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THE BEGINNINGS OF OLD-JAVANESE HISTORICAL LITERATURE

As far back as 1871 the late Professor Kern when discussing the Arjunavivāha, a highly literary Old-Javanese court poem written in the first half of the 11th century during the reign of Erlangga, remarked casually that we probably have to regard Arjuna as Erlangga's example in strife and victory.¹ This important comment was not taken into account until 1938 when Professor Berg took it up and worked it out in an article on the Old-Javanese Arjunavivāha.² First he brought new evidence for the fact that this poem was indeed written during Erlangga's reign. Next he assumed that the Arjunavivāha was a Javanese creation and not a translation or abbreviation of an Indian original as its contents diverge too much from the adventures of Arjuna as told in the Indian versions of the story, the Vanaparva or the Kirātārjuniya. Moreover, the Arjunavivāha was clearly written on the pattern of the so-called lakons, specifically Indonesian works of literature which are recited on important occasions because of the influence they are believed to exert.

However, the most important part of Professor Berg's article was his suggestion that the poet deviated on purpose from the original Indian story about Arjuna's adventures and meant in fact to write an epic poem about his royal patron Erlangga. And indeed it is striking how strongly the events in the life of the king resemble the tale told about Arjuna in the Arjunavivāha. From a certain passage in the text the author of the article drew the conclusion that the Arjunavivāha was composed just before Erlangga's wedding to Śrī Sanggrāmahvijaya-dharmaprasādottunggadevī and he brought forward a number of convincing arguments in favour of his idea that the poem was meant to be Erlangga's wedding hymn.³

¹ J. H. C. Kern, *Kawi-Studiën, Arjuna-wiwāha Zang I en II in tekst en vertaling, met aantekeningen en inleiding*, The Hague, 1871, pp. 9-10.

² C. C. Berg, *De Arjunāwiwāha, Erlangga's levensloop en bruiloftslied?*, B.K.I., vol. 97, 1938, pp. 19-94.

³ In *Herkomst, vorm en functie der Middeljavaanse Rijksdelingstheorie*, Verh. Kon. Akad. v. Wet., Afd. Lett., N.R., vol. 59, no. 1, Amsterdam, 1953,

After the publication of his article on the Arjunavivāha Professor Berg turned his attention to the Old-Javanese Bhāratayuddha, a poetical recast of the main events of the Mahābhārata written by the poet Sēdah, and finished by his pupil Panuluh. This work was written during the reign of king Jayabhaya of Kaḍiri, who ruled from at least 1135 to 1157 or later. In the same way as for the Arjunavivāha Professor Berg now proposed to regard the Bhāratayuddha not as an abbreviation of a Sanskrit original, but as an allusion to historical events of the poet's own time, and in fact as a description of the war conducted by king Jayabhaya against his relatives. Hence the Bhāratayuddha served almost as a justification of Jayabhaya's internecine war.⁴

In his treatise on Javanese historiography Professor Berg considered the Arjunavivāha and Bhāratayuddha a special type of Old-Javanese historical literature to which he gave the name of „śākakāla", as that seems to be the technical term used for it in Old-Javanese texts.⁵ As further examples of this type of court poetry he added the Usana Bali, some lakons written in the 19th century and the Arjunapralabdha which was actually written by Dawuh Bale Agung with reference to the recent death of his son Pande Bhaṣa. Personally I would prefer the designation "pseudo-epic court poetry" instead of śākakāla, because this description brings this type of literature from a specifically Old-Javanese, on to a more general plane. The texts quoted by Professor Berg as examples of pseudo-epic court poetry may not all carry the same weight but some scholars have accepted his ideas about the Arjunavivāha.⁶

note 31 on p. 192 Professor Berg slightly mitigates this expression "wedding hymn". J. L. Moens who accepts Berg's theory that the Arjunavivāha contains references to historical events in Erlangga's life believes that the poem was not meant as a wedding hymn but was written to palliate and at the same time glorify the incestuous relation which existed between Erlangga and Śrī Sanggrānavijayadharmaprasādottingadevī, who according to this author was Erlangga's half-sister, see J. L. Moens, *De stamboom van Airlangga*, T.B.G., vol. 84, 1950, pp. 110-158, especially pp. 150-151 & 156 and by the same author *Airlangga's Rijksdeling*, T.B.G., vol. 85, 1955, pp. 449-454, especially p. 451.

⁴ The article in which Professor Berg treated the Bhāratayuddha was never published. A short summary of his ideas on this text may be found in his *Javaansche Geschiedschrijving* in F. W. Stapel, *Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch Indië*, Amsterdam, 1938, vol. II, pp. 1-148, especially pp. 62-64.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 62.

⁶ F. D. K. Bosch, *De laatste der Pāṇḍawa's*, B.K.I., vol. 104, 1948, pp. 541-571, especially p. 567 and J. L. Moens, *De stamboom van Airlangga*, loc. cit.

At first sight one might have more or less expected Professor Berg to mention the Smaradahana as another example of pseudo-epic court poetry.⁷ This poem relates the adventures of the god Kāma who, at the request of the gods who were threatened by a demon, shot an arrow of love into Śiva's heart but was burnt to death by one flash from the third eye of the infuriated god. Rati, Kāma's wife, committed *sati* after her husband's death. As a result of Kāma's action Śiva and Pārvatī had a son who was destined to destroy the demon who threatened the world. After having given the main theme of his poem the poet finishes with some verses⁸ in which he relates how once upon a time Śiva and Pārvatī went for a walk on mount Meru and came upon the ashes of Kāma. Moved by pity Pārvatī implored her husband to allow Kāma to incarnate as a human being and the poet then enumerates three consecutive human incarnations of Kāma and Rati, the last being that of king Kāmeśvara and queen Kiraṇā of Kaḍiri.

As early as 1919 Dr Poerbatjaraka suggested that this third incarnation could be identified with the historical king Kāmeśvara I who ruled over Kaḍiri in the first half of the 12th century.⁹ The late Professor Krom, however, preferred an identification with Kāmeśvara II who lived in the second half of the same century.¹⁰

Recently Professor Berg has made it clear why he did not mention the Smaradahana as another example of pseudo-epic court poetry.¹¹ He points out that Dr Poerbatjaraka's argument in favour of an identification of the Kāmeśvara mentioned in the Smaradahana with king Kāmeśvara I is not very strong and that Professor Krom's argument for identification with Kāmeśvara II cannot be accepted. So far we agree¹² with Professor Berg, but his subsequent hypothesis is not convincing namely, that the chapters mentioning the three human incarnations of the god Kāma at the end of the Smaradahana as well as verse 1,6 at the beginning of the poem, may all be later additions, and that consequently the Smaradahana need not have been written

⁷ Smaradahana, edited by R. Ng. Poerbatjaraka, Bibliotheca Javanica, No. 3, Bandoeng, 1931.

⁸ Chapters XXXVIII and XXXIX.

⁹ R. Ng. Poerbatjaraka, *Historische gegevens uit de Smaradahana*, T.B.G., vol. 58, 1919, pp. 461-489; see however p. 387.

¹⁰ N. J. Krom, *Hindoe-Javaansche Geschiedenis*, 2nd ed., The Hague, 1931, p. 298.

¹¹ Berg, *Herkomst, vorm en functie der Middelljavaanse Rijksdelingstheorie*, pp. 26-31.

¹² The rejection of Professor Krom's argument does not mean that the identification itself should be excluded!

under the patronage of a king Kāmeśvara of Kaḍiri whether this be the first or the second. Professor Berg's argument is that the author of the "added" verses misunderstood the point of the Smaradahana and gave himself away as a later poet by the contents of these "added" verses.¹³ Having postulated that the end of the Smaradahana is a later addition Professor Berg has also to assume that verse 1,6 is an interpolation. As an argument in favour of this view he says that the reference to Smara's action on the battlefield, seems out of place. However, if we take the Smaradahana to be an example of pseudo-epic court poetry this passage could be explained as an allusion to an event in the life of king Kāmeśvara.

Professor Berg's second argument is that verse 1,6 hints too clearly at a king Kāmeśvara. However, we do not believe that the poet had to allude to his patron (and subject of the poem) in a very obscure way. As long as he used a śleṣa he had done his duty for this was the key to his work which gave his public the real identity of the mythical hero who was the subject of his poem. Professor Hooykaas has recently stressed once more the danger of singling out certain verses as later interpolations and additions by proving that many formerly condemned verses in the Old-Javanese Rāmāyaṇa belong to the original poem.¹⁴ In any case it is reassuring to find that Professor Berg himself left open the possibility that the Smaradahana was written during the reign of either of the two Kāmeśvaras.¹⁵

Professor Berg launched this hypothesis of the later date of these verses because the occurrence of the name Janggala in them might seem an argument against his theory of the partition of Java. But the unprejudiced observer of the Smaradahana who is not concerned with the topic of the partition theory can only say that, as the matter stands at present, there seems no reason for assuming that the verses under discussion are later additions.

As for the identification of the Kāmeśvara mentioned in the Smaradahana with either of the two Kāmeśvaras the situation is considerably simplified by the results of L. C. Damais' epigraphical researches. In an article published in 1949 he proved that the

¹³ Berg, *Herkomst, vorm, en functie der Middelfjavaanse Rijksdelingstheorie*, note 30, pp. 191-192.

¹⁴ C. Hooykaas, *The Old-Javanese Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin with special reference to the problem of interpolation in Kakawins*, *Verh. Kon. Inst.*, vol. XVI, The Hague, 1955.

¹⁵ Berg, *Herkomst, vorm en functie der Middelfjavaanse Rijksdelingstheorie*, p. 31.

inscriptions attributed to Kāmeśvara I in fact all mention a king called Bāmeśvara, leaving only one historical Kāmeśvara of which we have one inscription dated 1185 and perhaps another of 1182.¹⁶

Now the *Smaradahana* has not yet been compared in detail with the Indian versions of this story, especially the *Kumārasambhava* by Kālidāsa, the *Śivarahasya* of the *Śaṅkarasaṃhitā* of the *Skanda Purāṇa*, and the *Kumārasambhava* by Udbhaṭa.¹⁷ We therefore do not know how much difference there is between the Old-Javanese and the Indian versions, but as one of the peculiarities of pseudo-epic court poetry is that it sometimes has to deviate considerably from the original epic story in order to fit the course of the historical events to which the poem alludes, it should be mentioned here that there is at least one striking difference between the *Smaradahana* and the Indian versions of the story namely that as a result of Kāma's action Gaṇeśa was born to Pārvatī, whereas in the Indian stories it is Kumāra's birth which forms the central theme. Whether this difference can be explained by the historical course of events to which the poem might allude is difficult to say for unfortunately we know very little about the life of king Kāmeśvara. Apart from one or two inscriptions we have no source of information about him and it is therefore difficult to investigate whether the *Smaradahana* shows any notable similarity with certain events in his life. However, the title of the poem itself being a *śleṣa* obviously stresses the relation between the contents of the poem and the historical Kāmeśvara, for "Smara" is another name for Kāma (= Kāmeśvara) and "Dahana" is clearly a pun on the name of the kingdom over which Kāmeśvara ruled, as "Dahana" and "Daha" are two other names frequently used in inscriptions and literature to indicate the kingdom of Kaḍiri. In the beginning of a pseudo-epic court poem the author usually refers to his royal patron in a *śleṣa*, and in the case of the *Smaradahana* the poet clearly alludes to king Kāmeśvara, obviously the same person as the one mentioned in the end of the poem as the last human incarnation of the god Kāma. With these facts in front of us it seems a striking coincidence — to say the least of it — that during the reign and even under the patronage of a ruler named Kāmeśvara, who by his contemporaries was considered to be an incarnation of the god Kāma, an epic poem should have been

¹⁶ L. C. Damais, *Epigrafische aantekeningen*, T.B.G., vol. 83, 1949, pp. 1-26, especially pp. 6-10.

¹⁷ In this comparison the 14th century poem by Jayaśekhara called *Kumārasambhava* should also be taken into account although this may not yield important results because of the late date of this poem.

written describing exactly this god's adventures and we consequently believe the possibility should be left open that the *Smaradahana* contains an allusion to certain events in the life of king Kāmeśvara of Kaḍiri and therefore is possibly another example of pseudo-epic court poetry.¹⁸

In the same connection there is another matter which deserves our attention. The second human incarnation of the god Kāma mentioned in the *Smaradahana* is Udayana of Vatsa who figures as a hero in the *Kathāsaritsāgara*. Some time ago Professor Bosch put forward the idea that this mythological Udayana must have been identified by the Javanese with the historical prince Udayana of Bali who lived at the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th century.¹⁹ He pointed out that allusions to this identification can be found not only in the *Smaradahana* but also in Erlangga's inscription of 1041 and in the series of reliefs which decorates the tirtha of Jalatuṇḍa, the subject of which he was able to explain on an earlier occasion.²⁰

J. L. Moens took up this idea but in order to explain the awkward date 977 on Jalatuṇḍa he proposed an identification of the mythological Udayana with an historical Udayana I whom he postulated as the father of prince Udayana of Bali, the latter being indicated by him as Udayana II.²¹

Leaving aside the question which of the two suggestions is the right one, I think we may accept the fact that the story about Udayana of Vatsa's adventures was obviously current in ancient Java and moreover, the identification of an historical Udayana with the mythological person of that name seems to have been known to later generations, judging by the *Smaradahana* and Erlangga's inscription. We do not know whether there ever existed an Old-Javanese text about the story of Udayana of Vatsa alluding in a pseudo-epic form to the historical Udayana of Java and Bali, for no such MS has come down to us but the possibility should certainly not be excluded in view of the popularity of the story and also in view of the fact that the identification of the

¹⁸ Professor Bosch and J. L. Moens have both suggested identifications for the human incarnations of god Kāma mentioned in the end of the *Smaradahana* but they do not seem to have thought of the possibility that the contents of the *Smaradahana* could be an allusion to events in the life of an historical Kāmeśvara; Bosch, *op. cit.*, pp. 547 sqq. and Moens, *De stamboom van Airlangga*, *loc. cit.*

¹⁹ Bosch, *op. cit.*

²⁰ F. D. K. Bosch, *De spuijerreliëfs van Djalatoṇḍa*, *Cultureel Indië*, vol. 7, 1945, pp. 7-42.

²¹ Moens, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

mythological and historical Udayana was well known even in later days.

The above paragraphs may add some additional arguments in favour of Professor Berg's theory about the existence of a special type of literature which he calls *śākakāla* and which we have indicated as pseudo-epic court poetry.

The background to this type of poetry seems to be a tendency to transfer historical facts to the plane of myths and legends — a transformation of history into mythology or rather a magical equation of history and mythology. I think we should make it clear that this process of mythicization is different from the usual one which can be found in any community. This last type of mythicization results from the fact that the collective memory is unhistorical, and consequently historical facts are always gradually transformed into myths.²² As this process takes place unconsciously one might almost call it a law of nature. The type of mythicization found in ancient Java is, however, effected on purpose and might therefore be called artificial in contrast to the unconscious mythicization described above.

This artificial equation of history and mythology seems to exist in Javanese literature right up to the present day. According to experts on contemporary Javanese court literature even nowadays lakons are composed which deal with an epic subject but in reality describe events which happened recently in the palace.²³ The earliest examples of this tendency are the equation of Erlangga with Arjuna in the *Arjunavivāha* of the first half of the 11th century and that between the mythical Udayana and an historical person of that name. These equations make it clear that the Javanese tendency towards artificial mythicization must have existed already in the first half of the 11th century if not slightly earlier.

To sum up: It seems that one of the aspects of Javanese culture is an urge to equate along magical lines historical and mythological persons. This artificial mythicization found expression in literature and art and produced a certain literary type in which a well-known epic story of Indian origin was treated in such a way that it tallied with the historical events in the life of the king who patronized the poet. The writing of this pseudo-epic court poetry containing a hidden allusion to historical facts seems to have become fashionable in court

²² See for this type of mythicization M. Eliade, *The myth of the eternal return*, London, 1955, pp. 39 sqq.

²³ See J. Kats, *Het Javaansche Toneel*, vol. I, *Wajang Poerwa*, *Weltevreden*, 1923, pp. 110-111; Professor Dr C. Hooykaas also tells me he remembers hearing about this custom in Jogjakarta.

circles during the period of Kaḍiri and probably has its roots in the end of the 10th or the beginning of the 11th century.

When Professor Berg published his article on the Arjunavivāha he started from the assumption that this type of text is a Javanese creation — a product of Javanese soil — because the story deviates too much from the well-known Indian version and because the form of the Arjunavivāha shows strong influence of the lakons, the typically Indonesian type of literature mentioned before.²⁴ One would naturally be inclined to accept the same Javanese background for the other examples of pseudo-epic court poetry mentioned above and indeed in his treatise on Javanese historiography Professor Berg made it quite clear that he regards the śākakāla as a specifically Javanese type of historical literature.²⁵ J. L. Moens who accepted Professor Berg's theory on the Arjunavivāha is also of the opinion that this kind of historical writing is a typical aspect of Javanese culture.²⁶

However, it seems to us we would do well not to limit our attention to Indonesia when dealing with this subject but to look beyond the seas bordering the islands of South-East Asia. For it is a well-known fact that Indian court poets often show a tendency to present historical facts in a mythical garb. Indeed we find this tendency in many literary works as well as in inscriptions relating to recent historical events. A good example is the Navasāhasāṅkacarita written about 1005²⁷ in which the poet has intermingled legends and contemporary historical events to such an extent that it is practically impossible for us to know where to draw the line between fact and fiction.²⁸

Next to this type of semi-historical or semi-mythical court poetry Indian literature also produced pseudo-epic court poetry in which historical events are equated with certain mythological stories. Let us look more closely at a few examples.

In the middle of the 10th century the celebrated Kannaḍa poet Pampa wrote his Vikramārjunavijaya, or Pampabhārata as it is also called.²⁹ In this poem Pampa clearly weaves many historical events into the epic story taken from the Mahābhārata and he identifies Arjuna with his

²⁴ Berg, *De Arjunawiwāha*, *Er-langga's levensloop en bruiloftslied?*, loc. cit., pp. 39 sqq.

²⁵ Berg, *Javaansche Geschiedschrijving*, pp. 59 sqq.

²⁶ Moens, *De stamboom van Airlangga*, loc. cit., p. 112.

²⁷ See G. Bühler and Th. Zachariae, *Ueber das Navasāhasāṅkacarita des Padmagupta oder Parimala*, *Sitzungsber. Phil.-Hist. Cl. Akad. d. Wiss., Wien*, 1888, vol. 116, pp. 583-630.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 628.

²⁹ N. K. Sastri, *History of India*, vol. I, Madras, 1950, p. 283.

patron Arikesari II of the line of the Cālukyas of Vemulavāḍa, a feudatory to the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Kṛṣṇa III. Clearly this literary work is an example of pseudo-epic court poetry. The possibility even exists that the Vikramārjunavijaya served as an example for an Old-Javanese piece of literature, for a work called Arjunavijaya written by the poet Tantular in the middle of the 14th century has come down to us. So far I have, however, not yet been able to compare these two texts with each other. But the Vikramārjunavijaya is by no means the only case of pseudo-epic court poetry in Indian literature.

The great Kannaḍa poet Ranna, who flourished under the Cālukya king Taila II, when composing his Sāhasabhīmavijaya or Gadāyuddha in 982, identified Satyāśraya, the son of Taila II, with Bhīma who figures as the principal hero in the fragment from the Mahābhārata related in this poem.³⁰

The Rāmapālacarita by Sandhyākaranandi is a third example of pseudo-epic court poetry in Indian literature since it pertains at the same time to the hero Rāma and the historical Rāmapāla, king of Bengal in the end of the 11th century.³¹ This poem is actually a dvīsandhānakāvya in which every word has a double meaning.

Sometime between 1179 and 1262 Someśvaradeva wrote the Surathotsava which may perhaps also be counted as a case of pseudo-epic court poetry. The poet was working at the court of Viradhavala and Viśaladeva of Gujarat and probably wove some historical facts into his romantic and mythical story.³²

Then there is the Setubandha or Rāvaṇavadha which describes the episode in the Rāmāyaṇa of the building of the bridge to Laṅkā and the conquest of the realm of Rāvaṇa. The poem is composed in Prākṛit and was written at the court of Pravarasena II of Kaśmīr who reigned sometime in the 5th or 6th century. It is supposed to have been written in commemoration of the building of a bridge across the Jhelum by Pravarasena.³³

Finally it has been suggested that Kālidāsa wrote his Kumārasambhava to celebrate the birth of Kumāragupta I.³⁴

³⁰ Ibidem.

³¹ M. Winternitz, Geschichte der indischen Litteratur, vol. III, Leipzig, 1920, p. 74.

³² S. N. Dasgupta and S. K. De, A History of Sanskrit Literature, Classical Period, vol. I, Calcutta, 1947, p. 678.

³³ A. A. Macdonell, A History of Sanskrit Literature, London, 1905, pp. 331-332; the poem was, however, almost certainly not written by Kālidāsa.

³⁴ Sastri, op. cit., p. 156.

These examples may suffice. No doubt more cases of pseudo-epic court poetry will turn up as soon as someone takes the trouble to go through the extensive Indian *kāvya* material from this point of view. Meanwhile it seems to me that the above-mentioned examples go to prove that pseudo-epic court poetry was quite fashionable in India from early days onwards.

What was the relation between India and Java in this matter? This brings us to the much debated topic of the nature of Indo-Javanese culture. Was it "an integral part of the . . . civilization of the Indian continent" ³⁵ as some authors believe, or was it as others ³⁶ maintain a purely Indonesian culture on which the foreign influences from India had hardly any effect.

Professor Berg himself steers a middle course in this matter and assumes that India influenced Java considerably but that the foreign import was subsequently incorporated and assimilated into Javanese culture which had a stimulating effect and resulted in new forms being created.³⁷

The highest authority on this topic is undoubtedly Professor Bosch who has occupied himself more than any other scholar with this problem. Again and again he examined it, each time with reference to some different aspect of Indo-Javanese culture. His earliest contribution dates from 1919;³⁸ in 1946 his ideas crystallized in his inaugural lecture;³⁹ four years later he protested against Quaritch Wales' theory about the "local genius" which over-emphasized the indigenous contribution to Indo-Javanese culture.⁴⁰ His most recent publication on the topic is a fascinating paper read in the Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde in The Hague. One of the conclusions he was able to draw was that right into the Majapahit period the Old-Javanese culture

³⁵ O. C. Gangoly, *Relation between Indian and Indonesian Culture*, *Journal Greater India Soc.*, vol. 7, 1940, pp. 51-69, especially p. 68; see also pp. 56 and 67. See also by the same: *The cult of Agastya and the origin of Indian Colonial Art*, *Quart. Journ. Mythic Soc.*, vol. 17, no. 3, Jan. 1927, pp. 169-191, especially pp. 176 & 189.

³⁶ Quaritch Wales, *Rassers*, *Stutterheim* and *Pigeaud*.

³⁷ Berg, *Herkomst, vorm en functie der Middeljavanse Rijksdelingstheorie*, p. 56 and note 54 on pp. 198-199.

³⁸ F. D. K. Bosch, *Een hypothese omtrent den oorsprong der Hindoe-Javaanse kunst*, *Handelingen v. h. Eerste Congres v. d. Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde v. Java, Solo, 1919*, *Weltevreden, 1921*, pp. 93-169.

³⁹ F. D. K. Bosch, *Het vraagstuk van de Hindoe-kolonisatie van den Archipel*, Leiden, 1946.

⁴⁰ F. D. K. Bosch, "Local Genius" en Oud-Javaanse kunst, *Med. Kon. Ned. Akad. v. Wet., N.R. vol. 15, Afd. Lett., No. 1, Amsterdam, 1952*, pp. 1-25.

in its religious aspect was far more Indian than is generally assumed.⁴¹ Professor Bosch's view of the whole problem is that we must accept a considerable amount of Indian influence which resulted in Javanese culture being fructified by new ideas and in due course producing an Indo-Javanese civilization.

This middle course steered by Professors Bosch and Berg in the vexed matter of the nature of Indo-Javanese culture seems to provide the right background for our present problem as to what the relation between India and Java was concerning pseudo-epic court poetry. In view of the close relationship between the two countries especially in the cultural sphere and of the fact that in both countries the stories treated in this particular type of literature are taken from the same epic sources and possibly sometimes even treat the same incident,⁴² it seems highly improbable that the two countries devised this extremely artificial type of literature independently. Having to decide which way the derivation took place we have to keep in mind that countless aspects of Indo-Javanese culture were originally copied from Indian examples, whereas so far no trace of Javanese influence on Indian culture has been discovered. In the field of literature Java is strongly indebted to India especially in the early period when Javanese scholars contented themselves with recasting, extracting and translating Indian texts into Old-Javanese. Only quite recently Professor Hooykaas has given us another fine example of literary derivation by Java from India.⁴³ The *Arjunavivāha*, so far the oldest known example of Old-Javanese pseudo-epic court poetry, dates from a period of great literary activity in which the Javanese writers were strongly inspired by Indian literary examples and borrowed incessantly from Indian sources as is shown by the subjects they treat and the language and metres they use. In fact the major part of the literature which has come down to us from this period consists of recasts of Sanskrit originals into Old-Javanese. Finally this earliest example of Old-Javanese pseudo-epic court poetry dates from the first half of the 11th century whereas in India, — where we find this fashion widely spread — the idea of writing this type of literature seems to have caught on much earlier.

All this strongly militates against a derivation by India from Java and in favour of the assumption that India once again set the example.

⁴¹ F. D. K. Bosch, *Uit de grensgebieden tussen Indische invloedssfeer en oud-inheems volksgeloof op Java*, B.K.I., vol. 110, 1954, pp. 1-19.

⁴² This possibility should be left open as long as the *Vikramārjunavijaya* by Pampa has not yet been compared with the *Arjunavijaya* by Tantular.

⁴³ Hooykaas, *op. cit.*

In due course this idea of writing pseudo-epic court poetry was taken up by the Indo-Javanese scholars and used by them to create an Old-Javanese counterpart of this highly artificial type of Indian court-poetry. I would not like to suggest however, that the Indo-Javanese artists slavishly followed the Indian texts of this kind, although there may have been exceptions.⁴⁴ As in so many other fields of life, the Indian examples served to fructify the Indonesian mind and inspired the Indo-Javanese poets to create new works of art, contributing in this way to the establishment of an Indo-Javanese culture. The fact however, remains that in the beginning Java borrowed from India not only the themes and metres used in her pseudo-epic court poetry but even the very idea itself of writing such a type of literature.

In connection with this conclusion we must now return to what we said before about the background of pseudo-epic court poetry.⁴⁵ If we agree that this type of poetry is the literary expression of what we have called artificial mythicization or in other words a tendency to equate history and mythology on purpose, then we are forced to conclude that this attitude to historical facts is not an autochthonous characteristic of Javanese culture, as Professor Berg and J. L. Moens believe⁴⁶ but is a part of the rich heritage Java received from the Indian mainland which she subsequently assimilated into her own culture.

That this type of Indian historical writing like so many other aspects of Indian culture, took root so readily and rapidly in ancient Java probably finds its explanation in the fact that the two countries shared a more or less similar socio-religious cultural pattern, so that Indian ideas fell on fertile soil. I have suggested an explanation for this fact elsewhere⁴⁷ and it would take us too long to go into this interesting question now. Meanwhile it seems that in tracing the source of inspiration for the earliest Old-Javanese historical writings the study of Indian culture has once more been able to contribute to the explanation of an interesting aspect of Indo-Javanese culture.

Dr. J. E. VAN LOHUIZEN—DE LEEUW.

⁴⁴ See note 42.

⁴⁵ See p. 389.

⁴⁶ See the literature mentioned in notes 24-26; more recently Professor Berg has repeated his view that Javanese historiography is almost certainly an autochthonous element of Javanese culture, see C. C. Berg, *De evolutie der Javaanse Geschiedschrijving*, Med. Kon. Akad. v. Wet., Afd. Lett., N.R., vol. 14, no. 2, Amsterdam, 1951, pp. 121-146, especially p. 122.

⁴⁷ J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, *The Golden Germ, Art and Letters*, vol. 28, 1954, pp. 53-60, especially pp. 57-58.