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Chronologies and Chronograms

An Interim Response to Hägerdal

Hans Hägerdal's article on the chronology of the Balinese kingdom of Gelgel (1995) is a welcome contribution to recent attempts to describe this elusive period of Balinese history. In this article, Hägerdal takes issue with my own conclusions concerning the chronology of this period (Creese 1991a). It is neither possible for me to do justice to Hägerdal's detective work among the Dutch archival sources, nor to deal with his arguments point by point, in the context of this brief rejoinder. I will therefore confine myself to the discussion of the sections of his article where our studies overlap, namely the sections entitled 'The Later History of Gelgel' and 'The Political Shift in 1651-1686', and to some broader historiographical issues. I am currently working on a major study of the *Babad Dalem* and its satellite texts and will take up the many issues I am unable to deal with here in that work.

At first glance it is tempting to seize gratefully on the new evidence reported by Hägerdal and accept that Berg (1927) had indeed interpreted the fall of Gelgel correctly. However, having looked again at some of the source materials, I am unable to endorse Hägerdal's confident assertion that 'a comparison between Dutch and Balinese sources leaves little doubt that Di Made was the king ruling in the 1630s'. Even taking into account the additional data advanced by Hägerdal, the conjunctions between the Dutch and Balinese sources remain too few and too problematic for any real certainty, and there seems little hard evidence for positing a 'black hole' of one or two missing generations after the reign of Di Made in Balinese accounts of this period.

The two interpretations of the seventeenth century have widely divergent starting-points, which may in part explain the conclusions drawn. My own starting-point was the transition from the Gelgel period to the Klungkung dynasty, particularly the early decades of the eighteenth century, and my tentative reinterpretation of Berg's history of Gelgel was the background to the wider study that appeared in the subsequent issue of *BKI* (Creese 1991b). The transition from the Gelgel to the Klungkung dynasty is an important historical moment in Balinese depictions of the past, and Balinese sources provide a coherent account of those events. My focus was therefore on these Balinese accounts of the events that took place at the end of the seventeenth century. For both Berg and Hägerdal, on the other hand, the point of departure was a series of dates and comments recorded in Western sources and their focus was consequently on the period before c1650.

Hägerdal declares himself an historian rather than a philologist. The distinction is a moot one, particularly when dealing with Balinese historical traditions. More importantly, just as it is now generally recognized that philology without an historical context makes little sense, history without at least some textual analysis can only result in partial 'history'. For the purposes of this rejoinder, however, I will focus on three elements of the historian's stock-in-trade: events, names and dates.

The *Babad Dalem* presents in a more or less chronological way the origins of the major ruling dynasties and noble families of Bali, and is as much about the lesser nobility as the core Gelgel dynasty. It is written as a series of interwoven fragments moving from one descent group to another in a bewildering array of interconnecting lineages interspersed with narrative and mythical events. The structure and elliptic language of the text have implications for the interpretation and reinterpretation of the text itself through the generations, providing a fluidity that Western chronological historical writing lacks. Thus, Berg's assertion that the final section of the *Babad Dalem*, dealing with the fall of the dynasty, is 'fragmentary' (and therefore by implication a later addition and 'unreliable') is not borne out by a closer examination of the text. *Babad* invariably end abruptly, for ideally they are the kinds of texts that were and are continually updated with each new generation.

Nevertheless, there are from time to time 'events' described in the *Babad Dalem* on which an historian might focus. Three such events during the reign of Bekung, namely the two revolts by Batan Jruk and Pande (*Babad Dalem* 85-86) and the unsuccessful campaign against Pasuruhan in Blambangan (*Babad Dalem* 93), provide the foundation for the Berg/Hägerdal chronology.¹ Following Berg's reconstruction, Hägerdal wishes to equate Bekung with the king ruling Bali at the time of the first Dutch visit in 1597. At that time, the Balinese were reported to be at Kuta to equip an expedition against Pasuruhan. The Dutch were also told that an abortive revolt some ten to twelve years earlier had seen a relative of the king exiled to Nusa Penida. According to Hägerdal 'the similarities are too obvious to be ignored', but there are as many discrepancies as similarities between the Dutch and Balinese versions of this story, including two completely contradictory chronograms in the *Babad Dalem*, one dated 1578 (*Babad Dalem* 91), the other 1486 (*Babad Dalem* 85); Bekung's alleged childlessness and the Dutch report of several royal children; and the death, rather than exile, of the rebels.² Pande's genealogical link to the founding ancestor of the Gelgel dynasty, Kapakisan, as related in the

¹ Unless otherwise noted, *Babad Dalem* references are to the same edition as that used by Hägerdal, namely Warna 1986.

² For the difficulties of interpreting these chronograms, see Creese 1991a:247-8 n.16, 17. As Hägerdal notes (note 17), the *Babad Gumi* chronogram should read 1500 Śaka or 1578 A.D.

Babad Buleleng, a text not written until the early twentieth century (Schulte Nordholt 1992:56; cf. Worsley 1972:83), is hardly decisive. Moreover, as Hägerdal notes, even Bekung's expedition against Pasuruhan is ascribed to his successor, Saganing, in many Balinese traditions.

The central problem is that, although points of similarity do exist between the Dutch account and the *Babad Dalem*, both military expeditions in aid of Blambangan and revolts, particularly those by relatives of the king, are so commonplace throughout both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that, as I have argued earlier (Creese 1991a), it is possible to equate these events with any one of a number of rulers in the *Babad Dalem*. Although the visit of 1597 may have been of some significance in Dutch history, it passed unnoticed in Balinese sources. Bekung himself is in fact a problematic figure since, despite his prominent place in the *Babad Dalem*, neither the Padharman Dalem Gelgel shrine at Besakih nor other historical texts, such as the *Babad Blabatu*, *Babad Buleleng* and *Usana Bali*, preserve any memory of his existence.³

At the other end of the continuum of 'events' sits Di Made, whom Berg and Hägerdal both suggest was the king ruling Bali in the 1630s as well as the old king who died in c1650. However, in the *Babad Dalem* account, Di Made does not appear to have ever launched the attack on Pasuruhan that Berg/Hägerdal wish to make the focal event of his reign and to link to the ongoing conflicts of the 1630s in Blambangan known from Dutch sources. Perhaps more significantly, rather than depicting Di Made's reign as a time of prosperity, the final section of the *Babad Dalem* makes it quite clear that Di Made was forced from his throne before his death. Thus, a period of civil war during Di Made's reign and after c1650 is quite consistent with the *Babad Dalem* account.

Hägerdal's identification of Di Made with the Balinese king of the 1630s does not rest on these events alone, but also on the similarities between certain names in the Dutch and Balinese sources. Nevertheless, these conjunctions between names also deserve further critical consideration.

One of the most frustrating aspects of dealing with Balinese *babad* sources is that the names are rarely personal names and crop up in generation after generation. Hägerdal's argument hinges on the similarity between a number of names in the Dutch and Balinese sources, particularly that between the name Pannackan Patiekan, the crown prince of Oosterwijk's report of 1633 (Leupe 1856), and Dewa Pacekan, one of the sons of Di Made according to the *Babad Dalem* (103). In addition, Hägerdal proposes that Gustij Ponida is Di Made's minister Panida and the Pannackan t'Jouw (Cau) of the same report is Di Made's brother, I Dewa Cau (*Babad Dalem* 94). In Heurnius' report of 1638 (Leupe 1855) the

³ The absence of Bekung from the *Babad Blabatu* may be a factor in the longer chronology of the period after Di Made in this work.

princes referred to are Radja Tangap and Radja Pandjakan. Hägerdal concludes that both Patieken and Pandjakan are slightly corrupt variants of Pacekan. This conclusion is a reasonable one, but begs the question of whether the Pacekan of the Dutch sources is the Pacekan depicted as Di Made's son in the *babad* account.

Although Dewa Pacekan is included amongst the kings deified in the main Gelgel temple at Besakih as the last of the Gelgel line following Di Made, neither the *Babad Dalem* nor any other Balinese genealogical text or tradition of which I am aware lays claim to him as ruler or apical ancestor. He could perhaps be equated with Di Made's eldest son Pembayun of the *Babad Dalem* who, after his father's death, is said to have remained at Guliayang when his brother Jambe moved to Sidemen. However, not even Pacekan's parentage is absolutely certain in Balinese sources. The *Babad Manggis Gianyar*, for example, instead designates him the son of I Dewa Kaler, and the brother, rather than son, of Di Made's wife, Ni Dewa Pacekan.⁴ There is also a second *Babad Dalem* figure bearing this name, namely Kyayi Agung Ler Pacekan, who was the son and successor of Ki Gusti Panida, and who was involved in the overthrow of Agung (Maruti) that took place in 1686-7.⁵ In a number of other manuscripts of the *Babad Dalem* (including the two containing the oldest colophons, *Babad Pambañcangah Bali* (Museum Bali 5165) and *Babad Dalem Bodakeling* (HKS 3837)), this son of Di Made is named Pasekan rather than Pacekan.⁶ A Balinese envoy sent by the Dewa Agung to Batavia in 1705 called Pasakan is also recorded in Dutch sources (De Graaf collection).

Just as there may be more than one Pacekan, there are several other figures who bear the name Cau besides Saganing's son, I Dewa Cau. Hägerdal notes (note 33) that a Radja Tiou of Badung is mentioned in Dutch sources in 1666, and another, connected with Mengwi, in the early eighteenth century. A Paman Tsjauw is also one of the envoys sent by Agung Jambe in November 1693 to Batavia, possibly an elderly man, to judge by his title, but hardly likely to be the same one as the king's uncle and chief adviser of 1633 (De Graaf collection).⁷ In addition, the *Babad Blabatu* includes an Agung Cau in the sixteenth generation (late

⁴ I am grateful to I Dewa Gede Catra of Karangasem, who provided me with a copy of his transcription of this manuscript.

⁵ His co-minister was Ki Gusti Agung Di Made of Sidemen, the district in which Di Made's heir, Jambe, took refuge. The striking similarities in these names indicate that there are some interesting links and possible conflations of textual traditions still to be explored.

⁶ The Balinese characters for *sa* and *ca* are similar and easily confused.

⁷ There is even some indication that at least some VOC officials may have considered it a title (perhaps those who had served in Siam), for in 1695 the Dewa Agung of Klungkung's messengers are said to be Tsjahouw Cadisan and Niong (elsewhere Inong) Madenan (De Graaf collection).

nineteenth century?). In the same way, the Kamasan mentioned in Dutch missives of 1647-8, whom Hägerdal wishes to associate with Di Made's adviser Kamasan, could equally be placed in Saganing's reign, since Kamasan's father, known also by that name, served as Saganing's adviser (*Babad Dalem* 94).

Yet another figure in support of the *Babad Dalem* chronology of events is the renowned Gusti Pañji Sakti of Buleleng, who is known to have flourished in the closing decades of the seventeenth century and, at least in some traditions, is the son of Saganing himself. The same is also true of Gusti Batulepang, the son of Saganing's *patih*, Kyayi Agung. Like Pañji Sakti, he is a generational peer of Di Made according to the *Babad Dalem* (94), and it is known from Dutch sources that (a) Batulepang was instrumental in the restoration of the Gelgel lineage of Klungkung in 1687 (De Graaf collection). Like Pacekan, Cau and Kamasan, the name Batulepang may well be an appanage title passed on from generation to generation and cannot be positively identified with the name recorded in Dutch sources. It is not possible here to attempt to find a way through this maze of names, and the connections proposed by Hägerdal are certainly among the options. It should be clear, however, that the task of identifying names with specific figures is not a clear-cut one.

In support of his theory that it can only have been Di Made who was ruling in 1630, Hägerdal makes considerable use of the *Babad Gumi* (Kirtya 808 / LOr 10.548). Hägerdal is correct in assuming that I do consider it 'more reasonable to question the traditional chronograms than the genealogies'. He, on the other hand, places great faith in the chronogram material found in the *Babad Gumi* which, as he notes, is a date list containing memorable events in the Balinese past, provided with both chronogram and numeric dates. While chronograms are not unusual in Balinese and Javanese textual traditions, and lists of dates do occur, as for example in the *Candrasangkala* (HKS 2852/3630) and *Bungkah ing Sundari Terus* (HKS IX,65), the *Babad Gumi* is a singular example of the genre precisely because of the chronological sequencing of the events recorded in it. It displays the same kind of chronological interest as that found in a number of other texts, including the *Babad Dalem* A version of Warna (1986; see also Creese 1991a, Appendix 2), the *Babad Bali Rajia*, which is a chronological summary of Bali's history, complete with headings and dates, as well as a considerable number of recent *babad* of various descent groups.

Although the impact of Western scholarship on Balinese textual traditions is a relatively unexplored area, the influence of the work of Dutch historians, including those such as Berg, Lekkerkerker and De Graaf, who were concerned with this period of Balinese history, should not be underestimated. It is not unknown for Western writings to have found their way back into *lontar* form and thence back into public manuscript collections such as that of the Gedong Kirtya (Supomo 1993:41-2). Thus, although the

Babad Gumi gives a number of dates that seem to support Hägerdal's chronology, the dates themselves must be treated with considerably more caution than he has done. Hägerdal notes that the *Babad Gumi* attributes Saganing's death to the year 1623. On the other hand, the text of the *Babad Dalem B* (Warna 1986), from which he draws the bulk of his information, gives 1665, a year that appears to have now become the accepted date in modern Balinese historical writing, but which is almost certainly apocryphal. Most *lontar* manuscript versions of the *Babad Dalem* simply have a zero at this point (*i Śaka* 0).

Hägerdal points out that the Balinese sources are 'unpredictable'. There is no denying that this is true, at least for the task he has set himself, but the same is perhaps also more applicable to the Dutch sources than he acknowledges. The Dutch reports of 1633 and 1638 can hardly be said to contain the same information regarding the Balinese political situation, and the problem of the contradictory Portuguese sources also needs further investigation. The sheer ignorance of Dutch sailors and envoys and their brief, intermittent contact with Bali are also factors that need to be addressed before their reports are accepted unreservedly.

To seek to ask precise chronological questions of the Balinese sources as Hägerdal has done is perhaps to ask the wrong questions. As recent discussion has shown (Vickers 1990; Schulte Nordholt 1992), Balinese notions of history are not Western ones, and its historiographical writings are concerned with origins rather than dates. The current debate over the chronology of the Gelgel period highlights this issue by pointing out the problems inherent in seizing upon a name or date in a Balinese source and ascribing to it an importance it may not warrant.

In conclusion, I am still inclined to consider the Berg/Hägerdal chronological 'black hole' in the Balinese sources as a product of the impossibility of matching fragmentary pieces of data from widely divergent sources. Attempts to find links between Dutch and Balinese sources sometimes prove quite fruitful (Schulte Nordholt 1988; Creese 1991b). However, for the seventeenth century, such meeting-points are so rare that the task of identifying particular figures should probably be considered an impossible one. As I have demonstrated, it is possible to muster at least as much evidence for a later reign for Di Made, such as I have put forward in my reinterpretation of Gelgel, as to tie it to the 1630s. While acknowledging that the manipulation of origins is an important feature of Balinese *babad* writing, to claim that the *Babad Dalem* has been 'simplified consciously rather than from a lack of historical memory' on the basis of apparent contradictions/connections with the fragmentary Dutch sources that are available, is untenable. It is only when considerably more work has been done on the interconnections of Balinese textual traditions concerning this period that any certainty may be brought to bear on the connections with Western sources. Hägerdal's article, however, has pointed the way to some stimulating lines of enquiry that such a discussion might follow.

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