

# Umpungeng Megalith Complex, Proto-Historic Settlement in the Highlands of South Sulawesi, Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

This research discusses the Umpungeng megalith complex, a historical proto-settlement in the highlands of Soppeng Regency, South Sulawesi. The importance of this megalith complex is the authenticity and completeness of its monuments, and still the use of a number of ritual mediums for the spiritual purposes of the community. The method used is the archaeological method as the main method, while textual analysis of ancient manuscripts becomes a secondary method. Similarly, interviews are also conducted to confirm artifactual information and ancient manuscript information. The results showed that Umpungeng is an important toponym of the Kingdom of Soppeng. The structure and pattern of Umpungeng settlements follow a topography whose location is uneven. Megaliths that serve as a cult medium are positioned in the middle while residential areas are scattered far apart, following the topography of the mountains. The contribution of this research is to provide an overview of the pattern of 14th-century settlement in the highlands of South Sulawesi.

**Keywords:** *Umpungeng, megalith, proto history, Soppeng*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Umpungeng Megalith Complex is at an altitude of 750 meters above sea level, located in Umpungeng Village, Lalabata Subdistrict, Soppeng Regency, South Sulawesi Province. Umpungeng is referred to in the *Attoriolonna Soppeng* lontarak<sup>1</sup> as an important wanuwa among the 60 wanuwa of the Kingdom of Soppeng Rilau, one of the inland kingdoms in South Sulawesi. At first glance, there is not much more interesting about wanuwa Umpungeng than other wanuwa who support the pre-Islamic Kingdom of Soppeng Rilau. We chose to discuss the Umpungeng site in this paper for two reasons. <sup>2</sup>The reason pertama is megalithic monuments that are characteristic of proto-historical settlements in South Sulawesi are still complete so that it is possible to trace the pattern. Compared to other sites that are universal, the megalith of Umpungeng site is

relatively more complex and until now is still maintained and sacred by the community. The megalith component of Umpungeng consists of: bracelet meeting stones, *punden berundak*, *dolmen*, *lumpang* (stone jar), perforated stones, altars, inauguration stones, upright stones, stone containers, and scratching stones. The application of careful settlement analysis of all monuments and other settlement data can produce an overview of proto-historical settlement patterns *wanuwa* Umpungeng. The second reason is the location of Umpungeng at an altitude area, where the settlements in South Sulawesi are more widely spread in low-lying areas or near riverbanks that are more fertile from an agricultural point of view. Until now, our understanding of the pattern of megalithic megaliths of the proto-historical period of the Highlands of South Sulawesi is still very limited.

If the use of megalith monuments is seen as a trend that characterizes proto-historical settlements, then the reconstruction of

<sup>1</sup> local kronim written using lontara script

<sup>2</sup> wanuwa is a village-level political union.

Umpungeng settlement produced by this paper can be an important reference in studying the historical *wanuwa-wanuwa* located in the highland region of South Sulawesi. Here lies the contribution of this paper. The research questions asked are:

1. What archaeological findings are found in wanuwa Umpungeng?
2. When wanuwa Umpungeng played a role in the history of the Kingdom of Soppeng Rilau?
3. How to picture the pattern of Umpungeng settlement?

## 2. METHOD

Intensive research at our Umpungeng site was conducted between 2017 and 2021, initiated by interview activities on a number of village elders in Umpungeng traditional houses. The village elders provide information about the story of the formation of *wanuwa* Umpungeng, Umpungeng's position in the government structure of the Kingdom of Soppeng as well as the rituals and functions of Umpungeng megalith monuments. After that, a survey was conducted to get information about the shape, distribution and function of Umpungeng megaliths. Library studies are also conducted to strengthen Umpungeng information in relation to the history of the Kingdom of Soppeng. The reading of the ancient manuscripts of the National Archives collection was carried out by Dr. Muhlis Hadrawi, M.Hum. to reinforce Umpungeng's position in the government structure of the pre-Islamic Soppeng Kingdom.

Archaeological data includes analysis of authenticity, shape, function and distribution to find out the pattern of ancient Umpungeng. Analysis of the data of interview results is done by confirming the information of each informant so that the validity is higher. The study of the manuscript is done by placing the figures and momentum mentioned in the manuscript with a chronicle or *lontaraq Attoriolonna Soppeng*. All archaeological analysis results, interview data, ancient manuscripts and literature studies are then integrated to explain the type of archaeological findings, setting the time of wanuwa's role. Umpungeng in the history of the Kingdom of Soppeng Rilau as well as a picture of the pattern of ancient settlements Umpungeng.

## 3. RESEARCH RESULTS

### 3.1 Research Location

Megalith Umpungeng is located in Umpungeng Hamlet and old Umpungeng Village, both included in the administrative Umpungeng Village, Lalabata Subdistrict. The topography of the region is medium and hard corrugated so there is almost no natural flat land. Houses that only number about 30 stand on sloping land or on hillsides and mountains that have been razed. The settlement occupies a location with a height of between 700 meters above sea level to 800 m above sea level.

The distance of the Umpungeng megalith from the capital Watansoppeng is about 35 km. Road access to Umpungeng Village can only be passed by motorbikes and horses. The types of vegetation found in Umpungeng Village are clove trees, banana trees, pine trees, palm trees, coconut trees and coffee trees. At the foot of a row of hills, flow several rivers



Figure 1. Mountain topography of Umpungeng Site with houses far apart

### 3.2 The shape and distribution of megaliths

Archaeological finds at the Umpungeng site consist of an arrangement of bracelets, two terraces, three dolmen, two stone lumpangs, five perforated stones, three altars, one inauguration stone, one upright stone and one stone tray. The sacred megalith monuments are on the top of a hill whose north and south sides are steep. At the foot of the hill flowed several tributaries. All megalithic monuments have names. It has a different function in the implementation of ritual ceremonies. The location of the megalith monument is surrounded by people's homes.



Figure 2. The Umpungeng megalith

People refer to the stone-gathering bracelet as *Barugae*, a round shape that sometimes revolves around several parts. There are three, in the south, east, and west. (Figure 2). Ladder on the east side is a ladder used to go up to *barugae* and the stairs on the west side are stairs down or places out after a ritual ceremony. Batu temu bracelet is located on the ridge, which serves as a place of worship, inauguration and deliberation. There are 56 chunks of stone that make up the arrangement of the bracelet, also serving as a seat when the ritual takes place. The dimensions of the arrangement of the bracelet are long 17.50 meters and 15 meters wide. 20 meters.



Figure 3. Distribution of Umpungeng megalith monuments

Arranged with the arrangement of bracelets, there are other monuments with different functions when the ritual takes place, such as stone *lumpang*, perforated stone, stepped *punden*, dolmen, scratching stone, and inauguration stone. *Punden* stepped is an arrangement of chunks of stone that form three steps, function for the medium of worship, as well as being a barrier to profane and sacred territory. The location of the *undak-undak* (terrace) in the western part of the arrangement of stone meeting bracelets.

*Bocco-boccoe* It is the name given by the community for the stone *steps*. This stepped *punden* is in the form of a circle consisting of three levels of terrace as follows:

1. First Terrace, dimensions width 64 cm, height 65 cm and diameter 520 cm.
2. Second Terrace, dimensions width 80 cm, height 70 cm, diameter 360 cm.
3. Third Terrace, dimensions width 55 cm, and height 50 cm.

Other megalith artifacts are perforated stones, some have one hole and there are also more than one even there are chunks of stone with a number of holes of ten. There are five hollow stones at the Umpungeng site, all of them inside sacred locations. The average hole diameter size is 10 cm, serving as a tool for processing food and grain during the inauguration ceremony. All of them show a smooth hole, explaining its function as a tool to process grains. Lumpang stones were also found, having a large hole size. There are two stone lumps in this site, is in the stone arrangement East side bracelet. The type of rock is andesite rock, all of which aggravates the smooth surface of the hole, clarifying its function for pounding.

Another megalith is the dolmen, meaning a stone table of monolith rock shapes. Dolmen on this site are located on the west and south side of the bracelet arrangement. There are three *dolmen* on the site, serving as a table where food and all offerings are laid out during the ritual ceremony. In the middle of the arrangement of the bracelet, there is an inauguration stone that leads to a stepped *punden*. Because it is considered the most sacred by the surrounding community, this inauguration stone is given an iron fence around this stone. This inauguration stone is circular but not symmetrical which is believed to be *Possi Tanae* or the center of the land of the village of Umpungeng. About the last five years, the community called *batu pallantikang* Umpungeng as the center point of Indonesia. This inauguration stone serves as the place of the establishment of the person who will be appointed by Arung Umpungeng as *Matoa* or village head after the verdict of the results of deliberations conducted by *Matoa Wanua*. *Matoa* who was appointed stood on this stone and faced towards the *punden* in the seat of Arung umpungeng to be recited his oath. The

size of this inauguration stone, 37 cm long and 50 cm wide.

Megaliths of altar stones are also on the Umpungeng site. Altar stones are flat stones that are usually associated with other finds such as menhir, dolmen, arrangement of bracelets, dakon and scratched stones. The altar stone of the Umpungeng site is on the third step with a north-south orientation. The condition of this altar stone is still intact and this altar stone serves as a place to store offerings during ritual ceremonies and deliberations conducted at the Umpungeng Site. There are three altar stones on this site. The flat surface indicates that the altar stone is an artificial monument.

Scratching stones are small or large stones, on the surface there are artificial scratches, which are made by scratching to form grooves of lines with certain motifs and intended for a specific purpose [1]. The function of the stone is to gain supernatural powers and as a religious symbol [2]. The findings of scratched stones at the Umpungeng Site amounted to two pieces, with the condition of the findings are still intact but have been overgrown by moss so that scratches contained in the chunk of the stone are difficult to identify if only seen with the eyes only. The stone scratching on this site serves as a symbol of every ceremony that has taken place on the Umpungeng Site, especially ceremonies that concern Inauguration. This stone is located in the stepped punden on the third step and the one bergores stone is between the houses of the residents to facilitate the inscription of the scraped stone named the stone scratched I and II.

The finding of rectangular scratched stone has five sides with the shape of a streaky or geometric range scratches. (See photos 25 and 26) chunks of rock from above and scratching motifs found on geometrically shaped chunks of rock. The size of the stone is 42 cm long and 85 cm wide This scraped stone is located among the settlements. The shape of a fairly large bergores stone has six sides with an east-south orientation. The shape of an upright striped geometric scratch that serves as a sign that there has been a ritual ceremony regarding the inauguration with the meaning of this upright striped scratch. The condition of this scratching stone has been overgrown by moss (see photos of 27 and 28 chunks of stone that contain scratching motifs and motifs on chunks of stone). The size of the stone is 130 cm long and 120 cm wide.

Upright stone is found at the Umpungeng Site which is made of andesite stone that is quite large and then placed upright. This upright stone is located 20 meters from the building of the arrangement of stone meeting bracelets. Upright stone is next to mosque located around the site (See photo 29 appears front of upright stone). People used to call it *Attajangeng Stone* or stone of caught by daylight, where according to mythology if during the day the stone can not walk to the intended place because the dawn has appeared. The role of this stone as a gate or welcome stone and a marker that will enter the sacred area is the arrangement of bracelets where ritual ceremonies are held. The size of this upright stone is 60 cm long, 90 cm high and 83 cm wide.

This finding was identified as a stone container because its shape resembles a container to hold water. The function of this container according to the surrounding community is used as a place to store water. This finding is around the people's house, precisely behind the mosque at Umpungeng Village with the find on the east side, (See photo of 30 visible in front of a stone container). The size of the find is 75 cm long, 73 cm high, 78 cm wide and 22 cm hole depth.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

Umpungeng settlement patterns follows the morphological groove of the hard corrugated landscape. At the very least, the components of Umpungeng settlement consist of residential locations, megalithic ritual locations, traditional houses or palaces that are places to store regalia, road networks, wells, tombs, and plantation land. When compared to other settlements in the same period in South Sulawesi, Umpungeng settlement is indeed very earthy while other settlements are more complex, especially those in the lowlands.

Umpungeng megalith monuments are in the middle of the settlement with a tenuous house distance. The center of the settlement is *possitana* (center of the earth), located in the middle of the arrangement of stone tombs. *Possitana* is even a complex with ritual monuments such as dolmen, perforated stones or stone altars. Compared to other Soppeng Kingdom buffer toponym that also contain megalith monuments, the Umpungeng megalith complex has a more complete component. On other Soppeng Kingdom buffer toponym such as Tinco, Lawo, Ujung or Botto sites, not as complete as megaliths in Umpungeng.

Based on the comparison of megaliths in Soppeng, Umpungeng megaliths do have the privilege of the completeness of the monument. The completeness of Umpungeng megalith consists of stepped punden, dolmen, lumpang, perforated stone, altar stone, inauguration stone, upright stone and scratched stone, all on the arrangement of the structure and the inside of the bracelet meeting arrangement. Basically, there is a firmness of the distribution of megalith Umpungeng that describes the perception and appreciation of the Umpungeng community towards more complex ritual ceremonies.

Results of local manuscript or chronicle search by Mr. Dr. Muhlis Hadrawi regarding the area and megalith structure of Umpungeng shows that Umpungeng is a wanua (village) that has an important position as the center of rites (ceremonies) within the scope of the Kingdom of Soppeng, not in terms of politics, power, economy, and troop strength. As the center of the rite (ceremony), Umpungeng is thought to be the earlier wanua appeared and is the area of origin of the surrounding settlements. Therefore, Umpungeng is referred to as the country of origin by the ancestors who made the mountain village around Bulu Dua. It is only natural that then Umpungeng becomes a ritual center recognized by the surrounding villages.



Figure 4. Altar of Umpungeng

The high, great and revered authority of the other *wanuwa-wanuwa*, it is because they have a high rite of authority. The rite (ceremony) in question is to make a decision for the farm and decide who will be the head of the village (*wanuwa*) carried out on the arrangement of the bracelet. The position and authority of Umpungeng as the center of the rite besides Umpungeng is an important wanua in the system of government of the pre-Islamic Soppeng kingdom, as it is still preserved in the collective memory of the people who say that "de'nawedding ilanti' datue ri Soppeng narekko

*de'pa natakkappo matoa wanuwanna Umpungeng"*. This is what causes the importance of Arung Umpungeng if the inauguration ceremony of King/Datu Soppeng in the past. In addition, the Umpungeng custom is referred to as *Ade' Pitue* (Seven Customary Council) If there is a traditional ceremony performed, the seven customary components of the Umpungeng customary system serve as the organizer of the ritual ceremony.

In the past, the seven customary components lived around the location of *possi tana* (center of the earth). The thing that strengthens Umpungeng has the respected and appreciated authority of other *wanuwa-wanuwa*. The seven common play a role in the ritual ceremony performed in the arrangement of Umpungeng bracelets, where *Matoa* acts as the leader of the ceremony, and the so-called *Pompuna* acts as a representative of *Matoa*, Arung Tudang acts as a provider of equipment, while acts as a *pabbicara* as an interpreter, there is a role as a village guard called *pabatte*, there is a role in taking care of the affairs of the village and there is a role as a *sanro* or village shaman who makes *rekko ota* (leaves). Betel folded in the shape of a triangle as a condition of the ritual to be performed. The traditional ceremony that is still carried out to this day is a traditional ceremony called *maccera tana*.

The annual ceremony is called *Mallangi Arajang* or washing regalia. The regalia owned is a piece of Arung Palakka hair that is stored in *Arajang* house. For the bugis community, *Arajang* is a sacred heritage left by *Manurung* (people who come down from the sky) or Arung (king) as a reminder to the local community. For the people of Umpungeng Arung Palakka haircut is a *arajang* (heirloom) that will continue to be cared for and purified every year through a procession of customs. The process of the ceremony *maccera tana* and *mallangi arajang* is carried out 3 days 3 nights which on the first day performs *maccera tana* or give offerings on "*pocci tana*", the second day of the ceremony takes holy water in *pitu bujung* (7 wells) for the washing of *Arajang* on the top of mount Latuli Dusun Umpungeng, after the holy water taken from *pitu bujung* is then brought down to the *manurung* house or where the Arung Palakka (King of Palakka) haircut is stored, The third day of the last process of the traditional Umpungeng ceremony is bathing or purifying Arung Palakka haircut using holy water that has been taken from *pitu bujung*, after completion of bathing, *arajang* is returned to its place and will be removed again when *arajang*

umpungeng ready to be purified next year. The traditional ceremony of lontara reading is held every three years in August and September.

The life of the Soppeng community is the same as other Bugis society, before embracing the religion Islam, also influenced by the assumption of supernatural forces circling the world. Until now the rest of the assumption can still be seen in their lives such as the belief in magic, the worship of sacred places and the spirits of ancestors. Belief in the supernatural power that causes people tend to look at places of height such as mountain peaks and hills. That is why at the height they perform worship ceremonies, as well as ceremonies related to the most important peaks of their success [3].

The thing that encourages the public to choose the place of height as a place to hold ceremonies and the burial place of the king or figures who are respected and exalted is intended to provide a place for the spirit of the figure not to go away from them and the spirit will still lead and protect them. Because they believe the place of height will make it easier for them to communicate with the spirits or the gods. This is due to the previous people's assumption that the place of height is the gathering place of their ancestors' spirits and they believe that their ancestors came from the sky or "patala sky".

According to the story that developed among the community that the village was called Umpungeng because the first to inhabit Umpungeng was a To-Manurung with his wife who was also a son tomanurung from Tete (Bone) named Besse Timo. Before they lived in Umpungeng, at first they lived in another village called "*Kande Awang*" hill which means to eat chaff. Named Kande Awang because as long as they lived on the hill, they only ate rice husks because they did not know that what rice ate was its contents. At that time to meet their needs only depend on the nature of the surroundings. *Tomanurung* who lives in Bukit Kande Awang with his wife accompanied by a chicken.

After some time living in Bukit Kande Awang food and plants around it is getting thinner, so chickens start looking for a place to find food. *Tomanurung* was astonished to see the behavior of his chickens who were no longer always around the hill where they lived. After *To-manurung* followed his chicken where it went and it turned out that the chicken was on a hill, where the chicken was playing with the ground while digging under a large tree called

*Ajuara* (Bugis) or Banyan Tree. The behavior of the chicken that the Bugis call "*ma-bumpung*". Based on this so that the hill is called Bukit Umpungeng. And after that *Tomanurung* moved from Kande Awang hill to Umpungeng Hill, because Umpungeng hill is considered fertile and can meet their daily needs, and in the end they make a house with the help of Lord Patappae (God Almighty) called "*Bola Tomanurung*". (Interview with Mr. Rahman on September 15, 2019).

Based on the story of MitoLogi above, it can give an idea that Kampung Umpungeng as well as other bugis areas show the myth of Tomanurung is the concept of the king's position for the formation of the kingdom, while providing supremacy (special knighthood) for the king and his descendants as the top layer in the social life of the community.

The results of our interviews show that the houses that exist now are old houses or at least the location of old houses. We believe the information is because it is not easy to find a location for housing in Umpungeng because the flat land is almost non-existent. The shape of the house is a stage, confirming the origin and understanding of pre-Islamic beliefs that megalithis.

Thus the megalith of Umpungeng still exists today because of its function and role as a medium of great rites. The honor and prestige of the Umpungeng rite compared to other toponyms in Soppeng is higher, and it is this ritual aura that makes this megalith complex still survive because it is protected by a strong mythology. Megalith Umpungeng is a picture of a monument in a settlement that is highly respected and protected by its people who are still overwhelmed by the mythic mind.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In terms of the potential of natural resources, Umpungeng is a toponym that is not surplus and tends to be resource poor. Its people are not large only relying on the cultivation of corn, bananas, millet, or yams, but its position in the structure of the Soppeng kingdom is very important. This is because Umpungeng is symbolically superior to other toponym that is more surplus. The mythic mind of the people makes this site very important for the kingdom of Soppeng. Therefore, megalithic monuments protected by powerful myths still survive today. Umpungeng represents a mythic community settlement that has very rarely survived now and its settlement patterns can be a comparison

material to imagine proto-historical or 14th century settlements in South Sulawesi.

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