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Of sastra, pènget and pratélan; The development of Javanese dance notation

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OF SASTRA, PÈNGET AND PRATÉLAN: THE DEVELOPMENT OF JAVANESE DANCE NOTATION

The investigation into the development of the theatrical traditions of Java apparently does not suffer from a lack of source material. The beautiful dance scenes on famous temples such as Borobudur and Prambanan, and the frequent mention of theatre and dance in Javanese literary works are sufficient proof of the importance of the performing arts in Javanese culture.

However, depictions on temple reliefs or descriptions of dance and the theatre in works of poetry do not usually provide precise information on the reality of artistic practice. This is not surprising, as neither temple reliefs nor works of literature were created for this purpose. However realistic the quality of the dance scenes on temple reliefs may seem, it is not certain how much of their form is bound by architectural convention. Therefore it is very doubtful whether conclusions about the form and style of Javanese dancing at the time of the construction of such temples may be drawn from the depiction of dance scenes on temple reliefs.[1] Moreover, a relief in stone is a still picture, presenting static information, the purpose of which was not to give a faithful representation of complex dance motions or musical sounds.

Passages on dance practice and theatrical performances in Javanese literature suffer from similar restrictions. Their function is not to provide a detailed description of movement or sound structures, but they serve to evoke a particular atmosphere, or to depict the scene in which the performance takes place. Therefore, such passages tend to give descriptions of costumes, reactions of the audience or remarks about the quality and effects of the dancer or musician, rather than being informative about the choreography or music itself. As an example I quote the following passage from the Middle Javanese Panji Romance Wangbang Wideya, Canto 3:95-97:

[1] See the discussion on this topic in Holt 1936 and Sedyawati 1982.

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> 'Panji Wireswara was silent and held his peace, replying only with an obeisance. He felt terribly weak and weary; he was left speechless. The king partook of *sayub*, and it was an exceedingly merry feast. Then they struck up a melody on the *gamelan*, the gongs boomed, and the nobles danced.
>
> Raden Singhamatra danced; his dancing was fine, restrained, and without too much movement (?). He went straight and took a *dhadhap* shield and lance. Wangbang Wideya descended and then asked leave to dance. His deft gestures caused one heartache and bewildered the watchers, especially when he took the *dhadhap* shield. Everyone watching his dancing was astounded; he was truly skilled, and it was appropriate indeed that he be feared in battle. The king of Daha was overjoyed and said, "How could this man ever fail to destroy his adversaries?"' (Robson 1971:199.)

If we want to investigate the exact form, structure and artistic development of Javanese theatrical traditions, we need authoritative and detailed definitions and descriptions designed for the use of performers, such as are found in the Sanskrit Bharata Nātya Shāstra, or the South Indian Abhinaya Darpana. Unfortunately, such texts have not been found in Java so far. The general opinion therefore is that the classical arts of dancing, drama, singing and music basically represent an oral tradition, handed down directly from teacher to student.

Yet, in the main artistic centres of Central Java information can be found that proves that by the end of the eighteenth century Javanese artists made use of written texts. In the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries a number of handwritten scores were brought together in the manuscript collections of the courts. These were composed by dancing and music masters in the service of the ruler, and contain information necessary to support the regular practice of dancing, singing, acting and music-making at these courts.

Nineteenth-century notations

The earliest manuscripts of this kind contain texts of songs performed as an accompaniment to the sacred female *bedhaya* dances of the courts, and are accordingly entitled *'(Pe)sindhèn Bedhaya'*. They are dated as early as the second half of the eighteenth century, but the song texts they contain were probably composed before that time. While these texts mainly provide the *'cakepan'* or text[2] chanted by the choir, they often also contain some indications about the musical setting and the structure of the per-

[2] While in Bali the expression *cakepan* refers to a complete set of *lontar* leaves with a written text on them, the Javanese use this expression to refer to the words - spoken, or written or printed on paper - of a poem sung by one or more singers.

formance, as well as regarding certain actions of the dancers (Brakel 1988:91ff).

The earliest choreographic scores of female court dances which I have found so far are the notations (called *'pènget'*) in a 'notebook' of the Yogyakarta court, entitled *'Kagungan Dalem Buk Beksa Bedhaya utawi Srimpi'* ('The Royal "book" of *Bedhaya* and *Srimpi* dances'), which was written for the ruler Hamengkubuwana VII (1877-1921). While most of these scores are for dances created and performed during the reign of this ruler, the manuscript also contains compositions by previous rulers. Some dances occur several times, no doubt representing different versions of the same dance, presumably performed on different occasions.

This manuscript, which apparently was compiled by various persons over a number of years during the last part of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, represents one of the earliest examples of Javanese dance notation. The main component is provided by notations of dance patterns and spatial arrangements, which are referred to in Javanese terminology. These are accompanied by indications as to duration (counted in terms of the number of gong beats of the accompanying musical piece) and in some cases also by references to corresponding words in the accompanying song texts.

The following transcription is of the beginning of the score for a famous nineteenth-century court dance for five dancers, Srimpi Renggawati, here named Srimpi Mliwis.[3]

Punika pènget lampahipun beksa kagungan dalem Srimpi Mliwis, gendhing Renyep lajeng dhawah Sumyar, saléndro.
This is the score of the royal dance (named) Srimpi Mliwis, (arranged to) the musical piece (named) Renyep, and followed by (the musical piece named) Sumyar, (in the) *sléndro* (tonal system).

Ngandhap punika lampahing beksa Below is the course of the dance	*pasindhèn* song text	*gong* gong beats
Awit rakit tengah rimong nyembah start in the opening formation in the centre (with the *sampur*) across the shoulder and perform the gesture of worship	2	
Minger ajeng-ajengan ngadeg iring-iringan Turn to face each other, and stand up side to side	1	
Minger ungkur-ungkuran minger miring Turn back to back, and turn sideways	2	

[3] The subject of the dance is the romance between King Angling Darma, transformed into a white duck *(mliwis)*, and the young Princess Renggawati.

What is remarkable about these early scores is that they refer to dance patterns by means of special terms such as *'rakit tengah'* ('opening formation in the centre', i.e. of the dance hall), *rimong (sampur)* ('draping the dance scarf crosswise over the shoulder'). Some of these terms denote spatial patterns and motions, such as *'minger ajeng-ajengan'*, while others refer to patterns of movement or to specific poses, such as *'rimong nyembah'*.

Since the duration of the movement indicated in the right-hand column is equivalent to the time elapsing between two (or more) gong beats in a slow and stately musical piece, we may infer that the terms merely constitute a summary indication of the actual choreography. This was sufficient, no doubt, as a mnemonic aid for the dancing-masters and musicians using this score, but rather lacking in information for people who are not familiar with the composition.[4]

Thus, the purpose of this score book cannot have been to serve as a means of instruction - we may well assume that in the nineteenth century dances were taught and practised through direct imitation, as in fact still is the custom nowadays. The arrangement of the notation suggests that, rather than being destined for the use of students, these scores served as a 'reminder' not just to the dancing-master, but more especially to the *pengeprak*, or the person responsible for guiding the dancers and musicians during performances by beating signals on a small wooden slit-drum *(keprak)*.

Dance terminology in the Serat Centhini

The use of dance terminology in Java did not start with this manuscript, however. It was not restricted to the court of Yogyakarta, either. From its occurrence in other literary works we may infer that it must have been known also in other parts of Java, and previous to its use in this Yogyakarta court manuscript.

As an example, I quote below a passage from the early nineteenth-century Centhini romance, describing the dance of a professional dancing-woman *(ronggèng)* named Madu.

(Canto 193:18, Wirangrong)

'Ronggèng jèngklèk angririmong	The dancing-woman performed the *rimong* movement
Tumenga rem nétra asta ngrajung	With downcast eyes and her hands in the *ngrayung* position[5],
Kejer kang jariji	The fingers quivering,

[4] In his chapter on 'the theory of notation', Goodman describes the primary function of music and dance scores as follows: 'A score, whether or not ever used as a guide for a performance, has as a primary function the authoritative identification of a work from performance to performance' (Goodman 1988:128).

[5] The term used for the position of the hand in which the fingers are fully stretched is usually *'ngrayung'* rather than *'ngrajung'*.

Kanan menthang andhengklang	The right arm fully stretched (with a curve),
Jari geter mawiwilan.'	And the fingers trembling separately.

(Canto 194:1, Jurudemung)

'Ronggèng lekas mingser gènya	The dancing-woman quickly shifted from her place,
Larap nilap kadya kupu	Fluttering like a butterfly.
Sisirig meded ni Madu	Madu circled around with *sirig* steps,
Sekala asalin rupa.'	Then she seemed to change form.

(Serat Centhini 1915, *jilid* VII-VII:12-13)[6]

There are several other passages about dancing, music-making and singing in the Serat Centhini, mostly describing rather informal gatherings featuring what would nowadays probably be classified as 'popular' or 'folk-art'. The following passage describes two young men performing a dance named after a well-known character of the masked theatre, *Kelana kasmaran* ('the knight-errant stricken with love'). In view of the fact that this dance is usually performed as a masked solo dance, it is unusual that it is performed here by two dancers, and that these do not wear masks. But, as the text emphasizes, they **look** as though they were really wearing masks.

(Canto 366:111-114, Asmarandana)

'Wong roro dènira ngibing	As the two men were dancing,
Arakit sesolahira	They moved in the proper formation.
Nelasken céngkoking jogèd	Completing the dance patterns,
Pangembyaké tan salaya	They swiftly flicked their dance scarf
Amiwir sondhèrira	As they spread it,
Kekicatan tindakipun	Performing the *kicat* step (lifting their soles),
Pacak guluné èjlègan.'	They frequently moved their head.
'Andheglèg klek oklak-aklik	Swiftly they wiggled their head sideways
Ébat kumruwel lir bahak	And turned around (inwards) as though they were plundering,
Éndha sinamber ing kèkèt	Then dodging [to avoid] being swept down
Kiprah kitrang kipat-kipat	Excitedly moving their arms, flicking off (the dance scarf),

[6] Sedyawati also cites this passage in her analysis of the structure of Gambyong dances as described in the Serat Centhini and Cabolang (Sedyawati 1984:133).

Ngling ngling bling ngling jengginggat	*Ngling ngling bling ngling* jumping up and down[7],
Agrudha babon neladhung	They performed (the) *grudha* (movement?) like a hen flying at (an intruder)[8]
Kesrug gidrah runyah-runyah.'	And jumped up and down in a coarse manner.
'Ilo-ilo ngolang-ngaling	They mirrored themselves turning around to the sides
Atindak lir katèl nebak	And stepped placing their feet firmly on the ground,
Manggel kadung médong-médong	(Then) walked hesitantly swaying their buttocks,
Anggedhindhang pepincangan	Drawing up their sides, as though they were limping,
Dhedhangkan lènggak-lènggok	They turned their head,
Gedrug-gedrug nampel pupu	Stamped their feet[9] and hit their thighs,
Naricig sisirik manggang.'	Counting (?) the *sirig* and *manggang* movements.
'Keplok tangan angetibing	They clapped their hands (walking quickly?)
Menthang bau aseblakan	And stretched their arms with a sweeping motion,
Nulya seseg lelagoné	Then the melody became faster
.....	.....
Kang beksa celana cancut	The dancers with their *kain* folded over their trousers[10]
Capeng lir arsa mangun prang.'	Performed the *capeng* movement as though they were preparing to fight.[11]

(Serat Centhini 1988, *jilid* 6:172)

[7] Probably referring to a movement that is now termed *entragan*, which is used in the *kiprahan* section of *gandrung* love dances and seems to imitate the sound of someone galloping on horseback.

[8] In my forthcoming publication on Surakarta dance terminology, the term *grudha* is described as follows: 'Pose in which the body is held composed and very erect, demonstrating strength and self-reliance'.

[9] The term *gedrug* nowadays is used when the front of the foot is placed down while the heel is raised; it does not necessarily imply 'stamping'.

[10] During fighting scenes, and when male dancers are performing in the strong *(gagahan)* style in general, the long hip-cloth is folded to cover only the hips and thighs.

[11] The *capeng* movement imitates the fastening of the upper armlets, somewhat similar to rolling up the sleeves, in preparation for a fight.

Assuming that the dance terms used in the above passages of the Serat Centhini were as generally understood by contemporary Javanese listeners or readers as the remainder of this text, the dancing appears to have been described so vividly that one can easily imagine what is happening, even without personal experience of such performances. And yet, in spite of their liveliness and relative length, these descriptions do not really provide a reliable picture of a choreography - we do not even know whether the movements that are mentioned were executed in the order in which they are described in the text. Being part of a literary work, they are subject to certain restrictions on both form and content, also where the descriptions of dances are concerned. Ultimately, their aim is to evoke a particular scene and its atmosphere, rather than to provide an accurate notation of a choreography.

Serat Citramataya: The earliest score?

One of the earliest examples of the actual notation of a choreography is a rather short but very special Javanese poem composed by R.M.A. Tandhakusuma. This famous court artist and nobleman of the Mangkunagaran palace in Surakarta[12] lived in the second half of the nineteenth century. The manuscript of his poem has been preserved in the palace library and is entitled 'Serat Citramataya' ('Treatise on the Form of the Art of Dancing').

In the opening verses, using the Mijil and Pangkur metres, the author explicitly states that it is necessary to 'memorize', or 'note down' (the Javanese word *mèngeti* may have both meanings), the words and music of classical Javanese poetry *(kakawin)* and dances *(mataya)*. The words *kakawin* and *mataya* indicate stylized and sophisticated art forms which enjoy a high status in Javanese culture. After this he lists the names of the male *wirèng* or warrior dances performed at the (Mangkunagaran) court in his days. He then changes over to a different metre (Kinanthi) and gives an accurate description of one of these court dances, named Beksan Panji Nom (Dance of the Young Panji). The description starts as follows:

(Kinanthi)

'Kanthèt Panji Nom nyobrang rum	Continuing with the (dance of the) Young Panji, set to the beautiful (musical piece) Sobrang,
Grita nembah nikelwarti	First perform the gesture of worship *(sembah)* and kneel.
Purna ngadeg mèjèt wrangka	Thereafter stand up and hold the sheath,
Tanjak kanan mrih respati	Stand in the right *tanjak* pose in order to be graceful,

[12] According to Sukirman Dharmamulya, R.M. Tandhakusuma married a daughter of Mangkunagara IV. Moreover, he was the grandchild of the Bupati of Kediri, Kangjeng Pangeran Arya Purbonagoro, who was a son of Mangkunagara I.

Minger ngigel rep-arepan	Turn and perform *ngigel* facing each other,
Miwir sampur nglinggot dhiri.'	Spread the *sampur* and sway the body sideways.
'Nyat mangéring larasipun	Quick to the left is the *laras* (movement),
Praptèng pojog besut ramping	Having reached the corner and finished the *besut* (movement),
Minger nganan ngigeling mrak	Turn to the right for the *mrak ngigel* (movement).
Anglinggot igelé ramping	Sway the body sideways after *ngigel*
Wangsul nganan larasira	And go back to the right, performing *laras*,
Pojogan kang dèn ejlègi.'	Again one arrives at the corner.

In spite of its poetic form, this description may well be considered as representing an early type of dance notation, rather than as a literary work. The choreography is described in a systematic fashion from beginning to end. Both spatial patterns, movements and poses are referred to by means of dance terms, which are used in combination with more 'ordinary' as well as 'literary' Javanese words and expressions. Tandhakusuma has skilfully managed to respect the rules of Javanese metrical poetry, which has affected his choice of words and sometimes makes interpretation somewhat difficult. Nevertheless, it is possible to see that the author intended to write a score, specifying what he estimated to be the most relevant points of the choreography.

After completing the notation of this nineteenth-century court dance, Tandhakusuma mentions the names of the people who were his dancing teachers, the first of whom is Susuhunan Paku Buwana VIII (1859-61) of Surakarta, a well-known patron of the arts. He ends the poem with a blessing on His Royal Highness, without any further specification, but probably referring to his own relative, the Mangkunagara.

As is indicated by his titles, Raden Mas Arya Tandhakusuma was a man of noble birth, who lived at a time when the Javanese courts were very active centres of culture and art. Performances of music, dancing and theatre were part of court rituals, and members of the nobility both patronized and practised the arts. By staging splendid performances at regular intervals, each of the courts not only intended to assert its status, but was also able to keep large groups of people, including relatives and servants, connected to it.

The practice of the performing arts served yet another purpose: by creating special styles of dancing and music-making, each of the main courts marked off its identity from the others. Thus, artists played an important role in defining the status and image of a particular court. In this

sense, Tandhakusuma functioned as a key figure at the Surakarta Mangkunagaran palace, for which he created a special musical drama genre, named Langendriyan.

This complex theatrical form, which is still considered as the hallmark of the Mangkunagaran court today, developed in various stages in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. According to Surakarta sources, the performance originated as a relatively simple recitation, or rather singing, of the Javanese legend of Prince Damar Wulan by a group of women.[13] At the end of the nineteenth and in the first part of the twentieth century, the court performances of Langendriyan were embellished by the addition of dancing in beautiful theatre costumes, while the singers' lines were set to a musical accompaniment by the court *gamelan.*

Manuscripts of Langendriyan texts in the Mangkunagaran library, mostly attributed to Tandhakusuma himself, bear witness to the many performances that were, and still are, staged in the large dance pavilion of the palace. As Langendriyan is based on sung poetry as found in the manuscripts, these poetic texts constitute the earliest written testimonies of the performances. In the course of time, both the increasing complexity of dramatic performances and the desire to devise variant or novel forms of artistic expression may have necessitated the use of more complete scores for performances.

It is not unlikely that Tandhakusuma became acquainted with the use of written scores as a basis for dramatic performances at the courts of Yogyakarta, where he also went to study the performing arts. In the Serat Citramataya he mentions a prince from the Paku Alaman court as one of his dancing teachers. It is quite possible that he may have borrowed the idea for a musical drama for the Mangkunagaran court in Surakarta from the courts of princes in the city of Yogyakarta, where this genre - including Langendriyan performances as a dramatization of the Damar Wulan tale - flourished at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.[14]

In Yogyakarta, performances not only of musical drama, but also of male court drama *(wayang wong)* and even of female court dancing were making use of written scores by the end of the nineteenth century, as was discussed above. While this may have been necessitated by the increasing complexity of performances, involving large groups of (actor-)dancers, singers and musicians, it may also have been done as a matter of principle. The court of Yogyakarta had a tendency towards restraint and discipline

[13] The origin of the Langendriyan opera is described in an anonymous article in the Indonesian magazine *Relung Pustaka*, of which only a few issues were published by the Radyapustaka museum, Surakarta, in the early 1970s.

[14] According to Yogyakarta sources, the Javanese Langendriyan 'opera' enacting the East Javanese legend of Damarwulan was first created in Yogyakarta by Prince K.G.P.A.A. Mangkubumi (1855-77) (*Kawruh Jogèd Mataram* 1982:77).

in its artistic expressions. Dramatic texts had to be memorized by the actors, rather than being improvised, as is still the case in the Surakarta *wayang wong* tradition.

Twentieth-century score books

There may be yet another explanation for the use of notated scores. By the end of the nineteenth century, Dutch interest in Javanese culture had become firmly established and the influence of this started to make an impact on it. Such interest was often of a formal and scholarly nature, and was based on a written tradition of acquisition and transmission of knowledge. This resulted in the emergence of Javanese prose with an informative character, such as in nineteenth-century Javanese-language newspapers.

By this time, too, Javanese court musicians had started devising written notations for their traditionally orally transmitted *gamelan* music. Likewise, the first Javanese explanatory prose texts on the art of dancing date from the beginning of the twentieth century. These were written by well-educated Javanese, no doubt inspired by formal Dutch methods of instruction. They contained information on the art of dancing, arranged in an orderly fashion, with the purpose of instruction.

Such knowledge was not initially imparted to the general public through printed books, but rather was recorded in privately owned manuscripts. Nevertheless, the intention to record the knowledge of dancing practice in writing represents a break with the oral methods of instruction, which are based on direct transmission from teacher *(guru)* to student *(siswa)*.

Serat Wédhataya

One of these early twentieth-century textbooks on the art of dancing is the Serat Wédhataya (Sacred book on the art of dancing), compiled in the year 1924 by instructors of the dance group of B.K.P.A. Kusumadiningrat. The latter, a son of Paku Buwana IX, was a patron of the arts, following the tradition of the Surakarta *kraton*.

The Wédhataya is divided into three main sections, as follows:

1. a part containing somewhat esoteric, philosophical explanations of the meaning or essence *(rasa)* of specific dance movements;
2. a list of a number of dance movements, illustrated with photographs;
3. notated scores of choreographies practised by the students of the dance group.

The addition of photographs is a twentieth-century novelty, clarifying the movements referred to by the dance terminology. As the still image used here is an educational tool meant to supplement the written information, its purpose differs from that of the depictions of dancing scenes encountered on ancient temple reliefs. The terminology found in the second

section recurs in the dance notations in the third section (this time without photographs), mostly of male warrior dances *(beksan wirèng).*

The name of the tenth score, Beksa Panji Enèm (Dance of the Young Panji), corresponds with the name of the composition discussed by Tandhakusuma. The most striking difference between the notations in the Serat Citramataya and the Serat Wédhataya is that the twentieth-century score comprises exclusively dance terms and is written in prose. Thus, it is obvious that its purpose is restricted to the presentation of the score of a dance.

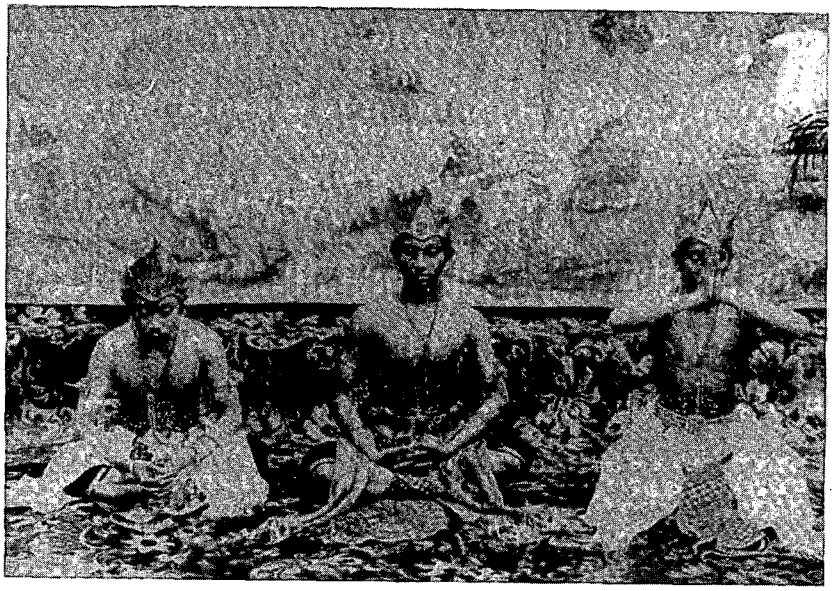

Illustration of the first dance pattern described in the Radya Pustaka manuscript of the Serat Wédhataya. The caption reads: 'wiwit lenggah sila tumungkul, dhèngèk lajeng ngaras; punika saben beksa wirèng kedah makaten' (= *'begin by sitting cross-legged leaning forward, straighten up first, then perform a* sembah*; all* wirèng *dances must begin this way').*

The Serat Wédhataya score begins as follows:

'Beksa Panji enèm, rakit kekalih, gendhing Sobrang, pélog pathet barang, kadamel majeng mangalèr.
Dance of the young Panji, composed as a duet, set to the musical piece Sobrang, in the *pélog* tonal system and *barang* mode, made facing the north.

Wiwit lenggah sila tumungkul,
Begin by sitting in *sila* position leaning forward,

ndhèngèk lajeng ngaras,
straighten up, then perform a *sembah,*
jèngkèng ukel ngaras malih,
kneel, turn and perform a *sembah* again,
jumeneng nyepeng pucuk warangka bontos kandelan,
stand up and grasp the tip of the sheath and the end of the sheath cover,
tanjak tengen,
stand in the right *tanjak* pose,
junjung suku tengen bucal asta kiwa,
lift the right leg and fling the left arm,
laras ajeng-ajengan,
(perform) *laras* facing each other,
mlampah laras ngalèr ngidul,
walk (in) *laras* northward and southward,
wangsul tengah,
return to the middle.'

For various reasons, the interpretation of the Wédhataya scores is difficult for present-day Javanese. These reasons are:
- the significance of the dance terminology used in these scores is not always remembered precisely nowadays, not even by old dancing masters;
- the scores only provide some general indications as to the relationship between spatial and movement patterns;
- the scores do not specify the duration of the movements or their relation to the accompanying music.

Apparently, for the writers of the Wédhataya such information was unnecessary, and probably self-evident. In the meantime, however, performance practice must have developed in such a way that even Javanese dancing masters who are well acquainted with traditional dancing find it difficult to interpret these scores.

Dance manuscripts of the Mangkunagaran

In a previous article I have drawn attention to the existence of a large number of dance scores kept in the Reksapustaka library of the Mangkunagaran palace (Brakel 1975). Judging from their dates, most of these scores were written during the reign of Mangkunagara VII (1916-1944), who was a well-known patron of the arts. Although the prince personally attended artistic activities at his palace, the scores were probably composed and written by his dancing and music masters.

It is noteworthy that the majority of these scores include descriptions of two categories of classical Javanese dance, male and female warrior dances *(beksan wirèng)* and *wayang* dances expressing a dramatic theme. Many of these dances may have actually formed part of the large-scale dramatic Wayang Wong and Langendriyan performances. Thus, the dance

manuscripts form only a partial reflection of the artistic activities at the court.[15]

The way in which the scores are set out is quite unique.They may well have come about under the direction of Prince Mangkunagara VII himself, who is reputed to have been a good dancer, taking a strong personal interest in the dancing activities in his palace (Holt 1939).

The notation of the battle dance of Karna and Arjuna, named *'Karna Tandhing'*, which is kept as number G 142 in the Reksapustaka library, has been chosen as an example here. The Javanese scores, *pratélan beksan wirèng* ('list of warrior dances'), have been divided into two main parts. The first part consists of a very detailed description of dance movements in relation to musical structures, while the second part merely lists the main movement patterns and provides drawings of the corresponding spatial positions of the dancers. The musical setting of the composition is mentioned in the introduction to the description proper. This runs:

> *'Pratélan beksan wirèng: Karna, prang tandhing kaliyan Janaka, sami alusan beksa kembar. Gendhinganipun ladrangan, Ladrang Larasdriya, kendhang kalih, dhawah Katawang ugi Larasdriya. Perangipun Slepegan, dhawah Ayak-ayakan sléndro pathet 9. Ingkang beksa katata linggih sila dhekung ngapurancang wonten ing gawang, Janaka wonten gawang wétan, Karna wonten ing gawang kilèn. Gangsa mungel Slepegan, manawi iramanipun sampun ajeg, amiwiti beksa kados ingandhap punika.'*
>
> Score of the warrior dance of Karna in combat with Janaka (Arjuna), both dancers performing in the refined style. The musical piece is a *ladrangan* named Ladrang Larasdriya, (performed) on double drums[16], followed up with (a second movement with a) *ketawangan* (structure), also Larasdriya. The fight is (set) to (the) Slepegan (piece), followed by Ayak-ayakan in *sléndro, pathet sanga.* The dancers are placed in the *sila* position, leaning respectfully forward, each in their own place.[17] Janaka is sitting on the eastern side, Karna on the western side. The *gamelan* plays (the) Slepegan (piece). When the tempo has become steady, begin to dance as (described) below.

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[15] The Langendriyan librettos which I have seen contain poetic verse *(macapat)* and the names of the melodies played by the *gamelan* orchestra, but no notations of dances or indications of spatial positions in these plays.

[16] A piece with a *ladrangan* structure is usually accompanied by a pair of Javanese drums *(kendhang)*, one large and one small, played by a single drummer who beats out specific interlocking rhythmical patterns.

[17] Literally: 'framework', that is, the appropriate positions to the left and right of the dancing area in the centre of the *pendhapa.*

This introduction is followed by a description of the dance movements in relation to the musical structure, which is indicated by the names of the instruments which are struck at regular intervals, such as the *kempul*, *kenong* and *gong*. These have a punctuating function in the melodic and temporal structure of the music.

The movements are described in patterns or groups, which are each named after one particular characteristic movement. Each group is also numbered. Thus, the description of the beginning of the dance reads as follows:

'1. *Sila nyembah*
kempul: badan jejeg, tangan kalih lurus nyakithing tumumpang dhengkul kalih, ingkang tengen inggih tengen, ingkang kiwa inggih kiwa; kethuk: èpèk-èpèk kalih jebèbèh kempal ngadeg; gong: nyembah; kempul: kuncuping tangan kalih nyembah wau mandhap sipat jaja; kempul: embat mudar asta, ingkang tengen manengen malangkerik èpèk-èpèk mangkurep tumumpang pupu sacelaking dhengkul tengen, ingkang kiwa mangiwa ugel-ugel tumumpang dhengkul kiwa mulat mangiwa; gong: nolih manengen; kempul: jèngkèng, tangan kalih lestantun tumumpang dhengkul.'

1. sit cross-legged and perform a *sembah*.
kempul: the body is straightened, both arms are straight, with the fingers in the *nyakithing* position, placed on the (two) knees, the right hand on the right knee and the left hand on the left knee; *kethuk*: the two palms are joined with the fingers extended (and pointing) upwards; *gong*: perform a *sembah*; *kempul*: with the palms still joined, both hands are lowered to the level of the chest; *kempul*: move the hands apart with a swaying motion, the right hand to the right *(malangkerik)* with the palm placed on top of the thigh, close to the right knee, and the left hand to the left with the wrist placed on the left knee, look to the left; *gong*: look to the right; *kempul*: kneel, with both hands still placed on the knee.'

Compared with the previous notations, the above score represents a remarkable development. Not only does it give a detailed and analytical description of the composition as a whole, specifying the separate movements of different parts of the body (head, arms, hands, legs), but it has also been organized in a systematic manner, as the choreographic structure has been related to the musical, hence temporal, structure. This sophisticated character of the score clearly testifies to the complex and refined nature of dramatic performances at the Mangkunagaran court at the time. On the other hand, the scores contain a great many redundancies, in that they unnecessarily repeat the same descriptive details of frequently recurring movement patterns. They are therefore rather bulky, and it is unlikely that they served as guides during a performance.

These Mangkunagaran dance scores are evidence of a highly developed

capacity for movement analysis, especially when compared with the rather sketchy outlines of groups of movements in other Javanese dance notations up to that time. It is quite remarkable that such a detailed and orderly system of notation could have developed independently in such a relatively short period. While the frequent dance and drama performances during the reign of Mangkunagara VII apparently initiated this development, the fact that this ruler took a personal interest in the dramatic arts may well have provided the main stimulus for it.

Contemporary use of dance notation in Java

Javanese dance performance practice underwent major changes after Indonesian Independence and the subsequent social changes. Not only were dances now performed in new surroundings such as 'modern' theatres, and for different audiences, with tastes and life-styles that differed from the pre-war ones, but also the transmission of art forms changed as a consequence of the creation by the Indonesian Government of new, Western-style educational institutions for the performing arts. The traditionally personal relationship between *guru* and *siswa* has been replaced by classroom instruction involving increasingly large numbers of largely urban middle-class students, who are instructed by relatively young teachers. This situation requires different methods of instruction.

While direct imitation of a live model is still widely practised, instruction in State Academies is based on a standardized curriculum, classroom lectures and written textbooks. This has had an effect not only on the formal structure but also on the duration, as well as on the aesthetic qualities of art forms.[18] Thus, in combination with an ever-growing tendency to copy Western performance models, changed social structures and ideals have caused a major disruption of the performance tradition in Java.

The impact of these changes is also manifesting itself in an increased dependence upon fixed scores, especially for what are presently called 'traditional' choreographies. As the pre-war dance patterns are no longer a subject of general knowledge, the notation of traditional dances nowadays has become much more detailed and specific than in the earlier scores cited above.

In an attempt to preserve the knowledge of traditional choreographies, the late Dr. Humardani in the year 1971 asked the famous dancing master Ngaliman to rescue some ancient choreographies which were in danger of being forgotten altogether.[19] Ngaliman visited the oldest and most respected dancing master at that time, R.M. Wignyahambeksa - a grandson of the famous Tandhakusuma - and was able to make a 'reconstruc-

[18] The lectures of Humardani, the first director of the Surakarta Academy of Music (Akademi Seni Karawitan Indonesia), frequently dealt with these issues.

[19] Personal communication by Ngaliman in 1985.

tion' of a number of dances from the old man's memory just before he died. One of these ancient dances was the Beksan Panji Kembar, which is another name for the Dance of the Young Panji mentioned before.

According to Ngaliman's notation of 1971, the beginning of the score runs as follows:

Beksan Panji Kembar, yasan Sénopatèn Mataram, Ladrang Sobrang, pélog pathet barang.

The Dance of the Twin Panji, created (in the tradition of) Sénopati of Mataram[20], (set to the musical piece) Ladrang Sobrang, in *pélog* (tonal system), *barang* (mode).

Sembahan laras

1-8	*sila anurraga* sit cross-legged in a humble posture	N3
1-4	*sèlèh asta, silantaya* lay your hands down, cross-legged dance pose	
5-8	*mangenjali (nyembah)* perform the gesture of worship *(sembah)*	G
1-8	*sèlèh asta* lay your hands down	N1
1-4	*nikelwarti* kneel (fold your limbs)	
5-8	*gedeg* move your head	N2
1-4	*menthang kanan ukel medal* stretch the right (arm) and turn (the hand) outward	
5-8	*ukel mlebet kanan, terus gathuk asta kiri* turn (the) right (hand) inward, then join with the left hand	N3
1-4	*silih ungkih (nganan, ngiri, dhadha)* try and take each other's place (draw your hands to the right, to the left, and to your chest)	
5-8	*mangenjali* perform the gesture of worship	G
1-8	*mangenjali trap janggut* perform the gesture of worship near the chin	N1

[20] Not all writers agree about the identity of the author of the two special *wirèng* court dances entitled 'Dance of the Old Panji' and 'Dance of the Young Panji'. Whereas Tandhakusuma attributes both to Paku Buwana IV, Padmasusastra states in the Serat Tatacara that the first dance was created by Susuhunan Paku Buwana IV, while he does not specify who created the dance of the Young Panji.

1-8	*mangenjali trap dhadha* perform the gesture of worship near the chest	N2
1-4	*ngembat manganan* lift with a swish to the right	
5-8	*sumèlèh dhengkul kiri* lay down on the left knee	N3
1-4	*menthang sareng ukel medal* stretch together, turn outward	
5-8	*ukel mlebet (sareng) lajeng sèlèh asta* turn inward (together), then lay your hands down	G
1-4		
5-8	*gedeg* move your head	N1

Ngigel laras

1-8	*humadeg, ngigel lajeng tanjak kanan dhuwung* stand (up), perform *ngigel*, then stand in the correct *tanjak* pose (holding) the *keris*	N2
1-4	*hoyog manganan* sway to the right	
5-8	*menthang kiri, junjung suku kanan* stretch (the) left (arm), lift the right leg	N3
1-4	*sèlèh suku kanan, aben ajeng* put the right leg down, face your opponent	
5-8	*miwir sampur kiri, jimpit kain kanan, ndudut suku kiri* spread the left dance scarf, pinch the right *kain*, draw your left leg towards yourself.	G

The above notation is based entirely on Javanese dance terms, which have been translated as literally as possible here - in fact, they are not really translatable, but should be visualized. As may be inferred from the terms used, this opening section corresponds approximately with the segment of the choreography that is covered by the first stanza of Tandhakusuma's poem, and by the first six phrases of the Wédhataya score quoted above.

The elaborate character of Ngaliman's score demonstrates how much the accuracy of the notation of movement patterns has improved since the first decades of the present century. Moreover, the arrangement of the score has been systematized, making it a more practical guide for performance practice and training than the Mangkunagaran scores described above.

In Ngaliman's notation, the flow of movement has been divided into segments of eight musical beats each, which may again be subdivided into smaller units of four, or even two, beats. The letters and figures in the column on the right refer to the regularly recurring beats on the *kenong*

(N) and *gong* (G), linking the movement patterns to structures of the music played on *gamelan* instruments. While temporal aspects and musical structures are clearly indicated in this score, spatial patterns are usually depicted in drawings by hand in the left-hand margin. The very precision and analytical arrangement of Ngaliman's dance score clearly illustrate how Javanese dance notation has developed from what was a rather sketchy and prescriptive mnemonic aid *(pènget)* into an analytical and more descriptive score *(pratélan).*

It is clear that the clue to the development of this kind of linguistically based score is a proper understanding of dance terminology. This terminology does not form some kind of abstract system which anyone can master by studying a textbook, but is used as well as transmitted in the living dance performance practice. Not only is it intimately concerned with movement patterns, but the very structure and quality of the dance patterns are perceived and defined by means of this terminology. We may therefore conclude that, as terminology derives its meaning from performance practice, the continuity of the dramatic action is in its turn determined by the use of this terminology.

Conclusion

The importance of the living performance tradition can not be demonstrated more clearly than through the example of classical Javanese dancing. The dance terminology used in scores is defined by dance practice, and in its turn is a means of structuring, perceiving and discussing performances. Only after one has learned to perform a dance is it possible to understand its notation. Never should a dance be learned from a score. But, after one has studied a complex choreography, notation can help to remember and reproduce it.

The interpretation of ancient scores such as the ones discussed above may be difficult and must be based on personal experience, requiring zealous practice. Yet, these remains from the not-too-distant-past constitute an incentive for present-day artists, both by making for a deeper understanding of structures and developments in the Javanese artistic tradition, and as a source of inspiration for new compositions.

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