

Megalithic Culture in Luak Jempol

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the Megalithic culture in Luak Tanah Mengandung especially in Luak Jempol. The objective of this writing is to discuss the origins, social structure and views of the community related to Megalithic culture among the local community from a sociocultural. In addition, this paper also discusses the distribution of megalithic sites using the method of Geographic Information System (GIS). The distribution of megalithic rocks in Negeri Sembilan is quite comprehensive compared to other states which are relatively small. The study also uses written materials in the library whether books, journals, or seminar papers and so on. In addition, this study uses ethnoarchaeological methods as they are commonly used by scholars to study megalithic socioculture and culture. The results showed the distribution of megalithic sites, the number of megalithic rocks in Luak Jempol as well as recording the coordinate position of each megalithic site using the Global Position System (GPS) tool.

Keywords: *Megalithic culture, Geographic Information System, sociocultural.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Megalithic culture is a universal culture. Megalithic culture is a reference to the Greek word where 'Mega' means 'Big' and 'Lith' means 'Stone'. The combination of the two words forms 'Megalith' or 'Megalithic' which is the use of large stones in the life of past societies, especially societies in the Metal Age and beyond [1]. This terminology was first used by Algeron Herbert in 1849. A variety of types of boulders or megaliths are found throughout the world, but most are not associated with tombs. Megalith means a structure of large stone built without the use of mortar or concrete and is highly associated with prehistoric times or prehistoric cultures. The uniqueness of the remnants of the megalithic culture makes in some places it also known as the 'living stone culture'.

This culture has been widely practiced in Southeast Asia and it is believed to be a genuine local tradition and not influenced by the outside world. Another term associated with the use of large stones is monolithic. This monolithic is associated with post -prehistoric cultures [2]. Monolithic architecture is built because of

carvings, sculptures, or excavations of a very large block of stone (usually a hill) to become a building used by humans. A monolithic example is the Church of St. George (Bete Giyorgis) in Lalibela, Ethiopia built by the Zaywe Dynasty and Pancha Rathas in India built in the 7th century AD. The types of megalithic found in the Malay world show their diversity. These include menhirs, dolmens, stone crates, grav slabs, waruga, *punden berundak* and so on. However, in terms of the type of arrangement such as circles and alignment as found in England and Romania are not found in Southeast Asia [3].

2. BACKGROUND

In Malaysia, megalithic is a large rock culture (megalith) that occurred during the transition period from the Hindu Buddhism era to the Islamic era. At that time, the community in Negeri Sembilan built granite blocks for a specific purpose. The earliest megalithic is said to date from the end of the Neolithic period in about 3000 BC in West Asia. While in this country megalithic culture originated from protohistoric times. Radiocarbon dating at the megalithic site of Pulau

Sebang, Alor Gajah shows a dating of 1772 AD (130+50 BP) which is in the last quarter of the 18th century AD [4]. Although it is believed to have existed since the Neolithic era, but it only developed rapidly in the metal age.

Megalithic culture in Negeri Sembilan and Melaka (Naning) is of the type of 'alignment' that is also found in other countries such as in Northeast India and Indonesia [5]. Megalithic influence of this type is very widespread, especially in the districts where there is a population of the Minangkabau community. In Melaka alone there are 81 megalithic sites that have been identified on privately owned land [6]. In addition, Evans also claimed, the culture in Pengkalan Kempas is as deep as two feet based on the effect of sand which is different from the top layer. This site is estimated to date around 14-15 AD based on the (relative) dating of the tomb of Sheikh Ahmad Majnun which has a death date around 1467 AD. Among other sites found megalithic stones in Negeri Sembilan are Rembau, Jelevu, Kuala Pilah and Tampin districts. While the remnants of megalithic stone in Melaka are found in the Alor Gajah district, namely in Kampung Taboh Naning, Cerana Putih, Pulau Sebang, Simpang Empat, Tanjung Rimau, Melaka Pindah leads to Repah and a little in the Jasin district [7].

Negeri Sembilan is a state with 'nine states' in it. During the process of unification of these states, it has undergone various changes from time to time since the very beginning of time. Thus, the states that are members of a coalition or federation are interchangeable and changeable. When the British completely colonized Negeri Sembilan and Seremban became the state capital [8]. Negeri Sembilan has 14 *suku*, namely Seri Menanti, Tampin, Sungei Ujong, Jelevu, Johol, Rembau, Terachi, Gunung Pasir, Inas, Gemenceh, Ayer Kuning and Linggi [9]. However, these *luak* can be grouped into 4 groups, namely *Luak Berundang* (Jelevu, Johol, Rembau and Sungei Ujong), *Luak Tanah Mendandiung* (Gunung Pasir, Inas, Jempol, Terachi and Ulu Muar), *Adat Lingkungan* around the town of Di Raja Seri Menanti and *Luak Tampin*.

Luak or called *Luhak* is the Minangkabau language which means region or colony. This study is more focused on *Luak Tanah Mengandung* which consists of five *luak*, namely Gunung Pasir, Inas, Jempol, Terachi and Ulu Muar. The leader of each of these *luak* is called the *Penghulu* and all these *luak* are under the auspices of the Yang Dipertuan Besar of Negeri Sembilan. The inheritance of the *Penghulu* is rotated based on the belly of the *suku Biduanda*, except *Luak Gunung Pasir*, *Luak Tanah Datar* and *Luak Terachi*, *Suku Seri Lemak (Selemak) Pahang*.

3. LUAK JEMPOL

3.1. The origin of Jempol

According to the oral story, Jempol was named after a tragic event happened to a girl named Jampo. This girl is the daughter of a To' Batin named To' Pileh. Because the girl was beautiful, many young men put their hearts into her to be their wife. One of the youths in Kampung Terentang (Titian Teras) around the Leban Condong area has spread slander that Jampo has committed incestuous acts with the youths in the village. Therefore, To' Batin Pileh has sentenced Jampo without a motion to inspect. Jampo was sentenced to jump into a river that had been installed with pointed bambu runcing, according to To' Batin's rules at the time, this was the beginning of the proverb "*biar mati anak, jangan mati adat*". After a long time, To' Batin Pileh realized that his daughter Jampo was innocent. So, to remember the honesty of his innocent daughter, To' Batin Pileh named the river as Sungai Jampo. When *Luak* was established, it was named *Luak Jempol* [8].

In terms of the administration of Adat Perpatih (District Hulu and District Kuala Jempol), Jempol is a 'state in *Luak Tanah Mengandung*' administered by *Penghulu Luak Jempol*, namely Datuk Setia Pahlawan. While the government administration, this district is assisted by village or *Kariah* heads. In addition, the boundaries of these *luak* are mentioned in the proverb:

Batas Muar, sepanjang Sungai Muar

Batas Jempol, sepanjang Sungai Jempol

Batas Johol, sepanjang Sungai Jela

3.2. Boundaries

So *Luak Jempol* was recorded at Balai Penghulu *Luak Jempol* covering the area upstream to Kuala Sungai Jempol, namely Anak Ayer Lonek to Bukit Mempinas, Batu Sawa to Jeram Panjang cutting Sungai Muar to Simpang Palong Jeram Panjang, going to Batu Menonggol border of Pahang, Johor: Lubuk Serampang continues to Kuala Lui, Bukit Beras, Bukit Pasoh, Simpang Pertang, Langkap Guntur including Tengkek, Padang Lebar, Keru, Jerjak, Sungai Jelutong, Seri Melenggang, Sungai Talan, Bukit Sempit, Batu Kikir, Serting Ulu, Serting Hilir, Kuala Jempol, Ayer Hitam and Bayai [10].

Kuala Sungai Jempol it is located of *Laluan Penarikan* that is trade routes between Melaka and Pahang during the Empayar of Melaka in the 15th century, in addition, Kuala Sungai Jempol which flows into the river Muar and cross the road after reaching the *Laluan Penarikan*

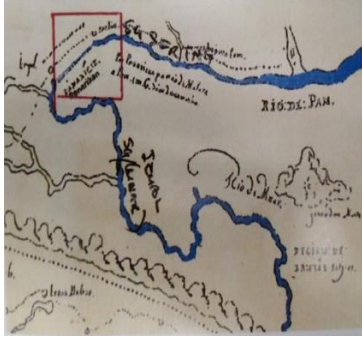


Figure 1 Map of d'Ereida (1613): Lualan Penarikan. (Sources: Lembaga Muzium Negeri Sembilan.)

3.3. History of Population Entry

The original inhabitants of Hulu Jempol are indigenous people because they have opened this place. These Orang Asli are placed somewhere in a special area in Kampung Guntur, Tengkek. Meanwhile, the Minangkabau nomads came in 1457 to *Luak Jempol* which was initially believed to be in Jambu Lapan and then they sailed to Sungai Muar until *Lualan Penarikan* (area around Serting Palace). Before they opened a new area, they first entered an understanding with the chiefs of the Orang Asli to enable them to settle and open fields and farms as was the case in their native land. Apart from that, according to a note by Balai Penghulu *Luak Jempol* on the arrival of the Minangkabau people, it started with four *suku* who had come to Melaka and then to Batang Tiga. The first four *suku* to come are:

- a. *Suku Seri Melenggang* led by Juara Megat

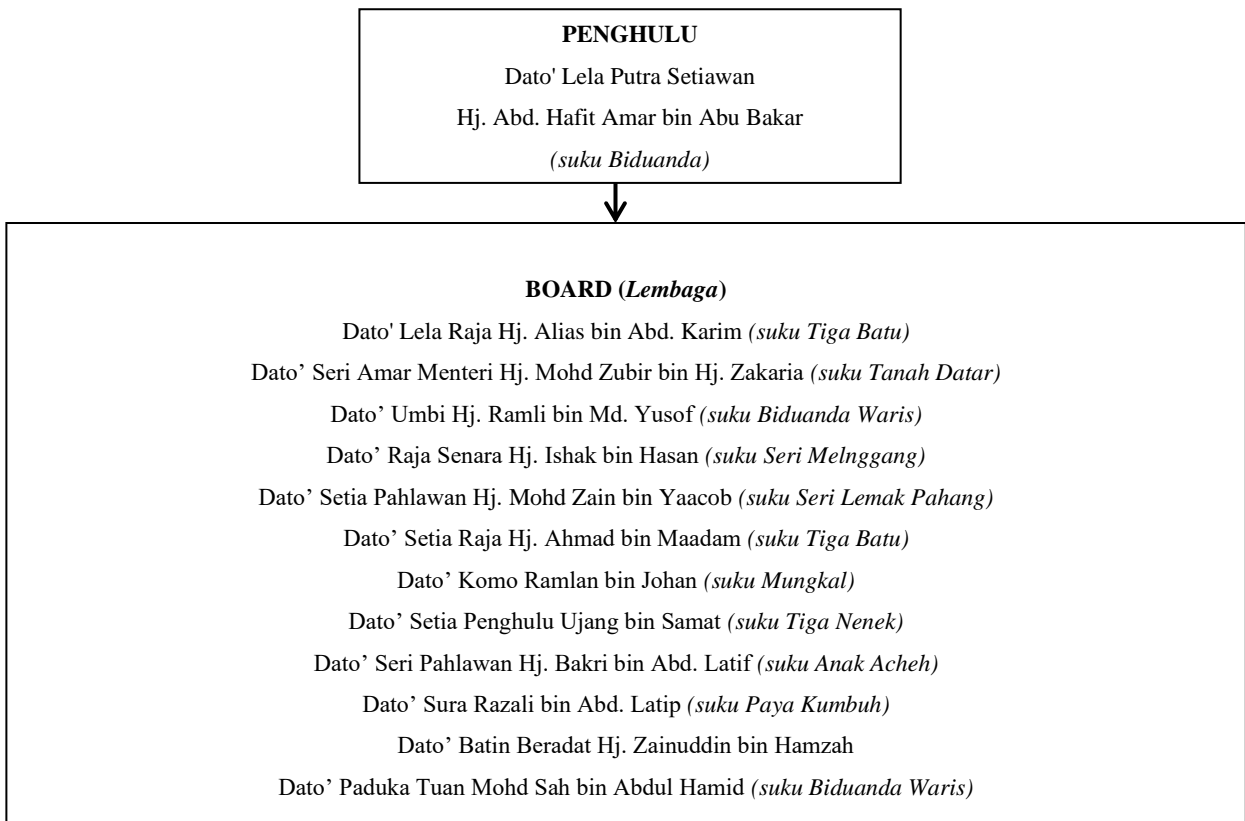
- b. *Suku Tiga Batu* led by Susu Labuh
- c. *Suku Tanah Datar* has no leader
- d. *Suku Mungkal* has no leader

3.4. Social Structure

Penghulu *Luak Jempol* became the head of the customary and religious government in the luak and under him was further strengthened by Dato Lembaga who led their *suku*. While *buapak* is the focus of the '*perut*' found in each *suku*. The title for *penghulu luak* is Dato 'Lela Putra Setiawan and is appointed from Biduanda's heirs who are entitled to inherit. To inherit, they have been appointed from the descendants of Patam as confirm recorded by Balai Penghulu Luak Jempol:

"Dato 'Penghulu Luak Jempol's legacy all consists of Biduanda's heirs who are of Patam descent"

Apart from that, the *Luak Jempol* chief was given a seal by the Sultan of Johor just like other *Luak* chiefs. This is because in return for the loyal services of the chief to Yamtuan Antah. In addition, there are 10 *luak* and 12 Dato' Lembaga in *Luak Jempol*. This is because the *Suku Tiga Batu* is divided into three, namely the *Suku Tiga Batu Lela Raja*, *Suku Tiga Batu Setia Raja* and *Suku Tiga Batu Maharaja Setia*, so the number of Dato' Lembaga in *Luak Jempol* is 12. The title of Dato' Lembaga and its tribes are now as follows:



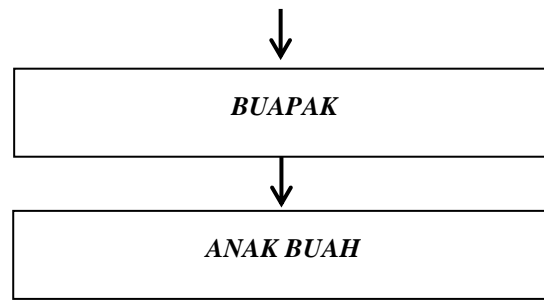


Figure 2 Hierarchy in Adat Perpatih.

4. MAPPING OF MEGALITHIC SITE USING GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS) IN LUAK JEMPOL

Mapping of megalithic sites in *Luak Jempol* was done using Geographic Information System (GIS) method to see the distribution of megalithic sites around Luak Jempol area. Geographic Information System (GIS) is a computerized management system that works for the purpose of information management, processing, analysis, and production of information that is often associated with data in the form of maps/plans. Geographic Information System (GIS) is also an information system that can store, display, analyze, and manipulate data related to spatial data. This system has become increasingly important and useful especially to those who have used spatial data such as the use of maps to analyze population, land use, climate forecasting, forest management and so on.

The capabilities of this system are not limited to digital map display only instead it can do analytical work. For example, the display of the distribution of megalithic sites in Negeri Sembilan requires 3 analyzes, namely:

- a. Distribution of megalithic sites around the district of Kuala Pilah
- b. Distribution of megalithic sites according to *Luak Tanah Mengandung*
- c. Distribution of megalithic sites by valley

The combination of these three analyzes will produce the desired display in which the location of the remaining megalithic site has an actual coordinate point on the earth's surface. This means that the reliability of the use of GIS is precise in the process of analysis of these megalithic sites. However, the accuracy of an analysis depends on the accuracy of the data entered the GIS. The position of the site displayed in this GIS has a fixed place reference on the face of the earth. Thus, the GIS application can display the desired distribution of megalithic sites.

In Negeri Sembilan, the mapping of megalithic sites in *Luak Tanah Mengandung* was carried out with the aim of recording the coordinate position of each

megalithic site using the Global Position System tool and integrated together with Geographical Information System (GIS) software. This method can indirectly map each megalithic site more accurately and this information can be used more efficiently by users in the future. Although previous studies have recorded the number of megalithic sites in Kuala Pilah more than 200 sites and some state that also in the Terachi Valley alone has 300 sites but the data we obtained is not in line with previous records. The latest mapping of megalithic sites in *Luak Tanah Mengandung* has successfully recorded a total of 126 sites with a total of 4223 megalithic rocks [2].

Based on the megalithic site mapping (figure 5) study that has been conducted, *Luak Jempol* is the third largest *luak* that still has remnants of megalithic sites after *Luak Terachi* and *Luak Ulu Muar*. Based on sources from the Negeri Sembilan survey and Mapping Department, Negeri Sembilan and Country Planning Department and the Grassroots Institution Coordination and Monitoring Unit, the area of Jempol district (figure 4) is 148, 458.42 hectares equivalent to 1484.5 sq km. This is because Jempol district is the largest district in Negeri Sembilan. There are 5 *mukim* in this district, namely Mukim Kuala Jempol, Mukim Rompin, Mukim Serting Ulu, Mukim Serting Hilir and Mukim Jelei and has 56 villages in the vicinity.

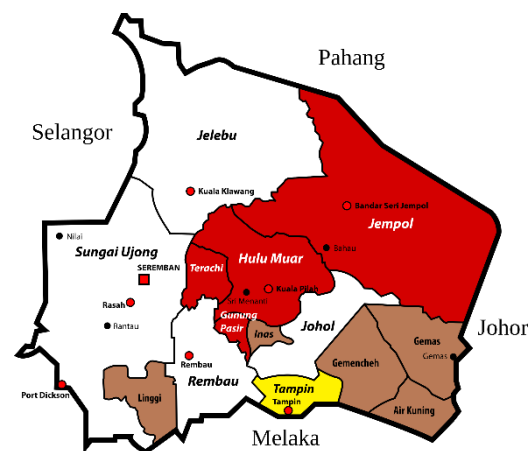


Figure 3 Customary districts of Negeri Sembilan.

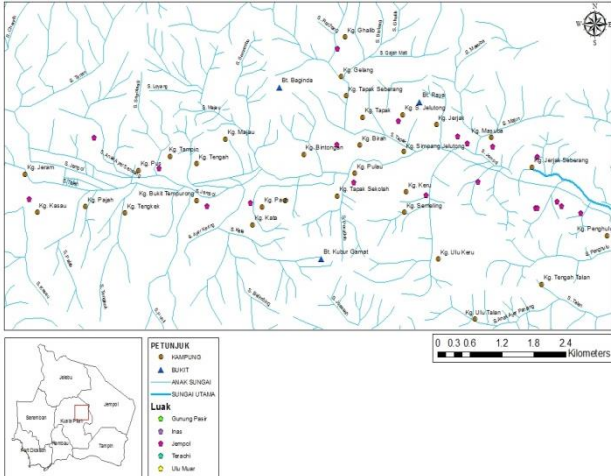


Figure 4 Distribution of megalithic sites in Luak Jempol.



Figure 5 Jempol District.

Remains of megalithic sites in Luak Jempol are mostly found in the Ulu Jempol area. The total number of megalithic sites remains found in Luak Jempol is 22 sites equivalent to 395 megalithic stones in total. The following is a list of megalithic sites and the number of megalithic rocks found in Luak Jempol:

Table 1. Location of Megalithic Site at Luak Jempol.

No	Location / Village	Gps	Total
1.	Anak Ayer Bulan	Longitude: 2.86677 Latitude: 102.27249 Elevation: 106 M	2
2.	Anak Ayer Penghulu	Longitude: 2.83579 Latitude: 102.2823 Elevation: 108 M	17
3.	Bukit Perah	Longitude: 2.83962 Latitude: 102.3072 Elevation: 86 M	2
4.	Bukit Tempurung	Longitude: 2.85932 Latitude: 102.21686 Elevation: 124 M	7
5.	Jerjak Masjid	Longitude: 2.86305 Latitude: 102. 26252 Elevation: 97 M	40
6.	Jerjak Seberang		
	Site 1	Longitude: 2.86826 Latitude: 102.265 Elevation: 112 M	20
	Site 2	Longitude: 2.86875 Latitude: 102.2607 Elevation: 107 M	11
	Site 3	Longitude: 2.86978 Latitude: 102.25908 Elevation: 110 M	
7.	Kasau	Longitude: 2.86032	2
			47

		Latitude: 102.18681 Elevation: 133 M	
8.	Keru Dalam	Longitude: 2.86101 Latitude: 102.2538 Elevation: 124 M	29
9.	Majau	Longitude: 2.8598 Latitude: 102.23873 Elevation: 113 M	10
10.	Padang Lebar <i>Site 1</i>	Longitude: 2.85946 Latitude: 102.27656 Elevation: 112 M Longitude: 2.86009 Latitude: 102.27581 Elevation: 107 M Longitude: 2.85909 Latitude: 102.27226 Elevation: 115 M Longitude: 2.85911 Latitude: 102.27249 Elevation: 113 M	15
	<i>Site 2</i>		2
	<i>Site 3</i>		15
	<i>Site 4</i>		10
11.	Pulau	Longitude: 2.86854 Latitude: 102.23873 Elevation: 113 M	13
12.	Rachang	Longitude: 2.88291 Latitude: 102.23875 Elevation: 127 M	33
13.	Seri Melenggang	Longitude: 2.85839 Latitude: 102.27984 Elevation: 105 M	12
14.	Sungai Jelutong	Longitude: 2.87207 Latitude: 102.24904 Elevation: 124 M	11
15.	Tampin Pus	Longitude: 2.86491 Latitude: 102.20869 Elevation: 127 M	12
16.	Tapak	Longitude: Latitude: Elevation:	40
17.	Tengkek	Longitude: 2.86955 Latitude: 102.19781 Elevation: 136 M	45

4. CONCLUSION

Local resident believes the arrangement (alignment) found in their area ancestor graveyard. However, this megalithic stone remain mystery to the local and

researcher because this brings a lot of inquiries regarding the influences and function of this megalithic culture. The discovery of this megalithic stone poses a wide range of perceptions among society and researchers. Among them is the megalithic stone is a sign of development for the early settlement of the

community which makes it a place of worship, used as a place of community to gather for the purpose of traditional offerings, in honor of figures and so forth. Therefore, conclusion can be made that there still a lot of research to be performed regarding megalithic site that found in Negeri Sembilan, specifically on the function of the stone that is still remain unclear. In fact, the research should be carried on so this side would not be destroying without any research study been made.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors conceived and designed the study. Zuliskandar Ramli and Nur Farriehah Azizan conducted the experiment, analyzed the data and wrote the paper. All authors contributed to manuscript revisions. All authors approved the final version of the manuscript and agree to be held accountable for the content therein.

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