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An Old Text Brought to Life Again A Reconsideration of the 'Final Version' of the *Babad Tanah Jawi*

In Javanese literature the generic term for 'stories about past events' is *babad*. This term is applied to a wide range of texts, but the one which has attracted by far the most attention from scholars of many disciplines is the *Babad Tanah Jawi*. In J.J. Ras' words (1992a:184), it 'occupies a unique position with regard to the other babads'. This is due, according to Ras, to its 'specific character', because '[i]t was written at the royal court by a *pujangga dalem*, i.e. a person well-versed in letters holding the highest clerical rank at court. Originally this post was held by a kind of religious official.' (Ras 1992a:184.) The *Babad Tanah Jawi* is not some notebook or chronicle in prose, but a poem written in Javanese metres (*tembang macapat*).

Ras has expounded his views on the genesis and function of the 'final' Surakarta version of this *babad*, commonly known as the 'Major Babad', in a number of fairly recent publications (see especially Ras 1987b:ix-lxiii, and also Ras 1992a, 1992b and 1994). Ras' theory is that this text served to legitimize the reigning king's position as ruler. The aim of the 'chronicle of the realm' was to prove the ruler's right to the throne by virtue of ancestry and divine predestination. It justified the present by an authoritative account of the past.

The Major Babad is said to be the product of a process of more than two centuries of constant writing and rewriting. Ras argues that the text probably originated in around 1612, with the rewriting of the *Babad Demak* on the orders of Panembahan Séda ing Krapyak (c.? 1601-1613), the ruler of the nascent realm of Mataram in Central Java. It was completed during the reign of his son, Sultan Agung (1613-1649), and functioned as a charter to legitimize his rule. Subsequent rewriting, necessary for the periodic updating of the text, mostly involved only minor adaptations and interpolations. After particular crises, however, a drastic recast was necessary. For this purpose, prophecy and allusion were resorted to as literary devices. Prophecies and

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allusions were integrated into earlier parts of the story as a way of foreshadowing later, 'predestined', events.

Ras distinguishes a number of major revisions, the first of which was made after 1680 to legitimize the position of Amangkurat II as the first ruler of the realm of Kartasura. The second revision was needed after 1705 to legitimize the usurpation of the throne by Prince Puger (Pakubuwana I, 1705-1719). Then Pakubuwana II had the text updated to the end of his father's reign (Amangkurat IV, 1719-1726). Pakubuwana III in his turn had Pakubuwana II's reign (1726-1749) included. The Babad was again rewritten on the orders of Pakubuwana IV 'when the latter found himself and his dynasty in danger in 1788' (Ras 1992c:270). The last rewriting of the text took place in 1836 on the orders of Pakubuwana VII, who needed to legitimize his position after the disastrous outcome of the Java War (1825-30) and the subsequent banishment of Pakubuwana VI in 1830. This last revision dwarfed all its predecessors. According to Ras (1994:534), the expansion of the text in 1836 assumed excessive proportions. The unique manuscript of this 'definitive' version kept in the Leiden University Library (LOR.¹ 1786) runs to no fewer than eighteen folio volumes. Coming to slightly over 9,000 pages (Pigeaud 1968:25), the Major Babad ranks as one of the most impressive products of Javanese literature. The colonial publishing house Balai Pustaka in 1939-41 published the first half of the story, up to the foundation of Surakarta in 1745 (LOR. 1786, vol. 10), in 31 small volumes on the basis of the typescript transliteration by Soegiarto (Leiden University Library BCB portfolios 30-34).

On the face of it, Ras' theory of the textual history of the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, building on the work of Brandes, Djajadiningrat, De Graaf and Berg, seems logical and convincing enough, though it must be remembered that it is of a highly hypothetical nature. New insights, like those offered by, for example, Ricklefs' sceptical views about the possibility of determining the time of writing of particular passages on the basis of prophecies (see Ricklefs 1998:387), or simply by the analysis of more manuscripts belonging to the *Babad Tanah Jawi* tradition than the few on which Ras concentrated, might give rise to different conclusions.

With regard to the so-called final rewriting in 1836, a weak point in Ras' argument is that he nowhere explains why this necessarily had to take place in that specific year. To put it differently, why was the *Babad Tanah Jawi* not rewritten earlier, for instance in 1830, the year when Pakubuwana VII succeeded to the throne, or in 1834, when he entered into a very important dynastic marriage to the daughter of the Madurese Sultan? Furthermore, Ras does not seem to be very well informed about the historical situation at the Solo-

¹ A list of abbreviations may be found at the end of this article.

nese court in the nineteenth century. For instance, he is unaware of the precise family relations between Pakubuwana VI and Pakubuwana VII and does not mention the rivalry which existed between them (see Ras 1992c:270, 1994: 534). Yet, in my opinion, a knowledge of the historical context is essential for a better understanding of both the dates and the function of the Major Babad.

In this article I want to pursue the question of the final rewriting of the *Babad Tanah Jawi* in greater depth. This issue not only is of interest for philologists and (literary) historians, but also is relevant for our ideas of the Javanese state ideology. First, I will briefly sketch Pakubuwana VII's historical background before his accession to the throne. Then I will dwell on the opening stanzas of the Major Babad, which play a pivotal role in Ras' theory. Finally, I will turn to the so-called *Babad Meinsma* (named after its Dutch editor, J.J. Meinsma), which is a synopsis in prose and is closely related to the Major Babad.

The contest for the throne

For Pakubuwana VII the search for legitimacy began long before 1836, at a time when he was still called Prince Purbaya. He was the oldest (surviving) son of Pakubuwana IV and Ratu Kencana. Already in 1815, his mother's party at court had tried to secure his rights to the throne by trying to eliminate the crown prince, the future King Pakubuwana V, from the succession and put Prince Purbaya forward instead. This attempt failed, and in 1820, after the death of Pakubuwana IV, the crown prince became Susuhunan Pakubuwana V. His early death in 1823 seemed to clear the way for Purbaya, but due to internal court intrigues the oldest son of Pakubuwana V was chosen as the new king. This was a slap in the face for Purbaya: at the time of his accession, the sixteen-year-old King Pakubuwana VI did not even have princely status, having only been known as the Grand Vizier's spittoon bearer (Wieringa 1994:189-92).

Pakubuwana VI's reign (1823-1830) proved to be anything but a success, and the Dutch repeatedly toyed with the idea of deposing him and appointing Purbaya in his place (Wieringa 1994:192 ff.). But with the Java War still in progress, the Dutch were very cautious. Especially from the year 1828 onwards, Pakubuwana VI several times narrowly escaped dethronement. In the meantime, Purbaya presented himself to the Dutch as their ideal candidate. In a secret letter to a Dutch officer at the end of 1828, Purbaya stated that, according to Javanese custom, it was he who was entitled to the throne of Surakarta. Everything he said and did, so he wrote, was fully in accordance with the will of the Dutch, and he counted on them to give him back his father's realm (LOr. 2168, no. 50).

Perhaps in an effort to put the record with regard to his birthright straight, Purbaya ordered his chief official, Mas Ngabèhi Sindusastra, on 25 November 1829 to make a study of his Javanese and Arabic lines of descent and to present the outcome of this study in the form of a literary work.² This genealogy forms the beginning of at least three texts dealing with Java's mythological past.³ The genealogy as a whole need not concern us here.⁴ It is merely a long list of ancestors presented in the form of 'A begot B, B begot C, C begot D', and so on. It begins with the Prophet Adam and his two sons, Sis and Sultan Kayumarat. Sis succeeded his father as prophet, inheriting Adam's prophethood (*kanabéyan*), whereas Sultan Kayumarat became the ruler of the realm of Kusniya Malébari, inheriting Adam's kingship (*karaton*). So the genealogy is divided into a right branch (*panengen*), representing the Arabic, prophetic line (counting the Prophet Muhammad, Fatimah and Husain among the ancestors), and a left branch (*pangiwa*), representing the Javanese royal line (counting *wayang* heroes and the Hindu-Buddhist kings among the ancestors). The two lines are finally joined together in the members of the House of Mataram.

Such royal genealogical lists were common at the court of Solo, and Sindusastra probably simply adapted an already existing list. With a few minor variations, it is almost identical to the genealogy of Pakubuwana VI copied in 1824 (see Winter 1902:26 ff.). The final part of Sindusastra's work is different from Pakubuwana VI's genealogy, however, which provides its *raison d'être*. Here we read (Palmer van den Broek 1870:4 (Javanese text), canto 2:4) that

² LOr. 1813, canto 1:1-3; see also Palmer van den Broek 1870:1 (Javanese text). The Javanese date is 28 Jumadilawal in the year when 'the hermits whispered with one voice' (*wiku misik swara tunggal*), that is, AJ 1757.

³ The three texts are: (1) *Serat Arjuna Sasrabau* (edited by Palmer van den Broek 1870); (2) *Serat Partayagnya*, begun by Sindusastra and finished by his son Radèn Rangka Nayadipura in 1850 (see Behrend and Pudjiastuti 1997a:421 for references to MSS); and (3) *Serat Kandha*, which according to Behrend (1990:8-9) comprises the history from Sayid Anwar to Dèwi Sri and Radèn Sadana. Behrend and Pudjiastuti (1997b:891) furthermore mention a *Sejarahing Nungsa Jawa* (Fakultas Sastra, Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta, MS SJ 209/L 8.47), written by Sindusastra on 25 November 1829 on the orders of Purbaya. Then there is also a *Sajarahing Ratu Jawi*, written by a certain Ngabèhi Gunawijaya, who began his work on AJ 15 Dulkaidah 1759 (AD 15 April 1832), which claims to be based on Sindusastra's text (L.Or. 4946, folios 55a-95a; the date appears on f. 1a-b).

⁴ Pakubuwana VII at some point during his reign ordered his poet Ngabèhi Sastrawijaya to copy/rewrite the genealogy. Unfortunately the sole testimony seems to be a Dutch translation which only contains the beginning of the left, royal branch (L.Or. 7940, no. 3). It is undated, and it is impossible to determine whether it differs from Sindusastra's list. Ngabèhi Sastrawijaya is identified as 'the king's writer'; could it perhaps be that Sastrawijaya was a new, more elevated name for Sindusastra after his patron's promotion?

<i>iya jeng Susunan Bagus</i>	His Highness Susuhunan Bagus,
<i>Pakubuwana ping pat</i>	Pakubuwana the Fourth,
<i>ratu ambek wali mukmin</i>	a king of devout and saintly character,
<i>apuputra Pangran Dipati Purbaya</i>	begot Prince Purbaya.

In other words, the Javanese list of kings, beginning with Adam, finally comes to its conclusion with Purbaya. The text continues (Palmer van den Broek 1870:4 (Javanese text), canto 2:5):

<i>jumeneng kolonèl usar</i>	He holds the rank of colonel of the hussars,
<i>kang sinatriya geng nagri</i>	and is regarded as the great nobleman
<i>Surakarta Adiningrat</i>	of the court of Surakarta Adiningrat.

The poet almost makes a king of Purbaya, using the rather uncommon expression *jumeneng kolonèl usar*, which is reminiscent of the more usual phrase *jumeneng nata*, 'to rule as king'. The man who in 1829 really ruled as king, Pakubuwana VI, is not mentioned at all in the text.

The opening stanzas of the Major Babad

In June 1830, shortly after the end of the Java War, Pakubuwana VI left his palace without prior Dutch consent and was thereupon deposed and banished to Ambon. In all probability Pakubuwana VI never planned to start a new war, as the Dutch claimed, but his 'flight' gave the Dutch a pretext to get rid of him and appoint Purbaya as his successor (Wieringa 1994:205 ff.). From the outset Purbaya, or Pakubuwana VII, enjoyed the full support of the Dutch and had no internal court opposition to fear. Why, then, should he have been in need of a drastic rewriting of the *Babad Tanah Jawi*? According to Ras, the legitimizing function of the text is formulated explicitly in the opening stanzas. Ras overlooks the fact, however, that this introduction was not entirely new. It was taken from the 1788 version, nowadays preserved in NBS 224, kept in the Leiden University Library. This runs as follows:

<i>Munggèng sarkara ring ukara nis</i>	Lines composed in <i>dhandhanggula</i> without
<i>sasmita tan sumukèng pustaka</i>	a cue produce an unpleasant text;
<i>kang tyas rujit karejété</i>	one is deeply hurt.
<i>lir antaka kawantu</i>	As if struck by death,
<i>Murwisésaning Yyang kaèksi</i>	one sees the Almighty Creator,
<i>kang nitah amamatah</i>	the Creator and Distributor
<i>ing boga sawegung</i>	of all food;
<i>kang amurwa sifat purba</i>	He Who created the first things

*kang ambagi sagala isining bumi
nimpuni paripudya*

and Who divides everything on earth,
receiving [man's] worship.

*Kang asih mring rahsanya ngasihi
mangka manggala para dinuta
dipèng rat wuryaning raté*

He who loves those who inwardly love
him
is the first among the Messengers,
a light in this world from the very
beginning.

*respati kang rinasul
warana ris nayakèng bumi*

He is well-suited to be a Prophet
as a friendly mediator and a viceroy on
earth.

*kuneng awit kawangwang
wawangson winangun
rawining rat nusa Jawa*

Now we begin to consider
the contract which was concluded;
the story of the whole of the Javanese
island

*kinarsakken dinawa supaya dadi
manfangat winasiyat*

should be prolonged, in order to be
beneficial as an heirloom.

*Mangka pangèngget amèmènggeti
wajib sajarahing tanah Arab
tuhu ing Jawa tan paé
pamilanging luluwur
pan inguni kalimosadi
pusaka pinustaka
ing karsa sang prabu
Pakubuwana kaping pat
pinrih aja parbatan wit carita di*

As a reminder, in order not to forget,
the genealogy from Arabia is needed
and, verily, the Javanese one as well.
The enumeration of the ancestors
was from of old a talisman.
An heirloom in the form of a book
is what our king,
Pakubuwana the Fourth, desired,
wishing that the beginning of the noble
story should not be a bone of conten-
tion,

ayya nanggung rekasa

lest anyone be troubled.

*Rikang nalika mretèng palupi
limalas Ngakhad Rabiylulawal
kanem mangsa lif warsané*

The date when the old text was revived
was Sunday, the fifteenth of Rabiulawal,
the sixth month [of the solar year], in the
year Alif,

Pon wuku Julungarum

[the market day] Pon, the *wuku* Julung-
wangi;

margèng nata kaswarèng dasih

'the way of the king is proclaimed by the
servants'

*pareng ingkang sengkala
mugya Hyang Aruhur
marma martana nugraha*

was the chronogram.
May the Almighty,
Who bestows blessings and boons,

mawantua safangat si murtèng bumi incessantly intercede
mring sang kretartèng praja on behalf of the ruler of the realm.

Purwaning wasita kang tinati

The beginning of the tale is arranged
 [according to]

sajarahing nata kina-kina

the genealogy of the kings in olden times,
 who cultivated the island of Java.

ing nusya Jawa babadé

The first of the ancestors

dhihin ingkang luluhur

was the Prophet Adam, who begot Esis.

Nabi Adam putra Esis

Esis begot Nurcahya.

Esis putra Nurca<h>ya.

Nurcahya had a son

Nurcahya asunu

called Nurrasa.

iya mangaran Nurrasa

Sang Nurrasa begot Sanghyang Wening,

sang Nurrasa ya aputra sanghyang

Wening

who begot Sanghyang Tunggal.

aputra sanghyang Tunggal

These stanzas, with the exception of stanza 4 (containing the date), are reproduced verbatim in the Major Babad of 1836. Between stanzas 3 and 5 of the older text, the writer of the 1836 version added the following two stanzas:

Santosaa ri wardaya déning

One may accept it with a tranquil mind,
 because of

muktamaté carita punika

the reliability of the story,

winangun lawan kususé

arranged in accordance with what is
 commonly accepted,

tinurut urutipun

it follows the line [of descent]

malar dadya tepa palupi

in order to become an example.

ri kang karsa amarna

The person who wanted it as story

nenggih jeng Sinuhun

was indeed His Highness

Pakubuwana ping sapta

Pakubuwana the Seventh,

angluluri anggiting rama narpati

preserving the composition of his royal
 father,

pinrih sapangatira

in order to obtain his blessing.

Tumeraha trus ing wuri-wuri

May it continue to be handed down in
 the future

warananing murwèng kawiryawan

as a way of gaining prestige,

wahyaning wahyu wiyosé

disclosing [the king's] heaven-sent royal
 dignity;

mawantua rahayu

may he always further the well-being

yuwanané dènniya ngayomi

of all his subjects

ring wadya sadayanya

and may he always protect them.

<i>kasub sabiyantu</i>	They are famous for their unanimity.
<i>aywa na sangsayanira</i>	Let there be no misfortune,
<i>amanggiha suka arja sanagari</i>	may the entire country find pleasure and luck
<i>déning dana naréndra</i>	thanks to the benevolence of the king.

This is followed by a stanza about the date of the new version; quite in the style of its model:

<i>Nihan nalika martèng palupi</i>	The date when the old text was revived was
<i>Tumpak Wagé ping gangsal ing Rajab</i>	Saturday, [the market-day] Wagé, the fifth of the [month of] Rajab,
<i>lumaksanèng taun Ehé</i>	in the current year Ehé,
<i>Sancaya mangsa catur</i>	the <i>windu</i> Sancaya, the fourth month [of the solar year],
<i>Mandhasiya dèn-sengkalani</i>	the <i>wuku</i> Mandhasiya, with the chronogram
<i>dadi rasa sabdéndra</i>	The word of the king was taken note of.
<i>muga Hyang kang ruhur</i>	May the Almighty,
<i>marma martana nugraha</i>	Who bestows blessings and boons,
<i>inistura ing rahmat sang murbèng</i>	help the ruler of the realm with His
<i>bumi</i>	blessing.

After this the actual story begins with the genealogy of Adam, exactly the same as in the 1788 version.

A further comparison of the 1836 version (LOr. 1786 or NBS 230) with the 1788 version (NBS 224) shows that the new text is but a replica of the old one. NBS 224 ends with canto 46, however, whereas the 1788 version must have continued beyond that, as its last lines read 'about the big, two-coloured fortress, / the king liked its sweetness' (*kitha bacingah kang agung / nata suka artatinya*), containing the cue *artati* ('sweetness') for the introduction of the *dhandhanggula* ('sugar crow') verse form in the next canto.

An old text revived

It is my contention that the whole of the 1788 version was copied, and not only the first forty-six or forty-seven cantos. Some clues that support this hypothesis are found in the aforementioned opening stanzas. As is quite common, the text opens with a sentence signalling the metre (in this case *dhandhanggula*, a very popular verse form for openings). Then, using what

seems to me rather far-fetched imagery, the poet switches to an invocation of God which, as Ras (1992a:188) rightly remarks, together with lines 1-5 of stanza 2 constitutes a poetic variant of the *shahāda*, the Islamic profession of faith. Like Ras, one may read the remainder of the introduction by focusing on the story's legitimizing function, but I wish to place emphasis on another aspect, namely its character as an heirloom. Both kings explicitly express a wish to preserve an older text which they inherited.

In this context I would like to draw attention to the intriguing first line of the stanza concerning the date of origin of the text. In the 1788 version this line reads *rikang nalika mretèng palupi*, and in the 1836 version *nihan nalika martèng palupi*. The key phrase here is *mretèng palupi* or *martèng palupi*. Judging by his translation 'this is the time at which the writing is published', Ras (1987a:X) seems to have interpreted the word *martèng* (a contraction of *marta* and *ing*) as a verb derived from *warta* ('news', 'report', 'communication'). In my opinion, however, the word *mreta* or *marta* has to be understood as *anggesangi*, meaning 'to bring to life, to revive' (Winter and Ranggawarsita 1990:137, 149); it ultimately probably goes back to Old Javanese / Sanskrit *amṛta*, 'immortality', 'draught of immortality' (see Gericke and Roorda 1901, II:482-3). Javanese dictionaries define the next word, *palupi*, as 'example, model' (*tuladha, pola, tuturutan*), or as 'writing, book' (*tulisan, layang*) (Poerwadarminta 1939:460; Winter and Ranggawarsita 1990:194). Interestingly, however, it is also glossed as *lepiyan*, meaning 'a text or piece of writing which has been saved even though it is no longer used, but is kept for remembrance sake or in case it might be needed as a model for other written texts' (Winter and Ranggawarsita 1990:194; Gericke and Roorda 1901, II:134 s.v. *lepèh*; translation by Day 1981:276). In Java's tropical climate, copying was necessary if one wanted to preserve a manuscript. Works which were not continually revived through continual copying simply disappeared.

So which king, if not Pakubuwana IV nor Pakubuwana VII, ordered the final rewriting of our text? Meinsma already in 1877 pointed to a Javanese tradition, recorded by Brumund in the 1860s, which is very important in this respect (Meinsma 1877:6; also quoted in Djajadiningrat 1913:221 and in Ras 1992a:193). Brumund (1868:302) claims, on the authority of Javanese experts, that the *Babad Tanah Jawi* 'as we have it at present' (*zoo als wij dien thans bezitten*) – in other words the Major Babad – was rewritten after 1744 on the orders of Pakubuwana II (1726-1749). He had it brought up to date till the death of his father. Thereafter Pakubuwana III (1749-1788) also had the reign of his father included in the Babad and ordered copies of the text for circulation. After that, Brumund notes, later Solonese rulers, but also other Javanese rulers and aristocrats, adapted the *Babad Tanah Jawi* according to their own needs and tastes.

It should be remembered that the *Babad Tanah Jawi* of the Solonese kings

was only one among many versions existing in Java. Ras (1992a:210) gets round this particular problem by contending that the Major Babad represents the 'official version', whereas the other recensions are mere second-rate story-books. In my opinion, the 'official' status of the Major Babad was restricted to the Solonese court; outside the Solonese palace walls, other versions had an equal claim to authority.

A look at the structure of the cantos may suffice to show the great diversity that marks *Babad Tanah Jawi* texts (see Day 1979 and Ricklefs 1979). For a comparison with the Major Babad, I have chosen three other versions at random. These are: (1) the *Babad Kraton*, a Yogyane version of 1777, written by Radèn Tumenggung Jayèngrat, son-in-law to the Sultan (Ricklefs 1974:212); (2) LOr. 6783, a manuscript from Sampang (Madura), begun in 1807⁵; and (3) LOr. 3182, a manuscript begun by one Tirtasura, *mantri jawa* of Yogyakarta, in 1823.⁶ Although the wording may differ slightly, all three texts have basically the same beginning as the Major Babad.

<i>Babad Kraton</i> , canto 1:3	LOr. 6783, canto 1:3	LOr. 3182, canto 1:10
<i>Hyang aripta atembang artati</i>	<i>Purwaning wasita kang tiniti</i>	<i>Winurcita teturunanèki</i>
<i>kang tinutur sajarahing nata</i>	<i>sajarahi nata kina-kina</i>	<i>serat babad sujarah naréndra</i>
<i>ing nusa Jawi sakèhé</i>	<i>ing nusa Jawi babadé</i>	<i>ing nusa Jawi purwané</i>
<i>dhihin i<ng>kang luluhur</i>	<i>dhingin ingkang luluhur</i>	<i>dhihin ingkang leluhur</i>
<i>Nabi Adam aputra</i>	<i>Nabi Adam aputra Esis</i>	<i>Nabi Adam putra Nabi Sis</i>
<i>Esis putra Nurcahya</i>	<i>Esis putra Nurcahya</i>	<i>Nabi Sis apeputra</i>
<i>Nurca<h>ya asunu</i>	<i>Nurcahya asunu</i>	<i>Nurcahya susunu</i>
<i>iya kang aran Nurrasa</i>	<i>iya kang aran Nurrasa</i>	<i>Sang Nurrasa apeputra</i>
<i>nulya putra Sa<ng>hyang</i>	<i>Sang Nurrasa apeputra</i>	<i>Sanghyang Wenang aputra</i>
	<i>Sang-</i>	
<i>Wenang iku si<ng>gih</i>	<i>hyang Wèning</i>	<i>Yyang Tu<ng>gal siwi</i>
<i>aputra Sa<ng>hyang</i>	<i>aputra Sanghyang</i>	<i>Sanghyang Guru peputra</i>
<i>Tu<ng>gal</i>	<i>Tunggal</i>	

Comparing the structure of the cantos, however, we see that four distinct versions can be differentiated (see figure 1, which gives the names of the verse forms and the number of stanzas per canto; for reasons of space, only the first ten cantos are listed).

⁵ LOr. 6783, canto 1:2, reads: ... / *purwanipun sinerat / nenggih dinten Saptu / Tanggal sapta-las lèk Sapar / taun esi kreti guna sabda nabi / punika kang se<ng>kala / /*. The Javanese date 17 Sapar 1734 coincided with AD 26 April 1807.

⁶ According to a note in Javanese script on the first page, it was later (in 1864) purchased in Ngawi by a Chinese called Tan Bing Tik (*Tan Bing Tik beli di Ngawi 1864*).

Figure 1. Canto structure of four *Babad Tanah Jawi* MSS

Major Babad	<i>Babad Kraton</i>	LOr. 6783	LOr. 3182
1 dhandhanggula, 17	dhandhanggula, 159	dhandhanggula, 34	dhandhanggula, 56
2 asmaradana, 47	mijil, 123	mijil, 35	durma, 36
3 sinom, 37	asmaradana, 65	sinom, 12	asmaradana, 35
4 pangkur, 29	dhandhanggula, 44	dhandhanggula, 30	mijil, 40
5 durma, 57	durma, 20	girisu, 19	megatruh, 28
6 dhandhanggula, 88	dhandhanggula, 29	asmaradana, 62	kinanthi, 35
7 pangkur, 30	durma, 26	dhandhanggula, 28	sinom, 38
8 mijil, 62	dhandhanggula, 46	sinom, 26	dhandhanggula, 26
9 durma, 39	sinom, 77	kinanthi, 17	durma, 22
10 asmaradana, 84	dhandhanggula, 78	pangkur, 24	asmaradana, 58

These four texts not only differ in poetic structure, but also present four variant accounts.

Compared to the Major Babad, all the other Javanese versions of the *Babad Tanah Jawi* can only be described as 'minor'. This is due to the strong emphasis in the Major Babad on the reigns of Pakubuwana II and III. From Ras' brief survey of the contents of the published edition it is clear that this 3,754-page text can be divided into the following five parts: (1) 128 pages about earliest times; (2) 137 pages about the kingdoms of Demak and Pajang; (3) 347 pages containing the history of Mataram; (4) 1,045 pages on the history of Kartasura; and (5) 2,097 pages about the history of Surakarta up to 1745 (Ras 1992a:185-6). The published text, however, only covers the first ten volumes of LOr. 1786; the other eight volumes deal with the history of the years 1745-68 (Ras 1992a:185). In my opinion the disproportionate attention to the reigns of Pakubuwana II and III supports the Javanese tradition that the Major Babad was written during their lifetimes. They needed a lot of words to account for their loss in the power struggle, which had ended with the division of the Javanese kingdom into petty principalities.

It is difficult to say whether Pakubuwana IV in 1788 rewrote the text he had inherited from his father, because Pakubuwana III's text is no longer available. In any case, two and a half months after his accession to the throne, Pakubuwana IV⁷ ordered his father's version to be recorded in a book, which we now know as the Major Babad. Ras' suggestion that his orders accordingly were prompted by the dangerous situation at the time seems illogical. In the first few months of Pakubuwana IV's reign, the Solonese court was not under threat. 'His youth, his personal mildness, and

⁷ He became Sunan Pakubuwana IV on 29 September 1788; his *Babad Tanah Jawi* was begun on 14 December 1788.

his physical weakness did not suggest much was to be expected from him' (Ricklefs 1974:311). Only in 1789 did a political crisis arise, which came to a head in the following year, when the Solonese court was surrounded by several thousand troops of the Dutch East India Company, from Yogyakarta, and from Mangkunegara I's district. The crisis was quickly defused, however, when at the end of 1790 Pakubuwana IV begged the Dutch for pardon and a new treaty was signed, formally acknowledging the partition of the Javanese kingdom on a permanent basis.

Dutch involvement

Ras (1987b:xxii-xxv) has developed a rather complicated theory about an interpolation in canto 26:65-71, which is included at the end of LOr. 1786 (and also of NBS 230, which Ras did not consider). This theory is based on a misinterpretation of the chronogram in canto 26:71, however. In LOr. 1786 this chronogram reads *tata aryas resi prabu*, and in NBS 230 *tata anggas resi prabu*. The problematic word here is the indicator for the decade – *aryas* or *anggas*, which Ras (1987b:xxiv) translates as 'waistband', with the numerical value '1'.⁸ Ras therefore interprets the chronogram as designating AJ 1715, or AD 1788, the year when Pakubuwana IV ascended the throne. Both these words are associated with trees, however, and therefore have the numerical value '6' (Bratakesawa 1980:235; Sajid n.d.:10).⁹ So in actual fact the chronogram should be read as AJ 1765, the full date being AJ 29 Jumadilawal 1765, corresponding to AD 31 August 1837. Probably the temporary break in copying in 1837 was mentioned in the text to indicate the last page of the first volume – at least it is the last page in NBS 230, while in LOr. 1786 it is followed by some blank pages.

The remarkable fact remains that the copying of a mere 26 cantos of the 1788 version took ten months (October 1836 - August 1837). Why did this take so long? Furthermore, the text of LOr. 1786 may be long, but it ends abruptly and does not seem to be complete. Its 'sequel', the so-called *Babad*

⁸ In Gericke and Roorda 1901, I:223 (*tali*) *anggas* is indeed given this definition, though with the numerical value '6'.

⁹ The word *aryas* (or *arès*) is not listed in the usual works on chronograms, and may result from a scribal error. It may be interpreted as a poetic form of *arès*, meaning, *inter alia*, 'the bump at the bottom of the banana-tree trunk where the shoots appear; also the inner part of the banana-tree trunk'. For *anggas*, Prajapustaka (1950:9) gives two definitions: (1) *kayu glinggang* ('dead tree or wood'), and (2) *iber-iberan* ('flying creatures'). The second definition probably has to do with the term (*walang*) *anggas*, which denotes a kind of grasshopper (see Gericke and Roorda 1901, I:223).

*Prayud*¹⁰, only goes on for twenty-two more stanzas, ending in AJ 1694, corresponding to AD 1768. If the Major Babad was really as important to Pakubuwana VII as Ras claims it to have been, why does it then at least give the impression that its copying was not exactly given top priority? And why does it not cover the dramatic Java War and its aftermath, which brought Pakubuwana VII to the throne?

Moreover, Winter's copy, now LOr. 1786, is the only one to have been preserved; contrary to what is claimed in the blurb of Ras 1987, there is no copy in the Solonese palace library (see Florida 1993).¹¹ It seems remarkable, to say the least, that a text that is considered by historians to be one of the most important ones of Java, and by Ras even the fundamental legitimizing document of the Solonese dynasty, is not present in Surakarta. Perhaps it could be argued that the Major Babad was so sacred that almost no one was allowed to see it (as in the case of some heirlooms, including manuscripts), but this is not very plausible. It would be in contradiction with the entire purpose of the Babad as an instrument of royal propaganda as well as with historical practice (Pakubuwana III is said to have distributed copies of his version throughout the realm).

In all probability we are indebted for the survival of the Major Babad to C.F. Winter. For it was under his supervision that this text was copied (Pigeaud 1968:25). Winter was highly respected by Pakubuwana VII, being the only non-Javanese person with whom he spoke Javanese (Houben 1994:124). They carried on a personal correspondence, which was very informal in tone – Winter being addressed as *saudara* ('brother') by Pakubuwana VII. Unfortunately, although some private letters from Pakubuwana VII to Winter concerning (unidentified) manuscripts have been preserved for the years 1843 and 1848-1849, nothing is said in these about the copying of the Major Babad (LOr. 2170, no. 3).

However that may be, I personally have not read all of the nine thousand pages of the Major Babad and therefore cannot say definitely that it does not contain prophecies relating to Pakubuwana IV, V, VI or VII. Perhaps the account of the war of 1746-1757, which is described at great length, contains hidden allusions to the Java War. In any case, Ras is absolutely silent on this subject.

¹⁰ I used LOr. 6755, which from canto 1:57 onward runs parallel to LOr. 1786, volume 17, page 149, up to the end, volume 18.

¹¹ See Vreede's unsubstantiated suggestion that LOr. 1786 may be an incomplete copy of a longer original, which is allegedly still kept in the Surakarta or Yogyakarta court archives (Vreede 1892:72).

A late prophecy

Nevertheless, there is one rather late prophecy to which Ras (1987b:xix) draws attention in his discussion of the problem of whether the prose version of the *Babad Tanah Jawi* is based on the Major Babad or whether it represents an independent recension. The prophecy in question is set in the year 1720 and predicts that the grandson of the rebel Panembahan Purbaya will become king and that his kingdom will be greater than those of his ancestors.¹² In the Major Babad, Ki Tumenggung Kandhuruwan Wilatikta, a commander who is ordered to crush this Purbaya's rebellion but who contemplates defection, is told by soothsayers (L.Or. 1786, canto 141:64):

*Nanging ta ingkang wayah ing bénjing
 kangjeng Panembahan Purbaya
 punika kang madeg rajèng
 umadegipun ratu
 Ngadipala puranirèki
 langkung sangsanira
 rikang purwanipun
 wesana luhur kalintang
 anglangkungi ing sama-samaning aji
 umadeg adilira*

But later the grandchild
 of Panembahan Purbaya
 will become king.
 He will rule
 in the kingdom of Adipala.
 It will be very difficult
 in the beginning,
 but finally he will earn high respect.
 He will exceed his fellow-kings,
 ruling righteously.

A little later in the story, Panembahan Purbaya is told the same thing by his personal fortune-teller (canto 141:76-77):

[...]
*sawingking tuwan bésuk
 ingkang pasthi umadeg aji
 inggih wayah paduka
 panjenenganipun
 ngadhaton ing Adipala
 kilèn lèpèn Semanggi pecané bénjing
 sangsaya karatonnya*

[...]
 in the future, after you,
 the man who will certainly become king
 will be your grandson.
 He
 will rule in Adipala,
 to the west of the river Semanggi.¹³
 According to the prophecy,
 his reign will be difficult,

¹² De Graaf (n.d.:15) suggests that Pakubuwana III ordered changes to be made in older parts of the *Babad Tanah Jawi* to honour earlier Purbayas on account of this blood relation. He points to, for instance, a highly mythological Purbaya who plays various magical roles during the siege of Batavia in 1628-9 and during the struggle against Radèn Trunajaya in 1676. However, these two particular episodes are also to be found in the *Babad Kraton* (see Pantja Sunjata et al. 1992: 297 ff. and 390 ff.), thus refuting De Graaf's hypothesis.

¹³ Semanggi is an older name for the Solo River (Ricklefs 1993:339 n. 100).

Nanging purwané kéwala bénjing
 sangsayané ingkang panjenengan
 wayah paduka ing tembé
 déning wesananipun
 apan madeg nata dibya di
 netepi adil ing Hyang
 tuhuning pinunjul
 ing sasama-sama nata
 tanah sabrang tan ana kang nyanyameni
 jenengé wayah tuwan

But his future problems
 will not remain.
 Your grandson will later
 at last
 rule as a magnificent king.
 He will observe divine justice.
 Verily, he will surpass
 his fellow-kings.
 No one abroad will equal
 the rule of your grandson.

This prophecy about the grandson of Panembahan Purbaya alludes to Pakubuwana III, who ascended the throne in 1749. Its exact date has been discussed by Ras and Ricklefs. Ras, assuming that the prophecies in this fragment are *post eventum*, believes that this particular prediction about the future Pakubuwana III probably goes back to a version that was written in Surakarta in the second half of the eighteenth century at the earliest (Ras 1987b:xix). Ricklefs, on the other hand, argues that this need not necessarily be an *ex post facto* prophecy interpolated during Pakubuwana III's reign or later, but may have been contemporaneous with the events of 1720, as Adipala was later passed over in favour of Surakarta. He says: 'A prediction concocted after the accession of Pakubuwana III and inserted into the chronicle account of 1720 would surely have got the site of the new *kraton* right' (Ricklefs 1993:195).

In the prose Babad the prophecy to Kandhuruwan is slightly altered to fit the facts, however, stating that the future king will 'rule in Adipala in the territory of Solo, near the river' (*ngadhaton ing Adipala bawah ing Sala, caket benawi*; Ras 1987a:353), while Panembahan Purbaya is told that this will be in Solo or in Adipala, to the west of the river (*ngadhaton ing Sala utawi ing Adipala, sakilèn ing benawi*; Ras 1987a:355). The prose Babad then goes on to predict that 'his kingdom will last eighty years, then it will decline'.¹⁴ This addition in the prose Babad, predicting Surakarta's decline after eighty years, according to Ras (1987b:xix), could only date from the period around 1830.¹⁵ Ras (1987b:xix) wonders whether the author of the Major Babad left out 'this unpleasant phrase' and 'normalized' his text or whether the author of the

¹⁴ The Javanese text reads (in modernized spelling): '*Karatonipun ngungkuli para leluhuripun ingkang sampun sami sumaré. Laminé karatonipun wolung dasa taun, nunten apes.*' (Ras 1987a:355.) An anonymous referee of this article reminded me that the so-called 'revised' edition of the prose Babad contains the same addition, differing only in style (KITLV Or. 8, *Verbeterde Babad*, vierde stuk, p. 32).

¹⁵ In Ricklefs 1998:311 n. 5 the versions of the Major Babad and the prose Babad are mixed up.

prose version added the prediction about the eighty years. According to him (Ras 1987b:xix), the age difference between the two readings can only be slight, both the Major Babad and the prose Babad deriving from a single common example.

In my view the prediction of Solo's decline is an addition that may be typical for the prose Babad. If my thesis that the Major Babad of 1836 was only a replica, and not a new version, of the 1788 version is correct, then obviously this prediction could not possibly have occurred in it. In this connection I would like to draw attention to three points. Firstly, another prose version, which according to Ras (1987b:xx) represents the Pakualaman perspective, contains a similar prophecy to that in the Major Babad, though with omission of 'the unpleasant phrase' (see NBS 216B, page 162). This prompts one to ask why a Yogya version, from the 'enemy camp', so to speak, should leave this out. Secondly, where generally seven generations is considered to be the usual time span for a dynasty (see Wieringa 1998:322), it is curious that another text, also dating from the reign of Pakubuwana VII, should be the only one, as far as I know, to have a kingdom as a matter of course last eighty years or ten *windu* – one *windu* being a cycle of eight years (Meinsma 1863: 265). Finally, it should be noted that the author of the prose Babad, Radèn Ngabèhi Kertapraja, was not a mere scribe who copied other people's words, adding nothing and changing nothing. Cohen Stuart (1852:46) praises him for his revision of several texts, while Winter was impressed with his elegant style and apt word use (see Swellengrebel 1974:67). It is not known on what text the prose Babad is based and when exactly Kertapraja wrote it. In any case, this must have been after April 1838, when he was appointed to the post of teacher at the Javanese Language Institute in Surakarta.¹⁶ Kertapraja's addition may have been purely matter-of-fact: eighty years after 1749, Surakarta was indeed seriously weakened as a result of the Java War and the subsequent cession of territory to the Dutch. So Kertapraja may have inserted an 'objective' interpolation. Another possibility is that he was prejudiced and that his prediction should be interpreted as being anti-Pakubuwana VI and pro-Pakubuwana VII. This is not wholly unlikely, as a chronogram list made by him bears traces of astonishing partiality (*Babad Sengkala*, LOr. 1859). Not only does it end with the full date of Pakubuwana VI's exile (whereas normally only years are mentioned), but the last entry but one, which originally dealt with Pakubuwana VI's succession in AJ 1750, is deleted and replaced by the statement that Prince Purbaya ascended the throne in AJ 1757, thereby striking the name Pakubuwana VI off the list of Javanese rulers (LOr. 1859,

¹⁶ Radèn Ngabèhi Kertapraja, then *hoofd goenoeng* of Bareng, was appointed to this position (in which he was paid fifty guilders a month) on 24 April 1838; see the letter from the Resident of Surakarta to the Solonese *patih* of 11 May 1838 (LOr. 2229, X, no. 9).

folio 18a). It is uncertain if Kertapraja was responsible for the 'correction', however.

Conclusion

Summing up, my reconstruction of the final stages in the textual history of the Solonese court version of the *Babad Tanah Jawi* comes to the following. During the reigns of Pakubuwana II and III the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, an already existing story of a few hundred pages, was expanded enormously by the addition of a long story about the life and work of these two rulers. Thereafter, in 1788, Pakubuwana IV ordered that this version be recorded in a book, now known as the Major Babad. This work remained on the shelf for almost fifty years, until Pakubuwana VII ordered it to be recopied. It is not unlikely that Winter was the prime mover behind this plan. After all, he wanted the text so as to be able to make a prose version of the *Babad Tanah Jawi*. Some time after Radèn Ngabèhi Kertapraja's appointment in April 1838, Winter ordered him to make this prose version. Differences between this version and the Major Babad may be the result of Kertapraja's editing.

For two centuries Javanese kings felt the need to keep a written record of the past, constantly adapting this to new circumstances. By wielding power over the past, they hoped to be in control of the present and future. As their actual power dwindled, literary efforts were made to exert authority over the past. A major such literary effort was required when in the eighteenth century the Dutch gained the upper hand and the Javanese kingdom was permanently divided. The Major Babad, at present only accessible in a unique manuscript (LOr. 1786), was Pakubuwana III's swan song, recorded for posterity by his son Pakubuwana IV in 1788. For Pakubuwana VII the *Babad Tanah Jawi* hardly had a legitimizing function at all, apart from its linking him to his father. Probably he ordered a copy of the text simply to satisfy the thirst for knowledge which the Dutch, who had brought him to power, were beginning to manifest. After that, the text was never to be revived again in Solo.

NOTE

This article is a revised version of a paper presented at a conference on the interpretation of sacred texts held by the Dutch Association of Religious Studies in Kapellerput on 15 and 16 May 1998.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

AD	Anno Domini, in the Christian era
AJ	Anno Javanico, in the Javanese era
BCB	Sheaves of papers (Dutch: <i>bundels</i>) collected by C.C. Berg in portfolios
KITLV	Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Leiden
LOr.	Leiden University Library Oriental manuscript
MS(S)	Manuscript(s)
NBS	Netherlands Bible Society manuscript, Leiden University Library

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BCB portfolios 30-34	Transliteration of LOr. 1786
LOr. 1786	Major <i>Babad Tanah Jawi</i>
LOr. 1813	<i>Serat Arjuna Sasrabau</i>
LOr. 1859	<i>Babad Sengkala</i>
LOr. 2168	Javanese letters
LOr. 2170, no. 3	Javanese letters
LOr. 2229, X	Javanese letters
LOr. 3182	<i>Babad Tanah Jawi</i> (Yogyakarta, 1823)
LOr. 4946	<i>Sajarahing Ratu Jawi</i>
LOr. 6755	<i>Babad Prayud</i>
LOr. 6783	<i>Babad Tanah Jawi</i> (Madura, 1807)
LOr. 7940, no. 3	Genealogy
NBS 216B	<i>Babad Tanah Jawi</i> (Pakualaman)
NBS 224	<i>Babad Tanah Jawi</i> (1788 version)
NBS 230	<i>Babad Tanah Jawi</i> (1836 version)

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