

NORTH BORNEO GONGS AND THE JAVANESE GAMBELAN: A NEW HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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... anatypical historiography, historiography going against the pattern of the culture under study ... [should be replaced by] syntypical study of the history of a people, in which its own historiography is viewed as one of the elements of its cultural pattern.

Berg 1951–2, quoted in Zoetmulder 1965, 329

1. INTRODUCTION

This contribution takes as its starting point the gong² ensembles of Sabah, north Borneo. These gong ensembles fall into two categories: suspended gongs only, and gong-chimes with suspended gongs as 'accompaniment'.

During ethnomusicological fieldwork among the Lotud people³ in the Tuaran area on the west coast of Sabah, I also became interested in the historical perspective. From where did these rice-farmers (and former headhunters) get their gongs? Who were the agents? And how old is the tradition?

The first questions seemed simple to answer. The gongs were said to come from the Philippines and from Brunei. Many were inherited and others were bought somewhere, often in the little town of Kota Belud not far to the north. But before that?

1. The author gratefully acknowledges the support of the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences, and of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music, in providing grants for certain phases of the fieldwork undertaken in connection with this study.

2. In the present paper, I distinguish between 'gong' and 'bronze drum'. There is a marked difference in appearance and construction between the two instruments. 'Gong' is here used in the ordinary sense of 'a circular metallophone with a comparatively narrow rim and thick walls', whereas the latter has a rather thin 'membrane' and a comparatively long 'body'. The difference between 'gong' (in the above sense) and 'bronze drum' is thus a *morphological* one.

Acoustically speaking, however, both 'gong' (in the above sense) and 'bronze drum' are gongs and in this sense differ from bells: 'the gong's vibrations issue from its center while its rim is virtually dead, whereas the bell, on the contrary, is most resonant on the soundbow and dead at the vertex' (Marcuse 1975, 46).

'Bronze drum' is a translation of the Chinese *tonggu* and is often used in Western literature with apologies, since everybody of course acknowledges the fact that the instrument is not a drum (having no membrane) but an idiophone. (Today, Kempers (1988, 56) seems to be the only one to seriously defend the name 'bronze drum'.) Thus since a 'bronze drum' is in no sense a drum, Curt Sachs suggested already in 1915 (Sachs 1915, 38) the more appropriate term 'kettle gong'. In sum: within the acoustical category 'gong' we should distinguish between the morphological sub-categories 'gong' and 'bronze drum/kettle gong'. The term 'bronze drum' is used here in preference to 'kettle gong' for the sole reason that it is used by the authors and translators discussed below.

3. Lotud is what these people call themselves. They are one of the numerous ethnic groups of northern Borneo which are collectively known as *Dusun*, an exonym. The latter term is, however, nowadays used by some of the groups as a designation of themselves (and resented by others, who prefer the term *Kadazan*). I use it here for practical reasons. Similarly, several other ethnic groups further south are lumped together under another exonym, *Dayak*. For the following discussion, these groups must be distinguished from the Muslim (former) sea-dwellers along the coast (*Bajau*, *Illanun*, etc.).

On the one hand, small ensembles with similar gong-chimes can be seen as stone-reliefs on Angkor Wat in Cambodia and are, maybe, eight hundred years old. On the other, most musicologists take it for granted that gongs in the archipelago are Javanese. In that case, they would belong to a tradition with very deep roots. In his standard work, *Music in Java*, Jaap Kunst does not protest against Javanese traditions, asserting that the first gamelan, 'the three-toned Munggang' was 'put into service in 347 AD' (Kunst 1973, 260). In his book *Hindu-Javanese Musical Instruments* (Kunst 1968), he referred to historical information describing a 'gong-culture' in Java since at least the seventh century.

Mantle Hood goes even further back in time. According to him, the gong instruments developed from the so-called bronze drums (i.e., kettle gongs). These were imported to Java in sets 'sometime around the first century' (Hood 1970, 157)⁴ as the original *Munggang* or *Lokananta* (Hood 1984, 33).⁵ In due time the bronze drums were transformed into gongs and the little ensemble became the first gamelan: This 'first three-tone gamelan Munggang of the type housed in the palace of the Sultan today' was produced 'shortly after 300 AD'. Thus, the oldest gong ensemble (*gamelan Munggang*) is almost 1700 years old. The so-called Gamelan Majapahit (Tenggarong, eastern Borneo) 'probably dates from the 6th or 7th century'.

From this starting point Hood attempted to trace the evolution of the gamelan. The result was that, according to himself, most intermediate stages from *gamelan Munggang* to today's full-fledged gamelan were 'documented by extant archaic ensembles found in Java' (Hood 1984, 33): *Kodok Ngorèk* in the fifth or sixth century, at least four other gamelan in the seventh and eighth centuries, *gamelan Sekati* between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, and so on.

Professor Hood's datings of the various Javanese gamelans seem to be accepted in the literature; for instance, they are used in the authoritative *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*,⁶ and they form the basis for the chapter on Java in Hans Oesch's recent volume on non-Western music in the *Neues Handbuch der Musikwissenschaft* series (Oesch 1987). In his review in *Ethnomusicology*, Bruno Nettl regarded this chapter as 'a stellar performance of scholarship' (Nettl 1989, 148).

If the north Borneo gong ensembles originate in a Javanese tradition (I will argue below that they do), and if Jaap Kunst's and Mantle Hood's datings are correct, then there is a possibility that the Borneo gong ensembles are almost as old as the Javanese ones. Or, in practice, they may belong to any century of this huge time-span.

Below, I shall attempt to reduce this time span somewhat, in order to find a *terminus post quem* for the Lotud and north Borneo gong traditions. I will, basically, ask two questions: what evidence do we have concerning the early history of Javanese gongs and gong ensembles? What does the available evidence tell us of the spread of gongs and gong ensembles in the area?

Naturally, in a few pages, it is not possible to discuss in detail all the evidence that has been adduced on the subject by various scholars. Still, by examining a few key aspects, it seems possible to suggest a historical scenario that is rather different from the current one.

4. Cf. the timetables in 1970: foldout facing p.167, and in 1984, 186.

5. Elsewhere, however, Professor Hood states that the bronze drums were imported already 'shortly after 300 BC' (Hood 1980, 57, 66, 122, 131, 132ff).

6. S.v. *Indonesia*, 169ff.

2. JAVA

2.1. THE HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

For practical reasons, the source material will be divided into four groups: Chinese, Javanese, and Western literary records, and archaeological finds.

2.1.1. CHINESE SOURCES

Jaap Kunst uses several Chinese texts⁷ (in translation) to show that Java had gong music already during the Tang dynasty (c.618–906). His oldest record of a ‘gong’ (Kunst 1968, 65) is found in Groeneveldt’s translation (Groeneveldt [1880], 84) of the 222nd book of the Tang annals. Here, we learn that when the king Hu-lu-na-po in Poli sits in his chariot drawn by elephants, ‘music is made by sounding gongs, beating drums and blowing conches’.

Our first problem concerns the general reliability of the descriptions. Below (fig.1) are three brief excerpts from old Chinese historical records, describing official, ceremonial occasions. All give information on music. The excerpt above on king Hu-lu-na-po comes from the third one (New Tang History), quoted by Kunst; I have added the other two for comparison.

Tongdian, 8th cent. — On ‘*Tan-tan*’

吹	擊	鼓
chui	li	ji
blow	conch.	strike
	caleb.	drum

1 2

Suishu (Annals of the Sui Dynasty, 581–618). — On ‘*Chitu*’

吹	擊	鼓	以	樂
chui	li	ji	gu	yue
blow	conch	strike	drum	music:
	caleb.			joy

1 2 3

7. In the transcriptions the *pinyin* system is used, but in quotations I keep the original author’s spelling.

Xin Tangshu (New Tang History) 222:3:2r. — On 'Poli'

鳴	金	擊	鼓	吹	鑿	爲	樂
ming	jin	ji	gu	chui	li	wei	yue
make	gold;	strike	drum	blow	conch	make	music;
sound	metal				caleb.		joy
4		2		1		3	

First, a caveat on these ancient texts in general. When judging the contents of the old Chinese records, we must remember that the latter cannot be regarded as journalistic, one-hundred-per-cent reliable descriptions of reality. In a typically Chinese way they also relied on literary conventions, which affected both the way the author arranged his material and his choice of words. On top of that came the copying and re-editing process before the final version was included in, for instance, the dynastic histories.⁸

As exemplified by the above quotations, the authors use a limited number of stock phrases to stress how music (among other things) mirrors, or symbolizes, the glory and power of the king and the state in various countries. *Tongdian* uses two phrases, *Suishu* uses the same ones plus one, and *Xin Tangshu* has added a fourth phrase (which here precedes the other three). Thus, the descriptions do not change as often as the place-names.

The fact that contents and wording are influenced by standard patterns does not mean that the information is all wrong. The impetus behind these descriptions was economic and political; they should be seen as instrumental in China's attempts to establish trade contacts and amass political knowledge about the surrounding countries. In general, the sections on import and export wares are conceivably rather reliable; the passages with another function, to stress the sumptuousness of foreign governments, are probably less so, at least in their particulars. They should not be taken at face value without supplementary evidence.

Now, the translations. The word [钅] *jin*, which Groeneveldt translates as 'gong', is ambiguous. Its basic meaning is 'gold', but it can also refer to metal in general, or various metal objects. It is one of the eight categories in the traditional Chinese classification of musical instruments. When a Chinese author had to mention an instrument with which he was not familiar and thus lacked the terminology, he probably simply indicated the category instead—'metal instrument', 'gourd instrument', etc. Which particular word we should use in a translation (if we try to be more specific than 'metal instrument') is thus largely a matter of judgement and conjecture. In older periods, *jin* often refers to 'bell', but—in later records in particular—it may also stand for 'gong', 'metal flute', and so on. Let us consult two sinologists who are also musicologists. For the Chinese Classics, Walter Kaufmann judiciously translates *jin* as 'metal instruments' (Kaufmann 1976, 56, no. 295); and Maurice Courant (1924, 122) translates the phrase *jin sheng* into 'le son du métal', a phrase which refers to the sound of 'les carillons "quand on les frappe fort"'. When he details the instruments of the Ming period (some 600 years later than New Tang history) orchestras, however, Courant interprets *jin* as 'gong' (*ibid.*, 24f). However, to what extent the word might really refer to a gong and not to a bell already during the Tang dynasty

8. See the example with Chang Sheng and Ma Huang below.

is not at all clear. A combination of bells and drums was often used in ritual orchestras in old China. Against this background, it is misleading to render *jin* into 'gong' in the translation of a single source from the Tang dynasty.

Finally, modern research is far from a consensus as to where Poli was to be found, but everybody seems to agree that it was not in Java. To state, as Kunst does, that the gong certainly existed in Java because it (possibly) was used in a country some 1000 miles away from that island⁹ is hardly a scholarly conclusion. With the same methods, it is easy to 'prove' that the keyed harp is used in England, the kantele in Denmark, the Hackbrett in Sweden, and so on.

The next example of Groeneveldt's misleading use of the word 'gong' occurs in his quotation on Pahang from Fei Hsin's *Xingcha sheng lan*, which appeared in 1436. We read that 'Articles of import are ... gongs, boards, etc.' (p. 137). However, for these two nouns Fei Hsin uses the expression: [鼓板] *gu ban*; the two characters mean 'drum' and 'clapper', respectively (Rockhill 1915, 121).¹⁰ They have nothing whatsoever to do with gongs.

Our third record comes from the early fifteenth century. Here Kunst finds his first evidence for the existence of the gamelan in Java, including instruments like *bonang* and *gong*. From Zheng He's travel stories, as recorded by Ma Huan (1937, 164ff), he is able to cite 'a statement ... to the effect that "the gamelan consisted of a set of copper drums (of course bonangs [J.K.]) and a large brass gong ..." ' (Kunst 1968, 89).¹¹

Let us begin with the gong. The Dutch translation of 1937 that Kunst used was not made from Ma Huan's original text. Groeneveldt's translation ([1880], 51) of the same passage suffers from the same deficiency ('the relations ... beat copper drums and gongs ...'). The original mentions only the bronze drum, but no gong (Rockhill 1915, 243f). However, several years after its appearance (not earlier than 1436), the original edition from c.1425–32 (?) (see Rockhill *ibid.*, 61) was rearranged, changed, and amplified by a Mr. Chang Sheng (*ibid.*, 71). This is when the gong,¹² which was not mentioned in the first edition, entered the text. It is most likely that Groeneveldt did not have access to the original version of Ma Huan's work, since it seems that only one copy of it is extant and this copy, moreover, was in private possession.

Still more interesting than the dubious gong are the 'copper drums'. Mr. Kunst states flatly that they are *bonangs*. But the Chinese language does not distinguish between

9. Groeneveldt and Kunst guess that Poli was situated in northern Sumatra.

10. *Gu* is the generic name for drum, and *ban* is a synonym for *pai ban* (a compound that refers to the important clappers that are used for beating time in much opera and chamber music). Mathew, like Rockhill, regards *gu ban* as a compound meaning 'musical instruments' (M. 3479, no.8). To transform a drum into a gong is, unfortunately, no unique case of mistranslation. Van Gulik (1940) insisted on calling the venerable *qin* a 'lute'; and even as erudite a sinologist as Bernhard Karlgren (1950), in his translation of the Chinese classic *Shi jing*, rendered the names of the antique zithers *qin* and *se* as 'lute' and 'guitar', respectively. Legge (1960), in his translations of the Chinese classics, chose 'lutes big and small' for the same instruments. Mathews, in his dictionary, renders *se* as 'lute' (M. 3479 no. 14). And so on.

11. When he mentioned the same record a decade earlier in his great work on Java (*Music in Java* 1973, 112) he was not yet fully convinced; here the parenthesis reads: '(perhaps *bonangs*)'. (The last edition of *Music in Java* that Jaap Kunst saw to print was the second one, in 1949. The third, posthumous, edition from 1973 contains only very minor revisions in the text. When the second, English, edition of *Hindu-Javanese Musical Instruments* was published in 1968, it incorporated the very extensive revisions and additions that Jaap Kunst was working on during the fifties. Jaap Kunst died in 1960.)

12. *Tongluo*. *Tong* means bronze, brass or copper; *luo* is the normal term for the common, flat Chinese gong.

singular and plural, and there is no reason to assume that several objects were involved. Second, the words used in the Chinese text are [銅 鼓] *tonggu*. This expression is sometimes translated by Groeneveldt as 'copper drum', sometimes as 'gong', and sometimes as both (see for instance p. 107: 'a small copper drum (gong)'—for some reason in the singular this time!). However, *tonggu* is simply the normal and common term in Chinese for 'bronze drum', and has nothing whatsoever to do with gong-chimes (like *bonang*) or gongs.

Finally, we may comment upon Kunst's interpretation of a quotation from *Ying ya sheng lan* (in Groeneveldt [1880], 51), where 'we again [sic; besides *Cheng-Ho's travels* in the Dutch translation (Ma Huan 1937)] read of the occurrence in Java of brass drums and gongs, the blowing on coconut shells, and the beating of bamboo drums' (Kunst 1968, 89).¹³ But *Cheng-Ho's travels* and *Ying ya sheng lan* are only different titles for the same text, as already touched upon above; Jaap Kunst has read slightly different translations of the same original. Consequently, instead of two independent sources confirming the existence of *bonangs* and gongs, we have none.

Although it is always dangerous to draw conclusions *e silentio*, it is striking that none of the available Chinese descriptions of Java before c.1500 actually mention gongs, an instrument which after all was well known in China by the time. To give another example: in the section on Java, the *Song shi* (Sung dynastic history) mentions that 'of musical instruments they have the flute, the drum and the clapper; they are furthermore skilled in dance'. (The Chinese text has *di*, *gu* and *ban*, respectively.)¹⁴ The point is that such a conspicuous phenomenon as gong ensembles is not mentioned here either.

In sum, the support in the Chinese records for the early existence of gong ensembles and gong-chimes in Java is exploded. It depends entirely on mistranslations.

2.1.2. JAVANESE SOURCES

In a few cases, gongs are mentioned in Javanese written sources which purport to have deep roots in history.¹⁵ Most of these texts are only extant in comparatively late versions. (The *kakawins*, for instance, survive mostly as nineteenth-century copies, having existed for centuries in oral tradition.) Since many of them—like the famous *Paraton*, which

13. Kunst suggests that 'bamboo drums' in reality refers to bamboo zithers; he states that 'such bamboo idiochords are often called 'drums', and supports his interpretation with a concrete example from Nias. But the word that Groeneveldt correctly rendered as 'drum', *gu* (Courant 1924: *koù*; see for instance p.226, no.629), never means 'zither' in Chinese. (It is a different matter that, according to Mathews, the word *gu* may mean 'strike' (the zither), for instance *gu se*, 'play the *se*'; M. 3479 no.14.) Besides, these 'bamboo drums' are again no part of Ma Huan's text, but another later addition by Mr. Chang Sheng. In his earlier book on Java, Kunst (1973, 112) still makes allowance for the possibility that the two texts may be identical.

14. This text was copied into the dynastic history from a book by the traveller Zhau Rugua (Chau Ju-kua). Zhau, in turn, built his section on Java on information from other authors and travellers. The above quotation from *Song shi* was translated into English in Groeneveldt 1880, 17; a slightly misleading English translation of Zhau's text is found in Chau 1911, 77.

15. In many countries, a kind of romantic wishful thinking has allured scholars to try very hard to interpret various cultural phenomena to be as old as possible—a cultural attitude that in itself is worthy of an anthropological analysis. When the historian is bitten by this bug, the symptoms are usually that his writing temporarily becomes highly speculative. The change in his vocabulary is quickly noted by the perceptive reader.

contains many references to music—should be regarded as ‘more a tale than history’ (Soekmono 1965, 37), their reliability as witnesses with respect musicological detail of some 800 years ago is doubtful. There is reason to believe that, during their long life, they have not always been immune to changes of various kinds: explanations, additions and substitutions in order to make them more intelligible to the public.¹⁶ But even if we presuppose that no copyist during the centuries has ventured to substitute a modern instrument (like ‘gong’) for an older one which was becoming obsolete (like, for example, ‘bronze drum’), we can only be reasonably sure that the word ‘gong’ first turns up sometime around the twelfth century—and then in extremely few sources. It is remarkable that in the large, detailed and very informative manuscript, *Nagara-Kertagama*, from 1365, which is by far our best and most reliable source on early Majapahit, there is nothing that could be suspected as referring to gongs at all.

Jaap Kunst admits (1968, 67) that it is striking that gongs are rarely mentioned in the Old Javanese literature. To account for this fact, he postulates that the gong was also known under other names; the problem is to find out what these names are. True, there are several unidentified terms which seem to stand for musical instruments. Kunst singles out a few of them as possible synonyms for ‘gong’. A case in point is the Sanskrit word *bhèri* which is mentioned in *Adiparwa*, c.1010 (Kunst *ibid.*, 94). Today, it is the name of a small gong.

There is no doubt (*ibid.*, 66) that *bhèri* originally referred to a drum, and that this was the case at least as late as the eleventh century. But on the evidence that *Adiparwa* uses the word *tabeh*, ‘to strike’, in connection with this instrument, and considering the fact that nowadays this verb is used ‘primarily’ (*sic*) for idiophones, Kunst draws the conclusion that in olden times (at least in the eleventh century), *bhèri* might also mean gong.

However, the verb *tabeh* was used for membranophones as well, for example *manabeh ta kendang* (*Ramayana* 22.3)¹⁷ or *kendang gending gubar ghurnitatara tinabeh* (*Hariwangsa* 36.7). Kunst adds (*ibid.*, 67) that ‘when the word [bhèri] is used in combination with *mrdangga* we must bear in mind that it might mean a kind of drum’. True enough; but when this combination occurs in the Old Javanese literature, the same verb may be used: *mrdanga bheri tinabeh* (*Udyogaparwa* 101.7). The basis for the hypothesis that *bhèri* might also mean ‘gong’ in the Old Javanese literature, vanishes. (And we may, of course, also ask: if the word *bhèri* can change its meaning from drum to gong, why cannot *tabeh* change from ‘beater of idiophones and drums’ to ‘beater of idiophones?’)

For reasons of space, it is not possible here to discuss the other words (*gubar*, *mahasara*, *munda* and *saragi*). Suffice it to say that with the possible exception of *gubar*, these cases are still less convincing. (In a later chapter in his book, Kunst himself (*ibid.*, 88) seems to have changed his mind since he now states that *mahasara* and *munda* are drums). But no real basis is given for this guess-work, and in the case of *mahasara* Kunst himself admits that he is just speculating.

It has been argued that the Old Javanese word *gendhing* refers to a kind of gamelan ensemble; *ergo* such orchestras existed already some 600–1000 years ago. But the meaning of the word *gendhing* in the Old Javanese literature seems to be anybody’s guess. Kunst (*ibid.*, 5, 72f) for instance, believes that the word may be linked to ‘gamelan’

16. For an example of the result when a manuscript was copied and altered several times, see Winstedt 1939, 32ff.

17. This and the two following quotations from primary sources are taken from Zoetmulder 1982.

because *tukang gendhing* was recently reported to mean 'gamelan smith'; also, a nowadays rare Balinese gamelan ensemble was, in the 1850s, referred to as *gendhing luwang*. However, he also states clearly that (in the Old Javanese literature) 'nothing can be found out about the nature of the ensemble meant' (*ibid.*, 5). Professor Hood (1970, 151) offers a very different interpretation and insists that *gendhing* meant 'rebab', a bowed instrument originating in the Middle East.

However, a review of the way the word was used in Old Javanese literature (see Zoetmulder 1982, 515) suggests that *gendhing* was a generic term, used before the development of various particular terms for percussion instruments (both idiophones and membranophones): *gendhing gong*, *gendhing kendhang*, *gendhing bheri*, etc.¹⁸ It tells us nothing of either the number of instruments involved or of the relation between the instruments. 'Gamelan', on the other hand, is not a generic term for percussive groups, but refers to a very particular category of music ensemble. Consequently, to translate *gendhing* by 'gamelan' is misleading and can only cause confusion. Zoetmulder points out that the word 'is frequently found in descriptions of armies', which suggests that *gendhing* was used more for signalling than for making 'music' in the Western sense. By metonymic extension the term got the meaning 'organized sound made on such (percussion) instruments', and finally, as the modern gamelan developed from the small percussion ensembles, the present sense of 'melody' or more specifically 'gamelan composition'.

We conclude that there is very little evidence of gongs in Java in Javanese and Chinese written sources before the fourteenth century. After an examination of the sources, the remarkably few examples—in Javanese texts—that still remain mention single gongs only, mostly used for military or signalling purposes; there is no information on gong ensembles or gong-chimes.

2.1.3. WESTERN SOURCES

Around 1515, in an extraordinarily interesting note, the excellent observer, Tomé Pires, provides the first description of a Javanese gong ensemble:¹⁹

... tem musyca de synos tamJem como orgaõos o som de todõs de todas vezes.

The English translation reads: '... they have the music of bells—the sound of all of them playing together is like an organ' (Pires 1944, I, 177).²⁰ But again, this is probably a mis-translation; there is no need for any far-fetched comparisons with organs here. *Orgaõ* conveys the meaning of 'each of the parts in a mechanism or organism, working together',²¹ and *synos* (mod. Port. *sinos*) means bell. In other words, the author gives a good description of an ensemble with (suspended) gongs, playing together in an interlocking pattern.

18. Compare the way words like *burung*, *bunga*, *ikan* etc. are used in Indonesian and Malay, for instance: *burung badak*, 'bird hornbill', *bunga melur*, 'flower jasmine', *ikan lemuru*, 'fish sardine'.

19. Kunst's statement (1973, 5) that the rather uninteresting and trivial remark by Francis Drake in his logbook of 1580 is the oldest European record of Javanese music is wrong by sixty-five years.

20. The Portuguese text is in vol. 2, 419.

21. I am indebted to Dr Lars Hedin, Stockholm, for this translation.

The word 'bell', for 'gong', was used by many subsequent writers during the next centuries, for lack of a suitable Western term. This should not make us think of some high-pitched, tinkling sound. Peter Mundy, in one of the first Western records to use the word 'gong', writes from Sumatra in 1637:

another Copper Instrument called a gung, wheron they strike with a litle wooden Clubbe, and allthough it bee butt a small Instrumentt, not much More than 1 Foote over and 1/2 Foot Deepe, yett it maketh a Deepe hollow humming sound Resembling thatt of a great bell.

Mundy 1919, 123

We have seen that the asserted first record of a bonang in the written sources (Ma Huan, above) was due to a mistake. According to Kunst's standard work, the next description of a bonang is found in a report from 1602:

Their drums are high-pitched pans of some metal called Tombaga, and which generally make a hellish noise ... This music consisted of ten or twelve Tombaga pans, carried upon a handpole, between two men. Each was tuned a note higher than the other ...

Kunst 1973, 155

But this text, translated by Kunst from the eighteenth-century work, *Historische Beschrijving der Reizen*, is corrupt. The original (which actually describes an event in Banten in June 1605) was published by Edmund Scott in 1606, and begins: 'Their drums are huge [not 'high-pitched!'] pannes ...' (Scott 1943, 154–5). It is perfectly clear from Scott's choice of words that he is not describing a small gong-chime of the bonang family (which is 'high-pitched' but can hardly produce 'a most hellish sound'), but a set of large, hanging gongs. The ensemble witnessed by Tomé Pires may have been something similar.

These 'huge pannes' are also represented in a picture from a visit to the same west Javanese area in 1596 (Rouffaer and Ijzerman I, pl. 24).²² It shows four large, suspended gongs, which here play together with two small sets of horizontal gongs; in one of these, four small gongs are visible. This is, to my knowledge, the first visual representation of gongs in Western sources, and the first record of Javanese horizontal gongs anywhere. In the oldest report from the expedition, both the large suspended gongs ('groote beckens'), the loud noise ('een groot gheraes'), and the female dancers are mentioned:

ende hebben oock groote beckens daer zy op cloppen, ende weten so een groote melodye te maken daer de vrouwen na dansen ... dese danserye ghebruijcken zy al des nachts, so datter snachts een groot gheraes is van Beckens end Instrumenten ...

Rouffaer and Ijzerman II, 30

2.1.4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS

There are no old archaeological finds of gongs or gong-chimes to help us establish a chronology. The excavated bonang-kettles mentioned by Kunst (1973, 159) do not prove that gong-chime instruments existed during Majapahit or earlier. These instruments are, as far as I am aware, discussed for the first time by Kunst in the 1920s (1924, 6) when he mentions 'een aantal in den grond of in rivier-beddingen gevonden gongs, bonangketels

22. Reproduced in Kunst 1973, 2, ill. 62; the bibliographic reference is misleading.

en gendirtoetsen, die mogelijk nog van Hindoe-Javaanschen en, op zijn laatst van vroeg-Mataramsche herkomsts zullen zijn'. Thus, according to Kunst, these 'bonang-kettles' could well be from the seventeenth century. But since we know from the above-mentioned picture that at least some kind of rudimentary gong-chimes existed in Java by then, these finds do not add much to our knowledge. Furthermore, in his 1968 study, Kunst now states of these gongs that 'there is no way of determining to which period they belong' (Kunst 1968, 65; cf. 62).

It was pointed out above that the records of gongs in the Old Javanese literature mention single specimens only. This is illustrated as stone-reliefs (all from eastern Java) from c.1370 on. The oldest picture shows one *gong agung* suspended from a pole carried by two soldiers (like in the description by Edmund Scott, above; see Kunst 1968, 66, figs. 54 and 55–9; Kunst 1973, 109). For the rest, the few pictures show small, handheld gongs used possibly for signalling purposes.²³ However, in this context we must mention the *réyong*: two small gongs, each attached at the end of a horizontal stick which lies across the player's lap. The oldest record (a stone sculpture) may, it is guessed, be as old as 'about 1200?' (Kunst 1968, fig. 47); the next one is from c.1300. They always show one musician only, playing his *réyong* with one beater in each hand, much as he would play a two-headed drum. This set-up is noteworthy, since the artists would have no difficulty in reproducing whole musical ensembles if they wanted to.

Only at the end of the fourteenth century (1375) do we encounter the first little group of several *réong* players.²⁴ No similar ensemble seems to be mentioned in the Old Javanese literature.

2.1.5. CONCLUSION

Let us sum up the observations so far. During several centuries, gongs are only recorded sparsely and as single specimens. One small *réong* ensemble turns up around 1375, and groups of suspended gongs are described from c.1515 onwards. Around 1600 we find the first Javanese small gong-chimes, perhaps better described as stands with four small horizontal gongs. This is not much on which to play melodies and it is debatable whether the designation 'gong-chime' (if the term connotes 'device on which to play melodies') is justified. We shall return to this subject below. An informed estimation, then, is that ensembles with suspended gongs developed only around the fifteenth century, and that small horizontal gongs did not carry much importance before the end of the sixteenth century. There seem to be no records at all that they were used in the fifteenth century.

23. Hood (1970, 160) attempts to prove his 'working hypothesis, namely, that instruments of the gong-chime cultures of the Orient become smaller in size through time, and individual units multiply to form sets, the sets in turn being combined to form increasingly large ensembles'. The latter part of the hypothesis is no doubt true, although it seems that this development mainly took part during the last few centuries. The first part, however, is probably wrong. The first records of gongs show that the instruments were rather small. Groslier (1921, 126) estimates that the largest gong in the stone-reliefs of Angkor Wat 'd'après la taille des porteurs ... peut mesurer 0.50 [metres]', and the first representation of a Javanese gong (on Kedaton) confirms this. A few extraordinary large, prestigious court specimens should not be taken as representative for a general development.

24. On the pendapå-terrace of Candi Panataran in Kediri Residency, East Java (Kunst 1968, fig. 62).

2.2. GAMBELAN MUNGGANG

The difficulty with the series of datings of the various gamelans in the contemporary literature is that there is no evidence to discuss. When we try to find out why a particular gamelan is said to be from, say, the ninth century, the whole argument ultimately turns out to rest on the statement that gamelan Munggang was created in 347 AD.²⁵ Our task now will be to examine this statement. Two questions will be asked: first, why should the historian believe at all that it is correct? second, what is the function of the statement in the context of Javanese culture?

2.2.1. THE EVIDENCE OF THE MANUSCRIPTS

We turn first to Professor Hood's starting point, a quotation from Jaap Kunst, who 'without specific documentation' (Hood 1980, 155) reports that gamelan Munggang 'is said to have been put into service in Çaka 269 = 347 AD' (Kunst 1973, 260; cf. Hood 1970, 150).

This information is found in Groneman's book on the Yogyakarta gamelan traditions (Groneman 1890, 48),²⁶ and we may speculate that Kunst, as a student of Javanese music, first came across it here. In his book, Groneman cites the section on the early history of Javanese music in R.Ng. Rangga Warsita's *Pustaka Raja Purwa* from the Surakarta (Solo) kraton (Rangga Warsita 1884), where the mythologic chronology of early gong ensembles is reproduced. This chronicles purports to treat the kings in the period of Mahabharata; Rangga Warsita is considered to be the last of the official chroniclers (the *pujanggas*) and died in 1873. (A perusal of Kunst 1973, 15ff, however, shows that Kunst has gone to the sources and studied both the original text of Rangga Warsita's chronicles and the Yogyakarta kraton gending collection, which is so central to Hood's discussion; see below.) Besides the evidence from Kunst, Hood supports his hypothesis with reference to a seven-volume manuscript in the Yogyakarta kraton. This manuscript, which gives the notation of the balungan part of more than 700 gamelan melodies (*gending*) was written in 1888 (Hood 1980, 159). The introduction begins with the story of the creation of the first gamelan Munggang.

25. One representative example will serve to illustrate this point. Hood (1980, 174) writes as follows: 'By the 13th century, as we have pointed out, Gamelan Munggang already was regarded as an ancient and sacred type of ensemble to be reserved only for very special occasions'. This sentence, which states both that the gamelan Munggang existed and what particular functions it performed during a particular century, refers to another sentence two pages earlier: 'As early as the period of the Majapahit empire (thirteenth to sixteenth centuries) gamelan Munggang already was reserved as an ancient and holy gamelan used in connection with the religious rituals of Javanese Hinduism'. This time, we get a footnote referring to Kunst 1973, 260. When we turn to this page for proof, we are treated to the information that Batara Guru (= Shiva) created gamelan Munggang in 347 to be able to call the gods for consultations, and some pure guesswork: 'The position which it occupied in the kraton of Majapahit corresponded, it appears, to that which is reserved to-day for the gamelans sekati ...'. New references lead us to Stutterheim's *De Kraton van Madjapahit*, Goens' *Reisbeschrijving van den weg uit Samarangh nae de koninklijke hofplaets Mataram...* and Hood's own article of 1970. But the information given on gamelan Munggang in Stutterheim's little book (1948, 51, 68) is limited to observations on contemporary practice (he does not refer to any records that it existed several centuries ago), Goens's extensive report is about Mataram in the middle of the seventeenth century (and tells us nothing about Munggang—see Goens 1656), and Hood's own article has nothing to add.

26. Groneman, in turn, refers to p. 253 in the first volume of the printed version of Rangga Warsita's manuscript.

Professor Hood finds that gamelan Munggang, and also a number of other musical instruments, are mentioned in both the section on the early history of Javanese music of *Pustaka Raja Purwa* and in the corresponding section of the introduction to the Yogyanese gendhing collection. He takes the fact of the existence of the same information in two different sources as confirmation that these instruments in fact had an early existence, the rationale being that the two sources are independent (since they come from two competing courts) and therefore support each other.

For reasons of space, we cannot reproduce the contents of the two texts. But it is possible to demonstrate the close parallelism of the two manuscripts in tabular form:

	Groneman (<i>Pustaka Raja Purwa</i>)	Hood (<i>Yogya gendhing collection</i>)
162/240 ²⁷		tetabuhan Lokananta or gamelan Munggang
Shiva	Sri padoekå rádjå Måhådewå Boeddå	Sang Hjang Batara Guru = 'the godlike king of Medang Kamulan, Sri Panduka Maharadja Déwabuddha'
created	taboehan Lokanåntå	tetabuhan Lokananta
269/347		
Shiva orders	Giri Nåtå	
Indra to make	Endrå gamelan Lokånåntå	
279/357		
Indra created	Endrå	Sang Hjang Héndro
out of:	taboehan soerèndrå	tetabuhan Suréndra
	gending (rebab) kålå (kendang) songkå (gong) pamatoet (ketoek) sahoeran (kenong) gamelan soerèndro	gending, now called rebab kala, the modern kendang sangka, a type of gong pamatut, ... the ketuk sahuran, ... the kenong
326/404		
Indra presents it to	sangjang Endrå	Sang Hjang Héndro
of	Sri måhårádjå Kano	Sri Maharadja Kano
who adds	Poerwåtjaritå	Purwatjarita
after which	saloendi (kempoel) garantang (gambang)	Salundi, ... the kempul garantang, ... gambang
	het gebruik van den gamelan	he then allowed his people

27. Chronology according to the traditional Javanese *çaka* and the Western system.

328/406

	sedert dien tijd op Java algemeen is geworden	to make copies
	vorst Kano in navolging van de bewoners van 't land Adjam, ... Joden en Hindoe's oorlogs-taboehan ..., mardånggå genoemd	Sri Maharadja Kano imitating the inhabitants of the country of Hindu-Arabic-Jewish origin war instruments ... Tetabuhan Mardangga

Kunst (1973, 15) lists the musical instruments that are mentioned in the Solonese *Pustaka Raja Purwa* (and above), and Hood (1970, 152) compares this list to the instruments in the introduction to the Yogyakarta kraton gending collection. Considering Surakarta and Yogyakarta's 'past history of open or smoldering hostility' (1970, 153), Hood finds it significant that the two lists are so similar. In his view, this similarity testifies to the two manuscripts' credibility also on historical events of very long ago. He states that both sources 'represent the summation of a long oral tradition' (1970, 153) and (with reference to the Yogyakarta manuscript) he maintains that 'it is possible that some of the traditions recorded in this source stretch back into proto- and prehistoric times' (1980, 158). This, in turn, makes it possible for him to regard the story of the creation of the first gamelan in the fourth century as a true statement of a historical fact, notwithstanding his occasional use of expressions like 'semi-mythical' and the like. For Mantle Hood, this assignment of the Munggang to the fourth century is an indispensable starting point; the datings of the other 'archaic' ensembles are then arrived at by a kind of interpolation.

As is clear from the above, the two texts are indeed very similar; probably more so than Hood apparently is aware of, since he has himself obviously not consulted neither *Pustaka Raja Purwa* nor Groneman's summary.²⁸ Not only are the Javanese terms for the musical instruments the same in both sources, but the historical narration is strikingly similar both as far as basic structure and particulars are concerned.

This similarity between the two manuscripts, then, is the exact opposite of a proof that the tradition is old and reliable. What we have is not two independent lines of tradition which mutually support each other. Instead, the very similarity between the two accounts indicates that they are interrelated; most probably, the introduction to the Yogyakarta kraton gending collection simply used the historical information in the prestigious and authoritative *Pustaka Raja Purwa*. In doing this, the compiler of the Yogyakarta collection is part of a by now well-established tradition. A comparison with the introduction to *Noot Gendhing lan Tembang* and with Prajapangrawit's *Wédhé Pradangga*²⁹ shows that these two works have used the same information as in the table above, and even retained the same wording. The explanation is given by Prajapangrawit himself in his introduction: the sources to his book 'included selections from *Pustaka Raja*' (Karawitan 1987, II, 33). This close connection between *Pustaka Raja* and the Yogyakarta collection is further underlined by an observation on the former work which was made in the article 'Vokalia dan Instrumentalia pada Gamelan' (cited Karawitan 1987, II, 309) concerning the five instrumental terms mentioned under the year 279/357. The author, from the editorial staff of Udan Mas, states that

28. Otherwise, he would not have used the expression 'without specific documentation' (see above).

29. Both reprinted in English translations in Karawitan 1987, vol. 2.

Ranggawarsita probably has mistranslated these terms (except for *kala* and *parmatut*), and that the most likely correct translation is: *gendhing* means 'gamelan', *sangka* means 'a kind of trumpet', and *sahuran* is not a term for an instrument.

These corrections appear to be largely in order, as confirmed by Kunst (1968, 5, *gendhing*,³⁰ and 1968, 30ff, *sangka*). And the point here is that Rangga Warsita's mistranslations in *Pustaka Raja Purwa* turn up also in the Yogya gendhing collection (as may be gathered from the table above). Consequently, the text in the Yogya gendhing collection is dependent upon the version in *Pustaka Raja Purwa*. Contrary to Professor Hood, we must conclude that the existence of the gamelan Munggang myth in two different manuscripts does not support any statements that the actual ensemble came into being almost 2000 years ago.

Finally, a few words on the source and only remaining basis for the accepted chronology, in much contemporary literature, of the history of the Javanese gamelan, Rangga Warsita's *Pustaka Raja*. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there was a renaissance of classical Javanese literature. This renaissance arose in the central Javanese courts with Surakarta as its main centre. The works of the Surakarta authors, the *pujanggas*, spread all over Java and were considered as models to be imitated; in the words of Pigeaud, who has mapped this development for us, 'in the nineteenth century, Surakarta renaissance literature was considered as the Javanese literature *par excellence*' (Pigeaud 1967, 7). Thus it was no remarkable phenomenon that the compiler of the Yogya gendhing collection copied parts of a recent Surakarta text in his introduction.

As noted above, Rangga Warsita was the last of these *pujanggas*. He collected traditions and old stories which he arranged chronologically. However, his chronology and the exact years assigned to each event were products of his imagination only; he simply made it all up. Because of this, the impression he gives of being historically reliable is entirely spurious (Pigeaud *ibid.*, 170). This fact, of course, is a death-blow to the hitherto accepted chronology of the gamelan. And two questions arise: why did Rangga Warsita embark on this, from the outsider's point of view, almost bizarre undertaking of making up dates for the entries in his great collection of tales? And why did he put the creation of the gamelan as early as 347 AD? Pigeaud formulates the answer to the first question: 'His, at first sight preposterous, idea of dating all tales is to be considered as a consequence of his thoroughly Javanese belief in an all-pervading Order, which should be visible in myth and ancient history (*ibid.*, 170)'.

The second question merits closer investigation.

2.2.2. GAMELAN MUNGGANG IN JAVANESE CULTURE

Rangga Warsita's assertions that gamelan Munggang was created in a distant past should be regarded as an aspect of its particular position in central Javanese court culture rather than as well-founded testimonials of its historical development.

In Western writing, the role of gamelan Munggang in Kraton culture has been badly misunderstood. For instance, Groneman (1890, 45) tells us that its music on the *siti inggil* 'verhoogt den luister der *garebeg*-feesten', and in Hansen Raae's free translation of Tirtokoesoemo (1931?, 57) we read that what the Munggang plays on this occasion is a 'song of welcome'. In reality, its functions are to be found on a much deeper level.

30. But cf. on gendhing in the section on Javanese sources above.

First of all, the gamelan Munggang case may be regarded as a classic anthropological instance of legitimization of authority. A myth is not an historical record, but neither is it just a story. Instead, it may be regarded as a statement of events in the remote past that are seen as the justification of existing institutions or validation of social arrangements. The myth, then, becomes a 'social charter' which defines the rights and privileges of groups and persons to particular positions of social power and to particular property rights; it has to be interpreted by reference to its connection with other extant institutions in society. For instance, 'one requisite for the establishment of kingship is often some claim to a specially close relationship with supernatural beings. This claim may rest on the belief that the king is actually descended from the gods' (Mair 1970, 214; cf. Firth 1951, 239f; Gluckman 1965, 26; Mair 1974, 204).

In Java, new dynasties and kings always tried to present themselves as the rightful heirs of the realm and the perpetuators of the existing order, not as the inaugurators of a new era. To stress this, several means were used. The most important, to be considered here, are genealogy and *pusaka*.

2.2.2.1. GENEALOGY

The basic claim to authority was that the kings were actually descended from the gods. The seminal text on myth, seen in this light, is Malinowski's 1925 Frazer lecture in which he states that myth 'is not an explanation in satisfaction of a scientific interest, but a narrative resurrection of a primeval reality, told in satisfaction of deep religious wants, moral cravings, social submissions ...' (Malinowski 1954, 101; cf. also 144). Instances could easily be multiplied from the ethnographic literature.

In the course of Javanese history, we find this standard pattern constantly at work. One of the first documented cases is the so-called Erlangga poem (dated 1041 AD), discussed in this light by Berg (1956, 172ff). Another example is Angrok (twelfth century), the founder of the kingdom of Singasari. In Pararaton, 'The Book of Kings (from Singasari to Majapahit)', he is called the son of Brahma, the (adopted) child of Bhatara Guru [= Shiva], and an incarnation of Wisnu (Schrieke 1957, 9; cf. Berg 1951–2, 6ff). And so on, throughout the following centuries.

2.2.2.2. PUSAKA

The next technique is merely an extension of the previous one. Pusaka are sacred heirlooms, a category of objects that are inherited from previous generations. Their role in this context can hardly be overestimated.

When new rulers and dynasties appeared on the scene, there was always a danger that the sacred continuity would appear to be broken. The point is brought forward by Schrieke (1957, 9) who continues: 'Cogent proofs had therefore to be brought forward showing that the new rulers were really regarded as legitimate sovereigns. Hence the emphasis [was] laid on their *kesakten* [magic power], on the passing of the mystic light of royalty to the new rulers'. He mentions as one case in point that the imperial crown of the Hindu kingdom of Majapahit was worn for years by the rulers of Mataram as outward sign of the continuity of power. Another example is the name 'gamelan Majapahit' which is more easily explained by similar claims rather than as a kind of historical testimony.

Thus, belief in divine origin, as well as genealogy, myth, and supposedly age-old *pusaka* were invoked in legitimizing the position of the ruler. Powerful objects like gamelan

Munggang, surrounded by a mythical aura, fulfilled the important task of visualizing the link with the divine past, thereby reminding the citizens of the ruler's right to his elevated position.

2.2.2.3. COSMOLOGICAL ASPECTS

A deeper insight into the role of gamelan Munggang in the context of Javanese culture is possible by examining in some detail the cosmological aspects of kingship in Central Java. In this respect, kingdoms like Madjapahit, Mataram and the later sultanates are largely representative of the religious and philosophical pattern that we also find in the other Indianized states of Southeast Asia (Coëdes 1971, 100f, 119f).

The basic tenet in the Javanese conception of the world is the idea of universal harmony. In central Java, the human realm was constructed to mirror this cosmic balance, because 'humanity is constantly under the influence of forces emanating from the directions of the compass and from stars and planets ... Harmony between the empire and the universe is achieved by organizing the former as an image of the latter, as a universe on a smaller scale' (von Heine-Geldern 1956, 1). In practice, both the physical lay-out of the capital and the organization of the formal administration of the state were arranged to reflect this cosmic harmony.

The magical centre of the capital and the kingdom is the palace itself, the *kraton* (von Heine-Geldern 1956, 11; Geertz 1980, 109ff; Mulder 1978, 14; Magnis-Suseno 1981, 93ff). Like everything else, it is designed to replicate the cosmic balance and symmetry. In the middle of the microcosmos, under Mount Meru in the *kraton*, which is the magical centre of the kingdom, is the king, *ratu*; his sacred energy, *sakti*,³¹ is so great that even his finger-clippings are saved for their inherent power. He is the point where macro- and microcosmos meet, and his seat is the axis of the world. He is the lens, the prism, through which the divine grace radiates all over the kingdom (Anderson 1972, 8), gradually getting weaker the farther away it reaches. With the king rests the main responsibility for upholding the unity and equilibrium between the human and the cosmic orders; his inner harmony mirrors the balance of conflicting powers in the universe.

How does the king become a 'prism', capable of attracting this cosmic power? To explain this, we must introduce the twin concepts *halus* and *kasar*. *Halus* may be translated, roughly, as pure, refined, controlled, soft, and *kasar* as coarse, crude, uncontrolled (cf. Geertz 1964, 232ff; Anderson 1972, 38; Magnis-Suseno 1981, 87ff). The *halus-kasar* axis is a conceptual scheme that can be applied to most aspects and products of human life, including batik, dance, music, and behaviour in general; every Javanese is familiar with it (Peacock 1967, 65).

The *halus* behaviour is not only the sign of a good upbringing and one of the symbols of a high status group in Javanese society (Cohen 1976, 74f). Through his politesse and self-control, each gentleman is a microcosm of the heavenly order (Peacock 1975, 170). The goal is to be able to control one's human emotions and passions; it is this inner maturity that shows in the outward composure. A *kasar* person lacks inner balance; he may be capricious, unpredictable, even potentially dangerous. This contrast between *halus* and *kasar*, between the spiritual control and the lowly passions, is dramatized in the shadow-play, *wayang kulit*.

Here, the most central of all the puppets is not one of the living creatures at all, but the *gunungan* or *kayon*. This is a large and very versatile puppet, which performs a variety

31. Cf. Magnis-Suseno 1981, 85 and *sakti* in Zoetmulder 1982.

of functions during the play. Its shape is that of a mountain (hence the name *gunungan*); on one side it pictures a tree growing up from a small building. The tree is the Tree of Life, possibly derived from the well-known Indo-European symbol. Various animals are playing in its foliage: monkeys, birds or serpents are usually present, sometimes even tigers, buffaloes, etc. Its roots are within the house, and to pass through its doors is, in fact, to enter *Surga*, Heaven. But the door is guarded by two hideous *raksasa*, giants, armed with swords: the twins Hyang Cingkarabala and Hyang Balaupata. They represent the two strongest of all human powers: hunger and sexuality (Ulbricht 1972, 5f). Man can hope to enter through the gate of Fulfilment and meet God only on condition that he has purified his soul and mastered his longing for food and his carnal desires. In the world of the wayang, it is stressed that the way to purify the soul and to attain complete self-control is to meditate (Hardjowirogo 1965, 49).

The role of meditation in generating power is a common theme in Javanese culture. In Javanese yogaistic traditions, divine power is absorbed with the help of techniques such as fasting, going without sleep, sexual abstinence, or other kinds of *tapa*, or asceticism (Anderson 1972, 8; Mulder 1978, 23). However, in this quest for insight and power, meditation seems to be the most efficient tool.

Power, in the context of Javanese culture, is not equivalent to brute, physical force. Instead, it emanates from an inner quality, the *kebatinan*. To have this power, *kasektèn*, is to be *sekti*. Meditative concentration means contact with the divine, a mystical union with God, and accumulation of spiritual energy. The more the mystic can concentrate on his union with God, and the more he can turn away from chaos, *lahir*, the *kasar* aspect, the more he becomes a receptacle for the spiritual powers (Magnis-Suseno 1981, 90); indeed, the most obvious sign of the man of Power is his ability to concentrate (Anderson 1972, 13). And this is the way the ruler, in his position at the very centre of the microcosmos, and in the extraordinary concentration of deep meditation, becomes a mediator between the mundane world and the world of God.

It remains now to assign gamelan Munggang its proper place in this cultural context. Kunst (1924, 27f; 1973, 259) lists several occasions for playing the Munggang. Against the above background, one of them is of particular interest, namely, its use during the *garebeg*. This is a state ritual which is celebrated three times a year. The basic structure of all *garebegs* is the same. The details need not be described here, but one central aspect is that the Sultan and his attendants move from his private quarters to the *Siti inggil lor*, a raised area with a large hall in the northern part of the kraton. The route of this procession is rich with symbolism.

Within the *Siti inggil* there are two small halls, *Bangsal Witono* ('Seat in Heaven', the place of the Munggang gamelan during the ceremony) and—adjacent to it in the north—*Bangsal Mangantur Tangkil*, which symbolises a soul within the body. The latter is the place of the Sultan's throne, the centre of the whole ceremony.

The Sultan's ceremonial walk from his private quarters to the throne is not only a movement from one building to another. This time-space process corresponds to the separation phase in van Gennep's analysis of the rites of passage (van Gennep 1908, 21). The procession passes through a number of symbolic barriers, stages in the Sultan's increasing concentration. He approaches and ascends the throne, and sits down to meditate; this is the moment when his mind reaches its highest state of concentration, the liminal stage, the point of contact with God and the Macrocosmos. And at the same moment gamelan Munggang begins to play.

Most schools of Hinduism accept that there are eight steps in the practice of yoga, leading up to liberation from the world and a realization of the self as a transcendent spirit. They are, in brief: (1) purity of mind, (2) cultivation of good habits, (3) adoption of

suitable postures for meditation, (4) breathing exercises, (5) restraint of the senses, (6) keeping the attention fixed on some object during meditation, (7) meditation on the object of attention, (8) perfect concentration of the mind on the object of attention. All these points are relevant during the *garebeg*. For the present discussion, however, the most interesting one is (4). In Yoga practice, these breathing exercises 'conduce to the steadiness of the body and the mind. They consist of deep inspiration, retention of breath and expiration, with measured durations in the proportions of one to four and four to two time units, respectively. The practice of breath control enables one to suspend breathing for a long time and thereby prolong the state of concentration' (Chatterjee 1953, 223). Another and more general function of breath control during meditation is that, like correct posture, it helps to control the body and keeps it from distracting the mind (Bhattacharyya 1953, 166).

The only authoritative report on the way the Munggang is played on this crucial occasion seems to be the one by Brongtodiningrat (1978, 16): '*perlahan-lahan dan tidak keras, menurut rythme keluar masuknya nafas*' ('soft and not hard, following the rhythm of breath expiration and inhalation').³² For the argument, this information is highly pertinent, considering the importance of breath control during meditation.

We are now in the position to assess the function of gamelan Munggang in this context of kraton ceremonialism. It is not only the tangible (and audible) symbol of the ruling group in society, but also a most important part of the liminal rite, a tool in the communication between the Micro- and Macrocosmos. To utilize an image by Anderson (1972, 8f), it is part of the mechanism that, during the phase of transition, makes the burning-glass (i.e., the king, the eternal meeting-point between heaven and earth) perform its function of concentrating the divine light to an extraordinary degree in the centre, only to let it pour out over the realm to give prosperity and happiness.

2.2.3. CONCLUSION

This analysis of gamelan Munggang viewed in the context of Javanese society has shown that it was a cultural necessity to assign its origin to a very distant past. One of its functions was to validate the Sultan's claim to be the legitimate ruler of the realm; another was to serve as a tool during the rite when he attained his mystic unity with the cosmic powers. It was inconceivable that a 'sacred' ensemble, fulfilling a vital function in the mediating process between the divine cosmos and the human world, could be of recent manufacture; and the fact that it was a *pusaka* with a legitimizing function meant, virtually by definition, that it was created sometime in the mythical past. In other words, to equip gamelan Munggang with a very long history was a cultural necessity, not the result of a reliable historical tradition.

From this point of view, the mythology around gamelan Munggang performs its function well. Rangga Warsita stated that the first gamelan was created by Sang Hjang Batara Guru (= the Indian god Shiva) in 347, a date of his own invention. The name of the ensemble was Lokananta, 'heavenly music played on invisible instruments'. From this mythological context, Professor Hood picks one item, the year 347, and uses it as the only, and somewhat fragile, basis for his entire series of datings of Javanese gamelans.

This insight is a good starting-point for a reconsideration of the historical evidence concerning the early gong ensembles on Java, such as the one carried out in the first section of the present paper. Since such an analysis does not give any support to the

32. This observation, like many others of a more technical character, is omitted from the English version.

theories of early gamelan ensembles in the area, it conforms well to what we have learned of the real character of the gamelan Munggang myth.

3. THE DIFFUSION OF THE GONGS

Many independent sources, the first of them being Tomé Pires around 1515 (see Pires 1944) and Duarte Barbosa in 1518 (Barbosa 1921, 198), confirm that Javanese gongs were in demand in the archipelago during the sixteenth century: 'They have enough copper bells and *fruseleira*³³ bells for the needs of these parts. It is great merchandise' (Pires 1944, 180). Some of these gongs were exported to Malacca and then distributed over the whole archipelago in return for cloves and other export wares (Barbosa 1921, 174f); others were sold directly to the customers.

The first description of a gong ensemble in the archipelago (outside of Java) was made by Pigafetta, who took part in Magellan's circumnavigation. It was located in Cebu, central Philippines, in early April 1521. The ensemble consisted of one drum, two small and one large gong, and one pair of cymbals (?). Pigafetta states that the 'metal drums' are Chinese, but there is reason to believe that he is in error here; the character of the little ensemble, his description of its soft sound—'*elles sonnans d'accord / qui rendoyent ung son tres doux*' (Pigafetta 1969, fol. 40r), and the name *Aghon* (Jav. *agung*), for the gongs, makes it more likely that they represented the knobbed, Javanese tradition.³⁴ He was followed by a swarm of subsequent writers who witnessed the increasing trade in Javanese gongs over the whole area. It is noteworthy that when these writers give information on prices etc., they invariably talk about single gongs, never about sets of gongs or gong-chimes. It is clear from the source material that these gongs are luxury items. We find them occasionally in rituals, but primarily as status symbols and investment objects among the affluent nobility:

The Kings and great men set great value on these and keep them both great and small as a treasure and estate.

Barbosa 1921, 203

In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century reports we find several statements to the same effect. These products, manufactured from rare and expensive bronze, by skilled craftsmen, were economically out of reach for ordinary people. As today, wealth was very unevenly distributed among the population; the expression *orangkay* (Malay *orang kaya*, rich man) is repeatedly met with in travellers' reports from the whole archipelago up to the present day. In 1521, Pigafetta found that one gong was worth approximately 130 kg. of cloves. This equalled, roughly, 100 knives, or 30 pairs of scissors, or 10 axes, or 30 kg. bronze, or about 25 glasses. Pigafetta (1969, 118, 169) adds: 'And the king had all that'. No wonder that the numerous sixteenth-century reports detailing the kind of merchandise traded between the islands of the northern archipelago hardly ever mention gongs. Here, they were obviously too rare to be of much importance.

33. Bronze, or a mixture of copper and lead (much inferior to bronze).

34. Although, due to the rise of Malacca as the dominant trade centre, Chinese trade contacts with Java were not as extensive as they had been a century earlier, the Chinese still played a considerable part in Javanese trade (see Meilink-Roelofsz 1962, 26). The strong possibility that the gongs were transported on Chinese junks may account for Pigafetta's mistake.

The second factor which contributed to the maintenance of gongs within narrow social bounds was the trade pattern which was to develop and become firmly established in the whole area during the next few centuries. With the growing spread of Muslim preachers/traders and the expanding spheres of influence of the Malay states (like Brunei), Malay petty rulers seized control over local trade. The result was that the locals, 'Dayak' and others, were 'compelled to sell their produce to some neighbouring raja or rich Bugis for what he thinks proper to give them... These are all pirates who paralyze the exertions of thousands of individuals who would be otherwise active...' (Dalton 1837). These circumstances may at least partly explain the observations on the 'Dusuns' relations with the outside world' (or, rather, lack of such contacts) that were made by several western visitors. For instance, in 1775 Jesse was told by informants from Brunei that the Dusun rice-farmers had 'no purchaser for their commodity but the Borneyans [= people from Brunei], who treat them very indifferently, the intercourse, of consequence, is not carried to any extent' (Jesse 1794, 5); and Dalrymple confirms a few decades later that the Idaan (as the Dusun were called by then) 'from their want of foreign Communication ... are less addicted to Commerce, than the Value of their Country would make it imagined' (Dalrymple 1792, 535; *ibid.* 1806, 58). Since they were thus to a large extent cut off commercially from the outside world, the Dusun had few possibilities to buy gongs, even if they could afford to.

Still, little by little, gongs eventually penetrated into the Dusun and Murut societies. This seems to have happened in two waves: first the suspended gong ensembles, and later the gong-chimes. Generally speaking, the suspended gongs are found among practically all ethnic groups, and then in both ritual and profane contexts. The gong-chimes have a more limited distribution and are often (for instance among the Lotud) only used for entertainment, dance accompaniment, etc. The two should preferably be discussed separately, so let us distinguish between the *suspended gong complex* and the *gong-chime complex*.

3.1. SUSPENDED GONGS

The suspended gong complex has a wide distribution in all societies in the area under discussion (north Borneo and Mindanao). It is well integrated in ritual life everywhere; important ceremonies in the life cycle and the rice year are (or were until recently) normally accompanied by gongs. The antiquity of these traditions as a widely distributed phenomenon should not be exaggerated, but the development started early. We find the first observations on ritual gong music (in the southern Philippines) in the sixteenth century. As we noted above, these gongs were of the Javanese kind. This does not necessarily mean that they were all manufactured in Java. Already during Majapahit, some six hundred years ago, Brunei was part of the Javanese empire; and when the Indonesian gong ensembles developed and became integrated in ceremonies of state as symbols of its power (both in the divine and the worldly sense of the word), it is natural that this music and the ritual dances spread to the vassal states. However, when the famous Brunei bronze craftsmen began to make gongs is not at all clear. Pigafetta observed brass cannons there in 1521,³⁵ but it is believed that gong manufacture belongs to an unspecified, later phase of the Brunei bronze industry (Huyser 1929, 129). Forrest

35. In translations, 'brass' is the term generally used (for instance, Pigafetta 1969, 101; Lim and Shariffuddin 1976, 142). The French manuscript has 'artillerie de fonte' (Pigafetta 1969, fol. 60r).

(1779, 176) states flatly that the knobbed gongs he observed in Sulu (southern Philippines) in 1775 come from Cheribon, Java.

There are several facts that link Javanese music and dance to north Borneo. For instance, with respect to ritual dance, the very informative *Nagara-kertagama* from 1365 tells us about a dance of crucial importance (Pigeaud 1960–2, I, 51; my emphasis):

çrí rajya rikanang witana *mangigel* bini bini juga tang maninhali mark

in Pigeaud's translation (*ibid.*, III, 78):

The Illustrious Kings in the *witana* (great hall) there danced with *binis* (women), *binis* (women) only were the onlookers, entering into the Presence

From his commentary (*ibid.*, IV, 517):

The dance of a male performer in front of a female dancer (*mangigel*) is repeatedly mentioned in the texts. Dances of that kind were often performed on the occasion of religious festivals. Probably they were connected with the idea of fruitfulness and the cult of an ancient chthonic Mother Goddess [...].

This word, *mangigel*, is also found in the chronicles *Sejarah Melayu*, in the oldest version from the sixteenth century. The Malay Sultan Mansor Syah visits Majapahit in Java to marry the beautiful princess Raden Galuh Cendera Kirana, and as part of these state celebrations there is music and dance (Shellabear 1981, 89):

memalu segala bunyi-bunyian, daripada gong, gendang... giring... ada yang mengigal...

made all kinds of music, on gong(s), drum(s)... giring... some people danced...

Mention is made also of several other instruments. The text deserves an extended analysis, but it is striking that the little foot-bells, *giring*, are found in this context. One of the most important ceremonial dances among the north Borneo Dusun is called *mengigol*; it features little foot-bells, called *giring-giring*. This dance is closely associated with the head-hunting complex, an extremely important institution in Dusun culture which was intimately associated with rice cultivation. The rice economy of the Dusun is a cultural focus (in Herskovits's sense—see Herskovits 1964, 542–3), and head-hunting was crucial to obtaining a good harvest, understandably an extremely important concern in a peasant society.

It is also possible to establish links between Java and the Dusun gong music. Again, consider gamelan Munggang. Its music was transcribed thus by Jaap Kunst (1973, I, 259; cf. Hood 1980, 167):

Gamelan Munggang

Bonang

Kenong japan

2 gong

ageng

Bedug

Kendang

But this conception of the Munggang music as a three-tone melody, accompanied by a few other gongs and drums, is ethnocentric and misleading. As Hoffman (1975, 8ff) points out, the different pitches in *all* of the instruments actually mark subdivisions of the temporal cycle. There is no essential difference in musical function between the three bonang kettles and the rest of the instruments, no Munggang 'melody', only interlocking rhythmic patterns; and it would be wrong to impose irrelevant musical concepts (like 'melody') upon a music which obeys a very different musical grammar.

If we now return to the picture of a small, west Javanese gong ensemble from 1596, we realize that it depicts a Munggang-type of ensemble—which, after all, consists of both horizontal and vertical gongs!—rather than an ensemble with two melodic instruments (gong-chimes) with a somewhat limited range.

When we transcribe the Munggang music informed by this insight, we get the following:

Gamelan Munggang

Bonang 3 and
Kenong japan

Bonang 2

Bonang 1

Kendang

Gong agung (a)

Gong agung (b)

In this rhythmic interplay, some parts are performed on suspended gongs, others on horizontal ones (the *bonang*). It turns out to be virtually identical to the *Magagung* music, another of the most important pieces of the north Borneo gong music repertory. It accompanies a variant of the ritual *Sumazao*-dance, and again we are at the very heart of the old head-hunting ceremonies. (*Azau* denotes a war attack (to take heads), the prefix *sum*, I was informed, signifies violence.)

The music is performed on suspended gongs of different sizes, hanging in a row from a horizontal beam. Pitch is not critical, and there is no set tone system; but since the gongs become increasingly larger, one gong is always somewhat higher than the next. It is quite

probable that this is the kind of ensemble heard by Tomé Pires in Java around 1515, and observed by Edmund Scott in west Java almost a century later.

Magagung

Sianang (a)	♩ ♩ ♩ ♩	♩ ♩ ♩ ♩
Tompangung		♩ ♩
Tawag-tawag (a)	♩	♩ ♩ ♩
Sinang (b)	♩	♩ ♩ ♩ ♩
Tawag-tawag (b)	—	♩ —
Agung haid (a)	—	○
Agung haid (b)	○	—

For comparison, the third example reproduces two closely-related and very common colotomic structures in the current standard repertory of the central Javanese gamelan: *Ketawang* and *Ladrang*. Obviously, gamelan Munggang is alive and well, not only in north Borneo but also in the 'ordinary' gamelan repertory.

Central Javanese gamelan, colotomic structure

Kethuk	♩ ♩ ♩ ♩	♩ ♩ ♩ ♩
Kempul		♩ ♩
Kenong	♩	♩ ♩ ♩
Gong (ketawang) or: Gong (ladrang)	○	○
	○	—

To round off this part of the discussion, let us briefly return to the west coast of Sabah. Now, we are able to find the solution to a problem of which every gong-player in north Borneo is aware, but cannot answer: why is a particular category of Sabah gongs, of the highest quality, known as *Chanang Kimanis*?³⁶ Answer: Brunei exercised an indirect control over its northern Borneo territory through its control of the coast, in particular the

36. Cf. Rutter (1929, 113f) on the *Chanang Kimanis* from his stay in Sabah some eighty years ago.

mouths of the rivers (Brown 1978, 136f, 143f). Kimanis, a small place on the coast in southwestern Sabah, was the northernmost outpost of the Brunei sphere of influence, and an important port for the import of Brunei gongs—*instruments that had the reputation of being of very high quality*. And these were obviously not the only instruments to enter Sabah *via* Kimanis: according to Dalrymple's report from the early nineteenth century, the locals here also carried on an extensive trade and travelled as far as Java in their own boats (Dalrymple 1806, 59).³⁷

3.2. GONG-CHIMES

3.2.1. THE MIDDLEMEN

For this instrument, the above-mentioned pirate centres were, if possible, of still more importance. Some of them had nothing to do with any local ruler at all, but were simply pirate villages and nothing else. At the same time, they had established contacts with more distant political powers. It was primarily the Brunei nobles who, trying to increase their wealth and political power and revolting against the Sultan, formed various alliances with the pirates (Tarling 1978, 119 and 122). Thus, there were close relations between the pirates of the Tuaran and Tempassuk (Kota Belud) area and Brunei, with its bronze industry and gong forgeries (Hunt 1837, 24).

These two places were among the most notorious pirate nests on the west coast of Sabah. The pirates were Muslims of the Illanun and Bajau groups,³⁸ in Tuaran, the latter was by far the most important. For them, trade and piracy were, so to speak, an integrated whole (cf. Meilink-Roelofsz 1962, 102), and an observation on a similar pirate community (at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula) probably applied here as well: 'Everything the inhabitants of Tumasik possess is a product of their plundering of Chinese junks' (*ibid.*, 19).

José Maceda (1963, I, 62f) has suggested that the gong-chime complex probably spread with Islam since on Mindanao it is found mainly among Muslim groups. And true, the general opinion among the Dusun is that the Bajau are excellent musicians on the *kulintangan* (which is the name for the gong-chime in north-western Borneo and the southern Philippines). But the rice-farming Dusun/Kadazan communities on the west coast of Borneo where the *kulintangan* is common, such as Tuaran and Papar, are not Muslim. On the contrary, the historical records agree that the relations between the slave-taking Bajau (Hunt 1837, 13) and the head-hunting Dusun have for very long been extremely tense—two socio-cultural systems that clash on every imaginable point. Marauding and open warfare were common. Some time in the eighteenth century, the Dusun finally succeeded in driving the Bajau out of Tuaran; instead, the latter settled in the nearby 'water village' of Mengkabong.

Considering the open hostilities between the Bajau and the Dusun, it appears to be a rather problematic hypothesis that the former would act as intermediaries in the gong trade between the outside world and the Dusun. As late as 1862, the Bajaus of

37. It is difficult to believe that this otherwise very careful and trustworthy observer is correct when he gives the impression that it was the Idaan (= 'Dusun' rice-farmers) that sailed to Java. Most probably, the Javanese products were instead imported on Bajau prahus. Enriquez (1927, 117) learned in Tempassuk in the 1920s that gongs were also made by the Malays (= Brunei people) in Kimanis. This information is not confirmed by any other source. Most observers agree that gongs have never been manufactured in north Borneo.

38. Letter from James Brooke to J.C. Templer 1845, quoted in Tarling 1978, 124.

Mengkabong are described as 'a very lawless people'; they are 'bold seamen, and will venture anywhere in search of wealth' (StJohn 1962, I, 293 and 291); and Enriquez (1927, 136) maintained in 1927 that no one seems to love the Bajau'.

But the fact remains that the Dusun learned the music from the Bajau. In the *kulintangan* traditions of the Lotud, three 'melodies' (*lagu*) are used: *Ayas*, *Kudidi*, and *Tidung*. These are not melodies in the western sense of the word. Rather, they refer to the kind of rhythmic modes that are used; like in blues, this provides a basis upon which the musician may improvise, or (if he lacks the imagination and creativity) play a more or less personal, set version.³⁹ Now, a visit to Mengkabong shows that they use exactly the same three *lagu*. And the Lotud agree that the best *kulintangan* music is the one performed in Bajau style. How did the Lotud Dusun and the Bajau get come into friendly contact with one another?

One important solution to this problem lies in the *tamu*, the traditional market. Since the first half of the nineteenth century, piracy faced a stiffening resistance. This was to a large extent due to 'the white Raja', James Brooke himself, who was firmly determined to use all his powers to suppress it; he even burned down several of the pirate villages (for instance, Tempassuk in 1846). But at the same time he noted (as did several other observers) that the pirates also needed 'a market for the sale of their slaves and plunder'.⁴⁰ And parallel with the decline of piracy, the Bajau turned little by little to another way of life. They became more settled, depending upon the *tamu* for barter with the farmers: fish, and goods like salt and gongs, in exchange for rice and vegetables. At some places along the coast, more expensive export products were also sold. Thus, camphor and cinnamon were important articles in the above-mentioned town of Kimanis, for instance; this partly accounts for the fact that the locals could afford the expensive Brunei and Javanese gongs. (Eventually, for these people who had led their whole life on boats, it even became a status symbol to own a house; see Nimmo 1968, 56f). At the other end of the trade exchange were the jungle groups, like the Murut and (further south) the Punan, who provided forest products such as rattan, etc. (Hoffmann 1981).

Also the cash economy contributed to entice the Bajau gongs and gong-chimes away from their traditional functions as investments and prestige goods. In the 1920s, Enriquez (1927, 117) saw 'literally hundreds of gongs and brass pots' in the pawn shop in Kota Belud.

3.2.1.1. PROVENIENCE

It could be argued that the gong-chimes of north Borneo were originally exported from mainland Southeast Asia. On the stone reliefs of Angkor Wat, there are a couple of representations of gong-chimes with nine small gongs (Groslier 1921, 126–7). These may possibly be as old as the twelfth century. Can the gong-chimes of the Dusun be eight hundred years old?

It is quite possible that these Khmer gong-chimes eventually spread to Java and, a few hundred years ago, developed into the Javanese bonang. But, except for the basic idea, there are few similarities between them and the Borneo type. The shape is different

39. So far, the only ethnic group known to use rhythmic modes as the basis of their *kulintangan* melodies has been the Magindanao of Mindanao, southern Philippines (Maceda 1980).

40. In the above-mentioned letter (n. 40).

(circular vs. straight); the terminology is different; and the music on the Borneo instruments bears no similarity to their counterpart on the mainland.

On the other hand, both the shape of the instrument and the basic traits of Lotud *kulintangan* music are identical with that of the *engkerumong* or *kromong* gong-chime of the Iban people further south. Here, as for instance in the Lotud area, the gong-chime is part of a small ensemble which includes a few gongs and one drum. Snelleman finds its music 'zeer welluidend' (Snelleman 1918, 830—another indication that the 'hellish noise' that Edmund Scott heard in Banten 1605 came from a very different set of gongs).

The *kulintangan*, then, is originally a Javanese instrument that became diffused not only to the north but also eastwards: Bickmore reports in 1868, from the small island of Nusa Laut in the Moluccas (east of Ambon), a single-row gong-chime called *bonang* or *kromo*. Several informants told him that 'this instrument ... was introduced here from Java by natives of these islands who were taken there by the Dutch to assist in putting down a rebellion' (Bickmore 1868, 140).⁴¹ Nowadays the instrument is known as *kromong* in Indonesian.⁴²

3.2.1.2. MUSIC

It is of course difficult to discuss the style of the gong-chime music in north Borneo a few centuries ago. Today, it is a rhythmically driving, motivic music built upon rhythmic modes, and idiomatic for the instrument. In some ways, it resembles the music on the one-row gong-chime of the West Javanese village ensemble *Goong Rèntèng*. This archaic ensemble was analyzed by Ernst Heins who called it 'a gamelan frozen in time' which has 'survived three centuries of change' (Heins 1977, 136 and 143). In *Goong Rèntèng* we may hear the gong-chimes play the characteristic syncopated, motivic rhythms of the Lotud *kulintangan*, but also sometimes a rather even succession of tones (transcribed as quavers by Heins). There is a possibility that this latter way of playing represents an older style of *kulintangan* music. In January 1776 Thomas Forrest heard:

some tunes they had played on their musical gongs, called Kalintang. These instruments had little or no variety: it was always one, two, three, four, common time; all notes being of the same length, and the gongs were horribly out of tune. Now and then a large gong was struck by way of bass.

Forrest 1779, 296ff

It may also be compared to the music that François Valentyn heard in Amboina, Moluccas, in the early eighteenth century. It was played on a gong-chime with five or six kettles accompanied by two gongs. The gong-chime played semiquavers, and the large gong twice in every bar 'zodaanig, dat ieder slag op de groote Gongen in een halve maat net, en 't speelen op de kleene Gongetjes als in een maat van 16 deelen (zoo de Musicanten spreken) bestaat' (Valentyn 1724, 162)—in both cases, then, a regular succession of tones.

41. The Dutch restored control over Indonesia in 1816 and soon faced several disturbances over the next few decades. In Java the most important of these was the so-called 'Java War' of 1825–30. Naturally, this does not prove that the gong-chime never existed in the eastern archipelago before the early nineteenth century; on the contrary, the instrument was described by Valentyn in Amboina some 145 years before Bickman (see below). But it does suggest that in local opinion the instrument was considered to be a comparatively new addition.

42. Soeharto 1978, *kromong*.

Such a general historic development from simple to more complicated rhythms in the music is compatible with the distinction made between two styles of performance of *kulintangan* music among the Magindanao in southern Philippines. There, 'the ancient style' is generally slow, stereotyped and conservative in its improvisations; the modern manner of playing is faster, more experimental, and offers much more freedom in employing different rhythmic and melodic formulae (Maceda 1963, I, 74). Against this background, the Lotud *kulintangan* music clearly represents a relatively modern style.

3.2.1.3. THE SOUNDSCAPE

A final category of evidence should be briefly considered. Particularly in the nineteenth century, foreign visitors often complained about the incessant noise of the gongs. To take two random examples, in the 1850s Spencer StJohn had difficulties with 'the beating and clanging of these earsplitting instruments' (StJohn 1862, I, 180), and in 1896 Wilder had to endure a ceremony in a longhouse 'with the most awful banging of gongs ... at both ends of the house' (Appell 1969, 321).

This is valid also for visitors far into the jungle, although the gong ensembles they describe usually are rather small. The travellers of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, however, had no problems in sleeping undisturbed at night. One gets the distinct impression that the soundscape of the archipelago changed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The reason is that, during the first centuries, the few gongs found by the western travellers always belonged to the rich people and the upper class; only much later are there descriptions of gongs in the longhouses and villages.

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

We have travelled far, from the Chinese dynastic histories to the complaints of modern travellers. A variety of methods has been used: historical, anthropological, linguistic, musicological. But from this diverse evidence, a coherent picture emerges.

Contrary to what is commonly stated, no reliable historical records point to the existence of early gong ensembles in Java. The statement that the first gamelan was created almost two thousand years ago belongs to the same category of myths as the statement that it was made by Sang Hjang Batara Guru (= the Indian god Shiva). Individual gongs were probably used more than a thousand years ago for signalling and military purposes, but gong ensembles are a much later phenomenon. In the archipelago, suspended gongs were the first to spread and become integrated into ritual life in the area under consideration. The sixteenth century was an important time in the development and diffusion of gong instruments and gong traditions (this is probably linked to the intensification of the spice trade because of European interest). Gong-chimes were used in the sultanates of Brunei and (later) Sulu; with 'sea-nomads' like the Bajau as middlemen they eventually spread to the Dusun through the established trade channels.

Further south, in Sarawak for example, they may have been imported via Chinese and Javanese trade junks. Also, according to Iban (Dayak) traditions, gongs were brought with the ancestors when they spread from south Borneo northwards.⁴³ This may account for

43. I have myself tried out gongs in Iban longhouses far into the Sarawak jungle which clearly were of Javanese manufacture.

the difference in terminology between Bajau/Dusun *kulintangan* and Javanese/Dayak *engkerumong*.

To sum up: it seems that most gong traditions of the Lotud and other Dusun people are hardly more than two or possibly three centuries old—a substantial reduction of our initial time span of almost two millennia.

Glossary

<i>bonang</i>	Javanese double-row gong-chime
<i>gamelan</i>	Javanese ensemble, mainly composed of percussion instruments
<i>gong agung</i>	the deepest gong in the gamelan
<i>kakawin</i>	Old-Javanese epic poetry
<i>kraton</i>	court; palace
<i>kulintangan</i>	one-row gong-chime in Borneo and southern Philippines
<i>pusaka</i>	heirloom
<i>Siti inggil</i>	a raised courtyard before the entrance to the Kraton
<i>Solo</i>	Surakarta
<i>tonggu</i>	kettle gong, often called 'bronze drum'
<i>Yogya</i>	Yogyakarta

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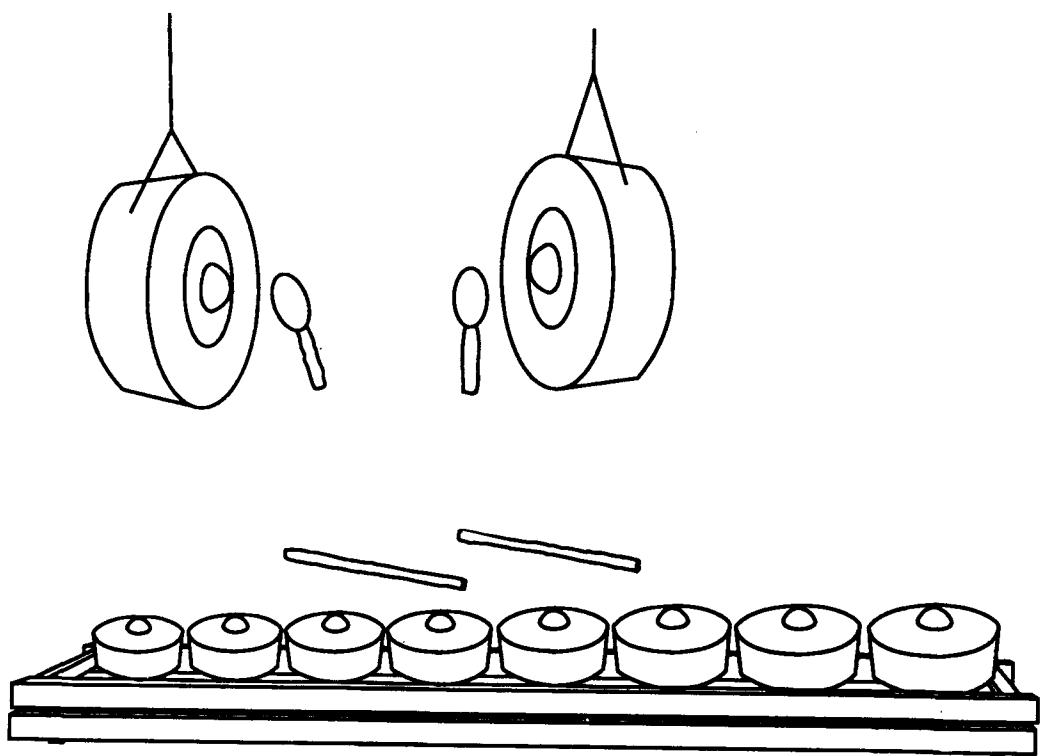
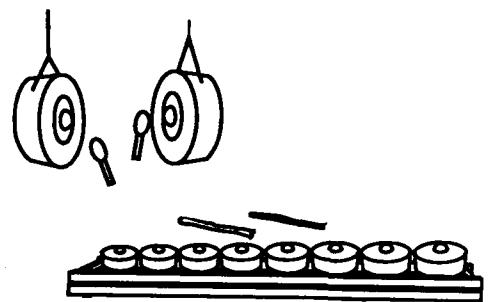
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Kulintangan (gong-chime) and two tawag (suspended gong with broad rim)