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# Inscriptions of Sumatra

## II. Short epigraphs in Old Javanese

ARLO GRIFFITHS

### ABSTRACT

This article documents the existence of inscriptions using Old Javanese language on the island of Sumatra, by editing three short epigraphs, the first of which has previously been published but never satisfactorily interpreted, while the remaining two have not yet been published at all. However short these texts are in themselves, they raise interesting questions about the cultural, commercial, political, and linguistic connections between Java and Sumatra in ancient times.

### KEYWORDS

Old Javanese, Old Malay, Java, Sumatra, inscription, funerary monument, *makara*, *saragi*.

The two major literary languages of the Indonesian archipelago, Malay and Javanese, are associated – both factually and perceptually – with the two major islands Sumatra and Java. The earliest written records of Sumatra, taking the form of inscriptions on stone, are indeed in Malay, while the earliest written records in an indigenous language found in Java are indeed in Javanese.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, there are exceptions to this pattern of language distribution in the epigraphical record. The presence of a group of inscriptions in Old Malay originating from Central and West Java has drawn considerable scholarly attention;<sup>2</sup> but the reverse phenomenon, the epigraphical use of Old Javanese

<sup>1</sup> Several colleagues have helped me access the inscriptions discussed here, or shared with me their views on problems of interpretation. I gladly acknowledge the help of Agus Widiatmoko, Annabel Gallop, Budi Istiawan, Marijke Klokke, Daniel Perret, Uri Tadmor, and Jan Wisseman Christie.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the historical significance of this group of inscriptions, and a complete listing of the relevant secondary literature, see Jordaan and Colless 2009: 194–199

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on Sumatra, has hardly been investigated.<sup>3</sup> In continuation of my research on the epigraphical record of Sumatra (to be) published elsewhere,<sup>4</sup> the purpose of the present paper is to document the existence of the phenomenon, and in so doing to present to the academic world three inscriptions, the first of which has previously been published but never satisfactorily interpreted, while the remaining two have not yet been published at all. It will be shown that no general explanation will be sufficient to cover the diversity of historical scenarios leading to the presence of these artefacts on Sumatra.

## 1 INSCRIBED UPRIGHT STONE FROM WEST SUMATRA



Figure 1. Inscription of Kapalo Bukit Gombak II (Photograph by Johannes Greger, Tanah Datar project, 2011).

An inscription dating to about the period of Ādityavarman (fourteenth century ce), currently held in the shelter of inscriptions at Pagaruyung in regency

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(appendix B: “Śrīvijaya and the Old Malay inscriptions of Java”). See also Griffiths Forthcoming a.

<sup>3</sup> The inscription of Hujung Langit in Lampung, still unpublished, was initially considered to have been written in Old Javanese, but Louis-Charles Damais later showed (1962a) that it is written in Old Malay. One or two short inscriptions from Padang Lawas, in North Sumatra, have been misidentified as being in Old Javanese. On this misidentification, see Griffiths Forthcoming b.

<sup>4</sup> My review article “Inscriptions of Sumatra: Further data on the epigraphy of the Musi and Batang Hari River Basins” (Griffiths 2011) is hereby retroactively declared the first instalment of this series of studies dealing with Sumatran epigraphy. See also Griffiths Forthcoming b.

Tanah Datar, West Sumatra (Figure 1), and originally recovered from the site Kapalo Bukit Gombak not far from Pagaruyung, was listed as number 28 in Krom's "Inventory of the antiquities in the Padang Highlands" (1912: 43). Krom there proposed the reading *om pagunnira tumaṅguṅ kuḍavira*, which was published again without significant differences the next year as number CXXV of Brandes' *Oud-Javaansche Oorkonden* (1913: 260). Neither Krom nor Brandes published a translation, or made any statement with regard to the language of the inscription. There are some studies of more recent years by Indonesian scholars, who have correctly observed that the language is Old Javanese. The scholars in question have proposed translations of the text, but here one notes a certain arbitrariness of interpretative choices.

Before discussing the problems of interpretation, let me first offer my own reading, following international (Indological) norms for the transliteration of Indic script types<sup>5</sup> and using the paper estampage I made in 2011 that has since entered the collection of the École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) in Paris under inventory number n. 2010 (Figure 2).



Figure 2. EFEO estampage n. 2010 of the inscription of Kapalo Bukit Gombak II.

<sup>5</sup> The complaint of Dick van der Meij in his review (in *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 166 [2012]: 337–340) of a recent publication of mine, where I followed these same norms, that I have done so “without explaining what these norms are” is symptomatic of a widespread reluctance among Indonesianists to view Indonesian data as part of a larger whole than the archipelago itself. Anybody who takes the effort to use google (keyword “IAST”) can find out what the norms for transliteration of Indic script types are. Following these norms means most notably that I use *v* and not *w* to represent the 29th consonantal *akṣara* of the Indic syllabary. This is a choice of transliteration, and has nothing to do with phonology, as the reviewer implies it should. (If phonology were the determining factor in the transliteration system, I would also be obliged to obliterate the difference between *bh* and *b* which is relevant in this inscription, as it is in most documents using Indic script types, from Afghanistan to Bali.) I furthermore represent the *anusvāra*/*cecak* with the sign *ṃ*, which again presupposes nothing with regard to the way this sign was actually pronounced. In my translations, I normalize elements of Indic origin according to their expected spelling, and occasionally simplify the transliteration system for Old Javanese (or Old Malay) elements by merging *ṃ* with *ṅ* and *h* with *h*.

- (1) °om̃ pa(bh/g)unnira tumaṅgum ku-  
 (2) ḍa vira |

The pronominal clitic *-nira* here clearly indicates that the language is Old Javanese. All previous scholars have read *pagunnira* in line 1. This is indeed a possible reading, but *g* and *bh* are very similar in this script, and in this case, both possibilities *pagunnira* and *pabhunnira* need to be considered.

I am aware of two proposals for translation of this short text (with the reading *pagunnira*) into Indonesian. One is “Bahagia. Atas hasil kerja Tumanggung Kudawira [Happiness. On the basis of the result of the work of T.K.]”; the other is “Selamat ditetapkannya Tumanggung Kudawira [Hail the fact that T.K. has been made firm]”.<sup>6</sup> The first translation can be rejected outright, for there is no Javanese base or derived form resembling *pagun* that has a meaning relatable to ‘hasil kerja [result of work]’, and there is no word or grammatical element in the Old Javanese to express the meaning ‘atas [on (the basis of)]’. The second translation is presumably based on the assumption that *pagun* is derived from the base *pagu*. This is a plausible idea, but the translation as a nominalized passive causative (*ditetapkannya*: ‘the fact of having been made firm’) lacks grammatical foundation. Rather, *pagun* must with this reading be considered a spelling variant of the noun *pagvan/pagon*, and fluctuation between *u/va/o* is indeed very common in Old Javanese documents (see Acri 2011: 56–57). Zoetmulder (1982: 1231) glosses *pagvan* as “firm base, support”, and one may use this as a point of departure in determining the intended contextual meaning, depending on one’s interpretation of the original function of the stone on which this text is engraved. If, as I do, one considers it likely that it had a funerary or commemorative function, then a translation such as ‘resting place’ might be suitable: ‘Om̃. The resting place of lord KuḍaVira’.<sup>7</sup>

The alternative reading *pabhunnira* proposed above is equally acceptable from the paleographic point of view, and is likewise susceptible to a plausible interpretation, namely as derivate from the base *avv* ‘ash’:<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The first is the one proposed by Budi Istiawan (2006: 17), and the second is the one proposed by Machi Suhadi as cited by Budi Istiawan from an unpublished report (dated 1991) that is not available to me. Bambang Budi Utomo (2007: 71) cites another unpublished report of Machi Suhadi (dated 1995) that is likewise unavailable to me. For a review of Bambang Budi Utomo’s work, see Griffiths 2011.

<sup>7</sup> On the shapes of funerary monuments in West Sumatra, from prehistory to the early Islamic period, see Miksic 2004. The stone under discussion has the same general shape as several examples illustrated by Miksic, and if indeed it may be classified among them, then this stone represents a stage between prehistory and the Islamic period. In an email of 23 December 2012, Jan Wisseman Christie writes to me: “I would be inclined to interpret the short inscription as ‘Om̃, The foundation (that is firm establishment) of Tumanggung Kuḍawira’. It looks to me like a boundary marker for a religious establishment or temple founded by Kuḍawira”. This seems to me less likely, since in the case of the reading *pagun*, from nominal base *pagu*, I expect *-nira* to express the owner or beneficiary, not the agent, of the act of supporting expressed by the base *pagu*.

<sup>8</sup> We must keep in mind that the Malay equivalent is *abu* and that *v/b/bh* are liable to be used in each other’s place in Old Javanese documents. See Acri 2011: 54–55 and 57–58.



*pa-avu-an* 'place for ashes', that is, precisely the same formation as modern Javanese *pawon* 'kitchen', but presumably in a different meaning. If we read *pabhunnira*, we may think of a translation like 'Om. The ash-deposit of lord Kuḍa Vīra'.

Either way, it seems very likely that the inscribed stone marked the physical remains of *tumaṅgun* Kuḍa Vīra. It may be noted that there is a person called *biraparākramakuda* in the contemporary Old Malay inscription Gudam II,<sup>9</sup> standing today right next to the inscription Kapalo Bukit Gombak II at Pagaruyung. Furthermore, there is a *rakryān damuñ pu Vīra* mentioned in Kṛtanagara's Old Malay inscription of 1286 CE on the socle of the Amoghapaśa from Padang Roco (Dharmasraya, West Sumatra) as part of the delegation from Java to Sumatra (*dari bhūmi jāva ka svaṛṇnabhūmi*).<sup>10</sup> Although this last inscription is at least several decades if not more than a century older than the Old Javanese inscription that concerns us here, it still seems possible that the use of Old Javanese language indicates direct immigration from Java, or descendance from such a Javanese official as *rakryān damuñ pu Vīra*. I intend to further explore this problem, and situate these epigraphical data in a wider context, in my planned monograph on the inscriptions of Ādityavarman.

## 2 INSCRIBED MAKARA FROM THE NORTHERN GOPURA OF CANDI KEDATON, MUARA JAMBI TEMPLE COMPLEX, JAMBI

During a visit to the Muara Jambi complex on 22 December 2011, Agus Widiatmoko of the Bureau for Conservation of Antiquities (Balai Pelestarian Peninggalan Purbakala) in Jambi showed me some interesting recent discoveries. During excavations in preparation of the restoration of the Gopura at the northern end of the large area in front of Candi Kedaton that appears to show no further traces of construction except one *manapo* (mound), three out of a presumed original set of four *makaras* were found in their original position. Each has roughly the same dimensions, but the sculpture is different in each case. The two *makaras* on the southern staircase show *nāgas* protruding from the *makaras'* mouths; the sole *makara* found on the northern staircase has a mythical creature<sup>11</sup> protruding from its mouth. I have recorded the following approximate dimensions (height, width, depth) per *makara*:

Southeast: 123 × 63 × 113 cm (Figures 3–4)

Southwest: 123 × 67 × 130 cm (Figures 5–6)

Northeast: 123 × 62 × 114 cm (Figure 7)

<sup>9</sup> This inscription (issued by Akārendravarman, whom I hold to have been Ādityavarman's successor) was provisionally published by De Casparis (1995: 923), who was however unable to read the element *bira* (and who held a different view on the relationship of Akārendravarman to Ādityavarman). Note that the spelling is here *kuda*, not *kuḍa* as in the Old Javanese text, but these are presumably spelling equivalents (just as *vira* and *bira* are), unless the difference is due to the distinction between Malay and Javanese.

<sup>10</sup> The socle is held in the National Museum, Jakarta, under inventory number D.198A. For the text engraved on it, see Krom 1916.

<sup>11</sup> Half lion, half-ram? The type is well known in Java.



Figure 3. Northern Gopura, Candi Kedaton, Muara Jambi. Southeast *makara* viewed from the East (Photograph by the author, 2011).



Figure 4. Northern Gopura, Candi Kedaton, Muara Jambi. Southeast *makara* viewed from the South (Photograph by the author, 2011).



Figure 5. Northern Gopura, Candi Kedaton, Muara Jambi. Southwest *makara* viewed from the South (Photograph by the author, 2011).





Figure 6. Northern Gopura, Candi Kedaton, Muara Jambi. Southeast *makara* viewed from the West (Photograph by the author, 2011).



Figure 7. Northern Gopura, Candi Kedaton, Muara Jambi. Northeast *makara* viewed from the North (Photograph by the author, 2011).

The two southern *makaras* bear writing in relief of a mode seen in inscriptions on the island of Java from the late tenth through the early eleventh century, but not to my knowledge found anywhere else on Sumatra.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> In my opinion, it is not useful to classify this mode of writing as '(Kediri) quadrate script', because this category should be restricted to highly ornamental styles of writing, as implied by the discussion of De Casparis (1975: 42). However, this scholar himself, like all



The Southeast *makara* bears an inscription comprising only of two syllables (Figures 8–9), enclosed in opening/closing signs (in the shape of an opening counter-clockwise and a closing clockwise curl, here both represented by the sign @), on the knob at the hind end of the ‘manes’ of the *makara*: @ so ja @.



Figure 8. Northern Gopura, Candi Kedaton, Muara Jambi. Inscription on the flank of the Southeast *makara* viewed from the East (Photograph by the author, 2011).



Figure 9. Northern Gopura, Candi Kedaton, Muara Jambi. Inscription on the flank of the Southeast *makara* viewed from the West (Photograph by the author, 2011).

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predecessors, actually confounds highly ornamental modes of more or less quadratic shape with plain ones such as the mode that concerns us here.

The meaning of this short text is not immediately evident. I hesitantly propose to read the *akṣaras* together as one word, *soja*, and to understand this as a spelling equivalent of *svaja*, which literally means ‘self-born’ and normally denotes a kind of snake, perhaps a ‘viper’, in Sanskrit. This might correspond with the fact that this *makara* shows a cobra protruding from its mouth. Another possibility is to read this word together with the text on the Southwest *makara*, as I will discuss below.

The Southwest *makara* bears an inscription of two lines on the hind part of its proper right (outer) side (Figure 10). The language is distinctly Old Javanese, not Old Malay, as revealed most explicitly by the same pronominal clitic *-nira* that we have encountered in the first inscription discussed above, attached here to a derivative of the typically Javanese base *vurṣita*.<sup>13</sup> The present one reads:

- (1) //pamuṣitanira mpu ku-  
 (2) suma [liminal signs]



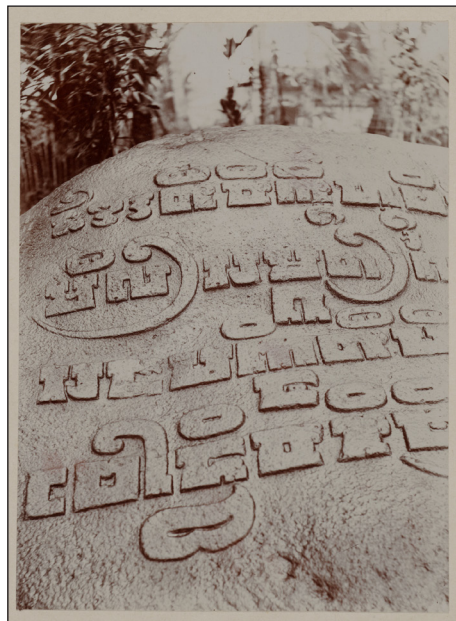
Figure 10. Northern Gopura, Candi Kedaton, Muara Jambi. Inscription on the flank of the Southwest *makara* viewed from the West (Photograph by the author, 2011).

The sign represented here as // is a liminal sign of the same type as the four non-letter/non-numeral signs which terminate the text, but its shape with a long clockwise curl passing through a vertical bar is not known to me from other Indonesian inscriptions. With precisely the same sentence structure as that of the inscription Kapalo Bukit Gombak II, the *prima facie* interpretation of the text is: ‘The gift of master Kusuma’. If we now return to the problem of the word *soja*, it needs to be recalled that we do not know the original indigenous

<sup>13</sup> This base, of common occurrence in Old Javanese, has the appearance of a loanword from Sanskrit, but its source in that language is not evident (Zoetmulder 1982: 2334). The word does not seem to have been discussed in Gonda’s *Sanskrit in Indonesia* (1973).



appellation for the beasts that are referred to as *makara* in archaeological literature, and it is not inconceivable that in *soja* we have found precisely an/the original term in Old Javanese for *makara* in general. In that case, the inscriptions on the two *makaras* may form one sentence, meaning 'Makaras, the gifts of master Kusuma'.



Figures 11-13. OD Photographs 2692-2694, dated 1917, of the inscription of Puh Sarang, courtesy of the Kern Institute, Leiden University Library.

The donation recorded here can be dated on palaeographic grounds to about the period 950-1050 CE. For a form of writing in relief that is basically

identical to the *akṣaras* on these two *makaras* can be observed in two internally dated epigraphic monuments from East Java. The first is the inscription of Puh Sarang in Kediri regency, dated to 924 Śaka (1003 CE), captured in a group of excellent archaeological photographs from the former *Oudheidkundige Dienst*.<sup>14</sup> OD 2692–2694 (Figures 11–13).<sup>15</sup> The other East Javanese epigraphic monument is the group of short inscriptions in relief from the bathing place Jolotundo on Mount Penanggungan, one of which (Figure 14) bears the *millésime* 899 Śaka (977/8 CE), the other ones – for example the one reading @ *gəmpəṅ* · @ depicted here in Figure 15 – being dateable by association. A third relevant comparison is furnished by the first of four associated stones from the Sukabumi area of West Java on which is engraved an inscription recording the foundation by king Śrī Jayabhūpati of the domain of Sañ Hyañ Tapak ‘The Sacred Footprint’ in the year 952 Śaka (1030 CE). This stone is captured in OD 1456 (Figure 16).<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> A database comprising all of the more than 21,000 of these “OD” photos that arrived in public Dutch collections until the late 1950s, before contacts between Indonesian and Dutch institutions finally became too severely weakened after decolonization, is searchable at <https://socrates.leidenuniv.nl> (under the collection “Kern Institute”: use prefix “OD-” with hyphen for searches by OD number). A substantial number of photographs is already available in digital form, including the OD photos used for this article, and can be viewed through the Leiden website.

<sup>15</sup> See also the photo of a drawing OD 3778. For the most reliable reading of this text, I refer to Damais (1955: 243).

<sup>16</sup> See also the photo of an estampage that is plate 1 in Pleyte 1916. For this part of the inscription, a reading with slight improvements *vis-à-vis* that of Pleyte was offered by Damais (1955: 86–87). Different from the spelling we see in *pamurṣita* on the Muara Jambi *makara*, this Sañ Hyañ Tapak inscription shows the highly idiosyncratic feature of consistently placing the sign for syllable-final *r* (called *layar* in Javanese, *repha* in Sanskrit) on top of the *akṣara* after which it should be read, rather than on the following one (see, for example, °*vārdana*° in line 8). This feature, which later became the norm in Javanese manuscripts (see Acri 2011: 85) and is also found, surely under Javanese influence, in an Old Malay inscription from Lampung (Damais 1962b: 298), is not, to my knowledge, observed in any other inscriptions of the islands of Java and Sumatra unquestionably datable before the fifteenth century CE; the palaeographic shift in placement of the *layar* that has occurred on Java is, alas, not discussed in De Casparis 1975. The fact that our Muara Jambi inscription places the *layar* in the normal position possibly means that we can exclude an, anyhow unlikely, connection with West Java.





Figure 14. Inscription with millésime 899 Śaka at Jolotundo (Photograph by Hadi Sidomulyo, 2012).



Figure 15. OD Photograph 6575, dated 1922, of an inscription at Jolotundo, courtesy of the Kern Institute, Leiden University Library.



Figure 16. OD Photograph 1456, dating from about 1912, of inscribed stone National Museum D.73, courtesy of the Kern Institute, Leiden University Library.

This paleographic dating confirms the stylistic one proposed by Marijke Klokke (Forthcoming), who informs me that it is abnormal for pairs of non-identical *makaras* to be erected at opposite sides of a single staircase. There is thus some reason to suspect that the newly discovered *makaras* of the Gopura of Candi Kedaton did not originally belong together. One may speculate that they were manufactured on Java, before they were brought to Jambi at Mpu Kusuma's behest, and such a Javanese connection would explain the use of Old Javanese language, but even in this scenario we remain in the dark as to whether the inscriptions would have been engraved before or after transport to Sumatra, and why the norm of erecting identical *makaras* in pairs was not respected.

### 3 INSCRIBED GOLDEN BOWL FOUND IN ROKAN HILIR, RIAU

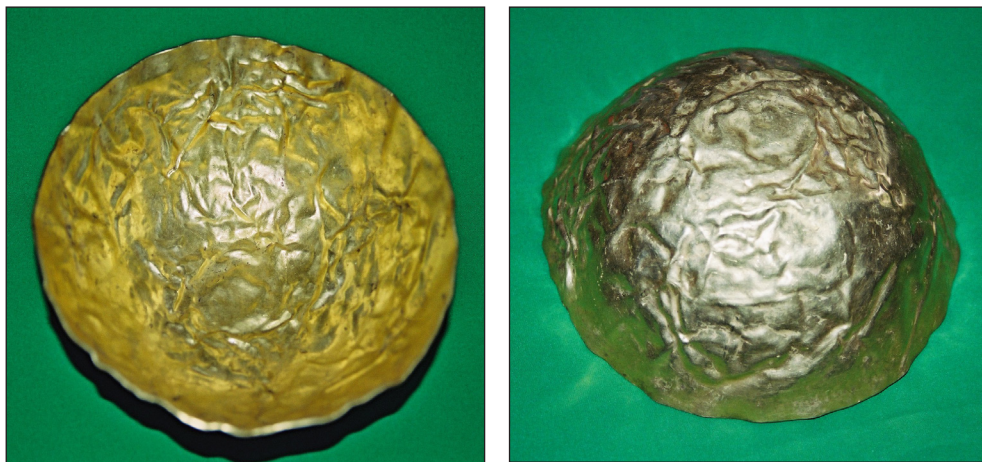
In the framework of the collaborative research project of Pusat Penelitian dan Pengembangan Arkeologi Nasional (recently renamed Pusat Arkeologi Nasional, or National Centre for Archaeology) and the EFEO to prepare an inventory of all (non-Islamic) pre-1600 inscriptions of maritime Southeast Asia, Machi Suhadi and Daniel Perret visited the Museum Daerah Riau at Pekanbaru on 12 April 2004. They found there, besides inscriptions from Muara Takus,<sup>17</sup> an inscribed low golden bowl (Figures 17–18), said to have been found in *kecamatan* Tanah Putih, Rokan Hilir regency, in Riau province, and to have entered the museum's collection in the 1990s.<sup>18</sup> As far as I know,

<sup>17</sup> For these I refer to Griffiths Forthcoming b.

<sup>18</sup> The object and its inscription are mentioned in Gallop Forthcoming. This paper deals with Malay inscriptions on silverware of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The structure of these inscriptions is remarkably consistent with that of the inscription of one millennium



the object and its inscription have not yet been published. The dimensions Machi Suhadi and Daniel Perret recorded are height 5.5 cm, diameter 15 cm, thickness 0.1 cm.



Figures 17-18. Golden bowl in Museum Daerah Riau (Photographs by Daniel Perret, 2004).



Figure 19. Inscription on the golden bowl in Museum Daerah Riau (Photograph by Daniel Perret, 2004).

The inscription (Figure 19) can be read and translated as follows:

saragi da lakhaṇi  
'Bowl of lady/sir Lakhaṇi'

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earlier discussed here. Gallop has observed that "A significant proportion of named owners appear to be female".

Close similarities with this object and its inscription can be observed in an artefact from the Wonoboyo hoard, now held in the National Museum at Jakarta under inventory number 8924. The bowl in question bears the text *saragi dyah buñā*, meaning ‘Bowl of lady/sir Buñā’, as reported in various publications, none of which regrettably includes a photo of the inscription itself.<sup>19</sup> The Riau bowl can be dated, on the basis of paleographical considerations, to the ninth or tenth century CE. As I have pointed out elsewhere (Griffiths 2011), at this period we are unable to distinguish Javanese and Sumatran forms of the Kawi script that is used here, so the shape of the script tells us little about the place of manufacture and utilization. On the honorific element *da/ḍa*, used both in Old Malay and in Old Javanese, I refer to a recent publication (Griffiths Forthcoming a). The name Lakhaṇi is evidently based on a Prakrit form corresponding to Sanskrit *Lakṣaṇī*,<sup>20</sup> which could theoretically be either feminine (from the stem *lakṣaṇī*) or masculine (from the stem *lakṣaṇin*). Since the word *buñā* means ‘flower’ in Malay, it is perhaps more natural to assume that Dyah Buñā was a lady;<sup>21</sup> and since a proper name *Lakṣaṇa* is attested several times in Old Javanese inscriptions (Damais 1970: 713) where it almost certainly denoted men, one might expect a feminine variant of the name to have existed, and to have taken the form *Lakṣaṇī*. The argument remains tenuous, but I am somewhat inclined to assume that Dyah Buñā and Da Lakhaṇi were ladies. As for the language of the inscription, there is no morpheme that explicitly points to Old Javanese, but since there is no known attestation of the word *saragi* in any form of Malay known to me, and since there is no reason to doubt that the Wonoboyo inscription is in Old Javanese, I am inclined to assume

<sup>19</sup> On the Wonoboyo hoard in general, see Lunsingh Scheurleer 2010: 30–31 (with further references, to which the special 1993 issue of *Berkala Arkeologi* Yogyakarta and the articles Wahyono Martowikrido 1998 and 1999 may be added). Photos of the bowl in question have been published in Bianchini 1995, item 22, pp. 84–85, a French-language exhibition catalog later republished in English as Webb 1999, item 24, pp. 72–73. The description of the bowl, including a reading of the inscription, seems to be due to Martono Martowikrido. Only this scholar has given a reproduction in the form of an eye-copy (1998: 136). He is also the only scholar to read *buñā* rather than *buña*. Judging by his eye-copy, this reading is correct. However, the discussions in his several publications of the meaning, significance and date of the inscription, contain various doubtful points. The attribution to the early tenth century remains open to question, and an earlier dating cannot be excluded. The reading of the inscription was also published in Riboet Darmosoetopo 1993.

<sup>20</sup> Compare De Casparis 1988 on such Prakrit loanwords in Old Javanese, especially (pp. 60–61) on the word *lākha* deriving from Sanskrit *lākṣa* ‘lac’ through an expected Prakrit form *lākkha*. Since degeminated spelling is a common feature of written documents in Java, as elsewhere in ‘Indianized’ South and Southeast Asia, I do not think it is necessary to follow De Casparis in speaking of ‘Proto-Neo-Indian’ for the mere reason that we do not find *lākkha*.

<sup>21</sup> The name *buñā* (with short final *a*) is attested at least once as part of a place name in the epigraphy of ancient Java, but in an inscription in Old Malay language (Damais 1970: 397, 691). I do not think the difference *a/ā* is in itself necessarily significant, and in this respect I disagree with Boechari, who believed that vowel length in the proper name *Salaḍū* necessarily indicates a female (see Boechari 1967–68: 15, 2012: 128). Without further examples, it seems dangerous to apply a pattern of the Sanskrit language to names from local languages where vowel length is not phonemically distinctive. But in this case, I do argue, on other grounds, that we are dealing with a woman.



that the language of the Riau inscription was the same. Compared with the preceding two items, and especially the first, which was certainly produced locally, the present case of a highly portable artefact leaves open the possibility that the inscribed artefact was not locally produced; the determination of the language as Old Javanese gives specific reason to think of an import from Java, whether in the distant or in the more recent past. Without knowledge of the archaeological context where the object was found, to confirm or exclude that it is a production or settlement site likely to have been the original place of manufacture or utilization of the bowl, this of course remains a matter of pure speculation. At the very least, the pair of bowls bearing self-identifying label inscriptions with the word *saragi* clearly show that Zoetmulder's gloss of this word as meaning "a copper kettle or pot" (1982: 1687) needs to be revised to agree more closely with the shape of these bowls and to include also objects made of gold.

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