

Local Trade in the Kingdom of Inderapura in the 17th-18th Century Ce

Sudarman*

Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang, Indonesia
Email: sudarmanma@uinib.ac.id

Khairul Amal*

Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang, Indonesia
Email: khairulamal@uinib.ac.id

Safrudin Halimy K**

Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang, Indonesia
Email: safrudiniain@gmail.com

Rahmawati***

Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang, Indonesia
Email: rahmawati@uinib.ac.id

Urwatul Wusqo****

Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang, Indonesia
Email: urwahw75@yahoo.com

Abstract

The research is undertaken with several aims in mind. First, to analyze the local trade conducted in the Kingdom of Inderapura within the 17th-18th century CE. Second, to classify several types of local trade conducted under the patronage of the Kingdom of Inderapura in its effort to ascertain its position

* Fakultas Adab dan Humaniora Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang, Kampus II, Jln. Prof. Mahmud Yunus Lubuk Lintah Padang Kode Pos 25153 Telp. (0751) 30071 Website: <https://fah.uinib.ac.id/>

** Fakultas Syariah Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang, Kampus II, Jln. Prof. Mahmud Yunus Lubuk Lintah Padang Kode Pos 25153 Telp. (0751) 30071 Website: www.uinib.ac.id/

*** Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang, Kampus II, Jln. Prof. Mahmud Yunus Lubuk Lintah Padang Kode Pos 25153 Telp. (0751) 29889 Website: <https://ftk.uinib.ac.id/>

**** Fakultas Dakwah dan Ilmu Komunikasi Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang, Kampus II, Jln. Prof. Mahmud Yunus Lubuk Lintah Padang Kode Pos 25153 Telp. (0751) 30071 Website: <https://fdik.uinib.ac.id/>

as the main patron of commerce on the west coast of Sumatera. One of the policies issued by the king of Inderapura to boost the kingdom's commerce was not to burden the anchoring merchant ships with paying customs. Here lies the difference between the port of the Kingdom of Inderapura with other ports on the west coast of Sumatera. The article approaches the problem through maritime historical research method. It utilizes the Dutch colonial archives and the *Tambo* of the Kingdom of Inderapura as the primary sources. Besides that, the research also makes use of related books and scientific journals as secondary sources. To enrich and bring depth to its analysis, the research approaches the research question socio-economically. These sources, then, need to pass the internal and external criticism to validate its reliability. The final steps are synthesis and historiography (putting and arranging those facts into historical writing). The writers discover that there are three types of local trade conducted by the Kingdom of Inderapura along with the 17th-18th century CE: intra-island, inter-ports, and inter-islands trade.

Keywords: The Kingdom of Inderapura, Local Trade, VOC, The Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam, The Kingdom of Banten.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk menganalisis tentang pola perniagaan lokal di kerajaan Inderapura pada abad XVII-XVIII M. Hal ini sekaligus untuk mendalami bagaimana pola-pola perniagaan yang dibangun oleh kerajaan Inderapura sehingga kerajaan ini mampu menjadi penopang utama perniagaan di Pantai Barat Sumatera. Salah satu kebijakan yang diterapkan oleh raja Inderapura adalah setiap pedagang yang berlabuh tidak dibebani untuk membayar bea cukai, inilah yang membedakan antara pelabuhan Inderapura dengan pelabuhan yang lainnya di Pantai Barat Sumatera. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode riset sejarah maritim dengan sumber primer berupa arsip kolonial, sumber lokal berupa *Tambo* kerajaan Inderapura dan sumber sekunder serta pendekatan sosial ekonomi, kemudian sumber-sumber tersebut dikritik dengan melalui kritik internal dan eksternal (memvalidasi akurasi terhadap keaslian sumber), setelah itu dilakukan sintesis dan historiografi. Dari penelitian ini ditemukan bahwa pola perniagaan yang dipergunakan oleh Kerajaan Inderapura pada abad XVII-XVIII M adalah; *pertama*, pola perniagaan antar pelabuhan. *Kedua*, pola perniagaan antar pulau. *Ketiga*, pola perniagaan ke pedalaman.

Kata Kunci: Kerajaan Inderapura, Perdagangan Lokal, VOC, Kerajaan Aceh Darussalam, Kerajaan Banten.

Introduction

Many small kingdoms situated along the Sumatran coast are missing from historical research despite their importance which, according to Adrian B. Lopian, had been affecting the economy, cultures, and politics in this region for centuries. Historians tend to clump these kingdoms into one united kingdom or even affiliated them to bigger clusters. Inter-islands traffics had helped many people in Nusantara to develop a distinctive maritime network,¹ supported by the advances in sailing technology, navigational skills and massive enterprising spirit.² Their absence is worsened by the fact that historical researches in Indonesia still give priorities on what had happened on land, although more than half Indonesian territory is a sea.³

One of these missing small kingdoms which importance is still untouched by the historians is the Kingdom of Inderapura. This 'forgotten' kingdom was situated on the west coast of Sumatera and it had played important roles to animate inter-island trade in Nusantara for centuries. Its' supplies of pepper were crucial in making sure that trading activities in the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam kept running.⁴

The important role played by the Kingdom of Inderapura in inter-islands trade in Nusantara should not come as a surprise, for this region had been renowned as a producer of pepper, rice, and gold for a long time. According to Van Ronkel's report, in 1616 CE, Inderapura was a prosperous kingdom under the reign of Raja Itam. Around 30,000 of its people depended on their livelihood on farming and plantation, with rice and pepper as its main commodities. Under the reign of Raja Besar in 1624 CE, VOC succeeded in making an agreement with the court to allow its ships to load commodities onboard without docking, thus freeing them from paying customs. This step was taken to boost

¹ Singgih Tri Sulistiyono and Yety Rochwulaningsih, "Contest for Hegemony: The Dynamics of Inland and Maritime Cultures Relations in the History of Java Island, Indonesia", in *Journal of Marine and Island Cultures* 2, Iss. 2, (2013).

² Adrian B. Lopian, *Pelayaran Dan Perniagaan Nusantara Abad Ke-16 Dan 17*, (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2008), 1.

³ Sartono Katodirdjo, *Pengantar Sejarah Indonesia Baru: 1500-1900 Dari Emporium Sampai Imperium*, (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1999), 115.

⁴ Sudarman, "Jaringan Perniagaan Dan Islamisasi Di Kerajaan Inderapura Abad XVII-Awal Abad XVIII M", in *Disertasi Doktorat*, (Yogyakarta: Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Sunan Kalijaga, 2016), 23.

the economy and still practised by the next king, Raja Puti.⁵

The Kingdom of Inderapura reached its zenith in controlling the maritime trade in 1616 CE. At the same time, Southeast Asia's commerce and seafaring were at its peak. Anthony Reid called this period the 'Age of Commerce'.⁶ One of the contributing factors was the availability of the many ports which were easily accessible by merchants.⁷ In correlation with the above, The Kingdom of Inderapura's position was proven very strategic as a stopover and connector between ports in the east and west coast of Sumatera. The policy of free customs issued by the Kingdom that helped regional traders, even international, to reduce their operational costs also helped to attract merchants to conduct trade in Inderapura.

This research is a historical study using 'new history' approach in maritime history. The focus of this study is to unravel the history of commerce on the west coast of Sumatera, especially to understand several types of local trade conducted in the Kingdom of Inderapura. It utilizes Tambo manuscripts of the Kingdom of Inderapura and VOC archives as primary sources, and books and scientific journals written by maritime historians about the Kingdom of Inderapura as secondary. By cross-checking local sources with the colonial archives and analyzing it historically, the article propounds an argument that the local trade in the west coast of Sumatera in particular and international commerce in general, depended on the flow of local trade conducted within the Kingdom of Inderapura. Its types are unique and might not be found anywhere else in Nusantara.

Intra-Island Trading Activities of the Kingdom of Inderapura

Minangkabau hinterland produces pepper and gold. These two commodities were cogs in the machine of the economy in the Kingdom of Inderapura. Fertile soil, good climate, and abundant water supported pepper cultivation. The farmers never find many difficulties to expand

⁵ Sudarman et al., "Spice Route and Islamization on the West Coast of Sumatra in 17th-18th Century", in *Iclas* 2018, (2019), 48–50.

⁶ Anthony Reid, *Asia Tenggara Dalam Kurun Niaga 1450-1680; Jilid 1, Tanah Di Bawah Angin*, (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2011), xix.

⁷ Singgih Tri Sulistiyono, Noor Naelil Masruroh, and Yety Rochwulaningsih, "Contest for Seascape: Local Alassocracies and Sino-Indian Trade Expansion in the Maritime Southeast Asia during the Early Premodern Period", in *Journal of Marine and Island Cultures*, (2018).

their cultivating land to grow this plant. Although some did, it was still within their capability to solve. The overflowing production of pepper in this region might testify to such an assumption.

Both land and river were functioned to connect trading activities between the Kingdom of Inderapura and Minangkabau hinterland. At least, four big rivers disembogued into the coast of Inderapura. First, Sindang River with its headwater in Sarang Kemuning Mountain. The mountain also provided waters for Lasi River and Air Gansang. Sindang River flowed westward to Rumbai, Gedang, Panjang and Keri Rivers. The current then diverted northward where it met Batang Air Pandan and finally converged with the current of Batang Air Lunang in Pinggan Lake.

Second, Batang Air Lunang. Its water came from Sarang Kemuning Mountain and Batang Air Saro. The Sikabu River was also originated from Sasaran Parang Hill, Kumbang Gadang, Kumbang Ketek, and Ruyung Rivers. The merging currents of Sindang River and Batang Air Lunang flowed to Kesik Lake, then to Padang Lake meeting with Air Barujung River.

Third, Batang Tapan in the eastern upstream of Kerinci. It flowed westward to Dalam River, Air Sako, Air Palajang Dalam, and then merged with Lubuk Batu Tunggal and Lubuk Kabu. Panadah River in the north and Gambir River fed its current, which then flowed near Lubuk Ubay Hill and met Lubuk Kabu. The current then flowed across Tapan, to the west and bent northward, then merged with Tinuri, Talang, Pulai Bagaung, Gajah, and Palang Rivers. It then merged with greater Tapan Ketek River into a tributary of Air Panggang Hill which was fed by Batang Berhulu River from Jambi and Galam, Pandan Kecil and Sibilusus Mountains. From the intersection of Batang Tapan and Air Tapan Kecil, the current flowed westward and merged with Sindang River and Batang Air Lunang, which was not far from Air Barujung. The great current then flowed to Muara Sakai. Not far from Muara Sakai, the current merged with Air Betang, which was originated from Batang Air Inderapura. Its upstream was fed by waters from Batang Air Sambar and Batang Air Rumbai east of Ijau Mountain. The current met Air Batu and flowed through Lubuk Koto Pandan to Muara Sakai. The stream then flowed through Lubuk Gedang, strengthened by Air Pelokan, to Muara Gedang. Muara Gedang was fed by the combination of Sirah and Bantaian Rivers. The estuary (i.e. Muara Gedang) was so big that in its midst there stood two important historical little islands

for the Kingdom of Inderapura, i.e. Rajo and Puti Islands.⁸

Fourth, Silaut River which got its water from Sasaran Kayu Gading Hill. The river flowed downstream to the sea and changed its course southward to join the confluence of Nepai, Batu Nipis, Gendawang, Bajaban, Air Hitam and Air Muara Terurai Bunga Rivers. The current then flowed to Muara Tasambur in the north of Mingkuang River.

Aside from these great rivers, along the coast of Inderapura, there existed some streams which could only be sailed by small boats carrying two or three persons. Included in this category were Air LubukSitayan, BatangMalapang, BatangNilau, BatangSikayang, BatangKarang Bukit Putih, BatangSingkarak, BatangPangian, Batang Bukit KayuJambak, Gemuruh, Ruyung, and Tamiak Rivers.

William Marsden categorized the Kingdom of Inderapura as 'the kingdom by the river', for it was positioned along the estuary of rivers which took its waters from Kerinci Mountain. It is the biggest river on the west coast of Sumatera. Alongside the riverbank, farmers planted pepper and coffee. It was also easy to find gold mines run by indigenous people. To connect farmers inhabiting the riverbank with buyers in the mouth, the river was the only effective and efficient way to transport the commodities. Local sources also mentioned the use of the river as a transportation method: every year the King would sail the river to interact with his people. This annual trip was also intended to oversee pepper cultivation and to keep an eye on any possibilities of opening new gold mines.⁹

Basically, there were two routes utilized to connect Inderapura and the hinterland. First, the land route. This route had been used for a very long time. When Tuanku Rajo Mudo, the king of the Kingdom of Kerinci, intended to establish a bilateral relationship with the Kingdom of Inderapura, the royal retinue decided to take the land route. At that time, Datuk Permai Duaso (count of Tapan principality) was inspecting the road to 'the Land beyond the Hill' (i.e. Kerinci). His entourage then encountered Datuk Bandaro Hitam, an envoy from the Kingdom of Kerinci. The 'footpath', as it was termed by Gusti Asnan, was trodden by most people of the hinterland to interact with the outsiders.¹⁰ Mainly because of its limited capacity and its hilly roads,

⁸ Gusti Asnan, *Dinamika Sistem Birokrasi Pada Masa Kerajaan Inderapura Abad XVI-Awal Abad XX M*, (Jakarta: Litbang Kemenag RI, 2012), 15.

⁹ William Marsden, *Sejarah Sumatra*, (Jakarta: Remaja Rosdakarya, 1999), 209-210.

¹⁰ Gusti Asnan, *Dinamika Sistem...*, 116.

the yields from the hinterland could not be transported through this road in huge amounts. VOC archives also confirmed that not many yields were brought through this land route. Only gold from the mines could be transported through it.

Second, river route, which was the main highway connecting Minangkabau hinterland with trading centres in Malacca Strait, including the port of Inderapura. A Dutch report dated 1616 CE described Inderapura as a prosperous region. The riverbanks could accommodate around 30,000 people labouring in the rice and pepper cultivation. In 1625 CE, around 50,000-150,000 piculs of pepper were transported through rivers to be exported outside Inderapura. Coffee was sold around 2,000 piculs annually with 7 f price per picul.¹¹

Pepper of the highest quality was planted in the hinterland, thus wide transportation network was needed to carry it outside. Small boats were sent upstream to carry pepper to the warehouses in the port. Only wealthy merchants could afford such practices. Brokers on the coast should also be able to maintain good terms with the indigenous people all the time, for they sometimes decided to resort to piracy to disturb the mercantile activities. Pepper trade in the Kingdom of Inderapura was determined by the political situation in the court. The Sultan possessed absolute authority to decide the price of pepper in the port of Inderapura.

The farmers sold their pepper and coffee to peddlers or brokers. These middlemen would then sell the commodities to major players such as indigenous wealthy merchants, Acehnese, Chinese or VOC. The peddlers also acted as the collector. They manipulated farmers to not interact with brokers or major players directly, thus allowing them to control prices in the hinterland. While rich merchants controlled trading activities in the hinterland, the Sultan of Inderapura also played his part by issuing policies demanding petty kings in the hinterland to sell their yields (pepper, coffee, and cotton) in the port of Inderapura. Sultan Muhammadsyah sent the following letter to the Kingdom of Kerinci:

Alamat surat titah dari pada yang dipertuan Seri Sultan dalam Inderapura serta menteri yang dua puluh, barang disampaikan Allah subhanahu wata'ala kiranya kepada Dupati yang batiga lawan pemangku dengan

¹¹ Christine Dobbin, *Gejolak Ekonomi Kebangkitan Islam Dan Gerakan Padri: Minangkabau 1784-1847*, (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2008).

penggawa serta menteri yang selapan dalam tanah Kurinci dalam Negeri Semurut. Adapun seperti surat yang dikirimkan kepada kami sudah sampai, terlalu suka hati kami pada mendengar bunyi dalam surat itu menimbulkan yang asa dan hendak meramaikan bandar Inderapura. Lalu kepada kicang kecoh dalam Inderapura sudah habis. Kami besarkanlah karena kita hendak ramai. Seperkara lagi pada jenis perniagaan sudah dilihat Raja Indera Suta, Tuwan Raja Hamat dan Meti dalam Rinci. Maka dapat daripada surat ta'lim dan takrim dan tabik banyak-banyak dari pada orang kaya Serian dan orang kaya Petor Muda barang disampaikan Allah kiranya kepada Raja Kiai Dipayi Simpan Bumi dengan segala dipati semuanya dalam Negeri Kerinci. Waba'du kemudi itu karena surat ini seperti janji tahu sekarang sudah datang barang2 berniaga jenisnya selampuri hitam beseta itam besar beseta putih besar, beseta itam kecil, beserta (putih) kecil, zusilangan, kasah putih halus, kasah putih kasar, kasah merah halus, perkara (merah), giras putih, ipuh, kendakin, beseta papan, ginggang lagi sekih, ada besi panjang lagi semoa elok barang-barang. Karena itu kami suka Raja Dipati Simpan Bumi dengan orang banyak dari Air Aji berniaga bawak barang-barang lagi gading gajah dan lilin dan banyak-banyak tali Kerinci yang putar tiga lain-lain. Yang boleh dapat dalam negeri Kerinci. Tetapi jangan lupa bawa emas banyak-banyak ke dalam Air Aji, karena banyak barang sempati (?) banyak lurus, jangan takut hitu biru, tidak lain sekarang cenderamata orang kaya Serian dan orang kaya Petor Muda sekayu paerkala merah seperti tunjukkan baharu suruh dengan surat ini sama-sama habis bahagia barang yang patut itu kepada Raja Simpan Bumi.

Every February, the pepper farmers came with their boats from the hinterland to sell their yields. The awaiting brokers would buy up the entire stock of fresh pepper. They did this to anticipate the fluctuation of pepper prices. Once European or Chinese ships were sighted from the port, the cost would skyrocket. Thus, the merchants would hoard pepper as much as they could. In 1616 CE, on average, the hinterland of Inderapura could produce 100 to 150 boats annually, with each farmer carrying 150 piculs.

Inderapura's Inter-Ports Trade in the West Coast of Sumatera

The west coast of Sumatera was marked here and there with coastal cities and its unique commodity. Gusti Asnan classified these cities into three categories: First, coastal cities around Padang (Padangsche Benedenladen). Included in this category were cities such as Padang, Pariaman, Tiku, and Air Bangis. Second, northern coastal cities (Noordelijk Havens), which included Natal, Tapanuli, Sibolga,

Barus and Singkel. Third, southern coastal cities (Zuidelijk Havens), consisted of Bandar X to Inderapura.¹²

In the 17th century CE, the port of Inderapura was the largest pepper supplier. Even the coastal cities mentioned above depended on this port. VOC archive confirms this statement:

The territory of the Kingdom of Inderapura stretched from Silebar to Batang Kapas. At the beginning of the 17th century CE, its influence even reached Padang. On the west coast of Sumatera, the Kingdom of Inderapura was the main producer of pepper. Their production was twice the amount of pepper produced by other regions. Besides pepper cultivation, the kingdom ran several gold mines that had been kept secret from the King of Aceh. In 1665 CE two gold mines were presented to VOC as promised to Groenewegen in 1662 CE.

Inderapura as an entrepot also served as the meeting place for indigenous traders from the hinterland and international merchants because they assumed that their needs would be easily found in this port. Trading network with coastal cities on the west coast of Sumatera, whether in the south or north of the Kingdom of Inderapura was established for the following factors. First, the political network was the main relationship sowed by the Kingdom of Inderapura. Around the 16th-17th century CE, most of the coastal cities on the west coast of Sumatera were under the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Inderapura. Therefore, this region had to observe trading regulations issued by the Kingdom. Each region supplied its unique commodity. Inderapura and Sibolga were the main producers of pepper. They produced pepper of the highest quality. Meanwhile, Salida and Silebar produced gold, which was highly requested by international merchants. The King also actively sent royal letters to the petty kingdoms situated along the west coast of Sumatera, urging them to establish trade with the Kingdom of Inderapura. Second, mutually beneficial trading network. The Kingdom of Inderapura implemented free customs policy resulting in lively trading activities in its port. When the west coast of Sumatera was under the dominion of the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam and all trading activities were concentrated on Kutaraja, those cities were paralyzed. The Acehnese put severe control on them by stationing a *hulubalang* in each. Meanwhile, Inderapura as an autonomous kingdom managed to exercise certain freedom agreed upon with the Acehnese, including managing their internal trading activities with the hinterland

¹² Gusti Asnan, *Dinamika Sistem...*, 120.

or the coastal cities in the west coast of Sumatera.

The trading network was built upon the similarity of religion and culture. Most people inhabiting the west coast of Sumatera were Muslim and held onto their Malay culture wholeheartedly. These two (i.e. Islam and the Malay culture) were the main contributing factors to the greatness of Inderapura and its position as the main patron of commerce on the west coast of Sumatera. The merchants and sailors who visited Inderapura were of various cultures, religions, and places of origin. Thus, one unifying language was needed to communicate and interact. The Malay language was *lingua franca* spoken by everyone at the time. Lombard proclaimed that before the Dutch came to Nusantara, Malay language was spoken in every coastal city. The Dutch then decided to adopt the language for communication. The shift of trading routes from the east coast to the west coast of Sumatera was mainly instigated by the clash of ideologies. The port of Malacca, as the main entrance to Nusantara, was ruled by the Portuguese who happened to be Christians. The Arab merchants thus decided to seek another route to avoid dealing with these infidels. They found the opposite route along the west coast of Sumatera. The Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam as its master took this opportunity and exerted its ultimate efforts to vivify commerce in its cities.

In 1640 CE, the Acehnese's power had weakened. Their control over the trading activities on the west coast of Sumatera waned to such extent that the Sultan had no control anymore over the trade of pepper. As a consequence, Indian Muslim merchants were free to buy pepper from the farmers directly. This condition didn't last long though. The Dutch asserted their hegemony over the trading activities on the west coast of Sumatera by making an agreement with the Acehnese. There were two main points in this agreement: First, the Dutch press the decaying Acehnese court to fix prices of the commodities sold in this region according to their agreement with the Dutch and to ban foreign merchants, save the Dutch, to enter these ports. Second, at the same time, the Dutch tried to seek potential allies among those ports who were willing to abandon the trading regulations issued by the Acehnese and to open their ports for the Dutch.¹³

To secure the inter-ports trade on the west coast, in 1663 CE Jan Van Groenewegen approached the master of each port to discuss

¹³ Denys Lombard, *Nusa Jawa: Silang Budaya, Jilid 1: Batas-Batas Pembaratan*, (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2008), 102.

the possibility of conducting trade between them. Those involved were Raja nan Empat (Raja Panjang Anak and Raja Lelo), Kings of Inderapura (Sultan Mansyursyah and Sultan Mahmudsyah), from Tiku Bandar Khalifah and Padang. A treaty was agreed upon, known as “the Treaty of Painan” (*het Painans Tractaat*).¹⁴ The contents of this treaty were: first, the VOC was granted total freedom to sail the entire waters of Inderapura, BandarX, Padang, Pariaman and Tiku, with every right to monopolize trade. It was not obliged to pay customs except to present some gifts to coax the master of each port. Second, the people of Inderapura were not allowed to sell their commodities to other merchants. VOC had every right to measure the grades of gold sold before the price was decided. Third, the Kingdom of Inderapura and every other coastal city should no longer recognize the Acehnese’s authority. They should drive away every royal official and representative appointed by the Acehnese. Fourth, the VOC was to protect the Kingdom of Inderapura against foreign invaders as long as it was able to. And fifth, the Criminal Laws of the Kingdom of Inderapura did not apply to VOC officials perpetrating crimes in Inderapura and its jurisdictions.

Inter-Islands Trade of the Kingdom of Inderapura

Within VOC’s purview, the inter-islands trade was the trade between Aceh, Java, Madura, Celebes, Molucca, Penang Island, Malacca, India, China, and Europe. The arrivals of foreign merchants depended on Monsoon, opined by some as the unifying element for merchants scattered across the Indian Ocean. West Monsoon blew throughout October-April. Thus, European and Indian merchants would sail to Inderapura until January. From January to April, they traded with the indigenous merchants. Meanwhile, east Monsoon blew from April to October. This was the time for the local merchants from Banten, Celebes, and the eastern part of Nusantara to set sail to visit Inderapura and other coastal cities on the west coast of Sumatera.¹⁵

The port of Inderapura was bustling with foreign merchants because it provided better merchandises. The foreigners could easily obtain pepper, coffee, gambir, and gold of higher quality there. Beside

¹⁴ W.D Leeuw, *Het Painansch Contract*, (Jakarta: Arsip Nasional, 1974).

¹⁵ Sulistiyono and Rochwulaningsih, ‘Contest for Hegemony: The Dynamics of Inland and Maritime Cultures Relations in the History of Java Island, Indonesia’.

its overflowing riches, the port was geographically strategic. The ground was sloping and equipped with natural bays for merchants' ships to cower when the storm hit.

The Dutch archives expounded three categories of foreign merchants.¹⁶*First*, the merchants who owned huge capital but without political support and weapon. Those included in this category were Indian, Arab, Chinese and Makassar merchants. *Second*, the merchants with huge capital and equipped with political power, weapons, and support from trading companies. Those were the Dutch and their VOC (Verenigde OostIndische Compagnie) and the English with their EIC (East India Company). *Third*, the merchants without huge capital but supported by political power and weapons from Portugal, Aceh, and Banten.

The relationship of the Kingdom of Inderapura with foreign merchants had been established from time immemorial, but it reached its peak in the 15th-16th century CE. At that time, Indian merchants would frequent the west coast of Sumatera to trade in merchandises such as silk, porcelain, and ceramic. They would also buy local commodities to sell it in other places. Although Pires never mentioned the port of Inderapura in specific, he did mention that Indian merchants had come to ports of Barus, Tiku, and Pariaman. In the 16th century CE, these ports were under the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Inderapura.¹⁷

When Inderapura was under the authority of the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam, one of the regulations issued by the Acehnese was to ban foreign merchants from conducting trade with indigenous merchants directly in the port of Inderapura. Instead, all international trading activities were concentrated on Kutaraja.¹⁸ After the Acehnese's power declined and their grips over these coastal cities loosened, Indian Muslim merchants started to frequent the west coast once again. They would also visit the port of Inderapura to buy pepper and gold. Their ambition did not stop at the shore. They even penetrated the hinterland to buy from the farmers directly. Their activities did not last long though. The Dutch started to establish alliances with masters of every port. These alliances entailed local farmers to sell their commodities

¹⁶ Hendrik Kroeskamp, *De Westkust En Minangkabau*, (Utrecht: Fa. Schptanus, 1931).

¹⁷ Tome Pires, *Suma Oriental Perjalanan Dari Laut Merah Ke China & Buku Francisco Rodrigues*, (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2014), 226-227.

¹⁸ Rusli Amran, *Sumatra Barat Hingga Plakat Panjang*, (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1981), 129.

only to the Dutch. They were not allowed to conduct trade with other foreign merchants unless they had a permit from the Dutch. This practice was harmful to the Indians as they were unable to trade freely in Inderapura anymore.¹⁹

The Dutch came to Inderapura in 1602 CE. Coen sent ships to secure pepper and gold, but Raja Hitam was able to withhold VOC's incursion, thus delaying the Dutch's intention. This failure did not discourage VOC to monopolize trade in Inderapura. For several times, the Dutch attempted to negotiate with the court to establish permanent cooperation in trade. Their intention was finally accomplished when the Acehnese was in a weak position. The Dutch took advantage of this situation by having an agreement to cripple the Kingdom of Inderapura.²⁰ Unfortunately, after this agreement, the situation did not favour VOC entirely. Discontents popped from every corner and the scale intensified. The situation was further aggravated after the Acehnese were able to reconsolidate their power on the west coast. Using religion as a stepping stone, the Acehnese ignited the hostility towards the Dutch.²¹

The English started their trade relationship with Inderapura after being driven out of Banten. At first, their gaze was fixed on the ports of Bengkulu. To tie a stronger relationship, EIC approached the court to conduct a treaty. At that time, the court conflicted with Raja Adil of Majunto. For Sultan Muhammadsyah, the English arrival was his opportunity to drive out the Dutch. It would also enable him to end Raja Adil whom the Dutch had fully supported. In 1685 CE, EIC (East India Company) built their settlement office in Inderapura, Majunto, and Taluk. In 1686 CE, HMS Royal James arrived at Inderapura carrying within it 100 soldiers. But a disease struck them, killing 30 soldiers. The ship then got back to England without carrying pepper from Inderapura.²²

J. Kathirithamby-Wells attempted to illustrate the trade between England and Inderapura. She indicated that the trade of pepper in Inderapura was wholly under English (EIC) control. The English were able to maintain contact with heads of villages and farmers and

¹⁹ Sudarman et al., "Spice Route and Islamization on the West Coast of Sumatra in 17th-18th Century".

²⁰ W.D Leeuw, *Het Painansch Contract*.

²¹ MD. Mansoer, *Sedjarah Minangkabau*, (Jakarta: Bharata, 1970), 77-79.

²² Rusli Amran, *Sumatra Barat...*, 130.

supervised the transportation of pepper directly. On the other hand, the English monopoly over pepper did not impoverish the farmers because they were able to keep the basic prices, thus stabilizing supply and demand.²³

The port of Inderapura was situated between Banten territory on the easternmost of the west coast and Aceh territory overshadowing the west coast of Sumatera. Inderapura maintained ideological relationship and kinship with both kingdoms in the same term. Thus, it would be logical for the three to cooperate to promote Islam and invigorate commerce. Hamka declared that both the Kingdoms of Aceh Darussalam and Banten were the mightiest kingdoms in Nusantara at that time. The Acehnese was the overlord of the Strait of Malacca while the Kingdom of Banten controlled the Sunda Strait. Both had naval and fiscal power from trading activities conducted within their territory. Their efforts would make Islam triumphant in Nusantara.²⁴ In the 16th century CE, the Kingdom of Banten had been considering to extend its power to Inderapura. Through a brilliant diplomacy, Banten became part of the royal family and was granted a fief rich with a pepper called Teluk Ketaun. Its name then changed into Manjuta. Now it is called Silebar.²⁵

The relationship between the two kingdoms flourished. In 1600 CE,²⁶ two Dutch vessels laden with pepper crossed the water of Inderapura. The Dutch's safety had been guaranteed by the Sultan of Banten, thus the Sultan of Inderapura felt equally responsible. The relationship between the two kingdoms was peaceful and intimate. On the contrary, Banten relied on coercion to control the centres of commerce in Palembang. Banten had attacked the Kingdom of Palembang twice, notably the region of Tulungagung as the centre of pepper cultivation.²⁷ In the Kingdom of Inderapura, Javanese merchants had a special right. They were allowed to buy wherever they wished, while other merchants must conduct the trade in Kutaraja.

²³ F.S. Gaastra and J. Kathirithamby-Wells, *The British West Sumatran Presidency (1760–85). Problems of Early Colonial Enterprise*, (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 1977).

²⁴ Hamka, *Dari Perbendaharaan Lama*, (Jakarta: Panji Masyarakat, 1982), 78.

²⁵ J. Kathirithamby-Wells, "The Inderapura Sultanate: The Foundations of Its Rise and Decline, from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries," in *Indonesia*, Iss. 21, (1976).

²⁶ Hendrik Kroeskamp, *De Westkust En Minangkabau*.

²⁷ Hendrik Kroeskamp.

Conclusion

The Kingdom of Inderapura was the main patron of commerce on the west coast of Sumatera, for they were able to maintain robust trading activities within their kingdom, especially the local trade. Inter-islands and international trade would not run smoothly without a vibrant local trade. This finding is negating the statements of maritime historians who often neglected the study of the local trade and deemed it unimportant and insignificant for the successful international trade. There are three types of local trade conducted within the Kingdom of Inderapura: first, inter-ports trade. Second, inter-islands trade. And third, intra-island trade.[]

Bibliography

- Amran, Rusli. *Sumatra Barat Hingga Plakat Panjang*, (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1981).
- Asnan, Gusti. *Dinamika Sistem Birokrasi Pada Masa Kerajaan Inderapura Abad XVI-Awal Abad XX M*, (Jakarta: Litbang Kemenag RI, 2012).
- Dobbin, Christine. *Gejolak Ekonomi Kebangkitan Islam Dan Gerakan Padri: Minangkabau 1784-1847*, (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2008).
- Gaastra, F.S. and J. Kathirithamby-Wells, *The British West Sumatran Presidency (1760–85). Problems of Early Colonial Enterprise*, (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 1977).
- Hamka. *Dari Perbendaharaan Lama*, (Jakarta: Panji Masyarakat, 1982).
- Kartodirdjo, Sartono. *Pengantar Sejarah Indonesia Baru: 1500-1900 Dari Emporium Sampai Imperium*, (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1999).
- Kathirithamby-Wells, J. "The Inderapura Sultanate: The Foundations of Its Rise and Decline, from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries." In *Indonesia*, Iss. 21, (1976).
- Kroeskamp, Hendrik. *De Westkust En Minangkabau*, (Utrecht: Fa. Schptanus, 1931).
- Lapian, Adrian B. *Pelayaran Dan Perniagaan Nusantara Abad Ke-16 Dan 17*, (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2008).
- Leeuw, W.D. *Het Painansch Contract*, (Jakarta: Arsip Nasional, 1974).
- Lombard, Denys. *Nusa Jawa: SilangBudaya, Jilid 1: Batas-Batas Pembaratan*, (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2008).
- Mansoer, MD. *Sedjarah Minangkabau*, (Djakarta: Bharata, 1970).

- Marsden, William. *Sejarah Sumatra*, (Jakarta: Remaja Rosdakarya, 1999).
- Pires, Tome. *Suma Oriental Perjalanan Dari Laut Merah Ke China & Buku Francisco Rodrigues*, (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2014).
- Reid, Anthony. *Asia Tenggara Dalam Kurun Niaga 1450-1680; Jilid 1, Tanah Di Bawah Angin*, (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2011).
- Sudarman et al., "Spice Route and Islamization on the West Coast of Sumatra in 17th-18th Century." *Icclas 2018*, (2019).
- Sudarman. "Jaringan Perniagaan dan Islamisasi di Kerajaan Inderapura Abad XVII-Awal Abad XVIII M", dalam *Disertasi Doktorat*, (Yogyakarta: Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Sunan Kalijaga, 2016).
- Sulistiyono et al., "Contest for Seascapes: Local Alassocracies and Sino-Indian Trade Expansion in the Maritime Southeast Asia during the Early Premodern Period". Dalam *Journal of Marine and Island Cultures*, (2018).
- Sulistiyono, Singgih Tri, and Yety Rochwulaningsih. "Contest for Hegemony: The Dynamics of Inland and Maritime Cultures Relations in the History of Java Island, Indonesia". In *Journal of Marine and Island Cultures* 2, Iss. 2, (2013).