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Learning from the scribes: a study of the Old Javanese Uttarakāṇḍa from the Merapi-Merbabu tradition

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Learning from the Scribes

A Study of the Old Javanese *Uttarakāṇḍa* from the Merapi-Merbabu Tradition

Uttarakāṇḍa, an Old Javanese prose literary work from the 10th century, was composed during the reign of Dharmawangśa. At least two text traditions have been identified: the Balinese tradition and the Javanese tradition, more precisely the one found in the Mount Merapi and Mount Merbabu area of Central Java. Three editions have been published, yet none have included manuscripts from the Javanese tradition, even though it may be assumed that each tradition possesses its distinct characteristics. This dissertation examines the transmission of the *Uttarakāṇḍa* text in Java and the quality of Javanese scribes' reproductions using A. Dain's methodology, further developed by A. M. Duinhoven, to analyse the history of its transmission and the perspectives of the scribes. Furthermore, Irene J. F. de Jong's theory supports structural analysis as a means of identifying errors and discrepancies. By establishing the scribe's habits, tendencies, and errors, and by mapping the spelling system and palaeographic developments, the corrupted text could be effectively restored. As a result, the manuscript regains its status as one of the witness manuscripts of the Old Javanese *Uttarakāṇḍa* text. In addition, this study presents a preliminary overview of the possible contribution of manuscripts copied in Java. For this purpose, several passages from Javanese and Balinese traditions are compared. The examples show that, in some respects, the Javanese tradition has a different focus and emphasises different aspects, and in some cases offers a better reading.

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