

TRACING THE HISTORICAL TRACES OF THE ENTRY OF ISLAM IN MAHALA VILLAGE, TINADA DISTRICT, PAKPAK BHARAT REGENCY

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the process of the entry of Islam into Mahala Village, Tina District, Pakpak Bharat Regency, an area where the majority of the population still adheres to the school of faith and is located in the interior of North Sumatra. This historical search was carried out to fill the void of local historical literature regarding the spread of Islam in the Pakpak area which has received less attention in academic studies. The main focus of this research is to identify the path of entry of Islam, what are the evidence of Islamic historical heritage and analyze the influence of Islam on the people of Mahala village, especially in social and cultural aspects. This research uses a qualitative method with a historical approach. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with community leaders, religious leaders, as well as direct observation of historical sites such as old tombs in Lae Meang Hamlet. In addition, secondary sources of documentation are used in the form of articles, archives, and oral historical records. The results of the study show that Islam began to be known in Mahala Village around the 1920s, as evidenced by the existence of the tombs of Islamic propagators with the year of death written between 1923-1927. The process of spreading Islam took place peacefully through trade routes and social interactions, especially by immigrants from Aceh and Barus. Important figures in this process include Teuku Panjang Rambut and Abdurrahim Berutu. Although the Muslim community in Mahala remains a minority, their existence is harmoniously accepted by the local community. The conclusion of this article shows that the process of Islamization in Mahala Village took place culturally and peacefully, not through confrontation. This shows the importance of a social and locality approach in understanding the dynamics of the spread of religion in multicultural areas such as Pakpak Bharat.

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INTRODUCTIONS

Islam has become an integral part of the life of the people of the archipelago, including in the North Sumatra region. The process of entering Islam into rural areas is often through trade, da'wah, and socio-cultural interactions. Mahala Village, located in Tina District, Pakpak Bharat Regency, is one example of an area that underwent an interesting Islamization process to explore. (Reid, 2005)

Pakpak Bharat, as part of the North Sumatra region, has a long history in the development of Islam. According to research by Devi Juliani Tampubolon, Islam entered Pakpak Bharat through trade relations with Aceh and Barus. Figures such as Teuku Abdullah and Teuku Panjang Rambut were instrumental in introducing Islam to the local community through a da'wah approach that was in accordance with the local culture. (Lift & Katimin, 2021)

The entry of Islam into an area is generally accompanied by a process of cultural acculturation and the emergence of historical relics that are traces of Islamic civilization, such as old mosques, tombs of scholars, ancient manuscripts, as well as traditions and customs that come into contact with Islamic values. Similar things are believed to have also happened in Mahala Village. There are several historical sites or relics that are believed to be the initial evidence of the entry of Islam into the area, such as the old mosque which is believed to have been established since the beginning of the 20th century, as well as the tombs of figures who are said to be the first spreaders of Islam. Studying and documenting these relics can provide a clearer picture of the time, path, and important figures who played a role in the process of Islamization in Mahala Village. (Perret, 2012) (Nasution et al., 2022)

In addition to physical evidence, the influence of Islam on the lives of the people of Mahala Village is also an important aspect that needs to be researched. This influence can be seen from the social, cultural, and value systems embraced by the community. For example, how Islamic teachings affect the kinship system, marriage traditions, education, and informal leadership structures in the village. In this context, this study is not only historical, but also sociological, as it touches on the dimensions of contemporary people's lives inherited from the past. (Ningsih et al., 2024; Shirley, 2012)

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This research aims to reveal how the process of entering Islam into Mahala Village, Tinada District, as well as tracing the evidence of historical heritage related to the process of Islamization in the village. In addition, this study also wants to understand the influence of the entry of Islam on the social, cultural, and economic life of the people of Mahala Village. By delving into this local history, it is hoped that a deeper understanding can be obtained of the dynamics of the spread of Islam in rural areas, especially in the Pakpak Bharat Regency area, North Sumatra.

The main purpose of this study is to find out historically how Islam entered and developed in Mahala Village, Tinada District. This research also aims to trace and document various Islamic historical relics that can still be found in the village. In addition, this study seeks to analyze the influence of the presence of Islam on the people of Mahala Village, especially in social, cultural, and religious aspects, in order to understand the transformation that occurred in the lives of the local community after the entry of Islam.

The benefits of this research are expected to contribute to the development of scientific studies on the history of Islam in rural Indonesia, as well as enrich the treasure of knowledge about the Islamization process that occurred outside the areas of Islamic power centers. For the people of Mahala Village itself, this research is expected to increase awareness of the importance of preserving Islamic historical heritage as part of their cultural identity. Furthermore,

this research also aims to foster a sense of pride and historical awareness among the local community towards the existence and cultural values of Islam that have been a part of their lives for centuries.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method with a historical approach. This approach was chosen because the main focus of the research is to trace past events, especially the process of entering Islam into Lae Meang Hamlet, Mahala Village, Tina District, Pakpak Bharat Regency. The historical approach aims to reconstruct historical facts through the tracing of available primary and secondary sources, as well as through the narration of the sources who have a direct or indirect relationship with the event. Thus, this approach allows researchers to understand the dynamics of Islamization in the region in depth and comprehensively. (Herlina, 2020)

The type of research used is qualitative descriptive. This type was chosen because the data collected is narrative and not in the form of numbers, and aims to describe in detail the process of spreading Islam, its historical heritage, and its influence on local communities. The research was conducted in Lae Meang Hamlet, Mahala Village, Tina District, Pakpak Bharat Regency, with the implementation of data collection for several weeks in July 2025. (Rasyid, 2022)

The data sources used in this study consist of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources were obtained through direct interviews with community leaders, religious leaders, and Muslim citizens who were descendants of the early spreaders of Islam in the area. Meanwhile, secondary sources include historical documents, local archives, articles, and academic literature that discuss the Islamization process in Pakpak Bharat and the North Sumatra region in general.

The data collection techniques in this study include *in-depth interviews*, direct observations, and documentation studies. In-depth interviews were conducted with resource persons who had knowledge of local history from generation to generation. Direct observations were made of historical sites related to the spread of Islam, such as the old tomb in Lae Meang Hamlet, the first mosque, and other Islamic symbols. The documentation study was carried out through searching various written sources, both in the form of literature from the internet, previous thesis, and relevant local history books.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The Entry of Islam into Mahala Village

Islam entered the area of Mahala Village around the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century through trade and da'wah. Several important routes of spreading Islam to the Pakpak Bharat area, including Mahala Village, came from Barus, Aceh Singkil, and Mandailing Natal. Important figures such as scholars from Barus, Singkil, and Medan, slowly introduced the teachings of Islam to the local community. (Combih, 2025)

This spread does not take place massively but slowly and gradually. Islamic leaders at that time prioritized a social and cultural approach in spreading their teachings. They live with the community, engage in social activities, and provide an understanding of Islam through recitation, basic religious education, and spiritual approaches.

History Of The Entry Of Islam In Pakpak Bharat

Islam has entered Pakpak Bharat around the 1700s, as evidenced by the discovery of the burial complex of Islamic propagators in Lebbuh Lae Meang, Mahala Village, where on the tombstone can be seen Malay Arabic writing and the numbers 1843, 1926, because it was just discovered. Like a figure named Guru Gindo Chaniago who came from the coast of Barus to the pakpak Bharat of the mountains of Lebbuh Lae Meang and he who brought from Lae Meang to Barus increased learning about Islam and while bringing spices from the mountains to the coast of Kanpur and the coast of Singkil from the coast of Singkil and Camp they brought the needs of the people in the mountains such as salt, cloth and in the form of iron tools, machetes, spears, axes, pickaxes, with the existence of them carrying these tools, they can build the first mosque in Lae Meang, Pakpak Bharat Regency, said Mr. Atur Pandapotan Solin

as a traditional figure of customary land stakeholders of indigenous peoples (who have a cultural site environment in Lae Meang Hamlet). (Berutu et al., 2024)

The process of the entry of Islam into the Pakpak Bharat area, including Mahala Village, cannot be separated from the trade relations between the local community and traders from Aceh and Barus. Devi Juliani Tampubolon in her research explained that this trade relationship opened up opportunities for figures from Aceh, such as Teuku Abdullah and Teuku Panjang Rambut, to carry out Islamic da'wah in the area. The da'wah approach is adaptive to local culture, making it easier for the public to accept Islamic teachings. (Al-Fairusy, 2020)

In addition, Abdurrahim Berutu, a local figure from Pakpak, also played an important role in the spread of Islam through political channels. He used his position and influence to introduce Islamic teachings to the Pakpak Bharat community. The role of these local figures shows that the Islamization process is not only carried out by outside preachers, but also by local communities who have awareness and commitment to the spread of Islam.

Physical Evidence and the Influence of Islam on the Mahala Village Community

Mahala Village holds various physical evidence that shows the process of Islamization in the region. One of them is the discovery of an ancient tomb in Lae Meang Hamlet, Mahala Village, which is suspected to be the tomb of a figure who spread Islam. These tombs were discovered by residents when clearing agricultural land and have tombstones with Arabic inscriptions and year numbers indicating the year of death. (Azhari, 2017)

In addition to the tomb, the remains of houses of worship buildings, such as mosques, as well as pan-shaped stones used as places to store ablution water, were also found. This evidence shows that Islam once flourished in Mahala Village and had a significant influence on the social and cultural life of the local community.

The influence of Islam on the people of Mahala Village is also reflected in the preservation of cultural and religious values. The redevelopment of Sapo Jojong Sipitu Marga Solin in Lebuh Lae Meang, Mahala Village, is an effort to rediscover cultural values that had been lost and maintain the blend of culture and religion. The Regent of Pakpak Bharat, Frans Bernhard Tumanggor, emphasized that the redevelopment of Sapo Jojong Sipitu has an important value in efforts to preserve Islamic history and civilization in the land of Simsim. (Ponja et al., 2020)

A. Evidence of Islamic Heritage in Mahala Village

1. Discovery of the Tomb of an Islamic Propagator in Lae Meang Hamlet

The discovery of the tomb, which is suspected to be the tomb of a figure who spread Islam, Lae Meang Hamlet, Mahala Village, Tinada District, Pakpak Bharat Regency, is one of the important physical evidence in tracing the history of the entry of Islam into the region. These graves were discovered by accident during the clearing of agricultural land by local residents. The tombstones found had Arabic writing and year numbers in Latin letters, indicating the year of death of the individuals, such as 1923, 1926, and 1927. (Siketeng, 2017)

According to the information obtained, the area where the tomb was discovered was once a settlement for immigrants from Aceh. In this location, there have also been houses of worship buildings in the form of mosques and pan-shaped stones used as places to store ablution water. This evidence shows that there was significant Islamic da'wah activities in Mahala Village in the past.

B. Redevelopment of Sapo Jojong Sipitu as a Cultural and Religious Center

Efforts to preserve and revitalize cultural and religious sites in Mahala Village are also reflected in the redevelopment of Sapo Jojong Sipitu Marga Solin in Lebuh Lae Meang. Sapo Jojong Sipitu is a traditional building that has high cultural and religious value for the Pakpak people. The redevelopment of the site began in 2023 and was completed in June 2024, with the aim of re-excavating cultural values that had been lost and maintaining the blend of culture and religion.

Indonesian Architecture and the Indonesian Vernacular Association. The Regent of Pakpak Bharat, Frans Bernhard Tumanggor, emphasized the importance of rebuilding Sapo Jojong Sipitu in an effort to preserve the history and civilization of Islam in the land of Simsim. In addition, the Deputy Regent of Pakpak Bharat, H. Mutsyuhito Solin, explained that the implementation of the reconstruction of Sapo Jojong Sipitu began with the implementation of the Mndegger Uruk Marga Solin party in Tinada in 2019, which was then followed up with cooperation and MoU with the Indonesian Architecture Association and the Indonesian Vernacular Association.

C. Evidence of Islamic Historical Relics in Mahala Village

Strong evidence of the entry of Islam into Mahala Village is found in Lae Meang Hamlet, one of the old hamlets in the village. Some important relics include:

a. Tomb Complex of Islamic Propagators

There are old tombs with tombstones inscribed with Arabic letters and Latin numerals indicating the year of death around 1923–1939. These tombs are believed to be the resting places of the first Islamic propagators in the area. One of the figures who is believed to be buried there is the *pertaki*, the leader of a descendant in a clan who opened a village that became the traditional land holder and was also the beginning that guided the community to convert to Islam.

b. Remnants of Mosque Buildings

There is a building foundation that is suspected to be the first former mosque in the village, and there have been 3 changes of places. Also found were frying stones used to hold ablution water and purification places. (Batubara et al., 2023)

Oral traditions and place names

The name of the hamlet "Lae Meang" and the oral stories of the village elders reinforce that the area was once a center for *da'wah* activities and the spread of Islam.

The existence of traditional titles that are pinned on meritorious Islamic figures, such as "Tuan Imam" Guru Gah. But now it is rarely mentioned for millennials, whose task is to marry the bride and the imam of the congregation, shows the influence of Islam on the social structure of society.

Some of the results of interviews from the people of Mahala village:

"In accordance with my analysis, the influence of Islam entering the Mahala Village area in social, cultural and religious aspects makes a very strong influence so that in terms of religion, especially in Pakpak Bharat district, the residents of Mahala Village in terms of social life continue to prioritize Islam as their foundation. that in the hamlet of Lae Meang, Mahala village, (around the old tomb) there is a place of sunbathing and *shahadah* guided by, the priest and the circumcision *modim*.

Therefore, the culture of Pakpak and collaboration with Islam are always combined in sacred activities, such as marriage, circumcision, and in the custom of death, or feasting." Said Mr. Ahmad Zais Berutu as the Secretary of Mahala Village.

According to Mr. Atur Pandapotan Solin as a traditional leader in the village:

"This is the place or house if the local language is *sapo*, our great-grandmother is the first to receive the group that comes from the Barus Obung, we are the first to receive the group that comes from the Barus Ang looking for spices, the merchants who come from the Coast of Barus directly to Sibongkaras and directly to Lebbuh Lae Meang. Inila *sapo* his name is Rica Solin as a *pertaki* or leader in a community in the pakpak tribe, his name or position is *pertaki*, this is Sapo Jojong Sipitu *pertaki* Lae Meang, this is the house of the leader of a clan in his pakpak who received the first Islamic religious teachings with his children and relatives as well as immigrants around this village complex, In the past, this was a house where they deliberated on how the merchants who came from the coast of Maras did not

understand the language with our people at all and we are proud that in this place they can discuss with sign language and there can be friendship with family kinship only with sign language. The tomb in Lae Meang village has not been touched by anyone because the data is not yet valid and has not been published.

Suggestion from Mr. aAtur Pandapotan Solin as a traditional leader as well as a traditional leader

Since the discovery of the old eater, there has been no such thing as an old eater. The touch of development from the government because we its derivatives are trying to maintain the site for. Maintaining the original tombs of our ancestors, educating the younger generation of their descendants to maintain and respect the work of their ancestors.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research and interviews as well as literature studies conducted, it can be concluded that the process of entering and developing Islam in Mahala Village, Tinada District, Pakpak Bharat Regency, is part of the dynamics of the spread of Islam in the Pakpak area in general, which takes place peacefully, slowly, and prioritizes cultural and social approaches. This process did not happen suddenly, but through the role of a number of scholarly figures from outside the Pakpak area such as Barus, Aceh Singkil, and Medan, as well as the involvement of local figures who had influence in the social structure of the Pakpak community.

The most obvious evidence that shows the existence of Islam in Mahala Village since the beginning of the 20th century is the discovery of an ancient tomb complex in Lae Meang Hamlet inscribed with Arabic letters and Latin numerals on its tombstone, with the year of death between 1923–1927. In addition, the existence of the remains of the mosque building, the frying pan (a place for ablution water), and the oral traditions of the people who are still alive today also strengthen the fact that Islam has taken root in this village more than a century ago. Figures such as Tuan Pakih and the clerics buried in the complex are a strong symbol that Islam is present by bringing education, moral values, and a new religious structure to the local community.

The influence of Islam on the Mahala people is evident in the transformation of culture and beliefs. Societies that had previously held the traditional sacred beliefs of mejan, began to abandon animist practices and replace them with Islamic teachings. This does not eliminate local culture, but rather forms a process of acculturation, in which Islamic values are integrated into the existing customary system. For example, traditional ceremonies are still maintained but adjusted to Islamic law.

The social life of the community has also undergone significant changes. Religious education, the role of mosques, and religious activities are part of the daily life of the Mahala people. The spread of Islamic values encourages increased spiritual awareness, social solidarity, and the strengthening of morality in relationships between citizens. The community began to prioritize the values of honesty, justice, help, and respect for differences as part of the Islamic teachings that they followed.

Tombs or mosques, but also leave the influence of values and civilizations that continue to develop and be inherited from generation to generation. Public awareness of the importance of preserving Islamic history is a strategic step to build a strong local identity while maintaining harmony between religions and cultures. Thus, it can be said that Islam has a central role in shaping the identity of the people of Mahala Village spiritually, socially, and culturally. The entry of Islam in this village did not only leave physical traces in form and tradition.

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