Chapter II

Narrative reliefs and Panji stories

NARRATIVE RELIEFS AND LITERARY TRADITIONS

The narrative temple reliefs are generally based on contemporary literary narratives, be they of written or oral form. In order to understand the symbolism of narrative reliefs, which is the task of this study, we need to take a look at the specificity of the literary and of the sculptural traditions in ancient Java and their interrelation.

The perception of stories and myths as conveying a mystic knowledge has a long and strong tradition in Javanese culture, which is still alive today in the practice of the *wayang* performances. Narratives can be understood on various levels. They can be considered to merely entertain or, on the other end of the scale, to convey a message on the level of mystic/spiritual knowledge. This applies to various presentations of narratives: in literature, in the visual medium of relief depictions, as well as in types of performances. The understanding of the narrative will correspond to the particular background of the viewer or the audience and his/her stage of spiritual knowledge. It is for the initiated viewer that the narratives and, particularly, the narrative reliefs impart a spiritual message on an utmost level.

Based on my earlier studies of Javanese temple reliefs, I consider the functions of narratives – both in the literary and in the visual medium – to be comparable.¹

Teeuw et al. (1969:45), referring to the *kakawin Siwaratrikalpa* highlights

¹ Within a theoretical approach, this corresponds to the parallel between analysing a literary work and an art work, as for example discussed by Olsen (1991). A compilation of papers in Fontein 2000b thematize the interrelation between visual and literary forms of art, in particular Fontein's introduction in this book.

the close relationship between the literary and visual arts of ancient Java. In the past they have often been treated as separate matters, whereas they are not only complementary studies but can be of great assistance in the comprehension one of the other. [...] wish to emphasize here the importance of a knowledge of ancient Javanese art for that of literature, and the fruitfulness of co-operation between these two fields of study.

Old Javanese poetry in form of *kakawin* has, among others, the function to create rapture, *langö*, which is intended by the poet as a means, a *yantra*, to unify with the Divine. Zoetmulder (1974) explains this poetical process in his extensive studies of Old Javanese literature.² The means to create *langö* is the description of beauty, be it beauty of nature and landscapes or of women. I consider that on the level of beauty the literary and the visual medium both operate in the same way: the beauty of the narrative depictions in temples implies the same kind of rapture as aroused by the Old Javanese *kakawin* (Kieven 1994:117). The creators of the narrative reliefs intended to arouse rapture by depicting scenes applying to the senses, such as erotic scenes or scenes depicting beautiful landscapes, and by the beauty of the reliefs itself. The reliefs become a *yantra* for the viewer to unify with the Divine. The reliefs with cap-figures which are discussed in this study contribute in their own specific way to inducing *langö* in the viewer.

Narrative reliefs at ancient Javanese temples display a variation of styles. While Central Javanese sculptural art is characterized by a naturalistic style, the art of the East Javanese period shows a stronger stylization. Scholars have coined various names for the different styles.³ I do not go into detail concerning these terminologies since they are not relevant to my object of research, which lies outside of the question of styles. Within the art of the East Javanese period, I follow Klokke's (1993) classification of early East Javanese art as characterized by a more naturalistic style until the late thirteenth century – Kediri and Singasari period – as opposed to late East Javanese art of the late Singasari and Majapahit

² See also Zoetmulder 1957. For state-of-the-art discussions of Old Javanese literature in a broad scope see the articles in Van der Molen 2001.

³ Major research has been carried out by Van Stein Callenfels (1924, 1925a, 1925b); Holt (1967); Stutterheim (1989); Klokke (1993). These authors discuss the various styles and label them using specific terms.

period, which has a stronger stylized way of depictions.⁴ The ‘cap-figures’ represent one special iconographic creation of this late East Javanese art.

The specificity of the cap-figure has to be seen in the context of the many other new elements which were developed in East Javanese art, and particularly in late East Javanese art, as distinct from Central Javanese art. They reflect the creativity in East Javanese art, expressing the ‘local genius’ which we can observe in architecture, in literature, and in the religious practices of the time period. They also reflect the fact that there was an open climate in cultural affairs which was certainly stimulated and supported by the contemporary political conditions and leaders. Here I present a few examples to show the variety and richness of these new features.

On the level of architecture the East Javanese temples display a linear layout, in contrast to the concentric layout of the Central Javanese temples. While the Central Javanese *candi* was ritually circumambulated in the clockwise direction *pradakshina*, the East Javanese temples often feature the counterclockwise *prasawya* direction. We can recognize the direction from the postures of the figures depicted in reliefs. In several cases, *pradakshina* and *prasawya* are even combined; for example, in Candi Surowono and in the Main Temple of Candi Panataran. This has led to various interpretations, which I discuss in the respective chapters of my case studies. The *panakawan*, still today an important character in *wayang*,⁵ is a typical East Javanese element in narrative reliefs which does not appear in Central Javanese art. The reliefs at Candi Jago provide the first known depictions of *panakawan*.⁶ The *kala*-head above the *cella* entrance, a common feature in both Central and East Javanese architecture, displays in the latter a stronger demonic character with a lower jaw, big fangs, and raised fingers in contrast to that in the former, which lacks a lower jaw and features a less fierce expression. A specific example is the depiction of the huge *kala*-head on the back of the Ganesha statue

⁴ An interesting opinion shared by several scholars is that different local traditions, produced by different princes acting as principals, yielded the different styles (Satyawati Suleiman 1978:41; Stutterheim 1938:29).

⁵ Testimony of the practice of *wayang* in the eleventh century is found in the *kakawin Arjunawiwaha* (Canto V.9). The *kakawin Ghatotkacasraya* from the mid twelfth century is the first text to mention the *panakawan* (Van Stein Callenfels 1925a:171; Zoetmulder (1974:547 note 56).

⁶ Galestín (1959:14, 16-8) argues that an earlier depiction of servant figures in the reliefs at Candi Jolotundo (AD 977) does not represent *panakawan* in the *wayang* style. The *panakawan* in Candi Jago has the shape of the *panakawan* figures in Javanese and Balinese *wayang*, for which reason Galestín refers to it as the *wayang* style.

from Boro. Stutterheim (1989:171) refers to this *kala*-head when he, in discussing the question of degeneration of East Javanese art, coined the expression 'magicism' as a new characteristic in this art. Based on a comparison with the magic art of 'primitive people', he interprets the magic elements in East Javanese reliefs as having the purpose of warding off evil influence (Stutterheim 1989:164-5). Other examples are the numerous depictions of clouds and spiral motifs, extant for example in the *Ramayana* reliefs at Candi Panataran, which in some cases look like ghost-heads. Lunsingh Scheurleer (2000) additionally points to a generally increasing appearance of demonic features in East Javanese art. Another typical feature is the growing dominance of certain characters in sculptural art, such as Bhima, Hanuman, and Garuda, and the associated change of their meaning and symbolism.⁷ The emergence of Panji in sculptural art has to be considered in this context.

It is mainly two different genres of literature that are displayed in the reliefs. One genre is comprised of the *kakawin*, the Old Javanese poem, based on the Indian epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Examples are the *kakawin Arjunawiwaha* and the *kakawin Krishnayana*; except for the Old Javanese *Ramayana*, all of them were composed during the East Javanese period. Other narrative reliefs depict stories, composed independently of Indian sources during the East Javanese period, which became very popular in this time, among them the *Bubukshah* story and particularly the *kidung* poetry, such as the *kidung Sri Tanjung*. Also the Panji stories belong to the genre of *kidung*.

It must be considered that Indonesia, particularly Java, has a strong oral tradition. Still today the medium of oral transmission is widely preferred to the written medium. The fact that several manuscripts with slightly differing content exist for some Old Javanese texts attests to a creativity in composing new versions which yielded a broad variety of forms. From this we can conclude that even more variations existed which were not written down, but orally transferred and which might even not be known to us. The outstanding example for this tradition is found in the Panji stories which exist in sheer incalculable numbers. The oral tradition is also manifest in the relief depictions, which may display various deviations from narratives.⁸

⁷ Lunsingh Scheurleer 2000; Duijker 2001, 2010; Klokke 2006.

⁸ Worsley (2006, 2009) discusses such vernacular traditions on the example of the *Ramayana* reliefs at Prambanan.

The dichotomy between the two genres *kakawin* and *kidung* has been a standard point of discussion between experts in Old Javanese literature.⁹ The *kakawin*, the Indian-based stories, are composed in an Indian metre and written in Old Javanese. Gods and priests play an important role in their interaction with the heroes, such as Arjuna and Krishna in the *Arjunawiwaha* and the *Krishnayana* respectively. The *kidung* stories are composed in a metre independent from Indian poetry and use the so-called Middle Javanese language. This language was, contrary to its misleading name, used contemporaneously with the language of the *kakawin*.¹⁰ Similar to *kakawin*, *kidung* are set in a court environment, but they have a stronger Javanese setting. I will return to this issue in more detail in the discussion on the Panji stories in the following sub-chapter.

The dichotomy between *kakawin* and *kidung* can be transferred to the visual medium. It corresponds to Forge's (1978:13) terminology, which classifies the two genres of stories depicted in traditional Balinese paintings. He refers to the stories based on the old Indian epics as 'mythological stories'. Stories 'covering the adventures of romantic heroes, past kingdoms, folk heroes', particularly the Panji stories, are called 'post-mythological stories'. In the Balinese paintings depicting mythological stories, the heroes, such as Krishna or Rama, appear in full gala attire, and particularly with the crab-claw shaped headgear called *supit urang*. In the depictions of 'post-mythological' stories, the heroes, among them Panji, are characterized by simple dress. The same two differing kinds of iconography apply to the depictions of heroes in East Javanese narrative reliefs. The heroes of the *kakawin*, such as Arjuna and Krishna, are depicted with the *supit urang*, while Panji and in some cases also other *kidung* heroes, such as Sidapaksa in the *Sri Tanjung* story, are characterized by the cap. The way the headgear resembles those of the Balinese paintings and the Balinese *wayang* puppets, can be understood to be a continuation of the East Javanese prototypes.

The visual medium of the reliefs makes use of the different connotations of literary genres in order to convey a certain symbolism. Furthermore, the visual medium allows for more criteria to be applied for inducing the intended message. The symbolism of narrative reliefs is conveyed in four ways:

⁹ Amongst others Zoetmulder 1974:24-36, 143-51, 407-9; Robson 1979; Vickers 2005:159-67.

¹⁰ The term 'Middle Javanese language', for example, is discussed by Zoetmulder 1974:25-6.

1. by the selection of the depicted narrative;
 2. by the selection of particular scenes of the narrative;
 3. by the specific combination of several narratives;
 4. by the placement of the narrative reliefs in the religious site.¹¹
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1. Certain narratives which carry a specific symbolic meaning were chosen for depiction. For example, the *Sudamala* and the *Sri Tanjung* are known to have an exorcist symbolism (Zoetmulder 1974:433-6). They were selected to be depicted in temples that emphasized the spiritual liberation of the soul. Beyond this, the visual medium of the depictions can produce its own deviations or use existing deviations or oral versions of the narratives.
 2. Furthermore, the visual medium allows the exposure of, or emphasis on, a symbolic meaning that differs from the original narrative by making a deliberate selection of depicted episodes. Through this selection a specific intended message is conveyed.¹² An example is the *kakawin Arjunawiwaha*, which features the ideal of Arjuna as a *kshatriya*. Depictions of the temptation scene of the *Arjunawiwaha* are numerous (Kieven 1994). In some sanctuaries this scene is the major one, such as in Goa Selomangleng in Kediri and in Goa Selomangleng in Tulungagung,¹³ and places the focus on the aspect of asceticism. In other sanctuaries, such as Candi Surowono, this scene is combined with other episodes of the text which focus more on the *kshatriya* ideal. Both the asceticism and the *kshatriya* ideal have a different function, each of which corresponds to the function of the sanctuary itself.
 3. The combination of depictions of certain narratives with others within the one sanctuary enables the creation of more complex symbolic meanings. This is demonstrated through the combination of episodes of the *Arjunawiwaha* with the *Sri Tanjung* and the *Bubukshah* story at Candi Surowono, or through the large number of different narratives depicted in Candi Jago.¹⁴

¹¹ O'Brien (1988, 1990), Klokke (1993), Kieven (1994), Worsley (1986, 1996), and Sbeghen (2004) discuss certain temples and narrative reliefs in the context of these four aspects. The book by Kinney (2003) displays excellent photos of many narrative reliefs on East Javanese temples.

¹² Klokke (1992) gives many examples of the various iconographical traditions, favouring selections of depiction in East Javanese art.

¹³ These are two different cave sanctuaries having the same name.

¹⁴ I will discuss the interrelationship of these narratives in chapters VI and VIII on Candi Jago and Candi Surowono.

4. The specific placement of the depictions within the sanctuary is another component that contributes to their symbolic meaning. Earlier investigations (O'Brien 1988, 1990; Klokke 1995; Kieven 2008) have shown that on the higher levels of a terraced temple and on the rear side of a temple the depictions are more connected with the divine and sacred world, while on the lower levels and the entrance part the depicted narratives have a stronger affiliation to daily life. Generally speaking, the depictions of the Indian-based *kakawin*, or the so-called 'mythological stories', are confined to the upper levels and the rear and thus to the sacred sphere, while 'post-mythological stories', such as the *kidung*, appear on the lower levels and the entrance part and thus belong to the mundane sphere. This hierarchical arrangement of narrative reliefs within a temple actually draws upon the Central Javanese temples, first of all on the Borobudur with its vertical progress from the *kamadhatu* (the level of deeds) via the *rupadhatu* (the level of forms) up to the *arupadhatu* (the level of the formless void).¹⁵

The cap-figure under research, as a particular iconographic element, presents a specific means for expressing the intended symbolism. It does so by being part of a selected narrative, part of a selection of scenes, part of an interrelation with other narratives, and through its depiction in certain places within the layout of a temple. My investigation into certain examples of depictions of cap-figures in my case studies will yield interesting results on their symbolic meaning.

To sum up: the deliberate combination of the three media – the literary narrative, the visual depiction, and its placement within the temple architecture and layout – conveys a specific message. It is this message that I will decipher in the later examples.

PANJI STORIES

THE LITERARY GENRE

Among the narratives whose depictions show cap-figures, Panji stories are those most frequently visualized. Panji stories were very popular during the Majapahit period. This is demonstrated by their setting in the

¹⁵ These three levels correspond to the concept of *bhurloka*, *bhuwarloka*, *swarloka* – world, atmosphere, heavens – foot, body, upper structure of the *candi* (Stutterheim 1937a:245; Sockmono 1995:96, 105).

historic Majapahit court culture, and by the many depictions of Panji stories in narrative reliefs at Majapahit temples. Following the extension of Majapahit's power, seen for example in the conquest of Bali in AD 1364, the Panji stories spread to other areas in the archipelago of present-day Indonesia. They even came to be known in Mainland Southeast Asia and thus became an indicator of Majapahit's wide political, economic, and cultural influence.¹⁶

This genre of literature has attracted scholarly attention across various disciplines such as philology, history, anthropology, and in more recent forms of art. The Panji theme in ancient Javanese art, however, still represents a gap in scholarly research. My analysis will provide a contribution to fill this gap.

The Panji stories, with their strong oral tradition, exist in a broad range of variations. Their written versions were composed in *kidung* form. The *kidung* genre was popular during the Majapahit period. In Bali the tradition of composing *kidung* poetry, as with *kakawin* poetry, has been maintained throughout the centuries.¹⁷ The most popular Balinese Panji story is the *Malat* (Vickers 2005). In the Malay world Panji stories were created in the Malay language, for example the *Hikayat Panji Kuda Semirang*. In Java famous poets, such as Ranggawarsita or the Sunan Pakubuwana IV of Surakarta, composed many new Panji stories, such as the *Jayakusuma*, which formed part of the flourishing literature of Surakarta at the beginning of the nineteenth century. All these variations, be they from Bali, the Malay world, or from Java, have a Javanese setting.¹⁸

¹⁶ There exists in Thailand and Cambodia, for example, the popular story of Inao and Bussaba which is a Panji story; the name Inao corresponds to the name Inu or Ino which is frequently used to denote Panji in the Javanese stories. See Poerbatjaraka 1940a, 1968; Robson 1999. The PhD thesis by the Thai scholar Davisakd Puaksom (2008) discusses the perception of Java as reflected in the Thai Panji stories.

¹⁷ According to Zoetmulder (1974:28-9), no *kidung* can be exactly dated. Most of them were written in Bali, but 'we can safely assume that *kidung* literature in Bali was a continuation of a literary form which had its origin in Java'. Berg (1928:67) states that the *Wikir Polaman* mentioned in the *Pararaton* belongs to the end of the thirteenth century and might be the oldest Javanese *kidung*. This opinion has been maintained by Robson (1979:306), who mentions the earliest extant *kidung* to be the *Panji Wijayakrama-Rangga Lawe*, dated to AD 1334 (drawing on Damais 1958).

¹⁸ Manuscripts in the different languages are kept in many parts of the world, amongst others in Java, Bali, Leiden, all throughout Southeast Asia, and even in Sri Lanka.

The Panji stories relate the adventures of Prince Panji in regaining his betrothed, Princess Candrakirana.¹⁹ ‘Panji’ is a title, used preceding a proper name.²⁰ In modern Javanese it means ‘flag’ or ‘banner’ (Horne 1974:423). In the stories Prince Panji – in Javanese language ‘Raden Panji’ – has various names, for example Panji Jayengtilem, or Panji Wangbang Wideya. The princess also appears with different names, such as Raden Sekartaji or Raden Galuh. Panji is from the kingdom of Janggala/Kuripan while Candrakirana is a princess from Daha/Kediri. These kingdoms correspond to historical kingdoms which played an important role in the Majapahit politics, as I will explain in Chapter IV.

The titles of the Panji stories often refer to the name of Prince Panji in the respective story: *Panji Jayakusuma*, *Panji Ngronakung*, *Panji Jayengtilem*, *Panji Asmarabangun*, *Panji Ande-Ande Lumut*, *Panji Waseng Sari*, *Panji Malat*. The story *Panji Angreni*, edited by Karsono (1998), is very popular in *wayang topeng* and refers to Angreni, a second woman loved by Panji. Many of these single stories exist in a variety of manuscripts. For example, twelve manuscripts of the *Panji Angreni* story are known to exist (Karsono 1998:3).

The continuing popularity of Panji stories until recent times is manifest in their multiple forms of presentation and expression in art forms such as *wayang beber* and *wayang topeng*. *Wayang beber*, with depictions of scenes on paper scrolls, is nearly extinct and only very rarely performed in the area of Pacitan on the south coast of East Java, where two sets are still extant.²¹ *Wayang topeng* is a form of dance-drama with masked dancers, still performed in the area of Malang in East Java and in Cirebon on the north coast of West Java.²² Both *wayang beber* and *wayang topeng* are supposed to have already been performed in Majapahit time. *Wayang gedhog* is a specific form of the Javanese *wayang kulit*, performing

¹⁹ The name ‘Panji’ is in some stories replaced by ‘Inu’. The complete title is usually ‘Raden Panji’ or ‘Raden Inu’. ‘Raden’ denotes a person of superior status, be it male or female.

²⁰ Zoetmulder 1982:1270. The name ‘Panji’ was common as a title for aristocrats. Proof is given in Old Javanese literature, for example in the *kakawin Bhomakawya* (81.29) dated in the Kediri period which means before AD 1222, and in inscriptions (Buchari 1968, 1965:58-9) The title was obviously used since the Kediri period. The *kidung Harsa Wijaya* (4.75a), which relates the story of Kertarajasa, the founder of Majapahit, was probably only composed in Bali in the nineteenth century, but it is remarkable that here Kertarajasa is referred to as ‘Panji’ or ‘Raden Ino’ (Berg 1931a:2).

²¹ Kant-Achilles (1990) has described and investigated these two sets in a very elaborate way. They are held in the villages of Gelaran and Gedempol and are assumed to date from about 1700-1735 (Kant-Achilles 1990:24). See also Sayid 1980.

²² For *wayang topeng* see Onghokham 1972; Lucas 1973. A few photos of *topeng* in Jessup 1990:179-82.

Panji stories, and nearly extinct.²³ In Bali the popular *gambuh* dance and traditional Balinese paintings present the *Malat* story, a Balinese version of a Panji story (Vickers 2005; Forge 1978).

All the various Panji stories have a major plot in common. Each single story creates its own individual variation on this plot. I quote Zoetmulder's (1974:428-9) synopsis of the Panji stories:

There are four kingdoms whose kings are brothers: Koripan or Kahuripan (= Janggala = Keling), Daha (= Kadiri = Mamenang), Gegelang (= Urawan) and Singhasari. The marriage between the crown prince of Koripan and the princess of Daha is the main theme of all the Panji stories. The prince is generally called *raden* Panji or *raden* Ino, but bears one or more other proper names besides [...]; the princess is commonly designated by the name *raden* Galuh [or Candrakirana, L.K.] [...]. At the beginning of the story they are already betrothed, but the princess vanishes and Panji leaves the *kraton* to go in search of her. Both assume different names. Those of Panji generally indicate his irresistible charm in love: *Malat Rasmi*, *Waseng Sari*, *Wideya* [...], and these are used as titles for the various poems. Often he lives unrecognized in the vicinity of his love. It may also be the princess whose identity remains long unknown. The stories invariably end with recognition of the partners, general rejoicing and a wedding. Panji's great love for the princess of Daha does not prevent him from getting involved in other amorous escapades. On the other hand he proves his valour in battle when on his search he roves about with his band as a *ksatriya* from a foreign country, destroying one enemy *kraton* after the other, or when he comes to the assistance of the king whose hospitality he enjoys, if the latter is attacked by the ruler of another country whose request for the hand of the princess has been rejected.

Typical in the Panji stories are the companions of the principal personages. They are sons and daughters of court *mantris*, who are brought up together with the prince or the princess as their companions and trusted friends, go on confidential errands and give them advice. In their often humorous comments on the various situations they are the exponents of common sense, and in their reactions they show themselves to be less inhibited than their masters by the rigorous norms of aristocratic conduct.

²³ For *wayang gedhog* see Noto Soeroto 1911. The aforementioned 'Panji Festivals' and other activities held during the last years in East Java and planned for the future deliver important contributions to revitalizing such performances – *wayang beber*, *wayang topeng*, *wayang gedhog* – in the Panji tradition.

[...] The women who surround the princess are named Bayan, Sanggit, and, in a more modest role, Pangunengan and Pasiran. Panji is invariably accompanied by Jurudeh, Punta, Prasanta, Kertala and occasionally a few others. They are indicated by the common name of *kadehan* [...].

In addition to this synopsis, further features of specific Panji stories should be mentioned. The hermitess Kili Suci, Panji's aunt, plays a distinctive role in some stories. The so-called 'Angreni-motif' is another recurrent feature, in which Panji wants to marry the girl Angreni from a lower status although he is betrothed to Candrakirana. In response, Panji's mother, or in some stories Kili Suci, kills Angreni so that the story can go on.²⁴

The main elements of Panji stories will be a platform for my later discussion of the relief depictions in the case studies:

- separation and longing between Panji and Candrakirana
- Panji journeying together with his companions in search of Candrakirana
- Panji becoming involved in war
- Panji engaging in love-affairs with other women
- Panji acting as a musician or poet
- Panji retiring for meditation
- reunion of Panji and Candrakirana

The character of the Panji stories has to be considered in the context of the different characters of the *kakawin* and *kidung*, as well as their binary opposition. The *kakawin* stories have a sacred, holy connotation: the heroes are to a major degree involved in episodes connected to the gods or their demonic opponents, or are engaged in ascetic practices. In many cases they use the Indian setting in referring to the original Indian names, such as 'Lengka' in the Old Javanese *Ramayana*. *Kidung* stories have a more 'down to earth' character (Robson 1971:19). They display a clear Javanese setting, referring to Javanese names of persons and geographical places, such as Janggala and Panjalu.

Kakawin and *kidung* do, however, also have a lot in common. The *kidung* genre and particularly the Panji stories have, like the *kakawin*, a court setting and thus form part of the court literature canon (Robson 1971:11). However they also reflect other aspects of social life in Majapahit Java,

²⁴ A similar episode is displayed in the Balinese *Malat* where Nawang Rum commits suicide after Panji refuses to marry her because she is not appropriate for him (Vickers 2005:20-1).

and in comparison to the *kakawin* the *kidung* texts are more characterized by a setting of daily life. Another important difference between the *kakawin* and the *kidung* lies in the social status of the protagonists. The heroes of the *kakawin*, such as Rama, Krishna, and Bhima, are kings or kings-to-be or belong to the Pandawa brothers, and therefore have already accomplished their status. On the other side, the heroes of the *kidung* are young princes who are involved in struggles to become king.²⁵ Both *kakawin* and *kidung* deal with beauty and love-making, which in the case of *kakawin* is known as a means to evoke *langö*, the rapture that induces the unity with the Divine. In this way *kakawin* have a strong spiritual character. *Kidung*, however, when indulging in erotic scenes and beautiful nature, do this more on a superficial level appealing to the senses and the emotions. *Kakawin* 'go "beyond the realm of the senses", they touch on the [...] unmanifest world [...] while *kidung* are still concerned with the manifest world of sensuality' (Vickers 2005:164). While love-making in *kakawin* always happens between a married couple, the king and the queen, in the *kidung* it is mostly between a prince and his betrothed or another lady. In all these respects *kidung* have a kind of preparatory character. They thematize the unaccomplished status in preparation to proceed to an accomplished one.

In the Panji stories, as a particular type of narrative within the *kidung* genre, Panji's behaviour and activities show a strong link with folk literature. This can be seen in descriptions of Panji walking through the countryside and meeting with rural people, of taking part in warfare, of courting women. Vetter (1984:42), in her broad survey of the Panji theme states: 'Originally a part of folk literature, perhaps in the form of an oral *kidung* or in folk drama, they grew in popularity and were adopted by court poets and artisans.' This statement raises an open question which needs further investigation. Were the Panji stories initially created as folk literature and then adopted by court literature, or vice versa: were the Panji stories originally created as court literature and then adopted by folk literature? Robson (1971:19) seems to believe in the first alternative: Panji stories were 'essentially narrative tales with a strong flavour of the ballad [...] when the time came for such *kidung* material to be written down, it naturally had to be cast in the literary form favoured at court, the centre par excellence of literary activity.' This also raises the

²⁵ See my later discussion on the subject of the life crisis of a young royal and the reference to Hunter 2007.

corresponding question concerning the depiction in reliefs: were sacred matters transferred to a medium of folk culture, or were folk traditions transferred to a sacred medium?

Perhaps more so than in the form of literature, alternative forms of presentation of the Panji theme in art and in ritual did display this folk character. Examples are performances in the various *wayang* forms which I will discuss further down in this chapter. Last but not least, the temple reliefs themselves display the folk character of the Panji stories. This will become apparent through my discussion of the case studies.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Synopses of Panji stories have been provided by W.H. Rassers (1922), Poerbatjaraka (1940a, 1968), Sulastin Sutrisno et al. (1983).²⁶ Not many Panji stories were translated and edited, perhaps due to the large size of the texts. Robson translated and edited two stories in English: the Malay *Hikayat Andaken Penurat* (1969) and the Middle Javanese *Wangbang Widaya* (1971). Margaret Fletcher (1990) translated and edited the Middle Javanese *Wargasari*. The Bale Pustaka translated several Panji stories in 1933 into Indonesian, which in 1979 were published by the Indonesian Department of Education and Cultures (DepDikBud). Other stories have been translated into Indonesian, but have not yet been published. Most of the Indonesian works stand in the philological tradition, which focuses on a textual criticism of manuscripts and their contexts rather than proceeding to a metalevel of analysing texts.²⁷

Various aspects of Panji stories have been the subject of studies. In the early years of research this was mainly in relation to their origin and historicity. Rassers was the first to discuss these two aspects of the Panji stories intensively. In his doctoral thesis ‘De Pandji-roman’ from 1922²⁸ he undertakes an anthropological structuralistic approach to the mythological background of the Panji stories in order to extrapolate the essence of the story – ‘de eigenlijke kern van de Pandji-roman’ (Rassers

²⁶ There is no information about the number of the extant written versions of Panji stories, but from the publications we can conclude that they number in the dozens.

²⁷ I was able to collect several Indonesian translations of Panji stories from colleagues at the University Gadjah Mada Yogyakarta, for example *Panji Angreni*, *Panji Jayakusuma*, *Panji Jayengtilem*, *Panji Sekar*. I am grateful to Bp. Padmapuspita, Bp. Subalidinata, Bp. Suwandi.

²⁸ Not to be mixed up with Rassers’ *Panji, the culture hero* (1959), which in spite of the title does not deal much with Panji at all, but with the Javanese traditions of performances.

1922:129). For Rassers (1922:163), this essence is ‘het schaken, veroveren of tegen een aanval verdedigen van een prinses’ (‘the kidnapping, capturing or the defending of a princess’, LK). Furthermore, he attempts to locate the origin or prototype of the Panji stories. Based on an analysis of the Malay *Hikayat Cekelwanengpati* in comparison to ancient pre-Hindu Indonesian beliefs he argues that Panji is the symbol for the sun, and Candrakirana – literally translated meaning ‘moonbeam’ – the symbol for the moon. Panji also represents the waning moon, while his rivals represent the waxing moon. Rassers (1922:214-5) explains the sun-moon motif as an indigenous, originally Indonesian motif and interprets it as a symbol for the structure of the ancient tribal society consisting of two exogamous groups. He regards Panji and Candrakirana as representatives of these two groups and thus as the ancestors of the Javanese people. Moreover, Rassers (1922:179, 210-1) declares a myth from North Celebes – the myth of *Kalangi* and *Manimporok* – to be the prototype of the Panji stories. This whole line of argumentation is highly speculative. A remarkable point in Rassers’ line of reasoning about the sun-moon motif is that Panji, in representing the waning moon, is the shy chaste young man, and as a representation of the sun he makes many princesses satisfy his sexual desires (Rassers 1922:200). Although not specifically expressed by Rassers, this point raises the significance of the development of a young man into adulthood, which I will discuss further on.

Rassers’ approach provoked scepticism in the scholarly world.²⁹ One point of criticism, for example, was that Rassers had largely based his investigation on a rather recent Panji story (Poerbatjaraka 1940a:348, 1968:386). Fifty years after Rassers’ publication, J.J. Ras (1973), still refusing the aspect of ancient tribal mysticism, looks from a new perspective at some parts of Rassers’ argumentation and further elaborates on them. I will present these ideas below. Still today, the origin of the genre of Panji stories has not yet become evident (Robson 1971:12, 15). This question does not, however, add substantially to our understanding of the Panji stories, which may be the reason why it has not evoked further scholarly research.

The other major question concerning the Panji stories is their historical background, which yielded a large number of different, complex, and even quite confusing opinions, which were discussed in a lively dispute

²⁹ See the concise discussion of the scholarly positions in Vickers 2005:80-3.

among Rassers (1922), Poerbatjaraka (1940a, 1968), and Berg (1954). Rassers raised the suggestion of historical connections between the Panji stories and the life of King Airlangga, the ruler in East Java in the early eleventh century. Airlangga had divided his kingdom among his sons into the two parts of Janggala and Kediri, which correspond to the home-kingdoms of Prince Panji and Princess Candrakirana, respectively. The separation and the struggle of the two protagonists of the Panji stories to find each other again and their final reunion reflect the historical process from the times of Airlangga up to the struggle of Majapahit in unifying the split parts of the kingdom.³⁰ This historical correspondence between Majapahit policy and the Panji stories might have been a reason for the popularity of the genre in the Majapahit period.³¹ Rassers (1922:132-6) points to another connection between the Panji stories and Airlangga: according to Javanese tradition told in the *babad* (dynastic chronicle) of the seventeenth century, Airlangga's daughter remained unmarried and led an ascetic life. She would have been the aunt of Panji. This aunt is in several Panji stories – for example, the *Serat Kanda* and the *Panji Jayakusuma* – known as the female hermit Kili Suci who lived in a hermitage at Mount Pucangan.³² Following this theory Airlangga would be the grandfather of Panji. Indeed, there is a tradition which refers to Airlangga as Panji's grandfather with the name 'Resi Gentayu' (Rassers 1922:134). As if this was not enough, Rassers (1922:140-8, 152-8) discusses still other possible historical connections: Ken Angrok, the founder of the Singasari kingdom, and also Raden Wijaya, the founder of Majapahit, could be prototypes for Panji.³³ Eventually, however, Rassers rejects an origin of the Panji stories in history, arguing that the character of Panji cannot be identified with just one historical person.

Poerbatjaraka (1940a:363, 1968:408-9) argues that the Panji stories were first created in the heyday or even in the post-heyday of Majapahit in Java, that is, the middle of the fourteenth century or later, and then gradually spread to other regions in Southeast Asia. He bases his study on a compilation of synopses of Panji stories from Java, Sumatra,

³⁰ See also Schrieke's (1957:21) discussion of this issue.

³¹ See also Agus A. Munandar 1992. I will return to this topic in Chapter IV in the sub-chapter 'Politics of Majapahit'.

³² Rouffacé 1909:182; Rassers 1922:132-6; Poerbatjaraka 1940a:334-5, 1968:370-1; Krom 1931:245, 269. Mount Pucangan has been identified with Mount Penanggungan (Pigeaud 1960-63, IV:239; Kern 1917:113). See Chapter X on the sanctuaries on Mount Penanggungan.

³³ Berg (1931) claims the *kidung Harsa Wijaya* to be a Panji story referring to Raden Wijaya.

Cambodia, and Thailand, comparing them with one another.³⁴ He presents a new suggestion in the speculations about the historical prototype for Panji: King Kameshwara from the twelfth century kingdom of Kediri would be this prototype. In his argumentation, Poerbatjaraka (1919:478, 1968:XIII) refers to the *kakawin Smaradahana*, which was composed in the twelfth century in honour of King Kameshwara from Kediri and his wife Kirana, a princess of Janggala. He identifies Kameshwara with Panji, and Kirana with Candrakirana, considering the vice versa positions of Kediri and Janggala in the Panji stories and in the *Smaradahana* to be unimportant within his line of argument.³⁵ A lively discussion between Poerbatjaraka (1940a:362-4, 1968:403-5) and Berg ensued about these issues, particularly in regard to the date AD 1400 as a fixing point in the creation of the Panji stories. In an earlier article Berg (1928) had expressed the belief that the spread of the Panji stories had occurred between 1277 and c. AD 1400, and that the original versions of the stories must have been created long before that time. However, in 1954 he argues that Panji stories were composed after AD 1400 (Berg 1954:191). Furthermore, he opposes Poerbatjaraka in claiming that King Hayam Wuruk of Majapahit (AD 1350–1389) was the historical figure behind Panji. He bases this on the *Kidung Sunda* where the name ‘Prince of Koripan’ is used for Hayam Wuruk’s father (Berg 1954:194, 305). Among all the different references to Airlangga, Ken Angrok, Raden Wijaya, Kameshwara, and Hayam Wuruk, the historical connections to Airlangga as the ‘separator’ and to Hayam Wuruk as the ‘unifier’ are the most realistic without a need to establish a historical person as a prototype for Panji.

A pertinent issue in the discussions on the historicity relates to the names of four kingdoms and their synonyms which are found in the Panji stories. Besides (1) Janggala/Kuripan and (2) Daha/Kediri/Mamenang as the home kingdoms of Prince Panji and Princess Candrakirana, the kingdoms of (3) Singasari/Tumapel and (4) Gegelang/Urawan/Wengker feature in most versions of the Panji stories. In the stories these kingdoms are connected with each other in a complex network of kinship. It is a matter of common knowledge that these names of kingdoms

³⁴ The stories are the Malay *Hikayat Panji Kuda Semirang*, the *Serat Kanda*, the *Panji Angron Agung*, the *Panji Jayakusuma*, the *Panji Angreni* from Palembang, the *Panji Kuda Narawangsa*, the Balinese *Malat*.

³⁵ This identification has been maintained in present-day popular Indonesian literature about the Panji theme.

correspond to historical kingdoms.³⁶ Kediri and Singasari were the predecessors of Majapahit. The pair Janggala and Kediri played key roles in the division of the realm after Airlangga, and subsequently in the unity of the realm, which was a major political concern throughout the whole East Javanese period. The names of all four kingdoms are mentioned in various inscriptions, and also in the *Nagarakertagama*, the panegyric of King Hayam Wuruk dated AD 1365.³⁷ The *Nagarakertagama* gives evidence that the names Kuripan, Singasari, Daha, and Wengker form part of the titles of rulers or princes/ses who were members or related to members of the royal family (*Nag.* 1.4-6.4).

Thus the network of kinship displayed in the Panji stories corresponds to a similar network in the historical situation of the Majapahit royalty, while the four kingdoms of the Panji stories parallel the actual Majapahit system of petty kingdoms. Therefore, the Panji stories 'were a major part of the political thought of the court of Majapahit' (Vickers 2005:269). There are still other names of principalities that attest to the parallel between the Panji stories and historical facts. For example, Matahun, Paguhan, Pamotan, Keling, and Lasem occur in the *Kidung Sunda* and the *Pamancangah*, and also in the *Nagarakertagama* (Berg 1954:195-205). Another remarkable parallel to historical names is found in the titles of various protagonists of the Panji stories, such as Kebo, and Lembu, which also occur in inscriptions of the Majapahit period and were perhaps titles of members of the *kshatriya* class (De Casparis 1981:148).

Fundamental to an understanding of the Panji stories is that their essential issue, the separation of the two protagonists and their eventual reunion, has an indisputable historical correspondence to the division of the realm into two kingdoms, Janggala and Kediri, and their later union. However, all attempts to identify Panji with a historical person seem futile and do not add to our understanding of the stories. In this respect

³⁶ See my discussion of the names Janggala and Kediri in Chapter IV, sub-chapter 'Unity of the realm'. Poerbatjaraka (1940a:335-8) and Berg (1954:192-3) try to localize the names Gegelang/Urawan/Wengker when referring to the *Parwatan*, which mentions these names several times. Berg explains that Gegelang, Urawan, and Wengker are synonyms.

³⁷ The *Nagarakertagama*, written in *kakawin* form, figures as the major literary source of Majapahit history. This text will be discussed later in Chapter IV. I use the name '*Nagarakertagama*' instead of the term '*Desawarnana*' due to older convention, although the latter has become the preferred term in scholarly reference recently.

I agree with Rassers (1922:164), who, as mentioned above, questions the possibility of a coherent historical background for the stories.

Ras, leaving the question of historicity aside, discusses Rassers' approach to the mythological context of the Panji stories.³⁸ He pays special attention to Rassers' point, that the Panji stories are marital stories (Ras 1973:434-9). He calls the Panji story a typical 'wedding-story', referring to the *Hikayat Cekel Wanengpati*, where the adventures of the two protagonists are 'enacted on the stage during the solemn celebration of their own marriage' (Ras 1973:438). That the Panji stories indeed have a strong association with performing practices, will be the topic of discussion further down. Ras establishes an interesting and convincing argument: since the Panji stories have a court setting, they were very suitable for being performed at royal weddings. The frequent practice of performances had the effect of producing variations of Panji stories, in the sense that the plot of the performed story was possibly changed each time according to the special situation or circumstances.³⁹ Ras further argues that in many Panji stories Panji and Candrakirana are incarnations of the deities Wishnu and Sri respectively. I will return to this issue in my later discussion of the symbolism of the Panji stories.

Robson's (1971) translation and edition of the *kidung Wangbang Wideya*, a Panji story written in Bali in the second half of the sixteenth century, marks a major new direction in the discussions of the Panji stories. Robson rejects the idea of the existence of an original Panji story or its prototype: 'there does not exist one ideal or basic Panji story but many, all more or less related' (Robson 1971:12). However, he does raise the question of an existing 'Panji theme'. For Robson, each of the many Panji stories represents 'an independent treatment of a fixed theme' (1971:12). In addition, the Balinese *Wangbang Wideya*, written in Middle Javanese, reflects the situation of the Javanese Majapahit court. Robson (1971:12-3) gives an even denser synopsis of the main theme of the Panji stories than the one by Zoetmulder, quoted above:

³⁸ In contrast to Poerbatjaraka, who reproaches Rassers for his focus on the Balinese *Malat*, Ras (1973:435) points to the fact that Rassers bases his analysis of the Javanese Panji stories on a non-Javanese Malay Panji story. Both critics issue an admonition to Rassers for using a version from outside of Java.

³⁹ Ras (1973:439) expresses his opinion that 'it is this social function of the Panji drama as the conventional stage-play for royal weddings in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries rather than its deeper religious meaning which explains the large number of existing Panji stories'. However, though rather convincing, this is a speculation since he does not give concrete evidence in the form of a reference to *kakawin* or the like.

In Java, where the story is set, there are two kingdoms, Kuripan and Daha (various alternative names also occur), of which the former is the senior. The prince of Kuripan is betrothed to the princess of Daha but, before they can marry, a complicating factor (or combination of factors) intervenes. (For example, the princess may be lost, or be carried off, and have to be found, or a foreign king may attack and have to be defeated.) When the problems have been solved by the prince, in disguise and using an alias, then he can finally reveal himself and claim the princess. With their marriage the world returns to its former settled state. Such is the lowest common denominator of the Panji theme, although this frame can be expanded to include a great variety of episodes, elaborate descriptions and repetitions.

In 1983 a UNESCO regional conference on the hero in Southeast Asian classical literature was held at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta.⁴⁰ The authors of the Indonesian team, basing their analysis on five Panji stories,⁴¹ discussed the Panji theme as well, particularly the heroism of the character Panji within Indonesian culture. With this they contribute an analysis of the present-day perception of Panji stories by the Indonesian people.⁴² The compilation of Panji's qualities produces the ideal hero: Panji has a charming and handsome appearance; a simple lifestyle, despite being a member of the court; a strong will; a well-developed sense of aesthetics, with many artistic skills like poetry-writing and playing music; a good character and attitude towards other people; an ultimate loyalty in love for his betrothed in spite of his love affairs with other women. Panji moreover shows obedience to the gods and practises meditation as a means to contact the gods. He is also a successful warrior, who displays many survival skills along his journeys through jungles and countryside (Sulastin Sutrisno et al. 1983:241, 266-82). Although this analysis is based on rather recent versions of Panji stories, the aforementioned qualities hold true for the more ancient versions as well.

Vickers (2005) in his comparative study of the Balinese *Malat* in literature, dance, and art gives a critical outline of the scholarly positions

⁴⁰ Unfortunately, a publication of the 309-page manuscript (Sulastin Sutrisno et al. 1983) of the papers presented in this conference is not known to me.

⁴¹ These five stories are the Javanese *Serat Panji Jayakusuma*, the Balinese *Malat* and the *Geguritan Pakang Raras*, the Malay *Hikayat Panji Kuda Semirang* and the *Hikayat Galuh Digantung*.

⁴² It must be noted that today the knowledge of the Panji stories by the younger Javanese generation has strongly faded away.

and discussions on the Panji theme to date. He pays special attention to the relationship between ‘text’ and ‘history’ and particularly to attempts to classify Panji stories as ‘fact’ or ‘fiction’. An example is the *kidung Harsa Wijaya* which Berg (1931) claims is a story with a Panji hero related to the historical life of Raden Wijaya, while others, for example Vickers (2005:82-3) interpret it as a fictive story.⁴³ His discussion of the correlation between the presentations of the *Malat* in text and in the visual medium of paintings has been important in giving me direction for my analysis of the relief depictions of Panji stories.

Kidung poetry on a more general level has generated rather few particular studies. Robson (1979:307) considers a reason for this neglect to be ‘the fact that kidungs are not held in the same awe as kakawins’.⁴⁴ Robson (1979:302-3) highlights the topic of aesthetic and erotic enjoyment which occurs equally in both *kakawin* and *kidung*, the aesthetic enjoyment in *kidung* frequently being aroused by scenes of playing music and singing. Hunter (2007) has presented a study on the *kidung* as related to the role of young royals during the Singasari period, focusing on the *kidung* as symbols of the struggle of the young aristocrats in becoming an accomplished *kshatriya*. All these studies are very useful for our understanding of the Panji stories as particular types of *kidung*.

SYMBOLISM OF THE PANJI STORIES

(a) *Panji stories symbolizing eroticism and sexual union*

The Panji stories have a strong erotic character, which must be seen in the larger context of Old Javanese literature, that is, *kakawin* and *kidung* poetry. For the *kakawin*, this issue has been the subject of broad scholarly research both in the field of Old Javanese and Balinese literature. The most relevant studies are delivered by: Zoetmulder (1974), who discusses *langö*, that is, the rapture yielded by the description of beauty and erotic situations; by S. Supomo (2000), who elaborates on the role of the God of Love in *kakawin*; by Raechelle Rubinstein (2000), who touches on the issue of eroticism in her discussion of the Balinese ritual of composing *kakawin*; by Helen Creese (2004) in her study of marriage and sexuality

⁴³ The *Harsa Wijaya* was written in Bali in the nineteenth century. In his later work Berg (1954) accounts for ‘the possibility of a text allegorizing history’ (Vickers 2005:82).

⁴⁴ Robson (1979:306) points to the fact that the Majapahit period with compositions of a large number of *kakawin* also ‘saw the rise of the *kidung*’, an issue which deserves further appreciation and research.

in *kakawin*, where eroticism is the crucial feature. Though not as much research has been done on the *kidung* genre so far, we know that the erotic connotation of the *kakawin* texts finds its parallel in the *kidung* and the Panji stories. In both kinds of poetry erotic enjoyment of great diversity is expressed, and the sexual encounters are frequently described in a very romantic and realistic way. While erotic episodes and particularly the consummation of marriage in *kakawin* poetry happens between the married couple, in *kidung* poetry it does so between the unmarried partners (Vickers 2005:163). Still, the effect created for the reader who can share the emotions of the heroes of the story is the same, though in the case of *kakawin* this should eventually yield *langö* on a high spiritual level, and in the case of *kidung* it stays on a more superficial level. I argue the union of Kama and Ratih in the *kakawin* (Supomo 2000) to in fact parallel the union of Panji and Candrakirana in the Panji stories, each on its own level of spirituality. The latter acts as a kind of preparation for the former. I will refer to these issues in my later elaboration on Tantrism.

I hold Vickers' (2005:173-4, 180-1) discussion of the erotic character of the *Malat* to be transferable to Panji stories in general. The description of erotic scenes or behaviour, of emotions, of desire, of wishes and longing, of sexual love, all are intended to have a 'love-arousing effect' on the audience. Thus, while listening or watching a Panji story or play, the audience would be filled with erotic emotions. Being guided through a long line of such emotions during the course of the story eventually there is always the happy ending in the union and the marriage of Panji and Candrakirana. This makes them the typical wedding story as Ras (1973:438-9) pointed out, and which he considers to be the reason for its frequent performance at wedding ceremonies.

An example of an erotic scene in a Panji story can be located in the *Wangbang Wideya* (Robson 1971:227, Canto 3:157a-158b):

When they had gone into the fragrant bed-chamber he murmured fondly to her while holding her on his lap,

With words as sweet as sugar, 'Oh lady who are the embodiment of the full moon of the month of Kartika, your sweet charms are overflowing with loveliness. Come, grant me the favour of enjoying your delights on the bed.' The girl, though, hung back shyly, but he persisted, and she

was overcome. When the *tapih*⁴⁵ was opened her slender waist made him weak with emotion.

Eagerly he carried out his desires – he squeezed her breasts, and sure enough the woman’s anger subsided; she was won over in his act.

When they had now been united he took the beautiful one on his lap and with kind words tried to draw out her affection.

This quotation demonstrates a recurrent fact that the woman often was taken by the man with violence. I want to point out the particular term mentioned in the last verse, saying that he took her ‘on his lap’, in the original text, ‘*pangkwan*’ (lap; Zoetmulder 1982:1262). In an earlier study (Kieven 2003), I investigated this term and drew parallels to depictions in reliefs; I will later make use of these insights in my interpretation of the reliefs.

The similarity of descriptions of erotic scenes in a Panji story and in a *kakawin* is demonstrated in a verse in the *kakawin Sumanasantaka* (Canto CIII, 2; Hunter 1998:57), where Prince Aja courts the beautiful Indumati:

Here, good lady, be seated on my lap,
so long have I been pining for you
who comes to me like a rain cloud,

You who are cool mist to my burning longing,
rumbling thunder to my desire,
lightning that illuminates the darkness of my heart.

We can imagine and maybe still experience ourselves that both the *Wangbang Wideya* and the *Sumanasantaka* arouse emotions for the reader.

(b) Panji stories symbolizing fertility

Within Javanese mythology Panji and Candrakirana are considered to be incarnations of the Hindu gods Wishnu and his consort Sri, who in their union symbolize fertility (Ras 1973:437-9, 442). In India, Wishnu’s consort more commonly has the name ‘Lakshmi’. She is regarded as the deity of fortune, prosperity, and wealth, as well as the creative energy

⁴⁵ A *tapih* is a garment worn by women around the lower part of the body (Zoetmulder 1982:1948).

of Wishnu.⁴⁶ The origins of the transferral of the name and symbolism of the Indian Sri to Indonesia are quite blurred. N. van Setten van der Meer (1979:102) cautiously states that 'the name Sri is said to have been borrowed from an Indian goddess'. Quaritch Wales (1951:94) considers Sri to have her origin in the Bengal rice spirit Dewi, while M. Appel (1991:28) refers to her as 'Schutzgottheit des Reisanbaus' ('protective goddess of rice-cultivation', LK).

Weatherbee (1968:501-2) in his discussion of the 'Indonesian Sri' points out that her 'chthonic nature as the goddess of rice seems clear'. In asking if this manifestation should be seen as 'isolated from her Indian namesake', he suggests that 'the role that she plays seems to be if not indigenous at least an indigenous emphasis of her chthonic features.' As mentioned earlier, the interrelations between Javanese and Indian culture must be seen as a 'creative response' by Java to Indian influences. Based on the fact that rice cultivation was already practised in Java since the Austronesian expansion before 1000 BC (Bellwood 1992:114), and also on evidence for wet-rice cultivation since the early Christian era (K. Hall 1992:188), we may conclude that an indigenous pre-Hindu concept of the rice-goddess in Java was adapted to the concept of the Indian goddess Sri/Lakshmi.⁴⁷ On the other hand, the concept of the Indian goddess was adopted by the Javanese and assimilated into their older beliefs. It is in fact not necessary to look at the origins of the meaning of Sri in India; rather, one should look at her meaning in the Javanese context. In Java as well as in Bali, Dewi Sri was, or, partly, still is, venerated as the goddess of rice and of fertility. Depictions of Dewi Sri from the classical Javanese period show her with a rice ear.⁴⁸

The correlations between Panji-Candrakirana and Wishnu-Sri are complex, and also correspond to another Javanese myth, that of Sadono-Sri. Several variations of the myth of Sadono and Sri are known by different names, such as the *Manik Maya*.⁴⁹ The essence of these myths is that the brother and sister Sadono and Sri love each other, but are

⁴⁶ For further information about the Indian context, see Pintchman 1994:156-8.

⁴⁷ According to Wiseman Christie (2007:236, 245-6) the earliest information about an established knowledge of wet-rice agriculture in Java is given in inscriptions of the late first millennium AD.

⁴⁸ Krom (1923, II:281) mentions a sculpture which was found near Panataran. Plate 108 in Krom 1923, III depicts a bronze figure.

⁴⁹ See Kats 1916; Hidding 1929. The cult of Sadono and Sri has been continued into the present day via the tradition of placing a pair of wooden figures, called Loro-Blonyo, male and female, in front of the ritual wedding bed of the Javanese aristocracy. A photo of Loro-Blonyo figures from Surakarta can be found in Jessup 1990:fig. 183.

of course not permitted to marry each other. However, they do not want to marry anyone else. Instead, they leave home individually and then search for each other and in the end meet again. In his discussion of the Sri-Sadono myth with a focus on the *lakon* for the *wayang* play, K.A.H. Hidding (1929:117) states that the end of the myth leaves open whether Sri and Sadono do indeed get married.⁵⁰ On this point he opposes Rassers (1922:336), who interprets the marriage between the two siblings to be the actual end of the story. Be they married or not, is however less important than the fact that they are reunited in some way at all. In these myths, Sri is often associated with rice. For example, in the *Manik Maya* story, Sri, under her other name Tiksnawati, dies and her corpse produces the rice-plants, amongst others (Kats 1916:178). The fact that in Sanskrit the name Sadono is another name for Wishnu, has been discussed by several authors.⁵¹ After questioning if this identity can be transferred to the Javanese tradition, Hidding (1929:122) concludes that the siblings Sri and Sadono can be compared with Panji and Candrakirana as incarnations of Wishnu and Dewi Sri, which seems rather convincing to me.

The *lakon Sri-Sadono* and its variations used to be performed in connection with agricultural ceremonies, as documented around one hundred years ago by A. Kruijt (1903), G.A.J. Hazeu (1901), and Kats (1916), and later discussed by Rassers (1959:7-29). In more recent times Van Setten van der Meer (1979), G. van der Weijden (1981), and Appel (1991) have investigated rice myths in Java.⁵² Appel points out that in West Java, Central Java, and East Java the various myths have common traits: Dewi Sri – or, as she is also known, Dewi Pohaci, Nyai Pohaci Sanghyang Sri, Tiksnawati – dies and her body then changes into rice and other cultivation plants (Appel 1991:32). Another aspect is the parallel between the processes of rice-growing and pregnancy, which is displayed in the rice ceremonies (Appel 1991:89-91). The night before harvesting the rice a *wayang* performance is given with the *lakon Sri-Sadono* (Van der Weijden 1981:34; Appel 1991:13). In the harvest one bunch of rice ears, the so-called *penganten* (bridal couple), is cut and kept separately,

⁵⁰ Hidding refers to both Kats 1916 and to Rassers 1922.

⁵¹ Hidding 1929:114; Rassers 1922:336; Kats 1916:189, referring to Van der Tuuk, *Kawi-Balinesch Nederlandsch Woordenboek* 1897-1912. Pigeaud also refers to the meaning of a Sanskrit name Sadhana for Wishnu. He has highlighted a few interesting instances in the *Nāgarakertagama* which, according to him, demonstrate a relation to the couple Sri and Sadono (Pigeaud 1960-63, IV:319, 328).

⁵² See also Ismani 1985, Wolbers 1993.

symbolizing Sri and Sadono. In her conclusion Appel (1991:92) states: 'Es bestehen vielfältige Zusammenhänge zwischen der Fruchtbarkeit des Menschen und der Fruchtbarkeit des Reises' ('There exist manifold connections between the fertility of mankind and the fertility of rice', LK).⁵³

Van Setten van der Meer (1979:102) also considers the Sri-Sadono myth to be important in rice-ceremonies, with Sadono being another name for Wishnu. In her investigation of *sawah* cultivation in ancient Java, she compares religious rice ceremonies from Lombok and East Java around 1900 with contemporary ceremonies. Be it in Lombok or Java, they use the Old Javanese language and do not appear to have major differences. She comes to the reasonable conclusion that these rice ceremonies are 'very ancient indeed, probably handed down through countless generations of rice farmers in Java' (Van Setten van der Meer 1979:111). She describes the symbolic process of the rice growing:

Sri, as the rice seed, meets Visnu, the water. [...] She becomes incarnate in the rice by the process of dying, and as the seed grain she is buried in the earth. There she meets with Visnu, himself reborn in the water, and their marriage takes place, the joining of the rice seed and the water, the ovum and the semen. Thus begins the life cycle leading ultimately to the yellowing grain after which it enters the earth again and the never-ending cycle continues.

(Van Setten van der Meer 1979:103)

Ras (1973:445-56), in comparing the Panji stories with the Ngayu Dayak creation myth, elaborates on quite interesting interrelations. He interprets Panji as an incarnation of Wishnu symbolizing the sun and, at the same time, the water, and Candrakirana as an incarnation of Sri symbolizing the earth. Panji is equated with the tree of life, which itself is another symbol of the *lingga* of Siwa which ejects the semen and fertilizes the *yoni* of Siwa's consort. It is water – Wishnu – symbolized by the semen which fertilizes the earth – Sri. I will later come to a similar interpretation of the identity of *lingga*-semen-*amerta* in my discussion on Tantrism.

⁵³ It must be noted that many of the ceremonies described by Appel and Van der Weijden have been diminishing in recent years (Van der Weijden 1981:35), due to the 'Green Revolution' which is more attentive to effective productivity than to maintaining the old traditions. I owe this information to peasants I met in East Java in September 2007, and to Pak Suryo Prawiroatmojo, who collected information amongst peasants in the area of Trawas/East Java in 2006.

There are actually not many Panji stories which explicitly mention Panji and Candrakirana as incarnations of Wishnu and Dewi Sri, or Sadono and Sri. However, as discussed above, especially with reference to Hidding and Ras, the interrelations are evident and have been part of tradition. Weatherbee (1968:477), in discussing the various rice myths and the Panji stories, expresses these interrelations in a simple, but striking way: ‘The mythic identification of Panji and Candra Kirana or Sekartadji with the godheads Visnu and Sri can be considered as well established both through the explicit terms of the various stories making up the so-called “Panji cycle”, the interpretations of the European students of the narrative complex, and the belief of the Javanese themselves.’

I give a few examples of Panji stories which have the topic of Wishnu-Sri or Sadono-Sri. They were all written in relatively recent times; however, given the fact that many Panji stories are supposed to be written versions of previously existing oral versions, we may assume that the core of the stories – that is, Sadono and Sri being incarnations of Wishnu and Dewi Sri, respectively – is derived from such earlier versions.

- The Javanese *Babad Daha-Kediri* of the seventeenth century, as quoted by Ras (1973:437), refers to Panji and Candrakirana as incarnations of Wishnu and Dewi Sri.
- The Javanese *Serat Kanda*, written around 1700, speaks of Wishnu who incarnates in the prince of Janggala, and about Sri, who incarnates in the princess of Kediri (Poerbatjaraka 1940a:90-1, 1968:92).
- The Javanese *Panji Jayakusuma*, written around 1800,⁵⁴ recounts the story of the siblings Sadono and Sri who are themselves incarnations of Wishnu and Sri. Sadono and Sri are then incarnated into Panji and Sekartaji (Poerbatjaraka 1940a:103-57; 1968:123-30; Sulastin Sutrisno et al. 1983:39).
- Ph. van Akkeren (1970:17-8) speaks of a specific story with Panji and Sekartaji as the incarnations of Sri and Sadono.⁵⁵

Although these texts are more recent than the Majapahit period, I still consider them to be valid for application to the Panji stories of that

⁵⁴ The story was written in the times of Pakubuwana IV and Yasadipura I and II. Yasadipura I died in 1803 (Sulastin Sutrisno et al. 1983:37).

⁵⁵ Unfortunately Van Akkeren does not mention the name of this Panji story.

period. I base this interpretation on the arguments quoted above by Weatherbee (1968:477) and by Van Setten van der Meer (1979:111) where they consider the identification of Panji and Candrakirana with Wishnu and Sri to be very ancient.

From my discussion I conclude that the Panji stories in fact have an association with agricultural fertility, and particularly with rice ceremonies. Thus one of their functions is to be a symbol for the agricultural fertility in Java.

The interrelation between the symbolism of eroticism and of fertility is evident. The final marriage of Panji and Candrakirana produces, as a natural result of the union of woman and man, fertility. Thus, there were two major occasions to perform Panji dramas: both agricultural ceremonies and wedding ceremonies.

(c) *Panji stories symbolizing political union*

From the discussion of the historical aspects of the Panji stories it becomes clear that, although no specific historical figure can be determined to be the origin for the character of Panji, one aspect of their symbolism lies in their reflection of the struggle for the unity of the realm. Since this struggle was the central political issue of the Majapahit period, it most likely increased the popularity of the Panji stories during the Majapahit period.⁵⁶ This topic is beyond the scope of my study. However, a specific aspect in the political context is of interest to my later investigation, and I wish to discuss this aspect here as a single kind of symbolism.

(d) *Panji stories symbolizing the political struggle of a young royal*

That *kidung* stories and particularly Panji stories reflect the struggle of a young royal within the political hierarchy has been identified by Hunter (2007). The aim of the heroes of the *kidung*, usually young princes, is to become a king or an accomplished *kshatriya*. As a precondition for this final goal they have to struggle to find the right and appropriate woman for marriage.

Kingship itself is not the subject of *kidung* and Panji stories, but rather, the preparation for kingship. In the *kakawin*, in contrast to the *kidung* stories, the heroes are already settled in their position as a *kshatriya* or a king. Worsley (1991:173, 180-1) argues, based on the example of the

⁵⁶ See further discussion in Chapter IV, sub-chapter 'Unity of the realm'.

kakawin Arjunawijaya, that a king needs a consort for his legitimization. In the quest for fitting partners, social status was an important point. Creese (2004:89), in her discussion of the issue of marriage in *kakawin*, states: 'Marriage was of immense political significance in mediating relationships among elite families [...]. At the same time, [...] individual love [is] the overriding force in determining the choice of life partners.'⁵⁷ Both Worsley and Creese refer to *kakawin* literature with a setting in Majapahit society, which allows to apply their arguments to the Panji stories set in Majapahit society as well. The marriage between Panji and Candrakirana from the two competing kingdoms Janggala and Panjalu expresses the political significance of the issue of the union of these two kingdoms, which had a historical base in the Majapahit struggle for the unity of the realm. At the same time, romantic love is an element in the politically important union of the two lovers.⁵⁸

The struggle which Panji undergoes to find his beloved reflects the process of a young man becoming an adult, that is, the life crisis of a young man.⁵⁹ In his preparations to become an ideal man, Panji must demonstrate his qualities in practices of art, in warfare, in love-making, and in ascetic practices. As a prince, Panji is only sufficiently accomplished to become a king after he has married a woman of his status. Thus the Panji stories reflect the political and status struggle of a young royal-in-progress within the royal hierarchy. This struggle of young royals took on an even stronger importance within the politically unstable situation of the Majapahit decline in the fifteenth century, which may also have provided the reason for the increased popularity of Panji stories during this time period.⁶⁰

I remind the reader of Rassers' point considering Panji's two different characters: the chaste young man and the sexually fully active adult man. Ras (1973:432-3) further develops Rassers' arguments and com-

⁵⁷ In Chapter IV (sub-chapter 'Politics of Majapahit') I will discuss in more detail the issue of arranged marriages, particularly cross-cousin marriages as a political instrument in Majapahit time.

⁵⁸ Boon (1977) comments that the element of romantic love in Panji stories functions as a counterpart to the theme of marriages between cousins.

⁵⁹ This theme of life crisis is actually equally valid for both the man (Panji) and the woman (Candrakirana). However, in the literature on the Panji stories, only Panji's struggle has been considered. As my research object is the male cap-figure, often representing Panji, I restrict myself in my discussion to the male life crisis.

⁶⁰ The historical background will be discussed in Chapter IV, sub-chapter 'Decline of Majapahit'.

compares the process of becoming an adult with a series of initiation rites which are held by totemistic Australian tribes, for example. After having married the particular woman who was destined for him from the beginning, Panji passes his initiation and is fully accepted as an adult. This flow of the story corresponds to the scheme and terminology established by Van Gennep (1960:10-1), who distinguishes three different rites of passage in the lifetime of an individual in any society: rites of separation, transition rites, and rites of incorporation, the latter one determining the marriage.⁶¹ This take on the Panji stories parallels Vickers' (2005:171) approach to the Balinese *Malat* when he asks the question: 'how is [the *Malat*] tied to notions of the self and transitional phases in life, as people moved from adolescence to that married state which in Bali constituted adulthood?'

By way of conclusion to the four kinds of symbolic meanings of Panji stories discussed above, I want to refer to Weatherbee (1968:518), who presents a remarkable statement: 'The union [of King and Queen] was necessary for and guaranteed agricultural prosperity and well-being.' Thus, the Panji stories express the aspiration of an accomplished royal couple after their struggles, and, at the same time, the related desire for agricultural fertility. I conclude that the symbolic levels of eroticism, fertility, political union, and political struggle are all interconnected. The Panji stories thus have a wide range of importance in mythology, in ancient Javanese literature, in the genre of romantic love stories, in fertility cults, and in Majapahit politics, which all account for their popularity in the Majapahit period.

NARRATIVES, PANJI STORIES, AND PERFORMING ARTS

An aspect which has been rather neglected in research on temple reliefs is the question of the interrelation between performing art, literature, and visual art. I consider this aspect to be relevant for the discussion on Panji stories and their visual depiction, and for the understanding of their interrelation.

Robson (1983:316), from the perspective of *kakawin* poetry, points to the fact that the question of recitation and of performance of poetry

⁶¹ See also Turner 1969.

did not get much attention so far. He hits the point when he states that the 'poem is the sum-total of all three [...] aspects, which can be given the names "narration", "imagery", and "music".' Sedyawati (1993:175), looking at the same issue from the perspective of art, raises the question

whether there was some kind of relationship between the different forms of art, namely the narrative art in stone, oral literature, written literature, and the performing arts. We know that today in Javanese art there is a close relationship between the visual and the performing arts, especially concerning the presentation of stories.

At one point in my research I came across the description of the relief panels at Candi Mirigambar by the Dutch archaeologist Knebel in the year 1908. He quotes the words of the village head who had guided him to the temple and had told him with a kind of 'dalang-voice' the story of *Angling Dharma* represented in the reliefs (Knebel 1908b:220). Knebel and later Krom, as did I, doubted the interpretation of the reliefs as the *Angling Dharma*. Nevertheless, I was struck by the idea of a *dalang* accompanying the visitor and conveying the narrative in a lyrical way, just as a *dalang* does in *wayang kulit*. Even more similar to the visual medium of the relief depictions is the visual medium of *wayang beber*, where a *dalang* tells or, better, sings the *lakon* of the story which is depicted in the painted scrolls.⁶² It is supposed that *wayang beber* and also *wayang topeng* were already practised in Majapahit time.⁶³

Vickers' (2005) discussion of the *Malat* and the several ways of its performance pointed me in the same direction: its written form, the danced form in *gambuh*, and the spoken/sung form during the *gambuh* dance. All three forms are part of the one process: to convey the message of the *Malat* story.

The performing arts did in fact have an important role in ancient Javanese culture, as is illustrated in inscriptions and in Old Javanese liter-

⁶² I have actually practised forms of such performance art myself: I have presented slides of relief depictions while reading passages from corresponding stanzas of Old Javanese literature and singing appropriate *macapat* songs, with the whole presentation accompanied by *gamelan* music. The combination of these three mediums made the content of the stories more lively and comprehensible. [The only form of art performance that was missing was dance.]

⁶³ For general information on the *wayang beber* see Kant-Achilles 1990; Van Hoof 1991.

ature.⁶⁴ For example, the *Nagarakertagama* speaks of dance performances, even with the king himself as actor (*Nag.* 91.4-8). That music, dance, and drama performances were held in high esteem at the royal courts, is attested to by the position of a special master of ceremony, the *demung*, who had the function ‘to care for and entertain the King (with) everything that gives him pleasure’ (Robson 1979:301-2). Another position referred to in inscriptions is the *widu*, who sings songs and poetical texts and probably also performed a kind of drama; Robson (1983:293) suggests that the *widu mawayang*, mentioned in the Old Javanese *Rayamana*, belongs to a specialist group of ‘lowly practitioners wandering the countryside’.

The performance tradition has been maintained throughout the centuries in Java as well as in Bali, and is still an important medium of entertainment and of conveying spiritual and mystic knowledge. The various kinds of *wayang* – *wayang orang*, *wayang topeng*, *wayang kulit*, *wayang golek* – attest to this. Such performances act both in a court environment and in a more rural setting, for the latter case still more explicit in performances such as *jatilan* and *reog* which bear an exorcist character.⁶⁵ We may in fact assume that these long-lasting traditions go back to the times of ancient Java.

Particularly in the case of the Panji stories, the performance tradition also seems to have been enacted both in a court and in a rural environment: as discussed above, there is high evidence of their performance in royal marriage ceremonies and in agricultural ceremonies. Satyawati Suleiman (1978:43), referring to a comment by Poerbatjaraka, states that the Panji stories ‘have origins among the common people and started as a drama enacted by travelling troupes of village people’. This again raises the question to which I referred earlier: does the Panji tradition have its roots in folk or in court tradition? A similarly circular question is: can we determine if the dramatic form of the stories existed prior to the literary form? Both questions in fact are not essential for our understanding of ancient Javanese art and culture. More important is the interrelation

⁶⁴ Edi Sedyawati (1993) dedicates an article to this issue in her iconographical analysis of the dance scenes in the *Ramayana* reliefs on the Prambanan temple. Dwi Cahyono (1996) has written an interesting paper on the social levels of performing artists in ancient Java, based on information from inscriptions and Old Javanese literature. This author presented another paper (2010) on the topic of *wayang topeng* (mask dance) performing Panji stories in the Majapahit period. Here he suggests that the term *raket*, mentioned in Old Javanese texts, denotes the Balinese term *gambuh*.

⁶⁵ Pigeaud (1938) and Clara van Groenendaal, V.M. (1995) have elaborately presented and discussed such popular forms of performance.

and intercontextuality: in both folk and court tradition Panji stories were presented in forms of literature, of performance, and in visual art.

The fact that the village head in Candi Mirigambar told a story which obviously had little to do with the relief depictions suggests that the interpretation of a relief series by the local community may have changed over the course of time.⁶⁶ Such changes reflect the broad vernacular tradition in literature.⁶⁷ We may imagine that even throughout the times of the ritual use of the temples during the Hindu-Buddhist period the original symbolism had passed into oblivion or had seen alterations. Still, we can only speculate that such changes did not happen without any reason, but that they reflect a possible change in the spiritual needs of the community.

What makes the issue of performance even more pertinent within the subject of my study is the fact that Panji in the Panji stories himself is known as a talented *gamelan* player, poet, and presenter of lyrics, thus he is figured as a performing artist. In my discussion of the Panji reliefs I will raise the suggestion that in the same way as a *dalang* or a priest explained the reliefs in the temple, Panji also ‘acted’ as a guide to an understanding of the function of the temple. That Panji was particularly suitable for this task can be implied from his own quality as a performing artist, and from the performance tradition of the genre of the Panji stories.

Whether a story depicted in reliefs was additionally performed in situ in other media: by a *dalang*, by a singer, or by dancers is still an open question. These questions will form a part of future investigations, which I only marginally touch on here.

⁶⁶ In Chapter IX on Candi Mirigambar, I will identify another such story in the relief depictions.

⁶⁷ Hunter (2000) proposes a version of the *Angling Dharma* (remarkable enough that it is the same story as in Candi Mirigambar!) to be depicted in Candi Jago, which was told to him by the *juru kunci* (temple guard). See Chapter VI on Candi Jago.