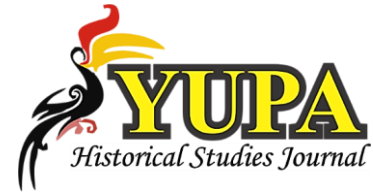


P-ISSN: 2541-6960; E-ISSN: 2549-8754

Yupa: Historical Studies Journal

Vol. 8 No. 2, 2024 (263-272)

<http://jurnal.fkip.unmul.ac.id/index.php/yupa>



## The Role of Fort Asa City as a Basic Defense of The Bima Kingdom in 1667

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Submitted	Revised	Accepted
06/03/2023	19/02/2024	01/03/2024

**Abstract** The resistance of the Bima people in defending the kingdom's territory from Dutch colonial colonialism has taken quite a long time, where Asakota Fort has an important role as a maritime defense strategy. The aim of this research is to find out the struggle of the Bima people against the VOC (Verenigde Oost Indische) government from the territory of the Bima kingdom. The results of the research show that the Asakota Fortress had an important role in defending the naval resistance attacks between the Bima kingdom and the VOC government, because it was located in a strategic place to repel VOC warships that wanted to enter the Bima kingdom's territory. Asakota Fort was built during the time of Sultan Abdul Khair Sirajuddin as a sea defense fort at the entrance to the Bima kingdom. At that time the Gowa-Tallo kingdom had been defeated by the Dutch Company and ended with the Bongaya agreement.

**Keywords:** Role, Fort Asakota, Basic, Defense

**Abstrak** Perlawanan rakyat Bima dalam mempertahankan wilayah kerajaan dari penjajahan colonial Belanda telah memakan waktu yang cukup panjang dimana Benteng Asakota mempunyai peran penting sebagai strategi pertahanan laut. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui perjuangan rakyat Bima dalam melawan pemerintahan VOC (Verenigde Oost Indische) dari daerah kekuasaan kerajaan Bima. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Benteng Asakota mempunyai peran penting dalam mempertahankan serangan perlawanan laut antara kerajaan Bima dengan pemerintahan VOC, karena berlokasi di tempat yang strategi untuk menghalau kapal-kapal perang milik VOC yang ingin masuk di wilayah kerajaan Bima. Benteng Asakota dibangun pada masa Sultan Abdul Khair Sirajuddin sebagai benteng pertahanan laut yang berada di pintu masuk kerajaan Bima. Pada saat itu kerajaan Gowa-Tallo telah dikalahkan oleh compeni Belanda dan berakhir dengan perjanjian Bongaya.

**Kata kunci:** Peran, Benteng Asakota, Basic, Pertahanan



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## INTRODUCTION

A long journey of a nation which later became important because there was a civilization that had meaning, especially the meaning of a historical building civilization. The elements contained in a historical building have their own characteristics to record collective memory related to developments from time to time regarding traces of the past. Traces of civilization are a defensive fortress owned by a nation or region which has its own characteristics which depend on the social conditions of its people. Apart from that, the shape of the historic building will influence the values and local wisdom (local genius) of the local community. Historically, the birth and emergence of defensive fortifications in a region and nation is in principle an expression of a society that defends an area or territory from enemy attacks (Raditya et al. 2022).

According to (Mansyur 2006), the existence of forts has been known since prehistoric times, namely to protect themselves from disturbances outside the region. Furthermore, according to (Wibowo 2019), the form of forts in prehistoric times was still very simple with the materials used being made from circular clay mounds to protect settlements or places that were considered important. Meanwhile, according to Ian Hong, a fortress is a barrier between two conflicting parties, namely between those who defend and those who attack. They usually see situations and conditions that allow potential disturbances to occur, so they can respond to the threat of attack. In another opinion, a fort is a series of defensive buildings to strengthen the position and protect an area that is a particular area of power and authority (Anon, 2017).

In the context of war, forts are evidence that a historical event has occurred that Indonesia was once colonized by foreign nations. Colonization began with the journey of Europeans in the 16th century by opening shipping routes to the east in search of spices. After succeeding in obtaining spices and controlling their colonies, the Dutch built a trading partnership by establishing the VOC together with the military to defend their colonies in Indonesia. With the presence of the VOC as a supporter of power for the Dutch nation, the Indonesian people began to feel depressed and full of uncertainty with their lives becoming increasingly chaotic due to the brutality of the Dutch people and their VOC accomplices (Mansyur 2016).

As a result of the Dutch people's continuous control by exploiting the natural resources in the archipelago and the Dutch's treatment of the people with forced labor, the people rebelled. The resistance was commanded by the kings of the archipelago by building strength to defend their territory by building defensive forts. The fort was built by the king and his people as a symbol of defense. The more forts built in a kingdom, the stronger the defense, so that the kingdom experienced prosperity and glory. These defensive fortifications were proof that the colonialists were increasingly under pressure and it was difficult to penetrate the defenses put

up by their people. Popular resistance and high nationalist feelings made the colonial nation hide in its hiding places, even on foot in the archipelago.

These forts are historical witnesses, that the struggle of the Indonesian people to expel the colonial nation on this earth was a struggle full of suffering. This historical evidence shows that the presence of colonialists in the archipelago made the people unhappy and always opposed the invaders. Therefore, considering the importance of the struggle, efforts to remind past events in the midst of the current era of modern development require the disclosure of historical data as an embodiment of the values, attitudes and behavior of society from time to time. The defense and security system developed by the kings could be adjusted based on the geographical conditions in the fort environmen (Sudarwani, Eni, and Sir 2020).

## **METHOD**

This research uses an approach to observing the conformity between the data and the research object. The historical research method is to trace traces of the past using a descriptive qualitative analysis approach, namely carrying out a reconstruction process by explaining a complete point of view to find historical facts. The steps in this research are heuristic, namely the initial stage in finding the historical sources needed. Criticism or verification is a method of proving whether historical sources collected are trustworthy or not. Interpretation is a method of assessing historical facts based on an objective attitude. And historiography, meanwhile, is the final stage in discovering a historical fact by reconstructing historical sources into a historical writing that is independent and free from intervention. For the research locus, Asakota Fort which is located in the Soromandi area of Bima Regency, determine key informants, initial observations of the research area, determine temporary guesses, observations and field theory (Herlina 2020).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Historical Background of Asakota Fort**

Asakota is a stronghold of the Bima Kingdom which is located in Punti Village, Soromandi District. This fort was built during the Dutch colonial government and was discovered at the same time as the eruption of Mount Tambora. Architecturally, the Asakota fort was built with a design consisting of neatly arranged stones with a height of  $\pm 6$  meters and a width of the rock formation of around  $\pm 3$  meters, this gives the impression of being sturdy and strong against enemy attacks. The materials and piles of stones were mostly taken from the Soromandi area and the Bima area in general. Geographically, Asakota Fort is located on the coastline which extends into the city of Bima with an area of 1000 m<sup>2</sup>. This fort is flanked by two mountains between the Soromandi area and the Asakota area, the entrance to Bima Bay.

Asakota Fort still has historical remains, namely an ancient cannon stored in the left corner of the fort facing north of Bima Bay. If you look at the traces, Asakota Fort has two cannons stored in the right corner and the left corner, but what is still there today is the cannon on the left side (Tondo 2005).



Picture 1. Asakota Fort Entrance Signboard  
Source: Personal Documentation

The construction of Fort Asakota took quite a long time considering its location, which made it very difficult to bring in stones from various regions in the Bima kingdom. The construction of this fort uses mountain stone as a material with a construction that is high enough, dense and neat so that it does not easily shake or collapse. The creation of the Asakota fort was a manifestation of protecting oneself from enemy attacks in resistance to the Dutch colonial government. An important preparation in defending the attack was to build an Asakota Fort based on the initiation of Sultan Abdul Khair Sirajuddin as a rectangular defense system for quite a long time. The location of the fort was used as a place to plan strategies in the guerrilla war with colonial troops who wanted to enter the territory of the Bima kingdom (Hidayati 2023).

The existence of the Asakota Fortress was built to repel and spy on ships from colonial troops entering the territory of the Bima Kingdom. This fort was a naval defense base for the war of the Bima kingdom, which was built on a mountain that sloped into the sea. This mountain is called "Nisa" when the sea water recedes, it will appear merged with the land. This fort was discovered in 1908 with relics still stored, namely an ancient cannon, this cannon is the main cannon which is kept in the west corner. Asakota Fort is an ancient relic that has high historical value that must be preserved. However, unfortunately, currently Asakota Fort looks

chaotic and is covered in bushes and the stones are arranged irregularly and are falling into the sea due to not being cared for and paid attention to by the community and related agencies (Bhuana and Sumaryoto 2023).

### **Dutch Occupation in Bima**

In the political situation in the Bima sultanate, the Dutch colonial government began to intervene in the affairs of the Bima sultanate, starting in 1908. The Dutch colonial government intervened by making a political agreement (Lange Politie Contract) between Sultan Ibrahim and the Netherlands (Wibowo 2019). The contents of the agreement stated that Bima became part of the Dutch East Indies nation and was forced to recognize the existence of Dutch colonial power and government in Bima. Through this agreement, the Dutch colonial government invested its power by forcibly collecting taxes and withdrawing harvests from the people of Bima. This social condition boomeranged and then community resistance arose due to the treatment of the Dutch colonial government which colonized the people and the Bima sultanate from various aspects of life (Alrianingrum 2016).



Picture 2. View of the inside of Asakota Fort  
Source: Personal Documentation

The resistance of the people of Bima was commanded by Sultan Salahaddin, who had just replaced his father, Sultan Ibrahim, who had died. Politically, the relationship between the Bima Kingdom and the Dutch colonial government began when an agreement was signed on

December 8 1669 as a result of the Bima Kingdom intervening in the war between the Gowa Kingdom and the Netherlands. In this war, the Gowa kingdom suffered defeat and was forced to sign an agreement with the Dutch in 1667, known as the Bongaya agreement (Malla Avila 2022). The agreement was to sever the cooperative relationship between the Bima kingdom and the Gowa kingdom so that they would not help each other in war. Furthermore, in 1669 the Dutch colonial government began carrying out trading activities in the territory of the Bima king and prohibited the Bima king from collecting port taxes for company ships. Officially the Dutch colonial government exerted its influence when Mr. Haagman was sent to become Resident in Bima in 1938. With the entry of power and influence of the Dutch colonial government, politically he changed the government system of the Bima kingdom by limiting the sultan's rights (Alrianingrum 2016).



Picture 3. One of the cannons left by Fort Asakota  
Source: Personal Documentation

The political situation then became heated when in 1942 there was a shooting and attack on a Javanese and Madurese boat carried out by two Dutch pilots who were traveling from Kendari to Australia. The shooting and attack were a result of the refusal of two pilots' request to take them to Australia. Ahmad Yamin continued, this incident was considered normal by the Dutch colonial government in power in Bima and did not take any action against the two pilots. This incident then caused widespread friction for the youth and PETA soldiers to attack the barracks and their residential areas. This attack was the momentum for the end of the influence and power of the Dutch colonial government in Bima. The people fought back in response to the actions of the two pilots. People's resistance carried out guerrilla warfare to drive the Dutch out of various corners of the Bima region (Ismail 2004).

After the end and departure of the Dutch colonial government, the Bima Sultanate returned to sovereignty. At the same time, the Bima Sultanate was completely in the hands of Sultan Abdul Khair Sirajuddin who then assumed control of social, economic and political policies. The return of the Bima Sultanate to an independent region free from action and intervention by the Dutch government made the Dutch people who were still in Bima feel threatened and depressed. After that, anticipating the entry of the Dutch government to reclaim its colonies, the Bima Sultanate under the leadership of Sultan Muhammad Salahuddin developed a power strategy to defend its territory (Alrianingrum 2016).

### **Asakota Fortress as the Basic Defense of the Bima Kingdom**

Asakota Fort is a defensive fort of the Bima kingdom which is located in the northern part of the Bima Strait and is flanked by two lands. This fort was one of the sea defense forts to repel and monitor the entry of colonial troops entering the Bima Kingdom. After the Dutch succeeded in occupying the Gowa Tallo kingdom, led by the Hasanuddin Sultanate, this kingdom became increasingly weakened and cornered due to the war that occurred from 1654-1667, led by the VOC (Raditya et al. 2022). This war gave birth to the Bongaya agreement which had to be signed by Sultan Hasanuddin and his people which contained, (1), the VOC obtained trade monopoly rights in Makassar (2), the Dutch could build a fort in Makassar called Rotterdam (3), Makassar City released Bone and on the island outside Makassar (4), Aru Palaka is recognized as the king of Bone (Mansyur 2006).



Picture 4. The eastern rock formations are visible  
Source: Personal Documentation

After the VOC (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie) succeeded in conquering the Gowa-Tallo kingdom, the Dutch Colonial government wanted to expand its colony to the Bima Kingdom by shipping and trading at the port harbor of Bima. After the political agreement made by the kingdoms on the island of Sumbawa with the VOC in Makassar in (1761-1775) the colonial government began to exert its influence on the island of Sumbawa. In this agreement, the Bima Kingdom began to be pressured by giving a consensus to the VOC to trade in its sovereign territory. By making a political contract, the Dutch colonial government carried out political penetration to exploit the economy in the Bima Kingdom region (Indra and Aziz. 2005).



Picture 5. The western rock formations are visible  
Source: Personal Documentation

The Bongaya Agreement made Sultan Abdul Khair form a naval warlord's defense by building Asakota Fort as a sea defense fortress at the entrance to the Bima kingdom. In Sultan Abdul Khair's statement, obeying the Bongaya Agreement was the same as submitting and obeying the company (Marihandono 2008). The Bima Kingdom, led by Sultan Abdul Khair Sirajudin, fought back with a political diplomacy struggle with the VOC until finally the VOC submitted under the authority of the Bima Kingdom. And at the same time, when the VOC wanted to renew its agreement with the Bima kingdom, Sultan Abdul Khair refused and put-up resistance by seizing the VOC's merchant ships in 1691 (Mentayani et al. 2019).



## CONCLUSION

The existence of the Asakota Fort which was strategically located to scout and repel shipping traffic carried out by the VOC (Verenigde Oost Indische) which carried out trading activities from the east. Apart from that, Beneteng Asakota was built to defend the territory of the Bima Kingdom in the war against the Dutch colonialists. This fort is a historic fort that was built in 1667, during the reign of Sultan Abdul Khair Sirajuddin who did not agree with the Bongaya agreement. After that he left Makassar and returned to Bima to form a naval force for war in Bima. The Asakota defensive fort at the entrance to the Bima Strait was a pioneer in sea defense and was facilitated by several short-range and long-range weapons. The sea defense system owned by the Bima kingdom can be adapted to the strength of weapons and supporting facilities to defend against enemy attacks.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With the completion of this research, the author would like to thank the Research and Quality Assurance Institute (LRPM) of Sumbawa University of Technology who facilitated the implementation of this research. And thank the publication institution Yupa: Historical Studies Journal which published the results of this research.

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