

Philological and Historical Analysis of Babad Nagari Purworejo: The Socio-Political Evolution of Bagelen into a Modern Regency

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The study of Javanese historiography requires a meticulous examination of the **Babad** tradition, a genre of literature that blends genealogical records, historical accounts, and mythological narratives. Among the most significant manuscripts concerning the Central Java region are the **Babad Nagari Purwareja** and the **Babad Dipanegara**. These texts are not merely literary artifacts; they serve as critical primary sources for understanding the transition of the **Bagelen** region into the **Purworejo** Regency following the aftermath of the Java War (1825–1830). As a technical analysis of regional evolution, this article explores the structural, linguistic, and socio-political dimensions of these manuscripts and their implications for modern regional development.

The Theoretical Framework of Javanese Historiography and the Babad Tradition

To understand the **Babad Nagari Purworejo**, one must first grasp the technical definition of a *Babad*. In Javanese philology, a Babad is a chronological account often written in **Macapat** (traditional Javanese poetry) that chronicles the rise and fall of kingdoms, the lineages of noble families, and significant territorial shifts. The **Babad Nagari Purworejo** specifically documents the administrative birth of Purworejo, which occurred on February 27, 1831, under the colonial administration of the Dutch East Indies and the local leadership of **R. Adipati Cokronegoro I**.

The Mechanics of Macapat Verse in Historical Documentation

Most versions of the **Babad Nagari Purworejo**, including the editions preserved in the National Library of Indonesia and those digitized by Perpustakaan Press, utilize the *Macapat* system. This system is governed by strict rules known as **Paugeran**, which consist of:

- Guru Gatra: The number of lines in each stanza (pada).
- Guru Wilangan: The number of syllables per line.
- Guru Lagu: The vowel sound at the end of each line (rhyme scheme).

The use of **Macapat** served a dual purpose: it made the history easier to memorize for the *Pujangga* (court poets) and ensured the preservation of the text through oral and written transmission. Technical analysis of the manuscript reveals that meters such as *Dhandhanggula* are often used for introductory sections to convey a sense of beauty and hope, while *Pangkur* is utilized for descriptions of warfare or intense conflict, such as the **Perang Diponegoro**.

The Historical Transition: From Bagelen to Purworejo

The transition from the ancient territory of **Bagelen** to the regency of **Purworejo** is a central theme in these manuscripts. Historically, Bagelen was a region of significant strategic importance to both the Mataram Sultanate and the Dutch. However, the turbulence of the Java War necessitated a new administrative structure. The **Babad Dipanegara** and **Babad Nagari Purwareja II** highlights how the resistance led by **Prince Diponegoro** fundamentally altered the landscape of the **Kedu** Residency.

The Role of R. Adipati Cokronegoro I

Formerly known as **Demang Cakradiwirya**, R. Adipati Cokronegoro I was the first Regent of Purworejo. The manuscripts serve as a legitimizing document for his rule. Unlike many other babads that focus purely on royal myth, the **Babad Nagari Purworejo** contains relatively pragmatic accounts of urban planning, including the establishment of the **Alun-alun**, the **Great Mosque**, and the colonial military installation at **Kedungkebo**.

Technical Comparison: Babad Dipanegara vs. Babad Nagari Purworejo

While often bundled together in archival collections (such as Jilid II and Jilid III mentioned in the research data), these two texts serve different functional purposes. The following table illustrates the core differences between these historical records.

Feature	Babad Dipanegara	Babad Nagari Purworejo
Primary Focus	The life, spiritual journey, and resistance of Prince Diponegoro.	The administrative establishment and lineage of the Purworejo Regency.
Temporal Scope	1825–1830 (The Java War).	1831 onwards (Post-war reconstruction and governance).
Authorial Perspective	Often subjective/autobiographical (in the case of Babad Diponegoro Menado).	Bureaucratic and legitimizing (authored by court officials/ Cokronegoro I).
Geographic Center	Yogyakarta and the Magelang/Kedu hinterlands.	Purworejo (formerly Bagelen) and the Kedungkebo barracks.
Literary Structure	High emphasis on Babad Perang (War Chronicles).	Emphasis on Tata Praja (Governance and state-building).

Philological Workflow for Manuscript Analysis

To extract reliable historical data from the **Babad Nagari Purwareja**, researchers employ a rigorous philological method. This process is essential because the original manuscripts are often written in **Aksara Jawa**(Javanese Script) and utilize archaic vocabulary that is no longer in common use.

1. Description of the Manuscript

The first step involves documenting the physical state of the codex. As noted in the data, the **Babad Nagari Purworejo** spans over 360 pages. Technical descriptions include measuring dimensions (e.g., 23 cm height), assessing paper quality (often European paper or *Dluwang*), and identifying the script type (*Aksara Jawa* or *Pegon*).

2. Transliteration and Transcription

This is the technical conversion of the **Aksara Jawa** into the Latin alphabet. This process must be letter-perfect to avoid altering the *Guru Wilangan* of the poem. For instance, the phrase "Hestining Rasa Hambuka Praja" is not just a motto; it is a **Candra Sangkala** (a chronogram) that represents a specific year in the Javanese calendar.

3. Critical Edition and Translation

Scholars compare different versions (Jilid II, III, and various copies) to identify *corruptions* in the text. The final goal is to produce a translation that preserves the technical meaning of administrative titles (e.g., *Demang*, *Adipati*, *Kumpeni*) while making the content accessible to modern historians.

Socio-Cultural Modeling: "Hestining Rasa Hambuka Praja"

Modern regional development in Purworejo is often modeled after the socio-cultural principles found in these babads. The motto "**Hestining Rasa Hambuka Praja**" serves as a philosophical foundation for the region. In a technical socio-cultural context, this represents a model of governance that integrates **Ethical Intent (Rasa)** with **Institutional Development (Praja)**.

Spatial Organization and Urban Design

The **Babad Nagari Purworejo** details the specific layout of the town, which follows the traditional Javanese *Catur Gatra Tunggal* (Four Elements in One) model:

- The Center of Power: The Pendopo (Regent's Office).
- The Spiritual Pillar: The Masjid Agung (Great Mosque).
- The Economic Hub: The Pasar (Market).
- The Public Space: The Alun-Alun (Town Square).

The manuscripts also highlight the presence of the **Kedungkebo** military base. Now known as the headquarters for **Yonif 412 Purworejo**, this site represents the historical intersection of Dutch military architecture and Javanese territorial administration. The transition from a *Tangsi Kumpeni* (Company Barracks) to a modern Indonesian military installation is a testament to the geographic continuity described in the Babad.

Analysis of the Babad as a Educational Tool

The **Paguyuban Muda Ganesha** (Alumni of SMA Negeri 1 Purworejo) and other educational entities often use these historical texts to foster a sense of identity. From a pedagogical perspective, the study of the Babad offers several technical benefits for students and historians:

1. Linguistic Skill: Mastery of high-level Javanese (Krama Inggil) and poetic structures.
2. Analytical Thinking: Deciphering political motivations behind text production (e.g., why Cokronegoro I emphasized certain events over others).
3. Heritage Conservation: Understanding the importance of digitizing 19th-century manuscripts to prevent the loss of data due to physical degradation.

Challenges in Interpreting the Babad Nagari Purwareja

Despite their richness, these manuscripts present several technical challenges for the modern researcher. One primary issue is **Historiographical Subjectivity**. The Babad was often commissioned by the ruling elite, meaning it may gloss over failures or exaggerate the divine right of the Regent.

Failure Modes in Historical Analysis

- Anachronism: Applying modern democratic values to a 19th-century feudal-colonial administrative text.
- Philological Errors: Misinterpreting the Sengkalan (chronograms), leading to a misdating of historical events by decades.
- Source Scarcity: While Jilid II and III are documented, other volumes or oral traditions may offer conflicting accounts that are difficult to reconcile.

Solutions for Researchers

To mitigate these challenges, a **Cross-Referencing Methodology** is required. Historians must compare the Javanese accounts in the **Babad Nagari Purworejo** with Dutch archival records (such as the *Algemeen Rijksarchief* in The Hague) regarding the **Residency of Kedu**. This dual-perspective approach allows for a more objective reconstruction of events, such as the exact details of the territorial handover in 1831.

The Enduring Legacy of the Bagelen-Purworejo Narrative

The evolution from **Bagelen** to **Purworejo** is a story of resilience and adaptation. The **Babad Nagari Purworejo** captures a moment in time when a traditional society was forced to navigate the complexities of colonial bureaucracy while maintaining its cultural soul. The detailed accounts of **Demang Cakradiwirya's** ascent and the meticulous documentation of the region's geography provided in the 2020 Perpunas Press publication ensure that this knowledge remains available for future generations.

Ultimately, the manuscripts serve as a bridge between the era of **Prince Diponegoro** and the modern Indonesian

state. By analyzing these texts through a technical and philological lens, we gain not only a history of a specific regency but also a deeper understanding of the broader socio-political shifts that defined 19th-century Java. The integration of history, literature, and administrative record-keeping within the **Babad Nagari Purworejo** remains a pinnacle of Javanese intellectual achievement, providing a model for how regional identity can be preserved amidst the tides of change.

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