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JAVANESE STORIES OF JESUS
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Karel Steenbrink

CIRCUMLOCUTORY IMPERIALISM:
WATAN IN THE THOUGHTS
OF SYED SHAIKH BIN AHMAD AL-HADY
Ismail F. Alatas

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Alef Theria Wasim &
Karel Steenbrink

Javanese Stories of Jesus*

Abstraksi: Fokus utama tulisan ini mendiskusikan kisah Yesus (Nabi Isa) dalam kitab Jawa klasik, Serat Anbiya, karangan Kramadiwirya yang terbit pada 1859. Dalam analisisnya, penulis membandingkan kisah yang sama dengan kitab-kitab lain yang berlatar belakang non-Jawa. Di bagian akhir, penulis juga mendiskusikan berbagai kemungkinan budaya yang mempengaruhi cerita tersebut.

Tidak banyak perbedaan kisah Yesus dalam Serat Anbiya dari kisah yang diceritakan dalam al-Qur'an. Seperti halnya dalam al-Qur'an, kisah Yesus dalam Serat Anbiya dimulai dengan datangnya malaikat kepada Maryam yang memberi kabar bahwa ia akan hamil dan melahirkan seorang anak tanpa ayah. Dan Maryam hamil dan melahirkan seorang anak tanpa ayah. Kenyataan ini membuat dirinya dicemooh dan dikucilkan dari masyarakatnya. Meski demikian, sejak dalam perut ibunya Yesus meneguhkan ibunya bahwa kelahiran dirinya adalah kehendak Tuhan dan dirinya diciptakan dengan cara seperti ini (tanpa seorang ayah). Begitu juga seperti halnya dijelaskan al-Qur'an, Yesus setelah lahir mampu berbicara kepada orang-orang di sekitarnya, menjawab berbagai ejekan dan cemoohan masyarakat sekitar, dan sekaligus menyakinkan bahwa dirinya memang utusan Tuhan dan menepis berbagai tuduhan buruk terhadap ibunya.

Kisah ini kemudian berlanjut hingga masa dewasa Nabi Isa, yakni ketika ia berumur 14 tahun, saat ia mendapatkan wahyu dari Tuhan. Menurut Jibril, kedatangan Yesus sudah diberitakan dalam Injil, dan bangsa Israel diperintahkan untuk tunduk kepada hukumnya. Yesus mengajak bangsa Israel untuk mengikuti agamanya, mengakui bahwa Allah adalah Tuhan

mereka dan Yesus adalah pemimpin mereka. Namun mereka keberatan untuk mengikuti ajakan seorang yang dilahirkan tanpa ayah. Seluk-beluk kisah perjuangan Yesus kemudian mendapat perhatian yang cukup rinci: penolakan mayoritas bangsa Yahudi; tuntutan mereka atas mukjizat yang dimiliki oleh Yesus; hanya sebagian kecil pengikutnya yang beriman; hingga kisah penyaliban Yesus.

Setelah menceritakan kisah Yesus dalam Serat Anbiya, penulis membandingkan antara kisah tersebut dengan kisah dalam al-Qur'an. Ada beberapa perbedaan antara kisah dalam kitab klasik Jawa tersebut dengan al-Qur'an. Di antaranya adalah bisikan Yesus kepada ibunya, Maryam, ketika ia masih di dalam kandungan. Cerita tersebut tidak didapatkan dalam al-Qur'an. Perbedaan lain adalah kemunculan Jibril sebanyak dua kali dalam cerita Jawa, sementara dalam al-Qur'an hanya sekali.

Hal lain yang menarik dari artikel ini adalah bahwa penulis juga membandingkan kisah tersebut dengan kisah-kisah yang ditulis sarjana-sarjana lain non-Jawa, yakni al-Kisa'i (mewakili budaya Arab), Tha'labi (mewakili budaya Persia), Mirkhond (mewakili budaya Turki), dan Rabghuzi (Turki). Penulis tidak saja membandingkan kisah-kisah tersebut tetapi juga berusaha mengkaitkannya dengan latar belakang budaya para penulis kisah tersebut. Dan latar belakang budaya penulis sangat mempengaruhi alur kisah: bagaimana kisah tersebut disuguhkan, kisah apa yang lebih ditekankan oleh masing-masing penulis kisah, dan makna apa di balik kisah tersebut di atas. Karena perbedaan latar belakang budaya di atas, maka penekanan masing-masing kisah berbeda. Sebagai contoh adalah al-Kisa'i yang lebih mengutamakan makna etis dan pragmatis, dengan memberikan penafsiran sebagai keberpihakan terhadap orang-orang miskin.

Perbandingan berbagai kisah tentang Yesus ini sengaja dilakukan oleh kedua penulis, karena dua alasan. Pertama, untuk menunjukkan selera masing-masing kebudayaan Islam, termasuk Arab, Persia dan Turki. Kedua, untuk menunjukkan budaya perbedaan yang bisa ditolerir. Sebagaimana terlihat dalam berbagai versi, masing-masing penulis memberikan penekanan, sumber kisah, makna yang berbeda, tetapi kisah-kisah tersebut masih tetap diterima. Dalam konteks inilah, tidak heran jika latar belakang sosial budaya Jawa juga masuk dalam alur kisah Yesus dalam Serat Anbiya. Contoh dalam hal ini adalah absennya gambaran tentang padang pasir ketika Maryam berusaha menghindari dari ejekan masyarakat sekitar, sebagaimana dikisahkan dalam cerita-cerita dari Timur Tengah. Sebaliknya, dalam Serat Anbiya, Maryam digambarkan melewati hutan dan pegunungan ketika mau melahirkan Yesus. Cerita ini jelas lebih menggambarkan kondisi alam Jawa yang lebih kaya ketimbang alam Timur Tengah.

Javanese Stories of Jesus*

خلاصة: يتناول هذا المقال نقاشا يتمحور حول قصة يسوع (عيسى عليه السلام) في *Serat Anbiya* (رسالة الأنبياء)، الكتاب الجاوي الكلاسيكي لكراماديويريا (Kramadwiryana) والذي نشر عام ١٨٥٩. ويقارن الكاتبان نفس القصة ونظيرها في كتب أخرى غير جاوية باعتبارها موضوعا للتحليل. ويناقش الكاتبان في نهاية المقال عدة احتمالات للثقافة التي أثرت في هذه القصة.

الفرق ليس كبيرا بين قصة يسوع (Jesus) في الكتاب المذكور وبين القصة الواردة في القرآن. وبدأت القصة في الكتاب بمجيء الملائكة إلى مريم لتبشيرها بأنها حامل وستلد ابنا من دون أب أو والد، فحملت مريم وولدت ابنا بدون أب. وأدى هذا الواقع إلى أن سخرها وقذفها مجتمعا. ورغم ذلك، ثبت يسوع أمه منذ حمله بأن ولادته من إرادة الله، وأن خلقه بدون أب. وكان يسوع فور ولادته قادرا على التكلم - كما قصه علينا القرآن - أمام الناس من حوله إجابة عن سخريتهم واستهزائهم إياها، وتأييدا بأنه رسول الله، وردًا على عدة اتهامات سيئة موجهة إلى أمه.

ومرت القصة إلى أن بلغ عيسى عليه السلام سن الرشد، وكان عمره ١٤ سنة تلقى فيها وحيا من الله. قال جبريل إنه قد بشر الإنجيل بإرسال عيسى، وأمر بني إسرائيل بطاعة أحكامه، ودعاهم عيسى إلى اتباع دينه بحيث أن الله ربهم، وأن عيسى إمامهم. ولكنهم رفضوا دعوته لأنه رجل وُلد بدون أب. وتلقى من سيرة يسوع في سبيل الدعوة قدر وافر ومفصل من العناية، حيث رفض معظم اليهود دعوته، ومطالبتهم ببرهنة معجزاته، وقلة أتباعه المؤمنين، وحتى قصة صلبه. وحكي في قصة الصلب أن الله قد حوّل عصا الخبار يسوع (عيسى) جسما وصوتيا على السواء، في حين أن يسوع قد ارتحل إلى مكة، وعملية الصلب وُجّهت إلى عصا الخبار، وبعد العملية وعى القائمون بالصلب أن ما صلب ليس يسوعا

ولكنه مدرسههم. وحكي في نهاية القصة أن يسوع في آخر الزمان سيعود لمحاربة الكفار، وسيصبح إمام العالم، ودعا أمته لأن تتبع شريعة محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم.

وبعد سرد تلك القصة في رسالة الأنبياء، يقارن الكاتبان بين القصة المذكورة ونفس القصة في القرآن الكريم، فهناك عدة فروق في الكتب الكلاسيكية الجاوية وفي القرآن، ومن بينها وسوسة يسوع لأمه، مريم، أثناء حملها في بطن أمه. والفرق الآخر هو ظهور جبريل مرتين في القصة الجاوية، بينما ظهر جبريل مرة واحدة في قصته في القرآن.

وهناك نقطة أخرى جذابة من هذا المقال، وهي أن الكاتبين يقارنان القصة بقصص ألفها العلماء غير الجاويين، وهم الكسائي (مثلا للثقافة العربية)، والتعليبي (مثلا للثقافة الفارسية)، ومرخاند (مثلا للثقافة التركية)، ورابغوزي (مثلا للثقافة التركية). ولا يقارن الكاتبان القصص المذكورة فقط، ولكنهما حاولا أيضا أن يربطوا القصة بخلفية هؤلاء المؤلفين. وفي نظر الكاتبين أن خلفية المؤلفين الثقافية تؤثر في حبكة القصة: كيف تم سرد القصة؟ وما النقاط التي ركز عليها كل من المؤلفين في القصة؟ وما المغزى من وراء القصة؟ والتركيز على نقاط القصة متباين لاختلاف خلفياتهم المتفاوتة. فالكسائي على سبيل المثال يركز تركيزا أكثر على المغزى الأخلاقي والبراجماتي، وذلك بتقديم التفسير باعتباره أنجازا للفقراء والمساكين. وثمة مبرر لهذه المقارنة بين المؤلفين، أولهما: إبراز الاتجاهات الثقافية، بما فيها الثقافات العربية، والفارسية، والتركية. وثانيهما: إبراز الفروق الثقافية التي لها مجال من التسامح. وكما هو واضح في عدة أنواع من القصة، فإن كلا من المؤلفين يقدم تركيزا على نقطة معينة، ومصدر القصة، والمغزى المتباين، ولكن القصص المذكورة لا تزال مقبولة لدى المجتمع. وفي هذا الصدد، يرى الكاتبان أنه ليس من العجيب أن الخلفية الاجتماعية الثقافية الجاوية سادت حبكة قصة يسوع في رسالة الأنبياء. ومثال ذلك غياب السرد عن الصحراء عندما حاولت مريم التخلص من استهزاء وسخرية المجتمع، مثلما ورد في القصص من الشرق الأوسط. وبالعكس أن مريم في رسالة الأنبياء وُصفت أنها مرت على غابة وجبل حينما أرادت أن تلد يسوع. وهذه القصة تعرض مواصفة أوضح عن أوضاع العالم الجاوي الأغني ثقافة من عالم الشرق الأوسط.

Since Islam's arrival in the area, Java has produced many honourable Islamic figures, among them popular Islamic preachers who were able to resolve some of the conflict between pre-Islamic folklore and the basic teachings of Islam, fusing the two, and thus having significant influence in the spread of Islam throughout Java. In Javanese literary tradition, the *qisasul anbiya* (Ar. *Qīṣaṣ al Anbiyā*, Stories of the Prophets) is usually called *Tapel Adam*, or 'Adam's Clay', although the title *Serat Anbiya*, or 'Tales of the Prophets' is also used.¹ One of the stories, the story of Joseph — the most handsome of the prophets — became extremely popular in Javanese literature. It wasn't only the wife of his master, Potifar, who could not resist his beauty, but many other women also. According to the Qur'anic account (Qur'an 12:39), the spellbound women "cut their hands, exclaiming: God preserve us. This is no mortal human. This is nothing but a noble angel!" The popularity of the story of Joseph in Java is evident in its use at marriage ceremonies.²

Only a few of the *Tales of the Prophets* have been published in modern times. There are manuscripts from the 19th century, but in the 20th century the rise of Islamic Reformism rendered many of these text outdated as they mixed so much fantasy with the 'original stories'. Haji Abdulmalik ibn Karim Amrullah, better known as Hamka, a Muslim scholar and novel writer, retells many of these in his 30-volume Qur'an commentary, while at the same time stressing that the Qur'an alone only should be the source of interpretation and that many of these stories are Jewish folklore (*Israiliyāt*) which distort the true meaning of the Qur'an.

In 1859 one voluminous Javanese elaboration of the *Tales of the Prophets* was published in Javanese script by a Javanese scholar, Kramadwirya. During the 1980s this text was transcribed in Latin transliteration. It is this text that is used here to compare the Javanese text with four other versions of the *Tales of the Prophets* from non-Javanese backgrounds.³ These include the oldest known versions of al-Kisai and al-Tha'labi (both circa 1025),⁴ an Eastern Turkish version from the 14th century by al-Rabghūzī,⁵ and a Persian version by the historian Muhammad ibn Khawand Shah ibn Mahmud, commonly known as Mirkhond (d. 1498).⁶

The Story of Jesus in the Javanese *Serat Anbiya*

The Jesus-section of the Javanese *Serat Anbiya* starts at the end of the story of the People of the Cave, the Muslim version of the Christian legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesos, who fled persecution under Emperor Decius (249-251) and disappeared,⁷ until they were found and rose up again. In most versions of this series, this story is told after the Jesus section (in Tha'labī, Rabghūzī, Mirkhond, but not in Kisai), but here it precedes the Jesus-story.⁸

The section on Jesus starts with a new meter, the *Dandanggula*, which in Javanese poetry is used for episodes that have to be told in an agreeable and pleasant way. This most popular 15 meters of classical Javanese poetry is considered the most elegant of styles.⁹ Like the other meters, each canto (*pupuh*) is divided into stanzas (*pada*) of equal length and similar rhyme. *Dandanggula* is a system of ten lines with a fixed number of syllables and ending, as follows: 10 i, 10 a, 8 è/0, 7 u, 9 i, 7a, 6 u, 8 a, 12i, 7 a. For example, the opening stanza runs as follows:

*Wonten ingkang cinarita malih
Sira sang dewi Ni Rara Maryam
Asanget kasutapanè
Lan Mram kang darbe sunu
Aprenah kaponakan Nabi
Jaka Riya kang nama
Mariyam kang winuwus
Ayu kang cahya lir wulan,
riyem riyem jaladara angalingi
Semuning prihatinan*

The story will now continue with her Highness, the noble lady Mary, mighty mother of a son and fire that lightens (*mram*). Niece of a prophet: joyful (*Riya*) youth is he called. Mary is she named who shines beautifully like the moon sparkling (*riyem-riyem*) like the ocean but her face is earnest.

The story of Jesus is told first in this lofty style — *Dandanggula*-style — in 30 stanzas, followed by 19 stanzas in the *Durma*-style. This last style tries to convey Jesus' anger and irritation,¹⁰ reflecting his feelings during the last part of his life when he is rejected by the Jews and an attempt is made on his life. We refer to each stanza in the *Dandanggula*-style here as 'dand', while the second *canto* is referred to in its full name, followed by the number of the respective stanzas. Below we give a rather free English rendering of the Javanese text.

Dand 2

*Mring patirtan Mariyam asusuci
Ya ta Mariyam salat tangat
Sawuse bakda tingale
Ana wong kakung rawuh
Warnanipun anom apekik
Mundur Ni Rara Maryam
Kang prapta amuwus
Ingsun dudu manungsa ingkang sayekti
Pan ingsung malaekat*

At a water place Mary made ablution and she prayed obediently. And after prayer, an adult man came looking young and bright. Mary gave way and the manifestation said "Do not be afraid Mary, I am not a man I am an angel.

Dand 3

*Pan manira ingutus Hyang Widhi
Salaming Hyang maring sira Maryam
Pan sira ing mangke kinen
Darbeya anak kakung
anak dening Pangeran
Dewi Maryam matur
Kadi pundi tingkah amba
Yen darbeya amba anak tanpa laki
Mindah ucaping janma*

I am sent by the Lord High to bring you God's salutation, Mary you have been chosen to give birth to a son, a son given to you by God." Mary said: "How will this be? That I give birth to a baby without a man? What will people say?"

Dand 4

*Jabrail wau anahuri
Allah sipat kodrat lan wiradat
Kuwasa barang karsane
Nabi Sis tanpa ibu
Kadi putranira ing benjing
Yeku tanpa bapa
Jabarail niyup
Warnine kulambi neka
Kang nurbuwat punika wau wus manjing
Ing pernahe Jumala*

Gabriel answered:

“God is powerful and commanding
He does what he wants.
Prophet Seth was born without a mother,
like your son shortly
will be without a father.”
Gabriel blew
in the form of a garment
and so the prophethood entered
the universe.

Dand 5

*Ri sampunipun alami lami
Yata wawrat wau dewi Maryam
Langkung prihatin manahe
Lare wetengan muwus
Heh, ta ibu, sampung prihatin
Wus karsaning Pangeran
Ndadekken maring sun
Ri sampunipun mangkana
Dewi Maryam ingucap wong bani Israil*

Not long after this
Mary indeed became pregnant.
She became very anxious,
but the child in her womb said:
“Oh, mother, do not worry.
It is God’s will,
that I am created
in this way.
Lady Mary was the subject of
Israelite gossip,
day and night.

Dalu pantara siyang

Dand 6

*Anggarumung jalu lawan estri
Kang den ucap amung dewi Maryam
Wawrat tan ana lakine*

Men and women talked about her,
chatting only about Lady Mary
that she had become pregnant
without a man.

*Dewi Maryam angrungu
Den sasember dipun piringi
Maryam kalangkung merang
Angucap ing kalbu
Tan kawiyos ing wacana
Baya angur tumuliya ingsun mati
Nora ndedawa wiring*

Mary heard the rumours
she felt embarrassed,
but she refrained from speaking
and said in her heart
(something which) nobody could hear,
“I would rather die
than bear this shame.”

Dand 7

*Maryam lumampah lunga ing wengi
Liwat ing wana sukuning arga
Datanpa rowang lampahe
Yata amanggih anggur
Lawan kurma pinggiring warih
Wening kang sassumeran
Dewi Maryam lungguh
Sumendhe ing wite kurma
Dennya lenggah angedhepaken ing wukir
Anglalawu sarira*

At night Mary went out,
entered a forest at the foot of a mountain.
She went all alone.
She found grapes
and dates near a place with
clear and abundant water.
She was seated
at the trunk of the date tree.
She lifted her eyes to the mountains,
and sat, exhausted.

Dand 8

*Heh ta Maryam sira delap urip
Angur baya matia ing wana
Nora ndedawa wiraos
Ya ta wawrataniipun
Sedhengira wau alahir*

“Oh Mary, your life is in darkness.
You’d better die in the forest
and should not continue this misery.”
From her pregnancy
At this moment she gave birth,

*Miyos jalu kang putra
Warnane bagus
Cahaya lir wulan purnama
Widadari suwargi samya nuruni
Tulung Maryam puputra*

Dand 9

*Ingang putra pinangku tumuli
Dewi Maryam kang manah kewedan
Arsa binucal putrane
Tresna welas kalangkung
Arsa mangkyo binakta mulih
Tan wande amimirang
Jabara il rawuh
Angucap ing dewi Maryam
Aja sira wedi ingucap ing janmi*

Pasraha mring Pangeran

Dand 10

*Lamun sira dipun tetatoni
Angucapa yen lagi puasa
Dening yen meksa tetaken
Lahta takona iku
Maring anakira pribadi
Saksana Dewi Maryam
Sang putra sinambut
Ingemban sira lumampah
Sampun prapta wismane ing Bani Srail*

Kathah prepta umingal

Dand 11

*Sarwi tanya esmu mampirangi
Dhateng Maryam sarwi amamirang
Ganti gumanti tetaken
Sarwi mesem gumuyu
Maryam olihira ing endi
Aduwe anak lanang
sapa ramanipun
Tembe tumon kaya sira
Apaputra sira during duwe laki
Baya olih raramban*

Dand 12

*Sapa ingkang sire tiru nini
Luhurira padha wong utama*

*Pandhita agung tepane
Agawe lingsemipun*

*Sanakira kang becik becik
Tan angeman sarira
Warnanira ayu
Nanging lakunira ala*

she delivered the son,
a beautiful body
shining like the full moon.
And angels from heaven also came out
to help Mary with her son.

She placed the boy on her knees.
Lady Mary, who was so worried,
wanted to throw her child away
but she loved him so.
Then she wanted to bring him home
no longer ashamed.
Gabriel appeared
and said to Lady Mary:
“Do not be afraid that people talk
about you.
Trust only in God.

“When people ask you (about the baby)
just tell them that you are fasting.
If they still question you,
let them ask everything
of the child himself.”
Thereupon Mary
took the baby and
cherished him and
went back to her house among the people
of Israel.
Many people came to see her.

Mockingly they asked her,
Lady Mary, (about her son) in a nasty way.
One after the other
with some dirty smile:
“Lady Mary, where did you get him?
You have a son:
who is his father?
It will look as if you
had a child without a husband.
As if you went out to eat freely
amongst the nature.

With whom did you go, my dear?
Your ancestors were honourable and
honest people,
like the high priest.
They were disciplined people.
They have been disgraced now,
your pious family.
You did not take care of yourself.
Your face is pleasant
but your actions are rotten.

*Heh ta Maryam angakuwa aja kumbi
Lah sapa bedhangira*

Hey, Mary, give in, do not keep your secret,
just tell us who your lover is!"

Dand 13
*Dewi Maryam anahuri aris
Aja takon ingsun lagi pasa
Lah sira takone dhewe
Ing bebayi nak ingsun
Anahuri wong bani Srail
Ujar dora sengara
Bayi bisa muwus
Bisa sandi sira Maryam
Ngaku pasa aken takon ing babayi*

Lady Mary answered politely:
"You should not question me, I am fasting.
You should just ask
my baby, my child here."
The Israelites answered:
"Your words make no sense,
how could a baby talk?
You, Mary, may say
that you fast, you should ask
the baby yourself,
if he can talk".

Bisa apene ngucap

Dand14
*Ya ta wonten pituwa sawiji
Angling alon takonana uga
Karuwen ala becika
Tinaken tan asantun
Bayi sira ingsun takeni
Lah sira ramanira
Tutura maringsun
Rewange bedhang bu nira
Parmaning Hyang babayi nulya nahuri*

One of the older people then asked
in a polite and proper way,
without bias,
in a well-mannered way
"You, baby, I ask you,
who is your father?
Tell me,
a loving servant of your mother."
By the grace¹¹ of God, the baby thereupon
said:
"I am God's servant

Sun kewulaning Allah

Dand15
*Biyang ingsung iku suci
nora jinah nameningsun Ngisa
datanpa bapa jatine,
wus karsaning Hyang Agung
kadi putra Adam in nguni
Nabi Sis namanira
Iku tanpa ibu
Ingsun dinadekken ing Hyang
Tanpa bapa lah tobatta ing Hyang Widhi*

My mother is a pure woman
not an adulteress;¹² my name is Jesus
my birth was without a father
it was the will of the Almighty
like the son of Adam in a time long passed
the one who had the name of Seth
he had no mother
I was created by God
without a father. Seek repentance from
God
your thoughts are wrong!

Salah panggalahira

Dand 16
*Dinosan sira maring Hyang Widhi
atobatta maring ibu Maryam
nedhas ing apurane
kaliwat sira iku
amimirang ing ibu mami
gawok kang amiyarsa
bayi bisa muwus
sampuning alama-lama
cinarita umur putwelas warsi

sapun mangkya diwasa*

You have sinned against God
Apologize to mother Mary
Ask for forgiveness
You have gone too far
You have openly blamed my mother"
Amazed were all listeners
that a baby could speak.
A long time later
When he (Jesus) had reached the age of
fourteen,
he was already a grown adult.

Dand 17

*Katurunan wahyuning Hyang Widhi
Jabarail ingutus dening Hyang
Alenggah alon wuwuse
Salaaming Hyang kang Agung
Dhateng tuwan Ngisa linuwih
Pan tuwan taturunan
Ing kitab sawiyos
Kitab Injil lumraha
Sakathahe kaum tuwan bani Srail
Kenen anut sarengat*

Revelation descended from the High God, Gabriel was sent by God. He sat down and spoke in a polite way, "Salutation from the Supreme Deity to your noble Lord Jesus. Your coming was revealed in the book of the Exodus,¹³ commonly called the Gospel [*Injil*], and all people of Israel are commanded to follow the Law [*sarengat*].

Dand 18

*Warahana jalu lawan estri
atuirawa ing agamanira
padha angucapa kabeh
Allah Pangeran ingsun
Nabi Ngisa panutan mami
Nabi Ngisa angkat
Linga para kaum
Tan anut wong tan karuwan
Tanpa bapa pasthine sira sun tampik
Ing sapitutturira*

"Listen, men and women, follow my religion. You must say all 'Allah is my Lord, the Prophet Jesus is my Leader,'"¹⁴ the Prophet Jesus commanded. But many people said: "We do not follow unknown people. Without a father, we reject you in your words."

Dand 19

*Nabi Ngisa apti mamarahi
Nora nana kang mituhu sira
Asangat pamaidone
Nagi Ngisa lumaku
Maring desa nulya amanggih
Ing wong malanten wastra
Nabi Ngisa muwus
Sira iku masih wastra
Angur masih in awakira pribadi
Anucekken sarira*

Jesus became angry at this. "None of you are loyal. You are terribly treacherous." The Prophet Jesus went to a village and was seated close to a leper¹⁵. The Prophet Jesus said: You are still with clothes. You should rather take care of yourself and cleanse your body.

Dand 20

*Wong malanten wuwuse amanis
kadi pundi wong masih sarira
Bagindha Ngisa wuwuse
Iya lawan panebut
Allah iku pangeran mami
Kalawan Nabi Ngisa
Iku Nabiningsun
Utusanipun Hyang Suksma
Allah iku kang ndadekken bumi langit
Kang sung lara kapenak*

The leper person said politely, "How could I do it with this body?" Lord Jesus said, Only by saying that Allah is your Lord and the Prophet Jesus is your prophet, the messenger of the Lord of Heaven, Allah who created heaven and earth who makes (people) sick and heals.

Dand 21

*Mangkana wong malanten tumuli
nandang iman anuting agama*

*Wong kalih welas kathahe
Nabi Ngisa lumaku
Wong misanya ulam kaeksi*

Thereupon the leper accepted the faith and followed the religion. They were twelve in number. The Prophet Jesus journeyed and he saw fisherman.

*Nabi Ngisa angucap
Mring wong warigaluh
Yang sira ayun sampurna
Raganira ing donya rawuh ing akir
Nandhanga sira iman*

The Prophet Jesus said
to them in the water:
“If you want to be perfect,
in this world and in the next,
accept the faith.”

Dand 22
*Wong Juhun nambung wacana manis
Para nabi ingkang kina-kina
Ana uga kasektane
Karane iku tinut
Inga kaume anut agami
Kalamun sira Ngisa
Endi tandhanipun
Endi ta kasektanira
Iki ana wong wuta nora ningali
Lah iku mulyakena*

The Jews¹⁶ thereupon said:
“All prophets of former times
had their supernatural powers
and therefore they were followed.
People followed their religion.
But you, Jesus,
where are your signs,
where is your supernatural power?
Here are people who are blind,
heal them.

Dand 23
*Nabi ngisa nenedheng Hyang Widhi
dyan tumurun dutaning Pangeran
Jabarail lon wuwuse
Salaaming Hyang kang Agung
Tinarima panedha Nabi*

Jesus asked God for this
and thereupon the emissary of God,
Gabriel, said:
“Salutations from the High God!
The prayer of the Prophet has been
answered.
Miracles have been granted to you, Jesus.
Blind will see,
healed are their eyes
and the deaf
make them hear again.
Visit them and they will be healed.

*Ngisa sinung mukjijat
Wong wuta dinamun
Mulya tingalipun padhang
Ing wong budhug
Aken marasena iki
Dinamun nulya waras*

Lepers will be made
healthy.” The Jews said,
“Dead people who were buried
already for a long time,
you will raise from the grave.
If you make them live again
we will follow you.
Jesus thereupon went to a graveyard,
and they came to life.

Dand 24
*Wong kang belang dinemun tumuli
yata waras wong Juhud angucap
wong kang mati kinubur
pajaratan niku wus lami
lah sira uripena
Yen uripa iku
Ingsun anut maring sira
Nabi Ngisa pajaratan dan damoni
Yata enulya geseng*

Giving the salutation, he was seated.
He talked of heaven
and hell, while the people listened.
All listeners were astonished.
The people of Israel said:
If you let come
provisions for us;
if food would come
of various kinds down from heaven,
if you can do that,

Dand 25
*Uluk salam anulya alinggih
Kacarita ing kabar suwarga
Naraka tinurut kabeh
Gawok sakeh angrungu
Yata ngucap wong bani Srael
Yen sira nekanana
Jejalukan ingsun
Nek kena papanganan
Warna-warna tumuruna saking langit
Lamun sira kuwasa*

Dand 26

*Nyata sira iku Nabi
ingsun anut ing agamanira
kang asri asri sajene
woh-wohan aja kantung
juwadahan kang gurih manis
Nabi Ngisa nanedha
Mring Allah Ta'ala¹⁷
Ya ta parmaning Pangeran
Dutaning Hyang Jabarail
Nulya prapta
Ngucap ing Nabi Ngisa*

You are really a prophet
and we will follow your religion.
If it is delicious food
Do not forget the fruits
and biscuits, tasty and sweet.
The Prophet Jesus asked this of
the High God;
and on the command of God
the messenger, Lord Gabriel
arrived
and talked to Jesus.

Dand 27

*Tinarima panedhaning Nabi
Ngisa maring Allah tangala
Nabi Ngisa kasektane
Yata wau tumurun
Asesajen saking in langit
Dhaharan warna-warna
Asri yen dinulu
Ana anut ana ora
Ingkang anut punika
Pra samya ngiring
Dhateng bagindha Ngisa*

“The request of the Prophet is accepted,
of the Prophet Jesus to the High God.
Prophet Jesus has supernatural powers.”
Thereupon came down,
a meal from heaven,
all kinds of food,
quite spectacular to look at.
Some followed, others not.
Those who followed
all encircled
Lord Jesus.

Dand 28

*Yata wonten pawestri satunggil
apratapa aningali sira
Ngisa ingiring wong akeh
Pawestri lon amuwus
Lah ta sapa kang sira iring
Kang tinakonan ngucap
Iring-iring tengsun
Ngalap berkah Nabiullah*

There was a lonely woman,¹⁸
living as a hermit, who looked at him.
While Jesus was accompanied by many people,
this woman asked,
“Who is following you?”
He who was questioned replied,
“Those who are following me
are trying to receive the blessings of God’s
Prophet.”
Jesus knew that he was an excellent
prophet,
called Jesus, Spirit of God.

Nabi Ngisa tahu yen Nabi linuwih

Juluk Ngisa Rohkullah

Dand 29

*Pan katurunaning kitab Injil
wuwuh wuwuh ing mukjijatneka
Saya mumbul kasektane
Estri tapa amuwus
Heh ta, Ngisa yen nyata nabi
Dadekena ta ingwang
Manuk kang amabur
Estri tapa dinamunan
Dadya menut mabur tan ngambah ing siti
Gawok sakeh tumingal*

The prophet, who received the Gospel,
performed more and more miracles.
His supernatural powers grew in fame.
The female hermit said,
“Jesus, if you are really a prophet,
make for me
a bird that can fly in the air.”
And so it was done for the female hermit.
The bird flew and did not walk on the earth.
All who saw it were astonished.

Dand 30

*Sakathahe wonging bani Srail
ingkang sami wus anandhang iman*

All of the Jews
who had started to believe in him,

agawe bekti lampaha
 Dening kang nora anut
 Ngayem-ayem sakehe sengit
 Ing Ngabi Ngisa ika
 Maido kalangkung
 Winastanan bisa nyulap
 Nabi Ngisa pinaido wong kafir

Nabi Ngisa sungkawa

31.

Pakumpulan sakehe wong kafir
 arsa angepung dhateng Nabi Ngisa
 sumekta lawan sikepe
 sadaya sampun rembug
 Nabi Ngisa dipunulari
 Saking parmaning Suksma
 Winarna Toya Nus
 Ginaguru ing wong Kopar
 Saujare ingidhep dening wong kafir

Barang sudarmanira²⁰

started to live in a pious way.
 But those who did not believe in him,
 became spiteful
 towards Jesus;
 they did not believe in Jesus.
 They said that he deceived (the people).
 The Prophet Jesus was not trusted by the
 unbelievers
 The Prophet Jesus was sad.

The crowd of unbelievers surrounded him
 They wanted to encircle the Prophet Jesus.
 They were firm in their opposition
 and they discussed
 how they could pull the Prophet Jesus
 out of God's grace.
 Let us talk now about Toya Nus¹⁹
 The teacher of all the unbelievers
 All his sayings were followed by the
 unbelievers.
 He became their father.

Judas and the Attempt of the Jews to Kill Jesus (in Durma)

1. Sang Toya Nus rinupakken ing Pangeran
 saseolahe winarni
 kadi Nabi Ngisa
 rupa miwah swara
 yata wong ing Bani Srail
 angepung samaya
 pepak sakehe kafir

The Lord made Toya Nus
 in his appearance
 look like the Prophet Jesus
 body and voice,
 the people of Israel
 surrounded Toya Nus.
 (They were) a crowd of unbelievers,
2. Nabi Ngisa kinepung kinendhang-
 kendhang
 Nabi Ngisa winarni
 Giniring malaekat
 Dhateng nagari Mekah
 Samana Mariyam kapanggih
 Kaliyan putra
 Kang ibu nangis-nangis

The Prophet Jesus was brought with gentle
 music.
 We must talk of how the Prophet Jesus,
 surrounded by angels,
 came to Mecca.
 When Mary met
 her son
 she was crying.
3. Linge Maryam ingsun melu
 maring sira
 munggah mring luhur langit
 Linge Nabi Ngisa
 Ibu tuwan kantuna
 Benjing tuwan pan pinanggih
 Lawan kawula
 Benjing dina kang kari

She cried, "I want to join you
 in the highest heaven."
 The Prophet Jesus said:
 "Mother, you must stay here.
 You will see me later,
 meet me,
 on the last day."
4. Nabi Ngisa wau binekta mring Mekah
 minggah mring luhur langit
 wong kafir kelangan

The Prophet Jesus was brought to Mecca
 and rose to the highest heaven
 the unbelievers could no longer see him

- pra samya bilunglungan
Sakathahe kaum kafir
Ngulari samya
Sinebar kaum kafir*
- they were in confusion.
All of the unbelievers
were looking (for Jesus)
and so they dispersed.
5. *Pirang-pirang wong kafir tan kena
ngetan
gedhe cilik ngulari
kitha wong ing desa
wana miwah ing arga
ing jurang ing ereng-ereng
sajroning guwa
sami dipunulari*
- The unbelievers could not do anything.

The old and the young were searching,
people from the town and from the village,
from the forest and the mountain,
from the steep valley and the slopes,
in the caves,
they were all searching.
6. *Ngalor-ngidul mangulon tumulya
ngetan
sami nemen ngulari
Takon tinakonan
Sakehe kaum Kupar
Saksana sira ningali
Sang Toya Nus pinanggih*
- To the north, the south, west and east,

all looking and asking.
Searching and being searched
were all of the unbelievers.
And finally,
Toya Nus-in the form of Jesus-was found.
7. *Dyan cinandhak Toya Nus dening
wong kathah
saya kathah kang prapti
Toya Nus angucap
Pa geneya ta sira
Pada anggugengi kami
Pan nora dosa
Ngucap wong bani Srail*
- Toya Nus was caught by the masses.

More and more came.
Toya Nus cried,
“What do you want?
Why do you hold me?
I committed no sins.”
The people of Israel replied,
8. *Awasena matanira ingkang pedhang
Lah apa sira iki
Padha kena lara
Ngucap sakehe kupar
Iya ingsun ora pangling
Lah sira Ngisa
Angaku guru mami*
- “Look with your own eyes!²¹
Who are you?”
Struck by sickness?
The unbelievers said,
“Oh, we did not recognise you.
You are Jesus!
He who claims to be our teacher!
9. *Sira Ngisa ambabodho maring ingwang
bisa anggawa sandi
Nora ngaku Ngisa
Ngaku Toya Nus sira
Saksana dipun taleni
Ginodhi sira
Sinurak wanti-wanti*
- You are Jesus, who tried to trick us,
that you could hide yourself.”
“I am not Jesus,
I am Toya Nus!” exclaimed Toya Nus.
“Quick, bind him!
You must be tied.”
Thus they cried again and again.
10. *Sasambata Toya Nus amelas arsa
nanging tan pinarsi
Karsa pinejahan
Ingukumaken sira
Sakehe tingale kafir
Pan Nabi Ngisa
Tan wruh pinadha warni*
- Toya Nus asked for mercy,
but he was not heard.
They wanted to kill him,
sentence him to death.
The unbelievers just saw him
as Jesus and
not knowing that his appearance had been
changed.

11. *Ri saksana ingukumaken ta sira
Toya Nus sampun mati
Sasampuning pejah
Rupane kang palastra
Rupa kadi wingi uni
Sadaya mulat
Dudu Ngisa kang mati*
- In this way Toya Nus was executed.
He was put to death,
but after he had died,
his appearance
returned to as he had been previously.
All people looked and saw that
it was not Jesus that had died!
12. *Tuhu Toya Nus wau kang apalastra,
ya ta sakehe kafir
anangis sadaya,
anedha pangapura
dhateng Toya Nus kang mati
alara-lara
nangis wong Bani Srail*
- Indeed it was Toya Nus who had died.
All unbelievers
cried together
and asked forgiveness
of the dead Toya Nus.
Helpless
the people of Israel cried.
13. *kawarnaa wauta bagindha Ngisa
Wonten luhuring langit
Ing langit kaping pat
Benjing ing akir jaman
Punika tumurun malih
Maring ing donya
Anulungi ing jurit*
- Let us now turn our attention to Lord Jesus.²²
He is in the high heaven,
in the fourth heaven
but at the end of time
he will come back
to this world,
to help in the fight.
14. *Nabi Ngisa cacawisanira aprang
benjing ing jaman akir
aprang lawan Jajal
lanatullah ing benjing
Nabi Ngisa kang metoni
Patine Jajal
Nabi Ngisa angradin*
- He will prepare for the war
coming at the end of time
against the Anti-Christ,²³
the coming of the cursed one.
The Prophet Jesus will then go out
and kill the Anti-Christ
and Jesus will rule.
15. *Nabi Ngisa jumeneng ratu in Makah
ngrusak sakehe kafir
Pan kinen anuta
Dhateng sarengat neka
Nabi Muhammad sinelir
Sampune seda
Nabi Ngisa ing benjing*
- The Prophet Jesus will be king in Mecca
and kill all unbelievers.
He will press on all people to follow
the *sharṣ'a*,
of the noble Prophet Muhammad,
until he dies.
the Prophet Jesus will then return
16. *Pan kinubur Nabi Ngisa ing Madinah
punika bumi suci
Yata Nabi Ngisa
Kalane wau musna
Duk binakta maring langit
Kocap ing Kur'an
Kang muni kitab Injil*
- The Prophet Jesus will be buried in Medina,
the holy ground.
When Jesus
disappeared,
taken away into the heaven,
(according to the Qur'an
that is the voice of the Gospel)
17. *Pan ing wuri anuta Nabi Muhammad

Dadi panutup Nabi
Nyalini sarengat
Teko dina kiamat
Tuhu nabi kang sinelir
Nabi Muhammad
Kocap ing kitab Injil*
- He said, "You must later follow the
Prophet Muhammad,
he is the last prophet,
who will give the law [*shari'a*]
(to be followed) until the day of judgment.
He is truly the noble prophet,
the Prophet Muhammad,
who was mentioned in the Gospel."

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>18. <i>Cinarita antarane Nabi Ngising Nabi Musa nguni sewu satus warsa lan seket tigang warsa katurunan Jabarail sajeneng neka Nabi Ngisa ing nguni</i></p> | <p>It is said that between Jesus and the Prophet Moses there were eleven hundred and fifty three years until Gabriel came down then came the Prophet Jesus</p> |
| <p>19. <i>Jabarail tumurun ping kalih welas lan umuripun Nabi Ngisa aneng donya Mung tigang dasa tiga Warsa laminipun ugi Malih kocapa Nabi Muhammad sinelir</i></p> | <p>Gabriel descended for the 12th time and the age of the Prophet Jesus on the earth was only thirty three years. Let us now talk about the noble Prophet Muhammad</p> |

Intercultural Comparisons 1: Comparison to other *Qisas*

Above we have already indicated that there are many versions of the popular *Tales of the Prophets*. In a broad sense this Javanese story is not dissimilar to the other *Qisas* (tales)-literature. Jesus is one of the major prophets of a group that sometimes counts 5, 7, 12 or some 25 major prophets. The parents of the prophet do not usually have an important place, although they are mentioned in some cases (such as in giving the genealogy from Abraham until Joseph, while the parents of David, Solomon, and Muhammad are also mentioned, albeit briefly). Mary's life is detailed quite extensively, from her education in the temple under Zechariah, to the first time Gabriel comes to her, to her delivery in a deserted place. In the cradle Jesus pleads in favour of his mother and defends her chastity. Then miracles start. The life of Jesus is more concentrated on these miracles than on the acts or the content of his preaching. This is indicated only in extremely short notes. Jesus has some followers, the apostles, but the majority of the Jews reject his prophethood and they try to kill him. Jesus, however, is rescued by God and taken to heaven.

Through a rough comparison with other versions of this genre we want to look at some peculiar details of the Javanese narrative. These include:

1. The comparison between Seth and Jesus (Seth born without a mother, Jesus without a father). The Qur'an itself refers to a comparison between Adam and Jesus, both born through the powerful command of God, "Be, and he was" (Q. 3:59).
2. Gabriel's act of breathing which produced a new garb and the light of prophethood that entered Mary's body. The latter may have its origins in the story of Muhammad's birth, where his mother Aminah also received the light of prophethood in her womb after she had become pregnant.²⁴

3. In the Javanese version, Jesus speaks from the womb, comforting Mary, while in the Qur’anic story he is only speaks in the cradle to the Jews who accused Mary of adultery, after Jesus was born.
4. In the Qur’an there is only one appearance of Gabriel to Mary, when she was first told that she would give birth to a child named Jesus. The Javanese story includes a second appearance of Gabriel, instructing Mary how to respond to the Jews’ accusations after the birth of Jesus.
5. A woman, living as a hermit, is introduced as someone who asks for miracles, more specifically the miracle of birds of clay that can fly.
6. The crucifixion of Jesus is *expressis verbis* mentioned in the Qur’an (4:157), but in the other stories the failure of the Jews to kill Jesus is only mentioned in general terms (3:54-55). In the Javanese story the cross is also not mentioned. It is expressly stated that Toya Nus had the full outward appearance of Jesus, even his voice, but no details are given about the way he was put to death.

The list below indicates by way of example some similarities and differences between the Javanese version and other better known versions of this narrative.

Javanese	Kisā’ī	Tha’labī	Mirkhond	Rabghūzi
Comparison with Seth	None	None	None	None
Gabriel giving a cloth and a light to Mary.	Only breathing that reaches her womb directly.	Gabriel breathes in the pocket of the outer garment that Mary had removed. When Gabriel leaves Mary she puts this garment on and Conceive.	Gives two possibilities: Breathing either into Mary’s sleeve or into her womb. Nine months later Jesus is born.	‘Gabriel grasped hold of Mary by her collar and blew into her. Mary conceived Jesus.’
Jesus speaking for the first time from Mary’s Womb, to comfort her.	No mention	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In Mary’s womb Jesus glorifies God and Mary hears this. 2. Jesus possibly spoke immediately after birth to Mary alone: ‘Grieve not’. 	Jesus speaks for the first time from the cradle.	‘John and Jesus used to speak to each other while still in their mothers’ womb.’
Two appearances of Gabriel. The first appearance of Gabriel was to inform Mary of Jesus. Second appearance of Gabriel during Mary’s pregnancy to comfort her	Three appearances of Gabriel: Once to Zachariah and the other two times as with the Javanese version.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To Zachariah 2. Informing Mary of Jesus in a cave where Gabriel was waiting for her. 3. Appearance to Joseph that he should not kill Mary 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To Zachariah, a ‘divine allocation’ not from Gabriel; 2. Gabriel, a handsome and beardless youth, informs Mary of Jesus. 3. Gabriel is a guide for Mary when she goes out for the birth of Jesus. There is frequent contact between the two, but also divine revelations are given. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To Zachariah 2. Informing Mary about Jesus.

Jesus questioned by a female hermit	The Jews who asked for miracles are not specified	Unidentified Jews asked Jesus for miracles.	The arrogant king of Nassibin asks Jesus to perform miracles. He and his people turn to Jesus' ways.	Unidentified Jews ask Jesus for miracles.
Judas is crucified or killed in an unidentified way	Neither the death of Jesus nor of Judas is told: Jesus stayed among them 'until God raised him up to Himself'	No story of Judas. Jews try to kill Jesus who is concealed by Gabriel. Pilate seeks him and is transformed into the likeness of Jesus and therefore killed on the cross. Later Judas (resembling Jesus) is killed.	Jesus is taken prisoner with the other apostles. Sarhus volunteers to take the shape of Jesus under the promise that he would enter paradise after. Jesus ascends to heaven first, then Sarhus is crucified. In another version Judas is hung.	The Jewish king or leader, Tatus (also called Ashyugh), wants to kill Jesus. God makes Ashyugh look like Jesus and he is hung.

In the early history of Christianity three major cultures are commonly referred to as greatly influencing this religious tradition. The first, the Jewish religious culture, shows a rather sober and practical orientation as it concentrated on clear ethical commands for proper conduct in this world. The Greek religious culture pays much more attention to philosophical and theological speculation, including questions regarding the relation between eternal divinity and this changing world, about the origins of evil, and about the essence of spiritual beings as distinct from the material and physical world. This is clear from the debates at the first ecumenical councils. The Roman contribution to the growth of Christianity was more that of legal precision and sound organization, that resulted in the papal primacy of Rome. This is, of course, a simplification of something considerably more complex. In the same simplified way we may see Arabic Islam as the religion of clear and unsophisticated moral rules, defending the poor and weak against the rise of capitalism and trade. Persian religious culture has contributed to Islamic tradition through theological discourse. It was the Persians, influenced by Greek philosophy, who started to debate such theological matters as whether the Qur'an was created or not, and whether God has attributes or not. As for the Turks, they reorganized Islamic culture and produced more legal and encyclopaedic works than philosophical and theological.

Of the five versions of the story of Jesus above, Kisai resembles most the Arab mind. His story is perhaps the most down to earth and condensed version of the stories. It contains many stories with an ethical and pragmatic meaning. Great emphasis is placed on defending the poor in the stories, such as in the case of the lion which was waiting for an ox. "The ox might belong to poor people, said Jesus, go to such-and-such a place where you will find a camel. Eat it and leave the ox to its owners." So the lion went off in the direction of the mountain.²⁵

While the full details of Kisai are unknown, more is known of Tha'labi who may have been the first to present the stories. He was born in the Persian town of Nisabur and died in 1035. His *Tales of the Prophets* is based extensively on the Qur'anic commentary he wrote. This work was never published though because many of his sources were deemed unreliable. His *Tales of the Prophets* is "a work of popular imagination designed for education and entertainment."²⁶ Tha'labi's work, by far the longest text, has some elaborations that are not found in other stories. For example, Zachariah was here married to two sisters, Elisabeth (John's mother), and Hanna (Mary's mother). He has a long debate about the length of Mary's pregnancy, from just a moment to three hours to a full nine months). Mary had been promised to the king of Israel. Therefore she fled to Egypt with Joseph and Jesus, when she had delivered the baby. In many stories there are often also contradictions. He himself does not take a firm position with regards to these. Tha'labi, a responsible scholar, mentioned his sources without questioning their reliability. He simply quotes them to demonstrate the tremendous variety of versions that exist. He seems not to be bothered about the awkward elements of his stories. For example he relates that Joseph (absent in the Qur'an itself and in the Javanese version) was a carpenter who rendered his services for free, however he fails to explain how his family could make a living. Such questions are too trivial for this genre of story. Throughout the stories it is evident that Tha'labi is not the careful scholar seeking to ensure that every detail is a proven fact, but rather a story-teller who cannot resist a good story.

With Mirkhond (1433-1498) we enter the Turkish culture, although Mirkhond wrote in Persian. Edward Browne, who did not like his florid style, blames Turkish literary culture for this: "It was under Tartar, Turkish, Indian and other non-Iranian patronage that this inflated rhetoric especially flourished, and the Ottoman Turks in particular developed it to a very high degree."²⁷ Mirkhond has the most curious passage about the relationship between Joseph and Mary. Joseph was a cousin of Mary, a carpenter who occasionally saw Mary in the temple where she remained secluded. He saw that she was pregnant and he asked her three questions consecutively: "Was there ever any harvest without a seed? Has ever a tree grown without being watered? Has a child ever been born without a father?" Mary replies that Adam and Eve were born without a father or mother. Then Joseph answers politely, "My question was philosophical, and I beg your pardon for my boldness. But now my demand is that you inform me of the true way in which your pregnancy has taken place."²⁸ In his account of the crucifixion Mirkhond also has another peculiar story. When Jesus was bound and ready to be put on the cross, the sun was eclipsed "to such an

extent that darkness and obscurity prevailed, so that vision became impossible. And the Most High despatched angels who rescued Jesus from his bonds and bore Him with exalted dignity to heaven, after having shackled Yuda in his stead.”²⁹

Prior to Mirkhond’s version, a full Turkish version was produced by Rabghūzī, written in 1310 for a prince of Mongol lineage, but of Muslim faith. It was written in the literary Turkish of Central Asia, in a mixture of prose and poetry. In his story of the crucifixion, Tatus – also known as Ashyugh - was the leader of those Jews who wanted to kill Jesus. He was made by God to look like Jesus and after Jesus ascended to heaven Tatus was crucified instead of Jesus. The various names used in reference to the person crucified in place of Jesus suggests that there has been some kind of fusion between Pilate (Pilatus) and Judas. It appears here that Tatus refers to Pilate? In this case the Javanese Toya Nus would come from Pilate rather than Judas.³⁰

We have included some comparisons for our Javanese *Tales of the Prophets* with foreign versions for two reasons. First: we want to show the international flavour of Islamic culture, including Arab, Persian and Turkish. In the grand scheme of things, the different stories are very similar, all being chains of anecdotes with some moral to the story and talking of the odd miracle. Therefore, perhaps, it is more important to designate the oral and anecdotal culture of the prophetic narratives as a religious *haggadah*, a culture of story-telling, in contrast with the *halachah*, the religious culture that takes precise rules of conduct most seriously. In anecdotal culture the precise meaning of words is not so important. The story-teller has much more liberty in reshaping his stories. In religious law however, such freedom is less acceptable. This brings us to our second observation from this international comparison. These stories show us a culture of tolerated differences. The story of Jesus is part of a long series of some 12-25 major prophets. In contradiction of the dogmatic assertion that all prophets are equal in divine estimation, we see many differences in how the prophets are revered. Also within the various stories, often even within the accounts of one storyteller we have many variations and differences. Differences are, however, a common characteristic of many aspects of Islamic scholarship: from Qur’anic commentary to the differences between schools of law, from mystical doctrine to the free-form variations within the genre of prophetic tales. Only in the relatively unimportant religious tradition of philosophical-theological discourse, the *kalām*, was there a level of intolerance that led eventually to an Islamic inquisition, the *mihna* in the ninth century, where those who maintained that the Qur’an was uncreated (and later those who maintained that it was created) were sentenced to death.

Intercultural Considerations 2: Javanese Literary Conventions in an International Tradition

Just as was done by the Arabs, Persians and Turks, Indonesia has created its own particular style of Islamic culture and tradition. In the past this has often been depicted as syncretistic. It has been stressed by many scholars, that the Islamic confession of faith was not much more than a thin veil covering an animistic or Hindu body. It was not only non-Muslim colonial and missionary observers who criticized Indonesian Islam for its lack of purity and orthodoxy, but also Muslims from abroad and those influenced by Islam of the Middle East who have criticized Indonesian Islam as being full of deviations from orthodox practices and doctrines. From their perspective, Indonesian and especially Javanese Muslims have also created a counter-culture, distinguishing Islamic and Arabic culture, which is quite critical of Arab Islamic culture. A striking example is the Javanese ruler of Surakarta, Prince Mangkunegara IV (1811-1881), in his highly revered poem *Wedhatama* (i.e. the ultimate Veda or Science):

Many are the young people who boast of their theological knowledge.
Though not yet qualified
They are in a hurry to show off;
The way they interpret the Arabic texts
like a Sayid from Egypt:
Every time they belittle the abilities of others.³¹

The story of Jesus in Javanese poetry does not have this anti-Arab bias. It is likely a free adaptation from a common text in the Malay or Arab Muslim tradition of the *Tales of the Prophets*. Below we want to stress some particular aspects that illustrate its Javanese character.

Seth

In the common Arab, Persian and Turkish *Tales of the Prophets*, Jesus is compared with Adam as being born without a father (just as in the Qur'an). Why does this Javanese text include the comparison with Seth? This is probably due to the rather peculiar genealogy of Javanese historical books. Tabari included the 'Persian Adam' or Gayomart, in the Persian version of world history as a son of Adam. The Javanese and Malay stories go much further. They include also Hindu divine personalities like Vishnu, Rama and Krishna, as well as some more figures like Nurbuwah ('Prophetic Light') in this genealogy, where Seth is the connection to the more common Islamic history.³²

Mary's Beauty

In the other versions of the prophetic tales it is Mary's piety and her chastity that is emphasized, but here we see common Javanese literary conventions about Mary's physical beauty used, such as the description 'shines beautifully like the moon, sparking like the ocean'. They should be taken as such, because no noble lady in this style of poetry can be introduced without some emphasis on the physical appearance.

A Flood of Miracles

Javanese literature is known for its miraculous stories. It has even been said that "There are no limits to the Javanese people's imagination".³³ A striking example is the baby Jesus speaking in his mother's womb already before birth and not, as in the Qur'anic and more common Muslim tale, for the first time in the cradle to bystanders who reproached Mary for being pregnant without being married. The same is the case with the second appearance of Gabriel to Mary, giving advice that she should not herself answer those questioning her about the father of the baby, but should leave this to the child himself.

Nature

When Mary leaves her house at night to escape the gossip of the Jews, she does not enter the desert as in the Middle Eastern stories, but passes a forest, the foothills of the mountains, arrives at water, next to where she sees a vine and a date-tree. In this Javanese version the vision of nature is much richer than in the Arabic texts.

Fasting

Islamic fasting is abstinence from any food, drinking and sexual intercourse from dawn until sunset. Javanese traditional fasting has different rules. There is the rule of *putihan* (lit. 'white'), eating only white rice, egg and drinking plain water. Abstinence from talking as much as possible is also part of Javanese fasting and this is referred to in Dand 10.

Direct Speech

The Qur'an has much more direct speech than the biblical text in comparable sections of the prophetic stories. The longest Qur'anic story, that of Joseph, is nearly all in direct speech and therefore the text resembles a text for a 'theatre play', a long chain of dialogue with little narrative, while the Bible is here more like a novel.³⁴ Javanese literature is to some extent dominated by the *wayang* or shadow play, where the story is known, and the audience is familiar with the major figures so that they need no

introduction. The Javanese shadow play also moves quickly from episode to episode, without much narrative between the various sections of the play. Traditionally *wayang* theatre is full of direct dialogue, as is all Javanese traditional literature. In our abridged rendering of the Jesus story we could not always stress this element. Therefore we gave in full the quite extended speech of baby Jesus, defending the chastity of his mother Mary.

Intercultural Considerations 3: The Muslim-Christian Dimension

What can we say about the avalanche of perceptions of Jesus from the viewpoint of Christian and Muslim theology? Do these old texts have some relevance to the painful developments in Muslim-Christians relations since the attacks of 11 September 2001 and the war in Iraq? This last section aims to give some short notes from the perspective of the *duplex ordo*, the double task of all specialists of theology: to give an honest, reliable and relevant picture of developments of the past, further to suggestions for further development of the central ideas of any religion, in this case of Christianity and Islam.

1. The Jesus story found in the Qur'an came in a variety of contexts. The oldest text of Surah Maryam (19:16-36) is in line with the other stories of the former prophets. These were revealed in the context of confirmation of the message of the Arab prophet. The second and third larger passages on Jesus in Surah 'al-Imrān (3:38-59) and Surah al-Nisā' (4:155-158) are put in the context of the conflict between Muhammad and the Jews of Medina. The claim of the Jews that they had killed the prophet Jesus is denied and the Jews are reprimanded for their effort, while God had rescued Jesus and taken him to heaven. The fourth basic passage on Jesus, in Surah al-Mā'idah (5:110-120) shows a clear polemic with Christians because Jesus is introduced denying that he is God (a similar denial is found in 9:30).
2. *Qisasul Anbiya'* is far from the polemic of the Qur'anic passages. These are texts with a good mixture of entertainment and pious instruction, of joyful meditation about God and his prophets throughout world history. Although in theory the prophets have the same status (see Qur'an 2:136, similar to if not identical to 3:84), their lives are very different. *The Tales of the Prophets* provides us with images of Jesus not produced in a manner critical of Christian beliefs, but as material for the spiritual elevation of the faithful. Therefore at first glance they appear to be an excellent opportunity to share religious experiences and commonalities

- between Christians and Muslims. There are, however, in this regards a number of problems.
3. The first problem is related to changes within the Muslim community. Since the beginning of the 20th century Muslim reformists have been very critical of these stories. They have the common freedom of the *midrash* and the *haggada*: they are full of nice but recent innovations and therefore do not meet the higher standards of those Muslims who want to go back to the Qur'an and the prophetic traditions as do the Muhammadiyah Muslims of Indonesia. This is also the reason why our Javanese text, summarized above, was not reproduced in the 20th century, other than for the purpose of the documentation of literary history. There were only two publications in modern standard Indonesian, one with the traditional title of *Kisah Nabi-nabi*, by the sound scholar but also incurable story-teller and novelist Hamka. The other is by Achmed Muchlis.³⁵ Both were not directed at adult audiences but rather for children.
 4. Another problem is the language. After Indonesian independence in 1945, the use of Javanese declined dramatically. Although it is now the first language of some 80 million out of 220 million Indonesian citizens, there is no newspaper or good weekly magazine in Javanese. There is almost no literature in that language. Hendrik Kraemer, who in the 1920s and 1930s promoted the production and printing of texts in the still popular traditional Javanese, could not foresee that the language would become something of the past after 1945.³⁶
 5. It has to be regretted that the genre of the *Tales of the Prophets* has lost its place of popularity amongst the people. These stories present Jesus in a way dissimilar to that of the Qur'an which aggressively attacks Christian and Jewish perceptions. In the Qur'an Jesus is given a number of important titles: Word of God, Spirit from God, and *Masih* (or Messiah). But the tradition of Qur'anic interpretation over the last few centuries only gives minimal significance to these important keywords of the Jewish-Christian tradition.³⁷ In the dialogue between Christians and Muslims regarding Jesus, the latter should be questioned about the continuation of the Jewish-Christian tradition and asked to take this terminology more seriously. Besides, Christians have to be aware of Muslim familiarity with modern critical biblical scholarship and the call for demythologisation. They should not too easily revert to formulations of past centuries or even to those of late antiquity.
 6. Since the early decades of the 20th century, the rise of Muslim reformism, and anti-Western nationalism, often in combination with each other, have made it more and more difficult to communicate about Jesus with

Muslims. Christianity itself has also experienced many changes and educated Muslims know about the quest for the historical Jesus and the theological debates that have resulted in a variety of images of Jesus. Better educated Muslims nowadays understand that the Qur'anic image of Jesus was influenced by conflicting Christian traditions: both the Nestorian reluctance to recognise Jesus fully as God, and the Monophysite denial of the full humanity have influenced the Qur'anic Jesus. It can be said that the image of Jesus in the 21st century certainly cannot be defined independent of the contemporary Muslim community.

Endnotes

- * A much shorter version of this article was published by Karel Steenbrink in a *Festschrift* for Prof. J.A.B. Jongeneel who prepared a book on 'Jesus Christ in World History'. Martha Frederiks (ed.), *Towards an Intercultural Theology*, Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2003, pp. 137-152.
1. A much shorter version of this article was published by Karel Steenbrink in a *Festschrift* for Prof. J.A.B. Jongeneel who prepared a book on 'Jesus Christ in World History'. Martha Frederiks (ed.), *Towards an Intercultural Theology*, Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2003, pp. 137-152.
 2. For a description of the genre of literature, see Theodoor Pigeaud, *Literature of Java*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967, I: pp. 129-132.
 3. On the Yusup (Joseph) romance see Pigeaud, *Literature of Java*, I: pp. 217-219. See also Bernard Arps, *Tembang in two Traditions. Performance and Interpretations of Javanese Literature*, London: SOAS, 1992.
 4. A Microfiche copy of the 230 pages of this text in the transcript of Sudibiyo is available at the library of KITLV, Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-Land-en Volkenkunde in Leiden (Code M II 4053, 1986). On Kramadiwiryā see also Pigeaud, *Literature of Java*, I, p. 131 & III, pp. 158-159 and p. 282. Several other Javanese versions of the *Tales of the Prophets* are described and summarised in Raden Mas Ngabei Dr. Poerbatjaraka, *Indonesische Handschriften*, Bandung: Nix, 1950, pp. 26-63. A modern Indonesian version of these tales is Achmed Muchlis, *Dari Adam sampai Muhammad: Dua puluh lima kisah*, Surabaya: SIC, 1990s (no date).
 5. W.M. Thackston, *The Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisai*, Boston: Twayne, 1978. The Jesus-section here is on pp. 326-336. See also William M. Brinner, 'Arā'is al-Majālis fī Qisās al-Anbiyā' or *Lives of the Prophets as recounted by Abu Ishāq Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibraḥīm al-Ṭa'labī*, Leiden: Brill, 2002, pp. 638-680.
 6. H.E. Boeschoten, J. O'Kane & M. Vandamme, *The Stories of the Prophets (Qisās al-Anbiyā), an Eastern Turkish Version*, Leiden: Brill, 1995. The Jesus-section here is Vol. II:, pp. 477-495, with additions pp. 739-740.
 7. On this scholar see Edward G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, Cambridge: University Press, 1956, Vol. III: pp. 431-433. Browne calls Mirkhond "verbose and florid" and the translation by Rehatsek as "needlessly grotesque." Notwithstanding the criticism by Browne, we use here the translation by E. Rehatsek, *The Rauzat-us-Safā or Garden of Purity, containing the Stories of Prophets, Kings and Khalifs by Muhammad bin Khāvenshāh bin Mahmūd commonly called Mirkhond*, London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1892 Vol. II, 1. The section on Jesus here is on pp. 156-182.
 8. According to the Qur'an (18:9-26) it was 309 years.
 9. The content of the whole text of 230 pages is as follows: page 1, Adam; page 27 Idris (= Henoch); page 34, Noah; 84 Joseph, son of Jacob; 121, Moses; 143, Solomon; 166, Mary, mother of Jesus; 191, Muhammad, the Prophet of Mecca; 204, Muhammad Hanafiya; 205, Jenal Kubra; 206, Maulana Ibrahim, Muslim missionary to Cempa, Vietnam; 215, Sunan Ampel, Muslim missionary to Surabaya, Indonesia.
 10. J.J. Ras, *Inleiding tot het Modern Javaans*, 's-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1982, 311. On pages 308-337 Ras presents a very lucid introduction to the Javanese classical poetic conventions.
 11. Ras, *Inleiding tot het Modern Javaans*, p. 313.
 12. *Parmaning Hyang*: Th. Pigeaud, *Javaans-Nederlands Woordenboek*, 's-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1982 (3d ed., first of 1939), translates *parman* as 'genade (van God)', but even if we would consider it a Javanese word originating from Arabic/Persian *fīrmān* (decree) it doesn't have the meaning of 'word of God' because the Qur'an here uses the word *kalimat*.
 13. Javanese *jinah* here from Arab *zina*.
 14. *Wiyos* has the meaning of 'coming out', mostly used as 'being born'. It is uncommon for the biblical Book of Exodus, that is called *Pangentasan*. Perhaps the equivalent of Indonesian *sawiji* should be read here in the meaning of 'a [book]'

15. The text of the 'confession' is: *Allah Pangeran ing sin, Nabi Ngisa panutan mamí*. It resembles the common Muslim confession of faith, only Jesus here is not mentioned as a prophet, but as someone to be imitated. *Panutan* is also often used for Muhammad.
16. *Malanten* for 'leper'?
17. Here the common *Banu Israil* is not used but *Wong Juhun*, probably a mistake which should be *Wong Juhud* as in stanza 24.
18. Instead of the common *Hyang* for God here the Arab expression for the High God is used.
19. *Ya ta wonten pawestri satunggil* is formulated as a new beginning for a part of the story.
20. This section starts with *Winarna Toya Nus*: The account now is about Toya Nus. Toya means 'water', *nus* is the word for *iwak nus* or squid. There is a prophetic story about Jonah (in Arabic Yunus) and *Toya Nus* could be Yunus. It is possibly derived from Pilate (Pilatus), who is in some stories mixed up with Judas. In all, elements from the three very different persons Jonah (Yunus), Pilate and Judas may have been mixed up.
21. *Sudarmanira* means 'his father'. It is used here to indicate the change of metrum to that which is called *Durma*. Ras, *Inleiding tot het Modern Javaans*, 313. Sunan Bonang is considered to be the inventor of this meter which is characterised by Jesus being angry (*nepsu*) and irritated (*sereng*).
22. The common Javanese would not use a sword (*pedhang*) but rather wear a dagger (*keris*).
23. *Kawarua wauta bagindh Ngisa*: a formula of transition from one subject to another.
24. Javanese: *Jajal*, from Arab *dajjāl*.
25. A. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, Karachi: OUP, 1968, p. 69.
26. Thackston, *Tales of the Prophet*, p. 330.
27. Andrew Rippin in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Brill: Leiden, 1960-, s.v. al-Ta'labi.
28. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, III, p. 433.
29. Mirkhond, *Rauzat-us-safa*, 1/2, p. 158.
30. Mirkhond, *Rauzat-us-safa*, 1/2, p. 180.
31. Rabghz̄z̄s̄, II: p. 739.
32. Stuart Robson, *The Wedhatama. An English Translation*, Leiden: KITLV, 1990, p. 37.
33. J.J. Ras, "The Genesis of the Babad Tanah Jawi; Origin and Function of the Javanese Court Chronicle," *Bijdragen van het Koninklijk Instituut*, 143 (1987), pp. 343-356.
34. "Javanen hebben geen rem op hun fantasie" was an oft-repeated statement by the late Drs. Amin Sundoro, who taught me Javanese languages and literature in Yogyakarta, 1984-1988.
35. Anthony Johns, "In Search of Common Ground: the Qur'an as Literature?," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 2 (1993), 191-209 esp. pp. 204-207 for the emphasis on dialogue rather than narrative in the Qur'an.
36. Hamka, *Kisah Nabi-nabi*, Jakarta Bulan Bintang, 1970. For Muchlis see note 7 above.
37. Edwin Wieringa, "Het Christendom als het Ware Inzicht. Hendrik Kraemers uitgave van Paulus Tosari's *Rasa Sejati*" in Willem van der Molen en Bernard Arps (eds.), *Woord en Schrift in de Oost*, Leiden: Vakgroep Talen en Culturen van Zuidoost Azië en Oceanië, 2000, pp. 56-82.
38. See the forthcoming dissertation by Stanley Refly Rambitan on the modern Indonesian Qur'an Commentaries on Jesus.

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