and the independence era. Like other SPSP branches established across various regions, SPSP Batusangkar is tasked with maintaining, protecting, restoring, documenting, guiding, and educating the public about historical and archaeological sites within its area of operation. The Batusangkar SPSP was initially located in the guardhouse of the Adityawarman Inscription before moving to the Balai Adat, which is situated directly in front of the regent's official residence. After receiving a land grant in 1994, the Batusangkar SPSP office was officially relocated to Jalan Sultan Alam Bagagarsyah, Nagari Pagaruyung, Tanjung Emas District. However, the SPSP Batusangkar office was officially established in 1996, as shown in

Figures 1 to 3 (T. Hidayat, Personal Communication, 14 March 2024).



Figure 1. Portrait of the SPSP's Office in the 1990s
(Source: Dokumentasi SPSP)



Figure 2. Portrait of SPSP's second office in the 2000s
(Source: Dokumentasi SPSP)



Figure 3. The location of the BPK III office on Jalan Sultan Alam Bagagarsyah, Nagari Pagaruyung, has been the same since the 2000s until now.
(Source: Dokumentasi SPSP)

The inauguration of SPSP Batusangkar ultimately supported the existence of the Museum of History and Archaeology (Muskala) under the management of the West Sumatra Regional Office of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Candra and Rahman, 2023). SPSP

Batusangkar faces various challenges in managing its archaeological collections, such as limited data. This is because, although the number of objects in West Sumatra-Riau is quite significant, they must align with local traditions and the vast geographical area with limited transportation infrastructure during the data collection process. Additionally, SPSP Batusangkar still needs to convince local governments and communities about the role and functions of the institution in preserving the collection (A. T. Mulyono, Personal Communication, 28 February 2024).

In its development, Presidential Decree No. 117 was issued to establish the Department of Tourism and Culture. Although this policy was temporary because after Megawati became President of the Republic of Indonesia, the status of the Department of Culture and Tourism was changed to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. In this context, SPSP Batusangkar played a role in supporting the government, particularly in preserving culture by nurturing, developing, protecting, and utilising culture not only for tourism purposes. To carry out its role within the government structure, in 2002 SPSP Batusangkar changed its name to BP3. At the same time, its territory was expanded to include the Riau Islands (R. Rusli, Personal Communication, 19 December 2023).

In carrying out its duties, BP3 is responsible to the Directorate General of History and Archaeology, with implementation managed by the Director of Archaeological Heritage in accordance with Permenbudpar 37 of 2006. Essentially, there was a vertical bureaucratic restructuring, though this did not significantly impact the tasks and functions of SPSP/BP3. This is because the institution's focus remained on the preservation of historical and archaeological heritage.

Over time, the institution was once again placed under the management of the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2011, resulting in the issuance of Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 52/2012 on the Organisation and Operational Procedures of the Cultural Heritage Preservation Centre (BPCB). In this context, the term BP3 was changed to BPCB. With the issuance of Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 30/2015, the Batusangkar Cultural Heritage Preservation Centre was renamed the West Sumatra Cultural Heritage Preservation Centre (BPCB Sumbar). The organisational structure of BPCB Sumbar consists of a Head who oversees Section Heads and Sub-Section Heads. Section Heads are responsible for coordinating the Maintenance Working Group, the Rescue-Security-Zoning Working Group, the Documentation-Publication Working Group, the Development-Utilisation Working Group, and the Restoration Working Group (Nurmatias, Personal Communication, 2 April 2024).

The regulation was later amended based on Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology No. 33/2022 concerning the Organisation and Work Procedures of Cultural Preservation Centres. Therefore, BPK III employees were reorganised by merging staff from the Cultural Values Preservation Centre in Padang and the West Sumatra Cultural Heritage Preservation Centre in Batusangkar. In its efforts to preserve and promote cultural heritage and intangible cultural heritage, BPK III West Sumatra focuses solely on the West Sumatra region. This agency was officially established on 2 June 2022, and its inauguration took place on 22 December 2022. Undri serves as the head of BPK Region III West Sumatra Province, with Fauzan Amril as the Head of the General Affairs Section. The agency, located in Padang and Tanah Datar, has 88 staff members and 113 cultural heritage custodians (Staff Placement Decision 2022: 1-5; Staff Reorganisation Decision for BPK Region III, 14 April 2023: 1-6; Cultural Heritage Custodian Decision for BPCB West Sumatra, 17

February 2022).

In the field of conservation, from the SPSP to the BPK Region III West Sumatra, the commitment to preserving the nation's cultural assets remains steadfast. However, since 2022, these efforts have been realised through collaboration between the Cultural Heritage Law No. 11 of 2010 and the Cultural Advancement Law No. 5 of 2017 to preserve and promote cultural heritage that reflects the nation's identity. As one of the nation's cultural treasures, the Pulau Sawah Temple Complex is always prioritised to ensure that this distinctive heritage of Dharmasraya Regency continues to provide benefits in terms of economy, knowledge, religion, and history.

Tracing the Melayu Legacy: From Sriwijaya's Dominion to Dharmasraya's Rise

The location of Malay is quite a puzzle because there are various versions of its location. In 1993, Basyarsyah II and his colleagues stated that 'Malay' was located precisely on the coast of the Malacca Strait, starting from southern Thailand, the Malay Peninsula, the east coast of Sumatra, to the South China Sea, such as Brunei, Sabah, and Serawak. Winstedt (1984) had a broader perspective, linking the Malay people to all indigenous groups inhabiting the entire Nusantara archipelago, the Philippines, parts of Indochina, and Formosa (Taiwan) (Hakim, 2017, pp. 101-112). Both views do not deny that one of the locations of the Malay people is in Indonesia (Soedewo, 2007, pp. 19-20). Regarding the Malay people in their homeland, it is interesting to trace the story of the Malay people of Sumatra.

There is a view that the Malay people were located in the Jambi region at that time, but it was assumed afterward that they were in the Malay Peninsula (Soedewo, 2007, p. 20). In Malay mythology, their ancestors are believed to have come from the sky and descended to Bukit Seguntang Maha Meru in the upper reaches of Palembang. Based on a classical perspective, the village at the upper reaches of the Merangin River (Karang Brahi) is estimated to be the original centre of the Malay Kingdom, with its port at Muara Jambi (Marzali, 2023, p. 76). The fact that this aligns with I-tsing's records, which mention that the Malay port served as a stopover point between India and China, is significant. It is stated that from this port, one could sail northward to Kwang-tung in approximately fifteen days. Based on the above information from the Buddhist monk, Slametmuljana identified the mouth of the Batanghari River (Kota Jambi) in the 7th century as the location of the Malay Kingdom. Another perspective comes from Boechari, who places the Malay people on the eastern coast of Sumatra (the Batang Kuantan region or on the western coast of Malaysia near Port Swettenham) (Hassan et al., 2021, pp. 45-46).

Based on I-Tsing's expedition reports on the spread of Buddhism in the Malay region, it can be concluded that the Malay Kingdom was not actually the Sriwijaya (Sriwijaya) Kingdom, but rather a conquered region. According to Suzuki, the capital of the Sriwijaya Kingdom was located in Chaiya (in Ban Don Bay, Southern Thailand) (Razzaq, 2017, pp. 39-50). Sriwijaya was never located in Palembang, but Palembang was one of the territories under Sriwijaya's control (around 650 CE). In addition to Palembang, Muara Jambi was also under the control of Sriwijaya (around 672-687). Information indicates that I-Tsing was once escorted by the king of Sriwijaya to Muara Jambi in 672, and later in 687 he found that the Malay had been conquered by Sriwijaya. I-Tsing's testimony shows that around 685, Sriwijaya had conquered the Malay, although not under strict control. Therefore, the Malay continued to send envoys to China. This was considered by Sriwijaya as a form of resistance, so that around 683-686 a warning was issued as stated in the Karang Brahi Inscription (Marzali, 2023, pp. 66-67).

The inscription on the Karang Brahi Inscription confirms that Merangin was the original location of the Malay Kingdom. Although the kingdom had the Muara Jambi Bay, its location was deep inland along the Batanghari River, situated on a hill. It is believed that this Malay Kingdom established trade relations with China and India, which angered the Sriwijaya Kingdom (Hakim, 2017). Field evidence indicates the presence of rectangular brick structures located 200 metres from the banks of the Batang Merangin River, which are believed to be the site of the kingdom. However, J.L.A. Brandes firmly identified Dharmasraya (West Sumatra) as the centre of the Malay Kingdom of Sumatra. The emergence of Dharmasraya coincided with the decline of the Sriwijaya Kingdom due to the invasion of Rajendracola I (1025), marking the end of the Sailendra Dynasty's rule in Sumatra. Shortly thereafter, the Mauli Dynasty emerged in Dharmasraya as the rulers of the Malacca Strait. These facts indicate that the Malay Kingdom of Dharmasraya was not a continuation of Sriwijaya, as suggested in Figures 4 and 5.



Figure 4. A portrait of the Batanghari River in the area controlled by the Malay Kingdom of Sumatra, believed to be the route of the Pamalayu incident.
(Source: <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11840/22931>)



Figure 5. The Dharmasraya region, which was once the domain of the Malay Kingdom
(Source: <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11840/2786>)

The Malay Kingdom of Dharmasraya can be considered the successor to the Malay Kingdom in Sumatra, given that kingdoms in Sumatra often moved to avoid attacks from enemies such as Srivijaya. Hasan Djafar divides Malay history into three phases: the early period (around the mid-7th century CE), the period of occupation by Srivijaya (around 680-mid-11th century CE), and the late period (around the 11th to 14th centuries CE) (Bahar, 2014, p. 18). The emergence of the Malay Kingdom in Karang Brahi Hulu Sungai Merangin, which was later moved to Muara Jambi for strategic reasons, falls within the early phase.

Subsequently, the expansion period of Sriwijaya, which included the control of the Malay Kingdom of Jambi, falls within the occupation phase. The final phase is marked by the disappearance of the name Sriwijaya in 1365 and the emergence of discussions about the Malay Kingdom of Dharmasraya (Marzali, 2023, p. 76). Discussions about the Malay people highlight the existence of Dharmasraya Regency as the legacy of the kingdom. This regency, located in the southeastern tip of West Sumatra Province, was inaugurated on 7 January 2004. Dharmasraya is strategically located on the Trans-Sumatra Highway and is directly bordered by Bungo Regency, Jambi Province. In addition to land, Dharmasraya and Jambi Province are connected by the Batanghari River, which is approximately 1,740 km long (Widiatmoko, 2009, p. 1). Upon examination, Dharmasraya is located precisely at the upstream of the Batanghari River, with its downstream reaching Muara Jambi (access to the Malacca Strait). In the past, the Batanghari River Basin in Dharmasraya District was used as a means of transportation, supporting agriculture, and producing gold. When linked to Dharmasraya as a royal land, the Batanghari River Sub-Basin in Dharmasraya was once used as a Malay Royal Port (Candra and Rahman, 2023, pp. 15-16).

Regarding the Malay Kingdom and its relationship with the Batanghari River Basin, it's a story of affiliation between the Kingdom of Java and the Kingdom of Sumatra. Such knowledge cannot be mere speculation because it was inscribed on the Dharmasraya Inscription, which uses Old Javanese script and a mixture of Sanskrit and Old Malay. Additionally, in the Pararaton manuscript and the Negarakertagama manuscript (stanza XLI,5), there is information equivalent to the Malay account, namely Pamalayu, which was centred in Dharmasraya (Sadzali, Resiyani, and Fitrah, 2021). The Pararaton mentions that in 1275, the last king of Singasari (Prabu Kertanagara) sent envoys from Java to Sumatra led by Mahisa Anabrang or Kebo Anabrang. Then in 1286 AD (1208 S), another force led by four officials from Java was sent to deliver the Amoghapasa Lokeswara statue and 14 accompanying statues to the Malay king Sri Maharaja Tribhuwanaraja Mauliwarmadewa to be erected in Dharmasraya (Istiawan, 2023, p. 45). Apparently, it is reported that the expedition of the Singasari Kingdom (led by Rakyana Adwiyabrahma) to the Malay Kingdom occurred after the centre of the Malay Kingdom was moved from Tebo to Dharmasraya (1286), so it is estimated that the arrival of the Javanese troops in 1275 took place in Tebo (Marzali, 2023, p. 76).

Some versions state that the Pamalayu Incident had a political objective to maintain political stability in the Nusantara region and Southeast Asia (Champa) from the threat of Kublai Khan (Mongol), who had almost conquered the entire Asian continent. The statue sent was considered a symbol of alliance between the Malay and Singasari kingdoms. That is understandable given that the political constellation of Singasari is reported to have influenced the Malay Kingdom of Dharmasraya. In fact, Amoghapasa is a replica of the statue of Wisnuwardhana at Candi Djago, Malang (1284–1269). Such a 2.15-metre-tall statue depicts Hayagriwa, Suddhanakumara, Syamatara, and Bhirkuti, while the statue in the main temple courtyard is a statue of Bhairawa depicted with a skull and a knife in his hand, and Aksobhya on his hair ornament (Proborini, 2017). These similarities serve as evidence strengthening the political ties between East Java and Sumatra during the 12th to 14th centuries CE. The relationship between Java and Sumatra regarding the existence of the Malay Kingdom of Dharmasraya is quite contrasting in one of the contents of the Kakanwin Negarakertagama manuscript written in 1365, in stanza XIII verse 1, which states that Dharmasraya was part of the Majapahit Empire. That information is further reinforced by reports that Adityawarman

was brought to Sumatra in 1339 as an envoy or subordinate king of Majapahit, undertaking various expansions, beginning with the conquest of Palembang. Regarding this, Prof. C.C. Berg interprets Arya Damar (in *Kidung Pamancangah* and *Babad Arya 16 Tabanan*) as the regent of Palembang who assisted Gajah Mada in conquering Bali in 1343, and his identity is identical to Adityawarman (Mardiyono, 2023, pp. 154-155). Adityawarman was the ruler of the Malay Kingdom of Dharmasraya who moved the centre of power to the interior of Saruaso. That origin indicates that the position of the Malay Kingdom was not fixed but moved according to circumstances. Initially, the kingdom was located in Karang Brahi (Merangin) with Muara Jambi as its port. Later, the kingdom was moved to Tebo (to avoid attacks from Javanese rulers, Chinese forces, and the Islamic Samudera Pasai in the 13th century), due to the arrival of Javanese forces in 1275, the centre of power was transferred to Dharmasraya (Padangroco) until it was finally moved to Saruaso around 1340 (Marzali, 2023, pp. 75-76).

Based on the history that has been revealed previously, Dharmasraya is believed to be one of the important centres in the story of the Malay Kingdom in Sumatra. That belief is supported by various historical discoveries around the Batanghari River Basin, such as in the Pulau Sawah Site Area, Padangroco Site, Awang Maombiak Site, and Padang Lawas Site. These sites are confirmed to have connections with the existence of the Malay Kingdom of Dharmasraya, which is believed to have been influenced by Buddhism from the Sriwijaya Kingdom as well as from kingdoms in Java such as Singasari and Majapahit (Marzali, 2023, pp. 66-67). The existence of the aforementioned historical relics indicates that Dharmasraya was once influenced by Hindu-Buddhist culture. De Casparis (1927) stated that Hinduism was actually less dominant in Sumatra because the kings on the island generally embraced Buddhism. One of the famous Malay kings of Dharmasraya was Adityawarman. The king adhered to Tantra (Buddhism) and considered himself to be the incarnation of Lokeswara (Buddha referring to Bodhisattva). That interpretation is difficult to refute due to the abundance of Buddhist-related evidence found at the Pulau Sawah Temple Complex in Nagari Siguntur, such as profane and sacred stoneware structures indicating that the complex was once extensively used as a place of worship for deities (Sadzali, 2022, p. 82). Buddhist elements at Pulau Sawah are prominent in the temple structures and various artefacts such as the bronze statue of Durga-mahasuramardini, half-body deity statues, bronze statues resembling people sitting on a raft, bronze artefacts, ceramics, and the Amitabha Buddha artefact at Site Pulau Sawah VIIa, a standing Buddha statue in the tribangga posture on a pedestal, a Buddha Gautama statue and a Garuda statue known as the vehicle of Buddha Amoghasidi, fragments of a Buddha statue's crown, a pot containing an inscription on gold foil (*suwarna-pattra*) containing a Buddha mantra, a pot containing needles related to the construction of a stupa to house the relics of a Buddhist figure, sacred texts, or objects emitting sacred power, and so on (Taim, 2021, p. 17).

Institutional Roles and Community Engagement in the Preservation of Pulau Sawah temple Site, Dharmasraya

The preservation of the Pulau Sawah Temple Complex has been carried out in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. During the New Order era, Law No. 5 of 1992 on Cultural Heritage was the reference. Under the leadership of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the Cultural Heritage Law No. 11 of 2010 was enacted. Currently, the Cultural Heritage Preservation Office of Region III, West Sumatra Province, is actively involved in preserving cultural heritage and promoting cultural objects in accordance with the Ministry of Education,

Culture, Research, and Technology Regulation No. 33 of 2022. The 1992 Cultural Heritage Law is considered centralised because various aspects such as control, ownership, discovery, search, protection, maintenance, management, utilisation, and supervision are carried out by central government officials, namely the minister responsible for culture and his staff at the central level, as well as the Archaeological Heritage Agency, the Regional Office of the Ministry of Education and Culture, and the District/City Education and Culture Office at the regional level (Sugiharta, 2013, p. 65). In this case, the preservation of the Pulau Sawah Site is ultimately dominated by the central government, so that the manager (institution) acts as an intermediary for the authorities. The indifference of the Siguntur community and the inadequate interest of the local government may be due to the principles of the era. On the other hand, archaeologists often employ advanced methods when assessing archaeological heritage. However, they rarely apply the same level of precision in developing methods to understand the meaning of a place, a country, or even the heritage itself for the relevant community (McNaughton, Morrison, and Schill, 2016). Therefore, it can be said that there is a lack of coordination among the relevant parties in managing the Pulau Sawah Temple Site Complex.

SPSP Batusangkar is one of the entities responsible for the preservation of integrated cultural heritage in the context of government policy, so its presence plays an important role in determining cultural identity claims based on material culture. Its presence in the early 1990s made the Siguntur community aware of the importance of Pulau Sawah as an ancestral heritage that must be preserved. SPSP actively seeks to protect, maintain, and develop Pulau Sawah. Data inventory and excavation activities are carried out periodically to enrich the data supporting all forms of preservation efforts (A. T. Mulyono, Personal Communication, 28 February 2024). In the practice of preserving the Pulau Sawah Temple Complex, SPSP Batusangkar has established relationships with relevant stakeholders, such as policy makers and decision makers in the field of cultural preservation, including local and central governments, traditional leaders, and the local community. In this context, the district government and the community have claims over the cultural heritage of their region. To ensure that SPSP Batusangkar's conservation efforts receive positive support, an approach prioritising ethics is adopted, such as the practice of 'ngemong,' which is likened to the proverb 'a person carried on one's lap will surely die' (T. Hidayat, Personal Communication, 14 March 2024). The information above aligns with the stance of the community and the Dharmasraya District Government, which are ready to collaborate with SPSP Batusangkar (now BPK III Sumbar) to preserve and develop the heritage of the Pulau Sawah Site. The Dharmasraya District Tourism and Culture Office has been a loyal partner of BPK III since the initial activities. As a regency established through administrative restructuring, Dharmasraya has definitively maintained its diversity and regional identity, one of its key potentials being the Pulau Sawah Site. To realise this vision, the Dharmasraya Government has cultivated relationships with all stakeholders. Regarding the inventory of cultural heritage assets, as well as the maintenance and preservation of regional cultural assets, the Dharmasraya Regency Government requires intensive coordination with the West Sumatra Cultural Heritage Preservation Agency (BPCB Sumbar) (referred to as BPK III) (Riska, 2023, pp. 53-55).

SPSP Batusangkar serves as one of the main entities in the preservation of integrated cultural heritage, in accordance with government policy. Its role is crucial in determining cultural identity claims based on material culture. Since the early 1990s, the presence of SPSP has raised awareness among the people of Siguntur about the importance of Pulau Sawah as

an ancestral heritage that must be preserved. SPSP is actively involved in the protection, maintenance, and development of Pulau Sawah. Data inventory and excavation activities are conducted regularly to enrich the data supporting various conservation efforts (M. Zoehdi, Personal Communication, 19 April 2024). In preserving the Pulau Sawah Temple Complex (Figure 6), SPSP Batusangkar collaborates with relevant stakeholders, including public policymakers in cultural preservation, such as local and central governments, traditional leaders, and local communities. In this context, the district government and the community have claims to the region's cultural heritage. To ensure positive support for SPSP Batusangkar's preservation efforts, ethical approaches such as the *ngemong* practice, which is likened to the proverb “orang bila dipangku pasti mati” (if you hold someone in your lap, they will die), are applied (Smith & Clarke, 2004: 10; Interview with Teguh Hidayat, 14 March 2024 in Padang). This information aligns with the stance of the community and the Dharmasraya District Government, which are ready to collaborate with SPSP Batusangkar (now BPK III Sumbar) in maintaining and developing the Pulau Sawah Site. The Dharmasraya District Tourism and Culture Office has been a loyal partner of BPK III since the inception of the activities. As a newly established regency, Dharmasraya is committed to preserving its diversity and regional identity, with the Pulau Sawah Site as one of its potentials. To achieve this goal, the Dharmasraya Government has established relationships with various stakeholders. In terms of inventory, maintenance, and preservation of regional cultural assets, the Dharmasraya Regency Government requires intensive coordination with the West Sumatra Cultural Heritage Preservation Agency (BPCB Sumbar) (referred to as BPK III) (Riska, 2023, pp. 53-55).



Figure 6. Results of the 1996 Excavation
(Source: Documentation of SPSP Batusangkar)

In 2003, BP3 carried out the restoration of the Pulau Sawah I and II Temple Sites. In addition to BP3 activities, the Arkenas Research Centre also conducted further research. In 2004 and 2005, the restoration of the Pulau Sawah Temple Site phase III was continued. In 2007, BP3 actively conducted excavations at the Pulau Sawah Site, including site cleaning, excavation of the Pulau Sawah II Temple Site, and the discovery of artefacts at the Pulau Sawah I and II sites. At that time, ancient remains in the form of pottery shards, ceramics, knife blades, and coins were found near the fence structure on the southeast side. To enrich preservation references, in 2008, BP3 preservation personnel conducted a spatial study to regulate the boundaries and environment of the Pulau Sawah Temple Complex. In 2008 and 2009, BP3

together with the Medan Archaeological Centre researched sites in Hulu Das Batanghari. The results of these activities uncovered ceramic bowls dating back to the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127 CE). Through inter-institutional collaboration, it was speculated that Pulau Sawah was indeed influenced by Hindu-Buddhist culture and existed for a brief period, between the 12th and 14th centuries (Candra and Rahman, 2023, pp. 54–60). Interest in the Pulau Sawah Temple Site Complex has become more regular during the BPCB Sumbar period. In 2012, excavation of the Pulau Sawah Temple Site XI structure was conducted. From this activity, fragments of yellowish-brown pottery shaped like a bottle mouth were found (in box U3-B10, spit 7). The excavation results revealed the discovery of a single brick building structure consisting of 25 layers of bricks. Additionally, there was a floor structure estimated to consist of two units, each comprising three layers of bricks on the eastern side and two layers on the southern side. This massive preservation effort also uncovered a brick wall structure consisting of two rectangular corners extending from north to south (Compilation Team, 2012, p. 51). Still during the BPCB West Sumatra period, in 2014, excavation of the Pulau Sawah II structure was carried out (Continuation of Excavation at the Pulau Sawah XI Temple Site). Scattered brick fragments indicate that the cultural heritage site is an organic object, thus classified as a non-renewable resource vulnerable to natural factors, necessitating the preservation of its structural integrity. In 2015, a planning study for the conservation and zoning of the excavation area at Munggu IX, VI, and V was conducted. Following this, in 2016, rescue excavations were carried out at Munggu IV, III, VII, VIII, X, and XII. Then, in 2018, BPCB Sumbar again conducted a rescue excavation at Munggu XI. The findings included a three-layer brick structure, a gravel arrangement, and a layer of crushed bricks, as well as several decorated bricks and a few ceramic fragments (Sugiharta, 2013, p. 15).

The importance of the Pulau Sawah Site prompted the West Sumatra Cultural Heritage Preservation Agency (BPCB Sumbar) to conduct a rescue excavation of the Pulau Sawah Temple Site in the Munggu XI area in 2019. The results of this activity revealed the presence of brick structures (in boxes S1-T6) and several pottery fragments. In boxes B1-U17, scattered bricks and pottery fragments were found, along with white and blue glazed ceramics. Additionally, pottery shards shaped like decorated bowls were found on the northern side of the Munggu XI fence. The abundance of findings at the site prompted the implementation of the Rescue Excavation of the Pulau Sawah Temple Site in 2021, which yielded features (Temple Brick Structures) and artefacts (Pottery Fragments). In 2022, which marked the end of the West Sumatra BPCB's management and the beginning of the BPK III period, a series of activities were carried out in the Pulau Sawah Temple Site area, including the Munggu XI Rescue Excavation, which uncovered the ruins of a fence structure and fragmentary pottery artefacts (pots, bowls, kettles, jugs) and porcelain and stoneware ceramics (estimated to be from the Ming Dynasty XV-XVII AD) (Compilation Team, 2019, p. 26; p. 34). This activity also included the identification of findings and environmental conditions around the site, mapping of the Pulau Sawah Temple Site using LiDar (Directorate General of Culture), and the organisation of a Field School and Exhibition (during the Pamalayu Festival and Kenduri event). This final activity was a collaboration between the BPCB, the Directorate General of Culture, the Dharmasraya Government, and the community (Candra and Rahman, 2023, pp. 131-147).

The facts presented above describe the history of the preservation of the Pulau Sawah Temple Complex carried out by preservation actors. Since its establishment, the institution has made significant efforts to preserve Pulau Sawah. Despite facing complex challenges in the early stages, activities began with the collection of data. The rugged geographical conditions

and the local community's resistance to outsiders made it impossible for the UPT Kemdikbud to carry out activities without the support of the local government and the local community. Therefore, efforts to build relationships were made by prioritising a friendly attitude as outsiders (T. Hidayat, Personal Communication, 14 March 2024). SPSP's partners during this period were the community and cultural observers in the sub-district under the supervision of the Culture Office. Based on community complaints regarding the discovery of large brick structures around the Batanghari River, SPSP finally conducted intensive surveys and research. That activity ran smoothly thanks to cooperation with the Arkenas Research Centre (1991-1994) and was supported by positive community response to the findings, as well as government assistance. From SPSP to BPK III, the preservation activities of the Pulau Sawah Temple Complex were routinely coordinated with the Dharmasraya Regency Culture, Tourism, Youth, and Sports Office. In addition to coordination, assistance was also frequently provided, such as during the Cultural Canal Exhibition via the Pamalayu Festival in Dharmasraya Regency on 18–24 August 2022. The collaborative working relationship continues to this day. The Dharmasraya Regency Government acknowledges that by advancing its local cultural heritage collaboratively with BPK III, specifically the Pulau Sawah Site, it has brought positive benefits such as an increase in the number of tourists and improved income for local residents. BPK III's conservation activities, which involve the community as local labour, have provided employment that supports well-being. Additionally, various activities such as excavations and the Pamalayu Festival are examples of local tourism development that have social benefits, enhancing social integrity and identity. It is a source of pride for the community, especially the heirs of cultural heritage who feel that their ancestors' identity is valued. Therefore, it can be considered a landmark for Dharmasraya District (from the SPSP era to BPK III in West Sumatra) (T. Hidayat, Personal Communication, 14 March 2024).

SPSP Batusangkar in executing its duties of protection, development, and utilization, as well as facilitating the preservation of cultural heritage within its jurisdiction, cannot independently realize cultural heritage preservation due to adherence to a set of legal norms. In the preservation of the Pulau Sawah Temple Complex, SPSP and subsequently BPK III have established cooperation with central/regional government entities and the community to support the preservation of cultural heritage, which upholds the inculcation of noble values and the strengthening of identity amidst global challenges. The Dharmasraya Regency Government and the community are enthusiastic about BPK III's preservation activities as they contribute to promoting tourism based on local wisdom (Pulau Sawah Temple). In this context, the preservation efforts of SPSP/BPK III receive support from the Dharmasraya Regional Government, which recognizes that cultural affairs are one of the responsibilities delegated by the central government to regional governments. This highlights the contrast between the implementation of Law No. 11/2010 and Government Regulation No. 38/2007 (Riska, 2023, pp. 6-7). According to the Siguntur community, represented by the Siguntur Royal Family, the transition from SPSP Batusangkar to BPK III Sumbar has significantly aided the preservation of historical relics in Dharmasraya (particularly the Pulau Sawah Temple, which is a heritage for the royal descendants) (T. A. P. Marhasnida, Personal Communication, April 19, 2024). Prior to the establishment of this UPT, the preservation of the Pulau Sawah temple complex was considerably threatened due to looting that resulted in vandalism by individuals crossing the Batanghari River in search of treasure within the brick structures. This fact illustrates an unfriendly attitude towards appreciating past heritage (M. Zoehdi, Personal Communication,

April 19, 2024).

Upon the establishment of SPSP, socialization efforts were undertaken to instill a sense of ownership among the community towards Pulau Sawah. These activities have led to an understanding of the temple's value, fostering a sense of responsibility to protect it. Since 1995, regular excavations have been conducted to refine historical data and uncover Dharmasraya's identity as a Buddhist-influenced Malay Kingdom heritage. In every physical activity at the Pulau Sawah site, SPSP Batusangkar and subsequently BPK III Sumbar consistently involve community participation. These activities broaden the community's horizons regarding history while providing employment opportunities, thus it is unsurprising that each activity receives a positive response (Interview with Tuan Acik Putri Marhasnida, April 19, 2024, in Siguntur). Based on its preservation history, several artifacts obtained from the Pulau Sawah site are stored in the collection room of BPK Region III, West Sumatra Province. These treasures are not only secured but also maintained and publicized for historical, scientific, educational, religious, and cultural purposes. The array of preservation data presented in the table underscores that SPSP Batusangkar (now BPK III) consistently appreciates the Pulau Sawah Site Complex as a cultural asset that embodies the identity of the Dharmasraya Malay Kingdom.

Simpulan

The preservation of the Pulau Sawah Temple Complex from SPSP Batusangkar to BPK III Sumbar has had a significant impact on the existence of this cultural heritage site as a legacy of the Buddhist-influenced Malay Kingdom. This site serves as an egalitarian source of history, providing knowledge and education. Concretely, the Pulau Sawah Temple Complex is frequently used as a research subject and serves as a symbol reflecting the identity and promoting tourism in Dharmasraya Regency within the context of local wisdom. This reality is closely tied to the role of local stakeholders, particularly SPSP Batusangkar (now BPK III), in preserving and promoting Pulau Sawah as a cultural asset of the nation from Dharmasraya Regency. In efforts to realise this, since the SPSP era until BPK III, support has been obtained from central government agencies, local governments, and the community. To this day, every agenda for the preservation of the Pulau Sawah Temple Complex has been successfully implemented thanks to harmonious collaboration with the relevant stakeholders mentioned earlier.

References

- Candra, D. dan Rahman, A. (2023). *Jalan panjang penelusuran jejak purbakala di DAS Batanghari Situs Candi Pulau Sawah*. Balai Pelestarian Kebudayaan Wilayah III Provinsi Sumatera Barat.
- Ginting, N., Rahman, N. V., and Nasution, A. D. (2020). A comparative study of landmark on heritage tourism in Sumatra. *Environment-Behavior Proceedings Journal*, 5(1), 221-227. <https://doi.org/10.21834/ebpj.v5i15.2491>.
- Hakim, L. (2017). The Malay world in history: Study on Malay identify. *Journal of Malay Islamic Studies*, 1 (2), 101-112. <https://doi.org/10.19109/JMIS.V1I2.3838>.
- Herlina, N. (2008). *Metode sejarah*. Satya Historika.
- Istiawan, B. (2023). *Selintas prasasti dari Melayu kuno*. Balai Pelestarian Kebudayaan Wilayah III Provinsi Sumatera Selatan.
- Istiawan, B. dan Utomo, B. B. (2014). *Menguk tabir Dharmasraya*. Balai Pelestarian Cagar

Budaya Sumatera Barat.

- Mardatillah, A. (2020). The enterprise culture heritage of Minangkabau cuisine, West Sumatra of Indonesia as a source of sustainable competitive advantage. *Journal of Ethnic Foods*, 7 (34). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42779-020-00059-z>.
- Mardiyono, P. (2023). *Sejarah kerajaan bawahan Majapahit di luar Jawa dan luar negeri*. Araska.
- Marzali, A. (2023). The early history of the Malay Kingdom in Jambi. *Jurnal Pengajian Melayu (JOMAS)*, 34(2), 65-80.
- McNaughton, D., Morrison, M., and Schill, C. (2016). 'My country is like my mother...': respect, care, interaction and closeness as principles for undertaking cultural heritage assessments. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 22 (6), 415-433. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2016.1165277>.
- Proborini, D. (2017). Analisis aspek diplomasi kultural dalam ekspedisi Pamalayu, 1275-1249 M. *Jurnal Analisis Hubungan Internasional*, 6(3), 72-82.
- Putranto, A., Suharyadi, R., Haryono, E., dan Muta'ali, L. (2024). Landscape archeology as a key concept of cultural resources management in Indonesia. *IOP Conference Series, Earth and Environmental Science*, 1443(1). <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/1443/1/012009>.
- Rashid, M. S. A. (2015). Understanding the past for the sustainable future: Cultural mapping of Malay heritage. *Procedia – Social and Behaviour Sciences*, 170. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.01.007>.
- Razzaq, A. (2017). The kingdom of Sriwijaya in the development of Islamic civilization and the economy in Nusantara before 1500 AD. *Journal of Malay Islamic Studies*, 1(1), 39-50. <https://doi.org/10.19109/jmis.v1i1.3790>.
- Sadzali, A. M. (2022). Karakteristik arsitektur percampuran masa klasik di DAS Batanghari. *Titian: Jurnal Ilmu Humaniora*, 6 (1), 80-94. <https://doi.org/10.22437/titian.v6i1.19163>.
- Saputra, R. (2024). Governance frameworks and cultural preservation in Indonesia. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 11(3), 25-50. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/2145>.
- Sugiharta, S. (2012). Desentralisasi dan sumber daya aparatur: Problematika pelaksanaan desentralisasi pelestarian cagar budaya di Provinsi Sumatera Barat, Riau, dan Kepulauan Riau. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik (JSP)*, 15 (3), 232-245. <https://jurnal.ugm.ac.id/jsp/issue/view/1664>.
- Sugiharta, S. (2013). *Jalan terjal desentralisasi: Dinamika penyelenggaraan urusan keurbakalaan di Kabupaten Tanah Datar, Sumatera Barat pada era Otonomi Daerah (1999-2011)* (Master's thesis). Master in Public Administration, Faculty of Social Science and Politic Science, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta.
- Syed-Hassan, S. N. R. K., Zafrualam, D., Bahri, A. Z., Yaapar, M. S., Bustami, R., and Bin Alwi, Z. Genetics revealed historical and cultural relationship of Sunda shelf and Cape Malays peopling. *Malaysian Journal of Human Genetics*, 2 (1), 44-58. <https://mjhg.kk.usm.my/index.php/journal/article/view/25/21>.
- Taim, E. A. P. (2022). Pulau Sawah: The oldest ancient shrine from Hindu Buddha periode in upstream Batanghari River West Sumatra. *Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference on Language, Literature, Culture, and Education (ICOLLITE 2022)*, 162-171. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-494069-91-6_25. Atlantis Press.