



ANCIENT SETTLEMENT INDICATIONS IN LUWU REGENCY, SOUTH SULAWESI

Indikasi Pemukiman Masa Lalu di Kabupaten Luwu, Sulawesi Selatan

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Abstrak

Tulisan ini bertujuan menjelaskan sejumlah data arkeologi, tradisi dan lingkungan okupasi manusia di Kabupaten Luwu. Metode pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan survei dan ekskavasi. Survei menjaring sejumlah data yang ditemukan di permukaan dengan menitikberatkan pada aspek bentuk dan jenis artefaktual (seperti gerabah, artefak batu, atau monumen megalitik). Dalam pelaksanaannya ditemukan empat situs terkonsentrasi di atas bukit, yaitu Bukit Lebani, Bukit Cakke Awo, Bukit Malela, dan Bukit Lebani. Kegiatan ekskavasi dilakukan di Bukit Lebani yang memiliki tingkat variabilitas cukup tinggi dibanding situs-situs yang lainnya. Hasil identifikasi temuan pada situs Bukit Lebani, terdapat tiga jenis temuan yakni, batu berlubang, fragmen gerabah, dan lumpang batu. Batu berlubang ditemukan tersebar dan hampir merata di daerah-daerah datar di puncak bukit, digunakan sebagai tempat penampungan air untuk kebutuhan pemukim di atas bukit. Periode pertama dihuni oleh sekelompok manusia yang dipimpin oleh "kepala suku" bernama Pong Diwero sebelum abad ke-18 M. Pada periode berikutnya, yaitu awal abad ke-19 pemukiman terkonsentrasi di daerah lereng-lereng bukit. Pada periode ini puncak Bukit Lebani tetap menjadi sentrum bagi terlaksananya acara ritual/upacara oleh manusia pendukungnya. Data etnografi menjelaskan bahwa masyarakat yang bermukim di sekitarnya melakukan ritual di atas puncak Bukit Lebani setiap selesai musim panen.

Kata Kunci: *Pemukiman, adaptasi, ritual, kronologi.*

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to explain a number of archeological data, traditions and human occupational environments in Luwu Regency. The data collection methods consist of survey and excavation. The surveys carried out indicate a number of surface data, focusing on the shape and type aspects of artifacts (such as pottery, stone artefacts, or megalithic monuments). In the implementation we find four sites concentrated on the hill, named Bukit Lebani, Bukit Cakke Awo, Bukit Malela, and Bukit Balubu. Excavations are carried out at Bukit Lebani which has a high level of artifact variability compared to the other sites. The results of the artifacts identification of Bukit Lebani site have determined three types of artifacts known as hollow stones, pottery fragments, and stone mortars. Hollow stone is found scattered and almost distributed evenly in flat areas on the hilltop, used as a water reservoir for the needs of settlers on the hill. According to local oral tradition, Bukit Lebani is inhabited by a group of people led by a "tribal chief" named Pong Diwero before the 18th century. In the following century, settlements are concentrated on hillsides. In this period, the peak of Bukit Lebani remains as a center for the implementation of rituals / ceremonies. Ethnographic data explain that the people who live around the sites perform rituals at the top of Bukit Lebani after harvest season is through.

Keywords: Settlement, adaptation, ritual, chronology.

INTRODUCTION

Luwu is located in the northern and eastern parts of South Sulawesi Province,

around 367 km from the Capital Makassar, with 7 to 8 hour drive away. Geographically

it is located at coordinates between 2 ° 3 '45 "- 3 ° 37' 30" South Latitude and 119 ° 41 '15"- 121 ° 43' 11" East Longitude (Figure 1), covering an area of 3,000.25 km² with a population of 350,219 people (BPS, 2018).

Luwu Regency is a unique geographical area because Palopo, a municipal administration, comes between its

territories; Walenrang and Lamasi, famously known as WALMAS, are on the other side of the municipality, to the north to be exact. The establishment of Palopo municipality divided Luwu into two separate areas, the southern part on the one end (south of Palopo) and the north on the other end (Sulaiman, 2017, pp. 129–130).

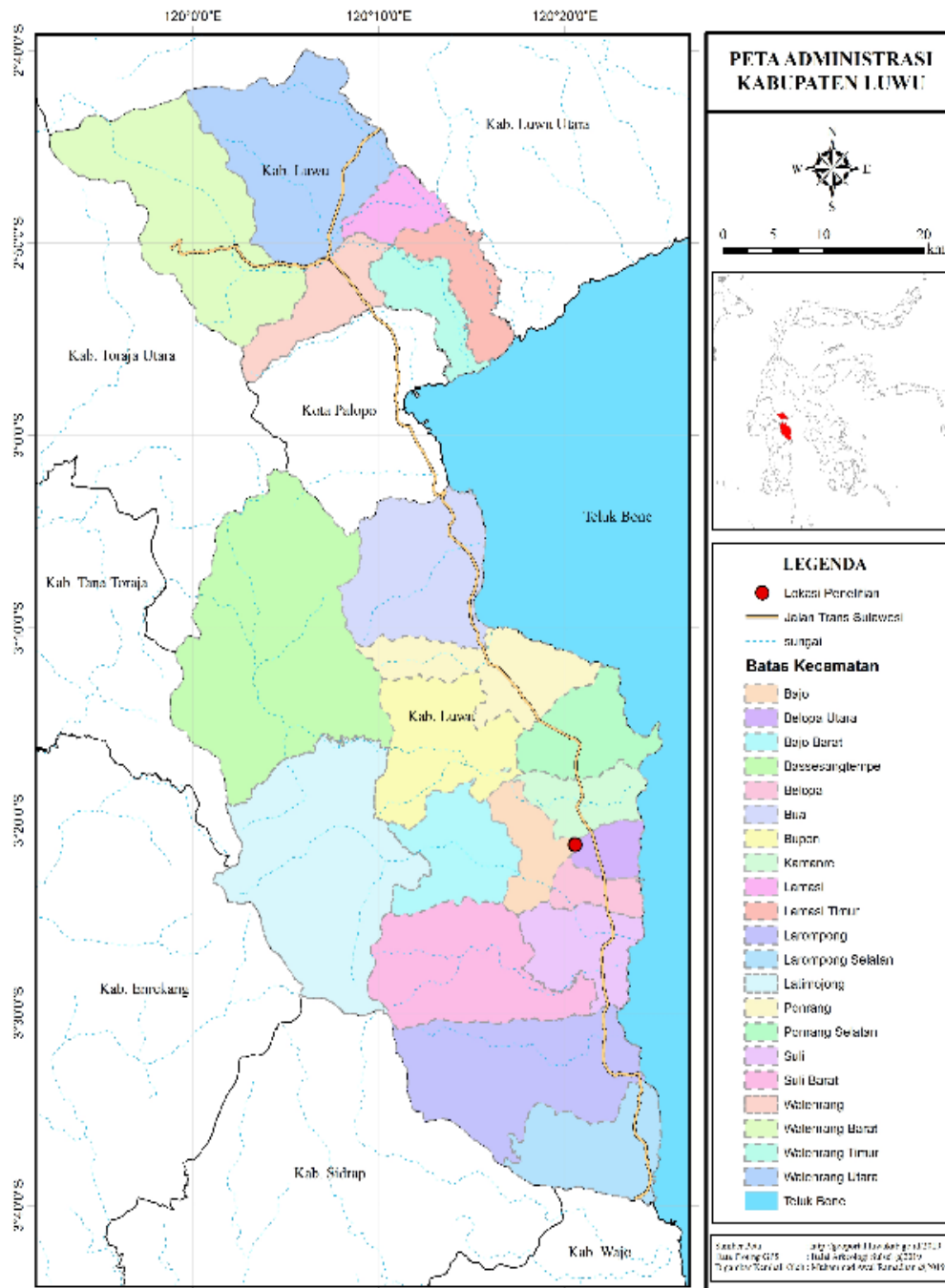


Figure 1. Administration Map of Luwu Regency (Source: Balai Arkeologi Sulawesi Selatan, 2019).

As a whole Luwu region has been divided into four regencies namely East Luwu, North Luwu, Palopo, and Luwu. As far as the writer is concerned, archeological studies have revolved around human activities since the establishment of Luwu kingdom in 13th or 14th century, thus far. The survey suggests that the distribution (trading probably) of imported luxury goods had been common among kingdom rulers. It is evident from the fact that the largest quantity of porcelain fragments of the highest quality, are found at major palace sites; while lower quality objects in smaller quantities are found at secondary sites (Bulbeck & Caldwell, 2000).

A study on Luwu in relation to the transition to rice cultivation carried out by Bulbeck and Caldwell (2000) and (2008) shows that rice planting had been practiced since 1300s (Bulbeck and Caldwell, 2008: 15). This is due to an increase in the supply

of merchandise from other parts of the archipelago, the most common of which stated in the archaeological record are ceramic objects (Bulbeck & Caldwell, 2000; Iwan Sumantri, 2006).

Fakhri (2016) and Yuniawati (2014) have taken part in megalithic culture research on Rampi and Seko of North Luwu Regency (Luwu Utara). The former study indicates that the distribution of archaeological findings appears to have developed from the western region around the Rampi area and continues to spread northward to the northeast of the Bada Valley and Poso Valley. Megalithic culture develops in the early metal period (paleometallic) and extends as a form of tradition up to these days (Fakhri, 2016, p. 34). The data gathered from radiocarbon dating in the Rampi Valley, South Sulawesi show an occupational period from around the 2nd to 3rd century, leaving behind such

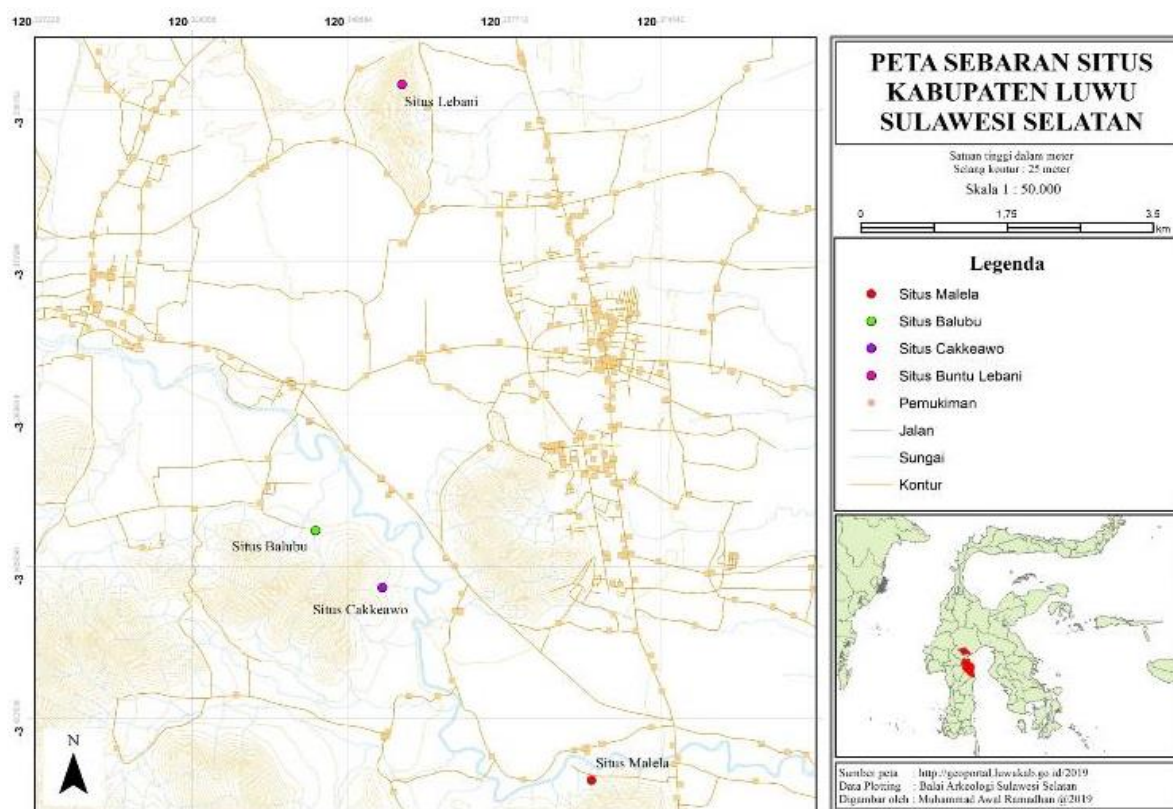


Figure 2. Surveyed sites in Luwu, 2019 (Source: Balai Arkeologi Sulawesi Selatan, 2019).

relics as statues of menhirs, mortars and dolmen (Yuniawati, 2014).

It has been clear so far that both megalithic research and early royal research are still a major concern in the northern and eastern regions of Luwu. They have not yet attempted to address the extent of prehistoric sites and tradition at the heart of the former Luwu kingdom, with Belopa as capital. The void of perspective and the absence of research direction are considered of importance to gather more cultural data. To span the gap, this study seeks to present a number of archeological data, traditions and human occupational environments which highlight their means of adapting to the hilltops around Belopa, Luwu Regency.

In response to that matter, this article attempts to answer the following research questions: (I) What are the shapes and types of artifacts at the Bukit Lebani site, Luwu Regency? (II) What is the chronological framework of the Bukit Lebani site as one of the hills once inhabited in the past? (III) What is the ceremonial tradition at Bukit Lebani like?

METHODS

Data are collected through survey and excavation. The former confirms some

superficial points concerning aspects of settlement characteristics such as pottery, stone artifacts, and megalithic monuments. In turn, survey is carried out directly on the four places: Bukit Lebani, Bukit Cakke Awo, Bukit Malela, and Bukit Balubu (Figure 2). The survey findings are then identified and classified according to their shape and type.

Of the four sites surveyed, Bukit Lebani is chosen to be excavated on the basis that it has various findings such as hollow (perforated) stones, pottery fragments, stone mortars, and burials on rock cliffs, all available from top to the hillside. Those items are not evenly discovered at the other three sites.

Excavation is done with a trench system measuring 100 x 100 cm with deepening techniques using spits of 10 cm long per spit. It is carried out on the slopes, considering finding a fairly flat area is beyond reach. The peak (top) area filled with limestone outcrops, it is even more difficult to get some space to conduct a testpit.

Excavation is intended to see the period or date of the cultural layers and findings deposited in the soil. There are two excavation trenches employed, S11 B1 trench located on the east side of the hill

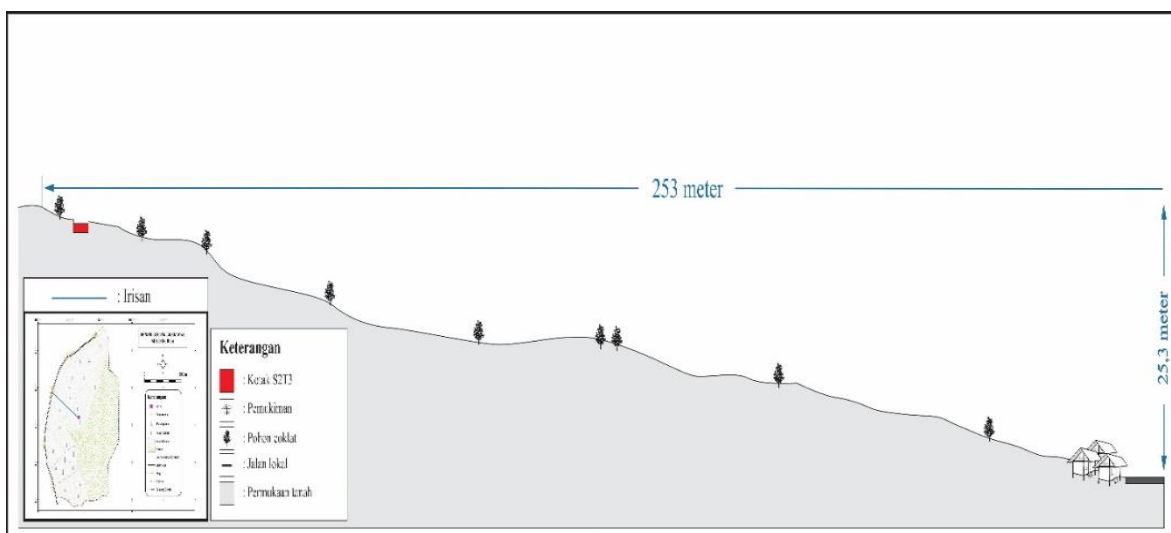


Figure 3. Sector 2 of Bukit Lebani, excavated location (red color) (On the western side of the hillside) (Source: Balai Arkeologi Sulawesi Selatan, 2019)

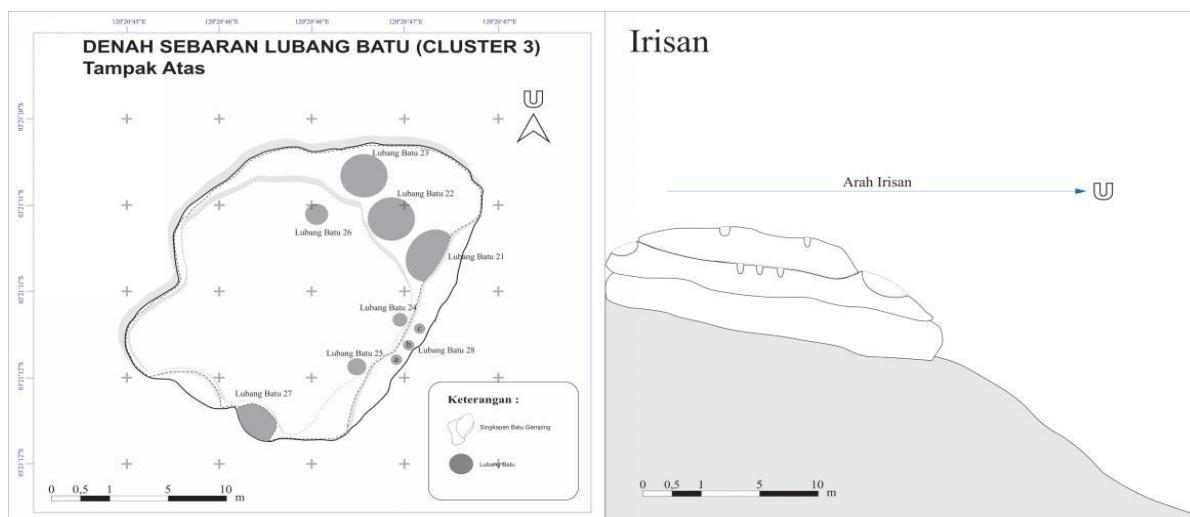


Figure 4. A cluster of hollow stones at the peak Bukit Lebani (Source: Balai Arkeologi Sulawesi Selatan, 2019).

(Sector 1) and S2T3 trench located on the west side (Sector 2) (Figure 3). Sector 1 does not see any organic material (such as charcoal, shells or bones) in the excavation trench, meaning no dating analysis is performed. Pottery fragments found in their spit and charcoal are common in Sector 2. The charcoal from spit 7 (80 cm deep) is selected to be sent to Beta Analytic, Florida, USA for dating analysis. Ethnographic approach, doing interview with prominent members of the community living nearby Bukit Lebani, is taken to explain the site function. In terms of form, there are three interrelated aspects, namely: (1) humans or the speakers; (2) the living environment; and (3) culture as a result of adaptation and interaction with the environment and external influences (Simanjuntak, 2015, p. 26). Furthermore, a study is also conducted to examine factors of humans capable of adapting to the natural and cultural environment. The study indicates that the forms of artifacts and the topography of the site as well as natural resources play significant roles in supporting the human settlement system of the past.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. The Shape and Type of Artifacts at Bukit Lebani

A total of four sites surveyed in this stage indicate concentrated findings on the hill, dominated by pottery fragments spreading over from the hilltop to flatland on the slopes. Among the four sites, Bukit Lebani is chosen out of the four to be the excavation point for its various findings. Apart from pottery fragments, Bukit Lebani also have some rock outcrops found at it, having several holes, stone mortars, ritual medium (*batu lampo* and *batu tedong*), and burrows (burial spots on rock cliffs).

Findings at Bukit Lebani consist of hollow stones, pottery fragments, and stone mortars; the first items are distributed evenly on the hilltop. The hollow stones are identified on boulders randomly located and are absent of regular pattern, indicating that past settlers only taking advantage of naturally available outcrops. The hollow stone observed is circular and rectangular in size with diameters varying from 18 cm to 130 cm with a depth of between 6 cm and 53 cm. The stone mortar wall has a rough texture and the size of the hole is almost the same, both at the top of the hole and at the bottom.

Looking at the configuration of Bukit Lebani Site, it is clear that hollow stone is located randomly and does not have a certain pattern. Similarly, the rough texture of the

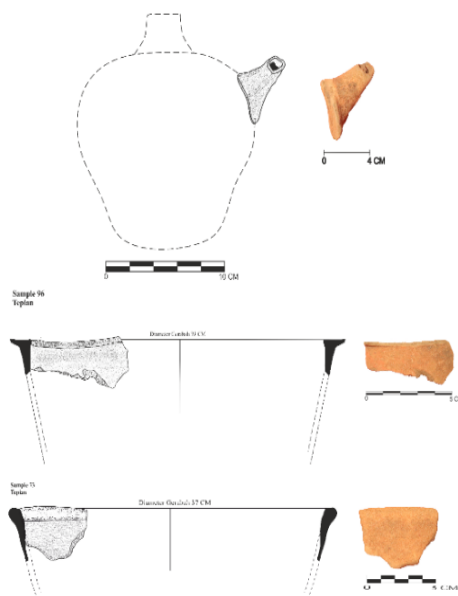


Figure 5. Some shapes of pottery in Bukit Lebani (results of reconstruction) (Source: Balai Arkeologi Sulawesi Selatan, 2019).

wall, with the size of the edge and bottom of the hole almost the same, does not signal it to be a stone mortar as opposed to one having a smooth wall texture and the hole size getting smaller downward. It is gathered from wall and shape analysis that stone findings are not used repeatedly to process something in contrast to that in the stone slope.

The Pottery fragments are next in line on the finding list, discovered on two points at the hilltop and concentrated around hollow stone on the hillside, following the waterway (Figure 5). The ones found around hollow stone indicate that there had been quite intense human activities at that location, having a lot to do with the presence of the stone. Natural transformation is a sensible reasoning for pottery fragments found on the hillside following waterway, being at the top of the hill in the beginning prior to being carried away by the water down to foothill to form a flood plain.

Analyzing laying patterns, wall texture, hole size, number of holes, and their association with pottery as an indicator of human activity, it is estimated that the presence of these hollow stones serves as a reservoir of water as no spring is found nearby, nor is it found on hillside which happens to be flood plain. What is more, the writer also finds a lot of watershed area being useful only in rainy season.

Reconstruction process on the forms of pottery indicates that it is for daily needs. Pottery such as jugs and big bowls are used in the kitchen; whereas jars are used to store water. Putting pottery into its own context, the writer finds out that it is closely related

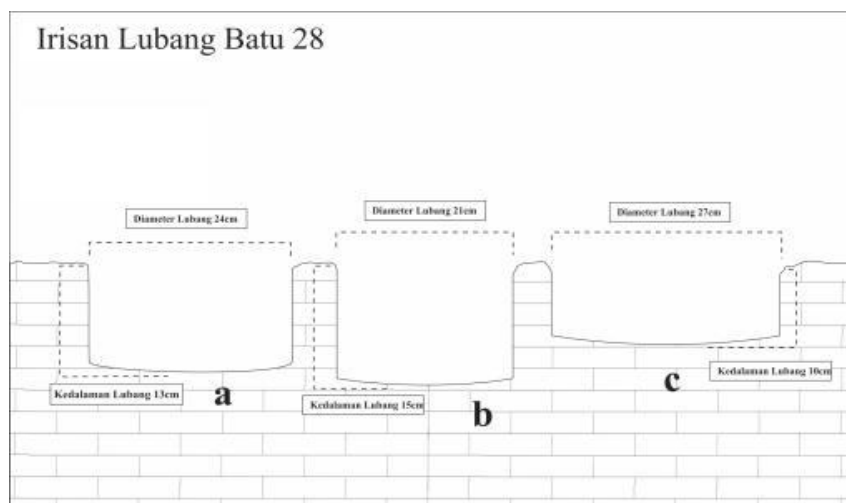


Figure 6. A slice of hollow stones, used to store water at the top Bukit Lebani. (Source: Balai Arkeologi Sulawesi Selatan, 2019).



Figure 7. Stone mortar at the top of Bukit Lebani as a means of pounding seeds In human settlement system (Source: Balai Arkeologi Sulawesi Selatan, 2019).

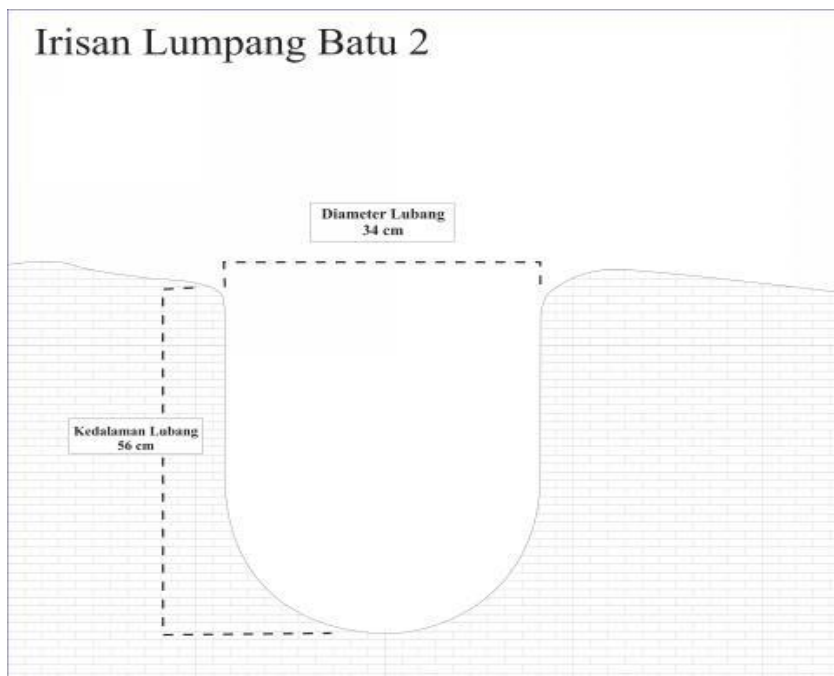


Figure 8. A slice of the form of stone mortar at the top of Bukit Lebani (Source: Balai Arkeologi Sulawesi Selatan, 2019).

to the hollows cut into the stones to contain water on the hilltop (Figure 6).

Another finding is stone mortar, discovered on the north side of the hilltop (Figure 7). Unlike other items found in great numbers, there are only two pieces of this type. The stones are circular with a diameter

of 24 cm and 34 respectively, and 24 cm and 56 cm deep visibly clear at the wall with warped bottom (Figure 8). What the stones existence point to is that they once serve the purpose of pounding materials continuously, strongly validating the claim that Bukit Lebani is used to be a settlement. Past life is



Figure 9. Tomb stone at Bukit Lebani, similar to that in Toraja (Source: Balai Arkeologi Sulawesi Selatan, 2019).

even more undeniable in this area because of such items as hollow stones, earthenware fragments and stone mortars being collectively found on the same complex.

Another discovery is the stone tomb cut into the wall of limestone, consisting of three holes of rectangular shape; one hole is capable of containing more than one corpse (Figure 9). The burial model using perforated stone walls is also used in Toraja and Mamasa areas, where settlements and burial sites are only a few minutes from each other. It is now evidently clear that Bukit Lebani is a community settlement (Ahimsa-Putra, 1997, p. 20).

2. Settlement Period

The function of the Bukit Lebani Site as a settlement is echoed by oral tradition shared by the locals. In an interview conducted on April 18, 2019, one of the prominent members, Naming aged 66 admits that Bukit Lebani once became home to Torajan people. The occupancy period at Bukit Lebani takes place at around 160 ± 30 BP (according to the results of carbon dating from Beta Analytic, Florida, USA).

Besides the artificial archaeological remains in the form of hollow stones, stone mortars and pottery fragments, Bukit Lebani

also has three large non-artificial stones held sacred by the local community, with larger stone measuring 461 cm long and 775 cm wide. The local community refers to it as *Batu Lampo*. The second stone is much smaller (125 cm long, 106 cm wide and 117 cm high) called *Batu Tedong* (Buffalo Stone). *Batu Tedong* located in the north is believed to represent male buffalo while the one in the south, female. The two is believed to be the buffalos Pong Diwero left behind when he is bested by Datu Kamanre's troops. Not long after the departure of their owners, the buffalos then transform into stones and remain at Bukit Lebani (Figure 10).

In the next period, the former residential area becomes a ceremonial point for Luwu people. They regularly hold a thanks giving event after the harvest season as a token of gratitude. Prior to having meals together, they put some offerings (rice and chicken) in front of *Batu Lampo*. It is believed to be the incarnation of a bundle of rice.

Up to that point in time, this community has had many things significant happening in discussion among members, food gathering and human resources nurturing. On the one hand, they interact with their own group members, and on the



Figure 10. *Batu Lampo*, believed to be the incarnation of a bundle of rice, is a ritual medium at the top of Bukit Lebani (Source: Balai Arkeologi Sulawesi Selatan, 2019).

other hand, on a much bigger scale, they participate in their community ceremony. Such events have contributed to the members knowing what-and-how of their ceremony and made it prestigious. (Mcfadyen, 2006, p. 78).

Calendar tracking indicates that Bukit Lebani was once inhabited by a group of humans in the 18th century (1797), most likely a group led by Pong Diwero being the initial settlers, even earlier than that time. In the next period, in the beginning of the 19th century, settlements are more concentrated on hill slopes where the land surface is quite flat which can help ease human mobilization by means of adequate accessibility in the form of village roads that connect one village to another.

Pong Diwero's are the first settlers of Bukit Lebani, having have to depart that area due the loss they suffer in a war against Datu

Kamanre. After that loss, Pong Diwero and his people move to the west to a place named *Gunung Sampa* of *Desa Sampa* (also known as *Bala Batu*) where he is believed to have disappeared (*mallajang*). All aspects considered, Bukit Lebani is only occupied once, by the departed Pong Diwero.

Settling on high lands is influenced by two main factors. The first one is ideological aspect, where living at hilltop is believed to be getting closer to a god. The concept also plays great deal in burial site selection. The second factor is environment; making living on the foothill of Lebani is impossible due to its being vulnerable in rainy season.

Analysis on artifacts and oral tradition checking being through, the writer concludes that Bukit Lebani serves two function; the first one is a communal settlement by Pong Diwero and his people.



Figure 11. *Batu Tedong* of buffalo shape, is a ritual medium at Bukit Lebani (Source: Balai Arkeologi Sulawesi Selatan, 2019).

Second, it is used as a cult site, where the worshipers only come to give offerings and leave when their ceremony is done. It is evidently clear that Bukit Lebani is employed for two purposes by two different communities at two different times.

The shift of function from settlement to worshipping point is made possible by different viewpoints of two different communities; different times offer different perspective, to put it simply. Profane perspective leads men to believe that this world is nothing but a place to settle.

Over time, Bukit Lebani reaches its next purpose, a ceremonial point (Figure 11). Both natural setting and intervened one are deemed as a medium to reach out to the creator. In that regard, *Batu Tedong* is seen as an incarnated one, made legitimate by being spoken from generation to generation. An item will come to be taken as sacred, believed to possess magical power, when it is made into a legend; thus enabling people to come into touch with supernatural being.

3. The Ceremony at Bukit Lebani

During the period of community occupancy, the man of the past try to adjust to the environment. First, they make use of stone blocks to make hollow ones for storing water since it takes 2 km to get to a spring at

Sungai Salu Suso, a cross section of *Sungai Suli*. Water is really vital in sustaining their life, making it a crucial factor in settlement department, aside from soil fertility. The society tends to adapt and utilize environmental resources to meet their needs(Wardaninggar, 2018, p. 126).

To overcome distance and difficult access to Lebani from Sungai Salu Suso, the settlers hollow boulders of various sizes available at the top in great numbers to store water. Before people of Indonesia come to know Islam, burial is carried out by burning the dead bodies or storing them in big jars before being put into the ground or placing them in a coffin called *duni/erong* to be put on rock cliff. The last method is secondary since it only takes *duni* wood to keep the bones. Stone caves and rock cliff are where the dead bodies put in the areas not having sufficient woods. In the later stage of burying the dead, limited rock cliffs force people to build cemented building called *patene* instead, commonly practiced in Toraja these days.

CONCLUSION

A series of studies carried out indicate several settlement points in the past, namely Bukit Lebani, Bukit Cake Awo, Bukit Malela, and Bukit Balubu all spanning

from hilltop to hillside with a lot of pottery fragments discovered on the surface. All those sites are next to rivers or streams, indicating that people of the past center their life on water sources in meeting their needs.

Identification on types and finding distribution, consisting of hollow stones, pottery fragments, stone mortars, and burials on rock cliffs, leads the writer to take Bukit Lebani as the main object of research. Hollow stones are found scattered and almost evenly distributed in flat areas on the hilltop, the existence of which is vital in storing water for daily needs.

Bukit Lebani had been inhabited by a group of people since the end of the 18th century. Oral tradition has it that Bukit Lebani was once inhabited by a group of people led by a "tribal chief" named Pong Diwero, considered the first part of the settlement. In the following period, around 1797, settlements are concentrated in the hillside with flat and vast topography, helping ease the interactions with other community members. During this time, the peak of Bukit Lebani remains a center for rituals/ceremonies. Ethnographic data reveals that the people who live nearby perform a ritual after harvest season is through, as a form of gratitude that rice has

been successfully harvested. *Batu Lompo* as the medium of the that rituals.

All findings across Bukit Lebani indicate a settlement that brings together great landscape, cultural imagination and ideology, architecture, materials and area management to move forward as a community. At Bukit Lebani, and quite possibly throughout Southeast Asia, stone is considered a life force that helps express the imaginative nature of ideology. This is the essence of animist cosmology that sees the power or life of the universe flowing through all reality and all substances.

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