

Historical Aspects of Place Names in Yogyakarta

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Multamia RMT Lauder & Allan F. Lauder
Department of Linguistics Universitas Indonesia

Are geographical names trivial?

- The study of geographical names may seem to the average person a trivial activity compared to studying medicine, agriculture or economics
- Geographical names are largely taken for granted. The assumption is that they simply serve to refer to geographical features and that everything is obvious. They might also assume that looking into them would be a waste of time
- But nothing could be further from the truth

The value of geographical names

- In fact, geographical names can often tell a story. They can give us clues to a cultural landscape from the past; they can also provide evidence of the sequence of human migration and settlement in an area, even when time has erased all physical evidence
- Geographical names also have value as they play a part in the efficient operation of modern urban societies.

Useful place names

- When linked to a coordinated system of house numbers and postal codes, a city's street names become elements of a geolocational system that makes life easier in many ways for many people.
- Government authorities can provide public services or collect taxes. Commercial companies can target potential customers. Ordinary people can find their way to a place they have never been before. Names are an essential and useful part of our daily life.
- We can therefore argue that they are not trivial and that we should ensure they serve us well.

Toponymic Research

- The field of toponymy has experienced a major transformation over the course of the last 20 years. A variety of new thematic concerns have been explored, and there is now a far greater recognition that toponymic research should be firmly grounded in an explicit engagement with critical theories of space, place, and landscape (Rose-Redwood, 2010: 458)

Place-naming and Political Power

- The semiotic association between place naming and political power can be traced back throughout the course of history
- It is relatively common to name places after their founder or some person of influence; e.g. Bandara Soekarno-Hatta
- We also see examples of naming places (streets, airports, etc.) after national heroes or historical figures; e.g. Jl. Jend. Sudirman

Place-naming Today

- The image-generating power of toponyms has long played a role in the political economy of place promotion
- Place-naming rights are increasingly bought and sold like commodities, used to project the power of corporations and privatize public space and memory (Boyd, 2000; Yurchak, 2000).

Fieldwork

- Yogyakarta has been selected as the venue for the 4th United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names Training Course
- The history and prehistory of a place is often implicated in geographical names
- We will use the opportunity of this unique location as a case study in learning about a place's history, its ancient kingdoms, and prehistoric settlements, to see the connection between history, geography, archeology, culture and place names
- Let's take a look back in time in Yogyakarta

The Last Javanese Monarchy

- Kraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat is a Javanese monarchy located today in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia
- It traces its origins back to the sixteenth century.
- In 1558, the King of Pajang gave land in the area of **Mentaok** to Ki Ageng Pemanahan and land in the area of **Pati** to Ki Panjawi because they had helped to kill his enemy Arya Penangsang

Mentaok

- Mentaok was forested and unpopulated. Ki Ageng Pemanahan encouraged people to move there from **Pajang** and **Grobogan**. According to historical records, during the journey to Mentaok, the migrants – the ancestors of the Mataram kingdom – stopped on the way to rest at the village of **Taji** in the **Prambanan** area. They were welcomed there by Ki Gede Karanglo with great hospitality (de Graaf, 1941:63—64)

Mataram

- The forested area of Metaok was cleared to make way for human settlement which developed into the Mataram kingdom
- All of the Mataram kings can trace their ancestry back to Ki Ageng Sela (who came from [Sesela](#) village in the Grobogan region).
- Ki Ageng Sela had a son named Ki Ageng Ngenis (who resided in [Lawiyan](#) Village) and a grandson named Ki Ageng Pemanahan (after the village [Manahan](#))

Capital Cities of Mataram

- Since 1588, the capital city of the Mataram kingdom has moved a number of times (Daldjoeni, 1984):
 - Kota Gede
 - Kartasura
 - Plered
 - Yogyakarta

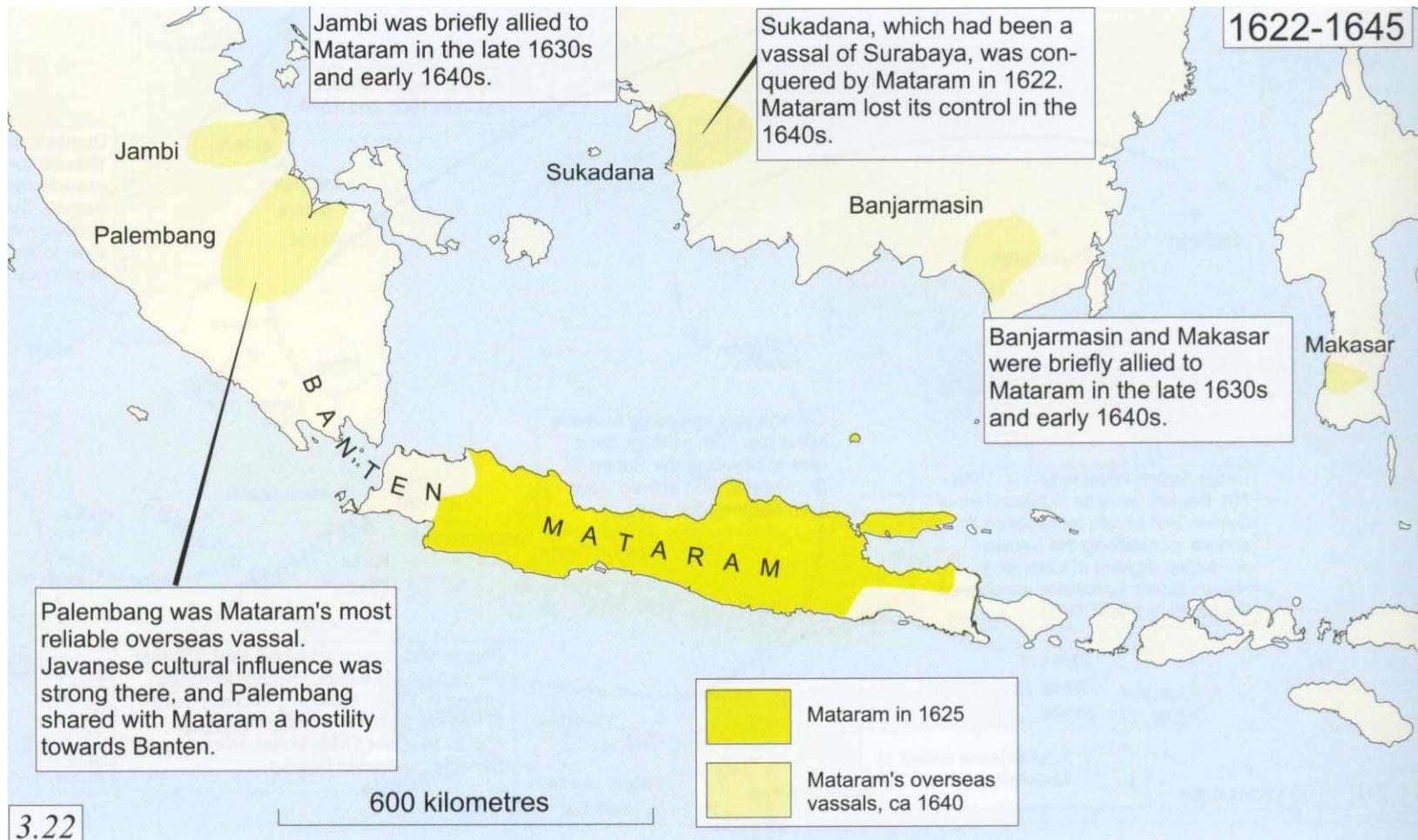
Mataram Sultanate during Sultan Agung's Reign (1613-1645)



The maximum extent of Mataram Sultanate expansions during the reign of Sultan Agung Hanyokrokusumo (1613-1645). The map shows in the darker color the Sultanate territory at the beginning of his reign and in the medium color the extent of expansion by the end.

© 2011 Gunkarta Gunawan Kartapranata, Wikipedia, based on Chalid Latief dan Irwin Lay. 1997 Atlas Sejarah Indonesia dan Dunia. Jakarta: Pembina Peraga

Mataram's overseas empire



Cribb, Robert. 2000. *Historical Atlas of Indonesia*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon. p. 89

Kraton Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat

- Mataram itself refers to the areas around present-day Yogyakarta.
- Based on The Giyanti Treaty with the Dutch Colonial Government, the Mataram Sultanate was split into two on February 13, 1755 becoming the Yogyakarta Sultanate and the Surakarta Sultanate
- The Sultanate of Yogyakarta was also called Mataram Islam
 - Founded on February 13, 1755
 - Integrated with Indonesia on September 5, 1945
 - The Special Region of Yogyakarta was created after the war of independence ended and was legalized on August 3, 1950
 - The Sultan is the Head of the Special Region of Yogyakarta. He has responsibility as the Head of the Territory and takes the title of Governor

The Yogyakarta Kraton - Front Hall



Pagelaran, the front hall of the Yogyakarta Palace (*Kraton*), is a multi-purpose building. It is situated facing the northern city square (Alun-alun Lor). © Gunawan Kartapranata 6 June 2008, Wikipedia

Princes and princesses of the Yogyakarta Sultanate (1870)



This photo, taken around 1870, shows young princes and princesses of the Yogyakarta royal family. They are, from left to right: Gusti Raden Mas Soedjadi, Gusti Raden Mas Poentoadji, Gusti Raden Mas Poetra, Gusti Raden Mas Soegiri, Bendara Raden Mas Soegirman. These children, when they became adults, were accorded royal titles as follows, again from left to right: Bendara Pangeran Harjo Soerjodiningrat, Kanjeng Gusti Pangeran Hadipati Djoeminah, Sampejan Dalem Kanjeng Gusti Anom Pangeran Adipati Hamengkunegara, Gusti Pangeran Harjo Mangkukusumo, Ngarsa Sampejan Dalem Dalem Inggang Sinuwun Kanjeng Sultan HB VIII.

Source: Tropenmuseum; Photographer: Kassian Cephas (1845–1912). Wikipedia

Traces of Mataram

- Traces of the expansion of the Mataram kingdom outside its main area of power can be found in the place names of the Special Region of Jakarta:
 - **Matraman** District, East Jakarta (Ruchiat, 2012: 113—115)
 - was the location of the **Mataram** troops final defense in the campaign against Batavia
 - **Pegangsaan** Sub-district, Central Jakarta (Ruchiat, 2012: 123)
 - was formerly a handicraft center for fine metal workers in bronze (**gangsa**). Many of the artisans came from Mataram in Java
 - **Jagakarsa** District, South Jakarta (Zaenuddin, 2012: 257—258)
 - originated from a general called Raden Bagus **Jagakarsa** Surobinangun during the Mataram war of 1625. After his defeat against Batavia, he decided not to return to Mataram, fearing that he might be beheaded

Mataram Soldier



Pasukan Mataram (Haks, Leo dan Guus Maris. 1995.

Lexicon of Foreign Artists who Visualized Indonesia (1600-1950).

Singapura: Archipelago Press), found in Ruchiat, Rachmat. 2011. *Asal-Usul Nama Tempat di Jakarta*. Jakarta: Masup. p. 114.

According to history

- The historical records for the Mataram Kingdom tell us that a number of names have been found:
 - The Special Region of Yogyakarta: [Mentaok](#), [Pati](#), [Pajang](#), [Grobogan](#), [Prambanan](#), [Taji](#), [Sesela](#), [Lawiyan](#), [Manahan](#), [Kota Gede](#), [Karta](#), [Plered](#), [Surakarta](#), and [Yogyakarta](#)
 - The Special Region of Jakarta: [Matraman](#), [Pegangsaan](#), and [Jagakarsa](#)
- Tracing these names from history is not difficult, especially if we also include information from prehistoric settlements

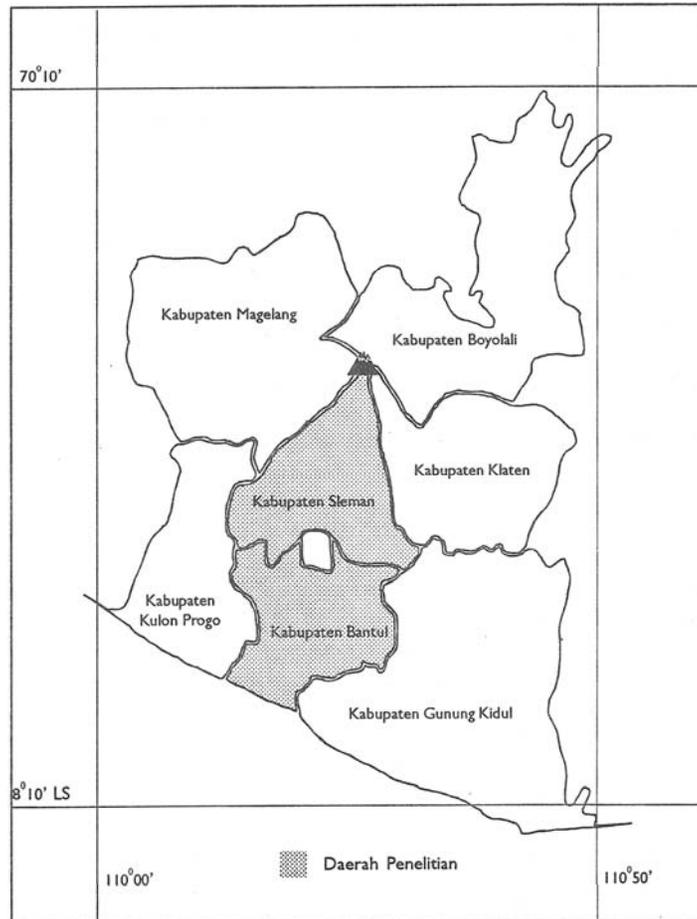
Prehistoric settlements

- Spatial archeology does not focus on individual artefacts but rather on their distribution. It also looks at the spatial distribution of sites, and the relation between ancient sites and the kinds of human activity that were found in prehistoric times
- Spatial archeology research can tell us about the location of archeological sites, and help to trace the existence of present day villages which were first settled hundreds or even thousands of years ago

Spatial Archeology Research

- Mundardjito performed spatial archeological research on the location of sites from the Hindu-Buda period in Sleman and Bantul, Yogyakarta
- He found that there was evidence that the old temples had been built using the ancient Indian texts Manasara-Silapasastra and Silpa Prakasa
- See the Appendix (in the paper) on the location of temples (candi) in Yogyakarta from the spatial archeology research by Mundardjito (2002: 54--60)

Location of research on temples (candi) in Yogyakarta



Source: Mundardjito. 2002.
*Pertimbangan Ekologis:
Penempatan Situs Masa
Hindu-Buda di Daerah
Yogyakarta*. Jakarta:
Wedatama Widya Sastra
(WWS) and École Française
d'Extrême-Orient. p. 33

Local names

- UNGEGN advises that local names are used
- The benefit of this is that it will help to preserve the history of the local community, their upheavals, settlements and migrations
- All geographical names, whether of natural features, man-made features or administrative areas, can be identified through spatial archeological research.
- This will have a positive impact in preserving and respecting the culture of the local community

Conclusion

- The function and role of history in the naming of topographic features is very important if we want to understand the local culture
- The history of the past helps us to know whether geographical names are relatively new or if they have existed for hundreds of years
- Tracking the name of historical topographic features requires the involvement of a team of people with different expertise. Linguists, who are specialists in geographical linguistics, should work with archeologists, who are specialists in spatial archeology