THE OPTIONS CLOSE FOR THE COURT TRADITION

Royal courts continued to flourish in many parts of Southeast Asia after the establishment of effective European dominance, but their literature appeared to decline both in quantity and quality. The two following papers examine the reasons of this decline in terms of Javanese and Cambodian court traditions. The exceptional liveliness and perception of Purwasstra's chronicle of the Bambangan Wars stemmed from a court in a time of change, when vital choices had to be made between rival political alliances and social models. The Dutch in this chronicle are neither mythologized nor ignored, but their peculiar strengths and weaknesses are noted. Courts whose options were closed off by Western domination, like that of Monivong under the French, tended to lose their appetite for serious discussion of the past.

JAVANESE HISTORIOGRAPHY IN AND OF THE 'COLONIAL PERIOD': A CASE STUDY

Ann Kumar

Why do men write histories? We professional practitioners tend to assume that our is a legitimate and even a natural occupation until we come to study a place-and-time where it has manifestly not been a significant interest of the literate class. In concluding the Canberra symposium, Professor Wolters suggested that for the most part in Southeast Asia the dominant preoccupations lay elsewhere: in religion. Paradoxically, however, it was precisely the religious or moral preoccupation that in many civilizations initiated an interest in history, however much this craft was secularized later. One has only to think of the Christian desire to understand and demonstrate a historical Providence; the Muslim concern for the pure transmission through time of Muhammad's teachings; the Theravada concern for the observance within the sangha of the decisions of the Councils; the Confucian view of history as a gallery of good and bad examples held up to the current ruler to illustrate the precepts he must follow. The function (or lack of it) of historiography within the total cultural framework presents a complex subject for investigation, and the Indonesian case is particularly interesting in that we find here two periods of very little attention, in so far as we can quantify it, to the study of history, on either side of a dividing period of apparently much more lively interest. Of the total surviving literature of the Indianized kingdoms, only one or two works can at all be described as histories, and though the number of historical works written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can certainly multiply that figure a hundredfold, it is still a relatively small corpus. Between

1 See Craig Reynolds, in this volume.
2 See David Marr, in this volume.
3 I refer here to the Pararaton and Nagarakretagama, which appear to be the only candidates for inclusion in this category, although the circumstance that both these texts were preserved only outside Java suggests that the survival rate for historical works may have been lower than that for other literature (because of the demise of the patron dynasty, etc.)
4 Including, that is, all works seeking to analyse the past or set within a historical framework, however diverse their philosophical bases, methodologies, and intended audiences. They range from a small number of "traditionalist" histories drawing heavily on wayang mythology (principally, Ronggwaswara's history of the kings of Java) through an equally small number of autobiography such as priayati in contact with the Dutch through the civil service, such as Achmad Djaladiningrat, Herinneringen (Amsterdam, G. Kolff, [1936]) and Margono Djojohadikusumo, Herinneringen uit 3 tijden (Amsterdam, G. Nabrit, 1970), to a notably larger number of nationalist histories, such as Sanusi Pane, Sedjarah Indonesia (Djakarta, Balai Pustaka, 1965), and paharwan biographies, with a few dissertations on the place of history in Indonesian nation-building, for example, Koenjan Abduguns, Pengurusan Imtu Sedjarah (Djakarta, Pranantja, [1963]), and Marxist analyses as presented by Tan Malaka in Madiq, Materiales, Diaektika, Logika (Djakarta, Widjaja, 1951), Must-Azitie (Djakarta, Poestaka Moerba, 1947) and Pandangan Hidup (Djakarta, Widjaja, 1952), as well as by D.N. Aidit—see paper by R. McVey in this volume.
these two comparative lows stretches the period associated with the civilization of Islam, and which produced those numerous sejarah, sisliah, hikayat, and babad that crowd the pages of catalogues of Malay and Javanese manuscripts. In time, historiography follows upon the introduction of Islam: post hoc, ergo propter hoc?

A simple explanation in these terms must at least be modified sufficiently to account for certain apparent anomalies: on the one hand the fact that much of the Javanese historiography, though chronologically post-Islamic, appears to use for its framework an Indo-Javanese rather than Muslim mythology and organization of time and in its frequent invoking of the supernatural as a causal factor contrasts with the generally 'disenchanted' character of historical writing from other parts of the Muslim world, and declines rather than increases in volume in the course of the nineteenth century when commitment to Islam was arguably growing both in breadth and in depth; and on the other hand the development of a reasonably prolific Balinese historiography, contemporaneous with but apparently not inspired by the spread of Islam. This corpus of material from Bali includes both the works usually categorized as 'Middle Javanese', since they are written in the Javanese language, and later Balinese language histories, notably the nineteenth century 'Rusak' or 'Uug' genre — works from different Balinese centres treating a common theme: the ending of the principality's sovereignty with the coming of the Dutch.

It seems reasonable to conclude that social developments — especially perhaps the effect of social crisis noted by Wang Gungwu in his introductory remarks — are as significant as religious ones in producing new attitudes to the past, although the two should not be seen as operating separately, but rather in interaction. In this paper I have chosen to concentrate on a reasonably well-defined socio-political unit which was at a certain period in its history opened up to a number of new world-views, among them the Islamic, in a process which also entailed a particularly high degree of social violence, and to consider firstly, what sort of historiography this period produced, and secondly, the problems which the historical interpretation of the period might involve for contemporary historians.

5 The best English-language introduction to the interpretation of the mythic and temporal frameworks found in the Central Javanese dynastic babad is M.C. Ricklefs, Jogyakarta under Sultan Mangkubumi, 1749-1792 (London, O.U.P., 1974), esp. ch. VII. C.C. Berg, Het Ruk van de Vijfvoedige Buddha (Amsterdam, Noorde-Hollandsche Uitg, 1962) gives a more detailed account of the apparent persistence of Javanist-Buddhist cyclical schemes of dynastic history.

6 On the 'Middle Javanese' works see C.C. Berg, De Middell-Javantische Historische Traditie (Sanport, C.A. Mees, 1927); and for an example of a babad dealing with the end of one Balinese principality, see P.J. Worsley's edition of the Babad Buleleng (Bibliothea Indonesica, no. 8) (The Hague, M. Nijhoff, 1972).

7 See Wang Gungwu, in this volume.

The kingdom of Balambangan occupied the easternmost 'slice' of the island of Java, being centered in the Banyuwangi district and extending westward to somewhere about the regions of Besuki in the north and Puger in the south. For much of its history, Balambangan could be described as a border zone, drawn into either Central Javanese or Balinese empires according to the relative strength of the Javanese and Balinese kingdoms. Thus during the first half of the seventeenth century, suzerainty over Balambangan was contested by its two considerably more powerful neighbours, the Balinese principality of Gelgel and the Javanese state of Mataram, and enforced on numerous occasions by military expeditions. During the period from about 1670 to 1690, however, there was a rather exceptional coincidence of weakness in the Central Javanese state and an absence of any really strong principality on Bali. The ruler of Balambangan at the time was Tawangalan, whose long reign was afterwards remembered as a sort of golden age — perhaps an indication that it was at this time that a sense of an identity distinct from either Central Java or Bali developed in Balambangan. After Tawangalan's death in 1690, however, the succession was disputed by three of his sons, who were divided over the question of whether to ally with the VOC or with the 'rebel' Surapati, whose capital was at Pasuruan and who was then the chief thorn in the side of the VOC in Java. Subsequently, in 1697, the Balinese principality of Buleneg allied with Surapati to send an expedition (which included Makassarese troops) to Balambangan, and installed another candidate as vassal ruler, under the dual suzerainty of Buleneg and Pasuruan. This ruler seems to have sought some leverage against his overlords by putting out feelers both to Buleneg's Balinese rival, Klungkung, and to the VOC, but in 1726, when Buleneg lost its war with Mengwi, Balambangan was handed over to this state as its vassal. In 1736 a minor, Pangeran Patih (II), was put on the throne. During his reign north Balambangan suffered greatly from the depredations of Madurese war parties in search of booty and men.

In 1734, by the terms of van Imhoff's contract with Mataram, that state transferred to the VOC its claims to sovereignty over the part of Java east of the meridian passing through Pasuruan. After this point, therefore, Balambangan found itself squeezed between the Balinese principality of Mengwi and not Mataram, but the Company which had inherited Mataram's economic and political interests in a more centralized control. The mountainous and inaccessible regions of East Java sheltered various groups which had in one way or
another came into conflict with the VOC: Chinese who had found refuge there after the troubles of 1740 and the following years; the descendants of Surapat, in Malang and Lumajang; pirate Buginese; ‘smugglers’, and so on.

In Balambangan itself, a quarrel developed between Pangeran Patih, the ruler, and Wong Agung Wilis, his half brother by a Balinese mother. When in 1763 Pangeran Patih was summoned to Mengwi by his overlord, he took fright, fled to Pasuruan and sought help from the VOC, but the Governor-General, van der Parra, decided against intervention, and as a result Pangeran Patih had no option but to allow himself to be taken to Mengwi with his half-brother. Here he was eventually put to death, being replaced as ruler of Balambangan by two Balinese deputies, Gusti Ngurah Ktut Kaba-Kaba and Gusti Kuta-bedah.

Under their rule, English traders began to call in to Balambangan, bringing opium, fire-arms and textiles in exchange for provisions, tea and birds’ nests. Chinese and Mandarane were also active in ‘smuggling’, and fear of the English threat spurred the VOC on to clean up the unruly ‘Oosthoek’, a campaign which began early in 1767. Two relatives of Pangeran Patih, Mas Anom and Mas Weka, went over to the VOC; Kuta-bedah was killed; Ngurah Ktut Kaba-Kaba and his family and followers ended their lives in a puputan (suicidal attack). Ulu Pampang (now Tratas, on the bay of Pampang) was conquered and a fort built there. The next stronghold to fall to the VOC was Malang (which was, strictly speaking, under the Sunan’s authority according to the 1743 agreement) followed by Lumajang, Ngantang and Porong.

In Balambangan, Wilis had now returned from Bali. He sought acceptance from the VOC, but as time passed the Company became increasingly anxious about his following of Chinese, Buginese, Mandarane and Balinese, and his liberality in dispensing money and weapons. A thousand Madurese – the VOC’s toughest though usually least disciplined troops in its Balambangan campaigns – were stationed in the principality. Eventually a new conflict broke out in which Mas Anom and Mas Weka, though they had been installed as regents by the VOC, joined Wilis against the Company. All were in the event captured and exiled, and two new regents were installed. These were persuaded to accept Islam, a measure envisaged as a means of severing the ties with Bali which the VOC considered the greatest source of trouble. A draconian military regime was initiated, under which all rice and provisions were commandeered or, where this was not possible, burnt, leading to widespread famine. Unpaid forced labour was used to build the fortifications.


12 A more serious conspiracy to murder the Dutch garrison and bring in the Balinese, probably at the instigation of the principality of Jembrana and possibly with English assistance, had to be rooted out as late as 1797. On the events of the years 1767-1777, see de Jonge, XI, pp. ii-xxv, and C. Lekkerkerker, ‘Balambangan’, Indische Gids, 45th year, 2 (1923) pp. 1030-67.

As C.J. Bösch observed, writing from Bondowoso in 1848, this region is perhaps the only one in Java where a once numerous population was entirely wiped out. By far the greater part of the area's present-day population dates from after Bösch's time, from the period when the development of large agricultural enterprises (particularly of sugar) brought about a heavy immigration from Central Java and Madura. This seems to have reached its peak in the early twentieth century. According to the figures of the 1930 census, almost half of the inhabitants of Banyuwangi, the heart of the old kingdom, had been born elsewhere, and no other regency on Java showed such a high percentage of immigrants. In most of Java east of Pasuruan and Lumajang, the majority of the population is Madurese; the exceptions are south Jember—south Banyuwangi where people of Central Javanese origin predominate, Puger, Wuwahan and Genteng, and some cities. In 1930 the descendants of the old Balambangers, the 'Usiners', of Banyuwangi and Jember regencies, numbered 179, 579 out of a total population of 1,406,444. According to Lekkerkerker, they were still distinguished by their self-respect, honesty, obstinacy, and an unwillingness to enter into the service of Europeans. This cursory survey sufficiently reveals the violence of the social crisis accompanying the end of the old order in Balambangan. This period is also remarkable for the number of historical works it produced, works which exhibit widely divergent political loyalties and interpretations. Of those that survive, one consists of genealogies of the royal house of Balambangan and related East Javanese noble houses, combined with a version of the career of Surapati and his relationship with the VOC. A second gives an overall account of the Dutch conquest of easternmost Java (including not only Balambangan but also Lumajang, Malang, and adjacent regions). Thirdly, a group of closely related Balambangan dynastic chronicles from the nineteenth century provide a brief survey of the kingdom's history from a particular point of view. Lastly, 14 C.J. Bösch, 'Aanteekeningen over de Afdeeling Bondowoso (Residentie Bezoek), TGB, 6 (1857) pp. 469-508.


16 Ibid., p. 16. Since censuses no longer include information on suku or language groups, it is not possible to ascertain whether the relativity of Madurese to Javanese has altered since 1930.

17 Volkstelling 1930, deel 3, pp. 17, 120.

18 Lekkerkerker, 'Balambangan', p. 1031.

19 See my Surapati, pp. 147-66, 155-75.


22 See Pigeaud, *Literature, II*, p. 191 (Lo 4090). The author of this text was an inhabitant of Lumajang, but his account gives the most credit to the troops from Sumenep (as opposed to Bangkalan).

23 See Pigeaud, *Literature, II*, p. 191 (Lo 4089). This text is intrinsically very interesting, but will not be discussed here.


25 Using for this group Lo 4087, of the Leiden University collection (see Pigeaud, *Literature, II*, p. 191).

26 On the local history of Probolinggo, see J.G.W. Lekkerkerker, 'Probolinggo, Geschiedenis en Overlevering', *Het Nederlandsche Java Instituut, Mededeeling no. 9, pp. 1-32; and R.T.A. Nittinger (comp.), *Pringgutan adunja Boepati-Boepati di Negi Probolinggo welai dianan duo boke kale* (Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Kern Collection, no. 49). Nittinger was appointed Regent (Bupati) of Probolinggo in 1916.

27 On Candranegara and the senior and junior Regents of Surabaya (bupati sepuh, bupati anon) see Sutherland, p. 142.
Regent for thirty-seven years, during which time he proved a loyal ally of the VOC and increased the amount of the contingent (rice, indigo, bird's nests) delivered to the Company. About Purwasstra himself I have been unable to find any information, but it is illuminating to bear in mind the circumstances in which he wrote—Probolinggo's strategic importance and the replacement by the VOC of a dubious Regent by one fully committed to the Company—in reading his account of the conquest of easternmost Java.

Balambang and the 'great powers': Mengwi and the VOC

Purwasstra begins with an account of the Panjaren Panth—Wong Agung Wilis conflict. Although remarking that Panjaren Panth was to be pitied because he was still a heathen, unconverted to Islam,28 he nevertheless presents this, the last ruler of the old Balambang line, as pure and blameless—if rather ineffective in action—and ill-served by his ministers, who govern badly. Wilis, on the other hand, is depicted as covertly building up a following among the common people and the army, his popularity with the latter being summarily explained in the comment dayar bala brai duniya (of course the army are always out for goods).29 Feeling threatened by Wilis's actions, Panjaren Panth seeks help from the Dutch, but his request is eventually turned down by the Governor-General and he is politely but firmly brought to Bali by the minions of his overlord Gusti Agung Cokorda, who is displeased that he has gone for help to the Kumpeni. The Cokorda asks Wilis to take over as ruler of Balambang, but Wilis replies that he could not do so while his brother was alive, a remark which the Cokorda interprets as a covert request that Panjaren Panth be killed. He says nothing to Wilis, but does indeed have Panjaren Panth put to death. Purwasstra offers no explanation as to why the Cokorda did not, in fact, then make Wilis ruler of Balambang, but installed instead the two Balinese deputies (Gusti Ngurah Kuta-Kaba and Gusti Kuta-Bedaha) referred to above.

Taking the author's presentation of the course of events in its entirety, Wilis emerges as a somewhat ambiguous figure, building up strength yet never moving openly against his brother—refusing indeed to accept the throne when his brother offers it to him, and on several occasions professing fraternal affection.

This presentation of the Panjaren Panth—Wonis conflict differs from that given in the nineteenth century babad.30 Here, Panjaren Panth is by no means such a blameless character: although the Cokorda has ordered that Wilis be made path, he chooses instead one of his own sons, Sutajiwa; and when the latter becomes involved in a quarrel over fighting cricket with the Balinese agul-agul31

Rangga Setata, he has Rangga Setata killed. Wilis, on the other hand, is presented as a person of great popularity and supernatural power who, shamed by being passed over for the office of path, retires to the sea-coast to practise asceticism. When a Buginese army of 800 men arrives and threatens the capital, the army commander tells Panjaren Panth that he would feel strong enough to engage the Buginese only if Wilis were fighting at his side. He is sent to obtain Wilis's help, which Wilis initially refuses, saying: 'I, Singamumpuni, am powerless to do anything, because I am a low and poor person. I would like those who have the position, the name, the yellow umbrella of state, to be asked to destroy the state's foes'. (Insan iki, Singamumpuni, wis ora duwe daya upaya, sawab insan wong ala tur papa. Kareingsan kang pada oleh lelungguh, kang pada oleh nama, kang pada payung kuning, dimane diikarsake nyirnake satruh negara.)32 Later he relents, materializes suddenly in the capital, wipes out the Buginese force with the aid of just one companion, and disappears as mysteriously as he had come. Finally, when Panjaren Panth is summoned to Bali by the Cokorda, he refuses, the author explains, because 'he realized that he had sinned, firstly because he had not carried out his [the Cokorda's] wish to make Wong Agung Wilis path, secondly because he had killed the Balinese officer Rangga Setata' (sambun ngrocu yen gadahi dosa, saprakara Wong agung Wilis diikarsake gawe pangeran path boten den-lampahi, rong prakara jejeneng saking Bali rongga Setata depun-pejahai).33 To sum up the differences between the two interpretations, whereas according to Purwasstra, Panjaren Panth incurred the wrath of his suzerain only after seeking help from the Kumpeni on account of the threat posed to him by Wilis, according to the author of the nineteenth century babad he sought help from the Kumpeni only because he had already incurred the wrath of his suzerain, on account of his own misdeeds.

When he comes to describe the administration of Balambang from Mengwi, Purwasstra characterizes the rule of the two Balinese deputies as harsh and immoral. They exact new taxes every month, try to find out who is rich so that they can appropriate his goods, do not allow the slightest error on the part of their subjects and, perhaps most notably, no woman is safe with them.34 They are depicted as 'foreign' in their habits—going into battle wearing only loin-cloths and armed with blow-pipes, for instance. Only in death by puputan do they command some respect: they have taken what they wanted, and now pay for it. That their officers should go over to the Dutch is the inevitable result of their misrule. In the nineteenth century babad, however, their rule is not described as bad, and their officers are depicted as treacherously turning against them when they are hard-pressed in battle against the Dutch.35

28 LOr 2185, Canto 1, Stanza 9.
29 LOr 2185, Canto 1, Sanza 16.
30 LOr 4087, pp. 29-41.
31 'Steadfast, heroic, first in battle': military title.
32 LOr 4087, pp. 34-5.
33 LOr 4087, p. 41.
34 See LOr 2185, Canto 10, Stanza 28; Canto 14, Stanza 16.
35 LOr 4087, pp. 43-5.
The Dutch

Purwasatra is noticeably pro-Dutch: although he is sympathetic towards Pangeran Patih and depicts the way in which he lost his throne and was put to death as nothing less than sacrilege, it is nevertheless the Dutch who are the real prawastra (heroes) of the babad. But he does not attempt to make them conform to Javanese models of behaviour—quite the contrary. When Pangeran Patih, no operator, is serving himself to meet the VOC representative, he asks a fellow Javanese whether it is true that Dutchmen kiss other men’s wives, for he will die if they kiss his;36 and when the Dutch envoy rushes up to him without any observance of the proper forms, he recoils like a man accosted by a large dog, and has to be reassured that this is just the way of Dutchmen trying to be friendly.37

Throughout the babad many occasions are taken to describe the distinctiveness of the Dutch. Although they are sometimes extolled as saritru (knights)38 their characteristics are certainly not those of refined aristocrats: they do everything in haste;39 they drink until very drunk;40 they are fond of women,41 they feast on pork42 and they are consistently moved by financial considerations, which are never represented as any part of the calculation of the Javanese actors in the babad. Thus Purwasatra relates how the retiring Governor of the north-east coast, leaving Semarang, asks the Bupati to give money for his return journey, and represents, accurately, the presence of the English traders as the immediate reason for the VOC decision to intervene in Balambangan after all.43 As a result of this concern for money, they are enormously rich and live in cities like heaven, the manifold luxuries of which could not be described even in a whole day.44

Purwasatra was obviously in a position to be reasonably well informed about the organization of the VOC: much of the babad consists within a framework formed by letters going up the chain of command from the Gezagheber, (‘Sakeber’) of Surabaya to the Governor of the north-east coast at Semarang and thence to the Governor-General at Batavia, and letters in reply coming down the line again. He explains such features of VOC organization as might be strange to a Javanese audience— for instance, that officials are replaced every three years, so that all have a turn at ruling and their hearts are as one45 (nevertheless, Breton—‘Berton’—the Gezagheber at Surabaya is understandably angered by being sent away from Java, to Banda, when his term is up).46

In general, things are well-ordered under the Dutch; the Gezagheber’s government is respected throughout the coastal area, which is exceedingly prosperous under his rule.47 Immediately following this passage is counterposed a description of Balambangan under the Balinese deities, its inhabitants insecure and oppressed.

Ricklefs’ study of babad texts led him to conclude that “the Europeans [as individuals] were perceived in a manner similar to that in which the Javanese saw the panakawan, the clown retainers of the wajang.”48 Purwasatra’s treatment of the Dutch suggests that the matter is not so simple. In so far as he

36 LOr 2185, Canto 5, Stanzas 34: Ingkang dadi marasingwang, anging dularia wadon, amitrus waringing katah, anatane Welandu, lumah geertang angambang, marang rabing wong liyan. Kakekona rahi mami, den-ambuga mering Welandu, umat Puspakumana, datan ing warta, werteone wong edan taun... ... [My anxiety is about your sisters, I have heard from many people, that the Dutch generally exchange kisses with other people’s wives. If it happens that my wife is kissed by the Dutch, I will surely die].

37 LOr 2185, Canto 5, Stanzas 30-32.

38 See for example the description of the Surabaya Gezagheber, LOr 2185, Canto 5, Stanzas 6-8: Wus angaruk basunankei, Sakeber ing Surabaya, anatane wana ilo, rinc inoj da pasmen mulyar, sarung kaki pinasang, topine rinenda muriat, suremaringinus. Dasaare saritru sijig, cahayane sayu gunilang, Sakeber Suraringgane, angaruk ing busana, sangganging wong kajin saru yang tumingal, buda kapir esti jah, yen mulat yekat kasmiran. Inj sahyang tan ana tending, mitawh ing tenah Jawa, Sakeber baguse, dasare saritru bronjak; pantes santikanra, anad-asing manahyun, tembuneg apaig kelang. [He put on his attire, the Gezagheber of Surabaya, donning a jacket of green silk adorned with glittering laces, he put on his socks, and a hat with glowing lace, making the beauty of the flowers look pale. He was the essence of a handsome warrior, the Gezagheber of Surabaya, his radiance shining forth ever more brightly. As he put on his attire all who watched, Buddhist unbelievers, men and women, became infatuated by the sight. He had no equal in the lands over the sea or on Java. The Gezagheber was the perfection of beauty, in truth a dashing warrior, his skill [at arms] befitting him, modest and polite his heart, his speech sweeter than sugar syrup].

39 LOr 2185, Canto 5, Stanzas 66.

40 See for example, LOr 2185, Canto 5, Stanzas 7.

41 See for example, LOr 2185, Canto 6, Stanzas 23-27, where the unfortunate Pangeran Patih has to deliver up his seven daughters and (three other girls) to the Governor-General, who has just refused his request for help.

42 LOr 2185, Canto 14, Stanzas 1-2.

43 LOr 2185, Canto 14.

44 LOr 2185, Canto ii, Stanza 2: dunyane si narapati, pan negeri Bataviyah, tuku kutane kumpenti, ir kasyariang angalih, dinulu parang pala[n]u cur kita ing Bataviyah, pinageran gedah putih, yen cinautuna sadae mungga tuntah [the world of the prince (i.e. the Governor-General of the VOC) is the city of Batavia, which is indeed the Company’s fort. It is as if heaven descended. The fort of Batavia has a wall of white ceramic; if we were to tell you about it for a whole day I could not come to the end].

45 LOr 2185, Canto 11, Stanzas 12.

46 LOr 2185, Canto 13, Stanza 24: Sasampunung mooca [mooca] surat, Sakeber runtik ing galihi, netyane asemru merang, mingali para bupati, yen ngocapa sanjuring eti, nora kaya sang aprabu, yen asta marung wangi, mongga kalakona kali, dyan binacal sangking alam tanah Java. Kalo no ina, jih had read the letter, the Gezagheber felt anger in his heart, and his eyes seemed to express shame as he looked at the Bupati, as if he were saying to himself, it is unbelievable that the prince (the Governor-General), if he had any affection for me, would then have thrown me out of the world of Java.

47 LOr 2185, Canto 14, Stanzas 13.

48 Ricklefs, p. 364; see also pp. 28-9, 389.
describes them in traditional (wayang) terms, they are satriya (knight), not panakawan. But as we have seen, they are not satriya who conform to the established wayang stereotype of restraint, refinement, and aristocratic unworldliness. The question arises as to whether the 'Javanese' were content simply to assign the Dutch to pre-existing literary stereotypes: it seems rather that the effect of the Dutch on an author's particular situation forced him to re-order his view of the world and therefore to write a certain sort of 'text' which will be different from other 'Javanese texts' both specifically in its treatment of the Dutch and in toto — secularly optimistic vs. transcendentally pessimistic, outward and forward-looking vs. inward and backward-looking etc. — in so far as the authors have had differing experiences. From the still somewhat limited sample available, we can already note different responses to the Dutch. Other authors, in contrast to Purwasatra, minimize (or do not perceive) the ways in which the Dutch were (racially, culturally, technologically) a 'different' group, for instance by depicting the Governor-General as just another Javanese prince possessed of the attributes of power (wives, concubines, gamelan, regalia).

In addition to its interpretation of Balambangan's relationship with the Balinese and the Dutch, Purwasatra's babad gives some very interesting testimony on the relationship seen as existing between the VOC and the rulers of the two Central Javanese kingdoms. His representation of this particular relationship is ambiguous: at times he writes as if the VOC were the servant, or at least the lesser ally, of the Sunan, as for instance when the new Governor of the north-east coast, setting out for Semarang, is told by the Governor-General to conduct himself humbly towards the Sunan and the Sultan; or when the glories of the ruler of Solo are celebrated — his threefold descent from Majapahit, heavenly nymphs, and the Prophet, his authority over all the bupati of Java and the awe he inspires in rulers over the sea — and the author remarks that now his kraton is even more exalted since the Kumpeni support it (saya buk variance, jadi, pan rinofung dening Kumpeni). Again, before launching the attack on Malang, the Governor at Semarang asks permission from the Sunan, adding saking arih kawula dateng ing gasti (as your servant fears to go against his lord — the words kawula and gasti indicating a servant-master relationship of great distance, as between a ruler, or God, and his subjects).

At other times, however, at least some of the characters in the babad represent the Javanese rulers as subordinate to the Dutch — for instance, when Malayukusuma's patih advises him against resisting the Dutch since even the two kings of Java have submitted (anyud) to them. Elsewhere, the Governor at Semarang is described as having the power to make and unmake tumenggung and bupati; and at another place Purwasatra represents the Kumpeni as seeing the conquest of Balambangan as a step towards making all on Java its servants.

It seems to me that this ambiguity is not unintentional, but rather reflects an awareness on the part of the author of a divergence between the form and substance of this relationship. This interpretation is supported by the evidence of the letters around which, as noted above, much of the action develops. Each letter is quoted in full, and the formal prologues announcing the sender of the letter and his relationship to the recipient differ consistently according to whether the letter is to be passed down within the VOC hierarchy or is to be sent from the Kumpeni to a Javanese ruler. In the former case, the VOC officials, particularly the Governor-General and Governor of the north-east coast, claim for themselves very large powers, whereas in the latter they adopt an attitude of subservience. One may compare, on the one hand, a letter from the Governor-General to the Governor of the north-east coast at Semarang, or a letter from the latter to one of his VOC subordinates, with, on the other, a letter addressed to the Sunan by the Governor of the north-east coast. In the first letter the Governor-General describes himself as: 'the Raja of the Company, the most honourable Governor-General, who has his seat in Batavia, who has authority over all Java, and rules the tanah seberang'. The Governor of Java's north-east coast — who was in many ways a more powerful figure than the Governor-General himself, being responsible for relations with the Javanese courts and having the official title 'Gouverneur van Java' — in the second letter styles himself 'Ruling edeleheer' of Semarang, commander in battle and governor and director, who is all-powerful in Java. When writing

52 LOR 2185, Canto 5, Stanza 69, pan weneng amatanena, pungen kawala kang caduran, aveneng kungpur tumenggung, weneng akarya bupati [indeed he has the authority to have put to death officials who have sinned, and he has the authority to dismiss tumenggung, and to create bupati].

53 LOR 2185, Canto 13, Stanza 59-60: Umatara pura pengguna, yen anggala idine naeng Betawi, prayoga multi ginepuk, negari Balambangan, malah mandar ing benjat dada batar, sadaya ing tanah Java, kawengku ngiring kumpeni. [All the Company's officials said, supposing we obtain the permission of the prince of Batavia (the Governor-General), it would be better to make an assault on the country of Balambangan, so that in the future all Java may be our servant, to be ruled by the Company.]

54 Rajeng kumpeni, kangjeng gurnadur jendral, ingkang palungngh, pan negari Batawiyah, kang minez saqunging tanah Jawi, amengku tanah sabrangg (LOR 2185, Canto 15, Stanza 36).


56 Edeleheer was the title of the members of the 'Raad van Indië', the governing body of the VOC on Java.

57 Senapati: also used in the title of the rulers of Mataram and their descendants.

58 Prabu deHel ing Semarang, senapati payuda, gupemur lan direktur, kang anyakra bawah [i.e. anyakrawati] Jawi (LOR 2185, Canto 23, Stanza 21).
to the Sunan (in the last-mentioned letter), however, he switches from the *ingan* (‘I’) used by monarchs, to the *kawula* (‘your servant’) used to monarchs, and kneels before the

most revered Susunan, who is held on high by all the Company soldiers . . . . who rules the people of Java, and has authority over lords in religion, the commander in battle, who is made glorious by God, who exercises supreme power, who enjoys all the good things of the earth, who rules all rulers, who is protected by the Supreme Soul . . . surrendering to his Lord his life-and-death . . .

Purwastra therefore depicts a type of relationship between the Company and the courts which is only maintained by the Company officials’ willingness to show a deference not really consistent with the far-reaching claims to sovereignty which they made among themselves and were in the process of implementing. It is significant that by the last decades of the eighteenth century some Javanese at least were conscious of this ambiguity.

**General Form and Characteristics of Purwastra’s Babad**

This babad provides a coverage of recent political developments on Java which is both detailed and on the whole accurate, contrasting markedly with, for instance, the Surapati babad from Balambangan, which also attempts a wide coverage but whose basis in historical reality is exiguous. In contrast to the numerous babad which take for their framework the fortunes of one particular regional dynasty, this one maintains a pan-Java perspective, presenting political developments as essentially a struggle between the VOC and its opponents. In perceiving an ‘anti-VOC’ party on Java, Purwastra anticipates the historiographical schema of a number of Indonesian nationalist historians. Where he differs is in the value accorded to this party of which the Surapati family forms the core, for in contrast to the nationalist historians Purwastra depicts the individuals concerned as generally less heroic than the great men of the VOC though still inheriting from their great ancestor a power to make reverberations in the universe.

In maintaining this pan-Javanese perspective, the author unfurls a particularly controlled narrative, keeping the various threads of the story well in hand and making it easy for the reader, or listener, to follow the sequence of events even when many different people and places are involved in the action. The work has unity and coherence, and a consistent moral position, which can perhaps be expressed succinctly in the words of one of its actors: ‘As long as Balambangan prospers, what does it matter if the Kumpeni rules us, as long as they are honest and do not plunder us, and the great ones do not take our wives’.

The mythological or supernatural elements in many babad have long been presented a problem for Western scholars. The extent to which these elements are present varies from text to text; in some they dominate the whole, and ‘history’ is made by the direct intervention of supernatural forces. In Purwastra’s work, the supernatural makes an appearance on three occasions. Pangeran Patih’s departure from Balambangan to Bali at the behest of his overlord is attended by these manifestations:

- Rain weeping, and a cold howling wind, indeed it was a great curse, sounding an alarm for the collapse of the country of Balambangan. Not long afterwards the eastern foot of Mt Raung thundered. The gods of the kalifa shouted, on account of Balambangan, their voices making fearful reverberations. The people of Balambangan were aroused, for now for the first time they saw and witnessed such a howling wind.

After the Pangeran is put to death, the author says:

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65. Asal kerta Balambangan, nora ketang kapurenah mring kumpeni, sok fuara manahipun, lan aja ajjareh, lawan aja wong gede gelem anjihus maring rahibing kawula . . . (LOR 2185, Canto 14, Stanza 16).


67. An example of this type of text is discussed in Ricklefs, pp. 194-209.

68. . . . **udan tangis, samirana moncawara [= moncauwara], apan ageng sengarane, tengarane [= tengarane] lamun rengka, negari Belambangan, tan antara gunung Raung, jenagai [= jenagai] suku kaw ngan. Surak dewating wong kapir, kaping pangju Belambangan, geter pater syarane, kaget ing wong Balambangan, dening tembe tumingal, lawan te tembe andula, undane keng moncawarna [= moncauwara].** (LOR 2185, Canto 8, Stanzas 37-38).
a voice was heard from above the sky, calling Pangeran Patih from a distance: "O King of Balambangan, entrust your cause to God the exalted, in the future He will revenge you by punishing the one who has done evil. God cannot be kept in ignorance, He will be strong in taking your part in the years that remain." 69

And lastly, the death of Kertanegara of Lumajang is followed by an earthquake.70

It is significant, however, that there is no direct intervention of the supernatural with an immediate causal effect on the events which follow — or to put it another way, there are omens but not miracles.71 In the first example cited, the shouts of the heathen gods may perhaps be interpreted as a dramatic device marking the end of the old order in Balambangan, functionally similar to the cry 'Great Pan is dead!'; and in the second, the voice from the sky testifies to the inevitable operation of a general law, that is, that when men act in defiance of divinely sanctioned morality, they must suffer the consequences. The operation of this general law may be deduced from a particular sequence of events, but it is not inextricably interwoven in their unfolding, for which the immediate causation, if not the 'deeper' explanation, can be seen in purely secular terms: the people of Balambangan were willing to accept VOC rule because they saw it as at least possibly better than that of the Balinese deputies, who were hated because of their exactions and offences against common morality, and it was for this reason that Balinese rule over Balambangan came to an end. The whole babad is so organized as to induce the reader to make this type of explanation on the basis of the evidence he is given; and even with the 'supernatural' passages entirely excised, would still form a perfectly complete and logical whole. If this were done with some other babad very little would be left, and that little would be reduced to a collection of logically unconnected episodes.72

69 ... wonten suwara kang kangunu, saluhare madnyagantang, anyesuk pangeran Patih [h]. Lali sang nata Balambangan den praca araha dewa kang luhuk, benjang males ukum, maring kang gawe ala, mapan dewa tan kena kinarya tambuh, apan agung belatra, ing benjang taun-taun kang kari. (LoR 2185, Canto 9, Stanzas 23-24).

70 LoR 2185, Canto 27, Stanzas 6-7.

71 By 'miracles' I mean such occurrences as the routing of the Majapahit army by Sunan Giri's pen-turned-kris as described in J.J. Meinsma (ed.), Babad Tanah Jawi (c. Gravenhage, 1874), p. 27f.

72 This exercise can be performed on, for example, the account of battle for supremacy on Java between the Javanese and the forces of tanah sabrang (men from overseas) as described in the Surya Raja. See Ricklefs, pp. 200-07.

This is therefore one of the babad which conform most closely with Western expectations of what a 'history' should be. It is secular, political, realistic; it weaves together many threads within the controlling framework of an apparently unidirectional view of the period interpreted by Purwasstra for a modern Indonesian historian.

What were the stimuli for history-writing at this period? The most obvious one was war: many babad deal specifically with one or more of the great wars of the period 1740-1830 (the 'Chinese War', the wars leading to the partition of Mataram, the East Java campaigns which form Purwasstra's subject, the English conquest, the Dipanagara wars) and even minor incidents had their historians,74 down to the isolated and quickly crushed imminent rebellion on behalf of Pangeran Suryengala in 1883. The nineteenth century Balinese histories, too, are histories of wars (those which ended the independence of the principalities) and even babad whose intention is to recount the history of the Javanese dynasties detail not social change or the development of political institutions, but dynastic warfare: even religious change is presented in military rather than theological terms. With the establishment of the pax Neerlandica on Java there were no wars, and therefore no subject for history.

Can we argue that the wars of this period, during which the Company (after more than a century on Java) assumed a much greater military role, were of such a different category in their scope, nature, and deadly significance for Javanese society as to have stimulated a new desire to write history?

73 This is not to say that its explanations are therefore 'true': they comprise, as became evident from comparison with the 19th century babad, a partisan account of the events of the period and must be treated as such.

74 Pakubuwana IV's brief defiance of the Company, for instance, is chronicled in the Babad Pekeping (see Ricklefs, ch. IX).

75 A Jogjakarta writer loyal to the reigning Sultan wrote a detailed account of this affair (LoR 6756 in the Leiden University library collection).
The answer to this question depends of course on whether the lack of extant histories from earlier periods really indicates that there was then no historiography, or is a *trompe d’oeil*. We must take account not only of the factor of physical loss of manuscripts, but also of the tendency (in a partly literate society where the requirements for preserving a strictly ‘historical’ view of the past – notably the preservation of a wide range of written records which a large literate community habitually consulted – were lacking) for histories to become assimilated to non-historical literary models current in court or village circles. For example, it seems to me that one group of *babad* about the historical figure Surapati are in the process of becoming assimilated to the Yusup romance so popular among Javanese Muslims.76 One may speculate, but cannot prove, that earlier ‘histories’ have been completely absorbed into the Panji and other cycles. So it is premature to conclude that there was no earlier historical tradition. Undoubtedly, however, the great changes of this period had their effect on the *type* of history written. Purwasstra’s realistic, involved and politically partisan history can be seen to be related to a number of factors peculiar to his time and place: the impact of a sudden and immediately visible break between old and new structures (the kingdom of Balambangan overtaken by the Company) combined with a feeling of the possibility and even necessity of actively choosing one or the other of the alternatives which seemed to be offered for the future; and the conjectured effect of a number of competing viewpoints on political and economic desiderata – it will be remembered that Balambangan not only showed a major division between pro-Balinese and pro-VOC parties, but was also a centre for significant groups of Chinese and Englishmen.

It seems clear, in view of the very divergent uses of historical material among even the small sample of *babad* so far published or discussed, that we should beware of talking about a Javanese ‘mind’ or ‘world-view’ independent of the particular reality confronted by each Javanese author. Indeed, it may be that many of the difficulties we outsiders have had in understanding these mysterious texts stem from such assumptions, and from a mistaken hope that a single key can be found which will unlock all doors.

Turning to the second question – the significance of this period to modern Indonesian historians – it is immediately apparent that it is crucial to Javanese history, for through these campaigns VOC domination of the island was finally established. Nevertheless, the interpretation of the period is problematic. Where colonial accounts centred around the military progress of the VOC assuming the historical inevitability and desirability of its eventual triumph, such an organization is hardly likely to carry conviction for modern Indonesians. In the process of re-examination, is it then possible to discern another historical force which might be considered as the bearer of more just, humane and enlightened ideas for man and society, a force whose significance has been minimized by the previously dominant historical orthodoxy?77 One may note that in the recent re-examination of the history of other parts of the modern state, a number of historians have assigned this role to Islam, personified by such figures as Iskandar Muda, Sultan Alauddin and Hasanuddin,78 Dipanagara, and the heroes of the Padri and Aceh wars. In the present case, however, the historical facts make such an interpretation peculiarly difficult: Islam was, after all, here not the core of ‘anti-colonial’ resistance, as it was in Banten and Aceh, but was actually forced on Balambangan by the VOC, and associated further with Madurese colonization, under VOC auspices, of a devastated land. Furthermore, allegiance to Islam is not, in this part of Java particularly, the unifying factor that it may be elsewhere, since perhaps nowhere else has the creation of a plural society79 in the colonial period so eroded the basis of social consensus. This is not to argue that present-day divisions are historically continuous with those evidenced by the *babad*, since in fact the break in historical continuity and historical tradition is as complete as one might ever expect to find. But present-day divisions are such as to find fuel in interpretations of the course of these earlier historical events. There exists already in modern Javanese writings an interpretation of the island’s history strongly opposed to the Islamic viewpoint mentioned above: an interpretation in which Islam is assigned an important functional role, but one as *diabolus ex machina* in the scenario of decline and defeat, betraying and weakening Javanese society by seducing it from its more strongly rooted and ancient beliefs. This interpretation is typified by the ‘well-known’ (or notorious) *Serat Dermagandal* from the Kediri region, a work which

76 See my *Surapati* (I have not, however, noted the similarity of the accounts of Surapati’s youth to the romance).

77 In this connection, compare the ‘rehabilitation’ of the Tay Son movement as against orthodox dynastic legitimation in modern Vietnam (see Marr, in this volume).


79 It is not yet possible to say with certainty to what extent ideological divisions coincide with or cut across the dimension of inter-ethnic division, although it is obvious that the *Nahdatul Ulama* was strong in Madurese regions and it has been suggested that divisions between Muslim parties may have had an ethnic aspect. See H. Feith, *The Indonesian Elections of 1955* (Ithaca, Cornell U.P., 1957) p. 83; B.B. Hering and G.A. Wilks, *The Indonesian General Elections of 1971* (Bruxelles, Centre d’étude du Sud-Est asiatique et de l’Extreme Orient, 1973) p. 18; K. Ward, *The 1971 Elections in Indonesia: an East Java Case Study* (Melbourne, Monash U.P., 1974) pp. 167-8. Since post-independent censuses no longer include information on *suku* affiliation, extensive field-work would be necessary to establish the relationship between these divisions. Studies currently being undertaken do seem to indicate that post-1965 conversions to the ‘new Hinduism’ radiating out of Bali are mainly from those areas settled by immigrants from Central Java, that is, Jember Selatan, the Pare district and the slopes of Mt Kelud, south-west of Madiun (unpublished seminar paper on the ‘new Hindus’ of East Java, given by Ron Hailey at the Australian National University, 16 May 1974).
breathes rejection of Islam as being a religion foreign to Java and the Javanese; moreover, a religion which had come to power as a result of the utterly reprehensible conduct of the walls, the venerated saints of ancient Javanese Islam who conspired against Majapahit, and by the ignominious action taken by Raden Patah, the first king of Demak, against his father... 80

The re-publication of this work in 1925 caused a furor both among Muslims and in the Chinese community (which had equal grounds for taking offence). The even balance between the consciously Islamic and the at least non-Islamic electorate suggested by East Javanese voting patterns81 makes such differences of interpretation potentially explosive.

Furthermore, the fact that the demographic pattern of this region is not the result of a gradual autonomous evolution but is in a sense merely the debris of a particularly violent colonial experience makes it equally hard for a modern historian to interest his readers in the evolution of shared norms of the sort which do, for example, make recognizable Dutchmen out of members of bitterly opposed religious persuasions.

It may be objected that in attributing ‘value’, either positive or negative, to the Islamic or to any other perceived social force in interaction at a particular period, a partiality is introduced which is improper for the historian, who should strive for that ‘serenely and absolutely neutral’ viewpoint attributed to van Leur. 82 This leads us into a debate too important to be encapsulated here. It is, however, perhaps worth reminding ourselves that the work of England’s major historians, from Macaulay (and even before him) to Rowe and his contemporaries, has been inseparably bound up with two related endeavours: firstly, to perceive in the historical process a coherent and developing core of intellectual and social values which can provide both a sense of cultural continuity and a basis for the direction of future progress; and secondly, to argue the strength of one perception of these values against those of other historians. If moral neutrality is invoked to preclude debate of this order, the study of history is reduced to an activity unlikely to engage the vital attention of an educated public anywhere, and there would be little reason to suppose that it might achieve more than its present minor importance in Indonesian intellectual life.

81 See Feith, pp. 66, 83; Hering and Wills, table 16b etc.

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**CAMBODIAN PALACE CHRONICLES (RAJABANGSAVATAR), 1927-1949: Kingship and Historiography at the End of the Colonial Era**

David Chandler

The chronicle histories (bangsawat) of King Sisowath Monivong (r. 1927-1941) and his grandson, King Norodom Sihanouk (r. 1941-1955; the chronicle stops at the end of 1949), 1 are the last examples of a venerable Cambodian genre derived from the tradition of royal chronicles (phraatchaphongawad) in Thailand. 2

The manuscripts are of very different lengths. Monivong’s takes 132 pages to cover fourteen years, while Sihanouk’s uses over 800 pages to deal with nine. This difference reflects changes in what it was thought proper for a bangsawat to include — Sihanouk’s chronicle contains decrees and speeches, for example, while Monivong’s does not — as well as a change of style from that of a sixty-five year old brigadier in the French Army en retraite (as Monivong was when he died) to an eighteen year old boy. More importantly, the expansion of the format reflects changes in the ideology of kingship, forced on the French by the pressures of World War II, and thus in the way that people in the palace, including Sihanouk, came to view this institution, and its role in Cambodia’s past. 4

* In revising this paper for publication, I have benefited greatly from discussions with Barbara and Leonard Andaya, David Marr, and Craig Reynolds, as well as from other papers given at the colloquium especially those of Shelly Errington and Michael Vickery.

1 The chronicles, entitled Rajabangsavat brah Sisowath Monivong (hereafter RSM) and Rajabangsavat brah Norodom Sihanouk (hereafter RNS) were photographed by the Centre for East Asian Studies in Tokyo, from a copy in Phnom Penh, and are available on microfilm. Unfortunately, the chronicle of Monivong’s father, Sisowath (r. 1904-1927), came to my attention only as this collection was going to press. It is also available from Tokyo on microfilm.


3 On the parameters of the genre at this time, see my ‘Duties of the Corps of Royal scribes: an undated Khmer Manuscript from the Colonial Era’, *JSS*, 63, ii (1975) pp. 343-8. From RSM, p. 43, I can now tentatively date the manuscript from 1931.

4 The view of the past outside the palace was quite different, with less emphasis on kingship, and more on rebellious (or loyal) royal heroes. See, for example, Anonymous, *Koeng robakhset teuk khmer* (Phnom Penh, 1958) drawn from a manuscript, in verse, dating from 1869-1870.