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Old Javanese Kakawin and the Sabaras

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KORTE MEDEDELINGEN

OVER DE WORM IN DE STEEN, die door Gods zorg zelfs daar een groen blaadje te eten heeft, heeft de heer Damsté tweemaal in dit tijdschrift verteld (104 p. 515 evv., 109 p. 164 evv.). Door dit wonder werd o.a. Mozes bemoedigd toen hij bij zijn dood zijn zoontje onverzorgd moest achterlaten. De heer Damsté en ik hebben indertijd nog gezocht of we deze episode elders in de muslimse verhalen over Mozes konden vinden, maar we zijn daarbij niet vasthoudend genoeg geweest. Tot de parelen, die Hellmut Ritter uit de zee der epen van Farīduddin ʿAttār heeft opgedoken, behoort ook zulk een stichtelijk wormverhaal (Das meer der seele, s. 214), en Ritter tekent er bij aan, dat het bij Weil, Biblische Legenden p. 189 in de legende over Mozes te vinden is. Weil's boek is uit verschillende bronnen samengesteld; een ervan is al-Kisāʾī, Profetenverhalen. Daarin komt dit verhaal, wat korter dan Weil het vertelt, voor (ed. Eisenberg p. 240) en ook in de Maleise bewerking van deze stof vinden we het, b.v. in het handschrift beschreven door Van Ronkel, Supplement-catalogus Leiden no. 705. In Ritter's boek wordt op voortreffelijke wijze het type van vroomheid getekend, waarvan dergelijke verhalen getuigen.

P. VOORHOEVE.

OLD-JAVANESE KAKAWIN and THE SABARAS. Verrier Elwin in his 'Religion of an Indian Tribe' (Oxford University Press, 1955), deals with the non-Aryan Sarabas, Sawaras or Saoras. Those conversant with the Old-Javanese Rāmāyaṇa Kakawin will remember them from the following episode:

Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, searching for the abducted Sītā in a lovely forest, meet a completely black female anchorite, a Śabarī (VI. 97-113). The passage corresponds with Bhaṭṭi-Kāvya VI. 60-71 and occurred already in Vālmiki III. 74 — with the exception of the stanzas 106-109 which are additional. In his translation (BKI 73, 1917; VG X, 1922) Professor H. Kern explains that the Ṣarabas of Ṣawaras are a non-Aryan tribe in South-India known to Ptolemy as Sabarai. All available material to be found in Indian literature about the Sawaras or Saoras has now been compiled in the Introduction to this book which deals specially with this still-extant tribe.

The author on p. 31-32 quotes a legend from the Musahar, 'an other tribe whose traditions appear to connect them with the Saoras', to be found in Nesfield, 'The Musheras of Central and Upper India' (The Calcutta Review, vol. 86, 1888). The legend reads as follows:

'Arjuna had retired to the forest to meditate on the 108 names of Siva,

and to test him the god caused a wild boar to run before him. But Arjuna first finished his devotions and then seized his bow and arrow and gave chase to the animal which led him to a hermit's hut. Here Siva and Parvati had assumed the disguise of a Saora and his wife. Arjuna and the Saora both commenced pursuing the boar and when the animal had been hunted down and killed, a contention arose as to who had the right claim to it. It was agreed that the matter should be decided next day by a wrestling match. Arjuna wrestled with the disguised god all the day till sundown, when he pleaded that he must go and repeat his evening devotions, to which his antagonist consented. In the course of these Arjuna realised who the Saora really was and, returning to the hut, threw himself at the feet of his divine antagonist and received his blessing.

Now in this hermitage there was a maiden...'

This is the last mention of Arjuna in the legend; the story of the wrestling of Arjuna and Siva is introductory to that of the maiden and her progeniture.

Now Professor Poerbatjaraka in the introduction to his text-edition and translation of the Arjuna-Wiwāha dealt only summarily with the composition of this XI. century poem (BKI 82. 1926). Professor Berg in his study 'De AW, Erlangga's Levensloop en Bruiloftslied' (BKI 97. 1938) reexamines the plot more in detail. An important question for him is, whether this plot as a whole is known to us from written or oral Indian sources; if not, we might assume that the welding together of the constituents is of Javanese origin.

It now appears that welding together of this introduction — if not with the same second part — was known in India.

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