



K O N I N K L I J K E N E D E R L A N D S E
A K A D E M I E V A N W E T E N S C H A P P E N

Provenance report regarding Krissen [Krisses]

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Provenance report regarding Krissen [Krisses]

Tom Quist

 Photo: Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen., inv.no. RV-3600-1892	Custodian	NMVW Museum Volkenkunde
	Current possessor	Dutch State
	Inventory number	RV-3600-1892
	Material/technique	Iron, silver, wood
	Measurements	Kris in sheath: 63 x 17 x 4 cm Kris: 50 x 8.5 x 4 cm Sheath: 54.5 x 17 x 2.5 cm

 Photo: Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen. Inv.no. RV-3600-1893	Custodian	NMVW Museum Volkenkunde
	Current possessor	Dutch State
	Inventory number	RV-3600-1893
	Material/technique	Iron, wood
	Measurements	Kris in sheath: 67 x 19.5 x 4 cm Kris: 61 x 10.5 x 4 cm Sheath: 55 x 19.5 x 3 cm

 Photo: Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen. Inv.no. RV-3600-1894	Custodian	NMVW Museum Volkenkunde
	Legal owner	Dutch State
	Inventory number	RV-3600-1894
	Material/technique	Iron, wood
	Measurements	Kris in sheath: 53 x 16 x 3.5 cm Kris: 42.5 x 7 x 3.5 cm Sheath: 45 x 16 x 2.5 cm

 Photo: Collection Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen. Inv.no. RV-3600-1895	Custodian	NMVW Museum Volkenkunde
	Current possessor	Dutch State
	Inventory number	RV-3600-1895
	Material/technique	Iron, wood, brass
	Measurements	Length: 55.5 cm Length of blade: 49 cm Length of sheath: 46 cm

Summary of findings

The krisses with object numbers RV-3600-1892 to RV-3600-1895 (inclusive) were collected on Madura in 1900 by Johannus Lambertus Cornelis Anten, an officer in the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army. The research was unable to uncover exactly how Anten came into possession of the krisses. The objects have characteristics that are typical of Balinese krisses. Further object-focused research in collaboration with Indonesian kris experts may provide more clarity on the exact geographical origin. Anten collected the four objects along with various other krisses and stabbing weapons at the request of his fellow officer, George Nijpels. They were designated to be added to the ethnographic collection of the Hoofdcursus in Kampen. The krisses arrived in Kampen in late 1900 or early 1901. After the Hoofdcursus was disbanded in 1923, the objects were transferred to the Ethnographic Museum of the Koninklijke Militaire Academie in Breda. In 1956, this collection was taken over by Museum Volkenkunde, which has been part of the National Museum of World Cultures since 2014.

Reconstruction provenance

1900

Collected by Johannus Lambertus Cornelis Anten, Madura

NL-LdnRMV, A16, file no. 35, letter from George Nijpels to Hendrik Theodorus van IJsseldijk, 11 September 1900; letter from Johannus Lambertus Cornelis Anten to Hendrik Theodorus van IJsseldijk, 18 April 1901.

1900

Shipped to the Netherlands by George Nijpels, Batavia

NL-LdnRMV, A16, file no. 35, letter from George Nijpels to Hendrik Theodorus van IJsseldijk, 11 September 1900.

1900/1901-1923

Ethnographic collection of the Hoofdcursus, Kampen

NL-LdnRMV, A16, file no. 7, catalogue of the ethnographic collection of the Hoofdcursus officer training school, East Java and Madura (series 43-47, 49-50, 172-181), undated.

1923-1956

Ethnographic Museum of the Koninklijke Militaire Academie, Breda

NL-LdnRMV, A16, file no. 8, '*Verhuizing museum Hoofdcursus Kampen naar Breda*', inventory box 8, 29 June 1923; file no. 10, concordance lists of object numbers in the collection of the Ethnographic Museum of the KMA, undated.

1956-present

NMVB Museum Volkenkunde, Leiden

NL-LdnRMV, inventory cards RV-3600-1892 to RV-3600-1895 (inclusive) (digital versions available in TMS).

Introduction and context

This report describes the results of provenance research into four krisses in the collection of Museum Volkenkunde, part of the National Museum of World Cultures (NMVB). The research was carried out by NMVB in January 2021, followed by reporting in February. The weapons were selected for Work Package D of PPOCE due to a supposed connection with expeditions of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL) on Bali in 1906 and 1908. The krisses are registered in the Museum Volkenkunde collection under object numbers RV-3600-1892 to RV-3600-1895 (inclusive). The weapons come from the former Ethnographic Museum of the Koninklijke Militaire Academie (KMA) in Breda. In 1956, its collection was transferred to Museum Volkenkunde.¹ On arrival the former collection was registered as series 3600. The museum in Breda continued to exist as a subsidiary of Leiden until 1993 under the name, Volkenkundig Museum Justinus van Nassau.²

The four krisses are kept in the NMVB depot in 's-Gravenzande.³ Physical examination of the weapons during the provenance research was not possible due to the lockdown/travel restrictions imposed in December 2020 in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, The Museum System (TMS), the NMVB collection management system, only contains antiquated photographs of the objects in low resolution. The following discussion of the object characteristics is therefore based on existing descriptions taken from the object records and the digitalised inventory cards. Follow-up research could focus on a closer examination of the objects in the depot in 's-Gravenzande. Indonesian kris experts could also be consulted.

Of the four krisses three have a wavy blade; however, RV-3600-1894 has a straight blade. Furthermore the blade of RV-3600-1893 features *pamor*, patterns in shades of grey created by welding together iron and nickel alloy.⁴ The stem ring connecting the blade to the hilt is made of silver on RV-3600-1892 and brass on RV-3600-1895, and in both cases is adorned with a beaded edge. The design of the stem rings of the other two weapons is not mentioned in the object descriptions in TMS. All four wooden hilts are slightly curved with a round tip. The hilts of RV-3600-1893 and RV-3600-1894 are made of *kayu pelet* (mottled wood), which is characteristic of kris hilts

¹ In 1956 the museum was still known as Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde. For reasons of clarity and consistency, this provenance report only uses the name Museum Volkenkunde. The Museum System (TMS, NMVB collection management system), object records RV-3600-1892 to RV-3600-1895 (inclusive); Marie-Antoinette Willemsen, *Volkenkunde in Breda. Van Indische verzameling tot Rijksmuseum Justinus van Nassau en de Vereniging voor Volkenkunde* (Breda 2011) 29, 56-57; Wikipedia. "Museum Volkenkunde" https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Museum_Volkenkunde, consulted on 18 February 2021.

² Willemsen, *Volkenkunde in Breda*, 57-58; https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volkenkundig_Museum_Justinus_van_Nassau, consulted on 9 February 2021.

³ TMS, object records RV-3600-1892 to RV-3600-1895 (inclusive).

⁴ Edward Frey, *The Kris. Mystic Weapon of the Malay World* (Oxford 1988) 31.

from Bali.⁵ Based on the object photograph this would similarly appear to be the case for RV-3600-1895. Another noteworthy feature is the zigzag pattern on the hilt of RV-3600-1893, which also attests to Balinese influences.⁶ *Kayu pelet* has also been used for the upper side of the wooden sheaths of RV-3600-1892 and RV-3600-1895. The object photo of RV-3600-1894 shows a dark mark halfway down the wooden sheath which suggests the same. Furthermore, the sheath of RV-3600-1893 is characterised by the use of a type of dark wood, possibly *sono*.⁷ The sheath of RV-3600-1892 has a crack on one side, through which the blade can be seen. This may be the result of damage.

Provenance report

Digitalised inventory cards linked to the object records of the krisses in TMS state that the weapons are from Bali and were acquired by the Ethnographic Museum of the KMA in 1923.⁸ The objects are reported to have belonged to the ethnographic collection of the Hoofdcursus in Kampen, and to have been donated to Breda when the officer training school was disbanded.⁹ The Hoofdcursus is reported to have received the objects as a gift from ‘Kapt. der Inf. O.I.L. J.L.C. Anten.’¹⁰

The archive of the Ethnographic Museum of the KMA is kept in the offices of Museum Volkenkunde.¹¹ One part of the archive is ordered along general lines with numbering for each file, without there being a real inventory. A second, more extensive section of the archive was discovered in 2020 during work on archives which are managed by NMVW, and this is currently being roughly ordered. Both sections of the archive contain documents which came from the Hoofdcursus in Kampen.

An undated typed copy of the catalogue of the Ethnographic Museum of the KMA lists the four krisses under numbers 1892 to 1895 (inclusive), each with the designation “Kris, with sheath; Bali.”¹² In addition, the weapons are mentioned in a series of exercise books that contain concordance lists of old and new object numbers and in which the name of the donor is also given. This shows that number 1892 corresponds to the former numbers 3685 and 43/2; 1893 to 3687 and 43/4; 1894 to 3684 and 43/1; and 1895 to 3686 and 43/3. After the figures, “Kapt. J.L.C. Anten” is stated as the donor.¹³ This is also the case for other numbers, which suggests that more objects came from this person. According to a 1949 acquisitions book of the Ethnographic Museum, the numbers 3684 to 3687 (inclusive) date from 1923, the year in which the Hoofdcursus was disbanded and the collection was transferred to Breda.¹⁴ The numbers are part of the object numbering used by Claas Spat (1865-1931) for registering objects in the collection, also known as ‘spat numbers.’¹⁵ Spat was a teacher at the KMA and curator of the collection from 1897 until the early 1920s. In 1905 Spat started collecting

⁵ Frey, *The Kris*, 45-46.

⁶ Ibid., 45-46, Plate 15c.

⁷ Ibid., 43.

⁸ TMS, object records RV-3600-1892 to RV-3600-1895 (inclusive).

⁹ Ibid.; Willemsen, *Volkenkunde in Breda*, 14, 29.

¹⁰ TMS, object records RV-3600-1892 to RV-3600-1895 (inclusive); O.I.L. is an abbreviation of Oost-Indisch Leger [East Indies Army], i.e. the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL).

¹¹ Museum Volkenkunde (NL-LdnRMV), archive access A16: Archive of “Justinus van Nassau” ethnographic museum, Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, Breda department (not inventoried).

¹² “Kris, met scheede; Bali.” See: NL-LdnRMV, A16, file number 1: Catalogue of the Ethnographic Museum of the KMA, undated.

¹³ Ibid., file no. 10: Concordance lists of object numbers in the collection of the Ethnographic Museum of the KMA, undated.

¹⁴ Ibid., unordered files: “Aanwinstenboek van de Ethnografische Collectie van de Koninklijke Militaire Academie waarin opgenomen de collectie van de H.C. te Kampen,” 1949; Willemsen, *Volkenkunde in Breda*, 29.

¹⁵ NL-LdnRMV, A16, “Aanwinstenboek,” 1949; Wikidata. “Claas Spat.” <https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q63004149>, consulted on 10 February 2021.

ethnographic objects to use as practical examples for teaching non-commissioned officers training at the KMA for postings in the Dutch East Indies.¹⁶

The archive of the Ethnographic Museum contains catalogues of the Hoofdcursus collection. An associated “Summary of the series” shows that the collection in Kampen was classified according to region of the Indonesian archipelago, and then by type of object.¹⁷ The overview shows that series 43 was reserved for weapons from Madura. In accordance with the numbers in the Breda concordance lists, the four krisses are listed under serial number 43 in the part of the Hoofdcursus catalogue devoted to East Java and Madura. After numbers 1 to 4 (inclusive) “J.L.C. Anten” is listed as donor, with the numbers 1892 to 1895 (inclusive) having been added in pencil after the transfer of the collection to the KMA.¹⁸ The krisses and other stabbing weapons numbered 5 to 29 (inclusive) are also attributed to this person, with in most cases a mention of the later object numbers.¹⁹ In addition to the catalogues there is surviving documentation regarding the collection’s move from Kampen to Breda in August 1923, consisting of lists stating the contents of removal boxes. According to these lists, krisses with the numbers 43/1 to 43/4 (inclusive) were transferred to the KMA in box 8.²⁰

The archive of the Ethnographic Museum also provides an answer to the question of how the weapons ended up in Kampen. The founder of the collection of the Hoofdcursus was Hendrik Theodorus van IJsseldijk (1862-1916).²¹ He began to serve in the KNIL in 1883, taught at the Hoofdcursus for a number of years in the 1890s, and returned to the Netherlands for good in 1900 due to injuries sustained during the war in Aceh.²² On his return he went back to work in Kampen, as a teacher of the Malay language, regional geography, and ethnography at the department in charge of preparing non-commissioned officers for a posting with the KNIL. For the same reason as Spat some years later, Van IJsseldijk started building an ethnographic collection. To do so, he used his network of former colleagues in the Dutch East Indies, including kapitein [*captain*] George Nijpels (1859-1950), who taught at the KMA for a while in the 1890s.²³ He asked Nijpels and other soldiers to collect objects that he could use in practical lessons.²⁴

The archive of the Ethnographic Museum contains a correspondence file from the Hoofdcursus with letters received in Kampen during the existence of the collection. A number of letters that Nijpels wrote to Van IJsseldijk from Batavia tell how the process of remote collection started up in 1900. In

¹⁶ Royal Library of the Netherlands (KB), Delpher, *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 2 July 1931, p. 9, article ‘Prof. C. Spat overleden’, <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010661874:mpeg21:a0241>, consulted on 10 February 2021; Willemsen, *Volkenkunde in Breda*, 22, 29.

¹⁷ ‘Verzamelstaat der Seriën’. See: NL-LdnRMV, A16, file no. 22: ‘Verzamelstaat der Seriën van het Hoofdcursus-Museum’, undated.

¹⁸ Ibid., file no. 7: Catalogue of the ethnographic collection of the Hoofdcursus, East Java and Madura (series 43-47, 49-50, 172-181), undated.

¹⁹ Numbers 1 to 17 (inclusive) state Anten as donor; numbers 18 to 29 (inclusive) do not include donation details. From number 30 upwards names of other donors are given, suggesting that numbers 18 to 29 (inclusive) also came from Anten. The letter of 11 September 1900 discussed on page 6 of this report from George Nijpels to Hendrik Theodorus van IJsseldijk confirms this assumption.

²⁰ NL-LdnRMV, A16, file no. 8: “Verhuizing museum Hoofdcursus Kampen naar Breda,” inventory box 8, 29 June 1923.

²¹ Open Archieven. “Geboorte (geboorteakte) op 1 december 1862 te Oud en Nieuw Mathenesse.”

<https://www.openarch.nl/rzh:330a665c-9cc2-41d0-b646-fe8979f27541/nl>, consulted on 11 February 2021.

²² National Archives of the Netherlands (NL-HaNA), archive access 2.13.04: *Dienststaten en stamboeken der Officieren van de Koninklijke Landmacht en van de koloniale troepen in Nederland* [Service records and military records of the officers of the Royal Netherlands Army and of the colonial troops in the Netherlands] (1814-1940), inv.no. 629, *Aanvulling Stamboeken* [Supplement to service records], Letter A, KNIL, c. 1882, f. 63, https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/2.13.04/invnr/629/file/NL-HaNA_2.13.04_629_0080, consulted on 11 February 2021.

²³ NL-HaNA, 2.13.04, inv.no. 629, f. 69, https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/2.13.04/invnr/629/file/NL-HaNA_2.13.04_629_0087, consulted on 11 February 2021; KB, Delpher, *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 9 November 1950, p. 2, article “Generaal G. Nijpels overleden,” <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=KBNRC01:000067822:mpeg21:a0028>, consulted on 11 February 2021.

²⁴ Willemsen, *Volkenkunde in Breda*, 15-16.

his first letter of 26 June, Nijpels pledged his “cooperation in the broadest sense of the word.”²⁵ By then, he had already received 25 guilders by money order from Van IJsseldijk to use as a budget for purchases, and now requested an additional 75 guilders. This was because Nijpels himself had “no funds available to make any significant advances.”²⁶ On 11 September, the first objects were reported to have already been packed up for shipment to the Netherlands. An enclosure to Nijpels’ second letter states that these included 29 weapons from Madura, collected and donated by “J.L.C. Anten, instructeur of the Barisan corps in Bangkalan.”²⁷ Thus, Nijpels in his turn used his network in collecting objects for the Hoofdcursus. His strategy was to purchase objects “which give a lot for little money,” to enable the collection to grow rapidly in this initial phase so that “pupils and interested parties....can get to see all kinds of things from all over.”²⁸

In the course of the research, “J.L.C. Anten” was identified as KNIL officer Johannus Lambertus Cornelis Anten (1860-1941). His service record, which is kept in the National Archives of the Netherlands, shows that Anten left the Netherlands for Batavia in 1884.²⁹ In 1887-1889 and 1897, he fought in the Aceh War. Having been promoted to kapitein der infanterie in 1896, in 1900 he was appointed instructeur of the Barisan corps in Bangkalan on Madura. This was a militia of Madurese soldiers used for reinforcement on KNIL expeditions, such as that in Aceh. The corps was under the command of the Sultans of Bangkalan and Sumenep, but was trained by KNIL (non-commissioned) officers.³⁰ In 1903 Anten stopped his work as instructeur of the corps to take a year of leave in the Netherlands. After his return in 1905-1906, he was civiel gezaghebber on Sulawesi during an expedition of the KNIL. In 1909 Anten retired having progressed to the rank of luitenant-kolonel. His career record shows that he was not involved in the KNIL expeditions on Bali in 1906 and 1908.³¹

In his letter of 11 September 1900, Nijpels does not state how Anten came into the possession of the 29 weapons from Madura. He did write to tell Van IJsseldijk that they were “in a far from tidy state” and that he suspected “that they had been bought ‘en masse’ at the *roemah gadeh*,” the local pawn shop.³² But, he added, “once they have been polished up nicely they will be able to make a good effect.”³³ Finally, Nijpels noted in the enclosure to his letter that the 29 weapons may have been manufactured outside Madura.³⁴ In addition to the incoming letters from Nijpels, the file of correspondence of the Hoofdcursus was also found to contain a letter from Anten himself. Van IJsseldijk turns out to have written to him directly because on 18 April 1901, Anten confirmed that he had received his letter of 19 March. Anten reported that he had been able to gather more items for the collection in Kampen. It would appear that Van IJsseldijk had also asked him to pass on the names of the kris types previously sent. Anten wrote that he was unable to recall these without

²⁵ “Medewerking in den ruimsten zin van ‘t woord.” See: NL-LdnRMV, A16, file no. 35: incoming correspondence of the ethnographic collection of the Hoofdcursus in Kampen, letter from Nijpels to Van IJsseldijk, 26 June 1900.

²⁶ “Geen fondsen beschikbaar om eenige voorschotten van beteekeenis te doen.” See: NL-LdnRMV, A16, file no. 35, letter from Nijpels to Van IJsseldijk, 26 June 1900.

²⁷ “J.L.C. Anten, instructeur der Barisan te Bangkalan.” See: NL-LdnRMV, A16, file no. 35, letter from Nijpels to Van IJsseldijk, 11 September 1900.

²⁸ “Die veel voor weinig geld geven”; “leerlingen en belangstellenden [...] van alles en overal wat te zien krijgen.” See: NL-LdnRMV, A16, File no. 35, letter from Nijpels to Van IJsseldijk, 11 September 1900.

²⁹ NL-HaNA, 2.13.04, inv.no. 629, f. 87, https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/2.13.04/invnr/629/file/NL-HaNA_2.13.04_629_0111, consulted on 15 February 2021.

³⁰ Adriaans, Willy and Smith, Andy, *Oorlog in beeld. Een document in foto's van toen en nu* (Arnhem 2015) 22.

³¹ NL-HaNA, 2.13.04, inv.no. 629, f. 87, https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/2.13.04/invnr/629/file/NL-HaNA_2.13.04_629_0110, consulted on 15 February 2021.

³² “Verre van netjes”; “dat zij ‘en masse’ in de *roemah gadeh* gekocht zijn.” See: NL-LdnRMV, A16, File no. 35, letter from Nijpels to Van IJsseldijk, 11 September 1900; Wikipedia. “Rumah Gadi.” https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rumah_gadai, consulted on 16 February 2021.

³³ “Nadat ze netjes opgepoetst zijn zullen ze een mooi effect kunnen maken.” See: NL-LdnRMV, A16, File no. 35, letter from Nijpels to Van IJsseldijk, 11 September 1900.

³⁴ Ibid., 11 September 1900.

seeing the actual weapons again. He made no further statements about the provenance of the krisses and the other stabbing weapons.³⁵ Nor is it clear when the 29 weapons from Anten arrived in Kampen. Given the dates of the letters from Nijpels and Van IJsseldijk, this must have been in the latter months of 1900 or the first quarter of 1901. To summarise, it is not possible to establish how Anten acquired the four krisses and the other weapons.

The research revealed no other sources able to shine light on Anten's collection activities while he was on Madura. Nor were there any clues as to the provenance provided by the digitalised inventory cards of the other weapons which ended up in the collection of Museum Volkenkunde via the collection of the Hoofdcursus and the Ethnographic Museum of the KMA.³⁶ The kris hilt of at least two of these specimens appears to be made of *kayu pelet*, indicating a possible Balinese provenance.³⁷

³⁵ Ibid., letter from Anten to Van IJsseldijk, 18 April 1901.

³⁶ In addition to the four krisses a total of 17 objects are concerned. See: TMS, object records RV-3600-1821 to 1825 (inclusive), 1835, 1839, 1843-1844, 1852, 1863, 1880, 1882, 1885, 1887-1888 and 2806. This means that eight of the 29 weapons that Anten gifted to the Hoofdcursus in 1900 are not in the collection of Museum Volkenkunde. With regard to the provenance, the inscription "P. Meda. Boanek (cotta) 20-10-1896" on the sheath of RV-3600-1839 does provide a clue but the research did not succeed in identifying the person and/or location referred to.

³⁷ TMS, object records RV-3600-1839 and RV-3600-1843.