

Trade During Pre-Sriwijaya (4th–5th Centuries Ad)¹

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ABSTRACT

Since early century AD until 5th century AD South Sumatra had been inhabited by communities that were composed in solid social integrations in form of local chiefdoms. Researches concluded that in 4th century AD there were settlements of communities in the East coast of Sumatera. It was believed that these communities had made contacts with India and Chinese traders, as well as with traders from other countries,

Karang Agung Site is one of the sites that had been inhabited by humans during the above period. It is located in South Sumatra in the east coast of Sumatra. There are a number of variables that show the importance of this site, they are: its location which was near water (Musi tributary, moats); the existence of boat stake and various artifacts that were assumed to be trade commodities (stone and glass beads, fine-paste pottery, gold jewelry in forms of earrings and rings) and remains of a boat; its location in international trade route. According to Van Leur, one of the two main trade routes in Asia is the "silk road" that covers China, India and up to Europe. It passed through Central Asia, Turkistan, and the Mediterranean Sea, which had contacts with Indian travelers/traders.

This paper is made in an attempt to re-emphasize the existence of the site of Karang Agung, which is based on its natural landscape that was a tidal swamp with very limited sources of fresh water. Despite all that, its inhabitants were very advanced in the field of trade. There must have been some factors that forced this area to become the buffer zone in an international trade route between the open seas and the interior areas.

Key Words: Tidal Swamp, Trade Route, Pre-Sriwijaya, Trade Pattern

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PERDAGANGAN PADA MASA PRA-SRIWIJAYA ABAD 4-5 M

ABSTRAK

Sejak awal abad M – 5 M, Wilayah Sumatera Selatan telah dihuni oleh kelompok-kelompok masyarakat yang tersusun dalam integrasi sosial yang mapan dalam bentuk kepemimpinan lokal. Diperkirakan pada abad ke-4 M di Pesisir Timur Sumatera telah muncul pemukiman-pemukiman dari suatu masyarakat yang melakukan kontak dengan pedagang India dan China dan mungkin juga dengan pedagang lainnya.

Situs Karang Agung adalah salah satu situs yang pernah dihuni manusia pada periode tersebut diatas, tepatnya terletak di wilayah Pantai Timur Sumatera, di Sumatera Selatan. Beberapa variabel yang menunjukkan bahwa situs ini penting pada masa itu adalah: terletak dekat sungai, dan anak sungai Musi, adanya parit ataupun kanal-kanal, ditemukannya tiang pancang perahu, ditemuka sejumlah artefak yang diduga kuat sebagai komoditi perdagangan antara lain: manik-manik batu dan kaca, tembikar halus, perhiasan dari emas seperti cincin dan anting, adanya temuan bangkai perahu, dan secara keruangan terletak di jalur internasional. Menurut Van Leur salah satu dari 2 jalan perniagaan besar di Asia adalah jalan "sutra", yang meliputi Tiongkok sampai ke India, dengan Eropa. Jalur tersebut melalui antara lain: Asia Tengah, Turkistan, Laut Tengah yang berhubungan dengan kafilah/pedagang dari India.

Kajian ini ingin menegaskan kembali keberadaan situs Karang Agung yang apabila dilihat bentang alamiahnya merupakan daerah rawa pasang surut dengan sumber air tawar yang sangat terbatas, namun masyarakatnya sangat maju dalam bidang perdagangan. Tentu ada faktor-faktor yang mendorong wilayah ini menjadi area penyangga bagi lintasan perdagangan untuk mencapai wilayah pedalaman dari lintasan luar (internasional).

Kata Kunci: Rawa Pasang surut, Pantai, Jalur perdagangan, Pra Sriwijaya, Pola perdagangan

INTRODUCTION

During early century AD the Indonesian people were undoubtedly the prominent sailors and traders in the Far East. The large amount of exotic goods from Rome and India to Asia were brought to China, not to princes and kings in Sumatra and Java like assumed by most people, since the two islands were undeveloped, poor, and politically unorganized. Chinese silk, which was very popular among the Greek and Roman people, was usually traded for Western 'luxurious' goods of similar value. As for spices and resin from the Indonesian Archipelago were usually traded for other spices or, if lucky, for gold (Read, 2008).

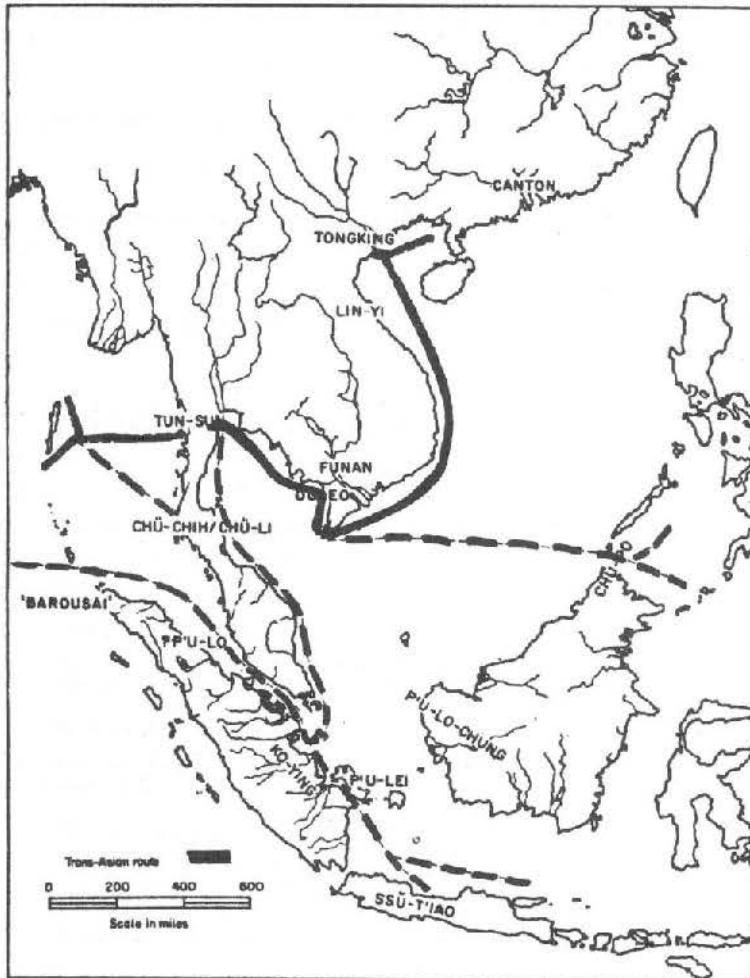
Archaeological evidences indicating the awakening of a maritime nation include among others are remains of boats, boat stake, remains of oar and rudder, and artifacts that are assumed to be trade commodities (beads, gold jewelry, metal implements, and fine-paste pottery). Intensive investigations from 2000 – 2005 were carried out by Tri Marhaeni S. Budisantosa etc., researchers from the Archaeological Branch Office of Palembang, and teams from the National Research and Development Centre of Archaeology in Jakarta.

Previously, Soeroso had also conducted a research in this area, which revealed that since early 1st century AD until early 5th century AD South Sumatra had been inhabited by community groups with solid social integrations in forms of local chiefdoms (Soeroso, 1996).

Other investigations concluded that in 4th century AD there were settlements of communities, which had made contacts with Indian traders and maybe traders from other places (Budisantosa, 2008).

The site of Karang Agung is one of the sites in the east coast of South Sumatra that was inhabited by humans during the above period. The variables that show the importance of this site are among others: its location which was near water (Musi tributary, moats); the existence of boat stake and various artifacts that were assumed to be trade commodities (stone and glass beads, fine-paste pottery, gold jewelry in forms of earrings and rings) and remains of a boat; its location in an international trade route. According to Van Leur, one of the two main trade routes in Asia is the "silk road" that covers China, India and up to Europe. It passed through Central Asia, Turkistan, and the Mediterranean Sea, which had contacts with Indian travelers/traders.

From the following map we know that the east coast of Sumatra, including Karangagung Tengah Site, was part of the maritime trade route in Southeast Asia. The commodities from Sumatra included incense, wood products (ebony wood, electrum or natural mixture between gold and silver), ivory, gold, silver, pearls, glass, and precious stones. According to Robert Dick (2008), the Egyptians had imported those kinds of goods from Southeast Asia, most probably including the east coast of Sumatra like what was depicted in the trade route map in the early century AD. The goods were traded with gold and silk.



Picture 1 : Maritime trade route in Southeast Asia in the year 250 AD
(Wolters 1967)

The international trade route existed before the Sriwijaya period. In accordance with the title, in this paper will discuss the trade before the Sriwijaya period. The Sriwijaya Kingdom did not have a role in the international trade route before 7th century AD (16th June 682 AD), like what was mentioned in the Kedukan Bukit Inscription, which mentioned mobilization of soldiers and 200 cases of provisions in boats plus 1,312 more soldiers on foot in a siddhayatra journey in search of a place to build an encampment (Utomo, 1988). Therefore retracing historical data before 7th century AD becomes important. Many experts, including historians and archaeologists, have studied historical evidences and stated the facts regarding events mentioned in Chinese chronicles.

Seen from the periodization, the 4th – 5th centuries AD was the beginning of the historical period in Indonesia based on the discovery of Yupa inscriptions at Kutei, Kalimantan, in 4th century AD. This early historical period was still largely influenced by the previous period, namely

the prehistoric period, so that it is known as the proto-historic period. In discussing the trade during this period, the events that occurred around this period become important, and it is proven by archaeological finds, particularly within the site of Karangagung Tengah, so that it can support the discussion about the trade pattern during that period.

To study the trade pattern, besides historical approach to be used as written sources to explain the events in the past, economic-archaeological approach is also used particularly in ancient economics when the trade contacts occurred.

According to Heriyanti Ongkodharma Untoro, in her research about **Kapitalisme Pribumi Awal di wilayah Banten (Early Indigenous Capitalism in Banten)**, which discusses trade during the colonial period, economic-archaeology is part of archaeology that focuses on the study of various attempts of men in the past to fulfill their daily lives, using archaeological data; while economics is a branch of science that studies human attempts to reach prosperity, as well as indications and relationships that come out from those attempts (Ongkodharma, 2007). This paper will also discuss trade patterns using economic-archaeology approach that focuses on studies on trade and change (Renfrew 1993), which are assumed to occur in the eastern coast of Sumatra.

HISTORICAL SOURCES

Based on Chinese sources, O.W. Wolters (1967) stated that there had been two important trade kingdoms before Sriwijaya existed: Ko-ying dan Kan-t'o-li. Because this paper is about trade before the Sriwijaya period, Ko-ying and Kan-t'o-li are significant to be included in the discussion.

In his research on the palaeogeography of the Sriwijaya Kingdom, S. Sartono, a geologist who also quoted Chinese sources, mentioned that "between 430 and 473 AD there were five kingdoms that sent 20 emissaries to China in peaceful missions. Among them, six emissaries were from Ho-lo-tan, eight from P'o-huang, and two from Kan-t'o-li." After 473 AD only Kan-t'o-li sent its emissaries to China. In 6th century AD this kingdom very rarely sent peaceful emissaries to China, which indicated that it felt strong enough, so that it no longer needed affiliation with China. Apparently this kingdom enjoyed its trade monopoly with China, and its power and sovereignty had made this kingdom to be considered the embryo of the Sriwijaya Kingdom, or 'proto Sriwijaya' (Sartono, 1979). Since century AD the kingdom of Kan-t'o-li had never been heard of again.

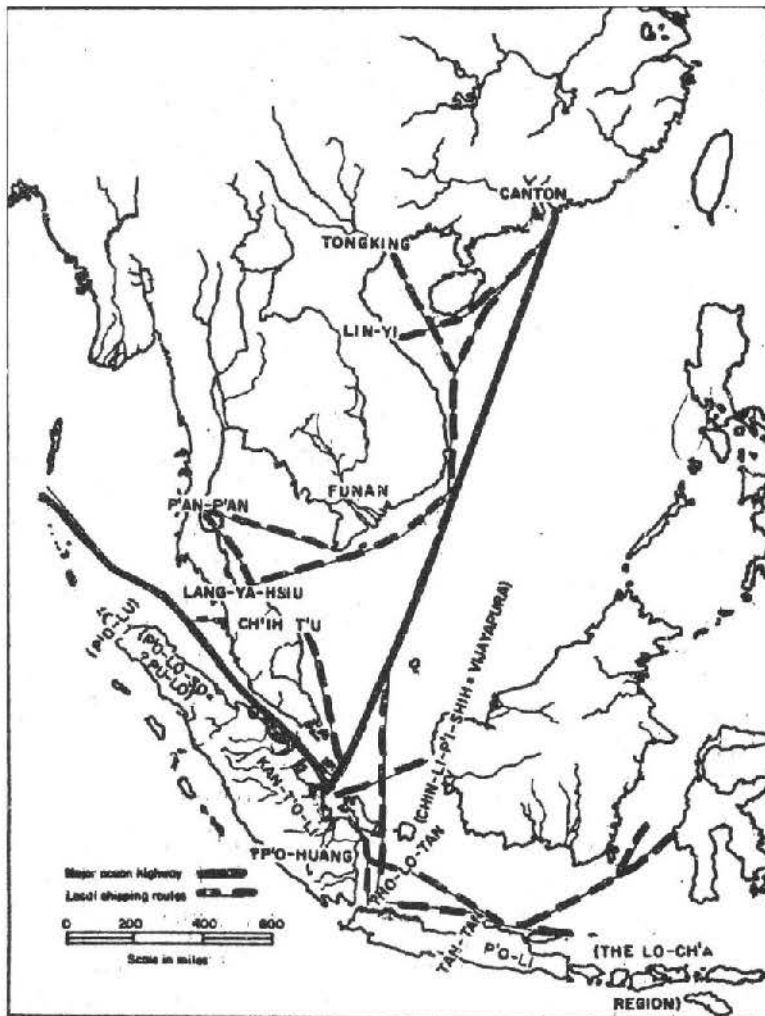
Then there was the kingdom of Ko-ying, which is assumed to be located on the east coast of Sumatra. The name Ko-ying was mentioned in Chinese record made by K'ang T'ai and Wu Chen (222-280 AD), who mentioned that Ko-ying was located in the south. Ko-ying was a harbour city that had trade relationship with India, and its assets included pearls, gold, jade, crystal rocks, and statues (Sartono, 1979).

Experts are still disagreeing on what and where Ko-ying was. The consensus is: Ko-ying was situated in a place southeast of Sumatra, which was an ideal location to control the passage between India and China through the Melacca Strait or the Sunda Strait. The location of the kingdom was probably within that area (Dick, 2008). Ko-ying is assumed to be situated around Palembang. Therefore Ko-ying and Kan-t'o-li were the kingdoms that had flourished in the pre-Sriwijaya period.

It is also mentioned that Kan-t'o-li reigned in 441 – 563 AD. It covered an area that included South Sumatra, Batanghari River, and Musi River (did it also include Karangagung Tengah area?).

Based on historical sources and results of investigations by experts, particularly S. Sartono who studied the palaeography of South Sumatra, the kingdoms of Ko-ying dan Kan-to-li were known to be part of the trade activities at Karangagung Tengah in the east coast of Sumatra.

Besides the kingdoms mentioned above, there were other several kingdoms existed outside Indonesia before 7 AD that were located around the southern part of Sumatra that is known as the east coast of Sumatra, also several destination areas or part of an international at that time. These kongdoms were Funan in Funan (near Oc-Eo harbour not far from the harbour of Oc-Eo in the delta of the Mekhong River, China (in Kra Highland and China). (see Wolters' map)



Picture 2 : Maritime relationships in Southeast Asia in 430 – 610 AD
(Wolters 1967)

Wolter's map shows that the east coast of Sumatra, which in 3rd century AD was still in broken lines, in 5th century AD has become a continuous line. It illustrates an international trade route that connected the Indonesian Archipelago (in this case the east coast of Sumatra) and Canton (China).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCES

Robert Dick, in his book, *Penjelajah Bahari* (Sea Traveller) states that there were remains of a boat from 3rd AD. The boat was 162 feet long (± 50 m) and the weight was 600 tons. The boat was made of several layers of wooden planks without iron to strengthen it. The wooden planks were tied together using a rope made of palm fiber. It had no outrigger but has sails.

The wooden planks were arranged in criss-cross fashion and were tied with connecting plates using bolts and nuts technique (*pelat sambung dan teknik pasak*), which was common in Indonesia until 1500 years later (Dick, 2008). Besides remains of a boat, a 60 feet long remain of a rudder was also found.

Intensive archaeological researches at Karangagung Tengah and its surroundings in the east coast of Sumatra, which were carried out by the Archaeological Branch Office of Palembang, yielded house poles, boat rudder, pottery, beads, whetstone, mollusks' shells, bones, teeth, coconut shells, and anvils (Budisantoso, 2002; Soeroso, 2008; Fadhlani, 2002).

Most of the fine and rough pottery are household utensils. The fine ones are grayish red in color, thin, and are made with paste-like mixture. Based on the decorations, shapes and material, the pottery is assumed to be originated from Arikamedu, South India. The pottery was brought to Karangagung Tengah as imported goods (trade commodity). The functions are among others ceramic gourds, jarlets, jars, urns, jarlets, bowls, cups, flasks, etc. The pottery is decorated with geometric designs like triangles, lines, and circles, as well as comb-like design, herring bone, and dots. The decorations were made using stamped, incised, and cut-out techniques.

Beads are one of the most commonly found artifacts. Thousands of beads of various sizes and colours were found at Karangagung Tengah site and its surroundings in the east coast of Sumatra. They were made of stone, glass, and baked clay (*mutisala*). Glass beads are the most frequently found compared to those made of stone or baked clay. Analyses on them show that beads in the shape of cylinders (percussion), which colours are milky white and brownish black (in striped design), are assumed to be originated from Taxila site, India. Based on research by Dubin, those beads were from 500 BC and were made by the Persians during the Roman period (249 – 200 BC) (Dubin 1987). Most of the glass beads found at Karangagung Tengah and its surroundings are monochromatic ones and their colours are dark blue, light blue, dark green, light green, yellow, and orange. The glass beads were known as the *trade wind beads*, which were commodities brought via the trade routes that were depended on wind. They were also known as the *Indo Pacific beads* (Hardiati, 2002; Budisantoso, 2002).

There were also *Gold-in-glass beads* or *sandwich glass beads*, which were made of glass with a layer of gold in between (in the middle). This type of beads were initially made in Egypt, and then imported abroad in 3rd century AD. According to experts of the history of glass, such beads were also made in Constantinople in 4th – 5th centuries AD (Budisantoso, 2002).



Several types of commodities (beads, earrings, stone bracelets, necklace made of tin/lead).

Other investigation on the chronology of the Karangagung Tengah site used palm wood (*Palmae/Arecaceae*) taken from remains of wooden poles found at that site in dating analysis, and the result is that it was from 4th century AD or 1629 – 1624 BP (Soeroso, 2008).

Archaeological researches at Kayuagung, Musi Banyuasin regency, South Sumatra, resulted in the discovery of pottery, beads, and gold ornaments. Are those artifacts part of the commodities that were traded with forest produce? The researches also yield traces of settlements. Dating on wood reveals that it was from 4th – 5th centuries AD. As for the Indo-Pacific beads, they were among the commodities traded during the period and even far beyond the period, which was around early first century AD

DISCUSSION

Based on the above description, we know that Karangagung Tengah and its surroundings was part of an international trade route of beads in 4th century AD, and that this site and other sites in the east coast of Sumatra, such as Air Sugihan, Mulya Agung, and some others (there were approximately 21 archaeological sites from the same period), were also settlements. The settlements were in linear pattern following the flow of old rivers.

Observation on the map of trade routes made by previous experts (Wolters, 1967) explains that the east coast of Sumatra belonged to the world trade route in that period. Consequently, the areas along the route were quite busy with activities. Some experts are of the opinion that the sites were places visited by traders before they sailed to China on their way to India or even the Middle East. It was the effect of the opening of a marine trade route between the western part of the world (the Mediterranean) and the eastern part (China), in which India, Srilanka, and Southeast Asia (including Indonesia) – particularly the islands that ruled the sea – were included. The impact of the opening of this route was the emergence of trade-based rulers or kingdoms, for instance Funan, Kan-to-li, Ho-ling, and also the most powerful kingdom at that period, namely Sriwijaya. (Dick, 2008). Anyone who passed through the trade route, whether they liked it or not, had to make contact with those rulers/kingdoms.

It is said that journeys to the east, to the country 'behind the morning sunrise' were largely depended on the west monsoon wind, which blows from the Indian Ocean from April to July. On the other hand, journeys home were very depended on the northeast monsoon wind that blows in January. Because it was impossible to finish a round trip from China and back in one year, the sailors believed that it would be wiser to go back from Kra after the first journey than to wait for the return of the cargo ships (Dick, 2008). In this case, the role of the kingdom of Funan as the ruler of Kra at the delta of the Mekhong River was very significant.

Observation on Wolters' map (1967) reveals that it was also during that period that the strait of Melacca route via Sumatra was used on the way to Kra. The very long journeys had naturally made the east coast of Sumatra the stopping place for the trade ships from all over the world. Endang S.H. states that during the first century AD the east coast of Sumatra was one of the stopping places while the ships waited for the wind (Hardiati, 2002). In stopping places the ships anchored while waiting for the right wind, repaired their ships, loading and unloading their cargoes, getting provisions (food and fresh water) for the next journey, etc.

It was highly possible that during the stop, there were interactions in forms of transactions or barter. During the interactions there were exchanges of local and foreign cultures, at least in the form of exchange of specific commodities. As a result, the local and foreign cultures influenced

each other, and the quality and amount of commodities affected the technology and production activities (Renfrew, 1985).

Persian cargoes were thought to bring scented resin wood, pistachio nuts, medical herbs, perfumes, and brocades from the Archipelago (Wolters, 1967). Marsden mentions that the herbs and spices commodities from the island of Sumatra include: incense, camphor, peppers, nutmegs, cloves, resin, gambier, gaharu wood, cotton, wood for buildings construction, areca nuts, and coffee (Marsden, 2008).

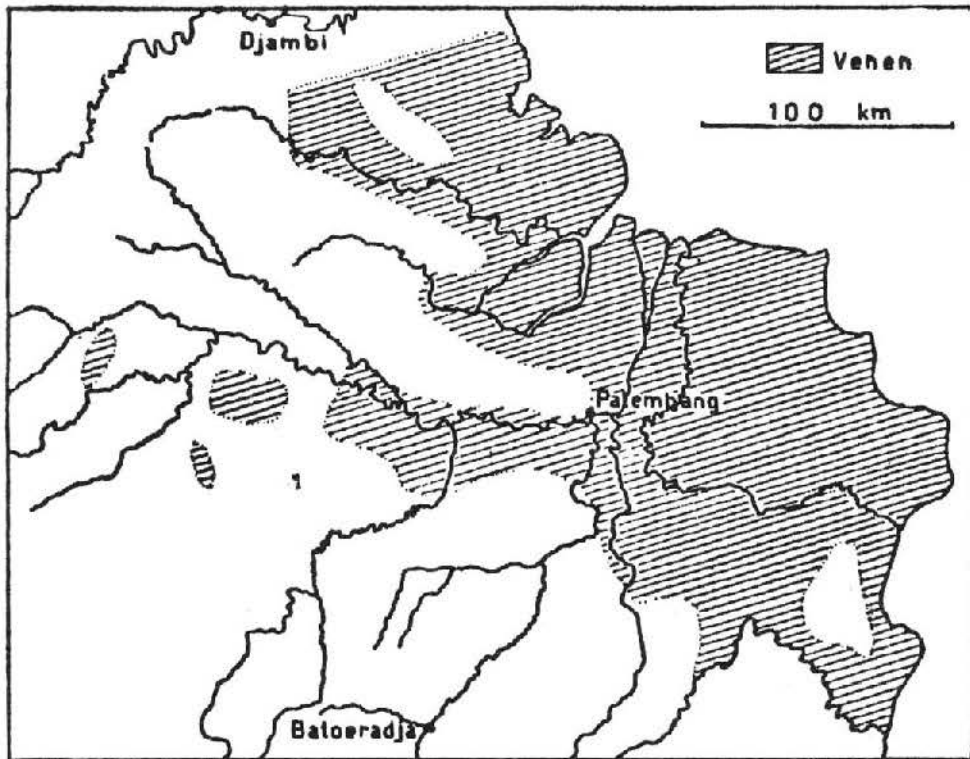
If this is true, then in the tidal swamp areas like the east coast of the southern part of Sumatra during 4th – 5th centuries AD there had been trade activities with the outside world. This was probably the factor that impelled the emergence of habitation sites in that area, which were passed by many rivers like the Lalang and Cilik Rivers that flowed into and joined the Musi River. This assumption is supported by the discovery of archaeological sites in forms of settlements along the old rivers (Lalang and Cilik).

The inhabitants of the old settlements lived in houses supported by poles, because of the tidal swamp in the estuary of old rivers, which were directly influenced by marine activities.

Swamp is a relatively flat landscape with still water that is naturally formed both continuously or seasonal as a result of blocked natural drainage. Its physical characteristics are: concave surface, sometimes with peat; it has the lowest water acidity (chemical characteristic); with swamp fish, vegetations, and woodland (biological characteristics). There are two types of swamp: **tidal swamp**, which is located at or near the beach, in an estuary or near an estuary that was influenced by tidal waves of the sea; and **non-tidal swamp** or inland swamp, which is located farther than the beach and therefore not influenced by tidal waves. The characteristics of swamp in the interior land are: largely influenced by rivers so that it has saline and brackish water. Sedimentation process made most of the area turned into lands that are part of river deltas. Its location, which is relatively quite far from the coastline, made the area hardly reached by sea water during high tide. Therefore the area was more influenced by river activities besides daily high and low tides of the sea (Subagjo in Suriadikarta dan M.T Utriadi, 2007).

Based on its hydrology, a swamp is a unit. The length of the high and low tides inland depends on the elevation and form of the beach and its change towards the interior, as well as the hydraulic obstacle along the flow route. An estuary (the downstream of a river that lets the water in during high tide and lets the water out during low tide) is the main flow route of the tidal movement. The longer and wider the estuary is, the farther the tidal movement into the interior is. An estuary is considered long if the river and land are almost unchanged far into the interior. The denser the distribution of the estuary makes the area that can be reached by the tidal activities wider. Because the area is a swamp area, the potency of high and low tides can be made wider by digging a canal up to the sea, making a short estuary longer, and branching an estuary or connecting an estuary to another

(Notohadiprawiro, 1970). This is probably the reason behind the making of canals that connect one river to another (others).



Picture 3 : The distribution of peat deposits in Jambi and Palembang (Rutten1927; Sartono, S. 1979)

The above information proves that the natural condition of Karangagung Tengah and the east coast of Sumatra was suitable to be made into trade-based settlement. The rivers that flow up to the interior had enabled connections between the interior and the coastal area. The settlement was adjusted to the surrounding nature, with houses on high poles (stilt houses).

In utilizing peat area, it is important to take into account the thickness of the peat layer. According to Widjaja-Adhi from the Research and Development Centre of Agriculture, peat can be classified into four classes: 1. shallow peat (50-100 cm); 2. average peat (10-200 cm); 3. deep peat (20-300 cm); and 4. very deep peat (> 300 cm). Soil with peat of 0.50 m thick is classified into peaty soils. For Karangagung Tengah, the author has not studied on the characteristics of peat in the past. However, the above description proves that human can live in peat area and they can even produce rice and other short-term crops in peat area.²

2 Peat soil (Organosols = Histosols) is formed from the decomposition of organic material, especially remains of plant tissues in the past. In its initial stage, the

As a transit harbour, surely Karangagung Tengah differs from big harbours such as Oc-Eo at the delta of the Mekhong River, which is assumed to be from the same period as the east coast Sumatra. This situation has an impact on the form or pattern of trade during the 4th – 5th centuries AD. According to Renfrew, in trade there were at least some people who carried out the trade and the areas where the sources of commodities are.

The trade pattern that involved many people who made transactions from the first seller to the next is a retailer pattern. The first hand seller is actually the retailer for the large-scale merchants as the capital owner. The commodities are not merely for their own daily needs but also to be sold again in transit places. Therefore there were people who pool the goods to be redistributed. The redistributions were not only among merchants in trading ships but also between the local traders and people in the interior parts, using small vessels that sails on the criss-crossing tributaries. In the interior, the retailers traded their commodities with forest products. That was how people get the goods that were considered important but not manufactured locally, such as fine and thin pottery, beads, textiles, gold and/or silver ornaments. Renfrew (1993) stated that in such type of trade there are two important elements: **reciprocity** and **redistribution**.

In the framework of Renfrew's statements, based on archaeological evidences – artifacts and written sources (Chinese sources and other historical sources) – it is assumed that there were four stages of trade in the east coast of Sumatra, from the simplest to the complex ones. The higher ones are not included in the trade pattern of this period, because they required distribution centres, harbours, port cities, big capital, etc., which were related to local and regional political situations. Stages of trade have been discussed by Heriyanti Ongkodharma.³ (Renfrew, 1993). There are ten

deposit process of organic material occurred in depression area behind river banks. With fresh and brackish water that flooded the depression area, decomposition of organic material becomes very slow. Eventually there are accumulations of organic material, and peat deposits are formed with various thicknesses depending on the topographic condition of the mineral soil under the peat layer (Widjaja-Adhi *et al.* 2000; Subagjo 2006) Potential Acid Sulfate (PAS) area is a type of soil that contains pyrite at the depth of 0 > 100 cm below the surface. Pyrit in this type of soil is in reduction stage (unoxydized). This soil usually has A/B and C types of overflows in PAS-3/A. PAS land has a pH of > 3,50, which becomes higher in accordance with the depth of the land. PAS land should be kept so that its sulfidic material is not oxydized. The soils are classified into: Typic/Haplic/Thapto-HisticSulfaquents, Typic/Aeric Hydraquents/Fluvaquents/Endoaquents/Endoaquepts or Sulfic Hydraquents/Fluvaquents/Endoaquents/Endoaquepts (Soil Survey Staff 1998). Those types of soils are suitable for edible crops, especially irrigated rice in A or B overflowing types. C/D types of overflows are more suitable for horticultura plants and plantations.

3 In the note (page 23) of her book, *Kapitalisme Pribumi awal Kesultanan Banten 1522-1684, Kajian arkeologi Ekonomi*, Heriyanti Ongkodharma Untoro

stages of trade from the simplest to the most complex ones. The first four are: 1. **Direct Acces**, in which B can directly come to the sources without reference from A; 2. **Reciprocity (Home Base)**, in which B comes to A in A's base and they trade their specific goods under their own supervision; 3. **Reciprocity (Boundary)**, in which A and B meet at the border to do the transaction; and 4. **Down The Line Trade**, in which commodities are traded at the transit places along the way, and this is similar to stage 2 and stage 3 (A is the source and agent/doer, while B is the agent/doer).

At the first stage anyone could come to the east coast of Sumatra, because it was part of the international trade route. At high tides, merchants from outside could go to the interior to trade the goods they brought with local produces based on mutual needs. At the second stage, which is more advanced, the local goods that were wanted by people from the outside were pooled in one place, so people did not have to go to the interior and transactions can happen even at low tides at the base chosen by the people in the source area (for instance at the estuary). This way more local produces can be traded because they were well prepared, and thus the profit will be higher. At the third stage, both local traders and traders from the outside meet at a base they chose to do their transactions. The next stages are reflections of free trade among continents based on basic needs to achieve prosperity.

The four stages show that what the traders/merchants did along the trade route were still simple ones, just to fulfill local needs. But it is very likely that this simple trading activities had led to the emergence of powerful kingdoms because in the world of trade applies: those who rule the trade route will rule the economics.

Of course there were regulations that controlled this way of trading, in which big ships had the priority to anchor in the east coast of Sumatra, while the smaller ones had to wait in line. This was due to the fact that this area depends on season and the size of the beach. Was possible that there was a certain ruler at the period who controlled the trading activities? Chinese sources mention two kingdoms that were important at that time: Ko-ying and Kan-to-li. Both are assumed to be in Palembang, South Sumatra. Probably they were located not far from the east coast of Sumatra, so it is understandable that they were regarded as the embryos of Sriwijaya. Wolters, (1967) in Soeroso, (2008) stated that before the emergence of Sriwijaya, in the east coast of the southern part of Sumatera, in 3rd – 4th AD there was a kingdom that ruled the southern sea, which Chinese source mentions as Ko-ying/Chia-ying. Ko-ying was replaced by Kan-t'o-li, which sent emissaries to China in 430-475 AD (Woltwers, 1967; Soeroso, 2008). Soekmono's opinion that the Kingdom of Sriwijaya (or the embryo of Sriwijaya) was a sea may be true. Maybe what he meant was the east coast of Sumatra, which was a tidal swamp area that became a sea at high tides.

discusses matter of factly Renfrew's ten stages of trading activities (Ongkodharma, 2007).

Van Leur also mentions about trade like quoted by Soeroso (2008): *"There were a lot of markets and they were isolated one from another, and their structures vary. At each market there were only several hundred bahars (1 bahar = about 400 lbs.) of nutmegs and cloves, pepper, several hundreds boxes of textiles, several dozen cargoes of porcelains, and several dozens of forest products. An international market consisting of people bargaining and retailers using hand scales or the scaling house of the harbour city or the tax building of its ruler, carried out in cities and harbours during harvest times and using the right wind. When the merchants had gone, and the money they brought had been used, the trade completely stopped."* (Soeroso, 2008).

CONCLUSION

1. The area of Karangagung Tengah, which was mostly sea, is part of the pre-Sriwijayan trade route in 4th – 5th centuries AD. This is supported by the study on the change of coast line, which proves that this area was once part of the shoreline. It was probably a small harbour, not a real one. The archaeological finds to support this argument are remains of a boat and a rudder not far from the beach.
2. Karangagung Tengah is a transit place for international ships, a place to anchor, a place where ships' crews can rest or repair their ships or loading and reloading, as well as getting logistics (especially fresh water, probably taken from the Musi River, which is a fresh water river).
3. The pattern of trade during the period is a combination of reciprocity and redistribution (Renfrew, 1993), which consists of four stages of trade during 4th – 5th centuries AD.

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