



Historical Analysis of the Changing Meaning of Bengkulu Tabot Tradition

Agus Sapriansa

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang

e-mail: sapriansya70@gmail.com

Arditya Prayogi*

Universitas Islam Negeri KH Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan

e-mail: arditya.prayogi@uingusdur.ac.id*

Abstract

The existence of multiple meanings of the implementation of the Bengkulu Tabot tradition is the main background for writing this article. This meaning implements the Bengkulu Tabot ceremony tradition and changes its function. Thus this article aims to reveal the dynamics of changing the meaning of the Tabot tradition historically. This article is a qualitative research using historical research methods including heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography. From the results of the analysis, it is known that at first, the Bengkulu Tabot tradition had a sacred-magical value which in its implementation was closely related to the entry of the Syi'ah-Punjab understanding into the Bengkulu region. This form of implementation of the Bengkulu Tabot tradition is specially recorded in the manuscript of the Story of Tabot which has a sacred dimension. However, along with the times, the implementation of the Tabot tradition then changed its value to become profane in the form of the Bengkulu Tabot festival. The implementation of this festival takes on the identity of Tabot Pembangunan which was introduced by the Bengkulu Government. This condition resulted in the emergence of a discourse related to the legality of identity in the Tabot tradition in Bengkulu.

Keywords: *Tradition; Tabot; Bengkulu; Sacred; Profan*

Abstrak

Adanya makna ganda dari penerapan tradisi Tabot Bengkulu menjadi latar belakang utama penulisan artikel ini. Makna ini mengimplementasikan tradisi upacara Tabot Bengkulu dan mengubah fungsinya. Dengan demikian artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap dinamika perubahan makna tradisi Tabot secara historis. Artikel ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan menggunakan metode penelitian sejarah meliputi heuristik, verifikasi, interpretasi,

dan historiografi. Dari hasil analisis diketahui bahwa pada awalnya tradisi Tabot Bengkulu memiliki nilai sakral-magis yang dalam pelaksanaannya erat kaitannya dengan masuknya paham Syi'ah-Punjab ke wilayah Bengkulu. Bentuk implementasi tradisi Tabot Bengkulu ini secara khusus terekam dalam naskah Kisah Tabot yang memiliki dimensi sakral. Namun, seiring dengan perkembangan zaman, pelaksanaan tradisi Tabot kemudian berubah nilainya menjadi profan dalam bentuk festival Tabot Bengkulu. Pelaksanaan festival ini mengambil identitas Tabot Pembangunan yang diperkenalkan oleh Pemerintah Bengkulu. Kondisi ini mengakibatkan munculnya wacana terkait legalitas identitas dalam tradisi Tabot di Bengkulu.

Kata Kunci : *Tradisi; Tabot; Bengkulu; Sakral; Profan*

INTRODUCTION

Talking about the culture of the Bengkulu area, you will not be separated from talking about the Tabot tradition. As a tradition, Bengkulu people always celebrate it every year in the month of Muharram, based on commemorating the death of Husain R.A, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, in Padang Karbala on Ashura day 10 Muharram 61 H in the Karbala incident.¹ Even though the Bengkulu people already consider this tradition as one of the local cultures, it should be underlined that this tradition is not the original tradition of the Bengkulu people. This tradition originated in Iraq, then developed in Iran, spread to India, and eventually entered Indonesia and the Bengkulu region.²

There is no definite information about when Tabot entered Bengkulu, but it is believed that this tradition arrived in Bengkulu between the late 17th and early 18th centuries, an era when Bengkulu was under British colonial rule.³ At that time, the British had an interest in monopolizing the pepper trade in the Bengkulu area. For this purpose, the British brought the Sepoi or Cipei from Madras (1760-1785) and Bengal (1785-1824), who adhered to Shi'a Islam.⁴ The Sepoi people who were brought in then settled and mingled with the native people. From this process, they

¹ Juan Eduardo Campo, *Encyclopedia of World Religions: Encyclopedia of Islam* (New York: Facts On File Inc, 2009). 421.

² *Tabot dan Peranannya dalam Masyarakat* (Padang: Proyek Pengembangan Permuseuman Sumatera Barat, 1982). 18.

³ Agus Setiyanto, *Orang-Orang Besar Bengkulu* (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2006). 253.

⁴ Zulkifli, *The Struggle of the Shi'is in Indonesia* (Canberra: Australian National University E Press, 2013). 5.

introduced the Tabot tradition to the people of Bengkulu.⁵ However, there is a local source regarding the Tabot tradition which is the work of the Bengkulu people in the form of a manuscript with Arabic-Malay script entitled "Story from Tabot" dated 1886. This manuscript consists of ten chapters which tell the background of the holding of Tabot and the life journey of Husain R.A, grandson of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, from childhood, and adulthood, until the death of Al-Husain in the Padang Karbala incident.

At a glance, the text also provides an overview of the instructions regarding the implementation of the Tabot tradition. Based on this text, the researcher is interested in seeing the dynamics of the implementation of the Tabot tradition in Bengkulu, whether there have been changes or shifts in its implementation, bearing in mind that currently the Tabot tradition no longer only presents sacred rituals, but since the 1990s the Tabot tradition has developed into an annual community cultural festival as well as a venue for regional tourism promotion. Of course, this is interesting to reveal, so that historical values can be maintained and the standard cultural order can be understood as a whole by the community. In addition, most Bengkulu people do not fully understand the meaning of the Tabot itself, so it is feared that the Tabot tradition will be isolated among its supporting community.

This article aims to reconstruct the history of the Tabot Tradition in Bengkulu, from its initial stages to its development based on the Tabot Story script, including the various problems that exist in it. This article is one of the efforts to be able to provide information on the Tabot tradition to the public in written form, with the hope that the community will fully understand the Tabot tradition, both in terms of history and the developments that occur in it. Articles about the Tabot Tradition in Bengkulu have been widely researched, but most of them do not use manuscript sources as references for their writings. As written by Hamidi (1991),⁶ Yuliati (2010),⁷ and

⁵ Lesi Maryani, "JEJAK SYIAH DALAM KESENIAN TABOT BENGKULU; SUATU TELAHAH SEJARAH," *Mozaic: Islam Nusantara* 4, no. 1 (4 April 2018): 41–58, <https://doi.org/10.47776/mozaic.v4i1.121>.

⁶ Badrul Munir Hamidi, *Upacara Tradisional Bengkulu: Upacara Tabot di Bengkulu* (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1991).

⁷ Yuliati, "Upacara Religi dan Pemasaran Pariwisata: Studi Komodifikasi Tabot di Provinsi Bengkulu" (Surakarta, Universitas Negeri Sebelas Maret, 2012).

Gumay (2011).⁸ This entire article explains the history, use, and development of Tabot in society. However, even though they both discuss Tabot, this article has differences from previous articles, especially when viewed from the use of the local script "Stories from Tabot". In addition, the approach⁹ in this article is directed at the dynamics of change in the Tabot tradition as a historical process. As a result, this article can elaborate on sharing similar articles and can enrich perspectives in seeing Tabot as a cultural tradition.

METHOD

The historical method is the research method used for writing this article. The historical method means a process of critically examining and analyzing various records and relics of the past, including an imaginative reconstruction process based on data obtained through the stages of the historical method.¹⁰ There are four stages in the historical method, namely heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The first stage, namely heuristics, is carried out by searching and finding various sources, which in this article is carried out through library research. The historical sources for writing this article are in the form of written sources in the form of books or texts related to the Tabot tradition. The source of the manuscript related to the Bengkulu Tabot tradition is the Story Manuscript of Tabot which is stored in the Indonesian National Library on the fifth floor of the manuscript collection section. In the catalog, the story script from Tabot has an ML code. 145. From a physical perspective, the manuscript measures 21 cm x 17 cm. This manuscript consists of 8 pages written in Arabic-Malay script. The manuscript contains a note dated July 6, 1886. The condition of the manuscript is damaged, such as the paper on several pages. which is so fragile that it is no longer possible to read. As for this article, the script used is a script that has been made into digital form.

After the first stage is carried out, the second stage is carried out, namely the critical stage. The criticism stage is carried out by carrying out two types of criticism,

⁸ Syuplahan Gumay, "Tradisi Tabot Sebagai Medium Pemersatu Masyarakat Kelurahan Berkas Kecamatan Kota Bengkulu" (Bengkulu, Universitas Negeri Bengkulu, 2011).

⁹ Arditya Prayogi, "TELAAH KONSEPTUAL PENDEKATAN KUANTITATIF DALAM SEJARAH," *Kalpataru: Jurnal Sejarah dan Pembelajaran Sejarah* 8, no. 1 (Juli 2022): 76–85, <https://doi.org/10.31851/kalpataru.v8i2.8970>.

¹⁰ Louis Gottschalk, *Mengerti Sejarah*, trans. oleh Nugroho Notosusanto (Jakarta: UI Press, 1986). 32.

namely external and internal criticism. External criticism is carried out by testing the authenticity/authenticity of historical sources by conducting a critical review of the form of the source, age, time, and various matters related to the research source. Meanwhile, internal criticism is carried out by examining carefully and accurately various matters related to the contents of the source, such as whether the source can be trusted to be true. In this case, what is tested in internal criticism is the credibility of historical sources. After going through the stages of criticism, historical data is obtained in the form of various historical information that is relevant to the discussion of the research topic/article. After that, the third stage is interpretation. At the interpretation stage, efforts are made to interpret various data that have been collected and criticized before, and in the interpretation stage, a description will be produced. Interpretation is done analytically and synthetically. Various data and information related to the Bengkulu Tabot tradition are described and elaborated for analysis and integration. This interpretation stage then contains various explanations to then be assembled into a unified whole.¹¹ After that, the final stage of historical research is carried out, namely historiography. At this stage, historical writing is carried out which is a description that explains the results of interpretation to become historical writing or also known as historiography.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theory of the Entry of the Tabot Tradition in Bengkulu

The emergence of the Tabot tradition is inseparable from the event of Al Husain's death in an unequal battle between Al-Husain and Yazid bin Ubaidillah's troops led by Ubaidillah bin Ziyad. Islamic history records this event as one of the dark events known as the Karbala incident. This event is the culmination of a series of events that illustrate how unfavorable the socio-political conditions of Muslims were after the death of Muawiyah as a caliph. The following will explain how the process of the emergence of the Tabot Tradition after the Karbala Incident occurred, followed by the spread of this tradition from the Middle East to various regions including the Bengkulu region.

¹¹ Nina Herlina, *Metode Sejarah*. 36-54.

There is no written information confirming when the Tabot tradition became known in the Bengkulu community. William Marsden, a writer who has observed a lot of Sumatran society, and was in Bengkulu when Bengkulu was occupied by the British, did not mention Tabot at all.¹² To trace it, Tabot is associated with the theory of the entry of Shiites into Indonesia, although to this day it still generates debate among supporters of the Shia theory and groups that criticize this theory. There are opinions expressed by Fatimi, Jamil, Hasjmi, Azmi, Atjeh, and Sunyoto. They believe that Shia has been present in Indonesia since the beginning of Islamization and that Shia followers have played an important role in this process.

Referring to the Shia theory, it is stated that in the early days of the Islamic Sultanate in Indonesia, it did not only involve Sunni preachers but also the role of Shiites in it. So that the role of Shia cannot be ruled out just like that. However, such an argument is refuted by groups that criticize this opinion, for example, the opinion of Buya Hamka. In his writings, Hamka said that in Pariaman, which is considered to be a supporter of the Shi'a theory as the basis of the Shi'a ideology, he found the fact that let alone becoming a political force, the Shi'a ideology itself was not widely known by the public. According to him, no one from the Pariaman population has a Shi'a understanding apart from the itinerant patriarchs who have (collected funds) asked for donations to make the Tabot.¹³

Although no written record can explain exactly when Tabot entered the Bengkulu area. However, from several sources, it was found that there are at least two opinions regarding the theory of the entry of Tabot to Bengkulu. First, the theory of Sheikh Burhanuddin Ulakan or Imam Senggolo.¹⁴ This theory states that the entry and development of the Tabot ceremony in Bengkulu are related to the arrival of a group of merchants from Punjab. Before spreading to the Southeast Asian region, the Tabot culture - which originated in the Middle East - was first introduced to the South Asian region, namely the Indian region. Then from India, the Tabot tradition was brought to Bengkulu by preachers from Punjab. These preachers previously landed and stopped in Aceh, but because they felt they did not get an adequate

¹² William Marsden, *Sejarah Sumatra* (Depok: Komunitas Bambu, 2008).

¹³ Hamka, *Antara Fakta dan Khayal Tuanku Rao* (Jakarta: Penerbit Republik, 2017). 177-178.

¹⁴ Syaifril, *Tabut Karbala Bencoolen Dari Punjab Symbol Melawan Kebiadaban* (Jakarta: PT. Walaw Bengkulen, 2012).

response, they then left Aceh and continued their journey.¹⁵ Initially, the implementation of the Tabot tradition in Bengkulu was associated with the group of preachers from Punjab led by Maulana Ichsad. It's just that they didn't settle in Bengkulu, after a few years they returned to Punjab. After the death of Maulana Ichsad, the Tabot Tradition in Bengkulu was then continued by a prominent scholar named Syekh Burhanuddin or Imam Senggolo (1646-1693M) as the successor to the Tabot tradition.¹⁶ At present, the name of Sheikh Burhanuddin is highly respected by the Tabot heir family, but there is no clear information regarding the figure of Sheikh Burhanuddin, so this raises different opinions.

The second theory is that of the Sepoy soldiers. This theory states that the Tabot tradition in Bengkulu is not inherited from the Shia group in the archipelago. This tradition was first brought and developed in Bengkulu by the Sepoy army who accompanied the British military when they tried to control the west coast of Sumatra during the period 1750-1825. This theory is strengthened by the existence of colonial sources so this theory indirectly rejects the theory that states the involvement of local communities (Indonesia) in the spread of Tabot.¹⁷

The Bengkulu Tabot Sacred Tradition in the Story Manuscript from Tabot

Substantively, the Tabot tradition is widely inseparable from the event of Al-Husain's death in Padang Karbala. However, in the text of the Story from Tabot the implementation of the Tabot tradition in Bengkulu does not only stop at the event of Al-Husain's death, but other stories contain elements of myth about the main figure who is the creator of this tradition, so it is understandable why the implementation of the Tabot Tradition in Bengkulu still has to be held. There is some information that tells about the background of the implementation of the Tabot Tradition in Bengkulu, as recorded in the Tale of Tabot text.

In the manuscript of Stories from Tabot chapters 8 and 9, it is explained that the killer of Al-Husain was a Yazid soldier named Samarlib. Besides Samarlib, another character mentioned is Nastal. It was explained that Nastal was a friend of

¹⁵ Zubaedi, "Revitalisasi Tabot untuk Membangun Kerukunan Umat Beragama di Bengkulu," *Jurnal Harmoni* 7, no. 27 (2008): 45–64.

¹⁶ Syuplahan Gumay, "Tradisi Tabot Sebagai Medium Pemersatu Masyarakat Kelurahan Berkas Kecamatan Kota Bengkulu."

¹⁷ Azyumardi Azra, *Islam Reformis Dinamika Intelektual dan Gerakan* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 1999). 147.

Al-Husain who wanted to take the jewels stored in the belt worn by Al-Husain, but his evil intentions were unsuccessful because Al-Husain's hand slapped and held Nastal's hand which made him fall and faint. In his dream, Nastal said he met angels, prophets and their children, and angels who came to visit Al-Husain's body.

In another source, it is also told that after Al-Husain died, suddenly Al-Husain's body was picked up and saved by a group of angels from the sky in a procession. Then the angels put Hussein's body in the procession and was carried away by a bird straight to the presence of God. It was at that time that a nation of Cipei (Sipahi: Rear India) who was said to be one of the loyal followers of Shi'a depended on this part of the procession without the angels noticing. Halfway through, the presence of an uninvited human being was discovered by a group of angels and this was not justified at all, but the Cipei people hoped to be included in this procession wherever they were as long as they could be with the body of Hussein, whom he loved so much. That. With regret, the request could not be fulfilled by the angels. Then immediately the procession was forced to land again. To comfort the hearts of the Cipei people who were being hit by grief, the angels suggested that they make and just imitate the model of the procession they were carrying, like the example we now know as Tabot.¹⁸ From this, it is clear that the implementation of the Tabot tradition in Bengkulu has not only been influenced by Shia culture but has also been mixed and added to by the beliefs of the local community, where elements of myth and fairy tales are forced to find the right story so that the Tabot tradition is still carried out.¹⁹

From the historical background above, the manuscript of the Story of Tabot provides an overview of the activities or rituals which are the stages of carrying out the tradition itself. The stages of carrying out the Tabot Tradition as written in the script Tales of Tabot consist of the ritual of taking land, taking banana stems and occupying penja, pilgrimage, parading the fingers, parading the turban, sunsan day, parading the Tabot and throwing away the Tabot. For more details, it can be seen from the following edits to the Story script from Tabot.

Section 1

¹⁸ *Tabot dan Peranannya dalam Masyarakat.*

¹⁹ J.J. Ras, *Hikajat Bandar, A Study in Malay Historiography* (Leiden: The Hague-Martinus Nijhoff, 1968). 12.

“On the night of the first day of the month of Al-Muharram, all the people who made the Tabot took the land with their names. And that means, when Amir Husain was still small, his grandmother, Rasulullah SAW, was holding the land in his lap, then Jibril came to Rasulullah SAW to tell him about the death of Amir Husain. So Jibril said, “After the death of Rasulullah SAW, Amir Husain was tortured and killed by the Yazid people in Padang Karbala. And answered the Prophet's wife the name Umi Salamah, "What will happen to us tomorrow?" So Jibril went to get a handful of soil in the Karbela Field. So he gave it to Umi Salamah. So Jibril said, "Keep this soil well in the glass cover and let this soil be checked every year, every day of the month of Al Muharram. And if this land turns into blood, then the death of Amir Husain will be close. And that's the man who took the land.”

Section 2

On the fourth day before the fifth of Muharram, people make the Tabot by taking a banana stem and writing the name pen. That is, four days before the five days, the day when Amir Husain married his wife, the daughter of Sahari Banun, the daughter of Raja Kusari.

Article 3

On the sixth day, the seventh night of Muharram, everyone makes the Tabot go walking, the pilgrimage is called. Meaning, the pilgrimage was when Amir Husain's people all departed from Medina to move to Kufa, and went to see all the graves of the Prophet and all the graves of the prophets in Medina with several sounds.

Article 4

On its eighth night, people make the Tabot parade the fingers of its name. That is, people in the land of Kufah will meet Amir Husain at the Kurtasi River.

Article 5

On the eighth day, soldiers from Damascus came to the Kurtasi River with the intention of going to war to cut off Amir Husain's head.

Article 6

On the ninth night, the person who made the Tabot paraded his name's turban. That is, both sides of the army fought to wear their respective war clothes.

Article 7

On the ninth day, Sunsan's name means to keep silent. That is, the people of Amir Husain save all their children and grandchildren.

Article 8

On the tenth night, people paraded the Tabot name. That is, Amir Husain had been killed by Raja Yazid's army, in the Karbela Plains.

Article 9

On the tenth day of Muharram, people throw away the Tabot name. That is, all the prophets and angels, the children of the angels buried the bodies of Amir Husain, and all those who died martyrs in Padang Karbala.

Article 10

From the meaning of majnu, fakir, and si. And that was majnu ladies-in-waiting when Amir Husein married Putri Saharai Banun, daughter of Raja Kusari. And the meaning of being poor is that all the children and siblings of Amir Husain have been taken away by Lasykar Raja Yazid to become poor people. And asrti si', there was a worker who collected the children and relatives of Amir Husain when he was in the war. That's how it is.

In the Story Text from Tabot, there is no explanation of how Al-Husain was killed in Padang Karbala, but in the Hikayat Hanafiyyah it is explained that Al-Husain's martyrdom was caused by an unequal battle with Yazid's troops.²⁰ From the entire explanation of the manuscript of The Story of Tabot, the important point that can be drawn is that between the stages of the implementation of Tabot and Al-Husain's life journey from childhood to his martyrdom in Padang Karbala, they are an inseparable unit.

In its later implementation, the sacred Bengkulu Tabot tradition has had its ups and downs in the long history of the traditional life of the Bengkulu people. At

²⁰ L.F. Brakel, *The Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyyah, A Medieval Muslim-Malay Romance* (Dordrecht: The Hague-Martinus Nijhoff, 1975). 194.

least, as a sacred tradition, the Bengkulu Tabot tradition was still being carried out at least in the mid-1970s to the 1991s. In this period, the party carrying out the Tabot celebration consisted only of the Tabot family group, while the government's role in the celebration of the Tabot Tradition was not seen significantly. In practice, the family group inheriting the Tabot tradition is the party responsible for its implementation. This family group itself is descended from Syekh Burhanuddin (Imam Senggolo) or members who participated in Maulana Ichsad's entourage in 1336. The Tabot family group is divided into fourteen families including the Ibrahim family, Zainuddin Tengah Padang, Buyung, Keling, Liang, Gurai, Job, Agus Salim, Jurai, Zakaria, Mahyudin, Muhidin, Gaim, and Aswani. Each Tabot family has a leader, who is generally the head of the family or the eldest son and is equipped with a *penja* which is the symbol of their group.²¹

The belief that the Tabot tradition has a sacred dimension is evident in the belief that if the Tabot ritual is not carried out consistently every year, this family group will suffer from various disasters, either in the form of disasters and/or illness. The form of this disaster is not only in a textual sense in the form of an acute illness or natural disaster but also in a contextual sense, such as the difficulty in obtaining sustenance in life. Therefore, these family groups will try to consistently carry out the Tabot tradition every year.²² In addition, for the heirs of the Tabot family there are several taboos that they must obey in carrying out the Tabot. Among them are not allowed to show a happy or happy attitude, must avoid disputes in the family, and are prohibited from criticizing the food offerings that are brought. If they criticize the taste of the offerings they bring, they believe that the person concerned will fall sick and even go crazy.²³ Furthermore, even Tabot is a sacred tradition that requires a magical element. In this case, the implementation of the Tabot is carried out in a closed manner, in the sense that it is only carried out by the heirs of the Tabot family. However, that does not mean that ordinary people cannot be involved at all. Some conditions must be met by ordinary people who want to take part in the Tabot ritual, namely, they must eat porridge or rice that has been doused with pure milk. Like it

²¹ *Upacara Ritual dan Festival Tabot* (Bengkulu: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2002). 42.

²² Syuplahan Gumay, "Tradisi Tabot Sebagai Medium Pemersatu Masyarakat Kelurahan Berkas Kecamatan Kota Bengkulu." 9.

²³ Badrul Munir Hamidi, *Upacara Tradisional Bengkulu: Upacara Tabot di Bengkulu*. 71.

or not, the individual who tasted the food should not comment on the taste of the food being tasted. If it is violated, then they believe the person will be struck by bad luck.

In its implementation, Tabot in this medium still displays a sacred-magical patterned tradition with stages that have begun to experience adaptation from the Tabot Story script. As an illustration, the rituals performed include; taking the land, sitting penja, jailing, merdai, penja wine, seroban wine, gam, gedang wine, and the end of the Tabot ritual event on the 10th of Muharram is the wasted Tabot.

Bengkulu Tabot Tradition Festivalization

The turning point for changing dimensions in the Bengkulu Tabot tradition began in the 1990s after Bengkulu Province was invited to Jakarta to showcase Bengkulu regional culture in 1991, to welcome Visit Indonesia Year (VIY). In this medium, the Tabot tradition was upgraded to become a tourist festival in Bengkulu Province which was named the Tabot Festival and was under the responsibility of the Tabot Family Harmony (KKT) which was formed in 1993.

After the Tabot tradition turned into a festival, the implementation of the Tabot tradition, which was previously only carried out by the heirs of the Tabot family, began to receive attention from the government. If previously the government was not involved, since 1997 the Bengkulu provincial government, especially the Provincial Tourism Office, has been directly involved in the implementation of the Tabot festival.²⁴ When a tradition or cultural practice has been objectified, such as for tourism purposes. So the logical consequence is that this tradition has become common property, and no longer belongs to just one group. In this case, all walks of life and community identities then have the right to be involved in this tradition. Finally, it is not surprising that the implementation of the Tabot tradition for most Bengkulu people who do not come from the Tabot heir family – even the KKT – only carries out traditional activities without understanding and understanding the values contained therein. This then creates space for debate between sacred values and profane values. each side stuck to their ideals. The battle for idealism also influenced the development of Tabot in Bengkulu.

²⁴ Poniman, "DIALEKTIKA AGAMA DAN BUDAYA," *Nuansa: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Kemasyarakatan* 8, no. 2 (Desember 2015): 165–71, <https://doi.org/10.29300/nuansa.v8i2.394>.

In the context of making the Tabot tradition of profane value, the government – in this case, the province of Bengkulu, is making breakthroughs in non-ritual aspects so that Tabot can become more attractive. The quantity aspect is the main objective in the implementation of these "breakthroughs". As a consequence, the sacred aspect is no longer prioritized. Of course, increasing the "quantity" of visitors in carrying out the Tabot Tradition requires maximum effort. For example, by carrying out massive promotions, such as making booklets and distributing them through the relevant agency offices inside and outside Bengkulu Province as well as making pamphlets. In addition, the government also involved other parties such as the Indonesian Hotel and Restaurant Association (PHRI) in Bengkulu to inform visitors, the Association of Indonesian Travel Companies (ASITA), as well as students and students by utilizing social media.

As a result, the identity (claim) of "Tabot Pembangunan" emerged. With the emergence of the term "Development Tabot", then, in general, there are two types of Tabot in Bengkulu, namely "Sacred Tabot" and "Development Tabot" which are used as accompaniments to "Sacred Tabot". It's just that the Development Tabot is not equipped with "finger penja", which is only intended for the "Sacred Tabot" family as their symbol and identity.²⁵ In addition, it should be understood that "Development Tabot" is a Tabot made by community groups interested in the Tabot festival, be it individuals, groups, or from agencies such as banks, district or city governments in Bengkulu, as well as private parties such as service providers. So that the benchmark for the form of "Tabot Pembangunan" is adjusted to the request of the customer.

It should be understood that the making of Tabot is not arbitrary, but requires special expertise and skills, where these skills are owned by the heir to the Tabot family. This is certainly an opportunity for them, even the government helps promote their expertise by directing those who want to make Tabot to Tabot families. In addition to increasing the number of Tabots, the government has also compiled a schedule for the Tabot festival by the government's agenda. From the prepared schedule, it appears that the government has made efforts to make Tabot more attractive by adding various kinds of activities, such as entertainment, folk music,

²⁵ Harapandi Dahri, *Tabot Jejak Cinta Keluarga Nabi di Bengkulu* (Jakarta: Citra, 2009). 101.

holding festivals, and various kinds of competitions with Islamic nuances. For example, the tambourine contest, the hijab princess contest, and others. This is because Tabot is held to coincide with the Islamic New Year, so trying to package the event has an Islamic nuance.

Apart from presenting events with Islamic nuances, Bengkulu arts, and culture were also displayed, such as Dol, Telong-Telong, and Fish competitions. The addition of Dol, Telong-telong, and fish competitions is an attempt to display Tabot in a different package. If previously Dol was the musical accompaniment of the Tabot ritual tradition, in this period Dol music was used as a non-ritual competition which was separate from the ritual aspect. Meanwhile, the Telong-telong that appears is actually not a tradition related to the implementation of the Tabot, but is motivated by the desire of ethnic Chinese to participate in the implementation of the Tabot. The appearance of Telong-telong makes Tabot rich in culture, namely local, Islamic, and Chinese culture. The shape of the Telong-telong resembles Chinese lanterns, which are shaped in such a way as to produce beautiful works of art, such as dragons, cartoon characters, etc. Apart from performing Telong-Telong, the participation of ethnic Chinese in the implementation of the Tabot can also be seen from the appearance of the Barongsai dance. It is not only a place to display elements of Chinese culture. In this period, the Tabot Tradition was also used as an event to revive Bengkulu's original culture, whose existence seemed to be in suspended animation.

In addition to adding competition activities, the government also provides bazaars for all levels of society in Bengkulu province who want to offer their wares or industries that want to introduce their products and sell the goods they produce. For example provider companies, cigarettes, or other industries in Bengkulu. Their involvement also helped facilitate and assist the government in promoting Tabot. By making billboards or banners to make the Tabot festival a success. It can be seen that the Bengkulu Provincial Government is not playing games with their goal of making Tabot a mainstay tourist destination. This desire received a warm response from the people of Bengkulu, because it is so great if you look at the people's interest in the Tabot tradition. With the various kinds of activities carried out by the

government, it is not surprising that most Bengkulu people are more familiar with the profane or non-ritual side of Tabot than the ritual aspect.

Their involvement also helped facilitate and assist the government in promoting Tabot. By making billboards or banners to make the Tabot festival a success. It can be seen that the Bengkulu Provincial Government is not playing games with their goal of making Tabot a mainstay tourist destination. This desire received a warm response from the people of Bengkulu, because it is so great if you look at the people's interest in the Tabot tradition. With the various kinds of activities carried out by the government, it is not surprising that most Bengkulu people are more familiar with the profane or non-ritual side of Tabot than the ritual aspect.

CONCLUSION

In this article, it can be concluded several things, among others. First, the existence of the Tabot Tradition has experienced ups and downs in the life of the Bengkulu people. From these various dynamics, one of the pieces of information regarding the existence of the Tabot Tradition in Bengkulu is in the manuscript of the Story of Tabot 1886. In terms of content, the manuscript of the Story of Tabot contains ten chapters that tell about the origins and stages of the Tabot tradition. All of these chapters are inseparable from the story of Al Husain's life journey from childhood to death in Padang Karbala. The manuscript contains elements of myth, fairy tales, and the cult of the figure of Al-Husain. The story of Al-Husain's life journey is then expressed in the form of a series of actions. This action becomes the ritual stage in the implementation of the Tabot Tradition. Beginning with the ritual of taking land, taking banana stems and occupying the penja, pilgrimage, parading the fingers, parading the turban, sunsan day, parading the Tabot, and throwing away the Tabot.

Second, the Bengkulu Regional Government then saw Tabot as an opportunity to advance the Bengkulu tourism industry, so the government 1991 issued a policy to upgrade the Tabot Tradition to an annual cultural festival that was profane by establishing the identity "Tabot Development", which in its implementation requires no small amount of funds. For the Tabot festival to attract the public's attention, its implementation places more emphasis on the development

of artistic and entertainment values in the Tabot Tradition. Apart from that, to be able to become a tourist magnet, the government is also holding various kinds of competitions, music events, and cheap bazaar facilities, all of which lead to economic interests. The efforts made by the government received a positive response from the people of Bengkulu. Third, this phenomenon causes the sacred values in the Tabot Tradition to more or less fade. This condition then resulted in the emergence of a debate related to the legality of identity in the Tabot tradition in Bengkulu. As a historical research, this article has limitations on the use of primary sources which are only focused on the manuscript of the Story of Tabot. Thus, as a recommendation for research on Tabot, it is also necessary to explore and then use other primary sources if possible, so that the historical dynamics of the Tabot tradition, especially in Bengkulu, can be described holistically.

REFERENCES

- Agus Setiyanto. *Orang-Orang Besar Bengkulu*. Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2006.
- Arditya Prayogi. "TELAAH KONSEPTUAL PENDEKATAN KUANTITATIF DALAM SEJARAH." *Kalpataru: Jurnal Sejarah dan Pembelajaran Sejarah* 8, no. 1 (Juli 2022): 76–85. <https://doi.org/10.31851/kalpataru.v8i2.8970>.
- Azyumardi Azra. *Islam Reformis Dinamika Intelektual dan Gerakan*. Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 1999.
- Badrul Munir Hamidi. *Upacara Tradisional Bengkulu: Upacara Tabot di Bengkulu*. Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1991.
- Hamka. *Antara Fakta dan Khayal Tuanku Rao*. Jakarta: Penerbit Republika, 2017.
- Harapandi Dahri. *Tabot Jejak Cinta Keluarga Nabi di Bengkulu*. Jakarta: Citra, 2009.
- J.J. Ras. *Hikajat Bandar, A Study in Malay Historiography*. Leiden: The Hague-Martinus Nijhoff, 1968.
- Juan Eduardo Campo. *Encyclopedia of World Religions: Encyclopedia of Islam*. New York: Facts On File Inc, 2009.
- Kuntowijoyo. *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah*. Yogyakarta: Bentang, 2005.
- L.F. Brakel. *The Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyah, A Medieval Muslim-Malay Romance*. Dordrecht: The Hague-Martinus Nijhoff, 1975.
- Louis Gottschalk. *Mengerti Sejarah*. Diterjemahkan oleh Nugroho Notosusanto. Jakarta: UI Press, 1986.

- Maryani, Lesi. "JEJAK SYIAH DALAM KESENIAN TABOT BENGKULU; SUATU TELAHAH SEJARAH." *Mozaic : Islam Nusantara* 4, no. 1 (4 April 2018): 41–58. <https://doi.org/10.47776/mozaic.v4i1.121>.
- Nina Herlina. *Metode Sejarah*. Bandung: Satya Historika, 2008.
- Poniman. "DIALEKTIKA AGAMA DAN BUDAYA." *Nuansa: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Kemasyarakatan* 8, no. 2 (Desember 2015): 165–71. <https://doi.org/10.29300/nuansa.v8i2.394>.
- Syiafril. *Tabut Karbala Bencoolen Dari Punjab Symbol Melawan Kebiadaban*. Jakarta: PT. Walaw Bengkulen, 2012.
- Syuplahan Gumay. "Tradisi Tabot Sebagai Medium Pemersatu Masyarakat Kelurahan Berkas Kecamatan Kota Bengkulu." Universitas Negeri Bengkulu, 2011.
- Tabot dan Peranannya dalam Masyarakat*. Padang: Proyek Pengembangan Permuseuman Sumatera Barat, 1982.
- Upacara Ritual dan Festival Tabot*. Bengkulu: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2002.
- William Marsden. *Sejarah Sumatra*. Depok: Komunitas Bambu, 2008.
- Yuliati. "Upacara Religi dan Pemasaran Pariwisata: Studi Komodifikasi Tabot di Provinsi Bengkulu." Universitas Negeri Sebelas Maret, 2012.
- Zubaedi. "Revitalisasi Tabot untuk Membangun Kerukunan Umat Beragama di Bengkulu." *Jurnal Harmoni* 7, no. 27 (2008): 45–64.
- Zulkifli. *The Struggle of the Shi'is in Indonesia*. Canberra: Australian National University E Press, 2013.

