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KORTE MEDEDELINGEN

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READING OLD JAVANESE INSCRIPTIONS

Among the editions of Old Javanese inscriptions that are at present available, those prepared by W. F. Stutterheim deserve special praise. In general they are more accurate than any of the other editions and, owing to the author's unparalleled knowledge of ancient and modern Javanese civilization, of great interest to Indonesian studies. Yet, even Stutterheim sometimes made mistranslations or incorrect interpretations due to his probably exaggerated view of the continuity between old and modern Java. His transcriptions, however, are nearly always completely reliable – nearly always, as there are a few exceptions. It is true that any transcription involves an element of interpretation, for instance in the separation of the words of the original text, but this is hardly a problem, since every reader knows that the original inscriptions do not separate the individual words.¹ In a few cases Stutterheim went too far, however, for example when he transcribed *rāme* in some inscriptions as *rāma i*, 'village elder of', followed by the name of a village. This no doubt is the correct interpretation, but it is not an accurate representation of the original.

There are, however, cases where a given interpretation is not beyond doubt. Thus, Stutterheim occasionally transcribed *rake* of the original as *raka i*, as he thought that this title should be interpreted as 'Raka of' (some place over which the dignitary concerned exercised some form of authority). Such an interpretation would be plausible if the inscriptions sometimes give *rake* and at other times *raka i* (just as they usually give *rāma i* but occasionally *rāme*), but this is by no means the case; I have never found *raka i* in an original inscription. Once Stutterheim even admitted that he tacitly ('stilzwijgend') corrected any clerical errors he found in an inscription!²

Unfortunately even Stutterheim sometimes made mistakes in his transcriptions. In his otherwise exemplary edition of a copper-plate inscription of Balitung, rightly described by him as 'an important inscription of the Kěḍu' (Stutterheim 1927:173-216), one reads just after the beginning of line B-16 the words: *mati tanpa kasangkān · mati tanpa wacu bratan*. The passage occurs in the middle of the imprecation against all those venturing to violate the integrity of the foundation with its numerous privileges. In this case, the text of the imprecation is particularly elaborate, as also the king's ancestors are invoked as protectors of the foundation. In this connection the text gives us the famous list of the early kings of Mataram prior to Balitung, starting with *Rakai Matarām sang ratu Sañjaya*. Stutterheim fully translated and discussed this im-

portant dynastic list, but proposed no translation of the above-cited passage of B-16.

About fifteen years ago H. B. Sarkar re-printed Stutterheim's transcription (with one or two typing errors and the replacement of *w* by *v*) and added his own translation (Sarkar II 1972:69, 76). As for the puzzling words quoted earlier, he translated them as: 'he may die without reason, he may die without making purificatory rites (?)'. No note is added to account for this conjectural translation, which is surprising, as no word *wacu* is known from any other source. Nor is *wacu* listed in the new and almost exhaustive Old Javanese dictionary by Zoetmulder, presumably owing to some doubt about the reading.

A brief look at the original inscription, which is beautifully engraved on two copper plates in the Sriwedari Museum at Surakarta, convinced me that the passage has been misread. The error is due to an incorrect reading of the rarely used sign for the initial (long) *ī*, which is represented as a short initial *i* with a long, semi-circular curve resembling the medial *r* (*cakra*) attached to it. Actually, precisely the same sign occurs in the next two lines of the inscription (B-17 and 18), both times in the word *īndah*, where it has been correctly transcribed.

As for the preceding two *akṣaras*, which have suffered a little from corrosion, I have no doubt that they should be read as *ka* and *wu* respectively, thus yielding the word *kawuītan*,³ 'origin, cause, motive'. The whole passage should therefore be read as: *mati tanpa kasangkān · mati tanpa kawuītan*, 'he (the man who violates the rights of the foundation) shall die without cause; he shall die without reason'. The idea is clearly that such offenders will be killed automatically, without the need for a juridical death sentence, for instance: they may be killed by a crocodile while bathing in the river, by a poisonous snake while walking in a field, etc. Such is the power of the imprecation!

NOTES

- 1 This is the general principle; but words are sometimes separated by punctuation marks (especially in enumerations, lists of names etc.). In addition, the use of a *patèn* (*wirāma*) mark is always a clear indication of the end of a word.
- 2 See, for example, Stutterheim 1935:450, note 1: 'In den tekst heb ik de voor de hand liggende verschrijvingen of slordigheden (dialectische eigenaardigheden?) benevens enkele drukfouten [*sic*] uit de transcriptie verbeterd; een uitzondering werd gemaakt voor het onzekere *pamgēt*, *samgēt*, of *samgar*' [I have corrected the obvious writing errors and lapses (dialectal peculiarities?) in the text, as well as some printing errors of the transcription; I have made an exception for the uncertain *pamgēt*, *samgēt*, or *samgar*']. Fortunately Stutterheim did not often apply this method.
- 3 Zoetmulder 1982 gives for *kaw(w)itan* (s.v. *wwit*) among other meanings those of 'origin', 'beginning' etc. The word *kasangkān* is not given there, but we find mentioned (p. 1668) *tan pasangkān*, 'without demonstrable or clear origin'.

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J. ERKELENS

WIE LIET DE PADI ONHOORBAAR GROEIEN, EN WANNEER VOOR 'T EERST?

Dat padi onhoorbaar groeit, behoeft geen betoog. Het is inmiddels echter voor velen een vraag geworden (al dan niet gesteld), wie voor 't eerst deze constatering nieuwe inhoud gaf door een overeenkomst te leggen met het onhoorbaar groeien van het nationalisme in Indonesië, ongeveer in de periode 1910-1920. Hierop het antwoord te geven, is niet zo eenvoudig. Wellicht is dit mede te wijten aan de omstandigheid, dat deze woorden inmiddels gevleugeld zijn geworden en de 'schuldige' zich nog nimmer heeft gemeld.

Niet zelden wordt E. Douwes Dekker (Multatuli) er op aangekeken deze woorden voor 't eerst in die context te hebben gebruikt. Dit blijkt m.n. in het Multatuli-jaar 1987 het geval te zijn, b.v. in het artikel van K. S. Depari in het Indonesische dagblad *Suara Pempbaruan* van 12 maart 1987, waarin de schrijver zegt, dat Indonesië's eerste president, Soekarno, dikwijls citeerde uit de *Max Havelaar*, zoals 'de padi groeit onhoorbaar'. Ook Prof. Dr. C. Fasseur lijkt geneigd Multatuli te beschouwen als de auteur intellectuelis van deze woorden, althans gelet op de titel van zijn inaugurele rede te Leiden van 19 februari 1987: *Onhoorbaar groeit de padi; Max Havelaar en de publieke zaak*. Prof. Dr. W. F. Wertheim schrijft in 1953 deze woorden toe aan Prof. Dr. Jan Romein in zijn voorwoord bij de handelseditie van het proefschrift van J. M. Pluvier (*Overzicht van de ontwikkeling der nationalistische beweging in Indonesië*, 's-Gravenhage-Bandung, 1953, p. VII). Bijna dertig jaar nadien zegt Wertheim (tijdschrift *Bzzlletin* No. 81, dec. 1980, p. 44-45), dat Romein dit zinnetje voor de eerste maal gebruikte in zijn artikel 'Het Ontwaken van Azië' in de *Nieuwe Geïllustreerde Wereldgeschiedenis* van 1929 (deel 8, pp. 4999-5049).

In zijn artikel in *Bzzlletin* geeft Wertheim zelf reeds een correctie op zijn toeschrijven aan Romein, en wel n.a.v. een bericht uit Indonesië (in 1953; Wertheim dacht dat dit afkomstig was van Moh. Hatta). Het