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In: Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 137 (1981), no: 2/3, Leiden, 259-292

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JAVA AT THE CROSSROADS

Aspects of Javanese Cultural History in the
14th and 15th Centuries

I INTRODUCTION

The study of Javanese literature still has a long way to go. Many more texts need to be edited and translated, but this by itself will not be enough. The works that make up Javanese literature also need to be placed within a wider framework, both the framework of history and that of the achievements of Javanese culture as a whole. It is a question of perspective. The significance of the part is only fully appreciated when it is seen in the company of its fellow-parts making up the sum-total. And so two basic assumptions to be found here are, firstly, that it is possible to view Javanese literature as developing and changing over a certain period of time, and, secondly, that it is useful to see this process against the background of the culture of which, after all, literature is only one expression.

The "certain period" chosen here is the 14th and 15th centuries, although it will be necessary to stray over the borders at either end: history can very rarely be cut into neat blocks. The significance of this period is that it lies in the "middle"; the great classics of Old Javanese belong for the most part to an earlier time, and the literature of Modern Javanese has yet to be born. And yet, seen in another light, it is a time when both meet. This is, then, the age of Middle Javanese literature, a literature that arose in Hindu Java and was continued in Bali, a literature that used new themes and a different form, the *kidung*. So it is from a desire to explore the background to the rise of this literature that the present study comes.

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But investigations showed immediately that innovations were not restricted to Middle Javanese literature. Even Old Javanese was open to change, while at the same time foundations were being laid for the literature that would be continued in Java itself, rather than Bali, and would grow into Modern Javanese. This perhaps shows just how complicated the picture is, and it also shows how the special relationship between Java and Bali was crucial for the preservation and development of Javanese literature in its full breadth.

Compartmentalization is often misleading: as a corrective this study will stress *meeting*, not only of genres and periods but more especially of cultures. It should be stressed that Javanese culture, and hence also Javanese literature, has not grown up in a vacuum, but in constant interaction with other cultures both within the Archipelago and beyond. In particular, influences have reached Java from India, resulting in certain changes in Java. But at the same time we should not neglect the likelihood of influences coming from another direction, namely China. We have to discover *how* such influences reached Java, at what time, and with what effects. The 14th and 15th centuries saw in Java a remarkable prosperity, and also remarkable changes; externally Java stood at a crossroads in international trade, and internally at the crossroads between Hinduism and Islam.

II JAVA IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN THE 14TH AND 15TH CENTURIES

Like most important junctures in the history of a people, the foundation of Majapahit (probably some time in A.D. 1293) can be looked on as both a fresh beginning and as a continuation of what went before. For several centuries the kingdom of Java had had its centre in different parts of East Java, geographically distinct yet not very distant from each other. Up to 1222 the capital had been in the region of the present-day town of Kaḍiri on the Brantas River, and then for the 70 years up to 1292 it had been located at Singhasari, further to the east and a little to the north of the present town of Malang. While the Kaḍiri period has been famous for the classics of Old Javanese literature that were written then, the Singhasari period is noted for achievements of another kind, namely architecture and sculpture. These seem to provide evidence of fresh influences in Javanese art and religion originating from India, where the last Hindu-Buddhist rulers of Bengal had finally succumbed to the Muslims at the end of the 12th century.

The story of how the capital came to be established at Majapahit is an involved one, familiar to students of Javanese history thanks to the relative abundance of sources just for this time, including an inscription, Chinese reports and Javanese literary works. To put it briefly, in 1292 Kaḍiri saw an opportunity to avenge its defeat in 1222 and succeeded in defeating Singhasari. The king, Kṛtanagara, was killed, but his son-in-law (or perhaps prospective son-in-law) Wijaya escaped and made his way to Madura. There he gathered support and prepared a plan; he then went to Kaḍiri and pretended to submit. As a result he was soon granted a hunting preserve and surreptitiously built a settlement there with the help of his Madurese allies. This settlement was called Majapahit. At this point Wijaya was helped by a lucky accident: the arrival of a large Chinese expedition sent by the Mongol emperor of China, perhaps to punish Java for an insult inflicted on envoys during the reign of Kṛtanagara, but also part of Chinese expansionist policy in that century. The Chinese were confused by the fact that the king concerned was no longer to be found, but his son-in-law promptly engaged their support in quelling the usurper in Kaḍiri. Having thus eliminated Kaḍiri, he turned on his Chinese allies, cutting them off from the sea, with the result that not many returned to China to tell the tale. And so Wijaya became king of Java under the name Kṛtarājasa with his capital at Majapahit.

There are several points in this tale that deserve to be emphasized. One of them is continuity. Dynastically, the royal house of Majapahit is a continuation of that of Singhasari. Wijaya was related to Kṛtanagara and would also legitimize his position by marrying the latter's daughters, so that there could be no doubt about his continuing the Singhasari line, which was founded by Ken Angrok. However, the capital was not re-established at Singhasari. This introduces a new point, relating to the geography of East Java. Due to the location of high mountains, as well as the effect of mere distance combined with inefficient transport, the countryside has been regarded as divided into distinct regions. One of the most familiar divisions is Kaḍiri versus Janggala, separating the upper Brantas valley from the area of the mouth, roughly the present Kediri and Surabaya. Singhasari, on the other hand, was divided from this valley by a row of mountains. Majapahit was also located in the Brantas valley, but neither deep in the inland nor on the coast — in fact half-way between Kediri and Surabaya at a site now called Trōwulan, near Mojokerto. The strategic advantage of this position had already been demonstrated soon after

the foundation of Majapahit, when it was used to harass the Chinese returning northwards from their attack on Kaḍiri. Because of the facts of geography they had to pass the area of Majapahit in order to reach the coast where they had left their ships. Further, it will be seen that Majapahit is equidistant from Kaḍiri and Singhasari. One cannot say whether this was foreseen by its founder, but politically an effect would be to unite the old rivals, Kaḍiri and Singhasari.

However, a perhaps even more important advantage of the location would become apparent in another field. If we look again at the position, we see that Majapahit commands the biggest river-valley in East Java. Now it has been said that Javanese kingdoms have been of one of two types, "agrarian" or "harbour", in other words either located in the interior and supported by agriculture, or located on the coast and supported by commerce. But Majapahit was not clearly of one type or the other; instead it combined the advantages of both. So as well as uniting the two traditional "halves" of the realm, Janggala and Kaḍiri, it lay in a wide rice-producing plain and was close enough to the ports to control them.

The extent of Java's military power and political influence in the Majapahit period has been debated, but these ultimately depend on power of another sort — economic power. It is an objective fact that Majapahit was remembered as a great power and that Javanese cultural influence came to be felt in a number of surrounding regions. In his *Suma Oriental* (1512-15) Tomé Pires writes: "They say that the island of Java used to rule as far as the Moluccas (*Maluco*) on the eastern side and (over) a great part of the west; and that it had almost all the island of Sumatra under its dominion and all the islands known to the Javanese, and that it had all this for a long time past until about a hundred years ago, when its power began to diminish..." (Cortese 1944: 174). Despite his not very polished style, Tomé Pires' book is an almost inexhaustible mine of information, information that turns out to be surprisingly accurate wherever it can be checked.¹ It will be quoted repeatedly below.

If it is true that the economic power of Java was greater in the 14th century than it had been before or would be later, then the reasons leading to its rise are a problem that needs to be studied. The establishment of the capital at Majapahit, with the advantages that this may have entailed, cannot be a complete explanation, as commerce is by definition a two-way relationship, and its state depends on conditions at both ends of a trade-route.

Assuming that the placement of the capital in the midst of an extensive rice-growing plain led to a more intensive exploitation of the means of production, increased production in turn will have meant a greater surplus for export. That agriculture got high priority in Majapahit is shown by the fact that King Hayam Wuruk's own uncle took a personal interest, as reported in the contemporary poem *Nāgarakṛtāgama* (1365).² Traditionally Java's main export had been rice. In Wang Tu-Yüan's account *Tao i Chih lio*, dated 1349, we read that in Java "The fields are fertile, the land level and producing rice in such abundance that there is a surplus to export to other countries..." (Rockhill 1915: 237). At the same time Java was also an entrepot for spices carried from the Moluccas. These products were then the means for buying goods from overseas. The trade as it existed at the time of the coming of the Portuguese is described by Tomé Pires, and it is evident that the goods in demand in Java were of the luxury class, consisting largely of many kinds of fine cloths carried from India.

A glimpse of the trade can be gleaned from internal sources from the second half of the 14th century. The first is again the *Nāgarakṛtāgama*, where we find a description of the annual court festival, mentioning how people came from other countries, namely Jambudwīpa (India in general, or North India in particular?), Cambodia, China, Annam, Champa, Karṇāṭaka (South India), Goḍa (Gauda or Gaur, capital of Bengal), and Syangka (perhaps Siam, with its capital at Ayodhya from 1350). These are the places the people came from; they came aboard ships (*potra*), joining the merchants in large numbers (*milw ing wanik sōk*, Nag. 83.4). In other words, it seems that the passengers simply joined the many trading vessels plying between the countries mentioned and Java. From another work, the *Arjunawijaya* (c. 1370), we can take the following quotation: "the rainbow gleamed at the edge of black clouds, like a piece of cloth with coloured stripes / which had just been received from a merchant ship as a gift from its captain to the king" (33.3).³ It is interesting that the merchandise chosen for this image should be cloth, and it is significant that the captain of the ship should be depicted as making a gift to the king from the goods carried in his ship. It is possible that this was the general custom, and if so it would provide a useful sidelight on the court's involvement in the movement of goods in the import-export trade and its interest in luxury goods from abroad.

However, it is also necessary to look to external factors in Majapahit's prosperity. Was the trade more attractive than it had been before,

perhaps as a result of changes in a region representing the source of the valuable goods that were brought to Java? In order to answer this question we have to try to identify which region was the most influential in the trade with Java during the 14th century.

A study of the Middle Javanese *kidungs* can help here, because certain of these were probably written during the Majapahit period, and others later at the strongly Javanized courts of Bali, and these contain detailed descriptions of clothing and jewellery. Some of the terms given for the various kinds of fabric can be compared with outside sources, principally Ma Huan's account of the foreign lands he visited in the early 15th century. To be more specific, we find that the kinds of cloth exported from Bengal agree to a certain extent with those found in the *kidung* literature,⁴ suggesting that Bengal was the supplier of a significant proportion of the expensive cloths that were appreciated at the court in the time when the literary tradition represented by the *kidungs* was taking shape. For a somewhat later time, the beginning of the 16th century, Tomé Pires confirms the importance of the trade in cloth from Bengal (see Cortesão 1944: 92).

Bengal itself had been a province of the Delhi sultanate, but with the revolt of Fakhr-ud-din against the tyrant Muhammad bin Tughlug became independent in 1338. Before long it went through a period of remarkable cultural flowering. Smith says: "The huge Ādina mosque at Pandua, twenty miles from Gaur, built by Sikandar Shāh in 1368, has about 400 small domes, and is considered to be the most remarkable building in Bengal. The vast ruins of Gaur are estimated to occupy from twenty to thirty square miles" (Smith 1958: 272). It is this Gaur that is mentioned in the *Nāgarakṛtāgama*. Bengali literature is also said to have flourished at this time. Bengal would remain independent until 1576.

But we must also look in quite another direction. In China the Ming Dynasty had been founded in 1368, and the emperor Ch'eng-tsu (1403-24) followed a vigorous policy of expansion, despatching a series of six large-scale expeditions to the "Western Ocean" with as commander-in-chief the grand eunuch Cheng Ho. These expeditions took place between 1405 and 1421, and were followed by a seventh in 1431-33. In the Introduction to his translation of Ma Huan's book *Ying-yai Sheng-lan*, Mills says:

"It seems probable that the emperor was actuated by a desire to enhance his own personal prestige by a flattering display of might, which would result in a throng of foreign ambassadors seeking audience at his court.

He probably wished to re-establish the renown of China as a leading political and cultural state and secure its hegemony over the eastern world by a manifestation of its power and wealth, and he probably also desired to expand overseas commerce, particularly with the countries of the occident, since this yielded profit to the treasury, brought prosperity to those who engaged in it, and introduced goods badly needed by the court and country, especially since the conquests of Timur Lane (Tamerlane) had cut the continental silk-route" (Mills 1970: 1).

In the Indonesian region Java, Palembang, Malacca and north Sumatran ports were visited. The main trade-route linked China with India and the Middle East, and as a result of the expeditions trade flourished. But with the passing of this emperor the period of greatness was over, and before long China started to suffer setbacks and was unable to follow an aggressive external policy (Mills 1970: 3).

In India one of the places visited was Bengal, and Ma Huan gives a description of it as it was in 1432. Details from this have been used as evidence of the trading connection between Bengal and Java. Concrete evidence of Chinese trade with Java is found in the ceramics and coins that have been found in the soil of East Java. Ma Huan says: "The people of the country are very fond of the blue-patterned porcelain-ware of the Central Country, also of such things as musk, gold-flecked hemp-silks, and beads" (Mills 1970: 97) and "Copper coins of the successive dynasties of the Central Country are in current use universally" (Mills 1970: 88).

It appears, however, that a large proportion of the blue-and-white ceramics found in East Java are in fact Vietnamese and can be dated to around the mid-15th century. It is possible that these were not shipped direct from their place of manufacture in Vietnam but were taken first to the ports of South China and then re-exported (see Brown 1977: 17). Perhaps this is the ware referred to by Ma Huan.

The facts of history are generally far more complicated than one might suspect, but at least some light on the rise of Majapahit to prosperity is cast by the fact that countries located at the ends of the trade-route passing through South-East Asia, namely China and Bengal, were themselves going through a period of prosperity and encouraged trading contacts with the outside world. In order to understand the new cultural influences that would reach Java from further afield we are obliged to look at Java in the context of the other countries of the region — on the assumption that cultural influences do not travel of their own accord but are carried in the same ships as the wares of

merchants. It is these suppositions that now need to be developed in more detail.

III JAVA - PASAI/MALACCA - BENGAL IN THE 14TH AND 15TH CENTURIES

Referring to the heydays of Java, then long past, Tomé Pires writes: "It is because of this power and great worth that Java had, and because it navigated to many places and very far away — for they affirm that it navigated to Aden and that its chief trade was in *Bonuaquelim*, Bengal and Pase — that it had the whole of the trade at that time. All the navigators were heathens, so that it thus gathered together such great merchants with so much trade along its coasts, that nowhere else so large and so rich was known" (Cortêsão 1944: 174).⁵ That the Javanese sailed as far as Aden has not been confirmed, but it is the regions of Java's chief trade in the 14th century that are relevant here. "*Bonuaquelim*" is, of course, *Benua Keling*, *Keling* being the name used by the Portuguese for people from "at least part of the *Choromandel* coast" (Cortêsão 1944: 91). *Pase* (*Pasai*) is an obvious port of call on the route from Java to Bengal, and probably also to South India, assuming that shipping from Java passed up the east coast of Sumatra and through the Straits.⁶

The mention of *Pase* inevitably involves *Malacca*, which was founded about 1400. At first *Malacca* found it hard to break into the established patterns of trade; Tomé Pires relates, in another place, that *Xaquem Darxa* (*Iskandar Syah*, ruler of *Malacca* c. 1414-24) proposed to *Batara Tamarill*, king of Java, that the latter should trade with him, but *Batara Tamarill* replied that he had a longstanding arrangement with *Pase*; *Xaquem Darxa* wrote to *Pase* asking for trade, "Whereupon the said king of *Pase* sent ambassadors to the said *Xaquem Darxa* saying that he would willingly agree to what he asked if he would turn Moor..." (Cortêsão 1944: 239). *Malacca* then "greatly improved in friendship with, (and became) almost a vassal of *Batara Tumarill*, king of Java, on account of the many junks and powerful people from that country who at that time used to navigate great distances... wherefore, although the king of *Pase* had not agreed to it, some junks used to come to *Malacca*, although it was nothing much, because the port-of-call for all the merchandise was in *Pase*" (Cortêsão 1944: 240). Such is his account relating to the situation soon after the founding of *Malacca* — but that situation would soon change. Among other things

we may conclude that the ruler of Malacca at that moment was not yet a Muslim.

In view of the special relationship between Java and Pase, it may be useful to quote what Tomé Pires says of Pase, under his account of Sumatra: "... the kingdom of Pase is becoming prosperous, rich, with many merchants from different Moorish and Kling nations, who do a great deal of trade, among whom the most important are the Bengalees ... The people of Pase are for the most part Bengalees, and the natives descend from this stock ..." (Cortêsão 1944: 142). "Pase used to have heathen kings, and it must be a hundred and sixty years now since the said kings were worn out by the cunning of the merchant Moors there were in the kingdom of Pase, and the said Moors held the sea coast and they made a Moorish king of the Bengali caste, and from that time until now the kings of Pase have always been Moors ..." (Cortêsão 1944: 143). One hundred and sixty years before the time of writing would put us in about 1355; while it is almost certainly not true that the kings of Pase prior to this were heathens, it is not impossible that Bengalis came into the ascendancy at about this time, when Bengal itself had recently become independent, as we have seen above, and subsequently dominated that place to such an extent as to impress Pires' informants at the beginning of the 16th century. A close relationship between Pase and Bengal from the mid-14th century would agree with the statement that Java's main trade was with South India, Bengal and Pase, and may turn out to be a key link in the cultural contacts between Java and India.

The Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai (Part 3) gives a story explaining how Pasai came to be subject to Majapahit, involving a Majapahit princess whose beloved was killed by the ruler of Pasai, leading to an expedition of revenge and that ruler's eviction. His name is given as Sultan Ahmad, but no date is supplied for the event. Despite the romantic nature of the explanation and the fact that it cannot be checked, there seems little reason to doubt the claim that Pasai was conquered by Javanese from Majapahit. The Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai goes on to describe further Javanese naval expeditions which led to the subjection of a large number of other places in the Archipelago.

The Nāgarakṛtāgama, which offers a description of the realm as it was in 1365, includes an extensive list of the places over which Java held a "protectorate".⁷ This list mentions places in North Sumatra, including Samudra (13.2). The name Pasai is not used. This tallies with the name "Sumutra" used by Ibn Batuta, emissary of the Sultan

of Delhi to China, who visited North Sumatra in 1345/46. However, he does not mention its being subject to Java. So for lack of further evidence, one can only speculate that Pasai/Samudra was conquered by Java around the middle of the 14th century; then for the second half of this century, its history is obscure.

The Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai makes a particularly interesting claim. It says that after the conquest of Pasai the captives who were taken to Majapahit were allowed to settle there; they were, of course, Muslims, "And that is the reason why there were many holy graves in the land of Java at the time when Pasai was conquered by Majapahit" (*Itulah sebabnya maka banyak kramat di tanah Jawa itu tatkala zaman Pasai alah oleh Majapahit itu*, Hill 1960: 100). For this it claims the authority of tradition in the customary phrase, "Such is the story as told by those who 'own' this tale".

The relationship between Majapahit and Pasai is also alluded to in the Hikayat Banjar, where we read that the king of Majapahit, there called Dipati Angrok, sent out ten ships to fetch the princess of Pasai for him to marry. The king of Pasai could not refuse her to his overlord, even though she was a Muslim. She was married to the king of Majapahit, but was given a separate house. She had a son, and then her brother, called Raja Bungsu, came to Majapahit; the princess would not let her brother go home, so he settled in Java at a place called Ampel-gading. There the local people soon wished to become Muslims. The king of Majapahit had no objection, and said, "Tell Bungsu that he may convert to Islam anyone who wishes it. He may convert people even from here in the capital if they wish, let alone the villages" (Ras 1968: 419).

So it is becoming apparent that a discussion of the relations between Java and other regions, in particular North Sumatra, and after that places further afield, is going to involve the problem of the coming of Islam in Java. Tracing the origin of cultural influence from abroad in other fields can scarcely be separated from religion. It is not a simple question, because the coming of Islam in Java has to be regarded as a process, not an event, and so we have to define carefully exactly which period is under discussion at any given time.

First, however, something should be said about the relationship between Java and Malacca. This is because Malacca was to become the major centre of trade and power in the area of the Straits, and because Malacca and Majapahit were contemporary, a fact often not remembered. During the whole span of its history, i.e. from its founda-

tion in about 1400 until its conquest by the Portuguese in 1511, Malacca had alongside it the kingdom of Majapahit in Java. And for about three quarters of this time Majapahit was a force to be reckoned with.

The *Sejarah Melayu* tells the tale of the princess of Majapahit who married the adopted son of a toddy-tapper; their daughter, Raden Galuh Candra Kirana, was famous for her beauty, and so Sultan Mansur Syah of Malacca decided to go to Majapahit to ask for her hand. There follow a number of incidents at the court of Majapahit the tendency of which is to prove that the men of Malacca are the equals, if not the betters, of the Javanese. An atmosphere of rivalry between these two kingdoms is quite understandable, and is expressed symbolically in the *Sejarah Melayu* by means of stories of combats and tricks. Despite the fact that the Malaccans are depicted as always coming out on top, it is significant that it is nevertheless Majapahit which is the *source* of prestige. As an example, there is the incident when Betara Majapahit has taken Tun Bija Sura's kris (a typical symbol of prestige) and showing it to him asks him whose it is... but in the mean time it appears that Tun Bija Sura has taken a kris belonging to one of the Javanese. But then it is Betara Majapahit who gives the praise: "All these Malaccans are very clever, we cannot trick them" (see Shellabear 1961: 123). After this Sultan Mansur Syah is given the princess and returns. And perhaps this is the most significant of all: it is the sultan of Malacca who is given the favour, not the reverse.

History has not recorded the visit to Java of a Malacca sultan or his marriage to a Javanese princess. Sultan Mansur Syah ruled from 1459 till 1477, and in this time Malacca extended its territories to include Pahang, Johore and several kingdoms along the east coast of Sumatra (Moorhead 1957: 133-134). It is very probable that by this time Majapahit was unable to maintain any claim to sovereignty over Sumatra (see Shellabear 1961: 124), and this naturally fell into Malacca's hands.

The name Malacca does not seem to feature in Javanese romance or legend. In the *kidung* Malat, however, the greatest of the Middle Javanese romances, the Crown Prince of Daha, Gunung Sari, becomes king of Malayu for a time while searching for his sister. He is quite a prominent figure in the story. There is no indication as to where this Malay kingdom is thought to have been located, except that it was overseas.⁸

Tomé Pires has useful information to add on the relationship between Malacca and Java, with particular reference to the coming of Islam to Java. Malacca itself being Muslim, it is said to have had a hand in the establishment of Islam in Java. Writing of Sultan Muzaffar Syah (1445-56), Pires says: "This *Modafarxa* sent ambassadors to Java to the heathen king, and they say that by secret means he found a way through his priests to induce important men from the coastal districts to turn Moors, and these are now *pates*... The said *Modafarxa* was a vassal of the said king of Java and sent him elephants and things from China and rich cloths from among those which came to his port, and as long as he lived he always maintained his friendship with the said king; and a large quantity of foodstuffs came from Java. He greatly improved the port of Malacca" (Cortese 1944: 245-246). This passage makes the somewhat surprising statement regarding the political relationship that the sultan of Malacca was a vassal of the king of Java; however this may have been, the economic links are duly stressed: Java received luxury goods including cloths in return for foodstuffs.

The establishment of Islam in Java will be discussed below. While it is not impossible that Malacca exercised some influence in this, it is also curious to observe that it by no means prevented contacts of a cultural nature between Java and non-Muslim India. This can be said in the light of the work of the poet Mpu Tanakung who wrote in Old Javanese in the third quarter of the 15th century. His works show a knowledge of Sanskrit sources not exploited before, and his main work, the *kakawin* *Śiwarātrikalpa* written c. 1470, is an attempt to make propaganda for a new Śiwaite ritual, the Night of Śiwa. It is known that this ritual was practised by the kings of Vijayanagar in South India in this period, so that it can be assumed that either Mpu Tanakung travelled to South India or that he had a teacher in Java who came from there, and in this way became acquainted with fresh Hindu ideas (Teeuw et al. 1969: 19-23).

IV THE ISLAMIZATION OF JAVA

The problem of the Islamization of Java can perhaps best be approached via the Islamization of Malacca. Malacca's challenge to the long-standing trading links between Java and Pasai has been mentioned above. Tomé Pires' story continues thus:

"At the end of three years the said *Xaquem Darxa* allowed the ambassadors to return to Pase with honour, and the kings made friends,

and they traded from Pase in Malacca, and some rich Moorish merchants moved from Pase to Malacca, Parsees, as well as Bengalees and Arabian Moors, for at that time there were a large number of merchants belonging to these three nations, and they were very rich, with large businesses and fortunes, and they had settled there from the said parts, carrying on their trade; and so having come they brought with them mollahs and priests learned in the sect of Mohammed — chiefly Arabs, who are esteemed in these parts for their knowledge of the said sect" (Cortese 1944: 240).

"At this time king *Xaquem Darxa* was already old, and the land was trading in merchandise; and there were many Moors and many mollahs who were trying hard to make the said king turn Moor, and the king of Pase greatly desired it . . . At last, when he was seventy-two years old, the said king *Xaquem Darxa* turned Moor, with all his house, and married the said king of Pase's daughter" (Cortese 1944: 241-242).

There are several important points to be found in Pires' account of the conversion of the king of Malacca. Firstly, we have to make a clear distinction between the "Moorish merchants" and the "mollahs". The merchants' concern is to enrich themselves by carrying on their trade, but, being Muslims, when sufficient numbers of them have settled in a place, they feel the need for religious teachers, and so these then follow. In other words, the merchants pave the way but are not themselves qualified to teach religion, and so they send for the experts. The second point is that these experts are not necessarily of the same race as the merchants — the merchants were of various races, but the teachers of religion were "chiefly Arabs", because they were considered to be more knowledgeable in matters of religion. And thirdly, the Islamic religion could only be considered as "established" when it had become so influential, in terms of wealth and power, that finally it was adopted by the ruler "with all his house".

Now we saw above that Pires' information was that Sultan Muzaffar Syah had found a way to induce important men in the coastal districts of Java to become Muslims, and that these were "now" (i.e., in his time) *pates*. Elsewhere (p. 182, under Java) he states that these Muslims had been in those parts "for about seventy years" when they took over power (see below, p. 277). So if we take 1450 as the mid-point of Sultan Muzaffar Syah's reign, then 70 years would take us back to 1380. This estimate is of course rough, but luckily we have a more objective way to check the information, namely the presence of Muslim grave-stones.

Muslim gravestones are to be found at the site of Majapahit, one group being at Tralaya, located just south of Kedaton. The dates on

these have been subjected to a thorough study by L.-C. Damais, who gives the following years: 1376, 1380, 1407, 1418, 1427, 1467 (twice), 1469, 1475, and 1611 (Damais 1954: 411). Of these, the year 1611 falls outside our period. The others are all relevant and prove the presence of Muslims at the capital from the very height of the Majapahit period. The stones do not bear names, so there is no way of discovering the identity of the interred persons. However, graves I, II, III and IV of the Tralaya group bear an emblem consisting of the so-called "Majapahit halo" or sun symbol with inside it an object which Damais calls a book but which might also be a split drum crossed by a ribbon. Combined with the proximity to the kraton this suggests that the graves belong to persons of high rank, perhaps even members of one family, as the years for the stones concerned are (in chronological order): 1407, 1427, 1467 and 1475, a period of 68 years (Damais 1954: 413).⁹ But the Tralaya graves are not the only ones at Majapahit. The one called "Trawulan XIII" is in situ and has an even earlier date, namely 1368, while the grave pointed out as that of Putri Cempa, famous from legend, also at Trawulan, has the year 1458.

These Muslims are obviously not the same ones as referred to by Pires; perhaps Muslims were present both in the coastal districts and at the capital. There are several problems awaiting an answer here.

To understand the coming of Islam in Java we have to examine it in the light of cultural borrowing and influence as a whole with reference to the period concerned, and to do this we have to consider the question of the origins of Indonesian Islam. Within the Indonesian area, North Sumatra has, in my opinion rightly, been regarded as the cradle of Islam, as it had been established there (using this term in the sense alluded to above) already in the 1290s, since we know that a Muslim ruler, Sultan Malik al-Saleh, died there in 1297. But where did this Islam come from?

Scholarly opinion on this subject has been ably and clearly reviewed in an article by Professor G. W. J. Drewes more than ten years ago (Drewes 1968), so there is no point in covering the same ground here.

In answering the above question, I would be inclined to begin by lending credence to the traditional tale of the Islamization of Pasai as found in the *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* and the *Sejarah Melayu*, insofar as we are informed that the ship bringing the apostle of Islam carried him from Ma'bar. It is well known (see e.g. *Hobson-Jobson* s.v.) that this is a name for the Coromandel Coast, i.e. Tamil-speaking South India covering an area from Madras to the south. Is there any

reason to doubt the possibility that Indonesian Islam came from South India, or to hold that another region has a better claim?

Nilakanta Sastri has written, "The contact of South India with Islam is much older than that of the North" (Nilakanta Sastri 1966: 439). The Muslim population of the Malabar Coast, the Moplahs, trace their history back to the earliest times; "Travellers like Masūdī (916) and Ibn Batūtā (fourteenth century) testify to the presence of Muslims and mosques all along the west coast. There were Muslim settlements on the east coast also, of which Kāyalpattanam and Nagore were the most important. Islam, it is said, was preached actively near Trichinopoly early in the eleventh century..." (Nilakanta Sastri 1966: 439). Hence as far as period is concerned, it is by no means impossible that Indonesian Islam should have spread from South India. Furthermore, South India is close to North Sumatra, or at least more directly linked than with places such as Gujerat or Arabia, and had had trading links with Indonesia for a very long time.

However, the question of the schools of law also has to be taken into consideration. Indonesian Muslims adhere to the Shāfi'i school, and this is also the school followed in South India, while North India adheres to the Hanafī school. The Shāfi'i school can be traced back to the Hadramaut and is also found in Egypt and other parts of the Middle East (Juynboll 1930: 20). Muslims are not inclined to alter their adherence in this regard, so it is not unreasonable to assume that the main stream of Indonesian Islam stems from an area where the Shāfi'i school was also dominant. So South India is very probably the origin of Indonesian Islam: this is also the conclusion drawn by Marrison in 1951. But he was not the first to look in that direction, as Snouck Hurgronje had written, "...it is indeed more probable that Aceh, like other countries of the Indian Archipelago, was mohammedanized from Hindostan. Not only Mohammedan Klings and people from Madras and Malabar, but also heathen Klings, Chetties and other Hindus, have carried on trade in Aceh down to the present time..." (Snouck Hurgronje 1906: I 17). As early as 1820 Crawford, although attributing the origin of Indonesian Islam to Arabia, had said (referring to the Malays), "Their superior instruction is owing to their longer and more intimate intercourse with their masters the Arabs, and the *Mahomedans of the Eastern coast of India*" (my italics; Crawford 1820: II 260). However, Veth (1896-1907: I 231) and, following him, Arnold (1913: 368) looked more particularly to the Malabar Coast. The most recent comment on this subject is from the American Kenneth

R. Hall, who supports the idea that Indonesian Islam came from the Coromandel Coast (Hall 1977: 222).

It is in this light then that one has to look at the statements of Tomé Pires quoted above. Despite the predominance of Bengali and other merchants, the experts in religious law ("mollah" or "mullah" is derived from Arabic *maulā*, a title given to a teacher of theology or law) whom they called were not Bengali but "Arab", probably because these were from some part of Arabia and were Shāfi'i, in keeping with the school already long established.

Again we have to be careful about the period under discussion. Pires was referring to conditions in the 15th century, whereas our consideration of the question of the coming of Islam refers to the 13th. In fact, if Islam had been established in northern Sumatra in the last decade of that century, contact with it had probably been proceeding for many decades, at least from the early part of the 13th century, so that it is conditions in India at that time that have to be considered.

Although Bengali Muslims follow the Hanafī school of law and for this reason alone Bengal cannot be the source of Indonesian Islam, there is another reason too. Bengal was conquered by the Muslims only in 1200, and there is cause to believe that Buddhism and Hinduism in Bengal continued to be much alive for some time after that. This can be said in view of the fresh influences visible in the splendid sculptures of Singhasari (1222-1292), which are anything but evidence of the last flickerings of life of either Buddhism or Hinduism.¹⁰ If it is true that in the 13th century Bengal was still emitting such cultural influences, then it seems unlikely that Islam would have been strong enough to exert any influence on areas overseas, namely Indonesia. This is why it was not the Hanafī school that became established in Indonesia, and why South India is the only part of India that comes into consideration in this connection.

The influence of Tamil Muslims in Malacca during the 15th century is clear when we read the *Sejarah Melayu*. It is only to be expected that they should have left their mark on the Malay language, at least in certain fields. For example, Drewes has drawn attention to the fact that the Malay *lebai*, an expert on religious matters, is derived from Labbai, the name of a Muslim South Indian population-group (see Drewes 1968: 458-459). The term *lebé* is also known in Javanese dialects, in the meaning of a Muslim village official.

Another word of interest in this connection is the Malay *senteri*, which corresponds to *santri* in Javanese. *Senteri* is often found in

literature in combination with *dagang*: *dagang senter*, meaning “traders and wandering students of religion”. The Javanese *santri* refers to a student of religion living in a school, a *pesantrèn*. The derivation of these words has been discussed by Gonda (1973: 362-363). He wonders whether they might be connected with a South Indian form of the Sanskrit *jāstri*, “learned”, “a scholar”, but he does not go on to draw attention to the Tamil form of this word, viz. *sāttiri*.¹¹ As another possibility he mentions Skt. *sattri(n)*, to which he attributes the somewhat speculative meaning of one who lives in an alms-house or in a religious building in general. Perhaps we can assume that the Malay *senter* is derived from the Javanese *santri*, in view of the fact that the *pesantrèn* is a Javanese institution. If Javanese *santri* were connected with Tamil *sāttiri*, this would have interesting implications for the history of the institution of the *pesantrèn*.

Evidence of the presence of Muslims in Java in the early part of the 15th century is to be found in the well-known passage in the book of Ma Huan, the *Ying-yai Sheng-lan*, published in 1433. Ma Huan writes:

“The country contains three classes of persons. One class consists of the Muslim people; they are all people from every foreign kingdom in the West who have migrated to this country as merchants; [and] in all matters of dressing and feeding everyone is clean and proper.

One class consists of T'ang people; they are all men from Kuang tung [province] and from Chang [chou] and Ch'üan [chou] and other such places, who fled away and now live in this country; the food of these people, too, is choice and clean; [and] many of them follow the Muslim religion, doing penance and fasting.

One class consists of the people of the land; they have very ugly and strange faces . . .” (Mills 1970: 93).

Ma Huan mentions Chinese more specifically as inhabitants of Tuban and Gresik, but otherwise does not tell us where the Chinese lived; we are also not told more exactly where the foreigners from the West lived. The first “class” will have contained a wide variety of races, although all were Muslim, while “many” of the Chinese were also Muslim. The Chinese had apparently been settled in Java for some time.

It is known that Islam already had a long history in southern China (see Broomhall), and Ma Huan himself was a Muslim, so what he says has to be taken seriously. However, the Chinese Muslims are of the Hanafī school (*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. Hanafīyyah), so we

are forced to conclude that the Muslim Chinese in Java were not instrumental in or influential upon the establishment of Islam there. As far as I know, there is no evidence to suggest that the Hanafi school has ever had any influence in Java. We are obliged to conclude that the first class, the foreign merchants from the West, had either settled earlier in Java and established their form of Islam, or that they were in fact numerically stronger. The history of Islam in Java prior to this, i.e. during the 14th century, is obscure, but we have to remember the role attributed by tradition to Majapahit's vassal Pasai.

At this point perhaps some words should be devoted to the Chams, to whom Javanese tradition assigns a part in the introduction of Islam. Relations did exist between Majapahit and Champa, as King Jaya Simhavarman III of Champa married a Javanese princess by the name of Tapaśi at the beginning of the 14th century (Coedès 1968: 217), and in 1318 a Cham king was defeated by the Vietnamese and took refuge in Java (Coedès 1968: 229). Neither of these events is recorded in Javanese sources. However, the *Sejarah Melayu* contains a passage, apparently intended to explain the origins of the Chams of Malacca, which offers a very brief account of their history. This account is far from being mere folktale. It records the marriage of a Cham king with a Javanese princess. The end of the kingdom of Champa came when it was invaded by the king of Kuchi and the Chams were scattered in all directions. What has been rendered as "Kuchi" here is in fact an old name for Tonkin, *Giau-Chi*, and the event referred to is the invasion of Champa by the Vietnamese in 1471 (see Coedès 1968: 239). The *Sejarah Melayu* states that two sons of the Raja escaped by ship, one going to Acheh and the other to Malacca. The Chams were well received in Malacca by Sultan Mansur (1459-1477) and were told to embrace Islam, which they did, and "that was the origin of the Chams of Malacca". There is no evidence that the Chams had been Muslims prior to the break-up of their kingdom, and their conversion would otherwise have been unnecessary. This evidence of the relations between Malays and Chams may go some of the way toward explaining the fact that Malay literature has been familiar to them. However, Tomé Pires (writing 1512-15) says of Champa: "The king is heathen", and "There are no Moors in the kingdom" (Cortesão 1944: 113-114). In short, there does not yet seem to be anything to support the theory that the Chams may have been instrumental in introducing Islam to Java.

Tomé Pires gives the following account of how the coastal areas of Java came to be under Muslim influence.

"Now I will begin to tell of the Mohammedan *pates* who are on the sea coast, who are powerful in Java and have all the trade because they are the lords of the junks and people.

At the time when there were heathens along the sea coast of Java, many merchants used to come, Parsees, Arabs, Gujaratees, Bengalees, Malays and other nationalities, there being many Moors among them. They began to trade in the country and to grow rich. They succeeded in way of making mosques, and mollahs came from outside, so that they came in such growing numbers that the sons of these said Moors were already Javanese and rich, for they had been in these parts for about seventy years. In some places the heathen Javanese lords themselves turned Mohammedan, and these mollahs and the merchant Moors took possession of these places. Others had a way of fortifying the places where they lived, and they took people of their own who sailed in their junks, and they killed the Javanese lords and made themselves lords; and in this way they made themselves masters of the sea coast and took over trade and power in Java.

These lord *pates* are not Javanese of long standing in the country, but they are descended from Chinese, from Parsees and Kling, and from the nations we have already mentioned" (Cortese 1944: 182).

Just as in his account of the conversion of Malacca, Pires makes a clear distinction between the merchants and the mollahs. The former came in order to trade and grow rich, and when they were settled the teachers came "from outside" — their origin this time is not specified. The Muslim population consisted of the descendants of various foreigners who had become Javanese by virtue of their long residence in Java, and probably by intermarriage. However, there seems to be no hint of "preaching" to the indigenous population with the aim of converting them or of any kind of missionary campaign.¹² We have to view the process of the adoption of Islam in the port towns as more a matter of expediency than of idealism: if the rich merchants were Muslims, and were in the majority, then they were the ones who possessed power and influence, and it was in one's own interests to identify oneself with them also in the matter of religious adherence and practice. Only in this sense can merchants be said to have been instrumental in spreading Islam. Muslim teachers came in order to give instruction to a community that already existed, not in order to set it up. As a second method of taking over power, Pires puts forward the theory that in some places the Muslim trading community resorted to violent methods, first fortifying themselves and then doing away with the local lord. Pires puts all this in the reign of Sultan Muzzafar Syah of Malacca, so, as we have seen, the "about seventy years" before puts us at the height

of the Majapahit period, when it is indeed likely that Majapahit's prosperity attracted traders from far and wide.

Pires notes that the Muslim communities built mosques. None have survived from this period (mid-15th century), and Javanese literature is silent on the matter, except in one particular. The Middle Javanese *Kidung Sunda* tells how the king of Sunda brought his daughter to Majapahit as a bride for King Hayam Wuruk; arriving at Bubat he did not find the reception that he expected as due to a bride of equal rank, and so sent his Patih to Majapahit to find Gajah Mada and make enquiries as to the cause. The Patih's way to Majapahit is described; arriving there, he came first to the *Masigit Agung*.¹³ There can be no other translation for this than "Grand Mosque", although there is no record of there ever having been a mosque in Majapahit. The text, in the version in which we have it, is probably late and written in Bali, even though the events related are to be placed in the middle of the 14th century. But the very fact that this detail was included in a text written in Bali is indicative of its truth, as the Balinese, themselves Hindu and priding themselves on their connection with Hindu Majapahit, are unlikely to have invented a mosque in the midst of Majapahit. It remains a puzzle, although archaeology might be able to help us solve it. We have already seen that there were Muslims present in the capital from an early date, and it is not impossible that as time went by their numbers were such as to warrant the erection of a mosque.

But there are still more riddles concerning the history of Islam in the Majapahit period. The series of Muslim gravestones at Trawulan ends abruptly in 1475 and the dated stones in 1478, precisely the year given by Javanese tradition for the defeat of Majapahit by a Muslim alliance. However, we know from inscriptions that there continued to be a Hindu king in East Java. Something happened in 1478, but what? When Tomé Pires visited Java in 1513 he was told nothing about the capital having been ravaged by the forces of the Moors — and we may be sure that if he had heard such a thing he would certainly have quoted it as evidence of the "cunning of the merchant Moor" or some such. But on the other hand he gives the name Majapahit nowhere. Instead, he says that the king lives in a place called Daha, which is to be reached in two days' easy travel from Tuban: "... this is the nearest port to the city of Daha" (Cortêsão 1944: 190). If the capital were still at Majapahit it would have been much quicker to go via Surabaya or even Hindu Pasuruhan, whereas if it was at

Daha (= Kaḍiri), Tuban and Surabaya are more or less equidistant.

Thanks to Noorduy'n's work, we know that in 1478 a successful coup took place whereby King Singhawikramawardhana was killed and replaced by another Hindu king, although of the same line. According to an inscription of 1486, the then king, Girindrawardhana, was still calling himself "Lord of Majapahit (consisting of) Janggala and Kaḍiri". Whether Muslims had played a part in the coup, and what its effect was on the relationship between Muslims and Hindus in Java, we cannot yet say. But some time before 1513 the Hindu ruler had apparently withdrawn further into the inland and settled at Daha, perhaps out of a desire to put some distance between himself and the Muslim port towns (see Noorduy'n 1978: 244-253, esp. note 36).

One of the main Muslim coastal states was Surabaya, as we can conclude from Pires' description of Java.

"The lord of Surabaya is called *Pate Bubat*, and *Guste Pate* has now given him the name of *Jurupa Galacam Jmteram* [Juru Pangalasan ing Terung]; which means 'the excellent captain'. He is a knight and a person of great authority, more honoured in affairs of arms than any of those who are living along the sea-coast, whether Javanese or Moorish; and all the Javanese rely on him, on his personality and counsel. He has a great deal of land and he is often at war with *Guste Pate*, and sometimes they are friends . . . He is constantly at war, and he is not given to any other exercise. All his Javanese neighbours receive counsel and help from him. He is closely related to the Moorish *pates* . . . His land has foodstuffs like the other Javanese lands, because all the land of Java has them. The merchandise goes out from Grisee."

The following sentences are particularly relevant: "He very much wants there to be friendship with Malacca, and they say he is working hard for it. He has already written to this fortress, and they have written him twice" (Cortese 1944: 196).

In the second half of the 16th century Surabaya would become the leader among the states of East Java, but we can see that its leading position is already foreshadowed at the beginning of that century. (Although Demak would be dominant for a time, one has to remember that it was located in Central Java, some distance from the region of Surabaya and Gresik.) Pires bears witness to the desire of the lord of Surabaya to be on a good footing with Malacca, but there is evidence that this was not a new policy, connected with the Portuguese take-over of Malacca.

There is a passage in the *Sejarah Melayu* which begins, "Now the Chief of Surabaya, Pateh Adam by name, came to Malacca to do

homage. He was given robes of honour by Sultan Mahmud Shah and in the hall of audience was assigned a place on a level with the ministers of state". The story goes that during this visit he noticed the Sri Nara 'diraja's daughter who was just old enough to toddle and understood that she was promised for him. So when she was of marriageable age he came again to Malacca to claim her, but her father said that there had been no such agreement. Nevertheless Pateh Adam made his way to her house and gained entry; Sri Nara 'diraja was enraged and surrounded the house. When all forty of Pateh Adam's retainers had been slain, he said, "If I die, this girl dies too!" But Sri Nara 'diraja's daughter was too dear to him, and so they were married. At last Pateh Adam returned to Java with her, having taken leave of Sultan Mahmud Shah. The passage ends with, "By Tun Menida he had a son named Tun Husain and it is he who is Chief of Sourabaya at the present time" (Brown 1952: 136-137).

Such is the tale according to the Raffles MS. 18 version of the *Sejarah Melayu*. The version published by Shellabear has the same tale, but it ends differently: "Pateh Adam had a son with Tun Manda, named Pateh Hussain, and he was the great-grandfather of Pangeran Surabaya who was killed by an amock".¹⁴

Both visits of Pateh Adam to Malacca fell within the reign of Sultan Mahmud Syah. The passage concerned comes after the death of Mena-war Syah of Kampar, dated c. 1505. If we take this as the date of the *second* visit, and assume that by that time the girl was in her mid-teens, then the *first* must have been in about 1490 (Sultan Mahmud Syah succeeded in 1488). If their son was born soon after, then he may have become Pangeran Surabaya about 25 years later, so that "the present time" of this passage in the Raffles MS. 18 will have been c. 1530. This is not in conflict with Winstedt's estimate of 1535. On the other hand, the "great-grandfather" (Malay *moyang*) referred to in the Shellabear version suggests that this was written three generations later.

We might add that the names Patih Adam and Patih Husain are not known from the *Serat Arok* which gives a history of Surabaya in the late Majapahit period; I am not inclined to identify Patih Hussain "who was killed by an amock" with the Adipati of Surabaya who in the *Serat Arok* was put to death by the King of Majapahit, because he (Patih Husain) was apparently still alive in c. 1530, when Majapahit had well and truly disappeared.

The relevance of this discussion to our investigation is that it demon-

strates in a more explicit way the close relations between Malacca and the East Javanese coastal cities over a certain period. That such relations existed is important as it shows clearly a route along which cultural influences may have reached Java from abroad, more specifically from the major centre of Malay culture at that time. The region of Surabaya and its neighbouring port of Gresik, heir to Hindu Majapahit on the one hand and open to the outside world on the other, probably played a part in Javanese literary history more significant than has yet been acknowledged.

V THE "PASISIR" LITERATURE

Having looked at some of the routes linking Java with the outside world, and having seen some of the cultural influences that reached Java via them in our period, we are now able to consider the question more specifically of literature and the influences that operated on it.

At the conclusion of the *Nāgarakṛtāgama* (1365) the poet tells us that not only Javanese scholars praise his king, but also foreign ones (93.1):

"All the scholars of foreign countries compose His Majesty's praises —
The Buddhist monk Śrī Buddhāditya has composed a panegyric on him
of countless verses;
His home is in India and is called Kancipuri of the Six Vihāras,
And the sympathetic priest Śrī Mutali has offered praises in pure
verses."

This stanza is remarkable for various reasons. It shows not only that Buddhism still existed in India in the second half of the 14th century, and in South India at that, but also that relations existed between Javanese Buddhists and those living in Kanchi (Conjeeveram).¹⁵ Perhaps the Javanese specially cultivated this contact as being the only place in India where Buddhism was still active, but if the poet's claim can be taken at face value, then the Indian scholars were at least aware of the existence of a Buddhist centre in Java.

Referring to a time about a century later (c. 1470), it has been convincingly argued (Teeuw et al. 1969: 19-23) that the theme of the *kakawin* *Śiwarātrikalpa*, "The Observance of the Night of Śiwa", is evidence of continuing contact between Javanese Hindus and India, South India in particular, as from inscriptions it appears that rulers of Vijayanagar observed the Night of Śiwa. If the author of the

Siwarātrikalpa, Mpu Tanakung, himself travelled to India, he would probably have left Java from a port such as Gresik and sailed first to Malacca, then to a port on the eastern coast of India. This would prove that there were no bars to a Hindu traveller passing through Muslim ports — the very idea of a religious barrier is obviously out of place. In the same way as trade could move freely back and forth, so too could persons travelling for other reasons, be they cultural or scholarly.

Within Java itself, apparently there was still an audience for a new Hindu theme, in fact one is tempted to speculate as to whether the Siwarātrikalpa might be regarded not only as propaganda for Hinduism, but also be viewed as a reaction to an Islam constantly growing in influence in Java!

The Hindu literature was probably centred around and sponsored by the courts in the interior, and to this extent should be seen as geographically separate but contemporaneous with a new stream in literature being created in the flourishing port towns. We have seen that the latter did not have a monopoly of international contacts, and I would hesitate to call it "new" in contrast with the "old". Even the name "Muslim" may be misleading for the literature of the port towns, as by no means all its products would have a clearly Islamic stamp. For these reasons I propose to adhere to the term "Pasisir" (Coastal) which has been used in the past.

The Pasisir literature and its origins need to be looked at a little more closely. Because outside influences reaching Java during the 15th century will probably have had to come through Malacca, it is useful to look at the situation in Malay literature first.

All the Malay literature that has come down to us uses a script deriving from Arabic, although it is probable that there once existed a Malay literature written in a script related to those still used for Batak, Rejang and Lampung. The adoption of a new script in place of an older one is already evidence of a heavy cultural influence. Where did this influence come from, and when did it come? The first instance of Malay written in Arabic script is an inscription from Trengganu from the 14th century. The exact date is uncertain: it is either 1326 or 1386. Of the script it has been argued (de Casparis 1975: 70-71) that, "From the fact that most of the conventions which would remain characteristic of the writing of Malay... in Arabic script — such as the use of *alif*, *yā* and *wāw* for expressing the (short) vowels of syllables bearing the word accent — had already taken shape by that time may

suggest that Arabic script had already been in use for some time before the (somewhat uncertain) date of the inscription" (see also de Casparis 1975: 26).

Malay script is not Arabic script, but modified Persian script. According to Lewis, when the Persians adopted Arabic script, they invented signs to represent *c*, *g*, *p*, and *zh*, which were not present in Arabic. Of these Malay took over *c* and *g*, made a new *p* from *f*, invented *ng* and turned *p* into *ny* (Lewis 1958: 6). Further, the Javanese names for the three vowel-points used in *pégon* (Javanese Arabic script) are Persian: *jabar* for the *fatḥa* (a), *jēr* for the *kasra* (e, i), and *pès* for the *ḍamma* (o, u).

Now a well-known passage from the *Sejarah Melayu* tells how on the night before the final Portuguese assault on Malacca the young nobles were waiting in the hall of audience. They said, "Why do we sit here idly? It would be well for us to read a tale of war that we may profit from it". And so they applied to the ruler for the *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyyah*, but Sultan Ahmad gave them the *Hikayat Hamzah* instead, saying, "We would give you the Story of Muhammad Hanafiah did we not fear that the bravery of the gentlemen of our court falls short of the bravery of Muhammad Hanafiah! But it may be that their bravery is such as was the bravery of Hamzah and that is why we give you the story of Hamzah". But they were not satisfied with this and sent again to the ruler, who then gave them the *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyyah* (translation by Brown 1952: 168).

I have no hesitation in accepting the above passage as evidence of the acquaintance of the Malays with the *hikayats* Muhammad Hanafiyyah and (Amir) Hamzah in the year 1511, and cannot concur with van Ronkel (1895: 91-92) who denied this. In this I am in full agreement with Brakel (1975: 10), although without further evidence I would be reluctant to assign the reading of *hikayats* a "magico-religious interpretation".

Of the two *hikayats* mentioned, the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* was the first to be studied in some detail, when in 1895 van Ronkel compared the Malay and Persian versions of the story, with the result that: "...de critische vergelijking der verhalen in hun geheel deed de volledige afhankelijkheid der Maleische versie van het Perzische verhaal ten duidelijkste uitkomen" (van Ronkel 1895: 98).

However, we should not be misled by the word "Persian" here, as it means "in Persian" and not "from Persia". In the words of van Ronkel (1895: 250):

“Wanneer wij in het oog vatten dat verscheidene Indische woorden in de twee Perzische HSS., die ons ter beschikking stonden, voorkomen, dat het HS. uit Dresden in Indië (Bihār) is geschreven, dat dit met het HS. uit München waarschijnlijk eveneens het geval is, dat van de vijf Londensche HSS. er vier uit Indië zijn, en dat zoowel in Add. 24.418 als in de Teheransche uitgave een ‘admixture of Indian words and phrases’ op te merken is, dat [dan?] wordt zeer waarschijnlijk, zoo niet zeker, dat de Hamzaroman, niet in Perzië, maar op Indischen bodem ontstaan is. Buitendien behoort deze roman, met zijne geesten- en toovergeschiedenissen, in Indië geheel thuis.”

One has to recall that in the 18th century, when the Persian MSS. were written, Persian had been the literary language of North Indian Muslims for centuries. As Ma Huan had noted on his visit to Bengal in 1432, “As the language of the country they all adopt Pang-ko-li [Bengali], which constitutes an independent tongue, though there are also some people who speak the Pa-erh-hsi [Parsi] language” (Mills 1970: 161).

It was also van Ronkel who began the study of the Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyyah, when in 1896 he referred to a Persian source, but it was not till 1975 that Brakel would elaborate on this. It now appears that there exist three MSS. of the Persian original, namely MS. Add. 8149 of the British Museum written in Azimganj, Murshidabad (Bengal) in 1721, a second in Leningrad dated 1821-22 (Brakel 1975: 12 & 280 resp.), and a third in the Dacca University Library written in 1787 (Brakel 1977: 95-96). Brakel’s conclusion is that the Malay Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyyah was translated from the Persian; something that he has not stressed, however, is that in view of the origins of two of the MSS. Bengal is a likely source for this Persian original.

Brakel argues that the Persian original was written some time in the 14th century; one of the arguments for this is the fact that firearms do not occur in it. As for the date of the Malay text, he says that “It must be surmised that the text was translated into Malay not long afterwards”, and in this connection he thinks of “the Muslim centres on the north-east coast of Sumatra”, that is, the centre of Malay culture in the 14th century (Brakel 1975: 54-57). In any case it is clear that the work of translation from Persian into Malay was probably done in a centre of Malay culture in close contact with North India, rather than in India itself, and that it must have been some time before 1511. There is, however, no need to assume that the Malay version followed the Persian “not very much later”: if one were to take the

opposite view, it would seem that the translation might have been made in Malacca some time in the course of the 15th century.

Another *hikayat* that could be taken into consideration is the Hikayat Iskandar Dzul-Karnain. This was known to the author of the Sejarah Melayu, as can be seen from the fact that its first chapter is a summary of the adventures of Raja Iskandar. The Raffles MS. 18 version alludes specifically to its source in two places: (i) (MS. p. 3) *Maka bertemulah kedua rakyat lalu berperanglah, seperti yang dalam Hikayat Iskandar itu* — “And the two armies met and battle was joined, as is related in the Hikayat Iskandar”; and (ii) (MS. p. 5) *Maka baginda pun berjalanlah lalu ke matahari hidup, seperti yang tersebut dalam hikayat yang termasyhur itu* — “He then set forth for the East, as is related in the famous history” (Brown’s translation). Van Leeuwen (1937) was of the opinion that the *hikayat* originated from Arabic tales of Alexander, but others such as Hooykaas (1937: 156) prefer to believe in a Persian original, although such a text has not yet been found. Winstedt (1958: 78) claims that the fame of the Hikayat Iskandar can already be discerned in the choice of a name by the newly converted first ruler of Malacca, Sultan Iskandar Syah, but it is well to remember that there was a ruler of Bengal by the name of Sikandar Shah who built the Ādina mosque in 1368.

The Hikayat Seri Rama, on the other hand, is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, of extant works in Malay. Of this work van Ronkel has written (1919: 383) that the form of certain words (and names) makes it likely that it was translated from a Tamil original, and he points out that the Javanese version of the work is called Rama Keling, the name Keling showing that it was indeed attributed to a South Indian source. However, no-one has yet indicated a Tamil work that represents the original.

A number of other works are likely to have already existed in the 15th century, but so few examples of Classical Malay literature have been published or discussed in a critical fashion that at this stage it is difficult to say more. If the script used for Malay is borrowed from Persian, and two of the earliest works are demonstrably translated from the Persian, then it is reasonable to assume that the main literary genre of Classical Malay, the prose *hikayat*, may also owe something to borrowing. The term *hekāyat* is indeed used in one of the MSS. of the Persian version of the tale of Muhammad Hanafiyyah (see Brakel 1975: 12), suggesting that the term was also used in that language for a prose story. Obviously a detailed study of the relationship between

the Malay and Persian *hikayat* is much needed. The only work so far devoted to the *hikayat* as a genre is that of Bausani (1962).

One of the most important and well-known works of the Javanese Pasisir literature is what is commonly called *Ménak*, which is an abbreviation for *Serat Ménak Amir Hamzah*. This is a very extensive work, so much so that in later versions separate episodes have got their own names and have been published as separate works. The adventures of Amir Hamzah also form part of the repertoire of the Javanese *wayang golèk*, further evidence of their importance.

Van Ronkel also made a comparison between the Malay and Javanese versions of the story, and is firmly of the opinion that the Javanese *Ménak* was not taken from the Persian but was adapted from the Malay, or in other words, not translated literally but retold and expanded on the basis of a Malay version, although a Malay version that stood a little closer to the Persian than the one he had used (van Ronkel 1895: 204-205).

In fact, the Javanese version has probably been repeatedly reworked over a long period of time, going back to a comparatively early date. As it was already known in Malacca before the Portuguese conquest, there is a possibility that it also reached Java quite early, although this cannot be demonstrated on the basis of any old manuscripts. The use of *Ménak* as title for Amir Hamzah can be compared with *Ménak Jingga*, king of Blambangan in the *Serat Damar Wulan*, but the word also occurs in Middle Javanese *kidungs*, simply with the meaning "noble, high-born, handsome", suggesting that the original translation from Malay into Javanese was perhaps made in the 15th or 16th century.

The story of Muhammad Hanafiyyah is, oddly enough, scarcely known in Javanese, being found in only one fragmentary *lontar* MS. from Lombok, now in the Jakarta collection. Brakel has reproduced several stanzas from this work (Brakel 1975: 104-106).

There are other Javanese works that are said to be translations from the Malay. For example, the *Iskandar* coincides in the main with the Malay *Hikayat Iskandar Dzulkarnain*, although the Javanese is more extensive (Vreede 1892: 35). This *Iskandar* is represented by one manuscript only (Cod. Or. 1805) written in 1790 and was never very popular (Pigeaud 1967: 243); this is of course not to be confused with the Baron Sakèndèr.

But Javanese also seems to have borrowed independently from foreign

sources. A good example is the Ahmad Muhammad, a tale of jealousy between two brothers which has been well known in both Java and Lombok. The story is also known in Bali under the name Amad in Javanese *macapat* and *tengahan* versions; one can surmise that it came to Bali from Lombok rather than from Java, alongside other Islamic works that are found in this otherwise completely Hindu society. There does not seem to be a Malay original of this story — on the contrary, according to Juynboll (1899: 144) the Hikayat Ahmad Mohammad (Cod. Or. 3249) is a Malay adaptation of the Javanese poem. (See also MS. 36558 in Ricklefs and Voorhoeve 1977: 161.)

This point can be illustrated further by the Kidung Aji Darma, now available in an edition and English translation (Drewes 1975). This *kidung* is, of course, Middle Javanese and comes from Bali, and alongside it there exists also the Serat Angling Darma, a more extensive retelling of the same matter, in several versions. The fact that both Middle and Modern Javanese versions are found suggests that it was written as early as the late Hindu period. However, it is not an original Javanese composition, but derives from Indian folktales, although there is not a trace of Islam in it. Belonging to the same complex we have the Hikayat Syah Mardan, but this is clearly not the original of the Kidung Aji Darma, or for that matter of the Serat Angling Darma. But it appears that the Hikayat Syah Mardan did inspire another Javanese work, the Bagénda Sèh Mardan (Cod. Or. 2296; Pigeaud 1967: 223-224). The Kidung Aji Darma may thus have been written in 15th century Majapahit, but its antecedents, either in a lost Malay work or in some Indian language, have yet to be identified. It is related to other cycles of animal fables, and there is a link with the Laotian story of Lin Tōng, as Drewes has shown (Drewes 1975: 45-47).

The relationship between Javanese Pasisir and Malay literature is thus probably more complicated than has been thought. At least we should refrain from assuming that works reached Java via Malay until there is solid evidence to that effect. However, this does not affect the thesis that both have had links with India, and that borrowing by both was effected along comparable routes.

VI CONCLUSIONS

In this study we have approached the description of the background of the Middle Javanese *kidung* and the early Pasisir literature via the phenomenon of cultural borrowing. The origin of certain of the fine

cloths and other luxury goods as described in the *kidungs* is to be sought in Bengal, and this provided the clue to the origin of certain borrowed literary themes. It was argued that items of non-material culture can only be conveyed along routes used for the import of material items, and so it was necessary to show just how Java was linked with India by trade routes running via North Sumatra and Malacca.

In the period concerned, cultural borrowing turned out to concern not only literary themes but also to be linked with religion as well, as this was a critical period in Indonesian history, that of the establishment of Islam in many places. However, it became apparent that the adoption of Islam is not to be equated with other kinds of borrowing in this time — this is because its roots go back to an earlier period, with the result that its origins are to be sought not in Bengal but in South India.

Unfortunately several vast gaps in our knowledge were exposed. Not only did the resources in published materials for both Malay and Javanese literature turn out to be inadequate, but it also became clear that a study of the Persian romances of North India would be helpful on the one hand, and on the other a study of the history and characteristics of the Tamil-speaking Muslim communities of South India. The study of Javanese (and Indonesian in general) cultural history can best be served by pointing to links, looking at movements in a wider perspective, and by examining not dividing-lines but meeting-places.

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January, 1980

NOTES

- ¹ Pires' own comment on his methods is: "The great island of Java is finished, as well as I have been able to examine and investigate it, verifying my facts with many people; and whenever they seemed to me to agree thoroughly, I have written that down, and they certainly are not out of the right order;..." (Cortese 1944: 199).
- ² This is found in the account of the royal family (Canto 4, stanza 2). My translation of the stanza is:
 "Her husband [i.e. of Hayam Wuruk's mother's younger sister] is the one
 in Wēngkēr, like the divine Upendra descended,
 Prince Wijayarājasa of incomparably excellent wisdom,
 An equal of the Prince of Singhasari [mentioned above, Hayam Wuruk's
 father] ...(?),
 He knows about the cultivated fields (*thāni*) of the whole of the land of
 Java".
 Cf. the translation of Pigeaud (1960-63: III 6).
- ³ The translation is Supomo's (Supomo 1977: II 230). The only other reference to ships and merchants in this work is 8.11d: *jong pelang tan dwa bingkas karēm ika, gumuruh banyaganyâtighurna*, "junks and *pelang* boats were wrecked and sank, and the screams of the merchants were tumultuous and deafening" (Supomo 1977: II 201).

- ⁴ The kinds referred to are *mañjēti*, *sanēbab*, *cahutar* and perhaps *pik*, to use the terms of the *kidungs* (see Mills 1970: 162-163). I have discussed this subject more fully in a paper read at the Second European Colloquium on Indonesian Studies held in London in April 1979.
- ⁵ Or in the words of the *Nāgarakṛtāgama* (83.2b): *nghing Jambudwīpa lawan Yawa kēta ng inucap kottamanya n sudeśa*, lit: "It was only India and Java of which the excellence as fine countries was mentioned", meaning that India and Java (in that order?) were the two most prosperous countries of the time.
- ⁶ The west coast of Sumatra was, however, also used for the trade from Sunda to the Maldives and Gujarat (Cortêsão 1944: 159-162; 170).
- ⁷ The text (12.6) does not say that these places were "subject", but that they "sought refuge" (*angaśraya*) and "approached humbly" (*marēk*), thereby suggesting a relationship of dependence on Majapahit, probably in fact a euphemism for subjection.
- ⁸ See Canto 27 of the *Malat* as summarized by Poerbatjaraka (1940).
- ⁹ Apart from the gravestones, Damais also studied the dates found on blocks of stone from the vicinity of Majapahit, the latest being the one called Trawulan X, bearing the date 1478.
- ¹⁰ Tantric Buddhism also gained a foothold in Pagan under King Narapati Sithu (1173-1210), apparently thanks to monks who fled to Burma from Bengal following the Muslim conquest (Griswold in Griswold, Chewon Kim and Pott 1964: 14).
- ¹¹ R. J. Wilkinson, in his *A Malay-English Dictionary*, already gave as derivation of Malay *senteri* the Tamil *santiri*, but this form could not be traced. For information on the Tamil I am indebted to Dr. A. Govindankutty of the University of Leiden.
- ¹² Or in the words of Snouck Hurgronje, "Those who sowed in the Far East the first seeds of Islam were no zealots prepared to sacrifice life and property for the holy cause, nor were they missionaries supported by funds raised in their native land. On the contrary these men came hither to seek their own worldly advantage, and the work of conversion was merely a secondary task" (Snouck Hurgronje 1906: II 278-279).
- ¹³ The actual passage gives the following details (Kidung Sunda ed. Berg 1927, 1.59a-b):
Patang wiji kang inutus, danta ning Sunda apatih, Anepakēn lawan dēmung tumēnggung, (ng)aran pangulu Barang, mwang Pitar apatih, wong sinaring umiringa wontēn tigang atus, lampah ikāngidul ndatan asari, pada agagañ-cangan jumog ing Masigit-Agung / Palaweyan kang dinunung, pada angetan lumaris, malih angidul lakwannya lumaju, prapta ring Pablantikan, anuli lumaris, prapta ring kapatihan . . .
 Translation:
 "Four were despatched, the Patih of Sunda, Anepakēn, the Dēmung and the Tumēnggung called Pangulu Barang, and Patih Pitar, accompanied by three hundred picked men. They headed south without delay and making haste came to Masigit-Agung; they headed for Palaweyan, going to the east, and again straight on to the south, till they arrived in Pablantikan and then went on and came to the Kapatihan."
- ¹⁴ "Maka Pateh Adam pun bēranak dēngan Tun Manda sa-orang laki-laki, Pateh Hussain nama-nya, itu-lah Pēnggeran Surabaya punya moyang yang kēna amok" (Shellabear 1961: 215).
- ¹⁵ Nilakanta Sastri (1966: 437) adds: "One section of Kāñchipuram bore the name of Buddhakāñchi to a relatively late date", although he does not say just how late, and mentions the above reference from the *Nāgarakṛtāgama*.

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