

Wacana Vol. 21 No. 1 (2020): 28-41

# The figure of *pañji* in Old Javanese sources

## What is in a name?

JIŘÍ JÁKL

### ABSTRACT

Literary and epigraphic references to the figure of *pañji* in Old Javanese texts are analysed, and contextualized with much better-known references to the figure of Pañji in Middle Javanese texts. A hypothesis is offered that Old Javanese term *pañji* is best rendered as “court-name”. It is argued that young boys from elite families obtained their familiar court-name (*pañji*) at the very onset of their career at the court, where they served as pages and attendants of the royal family. They were also trained in arms, religious lore, and arts. Being since their childhood close to the king, they were trusted persons, and some of them made careers as high-ranking court officials, such as Dəmuñ or Kanuruhan. Others, denoted *ācārya*, were trained as “masters of divine weapons”, Tantric ritual specialists, who were in charge of the so-called “divine weaponry” (*dīwyāstra*), mantra-infused ordinary weapons, an arsenal well-known in Old and Middle Javanese texts. Vestiges of this ritual lore have survived in Java until modern times.

### KEYWORDS

Pañji; Old Javanese texts; literary representations.

### INTRODUCTION

The figure of Pañji and his narrative is rightly perceived to be one of the outstanding symbols of the rich Javanese culture, like *wayang kulit* or *batik*.<sup>1</sup> The

---

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Arlo Griffiths (EFEO, Lyon) for sharing with me his provisional edition and translation of the Sukhāmṛta inscription. I am also grateful to two of my reviewers for their helpful comments that helped to improve the argument advanced in this study. I would also

---

Jiří JÁKL is a researcher at the Heidelberg University, working mainly on the cultural, religious, and social history of pre-Islamic Java and modern Bali. Jiří has studied Old Javanese at the Leiden University, and in 2014 has obtained his PhD from the University of Queensland, Brisbane, for his work on warfare in pre-modern Southeast Asia. His first monograph on alcohol and its multiple uses in pre-Islamic Java (*Alcohol in Early Java: Its social and cultural significance*) is to be published soon by the Brill. Jiří Jákł may be contacted at: [jiri.jakl@uni-heidelberg.de](mailto:jiri.jakl@uni-heidelberg.de).

Panji stories, written in the literary register known as Middle Javanese, were widely known in both Java and the Malay world as early as the fourteenth and fifteenth century CE (Braginsky 2004: 157; Vickers 2015). Ever since Rassers published his *Panji-roman* in 1922, scholars have maintained that Panji stories represent the original creative production of Javanese poets; some of the *kidung* poems about Pañji stand out as being among the highest achievements in Javanese literature (Poerbatjaraka 1940; Zoetmulder 1974). A number of scholars have linked the character of Pañji to different historical figures documented from pre-Islamic Java, but their efforts have never been conclusive. To give several examples, Poerbatjaraka (1931), based on his reading of the *Smaradahana*, has identified the Javanese King Kāmeśwara I (r. 1113-1130 CE) as the historical figure on whom the literary character of Pañji is based. Van Stein Callenfels (1921: 300-302) regarded the famous King Airlangga (r. 1019-1049 CE) as the prototype of the literary figure of Pañji, and Berg (1954) saw Hayam Wuruk (r. 1350-1389 CE) as the prototype of Pañji. In a series of her interesting studies, Kieven (2013, 2016, 2017) has suggested that, in Java of the Majapahit period in the fourteenth and fifteenth century CE, Pañji was a spiritual guide to the esoteric realm for pilgrims (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Depiction of a scene from the Panji story, at the Pendopo Terrace (1375 CE), south part, Panataran Temple: Panji and Candra Kiraṇa have been united, and their union is witnessed by an ascetic (*resi*) and two nuns (*bhikṣuṇī*). (Photograph by Lydia Kieven, 2007).

---

like to express my special thanks to Lydia Kieven (Köln), who kindly provided a photograph of Pañji (Figure 1).

Looking at the meaning of the name, Kieven (2017: 4) claims that “Panji” is actually only a title to denote a prince. Although I find the views about the ritual function of Pañji important, I cannot fully subscribe to the idea that Pañji is just a title to refer to a prince. In my rather meagre contribution to the debate about the genesis and function of the Pañji-figure, my purpose is to abstract, analyse, and contextualize what appear to be disconnected gleanings from *kakawin* poetry and Old Javanese epigraphy. Despite of being typically associated with the Middle Javanese literary tradition, the term *pañji* also makes a limited appearance in Old Javanese texts. Consisting of only a few scattered literary vignettes and a handful of attestations in inscriptions, this body of evidence has been considered irrelevant to the figure of Pañji, the “Crown Prince of Koripan”, and has therefore largely escaped the attention of scholars working on the topic. It is hoped that the Old Javanese evidence offered here can inspire other scholars to look at possible parallels between Old and Middle Javanese evidence for the figure of *pañji*/Pañji.

#### OLD JAVANESE LITERARY EVIDENCE: THE FIGURE OF PAÑJI AND ITS MARTIAL AND EROTIC ASSOCIATIONS

Scholars of Old Javanese literature have long been aware of the occurrence of the term *pañji* in Old Javanese literature, where it is found as early as in the ninth or tenth century CE.<sup>2</sup> Let me begin by quoting a gloss on the term *pañji* provided by Zoetmulder (1982: 1270) in his influential *Old Javanese-English dictionary*:

name, title; used before a proper name, often in the form (m)apañji. Frequent in kidungs, with or without following proper name (sira Pañji, sira pañjy Amalatrasmī) to denote the crown prince of Koripan. Apañji app. also denotes an official in the kraton of a rank below that of the pamègèt. (*Bhomāntaka* 81.29).

Zoetmulder’s interpretation, which covers both Old and Middle Javanese meanings of the term, has remained unchallenged: scholars of Old Javanese usually leave the term *pañji* untranslated, taking it either as a personal name or title. Teeuw and Robson (2005: 29) understand *mapañji madaharsa*, the name of a ruler who sponsored the anonymous author of the *Bhomāntaka*, a *kakawin* composed in the late-twelfth century CE, to be a personal name, rendering it “Mapañji Madaharsa”. Robson (2015: 751) has recently claimed that the Old Javanese form *mapañji* refers to “a title for high nobility, found in literature and also in inscriptions as early as the 10th century”.

In a charming vignette in the *Bhomāntaka*, noted by Zoetmulder (1982: 1270) in his gloss quoted above, *pañji* denotes one of the ranks of the men serving Kṛṣṇa, who is depicted in the text as an aging king. Although the scene is set in mytho-poetical time-space, the text is thoroughly informed by

<sup>2</sup> In this article I have not discussed the term *pañji* attested in a number of Balinese inscriptions, in which it seems to refer to the repayment of a debt or another form of financial/monetary transaction (Zoetmulder 1982: 1271).

the socio-political lore of ancient Java and Old Javanese military terminology, in particular, making the *Bhomāntaka* a valuable source for our knowledge of pre-Islamic Java. The men designated *pañji* seem to have been part of the military establishment of Kṛṣṇa's court, and the author depicts them at the moment of military review held before the men depart for the war against Bhoma, the king of the *asuras*. Reviewed by the king, under the command of their military leaders, *pañjis* display their martial skill at the palace square, in the hope of receiving promotion in the court hierarchy. Let me quote from the Old Javanese text and excellent translation of this passage in the edition prepared by Teeuw and Robson (2005):

*wāhu mapañji-pañji karikāmalar apaməgəta  
sañjata karwa tuṅgul aləsəh miṅər adulur adən  
bhāwa nikā n umundur i təlasnya mapulih abanət  
yar mapilih wuwusnya ri patuṅgul ika ciṅa-ciṅah<sup>3</sup>*

Recently of *pañji* rank, were they hoping to become a *paməgət*?

With their weapons as well as flags hanging limply, they stepped aside and joined in having a rest;

Their manner of acting was to withdraw and after that to make a quick comeback;

When they were particular in their words to the flag-bearers, they were in high spirit.<sup>4</sup>

We have seen above that Zoetmulder (1982: 1270) has noted the importance of this passage, reading it as evidence that (*ma*)*pañji* denoted “an official in the kraton of a rank below that of the *paməgət*”. What was the function and social standing of the *paməgət* in ancient Java? How can we possibly learn more from this interesting vignette? In the preceding Stanza 81.28, it is made clear that the *pañjis* were part of ‘a throng of *taṅḍas*, exercising there with close attention’ (*taṅḍa mākrəp irikānulah aninət-inət*). I have argued elsewhere that the men denoted *taṅḍa* were court-based, active combatants, who led troops of their own followers and were the backbone of the military expansion of Javanese states (Jákl 2019). Interestingly it is also an attribute of a war-flag, the emblem of different bands of *pañjis* in the passage in the *Bhomāntaka* quoted above: a war-flag or colour is also typically associated with *taṅḍas* (Jákl 2019); personal flags could have marked *pañjis* as combatants. It is clear that *pañjis* in twelfth-century Java were part of a court (military) establishment consisting of the men generally known as *taṅḍas*. The court-rank *paməgət* was the designation of high-ranking officials, whose tasks entailed judicial duties. However, it also seems that some of them were recruited from the court military establishment, and could have begun their career as soldiers.<sup>5</sup> Zoetmulder (1982: 1132) glosses *paməgət* as “a person invested with a high office or rank at court”. Barrett

<sup>3</sup> *Bhomāntaka* 81.29. Old Javanese text taken from Teeuw and Robson (2005: 440).

<sup>4</sup> Teeuw and Robson (2005: 441).

<sup>5</sup> The military training of *paməgəts* is mentioned in *Bhomāntaka* 82.39.

Jones (1984: 102), based on the study of Van Naerssen (1933), states that “in the earliest inscriptions the word had the meaning of ‘notable’ and later came to mean ‘expert’ or ‘arbiter’”.

One active military function of the men known as (*ma*)*pañji* can actually be traced to the ninth or tenth century CE; a figure denoted *pañji* is mentioned in an interesting passage in the *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, a *kakawin* composed between the second half of the ninth century and the beginning of the tenth century CE. Before I quote Stanza 25.85 in which a *pañji* is mentioned as a metaphor, let me provide a brief textual context of this passage. One of the young maidens sporting on the bank of the river Sarayū is gathering the red blossoms of the *palāśa* trees. The bright colour of the blossoms reminds the anonymous author of the *kakawin* of ‘the hearts of those overcome by passion, stabbed by Manmatha’<sup>6</sup> (*hati sañ sarāga tinəwək nirañ manmatha*).<sup>7</sup> Apart from the blossoms of the *palāśa* trees, young girls are using the pollen of the pandan plants ‘to serve as their powder’ (*pinakapupur*).<sup>8</sup> They also collect petals ‘and wind them around their index-fingers to serve as a flower-offering’ (*wilətakəna rikañ dūwa n pakasəkar*).<sup>9</sup> There is one girl, who fashions *śrīgadiñ* blossoms into a garland and uses *campaka* flowers to make her bracelet.<sup>10</sup> Like the other girls, she seems to be preparing herself for the worship of Kāma, the god of love. At the same time, this girl tries to tempt young ascetics who are spying on the group of young girls, hiding themselves behind the trees growing along the bank of the river. Most interestingly, the girl in question suddenly begins to sway her head agitatedly, acting like a *pañji*:

*pakatajug wuṇa jaṅgit agəñjutan*  
*nururakən sari niñ saruṇi hulu*  
*puji mapañji mapinṅjaṇa*<sup>11</sup>*meñjuha*  
*jaga ta sañ tapa denya mañel kumöl*<sup>12</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Manmatha is one of the names of Kāma, the god of love.

<sup>7</sup> *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* 25.82.

<sup>8</sup> *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* 25.83.

<sup>9</sup> *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* 25.83.

<sup>10</sup> *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* 25.84.

<sup>11</sup> Admittedly, *mapinṅjaṇa* is a difficult term. Zoetmulder (1982: 1364) marks the word with a question mark, adding that Balinese interlinear commentaries on this word insert *matenaten* (‘with locks of hair in front of the ears’). Robson (2015: 733) renders the form *mapinṅjaṇa* ‘she would toss her head’.

<sup>12</sup> *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* 25.85. Old Javanese text taken from Van der Molen (2015: 591).

The enchanted *jaṅgit* flowers<sup>13</sup> serve as a *tajug*-crown,<sup>14</sup> swaying up and down,  
 Making the pollen of the *saruṇi* fall on her head;  
 Proud, acting as a *pañji*, she tosses the long locks of her hair agitatedly,  
 To be sure that the ascetics will find it hard to restrain themselves.

Zoetmulder (1982: 1271) was perplexed by the meaning of *mapañji* in this stanza, and marked the passage as “unclear”. Robson (2015: 751) has noted in the commentary to his translation of the *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* that the word *mapañji* in stanza 25.85 “has nothing to do with the Pañji story (SS)”. In my view, we should not dismiss the possibility that there is a certain relationship between the *pañji*-figure enacted by the girl in this stanza and the Pañji hero known from Middle Javanese literature. Firstly, the passage is framed in the context of the worship of Kāma, who was an object of devotion in ancient Java, as we gather from a number of scattered references in Old Javanese *kakawins*, especially the *Smaradahana* (Poerbatjaraka 1931). Secondly, the figure of *pañji* enacted by the girl must have been pretty familiar to the court audience for whom the *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* was composed. In Stanza 25.80 the girls ‘come to test and inflame those who have only recently become naked ascetics’ (*mamarikṣa gumala-galak sañ wahu-wahu laṅna*).<sup>15</sup> The naked mendicants are still very young because they are designated by the Sanskrit loanword *taruṇa* (‘young unmarried man’), as we gather from Stanza 25.81. The term *taruṇa* is also commonly used in Old Javanese to denote young, unmarried warriors, men who still have to prove their martial skills.<sup>16</sup> A *pañji* in question must therefore be a young man, who is either performing a war-dance or engaging in a mock-attack. The frantic swaying of the head and wildly tossing the long hair enacted by the girl in the stanza quoted above was typical of the martial behaviour of Javanese warriors, and similar displays of prowess accompanied attacks by Javanese soldiers as late as in the seventeenth century, when it was observed and recorded as remarkable by the Dutch officers (Charney 2004).

<sup>13</sup> The flower denoted *wuṇa jaṅgit*, which is otherwise unknown in Old Javanese texts, does not seem to refer to a specific biological species; rather, it was a kind of “magically enchanted” bouquet, composed of a number of flower species, including *saruṇi* (*Pyrethrum* and *Wollastonia*), as we gather from the second line of Stanza 25.85. The *śrīgaḍiṅ* and *campaka* blooms, mentioned in the previous Stanza 25.84, also seem to be part of this enchanted bouquet. Zoetmulder (1982: 727) has noted that a related Old Javanese term, *jaṅgitan*, “seems to be some kind of harm (defect? disease?) caused by the practice of magic (*majajanggit*?) to another person”. We are probably not far wrong if we regard *wuṇa jaṅgit* as a kind of enchanted crown made of a garland of flowers, which had some function in the war rituals discussed in the second part of this article. Compare also the Modern Javanese word *anggit/janggitan* which denotes ‘devil, imp’ (Robson and Wibisono 2002: 295).

<sup>14</sup> For a not entirely innocent *tajug* garland, compare *Ghaṭotkacāśraya* 5.7 magic (Robson 2016: 52-53), in which the poet, referring to the dress of Princess Kṣiti Sundari, poses a rhetorical question ‘But who of course would dare to look at her, unless insisting on bringing a curse upon himself?’ (*ndah syapa wānya rakwa mulate sirān waśa panambhawānya tulaha*).

<sup>15</sup> Their erotic display seems to have been a complete success, as we gather from Stanza 25.81, in which we learn that the young ascetics ‘are defeated, their knees quaking and weak and they are filled with passion’ (*alah tūrnya kumətər akwañ kəna ya rināgan*).

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, *Arjunawiwāha* 23.9; *Bhāratayuddha* 13.29; *Sutasoma* 86.6.

Another interesting detail indicating the martial display typical of the category of *pañji* warriors and its ritual/magical associations is the use of “enchanted flowers”, a kind of amulet-like headdress or garland. We know that in ancient Java young warriors especially wore flowers stuck in their long hair or a flower-crown on their head when they departed for the battle. Elsewhere (Jákl 2016), I have demonstrated that the men denoted *waragañ* (‘young champions’, ‘young front-liners’), known in Old Javanese texts for their combat strategy of launching amuck-like attacks, were associated in particular with a highly ritualized display of dress and weapons. To give one example, in the *Bhomāntaka* some of the young *waragañ* warriors are ‘determined to do their duty on the battle-field, the flowers stuck in their *kura-kura* crowns’ (*amriha riñ təgal saha səkar haneñ kura-kura*).<sup>17</sup>

It is also possible that Stanza 25.85, in which the girl pretends to act as a *pañji*, is meant as an allusion to a practice of ritual cross-dressing. Hooykaas (1959: 689-691) has drawn attention to the scene of the ritual wedding dance (*pulir*) in which Raden Inu performs the bride’s part, while Candra Kirana performs the part of the bridegroom. Recently, Kieven (2017: 6) has suggested “the final union, which is depicted in romantic and erotic ways, as a means of esoteric path of achieving union with the Divine. This is known as a crucial aspect in Old Javanese *kakawin* poetry”. Having discussed these literary vignettes, let me now turn to the epigraphic evidence and offer a suggestion about how to interpret Old Javanese term *pañji*.

#### OLD JAVANESE EPIGRAPHICAL EVIDENCE: THE FIGURE OF PAÑJI AND ITS RITUAL ASSOCIATIONS

The names of at least four categories of persons documented in Old Javanese inscriptions and literature are preceded by the term (*ma*)*pañji*: high-ranking court officials, Javanese kings, spiritual teachers or priests, and surprisingly, some epic figures. All of these men were in the initial stages of their careers as members of the court, in which they served as “pages”. It seems to me that their *pañji* appellation is actually a kind of “court-name”, initially used for young boys who entered the court (military) establishment at the moment at which they received their court-name; some of them must have continued to use it throughout their careers. Among the highest ranking court officials, Dəmuñ and Kanuruhan are those who most commonly bear the *pañji* court-name.<sup>18</sup> Several Javanese kings are also known by their *pañji* court-name: the king (Śrī Mahārāja) who issued the Banjar Arum inscription in 1052 CE, bears the court-name (*mapañji*) Garasakan.<sup>19</sup> In *Ghaṭotkacāśraya* 1.4, *mapañji* Madaharṣa refers to King Jayākṛta mentioned in Stanza 1.3, who is, according to Robson

<sup>17</sup> *Bhomāntaka* 82.2.

<sup>18</sup> For Dəmuñ *mapañji* Wipakṣa, see Oud-Javaansche Oorkonden / OJO 79 (2a), issued in 1269 CE in Brandes (1913: 183). For Kanuruhan *mapañji* Maṇḍala, see OJO 70, issued in 1136 CE in Brandes (2013: 143).; for Kanuruhan *mapañji* Anurida, see Penampihan inscription (2a.1-2), issued in 1269 CE in Brandes (2013: 127).

<sup>19</sup> Boechari (2012).

(2015: 292), Kṛtajaya, the last king of the Kaḍiri period who died in 1222 CE. The famous Javanese King Jayabhaya (r. 1135-57) is known to historians under his *pañji*-name (hence Jayabhaya), which is mentioned, for example, in the Ngantang inscription, issued by him in 1135 CE (Brandes 1913: 155).<sup>20</sup>

The most interesting category of the figures bearing the *pañji* court-name, however, are the men denoted *ācārya* ('spiritual guide, spiritual teacher'). This function immediately reminds us of Pañji as a Majapahit spiritual guide to pilgrims, the interpretation proposed by Kieven (2013). A man called *ḍang ācārya* ('the honourable spiritual guide') Śīwanātha, bearing the court-name (*mapañji*) Tanutama, is mentioned in the Penampihan inscription, issued in 1269 CE.<sup>21</sup>

An important source which casts more light on our knowledge of the function and social status of the figure known as *pañji* in ancient Java is the Sukhāmṛta inscription, issued in 1296 CE by King Kṛtarājasa (r. 1293-1309), the first king of Majapahit, for the benefit of a person called Pu Kapat, who was given the privilege of holding the freehold (*sīma*) of his village of Sukhāmṛta.<sup>22</sup> This long inscription actually mentions a couple of figures who bear the court-name (*pañji*) but here I shall focus on the recipient of the charter, Pu Kapat. The document gives us rare insight into the court ranking system, detailing the career of Pu Kapat, who obviously began his career as a member of the court-establishment as a "page":

*hana pva sañ apañji pati-pati sāksāt vuruk de bhaṭāra śrī kṛtanagara satata sañkan  
rarai tan sah ri pādapithanira maparināmāñintiri makāvaśāna dmuñ ri līna bhaṭāra śrī  
kṛtanagara pva*<sup>23</sup>

As for the one who bore the court-name (*pañji*) Pati-Pati, he was clearly the beloved page of Lord Śrī Kṛtanagara; from childhood never separated from His [Kṛtanagara's] footstool, gradually rising in the court ranking-system, finally holding the function of Dəmuñ at the death of Lord Śrī Kṛtanagara.

Male members of Javanese noble families seem to have entered the court as young boys, and were trained in arms as well as in the arts, such as music and dance. This view is strengthened at another place in the Sukhāmṛta inscription, where we learn that Pu Kapat – still a young man known under his court-name Pati-Pati – actively followed his Lord, King Kṛtanagara, to the war(s) against his enemies. The military campaign is described in graphic detail:

<sup>20</sup> OJO 68 (1a.4).

<sup>21</sup> Panampihan inscription (2a.7).

<sup>22</sup> In citing the Sukhāmṛta inscription, I have made use of a provisional edition and translation kindly shared by Arlo Griffiths, but have modified the latter on points important to the argument presented here.

<sup>23</sup> Sukhāmṛta inscription (Va.6-Vb.2).



*tan kantun ta sañ apañji pati-pati tka pva sিরerika mtu teki kadevātmakanira kavus nās-nāsən tekān śatru tan pasara ekalomnānipāta tan rumurvakən vulu salambā gatinya kevala paravaśa hantu vadvanya katavan ratunya hinir ānak rabinya inalap rājadrōyanya<sup>24</sup>*

The one who bears the court-name Pati-Pati was not left behind. When they reached the place [of the enemy], the divine nature [of the king] manifested itself: completely subdued and shivering with fear, the enemies were seized by terror, unable to make even a single hair [of the king's men] fall. They found themselves completely overpowered/vanquished: their military troops were crushed, the kings taken captive; their children and wives were led away [as slaves], the royal property was confiscated.

At another place in the inscription we learn more details about Pu Kapat's career, including the biography of his father:

*hana pva sañ apañji pati-pati inanugrahan ta kumalilirana pañji niñ rāma mapañjyā pati-pati ndān rāma sañ apañji pati-pati sira ta bhujāṅga śaivapakṣa bhairavabrata mapuṣpapāta dañ ācāryyāstrarāja mapañji pati-pati<sup>25</sup>*

As for the one with the court-name Pati-Pati, he was granted the privilege of inheriting the court-name of his father, so that he [too] would bear the court-name Pati-Pati, for the father of the one with the court-name Pati-Pati was a *bhujāṅga*-priest of the Śaiva persuasion, of the Bhairava vow, who had a consecration name "Honourable Master of Divine Weapons", [and] a court-name Pati-Pati.

This passage makes it clear that the court-name (*pañji*) could be inherited in a family line in ancient Java. It also indicates what might have been the principal task of those spiritual guides/priests who bore the *pañji* court-name: his consecration name 'Master of Divine Weapons' (*ācāryyāstrarāja*), plus the fact that the man is associated with the cult of Bhairava would indicate that his duty lay in the field of war rituals. Magical empowerment of troops, as well as rituals to achieve the magical subjugation of the enemy, were part and parcel of ancient warfare in pre-modern Southeast Asia (Quaritch Wales 1952; Charney 2004; De Grave 2014). Old Javanese sources are particularly rich in this lore and the so-called 'divine weapons' (*astra*), regular weapons (such as bows and spears) imbued with the supernatural power (*śakti*), figure prominently in the arsenal of epic heroes and of Javanese mortals until the early-modern times (Jákl 2012).

Ever since Poerbatjaraka (1926) and Berg (1954) analysed Stanza 36.2 in the *Arjunawiwāha*, a *kakawin* composed by Mpu Kaṅwa in the first half of the eleventh century, they established the close associations between Old Javanese *kawi*, a figure usually interpreted rather simplistically as a 'poet', and the business of war. In Stanza 36.2, the very last stanza of the text, we find a curious reference to Mpu Kaṅwa, 'who is excited, as he is now preparing for a military campaign, attending the king' (*bhrāntāpan tēhər anharəp samarakārya*

<sup>24</sup> Sukhāmṛta inscription (VIIb.4-6).

<sup>25</sup> Sukhāmṛta inscription (VIIIa.1-3).

*manirini haji*). What was the task of the “poet” in the war waged by his lord? Berg (1938, 1953) has envisaged Old Javanese *kawi* as a “priest of literary magic” (Dutch: *priester van de literaire magic*), who, by manipulating historical data, fortified the “magic energy” of the king, his patron (1953: 117). Other scholars, such as Zoetmulder (1974: 179), who speaks about the “literary yoga”, have only partially accepted the views proposed by Berg. Yet, there is a common consensus that the process of writing *kakawin*s in ancient Java entailed a spiritual aspect. Although this is not the place to discuss the function of the Old Javanese *kawi* in detail, it is clear that he was knowledgeable in the wielding of “divine weapons”, and had access to the mantras used to activate this supernatural arsenal.

It seems obvious that the ritual specialists entrusted with this arsenal and mantras to activate divine weapons had been based since their early childhood at the court as “pages” who could be trusted by the king and were trained in both the weaponry and the scriptures (*aji*) containing mantras to transform regular weapons into a divine arsenal. Another interesting reference to a *kawi* who bore a *pañji* court-name is found in the *Deśawarṇana*, a *kakawin* composed by Mpu Prapañca in 1365 CE. In Stanza 25.2 we encounter him among the distinguished persons who welcome King Hayam Wuruk to Patukañan, where he spent several days of his “pleasure trip”, accepting tributary payment and gifts from his subjects. The *kawi* in question is said to be a Śaiwa, bearing the court-name (*mapañji*) Mapañji Sāntara (*apañji mapañji sāntara*), ‘learned in the scriptures and a knowledgeable *kawi*’ (*widagdheñ āgama wruh kawi*).<sup>26</sup> Several scholars have commented on what looks like a reduplicated form *apañji mapañji*; Robson (1995: 112) notes that *apañji mapañji* ‘seems double’ and offers an explanation by the way of question: “Is the former a category and the latter a title, or was the poet a bit confused about the names?” I can only add that Mapañji Sāntara seems to be a court-name of the poet.

Finally, I would like to discuss the references to *pañji* in the *Sumanasāntaka*, a *kakawin* composed by Mpu Monaguṇa around 1200 CE and the only Old Javanese text in which *pañji* refers to the crown prince, a social and political role typically associated with the figure of Pañji in Middle Javanese literature. As already noted by Robson (1983: 305), there are only two places in the *Sumanasāntaka* where Old Javanese *pañji* clearly refers to the crown prince. The first passage is found in Stanza 7.22, in which the sage Trṇawindu informs the dying divine nymph Hariṇī that in her next rebirth she will marry a mortal, Prince Aja, who in his previous life was her (divine) husband. The passage implies a sexual bond established between the mortal figure of *pañji* and a heavenly nymph. Let me quote from the Old Javanese text and its translation from the recently published edition prepared by Worsley and his colleagues:

<sup>26</sup> *Deśawarṇana* 25.2.

*priyanta riñ anāḍijanma dadi mānuṣa lituhayu sūrya wañśaja  
narendra raghu rakwa mānak aniru prakaśita subhageñ purāntara  
apañjy aja dhanurdharānwam ini niñ raghunagara turuñ smarātura<sup>27</sup>*

Your husband in a former life has become a handsome mortal born of the Sun dynasty.

They say that King Raghu has a child who, in his own image, is renowned and famed in other kingdoms.

Crown Prince Aja, an archer, young and the ornament of the Raghu's kingdom, has not yet suffered the pains of love.<sup>28</sup>

The second person bearing the *pañji* appellation (*apañji*) which can be rendered "Crown Prince" is Daśaratha, a famous hero in the *Mahābhārata* epic, who is introduced in *Sumanasāntaka* 162.3 as 'the only child' (*mānak tuṅgal*) of Aja. His birth, too, was prophesized by the sage Ṛṇawindu, as we can gather from Stanza 7.26. It might be construed as significant that, in the *Sumanasāntaka*, both Aja and Daśaratha are categorized as 'archers' and both of them were experts in handling divine weapons.

The complex relations between the figures known from Old Javanese *kakawins* and their counterparts attested in Middle Javanese *kidungs* are not limited to the problem of *pañji*/Pañji. Teeuw and Robson (2005: 621) have detected another interesting parallel in an enigmatic figure called *pisañan* in the *Bhomāntaka* and the well-known literary figure Ken Pisangan attested to in a number of Middle Javanese Pañji stories. The vignette in the *Bhomāntaka* is part of a discussion among the servants of Princess Indumatī. The ladies learn from the divine nymph Tillotamā that Princess Indumatī has had sex with Prince Aja, who 'has arrived here, and has already slept with the princess' (*prāpti ñke tēlas aturū lawan suputrī*), according to Tillotamā's succinct report in Stanza 28.6. Eager to know more about the identity of Aja, the ladies engage in a lively conversation about the prince and his possible relations to Princess Indumatī. One of the maids (*paricārikā*), whose name is not disclosed in the text, gives an account of her dream in which she saw Indumatī entwined with a big snake, apparently a hint of her secret love affair:

The princess, you know, had the moon beside her;

A big snake came and wound itself around her –

This is evidently what will happen to her: the result is quick and plain.<sup>29</sup>

In Sanzas 28.9-10, the maid explains why she has decided to disclose the dream, hinting at her ambitions to become a *pisañan*, a court figure otherwise completely unknown in Old Javanese literature:

<sup>27</sup> *Sumanasāntaka* 7.22abc. Old Javanese text taken from Worsley et al. (2013: 82).

<sup>28</sup> Worsley et al. (2013: 83).

<sup>29</sup> *Bhomāntaka* 28.8bcd. Translation is that of Teeuw and Robson (2005: 223).

*jāti nwañ mañucapa ramya niñ rahadyan  
yan rakweka rari sənən narendraputri  
nyāñ māsīh sira ri gatiñku pūrwasewa  
lābhāntən palakunən i nñhulun dālāha  
mwañ kātönku pisañanāpan ardha saśri<sup>30</sup>*

My nature is to say something pleasant about the gentleman –  
providing, of course, that it is her loved one.

And in this way, she will be grateful for how I have served her in the past.

And my ambition is to be made a *pisañan*, as this is very wonderful.<sup>31</sup>

Teeuw and Robson (2005: 621), the editors of the *Bhomāntaka*, have noted in their commentary on the text that the maid “may be referring to a particular position in the service, as Ken Pisangan is one of the princess’s maidservants in many Pañji stories, second in rank to Ken Bayan”. In my view, the pun and allusions found in the two stanzas quoted above indicate that the Old Javanese *pisañan* could have referred to a (female?) interpreter of dreams attached to ancient Javanese courts. The maid seems to offer a kind of “spiritual service” for which she hopes to be rewarded in the future if it were to transpire that Indumatī is pregnant. As I see it, the lady who hopes to be promoted as a *pisañan* tries to save the precarious position of Princess Indumatī, who has had sex with a figure whom the ladies regard as a complete stranger. The prophetic dream of a “would-be-*pisañan*” will provide a supra-natural explanation for the princess’s pregnancy.

## CONCLUSION

In this short contribution, I have discussed the Old Javanese term *pañji*, contextualizing its meaning and use with what we know about the figure of Pañji from Middle Javanese literature. Typically interpreted by scholars as “name” or “title”, in Old Javanese literature and inscriptions this word (*ma*) *pañji* precedes the personal names of four types of persons: high-ranking officials, Javanese kings, spiritual teachers and some epic figures. All of them seem to have been closely associated with the royal courts. The *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* (late-ninth to early-tenth century) and the *Bhomāntaka* (late-twelfth century) suggest that the figures designated (*ma*)*pañji* were young warriors or persons associated with warfare. I have offered a hypothesis that Old Javanese term *pañji* is best rendered as “court-name”; young boys from noble families obtained their particular court-name at the outset of their careers at the royal court, at which they initially served as pages, and were trained in the use of arms and the arts. As persons trusted by the king, some of them were promoted to the position of high-ranking court officials, such as Paməgət, Dəmuñ, and Kanuruhan. Others were trained to be “masters of divine weapons”, Tantric

<sup>30</sup> *Bhomāntaka* 28.9a-10a. Old Javanese text taken from Teeuw and Robson (2005: 224).

<sup>31</sup> Teeuw and Robson (2005: 225).

ritual specialists who had mastered the mantras for turning regular weapons into the so-called “divine weaponry” (*dīwyāstra*), a type of arsenal commonly mentioned in Old and Middle Javanese texts. Although changed by the process of Islamization, the Tantric concept of “divine weapons” has survived in Java until modern times in the form of magically infused, “enchanted” weapons, such as arrows, pikes, and bullets.

#### REFERENCES

- Barrett Jones, A.M. 1984. *Early tenth century Java from the inscriptions*. Dordrecht: Foris.
- Berg, C.C. 1938. “Javaansche geschiedschrijving”, in: F.W. Stapel, *Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch Indië; Vol. 2*, pp. 7-148. Amsterdam: Joost van den Vondel.
- Berg, C.C. 1954. “Bijdragen tot de kennis der Panji-verhalen”, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 110: 189-216, 305-334.
- Braginsky, Vladimir. 2004. *The heritage of traditional Malay literature; A historical survey of genres, writings and literary views*. Leiden: KITLV Press.
- Brandes, J.L.A. 1913. *Oud-Javaansche oorkonden; Nagelaten transcripties van wijlen Dr. J.L.A. Brandes. Uitgegeven door N.J. Krom, VBG 60* (parts 1 and 2). Batavia: Albrecht; 's-Hage: Nijhoff.
- Boechari. 2012. *Melacak sejarah kuno Indonesia lewat prasasti/Tracing ancient Indonesian history through inscriptions*. Jakarta: Gramedia, Departemen Arkeologi FIB UI, EFEO.
- Charney, Michael W. 2004. *Southeast Asian warfare*. Leiden: Brill.
- Grave, Jean-Marc de. 2014. “Javanese ritual initiation; Invulnerability, authority, and spiritual improvement”, in: D.S. Farrer (ed.), *War magic, religion, sorcery, and performance*, pp. 47-66. New York/London: Berghahn.
- Hooykaas, J.H. 1959. “Panji’s wedding dance”, in: Herbert Franke (ed.), *Akten des 24. Internationalen Orientalisten-Kongress: München, 28 August bis 4 September 1957*, pp. 689-691. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Jákl, Jiří. 2012. “Swarming ants and their kin in the Old Javanese *kakawin* literature”, *Pandanus* 12: 47-63.
- Jákl, Jiří. 2016. “The literary motif of head-taking in Old Javanese court poetry (*kakawin*); *cěngĕl* and *varagang* terms revisited”, *Indonesia and the Malay World* 44(129): 165-187.
- Jákl, Jiří. 2019. “The figure of *taṇḍa* in Old Javanese literary and epigraphical records”, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 175(2/3): 309-339.
- Kieven, Lydia. 2013. *Following the cap-figure in Majapahit temple reliefs; A new look at the religious function of East Javanese temples, 14th and 15th centuries*. Leiden/Boston: Brill.
- Kieven, Lydia. 2016. “Panji and Candrakirana lost in separation”, *Amerta* 34(1): 31-48.
- Kieven, Lydia. 2017. “Getting closer to the primordial Panji? Panji stories carved in stone at ancient Javanese Majapahit temples – and their impact as cultural heritage today”, *Journal of Archaeology and Fine Arts in Southeast Asia* 1(1): 1-24.

- Molen, Willem van der. 2015. *Rāmāyana; The story of Rāma and Sītā in Old Javanese*. Romanized Edition. Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.
- Naerssen, F.H. van. 1933. "De Saptopapatti", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 90: 239-258.
- Poerbatjaraka, R.M.Ng. 1926. "Arjuna-Wiwaha; Tekst en vertaling", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 82(1): 181-305.
- Poerbatjaraka, R.M.Ng. 1931. *Smaradahana; Oudjavaansche tekst met vertaling*. Bandoeng: Nix.
- Poerbatjaraka, R.M.Ng. 1940. *Pandji verhalen onderling vergeleken*. Bandoeng: Nix.
- Quaritch Wales, H.G. 1952. *Ancient South-East Asian warfare*. London: Bernard Quaritch.
- Rassers, W.H. 1922. *De Pandji-roman*. Antwerpen: De Vos-Van Kleef.
- Robson, S.O. 1983. "Kakawin reconsidered; Toward a theory of Old Javanese poetics", *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 139(2/3): 291-319.
- Robson, S.O. 1995. *Deśawarṇana (Nāgarakṛtāgama) by Mpu Prapañca*. Leiden: KITLV Press.
- Robson, S.O. 2015. *Old Javanese Rāmāyana; A new English translation with an introduction and notes*. Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.
- Robson, S.O. 2016. *The kakawin Ghatotkacāsraya by Mpu Panuluh*. Tokyo: Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.
- Robson, S.O. and Singgih Wibisono, with the assistance of Yacinta Kurniasih. 2002. *Javanese-English dictionary*. Hongkong/Singapore: Periplus Editions.
- Teeuw, A. and S.O. Robson. 2005. *Bhomāntaka; The death of Bhoma*. Leiden: KITLV Press.
- Vickers, A. 2015. "Majapahit and Panji stories", in: Catrini Kubontubuh and P. Carey (eds), *Majapahit for the world*, pp. 47-64. Jakarta: Arsari.
- Worsley, P.J., S. Supomo, Th.J. Hunter, and Margaret Fletcher. 2013. *Sumanasāntaka; An Old Javanese epic poem, its Indian source and Balinese illustrations*. Leiden/Boston: Brill.
- Zoetmulder, P.J. 1974. *Kalangwan; A survey of Old Javanese literature*. The Hague: Nijhoff.
- Zoetmulder, P.J. 1982. *Old Javanese-English dictionary*. With the collaboration of S.O. Robson. 's-Gravenhage: Nijhoff. Two volumes.