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COLLECTING IN THE COLONY

Hybridity, power and prestige in the Netherlands East Indies

The history of collecting has been part of anthropological discourse since the 1980s and it is now recognised that collecting is not a neutral activity. In colonial times particularly, it was a political statement. Three issues are raised in this article on collecting. Firstly, there has been inadequate attention given to the problem of hybridity in museum collections. Secondly, there is need for more research on the division of collections between the Netherlands East Indies and museums in the Netherlands as it is likely that some collectors circumvented official policies for regulating collecting activities. Thirdly, more attention should be given to the Ethical Policy and its influence on collecting.

Introduction

Many non-European ethnographic collections in Europe (and other parts of the world) are the direct result of colonial activities. All kinds of collecting contexts can be distinguished including scientific expeditions, military expeditions (peaceful or violent), missionary activities, and collecting for colonial exhibitions. For many years, at least until the 1980s, it was unusual to discuss within a museum the sensitive issues relating to these collecting contexts. As a result some people have wondered about a crisis in the world of ethnological museums.¹ How useful are these museums if they are not even prepared to discuss their own past? And what image can these museums give of the 'other', non-European world if they are unwilling to face the context in which the collections were compiled?

Collecting is never a neutral activity. All collecting, certainly in the context of colonialism, is political. It concerns a power relationship between the owner of an object and the collector who desires the object. Although both parties had ways of manipulating each other, in the colonial situation this power relationship was often asymmetrical.

Collecting was also never random. There was no random choice available to the collector. External circumstances always coloured their choice. Sometimes objects were not collected simply because collectors had no idea of what was kept hidden for them. In other situations collectors were confronted with an enormous supply of

¹For critical remarks on the history of museums, ethnography and collecting, see Clifford 1988.

similar objects: wooden spoons from North Luzon, or wooden and coconut spoons from the Lesser Sunda Islands of East Indonesia (see below). We do indeed find these objects everywhere in European museums. Was that, for the local population, a clever way of earning some money? And did European collectors, just fall for it, accepting these spoons as typical Ifugao or typical Timorese? Sometimes, the local population was clearly aware of the arrival of the Dutch explorers and, without any doubt, prepared objects to be sold to them. We have good reason to think that the composition of our early collections was also to a large extent determined by the way the local people manipulated the curious researcher or collector who visited them perhaps with the desire to bring many trophies home, for the glory of the homeland and of himself (usually not *herself*) (ter Keurs 2007a).

Little attention was given to these issues before the 1980s. Then, anthropologists, such as Nicholas Thomas (1991), started to pay attention to the entanglement of objects with exchange systems, both internal and external, and the extrapolation of the local exchange systems to the situation of collecting by an outsider. As a result there was also more attention given to the political context in which collections were compiled. Barringer and Flynn (1998: 1) formulated several questions for such research of which two became central issues in recent work on Indonesian collections in the Netherlands and in Indonesia. Firstly, what impact did the imposition of colonial power have on indigenous societies and on cultural production within them? And secondly, what impact does the power relation of colonialism have on the interpretation of objects?

International scholarly attention given to collecting as a specific phenomenon resulted in many interesting studies on the trajectories of objects in the British colonial empire. There are too many to be mentioned here, but some important studies are Barringer and Flynn (1998), Gosden and Knowles (2001) and Shelton (2001). The first book that focused on collecting in Indonesia (i.e. Netherlands East Indies) was *Treasure hunting?* (2002) by Reimar Schefold and Han Vermeulen. Less than two years after its publication the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden, and the National Museum of Indonesia began a programme of co-operation which included the history of collecting as one of its foci.²

The programme of cooperation between the two museums consisted of several activities, one of the most central of which was the exchange of information and consultation about their respective Indonesian collections. This included several exchange visits of staff from the curatorial and conservation departments. Important sources were the *notulen* (minutes) of the Board meetings of the *Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen* (Batavian Society for Arts and Sciences, henceforth Batavian Society), a scholarly organisation founded in 1778 in Batavia. The museum of the Batavian Society later became the National Museum of Indonesia. From the old inventories and the minutes of the Board meetings, the fascinating story of collecting and the story of the subsequent division of the collections between the Colony and the Motherland could partly be reconstructed.

²The project, 'Shared Cultural Heritage', and was funded by the Netherlands Culture Fund (HGIS), the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden, and the Indonesian Ministry for Culture and Tourism. Sponsorship from the private sector came from KLM Cargo. A follow-up project was formulated in 2007 and it was decided that the project would continue under the name 'The New Museum', referring to the new building of the Museum Nasional. Funding is available until mid-2010.

The programme focused on the second half of the 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th century, the heyday of colonial collecting, and distinguished the following types of collectors: scholars, colonial officers (civil servants), missionaries, military men, local rulers/local elite and interested lay persons. So far, the main results of the research undertaken by the curators of the National Museum (Jakarta) and of the National Museum of Ethnology (Leiden) have been published in two books (Hardiati and ter Keurs 2005; ter Keurs 2007a). This article will focus on three issues: hybridity in colonial (Netherlands East Indies) collections; the division of collections between the Netherlands as the Motherland, and the Netherlands East Indies as the Colony, and the influence of the Ethical Policy (*Ethische Politiek*) on collecting.

Hybridity in East Madura

There are no 'pure' collections in the sense that collections can be pure representations of the cultures where they originate from. The simple fact that they have been collected makes them part of a relationship between the collectors and the sellers (producers or middlemen). In the colonial context this relationship is always a power relationship which does not automatically mean that force has been used to obtain the objects. It does mean, however, that producers, middlemen and collectors all had their influences in the production, commodification and appreciation of the objects. The dominant view was that these collections were representations of the cultures where they were produced. However, curators and other scholars have become increasingly aware of the fact that 'the ambivalence and hybridity of colonial culture and the paradoxical interdependency of coloniser and colonised' (Barringer and Flynn 1998: 2; Bhabha 1994) were of great importance to the ways objects were made and collections compiled and interpreted. As Ata-Ullah (1998: 69) observes for India, in the 'stylistic hybridity and colonial art and designs education . . . several objects . . . were made by adapting the skill of local craftsmen to suit European taste' and that these objects were 'in demand by the rising educated middle classes in India'.

In the past, hybrid objects were rarely valued by researchers of 19th century colonial collections. The old catalogues of the Leiden Museum Indonesian collection (Juynboll 1909–32) sometimes mentioned hybrid forms although they were not identified as such. I have noted elsewhere (ter Keurs 2007b) that textiles from the *Peranakan*³ in the Netherlands East Indies were in the 19th and early 20th century identified as not coming from *Peranakan* groups but as Chinese or Javanese. Where hybrid forms were identified, they were often not valued. Eighteenth and 19th century categories for objects and cultures were essentialist categories. Marginal groups or groups of mixed descent (and their objects) were usually disregarded, or seen as spoiling the 'pure' image of a group or style. A good example of this view of material culture is the work undertaken on New Guinea art styles (see for example Gerbrands 1951). To bring order to the museum collections from New Guinea scholars were looking for the characteristics or the typical traits, of a style. They identified typical Asmat or Mimika characteristics, but paid no attention to the regions in between or to the new developments in more

³The term *Peranakan* is often used for people of mixed Chinese and Malay descent, who have developed distinct cultural expressions. Many *Peranakan* live around the Straits of Malacca.

recent Asmat or Mimika carvings. Mixed styles were not seen as good representations of a region's material culture.

Although hybridity is often, consciously or unconsciously, present in the collecting process, its influence on the form of the objects is not always very clear. Due to lack of data on how exactly the collecting took place, often we cannot establish clearly the various influences on the objects collected. We can suspect manipulations by the producers or the middlemen and anticipation of 'western' taste by the producers, but information about this is usually lacking. Sometimes, however, the historical process that shapes an object is better documented. This is the case for a Madurese kris in the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden, museum number RMV 2523–2 (Figure 1).

In 1947 the widow of General P.F. Hoeksema de Groot donated a small collection of Indonesian artefacts to the Leiden Museum. The collection contained a kris from Madura in the hilt of which a cross was depicted that appears to represent the *Militaire Willemsorde*, the highest decoration given to Dutch military men for courage and bravery. However, the kris – said to be a *pusaka* (heirloom) – was given to General Hoeksema de Groot by a Madurese ruler in the period when Hoeksema de Groot was serving in the Corps Barisan in Pamekasan. So how did a kris with a typical Dutch decoration, become



FIGURE 1 Madurese kris in the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden. Inventory number RMV 2523-2. Courtesy of the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden.

a *pusaka* in the family of a Madurese ruler? To answer this question we have to start with a short description of the legitimisation of power in Madura in the late 18th and early 19th century and in particular the relationship between the rulers of Madura and the Dutch authorities.

Although the rulers (*susuhunan*) of the Javanese kingdom of Mataram were in fact the overlords of West Madura from 1624 to 1744, matters on succession were usually left to the local elite. The taxes paid to Mataram were often negligible and the local Madurese rulers regularly ‘bluntly refused’ to undertake the obligatory journey to the *susuhunan* (Nagtegaal 1995: 51, 52). In East Madura (Sumenep and Pamekasan) the situation was slightly different. Here, from 1680 onwards, the Dutch East India Company (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, VOC) was the actual ruler, but the Dutch traders remained more distant from local affairs than the Javanese *susuhunan*. The Dutch simply acknowledged local political decisions as long as things remained quiet (Nagtegaal 1995: 52). However, as observed by both Nagtegaal (1995: 52) and Le Roux (1946: 165) the East Madurese rulers were under an obligation, when necessary, to provide the Dutch with troops. In Java and Bone (south Sulawesi) East Madurese troops fought on the side of the Dutch and this support for the Dutch colonial engagement was rewarded. Because of services rendered, King William I gave the rulers of both Sumenep and Pamekasan the title of Sultan in 1831.⁴ In the same year the two Sultans formed the Corps Barisan, with cavalry, artillery, lancers and pioneers (Le Roux 1946: 166). Thus, a solid stronghold of Dutch power, closely connected with the local rulers, was established.

I will not recapitulate all the interesting details Le Roux (1946) observed of Kris 2523–2. The hybrid nature of the object is however clear even to superficial observers. Many details refer to the military support the East Madurese rulers gave to the Dutch. The characteristic helmets of the *kurassiers* (cavalrymen) are clearly visible in the kris hilt (Figure 2). According to Le Roux the names used for parts of a kris also reflect the colonial power play between Madurese, Javanese and the Dutch. In Sumenep the hilts of krises are called *landhian poelasir* or *landhian langsir*, *poelasir* being derived from *kurassiers* and *langsir* from lancer (Le Roux 1946: 162).⁵

Le Roux also discovered the reason (with the help of C. Steinmetz, the editor of *Cultureel Indië*) for the design of the *Militaire Willemsorde* on the hilt. In the archives on Dutch decorations he found the name of Adie Pattij Tjakra Diningrat, who was appointed *Panumbahan* of Pamekasan in 1829, as someone who had been awarded the *Militaire Willemsorde* (third class) on 26 August 1833 for his actions during the Java War. Apparently the *Panumbahan* was wounded during the war and he was praised for his ‘uitstekende daden’ (heroic actions). Further details are lacking.

Looking at collections with hybridity in mind takes us away from the essentialist’s categories that have so long dominated museum research. A critical review of old

⁴The usual title for a Madura ruler was *Panembahan*, also written as *Penembahan*.

⁵Le Roux based his article partly on information obtained from the Regents of Sumenep and Pamekasan, whom he interviewed during his stay in the Netherlands East Indies, before World War II. In the 1930s Le Roux moved to the Netherlands where he became curator and later director of the Rijksmuseum for Volkenkunde in Leiden. After the war he moved to the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam and wrote his famous work on the Mountain Papuas of West New Guinea (published in 1948–50).



FIGURE 2 Madurese kris in the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden (detail). Inventory number RMV 2523-2. Courtesy of the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden.

colonial collections cannot succeed without an awareness of the colonial power play that formed these collections. Hybrid forms were and are, probably more than we are willing to admit, important aspects of the collecting process. For some types of objects, such as textiles from northern Java or colonial furniture, hybridity has had ample attention (often without developing a critical theoretical framework), but many other types of objects have to be reviewed with hybridity in mind. The collecting process itself combines at least two cultural influences (that of the collector and the producer), but very often it concerns a much more complex situation in which several middlemen are involved, and in which hybrid forms are likely to come into existence. We have only just begun to understand this complex story of collecting hybridity.

Dividing collections and personal agendas

As mentioned above, from the old inventories and minutes of the Batavian Society we can to some extent reconstruct part of the fascinating story of the collections. In addition, there are the stories about what the collectors did with the objects. One issue is the division of the collections between the ‘Colony’ and the ‘Motherland’.⁶ This sometimes led to intensive discussions between museum directors in the Netherlands and the Board members of the Batavian Society. In Batavia it was certainly not felt as evident that all the collections should be sent to Leiden, or indeed to any other museum in the Motherland. The Batavian Society consisted mainly of Dutch colonial researchers and civil servants. Usually they were in the colony for decades, sometimes for a lifetime. For them the museum in Leiden was far from the field. At that time its curators were not doing fieldwork (many of them never left Europe), it was seen as being too academic and as having, consequently, a limited view on the cultures in the Netherlands East Indies. Whether this image of the Leiden armchair scholars is correct or otherwise, is not the issue here. The point is that the Batavian Society and the colonial government did everything in their power to keep the best objects in the colony: to be stored, seen and researched in the museum in Batavia. In fact, research has revealed that most of what were regarded as the best pieces stayed in the colony (in the museum of the Batavian Society) and were never sent to Holland.⁷ At least in the last decades of the 19th century it was normal practice to divide collections between the Museum of the Batavian Society and museums in the Netherlands, particularly the Leiden Museum. However, archaeological collections and ethnographic collections went through slightly different trajectories.

Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, the British Lieutenant-Governor of Java (1811–16) in the Napoleonic interregnum, stimulated the activities of the Batavian Society enormously. He also acted as President of the Board. Raffles’ *History of Java* (1817) is a good illustration of his interest in what we now call ‘cultural heritage’. The increasing attention given to the Hindu Buddhist past of the archipelago was further stimulated by the Dutch when they returned to the East Indies in 1816. Before the British period the VOC ruled over large parts of what is now called Indonesia, but on 31 December 1799 the VOC was declared bankrupt and the following day the Dutch State formally took over the VOC’s obligations, chiefly political and economic control over the archipelago. Although political control was still tenuous – the Dutch certainly had no control over most of the region, only exercising power in some coastal enclaves – the new King William I saw the importance to the Netherlands of a great colonial empire and proceeded energetically to realise this aim. One of his first actions was to send Professor C.G.C. Reinwardt (1737–1854) to the colony to ‘set up agriculture and arts and sciences in the regained colony’ (Lunsingh Scheurleer 2007: 87). King William also founded the *Natuurkundige Commissie* (Natural Science Committee) in 1820 to stimulate scientific research and to increase knowledge of the land and people of what was now

⁶How the collections were divided between the Colony and the Motherland is a complex story. Lunsingh Scheurleer (2007) gives a good summary of this issue in relation to archaeological objects. For ethnographic objects the story is slightly different (see section).

⁷For examples of how collections from Java and Bali were divided, see Brinkgreve and van Hout (2005), Brinkgreve (2005) and Brinkgreve and Stuart-Fox (2007).

officially called the Netherlands East Indies. From the very beginning the archaeological remains chiefly on Java attracted most of the attention. Often still covered with trees, they were explored, described, drawn and painted. Later photography came to play a major part in the documentation of the Hindu-Buddhist remains in the Javanese countryside. As early as 1822 an Archaeological Committee was formed to promote activities in the field of Hindu-Buddhist archaeology (Sedyawati and ter Keurs 2005: 28). By that time, westerners were already collecting Hindu-Buddhist statues.⁸ As Lunsingh Scheurleer (2007: 89) comments:

In the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century, the antiquities were free for the taking in the eyes of the Europeans. It was quite common for higher officials to collect antiquities and erect them in the garden ... or take them home to the mother country.

This situation changed in 1840 when the colonial government issued a decree stating 'that no private persons are to consider antiquities as their property, and that no antiquity was allowed to leave the island without the consent of the Governor General' Lunsingh Scheurleer (2007: 89).

Prior to 1840 the circumstances described above led to the acquisition of some very interesting collections by the Museum of Antiquities in Leiden from private persons, with or without the involvement of the colonial authorities. During this period (until about 1840) some impressive objects, such as the famous Singasari statues, often went to Leiden instead of being stored in Batavia.⁹ Later it became regular policy to store the larger pieces in the Museum of the Batavian Society and as a result the National Museum of Indonesia now has the best Indonesian Hindu-Buddhist collection in the world.

For ethnographic collections, it was much later that the authorities regulated export. In the first half of the 19th century there were no clear regulations. Sometimes collections were acquired by the Batavian Society, sometimes by museums in the Netherlands. In many cases, it is not clear exactly what happened between collecting in the field and the 'final' storage destination. The collections of plant and animal species (1828–36) of the Natural Science Committee expeditions were sent to the Museum of Natural History (now Naturalis) in Leiden. The ethnographic objects, however, were not sent to the National Museum of Ethnology, since that museum had yet to exist as an independent ethnological museum.¹⁰ Here too, as with the archaeological collections, it concerned personal collections of the expedition members and an evident role of museums in the collecting process had yet to be clearly established. At least two of the members of the Natural Science Committee, Heinrich Macklot and Salomon Müller, initially kept their collections of ethnographic objects as private

⁸For a detailed account of the appropriation of Javanese Hindu-Buddhist culture see Lunsingh Scheurleer (2007).

⁹The Hindu-Buddhist collections were stored in the National Museum of Antiquities and later, in 1903, transferred to the National Museum of Ethnology.

¹⁰1837 is usually regarded as the founding year of the National Museum of Ethnology. This date is however contested. Some authors regard 1837 as being just one of the dates in the history of the formation of the museum's collections (Effert 2008).

collections. In addition, most of the collections were quickly disentangled from their collectors (Shelton 2001).

Although the Leiden Museum had yet to come into being, parts of the collections that were to become the core collections of the National Museum of Ethnology had been formed. Many members of the early expeditions died in the ‘course of duty’ and their collections were often kept by their families or sold to other collectors or government institutions. It was Ph. F. von Siebold, considered to be the founding father of the museum in Leiden, who acquired the collection of Macklot, a member of the Natural Science Committee killed in Java in 1832. As a consequence, all the Macklot objects in the museum are registered under serial number one (RMV series 1). Another collection, that of Müller, was only acquired by the museum in 1864. It is interesting to note that Müller’s collection was not given to the museum but bought by the museum. This shows that the objects were considered to be private property and were not owned by the state, even if they were collected during state sponsored expeditions.

In the second half of the nineteenth century ethnographic collections were usually divided between the Colony and the Motherland albeit with exceptions. A major change in policy came in 1862, when the colonial government decided to invite colonial officers ‘to create ethnographic collections on behalf of the government, to the best of their ability with the instruction to send these to the society [Batavian Society] . . .’ (Sedyawati and ter Keurs 2005; NBG 1863: 150–51). It was added that a separation had to be made between objects meant to be stored in the museum of the Batavian Society and objects which were supposed to be sent to the Netherlands ‘for the assembly of an ethnological collection’ there (NBG 1863: 151). This decision was the result of a note written by Dr Conrad Leemans, the then director of both the Museum of Antiquities and the Museum of Ethnology in Leiden, in which he asked the authorities to act as mentioned. The authorities did as Leemans requested and many collections were indeed divided, although not always directly between the Batavian Society and the museums in the Netherlands. Since the Board of the Batavian Society advised and therefore decided *de facto* on the division of objects, there was a strong tendency to act in their own favour at the expense of the museums in the Netherlands. Leemans and his successors were unable to prevent that.

Some examples offer a good illustration of what actually happened when collections were shipped to Batavia. At the end of the 19th century, Dr A.W. Nieuwenhuis, nicknamed the ‘Dr Livingstone of Borneo’, made three trips to the interior of Borneo, now called Kalimantan. The entire collection of the first trip (1896–97) ended up in the museum in Batavia. Only a very small collection, collected by expedition leader Gustaf Molengraaff went to Leiden. However, Nieuwenhuis’ second collection (1889–99) as well as his third collection (1900) went to the museum in Leiden. Soon after, Nieuwenhuis himself moved to the Netherlands to become professor of anthropology at the University of Leiden. The collector’s intention to return to Europe might have been an important incentive to send collections to Leiden as in the example of Gooszen (below). The Board of the Batavian Society did not oppose this since they had had a good collection from Nieuwenhuis’ first expedition.

The conqueror of Aceh and the Gayo-Alas region, G.C.E. van Daalen, also collected ethnographic objects and his collections can be found in Jakarta and Leiden. The Dutch historian Harm Stevens published two articles on van Daalen as a collector (Stevens 2005, 2007). In a violent military situation the detachment of collecting contexts and collectors was usually quite complete. Officers and soldiers were, for obvious reasons,

not open in explaining how they obtained the objects. Therefore, details about the collecting process are often lacking. Stevens (2005: 82) noted that the first published description of the van Daalen objects in the Leiden Museum (Fischer 1912) avoided any discussion of the military involvement in Aceh. In general the circumstances of collecting remain unclear in many cases. Although it is possible that many objects were taken from Acehnese who died during the fighting, this is probably not a good reflection of what actually happened. On 17 September 1901, just before his first expedition to the Gayo-Alas region van Daalen received an instruction in which it was stipulated that no one was allowed to take any belongings of Gayo individuals and that they would be punished if they did. It is therefore likely that most objects were collected when local people visited the army camps to sell objects to the officers (Stevens 2005: 82–83). Finally, the van Daalen collections were, as was regular practice, sent to Batavia where a few hundred objects were stored in the collections of the Batavian Society. Other items were sent to the Netherlands and divided between the ethnographic museums in Leiden and Rotterdam.

A final example concerns the collections of the military commander of East Indonesia, A.J. Gooszen. Here, the personal motives of the collector clearly influenced the final destination of the collections. In 1906 the authorities planned a further exploration of western New Guinea. The border between east and west New Guinea was still a potential point of dispute and it was felt to be a matter of some urgency to claim authority over certain areas. The exploration was planned in two parts: north and south. As Nico de Jonge (2005) observed, the Southern detachment which was active from 1907 to 1913 became the best known of the two. This was the result of a series of newspaper articles written by Gooszen and published in the Netherlands. Under the name 'Pioneer' he reported on 'the rigours of the journey' (de Jonge 2005: 191). To put it in modern terms, as a public relations man Gooszen was very successful.

The expeditions were a success as well. Large parts of New Guinea were mapped and an enormous number of objects was collected. We should, however, not forget that circumstances were hard and the cost in financial and human terms was high. In the course of six years 140 people died, mostly forced labourers who participated in the expeditions (de Jonge 2005: 195).

As mentioned, the regular practice was to send objects to Batavia first before any decision was taken on the final destinations of (parts of) the collections. The Northern detachment did so consequently. At the same time, however, Gooszen sent 6,250 objects straight to Leiden, probably without informing the Board of the Batavian Society.¹¹ Gooszen's reasons were twofold. Firstly, he held the personal opinion that the museum in Leiden was a more suitable institution (de Jonge 2005: 194) to store collections from the Netherlands East Indies than the Batavian Society and, secondly (perhaps the most important reason), he was aiming for a post in the Leiden Museum probably as director, after his return to the Netherlands (de Jonge: 194). This personal agenda was apparently far more important in allocating the collections from the Southern detachment than any formal rule about collecting and dividing collections. The official decision to collect for both the Batavian Society and museums in the Netherlands had been taken many decades earlier and by the time Gooszen collected there may have been some

¹¹The objects collected by Gooszen in the Leiden Museum are registered under serial numbers 1779, 1889 and 1971.

doubt about the formal, legal status of the practice of dividing collections. Whatever the details of this affair may have been, the fact remains that the Board members of the Batavian Society had not as far as we know asked for the return of the Gooszen collections to the Netherlands East Indies. Did they not notice the flagrant breach of regular practice by Gooszen? Unlikely as it may be, were they too lazy to act? Were there practical reasons for not making an issue of it for fear of disputes over responsibility of transport costs? Or were the Batavian Society simply powerless to intervene?

Gooszen's case is not the only remaining problem. One of van Daalen's officers, Th. J. Veltman, made a superb collection in Aceh where he stayed as civil inspector for some time after the conquest. Veltman sold his entire collection (series RMV 1599) to the museum in Leiden during his leave of absence in 1907. As far as we have now been able to establish, nothing went to the Batavian Society (Lauren 2008). Here again we can pose the question: Why did the authorities not react to this? And how easy was it for Veltman to export his collection from the colony? Apparently, in normal situations the rules were strictly applied, but the exceptions mentioned here show that for people high in the colonial hierarchy it was not difficult to bend the rules and to avoid the involvement of the Board of the Batavian Society.

An account of the gifts donated by Indonesian rulers to the Dutch authorities would be a story in its own right. Such gifts were in fact state property, and were usually given on loan to the Batavian Society. Governor-General Pahud did so consequently, but this practice was certainly not followed by all his predecessors or successors. Governor-General Sloet van der Beele kept the objects he received from local rulers and took them to the Netherlands after his retirement. Upon his death his family sold his collection to the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden (series 982, bought in 1894). In a way, his family was selling national property to a national museum. The dagger illustrated here (Figure 3) was a gift from Mangkunegara IV to Governor-General Sloet van der Beele (Brinkgreve and van Hout 2005).

The Ethical Policy

The third issue is the influence of the Ethical Policy on collecting. The policy resulted from a critical movement that gained influence with the colonial authorities from 1900 onwards. Triggered by an article published by C.Th. van Deventer in 1899, critical colonials pointed out that the colonisers had an *eereschuld* (debt of honour) towards the local population. This 'enlightened colonialism' (Legêne 2007: 221) was officially sanctioned in 1901 when Queen Wilhelmina raised it in her annual speech (Legêne 2007: 221) in which the plans of the government were (and still are) presented. Although one can critically discuss the actual effects of the Ethical Policy on the welfare of the local people, it had a clear influence on the colonisers' interest in material culture.

Where Barnes (2007: 204–5) notices the influence of the Ethical Policy on Ernst Vatter's activities as a researcher and a collector, many other examples can be mentioned. Traveller and batik specialist, C.P. Rouffaer (Brinkgreve and van Hout 2005: 118–19) interpreted van Deventer's economic debt of honour as an artistic debt and advocated intensive study of the local arts and crafts (Rouffaer and Juynboll 1900–14). Other major works include Jasper and Pirngadie's *Inlandsche Kunstnijverheid* (1912–27). The first decade of the 20th century also produced some influential journals such as



FIGURE 3 Dagger (RMV 982-1), a gift from Mangkunegara IV to the Dutch Governor-General Sloet van der Beele. Courtesy of the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden.

Nederlandsch-Indië Oud en Nieuw (1916–37) and *Cultureel Indië* (1939–46) which can be seen as part of the general stream of ideas resulting from the Ethical Policy.

What influence did the Ethical Policy have on collecting activities? The enormous growth of colonial collections in European museums in the last three decades of the 19th century did not continue in the 1920s and the 1930s. The inventories of the Leiden Museum show a dramatic drop in the number of items acquired after 1910. However, collections that did come in were sometimes very well documented. The two journals mentioned earlier give ample evidence of increasing in-depth knowledge of Indonesian material culture. We know of at least some collectors such as P. Voorhoeve and G. Tichelman who had a profound interest in local cultures, and had established good relationships with local informants. However, they did not

collect large numbers of objects. They were well informed but their main aim was to collect information rather than objects, and to promote respect for the 'other' culture. Here too, personal reasons may have provided the main motivation. As with many anthropologists and other travellers, a wish to prove oneself or an attempt to increase one's prestige and status in the eyes of the academic or cultural elite in the Motherland may have been of importance here. However, these reasons are not usually explicitly mentioned in published sources. Only dairies and letters offer opportunities for discovering more personal motives. In some cases we have these personal sources and we then see that they do show us the unofficial story of colonial collections.¹² Sometimes we can read between the lines of the published sources. In many cases, however, we lack sufficient information on the real motives for collecting.

In studying the underlying motivation for collecting during the period of the Ethical Policy, we should remember that when Queen Wilhelmina formally paved the way for a more enlightened colonialism in 1901, some of the most violent colonial wars were still to come. North Sumatra (Aceh, Gayo, Alas and the Batak) was brought under Dutch military control as late as 1907. In that year the resistance in north Sumatra was finally broken when the Batak leader Si Singa Mangaraja was killed by soldiers of the colonial army. The last war in south Sulawesi took place in 1905–06 and the conquest of Bali ended in 1908 when Klungkung was conquered by the Dutch. It was only at the end of the first decade of the 20th century that the whole archipelago was brought under colonial rule. Thus the Ethical Policy had a violent start. Only after this military and political offensive was there more manoeuvring space for the more humanitarian colonial officers. However, it remains a fascinating contradiction: violence and collecting. Are these practices expressions of the same human drives? At the start of the 20th century many collectors criticised the colonial authorities for its violent oppression of its colonial subjects. The famous traveller W.O.J. Nieuwenkamp was highly critical towards the Dutch military operations on Bali (Brinkgreve 2005: 130), but at the same time he did some of his best collecting following the path of the colonial army.

Concluding remarks

Collecting in colonial times was probably much less systematic than previously thought. The ideal 'enlightened', rationalist picture of the value-free, objective scientist did often prevail, but politics was never far away. The local population probably had more influence on the collecting activities than we were willing to admit (ter Keurs 2007a: 1–13). Reports of researchers and collectors are biased (then as now) and in colonial times leaving out details about the political situation in an area was considered normal. Whatever the reasons for this omission (perhaps it was sometimes just left out because the collectors felt it did not matter), it is important to attempt to fill this gap in our knowledge. What was the political situation at the time of collecting? How did this influence the composition of the collections? What was the influence of the local population? And last but not least: how did personal reasons influence the collecting practices?

Personal reasons were often the drive behind a first voyage to the colony. Young people looking for adventure, looking for a way to leave the parental home, is sometimes

¹²See, for example, de Jonge's fascinating text on the missionary P. Middelkoop (2005: 187–91).

explicitly mentioned as the incentive to search for new horizons. Collecting for reasons of curiosity, science or simply as souvenirs, was an integral part of this search for something new and exotic, and as strategies to control the new, strange, mysterious 'other'. In the 19th century at least, the collection of hybrid forms, in which the 'other' was no longer a pure 'other', was not popular. Controlling the 'other' human being by collecting his or her objects and at the same time satisfying the collector's own psychological needs – one wonders if this was what it was all about.

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