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Princess Sodara Kartika frees Amir from prison

The epic of Amir Hamza (?16th century)

BERNARD ARPS

ABSTRACT

MS Jav. b. 2 (R) is among the earliest Javanese manuscripts brought to Europe by seafarers. It was presented to the Bodleian Library, Oxford, in 1629. Its text – titled *Stories of Amir (Caritanira Amir)* – sheds new light on the literary and cultural history of Java and the wider Java Sea world. Probably composed in the 1500s, possibly in Banten, the text contains part of an adaptation of the Malay *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*, itself a rendition of an eleventh-century text in Persian. The protagonist Hamza was an uncle of the Prophet Muhammad. His epic story used to be told across Islamic Asia in a range of literary and performance genres. The text is Javanized not only in its language but also its poetics and (selectively) its natural and cultural settings. Among other things, *Caritanira Amir* helps to clarify the relationship between Middle and Modern Javanese, and it problematizes social, political, and religious issues that were evidently of concern in the early modern Java Sea world. Several appear in the excerpt presented here.

KEYWORDS

Cultural history of Java; epic of Amir Hamza; Islam in the Java Sea world; Middle and Modern Javanese language and literature.

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INTRODUCTION¹

Indonesia's Independence Day is a cause for various kinds of celebration nationwide. On 30 August 2020 the customary puppetry festival presenting a month of nightly performances showcased a curiosity (broadcast online this time because of Covid-19). It was *wayang kulit Menak*, a rare genre of shadow theatre telling stories from the epic of Amir Hamza.

The story of the adventures of Amir Hamza and his offspring is the epic of Muslim Asia par excellence. The historical Ḥamza ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib was an uncle and contemporary of the Prophet Muhammad. He became the hero of an expansive epic in which he features as a champion of Islam *avant la lettre*, subduing infidel kings and converting them, after which they become his companions. The story of Hamza's exploits (also amorous ones) was put to paper in Persian probably in the eleventh century CE. Alongside oral storytelling, this work was a wellspring for the subsequent spread of the epic across Asia from Turkey to Mindanao, in Persian and a range of local languages and genres. In the Malay world Hamza's fame is based on the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah*, a prose text in Malay, probably adapted directly from the Persian. In Java its forms were varied. The *Hikayat Amir Hamza* was rendered into Javanese verse on several occasions. Expansions and sequels were composed directly in Javanese. And it used to be told also by bards, through puppetry, and in drama and dance. Amir Hamza is a familiar figure, known affectionately in Javanese as Wong Menak, "the Nobleman".

The performance genre featured in 2020 was a rarity. The episode, however, was a beloved one. It recounted how King Jobin, defeated by Amir after which he has joined Amir's forces, covets Amir's spouse, and rebels. She meets her end, as does Jobin (Suluh Juniarsah 2020). This story also used to be in the repertoire of the rod-puppet theatre that was popular in rural western Central Java until the 1980s (Sindu Jotaryono 1999).

The Jobin episode is of long standing. A literary version is found in a palm leaf manuscript, inscribed with Javanese letters, that has been in the Bodleian Library in Oxford since 1629 (Figure 1 and 2). The text, a narrative poem, calls itself "Stories of Amir" (*Caritanira Amir*). In 40,000 words it tells one tenth of the epic as recorded in the Malay *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* and its Persian exemplar.

This manuscript and its text have great historical significance. The language is of the medieval variety that scholars have called Middle Javanese, which has not been found in Islamically oriented texts before. But it also contains features characteristic of Modern Javanese. On the poetic plane, this is the oldest known manuscript containing a text in the *macapat* verse form that

¹ For questions, critique, and support I thank Els Bogaerts, Nancy Florida, Ronit Ricci, Tony Day, Willem van der Molen, Edwin Wieringa, and the other members of the research group New Directions in the Study of Javanese Literature at the Israel Institute for Advanced Studies (2018/2019). My membership was co-funded by the IIAS and the Marie Curie Actions, FP7, in the framework of the EURIAS Fellowship Programme.

A first transliteration of the text of the excerpt was made by Mr. Ignatius Supriyanto in 1996-1997. The Bodleian Library allowed me to study MS Jav. b. 2 (R) through the good offices of fellow gamelan enthusiast (and admissions officer) John Pusey.

dominated Javanese writing until the late nineteenth century. The imagery, narrative style, and motifs are those of medieval Hindu-Buddhist texts, but with Islamic turns: pious phrases, Muslim ideals and taboos, the disposition of God. The text's Persian roots can be sensed under the surface, as it retains the general mode of narration of its Persian ancestor. A few Persian phrases are quoted and there is singing of "Persian song" (with lyrics in Javanese translation). The geographic and cultural setting is Middle Eastern or Western Asian, centred on Mecca and Ctesiphon (the Sasanian capital near present-day Baghdad), with deserts and warriors on horses and elephants, brandishing swords and maces rather than kris. Outlying districts are inhabited by jinns and fairies. But at the same time the setting is Javanese, with lush tropical vegetation and people playing gamelan and shadow theatre.

The manuscript is probably from Banten. It is likely that the larger epic poem from which the manuscript takes its text – an adaptation of the Malay *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* – was composed in the sixteenth century at a princely court on Java's north coast, possibly Banten itself. In Java this version of the poem was superseded by more modern renditions in the eighteenth century. But elsewhere in the world of the Java Sea this text continued to be copied, and presumably recited (sung) and heard as well. Variants of the text, as well as earlier and later episodes from the same literary telling of the epic, have been identified in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century manuscripts from the islands of Madura and Lombok. Manuscripts from the Sultanate of Palembang (southeastern Sumatra) contain earlier episodes that may hail from the same rendition. These were places around the Java Sea where the vernacular language was not Javanese, but where a Javanese ideology and style (Arps 2018) formed a celebrated part of the local cultural repertoire.

How was it possible for this stylized telling of a story of battle and romance, centred in a distant and fantastic western Asia, to enjoy such widespread and long-lasting interest in the world of the Java Sea? No doubt the grounds for people's fascination varied with local cultural dynamics and historical conjuncture. But amidst the variety lay a constant. The poem thematises big issues that were evidently of concern in early modern Islamic cultures around the Java Sea, in the nineteenth century no less than the sixteenth. The following excerpt illustrates several domains of interest, including Islam (especially conversion and piety), strong women, social hierarchy, moral political economy, and political strategy.

PRINCESS SODARA KARTIKA FREES AMIR FROM PRISON

The text transliterated and translated below is from palmleaf MS Jav. b. 2 (R) in the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford. In the manuscript text, only stanza boundaries are indicated with punctuation marks; verse lines are not.

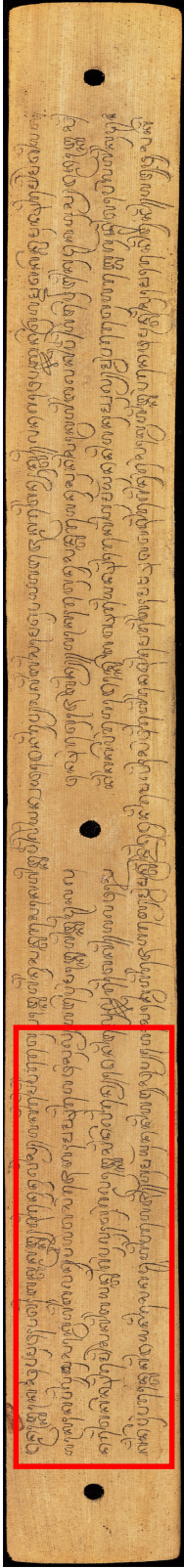


Figure 1. A page from the Bodleian manuscript of Stories of Amir. The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MS Jav. b. 2 (R), f. 16v. (Image courtesy The Bodleian Libraries, CC BY-NC 4.0.)

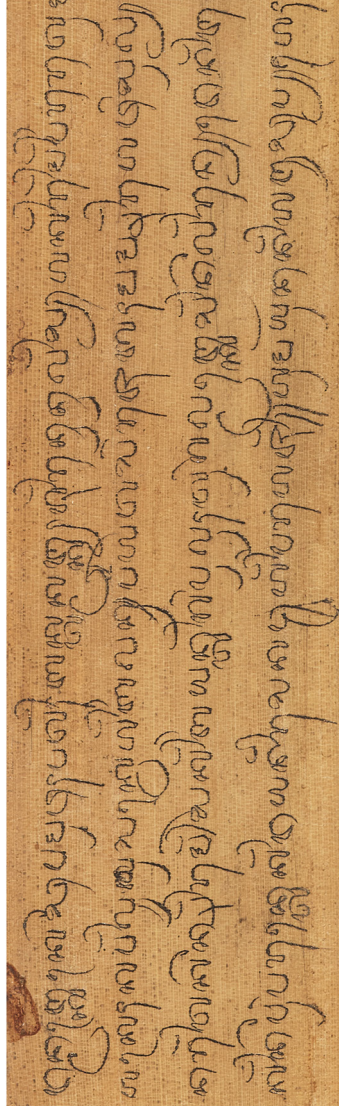


Figure 2. Detail of f. 16v. The first two verse lines read *Dan mangke kocapa nuwah / Patih Baktak mangkya sirânunulis* (“Now let us speak afresh about / Chancellor Baktak, not much later he wrote a letter”). (Image courtesy The Bodleian Libraries, CC BY-NC 4.0.)

WHAT PRECEDES

The excerpt comes after the episode of King Jobin's rebellion, a different version of which was shown in the 2020 shadow play. After the violent death of his beloved wife Munigarin by Jobin's hand, Amir Amzyah (as he is called here) withdraws to Mecca, mourning at her grave. He has relinquished his leadership of the Arabs, his followers leave. The infidel King Kanzun, who bears a grudge against Amir, captures and tortures him. Amir's loyal companion Umarmaya attempts to rescue him but fails by God's will, for Amir has not shown Him sufficient thankfulness. When Amir's other followers learn about his predicament, they march on Mecca. Kanzun, terrified, retreats to his kingdom of Angki with Amir. The Arabs lay siege to Angki.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE IN THIS EXCERPT

Amir Amzyah: the epic's protagonist, chief commander of the Arabs and son of the governor of Mecca.

Ibrahim: the prophet Abraham (who is the prophet of Islam, as this is before Muhammad received his revelation).

Kanzun: king of Angki ('Akkā, that is, Acre), brother of Sodara Kartika.

Sodara Kartika: princess of Angki.

THE VERSE FORMS AND TRANSLATION

The Javanese text was designed for melodic reading. It is totally unknown what the tunes and singing style were like in the sixteenth or early seventeenth century. The verse forms used in *Caritanira Amir*, however, are still widespread, and their metrical outlines have endured. Each verse form consists of stanzas with a certain number of verse lines, each individual line comprising a fixed number of syllables and with a particular vowel in the final syllable. The way syntactic patterns are mapped onto the metrical structure in the text provides some clues regarding melodic continuity and finality (see the Annotations). In the nineteenth century the melodies were basically iambic. This was not necessarily the case in the sixteenth century, but it has served as a guideline for my English rendition. The translation reproduces the number of stresses per verse line.

PANGKUR (CANTO X)

117 [...] *tan kocapa ana ta malih winuwus*

*Dewi So·da·ra Kartika
sanakira Sri Bhupati*

[...] It is left untold, may something else now be described:

the Lady Sodara Kartika
a sister to His Majesty.

- 118 *Antyanta ing warnanira
kaduk raras liringira amanis*

*lwir hyangning jaladi madu
idhèping kang umulat
nirukty akeh danadarma budinyâlus*

*nirmoda ring kawlas-arsa
asidèkah ing wong miskin*
- Her beauty was superior.
Exceedingly fair, she cast the sweetest of
glances
like the goddess of a honey-sea.
So thought those who set eyes on her.
Suitably generous in giving alms, her
character refined.
Compassionate to the miserable
dispensing charity to the poor.
- 119 *Wijnya pratama ing sastra
putus ing gamèlan tama ing rawit*

*sing gina tan ana luput
nalika wèngi sira
angipîng jro turunira atêtèmu*

*la<n> Nabi Ibrahim sira
aweh kanugrahan lèwih*
- She was well-versed, at letters an adept.
Mistress of gamelan, consummate in the
fine arts.
Not a single talent was lacking in her.
On a certain night it happened that
she had a dream, in her sleep she found
herself face to face
with Ibrahim the prophet who
bestowed on her an exceptional grace.
- 120 *Sinungan agama Islam
ingandikan dera Nabi Ibrahim*

*heh Dewi Kartika sira
maraêng Amir Amzyah
atulunga ing masakate sirêku
wètokèna ing panjara
wruhanira Amir iki*
- She was granted the religion of Islam
and the prophet Ibrahim gave directions to
her:
“Now then, Lady Kartika, you
must go to visit Amir Amzyah
and rescue him from the hardship he is in.
Release him from imprisonment.
For you must be aware that Amir
- 121 *Iku Nini buyutingwang
turun-turunaningsun iku Nini*

*kramanira iku mbesuk
sabab sinung nugraha
dening Pangeran mara ing sira
agung*
*sira n tẽ<m>be anak lanang
ingangkat darjatirêki*
- is, dear girl, my great-grandson.
A descendant of mine, that is what he is,
my dear.
He is going to be your spouse one day,
for a grace is bestowed upon you.
From the Mighty Lord it comes to you, a
weighty one.
Later you shall have a son.
Your station is going to be raised
- 122 *Ing dunya tẽkêng akerat
yata sira Dewi Sodarâtangi*

*maksih angungas gandârum
lèwih sakwehing ganda
Dewi Sodara amicarêng twasipun*

*běñr ipeningsun ika
wong saleh baya kang kaksi*
- in this world and in the afterlife.”
Thereupon the Lady Sodara rose from her
bed.
She could still discern a fragrance
that surpassed all other scents.
The Lady Sodara pondered, then said to
herself:
“So what I dreamt really occurred
I must have seen a holy man.”

- 123 *Mangkat sira Dewi Soda-
-ra Kartika maring <ng>genira
Amir
tandwa sira aglis rawuh
ing prĕnahira Amzyah
kaget sakwehing wong akĕmit
andulu
ing Dewi Sodara sira
suminggah punang akĕmit*
- And then she went, Lady Soda-
-ra Kartika, to the place where Amir was
held.
Within moments she arrived in haste
at the spot where Amzyah was kept.
The sentinels were startled when they
realized
that this was Lady Sodara.
The sentinels stepped aside for her.
- 124 *Raden Dewi angling sira
heh sakwehing atandha kang akĕmit
wruhanira ingsun wau
ing nidra aswapĕna
katurunan ing Nabi Ibrahim ingsun

dentata sapolahira
swapĕnanira ing uni*
- The noble lady said to them:
"O all of you guardsmen standing sentinel:
Know that a little while ago
in my sleep I had a dream.
The Prophet Ibrahim descended and
appeared to me."
She gave a full description of
the dream she had experienced.
- 125 *Yata sakwehing atandha
amintuhu sojarira Twan Dewi

yata sami sinungan ra-
-jata kalawan ĕmas
pira-pirang kati wong
atandhĕmuwus
nĕdha patik Pramiswara
nugrahanira mring dasih*
- It came to pass that all the guards
took her word, believing the eminent lady's
account.
Thereupon she gave them sil-
-ver as well as pieces of gold
that weighed many dozens of ounces. The
guardsmen said to her:
"Your Highness's servants thank you for
the graces you have granted them.
- 126 *Depun sampun dening Tuwan
lampah puniki liwat ing awisthi
kawula uga wogan kang
angĕmasi antaka
den apĕnĕd Tuwan sampun asung
dudu
Dewi Sodara Kartika
angling aja walang ati*
- My Lady should desist from pursuing
this course of action, it is extremely dangerous.
For surely your servants will, alas,
pay the price of it with death.
Please do what is right, don't lead us into
wickedness."
The Lady Sodara Kartika
replied: "Do not feel anxious.
- 127 *Tuwi sira kabeh iya
sing anurut ing ujaringsun iki

sinung nugraha sirĕku
dening Hyang Mahamulya
tur sira mbesuk padha sinungan
lungguh
denira wong menak Amzyah
padha amintuhu ing ling*
- For this pertains to all of you,
to all who comply with the instructions I
shall give:
You are sure to be granted a grace
by the Power Most Excellent
and also you will be granted positions of
esteem
thanks to Amzyah the nobleman."
All consented to her words.

- 128 *Yata ing nalika ika
BagindhĀmzyah asujud ing
Hyang Widi
anēdha pangapurâgung
kaluluputanira
sukur ing satitahing Hyang
sirânuhu
tan wiyanga ing sakarsa-
-nira Sang Amurbêng Kapti*
- Now at this particular point in time
the Lord Amzyah prostrated before
Almighty God.
He requested great forgiveness
for the error of his ways.
He showed gratitude for all dispositions of
God and agreed
not to depart from anything willed
by the One Who reigns over all desire.

MAGATRUH (CANTO XI)

- 1 *Dan kawasitaa mangke Raden
Galuh
Sodara Kartika praptîng
ꦏꦺꦒꦮꦤꦶꦫꦤꦶꦩꦶꦫꦶꦏꦸꦁ
tan wangwang sirânguculi
saking warangka tan alon*
- Now then let us continue to speak about the
princess royal
Sodara Kartika, who had arrived at
the place where Amir was being held.
Without further thought she set him free
from his cage without delay.
- 2 *Yata winētokēn sira Amir sampun
saking panjara anuli
binakta ing puri asru
minulya-mulyêng jro puri
datan ana wruh punaꦏꦺꦒꦶꦮꦺꦁ*
- So at that time Amir had finally been released
from imprisonment and at once
she took him to the palace in haste.
She did him honour in the palace.
There was not a soul who noticed it.
- 3 *Kalintang mulenira Rahaden
Galuh
yata awrēta sirēki
dentata ipene wau
katurunan ꦏꦤꦧꦶꦫꦫꦶꦩ
dentata sapolahnyang wong*
- The princess royal treated him with the utmost
respect.
And she recounted what had happened.
She described the dream she had of late
that Ibrahim the Prophet appeared to her.
She recounted in full what he had done
- 4 *Apajar yan maka-kramanira
mbesuk
dentata sojarirēki
sirĀmir nēhēr asujud
sukur ing titahing Widi
asung nugrahēki mangko*
- How he declared that later they would be
husband and wife.
She told him all the things he said.
Amir then prostrated himself
to express his thanks for God's disposition
for granting them His grace now.
- 5 *Yata ingangkēn pramiswari Twan
Galuh
nging sira dereng akawin
rehira dereng akumpul

minulya-mulyêng jro puri
tan warnanēn polahnyang wong*
- Then he recognized the princess royal as his
queen
although they had not been wedded yet,
which is why for now they abstained from
union.
She showed him honour in the palace.
But their actions shall not be described.

- 6 *Sakwehing akĕmit padhâtri
gumuruh
geger wrinwrin polahniki
ilangirÂmir ing dalu
lwir tingkahing tan wruh uni
yata matur ing Sang Katong* The men who stood sentinel made a tumultuous clamour, running about confused and in fear, for Amir had vanished during the night. They feigned ignorance of what had happened. Then they made report to the king:
- 7 *Wikananira Paduka Sang Aulun

Amir Amzyah sira ghaib
ilang sira wau dalu
tan ana angawikani
sakwehing akĕmit mangko* “Let it be known to Your Royal Highness, Esteemed Lord, that Amir Amzyah is gone without trace. He vanished in the course of the night without one person noticing it among the men standing sentinel.”
- 8 *Bramatya sira mangke Sri Raja
Kanzun
maring sakwehing akĕmit
kinen angulatanâsru
sakwehing kang tandha mantri
ulubalang kabeh mangko* His Lustrous Majesty Kanzun broke out in a rage against the men who stood sentinel. He issued orders to search for him keenly to all the guardsmen and officers of state and all the captains of troops now.
- 9 *Milu angulati sira Raja Kanzun

anging sira tan kapanggih
emĕng twasira Sang Prabhu
yata angucap ing mantri
apa dayanira rĕko* King Kanzun himself joined the search along with them. Nevertheless, he could not be found. His Majesty was disconcerted. Thereupon he said to the officers of state: “What do you suggest we do about this?”
- 10 *Yan dayaningsun yan Amir wusa
mĕtu
saking jro kutha iriki
ana tangara karungu
kĕndhang tinabuh tangari
dening bala Arab rĕko* My own suggestion is thus: if Amir had already left gone outside the city wall we would have got to hear a signal. The drums would be struck to give a sign by the Arab troops for sure.
- 11 *Maksih uga ing jro kutha
tarkaningsun
lah rĕko mantri sawiji
atakonĕng juru tĕnung
mangkat aglis punang mantri
wus prapta dan lingnyâtakon* Despite how it seems, he is still inside the city, I think. Now then, one of you officers must seek the fortune-teller’s advice.” In an instant an officer was on his way. Having arrived he asked for advice.
- 12 *Dentata sandikanira Sang Aulun

pun juru tĕnung mangky angling
satuhune Amir iku
maksih ing jro kuthĕriki
anĕng kastriyajen mangko* He conveyed every word that had been spoken by His Lordship. The fortune-teller promptly replied: “Indeed, it is true that Amir is still at large within this city. He is staying inside the zenana now.

- 13 *Piningit mangke denira Raden Galuh
sinimpĕnan ing jro puri
aglis punang mantri matur
ing sira Sri Narapati
wus dentata sojarnyang wong* He is kept secluded at present by the princess royal.
She is hiding him within the palace.”
Quickly the officer went to convey this to him, the lustrous ruler of men.
He reported all that he had said.
- 14 *Ĕnti runtikira sira Raja Kanzun
kady amĕdalĕna agni
saking srĕngsrĕngni pandulu
kumĕdut paduning lathi
nti wirangira Sang Katong* The King Kanzun was beside himself with utter rage.
He seemed to be casting flashes of fire from the fury that was in his eyes.
His mouth was trembling at the corners.
The ruler’s embarrassment was extreme.
- 15 *Yata angundang parĕkan istri asru
wowolu parĕkan prapti
dan lingira Sang Aulun
maraa ing kanyapuri
mareka ing Yayi rĕko* At the top of his voice, he called out for his female attendants.
Eight of them presented themselves.
Thereupon His Noble Lordship said:
“You make your way to the maidens’ quarters
and pay your respects to my younger sister.
- 16 *Anĕngguh Amir anĕng dalĕme iku
mangkat kang utusan aglis
matur ing Rahaden Galuh
sandikanira Nrĕpati
matur yan runtik Sang Katong* It is alleged that Amir is skulking in her mansion.”
The envoys departed without ado.
They humbly apprised the princess royal of every word the king had said.
They told her His Majesty was enraged.
- 17 *Ingaturakĕn dening wong juru
tĕnung
yan Amir ana ing puri
Tuwan rĕke kang kadulu
ing tĕnung kang anguculi
saking warangkane rĕko* For it had been brought to his attention by the fortune-teller
that Amir was inside the palace.
“It was My Lady whom the fortune-teller identified as the one who released him from the confines of his cage to be sure.”
- 18 *Yata sang putri sira agawe wuwus
amrih luputanirĀmir
heh wruhanira Sang Prabhu
dursila mantri nrĕpati
tan yukti lampaha cĕlor* And thereupon the princess fabricated a tale so Amir would be clear of trouble.
“Well then, His Majesty should know that his officer is misbehaving.
He is acting unseemly, what he does is lewd.
- 19 *Pira-pira dene kedanan iringsun
asring akirim rĕrĕpi
unine suratnyĀmlas-yun
anĕdha kinarya dasih
lawasing agĕsang rĕko* Again and again he shows that he is besotted with me.
He sends me letters all the time.
What he writes is meant to break my heart.
He begs to be considered my servant for the remainder of his life.

- 20 *Anging isun tan anambad<an>ing
kahyun
nirdon sojaring rĕrĕpi
karane agawe wuwus
ingsun deng sĕnggwa tan yukti
denprih bĕndua Sang Katong* Nevertheless I have not submitted to his wishes.
Everything he said in his letters was futile.
Hence he has fabricated a tale
to raise the suspicion I acted unseemly.
He tries to arouse the ruler's displeasure.
- 21 *Pira-pira uga pangapuraningsun

sojare sunpitanwruhi
tan matur ing Sang Aulun
mangko atĕmah kayĕki
acaragapan Sang Katong* So all I can do is request forgiveness over
and over,
for I chose to make light of what he wrote
and failed to report it to His Lordship.
So that now it has ended up like this
Throwing his Majesty off his balance.
- 22 *Mangsula sira maturĕng Sang
Aulun
punang parĕkan padhĕmit
matur ing sira Sang Prabhu
sandikanira Twan Dewi
nti runtikira Sang Katong* You must return and beg to convey this to
His Lordship."
The attendants took their leave and went
to apprise His Royal Highness the king
of what the eminent lady had said.
The king was beside himself with rage.
- 23 *Angunus pĕdhang pinĕdhang de
Sang Prabhu
pĕgat griwane sang mantri
tan warnanĕn sampun antu
muwah sira Sri Bhupati
sangsayĕling twasnya kepon* His Royal Highness drew his sword and
struck out with it,
severing the officer's head from the neck.
Let us not linger, he was dead.
To return to His Lustrous Majesty:
he became overwhelmed with anxiety
- 24 *Rehira sirĀmir tan a<na> katĕmu

tan pĕgat denyĕngulati
ing siyang muwah ing dalu
mantri sami alin-alin
sinalabarakĕn ing wong* because of the fact that Amir was nowhere
to be found,
although they searched for him without cease
during the daytime and during the night.
All the officers were gravely concerned.
And a public announcement was made.

COMMENTARY

A great deal of what culturally interested historians have said about the Java Sea world in the sixteenth century (Theodore G.Th Pigeaud and H.J. de Graaf 1976; Anthony Reid 1988; Denys Lombard 1990; M.C. Ricklefs 2001) is constructed from later materials and speculative. Fascinating as this may be (for what it often is: later views), what can be gleaned from actually contemporaneous materials is mere glimpses. Preciously little has survived. The contents of intellectual and literary life at this time, including views of the world, are largely a mystery.

And then there is this manuscript. While it contains a fictional narrative set in a fanciful version of the Middle East in a distant past, it is an immensely rich source of insights into the sixteenth-century cultural world of the Java Sea. In this brief commentary on the text in the Oxford manuscript followed

by annotations on the excerpt, I try to connect genre, language, and narrative world-making – with a principled interest in the environment in which the text was created and, especially, for which it was created.

THE TEXT'S CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

The manuscript is of unstated provenance, as is the text. But there is circumstantial evidence that the text was composed in a Muslim court milieu, and that this was in Banten. The Islamic orientation is evident in the narrative. It is forcefully expressed also in the comment expressing skepticism that was attached to the verse text in two places: the Arabic formula *wa-l-lāhu a'lam bi-ṣ-ṣawāb*, 'and God knows the truth best'. As to the court environment, the point is not that the story is set in royal circles with noble protagonists. That is so in the Persian and Malay texts as well, and such a setting and dramatis personae for literature and performance are easily maintained in other social circles in Java. But the text breathes an intimate and sympathetic familiarity with court servants running to and fro, court rituals, manners, status, and hierarchical patterns of speech. Indeed ultimately, in the colophon, the writer begs forgiveness for the defective language, metrics, and letters of the song (*gita*) he or she has composed for someone called "the exalted one" (*sang luhung*).

Banten is a likely candidate. The person who presented the manuscript to the Bodleian in 1629, the Earl of Pembroke, had had connections with the English East India Company since 1614 (J. Noorduyn 1985: 59). The Company had traded in Banten from 1602. The script bears similarities to a few memos that have survived from Banten in 1619 (Ricklefs 1976). In admittedly rare cases (and not in this excerpt) the spelling reflects dialect features known inter alia from Banten, and the text contains a few words not known from Javanese but from Sundanese, the language spoken in the interior of Banten.

If these assumptions are correct, the text was composed around or after 1526, when the first Muslim ruler established himself in Banten (C. Guillot, L. Nurhakim, and S. Wibisono 1994; H. Djajadiningrat, 1913: 110-111, 193). He came from Demak, apparently founded by a Muslim around 1475 (Ricklefs 2001: 41). The terminus ante quem of the text's composition is of course c. 1625, but an early date of composition is plausible, as conversion of rulers to Islam (automatically and immediately followed by the conversion of the ruler's people) is a running thread in the epic, *Caritanira Amir* included. If it is from another court on Java's north coast, say Cirebon (the most likely alternative, as its hinterland is likewise Sundanese-speaking) or Demak, the earliest likely date of composition is pushed back about fifty years, and if it was Demak or Palembang some seventy-five years.

GENRE

That *Caritanira Amir* engaged in a particular kind of world-making becomes self-evident if one considers the other textual genres in and around Java in the same period. So what was the position of this text in the Javanophone textual

universe of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries? Where does it stand within the complex of Javanese genres? There is room here for three succinct comparative observations.

A small number of Islamic texts in Javanese were in the earliest manuscripts acquired by European seafarers in the late 1590s and early 1600s. These texts are theologically, doctrinally oriented treatises, often designed in dialogic form (G.W.J. Drewes 1954, 1969, and more). This is basically what is known of sixteenth-century Islamic discourse in Java. The present text, brought to Europe in the same period and likewise Muslim, shows that Javanese Islamic discourse of the sixteenth century included imaginative stories, and that in this respect it partook of pan-Asian trends and circulations. The Javanese biography of the Prophet Yusuf (Arps 1990), which thus far is thought to have been composed in 1633 (with different ideas about the place where this happened: Arps 1992b: 120-122 and Ricklefs 1998: 56), has remarkable stylistic similarities with *Caritanira Amir*. Its manuscripts are likewise found across the Java Sea world, and conversion features in it as a theme (Arps 1990: 42, 44, 52). It may well originate from the same place and period as *Caritanira Amir*. The same may go for yet other Islamic narratives known from later versions.

Genres thrive in particular cultural environments, and in the sixteenth century Java was rich in cultural environments. Alongside the scribbled memos and the Islamic treatises just mentioned, we know of Hindu treatises (for example, a Darma Putus manuscript dated 1613 in Pigeaud 1975: 23, 37-38, 229-230), copies of classical Old Javanese narrative poems (for example, the *Rāmāyana* manuscript of 1521 mentioned in I. Kuntara Wiryamartana and W. van der Molen 2001: 58, 59), and Middle Javanese narrative poems (*kidung* or 'songs'). From Java we know for instance stories about men of religion journeying and achieving release, composed in Java 1510-1541 and copied throughout the seventeenth century (Kartika 2015: 50), and from Bali historiographic poems possibly composed in the late sixteenth century (C.C. Berg 1927: 18-46; C. Hooykaas 1961; Helen Creese 1999: 52-53).

Against this backdrop of religious and cultural orientations in texts across the Java Sea world, Islamicity stood out in *Caritanira Amir* (and in the wider genre of Islamic narrative of which it was possibly part). The text displays its Islamic orientation in a far from subtle way in Amir's forced conversions. In the description of Lady Sodara Kartika's eminent qualities (X.118a-119c) the excerpt presents a tiny and more refined but telling example. The description is conventional in terms of Middle Javanese verse narrative, but it contains at least one novel element, which happens to be Islamic: Sodara Kartika dispenses charity to the poor (*asidĕkah ing wong miskin*). The use of words of Arabic derivation (*sidĕkah*, *miskin*) is relevant: the suggestion – implied against the background of the established literary tradition, which is invoked by all the other items of description and by the passage as a whole – is that these particular virtues are best expressed in Muslim terms, because they are Islamic virtues. It will come as no surprise that certain court rituals in the sultanate of Banten included the distribution of money to royal servants (Johan Talens 1993: 339-340, about the late seventeenth century).

LANGUAGE

The language of *Caritanira Amir* is fascinating but not always easy to interpret. In the Annotations below I have noted a few important observations that may help to make sense of the lingual dimension.

The general language variety of the descriptive passages can be characterized as Middle Javanese or as archaic literary Modern Javanese. In fact here this distinction turns out to be misguided. What is relevant is the very interesting phenomenon (which is, however, incidental in the excerpt) of occasional eruptions of specific stylistic registers that invoke distinct cultural realms. Three of these stylistic registers with cultural resonances are most prominent. Firstly, an Old Javanese style, characterized by classical vocabulary and formulations. It is used to invoke a sense of beauty and rapture, for instance in the description of landscapes. Second is a lively (probably colloquial) style abounding in phonaesthetic and onomatopoeic words, which is used to describe scenes of chaos and is often humorous. Thirdly, a style characterized by frequent enjambments and breaking of words by verse line boundaries, as well as divergence from normal end-of-line vowels. This style occurs especially in scenes characterized by dynamism and urgency.

In the dialogues there is evidence not only of honorifics but of the politeness-bound “speech styles” for which Modern Javanese is famous. Some cases are noted in the Annotations, as are some spellings that may be honorific.

Overall, in terms of language variety in historical and generic perspective, this text stands in a space between squarely Middle Javanese and squarely Modern Javanese. It wavers between the two, but the vacillation is sociocultural and stylistic rather than transitional in purely chronological terms. The language of *Caritanira Amir* is Middle Javanese with on occasion deliberate colloquial elements, and at the same time Modern Javanese with archaic elements and excursions into Old Javanese.

WORLD-MAKING


In the Annotations that follow, I refer to genre and language, and to several of the cultural concerns, noted earlier, that provide motifs or are thematised throughout *Caritanira Amir*.

ANNOTATIONS

References are to stanzas and verse lines. The abbreviations used are listed at the end.

CANTO X (VERSE FORM: *PANGKUR*)

- 117 The passage presented here begins with verse line e.
- 117e *tan kocapa ana ta malih winuwus* is a narrative formula with many variants. Its first half – here *tan kocapa*, literally ‘let it not be uttered’ – signals a pause in the preceding narrative strand, about Amir’s captivity. The second half signals a shift to another narrative strand (often continuing an earlier one that was halted). In general, CA is constructed of personage-focused storylines that are intertwined, a method of narrating that would become common in Java, for instance in *wayang*.
- 117e In CA, *kocap(a)* always denotes descriptive narration, hence the translation here.
- 117e *Malih* here has the OJ meaning ‘to shift to another place or activity’ (ZR 51), not MoJ ‘again’. In general, the Javanese dictionary that is most useful for interpreting *Caritanira Amir* is ZR.
- 117f One thing that, we may assume, was a new ideology that was promoted in this text concerned the roles of women. In this respect CA stands in stark contrast to typical roles of women in important Hindu-Buddhist narratives. The hero Amir Amzyah is surrounded by a diverse group of strong women: his wife and great love Munigarin; his other wives including the fairy Asma Përi, who lives far away but in CA visits with their daughter Kuraisin; and his evil mother-in-law. Amir himself may bask in masculine heroicalness, but in terms of actual social plot he fades into nothingness most of the time, pale as he appears in contrast with the noble women he interacts with.
- 117g Like elsewhere in the MS, *bhupati* ‘king’ is spelled with the character that in OJ denotes an aspirated *b*. This may be a reflex of the OJ *bhūpati*. It could also signify that the word has an honorific meaning. In CA, *nata* ‘king’ and *prabu* ‘majesty’ also commonly contain signs for aspirated consonants. This, too, reflects these words’ etymologies (*nātha* and *prabhu*).
- 118c *hyangning jaladi madu*: this simile for a lovely woman is known from OJ and MiJ literature, and also occurs in archaic MoJ texts.
- 118e *nirukty akeh*: this kind of sandhi (word-final *-i* followed by word-initial *a-* becomes *-y a-*) is standard in MiJ and often applied in CA to fit wordings to the numerical requirements of the metre. In later MoJ texts it is very rare.
- 118e *budinyâlus*: the sandhi that occurs when the final vowel of a word is merged with the vowel beginning the next word is indicated with a circumflex in the transliteration. *Budinyâlus* fuses *budinya* and *alus*; *marâêng* in X.120d fuses *maraa* and *ing*, and so on.
- 118f *nirmoda* is lacking from ZR, although its possible existence is signalled under the lemma *nirmona*. Its use in CA and its gloss in H.N. van der Tuuk (1897: 527) make clear that *nirmoda* means ‘compassionate’.

- 118g *asidžkah* ‘to give alms’, from Ar. *ṣadaqa* ‘alms, almsgiving’. Words of Ar. derivation are not in ZR, as P.J. Zoetmulder (1974: 31, 35-36) considered the absence of Ar. loanwords definitional for OJ (in a broad sense, including MiJ).
- 119b One of Sodara Kartika’s artistic skills is decidedly Javanese: *gamēlan*.
- 119d-120a The Islamizing Asia that the epic of Amir Hamza imagines is an Asia that is Islamized by Hamza. Most prominently it is fully brutal, forced conversion of infidel kings, followed unquestionably by their people. In a few cases, like this one, the conversion is more subtle, and not by Hamza.
- 119d *Sira* is interestingly complicated. Here it is an independent third person pronoun (“he, she, they”) and in this capacity it is socially neutral. *Sira* can also be used appositively preceding or following a proper name (as in X.122b, 123a, 123f) or pronominal phrase (for example, XI.9a, 18a, 22c), in which case it may be glossed ‘the worthy, esteemed, honourable’ or suchlike. *Sira* is also a courteous second-person pronoun in CA, used to address social subordinates as well as superiors. It contrasts with *ko* (sometimes *si ko*) for impolite ‘you’, which is always spoken in anger. In the Bodleian MS, *sira* is normally spelled *šira*, using an uncommon character which may signify the pronoun’s reference to a human being, so as a kind of honorific.
- 119g *Kanugrahan* ‘grant, gift, favour, grace’ is written with the character that in OJ represents an aspirated *gh*. Several other instances of the base *nugraha* (though not all) are spelled like this. This is not etymologically determined, as OJ *nugraha* (from Sanskrit) has an ordinary *g*. It may be honorific: in CA these words refer to graces granted by God or royalty to (ordinary) people.
- 120b Like in MiJ texts and fourteenth- and fifteenth-century inscriptions (ZR 79), *ingandikan* and other words based on *andika* refer to the words of a person speaking from a position of authority. The social opposite is formed by *atur* and derivatives, of which *matur* ‘(humbly) speak’ occurs most frequently in CA (for example, XI.6e). The evident relevance of honorifics in CA’s spelling, vocabulary, and narrative suggests that the milieu of the text was hierarchically stratified and probably aristocratic, and that the text was designed to maintain (or institute) this.
- 120d Amir Amzyah. *Amir* ‘the commander’ (Ar.) is used as a name. It also occurs independently. The epic hero’s proper name, which is Hamza in Ar., is spelled with , in which the combination of *j*, *-y* (*pengkal*), and the diacritic that marks a foreign sound should probably be understood as *zy*. (It is unlikely that these together denoted the *z*, because in other words with *z* in CA, the *ja* with the diacritic suffices.) Instances of sandhi like *BagindhÂmzyah* ‘Lord Amzyah’ (128b) suggest that in Javanese the name did not begin with a *h* or *ḥ* sound but with the vowel.
- 120e *Masakat*, an Ar. loanword (*mashaqqa*, plural *mashaqqāt*, ‘trouble, hardship’), is not in the Moj and OJ dictionaries. It occurred in Malay as used by Javanese from Banten in the early seventeenth century; witness Ricklefs (1976: 135).

- 120g *Wruhanira* consists of *wruh* ‘to know, realize, understand’, the arealis suffix *-a*, and the second- or third-person pronominal suffix *-nira*. A literal gloss is ‘may it be your understanding (that)’.
- 121d The theme of this sentence – the one(s) on whom grace is bestowed – is not specified in the Javanese. *Sira* and *-ira* in lines 121e-g could refer to the princess (you, second person), the princess and Amir together (ditto), or Amir (he/him, third person). The latter is unlikely, but there is no need to choose between the first two, hence the translation.
- 121f The reading *sira n tēmbe* is a conjecture. In CA the nasal in word-internal clusters like *mb* is usually written – though sometimes not. Moreover the homorganic nasal is used in CA as a prefix alternative to the preposition *ing* (as in *mbesuk* and *mbenjing* ‘in the future’, which occur in CA as well as *ing besuk* and *ing benjing*). But *tēmbe* (‘in the future, later, presently’) is not otherwise attested in CA, let alone *ntēmbe*.
- 121f *Anak lanang* ‘son’ is used here (and elsewhere in CA) as a verbal phrase: ‘to have a son’. This son, Sa’id Toki or Tofi, will play an important role later, in a part of the epic that is not narrated in CA.
- 121g *Darjat* ‘rank, status’ is not in ZR, as it is a loan from Ar.
- 122a *Dunya* ‘world’ and *akerat* ‘hereafter’ are Ar. loanwords as well.
- 123-127 Moral political economy is a major cultural domain thematised throughout CA. It is not simple, however. Note the present attempt by Sodara Kartika – who, we have been told, is virtuous and who has just been converted to Islam, who is meant for Amzyah and will be eminent in this world and the next – to buy the guardsmen’s acquiescence with valuables and promises of boons from God as well as Amzyah, and their response (X.126-127). Later indeed they will feign ignorance (XI.6-7).
- 123ab The verse line boundary falls within a word. Although rare, in CA such breaking of words may occur in particular places, including between *Pangkur*’s lines a and b. Presumably line a ran on to line b melodically (compare Arps 1992a: 83-84, 292-306, 334-343). This phenomenon seems to occur especially in scenes that are characterized by dynamic movement and a sense of urgency. This is so also in the present instance.
- 124b Jiří Jákł (2019) discusses the nature of the military functionaries in the king’s service called (*a*)*tandha* in OJ. Their roles changed over the centuries. In CA they are guardsmen. Like elsewhere, in CA the (*a*)*tandha* are often mentioned in the same breath with the officers of state called *mantri*. A third office in CA is formed by the *ulubalang* ‘captains’ (a Malay term). Besides the ordinary soldiery referred to as *bala* ‘troops’ or *wadwa* ‘followers’ (comprised of *dasih* ‘subjects, servants’), and the more prominent *prajurit* ‘warrior(s)’, these three categories make up the core military-administrative officialdom of CA.

A further group, mentioned only twice, are magistrates called *hakim*, a term of Ar. provenance. Above these soldiers and officials stand various kinds of nobles, most markedly the *satriya* ‘knights’ (at one point characterized as *prajurit luhung* ‘exalted warriors’) and rulers or kings called *raja*, *ratu*, *nata*, *aji*, *narendra*, *bupati*, *nrěpati*, *narapati*, or *katong*. (These terms are synonyms, although here only *raja* and *ratu* are used as honorific titles preceding a proper name, as in X.8a.) The main kings have a *patih* ‘chancellor’. All in all, the military-administrative hierarchy that CA describes for medieval Asia is far less complex than that known from fourteenth-century Hindu-Buddhist Java (Pigeaud 1962). *Ulubalang* and *hakim* are not attested for sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Java and these categories may have been deliberately foreign.

- 124f *Sapolahira*: besides *polah*’s central meaning (‘action, behaviour, activity’), by extension in some contexts in CA it means ‘what happens or happened’.
- 125-127 Trying to convince people to do things by promising them wealth and status is a motif that occurs throughout CA. It is represented as a normal political strategy. Stratagems (*paranti*, *upaya*, *daya*, *akira*, *masělat*) are another major cultural domain thematised in CA.
- 125cd The verse line boundary falls within a word (see 123ab) and in addition line a’s final vowel is irregular. This suggests even more strongly that the end of the verse line is metrically non-final, that is, not a cadence. This must have been signalled melodically: the tune suggested continuation.
- 125f Elsewhere in CA the word is *Pramiswari*. Here a masculine form is used metri causa. According to ZR 1286 *pramiswari* (*parameśwari*) means ‘first wife of the king, queen’. Though used to address a princess here, it usually has this meaning in CA as well.
- 126a *Depun* marks the modal imperative ‘it should be or happen in such and such a manner (as expressed in the word or phrase that follows)’, while *sampun* means ‘(it has been) enough’ and *dening Tuwan* is ‘(done) by you’. Together they signify ‘You should stop doing this’. What the princess has in mind – *lampah puniki* / ‘this course of action’ – is not made explicit, although of course all are entirely clear about it.
- 126c The final vowel of this verse line is irregular, which confirms that the end of this line is non-cadential.
- 126e The general category of *dudu*, opposite to *apěněd*, is a key concept in the moral political economy of CA. The meaning of *dudu* is deeper than ZR’s ‘wrong, not as it should be’. ‘Wicked(ness)’ comes close.
- 127b OJ *sing* means ‘whoever, whatever’ (ZR 1775).

- 128a The sudden switch to Amir's storyline marks a turning point in the narrative. There had been an earlier attempt to free Amir, but God willed it to fail because Amir lacked in thankfulness to Him (stanza 81, before the excerpt). Amir's current change of heart changes his fortunes as well. Amir's piety plays a central role in pushing forward the narrative of CA. Lapses lead to life-threatening adventures and unfortunate misery. Thankfulness to God – particularly Amir's – is clearly a key issue. See also Amir's response when Sodara Kartika tells him that they are meant for each other (XI.4c-e).
- 128fg The verse line boundary falls within a word. Though it is a boundary between morphemes, this does suggest that the end of line f was not a metrical cadence. This is confirmed by other occurrences of word breaks at this point in *Pangkur* stanzas.
- 128g *Amurba* is not in ZR. In poetic MoJ it means 'to create' and 'to govern'. It occurs in the former sense in sixteenth-century Islamic manuscripts from Java (Drewes 1954, 1969).

CANTO XI (VERSE FORM: *MAGATRUH*)

- 1d *Tan wangwang* means 'without hesitation, immediately' in CA, unlike OJ and Mij texts where *tan wawang* means the opposite (ZR 2228). As observed in ZR 2201, an exception is the Mij *Nawaruci*, a Shivaite text probably composed in Bali before 1614 (Prijoetomo 1934: 13, 21). The correspondence is puzzling.
- 3c *Dentata* occurs frequently in CA with the sense of 'be recounted, described, conveyed'. Going by ZR, elsewhere in OJ and Mij *anatā* and *tumatā* (from *tatā* 'arrangement, ordering; fixed order, rule') mean 'to order, arrange, put in good order, compose, (perhaps also) write in metric lines' (ZR 1958-1959). Van der Tuuk, however, records the meaning 'reported, communicated' for *tinata* or *dentata* in the Mij texts *Tantri* and *Wangbang Wideya* (1899: 651-652). For the latter work see S.O. Robson (1971: 74 (*dentata* 'reported'), 222, 289 (*anata* 'to observe')).
- 5b *Akawin*, based on *kawin*, a loan from Persian, is not in ZR. As other instances in CA indicate, it refers to a state of being married that involves vows and can be dissolved.
- 5c *Rehira dereng akumpul* could mean two things. In CA, *rehe*, *rehing*, and *rehepun* usually denote 'because (he, she, they, it, and so forth)'. This suggests 'because they did not (or had not) join(ed) yet', that is, 'have/had intercourse'. However, in one instance *rehe* means 'which is the reason why (he)'. This supports a meaning of the clause which makes more sense in the present context: 'which is why they did not join (have intercourse) yet'. That Amir and the princess were destined for each other and are now together secretly in her quarters was taken as an immutable narrative fact.

But it raised a moral problem. Different Southeast Asian tellings dealt with this differently. (The nineteenth-century Urdu rendition does not comment; Ghalib Lakhnavi and Abdullah Bilgrami 2007: 767.) In a different version of the narrative, Ratu Mas Blitar's *Menak* copied in Central Java in 1715, their being together, in love but unmarried, is labelled a *sarik* 'lapse, transgression'. According to Samad Ahmad's Malay version, Amir and the princess make a pledge (1987: 414), presumably to be married.

- 6b The suffix *-(n)iki* in CA combines *-(n)e* and *iki*. In MoJ it is commonly *-(n)eki*.
- 6d *lwir tingkahing tan wruh uni*: literally, 'like the behaviour of someone not knowing (what had happened) at that time'.
- 7a *Wikananira*, from *wikan* 'to know, understand', is structured like *wruhanira* (X.120g) and means the same.
- 7b *Ghaib* (an Ar. loanword) is spelled with a *ga* bearing the diacritic that marks a foreign sound (see X.120d).
- 8a *Bramatya*: prominent depictions of and references to affect are among the things that the epic of Amir Hamza in this version has in common with epic storytelling throughout South and Southeast Asia. Most prominent in the excerpt are bouts of anger, expressed by means of a range of synonyms: *runtik* (repeatedly), *bramatya*, *běndu*. In this short passage a variety of other affect words also occur: *walang ati*, *eměng*, *kepon*, *wrinwrin*, *wirang*, *kedanan*, *amlas-yun*, *alin-alin*.
- 8e *Ulubalang*, a Malay-derived word, denotes a category of military officers. See the note to X.124b.
- 9e These and other instances of *daya* in CA show that it means '(tactical) suggestion'. This term in the domain of political strategy occurs prominently in CA. See the annotation to X.125-127.
- 10b *Kutha*: while ZR glosses 'fort, stronghold, fortified encampment, walled palace, wall', in CA *kutha* or *kitha* typically denotes a walled town or city (Mecca, for instance, is a *kutha*) or its walls. Besides the ruler's residence with its women's quarters, it contains lanes with houses and shops, a public square or field, water reservoirs, and a market.
- 10d *kěndhang tinabuh tangari*. Throughout CA, drums called *kěndhang* are beaten to signal war, retreat, victory, joy, grief, and more.
- 14a-d These images and metaphors remain in use in Javanese shadow play today.
- 17c The Javanese text lacks quotation marks, but normally it is clear where direct speech begins and ends even when this is not indicated with framing expressions like "X said". Here the polite second-person pronoun *Tuwan* marks this as direct speech. However, whether the sentence that forms the preceding two verse lines is quoted speech or narrative text is less obvious. The word *ana* 'to be (somewhere)' in 17b suggests that this is not the envoys speaking to the princess, in which case one would expect *ana's* polite counterpart *wontěn* or *wantěn* instead. (This polite word also occurs in narrative passages, but that is another matter.) If it is not quoted, it must be narrative.
- 18a *Agawe wuwus*: an expression in the realm of moral political economy that recurs in CA (in several variants): 'to make false claims' about someone.

- 18b *Luputanira* is morphemically analogous to *wruhanira* (X.120g) and *wikananira* (XI.7a), although its function is a little different. It consists of *luput* ‘escape, be free (from)’, the arealis suffix *-a*, and the second- or third-person pronominal suffix *-nira*. A literal gloss is ‘his possible escaping’. What Amir might escape from is clear from the context.
- 18d It seems to be implied that the king’s officer (*mantri nrĕpati*) mentioned here and below is the fortune-teller (*juru tĕnung*). In Ratu Mas Blitar’s *Menak* and the published Malay text (Samad Ahmad 1987: 414) it is clear that they are one and the same person.
- 18e Instead of ZR’s ‘false, deceitful’ and ‘to act the fool(?)’ (ZR 332), the MoJ meaning ‘lewd’ is more likely for *cĕlor* here. (This meaning also fits some of ZR’s examples.)
- 19a While ZR gloss *pira-pira* as ‘quite a few, many’ (ZR 1366), in CA it denotes not only plurality of number but also repeated action, intensity, long duration, and great weight (like *pira-pirang* in X.125e). *Dene* means ‘his actions, deeds’ and serves to nominalize and make definite a verb or verbal phrase (like MoJ *olehe*).
- 19d Asking to be considered someone’s servant is a conventional way of courting them.
- 20d *Deng* may be a misspelling of the passive prefix *den-*, while *sĕnggwa* is a metri causa contraction of *sĕngguha*, consisting of base *sĕngguh* ‘to consider (as), believe to be’ and the arealis suffix *-a*.
- 21b For the first-person passive verb form *sunpitanwruhi* see ZR 1920 (a)*pitambuh* and *pinitambuhan* sub voce *tambuh* ‘not to know’ (from *tan wruh*). I take it that *sojare* ‘all the words of’ refers to the letters, as it did in 20b.
- 21e *Acaragapan* is unrecorded. Assuming that it is not a misspelling, I surmise that it is based on **cagap* with the intransitive verbal circumfix *a- X -an* and the evocative infix *-ar-* (suggesting a sudden and/or ubiquitous action or condition). This base is not recorded for OJ or MoJ, but Sundanese *cagap* has the same meaning as OJ and MoJ *gagap*, namely ‘(to try) to seize, grope for’. MoJ *garagapan*, with the same infix, means ‘be disorientated, grope about (having suddenly awoken from a deep sleep)’. The vocabulary of CA contains a few more cases of similarity with Sundanese.
- 23a The sword (*pĕdhang*) marks this as a foreign narrative. Its Javanese, Balinese, Malay counterpart is a kris, but this does not occur in CA.
- 23d In CA, *muwah* ‘again; and also’ is often used as a narrative particle to signal that the story will focus afresh on a personage who has featured earlier.
- 24e *Sinalabarakĕn* is not in ZR. Its base, *salabar*, means ‘announcement’ in Sundanese and dialectal MoJ, and Sundanese *nyalabarkeun* means ‘announce to the public’.

IN CONCLUSION

Stories of Amir is not only a gripping narrative, it yields a range of insights into the cultural history of the Java Sea world. It also helps to set right three important historical misconceptions.

What survives in terms of Islamic manuscripts from around 1600 seems to suggest that Javanese Islam was preoccupied with theological concerns. This manuscript demonstrates that a completely different orientation within Islam also circulated. The great Muslim Asian epic was also being read. The fact that even today it is part of some literary and performance traditions suggests that it was important. The pious, sceptical marginalia in *Caritanira Amir* do indicate that there was an overarching religious-cultural sphere of an orthodox Islamic nature.

A second misconception is that famous Islamic narrative texts in Javanese like the story of Yusuf date from the seventeenth century. Linguistic, poetic, and ideological features of the *Yusuf* are so close to *Caritanira Amir* that they were without doubt composed in the same literary tradition. This in turn suggests that the *Yusuf*, too, may be sixteenth-century (possibly even earlier, like *Caritanira Amir*). In this respect, too, *Caritanira Amir* helps to shed important new light on Java's literary and cultural history.

Thirdly, cautious scholars have always suspected this, but the text confirms that there is no rigid boundary between Middle Javanese and Modern Javanese, both in terms of language and in terms of literary conventions. In *Caritanira Amir*, at least, the difference is a matter of deliberate stylistic variation linked to cultural domains which, presumably, were in the active cultural repertoire of sixteenth-century Java.

In *Caritanira Amir* then, the epic of Amir Hamza – which imagines an Asia that is being Islamized – is brought into an inseparable embrace with time-honoured Javanese-ness. The text introduced this pan-Asian Islamic imagination, articulated in a mature and confident Javanese voice, to the world of the Java Sea.

ABBREVIATIONS (IN THE ANNOTATIONS)

Ar	Arabic
CA	<i>Caritanira Amir</i>
Mij	Middle Javanese
MoJ	Modern Javanese
MS	manuscript
OJ	Old Javanese
ZR	Zoetmulder and Robson (1982)

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