LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS OF WAR AND WARFARE IN OLD JAVANESE KAKAWIN POETRY

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MA

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Abstract
This thesis studies literary representations of war in *kakawin*. The battle, a central event of *kakawin* warfare, is conceptualised as a sacrifice on the battlefield. Blood-spilling and unlimited martial violence are depicted as the two most important aspects of the battle and *kakawin* warfare pays scant attention to strategic aims and tactical considerations. The main argument of this thesis is that virtually all aspects of warfare, even the most mundane, have been constructed to represent martial violence in terms of sacrifice. Furthermore, the thesis demonstrates that literary representations of warfare in *kakawin* are highly selective. Those aspects that were of high symbolic value for premodern court society, for example, the decapitation of the enemies on the battlefield, are given prominence, while aspects of low symbolic value, such as the logistics of war campaigns, were of little or no concern to the authors. Javanese poets preferred to think about martial violence in terms of metaphor. They employed the same set of words and concepts for battle as for animal sacrifice and the hunt, two other activities in which life is destroyed. I argue that in numerous metaphors Javanese poets express the idea that blood spilled on the battlefield is an enriching substance that increases the fertility of the earth and its potential to grow crops and sustain people. Correspondences are drawn between gushing blood and rivers bringing precious water to peasants, and between the spilled blood of fallen warriors and the flow of volcanic mud (*guntur*) bringing enriching minerals to the fields. I argue that the earth is envisaged as the ultimate recipient of oblations consisting of the flesh and blood of dead soldiers. I argue further that the literary motif of corpses of warriors slain in battle, left lying on the battlefield, is structurally similar to the phenomenon of blood offerings (*tawur*) to chthonian spirits. I demonstrate that a similar sacrificial symbolism is known from the Old Javanese inscriptional record such as the establishment of religious free-hold territories (*sīma*). The thesis also presents the first sustained discussion of the rich imagery of cooking, eating and food symbolism that pervades the depiction of battles in *kakawin*.

This thesis presents new evidence that poets did more than merely conform to poetical requirements in including the war scenes typical of *kakawin*. Earlier scholars have presumed that literary representations of war and warfare in *kakawin* are highly stereotypical and among the least ‘localized’ themes in Old Javanese poetry (Zoetmulder 1974: 188). Nevertheless, their findings have been based primarily on the analysis of a single text, the *Bhāratayuddha*, the twelfth-century Old Javanese version of Sanskrit *Mahābhārata*. To develop a more balanced view of the topic, I have collected and analysed the available evidence pertaining to war and warfare in all *kakawin* belonging to the Javanese textual tradition. In addition, I analyse in detail the structure of the *kakawin* army and propose a number of refined understandings of Old Javanese military
terminology. These findings demonstrate that, in spite of the fictional character of *kakawin* warfare, the warriors are engaged in martial practices that do reflect the martial culture familiar in the premodern Javanese court milieu. As was previously argued by Creese (2004: 42) for the topic of sexuality and marriage patterns in the *kakawin* world, it was essential that *kakawin* embodied the social reality of their time or they would lose force.

The motif of battle-sacrifice is not only a powerful literary formula. The symbolism of the metaphor of battle as a sacrifice pervades virtually all of the martial scenes. This thesis attributes the prominence of formulaic passages in descriptions of battles to the function of the author, the *kawi*, as the practitioner of ‘literary magic’, or the ‘language priest’ in the service of his royal patron (Teeuw and Robson 2005: 1). Poets ‘infused’ the text with the formulas that served to tap into the protective power of (terrific aspect of) the divinity.

Finally, I develop the concept of the ‘landscape of warfare’. Javanese poets constructed a mytho-poetical zone of war—the ‘landscape of war’—in which all elements of battle and war embody the martial: not only warriors, but also animals, plants, and even inanimate objects, all contribute to the creation of an all-encompassing physical and sensory world. Virtually all the passages in which the ‘landscape of warfare’ is found make use of Javanese rather than Sanskrit words and thus this landscape reflects Old Javanese aesthetic and poetics.
Declaration by author

This thesis is composed of my original work, and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to co-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

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Publications during candidature


Publications included in the thesis
No publications included.

Contributions by others to the thesis
No contributions by others.

Statement of parts of the thesis submitted to qualify for the award of another degree
None.
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Keywords

war, warfare, literary representations, Old Javanese, kakawin, sacrificial symbolism.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The subject of war is an important theme in Old Javanese *kakawin* poetry. Descriptions of battles, and to a much lesser extent accounts of other martial exploits, such as ambushes and spying missions, abound in *kakawin*. In fact, war, along with court love and eroticism, represents the major thematic concerns of *kakawin* poetry (Creese 2004: 4). Composed on Java between the ninth and fifteenth century and later also on Bali and Lombok, *kakawin* represent court epic poems written in the literary register of Old Javanese language and sharing the metrical system of the Sanskrit kāvya. Scholars freely acknowledge dependence of the *kakawin* martial imagery on the Sanskrit literary models (Zoetmulder 1974: 188), though they point to the added material that has no parallels in Sanskrit texts (Supomo 1993: 30). In spite of the absence of a (written) tradition of Old Javanese literary theory, it is generally supposed that a high rate of recurrence of battle scenes in the texts is caused by formal requirements for the ‘prescribed battle scenes’ (most recently Wesley 2011: 12). Earlier scholars have presumed that literary representations of war and warfare in *kakawin* are highly stereotypical and among the least ‘localized’ themes in Old Javanese poetry (Zoetmulder 1974: 188). I suggest, on the contrary, that literary representations of war reflect the importance ascribed to sacrificial elements of martial violence in pre-Islamic Java. While the findings of the scholars who have studied literary representations of war in *kakawin* have been based primarily on the analysis of a single text, the *Bhāratayuddha*, the twelfth-century Old Javanese version of Sanskrit *Mahābhārata*, I develop a more balanced view of the topic, analysing the available evidence pertaining to war and warfare in all *kakawin* belonging to the Javanese textual tradition. The aims of this thesis are:

1. To survey a selection of Old Javanese *kakawin*, especially the texts authored in Java, with special reference to depictions of war and warfare.
2. To describe, analyse, and compare the dominant themes that emerge.
3. To draw conclusions on the significance of such themes within the setting of pre-Islamic Javanese civilization.

1.1 APPROACH: WAR AND WARFARE IN KAKAWIN POETRY

Since the beginning of the study of the *kakawin* genre, scholars have recognised the importance of the theme of war. Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, a keen observer of Javanese politics and military affairs and the author of *The History of Java* (1817), has recognized that Old Javanese and Sanskrit literary representations of war and warfare are based on the common tradition. Raffles was
acquainted with the Javanese kakawin tradition and devoted one chapter in his book to the Bhāratayuddha, known to him under its modern Javanese name Brata Yudha Kawi (1830: 465-524). By the early nineteenth century, however, kakawin were still considered to represent an offshoot of the Sanskrit literature and Raffles was unable to say if the Bhāratayuddha was composed on Java or in India (1830: 459). Unsurprisingly, Sanskritists were the first scholars to study the Old Javanese language and the kakawin literature in detail. Early textual editions and a few other studies on kakawin literature, such as those by Friedrich (1850, 1852), Kern (1873), Gunning (1903), and Poerbatjaraka (1926, 1931), though of enduring value for past and future editors of individual kakawin texts, offer very little of relevance to the study of literary representations of war.

For the first studies relevant to the subject of war in the kakawin genre, we must look in another direction, to the field of lexicography. Old Javanese studies have been blessed with two gifted lexicographers; Van der Tuuk, an earlier of them, compiled a monumental four-volume Kawi-Balineesch-Nederlandsch Woordenboek (1897-1912), a work that remains even now the best source for a number of otherwise poorly known terms and concepts pertaining to premodern warfare. Working on Bali during the period when local rulers still exercised political and military power, Van der Tuuk collected Balinese words used to gloss otherwise completely unknown Old Javanese terms and concepts.

Another important contribution to the subject of war and warfare in kakawin resulted from a novel reading of the texts, especially the Arjunawiwāha, Bhāratayuddha and the Deśawarṇana by C.C. Berg. Certainly not a part of the pre-war scholarly mainstream, Berg was a scholar of Javanese literature with philological training in Indonesian languages. In a number of studies he argued that Old Javanese kakawin (as well as Middle Javanese kidung) could not be fully appreciated without the understanding of Javanese and Balinese theories of power (1938, 1951, 1962, 1969). Berg was the first scholar who realised that along with their literary and didactic value, kakawin functioned as sacred objects, royal regalia imbued with supernatural power (1969: 31). Berg developed a hypothesis that Javanese kawi served as, what Berg called for a lack of better terms, a ‘priest of literary magic’ (priester van de literaire magie). By manipulating historical data and by way of allusion, says Berg, the poet fortified the ‘magic energy’ of his royal patron (1953: 117). This led Berg to propose that kakawin represented allegories of political power (1938: 24). In the later period of his academic life Berg (1962; 1969: 124-143) argued that during the Majapahit period, the most glorious moment of Javanese premodern history, there was much reworking of earlier textual material, including kakawin. This view, however, was never fully endorsed by other scholars.

The Deśawarṇana in particular became the focus of Berg’s later literary interests (1969: 46-67). Berg has argued that the Deśawarṇana, considered by most of the scholars to represent a
'historical kakawin', actually only masquerades as a historical text. In fact, says Berg, the Deśavārṇana represents an allegory on the Buddhist Lalitavistara, composed to place the Majapahit royalty into a web of spiritual associations and religious benefits (1969: 46-67). For a number of reasons, the Deśavārṇana is the kakawin that has attracted by far the greatest scholarly attention, both from general historians and historians of literature (Krom 1919, 1931; Poerbatjaraka 1924; Pigeaud 1960-1963; Robson 1995). The textual edition by Pigeaud, though criticised on various grounds (Johns 1965: 534), remains the most complex study on the cultural history of Majapahit empire. Importantly in the context of this thesis, Pigeaud devoted a considerable attention to a number of aspects pertaining to premodern warfare. Pigeaud was the first scholar who paid attention to Old Javanese military terminology, arguing, for example, that the word pajurit may represent an originally Kaḍiri term denoting the class of professional soldiers (1962: 122).

With the exception of Berg and Pigeaud, until the late 1960s scholars perceived kakawin mostly as a literary expression of the ‘Greater India’, a trans-regional cultural formation in which the Old Javanese literature was perceived as derivative, imitative, and devoid of inner dynamics (Ghosh 1936). A turning point in the study of Old Javanese literature came in 1969 when two events challenged this longstanding view. The first was the publication of an insightful article by Aichele (1969), which provided a detailed comparison of the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa and the Śivagrha inscription (856), demonstrating that the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa, long recognised for its literary qualities (Hooykaas 1958), could be read as an allegory of Javanese political power in the ninth century. The other event that challenged the view of kakawin as derivative, rather poor imitations of Sanskrit kāvyā, was the publication of the co-edited textual edition of the Śīwarātrikalpa (Teeuw et al. 1969).

The next milestone in the study of kakawin poetry came with the publication of Zoetmulder’s seminal work on the Old Javanese literature, Kalangwan; A survey of Old Javanese literature. Here, Zoetmulder has not only presented a concise literary-historical overview of Old Javanese prose and poetry, but he has also developed a highly original theory of kakawin aesthetic teleology. Zoetmulder (1974: 187-214) has devoted the whole chapter entitled ‘The World of the Poem’ to demonstrate the abundance of the evidence that reflects, from the court perspective, the life of premodern Java and Bali: fauna, flora, the system of counting time, seasons and weather, and literary reflections of all of these phenomena are based on the local lore. Zoetmulder has cautioned, however, against over-zealous acceptance of kakawin narrative as a reflection of Javanese or Balinese premodern culture; the theme of war has been selected as an exemplum of this attitude: ‘it would be unwise’, warns Zoetmulder, ‘to rely too much on the Bhāratayuddha for a true description of Old Javanese warfare’ (1974: 188). Though Zoetmulder’s vigilant warning is well-placed, it proved only too efficient and influential: post-Kalangwan literary-historical advances in the study
of *kakawin* have all but bypassed the theme of war and warfare. Still, a number of important contributions that have a high relevance for the study of the theme of war were published after that time. One is Robson's insightful article on the theory of the Old Javanese poetics, which draws a distinction between several forms of Old Javanese poetry, such as *palambang* and *kakawin* (1983). Robson’s findings have been used in this analysis to re-define the nature of the *kawi’s* work as being distinct from the literary endeavors of the literary characters that only figure in the *kakawin* in the capacity of *kawi*.¹

In the tradition started by Van der Tuuk, virtually the only work on the subject of war and warfare in the Old Javanese literature continued to be done in the field of lexicography: Zoetmulder’s *Old Javanese-English Dictionary*, published in two volumes in 1982, represents a truly magisterial achievement in which almost all of the terms pertaining to war and warfare known from the *kakawin* poetry, including the words of completely unknown meaning, are covered as never before. All textual editions of the *kakawin* poetry published since 1982 hugely benefited from Zoetmulder’s meticulous work.

Another work that has exercised influence on our current understanding of the *kakawin* genre is the monograph by Creese (2004) on marriage patterns and sexuality in the *kakawin* world: *Women of the Kakawin World: Marriage and Sexuality in the Indic Courts of Java and Bali*. As discussed above, Creese has further developed the theoretical concept of the *kakawin* world, emphasising the idealised nature of the social, cultural, and political norms represented in the *kakawin* genre. Creese’s observation is of direct relevance for the study of the theme of war and warfare as it helps to understand the literary representations as idealised and prescriptive.

Another recent contribution to the field of Old Javanese studies that has clarified, and will continue to do so, our understanding of the concept of war in *kakawin* genre is the textual edition and study of the *Bhomäntaka* (Teeuw and Robson 2005). In this meticulously prepared edition, Old Javanese studies have reached a new level of understanding of the literary motif of warfare in the *kakawin* genre: for the first time, serious attention has been paid to a number of military terms and the meanings of many of them have been clarified in the substantial commentary to the text (found on pages 387-451). In the introductory part to the textual edition of the *Arjunawiwäha*, another *kakawin* which has its share of difficult vocabulary pertaining to the warfare, Robson (2008: 18-19) has refined our understanding of the concept of the *kakawin* world, suggesting that we embrace a wider understanding of this concept which included not only the world of humans, as imagined in the texts, but also the world inhabited by the divine and *rākṣasa* characters, both the heaven and the netherworld.

¹ See section 1.4 in this chapter.
The most recent contribution to Old Javanese studies that is relevant to this thesis is the co-edited volume on the Old Javanese *kakawin Rāmāyana* (Acri *et al.* 2011). Summarising the old and offering some new information on the earliest known *kakawin* and its place in the literary cultures of Java and Bali, the volume displays a number of approaches to the Old Javanese *Rāmāyana* adopted by the scholars working in the field of Old Javanese studies. Acri (2011a), one of the editors, has expressed the hope that the volume ‘would contribute to overcoming the contrasting viewpoints, emphasizing either indigenous or Indic elements and points of view’ and ‘try to revive the close interconnection once characterizing the fields of Sanskrit and Old Javanese studies’. It is also my belief that the rich interplay between the Indic and local elements make the study of literary representations in *kakawin* such an interesting field of research. I must refute, however, the view advanced by Wesley (2011: 12) in his contribution in Acri *et al.* (2011) that ‘scholars freely acknowledge instances in Kakawin of the prescribed battle scenes’. While it is true that a number of scholars consider the motif of battle as an ‘obligatory part’ of *kakawin*, it is not at all certain that the motif of battle was believed by the ancients to be an obligatory part of the *kakawin* genre. Among the contributions in Acri *et al.* (2011), Robson’s study on the ‘hymns of praise’ is of direct relevance to this thesis, as in a number of cases these hymns were addressed to the terrific aspect of divinity (Robson 2011: 1-10).

### 1.2 Previous Research on the Subject: Review of the Literature

The study of literary representations of warfare in Old Javanese *kakawin* poetry has to date attracted only limited scholarly attention. This reflects not only a dearth of scholars working in the field of Old Javanese literature in Indonesia and abroad, but, more generally, our poor knowledge of the subject mirrors an insufficient understanding of warfare practices and war culture in premodern Southeast Asia. In this chapter I provide a review of the literature on the subject of premodern Southeast Asian warfare. I start with a general overview of the research field. Then I discuss the studies pertaining to various aspects of war and warfare in premodern Southeast Asia. Finally, I analyse in detail the few studies pertaining specifically to the subject of literary representation of warfare in premodern Southeast Asian literatures.

To date there are only two general overviews of warfare in premodern Southeast Asia. An early start was made by Quaritch Wales (1952) in *Ancient South-East Asian Warfare*. Quaritch Wales, a practicing military officer, was the first to argue that the study of local warfare cultures can profit from a wider perspective as he recognized that many elements of premodern warfare, such as the use of blowguns and the ritual emphasis on taking head trophies, were shared among the peoples who lived in state societies and those whose political framework was tribal. For its time this
was a landmark achievement that still remains an important source on a number of cultural aspects of warfare, even though a number of views of Quaritch Wales on the practical matters pertaining to war and combat have been corrected by more recent scholarship. It would be decades before other historians tried to identify commonality in warfare across the region as a whole. Reid (1988) has identified aspects of warfare common to the region as a part of a large project to understand the early modern period in the region’s history. In another survey that covered the early-modern period, Andaya (1994) directed attention to the cultural importance of warfare, offering a more sophisticated rendering of the importance of religious concepts in warfare than given four decades earlier by Quaritch Wales.

The second book-length study on premodern warfare in Southeast Asia appeared in 2004 and was authored by Michael Charney, a scholar of early-modern Myanmar. His *Southeast Asian Warfare; 1300-1900*, covers warfare in mainland and island Southeast Asia. Most important cultural aspects of warfare are discussed: the spiritual and religious concerns of warriors, including the concept of invulnerability, the spiritual importance of women in military campaigns, and the meaning of head-taking practices. Premodern combat is reconstructed, even though mostly for mainland societies. A wide range of weapons and their use is discussed and the problem of military logistics has been covered. The use of animals, both in combat (horses, elephants), and in military logistics (elephants, buffaloes), has been reviewed. Some forms of warfare, only rarely discussed in other studies, such as riverine warfare and siege warfare, are analysed in unprecedented detail. The time range selected for coverage bridges the late period of ‘classical states’ and the early-modern period when gunpowder technologies changed warfare in many parts of Southeast Asia. The methodological challenges of covering such a diverse region over the course of six centuries are clearly great. It is especially the period before 1500 that is covered in a less complex way than the period from the sixteenth century till the end of the nineteenth century. While Charney makes use of some early Burmese and Mon texts, Old Javanese and Middle Javanese textual evidence, with the exception of the *Deśawaraṇana*, has not been used. The same pertains to the Old Javanese inscriptional record. Charney’s book may not have covered all aspects of warfare in great detail but it presents a well-structured overview of the field of Southeast Asian premodern warfare. Another important contribution to our understanding of warfare culture in early Southeast Asia is Lieberman’s (2004, 2009) comprehensive two-volume *Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context, c. 800-1830* that covers, among a plethora of other topics, also warfare. In comparison to similar patterns of development elsewhere in Eurasia, Lieberman provides the context for the understanding of the historical role of warfare in the region.

Studies on weaponry in Southeast Asia are relatively numerous, though few use rigorous academic methodologies. Jacq-Hergoualc’h (1979, English version 2007) represents the best study
on the weaponry and battle dress of premodern Cambodia. Jacq-Hergoualc’h (1991) is the most complex study on the weaponry of premodern Campa. For Java, Draeger (1972) still remains an important source. Sun Laichen (2003a, 2003b) has discussed in detail the transfer of gunpowder technology from Ming China to the mainland Southeast Asia.

Tactics and war strategy, traditionally representing a research agenda of the so-called ‘old military studies school’ have been only poorly studied in Southeast Asia. Two exceptions are Van der Kraan (1995), a study that covers also indigenous Balinese war strategy, and Fernquest (2006), a study on the military leadership in premodern Myanmar. Only rarely, in marked contrast to the trend common in other parts of the world, have war campaigns and individual battles been studied by historians and incorporated into discussions on general histories in the region. An early exception to this pattern is represented by Luce’s (1922) detailed study on Cambodian invasions of Lower Burma in Angkorian period and their historical significance. Terwiel (1988) analysed the important battle of Nong-Sarai (1593). By far the best analysis of any individual battle is Angeles (2007), a detailed study of the battle of Mactan, and a sophisticated discussion of the indigenous concept of warfare in the early-modern Philippines. Building on the early work of Majumdar (1961), Sakhuja and Sakhuja (2009) have analysed the naval expeditions of Rajendra Cola I into insular Southeast Asia.


Turning specifically to the subject of literary representations of war and warfare, the harvest is lean. To the best of my knowledge, only four studies have been published to date that discuss specifically the problem of literary representations of war and warfare in premodern Southeast Asia. An important contribution to the discussion on literary representations of violence and war in
premodern Southeast Asian literature is Day’s (2002) work *Fluid Iron: State Formation in Southeast Asia*. Especially in chapter five, called ‘Violence and Beauty’, Day has addressed a number of topics pertaining to the process of aestheticisation of violence, a key issue in *kakawin* poetry. Day (2002:258) argues that the cultural concept of ‘beauty’ of martial violence is not simply a matter of poetic imagery but represents a narrative strategy that serves to legitimate the secular power of rulers by linking them to a mythological master-narrative. In more concrete terms, Day explores the theme of Abhimanyu’s fight to the death found in the *Bhāratayuddha*. Hägerdal (2004) has discussed the literary representations of war in traditional Balinese and Sasak literatures, comparing the indigenous approach and perspectives with, in his view, more accurate and balanced view of contemporary European sources. Recently, Soe Thuzar Myint (2011) has discussed the literary representations of the battle of Ayutthaya in the early-modern and modern Burmese literature. The most sophisticated contribution to date is Hunter (2011b) who has provided in a nuanced study a comparative analysis of the motif of the wrestling match between Arjuna and Indra in the Old Javanese *Arjunawiwāha* and in the Sanskrit *Kīrāṭarjunīya*. Hunter discusses in detail religious symbolism of the literary motif that had a great influence on Old Javanese warfare imagination. While not concerned exclusively with the theme of literary representations of war and warfare, the recently published critical edition of the *Sumanasāntaka*, a co-edited volume by Worsley, Supomo, Hunter, and Fletcher (2013), is an important contribution to the subject. In his contribution to this volume, Hunter (2013) has provided a valuable comparison of the literary depiction of warfare in the *Sumanasāntaka* and in the Sanskrit *Raghuvaṃśa*.

1.3 METHODS AND SOURCES

This thesis uses the *kakawin* authored on Java as its main source. While it is acknowledged that Javanese and Balinese traditions represent a literary continuum and reflect the same values of premodern court society, of the Balinese *kakawin* only the two versions of the *Hariśraya* (A and B) were used extensively, while a small number of other Balinese *kakawin* have been occasionally used for comparative evidence. There are two reasons why the corpus of Balinese *kakawin* was not used in this thesis. First: on a number of occasions, arguments in this thesis are based on the comparison of *kakawin* with the Old Javanese epigraphical evidence; in all cases, the inscriptions that have been consulted were issued on Java and would thus reflect Javanese rather than Balinese reality. Second: the same holds true for the comparative evidence culled from two historical texts that have been used extensively in this thesis, the *Nawanatya* and the *Pararaton*, both of them
composed on Java and reflecting specifically Javanese premodern reality (Pigeaud 1967: 72, 121). It has been also observed that Javanese kakawin known to us today stood the test of time and many of them, though not all, have long been appreciated in Bali as the best specimens of the kakawin genre, what Robson aptly calls the ‘classics’ (1972: 309). The kakawin Rāmāyaṇa, particularly, has been regarded as the so-called ādi-kakawin, the preeminent example of the kakawin genre, and has been immensely influential in Balinese kakawin tradition (Creese 2011: 93).

It should be noted that the textual editions of kakawin of the Javanese tradition that have been utilised in this thesis are based mainly on the manuscripts preserved on Bali. The manuscripts that belong to the much less known tradition of Javanese scriptoria, such as the manuscripts from the so-called ‘Merapi-Merbabu collection’, are generally poorly preserved (Zoetmulder 1974: 40-41) and, as observed by Van der Molen, in many of them ‘deviation has often progressed beyond repair’ (2007: 96).

Only fifteen kakawin authored on Java have survived from a period of almost six hundred years (Creese 2004: 10). This is not much compared to the very rich Balinese tradition with more than one hundred and fifty known texts, including shorter lyrical poems (Creese 1999: 46). Most of the Javanese kakawin have been reliably dated by the names of poets’ patrons mentioned in the text, usually in the introductory manggala.

Even though all Javanese kakawin have their share of evidence pertaining to the subject of war and warfare and all of the fifteen kakawin have been utilized in the thesis, seven texts stand apart as the most important in view of the richness of their evidence. These are the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa, Arjunawiwāha, Bhāratayuddha, Bhomāntaka, Sumanasāntaka, Desawarnāna and the Arjunawijaya. In what follows, these seven texts are introduced and their value for our understanding of the theme of war in the kakawin genre is assessed. The remaining kakawin are discussed only at the place of the text where their evidence is utilised for the first time.

Out of the six texts marked as the most important for the argument of this thesis, the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa should be discussed first, as it is considered to stand in a category of its own. Composed, according to the current scholarly opinion, in the middle of the ninth century (Acri 2011a: xii), the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa is the only specimen of its genre that dates from the Central Javanese period (732-928). The language of the text differs in a number of aspects from all other kakawin and the grammar (especially the conjugated forms) and lexicon demonstrate numerous ‘irregularities’ compared to the 'standard' register of the kakawin composed in East Java (Poerbatjaraka 1932: 35). Another feature specific to the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa is an abundant use of complex poetic figures, such as the figures of repetition (yamaka), employed in many cases with a mastery not reached in other kakawin (Hunter 2011a: 44). Based partially on the Sanskrit Bhaṭṭikāvyā, Hooykaas (1958) and Zoetmulder (1974: 226-230) have argued persuasively that kakawin Rāmāyaṇa retains its
Indian character much more than other kakawin. Zoetmulder (1974: 232-3) collected evidence that not only the court society but also the nature depicted in the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa have close parallels in the Sanskrit kāvyā. Zoetmulder (1974: 232) also notes that there is no introductory manggala in the text and points to a complete absence of terms like langö and lēngēng (both terms denote the state of aesthetic rapture experienced by literary characters, as well as by the authors of the texts), considered typical for the kakawin aesthetic teleology. Yet, the special status of the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa does not pertain to the theme of war; on the contrary, there are a number of elements pertaining to the literary representation of war and warfare that have been marked in this thesis as typically Javanese and that are attested for the first time in the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa.

The Arjunawiwāha, the earliest kakawin known from East Java, was composed most probably sometime between 1028-1035 (Zoetmulder 1974: 244), almost two hundred years later than the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa. These lacunae from which no kakawin are known are typical for the Javanese kakawin record: following the Arjunawiwāha there is a gap of around a century from which no texts are known (Robson 2008: 4). Then follows a short period of a great literary activity between 1157 to 1222, from which seven kakawin survived, namely the Bhāratayuddha, Hariwangśa, Ghatotkacāśraya, Sumanasāntaka, Smaradahana, Kṛṣṇāyaṇa and the Bhomāntaka. The Singhasari period (1222-1292), known for its artistic activities in the field of architecture, sculpture and bronze-working, is yet another period from which no kakawin survived (Hunter 2007: 54). In the final phase of the kakawin production in Java, during the glorious Majapahit period (1293-1520s), five works known to us were composed: the Deśawarṇa, Arjunawijaya, Sutasoma, Kuñjarakarṇa and the Pārthayajña.

The Bhāratayuddha, composed uniquely by two authors, Mpu Sēdah and Mpu Panuluh, and dated by chronogram to 1157 (Zoetmulder 1974: 269), represents a version of the Mahābhārata, or more precisely of its part covered in the so-called ‘battle books’ (Udyogaparvan to Śalyaparvan). While Zoetmulder (1974: 188) was utterly sceptic about the chance of gleaning information on war and warfare of pre-Islamic Java from this work, Supomo's detailed analysis has demonstrated that the literary representation of war in the Bhāratayuddha differs markedly from its Sanskrit model (1993: 14-21, 29-37). Supomo has also addressed the problem of the relationship between the Bhāratayuddha and the Old Javanese parwa, suggesting that like the Old Javanese Udyogaparwa and Bhīṣmaparwa, the Old Javanese Droṇaparwa, Kārnāparwa and Śalyaparwa must have once existed but did not survive (1993: 37). As will be seen in the next chapters, the Bhāratayuddha is not only our best source for the concept of battle as a sacrifice on the battlefield, but is also a valuable source of evidence on the concept of divine weapons, food imagery in martial scenes, and the concept of kiwul.
The Bhomāntaka, the most important literary source on the concepts of premodern war and warfare we have, was probably composed in the second half of the twelfth century (Teeuw and Robson 2005: 48). The author of the Bhomāntaka is anonymous. The Bhomāntaka represents a treasure trove of evidence pertaining to warfare: it is our best source for the concept of waragang (young men striving to prove themselves in battle by demonstrating their martial prowess in individual charges in front of the troops), the institution of pangalasan (court military establishment, see section 4.2), horsemanship, pre-battle participatory animal sacrifice, food symbolism of the martial scenes, identity of the gandī weapon (most probably a pellet bow), and many other major and minor issues pertaining to premodern warfare. Dutch edition, prepared by Teeuw (1946), has been followed by English edition by Teeuw and Robson (2005). This critical edition is accompanied by a very substantial commentary, in which most of the aspects pertaining to the theme of war and warfare have been addressed in an unprecedented level of detail and erudition, and this thesis draws heavily on this edition.

The Sumanasāntaka represents yet another text dated to the late Kaḍiri period that has its share of evidence on the concept of war and warfare. Composed by Mpu Monaguṇa around 1200 (Zoetmulder 1974: 305) and based partially on the Sanskrit Raghuvamśa, the Sumanasāntaka is considered to be one of the most beautiful specimens of the kakawin genre. Being at the same time the most ‘Javanese’ kakawin, scholars widely acknowledge the importance of the Sumanasāntaka as a source for the history of pre-Islamic Javanese culture (Zoetmulder 1974: 307; Creese 2004: 76; Worsley et al. 2013). Supomo (2001: 124) observes that ‘even if we leave out all the scenes that have close parallels with the Raghuvamśa, the Sumanasāntaka still offers more than any other kakawin as a source of information about life in ancient Java’. Mpu Monaguṇa depicts in the Sumanasāntaka a number of warfare practices that are poorly documented in other texts: the use of war elephants, the ceremonial and non-ceremonial use of the war insignia of rank, and the elite infantry. A detailed description of definitely ‘unheroic’ ambush of prince Aja and his troops can be read as the earliest evidence of a typically Javanese strategy to waylay the enemy in the geographically restricted terrain configuration.

The next text, the Deśawarṇana, occupies a special position among the kakawin. Composed by Mpu Prapañca and written over a period of about six years, the Deśawarṇana is dated to 1365 (Robson 1995: 8). Discovered only in 1894 in Lombok, the Deśawarṇana has since that time certainly been the most studied kakawin. It was read, however, not as much for its literary value but rather as the major source of pre-Islamic Javanese cultural, social and religious history (Krom 1931, Stutterheim 1948; Pigeaud 1960-1963). The Deśawarṇana, certainly, has its share of mythological material, and a textual sequence covering the theme of the royal hunt, a fictional, mythological theme, is discussed in the next chapter.
The *Arjunawijaya*, one of the two *kakawins* composed by Mpu Tantular (the other is the *Sutasoma*), was composed sometime between 1365 and 1389 (Supomo 1977: 14). Similar to the *Deśawarṇana*, and unlike most of the *kakawin* composed during the earlier Kaḍiri period, the *Arjunawijaya* shows an influence of the Buddhist concept of non-violence; it is demonstrated at several places in this thesis how this different perception of violence influenced the conception of martial values and an imagination of war. The editions of *kakawin* texts used in this thesis (for translations and quotations of original Old Javanese passages) are these: *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* (Soewito Santoso 1980), *Arjunawiwāha* (Robson 2008), *Hariwangsa* (Teeuw 1950), *Bhāratayuddha* (Supomo 1993), *Ghaṭotkacāśraya* (Wirjosuparto 1960), *Smaradahana* (Poerbatjaraka 1931), *Bhomāntaka* (Teeuw and Robson 2005), *Kṛṣṇāyaṇa* (Santoso Soewito 1986), *Sumanasāntaka* (Worsley et al. 2013), *Deśawarṇana* (Robson 1995), *Arjunawijaya* (Supomo 1977), *Sutasoma* (Santoso Soewito 1975), *kakawin Kuṇjarakarṇa* (Teeuw and Robson 1981), *Śivarātrikalpa* (Teeuw et al. 1969).

Apart from the textual corpus of Javanese *kakawin* this study makes use of the Old Javanese *parwa*, prose re-workings of the *Mahābhārata*, Old Javanese prose *Nawaneyta* (text of the court etiquette composed in the fourteenth century), as well as of the Middle Javanese *kidung* and prose texts such as the *Pararaton*. This thesis makes also abundant use of the Old Javanese epigraphical material, especially the inscriptions collected by Brandes (1913) in his *Oud-Javaansche Oorkonden*, as well as a number of inscriptions edited by Boechari (2012).

### 1.4 THE *KAKAWIN* WORLD: THE STATE OF THE QUESTION

The argument of this thesis implies the view that an idealised, fictional court society is represented in *kakawin*. Firstly, therefore, the concept of the *kakawin* world should be clarified. The view that *kakawin* poems, though representing literary fiction, reflect in a particular way the society of premodern Java, developed slowly. Van der Tuuk (1896-1912) and Berg (1938, 1951) were early champions of the idea that *kakawin* contain valuable data about the culture of Javanese pre-Islamic society. In 1969, the editors of the *Śivarātrikalpa*, a *kakawin* text composed in the fifteenth century by Mpu Tanakung, made another step to approach *kakawin* texts as literary reflections of the world of premodern Java (Teeuw et al.1969). With the exception of the *Deśawarṇana*, most, if not all other *kakawin* have been appreciated mainly for their literary merits rather than for the evidence they give on the society and culture of premodern Java. Supomo (2001: 114), for one, has summarised the scholarly opinion prevailing until the edition of the *Śivarātrikalpa* was published in 1969:
[...] nothing more than works of fiction based on Indian narratives. Accordingly, the entire narrative section of the *kakawin* was simply dismissed as having nothing to do with contemporary Javanese life.

In a novel move, the editors of the *Śiwarātrikapla* not only presented a view that visual evidence of contemporary Javanese temple reliefs could be used to explain obscure passages in the *kakawin*, but they actually analysed the narrative of the text *as situated* in ancient Java. The editors even suggested that the hunter Lubdhaka, the main hero of the *kakawin*, must have lived ‘somewhere in the Pēnanggungan – Arjuna mountain complex, or in the region of Tumapēl where [...] [the king] Suraprabhāwa may have had his capital’ (Teeuw *et al.* 1969: 46). Though a number of claims made by the editors remain speculative, the edition of the *Śiwarātrikalpa* nevertheless challenged the view that *kakawin* represent Old Javanese renderings of Sanskrit literary models. Zoetmulder has further elaborated the view that *kakawin* reflect the local environment, with its flora and fauna, as well as the structure of premodern Javanese and Balinese court society, turning the model into a full-fledged theory (1974: 187-214). Since the publication of Zoetmulder’s *Kalangwan*, this concept has been firmly established and the model has been further refined. The most important recent contributions to this theoretic paradigm are Creese (2004), who coined the term ‘*kakawin* world’, and Robson (2008). Both scholars emphasise *kakawin* as ‘model-setting’ texts in which a fictional court society and its world is constructed to provide idealised social norms and models of proper behaviour. Creese (2004: 42), studying the relationship between the Javanese and Balinese *kakawin* traditions, has provided in her work on women and sexuality in the *kakawin* world a convenient model for analysing of the texts that have their origin in pre-Islamic Java, as well as for those that originate from Hindu Bali:

The religious, political, and didactic functions of *kakawin* composition helped to ensure that the poems encapsulated an imaginary world that was not widely divergent from the experiences of the audiences for whom they were intended. *Kakawin* provided models for appropriate standards of male and female behavior, and poets drew from everyday experience to affirm idealized social norms and to provide moral guidance to all. It was essential that the poems reflected and embodied the social reality of their time or they would lose their force.

Robson (2008: 18-19) has further refined the concept of the *kakawin* world by pointing to the complexity of this theoretical construct, expanding the extent of the *kakawin* world to its proper limits. In his edition of the *Arjunawiwāha* Robson emphasises the constant interplay between the world of divine denizens and the world of humans, an aspect that is of acute relevance to the argument made in this thesis:
The writer’s eye ranges far and wide, taking us to places far beyond the reach of common mortals. The events described and the characters who enact them are by no means limited to the earth and humanity.²

Another development that has influenced the concept of the kakawin world is Pollock’s (1996) theoretical concept of the ‘Sanskrit cosmopolis’, a widely perceived cultural formation extending from India as far as Central and Southeast Asia. Pollock argues that ‘cosmopolitan’ Sanskrit language articulated politics as aesthetic power rather than material and military entity, serving as the vehicle for elite’s self-presentation (1996: 168). Further, Pollock argues that the substitution of cosmopolitan Sanskrit with vernacular languages (including Old Javanese and the constitution of the kakawin genre in Java) could be regarded as an effort to articulate epic allegories of local political power (1996: 197). Pollock’s ingenious views proved attractive and scholars of the Old Javanese literature have included the new theoretical construct, especially the idea of Old Javanese as a ‘vernacular cosmopolitan’, in their own agenda (Hunter 2007; Acri 2010). Pollock’s sound evidence that kakawin are no exception among the texts composed as allegories of political power puts the analysis of this aspect of kakawin on especially firm ground. Berg was the first advocate and firm defender of the view that kakawin should be analysed principally as allegories of political power (1938, 1962).

It is good, however, to acknowledge the limits of the paradigm of the Sanskrit cosmopolis and its applicability to the Old Javanese kakawin genre. Long before Pollock formulated his views, Zoetmulder (1957: 55-59) and Robson (1983: 306-308) called attention to the limits of the interpretation of kakawin as allegories of political power and historical texts. Since the publication of Pollock’s views, scholars of Old Javanese literature have gone to great trouble to pinpoint, in what are often elaborate constructs, the exact associations made between literary characters and historical personages that may stand behind them (Jordaan 2006: 17-22; Acri 2011b: 86-89). It is certainly a characteristic of a good allegory to make associations that are multivariate, fluid and susceptible to diverse interpretations under the changed local or historical conditions. After all, texts such as the Arjunawiwaha and the Bhāratayuddha, which without doubt represent allegories of political power, have been cherished in only slightly different variants by both Javanese and Balinese audiences for hundreds of years after the patrons of the authors of these texts passed away (Van der Molen 2007: 104).

Recently, Daud Ali (2004: 15) has argued, for the case of Sanskrit kavya, that Pollock’s theoretical construct assumes a rather impoverished court sociology, fully dominated by the single figure of the king. Daud Ali suggests adopting a ‘court-centered approach’ and perceiving the politics articulated in the court poetry rather as a reflection of a complicated web of often competing

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² Robson (2008: 18).
powers inside the court, which were, however, all based on the shared notions of courtly society (2004: 18).

The views advanced by Daud Ali have relevance for the perception of court society depicted in *kakawin*: court society is influenced not only by royal patronage but also the religious community of *wiku haji*, known also as *wiku nagara* or *wiku rājya*. While *wiku* is the general term used in Old Javanese to denote persons of a religious status or function (Zoetmulder 1974: 155; OJED 2274), *wiku haji* designates more specifically a person of a religious status linked in one or other way to the court. Zoetmulder (1974: 155) renders *wiku haji* as ‘*wiku* in the service of the king’ and observes that these well-born religious figures were resident both at the court as well as in the countryside where they headed religious establishments of royal affiliation. Kakawin persistently emphasise this link between the court and royal religious foundations that may have represented one of the most visible projections of royal power outside of the core royal areas and thus plausibly reliable supporters of the king’s politics. Both male and female *wikus* played a crucial part in the court ritual, as evidenced plainly by the *Sumanasāntaka* and the *Deśawarnana*. The ‘court wiku’ were important in the rituals of protection, as well as in the *tawur* exorcist ritual conducted during the purificatory ceremonies at important state occasions: royal marriages and the rites performed before departure for war. Zoetmulder (1974: 159) observes how a distinct aspect of ‘worldliness’, typical for the category of *wiku haji*, could clash with the ambience of unworldliness, typical for some of the religious communities depicted in *kakawin*:

[f]or example, after his abdication, Raghu [...] retires into the forest to spend his last years in religious observances. Part of his suite come with him to live in the hermitage. Not surprisingly so, they bring with them the spirit of the court. “What sort of *wiku* are these guests? They must be court-*wiku* (*wiku nagara*)”, says one of the original inhabitants. And we detect a tone of disapproval in these words, implying that it is a rather worldly company. Many of them are relatively young. [...] Versed in song (*gīta*) and *kakawin*, to which they were wont to direct their worship while still at court, they compete in composing sweet and moving poems that fill the pavilions (*patani*).

The distinct aspect of worldliness ascribed here to the class of *wiku haji* is discernible in most, if not all, *kakawin* authored in Java which were composed at the court environment rather than at priestly hermitages, as was the case by the end of the Hindu-Javanese period when the royal support diminished or ceased altogether (Zoetmulder 1974: 373). Given the similarity in behaviour, it seems reasonable to assume that the origin of the authors of the *kakawin* courtly poetry is to be looked for

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3 See, for example, a character of *wiku haji*, the head of a large and prosperous community living far from the royal court, described in detail in stanza 28 of the *Sumanasāntaka*.

4 Unless otherwise stated all translations from the *Deśawarnana* are taken from Robson (1995).

5 For a court-based female *wiku* exorcist performing a purificatory ritual for the bridal couple in the *Sumanasāntaka* see Creese (2004: 160-161). For the *tawur* ritual as part of war preparations, see chapter four.
in the milieu of _wiku haji_. Zoetmulder (1974: 248) observes that the chief brahmin, the principal authority on the sacred scriptures and king’s adviser, belonged to the category of _wiku haji_, as well as some of the _kawi_.

1.5 POETS IN WAR: TRACKING THE OLD JAVANESE KAWI

I propose that to understand the prominence of sacrificial elements in literary representations of war and warfare and to appreciate the formulaic character of these descriptions, it is necessary to analyse the person of _kawi_ and his religious function. Conventionally, _kawi_, the authors of _kakawin_, are called ‘poets’ in English. The word ‘poet’ has connotations so deeply established and far-reaching that it has brought and brings some serious misunderstandings of the concept of authorship in Old Javanese literature. Known only by their pen-names, the authors of _kakawin_ are, with the exception of Mpu Prapañca, elusive figures. In the case of the _kakawin_ Rāmāyaṇa and _Bhomāntaka_ we even do not know the authors’ pen-names. About the former text, Zoetmulder (1974: 233) simply admits that ‘about the name and individuality of the author of the Rāmāyaṇa _kakawin_ we must confess to total ignorance’. Trying to elucidate the origin and character of the Old Javanese _kawi_, Zoetmulder admits with a certain sense of despondency that he has failed to find a single Old Javanese inscription containing the words for ‘poet’ or ‘poetry’ (1974: 126). Summarising the problem of the _kakawin_ authorship, Zoetmulder (1974: 126) observes that ‘of the individual personalities of the authors, next to nothing is known to us’. Still, the figure of _kawi_ and his or her function in ancient Java has been subjected to intense study and the understanding of the status of _kawi_ has undergone a remarkable development since Berg advanced the hypothesis of _kawi_’s religious function in 1938.

In several of his studies, Berg (1938, 1953) developed and defended the hypothesis that _kakawin_ should be interpreted as historical texts and that the _kawi_ was first of all a ‘priest of literary magic’ (in Dutch original: _priester van de litteraire magie_) who, by manipulating historical data, fortified the ‘magic energy’ of the king, his patron (1953: 117). Berg was the first to recognise that in premodern Java there was a close relationship between the magic power of the written word and the author of _kakawin_ (1938: 59). To substantiate his claims, Berg used the introductory _manggala_ of three _kakawin_, namely the _Arjunawiwāha_, _Bhāratayuddha_, and the _Deśawarṇṇa_. Zoetmulder (1957: 64) was not comfortable with Berg’s hypothesis of the _kawi_ as a ‘priest of literary magic’, and tried to demonstrate that the texts selected by Berg should be considered exceptional among the _kakawin_ corpus. Comparing the introductory _manggala_ of some fifty _kakawin_, most of them

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6 As part of his argument, Zoetmulder (1974: 249) quotes the passage from _Sumanasāntaka_ 47.1: _wiku rājya kawi wruh mangaji_.
composed in Bali, Zoetmulder dismissed Berg’s hypothesis as unsupported by the evidence. Berg’s ingenious concept, however, especially the religious function of kawi as an officiant, proved influential.

Zoetmulder (1974: 156) deduces from the single line in the Deśawarṇana where the plural para kawi is used that duties of kawi included ‘the study of the texts, both religious and secular [...] and the preservation of these texts through copying and recopying’. Zoetmulder (1974: 156) envisages four social roles played by people who became kawi: in addition to being scribes and courtiers, according to Zoetmulder, ‘music and dancing certainly belonged to their tasks’. However, this claim is not supported by the evidence and the suggestion that kawi, authors of kakawin poems, served any of these functions in pre-Islamic Java remains speculative. Some of the tasks ascribed by Zoetmulder to kawi were actually entrusted to professional scribes (likhita, citralekha, anurat) who are mentioned with some frequency in the Old Javanese epigraphical record, some of them known by their personal names (Hinzler 2001: 163).

In his effort to glean from the kakawin as much evidence about the figure of kawi as possible, Zoetmulder has, in my view, conflated the evidence on complex epic kakawin with the much more abundant evidence on short poems. Zoetmulder (1974: 145) says that these ‘other products of poetic activity, going by different names [...] should probably all be placed in the kakawin category. These include wilāpa, pralāpita, bhāsa and palambah’. In the case of palambah, Robson (1983: 301) has proved persuasively that palambah is the actual name of the genre of epic court poetry, while the term kakawin originally refers to the stanza. What may have been common to the shorter poems such as wilāpa and pralāpita was the verse technique derived from the kakawin genre (Zoetmulder 1974: 145). This is the reason members of the court society cherished the company of kawi to learn and practice the verse technique with them. It is also why the prince Sutasoma, among other court literary characters, ‘liked nothing better than to be with poets (kawi) in order to take them as models for composing pralāpitas’ (Zoetmulder 1974: 152).

I argue that what the courtiers learnt and practiced with kawi was actually a verbal dueling, a game-like competitive performance of poetry known from many other parts of premodern Indonesia (Bowen 1989; Braginsky 1993). Kakawin represent the earliest evidence that the oral genre of Javanese poetry similar to Modern Javanese parikan was already developed in the pre-Islamic period. Modern parikan verse consists of two couplets: the first suggests the second by sound or other similarity (Robson and Singgih Wibisono 2002: 543). It is thus similar to the much better known Malay pantun, a cross-rhymed quatrain breaking into two distichs, sampiran and isi, which usually have no direct logical connection between them and are united by phonetic or symbolic parallelism (Winstedt 1991: 138; Braginsky 2004: 493). The exchange of letters with short love
poems, based on the oral genres such as pantun and parikan, has been an important element of premodern literacy in many parts of Southeast Asia; in fact, several scholars have argued that the surprisingly high rate of literacy in pre-colonial Indonesia was caused mainly by the phenomenon of verbal dueling communicated through letters (Loeb 1935: 280; Mantja 1984: 37; Reid 1988: 216-218). A few pantun interspersed in the classical Malay texts Hikayat Raja Pasai and Sejarah Melayu have been taken as the earliest evidence that an originally oral verse genre entered the written literature as early as the fourteenth century (Braginsky 2004: 492). In our present state of literary-historical understanding, passage 35.3 in the Arjunawiwaha, in which Mpu K醤wa represents Tillotam醠 singing ‘one line in the form of bh鰏a’ to cap Arjuna’s theme, represents the earliest attestation of the phenomenon of verbal dueling not only in Javanese literature, but also in the region of Southeast Asia. Deserving much more study than it has received hitherto, even now it could be claimed that there is substantial evidence for the elements of verbal gaming in kakawin, with the most complex instance found in the long passage depicting the betrothal of Indumat醠 in the Sumanas醮ntaka, a motif which is without any parallels in the Raghuvam醣a, the text on which the Sumanas醮ntaka is partially based (Zoetmulder 1974: 153). Other instances of verbal dueling are found, for example, in the Bhom醮ntaka and in the Sutasoma.

This excursion into the subject of ‘capping’ in kakawin has direct relevance to the views defended by Zoetmulder: while it has been long acknowledged that poetical skills represented an important asset of the members of premodern courts in Java and Bali (Zoetmulder 1974: 152), the phenomenon of verbal gaming needs to be dissociated from the phenomenon of epic kakawin. Creese (2004: 20) observes that the composition of kakawin was a ‘craft in which the poet, as an adept, was able to harness the power of the written word’, an act of more important agenda and consequences than simple verbal dueling. Still, the subject of verbal game in kakawin certainly deserves attention as it can tell us much about the nature of the kakawin genre and its relation to other genres such as Sanskrit k鰏ya, and about the oral elements in the Old Javanese literature. Because most of the evidence collected by Zoetmulder and interpreted as pertaining to kawi is actually a valuable evidence on the literary characters who ‘behaved like kawi’, it is the introductory manggala and closing parts of kakawin that are still our best source from which to deduce the world of Old Javanese kawi (Creese 2004: 17-18).
1.6 LITERARY YOGA AND THE DIVINE EYE: KAWI ON THE BATTLEFIELD

Though drawing heavily on the passages that describe the literary characters who acted ‘like kawi’ but who themselves were not kawi, Zoetmulder has presented in his Kalangwan a highly original conception of kakawin aesthetic teleology, which has its origin partially in the views formulated by Berg. Zoetmulder’s theory is helpful for an analysis of the martial scenes in the kakawin genre and I would like to offer a fine-tuning in view of the theme of war. Zoetmulder, using the terms ‘poet’s religion’ and ‘literary yoga’ (1974: 179), understands the kawi as essentially a religious officiant, an ‘adep of a cult of beauty’ (1974: 68). Through yogic meditation on the deity, the kawi evokes the divine presence and seeks union with the divinity by summoning it to assume a material form (sakala) by entering a material object, in this case the kakawin poem inscribed, or made otherwise permanent, on some ‘medium’ such as his writing board. Looking for inspiration in the beauty of nature and feminine beauty, the kawi experiences a trance-like state of langö, a feeling that Zoetmulder (1974: 172) renders as ‘rapture’.

Since the publication of Kalangwan, Zoetmulder's concept of kakawin's aesthetic teleology has been widely accepted and several of its aspects elaborated; Creese (2004: 29), observes that the use of Old Javanese language marked kakawin as belonging to the body of sacred knowledge by which the court society of Java was ordered. At the same time, Creese warns against reading too much into the religious function of kawi poet, emphasising that kakawin are complex texts that served, and continue to do so, a wide range of functions (2004: 23). It is also worth noting that the term ‘priest’ is used rather indiscriminately by the scholars of Old Javanese literature.8 While Zoetmulder mostly avoided the term, probably in opposition to Berg’s concept of kawi as the ‘priest of literary magic’, Teeuw and Robson (2005: 1) have coined in their edition of the Bhomāntaka the term ‘language priest’:

The poet is a priest, who in his language has at his disposal a means to evoke the god, to have him descend into the material, visible world. The poet creates this opportunity to communicate with the god not only for himself but also for his fellow-men who hear or read his poem.

In line with Zoetmulder’s views, Teeuw and Robson consider the poem itself to represent a ‘temple (caṇḍi) of poetry’ that the kawi constructs by poetic language for the deity to descend into (2005: 1). By this act, according to Teeuw and Robson, the poet creates what the ancient Javanese called kalangwan, ‘beauty’ perceived as a religious value (2005: 1). This view has been recently

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8 For the pitfalls of the concept of ‘priest’ as a ‘mediator’ between the human and the divine sphere, see Henrichs (2008: 8).
challenged by Fox (2003, 2005), who has problematized the way scholars ‘construct’ Old Javanese text, arguing that the idea of text as a ‘temple’ is an act of ‘fetishizing’ this theme. As I see it, Fox (2003: 75) is actually uncomfortable with the philological approach of looking for the autograph by collating a number of manuscripts. Fox is certainly right in his observation that scholars of Old Javanese literature ‘construct’ the text in their effort to produce a critical edition. This is, however, what philologists are expected to do in order to deliver the text to their audience. Certainly, there are other ways to edit the text, for example by ‘constructing’ the ‘diplomatic edition’ based on a single manuscript. Fox’s critique is, in my view, a critique of the method developed and used by classical philology. More interestingly, Fox (2003: 81) has also questioned the way that authorship is constructed in kakawin, claiming that scholars unduly emphasise the ‘authorial moment of creation’, while the ‘unspectacular work’ of copyists is generally not appreciated (2003: 83). Fox’s critique is well-aimed here, and his remarks reflect how little we actually know about the history of particular Old Javanese texts: the aim of emphasising the ‘author’ reflects our poor understanding of the changes that most, if not all, of the texts endured during the long period between the ‘authorial moment of creation’ and the moment texts were collected.

It is apparent that the quality of ‘beauty’ is usually not considered typical for the martial scenes in which carnage is depicted; yet, in a number of passages kawi represent horrific slaughter as ‘beautiful’, using most often the term halêp to suggest the quality of beauty. Consider, for example, the passage in the Bhãratayuddha in which Yudhiṣṭhira observes the desolate Kurukṣetra battlefield glowing in the darkness of the night by discarded armour, helmets, crowns and earrings strewn on the ground. The battlefield is described as ‘enchanting’ (halêp) and ‘inaccessible’ (durgama). In his comparative analysis of deviations between the Bhãratayuddha and Sanskrit Mahãbhãrata Supomo (1993: 19) notes that the passage has no close parallel in the Sanskrit Mahãbhãrata.

It is the quality of being ‘inaccessible’ that is often mentioned in descriptions of the battlefield in the kakawin genre. Certainly, it is possible to take these descriptions at their face value. On the material plane, the kawi often wanders to inaccessible, isolated places to seek poetic rapture (Zoetmulder 1974: 124). On the spiritual level, poets often emphasise a difficult task to approach the divinity to whom they serve by composing a poem in the kakawin form: Mpu Monaguṇa says in the manggala of the Sumanasãntaka that it is ‘extremely difficult to approach, he is the abode of one who is a prince of poets’. To understand these associations and the actual function of kawi it is necessary to pose the question of how authorship is constructed in kakawin.

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9 Bhãratayuddha 23.5.
10 Sumanasãntaka 1.1. Quoted from Worsley et al. (2013: 55).
Firstly, consider the famous passage in the *Arjunawiwāha* in which Mpu Kaṇwa represents himself as taking part in a military expedition (samarakārya) conducted by his royal patron, king Airlangga:

*bhrāntāpan tēhēr angharēp samarakārya mangiringi haji*\(^{11}\)

I am agitated for I have been preparing for a military campaign, attending the king;\(^{12}\)

The line has generated substantial interest among the scholars of Javanese literature and history.\(^{13}\) Berg (1938: 48) expressed doubts that the poet, a member of the ‘priesthood’ in Berg’s words, was obliged to accompany the king to the battlefield. Zoetmulder (1974: 247) has devoted three pages of notes to this single line, trying to make sense especially of the phrase *angharēp samarakārya*. Dissatisfied with the previous research on the last canto of the *Arjunawiwāha*, Zoetmulder (1974: 247) has introduced the translations by Kern, Poerbatjaraka, and Berg before suggesting his own solution for how to render the phrase *angharēp samarakārya*. It is worth quoting the three translations, one by one, as provided by Zoetmulder in English: Kern: ‘intending to go into war’; Poerbatjaraka: ‘will (accompany the king) into war’; and Berg: ‘facing military operations’ (1974: 247). Zoetmulder (1974: 245), for one, translates the phrase ‘making preparations for a military expedition’. Furthermore, he observes that the same phrase (*angharēp samara*) is used in *Wirāṭaparwa* 45.17, where the instruction is given by Bhīṣma to Duryodhana about the strategy to be used by a king in face of his enemies.\(^{14}\) The same phrase is attested as well in *Bhīṣmaparwa* 116.8 where Duryodhana addresses Bhīṣma and asks for his help.

Next, Zoetmulder (1974: 248) observes that the word *tēhēr* preceding the phrase *angharēp samarakārya* conveys the view that Mpu Kaṇwa’s preparations ‘not only followed immediately after the completion of his first major poem, but was also a consequence of it’. Zoetmulder observes that the final element of the line, *aji*, designates ‘sacred or highly esteemed scriptures and the doctrine they contain’, but also ‘any magically powerful formula as well as the knowledge of its proper use’. Summarising his exposition, Zoetmulder (1974: 249) concludes that Mpu Kaṇwa ‘is called on to assist in the preparations for the samarakārya with his knowledge of the *aji*’.

Zoetmulder’s rendering of *aji* differs from that by Berg and Poerbatjaraka, who read the word *haji* and render it ‘king’ (Zoetmulder 1974: 248). Robson does the same (2008: 191) in the critical

\(^{11}\) *Arjunawiwāha* 36.2. Unless otherwise stated all translations from the *Arjunawiwāha* are taken from Robson (2008).

\(^{12}\) Robson (2008: 149).

\(^{13}\) A similar association between the composition of a *kakawin* and military campaign in which a poet takes part is found in *Hariwangśa* 54.3; here we learn that Mpu Panuluh’s composition of the *Hariwangśa* has been associated with the period of war campaign so that Mpu Panuluh describes himself as ‘following the king the moment he waged a war’ (tumāt ri haji kāla nira n angayu singhawikrama). Unless otherwise stated Old Javanese text and translations from the *Hariwangśa* are taken from Teeuw (1950).

\(^{14}\) *Wirāṭaparwa* 45.17: samangkana bungkah ning mangharēp sangrāmakārya. The Old Javanese text taken from Zoetmulder (1974: 247), who renders the line: ‘this is the basis for him preparing for war’.
edition of the text, observing that the majority of the manuscripts indeed read haji. In my view, the issue of ajī/haji is of much less importance than the two other aspects pertaining to Zoetmulder’s analysis: the first is a recognition of angharēp samara as designating some kind of preparations pertaining to war, a suggestion also accepted by Robson in the translation of the line given above. The second, so far unappreciated aspect, is the presence of Bhīṣma in the two other attestations of angharēp samara found in the two parwa.

To develop this argument, I will introduce another passage in which a kawi is depicted as taking part in the battle, stanza 12.13 in the Bhāratayuddha. At the moment Kṛṣṇa threatens to wipe out all of the Korawa warriors, Bhīṣma and Droṇa order them to withdraw from the battle. After the dust settles, a glow illuminates the battlefield. A horrible vista of the Kurukṣetra is offered. The battlefield is envisaged as forming an ocean of blood:

\[
gaja kuda karangnya hru angirah paṇḍana nika sōk  
aracana makakawya ng śūrā tan wēdi mapulih
\]

The elephants and horses were its cliffs, the innumerable arrows [stuck in their bodies] were like pandanus thickets [growing on the cliffs];

As if the hero who had fearlessly launched a counter-attack was a kawi arranging a poem.

It is argued here that a complex parallel is drawn between the ‘landscape of the battle’ and the ‘tools of the trade’ of a kawi. In a number of texts, arrows are compared to the (thorny) pandanus, the thorns of which were used as a stylus and its blossoms represented as readily available writing material (Zoetmulder 1974: 135-137). Coral reefs (karang) may allude to karas, another writing material used by kawi, rendered by OJED 805 as ‘prob. writing-tablet or board’. In his concise treatment of the writing material and writing tools used by kawi, Zoetmulder (1974: 135) suggests that karas ‘would seem to have been made of a wood-like material similar to a flat piece of split bamboo or a board of the same material’. Karas, however, may also designate some sort of soft stone, an identification that does not contradict the textual evidence about it. Recently, Hinzler (2001: 161) has called attention to the official called samgat watu karas known from the Old Javanese inscriptive record. The phrase watu karas may further support the view that the term karas denotes writing material made from soft stone.

Zoetmulder (1974: 171) and Supomo (1993: 183) render the word kawi in the passage quoted above as the grammatical plural, so that they draw an association between the ‘warriors’ and the ‘poets’. It is more plausible, however, that the kawi in stanza 12.13 should be associated with

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15 Bhāratayuddha 12.12. Unless otherwise stated all translations from the Bhāratayuddha are from Supomo (1993).
17 A similar association is made in Hariśraya B 53.2 where the poet, engaging the enemy in the battle, uses his writing board (karas) as a bow and his pen (tanah) as arrows.
only a single warrior who was on the battlefield in this critical moment: the great sage (*maharṣi*) Bhīṣma, as we gather from the next stanza 12.14:

> *irika sira maharṣi n kāryāmuk tan ili murud*  
> *pinanah inirup endah mangkin garjita masiga*  
> *hanan asēmu katon ring dik lāwan widik angēḍap*  
> *kadi gila kadi māyā lālitya n paratha-rathan*

There, the great sage did not join the retreat, bound on storming the enemy. Excited, he delighted in the extraordinary arrows that rained upon him from all sides. He seemed to be everywhere at once, visible now and there for a moment, Now like a nightmare, then like an illusion, as he fought with grace from legions of chariots.\(^{18}\)

‘Delighted’ to face Kṛṣṇa, Bhīṣma bravely faces the skeins of arrows showered at him. Enraged Kṛṣṇa, unable to restrain himself, descends from Arjuna’s chariot, intent on slaying Bhīṣma.\(^{19}\) The parallel drawn between the character of Bhīṣma and the *kawi* is intriguing. Being of semi-divine origin (son of king Śantau and goddess Ganggā), Bhīṣma has been given the ‘divine eye’ by Kṛṣṇa to see his theophany (Hiltebeitel 2001: 53). This theophany of Kṛṣṇa is depicted in *Bhāratayuddha* 12.11 where the poet describes Kṛṣṇa as ‘having the appearance of Kāla intent on destroying the world’ (*asēmu kāla krodha angēntyakēna jagat*). Kṛṣṇa’s theophany in his terrific form forces Droṇa and Bhīṣma to withdraw all of the Korawas from the battlefield, as described in stanza 12.12. Bhīṣma is not only the witness of Kṛṣṇa’s theophany by the agency of the divine eye imparted on him, but he is identified with the *kawi* who thus seems to have the same faculty of divine insight. It is intriguing that Bhīṣma is mentioned in the three passages collected by Zoetmulder where the phrase *angharēp samara*, analysed above, is attested. The parallel between the *kawi* and Bhīṣma is best understood as their shared faculty of divine insight and the ability to cross the boundaries of human and divine worlds. I suggest analysing the figure of Mpu Kaṇwa, the *kawi* who authored the *Arjunaśīvāha*, in light of this finding. Robson (2008: 18) states meaningfully in his edition of the *Arjunaśīvāha*: ‘the writer’s eye ranges far and wide, taking us to places far beyond the reach of common mortals’.

Hiltebeitel (2001: 91, n. 206) observes that the divine sage, Kāṇva, is indeed one of only a few epic characters on whom the divine eye was imparted.\(^{20}\) This is not to argue that Mpu Kaṇwa, an author of the *Arjunaśīvāha*, has been identified in the text with the divine sage Kaṇwa. Rather, the faculty of the divine vision of the heavenly sage and the poet may have been perceived to be of

\(^{19}\) *Bhāratayuddha* 12.18.  
\(^{20}\) Sage Kāṇva has a venerable pedigree: he is one of the Aṅgirasas, brahmans of the *Atharva Veda*, who are represented in the *Mahābhārata* as experts in black magic, curses and divine weapons (Hiltebeitel 2001: 112).
the same quality: Kāṇva is named among the seven heavenly sages (saptarṣi) who traverse divine and earthly worlds. The author of the Arjunawiwāha who, in fact, acts as a dramatis persona in the kakawin, has expected to have the same divine insight as the heavenly sage. It is the faculty of divine insight that marks the difference between the kawi, author of an epic kakawin, and any literary character represented in the kakawin acting ‘like a kawi’. Contrary to Zoetmulder (1974: 127) I argue that to be the kawi was not the same as to act like the kawi.

We will probably never know how a kawi used his divine insight. But some hints can be obtained by reading the passages in which kawi’s visions are detailed. Though the problem of sight, optics and vision in the kakawin has never become a subject of study, a few preliminary observations can be made here. In the passage from the Bhāratayuddha quoted above, the poet envisages Bhīṣma as being ‘visible now and there for a moment’. The word angēdap is used to describe the quality of kawi’s vision; in Old Javanese the verb angēdap denotes a ‘flash’, or ‘glint’, something visible only for a very short moment, but also the ‘twinkling of an eye’, or a wink (OJED 836). A theory advanced by Hiltebeitel may be useful here. In his analysis of the narrative frameworks of the Mahābhārata, Hiltebeitel (2001: 95) calls attention to the trope of the Naimiṣa Forest, a place where the sages convene to perform a sattrā ritual, and a place where they recite the story of Mahābhārata. Hiltebeitel observes that Naimiṣa is a forest with a giveaway name: ‘lasting for a moment, a twinkling’ (2001: 95), a forest, argues Hiltebeitel, ‘where stories, to put it simply, transcend time and defy ordinary conception of space’ (2001: 96).

The motif of the Naimiṣa Forest is very similar to kawi’s ‘vision of war landscape’, a vision of desolated battlefield that miraculously turns into the forest. Hiltebeitel, citing Bonazzoli (1981), further suggests that the Naimiṣa Forest is ‘not so much a place as a process through which more ancient purāṇa is “absorbed into a new stream” for the Kali yuga’ (2001: 96). This, in my view, would be consistent with the main task of kawi: in the kakawin, the poet harnesses the spiritual energy, ‘taps into the divine power’, to influence current affairs. In his analysis of the Arjunawiwāha Robson (2008: 16) has precisely formulated this elusive aspect of the kakawin composition and presentation:

> the enactment of the drama (in the form of recitation) actualizes in the imaginary world an outcome that may have been relevant in the visible world, and the audience will have been aware of the circumstances of the time and what the work may have been aiming to achieve.

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22 For another instance where angēdap is used, see the motif of Yudhiṣṭhira’s night vision of the deserted battlefield and the apparition of the ‘Goddess of the ocean of syrup’ in Bhāratayuddha 20.25 analysed in section 6.2 in chapter six.
On the level of ritual, *kawi* strives through his faculty of divine insight to connect past, present, and future ‘in the twinkling of the eye’. The word *angēdap* suggests that a vision of bright, flashing objects and entities is imagined: the enormous stock of fiery energy (*ṣakti, teja*) is conjured so that *kawi* is forced to ‘twinkle’ the eyes. The regularity with which the verb *angēdap* and its variants describe *kawi*’s visions supports the view advanced by Zoetmulder (1974: 185) that the poet’s divine insight, his ‘union with the god’ as Zoetmulder calls it, was of a transitory nature:

[...] lasting no longer than the brief moment of ecstatic rapture experienced in surrendering oneself to the overwhelming power of the aesthetic experience.

By his faculty of divine sight the *kawi* strives to stream the previous victories into the space and time of his own presence: descriptions of horrible violence, and especially the vistas of battlefield overflowing with the blood of slain warriors, are meant to convey the view that victory over an enemy can be secured by a mere act of simulation.23 The task of Mpu Kaṇwa, described in the last canto of the *Arjunawiwāha* as conducting ‘preparations for military campaign’ (*angharēp samarakārya*), seems to have been to secure for his lord, king Airlangga, the help of the terrifying ‘war’ aspect of divinity by constructing the text as a temple of poetry. In this capacity, as suggested by Creese (2004: 21), the text itself becomes a treasured sacred object, part of the royal regalia of individual patrons imbued with supernatural power, a palladium not dissimilar to royal sacred weapons, banners or musical instruments.

1.7 SYNOPSIS OF THE THESIS

The chapters of this thesis develop the argument as follows. Chapter 2 (‘War as a ritualised violence: the concept of 'battle-sacrifice'’) details the literary metaphor of the ‘sacrifice on the battlefield’, demonstrating how it relates in *kakawin* to the concept of beneficial blood-spilling, a phenomenon which is based on Hindu-Javanese horticultural and agricultural lore and its symbolism, as well as on the view that blood, spilled on the battlefield, represents an offering to the chthonian spirits, while the earth is the ultimate receiver of the battle-sacrifice (*raṇavajñā*). Next, an overlap between the motif of battle-sacrifice and the symbolism of (sacrificial) meal is analysed. It is shown that the act of slaying an enemy is conceptualised in terms of cooking and eating a sacrificial dish. It is argued that the motif reflects a premodern martial culture and the phenomenon of oath-taking. Furthermore, it is demonstrated that an abundant imagery of fertility and the eroticisation of martial scenes reflects the agricultural concerns of premodern Javanese society.

23 Apart from the *Arjunawiwāha* and the *Bhāratayuddha*, in Hariwangsa 54.3 we learn that Mpu Panuluh, author of the text, has received ‘urgent order’ (*sinwī kinon*) from the king Jayabhaya, his literary patron, to accompany him to the war.
Chapter 3 (‘Blood-spilling: sacrificial aspects of war’) considers the associations between the battle and the hunt; special attention is paid to the motif of the royal hunt in the Deśavarnana and to the symbolism entailed in the confusion between the human and animal quarry. It is shown that the theme can be traced to the famous episode of the burning of the Khāṇḍava Forest, found in the Ādiparwa, in which Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, both kings, annihilate almost all inhabitants of the forest, ‘sacrificing’ them to the god Agni. The symbolism of sacrifice dominates in martial scenes in the kakawin poetry and virtually all aspects of warfare are constructed as aspects of the sacrifice. The phenomenon of divine weapons is discussed in detail, and it is shown how the concept of fiery energy, an underlying principal of divine weapons, has been conceptualised in terms of fire sacrifice and cookery. It is shown that the striking confusion between the slaying of enemies and cookery has its conceptual parallel in the imagery of animal sacrifice and communal consumption of sacrificial meal, a theme attested in the Old Javanese epigraphical evidence. I argue that Javanese poets consciously used the vocabulary and imagery of animal sacrifice, a phenomenon they disapproved of, to contrast it with a fire sacrifice (homa), and think about the combat in terms of these two forms of sacrifice.

Chapter 4 (‘The kakawin army: its organization and style of combat’) explores how the sacrificial aspects of martial violence influenced the way poets constructed the theme of war and warfare. It is shown how the kakawin ‘four-fold army’ (caturanga), imagined as composed of the units of battle chariots, war elephants, cavalry and foot-soldiers, and the way these units fight, have been conceptualised in terms of sacrifice: there is no other objective in the battle than a complete annihilation of warriors. The weaponry used in combat, as well as the style of fighting, have been constructed to convey an image of slaughter aimed exclusively at high numbers of casualties. Furthermore, allegorical aspects of kakawin army structure are explored; it is demonstrated that the epic category of ‘foot-guards’ has been identified with premodern elite foot soldiers, a group tentatively identified with the category of pangalasan known from the Old Javanese prose text Nawanatya.

Chapter 5 (‘Traditional warfare and its sacrificial symbolism in kakawin’) analyses a number of aspects pertaining to the martial culture reflected in kakawin. It is shown that the construct of kakawin warfare is highly selective: the elements of warfare that were of high symbolic value and had sacrificial associations, such as the beheading of enemies on the battlefield, have been widely represented, while we have only a few glimpses into the aspects of warfare that were of low symbolic value, such as the logistics of war campaigns.

Chapter 6 (‘Landscape of warfare: glimpses into the mood of war’) considers the mytho-poetical ‘landscape of warfare’: an imaginary construct in which martial elements, otherwise widely dispersed in battle scenes, are found in a concentrated, ‘distilled’, form, seen in the ‘twinkle of an
eye’. The trope represents poets’ glimpses into an environment totally dominated by martial associations, where the nature is represented in terms of warfare: trees, flowers, lianas, tubers and other crops are styled as warriors, while animals and birds are depicted either in flight or already caught in traps set in the imaginary countryside. Attested in a number of kakawin, the ‘landscape of warfare’ is a literary quality only superficially similar to the heroic rasa of martial scenes in Sanskrit kāvya poetry; it is argued that the trope is best understood as a projection of the thoughtful mind of kawi transmuted into writing. Chapter 7 concludes the thesis, presenting a summary of the major findings.
A note on orthographic conventions used in the thesis

Old Javanese is transcribed according to the system implemented by Zoetmulder (1982) in his *Old Javanese-English Dictionary* (OJED), with one deviation: /ŋ/ becomes /ng/. Being an Austronesian language, Old Javanese is thus transcribed according to the conventions established by Blust (2009), e.g. /c/: voiceless palatal affricate, /j/: palatalised voiced velar stop, /ɛ/. To transcribe names, either of persons, political units, geographical and topographical features, capital letters are not used. Obsolete botanical and zoological names in dictionaries have been altered to match the currently accepted scientific consensus. The symbol [...] is used to designate that a part of a textual sequence from a quoted textual passage has been omitted. All dates are that of the Common Era, unless otherwise stated.
Chapter 2: War as ritualised violence: the concept of ‘battle-sacrifice’

One of the most important concepts in the kakawin war imagination is the extended metaphor of the ‘battle-sacrifice’ (raṇayajña), a view that battle represents a form of sacrifice that takes place on the battlefield. In a rich imagery of the complex metaphor of raṇayajña, numerous correspondences are drawn between the battle and the sacrifice, most prominently between weapons and sacrificial implements, warriors and different classes of ritual officiants, dead bodies and sacrificial dishes. Until recently, the motif of battle-sacrifice in Old Javanese literature has received only limited attention. Judging from scattered references to this motif, scholars have considered the subject of raṇayajña as a foreign cultural concept that is largely unproblematic. Teeuw et al. (1969: 150) have touched on the motif of battle-sacrifice in their discussion of an unusual word form, karanānggayajña, attested in Śivarātrikalpa 23.3. The editors translate the term as ‘the sacrifice on the battlefield’, adding that ‘[b]attle as a sacrifice is a well-known conception from India’ (Teeuw et al. 1969: 150). Robson (1971) has discussed the motif of battle-sacrifice in the Middle Javanese kidung Wangbang Wideya, pointing to the continuity of the motif in Javanese literature. Zoetmulder (1974: 545) has acknowledged that the trope is ‘common in Old Javanese literature’, listing several texts in support of his claim (kakawin Rāmāyaṇa, Udyogaparwa, Bhāratayuddha, Arjunawijaya). Moreover, Zoetmulder has made the general observation that ‘performance [of the raṇayajña] pertains to the duties of the kṣatriya, no less than does the ordinary sacrifice to the duty of the brahmin’ (1974: 545). In the past fifteen years, however, some scholars have noted that the trope of battle-sacrifice in Old Javanese literature represents a more complex issue than previously realised. Among other topics, Day (2002: 228-84) has discussed the trope of battle-sacrifice and the naturalisation of violence in the chapter entitled ‘Violence and Beauty’, which forms a part of his study on the formation of early states in Southeast Asia. Day (2002: 243) observes, following Geertz, especially Geertz (1980) and his studies on Balinese politics as the ‘theatre of power’, that Javanese rulers naturalised violence in order to place themselves in the mythological master narratives.

Recently, Hunter (2013) has discussed the literary motif of battle-sacrifice and the naturalisation of martial violence in Old Javanese kakawin, in his chapter entitled ‘Parallels and Transformation’ that is part of the critical edition of the Sumanasāntaka (Worsley et al. 2013). In this important study Hunter compares the trope of battle-sacrifice in Old Javanese and Sanskrit literatures, especially in the works of Kālidāsa, raising, for the first time in the history of Old Javanese studies, the issue of the complexity of the subject, and observing that the trope of battle-sacrifice in Old Javanese literature does not represent a simple imitation of the Indian literary motif.
Hunter (2013: 589), comparing the trope in Old Javanese Bhāratayuddha 1.1 and in Sanskrit Raghuvaṃśa 7.49, observes:

Here again, when comparing the treatment of battlefield scenes and the naturalization of violence in aesthetic modes, we find that in both Kālidāsa and the composers of kakawin, a term like Becker’s attunement seems best to fulfill our critical needs, calling attention to shared understandings that have taken different forms in their further development, but share a common cultural heritage.

Valuable, and entirely novel, is a detailed comparison between the battle scene in Sumanasāntaka 151, one of the most localised depictions of warfare practices in the kakawin poetry, and its counterpart, the battle scene in the Sanskrit Raghuvaṃśa. Hunter (2013: 588-9) concludes:

While Monaguṇa’s presentation of the battle scene takes its own path, following the traditions inherited from a long history of kakawin practice, there is no doubt that both he and Kālidāsa shared a point of view that naturalized the violence of war in aesthetic and religious terms.

Hunter (2013) thus challenges the well-established view that the subject of martial violence in Old Javanese literature is unproblematic, and arguments persuasively that the literary motif of battle-sacrifice in kakawin is a complex issue.

The concept of battle-sacrifice is developed at length in the Old Javanese Udyogaparwa, a prose version of the fifth book of the Mahābhārata. The theme of the battle-sacrifice is the leitmotif of the fratricidal war between the Pāṇḍawas and the Korawas that forms the narrative core of the epic. On the brink of the battle, Kṛṣṇa tries to manipulate Karna to take the side of the Pāṇḍawas. Karna refuses all of Kṛṣṇa’s offers and chooses to remain loyal to the Korawas and fight for them in the ensuing war. In a bold speech, Karna styles the upcoming war between the Pāṇḍawas and the Korawas as a battle-sacrifice (raṇayajña) in which the Pāṇḍawas must act as sacrificers, while the Korawas are destined to be the victims. The motif of battle-sacrifice is attested in a number of kakawin in the form of an extended metaphor, a formula of one or two stanzas, embedded in a prominent part of the narrative. Apart from that, the metaphor had a profound influence on kakawin martial imagery and, along with the sacrificial elements of local extraction discussed in chapters one and two, the concept of battle as a form of sacrifice manifests itself widely in war scenes, especially in the symbolism of blood-spilling. Furthermore, there is a recognisable correspondence between blood-spilling and the fertility of the earth.
This chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section I address the motif of the \textit{raṇayajña} metaphor as a literary formula, analysing its attestations in the \textit{Bhāratayuddha} and \textit{Arjunawijaya}. In the second section, I discuss the paradox that the motif of battle-sacrifice, a signature trope of the \textit{Mahābhārata}, is attested in the \textit{kakawin Rāmāyaṇa}, a finding that discloses an unexpected influence of the \textit{Mahābhārata} epic, or the \textit{Mahābhārata} textual tradition, on the Old Javanese version of the \textit{Rāmāyaṇa}. In the third section I demonstrate that in several \textit{kakawin} the literary motif of battle-sacrifice has been elaborated to articulate a typically Javanese martial symbolism in which the ‘sacrifice’ of enemy warriors on the battlefield has been re-conceptualised in terms of food and cookery. In the final section I address the problem of the symbolism of the blood-spilling and I explore the correspondences between the martial symbolism of the battlefield and the agricultural field.

2.1 THE CONCEPT OF BATTLE-SACRIFICE IN \textit{KAKAWIN}

Probably not surprisingly, the motif of battle-sacrifice is found in the \textit{Bhāratayuddha}, a \textit{kakawin} version of the \textit{Mahābhārata}. As it is embedded in the introductory preamble (\textit{manggala}) of the \textit{Bhāratayuddha}, the concept of battle-sacrifice is promulgated as the leitmotif of this \textit{kakawin}:

\begin{quote}
Desiring the annihilation of all hostile powers, the hero devoted himself to the performance of his sacrifice on the battlefield.
Gracefully he used as flower-offerings the head ornaments from the hair of his fallen enemies;
As grains, the forehead ornaments of deceased kings, and the burning palaces of his adversaries as his sacrificial fire-pits,
Into which he constantly sacrificed the heads of his foes decapitated while fighting valiantly in their chariots.\textsuperscript{24}
\end{quote}

The ‘hero’ (\textit{sang śūra}) introduced in this stanza as the performer of the ‘sacrifice on the battlefield’ (\textit{yajña ring samara}) is identified in the next stanza, 1.2, as the twelfth century Javanese king, Jayabhaya (1135-1157). Next, Mpu Śeḍah relates that after Jayabhaya had performed the battle-sacrifice, ‘his fame has spread throughout the Three worlds’ (\textit{kastawānira tēkeng tribhuwana}) so that ‘he is acclaimed by all of his adversaries as the Lord Protector’ (\textit{kapwāśabda bhajāra nātha samusuhrina}). Berg (1953) has suggested that the epic figure of Arjuna has been allegorically identified in the \textit{Bhāratayuddha} with the Javanese king Jayabhaya, literary patron of Mpu Śeḍah, while Supomo (1993: 260) has identified Jayabhaya with the epic figure of Kṛṣṇa. Although the imagery of the motif of battle-sacrifice is widely distributed in martial scenes in the \textit{kakawin} poetry,

\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Bhāratayuddha} 1.1.
the inclusion of the *raṇayajña* formula in the preamble of the *Bhāratayuddha* is curious and calls for an explanation. In order to understand the function of the motif of battle-sacrifice in *kakawin*, it may help to consider this subject in the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* first, and then re-consider its meaning in the Old Javanese literary context.

Scholars analysing the motif of battle-sacrifice in the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* have reached different conclusions about its function and meaning in the epic (Hiltebeitel 1990, Hiltebeitel 2001; Feller 2004). Several scholars understand the motif of battle-sacrifice in terms of an epic reworking of Vedic ritual themes; the trope is compared and contextualised with other motives of ‘ritual killing’ found in the *Mahābhārata*, like the burning of the Khāṇḍava forest, an episode in which Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa kill (‘sacrifice’ to the Fire) nearly all creatures living there. Another famous motif analysed in a similar framework is Janamejaya’s ‘snake sacrifice’. Hiltebeitel (2001: 115) claims that the horrible killing of snakes in the sacrificial fire is, at least implicitly, a rite of black magic (*abhicāra*) designed to kill an enemy. Hiltebeitel is the main proponent of the idea that the ‘great war’ in the *Mahābhārata* is in fact a snake sacrifice repeated on the field of Kurukṣetra, and that rather than ‘ritualise’, ‘transpose’ or allegorise an older story, the epic poets ‘make knowing allusion to Veda, its rituals included, within the primary texture of their composition’.

In this interpretative model, *Mahābhārata*’s ‘great war’ is imagined as yet another critical moment of a long-lasting conflict between demons and gods, styled as sacrificial violence in which the Kauravas, incarnations of demons, will be sacrificed by the Pāṇḍavas, who are (partial) incarnations of gods. Allusions are made throughout the *Mahābhārata* that connect battle-sacrifice to previous sacrifices conducted in order to annihilate demons. It is apparent that such intra-textual ramifications of Vedic ritual themes are not applicable to the Old Javanese *kakawin* poetry, and that we must look for another objective behind the motif of battle-sacrifice in *kakawin*.

A careful reading of the Old Javanese texts in which we find the motif of battle-sacrifice suggests that the motif is styled as a literary formula and, with the important exception of the *Bhāratayuddha*, the formula is embedded in a battle harangue, typically delivered by a military commander to strengthen the spirit of his troops: by Anggada in the *kakawin Rāmāyana*, by Karna in the *Udyogaparwa*, by Suwandha in the *Arjunawijaya*, and by Bhoma in the *Bhomāntaka*. The motif of the battle-sacrifice is not only a literary metaphor; it functions as a formula in which the terrible, war aspect of god (especially Wiśṇu) is evoked. Consider a passage from the *Arjunawijaya* where the prime minister (*patih*) Suwandha addresses his soldiers in a bold speech, trying to raise

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25 In Sanskrit panegyric inscriptions the motif of battle-sacrifice is part of martial eulogy; the motif, however, still remains to be identified in the Old Javanese inscriptive record. For an Indian specimen of the motif in panegyric inscriptions, see, for example, the inscription of Yaśovarman, dated 953/4, from the Khajuraho temple in India which eulogises the military campaign of the king Rāhila (Salomon 1998: 55).

26 Hiltebeitel (2001: 115).
their morale at the critical point of the battle when it seems that his troops will be completely annihilated. Suwanda calls the men to attend the ‘sacrifice on the battlefield’ (ahoma ri madhya ning samara):

Concentrate your mind on the enemy, and follow the path of the Void when this mighty enemy overcomes you.

This battlefield then will change into the shining moon or sun, by means of which fallen heroes

Can immediately attain the most prosperous world, for in truth you are all like the god Keśava.27

Styling the warriors to be ‘like the god Keśava’ refers to the religious overtones of the motif of battle-sacrifice and its associations with the cult of Wiṣṇu. In the next stanza we learn that, after hearing Suwanda’s encouraging words, all the Hehaya soldiers attack with a renewed vigour, roused upon ‘hearing this speech’ (mangrégö wåkyä hetu). The next example of the motif of battle-sacrifice is found in the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa, in the speech delivered by Anggada, the son of the slain monkey king Bālī. At the moment Rāma’s army faces the fate of a complete annihilation at the hands of the giant rākṣasa Kumbhakarna, Anggada calls the desperate monkeys to attend the battle-sacrifice, propitiating the god Mahāvīra Bhadreśwara:

nguni-nguni yan ikang musuh mātya nīsēsa denteng raṇa byakta homanta meman tēmēn tat [t] ametā byayantāṅghōng ikāŋgēn-āṅgēn nikāŋgēn-[n]ān głōttān lang nītya sang hyang mahāvīrabhadreśwarāłambanānēng raṇānggānggānā ning pahōman samiddhānta wangkay nikāŋ sātru sampūrṇāma pūrṇmahūtī rāh utēk //

Moreover, if the enemy dies with none remaining, [slain] by you in the battle, then your fire sacrifice would be manifest and complete. It will truly be a pity if you do not seek the reward [of the sacrifice]. May your thoughts be always clear and serene so that Mahāvīra Bhadreśwara takes his material form in the midst of the sacrificial battlefield. Your firewood is the bodies of your enemies, the perfect sacrificial dish is blood and brains.28

To summarise: the battle-sacrifice formula was conceptualised by Javanese poets as a part of the battle harangue delivered by a commander to embolden the spirit of his troops at the critical moment of battle. Styled in texts as a direct speech, the battle harangue employes the imagery of battle-sacrifice and references to the terrible, ‘war-like’ aspect of a particular god, mostly Wiṣṇu, who is thus evoked in the midst of the battlefield. Recently, Robson (2011: 10) has addressed the motif of the ‘hymns of praise’ (stutī), a narrative element similar to the literary formula of battle-sacrifice:

27 Arjunawijaya 53.4. Unless otherwise stated all translations from the Arjunawijaya are taken from Supomo (1977).
28 Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 22.53. Unless otherwise stated all translations from the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa are taken from Soewito Santoso (1980). This translation is mine.
On a literary level, the *stuti* is a means of moving forward in the story, and on a ‘theological’ level it is a means of harnessing divine power for the purpose of fulfilling the desires of the humble worshipper and the needs of the world.

The formula of battle-sacrifice may have a function similar to the hymns of praise: both literary motifs are embedded in the narrative at the critical moment of the story where the forces of dharma face a crucial dilemma. The battle-sacrifice formula may function as a means of harnessing the power of the ‘war-like’ aspect of the deity summoned amidst the battlefield.

2.2 RĀMA AND THE BATTLE-SACRIFICE IN THE KAKAWIN RĀMĀYAṆA

Interestingly, the motif of battle-sacrifice is found already in the *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, most probably the earliest Old Javanese *kakawin* (Acri 2011a). The attestation of the motif of battle-sacrifice in the *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* is surprising as the trope of *raṇayajña* and its complex imagery is specific to the Mahābhārata textual tradition and it is found neither in Vālmīki’s *Rāmāyaṇa*, nor in Bhaṭṭi’s *Rāvaṇavaddha*, two texts that served as models for the Old Javanese *kakawin* (Hooykaas 1958).

Curiously, in *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* 22.53 we find the earliest attestation of the motif of battle-sacrifice in Old Javanese literature, and the three stanza-long passage, moreover, represents the most elaborate and detailed specimen of this formula. As in most other cases, the motif of battle-sacrifice is part of a battle harangue. It is delivered by Anggada to embolden the spirit of panicking and desperate monkeys:

```
bali hana raṇayajña ya jñāna sang śūra yan sāra sang wīra sang dhīra sang dhārakeng prang mahānta ng panungtung ning uttungga tātān pakān̄ggēḥ tikā tungga-tunggal śirāṇinggilis kesisan tar gēlis ngwang waneh kwan ning āmbēk ya muśṣeng kṣaṇaḥ ling nirāmūk śireṇg paprangan mangkanātah kitang wānara.
```

Ceremonial offerings of battle-sacrifice are known to the heroic warrior, valiant, steadfast and unswerving in the battle, in pursuit of the highest state of distinction, who does not regard himself as alone when left behind on the battlefield: I will not yield to pressure of others, furthermore, in a second, I can reach heaven. So thinks he, fighting fiercely. You should do likewise, monkey soldiers.

```
apa phala puḥarā nikaṅ jīva yan tan paṃūjā lawan tan kapūjā rikeng paprangan yekyakēn kunda-kundā nirang wīra nāṅg śatru yāṅgkēn [n] apūy nayudhanyojośalāṅgkēn dilah nāṅg kaśūranta yekān akēn śrukṣruvāṇya huṁtanta ng hurip nyāṅg awak carwa paṅcopedārā ika wruhta ring citra paṅcāyudha
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What is the use of living if you have nothing to offer to be praised? The battlefield is the brazier for the hero, the enemy the sacrificial fire, the weapons the flame of the fire, your
courage should be the offering spoon, and your soul is the oblation. Your body is the place in which to prepare the offering, and the five oblations are your clear knowledge of the five ways of fighting.29

The poet has embedded the trope of battle-sacrifice into Anggada’s harangue to monkey soldiers: Rāwaṇa’s residence of Lēṅgā is implicitly identified with the ‘brazier’ (kuṇḍa-kuṇḍā), rampaging Kumbhakarṇa is represented as the ‘sacrificial fire’ (apuy), the souls of the warriors are the ‘oblation’ (huti), while their bodies are the ‘sacrificial dish’ (caru). The sacrificial fire, represented by the figure of Kumbhakarṇa, is the single most important element of the battle-sacrifice: clearly, it is the ‘fiery energy’ (śakti) of Kumbhakarṇa that is alluded to in the image of fire consuming simian warriors. Interestingly, the slaying of simian soldiers is conceptualised in terms of eating and Kumbhakarṇa is represented as a glutton with an unbridled appetite:

\[
\text{wrēddhi tekang lapā tan palō tang wēṭēng de nikang wre pirang koti lakṣa kṣaya nyeng kṣanākweh dahat lwangnya tan lwang-lwang ikang lapān tulya kālāgniordrāṅg apuy ring wēṭēng somasuk tan pašeśāsi bhasmākrēta}
\]

His hunger went from bad to worse; his stomach was never full, even after millions and millions of monkeys disappeared [in his stomach] in a moment. As the numbers of those who perished grew, no less grew his hunger, resembling the fire of the terrible Kāla, consuming everything coming in, turning it to ashes.30

After hearing Anggada’s bold speech, monkey soldiers attack the giant demon with a renewed vigour. Kumbhakarṇa, however, proves to be a formidable enemy. The giant looks around the battlefield, and his spirit soars in expectation of the slaughter he is about to unleash.

Kumbhakarṇa’s solitary raid aims to devastate the Rāma’s fighting force, bringing it to the brink of collapse. What follows is a killing spree in which Kumbhakarṇa single-handedly slaughters legions of simian soldiers. The Rāmāyaṇa’s fantasy element is here at its best. The giant devours monkeys by hundred, and his mouth is compared to the wadawā hell.31 Other simian soldiers are sucked into his huge nose, killed when dashed on the dried mucus that is sharp as rocks. Many other monkeys die caught under the stones kicked up by Kumbhakarṇa’s toes.32 Finally, Kumbhakarṇa is killed, but only after he has almost completely devastated the monkey army. The slaying of Kumbhakarṇa is represented as an act during which he is deprived of his store of ‘fiery energy’ (śakti) that is stored in his ears, armour, and crown. His pool of ‘fiery energy’ is thus diminished step by step: first, his nose and ears are cut off by Sugrīwa, then his golden armour and crown are shattered by

29 Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 22.53. Translation is mine.
30 Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 22.50. Translation is mine.
31 Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 23.1.
32 For the monkeys killed by being dashed on Kumbhakarṇa’s dried mucus, see kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 22.84. For monkeys being devoured, their blood imbibed by Kumbhakarṇa, see kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 22.89.
Lakṣmaṇa’s well-aimed shots. Finally, his heart is pierced by Rāma’s arrow. The martial excellence of demonic Kumbhakarṇa and his metaphorical identification with the sacrificial fire in the *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* testifies to the Javanese fascination with the phenomenon of ‘fiery energy’. Hundreds of years later, in the fourteenth-century reliefs depicting the *Rāmāyaṇa* on the lower terrace of the main temple of Panataran, East Java, the scene showing the killing of Kumbhakarṇa is set deliberately as the final act of the whole series (Kieven 2011: 220). Klokke (2006: 397) has called attention to an interesting fact that in the version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* depicted at the Panataran it is Hanumān, not Rāma, who slays Kumbhakarṇa in the final duel. Further, Klokke observes that out of 106 relief panels depicting the *Rāmāyaṇa* at Panataran, 35 of them show Hanumān, while only four panels depict Rāma (2006: 395). Elaborating on the work of Stutterheim and Klokke, Kieven (2011: 226) points to Hanumān’s increased popularity during the fourteenth century and ascribes it to what she calls ‘magicism’ of this period when the semi-divine and semi-simian Hanumān mediates between the world of demonic wilderness and the human world. Kieven explains the substitution of Rāma by Hanumān in the act of slaying Kumbhakarṇa depicted at the Panataran in terms of ‘fiery energy’, with Kumbhakarṇa on a par with Hanumān:

The start and the end of the *Rāmāyaṇa* series, located next to each other on the north wall, mark the two poles of the ‘Hanuman story’: Hanuman and Kumbhakarṇa are the alter egos of their masters, Rāma and Rāwaṇa, respectively.\(^{33}\)

In the *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, simian soldiers are still conceptualised by and large as animals and this tension between the animality and human nature is at the core of the slaying of Bālī by Rāma. The act of killing is styled in the text as the battle-sacrifice held by Sugrīwa, who wishes to kill his own brother Bālī so that he can win back his lost throne and his wife Tārā who was abducted by Bālī. Sugrīwa, too weak to kill his brother on his own, commissions Rāma to slay Bālī, or as the text has it, Rāma is ‘ordered to perform the sacrifice’ (*sireka kinon mayajñā*).\(^{34}\) Rāma’s participation in this morally doubtful act is the price he has to pay for the assistance of Sugrīwa’s monkey subjects in his quest for Sītā and for their military participation in the war against Rāwaṇa. The motif of battle-sacrifice is embedded in the passage that describes Sugrīwa and Rāma on the point of departure for the cave where Bālī resides:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{kinonsugrīwa yajña gawayēnnira \text{ring ranānggabālī}} \\
\text{kēbo wunuhan kaharan pamūjā} \\
\text{sang āryya rāghaha sireka kinon mayajñā} \\
\text{tārā sirābhhyudaya bhoga phalanya bhuktin}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{33}\) Kieven (2011: 226-7).

\(^{34}\) *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* 6.159.
Sugrīwa wished to hold a sacrifice on the battlefield, 
Bālī was the buffalo to be slaughtered as a victim. 
The noble Rāghava [Rāma] had been ordered to perform the sacrifice; 
As for Tārā, she would be the fruit [of the sacrifice] to be relished.\(^{35}\)

Even though the trope of battle-sacrifice is clearly recognised in this passage, the author of the text goes his own way, styling the ‘sacrifice on the battlefield’ (yajña \(\ldots\) ring raṅgga) as having only a single victim - the monkey king Bālī, even though the concept typically presupposes legions of victims. Furthermore, Bālī is styled in this passage as the buffalo, a sacrificial animal of the highest status. The killing takes place during the wrestling duel between the two brothers: when it turns out that Sugrīwa is unable to slay Bālī, Rāma urges him to attach a green leaf to his costume so that he can tell the two grappling wrestlers apart and then dispatch Bālī by his arrow.\(^{36}\) The way Bālī is slain is unheroic and it is morally flawed: according to the ‘warrior code’ (kṣatriyadharma), Rāma has committed a crime by killing Bālī who had been engaged in a wrestling duel with another opponent. Mortally wounded, Bālī reproaches Rāma for doing wrong by committing the ‘act of murder’ (hīngsākarma).\(^{37}\) Rāma defends himself, arguing that Bālī is a mere animal. Being a beast, Bālī can be killed by any warrior (kṣatriya) without a sense of sin:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{swajāti ning kṣatriya nā tīnūtku} \\
\text{tan hingsa teking pamaī kēnas kweh} \\
\text{sakweh nirang kṣatriya ngūni pūrwwa} \\
\text{sireka tūtēngwi taman padoṣa}^{38}
\end{align*}
\]

“The nature of kṣatriya is what I follow, 
To kill a multitude of wild beasts is no crime; 
The kṣatriya of the times gone by 
Whom I take as my example, they did not sin [by killing an animal].”

\[
\begin{align*}
lāwan kēnas jāti niking pinatyan \\
pinrih linaŋjak kinalān sinungan \\
sakweh niking satwa haneng alas gōng \\
suśīla duśīla wēnang ya hingsan
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{35}\) Kakawin Rāmāyana 6.159. Translation is mine. 
\(^{36}\) Kakawin Rāmāyana 6.170. 
\(^{37}\) The importance of this morally ambiguous act is emphasised by Lefeber & Goldman (1994: 45), editors of the Sanskrit Kiśkindākīnī, who argue that ‘[...] the concentration of both kāvyā and didactic verses around Vālīn's death reveals that this has long been felt to be not only the most dramatic event in the kānda but also the dominant moral issue. All action stops, and even Vālīn's actual dying is delayed while Rāma's act and its consequences are scrutinized.’ 
\(^{38}\) Tūtēngwi does not make good sense. The line may be corrupted here.
“Moreover, it is the nature of wild beasts to be killed,
Skillfully trapped in pitfalls, snares and booby traps.
All the beasts in the vast forest,
Good or bad, they may be slaughtered.”

Bālī, reduced by Rāma to the status of a ‘wild animal’ (kēnas), is killed as a beast. The slaying of Bālī is equated with the sacrificial slaughter of a buffalo. Interestingly, the two attestations of the motif of battle-sacrifice in the *kakawin Rāmāyana* are intricately linked by the very figure of the monkey king Bālī. The first line of stanza 22.53 quoted above, in which the poet explores a cluster of meanings attached to the Old Javanese word *bali* and its spelling variants, contains an interesting pun on the name of Bālī, the father of Anggada who delivers the speech. First, the word form *bali* is a variant of the more common *wali*, which is translated in OJED 197 as ‘tribute, offering; propitiatory oblation’. Secondly, *bali* is used as an emphatic particle, and this meaning is preferred by Zoetmulder in his translation of this passage (OJED 198). Thirdly, ‘Bali’ designates a famous Vedic demon (*asura*) killed by Viśṇu, a possible allusion to the fact that the monkey king Bālī is killed in the epic by Rāma, an incarnation of Viśṇu. Most importantly, ‘Bali’, is an Old Javanese rendering of the Sanskrit personal name Vālin, the name of the king of apes whose killing by Rāma is styled in stanza 6.159 as a battle-sacrifice. Being a pun, the first line of stanza 22.53 could be translated as ‘ceremonial offerings of battle-sacrifice are known to the heroic warrior’, as done above, or, alternatively, as ‘Bālī was the [proper] battle-sacrifice known to the heroic warrior’.

The attestation of the motif of battle-sacrifice in the Old Javanese rendering of the *Rāmāyana* supports a view that by the ninth century the metaphor of battle-sacrifice, rooted in the symbolism specific to the *Mahābhārata*, represented a well-known literary formula: I suggest that the author of the *kakawin Rāmāyana* may have wished to invest Rāma with the same symbolism of the battle-sacrifice metaphor that has been vested upon Arjuna in his role of the sacrificer in the ‘great war’ of the *Mahābhārata*.

2.3 BATTLE SACRIFICE AND THE COOKING OF THE ENEMIES

The literary motif of battle sacrifice was not only accommodated in *kakawin*, as demonstrated in the previous sections, but the originally Indian concept has been explored in several texts to articulate a typically Javanese martial symbolism: the killing (‘sacrifice’) of enemy warriors on the battlefield has been re-conceptualised in terms of cooking and eating. As has been demonstrated in the

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39 *Kakawin Rāmāyana* 6.187. Translation is mine.
40 OJED 1244 traces this term to Sanskrit *bali*, at the same time calling attention to its remarkable similarity to another Old Javanese word, *pali-pali*, which OJED 1244 translates as ‘the various ritual requisites (with purifying and strengthening power), used in ceremonial blessings (wedding, return after a battle, festive reception etc.)’. 
previous chapter, Javanese poets conceived of battle and food preparation (and consumption) with a common set of concepts and words. In section 3.5 it will be demonstrated that the food symbolism used in the context of threatening, or offensive speech, is not unknown in the Sanskrit Rāmāyaṇa where it is, however, limited to the scene in which demonesses threaten to chop up Śitā for their meal (Goldman and Sutherland Goldman 1996: 181), and to the similar threat voiced on one occasion by Rāwhaṇa.41

In kakawin, the most complex specimen of re-styling of the motif of ranayajña in terms of cooking and eating is found in Bhomāntaka 80.1-2. The two stanzas are part of a section in which Bhoma, the king of demons, receives a report from his emissaries that Krśṇa and his Yadu warriors, together with soldiers of allied kings, are prepared to attack Prāgyotisha, Bhoma’s fortress and residence. Red with anger, Bhoma delivers a bragging speech that is informed by the symbolism of food. In his speech, the demon king threatens to slay all of the Pāṇḍawara warriors single-handedly:

“Who is fitting to be an adversary to me? Krśṇa and Baladewa will be as dangerous as a ball of rice in my hand,
And in particular the other kings, beginning with Pārtha, I will stir like boiled vegetables.

I with my two hands will make porridge of his palace, and without help I will set it on the stove;
My syrup will be the blood of my enemies, and I will spice it with my bare hands.
And I will be the one to pound up the enemies’ heads, so their brains will be the coconut milk -
I deserve to eat my fill of fame - I am obsessed with winning merit on the field of battle!”42

Bhoma styles himself as both a sacrificer and receiver of the sacrifice. Krśṇa and his warriors are perceived as sacrificial victims - wishful thinking that will not come true as Bhoma ends up being slain at what turns out to be his own ‘sacrifice’. In fact, Bhoma assumes the position occupied by Krśṇa in the Mahābhārata - that of a receiver of the sacrifice (‘I deserve to eat my fill of fame’).43

At the same time, the demon king is represented in this passage as the personification of Death, the

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41 Rāwhaṇa’s threat is found in Rāmāyaṇa 3.54.22, in what Pollock (1991: 23, n.37) aptly glosses as ‘a scarcely figurative threat’ addressed by Rāwhaṇa to Śitā: “Listen to what I have to say, my lovely Maithili: If within the space of twelve months you do not yield to me with a sweet smile, the cooks shall chop you into minced meat to my breakfast”. Both the context and the meaning of this interesting passage are, however, quite different from that found in the Old Javanese literary examples. The passage from Vālmiki’s Sanskrit Rāmāyaṇa just quoted above testifies, albeit in a rather extreme manner, to the well-known fact that Rāwhaṇa was considered to be a human-eater. Dietary habits of the king of rācāsaya are detailed in several other passages; for example in the Rāmāyaṇa (5.11.11), where Hanumān, looking unsuccessfully for Śitā in Rāwhaṇa’s palace, expresses his fears that “[...] perhaps poor Śitā, cut off from her kin, was eaten by cruel Rāwhaṇa as she attempted to defend her virtue” (Pollock 1991). On the contrary, Javanese poets use the motif of ‘sliced food ingredients processed into a dish’ exclusively in a martial context, and as will be seen, they ascribe a completely different meaning to this motif than does Vālmiki in his Rāmāyaṇa.

42 Bhomāntaka 80.1-2. Unless otherwise stated all translations from the Bhomāntaka taken from Teeuw and Robson (2005).

43 This status of an enjoyer of the sacrifice is most graphically demonstrated in Sanskrit Mahābhārata 11.26-9, where Krśṇa shows himself to Arjuna in his terrible cosmic form devouring the killed warriors of both the armies (see Feller 2004: 280).
ultimate recipient of the sacrifice: we have seen before how in the Bhāratayuddha Śalya proclaims that Kṛṣṇa would be ‘consumed by the tongue of Death’. The passage in the Bhomāntaka is centred upon a complex imagery of sacrificial dishes and can be understood as representing a version of the literary motif of battle-sacrifice, re-conceptualised in terms of food. Bhoma’s speech is similar to the speeches of Kṛṣṇa and Śalya in so far as it takes place before the battle and it is delivered in a state of extreme wrath. First, Bhoma questions the (insufficient) sakti of the warriors fighting for Kṛṣṇa (‘who is fitting to be an adversary to me?’); then, the demon king makes a pledge to slay Kṛṣṇa, Baladewa, and ‘the other kings beginning with Arjuna’ (tikang ratu makādi pārtha). The act of killing is entirely styled in terms of the preparation of sacrificial dishes. Particularly interesting are the correspondences drawn between the ‘standard’ oblations of the battle sacrifice (flesh of dead warriors, blood and brains) and their victual counterparts specified by Bhoma. The balls of rice, vegetable stew, porridge, palm sugar syrup and coconut milk represent dishes and drinks that were consumed as daily fare in premodern Java. Interestingly, all of the terms used to designate these dishes and drinks are purely Javanese words, accommodating this parody of food firmly in a local setting. Teeuw and Robson (2005: 43) have suggested that the court of Kṛṣṇa and Baladewa depicted in the Bhomāntaka may be a literary representation of the Javanese court of Kaḍiri in the second half of the twelfth century. It makes sense, then, to suppose that Bhoma’s rāksasa domain may be allegorically identified with an enemy locale situated somewhere in Java. This identification may be supported by the passage in another part of the Bhomāntaka, where the author identifies Prāgjyotiṣa, the seat of Bhoma, with the ‘chief of the non-Āryan regions’ (ādīkang anāryadeśa) where ‘nobody observes the distinction of caste’ (tanora pwa ya warṇabheda).

In what follows I analyse in detail the correspondences that are drawn in Bhomāntaka 80.1-2 between the sacrificial dishes and slain warriors, exploring especially the interplay between the sacrificial and non-sacrificial meaning of food in the context of the speech as a pledge to slay the enemies.

Bhoma’s opponents are envisaged as victims of the battle-sacrifice and, at the same time, in an act of conscious inversion of food symbolism, belittled as ridiculously easy to overpower and ‘consumed’ as the dishes and drinks listed by Bhoma. There is an interesting graduation of suggested correspondences in this sequence, adding to the dramatic effect of this powerfully worded passage. First, the two most important actors, Kṛṣṇa and his brother Baladewa, both of them incarnations of gods, are likened to mere balls of rice (kēpēl). There is a twofold symbolism in this striking image: while making a ball of sticky rice is one of the possible ways to eat cooked or steamed rice, kēpēl conveys at the same time an idea of a sacrificial rice ball, which is also designated by the Sanskrit loanword piṇḍa. In the Hindu religious context, the piṇḍa is a ball of

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44 See section 3.3 in chapter three.
45 Bhomāntaka 79.11.
cooked rice, mixed with other ingredients such as sesame seeds, milk and honey, offered to dead ancestors in the course of the śraddhā funeral ceremony as a transitional food mediating between death and birth (O’Flaherty Doniger 1980: 6). Arguably, Kṛṣṇa and Baladewa are imagined as two balls of sacrificial rice, held by Bhoma in his hands and served for his breakfast in an act alluding to the battle-sacrifice. The same motif is attested already in the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa where Rāwaṇa’s patih Prahasta, boasting that he is capable of devouring even the moon, threatens that if Rāma, Lakṣmanā and their monkey soldiers come to Lēṅkgā, he will ‘eat them for breakfast’ (kēpēl-kēpēl tulaṇya nikā yadin têkā). The symbolism of the rice ball offerings found in the Bhomāntaka suggests that the killing of Kṛṣṇa and Baladewa is styled as a sacrificial act. While the information on Javanese practice is lacking, we know that in India pinda rice balls were occasionally used in Tantric rituals, especially those associated with the terrifying form of the goddess Durgā.

Because they are second in rank and significance after Kṛṣṇa and Baladewa, Bhoma threatens to stir the allied kings fighting for the Pāṇḍavas ‘like boiled vegetables’ (tulaṇya kuluban). Bhoma explicitly mentions Arjuna, who will ultimately kill him in a duel, as the first among these kings. While I follow here the translation of this passage by Teeuw and Robson (2005), it is worth noting that Old Javanese kuluban conveys a wider range of meaning than does its Modern Javanese counterpart, which restricts the interpretation of this dish to boiled vegetables. On the other hand, the Old Javanese kuluban covers several kinds of stews prepared by boiling meat and non-meat ingredients in a cauldron, as the word figures in descriptions of rākṣasa’s feasting which is generally not associated with the consumption of vegetables. Considering the well-established literary theme of rākṣasa demons’ fondness for animal meat and human flesh, it is plausible that the

46 Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 13.34. The interpretation of kēpēl-kēpēl in kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 13.34 as ‘breakfast’ goes back to Juynboll’s Kawi-Balinesche Glossarium op het Oudjavaansche Rāmāyaṇa published in 1923. Soewito Santoso (1980: 338) accepted Juynboll’s interpretation, translating the line in question as follows: ‘When they come, they will merely become my breakfast’. In his commentary to the text, Soewito Santoso (1980: 758) speculated that ‘[...] because for Prahasta, a breakfast is certainly less than lunch or dinner, at least that seems to have been in the mind of the Javanese writer of the RK’. While we do not know much about the way ‘breakfast’, the first meal of the day, was conceptualised in pre-Islamic Java, it seems to me that Prahasta’s ritual ‘breakfast’ is styled rather on the motif of Kumbhakarna’s gargantuan meal, devoured by Rāwaṇa’s giant brother after being woken up from his slumber. Called ‘breakfast’ (kēpēl-kēpēl), the meal is described in some detail in kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 22.10-12. It consisted of rice ‘in millions of rice-steamers’ (iwu-iwu lakṣa koti kukusan) and a ‘bush-meat’ stew prepared of lions and elephants (kēla-kēla māṅga singha haliman). It is interesting to notice that in some Sundanese areas of Western Java, the word kēpēl still designates a morning meal consisting of balls of rice, served either simply with salt, or with diverse accompanying dishes.

47 O’Flaherty Doniger (1980: 9) gives an example how in India the funeral pinda has been adapted in a Tantric pījā to the goddess Kāli: ‘In this ceremony, the male and female participants take in their left hands balls of food (mixed with the four Tantric “m’s) called pindaś, and they eat them in an action referred to as tarpana (‘satisfaction’, the term also used to refer to the offerings of pindaś to the ancestors). This inversion is introduced not in order to change re-death into re-birth but in order to reverse death altogether, to change it into immortality through the secret ritual’.

48 See, for example, Robson and Singgih Wibisono (2002: 409), who translate the Modern Javanese kuluban as ‘briefly boiled green vegetables’. 
*kuluban* in the *Bhomântaka* refers to a meat stew.\(^{49}\) I follow, however, Teeuw and Robson’s translation of *kuluban* as ‘boiled vegetables’, for the simile conveys an understanding that the bodies of enemies would be dismembered and hacked into small parts, in a process similar to cutting the ingredients for a stew.

Next, in stanza 80.2a, Bhoma threatens to raze Kṛṣṇa’s palace to the ground without any assistance, setting it on fire like a dish of porridge placed on the stove.\(^{50}\) The literary comparison of a destroyed building to rice porridge (*bubur*) is common in Old Javanese literature, testifying to the fact that the Javanese perceived the act of the physical demolition of a building in terms of cooking porridge (*amubur*). At the same time, the symbolism of a demolished palace refers to one of the figures of the literary trope of battle-sacrifice where destroyed palaces are conceptualised as sacrificial vessels. Apart from the *Bhomântaka*, this imagery is found in the powerfully worded introductory *manggala* of the *Bhâratayuddha*, already discussed in section 3.1, where we learn that the king Jayabhaya uses ‘the burning palaces of his adversaries’ (*nagara ning musuh gēsēng*) as his sacrificial vessels (*kunḍanira*). In my view, however, the most important association made in *Bhomântaka* 80.2 is that between a destroyed palace and the seat of Kṛṣṇa’s royal power or śrī, turned into porridge and ‘devoured’ by Bhoma. The demon king will thus secure for himself the royal śrī, associated previously with Kṛṣṇa. Porridge figures among sacrificial dishes in several other *kakawin*; an oblation of rice porridge (*caru bubur*) is mentioned, for example, in the *Śiwarātrikalpa* where it is further specified as ‘porridge cooked with sugar’ (*bubur gula liwēl*).\(^ {51}\)

Next, in stanza 80.2b, Bhoma swears to prepare his ‘syrup’ (*gulan*) from the blood of slain enemies. As Teeuw and Robson (2005: 645) note, the kind of syrup alluded to in this passage was made of ‘red sugar’. The concoction in question can be plausibly identified with the substance called in several *kakawin* ‘liquid sugar’ (*gula drawa*), a sweet, thick, red-coloured treacle made from palm sugar, occasionally flavoured with spices, and kept in bamboo tubes to ferment.\(^ {52}\) The correspondence drawn between the blood and fermented syrup made from the sap of sugar palm is very interesting. In *kakawin*, blood is often represented as a substance of intoxicating (*awērō*)

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\(^{49}\) Rākṣasa partaking on *kuluban* prepared apparently from human flesh were observed by Hanumān on Lēŋkā in kakawin *Rāmāyaṇa* 8.33. Demons, consuming *kuluban* prepared from the meat of boar, are described in *Abhîmanyauvîvāha* 8.6. For the specifically vegetable *kuluban*, see *Kūñjarakarna* 5.8. This scene describes the stew cooked by ascetics (tapārṣi) for their meal.

\(^{50}\) I suspect that the line refers to Kṛṣṇa’s palace, the residence of Bhoma’s main opponent. An ambiguous wording of this line, however, makes possible an attribution of palace(s), *puranya*, the grammatical object of the sentence, to Arjuna, or to Arjuna and other kings allied with Kṛṣṇa.

\(^{51}\) In *Śiwarātrikalpa* 37.4 it is Śiva himself who orders to prepare a kind of porridge as an oblation used during the ‘Night of Śiva’: ‘[a]nd as offering milk porridge and molasses porridge, mixed with green peas’ (Teeuw et al. 1969: 141). Unless otherwise stated all translations from the *Śiwarātrikalpa* are taken from Teeuw et al. (1969).

\(^{52}\) For *gula drawa*, see *Krṣṇayāṇa* 10.1; *Sutasoma* 58.9 and 85.7; *Pārthayajña* 17.5. For spiced syrup see, for example, *Sumanāntaka* 49.5; for the syrup kept in bamboo tubes, see *Pārthayajña* 18.7.
quality. Mildly alcoholic fermented palm syrup (gula drawa) may have been used in pre-Islamic Java as the sacred stand-in for blood: this association, lost in modern Java, is still recognisable in the passage in the Bhāratayuddha in which Mpu Sėdah associates the blood seeping from the wounds of young Abhimanyu’s dead body to red palm syrup (gula drawa). In section 5.2 of chapter five I demonstrate that the consumption of fermented beverages was part of an act of taking oaths before a war campaign. Typically, drink was considered to add weight and authority to the spoken word and alliances were fortified with a cup (or tube) of palm wine. Consumption of alcoholic beverages is nearly always depicted in kakawin as a communal activity so that there is hardly any place for solitary drinking. Similar to Kumbhakarna, probably the most famous solitary eater (and drinker) in the kakawin poetry, the author depicts Bhoma in the passage under discussion as a solitary drinker, thus further emphasising the self-obsessed nature of the demon king, who vows to annihilate the enemies ‘without any help’ (tak arowanga). Viewed from this perspective, Bhoma’s pledge to single-handedly slay his enemies is fortified by his solitary drinking of the syrupy concoction that he further spices with his ‘bare hands’ (karatala). The word karatala used in this context is an ingenious pun: while the term commonly designates a kind of machete-like sword, in the context of this bragging speech karatala is used for Bhoma’s massive hands (literally: ‘broad palms’). In a beautiful metaphor, the poet conjures up an image of Bhoma as someone who will fight only with his bare hands, without any need for a weapon. Representing a stock image of the kakawin martial imagination, the bare-handed fight, ‘wrestling’, was considered the most accomplished way of combat, representing the final stage of heroic duel fights. Wrestling duels, too, have a deep religious symbolism, representing the test of sakti of the two wrestlers when one of them is a god in disguise who only masquerades as a wrestler. The duel culminates in an act of devotion by the overpowered wrestler. Probably the most famous wrestling duel between an epic hero and a god is the fight between Arjuna and Śiva in the Arjunawiwaha. Recently, this motif has been analysed in comparative perspective by Hunter (2011) who emphasises the religious and symbolic dimension of the motif of the divine duel. The wrestling symbolism in the Bhomāntaka 53

53 Intoxicating quality of blood is mentioned, for example, in kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 8.34, in a passage where feasting rākṣasa demons devour raw meat and drink blood copiously. The author informs us that ‘drunken blood made them wild and elated’ (inimunnya rāh wija-wijah mawērō). The theme is associated in the Old Javanesse literature with the drinking habits of demonic characters, used sometimes in a moralising context, as in the Buddhist kakawin Kuñjarakarna 8.3. In a vivid description, servants of Yama, who are likened to Bhairawa, get drunk on the blood of tormented sinners: ‘[...] like Bhairawa they roared with a terrible noise, intoxicated and daubed with bright blood they danced fast and furious [...]’ (Teeuw and Robson 1981: 95). Unless otherwise stated all translations from the Kuñjarakarna taken from Teeuw and Robson (1981).

54 Bhāratayuddha 13.33. Another kind of symbolism pertaining to blood is attested in stanza 13.32 where the blood flowing out of Abhimanyu's crushed head reminds Mpu Sėdah of 'red spittle' (hidu bang): the bright red-coloured saliva, not dissimilar in colour and texture to blood, was the result of chewing a betel quid, another stimulant used commonly in premodern Java and Bali.

55 Arjunawiwaha 9.3.
suggests that Bhoma, persuaded about his invincibility, styles himself as an object of religious devotion.

Next, in stanza 80.2c, brains spilling out of the crushed heads of Bhoma’s enemies are likened to coconut milk (santēn). In this imagery, a correspondence seems to be drawn between the milk, a traditional ingredient of caru (oblation prepared by boiling milk and butter with other substances, see OJED 310), and ‘coconut milk’, which was obtained by pressing coconut meat. In a similar imagery found in kakawin Rāmāyana 22.53, mashed brains are styled, along with blood, as ‘a perfect offering dish’. Arguably, the literary motif of battle-sacrifice was expanded in the Bhomāntaka to include local food symbolism. A traditional theme of killed warriors, envisaged as victims of the battle-sacrifice, has been re-styled in kakawin to encompass symbolic correspondences drawn between these human victims and regular food items.

2.4 THE EARTH AS RECEIVER OF THE BATTLE-SACRIFICE: FERTILITY SYMBOLISM OF BLOOD-SPILLING

Death on the battlefield is conceptualised in the motif of battle-sacrifice as a beneficial act. Martial scenes in kakawin abound in the gruesome imagery of wounded and killed men. The poets’ insistence on anatomically repulsive detail and the excessive attention paid to it are striking: examples include descriptions of intestines collapsing out of gaping stomachs ripped open, eyeballs popping out onto the ground and brains oozing out of eye-sockets. There is hardly any call for open wounds to be treated and no effort to remove dead bodies to the safety of the battle camp. If we are to follow the logic of kakawin, wounded soldiers, horses and elephants are simply left to die on the battlefield, without any mercy. This is in sharp contrast to the practice attested, for example, in ancient Greek epics where severe fights are conducted in order to secure bodies of dead warriors and prevent them from falling into enemy hands. As a consequence of this lack of care, dead bodies fall prey during the night to the depredations of carrion-eating animals, such as wild dogs, jackals and vultures. In addition, rākṣasa and man-eating demons (piśāca) invade the deserted battlefield to feast on the corpses. However, it is specifically in the vistas of the battlefield strewn with dead bodies, decapitated heads and dismembered limbs that literary hyperbole is employed with an unparalleled mastery. I suggest that this horrible imagery, as well as the lack of attention paid to wounded and dead soldiers, can be understood within the framework of the concept of the battle as a sacrifice on the battlefield.

Recently, Feller (2004: 274) has called attention to the agricultural symbolism of flesh and blood in martial scenes in the Sanskrit Mahābhārata, claiming that:

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56 Consider, for example, a notoriously famous fight over the body of Patroclus in canto 17 of Homer’s Iliad.
[...] it may not be too daring to say that the blood and flesh of the dead warriors soak and revitalize the earth, like the sap of spring and the rain of the monsoon.

The Earth is envisaged as a recipient of oblations consisting of the flesh and blood of dead soldiers. In *kakawin* it is especially the correspondence between the blood-spilling and fertility of agricultural land: gushing blood is likened to rivers bringing precious water to peasants or to the flow of volcanic mud, bringing enriching minerals to the fields. Consider these descriptions in the *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*:

> patēmu ni rāh nikang mati samangkanādbhuta dalēmnya īngan i ḍaḍa

The pool of collected blood was amazing, its depth reaching to the chest [of a man].

> atiṣaya bhīṣaṇāŋ samarabhūmi mabāng ya kabh ahalēpa mangkanāŋ talaga sang yama yan panurun rudhira ya ta wwayanya malētuh mahangi maharing

The battlefield looked very terrifying, running all with red blood,
Beautiful as if the lake of Yama descended to the earth;
The blood was its water, reeking and spreading everywhere.

> kadi guntur ikang rudhira ya humilī rikanang giri gahwara kali madalēṃ

Blood was rushing as volcanic mud,
Out of the depths of mountain, turning into a deep river, [...]

In numerous metaphors Javanese poets express the idea that blood spilled on the battlefield is an enriching substance, increasing fertility of the earth and its potential to grow rice and sustain people. Poets use metaphors deeply embedded in the farming lore of Javanese peasants so that an intimate link between warfare and agriculture is reaffirmed. Blood gushing from warriors’ wounds is likened to the rain in the seventh month (*kapitu*), rushing mountain torrents, springs of water, floods, and the flow of enriching volcanic mud. The metaphor of blood seeping out of the wound, likened to an outflow of the volcanic mud (*guntur*) is particularly innovative. Arguably, blood flowing from the wound as well as *guntur* mud ejected during a volcano eruption cause destruction of life. According to *kakawin*, both of the substances are at the same time responsible for renewal of lives.

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57 *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* 19.129. Translation is mine.
58 *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* 19.130. Translation is mine.
59 *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* 19.131. Translation is mine.
60 Seeping or gushing blood is likened to the rain in the seventh month (*kapitu*) in *Bhomāntaka* 87.4; to the mountain torrent in *Bhomāntaka* 99.13; to the spring of water (*wulakan*) in *Sutasoma* 99.10; to the waters of flood in *Ghatotkacāśraya* 41.4 and *Krṣṇayāṇa* 51.19.
life. Volcanic activity is responsible for the incredible fertility of Javanese and Balinese soil, which is among the most productive in Southeast Asia. However, it is also responsible for the periodic destruction of life in the areas subject to volcanic eruptions. Blood symbolises renewal and in one of the most original similes in the Bhomāntaka even the chariots smeared with blood are envisioned as ‘newly painted’.  

The rain of blood (hudan rudhira) is listed in the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa among the positive ominous signs that accompany Rāma on his way to Lēngkā, foretelling his victory over Rāwaṇa. Agricultural and vegetative symbolism is prominent also in the martial scenes in which blood is not the dominant element. The Bhomāntaka is particularly rich in this symbolism: corpses of demons, dispatched by Kṛṣṇa's disc-weapon, fall from the heaven ‘like amazingly heavy rain’ (himpēr hudan adrēs adbhuta) and the slain elephants ‘fell down like fruits, bunch after bunch’ (gajāśwa tūya wwaḥ ikāsusun tībā).

Summarising this chapter, the motif of battle-sacrifice is attested in several kakawin in the form of a formula, one to three stanzas long, embedded in the battle harangue delivered by a military commander at the critical moment of the battle. Interestingly, the motif and symbolism of battle-sacrifice, typical for the Mahābhārata epic and its textual tradition, is attested at two places in the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa. I have advanced the hypothesis that in Java the motif of battle-sacrifice was viewed as a powerful literary formula, and that the author of the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa wished to invest Rāma, a major epic hero of this text, with the same prestigious symbolism as was attached to Arjuna in his capacity as a ‘sacrificer’ in the ‘great battle’ of the Mahābhārata. The motif of battle-sacrifice, however, should not be viewed as only a complex literary trope: the metaphor of battle as a sacrifice pervades kakawin poetry and was successfully elaborated by poets to cover typically Javanese martial imagery that draws a parallel between the slain warriors and food preparations. Finally, I have demonstrated that the specific symbolism of blood-spilling has important agricultural connotations of fertility in kakawin.

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61 This simile is attested at two places: in Bhomāntaka 92.19; 99.16.
62 Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 19.45.
63 Bhomāntaka 99.10.
Chapter 3: Blood-spilling: sacrificial aspects of war

3.1 HUNTING SYMBOLISM IN THE MARTIAL SCENES

Literary representations of military violence are deeply influenced by the theme of the hunt. Javanese poets conceived of battles and hunts with a common set of words and concepts so that the depictions of battle reveal a certain game-like quality; the confusion between human and animal quarry is typical for the kakawin martial imagination. Allsen (2006: 65), who has analysed the phenomenon of the royal hunt across premodern Eurasia, observes that the hunt was essentially the (military) exercise in envelopment. Not only the battlefield, but also the formation of arrayed warriors has been conceptualised in kakawin as a well-defined, enclosed ‘hunting ground’, which must be breached by the opponent. Allsen argues that the royal hunt in particular has been the par force hunt (2006: 54). In hunting par force, game was run down and exhausted by the dogs before the killing started. The organization of the par force hunt represented an obvious demonstration of good management as its organization was exceptionally demanding. Furthermore, Allsen (2006: 182) notes that the motif of a royal hunt carries an important message that a forceful demonstration in one sphere, such as the hunt, strongly implies a similar competency in others, such as the suppression of bandits or tax collection. I will demonstrate that this aspect of hunting symbolism can be detected in the Dešawarṇana: in my view, it is in the political context of the death of Gajah Mada that the motif of the royal hunt in the Dešawarṇana resumes its symbolic significance.

Specific to the kakawin martial imagination is the view that the warriors are identical with the game. A rather uncomplicated instance of this conflation is found in the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa where the animal status of monkey soldiers is mocked by Rāwaṇa who urges his rākṣasa soldiery to ‘go out and wage a war’ (mēṭwa ring raṇa) against Sugrīva’s monkeys, using the equipment employed commonly in the hunt: ‘blowguns, bows and hunting dogs’ (tulup panah yeka wawan lawan asu).64 One of the obvious reasons for the conflation of human and animal quarry is the ambivalent status of rākṣasa, demonic figures endowed with physical attributes of animals, such as the tusks, claws and abundant bodily hair. Rākṣasa and other classes of demonic beings were commonly depicted as wild animals, game which was hunted during the battle. The vocabulary attested in martial scenes can be traced in many cases to the words used to describe animals preying upon one another, such as animbat (‘to tusk, to horn’), anawat (‘to swoop down on’), and anujah (‘to pierce with the tusks’).65

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64 Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 18.31.
65 For animbat in martial context see, for example, Bhāratayuddha 13.17 and Bhomāntaka 95.3. For anawat see kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 19.85. For anujah see Bhāratayuddha 18.12.
Typical battle is represented in *kakawin* as a series of head-on clashes on a well-delineated territory which is ‘enclosed’ by natural obstacles such as ravines, rivers, and dense woods, another structural similarity to the enclosed hunting ground. Mostly devoid of any strategic aims, the battle has only a single objective: to crush and completely annihilate enemy warriors. Most battles are conducted by the ‘mutual consent’ and ruled by the principle that warriors would fight until the moment the enemy is completely destroyed or forced to flee. Still, the enemy is pursued and slain upon the flight. It is here that the parallel between the battle and the hunt is most obvious: the pursued enemy is ‘hunted’ (*binuru*) while he strives to reach the safety of his battle-camp or stronghold. The *Bhāratayuddha*, by way of example, depicts Karṇa, who is overpowered by Ghaṭotkaca and retreats into the safety of Korawa's fortified encampment (*makukud*); during his flight Karṇa is ‘chased’ (*binuru*) by rākṣasa who spill out from Ghaṭotkaca's mouth and hands.66 The term *makukud*, analysed in detail in the next section, carries strong associations with the animal world; it designates a natural predisposition of a pursued or hunted animal to reach the safety of its burrow. In the martial context, it is used to describe pursued warriors who try to reach the safety of their encampment or stronghold.

The association between the battle and the hunt can be traced to a famous episode of the burning of the Khāṇḍawa Forest, found in the Ādiparwa, in which Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna annihilate almost all inhabitants of the forest, ‘sacrificing’ them to the god Agni. Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa are represented as the officiants at the sacrifice, which prefigures their role in the Kurukṣetra battle in the fratricidal war that forms the core of the *Mahābhārata* narrative. References to the motif of the burning of the Khāṇḍawa Forest abound in *kakawin*: the routed Korawas, by way of example, have been annihilated by the Pāṇḍawas ‘like a forest burnt up by Pārtha who resembled fire’ (*lwir alas lubar ginēsēngan de pārtha tulya apuya*).67 The association between the battle and the hunt can be traced ultimately to the Vedic image of Rudra ‘the Lord of the Beasts’ (*pašupati*) who rules over domestic animals (*paśu*), as well as over the beasts of the forest (O’Flaherty Doniger 1980: 171).

The confusion between the battle and the hunt is also discernible in the motif of battle-array (*byūha*), a battle formation drawn by the army upon reaching the battlefield. Conceptualised in formal categories of tight blocks, there is hardly any place for a loose, unformed mob in the *kakawin* poetry. A number of battle-arrays trace their name to the birds of prey or other animal predators whose shape they imitate.68 The segments of battle-array, too, are commonly denoted...

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66 *Bhāratayuddha* 18.12.
67 *Bhāratayuddha* 33.1. See also *Sutasoma* 134.1.
68 See, for example, the Lobster-array (*makarabyūha*) in *Bhāratayuddha* 13.24; the Garuḍa-array (*khagendrabyūha*) in *Sutasoma* 99.8; the Curlew-array (*kroñcabyūha*) in *Bhiṣmaparwa* 81.24, and the Serpent-array (*takṣakabyūha*) in *Krṣṇakālāntaka* 40.8.
‘beak’, ‘wing’, ‘tusk’ and ‘tail’, emphasising the importance of hunting symbolism in Old Javanese literature. Consider a passage taken from the Arjunawiwāha:

Citrānggada and Citrasena were the right ‘tusk’, waiting on the ridge;
And occupying the left was Jayāntaka, spreading out, compact, deliberately far advanced,
Like the hands of the array, ardently desiring to create havoc among the enemy;
Certainly this battle-order was solid, drawn-up in ranks, hard to get a grip on and impenetrable.69

This conceptual paradigm is most profound in the literary motif of the battle formation called ‘Forest-array’ (kananabyāha), which is associated in the kakawin with the motif of the Khāndawā Forest mentioned above, as well as with the motif of the Nandana forest analysed below, and with the hunting, as well as sacrificial, symbolism they entail: in the Arjunawījaya, for example, prime minister Suwandha implores his soldiers to regard the ‘battle-array of the enemy’ (pagēlar ning musuh) to be the ‘sacred fire-place’ (kuṇḍa).70 Having demonstrated an association drawn between the battle and the hunt, and more specifically between the battlefield and the hunting ground, in the next section I explore the sacrificial symbolism entailed in this overlap of battle and hunt.

One of the most famous instances of a mass slaughter of warriors is the attack of Aśwathāman on the Pāṇḍawas’ camp, during which the son of Droṇa slays the sleeping warriors (Zoetmulder 1974: 262; Hiltebeitel 2001: 18). While in the Sanksrit Mahābhārata Aśvathāman has been identified with the god Rudra, in the Bhāratayuddha Mpu Panuluh says that Rudra ‘protected’ (angrakṣa) Aśwathāman during his attack so that he was able to slay the warriors fighting for the Pāṇḍawas.71 Abhimanyu's death detailed in the Bhāratayuddha is another motif that has deep associations with the hunt. At the moment Abhimanyu enters the circular formation (cakrabyāha) drawn by the Korawas, Jayadratha has blocked the advance of other Pāṇḍawas, ‘like shutting the mighty door’ (himpēr kori lēkas nira), preventing them from joining Abhimanyu in an attack.72 The encirclement of Arjuna’s son by his Korawa enemies gives him a distinct game-like quality: the image is one of an enclosure in which Abhimanyu finds himself trapped, not unlike game enveloped by hunters in a diminishing ring amidst the hunting ground.

Hiltebeitel (1990: 340), who analysed the motif of Abhimanyu’s death in the Sanskrit Droṇaparvan, further observes that at the moment Abhimanyu dies, he is encircled by six of the foremost Kuru warriors, five of them incarnations of Vedic deities (Droṇa of Bṛhaspati, Kṛpa of the Rudras, Karṇa of Sūrya; Aśwathāman is a complex incarnation of Mahādeva [Rudra]-Antaka-Krodha-Kāma, and Kṛtawarman of the Maruts). Breaching into the cakrabyāha battle formation, so

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69 Arjunawiwāha 25.1.
70 Arjunawījaya 53.3.
71 Bhāratayuddha 50.15.
the *Bharatayuddha*, Abhimanyu is deprived of all of his weapons and accoutrements of the warrior by several well-aimed arrows. Before finally dispatched by Droṇa, Abhimanyu continues his devoted charge: ‘striving after the glory’ (*mangusir yaśa*), he wished to die, ‘taking Suyodhana [Duryodhana] as his sacrificial victim’ (*makiwuleng suyodhana*). The term *kiwul* is attested in a couple of Old Javanese texts and, in my view, seems to designate an arch-enemy, a selected opponent targeted during the battle; Abhimanyu, well aware of his destiny, clearly aims to dispatch Suyodhana as his *kiwul*. There is a discernible element of self-sacrifice entailed in the phenomenon of the *kiwul* sacrificial victim, as the attacker knows too well that he has but a slight chance of surviving such an attack. At another place of the *Bharatayuddha* Kṛṣṇa nominates Ghaṭotkaca (who is of half-*rākṣasa* descent) to fight Karna in a dangerous night duel. Ghaṭotkaca is delighted and accepts the challenge, well aware that Karna is the most formidable warrior fighting for the Korawas. It turns out, as is well-known, that Karna outwits Ghaṭotkaca and escapes from his rage; desperate and suffering from deadly wounds, in place of Karna Ghatotkaca slays Karna’s charioteer, substituting him for his *kiwul* sacrificial victim (*akiwul sārathi*).

Surprisingly, taking a charioteer as a replacement of his lord is a motif attested in several texts, so that we may surmise that the concept of *kiwul* sacrificial victim, its meaning now mostly lost on us, has in the past entailed the idea that the victim served as a ‘vehicle’ conveying the man who slain him to the place reserved for the warriors who died in battle.

As we have seen, the phenomenon of the *kiwul* sacrificial victim is associated in *kakawin* with the view that a warrior (who takes the sacrificial victim) is prepared to ‘penetrate’ a zone difficult to access, represented either by a formidable battle formation, or, as in the case of Ghaṭotkaca, by the particularly dangerous combat conditions of night fighting. The circular formation drawn up by Droṇa within which young Abhimanyu dies is described in the *Bharatayuddha* as being ‘most difficult to penetrate’ (*wēkas ing atidurgama*). The same quality is ascribed to the Nandana forest, the hunting ground of the Javanese king Hayam Wuruk, represented in the *Deśawarṇana* as being ‘very hard to penetrate’ (*kāṇanātīdurga*) due to its ‘very terrifying trees’ (*kaywanyādbhutatara*). In the next section the implications of the ‘impenetrability’ of the Nandana Forest are explored in detail.

73 *Bharatayuddha* 13.28.
74 OJED 882–883 renders *kiwul* ‘that which one takes along in one's death; the person (enemy) whom one drags along in one's death (dies together with)’.
75 *Bharatayuddha* 19.6.
76 *Bhīṣmaparva* 74.31: *makākiwul wāhananya*.
77 *Bharatayuddha* 13.22.
78 *Deśawarṇana* 50.1.
3.2 THE ROYAL HUNT IN THE DEŠAWARÑANA

In the analysis of the royal hunt described in the Dešawarñana I demonstrate how conceptually close the literary construct of the hunt is to war in the kakawin poetry. Furthermore, there is a distinct political aspect of the motif of the royal hunt led by the king Hayam Wuruk, the literary patron of the text. Contrary to many other subjects discussed in the Dešawarñana, which have invited substantial comment by the scholars, the five cantos spread in twenty five stanzas detailing the royal hunt have received only a limited attention and a rather unappreciative reception. Scholars have been not impressed by this textual sequence in the Dešawarñana: Pigeaud (1962: 145) considers the episode to represent a ‘humorous interlude’, a farcical intermezzo similar to modern Javanese banyolan, while Zoetmulder (1974: 352) observes that Mpu Prapañca ‘indulges in the fantasy of presenting the animals as assembled in council’. Robson (1995: 124) notes that the motif of royal hunt has little relevance to the main subject of the Dešawarñana and has been added merely for the ‘demands of the genre’.

I argue that the motif of the royal hunt is a fitting part of Mpu Prapañca’s effort to reaffirm the royal authority of Hayam Wuruk by placing him in a mythological master narrative. So far, scholars have paid only a scant attention to the context and structure of the episode: the hunt takes place during an ‘inspection tour’ of Hayam Wuruk through East Java in 1359, while the Dešawarñana, the single known work of Mpu Prapañca, was composed in 1365, almost immediately after the death of Gajah Mada, Hayam Wuruk’s mighty and skillful prime minister (patih), who died in 1364 (Krom 1931). Gajah Mada was responsible for the military expansion of the Majapahit kingdom to Bali and parts of Sumatra, as well as for the political centralisation of Java (Buchari 2012: 427). The period of just one year between Gajah Mada’s death and the composition of the Dešawarñana strongly suggests that the poem was composed as a part of an effort to reaffirm the political and military might of Hayam Wuruk after his skillful prime minister and the highest commander of the army had died.79 Another factor that may have influenced Mpu Prapañca’s choice to complete his work in 1365 was the śrāddha rites conducted for the Rājapatnī and described in the Dešawarñana in great detail.

Riding in chariots, the king, accompanied by his wives, ministers and a large military entourage covered around seven hundred kilometers in two or three months (Hadi Sidomulyo 2007: 5). At a number of places in the Dešawarñana Mpu Prapañca emphasises the divine status of Hayam Wuruk and his main wife:

Plainly a god and a goddess, as he kept close company with his loved one.

79 During the final years of his life Gajah Mada was holding the highest military title tumēnggung; after his death in 1364 the title went onto one Pu Nāla (Krom 1931).
Their maid-servants were like nymphs just come down from the sky together,
And those who saw it imagined that their impurities would be wiped away and appeared to be utterly amazed.\(^{80}\)

Viewed from this perspective, Hayam Wuruk is by way of allusion identified in the hunting episode with Paśupati, Lord of the Beasts, and the Nandana forest with the Majapahit kingdom. Mpu Prapañca’s detailed description suggests that the style of the royal hunt depicted in the Deśawarṇa\(^\text{na}\) did not differ markedly from the model known from premodern Japan or India. First, men equipped with beaters were employed to make the game move in one direction. Through the circular movement of horsemen, all kinds of running animals were then enclosed into a diminishing ring that was defined by some kind of provisional fencing. Fire was used to prevent animals from escaping into the wild:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{The wood was encircled, the monkeys were startled and took fright,} \\
\text{And the birds were in commotion, bent on getting away in their agitation.} \\
\text{The din of the servants echoed back and forth as they lit fires everywhere,} \\
\text{It resounded like the thunderous roar of the sea.} \\
\text{The flames of the fires blazed as high as the sky,} \\
\text{Like the Khaṇḍawa wood once burnt by the god Agni.} \quad \text{(81)}
\end{align*}
\]

Arguably, military discipline was needed in order not to break ranks and dispatch those animals that attacked the huntsmen even before they could be drawn into an enclosure. Allsen argues that the royal hunt has been by principal the staged hunt (2006: 54). Monkeys and birds flew away, while other animals ‘looked for safety in the centre’ (akukud umusī tēngah).\(^{82}\) As I have proposed above, the term akukud can be traced to the hunting lore where it denotes the efforts of chased game to look for safety. In virtually all instances of the word akukud in Old Javanese literature, it is attested in the martial context. OJED 912 renders akukud ‘to gather up (everything) and leave; to depart for good’. In my view, the meaning of Old Javanese akukud is more restricted, as it is known to us only from the martial context where it designates, always with pejorative overtones, an effort of warriors, or persons ousted by the enemy from their homes, to reach the safety of a stronghold or fortified battle-camp.\(^{83}\) The word is used with this meaning several times in the Bhāratayuddha, where it serves to depict the beaten Korawa warriors retreating to the safety of their fortified encampment on

\(^{80}\) Deśawarṇa\(^\text{na}\) 27.1. See also stanza 27.2 where Mpu Prapañca praises Hayam Wuruk for his martial prowess demonstrated in a mock combat. Mpu Prapañca concludes the laudatory passage by this statement: ‘indeed he was simply a divinity descended as he roamed the world’ (Robson 1995: 43-4).

\(^{81}\) Deśawarṇa\(^\text{na}\) 50.2-3.

\(^{82}\) Deśawarṇa\(^\text{na}\) 50.4.

\(^{83}\) See, for example, Arjunawiwāha 22.2 where Arjuna reports to Indra that the inhabitants of the slopes of the Meru mountain, overrun by Niwātakawaca’s demons, are ‘retreating and packing up (akukud)’, as they plan to take refuge with Indra (Robson 2008: 105).
the Kurukṣetra. In the *Arjunawiwāha* the word *akukud* is employed to denote a flight for life of the inhabitants of the slopes of Meru, ‘hunted’ by Niwātakawaca’s demons. Upon hearing the disturbing news, god Indra proclaims that Heaven would accommodate the refugees, who should be ‘given orders to retreat to safety [of Heaven]’ (*konēn makukuda*) to be ‘protected and befriended’ (*rakṣan sahāyan*).\(^85\)

To resume the description of the hunt in the *Deśawarṇana*, the game has gathered in the middle of the forest, in the apparent safety of what was actually a deadly trap: while the deer suggest fleeing away, the bull, buffalo and wild dog would like to offer resistance. The lion, king of the beasts, suggests instead being resigned to one’s fate, preaching that ‘if you happen to be found by the king [...] you should merely await death.’\(^86\) The lion’s council represents yet another reference to the divine status of king Hayam Wuruk. Wild animals are conceptualised in the *Deśawarṇana* as representatives of adharma (a quality, especially behaviour, which is not in accordance with the moral and religious law) and their slaughter in the hunt represents an important aspect of the king’s control over his disobedient ‘subjects’. The figure of lion serves to conceptualise the way how to wage control over the ‘small game’, a metaphor for the common populace: the lion kills in a selective way and in the *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* Bharata is implored by Rāma to ‘imitate’ (*tiru-tirun*) ‘the selective way lion kills’ (*yatnānyān pamati-mati*).\(^87\)

In the meantime, the enveloped area had been steadily reduced until a killing ground was created. Soon, hunters on horses entered the enveloped area, starting to kill the confused game. Boars’ flashing tusks resemble daggers (*sihung nika tulya curik*) that turn into butchering utensils when used against hunters and their hunting dogs, which have their heads ‘severed’ (*kinērēt*) by the boars.\(^88\) Mpu Prapañca adds that their clash is ‘like a battle, fierce and confused’ (*papagutnya bangun laga rodra jēmur*).\(^89\) The hunters, however, continue to slaughter the game until it ‘lay in heaps [...], their losses piled up’.\(^90\) Whereas the hunters were riding on horses, Mpu Prapañca explicitly states that Hayam Wuruk used a chariot in the course of hunt. While the practicability of using a chariot during the hunt in the Javanese environment can certainly be doubted, Allsen (2006: 25) observes that driving game to more convenient locales by the use of beaters and fire was used widely in many Eurasian cultures so as to make riding practicable. The king was supposed to enter a plot of flat terrain which was cleared in advance and to shoot the pray from his chariot.

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\(^84\) *Bhāratayuddha* 11.3, and *Bhāratayuddha* 11.8.  
\(^85\) *Arjunawiwāha* 22.3.  
\(^86\) *Deśawarṇana* 51.5.  
\(^87\) *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* 3.60.  
\(^88\) *Deśawarṇana* 52.4. Robson (1995: 62) translates it as ‘their necks were severed’. The Modern Javanese verbal form *ngereti* is listed by Robson and Singgih Wibisono (2002: 363) as ‘to cut (sugarcane, bamboo) into sections with a knife, using a circular motion around the stalk’, suggesting the technical meaning of the term.  
\(^89\) *Deśawarṇana* 52.3-4.  
\(^90\) *Deśawarṇana* 53.2.
Symbolic elements of the whole enterprise are evident. The royal hunt is not only represented as a form of sacrifice; it was, as well, an event of social and a political significance: the well-organised hunt displays a ruler’s ability to marshal military manpower and corvée labour so that the royal hunt served as an effective reaffirmation of a ruler’s capacity to manage large scale enterprises, that is to govern.
3.3 DIVINE WEAPONS, FIERY ENERGY AND THE SYMBOLISM OF COOKERY

The conflation between the battle and the hunt is most apparent in the martial scenes that depict a pitched battle, the phase of combat during which major heroes employ the divine weapons (alternative names for this arsenal are ‘magic’ or ‘supernatural’ weapons).91 Governed by the principle of ‘fiery energy’ and united through mantras with an ordinary weapon such as an arrow or spear, divine weapons produce an armoury of a completely new quality that causes carnage on the battlefield (Whitaker 2000: 88). In this section I demonstrate that the power and the impact of divine weapons have been consistently associated with the act of eating and drinking, while the fiery energy of divine weapons, metaphorically associated with the sacrificial fire, has been conceptualised in kakawin in terms of cookery. While the Sanskrit Mahābhārata makes the phrase ‘time cooks’ (kālah pacati) one of its signatures (Malamoud 1996), and the ‘time-as-cooking’ metaphor is prominent in martial scenes (Hiltebeitel 2001: 39), it is demonstrated that the Old Javanese symbolism of cooking in martial scenes is associated rather with the concept of fiery energy, a subtle substance governing divine weapons.

Used by the gods, major epic heroes, and by some of the most powerful demonic characters, divine weapons play a central and ubiquitous role in the kakawin martial imagination. The concept of divine weapons can be traced to the two great Indian epics, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata; Whitaker, who analysed the phenomenon of divine weapons in Sanskrit literature, claims that in no other mythological corpus is the concept of divine weapons more developed than in these two works (2000: 87). Victories in battles and the slaying of major opponents are achieved in many cases with divine weapons. The same holds true for kakawin. Typically, the special arsenal is procured directly from gods, or from divine sages: Arjuna travels to the Himalayas to obtain divine weapons from Śiwa, while Rāma receives most of his divine arsenal from the sage Wasiṣṭha. Among the most famous of divine weapons are Viśnu’s Sudarśana disc-weapon, Arjuna’s Gāṇḍiva bow and Karṇa’s divine lance.

The subtle energy-substance governing the divine weapons, tejas in the Sanskrit literary tradition, has been covered in the kakawin poetry by the more general term śakti (Jakl 2012: 50). Even though the meaning of Old Javanese teja is wide, it is not commonly used to designate the fiery energy of divine weapons (Gonda 1973: 517). Whitaker observes that divine weapons reside in the mind of their wielder and they are closely connected with rage and anger: when unleashed they ‘invoke all the raw power of a warrior's furry’ (2000: 91). Most importantly in the context of this study, many of divine weapons are conceptualised as sentient weapons: they assume

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91 For the term ‘magic weapons’ see Robson (1983: 315). Divine weapons are called divyāstra in Sanskrit texts (Whitaker 2000: 87), while in Old Javanese texts they are designated variously as divyāstra (Ādiplarwa 155.25), astra divya (kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 2.22), and mahāstra divya (Bhāratayuddha 14.15). Interestingly, the word divya, as well as its variant dibya, are very rare in kidung (OJED 409).
theriomorphic and demonic forms which in a bestial fury tear their victims apart. Compare the passage from the Bhāratayuddha that depicts Śalya unleashing his Rudraroṣa weapon that almost annihilates the warriors fighting for the Pāṇḍawas:

_Bhūta, along with daitya, yakṣa, and asura came forth in throngs, cramming the battlefield; coming, the enemy hoard grabbed the opponents, ripping them apart in tight embrace, [and] devouring them._

One of the principles governing the way the fiery energy of divine weapons operates is that superior _śakti_ can absorb and neutralise an inferior source, but a superior source can also repel the fiery energy altogether. This is demonstrated in another passage in which Śalya, attacked by the Pāṇḍawas, stands undaunted on the battlefield, while the terrific _daitya, bhūta, yakṣa, and asura_, born out from his Rudraroṣa weapon, continue to hunt the enemy:

> sing mangsō kabalik tēkap ning asurāstra binuru pinangan
tan pendah kadi larwa-larwan angasut kutug ing apuy agōng

All the attackers were repulsed, hunted _(binuru)_ and consumed by his _asura_ arrows,
Not unlike flying ants _(larwa-larwan)_ rushing headlong into the blaze of a great fire._

Śalya only dies when he is faced by the warrior whose _śakti_ is more powerful than that of himself: it is Yudhiṣṭhira’s divine ‘Book-Weapon’ (_kalimahoṣadha_), transformed into a blazing lance, that is the ultimate cause of his death. The Bhāratayuddha describes how the gleaming lance pierces Śalya’s chest, depriving him of his strength by ‘drinking’ his _śakti_:

> yekan Šighra dinuk ring astrawara pustakamaya lumarap
mabhṝpan maniḥemadaṇḍa tumanēm ri ḍaḍa sang ahulun
tan pendah kadi wangkawā anginum i rāh nrpati mamulakan
ndah śaktinya tinūti ri jīwa nira mantuk ing amarapada

It was then that [Śalya] was stabbed by a swift, most excellent weapon in the form of a blazing book,
Radiant as it was the shaft of jewels and gold, penetrating deeply into the chest of the king;
Not unlike the rainbow, [the lance] drank the blood of the king that was gushing forth,
Then the _śakti_ [of the lance], followed by his soul, came back to the abode of the gods._

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92 Bhāratayuddha 40.8. Translation is mine.
93 Bhāratayuddha 42.4. Translation is mine.
94 Bhāratayuddha 42.8. Translation is mine.
My translation of the last line of this stanza differs from that advanced by Supomo (1993: 238), who renders the last line: ‘[s]uch was its power. Śalya’s soul then returned to the abode of the gods’. In my view, the phrase śaktinya tinūt ri jīwa nira should be understood as a reference to the process in which the śakti of Yudhiṣṭhira’s divine lance ‘released’ the soul of Śalya and, returning back to the heaven, carried Śalya’s soul along the way. According to the purānic lore – where the mythology encompassing the genesis of divine weaponry is most developed – divine weapons were forged from a fragment of the sun’s tejas, or from tejas emitted by the gods (Whitaker 2000: 93). The associations with the rainbow point to the local religious symbolism of the rainbow as a bridge to heaven (Hooykaas 1956).

In my view, the passage implies that through the act of ‘drinking’ Śalya’s blood, the fiery energy of the divine lance has ‘carried along’ Śalya’s soul on its way back to the sun, or heaven. It is interesting to realise how often the act of harnessing, absorbing and containing of lesser śakti by major śakti is perceived in the terms of eating or drinking, as in the passage quoted above. The process of containment is actually represented as a fire sacrifice and ancient poets use the simile of flying ants perishing in the flames of fire to emphasise this association. The sacrificial symbolism of the metaphors based on the concept of ‘eating’ and ‘drinking’ can be traced to the vision of Arjuna in the Bhīṣmaparwa, in which the Korawa warriors enter the mouth of Kṛṣṇa, perishing as in a sacrificial fire:

 […] kadi rūpa nikang laru-laru n tampuh ing apuy sędēng umurub makadon wināśa matika n kakawaśa dening tamah mangkana ta katonan ikang ratu wīra kabez an tame waktra rahadyan sanghulun makānta ng bhasmībūta juga ya

[…] as flying ants rush into fire blazing up, having as [their] aim to be overcome, they will die as [they] are overcome by [spiritual] darkness. Then, all the valiant kings will be seen entering your [Kṛṣṇa’s] mouth, and reduced to ashes.\(^95\)

Kṛṣṇa is perceived in the Mahābhārata as endowed with immense preternatural power and his śakti fiery energy is greater than that of all other warriors. The locally well-known propensity of swarming ants to fly headlong into fire and die consumed by its flames alludes in this passage to desperate attacks of the Korawas doomed to fail, their śakti consumed by the superior śakti of Kṛṣṇa (Jakl 2012: 62). A similar image is known from Sanskrit literature: swarms of salabha, regularly compared to multitudes of soliders, are usually interpreted as flying locusts (Karttunen 2004: 307). More pronouncedly than in Sanskrit literature, the image of swarming insects in kakawin is

\(^95\) Bhīṣmaparwa 61.7-10. Unless otherwise stated all translations from the Bhīṣmaparwa are taken from Gonda (1936).
suggestive of defeat and warriors symbolised by burnt ants are always classed as demons or their incarnations (Jäkl 2012: 57).

Apart from drawing associations between the process of containment of the fiery energy and the act of eating, Javanese poets conceptualise this fiery energy in terms of cooking and explain the release of this subtle substance in terms of diverse cooking techniques (steaming, boiling, stewing, frying etc.). This phenomenon seems to cut through whatever other differences there may be between the food symbolism in *kakawin*. While in the next section I demonstrate that in doing so, the poets have drawn heavily on the symbolism of animal sacrifice, in this section I discuss some of the passages in which the symbolism of cooking serves to elucidate the concept of fiery energy infused in divine weapons.

The symbolism entailed in the scene of ‘drinking’ Šalya’s blood and containing his soul through the agency of Yudhiṣṭhira’s divine weapon, can be detected in two another, closely related, passages in the *Bhāratayuddha*, in which the imagery of cooking is used to illuminate the concept of fiery energy. The textual sequence is a part of an Old Javanese reflection of the famous dialogue between Karṇa and Šalya found in the *Karṇaparvan*, the third of the ‘battle books’ of the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata*. When Duryodhana asks Šalya to serve in a battle as Karṇa's charioteer Šalya agrees only on the condition that Karṇa does not insult him. However, Karṇa, who is famous for his bragging and narcissm, boasts that he will single-handedly kill all of the Pāṇḍava warriors:

*byaktan syuh lwir gilen de ning iṣu niyata yāpiṇḍa haryas rinēncēm*

Surely, they will be cut to pieces by the arrows, like the dish of *gilen*, certainly they will be chopped up like the dish of banana heart!96

This is a disturbing passage; in chapter three I argue that Karṇa's speech is best understood as an oath to kill the enemies, while here I focus on the food symbolism it entails. First, Karṇa threatens to ‘make a porridge’ (*mubura*) of the slain Pāṇḍavas. The word is derived from *bubur* (porridge) and OJED 264 renders *amubur*, common in Old Javanese texts, rather generally as ‘to crush (stone, enemy), cut to pieces, destroy completely, exterminate’. At the same time, OJED 263 lists *abubur* as the only derivation from the root *bubur* (‘porridge’) with culinary associations, translating the verb ‘to prepare bubur’. From the context of Karṇa’s speech it is nevertheless clear that what we encounter here is a food metaphor that has both martial and sacrificial associations. The same culinary metaphor is found in *Bhomāntaka* 80.2 in the speech of demon king Bhma, who threatens to ‘make porridge’ (*mubure*) of Arjuna’s palace and ‘set it on the stove’ (*anghapuyana*).97 Bhma’s

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96 *Bhāratayuddha* 27.5. Translation is mine.
97 This passage is analysed in detail in section 2.3 of chapter two.
speech, which entails a complex food metaphor, is analysed in detail in chapter two. In the third instance known to me, the metaphor is found in the *kakawin Rāmāyana*, where Rāwaṇa, humbling Rāma and Lakṣmana, likens the two brothers to a dish of porridge (*bubur paḍa ni rāma lakṣmana*).\(^{98}\) Seemingly, the metaphor of an enemy turned into a dish of porridge (and consumed) is used only in direct speeches that are delivered by the literary characters representing adharma (Bhoma, Rāwaṇa), or by the figures allied with the forces of adharma and fighting for them (Karna, Śalya). The association of the porridge and dead ancestors (*pitara*) in Karna’s speech, as well as the fact that Bhoma swears to prepare porridge as part of his complex menu of sacrificial dishes, would point to the sacrificial aspect of this food metaphor. This association, in fact, is clearly discernible in the religious context in which Old Javanese *bubur* is represented in the Śiwarātrikalpa, and in the *Malat*.\(^{99}\) Even in modern Java, rice porridge retains its status as a ceremonial dish and, prepared in several colour variants, porridge is consumed during *slametan* religious festivals (Geertz 1976: 40).

To come back to Karna’s speech, its message associates the Pāṇḍawas with the sacrificial dish of porridge, as well as with the dish called *gilen* and a dish of chopped up banana heart introduced in the next line. For the interpretation of Old Javanese *gilen* I have no definitive solution and I can offer only a few observations. The word is only attested in this passage in the *Bhāratayuddha*. It may be related to *gilay-gilayan*, a word known from Bhomāntaka 81.38 that is listed among the dishes consumed by Kṛṣṇa’s warriors during the ceremonial meal before their departure for the battle against Bhoma. OJED 525 renders *gilen* tentatively as ‘a curry’ and Supomo (1993: 216) translates it as ‘curry-meat’. The context of Karna’s speech would suggest that the dish consisted of chopped up meat, prepared either raw or cooked, which is supported by the pairing of *gilen* with *haryas*, the dish of banana pseudo-stem (‘banana heart’), a tender core of the banana plant’s trunk.\(^{100}\) Śalya, enraged by Karna’s bragging speech, pays him in the same coin and employs another food metaphor to humble Karna:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ndin ngwang tan guywa dentan pangucap amubura ng śatru śūrātirodra} & 101 \\
\text{ndin tuhwāpan hiwag ngħing juga kiita liwētięn de nikang bhīma pāṛtha} & \\
\text{ndak ton pṛāṇanta harwākēṇa ring īṣu mēnen bhukti ing mṛtyujiḥwa} & \\
\text{dōḥdōḥ byaktekung anggan patēmahana hīṭip ning kawah dlāḥa waswas} &
\end{align*}
\]

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\(^{98}\) *Kakawin Rāmāyana* 17.8.

\(^{99}\) For the ‘oblation of rice porridge’ (*caru bubur*) see Śiwarātrikalpa 37.4. For the ‘porridge offered to ancestors’ (*bubur pitara*) see Malat 6.71b.

\(^{100}\) Called *ares* in Modern Balinese, a dish of spiced boiled banana pseudo-stem, finely sliced and chopped, is a relish usually eaten either with the ceremonial *komoh* soup of blood, or with skewers of grilled viscera called *serapah* (Eisenman 1989: 313).

\(^{101}\) The textual sequence *amubura ng* has been rendered in Supomo (1993) in the form *amuburang*. In view of the context of this passage I have opted to reconstruct its reading as: *amubura ng*. 

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“How could I not laugh at your claim to turn such a valiant and terrifying enemy into porridge? It will be impossible! It is actually you who will be boiled as rice by Bhīma and Pārtha! I shall see your soul stirred violently by the arrows, as a [dish of] half-cooked rice, to be savoured by the tongue of Death! Oh, your body will clearly become [only] the crust of the cauldron of hell. There is no doubt about that!”

Śalya’s words are clearly meant to question Karna’s ability to slay the Pāṇḍawas as easily as he boasts to do. A number of correspondences are drawn not only between the act of slaying an enemy and the process of cooking, but also between the particular food symbolism revealed in the two speeches: while Karna threatens, in a metaphor of blood, to chop up the Pāṇḍawas and prepare a dish of gilen from their mangled bodies, Śalya foretells that it is Karna himself who will be ‘cooked’ like rice by the Pāṇḍawas. To fully appreciate the food metaphor used by Śalya in his speech it is necessary to discuss briefly the way Javanese traditionally cook rice. Unlike in the Malay-speaking areas of Sumatra where rice is simply boiled in water, in Java and Bali rice has been typically cooked in three distinct steps, a method called commonly, but rather imprecisely, ‘steaming’ (Geertz 1976: 43). The laborious process actually consists of three distinct phases: first, rice is boiled in a pot until it absorbs all the water. Next, the half-cooked rice is transferred into a container called in Old Javanese texts pangarwan and boiling water is poured over the rice while it is stirred thoroughly. As the last step, rice is placed into a bamboo cone (kukusan) to be finished by steaming.

It is clear that in his speech Śalya draws a parallel between the slaying of Karna and the way rice has been traditionally cooked: first, Karna is said to be ‘boiled’ (liwêtén), as the rice is boiled in a pot until it absorbs all the water. Then, Karna will be ‘stirred’ (hinawakên) by the arrows of Arjuna and Bhīṣma, like the half-cooked rice is stirred before it is put in the steamer to be finished over boiling water. Karna’s soul (prāṇa), ‘released’ from his body, will be finally devoured by the tongue of Death, while his physical body (angga) will end up scorched in the cauldron of hell.

From the above discussion it is clear that the fiery energy of divine weapons wielded by Karna, Arjuna and Bhīma is represented in this passage in terms of cooking. In the next section it is

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102 Bhāratayuddha 27.7. Translation is mine.
103 A Malay word used to denote the boiling of rice is tanak. Wilkinson (1959 II: 1162-3): ‘[b]oiling (rice). Bertanak nasi: to boil rice; to prepare a meal’. Under the same entry Wilkinson further observes that ‘[i]n large areas of Java rice is cooked by steaming (kukus, dang) and not by boiling’.
104 Though it is difficult to say how ancient is the technique of cooking rice by a combination of boiling and steaming, the utensils used in this cooking method are mentioned in Desawarnana 60.3: the cone-shaped basket in which rice is steamed (kukusan), its lid (dulang) and the pot for half-cooked rice (haru dang). These articles are part of the baggage carried by a cook in the entourage of Hayam Wuruk. A woman, cooking rice in a two-part steamer (consisting of a pot and a woven bamboo steamer), is depicted on the stone base of a house pillar found in Trowulan which is dating most probably to the fourteenth century (Pigeaud 1962, IV: x).
argued that the symbolism of cooking is shared between the martial imagery found in *kakawin* and the imprecatory imagery of curses attested from the Old Javanese inscriptive record. This imagery common to *kakawin* and inscriptions is discernible in Śalya’s speech in the motif of ‘stirring the rice’ (*harwıkēna*), an image found also in OJO 63 (1042) in the imprecatory formula that reads: ‘let him be stirred like rice (*harwakēna*) by the daggers of *kingkara*’.

Surprisingly, violent food imagery is quite common in *kakawin*. Another violent image derived from the method of cooking rice is covered by the term *amusus* / *amususi*. OJED 1463 considers only the form *amususi* to carry any culinary associations, and translates its single attested occurrence in *Sumanasântaka* 141.16 ‘to wash rice (kēḍēle, etc) before boiling (by whirling the grains around with the hand)’. The form *amusus* is rendered more generally as ‘to turn round rapidly, whirl, carry along in a whirl; to sweep away, destroy’. Certainly, such meanings could be assigned to this word in a very large number of the passages where it is attested. It is apparent, however, that the associations with the violent act of washing rice before cooking by its stirring is strong in Old Javanese. Teeuw and Robson point out that ‘the image is that of rice grains that are stirred in the pot with a circular motion to wash them before cooking’ (2005: 610-11).

There are still other cooking techniques mentioned in the context of martial scenes and descriptions of battles that are associated with divine weapons: ‘to roast under hot ashes’ (*amēnēm*), ‘to roast’ (*amanggang*), to ‘dry-roast, bake’ (*anangā*).105 Apart from cooking techniques, there are a number of words used to describe butchering of sacrificial animals detailed in the Old Javanese inscriptive record; the same words are used in descriptions of fighting techniques, especially those associated with demonic characters. This overlap will be analysed in the next section.

### 3.4 BHĪMA THE EXORCIST: SYMBOLISM OF ANIMAL SACRIFICE IN THE MARTIAL SCENES

One of the striking aspects of the *kakawin* martial imagination, so far uncommented on by the scholars of Old Javanese literature, is the use of vocabulary known otherwise from the imprecation formulas found in the Old Javanese inscriptive record. Curses represent a common element of Old Javanese inscriptions, being particularly elaborated in the foundational documents of *sīma* freehold territories (Boechari 2012: 279). The trespassers are threatened to be devoured by ferocious animals, both real and mythological, or to be tortured by demonic beings: mangled, chopped up, their hearts torn out from the chest cavity, among the more horrific penalties (van den Veerdonk 2000: 56). The curses were also a part of the trial by the oath, a legal procedure documented from

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105 For *amēnēm* see Bhomântaka 43.18, and *Sumanasântaka* 59.3; for *amanggang* see Bhomântaka 81.24; for *anangā* see Arjunawiwâha 25.8, Bhâratayuddha 51.19, and Hariwijaya 2.25.
premodern Java and Bali (Creese 1999: 284).¹⁰⁶ On the other hand, the prescriptive legal codes, such as the Kuṭāramāṇawa, known in Java since at least the twelfth century, do not seem to integrate curses into their fabric (Creese 1999: 246).

The vocabulary employed in the imprecation formulas of Old Javanese inscriptions consists almost exclusively of Javanese words and encompasses the verbs angḍudat (‘to rip open [the chest cavity]’), angḍudut (‘to tear out [the heart]’),¹⁰⁷ anēṣēb (‘to cut up to pieces’), sumēbitakēn (‘to rip open’), anētēk (‘to slash, to cut up’), and anglanḍēsakēn (‘to use st. as a chopping block’), among the more common words.¹⁰⁸ Conspicuously, the same verbs are used in the inscriptive record to describe an animal sacrifice carried out by a makuḍur officiant during the ceremony of an establishment of the freehold territory (Boechari 1977: 132). The cock is named most often as a sacrificial victim, but occasionally other animals, such as pigs and water buffaloes, are mentioned in the inscriptions (Barrett Jones 1984: 56). In kakawin we encounter the same vocabulary in the scenes that depict bhūta, piśāca, and yakṣa in combat. These demonic beings are usually represented as being ‘spilled out’ from sentient divine weapons wielded by rākṣasa or semi-rākṣasa literary characters. Apart from this motif, the vocabulary is restricted to a limited number of duel scenes in which a morally corrupted character, representing adharma, is slain by one of the major heroes representing dharma.

Strikingly, most of the instances of this vocabulary of sacrifice (as well as the phenomenon of sacrifice conducted by the makudur) are attested in inscriptions issued before 930. A parallel case of the correspondence between kakawin and the inscriptive record is found in the observation made by Poerbatjaraka in the context of his studies on the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa. Poerbatjaraka has realised that some of the names of office-bearers found in the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa are known almost exclusively from the Old Javanese inscriptions issued before 930 (1932: 177). This observation made him to conclude that the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa dates to the time of Siṅḍok (1932: 198). While the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa is now believed by most scholars to date to the middle of the ninth century (Acri 2011a: xii), Poerbatjaraka’s observations helped scholars to start to think about the dating of the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa to the Central Javanese period (Zoetmulder 1974: 231). It is suggested here that the coincidence between the sacrificial vocabulary linked with the figure of makudur and the same vocabulary used in the martial scenes in kakawin would suggest that these words may have

¹⁰⁶ An important element of the premodern Javanese oath-taking system was a ‘water oath’: an act of pouring water over the inscription that contained a curse; drinking of the water infused with the power of the curse bound the participants to its stipulation on pain of activating the curse. Daud Ali, who has compared Javanese and Indian oath-taking practices, observes that this kind of water-drinking ritual aimed to bond participants was unknown in premodern India where such rituals were typically associated with ordeals or oaths providing purification in legal matters (2011: 287).

¹⁰⁷ The terms angḍudat, angḍudut, and angḍudat may be the same words. There is confusion in the spelling.

¹⁰⁸ For angḍudat see Arjunawijaya 49.13, for angḍudut see Sutasoma 128.6, for sumēbitakēn see kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 8.6, and for anglanḍēsakēn see Bhomāntaka 95.1.
represented archaisms and were incorporated into those parts of *kakawin* narration in which associations of ‘archaic’, basically non-Hindu animal sacrifice to the chthonian spirits, represented by demonic beings, were made.

To demonstrate this overlap between the *kakawin* imagery and the imagery of the Old Javanese epigraphic record, let me introduce the episode from the *Bhāratayuddha* in which Bhīma slays Śakuni. Supomo (1993: 20) observes that the textual sequence, of which the episode forms a part, deviates markedly from the version found in the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* in which it is Sahadeva who kills Śakuni. The *Bhāratayuddha* expounds how Bhīma dispatches treacherous Śakuni and mangles his body:

*na*naha*n wacana bhīmasena teher angdēdgēl sāhasa
rēnūh sawa nira sang ārya śakuni n linūd ring gadā
byattī sinēsēb-sēsēb nira sinēmpa-sēmpal huwus
dinūkakēn amaṅcadeśa mapadohan ing lor kidul

Thus spoke Bhīmasena, thereupon striking forcibly, Smashing the body of noble Śakuni with his club; Let us not speak about [his body that was] chopped to pieces, [And] thrown to the five directions of the world. ¹⁰⁹

The verbs *anēsēb-nēsēb* (‘to cut to pieces’), and *anēmpal-nēmpal* (‘to chop up’), used to denote the way Bhīma dispatches Śakuni, point to the ferocious style of combat; the fact that the word *sēsēban*, formed from the same root as *anēsēb*, designates a ‘chopping-block’, further emphasises a sacrificial aspect of Śakuni’s death at the hand of Bhīma. As argued persuasively by Aichele, the phrase *lor kidul* (literally: ‘north [and] south’) in the last line of the stanza denotes the ‘whole world’ (1959: 332). Interestingly, the handling of the villain’s body, chopped up to pieces and bestrewn into five directions, is structurally similar to the slaughter of a sacrificial chicken and subsequent burying of its bodily parts conducted by the *makuṭur* officiant. For example, in VG VII 32.f we learn that the officiant decapitated a chicken, ‘planting [parts of its body] at the crossroads’, (*pinapasakēnya ri catuspatha*). The task of the *makuṭur* officiant seems to have been to appease harmful spirits. His ritual agenda may have been similar to modern Balinese *sēngguhu* or *rēsi bhujangga* priests who are responsible for a regular village purification from malevolent *bhuta* and *kala*, sacrificing them the blood of pigs or chickens (Hooykaas 1973: 15). Hooykaas further observes that during the rites of exorcism, the officiating priest has to:

[... ] convoke them, to regale them and finally to invite them to go home to their respective quarters at a safe distance in the four directions.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ *Bhāratayuddha* 43.6. Translation is mine.
On the level of ritual, Bhīma is represented as an exorcist, purging the world of the malevolent forces represented in the Bhāratayuddha by the Korawas, themselves incarnations of rākṣasa (Hiltebeitel 2001: 117). Zeotmulder (1974: 437) has pointed out at Bhīma’s role of an ‘exorcist’ in the Middle Javanese poem Dewaruci (and its prose version Nawaruci), an esoteric text that details Bhīma’s quest for the purifying water (bañu pawitra), an elixir of life found in the middle of the ocean. Zeotmulder (1974: 437) has pointed out at Bhīma’s role of an ‘exorcist’ in the Middle Javanese poem Dewaruci (and its prose version Nawaruci), an esoteric text that details Bhīma’s quest for the purifying water (bañu pawitra), an elixir of life found in the middle of the ocean. Zeotmulder (1974: 437) observes that on his way Bhīma slays several monsters, acts that have been conceptualised in the text in terms of exorcism (lukat). The Bhāratayuddha may thus represent early evidence of this aspect of Bhīma’s character. Another important aspect of Bhīma’s figure in Java and Bali is his association with fertility, demonstrated by his prominently displayed genitals on the statues dated mostly to the Majapahit period (Duijker 2010: 161).  

A similar symbolism is attested in the Arjunawijaya. In the passage in which an annihilation of the kings of the Hehaya race on the battlefield is described we learn that their severed heads were chopped up (rinujak), while their mangled bodies, cut up to pieces (sinempal), were ‘thrown far to the eight points of the compass’ (ginutukakēn ireng aṣṭawātīdūra). From these two examples it is apparent that Javanese poets drew on the imprecatory imagery that was developed and used in the Old Javane inscriptions. At the same time, they have drawn a parallel between the spilling of blood in an animal sacrifice conducted by makudur officiant and the motif of a horrible way of slaying an enemy warrior and mangling his body. As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, this overlap, traced here to the Javanese sacrificial practice, also stands at the centre of the originally Indian concept of the battle-sacrifice. This confusion between the battle and the ritual slaughter is further emphasised by the fact that in numerous martial scenes demonic characters use the weapons that represent butchering implements more than common weaponry: baḍama cleavers, caluk chopping-knives, kuḍuwak, laḍing cleavers, and wēdung broad chopping knives. All of these weapons are strongly associated with the characters representing adharma. In the Sumanasāntaka the warriors of the king Hemānggada, compared to demons, carry not only the baḍama cleavers but also the chopping blocks (lanḍēsan). Interestingly, a number of Old Javanese inscriptions depict the sacred stone (kulumpang), which demarcated the sīma boundary, serving as the chopping block (linanḍēsan) on which a sacrificial chicken was decapitated.  

Until recently, several groups of Hindu-Javanese have practiced an animal sacrifice, as documented by Geertz for the lowland abangan groups (1976: 82-3) and by Hefner for the Tengger

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110 Hooykaas (1973: 8).
111 This association may have been quiet old: while Bhīma’s genitals are shown on a number of fourteenth and fifteenth century statues, Duijker (2010: 166) points to the fact that this motif is known already from the Jalatunda reliefs.
112 Sumanasāntaka 147.9. For kulumpang sacrificial stone used in the capacity of lanḍēsan chopping-block in the ritual decapitation of chickens at the establishment of a freehold see, for example, OV 1925.41f (902) IIIa.15: manēdēk gulī ni hayam linanḍēsakēn ing susuk kulumpang.
113 See, for example, OV 1925.41 f IIIa.15.
highlanders (1985: 123). Apart from the sacrifice conducted by the *makuḍur* ritual specialist, a participatory animal sacrifice (a type of sacrifice where the sacrificial meal is shared among its participants) was conducted until the late Majapahit period, and probably even later, as part of state rituals: in the description of the funerary obsequies (*srāddha*) conducted for the queen Rājapatnī, described in a great detail in the *Deśawarnana*, we learn that ‘the *cāru* offerings were divided up and shared out among the servants’.\(^{114}\) OJED 310 renders Old Javanese *cāru* simply as ‘offering’, while *kakawin* suggest that *cāru* covered a range of offering items, including flowers.\(^{115}\) In the texts dated to the Majapahit period and later, however, *cāru* designates particularly an animal sacrifice: in the *Arjunawijaya* demons slay enemies as if they were ‘sacrificial buffaloes’ (*krēwag carwa*); the *cāru* offerings in the *Deśawarnana*, rendered by Robson (1995: 74) ‘offerings to the demons’, point to an animal sacrifice shared in the common meal by the participants.\(^{116}\)

There is especially abundant evidence of *sīma* charters that demonstrate that a participatory animal sacrifice was common in Hindu Java. This emphasis on animal sacrifice and the sacrificial meal shared among the participants is in the sharp contrast with the post-Vedic India, where the all but exclusive emphasis on fire and burnt oblation had broken the concretely material and societal pattern of sacrifice. Yet, Heesterman (1993: 188) observes that even in India, the animal sacrifice never completely disappeared and a sacrifice in honour of the ancestors was known and practiced in which animal’s blood was ritually used and meat was shared among the participants.\(^{117}\) In the Middle Javanese *Calon Arang*, the *caru* offering consisting of flesh and blood is mentioned (*caru gēthih mantah daging mantah*).\(^{118}\) In modern Bali, the term *caru* is used specifically to denote the blood offering made to appease demonic *bhuta* and *kala* (Eisman 1989: 226).\(^{119}\) Placed on the ground, the offerings consisting of flesh and blood remind us of the corpses of warriors slain in battle, devoured by the elated *piśāca, gaṇa*, and *bhūta*, a motif known from a number of martial scenes in *kakawin*. Compare a passage from the *Bhāratayuddha* where, interestingly, the scene of desolated battlefield, full of dead bodies, is envisaged as yet another phase of battle:

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\(^{114}\) In this context, Hiltebeitel (2011: 541) makes an interesting observation on the buffalo sacrifice in India: strikingly, the meat is consumed by some of the Hindus. These participants usually belong to the lower castes, while the members of all castes participate at the sacrificial ceremony.

\(^{115}\) See, for example, *Bhomāntaka* 17.9 (*caru sēkar*), and *Siṃmanasāntaka* 73.4 (*kambang ing caru*). The term *caru*, and the concept it designates, has a long history in India. In Vedic ritualism *caru* represented a thick porridge prepared from un-pounded rice or barley grains, cooked in water with butter or milk (Gonda 1975: 180). In later period *caru* was used to describe a ritual rather than a substance (Heesterman 1993). In medieval India *caru* became identical with *homa* burnt offering (Heesterman 1993).

\(^{116}\) *Arjunawijaya* 50.2.

\(^{117}\) Heesterman (1993: 194-5) gives a description of this ritual: ‘heart and kidneys of the immolated cow were put down for the deceased father, grandfather, in the way of the usual rice ball (*pinda*) offerings, and the blood is made run out as an offering to demons and the inauspicious dead. Finally, the meat is shared out and consumed in a *srāddha*-like meal’. See also Biardeau (1989: 19-34).

\(^{118}\) *Calon Arang* 122.20.

\(^{119}\) Eiseman (1989: 229) further emphasises the repugnant aspect of *caru* offerings in modern Hindu Bali: ‘there is nothing fresh or delicate or beautiful about *caru* offerings. The odour of rotting meat is sometimes extremely strong, and the offerings are normally covered with flies.’
As Yudhiṣṭhira proceeded deeper into the battle, the corpses looked even more awe-inspiring;
In the startling flash of lightning the swelling ocean of blood has been revealed,
There he saw the elated troops of ṗiśāca and bhūta in revelry;
Drunken on blood, satiated by flesh, they elatedly attacked one another.¹²⁰

The scene of desolated battlefield, covered by the bodies of slain warriors, is envisaged as yet another phase of the battle, a finding indicated by the fact that Mpu Sĕdah explicitly says that Yudhiṣṭhira proceeded ‘into the battle’ (riṅkang raṇa).¹²¹ It seems that the scene of horror represents the ‘battlefield’ for befuddled ṗiśāca and bhūta fighting elatedly over the flesh and blood. Bodies of dead warriors, left in kakawin almost invariably scattered on the battlefield where they become prey to the imps and giants, are structurally similar to the raw flesh and blood offered to the chthonian spirits in modern Balinese rituals. In the next chapter I demonstrate that the phenomenon of ‘blood offering’ has been skillfully integrated into the concept of the battle-sacrifice (raṇayajña) in which it is the earth that is represented as the ultimate recipient of the blood and flesh.

In the Old Javanese Agastyaparwa the offering to bhūta is explicitly identified with the Javanese tawur sacrifice (bhūtayajña ngaranya tawur).¹²² Appeasement of chthonian spirits was part of the Majapahit religious practices, as we gather from the Deśavarnana, where Mpu Prapañca details the structures inside the royal palace complex that were used for the offerings to demonic forces:

Located to the east are the places for offerings in rows of three: in the centre is the tall Śaiwa sanctuary;
The place for the Wipras is on the south, equally excellent and with stories; on the west of the courtyard is a platform for offerings to the demons.¹²³

It is clear that the offerings to the demons (tawur) represented offerings to the chthonic spirits; they were placed on the structures called patawuran, which were distinguished from the platforms called pahoman on which fire oblations (homa) to the major gods were made.¹²⁴ Pigeaud (1962 IV: 482) has speculated that Wiṣṇuite officiants were responsible for the tawur offerings to the chthonic spirits, which he associated with the worship of the Mother Goddess and the modern Javanese cult of Dewi Sri, a protective goddess of rice. This suggestion, though interesting, is nevertheless not

¹²⁰ Bhāratayuddha 23.4. Translation is mine.
¹²¹ Compare Supomo's translation of this line: ‘As Yudhiṣṭhira went deeper onto the battle arena, the corpses seemed even more horrifying’ (1993: 211).
¹²² Agastyaparwa 356.7.
¹²³ Deśavarnana 8.4.
¹²⁴ Robson (1995) observes that the term homa refers originally to an offering burnt in fire and claims that there is no evidence for this in Java and Bali. This is, however, not entirely precise for kakawin sometimes refer to the practice of ritual oblation to fire. The practice is represented as a ritual activity typical for ascetics.
supported by evidence in the Deśawarṇana. Still, the association between the tawur offerings and fertility is discernible in the Sumanasāntaka where we find the best description of the tawur purificatory ceremony in kakawin. The ceremony is conducted in the context of the wedding of Indumati and Aja, at the very beginning of its public celebration. Creese (2004: 161), who has studied this passage in detail, points out the fertility symbolism entailed in the tawur ritual:

It takes place in the bejeweled paprasan where the bridal couple sits surrounded by female attendants; the officiant recites prayers to the accomplishment of cymbals and bells. The regalia used in the ceremony comprise dishes, golden pots of holy water, and the ritual thrones. Decorations of rice paddy, presumably symbols of fertility, and implements for pounding and winnowing rice are placed on the sides of the pavilion.

The symbolism of rice and the lore pertaining to its cultivation is certainly not surprising in the context of a conjugal ceremony. The aspect of fertility, however, further supports a view that tawur sacrifice to the chthonian spirits has been aimed to increase the fertility of the land. So far a largely unstudied theme, martial scenes in kakawin are rich in agricultural and horticultural symbolism. The erotic metaphors pertaining to the combat, and especially the motif of the deflowering of a young princess, support evidence that Javanese poets thought about war in terms of fertility. I analyse this theme in some detail in the next chapter, while here I discuss the motif of the tawur offering conducted at the Kurukṣetra battlefield on the night before the commencement of the battle between the Pāṇḍawas and the Korawas. Described in Bhārayuddha 10.6, the motif has no parallel in the Sanskrit Mahābhārata and represents an addition of the Javanese author:

\[
\begin{align*}
tuwin\hspace{1em}pada\hspace{1em}tēlas\hspace{1em}makārya\hspace{1em}bhisuweng\hspace{1em}tēgal\hspace{1em}paprangan \\
rawan\hspace{1em}ngaran\hspace{1em}ikang\hspace{1em}tawur\hspace{1em}nrpati\hspace{1em}pāṇḍawāmūrvāni \\
kunang\hspace{1em}tawur\hspace{1em}i\hspace{1em}sang\hspace{1em}nṛpeng\hspace{1em}kuru\hspace{1em}ya\hspace{1em}kāri\hspace{1em}lād\hspace{1em}brāhmaṇa
\end{align*}
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Furthermore, the equinox worship had already been performed on the battlefield. The king of the Pāṇḍawas was the first who made the tawur offering called rawan. But as for the king of the Korawas, only a Brahmin was left for his tawur offering.125

The nature of the rawan offering performed by Yudhiṣṭhira remains unknown. The enigmatic word rawan is not listed in OJED if we do not take into account the form rarawwan known from the Bhomāntaka, where it designates one of the dishes consumed by Kṛṣṇa’s warriors.126 Supomo has rendered rawan in his translation of the Bhāratayuddha as the name of the tawur offering (1993:178). The coded wording of stanza 10.6 supports a view advanced by Zoetmulder (1974: 81.37).

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125 Bhāratayuddha 10.6. Translation is mine. Old Javanese text has been taken from Supomo (1993: 72).
126 Bhomāntaka 81.37.
282) that Mpu Sėdah, now and then, ‘understood his sources insufficiently, or condensed them in such a way as to render the text unintelligible to those who are not familiar with them’.

While the Sanskrit Mahābhārata knows nothing about the episode, an interesting parallel for the rawan sacrifice in the Bhāratayuddha could be found in classical Tamil sources. Hiltebeitel (1988: 317) points to the fact that in the classical Tamil versions of the Mahābhārata it is the son of Arjuna by Ulūpi, called Aravān, who is sacrificed at the Kurukṣetra before the battle. Hiltebeitel (1988: 15) registers features of the distinctive Tamil mythology of Arjuna’s son Aravān already in Peruntēvanar’s Pāratam, a Tamil version of the Mahābhārata composed in the middle of the ninth century. Considering several parallels between the Tamil story of Aravān’s battle sacrifice and the description of the tawur battle sacrifice (rawan) in stanza 10.6 in the Bhāratayuddha, it is worth giving some details of the episode as discussed in Hiltebeitel (1988: 320-329).

First, it is Duryodhana who secures Aravān as a sacrificial victim in response to Bhīṣma’s suggestion that young and handsome Aravān would be the most suitable victim to Kālī. Sahadeva tells Duryodhana that the correct time for the sacrifice is midnight on the new moon. Aravān promises to serve as the sacrificial victim of Duryodhana, his father’s parallel cousin. However, after making the pledge Aravān is persuaded by Kṛṣṇa to become a sacrificial victim for the Pāṇḍavas instead of the Kauravas. Yudhiṣṭhira suggests sacrificing a wild buffalo, elephant, boar, horse, camel, sheep, cock, and deer instead of Arjuna’s son. In a tricky speech, Kṛṣṇa claims that the human offering entails all such animal offerings. Aravān agrees to become the sacrifice for the Pāṇḍavas. It is now early morning and the time for another of Kṛṣṇa’s tricks: he must move the date of sacrifice by a day so that Aravān can keep his promise to Duryodhana, but sacrifice himself for the Pāṇḍavas instead. With little trouble, Kṛṣṇa persuades the purohita that the new moon is tonight and orders them to perform the ancestral offerings. When the sun and moon see that the officiants perform their offerings a day earlier, they come together to find out why. Aravān is sacrificed and his body is cut into thirty-two parts. Then, Aravān’s body is reconstituted so that he can take part in the war only to be slain in the battle by rāksasa Śṛṅgī, a motif also found in the Bhāratayuddha.127

There are at least three interesting parallels between the death of Tamil Aravān and that of Abhimanyu in the Bhāratayuddha. Both of them are sons of Arjuna and both of them die young, at the prime of their youth, at the age of sixteen years (Hiltebeitel 2001: 128; Jakl 2013: 4). Bodies of both of them are cut into small parts: Aravān’s body is slashed into thirty-two parts (Hiltebeitel 1988: 326), while the body of Abhimanyu is described as 'cut to shreds, as delicately as [sliced cucumber]’.128

127 Bhāratayuddha 12.17.
To summarise this section, it has been demonstrated that Javanese poets conceived of combat in terms of animal sacrifice, a practice widely conducted in premodern Java. Poets have employed a terminology that is known from the Old Javanese inscriptions where it is used either in imprecatory formulas of curses, or it is found in descriptions of animal sacrifice. Identified at least since the Majapahit period with cāru, the offering of blood and flesh to the chthonian spirits has been associated in kakawin with the rākṣasa warriors and their style of fighting.

3.5 RĀWAṆA’S KITCHEN: THE SACRIFICIAL SYMBOLISM OF COOKERY IN MARTIAL SCENES

In the previous section it has been demonstrated that by employing imagery pertaining to the animal sacrifice a parallel was drawn between the battle and the sacrifice to chthonian spirits. Furthermore, poets have associated the style of combat ascribed to the forces of adharma with the ritual slaughter of sacrificial animals. This section addresses the symbolism entailed in the association made between slain warriors and (sacrificial) dishes mentioned in a number of kakawin martial scenes. It is shown here that the dishes of the kakawin martial imagery are also known from lists of dishes consumed at the ceremony of the establishment of the sīma freehold territory. It is argued that far from representing only literary trivia, the imagery of meat dishes refers exclusively to the style of combat of demonic characters, famous for their cannibalistic habits and anthropophagy. It is suggested that poets employ this imagery to belittle and ridicule certain warfare practices.

Close reading of the martial passages containing the food symbolism of meat dishes suggests that Javanese poets ascribe these associations exclusively to the warriors fighting for adharma, mostly rākṣasa and their incarnations. The fire symbolism, on the other hand, is prominent in the scenes in which dharma warriors slay the enemy, especially by the agency of divine weapons. I argue that the style of slaying the enemy is conceptualised in these passages in terms of sacrifice: the warriors fighting for dharma kill through the agency of fire, a fiery energy of their divine weapons, as if conducting a fire oblation (homa) from which no sacrificial dish results. The warriors fighting for adharma, on the other hand, kill as if conducting an animal sacrifice shared in a communal meal by the participants. This opposition would also explain why kakawin so often associate rākṣasa demons with blade weapons.

Three examples of the food symbolism entailing dishes of meat will be analysed to demonstrate how the poets conceived about the act of slaying enemy warriors in terms of cookery and sacrifice. One of the words used in the martial scenes of kakawin to designate slaying of the enemy is angrujak (‘to chop into little pieces’). In Middle Javanese, as well as in Modern Javanese,
rujak or rurujak denotes a salad of sliced unripe fruit with a spicy sauce.\(^\text{129}\) In the martial scenes
the verb angrujak refers invariably to the fighting style of demonic characters, or otherwise to the
killing effect of sentient divine weapons (used by the forces of dharma) that ‘spill out’ demonic
warriors. In the Bhāratayuddha we learn that half-rākṣasa Ghaṭotkaca, ordered by Kṛṣṇa to attack
Karna, spills from his hands and from his mouth ‘weapons of special qualities’ (sañjata wiśesa),
rākṣasa warriors, who rush to assault Karna, ‘chopping him to pieces’ (rumujak).\(^\text{130}\) Arjuna ‘chops
up’ (rumujak) the warriors of king Cedi with mighty arrows released from his divine bow
Gandewa.\(^\text{131}\)

Given the martial connotations of the verb angrujak it seems reasonable to assume that the
style of rujak dish prepared from finely sliced fruits can be traced to ‘red salads’ attested in the
Bhomāntaka and in the Smaradahana, as well as to an association drawn in kakawin between
severed heads of enemies and harvested fruits, a theme analysed in detail in chapter five.\(^\text{132}\) The
distinctly non-vegetarian style of the rujak dish is discernible in the Sumanasāntaka, where the
troops of preta and piśāca, thirsty for blood (alapā rāh), revel in ‘choping up the livers’ (angrujaka
hati) of slain warriors.\(^\text{133}\)

Another dish of minced meat, rumbah, is mentioned in the martial context of the Bhomāntaka
and Smaradahana; apart from that, the dish of rumbah is known from the Old Javanese
inscriptional record, where it is listed among the dishes consumed during the ceremony of the
establishment of sīma freehold.\(^\text{134}\) The dish of rumbah is mentioned in the Bhomāntaka among the
dishes consumed by Kṛṣṇa's warriors during the meal that preceded the battle against the demon
king Bhoma.\(^\text{135}\) The dish is specified in this passage as ‘bloody mince of tripe’ (rumbah abāṅg
babat). For the second time, rumbah is alluded to in the simile in which the broad knives (kuduwak)
of demonic warriors, ‘draped with fat’ (kasangsangan gajih), are compared to ‘red mincemeat’
(rumbah amirah).\(^\text{136}\) This description allows for a conclusion that apart from the minced meat and
blood, animal fat (gajih) was an important ingredient of the dish of rumbah.\(^\text{137}\) The dish of rumbah

\(^{129}\) Modern Javanese rujak: ‘a salad of chopped unripe fruit with a hot sauce’ (Robson and Singgih Wibisono 2002: 636). For the Middle Javanese rurujak see Malat 9.59.

\(^{130}\) Bhāratayuddha 18.5.

\(^{131}\) Bhomāntaka 89.3.

\(^{132}\) See section 5.3.

\(^{133}\) Sumanasāntaka 147.9.

\(^{134}\) See vN 8 (902) 5A.5: haryas kuluban sūnda rumbah ityewamādi; OV 1925.41 f. (902) IIIa.20.

\(^{135}\) Bhomāntaka 81.35.

\(^{136}\) Bhomāntaka 86.17.

\(^{137}\) The reference to animal fat (gajih) as an ingredient of rumbah carries yet another association with the sacrifice. It is curious that apart from denoting animal fat, gajih is used in Old Javanese inscriptions in the meaning ‘reward, payment’ (OJED 477) and in Modern Javanese gajih means ‘salary’ (Robson and Singgih Wibisono 2002: 224). This association is apparent in Bhāratayuddha 13.18 where the Pāṇḍawas, after crushing (angramēś) the Korawas, partake of the sayub drinking-bout (anayub agosithi), during which they obtain their ‘redemption’ (pinigajihan). It has been suggested that offerings done to the harmful spirits such as kāla and bhūta, may entail an aspect of ‘repayment’; Zoetmulder, for one, has opined that the term tawur may convey ‘the idea of repayment or redemption’
seems to be similar to modern Balinese ‘red lawar’ which consists mostly of raw meat and viscera cut into long slivers, mixed with coagulated blood that makes it red (Eiseman 1989: 313). In fact, Balinese lawar is of two types, white and red. Both types contain chopped greens, shallots, jackfruit, coconut and condiments. Consumed exclusively in the sacrificial context, meat used for the ‘red lawar’ is either pork or, in south Bali, turtle meat (Covarrubias 1937: 86; Kruger 2014: 23).

The dish called ḭuḍutan has been selected as the last example of a dish style that displays confusion between the battle and animal sacrifice. The verb angḍuḍut (‘to tear out’) denotes in Old Javanese inscriptions a sacrificial act of tearing out the heart from the chest cavity of a chicken (ḍuḍut hatinya). It is part of the curses called upon the trespassers of the sīma freehold. The dish called ḭuḍutan is mentioned in a couple of Old Javanese inscriptions, listed among the dishes consumed by participants of the ceremony of an establishment of the sīma freehold.\textsuperscript{138} It is argued that the dishes such as rujak, ḭuḍutan, rumbah, as well as various ‘red salads’ (lalab amirah-mirah) known from the Bhomāntaka, are best understood as sacrificial dishes consisting of raw minced meat mixed with blood, consumed in a ceremonial context that entailed an animal sacrifice.\textsuperscript{139} A study of a rich epigraphical evidence for the dishes consumed during ceremonial meals detailed in the sīma charters may reveal more about the symbolic meaning of the dishes consumed in the ceremonial context.

The fact that the dishes described above consisted of minced, mostly raw meat, and the finding that the symbolism pertaining to the style of these dishes has been associated with the rākṣasa (and with their incarnations) and other classes of demonic beings discloses a view that poets made an association between an animal sacrifice, sacrificial dishes of raw meat and blood, and rākṣasa’s eating habits. Heesterman (1988: 132) has demonstrated how the two most significant aspects of animal sacrifice, an immolation of the victim and the sacrificial meal, almost disappeared in the post-Vedic Hinduism with its reliance on fire oblation. Unlike in India, a participatory animal sacrifice continued to be widely practiced in Hindu-Buddhist Java, as we gather, among other sources, from the inscriptive evidence of the sīma charters. Reid (1988: 32)

\textsuperscript{138} See OV 1925.41f. (902 AD) IIIa.20: ginanganan hana rumwah ana kuluban ḭuḍutan tetis.

\textsuperscript{139} The dish called ḭuḍutan is mentioned also in kakawin Rāmāyana 26.5 in a scene that does not necessarily reflect a sacrificial context of eating. This and similar cases reveal that the importance of blood as an element in a number of named dishes did not pertain exclusively to the ritual and sacrificial use of such food but represented in pre-Islamic Java a culinary preference of some social groups. The consumption of dishes containing blood was not necessarily related in all cases to the ‘sacred’ status of blood and meat, as argued by Reid (1988), who does not take into account the important fact that not all kinds of meat had ‘sacrificial status’ in premodern Southeast Asia (squirrel?, tuna?, snails?).
has argued that in pre-modern Southeast Asia the consumption of meat always had a pronounced ritual character and was associated with the animal sacrifice.

The meat and its consumption have strong symbolical associations in *kakawin*: it is only in the motif of royal banquet that poets represent dharma characters eating meat; otherwise, meat consumption is associated almost exclusively with the demonic characters.\textsuperscript{140} Soldiers represent an important exception to this pattern and poets often ridicule their appetite for meat: Sāmba’s soldiers, camping overnight at the precincts of a hermitage, make a big campfire to grill the prawns they ‘obtained by fishing for them on the spot’ (*ulithnikāṅgdadak amet*).\textsuperscript{141} Apparently, the poet mocks the thievish attitudes of soldiers who fished out the ‘sacred’ prawns kept either in the ponds outside the hermitage or found in a near-by river. Generally, Old Javanese texts suggest that by their strong association with killing and death soldiers cross the boundary into rākṣasa ways and their diet reflects this similitude. It is interesting to notice that in the *kakawin* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* textual tradition (*kakawin Rāmāyaṇa, Arjunawijaya*), the holy environment of the hermitage has a positive influence on soldiers’ eating habits: Rāwaṇa’s soldiers who visit the hermitage at the slopes of Mount Himawān are pleased to eat fruits, tubers, and vegetables there, while Sāmba’s soldiers in the *Bhomāntaka*, as we have seen above, resort to the fishing to secure themselves food when they stay overnight on the precincts of a hermitage.\textsuperscript{142}

*Rākṣasa* have been conceptualised in the *kakawin* poetry as prominent meat-eaters; an abundant consumption of the flesh of wild beasts, such as lions and elephants, mostly raw but sometimes cooked, appears to have been the main element of *rākṣasa*’s carnivorous diet. In the *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* the dietary code of *rākṣasa* is described in vivid detail:

\begin{verbatim}
amangan tasak mētah asing sahanā
manēwēr pupā ya manisig ya daging
amēcēl-mēcēl hana kulub-kuluban\textsuperscript{143}
\end{verbatim}

Whatever they ate was either raw or cooked.
They cut off a thigh [from a human corpse], stripping off the flesh;
Cooking it with spices and vegetables, [they] made it into a stew.\textsuperscript{144}

Cannibalistic ribaldry of the *rākṣasa* stuffing themselves with meat and blood assumes a nearly carnival dimension in this passage. *Rākṣasa* are characterised as the radical antithesis of dharmic values, with particular references to the areas of food and sexuality. The author of the *kakawin*

\textsuperscript{140} The motif of royal banquet associated with the consumption of meat is found in the *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa, Arjunawijaya*, and in the *Deśawarṇa*.
\textsuperscript{141} *Bhomāntaka* 5.1.
\textsuperscript{142} For Rāwaṇa’s soldiers see *Arjunawijaya* 10.20.
\textsuperscript{143} *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* 8.33.
\textsuperscript{144} *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* 8.33. Translation is mine.
Rāmāyaṇa may have presented a literary model of how to depict the eating and drinking habits of rākṣasa, a pattern that was imitated, and elaborated, in other kakawin. He may have drawn on Vālmiki’s Rāmāyaṇa, where the food symbolism serves to draw a sharp divide between the forces of dharma and adharma. Rākṣasa are typically represented by their carnivorous diet. One scene in Vālmiki’s Rāmāyaṇa is important in comparative terms: when Rāvana orders the demonesses to threaten Sītā, the willful rākṣasī suggest killing her and preparing a dish of her flesh. Goldman and Sutherland Goldman (1996: 181) were the first to interpret this passage in culinary terms, in keeping with what they thought was the ‘tenor of the verse’. They render Sītā’s answers to the demonesses: “You can slice me, dice me, chop me up, or roast me in a blazing fire!” While the passage is exceptional in Vālmiki’s text, it is difficult not to see a structural parallel with the food symbolism attested in the martial scenes of kakawin.

Nowhere in the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa, with the important exception of the description of a royal banquet in the last canto, is meat consumption associated with the characters representing dharma. The narrative strategy to represent the consumption of meat as an act of adharma is clearly reflected in the passage that depicts a repast consisting of ‘all kinds of food’ (anekawarna pinangan) served to Sītā during her captivity at Lēṅgkā. Intriguingly, the dishes served to Sītā are mentioned in two related passages, in each passage under different names. We must admit that the style of the dishes named in the first passage, laṇḍaga, puli, and maṇḍaga, is far from clear. It may be important that the food is served to Sītā by Trijaṭā, rākṣasī daughter of virtuous Wibhiṣaṇa, and not by an anonymous rākṣasī character. The food is thus identified as ritually clear. This finding is supported by the second passage in which the named dishes (lakētan, tape, bubur) leave little doubt that Sītā is on non-meat, ritually pure, diet. Conspicuously, Rāvana’s kitchen on Java serves dharmic food to Sītā, while frightful rākṣasī hags in Vālmiki’s Rāmāyaṇa could only think about making themselves a dish of Sītā’s flesh. By representing demon characters eating radically different food than the dharmic characters (which is not so clear in Vālmiki’s Rāmāyaṇa) the author of the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa established a literary pattern of description of the eating and drinking habits of rākṣasa that was vigorously imitated by other poets.

To summarise the evidence of this chapter and to contextualise it with the arguments advanced in chapter one, it has been demonstrated that poets have conceptualised slaying of the enemy in terms of sacrifice. A parallel has been drawn between the style of killing in battle and the immolation of the sacrificical victim: while the warriors fighting for dharma would rely on the fiery

145 Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 24.11.
146 The editors explain that: “[t]here is no way, of course, to definitely determine the meanings here. However, given the exact nature of the threats made against Sītā, especially at verse 5.20.9 above, we felt that culinary terms would be appropriate in this context’ (Goldman and Sutherland Goldman 1996: 419-420).
147 Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 17.101.
148 Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 17.112.
energy of their divine weapons to kill, the warriors fighting for adharma kill the enemy as if they were conducting blood animal sacrifice. The dichotomy of dharma and adharma forces has been expressed not only in the bipolarity of divine / demonic; it has been marked as such even in the style of slaying the enemy.
Chapter 4: The *kakawin* army: its organization and style of combat

In the previous chapter I have demonstrated that literary imagination of warfare in *kakawin* is structured around the concept of battle as a sacrifice on the battlefield and its pervasive symbolism. In this chapter I develop this argument, exploring the problem of literary representations of war as evidence of premodern concepts of Javanese warfare. Rather than solving intractable mechanical questions pertaining to the actual combat, I am concerned with the way poets conceptualise the military violence. More specifically in this chapter, by focusing on the way Javanese poets accommodated the phenomenon of ‘army’ in the fictive *kakawin* narrative, I demonstrate that even highly practical aspects of warfare, such as the organisation of the army, have been reconciled with the predominant concept of military violence as a sacrifice conducted on the battlefield.

In the sections that follow I analyse the four ‘tactical arms’ (foot soldiers, cavalry, battle chariots and war elephants) imagined as idealised, distinct elements of an army represented in *kakawin*. The chapter is divided into six sections. In the first section (4.1) literary representations of foot soldiers are analysed and the epic category of ‘foot-guards’, soldiers fighting at close range, is discussed in detail. In the next section (4.2) I read the *kakawin* evidence pertaining to foot soldiers against the historical evidence of the *Nawanatya*, a prose manual of court etiquette, pointing to the striking similarities in depiction of the category of foot soldiers in *kakawin* and in the *Nawanatya*. I argue that the military retainers were organised in the court establishment called *pangalasan* that had the attributes of the standing army. In the third section (4.3) the subject of cavalry is analysed, and in the fourth section the theme of battle chariots is examined (4.4). The fifth section is devoted to the problem of war elephants (4.5). Finally, the organisation structure of *kakawin* army is discussed, and a particular attention is paid to the figure of *tanda* military personnel (4.6).

4.1 FOOT SOLDIERS: EPIC ‘FOOT-GUARDS’ AND MILITARY RETINUE IN THE WORLD OF *KAKAWIN*

The epic armies in *kakawin* are represented as structured on the theoretical, idealised model of a ‘fourfold army’ (*caturangga*). Originally an Indian concept, the Sanskrit loanword *caturangga* designates an army made up of four ‘limbs’ (*catur-angga*): battle chariots, war elephants, cavalry and infantry. The concept of the ‘fourfold’ army represents a dominant paradigm in the *Mahābhārata*, in which the Pāṇḍawas, as well as the Korawas, command large, complex armies (Singh 1965: 112). In the *Rāmāyaṇa* it is only the *rākṣasa* king Rāwaṇa who has the support of the classical fourfold army with its formal divisions of battle chariots, elephant corps, cavalry and

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149 The concept was employed in Indian literature, especially in military manuals, long after battle chariots became obsolete. For the concept of *caturangga* in India, see Singh (1981: 62).
infantry. Rāma, who has lost his kingdom, at the killing fields of Lēngkā relies only on himself, his brother Lakṣmaṇa, the rākṣasa defector Wibhīṣaṇa and the host of monkey soldiers. The complex fourfold army is viewed in the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa, as well as in other kakawin, as one of the attributes of royal power rather than as an organised tactical body. However, it would be misleading to suppose that all literary representations of army in kakawin follow the fourfold pattern; we encounter, for example, descriptions of armies consisting exclusively of foot soldiers.\footnote{See, for example, the depiction of a war band of niśācara in canto seven of the Bhomāntaka, or the army of kingkara depicted in the kakawin Kuñjarakarna.}

The fourfold army represented the military concept associated with the epic past: emulating the highly respected literary model, Javanese poets introduced to the texts (and to their audiences) battle chariots and war elephants, elements of martial culture that were largely alien to premodern Javanese warfare. While the image of cavalry, war elephants and battle chariots in Old Javanese poetry emulates almost entirely literary models from the Old Javanese parwa, themselves based on Sanskrit models (Zoetmulder 1974: 68-87), there is a recognisable difference between the way foot soldiers are represented in parwa and in kakawin. Unlike parwa, which represent infantry as being invariably of low status, kakawin depict the category of foot soldiers that engage in hand-to-hand combat, mostly with the spear, as disciplined, brave and efficient troops. This emphasis on status-conscious foot soldiers is striking and calls for an explanation.

I demonstrate in this and in the next section that corroborative evidence from historical texts (Navanatya, Pararaton, Kidung Sunda) suggests that a particular category of Javanese warfare culture – an elite infantry and its martial lore – is reflected in this literary theme. Importantly, these men and their equipment are described in kakawin in a consistent way, using a Javanese terminology devoid of Sanskrit loanwords. Early-modern European textual evidence suggests that until the eighteenth century, along with limited numbers of cavalry, well-trained units of spearmen fighting on foot represented the most important segment of Javanese armies, while the bulk of military manpower consisted of poorly trained troops of peasantry (Schricke 1957: 185). All available evidence suggests that elite units of foot soldiers in Hindu-Buddhist Java were the most efficient combat force; the status of pre-Islamic cavalry remains a shadowy issue for there is only a meagre historical evidence that pre-Islamic Javanese armies employed cavalry as a tactical unit, a problem discussed in section 4.3 of this chapter. We have also no reliable evidence that elephants were used in the course of battle and not only as riding mounts of the political and social elite (Quaritch Wales 1952: 45; Pigeaud 1962 IV: 60).\footnote{Arguing from another perspective, that of the visual evidence, Quaritch Wales (1952: 46) calls attention to the interesting fact that all of the four scenes of actual fighting found at Borobudur reliefs show only foot soldiers.}

The literary motif of elite foot soldiers is already attested in the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa in an interesting passage that details how Rāwaṇa’s commanders deploy the troops around the stronghold.
of Lëngkā: battle chariots and cavalry are positioned on the flat plain (tégal), war elephants deployed in marshy and riverine terrain, and ‘armoured troops’ (waték makawaca) of infantry are posted in rugged ravines.\footnote{Kakawin Râmâyana 19.65.} This passage may reflect a premise of military theory that the infantry would be most efficient in rugged terrain, due to its mobility in restricted space (Singh 1965: 132). At the same time, however, it conceptualises the category of foot soldiers fighting at close range.

These men are marked in kakawin by the equipment they carry: spear, protective jacket and shield, all designated by Javanese words.

If we read kakawin against the evidence of the Nawanatya, an intriguing pattern emerges: the men represented in the Nawanatya as fighting at close range with spears, typically interpreted by scholars as king’s bodyguards (Pigeaud 1962 IV: 152), are depicted in a similar way as the category of foot-guards in kakawin: using the spear as their main weapon, protective jacket and shield. Even though the interpretation of Old Javanese terminology for pole weapons is often fraught, the galah spear is represented in kakawin as a prestigious weapon. The textual evidence suggests that unlike many other spear types, the galah had its tip fashioned from metal: the Bhomântaka describes how the metal of spear-points (waja galah) clash with the daggers of an enemy.\footnote{Bhomântaka 106.3.} Another passage in the Bhomântaka says that only a galah spear is efficient enough to kill a formidable warrior (prawâra), hinting most probably at its metal tip.\footnote{Bhomântaka 12.11.} In the Hariwangśa, galah spears with points fashioned from metal are explicitly mentioned as the weapons of noble warriors, and in the Arjunawiwâha even the gods fight with galah spears, though without much success.\footnote{Bhomântaka 106.3.}

The Nawanatya classifies military retainers of the king (wadwa sang prabhû) by the type of shield they carry rather than by the weaponry they use: the category characterised by the đadap shield is of special interest, as this shield seems to have been of a considerable antiquity.\footnote{Kakawin Râmâyana 19.65.} In what seems to be the earliest reference to this shield style, found in the Gedangan inscription (860), a shield-maker (undâhagi đadap), literally a ‘woodcarver of đadap’, is listed among the craftsmen.\footnote{OJED 345 characterises đadap as a ‘long, narrow parrying shield’. The đadap was certainly quite large, for in the Sumanasântaka it is depicted as used by Aja’s warriors as a ‘parasol’ (makasong đadapnya) to protect the men from a shower of arrows.\footnote{Sumanasântaka 149.10.} Furthermore, the đadap shield seems to have been cumbersome: in the Hariwangśa the shields and spears proved useless in a mêlée where}
only short swords would prove efficient. A passage in the Bhomāntaka suggests that the ḍāḍap shield may have been quite heavy, as the shields are depicted as being discarded on the battlefield by warriors in flight.

To summarise, ḍāḍap were long, narrow shields with protruding ends, similar to shields used in parts of premodern Indonesia in close-range skirmishing with spear or sword. The presence of a protruding bodkin (common to this type of shield) at the lower part of the ḍāḍap shield is actually confirmed by one passage in the Bhomāntaka: several warriors who are practicing threatening attacks as part of their military training attach the freshly received decorative tassels to their shields that are said to be ‘planted in the yard’ (piṇañjēr ing natar).

The third article worthy of our attention is the siping-siping protective jacket. Unlike kawaca, a metal breastplate covering the upper torso of high-status warriors, this simple item of battle dress is donned mostly, if not exclusively, by foot soldiers. Siping-siping is mentioned not only in a number of kakawin composed in the Kaḍirī period, it is also known from the Nawanatya, and it is attested in at least one Old Javanese inscription; it also occurs in the related form sisimping in Middle Javanese kidung literature. In the famous description of a desolated battlefield found in the Bhāratayuddha, protective jackets (siping-siping), floating in the sea of blood, are likened to ‘flashing fish’ (mînanya n lumarap). Another kakawin, the Ghaṭotkacārṣraya, names the siping-siping jacket among the dazzling articles of battle attire worn by foot soldiers. Scholars of Old Javanese literature commonly render siping-siping as ‘scale armour’. Zoetmulder summarises in OJED 1784 the current understanding of this piece of battle dress:

part. of warrior’s attire, prob. a kind of short jacket without sleeves, covering the upper part of the chest (see KBW s.v. simping); apparently of scaled metal plates and worn by those who have distinguished themselves.

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159 Hariwangśa 35.4.
160 Bhomāntaka 95.1a.
161 Used to cover the Dayak warriors in attacks on longhouses to protect them from pelted missiles and from arrows, one could not help but be reminded of Aja’s warriors in the Sumanasāntaka using ḍāḍap shields as ‘umbrellas’ to protect them from the ‘rain of arrows’.
162 Bhomāntaka 39.8.
163 For the meaning of kavaca in Sanskrit epics, see Singh (1981: 97). Oftentimes, such as in Hariwangśa 32.8, the phrase ‘dress, armour, and helmet’ (bhūṣana kavaca rukuh) has a formulaic character and it is used as a cliché to describe noble warriors riding in chariots, on horses, or mounted on elephants.
164 Siping-siping is attested in Hariwangśa 32.15, Bhāratayuddha 44.10, Ghaṭotkacārṣraya 36.2, Bhomāntaka 82.20, Smaradahana 30.3, and in a number of Balinese kakawin. Siping-siping is also mentioned in an undated Old Javanese inscription that comes from the vicinity of Tuban (Brandes 1913: 253). For the related form sisimping see, for example, Kidung Sunda 2.185, and Rangga Lawe 10.22.
165 Bhāratayuddha 44.10.
166 Ghaṭotkacārṣraya 36.2. Unless otherwise stated all translations from the Ghaṭotkacārṣraya are taken from Wirjosuparto (1960).
167 See, for example, Supomo (1993: 240) who renders sipi-siping in the Bhāratayuddha as ‘metal-plated jackets’.
It may be that in the freedom of the *kakawin* poetry *siping-siping* is used as a rendering of the Sanskrit loanword *kawaca*. There is, however, only meagre evidence that Javanese military personnel, including high-ranking commanders, ever used metal armour, while for the sixteenth and seventeenth century there is substantial evidence that they used protective jackets fashioned from buffalo hide, sometimes reinforced with metal elements (Ricklefs 1993: 72; Charney 2004: 84).

One passage in the *Nawanatya* gives us valuable information that the men who proved themselves in battle had the jacket ‘emblemmed with shell discs’ (*sinimpi-simping*). The Bhomântaka suggests that in the ceremonial context *siping-siping* may have designated indeed a kind of jacket composed of metal plates (Teeuw and Robson 2005: 443). In all known cases, the jacket is associated with the elite troops of infantry.¹⁶⁹

The word *siping-siping* may be a specifically Kaôri term. Originally, the word *siping-siping* designated a kind of marine shellfish and its shell: in the *Sutasoma* ladies-in-waiting collect these obviously beautiful shells during the pleasure trip to the sea to fashion them into ear-ornaments.¹⁷⁰ In Modern Javanese the word *simping* still designates a ‘kind of oyster shell resembling mother-of-pearl’ (Robson and Singgih Wibisono 2002: 681). Similar protective short-sleeved jackets were used by foot soldiers in Angkorian Cambodia, as attested by numerous visual representations on the reliefs from Angkor Wat dating to the twelfth century (Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2007: 19).

Remarkably, the elite foot soldiers described above have been associated in the *kakawin* texts composed during the twelfth and early thirteenth century during the Kaôri period with the epic category of foot-guards (*pādarakṣa*). In passing, the category of foot-guards is mentioned in the Old Javanese *Udyogaparwa*.¹⁷¹ A developed concept of foot-guards as small, well-defined units of elite soldiers is found in the *Bhāratayuddha*. In the passage that describes the opening phase of the ‘great battle’ between the Pāṇḍawas and the Korawas, the foot-guards are conceptualised as units of ten allotted to accompany noble warriors riding on horses:

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ratheka sapuluh gajahnya gaja tunggal aśvā daśa kudeka sapuluh padāti nika śūramanteng laga kēnohnya hana pādarakṣaka yadin wiśirnā n winūk
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Each chariot [was guarded by] ten elephants, each elephant [was guarded by] ten horses, One horse [was guarded by] ten soldiers on foot, brave in the battle;

¹⁶⁸ Pigeaud (1960 III: 124) translates the sequence *kalambi sinimpi-simping* as ‘jacket with tips on the shoulders’. OJED 1785 translates *sinimpi-simping* tentatively as ‘in the form of a simping? (or: provided with a s.?)’.

¹⁶⁹ For *siping-siping* in the Bhomântaka see Teeuw and Robson (2005: 443), who translate *siping-siping kuning*, protective jackets sported by warriors of Kṛṣṇa at the review of his troops, as ‘brass jackets’.

¹⁷⁰ *Sutasoma* 87.3. From the verbal form *makasumpang* it is not entirely clear whether the shells are collected to be used as ear-ornaments on the spot, or to be fashioned into earrings only later in the royal residence.

¹⁷¹ *Udyogaparwa* 122.19.
Fitting [to be] foot-guards [of the mounts] if hard-pressed in attack.  

This concept goes back to the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata*, more specifically to its sixth book, the *Bhīṣmaparvan*. It is not my aim to propose that the epic category of foot-guards reflects the martial culture of pre-Islamic Javanese infantry. Rather, I offer a hypothesis that the accoutrement of foot-guards, detailed in a number of texts, reflects one aspect of Javanese martial culture: a festive battle dress worn in the ceremonial context. The evidence pertaining to the category of foot-guards is gleaned from the *Bhāratayuddha*, *Ghaṭotkacāśraya*, *Bhomāntaka*, *Sumanasāntaka*, *Śivarātrikalpa*, the *Nawanatya*, and a number of Old Javanese inscriptions. I begin with a passage taken from the *Bhomāntaka* that depicts foot-guards assigned to Arjuna:

Many were the foot-guards, skilful in close one-on-one combat,
All clad in uniform, wearing *singhēl* in great numbers, *kalung* and clinging *karah*.  

The accoutrements listed in the second line, *singhēl*, *kalung* and *karah*, are best understood as representing the insignia of rank. This and other passages analysed below give us a glimpse into the practice, which has no parallels in depictions of foot-guards in the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* and should be interpreted as a literary reflection of Javanese martial culture. The *Bhomāntaka* also provides evidence on the context in which the soldiers were given marks of distinction: this happened either during the ritualised pre-battle spectacles, commonly called ‘mock battles’ by scholars, or on the occasion of feasting after the battle. In their edition of the *Bhomāntaka*, Teeuw and Robson (2005) recognise in stanza 39.6 a reference to the practice of the ranking of soldiers, interpreting the sequence *anumāna ning wani* as ‘signs of the brave’. In another passage found in the *Bhomāntaka*, the marks of distinction awarded to soldiers are associated with their martial excellence and performance during the battle:

The warriors wearing *karah* and *kalung* were a beautiful sight;
Others donned brass scale armor, running in neat files,
And all of the abundant helmet crests glittered dazzingly –
They were the royal troops and these were the signs that they won fame in battle.  

We are never privileged to get a glimpse into the system of criteria by which the warriors were classed. It seems, however, that the marks of distinction reflected the recipient's rank in the court military hierarchy. There are around eight different insignia attested in the Old Javanese texts:

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172 *Bhāratayuddha* 10.17. Translation is mine.
173 *Bhomāntaka* 82.27.
174 *Bhomāntaka* 81.30.
*singhêl, kalung, karah* and a kind of scaled jacket are the most often mentioned. All of these four marks of distinction are attested in the *Bhāratayuddha*, fittingly in the passage which has no parallel in the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* (Supomo 1993: 19): still intact insignia are sported by several defeated enemy spearmen encountered by Yudhīṣṭhira, Arjuna, and Kṛṣṇa during their eerie night search of the Kurukṣetra battlefield for dying Bhīṣma. The exact form of these insignia is not entirely clear. While *singhêl* is usually considered to represent a kind of head-dress, close reading of the texts suggests that in a martial context *singhêl* may more specifically designate the rings (called simply *singhêl*) that were bestowed upon the men who proved themselves in battle, and who then attached the rings to their head-cloth. *Kalung*, found in the martial context, represents a warrior’s torque or necklace, a decoration attested from several other parts of premodern Indonesia, such as Nias or the Toraja highlands in Sulawesi. At the same time, *kalung* may have served as an article of bodily protection by rendering slashes on the neck less effective: Śarabha, attacking furiously the son of king Druma, cuts through his necklaces (*pamēgat kalung-kalung*) so that his neck was ‘sorely wounded’ (asakit *kanin*), but he survived the attack. *Karah*, used in the martial context, may designate a kind of necklet.

The material from which these items were fashioned differed: tin, brass, silver and gold are mentioned in the texts. Intended for display, the military insignia are depicted as highly polished so that they glitter: karah described in the *Ghaṭotkacāśraya* is ‘dazzling’ and the *Sumanasāntaka* depicts the *singhêl, kalung* and karah of the military retainers of the king Hemānggada as dazzling like ‘gold illuminated at the setting of the sun’. This metaphor may represent a poetic expression or it may actually refer to the *tumbaga*, an alloy of gold and copper popular in pre-Islamic Java (Lunsing Scheurleer 2013).

Distinguishing marks, seemingly, became more spectacular as the ranks progressed, and the fact that the foot-guards are in most cases described as carrying a ‘set’ of the three marks of distinction (*singhêl, kalung*, and *karah*) may represent either a typified literary motif, or it may point out to the rank of the soldiers associated in *kakawin* with epic foot-guards. The full set of insignia would mark them as members of the royal, or princely, military retinue. Almost certainly, *lêngên* and *singhêl* marked the lowest of these grades as some of the soldiers described in the

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175 *Bhāratayuddha* 23.2. We learn in stanza 22.7 that Yudhīṣṭhira, Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa were accompanied in their search of the battlefield by a number of ‘selected warriors’ (*dulur nira pinilih ikang balângiring*).

176 OJED 1778 observes that *singhêl* may designate only a part of the head-dress, rendering the term as ‘a piece of dress or attire, prob. a loose piece of garment, hanging down, esp. from the head (part of the head-dress?) [...]’. It is given and worn as a mark of distinction, for men or women ‘[...’].

177 For the ethnographic specimen from Nias, see Carpenter and Richter (2011: 92).

178 *Bhomântaka* 90.6.

179 OJED 801 translates tentatively as ‘band or ring (necklet? armlet?)’ and calls attention to the Modern Javanese karah meaning ‘a metal ring or band, as around the handle of a kris’.

180 *Ghaṭotkacāśraya* 36.2.

181 *Sumanasāntaka* 53.3. Worsley *et al.* (2013:217).
An interesting glimpse into the bestowal of war insignia is found in a farcical scene in the Bhomāntaka that actually represents a parody of combat. The head of a hermitage (dewaguru) behaves like a warlord, sending his disciples into battle against rākṣasa foes, declaring that he ‘would reward’ (ndak gañjar) those who succeed in ‘taking an enemy’ (makoliha musuh) with a set of ‘fine clothes, including a jamang sash’ (basahan arja tēkeng jamangnya). Further, he promises that if someone spears a formidable warrior (prawīra), ‘what he obtains will be even finer – he will have a singhēl!’ (denyālabhā pinahalēp hana singhēlnya).

We are fortunate to be able to draw upon a parallel from the non-martial context found in the Sumanasāntaka: interestingly, lēngēn, singhēl, kalung, karah and some kind of scaled jacket, are also vested on the court ladies living in the inner parts of the royal residence (antahpura) where they serve as ladies-in-waiting. The insignia of rank are awarded according to their proficiency in artistic performances; judging from an immensely important passage in Sumanasāntaka 41.1-2, the marks of distinction progressed from singhēl through the armband (lēngēn) to the necklace (kalung) and finally to karah. Only twenty of the ladies-in-waiting are represented in the Sumanasāntaka as entitled to wear the karah. At the top of this elaborate system of the inner-court hierarchy depicted in the Sumanasāntaka stood lady Jayaluh, the most excellent of ladies-in-waiting, whose special mark of distinction consisted of a scaled vestment fashioned of gold and jewels (sisik māś maṇī); moreover, she was entrusted with carrying the betel-set of her mistress, princess Indumati.

Creese (2004: 52) observes in her detailed analysis of the court hierarchies in premodern Java and Bali that the social environment of the inner court was one of a narrow, enclosed world, where the rivalries between the women inhabitants were common. A similar competitive spirit is discernible in the milieu of the foot-guards, the men who were allegorically identified in the kakawin of the Kaḍiri period with military retainers. While the antiquity of the practice of awarding insignia of rank to soldiers is unknown, singhēl and kalung are mentioned in the Old Javanese inscriptive record as early as 931 as the marks of distinction vested upon the ‘spear-troops’ (aninghēlanā angalungana pamaj). This is long before the first attestation of this practice in the kakawin poetry and the inscriptive record confirms that at least singhēl and kalung were by that time associated with the martial context.

A close reading of the Sumanasāntaka further suggests that Mpu Monaguṇa draws an interesting parallel between the ladies-in-waiting and the foot-guards of prince Aja. We know from stanza 41.2 that there were only twenty ladies-in-waiting entitled to wear karah. In stanza 147.20 Mpu Monaguṇa explicitly mentions that there were also twenty of Aja’s foot-guards who wore

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182 Bhomāntaka 81.27.
183 Bhomāntaka 12.11.
184 See, Cohen Stuart (1875: 7 AD IIIa.4).
karaḥ. These military retainers stayed in the close proximity to prince Aja, serving as his body guards in the residence, escorting the prince on his journeys, and following him into battles. It is probably not unreasonable to suppose the existence of some form of relationship between these military retainers and ladies-in-waiting, as suggested by the literary parallel between the twenty high-ranking ladies-in-waiting entitled to wear karaḥ serving to Indumati, and Aja’s twenty personal body guards, described in some detail in stanza 147.20:

[…:] the boastful foot-guards who, like twenty oceans, were hard to overcome in battle.
In the middle was Prince Aja, foremost among the powerful lions and tigers.
The battle formation had been drawn up in the form of ‘Agastya sucking the sea dry.’

The passage reminds us to a vary similar passage in the Bhomāntaka, in which Kṛṣṇa, styled in the kakawin as an aging king, gives his council to young Arjuna, suggesting that ‘youthful warriors’ should serve him as a ‘forest in which to disappear’ so that Arjuna’s wild lion-like valour becomes apparent when he ‘springs out on his enemy’ from the safety of his cover. This passage, as well as the passage in the Sumanasāntaka quoted above, suggests that the picked troops who formed the royal and princely military retinues were styled as ‘clustered’ around their lord. One also wonders about the identity of an epic figure of Kawidoṣa: in the Sumanasāntaka he is styled as a secret lover of lady Jayaluh, the highest-ranking of the ladies-in-waiting. Viewed from the perspective of the system of court honours described above, Jayaluh was also the leader of the twenty ladies who reached the rank that entitled them to wear karaḥ.

By the fourteenth century, during the height of the political and military might of the Majapahit kingdom, an official with the title rakryan rangga was responsible for the review of soldiers and for the implementation of the complex military ranking system (Pigeaud 1960 I: 84). A detailed description of this system, supervised by the rakryan rangga dignitary, who was one of the four highest Majapahit court officials, is given in the Nawanatya. The testimony of this historical account of Majapahit court ethics is important for our evaluation of kakawin as historical sources, so that it is worth quoting the relevant passage in full:

The marks of distinction of the men who have been brave in battle are: if a man carrying a lance is brave his mark of distinction is singhēl; his spear is decorated in the jinjring manner. If a man carrying a daḍap shield [has been brave in battle] he obtains a forehead-cover, a jacket embellished with shell discs, a metal girdle, gold [casing?] for his shield, his dagger is gilded. […] These come from rakryan rangga.

185 Sumanasāntaka 147.20. The translation is from Worsley et al. (2013: 363).
186 Bhomāntaka 81.19.
The passage is important because it confirms the existence of the specifically Javanese military ranking system alluded in kakawin. War insignia were precious items and may have represented coveted trophies in the battle. The Śivarātrikalpa contains a farcical passage describing how the enraged souls of killed warriors, dragged into the hell, furiously attack their tormentors, the kingkāra servants of Yama, the god of Death: running away in horror, the kingkāra are depicted as throwing their singhel, karah and kalung away.\footnote{Śivarātrikalpa 9.12.} Such a measure could be understood only when we admit that the insignia were coveted as prestigious trophies, or as objects of intrinsic monetary value. In another scene found in the Bhāratayuddha, Mpu Sēḍah describes the surprise of the Pāṇḍawas at the moment on the battlefield when they blunder into a small group of defeated warriors fighting for the Korawas, sporting their singhel, kalung and karah still intact.\footnote{Bhāratayuddha 23.2.} In this farcical scene, which has no parallel in the Sanskrit Mahābhārata (Supomo 1993: 19), the men claim that they survived the battle buried under the corpses of their dead comrades.\footnote{Ibid.} The passage is not only aimed at ridiculing the warriors fighting for the Korawas who had apparently looked for some hideout in the course of battle; it also can be interpreted as an allusion to the habit of despoiling dead bodies of soldiers by removing their war insignia and other precious articles.

4.2 THE ‘WOOD OF SOLDIERS’: THE COURT MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT OF PANGALASAN

In this section I further explore the theme of infantry, arguing that the epic category known in kakawin as prajurit represented professional soldiers who were organised in the court establishment of pangalasan. The first relevant passage is found in the Bhomāntaka, where Kṛṣṇa criticises young Arjuna for his intention to go into the battle before other warriors, ‘like a champion’ (amaragang). Kṛṣṇa disagrees with the martial strategy that entails the display of martial prowess, suggesting instead that the proper strategy for Arjuna is to ride into battle encircled by his faithful retainers. Kṛṣṇa articulates his council in the form of a well-known metaphor of the wood and the lion; the lion ‘protects’ the wood as the military commander ‘protects’ his troops; in exchange, the soldiers ‘guard’ their commander as the wood ‘guards’ the lion:

"The various youthful heroes serve as his forest in which to disappear, And his wild lion-like valour is then apparent when he springs out on his enemy".\footnote{Bhomāntaka 81.19.}
The same metaphor is attested in the *Sumanasāntaka*: the foot-guards are depicted clustered so tightly around their lord that their spears seem to form a forest of bamboo (*lwir pring sālas galah ning prajurit*).\(^{191}\) The extended metaphor of the ‘clump of spears’ provides evidence of the ingenious way in which Javanese poets made sense of an originally Sanskrit maxim and re-conceptualised the motif of the ‘forest ruled by the lion’ as the ‘clump of spears’ (*sālas galah*) in which trees are represented by spears. This literary pattern may reflect a historical trend, recognisable also in the twelfth century Cambodia (Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2007: 47), when small, close-knit units of spearmen were formed to counter the cavalry.

The epic foot-guards are thus represented in *kakawin* as spearmen. In the *Sumanasāntaka* and *Bhomāntaka* they are further identified with the category of soldiers called *prajurit*.\(^{192}\) Several related terms, all derived from the stem *jurit* (‘combat’), are attested in a number of *kakawin* composed in the Kañāri period.\(^{193}\) Pigeaud has suggested that *prajurit* (and its variant *pajurit*) is a specifically Kañāri term, rare in the texts composed in the Majapahit period and mentioned only once in the *Deśawarṇana* (1962: 122). It seems that since its first attestation in the Old Javanese literature in the twelfth century, *prajurit* has designated a category of professional soldiers who most probably served in military retinues of royal and princely households. In an important passage in the *Bhomāntaka*, Arjuna implores the peasant levy who would face an attack of Bhoma’s *rākṣasa* troops ‘to behave like a *prajurit*’ (*prajurit alēkasa*): to fight the enemy ‘without considering wives, children and kin’.\(^{194}\) Arjuna seems to draw a distinction between the non-professional levy and professional soldiers who were traditionally designated *prajurit*.

So far, little attention has been paid to the problem of the origin of the category of professional soldiers in premodern Java (Schrieke 1957: 116). We could surmise that similar to other armies, professional soldiers represented only the core of pre-Islamic Javanese armies, while the most of the military manpower was formed by peasantry levy. Unlike professional corps maintained and trained at the lord's expense, poorly trained peasants produced troops of unreliable quality: reluctant to assemble, anxious to get home, the men who were likely to desert during field campaigns or to run away when battle was joined (Charney 2004: 36). Schrieke (1957: 128) speculates that the first professional soldiers (called by Schrieke ‘bodyguards’) appeared on Java during the Singhasāri period in the thirteenth century. Hall (2000: 65) supports this view, suggesting that by the early thirteenth century ‘the centre possessed a standing force of men trained for war’. Both historians base their opinion on the evidence of the *Pararaton*, while the *kakawin*

\(^{191}\) *Sumanasāntaka* 147.7.
\(^{192}\) *Bhomāntaka* 3.34.
\(^{193}\) See, for example, *Bhāratayuddha* 19.11, *Ghaṭotkacāśraya* 9.5, *Smaradahana* 32.1, and *Sumanasāntaka* 111.3.
\(^{194}\) *Bhomāntaka* 81.15.
poetry suggests that a class of professional soldiers, styled as ‘bodyguards’, appeared as early as by the twelfth century.

Unlike paid mercenaries, the concept of professional soldiers in premodern Java does not necessarily involve service for payment, as other forms of remuneration were common; in fact, military service, with its emphasis on status and display, defied expression in purely monetary terms. The Nawanatya informs us that the juru pangalasan, a court dignitary responsible for the pangalasan, was the source of provisions of sufficient food and clothing to newly accepted soldiers, while the men who proved themselves in military service were remunerated in money:

The serving being steady, the rakryan juru pangalasan should make it up to him with wages.195

In the Arjunawijaya the king is admonished ‘to give food to his heroic warriors, so that he will be guarded well’.196 A number of kakawin and kidung support the testimony of the Nawanatya that clothes were awarded to soldiers for their services. Hall (2000: 71) has argued that access to elaborate textiles was a prerogative of Javanese kings who shared luxury imports with those in royal favour, thus reinforcing alliance relationships. Since the fourteenth century, at the latest, professional soldiers were organised in military units that are mentioned in the texts by their names. Mpu Prapañca lists in the Deśawarṇana a number of military units ‘guarding’ the royal residence. From his description it is clear that the men who were deployed in the inner apartments of the royal court, the ‘king’s troops’ (bala haji), served as guardsmen.197 Furthermore, Mpu Prapañca gives a long list of at least nineteen of these units:

Such are the kinds of those in attendance, the so-called pangalasan, countless in number, Tan Palwir, Nyū Gaḏing, Janggala, Kaḍiri, Sėḏah, Panglarang, Rājadewī [...].198

All of these units are covered by an enigmatic term pangalasan. Pigeaud (1960 II: 25) renders the term pangalasan as ‘guardsmen’; Robson (1995: 30) leaves the term in his translation of the Deśawarṇana untranslated, rendering the pertinent textual sequence ‘the kinds of men in attendance, called Pangalasan’. Similar to the terms pajurit and siping-siping, the word pangalasan is attested for the first time only in the kakawin of the Kaḍiri period.199 In the fourteenth century, it is found in the Deśawarṇana and in the earliest Middle Javanese kidung. Berg (1953) has advanced the hypothesis that the word pangalasan derives from kalasa (‘mat’), and designates an official who

195 Nawanatya 13b-14a. Unless otherwise stated all translations from the Nawanatya are taken from Pigeaud (1960-63).
196 Arjunawijaya 28.3.
197 Deśawarṇana 8.6.
198 Deśawarṇana 9.1.
199 Ghaṭotkacāsraya 2.10.
is given, or entitled to carry, a mat as a sign of his office. Pigeaud (1960 II: 25) observes that the term *pangalasan* represents a ‘collective noun indicating several groups or companies of Royal servants, especially used as military men’. Zoetmulder has accepted Berg’s hypothesis, listing in OJED 775 a number of occurrences of *pangalasan* in *kakawin*, *kidung*, and Old Javanese inscriptions. Providing a lemma of the term, however, OJED 775 has opted for a more general definition of *pangalasan*:

a group of royal servants or functionaries under a juru pangalasan. In kidungs we find the pangalasan carrying messages or executing orders from the king, conducting guests into presence etc. Derivation uncertain. [...].

Following Berg’s view, scholars have emphasised the administrative aspects of the category of *pangalasan*, understanding the men as a group of royal functionaries. Yet, while the administrative aspect of *pangalasan* is certainly recognisable in Middle Javanese *kidung*, it is unsupported by the Old Javanese evidence. The accepted scholarly opinion seems to result from projecting the category of *pangalasan* of the Middle Javanese *kidung* onto the Old Javanese textual evidence. The two Old Javanese texts, the *Deśawarṇana* and the *Nawanatya*, suggest that the meaning of *pangalasan* differs in the Old and Middle Javanese literature. In the case of the *Deśawarṇana*, scholars have interpreted the term *pangalasan* as denoting a category of court servants entrusted with the protection of the royal residence, drawing a comparison between these men and the modern, mostly ceremonial, guardsmen of Central Javanese courts of Yogyakarta and Solo (Pigeaud 1960; Zoetmulder 1974; Robson 1995: 102). Even though there is certainly a formal resemblance between the two professional groups, the available evidence suggests that *pangalasan* in the fourteenth century represented a court military establishment composed of soldiers who were active combatants, fighting in wars.

In my view, scholars of Old Javanese literature have been influenced in their interpretation of *pangalasan* by Mpu Prapaṇca’a conscious, and successful, effort to celebrate the reign of Hayam Wuruk as one of peace and harmony. In fact, during the second half of the fourteenth century Java witnessed not only a major phase of internal consolidation, but also a period of unprecedented external expansion based on its military power, a phenomenon that is yet to be properly studied. Organised in establishment(s) called *pangalasan*, military retainers are depicted in the *Deśawarṇana* as securing the peace of the royal residence. Rather than being ceremonial guards, these troops consisted of the troops of *the standing army*. This view is supported by the *Nawanatya* that informs us about the function of *rakryan juru pangalasan*, the chief of military retainers organised in the *pangalasan*:
As soon as there is a military expedition the rakryan juru pangalasan organises them.  

The Nawanatya further lists twelve military units of pangalasan by their name. Interestingly, three names of these units (Tanpalwir, Nyu Gaqing, Räjadewi) are known from stanza nine of the Deśawarnana quoted above. Pigeaud (1960 II: 25) has observed that Mpu Prapañca uses in this stanza the word ingaran (‘so-called’), emphasising the restricted, court use of the term pangalasan. In my view, this apparently special use of pangalasan should force us to reconsider the meaning and implication of alas in the term pangalasan. I suggest that the court usage of the term originates in the image of spearmen, identified in a number of kakawin with foot-guards who protect their lord as the wood (alas) protects the lion. The term pangalasan should not be traced to kalasa, ‘mat’, as opined by Berg (1953), but rather to alas ‘wood’. I offer a hypothesis that the Old Javanese pangalasan designates the ‘wood of soldiers’, representing a specific court reference to the military retinue composed of elite spearmen and possibly also cavalry equipped with lances.

Middle Javanese kidung, possibly reflecting an increased importance of cavalry during the fourteenth and fifteenth century, identify pangalasan more specifically with the mounted messengers. The semantic shift of the term pangalasan is similar to that of pangheran, another term attested for the first time in the twelfth century kakawin poetry. In Old Javanese literature the term pangheran designates a ‘waiting-place, dwelling-place’ (OJED 621). In the kidung literature the meaning of pangheran evolved into the designation of a person in ‘whose presence one dwells’, or who is ‘waited upon’: a ‘prince’.

As already stated, by the Majapahit period the juru pangalasan belonged to the five highest court dignitaries and his high standing is further supported by the Old Javanese inscription of Jaya Song, issued by Hayam Wuruk in 1350, in which the juru pangalasan, one Mpu Pétul, is listed as a member of the council along with the tumènggung and patih Gajah Mada (Pigeaud 1960 III: 152). The Nawanatya further specifies that the juru pangalasan was responsible for the selection of the men who entered the establishment of pangalasan:

The rakryan juru pangalasan’s work is: to him have recourse the ones who wish to enter the service. That is possible only through the juru pangalasan as intermediary.

Apart from guarding royal and princely residences, military retainers accompanied their lords, or ladies, on journeys as their military entourage (Hadi Sidomulyo 2007: 48). The most famous of
these units at the court of Hayam Wuruk were certainly the Bhayangkāri, described by Mpu Prapañca in the Deśawarnana as lodged close to the second gate of the royal residence and called pangalasan bayangkara in the kidung Harsawijaya. The Bhayangkāri foot soldiers, along with several other units, accompanied king Hayam Wuruk on his journey to Lamajang in 1359:

A great number of troopers [of the units of] Janggala, Kaḍiri, Sēḍah [and] Panglarang accompanied Him, densely clustered, Not to mention the Bhayangkāri who were in command, or the troops riding on elephants and horses.

This stanza suggests that the Bhayangkāri represented a military establishment composed of the personal bodyguards of the king, walking on foot rather than riding on horses. Mpu Prapañca gives us one interesting detail: unlike the anonymous troops mounted on elephants and horses, the foot soldiers accompanying the king are listed by the name of their units, probably a sign of honour. While it is known that until modern period infantry formed the backbone of Javanese armies (Schrieke 1957: 143; Charney 2004: 43), the relative importance of cavalry and war elephants is one of the most controversial subjects of Javanese military history. This subject is addressed in the next chapters.

4.3 LEAPING DOLPHINS: ELUSIVE KAKAWIN CAVALRY

Warhorses are depicted in kakawin martial scenes mostly as an idealised ‘shock cavalry’ of the four-part (caturangga) army, engaged in head-on encounters with the enemy’s cavalrymen. In most cases, the description of warhorses and mounted warriors is extremely formulaic and there are only a few passages that contain naturalistic descriptions of horses. The schematic literary style may, at least partially, reflect the fact that an image of the fast, big, long-legged and white thoroughbred had no imaginable counterpart in the horse stock available locally in Java: while epic horses in kakawin are represented as the very highest standard in livestock, most if not all Javanese horses in premodern period would have been of Tibetan or Mongol type, classified as pony (Boomgaard 2007: 39). Introduced probably from southern China at an unknown date, the Javanese breed was traditionally represented by stout, small and short-legged, dun-coloured horses (Wade 2009b: 165). Middle Javanese kidung, more faithful in their descriptions of horses, confirm this finding: even the

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205 Deśawarnana 9.2. Kidung Harsawijaya 3.64a.
206 Deśawarnana 18.5.
207 In Sanskrit kāvya, on the contrary, we find numerous detailed descriptions of horses; compare, for example, a expressive description of the horses of Rāvana's cavalrmen in Bhāṭṭikāvya 14.10: ‘The horses leaped up at the whip strikes, they skitted to the reins' pull, ran forward on release and in their exertions swallowed down blood’ (Fallon 2009: 323).
highest dignitary of the Sunda kingdom, Pati Anepaken, rides into the battle against the army of Majapahit at Bubat on a horse that is described as ‘gleaming black in colour, as the feathers of the crow’, fittingly named Gagak Mayura (‘Peacock Crow’). The Kidung Sunda, where we find this description, explicitly mentions that the steed was ‘of the noble Biman race from Korek’. The available evidence suggests that at least until the twelfth century Java imported most of its better-quality horses, but in the fourteenth century Java became an important breeder and the island is even listed among suppliers of horses to China (Ptak 1999: 208). The available evidence suggests that horse numbers steadily grew and in 1515 Tomé Pires reports that Javanese rulers had at their disposal substantial numbers of horses; the Eastern Javanese area of Blambangan and the island of Madura are mentioned as the regions where horses were bred (Reid 1988: 154).

In pre-Islamic Java horses were perceived as a mark of status, used mainly as prestigious riding animals, in ceremonial parades and, most prominently, in the hunt. The Bhomāntaka reflects how dominant the association of horses was with the elite hunt: the rākṣasa who blunder in the pitch-dark night onto a makeshift encampment of Samba’s warriors and overhear the neighing of horses, come to the rapid conclusion that the horses belong to hunters. Horses were certainly too expensive to be wasted in battles. The main task of ancient Javanese cavalrymen was to patrol the countryside and to conduct reconnaissance missions. Kakawin provide a venerable epic pedigree to this practice in the motif of king Jarāsandha sending out his cavalrymen to search out the marching camp of the Yadu warriors. In the Bhomāntaka Krṣṇa orders Samba’s cavalrymen to ‘guard’ (makēmit) the royal residence by ‘doing the rounds by day and by night’ (rahineng kulēm ika midēra). The concern is that rākṣasa troops will approach Dwārawatī during the night, setting the palace on fire.

Teeuw and Robson (2005: 436) have recently called attention to the special value of the Bhomāntaka for the study of early Javanese horse lore and horsemanship. In fact, a handful of kakawin composed during the Kaḍiri period suggest that in the second half of the twelfth century Javanese courts may have witnessed an important change in their perception of horses. The Bhomāntaka, nevertheless, remains virtually the only kakawin that gives us naturalistic descriptions of the cavalry and its tactics. In the Bhāratayuddha horses are designated for the first time by the word ajaraṇ (literally ‘trained animal’), a term used previously to denote a bird trained to talk (attested in this meaning in the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa). The word gave rise to jaraṇ, a standard Modern Javanese word for the horse. The Bhāratayuddha is also the earliest Old Javanese text in

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208 Kidung Sunda 2.139. Unless otherwise stated all translations from the Kidung Sunda are taken from Berg (1927).
209 Kidung Sunda 2.139.
210 Bhomāntaka 7.9-10.
211 Bhomāntaka 45.3.
212 Bhomāntaka 81.22.
which the term for the horse saddle, *palana*, is used. Unlike the word *rêngga* that designates any kind of ‘seat’, such as an elephant howdah and a seat in a chariot, *palana* is used specifically for the horse saddle.\(^{213}\) The horse harness (*abah-abah*) is attested for the first time in the *Bhomântaka* and there is also an abundant textual, as well as visual, evidence that horses in pre-Islamic Java, as well as Hindu Bali, were fitted with rich trappings, such as bell collars, tail flippers, tassels, and decorated saddle-flaps (*ebeg*).\(^{214}\) In premodern Indonesia, these trappings were never perceived as simple embellishments and decoration, but rather, were similar to the concept of protective jacket (*kawaca*), as apotropaic, spiritually potent articles, guarding a horse and his rider from malevolent influences (Charney 2004: 134).

There is a substantial body of visual evidence pertaining to the horse equipment, which has never been properly analysed: probably most importantly, scholars have noted that fully bridled and saddled horses are depicted on the ninth-century Borobudur reliefs, with some mounts represented with clearly visible stirrups (Wade 2009b: 167).\(^{215}\) It may be misleading, however, to draw conclusions about the bridling and saddling of horses in the classical period solely from this visual evidence due to the high degree of schematisation typical for the symbolic language of ancient visual representations, as argued by Jack-Hergoulach for the case of Angkor’s visual representations in Cambodia (2007: 34). Contextualising the available visual and textual evidence, it is clear that fully bridled, saddled horses equipped with stirrups were certainly present in Java by the fourteenth century, but the historical development of the phenomenon is far from clear. It is only in the early Middle Javanese *kidung*, such as the *Rangga Lawe* and *kidung Sunda*, that poets describe horse equipment and horse lore in full detail.

Even though warhorses are depicted already in the *kakawin Râmâyaṇa* as a part of Râwaṇa’s army, it is only in the *Bhomântaka* that we have evidence on the concept of cavalry as an organised, cooperative tactical unit. It is possible that until the twelfth century horses were used in Java more as mounts on which noble warriors rode to the battlefield where they dismounted to fight as infantry. Far from being rare, the phenomenon of ‘mounted infantry’ is attested from many parts of premodern world (Sidnell 2007: 90). In the texts composed in the late Kadiri period, however, we encounter for the first time descriptions, albeit presented as allegorical metaphors, in which horse-

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\(^{213}\) Horse saddles of high-ranking officials may have been elaborate, as suggested in *kidung Sunda* 2.57 where *mantri* ride in ‘gold-worked’ saddles. We know from the *History of the Yuan Dynasty* that the elaborate saddles, as well as superior horses, figured by the late thirteenth century among the gifts of Chinese emperor Sien to Ramkhamhaeng of Sukhothai (Pelliot 1904: 243, 251).

\(^{214}\) *Kidung Sunda* 2.139 depicts Pati Anepakên, the highest dignitary of Sunda kingdom, fighting on a horse that was adorned with tassels. Decorated saddle-flaps (*ebeg-ebeg*) are described in *Korawârâsrama* 130.18.

\(^{215}\) An alleged early introduction of stirrups is taken as a matter of fact by Haryono (2011: 167). Among other important visual representations of horse equipment, bridle and bell collar are shown on a bronze top-piece in the form of a horse and rider found at Ledok, near the Dieng Plateau in Central Java, dated between the tenth and twelfth century (Lunsingh Scheurleer and Klokke 1988: 162). Advanced horse trappings are shown on a possibly fourteenth century head of a horse fashioned in terracotta (Sumantri 1997: 42).
riders *operate* as cavalry rather than as uncoordinated individuals. In premodern Java only the men of noble origin could have afforded to keep, train and use horses (Boomgaard 2007: 40): as a result of these social and cultural inhibitions, the early Javanese cavalry was almost certainly composed exclusively of the members of gentry and the establishment of cavalry would have certainly challenged the traditionally strong position of the class of professional foot soldiers.

In fact, such a development is most probably reflected in the *Bhomāntaka*, in which the author at a number of places ridicules Sāmba’s cavalry troops who accompany the prince on his ‘rescue mission’ to save hermitages in the Himalaya mountains from the depredations of demons. Sāmba's lavishly clad cavalrmen and their richly caparisoned horses are an object of critique and mockery, allusive and never open, that may reflect the negative attitude of the author towards the novel phenomenon of cavalry aspiring to a leading role in the military system in which its actual efficiency may have been controversial. The first passage in which the horse-riding members of Sāmba's military retinue are made an object of mockery is found in stanza 3.42: after an arduous march through the rugged countryside the military entourage reaches the seashore and the warriors follow the narrow path winding up along the cliffs, enjoying a view of a picturesque seaside scenery below them:

Out at the sea there were the ships of fishermen, with canoes holding one man each,  
They looked dazzlingly white, for they glittered in the sparkling seawater.  
It looked as if they were riding horses, rising and falling on the big waves,  
But then some whales surfaced, and so with much splashing they paddled for the shore.  

By way of allegory, the poet associates Sāmba’s cavalrmen with the scared fishermen out at the open sea who ‘looked as if they were riding horses’. Both the cavalrmen and the fishermen appear ‘dazzlingly white’: in another part of the text, stanza 7.14, Sāmba’s horse-riders and the richly caparisoned horses are mocked as ‘flashing white’ and inappropriately ‘well-clad’ for the battle, while the fishermen, or their boats, in this stanza are represented as ‘dazzlingly white’ simply because of the glitter of the spattered water. Suddenly, the ‘whales’ (*gajamīna*) but possibly only a single ‘whale’, surface, and the scared fishermen paddle for safety. As demonstrated below, in the *Bhomāntaka* the whale is associated with Bhoma; we can surmise that Sāmba's cavalrmen, pressed by Bhoma in an ensuing battle, will retreat to safety in the same way the fishermen do in this stanza. To fully appreciate this beautiful metaphor, it is necessary to analyse the motif of the whale in some detail: it is attested in two linked passages, both of them alluding to the demon king

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216 *Bhomāntaka* 3.42.  
217 Old Javanese does not distinguish in a formal way singular from plural so that it is unclear whether the poet means one or more cetaceans in this passage.
Bhoma. At the beginning of the Bhomāntaka the sage Nārada comes to the court of king Kṛṣṇa to ask for help and protection of hermitages harassed by the troops of Bhoma. At that occasion, Nārada informs Kṛṣṇa that Bhoma is actually the son of Viṣṇu and the Earth Goddess and that Bhoma had already set out on the world-conquering expedition:

He came out and went to the sea with his weapons and accompanied by an army of demons. In an elated mood he rode on a whale, while his troops went merrily along the road, And sometimes he would sit at his ease on a rock that overlooked the waves when the tide was out.²¹⁸

I follow the translation of the text by Teeuw and Robson (2005: 85), who render iwak liman in this stanza as ‘whale’, though we may surmise that the ‘elephant fish’ on which Bhoma rides represents in this passage a mythological, fantastic whale monster of the Netherworld (Jakl 2014). Demon chiefs and kings oftentimes ride in kakawin on ‘huge elephants’ so that the demon’s mount (wāhana) in the form of a huge ‘elephant fish’ is fitting for Bhoma at the moment he is sea-borne. The poet consciously explores a tension between this ‘mythical’ cetacean and the very real whale (gajamīna) that surfaces in stanza 3.42, throwing the fishermen into havoc. The iwak liman ‘elephant fish’, which serves as a riding mount (wāhana) of the demon king Bhoma, is associated with the ‘elephant fish’ (gajamīna) so that the fishermen hunting for fish are allegorically identified with Sāmba’s cavalry ‘hunting’ for demons but whose bravery, or combat efficiency, is mocked in this subtle parallel.

This playful element is also recognisable in the image of cavalrymen likened to a shoal of dolphins, by far the most interesting metaphor used for cavalry in kakawin. Attested already in the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa in the comparison of Rāwaṇa’s rākṣasa army to dolphins, an elaborate version of the metaphor is found in the Bhomāntaka that likens the Yadu cavalry ready for battle to a shoal of dolphins leaping amidst the sea:

When they had arrayed themselves, they looked like a sea:
The chariots and great elephants were the reefs,
The rolling army was the wild waves,
And the horses were the dolphins leaping in turn.²¹⁹

In the kakawin imagery, warhorses are routinely likened to the reefs, as are battle chariots and war elephants.²²⁰ The metaphor in the passage quoted above, simple as it may seem, actually represents

²¹⁸ Bhomāntaka 2.10b-d.
²¹⁹ Bhomāntaka 83.4.
²²⁰ The metaphor of an army compared to the sea, with the chariots, elephants and cavalry styled as its reefs, and the foot-soldiers as its fish, is common in the Old Javanese literature and goes back to the Sanskrit epics. See, for example, Bhomāntaka 93.1.
an array of symbolic meanings ascribed to the cavalry: in its comparison of horses (cavalrymen) to dolphins it goes beyond an obvious verisimilitude between dolphins, playfully leaping in the waves, and galloping horses. A parallel is drawn between cavalrymen operating as a coordinated group, and dolphins, inquisitive fish-eating predators. One common method of their feeding is ‘herding’, where a pod squeezes a school of fish into what is known as a ‘bait ball’ (Rauch 2013: 17). Individual members then take turns plunging through the ball, feeding on the stunned and cornered fish. The method of dolphins’ feeding reminded the author of the Bhomāntaka of the way cavalry fought, wheeling around the infantry and targeting individual foot soldiers.221

Due to its mobility cavalry could be devastating in sudden, unexpected charges, as well as in pursuit of fleeing infantry; in a passage from the Bhomāntaka cavalrymen are envisaged cutting off the advance troops of rākṣasa pouring out from the cover of the wood to attack Samba’s fortified position:

Likewise they were attacked fiercely by the mounts undeterred, Caught off guard at the rear, encircled they weakened and suffered losses.222

Another valuable depiction of cavalry in the Bhomāntaka is represented by a vivid passage detailing the way Samba’s cavalry uses to envelope the retreating rākṣasa warriors. The passage may represent the earliest description of the popular strategy of Javanese cavalry of how to check the retreat of defeated infantry by wheeling circles around the soldiers in flight, a strategy described later in European texts (Charney 2004: 132). The author of the kakawin describes how Samba’s cavalrymen ‘circled around [the soldiers], then suddenly charged’ (medran ring kudānggyat tumandang).223 Taking into account more detailed European descriptions of this tactic, we can perhaps imagine cavalry galloping up and releasing a volley of javelins, each rider in turn wheeling away to prepare himself to approach again with another javelin.

4.4 CHARIOTEERS AND FIGHTING COCKS: CHARIOTS IN KAKAWIN

Battle chariots, one of the arms of the fourfold army (caturangga), are commonly represented in kakawin in a typified image as a force whose main task is to destroy enemy battle formations by overriding the opposing warriors, as well as vehicles of high-status personages. Powerful symbols, battle chariots are represented as the vehicles of epic heroes and military leaders. Unsurprisingly, there is virtually no historical evidence that chariots were ever used in premodern Java in the course

221 The similarities between cavalry and dolphins go even beyond the strategy of predation. Dolphins not only have acute eyesight, they also live in pods of up to a dozen of individuals, not dissimilar in number to what was a small unit of premodern cavalry. Unlike cooperative dolphins, predatory, single-minded sharks represent in kakawin individual warriors, eager to strike their enemies. See, for example, Bhomāntaka 85.13 and 93.1.

222 Bhomāntaka 8.9.

223 Bhomāntaka 8.4. For the early-modern evidence of this strategy see Charney (2004).
of battles (Quaritch Wales 1952: 45). Literary representations of chariots also reflect the view that these conspicuous vehicles served as highly efficient receptacles of ‘fiery energy’, known otherwise as an underlying principle of ‘divine weapons’ (for this concept generally, see section 2.3 in chapter two). A number of kakawin depict miraculously powerful and beautiful vehicles; probably the most famous among them is the Puśpaka, a sky-going sentient chariot appropriated by Rāwaṇa in the battle with his brother Kuwera. Though the motif of celestial chariots is adopted from the Indian epics, Hooykaas (1958: 359) calls attention to an oral tradition of sky-going conveyances in the Indonesian archipelago so that the motif of a flying chariot may have not represented an entirely unknown concept. Unsurprisingly, battle chariots are oftentimes described as ‘glittering’ (abhrā) or ‘shining’ (akram), a reference to the high level of their fiery energy.  

Typically, battle chariots are depicted engaged in heroic duels taking place in the course of a pitched battle: poets seem to delight in depicting charioteers outwitting one another in bold riding manoeuvres. Especially common is the motif of chariots wheeling circles on the battlefield, similar in style to the cavalry tactics described in the previous section. The kakawin Rāmāyana details a deadly chariot duel between Rāma and Rāwaṇa, giving us a rare insight into how the poets conceptualised the fight of battle chariots, a phenomenon unknown in Java, as a cock-fight, a ritualised spectacle well-known to their audiences. The contest of two epic heroes is compared to the fight of two invigorated cocks (anawung):

\[
\text{kēdō sira kadi kya mindēr athawā kadi pwa sapu hujwalenutitakēn
}
\text{tatan sira katon katon tang awēlū jugākululingan mawās makalangan
}
\text{kadi pwa kalangan bhaṭāra yama kālamṛṭyu manawung sirāngadu laga
}
\text{asing [ng] umasukerikā niyata yan pējah kapipiseng rathān paputēran}
\]

They were moving in circles like a comet or like a broom forcefully dragged around,

They could not be seen – only the circle was seen, rotating very fast;

Looking like the arena of god Yama and Kālāmṛṭyu, fighting as two cocks, competing in might.

Everyone coming into the circle would certainly be killed, ground to dust by the rolling wheels.

\[224\text{ See, for example, a ‘glittering’ chariot used by Krṣṇa in Bhāratayuddha 8.10, or a ‘shining’ carriage described in Bhāratayuddha 8.11.}
\[225\text{ See, for example, Bhomāntaka 84.5, and Arjunawijaya 61.8.}
\[226\text{ The motif of Rāma and Rāwaṇa circling around one another in their battle chariots is attested in the Sanskrit Rāvanavadha 17.84 where it is, however, devoid of the connotations of the cock-fight. The poet describes the duel rather succinctly: ‘The two warriors moved wondrously in circles, they cut off the volleys of weapons, they astonished the world and did not weary’ (Fallon 2009: 403).}
\[227\text{ Kakawin Rāmāyana 24.20. Translation is mine.}
The passage suggests that the poet thought about the encounter of battle chariots in terms of animal sacrifice, similar to the cockfight in the premodern period. A similar chariot duel between Kṛṣṇa and Bhoma, circling around one another and looking for a weak point of an opponent, is depicted in the Bhomāntaka. The kakawin Rāmāyaṇa, apart from the cock-fighting symbolism, gives us yet another intriguing detail suggesting that ancient Javanese may have conceptualised the chariot as a high-status vehicle used to fetch the warrior to the battlefield and ‘park’ it there: in a passage that has no parallel either in Vālmīki’s Rāmāyaṇa, nor in Bhaṭṭi’s Rāvanavadha, the Javanese author depicts Rāwaṇa’s general Akṣa, badly beaten by Hanumān, taking temporary refuge in the safety of his chariot off the battle line:

\[
\text{rēnćem bāhunyān pinalu ya kapisan mūrcchitāmrīh lumumpat} \\
\text{moruk merang mūr mari ta ya sakarēng ring ratha ngkān parāryyan} \\
\text{menak pwekāmbēknya mari ya mahuyang ūghra gumrit rathanya} \\
\text{sāmbut tekang hrū umaluya ta manah sang hanūmān ring astra}
\]

His shoulder was crushed by the first strike, his spirit broken so that [Akṣa] tried to flee away; Badly injured and ashamed, he fled to take a rest for a while in his chariot. Then, when he felt fit again, no longer sensing the pain, [Akṣa] moved his chariot speedily. He grabbed his arrows again and started to shoot at Hanumān.

This passage suggests that kakawin conceptualised battle chariots, as well as war elephants, in terms of defence, supporting a view that few chariots took an active part in battle. Indian historians often claim that battle chariots were already outdated by the time the Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata were composed and that no chariots had been used in Indian warfare since at least the seventh century (Bhakari 1981: 32; Yadava 2001: 76). On the other hand, Sidnell (2007: 16) suggests that the prestige value of battle chariots remained very high a long time after they ceased to be employed in the course of battle, so that the chariots continued to be used as a mode of transport for kings and generals to and from the battlefield.

In premodern Java, light chariots with spiked wheels drawn by horses were certainly never common, however, there are several reasons to suppose that at least in small numbers, quick-running light vehicles were employed in a military context. By the fourteenth century there are realistic visual depictions of light chariots with spiked wheels, drawn apparently from life, on temple reliefs at Panataran, East Java (Galestin 1936), and the Deśawarnāṇa contains several

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228 Bhomāntaka 105.2-6.
229 Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 9.48–49. Translation is mine.
descriptions of swift chariots in the context usually considered to reflect Java in the second half of the fourteenth century (Hall 1968: 243). Old Javanese texts use numerous technical terms pertaining to the construction and use of chariots, many of them Sanskrit loanwords, while some are of distinctly Javanese origin. To summarise this section, it has been shown that chariots were more important as cultural symbols than vehicles used in battles. Considerations other than simple military efficiency always play a part in war in any society and in premodern Java battle chariots represented an iconic item of martial imagination, vested with abundant cultural meanings.

4.5 WAR ELEPHANTS: THE KAKAWIN EVIDENCE

War elephants are prominent in the kakawin battle scenes, represented mostly in a typified way as animals of awesome appearance and exceptional physical strength. In fact, literary depictions of war elephants in Old Javanese literature are extremely formulaic and do not reflect the actual use of elephants in war. Nevertheless, texts give us some important clues about the way in which war elephants were conceptualised in pre-Islamic Java. The most formidable epic elephants are depicted as marvellous beasts of mythological pedigree, often having four instead of two tusks and sometimes more than a single trunk, such as the famous Irawan, a huge white elephant ridden by the god Indra. Some of the beasts depicted in kakawin are even more extraordinary: king Matsya rides – in a way suggestive of his name (‘fish’) – an elephant in the form of a giant fish, fully clad in scale armour. As disturbing as the physical appearance of epic elephants is the way poets imagine them to charge. Consider a passage taken from the Sutasoma:

In a hideous form he went forth, urging his great elephant to attack, swaying its trunk high in the air and trumpeting awesomely.
Amazingly swift it chased the king, attacking him with its tusks which only pierced the ground.

Male elephants in musth (a periodic condition of high aggression) are often depicted in kakawin as being set upon an enemy in deadly charges. Yudhiṣṭhira rides into the battle against the Korawas

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230 In addition to this evidence, a few rare bronze models of light chariots are known from Java.
231 Singh (1965: 37) observes that most of the complex Sanskrit terminology could be traced to the Vedic period. For the Javanese terminology, see, for example, the term panghul, which is used in Sutasoma 101.6 to designate a part of the chariot pole.
232 For the four-tuskers, see Bhomāntaka 82.36. Irawan is known in Sanskrit as Airavata and it is considered to be the king of all elephants: in addition to his four tusks, Irawan has also seven trunks.
233 Bhomāntaka 82.42
234 Sutasoma 101.13d-14a. Unless otherwise stated all translations from the Sutasoma are taken from Soewito Santoso (1975).
235 The bull elephant goes through the musthing each year as part of its reproductive cycle. The temples of the animal swell, its penis enlarges and remains almost constantly erect, dripping with a white discharge. The glands located between the eyes and ears secrete a dark oily substance, the ichor. The elephant will strike madly during this period
seated on an elephant in musth, as do some of the accompanying Yadus. The aspect of physical strength and virility of bull elephants serves to emphasise the martial excellence of noble warriors who ride them. Hyperbole is a commonly used to describe the deadly charge of an elephant: in a martial scene in the *Krṣṇāyana*, a brave warrior is killed, smashed down by an infuriated elephant as easily as the ‘cotton-card is blown by heavy wind’. A highly esteemed aspect of an elephant’s ability to ward off an enemy by scaring him is found in the motif of trumpeting in the course of a march or battle: by its bestial, furious noise, the animal scares an enemy in a far more efficient way than any musical instrument can do.

Most of the war elephants depicted in Javanese literature are conspicuous for their demonic-like quality and this may be the reason why adharma characters often ride on elephants: the *kidung Sunda* depicts Larang Agung, a commander of the Sundanese army, riding on an elephant, and associates the general with the mythological demon Upasunda. Gajah Mada, the commander of the Javanese army who represents in the scene the forces of dharma, is depicted riding in a chariot. The reputed wildness of elephants, their inflated size, as well as their ‘weapons’ in the form of oversized tusks, are represented as demonic attributes. War elephants, towering on the battlefield, are often compared to the reefs amidst the ocean: a metaphor in which individual huge pachyderms looming high over the mass of foot soldiers are envisaged as reefs rising from the sea.

Interestingly, in the *Bhomāntaka* war elephants are represented as an archaic element of warfare: the troops of king Druma and Basudewa are marked, with a sense of derision, as ‘experienced in war of old’ (*timuherikang prang alawas*). Close reading of this passage suggests that the two rulers rely in the battle on the corps of elephants identified in the text as a ‘motley mix’ (*ma*wor awur-*awur*). Apart from their elephants, Druma and Basudewa use only cumbersome chariots ‘jolting so violently that their horses jerked to a standstill’.

War elephants and their availability, use and demise in premodern Java remains, regrettably, a completely unstudied subject. While the employment of elephants in transport is documented in the Old Javanese inscriptional record (Barret Jones 1984: 86), the role of elephants in warfare in pre-Islamic Java remains an unclear issue. In his classical work on warfare in premodern

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236 Bhāratayuddha 9.9, and Bhāratayuddha 9.11.
237 *Krṣṇāyana* 51.23. Unless otherwise stated all translations taken from the *Krṣṇāyana* are taken from Soewito Santoso (1986).
238 See, for example, *Arjuna* 6.13 where Bajramaṣṭi urges his elephant to trumpet (*a*n*gulingakēn*) and delivers a final charge. For comparative Malay evidence, see Teeuw and Wyatt (1970: 182-3).
239 Kidung Sunda 2.140.
240 See, for example, *Bhomāntaka* 82.4
241 *Bhomāntaka* 82.29.
242 *Bhomāntaka* 82.29.
243 An attendant called ahaliman, or alternatively, pahaliman, who was responsible for the elephants, is often mentioned in Old Javanese inscriptions. However, the inscriptional record says nothing about the use of elephants in
Southeast Asia, now rather outdated though still valuable, Quaritch Wales (1952: 76) claims that the elephant was not native to Java and that Javanese kings obtained their elephants from Sumatra. Quaritch Wales summarises his observations on the role of war elephants in Java by the statement that ‘elephants are the mounts of a few chiefs only’ (1952: 76). Pigeaud (1962: 60-61), for one, considers the use of elephants in premodern Java to be extremely limited, observing that elephants depicted in the Deśawarṇa as part of the royal retinue of Hayam Wuruk were considered ‘more as ornamental additions to the Royal train than as useful mounts’.

It is generally acknowledged that the island of Java was once home of a local variety of elephant, the Javan elephant, which, however, became extinct in the historic period. In a number of kakawin we encounter the motif of a wild elephant, though it is impossible to distinguish between descriptions that may reflect the presence of elephants in their natural habitat from depictions that render Sanskrit literary themes. The latter category is certainly attested in the Sumanasāṅtaka in the motif of prince Aja killing a wild elephant that attacks him on the bank of the river Narmadā. The beast turns out to actually be Priyambada, a cursed son of the gandharwa king Citraratha. More ambiguous is the motif of a freely roaming wild elephant (liman alas) found in the Arjunawiwāha: it is tempting to suggest that the motif represents a piece of evidence that in the eleventh century wild elephants were still part of Javanese fauna.

Cranbrook et al. (2008: 4), giving their comments on visual representations of elephants on the Borobudur reliefs, observe that ‘caparisoned war elephants are accurately represented, implying direct familiarity by the artist’. In my view, there is one particular element in the visual depiction of elephants on the Borobudur that provides much more persuasive evidence than the commonly mentioned ‘naturalistic’ rendering of the motif: reliefs show a very unusual driving posture in the mahout driver who is seated near the animal’s tail, riding the animal from its crupper rather than from its neck. This driving posture seems to be unknown in premodern India, but it was the prevailing way of riding elephants in ancient Cambodia: Khmer mahouts are habitually depicted on numerous temple reliefs as riding elephants from the crupper, guiding the elephant by using a long goad to tap the elephant’s rear legs (Kistler 2007: 206).

244 There is an ongoing debate among scholars on the status of Javan elephant and the dating of its extinction differs markedly, ranging from the twelfth to the eighteenth century. Derinayagala (1951: 75), for one, has suggested that the Javan elephant was extinct as a species already by the twelfth century. For the recent overview of the evidence see Cranbrook et al. (2008).

245 Sumanasāṅtaka 30.7.

246 The motif of wild elephant is attested in Arjunawiwāha 15.11 (liman alas), Bhāratayuddha 9.4 (gajah alas), Abhimanyuwivāha 2.35 (liman alas) and Sorāṇdaka 8.84 (gajah alas).

247 See, for example, a depiction in Miksic et al. (2011: 93).
In premodern Southeast Asia almost all elephants used in transport and warfare were taken from the wild and then tamed; we hear, however, nothing about the hunting of wild elephants in Java and it is possible that larger Sumatran elephants were supplied to Javanese rulers as tribute or procured through trade. To be of any use in warfare, the tame elephant needed to be trained, a task that required a special skill of keepers, personnel that could be possibly identified with the *ahaliman* and *pahaliman* of Old Javanese inscriptions. Elephants were managed in the field by a trained driver who would ride bareback on the elephant's rear or neck, using the prod stick, an elephant crook (*angku kusa*), in cooperation with oral commands to drive an animal. The warrior, or several of them, would be seated on the howdah platform (*rèngga*), equipped sometimes with a side balustrade. Judging from the visual evidence on Javanese temple reliefs, the howdah seems to have been placed on a mat covering the elephant's back and held in position by ropes linked to the hooks rising from the four corners of the platform. One of the popular images depicted in *kakawin*, as it is in the Sanskrit epics and *kāvya*, is the howdah tumbling down from the elephant's back in the course of a pitched battle. There is no persuasive evidence that the castle, a sturdier variant of howdah attested from several other parts of Asia, was ever used in Java or Sumatra.

The same absence of evidence holds true for the elephant’s armour, which is, however, described in a number of Old Javanese texts: in the *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* we learn that before marching against Rāma, the elephant corps of rākṣasa put armour on their elephants (*gaja ya kinawacan*). The *Bhomāntaka* informs us that all elephants fielded by the king of Magadha in the battle against Kṛṣṇa were ‘armoured’ (*makawaca*). Elephant armour is not known from any visual representations from Java and nor is there any evidence for elephant armour from classic Cambodia (Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2007: 67). We know, however, that elephants were equipped with bell collars and other embellishments: the *Sumanasāntaka*, for example, mentions an elephant’s bell (*ghanṭa ning liman*).

Most of the *kakawin* martial scenes depict war elephants charging furiously against the ranks of their opponents, trampling enemies to death and causing horrendous damage. The attack method of a wild elephant in its natural environment is indeed to knock the victim down to the ground and to trample them (Kistler 2007: 23). The restricted supply of elephants and possibly a lack of

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248 OJED 1028.
249 The howdah and the way it was fastened to an elephant's body is depicted on the reliefs on Borobudur and Panataran monuments. Interestingly, the visual representations of howdah on these two monuments, almost six hundred years apart, are similar. These visual representations support a view that three main straps were used, linked to the hooks: breast strap, the underbelly strap and the crupper.
250 While elephant castles were used in premodern India, their use in Southeast Asia is documented only from Burma: elephants carried castles in the battle of Nga-zaung-kyan in 1281 in which the Burmese army was defeated by Mongol troops (Charney 2004: 159). Judging from the visual evidence, elephant castles were not used in the Angkorian Cambodia either (Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2007: 61).
251 *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* 19.4.
252 *Bhomāntaka* 85.9.
253 *Sumanasāntaka* 25.4. For the visual representations of elephants wearing bell collars, see Miksic (1991: 84).
specialised knowledge were the main causes of the relative unimportance of elephants in warfare in Java (Quaritch Wales 1952: 41). As an elevated position would certainly be convenient to survey the battle and issue orders, elephants would be used in a very limited numbers by military leaders during the course of battle, as envisaged in the *kidung Sunda* where Larang Agung, a commander of the Sundanese army, rides on an elephant while other high-ranking warriors use horses.\(^{254}\) Even in Angkor Cambodia, famous for its vast supply of wild elephants and superb expertise in elephant lore, the use of pachyderms in warfare was limited to the highest-ranking noble combatants if one is to judge by the abundant honorific insignia surrounding elephants on the visual representations at the reliefs from Angkor Wat, Bayon, and Banteay Chmar (Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2007: 61).

In *Sumanasāntaka* 153.8 a vivid account is given of an attack of foot soldiers on an elephant during the final moments of a battle when the routed troops of an enemy scattered in terror, leaving behind weapons, chariots, horses and, as the text has it, at least one elephant. The author envisages the elephant, or possibly several of them, overwhelmed in a mass attack (*rinubung*) and stabbed to death by spears (*dinudut śiṇūla*):

Their elephants were surrounded and, rushed upon, pulled and stabbed with pikes,

They looked like dead grasshoppers, dragged along by red ants.\(^{255}\)

The image of elephants likened to dead locusts is striking: a careful reading of the passage suggests that Mpu Monaguṇa actually depicts elephants that do not take part in the battle. The description of the utterly impractical way the formidable war elephant taking an active part in the battle is killed, strongly suggests that Mpu Monaguṇa gives us a depiction of the noble mounts of high-ranking warriors. Most probably, animals were tied up to the poles, or trees, not far away from the place of battle. Abandoned and left to their own lot, they become an easy prey for enemy spearmen. The motif of a slain elephant and its dead body looming high above the ground, however, has much wider circulation in *kakawin*. In the *Krṣṇāyana*, for example, killed elephants piled up on the battlefield are described as resembling heaps of coconut meat (*dawēt*) scattered to dry up in the sun.\(^{256}\)

The elephant's unique value came with its use in transporting baggage and bulky objects, and we may presume that some elephants in the retinue of Hayam Wuruk described in the *Deśawarmanā* were employed to carry bulky baggage. Elephants laden with bulky bales and packs are depicted in the famous scene showing an army baggage train found on the south side of the outer gallery at the

\(^{254}\) *Kidung Sunda* 2.140 and 2.204.

\(^{255}\) Worsley *et al.* (2013: 379).

\(^{256}\) *Krṣṇāyana* 51.25. Anyone who has seen even a photograph of a dead elephant lying on the ground will find these images impressively realistic.
twelfth century Bayon temple complex in Cambodia (Jacq-Hergoualc’h 2007: 156). In continental
Southeast Asia and Sumatra, elephants were also used to transport heavy siege equipment; the
evidence for Java is, however, lacking: when Sultan Agung attacked in 1628 the Dutch stronghold
in Batavia, he did not use elephants but buffaloes to haul heavy guns and other siege equipment
(Schrieke 1957: 74). Gunpowder technology became the single most important factor in the
declining field use of war elephants as the sparks and noise coming out of early guns and
matchlocks were a nuisance and it was difficult to train elephants to ignore them. Even early fire
weapons, introduced to Java in the early fifteenth century, proved quite efficient against war
elephants. The Vietnamese army of Dai Viet experienced this vulnerability of elephants during the
Chinese invasion in 1406-7 when the Ming troops used to great effect cannons as well as handguns
against Vietnamese war elephants. On several occasions the animals panicked and, fleeing away
from the battle, caused heavy damage to Vietnamese troops (Sun Laichen 2003b: 7-12).

4.6 MILITARY LEADERSHIP IN KAKAWIN AND THE MYTH OF THE LOW-STATUS TANṆA

There are a number of terms designating military commanders in kakawin, most of them loanwords
from Sanskrit, with adhikāra, balamantri and senāpati among the more common. The exact
meaning of these terms in the Old Javanese literary context is, however, far from clear because the
words are used interchangeably, and the texts generally do not reflect a structured chain of
command. One of the most typified and enduring themes pertaining to military leadership is the
motif of appointing commanders immediately before the battle, a motif that has a venerable epic
pedigree in the Mahābhārata in the theme of a multiple investiture of major epic warriors as
commanders-in-chief of the Korawa army. Conceptually, this motif does not contravene what we
know about premodern Javanese practices: traditionally, the Javanese lacked professional officers
as well as permanent officer corps, and military leaders were appointed ad hoc before the battle.257
In kakawin it is typically one of the main heroes, acting as commander-in-chief, who orders the
formation of an army into a battle-array and whose fall is understood as an ominous sign
precipitating the rout of his forces.258 The act of drawing up a battle array is depicted as the single
most important task of a military commander: the leaders are only rarely represented as marshaling
their soldiers.

257 As late as in the early nineteenth century, Raffles (1815: 329) reports that Javanese officers were appointed only at
the moment the army was to be raised. Raffles specifies that by that time, rulers only personally nominated the
highest-ranking officers, called widana, who headed platoons of three hundred and twenty men.
258 See, for example, Bhomāntaka 92.1.
In addition to Sanskrit loanwords used in *kakawin* poetry to designate military commanders, there are two terms that reflect genuine Javanese practices of premodern military command: *jurū* and *taṇḍa*. A number of texts give details on these military personnel, allowing for rare glimpses into the Javanese culture of military leadership and a more nuanced understanding of premodern practices of military command. Relevant passages may be read as literary reflections of the two-level command structure of pre-Islamic Javanese armies, consisting of regiment commanders (*taṇḍa*) and unit commanders (*jurū*). This simple structure of command mirrored primitive battlefield communication, when most forces could do no more in combat than to put into practice what had been planned and ordered beforehand, and they would hear nothing from their leaders except, perhaps, a brief pre-battle speech. Once the battle started, unit commanders (*jurū*) were probably of more relevance for the actual command than higher-ranking *taṇḍa*. *Jurū* had no named office but nevertheless exercised military command: they were called *jurū* or, more usually, *sajurū* (‘a unit under a *jurū*’), which is attested in the *Arjunawiwāha*, where *sajurū* designates military units of Indra’s heavenly army.259

The second level of military command was represented by the men called *taṇḍa*; commanders, who have been appointed from among the members of the court military establishment. The term *taṇḍa* is attested not only in *kakawin*; it is known from a number of prose texts, as well as from the Old Javanese epigraphical record. The status and function of the men designated as *taṇḍa* have invited substantial attention. Scholars of Old Javanese literature have, however, advanced widely different opinions about the social status and function of the *taṇḍa* in pre-Islamic Java. Most scholars ascribe to the view that *taṇḍa* designates a category of military commanders. Robson (1995: 29) renders *taṇḍa* in the *Deśawarṇana* as ‘officers’, and Teeuw and Robson (2005: 467) translate *taṇḍa* in the *Bhomāntaka* in the same way. O’Brien leaves the term in the *Sutasoma* untranslated, while in her comments to the text *taṇḍa* is rendered tentatively as ‘officer’ (2008: 263).

Most interestingly, the term *taṇḍa* is rarely used to designate a single person: with a few significant exceptions the word is employed in Old Javanese literature in a plural meaning, designating the category of *taṇḍa* personnel. This finding is further supported by epigraphic record: the term is used since the twelfth century as an element of the title of a category of high court dignitaries (the full title reads: *para taṇḍa rakrāṇ ring pakira-kiran*). According to Boechari (2012: 11), these men formed the second highest echelon of state officials, preceeded in rank only by the three highest dignitaries of the state.260 However, as we have only a rudimentary

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259 *Arjunawiwāha* 23.12. Robson (1998: 113) renders *sajurū* in this passage as ‘divisions’. For *jurū* designating a military unit, see, for example, Teeuw and Robson (2005: 441) who render *jurū* in the *Bhomāntaka* as ‘division’.

260 The term *para taṇḍa rakrāṇ ring pakira-kiran* is attested in the Old Javanese inscriptional record from the Kadiri until the late Majapahit period (Boechari 2012: 11).
understanding of these second level functionaries who surrounded the king, the precise scope of the
category of taṇḍa in pre-Islamic Java remains unclear. The uncertainty of the actual function of the
men designated by the term taṇḍa is reflected in the definition provided for taṇḍa by OJED 1928:

a category of dignitaries or officials. Is it (originally): in charge of a “banner” or company?
It seems, however, that it does not always point to a military rank. Pigeaud renders it with
“headman”. Is it distinguished from mantri? But taṇḍa-mantri, certainly in catus-taṇḍa-
mantri, denotes the rank of dignity (chief officer?). See also catus-, pañca-.

It seems to me that the identification of taṇḍa as members of the class of professional, salaried
officers would represent an anachronism in the case of pre-Islamic Java, though I acknowledge that
the rendering of the word as ‘officer’ is perfectly fitting for the epic context of kakawin. In what
follows I would like to emphasise an overlooked element of competitive martial prowess ascribed
to taṇḍa in a number of kakawin. It is also shown that taṇḍa were invariably of high social status,
contrary to the claims of several scholars (Pigeaud 1962; Aichele 1969; Acri 2011b) that the men
called taṇḍa represented in pre-Islamic Java a (religious) category of low status.

To obtain a better insight into the social standing and function of taṇḍa I start with the
hypothesis advanced by Zoetmulder that taṇḍa may have originally designated the men who were
‘in charge of a “banner” or company’ (OJED 1928). There are indeed several references in Old
Javanese literature to the unit called satatāṇḍa (literally: ‘one taṇḍa’) that seems to have designated a
military unit headed by taṇḍa. Generally, flags and banners were symbols of the military unit that
they represented. Taṇḍa would thus belong to the category of words that derive in one or another
way from the names for banners and flags, so that it is similar to the term pañji (De Casparis 1975:
56). Apart from these associations, the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa, the Bhomāntaka and the
Sumanasāntaka suggest that taṇḍa designates a warrior who distinguished himself in battle. A
valuable passage in the Bhomāntaka depicts military leaders appointed immediately before a battle,
as was the case throughout the Javanese premodern history. The commanders are selected from the
category of taṇḍa:

pinakāḍhikāra para taṇḍa sang kṣitisutātiśakti suyaśa

The formidable taṇḍas of Kṣitisuta who proved themselves [in battle] were appointed
leaders in the war.262

261 Bhomāntaka 85.8.
262 Bhomāntaka 85.8. Translation is mine. Compare the translation of Teeuw and Robson (2005: 467) who render the
sequence pinakāḍhikāra [...] para taṇḍa as ‘officers [...] were appointed as generals’.
The term suyaša (accomplished) in this passage suggests that military leaders (adhiķaṇa) were appointed from among the taṇḍa personnel who had demonstrated their martial excellence in battle. The passage does not represent taṇḍa as members of a class of ‘officers’ because the category of salaried military commanders did not exist in pre-Islamic Java. Another passage in the Bhomāntaka supports the view that by the Kaḍiri period, the time the kakawin was composed, taṇḍa were still seen as active combatants, evaluated according to martial performance that could have secured them a share of war prisoners or, alternatively, the benefits of being entrusted with the supervision of a fortress:

And there was a multitude of taṇḍas there, engaged in combat, highly attentive; Though assailed by many, they held on bravely, in the hope of securing slaves or a fortress.263

The literary context of this valuable passage suggests that taṇḍa were reviewed on the occasion of a pre-battle spectacle, part of which was ritual of taking of oaths, as well as a drill of armed forces and simulated fights (šrama), participatory sacrifice, convivial eating and competitive drinking. Such spectacles had a very practical purpose for the participants, including the taṇḍa, who aimed to demonstrate individual martial skills in order to increase their military value and to impress the king and the officials who supervised the affair. The motif of a pre-battle spectacle undoubtedly represents one of the most interesting examples of the localisation and contextualisation of originally Indic literary theme in the kakawin poetry.264 Other evidence of a highly competitive aspect of taṇḍa martial culture is found in the Sumanasāntaka, in the passage that gives an interesting glimpse into the structure of the festive spectacle organised at the occasion of the wedding of princess Indumaṭī and prince Aja, in which taṇḍa figure in simulated fights:

It seemed that the centre of the kingdom might split asunder because of the thundering noise
Of the kings with their gongs, cymbals and idiophones.
The more so because taṇḍa officials in particular vied with one another, milling about in a great crowd,
With conical drums thuddering as they continued to sound loudly the introductory themes for the music.265

Compare this passage from the Sumanasāntaka with the conspicuously similar passage found in the Bhomāntaka, which details how the taṇḍa of Kṛṣṇa (and of the lords allied with him) compete in a pre-battle spectacle for a share of money (and possibly also for a share of any prospective booty)

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263 Bhomāntaka 81.28.
264 The motif of pre-battle spectacles is analysed in detail in chapter five.
265 Sumanasāntaka 113.3. The translation is taken from Worsley et al. (2013: 297).
distributed among the troops, with the expectation that they would be seen, so that the monetary gifts might be increased:

The tanda of the kings were all well-prepared, vying with each other, Boisterous din of countless percussion instruments could be heard, Others performed martial dances on the square, while the whole group of their slaves were quiet. In expectation that they would be seen, so that the monetary gifts might be increased.²⁶⁶

Both texts depict tanda in a competitive display of martial prowess, vying with one another. Contextualising the available evidence, I offer a hypothesis that the term tanda originally designated a soldier who proved his martial prowess in battle and received the ‘mark of honour’ (tanda), an ensign that identified his rank. Restricted use of the term tanda, invariably associated in kakawin with the court military establishment, would suggest that tanda were originally soldiers serving the king; with Javanese armies growing in size and complexity, regiment commanders were appointed from this category of court-based military personnel.

The second point I will discuss is the social status of tanda. There is substantial literary evidence that in pre-Islamic Java tanda enjoyed a high social status: in the passage from the Sumanasántaka quoted above the tanda are depicted as performing in the spectacle alongside ‘lesser lords’ (ratu): the term used here to designate the members of subordinated local dynasties of royal pedigree, certainly men and women of high social standing. In the Bhāratayuddha Mpu Panuluh describes the tanda ‘drawn up’ (arēpat) inside Śalya's residence (wīrāyatana) found in the fortified encampment of the Korawas at Kurukṣetra, together with the ‘people of the court’ (v wang i dalēm).²⁶⁷ The Bhomāntaka depicts tanda riding in chariots into the battle, certainly a mark of honour in the world of kakawin.²⁶⁸ In another passage in the Bhomāntaka, when the court ladies discuss the possibility that they will be given in marriage to a tanda, they call him rahadyan, ‘gentleman’, once again a mark pointing to the high status of tanda.²⁶⁹ At the same passage we learn that the tanda would understand about ‘taking another wife’. The ladies, however, worry that if they are married to one tanda they will be ‘locked away’ (apingit). This detail points to the practice of seclusion common among the court milieu to which tanda belonged (Creese 2004). The practice of seclusion, on the other hand, is less plausible in the case of a wife of a perambulatory Śaiwa ascetic.

Still, several scholars have argued that the men designated tanda were officials of low social status. The main advocate of this view is Pigeaud, who has based his arguments on a single passage

²⁶⁶ Bhomāntaka 81.26. ²⁶⁷ Bhāratayuddha 19.6 ²⁶⁸ Bhomāntaka 82.17, and Bhomāntaka 82.42. ²⁶⁹ Bhomāntaka 55.8.
from the Deśawarṇana: in stanza 8.1 taṇḍa are depicted as soldiers assigned to guard (kumēmit) the western flank of the gate of the royal palace. In his textual edition of the Deśawarṇana Pigeaud translates taṇḍa of this stanza as ‘headmen’ (1960 III: 9). In his commentary to this passage Pigeaud suggests that the Old Javanese taṇḍa designates a ‘petty officer’ (1962: 13). Further, Pigeaud draws a correspondence between the taṇḍa depicted in the Deśawarṇana and the office of a superintendent of markets, a function attested from Central Java between the eighteenth and nineteenth century, called taṇḍa at that time. Rather forcefully, Pigeaud (1962: 13) ascribes the economic function of the taṇḍa market supervisor to the taṇḍa in the Deśawarṇana:

The fact that in Majapahit the taṇḍas mounted guard quite near the market-place leads to the supposition that their function already in the 14th century was related to the market and maintaining order.

A supposed market-related function of pre-Islamic taṇḍa personnel is, however, not supported by any other evidence, nor is it attested in the Old Javanese inscriptive record. In my view, in calling the taṇḍa ‘petty officer’ and ascribing him a low status, Pigeaud projects the social standing of largely ceremonial guardsmen of Yogyakarta and Surakarta modern courts onto pre-Islamic Majapahit military personnel who were active soldiers. Mpu Prapañca says nothing about a presumed commercial aspect of taṇḍa office; on the contrary, by depicting taṇḍa as guarding the safety of the royal palace, the sacral centre of the Majapahit kingdom, Mpu Prapañca implies that they were part of the royal military establishment.

Recently, the low status of taṇḍa was defended by Acri, who has linked the character of taṇḍa with the complex figure of a low-status wandering Śaiwa ascetic. In his detailed analysis of the kuwong bird in the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa, Acri (2011b) has made several interesting associations, drawing correspondences between the allegorical figures of kuwong and manuk uyakan birds, a taṇḍa official, a widu wandering performer and a Śaiwa ascetic. Acri has associated the figure of taṇḍa in Sumanasāntaka 113.3 with an enigmatic character of a wandering widu performer who is mentioned in stanza 113.4 among the participants on the wedding feast of princess Indumatī and prince Aja (2011b: 70). Acri links the performance of taṇḍa and that of widu, claiming that ‘the taṇḍas accompany the performance of the vidus with a ‘thunderous noise’ (gumērēh) made with their drums’ (2011b: 71). Taking the low status of taṇḍa for granted, Acri suggests that ‘besides their official and military activities, this category of functionaries also had the prerogative to take an active role in ceremonial performances’ (2011b: 71). To further strengthen his arguments, Acri (2011b: 71) traces the Old Javanese taṇḍa to the Sanskrit taṇḍaka, pointing out that one of the meanings of this word is ‘juggler’. Furthermore, Acri (2011b: 70) suggests that the passage found in Sumanasāntaka 113.3 is reminiscent of kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 24.112, where the poet draws
allegorical parallels between the birds and certain human characters, associating the enigmatic kuwong bird with the figure of tanḍa and at the same time with the figure of widu. This identification is presented by the literary character of starlin in its critique of the kuwong bird, which is likened to one wretched tanḍa:

sambegā ning kuwong tekana hinangēn-angēn donyān pamējahī  
kong tanḍa ng kong kaniṣṭākuṭa makuwu-kuwong ko ng kaśmala kuwong  
tan pomah tā katriṇān laku widu mawayang kom guṇyā sāguṇa

“The disposition of that kuwong there is to concentrate his thoughts on his task: to kill! You are the tanḍa! You have a miserable stronghold, hiding in holes! You are a wretch, kuwong! Homeless, unloved, acting like a wayang-performing widu, endowed with power!”

It is this satirical passage that has led several scholars to claim that the status of tanḍa is very low: Aichele (1969: 133) has rendered tanḍa in this passage as ‘Landstreicher’ (vagabond), which is indeed a fitting designation for the figure - allegorically represented as the perambulatory kuwong bird without any nest - wandering without a place to stay. Associating the complex character of kuwong/tanḍa/widu with the figure of a humble Śaiwa Atinārga ascetic, Acri has concluded that ‘the low status of tanḍas, associated with performances, was made object of satire’ (2011b: 79). In my view, the satirical passage is not meant to ridicule the low status of tanḍa, who is compared to the kuwong bird and to the presumed character of a Śaiwa ascetic. As I see it, the literary image is consciously distorted through a parody: in my view, in this allegorical passage the author of the kakawin Rāmāyana meant to criticise the high-ranking tanḍa of Rāwaṇa, the men who figure prominently in the passage found in stanza 22.35. To fully understand the associations made in stanza 24.112, it is necessary to go back to stanza 22.35 where we encounter the character of the tanḍa in the speech delivered by Kumbhakarna, a younger brother of Rāwaṇa. Awakened from his sleep, the giant rākṣasa gorges first on his gargantuan meal and then goes on to criticise Rāwaṇa for being unwise and blinded by his lust for power in opposing Rāma. In a bold speech, a sharp critique is launched against the tanḍa serving Rāwaṇa:

tanḍanta ya harohara rāt  
upāta pati prang-prangi ya  
agēlēm miduśeng tan paduśa

“[… ] Your tanḍa are a menace to the world! They are always keen on fighting and killing, Finding delight in punishing sinless people”.

Rāwaṇa’s *taṇḍa* are depicted in Kumbhakarna’s speech as immoral, unscrupulous and conspicuously powerful men who misuse the support of their lord for their own material benefits. It is difficult to consider this first attestation of the motif of *taṇḍa* personnel in Old Javanese literature to be a literary representation of low-status dignitaries invested with only a limited power. Kumbhakarna depicts Rāwaṇa's *taṇḍa* as powerful military personnel who busy themselves with raids and wars (*pati prang-prangi*), pillaging the country and extorting money from traders. Kumbhakarna styles these men more as unruly bandits than as the members of a palace military establishment. As high-status officials, *taṇḍa* are subjected to a harsh moral and social critique: in fact, the institution of *taṇḍa* as such is criticised because Rāma, an epic opponent of Rāwaṇa, had no ‘corresponding’ *taṇḍa* in his army composed largely of Sugrīva’s monkey soldiery.

Viewed from this perspective, it is easier to understand the association drawn between the *taṇḍa* and the figure of *kuwong* bird in stanza 24.112: represented allegorically as birds and animals living in a renewed harmony in the nearly paradisiacal conditions of revitalised Lēṅkā, the former demons seem to thrive. The poet depicts the previously terrible rākṣasa warriors who have been miraculously transformed into virtuous characters, as beautifully glossed by Hooykaas (1958: 265):

> After the restoration of Dharma, however, our rākṣasas become saints by putting an end to their vexations and preferring the company of virtuous men [...]  
> Animals which normally prey upon each other now live peacefully side by side, thoroughly enjoying the fortunate opportunities bestowed upon them; they only tease one another [...]  

However, the teasing detected by Hooykaas has, as we have seen, a deadly point: the figure of the *kuwong* bird turns out to be a warrior, a killer *taṇḍa* and a faithful servant to now-dead Rāwaṇa, one of the *taṇḍa* whom Kumbhakarna censured as being a ‘menace to the world’.

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271 Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 22.36. Translation is mine.  
272 Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 22.35.
them probably lost on us. There is not only the shared participation in ‘music-cum-acting performances’, as Acri (2011b: 71) observes, but most importantly the predatory character of both figures: while the *kuwong* is characterised in a number of Old Javanese texts by its carnivorous diet (see above: ‘his task is to kill!’), *taṇḍa*, a warrior by profession, is clearly a human ‘killer’, cruel and unforgiving as we learn in stanza 22.35. After the loss of Lębęgą, the daring *kuwong/taṇḍa* plans to establish a new stronghold (*kuwu*) as a base from which to wage war against the newly appointed ruler of Lębęgą.

To summarise this excursion into the character of *taṇḍa* in the *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, *taṇḍa* is certainly not a man of low status, as Aichele and Acri have it; he has, nevertheless, two contrasting appearances in the text, calculated for an effect of mockery. As military personnel serving to Rāwaṇa, *taṇḍa* are depicted in stanza 22.35-36 as *rākṣasa* lusting for gold and booty, still in full power, well-nested in the fortress of Lębęgą; on the contrary, in stanza 24.112 a figure of *taṇḍa* (allegorically associated with the *kuwong* bird) is represented as a wandering vagabond, a lordless warrior, cherishing the hope of establishing a new stronghold from which to launch his predatory raids. The social, and presumably political, situation of Rāwaṇa's former *taṇḍa* military personnel has changed: now they are doomed to live as individuals in hiding, wandering in the paradise of Lębęgą.

This leads me finally to the motif that is striking in stanza 24.112: an association of the *taṇḍa* with a fortified establishment (*kuwu*, *kuṭa*) and a playful aligning of the words *kuṭa*, *kuwu* and *kuwong*. In stanza 24.111 the *kuwong* bird proclaims its will to establish a stronghold in a hole found nearby:

\[
\textit{kuwwua ngke ndo kuwung ngke aku makuwu kuwung lingnyān uning kuwong}
\]

Here may be a stronghold, behold a hole here! I am establishing a fortress in the hole! Such were the words of *kuwong*’s cry.

Interestingly, an association of the *taṇḍa* and a fortress is also attested in stanza 81.26 of the *Bhomāntaka*, in which simulated fights by Kṛṣṇa’s warriors are described; we learn that *taṇḍa* ‘though assailed by many, held on obstinately’, demonstrating their martial prowess to the audience ‘in the hope of having slaves or a fortress’. From early-modern European textual sources we know that much of the war in Java was being fought from rival strongholds and makeshift stockades that were established in order to control, harass and enslave the local population.

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273 The predatory character of the *kuwong*, representing possibly some species of bird of prey or a coucal, is supported by abundant textual evidence. For a concise review of the subject, see Acri (2011b).


275 *Bhomāntaka* 81.28.
(Schrieke 1957, Charney 2004): the slaves mentioned in the Bhomāntaka may have been a reference to the war booty obtained through predatory warfare. It is tempting to speculate that in pre-Islamic Java there was a particular link between the function of taṇḍa military personnel and a fortified establishment: it may be that taṇḍa were in charge of border fortresses but much more research, especially on the Old Javanese epigraphic evidence, is needed to understand this relationship.

To summarise the evidence given in this chapter, the army has been conceptualised in kakawin as an idealised body of four, largely uncooperative tactical arms (caturangga) that has been represented as an attribute of epic rulers. Analysing the four segments of epic armies, I have argued that unlike in the parwa literary tradition (and the Sanskrit literary tradition), in kakawin the ‘elite’ category of infantry is distinguished. These men, represented in the texts as brave and status-conscious combatants, are depicted in the kakawin from the Kaḍiri period in a sufficiently standardised way to allow us to suggest that the literary motif reflects a category of premodern elite infantry: it has been shown that the epic category of the so-called foot-guards (pādarakṣa), equipped with the standardised weaponry and war insignia of their rank, has been allegorically identified in kakawin with the military retainers serving in royal and princely retinues. Furthermore, it has been suggested that the literary category of foot-guards provided a conceptual model for the military establishment of pre-Islamic Java called pangalasan, consisting of professional military personnel who formed the core of standing army. Some of these men served as personal guards of the king in times of peace and accompanied him when he travelled the kingdom. Cavalry, war elephants, battle chariots and the military leadership in kakawin were also analysed.
Chapter 5: ‘Traditional’ warfare and its sacrificial symbolism in *kakawin*

In this chapter I analyse four literary themes that represent four different aspects of martial culture reflected in *kakawin*: the motif of ritual feasting before the battle, the motif of participatory animal sacrifice, the motif of beheading enemies in the course of battle, and the motif of taking captives and acquiring war booty. The four themes reflect the same emphasis on the sacrificial aspects of war and the symbolism of battle as a sacrifice on the battlefield. I argue that by representing martial practices as ritually marked, and by ascribing them to well-known epic characters, Javanese poets provided an 'epic pedigree' for the practices that were of high symbolic value (such as beheading of enemies), or that were of particular social importance (taking war captives and acquiring war booty).

This chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section (5.1) I address the theme of the spectacle attended by the warriors who marched into the battle. Analysing several of its components (review of the troops, display of martial prowess, drinking of fermented beverages), I suggest that the main function of the pre-battle spectacle was a threatening display of martial prowess that may have included elements of worship of the demonic, war aspects of divinities. In the second section (5.2) I analyse the communal drinking and eating associated with the pre-battle spectacle. I demonstrate that the theme is best understood as a literary reflection of the participatory animal sacrifice conducted before the commencement of a war campaign. In the third section (5.3) the motif of beheading enemies during the battle is analysed. Special attention is paid to its ritual aspects and to the associated agricultural symbolism: the origin of the word *amugut* (‘to decapitate’), one of the common verbs used in *kakawin* to denote an act of decapitation, is traced to agricultural lore. Furthermore, I offer a new interpretation of Old Javanese word *cēngēl* as a term used to denote ‘head-trophy’, calling into the evidence the well-known motif of the trick with the fake heads conducted by Rāwaṇā to scare Śiītā, rendered in the *kakawin* Rāmāyaṇa in the way which has no parallel in Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* and Bhaṭṭi’s *Rāvanavadha*. In the fourth section (5.4) I address the typified motif of flight from the battlefield and the associated problems of war prisoners, captives, and war booty.

5.1 SPECTACLE BEFORE THE BATTLE: *KAKAWIN* EVIDENCE

In a number of *kakawin* attention is paid to the activities that take place before an army’s departure to the battle; several activities, such as a review of the troops, martial exercises and communal feasting of warriors are described, sometimes in considerable detail. While the theme may be considered to represent a variant of the motif of the ‘drinking festival’ (*mahotsawa*), well-known
from Sanskrit epics and kāvyā literature (Supomo 1977; Wesley 2011), close reading of kakawin suggests that the theme reflects a premodern practice of participatory animal sacrifice conducted before the march to the battle.

One of the most informative vignettes on this subject is found in Arjunawiwāha 16.7-8 in the passage that describes Arjuna and the celestial nymph Suprabhā on their airborne spying mission. Upon their final approach to the residence of the daiya king Niwātakawaca, they observe high-rise, makeshift structures, erected inside the fortress, and hear the din of drums and shouts of excited troops. Arjuna, obviously unaware of the nature of the festivities, asks Suprabhā:

“What drums are those booming, my dear? They may be announcing a great celebration”.276

Mpu Kañwa depicts warrior Arjuna as if being unaware of the actual nature of the festivities: Arjuna only conjectures that the beating of the drums may announce a ‘great celebration’ (mahotsawa), for, as he further observes, the asura are obviously ‘drunken’ (awērō) and ‘excited’ (wija-wijah), pointing out to the more restricted sense of the word mahotsawa – a ‘drinking bout’.277 Suprabhā, Arjuna’s beautiful companion, confirms his observation, expertly detailing the exact objectives of the ongoing festivities and the reasons for the asura’s joy:

“Obviously they are forming into companies in order to attack the King of the Gods, and are all at the ready.
They are putting their weapons in order, engaging in martial exercises in the square, competing furiously.
For its true that they have only seven days to wait before marching against the abode of the gods”.278

This passage represents a beautiful miniature in which Mpu Kañwa describes, in only a single short stanza, the major activities conducted during the last phase of preparations for war. It is striking that Suprabhā knows better than the warrior Arjuna what is happening inside Niwātakawaca’s fortress: while Arjuna could not specify an actual objective of the spectacle, beyond the point that the asura are drunken, Suprabhā recognises immediately that they are participating in a series of ritualised events before they launch an attack on the abode of the gods.

The key information given by Suprabhā in her report is that the asura, assembled on the square, engage in martial exercises, ‘grappling like Bhairawa’ (alap-alapan mabherawa).279 OJED 240 renders the Old Javanese adjectival form (m)abhairawa as ‘frightful, terrible, terrifying’. In my view, the textual context of this word in the Arjunawiwāha points to a rather restricted use that can

276 Arjunawiwāha 16.7.
277 Arjunawiwāha 16.7.
278 Arjunawiwāha 16.8.
be rendered more specifically ‘acting like Bhairawa’, or ‘in the way of Bhairawa’. In another place in the Arjunawiwaha it is Niwatakawaca, the king of Manimantaka, who ‘concentrated his mind to call up the gift of the Lord Bhairawa’ so that ‘the demon army emerged [...] from his mouth’.280

The cult of demonic Bhairawa was well-known, and possibly widespread, in pre-Islamic Java, being especially popular during the Singhasari period when a marked increase in demonic imagery in Javanese sculpture is attested (Reichle 2007: 175). Most importantly, the theme is attested also in the Old Javanese inscriptive record. Hunter (2007) has analysed in detail the references to the cult of Bhairawa made in the Sukamrēta inscription (1295), issued by Raden Wijaya to reaffirm the dedication of a foundation that was originally granted to Dang Acarya Mapañji Patipati. Hunter (2007: 35-6) observes that:

In the Sukamrēta inscription his son, also known as Patipati, describes himself as inheriting the role of ‘superintendent of Shaiva religious affairs’ as well as his father’s status as ‘religious official of the Shaiva order who practiced the vows of a Bhairava’ (bhujangga Śiwapaksā Bhairawa-brata). That Kṛtanagara may have patronized the family of Patipati precisely because they were his instructors in the path of Bhairavism comes out in Patipati’s narration of an event that strongly suggests it is intended to illustrate the efficacy of Bhairava teachings in the art of warfare. As Patipati tells the story there came a time when Kṛtanagara ‘set out against a village of evil-doers’. Patipati was not to be left behind, and arrived in time to see that Kṛtanagara had caused his ‘divine nature’ (kadewātmakan) to emerge, thus bringing terror to his enemies, who immediately submitted to his rule, ‘without his causing one hair to fall’ in the battle.

Worship during which terrible forms of major gods, including Bhairawa, were venerated in the context of preparations for a war campaign is known also from other parts of the Sanskrit cosmos, such as ancient Cambodia (Sanderson 2003).

Martial practices, certainly recognisable to Mpu Kañwa’s court audiences as ritualised events, have been associated, at least in the Arjunawiwaha, exclusively with the corrupted forces of adharma. Furthermore, considering a widely acknowledged aspect of the Arjunawiwaha as an allegory of political power, we may surmise that the forces of adharma of the text were identified in the court milieu with the political enemies against whom Mpu Kañwa’s patron, the Javanese king Airlangga, launched a number of military campaigns in his struggle to re-establish a central royal power during the first half of the eleventh century (Robson 2008: 2).

280 Arjunawiwaha 27.1.
From the report given by Suprabhā, we further learn that Niwātakawaca’s troops form into companies (mamaṇḍi-maṇḍi), honing their weapons (amahayu sañjata). Suprabhā also informs Arjuna that there are only seven nights left for Niwātakawaca’s army to get ready before leaving for a war campaign. In other kakawin the number of days, or nights, devoted to preparations for war differs: in the Bhomāntaka, for example, only three nights are given by Kṛṣṇa to his Yadu warriors for preparatory arrangements for the battle against Bhoma – a decision that reflects Kṛṣṇa’s perilous situation.281

Pre-battle spectacles had a pronounced aspect of public entertainment as the troops assembled, drilled and camped on the spacious outer courtyard (lēbuh) of the royal or princely residence (Pigeaud 1962: 83). The lēbuh outer courtyard is explicitly mentioned as the locus of pre-battle festivities in the Arjunawiwāha and in the Bhomāntaka.282 The texts further specify that temporary observation platforms were erected for the audience: court ladies sitting on such a terrace are explicitly mentioned among the distinguished audience in the Bhomāntaka.283 The makeshift structures (tataraban), seen by Arjuna and Suprabhā upon their approach to Niwātakawaca’s residence, are the observation terraces (Galestin 1936). A few other passages in the kakawin poetry suggest that these constructions may have been a common element of court festivities. Creese (2004: 145-6) analyses the long passage in the Sumanasāntaka that details the wedding of princess Indumātī and prince Aja; we gather from this description that the people from outside the court render their service to the king by erecting and decorating temporary pavilions used during conjugal rituals.284 By the Majapahit period observation terraces (panggung) developed into permanent structures as we gather from a detailed description in the Deśawarnana: ‘fine, high platform, its terrace plastered with white cement’ (arja panggung aruhur patigan ika binajralepa maputih).285 This substantial construction was situated close to the place where soldiers assembled each month of Caitra for review of the troops (Pigeud 1960 II: 19; Stutterheim 1948: 11). Pigeaud (1960 II: 19) imagines the structure described by Mpu Prapañca as a ‘high tower’. However, the terrace (panggung) described in the Deśawarnana was probably wide rather than high: the fact that panggung may have been quite long is alluded to in the Sumanasāntaka where we learn that the audience sitting in the panggung ‘resembled wayang puppets, arranged in a line’ (kadi wayang jinajar).286

Events designated in Old Javanese literature by the term śrama and called by scholars ‘mock battles’ or ‘sham battles’, are best understood as spectacles of a martial exercise at arms and drilling
of the troops. While military drilling certainly differs from staged display of martial skills, it is often difficult to distinguish the two motifs in kakawin. Drilling the troops is attested, for example, in the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa in the scene where Rāma, leaving for exile, implores his brother Bharata to organise regularly ‘manoeuvres of the troops’ (śrāman sañjata). This particular meaning of śrama is, however, rare in kakawin. The use of the term śrama in kakawin thus in most cases pertains to a display of martial skills at arms, either in the form of a ‘war dance’, or a simulated fight.

Summarising the data gleaned from Suprabhā’s report so far, it is clear that a public spectacle is described during which warriors engaged in threatening display of martial prowess that may have included elements of worship or propitiation of demonic forces, especially Bhairawa, the terrifying form of Śiwa. Recently, Robson (2008: 5) has called attention to the so-called ‘hymns of praise’, invocations embedded in the narrative of many kakawin, that in many cases implore the help of a terrifying aspect of a particular god. The passage in the Arjunawiwāha analysed in this section supports a view that a cult of demonic forms of divinities before a war campaign is alluded in Suprabhā’s report.

5.2 PARTICIPATORY ANIMAL SACRIFICE BEFORE THE BATTLE

In the previous section we have seen that Niwātakawaca’s asura warriors, worshipping terrifying forms of divinities before the march into battle, are depicted as being drunken. Generally, kakawin depict consumption of fermented beverages as an important element of hospitality: alcoholic drinks are commonly offered to distinguished guests even in hermitages and retreats of ascetics. The kakawin Rāmāyaṇa, more Indian in its perspective than other kakawin (Zoetmulder 1974: 232), stands alone in its critical attitude toward the consumption of intoxicating beverages, though in two cases (out of many) alcoholic drinks do not invite a direct criticism of the author(s); the first case is represented by an abundant consumption of fermented beverages proffered to the guests at the royal banquet organised by Rāma, and a second case is a private drinking ‘party’ of Rāma and Sītā in their bedchamber. The negative evaluation of fermented beverages and their consumption attested in the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa can be traced back to the Sanskrit Rāmāyaṇa and Bhaṭṭi’s

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287 Teeuw and Robson (2005: 441), by way of example, śrama as ‘martial sports’.
288 Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 3.71. Apart from this meaning, Sanskrit loanword śrama designates a ritualised war dance, performed in any phase of the battle, often to celebrate a victory over an opponent: in Bhāratayuddha 29.18, Bhima celebrates the moment the Korawa troops retreat by staging a ‘club dance’ (aśrama gadā). In this particular meaning, the word śrama is often substituted in the texts by the Javanese word kaijjar.
289 See, for example, Bhomāntaka 4.25 and 4.31, where ascetics offer palm wine to Sāmba and to his troops, who spend the night in the hermitage on their war campaign.
290 In kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 3.67 Rāma teaches his brother Bharata that ‘drinking [intoxicating beverages]’ (anginum) is a great sin, along with gambling (mentioned in stanza 3.69) and other vices. Typically, rākṣasa subjects of Rāwaṇa are depicted as heavy drinkers; see, for example, stanzas 8.32-34.
Rāvaṇavaddha, two texts that influenced the Old Javanese *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*.291 All other *kakawin*, however, assume a much more favourable attitude to alcoholic beverages and their consumption: Robson has called attention to the fact that even an excessive, heavy drinking, is not necessarily censured (1995: 135).

Whatever the actual practice behind literary representations, consumption of fermented beverages among the warriors has an essentially symbolic significance: it is expressive of reciprocity, competitiveness and social hierarchy (Supomo 1977: 45). There are many kinds of fermented beverages mentioned in the *kakawin* poetry, some of them of apparently greater alcoholic strength that others (Nastiti Surti 1989: 84). While the nomenclature of Old Javanese words pertaining to fermented beverages remains in many cases a shadowy issue, it is clear that palm wine obtained by tapping several species of palm was the most common alcoholic drink in pre-Islamic Java.

A number of *kakawin*, most prominently the *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Ghaṭotkacāśraya*, and the *Bhomāntaka*, suggest that drinking of alcoholic beverages before the departure for a war campaign was accompanied by a copious consumption of dishes that consisted mostly of meat. Certainly, the association of alcoholic drinks with dishes of meat points to a special, ‘festive’ dietary code; it would be misleading, however, to read these passages as simple accounts of menus. Food in the *kakawin* poetry is generally a sensitive subject: in several texts, such as the *Arjunawiwaḥa* and *kakawin Kuñjarakarṇa*, the food is barely mentioned even in the descriptions of feast scenes, while other texts, such as the *kakawin Ramāyaṇa*, *Bhomāntaka*, *Sumanasāntaka*, *Sutasoma* and the *Deśawarṇana*, are rich in vivid and detailed descriptions of food. Moreover, for the authors of courtly poetry to go through with a straightforward and literal description of food was embarrassing, as argued by Daud Ali for the *kāvyā* poetry (2004: 64). As we have seen in chapter three, food symbolism is important in the *kakawin* martial scenes and I suggest also analysing the motif of festive drinking and eating of warriors in terms of its symbolism.

Food is used as both a real and metaphorical subject in *kakawin* and the motif of consumption of meat dishes before the departure for battle provides evidence of diet, as well as of rituals conducted in preparation for a war. In her analysis of literary representations of food in Roman literature, Gowers has suggested that the passages that elaborate on food should not be read simply as lists of dishes, but rather as comments on social and ritual environment described in the texts (1993: 35). This metaphorical aspect of food in literary representations is prominent in almost all descriptions of feasting in *kakawin*. For example, the description of the royal banquet in canto 26 of the *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* is built upon the theme of monkey soldiers, who, living typically on fruits

291 For a learned discussion on the generally negative reception of alcoholic drinks in the Sanskrit *Rāmāyaṇa*, see Goldman et al. (2009: 536).
and roots, stuff themselves at the feast with copious quantities of meat dishes and savoury delicacies.

In section 3.4 of chapter three we have seen that the motif of a sacrifice (tawur) performed before a battle is known from the Bhāratayuddha. The text, however, provides no description of the actual sacrifice nor of the feasting before the battle. For a detailed account we must turn to the Bhomāntaka, which represents in sixteen stanzas (81.34-49) the most complex description of a sacrificial meal in the martial context, depicting the communal meal organised for the warriors of Kṛṣṇa. Taking place on the night preceding the march against Bhoma, the feast marks the end of a three-day period of military drilling, display of martial skills, and review of the troops. In fact, there are two separate feasts: the author draws a dividing line between a ‘private’ banquet (sēgēh) organised for the kings allied with Kṛṣṇa, and, presumably, a restricted number of high-ranking officials, and a communal meal in which soldiers took part. We hear next to nothing about the royal banquet, except that it took place inside the palace. On the contrary, the communal meal took place ‘in the fields’, at the square where the men trained during the day. The communal feasting only started in the early evening:

When the troops had gone to rest, night approached and the sun set.  
It was almost the eighth hour when they set about holding a drinking party.  
Nobody failed to do justice to the feast among the champions adorned with flowers,  
And the dishes were piled so high that those who saw them were repelled.

In the whole ‘feasting passage’, at least ninety-eight dishes are enumerated, the majority of which are meat preparations. The stanza quoted above informs us that some of the participants have been repelled by the mere sight of the dishes. Teeuw and Robson (2005: 647) surmise that the word ‘repelled’ (apurik) used in this passage is an indication of the fact that the food was aimed for a lower-class consumption. The matter seems to be, however, more complicated, as the core of diners is made up of elite ksatriya Yadu warriors. The poet calls the feast a ‘drinking party’ (anginum-inum), suggesting that the food was meant to accompany the alcoholic drinks, an observation further supported by the word tambul used to designate the dishes: tambul is not a general term for a dish or meal, but it is used in Old Javanese in a more restricted sense to denote preparations to accompany fermented beverages. Furthermore, many of the dishes enumerated in the lengthy list are not regular, daily fare, but rather special delicacies prepared for ceremonial eating. It is significant that there are hardly any vegetable dishes in the list. In kakawin, non-meat dishes based on tubers, vegetables and fruit, are typically associated with hermits and their specific dietary

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292 Bhomāntaka 81.25.  
293 The ‘eighth hour’ in pre-Islamic Java corresponded to 6 p.m; see Zoetmulder (1974).  
294 Bhomāntaka 81.34.  
295 OJED 1920 renders tambul ‘refreshments (taken with drink)’.

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codes. On the other hand, in canto 81 of the Bhomāntaka we have an incredibly rich account of dishes prepared from meat, lungs, hearts, intestines, tripe and marrow. Furthermore, many of the dishes consist of the meat chopped and sliced into small morsels, in some cases mixed with blood, fat, and marrow. This mix is detailed, for example, in stanzas 81.35-36:

`tambul ikāntigāgarēm ikang katupang ayung-ayung
mwang pabēkan pēcēl-pēcēl ikang licin acēka-cēkah
rumbah abāng babat saja lalab nikana mira-mirah
twas tan atis titisnya pēlēm ing barabas angēngēsi`

`len kulubanya langsuban asumsum ilat asuhunan
membuh atuntumañ jamu-jamur kurupuk uwur-uwur
limpa lawan lamungsir adulur paru-paru sinangga
tangkas usus tinunduk awudu̱k jata-jatahan angōt`

The dishes consisted of salted eggs, pork necks in small cuts,
And pabēkan cooked in hot sauce, licin chopped to small pieces,
[...] bloody mince of tripe with diverse red salads,
Heart, its drops not cold, and sizzling, drippling of turtle.

And their stews consisted of langsuban with marrow and tongue in rolls,
In addition with steamed mushrooms and crisp flakes of jellyfish,
Liver with rump accompanied by roasted lungs,
Breastbone, intestines on skewers, and hot fatty kebabs.

Along with many dishes made from the meat of domestic animals, preparations of food include the meat of wild birds (thrush, pērulk, wild pigeon), fish (kyang, layur, swordfish), crabs and prawns. A closer scrutiny of the inventory shows that the dishes prepared from wild animals have an important characteristic in common: virtually all of the dishes are prepared from the meat of predators, animals that feed on other animals. Some of them, moreover, feature prominent ‘weapons’ and they are typically represented as ‘killers’ in the kakawin poetry: swordfish, crabs and prawns are among the best examples. Even though parts of the section are far from clear, two important conclusions can be drawn from the list of the dishes and items of food: first, the premodern audience would certainly be quick to recognise that the feasting implies the slaughter of numerous animals to procure the meat. Second, a correspondence is drawn between the dishes consisting of chopped and

296 See, for example, kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 25.46, Bhomāntaka 11.4 and Arjunawijaya 10.21.
297 Bhomāntaka 81.35-36. I acknowledge that the translation of this passage by Teeuw and Robson (2005) has served as the model for my own atemp to render the passage into English. My translation, however, differs in the interpretation of several dish items.
sliced food ingredients and the well-known literary motif of killed (enemy) warriors, with their bodily parts hacked to pieces, lungs and hearts spilling out of bodies.

It is proposed that the description of the feast and the abundant consumption of meat dishes can be best understood as a participatory sacrifice before a battle. Practised in many parts of premodern world, the animal sacrifice represented a complex ritual aimed to propitiate the divine and demonic forces in order to obtain their help; at the same time the communal eating of the meat was believed to protect the men departing for war. In his analysis of the pre-battle participatory sacrifice (*sphagion*) among the ancient Greeks, Parker (2000: 308) observes that the sacrifice, an expression of aggression, is essentially an ambivalent ritual act:

[...] the animal stands for two distinct kinds of human victim. On the one hand it is the enemy, and this first death is designed to be a harbinger of many. On the other hand it is us, or rather our substitute. It dies that we may not. Neither interpretation is explicitly attested, of course. But both are strongly supported by ritual or mythical analogy, or by the logic of the situation. Before the battle of Marathon, the Athenians vowed to sacrifice as many goats to Artemis Agrotera as they might kill Persians.

While *kakawin* do not give us any direct evidence about the participatory animal sacrifice, we have seen in section 3.4 in chapter three that Old Javanese epigraphical evidence suggests that the animal sacrifice was a part of the ceremony of the ritual establishment of a tax-free territory (*sīma*): the inscription of Taji (901) informs us that six buffaloes and one hundred cocks were slaughtered and consumed by the 392 participants, in addition to numerous other dishes and fermented beverages (Rahardjo Supratikno 2011: 306). Early-modern European sources confirm that participatory sacrifice was common in many parts of Indonesia.  

In my view, the ‘feasting’ passage in the *Bhomāntaka* can be read as a testimony that a large-scale animal sacrifice before the battle was still a phenomenon of Javanese pre-Islamic martial culture.

In addition to implying an animal sacrifice before the battle, the dishes prepared from chopped and sliced food ingredients may convey a magical symbolism and the idea that harm could be done to an enemy by the mere act of magico-religious simulation. By the ‘law of similarity’, defined in a classical way by Frazer (1890), actors infer that they can secure a victory over an enemy already prior to the battle by doing harm to the objects identified with an enemy. For example, in the *kakawin Rāmāvana* the poet uses the symbolism of Hanumān’s plunder of Rāwaṇa’s pleasure garden on Lēngkā: in an act that can be understood as foreshadowing the physical destruction of Rāwaṇa’s residence and the ultimate annihilation of his rākṣasa army, Hanumān kills many of the garden’s animal inhabitants and uproots numerous of its trees, knocking

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298 See, for example, Hägerdal (2012: 213) on the martial context of a participatory animal sacrifice that included a dog and a buffalo, recorded from Timor in 1678.
off their ripe fruits. In a suggestive scene, the poet describes the fate of humanised, mutilated fruits, which lie now on the ground, in a fashion similar to severed heads of warriors, scattered on the battlefield:

*rūṃnya rūkṣāpasah kāsyasih satwa sakwehnyan ungewing taman mangkana wwa-wwahan kapwa heman manisnyenīgū sang hanūmān babar yan tibā ring lēmah kapwa kāmbah humīs duhnya duhkhānangīs īwirīnya yāpan salah īwir rēmēk yārēmuk*

The beauty [of the garden] was spoilt, all the animals living in the garden were pitiable, as well as all of the fruit, its sweetness wasted, as it fell down to the ground, split, trodden [by Hanumān]. Its juice came out, as if the fruit was sadly weeping because it was misshapen, squashed and squeezed. ²⁹⁹

The fruit imagery found in this passage, attested in neither Vālmiki’s Sanskrit Rāmāyaṇa nor Bhaṭṭi’s Rāvaṇavadha, suggests that the Javanese author wished to explore the literary potential of the anthropomorphic symbolism of fruits lying in a pitiable state on the ground, trodden (kāmbah) by spirited Hanumān, with the juice of the fruits squashed like the blood seeping out of the bodies of slain rūksasa warriors. In another scene in the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa which is informed by the symbolism of smashed fruits the poet depicts how the tired and hungry monkeys dine on fruit on Mount Suwela: eagerly, they eat their fill of diverse fruits, which are carefully listed. While monkeys quarrel over the food, many of the fruits fall down and their juice is splattered around (phala makabarēbēl ya kontal waneh / hana rēmēk arēmuk wiśīrṇān sirat). ³⁰⁰ It is important to notice that this episode happens prior to the battle of Lēṅgkā and it is therefore structurally parallel to the communal meals organised for warriors. In fact, fruits represent another powerful symbolism in the martial scenes: in the Bhomāntaka the severed heads of enemies are perceived as the ‘fruits of battle’ and in another scene an interesting correspondence is drawn between the act of slaying enemies and the ‘fruit harvest’. ³⁰¹ In the next section of this chapter I discuss in detail the related symbolism conveyed by the Old Javanese verb amugut used to denote the process of beheading an enemy, arguing that in pre-Islamic Java meaningful parallels were drawn between the symbolism of harvest and the practice of beheading opponents.

### 5.3 HARVESTING THE HEADS: BEHEADING ENEMIES AND ITS SYMBOLISM IN KAKAWIN

²⁹⁹ *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* 9.57. Translation is mine.
³⁰⁰ *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* 16.46.
One of the common motifs in the *kakawin* martial scenes is the decapitation of enemies during the battle. Virtually all descriptions of epic battles, especially the scenes depicting close-range combat, offer horrendous details of beheading, executed either by a single slash of a sword (*kadга, kris*; scholars often render these and similar blade weapons as ‘dagger’), or by a sharp, broad-headed arrow. Prominently, the troops of *daitya* and *rākṣasa* are depicted as adherents of the practice of beheading opponents, while some of the warriors fighting for the forces of dharma, including the Yadu troops of Kṛṣṇa, engage in this martial practice as well: in the *Bhomāntaka* we learn that when the Yadu soldiers storm Bhoma’s stronghold, dozens of the *asura* and *daitya* are slain by being decapitated (*kapugutan*).\(^{302}\) The popularity of the literary motif of decapitating enemies in the *kakawin* poetry may be traced to a number of sources: certainly, in the case of dharmar characters, it should be associated with the influence of the *Mahābhārata*, particularly with a figure of Kṛṣṇa who uses his spectacular Sudarṣana disc-weapon to kill willful demons. The motif of beheaded demons is also well-known from the *Rāmāyana* literary tradition: after Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa slay the *rākṣasa* enemies who came to the Himalayas to obstruct the sacrifices of venerable sages, animated severed heads are still seen hovering above the hermitage, resembling the head of Rāhu.\(^{303}\)

In a number of *kakawin*, the epic disc-weapon (*cakra*) is represented as extremely efficient in severing the head from the body: the demon Mura is beheaded by Sāmba’s disc-weapon ‘at one blow’ (*kapisanan*).\(^{304}\) Along with *cakra*, broad-headed arrows are imagined as formidable beheading weapons: king Somadatta, fighting for Kṛṣṇa, decapitates Durṇaya by a precisely aimed shot of his Half-moon arrow (*ardhacandra*).\(^{305}\) In all these passages, the symbolism of Kṛṣṇa’s Sudarṣana disc-weapon can be recognised. Swords and other blade weapons, including the prestigious kris, carry a pronounced symbolism of beheading: the *Arjunawiwāha* describes how ‘beheading krises’ (*kris pamök*) get broken in the mêlée.\(^{306}\) Interestingly, in most passages where we encounter blade weapons used for beheading (contrary to disc-weapons and arrows), they belong to warriors fighting for adharma. The weapon used almost exclusively for beheading, and carried in most cases by demons, is *candrahāsa*, a type of sword originally associated with Rāwaṇa, but used also by Karṇa: in the *Arjunawijaya* Rāwaṇa uses his *candrahāsa* sword to decapitate Gomukha, an envoy of his half-brother Kuwera.\(^{307}\)

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302 Bhomāntaka 42.19. Apart from demons, monkey soldiers are occasionally depicted as beheading their opponents: in *kakawin Rāmāyana* 20.29 we learn that monkey warrior Mainda who defeated Bajramuṣṭi ‘fled quickly, taking the head with him’ (*umēsat śīhra mawwata tēndas*).

303 Kakawin Rāmāyana 2.35.

304 Bhomāntaka 43.13.

305 Bhomāntaka 88.1.

306 Arjunawiwāha 25.6.

307 Arjunawijaya 2.8.
The Old Javanese terminology, however, also points to another, alternative source of the literary imagination pertaining to the practice of beheading the enemies. One of the verbs used to designate an act of severing the head from the body, *amugut* (‘to decapitate’), suggests that agricultural symbolism is also reflected in the martial practice of beheading opponents: in Modern Javanese, *pugut* designates a harvesting knife (Robson and Singgih Wibisono 2002: 602) used to cut off the tips of rice stalks that contain grains. It is worth pointing out that the use of agricultural symbolism in the martial context is attested from a number of literary traditions of premodern Indonesia. By way of example, in the *Radin Suane*, an epos from the Pasemah area in south Sumatra, we find several uses of symbolism derived from agricultural and horticultural lore: we hear of slaying enemies ‘like felling a plantation of ginger’, and in another place the author informs us that the invigorated warriors who overwhelm the eponymous hero Radin Suane charge as if ‘cutting down a plantation of taro’ (Collins 1998: 167).

The Old Javanese verb *amugut* is attested almost exclusively in the passages in which some form of handling of the severed head is introduced. An important piece of literary evidence is found in the *kakawin Rāmāyana* where Hanumān, waiting in hiding in the garden of Lēṅgkā to slay Rāwaṇa’s *rākṣasa* bodyguards, fancies that if Rāwaṇa himself came into the garden he would ‘take his head as a gift to Rāma who certainly will be pleased’.308 In the Sanskrit *Rāmāyana* and the *Bhaṭṭikāvyya* we hear nothing about Hanumān’s head-taking fantasies.309 The third example of symbolism pertaining to the severed head of an important person is found in the *Arjunawiwāha*: the gods, pleased by Arjuna, who had just acquired supernatural powers by his austere meditation practice, feel as if the ‘Demon King’s head had been offered on a plate’ (*taṇḍas ning daityapati juga kawwat*).310

Generally, it is only the head of an important person that is depicted in *kakawin* as being conveyed away from the battlefield as a head trophy; in most cases poets do not bother to detail the treatment of severed heads. Furthermore, in the *Bhāratayuddha* and in the *Bhomāntaka*, the original motif of decapitating *rākṣasa* foes becomes an element of the wider symbolism of a political allegory: as we have seen in section 2.1 in chapter two, the Javanese king Jayabhaya is represented in the *Bhāratayuddha* as ‘sacrificing the heads of his decapitated enemies’ (*ahuti tēṇḍas ing ripu kapōkan*), while in the *Bhomāntaka* king Krṣṇa admonishes his son Sāmba that the ‘manifest proof of being a “lion” is to succeed in seizing the heads of the enemy beheaded in their chariots’.311

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309 For the corresponding passage in the *Bhaṭṭikāvyya*, see Fallon (2009: 199) “‘If it were the intention of the demon chief himself to fight, then I would have to cut him down today,’” speaking thus the monkey continued: “When the lord hears this pleasing news that he is slain, he will be most delighted and Sita's heart will be full of joy.’”
310 *Arjunawiwāha* 5.1.
311 *Bhomāntaka* 3.24cd.
In the context of *kakawin*, however, it is necessary to carefully distinguish between the literary reflection of the practice of taking head-trophies of a few high-status warriors, and the culture of ‘head-hunting’, a phenomenon certainly not reflected in the *kakawin* poetry. Distant as it may seem from the court culture reflected in *kakawin*, the existence of the practice of collecting head trophies in pre-Islamic Java is supported by one, mostly overlooked passage in the *Nawanatya* that details the duties of the king’s troops:

If they [the royal troops] take off the head of the enemy the honoured King shall accept it [as a prize] of the campaign.\(^{312}\)

Certainly, we are not to make a conclusion that the practice of ‘head-hunting’ was still a common element of Javanese warfare culture in the fourteenth century when the text was composed. Yet, the passage is in no contradiction with the image of the king who, as the protector of dharma, punishes the enemies by beheading them in battle and accepts their head-trophies as spoils of war, as suggested by the passages from the *Bhāratayuddha* and from the *Bhomāntaka* quoted above. We know that in premodern Java the human head carried symbolic associations with power and the Europeans who visited Java in the sixteenth century reported that to touch another’s head was considered a distinct sign of lack of respect (Reid 1988: 83). Arguing from the perspective of visual evidence, Lunsingh Scheurleer (2000: 190) has suggested that an emphasis on skull imagery in visual depictions of Ganeša, typical for pre-Islamic Java, might derive from the important role of the head and skull in ancestor worship.

Apart from Java, the practice of procuring head-trophies during martial exploits is attested from several other parts of ancient Southeast Asia. Quaritch Wales (1952: 104), by way of example, calls attention to the reliefs on the Bayon temple in Cambodia that show a procession of Cham captives: one panel depicts men whose attributes identify them as war prisoners, while two Khmer soldiers hold up severed heads of conquered enemies for the king to see. Again, the king is represented as the ‘receiver’ of head-trophies secured by his troops as a symbolic token of submission of the enemy. In premodern Japan, the ritual of inspection of the heads by the victorious general or shogun developed from informal affairs, attested since the fourteenth century, to a formal session in which the shogun or one of his generals, sitting in a state, inspected heads one by one, giving his comments.\(^{313}\) In Java, as late as in 1810, a severed head of Raden Rongga’s chief commander, aptly called Dasamuka, was sent as a trophy to the court of Yogyakarta after the

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\(^{312}\) *Nawanatya* 23a.

\(^{313}\) Turnbull (2008: 45) observes that the practice of head collection has been attested in Japan at least since the eleventh century, while its origin remains unclear. Turnbull (2008: 45) also claims that ‘major victory would always end with the piling up of dozens, even hundreds, of severed heads in the commander’s headquarters’.
suppression of an uprising against the Sultan (Carey 2008: 257). The delivery and inspection of head-trophies by the king should be interpreted as a form of punishment of disobedient subjects.  

_Nawanatya_ 23a further specifies the identity and social background of these men, calling them the ‘filth of the country’ (*kalēngkā ning bhāmi*):

Grabbing thieves, highway-robbers, marauders, bandits, as well as night-thieves.

Among several Old Javanese terms pertaining to an act of beheading an opponent, the most interesting is certainly the word _cēngēl_. OJED renders _cēngēl_ rather generally as ‘head (also, and originally, a part of the neck?)’. However, in all cases known to me _cēngēl_ designates the head already severed from the body; furthermore, the word is attested exclusively in the martial context. I propose that _cēngēl_ actually has an even more restricted meaning in Old Javanese, where it designates a severed head handled as a trophy. The author of the _kakawin Rāmāyaṇa_ uses this term to denote the severed heads of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, conjured up by Rāwaṇa and shown to a shocked Sitā to persuade her that Rāma and his brother had already been killed in battle. Hooykaas (1958: 361) points to the great attention the Javanese author pays to the ruse with the faked heads, unlike Bhaṭṭī, who in his _Rāvaṇavaddha_ mentions the motif only in passing. The elaboration of the theme by the Javanese author is interesting and I analyse the three passages relevant to Rāwaṇa’s trick in some detail. Entering the pleasure garden with his military personnel who carry the heads of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, Rāwaṇa speaks to Sitā:

```plaintext
ari jānakī lihatanā ikang hulu
takarin cēngēl nika si rāma tekihēn
kalawan si lakṣmaṇa nahan huwus mati
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“My dear, little sister Jānakī, look at these heads (*hulu*)! There is no doubt that these are the head-trophies (*cēngēl*) of that Rāma, And that Lakṣmaṇa, who have been slain [in battle].”

_Cēngēl_ is certainly not used as a derogatory term; it is found even in the passage in which Sitā delivers her moving speech addressed to Rāma, or more precisely to Rāma’s severed head. In the long passage, which is of a considerable interest, Sitā laments Rāma. In his review of the _kakawin Rāmāyaṇa_ Zoetmulder (1974: 223) observes that Sitā ‘addresses the husband she believes to be

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314 The head-trophy of a high-ranking man was especially appreciated: VOC commissioner Paravicini reported in 1756 that two severed heads of _orang berani_ (meo) were secured by a war-band of Timorese VOC allies and carried on long pikes to the dwelling of His Excellency for inspection (Hägerdal 2012: 210).

315 The meaning of _cēngēl_ has been lost in Modern Javanese.

316 _Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa_ 17.4.

317 _Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa_ 17.7. Translation is mine.
dead’. Most interestingly, the passage could be also read as Sītā’s lamentation addressed to Rāma’s severed head:

\[\text{nā tāngis nira ta sang nrpapurī}\
\text{tungkulikana cēngēl naranātha}\
\text{dībya sang prabhu asih nira ring rāt}\
\text{nā winarṇana nirālarāśā}\
\]

Such was the weeping of the princess,
Looking down upon the severed head of the prince:
“Excellent lord, beloved by the whole world”
Pleased she in sorrow, downhearted. 318

Rāwaṇa, infuriated by Sītā’s unyielding emotions, submits the fake head of Rāma (that of Lakṣmana is not mentioned any more) to her, urging her to ‘display it as a sign of possession, or otherwise fling it down into the sewers’. 319 Admittedly, sawyakēn of this passage is a difficult word; OJED 1722 derives the form from sawya, a Sanskrit loanword for ‘left’, and renders sawyakēn tentatively as ‘to put to the left, throw aside?’ At the same time, however, OJED 1722 offers two alternative translations: ‘to consider or treat as st. of no value’, tracing the form to sawi (black mustard and its seed); and in the second alternative translation, ‘to exhibit as a sawi-sign’ OJED traces the word to sawi in the meaning ‘sign of possession (prohibition, entry, seizure, use etc)’, which is a technical term used in a number of Old Javanese inscriptions. This latter meaning seems to me the best rendering of sawyakēn in kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 17.59. Soewito Santoso (1980: 415) translates sawyakēn in the passage under discussion as ‘to make a scarecrow of it’. Most probably, Rāwaṇa suggests displaying the head on some prop, such as a pike, to be observed. At places where it becomes clear that Rāma’s head is only the head and not the head-trophy, the poet uses the term hulu (head): in 17.7, 17.59 (Rāwaṇa submits the head to Sītā), and in 17.80 (Trijaṭā, finding out about the trick by witnessing Rāma being still alive at Mount Suwela).

Another passage that can be read as a reflection of the tradition of respectful (and disrespectful) handling of the head is found in the Bhāratayuddha, which describes how Droṇa’s severed head (tēndas wipreśwara kapugutan) has been carried around the battlefield by Dhṛṣṭadyumna, held under his arm, then raised high, and hurled at the Korawa king. 320 After a long search, the Pāṇḍawas retrieve Droṇa’s severed head from the battlefield; it is displayed on a

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318 Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 17.8. Translation is mine.
319 Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 17.59.
320 Bhāratayuddha 20.7, and Bhāratayuddha 20.9.
conspicuous tray of *kaki* flowers and carried away.\(^{321}\) Needless to say, the act of ceremonial display of Drona’s severed head has no parallel in the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata*.

Finally, there are several, less detailed passages that further support the view that the Old Javanese *cēngēl* indeed designates a severed head handled as a head-trophy. In the *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* the seasoned warriors of Prahasta, Rāwana’s prime minister and general in one person, are praised, as in the past they have always succeeded in ‘taking head-trophies’ (*molih cēngēl*).\(^{322}\) A similarly-worded phrase is used in the *Bhomāntaka* in the passage where we learn that the warriors of the king Yawana busied themselves with ‘taking head-trophies’ (*angalap cēngēl*), while other men presumably ‘collected’ the severed heads from the battlefield.\(^{323}\) In another part of the *Bhomāntaka* a warrior about to secure a head-trophy addresses his victim: “Come on, let's have your head!” (*mah cēngēlamwa*).\(^{324}\) The practice of taking head-trophies is attested also from the *kidung Sunda*: in the course of battle between Javanese and Sundanese at the Bubat plain, when the high-ranking Pañji Mélong falls from his horse, mortally wounded, his head is instantly cut off.\(^{325}\)

### 5.4 The Literary Motif of Retreat from the Battlefield: Captives and Booty in the *Kakawin* World

One of the stock motifs in the *kakawin* martial scenes is the motif of the forced retreat of warriors from the battlefield, typically depicted as a desperate and panic-driven. Triggered usually by the death of a prominent warrior, or an army commander, in a number of texts warriors retreat many times during the battle, often looking for a temporary hideout, chased vigorously by their enemies. The motif is complex and reflects a number of literary and non-literary aspects pertaining to the concept of death and surrender. Generally, Old Javanese texts support the view that retreat from the battlefield, except when staged to obtain a strategic momentum, represents a dishonest act, disallowed to *kṣatriya* warriors: the Old Javanese *Bhīṣmaparwa* lays stress upon the ban on retreat of *kṣatriya* combatants, and in the *Bhomāntaka* Arjuna instructs the Yadu warriors of Kṛṣṇa that running away from the battlefield and hiding oneself represents a cowardly act.\(^{326}\) The *Arjunawijaya* even claims that a soldier who survives hideously or, even worse, by surrender, will ‘surely find his place in hell’.\(^{327}\)

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\(^{321}\) *Bhāratayuddha* 23.9.

\(^{322}\) *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* 21.211.

\(^{323}\) *Bhomāntaka* 86.11. Alternatively, the line could be translated: ‘Those who were taking head-trophies had red daggers, many dozen were taking [the head-trophies]’.

\(^{324}\) *Bhomāntaka* 88.28.

\(^{325}\) *Kidung Sunda* 2.137.

\(^{326}\) *Bhīṣmaparwa* 10.13, and *Bhomāntaka* 88.55.

\(^{327}\) *Arjunawijaya* 44.3.
A number of *kakawin* depict warriors taking to flight, including the brave Yadus and Wrśnis of Kṛṣṇa: the *Bhomāntaka* details how the Yadu warriors fighting against the troops of Bhoma fall in disarray and ‘flee in fear at seeing the overwhelming enemy’.328 Apparently, poets explore the tension between the normative prohibition to run away from the battlefield, based on the warrior code (*ksatriyadharma*), and what seems to have been a common response and most probably also a common practice in pre-Islamic Java: in the *Arjunawiwäha* even the heavenly troops of Indra, hard-pressed by the warriors of Niwätakawaca, ‘scatter and withdraw in disorder’ (*asasaran alaradan alulunan*).329

The motif of pursuit and hiding of defeated warriors, so popular in the *kakawin* poetry, can be traced to the mythological paradigm known mainly from the Old Javanese Ādīparwa and from the *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, that defeated rākṣasa, asuara and daitya demons would hide themselves from the wrath of infuriated gods, descending to the underworld (‘deep caves’ and ‘deep rivers’ in *kakawin*): in the *Bhomāntaka* Sāmbo kills the daitya Pralamba, while the remaining daitya demons are ‘heading for the underworld’ (ring pātāla waneh paranya).330 An interesting example of this symbolism is the scene of Duryodhana hiding himself like a fish (*sakṣat māṅgēpēp*) in the deep river after the Korawas lost the battle on the Kurukṣetra. Duryodhana is, however, detected by Bhīma who abuses him, reminding the lord of the Korawas that there is no place for him to hide.331 In a number of texts, the nether world as a place of forced retreat is substituted by a more down-to-earth image of a fortress or stronghold: in the *Hariśraya* B it is specified that after Malyawān, a commander of demon forces dies, Sumāli and other demons flee haphazardly into their stronghold.332 A similar motif is found in the *Bhomāntaka* where defeated rākṣasa fighting for Bhoma try to reach their fortified encampment (*pakuwwan*) on the Mount Rewāṭaka.333 We can detect an element of an allegory in these passages: poets represent strongholds of adharma figures in terms of the underworld, the abode of demons.

Once the troops were in full flight, at least in premodern martial reality, the men would be saved only by the proximity of a secure refuge, or by the exhaustion of its pursuers. In *kakawin*, however, the pursuit is mostly depicted as extended and bloody. Moreover, the texts hardly ever represent the surrender of men on the battlefield. Defeated warriors are depicted either as slain to the last man, or running away. In most descriptions of the desperate flee for life the stress is laid on the motif of blood-spilling, a recognisable aspect of the concept of battle as a sacrifice that takes

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328 *Bhomāntaka* 96.4.
329 *Arjunawiwāha* 26.2.
330 *Bhomāntaka* 13.3.
331 *Bhāratayuddha* 46.4.
332 *Hariśraya* B 49.3. See also *Bhomāntaka* 95.2a in which defeated warriors fighting for Bhoma try to reach their encampment (*pakuwwan*) on Mount Rewāṭaka.
333 *Bhomāntaka* 95.2a.
place on the battlefield. Poets delight in depicting the obstacles that hamper the flight of warriors and the bleeding bruises and scratches they suffer. Consider a passage taken from the Bhomāntaka that depicts the suffering of the men during the retreat from the battlefield:

Pursued by arrows, they wailed when hit,
And the ones who took shelter in the ravines were covered in thorns;
They fell to their knees on the sharp rocks with painful effect. 334

Poets often explore the humorous literary effect of these scenes and in a number of kakawin the ‘brave’ warriors representing dharma are depicted as hiding themselves from the wrath of bellicose rākṣasa: the Arjunawijaya depicts defeated Hehaya warriors who, running for life, hide themselves in the wild mountains, deep caves, frightening ravines, and even in the ‘abode of sages’ (unggwan sang rṣī); yet, even there they are pursued by furious rākṣasa. 335 In the Kṛṣṇāyana the author depicts a soldier who tries to prevent his comrades from running away from the battlefield: then, all of a sudden, a lance flies so close to him that he is almost hit. As a consequence of this imminent danger, he joins others in the flight, ‘hiding himself in a hole, not unlike a mouse entering its burrow’. 336 The mythological netherworld shrinks in this scene to a single hole somewhere close to the battlefield. The farcical image of a despairing man scuttling into a ‘hole’ is attested also in the Bhomāntaka in the scene that depicts soldiers ‘scurrying into holes like a mouse’ (anikus). 337 Fear is depicted as the major motive behind a panic-driven retreat; despairing warriors were apt to infect those behind them with their fear: in the Bhomāntaka the demons who quit the battlefield are styled as a flock of trik birds, ‘scattering far away’. 338 Even the elite Yadu warriors do not escape the poet’s ridicule: in the Hariwangśa the warriors of Kṛṣṇa, finding themselves in flight, try in vain to use their small parrying rangin shields to cover themselves from the shower of arrows to which they are exposed. 339 The Sutasoma depicts confused soldiers of king Jayawikrama, defeated by Poruṣāda’s rākṣasa troops, who try desperately to escape from the battlefield, ‘putting their bapang inside out and throwing away their clothing decorated with gold’. 340

Having traced the mythological associations of the literary motif of warriors retreating from the battlefield, I suspect that the immense popularity of this motif in kakawin also reflects the premodern practice of taking war prisoners during martial exploits or even searching for captives in purposeful raids. This would explain the very ambivalent status, and literary treatment, of the moral

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335 Arjunawijaya 52.7.
336 Kṛṣṇāyana 51.8.
337 Bhomāntaka 86.16.
338 Bhomāntaka 88.12.
339 Hariwangśa 35.5d.
340 Sutasoma 100.4.
value of flight in the texts. Considered dishonest by prescriptive kṣatriya standards, ‘cowardly’
behaviour may have been common not only among the low-status peasantry levy. Non-combatants,
the men unskilled in weaponry, who formed part of the baggage train, may have been particularly
prone to fleeing away once the battle started: porters, cooks, and victualers often became an easy
target of ambush, as we learn from the early-modern European sources (Schrieke 1957; Charney
2004: 134). A number of scholars have argued that the practice of taking war captives was common
in premodern Java (Schrieke 1957: 143, Reid 2000: 210). There is, however, only meagre historical
evidence to trace this phenomenon back to the pre-Islamic period. Critically interpreted, kakawin
may represent a valuable testimony how ancient the practice was in Java. Generally, Old Javanese
texts ascribe the practice of taking captives to the forces of adharma. At several places in the
Bhomāntaka, by way of example, the author represents the practice of taking war prisoners during
the raids and sieges as unworthy of the warriors fighting for dharma, making a great effort to use
the Yadu warriors of Kṛṣṇa as an exemplar: in the description of the siege of Bhoma’s residence we
learn that while ‘many maidens were captured and dragged away [...], in accordance with their
nature, none of the Yadu took captives’.

341 On the contrary, king Somadatta, fighting for Kṛṣṇa, defends at the war council a military strategy of taking captives by letting an enemy to penetrate the battle line and capturing him in a trap:

“Watch how they are felled, and powerless and cease to keep formation.
Let them be pushed back by horses and elephants and you should seize captives”.

342 Viewed from the perspective of predatory warfare, men and women captives represented not only a
valuable part of war booty; the increase of labour power may have actually been one of the main
aims of raids in premodern Java. Furthermore, a number of kakawin represent the practice of taking
war prisoners as a function of an institutionalised terror: in the Bhomāntaka we learn that demon
warriors who rampaged the southern slopes of the Himalāya strived to take by surprise anyone they
came across, ‘whether to capture or to kill them’ (ya tawanēn ya patyana kunēng).

343 I suggest that kakawin testify, albeit in the form of an allegory and metaphor, how common the practice of taking captives actually was in pre-Islamic Java, as well as in Hindu Bali. It is reasonable to suppose that
the men who were not killed during military encounters or did not escape through the flight were
captured and enslaved. We hardly ever hear about the threats to execute war prisoners in kakawin;
on the other hand, taking captives is represented as an important, and, occasionally, ‘private
business’: in Sumanasāntaka 149.11 we learn that ‘there were many who tried to take prisoners’

341 Bhomāntaka 43.18-19.
342 Bhomāntaka 81.13.
343 Bhomāntaka 7.9.
Creese (2004: 53-4) discusses the complex issue of captive women, who came to the court in many cases as prisoners of war. The *Arjunawijaya* alludes to the fact that some of these women may have been used as ransom (Creese 2004: 53). The *Bhomāntaka* describes the ‘gem of women’ (*strīratna* seized (*kālap*) by Kṛṣṇa’s brother Baladewa and his troops in conquered Bhoma’s residence: the author gives us a vivid detail, describing the women who were led away as being ‘guarded’ (*akēmitan*), because of ‘fear for thieves’ (*awēdi ring jaruh-jaruh*).  

These passages suggest that there was a distinct competitive aspect to taking war captives, but we lack comparative pre-Islamic evidence to draw any solid conclusions about the practice depicted in *kakawin*. Some of the captives in the world of the *Hariwangśa* are represented as being ‘transferred’ (*sinēlangakēn*) to the area of the captor, the king Karawīra. Another insight into the practices connected with taking war prisoners is found in the *Bhomāntaka*: in addition to being tied up (*tinalyan*), the captives were ‘strung together’ (*rinantay*), for the captors ‘pulled them as if to stretch them and carried them into the sky’. In my view, this fictive handling of the captives suggests that some form of chaining individual prisoners together to form a marching column may have been known in premodern Java.

In the early sixteenth century Java was described by several Portuguese visitors as the biggest regional exporter of slaves, with Melaka, Pasai and Brunei listed as the largest importers of the enslaved and bonded manpower (Manguin 1983: 214; Reid 2000: 210). Typically, historians link this seaborne trade in Javanese slaves to wars associated with the process of Islamisation: Ricklefs, for one, has suggested that conquests of the lands under Majapahit authority by Islamic Dēmak may have been more in the nature of ‘punitive (and population-gathering) raids’ (2001: 43) and Manguin has argued that most of the manpower available in the sixteenth-century Malacca consisted of Javanese war captives (1983: 211). However, it is equally possible that the early-modern European sources covered for the first time in relative detail a social process that had been underway for hundreds of years. Before the introduction of indentured labour in the nineteenth century, the movement of bonded men and women is believed to have been the primary source of labour mobility in many parts of Southeast Asia, including Java.

In several of his contributions, Reid has introduced the influential idea that war captives represented the main source of this bonded labour and that the major objective of warfare in Southeast Asia was the acquisition of captives who became bondsmen (Reid 1983, 1988, 1993).

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344 Worsley *et al.* (2013: 367).
345 *Bhomāntaka* 108.6.
346 *Hariwangśa* 33.9.
347 *Bhomāntaka* 95.3b.
348 For the motif of tied prisoners in the Middle Javanese literature, see also *kidung Harṣawijaya* 6.20.
With the increased pace of Islamisation in the latter part of the seventeenth century, Java ceased to be an important supplier of war captives, while Hindu Bali rose as a major source of slaves. Schulte Nordholt (1996: 41) observes that while prior to 1650 slaves were not the major component of Balinese exports, dominated at that time by cotton cloth, rice, and pigs, by the second half of the seventeenth century Balinese ports became important centres of regional slave trade. War prisoners also represented a valuable economic asset in other parts of ancient Southeast Asia, especially in Angkor and Champa. Hall observes that until the fifteenth century, the economy of coastal states of Champa was based mainly on plunder acquired in military raids and Cham ports were widely known as a major source of slaves (1992: 259). There is also visual evidence that taking war captives was common in ancient Southeast Asia: Quaritch Wales calls attention to the temple reliefs of Bayon that show prisoners led by a cord round their necks, while three men are depicted shut up in a cage (1952: 105).

*Kakawin* oftentimes represent the practices linked with taking war captives in terms of symbolism. Here I discuss one particular image associated with the literary motif of warriors in flight, found in its most elaborated form in the *Sutasoma*:

\[
tikang \text{ wwang manek wrk}a \text{ mwr min}dulhur \text{ sing nimittanya tan } \text{t}u\text{t}e\text{n} \text{ ing } \text{satru mungkus r} \text{i r} \text{on} \text{ ing h}a\text{n}o \text{ ny}\u00a0\text{pucang ha}\text{ndawe ca}n\text{diki} \text{ n } \text{t}a\text{ng} \text{ rinangkalnya } s\text{mbin mamet panglanang kathamapi} \text{ ya } t\text{in}t\text{u} \text{ t}\text{ekap ning } m\text{ah}\text{\footnotesize ayak}\text{"}s\text{a}n\text{a}\text{ndulur} \text{ dai}y\text{a}s\text{a}n\text{"}\text{a}\text{n}\text{gluruh } s\text{atru manggy}v\text{at sakeng byoma mangdu}k \text{ ta } \text{y}e\text{n} \text{ has}t\text{ra } \text{tik}\text{\footnotesize sn}\text{"}\text{a}ngdag\text{"}\text{el} \text{ ring m}a\text{h}\text{\footnotesize awr}k\text{\footnotesize s}a \text{ moh}\text{h}\text{\footnotesize ang}r\text{\footnotesize e}gut manggutuk ring } \text{watu sy}\text{\footnotesize u}h \text{ p}\text{e}\text{\footnotesize n}\text{\footnotesize ek} \text{ sing } \text{k}\text{\footnotesize n}\text{\footnotesize n}\text{\footnotesize alw}\text{a}ng
\]

The men climbed the trees, disappearing in the treetops, so that the enemy could not follow them [there]. Wrapping themselves in the leaves of sugar palms, coconut, betel, *handawe*, and *candiki* palms, while looking for the means to increase their courage. Yet, the great army of *yaksa*, together with *daitya*, pursued the enemy [there], taking them by surprise from the sky, prodding them with sharp weapons, pelting them in blind fury with the stones: smashed and squashed flat were those who were struck, suffering losses.\(^{349}\)

The curious image of warriors hiding in the treetops is not exclusive to the *Sutasoma*: it is found in a less elaborate form in the *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* in the scene in which some of the monkey soldiers, striving to save themselves from Kumbhakarna’s killing amuk, climb hastily into the treetops of the sugar palms (*hano*), and hide themselves in the foliage, prickled by the sharp *ijuk* fibre of the leaves.\(^{350}\) Premodern Javanese audience, well-aware of fire-resistant properties of *ijuk*, must have found the image of desperate monkeys covering their hairy bodies by the prickly leaves (in nature, the leaves are protected by the *ijuk* fibre growing on the base of leaf sheathes) utterly humorous: the

\(^{349}\) *Sutasoma* 137.1.  
\(^{350}\) *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* 22.51.
idea behind the image is that the *ijuk* fire-resistant fibre would protect the simian soldiers from being scorched to death by the fire of Kumbhakarna. Passed by the towering demon giant, the monkey soldiers, scratched by the *ijuk* fibre, suffer serious bleeding wounds. In chapter two I have demonstrated that blood-spilling is an important aspect of the concept of the battle as a sacrifice on the battlefield (*raṇayajña*) so that the motif of the bleeding monkeys could be understood simply as an element of this sacrificial imagery.

The same motif is attested in the *Bhomāntaka* where we learn that the trees standing on the battlefield ‘seemed to be painted red, as the blood left behind on their leaves trickled down’ (*kadi binangbang / makatiritis rāh Kawēkas i ronya*).\(^{351}\) This image represents an allusion to the vain effort of warriors to save themselves in the foliage of treetops.

Though the passage in the *Sutasoma* quoted above explores the same motif as the *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, Mpu Tantular further elaborates the symbolic aspect of blood-spilling inherent in the motif of bleeding soldiers by adding elements of food symbolism to his narrative. The verb *amungkus* (‘to wrap up’), used in the passage, indicates that the author has styled this martial scene in the terms of cookery: Old Javanese *amungkus* derives from the stem *wungkus*, a word related to Malay (and Indonesian) *bungkus*. Though unattested in Old Javanese, *wungkus* denotes in Modern Javanese a ‘wrapper, especially of banana leaves’ in which food is cooked (Robson and Singgih Wibisono 2002: 817). There is no reason to suppose that the meaning of *wungkus* has changed much during history; most probably, it has always designated the leaf wrapper used in the traditional method of roasting the food under hot ashes, a culinary technique called *amēnēm* in Old Javanese.\(^{352}\) Moreover, the palm species listed in the passage are all important sources of food or stimulants: *hano* belongs to the group of the so-called ‘sugar palms’ (OJED 585) which have been traditionally tapped for their sap, to be boiled to palm sugar, or fermented into palm wine (Eiseman 1990: 272), while *handawe* is a variety of the areca palm (OJED 584), a source of nuts traditionally used as an ingredient of a betel quid. Coconut palms remain widely used for their nuts, and *candiki* palms were cultivated in the past for their leaves used as wrappers for betel quid (Rooney 1993).

The image of the warriors wrapped in the palm leaves found in the *Sutasoma* may suggest that the poet uses a simile in which the men have been identified with the packets of food, ready to be ‘cooked’ by the fiery energy of weapons. As I have demonstrated in chapter three, the confusion between cookery and martial exploits, typical for the *kakawin* poetry, is rooted in complex associations between the preparation of food and killing: in both activities sharp ‘tools of the trade’,

\(^{351}\) *Bhomāntaka* 9.25.

\(^{352}\) OJED 235 *amēnēm*: ‘to roast under hot ash’. Interestingly, this word is by itself part of a food symbolism of the martial scenes: it is attested in *Bhomāntaka* 43.18 where we learn that many of the women of Bhma’s residence, stormed by Krṣṇa’s Yadu soldiers, were ‘roasted in the ashes’. For the method of cooking the food wrapped in banana leaves under hot ashes in modern Bali, compare Kruger (2014: 142).
as well as heat, are employed. The passage from the Sutasoma quoted above actually contains a double entendre, for the sequence candiki n can be read alternatively candikin, ‘made into betel-chewing packet’, as suggested by the meaning of nyandiki (‘to make betel-leaves packet’) in Modern Javanese (Robson and Singgih Wibisono 2002: 131). The rendering of the textual sequence as mungkus ri ron ing hano nyū pucang hādawe candikin results in an alternative reading:

 [...] wrapped in the leaves of sugar palm, coconut, betel, [and] hādawe palms as betel-chewing packets.

The soldiers, turned into betel-chewing packets, are to be ‘chewed’ by the enemies who are ready with their sharp weapons to slaughter the enemy, to crush and masticate him as a packet of betel quid. The symbolism of food wrapped in the leaves, prepared to be roasted under hot ashes, is extended in the Sumanasāntaka to cover an attack on Aja’s men waylaid by his enemies: Aja’s troops have been ‘wrapped up’ (kawungkus) by an enemy in an overwhelming attack, similar to the food that has been wrapped in the leaves, ready to be roasted under hot ashes.353 The complex association drawn between the mountainous, desolate and sparsely populated region where the assault occurs, the distinctly non-heroic method of ambush, and the simple method of food preparation, only foregrounds the poetic genius and literary mastery of Mpu Monaguṇa.

The interpretation of the Old Javanese verb amungkus as a method of roasting the food in leaf wrappers under hot ashes helps to explain one difficult passage in sarga 25 of the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa depicting an idealised life in Lēṅgkā after Rāvana’s death, when some of the former rākṣasa turn into ascetics and monks. In stanza 25.46 the poet hopes that ‘the monk may always eat hilus’, the tubers further specified by the word mamungkus (tulusa wiku ng mamangan hilus mamungkus). Hooykaas (1958: 372) translates the passage tentatively as ‘hilus-fruit in its skin’, and Zoetmulder (OJED 2331) endorses Hooykaas’ translation. It makes better sense, however, to translate the phrase hilus mamungkus as ‘hilus tubers in leaf wrappers’, pointing to the traditional method of roasting tubers and root vegetables under the hot ashes, a culinary preparation known from many parts of premodern Indonesia (see Kruger (2014) for modern Balinese parallels).

The motif of warriors hiding in the treetops of tall trees is not limited to the kakawin poetry: it is also found in the Middle Javanese prose: according to the Pararaton, Ken Angrok hastily climbed the palmyra palm (tal) when escaping from his pursuers. When the men finally tracked him, sounding their wooden shields below the palm, Ken Angrok escaped ingeniously by using two palm fronds as his wings.354

353 Sumanasāntaka 152.3.
Related to the problem of war captives is the literary motif of plunder. *Kakawin* reflect a view that booty has always been a motivation for war: heaven and hermitages are most often represented as targets of plunder and looting. In the *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* we learn that some of the rākṣasa who take part in the audience at Rāwaṇa's residence in Lēṅkā have recently returned from the abode of Indra, which they ‘plundered’.\footnote{Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 12.62.} Next follows a list of ‘heavenly fruit’, the booty that demon raiders present to their lord Rāwaṇa as war tribute (*pawwat*).\footnote{Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 12.64.} In another place of the same text, Kumbhakarna depicts Rāwaṇa’s tāṇḍa officials as influential members of the palace military establishment who busy themselves with conflicts and wars (*pati prang-prangi*), pillaging country and stealing money from the populace. Hermitages, establishments that in many texts share something of the quality of heaven, are represented as plundered by rākṣasa: in the *kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* we learn that a war band of Marīca's demons attack a hermitage, looking for gold.\footnote{Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 2.37.} Similarly, the author of the *Bhomāntaka* represents plunder (*.jarah*) as the main aim of raiding of hermitages conducted by rākṣasa in the area around the Mount Himālaya.\footnote{Bhomāntaka 7.14.} There is a humorous aspect to this particular passage which suggests that acquisitiveness at the expense of rich ‘protectors’ of the hermitage, represented in the text by Sāmba’s retainers, may have been acceptable in the martial context; facing Sāmba’s well-attired horsemen and their richly caparisoned horses, one of the rākṣasa exclaims:

“If I borrow their riches, then I can go home without getting anything in the way of plunder”.\footnote{Bhomāntaka 7.14.}

Apart from heaven and hermitages, royal palaces, and sometimes villages are represented in *kakawin* as targets of plunder: in the *Arjunawijaya*, Rāwaṇa’s demon army, killing the king Bāṇaputra, enter the city of Ayodhya ‘in search of gold for plunder and beautiful women’ (*strīrātmāra kanaka tang pinet rinampas*).\footnote{Arjunawijaya 19.3.} One canto in the *Hariwangša* is completely devoted to the description of a destroyed border area that became a target of raids, its settlements looted (*jinarah*) and peasants driven away as captives.\footnote{Hariwangša 33.1-9.}

We know from the early-modern European sources that plunder was a common phenomenon of premodern Javanese and Balinese warfare culture: men would look for gold, textiles, farm equipment, animals and people, whatever they could eat, use or sell (Charney 2004). The Javanese part of the inscription of Pucangan (1035), analysed by Boechari (2012: 167), gives details about
the war booty obtained by Airlangga’s troops from the lord of the district of Tapa: when he took refuge in ‘impassable areas’, he left behind ‘his children, wives, even his royal treasures and royal chariots’ (tanaya dāra tēka ring rājadrawya rājawāhana). Mpu Kaṇwa summarises in the Arjunawiwāha, in ornate language, what formed the ideal war booty in Java in the eleventh century:

Various were the fruits of victory: royal ornaments,
Special vehicles or girls of rare beauty,
Every kind of trophy as they were won by gaining the victory.\(^{362}\)

By way of literary metaphor, four most important elements of war booty are listed in this stanza: gold, textiles, horses (or elephants and chariots), and women captives. The phrase ‘every kind of trophy’ (sapanghada) may refer to awards of valour that were taken from the common store before any further distribution. The passage also suggests that plunder was ascribed not only to forces of adharma, but that active searching for booty was viewed as an inevitable consequence of a war campaign: the ‘fruits of victory’ listed in the passage quoted above are acquired and carried away by the heavenly troops of Indra, supported in their effort by Arjuna.

The ‘girls of rare beauty’, listed among the war booty in the Arjunawiwāha, do not represent a product of imaginative fancy of the poet but refer to the high-status women commonly depicted as targets of plundering troops: women of noble descent (wwang sujanma) are named among Rāwaṇa’s harem in the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa, and at another place in the same text we learn that ‘women along with gold and jewels of the first quality are the fruits of victory in battle over the enemies’.\(^{363}\) In the Bhomāntaka, the ‘gem women’ (strīrata) are seized (kālap) even by Kṛṣṇa’s brother Baladewa and his troops. Noble women captives, procured in war campaigns, figure prominently in the Sumanasāntaka.\(^{364}\) The motif of captive women is found as well in the Sanskrit literature: the Sabhāparvan informs us how the Gandharvas carry off the Kauravas and their women as prisoners of war, and the Mausalaparvan depicts the Ābhīras attacking Arjuna and abducting the Vṛṣṇi women.\(^{365}\)

It is interesting how often women captives figure in the kakawin martial scenes as the most important part of war booty. Though some claims are surely rhetorical, the repeated and often specific emphasis on the women captives of high-status cannot be ignored. Creese (2004: 53), analysing in detail the subject of sequestered high-status women in kakawin, observes that noble women, compared often in the texts to the gold and jewels of the first quality, were ‘valued no more, though possibly no less, than the jewels and fine pieces of cloth that are indicators of high

\(^{362}\) Arjunawiwāha 28.6.

\(^{363}\) Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 8.130.

\(^{364}\) Bhomāntaka 108.6.

\(^{365}\) Sabhāparvan 231.12, and Mausalaparvan 7.47.
status’. Generally, elite women were confined for their own protection and led sheltered lives within the palace walls, for they were of too great value, regarded by the king as prized jewels that may represent a challenge to other men, if left alone (Creese 2004: 47). Low-class women, on the other hand, faced a different prospect if captured by the enemy. The Bhomāntaka describes a successful attack of the Yadus on Bhoma’s residence during which the court ladies prefer to die than to be forcefully carried off (kahaṅang), while the attitude of their low-class women attendants (paricārika) is at least ambivalent:

And as for the maidservants, some were happy, others were unhappy:
Some wanted to be captured by a handsome hero,
And some hated the idea of sacrificing their vows not to be unfaithful;
It would be a pity about our bodies, they said, especially if they were to be treated merely as an object of enjoyment.366

The passage suggests that violence, including rapes, was a common phenomenon accompanying raids and sieges; the author of the Bhomāntaka further specifies that ‘many maidens (kanyā) were captured and dragged away, trembling pitifully and weeping’.367 An interesting interpretation of the literary motif of sexual violence accompanying a conquest of royal residence is found on the Panataran main temple reliefs that depict a series from the Kṛṣṇāyana: panel six shows Kṛṣṇa’s Yadu warriors leading away high-status captive women, while two accompanying panakawan are depicted raping two other women. Klokke (2000: 26), who has analysed in detail the whole series of reliefs depicting the Kṛṣṇāyana on the Panataran, observes that: ‘While Kṛṣṇa’s soldiers capture the women of the enemy in scene b, the two panakawans act against his orders, and immediately make love to two of the women’. In my view, the author of the relief does not depict a ‘love scene’, but the rape of servant women, and the two panakawan represent in an allusive way soldiers, probably of low status, and the horrific violence that accompanied successful conquests. In fact, in the description of the siege of Bhoma’s residence found in the Bhomāntaka, the author does not give us details about the violence faced by women during the siege; he only briefly states that ‘many women were roasted under hot ashes’ (akweh strī kabēnēm), an informative example of food symbolism used in the martial context.368 The food symbolism of the term kabēnēm is interesting for it styles the victims as food wrapped up in banana leaves, possibly an ingenious reference to the long, elaborate dress donned by the women of the inner-palace.

Even though the author of the Bhomāntaka restrains himself from giving us other horrible details of the violence faced by the women in the sacked Bhoma’s residence, he leaves no doubt

366 Bhomāntaka 40.19.
367 Bhomāntaka 43.18.
368 Bhomāntaka 43.18. For the food symbolism in martial scenes, see section 3.3 in chapter three.
that the soldiers of whatever social standing and whatever rank looked for booty; still in the same
description of the ransacking of Bhoma’s palace we learn that the Yadu soldiers of Kṛṣṇa, though
refraining from taking the captives, searched vigorously for any valuables:

But obviously any kind of property in the palace -
Gold, jewels and so on – they carried off to the last;
The Yadu heroes' men were loaded down
With the quantities of loot they took.369

Pillaging by the victors and subsequent scavenging by the camp followers may have been common
and viewed as the right of any participating soldier. We have, however, hardly any information
about the distribution of booty in pre-Islamic Java. Boechari, for one, opines that especially before
the Majapahit period there may have been a high officer of the central government, called tāwan,
who administered the war booty (2012: 187). A number of kakawin suggest that the loot, the
powerful engine of all ancient warfare, was distributed immediately after the spoils of a single
battle (or siege) were collected in a military camp: in the Bhāratayuddha, for example, we learn that
on the eighth day the warriors fighting for the Pāṇḍawas 'danced and chatted gleefully, as they
received their reward for the destruction of the enemy'.370 The Nawanatya represents an important
historical source on the phenomenon of plunder and gives us a valuable testimony on the habit of
distributing war booty as practiced among the soldiers in Majapahit during the fourteenth century:

So brave men who destroy the districts of the enemies and the serving-men of the enemies,
all their booty they can consider as their profits.371

It is significant that even the royal troops were remunerated by the time of Majapahit at least
partially by the distribution of loot, as we gather from this passage, which gives at the same time
more credence to the evidence pertaining to plunder and war booty in kakawin. It is impossible,
however, to determine how much plunder, or profit from its sale, went to individual soldiers.
Interestingly, one passage in the Bhomāntaka suggests that ‘small finds’ acquired by individual
soldiers in search of loot may have been considered their own property; the poet explores in a vivid
detail what seems to have been the norm, telling us that: ‘there was one [soldier] who found a
woman’s purse to his delight’.372

In this section I have demonstrated that the practice of taking war prisoners is depicted in
kakawin as one of the incentives of war. Ascribed mostly to the characters representing adharma,

369 Bhomāntaka 43.20.
370 Bhāratayuddha 13.18.
371 Nawanatya 23a.
372 Bhomāntaka 43.21.
the active acquisition of captives is conceptualised in a number of texts as one of the major aims of warfare. Furthermore, *kakawin* suggest that the loot, the powerful engine of all ancient warfare, was in pre-Islamic Java at least as important as the practice of taking war prisoners. The *Nawanatya* supports the view that in the case of war captives and loot *kakawin* give us, albeit in the form of fiction, important evidence on a number of aspects of the ‘economy’ of warfare in premodern Java and Bali.
Chapter 6: ‘Landscape of warfare’: Glimpses into the mood of war

6.1 ‘LANDSCAPE OF WARFARE’: THE MYTHO-POETICAL ZONE OF WAR

Javanese authors of the courtly poetry preferred to think about the war in terms of metaphor and allusion. Arguably, all the major forms of military violence attested in pre-Islamic Java have their conceptual counterparts in kakawin that exercised until the modern period a great influence on the imagination and thinking about warfare up until the modern period. While the open, ‘pitched’ battle has its famous epic model in the fratricidal war of the Mahābhārata, an epic pedigree of the category of unlimited, small-scale raids, ambushes and atrocities can be traced to the literary motif of rākṣasa harassing hermitages and other religious establishments. Siege warfare, the third important category of premodern military violence in Java, has its epic pedigree in the literary motif of the battle over Lēngkā detailed in the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa. I suggest that through their symbolical approach to the literary representations of war, Javanese poets consciously constructed what I designate the ‘landscape of warfare’: a complex imaginary environment dominated by the martial symbolism and mood. The way landscape of warfare is depicted in the texts has, among other important consequences, bearing on our appreciation of the kakawin poetry as a historical source.

I begin with the motif of a hermitage attacked by bellicose rākṣasa which may have, apart from its obvious symbolic meaning of a clash between the powers of dharma and adharma, a moral and political dimension: in the freedom of the kakawin world it may represent an allegory of a local political power. Political enemies are represented as rākṣasa (and enemy troops as rākṣasa warriors), while the hermitages and their inhabitants represent rural communities of peasants. Consider this allegorical association in the passage taken from the Bhomāntaka in which the peaceful condition of the land of Dwārawatī ruled by Kṛṣṇa – styled in the text as a king – and his brother Baladewa is depicted:

All their enemies, including Kangśa, together with their armies had disappeared through their doing, defeated and destroyed.

The world was then safe and sound, as all the hermitages were prosperous and happy, arranged in good order, [...].

Another important element of warfare imagination in kakawin is a preference for imagery rooted in the natural world of plants and animals. Even simple, well-known images are often employed with a great mastery and some novel metaphors attest not only to poets’ superb command of Old Javanese

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373 One important exception to this claim is an absence of any literary concept of sea war and warfare in the body of kakawin literature.
374 Bhomāntaka 1.5.
language and poetics, but also to their unsurpassed ability to express often difficult concepts pertaining to warfare. Furthermore, the elements of descriptions are carefully chosen not only to elucidate the concepts pertaining to warfare in a specific, symbolic way, but to conjure up a mood pertinent to the war and its atmosphere of tension. One demonstration of this narrative strategy is a textual sequence taken from the Bhomāntaka, in which the author depicts the march of Sāmba and his troops to the battlefield situated on the slopes of the Himālaya Mountain. Disturbing elements appear early on their way: the buds of the ground flowers growing below the kalak shrubs resemble ‘sharp spurs set out as traps’ (taji tajēm sinunggakēn). The sensing of imminent danger becomes apparent the moment Sāmba’s men enter the territory which suffers under the depredations of merciless rākṣasa, who seem to have set traps everywhere, catching the hermits in place of animals. After passing a miserable and impoverished Anartha district, Sāmba’s troops approach the magnificent Windhya mountains and the elements of martial mood foretelling an upcoming battle become even more pregnant. The author describes in detail a desolated path, shaded by only a few sparsely distributed trees:

The shoots of the rwi sisir, pilang and rukēm angap were as thick as flying ants on every branch.
The kasine wilted in the heat, and was already yellow by the side of the path, [...]

The trees listed in this passage represent species resistant to heat that could thrive in a dry, waterless environment unsuitable for farming – certainly a meaningful symbol of suffering and death in a society based to a substantial degree on wet rice agriculture. Moreover, from early-modern European evidence we know that thorny bushes, represented in this passage by rwi sisir, were commonly planted as the first line of defense around the fortresses (Ricklefs 1993: 152). The allusion to flying ants is another ominous poetic device pointing to the death: the locally well-known propensity of ants, airborne during their nuptial flight, to stream headlong into the flames of fires or lamps is used by the poets to allude to desperate attacks of warriors doomed to fail (Jakl 2012: 48). Forecasting the annihilation of rākṣasa enemies, another powerful omen is the thunder that shows the prince his way: after passing Mount Ojayan, Sāmba and his troops enter the desolate district, an eerie countryside along the river Saraswati, which ‘had been struck by a curse’.

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375 Bhomāntaka 6.4.
376 Bhomāntaka 6.14. The motif of flying ants definitely adds to the desperate mood of the scene. Other apparently meaningful similes, and the correspondent elements alluded in them, such as the mata-mata kuluma that ‘managed to grow a stalk in the valleys and look skywards’ (wrulh atangkil ing lēbhak [...] angungang tawang), are now beyond our comprehension.
377 For thunder showing Sāmbha the way see stanza 6.17, and for the motif of the cursed Saraswati River, see stanza 6.22 where we further learn that the cursed river ‘was given a place on the field of Marū’ (inēnahakēn ing tēgal marū).
The trees on both banks were pitiful, always covered in dust, 
Unfortunately without young shoots, and some had shed their leaves, standing in a daze 
awaiting rain.\textsuperscript{378}

The vista of wilting, dust-covered trees conjures up an image of a country struck by a natural 
catastrophe, such as a downfall of dust after the explosion of a volcano. Even animals behave in a 
way suggestive of the martial mood: herders have apparently lost control of their cattle (wṛṣabha), 
which now, ‘drawing a formation’ (agēlar), ‘walk in groups as they please’ (madulur yathāsukha), 
looking fearlessly at the elephants, horses and chariots of Sāmba’s military retinue.\textsuperscript{379} The image of 
the cattle suggests an allusion to robbers and outcasts, represented as rākṣasa, roaming freely 
throughout the countryside, engaged in willful depredations on hermitages. Finally, Sāmba and his 
troops reach the Himālaya Mountain, which gives them a cheerful welcome, offering ‘clear water 
led through the bamboo tubes’ (baṅu tinuntun ing pētung aho)\textsuperscript{380} so that the prince and his retinue 
can take a rest for a while. The Himālaya Mountain (himagirī, himācala), imagined in kakawin as 
forming the lower part of heaven, is represented in a number of texts as the mythical battlefield. It is 
at the slopes of the Himālaya Mountain that prince Sāmba observes the first signs of physical 
destruction caused by the rampaging rākṣasa:

\begin{quote}
He saw that Naraka's troops had ravaged the land with their evil deeds, 
The waruga had recently been plundered, and the passers-by directed their gaze at them.\textsuperscript{381}
\end{quote}

Similar to the course of events in the Arjunawiwāha, the troops are heading in the direction of the 
southern slopes of the Himālaya Mountain where, unexpectedly soon, the night falls, and darkness 
and fog envelope the warriors.\textsuperscript{382} Night birds of prey enter the scene, foretelling the attack of 
rākṣasa on Sāmba’s military retinue:

\begin{quote}
The moon was also obscured as it reached its height, covered by trails of cloud. 
The dok owl and kēbēt-kēbēt bird called, taking turns with the clamour of the daryas owls in 
the big kapok tree.\textsuperscript{383}
\end{quote}

Night birds of prey foretell the night attack of unheroic rākṣasa cowards, called in the Bhomāntaka 
appropriately ‘army of night strollers’ (nīsācarabala), demon warriors (wwil) who would attack

\textsuperscript{378} Bhomāntaka 6.22. 
\textsuperscript{379} Bhomāntaka 6.21. 
\textsuperscript{380} This image may allude to agricultural communities of peasants which were now in danger and which Sāmba comes 
to ‘protect’. 
\textsuperscript{381} Bhomāntaka 7.2. 
\textsuperscript{382} This darkness is defined in stanza 7.6 as the mental darkness (tamah). This is an important point as the ensuing 
battle between Sāmba’s troops and the demons is conducted under the physical condition of night which has 
important consequences for a reasoning about this particular encounter in chapter 5. 
\textsuperscript{383} Bhomāntaka 7.3.
Sāmba’s men in the pitch darkness of the night. The ‘landscape of warfare’ in kakawin is strikingly similar to a mytho-poetical pālai region, a ‘disaster zone’ of Old Tamil sangam poetry, symbolising danger, suffering and death: the pālai region is an area for war raids and battles and its main attributes are death, blood, and fire (Dubianski 2000: 16). The march of warriors to battle invariably takes place in the pālai mytho-poetical region. Consider a generalised description of this phenomenon by Dubianski (2000:16):

This zone is invariably characterized as “difficult for crossing”, “awe-inspiring”, “barren”, where tribes of nomadic eyinar huntsmen dwell, who attack the traveller to kill him [...] where “the tiger smelling of raw meat attacks deer and sucks the red blood; then a long-eared bird of prey stealthily pecks the remains of the foul-reeking flesh”, [...] where “a hawk is carrying the entrails of the dead warriors”.

This region of death has a number of parallels with the kakawin ‘landscape of warfare’. A similar zone, difficult to cross, is passed by the Pāṇḍawas in the Bhāratayuddha on their night visit of the battlefield where they go to search for the dead body of Droṇa. In a passage, which has no parallel in the Sanskrit Mahābhārata (Supomo 1993: 19), the Pāṇḍawas pass an eerie region:

They travelled along a deserted, untrodden path, wending their way through the desolate grassy fields along the slopes of ravines;
Streams, and frightening sand-banks with clusters of hapa-hapa and katang-katang plants.
Rows of vaguely visible ash-grey trees, half-hidden in darkness, were standing side by side;
Sharply winding steep slopes were covered with hardly discernible grass.

The plants indicate the mood of despondency: hapa-hapa designates (rice) plants without grain, but also fodder given to horses. Katang-katang plants, which normally prosper only in symbiosis with the trees (OJED 820), grow in this ‘war zone’ alone, on their own. Because the origins of kakawin genre are not yet fully understood, we cannot discount the possible mutual influences between Tamil and Javanese literature in the pre-Islamic period. It has been already shown that the motif of rawan sacrifice in the Bhāratayuddha has its close parallel in the Old Tamil version of the Mahābhārata and it will be demonstrated below that Old Tamil sangam poetry and Old Javanese kakawin display the same interest in the theme of virginity in the martial context.

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384 Bhomāntaka 7.8. Compare the passage in Bhomāntaka 95.31 in which the weapons of air-borne Bhoma’s demons are described as ‘dazzling like hawks’ (ahulap īvir hēlang), more evidence of the conceptual link between the demons and birds of prey.
385 Bhāratayuddha 22.9.
386 For hapa-hapa as fodder for horses see Waseng Sari 4.74a.
387 See section 2.4 in chapter two.
Coming back to the passage from the Bhomāntaka, we can observe that birds and animals were good to think with for Javanese poets; in canto 7.9 we learn that ‘desolate were all the liars where tigers lie in wait for passing deer’: a symbolic allusion to the anarchy prevailing in the district which is no longer administered by the local lords (represented by the tigers, ‘rulers’ of the animal world). Then, the true identity of the night birds of prey is revealed when they are styled as the new lords of the country, harassing the local population that is represented as ‘little animals’:

And the little animals were nervously excited at being pursued, and trembling ran helter-skelter into the grasses.\(^{388}\)

By way of allegory, the poet alludes to the condition of a lack of rule when those who normally administer the region are no longer in charge of power. The ‘little animals’ (kēnas) that arguably represent the common population, have no one to protect them, becoming an easy prey (binurū) to cruel owls and other night birds of prey. In despondency they hide themselves in the high grass. In the next stanza a beautiful pun is introduced, in which the poet represents the scared animals as mere scarecrows in the fields of millet, not powerful enough to ward off the night birds of prey:

\[
\text{tan pangucap tēgēg pitakut ing jawa rumēpa haneng sukēt pada kumōl}
\]

Without a word and speechless with confusion, the scarecrows in the millet/the cowards of [the island of] Java lay huddled in the grass, cowering in fear.\(^{389}\)

The passage at the same time contains a double entendre, a play with the double meaning of the word pitakut, denoting both scarecrow and coward, and the double meaning of the word jawa, which designates both ‘millet’ and ‘the island of Java’; the common people (‘little animals’) who now tremble in the grass (kumētēr [...] ing suķēt), are identified as the ‘scarecrows in the millet / cowards on Java’ (pitakut ing jawa), cowering in fear. While the unimpressive strawmen could scare small birds out of the sawah fields and talun gardens (mentioned in the same stanza), they could hardly prevent the predatory night birds from taking their fill. A few stanzas further down, Sāmba’s troops recognise the noise of an approaching army of rākṣasa, aptly called here niśācarabala: ‘army of night roamers’.\(^{390}\) In the ensuing battle Sāmba’s men utterly crush the rākṣasa war band.

A similar motif of a sinister ‘landscape of warfare’ is found in the Bhāratayuddha in the scene in which Kṛṣṇa orders the five Pāṇḍawas to leave their camp on the Kurukṣetra because he knows that Aśvatthāman will attack the encampment and slay the sleeping warriors. In the passage

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\(^{388}\) Bhomāntaka 7.4.
\(^{389}\) Bhomāntaka 7.5.
\(^{390}\) Bhomāntaka 7.8.
that has no parallel in the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* (Supomo 1993: 20), the five Pāṇḍawas and Kṛṣṇa pass through an eerie countryside:

In the deserted dry rice-fields that extended over the whole area scarecrows could be seen, guarding the fields against thieves.

Who, unnoticed, in the form of wild boars furtively crept in and eagerly stole the crops. Obviously, the rattle of the suspended alarm-device signalled that one [boar] was caught in the bamboo trap.

In the north-west the deer barked loudly, and the *kuwong* cried hoarsely.\(^{391}\)

The scarecrows (*pitakut*) symbolise, as is the case of the *Bhomāntaka*, scared peasants, unable to protect their crops from the predatory attacks of demons, represented in the passage by wild boars. The sinister rattle of the suspended alarm-device (*kukulan gantang*), a contraception fashioned from the hollow wood, is not merely a reference to the sound announcing to huntsmen that a boar has been caught in a booby trap; it also alludes to the frightening sound of the ‘snake bell’ (*sarpa bhagawān ghanṭa*) used by an enigmatic figure of a magician (*sādhaka*) mentioned in the next stanza.\(^{392}\) The mood of despondency conjured up in the scene is further enhanced by the reference to an ominous crying of the *kuwong* bird and a hooting of the owl (*kutupuk*).\(^{393}\) Owls are powerful symbols in a number of sinister descriptions of the landscape of warfare; in many cultures, their noiseless flight, sharp night vision, as well as unsuspected way of attacking the prey, caused that owls are commonly associated with supernatural powers (Rowland 1978: 116). Strikingly, even in this sinister scene Mpu Panuluḥ explores an erotic theme when he compares the Pāṇḍawas, escaping during the night from the camp attacked by Aśvatthāman, to the couple of lovers:

[... ] accompanied by a maid-servant and a young guard,
Secretively eloping while others were sound asleep [...].\(^{394}\)

The capture marriage is the most common form of marriage in the *kakawin* world (Creese 2004: 102) and the symbolism of elopement may represent an allusion to the special alliance between the Pāṇḍawas and Kṛṣṇa, who has, in fact, ‘abducted’ the Pāṇḍawas from their camp during the night. Descriptions of nature in the martial scenes seem to be generally more meaningful than commonly realised and much more work on symbolical and allegorical aspects of flowers, trees, vines, roots, leaves and tubers, as well as insects, birds and other animals which feature prominently in *kakawin*

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\(^{391}\) Bhāratayuddha 50.6.

\(^{392}\) OJED 186 renders *sarpa bhagawān* tentatively as ‘a certain mythological serpent’, while Supomo (1993: 249) renders it as part of a sequence designating, according to him, ‘a holy-snake bell’.

\(^{393}\) The hooting of the owl is mentioned in stanza 50.7.

\(^{394}\) Bhāratayuddha 50.7
needs to be done before we can fully appreciate the richness of *kakawin* and the literary excellence of Javanese poets.

### 6.2 GROVES OF DEATH: THE CONCEPT OF THE BATTLEFIELD IN *KAKAWIN*

The battlefield is conceptualised in *kakawin* as an idealized ‘landscape’ that has abundant associations with the natural world, especially in its image of a sacred ground and the sacred grove. The Old Javanese configuration of the battlefield is only partially structured on the trope of a spacious and level battlefield of Kurukṣetra known from the *Mahābhārata*.\(^{395}\) It is demonstrated in this section that the battlefield in *kakawin* is depicted as a constrained natural position, easy to defend, which gives it a certain quality of a ritual enclosure. Typical for *kakawin* is the prominence of particular trees that are represented as growing amidst the battlefield. The most often mentioned of these trees are *kēpuh*, *kapok*, *pöng*, *rukem*, *wadarā*, and *pilēm*. First, consider a description of the battlefield in the *Arjunawiwāha* on which Indra’s troops, led by Arjuna, defeat the demon king Niwātakawaca and his rākṣasa. The battlefield is depicted as located on the southern slopes of Meru, called the King of Mountains (*ri lambung ikang girirāja kidul*) in the text:

> [...] the mountain was inaccessible, and the field for the battle, though level, was hemmed in by ravines;  
> It was barren and the *pöng* and *wadarā* trees lacked water, in the path of mountain torrents, with piled rocks.  
> The ravines to the west of their halting-place were rugged and here they lay in wait facing the enemy,  
> A stronghold from which they would be able to cut off their best troops, some crouching in the grass.\(^{396}\)

The passage shows that the 'battlefield' is depicted as a natural, well-defendable stronghold. This image stands in contrast to the motif of a flat plain, suitable for chariot manoeuvres, elaborated in the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata*. The *pöng* trees that grow on the battlefield, or on its outskirts, are identical with the Modern Javanese *pung*, small trees with iron-hard wood (Robson 2008: 182). *Pung* grows up to seven meters in height and is characterised by strong, prominent thorns. Another thorny tree mentioned in this passage is *wadarā*, the jujube tree: in *kakawin* both *pöng* and *wadarā* represent the trees that have ‘armed themselves’ and stand as combatants on the battlefield. In the *kakawin* world both *pöng* and *wadarā* are associated with death and often grow on the charnel ground or cemetery: prince Sutasoma meditates in the charnel ground, where *pöng*, *wadarā*, *kasine*  

\(^{395}\) In *Hariwangsa* 32.14 the battlefield (*tégal*) is envisaged as being very wide, measuring ‘one hundred thousand yojana’. In *Arjunawijaya* 3.3, Mpu Tantular likens the flat *wanguntur* yard to the battlefield (*samara*).  

\(^{396}\) *Arjunawiwāha* 24.4.
and rukēm grow, surrounded by decomposing human bodies.\textsuperscript{397} In the previous section we have seen that kasine and rukēm figure profoundly in the description of the march of Sāṃba’s troops through the sinister region of Anartha.\textsuperscript{398}

I suggest that for Javanese poets the battlefield has an aspect of the sacred grove, a motif often associated with cemeteries. The image of clumps of trees growing amidst the battlefield is found in a number of kakawin: in the Bhomāntaka the shattered chariots are so numerous that they resemble ‘wild thickets’ growing on the battlefield.\textsuperscript{399} In Bhāratayuddha 20.23, in a section with an aftermath-of-the-battle scene that has no parallel in Sanskrit Mahābhārata (Supomo 1993: 18), the kapok and lēsēs, another trees with martial associations, form a grove in the middle of the Kurukṣetra battlefield:

Moreover, the kapok and lēsēs-trees in the middle of the battlefield
Appeared to have leaves of hands, shoots of coiling intestines – dangling horribly;
Fruits of livers were draped on the branches by the crows [which flew round the trees],
Which, with ghastly screeches, imbibed the blood.\textsuperscript{400}

The association between the battlefield and the charnel ground is prominent in this passage. The kapok, called also raṇḍō in Old Javanese, is a magnificent tree with large branches covered with numerous prickles. In the kakawin Rāmāyaṇa, the kapok is associated with Rāvana whose hands are said to resemble kapok branches: this simile reflects the shape of young branches with numerous prickles, similar to the battle mace studded with spikes.\textsuperscript{401} When the kapok tree blooms it produces abundant blossoms that develop into pods that eventually open, exposing the kapok fibres to the wind for dispersal. While the kapok tree belongs with its numerous prickles to the category of ‘armed trees’, the kapok fibre stands in martial context for feebleness: Maṉica defeated by Rāma’s ‘wind-arrow’ is said to be ‘as feeble as kapok’, an apparent reference to kapok fibres tossed by the wind.\textsuperscript{402} Furthermore, the association of kapok fibre (known as ‘silk cotton’) with silk may help us to understand why in the next stanza of the Bhāratayuddha, after the Pāṇḍawas leave the sinister battlefield, the kapok trees, covered by self-born bodily parts, undergo another metamorphosis and turn into love-lorn women:

\begin{quote}
  kayunya lwir stry ālök siwuhēn i layat ning wwang alangō / masiṅjang tēŋgran raṇḍi
  sumēmi
  tēkap ning rah angēbēk / bangun strī hyang ning lod juruh adadi ṭrākṣa n kinēdapan
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{397} Sutasoma 9.5.
\textsuperscript{398} See section 6.1.
\textsuperscript{399} Bhomāntaka 93.2.
\textsuperscript{400} Bhāratayuddha 20.25.
\textsuperscript{401} In Bhaṭṭikāvyā 8.51, on the other hand, Bhaṭṭi likens Rāvana’s arms rather generally to ‘tree trunks’ (Fallon 2009: 171).
\textsuperscript{402} Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa 2.43.
The trees resembled despondent, love-lorn women, deserted by their lovers, 
With blood-soaked banners of red silk as their bride’s dress, swollen by blood. 
Observed in a twinkle of an eye, the trees looked like an embodiment of the goddess of the ocean of syrup.

The whole textual sequence is best understood as a conflation of the martial and erotic imagery, so typical for the kakawin poetry. The erotic imagery is used in this passage not only for its poetical sake, but also to refer to fertility: I translate siñjang in this passage as ‘bride’s dress’, in view of a similar image attested in stanza 4.13, where the poet uses siñjang for a bride’s garment when he introduces a metaphor of the gaṭung flowers falling down like ‘the bride’s garment loosened by the groom’ (sumiñjang sāk de ning priya mamēdar). In stanza 20.24 Mpu Sēdah explicitly identifies the men who are leaving the love-lorn women on the battlefield with the Pāṇḍawas: this association can be read as an allusion to the martial and erotic function of the Pāṇḍawas, who, responsible for the carnage and blood spilled on the battlefield are, at the same time, envisaged as ‘lovers’, or possibly as ‘impregnators’, of the young women who have just been deflowered. This suggestion is further supported by the wording of stanza 22.9, in which Mpu Sēdah uses the word amūrwa (‘to deflower’) to describe the Pāṇḍawas wending their way to the battlefield through an eerie ‘landscape of warfare’.

Generally, kakawin martial scenes are rich in the associations between deflowered women and battle: in Bhāratayuddha 13.29, for example, Abhimanyu’s spirited attack is compared to the act of defloring a virgin (amūrwa kanyakā). The last line of the passage quoted above introduces yet another metamorphosis of the trees miraculously sprouting on the battlefield: observed in a twinkle of an eye, says Mpu Sēdah, ‘the trees looked like an embodiment of the goddess of the ocean of syrup’. The ‘goddess of the ocean of syrup’, is part of the battlefield vistas in several, mostly Balinese kakawin (Abhimanyuwīwāha, Hariwijaya). While the identity of this elusive goddess remains unknown, the sweet syrup (juruh) is a product of several species of palms. In Modern Javanese juruh denotes sweet thick syrup or sauce, made from coconut sugar (Robson and Singgih Wibisono 2002: 324); the meaning of juruh in Old Javanese seems to be the same. The word juruh is thus synonymous with ‘liquid sugar, syrup’ (gula drawa), a sweet, thick, red-coloured treacle made from palm sugar. In several kakawin, the association is drawn between the tapping of a palm and the slaying of a warrior: in the Śiwarāṭrikalpa Lubdhaka’s soul, caught by the kingkara (servants of Yama, the god of death), laments that his body ‘is just as the flower-stalk of an ivory coconut palm, notched for tapping’.

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403 Bhāratayuddha 20.25.
404 See section 6.1 of chapter six
405 Śiwarāṭrikalpa 17.2.
We have seen in section 2.3 of chapter two that in a number of martial scenes juruh and gula drawa symbolise blood so that it can be presumed that the ‘ocean of syrup’ (lod ning juruh) in the Bhāratayuddha denotes the ocean of blood, a stock image of the kakawin battle scenes. This leads us to suggest that the enigmatic goddess of the ocean of syrup has been associated with the palm and especially with the palm sap. The sugar palm and coconut palm, as well as juruh syrup, do have strong erotic, as well as martial, associations in kakawin. Here I briefly analyse the symbolism of the juruh syrup and then the symbolism of the sugar palm, before suggesting what the martial function of the goddess of the ocean of syrup may have been.

The erotic symbolism of sweet palm sap is attested in a number of kakawin. When the author of the Bhomāntaka refers to the consummation of a sexual union, comparing the sweetness of young Yajñawatī to the ‘syrup that has stood overnight’ (alindi juruh awēngyan), he makes an allusion to the postponing of the act of consummating the union: the syrup that stands overnight (in a bamboo tube) is much sweeter than the sap consumed immediately after the tapping. Heavenly nymphs and ladies-in-waiting are associated especially frequently with the sweet palm sap and its products; palm sugar and palm wine. The same symbolism is found in the Arjunawiwāha in the scene where the heavenly nymph Suprabhā, in a clever speech, uses the palm-tapping symbolism and implores the demon king Niwātakawaca, intoxicated by desire for her, that ‘the payment for a heavenly maiden is that she should be waited for till daylight, when she can probably be taken’. Once again, the passage is veiled in the symbolism of the sugar, or coconut, palm: commonly, Javanese tap the flowers of the palm twice a day; the sap tapped in the morning tastes sweeter than the afternoon’s harvest (Eiseman 1990). It may be that the repeated ‘violence’ done to the sugar palm by the tapper had in premodern Java sexual associations of a woman deprived of her virginity.

Powerless to resist, the bride is always portrayed as a victim and her defloweration as a defeat at the hands of the all-powerful male lover. [...] Again and again poets draw attention to the female body – the bride’s breasts and waist, her wan face, her tears, her eyebrows arched in a frown, her futile resistance, her clothing in disarray.

An intriguing parallel to this symbolism can be found in Old Tamil sangam poetry in the motif of the deflowered woman, the perpetual return of her virginity, and battle. Korravai, the virgin goddess of the battlefield, gives birth to the god of war Murukan: representing a linchpin of ancient Tamil conception of power (anangku), the perpetual virginity of Korravai represents a state characterised


407 Arjuanwiwāha 19.1.
by the utmost concentration of power, and a great potency for both creation and destruction (Dubianski 2000: 17). Shulman (1980: 141), pointing to the mythology of the Dravidian goddess, observes:

The virgin goddess is a focus of violent eroticism. She is indeed at her most powerful as long as her virginity is intact, so that in marrying her the god exposes himself to an intense, even lethal danger [...] The lustful virgin is a voracious killer.

It is tempting to suggest that the Old Javanese goddess of the ocean of syrup and her associations with the defloration and with the tapping of palm sap may be structurally similar to the Tamil virgin goddess of the battlefield. The subject certainly deserves more attention than it has received so far.

My final observation concerns the interesting fact that, apart from the Kurukṣetra, a famous battlefield of the Bhāratayuddha, the topography of kakawin does not give us the names of the battlefields. On the other hand, names of battlefields feature prominently in other premodern Javanese genres such as babad, and the named battlefields are known as well from a number of Old Javanese inscriptions.408 Probably the most interesting example is attested in the famous Śiwaṅga inscription (856 AD) where the name of the battlefield is introduced by the form of a figure of repetition (yamaka). The inscription informs us about the battle in the Iwung village (samarān thanīwung), a battle that Hunter (2011: 41) associates with the war mentioned in the Śiwaṅga inscription between the Javanese king Rakai Pikatan and his opponent Bālaputra. The Old Javanese tradition of anonymity of battlefields may be unique. It stands in contrast even to the little known Old Sundanese literary tradition: Noorduyn (1971: 155) observes that the Old Sundanese version of the Rāmāyana ‘appears to have been situated in a completely indigenous environment’, and the battlefield on which the battle between Rāma and Rāvana takes place is called ‘tēgal si Awat-Awat’.

408 For the names of the places where battles were fought, see, for example, Babad Buleleng 2.21 where the battlefield called ‘Pasrahan’ is mentioned. Such names may be sometimes considered to be ‘toponym monuments’, as is the case of the ‘Pasrahan’ or ‘Tahen Syat’ mentioned in Babad Buleleng 21.25, or they may reflect the names of local toponyms of the places where battle took place.
Chapter 7: Conclusion

*Kakawin* depict war as a conflict in which the forces of dharma, after initial obstacles, defeat and annihilate the forces representing adharma. The battle, a central event of *kakawin* warfare, has been conceptualised as a sacrifice on the battlefield, a paradigm in which warfare is devoid of any strategic aims and tactical considerations: blood-spilling and unlimited martial violence are depicted as the two most important aspects of the battle. The warriors represented in the imaginary *kakawin* world entail gods, heavenly denizens, demonic beings, and human combatants. In spite of the fictional character of *kakawin* warfare, the warriors are engaged in martial practices not widely divergent from the experiences of the audiences for whom *kakawin* poems were intended. The idealised warrior code expounded in *kakawin* poetry provided a model for the appropriate standard of behavior of soldiers and their military leaders. It has been demonstrated that *kakawin* reflect martial culture familiar to premodern Javanese; as was argued by Creese for the topic of sexuality and marriage patterns, it was essential that the poems embodied the social reality of their time, or they would lose their force (2004:42).

The main argument of this thesis is that virtually all aspects of warfare, even the most mundane, have been constructed so as to represent martial violence in terms of sacrifice. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that literary representations of warfare in *kakawin* are highly selective: the theme of war develops mostly those aspects that were of high symbolic value for premodern court society (for example the decapitation of the enemies on the battlefield), while aspects of low symbolic value, such as the logistics of war campaigns, were of little or no concern to the authors. Javanese poets preferred to think about the martial violence in terms of metaphor. It has been shown that they conceived of battle with the same set of words and concepts that were used for animal sacrifice and the hunt, two other activities in which life is destroyed.

The conception of an open battle – a phenomenon exceptionally rare in premodern Javanese warfare – can be traced especially to the literary metaphor of battle as a sacrifice conducted on a well-delineated battlefield. In the rich imagery of this complex metaphor numerous correspondences are drawn between the battle and the sacrifice, most prominently between weapons and sacrificial implements, warriors and different classes of ritual officiants, dead bodies and sacrificial dishes. The metaphor of battle-sacrifice (*raṇayajñā*) is attested in several *kakawin* in the form of a formula, one to three stanzas long, embedded in the battle harangue delivered by a military commander at the critical moment of the battle. I have advanced the hypothesis that the motif of battle-sacrifice has in the text a similar function to the hymns of praise (*stuti*): both literary motifs are embedded in the narrative at the critical moment of the story where the forces of dharma
face a crucial dilemma. The battle-sacrifice formula may serve as a means of harnessing the power of the written word, displaying thus an aspect of ‘literary magic’, a phenomenon that the *kakawin* genre shares with a number of literary traditions of premodern Indonesia.

This thesis attributes the prominence of formulaic passages in descriptions of battles to the function of the *kawi*, an author of *kakawin*, to serve to his or her royal patron as the practitioner of ‘literary magic’, or the ‘language priest’ (Teeuw and Robson 2005: 1), whose task it was to construct the text as a ‘temple of poetry’ into which the (terrific aspect of) divinity could be summoned. *Kakawin* texts are understood as allegories of political power, and it is suggested that the *kawi* was imagined to use the capacity of divine insight (‘divine eye’) to tap into spiritual power and influence the military affairs of his royal patron, the agenda envisaged for the poet by Robson (2008:16). In this capacity *kakawin* served as a sacred object, part of the royal regalia imbued with supernatural power, similar to royal weapons, banners or musical instruments that were carried, as we know from a number of descriptions, in front of the army (Creese 2004: 21).

The motif of battle-sacrifice, however, should not be viewed as only a powerful literary formula: the symbolism of the metaphor of battle as a sacrifice pervades most of the martial scenes. This prominence of sacrificial elements in the martial context is caused by the view that blood-spilling and death of warriors are beneficial acts: there is hardly any call for open wounds to be treated and no effort to remove dead bodies to the safety of the battle camp. As a consequence of this lack of care, during the night dead bodies fall prey to the depredations of carrion-eating animals such as wild dogs and jackals. In addition, man-eating demons (*piśāca*), *gana* and *bhūta* invade the deserted battlefield to feast on the corpses: it is specifically in the vistas of the battlefield strewn with dead bodies, decapitated heads and dismembered limbs that literary hyperbole is employed with an unparalleled mastery. The lack of attention paid to wounded and dead soldiers, as well as the feasting of chthonian spirits inhabiting the netherworld, can only be understood within the framework of the concept of the battle as a sacrifice on the battlefield, in which the Earth is envisaged as the ultimate recipient of oblations consisting of the flesh and blood of dead soldiers (Feller 2004: 274). I have argued that in numerous metaphors Javanese poets express the idea that blood spilled on the battlefield is an enriching substance, increasing the fertility of the earth and its potential to grow crops and sustain people: correspondences are drawn between gushing blood and rivers bringing precious water to peasants, and between the spilled blood and the flow of volcanic mud (*guntur*), bringing enriching minerals to the fields.

The appeasement of chthonian spirits was part of Javanese pre-Islamic religious practices, as we gather from the *Deśawarṇana* and a number of Old Javanese inscriptions. It has been argued that the literary motif of corpses of warriors slain in battle, left lying on the battlefield, is structurally similar to the phenomenon of blood offerings (*tawur*) to chthonian spirits. Furthermore,
it has been shown that a similar sacrificial symbolism is known from the Old Javanese inscrptional
record: the establishment of a religious freehold territory (ṣīma) was marked by a participatory
animal sacrifice conducted by the makuḍur officiant. The technical vocabulary pertaining to the
sacrificial activities of the makuḍur officiant is, moreover, attested in a large number of kakawin
battle scenes, especially in the passages that depict bhūta, piśāca and yakṣa in combat. These
demonic beings are usually represented as being ‘spilled out’ from sentient divine weapons, mostly
wielded by rākṣasa or semi-rākṣasa literary characters. Apart from this motif, the sacrificial
vocabulary is attested in a limited number of duel scenes in which a morally corrupted character,
representing adharma, is slain by one of the major heroes representing dharma: the most complex
example of this motif is found in the Bhāratayuddha in the scene in which Bhīma slays Śakuni and
mangles his body. I have also suggested that the wording of the imprecatory formulas found in a
number of Old Javanese charters, especially in the inscrptional corpus dating to the tenth century,
is strikingly similar to the vocabulary employed in the kakawin martial scenes which depict bhūta,
piśāca and yakṣa in combat.

Furthermore, it has been argued that animal sacrifice, common in the context of rituals
pertaining to the establishment of ṣīma freehold, has been also practiced in pre-Islamic Java in the
martial context. Kakawin have been read as evidence that the literary motif of pre-battle spectacles,
especially descriptions of abundant consumption of fermented beverages and meat dishes, depicts in
fact a participatory animal sacrifice conducted before the departure to battle. The analysis is based
mainly on the detailed description of this event in the Bhomāntaka. The emphasis on animal
sacrifice and the sacrificial meal shared among the participants is in a sharp contrast with the
situation in post-Vedic India, where all-but-exclusive emphasis on fire and burnt oblations had
broken the concretely material and societal pattern of sacrifice (Heesterman 1993: 188).

In a number of martial scenes, the phenomenon of sacrificial meal and its symbolism can be
detected. The originally Indian concept of battle-sacrifice has been explored to articulate a typically
Javanese martial symbolism: the killing (‘sacrifice’) of enemy warriors on the battlefield has been
re-conceptualised in terms of cooking and eating. Javanese poets conceived of battle and food
preparation (and consumption) with a common set of concepts and words. Pointing to the parallel
use of the symbolism of sacrificial dishes attested in Old Javanese imprecatory formulas, it is
suggested that the food symbolism in kakawin martial scenes can be interpreted in many cases as
warrior’s pledge to kill his enemies. In other cases the symbolism of cooking techniques (steaming,
boiling, stewing, frying etc.) helps to explain the concept of fiery energy (śakti), an underlying
principle of divine weapons that represent an arsenal of immense destructive power available only
to the most accomplished warriors.
To demonstrate that even highly practical aspects of warfare, such as the organisation of the army, have been reconciled with the predominant concept of military violence as a sacrifice conducted on the battlefield, the concept of the army has been analysed. It has been shown how the poets depict the four ‘tactical divisions’ of the *kakawin* army (infantry, cavalry, battle chariots, war elephants) fighting in a highly ritualised way: display of martial prowess is generally represented as being more important than any tactical or strategical aims. Furthermore, I have argued that the literary category of foot-guards (*pādarakṣa*), soldiers depicted in the texts as ‘guarding’ the cavalrymen and war elephants, reflect the martial culture of pre-Islamic Javanese elite infantry. Their weaponry and accoutrements are described throughout the corpus of *kakawin* authored in Java in a very consistent way, in Javanese terminology largely devoid of Sanskrit loanwords. Analysing in detail these descriptions, I have further suggested that the elite infantry, represented in *kakawin* as *pādarakṣa* foot soldiers, represented professional military retainers organised in the court establishment called *pangalasan*. Reading *kakawin* against the historical evidence of the *Nawanatya*, it has been further argued that by the time of Majapahit, at the latest, these military retainers formed the core of the Javanese standing army.

Finally, I have shown that Javanese poets developed a particular style of depicting martial themes: they constructed the mytho-poetical zone of war, called in this thesis the ‘landscape of warfare’. The concept, which has a parallel in Old Tamil literature, supposes that all elements pertaining to the description of war entail the aspect of violence: not only the warriors, but also the animals, plants, and even inanimate objects that are part of these scenes are suggestive of the martial mood. Virtually all the passages in which the construct of the ‘landscape of warfare’ is discernible are worded in Javanese devoid of Sanskrit loanwords. It is reasonable to suppose that these passages, which occur only occasionally in *kakawin* authored on Java, reflect specifically Old Javanese aesthetics and poetics.
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