

COLONIAL COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATION

Object	Prasasti Damalung/Ngaduman, RV-1403-1620
Current owner	The State of the Netherlands
Custodian	Wereldmuseum Leiden (formerly National Museum of World Cultures)
Application for restitution from	The Republic of Indonesia successively represented by <i>Tim Repatriasi Koleksi Asal Indonesia di Belanda</i> ¹ and <i>Tim Repatriasi Objek Pemajuan Kebudayaan Dan Pengembalian Cagar Budaya Yang Berada Di Luar Wilayah Republik Indonesia Ke Dalam Wilayah Republik Indonesia</i> ² (each hereinafter referred to as: Tim Repatriasi)
Date of application for restitution	20 September 2023
Recommendation number	ID-2025-4
Date of recommendation	21 November 2025
The Colonial Collections Committee ³ consisting of	Lilian Gonçalves-Ho Kang You (chair), Laura van Broekhoven, Remco Raben, Alicia Schrikker (members)
Secretariat	Jona Mooren, Liesbeth Ouwehand

1. The application

On 20 September 2023 the Republic of Indonesia submitted an application to the Dutch State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science for restitution of the inscribed stone referred to as Prasasti Damalung

¹ *Tim Repatriasi Koleksi Asal Indonesia di Belanda* consisted of Nadiem Anwar Makarim, Retno Marsudi (leaders/directors), Hilmar Farid (person responsible), I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja (chair), Bonnie Triyana (secretary), Oman Faturrahman, Sri Margana, Junus Satrio Atmodjo, Ninie Susanti Tedjowasono, Gabriel Roosmargo Lono Lastoro Simatupang, Irmawati Marwoto, Bondan Kanumoyoso (members), Sadiyah Boonstra (external adviser).

² *Tim Repatriasi Objek Pemajuan Kebudayaan Dan Pengembalian Cagar Budaya Yang Berada Di Luar Wilayah Republik Indonesia Ke Dalam Wilayah Republik Indonesia* consists of Fadli Zon (adviser), Endah (T.D.) Retnoastuti (person responsible), Ismunandar (chair), Masyitoh Annisa Ramadhani Alkatiri, Anindita Kusuma Listya, Basuki Teguh Yuwono, Agus Aris Munandar, Oman Faturrahman, Bambang Sunarto, Suryadi, Ninie Susanti, Putu Supadma Rudana (members), Raden Usman Effendi (coordinator), Anton Wibisono, Andhini Widyasari, Khanifudin Malik, Fatwa Yulianto (secretary).

³ The Advisory Committee on the Restitution of Cultural Objects from a Colonial Context (in short: the Colonial Collections Committee) was established on 6 September 2022 by the Dutch State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science.

or Prasasti Ngaduman with inventory number RV-1403-1620 from the collection of the Dutch State, which is in the custody of the Wereldmuseum Leiden.

2. The object

The object whose restitution is requested is an inscribed stone made of trachyte. It is rectangular, with the two top corners cut off at an angle of roughly 45 degrees. The stone bears an inscription engraved within a double-bordered square.

The stone is referred to as Prasasti Damalung or Prasasti Ngaduman. *Prasasti* means inscription. The names Damalung and Ngaduman both refer to the find-spot on the northern slope of the Merbabu volcano. Damalung is a designation for Mount Merbabu and Ngaduman refers to a village close to the find-spot. Nowadays this is located in the sub-district of Getasan in the Central Java *kabupaten* of Semarang (Semarang Regency). The inscription mentions the year 1371 Saka (1449/1450 AD).

3. The policy framework

The assessment of the application for restitution took place within the framework of the *Policy vision on collections from a colonial context* of the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science.⁴ The policy vision is based on the Council for Culture report *Colonial Collection, a Recognition of Injustice*.⁵ Applications for restitution of a cultural object may be made by states where the Netherlands exercised colonial rule or by countries that were colonised by other powers.

The assessment framework set out in the Policy vision can be summarised as follows:

First, the Colonial Collections Committee (hereinafter referred to as: the Committee) determines whether the provenance research is sufficient.

Then the Committee establishes whether involuntary loss of possession occurred. To this end it assesses whether it can be established with a reasonable degree of certainty that a country where the Netherlands exercised colonial rule involuntarily lost possession of the cultural object whose restitution is requested and that the cultural object subsequently came into the possession of the Dutch State. If it is established that this is the case, the Committee will recommend unconditional restitution of the cultural object.

If it cannot be established from the provenance history whether involuntary loss of possession occurred, and to the extent that the cultural objects in question are of particular cultural, historical or religious significance for the country of origin, then the Committee will consider the interests involved, whereby the importance of restitution for the country of origin shall be weighed against other relevant interests based on reasonableness and fairness.

Relevant interests may include the cultural importance of the cultural object to the country of origin, the communities involved both in the countries of origin and in the Netherlands, the significance to the Netherlands Collection, future storage conditions and public access. Objects may be significant

⁴ Policy vision, 29 January 2021, <https://committee.kolonialecollecties.nl/documents/2021/01/01/policy-vision-on-collections-from-a-colonial-context>

⁵ Report of 7 October 2020, <https://www.raadvoorcultuur.nl/documenten/adviezen/2021/01/22/colonial-collection-and-a-recognition-of-injustice>

for national and regional traditions as well as for the identity of a country, people, community or individual. A colonial cultural object will often be of different importance to the Netherlands than to the country of origin. Colonial cultural objects in Dutch museums may also be of special significance to Dutch citizens with roots in the countries of origin.

If the object whose restitution is requested originates from a country formerly colonised by another power, then the Committee will similarly consider the interests involved, thereby weighing the importance of restitution for the country of origin against other relevant interests based on reasonableness and fairness. Rectifying injustice must, however, be the basic premise in this assessment. In such a case, whilst the Netherlands did not cause the injustice, as the current holder of the objects only it is in a position to rectify that injustice.

If the Committee recommends restitution to the applicant state then the transfer of title procedure for public collections shall be observed – in accordance with the Dutch Heritage Act and the *Policy vision on collections from a colonial context* of the Minister of Education, Culture and Science – and the Committee's recommendation shall also be regarded as a recommendation on the indispensability and irreplaceability of the object in the sense of article 4.18 of the Dutch Heritage Act.

4. The procedure

On 20 September 2023 the Republic of Indonesia submitted an application to the Dutch State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science for restitution of the object described in section 1 above. The State Secretary requested the Committee to advise on the restitution application.

The custodian of the object commissioned research into the object's provenance history and issued an initial report with the findings. The Committee discussed the application for restitution and the report at a meeting on 12 April 2024. The custodian subsequently made some additions to the provenance report. An English translation of the finalised provenance report (*appendix 1*) was shared with Tim Repatriasi. No questions arose as a result of the report. On 6 June 2025 Tim Repatriasi provided supplementary information about the object (*appendix 2*).

After discussing the restitution application and all the provenance information again, the Committee resolved to recommend as stated below.

5. The provenance research

The provenance research was conducted by Rosalie Hans at the behest of the custodian of the object. The report on the provenance research is attached to this recommendation as appendix 1.

The provenance report forms an integral part of this recommendation and records the following findings:

Until 1823 the inscribed stone was located on the slope of the Merbabu volcano in Java. In that year the stone was removed by Hendrik Jacob Domis (1782-1842), Resident of Semarang, and taken to his residence in Salatiga, where it was kept in the garden until 1827.⁶ In that year, Governor-General Leonard Pierre Joseph Du Bus de Gisignies (1780-1849) had various antiquities shipped to the

⁶ Appendix 1, p. 6.

Netherlands *'ten dienste der museums'* [in the service of the museums]. These comprised objects placed in various residences and included the inscribed stone discussed here.⁷

The object was included in the collection of the Museum van Oudheden in Leiden before being transferred to 's-Rijks Ethnographisch Museum (now Wereldmuseum Leiden) in 1904.⁸

The stone bears an inscription engraved within a double-bordered square. The inscription was written in a unique language variant during a transition period between the Old Javanese Kawi script and the later Buda script. This means that the stone is important for the study of the development of the script in Central Java in the late 15th century.⁹ The inscription has been variously translated and interpreted since 1825. The inscription contains a reference to Mount Damalung.¹⁰ A lingam, a phallic symbol representing the creative force of the god Shiva, can be seen at the bottom of the double-bordered square.¹¹

According to the provenance report, the 19th-century Dutch academics who studied the stone cared more about the linguistic importance of the inscription than the stone's social and cultural significance.¹² Dutch archaeologists of the 19th century gave a philological and/or antiquarian interpretation of the stone and assumed that the object was an example of an 'extinct' culture with which local people no longer had any connection.¹³ However other sources, also dating from the 19th century, suggest that this was not the case.¹⁴ Domis himself wrote an article about the site where the inscribed stone was found: *'Salatiga, Merbaboe en de Zeven Tempels'* [Salatiga, Merbabu and the Seven Temples], from which it is clear that he gave some consideration to the possibility that the stone may still have held heritage value. For example, he writes that he wanted 'to protect this stone from further deterioration' and that he had 'been unable to find any peculiarities at all regarding this stone, and did not observe that the inhabitants paid it any homage, as they do in many places by offering to Genesa or another figure. The stone is unknown.'¹⁵ On requesting antiquities from the residences in 1827 Governor-General Du Bus de Gisignies also indicated that he wished to avoid the removal of objects leading to unrest: 'If, therefore, the aforementioned information is well-founded, and these antiquities are not used in any kind of religious worship by the inhabitants, such that not even the merest dissatisfaction is to be feared from

⁷ Appendix 1, p. 8.

⁸ Appendix 1, p. 9.

⁹ Appendix 1, p. 4.

¹⁰ The English translation of the inscription provided by Tim Repatriasi reads: "Om (homage to) Śrī Saraswatī (who brought) prosperity to the mighty mountain Damalung // Life turns like the wheel of murusa, and the sacred bathing place (petirtan) of Palēmaran overflowed due to the Creator, the Sun, (and) the Moon consuming both evil and virtue // And the gods (and) devoted humans who performed asceticism (tapas) left an imprint within the cycle of cause and effect, within its crater (cavity) // It is also the gods who observe the intellect (and) hear (the prayers) of humankind, granting liberation // What is forbidden is as difficult as speaking the truth. One who acts against the moral law (dharma)—by observing carefully and speaking cautiously—appears as if burning // Without provision, misfortune prevails without a clear origin. Wives, fathers, grandfathers, children, and descendants (seven generations) should not carry material possessions // Śrī Swasti, Year 1371 Śaka," appendix 2, pp. 4, 5. There are some discrepancies between this and the Dutch translation currently used by the Wereldmuseum, see appendix 1, p. 4.

¹¹ Appendix 1, p. 9.

¹² Appendix 1, p. 4.

¹³ Appendix 1, p. 4, 5.

¹⁴ Appendix 1, p. 5.

¹⁵ 'dezen steen voor het verder verval [wilde] bewaren' and 'volstrekt ten opzichte van dien steen geene bijzonderheden [had] kunnen ontdekken, en ook niet kunnen opmerken, dat de inwoners aan denzelven eenige eerbewijzing doen, zoo als op vele plaatsen door hen nog, door het offeren aan eenen Genesa, of ander beeld gedaan wordt. De steen is onbekend.' Appendix 1, p. 6.

exporting them.’¹⁶

When Du Bus de Gisignies wrote this, the stone had already been in the garden of Domis’ residence for several years and could no longer be used by the local population.

On 6 July 1827 Du Bus de Gisignies informed the Minister of the Navy and Colonies that the items were being shipped ‘for the enrichment of the collections of antiquities in the Netherlands [...] without harming the goodwill of the inhabitants.’¹⁷

The provenance report refers to various sources which demonstrate that, contrary to what is suggested by Domis and Du Bus de Gisignies, objects from the Hindu-Buddhist period did not lose their importance after the arrival of Islam but retained significance in the daily lives of the Javanese population.¹⁸

Evidence of this had already been found in the 19th century. For example in his *History of Java* (1817) Sir Stamford Raffles wrote in the chapter ‘Antiquities of Java’ that conversion to Islam did not imply that Hindu-Buddhist institutions no longer played a part.¹⁹

The stone is mentioned in one of the writings of Bujangga Manik, a Hindu Sundanese prince and itinerant monk who lived in the late 15th and early 16th century. In his poem Bujangga Manik mentions his recent return from Mount Damalung. In the 15th century Mount Damalung was home to various scriptoria where members of remote religious communities devoted themselves to religious study and a spiritual life.²⁰

The provenance report shows that Domis also had some knowledge of the history of the site from where he took the inscribed stone. In the article ‘*Salatiga, Merbaboe en de Zeven Tempels*’ of 1825 he writes that the nearby village of Salatiga came from ‘Selo-tigo’, which means ‘three stones’ in Javanese. Domis refers to Selo-tigo as having been a “resting place for missionaries from the Sultan of Mataram.”²¹ There is a spring at the site which according to Domis had housed three stone temples. What Domis describes in his article were in fact the remains of Candi Gedong Songo, a Shivaist temple complex.²² According to the provenance report Domis removed several statues from this temple complex and sent them to the Netherlands. Domis furthermore mentions several springs in Salatiga used by the local population for bathing. The provenance report concludes that it is possible that the inscribed stone was part of a ‘cultivated landscape that included natural springs on the slope of Mount Merbabu.’²³

The Wereldmuseum also holds a tracing of the inscription, a pen and ink drawing registered under number RV-1403-3706.

¹⁶ ‘Indien dus de voormelde informaties mogten gegrond en deze antieketeiten in geen godsdienstige vereering hoe ook genaamd bij den Inlanders zijn, zoodanig dat door derzelve uitvoering geene de minste ontevredenheid kan geducht worden.’ Appendix 1, p. 8.

¹⁷ ‘ter verrijking der verzamelingen van oudheid in Nederland (...) zonder den goeden geest der Inlanders eenigszins te kwetsen’. Appendix 1, p. 8.

¹⁸ Appendix 1, p. 5.

¹⁹ Appendix 1, p. 5.

²⁰ The reference to Damalung in the Bujangga Manik manuscript: “Kakara cu(n)duk ti gunung // kakara datang ti wetan // cu(n)duk ti gunung damalung // datangna ti pamrihan // datang ti lurah pajaran”.

Vertaling Noorduyt 1984:6: “Just returned from the mountain // just arrived from the east // returned from Mount Damalung // came from the hermitage // arrived from the place of learning,” appendix 2, p. 4.

²¹ ‘rustplaats geweest zijnde van de zendelingen van den Sultan van Mataram’. Appendix 1, p. 5, 6.

²² Appendix 1, p. 6.

²³ ‘cultureel landschap van onder andere natuurlijke bronnen op de berghelling van Merbabu’. Appendix 1, p. 6.

6. Assessment of the restitution application

6.1 Admissibility of the application

First of all, the Committee examined whether the application by the Republic of Indonesia was admissible. The application for restitution was submitted by a state where the Netherlands exercised colonial rule. The Committee therefore concluded that the application is admissible.

6.2 Policy framework

The application for restitution concerns a cultural object from a colonial context. The application therefore falls within the scope of the restitution policy, and the *Policy vision on collections from a colonial context* is applicable.

6.3 The provenance research

In order to assess the application for restitution it is important whether the provenance research is sufficient. The Committee is of the opinion that the research was conducted properly and provides sufficient information for a recommendation to be issued. Thorough source research was undertaken, and a critical evaluation was made of the existing information.

6.4 Substantial assessment

Next, the Committee assessed whether it can be established with a reasonable degree of certainty that the loss of the object was involuntary. In this matter it considers as follows.

The provenance report shows that the object was found in 1823 on the slope of the Merbabu volcano in Central Java by Hendrik Jacob Domis, Resident of Semarang, and taken to the garden of his residence in Salatiga.²⁴ Governor General Leonard Pierre Joseph Du Bus de Gisignies had the object shipped to the Netherlands in 1827 along with various other objects from residences.²⁵

The question then arose as to whether by taking the object Domis also acquired ownership of it. In order to answer this question it is important whether the object had an owner and Domis obtained permission to take possession of it, or that the object belonged to nobody and was thus what is known as 'res nullius'. In this matter the Committee considers as follows.

The Committee found no indications in the provenance report to suggest that Domis had ascertained whether the object had an owner, or was in the custody of any local authority, in order to be able to obtain permission to remove it. There is no proof of purchase by Domis or of any other type of cession to him. In his 1825 article '*Salatiga, Merbaboe en de Zeven Tempels*' Domis appears to assume that the object did not belong to anybody.²⁶

Next, the Committee faced the question of whether it is plausible that the object was what is known as 'res nullius', a thing without an owner. It emerges from the provenance report that Domis knew that the inscribed stone was part of the remains of a temple complex. In his article Domis describes the remains of the Shivaist temple complex Candi Gedong Songo. He took several statues from this temple complex and sent them to the Netherlands.²⁷ That the stone was located in a sacred place also finds confirmation in the 15th-century poem of Bujangga Manik. The poem places the object in the context of religious communities on Mount Damalung. Devoted to study and a spiritual life, these

²⁴ Appendix 1, p. 6.

²⁵ Appendix 1, p. 8.

²⁶ Appendix 1, p. 6.

²⁷ Appendix 1, p. 6.

communities were also called 'mandala'.²⁸ Thus it is plausible that the stone and its inscription were once part of one of these religious centres.

The provenance report shows that Domis described the object as a relic without a purpose or meaning, and that Du Bus de Gisignies wrote that he wished to avoid the removal of objects leading to discontent among the local population. However, it is clear from Domis' own publication and other sources cited in the provenance report that the object clearly did hold significance for the local population. Domis' article refers to the contemporary function of the find-spot, noting that local people used the springs in Salatiga for bathing.²⁹ The provenance report calls it 'a cultivated landscape that included natural springs on the slope of Mount Merbabu'.³⁰ In this context the Committee refers to the sources cited in the provenance report which show that objects from the Hindu-Buddhist era, which can be said to include the inscribed stone, retained significance in the daily lives of the Javanese population after the arrival of Islam.³¹ The Committee also refers to the provenance history of other sculptures that came from sacred places. From the early 19th century, European rulers and scientists removed statues from Hindu-Buddhist temples and temple remains in Java, often without any consideration for the significance of the statue to the local population.³²

On the foregoing grounds, the Committee concludes that it is plausible that Domis took the object from a place that held religious and/or cultural significance for the local population. The Committee therefore considers it implausible that the object was ownerless: it was not 'res nullius', which can simply be taken into possession.

Conclusion

On the foregoing grounds, the Committee is of the opinion that it is plausible that possession of the inscribed stone whose restitution is requested was lost involuntarily. In view of the above the Committee recommends unconditional restitution of the Prasasti Damalung / Prasasti Ngaduman, RV-1403-1620.

The Committee is furthermore of the opinion that the metadata, such as archive materials, correspondence and other contextual documentation, should also be put at the disposal of the Republic of Indonesia in the context of rectifying injustice.

The Committee was asked to advise on the application of article 4.18 of the Dutch Heritage Act in the event its recommendation means that the requested objects must be restituted. It is the opinion of the Committee that rectification of past injustice prevails in this case and that article 4.18 of the Heritage Act is therefore not applicable.

7. The recommendation

The Committee has assessed the application for restitution and recommends that the Minister proceed with the unconditional restitution to the Republic of Indonesia of the Prasasti Damalung /

²⁸ Appendix 1, p. 5.

²⁹ Appendix 1, p. 6.

³⁰ 'cultureel landschap van onder andere natuurlijke bronnen op de berghelling van Merbabu'. Appendix 1, p. 6.

³¹ Appendix 1, p. 5.

³² See for example the recommendation regarding the statue of Brahma, ID-[2023-8](#).

Prasasti Ngaduman RV-1403-1620, and that the metadata associated with the object be placed at the disposal of the Republic of Indonesia.

This recommendation was adopted by the Colonial Collections Committee on 21 November 2025.

Chair

Secretariat

Lilian Gonçalves-Ho Kang You

Jona Mooren, Liesbeth Ouwehand

Appendices



1. Provenance report regarding Prasasti Damalung/Ngaduman by Rosalie Hans, 26 February 2024, Wereldmuseum
2. Supplementary information *The Damalung Inscription*, received on 6 June 2025, Tim Repatriasi.

Provenance report

Subject: Prasasti Damalung (also known as ‘Ngaduman’ and ‘Stone with inscription’) from Indonesia; in response to a request for restitution from the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, Technology, 20 September 2023 (no.3)

Date: 26 February 2024

Author: Rosalie Hans

 <p>Photo: Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen</p>	Custodian	Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen (Wereldmuseum)
	Current owner	Dutch State
	Name and object number	Prasasti Damalung/Ngaduman RV-1403-1620
	Material/technique	Stone, trachyte
	Dimensions	Height: 96 cm Width: 90 cm Depth: 29 cm
 <p>Photo: Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen</p>	Custodian	Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen
	Current owner	Dutch State
	Name and object number	Pen and ink drawing c.1830 RV-1403-3706
	Material/technique	Tracing paper and ink
	Dimensions	Height: 75 cm Width: 88 cm

Summary of research results

The stone with inscription, known as prasasti Damalung or prasasti Ngaduman, has been dated to circa 1449/1450 (Gregorian calendar). The stone was probably part of a religious site or community in the 15th century, in the final period of the Majapahit empire (circa 1200 – 1550), which encompassed a large proportion of present-day Indonesia and part of present-day Malaysia. After that, it may have been part of a cultural landscape that included springs, which were still in use in 1825.

The stone with inscription was removed from the eastern slope of the Merbabu volcano in 1823 by the resident of Semarang, Hendrik Jacob Domis. In July 1827 the stone was sent to the Netherlands ‘in the service of the museums’, at the request of Governor-General Leonard Pierre Joseph Du Bus de Gisignies.¹ There, the object was first added to the collection of the Archeologisch Kabinet (Archaeology Cabinet) of Leiden University, known from 1826 as the Museum van Oudheden (Museum of Antiquities), and since 1867 as the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (National Museum of Antiquities), after which, in 1904, it was transferred to the Rijks Ethnographisch Museum (National Museum of Ethnology), later Museum Volkenkunde, now known as Wereldmuseum Leiden.² The object is currently owned by the Dutch State.

Reconstructed provenance

1449-1825:	On the slope of the Merbabu volcano, near Ngaduman, desa Tajuk, Central Java, Indonesia
1823:	Encountered by resident of Semarang H.J. Domis while travelling through the area, and taken to Salatiga
c. 1823-1827:	In Salatiga, in the garden of H.J. Domis’ residence
July 1827:	Viscount L.P.J. du Bus de Gisignies sends the object to the Museum van Oudheden (now the Rijks Museum van Oudheden)
1827-1904:	At the (Rijks)Museum van Oudheden in Leiden.
28 July 1904:	Object transferred to the then Rijks Ethnographisch Museum (now Wereldmuseum Leiden)
28 July 1904 – present:	Wereldmuseum Leiden

¹ National Archives (NL-HaNA), Finding aid 2.21.035, inventory number 178, Missives from commissioner-general Du Bus de Gisignies to the resident of the Kadu, letter no. 38, 31 May 1827. The original Dutch text reads: ‘ten dienste der museums’.

² Both museums have frequently changed their name. The Rijksmuseum van Oudheden was set up as the ‘Archeologisch Cabinet’ of Leiden University in 1818, but changed its name in the course of the 19th century. See: <https://www.rmo.nl/museumkennis/geschiedenis-en-collectie/rijksmuseum-van-oudheden/>, accessed on 20-02-2024. Wereldmuseum Leiden, known until September 2023 as Museum Volkenkunde, has had many changes of name. At the time of the transfer in 1904 it was known as the Rijks Ethnographisch Museum. See: <https://leiden.wereldmuseum.nl/nl/themas/geschiedenis-wereldmuseum-leiden>, accessed on 20-2-2024.

Object information

Description

The stone with inscription is made of trachyte, a volcanic rock. It is rectangular, with the top two corners cut off at an angle of approximately 45 degrees. The deeply engraved inscription is written inside a square with a double outline. A horizontal white stripe runs across the bottom of the stone.

In TMS, the Wereldmuseum's collection management system, the stone with inscription is also called Prasasti Damalung or Prasasti Ngaduman.³ Prasasti means inscription, and both Damalung and Ngaduman refer to the place where it was found. Damalung is another name for the Merbabu volcano, Ngaduman refers to the nearby village. This village, on the northern slope of Merbabu, is currently in the subdistrict of Getasan, part of district Semarang in Central Java.

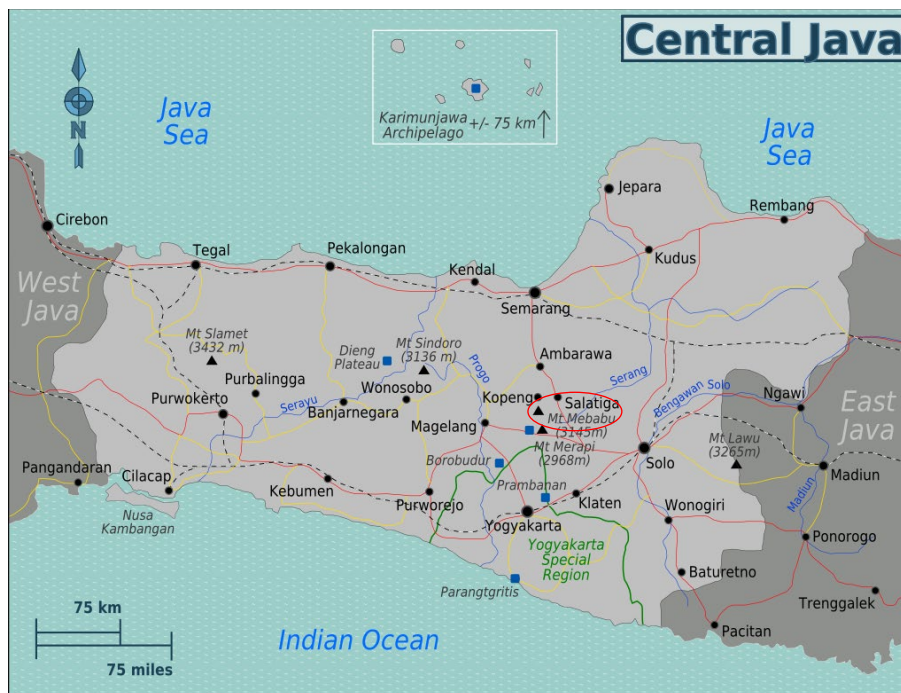


Figure 1: Map of Central Java indicating Mount Merbabu (incorrectly spelt as Mebabu). Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Central_Java_Region_map.svg, accessed on 22-2-2024.

Dates

As well as the inscription, the year 1371 Śaka also appears on the stone. This corresponds to the year 1449/1450 in the Gregorian calendar. Whether the stone was made and placed on the slope of Merbabu in that year is not known. It is however clear that the stone is now at least 574 years old. The region was part of the Majapahit empire in the late 15th century.

Inscription

The inscription was written during a transitional period from Kawi script, ancient Javanese script, and a newer spelling system known as 'Buda', and has also been described as 'Ancient Javanese with Middle Dialect' (Susanti, 2018, 588). The inscription has been translated and interpreted in various ways since 1825, including by the director of the Museum van Oudheden Conrad Leemans (1842, 23). The Demang (district head) of Salatiga, Rono di Poero, converted the script to modern Javanese for Domis' paper, where he describes the stone with inscription, and the Panembahan of Sumanap

³ The spelling of the name of this village varies: Ngaduman or Ngadoman.

(Sumenep) translated the inscription.⁴ De Casparis describes the complexity of the inscription as, on the one hand, a possible precursor of modern Javanese script and, on the other hand '[...] as Majapahit script reduced to its essentials' (1975, 65). It is this unique linguistic variation that makes the stone important for the ongoing analysis of the script and history of Central Java in the late 15th century, particularly since there is a lack of sources about the development of the Javanese script prior to the 16th century (De Casparis, 1975, 63, 66).

The translation currently used by the Wereldmuseum reads as follows:

*'Greetings to Sri Saraswati, great and sacred mountain Damalung (Merbabu). You are the life in this world, encircling, transforming into a person, a place of water... because Hyang Widi... by the God of the Sun, the God of the Moon who shines light on the good and bad of Gods and people. Those who see have also a heart, hear and will escape everything that tradition forbids. Everyone believes the true story in equal measure. If there are those who ... without servant cannot bring a woman, seven... have no real wife | In the year Saka 1371.'*⁵

Significance

The Dutch academics who studied the stone in the 19th century were more interested in the linguistic interpretation of the inscription than in the object's social and cultural significance. This focus on script was related to the growth in interest in Asian cultures in the 18th century, as part of a universal history of civilisation (Hoijtink, 2012, 84). Philology, and later archaeology, with a particular focus on sculptures, were used to incorporate Javanese culture into the concept of an ancient Greece based classical culture, which also included Egypt (Hoijtink, 2012, 93 et seq.).⁶ In 1873, for example, Cohen-Stuart wrote a paper that was concerned exclusively with the interpretation of the inscription. The focus was on translating the inscription, on the assumption that it was an example of an 'extinct' culture. Conrad Leemans (1809-1893), director of the (Rijks)Museum van Oudheden (1839-1891), in his catalogue of the collection published in 1842, wrote a lengthy explanation as to why objects from

⁴ *'Ik heb, daar de Ingebeij de letters wel kende, doch de taal niet verstond, dat afschrift door middel van den Samarangschen Regent aan den Pennambahan van Sumanap gezonden, met verzoek om dat afschrift in het Javaansch over te brengen; die Vorst, algemeen als een zeer bekwaam man in talen en historien bekend, is ook dan wel zoo goed geweest, om het afschrift in het Javaansch voor mij over te zetten.'* (1825, 120-121). English translation: 'Since the Commander knew the letters, yet did not understand the language, I sent the inscription via the Regent of Samarang to the Pennambahan of Sumanap, with the request to transcribe the inscription into Javanese; the King, generally known as a man highly skilled in languages and history, was so kind as to transcribe the inscription into Javanese for me'.

⁵ The ancient Javanese reads: 'ong sri sarasoti kreta wukir hadi damalung uri ping buwana 'añakra murusa patirtan palemaran hapan yang widi hani déni yang raditya yang wulan hanele 'i halahayu ni dewamanusa yang hanut yang hagawe bajaran tapak tangtu kabah.ha deni dewamanusa muwah. sang tumon sangng amanah arenge luputa ring ila ila pad.a kadelana tutur jati yén ana ngabah ta npa bekel apatik wenang tanpa baktaha histri pitung hajama tan wawa dona wastu sri syati sakawarsa | 1371. Translation from Indonesian by curator Pim Westerkamp, free after this text given in Indonesische Wikipedia site: https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prasasti_Ngadoman Westerkamp points to several references to the inscription on Indonesian websites. See for instance also no. 42 (out of 91 inscriptions) on <https://www.scribd.com/doc/234922982/Prasasti-Di-Indonesia> consulted 3 June 2024

Indonesia could be regarded as antiquities.⁷ He believed this also gave the Museum van Oudheden reason to collect these objects. Hoijtink (2012, 110 et seq., and 119 note 190), Ter Keurs (2018, 117) and others have drawn this idea into question, and point out that the assumption that the people no longer had any connection with the heritage was incorrect, and that evidence of this had already been found in the 19th century (2018, 117). Raffles's *History of Java* was well known in the circle of scholars in the early decades of the 19th century. But the chapter 'Antiquities of Java', explaining that conversion to Islam didn't imply that all Hindu-Buddhist institutions as religion were forgotten, was not included in the first Dutch translation of 1838, because of 'too great costliness' and because the descriptions were 'not necessary and merely instances of pleasurable pursuits' (Hoijtink 2012, 118 note 156). Lunsingh Scheurleer describes how inhabitants of Java hid sculptures as to protect them against theft. In doing so, a connection is being made with the concept of 'pusaka', free translated as 'heritage', of particular meaning and power (2007, 88,89). This connection between inhabitants with the objects is also apparent from the pieces written by both Domis and Du Bus de Gisignies, which are discussed below.

History of the findspot

In a paper on the ancient Sundanese text about the prince and the itinerant monk Bujangga Manik, Noorduyt states that the text describes Mount Merbabu as the site of religious communities which Bujangga Manik visited (1982, 416). According to Noorduyt, the text probably dates from the late 15th century, which is consistent with the date on the stone (1982, 414). A paper by Susanti (2018, 588) analyses the likely presence of religious centres on Mount Merbabu in the 15th century on the basis of, among other things, the inscription on the stone.⁸ Those centres or sites were also called *mandala*, and defined as: '[...] religious activity sites located somewhat away from the living areas, normally deep in the forest, in mountain slopes, or in caves.' (Susanti, 2018, 586). Leemans also mentions the possibility that the stone was part of a religious centre. In his second catalogue on Javanese antiquities, published in 1885, he wrote of this object: 'The eight-line inscription suggests, in terms of language and spelling, the transitional period to newer Javanese, =1371-1449 in the Christian calendar. It includes instructions associated with the worship of Siva, probably directed at visitors to a sacred site of prayer.' (Leemans, 1885, 30).

Domis writes of the area where the stone was located that the nearby village of Salatiga, now a city with a population of almost 200,000, was actually called 'Selo-tigo', which in Javanese means 'three stones'. There is a spring there, and there are said to have been three stone temples (1825, 107). What Domis describes in his paper were in fact the remains of the Shivaist temple complex Candi Gedong Songo, from which several sculptures were removed and sent to the Netherlands (Lunsingh Scheurleer, 2009, 3). Domis also writes that 'Selo-tigo' 'having been a resting place for missionaries from the Sultan of Mataram [...] provided a certain measure of accommodation.' (1825, 108). Domis

⁷ '[...] en behooren dus al de overblijfsels van de Indische Godsdienst in onze Oost-Indische bezittingen, voor zoover in dezelve de leer van Mahomed door de inboorlingen beleden wordt, uitsluitend tot het gebied der oudheidkunde.' (Leemans, 1842, IX). English translation: '[...] and thus all the remains of the Indies Religion in our East Indies possessions, insofar as those same teachings of Mohammed are practised by the natives, belong exclusively to the field of archaeology'.

⁸ See, for other literary sources from the Merbabu region, inter alia: I. Kuntara Wiryamartana, 1993. The Scriptoria in the Merbabu-Merapi Area. In: *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Manuscripts of Indonesia* 149, no: 3, 503-509 and I Kuntara Wiryamartana & W. van der Molen, 2001. The Merapi-Merbabu Manuscripts. A Neglected Collection. In: *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Old Javanese texts and Culture* 157, no: 1, 51-64.

mentions several springs that were used for bathing by the local population in the Salatiga district, which within the Dutch colonial system was governed from the residency of Semarang (1825). It is possible that the stone with inscription was part of a cultivated landscape that included natural springs on the slope of Mount Merbabu.

Related objects

The Wereldmuseum also has a pen-and-ink drawing on tracing paper of the inscription on the stone, with object number RV-1403-3706. The maker is not known, but since it was transferred by the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden to the Rijks Ethnographisch Museum, known today as Wereldmuseum Leiden, in 1904, the drawing predates 1904.⁹

Provenance report

As far as is known, the stone will have stood on the eastern slope of Mount Merbabu, near the village of Ngaduman, from the year of the inscription, 1449/1450. It was there that Hendrik Jacob Domis (1782-1842), resident of Semarang from 1822 to 1827, saw the stone and decided to have it placed in the garden of his residence in Salatiga.¹⁰ Domis wrote a paper on the site where the stone was found, entitled 'Salatiga, Merbaboe en de Zeven Tempels' (Salatiga, Merbabu and the Seven Temples') for the Proceedings of the Bataviaasch Genootschap der Kunsten en Wetenschappen (Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences), volume X. It includes the following passage:

'I found almost no antiquities in the vicinity of the eastern part of Mount Merbabu; there are only a few stones, bearing unclear letters, which were regarded as of too little importance to note. I found no sculptures, and the only thing that drew my attention was a large square stone inscribed in a clearly readable script. In order to protect this stone from further deterioration, I had the same transferred to Selo-tigo, from close to the dessa Adoman, and had the commander, Demang of Selo-tigo, Rono die Poero, transcribe it. He assured me that every letter was clear, and in the Javanese script, which was also called Sandie Boedosch, and that it had undoubtedly existed on the island since the time of the Buddhist or Brahmin religion.' [...] 'I have been unable to find any peculiarities at all regarding this stone, and did not observe that the inhabitants paid it any homage, as they do in many places by offering to Genesa or another figure. The stone is unknown, and it is for this reason that I venture to offer the drawing to the Society as a new contribution to Javanese antiquities.' (1825, pp. 120-121).¹¹

Domis was nominated for membership of the Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen on 25 March 1824. He accepted the invitation, and in August sent the society an initial version of his paper on Salatiga and Merbabu. In his book on the Batavian Society, Hans Groot

⁹ In 1830 a drawing had been made of a stone with an inscription, the size of an unfolded sheet of ordinary writing paper, meant to be sent to Paris, together with few plaster copies. Shortly after the death of Prof. Reuvens in 1835, the then keeper of the Museum of Antiquities, his successor Leemans wondered in a letter to the Orientalist Hamaker where this had 'landed up'. Possibly this was this drawing. In the Museum of Antiquities was a stone printing press (Hoijtink 2012, 111 en 120 n.204) .

¹⁰ In the 19th century, Semarang was spelt 'Samarang' by the Dutch.

¹¹ Domis calls the village Ngaduman Adoman. The title Ingebeij, used here for Rono die Poero, was a Dutch version of the Javanese title ngabehi which means commander, used mostly for military officials and occasionally for administrative positions (Manse and Kemper, 2015, n.p.)

wrote that Domis had sent drawings of '[...] Hindu statues that he had in his garden and a copy of an inscription in his possession.' (2009, 240). We can conclude from this that the drawing of the stone must have been made before August 1824, probably by Johannes Bik, and that the stone was at Domis' residence in Salatiga at the time.¹²

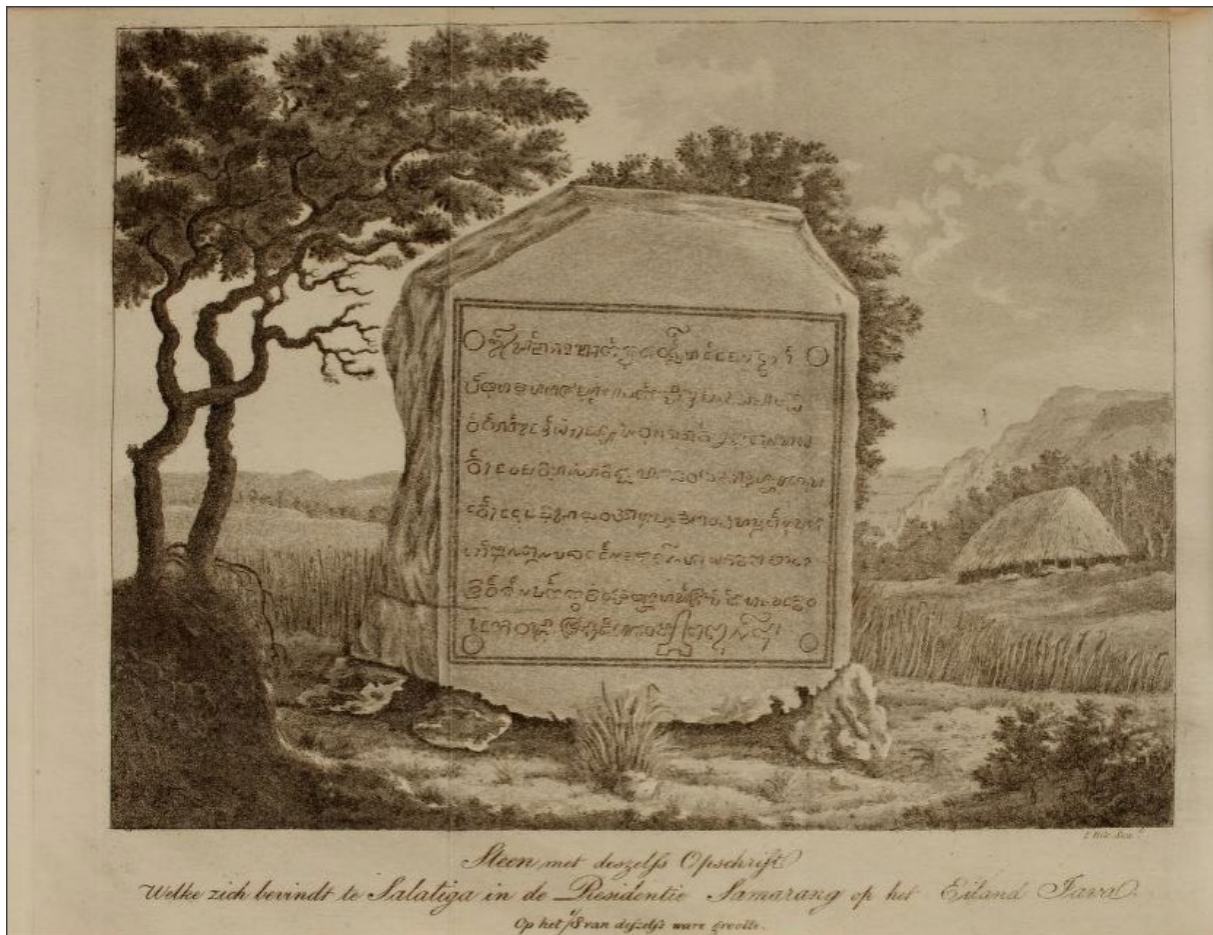


Figure 2: Etching by 'I Bik', possibly J.T. Bik (1796-1875), showing the stone in a fictional landscape, which accompanied the report by H.J. Domis in *Proceedings of the Bataviaasch Genootschap*, volume X. Source: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/128385#page/2>. Accessed on 5-2-2024.

The caption under the drawing states that the stone is in Salatiga, probably in Domis' garden, similar to the Singasari statues installed in the garden of colonial administrator Nicolaus Engelhard (1761-1831). It would appear, however, that the artist who drew the stone situated it in an imaginary landscape, based on Domis' descriptions.¹³

¹² For more information on Domis, see: Aa, van der, A.J. 1858. 'H.J. Domis' In: *Biografisch Woordenboek der Nederlanden*. Volume 4. https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/aa_001biog05_01/aa_001biog05_01_0539.php. For more information on his collection practices, see: Lunsingh Scheurleer, P. 2009. Franz Junghuhn en de Javaanse Oudheden op Java en in Leiden. In: *Aziatische Kunst*, Vol. 39, No. 2, pp. 2-21.

¹³ See also Tom Quist's research report on the statues from the Singasari temple complex: '1-2023-3 Advies Singasari', pp. 8-9. <https://commissie.kolonialecollecties.nl/publicaties/adviezen/2023/05/12/indonesie>. Accessed on 21-2-2024.

Governor-general Du Bus de Gisignies arrived in Batavia in 1826 with the task of putting the colony's finances in order (Groot, 2009, 231). He stayed until 1830.¹⁴ On 31 May 1827 Du Bus wrote three letters, one to the 'naval captain, commander of the naval force in the East Indies', one to the 'resident of the Kadu', and one to Domis.¹⁵ He wrote that he wished to take advantage of the presence of the ship of the line *De Zeeuw* in Semarang to send 'antiquities' to the Netherlands 'in the service of the museums'. In the letters to the residents, he also added that he had heard that they had antiquities at their residencies. Du Bus also wrote that he had understood that the objects were not used for religious worship. He did however request confirmation of this, emphasising that the removal of the objects should not lead to dissatisfaction.¹⁶ This correspondence indicates that Du Bus asked Domis to send the sculptures directly to *De Zeeuw*, which was at anchor in Semarang, with the assistance of a certain 'van Caneghem'.¹⁷ Domis sent two objects, one of which was the stone with inscription, and the other a sculpture of Ganesha, both now kept at Wereldmuseum Leiden under object numbers RV-1403-1620 and RV-1403-1621.¹⁸ The third object that was shipped on *De Zeeuw* was the statue of Durga (former object number RV-1403-1622) discussed in the research report on the statues from the temple complex at Singasari (Quist, 2022).¹⁹

It is not clear how Du Bus came upon the idea of asking the residents to send the antiquities in their possession to the Netherlands, but it is possible that, as reported in the above-mentioned research report, the former governor of Java's northeastern coast, Nicolaus Engelhard, had a hand in this, corresponding with Du Bus about the shipping of three Singasari statues. No written evidence of this correspondence has been found, however (Quist, 2022, 9). Another possibility may be that the then Minister of the Navy and Colonies, Cornelis Theodorus Elout (1767-1841), corresponded with Du Bus about sending Javanese statues, but no such information was found during this investigation.²⁰

Viscount Du Bus wrote to the Minister of the Navy and Colonies on 6 July 1827 informing him that he had asked the resident of Semarang to send the sculptures in his possession to the ship *De Zeeuw* '[...] for the enrichment of the collections of antiquities in the Netherlands [...]' and repeated that he

¹⁴ For more information on Du Bus de Gisignies, see: Prins, de, B. 2002. Voor Keizer en Koning: Leonard du Bus de Gisignies, 1780-1849, Commissaris-Generaal van Nederlands-Indië. Amsterdam: Balans.

https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_bie001200701_01/_bie001200701_01_0136.php

¹⁵ NL-HaNA, Finding aid 2.21.035, inventory number 178, Missives from commissioner-general Du Bus de Gisignies to naval captain, commander of the naval force in the East Indies, letter no. 35, to the resident of the Kadu, letter no. 38 and to Domis, the resident of Samarang, letter no. 39, all 31 May 1827.

¹⁶ '*Indien dus de voormelde informaties mogten gegrond en deze antieketeiten in geen godsdienstige vereering hoe ook genaamd bij den Inlanders zijn, zoodanig dat door derzelve uitvoering geene de minste ontevredenheid kan geducht worden, zoo heb ik de eer Uw Ed. Gestr. te magtigen daartoe het noodige te bewerkstelligen [...]*' (English translation: 'If, therefore, the aforementioned information is well-founded, and these antiquities are not used in any religious worship by the inhabitants, such that their export cannot be expected to cause the least dissatisfaction, I have the honour to authorise you, sir, to undertake what is necessary [...].') The underlining also appears in the original letter. NL-HaNA, 2.21.035, inv. no. 178, letter no. 38, 31 May 1827. 'Missive to the resident of the Kadu'.

¹⁷ This might be Mr. S. van Caneghem, who repatriated from Batavia (Javasche Courant, 3 April 1830, and also was Consul for the Netherlands in China.

¹⁸ Domis became resident of Passarouan (Pasuruan) in November 1827.

¹⁹ Quist, T. 2022. Research report on the statues from the Singasari temple complex In: I-2023-3 Advies Singasari, pp. 8-9. <https://commissie.kolonialecollecties.nl/publicaties/adviezen/2023/05/12/indonesie> Accessed on 21-2-2024.

²⁰ One potential source that could not be investigated during this study is: NL-HaNA, finding aid 2.21.059, Archive of Cornelis Theodorus Elout and several relatives, inv.no. 201, 'Incoming post and records of outgoing post from/to', 1826, Du Bus de Gisignies.

wished to do so '[...] without harming the goodwill of the inhabitants [...]'.²¹ The sending of the letter on 6 July 1827 is confirmed in the 'Records of the correspondence of the Commissioner General on the Netherlands East Indies during the month of July 1827'.²²

De Zeeuw docked in Vlissingen in early October 1827.²³ Some correspondence then ensued between the Ministry of the Interior and the administrators of the Museum van Oudheden before, on 19 November 1827, professor and custodian of the collection Caspar Jacob Christiaan Reuvs (1793-1835) received notice that King Willem I had given permission for the statues to be installed in the museum.²⁴

The stone was registered in the archaeological cabinet's inventory as 'Trachyte. Large outlined square stone with an inscription in Kawi, of 8 lines, below the image of a lingam (Published in the proceedings of the Bat. Genootsch. vol. X, pp. 120, 129 & 99)'.²⁵ It is noted that the stone had been 'sent across' by Mr Du Bus in 1827, with no record of the original location.

²¹ The full text reads: '*Het vertrek van Z.M's schip de Zeeuw mij gunstig zijnde voorgekomen om ter verrijking der verzamelingen van oudheid in Nederland, met hetzelfde eenige Indische antieke beelden mede te zenden. Zoo heb ik onder anderen den Resident te Samarang in der tijd daartoe uitgenoodigd, met op het oog houding nogtans dat zulks, zonder den goeden geest der Inlanders eenigzins te kwetsen zouden kunnen geschieden. Dien ten gevolge is door gemelde Resident in Z M's voornoemden boven ingescheept twee oudheden van Java, als een steen, waarvan in het 10^e deel van het Bataviasche Genootschap, pag. 120, 129 en 130 wordt melding gemaakt, en een beeld hetwelk voornoemde ambtenaar uit den grond heeft opgegraven boven Oenarang bij Samarang en voorstellende de Ganesa van Hindoes geheel onbeschadigd, en hebbende eene hoogte van bij de 3 voeten; zijnde dezelve in twee zware kisten afgepakt en beschreven: Aan Z.M. den Koning van Nederlanden.[...]*' (English translation: 'The departure of HM's ship de Zeeuw appearing to me to present a favourable opportunity to send, for the enrichment of the antiquity collections in the Netherlands, with the said vessel several antique Indies statues. I have invited the Resident in Samarang and others to do the same, bearing in mind, however, that such should take place without harming the goodwill of the inhabitants. As a result, the said Resident loaded on board HM's aforementioned vessel two antiquities from Java, including a stone, reported in the 10th volume of the Batavian Society, pages 120, 129 and 130 and a statue which the aforementioned official excavated from the ground above Unarang Samarang depicting the Hindus' Ganesa entirely undamaged, and having a height of 3 feet; the same being packed into two heavy crates and addressed: To HM the King of the Netherlands [...].')' Rijksmuseum van Oudheden (NL-LdnRMO), correspondence archive, inventory number 17.1.2-3, 1827, Letter from commissioner-general Du Bus de Gisignies to the Minister of the Navy and Colonies, no. 76.

²² It is noted on 6 July: '*6: Een houdende kennisgave van de afzending naar Nederland met Z.M. schip de Zeeuw van een kist met oudheden van Java, geadresseerd aan Zijne Majesteit des Koning der Nederlanden.*' (English translation: '6: A notification of the dispatch to the Netherlands by HMS De Zeeuw of a crate of antiquities from Java, addressed to His Majesty the King of the Netherlands'). NL-HaNA, finding aid 2.10.01, Archive of the Ministry of the Colonies 1814-1849, inv. no. 2907, 'Minutes of Du Bus de Gisignies, commissioner-general of the Netherlands East Indies, p. 28, 6 July 1827. https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/2.10.01/invnr/2907/file/NL-HaNA_2.10.01_2907_0028, accessed on 8-2-2024.

The current spelling of Oenarang is Ungaran.

²³ Royal Library (KB), Delpher, *Middelburgsche Courant*, 11-10-1827, p. 2, column 'Zee-tijdingen'. <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010269598:mpeg21:p002>, accessed 14-2-2024.

²⁴ NL-LdnRMO, 17.1.2-3, 1827, letter no. 88.

²⁵ Wereldmuseum Leiden (NL-LdnRMV), Finding aid A03, inv.no. 18, Inventory of the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, 1827, 'Javaansche Oudheden'.

In 1903 it was decided that all Javanese objects should be transferred to what was then the Rijks Ethnographisch Museum. The transfer took place in 1904. The stone with inscription was assigned object number 1403-1620 and the pen-and-ink drawing 1403-3706.²⁶

²⁶ NL-LdnRMV, Series dossier RV-1403, 'Proces-Verbaal van Voorwerpen enz. overgenomen uit het Rijks Museum van Oudheden te Leiden', 28-07-1904; Ger D. van Wengen, 'Indonesian collections in the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden' in Reimar Schefold & Han F. Vermeulen, *Treasure Hunting? Collectors and Collections of Indonesian Artefacts* (Leiden 2002) 81-108, ibidem 87.

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Susanti, N. 2018. 'Variety of distinct style scripts in inscriptions found in Mandalas of the late Majapahit era: An overview of the paleography to mark religious dynamics.' In: Budianta et al. *Cultural Dynamics in a Globalized World*. London: Taylor & Francis.

The Damalung Inscription

Inventory No. RV-1403-1620

Provenance : The inscription originates from Ngadoman Hamlet, Tajuk Village, Getasan Subdistrict, Semarang Regency, Central Java, Indonesia.

Dimensions : Height: 96 cm; Width: 90 cm; Thickness: 29 cm

Chronological Data : The inscription is dated to 1371 Saka / 1449 CE, as confirmed by the provenance report document 3b.

The Damalung Inscription, also referred to as the Ngadoman Inscription, is an epigraphic artifact carved on a stone slab, bearing significant historical value. It provides evidence of socio-political and religious aspects of 15th-century Java. Its physical dimensions and epigraphic content have been documented under inventory number RV-1403-1620. The inscribed date of 1371 Saka (equivalent to 1449 CE) has been verified and corresponds accurately with the information found in the official provenance documentation

The Damalung Inscription Narrative

- The Damalung Inscription, also known as the Ngadoman Inscription due to its discovery in the village of Ngadoman, was issued in 1371 Śaka (1449 AD).
- It is also referenced in a manuscript composed by Bujangga Manik, a Hindu-Sundanese priest who lived during the late 15th to early 16th centuries.
- Additionally, Damalung is mentioned in approximately 30 Merapi-Merbabu manuscripts as a site of authorship.
- Damalung refers to a mountain (referred to in the inscription as wukir hadi damalung), which is believed to be Mount Merbabu.
- On Mount Damalung, several scriptoria were located, scattered along the foot, slopes, and summit of the mountain.
- Bujangga Manik, the Hindu-Sundanese cleric, recorded that he had recently returned from Mount Damalung.

Scriptoria / Mandala

- Life in these communities was characterized by seclusion from urban centers, located in tranquil, mountainous environments.
- The inhabitants—often scholars or ascetics—had renounced worldly life to devote themselves to spiritual matters.
- These sites were also known as centers of study or *padepokan*, where scholars pursued knowledge and religious teachings.
- They constituted groups of buildings outside the jurisdiction of the royal government.

Damalung in the Records of Bujangga Manik

As cited in his writing:

Kakara cu(n)duk ti gunung,
 kakara datang ti wetan
 cu(n)duk ti gunung damalung
 datangna ti pamrihan
 datang ti lurah pajaran

Translation:

Just returned from the mountain,
 just arrived from the east,
 returned from Mount Damalung,
 came from the hermitage,
 arrived from the place of learning.

(Noorduyn 1984:6)

Damalung in the Inscription

Translation:

- Om (homage to) Śrī Saraswatī (who brought) prosperity to the mighty mountain Damalung.
- Life turns like the wheel of *murusa*, and the sacred bathing place (petirtan) of Palēmaran overflowed due to the Creator, the Sun, (and) the Moon consuming both evil and virtue.
- And the gods (and) devoted humans who performed asceticism (tapas) left an imprint within the cycle of cause and effect, within its crater (cavity).
- It is also the gods who observe the intellect (and) hear (the prayers) of humankind, granting liberation.

- What is forbidden is as difficult as speaking the truth. One who acts against the moral law (dharma)—by observing carefully and speaking cautiously—appears as if burning.
- Without provision, misfortune prevails without a clear origin. Wives, fathers, grandfathers, children, and descendants (seven generations) should not carry material possessions.
- Śrī Swasti, Year 1371 Śaka

Comparison Between Royal and Scriptorium Inscriptions

Royal Court Inscriptions

- Content : Typically grants of sima (tax-free land)
- Structure : Complete and formal
- Language : Old Javanese with limited vocabulary and heavy use of Sanskrit terms.
- Script : Old Javanese script, neatly written, with distinctive features depending on the reign of each monarch.

Scriptoria (Non-Royal) Inscriptions:

- Content : Moral advice, geographical references, praises to deities
- Structure : Irregular and informal
- Language : Middle-dialect Old Javanese with simpler vocabulary
- Script : Old Javanese script with localized stylistic variations.

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