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rations of segregation, members of these organizations espoused profoundly different world views and literally could not communicate with each other in print. *Putihan* were conversant only in Arabic script, while *priyayi* preferred the Latin script of European modernity and the Javanese characters of *Buda* times. Nonetheless, there was sufficient awareness across *aliran* that when *Suluk Gatholoco* and *Serat Dermagandhul* were reprinted in part or whole in 1918, 1923 and 1925, there were massive protests from *putihan*. Disputes were, however, quickly dampened by the Dutch authorities. While Ricklefs' historical study ends with the great depression of 1930, the book's conclusion projects forward to postcolonial '*aliran* political violence' (p. 262) concluding in the events of 1965-66, when the lack of a strong state to intervene led to massacre.

Polarising Javanese society is an important and comprehensive study, displaying great learning and judicious use of historical evidence. While there is some repetition, it is written in a generally accessible style, and should be of great interest to all students of modern Indonesian history.

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Stuart Robson, *Arjunawiwāha; The marriage of Arjuna of Mpu Kanwa*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2008, xiii + 208 pp. [Bibliotheca Indonesica 34.] ISBN 9789067183215. Price: EUR 24.90 (paperback).

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As stated in the preface, Robson's work on the *Arjunawiwāha* began back in 1998. In that year the author presented a paper, later published as 'On translating the *Arjunawiwāha*' (Robson 2001), containing illuminating considerations, penned in an elegant and stimulating manner, about the need and opportunity of 'doing again' that Kakawin by translating it into English (and translating Old Javanese literature in general). The present work constitutes the

result of the author's decade of work, being a new edition and the first complete translation into English (with commentary) of the poem *Arjunawiwāha* (early eleventh century AD), one of the oldest and most outstanding pieces of Old Javanese literature.

The book opens with a substantial introduction (36 pages) providing readers with historical and literary background information, intended to guide them into the marvellous, yet distant, world of Old Javanese poetry. Although much of the content relating to the history of Old Javanese literature is, as usual, based on the well-received ideas of Zoetmulder (1974), the author has made an effort to move forward and add some original elements of analysis that clearly improve our knowledge of the text. For instance, he compares the narrative of the Old Javanese poem with its possible Sanskrit 'prototypes', namely the *Vanaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* and the Mahākāvya *Kirātārjunīya* (though it seems that Robson only used Peterson's [2003] study of the latter text, without consulting any of the existing translations), and concludes that Mpu Kaṇwa knew both Sanskrit sources but created an original work. Furthermore, while tackling the historical background in which the work was composed, the author refers approvingly to the controversial (yet often ignored) original views of Roy Jordaan on the history of early Central Java and Sumatra, characterized by a rivalry between the Śailendra and Sañjaya dynasties during much of the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries. Jordaan's hypotheses (advanced in several articles, cited in the book's bibliography) offer a plausible solution to many otherwise unexplained facts in ancient Javanese history – such as the question of why Airlangga, the king who is believed to have been the patron of the poet, divided his kingdom into two smaller realms, headed by two of his sons. Robson adds further evidence to strengthen the hypothesis that the *Arjunawiwāha* constitutes an extended allegory on the king's marriage to a Javanese princess (Subhadrā in the poem). The existence of another wife of Śailendra origin might explain the division of Airlangga's realm between the two sons of different royal lines.

The translation of the Old Javanese text is one of the strong points of the book. The attention the author has devoted throughout his career to the challenges of translating Old Javanese literature so as to make it more accessible to a broad international audience is positively reflected in the book. I found Robson's translation to be excellent, although not free from occasional imperfections (see below), distinguished by the same elegance and poetic calibre that characterize the author's previously published translations of Old Javanese Kakawins.

Another valuable part of the book is the commentary to the text, which takes the form of critical notes clarifying difficult points in the interpretation of the syntax or trying to interpret rare or unattested Old Javanese words. Given our still imperfect knowledge of that language, the notes will be of

great help to future editors and students of Old Javanese texts. It is unfortunate that such notes, following the conventions of KITLV Press, are placed at the end in an appendix; the use of footnotes with the translation would make them much easier to consult.

All in all, the book is a welcome addition to Old Javanese studies by a leading expert, who has succeeded in making the text accessible to non-specialist readers. Note that a more appropriate title for this book would have been *The Balinese Arjunawiwāha*; for the author, as he himself admits on the first page of the introduction, presents 'a text based on a limited number of manuscripts from the Balinese tradition', all – except the most recent one – kept in the Leiden University Library. The very existence of Javanese manuscripts of the poem we learn about only on p. 16, and in an indirect manner, through a comment made by the author on Poerbatjaraka's claim regarding the presence of interpolations in both Balinese and Javanese manuscripts of the text. The self-imposed limitation to the Balinese tradition must be viewed in conjunction with the fact that the author does not actually claim to offer a critical edition, but 'simply to make the text available once more, building on Poerbatjaraka's work in 1926', and that 'there is also ample scope for further exploration of the manuscripts'. The author's admitted (p. 33) inability to consult the earliest edition of the *Arjunawiwāha*, based on a single Balinese manuscript, by Friederich (1850), is rather surprising, considering that this book is available in multiple copies at Leiden University Library. Although, as Robson notes, Poerbatjaraka's edition already includes Friederich's readings (indicated as manuscript B in the critical apparatus), he also observes that 'Poerbatjaraka's text has the misfortune of containing a large number of printing and other errors. His critical apparatus is unclear' (p. 34). One would expect KITLV Press to set the standard for editions and translations of Old Javanese texts, but the format and scope of the present book do not quite reflect the state of the art in philology as I perceive it. However, given the limitations that the author has imposed on himself, I will not enter into a methodological discussion here.

I would like to address a few inaccuracies that appear in the introduction and the translation. The first, a rather fundamental one, is found in the author's treatment of the implications of the influence of Sanskrit aesthetic theory on Old Javanese poetry (pp. 12-3):

The aesthetic theories of Indian poetry as set out in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* may have had some influence on the technique of Javanese poets, in view of the prominence of *rasa* (the theory of the arising of the six sentiments) in literary thinking at the time, even though there is no comparable textbook in Old Javanese to support this.

Now, it is a well-known fact that Sanskrit aesthetic theory admitted not six but

eight or nine *rasa*; the author here apparently confuses them with the *ṣaḍrasa*, namely the 'six flavours/tastes' perceived by human beings (Zoetmulder 1982:1588). Furthermore, the statement that there is no Old Javanese textbook dealing with Sanskrit-derived aesthetics is not correct. As Rubinstein (2000) has shown in her book *Beyond the realm of the senses* (listed in Robson's bibliography), one such text exists – an important and early one, perhaps dating as far back as the ninth century AD. It is called *Candrakiraṇa* or *Caṇḍakiraṇa* (portions of which are also known in Bali under different titles) and is, among other things, devoted to the art of composing poetry. It mentions nine *rasa* (Rubinstein 2000:178-9).

The statement (p. 30) that the name of the nymph Arjuna married, Suprabhā, 'is apparently not found in Sanskrit sources' is not correct. That Robson does not refer to Sanskrit sources for the same epic episode as that taken up by Mpu Kaṇwa in the *Arjunawiwāha* but to Sanskrit sources tout court is suggested by his remark that the name 'was created by Mpu Kaṇwa for the purposes of this story' and hence not known to him from other texts. But Suprabhā is such a well-attested name for women of both human and semi-divine origin in Sanskrit literature (see, for example, *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki, books 1 and 2; *Mahābhārata*, books 9 and 13; *Bṛhatkathā*; various Purāṇas) that I find Robson's hypothesis unlikely.

One aspect of the introduction that leaves me somewhat unsatisfied is the author's treatment of fundamental aspects of the poem, namely those of religion, philosophy and 'mysticism'. The secondary Indological source material used for tracing the religious and philosophical motifs in the Old Javanese text is limited. It is in fact confined to the now outdated *Philosophies of India* by Zimmer (1956), which is referred to for explaining important phenomena such as yoga. Robson perpetuates such clichés as the explanation of *tapas* as 'non-Aryan'. More importantly, he often refers to an unspecified 'Indian religion' or 'Hinduism' without mentioning the strongly Śaiva character of ancient Javanese religious life, or the fact that the *Arjunawiwāha* is a thoroughly Śaiva poem. It is, hence, to Śaiva scriptures that one would have to look in order to understand what is going on. But as it stands, the only Sanskrit religious texts referred to are the non-sectarian Upaniṣads. Śaivism is still an understudied aspect of ancient Javanese civilization, so some inadequacy in Robson's treatment of religious aspects of the text is no more than a reflection of the state of the art, but acknowledgement of the findings of previous scholars, such as Wiryamartana (1990) and Nihom (1997), on aspects of Śaivism in the poem would have been in order.

One example where Robson's translation suffers from insufficient acquaintance with the religious background of the poem is in canto 19.3, where Suprabhā praises Arjuna for being a proficient yogin, possessing the Eight Qualities (*aṣṭaguṇa*) along with supernatural powers (*siddhi*), immortality

(*amarāṇa*) and invulnerability (*accedya*). Robson does not explain what these Eight Qualities are. One would suppose that they are the same as the *aṣṭaguṇa* in canto 29.3d, translated by Robson as the Eight Qualities of Kingship (as in *Bhomāntaka* 38.12; see note 184, and compare Zoetmulder 1982:143). But since these Eight Qualities of Kingship *are about to be bestowed* on Arjuna on the occasion of his coronation as King, we can safely rule out this possibility: Arjuna was previously said to possess them already. We may find a clue in 35.7, where it is said that a lord of yogins, even one who has gained the Eight Qualities, may still give himself over to happiness. It is likely that the term *aṣṭaguṇa*, at least in 19.3 and 35.7, should be taken as a technical term referring to the eight supernatural qualities of realized yogins (*aṇimā* 'atomization', and so on), well-attested in Old Javanese as well as Sanskrit sources (also called *aṣṭaiśwarya*; see Zoetmulder 1982:143-4, 146).

I shall conclude with a problematic point in the translation. While I am aware that, given our still imperfect knowledge of Old Javanese, the matter is still very much open to debate, my impression is that Robson has gone a bit too far in assuming enjambment in his translation of the Old Javanese verses (see his critical remarks on this point, and on the inappropriateness of translating word-for-word, p. 35). Canto 13.5 is translated by the author as follows:

tāraṅganādityaśāśāṅgkamaṇḍala
alit katonanya sakeng swamānuṣa
agōng iwā mangkana de ni doh nika
katon sakeng madhyapadānghulap-hulap

The orbs of the stars, the sun and moon
Appear to be smaller than man himself;
Even so, they are large, and because of their distance
Seen from the earth, they twinkle

Robson presupposes an enjambment between the third and fourth lines, perhaps in order to solve the problem posed by the translation of *iwa maṅkana* as 'thus, even so, nevertheless' (following Zoetmulder 1982:708). I find it more natural, however, to interpret the two lines as separated, and to translate *iwa* ('like; so, just, indeed') and *maṅkana* ('thus, like that') literally. In this way we can also explain the *ā* of *iwā* not as an artificial lengthening for the sake of the metre, but as the result of sandhi between the *a* of *iwa* and the verbal prefix *a* attached to *maṅkana*. The resulting form *amaṅkana* would thus correspond to *mamaṅkana*, attested in *Sārasamuccaya* 434.2 with the meaning of 'to be thus' (see Zoetmulder 1982:1111). My translation runs as follows:

The orbs of the stars, the sun and moon
Appear to be smaller than man himself;

Being large indeed, they appear to be like that [i.e. small] because of their distance.

Seen from the earth, they twinkle

It seems to me that the stanza conveys the idea that the stars, even though they are large, appear small because of their distance from the earth — and not that the stars twinkle because of their distance, as Robson's (admittedly more elegant) translation implies. Compare the relevant portion of the Sanskrit version of this verse in the *Vanaparvan* (quoted by Robson, p. 9), translated by Van Buitenen as 'Those lights to be seen as the stars look tiny like oil flames because of the distance, but they are very large'.

To conclude, this new edition of the *Arjunawiwāha* has many positive points and the author deserves praise for his efforts to make this beautiful work accessible to a wider, non-specialist international readership. I nevertheless believe that the *Arjunawiwāha* cannot yet be considered 'done'. A critical edition based on all the known available manuscripts and a new interpretation of the text is yet to be produced.

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László Székely and István Radnai, *Dit altijd alleen zijn; Verhalen over het leven van planters en koelies in Deli (1914-1930)*. Vertaald [uit het Hongaars] en ingeleid door Gábor Pusztai en Gerard Termorshuizen. Leiden: KITLV Uitgeverij, 2007, 128 pp. ISBN 9789067182775. Prijs: EUR 14,90 (paperback).

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Reeds na de aanplant van de eerste plantages was Sumatra zeer gewild bij gelukzoekers, niet alleen Nederlandse, ook Europese. Aldus betrokken op 16 april 1914 de Hongaarse neven László Székely en István Radnai naar Medan, wat hen vele malen beter leek dan een slecht betaalde kantoorbaan in hun vaderland. Maar het zat hen niet mee. Wanhopig zochten ze naar werk en voelden zich in de steek gelaten, ook door landgenoten die hen vooruit waren gegaan. Na zes weken keerde István Radnai gedesillustioneerd naar Budapest terug.

László Székely (1892-1946) had geluk toen hij als assistent op een Engelse tabakspantage werd aangesteld. Het contact met zijn familie hield hij warm. En zo kon hij acht jaar later zijn broer Ferenc verwelkomen. Zijn werk op de rubberplantage Ajer Poetih (Kisaran) combineerde hij als cartoonist van het in 1924 opgerichte weekblad *Sumatra*. Dat jaar ontmoette hij ook Madelon Lulofs (1899-1958), de echtgenote van zijn collega Hendrik Doffegnies. Ze trouwden in 1926 maar hun huwelijk werd op de onderneming echter niet geaccepteerd. Uiteindelijk verlieten ze Deli en vestigden zich met dochter Kotjil in Budapest, waar ze van de pen leefden (1930).

Dat lukte Madelon beter dan László. Het duurde tot 1935 toen ook hij doorbrak. Dat jaar verscheen *Van oerwoud tot plantage*. Székely's autobiografische en sterk gedocumenteerde roman is een weergave van de harde mannenwereld met ijzeren discipline waar Javaanse en Chinese koelies en njais onmenselijk werden behandeld. Het voorwoord doet de lezer geloven dat het boek in drie dagen tijds als in een roes was geschreven. De roman werd door de Indische pers wisselend ontvangen: de NSB-krant *Volk en Vaderland* noemde het laster terwijl *De Indische Post* en *Het Vaderland* het geschetste beeld realistisch en een verrijking voor de Nederlandse koloniale literatuur vonden.