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Research Article

The Intensification Of Islamic Proselytization Through Maritime Trade In Aceh Darussalam Sultanate, 1607-1675 CE

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Abstract: The majority of maritime trade activities emphasize profit as the primary goal; however, in the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam, maritime trade was not solely profit-oriented but also utilized as a means of Islamic propagation. This study examines the role of maritime trade in the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam (1607–1675 CE) in intensifying Islamic proselytization in Southeast Asia. The research highlights how maritime trade, typically viewed through an economic lens, also served as a strategic instrument for religious dissemination. The Sultanate utilized revenues from trade, including customs duties and zakat, to fund the construction of mosques, establish Islamic educational institutions, and disseminate religious literature. Moreover, Aceh served as a transit hub for pilgrims on their way to Mecca, facilitating scholarly exchanges and strengthening Islamic networks across the archipelago. Employing a historical methodology with an economic sociology approach, this study integrates the economic and religious dimensions of Aceh's maritime activities. The findings underscore the Sultanate's dual function as a cosmopolitan trade center and a bastion of Islamic education, offering a fresh perspective on the interconnectedness of commerce and religion in Nusantara historiography.

Keywords: maritime trade; Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam; Islamic proselytization

Abstrak: Mayoritas kegiatan perdagangan maritim menekankan pada profit sebagai tujuan yang ingin dicapai, namun di Kesultanan Aceh Darussalam perdagangan maritim tidak hanya mementingkan profit namun juga dimanfaatkan untuk dakwah Islam. Penelitian ini mengkaji peran perdagangan maritim di Kesultanan Aceh Darussalam (1607-1675 M) dalam mengintensifkan dakwah Islam di Asia Tenggara. Penelitian ini menyoroti bagaimana perdagangan maritim, yang biasanya dilihat dari sudut pandang ekonomi, juga berfungsi sebagai instrumen strategis untuk penyebaran Islam. Kesultanan Aceh memanfaatkan pendapatan dari perdagangan, seperti bea cukai hingga zakat, untuk mendanai pembangunan masjid, mendirikan lembaga pendidikan Islam, dan menyebarkan literatur keagamaan. Selain itu, Aceh berfungsi sebagai pusat transit bagi para jamaah haji yang akan menuju Mekkah, memfasilitasi pertukaran keilmuan dan memperkuat jaringan Islam di seluruh nusantara. Dengan menggunakan metodologi sejarah dengan pendekatan sosiologi ekonomi, penelitian ini mengintegrasikan dimensi ekonomi dan agama dalam kegiatan maritim Aceh. Hasil penelitian ini menggarisbawahi fungsi ganda Kesultanan Aceh sebagai pusat perdagangan kosmopolitan dan pusat pendidikan Islam, yang menawarkan perspektif baru mengenai keterkaitan antara perdagangan dan agama dalam historiografi Nusantara.

Kata Kunci: perdagangan maritime; Kesultanan Aceh Darussalam; dakwah Islam

INTRODUCTION

Islamic traders from various countries previously traded in Malacca, but after the fall of Malacca to the Portuguese in 1511 the Islamic traders moved to a port city located at the tip of Sumatra Island, Banda Aceh Darussalam. Islamic cities with a maritime character are usually located on the coast and river estuaries where the life of the people is more focused on trade. Aceh is located in a bay that allows commercial ships to enter and exit, which resulted in Banda Aceh and the surrounding area being involved in East- West trade.¹ Aceh's geographical location is very strategic, making it the western gateway to the archipelago which has an important role in international traffic. Aceh became crowded and began to develop as a place of trade and also a place for the spread of Islam.

Maritime trade is the process of exchanging goods and services by sailing from one region to another, usually understood as an activity carried out by maritime traders who are only economically based. However, the Islamic kingdoms in Southeast Asia show that Islamization and trade went together. Aceh also emerged and developed as a trade-based coastal Islamic kingdom. This was supported by its maritime trade and control over commodity-producing regions, which had implications for Aceh's economic development. Trade relations with regions inside and outside the archipelago continued to increase, so that the activities of local traders with international traders at that time greatly benefited Bandar Aceh Darussalam as a cosmopolitan city.²

During the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda, the need for spices and mining products such as tin was very high and became a commodity that was quite marketable in the European market. The West Sumatra region as a producer of pepper and gold is also a potential production center. Pepper and gold were the main quarry of traders from Gujarat,

¹ Sudirman, Sri Waryanti, and Seno, *Sejarah Pelabuhan Ulee Lheue* (Banda Aceh: Balai Pelestarian Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional Banda Aceh, 2007).

² Toto Haryanto, "Kontruksi Politik Atas Kepemimpinan Wanita: Studi Peran Qadhi Malik Adli Pada Masa Pemerintahan Ratu Abad Ke 17," *Medina-Te: Jurnal Studi Islam* 15, no. 2 (January 1, 1970): 134–53, doi:10.19109/medinate.v15i2.4304.

China, the Netherlands, England and other Europeans. This was a major factor in the soaring demand and prices of these commodities. From the increased maritime trade during the time of Sultan Iskandar Muda, it is not surprising that the economy of the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam was progressing.³

After the death of Sultan Iskandar Muda, the government of Aceh was held by his son-in-law, Sultan Iskandar Tsani. During the reign of Sultan Iskandar Tsani, in 1639 the Dutch were granted permission to enter Perak to buy tin directly. With the opportunity to enter Perak, the Dutch continued to try to seize all silver production to fall into their hands.⁴ Then in 1641 Sultanah Tajul Alam Safiatuddin ascended the throne. She was the daughter of Sultan Iskandar Muda and the wife of Sultan Iskandar Tsani. Sultanah Tajul Alam's struggle was very hard in maintaining the sovereignty of the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam, one of which had to deal with the Dutch. The fall of Malacca into the hands of the Dutch, making the Dutch navy stronger to control the waters of the Malacca Strait. After the fall of the Malacca Strait to the Dutch, on the west coast of Sumatra, Aceh's power which previously extended to West Sumatra and even Bengkulu, one by one began to be controlled by the Dutch, as well as export commodities such as West Sumatra pepper.⁵ As Aceh's export commodities declined, so did its maritime trade.

The majority of maritime trade activities emphasize profit as the goal to be achieved, but in the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam maritime trade is not only concerned with profit but also used for Islamic propagation. The maritime trade activities of the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam generated wealth that could financially support activities related to Islamic propagation. Customs duties collected from commodities traded in export and import activities, these funds are then organized to be empowered for the intensification of Islamic preaching and advancing the public interest.

This research is limited to the years of study from 1607 to 1675 AD, marking the time when the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam played an important role in 17th century maritime trade. In 1607, the Aceh Sultanate's maritime trade began to prosper along with the first year of Sultan Iskandar Muda's reign, which is referred to as the peak of glory. Meanwhile, in 1675 many export commodities of maritime trade slipped out of Aceh's hands along with the end of the leadership of Sultanah Tajul Alam Safiatuddin Syah, finally Aceh's maritime trade also experienced a decline.

This study aims to analyze how maritime trade in the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam contributed to the intensification of Islamic preaching. The trend of previous studies only highlights the economic aspects of Aceh's maritime trade without linking it to the role of Islamic proselytization. This article seeks to enrich existing studies by focusing on the relationship between the maritime trade of the Sultanate of Aceh and the intensification of Islamic proselytization. To place this article in the context of scholarly research, a review of previous works is necessary to understand the contribution and position of this article in academic studies. The researcher conducted an analysis based on the writing trends of several previous works.

³ Adi Sudirman, *Sejarah Lengkap Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Diva Press, 2014).

⁴ Mohammad Said, *Aceh Sepanjang Abad* (Tt: Tnp, 1961).

⁵ A. Hasymy, *59 Tahun Aceh Merdeka Di Bawah Pemerintahan Ratu* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1977).

The first trend is related to political-economic history. The first article is entitled "The Contribution of the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam to the Progress of Maritime and Trade in the Archipelago in the XVI-XVII Century" by Johan Septian Putra and Imam Muhsin.⁶ Using the historical method, this article examines the history and dynamics of the maritime and trade of the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam, the trade economy of the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam continued to progress through increased trade from strategic areas of maritime trade. The second article, by Zumrotul Muhzinat, entitled "The Economy of the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam in the Era of Sultan Iskandar Muda".⁷ This article describes the policies related to the politics and economy of the kingdom carried out by Sultan Iskandar Muda. Using qualitative methods and a historical approach, this article focuses on the economic policies taken by Sultan Iskandar Muda and only briefly discusses the development of Islam. Third, the work of Arun Kumar Dasgupta, entitled "Acheh in Indonesian Trade and Politics: 1600-1641", a dissertation for Cornell University written in 1962.⁸ This work begins with a discussion of the characteristics of the Acehnese people, the arrival of the Portuguese, and the rise of Aceh in the 16th century. It then specifically examines Aceh's role in Asian trade, as well as English and Dutch trade in Aceh during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda. The work concludes with a discussion of Aceh under the rule of Sultan Iskandar Tsani, during which the Dutch began to emerge as the strongest military power in the Indonesian archipelago and started pressuring Aceh's territories to abandon their allegiance to Aceh.

The second trend is related to socio-economic history. The first article, by Intan Devi Orlita Sari, is entitled "Islamic Economy in the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam".⁹ This research examines the Islamic economy in the Kingdom of Aceh through fiscal and monetary policies using qualitative methods and historical approaches. During the Kingdom of Aceh, the financial system developed through Islamic fiscal policy, which included *zakat*, *kharaj*, *khums*, and *usyur*. The financial management was then handed over to Baitul mal, which was tasked with channeling funds to various sectors, such as education, Islamic propagation, culture, infrastructure development, science, and social welfare. The second article is entitled "The Influence of Maritime Trade on the Spread of Islam in Indonesia in the 15th to 17th Centuries" by Ika Purnama Sari et al.¹⁰ Combining historical analysis and case studies, this article examines the interaction of trade and the spread of religion, and its relevance in the context of history and social development in Indonesia. Trade routes enabled Muslim traders to bring Islam to strategic ports, merchant communities played a key role as agents of Islam, and maritime trade contributed significantly to economic growth, social mobility and urbanization, all of which supported the acceptance and spread of Islam in the archipelago.

⁶ Johan Septian Putra and Imam Muhsin, "Kontribusi Kesultanan Aceh Darussalam Terhadap Kemajuan Kemaritiman Dan Perdagangan Di Nusantara Abad XVI-XVII M," *Thaqafiyat: Jurnal Bahasa, Peradaban Dan Informasi Islam* 21, no. 1 (May 10, 2023): 48, doi:10.14421/thaq.2022.21104.

⁷ Zumrotul Muhzinat, "Perekonomian Kerajaan Aceh Darussalam Era Sultan Iskandar Muda," *Tsaqofah & Tarikh: Jurnal Sejarah Dan Kebudayaan* 5, no. 2 (2020), <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/386288298.pdf>.

⁸ Arun Kumar Dasgupta, "Acheh in Indonesian Trade and Politics: 1600-1641" (Dissertation, Cornell University, 1962).

⁹ Intan Devi Orlita Sari, "Perekonomian Islam Pada Masa Kerajaan Aceh Darussalam," *Jurnal Humanitas: Katalisator Perubahan Dan Inovator Pendidikan* 8, no. 2 (July 23, 2022): 146–54, doi:10.29408/jhm.v8i2.5248.

¹⁰ Ika Purnama Sari et al., "Pengaruh Perdagangan Maritim Terhadap Penyebaran Islam Di Indonesia Pada Abad Ke-15 M Hingga Ke-17 M," *Polyscopia* 1, no. 3 (June 27, 2024): 74–79, doi:10.57251/polyscopia.v1i3.1342.

The third article by Subkhana Adzim Baqi et al, entitled "Leadership Patterns of the Sultanah of Aceh in the Development of Science 1641-1699".¹¹ This article uses the historical method, the discussion begins by providing an overview of the background of the Kingdom of Aceh before being led by the Sultanah followed by an explanation of the beginning of the emergence of women's leadership in the Sultanate of Aceh. During the leadership of the four sultanahs science developed rapidly, dayahs throughout the kingdom experienced progress. However, the sultanahs could not restore Aceh's military, political and economic glory.

Based on the above works, this research is further research that complements the writings on maritime trade activities and the development of Islam mentioned in these works by trying to find a different perspective from the previous works. The works above have not focused on explaining the intensification of Islamic proselytization through the maritime trade activities of the Sultanate of Aceh in 1607-1675 AD. This statement is a statement of the difference between this research and the works above, namely the time, subject, object and approach used. This research fills the gap in Nusantara historiography by highlighting the relationship between maritime trade and the intensification of Islamic proselytization in the Sultanate of Aceh, which has not been widely discussed in depth. Most previous studies only focus on the economic aspects of maritime trade or the development of Islam separately, without exploring how maritime trade played a direct role as a means of intensifying Islamic proselytization. This research offers a new perspective by integrating the two dimensions in one analytical framework.

The method used in this research is the historical method which is carried out through four stages.¹² Heuristics is the first step in conducting historical research, which is an activity of searching for sources to obtain data, or historical material, or historical evidence.¹³ In this research, library research was conducted. Sources were obtained from a number of libraries: the library of UIN Sunan Kalijaga, the National Library, the Library of the Aceh Cultural Value Preservation Center (BPNB Aceh) and the Aceh Museum Library. In addition to libraries, sources were also obtained from the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia and the Aceh Documentation and Information Center (PDIA) in Banda Aceh. After the historical sources are collected, the next stage is criticism to obtain the validity of the source and whether the source is in accordance with the research problem.¹⁴ There are two kinds of criticism in history, namely external criticism in the form of verification of the authenticity and authenticity of sources and internal criticism, namely verification of the credibility of source content. Sources that have passed internal and external criticism, in the form of historical facts, are then subjected to a decomposition or analysis and interpretation stage. The author collects related facts, analyzes the relationship between one fact and another. Furthermore, interpretation is carried out which is supported by the approach used. This research was conducted with the help of an economic sociology approach. The economic sociology approach is used to analyze social factors related to economic activity. Damsar and

¹¹ Subkhana Adzim Baqi, Muhammad Aziz, and Sri Windari, "Pola Kepemimpinan Sultanah Aceh Dalam Pengembangan Ilmu Pengetahuan 1641-1699 M," *Journal of Islamic History* 2, no. 1 (February 24, 2022): 48-62, doi:10.53088/jih.v2i1.211.

¹² Dudung Abdurahman, *Metodologi Penelitian Sejarah Islam* (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2019).

¹³ Saefur Rochmat, *Ilmu Sejarah Dalam Perspektif Ilmu Sosial* (Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu, 2009).

¹⁴ Abdurahman, *Metodologi Penelitian Sejarah Islam*.

Indrayani suggest that economic sociology can be used to examine and study the relationship between communities in which there is social interaction with the economy, where in the relationship can be seen how society affects the economy and how the economy affects society.¹⁵ The last stage in this historical research method, the author conveys the synthesis obtained in the form of historical writing or historiography.¹⁶ As the last step of the research conducted, the author tries to present the results of the research as best as possible by looking at the context in which the event occurred, although it cannot be done as a whole because of differences in time and place.

RESULT

Maritime Trade Instruments of the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam

Maritime trade activities generate wealth that can financially support activities related to Islamic proselytization. Not only that, various instruments of Aceh's maritime trade can also be utilized for Islamic propagation. At least it is necessary to first describe how the Aceh Sultanate's maritime trade instruments were at that time.

1. Port

Ports at that time were not like ports today, but only utilized river estuaries such as the Kreung Aceh estuary.¹⁷ The position of the city of Banda Aceh in international trade traffic is more entrepot. This situation was related to the condition and potential of the capital city which did not produce much export material. The port of Aceh has a function as a collection center based on the principle of centralization of production sources and distribution of commodities in international trade. Entrepot is the main port located at strategic places on long-distance trade routes. This port has characteristics including (1) having a good natural harbor, (2) providing goods for ships that stop by, (3) there are warehouses and offices, (4) is a cosmopolitan place characterized by the diversity of nations that are domiciled for a certain period or long stay.¹⁸

Support ports handle specialized products from a particular region and are local trade centers serving entrepots. Support ports were characterized as places of origin of natural products.¹⁹ The trade that took place in these towns was supervised by the sultan who was represented by the syahbandar and panglima. Aceh only attempted to control the trade of these areas, while political control was retained by the local traditional rulers.

The sultan's representatives assigned to each region were stationed for three years and then transferred to another region. Once a year they were required to come to the capital to report on all political, social and economic developments in their areas. At the meeting, deputies who were deemed successful were rewarded and those who failed were

¹⁵ Damsar and Indrayani, *Pengantar Sosiologi Ekonomi* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2011).

¹⁶ Kuntowijoyo, *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 2018).

¹⁷ Uka Tjandrasasmita, *Pertumbuhan Dan Perkembangan Kota-Kota Muslim Di Indonesia Dari Abad XIII Sampai XVIII Masehi* (Kudus: Menara Kudus, 2000).

¹⁸ Singgih Trisulistiyono and dkk, *Simpul-Simpul Sejarah Maritim Dari Pelabuhan Ke Pelabuhan Merajut Indonesia* (Jakarta: Kementerian Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata, 2003).

¹⁹ Ibid.

sanctioned. One such sanction was the cutting off of the feet and hands of a viceroy in Tiku who failed to perform his duties properly.²⁰

There were institutions and positions to collect these revenues and support maritime trade in Aceh. Balai Furdhah was the Ministry of Trade of the Sultanate of Aceh, tasked with ensuring the collection of excise taxes on ships entering and leaving the port of Aceh. There were a number of employees in charge of Balai Furdhah, namely orangkaya and penghulu kawal, civil and military officials, clerks and syahbandar.²¹ There was also a court that handled disputes between merchants, both foreign and local. The sultan's belongings were taken care of by the eunuchs here.

2. Currency

The Spanish currency, the silver real became an effective international currency in Southeast Asia. By the 17th century no local currency could compete with the Spanish real as international money. This Spanish currency became the medium of exchange and unit of account for international trade transactions widely, especially in pepper transactions.²² The Sultan of Aceh established the Spanish ringgit as a medium of exchange equal in value to the Acehnese currency. One Spanish ringgit was equal to four deureuham.²³ Acehnese people call the Spanish ringgit as ringgiet meriam because there is a picture of two pillars that resemble cannons on the currency, the Spanish ringgit is also known as real, riyal or rial.²⁴

In addition, there were several more currencies circulating in the Sultanate of Aceh at that time, namely deureuham which was gold currency, keuh was a currency made of tin, kupang was Aceh's silver currency, pardaw was Portuguese silver currency and tahlil/tayell. 1 tayell equaled 4 pardaw, 1 pardaw equaled 4 deureuham, 1 deureuham equaled 4 kupang, and 1 kupang equaled 400 keuh.²⁵

3. Ship

Acehnese ships sailed to all parts of Aceh's territory to transport commodities to be traded at Aceh's ports. They also sailed overseas to India, Africa, Egypt, Siam and the Philippines.²⁶ Acehnese ships transported merchandise to the Red Sea to ports in the Mediterranean Sea and then on to various countries in Arabia, Africa and so on. These ships also sailed eastward to China, and sailed as far as Turkey with merchandise.²⁷

²⁰ Gusti Asnan, "Jaringan Pelayaran Dan Perdagangan Rempah Di Pulau Sumatera," in *Rempah Nusantara Merajut Dunia*, ed. Muslimin A.R. Effendy and Abd. Rahman Hamid (Samarinda: BPCBKT, 2020).

²¹ Sudirman, *Banda Aceh Dalam Siklus Perdagangan Internasional (1500-1873)* (Banda Aceh: Balai Pelestarian Sejarah dan Nilai Tradisional Banda Aceh, 2009).

²² Anthony Reid, *Asia Tenggara Dalam Kurun Niaga 1450-1680 Jilid I: Tanah Di Bawah Angin* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2011).

²³ M. Dien Madjid, *Catatan Pinggir Sejarah Aceh Perdagangan, Diplomasi Dan Perjuangan Rakyat* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2014).

²⁴ Sudirman, *Banda Aceh Dalam Siklus Perdagangan Internasional (1500-1873)*.

²⁵ H.M. Zainuddin, *Tarich Atjeh Dan Nusantara* (Medan: Pustaka Iskandar Muda, 1961).

²⁶ Zakaria Ahmad, *Sekitar Keradjaan Atjeh Dalam Tahun 1520-1675* (Medan: Monora, 1972).

²⁷ Sudirman, *Banda Aceh Dalam Siklus Perdagangan Internasional (1500-1873)*.

Less bulky trade commodities are transported along inland waterways, especially along rivers using *jalur* and *jalur kusangka*. Larger quantities of forest products from upriver are often transported on rafts made of bamboo and connected with rattan. The size of the raft depends entirely on the volume of goods to be transported. For long trips, a room made of pandanus mats is used as a sleeping place for those on the raft, usually two to three people. Usually, the river current is strong enough to carry the raft downstream at a reasonable speed. One or two oars are used to steer the raft; a pole is used to turn the raft around sharp corners. The transportation of goods from along the coast and the islands of Aceh to other distant areas used different types of boats or larger merchant vessels: the *tungkang* could carry 15-25 *kojans*, the *biduk* was an outrigger boat with two wings having a storage space of 2-5 *kojans*, the *sampan besar* with a cargo space of 8-10 *kojans*, and the *sampan* had a storage space of at most 4 *kojans*.²⁸

The Influence of Maritime Trade of the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam on the Intensification of Islamic Proselytization

1. Development of Islamic Education Institutions

The sultans and sultanahs of Aceh placed great importance on education and openly spread Islam to all corners of Aceh and even outside Aceh. The intensification of Islamic propagation in the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam can be seen in the efforts to improve this field of education, which aims to foster humans who are able and willing to practice the teachings of Islam. The ability to read Qur'anic verses and understand their meaning is considered important by most Muslims.²⁹

In addition to functioning as a place of worship, the mosque also has a function as an educational institution that provides knowledge about Islam starting from the most basic to the community. Bandar Aceh Darussalam is not only a city with political and economic activities, but also as a city center for scientific activities and development or called "University City". There are three places that are the center of scientific activities, namely:

- a) Baiturrahim Mosque, founded by Sultan Iskandar Muda in 1607 within the Darud Dunia palace complex. This mosque is the center of scientific activities, especially regarding political science and constitutional law. Scholars of political science and constitutional law were often seen having discussions with fellow scholars and with their students in several parts of the Baiturrahim Mosque. This hotbed of political science and constitutional law is supported by three buildings that function as three lifeboats that complement the explosions of reform ideas because the mosque is often overcrowded. The buildings are Balai Setia Hukama, Balai Setia Ulama and Balai Jamaah Himpunan Ulama.³⁰ Balai Setia Hukama, is a scientific institution where

²⁸ Julius Jacobs, *Het Familie-En Kampongleven Op Groot-Atjeh Deel II* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1894).

²⁹ Sujadi, "The Formation of PPME'S Religious Identity," *Al-Jami'ah* 51, no. 1 (2014): 81-128, doi:10.14421/ajis.2013.511.81-128.

³⁰ Madjid, *Catatan Pinggir Sejarah Aceh Perdagangan, Diplomasi Dan Perjuangan Rakyat*.

scholars (hukama) with various fields of expertise discuss and develop science. Balai Setia Ulama is an education or teaching ministry that deals with education issues. Balai Jami'ah Himpunan Ulama, a type of study club or place where scholars gather and discuss issues of education/teaching and the development of science.³¹

- b) The Baitul Musyahadah Mosque, founded during the time of Sultan Iskandar Tsani in 1637 within the Kuta Alam palace complex is also the center of scientific and cultural activities in the city of Banda Aceh Darussalam.
- c) The Jami Baiturrahman Mosque was established in 1292 and has been continuously modernized by the rulers of Aceh. Besides serving as a center for worship, the mosque also functioned as an institution of higher learning.³² Scholars from outside the region were frequently invited to deliver lectures and teach various fields of knowledge. They were also brought in to assist Acehnese scholars in improving the quality of Islamic education in the Sultanate of Aceh. The role of the Baiturrahman Mosque as an institution of higher Islamic education extended beyond teaching Islamic law (fiqh) to include various other fields of knowledge, similar to those taught at Islamic universities in Cairo, Baghdad, Cordoba, Qairawan, and Istanbul. For this reason, the mosque could also be referred to as Al-Jamiah or University. Jamiah Baiturrahman had 16 "Daar" (faculties).³³

2. Dispatch of Scholars and Religious Literature

The ulama in the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam had credibility and qualified abilities. The works they produced were used to better understand and be able to practice Islam according to sharia with the aim of intensifying Islam in the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam. During the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda, Sultan Iskandar Tsani, and Sultanah Tajul Alam Safiatuddin, there were four famous scholars, namely Hamzah Fansuri, Syamsuddin as-Sumatrani, Nuruddin ar-Raniri and Abdurrauf al-Fansuri or as-Sinkili.

Hamzah Fansury was a follower of the Qadiriyyah Order. In addition to speaking Acehnese and Malay he also mastered and was proficient in Arabic, Persian, Minang, Javanese, and possibly Urdu.³⁴ He visited several centers of Islamic knowledge in the Middle East, namely Makkah, Madinah, Jerusalem and Baghdad. Later he spread his teachings to Pahang, Kedah and Java.³⁵ With his language skills he was able to put his thoughts into writing in the form of books, prose and poetry such as *Syair Dagang*, *Syair Perahu*, *Syair Si Burung Pingai* and others. A number of his works contain praise of the sultan and often at the request of the sultan himself. In addition, he was also adept at diplomacy to attract the hearts of many people so that he was able to form a network of people's spiritual life with his Sufism teachings.

³¹ M. Hasbi Amiruddin, *Aceh Serambi Mekkah* (Banda Aceh: Pemerintah Provinsi Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, 2008).

³² Ismail Sunny, *Bunga Rampai Tentang Atjeh* (Jakarta: Bhratara Karya Aksara, 1980).

³³ Ahmad, *Sekitar Keradjaan Atjeh Dalam Tahun 1520-1675*.

³⁴ Muliadi Kurdi, *Aceh Di Mata Sejarawan Rekonstruksi Sejarah Sosial Budaya* (Banda Aceh: LKAS, 2009).

³⁵ Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII* (Bandung: Mizan, 1994).

During the heyday of Malacca, Malay had become the lingua franca in the world of trade in Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, during the Sultanate of Aceh, Acehnese Islamic scholars and authors with Hamzah Fansury as the pioneer succeeded in making Malay a lingua franca in the presentation or writing of works on Islam which played a role in the spread of Islam in Southeast Asia. The scholars at that time, especially Hamzah Fansuri, were instrumental in enriching the treasury of the Indonesian language (Jawi) with words derived from Arabic, so that Malay (Jawi) was able to become a language of science that was able to express difficult and complicated thoughts.³⁶

Hamzah Fansury's most famous student was Syamsuddin as-Sumatrani. Syamsuddin with his Arabic, Persian, Malay and Javanese language skills, theological mastery and diplomatic skills placed him as Qadhi Malikul Adil during the time of sultan Iskandar Muda.³⁷ With this highest position in the field of religion, he had the opportunity to make decisions regarding religious matters in the Aceh government. Most of Syamsuddin's works are related to kalam and Sufism written in Malay and Arabic such as *Miratul Iman*, *Miratul Qulub*, *Kitabul Haraqah* and so on. In each of Syamsuddin's essays there is a warning of the dangers of the subjects discussed in his essays, especially for people who are unable to use them and should not be discussed in inappropriate places.³⁸

Nuruddin ar-Raniri was Qadhi Malikul Adil during the time of Sultan Iskandar Tsani. Nuruddin ar-Raniri mastered Acehnese, Malay, Arabic, Parsi, and Urdu. He wrote various books in the fields of belief, fiqh, hadith, Sufism, history and philosophy. So far there are 31 known works of Nuruddin including *Bustan as-Salat* or the garden of kings, *Sirat al-Mustaqim*, *Hujjat as-siddiq li daf 'il-zindiq*, and so on.³⁹ *Bustan as-Salat* is one of the most important written sources in providing an overview of early Malay-Indonesian history. In each of ar-Raniri's writings, especially in the fields of belief and Sufism, he always quoted the opinions of expert scholars along with the books he used to strengthen his writings. He indirectly introduced scholars and Sufis from Islamic scholarly centers and their Islamic interpretations to encourage the birth and development of renewal among Nusantara Muslims.

Abdurrauf as-Sinkili was Qadhi malikul Adil during the time of Sultanah Tajul Alam Safiatuddin until the time of the next three sultanahs. Abdurrauf was a follower of the Shattariah Order and was a *fiqh* expert. He compiled many books, including *Majmu'ul Masaa-il* which contains various problems that arose in Acehnese society at that time and how to solve them, then *Miratuth Thullaab*, *tafsir Tarjuman Al-Mustafiid* which is the first complete interpretation of the Al- Quran in Malay, and so on.⁴⁰ His works were written in Arabic and Malay, but mostly in Arabic because his long stay in Arabia caused his Malay

³⁶ Zakaria Ahmad, "Guru Dan Murid (Riwayat Hamzah Fansuri Dan Syamsuddin as-Sumatrani)," in *Dari Sini Ia Bersemi* (Banda Aceh: Panitia Penyelenggara MTQ Tingkat Nasional ke-12, 1981).

³⁷ Kurdi, *Aceh Di Mata Sejarahwan Rekonstruksi Sejarah Sosial Budaya*.

³⁸ Ahmad, "Guru Dan Murid (Riwayat Hamzah Fansuri Dan Syamsuddin as-Sumatrani)."

³⁹ Aboe Bakar, "Jejak Langkah Nuruddin Ar-Raniri Dan Karyanya," in *Dari Sini Ia Bersemi* (Banda Aceh: Panitia Penyelenggara MTQ Tingkat Nasional ke-12, 1981).

⁴⁰ HAMKA, "Aceh Serambi Mekkah," in *Sejarah Masuk Dan Berkembangnya Islam Di Indonesia*, ed. A Hasymy (Jakarta: Alma'rif, 1989).

language to be not very good. Therefore, in writing his works he was assisted by two scholars who were proficient in Malay Arabic writing named Faqih Seri Inda Salih and Katib Seri Raja.⁴¹

The works of these scholars cover various disciplines such as *fiqh* (Islamic law), *tasawwuf*, *tawhid*/philosophy, *falak*/star science, morals, Islamic history, Arabic, and *manthiq*. These books also became literature in Aceh's educational institutions. In addition, they also had extensive scientific networks with scholars at home and abroad, their international relations encouraged further cooperation between Muslims from various countries, so that the Sultanate of Aceh was able to mobilize the power of ulama to spread Islam not only in Aceh but throughout the archipelago.

Aceh's port as a center of maritime trade attracted a handful of religious scholars from various countries to the region, such as the arrival of groups of religious teachers from South Asia and the Islamic heartland to Aceh with books of commentary and tafsir.⁴² The fame of Acehnese religious writers spread more quickly beyond Aceh and Sumatra because many pilgrims spent some time before departing and after returning from the holy land in Aceh so that they became familiar or accustomed to the religious trends that took place there.⁴³

Aceh sent scholars and their works to other regions. During the time of Sultan Iskandar Muda, Nuruddin ar-Raniri on behalf of the sultan sent books of law and history by Acehnese scholars to various regions. These included Kedah, Malacca, Ulakan, Pariaman, Mukadana in Kalimantan, Banten, Gresik, Kudus, Makassar and Ternate. The kings and scholars who received the books had a huge impact on the development of Islam in their countries. Many of the countries that did not receive the books sent scholars as envoys to Aceh to get acquainted and deepen their knowledge of Sheikh Nuruddin. The envoys were welcomed and entertained by the sultan in his palace and when they returned to their countries they were presented with Qur'ans and books.⁴⁴ Sheikh Syamsuddin As-Sumatrani was also sent to Malaya to spread Islam and died there in 1630.⁴⁵

During the time of Sultan Iskandar Tsani, two books were sent to Kedah, namely "Sirat al-Mustaqim" and "Ba' Al- Nikah" along with a letter sent directly by Nuruddin ar-Raniri around 1640 AD.⁴⁶ This was done by the sultan as an effort to intensify the preaching of Islam in Kedah so that it could soon develop more rapidly like in Aceh. Sultan Iskandar

⁴¹ Gumilar Irfanullah and Varidlo Fuad, "Jejak Moderasi Beragama Di Kesultanan Aceh Di Bawah Pemerintahan Sultanah Safiatuddin," *Jurnal Tamaddun: Jurnal Sejarah Dan Kebudayaan Islam* 10, no. 1 (July 1, 2022), doi:10.24235/tamaddun.v10i1.10572.

⁴² A. H Johns, "Islam Di Dunia Melayu," in *Perspektif Islam Di Asia Tenggara*, ed. Azyumardi Azra (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1989).

⁴³ H.J. de Graaf, "Islam Di Asia Tenggara Sampai Abad Ke-18," in *Perspektif Islam Di Asia Tenggara*, ed. Azyumardi Azra (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1989).

⁴⁴ Zainuddin, *Tarich Atjeh Dan Nusantara*.

⁴⁵ Ahmad, *Sekitar Keradjaan Atjeh Dalam Tahun 1520-1675*.

⁴⁶ Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII*.

Tsani also built an Islamic library and with the help of Sheikh Nuruddin intensified the writing of books and poems related to Islamic culture to increase the spread of Islam.

During the time of Sultanah Tajul Alam, various books by Sheikh Abdurrauf as-Sinkili were used as guidelines by the royal qadhis and to add to the royal library collection. Because he did not receive the books, Sultan Muhammad Alisjah Batjan sent a scholar as an envoy to meet Sheikh Abdurrauf and asked for the delivery of the Qur'an and books that were useful for his country. Just like her father, Sultanah Tajul Alam also honored and entertained the messenger in her palace. When the messenger returned to Batjan, Sultanah Tajul Alam gave him as many books as the cargo of one ship and accompanied by a convoy of 5 royal warships led by the Great War Commander Abdul Rahim Maharaja Lela. The books would be distributed throughout the Maluku islands and would also be given to Sultan Hasanuddin in Makassar. With the arrival of the shipment of books from the sultanah of Aceh, the development of Islam there is increasingly rapid and can inhibit the development of Christianity carried out by the Portuguese/Spanish.⁴⁷ In 1668 Sultanah Tajul Alam also sent Aceh scholars to Siam to spread Islam among the local population.⁴⁸

3. Utilization of Maritime Trade Ports and Ships for Hajj Implementation

The strategic location not only made Aceh's ports or cities a place for transactions in maritime trade, but also as a place to depart for the holy land. The Islamic propagation carried out by the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam influenced the smooth business of Islamic preachers on the islands of Java, Kalimantan and Sulawesi. Many people from the islands of Maluku or Ternate were directly acquainted with scholars in Aceh and before performing the hajj pilgrimage stopped at Bandar Aceh.⁴⁹

The nickname Serambi Mekkah or the gate to the holy land for Aceh is not without reason. Aceh became a stopover base for pilgrims at that time, because the pilgrimage to Mecca was closely related to maritime trade activities. It was in Aceh that pilgrims from all over the archipelago and Malaya boarded ships to go to the holy land and received guidance on the pilgrimage. In addition, before leaving and after returning from the holy land, they settled in Aceh for some time while studying and increasing their knowledge of Islamic religions.⁵⁰ Aceh's ports also became a place for people who went on pilgrimage to Mecca to exchange their currency for currency that could be used or valid in Mecca.⁵¹

The journey taken by the pilgrims on these ships was relatively long, no less than six months, because it was affected by the wind factor. The pilgrims boarded merchant ships anchored at the port of Aceh. Both Aceh's own merchant ships, which have been recorded since the 16th century to have anchored in the Red Sea via the Maldives Islands, and foreign merchant ships with routes from Aceh to the Gulf of Aden.⁵²

⁴⁷ Zainuddin, *Tarich Atjeh Dan Nusantara*.

⁴⁸ Amiruddin, *Aceh Serambi Mekkah*.

⁴⁹ Zainuddin, *Tarich Atjeh Dan Nusantara*.

⁵⁰ Ahmad, *Sekitar Keradjaan Atjeh Dalam Tahun 1520-1675*.

⁵¹ Zainuddin, *Tarich Atjeh Dan Nusantara*.

⁵² M. Dien Madjid, *Berhaji Di Masa Kolonial* (Jakarta: CV Sejahtera, 2008).

4. Discussion

Revenue from maritime trade activities was then managed by the Baitul Mal Center of the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam, which also took care of state financial management. The income of this state treasury center came from customs, zakat, waqf, alms, *kharaj*, jizyah or protection for non-Muslims.⁵³ Commodities traded in the Sultanate of Aceh both in export and import activities were levied customs duties of five to six percent for Europeans, fifteen percent for the Keling people, and for Islamic traders only levied when entering goods which is ten percent.⁵⁴ This customs duty is included in *usyur* or trade tax. Furthermore, there is Zakat which is an individual expenditure of income earned in accordance with Islamic sharia. The income of the people of Aceh can be obtained from agriculture, trade, and others. Then there is *kharaj* which is collected from various gardens in the Sultanate of Aceh based on the type of plant and the level of soil fertility.⁵⁵

Baitul Mal distributes the collected funds to the rightful parties in accordance with the sources of Islamic law used by the Sultanate of Aceh, namely the Quran and hadith, such as the poor, the needy, *ibnu sabil* and so on. In addition, the funds are also used for the establishment of mosques and educational institutions as infrastructure for worship and teaching Islam to the community. Funds managed by Baitul Mal also supported da'wah outside Aceh by traveling from place to place to spread Islam.⁵⁶ The cost of studying for many years in Yemen, Hijaz, Egypt, Syria or Turkey, as well as the ability to make the Hajj journey.⁵⁷ From these explanations, it can be seen that there is a reciprocal relationship between maritime trade activities and the implementation of the intensification of Islamic da'wah in the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam.

At present, the form of utilization of various maritime trade instruments for the intensification of Islamic preaching in the sultanate of Aceh can be said to be like the concept of philanthropy. According to Hilman Latief, philanthropy is closely related to solidarity, a sense of care, and social relations between the strong and the weak, between the poor and the rich, between the lucky and the unlucky, and between the powerful and the powerless.⁵⁸ Philanthropy can be defined as various resources that are utilized for the benefit of the people, not only limited to money, but also in the form of ideas, energy, thoughts and networks so as to encourage collective change in society.

The concept of Islamic intensification can be understood from the discussion of Islamic educational institutions and philanthropic movements by Hilman Latief in his book *The Politics of Islamic Philanthropy in Indonesia*. The purpose of philanthropic activities in this modern era is to create a common good or welfare (the public good) and the expected impact is the creation of collective change from a community. Philanthropy is a tool in collective efforts to solve problems of community life such as the realization of public

⁵³ Sudirman, *Banda Aceh Dalam Siklus Perdagangan Internasional (1500-1873)*.

⁵⁴ Madjid, *Catatan Pinggir Sejarah Aceh Perdagangan, Diplomasi Dan Perjuangan Rakyat*.

⁵⁵ Sari, "Perekonomian Islam Pada Masa Kerajaan Aceh Darussalam."

⁵⁶ Azyumardi Azra, *Perspektif Islam Di Asia Tenggara* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 1898).

⁵⁷ Johns, "Islam Di Dunia Melayu."

⁵⁸ Hilman Latief, *Politik Filantropi Islam Di Indonesia Negara, Pasar, Dan Masyarakat Sipil* (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2013).

welfare, poverty alleviation, strengthening democracy, and so on. The discourse of Islamic philanthropy can be linked to the purpose and essence of Islamic law to encourage social change in society, one of which is in Islamic preaching through Islamic educational institutions. The early development and spread of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia cannot be separated from philanthropic activities. The idea of establishing educational institutions is an integral part of the Muslim perspective in providing solutions to the social problems of society. Social change itself requires new approaches such as those related to strengthening the network, institutional capacity and resources of philanthropic institutions.⁵⁹

Philanthropy has traditionally been more individual in nature, so to some extent philanthropists are often driven by the intention to maintain or enhance their status and prestige in the public eye.⁶⁰ However, philanthropy from maritime trade in the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam was developed through the establishment of institutions that managed resources from maritime traders. The Baitul Mal of the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam was the institution that managed and then distributed these funds to eligible parties such as the poor and needy, as well as to those who needed capital to develop their productivity potential so that more intensive Islamic development could be carried out in the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam.

Traditional philanthropic activities are usually mercy-based and take the form of gifts for the benefit of social services such as philanthropists giving to the poor to help with food, clothing and shelter.⁶¹ However, the philanthropy of the maritime trade is further demonstrated by the allocation of these funds for the establishment of mosques. Apart from serving as a place of worship, mosques also functioned as educational institutions that imparted the most basic knowledge of Islam to the people. The intensification of Islamic proselytization in the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam can be seen in efforts to improve the field of education. Famous scholars from outside the Aceh region were brought in to assist Acehnese scholars in improving the quality of Islamic education in Aceh.⁶² Knowledge seekers could get scholarships to study outside Aceh. Excellent scholars and teachers were also given the opportunity to study back in Islamic centers. It was through this education that the spread of knowledge developed so rapidly. According to Azyumardi Azra, it can be said that one of the reasons for the formation of the network of scholars in the Islamic world cannot be separated from the element of philanthropy.⁶³

The sending of religious scholars and literature outside the Aceh region was a follow-up after the Aceh Sultanate community was proselytized, which was a form of the teachings of moderation at the center of the Islamic treatise. In practice, the principle of religious moderation was not only practiced and preached by preachers, *da'i*, *muballigh*, or traditional scholars in the archipelago, but also by several Muslim rulers, kings, or sultans.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Dendy Raditya, "Mengenal Filantropi Sosial," <https://Chub.Fisipol.Ugm.Ac.Id/>, February 3, 2020.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Johns, "Islam Di Dunia Melayu."

⁶³ Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII Dan XVIII*.

The involvement of rulers behind the writing of religious works is common in Islamic history.

For example, Sultanah Tajul Alam wanted Sheikh Abdurrauf as-Sinkili to address the religious polemics that developed in society through his work. The sultanah is recorded as expressing support and attitudes that embody the principles and spirit of the middle way and tolerance, as in her efforts to find a way out of the feud between the two camps of Sufism/Tasawuf at that time; namely between the followers of Hamzah Fansuri and Syamsuddin as Sumatrani who spread the ideology of Wujudiyah (wahdah al- wujud), and the followers of Nuruddin ar-Raniri who rejected it.⁶⁴ At its peak, this conflict culminated in ar-Raniri's order that the books of the wujudiyah adherents be burned in the front yard of the Baiturrahman mosque.⁶⁵

This problem, in part, may be caused by a partial, incomplete understanding of Islam. Islam is understood piecemeal. Islamic teachings are applied without looking at the existing environment, so that Muslims who apply it are like *aliens* and are not friendly to their environment, let alone care about it. This condition is usually because they are infected with selected and superior-religious diseases, which will then easily trigger them to become extremists and radicalists. For them, this predicate allows them to ignore the messages of outsiders, whoever they may be.⁶⁶

Sultanah Tajul Alam showed her disapproval of intolerant and violent ways of addressing these differences in understanding and this was in line with as-Sinkili's view that religious polemics and conflicts could disrupt the stability of the sultanate and harm the people of Aceh itself. Despite being patronized by the ruler, as-Sinkili's views on religious polemics appear neutral and objective. He did not take sides with any the contending parties, whether or not they were ultimately supported by the ruler. Here it seems that Sultanah Tajul Alam was trying resolve religious polemics by being fair and taking the middle way. She chose as-Sinkili because his ideas were known to be moderate and prioritized *islah* (reconciliation) between the feuding camps.⁶⁷

CONCLUSION

This research revealed the important role of maritime trade of the Sultanate of Aceh Darussalam (1607-1675 AD) in the intensification of Islamic development. The main findings show that maritime trade not only functioned as an economic activity but also as a strategic instrument to support Islamic proselytization. Through Islamic values-based resource management, trade proceeds were allocated in an organized manner for the construction of

⁶⁴ Irfanullah and Fuad, "Jejak Moderasi Beragama Di Kesultanan Aceh Di Bawah Pemerintahan Sultanah Safiatuddin."

⁶⁵ P. J. Veth, "Atsjin, En Zijne Betrekkingen Tot Nederland. Topographisch-Historische Schets," *De Locomotief: Samarangsch Handels- En Advertentie-Blad*, June 6, 1873.

⁶⁶ Sujadi, "Book Review: Islam, Antara Negara Agama Dan Negara Sipil," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 43, no. 2 (November 30, 2005): 501, doi:10.14421/ajis.2005.432.501-509.

⁶⁷ Gumilar Irfanullah and Varidlo Fuad, "Jejak Moderasi Beragama Di Kesultanan Aceh Di Bawah Pemerintahan Sultanah Safiatuddin," *Jurnal Tamaddun: Jurnal Sejarah Dan Kebudayaan Islam* 10, no. 1 (July 1, 2022), doi:10.24235/tamaddun.v10i1.10572.

mosques, educational institutions, dissemination of religious literature, as well as sending ulama to various parts of the archipelago. Aceh, as a cosmopolitan and transit center for pilgrims, also played a role in spreading Islam in Southeast Asia and strengthening the scholarly network of local and international scholars. The contribution of this research to scholarship is the integration of aspects of trade and Islamic proselytization in the historiography of the archipelago, which were previously discussed separately. In addition, this research strengthens the position of the Sultanate of Aceh as an important centre in the maritime trade network and the Islamization of Southeast Asia. However, this study has limitations including geographical coverage limited to Aceh without in-depth analysis of interactions with global trade centers, as well as a lack of discussion of the long-term impact of the synergy of trade and Islamic preaching post-1675 CE.

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