



Tracking Colonial Tracks in the Coastal of North Gorontalo: Study in Kwandang District

Sutrisno Mohamad; Andris K. Malae

Gorontalo State University, Indonesia

<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v9i11.4175>

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the traces of colonial heritage in the North Gorontalo Coast, or more precisely in the Kwandang area. The method used in this research is qualitative description. Qualitative description is the process of describing research results found in the field by researchers in the research process. The results of the study are that especially in Kwandang, there are three Colonial relics, namely Fort Mas which is thought to be a Spanish heritage, although it is still not exactly certain, but from the results of previous studies it says so, as well as Fort Leiden or Orange which in sources- the primary source of its existence is always explained together with Benteng Mas, meaning that they both have important values. Likewise with Marsa's Tomb by Sander Uno, although not so much information has been obtained, his name Marsaoleh means one of the influential people in the Kwandang area at that time.

Keywords: *Tracking Colonial; The Coastal of North Gorontalo; Kwandang District*

Introduction

Since entering the archipelago in the early 16th century until the second half of the 16th century, the colonial government has always instilled its political system, among others, by entering into various contract agreements with local kings, in addition to binding it also legitimizes that the area is its power in any way. So, it is not surprising, if one of the colonial countries (the Dutch government) created a trading partnership known as the VOC to be able to control Dutch traders in carrying out all their economic activities in the archipelago.

In an effort to control these economic activities, in every region in the European (colonial) archipelago such as Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands, of course, they must stay and establish political power above the political power of the regional governments (King) at that time. Of course, this is not something that is easy to do, but the effort to subdue local governments is one of the main goals so that economic activities which are the main objectives can be carried out without obstacles. This is of course carried out by various strategies, both diplomatic and suppressive (trade monopoly system), for example

the VOC, they know exactly the culture of the king in Nusanatara which is highly respected and respected by the people, so to control the people, first control the leadership. When they succeeded in controlling the king, that was where the early stages of Dutch colonialism through the VOC were, wherever they were.

After the king was controlled, the VOC had already thought about what attributes to prepare to be able to control more specifically all of its activities in the area. So, it is not surprising that the most strategic step taken by the VOC was to construct vital buildings that could support all VOC activities in every area it occupied, for example establishing forts, trading offices. For example, the Maluku region, as one of the areas that is the main destination for western nations who come to Indonesian territory. The wealth of Maluku spices, especially cloves, had become a commodity for "conquest" by western nations. It was recorded that the Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch had fought over the trust of kingdoms such as Ternate and Tidore to dredge up the wealth of spices. To expedite their efforts, a fort was built as a defense facility (kultur.kemdikbud.go.id).

Likewise, the Kwandang area in Gorontalo Province now, since 1677 (Yayasan 23 Januari, 1982, 24; Hasanudin & Basri Amin, 2012: 58) has become the VOC's choice to instill its influence and hegemony. Since arriving and instilling its hegemony, the VOC has erected vital buildings which can control all its activities in the Kwandang area. What is important is that all these buildings have social value for the people in Gorontalo, especially the people in the Kwandang area, North Gorontalo.

To this day, some of these European heritages still stand firmly in the Kwandang area, although they still need full attention from the local government. Because if this is not the case, the longer the Dutch heritage will be destroyed, either by nature or by irresponsible human actions. It needs strict guarding, because one of the identities of an area is in its history. History, in addition to being traceable from written sources (primary) also requires supporting evidence (artifacts), the Kwandang area has that, in complete written primary sources, from the artifacts displayed are real, it's just a matter of how the government's role in efforts to maintain and preserve so that it exists all the time, and can be used for many people, especially utilization in terms of further research.

Colonial Archaeological Relics in Kwandang

In addition to leaving written records related to the history of Kwandang, Europeans (Colonial) also left archaeological objects that can still be seen today, such as Kota Mas Fort (Spain), Leiden Fort or Fort Leiden or Orange Fort (Netherlands), and Marsa's House by Sander Uno. Almost all the former colonies of the Europeans must have left archaeological objects. Because this is the most important part in instilling his hegemony in society, and showing his existence in maintaining his power in the area, for example, one of them is the Citadel.

Fort is one of the potential artifactual data in Colonial Archaeological Studies because the distribution of the remains is quite evenly distributed in Indonesia. Its distribution covers areas in Sumatra, Java, Bali, East Nusa Tenggara, West Nusa Tenggara, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Maluku, North Maluku, Papua, to West Papua. The Architectural Documentation Center has identified and inventoried the existence of these forts in 2010 which totaled 270 forts. As for the work area of the North Sulawesi Archaeological Center itself, there are 12 forts. Two forts in North Sulawesi, namely, Tanawangko and Amurang forts, 5 (five) forts in Central Sulawesi namely, Fafontofore Fort, Matandau, Bangkuko Pusaka, Bebungketan, and Kota and 5 (five) more forts in Gorontalo namely, Kota Mas/Otamaas Fort, Oranje, Otanaha, Otahiya, and Ulupahu (Septeningrum et al, 2020:2-3).

In some cases, the fort built by the colonial government certainly had various functions, as Marzuki (2020:49) stated in his research, "The main function of the fort is a symbol of security, but it has developed into a center for government administration and trade. This change is caused by a sense of security, because they feel that they are already behind a big and sturdy wall, and have weapons. Of

course, what Marzuki said was not wrong, when he saw how strategic the Kwandang area was to build a fort as a monitoring (Fort Leiden), security and administrative place (Benteng Kota Mas).

Maas City Fort (Spanish Fort?) and Leiden. Fort

Kota Mas Fort is administratively located in the Moluo Hamlet, Cisadane Village, Kwandang District, North Gorontalo Regency. The location of Kota Mas Fort is not far from the coastline with a distance of about two kilometers to the west. This location is in the form of a lowland surrounding which is a residential area. Kota Mas Fort or also known as Ota Maas. The word "ota" is a local term which means fortress. This fort is in the form of a building complex that is no longer intact, leaving one bastion in the northeast corner and the gate on the west side and the ruins of the fort walls in several parts (Septaningrum, 2020: 1).

In this fort, a former well was also found adjacent to the ruins of a building structure in the center area of the fort complex. This fort stands on a valley plain morphology land. The valley is bordered by volcanic rock hills in the east, south, and west, while the northern part is a coastal plain. In addition, there is also the Kwandang River on the east side which flows all the time, although it experiences changes in volume during the rainy and dry seasons (Septaningrum, 2020: 1).

The first written information regarding the existence of the Kota Mas Fort in Kwandang is contained in the travel notes of CBH Von Rosenberg who visited Gorontalo in 1863 and published his report two years later (1865). The description of the fort in Rosenberg's notes is similar to the report in the Archaeological Yearbook Third Series, Bulletin of the Dutch Antiquities Association (*Oudheidkundig Jaarboek Derde Serie van Het Bulletin van Den Nederlandschen Oudheidkundigen Bond*) published in 1929. It is written that Kwandang is an extraordinary area, because in it there are the ruins of two forts, namely Fort Leiden and Fort Kota Mas. During his visit to Kwandang, Rosenberg estimated that the Kota Mas fort had not functioned since the early nineteenth century, or about 50 years before his arrival (Rosenberg in the Manuscript on Determination of the Cultural Heritage of North Gorontalo, 2021:5-6)

In the North Gorontalo Cultural Heritage Determination Manuscript (2021:5-6) it is explained that the ruins of Kota Mas Fort are in an abandoned state, located about ten meters from the house of the late Marsaoleh. Although completely abandoned, this fort still leaves an impression of greatness and strength. Two of the four bastions can still be identified on the land side. In the middle of the wilderness stood a heavy Water gate with two adjacent guard corps. The square-shaped entrance and stairs connected the corridor without a connection, all of which seemed neglected. The desolate view is emphasized by the foundations of the buildings in the former palace square, fragments of walls, wells, and gates, hidden behind dense vegetation. An eyewitness said that in 1911 this huge fort was undoubtedly, apart from serving as a residence for many people, still almost intact, but the natives had torn it down and used its stones for the construction of a mosque. A small river flows through the fort, which leads to the sea.

The Center for Architectural Documentation took an inventory of Kota Mas Fort in 2010. This fort is said to have been built by the Spaniards who are better known as Kota Mas, the size is quite large with four bastions (Architectural Documentation Center, 2010). The North Sulawesi Archeology Center and the Gorontalo Cultural Conservation Preservation Center (BPCB) carried out further excavation activities in 2019 at different times. The Center for Archeology focuses on the search for bastion structures in the three corners of the fort complex and the walls of the gate walls. In total, 13 boxes have been opened in the Southwest corner, 4 boxes in the southeast corner, 2 boxes in the Northwest corner and 2 additional boxes near the gate wall (Saptaningrum et al., 2019).

Based on research conducted by the Manado Archaeological Center and the Gorontalo Cultural Heritage Preservation Center, it is agreed that Benteng Mas is the only fort that is a legacy of the Spanish Nation (Buhanis Ramina, interview 5 September 2022). Of course, this still requires a deeper study,

because in the primary source records of Gorontalo, so far no one has received information that the Spaniards had entered Gorontalo. If you look at Rosenberg's writings published in 1865, he only mentions that there is already a fort in Kwandang that has been out of service or abandoned for a long time. In the article, Rosenberg also did not mention that the fort was a fort founded by the Dutch, so there is a strong suspicion that the fort had already existed when the Dutch came to Gorontalo in 1677.

This is different from the Recommendation Manuscript of the Cultural Conservation Expert Team of North Gorontalo Regency, which is still very "careful" in describing Mas fort as a fortress of the Spanish heritage, because in that context it was "possible" that during the assessment process the fort had not clearly found the primary sources, which definitely explains the Spanish rule in the land of Gorontalo, especially the Kwandang area. In fact, according to one of the Archaeologists of the Gorontalo Cultural Heritage Preservation Center, Buhanis Ramina (Interview, September 5, 2022) that during the exploration carried out by the Balar Team, one of the members who is also an expert on the Dutch Fort, stated that the construction was different from the Dutch fort that had been so far. He knew it, but also did not mention that the fort was a Spanish heritage, so according to him, further research was needed regarding the clarity of the mas fort in Kwandang.

Judging from its location, the function of the Kota Mas Fort was built for defense and as a place of administration, so it is different from the Leiden fort which was built on a fairly high hill with its function as monitoring all activities carried out by the Kwandang people as well as in supervising river and sea traffic which in at that time as an important trade traffic in the Kwandang area.

Fort Leiden is equally important for Dutch writers in both Rosenberg and other writers, always mentioning two forts that have long stood in the Kwandang area. Based on the results of the study by the Cultural Conservation Expert Team (2021), it is explained that:

“... The small fort Leiden dating from 1766 in the village of Donabalo, located on a hill at the mouth of the Kwandang River, bears witness to the construction of a simpler and more primitive building. The square walls with the circular sea ramparts and sunken rooms are still pretty easy to follow in parts, though the fully overgrown interior also blocks the view of the fort, where some old cannons are still strewn about. The information shows that Fort Leiden has existed since the XVIII century, namely during the VOC period, a period of turmoil.

This fort is located on a hill which is administratively included in the area of Dambalo Village, Kwandang District, North Gorontalo Regency, Gorontalo Province. The astronomical location of Fort Orange is $0^{\circ} 51' 2.06''$ - $122^{\circ} 54' 51.49''$ with an altitude of 36 meters above sea level. Fort Orange has been designated as a National Cultural Conservation on 23 May 2008 by the Minister of Culture and Tourism, Mr. Ir. Jero Wacik, SE with Permenbudpar Number: PM.30/PW.007/MKP/2008 (<http://kekulturan.kemdikbud.go.id>)

One of the North Gorontalo Cultural Heritage Team, Helman Manay (Interview, September 10, 2022) stated that initially for the community around this fort it was called the Orange Fort and it lasted for a very long time, but since the Designation Study was carried out by the Cultural Heritage Team and based on the sources -primary source then this fort was then proposed to be renamed Leiden Fort or Fort Leiden, but even so this name change was not immediately accepted by the community, but after there was rationalization from the Cultural Heritage Team, the suggestion was finally accepted by the community.

The aim of the Cultural Conservation Expert Team is certainly good, because based on the results of the studies that have been carried out, the primary sources actually state that the name of this fort is not

Orange Fort but Leiden Fort or Fort Leiden. Primary sources as the main reference must be consistent with the scientific field.

The next archaeological remains are Marsa's Tomb by Sander Uner. According to Buhanis Ramina (Interview, 5 September 2022) that there is not much information about this tomb. The research team has also gone directly to the community, but not much information has been obtained. It's just that several sources and sources always say that this tomb is so important to them. Moreover, if you look at the position held by Sander Uno as Marsaoleh, it means that he is one of the trusts of the Dutch government as a leader in the Kwandang area.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that in North Gorontalo, especially the Kwandang area, there are charms of past relics in the form of forts and the tomb of a Marsaoleh, some of which are still well-maintained and guarded to this day, and others are still in the stage of further research by research teams both from within Gorontalo and outside. Gorontalo. The relics received an important role from the local government so that after the Cultural Conservation Expert Team was formed it quickly moved to secure it, by determining, so that whatever happened to the various relics would be dealt with by the government through the power of the Cultural Conservation Act, so that the hope was that the relics would remain, preserved in various ways, including doing further research.

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Thank you

Thank you to PNBP for providing funding for this research. Contract number “B/168/UN47.D1/PT.01.03/2022 on behalf of Sutrisno Mohamad.

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