THE HISTORY OF THE MALAY LANGUAGE.*

A PRELIMINARY SURVEY.

I have called this lecture a preliminary survey, because it is a curious fact that in spite of the prolonged and periodically concentrated attention that was bestowed on the Malay language by many investigators, the history of this language was yet hardly ever the subject of scientific research, and in a time too when linguistics in general was predominantly a historical science. It is true that ever since Werndly's time, i.e. since the beginning of the eighteenth century, it has always been felt as all but obligatory to precede any description of the Malay language with an introduction of the history of those who speak Malay, and of its spread as a means of communication over a more extensive area. And generations of Malay scholars have no less faithfully accounted it their duty to give an enumeration of the foreign languages which have contributed towards the enrichment of the Malay lexicon, with many examples of loan words from each of those languages. But the history of Malay in its more proper sense, that is to say its origin and evolution in all its various forms in the many and diverse communities in which in the course of history it served as a means of communication (including the mutual relationship of those kinds of Malay), has so far remained an almost completely unmapped territory. Not only has not even so much as an outline of a historical grammar of the Malay language ever been published — by which I do not mean to suggest that the existence of a historical grammar is a guarantee of an adequate description of the history of a language! — it is even difficult to discover from publications devoted to Malay that the history of that language can be discussed with any profit.

It is naturally possible to point to causes showing why Malay has so long been studied without any regard to its history. It cannot be denied that for centuries a uniform and rigid brand of literary Malay has been very wide-spread. To those who confined themselves to literary texts the idea of taking a historical view could easily remain

* Text of a lecture, delivered on Leiden University Day ("Universiteitsdag"), February 7, 1959.

a remote one. Nevertheless it seems to me that the idea of the "remarkable invariability" of Malay, which Emeis recently recalled,[1] was based on prejudice rather than on objective observation, even taking written Malay only. The attitude of Dutch as well as of English scholars with regard to Malay has often been highly normative; every kind of Malay that they encountered was measured according to the norm of a particular sort of literary Malay, and everything that was not in accord with it was condemned as incorrect. No wonder that what remained was curiously uniform and invariable.

This normative evaluation resulted in all sorts of forms of Malay being for many years almost entirely neglected, forms which might have been of great importance to the study of its history. In the first place there is spoken Malay, or rather all the spoken forms of Malay which were or still are used in various parts of Malaya, Sumatra, Borneo and even further afield, in Jakarta, the Moluccas and Western New Guinea. Authorities on Malay were generally no less disapproving of all written Malay which did not tally with the norm, because for instance it was "spoiled" by foreign influence, such as Persian, Arabic, Javanese and so forth; and disapproving meant uninterested. That it was inconsistent faithfully to sum up loan words from all sorts of divergent languages and to be silent on the possibility of those same foreign languages influencing the grammatical structure of Malay apparently escaped their notice. It almost goes without saying that from this normative point of view all those forms of language, often also called Malay, which serve as a means of intercourse between those whose native tongue is Malay and those to whom it is a strange language (non-Malay Indonesians or strangers), or among the latter, were all too easily termed Low Malay or Pasar Malay, and usually found no favour with scholars of the Malay language.

In the last few decades a number of circumstances have gradually helped to change the situation we have just been describing, in which the question of the history of Malay never so much as cropped up. In the first place an astonishing historical prospect has been opened up by the deciphering of a number of inscriptions from the seventh century and later, which from the start have been recognized and described as Old Malay. Investigators of Malay have lately evinced a greater interest in various forms of Malay which fell outside the

[1] M. G. Emeis, Bijdrage tot de vergelijking van het moderne Melaja-Maleis en de Bahasa Indonésia, Bingkisan Budi, Feestbundel Van Ronkel, Leyden 1950, p. 117.

scope of previous investigators. The gradual spread of more modern views among the scholars of Indonesian linguistics has naturally contributed much towards the new state of affairs. It resulted in normative thinking about language in general and Malay in particular being replaced by a more unbiassed observation of the facts. Partly on account of this interest was aroused in all sorts of texts which had partially been preserved in old manuscripts written in a different brand of Malay from the literary standard kind, namely older or locally differentiated. Moreover the evolution of Bahasa Indonesia in Indonesia, and, although at the moment to a lesser degree, of modern Malay in Malaya, has forced people to take a fresh view of the relationship between norm and reality and as a corollary to inquire into the history of the Malay language.

Although it can certainly not be said that there is a superabundance of new data, yet sufficient publications have recently appeared to form a good opportunity for devoting our attention to the history of Malay. It seemed to me especially attractive to do so in a lecture on 'University Day', which in the first place is meant for alumni and for a wider circle than for philologists only, and which aims at giving an idea of the progress research has made in a given field of knowledge. Within that framework recent literature of different kinds will come up for discussion. But it will by now be clear that the present address can be no more than an exploration of a field hitherto but little investigated. The time allotted me being short I cannot enter into the problems of the development of Malay as one Indonesian language among numerous others, but must confine myself to dealing with the history of Malay in historical time. For the same reason I must pass over the relationship between Malay and Bahasa Indonesia in silence.

As has already been said chronologically speaking the most important new prospect that has been opened to the study of Malay is the discovery and decipherment of a number of inscriptions. They can with certainty be dated back to the second half of the seventh century, and their language has from the beginning been termed Old Malay. The result is that the period known to us as having Malay sources has now become at least twice as long as heretofore. High lights in the history of the discovery of Old Malay have so far been an excellent publication of four inscriptions by Coedès in 1930,[2] and the brilliant

[2] G. Çoedès, Les inscriptions Malaises de Çrívijaya, BEFEO 30 (1930), pp. 29—80.

decipherment of a big stone by De Casparis in 1956,[3] which had previously been considered wholly illegible. In addition a few Old Malay inscriptions of that same period or of a bit later date have come to light, curiously enough originating in part from Java.

The name Old Malay has without more ado been accepted for the language of these old inscriptions, but for the rest very little attention has been paid to the relationship between Old Malay and Malay. In his *Grammatik der Bahasa Indonesia* which appeared in 1956 Kähler inserted a chapter (not unoptimistically called *Abrisz der Grammatik des Altmalaiischen*),[4] in which he summarizes a number of morphological and syntactic peculiarities in the language used in the inscriptions. But the relationship to Malay remains undiscussed, even though he gives seemingly comparable Malay forms by the side of the Old Malay ones. So far it is really only Aichele [5] who has gone deeper into the problems of this Old Malay and its relationship to other Indonesian languages, especially Old Javanese, the hypothetical Old Batak, and Malay. The name of the language of the inscriptions "die man mit Recht als 'Altmalaiisch' bezeichnet hat" [6] presents no problems to him either. But he does go into the differences between this language and later Malay, and into their explanation. One of the questions he propounds is how to explain that a number of affixes which occur in the inscriptions do not appear in later Malay, or at least not in the same form. Interesting examples are the causative *maka-*, which is not known in Sumatran languages, but is known in Old Javanese and other IN languages, the suffix *-a*, which seems to correspond in function with the Old Javanese *-a*, still to be found in Javanese too, and also well known from the Philippine languages; and then the prefixes *ni-* and *mar-*, which are familiar in similar forms and functions in various IN languages, but which in later Malay correspond to *di-* and *bar-*. I am going a bit further into the relationship *ni-/di-* and *mar-/bar-* because they raise fairly important questions of principle. Aichele sees two possibilities for explaining the difference between Old Malay and Malay: "(es) gilt .... zu prüfen, ob es sich dabei um Entlehnungen

[3] J. G. de Casparis, Selected inscriptions from the 7th to the 9th century A.D. Prasasti Indonesia II, Bandung 1956, pp. 1—46 and pp. 344—353, and cp. pp. 207—211.

[4] H. Kähler, Grammatik der Bahasa Indonesia, Wiesbaden 1956, pp. 22—29.

[5] W. Aichele, Die altmalaiische Literatursprache und ihr Einfluss auf das Altjavanische, Zeitschrift für Eingeborenen-Sprachen, XXXIII (1942—1943), pp. 37—66.

[6] Aichele, p. 39.

handelt oder um Sprachgut, das dem Malaiischen im Laufe seiner Entwicklung verloren gegangen ist".[7]

A third possibility for explaining the difference between Old Malay and Malay suggests itself, at least at a first glance, when Old Malay *ni-* and *mar-* are compared to Malay *di-* and *bar-*, for it would only be natural in a formal sense to interpret it as a not unusual type of sound change in the IN languages, viz. a nasal turning into a homorganic occlusive. De Casparis, who did not know Aichele's article or who did not have it at his disposal in Indonesia, apparently thought of that explanation and even believed that he recognized the same correspondence in other cases as well.[8] His lexical identifications of *muah* with Malay *buah* and of *malûn* with Malay *belum* seem to me unacceptable for semantic reasons, however.[9] In any case they are inadequate as an argument for proposing a sound change nasal > voiced occlusive.

Aichele apparently rejects this view of a sound change and gives different explanations regarding the two seemingly corresponding cases *ni-* ∾ *di-* and *mar-* ∾ *bar-*. In the former case he believes that we have to do with two elements, namely the well-known prefix *ni-*, which is usually historically identified with the infix *-in-* and the preposition *di-*, which in historical time took over the function of that old prefix.[10] In the latter case he believes that a *mar-/bar-* isogloss runs through Western Indonesia, which must be of an early date as appears from the distribution of those forms among the languages. Therefore "Wir können nicht annehmen, dasz mal. *bĕr-* im Laufe der Sprachentwicklung aus *mar-* entstanden sei"[11]: the only alternative is to suppose

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[7] Aichele, p. 40.

[8] De Casparis, p. 24 f.

[9] De Casparis himself already points to Çoedès' statement that the occurrence of *vuaḥ* (= *buaḥ*) in the same inscription makes the identification of *muaḥ* with Malay *buah* doubtful, to say the least. The many places where *muaḥ* occurs make the explanation given by Çoedès and Aichele (p. 61) seem more likely. (=Minangkabau *muah*, etc.). *Malūn*, the identification of which with Malay *belum* De Casparis considers 'hardly doubtful' (p. 24) or 'probable' (p. 40, note 30), is translated by De Casparis himself in one of the four places in which it occurs (line 11, 'in order to') in a way which is very far removed from Malay *belum*, while the other places are doubtful too. The translations of *kadāci kāmu māti malūn maṃruruā* (line 10) by "if you die (?) before having succeeded in destroying (my palace) (?)", and of *maṅalit mas maṇi malūn maṃruruā kadātuaṅku* (line 11) by "spend gold and jewels in order to destroy my kĕraton" are not very probable, especially when considered side by side.

[10] Aichele, pp. 46—52.

[11] Aichele, p. 45.

that borrowing took place, and for various reasons Aichele considers Batak the original source.

I must say that I think his whole argument unconvincing. In the first place I seriously object to his too easy explanation of the Malay prefix *di-* coming from the preposition *di*, and in the second place to the very sharp distinction he makes between the prefixes *di-* and *ni-*. On investigating other languages it appears that by the side of the prefix *ni-* there also often occurs in closely related languages or dialects a corresponding prefix *di-*; this is especially the case in Batak, but it is a variation also to be found in languages on Celebes.[12] Moreover, in the light of comparative linguistics it is difficult to isolate the preposition *di* so strictly from the whole group *ni-/ i-/ di-/ -in-* as Aichele does. In other words it seems hardly likely that the Malay prefix *di-* in the conjugated form should historically go straight back to the preposition *di* (which is assuredly connected with *ni-*, etc.), and should show no connection with for instance *di-* as prefix in the conjugated forms in Toba and Mandailing Batak. No, if *mar-* should be a borrowing from Batak in Old Malay then little can be said against explaining *ni-* in the same way and a great deal is to be said for it.

By all this I do not at all mean to say that I am of opinion that in the case of *mar-* Aichele rightly speaks of a borrowing from Batak, and that the same explanation is also preferable for *ni-*. The basic mistake he makes in his explanation of *mar-* and also in the whole of his survey of Old Malay in my opinion lies in the fact that he tries to explain it from the point of view of Malay. It is a mistake which can already be noticed in his otherwise important article about the study of Old Javanese in 1929.[13] It is highly curious that in considering the difference between seventh and seventeenth century Malay he does indeed think of the possibility of Old Malay having borrowed (apparently assuming that there was some other language before that time which corresponded to classical Malay on the points in question), but that he does not so much as mention the logically and historically much more probable possibility of a renewal after 700. One wonders whether even so critical, shrewd and independent-minded an investigator as

[12] H. N. van der Tuuk, Tobasche Spraakkunst, Second Part, Amsterdam 1867, § 159, 3°, note 318 f. and the places mentioned there. N. Adriani, Spraakkunst der Bare'e-taal, VBG 70 (1931), p. 95 note. See also R. Haaksma, Inleiding tot de studie der vervoegde vormen in de Indonesische talen, thesis Leyden 1933, p. 6 ff.

[13] W. Aichele, Grundsätzliches zur Kawi-Interpretation, Feestbundel Koninklijk Bataviaasch Genootschap Volume I, Weltevreden 1929, pp. 1—21.

Aichele was yet unconsciously so bound to a norm, to the invariability of classic Malay, that he could only look upon differences in seventh century Malay as deviations from the classical norm, and whether the idea of the later forms being rejuvenations of the older ones really never occurred to him.

This preliminary assumption makes Aichele propound his theory of borrowings amongst those seventh century languages, but I believe that one cannot be too careful in such a matter. Morphologically for instance the combination of two facts such as the absence of an Old Malay element in Malay and its presence in present-day Batak is no sufficient reason for concluding that the element was therefore borrowed in Old Malay from Old Batak. And all this quite apart from the fact that the borrowing of affixes, although not quite impossible or unknown, is yet not a very usual thing.

But my main objection is a question of principle and of method. As long as there are no compelling indications that point in another direction it is better to consider morphological differences between Old Malay and Malay as an indication that seventeenth century Malay is not directly descended from seventh century Old Malay apparently. All sorts of complications are possible. Classical Malay may date directly back to some other Malay dialect already in existence in the seventh century (geographically it is of importance that the inscriptions come from South Sumatra, whilst classical Malay seems to have a much more Northern cradle).Or there may have been continuity in the literary tradition of Malay, but far-reaching influences on the part of other spoken Malay dialects may yet have made themselves felt in the course of those ten centuries.

Lexically too Aichele believed he could point to distinct traces of Batak influence in the Old Malay of the inscriptions. On the one hand one may take it that the borrowing of a word occurs more easily than borrowing an affix. But on the other hand the single fact that an Old Malay word which is missing in present-day Malay occurs in present-day Batak is by no means a conclusive reason for assuming it to have been a loan word in Old Malay that was taken from Old Batak. It would only be right to come to such a conclusion if specific characteristics of a phonetic, morphological or semantic kind distinctly stamp it as a non-Malay *and* markedly Batak word. Only one of all Aichele's supposed loan words started by giving me the impression of fulfilling the specific conditions mentioned above. I thought Aichele's identification of *parban* in *parbāṇḍa,* "dieser crux interpretum", with

Karo-Batak *pĕrban* ingenious,[14] even though the form looked rather anachronistic. In view of the fact that the uncontracted form *bahan* still seems to be normal in Karo-Batak it is difficult to take for granted that thirteen centuries ago Malay had already taken over this word in its contracted form. To crown all the decipherment of the serpent inscription by De Casparis has added three new *parbāṇḍa* instances to our repertoire, at least two of which make Aichele's identification with Karo-Batak *pĕrban* an impossibility.[15] There is nothing much for it but to go back to the very oldest interpretation of the word as given by Bosch, who sees an indication of a title in it, although the etymology is not clear.[16] To my mind at least the interpretation suggested by De Casparis is not very probable.[17]

Summarizing I believe the linguistic data of the seventh century inscriptions which have thus far become known can be recapitulated as follows: the language of these inscriptions in many very characteristic respects resembles Malay: phonologically it is striking that (as far as the data go in the non-Sanskrit words) the language only has three vowel phonemes besides the *ĕ*, namely *a, i,* and *u* (*e* and *o* only occur in Sanskrit words). The consonant system does not show any important differences with Malay, unless the occurrence of a series of cacuminal consonants by the side of dental, palatal, and velar consonants should count as such. De Casparis, however, considers it highly probable that it is merely a peculiarity in spelling. Moreover the *b* is lacking — another difference of which it will be difficult to prove that it it more than a question of spelling. The correspondences of van der Tuuk's r_1 and r_2 are also typically Malay. Morphologically there are all sorts of things that correspond to classical Malay: nominal derivations with *par-an, ka-an, pa*-nas-*an, -an*; *sa-*; and verbal ones with *-i* and *-kan,* and *ma-* with nasalization (though with a formal peculiarity in *mamāwa* which is considered irregular in classical Malay but which is very frequent in old Malay mss.). Among the well-known Malay formatives we do not come across *tĕr-*. Besides the affixes *ni-* and *mar-,* and *maka-* and *-a,* already mentioned above, the prefixes *um-* and *mi-* are unknown in Malay, although the occurrence as affix of the three mentioned

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[14] W. Aichele, Die altm. Lit. spr., pp. 53—55.
[15] De Casparis, p. 34 line 15, and p. 36 line 26.
[16] In Ph. S. van Ronkel, A preliminary Notice concerning two Old Malay inscriptions in Palembang (Sumatra), Acta Orientalia II (1924), pp. 14—15.
[17] De Casparis, p. 46 note 83: Sanskrit *parva(n)* + *-ṇḍa.*

last is not wholly certain.[18] It is striking that all four of these affixes are found in Old Javanese but that three of them only occur in a petrified form in Javanese.

From a lexical point of view also this language presents all sorts of peculiarities, which it is true are not one and all only Malay, but which taken together do definitely make a very Malay impression, as for instance the pronouns *aku, kamu, dia,* and *kita* (for "you" — but that is also found e.g. in the Hikayat Acheh [19] and their short forms *-ku* (but also *-ñku,* which is not Malay but which is Old Javanese for instance), *-(m)amu* (later *-mu*), *-ña* and *-ta* (not Malay, but again Old Javanese). The prepositions *di, dari, kĕ, dĕñan* (not *pada*), are very striking, and equally remarkable are *yaṅ, ada, tida, jaṅan,* and *ini* (but *inan* instead of *itu*). The numerals that have been found so far show some deviations: *tĕlu* and *sapulu dua* instead of *duabĕlas,* which is still Karo-Batak [20] but which may well have had a wider circulation in the seventh century. — All in all it must be admitted that this language rightly bears the name Old Malay, at least in the sense that it is not related to any other present-day language so closely as to Malay.

The next source for the history of Malay is an inscription in Kedu on Java which had already been known for some time but which was not available in a reliable form until De Casparis took it in hand.[21] Unfortunately the inscription is not only fairly short but a number of possible or probable place names occur in it, and Javanese at that, which is not exactly the easiest material from a linguistic point of view. That the language is just as Malay as that of the previously mentioned inscriptions is almost as well-established a fact as that it goes back to the middle of the ninth century. Phonologically it strikes us in the first place that *sapopo* occurs twice, a word which etymologically tallies with Malay *sĕpupu.* How to explain the *o* remains the question, but that here we clearly have to do with an IN word containing an *o* presents an important difference with the South Sumatran material. Another noteworthy point is that there is a form *ampa* for four; "a dialectal form for *ampat*" De Casparis calls it; [22] but is that so certain?

[18] De Casparis (p. 352) does not consider *umaṃgap* to be an *um*-form. He does mention the prefix *mi-* in *miāyu-āyu* (p. 348), however.

[19] T. Iskandar, De Hikajat Atjéh, thesis Leyden = VKI 26, The Hague 1959, p. 197.

[20] Here again to my mind Aichele's conclusion goes too far and too fast (pp. 52—53).

[21] J. G. de Casparis, Inscripties uit de Çailendra-tijd, Prasasti Indonesia I = thesis Djakarta 1950, pp. 50—73.

[22] De Casparis, p. 71.

As far as I can see it is the only word where the final consonant one would expect is lacking. De Casparis is apparently thinking of an early trace of the change from *-t* into *-q*, later to become familiar, which can be seen in Malay dialects (Kelantan and Trengganu) and in Minangkabau. But is it not rather an abbreviated form of a numeral, to be compared to abbreviations of the names of months, coins and the like in Old Javanese inscriptions (*po* for *pon*, *mā* for *māṣa*)? It should furthermore be noted that both the *b* and the *w* occur here, just as in Malay, whereas in the seventh century only the *w* is found. In an Indian alphabet it is difficult to make out, however, whether such a distinction is more than a spelling variation only. Morphologically also this ninth century material is limited. In any case *maka-*, *par-an*, and *ma-* nas. occur. Curious but also dubious is *tarkalaut*, a combination of *tar-* and *ka-* as De Casparis suggests? Particularly important in connection with what has been discussed above is the occurrence of a *di-* form which should probably be understood as a classical verbal *di-* form,[23] whereas *ni-* is lacking. No less remarkable is *war-* (or, =? *bar-*) in *waranak*, which occurs three times, besides which *marhyaṅ* is also to be found, however, probably as a title. Particularly these last peculiarities give the impression that this language is closer to classical Malay than is seventh century Old Malay. De Casparis suspects that some other Malay dialect formed the basis of this inscription. I also am inclined to look for its cradle nearer to the later centre of the Malay world. It is naturally impossible for me to enter further into the question of the origin of this particular brand of Malay in the interior of Java within the framework of this lecture. De Casparis has at least made it probable that the inscription was promulgated at a time that radical changes were apparently taking place, and he suspects that "the use of Old Malay in this charter may be understood as a kind of demonstration manifesting the origin of the *vaṃça* to which the Rakarayān Patapān belonged".[24]

This Malay inscription is not an isolated case in Java. De Casparis

[23] It says: *yaṅg rājya dirakṣa iya sabañakña yaṅg deça itas = tataḥ*.... (line 8). De Casparis translates it as: ‚Het rijk dat door hem beschermd wordt — zoveel streken als er zijn in alle richtingen ....' (The kingdom that is protected by him — as many regions as there are in every direction....'). Apparently he takes *iya* to be the 'agens' going with the *di*-form: I am more inclined to think it refers back to the kingdom: 'The kingdom, it is protected, etc.'; I do so chiefly because *iya* as a non-honorific pronoun can hardly refer to the sovereign; for other highly placed personages the inscription uses *siḍa*, whilst *iya* in other places in this inscription is apparently used in a non-honorific way.

[24] De Casparis, p. 200.

mentions another one of one line, and Bosch published yet another of three lines from Western Java dating back to 942, which for more than one reason is very interesting.[25] Although it contains hardly as much as five Malay words it nevertheless furnishes us with both a *mar-* and a *bar-* form, and therefore almost seems to have been preserved for the direct purpose of tempting philologists to advance hypotheses. Aichele certainly could hardly withstand the temptation to put forward these curious forms in support of his hypothesis and to surmise that "das volkssprachliche *bar-* habe zu dieser Zeit begonnen, neben dem Fremdling *mar-* in die Schriftsprache einzudringen und literaturfähig zu werden, bis es schlieszlich die *mar-*Form völlig verdrängte".[26] Meanwhile *bar-* (*war-*) already appeared to be "literaturfähig" in Central Java as early as 842, so that for the time being, as long as no fresh data are forthcoming, there seems to be little else to do than to record the curious fact of two variants of a prefix appearing side by side in one form of language which otherwise only occur complementally in IN languages.

The next remnants of Malay are of much later date, and this time they come from the heart of Minangkabau, from Pagarruyung, where right in the middle of a collection of Sanskrit verses there is an inscription of the year 1356 dedicated to the well-known Ādityawarman, which contains a piece of prose entirely Malay in structure, even though the number of Sanskrit words is again particularly great. This piece of Malay has never yet formed the object of careful research,[27] but it seems certain that linguistically it will present very little that is new. Phonologically a word with *e* (*rentak*) by the side of *uraṅ* is striking; morphologically two *bar-* forms are important as well as the word *diparbuatkan*, entirely like later Malay. *Kopadrawa* may be a form with the Old Malay prefix *ka-*, traces of which are still to be found in later Malay. A question which arises is whether in this Malay from Minangkabau characteristics already occur which distinguish later Minangkabau from Malay. It is not very clear — there are some particulars which might be interpreted thus (*inan, rabut, handak*), but others are definitely not Minangkabau (*tyada, lĕmah*).

The most interesting fact about this inscription is really that it lends

[25] F. D. K. Bosch, Een Maleische inscriptie in het Buitenzorgsche, BKI 100 (1941), p. 49-53.

[26] Aichele, p. 46.

[27] The stone has been transcribed by N. J. Krom in het Oudheidkundig Verslag van de Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië, Weltevreden—'s-Gravenhage 1912, p. 51f.

support to the obvious surmise that Old Malay remained in use as a written language right up to the end of the Hindu Sumatran period, just as in Java it was the case with Old Javanese. For we have to do here with the period in which the Islam had long ago penetrated Sumatra. This is confirmed by an inscription from Pasai, in Acheh, from 1380, a curiosity because it comprises a Malay poem in Indian writing and metre with various Arabic words and Moslem ideas.[28] The text teaches us next to nothing about the so-called internal history of Malay; but it is important proof, together with other data, that in 1380 in Pasai, an area in which at the present day Achehnese is the local language, Malay was apparently considered the right literary language for a commemorative inscription on a dead queen, and that Indian writing was the vehicle.

No less interesting is an inscription that comes from Trengganu dating from that same century, but this time in Arabic characters, which seems to proclaim Islam as the State religion.[29] What is most interesting to us in connection with the present subject in this rather mutilated inscription is that the language is largely identical with classical Malay, and that where it differs it seems to correspond to the present Trengganu dialect, although we should speak with the greatest caution with a view to the scanty data.

We are gradually approaching the period in which literary Malay comes into our field of vision, even though there is still an annoying gap in our knowledge. It is true that we assume that some of the oldest texts that have been preserved go back to the fifteenth century, perhaps even to the fourteenth, but the oldest manuscripts are from as late as the second half of the sixteenth century, at least cannot be proved to be earlier, while the manuscripts of some of the most interesting texts are of an even later date. And, unlike the Balinese copyists of the Old Javanese literature, who preserved the original texts with surprising fidelity and accuracy century after century, the copyists of Malay literature not only set to work rather carelessly, they often even seemed to deem it their duty and even their honour to purify their material, adapting it to the requirements of the day and smoothing out everything

[28] W. F. Stutterheim, A Malay sha'ir in Old-Sumatran characters of 1380 A.D. (with 4 plates), Acta Orientalia 14 (1936), pp. 268—279; and G. E. Marrison, A Malay Poem in Old Sumatran Characters, JMBRAS 24 (1951), pp. 162—165.

[29] H. S. Paterson, An early Malay Inscription from Trengganu, and C. O. Blagden, A Note on the Trengganu Inscription, JMBRAS 2 (1924), pp. 252—258 and pp. 258—263.

they considered to be an inequality. That means that for the investigation of the history of Malay it is the age of the manuscripts that happen to have been preserved, which primarily determines the value of a given literary work and not the age of the text. To name a few examples: a Malay translation of an Arabic panegyric, although it can only be used with the greatest circumspection for linguistic studies in view of the peculiarities of such translations, is nevertheless an important source for our knowledge of sixteenth century Malay, owing to the fact that it has been preserved in a manuscript which was in any case written before 1600.[30] But an original history of Pasai, which in all likelihood was written as early as the fifteenth century, is only known to us in a nineteenth century manuscript [31] and, except for a few lexical relicts (*kutaha* [32]) which slipped through the meshes of the purifying net, has been entirely made to conform with the classical ideal as far as language is concerned.

For there is such a thing as classical Malay which serves as standard and ideal for Malay literature. As tradition will have it is always identified with Malay as spoken in Johor and the Riau-Lingga Archipelago.[33]. To my mind that identity is only relative. Very little is known about the Malay spoken at Johor or the islands facing it. And the little we do know creates the impression that the distance between the spoken language of those parts and written literary Malay is no smaller than between West European cultural languages and their local, spoken counterparts.

This identification should be interpreted in such a way that the fixation of literary Malay, in the form in which we know it to-day took place at the Malay courts of Johor, Riau, etc. Naturally local Malay made its influence felt on literary Malay in the same way as official Malay in the Netherlands Indies came about in the twentieth century via the pens of authors from Minangkabau, giving it a Minangkabau

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[30] G. W. J. Drewes, Een 16de eeuwse Maleise vertaling van de Burda van Al-Būṣīrī (Arabisch lofdicht op Mohammed), VKI 18 (1955).

[31] Hikajat radja-radja Pasai, edited by E. Dulaurier in the Collection des principales chroniques Malayes, Paris 1849. J. P. Mead's romanized edition in JSBRAS 66 (1914), pp. 1—55, cannot be profitably used without keeping a close check on the text.

[32] The word that is spelled k-t-alif-h (cp. Drewes, register op. cit. sub *ketaha*) seems to me most probably to be *kutahu*, a worn-out form of 'how-do-I-know', Malay = *gerangan* after interrogatives. Van Ophuysen I believe already took it to mean that.

[33] E.g. Ch. A. van Ophuysen, Maleische Spraakkunst[2], Leyden, 1915, pp. 3—4. R. O. Winstedt, Malay Grammar[2], Oxford 1927, p. 30, cp. p. 75.

tinge, but not enough to entitle us to say that modern Malay is entirely similar to Minangkabau. We can continue this comparison and say that Minangkabau authors did not create literary Malay out of thin air any more than the authors at the courts of Johor and Riau created a literary Malay tradition straight off. We are reasonably sure that literary traditions existed at the older Malay courts. We know this for certain of Acheh in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, of Malacca in the fifteenth century, and of Pasai in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Both on the ground of internal evidence furnished by Malay literature and on the ground of general considerations and comparison with Java we may assume that the Malay literary tradition must be much older, and that even in pre-Moslem times there must have been an important Malay literature.

The question in connection with our subject now is whether anything is left of that older literary Malay. From what has been said above it follows that we can only expect to find traces of it in the not very numerous old manuscripts. Van Ronkel, who was the first to concern himself with such manuscripts, answered the question in the affirmative. On the strength of all sorts of peculiarities in a number of manuscripts dating from not later than 1600 he concludes that "the language of the manuscripts presents another, in this case older, period than that of the common Malay".[34] Recently Drewes raised the question anew, on the occasion of his publication of one of the manuscripts dealt with by Van Ronkel. He remarks that all sorts of deviations from classical Malay in the language of the manuscript can now readily be explained on account of the advance in Malay lexicography, and through the increase in our knowledge of Malay dialects. He consequently terms Van Ronkel's conclusion of 1896 no longer acceptable.[35] As can be seen from his comments further on in the book on the language of the manuscript he believes that most of the deviations from standard Malay are to be ascribed to the Perak dialect,[36] in itself not an incongruous supposition when we think of the close relations which existed between Acheh and Perak in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In his review of Drewes' book Voorhoeve has rightly pointed out that the fact that dialectal peculiarities are to be found in the Malay Burda text by no means precludes our having to do with an older literary

[34] Ph. S. van Ronkel, Account of six Malay manuscripts of the Cambridge University Library, BKI 46 (1896), p. 25.
[35] Drewes, op. cit. p. 10.
[36] Drewes, op. cit. pp. 40—41.

Malay, whether it be the direct predecessor of classical Malay from Johor or not.[37] The very fact that the particulars Drewes describes are peculiar to a large number of manuscripts is an argument in favour of considering this language on its own merits, and for not taking the later literary Malay as a starting point for describing this older literary Malay language. A general characteristic that strikes us in studying this written Malay is that the link with the pre-Moslem world is still so clearly visible. It already appears from the spelling, e.g. the use of the Arabic duplication sign with a consonant to indicate a preceding pepet can only be explained as a continuation of a similar spelling in Indian writing.[38] As has already been observed by various scholars,[39] all sorts of Sanskrit loan words are closer to their counterpart in the language of origin than in classical Malay, both as regards form (it is irrelevant in this connection whether it is only a spelling tradition or a difference in pronunciation) as well as meaning. That this should be so in late sixteenth and seventeenth century Acheh is all the more striking when we remember that Moslem influence had prevailed there for centuries on end. Morphologically also these texts show peculiarities of which the most interesting, considered from the classical Malay point of view, is the irregular nasalization and pre-nasalization. As Winstedt remarks "These rules are fixed only in literary or Riau-Johor Malay and even there with some few variants and exceptions".[40] In the picture displayed by the Malay dialects and languages geographically contiguous to Malay the view that the fixed rules in literary Malay are a peculiarity rather than that the whole of the rest are an exception to a fixed rule seems more fitting. The variation of *be-* and *ber-* in contrast to the fairly fixed rules in classical Malay also deserve mention in this connection. Moreover in these texts other derivations occur which are unknown in classical Malay. Drewes points to curious *ke-* forms.[41]

Taken all together there is reason enough therefore to assume that clear traces of an older literary Malay have been preserved. A closer and completer description cannot be given here. Further research will

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[37] P. Voorhoeve, in Museum, Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis 62 (1957), p. 38.

[38] T. Iskandar, De Hikajat Atjéh, p. 11.

[39] Van Ronkel, Drewes, Iskandar. Cp. also W. G. Shellabear's articles, An account of some of the oldest Malay mss. now extant, JSBRAS 31 (1898) pp. 107—151, and The evolution of Malay spelling, id. 36 (1901), pp. 75—135.

[40] R. O. Winstedt, Malay Grammar, p. 75.

[41] Drewes, Burda, p. 40.

have to devote itself to the question as to whether these older manuscripts have all been written in an identical, in its turn rigidly fixed literary Malay, or whether there are more relevant differences (for instance between manuscripts from Acheh and other regions). A comparison of the vocubularies of the texts will certainly also have to be undertaken. Another thing deserving of attention is the fact pointed out by Voorhoeve that a man like Nūrud-Dīn ar-Rānīrī when he arrived in Acheh in 1637 had already learnt Malay elsewhere, and had written texts in Malay, the language of which, except for the unavoidable Arabic influence, was classical Malay.[42] This again is an indication that two forms of literary Malay are to be found side by side, and partly in the same period of time, for are not the manuscripts from Acheh with the peculiarities mentioned above coincident with Nūrud-Dīn's apprenticeship in classical Malay? At least as far as can be judged to-day Nūrud-Dīn's language nowhere shows the pre-classical peculiarities, although he was later reproached that his Malay contained words from Bahasa Acheh which were not understood on Borneo.[43] Should this be looked upon as evidence of a concealed rivalry between two literary forms of the Malay of the first half of the seventeenth century, a struggle which in the end was naturally won by the Johor-Riau party? For in Johor-Riau Malay as the mother tongue of the population had always had deeper roots than in Acheh, where it was only the cultured language of an élite — even though it remained so right into the twentieth century.

Another important question is closely bound up with the afore-going, but through lack of data it is not yet ripe enough to be answered, hardly to be studied even, namely the relation between diverse other forms of local literary Malay and standard Malay. There are texts from Palembang, Bandjermasin, Kutai, Amboina, and many other regions in Indonesia. To W. Kern especially we owe important material concerning the Malay of Bandjermasin and Kutai.[44] But when he says of the Salasilah of Kutai "De taal der kroniek kan men ruwweg karakteriseren als litterair Maleis met Koetaise inslag", (the language of the chronicle can roughly be characterized as literary Malay with a Kutai tinge to

[42] P. Voorhoeve, Van en over Nūruddīn ar-Rānīrī, BKI 107 (1951), p. 357, cp. G. W. J. Drewes, De herkomst van Nuruddin ar-Raniri, BKI 111 (1955), p. 150.

[43] P. Voorhoeve, ib. p. 360.

[44] W. Kern, Aantekeningen op de Sja'ir Hémop (Sja'ir Kompeni Welanda berperang dengan Tjina), TBG 82. 2—4 (1948), p. 211—257.
W. Kern †, Commentaar op de Salasilah van Koetai, VKI 19 (1956).

it),[45] the interesting question remains unsolved as to whether that literary Malay is identical with the standard Malay of Riau-Johor after having undergone a secondary Kutai metamorphosis, or whether Kutai always had its own brand of literary Malay, or at least whether some other literary Malay had already existed there which in this text has partly been adapted to seventeenth century literary Malay. And the same question may well be asked about all the other written regional forms of Malay. An answer will only be possible after systematic and intensive research. And here again it seems to me entirely in place to give warning that it is not certain without examination that seventeenth century literary Malay should be the starting point for explaining all the peculiarities, and the possibility of different and possibly older Malay traditions should be taken into account.

In mentioning Nūrud-Dīn just now another fundamental problem cropped up for scholars in the history of Malay as a literary language, namely the problem of the Arabic influence. We know something about this influence since Van Ronkel's article appeared in 1899.[46] In Bingkisan Budi, the volume of studies devoted to Van Ronkel, Drewes again drew attention to it. Moreover he himself has made a fresh contribution to the knowledge of Kitab-Malay,[47] and particularly through his publication of the Malay translation of the Burda he has furnished fresh material towards the study of this problem.[48]

In spite of all this not much more than a start has been made. The question most interesting to our subject, namely how far literary Malay was influenced by Arabic idiom, has really not yet been systematically examined. For Winstedt's continual testing of the language of Malay literary products with his idiomatic standards cannot be considered as a scientific contribution to the evolution of literary Malay. When he remarks that most of the Moslem teachers who translated foreign texts into Malay were themselves foreigners, "who in their difficult task of translation murdered Malay idiom",[49] one might just as well argue that these people "created Malay idiom" — naturally a different Malay from the kind that was dear to Winstedt's heart, but a literary Malay

[45] W. Kern, Commentaar, p. 13.
[46] Ph. S. van Ronkel, Over invloed der Arabische syntaxis op de Maleise, TBG 41 (1899), pp. 498—528.
[47] G. W. J. Drewes, De herkomst van het voegwoord bahwasanja. Bijdrage tot de kennis van het Kitab-Maleis. Bingkisan Budi, Leyden 1950, pp. 104—116.
[48] See note 30.
[49] R. O. Winstedt, A History of Malay Literature, JMBRAS 17. 3 (1940), p. 93. Cp. also his Preface, and passim.

which answered a need that was widely felt, and which also strongly influenced non-religious Malay in untranslated texts. It is naturally the right of every student of literature to feel a preference for some particular use of language, or for some particular style, and to object to foreign influence. But I do not believe it can be denied that in applying such a literary and esthetic standard the linguistic investigation into the evolution of Malay has been and still is considerably hampered. In Dutch studies of Malay this normative attitude with regard to Malay has been taken up by Van Ophuijsen, and his influence, through the Minangkabau guru bahasa Melayu, still makes itself felt in Indonesia to the present day. Not that any Indonesian will deny the reality of a strongly altering language, but up till now in Indonesian educational circles there has been a strong tendency to judge every change from the point of view of the old norm. To my mind the influence of the normative viewpoint of Winstedt and other older English scholars on the attitude towards developments in modern Malay in Malacca is quite as strong. Up to the present day the practice of pointing out so-called non-Malay idiom in older texts forms an important part in the teaching of Malay. It is a pastime that is all the more pointless since it is often done without any knowledge of Arabic or Persian, but simply intuitively, according to fixed shibboleths. Only an open-minded attitude in observing and interpreting facts in the Malay language which at present are considered inferior or uninteresting will make it possible to gain a subtler insight into the history of the language.

The same problems which crop up in studying foreign influence on Malay also arise in considering the question of the relationship between official written Malay and its many spoken forms, particularly the dialects which geographically lie further off; even though the relation of Riau and Johor Malay to literary Malay is not without its problems either, as has already been said. A history of Malay should take these relationships into account. But here again the strongly normative way of thinking has impeded Malay scholars from gaining a correct insight into the nature of the problems, and has hindered the progress of research. Brown's recent republication of a number of dialogues in three Malay dialects from the Malay Peninsula furnishes a striking example of this attitude.[50] It is undoubtedly a useful and valuable book, because it gives a great deal of interesting material. But its presentation and elucidation is characteristic: these Malay dialects are described and

[50] C. C. Brown, Studies in Country Malay, London 1956. Cp. my review in BKI 113 (1957), pp. 293—297.

phonetically rendered from the stand-point of Malay as written by the English — and in addition they are judged according to those standards, they are even given marks "judged by Sějarah Mělayu standards" and so there is a difference in quality among those different dialects.

Not until such a normative approach has been definitely abandoned will the investigation of Malay dialects be really fruitful, also as regards the study of the history of Malay. It will probably even become the most important source for that purpose. For in Western Europe too it was dialect research after the manner of language geography which brought great increase and refinement into our knowledge of the history of language. At least part of the Malay area satisfies a few of the important conditions necessary to the success of an investigation into the geography of dialects; there is sufficient historical continuity, and the unifying influence of the modern Malay of Singapore has not yet gone too far. Besides quite a fair amount is known about the history of these regions. Difficult problems will undoubtedly arise if one should want to extend such an investigation to Malay dialects in Sumatra and Borneo. Quite recently Voorhoeve [51] on the one hand and Cense and Uhlenbeck [52] on the other have repeatedly had to point to the difficulty in defining the boundaries of Malay in their linguistic bibliographies of those islands, and only detailed research on the spot will be able to answer all sorts of hitherto unsolved problems. Certainly in the coastal area of Borneo it will probably often be impossible to catch up with the historical development on account of the numberless immigrations and shiftings that have taken place there since time immemorial up to the present day. But the data which notably Brown's material has already provided on the one hand and the experience I myself gained in the investigation of the geography of the dialects of Lombok on the other [53] together cause us to expect that a similar investigation in Malaya and the Malay region of Sumatra, providing it is carefully prepared and carried out on a somewhat larger scale, will be able to shed a great deal of light on the history of Malay.

A. TEEUW

[51] P. Voorhoeve, Critical survey of studies on the languages of Sumatra, 's-Gravenhage 1957, esp. pp. 15—20.

[52] A. A. Cense and E. M. Uhlenbeck, Critical survey of studies on the languages of Borneo. 's-Gravenhage 1958, esp. pp. 7—13.

[53] A. Teeuw, Lombok. Een dialect-geografiche studie. VKI 25 (1958).