COLONIAL COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Please note this is an unauthorised translation of the original Dutch text of Recommendation SL-2023-4, Zilveren Kastane

Object	Silver kasthāné (sabre)
Current owner	State of the Netherlands
Custodian	Rijksmuseum Amsterdam
Restitution request from	The Republic of Sri Lanka
Date of restitution request	4 March 2021, specified on 18 November 2022
Recommendation number	SL-2023-4
Date of recommendation	12 May 2023
Composition of Committee	mr. L.Y. Gonçalves-Ho Kang You (chair), Professor L.N.K. van Broekhoven, Professor R. Raben (members)
Secretary	J.A. van Ooijen MA

1. The object

The kasthāné is a ceremonial sabre made of iron, silver and gold, inlaid with precious stones, including diamonds and rubies. The kasthāné is richly decorated with an almost solid silver hilt, ornamented with four lion heads (simhas), and a wooden silver-plated scabbard. The shape and decoration are typical of kasthāné from the eighteenth-century Kingdom of Kandy. The kasthāné is registered in the Rijksmuseum collection under inventory number NG-NM-7112.

2. The policy framework

The assessment in this recommendation has been made within the framework of the *Policy Vision on Collections in a Colonial Context* of the Minister of Education, Culture and Science.[1] The policy vision is based on the *Colonial Collection and a Recognition of Injustice* report by the Council for Culture.[2]
A restitution request may be submitted by a State where the Netherlands exercised colonial power over an extended period of time.

The assessment parameters are summarized in the Policy Vision as follows:

The Committee first establishes whether the provenance research is sufficient.

[1] Policy vision, 29 January 2021, https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2021/01/29/rapport-beleidsvisie-collecties-uit-een-koloniale-context
[2] Report, 7 October 2020 Colonial Collection and a Recognition of Injustice | Advies | Raad voor Cultuur

The Committee then establishes whether an involuntary loss of possession has occurred. This entails an assessment of whether it can be established to a reasonable degree of certainty that the requested cultural object was were involuntarily lost in a country where the Netherlands exercised colonial authority for an extended period of time. If it is established that this is the case, an unconditional return of the cultural object will be recommended.

If it cannot be established on the basis of the provenance that there has been an involuntary loss of possession, and the cultural objects and the cultural objects are of a particular cultural, historical, or religious significance to the country of origin, the Committee will make a considered judgement, based on the various interests involved. The importance of restitution to the country of origin should be weighed in reasonableness and fairness against other relevant interests.

Relevant interests may include the cultural significance of the cultural object to the country of origin, the communities concerned in the countries of origin and in the Netherlands, the significance for the Collection Nederland, the future conditions in which the items would be kept, and public accessibility. Items can be of great importance to national and regional traditions and the identity of a country, people, community, or individual. The importance of a cultural object will often be different to the Netherlands than to the country of origin. For Dutch persons with roots in the countries of origin too, cultural objects in Dutch museums may have a special meaning.

If the item whose restitution has been requested originates from a former colony of another power, the Committee also makes a considered judgement .The importance of restitution to the country of origin should be weighed in reasonableness and fairness against other relevant interests. However, the rectification of an injustice will have to be the starting point in the assessment. In this case, the injustice has not been caused by the Netherlands, but the Netherlands, as the current owner of the items, is the only party capable of rectifying this injustice.

If the Committee recommends that an item or items be returned to the State requesting them, account should be taken – in accordance with the Heritage Act and the *Policy Vision on Collections in a Colonial Context* of the State Secretary for Culture and Media – of the public collections disposal procedure; the recommendation by the Committee should also be regarded as a recommendation on the indispensability and irreplaceability of the item as meant in Section 4.18 of the Heritage Act.

3. The procedure

On 18 November 2022, the Republic of Sri Lanka submitted a request to the State Secretary for Culture and Media for the restitution of the silver kasthāné that was looted during the attack on Kandy in 1765. The State Secretary asked the Colonial Collections Committee (hereinafter, 'the Committee') to advise on the request.
The custodian of the object, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, has carried out provenance research and issued a report on the matter (Appendix 1).

The Committee discussed the restitution request and the provenance report at its meeting of 9 January 2023. The Committee heard Dr Alicia Schrikker in her capacity of provenance researcher. As she is also a member of the Committee, she did not take part in the Committee's substantive deliberations or decision-making on the object. The Committee had no additional questions about the provenance research.

In January 2023, Committee member Dr Schrikker held talks in Colombo with various representatives of the Ministries of Culture and Foreign Affairs, the senior presidential advisor on security, the

Director General of the Department of National Museums, and the Dutch ambassador. She discussed with them how the restitution requests were being processed and consulted them on possible subsequent action.

On 24 March 2023, the Committee spoke with Taco Dibbits, General Director, and Dr Valika Smeulders, Head of the History Department, in their capacities as representatives of the Rijksmuseum, the custodian of the collection. They stated their support for the restitution policy and their belief in the importance of working in partnership with the country from which the items originated.
An English translation of the provenance research was shared with the Sri Lanka representatives. The provenance research gave no rise to any additional questions.
On 24 March 2023, the Committee discussed the restitution request again and decided to make the recommendations shown below.

4. The provenance research

The provenance investigation was carried out by Dr Alicia Schrikker and Doreen van den Boogaart RMa, in partnership with Senarath Wickramasinghe of the National Museum in Colombo. At the time of the investigation, Alicia Schrikker and Doreen van den Boogaart were employed as provenance researchers on behalf of PPROCE and employed by the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

The report of the investigation is appended to these recommendations (*Appendix 1*). The contents of the report are regarded as part of this recommendation. In a summarized form, the researchers set out the following findings in the report.

“NG-NM-7112 is a highly ornamented Sri Lankan kasthāné, or sabre, with a silver hilt shaped with four lion heads (simhas). Its shape and ornaments are typical for kasthāné from the Kandyan Kingdom in the eighteenth century. This kasthāné was made in the Royal workshop of the Kingdom of Kandy and was probably meant for a member of the Kandyan aristocracy. At present, the silver kasthāné is on display in the Rijksmuseum and presented as a spoil of war, obtained by the VOC during the war with Kandy in 1765. The object most likely arrived in the collection of the Dutch Stadtholders (Willem IV and Willem V) prior to 1795 and was first recorded in 1816. It is not exactly clear, however, what route the silver mounted kasthāné took from Kandy into the collection of the Dutch Stadtholders, which eventually became part of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam collection.

The eighteenth-century archival trails of this object are incomplete. Various scholars have suggested that this object was among the spoils of war that Dutch East India Company Governor of Ceylon, Lubbert Jan van Eck (in office 1762 – 1765), collected after the siege of the palace in 1765 and that were sent to his heirs in the Dutch Republic in 1768. This report shows that it is not possible to identify the silver mounted kasthāné with any certainty among objects described in the estate of Governor Lubbert Jan van Eck at the time. We have also found no documentation of the transfer of this object by any of the heirs of Van Eck to the collection of the Stadtholder Willem V. At the same time, we have also not come across evidence that would suggest another provenance. The exact moment of arrival of the silver mounted kasthāné into the collection simply remained unrecorded.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Kandyan provenance was forgotten, and at least until 1937 the kasthāné was described as originating from mainland Southeast Asia. Since 1965, the silver kasthāné has been catalogued once more as a spoil of the Kandyan-Dutch war by the Rijksmuseum together with the gold mounted kasthāné and knife and Lewke’s cannon.”

5. Assessing the restitution request

The request for the restitution was submitted by a State where the Netherlands exercised colonial power over an extended period of time, and therefore the *Policy Vision on Collections in a Colonial Context* is applicable.

The Committee is of the opinion that the research was conducted properly and provides a sufficiently solid basis on which to make a recommendation. A thorough source investigation has been carried out and existing knowledge has been critically evaluated. The report gives a good representation of the available information.

The Committee examined whether an involuntary loss of possession was involved, as meant in the policy framework. In doing so, the Committee considered the following.

The report contains four key questions designed to clarify the matter of provenance. As well as the archive examination, material and art-historical research also played a major role in this. The report raises the following questions.

Is it apparent from the material investigation whether the kasthāné had a royal origin or owner?

Based on the material investigation and specific details of the decoration, it has been established with certainty that this kasthāné was made in the royal workshops at Kandy. The objects made in the royal workshops, generally jewellery and decorative weapons intended as gifts, were always of a high quality. The level of opulence and refinement of the decoration was also an indication of the status of the recipient. The experts are of the opinion that the silver kasthāné must have been the possession of one of the highest-ranking aristocrats of the court.

What is known in the museum and in literature about the origin of the kasthāné? What is known about the objects that were looted during the attack on Kandy by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1765?

In 1765, Kandy and the royal palace were attacked and destroyed by Dutch troops led by the Dutch governor of Ceylon, Lubbert Jan van Eck. Van Eck died shortly after Kandy was taken. As Kandy and the palace were seized and looted, many objects were taken, including jewels and weapons. A number of these objects ended up as part of Van Eck's estate, from which they subsequently passed to the collection of Stadtholder Willem V. It has not proved possible, based on the sources, to establish whether the silver kasthāné was part of Van Eck's estate. There was previously an erroneous description, "silver belly-knife", on the inventory, but this must have referred to another weapon, namely a dagger or a knife.

It is possible that the kasthāné became part of the collection of Stadtholder Willem V and was displayed as war booty in his 'Cabinet of Curiosities' in The Hague. Eyewitness accounts state that weapons looted from the king of Kandy were among the items displayed in the Cabinet of Curiosities: "(…) unter den kunstsachen eine ganz silberne kanone mit golde ubersogen, graviert, und mit edelgesteinen besezt, welche die Hollander in ihren lesten kriege, met den koninge von Candi erbeutet haben, und viele andre sehr kostbare Waffen". Nonetheless, the kasthāné does not feature on the inventory of the collection of Willem V. However, it is known that the inventory is far from complete, and the possibility that the kasthāné was part of the collection cannot therefore be excluded.

To what extent do the Van Eck family archives and other Dutch archives provide clues linking the silver kasthāné to the attack on Kandy in 1765, and what route did the kasthāné take as it passed through Dutch collections?

The ‘Lists of gold and silver tableware, paintings, and clothing taken in January 1795’ that Stadtholder Willem V took with him when exiled to England in 1795 or had placed in safety at Schloss Oranienstein in Germany, include an object that is probably this kasthāné. From this, it can be concluded that the kasthāné must have been in the Netherlands before 1795.

Documents suggest that the kasthāné was transferred in 1816 by Willem I to the Royal Cabinet of Rarities (Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden, KKZ). The earliest mention in a Dutch collection registry that concerns this kasthāné with certainty is that in the KKZ under number 6025: “A sabre with a solid silver hilt, the pommel of which is shaped like a dragon, in a scabbard like the latter.” The following additional comment has been found in the Rijksmuseum documentation on KKZ no. 6025: “And transferred in 1816 by King Willem I to the Royal Cabinet of Rarities.”

However, it has not been possible to establish with any certainty by what route the kasthāné came to the Netherlands.

The Committee’s deliberations

Based on the following findings in the provenance research, the Committee is of the opinion that it is likely that the kasthāné does originate from the palace at Kandy and that it was looted as a spoil of war in 1765.

The materials investigation shows convincingly that the kasthāné was made in the royal workshops in Kandy for someone in high-ranking, possibly royal, circles.

To verify whether the kasthāné was already in the Netherlands before 1765, the lists of the Stadtholder collections and other sources from before that date were examined. They did not include any sabres that met the description. The researchers also examined the possibility that the kasthāné could have been a gift. For this too, no evidence was found. Moreover, the Sri Lankan experts do not believe this type of kasthāné was used for diplomatic gifts.

It has been established with certainty that the kasthāné formed part of the Dutch collection of the KKZ in 1816 and it is highly probable that it was already in the possession of King Willem V before 1795. The list of goods taken by King Willem V when he fled to England in 1795 includes an object that was probably this kasthāné.

Although, as previously mentioned, the route by which the kasthāné came to be in the possession of King Willem V cannot be stated with any certainty, the answer to that question is not crucial for the purpose of the assessment.

After all, it has been convincingly shown that the kasthāné originated from royal circles in Kandy. During the attack on Kandy and the looting that took place in 1765, many items were stolen. There is no evidence of a diplomatic gift. Based on the foregoing facts, the kasthāné most likely came from the Kandy war booty, and Kandy was therefore involuntarily deprived of its ownership.

The Rijksmuseum has itself assumed for decades that it was originally looted and there are no other indications that suggest anything else.

On the basis of the aforementioned reasons, contained in the provenance report, the Committee is of the view that it can be established to a reasonable degree of certainty that the requested cultural object was involuntarily lost in a country where the Netherlands exercised colonial authority for an

extended period of time. On the basis of the foregoing, the Committee recommends that the kasthāné be unconditionally returned on account of the involuntary loss of possession.

The Committee has been asked to advise on the application of Section 4.18 of the Heritage Act if it recommends that the requested objects be returned. In the view of the Committee, the rectification of a past injustice prevails in this case and therefore Section 4.19 of the Heritage Act does not apply.

6. The recommendation

The Committee has assessed the restitution request and recommends to the State Secretary the unconditional restitution of the kasthāné with inventory number NG-NM-7112 to the Republic of Sri Lanka.

This recommendation was adopted by the Colonial Collections Committee on 12 May 2023.

The chair	The secretary
Lilian Gonçalves-Ho Kang You	Jo'anne van Ooijen

Appendix

1. Provenance report regarding Kasthāné with scabbard (silver sabre) (A.F. Schrikker, D. van den Boogaart, March 2022)

Provenance report regarding Kastane met schede *[Silver sabre]*

Alicia Schrikker and Doreen van den Boogaart
In collaboration with Senarath Wickramasinghe (National Museum, Colombo)

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv.no. NG-NM-7112

Custodian	Rijksmuseum Amsterdam
Current possessor	The Dutch State
Current location	Rijksmuseum Amsterdam
Inventory number	NG-NM-7112
Material/technique	silver (metal) wood (plant material) iron (metal) gold (metal) diamond (mineral) ruby (mineral) crystal (lead glass) forging / casting
Measurements	length 61.5 cm length 49 cm × width 5.5 cm width 9.3 cm width 3 cm

Summary of findings

NG-NM-7112 is a highly ornamented Sri Lankan kasthāné, or sabre, with a silver hilt shaped with four lion heads (simhas). Its shape and ornaments are typical for kasthāné from the Kandyan Kingdom in the eighteenth century. This kasthāné is made in the Royal workshop of the Kingdom of Kandy and was probably meant for a member of the Kandyan aristocracy. At present, the silver kasthāné is on display in the Rijksmuseum and presented as a spoil of war, obtained by the VOC during the war with Kandy in 1765.

The object most likely arrived in the collection of the Dutch stadtholders (Willem IV and Willem V) prior to 1795 and was first recorded in 1816. It is not exactly clear, however, what route the silver mounted kasthāné took from Kandy into the collection of the Dutch stadtholders, which eventually became part of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam collection. The eighteenth-century archival trails of this object are less certain. Various scholars have suggested that this object was among the spoils of war that Dutch East India Company Governor of Ceylon, Lubbert Jan van Eck (in office 1762 – 1765), collected after the siege of the palace in 1765 and that were sent to his heirs in the Dutch Republic in 1768. This report shows that it is not possible to identify the silver mounted kasthāné with any certainty among objects described in the estate of Governor Lubbert Jan van Eck at the time. We have also found no documentation of the transfer of this object by any of the heirs of Van Eck to the collection of the stadtholder Willem V. At the same time, we have also not come across evidence that would suggest another provenance. The exact moment of arrival of the silver mounted kasthāné into the collection simply remained unrecorded.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Kandyan provenance was forgotten, and at least until 1937 the kasthāné was described as originating from mainland Southeast Asia. Since 1965 the silver kasthāné has been catalogued once more as a spoil of the Kandyan-Dutch war by the Rijksmuseum together with the gold mounted kasthāné and knife and Lewke's cannon.

Reconstruction provenance

Seventeenth/ Eighteenth century

Made in the Paṭṭal Hatara. The Four Workshops of the King of Kandy.

Object analysis, this report.

[date unknown] – 1795/1816

presumably Stadholders' collection, Dutch Republic

1795?-1816?

Presumably brought along in exile with Willem V to England and later (maybe) taken to Brunswick, Germany; Slot Oranienstein, Germany

Jan van Campen, De Haagse jurist Jean Theodore Royer (1737-1807) en zijn verzameling Chinese voorwerpen (Uitgeverij Verloren, 2000), 215; PPROCE Report RV-360-6021.

1816 – 1885

Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden, The Hague

NL-HlmNHA, 476, inv.no. 843, 'Lijst van voorwerpen op last van Koning Willem I overgedragen aan het Kon. Kab. v. Zeldzaamheden te 's-Gravenhage' [List of objects transferred to the Royal Cabinet of Curiosities in The Hague on the orders of King William I], 1816.

Original document in: NL-HaNA, 2.04.01, inv.no. 4030, 'Bijlage 1. Degens, Sabels en Stokken' [Attachment 1. Swords, Sabres, and Sticks], dated 6 July 1816, no. 37.

1885 –1927

Nederlandsch Museum voor Geschiedenis en Kunst in Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

Inventory card Rijksmuseum Amsterdam NG-NM-7112.

1927 – present

Rijksmuseum Amsterdam

Introduction and context

This provenance report focuses on NG-NM-7112, a silver mounted kasthāné currently displayed in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam in room 1.5: *The Netherlands overseas*. The current narrative adopted by institutions and researchers is that this kasthāné, together with a gold mounted sabre (NG-NM-560), a golden knife with crystal hilt (NG-NM-7114), a cannon (NG-NM-1015) and two wall-guns (NG-NM-519 and 520) were spoils of the Kandyan-Dutch war (1762-1766) and obtained during the violent, ruthless plundering of the Kandyan Palace in 1765.

In this provenance report we assess the material and archival evidence that has been used to support the presentation of the silver mounted sabre as part of the spoils of war and discusses the current gaps in our knowledge regarding this object. In the report we will therefore answer the following questions:

1) Which material elements support the thesis that the silver mounted sabre was of royal origin?

2) What knowledge is available in the museum and the literature regarding the provenance of the object?

3) What is known about the objects that were looted during the siege of the palace and town of Kandy in 1765 by the VOC?

4) To what extent do the eighteenth-century archival records from the VOC, the family archive of Van Eck, and the Royal Archives (KHA) provide us with concrete evidence that connects the kasthāné to the Kandyan-Dutch war of 1762-1766?

5) What route did the kasthāné take through the Dutch collections?

The research was conducted in collaboration with experts from the Sri Lankan National Museum in Colombo and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

Object analysis

The silver mounted kasthāné has been analysed in the Atelier of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam on 18 May and 25 November 2021 together with specialists from the museum's Conservation & Science department. The metal measurements and analysis of the stones were shared with Senarath Wickramasinghe from the Sri Lankan National Museums. He further analysed the design and decoration on the silver mounted kasthāné with the help of a series of detailed photos that were made on 18 May 2021 and 25 November 2021. Based on these data and earlier publications on Kandyan arms, Senarath Wickramasinghe provided us with his analysis of the object, which we have integrated in this overall object analysis.

There is no doubt about the Kandyan origin of the kasthāné, as it is a very typical Kandyan, and therefore Sri Lankan object.[1] Kasthāné were ceremonial swords or sabres and not used as fighting swords. The kasthāné came in different qualities, and can in general be divided into two categories: 'up-country' kasthāné (referring to the mountainous area of the Kandyan kingdom) and 'low-country' (referring to the island's maritime regions that were partially occupied by the Dutch) kasthāné. Kasthāné from the low country (i.e. the area under Dutch rule) were coarser, both in design and in material used.[2] The Rijksmuseum holds an example of such a low country kasthāné: NG-1982-18, in this case the hilt is made of carved wood.[3] For the Kandyan nobility, kasthāné were part of their formal custom when in function. Kasthāné were typical gifts from the Kandyan king to his highest nobles in reward for their service and on occasion were used as diplomatic gifts.[4] The king had decorative objects such as jewellery, swords, and chains made in the Four royal workshops (pattal hatara) for this purpose.[5]

The craftsmen from the pattal hatara worked almost exclusively for the court and their positions were hereditary. The Four Workshops were divided, respectively, into the "jewel," "crown," "golden sword," and "throne" workshops. Kasthāné produced in the royal workshops were all high quality, yet the exact quality in terms of design, decoration, and material of the kasthāné signified the rank to whom the object was gifted: the more decorated (i.e. use of figures, gems, silver, gold), the higher the rank of the receiver.[6]

The ceremonial function of Kasthāné at the Kandyan court are described in travel reports and in drawings and paintings of Kandyan chiefs and noblemen by Dutch artists in the eighteenth century.[7] For example, in 1681 Robert Knox observed:

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[1] P.H. D. H De Silva and Senerath Wickramasinghe, *Ancient Swords, Daggers, and Knives in Sri Lankan Museums* (Colombo: Dept. of National Museums, 2007): 128.
[2] P.H.D.H De Silva and Senerath Wickramasinghe, *Ancient Swords, Daggers, and Knives in Sri Lankan Museums* (Colombo: Dept. of National Museums, 2007): 162-167.
[3] Collection Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, NG-1982-18, https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/NG-1982-18. Purchased by the Rijksmuseum on 21 September 1982
[4] Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art (Being a Mongraph on Mediaeval Sinhalese Arts and Crafts, Mainly as Surviving in the Eighteenth Century, with an Account of the Structure of Society and the Status of the Craftsmen)* (Broad Campden: sn, 1908): 54-59.
[5] John Pybus, *Account of Mr. Pybus's Mission to the King of Kandy, in 1762* (W. Skeen, government printer, Ceylon, 1862): 105.
[6] Coomaraswamy, *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*, 58, 213, plate 23, figure 2, 7, 8.; P.E.P. Deraniyagala, "Sinhala weapons and armour," *Journal Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch* XXXV (1942): 95, 106-113; See also: Arnold Wright, *Twentieth Century Impressions of Ceylon: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries, and Resources* (Asian Educational Services, 1999), 182; *Pivot Politics: Changing Cultural Identities in Early State Formation Processes* (Het Spinhuis, 1994): 198.
[7] Cf. Collection Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, RP-T-1904-18,2, https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/my/collections/28203--roel-kramer/eye-kandy/objecten#/RP-T-1904-18,2; NG-1985-7-1-8, https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/NG-1985-7-1-8; NG-1985-7-3-127 https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/NG-1985-7-3-127

> When he [the Kandyan King] first promotes them [the Adigar] (…) he (...) gives them a sword, the hilt all carved and inlaid with silver and brass very handsomely, the scabbard also covered with silver — a knife, and halberd; and lastly, a town or towns for their maintenance.[8]

And in 1803 James Cordiner similarly explains that fine silver kasthāné were produced for the Kandyan nobility:

> All the men in office wear swords of a moderate size, antiquated and not formidable in appearance. The hilt and scabbard are made of silver. The former imitates the head of a tiger, the latter is embossed and turned round at the point.[9]

Dutchmen were also gifted with sabres or swords described as "silver-hilted" occasionally during their diplomatic embassies to the Kandyan king.[10] We do not know what these swords looked like, but we know that the king perceived the Dutch as vassals, and therefore may have treated the ambassadors the same as his chiefs and gifted them with the same kind of gifts, including kasthāné.[11]

Senarath Wickramasinghe emphasizes that silver kasthāné like NG-NM-7112 could have been made for members of the highest aristocracy only. What makes this silver kasthāné so special? Material analysis done by the Rijksmuseum conservation department reveals the following: the kasthāné's hilt is of near solid silver. Its curved blade is made of steel, while the blood trench is covered with silver tendrils.[12] The wooden sheath is completely silver-plated and decorated tendrils ending in a curl.[13] The silver kasthāné is set with several pale coloured gemstones. One of those has been examined more closely by Dr Hanco Zwaan of the Netherlands Gem Laboratory, Leiden and the Conservation & Science staff of the Rijksmuseum and might be a chrysoberyl cat's eye, with presumably a provenance in Sri Lanka. It is a very transparent stone and needs more research.[14]

[8] Robert Knox, *An historical relation of the island Ceylon, in the East Indies* (R. Chiswell, 1681), 53.
[9] James Cordiner, *A Description of Ceylon, Containing an Account of the Country, Inhabitants, and Natural Productions;: With Narratives of a Tour Round the Island in 1800, the Campaign in Candy in 1803, and a Journey to Ramisseram in 1804* (Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme ... and A . Brown, Aberdeen., 1807): 97.
[10] T. B. H. Abeysinghe, "Embassies as Instruments of Diplomacy: A Case Study from Sri Lanka in the first half of the eighteenth century," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Sri Lanka Branch* 86, New Series, Vol. 30 (1985): 17-18.
[11] At the last audience during the yearly ambassies by the VOC to the Kandyan Court, it was customary that gifts were also given back to the ambassador, his secretary, and the interpreter. The gifts depended on the rank of the VOC official. Ambassadors usually received silver swords [kasthāné?], golden chains, and golden rings set with stones. The secretary got a golden chain and rings and the interpreter only a chain. Sometimes, when the ambassadors pleased the king, they would also receive an elephant. T. B. H. Abeysinghe. "Embassies as Instruments of Diplomacy: A Case Study of Sri Lanka in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Sri Lanka Branch*, 1985/86, New Series, Vol. 30 (1985/86), p. 17-18; In this Sinhalese account of a Dutch embassy to the court of Kandy in 1731-32 the word kasthāné is literally used for the sabre gifted to the Dutch ambassador: Paul E. Pieris, "The Dutch embassy to kandy in 1731-32." *The Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland*, vol. 21, no. 62, Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka (RASSL), 1909, pp. 187–220: 213.
[12] For the exact composition of the hilt and sheath and the degree of silver and copper, see the XFR report by the Conservation and Science Department of the Rijksmuseum, dated 30 November 2021. Please note that these reports will be available via the Documentation folder of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam from April 2022.
[13] Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Sofie Hoffmann, Behandelingsrapport NG-NM-7112, [no date].
[14] Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Hanco Zwaan, Jan de Hond, Joosje van Bennekom, Ellen van Bork, Suzanne van Leeuwen, Report "Gemstones on the Cannon of Kandy", June 2021. Please note that these reports will be available via the Documentation folder of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam from April 2022.; Email Joosje van Bennekom, Metal Conservator Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, 6 December 2021.

Senerath Wickramasinghe concludes on the basis of the technology, workmanship and decorative motif that this is a typical Kandyan up-country kasthāné, possibly produced in the Kandyan royal workshops. He describes the Kandyan elements as follows: [15]

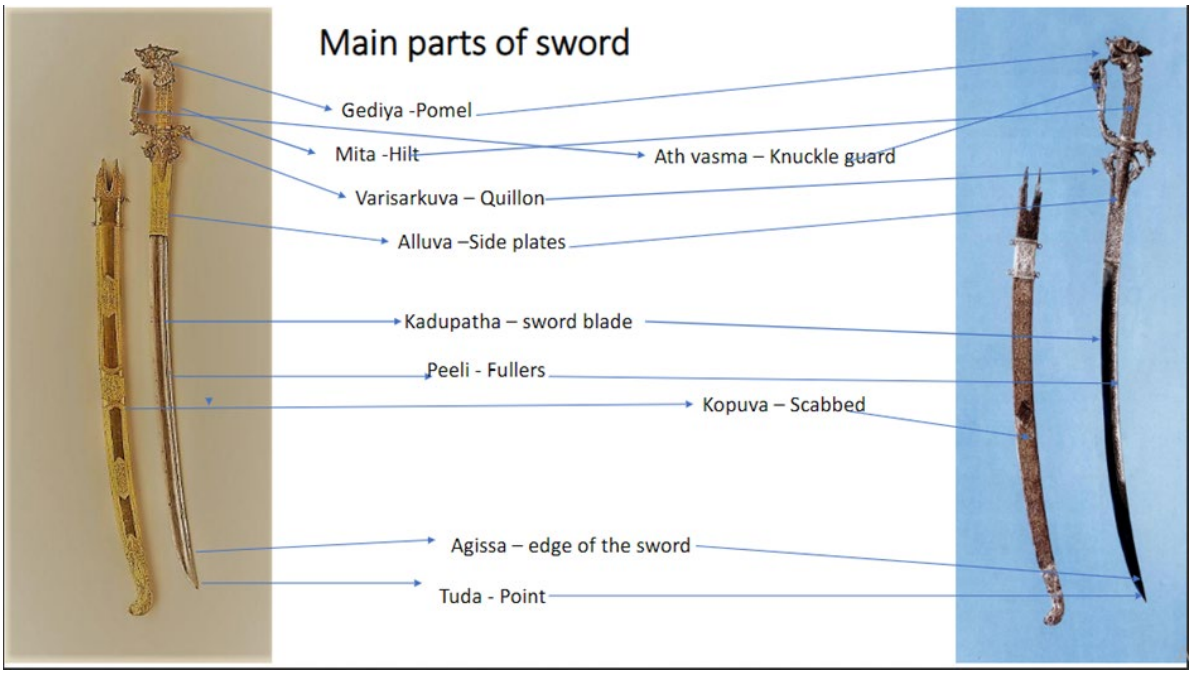

Photo 2: : Explanation of the different parts of a kasthāné, by Infographic (Photo by Senarath Wickramasinghe

"The pommel (gediya) has a simha head with conical crest. The lips and eye lids are decorated with arimbuva ornaments, the ears are leaf shaped with carved tip and the main is shown as three whorls liyapata (palapeti). The silver hilt (mita) has octangular and decorative panels that are separated by plain longitudinal ridges. The knuckle guard (Ath Vasma) has a Sarapenda (lion-head and bird's body) motif which arises from one quilian and runs forward towards the pommel. The lower part has arimbuva decoration. The front surface shows a standing female figure –- known as *nari lata*."

[15] Presentation Senerath Wickramasinghe, Director (Cultural) Department of National Museums, Sri Lanka, "Ancient swords, daggers, and knives in Sri Lankan museums," *Expert meeting Sri Lankan objects Rijksmuseum*, 27 August 2021. Please note that documentation on this will be available via the Documentation folder of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam from April 2022.

Photos 3 and 4: Nari Lata on silver mounted kasthāné (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv.no. NG-NM-7112).

Furthermore, Wickramasinghe tells us: "The quilion (Varisarkuva) is shaped in the form of a makara (dragon) head. The Ricasso has a long rectangular silver overlay and liyapata decoration. The blade (Kadupatha) is more curved and decorated than the golden sword (NG-NM-560) and single fuller and it extends to near top of blade. The blade is decorated with a liyavela design."[16]

The steel blade of the silver kasthāné is made in Kandy, as is evidenced from the decoration on the blade and the way in which the iron is polished.[17] In that regard, this silver mounted kasthāné stands out, as the blades of other Kandyan kasthāné from the same period, including NG-NM-560, were often of European origin.[18] The scabbard (Kopuva) is made of wood, entirely covered by wooden foil with embossed traditional motif. The upper end is "V" shaped. The designs are similar to other kasthāné of the Kandyan period, placing its creation in Kandy in between 1597–1815.[19]

[16] Presentation Senerath Wickramasinghe, 27 August 2021..
[17] XFR report, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam dated 30 November 2021. Please note that these reports will be available via the Documentation folder of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam from April 2022.
[18] P.H. D. H De Silva and Senerath Wickramasinghe, Ancient Swords, Daggers, and Knives in Sri Lankan Museums (Colombo: Dept. of National Museums, 2007): 147.
[19] Presentation Senerath Wickramasinghe, 27 August 2021For the typical Kandyan decorative elements such as the Nari Lata, the liyapata the sarapenda and the simha see: Coomaraswamy, *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*, chapter IV: "Elements of Sinhalese design and ornament."

Photos 5 and 6: Details of the scabbard. Notice how the kibihi-muna (lion face) is used as starting point of the flower pattern. (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv.no. NG-NM-7112).

Based on the exceptionally fine silverwork, it is concluded that the silver kasthāné was made in the Four Workshops of the Kandyan King. Kasthāné produced in the royal workshop were all of high quality, yet the exact quality in terms of design, decoration, and material of the kasthāné signified the rank to whom the object was gifted: the more decorated (i.e. use of figures, gems, silver, gold), the higher the rank of the receiver.[20] The object analysis does not provide us with further evidence about the intended owner of the kasthāné, except that the exquisite use of silver and gems suggests it was exclusively made for one of the adigars, or other members of the highest aristocracy at the court.[21]

[20] Coomaraswamy, *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*, 58, 213, plate 23, figure 2, 7, 8.
[21] See for comparison this silver kastane: Mandarin Mansion Antiques. "Sinhalese kasthāné dated 1776." Sinhalese kasthāné dated 1776 | Mandarin Mansion

Present knowledge regarding provenance available in the Rijksmuseum and literature

The silver kasthāné is a well-known object and is described in various Rijksmuseum catalogues and specialist publications on Sri Lankan and south Asian arms and armour.[22] The various authors consistently suggest that the kasthāné was part of the spoils of the Kandyan-Dutch war and that it was presented as a gift to the Dutch stadtholder Willem V by the executors Governor van Eck's estate. Where does this information come from?

This kasthāné, together with the golden pihiya and the gold mounted kasthāné (NG-NM-7114 and NG-NM-560) became objects of historical research for the first time in the 1960s, when two near-simultaneous exhibitions were being prepared: one in the Dutch National Archives (then called Algemeen Rijksarchief) on the history of the VOC in Sri Lanka (then called Ceylon) (*Ceylon-Nederland in het verleden 1602-1797*), and one memorial exhibition on the Dutch royal collections: *Koninklijk Kabinet van Schilderijen, Koninklijke Bibliotheek en Koninklijk Penningenkabinet*.[23] Professor Th. H. Lunsingh Scheurleer, who was affiliated with the Rijksmuseum until 1963, worked on the latter.[24] Correspondence between the Rijksmuseum and the Dutch National archives in 1965 show how both parties were looking for archival evidence on the provenance of these three objects, in addition to their search for extra information on Lewke's cannon, which already had been object of research.[25] The National Archives provided the museum with copies from the VOC archives regarding the spoils of the Kandyan-Dutch war of 1765, dated at 22 October 1765 (though misread at the time as 22 December 1765).[26]

Copies from the estate of Governor van Eck from his family archives were also added as evidence of the objects' provenance. It was on the basis of this documentation that the curators concluded that together with the cannon, the silver kasthāné, and the two other objects, the golden kasthāné (NG-NM-560) and the golden pihiya (NG-NM-7114) were spoils of the Kandyan-Dutch war. It was subsequently described as such in both exhibition catalogues.[27] Curiously though, Lunsingh Scheurleer connected the silver kasthāné to a silver 'belly-dagger' (buiksteker) from the list.[28] Here

[22] Among others: Lodewijk J. Wagenaar, *Cinnamon and Elephants: Sri Lanka and the Netherlands from 1600, Rijksmuseum Country Series* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2016): 121-123; P. H. D. H De Silva, "The Sword of State of King Sri Vickrama Raja Simha of Kandy, Sri Lanka," *Arms and Armour: Journal of the Royal Armories* 7 (2002): 94–97.

[23] M.A.P Roelofsz, Marius Petrus Henricus Roessingh, and Algemeen Rijksarchief ('s-Gravenhage), *Ceylon-Nederland in het verleden, 1602-1796: tentoonstelling in het Algemeen Rijksarchief, 's-Gravenhage, mei-sept. 1965* ('s-Gravenhage: Algemeen Rijksarchief, 1965), Th.H Lunsingh Scheurleer, *150 Jaar Koninklijk Kabinet van Schilderijen, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Koninklijk Penningkabinet: herdenkingstentoonstelling in het Mauritshuis, 1966* ('s-Gravenhage, 1966).

[24] Earlier Lunsingh Scheurleer had already traced back NG-NM-1015 as spoil of the 1765 Kandyan-Dutch war to the collection of Stadtholder Willem V and the *Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden*,Th.H. Lunsingh Scheurleer, "Het Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden en zijn beteekenis voor het Rijksmuseum," *Oudheidkundig Jaarboek* 13 (1946): 50.

[25] Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, file with object information NG-NM-560, D010291. Documents referred to were: National Archives The Hague (NL-HaNA), 1.04.02, inv.no. 3143 Ceylon, "Resolutien genomen in raden van politie zeedert 5 Januarij tot 31 December 1765" [Resolutions taken in the boards of Police, from 5 January to 31 December 1765], dated 22 October 1765, f. 2882; NL-HaNA, 1.10.65.01, "Inventaris van het archief van de familie Van Panthaleon van Eck, 1398-1946" [Inventory of the family archive of Van Panthaleon van Eck, 1398-1946], Inv.no. 60. 1, "Brieven betreffende overlijden en regeling der nalatenschap van Lubbert Jan van Eck, heer van Overbeek, gouverneur van Ceylon, door de executeurs van diens testament te Colombo aan de erfgenamen gericht. Met bijlagen." [Letters regarding the death and settlement of the estate of Lubbert Jan van Eck, Lord of Overbeek, Governor of Ceylon, addressed to the heirs by the executors of his will in Colombo. With attachments], dated 1765; NL-HaNA, 1.04.02, inv.no. 3138 Ceylon, "Copia secreete brief van den gouverneur alleen aan generaal en raden" [Copy of secret letter by the Governor, only addressed to the General and Boards], dated 10 November 1765, f. 367.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Lunsingh Scheurleer, *150 Jaar: Herdenkingstentoonstelling*, 74.; Meilink Roelofs, Ceylon-Nederland in het verleden, 1602-1796 (Den Haag 1965), 23: "Zilveren sabel van Singalees maaksel, afkomstig uit boedel L.J. baron van Eck."

[28] Lunsingh Scheurleer, *150 Jaar: Herdenkingstentoonstelling*, 74. He cites from the source as follows: 'Een-Buijk-Steeker met silver beslag zijnde een instrument waarneede seeker Moor van de vijanden omgecogt in Candia het op het Leeven van den overleedene had toegelegt'. See below for a more extensive discussion of this reference.

Lunsingh Scheurleer was clearly mistaken. The word buiksteker (lit. 'belly-dagger') refers to a waist-knife, rather than a sabre or sword. The word buiksteker was not commonly used at the time in the Dutch Republic, but we found a reference from Bengal in the same period, explaining that a buiksteker was a dagger carried around the waist. Historically, the word houwer (sabre or sword) would have been used to describe a kasthāné.[29]

In 1975 the director of the National Museum in Colombo, P. H. D. H. de Silva, undertook the laborious task of identifying all Sri Lankan objects and manuscripts that were kept in collections outside Sri Lanka. His overview was published under the title *Antiquities and Other Cultural Objects from Sri Lanka (Ceylon) Abroad*.[30] This has become a classic reference work and in 1980 De Silva's catalogue formed the basis of a large restitution request of the Sri Lankan government, which was unsuccessful.[31] Among the described Sri Lankan objects in the Rijksmuseum we also find the silver mounted kasthāné. De Silva stresses the elegance and uniqueness of the object:

> N.M. 7112 – A Kastané sword as elegant and dignified as N.M. 560, but hilt and scabbard are of silver. Pommel of hilt with *simha* head. Counter guard terminating in a *serapendiya* head at its upper end and with simhah end at lower extremity. *Pas d'ane* terminating in *simha* heads. Ricasso and portion of blade with silver overlay work. Length 60-5 cm.[32]

Researchers who published on this group of objects more recently, such as Lodewijk Wagenaar, Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer, and Ebeltje Hartkamp-Jonxis, did not question the assigned provenance of the silver kasthāné and the two other objects.[33] In the most recent publication*, Cinnamon and Elephants,* Lodewijk Wagenaar writes that the two kasthāné and the dagger were gifted together with the cannon (NG-NM-10150) to Duke Louis Ernest of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, who transferred them to Stadtholder Willem V. The silver kasthāné, as well as the golden pihiya and the golden kasthāné, would have been taken by the Dutch army in Kandy.[34]

Since 2015, the Rijksmuseum label has described this group of objects as follows:

> Following an unsuccessful invasion of Kandy in 1764, the VOC troops nevertheless succeeded one year later in penetrating the king's centre of power. Peace negotiations failed and the troops plundered the palace and the city. The booty included many costly jewels and arms, including these three ornate weapons that were probably the king's personal property.[35]

[29] J. Stavorinus, *Reize van Zeeland, over de Kaap de Goede Hoop, naar Batavia [...] in de jaaren MDCCLXVIII tot MDCCLXXI. Deel V Aanmerkingen over Bengalen*. (Leiden 1793): 58
[30] P. H. D. H. de Silva, *A Catalogue of Antiquities and Other Cultural Objects from Sri Lanka (Ceylon) Abroad* (Colombo: Department of government printing, 1975).
[31] See Appendix 2x of Alicia Schrikker and Doreen van den Boogaart, PPROCE report NG-NM-1015.
[32] De Silva, *A Catalogue,* 376.
[33] Wagenaar, Cinnamon and Elephants, 121-123; Lunsingh Scheurleer, "Een pronkmes uit Ceylon," 52–58; Jan van Campen and Ebeltje Hartkamp-Jonxis, *Aziatische Weelde: VOC-Kunst in Het Rijksmuseum* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2011); 86.
[34] Wagenaar, *Cinnamon and Elephants,* 123. Lodewijk Wagenaar adds though that it is not certain if they were taken from the palace of the king of Kandy.
[35] Collection Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, NG-NM-560, NG-NM-7112, NG-NM-7114.

What we want to highlight here is that the information gathered in 1965 has circulated ever since as unquestioned fact. It appears that subsequent researchers have not looked up the original documentation in the Van Eck estate, nor in the VOC archives. This is evidenced by recurring references in the literature of 22 December rather than 22 October 1765 as the first date when the looted objects collected by Van Eck were first listed.[36] The documentation gathered in 1965 requires further scrutiny. How were the objects from the lists in the VOC archives and the Van Eck family archives identified? Were the objects indeed gifted to Stadtholder Willem V (via the Duke of Brunswick) in conjunction with the cannon? How and when did these objects, including the silver kasthāné, arrive in the collection of the Rijksmuseum in the first place? And what was known about them at the time?

The Kandyan-Dutch war 1762-66 and the spoils of war

The association between Lewke's cannon and the silver kasthāné, the golden pihiya, and the golden kasthāné is very strong. This was also the ground on which they were connected with the Kandyan-Dutch war in 1765 and to the estate of Governor van Eck. What exactly is known about the objects that were obtained in the war? What information is provided in the VOC archives and the family archives of Van Eck? And can we indeed identify the golden kasthāné in Van Eck's estate?

The Kandyan-Dutch war of 1762-1766 is commemorated in both Sinhala and Dutch primary sources, and in both cases the looting of objects plays a prominent role. A royal historical chronicle from Sri Lanka, the Cūḷavaṃsa, describes how the king of Kandy decided to support popular resistance against the VOC. "[His] dignitaries set forth with the people living in Lanka, fought the fearful battle with the Olanda people, destroyed the foe, burned down the strongholds and terrified him in every possible way."[37] Conflicts between the Dutch and the local inhabitants of the Dutch occupied areas had started in 1759/60 but in 1761 the restrained relations between the Dutch in Colombo and the king of Kandy led to open warfare.[38] VOC Governor Lubbert Jan van Eck got hold of the Kandyan lowlands in 1762 and 1763, whereupon he decided to invade the town and palace of Kandy up in the mountains. The first campaign of early 1764 failed completely.[39] Even after the Dutch VOC troops invaded the city of Kandy on 19 February 1765, the Kandyan defence used guerrilla tactics, by retreating fast after an attack and using the rainy season to their advantage.[40]

During the days before the invading of Kandy, the king brought to safety his family and the treasures of the Kandy Palace and Temple of the Tooth.[41] An eyewitness, a Dutch soldier who worked as

[36] Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, file with object information NG-NM-560, D010291; NL-HaNA, 1.04.02, inv.no. 3143 Ceylon, "Resolutien genomen in raden van politie zeedert 5 Januarij tot 31 December 1765" [Resolutions taken in the boards of Police, from 5 January to 31 December 1765], dated 22 October 1765, f. 2882.
[37] Wihelm Geiger and C. Mabel Rickmers, *Culavamsa: Being the More Recent Part of the Mahavamsa* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1996): p. 266, line 115
[38] R. Raven-Hart, *The Dutch Wars with Kandy, 1764-1766*, Ceylon Historical Manuscripts Commission. Bulletin. No. 6. (Nugegoda, 1964), 3.
[39] Wagenaar, *Cinnamon and Elephants*, 121.
[40] Raven-Hart, *The Dutch Wars with Kandy*, 114; Prof. Gananath Obeyasekere, Emeritus Professor of Anthropology, "The Many Faces of the Kandyan Kingdom, 1591-1765: Lessons for our Time?" 23rd April 2014, Colombo, Princeton University lecture, p. 36-37. http://www.thesapri.org/pdf/lecture.pdf
[41] *Culavamsa*, p. 267, line 122-126. The King had sent two Uparajas with his treasures and the sacred Tooth Relic to "a province which was scarcely passable owing to mountains, forest and difficult roads."

surgeon in Kandy, described the situation as follows: "The King, with tears in his eyes, had caused the most precious objects to be removed from the Palace, and had then given leave to his troops to take what they wished of the remainder [treasures]."[42] This was not in vain as the Temple of the Tooth, the most important Buddhist shrine on the island, was targeted by the Dutch army and when they forced their way into the town, the palace and temple were razed by the troops and they "destroyed the sacred books and everything else."[43] The court was desecrated due to the slaughtering of the holy cows and the destruction of the Buddha statues and the palace was set on fire when the Dutch troops eventually retreated from the city due to strong resistance and a lack of food on 31 August 1765.[44]

The troops invading the city on 19 February 1765 were explicitly instructed not to plunder, but upon arrival in Kandy, the Dutch troops had found the warehouses partly emptied by the retreated Kandyan troops, who were allowed to do so by the king.[45] The looting that followed spread from the warehouses to even the apartments of the king himself.[46] Among the objects taken were linen, fabrics, furniture, some silverwork objects, curiosities, and copper coins.[47] Officers, soldiers, and slaves alike went looting. For instance, it is recorded that back in Kandy one officer had taken "silverworks, diamonds, and rings with and without stones".[48] This officer had defended himself later in Colombo by saying that he had bought the objects from two soldiers, just as Governor Van Eck himself had done. In fact, Van Eck had also bought several valuable and rare objects from the spoils. "Those objects might have been sold for give-away prices to Moors who were waiting to buy it,"[49] he wrote. Indeed, a great deal of the booty was sold or left behind by the soldiers in Kandy or during their trip back to Colombo after the retreat of the troops from Kandy at the end of August 1765.[50]

[42] Raven-Hart, *The Dutch Wars with Kandy*, 98-99; Sri Lanka National Archives, Colombo (SLNA), Lot 1: Archives of the Dutch Central Government of Coastal Ceylon, inv.no.4881, "Report of the military campaign." Transcription kindly shared with us by Chris Nierstrasz, author of *In the Shadow of the Company: The Dutch East India Company and Its Servants in the Period of Its Decline* (1740-1796) (Brill, 2012).
[43] *Culavamsa*, p. 267, line 122-126.
[44] Ibid.; Lorna Dewaraja, "Thailand's Sublime Gift to Sri Lanka: The Services rendered by UPĀLI MAHĀ THERA and his associates," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka* 48 (2003): 88.
[45] SLNA, Lot 1, inv.no. 4881, "Report of the military campaign," f. 223
[46] NL-HaNA, 1.04.02, 3138, Copia secreete brief van den gouverneur alleen aan generaal en raden in dato 10 November 1765 [Copy of the secret letter from the Governor [Falck] only to the general and boards, dated 10 November 1765], f. 363.
[47] NL-HaNA, 1.04.02, 3138, Copia secreete brief van de leeden van het geheime committe aan generaal en raden in dato 31 Maart 1765 [Copy of the secret letter of the members of the secret committee to the General and boards, dated 31 March 1765], f. 463b-464.
[48] NL-HaNA, 1.04.02, 3138, Copia secreete brief van den gouverneur alleen aan generaal en raden in dato 10 November 1765 [Copy of the secret letter from the Governor [Falck] only to the general and boards, dated 10 November 1765], f. 366b-367: "De kannekappel van La Baume die hier voor een ordentlijk man te boekstaande schillie Christoffel fernando, waar op La Baume zich, als zijnge slaagen vijand, beriep heeft verklaard, dat hij veele gouden ringen met en sonder steenen, zoo ook veel ander klein zilverwerk bij La Baume gezien had, waar van de kostbaarste ring aan den Her Kommandeur Mooijaart, toen ter tijd op Kolombo zich bevindende, voor 80 Rijkst door hem kannekappel verkocht was."
[49] Ibid, f. 366b.
[50] Ibid, f. 369.

Governor van Eck died some weeks after the conquest of Kandy and in his estate ten Kandyan objects were identified as spoils of war. These ten objects were described as follows:

- A golden container with a golden ola as well as a small bag with small golden balls attached
- A Buddha statue made of tombac
- An ivory machine with underneath a metal disk, that has an engraving in it
- A small canon piece inlaid with silver
- A fine decorated bow with golden mounting, together with an equally decorated quiver and arrows.
- A sword with golden grip and its sheath with golden mounting together with a part epee [sword knot] with silver mounting
- A red-lacquered baton of command with on both ends golden studs
- A fine decorated belly-knife with golden mounting
- A silver gold plated machine as a clock with underneath a fitting bottom piece
- A kind of palate/canopy with pillars of gold but overlaid with gold and silver.[51]

The ten objects were delivered to the big cash register [groote geldkas], which was commissioned by Hoofdadministrateur Daniel Burnat. By then, the decorated cannon had already been shipped to the Netherlands (on 15 November 1765), as the late Governor Van Eck had wished. It was sent as a gift to Duke Louis Ernest of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, the guardian of Willem V. On 13 May 1766 the headquarters of the VOC in Batavia gave permission to send the Kandyan objects that were left of Van Eck's estate to his heirs, provided that court in Kandy would not demand restitution.[52] Two objects from this list, namely, the Cover of the Tooth of Buddha (the silver-gilded machine) and the accompanying howdah (the canopy) were indeed returned in 1767 to the king of Kandy as a result the peace negotiations.[53] The golden container with golden ola was returned to the 'owner' from whom Van Eck had taken it, because e had never paid for it as he had promised.[54] In 1768 there were

[51] 'Zegge een goude koker daer in een goude ola benevens een zakje met goude bolletjes daaraan
1. '' Een Boedoes beeld van Tambak
1. '' Een ijvoore machine van onder met een metaale schijff, waar in gegraveert is
1. '' Een kleen kanonstuk met zilver ingelegt
1. Zegge een fraaij gewerkte boog met goud beslag, benevens gelijke pijlkoke en pijlen
1. '' Een zwaart met goude greep en dies scheede met goud beslag mitsgaders part epee met zilver beslagh
1. '' Een staff van kommando met rood verlakt en aan beide enden met goud beslag
1. '' Een fraai gewerkte buijksteeker met goud beslag
1. '' Een zilver vergulde machine bij wijze van een klok met een daar onder passend onderstuk
1. '' Een soort van verhemelte met pielaaren van goud dogh overhouts met een goud en zilver overtoogen.'
NL-HaNA, 1.04.02, inv.no. 3138, "Copia berigt van de Candiasche raritijten die in de groote geldkas overgebragt zijn" [Copy of message about the Kandyan curiosities that has been handed over to the big cash register], f. 875.
[52] SLNA, Lot 1, inv.no 2232, "Correspondense with Batavia and Holland 1766-1767," dated 13 May 1766.
[53] NL-HaNA, 1.04.02, inv.no. 3174, "Instructie voor den oppercoopman en secretaris van politie Van Angelbeek in dato 28 Januarij 1767 gaande als gesant naar 't hof van Candia" [Instruction for the chief merchant and the secretary of the police Van Angelbeek dated 28 January 1767, who went as an ambassador to the Kandyan court], f. 1454b-1455.
[54] NL-HaNA, 1.10.65.01, inv.no. 66, "Inventarissen van de nagelaten goederen van Lubbert Jan van Eck etc." [Inventories of thee state of Lubbert Jan van Eck etc.], dated 20 March 1769.

six objects left described as “curiosities that were found [gevonden] during the conquest of the Palace of the King of Kandy and looted [buitgemaakt].” These were sent to the heirs of Van Eck on the ship Vrouwe Petronella Maria in a box with the initials VE.[55] .

It is important to underline here that there is no mention at all of a silver sword or kasthāné in the listed spoils of war in the estate of Van Eck. How then have researchers in the past connected the silver kasthāné to war and the estate of Van Eck? First, it appears from the notes from 2008 in the documentation folder of the Rijksmuseum that a connection was made between the silver kasthāné and the “fine decorated ‘belly-dagger’ with golden mounting.” This appears odd for two reasons: the kasthāné is silver rather than gold; and, as discussed above, the word buiksteker translates as knife, rather than sabre. The common word used in the VOC period for a sabre or sword was *houwer*. Yet as was already, mentioned at an earlier moment, the silver kasthāné had been connected to another object that appears in the estate of Van Eck, namely a silver mounted ‘buiksteker’.[56] Clearly, object descriptions from the Van Eck family archive got mixed up here. In fact, it seems that at a certain point this confusion led to the belief that they were one and the same, the golden mounted belly dagger from the description of the spoils of war and the silver mounted belly dagger from Van Eck’s family papers, and furthermore that these are actually descriptions of the silver kasthāné.[57]

While the initial list of 22 October 1765 does not contain a reference to a silver belly-dagger, the estate of Van Eck that was drawn up later does indeed include a silver-hilted ‘belly-dagger’.[58] Additional information was added in the document: namely, that this weapon had been used by “a certain Moor” who had been bribed by Kandy to attack Van Eck. “A belly-dagger with silver mounting being the instrument with which a Moor, being bribed by the enemies in Kandy attempted to take

[55] NL-HaNA, 1.04.02, inv.no. 3200, "Origineele missive van den gouverneur Falck en den raad
aan de vergadering van 17 in dato 27 Januarij 1768” [Original letter from the Governor Falck and Boards [in Colombo] to the Council 17, dated 27 January 1768], f. 262. ‘[V]an de Hooge indische Regeering, bij sekreete Missive van den 13 Mai
1766 voor de erfgenaemen afgegeeven de volgende Rariteiten bij het veroveren van het Palijs des konings van kandia daar in gevonden en buit gemaekt.'

[56] “Een buiksteeker met silver beslag zijnde een instrument waarmeede seeker Moor van de vijanden omgecogt in Candia het op het Leeven van den overleeden had toegelegt.” NL-HaNA, 1.10.65.01, inv.no. 60. 1, “Brieven betreffende overlijden en regeling der nalatenschap van Lubbert Jan van Eck, heer van Overbeek, gouverneur van Ceylon, door de executeurs van diens testament te Colombo aan de erfgenamen gericht. Met bijlagen.” [Letters regarding the death and settlement of the estate of Lubbert Jan van Eck, Lord of Overbeek, Governor of Ceylon, addressed to the heirs by the executors of his will in Colombo. With attachments], attachment with inventory of estate of Van Eck, dated 10 November 1765.

[57] Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, file with object information NG-NM-7114, D004812. Documentation by Eveline Sint Nicolaas, Curator of History Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, 2008.

[58] However, on that list, on which all objects from the Kandyan booty are marked with the letter A, are described as “A fine decorated belly-stabber with golden mounting” just as in the list of spoils of war made in Colombo. The “silver mounted belly dagger” is marked with an F and may have taken a different route into the estate in comparison to the objects marked “A”. NL-HaNA, 1.10.65.01, “Inventaris van het archief van de familie Van Panthaleon van Eck, 1398-1946” [Inventory of the family archive of Van Panthaleon van Eck, 1398-1946], Inv.no. 60. 1, “Brieven betreffende overlijden en regeling der nalatenschap van Lubbert Jan van Eck, heer van Overbeek, gouverneur van Ceylon, door de executeurs van diens testament te Colombo aan de erfgenamen gericht. Met bijlagen.” [Letters regarding the death and settlement of the estate of Lubbert Jan van Eck, Lord of Overbeek, Governor of Ceylon, addressed to the heirs by the executors of his will in Colombo. With attachments], attachment with inventory of estate of Van Eck, dated 10 November 1765.

the life of the deceased."[59] This story regarding the attack on Van Eck is recorded in his own military diary, which served as the basis for popular publications on the war at the time and the episode may thus have been known to the family.[60] The description of this event in Van Eck's Diary of the 1765 campaign gives us insight in the unfortunate encounter 9 February 1765: it mentions his encounter with a traitor, described as "a Moor" [muslim trader]. This person approached Van Eck, telling him that he had a gift for Van Eck from the king and 'he then drew a stylet with such a wild look that Van Angelbeek (who was there with van Eck) suspected ill, and while pretending to be curious, he took and kept it.'[61] In the Kandyan kingdom small pihiya were also used as stylets for writing olas, and thus this is what the 'buiksteker' in the inventory would refer to. An example of what this might have looked like is the silver Kandyan knife in the NMvW collection (RV-360-6017 and 6019). [62] Clearly this is a very different object from a kasthāné, both in size and in shape

In other words, the hypothesis that NG-NM-7112 has been in possession of Governor Van Eck is not easy to substantiate with archival sources. The list of spoils of war from Kandy owned by Van Eck does not make mention of a silver kasthāné, sword, or sabre, and the silver belly-dagger mentioned in his estate must have been a knife (pihiya) rather than a kasthāné, and was made for a different purpose. Which route did NG-NM-7112 then take into the collection of the Rijksmuseum?

The unrecorded arrival of the golden kasthāné in the collection of the Dutch Stadtholder

Our analysis of the history Van Eck's estate showed that it is unlikely that the silver kasthāné was among the Kandyan objects that arrived in the Dutch Republic in 1768. This means that it would not have followed the same trail into the stadtholder's collection as either Lewke's cannon or the golden kasthāné. We have therefore tried to reconstruct the moment of the kasthāné's arrival in the collection of the Stadtholders: first through an analysis of the eighteenth century inventories of this collection and second by searching for correspondence with the heirs of Van Eck in the years after the arrival of the kasthāné and the other objects from his estate.

Our search through the eighteenth-century inventories of the collection of Stadtholders Willem IV and Willem V did not yield any result.[63] In fact, none of the other five Kandyan objects were found in

[59] "Een buiksteeker met silver beslag zijnde een instrument waarmeede seeker Moor van de vijanden omgecogt in Candia het op het Leeven van den overleeden had toegelegt." NL-HaNA, 1.10.65.01, inv.no. 60. 1, "Brieven betreffende overlijden en regeling der nalatenschap van Lubbert Jan van Eck, heer van Overbeek, gouverneur van Ceylon, door de executeurs van diens testament te Colombo aan de erfgenamen gericht. Met bijlagen." [Letters regarding the death and settlement of the estate of Lubbert Jan van Eck, Lord of Overbeek, Governor of Ceylon, addressed to the heirs by the executors of his will in Colombo. With attachments], attachment with inventory of estate of Van Eck, dated 10 November 1765.

[60] See for example: *Middelburgse courant* 13-5 1766: "slot van het dagverhaal der generale expeditie tegen de koning van Candia" (accessed via delpher.nl)

[61] Raven-Hart, *The Dutch Wars with Kandy*, 92; SLNA, Lot 1, inv.no. 4881, "Report of the military campaign," f. 223'. 'De Koning had hem honderd fijne kleedjes en honderd zilvere buiksteekers of messen geschonken, waarvan hij niet meer, als een kleedje geaccepteerd had als mede maar een mes dat hij tans noch droeg en ter zelver tijd niet zulx een houding en wild gezicht uithaelde, dat de sekretarus Angelbeeck voor eenig boos opzet duchtend het zelve, onder schijn van enkelde nieuwsgierigheid, van hem af vroeg en bij zich behield.'

[62] During our research we came across a silver Kandyan knife that might be identified *Ul Pihiya.* Interestingly, it appears that it also has a provenance related to the stadtholders' collection, and we have wondered whether there is a relation to the knife in the estate of Van Eck, but no provenance research has been done so far: see NMvW Museum Volkenkunde RV-360-6017 and 6019 (knife and sheath). RV-360-3018 was described as a "priem," possibly referring to a stylus that accompanied the knife in the manner described above, but it appears to have been lost in the collection or to have disappeared.

[63] Koninklijke Verzamelingen [Royal Collections] (NL-KaHV), A, William IV, prince of Orange, ruler of Nassau (1711-1751), inv.no. 46 III, 'Bekorte Staat en Inventaris van het Kabinet der Natuurlijke en door Kunstgemaakte Zeldzaamheden…' [Concise overview and inventory of the Cabinet of natural and artistic curiosities]; NL-KaHV, A30, Anne of Hannover, Princess of Great Britain and Ireland (1709-1759), inv.no. 415, 'Inventaris der Rariteiten overgegeven in het Kabinet der Natuurlijke en door Kunstgemaakte Zeldzaamheden, berustende onder de bewaaring van den Directeur Vosmaer' [Inventory of curiosities transferred to the Cabinet of natural and artistic curiosities, residing under

these eighteenth century inventories either, including Lewke's cannon. At this point it is important to stress once more that the arrival of objects in the collection of the stadtholders is not recorded in a very systematic manner. Furthermore, documentation on the collection is scattered and not completely preserved. Available sources have been brought together by Laura Smeets.[64] The descriptions on the various inventory lists made in 1759 and 1760 (three in total) of the stadtholders' artefact(s) regarding the weapons are very generic as are the later inventories. This makes it impossible to eliminate or assign descriptions. For example, in the "curiosities" section of the 1759 list we find an "Indian sabre, with its scabbard and hilt mounted with silver." Could this be the silver kasthāné?[65] Before any conclusions might be drawn based on such generic descriptions, further research into the collection and collection history is necessary. And at this point this does not substantiate a conclusion that NG-NM-7112 arrived in the collection of the stadtholders before 1765.

Because the descriptions of the objects in the estate of Van Eck are so generic, and because of the longstanding tradition in Kandy of bestowing diplomatic gifts to governors and governor generals, we also looked more broadly into the Stadtholder's correspondence regarding objects arriving from Asia. The cabinet consisted of the collection that Willem V and his wife, Wilhelmine of Prussia, inherited from Willem IV and his wife, Anna van Hannover. The acquisitions made subsequently reflect their personal tastes, while the objects they received as gifts reflect their relations, networks, and socio-political positions. A considerable part of Willem V's cabinet was formed by gifts from the territories exploited by the West India and Dutch East India Companies.[66] Indeed the archive of Willem V does show several instances of donations of art-historical and natural-historical objects, as well as weapons and other personal belongings to the stadtholders. Several letters from or about Governor-General P.A. van de Parra (1761-1775) inform us for example that he donated a great variety of objects, including weapons, to the collection of Willem V and also to the family of the stadtholders themselves.[67] Yet, there was no silver kasthāné among them or anything that might resemble it.

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the custodianship of director Vosmaer]; NL-KaHV, A30, inv.no. 415, 'Nadere Inventaris benevens derselver bij gevoegde taxatie van de Rariteiten overgegeven in het Kabinet der Natuurlijk en door Kunst gemaekte Zeldsaemheeden…' [Further inventory along with the associated valuation of the Curiosities transferred to the Cabinet of natural and artistic curiosities…]; NL-KaHV, archive access A31, William V Batavus, Prince of Orange-Nassau (1748-1806), inv.no. 173, Inventarissen van kleding, sieraden, linnen en zeldzaamheden [Inventories of clothing, jewellery, linen and curiosities], dated 1749-1766; NL-KaHV, A31, inv.no. 184, Inventaris van de kostbaarheden van Willem V in bewaring bij de kamerdienaar Oostheim, vervaardigd door A. Vosmaer [Inventory of precious items belonging to William V held in safekeeping by chamberlain Oostheim, drawn up by A. Vosmaer], 1782; NL-KaHV, A31, inv.no. 185, 'Lijsten van in januari 1795 meegenomen gouden en zilveren tafelgoed, schilderijen en kleding' [Lists of the golden and silver tableware, paintiings and clothing that were taken along] dated 1795-1798; NL-KaHV, A31, inv.no. 186, 'Briefwisseling tussen W.C. Vosmaer en Willem V over restanten van de stadhouderlijke collecties die naar Duitsland verzonden kunnen worden' [Correspondence between W.C. Vosmaer and Willem V on what was left of the stadtholder's collection that could be shipped to Germany] dated 1803.
Also consultation of the inventory of the Vosmaer family did not give any result. The following numbers are part of the section of Arnout Vosmaer as director of the stadholder's cabinets. NL-HaNA, 2.21.271 'Inventaris van het archief van de familie Vosmaer' [Inventory of the archive of the Vosmaer family], inv. no. 63-67.

[64] Laura Smeets, "Door kunst gemaakt. De verzameling zeldzaamheden van Stadhouder Willem V," (MA Thesis, University of Amsterdam, 2010).

[65] NL-KaHV, A29, William IV, Prince of Orange, ruler of Nassau (1711-1751), inv.no. 46 III, 'Bekorte Staat en Inventaris van het Kabinet der Natuurlijke en door Kunstgemaakte Zeldzaamheden…' [Summarised status and inventory of the Cabinet of Natural and Artistic Rarieties] Een Indiaansche zabel, de scheede en greep met zilver gemonteerd.'

[66] Edwin Van Meerkerk, "Colonial Objects And The Display Of Power. The Curious Case Of The Cabinet Of William V And The Dutch India Companies," in *The Dutch Trading Companies as Knowledge Networks*, ed. Siegfried Huigen, Elmer Kolfin, and Jan L. de Jong (Brill, 2010): 415-416: 422.

[67] See for example, NL-KaHV, A31, William V Batavus, Prince of Orange-Nassau (1748-1806), Inv. No. 1798, P.A. van de Parra 1767-1775, dated 27 July 1772; NL-KaHV, A31, William V Batavus, Prince of Orange-Nassau (1748-1806), Inv. No. 1799, J. van Riemsdijk 1776-1777.

As a final step in our search for evidence regarding the arrival of the kasthāné in the collection of the Stadtholder, we looked at contemporary descriptions of the display at the Cabinet for Curiosities. The cabinet can be considered as the first public museum in the Netherlands. The cabinet attracted many visitors.

Indeed we found that Kandyan objects do appear in a written account from the German traveller Carl Heinrich Titius from 1777. When Titius visited the Cabinet of Curiosities of Willem V, he explicitly mentioned that he saw a silver cannon with gemstones, and noted that the cannon was taken by the Dutch in their last war with the king of Kandy. No doubt this refers to NG-NM-1015 (see report). Titius further remarked that other weapons are exhibited in that same room.[68] He did not further elaborate on those other weapons. Nevertheless, a guide from 1785 on the museum of with the collection of Stadtholder Willem V, described yet another room that was filled with armour, clothing, and other ornaments from inhabitants of the island of Ceylon (Sri Lanka), other Indian countries, and China.[69]

To conclude, the estate of Van Eck does not list any object (that could possibly be identified as the silver kasthāné. Furthermore, We have explained though that this by no means excludes the option that it was gifted after the war to the Willem V for the simple reason that the archival recording of objects in the possession of the Dutch stadtholder was incomplete. The eyewitness accounts reveal that the curator of the Cabinet made explicit reference to the Kandyan-Dutch war and that besides Lewke's cannon, other armour from Ceylon (Sri Lanka) was at display at the time.

When was the object first recorded and what route did it make through the Dutch collections ?

The archival silences regarding the arrival of the silver kasthāné in the collection of the Dutch Stadtholder urged us to further scrutinize the museum documentation. In this section we focus on two questions: when was the object first recorded as part of a Dutch collection? And what route did it take through the collection? Our method was to work backwards in time through the museum documentation, this exercise included the decoding of the somewhat complex historical numbering of the object.

The Rijksmuseum as it exists now was built in 1885 and it incorporated the collections of various national museums that had been established over the course of the nineteenth century. These predecessors of the Rijksmuseum were in turn founded on older collections, such as the eighteenth century Cabinet of Curiosities of the Dutch Stadtholder Willem V. In this section we will trace the route that the silver kasthāné took through the various museums and collections, before it arrived in the Rijksmuseum. We focus on two questions. What knowledge was available at the time about the provenance of the silver kasthāné? And when was the object first recorded as part of a Dutch collection?

[68] Carl Heinrich Titius from 1777 cited by Johann Jacob Volkmann, *Neueste Reisen durch die vereinigten Niederlande* (Den Caspar Fritsch, Leipzig, 1783). "In zweeten saale ist unter den kunstsachen eine ganz silberne kanone mit golde ubersogen, graviert, und mit edelgesteinen besezt, welche die Hollander in ihren lesten kriege, met den koninge von Candi erbeutet haben, und viele andre sehr kostbare Waffen." See also, Th.H. Lunsingh Scheurleer "Het Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden en zijn beteekenis voor het Rijksmuseum," Oudheidkundig Jaarboek, 13 (1946).
[69] *Guide ou nouvelle description de La Haye et de ses environs* ('s-Gravenhage, 1785), 257 https://www.delpher.nl/nl/boeken/view?coll=boeken&identifier=dpo:5469:mpeg21:0250.

The unravelling of this part of the kasthāné's history starts with the object number that is assigned to it: one of the collections that the Rijksmuseum housed from the start was that of the Nederlandsch Museum voor Geschiedenis en Kunst (Dutch Museum for History and Art) and this is what the NM in the object number of NG-NM-7112 stands for. In 1927 the objects from this collection were incorporated in the Rijksmuseum and became part of the Dutch History collection, Nederlandse Geschiedenis, hence the additional NG.[70]

The information on the inventory card is fairly basic and provides us with the following information:

> Kris with a solid silver hilt, the knob of which is shaped like a dragon, in a sheath covered with silver leaf. South-east Asian [Achter-Indië] Length 60.5 Sheath 49 cm.
>
> From the Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden No. 6025.

At a later moment, the following provenance information was added:

> On loan Koloniaal Instituut. Received back in 1937.
>
> And in 1816 transferred by King Willem I to the Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden.[71]

At the time, this inventory card of the Nederlandsch Museum the silver kasthāné was associated with "Achter-Indië," which was commonly used to refer to mainland Southeast Asia. This allocation remained uncorrected on the inventory card when the other information was added. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, knowledge of Kandy armour and craftsmanship was apparently absent at the museum. For example, at the time the golden kasthāné was interpreted as Malay.[72]

The silver kasthāné had been transferred to the Nederlandsch Museum from the Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden (KKZ) in 1885, together with the golden dagger. Other Sri Lankan objects, such as Levke's cannon and the golden kasthāné, had already been transferred in 1875 as they had been interpreted by mistake as former possessions of Dutch national hero to Michiel de Ruyter.[73] In 1885 the Asiatic objects from that collection were distributed between the Nederlandsch Museum and 's Rijks Etnografisch Museum (NMvW Museum Volkenkunde). However, from this collection a specific group of objects were allocated to the Nederlandsch Museum to illustrate the ceremonial function of Stadtholder Willem V as highest director of the Dutch East India Company (VOC). The silver kasthāné was one of these objects.[74]

What do we know about the history of the silver kasthāné during the time it was kept in the Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden? Correspondence between Professor Lunsingh Scheurleer and

[70] Jan van Campen et al., *Aziatische kunst* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2014): 8-11.
[71] Inventory card Rijksmuseum Amsterdam NG-NM-7112: "Kris met massief zilveren gevest, waarvan de knop als een draak, in eene bladzilveren overtrokken scheede. Achter Indie. Lengte 60.5 Scheede 49. eM. Afkomstig van het KON. Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden No. 6025 In bruikleen Kol. Instituut. In 1937 terug ontvangen. En in 1816 door Koning Willem I aan het Kon. Kab. van Zeldzaamheden overgedragen."
[72] See Alicia Schrikker and Doreen van den Boogaart, PPROCE reports NG-NM-560 and NG-NM-7114.
[73] NL-HlmNHA, 476, 6. Archief van het Nederlandsch Museum van Geschiedenis en Kunst [Archive of the Nederlandsch Museum van Geschiedenis en Kunst], inv.no. 1092, "Inventaris van kunstvoorwerpen, door het ontvangen van het" [Inventory of artpieces, received by the Nederlandsch Museum van Geschiedenis en Kunst from the Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden], 1875.
[74] Jan van Campen, *Aziatische kunst*, 11

the Director of the Rijksmuseum van Volkenkunde (now part of Museum van Wereldculturen), P.H. Pott, from 1966 reveals more about the background of NG-NM-7112 in the collection of the Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden. Pott noticed that the numbers 6014-6029 in the catalogue were (almost) completely copied from the list of the objects King Willem I transmitted to the KKZ from his father's collection. Some of these ended up in the museum Volkenkunde, while others went to the Rijksmuseum. Pott was able to trace back almost all of the numbers from the list in the two museums. In the Rijksmuseum these were renumbered, ranging from NM-7053 to -7121.[75] And so, number 6026 in the KKZ became NM-7114 in the Nederlandsch Museum. In fact, all the KKZ numbers 6014-6029, have a colonial Asian background.[76]

In 1878 KKZ number 6025 was described as follows:

> A sabre with a massive silver hilt, the stud being dragon headed, in a sheath like the latter [that is, a sheath covered with thin silver].[77]

The silver kasthāné, golden pihiya, and the golden kasthāné were not the only Kandyan/Sri Lankan objects in the collection of the Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden. In fact, it appears that these objects were registered together in the KKZ collection as if belonging to a group of objects. Over the course of the nineteenth century, their Sri Lankan provenance was forgotten, but in 1823 this was not yet the case: the contemporary director of the Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden, R.P. Van de Kasteele, then described that desk 13 in the fourth room presented a range of Asiatic objects. Among them were a treatise in Sinhalese and a decorative belt with a snake motif, worn by the people of Ceylon.[78] R.P. van der Kasteele, first director of the KKZ, explicitly stated that these objects originated from the Cabinet of Stadtholder Willem V. On desk 15 in the same hall, the objects were exhibited which we now identify as the golden kasthāné together with the silver kasthāné, the golden pihiya, and another Kandyan knife which is now in the Wereldculturen collection (or: NG-NM-560, 7112, -7114 and RV-360-6017). In addition, two olas (palm leaf manuscripts) with Tamil and Sinhalese script where exhibited together with a copper plate with Sinhalese letters and an "Eastern writing pen," presumably a stylus, used to write on the palm leaves.[79] A conclusion we can draw from these records is that the silver kasthāné was exhibited as part of a group of objects that originated from Sri Lanka. Over time, however, the knowledge about this group of objects had faded.

The silver kasthāné seems to be one of the objects transferred from the royal collections by Willem I to the Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden in 1816: the descriptions of numbers 6014-6029 on the inventory list of the KKZ of 1878, were a direct copy of the descriptions on the list of transferal of 1816 by King Willem I.[80]

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[75] Museum Volkenkunde (NL-LdnRMV), Archive series 360, letter from P.H. Pott to T.H. Lunsingh Scheurleer, 9 September 1966.
[76] Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer, "Twee Oosterse Sieraden Uit de Stadhouderlijke Verzameling," *Bulletin van Het Rijksmuseum* 44 (1996): 15–26. Other examples from this series are the jewels of Steyn van Gollenesse and two jewels with an unknown provenance have been researched before by Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer.
[77] "Een sabel met massief zilveren gevest, waarvan de knop als een draak gevorm is, als in een scheede als een vorige." NL-HlmNHA, 476, inv.nos. 876-877, "Inventarissen van kunst- en andere voorwerpen, 1878-1882 876" [Inventories of art pieces and other objects] no. 6025.
[78] R.P. Van de Kasteele, *Handleiding tot de bezichtiging van het Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden op Maurtishuis, in 's Gravenhage* (The Hague, n.d. [1824], 97-101. ''Eene onbegrijpelijk kunstige van zilverdraad gevlochten slang, de kop en de staat schijnen daar naderhand aangemaakt te zijn; zonder deze is het een versiersel van een volk op Ceilon, wordende als een gordel om het lijf gedragen, wanneer aan de einde sluitingstukken zijn. Weegt 5 ons, 16 eng. Of 268,411 wig." We have not yet identified this object in the collection.
[79] Ibid.
[80] This is what P.H. Pott also concluded in 1966.

The "List of objects transferred to the Royal Cabinet of Curiosities in The Hague on the orders of King William I," number 183.10 has the following description:

> A sabre with a solid silver handle, the knob of which is shaped like a dragon, in a sheath covered with lofty decorated silver fittings.[81]

The original copy of this list is kept in the National Archives and it contains objects from the collection of Willem V that Van de Kasteele had received from de *hofraad* Hoffman. According to Jan van Campen, this list referred to the objects that Willem V took with him to England when he was exiled in 1795.[82] However, Tom Quist has suggested that this list is a copy of Hoffman's inventory on the weapons and walking sticks, written in German. In the view of Tom Quist, the listed stayed at Oranienstein Castle.[83] This had been the residence of Willem V since 1801. We have not been able to obtain further information on this question, but in any case it is very likely that the silver kasthāné and other objects on the German-language list were transferred to England or Germany or both and returned to the Netherlands in the period 1813-1816 when the monarchy was established, with Willem V's son, Willem I. From the museum documentation we can thus conclude that the golden silver kasthāné must have entered into the collection of Willem V at any moment prior to his exile in England and Germany in 1795.[84]

As discussed above we have not been able to identify the silver kasthāné in the eighteenth-century inventories of the collection of the stadtholders Willem IV and Willem V that are kept in the Royal Archives (Koninklijk Huis Archief).[85] This is where the archival trail through the museum documentation and collection inventories ends.

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[81] "Een Sabel met een massiev zilver handvatsel waarvan de knop, gelijk een draak gevormd is, in eene met verheven bewerkt zilver beslag overtrokkene schede." NL-HlmNHA, 476, inv.no. 843, "Lijst van voorwerpen op last van Koning Willem I overgedragen aan het Kon. Kab. v. Zeldzaamheden te 's-Gravenhage" [List of objects transferred to the Royal Cabinet of Curiosities in The Hague on the orders of King William I], 1816.

[82] Jan van Campen, *De Haagse jurist Jean Theodore Royer (1737-1807) en zijn verzameling Chinese voorwerpen* (Uitgeverij Verloren, 2000): 215.

[83] See Tom Quist, PPROCE report Provenance report Staatsiekris (RV-360-6021).

[84] This stay rejects the thesis of in the Rijksmuseum documentation that NG-NM-7112 as well as NG-NM-560 were the two weapons that, like NG-NM-1015 (Cannon of Kandy), were presented as one of the five objects, the "vaderlandsche gedenkstukken" to the new Batavian Parliament, as symbols for a new Netherlands in 1795. Among them was the sabre of Michiel de Ruyter and a cannon ascribed to the Ruyter. The cannon can be identified as NG-NM-1015 (see report), but the sabre cannot be linked to NG-NM-7112. See also: Van Luttervelt, "Herinneringen Aan Michiel Adriaenszoon de Ruyter," 36.

[85] Koninklijke Verzamelingen [Royal Collections] (NL-KaHV), A, William IV, prince of Orange, ruler of Nassau (1711-1751), inv.no. 46 III, 'Bekorte Staat en Inventaris van het Kabinet der Natuurlijke en door Kunstgemaakte Zeldzaamheden…' [Concise overview and inventory of the Cabinet of natural and artistic curiosities]; NL-KaHV, A30, Anne of Hannover, Princess of Great Britain and Ireland (1709-1759), inv.no. 415, 'Inventaris der Rariteiten overgegeven in het Kabinet der Natuurlijke en door Kunstgemaakte Zeldzaamheden, berustende onder de bewaaring van den Directeur Vosmaer' [Inventory of curiosities transferred to the Cabinet of natural and artistic curiosities, residing under the custodianship of director Vosmaer]; NL-KaHV, A30, inv.no. 415, 'Nadere Inventaris benevens derselver bij gevoegde taxatie van de Rariteiten overgegeven in het Kabinet der Natuurlijk en door Kunst gemaekte Zeldsaemheeden…' [Further inventory along with the associated valuation of the Curiosities transferred to the Cabinet of natural and artistic curiosities…]; NL-KaHV, archive access A31, William V Batavus, Prince of Orange-Nassau (1748-1806), inv.no. 173, Inventarissen van kleding, sieraden, linnen en zeldzaamheden [Inventories of clothing, jewellery, linen and curiosities], dated 1749-1766; NL-KaHV, A31, inv.no. 184, Inventaris van de kostbaarheden van Willem V in bewaring bij de kamerdienaar Oostheim, vervaardigd door A. Vosmaer [Inventory of precious items belonging to William V held in safekeeping by chamberlain Oostheim, drawn up by A. Vosmaer], 1782; NL-KaHV, A31, inv.no. 185, 'Lijsten van in januari 1795 meegenomen gouden en zilveren tafelgoed, schilderijen en kleding' [Lists of the golden and silver tableware, paintiings and clothing that were taken along] dated 1795-1798; NL-KaHV, A31, inv.no. 186, 'Briefwisseling tussen W.C. Vosmaer en Willem V over restanten van de stadhouderlijke collecties die naar Duitsland verzonden kunnen worden' [Correspondence between W.C. Vosmaer and Willem V on what was left of the stadtholder's collection that could be shipped to Germany] dated 1803.
Also consultation of the inventory of the Vosmaer family did not give any result. The following numbers are part of the section of Arnout Vosmaer as director of the stadholder's cabinets. NL-HaNA, 2.21.271 'Inventaris van het archief van de familie Vosmaer' [Inventory of the archive of the Vosmaer family], inv. no. 63-67.

Discussion

Despite extensive archival research, we have not succeeded in fully reconstructing the provenance history of the silver kasthāné. What is clear however is that NG-NM-7112 is a kasthāné from Kandy of outstanding craftsmanship, that was made in the royal Four Workhops (pattal hatara) most likely as part of the personal ceremonial attire of one of the higher aristocrats at the court. We also establish that the silver kasthāné was probably already in the collection of stadtholder Willem V at the end of the eighteenth century.

The archival documentation does not allow us to reliably deduce that the kasthāné was among Van Eck's spoils of war. At least, it does not occur on the list of ten objects from Kandy in his possession, nor in his estate. Thus, the questions that linger are how, when, and why did it arrive in the collection? These are more difficult to answer. Below, we provide a discussion based on our archival research and present different possible routes, but in each case the evidence remains scanty and circumstantial.

As discussed above, the archival documentation on the conquest of Kandy of 1765 shows that many objects were taken from the palace and the temple. Some of these arrived in Colombo and were traded locally or stayed in private hands. But certainly not all objects were recorded at the time. For example, we found that twenty years after the war a drinking bowl from the Kandyan king was still in possession of a VOC officer on the island.[86] Another example is the arrival of "vier grote Candiase geweren" ("four large Kandyan weapons") as gifts to the stadtholder from Batavia (probably from the Governor General) in 1767. These guns are not mentioned among the spoils of war, but we assume that there provenance is related to the war as they made their way to Batavia apparently soon after.[87] Thus, the fact that we have not been able to identify the silver kasthāné among the estate of Van Eck does not mean that the silver kasthāné could not have been taken from the Royal Palace in Kandy during the siege. However, a provenance as being bought, or gifted from an Kandyan noblemen to a VOC employee –- cannot be entirely excluded on the basis of similar contextual evidence.[88]

An ultimate point that bears emphasis is that for over fifty years now the Rijksmuseum has maintained that the silver kasthāné was part of the spoils of the Kandyan-Dutch war. Together with the cannon, the golden kasthāné, and the gold mounted knife, they have come to symbolise the moment of plunder and destruction of the Kandyan palace. This in itself has thus become an important part of the object's history.

[86] Collection Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, NG-1985-7-2-24, https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/NG-1985-7-2-24
[87] See: Alicia Schrikker and Doreen van den Boogaart, PPROCE report NG-NM-519 and 520.
[88] Cf. Lunsingh Scheurleer, "Twee Oosterse Sieraden," 15–26; Van Campen and Hartkamp-Jonxis, *Aziatische Weelde*, 86. The latter writes about a servant of a VOC employee who had bought kasthāné in Sri Lanka as a gift for two collectors in Groningen. Unfortunately, the authors could not provide us with a reference to the archival source.; During the PPROCE research a start was made with mapping the culture of gift-giving between the VOC and Kandy in the 1740s and 1750s, as well as to what happened to the objects after they were in VOC hands. A draft document 'Gift giving, Embassies and Collections' will be available in the documentation folder of this object from April 2022. An elaboration on this research went beyond the objectives of the PPROCE research, but future research on the practice of gift giving, flows of gifts, as well as the afterlives of these Kandyan gifts in Sri Lanka, the Netherlands and the rest of the world could provide more insight. The draft documents can be consulted as a starting point for future research.