

Chapter 9,1
Sumatra



Sumatra Krisses

Sumatra is the second largest island in Indonesia. The main part of the hilts from Sumatra represents *Garuda*. The only *Raksasa* like hilt you may find is the *Bima* type, which may have been imported from the *Cirebon-Tegal* area (chapter 4 fig 19). It is difficult to make a satisfactory description of the krisses from Sumatra, because so little have been done to identify from which part of Sumatra the different types may come. Further many kris types are hardly distinguishable from *Buginese* krisses or krisses from *the Peninsula of Malacca*. That is the reason why most writers only state that a kris comes from Sumatra. However, when I now try to establish from which area the different types of krisses come, it may sometimes be read with certain reservations. The 4 areas and 5 principalities to which the krisses to some extent may be classified are *Palembang* in the south, *Minangkabau* in the midwest, *Aceh-Gayo* in the north and *Central Eastern Sumatra* around *the Malacca Strait* with *Jambi* and *Riau*.

Palembang/Lampung

Palembang/Lampung in South Sumatra is probably the area from where the kris has spread to the other parts of the island. As early as the 7th century A.D. an important kingdom by the name of *Srivijaya* came into existence. In the following centuries it became one of the most important centers of this part of the world. Its power was based on trade. During the 7th century it extended its influence so much that about 663 it was in control of *the Strait of Malacca* and thereby in control of most of the trade to greater parts of Indonesia. Culturally it was an important center of Buddhism in South-Asia and a communicator between Indian and Chinese culture. The kingdom extended its power all the time until the 11th century. At the time its satellite states included *Aceh*, *the Nicobars* and the states in *the Malay Peninsular*. In periods it had conquered parts of *Java*, areas which were important for its trade with the eastern parts of Indonesia. To maintain the power of the kingdom the ruler had a big navy and army. It got its wealth through the tax and customs duties it imposed on its satellite states. But from the 11th century its power declined as it was plundered by Indian troops. During the 13th century it was conquered by an East-Javanese king and was incorporated in *the Majapahit Kingdom*. We do not know the exact location of *Srivijaya*, but it is thought to have been located where *Palembang* is located today.

The Palembang/Lampung Krisses.

Hilts

The Naturalistic Garuda Hilt

We do not know when the kris arrived in this area. Probably it was imported from Java sometime between the 12th century and the 14th century from *Pajajaran*, which was located right opposite on the other side of the *Sunda-Strait*. The early *Palembang/Lampung* hilts have some relationship to the *Raksasa* hilts from *Banten* or *Cirebon*. Now the hilts do not represent a *Raksasa* but a *Garuda* bird, the mount of the

god *Vishnu* (see fig 123 a, b). But its squatting position indicates that it is an ancestor, too. So it is the ancestor as a person connected with *Vishnu*, like the *Raksasa* indicates an ancestor connected with *Siva*. As regards *Palembang* something special may be implied. A Chinese source from the 13th century tells that the kings of *Srivijaya/Palembang* has a snake-genii as their ancestor¹. The *Garuda* bird being the primal enemy of the snakes, you may think that the *Garuda* hilts indicates that the old dynasty has been vanquished and a new dynasty has come to power. This happened during the 13th century when the Javanese took the leadership in this area. Another interpretation may be that it indicates that *Vishnu* had taken over in the area. Finally there is the interpretation that it is connected with the introduction of *Islam*, as the *Garuda* was a figure *Islam* could accept², which fx its popularity among the *Islamic Buginese* might indicate. So it might represent the transition of *Palembang* to *Islam* and at the same time that the old ruling dynasty has been vanquished. However, by the conquest of *Palembang* by the *Dutch* in 1821 the production of krisses in that area was put to a stop, as the *Dutch* prohibited people in the area to wear krisses and after that the craft quickly became extinct. It means that most of the krisses from *Palembang* probably must have been produced before 1821³.



Fig 123 a) *Garuda* hilt



123 b) *Garuda* hilt (17th cent. See chapter 9,2 Fig 148)

¹ In an inscription from 775 A. D. at a buddhist cloister in *Ligor* in the northern part of *Malacca* the king of *Scrivijaya* is described as the lord of the Nagas/snakes. J. Agthe: *Arm durch Reichthum. Sumatra*. Frankfurt am Main 1979, p 205. Helen Ibbison Jessup: *Court Arts of Indonesia*, New York 1990, p 61.

² See chapter 1 p 45-46.

³ J. Agthe: *Arm durch Reichthum, Sumatra*, Frankfurt am Main 1979, p 253.

The Stylized Java Demam/Garuda- and Ganesha/Raksasa Hilts

The *Garuda* hilt from *Palembang* is found in a stylized version. It is most probably a further development of the older naturalistic *Garuda* hilt. Presumably it is the ancestor of the stylized *Garuda* hilt, the so-called *Jawa Demam* hilt (see p 12 note 10), which has spread to all Sumatra. But characteristic of the hilts from this area is that they are very elaborately carved with scrolling designs. You may also find a stylized *Ganesha* representation, carved with a similar scrolling design, which may be related to the stylized *Ganesha* hilts from Cirebon (see chapter 4 Fig 30 a).



Fig 124 a) *Jawa Demam/Garuda* hilt from *Palembang*



Fig 124 b) *Ganesha* hilt from *Palembang*

The Bearish Jawa Demam/Garuda Type

This type of hilt is found in *Palembang* and in the *Minangkabau* area and other areas of Sumatra, too.



Fig 125) The bearish *Jawa Demam/Garuda* hilt.

The Long-Beaked Garuda Hilts

In the *Lampung* area krisses are found with a special *Garuda* hilt which is represented by a bird with a very long curved beak. It is sitting in a squatting *Pralambapada* position on a *Tumpal* throne.



Fig 126) *Garuda* hilts with long beaks from *Lampung* (see chapter 9,2 fig 157)

The Stylized Veiled Durga Hilt.

In the same area a kris with a rather unusual hilt in relation to Sumatra is found, as it represents a stylized human figure. You can faintly see a squatting human figure with its arms folded wearing a crown on its head. It is difficult to see which person it represents as its face is smooth and without features. *Martin Kerner* thinks it represents the veiled death-goddess *Durga* (*Balu Mekabun - Topeng type*)⁴. That is most probable, as certain *Panjang/Bahari-kris*ses from Northern Sumatra, which has been used for executions, have a similar hilt⁵.



Fig 127) The stylized veiled *Durga* (*Balu Mekabun - Topeng type*) from Lampung/Palembang.

⁴ Fig 139 and chapter 9,3 Fig 172.

⁵ Martin Kerner: *Keris Griffe*, Zürich 1996, p 31 and p 60 fig 54. See chapter 6 Fig 74, 75 and chapter 7 Fig 101.

Selut and Mendak

The *Palembang* krisses have a special type of *Selut* and *Mendak*. The *Selut* is composed of a big cup passing into a conical stem. The cup is often decorated with heart-shaped decorations with floral design (see Fig 128 a and chapter 9,2 Fig 150, 150 a, b).

The *Mendak* is composed of a rather shallow cup and a conical stem. Right below the cup is placed a ring, often decorated with small flowers and/or mounted with precious stones. This type of *Mendak* has a strong resemblance to a *Mendak* type found on *Buginese krisses* (see 128 b and chapter 8 Fig 105 b). On the high-class krisses the *Selut* and the *Mendak* is often in *Suasa*⁶, but it may be in gold or silver, too and on the more common pieces in copper or brass, eventually gilt.



Fig 128 a) *Selut* in *Suasa*. *Palembang/Lampung*.



128 b) *Mendak* in *Suasa* and gold. *Palembang*

⁶ *Suasa* is a red alloy composed of 4 parts of gold, 3 parts of silver and 9 parts of copper.

The Blades

The blades may be straight or waved, but the prevailing type seems to be the straight one. The blades are rather sturdy with *Gandik*, *Pejetan*, *Tikel Alis* and eventually some *Grenengs* on the blade or/and one *Greneng* on the *Ganja* (*Tungkakan*)⁷. The *Pamor* is strongly drawn and rough. The better blades have often gold (*Kinatah Emas*) on the *Gandik* and golden floral decorations. Some State *krisses* have a *Singa* or a *Naga* figure at the *Gandik* and floral decorations plated in gold (*Lung Kamarogan Kinatah*). A greater part of the elaborated blades comes from *Central Java*. The blades produced in *Palembang* are more stiff and stylized in the design of their decorations.



a)



b)



c)

Fig 129 a, b, c) *Palembang* blades. a) has a golden stylized *Kala* mask on the *Gandik* (chapter 9,2 Fig 152).

⁷ The shape of blade is often *Dapor Djalak Ngore* and has *Tilamupih* or *Tilamsari*.

The Sheaths

The sheaths are very specific to *Palembang/Lampung*. They are related to the sheaths from *Makassar-Gowa*, but differentiates from them in two ways. The points of the *Gambar* is not pointed, but ends in a blunt cut sloping inwards. Further the *Gambar* has on the below back end a design that looks like the rudder of a ship. The high class sheaths have often a *Pendok Bunton* in *Suasa* or gold. It may be undecorated or decorated with floral design. In *Lampung* an *old Ladrang* type of sheath is found which has some similarity to the *Tajong* sheaths from *Pattani* (see Fig 130 b and chapter 10 Fig 193 b, d).



Fig 130 a) A typical *Palembang* sheath.



Fig 130 b) An *old Ladrang* sheath from *Lampung*.

Minangkabau

In the Central Western part of Sumatra there is an old principality called *Minangkabau*. Its princely house is said to have been founded in 1347 by *Adityavarman* (1347-75). He was an aristocrat born in Sumatra, but raised at the court of *Majapahit*. He introduced a kind of *tantric Buddhism* and *Siva-Bhairavaism* which he presumably had brought along from *Majapahit*⁸. The wealth of the kingdom was based on gold-mines. The gold-dealers from *Minangkabau* went down to the coast and dealt in gold and jewellery. Thereby they came into contact with *Islamic* merchants, who influenced them to convert to *Islam*. This influence came especially from *Aceh*, which during the 16th century tried to monopolise the gold-trade. So in the end of the 16th century *Minangkabau* had converted to *Islam*. In spite of the conversion to the patriarchal *Islamic* belief they maintained their matriarchal family system, where the wives were the owners of all real estate. So the inheritance was handed down through the women and the women thereby maintained an influential position in the society. In 1820 the *Dutch* came into possession of *Minangkabau*. In the beginning of the 19th century a fundamentalistic movement had come into existence, which wanted to purge *Minangkabau* of all old beliefs and traditions. In their first attack in 1803 they murdered all members of the princely family except one. Gradually their influence grew and they threatened the surviving prince. He fled down to the coast and asked the *Dutch* for protection. They promised to protect him if he let them take over. But it was first in 1837 that the *Dutch* succeeded in finally vanquishing the rebellions in the interior parts of the area. A part of the krisses in the European kris-collections are captured from the rebels during this rebellion. (see Fig 131 a and b). Some of them have a year from the 1830's inscribed on the bottoms (*Buntut*) of their sheaths.

⁸ He had a statue done depicting himself in the shape of *Siva-Bhairava* (See chapter 2 Fig 5 b and Arne und Eva Eggebrecht: *Versunkene Königsreiche Indonesiens*, Hildesheim 1995, fig 104). He performed very bloody rituals sacrificing several human beings. At the time you did not differentiate between *Sivaism* and *Buddhism*.



Fig 131 a, b) Two *Minangkabau* krisses - captured from the rebels and brought home to Holland as souvenirs. On the bottom of the *Buntut* of the left is written 1835 and on the right is written 1837.

The Minangkabau Krisses

It is not known when the kris was introduced to *Minangkabau*. It might have been introduced by *Adityavarman* in the 14th century, but it seems, however, to be after the introduction of *Islam* in the beginning of the 16th century, as all krisses have a distinctly *Makassar* or *Buginese* stamp, which is related to the dominant influence of the commercial relations with *Makassar* and the *Buginese*. According to *G. B. Gardner* it was only the leaders of the society who were allowed to wear krisses⁹. Many of the krisses are rather small (*Kris Patrem*). The reason why is that they are krisses of the females. *Minangkabau* was as aforementioned matriarchal, therefore it was natural that the leading women wore krisses.

⁹ G.B.Gardner: *Keris and Other Malay Weappons*, Singapore 1936, p 39

Hilts

The Pangulu and the Bearish Jawa Demam/Garuda Type

A great part of the *Minangkabau* krisses have a *Buginese Pangulu* type of hilt (see Fig 132 a) or the bearish *Jawa Demam/Garuda*¹⁰ (see Fig 132 b).



Fig 132 a) *Minangkabau Pangulu* hilt.



Fig 132 b) *Minangkabau bearish Jawa Demam/Garuda* hilt.

¹⁰ The legend of *Jawa Demam*: A certain raja called his *Pandai Besi* and ordered him to make a kris hilt that was unlike any other, or lose his life. The kris maker could not think what to do, but as the night came on, it grew cold and the raja, who had fever (*Demam*), pulled his sarong up, and hugged himself to keep warm. The kris maker carved a hilt in his likeness. When the raja saw the result he was very satisfied. G.B. Gardner: *Keris and Other Malay Weapons*, Singapore 1936, p 23 For another version see Chapter 10 p 3 note 4.

Gayo-, Bear- and Buginese Types.

Some krisses in the *Minangkabau* area look like the ones found among the *Gayo*- and *Aceh*-people while others look like the *Buginese* or krisses from Central Eastern Sumatra (the bearish type). It is difficult to differentiate krisses from these areas.



Fig 133) *Minangkabau* hilt with *Gayo* features (See chapter 9,2 Fig 161).

Selut and Mendak

They may have a rather big beaker-shaped *Selut*. On state krisses it is in gold with filigree decorations. The stem of the *Mendak* or the stem of the *Selut* may be rather long and they have a bulb in *Buginese* style just below the cup.



a)



b)



c)

Fig 134 a, b, c) *Minangkabau* Mendaks/Seluts

The Blades

The blades which are rather short may be waved or straight. Characteristic of the waved blades is that they have the windings on the lower part while the upper part is straight (Fig 135 a and b). The straight blades are often a short (*Anak Alang*) Dapor Bahari type¹¹ (Fig 135 c)

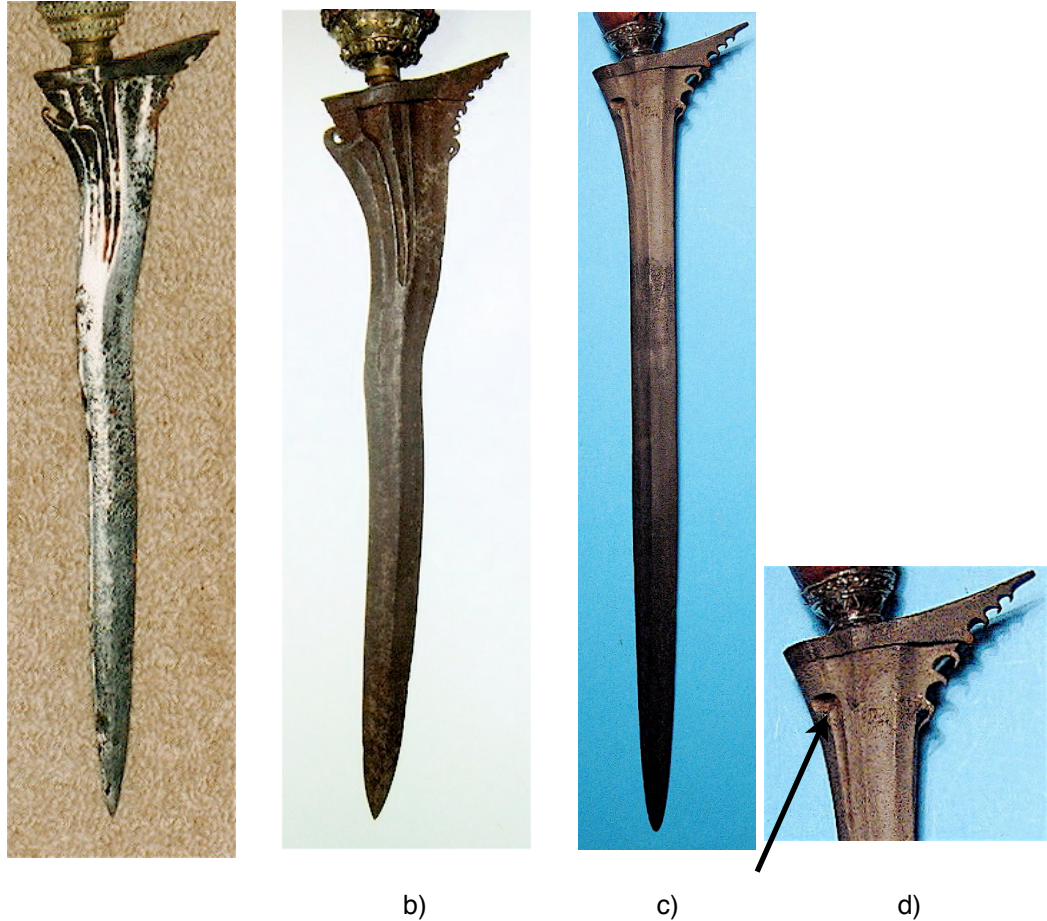


Fig 135 a, b, c) Typical *Minangkabau* blades. d) Notice the Sumatra C/Comma formation on the *Anak Alang* Bahari blade.

¹¹ The Bahari types of blades from Sumatra have a C- or rather a Comma shaped groove under the *Gandik* in the *Sorsoran* part of the blade which the Bahari types of blades from the *Peninsula of Malacca* are missing. In Java it is called *Tilamupih* or *Tilam Upih*. (Fig 135 d)

The Sheaths

The *Gambar* of the sheath has a special shape. It is a kind of *Tanggah* type, but it is more slim than the *Buginese Tanggah* type - is more smoothly outlined and the ends are more upwards curved and make a compact bending. The upper edge of the *Gambar* may be very broad and sloping downwards (Fig 136 a). The *Gandar* has a *Buntut* which often has an oval round shape. The sheaths may have a *Pendok Bunton* in gold, gilt silver or brass, decorated with floral design - it may be in the *Buginese* style with framed decorations on the upper part and band decorations on the lower part of the *Gandar* (Fig 136 c). Some of the sheaths are shaped like the *Makassar-Gowa Ladrang* type, which indicates the early *Makassar-Gowa* influence (Fig 131 b and 136 b).



a)



b)



c)

Fig 136 a, b, c) Typical *Minangkabau* sheaths

Aceh and Gayo

The existence of *Aceh* on the northern part of Sumatra is known from the 5th century, mentioned in an *Indian Buddhistic sutra*. From the 8th - 12th century *Aceh* was subordinated to *Srivijaya*.

Aceh produced a very important commercial commodity, pepper. From the 13th century *Aceh* took independently care of its own commerce. Their influence grew and became great by the backing of the wealth from their gold-mines, their fine commercial location and their talent for trade.

It was in the northern part of Sumatra that *Islam* first got a foothold in Indonesia¹². So as early as the beginning of the 16th century *Aceh* converted to *Islam* and with its extensive commerce the area became a center of the propagation of *Islam* in Indonesia. From then on their intention was to control the pepper-trade and to propagate *Islam*. The project was such a success that during the 16th century they had conquered most of the western part of Sumatra and converted the inhabitants to *Islam*. In their interior highland they had the populations of *Gayo* and *Alas* converted to *Islam* and made them satellite states, as well.

The capital *Banda Aceh* was now an important commercial centre, which had relations to Persia, Turkey, Arabia, India, China and the Europeans. It became after the Dutch had conquered *Banten* (1682) the most important commercial centre to the other European trading nations. During the 18th and 19th century it lost its power and influence and was finally conquered by the Dutch in 1913. It did not happen without the most vehement resistance. It took 39 years before the Dutch had defeated the brave and warlike *Acehnese* population¹³.

The Aceh and Gayo Krisses.

The krisses were mainly worn by the nobility. The common people only wore the national weapon the *Rencong*. The krisses of *Aceh* are a confusing mixture of types. A greater part of them are *Buginese* or they come from other parts of Sumatra. However, there are some traits which are special to the *Aceh* and *Gayo* krisses.

¹² The rulers of *Lamreh* and *Pasai* took the title of sultan in the 13th century. Jean Gelman Taylor: *Indonesia, Peoples and Histories*, New Haven and London 2003, p 74.

¹³ The war lasted from 1873 to 1912. This war is the reason why there are so many *Acehnese* weapons on the western market.

Hilts

Aceh: Jawa Demam/Garuda Type

The *Achenese* krisses often have a *Jawa Demam/Garuda* hilt in ivory or in rhino-horn on especially fine pieces. The face is stylized with a straight triangular beak. The breast may have floral decorations. Under the chin there may be a cutting. They often have scale-like rhombic shaped carvings (eventually decorated with fleur-de-lis) on the body which may represent bird-feathers.



Fig 137) Typical Aceh Jawa Demam/Garuda hilt in rhino-horn.

Pangulu

Krisses are found which are nearly identical to the *Buginese* type from Celebes with *Pangulu* hilts. But the *Selut/Mendak* may often reveal their *Achenese* origin.



Fig 138 a) *Pangulu* hilt in ivory from Aceh



Fig 138 b) *Pangulu* hilt in ebony from Aceh.

Panjang/Bahari Kris with the Stylized Veiled Durga Hilt

A special type of hilt is mostly used for the long slim and straight *Panjang/Bahari* ¹⁴ krisses, which is said to have been used for execution. This type is found in many places in Sumatra. Usually the top of the hilt has a floral decoration (See chapter 9,3 Fig 183). But the *Panjang* of the *Aceh* has an ivory hilt, which represents a stylized human figure, presumably the veiled *Durga*, *Balu Mekabun*. Shorter krisses may have this type of hilt, too. According to J.W. van Dapperen this type of hilt is said to come from *Karimon Djawa*, a group of islands between Borneo and Java. The man who carved this type of hilt is said to be a *Buginese* by the name of *Abang Amat*, who died about 1830¹⁵. The hilts are without doubt old. They have probably come to *Aceh* via its widely spread network of commercial relations. The hilt has apart from its floral decorations a resemblance to the stylized figural *Topeng* type hilts from *Lampung/Palembang* (See Fig 127). Maybe they got their inspiration from *Abang Amat* or maybe it is the *Palembang* type that has inspired *Abang Amat*? There are several possibilities. The top of the hilt may be decorated with a top - looking like a hat - in gold with floral decorations in filigree (see chapter 3 Fig 172).



Fig 139) *Acehnese* hilt representing the veiled *Durga* (*Balu Mekabun* -*Topeng* type) in ivory. Presumably made by *Abang Amat* from *Karimon Djawa* before 1830.

¹⁴ *Panjang* means long and *Bahari* means antique, ancient.

¹⁵ J.W. van Dapperen: *Krisheften. Nederlandsch Indië Oud and Nieuw* 1913, p 108.

The Gayo Java Demam/Garuda Hilt

The *Gayo Jawa Demam/Garuda* hilts may have some rather unusual characteristics. The left arm crosses the breast and the hand touches the ear. This type of hilt is by the *Minangkabau* people called *Kalih* (leader). It represents the one-armed "*Cipadui*k" a trickster figure¹⁶ (see Fig 140 a). The hilts are often in ivory. A characteristic of the *Gayo* as well as the *Aceh* hilts is that the *Bungkul* (the lower part of the hilt) has rhombic or star-shaped incisions around¹⁷. The *Gayo* krisses may have a special wooden hilt looking like a woodpecker. It has an oblong high crest on the top of its head. The beak is unusual strong, long, straight and pointed. Both the crest and the beak may be coated in silver (see Fig 140 c).



a)

b)



c)

Fig 140 a, b. c)

Jawa Demam /Garuda hilts from *Gayo* - a) and b) in ivory and c) in wood.

a) represents the hero *Cipadui*k - notice the left hand touching the ear.

c) is a woodpecker like figure with its beak and top covered in silver.

¹⁶ UCCA Fowler Museum, Los Angeles 2003: *Walk In Splendor*, p 100-101.

¹⁷ The number of stars may indicate the rank of the owner of the kris. On the shields of the *Aceh* the stars indicate the rank of the owner. The common soldier had 5 stars on their shield, but the army commanders and princes had 7 stars. Johanna Agthe: *Arm durch Reichtum, Sumatra, Frankfurt am Main 1976*, p 55.

Mendak and Selut of Aceh and Gayo Krisses

The Gayo types of krisses have a *Selut* composed of a big cup/beaker in silver or *Suasa* which may be decorated with filigree or scale like decorations (Fig 141 a, b). The stem may vary from being rather short to unusually long. They may also have a *Buginese* type of *Mendak* composed of a flat cup and 2 knobbed rings (Fig 141 c). The *Aceh Seluts* have a big cup, too, but the bottom of the cup is mostly flat. On the fine krisses it may be in gold with a lobed rim, floral filigree with star shaped flowers and sometimes mounted with stones and inlaid enamel (Fig 141 d). The stem is short and there maybe a ring just below the cup (See chapter 9,3 Fig 166, 170 a). The *Aceh Mendak* may have a rather flat cup decorated with engravings (Fig 141 e). The *Buginese* type of the *Aceh kris* may have a *Mendak/Selut* just like the *Aceh Mendak/Selut* or it may be a *Selut* constructed of three rotating segments decorated with knobs. On state krisses it may be in gold with the finest filigree work. On the top of the knobs there may be star shaped flowers so delicately elaborated that you may hardly be able to see them with the naked eye (Fig 141 f). The *Panjang kris* may have a *Mendak/Selut* with a cup with a lobed rim on a rather short stem or it may be without the stem and only be a conical cup with a lobed rim decorated filigree and with granulated bands of small metal (gold) balls (Fig 141 g).



a)



b)



c)



d)



e)



f)



g)

Fig 141 a, b, c, d, e, f, g,) Gayo and Aceh Seluts and Mendaks.

a) A Gayo *Selut* in *Suasa* with gold filigree decorations.

b) A high stemmed Gayo *Selut* in silver decorated with scales.

c) A Gayo *Mendak* composed of a flat copper cup and two knobbed brass rings - a *Buginese* type.

d) An *Acehnese Selut* in gold with a lobed rim decorated with filigree, green, white and blue enamel and mounted with rubies and diamonds.

e) An *Acehnese Mendak* in silver decorated with engraved fishing net design.

f) An *Achenese Mendak* in gold constructed of three rotating segments decorated with knobs with star shaped flower decorations on the tips - a *Buginese* type.

g) An *Acehnese Mendak* in gold with a lobed rim decorated with filigree and granulations.

The Blades of the Gayo and Aceh Krisses

The blades are seldom especially sophisticated. They are often of the *Buginese* type, which means that they are strong, have broad edges (*Gusen*) with a flat field of *Pamor* in the middle of the blade (Fig 142 a), but *Minangkabau* types are found, too (Fig 142 d). The *Panjang* blade differentiates from the other types of blades by being slim, long and straight and by often having no *Pamor* (Fig 142 e).

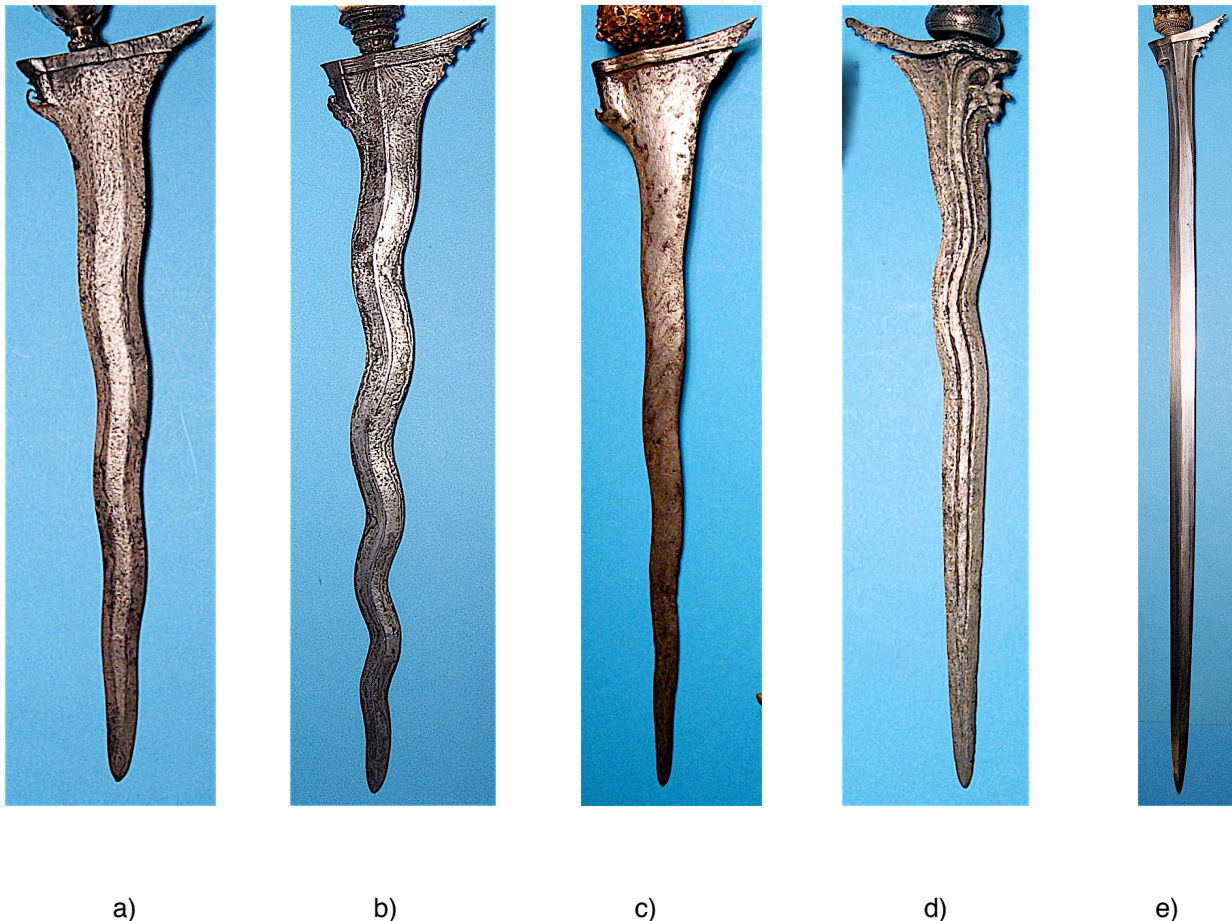


Fig 142 a, b, c, d, e)
a and b) Gayo blades - a) a Buginese type.
c) Aceh blade.
d) Aceh/Minangkabau blade.
e) Aceh Panjang blade.

The Sheaths of the Gayo and Aceh Krisses

The sheaths of the *Aceh* and *Gayo* krisses look like the *Makassar-Gowa* type of sheath, but the *Gayo* sheaths may have a *Minangkabau* influence on the outline of the upper border of the *Gambar* (see Fig 143 e and Fig 136 a). The Sheaths of the chiefs and the nobility may have a *Pendok Bunton* in *Suasa*, gold or silver. The *Pendok* of the *Gayo* sheath is mostly without decorations with the exception of some plaited metal bands and maybe some *Suasa* decorations (Fig 143 a, c, e). Characteristic of the *Gayo* sheaths are

that they may have a little square plate in silver, *Suasa* or gold in front of the *Gambar* (Fig 143 d). The *Pendok* of the *Aceh* sheaths, however, may have framed floral decorations on the upper part of the *Gandar*, whereas the lower part may be in *Suasa* or have band decorations with floral ornamentations or a rattan like binding in gold (*Buginese style*, see chapter 9,3 Fig 173)¹⁸ (Fig 143 f). The *Gambar* of the *Gayo* sheaths may be embellished with small *Suasa* plates (Fig 143 e). The *Gayo*- as well as the *Aceh* sheath have a *Buntut* (a chape or “shoe”) at the end of the *Gandar*. The *Buntut* of the *Gayo* sheath is circular divided into sections. In between the sections there are rhombic fields (looking like mounted stones) sometimes decorated with the characteristic *Acehnese* and *Gayonese* star-shaped flower (Fig 143 b). The *Buntut* of the *Acehnese* sheaths, however, has a curved and oval shape with protruding points and the same embellishment as the *Makassar-Gowa* sheaths in the shape of a row of small knobs on its edge (Fig 143 g). The *Tanggah* type of sheath is nearly the same as the one from *Celebes*, with the exception of the *Gambar* being not as broad as the *Gambar* of the *Celebes* type. The *Pendok* is in *Buginese style* (Fig 143 h). The *Gambar* of the *Aceh* sheath may have a special crescent shape (*Gambar-Tanggala*) (Fig 143 i). The *Panjang* type has the same type of *Gambar* which may be decorated with floral carvings. The *Gandar* may be embellished with silver rings and it may have a *Buntut* in horn edged in a V shaped notch (Fig 143 j).

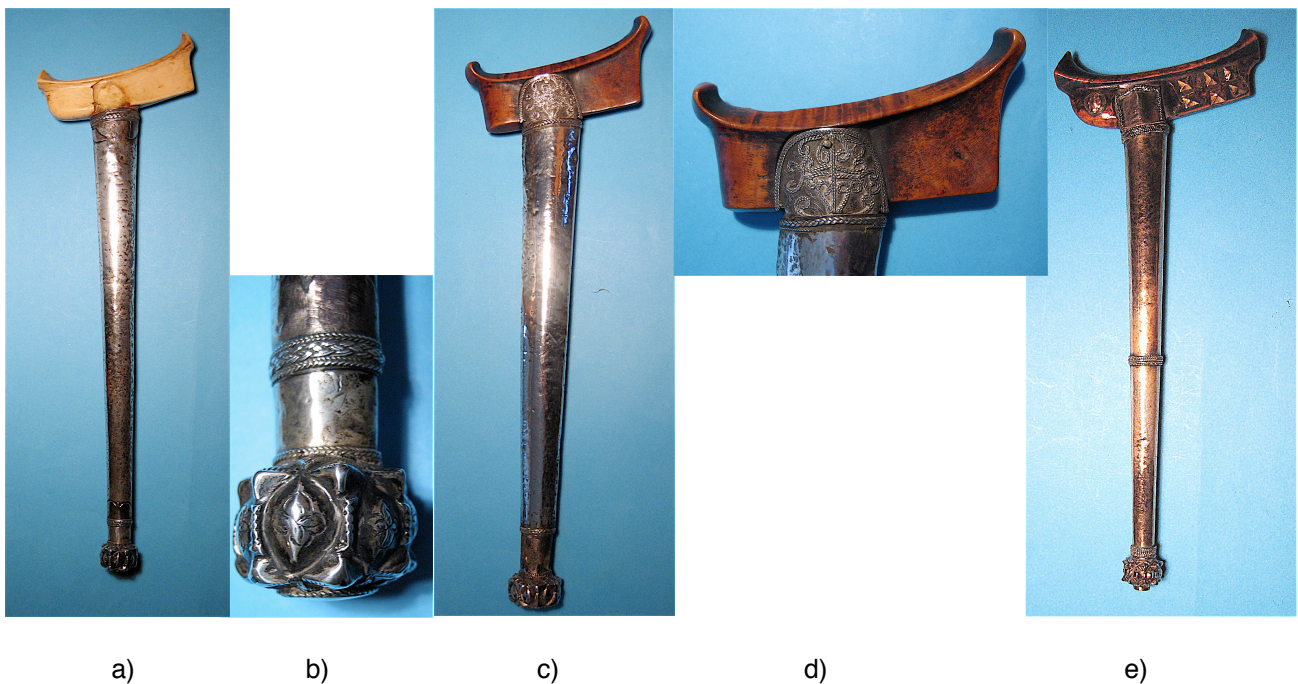


Fig 143 a, b, c, d, e, g, h, i, j.)

a) A *Gayo* sheath with a silver *Pendok Bunton*.

b) Notice the characteristic *Buntut*.

c) A *Gayo* sheath with a silver *Pendok Bunton*.

d) Notice the silver plate with a *Batak* design ?

e) A *Gayo* sheath with a *Pendok Bunton*, plate in the middle of the *Gambar* and a *Gayo Buntut*, all in *Suasa*. Decorated with small *Suasa* sheets on the *Gambar*.

¹⁸ As an exception *Gayo* sheaths are found with a similar decoration (see chapter 9,3 Fig 166).



- f) Aceh sheath in Makassar-Gowa old Ladrang style with Pendok Bunton in gold and Suas. Buntut in gold, the bottom of which has a floral design mounted with rubies.
- g) A Tanggah sheath in Buginese style with a Pendok Bunton in gold decorated with a framed floral design on the upper part of the Gandar. The nether part is decorated with the "broken" motif like military ribbons (shredded Pandan). There is an oval Buntut in gold at the end of the Gandar decorated with floral design.
- i) An Achenese crescent shaped type of sheath (Gambar-Tanggala). The Gambar is in black horn. Pendok Bunton in silver decorated with floral design.
- j) Achenese crescent shaped type of sheath (Gambar-Tanggala) decorated with floral carvings. The Gandar is embellished with silver rings. The Buntut in black horn is edged in a V shaped notch.

Special Characteristics of the Aceh Kris

Some Aceh krisses of the nobility are recognised by their fleur-de-lis or star shaped flower inlays in enamel on the golden fittings of the sheath and/or on the Mendak. A design of small rhombic scales with a primitive fleur-de-lis in the middle on the back side of the Pendok may reveal that it is a kris from Aceh, too (See chapter 9,3 Fig 169).

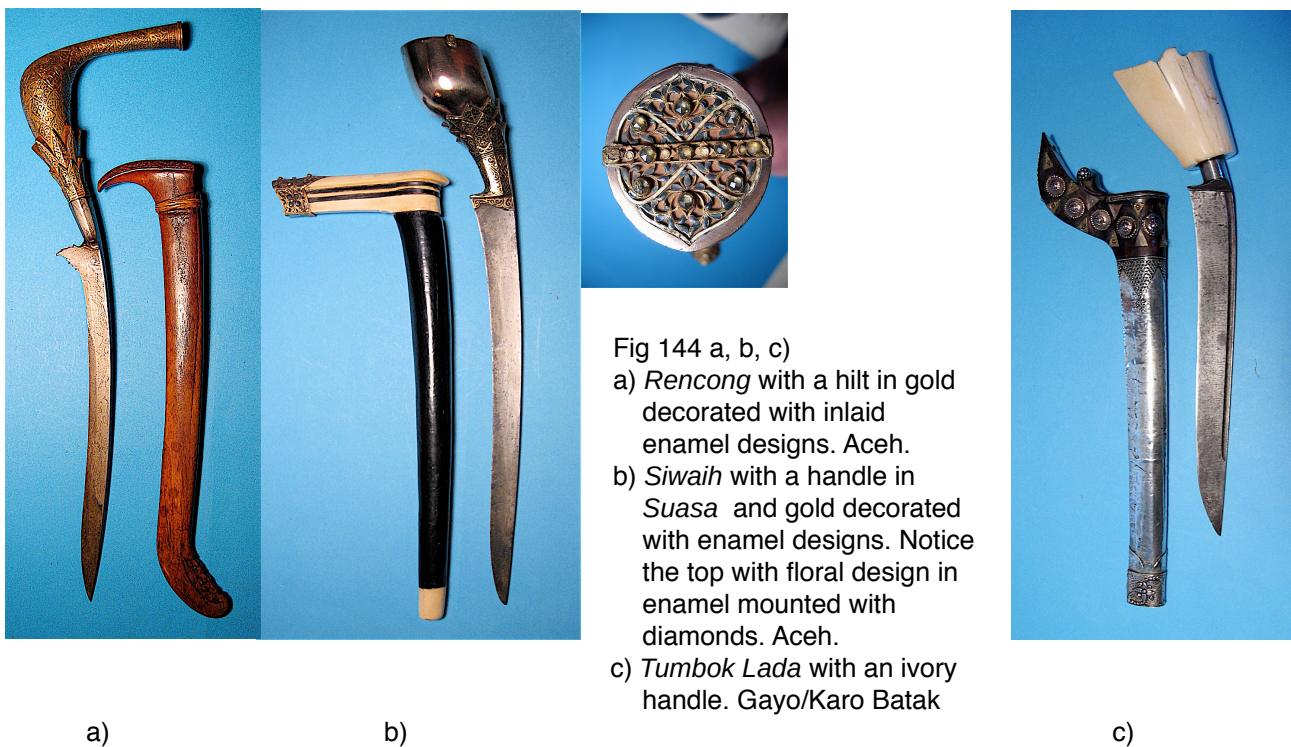
Influences

The Acehnese and Gayonese krisses have been influenced from many places. Makassar-Gowa in Celebes seems to have influenced the sheaths. This influence may be earlier than the Buginese. Makassar-Gowa had the leading commercial influence until 1669 when it was conquered by the Dutch and the Buginese, after which the Buginese took the lead (see chapter 8 p 2). The krisses with the Tanggah sheaths, Buginese

blade-types and *Pangulu* hilts indicate the strong *Buginese* influence. Another influence is the stylized figural hilts, which come from *Karimon Djawa*. *Minangkabau* has especially brought their influence to bear on the short blades and the blades with the waves only in the lower part of the blade and on the outline of the upper border of *Gambar* of the Gayo sheaths. The crescent shaped *Gambar* (*Gambar-Tanggala*), which some kresses have, is spread all over Sumatra. It must be connected with an area, which have had commercial relations to many places in Sumatra. Perhaps it has its origin in *Aceh* itself, which certainly had extensive commercial relations even to Eastern Indonesia, where this type is found in many places. Its origin may also be in Central Sumatra at the *Malacca-strait* (*Riau*), which through the *Buginese*, who had settled there, had commercial relations to the greater part of Indonesia.

The Rencong, Siwaih and Tumbok Lada.

The national weapon of the *Aceh* is not the kris, but the *Rencong*. Like the kris the *Rencong* is used to thrust and cut the belly of the opponent. They are as sacred to the *Aceh* as the kris is to the *Javanese*. The slightly curved blade is single edged and may have *Pamor* like the kris. Another special weapon is the *Siwaih* which in its most precious version with gold fitting and mounted with diamonds is the prerogative of noblemen to wear. The *Tumbok Lada* is rather similar to the *Siwaih*. It is among others worn by the *Gayos* and the *Karo Bataks*.



Krisses from Central Sumatra at the Malacca-Strait

Some of the krisses from *Central Sumatra* at the *Malacca-Strait* (*Riau and Jambi*) are difficult to classify. Many might as well come from the Peninsula of Malacca as they might come from Sumatra.

Buginese Types

The main part of the krisses in this area are *Buginese* influenced. The reason is that many *Buginese* after 1669 settled down in the area around the *Malacca-Strait*, because it was such an important commercial area. A dual administration had developed. The Sultans of *Johor* in the Peninsula of Malacca was always a member of a *Malay royal family* heading Malay retainers, while *Riau's* governor was a descendant of *Buginese* immigrants with his own *Buginese* staff. But the distinction was not sharp. The first generation of *Buginese* men married Malay women, and there were many *Malay-Bugis* alliances among the polygamous officials¹⁹. So the influence on the krisses is mainly *Buginese*, but mixed with influences from *the Peninsula of Malacca*.

Hilts, Mendaks and Blades

The hilts of the krisses are typical *Jawa Demam* or *Pangulu* types (Fig 145 e, f, g). The *Mendaks* are the characteristic *Buginese* type composed of a big cup eventually with bulbed rim and decorated with floral design (Fig 145 a) or the type with a broad cup and eventually a lobed rim (Fig 145 b, c). The variation of *the blades* is wide, but generally they are strong and rather flat, bearing the stamp of *Buginese* influence (Fig 145 e and 146). *The sheaths* are often the *Buginese* type of *Tanggah* sheath with a flat oval *Buntut* (Fig 145 e, f), eventually with a floral decorated *Pendok* (Fig 145 f) and/or a *Tuli Tuli Batir Batir* (Fig 145 e). The sheaths might also be the crescent shaped type (*Gambar-Tanggala*) with a *Buntut* in horn or ivory edged in a V shaped notch (Fig 145 g).



a)

b)

c)

d)

Fig 145 a, b, c, d) Different *Mendaks* from *Central Sumatra*.

a) Typical *Buginese Mendak* in gilt bronze.

b) *Mendak* in silver with a lobed rim.

c) *Mendak* in gold with a lobed rim, mounted with rubies and decorated with filigree.

d) *Mendak* in low carat gold.

¹⁹ Jean Gelman Taylor: *Indonesia, Peoples and Histories*, New Haven and London 2003, p 217.



e)

f)

g)

Fig 145 e, f, g)

e) A Central Sumatra kris with a *Jawa Demam* hilt in ivory, *Mendak* with a lobed rim in gold set with rubies on a short stem. The blade is a *Buginese* type. *Tanggah* sheath with *Tuli Tuli Batir Batir* in gold and plaited silver wire and an ivory *Buntut* (chapter 9,3 Fig 179).

f) A Central Sumatra kris with a *Jawa Demam* hilt in walrus ivory. *Mendak* with a lobed rim in silver on a short stem. The blade is a *Buginese* type. *Tanggah* sheath with a framed floral decorated *Pendok* in silver (chapter 9,3 Fig 178).

g) A Central Sumatra Kris with an elephant molar *Pangulu* hilt. *Mendak* in silver with a lobed rim. The blade is a *Palembang* type. The sheath has a crescent shaped *Gambar* (*Gambar-Tanggala*) and a rounded ivory *Buntut* (chapter 9,3 Fig 180).

Fig 146) Kris from Riau. *Pangulu* shaped handle in wood. This type of *Pangulu* hilt differentiates from usually *Buginese Pangulu* hilts by missing the beak and its body may be shaped in sharp planes. *Mendak* in silver on a short stem, decorated with silver filigree. The blade is a *Buginese* type. *Tanggah* sheath with a plain silver band on the *Gandar* (*Batang*) just below the cross-piece to strengthen the sheath joints. Flat oval ivory *Buntut* (chapter 9,3 Fig 178 a)



Fig 146 a (right)) *The hilt is a Jambi type in wood. It is a mixture of the Pangulu type and the Jawa Demam type. It has the appearance of a cock and it may be decorated with floral design. The Mendak is a cup in white metal decorated with knobs at the rim. The blade is a Buginese type. The sheath is a Tanggah type with an oval Buntut in wood (chapter 9,3 Fig 178 d).*



Panjang Type

The *Panjang* kris may also be found in Central Sumatra in the area around the Malacca Strait.

Fig 146 b (left) *The hilt is a Tapak Kupa (horse's hoof) type with floral decorations. The Mendak is a cup with a lobed rim type decorated with a knob pattern on a short stem - in silver. The blade has Dapor Bahari and the sheath is the crescent shaped type (Gambar-Tanggala) in wood. The Gandar is embellished with silver mounts decorated with floral design and rings. All in silver (see chapter 9,3 Fig 183)*



Bearish Java Demam/Garuda Type

In the same area (*Jambi and Riau*) you may find the bearish-looking *Jawa Demam/Garuda* type of hilt. However, this type is found in a wide area reaching from *Palembang* to *Minangkabau*.



Fig 147) Bearish-looking *Jawa Demam/Garuda* type of hilt in ivory from Central Sumatra/Minangkabau. *Old Makassar-Gowa Ladrang* type of sheath with a *Gambar* in ivory, the *Gandar* is covered with silver *Pendok Bunton* and with a *Buntut* in *Suasa* (see chapter 2 Fig 161 b)