Antinomianism as a way to God in nineteenth-century Java: the Suluk Lonthang between Islamic and pre-Islamic religious discourse

Acri, A.; Aminullah, Z.; Meyer, V.H.

Citation
Acri, A., Aminullah, Z., & Meyer, V. H. (2024). Antinomianism as a way to God in nineteenth-century Java: the Suluk Lonthang between Islamic and pre-Islamic religious discourse. *Journal Of The Royal Asiatic Society*. doi:10.1017/S1356186323000652

Version:	Publisher's Version
License:	Licensed under Article 25fa Copyright Act/Law (Amendment Taverne)
Downloaded from:	https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4038304

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

JRAS, Series 3 (2024), 1–25
doi:10.1017/S1356186323000652

ARTICLE

Antinomianism as a way to God in nineteenth-century Java: the *Suluk Lonthang* between Islamic and pre-Islamic religious discourse

Andrea Acri[1], Verena H. Meyer[2] and Zakariya P. Aminullah[3]

[1]EPHE, PSL University, Paris, France, [2]Leiden University, Leiden, Netherlands and [3]Universitas Gadjah Madah, Sleman, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Corresponding author: Verena H. Meyer; Email: v.h.meyer@hum.leidenuniv.nl

Abstract

This article presents the first complete critical edition and annotated English translation of the nineteenth-century Javanese mystical poem *Suluk Lonthang*. Combining different disciplinary expertise in old and modern Javanese philology, Tantric Studies, and Islamic Studies, it interprets the protagonist of the poem as an expression of the multifaceted and multivocal Javanese religious landscape of the time, whose historical—and translocal—roots can be discerned in Sufi traditions from the Islamicate and Persianate worlds, as well as Tantric traditions from both pre-Islamic Java and the Indian subcontinent.

Keywords: Java; modern Javanese language and literature; mysticism; Sufism; Tantrism; Islam

Introduction

This article presents the first complete critical edition and English translation as well as a comprehensive analysis of the nineteenth-century Javanese mystical poem *Suluk Lonthang*.[1] By combining different disciplinary expertise in Old and Modern Javanese philology, Tantric Studies, and Islamic Studies, it introduces and analyzes the protagonist of the poem as an expression of the multifaceted and multivocal Javanese religious landscape of the time, whose historical—and translocal—roots can be discerned in Sufi traditions from the Islamicate and Persianate worlds, as well as Tantric traditions from both pre-Islamic Java and the Indian subcontinent.

Composed in the rather uncommon eponymous verse metre, and part of the compilation entitled *Suluk Acih* by Mas Ronggasasmita,[2] the *Suluk Lonthang* tells the story of a renegade saint, Lĕbe Lonthang, whose sexual ventures and antinomian behaviours cause uproar in a Javanese town, and who is eventually curbed by his own wife. The

[1] Partial (and, in the case of the former, very free) English translations by P. J. Zoetmulder, *Pantheism and Monism in Javanese Suluk Literature: Islamic and Indian Mysticism in an Indonesian Setting* (Leiden, 1994), pp. 231–33, on the basis of mss. Leiden Cod. Or. 1795 I, pp. 191–95, and Cod. Or. 1796, pp. 91–95); and N. Florida, 'Sex wars: writing gender relations in nineteenth-century Java', in *Fantasizing the Feminine in Indonesia*, (ed.) L. Sears (Durham, 1996), pp. 207–224, on the basis of ms. Keraton Surakarta 502, pp. 78–80, are available, as well as a complete translation into German by E. Wieringa, 'Ketzer oder Wahre Gläubige? Der Kampf zwischen Javanismus und Islam im Suluk Lebé Lonthang', *Der Islam* LXXVIII (2001), pp. 131–133, on the basis of ms. Leiden Cod. Or. 1796, pp. 91–95.

[2] See 'The Islamic genealogies of the *Suluk Lonthang*', below.

© The Author(s), 2024. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The Royal Asiatic Society

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

poem ends on a deliberately ambiguous note, as the narrator directly addresses the audience and instructs them to use this poem for their own religious education. This text presents a fascinating window into Javanese religious imaginations of the nineteenth century—a time of major upheavals and transformations, a 'time of madness' (Florida 2019a)—making visible the disagreements and contestations of normative religious thought and practice in the context of colonialism and Islamic reform. With its focus on subversion and transgression as a possibility for the advanced mystic—especially in relation to gender roles and sexual mores—the poem raises questions about the relationship between spiritual prowess and norm breaking as opposed to puritan legalism, thus situating itself in a broader religious debate in Java and beyond.

A second question raised by the *Suluk Lonthang* concerns the contribution of pre-Islamic religious and cultural heritage to shaping contested articulations of ('normative') Islam in nineteenth-century Java. The nineteenth century was characterised by tensions between Muslims labelled 'Javanist' or 'heterodox' on the one hand and those who were increasingly concerned about reformist purity on the other.[3] One manifestation of the former were Sufi groups that engaged in ecstatic practices, such as the Santri Birahis. The Santri Birahis were often mentioned for their outrageous practices as their passion for God was reported to lead to group orgies.[4] The author's refusal to flat-out condemn Lĕbe Lonthang, and the dominance of the sexual in the figure's account, begs the questions of the meaning of sexual transgression for achieving spiritual accomplishment as well as the reverse—that is, the advanced mystic's authorisation to break sexual norms. These questions may perhaps be answered by taking into account not only Islamic, but also pre-Islamic, sources. Upon entering the village mosque, Lĕbe Lonthang accuses the pious Muslims of not knowing where God is, which shows that the issue of norm breaking in sexual ethics and, more generally, antinomian behaviour are signs of spiritual advancement—a motive known in both Islam[5] and pre-Islamic, Hindu-Buddhist Java.[6] Another avenue for investigating the poem's subversion of traditional gender roles[7] is the pre-existing idea in both Sufism and Tantric Śaivism that realising advanced spirituality required the overcoming of all oppositions, including those relating to gender[8] and social status.[9]

The project of looking for traces of Java's pre-Islamic religious heritage in sources that are self-consciously Islamic is controversial and has often been carried out in highly problematic ways. In the colonial period, scholars asserted that Javanese literature had reached its peak in the pre-Islamic era, to only partly recuperate its former glory in the so-called Surakarta Renaissance, and only when writers turned away from their preoccupations with Islam to pre-Islamic topics and motifs that corresponded to their essential nature.[10] Based on this conviction that Java was inherently Hindu-Buddhist, Orientalist scholars

[3] See M. Ricklefs, *Polarizing Javanese Society: Islamic and Other Visions* (Honolulu, 2007); M. Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narration of a Sufi Past* (Princeton, 2011); Wieringa, 'Ketzer oder Wahre Gläubige', p. 130.

[4] M. Cohen, 'Brai in performance: religious ecstasy and art in Java', in *Divine Inspirations: Music and Islam in Indonesia*, (eds.) D. Harnish and A. Rasmussen (Oxford, 2011), pp. 132–160.

[5] A. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Middle Period, 1200–1550* (Salt Lake City, 1994).

[6] A. Acri, 'Becoming a Bhairava in 19th-century Java', *Indonesia and the Malay World* XLVII (2019), pp. 285–307; A. Acri, 'Horror, transgression, and power: the "demonic numinous" in the Tantra-influenced literatures and visual arts of Java and Bali', *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* CVII (2022), pp. 137–206; A. Acri, '"Hard-core" Tantric traditions and the cult of Bhairava in Java', in *The Oxford Handbook of Tantric Studies*, (eds.) R. Payne and G. Hayes (Oxford and New York, 2024).

[7] Florida, 'Sex wars', pp. 221–224.

[8] See *Suluk Lonthang* v. 8: 'In truth there is no male or female!'

[9] Zoetmulder, *Pantheism and Monism*, pp. 231–233.

[10] N. Florida, 'Writing traditions in colonial Java: the question of Islam', in *Cultures of Scholarship*, (ed.) S. Humphreys (Ann Arbor, 1997), pp. 187–217.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

often went to great lengths to show that Islam in the Malay-Indonesian world was syncretic and ideologically feeble, and therefore definitely unsuited for the political Islam the colonial powers feared.[11] In the postcolonial era, these impressions persisted in scholarly works, perhaps most famously in the work of Clifford Geertz, who found that the religion of the Javanese had 'Indicism maintained beneath an Islamic veneer'.[12] These studies were problematic, because they assumed an essentialised nature of Javanese religious life that was unknown to its own practitioners but could be detected by the Orientalist scholar.[13] Beginning in the 1990s, scholars of Javanese literature started to push back against the idea that the religious texts written at the literary centres of Java's royal courts were just superficially Islamic, showing instead that the writers were trained Islamic scholars and situated themselves squarely in Islamic intellectual discourse.[14] Meanwhile, historians began to point to the genealogical links of the thin veneer argument and its rootedness in colonial and postcolonial politics.[15] This resulted in a reorientation in the scholarship in which scholars, aware of their colonial baggage, refrained altogether from tracing aspects of Javanese Islam back to pre-Islamic times. Yet, this reorientation runs the danger of reifying firm boundaries between religions—itself a colonial construct—that may not have existed in the same way among the authors of the texts that we are studying.

A comparative glance at the study of Islam in South Asia shows how powerfully this colonial legacy has shaped contemporary academic inquiry. In South Asia, the colonial narrative about Islam was a very different one, casting Muslims as belligerent invaders who were foreign to South Asia and inherently different from the adherents of Indic religions around them.[16] These colonial tropes powerfully affected contemporary communalism in India and Islamophobia among the Hindu Right.[17] The tracing of pre-Islamic continuities in South Asian Islamic thought,[18] or of crossovers and interreligious community in contemporary times,[19] has thus been embedded in a very different political project than it ever could have been in Java.

Only recently have scholars begun to explore new and more productive ways in which to discuss religious complexity—including its Indic roots—in Islamic Java.[20] We hope that

[11] A. Kuenen, *National Religions and Universal Religions* (New York, 1882), pp. 42–43; W. Marsden, *The History of Sumatra, Containing an Account of the Government, Laws, Customs, and Manners of the Native Inhabitants, with a Description of the National Productions, and a Relation of the Ancient Political State of that Island* (London, 1811), p. 346.

[12] C. Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago, 1968), p. 48.

[13] For a Javanese critique, see I. Afifi, *Saya, Jawa dan Islam* (Yogyakarta, 2019).

[14] See N. Florida, *Writing the Past, Inscribing the Future: History as Prophecy in Colonial Java* (Durham, 1995); and Florida, 'Writing traditions in colonial Java', pp. 187–217.

[15] Laffan, *Makings of Indonesian Islam*; T. Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago, 2005).

[16] M. Khan, *Who Is a Muslim? Orientalism and Literary Populisms* (New York, 2021); E. Morgenstein Fuerst, *Indian Muslim Minorities and the 1857 Rebellion: Religion, Rebels, and Jihad* (London, 2018).

[17] D. Ludden, *Making India Hindu: Religion, Community, and the Politics of Democracy in India* (Oxford, 2006); A. Truschke, 'Hindutva's dangerous rewriting of history', *South Asia Multidisciplinary Journal* XXIV.XXV (2020), pp. 1–15.

[18] C. Ernst and B. Lawrence, *Sufi Martyrs of Love: The Chishti Order in South Asia and Beyond* (New York, 2002); S. Kugle, *Sufis and Saints' Bodies: Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam* (Chapel Hill, 2007).

[19] C. Bellamy, *The Powerful Ephemeral: Everyday Healing in an Ambiguously Islamic Place* (Berkeley, 2011); A. Bigelow, *Sharing the Sacred: Practicing Pluralism in Muslim North India* (Oxford, 2010); A. Taneja, *Jinnealogy: Time, Islam, and Ecological Thought in the Medieval Ruins of Delhi* (Palo Alto, 2017).

[20] See the introduction to the Special Issue edited by A. Acri and V. Meyer, 'Indic-Islamic encounters in Javanese and Malay mystical literatures', *Indonesia and the Malay World* XLVII (2019), pp. 277–284, and various contributions found therein, including Acri, 'Becoming a Bhairava', pp. 285–307; B. Arps, 'The power of the heart that blazes in the world: an Islamic theory of religions in early modern Java', *Indonesia and the Malay World* XLVII (2019), pp. 308–334; V. Braginsky, 'Through the optics of imagination: the internal vision of the science of women', *Indonesia and the Malay World* XLVII (2019), pp. 373–405; V. Meyer, 'Translating divinity: punning

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

this study of the complexity of the *Suluk Lonthang*, especially in relation to its understanding of transgression, will further contribute to these endeavours. To this end, we present a translation of the poem alongside a critical edition of the Javanese text, followed by two analyses of the *Suluk Lonthang*, first from a pre-Islamic viewpoint, and then from an Islamic one. Rather than synthesising these readings, we offer them alongside each other to exhibit the entanglements, ambiguities, and multivocality of the religious world within which the *Suluk Lonthang* was written and read.

Critical edition and translation of the *Suluk Lonthang*

The *Suluk Lonthang* was partially collated by Zoetmulder from two Javanese codices (Leiden Cod. 1795 I, ff. 191–195, and Cod. 1796, ff. 91–95).[21] Zoetmulder omitted what he defined as 'a few obscene lines' from the Javanese; some of these were rendered by Florida in her translation of the *suluk*, on the basis of a manuscript kept in the *kraton* of Surakarta.[22] Wieringa also presented an edition of the full text on the basis of the second manuscript used by Zoetmulder, i.e. Cod.Or. 1796, ff. 91–95.[23]

The Romanised edition presented here is based on the following manuscripts (all written in Modern Javanese script on paper):

A: *Suluk Lonthang*, Leiden University Library Cod. Or. 1796, ff. 91–95. Inscribed: Surakarta n.d.[24]

B: *Suluk Lonthang*, KITLV Or 391/20. Copy of a ms at the Radya Pustaka Library, made in 1926.[25]

C: *Suluk Lonthang/Sĕkar Lonthang*, KS [Karaton Surakarta] 496.7, digital photographs of SMP 152_13 (Cornell University Library). Inscribed: Surakarta, 1885/6.[26]

---

and paradox in Hamzah Fansuri's poetic Sufism', *Indonesia and the Malay World* XLVII (2019), pp. 353–372; and E. Wieringa, 'A nativist defense of Javanism in late 19th-century Java: the Suluk Gaṭoloco and its co-texts in the Sĕrat Panaraga compilation', *Indonesia and the Malay World* XLVII (2019), pp. 335–352. See also S. Headley, *Durga's Mosque: Cosmology, Conversion and Community in Central Javanese Islam* (Singapore, 2004); and V. Gottowick, 'Pilgrims, prostitutes, and ritual Seks: heterodox ritual practices in the context of the Islamic veneration of saints in Central Java', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* CLXXIV (2018), pp. 393–421; V. Gottowick, 'Ritual, sex and the body: heterodox ritual practices at pilgrimage sites in Central Java', *The Pacific Journal of Anthropology* XXI (2020), pp. 332–351. The last two articles by Gottowick on heterodox ritual practices in modern Central Java are particularly relevant as they draw a parallel between ritual sex and Tantric traditions to show that the Islamisation of Java is not a linear process. Note, however, that they are marred by the author's reliance on outdated secondary sources on Indian Tantra such as Woodroffe, Bharati, and Eliade, and of a controversial publication by Peter Levenda on Tantra in Java rather than the growing body of specialised scholarly research produced in the past two decades. The statement in Gottowick, 'Pilgrims, prostitutes, and ritual Seks', p. 408, borrowed from R. Rubinstein, *Beyond the Realm of the Senses: The Balinese Ritual of Kekawin Composition* (Leiden, 2000), p. 224, that 'Tantrism remains a largely unexplored field in Indonesia as elsewhere' reflects a state of the art of at least two or three decades ago.

[21] Zoetmulder, *Pantheism and Monism*, pp. 231–233.

[22] Florida, 'Sex wars'.

[23] Wieringa, 'Ketzer oder Wahre Gläubige?'.

[24] See Th. G. Th. Pigeaud, *Literature of Java: Catalogue Raisonné of Javanese Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Leiden and Other Public Collections in the Netherlands*, vol. II: *Descriptive List of Javanese Manuscripts* (The Hague, 1968), p. 28. For the edition, see Wieringa, 'Ketzer oder Wahre Gläubige?'.

[25] See Pigeaud, *Literature of Java*, II, p. 842.

[26] See Florida, *Javanese Literature in Surakarta Manuscripts*, vol. 1: *Introduction and Manuscripts of the Karaton Surakarta* (Ithaca, NY, 1993), p. 279.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

D: *Suluk Lĕbe Lonthang*, MN [Mangkunagaran Palace] 313.22, digital photographs of SMP 16-5-1 (Cornell University Library). Inscribed: Surakarta 1896/97.[27]

E: *Suluk Lonthang*, within *Suluk Warni-Warni* (pp. 83–86), RP [Radya Pustaka] 332, digital photographs of SMP 16-51_4 (Cornell University Library). Inscribed: Surakarta 1886.[28]

F: *Suluk Lonthang*, within *Serat Suluk Warna-Warni tuwin Wirid Syattariyah* (pp. 111–115), RP [Radya Pustaka] 333, digital photographs of SMP 16-51_5 (Cornell University Library). Inscribed: Surakarta 1864.[29]

G: *Suluk Lonthang*, KS [Karaton Surakarta] 502.14, digital photographs of SMP 152_19 (Cornell University Library). Inscribed: Surakarta, 1867.[30]

The manuscripts enumerated above share a consistent version of the text, while a contrasting rendition of the *Suluk Lonthang* is documented in the Leiden Cod. Or. 179 manuscript. Despite encompassing some overarching similarities in the plotline, this version simultaneously presents disparate verses from the previously mentioned renditions. It is highly probable that some lines of the verses contained within it constitute an addendum, resulting in a total of 26 verses instead of the 23 verses found in the other seven versions. As a result, the Leiden Cod. Or. 179 manuscript is not collated together with the other seven texts, but rather presented in Appendix A to this article. Additionally, an alternative text bearing the title *Suluk Lonthang* is extant, specifically discovered in manuscripts Leiden Cod. Or. NBS 87 and NBS 89. An edited version of this text, collated from both manuscripts, is offered in Appendix B to this article. Furthermore, it merits mentioning that other brief texts under the title *Suluk Lonthang* have been identified. These texts encompass distinct material on Javanese mysticism and do not reference Lĕbe Lonthang.[31] An editorial, translational, and scholarly examination of this relatively compact textual corpus, encompassing other segments of Modern Javanese texts, which presumably feature the interconnected character of Ky Lonthang,[32] remains a hopeful undertaking for the future.

As for the editorial policies applied in this edition, not all variations are recorded in the apparatus, such as those that Robson described as 'white noise' or spelling options, unless the different spellings change the meaning.[33] Spelling options or 'free variants' that are not considered variant readings include the nasal prefix, the passive prefixes *dèn-* and *dipun-*, the possessive suffixes *-é* and *-ipun*, and consonantal gemination (even if it results in metrical problems).

[27] See Florida, *Javanese Literature in Surakarta Manuscripts*, vol. 2: *Manuscripts of the Mangkunagaran Palace* (Ithaca, NY, 2000), p. 205.

[28] See Florida, *Javanese Literature in Surakarta Manuscripts*, vol. 3: *Manuscripts of the Radya Pustaka Museum and the Hardjonagaran Library* (Ithaca, NY, 2012), pp. 238–240.

[29] See *ibid*., pp. 240–245.

[30] See Florida, *Javanese Literature*, I, p. 283.

[31] See, for example, *Suluk Lunthang*, Leiden Cod. Or. 2319, pp. 70–73, and Leiden Cod. Or. 8562, p. 45.

[32] See, for example, the aforementioned *Babad Tanah Djawa Poerwaredja* and *Sĕrat Seh Sitijenar*.

[33] See S. O. Robson, *Principles of Indonesian Philology* (Dordrecht and Providence, 1988), pp. 27–29.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

1. Sun ngrumpaka tinĕmbangan[34] lonthang-lonthang[35],
   kang dèn-anggit ing lakuné[36] lĕbé Lonthang,
   lĕbé Lonthang[37] lakuné saking[38] bang wétan.
2. Pĕngajiné[40] nora[41] dèn-garayang pisan,
   Sĕmbayangé pan nora[42] dèn-ambah pisan,
   kitabipun dèn-gawéa[43] wawayangan.
3. Klĕbutipun dèn-gawé umpaking diyan,
   atĕtĕgar pinggir pasar cocongklangan,
   bari[45] wuda atĕtĕgar[46] tanpa jaran.
4. Mung kontholé ngĕlèmbrèhana saiyan[48],
   myang[49] duwèké bĕranang agĕng apanjang,
   lagi tangi yèn[50] dinulu[51] tholang-tholang[52].
5. Wong sapasar padha gègèr apuyĕngan[53],
   lĕbé Lonthang dén-arani ing[54] wong buyan,
   lĕbé Lonthang angucap[55] adĕrèngèsan.

1. I compose a poem in the Lonthang metre[39]
   that relates the conduct of Lĕbe Lonthang.
   Lĕbe Lonthang comes from the eastern lands.
2. He never concerns himself with Qur'anic recitation.
   He never bothers with the obligatory prayers.
   His religious books he uses to play the *wayang*.[44]
3. His stand[47] he makes a base for the lamp.
   At the edge of the market he rides at a gallop,
   Buck naked he rides without a horse.
4. With his scrotum flapping like an elephant ear,
   his stick, bright red, big and long,
   is now erect and can be seen sticking out.
5. All the market people are agitated and in uproar.
   Lĕbe Lonthang is called a madman.
   Lĕbe Lonthang says with a grin:

[34] B suluk.
[35] B lonthang-lonthang-lonthang.
[36] B kang ginita lĕlakone.
[37] FG omits lebé Lonthang.
[38] B saka.
[39] Modern Javanese poetry is composed according to standard forms with their respective rules of poetic construction that determine the number of lines per stanza, the number of syllables per line, and the vowel of the final syllable; the form of the *Lonthang* is 12a, 12a, 12a. The *Lonthang* has the characteristic of *macapat* prosody but, because it is rare and not well known, it is not usually included in the common lists of *tĕmbang macapat* metres: see Th. G. Th. Pigeaud, *Literature of Java*, vol. III: *Illustrations and Facsimiles of Manuscripts, Maps, Addenda and a General Index of Names and Subjects* (Leiden, 1970), pp. 83–85; for an exception, see D. van der Meij, *Indonesian Manuscripts from the Islands of Java, Madura, Bali and Lombok* (Leiden, 2017), pp. 245–249. W. J. S. Poerwadarminta, *Baoesastra Djawa* (Groningen-Batavia, 1939), considered it to belong to the category of the *tĕmbang tĕngahan*. *Lonthang*, which is the name of both the metre and the protagonist of the poem, could also mean 'empty-handed', which may describe a characteristic of Lĕbe Lonthang, and also enables us to read the first line as 'I compose a poem empty-handed', perhaps in anticipation of the writer's voice at the end that is unable, or unwilling, to reveal the meaning of the poem.
[40] A pĕngajèné.
[41] B pan nora.
[42] A pan no.
[43] B dipun-gawé D pan dèn-gawé.
[44] For the *wayang*, the shadow puppet theatre, a lamp is positioned behind a screen to produce shadows of puppets that are visible from the other side where the audience is sitting. The *wayang* is a pre-Islamic art form through which originally a repertoire of Indic, Hindu-Buddhist stories were performed. In this poem, the *wayang* is implicitly set against scripturalist Islam, represented by Lĕbe Lonthang's religious books, which are appropriated as props for performing the *wayang*. Alternatively, according to Acri, this could be a reference to book-manuscripts containing pre-Islamic lore of the type used by puppet masters (*dalang*).
[45] CEFG sambi.
[46] B sisirigan; F ategar.
[47] *Klĕbut*, a rack or stand, is probably the stand of the books mentioned in the previous stanza: see Wieringa, 'Ketzer oder Wahre Gläubige?', p. 131; Zoetmulder, *Pantheism and Monism*, p. 232.
[48] BC gĕlambrèha gĕgambèran; EF gĕlambrèha gĕbambèran; G gĕgambèrna gegambèran.
[49] ACDEFG mung.
[50] B omits yèn.
[51] B dinulua.
[52] G thĕtholangan.
[53] B kamigilan.
[54] B omits ing.
[55] D pangucap.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

6. Ingsun iki kapéngin[56] ulah[57] paésan,
sokur sèwu olèha rabi parawan,
jër bojoku sampun[58] kĕmpong[59] kaya ingwang.
7. Nadyan tuwa jibusku mĕksih brĕngkayang,
kula èstri sapasar[61] padha puyĕngan,
lĕbé Lonthang nyander ngajak sosodoran.
8. Kang dèn-sandër padha kagèt[62] kamigilan,
lĕbé Lonthang angucap adërèngèsan,
sajatiné tan ana èstri[63] lan lanang.
9. Iya iku pangrénahé lĕbé Lonthang,
bok iyaa bok ayu dadi[64] timbangan,
bok gĕlĕma ingsun ajak sosodoran.
10. Barakané ingsun wuruk pĕpĕthèsan,
lebé Lonthang duwèké[65] abang dèn-guyang[66],
dipun-guyang[67] ing[68] adon-adoning bikang.
11. Kang dol bikang sru gitiki dipun-kayang,[69]

lĕbé Lonthang jibusé[70] saya ambapang[71],
nora mari malah nĕpsu anĕrajang.
12. Kang dol bikang lumayu kajĕngkang-jĕngkang,
suka-suka lĕbé Lonthang jojogèdan[72],
sarwi tanjak pacak[73] gulu tatayungan.
13. Suwé-suwé jibus mĕtu jĕnang lahang,
lĕbé Lonthang mundur[75] sarwi[76] lèlèmbéhan,
lĕbé Lonthang munggah mĕsjid cacawĕtan.

6. 'I want to be painted as a bride![60]
A thousand thanks if I could marry a young girl
for my wife is old and toothless like me.
7. Even though I'm old, my screwing is still formidable!'
The market women are all in uproar.
Lĕbe Lonthang, charging, invites them to a joust.
8. Those targeted are all outraged and disgusted.
Lĕbe Lonthang says with a grin:
'In truth there is no male or female'.
9. Indeed, this is the lure of Lĕbe Lonthang:
'Please, pretty thing, be my partner;
If you want, I invite you to a joust!
10. For your pals I'll prove a strict teacher
in how to bathe my bright red thing,
it is washed in pastry batter'.
11. The pancake vendor smacks Lĕbe Lonthang with all her might.
Lĕbe Lonthang's prick bulges further.
Unabated, rather more aroused, he attacks.
12. The pastry vendor, running off, falls on her back.
Delighted, Lĕbe Lonthang dances around,[74]
striding and swaying his neck, he dances around.
13. At length, screwing her, yellow sugar sap is ejaculated.
His arms swinging, Lĕbe Lonthang walks off.
Lĕbe Lonthang walks up to the mosque in a loincloth.

[56] G kĕpéngina.
[57] B olèh.
[58] B omits sampun; G wis.
[59] B kempong pérot.
[60] Lĕbe Lonthang's demand for bridal makeup introduces a gender-bending discourse that becomes more explicit in stanza 8.
[61] E papasar.
[62] B kagum.
[63] B wadon.
[64] C dati.
[65] BCEF dhogolé; G padha golèng.
[66] D dèn-guryang.
[67] G omits dipun-guyang.
[68] B déning.
[69] G kang dol bikang anggitiki sru dikayang.
[70] BCEF guthulé; G guguthulé.
[71] B bĕranang.
[72] AD tatayungan.
[73] ACDEF pancak.
[74] The dance in question is called *tayungan*. According to C. Brakel-Papenhuyzen, *Classical Javanese Dance: The Surakarta Tradition and Its Terminology* (Leiden, 2015), p. 31, the *tayungan* is a male warrior or battle dance in which warriors display their prowess and virility. Characteristic of the *tayungan* is stylised, ceremonial striding (*ibid*., p. 36). The term may also refer to a simple choreography taught to the untrained, even including servants and schoolchildren, so they too could profit from the benefits of dance (*ibid*., pp. 178, 194–195).
[75] G dudu.
[76] BCDEFG pasar.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

14. Nabuh bĕdhug durung mangsa dipun-tĕmbang,
kyai modin angarani yèn[77] wong édan,[78]
kang sĕmbayang[79] tuwa anom kagègèran.
15. Lĕbe Lonthang angucap bari[82] ambapang[83],
kabĕh iku padha luput asĕmbayang,
mangsa[84] kaya sĕmbayangé lĕbé Lonthang.
16. Lĕbé Lonthang sĕmbayangé[86] pĕpĕthingan,
lĕbé Lonthang bocah branyak kadurusan,
tanpa gawé salat tan[87] wruh prĕnahing[88] Hyang.
17. Kyai[89] modin ngucap[90] bari[91] kadhungsangan,
lĕbé Lonthang dèn-arani kalah[92] édan,
lĕbé Lonthang mudhun mĕsjid tatayungan.
18. Lĕbe Lonthang cucul mari[93] cacawĕtan,
kadi wau briga-brigi tholang-tholang,
nyai lĕbé Lonthang mara mapag dalan.
19. Sampun pèrot susuné nglèmbrèh[95] saiyan[96],
nyai Lonthang kĕmbené lungsuran salang,
sinjangipun lungsuran jala tambalan.
20. Pan[97] kapapag nèng dalan[98] banjur rangkulan,
sakaroné padha kangĕn[99] bung-ambungan,
lĕbé Lonthang duwèké[100] mĕksih bĕranang,[101]

14. He beats the drum[80] before it is time to do so.
The Kyai Modin[81] calls him a lunatic.
Those praying, young and old, are agitated.
15. Lĕbe Lonthang says as he stretches his arms:
'All of your prayers[85] are flawed,
impossible that they be like the prayer of Lĕbe Lonthang!
16. Lĕbe Lonthang's prayer is outstanding.
Lĕbe Lonthang is a dashing and accomplished young man.
No point in praying if you don't know where God is'.
17. The Modin mutters miserably,
calling Lĕbe Lonthang madder than mad.
Lĕbe Lonthang leaves the mosque, dancing.
18. Lĕbe Lonthang takes his loincloth off again
Like before it is inflamed,[94] sticking out.
Nyai Lonthang walks toward him in the street,
19. Her breasts hanging like elephant ears,
her breastcloth made of tattered ropes,
her skirts of ragged fishing nets.
20. As they meet in the road they embrace each other.
They have both desired to kiss.
Lĕbe Lonthang's stick is still bright red.

[77] ACEF ing.
[78] G kyai modin kang sĕmbayang.
[79] kang sĕmbayang: G angarani ing wong edan.
[80] This drum, the *bĕdug*, is beaten to accompany the call to prayer in Javanese mosques. It has become less common because of opposition to its use, especially by modernist Muslims due to its extra-scriptural origins.
[81] A *kyai* is an Islamic teacher or can be more generally a honorific. The term *modin* is a Javanese adaptation of the Arabic *mu'adhdhin*, the muezzin.
[82] B sarwi; G sambi.
[83] G ambathang.
[84] B nora.
[85] *Sĕmbahyang* specifically refers to ritual prayer, or *ṣalāh*—one of the five pillars and thus a legal obligation for Muslims. The poem thus specifically criticises formal observance of ritual law, which is implicitly contrasted with a superior form of observance, the inner understanding and realisation of religious truth. While the two need not be in conflict, some Sufis have claimed that their high level of spiritual realisation makes their observance of Islamic law, ritual prayer, unnecessary.
[86] B sĕmbanghyangé.
[87] D nora.
[88] D omits prenah-;.
[89] A lĕbé.
[90] D ngucup.
[91] BCDEFG sarwi.
[92] B lara; G ika.
[93] D sarwi.
[94] *Briga-brigi*, according to Poerwadarminta, *Baoesastra Djawa*, denotes the display of anger through actions or facial expressions. The sense appears to be of a lack of restraint and submission to passion, an unrefined and childish behaviour.
[95] B nglèmbèh; G nglébar.
[96] BCEF lir iyan; G lir diyan.
[97] B wus.
[98] BCEFG marga.
[99] B asih.
[100] B guthulé; CEFG dhogolé.
[101] A barangnang.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

21. Nyai[102] lĕbé murina[103] nasabi sinjang,
kang nunurat pan gumuyu tanpa rowang,[104]
guyunipun tĕgĕsé[105] dèn-étang-étang.
22. Sun watara tan béda kang darbé layang,
buh bĕnĕra buh sisip olèh[108] ambatang,
pambatangé kang nurat kang gadhah[109] layang.
23. Laku samar tatrapane lĕbé Lonthang,
sampun titi ingkang aran Suluk Lonthang,[111]
pagurokna kang sampun wruh prĕnahing Hyang.[112]

21. Nyai Lĕbe Lonthang jealously covers him with her skirts.[106]
The scribe,[107] on his own, is laughing,
laughing, pondering the meaning.
22. I assume it is no different for the book's owner.[110]
Who knows whose guess is right and whose is wrong,
the guess of the scribe or of the book's owner.
23 Obscure are the ways of Lĕbe Lonthang's conduct.
What is called *Suluk Lonthang* is now at the end.
Go seek instruction from someone who already knows where God is.

The pre-Islamic genealogies of the *Suluk Lonthang*

In his pioneering dissertation *Pantheism and Monism in Modern Javanese Suluk Literature*, originally published in 1935 in Dutch and again in 1994 in English translation, Zoetmulder discussed some antinomian characters described in nineteenth-century Javanese Islamic mystical texts. Among these was the bizarre and controversial figure of Lĕbe Lonthang. Zoetmulder, while suggesting a possible influence by Islamic antinomianism of the Sufi Malāmmatiyya, considered Lĕbe Lonthang a remnant of a radical strand of Tantric mysticism in which moral laws no longer apply to its initiates.[113] Further, he pointed at the existence of apparent similarities between the characteristics and behaviours of this figure and what he deemed to be his Indic counterparts, namely the transgressive practitioners of the Pāśupata and Kāpālika traditions of pre-Tantric and Tantric Śaivism. He thus regarded Lĕbe Lonthang as a figure representing a bridge, or synthesis, between pre-Islamic Tantric lore that was prevalent in Java up to the fifteenth century and Sufi-influenced Javanese mysticism. In doing so, he hypothesised the existence of historical continuities between pre-Islamic Indic religiosity and the Islamic paradigm that gradually became prevalent in Javanese literature, including the *suluk* genre, from the sixteenth century onwards.

Zoetmulder's ideas have not been pursued further by scholars of Javanese studies. Florida has interpreted Lĕbe Lonthang as a squarely Islamic figure who is the expression of a Sufi milieu,[114] while Wieringa has discussed the intertextual connections between the

[102] B bahi.
[103] A lona.
[104] B ingkang nurat gumuyu datan parowang.
[105] A tĕtĕsé.
[106] As Florida noted, the Javanese expression 'be covered by skirts' is a trope for being 'hen-pecked', thus providing a counterpoint to the gender dynamics earlier in the poem: whereas Lĕbe Lonthang vehemently pursues the market women, he is subdued by his wife. See Florida, 'Sex wars', p. 224.
[107] *Kang nunurat*, the one who is writing, could reference to either the scribe of a particular copy or the author of the poem. According to Florida, there is no clear distinction between these two categories of writing in traditional Javanese literature: see Florida, *Writing the Past*, p. 19.
[108] B dènira; CEFG dènya; D olihé.
[109] BCDEFG darbé.
[110] The one who owns or holds (*darbe*) the script is presumably the reader, who is directly addressed in these last stanzas of the poem.
[111] BCDEFG bĕnĕr luput kang nurat darma tumandang.
[112] B sampun tĕlas caritané lebé Lonthang; CDEFG sampun titi ingkang aran suluk Lonthang.
[113] Zoetmulder, *Pantheism and Monism*, pp. 234–238.
[114] Florida, 'Sex wars', p. 207, calls him a 'classic Sufi saint'. See also the discussion in Wieringa, 'Ketzer oder Wahre Gläubige?', who associates this character with the same milieu—influenced by the Sufism of Al-Ḥallāj—of Siti Jĕnar and Sunan Panggung.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

poem and other Javanese works such as the great *Centhini*, the *Suluk Gatholoco*, and the *Sĕrat Dĕrmagandhul*, which belong to the Javanese 'carnivalised' literary genre of the nineteenth century, characterised by erotic humour and a critical stance towards legalistic Islam in defence of Javanism.[115] These readings are legitimate, and yet the textual evidence, both within and without the *Suluk Lonthang*, would admit a more nuanced interpretation of the poem and its protagonist as expressions of, or reactions to, both Islamic and pre-Islamic religious strands. Feener, among others, has warned against the tendency to overestimate the importance of Sufism and its influence on Islam in Java.[116] Along similar lines, one could point out that, while Lĕbe Lonthang's behaviours seem indeed compatible with those associated with Islamic antinomianism, and in particular the 'way of blame' practised by the Malāmmati and Qalandari strands of Sufism,[117] those currents have never been strong in Java, and hence it is unlikely that they exerted any meaningful influences on the *Suluk Lonthang* and the Javanese *suluk* literature in general. Braginsky, discussing the hybrid erotological 'Sufi-Tantric' literature in Classical Malay, has suggested that Sufi mysticism was located in an existing local discourse indebted to pre-Islamic milieus rather than uniquely echoing issues current in Middle Eastern Sufi milieus.[118] And Foley, while noting in her discussion of the intersection between antinomian mysticism and performance in Java that, in Muslim Eurasia, the myths of 'undisciplined mad men who defy norms and joke as they teach, advancing others toward mystical truth' are widespread and often associated with performative arts such as music and puppetry, she also argues that

> [i]t is possible that the god-clown mythos of Southeast Asia grows from the popularity of this Hindu religious group or one of its tantric offshoots in South and Southeast Asia—all Pāśupata streams prescribed antinomian behaviors to move toward gnosis. It seems likely that such religious figures laid the groundwork for the lore of the Javanese bandit saints and the clowns of wayang, and the model was then reinforced by antinomian strains in Muslim culture.[119]

Thus, resuming Zoetmulder's thought-provoking analysis of the deeper religio-cultural roots of Lĕbe Lonthang, one may regard this figure as a 'survival' (almost in a Taylorean sense) and comparatively analyze it in the context of pre-Islamic, non-mainstream Tantric strands that included antinomian religious figures, radical monism,

[115] Wieringa (*ibid*., p. 137) concedes that Śaiva and Bhairavika concepts in particular may have possibly influenced the *Suluk Lonthang*, as Zoetmulder surmised, though he does not elaborate on this issue, and points out that this is not a particularly early text.

[116] See M. Feener, 'A re-examination of the place of al-Hallaj in the development of Southeast Asian Islam', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 154.4 (1998), pp. 571–592. Cf. M. C. Ricklefs, *Polarizing Javanese Society*, p. 41, fn. 25, on what he perceived as an overemphasis by Soebakin Soebardi on the direct influence of al-Ghazālī on Prince Mangkunagara IV, a ruler and poet, author of the *Suluk Wedhatama*.

[117] The question as to whether the Malammatiyya and Qalandariyya currents of Sufism may themselves have been influenced by Indic antinomian ascetics such as the Pāśupatas is a pertinent one, although it will not be entertained here. On the influence of Indian ascetic traditions (for instance, in terms of respiration techniques) on the Naqshbandiyya Sufi tradition in Central Asia, see J. Paul, 'Influences indiennes sur la Naqshbandiyya d'Asie centrale?', *Cahiers d'Asie centrale* 1.2 (1996).

[118] Braginsky, 'Through the optics of imagination', pp. 373–405. Braginsky, *The Heritage of Traditional Malay Literature: A Historical Survey of Genres, Writings and Literary Views* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 142–148, also argued that even the issues current in Middle Eastern Sufi milieus could have reflected ideas carried by influential Sheyks from India, which were already the result of a dialectic process between Islam and Hinduism.

[119] See K. Foley, 'Saintly puppet masters and sacred clowning: antinomian religion and patterns in Islamic puppetry of Java', in *Puppet and Spirit: Ritual, Religion, and Performing Objects*, vol. I: *Sacred Roots: Material Entities, Consecrating Acts, Priestly Puppeteers*, (ed.) C. Orenstein and T. Cusack (Abingdon, 2024), pp. 184–196 (esp. 192–193).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

an ascetic regimen revolving around transgression of social rules, and supernatural empowerment. This 'hard-core' Tantric strand, existing as a religious undercurrent through much of Javanese history, became prevalent in the Old/Middle Javanese text *Tantu Pañgəlaran*, which is the expression of a form of Tantric Śaivism practised in isolated hermitages and mountainous areas of Java in around the fifteenth century. This strand did not suddenly disappear from the religious and cultural landscape of Java after the rise to dominance of Islam, but apparently survived in some guise and even informed, arguably via the *Tantu Pañgəlaran* itself, the mystical milieus of Islamic Java and the literature produced by them, as well as the Javanese (and Balinese) literary and artistic imaginaries to the modern period.[120] Playing the role of a textual bridge between pre-Islamic and Islamic religious traditions in Java, the *Tantu Pañgəlaran* was reused in Islamic texts and may 'help us to establish a line of continuity, linking the age of the Hindu-Javanese *maṇḍala*[121] with that of the early Islamic period'.[122] It is, therefore, to the aforementioned Tantric strand that the prototypes of antinomian figures (such as Siti Jěnar/Lěmah Abang, Malang Sumirang, and, perhaps, Lěbe Lonthang indeed) known from Modern Javanese *suluks* may be traced to, rather than (uniquely) Sufism and Sufi characters such as al-Ḥallāj, thereby reflecting an original polemic among different Śaiva strands that was transmogrified into a polemic between 'orthodox' (mainstream, legalistic) and 'unorthodox' (antinomian, mystical) Islam in Java.[123]

Without denying the influence of Sufi ideas, practices, and practitioners on antinomian aspects of Javanism in general and the figure of Lěbe Lonthang in particular, there is a need to integrate into the current scholarly paradigm the elements of continuity with pre-Islamic Javanese religions, for the boundaries between the ideologies and practices of Tantric and Sufi antinomian practitioners were seemingly blurred in the early Islamic period, being the outcome of a process of adaptation and synthesis. It seems reasonable to assume that the antinomian behaviours propounded by Sufi currents were not adopted on a *tabula rasa*, but struck a chord with Javanese authors and their audiences precisely because they overlapped with those by pre-existing categories of practitioners that populated both the Javanese literary imagination and the socio-religious landscape in which it was anchored. Those pre-Islamic motifs, probably drawn from such Old/Middle Javanese sources as the *Tantu Pañgəlaran*, were used as the 'building blocks' in the process of textual bricolage that characterises the Javanese literary tradition throughout much of its history.

Returning to the pioneering work of Zoetmulder on *suluk* literature, it seems useful to revisit and fine-tune in light of recent scholarship the idea that the behaviours of Lěbe Lonthang are reminiscent of those of Pāśupata ascetics known from premodern Indian (as well as Old Javanese) literature.[124] Pāśupatas were notorious for their antinomian

[120] See Acri, 'Horror, transgression, and power' and '"Hard-core" Tantric traditions'.

[121] The word *maṇḍala* here refers to the communities of Śaiva ascetics-cum-scholars living in hermitages located in isolated mountainous areas of Java, and especially East Java, around the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries.

[122] See S. O. Robson and Hadi Sidomulyo, *Threads of the Unfolding Web: The Old Javanese Tantu Panggělaran: Translated by Stuart Robson with a Commentary by Hadi Sidomulyo* (Singapore, 2021), pp. 77–78.

[123] See Acri, '"Hard-core" Tantric traditions'.

[124] See Zoetmulder, *Pantheism and Monism*, pp. 234–235. The Pāśupatas were the earliest known Śaiva ascetic movement, which was important for the diffusion of Śaivism across the Indian subcontinent and beyond to Southeast Asia in the first half of the first millennium CE. The final stage of the Pāśupata practitioner brought him in contact with impurity in a charnel ground; by way of meditation and yogic techniques, he achieved liberation conceived as a state of unity with Rudra. The Pāśupatas must have been important realities throughout the history of premodern Java, as attested to by the relatively abundant references to them and their doctrines found in Old Javanese literature.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

acts of devotion towards the demonic, early form of Śiva called Rudra (with whom they aimed to unite at the end of their life), which consisted of singing, dancing, and laughing boisterously, as well as extravagant acts such as bathing in and sleeping on ashes, adopting the behaviours of animals, importuning people, and acting improperly.[125] This behaviour was part of the 'observance of the madman' (Skt *unmattavrata*), aimed at making the Pāśupata adept appear as a madman and be slandered by onlookers so as to cause a karmic transfer to his own advantage. Carrying out the *unmattavrata* along with a more transgressive set of practices were the skull- and bone-wearing Kāpālikas, who were scornfully depicted in sources from the Indian subcontinent as supernaturally endowed, evil sorcerers and hedonists who often posed as false Brahmans or ascetics; who sang, danced, and played in theatrical performances; and who engaged in sex with promiscuous female attendants, etc.[126] Some of these behaviours are indeed evocative of those by Lĕbe Lonthang, such as going about naked or wearing a loincloth in the manner of Indian ascetics (3–4, 18); engaging in dance (12, 17) as a form of 'prayer' (15); madman-like behaviours, which result in being called a madman (5) and 'madder than mad' (17) by the onlookers; importuning and harassing female onlookers (6–12); and publicly performing obscenities with his female partner (18–21).

The religious culture of 'holy madness' or mystical antinomianism of the Pāśupata and Kāpālika traditions (and, perhaps, also the elusive Siddhas or 'Holy Madmen')[127] has a long history in Java: just as had occurred in the subcontinent, these groups were made objects of critique by mainstream literati, who scornfully described them as being associated with supernatural powers, wizardry and antinomian behaviours, and the performing arts.[128] Two stanzas in the late *kakavin Pārthayajña* (*circa* fourteenth century) scornfully portray a category of itinerant, power-seeking ascetics who behave in a crazy manner, which seems to correspond to Pāśupatas practising the *unmattavrata* and ascetics who dance and recite stories in front of an audience, boasting supernatural powers,[129] who call to mind the Kāpālikas and the Siddhas. Lĕbe Lonthang's exploits remind us of the description of the obscene performances, buffoonery, and dances by different categories of folk performers and religious characters described in Old Javanese *kakavins*, such as instance comedians (OJ *abañol*), *vidus* performing the *wayang*, *piruses*, etc.—see in particular *Sumanasāntaka* 113.5.[130] Lĕbe Lonthang's 'dance' is described using the word *tatayungan*, which Javanese dictionaries gloss as a rhythmical walking step in the classical dance[131] or a war dance or weapon dance,[132] and which indeed we find among the martial dances performed by antinomian characters—for instance, the *tayungan* walking step in the dance performed by demonic, Bhairava-like characters in

[125] A. Acri, 'Pāśupatas', in *Springer's Encyclopaedia of Indian Religions. Hinduism and Tribal Religions*, (ed.) J. Long et al. (Dordrecht, 2022), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-024-1188-1_646

[126] See A. Acri, 'Kāpālikas', *Springer's Encyclopaedia of Indian Religions*, (ed.) Long et al., https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-024-1188-1_99.

[127] On which, see the contributions in R. Linrothe (ed.), *Holy Madness: Portraits of Tantric Siddhas* (New York and Chicago, 2006).

[128] See, for example, the *circa* mid-ninth-century *kakavin Rāmāyaṇa*, in particular 24.112 and other relevant passages of chapters 24 and 25, discussed in Acri, 'More on birds, ascetics and kings in Central Java. *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, 24.111–115 and 25.19–22', in *From Laṅkā Eastwards: The Rāmāyaṇa in the Literature and Visual Arts of Indonesia*, (ed.) A. Acri, H. Creese, and A. Griffiths (Leiden, 2011), pp. 53–91.

[129] See *Pārthayajña* 8.6 and 8.9. Old Javanese text, translation, and discussion in A. Acri, 'Performance as religious observance in some Śaiva Ascetic traditions from South and Southeast Asia', *Cracow Indological Studies* (Special Issue: 'Theatrical and Ritual Boundaries in South Asia. Part II') 20.1 (2018), pp. 1–30.

[130] See A. Acri, 'Birds, bards, buffoons, and Brahmans: (re-)tracing the Indic origins of some ancient and modern Javano-Balinese performing characters', *Archipel* 88 (2014), pp. 13–70, at pp. 24–26.

[131] See, for example, E. C. Horne, *Javanese-English Dictionary* (New Haven, 1974).

[132] See J. F. C. Gericke and T. Roorda, *Javaansch-Nederlandsch handwoordenboek* (Amsterdam, 1901).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the Balinese masked performance *topeng pajengan*, as well as by the *chaṇṭang balung*s of Surakarta.

Zoetmulder described Lĕbe Lonthang as a '*bhairawa* type', namely a practitioner assuming the tricksterish behaviours of Bhairava, the wrathful and demonic hypostasis of Śiva-Rudra.[133] Bhairava was the elected deity of the Kāpālikas. The survival of 'descendants' of those groups in Java centuries after the fall of the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms may be gathered from late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Dutch written accounts and photographic evidence of the *chaṇṭang balung*s ('rattling bones')—the buffoons who played a role in the patronage of female singer-dancers-cum-prostitutes at the Central Javanese court of Surakarta. Those figures, characterised by un-Islamic antinomian behaviours, epitomise a process of both continuity and change, through which those who were originally Tantric practitioners evolved and adapted their roles to the local mainstream (Islamised) politico-ritual economy, adopting new modes of negotiating with audiences, patrons, and prevalent religious fashions.[134] Lĕbe Lonthang could be the result of a similar process involving the transmogrification and synthesis of Hindu-Buddhist (Tantric) motifs into the Islamic (Sufi) discourse of (Early) Modern Javanism. One could also draw a comparison between Lĕbe Lonthang and the peripatetic antinomian ascetics, minstrels, and mystics known as Bauls (probably from Skt *vātula*, meaning 'mad') or Fakirs in Bengal, whose repertoire (in terms of both doctrines and practices, as well as performances) drew upon different traditions, including Sufism, devotional Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism/Śāktism, and Tantric Buddhist Sahajiyas, who provide a 'heretic counterpoint to the sectarian scholastic scriptures of both Hindu and Islamic religious establishments',[135] and whose sexo-yogic practices are phrased by means of Islamic, Tantric, and Haṭhayogic terminology.[136] Another figure who comes to mind is that of the mystic, Śaiva *yoginī*, and poetess Lallā (fourteenth century), who wandered around Kashmir naked, dancing and singing as an ecstatic madwoman, and composing religious songs transcending the Hindu–Muslim (Sufi) divide. This mix of Hindu and Islamic mysticism granted her the veneration that still exists to this day of Hindus and Muslims alike.[137]

Elements of continuity with pre-Islamic lore in the description of Lĕbe Lonthang include his performance of the *wayang* with the aid of holy books (palm-leaf manuscripts?)—an activity that was deeply connected with pre-Islamic religious and ritual practice, and required initiation. In the *Babad Tanah Djawa Poerwaredja*,[138] a Ki Lonthang from Semarang—apparently corresponding to Lĕbe Lonthang—refers approvingly to a *wong buda desa*, a non-Islamic/Javanist countryman, claiming that the world is equal to Hyang Suksma, the single divine principle existing within all animate and inanimate beings. Ki Lonthang is mentioned in various sources, along with Malang Sumirang/Sunan Panggung, as a pupil of Siti Jĕnar, one of the additional saints (MJ *wali*) besides the canonical nine (MJ *wali songo*) who propagated Islam through Java, who was executed for his heterodox pantheistic doctrines.[139] The association in textual sources between

[133] Zoetmulder, *Pantheism and Monism*, p. 236.

[134] See Acri, 'Birds, bards, buffoons, and Brahmans'.

[135] A. Dasgupta, 'The Bauls and their heretic tradition', *Social Scientist* 22.5–6 (1994), pp. 70–83, p. 70.

[136] K. E. Cantú, 'Islamic esotericism in the Bengali Bāul songs of Lālan Fakir', *Correspondences: Journal for the Study of Esotericism* (Special Issue: 'Islamic Esotericism') 7.1 (2019), pp. 109–165.

[137] R. C. Temple, *The Word of Lalla the Prophetess: Being the Sayings of Lal Ded or Lal Diddi of Kashmir (Granny Lal), Known as Laleshwari, Lalla Yogishwari & Lalishri, between 1300 and 1400 A.D.* (Cambridge, 1924).

[138] 47.35–36; see D. A. Rinkes, *De heiligen van Java* (Batavia, 1913), p. 183; cf. the parallel in the *Serat Seh Sitijenar*.

[139] Wieringa, 'Ketzer oder Wahre Gläubige?', p. 130, n. 6. See also Tanaya, *Sajarah Jati* (1975), stanzas 60–74, https://www.sastra.org/katalog/judul?ti_id=296 (accessed 15 July 2021); H. Buning, *Serat Seh Sitijenar* (1921–1922), pp. 103–118 (from *Sĕrat Babad Dĕmak*), https://www.sastra.org/katalog/judul?ti_id=436 (accessed 15 July

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Lĕbe Lonthang and the radical monism of Siti Jĕnar seems significant indeed, and needs to be explored further. The figures of Lĕbe Lonthang/Ki Lonthang, Malang Sumirang/Sunan Panggung, and Siti Jĕnar, whether historical or legendary, were deemed to be related to each other, not only on account of their biographical vicissitudes, but also for having publicly and unscrupulously proclaimed an extreme doctrine of heterodox mysticism[140]—in the case of Siti Jĕnar, for having claimed identity between himself and God. Just like Siti Jĕnar, Sunan Panggung was sentenced to death by a synod for his heretic ideas of radical monism and the two died under similar circumstances, performing miraculous acts at the very end of their lives. Ki Lonthang was killed at the synod by the same sword of Sunan Kalijaga that had put an end to the life of Siti Jĕnar.[141]

All those characters have often been associated by scholars with the radical doctrines expounded by Sufis, such as the cosmology of the twelfth- to thirteenth-century Ibn Arabi, and the biographical episode of their execution has been linked to the similar story of the capital punishment of the ninth- to tenth-century Persian mystic al-Ḥallāj, who was put to death on the ground of blasphemy (allegedly for having declared himself to be God). While the link with Ibn Arabi is pertinent, that with al-Ḥallāj is more problematic, especially as his direct influence on Javanese mysticism has been rightly downplayed by leading scholars of Javanese Islam, such as Zoetmulder,[142] Feener,[143] and Headley.[144] Indeed, without entirely discounting the possibility that the story of al-Ḥallāj as reported in medieval Islamic sources could have played a role in the formation of the unorthodox figure of Siti Jĕnar, Acri[145] has advanced the hypothesis that the latter figure may represent the Islamic counterpart of a character stemming from, or including elements of syncretism with, pre-Islamic heritage, especially in view of the close parallels in the biography (including capital punishment) and doctrines of Siti Jĕnar with episodes of the Old/Middle Javanese text *Tantu Pańgəlaran* mentioning renegade Śaiva/Bhairavika men of religion (OJ *viku*), such as King Aji Uṇḍal of Daha, who intended to become a *viku* and raise his status to that of the superior of a religious community (Skt/OJ *devaguru*), imparting radically monistic teachings and criticising mainstream Śaiva religiosity.[146] We

2021); R. Sasrawidjaja, *Serat Sitidjenar (tembang)* (Yogyakarta, 1958), pp. 35–41; Yayasan Sastra Lestari #1297 (based on the anonymous edition of 1831), *Sĕrat Demak*, pp. 379–393.

[140] Wieringa, 'Ketzer oder Wahre Gläubige?', p. 129.

[141] *Ibid*., p. 130, fn. 6; cf. *Sĕrat Cabolek* 6.5. According to Javanese tradition, Haji Mutamakin, Ki Bagdad (= Ki Bebeluk), and Seh Amongraga (the protagonist of the *Sĕrat Centhini*) were also executed for heresy: see Sobakin Soebardi, *The Book of Cabolek: A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation and Notes* (The Hague, 1975), pp. 7, 36–39; *Sĕrat Cabolek* 6.7; cf. Feener, 'Re-examination', pp. 577–578.

[142] Zoetmulder, *Pantheism and Monism*.

[143] With respect to the issue of the similarity between the hagiographies of al-Ḥallāj and Siti Jĕnar, see, in particular, Feener, 'Re-examination', pp. 576–577: 'no elements of this story need necessarily have come from what one might consider "Hallajian sources" in the strict sense, that is, sources that either profess Hallaj's doctrine or especially revere him as a figure. For it appears that the elements of the story which have generally been regarded as so "clearly Hallajian" may in fact be simply a reflection of more common motifs in the literature of medieval Muslim mysticism in general'; p. 579: 'The origin of the Siti Jenar narrative is due not to the presence of any specifically Hallajian texts or teachers in Java, but rather to an affinity between elements of the Hallajian narrative that were more widely spread in the medieval Muslim world and the pre-existing local tradition'. In *ibid*., n. 20, Feener adds that 'It may be due to the existence of such figures [i.e. the Indic/pre-Islamic Ṛṣi Viśrava, who was cursed by the gods because he proclaimed himself to be God] in pre-Islamic Javanese religious thought that elements from the Hallaj narrative were incorporated into later Javanese Muslim texts'.

[144] S. C. Headley, 'Being a "martyr" [*syahîd*] in Java today: a deformation of sacrifice?', Paper presented at the conference on 'Martyr(e) et suicide dans l'islam contemporain', Paris, 6–7 March 2006, CNRS, EHESS, https://secular.hypotheses.org/!les/2013/07/Being-a-martyr-in-Java.pdf (accessed 15 July 2021).

[145] Acri, '"Hard-core" Tantric traditions'.

[146] Robson and Hadi Sidomulyo, *Threads*, p. 77.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

may regard this mainstream Śaiva religiosity as a counterpart of the premodern, pre-Islamic counterpart of early modern and modern 'legalistic Islam'.

Furthermore, some of the doctrines of Siti Jěnar present intriguing resonances with those characterising the aforementioned 'hard-core' Tantric undercurrent revolving around a non-dual metaphysic and transgressive praxis.[147] For instance, the *Tantu Paṅgəlaran* attests to the word *ambhairava* ('to act like a Bhairava/to follow the way of Bhairava') to denote the antinomian behaviour of Śaiva anchorites eating corpses in the middle of the night at a charnel ground,[148] and the same term is attested in Modern Javanese *suluk*s (as *ambirawa/abirawa*) to describe the behaviours of antinomian mystics transgressing moral, social, dietary, and religious rules, who become 'one with Bhairava' and identify with God.[149] Among these characters is also Malang Sumirang, pupil of Siti Jěnar, who, in the eponymous *suluk*, is described as an infidel heretic (*kupur kapir*) who, having become a 'Bhairava', behaves randomly like a madman, is free of dichotomising thought, and is unafraid of committing acts that are forbidden (*haram*).[150] In the variant version of the *Suluk Malang Sumirang* appended to the *Sěrat Cabolek*, the same character is said to be inconsiderate, ill-mannered, and extreme, rejecting generally held opinions and mainstream religious lore, and acting like a madman (*liwung kadya wong edan*; 11.7–8). These behaviours and characterisations are reminiscent of those of Lěbe Lonthang, which, in the Javanese imaginary, are associated with the same constellation of ideas representing the radical and antinomian form of mysticism condemned by legalistic Islam. In turn, these may be regarded as the continuation and recast into an Islamic garb of a resilient Tantric ideology grounded on transgression and monism, which, in both the Indian subcontinent and pre-Islamic Java, is associated with Rudra- and Bhairava-worshipping practitioners such as the Kāpālikas and Pāśupatas, as well as the Tantric current of the Kaula.

That the *Suluk Lonthang* and its bizarre protagonist might have represented some sort of half-digested 'survivals' in the Islamic milieu of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Java is suggested by the explicit of the text, in which the copyist/redactor declares: 'Obscure are the ways of Lěbe Lonthang's conduct. … Go seek instruction from someone who already knows where God is', as if admitting his uneasiness towards this mystifying character and the purport of his acts, as well as his puzzlement towards the intention of the author of the text he was copying (21–22). Also diagnostic of the fact that Lěbe Lonthang may have been perceived in the Early Modern Javanese imaginaire as a stereotypical *corpus extraneum* linked to pre-Islamic heritage is the recopying of the manuscript of a *circa* sixteenth- to seventeenth-century Old/Middle Javanese Śaiva catechism, the *Uttaraśabda*, under the label of *Suluk Lonthang* by Cohen Stuart, R. P. Suryawijaya, and R. M. Samsi (Raden Panji Suryawijaya's son) in the 1860s.[151] Kurniawan and Puspitorini argue that this copyist's 'horizon of expectation' was directed at the *Suluk Lonthang*, even if those words never appear in the text, as if both of them were

[147] Acri, 'Becoming a Bhairava'.
[148] Robson and Hadi Sidomulyo, *Threads*, pp. 47, 53, 58, 60.
[149] Acri, 'Becoming a Bhairava'.
[150] *Ibid*., p. 291.
[151] Ms. CS 78, paper, Javanese script, *Uttarasabda (Suluk Lonthang)*, from *lontar* Merapi-Merbabu 1 L 225; see T. E. Behrend, *Katalog Induk Naskah-naskah Nusantara. Jilid 4. Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia* (Jakarta, 1998), p. 131; cf. Ms. 86 L 334, a *lontar* belonging to the Central Javanese Merapi-Merbabu collection listed as *Uttarasabda* (*Suluk Lonthang*) in *ibid*., p. 383. This Hindu-Buddhist text was composed in the period after the arrival of Islam, probably in the seventeenth century, as it betrays some Islamic influences: see Abimardha Kurniawan and Dwi Puspitorini, '*Uttararaśabda* in Java and Bali', in *Cultural Dynamics in a Globalized World*, (ed.) M. Budianta et al. (London, 2018), pp. 531–537, at p. 533.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

regarded as expressions of pre- or non-Islamic lore, just like the *Uttaraśabda* was.[152] All these elements suggest that the character of Lĕbe Lonthang could have been influenced by a deeply rooted pre-Islamic Javanese Tantric tradition of transgressive religious praxis, and could thus represent a synthesis of monistic-oriented Tantric and Sufi radical antinomianism recast in a Javanese dress.

The Islamic genealogies of the *Suluk Lonthang*

The *Suluk Lonthang* belongs to the genre of the *suluk*—a term derived from the Arabic *sulūk*, which can be translated as either 'walking a path' or 'comportment'. Both translations point to the centrality of Sufism in the *suluk*, as Sufi adepts have often conceptualised their spiritual progress as either a path or the careful observance of proper conduct.[153] *Suluk* were often highly complex and subtle, exploring elusive themes such as the relation of God to the world or the possibilities of human spiritual perfection.[154] In Java, the genre of the *suluk* flourished in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when *suluks* were produced and read especially at the centres of Islamic learning and the royal courts,[155] including Surakarta—home to a lineage of court poets who were steeped in both Java's literary heritage and the Islamic sciences.

In many of the extant manuscripts under consideration here, the *Suluk Lonthang* is part of compilations of texts that together make up Mas Ronggasasmita's *Suluk Acih* collection that was composed in 1815.[156] Whether this means that the *Suluk Lonthang* was actually composed by Mas Ronggasasmita, or only later added to compilations that also included the texts of the *Suluk Acih*, cannot be answered with certainty.[157] With its strong antinomian tendencies, however, it contrasts with the other texts of the *Suluk Acih*, which are mystical and speculative rather than antinomian. The poems of the *Suluk Acih* draw on a broad range of spiritual and intellectual traditions from the broader Islamic world, ranging from the ecstatic practices of the Shaṭṭāriyya Sufi tradition to Ibn al-'Arabī's speculative philosophy and even Ghazālī's sharia-minded vision of Sufism. Despite the fact that the *Suluk Lonthang* has a very different quality from the texts with which it is normally grouped, I want to suggest that the poem invites a similarly broad range of interpretative Islamic approaches and frameworks.

Wieringa's and Florida's studies have situated the *Suluk Lonthang* within its environment—the Muslim world of nineteenth-century Java, in which normative understandings of Islam, gender, and power were articulated and contested by the traditional elites,

[152] *Ibid.*, p. 536.

[153] In the context of Sufism, the term more commonly employed to indicate the adept's spiritual progress on the Sufi path is the Arabic *ṭarīqa* or one of its vernacular derivations (e.g. J. *tarekat*). In its second sense, *sulūk* references correct and spiritually beneficial comportment for Sufi adepts. For more on *sulūk* in the Arabic and Persian tradition, see L. Lewisohn, 'Sulūk', in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edn, (eds.) P. Bearman et al. (2012), http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1119.

[154] Florida, *Writing the Past*, pp. 259–260.

[155] See Th. G. Th. Pigeaud, *Literature of Java*, vol. I: *Synopsis of Javanese Literature 900–1900 A.D.* (Leiden, 1967), p. 86. It should be noted that Pigeaud, like many other Dutch scholars, downplayed the Islamic lineage and quality of the *suluk*. Cf. Florida, *Writing the Past*, p. 259, n. 21.

[156] Mas Ronggasasmita was a writer from a family of Javanese court poets. For more on him and his background, see Florida, *Writing the Past*, pp. 1–3; and N. Florida, 'Shaṭṭāriyya Sufi scents in the literary world of the Surakarta Palace in nineteenth-century Java', in *Buddhist and Islamic Orders in Southern Asia*, (eds.) M. Feener and A. Blackburn (Honolulu, 2019), pp. 153–184.

[157] Nancy Florida, personal communication (2018). Going further, E. Wieringa, 'Aanvullende gegevens over de *Suluk Acih* van Ranggasasmita', *Bijdragen tot de Taal- Land- en Volkenkunde* CXLIX (1993), pp. 362–373, has even disputed Ronggasasmita's authorship of the *Suluk Acih* altogether. Suffice to say, the author of the *Suluk Lonthang* is unknown.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Islamic scholars, reformers, and colonial scholars and institutions. Wieringa argues that Lĕbe Lonthang deliberately transgresses normative religious conduct and the moral law in order to ultimately transcend and be liberated from both. This deliberate transgression, he further suggests, was a critique of reformist movements in Islam that began to gain traction in Java at the time and that emphasised ritual and legal correctness. According to this reading, Lĕbe Lonthang ridicules and repudiates formal religious rites such as ritual prayer. By only engaging the most superficial layer of religious thought and practice, such rituals have no purpose if the one performing them does not know where God is.[158] Florida, on the other hand, has interpreted the text as a mockery of male sexual entitlement in the context of an ever-intensifying colonial order. In the traditional literature of nineteenth-century Java, a common genre was the didactic *piwulang estri*, or 'lessons for women', articulating virtuous gender relations through stories of a woman who completely submits to her polygynous husband's authority and desires. The ideology of male dominance in literature reinscribed male power against the background of their de facto military and political impotence in the face of Dutch colonial pressure and military supremacy. The *Suluk Lonthang* belongs to a genre of texts that refuse to celebrate this male sexual entitlement.[159]

Wieringa's and Florida's work has significantly furthered our understanding of the *Suluk Lonthang* in its nineteenth-century context and has given us an impression of the range of interpretations that the *suluk* likely received from its diverse scribes and readers. In my brief comments, I propose a different approach that will hopefully complement these previous studies. Taking a step back from the immediate historical context of the text, I want to offer a reading of the *Suluk Lonthang* in light of different strands of the Islamic intellectual and spiritual traditions. While transgression is a familiar mode of Sufi articulation in Java and beyond, I propose that the *Suluk Lonthang* invites a broad range of understandings that can be held together in tension. With its polyvalence, the poem defies any simplistic understanding of the bounds of legitimate Islamic practice, the significance of transgression, and the meaning of the poem for its different readers.

Antinomianism occupies a central, but also controversial, role in Sufi history. To practise and internalise their submission to God, Muslims follow the mandates of Islamic law (sharia) in their everyday lives. While the sharia is, by design, not static and has therefore resulted in different rules and laws at different times and in different places,[160] its legal injunctions are not optional, but mandatory, for Muslims. Nonetheless, there have often been Muslims—mostly Sufis—who self-consciously defied ordinary rules.[161] Among their contemporaries, their behaviour was controversial, as was their legacy for subsequent generations of Muslims. Some praised these lawbreakers as the most accomplished of Sufis while others condemned their comportment as un-Islamic. Through their antinomian behaviour, these figures rejected the external world with its rules and norms, or they pointed out the limitations of a spirituality that they considered empty and meaningless. Rule-breaking was the visible expression of their having transcended the mundane world of everyday life and a single focus on their interiority. Some Sufis were known for their ecstatic utterances (Ar *shaṭṭ*) that were linked to the annihilation of the Sufi practitioner's self to make room for God's presence alone. Their contemporaries were not always sympathetic, and some found a violent end. Mansūr al-Ḥallāj was killed in

[158] Wieringa, 'Ketzer oder Wahre Gläubige?', pp. 137–138.

[159] Florida, 'Sex wars', pp. 210–212, 221–223.

[160] For a presentation of the fluidity of Islamic law in its classical, premodern form, see W. Hallaq, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 57–71.

[161] An instance of such rule-breaking is the now well-known example of the wine-drinking Sufi that has been brought to attention by S. Ahmed, *What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton, 2016), who considered it one of the quintessential paradoxes of Islamic practice.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

tenth-century Baghdad after proclaiming that he was the divine truth (Ar. *ana al-ḥaqq*).[162] In early Islamic Indonesia, Seh Siti Jenar is remembered for having suffered a very similar fate when he failed to attend Friday prayer, taught his students secret knowledge, and, summoned by the other *walis* to be interrogated about his behaviour, proclaimed that Seh Siti Jĕnar was not there—only God was.[163] Some Javanese traditions situate a figure named Ki Lonthang in direct relation to Seh Siti Jĕnar, with the former being the disciple and student of the latter.[164] After Seh Siti Jĕnar's execution at the hand of the *wali sanga*, Ki Lonthang is invited to recant but declines, professing his allegiance to Seh Siti Jĕnar instead. As a result, he, too, is killed by the *wali sanga*.[165] Even to the present day, Seh Siti Jĕnar is a famous and very divisive figure in Indonesian Islam. Considered the most accomplished of Java's *walis* by some, he is denounced as a heretic by others.[166] The writer of the *Suluk Lonthang* thus drew on and situated Lĕbe Lonthang's story in a tradition in which antinomian actions, while controversial and denounced by the less spiritually mature, were also a well-known sign of the mastery of Sufi realisation.

Another avenue for investigating the *Suluk Lonthang*'s Islamic genealogies is to situate it within the theological strands present elsewhere in the *Suluk Acih* collection, of which the *Suluk Lonthang* often is a part. The compilation provides the hermeneutic context within which readers have often encountered the poem, likely shaping their perception of it. Ronggasasmita, the author of other poems of the *Suluk Acih*, was well versed in Sufi thought and had been initiated in the path and discipline of the Shaṭṭāriyya (MJ Syattariyah).[167] The Shaṭṭāriyya tradition, the dominant Sufi lineage of the Malay-Indonesian world in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, emerged in fifteenth-century Persia among ecstatic Bistami Sufis. Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī (d. 874), in whose legacy the movement situated itself, was another Sufi known for his ecstatic sayings, especially his phrase 'Glory be to me!'.[168] Among the lineage's most famous practitioners was the South Asian Muḥammad Ghawth of Gwalior (d. 1562 or 1563), whose spirituality was likewise characterised by ecstatic spiritual states, including an ascension to God's throne and face-to-face meeting with the divine. Like Ḥallāj and Seh Siti Jĕnar, Ghawth was persecuted for his ecstatic utterances.[169] In the seventeenth century, initiates

[162] For more on these ecstatic utterances and their theological significance, see C. Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism* (Albany, 1985).

[163] The similarity of the two stories suggests that Ḥallāj's story had become a hagiographic prototype onto which narratives of new figures were grafted. For more on these links, see C. W. G. Drewes, 'Het Document uit de Brandstapel', *Djåwå* VII (1927), pp. 97–109; Feener, 'Re-examination', pp. 571–592. The Javanese original and an English translation of one of the narrative traditions around Seh Siti Jĕnar can be found in D. Rinkes, *Nine Saints of Java* (Kuala Lumpur, 1996), pp. 18–19, 22–23.

[164] See Wieringa, 'Ketzer oder Wahre Gläubige?', p. 130, for numerous examples of such narrative links between Seh Siti Jĕnar and Ki Lonthang. Indeed, Ki Lonthang's discipleship of Seh Siti Jĕnar is often mentioned in Javanese historical writing, including also 'Sĕrat Dĕmak', *Yayasan Sastra Lestari*, 17 August 2021, https://www.sastra.org/kisah-cerita-dan-kronikal/babad/1704-serat-demak-anonim-1831-1297-pupuh-01-15 (accessed 8 February 2024).

[165] D. Rinkes, *De Heiligen van Java* (Batavia, 1912–1913), pp. 31, 186; Wieringa, 'Ketzer oder Wahre Gläubige', p. 130.

[166] Interestingly, the perception of Seh Siti Jĕnar's legitimacy does not always map onto expected boundaries between Islamic orientations, where only traditionalists and Sufis value his hagiographic persona. Over the last decades, Seh Siti Jĕnar has also been discovered by members of Muhammadiyah, Indonesia's largest modernist Islamic mass organisation known for its agenda of purifying Islam and for its sceptical attitude in relation to practices that push the boundaries of the legally permissible. See, for example, A. Munir Mulkhan, *Makrifat Burung Surga dan Ilmu Kasampurnan Syekh Siti Jenar* (Yogyakarta, 2002), who sees Seh Siti Jĕnar as a social activist who cared about the poor.

[167] Florida, 'Shaṭṭāriyya Sufi scents'.

[168] Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy*, p. 11.

[169] For more on the Shaṭṭāriyya in India, especially on Muḥammad Ghawth, see C. Ernst, 'Persecution and circumspection in Shaṭṭārī Sufism', in *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics*, (eds.)

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of the Shaṭṭāriyya based as scholars in Mecca and Medina integrated the speculative Sufism of the Arab-Andalusian scholar Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 1240) into the tradition of the lineage.[170] When 'Abd al-Raʿūf al-Singkilī (d. *circa* 1693) from Aceh's west coast brought the Shaṭṭāriyya to the Malay-Indonesian world, the path had synthesised the ecstatic impulses attributed to Bisṭāmī and Ghawth as well as Ibn al-'Arabī's speculative metaphysics.[171] The *Suluk Lonthang* embodies both of these strands of the Shaṭṭāriyya tradition. According to Ibn al-'Arabī's metaphysical framework, the Sufi's ultimate goal is the realisation that the existence of all entities in the cosmos, including the Sufi seekers themselves, is derivative of God's pure being (Ar *wujūd*). In Ibn al-'Arabī's work, the relationship between male and female is a complex metaphor for God's relationship with the cosmos, whereby the Sufi seeker needs to overcome this difference in order to realise God's oneness.[172] Within the Shaṭṭāriyya tradition, Lĕbe Lonthang's ecstatic behaviour, and especially the pervasive theme of gender-bending or denying the reality of gender, is thus legible as a sign of the truly advanced adept.

Beyond Ibn al-'Arabī's gender-bending, the transgression of sexual and gender norms in the *Suluk Lonthang* has many precedents in the history of Sufism. The principal (quasi-) institutionalised Sufi tradition with such a transgressive trajectory was the Qalandariyya. Prevalent as a movement of renunciants and dervishes, the Qalandariyya began to gain prominence in the thirteenth century, first in Khurasan and later in South Asia and Anatolia. Qalandars wandered from place to place in groups, begging for sustenance and shocking the people whom they encountered with illicit practices that included anti-social sexual behaviour.[173] According to Karamustafa, their ascetic and antinomian behaviour performed an emphatic rejection of conventional rules and norms, and often amounted to a social death or self-conscious liberation from mundane demands in hopes of gaining closer proximity to God.[174] Focusing on more contemporary contexts, Katherine Ewing has shown how the qalandar continues to be a significant figure in Pakistan today.[175] Following the same trajectory by engaging in illicit sex and other activities beyond the legal and social pale, they are simultaneously repulsive and enthralling; condemned by some, they are considered the most exalted of Sufis by others. In some cases, they explicitly deploy sexual difference to make their loss of self and love for and surrender to God manifest.[176] While there is no evidence of clear historical links between the Qalandariyya and Java, the impulse of using social transgression and

F. de Jong and B. Radtke (Leiden, 1999), pp. 416–435; S. Kugle, 'Heaven's witness: the uses and abuses of Muḥammad Ghawth's mystical ascension', *Journal of Islamic Studies* XIV (2003), pp. 1–36. For the involvement of the Syattariyah in the Mughal court, see A. Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York, 2012).

[170] K. El-Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghrib* (New York, 2015).

[171] A.H. Johns, 'Friends in grace: Ibrahīm al-Kūrānī and 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Singkeli', in *Spectrum: Essays Presented to Sutan Takdir Alishahbana on His Seventieth Birthday*, (ed.) S. Udin (Jakarta, 1978), p. 484.

[172] S. Shaikh, *Sufi Narratives of Intimacy: Ibn 'Arabī, Gender, and Sexuality* (Chapel Hill, 2014), pp. 120–121; K. Ewing, 'Embodied metaphor: playing with gender in South Asian Sufism', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* LXXXIX (2021), pp. 1261–1262.

[173] Their sexual transgression was often accompanied by other antinomian behaviour, such as the consumption of alcohol and drugs. For more on these groups, see S. Digby, 'Qalandars and related groups: elements of social deviance in the religious life of the Delhi Sultanate of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries', in *Islam in Asia*, vol. 1, (ed.) Y. Friedman (Jerusalem, 1984), pp. 60–108; and K. Ewing and I. Gerbakher, 'The Qalandariyya: from the mosque to the ruin in poetry, place, and practice', in *Routledge Handbook of Sufism*, (ed.) L. Ridgeon (London, 2021).

[174] See Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, pp. 21, 41.

[175] K. Ewing, *Arguing Sainthood: Modernity, Psychoanalysis, and Islam* (Durham, 1997), pp. 201–203.

[176] Ewing, 'Embodied metaphor', pp. 1256–1289.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

antinomian behaviour as a vehicle for getting closer to God was not limited to the Qalandariyya.[177] Like Qalandar lyrics that present the reader with a poetic world that is the 'nemesis and very antithesis of the Islamic social order',[178] it is likely that poems such as the *Suluk Lonthang* were often understood as such an extreme expression of antinomian renunciation.

These different motives of antinomianism—the ecstatic Sufi experiencing the oneness of or with God and is ultimately executed by the authorities, the antisocial adept displaying transgressive sexual practice in public, and the speculative mystic who has transcended boundaries separating men from women and humans from God—are narratively entwined in the figure of Lĕbe Lonthang. But does this ultimately mean that his behaviour is uplifted as exemplary and good? The authorial voice in the final stanzas defy any such clear-cut answer by refusing to give an answer of any sort. The *suluk*'s representation of his exuberant defiance of the Islamic social order is reminiscent of the carnivalesque as a mode of understanding, which describes a temporal inversion of conventional rules and norms that brings about a utopian place of freedom.[179] According to Bakhtin, the carnival is characterised by a laughter that is inherently ambiguous: 'It is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding. It asserts and denies, it buries and revives.'[180] Bakhtin's characterisation of this laughter also aptly describes the laughter of the *Suluk Lonthang*'s narrative voice, which is just as ambiguous as it declines to say who is right about the true meaning of Lĕbe Lonthang's story. But, amidst all this ambiguity, one thing is clear: after all the temporarily suspended conventional norms have been thoroughly mocked and the carnival is over, these social rules are once again in effect. Far from reducing their legitimacy during normal times, the mocking laughter of the carnival reinvigorates them.

An interpretation of the *Suluk Lonthang* as less cynical about the values of the Islamic social order based on the sharia is more in line with the dominant Islamic orientation in Java. Seh Siti Jĕnar's story and the *Suluk Lonthang* may be witnesses of the existence of transgressive behaviour and antinomian tendencies in Islamic Java but, by and large, Javanese Sufism, and Islam in Java as a whole, has been strongly influenced by the thought of the eminent classical theologian Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111)[181]—the quintessential sober Sufi of Islamic history who emphasised that a person's spirituality could only develop and grow if it was in agreement with the sharia.[182] At first glance, as a thinker

[177] Similar movements have also existed elsewhere in the Islamic world. See M. Dols, *Majnūn: The Madman in the Medieval Islamic World* (Oxford, 1992), p. 413, on the early modern period, and S. Zerar, 'Of folkloric eroticism in the Algerian Raï', in *PanEroticism*, (eds.) A. Ben et al. (Leiden, 2015), pp. 63–72, on contemporary Algeria.

[178] M. Miller, 'The *Qalandar* king: early development of the Qalandariyyāt and Saljuq conceptions of kingship in Amir Mo'ezzi's Panegyric for Sharafshāh Ja'fari', *Iranian Studies* LV (2002), p. 521.

[179] The term was originally coined by Mikhail Bakhtin in relation to the carnival in medieval Europe. See M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington, 1984). The notion of the carnivalesque has been taken up widely in both literary and social studies to reference a liminal space in which the social order is temporarily suspended. See P. Stallybrass and A. White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, 1986), pp. 6–26, on the carnivalesque in literary theory.

[180] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, pp. 11–12.

[181] On Ghazālī's influence in Java, see G. W. J. Drewes, *An Early Javanese Code of Muslim Ethic* (The Hague, 1978); P. Riddell, *Islam and the Malay-Indonesian World: Transmissions and Responses* (Honolulu, 2001), pp. 184–185; N. Said, 'The significance of al-Ghazâlî and his works for Indonesian Muslims: a preliminary study', *Studia Islamika* III (1996), pp. 21–45.

[182] For an introduction on Ghazālī's legally-minded Sufism, see, for example, C. Hillenbrand, 'Al-Ghazālī: in praise of Sufism', in *Routledge Handbook on Sufism*, (ed.) L. Ridgeon (London, 2020), pp. 63–74; E. Moosa, 'Islamic legal thought: a compendium of Muslim jurists', in *Islamic Legal Thought: A Compendium of Muslim Jurists*, (eds.) R. Peters and K. Reinhart (Leiden, 2013), pp. 261–293. For a discussion of the sober–drunk Sufi

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

who was very rational in his Sufi articulation, Ghazālī seems to be a poor fit for understanding the transgressive quality of the *Suluk Lonthang.* Indeed, as a practical example, the *Suluk Lonthang* does not represent the kind of Sufism that Ghazālī would have endorsed. But, even as he was weary of antinomian tendencies, the broader conceptual contours of his thought can be understood to undergird a central Sufi insight that is expressed in the poem as well. Famous for being a 'scholar of heterogeneity',[183] Ghazālī employed multiple epistemic registers in order to ultimately transcend all of them, because God's truth is irreducible to human knowledge of any sort. This transcendence also includes the rules and norms on which the Sufi seeker paradoxically simultaneously depends.[184] Lĕbe Lonthang's transgressions embody a version of Ghazālī's conceptual understanding of this transcendence in a practical or experiential form. Through his violations, he not only undercuts norms, but paradoxically also depends on and reinforces them.

According to Ibrahim Moosa, Ghazālī imagined new forms of knowledge through which contradictory or mutually exclusive views can be simultaneously maintained. The juxtaposition of incommensurable epistemologies resulted in tensions that proved very productive in Ghazālī's thought. Moosa argues that Ghazālī's epistemology was situated at the *dihlīz* or threshold—normally a transitional space between the house and the door.[185] A liminal space between binary opposites, the *dihlīz* both reinforces and undercuts the distinction between the inside and the outside, as it exists only by virtue of, but also in antithesis to, the structure it negates. Perhaps Lĕbe Lonthang can be understood as a rather unlikely embodiment of such knowledge situated at the threshold. His carnivalesque behaviour that inverts all religious values, including sexual and gender norms, can only derive its meaning through its dialectical relationship with prevalent social norms and epistemologies. The irreconcilable views that Lĕbe Lonthang makes visible—adherence to and transcendence of Islamic law—dialectically depend on each other and even construct each other as necessary antipodes for each one's significance and intelligibility. The narrator of the poem may refuse to condemn Lĕbe Lonthang in the last lines, but this does not mean that Lĕbe Lonthang's behaviour is elevated to a new standard. On the contrary, the moral and legal standards that are set by the sharia are reinforced because, without their authority, Lĕbe Lonthang would lose his transgressive Otherness, which makes his spiritual powers manifest.

Moosa calls Ghazālī's mystical writing that makes use of these tensions his 'heart-writing' or 'dialogical writing',[186] which is characterised by the productive tension between incommensurable discourses that point to each other's incompleteness and, in so doing, gesture beyond all human knowledge towards the God who utterly transcends both rationality and experience.[187] It does not merely store and transmit knowledge, but also has the pedagogical function of transforming both reader and writer. Ghazālī could be said to rely on conventional thought and discourses in order to transcend them, as he and others have to develop these discourses in order for him to transcend them in his heart-writing. Al-Ḥallāj and Seh Siti Jenar also needed others to think in conventional ways about the relationship between God and the adept in order for their bold statements to be meaningful.

binary, see J. Mojaddedi, 'Getting drunk with Abū Yazīd or staying sober with Junayd: the creation of a popular typology in Sufism', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* LXVI (2003), pp. 1–13.

[183] S. Al-Daghistani, *Ethical Teachings of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī: Economics of Happiness* (London, 2021), p. 2.

[184] V. Meyer, 'A Wali's quest for guidance: the Islamic genealogies of the Seh Malaya', *Wacana: Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia* XXII (2021), pp. 675–692.

[185] I. Moosa, *Ghazālī and the Poetics of Imagination* (Chapel Hill, 2005), p. 29.

[186] *Ibid.*, p. 104.

[187] For an example of how this is accomplished in another Javanese poem, see Meyer, 'Wali's quest', pp. 691–692.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Likewise, Lĕbe Lonthang's transgression of sexual norms should not necessarily be seen as the poet's critiquing or rejecting those norms. Lĕbe Lonthang needs others to practise those norms in order for his transgression to be intelligible. How his example is meant to transform the reader is not the same for everyone. For some, it may be a warning tale about what Sufi excesses can lead to. Those are exhorted to be scrupulous in their adherence to the sharia. For others, Lĕbe Lonthang, with his laughable exuberance, may be an indication of a kind of knowledge that is irreducible to the mandates of the sharia. The text therefore ends with an exhortation not to imitate this most advanced of adepts, but to seek an authority who can guide one in appropriate emplotment.

Acknowledgements. This article is the fruit of a multidisciplinary collaboration between the authors. The introduction is to be credited to Acri, Meyer, and Aminullah; the sections 'The pre-Islamic genealogies of the *Suluk Lonthang*' and 'The Islamic genealogies of the *Suluk Lonthang*' are to be credited to Acri and Meyer, respectively; the critical edition of the *Suluk Lonthang* is to be credited to Aminullah, while its translation is to be credited to Meyer with the support of both co-authors. Meyer would also like to thank Nancy Florida for her help with some difficult passages. Our collective research was made possible by an AAR International Collaborative Research Grant, as well as a PSL University–Columbia University collaborative research grant (ANR-10-IDEX-0001-02). In this article, we use the following sigla: Ar (Arabic), MJ (Modern Javanese), OJ (Old Javanese), Skt (Sanskrit).

Conflicts of interest. None.

Appendix A: Suluk Lonthang, Leiden Cod. Or. 1795[188]

1. Kawruhana ujar iku dèn-katawang,
   kang dèn-anggit lĕbé Lonthang,
   lĕbé Lonthang lakuné saking bang wétan.

2. Pĕngajiné nora-nora dèn-garayang pisan,
   sĕmbayangé pan ora dèn-ambah pisan,
   kitabipun dipun-gawé wĕwayangan.

3. Kalĕbuté dipun-gawé umpak diyan,
   lĕbé Lonthang lampahipun tĕtĕgaran,
   atĕtĕgar tĕngah pasar cĕcongklongan.

4. Bari wuda tatĕgar tan pajaran,
   mung kontholé gĕlèmbrèh saparti iyan,
   mung duwèké bĕranang agĕng tur panjang.

5. Lagi tangi yèn dinulu tholang-tholang,
   wong sapasar padha gègèr apuyĕngan,
   lĕbé Lonthang dèn-arani ala édan.

6. Lĕbé Lonthang angucap adĕrèngèsan,
   ingsun iki kapéngin olèh pahsèn,
   yèn olèha ingsun kahul mĕmanganan.

[188] Leiden Cod. Or. 1795 (pp. 192–195): collection dated 1763 A.J., i.e. AD 1835, originally belonging to the Delft collection; see Pigeaud, *Literature of Java*, II, pp. 27–28, text IX. In contrast to the aforementioned compiled texts of *Suluk Lonthang*, Leiden Cod. Or. 1795 showcases a plethora of metrical lines that exhibit significant disparities in content, characterised by notable augmentations and subtle omissions. Consequently, we have made a deliberate choice to include it as an appendix.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

7. Mĕmanganan lan wong akèh majĕmukan,
majĕmukan tĕngah dalan pĕrapatan,
sĕlawatan bari ingsun tatĕrbangan.

8. Nĕnontoni ingsun midĕr maring pasar,
ingsun iki kapéngin rabi prĕrawan,
jĕr bojoku kĕmpong pérot kaya ingwang.

9. Nadyan tuwa duwéku maksih brĕngkayang,
kula èstri kang kĕpapag kagègèran,
lĕbé Lonthang anyandĕr ngajak sodoran.

10. Kang dèn-sandĕr padha bubar kamigilan,
lĕbé Lonthang angucap adĕrèngèsan,
sĕjatiné tan ana wadon lan lanang.

11. Iya iku pangrĕnahé lĕbé Lonthang,
bok iyaa bok ngantèn dadia timbang,
lah gĕlĕma inggun[189] ajak sĕsodoran.

12. Barakané ingsun wuruk pĕpĕthèsan,
lĕbé Lonthang duwèké abang dèn-guyang,
dipun-guyang marang adon-adon biyang.

13. Kang dol bikang sru gitiki dipun-kayang,
lĕbé Lonthang duwèké saya bĕrkayang,
nora mari malah nĕpsu yu nĕrajang.

14. Kang dol bikang mĕlayu kajĕngkang-jĕngkang,
jĕladrèné kocar-kacir urut dalan,
suka-suka lĕbé Lonthang tĕtayungan.

15. Sarwi tanjak pacak gulu tĕtayungan,
suwé-suwé duwèk mĕtu jĕnang lahang,
lĕbé Lonthang mundur sarwi lĕlèmbéyan.

16. Lĕbé Lonthang munggah masjid cĕcawĕtan,
nabuh bĕdhug durung mangsa dipun-tĕmbang,
kyai modin angarani yèn wong édan.

17. Kang sĕmbayang tuwa anom kagégèran,
lĕbé Lonthang angucap sarwi ambapang,
kabèh-kabèh padha luput asĕmbayang.

18. Mangsa kaya sĕmbayangé lĕbé Lonthang,
lĕbé Lonthang sĕmbayangé pĕpĕthingan,
lĕbé Lonthang bocah branyak kaduluran.

19. Tanpa gawé salat tan wruh aning Yyang,
angurbaya angamboni salat pisan,
tuwa swungkuk gigir mulir kudhi trantang.

[189] Read: ingsun.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

20. Mundhak bunjut bathukmu saya ambranang,
kongsi pélot irungé lir arit gowang,
kyai modin lunga sarwi kadhungsangan.

21. Lĕbé Lonthang dèn-arani ala édan,
lĕbé Lonthang ngucap sarwi cĕcébolan,
ya karĕpmu angarani marang ingwang.

22. Lĕbé Lonthang mudhun mĕsjid tatayungan,
lĕbé Lonthang cucul mari cĕcawĕtan,
bĕbĕdipun lungsuran jaring tambalan.

23. Kadi wau kagungané tholang-tholang,
nyai lĕbé Lonthang mara mapag dalan,
nyai Lonthang kĕmbĕné lungsuran salang.

24. Tapihipun lungsuran sandut tambalan,
pan kĕpapag nèng dalan banjur rangkulan,
sĕkalihé padha kangĕn cĕciyuman.

25. Kyai Lonthang duwèké maksih bĕrkayang,
nyai Lonthang mari nanasabi sinjang,
kasasaban kagungan banjur angandhang.

26. Kawruhahana sasmitané suluk Lonthang,
aja tungkul amaca bari angandhang,
yèn wus awas pucungé dipun-apadhang.

Appendix B: *Suluk Lonthang*, Leiden Cod. Or. NBS 87 and NBS 89[190]

Punika saking Pangeran Mangkunĕgara,[191] suluk lonthang, sĕkar sinom,

1. Sinom aran silakrama,
tĕgĕse ingkang winarni,
wong ngalul wĕktu asalat,
tatakrama tĕgĕse ki,
wong ngalul himanyĕkti,
wibakrama tĕgĕsipun,
wong ngalul tokid ika,
gunakrama sun arani,
tĕgĕsipun iya kang[192] ngalul makripat.

2. Malih ingkang kawuwusa,
kang ngèlmu kawan prakawis,
kang kinarya tatĕmbangan
saréngat ingkang rumiyin,
tarékat kaping kalih,

[190] NBS 87 (pp. 164–165): see Pigeaud, *Literature of Java*, II, p. 734, text VII; NBS 89 (pp. 74–75): originally Gericke collection Cod. 8995 II; see Pigeaud, *Literature of Java*, II, p. 737, text XII.
[191] NBS 89 pakunĕgara.
[192] NBS 89 wong.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press

khakékat[193] ping tiganipun,
sĕkawané makripat,
lugaté dipunsindhèni,
lonthang-lonthang si lonthang sulur kambĕngan.

3. Wira-wiri wong saréngat,
ngulati suksma sĕjati,
kaping kalih lonthang-lonthang,
sulur ing babon upami,
wong tarékat nalitik,
ngulati suksma kang agung,
ping tiga lonthang-lonthang,
si lonthang sulur ing kambing,
lĕmpé-lĕmpé ngulati suksma kang mulya.

4. Iku lampahing khakékat,
wus jangkĕp tigang prakawis,
ping sĕkawané makripat,
sulur ing banyak upami,
wong makripat puniki,
apan tansah lĕngur-lĕngur,
milané wong makrifat,
tansah lĕngur-lĕngur ugi,
sĕjatine wus panggih suksma kang mulya.

[193] NBS 87 khaket.

Cite this article: Acri A, Meyer VH, Aminullah ZP (2024). Antinomianism as a way to God in nineteenth-century Java: the *Suluk Lonthang* between Islamic and pre-Islamic religious discourse. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186323000652 Published online by Cambridge University Press