



The History of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman, 1896-1946

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to uncover the historical significance of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman, its role within the Sultanate, its historical heritage, and preservation efforts. Employing a qualitative descriptive historical research method, data were collected through field studies, observations, and interviews with key figures including the Raja Kepala Adat Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman descendants, Malay culturalists, and relevant literature. Findings reveal that Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman, founded by Adir in 1629 with pepper as its main commodity, is a significant Malay kingdom in North Sumatra and part of Medan's four tribes. The research highlights the kingdom's power, evidenced by the Sunggal War against the Dutch (1872-1895), and notes the decline in its nobility's prominence following the East Sumatra Social Revolution of 1946, which led to the loss of most of its heritage except for the Grand Mosque and the grave complex of Datuk Sulung Barat and descendants.

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INTRODUCTION

Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman, also known as Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman, is a Malay kingdom located in the Sunggal subdistrict of Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra. Geographically, Sunggal-Deli Serdang lies in a lowland area predominantly following Malay customs. Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman was founded by the Karo people with the surname Surbakti, specifically Adir Surbakti, who established a village at the foot of Mount Sibayak called Songgal. Influenced by Datuk Kota Bangun, Adir converted to Islam in 1632, initiating an acculturation between the Karo people of the mountains and the Malay people of the coast (Hadi, [2012](#)).

This acculturation was marked by the adoption of a Malay identity, including the Islamic faith, Malay language, and Malay customs. However, despite these changes, the original surname was not entirely abandoned, indicating continued connection with the local population (Perret, [2011](#)). According to descendants of Sunggal met by researchers at the Grand Mosque of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman, Sunggal was initially a village founded by Adir Surbakti located in Sembuaikan at the foot of Mount Sibayak. Adir converted to Islam and embraced Malay identity.

Adir and his followers, who had converted to Islam, abandoned their Surbakti surname due to the prohibition of same-surname marriages in Karo customs, which led to their expulsion from their village. They then established the Sunggal settlement, which expanded significantly. Sinembah, Sukapiring, Hamparan Perak, and Soenggal (Sunggal) were also founded. In 1630, the four tribes' kings appointed the Aceh commander, Laksamana Bhintan, as judge, who later became known as the founder of the Deli Sultanate under the title Tuanku Sri Paduka Gotcah Pahlawan Laksamana Kuda Bhintan. Datuk Sunggal represented the confederation and appointed Gotcah Pahlawan, indicating that Sunggal was not subordinate to Deli (Azhari, [2013](#)).

In addition to Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman, there are three other traditional institutions in Medan, namely Kedatukan Sukapiring, Kedatukan XII Kuta, and Kejuruan Senembah, collectively known as Datuk Empat Suku. These four Kedatukans have their own territories and are linked to the Deli Sultanate, with Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman being an Ulon Janji in the Deli and Serdang Sultanates (Takari, [2012](#)).

According to Sinar ([1988](#)) in his book "*Perang Sunggal 1872-1895*" it was Aceh's commander, Laksamana Khoja Bintan, who converted the smaller Karo kingdoms to Islam while stationed in the Haru Kingdom as a representative of the Aceh Empire, based in Deli in 1612. One of his tasks was to intensify the Islamic mission, leading to a close



relationship with the most powerful Raja Urung, Gotcah Pahlawan, who married Mahmud/Mahbub Sunggal's (Datuk Hitam) sister, Nang Baluan, forming the Deli confederation and the Ulon Janji system. However, Tengku Lukman Sinar also explains that, according to the genealogical records of Datuk-datuk Sunggal, Sunggal Serbanyaman was converted to Islam by Datuk Kota Bangun during Adir's reign. After Adir, Sunggal was led by his son, Mahbub (1651-1667), followed by his son, Bubud (1667-1792), and then by his son, Andan (1792-1821), continuing the traditional royal succession.

During the reign of Datuk Amar Laut (1821-1845), the British delegation led by John Anderson, Governor of Prince of Wales Island (Penang), visited East Sumatra for economic cooperation with local kingdoms. Anderson visited Songgal (Sunggal) after traveling from Kampung Bendar. At that time, Datuk Amar Laut was in Selagan-layan, a small village with extensive pepper plantations, a day's journey from Sunggal (Nasution et al., [2022](#)).

Sunggal made a special impression on Anderson, who described Sunggal as a beautiful place with high banks, some as high as 30 feet. Anderson referred to Datuk Sunggal as "Orang Kaya" (nobleman). Datuk Amar Laut sent Anderson a freshly slaughtered calf's head and dried venison. Anderson noted that the Batta (Karo) people, dark-skinned arrivals via the Langkat route, cultivated pepper but had no religion, with few converting to Islam. In contrast, Datuk Sunggal and his children, whom Anderson mentioned as Sedul Ahmed (Abdullah Ahmad), Dalil (Djalil), and Mahini (Muhammad Dini), were handsome young men with fair skin (Aini et al., [2021](#)).

Sunggal Serbanyaman's existence in East Sumatra is marked by significant events, including becoming the holder of the Ulon Janji of the Deli Sultanate, with territories extending from Timbang Langkat to the Karo Highlands (Tahura), and the great Sunggal War against the Dutch and their allies, which lasted 23 years. During Indonesia's independence revolution, Sunggal Serbanyaman's government ended and merged into the Republic of Indonesia. The former palace center of Sunggal Serbanyaman is now the Tirtanadi Water Company (Sunggal branch). Nevertheless, Kedadukan Sunggal Serbanyaman continues to exist today. Its revival was marked by the coronation of Datuk Syahlafati Ichsan as the Raja Kepala Adat Kedadukan Sunggal Serbanyaman on October 25, 2020, 98 years after the last coronation of a Sunggal adat leader (Pane et al., [2020](#)).

Reinstating the coronation aims to remind the community, especially the Sunggal Serbanyaman family ties, that Sunggal was once a kedadukan, thus ensuring the next generation does not forget their ancestral history. Research on the History of Kedadukan Sunggal Serbanyaman can utilize various references, including historical archives, books, government documents, and interviews with local community figures.

The relevance of this research lies in its contribution to understanding and preserving the cultural heritage of the region. By comprehending the history and culture of this area, we can appreciate and conserve its existing cultural legacy. Several related studies are presented: (1) Siregar shows that Sunggal Serbanyaman, founded by Adir as the first Raja Sunggal in 1629, with pepper as its main commodity, has historical remnants including the Grand Mosque of Kedadukan Sunggal Serbanyaman and ancient graves in Medan, with preservation efforts including mosque repairs and relic replicas (Siregar, [2022](#)); (2) Khoiriyah indicates that the Grand Mosque of Datuk Badiuzzaman, built in 1885 by Datuk Badiuzzaman Surbakti, the eighth Raja Serbanyaman, remains a symbol of history and faith, reflecting past architectural beauty combined with traditional and spiritual values (Khoiriyah et al., [2023](#)); (3) Hadi highlights political struggle strategies including diplomacy with various tribes (Karo, Aceh, Gayo, Malay), guerrilla warfare, and scorched earth tactics (Hadi, [2012](#)).

This research offers novelty by filling gaps in the literature on the strategic role of Kedadukan Sunggal Serbanyaman in the socio-political context of East Sumatra during the period. While previous studies tend to focus on economic or cultural aspects separately, this research comprehensively integrates political, economic, and cultural analyses, including inter-tribal diplomacy strategies, guerrilla warfare, and scorched earth tactics. Therefore, it provides a holistic perspective on local power dynamics and interactions with Dutch colonial forces, as well as their impact on the local community. This study also introduces a new approach to understanding local leadership roles through the case study of Kedadukan Sunggal Serbanyaman, which has not been extensively covered in previous academic literature, thus enriching the understanding of East Sumatra's history and culture.

METHOD

This research employs a historical method with a qualitative approach, aiming to detail the dynamics of the kedadukan within social, political, and cultural contexts. Data collection involved several stages, including literature review, in-depth interviews, and historical document analysis. The literature review examined books, journal articles, and other relevant

written sources from national archives and private collections related to the history of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman. In-depth interviews were conducted with local historians, descendants of the kedatukan, and community leaders with direct knowledge of the period under study. This technique aimed to gather rich and contextual information about events, figures, and policies influencing the kedatukan (Fiantika et al., [2022](#)).

Data analysis was conducted using historical methods, including heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. Heuristics identified and collected relevant primary and secondary sources. Source criticism evaluated the credibility and reliability of obtained sources, ensuring high data validity. Interpretation analyzed the socio-political context of verified data, linking findings to existing theories and broader regional dynamics. Historiography compiled a coherent and logical historical narrative, depicting the development of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman from 1896 to 1946, including its strategic role in resistance against colonialism and contribution to regional identity formation. This approach ensures the research is not only descriptive but also analytical, providing deep insights into the role and influence of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman in East Sumatra's history (Firmansyah et al., [2021](#)).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The Early History of Kedatukan Sunggal

Kedatun or kedatukan is a term referring to a monarchical or political entity concept originating from the late prehistoric phase, later carried into the Hindu-Buddhist era for organizing a *datu's* territory. The earliest written records mentioning kedatukan come from 7th century Sriwijaya inscriptions, namely Telaga Batu and Kota Kapur. The term kedatukan means "the position of a *datu*" or "the residence of a *datu*," derived from the Old Malay word "*datu*" with the noun form *ka-datu-an* to indicate a place. The title *datu* is related to the terms *ratu* and *latu*. It appears in several inscriptions, such as the 7th century Telaga Batu inscription in Palembang. In a broader sense, kedatukan can refer to the entire monarchy (kingdom), but in a smaller sense, it can refer to the *datu's* residence (Riswan, [2018](#)).

The Kota Kapur inscription states:

"Umentern bhakti ni ulun haraki. unai tunai kita savanakta devata mahardika sannidhana. manraksa yan kadatuan çrivijaya. kita tuvi tandrun luah vanakta devata mulana yan parsumpahan."

Translation: "Oh all the powerful deities gathered here to protect this Kadatuan of Srivijaya; you deities who initiate all oaths!"

Kedatuan was widely known and spread throughout the archipelago, including Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula, Java, and the Philippines. In Javanese, the term '*ratu*' is synonymous with '*datu*,' so in Java, '*keraton*' (*keratuan*) is used synonymously with '*kedaton*' (*kedatuan*) to describe the *datu's* or *ratu's* residence. In Java, the term *kedaton* has shifted to refer to the inner court complex where the king and his children live, such as the *kedaton* complex in the center of the Surakarta Palace in Central Java (Perret, [2010](#)).

The Kingdom of Sunggal Serbanyaman was founded by the Puak Sunggal family. Initially, the Karo-Karo Surbakti figure became the leader and had a child named Sirukati Surbakti. Sirukati Surbakti had two children, Keбал Surbakti and Sirsir/Serser Surbakti. Sirsir/Serser Surbakti had four siblings, including Keбал Surbakti, who originated from Pak Pak (Dairi). They both traveled from Pak Pak/Dairi down the mountains to the Karo and Gayo Alas lands. Keбал Surbakti established a village in Lingga, while Sirsir went to Tanah Alas in Lingga Raja, then to Torong and founded a village there. Sirsir married a princess believed to be an elephant's incarnation, and their child was named Gadjah Surbakti. Gadjah Surbakti founded a village in Sitelu Kuru, named Kampung Gadjah (Perret et al., [2020](#)).

The people in Sitelu Kuru, Penghulu Gadjah, Penghulu Lingga, and the Surbakti family had close relations due to Gadjah Surbakti. Gadjah Surbakti had three children: Ator Surbakti, Nangmelias Br Surbakti, and Adir Surbakti. Adir founded a village in Sembuaikan at the foot of Mount Sibayak, named Songgal. He converted to Islam in 1632 due to Datuk Kota Bangun's influence. Adir's same-surname marriage led to his expulsion and abandonment of his surname. Same-surname marriages were considered taboo and disgraceful, necessitating relocation. They were deemed non-compliant with adat (tradition). Evidence of this prohibition still exists, with such people named Karo Sunggal, meaning they had to leave their birthplace and seek new lands elsewhere (Hartini, [2021](#)).

Such Karo people often became Maya-Maya, losing their surname and adat within the Karo tribe. Maya-Maya, meaning unclear, eventually formed their own communities without surnames. Adir had ten children, nine boys and one girl named Nang Baluan. One son was Mahbub, another Borang. Adir was the founder of the Sunggal Kingdom,

ruling from 1629 to 1651. When Aceh conquered Aru in 1612, an Aceh representative named Gotjah Pahlawan was stationed in Aru. Seeing Sunggal's influence among the Karo in the mountains, Gotjah Pahlawan married Nang Baluan to influence the Raja Urung in Tanah Karo. From this marriage, Deli and Serdang kings were born, forming the Deli confederation. Sunggal became Deli's in-laws and played the role of Ulon Janji (Khoiriyah et al., [2023](#)).

Mahbub, one of Adir's sons, succeeded his father as king and moved the Sunggal Kingdom's center to Kinangkung. Mahbub had two children, Bubud and Tobo. Mahbub ruled from 1651 to 1667, followed by Bubud, who ruled Sunggal from 1667 to 1792. Bubud had two children, Andan/Undan and Nang/Dayan Sermaini. Nang Sermaini married Panglima Magedar Alam from Deli. A succession conflict occurred in the Deli Sultanate in 1723 after Panglima Paderap's death. His son Umar was expelled from Deli and reported the situation to the Raja Sunggal. The Raja Sunggal convened Raja Urung Sinembah Tanjung Morawa and an Aceh envoy. After deliberation, Umar became the Raja Serdang with the title Tuanku Umar. Hence, Deli and Serdang nobility descended from Raja Urung Sunggal.

Andan/Undan succeeded his father Bubud as the Sunggal Kingdom's ruler from 1792 to 1821, moving the government center to Tanjung Selamat. He had six sons: Datuk Amar Laut, Datuk Jalaluddin, Datuk Keteng, Datuk Kojat, Datuk Bajing, and Datuk Nahu, and two daughters: Aja Banyak and Aja Gadih. Datuk Amar Laut succeeded the Sunggal throne and moved the government center to Jejabi. He ruled from 1821 to 1845, having four children, three sons, and one daughter: Datuk Abdullah Ahmad had eight children, Datuk Abdul Jalil had nine children, and Datuk Muhammad Dini had four children. During Datuk Abdullah Ahmad's rule, Sunggal broke ties with Deli and Aceh, having its own flag with an elephant emblem (Aini et al., [2021](#)).

Datuk Badiuzzaman became the king of Sunggal/Serbanyaman in 1866, titled Datuk Sri Diraja Indra Pahlawan, until 1895. After Datuk Badiuzzaman's death, his son Datuk Muhammad Moenai succeeded him, followed by Datuk Muhammad Hasan, Datuk Syafi Ichan, and currently Datuk Syahlafati Ichan.

Historically, Sunggal Serbanyaman achieved glory as a kingdom with vast territories in East Sumatra. The kingdom's main activity was trading pepper, its main commodity. The kingdom's center was located in Serbanyaman, now part of Medan Sunggal District. Before 1945, during Indonesia's Proclamation of Independence, Sunggal District was part of the Serbanyaman Kedatukan, led by Datuk Sunggal. Sunggal Serbanyaman was founded in 1629 by Raja Adir, with territories from Paya Geli, Kampong Lalang, Mandi Angin, Tanjong Mangoesta, Asam Kumbang, Kuala Tuntungan, Tanjung Selamat, Simpang Tiga, Sungai Beras, to Binjai, Timbang Langkat, and surrounding areas, extending to Tahura (Karo Highlands). This indicates that the kingdom's territory included lowlands and highlands, continuously expanding over time (Anwar, [2008](#)).

The kings of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman include Adir (1629-1651), Mahbub (Datuk Hitam) (1651-1667), Bubud (1667-1792), Andan/Undan (1792-1821), Datuk Amar Laut (1821-1845), Datuk Abdullah Ahmad (1845-1857), Datuk Muhammad Dini bin Datuk Amar Laut (1857-1866) (Datuk Kecil/Regent), Datuk Badiuzzaman (1866-1895), Datuk H Muhammad Alif bin Datuk Abdullah Ahmad (1895-1901) (Datuk Kecil/Regent), Datuk Muhammad Moenai (1901-1909), Datuk Muhammad Yusuf (Datuk Kecil/Regent), Datuk Muhammad Jalib Johan, Datuk Muhammad Hasan (1922-1959), Datuk Muhammad Hitam (1959-1986) (Datuk Kecil/Regent), Datuk Syafi Ichan (1986-2019), and Datuk Syahlafati Ichan (2019-present).

The Sunggal War

On May 15, 1872, conflict began between the Dutch colonial forces and the Sunggal (Serbanyaman 10 Kota) residents, which lasted until 1895, after Datuk Badiuzzaman Sri Diraja Datuk Sunggal's exile to Banyumas. The Kedatukan Sunggal (Serbanyaman) was located in Sunggal District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra. This conflict, known as the "Sunggal War" or "Batak Oorlog," involved the Batak Karo and Malay tribes collaborating in defense against Dutch colonial expansion. This war had unique characteristics, including cross-ethnic cooperation, resistance to land seizure, and efforts to defend territories from foreign domination. East Sumatra's history is also characterized by tobacco cultivation, which began in 1863, making the region prosperous and dubbed "Het Dollar Land."

The Aceh fleet almost attacked Deli, but Dutch intervention prevented it. The arrival of Dutch tobacco planters influenced the region's economic growth ("YM Datuk Syahlafati Ichan Dikukuhkan Jadi Diraja Sunggal Serbanyaman," [2010](#)). The Sultan of Deli's ancestors played a crucial role in shaping the government structure after Portuguese influence and Gocah Pahlawan's role in spreading Islam in Deli. The Deli confederation was formed with Sri Paduka Gocah Pahlawan as "Yang Dipertuan Agong" and "Arbiter" and Datuk Sunggal as "Ulon Janji" and leader of the Raja

Urung. During Sultan Panglima Mangedar Alam's reign, attempts to conquer Urung and Langkat failed, and British and Dutch influence impacted the region's dynamics (Sinar, [1988](#)).

The Sunggal War had distinct characteristics from other colonial wars in Indonesia at the time, as it was not based on religion (not a jihad war, where Malay Muslims joined Batak Karo non-Muslims); involved various ethnicities like Malay, Karo, Gayo, and Aceh; aimed to defend the homeland from Dutch colonial expansion; resisted land seizures by foreign/Dutch plantations; and formed a popular front to liberate areas already colonized by the Dutch (Sinar, [1986](#)).

According to Dutch intelligence reports, Lau Margo's fort was guarded by 100 fighters, 80 armed with rifles, under the command of a Malay Sunggal who was a brother of Panglima Dalam Sunggal. Secret information indicated that Datuk Sri Diraja received messages from Sunggal fighters through a Karo courier and had expressed sympathy for Datuk Kecil and others. On September 28, Dutch forces captured several nearby positions after fierce battles. Despite several failures, the fort eventually fell to Captain Welters on October 15 after strong resistance. Fighters harassed the Dutch by targeting Chinese laborers transporting equipment and ammunition. Datuks were willing to negotiate peace with the Dutch after meeting with the envoy. Dutch military operations intensified, forcing residents to flee to the forest without protection. Negotiation efforts were made by Resident Schiff, but Datuk Kecil's delegation arrived late, followed by Datuk Kecil's request for more time before resuming negotiations with the Riau Resident (Sinar, [2006](#)).

On the appointed day, Datuk Kecil, Datuk Jalil, and Sulong Barat, along with their followers, appeared before the Dutch forces. Upon reaching the Dutch occupation line, they were greeted by a detachment led by Lieutenant Ponstein. They then marched to Tanjung Balai and entered Sunggal village. Upon their arrival, the entire Dutch military expedition corps was ready to face them, fearing that residents might rebel upon seeing the Datuks. Dutch military operations intensified, burning houses and villages, forcing women and children to flee to the forest without protection.

The Riau Resident's proposal to exile Datuk Kecil, Datuk Jalil, and Sulong Barat according to official procedures was approved, and they were eventually exiled to Cilacap by the Governor-General's decision. In subsequent years, Datuk Kecil and Datuk Jalil died in prison, while Sulong Barat was allowed to return to Sunggal in 1907. Ultimately, those who once fought experienced different fates (*Sejarah Daerah Sumatera Utara*, [1978](#)).

Despite Datuk Kecil, Datuk Jalil, and Sulong Barat being exiled by the Dutch to Cilacap for alleged treason, Sunggal residents' resistance did not wane. Especially with the increasing encroachment of tobacco plantations on people's land, often condemned by Dutch soldiers guarding the plantations. The people retaliated by burning plantation buildings and showing their disapproval with traditional signs indicating "the enemy is here." Amid the tense situation, Dutch soldiers were stationed in various areas to maintain security, but resistance continued to emerge in different places. The people were concerned about the fate of their heroes, particularly Datuk Sunggal Badiuzzaman Sri Diraja and his brother Datuk Alang, who continued to struggle with secret meetings and efforts to gain support from Aceh (Suprayitno, [2012](#)).

Despite efforts to separate the Malay ethnic group from the Karo and stop Aceh's influence, these attempts failed. Eventually, Datuk Sri Diraja and Datuk Alang were exiled by the Dutch, and various resistances and attacks continued in different areas until 1896. Like their uncles, Datuk Kecil and Datuk Jalil, Datuk Sri Diraja and Datuk Alang never saw their wives, children, and beloved homeland, Sunggal, again. They died in exile. To this day, Datuk Sunggal Badiuzzaman Sri Diraja's grave is respected by Cianjur residents, known as "Makam Istana Deli," considered sacred by some. Through 25 years of continuous struggle, this was a significant people's war in Indonesian history. Datuk Sri Diraja and Datuk Alang left a legacy worth remembering and recognizing and acknowledging them as "National Heroes" would be a fitting tribute to their contributions to the people's resistance in Sunggal (Bangun et al., [1978](#)).

The Role of Keadudukan Sunggal in Two Sultanates: The Deli and Serdang Sultanates

Keadudukan Sunggal Serbanyaman stood independently and was not subordinate to any authority. It was established before the Deli Sultanate. However, after the formation of the Deli and Serdang Sultanates, Keadudukan Sunggal Serbanyaman became Ulon Janji in both sultanates, equal in power to the Deli and Serdang Sultanates. Within Keadudukan Sunggal Serbanyaman, there is a system of "Orang-Orang Besar Bergelar" with specific functions and duties. These include the Raja Keadudukan Sunggal (Datuk Syahlafati Ichan), Datuk Bendahara (Aja Muhammad Ikham), Datuk Temenggung (Aja Faisal Mansur), Datuk Panglima (Datuk Indra), Datuk Graha (Datuk Ahmad Juanda), Datuk Penggawa (Oka Hasan), Mufti Keadudukan Sunggal Serbanyaman (Ust. H. Jaini Hafiz), Datin Rakmila Utama (Cik Nur Wasilah Harahap), Encik Ampuan Suri (Cik Eva Handayani), Tengku Penasehat Utama (Yang Mulia Tengku Muhammad Muhar), Tengku Panasehat Diraja (Yang Mulia H Tengku Jaidi), and Datuk Tungkat Diraja (H. Ilhamsyah) (Hadi, [2012](#)).

Datuk Sunggal had significant political influence, especially in the Deli and Serdang Sultanates. Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman played a crucial role in appointing or replacing a Sultan. According to Aja Muhammad Ikram, Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman predated the Deli Sultanate, as the appointment of the Sultan of Deli was one of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman's rights and authorities. The kedatukan's power is evident from the political contracts signed between the sultanate and the colonial government (Anwar, [2008](#)).

Datuk Empat Suku had the authority to sign documents. There used to be a Grand Sultan, and below the Grand Sultan's signature was the Sultan of Deli's signature, followed by the respective datuk's signature. Thus, Datuk Empat Suku were sovereign. This meant that datuks were sovereign with their authority, while sultans wielded their power. Therefore, these four Kedatukans were sovereign and had the right and authority to appoint sultans.

The system for changing and appointing kedatukan successors was similar to the sultanate system. If the sultanate followed the "Raja Mangkat Raja Menanam" tradition, the same applied to Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman. The process of appointing a successor was carried out before the deceased datuk was buried. In 2020, when Datuk Syafi Ichan passed away, his son, Datuk Syahlafati Ichan, immediately succeeded him, becoming the 12th Datuk Sunggal Serbanyaman with the title Datuk Sri Indra Pahlawan Diraja.

Typically, political contracts were only signed by the sultanate, but in Deli, the kedatukan leader also signed these contracts. If a conflict occurred in the Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman's territory, Datuk Sunggal Serbanyaman had the right and authority to resolve it. According to Westernberg's 1892 records, village leaders interviewed by the secretary stated they recognized no other authority except the sultan's and datuk's. Datuks' influence was mostly felt in the judicial field, often traveling their territories to deliver decisions. However, severe cases, like murder and poisoning, were referred to the sultan (Perret, [2010](#)).

Kedatukan Sunggal's relationship with the Deli Sultanate dates back a long time, with Sultan Gocah Pahlawan marrying a Sunggal princess, Nang Baluan. This intermarriage continued in several periods, with the Deli sultanate marrying Sunggal princesses three times. Thus, Kedatukan Sunggal and the Deli Sultanate had close familial ties. The same applies to the Serdang Sultanate and other Datuk Empat Suku Kedatukans, which had kinship ties with Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman, either as Sunggal's in-laws or with Sunggal princesses as their in-laws (Khoiriyah et al., [2023](#)).

The news of Indonesia's Proclamation of Independence was delayed in East Sumatra, only emerging in October. After Japan's surrender, a power vacuum ensued, leading to significant social upheaval, with everyone vying for power, including sultans, political organizations, and the public. Social and political instability caused by social inequality led to the 1946 social revolution.

After the proclamation announcement in the Deli, Langkat, Serdang Sultanates, and Simalungun, these regions seemed to remain strong independent kingdoms. The sultans believed they did not need to join the new state proposed by Soekarno. Public joy was uncontrollable, and migrants from Java dominated the region, forming people's militias and attacking palaces (Suprayitno & Ritonga, [2018](#)).

These events culminated in the March 4, 1946, social revolution, with popular militias destroying the sultanates in Langkat, Deli, and Simalungun, accusing the royal factions of being Dutch collaborators. Educated nobles, like Amir Hamzah in the Langkat Sultanate and Datuk Hafiz Haberham in the Deli Sultanate, were killed. Consequently, Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman now serves as the adat holder in Sunggal (Sumantri & Nunzairina, [2019](#)).

The Heritage of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman

Historical relics provide valuable cultural information connecting past and present societies. Focused research on material heritage, such as identifying relics, helps communities understand their historical background, enhancing knowledge and conservation awareness. Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman's heritage includes:

The Palace of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman

The palace no longer exists physically but was believed to have stood at the current site of the Tirtanadi Water Company's water management installation, near the Grand Mosque of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman.



Figure 1. Former Palace of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman
(Source: YT ANSA TV)

According to information from Datuk Syahlafati Ichan through You Tube Video from ANSA TV Channel, that the characteristics of the palace in Malay are three, namely: (1) Close to the Mosque, that is the Great Mosque kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman (2) Close to the Market, that is Pekan Sunggal (3) Close to the river (Interview with Datuk Syahlafati, 2024).

Grand Mosque of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman

The Grand Mosque of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman, an ancient mosque from the past, still stands today beside the Tirtanadi Water Company, once the palace center (now on Jl. Pekan Sunggal, Medan Sunggal, North Sumatra). It is one of the oldest mosques in North Sumatra, along with Al-Osmani Mosque and Gang Bengok Mosque. Kedatukan Sunggal, being Muslim, required a mosque for its people's worship. Mosque construction was a social obligation of the ruler (Syahrawati et al., [2022](#)).

Initially, the Grand Mosque of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman was simple but was renovated in 1885, with stone walls for durability. Due to the Sunggal war against the Dutch company starting in 1872, construction was hindered, as the Dutch monitored movements in Sunggal, banning cement needed for the mosque's construction. Consequently, the kedatukan and the Serbanyaman community used egg whites mixed with sand as a binder. Limited cement was smuggled in and used sparingly. However, further studies are needed to verify these claims about the mosque's construction (Khoiriyah et al., [2023](#)).



Figure 2. The Great Mosque of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman
(Source: Researcher Documentation, August 08, 2023)

Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman Mosque is one of the old mosques in North Sumatra. The location of the Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman Mosque is on Jl. Sunggal Pekan, Medan Sunggal sub-district, Medan City, North Sumatra. This mosque was founded by Kedatukan Sunggal which covers an area of 362.76m². Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman Mosque is a complex consisting of a mosque and a tomb complex. The mosque building is rectangular in plan and faces east.

The use of the name Datuk Badiuzzaman Mosque has long been the designation of the Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman Mosque, based on information from the old people who were still alive, they also did not understand what the change was due to, so that after the inauguration of Datuk Syalafatih Icsan, it was reaffirmed that the real name of the mosque was the Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman Grand Mosque. The mention of the Badiuzzaman Mosque may be more of a tribute to the people of Sunggal to Datuk Badiuzzaman Sri Diraja or Datuk Sunggal who restored and raised the Mosque.

Over the years the mosque has only been managed by the zuriat of Kedatukan Serbanyaman. On October 25, 2020, the inauguration of Datuk Syalafatih Icsan as the 12th Raja Kepala Adat Sunggal Serbanyaman was held on the grounds of the Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman Grand Mosque. This inauguration was held again after the last inauguration of Datuk Hasan entitled Datuk Sri Indera Pahlawan Sunggal Serbanyaman as Raja Kepala Adat Sunggal 101 years ago in 1922 (Interview with Datuk Syahlafati, 2024).

Grave of Datuk Sulung Barat & Ancient Graves

In 1912, Datuk Sulung Barat died and was buried in Sunggal Serbanyaman, beside the Grand Mosque of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman. Other ancient graves in the mosque's grave complex lack sufficient historical background, as the Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman members have limited knowledge of the graves except for Datuk Munai, Datuk Raja Serbanyaman, whose descendants are still present (Perret et al., [2020](#)).

Sunggal Serbanyaman has several relics in the form of a tomb complex located around the Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman Mosque. One of these tombs is the tomb of Datuk Sulung Barat. The location of this tomb is not located in the cemetery complex, the position of the tomb is located individually and is to the north of the Kedatukan Mosque. It is located in a large courtyard area. Datuk Sulung Barat was buried in 1912 in Sunggal Serbanyaman, his grave was restored on June 28, 1987. The renewal of Datuk Sulung Barat's tomb is found in the construction of a 4x5 meter *jerjak* fence surrounding the tomb, coating the cement floor of the tomb, making *jirat*, and tombstones.

This tomb has a length of 200 cm consisting of *jirat* and tombstones. The *jirat* of this tomb is the result of restoration consisting of cement covered with white ceramics, while the new tombstone is round (cylindrical) without decoration, has the same height of the head and foot which is 72 cm from the ground (Sumantri & Nunzairina, [2019](#)).

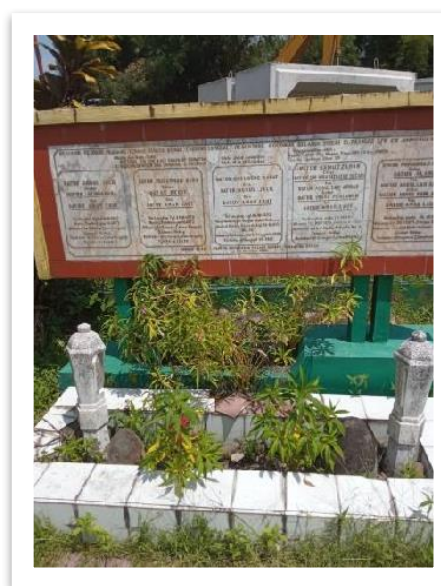


Figure 3. Grave of Datuk Sulung Barat
(Source: Researcher Documentation, August 8, 2023)

Manuscript of Syair Sunggal

The manuscript containing the Syair Sunggal was written by Raja Sortia of the Padang Tebing Tinggi Kingdom. This *syair* describes the prosperity of the Sunggal Serbanaman region and the wisdom of Datuk Sunggal, written in 1932 in Arabic-Malay script by Raja Sortia from the Padang Tebing Tinggi Kingdom. The researcher did not obtain specific information regarding this *syair* since it has never been published and is only kept in storage. Nevertheless, this *syair* now serves as one of the relics that can demonstrate the prosperity of Sunggal Serbanaman in the past, considering that there are not many written sources specifically narrating Sunggal Serbanaman as one of the kingdoms in East Sumatra. The Syair Sunggal is preserved by Malay culturalist T.M. Muhar Omtatok, a descendant of Raja Sortia, who also serves as the chief advisor of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanaman.

Another relic is an ancient manuscript containing the *syair* (poetry). Ancient *syair* manuscripts are regional literary works from the past. In general, every nation has records containing information about its society, customs, social culture, and governance from the past. These records, known as ancient manuscripts, are relics from the past that reflect different conditions compared to the present. They usually contain various information across different fields such as religion, literature, history, customs, and law. Adrisianti suggests that ancient manuscripts reflect the values of life, such as traditions, life guidelines, and moral teachings of the society of their time (Adrisianti [2015](#)).

This manuscript contains the Syair Sunggal, which was recited during the coronation of the 12th Datuk Sunggal (Interview with Muhar Omtatok, 2024). The *syair* in this manuscript narrates the beauty and grandeur of Sunggal Serbanaman, written in 1932 in Arabic-Malay script by Raja Sortia from Padang Tebing Tinggi. Translated into Indonesian, it reads as follows:

Sunggal Negeri Melayu Jati
Moyang Asli Dahulu Lagi
Dari Waktu Togoh Hingga Pegari
Makmur Ia Tiada Peri

Melayu Sunggal Murah Berani
Tiada Takut Bukan Khayali
Alang Diraja Siwah Belati
Tuah Melayu Dijunjung Disanggani

Negeri Sunggal Kaya Sekali
Serbanaman Bernama Negeri
Lada Merica Rotan Bukan Sekati
Tiada Pernah Kebuluran Barang Sehari

Raja Datuk Adil Bijak Pekerti
Resam Melayu Bangsawan Tinggi
Orang Bertandang Disambung Macam Sehati
Rakyatnya Bestari Lagi Berbudi

Seal of Sunggal Serbanaman

A seal and stamp are two inseparable and interrelated components. A stamp is a tool used to produce a seal, whereas the seal is the printed result of text or images on a particular object engraved on the stamp. Seals are usually used for important matters such as authentication, accountability, and validation of a decision, a practice that has existed since the kingdoms in the Nusantara region.

This specific seal belonged to Datuk Mohd. Yusuf (1907-1914), the caretaker of Serbanaman. The seal features Arabic script and the Hijri year inscribed with "Datuk Muhammad Yusuf Pemangku Serbanaman" along with Latin letters. This model is typical of the seals used by Malay rulers. The seal discovered by T.M. Mohar Omtatok is circular and smooth, with the word "Allah" at the bottom. The year inscribed on the seal is 1328 Hijri, equivalent to 1910 CE.



Figure 4. Seal of Sunggal Serbanyaman
(Source: Official Facebook Page of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman)

Keris Alang

The keris are one of Indonesia's cultural heritage weapons, typically forged or crafted from metallic materials such as iron, steel, or pamor (Adrisianti [2015](#)). The Keris Alang is a Malay cultural heirloom weapon, which serves as an essential element in the coronation ceremony of the Raja of Sunggal Serbanyaman. The Keris Alang Sunggal depicted above is an heirloom from Datuk Muhammad Hasan, the 10th Raja of Sunggal Serbanyaman. Essentially similar to other keris, the Keris Alang typically features a blade length of 35 cm and consists of three parts: (1) the handle, (2) the blade, and (3) the sheath. The handle of the Keris Alang is dark brown, the blade tapers and narrows towards the tip, and the sheath is decorated with motifs at the base and tip, with metal plating and a rounded end. The Keris Alang is worn by tucking it into the front of the waistband at an angle, either to the right or left. It is typically worn during formal traditional ceremonies or events.

The Keris Alang is a symbol of the grandeur of the Malay Sultanate or Kedatukan. The Keris Alang Sunggal was once again used in the traditional ceremony of the coronation of the 12th Raja Kepala Adat of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman on October 25, 2022. The last time it was used in a traditional ceremony was in 1923, during the reign of Datuk Muhammad Hasan, known as Sri Indera Pahlawan Sunggal Serbanyaman (1923-1945). The ceremony begins with the Raja slowly and gradually unsheathing the Keris Alang, then returning it to the sheath before tucking it into the waistband at an angle (Amelia et al., [2023](#)).



Figure 5. Keris Alang
(Source: Official Facebook Page of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman)

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research demonstrate that Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman played a significant role in the history of North Sumatra. This kedatukan functioned not only as a local governance center but also as a symbol of resistance against Dutch colonialism. Through the collaboration of various ethnic groups, Kedatukan Sunggal successfully preserved its identity and territorial sovereignty. The struggle against colonialism, which was not based on religious motives, involved multiple tribes and aimed to defend the homeland from Dutch expansion, highlighting a strong sense of unity and nationalism. The existence of the "Orang-Orang Besar Bergelar" system indicates a complex social structure and underscores the critical role of each individual in supporting the governance and society of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman.

The limitations of this research stem from the restricted availability of data sources and limited access to certain historical archives that may contain crucial information about Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman. Additionally, there is a potential bias in the interpretation of historical data obtained from sources that have not been thoroughly verified. This study was also constrained by time and resources, which impacted the scope and depth of the analysis that could be conducted. Therefore, further in-depth research and broader access to relevant historical sources are essential to enrich the understanding of the history of Kedatukan Sunggal Serbanyaman and its role in the history of North Sumatra.

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