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More on Birds, Ascetics and Kings in Central Java

Kakavin Rāmāyaṇa, 24.111–115 and 25.19–22

Andrea Acri

In an earlier article (Acri 2010) I have introduced stanzas 95–126 of *sarga* 24 and the whole of *sarga* 25 of the KR, which present the most difficult and least understood pieces of poetry in the whole of Old Javanese literature.¹ The two sections, displaying a close relationship on account of several shared lexical items and corresponding motifs, describe in allegorical terms animals, birds and plants in order to satirically represent ascetic and political characters of mid-ninth century Central Java. Because of their idiosyncratic language and style, and because of their allegorical content which find no correspondences in the *Bhaṭṭikāvya* or other Sanskrit versions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, they have been for long regarded as a *corpus alienum* in the poem.

The thesis of interpolation has been criticized by Hooykaas (1958a, 1958b, 1958c), who, however, did not rule out the possibility of these sections having been composed by a ‘second hand’. Having tried to distinguish the various textual layers that characterize those sections, I turned to analyse their contents along the lines set out in the masterful article by Aichele (1969) ‘Vergessene Metaphern als Kriterien der Datierung des altjavanischen *Rāmāyaṇa*’, discussing the allegories depicted there in comparison with the contemporary Śivagr̥ha metrical inscription. By taking into account additional Old Javanese textual and visual documents, I suggested a fine-tuning for some of the identifications advanced by the German scholar. In particular, I argued that the character of Vibhīṣaṇa (instead of Lakṣmaṇa, as argued by Aichele) in the poem could allegorically represent King Rakai Kayuvani, and that the satirical descriptions of various kinds of water-birds of the heron family (*jaṅkuṅ*, *kuntul*, *bisu*, *baka*)

1. In the present paper I transcribe Old Javanese according to the system implemented by Zoetmulder in OJED, but with the following deviations: *w* becomes *v*; *ḥ* becomes *h*; *ē* becomes *a* and *ō* becomes *o*. In order to avoid confusion, the spelling of quoted primary sources, both published and unpublished, has been standardized according to these conventions.

deceiving the freshwater fishes are to be taken as a critique directed to historical figures representing covert agents of the Śailendra prince Bālaputra disguised as Śaiva (and not Buddhist) ascetics.

My conclusion was that the satirical themes displayed in the stanzas represent a case of ‘localization’ of materials widespread in Sanskrit literature, which should be taken into due consideration in order to understand the identity and religious affiliation of the ascetic figures allegorically represented in *sarga* 24 and 25. I finished my article by announcing that ‘in future research I shall try to identify other allegorical characters mentioned there, in particular the *kuwoñ*-bird, with political and religious figures of mid-9th century Central Java’ (Acri 2010:502).

In the present contribution I focus on a group of stanzas, namely 111–115 of *sarga* 24 and 19–22 of *sarga* 25, which have so far not been satisfactorily interpreted, and advance a tentative identification of the ascetic figures that the birds, depicted there with clearly negative and ridiculing undertones, allude to. I argue that the poet, drawing from a well-known repertoire of stock figures and anecdotes pertaining to both the natural and human realms, developed a satire that is likely to be understood only against the background of the contemporary religious ideologies as reflected by textual sources from Java as well as from the Indian Subcontinent. Starting from the presupposition that the religious theme of these stanzas has so far been insufficiently tackled,² I shall detail the specific elements reflecting a Śaiva background, and argue that the ‘tension’ in the text is between a mainstream, householder-oriented form of religiosity and the extreme asceticism of certain groups belonging to the Pāsūpata or Atimārga division of Śaivism,³ who may also have been involved in covert activities of political maneuvering.

This paper aims at filling a gap in our knowledge of the religious background of the KR, and of the religious history of pre-Islamic Java in general.⁴ It also

2. The only exception I am aware of being Nihom (1996), by whose approach I feel deeply inspired. While introducing his discussion of the religious themes of KR 24.117 and 25.25, Nihom (pp. 653–4) remarked that ‘the methodological point to be advanced is that these cantos of the Old Javanese *Rāmāyaṇa*, despite their indubitable Javanese nature, are not likely to be understood without consideration of the beliefs of various schools of Indian religious sects.’

3. On the Atimārga and Mantramārga traditions of Śaivism, see Sanderson 1988.

4. The following considerations by Hooykaas (1958c:65–6) remain valid until today: ‘The whole problem of “Religion in the KR” by Stutterheim and Poerbatjaraka was reduced to the simple and antiquated antithesis Viṣṇu/Śiva, and further simplified by assuming that nearly the whole of *sarga* xxv is “interpolated”. [...] Śaivitic = Tāntric features of the KR may not be surprising for these early centuries, but the spread and influence of Tāntrism in Java remain largely to be investigated.’

aims to contribute toward the reconstruction of the history of Śaivism in the Subcontinent, by adding new data on ascetic groups whose features are only scantily documented in Sanskrit sources.

On Birds and Ascetics: KR 24.111–115

Stanzas 111–115 of *sarga* 24 represent one of the most obscure and intriguing passages of the entire KR. Various scholars have confronted these verses in the past, each trying to make sense of them by offering a different translation and interpretation. The first was Aichele (1931a), who translated this series of stanzas in connection with his study on the *vidu*—a figure standing between a performer and an ascetic—in ancient Java. The same scholar took this passage up again in his later work of 1969, in which he broadened his materials to include other stanzas of *sarga* 24 and 25 as well as the Śivagrha inscription of 856 AD. Aichele analysed these documents against the background of certain contemporary historical events that occurred during a period of social unrest that stormed Central Java as a result of the dynastic struggle for succession opposing the Śailendra Bālaputra to Rakai Pikatan. According to Aichele, the idiosyncratic language and allusive contents of these sources make them so obscure that we may assume that even the contemporary readers (or hearers) would not have understood this passage if the context and referents of the satire enacted by the poet were not immediately intelligible to them as ‘matters of actuality’. Aichele, however, only marginally focused on religious aspects, and did not attempt to compare the characters depicted in the stanzas with Sanskrit counterparts.⁵ In between Aichele’s two contributions, Hooykaas (1958a) published a translation of stanzas 87–126 of *sarga* 24. As far as our stanzas 111–115 are concerned, he added little, if anything, to the work of his predecessor. Santoso (1980a) offered only a very free and often unsatisfactory translation of these stanzas. While generally pointing in a note to the discrepancy between his translation and the one produced by Hooykaas,⁶ he simply remarked—not unreasonably—that ‘only by closely studying the behaviour of those animals in their natural habitat can a translator be inspired to make a good translation of these kind of descriptions in the *Rāmāyaṇa*’ (Santoso 1980a:802).

The first group of stanzas I am going to analyse comes right after the idyllic description of the return of splendour in Lan̄kā (stanzas 86–110). As Hooykaas (1958a:18) noted,

5. As Jordaan (1999:69) admitted, ‘the allusions to the social positions and involvement in the political situation of these birds remain simply too cryptic to be understood today’.
6. It is apparent that Santoso did not consult either of Aichele’s contributions.

Animals which normally prey upon each other now live peacefully side by side, thoroughly enjoying the fortunate opportunities bestowed upon them; they only tease one another, and even then the subject is as elevated as the problem whether it is preferable to live in a hole like a naked monk or to swerve about like a religious mendicant.

It is only from stanza 111 onwards that the harmony among the animals is suddenly broken and their animated discussion begins. The allegorical references become widespread and the narration acquires the character of a satire. The lively dialogue between two main bird-characters, a *kuvoñ* (cuckoo?) and a starling (*jalak*) who despise each other, is depicted in a peculiar theatrical style. Their verbal exchange is witnessed by other bird characters, as if it were a kind of stage performance. The debate begins in 24.111a:

manyañ-manyañ ya meñāñalula-ñalula riñ prajñojvala jalak

Calling to a challenge, the bright starlings are lively, being the servants of Gnosis.

I trace the form *manyañ-manyañ*, not found in OJED, to the root *syañ* I (OJED 1890: 'call, invitation'), attested in the non-nasalized form *asyañ-asyañ* 'to call, invite to come, challenge (to a fight)'.⁷ The equally reduplicated form *añalula-ñalula* 'to be the servant or follower of, to serve with' is attested only in the present passage of the KR.⁸ This line apparently contains puns. For instance, the word *ujvala*, meaning, among other things, 'flaming, shining, radiant' and 'fiery, fierce, violent', might be a plain reference to the bright-red colour of the starling; but it can also be taken as the epithet 'bright[-minded]'; metaphorically related to the expression *añalula-ñalula riñ prajña* 'servants of Gnosis'; or, we may render it simply as 'fierce'. The latter possibility is suggested by the fact that this bird is referred to in the second quarter of stanza 25.18 as being *galak* (*magalak*), that is 'wild, fierce, furious, passionate',⁹ involved in a debate with the 'logician' (*tarka*) green-parrot (*atat*):

7. Both Aichele and Hooykaas, judging from the lack of any note or remark, considered this form unproblematic. They translated this line quite freely, so that it is guesswork to ascertain which meaning they attributed to this form. Aichele (1931a:153): 'welk een gejubel en gevriemel onder de spreeuwen met hun helder verstand!'; Hooykaas (1958:279): 'they scream and wheel about among the quick-witted and flashing starlings' (apparently the subject was deemed to be the *kakatu*, appearing in the preceding stanza).

8. The root-form *kalula* 'servant, follower, assistant' is only found in this text and in inscriptions before 931 AD, see OJED 779 s.v.

9. The semantic closeness of the two adjectives is suggested by their proximate occurrence in a passage of the *Harivaṅśa* (39.2): *sira mañkin ujvala galaknira* 'as for him, more and more furious is his fierceness.'

macañil cumodya si jalak magalak

The fierce starlings are engaged in debate and raise difficult questions.

According to OJED 719, *jalak* denotes ‘several varieties of bird resembling the starling (*pastor*) [...] One variety can be taught to talk’. In modern Javanese the word still refers to a variety of talking bird kept in cages as a pet. That this quality was attributed to the *jalak* already in Old Javanese sources is suggested by a passage in the *Ṛṣiśāsana* (p. 15), where, in the list of the birds whose meat is forbidden to ascetics, we find a mention of the latter just before the *manuk narasabdā* ‘the bird(s) with human voice’. It is perhaps not too far fetched to see in their being ‘servants of Gnosis’ a reference to their commitment to the Goddess of speech Sarasvatī, who in Sanskrit lexicons is also indicated with the appellative *prajñā* (see MW, s.v.). The apparent context of debate in which the *jalak* appears in both 24.111–115 and 25.18 suggests that their ‘calling to a challenge’ is to be interpreted not literally (namely, to fight) but metaphorically (to a verbal debate). Such a verbal exchange with the *kuvoñ* does indeed occur in the course of our passage, starting in the last line of the stanza—but not before a naturalistic scene has been depicted, in which a weaver-bird (*hiji*), from its well-crafted nest on the branch of a tree, looks down with contempt at a quail (*puyuh*) squatting on the ground (24.111bc):

*prāñjak-prāñjak tumañjak ñ hiji mañajir umah tiñjo puyuh i sor
de niñ buddhyarddha müdān pakidupuh akipū tan pomah aramāh*

The Prinias (*prāñjak-prāñjak*) are eating with eagerness; the weaver-bird (*hiji*) plaits a house, looking at the quail (*puyuh*) beneath, who—because of his very stupid mind—is squatting on the ground, scratching about to make a resting-place, without running a household, dirty.

Since I have discussed these lines and their relationship with stanza 20cd of *sarga* 25 elsewhere (Acri 2008), I shall not comment upon them in detail here. Suffice it to say that in the latter stanza a quail is satirically linked to an ascetic (*viku*) and given the epithet of *alepaka*—‘spotless’ in Sanskrit but (also) ‘stained’ in Old Javanese—a term that in Tuto texts refers to the Śaiva sect of the Alepakas, which I have linked to the Vaimalas known from rare Sanskrit sources.

In the last line of the stanza (24.111d) the *kuvoñ* comes to the stage, enthusiastically showing off while taking as his abode a hole in the ground:

kuvva ñke ndo kuvuñ ñke aku makuvu kuvuñ liñnyān uniñ kuvuñ

‘There could be a residence here—look!—here is a hole! I use a hole as residence!’ Such were the words that the *kuvuñ* was crying out.

Before advancing any hypothesis as to the identity of the religious character represented by this bird, I find it useful to devote some attention to its ornithological identification first. A correct identification may indeed play an important role in our understanding of these satirical descriptions, which aim at stigmatizing the behaviours of certain ascetic characters by linking them to their imagined counterparts in the natural world.

As it appears from previous secondary literature, the identification of the *kuvuñ* is a matter of disagreement. Kern (1875:119), commenting on the occurrence of that word in *Vṛttasañcaya* 27, rendered it as ‘peacock’ (*pauw*); Juynboll (1902:137), hesitantly, as ‘a type of crow’; Aichele (1931a:153, 1969:132–4) as ‘cuckoo’, corresponding to the male of the bird called *kokila* (p. 132, note 22); Hooykaas (1958a:279) as ‘owl’; Santoso (1980a:640) did not translate it, giving *kuvvañ*.¹⁰ The uncertainty about the type of bird in question was summarized by Zoetmulder (1974:200) as follows:

Infatuation with the moon is also ascribed to the *walik*. [...] This is probably the night-bird which is now called *kolik*. Whether its sound was considered to be inauspicious or to announce the coming of a thief, and whether it was the female of the *tuhu*, as it is now, cannot be determined from the Old Javanese texts. The latter appears only rarely (under the name *tuhutuhu* or *tutuhu*). Since the names *tuhutuhu* and *walik* are apparently onomatopoeic and we find the verbs *anuhu* and *angalik-alik* (or *kakulik-kulik*) used to indicate the sound of the *kokila* as well as of the *kuwong*, the conclusion seems warranted that all these different names designate one and the same bird, namely a black species of the cuckoo variety.

The above considerations are subsumed under the relevant entries of OJED.¹¹ As evinced by Zoetmulder’s accounts, the identification of the *kuvuñ* poses sev-

10. The author apparently read the first words of line 111d as *kuvvañ (ñ)ke* and not *kuvva ñke* (that is, the irrealis of *kuvu* ‘residence, house’ plus the adverbial particle *ñke* ‘here’), which I find more likely.

11. [1] *kokila* (884): ‘(Skt the *kokila* or koil, black or Indian cuckoo; frequently alluded to in poetry, its musical cry being supposed to inspire tender emotions) a kind of cuckoo [...] judging from the call (*anunuhu* or *añalik-alik*), the *Cuculus Orientalis* is meant—the male called *tuhu* and the female *kolik* in modern Java, where their call is considered as ominous. Is it the same as the *walik*, q.v.? It appears to differ from the *taḍah-asih*, q.v. (*Cuculus Flavus*) and the *cucur*, q.v. (the male?). The *kokila* is not mentioned as weeping for the moon, but the *walik* does. In *Tantri Keḍiri* 4.73b and ff. it is also called *kuwoñ*, q.v.’ [2] *kuwoñ* (941): ‘a part. kind of bird of the cuckoo variety, prob. = *kokila*, *tutuhu*, the black cuckoo. But also: peacock? [...] *Tantri Keḍiri*

eral problems. The designation provided by OJED, that is Indian Cuckoo (*Cuculus Micropterus*), corresponds to a noisy species with a persistent four-note *bo-ko-ta-ko* call. This rather reminds us of the cry of the Cockatoo, and in any case hardly conforms to a musical cry ‘supposed to inspire tender emotions’ (OJED 885).¹² The second candidate for the *kuvoñ* suggested by OJED is the *Cuculus Orientalis*, whose cry *tuhutuhu* can be regarded as melodious.¹³ The bird is associated with such a call in *Vṛttasañcaya* 27b: *kuvvañ añliñ tuhutuhu* ‘the cuckoo cries: *tuhutuhu*’ (or: ‘really, indeed’, with an evident pun).¹⁴ But, as OJED 941 notes, his cry is also referred to as *tavvañ*, which, confusingly enough, is attributed to the peacock by other sources. And the confusion goes even further, for, as reported by OJED 944, *kuwoñ* (III) may also indicate the cry of the *manuk vidu* (= *kuvoñ*)¹⁵ ‘hollow like a drum?’, which meaning was arrived at on the basis of its unique attestation in *Bhomāntaka* 70.1.

I would now like to draw attention to textual evidence on the *tuhutuhu* and the *kuvoñ* that was not taken into account by previous authors. For instance, Turtur *Ṛṣiśāsana* (p. 15) presents a list of so-called *krūrapakṣi* ‘fierce, wild, bloody, terrifying’ birds, whose meat is forbidden food for ascetics (*viku*) of the Śaiva Siddhānta (*sañ siddhānta* or *siddhāntabrata*). This list features, among others,

4.76a: (here *kuwoñ* and *kokila* indicate the same bird, which in *Tantri Dēmuñ* is called *tutuhu* and *anyabrēta*, that is, the cuckoo) [...] *añuwwañ, pañuwwañ* (avs) of the sound of the *kuwoñ* and the cry of the peacock [...]; has there been a confusion between *añuwwañ* and *anawwañ*, even to the point of causing ambiguity in *kuwoñ* itself (cuckoo or peacock)? *Surak* seems to suit the cry of the peacock better than the call of the cuckoo (*anuhu*)’ [3] *tuhu* II (2049) *tuhu-tuhu*: ‘a part. kind of bird, the black cuckoo (= *kokila*, *kuwoñ* q.v.); its call’.

12. KR 25.71a does not leave any doubt about the musical skills of the bird: *ri kuvuñ kuvoñ umuni konəñ-unəñ* ‘In a hole the *kuvoñ* sings in an enchanting way’. It is noteworthy that the form *konəñ-unəñ* ‘enchanting’ is attributed to the sound or tones (*svara*) of the *vinā* in the Old Javanese *Uttarakāṇḍa* (*sarga* 26, p. 52), where Vālmiki addresses Kuśa and Lava (see Gomperts 2002:580–1).

13. Such a cry may be indeed linked with that attributed to the dwarf koel (*Microdynamis Parva*), whose song, according to Payne, Sorenson and Klitz (2005:368), ‘is a series of notes of medium to high pitch, a series of resonant upslurred whistles, “toui touei touei” [...] Another call is a rapid, rising, liquid series of notes, the series rising in pitch then leveling at the end, “tew-hodohodohodohodohodohodo ...”’. Although the dwarf koel is only found in New Guinea, it is under the following entry describing the genus *Eudynamis* that we find the *Cuculus Orientalis*. One species of this genus, first described by Linnaeus as early as 1766, is widespread from India through Indonesia to Eastern Asia.

14. The polysemy of the word *tuhutuhu* (which in Old Javanese can also mean ‘true, right, sincere’) is also exploited by the author of the *Navaruci* (31.22), introducing a pun in the description of call of the bird: *tan mithyeñ vacana tuhutuhu* ‘not false in speech is the *tuhutuhu*’.

15. See below, p. 62.

the *manuk vidu* and the *tuhutuhu* separately.¹⁶ It seems reasonable to assume that these birds are considered taboo for the *vikus* because of their predatory nature. This is interesting, for one would not expect to find the *manuk vidu* and the *tuhutuhu* in a list of carnivores; at least, not if we accept their identification with the cuckoo, for the dietary regimen of most species of this bird is vegetarian. This has become proverbial in the realm of Old Javanese animal stories, and is for instance confirmed by the *Tantri Kamaṇḍaka B* (p. 36), where the narrator introduces the stories of the ‘wager between the cuckoo (*kuvoṅ*) and the crow (*gagak*)’ and the ‘cuckoo and waterbirds (*jaṅkuṅ*)’ as an illustration of the unsuitability for herbivorous animals to seek the friendship of carnivores.¹⁷ There the cuckoo represents the quintessential vegetarian, feeding himself and his offspring with (the leaves or fruits of) the *variṅin* and *hambulu*-trees, while the crow and the waterbirds are carnivores par excellence, the former living on dead bodies and the latter preying upon fishes and even small birds.¹⁸

Now, the descriptions found in the above Old Javanese sources, which are later than the KR, appear to be in contrast with those given in *sarga* 24 and 25. From the latter *sarga* it would seem that the bird in question is terrestrial, since he is dwelling in a hole, and is a carnivorous predator, for he is repeatedly accused of having cruel intentions and being deceitful. These characteristics apply to the profile of the coucals, belonging to the cuckoo class and present in Java with several species, such as the Greater Black Coucal, *Centropus Menbeki*, and the Sunda Coucal, *Centropus Nigrorufus*. These are indeed terrestrial, predatory and opportunistic feeders. My conclusion is that the Old Javanese authors did not clearly distinguish the identity of cuckoos and coucals, both defined by the term *kuvoṅ* and possibly *tuhutuhu*. In order to preserve this ambiguity, I

16. This list finds a parallel in the *Vratiśāsana*. The Old Javanese commentary to Sanskrit *śloka* 8, mentioning birds whose meat is impure (*kākolukagrhdhraśyenakaṅkakokilasūcikāḥ / kiraśukāś ca sārīkāḥ sarvam abhakṣyamāṃsakam • abhakṣya*] *conj.*; acokṣa Ed.), lists the same series of *krūrapakṣi*: *gagak, dok, ayaṅ bakikuk, uluṅ, trilaklak, kaka* [ms.; kak ed.], *tuhutuhu* [ms.; *tuvu-tuvu* ed.], *domdoman, atat, syuṅ, nori, cod, gagandhan, alapalap, bibido, daryas, manuk vidu*.

17. These two stories are found neither in the *Tantri Kāmandaka* (A) nor in any Sanskrit or Southeast Asian digest of fables, but are narrated only in *Tantri Kamaṇḍaka B*, *Tantri Dāmuṅ* and *Tantri Kaḍiri* (Klokke 1993:252–65). This suggests that these additional stories were original Javanese (or Balinese?) additions. The relationship of the two stories with stanzas 24.111–118 of the KR is, to my mind, very likely, but its detailed discussion would require a separate paper. See also the following footnote.

18. The enmity between the *kuvoṅ* and the *jaṅkuṅ* must have been proverbial too, for it is attested (albeit not very clearly) also in stanzas 24.116–118 of the KR, where the speaker despising the waterbirds of the heron-family seems to be the *kuvoṅ* (note that the *jaṅkuṅ* is the first bird to be mentioned in stanza 117). See Acri 2010.

will refrain from translating the Old Javanese term in either way.

Let us resume the diatribe between the *kuvoñ* and the starling, which we left at stanza 24.111. In the first quarter of stanza 112 the author compares the performance of the *kuvoñ* with that of a *vidu*:

līnan lūnan ya hūnan muni manukk uyakan yekāmidu-midu

līnan lūnan (?) cries with much noise, the *manuk uyakan*—he is performing like a *vidu*.

The words *līnan* and *lūnan* are problematic. The former is not listed in OJED, while the latter figures there as a hapax,¹⁹ allegedly meaning ‘a kind of bird?’. Another problem is that, from the syntactical structure of the line, the subject of the line is not apparent, and it is not sure whether the second part is to be interpreted as a direct speech.²⁰ According to my understanding of this and the adjacent stanzas, the *kuvoñ* should be regarded as the understood subject of the line, defined by the attribute *manuk uyakan* and the predicate *mamidu-midu*. In doing so I go against Aichele (1969:133), who translated the line as ‘swinging around, the alarmed birds cried, while he was only play-acting’,²¹ thus taking *uyakan* as an adjective (‘alarmed’) to *manuk* (‘birds’), which refers back to a group of unspecified birds among those appearing in lines abc of the preceding stanza. I also go against OJED, which tentatively links the *manuk uyak(an)* with the *hiji* (weaver-bird) on the basis of passages occurring in the Tantri literature.²² From the context it is in fact apparent that the interlocutor of the *kuvoñ* is the starling (*jalak*), who is apostrophized by the former in the following stanza and accused of encamping near the weaver-bird (*hiji*), who, therefore, is disqualified from being the referent of *manuk uyakan*. The form is attested nowhere apart from KR 24.112, 114 and 115, except in *Tantri Dəmuñ* 4.55a (*manuk uyak*), narrating the well-known story of the monkey and the weaver-

19. In fact it occurs also in stanza 109d, which however can be emended into *luñhā*.

20. The specification of the speaker in these stanzas is often unclear as it may occur not at the beginning of the speech but in the first line of the stanza immediately following, that is after its utterance has been pronounced.

21. *Umherschwirrend rufen die aufgescheuten Vögel, während der nur seine Possen trieb.*

22. OJED 944 *kuyaka*: ‘a particular kind of bird. *Tantri Dəmuñ* 4.56a: *tan kadiñ kuyaka tos nikanj wesmakarmi nityāmaduñ taruñ* (*amaduñ* suggests a woodpecker. If this is right, *kuyaka* is not the same as *manuk uyak(an)* in the preceding verse; see *uyak* II), and OJED 2157 ‘*uyak** = *uya*, q.v. [*uya** *inuya* (pf) to pursue, chase, pester] • *inuyak* (pf) to pursue, chase • *manuk uyakan* (also *manuk uyak*) a part. kind of bird [...] From *Tantri Kāmandaka* 148.28 it appears that the *mañar* (weaver-bird) is meant. So *mañar* = *iji* = *manuk uyakan*’.

bird.²³ Since there are various reasons suggesting that the latter text is not to be regarded as a reliable source to draw upon in order to identify the birds appearing in these stanzas of the KR,²⁴ I suggest to interpret *manuk uyakan* not as a name of a bird, but rather as an adjective qualifying a bird calling to a verbal fight, as in the case of both the *hiji* in *Tantri Dəmuñ* and the *kuvon* in the KR. As the root *uyak* ‘pestering’ suggests, the attribute would denote a trait of a troublesome personality, which is in our stanzas fittingly represented by the *kuvon*. The bird is in stanza 114 attributed the denigratory attribute of *manuk vidu* and described in 112a as ‘acting like a *vidu*’, which gives us a clue as to the definition of the features of the bird as much as the identification of the human counterpart that he is meant satirically to represent. What these activities comprise is explained, through the mouth of the starling, in the rest of stanza 112 (lines bcd). There the bird is depicted as a homeless and unattached wayang-player, and, at the same time, ironically compared to a *tañḍa*²⁵ functionary:

sambegā niñ kuvon tekana hinānən-añən donyān paməjahi
koñ tañḍaṅ koñ kaniṣṭākuṭa makuvu-kuvuñ koñ kaśmala kuvon
tan pomah tā katṛṣṇān laku vidu mavayañ kom gunya sagaṇa

[Starling:] The studious kind disposition of that *kuvon*, it is to be pondered over, as his aim is to kill!

You are a *tañḍa*! You have a very mean ‘palace’, living in holes in the ground! You are stained, *kuvon*!

Homeless, unattached, while leading the life of a vagabond performer, a wayang-player, you are endowed with manifold abilities, having magical powers!

23. The story narrates] the fight between a weaverbird and a monkey (identified with Hanuman in the text). Having praised his skills and industriousness and scorned the monkey for being a wanderer without a fixed household, the weaverbird has its nest destroyed by the monkey.

24. For instance, Klokke (1993:46) has pointed out that, according to a personal communication of H. Hinzler, the *Tantri Dəmuñ* is likely to have been composed as late as the eighteenth century by Ida Pedanda Nyoman Pidada and his brother Ida Pedanda Ketut Pidada in Sidemen, Bali. Given the significant chronological priority of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the exemplary status it has enjoyed in Old Javanese literature, it cannot be ruled out that the usage of the term *kuyakan* in *Tantri Dəmuñ* might have even been derived from a wrong interpretation of these stanzas of the KR by the Balinese author(s). That this is more than a mere guess is suggested by certain elements in common between the stories of the *Tantri* and our stanzas. This makes it likely that they were taken as a source of inspiration by the author of the *Tantri Dəmuñ*, who, according to Klokke (1993:47), ‘has clearly made an effort to display his profound reading knowledge by referring to various texts and mythological stories not referred to in other *Tantri* texts.’

25. See below, note 48.

The vidu: A Śaiva ascetic in ancient Java

In order to understand the link between the *kuvon* and the *vidu*, and because the metaphors advanced in the stanza may be fully grasped only after we become familiar with the figure of the *vidu*, I should like to make a substantial excursus on the latter figure in ancient Java.

In a passage of the *Bhomāntaka* (70.1) the *kuvon* is called, as in KR 25.21a, *manuk vidu*, and his voice connected with thunder. The stanza, using the imagery of a ceremony,²⁶ allegorically depicts the sounds produced by atmospheric agents and animals (the *kuvon* and bull-frogs), evoking the accompaniment of musical instruments during some kind of performance (trans. Teeuw and Robson 2005:387):

*mijil hyaṅ aruṅāhalap valinirān ghanārjāsinaṅ
ikaṅ limut avarṇa-varṇa ya navagrahānde raras
gərah kadi curiṅ binaṅḍunan i kuṅkaṅ iṅ groṅ ləṅəlṅ
patər kuvuṅ ikaṅ manuk vidu taḥən tan imbāṅigəl*

The holy sun emerged fittingly attired, as its lovely clouds were shining,
And the mist in its various hues was its *navagraha* cloth, moving one's heart.

The thunder was like the cymbals, accompanied by the bullfrogs in the gullies,

And the thunderclaps were the boom of the *vidu taḥən* ('tree dancer') birds, dancing without interruption.

The association of the *kuvon/manuk vidu* with a call resembling the rumbling of a thunder is found in other Old Javanese passages, namely in the prose *Tantri Kamaṅḍaka* B and its cognate Kiduṅ²⁷ versions *Tantri Kəḍiri* and *Tantri Dəmuṅ*.²⁸ The former text narrates the story 'cuckoo and waterbirds', where the *kuvon* features under the *nomen omen* of Vākḅajra 'thunder-voice(d)' (p. 36).²⁹ The *kuvon* has a *bajragīta* 'song of thunder' and is able to chant in a beautiful manner (*lituhayu kiduṅana*) to accompany dance (*aṅigəl*). In a passage of the

26. Thus according to Teeuw and Robson (2005:640).

27. An Old Javanese or Middle Javanese composition in indigenous metres.

28. The *Tantri Kamaṅḍaka* B, which has been preserved in only one *lontar* from the Tabanan district in Bali, embeds six additional stories and 25 *ślokas* not present in the *Tantri Kāmandaka* A; see Klokke (1993:40–1).

29. Thus the transcription, whereas both *Tantri Dəmuṅ* and *Tantri Kəḍiri* read Bajravākya (see Hooykaas 1929, Appendix v).

Ghaṭotkacāśraya (5.13), the chanting of the *kuvoṅ/manuk vidu* is metaphorically referred to as an accompaniment for a wayang performance. The translation and commentary by Zoetmulder (1974:210–11) run:

‘The trees began to grow faintly visible, like wayang puppets; the *kuwong* sang songs to them. The day broke over the fields along the hill slopes.’³⁰

Here another feature is introduced in the comparison. For a wayang performance needs the accompaniment of song (*kidung*), and the *kuwong* is introduced to supply them. Apart from the fact that its voice is commonly heard at dawn, there may be a further, special reason for associating it with the wayang here. Another name for the *kuwong* is *manuk widwan*, in which the word *widwan* is derived from *widu*. From the oldest charters onward we find *widus* mentioned among classes of people connected with the performing arts, and there is ample evidence that one of their major functions was *mangidung*, the singing of songs. It was therefore the name ‘*widu*-bird’ which made the *kuwong* of all the singing birds most eligible to feature as singer in the wayang comparison. But how did he ‘sing to them’ as the text says? We may possibly have to assume something like a chorus accompanying the performance. But it may be that *widu* refers to the *dalang* himself. [...] Perhaps he is there, but unrecognized by us, because he is called *widu* rather than *dalang*. A short passage from the RY [= KR] seems to confirm this. In an imaginary discussion between various birds the *kuwong* is railed at for being despicable, of low morality, lacking his own home or family-ties (an obvious allusion to the cuckoo), and wandering about as a *widu mawayang*, a wayang-performing *widu*.

According to OJED 2263, the word *widu* denotes an ‘actor (dancer, singer, reciter, leader in a performance?)’. It is not clear whether a particular kind of performance is meant. *Widu* appears often to be qualified by *maṇiduṅ*, *mawayan*, or connected with *acarita*. In his study ‘Oudjavaansche beroepsnamen’, Aichele (1931a:152, 154) introduced the *vidu* as follows:³¹

The group with the title *widu* included singers, mask-dancers, actors, buffoons, shadow-players. Just as *paṇḍay* generally indicated the various specialists of the blacksmith profession, and *kabayan* the individual officers of spiritual brotherhoods, so was the Sanskrit *widu* = wise, intelligent, a comprehensive term for the category of actors.

From the verses of the *Rāmāyaṇa* it is clear that in Medieval Java the shadow-player is an itinerant comedian, whose profession expelled him from his home, who should remain solitary and who cannot maintain friendship nor conduct a regular family life.

30. *Ghaṭotkacāśraya* 5.13 (after Zoetmulder 1974:540): *tapvan avas taḥanya savayan kuvoṅnya lalitālah maṇiduṅi*.

31. Both passages are my translations from the original Dutch.

Textual evidence from the *Tantu Paṅġġaran* and the *Deśavarṇana* suggesting the status of bard of the *vidu* has been gathered by Robson (1971:17–9), who concluded that the *vidu* had the specific functions of reciting Kiduṅ of a magical nature as well as royal genealogies. In fact, while going through Damais' *Répertoire onomastique* (1970:625–6) one may find several occurrences of the term *vidu*, often accompanied by *maṅiduṅ*, in Old Javanese charters. These figures are invariably mentioned, along with other performers as well as the *maṅilala drabya haji* 'royal tax collectors', as 'undesirable' people who are forbidden to enter religious freeholds. Their appearance side by side the *maṅilala drabya haji* does not imply that they are to be considered as part of the latter category; on the contrary, as argued by Gomperts (2002:585–6), any people who demanded money for their services were equally forbidden to carry out their activities in the freehold's premises. According to Robson (1971:17), the *vidus*, like ascetics, were living at the king's expense and as such mentioned among the above category of people. But that the *vidus* were held in a particularly low position is suggested by a passage of the Javano-Balinese T tutur *Śevaśāsana* (31a.2, see OJED 2326 s.v. *wulu* II) that refers to those performing like *vidus* (*amidu*) as *vulu-vulu*, namely 'persons of an inferior social status (having an occupation which is considered inferior)', and linking them—along with *avayan* 'wayang-players', *menmen* 'musicians', *ijo-ijo*³² and *abacaṅah* 'reciters'—to the lowest category of people in the social scale such as *śūdras* 'members of the fourth estate', *caṅḍālas* 'outcastes' and *mlecchas* 'barbarians'.

The figure of the *vidu* and his ambivalent status cannot be explained by attributing to him only a role of performer, dancer and actor. It is in fact clear that in Old Javanese sources the *vidu* is also described as a religious figure characterized by ascetic traits and attributed the honorific prefix *saṅ*. To illustrate this aspect, Aichele (1931a:152–5) quoted a short but highly significant line from an allegorical passage of the *Nītisāra* (4.8):

saṅ vidv aṅga vanapraveśana samudragati manut i lampah iṅ kali

The ascetics go in the forest and to the sea, and follow the course of the rivers (?).³³

The line is part of a larger passage (stanzas 4.7–15) describing the disruption of the social and religious order in the Kali-age. Aichele (1931a:156) envisaged the

32. OJED 624: 'a particular kind of performance (which?); to perform *hijo-hijo*'.

33. After the edition and translation by Drewes (1925:160–2): 'De asketen gaan in het woud en naar de zee, en volgen de loop der rivieren (?)'.

presence of puns in the line and advanced a compelling interpretation. For instance, he argued against Drewes' translation of the words *vidv aṅga* as 'ascetics', interpreting it in the light of Modern Javanese *mārā badan* 'naked', attributed to the *topeng* (the name of the mask-dancers coming naked at a performance), where the Arabic loanword *badan* 'body' would be a synonym of the Sanskrit *aṅga*. Thus, the translation of *sañ vidv aṅga* would be '[the reverend] naked mask-player *vidus*'. Furthermore, he analysed the word *samudragati* 'going to the ocean' (also: *samudragā* = 'river'), but also *sa+mudrā+gati* 'assuming gestures', which is coupled with the Old Javanese *kali* 'river', but also 'the Kali age'. The image of the river entering the ocean is a well-attested simile in Sanskrit and Old Javanese Śaiva literature to describe the final liberation of the Soul,³⁴ and hence it fits in well as a description of ascetics.³⁵ This interpretation is also supported by the fact that the word *naśa* 'annihilation' (hence, a synonym of *mokṣa*) can be arrived at, as noted by Aichele, if we read *vanapraveśa naśa mudrāgati*.³⁶ Aichele proposed the following alternative translation:

Without a costume the mask-dancers begin to live as hermits, while they perform *mudrā*-gestures, in harmony with the fashion of the Kali(-age).³⁷

It is apparent that the above passage links (in a negative way, given the association with the Kali-age) the figure of the *vidu* with both a performer and ascetic. The reference to *mudrā* in particular leads to the above conclusion, for their use was common to both dancers and religious men.

Aichele concluded his study by pointing out that such a figure is also attested in Classical Malay (*bidu, biduan*) and Cham (*buduo'n*) as denoting a class of comic dancers and musicians, and referring to the existence of the modern Buginese form *widu-widu*, meaning 'to joke, to play about', and of the Tagalog *biro*, meaning 'quirk, joke, jest'.³⁸ Robson (1983:293), in agreement with his

34. See *Bhuvanakośa* 10.34, *Kumāratattva* f. 30 verso, *Rauravasūtrasaṅgraha* 8.10cd–13ab.

35. Perhaps one may also interpret it as a reference to the fact that favourite places to perform ascetic observances were, besides forests, the banks of rivers and especially the confluences of many rivers (note that the Sanskrit *samudra* literally means 'gathering together of waters').

36. The *śa* being in fact not distinguished from the *sa* in the mss. of the text.

37. 'Zonder kostuum beginnen de masker-dansers als kluizenaars te leven, terwijl ze *mudrā*-gebaren verrichten, in harmonie met de gang van de Kali(-tijd)'.
38. Aichele (1969:134) elaborated further on these parallels, providing the meaning of 'scherzen, schäkern, Unsinn machen' for the Buginese *widu-widu* and comparing the Tagalog reduplicate form *pagbibiro* attested in a passage of a text dealing with the practices of a magician to the *mamidu-midu* found in KR 24.112a.

predecessor, related the term *vidu* to the Malay *bidu* and *biduan*, 'a singer at a shamanistic seance' according to Wilkinson's dictionary, and argued that the root was indigenous Javanese and not Sanskrit. About the mention of the *vidu* in *sarga* 24 and 25 of the KR he remarked:

It seems that the *vidu* also performed a kind of drama, possibly the same as the shadow-theatre of today. The context where the words are found suggests that the *vidu mawayang* was 'homeless and unattached' and did not stand in particularly high regard. Probably alongside the sophisticated written literature of which the *Rāmāyaṇa* itself is an example there also existed a repertoire performed by lowly practitioners wandering the countryside. (293)

It appears that the terrain of the *vidu* was one that linked ritual, drama and the deeds of ancestors, likening him to the figure of the *dalang* (a term found only once in Old Javanese) who performs wayang and exorcises today. (294)

Now, it seems to me that no convincing explanation for the controversial traits of the *vidu* has been advanced so far. The attempts to link this figure to shamanism, magic, ritual or exorcism remain no more than educated guesses, also because they fail to explain the apparent ascetic character of the *vidu*. On the other hand, the Old Javanese textual evidence discussed so far suggests that the *vidu* may be connected with counterparts known from the Sanskrit tradition rather than regarded as a uniquely Javanese figure. His solitary and wandering asceticism, united with the practice of dance, drama, buffooneries and generally strange behaviour finds a compelling correspondence in the kind of asceticism followed by the Pāśupata Śaivas in the Subcontinent. In the guise of ascetic performances, these carried out similar picturesque practices, including babbling, making animal noises, inopportune jokes, and so on. To Ingalls (1962:294–7), who interpreted these behaviours as manifestation of 'shamanism', Lorenzen (1991:188) replied that the acts of Pāśupata adepts were not, as in the case of the shaman, manifestations of supernatural powers meant to cut them off from society, but rather aimed at provoking the contempt of others and thus gain good karma on the basis of a complex mechanism of transfer of merit (see also Hara 1994).

The ambiguous status of the *vidu* who, in spite of being a man of religion, is despised because of his involvement in performance and extravagant observances reminds us of the treatment accorded to certain classes of Śaiva ascetics, including the Pāśupatas, in Sanskrit sources. Parodies of these ascetics are in fact commonly encountered in plays and poetic texts, which reflect the stereotypes and values of courtly society and mainstream religiosity. These parodies are important because they provide us with precious, if partial, descriptions of

the practices of such groups, whose own writings have for the greatest part not survived. Yet, in the case of the Pāśupatas, it is mostly through an original text, the *Pāśupatasūtra* with the commentary *Pañcārthabhāṣya* (circa fifth century AD), that we gather the most detailed picture of their peculiar beliefs and ascetic practices. Scholars of Śaivism have characterized this tradition as follows:

The Pāśupatas [...] particularly enjoined the use of song and dramatic forms in the worship of Śiva, and this emphasis occurs from the earliest documents right through the life of the order. [...] Kauṇḍinya's commentary to *Pāśupatasūtra* 1.8 indicates that when worship is performed using song, it should be done according to *Gandharvaśāstra*; and when veneration is by dance/drama, it should be accomplished in consonance with the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the latter presumably Bharata's classic text. (Davidson 2002:223)

It was prescribed that he [the Pāśupata adept] snore, tremble, limp, play the lecher, act improperly and speak nonsensical words in full view of people. Such ridiculous actions were to be performed so as to give the impression that he was a madman (*ummatta*) and thus provoke disgust and contempt (*avamāna*).³⁹ (Hara 1994:120)

In the first stage of his ascetic career the practitioner was also to besmear himself with ashes, bathe in them (*bhasmaśayana*) and worship Rudra in a temple by means of the 'offerings' (*upāhāra*) consisting in dancing (*nṛtya*), chanting (*gīta*), boisterous laughter (*aṭṭahāsa*) and drumming on his mouth (*huḍḍukkāra*).⁴⁰ Sāyaṇa Mādhava (fourteenth century AD) in the account of the Pāśupata system given in his digest *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* (chapter 6) commented upon the passages of the *Pāśupatasūtra* describing the last two observances as follows:

Of these laughing (*hasita*) is a wild laugh, *ahaha*, accompanied by opening wide the throat and lips. [...] Dancing (*nṛtya*) is to be performed with the rules of the *Nāṭya-Śāstra* and should include all motions of the hands, feet and so forth. [...] The sound *huḍḍuk* is the sacred utterance like the bellowing of a bull, produced by the contact of tongue with palate. (Translation Hara 1958:26)

Let us compare the above characterizations of the Pāśupata adepts with the depiction of the *manuk vidu* given in KR 25.21a:

tat ujar manuk vidu vidagdha dahat prakatākatak mañaji nāṭaka ya

Do not say that the *vidu*-bird is very clever! Making much noise, acting like a frog, he practices the art of play-acting.

39. References to these acts can be found in *Pāśupatasūtra* 3.5, 3.12–17, 4.8.

40. See Sanderson (1988:665). The original reading of the manuscript is *ḍumḍum*, which has been shown to be a corruption of an original *huḍḍuk* (Sanderson 2002:30, note 32); Bisschop and Griffiths (2003:327, note 59) propose *huḍḍuñ*.

The passage above links the *manuk vidu* with the performance of noisy sounds (*prakāṭa*, probably referring to boastful laughing) and dance or play-acting (*nāṭaka*). OJED 819 s.v. *kaṭak* (a hapax) gives the meaning of: ‘frog?’ (on account of KBNW), but also advances another possibility: ‘is *akaṭak* perhaps the call of the *manuk vidu*? If ‘frog’, read: *prakāṭaṅ kaṭak*?’. All in all, the meaning of frog may fit in the present context. For instance, frogs are mentioned in KR 24.117 as being disciples of the coot, whose identification with a Pāśupata master has been proposed by Nihom (1996); furthermore, bull-frogs are said to accompany the thundering melody of the *kuvon* in stanza 70.1 of the *Bhomāntaka*.⁴¹ But the term may also be a pun, having a meaning related to the art of play-acting or dance. For instance, *kathak* is one of the six classical dance forms of India; and the Sanskrit word *kathaka* means ‘to recite; a professional story-teller’. The mention of the bird as not ‘very clever’ (*vidagdha dahat*) satirically plays on the similarity between the Old Javanese word *vidu* and the Sanskrit *vidvan* (that is, *vidvān*, ‘clever, intelligent, sage, seer, possessing the gnosis, etc.’), a motif that appears also in stanza 24.114, where the *manuk uyakan* (= *manuk vidu*) is there referred to as *pakṣi vidvan*.⁴² The Sanskrit adjective *vidvān* is frequently met in Sanskrit Śaiva texts as a technical term describing Brahmans in general and also applied to the Pāśupata practitioners.⁴³ Furthermore, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (35.106) makes an explicit connection between cleverness and the ability to play music. The passage documents the traditional Sanskrit semantic analysis of the word *kuśilava* ‘performer’: ‘He who can apply the principles of instrumental music (*ātodya*) and is himself an expert in playing instruments, is called a *kuśilava* because of his being clever (*kuśala*) and refined (*avadāta*) and free from agitation (*avyathita*).’⁴⁴

41. Quoted above, p. 63.

42. See OJED 114: ‘*vidvan* = *avidvan*? Prob. an intentional ambiguity’; see also Aichele 1931a:152, 1969:134.

43. See, for instance, *Pāśupatasūtra* 3.19: ‘For a wise man, being ill-treated, accomplishes thereby all asceticism’ (*paribhūyamāno hi vidvān kṛtsnatapā bhavati*); and *Pañcārthabhāṣya* 3.19.16: ‘Knowledge (*vidyā*) is the distinguishing mark of a Brahman, consisting in the clarification of the meanings of the words found in the scriptures’ (*vidyā nāma yā granthārthavar-tipadārthānām abhivyañjikā vipratvalakṣaṇā*). The *Guhyasūtra* (12.12ab) of the *Niśvāsattva-saṃhitā*, an early Śaiva scripture in Sanskrit that has preserved Pāśupata materials, calls *vidvān* a Pāśupata ascetic dwelling in the forest: ‘Thus he roams about, possessing the Gnosis, having subdued anger, winner of the senses’ (*evaṃ carati vidvānsō jītakrodho jīten-driyaḥ*; the form *vidvānsō* may be an irregular thematization of *vidvān*).

44. Quoted from Gomperts 2002:580. Note that the term *kuśilava* appears in the Sanskrit-Old Javanese lexicon *Amaramālā* (part of the *Caṇḍakiraṇa*) as a gloss of the word *pirus*—another kind of performer-cum-ascetic whom I hope to discuss in a future article.

Additional textual evidence in support of the suggested identification is provided by a few stanzas from the thirteenth century Kakavin *Sumanasāntaka* by Mpu Monagaṇa. Stanzas 3–4 of canto 113 give a detailed and fascinating description of a performance enacted by *vidus* and other figures in the proximity of the palace of Vidarbha on the occasion of the wedding of prince Aja and princess Indumatī:⁴⁵

*rasa bubula tənah niñ rājyāpan padha gumərəh
para ratu saha gəñḍiñ goñ rojeh tabətabəhan
apituvi para taṇḍasrañ-srañan midər arigan⁴⁶
saha paḍahī guməntər lāgyātryāsarak aṇavat*

It seemed that the middle of the kingdom would split open, for they all were thundering.

The vassals with large gongs, cymbals and other percussion instruments; and furthermore, the *taṇḍas* were vying with each other, turning around and crowding together.

With drums they made thunderous noises, at the same time shouting and crying to call-up the melody of the orchestra.⁴⁷

*para vidu səḍəñ ayvan sañ tañkil hyaṇ acarita
paḍa gumuyu kapūhan sakveh niñ vidu binisa
hana kavatak ujarjnyān guyvāvarṇa macarita
uḍuh uḍuh uḍuh āhāhāhāhāh bisa dahatən*

The *vidus* were acting together; the *tañkil hyaṇs* were reciting a story. Laughing all together and [appearing] highly astonished were the *vidus*, skillful.

Some of them felt compelled to cry out while laughing, narrating and reciting:

uḍuh uḍuh uḍuh āhāhāhāhāh—with too much power.

The *vidus* here enact their comic performance together with dignitaries such as the *taṇḍas*, whom OJED describes as low-rank dignitaries with military func-

45. The following two stanzas constitute just the beginning of the passage describing the whole ceremony, continuing through stanza 9.

46. Following the reading of OJED 126 (s.v. *arigan*) and not that of the typewritten transliteration (*taṇḍasrañ sāñan midər aritan*).

47. OJED 169: *awat** *aṇawat*, (*aṇawati?*), *paṇawat* (avs) ‘to come or go first, precede, go in front of, be the “leader”, lead in, introduce, call up, especially of the part of a melody, which introduces the theme before the full orchestra (*agamēl*, *aṇiduṇ*, *surak*) joins in.’

tions,⁴⁸ and *tañkil hyañs*, a category of unidentified religious functionaries.⁴⁹ What is striking here is the *vidus*' triple uttering of the sounds *uḍuh uḍuh uḍuh*, which may be compared to the exclamation *huḍḍuk* or *huḍḍuñ* attributed to the Pāsupatas,⁵⁰ followed by *āhāhāhāhāh*, a boisterous laugh reminding of the Sanskrit *aṭṭahāsa* (*aṭṭa* 'high, over-measured' is identical in meaning to the Old Javanese *dahatən* in stanza 4d) prescribed by the *Pāsupatasūtra*. The *tañḍas* accompany the performance of the *vidus* with a 'thunderous noise' (*guməntər*) made with their drums. These details remind us of the association of the *vidu* and the *kuvon/manuk vidu* with thunder-like sounds; and the stanzas as a whole remind us of KR 24.112, where the *kuvon* is compared, with apparent denigratory intent, to both a *vidu* playing wayang and to a *tañḍa*. But why were the *tañḍas* associated with *vidus* and music-cum-acting performances? It is possible that, besides their official and military activities, this category of functionaries also had the prerogative to take an active role in ceremonial performances. In this respect, I should like to point out that *tañḍaka* in Sanskrit, among other significations, can mean 'juggler' (MW 432).⁵¹ It is not unlikely that the *tañḍas* were involved in mock 'war dances', as is suggested by the expression *asrañ-srañan* 'vying with each other, trying to compete' in stanza 3c.⁵² This possibility is not as remote as it may seem *prima facie*, for a description of 'warriors' performing together with *vidus* and enacting a mocked war-dance aiming at causing the laughter of the public is found in the first three lines of stanza 66.5 of the *Deśavarṇana* (translation Robson 1995):

48. OJED 1928 s.v. *tañḍa* 2: 'a category of dignitaries or officials. Is it (originally): in charge of a banner or company? It seems, however, that it does not always point to a military rank. Pigeaud renders it with "headman". Is it distinguished from *mantri*? But *tañḍa-mantri*, certainly in *catuṣ-tañḍa-mantri*, denotes one rank of dignity (chief officer?). See also *catuṣ-*, *pañca-*. Aichele (1969:133) translated it as 'Landstreicher', without providing a justification.

49. Thus OJED 1943. The verbal form *atañkil* or *anañkil* means 'to appear before, wait respectfully', while *hyañ* denotes either a god or a person connected with the divine, such as an anchorite or monk (OJED 659–60).

50. I am aware that *uḍuh* in Old Javanese is attested as an exclamation ('Oh! Ah!', OJED 2102); however, it is possible that the exact nature and 'technical' meaning of this exclamation, uttered three times, was not grasped by Mpu Monaguna, who rendered it with the more familiar *uḍuh*. Furthermore, I do not know of any other Old Javanese passages where the interjection appears more than once in a row, as it does here.

51. From the root *tañḍ*, 'to beat'. See also *tañḍu*: 'name of an attendant of Śiva (Bharata's teacher in the art of dancing, cf. *tāñḍava*)'.

52. Although the range of meanings listed in OJED does not imply physical attack, *asrañ-srañan* in the present context might be taken in a less figurative manner (as it is *sərang* in Modern Javanese and Indonesian, meaning 'attack'). The form *asrañ*, preceded by *aprañ* 'to fight', is used in a context of battle in Kiduñ *Harṣavijaya* 2.69a.

*sāsiñ kāryya maveha tuṣṭa rikanañ para jana vinañun nareśvare huvus
nañ vidv āmacañah*⁵³ *rakātrakət ananti sahāna para gītada pratidinā
ānyāt bhāṭa mapatra yuddha sahañ maglaglapan añhyat andani paçəh*

Every performance that might please the people the King held:

See the storytellers (*vidu*) and masked dancers (*amacañah*)⁵⁴ taking
turns with all kinds of singers every day!

Not to mention the warriors shouting challenges—naturally the ones as
loud as thunderclaps⁵⁵ gave people a fright and made them laugh.

Pigeaud (1962:196) interpreted the last line as a description of a mock-battle rather than of warriors shouting verbal challenges. According to him, the ‘warriors eager for a fight’ (*bhāṭa mapatra yuddha*) are to be identified with modern Javanese performers of mock fighting dances.

A burlesque performance featuring a ‘woman of the Śaiva’, a female dig-nitary and a ‘woman of the *vidu*’ is described in another series of exceedingly difficult stanzas of the *Sumanasāntaka* (130.1–3):

*strī niñ śaiva tan erañ-erañ añigəl kaguyu-guyu vərə-vərə dawā
tan harṣeñ svara niñ mṛdaṅga salukat nuni-nuni ya ni gita niñ vaneh
hetunyān pañiduñ vijil niñ aji yah sah ulih-ulih ikāñrəñəl-rəñəl
sah to te prathamā kiduñnyan aṇavat midəm aṇujivat āmbahan tayoh*

The woman of the Śaiva was not ashamed to dance, causing laughter,
very drunk.

She was not happy with the sound of *mṛdaṅga* hand-drums and *salukats*,
let alone with the songs of others.

For that reason, she chanted the beginning of the manual ‘*yah sah*’—a
reminder for [the spectators] who were listening attentively.⁵⁶

‘*sah to te prathamā*’ were the words of her song as she called up the
melody of the orchestra, giving a knowing look and glancing at [the au-
dience], and then shouting: *tayoh!*

53. Pigeaud’s edition (p. 51) reads *vidvāmacañah*.

54. Grammatically it is also possible to take *amacañah* as a stative form referred to *vidu* rather than a substantive; hence, ‘the *vidus* were reciting.’

55. Robson’s comments (1995:133) on the form *magəla-gəlapən* run as follows: ‘Z [=OJED] “making a sound like thunderclaps”; whatever it is, it is meant to be funny, as people laugh. Or could it be connected with Mod. Jav. *glagəpan*, “to grope for words, fall over oneself”?’

56. The translation is not sure. OJED 2112 glosses *ulih-ulih* as ‘that which one brings back (home), esp. for those left behind’; but see also *añulih-ulih* ‘to talk about, discuss, deliberate (upon); to talk, tell a story’. I take *añrəñəl-rəñəl* to be the equivalent of *ruməñəl-rəñəl* ‘to listen in an effort to hear everything that is said’ (OJED 1536).

*dhan hadyan tumurun gumanty anigal onsil anavak akikat rumāmpayak
nhiñ kahyunya kiduñ buvun ya kiniduñnyan analik-alik endah in sabhā
rāmyārūm sinlanya gəṇḍiñ i tutuk kaguyu-guyu ginañjar in larih
gihgih puñ ri kipah dhurañ dinivayūh hamamati juga denikāmbahan*

Then a female dignitary came down to dance in her turn, moving to and fro, turning around and assuming the ‘posture of the peacock’,⁵⁷ with the arms stretched sideways.

Her desire was only [to sing] the *kiduñ buvun*;⁵⁸ that was sung while sounding and shrilling with a high pitch—what an unusual [sound] in the assembly!

Beautiful and lovely, the *gəṇḍiñ*-gongs were alternated with [the sounds coming from] her mouth; having caused lots of laughter, she was remunerated with drinks.

Then she shouted: *gihgih puñ kipah dhurañ dinivayūh!*⁵⁹

*endah bhāva nikañ vaneh saha kiduñ midər anilānakən vvañ in sabhā
ndā strī niñ vidu rakva mogha kavatak savañ acarita denikānigal
dhik hah kaśmala nāhan āmbahanikāṅgyat anudiñi matāñjək lmah
jhaig lās liñnya nhər mulih matlasan mañumik-umik anañjaliñ tavañ*

How amazing was the performance of the others with songs: it surrounded and overpowered the people in the assembly.

But look, suddenly the—so to speak—woman of the *vidu* felt compelled to dance as if to recite [at the same time].

‘Fie! Wretched!’ Thus was her shouting, suddenly pointing her finger and stamping on the ground.⁶⁰

‘Quick! Swish!’ she said, thereupon ending [her performance], muttering and offering a reverential salutation to the heaven.

These amazing stanzas offer a ‘live’ description of a stage performance that is religious as much as burlesque in character.⁶¹ It is not clear to which charac-

57. OJED 866: *kikat** *akikat* ‘(of a dancer and of a peacock) Does it refer to sound (song, et cetera)? Bal. comm. in *Lambañ Salukat* has *mañokok* (see s.v. *kokok*). Or is it a dancing posture?; 884 *kokok** *anokok* ‘(of the sound of the peacock, but not its cry) to cluck’.

58. OJED 864: ‘special *kiduñ*’.

59. I have not been able to make a sense of this utterance, which consists in several onomatopoeic sounds (hapaxes); see OJED 524 (*gih*) ‘onomat. particle?’; 1445 (*puñ* III) ‘onomat. particle?’; 874 (*kipah*) *kipah?* *kinipahan* (pf) ‘to overwhelm?’.

60. OJED 737 s.v. *jəkək* (hapax): ‘to put the feet on, stamp on (the ground)’.

61. The level of detail and the spontaneity of the narration leave no doubt that the author of the Kakavin, Mpu Monaguna, himself witnessed one of such performances. For a similar assessment

ter the ‘woman (or wife) of the Śaiva’ (*strī niṅ śaiva*) mentioned in stanza 1a refers; perhaps to a female attendant (*dūtī*) accompanying Śaiva (Kāpālīka or Pāśupata) ascetics in their performances?⁶² In any case, both her and the ‘Śaiva’ must have been characters familiar to the readers. The ‘woman of the *vidu*’ (*strī niṅ vidu*) appearing in stanza 3b is qualified by the particle *rakva* ‘so they say, as you know; as it were; imagine, deem’, which here may function either as a disclaimer in order to ‘relativize’ that qualification—contrast the celibate lifestyle that *vidus* were supposed to observe; or used as an attribute referring back to the dignitary lady of stanza 2 who, in giving her performance, looked like ‘a woman of the *vidu*, as it were’.

The words *yah sah*,⁶³ *sah to te prathamā*⁶⁴ and *tayoḥ*⁶⁵ pronounced by the woman of the Śaiva are Sanskrit. The *aji yah sah* or ‘manual on *yah ... sah*’ (correlative pronouns, nominative singular masculine) seems to serve as a reader for the burlesque ‘lecture’ on Sanskrit pronouns that the woman begins to deliver to the audience to the rhythm of music.⁶⁶ The expression *sah to te prathamā* indeed represents the declension of the first case (*prathamā* = *prathamā vibhakti* = nominative) of the masculine demonstrative pronoun: *sah* (singular), *to* (alternative spelling of *tau*, dual), *te* (plural); *tayoḥ* is the dual genitive and locative of the same pronoun. That a female (Śaiva) stage-performer chose such an unlikely occasion and manner to display her knowledge of Sanskrit grammar is an interesting fact, and one that indirectly supports my view that the figures involved may be linked with characters known from the Sanskrit tradition. As we have seen, the Pāśupatas spoke improperly and out of context, to give the false impression of being insane and thus be made object of public derision.

To bring this long excursus on the figure of the *vidu* to a conclusion, I briefly move into the realm of the visual arts, and in particular of Central Javanese

of the genuineness of the descriptions of places and events found in the *Sumanasāntaka*, see Supomo 2001:122–5.

62. References to such female characters abound in Sanskrit literature: see below, notes 68, 75 and 86.

63. OJED 34–5: ‘*ajiyah* (*jiyah*?)’ (perhaps the first words: “*aji yah*” or “*aji yahsa*”, from a text or mantra which is sung).

64. OJED 1599 (s.v. *sah*): ‘It seems to be Sanskrit from the beginning of a song or mantra.’

65. OJED 1969: ‘opening (Sanskrit?) word of a song?’.

66. It is relevant to quote here a passage of the Sanskrit-Old Javanese grammar *Kāraṅkaśāstra* (verses 3–4ab), containing the words *yah*, *sah*, *tayoḥ* and *prathamā*: *karma kartā tayor yogam yo vetti sah vicakṣaṇaḥ / yat kṛtaṁ karma tat proktaṁ, sa kartā yah karoti vā // tṛtīya prathamā śaṣṭhī tisraḥ karṭṛtvajātayaḥ /* ‘He who knows the action, the agent, the union between them, he is a clever one. That which is done is called action, he who acts is called agent. The third, first, sixth [cases] are the three forms of agency.’

temple reliefs. In a fascinating article, Stutterheim (1956:93–4) described the mysterious ‘dancing Brahman’ appearing on some reliefs of Prambanan (see Figs. 1, 2 and 3) and Borobudur (Fig. 4) depicting scenes of dance and recitation. The author described this enigmatic figure, both a Brahman and a performer, as follows:

[Borobudur:] ‘There are always a few women present, probably also dancers, who handle little handbells, and a man in Brahman dress frequently appears, apparently marking the time with his hands; occasionally he also has little bells in his hands’ [Krom and Van Erp 1920:706]. This refers to a company which evidently belongs to the dancing-scene, but which does not perform the actual dance. The remarkable thing in the passage quoted is the man ‘in Brahman dress’ [...]; whether or not he belongs to the highest caste is immaterial. What are we to think of this holy man who, judging by his beard or moustaches, should be in a hermitage rather than in a dancing scene?

[Loro Jonggrang:] That he is a ‘brahman’ can be deduced mainly from the fact that in most cases he has *moustaches and a beard* [...] Besides, judging by his position, posture and other characteristics, he appears *to take part actively in the course of the dance*. He is not completely absorbed in his own action, as the musicians of the reliefs usually are, but his movements and actions are clearly intended for the dance, while it is being performed by the dancing-girl or -girls. Furthermore, on several reliefs he appears *to sing or recite*; [...] finally he *claps his hands* or handles the little hand-bells. [Italics are of Stutterheim]

To explain this figure Stutterheim does not refer to the *vidu* but makes instead a thousand-year leap, turning to the early twentieth century Central Javanese royal palaces of Surakarta and Yogyakarta, where we do find figures who combine all the above actions. These are the *chaṅtang balung* and *pēsindèn talèdèk*. The former was described by European observers as a bearded buffoon with the upper part of his body naked, ‘whose duty is to become fuddled in public with gin or *arak* and to dance in an intoxicated state’ (Stutterheim 1956:98–9). Stutterheim further pointed out that this figure is also called *kriḍa astama*, in which ‘perhaps a trace of the Sanskrit root of the word “laugh(ing)”, *has*, can be found [...]; jeering laughter also plays a role in tantric rites’.



Figure 1: Loro Jonggrang, relief VII.11cd (from Kats 1925, relief x)⁶⁷

[From Stutterheim 1989:124–6] C: A woman with a sword and a shield is doing a war dance. In front of her, on the floor, is a vessel full of flowers and next to her again flowers and a fruit. On the other side there is a woman seated, similarly decorated as the dancer, holding in her right-hand a bell and a bow in her left. Between both women there is a diadem (?).

D: A group of persons playing music. In the foreground there is a man with a mustache, who is reciting from a manuscript and another who is playing with the hand on two drums. Behind there are two women with hand-drums and two more where, however, it is not possible to determine what they are doing in the concert. On 12e there is a sitting musician, with a bell or *ḍamaru*.

[...] It is clear that here some sort of celebration is taking place. The dancing girls, the musicians and the priests leave no doubt about it. [...] The dance of the woman is typically tantrik, as we can see in the Buddhist iconography of the *Ḍākini*'s and other creatures of the ferocious type. It is a dance which can be seen till today as a religious dance in Tibet. Perhaps it would be good, if we consider the dance on our relief as belonging to the celebration and not just meant for the pleasure of the audience. [...] The smaller drums are *ḍamarus*, as they are often to be seen even today with snake-charmers, but seldom used for ceremonies. But I must, however, point to the non-Indonesian character of the ensemble.

67. The subject of the scene and its position in the *Rāmāyaṇa* narrative are disputed; for a summary of the previous interpretations, see Worsley (2006:231–2). He suggested it should be interpreted neither as Bharata's nor as Rāma's consecration, as had been previously proposed, but as a depiction of the festivities held on the occasion of the return of Rāma and Sītā in Ayodhyā.



Figure 2: Loro Jonggrang, detail of relief VII.11 (note the Brahman reciting from a *lontar*) (particular of photo OD 3477, Leiden University Library, Kern Institute)



Figure 3: Another dancing Brahman? (Candī Sari, Prambanan, circa ninth century AD) (photo Kassian Cephas, OD 044446, Leiden University Library, Kern Institute)



Figure 4: Female dancer, Brahman and musicians (Borobudur, B 1a 233a)

The first attempt to update Stutterheim's findings in the light of Sanskrit Śaiva literature and to link the figures described by him with Pāśupata ascetics was made by Becker (1993:177):

In addition to the firm textual evidence of their presence in Java, there is less-firm, but suggestive, evidence of the involvement of Pāśupata monks in performance traditions. The reliefs of a Śaivite priest dancing and singing or reciting in the company of dancing women on temple reliefs at Borobudur and Prambanan (Stutterheim 1956:93) may indicate Pāśupata monks in the 'marked' or first stage of spiritual practice. The women could also be Pāśupata. In India, women as well as persons from all castes could receive Pāśupata initiation, a practice that scandalized orthodox brahmāns [sic] in India.

Becker noticed the similarity between the Javanese figures and the Pāśupata practitioners, but did not corroborate her intuition with additional evidence. Her concluding remark, based as it is on an outdated account by Rao (1916:8), about the women's admissibility to the order is incorrect: as documented in all the known scriptures of the Pāśupatas, the order was only accessible to male consecrated Brahmins.⁶⁸ But what is important here is that Becker's (and Stutterheim's) considerations concerning the reliefs in question may be extended to the figure of the *vidu* (and of his 'women'), thereby lending persuasiveness to my identification of that figure with a Pāśupata ascetic or, more likely, with a local development of the same character. As a matter of fact, the observances of the Pāśupatas, like bathing in ashes, dancing, play-acting and antisocial behaviours were also followed by other Śaiva groups such as the Lākulas and the Kāpālikas, who added to them a few more extreme practices like the drinking of alcohol and sexual promiscuity; the cemetery lore, which was in the Pāśupata movement limited to the last stage of practice, became more pervasive in those other orders.

Part of the Lākula stream of Pāśupatism were the Kārukas, also known as Kāru(ṇi)kasiddhāntins and Kāṭhakasiddhāntins,⁶⁹ about which little apart from their name is known from rare references in pre-eleventh century Sanskrit texts. From the secondary accounts found in rival Śaiva texts it appears that the group was accorded an extremely low status in the Śaiva hierarchy, even lower than the Pāśupatas themselves. The word *kāruka* can mean either

68. See Sanderson (1988:664). This unlike the Kāpālikas and Bhairavikas, who admitted out-castes and women (*kapālinī*). Since, however, we still know very little about the various forms of Pāśupatism in the Subcontinent, the possibility that certain groups of Pāśupatas admitted women cannot be ruled out; and we cannot even exclude that such a development might have occurred at some time in Java itself.

69. See Lorenzen 1991:1 and 172; Brunner, Oberhammer and Padoux 2004:92.

‘singer’ (from *kāru*, √*kr* 2, ‘one who sings or praises, a poet’),⁷⁰ or ‘maker, doer, artisan’ (from √*kr* 1). The former meaning of *kāru*, when referring to a Śaiva ascetic group, makes better sense.⁷¹

In the light of the evidence on performance-oriented Śaiva groups found in Sanskrit as well as Old Javanese sources, one may argue that both the *Kārukās* and the *vidus* represented a category of low-status ascetics of the Śaiva Atimārga, who ‘specialized’ as dancers and storytellers—professions which in both India and Java were held in particularly low esteem.

On Birds as (False) Ascetics

Let us now turn to the last three lines of stanza 112 of the KR, which we left at p. 62. If we read them once again in the light of the materials presented above, these lines, which like several others in *sarga* 24 and 25 can be defined as a well-crafted example of double-entendre, assume a new significance and add new elements to corroborate the view that the *kuvuṅ* (alias *vidu*) is to be linked with the figure of a Śaiva Atimārga ascetic. There, the *kuvuṅ* was accorded an extremely low status (*kaniṣṭha*) by the starling and was blamed for being impure or stained (*kaśmala*), which may allegorically represent the low position of the *vidu* in the eyes of courtly, householder-oriented and urban Javanese society. In line b the bird is said to be a *taṅḍa*, whose ‘fortress’ or ‘walled palace’ (*kuṭa*) is nothing else than a hole (*kuvuṅ*). The low status of *taṅḍas*, associated with performances, was made object of satire.

The depiction of the *kuvuṅ* as not having a fixed residence (*tan pomah*) and ‘taking residence in a hole in the ground’ (*makuvuṅ*, line 112c) appears to be a reference to the Pāsupata observance of lying in ashes.⁷² It may also be pointed out that the inscription of Paraḍah II issued in 943 AD (line 45–46, see Brandes 1913:102) mentions various figures of performers playing music during reli-

70. The *-ka* may be a mere expletive but may also have the function of pejorative.

71. In certain Siddhānta- and Bhairāvantras these Pāsupata devotees are sometimes referred to as *Kārukās* (from √*kr* 1)—most probably on account of textual corruption, for the most frequently attested form is *Kāruka*. Interestingly, the form *Kāruka* occurs in *Nāṭyaśāstra* 35.22, part of a series of verses describing the various people forming a theatric company. The word is compounded with *kuśilava* ‘bards, heralds, actors, mimes’ (see above, p. 69). Even though the meaning of ‘artisan’ still makes sense in the context, it is not to be excluded that the intended word was *kāruka*, meaning ‘singer’.

72. That the living in a hole on the ground (*kuvuṅ*) is to be associated with this particular observance is confirmed beyond any doubt by stanza 32 of *sarga* 25, linking it to the ‘the excellent lying in ashes’ (*bhasmaśayanātīśaya*). Compare also stanza 24.111c (Acri 2008:202–3).

gious festivities held in the presence of a *mahārāja*.⁷³ Although no mention of the *vidu* is found there, line 45 speaks about such performers playing drums (*anabēh*) as *sañ makuvuñ* ‘He who lives in holes’, thereby testifying to a connection between a musician and a ‘reverend person’ (*sañ*) who perform the observance of lying in ashes. This figure, on account of the data presented above, is likely to have been either a *vidu* or a similar kind of ascetic performer.

The negated passive form *tan katṛṣṇa* in 112d can be translated in different ways: ‘without desire, unattached’ thus referring to the conduct of the ascetic who controls the bodily organs;⁷⁴ ‘without a beloved one, without wife’, referring to his celibate status; ‘unloved’, referring more generally to his being despised by people as ‘conducting the life of / behaving like a *vidu*’ (*laku vidu*). The word *saguṇa* was translated by Aichele (1969:154), on the basis of its metaphorical usage in *sarga* 24.125ab, as ‘du in allen Rollen Gewandter’, being a reference to the ability of the *kuvorñ/vidu* to ‘fit in all roles’ (namely, play-acting). This, according to the German scholar, would have alluded to his skills in camouflage, for the character indeed represented a spy of prince Bālaputra disguised as a (Buddhist) ascetic. The hapax *guṇya*, a Sanskrit word meaning ‘endowed with good qualities’, closing the stanza could have been used to obtain an ironic effect. But the word may be translated in the more technical sense of ‘endowed with supernatural powers’; indeed, *guṇa* is commonly used as a synonym of *siddhi* in Sanskrit sources as well as in Old Javanese.⁷⁵ But, of course, the term could also be interpreted in a less technical sense, simply referring to the *vidu*’s ‘magical skills’. This is a typical motif in Sanskrit literature, where Śaiva ascetics of the Pāsupata and Kāpālika sects are made object of satire and described as a class of evil magicians.

73. Gomperts (2002:586) understands lines 45–46 of the inscription differently, suggesting that a *mahārāja* (probably Siṅdok) danced (*mañigal*) during festivities to music played by musicians.

74. Detachment and victory over the senses is indeed required of adepts of Atimārga Śaivism; see, for example, *Pañcārthabhāṣya* 3.11.6 and *Pāsupatasūtra* 5.11. In the *Mattavilāsa* (13, p. 54), a Kāpālika ascetic replies to a Buddhist monk, who begs for his pity, that if he would show pity, he could no longer satisfy the condition of being ‘free from passion’ (*vītarāgo*).

75. OJED 553 records s.v. the meaning of ‘magic’ and refers to the eight supernatural faculties s.v. *aṣṭaguṇa*, 143–4. The mention of these powers as *aṣṭaguṇa*, *aṣṭaiśvarya* or *aṣṭasiddhi* is widespread in Sanskrit-Old Javanese Tuturs. The powers listed in *Jñānasiddhānta* 11.5, 11.11 and 11.18 run in parallel with those of *Pāsupatasūtra* 1.23–26, 21–22, 28–37. According to *Pāsupatasūtra* 1.28–37, among the goals of the Pāsupata ascetic was the obtainment of the eight supernatural powers (*ity etair guṇair yuktaḥ*, ‘He is endowed with such qualities’), among which there was *kāmarūpitva*, ‘the ability to assume any form at will’. In the *Mattavilāsa* (6, p. 2), a drunk Kāpālika praises his Kapālīnī for having obtained a beautiful appearance through the power of *kāmarūpatā* achieved by means of *tapas*.

Let us now turn back to line 112b, where the starling warns the other birds about the alleged kind disposition (*sambega*) of the *kuvoñ*, who is accused of using his call inviting to perform asceticism in holes as a way to conceal his intention to kill (*donyān pamajahi*). The meaning of *sambega* ‘kind disposition’ in Old Javanese is the result of a semantic shift from the original Sanskrit *saṃvega* ‘violent agitation, excitement’. However, this term is also attested in both Sanskrit and Old Javanese philosophical texts with the technical meaning of ‘desire for emancipation’ or ‘intensity [in yogic practice]’.⁷⁶ Here we have another pun: the ‘desire for emancipation’ of the bird, manifested in his attire and observances, is not to be taken seriously. Why this is the case, and whom he is supposed to kill—an accusation that is reiterated also in stanza 115a—does, however, not become clear to us unless we analyse the stanza against the background of a comparable Indic motif, namely the satire of sham asceticism in the realm of fable stories. According to Bloomfield (1924:202–5), the position of the quintessential sham ascetic

is held in India by mendicant ascetics, especially of the class who worship Śiva and his consort Kālī [...] In accordance with the character and needs of these gods, their ascetic devotees are engaged in cruel practices, especially human sacrifice. The reward for these is, as a rule, the acquisition of some magical science (*vidyā*) which confers upon the ascetics superhuman power, or puts them in possession of gold. They [...] are smeared with the ashes of dead bodies, live in cemeteries, and are distinguished by many other outward signs of their calling. (202)

The Kāpālikas are depicted, further, as falling from grace thru the lure of beautiful women, and other worldly desires. Tho they exercise skill and cruelty, the story regularly shows them foiled in their purposes of whatsoever kind. When these ascetics try to inveigle their victims, or to satisfy their lusts in any way, they use their holy calling as a mantle, with which to cloak their designs; this trait, construed as hypocrisy, is seized upon by the storyteller as the constant psychic motif of this class of stories, no matter how various are the incidents which they entwine with this prime idea. (204)

As far as fiction is concerned, the theme next broadens out a good deal by introducing all sorts of people who are not ascetics at all, but sham the get-up and behaviour of ascetics for all sorts of nefarious purposes. Thieves do this so regularly as to make it a shrewd guess that the *Steṃya-Śāstra*, or Thieves’ Manual, if ever found, will contain one or more *sūtras* recommending thieves to operate in the guise of a Kāpālika, Pāśupata, or Parivrājaka. Most important is the following: The last mentioned idea

76. See *Yogasūtrabhāṣya* 1.21. This particular meaning, not recorded in OJED, is found in *Vṛhaspatitattva* 3 (*kasambegan*, see Sudarshana Devi 1957:73), and in the *Dharma Pātāñjala* (folio 62 *recto*), listing three categories of yogins who practice with, respectively, gentle, moderate or keen intensity (*sambega*).

is exported from human affairs into the field of beast-fable, so that there is scarcely ever an animal, which wishes to eat or injure another animal, that does not appear in the role of sham ascetic. (205)

I argue that the ‘orders’ uttered by the *kuvoni* in stanzas 24.112–114, against which the starling warns the other birds, accusing him of deceit, suggests that the character represents a sham ascetic—perhaps an agent disguised as a Śaiva Pāsupata sent by a hostile faction to infiltrate Central Java, either to prevent Rakai Pikatan’s succession to the throne left vacant by his father Rakai Garuṇ, or to overthrow him.⁷⁷ However far-fetched and inconceivable to the modern man it may appear, there is little doubt concerning the application of such stratagems in the pre-modern Indic world. The use of this kind of ‘secret agents’ is well attested in Sanskrit sources, being one of the most important strategic weapons recommended to Kings in the *Arthaśāstra*.⁷⁸ Such prescriptions, iden-

77. On the basis of the ‘Wanua Tengah III’ inscription, it is possible to fix the date of reign of Rakai Pikatan to 847–855 AD; see Wisseman Christie (2001), who interprets the king’s decision to move the palace to Mḍaṇ in Mamrati as evidence of political unease (p. 40). According to De Casparis’ reading (1956:295) of the Śivagrha inscription, Java witnessed the expulsion of the Śailendra dynasty and the defeat of the Buddhist prince Bālaputra at the hands of the Śaiva King Rakai Pikatan, who later abdicated in favour of his younger brother Dyah Lokapāla (Rakai Kayuvaṇi) before 855 AD and then became a hermit (*rājarṣi*), known under the name of Kumbhayoni. De Casparis’ historical reconstruction, and especially the identification of Rakai Pikatan with the Kumbhayoni appearing in the corpus of Sanskrit inscriptions from the Ratu Baka hill, has been criticized by historians and is now generally regarded as untenable in the light of the data contained in the Wanua Tengah III inscription. The dynastic struggles in ninth-century Central Java have been recently revisited by Worsley (2006; see below, p. 86), Sundberg (2009), Jordaan and Colless (2009). The last two authors believe that Bālaputra, who may have been a Śailendra viceroy in Sumatra (not in Śrīvijaya at Palembang), attempted a *coup d’état* against Rakai Pikatan’s rule or tried to prevent his abdication in favour of his probable son and successor, Rakai Kayuvaṇi, in order to safeguard the Śailendra interests and his own claim to the paramount throne. The issues are too complex to be dealt with here, but there seems to be no problem with assuming the minimal amount of political turmoil that my argument implies.

78. See Davidson (2002:174–5): ‘*Arthaśāstra* specifies almost a dozen situations in which an individual might masquerade as a *siddha* using their specific practices to accomplish the ends of realpolitik [... It] proposes many deceptive activities to be employed exclusively in the destabilization of neighboring states, and these actions frequently involve agents posing as *siddhas* or other religious characters to lure monarchs to secluded spots while promising them wealth, horses, or sex, not necessarily in that order’. Compare Olivelle (1987:49): ‘The most widespread and significant use of ascetics was made by what today would be called the state secret service. The use of spies and secret agents for domestic security and for foreign conquest was a hallmark of the Kautīlian state. Ascetics made ideal spies’ (their treacherous activities, including assassination and provocation aimed at achieving social turmoil, are described through pp. 50–8 of the same article). It may also be mentioned that, as appears from a relief of Caṇḍi Śiva at Prambanan, Rāvaṇa used the attire of a *ṛṣi*-ascetic to approach Sītā and abduct her (see Acri 2010:497).

tifying in vagrant ascetics ideal spies, were taken so seriously that the *Arthaśāstra* goes so far as to prescribe the following special restrictions: for instance, ascetics either showing ‘fresh’ emblems (*liṅga*) of their asceticism or lacking them were forbidden to cross inter-state borders; special restrictions and arrangements were applied with regard to the presence of ascetics in the vicinity of kings or queens; and actors, dancers, singers, musicians, minstrels and the like were excluded from freely roaming in the countryside, so as to control their movements (Olivelle 1987:42–5).

Let us proceed with stanzas 24.113–114a, where the starling becomes the object of the invective of the *kuvōṅ*:

ko tākuṅ kevalāsā makuvu-kuvu rikā saṅ śreṣṭhi pu hiji
kāsyāsih koṅ jalak ko mamaṅun umah uməlt tonton tiru-tirun
ṅel-ṅelən svaṅ ya mamrih makuvu-kuvu təvas saṅsāra kavilət
təkvan kuṅḍaṅta liṅku d-laku t-aviku kuvuṅ kuvvanta t-atapa
nā liṅ niṅ pakṣi vidvan manukk uyakan akon vikvāsusupana

‘You, without desire, only dejected, encamp over there in the nearness of the distinguished, learned weaver-bird!

You are in a pitiable condition, starling! You plait a house, hiding yourself, giving a performance which serves as an example!

Overcome by fatigue and error, he takes pain to live in temporary lodgings and the only result is that [he is] bound in the cycle of rebirths!

And also your partner, I say: go and become a wandering ascetic, a hole will be your dwelling-place, while you do penance!’

Thus spoke the intelligent bird, the *manuk uyakan*, ordering to become a wandering ascetic living in solitary places.

The *manuk uyakan*, alias *kuvōṅ*, is speaking again, replying to the starling and imputing him that he ‘encamps’ near the ‘distinguished’⁷⁹ weaver-bird (*hiji*). Since the starling and the weaver-bird were already mentioned in 24.111, the word *kuṅḍaṅta* ‘your companion’ most probably refers to the *hiji*. I take *tākuṅ* as *tā* (negative particle) *akuṅ*, also on account of a similar expression, mentioning both *tan akuṅ* and (*m*)*āsā*, in KR 6.40d: *tat hanākuṅ ya māśā* (‘there was not desire [in him], he was depressed’). Aichele (1969:133) translates it

79. The Sanskrit term *śreṣṭhin*, besides ‘a distinguished man, a person of rank or authority’, can mean ‘an eminent artisan, the head or chief of an association following the same trade or industry, the president or foreman of a guild’ (MW 1102; not reported in OJED), hence denoting a member of the *vaiśya*-class. This is in harmony with the description of the weaver-bird in the *Tantri Dəmuṅ* 4.56a as *tos nikaṅ vesmakarmi*, ‘the son of a house-builder’ (that is, an artisan).

differently: ‘du freilich ersehnt und trachtest nur danach’, in which case *tākuñ* is to be read as opposed to the *tan katṛṣṇa* referring to the cuckoo in the preceding line. *Akuvu-kuvu* means ‘to encamp, pitch tents, erect temporary buildings, move into or live in temporary lodgings’ (OJED 943, s.v. *akuwu-kuwu*). It may of course be an apt way to describe the nest of a bird, but it may also hint in allegorical sense to the householder lifestyle, which is generally regarded as superior (implied in line b) and yet is criticized from the ascetic standpoint of the *kuvon̄*. Here the verbal attack of the *kuvon̄* alias *vidu*, a follower of the ascetic path of the Śaiva Atimārga, seems to contain a critique of the householder-oriented religiosity typical of the Brahmanical (or *laukika*) mainstream, which would be followed by the starling and his companion referred to in line d, ultimately leading to re-birth in the cycle of reincarnation. Thus, the *kuvon̄* invites his interlocutors to become wandering anchorites (*t-aviku*) doing penance in holes (*kuvuñ kuvvanta t-atapa*), an evident allusion to the Pāśupata observance of lying in ashes. In the remaining part of stanza 114 a new character, who was apparently part of the quarrel, makes its appearance:

*konan tañ kokilānūt n-uni kakuli-kulik śabdanya masulit
ko kilyaṅ kokilāpan mañinaki kalavan laṅnāmutusana
bhuktī bhakteṅ alas gālñ makula-kula kulit molās kuli-kulit*

A female-*kuvon̄* [standing there] approved the order, and as she spoke emitted her call with a melancholic voice: *kuli-kulik!*

[*kuvon̄*.:] ‘You, she-*kuvon̄*, should become a female-ascetic, so that you bring satisfaction while together with naked wandering ascetics wishing to obtain perfection,

object of enjoyment among the worshippers in the great forest who have lower-ranking wives and are wrapped in a tree-bark cloth *kuli-kulit*⁸⁰!’

The speaker of stanzas 113–114, reiterating the order to follow solitary asceticism (*vikvāsusupana*), is the *kuvon̄*. He is mentioned in the first line with the attribute *manuk uyakan* and *pakṣi vidvan* ‘intelligent bird’; the latter two words are taken from Sanskrit (*pakṣi vidvān*) and recall the name under which the bird appears to have been known, namely *manuk vidu* (see KR 25.21a and *Bhomāntaka* 70.1d). The second line introduces the *kokila*, who presumably was present at the verbal exchange between the two opposed parties and took the occasion to approve the order of her male partner. The *kokila* indeed seems to be the female of the *kuvon̄*, also known as *valik*, ‘nightbird of the cuckoo family; female

80. Perhaps a play with words (not in OJED), by assonance with *kakuli-kulik* in line a.

of the *tuhu*?' (OJED 2184, s.v. *walik* III). Her cry *kuli-kulik* (OJED 917) may be considered a variant of (*kə*)*lik-əlik*, which occurs in the second quarter (b) of stanza 25.19:

si walik kəkəl kavəlikan lik-əlik

The *walik* is convulsing with laughter, turned upside-down, crying *lik-əlik*!

Why the *walik*, that is the female of the *kuvon*, is 'convulsing with laughter' (*kəkəl*) is not clear, unless we assume she is involved in some kind of performance in which laughter plays a role—another allusion to the *aṭṭahāsa* of the Pāsupatas? According to OJED 454, the cry *lik-əlik** is the same as *aṅṅelik* and *aṅalikalik*, the call of the *walik*; the last form is translated as 'sounding and shrilling with a high pitch'. Interestingly, the verb *aṅalikalik* occurs in one of the above-mentioned stanzas of the *Sumanasāntaka*, namely 130.2b (see above, p. 73), uttered not by a bird but by the female dignitary (*ḍaṅ hadyan*), dancing and chanting the *kiduṅ buvun*, who was also called 'the woman of the *vidu*, as it were'. This, I believe, strongly suggests the existence of a series of allegorical correspondences, namely between the *walik/kokila* and *ḍaṅ hadyan*, who appears to have some kind of relationship with, respectively, the *kuvon* and the *vidu*. That the *walik/kokila* is connected to the *kuvon* is also suggested by stanza 22 of *sarga* 25, which describes a bird called *kəlik* as following the mode of asceticism of the *kuvon*:

kavatək kuvon milu maningalakən, ri vanī nikaṅ kayu vənaṅ matapa
si kəlik təkən kaləpəsən saphala, makamārga mārğa ni kuvon makuvuṅ

The *kuvon* felt impelled to join together in leaving behind [the world]; in the bark⁸¹ of a tree they perform asceticism.

The one who cries 'kəlik' has obtained the liberation successfully; she follows the path of the *kuvon*, who takes residence in holes.

The hapax *kəlik* was doubtfully glossed by OJED (454, s.v. *əlik*) as '(to be read thus?) idem? or a certain bird or insect?'.⁸² The identification of the *si kəlik* 'the one [who cries] kəlik' in the verse with the *kokila* was already hinted at

81. The word *wanī* is not found in OJED, and is perhaps derived from the Sanskrit *vana* 'wood'.

82. Note that elsewhere (612) OJED interprets the *kəlik* as *həlan* (hawk), a bird which usually 'flies very high and if it comes lower, e.g. to drink at a river, the other birds set on it, so that it longs for rain'. But, since the *həlan* already appears in both *sarga* 24 and 25 under different circumstances, it is unlikely that it represents the same bird as the *kəlik*.

by Aichele (1969:138, note 32) on account of the similarity of his cry with *ku-lik*.⁸³ Stanza 25.22, depicting the *kāliks* as dressed in bark and following the ascetic path of the *kuvoṅ*, may be regarded, therefore, as the ‘sequel’ to stanza 24.114cd,⁸⁴ where the *kuvoṅ* maliciously invites the *kokila* to become a female ascetic. The ‘worshippers’ referred to in 24.114d may be Pāśupatas, who were also called *śivabhaktas* and were prescribed to wear bark-tree clothes.⁸⁵ They were satirically (mis)represented in Sanskrit literary sources as living in sexual promiscuity, followed by female *yoginīs*.⁸⁶

On Birds as Kings

Having demonstrated the existence of an extended allegory between birds and religious characters, the question now is: what are the historical figures, if any, alluded to in stanza 114? Although this is bound to remain a mere guess until new data is found, I offer the hypothesis that the word *kuli*, which in Old Javanese primarily denotes a ‘lower-ranking queen’, might have been used in a meaningful way as alluding to a royal female character close to the ‘lured’ king Rakai Pikatan (see below, stanza 115)—perhaps one of his wives. This female character is ordered to follow her husband in his ascetic retreat, becoming a female *viku* (*kili*). Worsley (2006:239) has argued that the dynastic struggle between Rakai Pikatan and Bālaputra was caused by the (second) marriage between the former prince and a Śailendra princess, who was Bālaputra’s step-sister. Indeed both princes claimed succession over the Central Javanese kingdom on account of, respectively, marriage and direct Śailendra descent. To him, the plot of the KR is an allegory of the events that occurred during Rakai Pikatan’s reign, and the whole series of reliefs in the south-western corner of the balustrade of Prambanan’s Śiva temple (to which fig. 1 also belongs) bears witness ‘to anxieties inherent in the relationships between factions in the polygamous Javanese royal households of the time’. To see in the *kokila* alias *kili* ridiculed in the stanza a (Buddhist) Śailendra wife of Rakai Pikatan is a fascinating hypothesis, and one that agrees very well with the historical reconstruction proposed by Worsley.

83. See above, 25.19, and 24.109a, where the *valik* emits the sound *lik-lik alik*.

84. I have discussed the apparent structural and linguistic relationships between parts of *sarga* 24 and 25 in Acri (2008, 2010); see also Nihom (1996).

85. See, for example, Bharata’s *Nāṭyaśāstra* 21.130–131.

86. See Bloomfield (1924) and Lorenzen (2000:82). The stereotype of a lustful Pāśupata eager to break his vow of celibacy is found in the *Mattavilāsa* (14), where the Śaiva ascetic, coveting the Kapālīnī Devasomā, acts as a judge between a Kāpālīka and a Buddhist litigant over a skull-bowl in order to get the girl of the former for himself.

The real purpose beyond the order of the *kuvoṅ* is again made manifest in the next and last stanza of the series (24.115):

*kabvatnyan sor ujar niṅ manuk uyakan akən kvanyāməjah-məjah
saṅkā riṅ harṣa donyār vulati hayu nikaṅ rājyojvala muvah
molih āmbəknya maprārthanān uvah apulih ṅ udyāna saphala
hetunyān arddha medan mamidu-midu dumon rovaṅnya pikatan*

Due to his lowliness, the saying of the *manuk uyakan* is to be considered as an intention⁸⁷ to kill.

Out of joy, he set out to see the beauty of the kingdom, splendid again. He attained in his heart the desire that the flowering park return again to the former condition;

for this reason he, very mad, acted like a *vidu*, having in his mind his decoyed (*pikatan*) companions.

It is difficult to escape the impression that in this enigmatic verse the author was playing with double meanings, for the use of the word *pikatan* could hardly have gone unnoticed by an educated audience of ninth- or even tenth-century Java. While the form *apikat*, *papikat*, *pinikatan* (from **pikat*, OJED 1355) ‘decoy-bird’ or ‘decoyed bird’ are well attested in Old Javanese, the form *pikatan* is only attested here and in *sarga* 25.13b—a fact that has been considered by Aichele (1969:135) as a convincing argument of its being a double-entendre alluding to the historical figure Rakai Pikatan.⁸⁸ He translated *dumon rovaṅnya pikatan* in line d as ‘(er) zog los gegen seine angelockten Genossen’, and as an alternative possibility ‘er griff an die Bundesgenossen von Pikatan’, with reference to some decoyed followers of the king. The Pikatan is said to be acting or behaving like a *vidu* (*mamidu-midu*) in a very crazy way (*arddha medan*). This aptly describes the behaviour of a Pāsupata ascetic.⁸⁹ But what is the connection between the *manuk uyakan-vidu*-Pāsupata and king Rakai Pikatan? Does the stanza hint at a closeness of the Śaiva ruler with (false) Pāsupata ascetics,⁹⁰ or even to the

87. I derive this form from *kwan* I (OJED 945): ‘place; one’s position or rank in relation to another; what one is concentrating on (thinking of)’; contrast *kwan* II = *kon* I ‘to order’.

88. Aichele’s hypothesis has found further support in additional evidence drawn by Arlo Griffiths from the Sanskrit portion of the Wanua Tengah III inscription, where verse 10 presents a translinguistic gloss on the name Pikatan as *pakṣi* (Sanskrit for ‘bird’): see Acri (2010:487–8).

89. Compare *Pāsupatasūtra* 4.8: *unmatto mūḍha ity evaṃ manyante itare janāḥ*, ‘other people will thus think: “he is a stupid madman”’; 4.6: *unmattavad eko vicareta loke* ‘He must wander about by himself like a madman’. Compare also the attribute *buddhy ardhha mūḍha* ‘with a very stupid mind’ attributed to the quail alias Alepaka in 24.111c (see Acri 2008:202–3).

90. One may suppose that Rakai Pikatan himself was lured by these false ascetics, who promised

fact that he himself assumed their ascetic practices? However far-fetched the latter possibility may appear, I may point at the occurrence of the attribute *pu manuku* qualifying a Rakai Pikatan in two ninth century inscriptions,⁹¹ which is remindful of the attribute *manuk uyakan* qualifying the *kuvon* or *manuk vidu* in the above stanzas of the KR. The fact that the sequence *manuku* occurs also in *manuk uyakan* would seem to imply that both attributes may be playfully alluding to one and the same (historical) figure.⁹²

By way of comparison, I should also like to point to Klokke's interpretation of the allegorical relief depicting the story, widespread in Sanskrit sources, of the 'hypocritical cat' (disguised as a sham ascetic in order to eat the mice) on the Buddhist Caṇḍi Mendut (regarded to have been built after 800 AD) as a satire of a Śaiva King. Klokke (1986:38–9) envisages in the cat an allegorical reference to the historical figure of Kumbhayoni, the Śaiva king (or prince) 'denoting himself as a sage and intent upon overruling the established Buddhist dynasty implicitly mocked at through the depiction of the hypocritical cat provided with the attributes of the sage Agastya'. The iconographical attributes of the cat, namely a trident, a rosary and a fly-whisk, are actually not exclusive to Agastya but also common to those of Śaiva ascetics and especially of the Javanese sect of the R̥sis, which have been regarded by Sanderson (2003–04:376) as representing followers of the Atimārga stream of Śaivism. On account of the historical reconstruction I have proposed, it is arguable that instead of Kumbhayoni the cat may represent Rakai Pikatan himself.

The situation of 'tension' described in stanza 24.115 appears to have changed in stanza 25.13, which, featuring the second occurrence of the word *pikatan*,

him supernatural powers that would enable him to win the struggle for succession, eventually falling into a trap prepared by his adversaries. This *modus operandi* is frequently met with in Sanskrit literature. Olivelle (1987:58), for example, quotes a passage from the *Arthaśāstra* (13.2.1–5) describing the stratagem that the agent-sham ascetic should choose in order to kill the king of an antagonist state: having spread false news about the holiness of his master living in the forest, he should induce the ministers and the king to pay a visit to the holy ascetic; in order to be granted a boon, the king should be invited to stay in the forest with his wives and sons for five nights, after arranging a festival with shows; the king is to be killed on that occasion.

91. Namely the Caṇḍi Argapura inscriptions (also called Wanua Tengah I and II) issued in 863 AD. The same epithet is attributed to a Rakai Patapān in the Caṇḍi Perot inscription issued in 850 AD (see Weatherbee 2000:349). Since it is now believed that in 863 Rakai Pikatan was no longer alive, Weatherbee suggests that Rakai Pikatan Pu Manuku 'would have been a younger brother or son of *rakai* Pikatan who then inherited the Pikatan title during the reign of his uncle or older brother *rakai* Kayuwangi'.

92. OJED (1844) glosses the verbal forms *anukū*, *sumukū*, *sinukū*, *panukū* as 'to go to war, go on a military expedition, wage war on, attack'; compare my remarks on the root *uyak* 'pestering' (p. 62).

may be regarded as a 'sequel' to the former stanza. When describing the peaceful hermitage of the sage Bharadvāja, the narrator notes (line b):

pikatan tatan mavādi dibya marin

The *pikatan*-birds are not scared at all; excellent, they feel at ease.

It is possible to interpret this line as an allusion to the fact that the period of instability and internecine clashes caused by parties hostile to Rakai Pikatan had come to an end, when, according to the Śivagr̥ha inscription, the power passed to his brother Dyah Lokapāla. On the other hand, if we regard the present portion of text as composed after Rakai Pikatan's death, the line can also be translated as: 'the [King] Pikatan is not scared at all; in a divine form, he feels at ease', in which the word *dibya* refers to his status of hermit but also to his post-mortem deification form.

Conclusion

Starting from the hypothesis, developed in Acri 2010, that allegory was used in ancient Javanese textual as well as visual documents as a means to criticize rival political and religious factions, I have taken up *sarga* 24.111–115 and 25.19–22 of the KR. Those stanzas mainly present a satire of the *kuvon*, an enigmatic bird who is linked with the no-less enigmatic figure of the *vidu*. On the basis of evidence gathered from Old Javanese sources, I have proposed to identify the latter as a Śaiva ascetic-cum-performer, whose practices are similar to those attributed in Sanskrit sources to the Śaiva ascetic of the Pāśupata order. Given the apparent leaning of the mode of worship of the *vidus* toward performance, singing and buffoonery, I argue that those characters may be regarded as a localized development of a little-known sub-group of the Pāśupatas, namely the Kārukās ('those who sing/recite?'), who were attributed a very low status in the hierarchy of the Śaiva groups. In the light of the above identification, I have offered a new interpretation of the relevant passages of the KR and proposed a fine-tuning of Aichele's hypotheses about the political dimension of the allegory between the *kuvon* bird and the *vidu*, as well as their relation with the decoy(ed) bird *pikatan*, in the framework of the crucial historical events that took place in mid-ninth century Central Java.

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