

Provenance report regarding Strijdjak [Ceremonial war jacket]

Klaas Stutje

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|--|--------------------|-----------------------------|
|  | Custodian | NMVW Museum Volkenkunde |
| | Current possessor | Dutch State |
| | Inventory number | RV-300-183 |
| | Material/technique | Cord; cotton; shells; paint |
| | Size | 75 × 83.5 cm |

Photo: Collectie Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen.
Coll.no. RV-300-183.

Summary of findings

Object number RV-300-183 is a ceremonial war jacket, or *baju tenunan*, used by warriors of the Ngaju Dayak community and shamans of the Kaharingan folk religion of Central and South Kalimantan. Archival documents and museum administration records indicate that this war jacket belongs to a large collection of almost 1800 items that the Rijks Ethnographisch Museum acquired from the colonial section of the Dutch pavilion at the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris in 1878. Dutch language newspaper reports from the Netherlands Indies suggest that this collection was brought together by private donors and government officials in the months prior to the *Exposition Universelle*. The expo's catalogue does not mention a donor or an exact date and manner of acquisition.

Reconstruction provenance

[no date] - 1877

[...]

1877-1878

The “Nederlandsch-Indische Commissie voor de Wereldtentoonstelling te Parijs in 1878”

“Voor de wereldtentoonstelling te Parijs,” *Sumatra-courant: nieuws- en advertentieblad*, 21-04-1877.

1878-

Rijks Ethnografisch Museum (today NMVW Museum Volkenkunde)

NL-LdnRMV-A1-4-192/193

Object information

This ceremonial war jacket, is a *baju tenunan* (“woven shirt” in Bahasa Indonesia) from South and Central Kalimantan. It is made of dark brown braided rope, decorated with light brown motives. The sleeves end in triangular points with fringes, and another triangle covers the neck. Nassa shells are attached on the shoulders, and the arm pieces and waist are decorated with strips of black and red cotton. There are several similar ceremonial war jackets from South and Central Kalimantan in NMVW collections, with inventory numbers RV-1239-144, RV-360-5271, and RV-16-337. Wereldmuseum in Rotterdam has one such jacket: WM-28766. According to Sammy Mansyur, historian of Banjar history, these war jackets were typically made of pineapple leaves, *nyamu* bark, and other plant fibers, and were used by warriors of the Ngaju Dayak community and shamans of the Kaharingan folk religion of Central Kalimantan.¹

Provenance report

War jacket number RV-300-183 belongs to a large collection (all registered RV-300-) of almost 1800 items that the Rijks Ethnographisch Museum (a predecessor of today’s NMVW Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden) acquired from the Dutch pavilion of the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris in 1878. This Expo was held from 1 May to 10 November 1878 in the Palais de Trocadéro and in a large temporary exhibition hall named Palais de l’industrie, along the Seine river. The Dutch section consisted of five large rooms in the Palais de l’industrie and a few installations in its monumental front porch, the Galerie du Travail. One of these installations was the colonial subsection of the Dutch contribution, largely consisting of objects and wares from the Netherlands Indies.

¹ The author wishes to thank Mansyur Sammy for his insightful collaboration. Email Sammy Mansyur, expert of Banjar history and culture, 9 April 2021. See also Albert G. van Zonneveld, *Traditionele wapens van Borneo: De uitrusting van de koppensnellers* (Leiden: Sunfield Publishing, 2015), 211-217.

According to a French visitors guide to the Dutch section, the center of the colonial installation was an immense pyramid carrying a variety of products and raw materials from the Indonesian Archipelago. Around this pyramid, tables were arranged which showed objects of art, culture, and industry.² One section was devoted to more than twenty “popular costumes,” representing the variety of Indonesian cultures and dresses. The catalogue of the Dutch contribution mentions under number 484 “Popular Costumes of Banjarmasin.”³ This number corresponds with the inventory card of the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde, which mentions “orig. mark 484.”⁴ A comparison of the catalogue with Volkenkunde’s RV-300- series demonstrates that the original Banjarmasin costume combined the war jacket with a white striped vest and trousers and a colourful hat, and possibly also a shield (inv.nrs. RV-300-180, -182, -184, shield numbers RV-300-194 and -195).⁵

While the *Exposition Universelle* was still ongoing, the Dutch department of Arts and Sciences of the Ministry of Interior Affairs invited museum directors to adopt parts of the collection in Paris for their respective museums. On 23 September, the Minister of Interior Affairs offered director Conrad Leemans (1809-1893) of the Rijks Ethnographisch Museum the opportunity to make a selection from the catalogue.⁶ A day later, Leemans replied by sending a list of all the desired items, including “all the numbers” of the popular costumes.⁷ In the end of 1878, the war jacket was registered in the inventory of the Rijks Ethnographisch Museum as a “*baadje* [shirt/jacket] of rough dark brown braided rope, ornamented in light brown and decorated with shells (*nassa*).”⁸

Before 1878

How was the colonial section of the Dutch pavilion established? Preparations for the Dutch contribution started in the first months of 1877 with the establishment of a coordinating committee under chairmanship of Prince Hendrik van Oranje-Nassau. On 20 February 1877, the Dutch government installed a sub-committee that had to assemble objects from the Netherlands Indies for the colonial section. This “Nederlandsch-Indische Commissie voor de Wereldtentoonstelling te Parijs in 1878” consisted of top-officials from the Netherlands Indies’ government, and was chaired by W.A. Henny (1825-1883), the Director of Education, Religion, and Industry.⁹ As a basis for the colonial exhibition in Paris, the sub-committee used the Indies’ collection that was exhibited two years before at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876, supplemented with categories of objects that had been underrepresented. According to a member of the sub-committee, D.W. Rost van Tonningen (1823-1878), traditional costumes were among these underrepresented categories, and indeed, the Banjarmasin costume was not mentioned in a report about the Dutch contribution to the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia.¹⁰ Rost van Tonningen recommended to exhibit “full costumes, for instance, of

² Clovis Lammare, René de la Blanchère, *Les pays étrangers et l'Exposition de 1878: Les Pays-Bas et l'Exposition de 1878* (Paris: Librairie Ch. Delagrave, 1878), 242-3.

³ *Catalogue spécial des produits exposés par le royaume des Pays-Bas, publié par la commission royale* (The Hague, L’Imprimerie de Giunta d’Albani Frères, 1878), p. 163 : “Costumes Populaires de Bandjermasin.”

⁴ Inventory card RV-300-183: ‘oorspr. merk 484’.

⁵ See also, NL-LdnRMV-A3-32, Inventory book 7, nos. 180-195.

⁶ NL-LdnRMV-A1-4-72, letter of the Minister of Interior Affairs to the Director of the Rijks Ethnographisch Museum, dated 23 September 1878.

⁷ NL-LdnRMV-A1-4-192/193, Letter from the Director of the Rijks Ethnographisch Museum to the Minister of Interior Affairs, dated 24 September 1878.

⁸ NL-LdnRMV-A3-32, Inventory book 7, nos. 183: “Baadje v. grof vlechtwerk, donkerbruin, lichtbruin geornamenteerd en met schelpen (*nassa*) versierd”.

⁹ “Nederlandsch-Indie,” *Bataviaasch handelsblad*, 26-02-1877.

¹⁰ *Verslag over de Nederlandsche Afdeeling op de Internationale Tentoonstelling te Philadelphia, 1876* (Haarlem: De Erven Loosjes, 1877).

the Natives and their wives on the various islands, insofar as the difference is characteristic". He continued that costumes of "chiefs, regents, etc., properly displayed with their weapons, would make a beautiful whole."¹¹ As such, the assemblage and display of the Banjarmasin costume confirms the European tradition of recording and exhibiting cultures and populations.

On 21 April 1877, the committee issued a circular, published in several Dutch-language newspapers in the Netherlands Indies, in which it called upon industrials, plantation owners, and other entrepreneurs to contribute raw materials, wares, and products for the exhibition. "Ethnological and ethnographical items" such as traditional costumes were also explicitly mentioned as categories of interest. The goods could be sent to Batavia, and expenses for purchase, transportation, and insurance would be financed by the colonial government.¹²

Between 28 November and 5 December 1877, a few days before transportation to Paris, the Indies' collection was exhibited in Batavia in the building of the Netherlands Indies' Society of Industry and Agriculture at the Koningsplein, present day Medan Merdeka. The exhibition was opened by the Governor General of the Netherlands Indies.¹³

A newspaper article in July 1877 providing an update of all the private donors indicates that government agencies and officials also contributed to the Indies' collection. The fact that number 484 in the catalogue does not state a donor suggests that the Banjarmasin costume was probably donated by a government official. This also applies to other objects from Banjarmasin at the Parisian *Exposition Universelle*. In total, the catalogue of the Dutch colonial installation contained 28 numbers from Banjarmasin, consisting of dozens of objects. Among these were mineralogical samples, tools from the diamond industry, fishing equipment and boat models, as well as jewels, tissues, costumes, hats and shields. Apart from the mineralogical samples donated by engineer H.J.W. Jonker (1847-1878) from the Oranje Nassau mine near Pengaron, none of the Banjarmasin donations were attributed to a donor.

This absence of further information about the collector or contributor from Banjarmasin and the lack of information about the local collection infrastructure of the colonial sub-committee for the Parisian *Exposition Universelle* makes it impossible to provide further context about the war jacket's provenance.

Suggestions for further research

It may be possible to find further information about the assemblage of the Banjarmasin collection in official correspondence and administrative reports of the Residentie Zuider en Ooster afdeling Borneo. These can be found in the archive of the Algemene Secretarie (ALG-SEC-K35) in Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia (ANRI). The fact that there was only one private donor from this region, and that the rest was probably collected via official routes of the colonial government, makes it plausible that additional information can be found in this archive.

¹¹ NL-HaNA, Koloniën, 1850-1900, 2.10.02, inv.no. 2984: Verbaal 24 April 1877 nr. 6, memo of Rost van Tonningen about desired objects: "Volledige kleeding bijv. van de Inlanders en hunne vrouwen op de verschillende eilanden voor zoo verre het verschil karakteristiek is; van de hoofden, regenten enz zouden behoorlijk geëtaleerd met hunne wapens een fraai geheel maken."

¹² "Voor de wereldtentoonstelling te Parijs," Sumatra-courant : nieuws- en advertentieblad, 21-04-1877. Also NL-HaNA, Koloniën, 1850-1900, 2.10.02, inv.no. 3020: Verbaal 29 August 1877 no. 37.

¹³ "Tentoonstelling," Bataviaasch handelsblad 26-11-1877; "De tentoonstelling aan het Koningsplein," Bataviaasch handelsblad 29-11-1877.