

The two *Kronik Tionghua* of Semarang and Cirebon: A note on provenance and reliability

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This article is the first comprehensive evaluation of the provenance and reliability of the two enigmatic Kronik Tionghua texts of Semarang and Cirebon (the ‘Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon’). Initially published by M.O. Parlindungan in 1964, historians have increasingly begun to use these documents when reconstructing Java’s early Islamic history. This article is a long overdue attempt to positively identify the Dutch colonial official (Cornelis Poortman) whom Parlindungan claims to have received the texts from. Although the article establishes that Parlindungan almost certainly knew this individual, discrepancies between his version of Poortman’s career and official Dutch records raise questions about whether Poortman could have found the two Kronik Tionghua, at least in the manner described. The article then ends with a close textual analysis of both Kronik Tionghua which demonstrates the possibility that both texts were written by a modern, Dutch-educated author. The article therefore concludes that both texts are probable fabrications, albeit ones based on authentic texts.

In 1964, the Indonesian Batak historian, Mangaradja Onggang Parlindungan, published a book entitled *Tuanku Rao*. This text, designed to glorify a nineteenth-century Minangkabau teacher of the same name (and who had been active in the Batak lands), included as an appendix an edited version of two reputedly *peranakan* (Sino-Malay) Javanese manuscripts. Parlindungan collectively called these texts *Peranan orang2 Tionghwa/Islam/Hanafi didalam perkembangan agama Islam di pulau Djawa, 1411–1564* (The role of Chinese Hanafi Muslims in the spread of Islam in Java, 1411–1564).¹ Actually covering the period 1403–1585, Parlindungan

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1 Mangaradja Onggang Parlindungan, *Pongkinangolngolan Sinambela gelar Tuanku Rao: Terror agama Islam mazhab Hambali di Tanah Batak 1816–1833* [Tuanku Rao (Pongkinangolngolan Sinambela):

claimed that the original manuscripts his edited versions were based on had been found in 1928, in two Indonesian Chinese temples, one in Semarang and the other in Cirebon. Supposedly found by a Dutch colonial official called 'Resident Poortman',² Parlindungan claimed that Poortman had subsequently taken both texts back to the Netherlands.³ There Parlindungan encountered them in 1937, after befriending Poortman while still a student.⁴ After obtaining copies of both texts, Parlindungan finally published them in 1964.

The potential significance of these Parlindungan texts — henceforth termed the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* (The Chinese Chronicle of Semarang) and *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* (The Chinese Chronicle of Cirebon) — rests in their claim that Zheng He, during his seven famous voyages between 1402 and 1433, established a network of Hanafi Chinese Muslim trading communities on Java that, collectively, instigated that island's conversion to Islam.⁵ Although this possibility has quite deservedly gained considerable attention over recent years (below), it runs contrary to the prevailing academic consensus: that Indian and/or Middle Eastern missionaries were primarily responsible for instigating Maritime Southeast Asia's conversion.⁶

Indeed, it is perhaps because of their potentially revolutionary claims that the popular Indonesian historian, Slamet Muljana, took up both texts soon after their publication, making them the central feature of his 1968 *Runtuhnya kerajaan Hindu-Jawa dan timbulnya negara-negara Islam di Nusantara* (The fall of Java's Hindu Kingdom and the rise of the Nusantara's Islamic states). In this text, Muljana reconstructed early Javanese Islamic history according to the claims of each text, quoting them extensively and reinterpreting more established sources (like the *Babad Tanah Jawi*) in light of them.⁷ Later, in his English-language work, *A story of Majapahit* (1976), Muljana expanded the discussion still further by

Hanbali Islamic terror in the Batak lands 1816–1833] (Jakarta: Tandjung Pengharapan, 1964), pp. 650–72.

2 Ibid., pp. 652, 666–7.

3 Ibid., p. 671.

4 Ibid., p. 435.

5 Ibid., pp. 652–64, 667–71.

6 This consensus goes all the way back to the nineteenth century, with authors like Thomas Stamford Raffles, *The history of Java*, vol. 2 (London: Black, Parbury and Allen, and John Murray, 1817), p. 3; and John Crawfurd, *History of the Indian Archipelago: Containing an account of the manners, arts, languages, religions, institutions, and commerce of its inhabitants*, in 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1820). More recently, important contributions have included Geoffrey E. Marrison, 'The coming of Islam to the East Indies', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24, 1 (1951): 28–37; Sayyid Qudratullah Fatimi, *Islam comes to Malaysia*, ed. Shirle Gordon (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1963), pp. 5–6; Hamka, 'Masuk dan berkembangnja agama Islam didaerah Pesisir Utara Sumatra', in *Risalah seminar sedjarah masuknja Islam ke Indonesia* [Proceedings of the seminar on the history of the introduction of Islam to Indonesia] (Medan: Panitia Seminar Sedjarah Masuknja Islam ke Indonesia, 1963), pp. 93–4; Sebastian Prange, 'Like banners on the sea: Muslim trade networks and Islamization in Malabar and Maritime Southeast Asia', in *Islamic connections: Muslim societies in South and Southeast Asia*, ed. R. Michael Feener and Terenjit Seva (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies [ISEAS], 2009), pp. 25–47; and Ronit Ricci, 'Islamic literary networks in South and Southeast Asia', *Journal of Islamic Studies* 21, 1 (2010): 1–28.

7 Slamet Muljana, *Runtuhnya kerajaan Hindu-Jawa dan timbulnya negara-negara Islam di Nusantara* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2012), pp. 86–122.

speaking of traditional Javanese mosque architecture as a possible derivation from the Chinese pavilion.⁸

In addition to Muljana, the texts also attracted the influential Dutch scholars, H.J. de Graaf and Th.G.Th. Pigeaud.⁹ Working together, both scholars gave the texts their tentative support for two reasons: firstly, the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* dates Majapahit's fall to 1527, a date de Graaf and Pigeaud both reached independently,¹⁰ while secondly, in 1976 de Graaf and Pigeaud (and again independently of the Parlindungan texts) published their own work arguing for Chinese influence over Maritime Southeast Asia's Islamisation, especially in Central and Eastern Java. To support their case, they pointed to the existence of numerous fifteenth-century Chinese trading communities along Java's northern coast and to West Javanese legends that attributed Chinese ancestry to the first Sultan of Demak (one of Java's first great Islamic powers).¹¹ Because Parlindungan's texts supported each of these points, de Graaf and Pigeaud argued in their favour. They even took the step of preparing a reprint of both *Kronik Tionghua* with an accompanying English translation and commentary (eventually published in 1984, under the auspices of Merle Ricklefs) in the hope of adding further momentum to the idea of a Chinese Muslim-driven proselytisation.

But despite Muljana's and de Graaf and Pigeaud's initially positive responses, overall the scholarly community met both *Kronik Tionghua* with considerable scepticism. Certainly, in Indonesia Muljana's work was quickly dismissed (and eventually banned),¹² while only a handful of slightly bemused review articles met de Graaf and Pigeaud's reprint of the texts.¹³ For the most part, these responses reflected a common concern: no one has been able to find the original manuscripts Parlindungan claims to have seen.¹⁴ Because of this, few scholars take either text seriously.

8 Slamet Muljana, *A story of Majapahit* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1976), pp. 245–7.

9 See: Hermanus Johannes de Graaf and Theodore Gauthier Theodore Pigeaud, *Chinese Muslims in Java in the 15th and 16th centuries: The Malay Annals of Semarang and Cerbon*, ed. Merle C. Ricklefs, Monash Papers on Southeast Asia no. 12 (Clayton: Monash University, 1984).

10 Ibid., p. 90.

11 Hermanus Johannes de Graaf and Theodore G.Th. Pigeaud, *Islamic states in Java, 1500–1700: Eight Dutch books and articles by Dr H.J. de Graaf as summarized by Theodore G.Th. Pigeaud*, Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 70 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), p. 5.

12 Beginning in 1971, Muljana's work prompted a wave of public exchanges in the prominent Indonesian news magazine, *Tempo*. Spurred on by pre-existing Javanese–Chinese racial tensions, these exchanges lasted more than a decade. Characterised by racially-charged rhetoric, they saw complaints by K.H.A. Dahlan (the then Indonesian minister of religion), who retorted that it was unacceptable to turn the *qibla* to Beijing. Finally, the Indonesian authorities banned Muljana's work for disturbing public order, from which point on the possibility of Chinese Muslim influence over conversion became a taboo subject in Indonesia. See Ann Kumar, 'Islam, the Chinese, and Indonesian historiography — A review article', *Journal of Asian Studies* 46, 3 (1987): 607–8.

13 Salmon, for example, begins her review by calling it 'a very strange book indeed,' while Jones starts by stating, 'this is one of the most curious works that I have ever been asked to review.' See: Claudine Salmon, 'Review of H.J. de Graaf, Th.G.Th. Pigeaud, and M.C. Ricklefs "Chinese Muslims in Java in the 15th and 16th centuries"', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 18, 2 (1987): 340–41; and Russell Jones, 'Chinese Muslims in Java in the 15th and 16th centuries by H.J. de Graaf; Th.G.Th. Pigeaud; M.C. Ricklefs', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 50, 2 (1987): 423–4. See also: Denys Lombard, 'H.J. de Graaf & Th.G.Th. Pigeaud, Chinese Muslims in Java in the 15th and 16th centuries', *Archipel* 32 (1986): 186–7.

14 Ricklefs, de Graaf and Pigeaud all discuss this point; see De Graaf and Pigeaud, *Chinese Muslims in Java*, p. 1.

Nevertheless, this problem has not prevented a recent resurgence in the fortunes of each *Kronik Tionghua*. This revival stems from a more general desire amongst academics to establish a role for Chinese Muslims in Java's conversion. Aside from de Graaf and Pigeaud's work, we can trace this imperative (and which also forms a key part of the current author's own work)¹⁵ back to 1985. In that year, the noted Sinologists, Denys Lombard and Claudine Salmon, published an article that, independently of either *Kronik Tionghua*, argued that the Yuan and early Ming dynasties (1272–1433) witnessed substantial Chinese Muslim migration into Maritime Southeast Asia, coinciding with the beginning of that region's Islamisation.¹⁶ The authors also reassessed the nature of Maritime Southeast Asia's trade over the same period in order to place China and its Muslim communities at its heart. In this way, they hoped to further justify the possibility that Chinese Muslims were influential enough to effect religious change in the region.¹⁷

It is largely because of these efforts — in addition to those of Roderich Ptak,¹⁸ Geoff Wade¹⁹ and Anthony Reid²⁰ — that both *Kronik Tionghua* have begun to develop a wider scholarly appeal. This has been particularly so in Indonesia, where Muljana's work has been republished and many new studies have sought to incorporate both *Kronik Tionghua* into the wider pantheon of traditional Javanese historical literature, setting them side-by-side with important texts like the *Babad Tanah Jawi* and *Hikayat Hasanuddin* (or *Sejarah Banten Ranté-Ranté*).²¹ From outside the region, Wade has argued that (at least some parts of) each *Kronik Tionghua* are genuine and that, as a result, there is an urgent need to re-evaluate early Javanese Islamic history.²²

Indeed, as documents both *Kronik Tionghua* are plausible, with early Javanese *peranakan* chronicles actually being quite common. The *Kaiba lidai shiji* ('A

15 Alexander Wain, 'Chinese Muslims and the conversion of the Nusantara to Islam', (DPhil diss., University of Oxford, 2015).

16 Denys Lombard and Claudine Salmon, 'Islam et Sinité', *Archipel* 30, 1 (1985): 73–94. This article was subsequently translated into English: D. Lombard and C. Salmon, 'Islam and Chineseness', *Indonesia* 57 (1993): 115–31.

17 Lombard and Salmon, 'Islam et Sinité': 73–5.

18 See Roderich Ptak, 'Ming maritime trade to Southeast Asia, 1368–1567: Visions of a system', in *From the Mediterranean to the China Sea: Miscellaneous notes*, ed. Claude Guillot, Denys Lombard and Roderich Ptak, South China and Maritime Asia vol. 7 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), pp. 157–91; and Roderich Ptak, 'Quanzhou: At the northern edge of a Southeast Asian "Mediterranean"', in *The emporium of the world: Maritime Quanzhou, 1000–1400*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001), pp. 395–427.

19 Most recently in Geoff Wade, 'Southeast Asian Islam and Southern China in the fourteenth century', in *Anthony Reid and the study of the Southeast Asian past*, ed. Geoff Wade and Li Tana (Singapore: ISEAS, 2012), pp. 125–45.

20 Anthony Reid, 'Flows and seepages in the long-term Chinese interaction with Southeast Asia', in *Sojourners and settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese*, ed. Anthony Reid (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), pp. 15–49.

21 For example, see: Adi Talango, *Sosok-sosok hebat di balik kerajaan-kerajaan Jawa: Perjuangan dan kegigihan mereka sumber inspirasi kita* [The great heroes behind Java's kingdoms: Their struggle and persistence are our source of inspiration] (Jogjakarta: Flashbooks, 2012); and Sabjan Badio, *Menelusuri kesultanan di Tanah Jawa* [The lineage of the Sultanates of Java] (Yogyakarta: Aswaja Pressindo, 2012).

22 Geoff Wade, 'Early Muslim expansion in South-East Asia, eighth to fifteenth centuries', in *The new Cambridge history of Islam, vol. 3: The eastern Islamic world eleventh to eighteenth centuries*, ed. David Morgan and Anthony Reid (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 396–97.

chronicle of Batavia'), for instance, is a well-known seventeenth-to-eighteenth century example.²³ Moreover, until 1931 Semarang's *Kongkoan* (Office of the Head of the Chinese Community) preserved a substantial body of early Chinese texts. Although these have since disappeared, the early twentieth-century Indonesian historian, Liem Thian Joe, used them to write a history of Semarang's Chinese community. Although Liem does not mention the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*, or provide a substantially similar account, his history does begin in 1416. This suggests that, at the very least, the *Kongkoan* preserved the memory of a Semarang-based Chinese community contemporary to Zheng He, supporting the possibility that a text like the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* could have existed.²⁴

But, despite growing interest in the texts, issues of provenance remain a serious obstacle for any scholar wishing to accept either *Kronik Tionghua* as reliable history. Moreover, Ricklefs has argued that Parlindungan's 'Resident Poortman' never existed.²⁵ There is therefore a need to discuss the origins of these texts in more detail; the important place each *Kronik Tionghua* has begun to occupy in both contemporary Indonesian historiography and recent calls to re-evaluate Javanese history makes this task an urgent one. This article will therefore attempt to resolve some of the difficulties surrounding their provenance and reliability. It will begin by tracing Parlindungan's Resident Poortman. Contrary to previous claims, the article will show that this individual did indeed exist and, moreover, that his life largely corresponds to Parlindungan's depiction of it. Whether Poortman discovered the two *Kronik Tionghua*, however, is uncertain; a number of inconsistencies in Parlindungan's account suggest Poortman could not have found them, at least in the manner Parlindungan describes. On this basis, and in light of several features within both *Kronik Tionghua* suggestive of modern authorship (specifically, of twentieth-century Dutch authorship), the article will argue that both texts are probably (but not certainly) forgeries based on authentic Javanese texts. More specifically, the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* appears to be an adaptation of the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, while the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* is a probable 'hybridisation' of the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* and *Purwaka Caruban Nagari*. To make the subsequent discussion clearer, however, the article will begin with a brief outline of the biography Parlindungan provides for his 'Resident Poortman'.

'Resident Poortman'

Parlindungan begins his account of Poortman's life by claiming that the latter studied Indology at Delft, specialising in Batak and Minang history and language. Immediately after graduation (no dates are given), Poortman then supposedly enrolled as a Dutch East Indies civil servant.²⁶ According to Parlindungan, his initial posting was to Tapaktuan, Aceh, and occurred shortly after the beginning of the

23 'Kaiba lidai shiji', ed. Hsu Yun-ts'iao, in *Nanyang Xuebao* [Journal of the South Seas Society] 9, 1 (1953): 1-64.

24 Liem Thian Joe, *Riwayat bangsa Tionghoa di Indonesia bagian riwayat Semarang 1416-1931* [The traditions of the Chinese in Indonesia as gleaned from the traditions of Semarang 1416-1931] (Semarang: Ho Kim Yoe, 1933).

25 See: De Graaf and Pigeaud, *Chinese Muslims in Java*, pp. iii-iv.

26 Parlindungan, *Tuanku Rao*, p. 424.

Dutch pacification of Aceh (around 1898). Correctly associating the latter event with the future Dutch prime minister, Hendrikus Colijn (1869–1944), Parlindungan claims Colijn had asked for a Minang-speaking interpreter to help him communicate with Aceh's coastal peoples. The colonial authorities promptly sent him Poortman, who quickly earned Colijn's respect and trust. As a result, Parlindungan claims Colijn entrusted Poortman with a secret mission to Singkil, to determine whether the region should be incorporated into Aceh or neighbouring Tapanuli.²⁷ After fulfilling this task successfully, Poortman's superiors rewarded him with the comptrollership of Sipirok (capital of Tapanuli) in 1904.²⁸

After this point, Parlindungan is vague about Poortman's career. From 1914 to 1918, Parlindungan claims Poortman taught himself Chinese using Ma Huan and Fei Xin, and while also accessing the *Yuan shi* ('Imperial records of the Yuan Dynasty').²⁹ Parlindungan does not state, however, what Poortman's official position(s) were during this period. Nonetheless, at a later point (although again no date is given) Parlindungan claims Poortman was appointed to the Residency of Jambi, before ending his career as 'the Acting Advisor on Native Affairs' in Batavia.³⁰ It was while Poortman was acting in this latter capacity that the colonial authorities entrusted him with another secret mission: to determine whether early indigenous Javanese sources were correct in attributing Chinese ancestry to the first Sultan of Demak. Parlindungan claims that Poortman was singled out for this mission because of his knowledge of Chinese — few other Dutch officials knew this language, making Poortman an obvious choice for the job. This mission, however, and which supposedly coincided with the Communist Party of Indonesia (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI) Revolt (dated by Parlindungan to 1928), resulted in the discovery of both *Kronik Tionghua*; Poortman took advantage of the chaotic conditions following the PKI Revolt to use local police officials to ransack the archives of the Sam Po Kong Temple in Semarang and the Talang Temple in Cirebon, in which locations he found both *Kronik Tionghua*. Each text was written in Chinese characters and dated events according to the reign of the Ming Emperor Yongle.³¹

Parlindungan ends his account by claiming that Poortman retired in 1930 and, after returning to the Netherlands, took up residence in Voorburg (a suburb of The Hague). There Poortman continued his study of the Batak and wrote a number of (again secret) government reports.³² For his part, Parlindungan met Poortman in 1937, while studying Batak history.³³ At that point Poortman introduced Parlindungan to both *Kronik Tionghua*, later asking him to deposit the original manuscripts at the Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, in 1938.³⁴ Subsequently, the two men remained in touch until Poortman's death in 1951.³⁵

27 Ibid., pp. 424–5.

28 Ibid., p. 426.

29 Ibid., p. 650.

30 Ibid., p. 426.

31 Ibid., p. 664.

32 Ibid., p. 434.

33 Ibid., p. 428.

34 Ibid., p. 671.

35 Ibid., p. 435.

The historical Poortman

As already mentioned, and contrary to what has sometimes been claimed, Parlindungan's Resident Poortman was a real figure: the *Regeeringsalmanak voor Nederlandsch-Indië* lists a C. Poortman as both comptroller of Sripolok (1904–1907)³⁶ and Resident of Jambi (1923–1925),³⁷ just as Parlindungan claims. The *Nederlands Indië stamboek ambtenaren* (folios 892 and 969) reveals this to be one Cornelis Poortman, born in Rotterdam on 29 September 1873. According to this individual's *persoonskaart* ('personal record card', preserved at the Centraal bureau voor genealogie), he died in Rijswijk on 4 May 1951. Rijswijk is a suburb of The Hague directly adjacent to Voorburg. As such, it seems highly probable that this Cornelis Poortman is the person Parlindungan is referring to, which immediately makes the provenance of each *Kronik Tionghua* appear more realistic. But, proof of Poortman's existence is not also, *ipso facto*, proof of the authenticity of either text. Rather, this will depend on the accuracy of Parlindungan's account of their discovery, which calls for a closer examination of Poortman's life as a whole.

According to the *Nederlands Indië stamboek ambtenaren*, Poortman joined the Dutch East Indies civil service on the 17 November 1896 and was immediately posted to Java, where he stayed until 1899.³⁸ Although Parlindungan does not mention this initial posting, the *Nederlands Indië stamboek ambtenaren* supports his claim that Poortman was then sent to North Sumatra; although it does not mention Tapaktuan, it states that Poortman was relocated to North Sumatra in 1899, when he was 'put at the disposal of the Governor of Aceh'. This statement, although general, tallies with Parlindungan's account. Moreover, Parlindungan claims that Poortman's move occurred shortly after the beginning of the pacification of Aceh. As noted, this gradual process started in 1898, when J.B. van Heutsz was appointed Governor of Aceh, with Colijn as his deputy.³⁹ Consequently, Parlindungan's timings also appear correct. Furthermore, although the *Nederlands Indië stamboek ambtenaren* does not detail Poortman's Acehnese activities, it does state that, in 1901, he was sent to the province's northwest coast. This is the region of Singkil, suggesting that Parlindungan's account of Poortman's secret mission could be correct. Certainly,

36 *Regeeringsalmanak voor Nederlandsch-Indië* (Batavia: n.p., 1887–): (1905), p. 277; (1906), pp. 216, 281; (1907), pp. 217, 283.

37 *Ibid.* (1924), p. 253; (1925), p. 257.

38 Unfortunately, none of the official Dutch sources describe Cornelis Poortman's education. Consequently, it has not been possible to confirm whether he studied Indology at Delft, specialising in the Batak. It is, however, a plausible scenario: until 1864, Delft (then known as the Royal Academy) was the Netherlands's principle training facility for colonial officials, with a thriving Indology programme that included Batak studies. After 1864, when the Academy was rebranded a polytechnic, this Indology programme declined but continued to be taught until 1901; see Maarten Kuitenbrouwer, *Dutch scholarship in the age of empire and beyond: KITLV — The Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, 1851–2011* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), p. 102. It is therefore entirely possible that Poortman enrolled there — given his date of birth, presumably during the early 1890s. The author has not, however, been able to confirm this with Delft: the university does not preserve a central record of its students, only a series of departmental ones. As such, because their Indology programme has terminated, the relevant department no longer exists and the current location of its records remains unknown (email communication, Ruth Koole, Delft University of Technology, 17 Nov. 2014).

39 Edwin Wieringa, 'The dream of the king and the holy war against the Dutch: The *Kôteubah* of the Acehnese epic, *Hikayat Prang Gômpeuni*', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 61, 2 (1998): 298.

this move was followed by Poortman's promotion to the comptrollership of Sipirok, again fitting with Parlindungan's account.

Subsequent to the above, the *Nederlands Indië stamboek ambtenaren* contains a lot of information Parlindungan lacks. After 1907, it records Poortman spending a period of time in Europe (lasting until 1909, and apparently spent in The Hague),⁴⁰ followed by a return to Sumatra. This time, however, the colonial authorities posted Poortman to Medan and charged him (on the 20 October 1910) with the governance of Langkat, where he stayed until 1911. Subsequently, Poortman moved all around Indonesia, before returning to Sumatra as the Assistant Resident of Palembang (appointed on the 9 July 1917). Later, he became the Resident of New Guinea and then the Resident of Jambi. Parlindungan, however, only mentions this last posting, while adding that Poortman taught himself Chinese (supposedly from 1914 to 1918). Parlindungan's failure to detail this period of Poortman's career, however, probably reflects his concerns: in *Tuanku Rao*, Parlindungan's interest in Poortman surrounds the latter's experiences in the Batak lands coupled with the discovery of the two *Kronik Tionghua*. Poortman's 1907 to 1923 activities (or, for that matter, his initial service on Java) do not bear on these points, thereby making them largely irrelevant to Parlindungan. His failure to mention them need not therefore be a cause for concern. Rather, up until 1925 Parlindungan provides a good, if limited, account of Poortman's career — after this, however, things become problematic.

As discussed, Parlindungan ends Poortman's career in Batavia as the 'Acting Adviser on Native Affairs'. In this role, he supposedly found the two *Kronik Tionghua* in 1928, during the PKI revolt. This scenario, however, is improbable for several reasons. First, the PKI revolt actually occurred between the 12 November 1926 and January 1927, with all significant Javanese activity ending before December 1926.⁴¹ As the revolt is essential to Parlindungan's account (it provides Poortman with the opportunity to search the temples and find the texts), events must therefore have occurred earlier than 1928 (perhaps in late 1926). This, however, is not probable because (and secondly) the *Nederlands Indië stamboek ambtenaren* claims that Poortman retired, not in 1930 as Parlindungan claims, but on the 6 March 1925 and while still the Resident of Jambi. It contains no record of a subsequent posting to Batavia. Confirming this, Poortman's *persoonskaart* lists Jambi as his final Dutch East Indies place of residence and claims that, by 24 April 1925, he was back in the Netherlands, living in Rijswijk. Consequently, Parlindungan's account seems impossible: during the PKI Revolt, Poortman was not Batavia's 'Acting Adviser on Native Affairs', but retired and living in Europe.

40 Although the *Nederlands Indië stamboek ambtenaren* does not elaborate on where Poortman went, according to his *persoonskaart* his two youngest children were both born in The Hague during this period: Cornelis Johan Louis Poortman (on 22 Jan. 1908) and Petronella Poortman (on 14 Aug. 1909). His eldest son, on the other hand, Arie Willem Poortman, was born in Baros on 11 Feb. 1902. This would again be consistent with a pre-1907 North Sumatran posting.

41 Justus M. van der Kroef, *The Communist Party of Indonesia: Its history, program and tactics* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1965), p. 16; Bob Hering, *The PKI's aborted revolt: Some selected documents*, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies Occasional Papers No. 17 (Townsville City: James Cook University of North Queensland, 1986), p. 24.

Ultimately, this seems to fatally undermine Parlindungan's account: if Poortman was in the Netherlands during the PKI revolt, he cannot have found the texts as described. Moreover, because the revolt is central to the discovery of each text, speculation about an earlier date (i.e. pre-1925, when Poortman was still in the Dutch East Indies) seems unacceptable. The revolt did, however, lead to increased surveillance (particularly of the Chinese) until at least the governorship of A.C. de Graeff (1926–1931), which might re-open the possibility of a 1928 (or later) date.⁴² Currently, however, no known record suggests Poortman returned to the Dutch East Indies after 1925. Consequently, we must conclude that the two *Kronik Tionghua* were not discovered in the manner Parlindungan describes. Moreover, the Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, where Parlindungan claims to have deposited the texts, has no record of them or of their supposed donation.⁴³ With these points in mind, the distinct possibility arises that both texts are fabrications. Indeed, a closer examination of the texts themselves supports this conclusion.

The *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*

Initially, we should note that two features of this text suggest authenticity. The first has gained considerable attention: the text contains several references to a man named Gan Eng Cu, who it identifies as the 'Kapten Cina Islam' of Tuban. Supposedly appointed to this position in 1423 by an individual named Bong Tak Keng (identified by the text as Zheng He's appointee to the governorship of Java's Chinese Muslim communities), the text also claims that, in 1436, Gan Eng Cu travelled to China as the envoy of Majapahit.⁴⁴ As noted by Wade, the *Ming shilu* ('Veritable records of the Ming Dynasty') partially supports this claim: in 1438, this source (and only this source) likewise records the arrival in China of a Majapahit envoy named Gan Eng Cu.⁴⁵ In 1964, however, when Parlindungan published the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*, this part of the *Ming shilu* had not been translated into any foreign language. Wade therefore suggests that it is unlikely Parlindungan could have known about Gan Eng Cu, implying that (at least this part of) the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* is genuine.⁴⁶

The second feature of the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* suggestive of authenticity relates to a well-known Javanese tradition that also claims Zheng He visited Semarang (a claim no early Chinese source supports). Central to this tradition is Semarang's so-called *gedung batu* (lit., 'stone storeroom'), a cave where Zheng He supposedly

42 Van der Kroef, *Communist Party of Indonesia*, p. 20.

43 Email communication with Dr. Paul van Dongen, Keeper of Manuscripts at the Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, 30 Aug. 2013. Likewise, Ann Kumar's report that Parlindungan left both texts at an unidentified manuscript store (*gedung*) in Rijswijk also remains unsubstantiated; see Kumar, 'Islam, the Chinese, and Indonesian historiography', p. 608.

44 Parlindungan, *Tuanku Rao*, pp. 652–4.

45 As well as the 1438 mission, the *Ming shilu* also records Gan Eng Cu acting as the Javanese ambassador in 1442, 1446 and 1447. The *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*, however, mentions none of these other visits. The *Ming shilu*'s account of Gan Eng Cu's life also differs from that in the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*: according to the *Ming shilu*, Gan Eng Cu was originally a fisherman from Longxi (in Fujian) who, after being blown off course, was wrecked on Java. It does not mention Zheng He (*Ming shilu*, juan 43.2a).

46 Wade, 'Early Muslim expansion', pp. 396–7.

stopped to pray during one of his early voyages (precisely which is unknown). According to the tradition, when members of Zheng He's crew later elected to stay in Semarang, Zheng He established a mosque (or in some versions, a temple) over this cave. Later on, this became Semarang's famous Sam Po Kong Temple, where Poortman supposedly found the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*.⁴⁷ Indeed, and unlike other Chinese temples, this structure is aligned towards the *qibla*, suggesting it may have once been a mosque (although, because the current building is recent, this alignment may not be original).⁴⁸

The *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*, however, never mentions the *gedung batu*. This oversight is perplexing. The *gedung batu* has existed since at least 1704, when it reportedly collapsed and needed repairing.⁴⁹ Moreover, the Javanese tradition linking the cave to Zheng He dates from at least 1783, when the Chinese traveller, Ong Tae Hai, recorded it in his account of Java.⁵⁰ As such, from the eighteenth century onwards, the Javanese have considered the *gedung batu* to be an inseparable part of why Zheng He visited Semarang and why the Sam Po Kong Temple was first established. If the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* post-dates the eighteenth century, we might therefore expect it to refer to the *gedung batu*. That it does not, however, could reinforce the text's authenticity; because scholars consider the *gedung batu* tradition to be a pious eighteenth-century legend, the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*'s failure to mention it could indicate an earlier and more accurate narrative.⁵¹

But, and although compelling, these points are insufficient to prove authenticity. Poortman's supposed knowledge of Chinese, for example, makes Wade's assertion tenuous; if Poortman knew Chinese, he could have provided Parlindungan with (albeit indirect) access to the *Ming shilu* prior to its translation. The absence of the *gedung batu* legend, on the other hand, could simply reflect oversight or a potential forger's knowledge of its spurious nature and a consequent desire to avoid it. Moreover, many more issues surrounding the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* are highly problematic. For example, the sections of the text centred around the rise of Demak strongly resemble the narrative found in the *Babad Tanah Jawi*. Both sources, for example, name Demak's first ruler 'Jinbun' and describe him as the son of Majapahit's final ruler, identified as 'Kerta Bumi' in the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* and 'Prabu Brawijaya' in the *Babad Tanah Jawi*.⁵² As in the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* also claims that Jinbun initially lived in Palembang where, together with his younger brother, he was raised by the city's governor. In the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*, the latter is identified as a Chinese Muslim called

47 Priambudi Setiakusuma, *Klenteng Agung Sam Poo Kong* [The grand temple of Sam Po Kong] (Semarang: Sam Poo Kong Foundation, 2006), p. 57.

48 Chinese temples are traditionally aligned north–south, see: Liang Ssu-ch'eng, *A pictorial history of Chinese architecture: A study of the development of its structural system and the evolution of its types*, ed. Wilma Fairbank (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1984).

49 De Graaf and Pigeaud, *Chinese Muslims in Java*, p. 59.

50 Ong Tae Hai, *The Chinese abroad: A desultory account of the Malayan Archipelago, particularly of Java* (Shanghai: The Mission Press, 1849), p. 21.

51 De Graaf and Pigeaud, *Chinese Muslims in Java*, pp. 52–3.

52 Parlindungan, *Tuanku Rao*, p. 657; *Babad Tanah Jawi: Mulai dari Nabi Adam sampai tahun 1647* [The chronicle of Java: Beginning with the Prophet Adam until the year 1647], ed. W.L. Olthof (Yogyakarta: Narasi, 2012), p. 26.

Swan Liong, while the *Babad Tanah Jawi* claims he was a Javanese Hindu prince called Arya Damar.⁵³ Nevertheless, both sources claim that, after living in Palembang for some time, Jinbun and his brother returned to Java. There Jinbun established himself at Demak (the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* claims he reigned from 1475 to 1518, while the *Babad Tanah Jawi* contains no dates) and his brother went to Majapahit.⁵⁴ According to both sources, Jinbun then spread his influence across Java.⁵⁵ The *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* claims he proceeded to pacify Majapahit twice, once in 1478 and then again in 1517, before finally destroying it in 1527.⁵⁶ The *Babad Tanah Jawi*, on the other hand, although again containing no dates, claims Demak overcame Majapahit in a single act of conquest.⁵⁷

This apparent resemblance between the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* and *Babad Tanah Jawi* is problematic for several reasons. First, it seems that key elements of the shared narrative originate with the *Babad Tanah Jawi*. As many scholars have argued, the *Babad Tanah Jawi*, and in common with most pre-modern examples of Javanese historiography, is an attempt to impart legitimacy to the ruling house which produced it — in this case, Mataram (1587–1755).⁵⁸ Between the late sixteenth and mid-eighteenth centuries, Mataram was Java's pre-eminent sultanate; its rulers controlled much of the island and, in order to lay claim to Java's broader Islamic heritage, consciously tried to position themselves as successors to Demak. For this reason, the *Babad Tanah Jawi* attempts to trace the genealogy of Mataram's rulers to Demak. But, and as noted by J.J. Ras, even after the rise of Islam, Javanese culture still invoked Majapahit as the principle means of conferring political legitimacy; the Javanese still saw the Hindu rulers of this kingdom as manifestations of the Supreme Being, and therefore as the ideals of kingship. Any Javanese ruler seeking unquestioned loyalty therefore needed to claim Majapahit ancestry.⁵⁹

In this context, it is unsurprising that the *Babad Tanah Jawi* attempts to trace Mataram's ruling house to Majapahit via Demak by claiming that Mataram's rulers were the descendants of Demak's Sultans who, in turn, were descended from Majapahit's final ruler.⁶⁰ It therefore seems that this element of the *Babad Tanah Jawi* is simply a device to confer legitimacy on Mataram. Indeed, 'Prabu Brawijaya', the name the *Babad Tanah Jawi* gives to Jinbun's father, is a generic title that

53 Parlindungan, *Tuanku Rao*, p. 657; *Babad Tanah Jawi*, pp. 29–30.

54 Parlindungan, *Tuanku Rao*, p. 657; *Babad Tanah Jawi*, pp. 37–9.

55 Parlindungan, *Tuanku Rao*, p. 657; *Babad Tanah Jawi*, pp. 41–2.

56 Parlindungan, *Tuanku Rao*, pp. 657–61.

57 *Babad Tanah Jawi*, pp. 54–5.

58 See Cornelis Christiaan Berg, 'Javanese historiography: A synopsis of its evolution', in *Historians of South East Asia*, ed. D.G.E. Hall (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 18–20; C.C. Berg, 'The Javanese picture of the past', in *An introduction to Indonesian historiography*, ed. Soedjatmoko, Mohammed Ali, G.J. Resink and George McT. Kahin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965), pp. 87–117; and Hoesein Djajadiningrat, 'Local traditions and the study of Indonesian history', in Soedjatmoko et al., *An introduction to Indonesian historiography*, p. 74.

59 Johannes Jacobus Ras, 'The genesis of the *Babad Tanah Jawi*: Origin and function of the Javanese court chronicle', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 143, 2 (1987): 353–4.

60 As such, the *Babad Tanah Jawi* claims Sutawijaya (Mataram's founder) was the adopted son of Hadiwijaya, the last sultan of Pajang (the kingdom which initially succeeded Demak). The latter was, in turn, son-in-law to Demak's final sultan who, through Raden Patah, was a descendant of Majapahit's final ruler (ibid., p. 351).

could refer to any Majapahit ruler.⁶¹ This lack of specificity casts doubt upon whether a real individual is being referred to. But ultimately, that this tradition also appears in the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* strongly suggests that the latter relies in some way upon the *Babad Tanah Jawi*. Consequently, because the *Babad Tanah Jawi* is traditionally attributed to the Mataram court official Pangeran Adilangu II, who wrote it between 1690 and 1718, it is probable that the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* post-dates that period.⁶² Jinbun's genealogy could, of course, have existed earlier, perhaps as an oral tradition, but ultimately this cannot be proven.

The *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* does not, however, simply duplicate the *Babad Tanah Jawi*'s narrative — variations are apparent. Nevertheless, these are also problematic. For example, the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* re-names Jinbun's father Kerta Bumi ('Kung Ta Bu Mi'). This in itself need not represent any difficulty because, as noted, the *Babad Tanah Jawi*'s alternative, Prabu Brawijaya, is only a generic title. 'Kerta Bumi', however, is not a satisfactory alternative. Rather, it is the name of a locality, not an individual, and outside the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* has only been applied to a member of the Majapahit court once: according to a passage in the *Pararaton* (a Majapahit king list dated to c.1600),⁶³ the youngest nephew of King Suraprabhawa (r.1466–1478) bore the title Bhre Kerta Bumi.⁶⁴ Significantly, however, in 1929 Dutch scholarship misinterpreted this passage; they initially mistook it to mean that Bhre Kerta Bumi was the king of Majapahit.⁶⁵ Only in 1978, in the work of Jacobus Noorduynd, was this mistake realised and corrected.⁶⁶ That it appears in the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*, however, is suggestive: it could indicate a Dutch-educated author writing during the period 1929–1978. Likewise, that the text ends with Demak's fall to Pajang — implying that event marks the end of one period and the beginning of another — also suggests a modern, Western-educated author. Certainly, early Javanese writers did not make this distinction.⁶⁷

As a further problematic point, it should also be noted that the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* differs substantially from two other early accounts: Tomé Pires's *Suma Oriental* (1512–1515)⁶⁸ and the aforementioned Bantenese court chronicle, the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* (probably late seventeenth century).⁶⁹ Both of these sources, however, are considered very reliable — produced entirely independently of each other, they substantially agree. It is therefore problematic that both sources (and in common with other early Portuguese texts, like the *Decades da Asia* of João de

61 De Graaf and Pigeaud, *Chinese Muslims in Java*, pp. 82–3.

62 Ras, 'Genesis of the Babad Tanah Jawi', p. 345.

63 Johannes Jacobus Ras, 'Hikayat Banjar and Pararaton: A structural comparison of two chronicles', in *A man of Indonesian letters: Essays in honour of Professor A. Teeuw*, ed. C.M.S. Hellwig and S.O. Robson (Dordrecht: Foris, 1986), p. 192.

64 Ki Padmapuspita, trans. *Pararaton: Teks Bahasa Kawi, terdjemahan Bahasa Indonesia* [The *pararaton*: The Kawi-language text with an Indonesian translation] (Jogjakarta: Taman Siswa, 1966), p. 43.

65 Martha Muusses, 'Singhawikramawarddhana', *Feestbundel KBG 11* (1929): 207–14.

66 Jacobus Noorduynd, 'Majapahit in the fifteenth century', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde* 134, 2 (1978): 239–40.

67 De Graaf and Pigeaud, *Chinese Muslims in Java*, p. 118.

68 Tomé Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires: An account of the East, from the Red Sea to China, written in Malacca and India in 1512–1515*, vol. 1, ed. and trans. Armando Cortesão (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 2005), p. xiii.

69 *Hikayat Hasanuddin*, ed. Jan Edel (Meppel: Drukkerij en Uitgeverszaak b. Ten Brink, 1938), pp. 15–17.

Barros)⁷⁰ claim that Demak's third ruler was on the throne in 1513.⁷¹ Equally, both claim that Demak's first ruler came from Gresik.⁷² This origin is significant: Ma Huan claims Gresik was a Chinese-founded city, ruled by members of the Chinese diaspora.⁷³ Consequently, that both sources mention Gresik in connection with Demak provides a strong link between Java's early Chinese communities and Islamisation. Its absence from the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* is therefore confusing: if the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* were a genuine Chinese Muslim document, we could expect it to mention Gresik.

The *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*'s use of Chinese names is another perplexing aspect of its narrative. Not only are the vast majority of these names absent from other sources (whether indigenous or Chinese) but, and as argued by Leo Suryadinata, they are not rendered in Mandarin. Rather, and as argued by Russell Jones, their transcription appears to be in the Hokkien Chinese dialect, thereby turning 'Sam Boa' into 'San Po Bo', 'Ma Huan' into 'Mah Hwang' and 'Fei Xin' into 'Fen Tsin'.⁷⁴ This conclusion, however, leads to an important observation. As Jones points out, the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* provides definitions for three of its Chinese names: Jin Bun is rendered as 'strong man', Swan Liong as 'diamond dragon' and Kin San as 'Golden Mountain'. According to Jones,⁷⁵ in Hokkien the last two of these definitions are correct. 'Jin Bun', however, and despite *jin* meaning 'man', has no meaning, whether in Hokkien or any other Chinese dialect.⁷⁶ 'Jin Bun', however, is the only one of these names to occur elsewhere. Indeed, its incoherence likely reflects the fact that it is a Chinese name which, over time, has been adapted to a Javanese language. If so, however, its presence amongst otherwise intelligible Chinese names (i.e. which have not undergone adaptation) suggests that not all of these names have experienced the same transmission history. This might indicate that, originally, they did not come from the same source and have only been placed together relatively recently.

The *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*'s depiction of how Java's Chinese communities lost their Muslim identity — that is, as a result of their isolation from China — is another curious point.⁷⁷ Certainly, after Zheng He's withdrawal from the region in the early 1430s, which was followed by a Chinese ban on all international trade lasting until 1567,⁷⁸ Java's remaining Chinese Muslim communities would have experienced a period of separation from their homeland. Under these circumstances, an observer might expect an eventual loss of Chinese identity, accompanied by acculturation. But,

70 See: João de Barros, *Da Asia*, década 4 livro 1 (Lisboa: Na Regia Officina Typografica, 1777–88).

71 Pires, *Suma Oriental*, p. 195; *Hikayat Hasanuddin*, p. 122.

72 Ibid.

73 Ma Huan, *Yingyai shenglan: The overall survey of the ocean's shores*, ed. Feng Ch'eng-Chün, trans. J. V.G. Mills (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 93.

74 Leo Suryadinata, 'Zheng He, Semarang and the Islamization of Java: Between history and legend', in *Admiral Zheng He & Southeast Asia*, ed. Leo Suryadinata (Singapore: International Zheng He Society and ISEAS, 2005), pp. 78–9; Jones, 'Chinese Muslims in Java: A review article', p. 424.

75 According to Ricklefs (who does not speak Hokkien), only the last of these is correct while the other two are meaningless; see De Graaf and Pigeaud, *Chinese Muslims in Java*, p. 189.

76 Jones, 'Chinese Muslims in Java: A review article', p. 424.

77 Parlindungan, *Tuanku Rao*, pp. 656–7.

78 Timothy Brook, 'The merchant network in 16th century China', in *Key papers on Chinese economic history up to 1949*, vol. 2, ed. Michael Dillon (Folkstone: Global Oriental, 2008), pp. 512–13.

it is unlikely this situation would lead to a decline in Islamic identity: during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries (when this decline supposedly occurred), Java was experiencing rapid Islamisation and the creation of a thriving Javanese Islamic culture. Abundant opportunities would therefore have existed to encounter and interact with Muslims. Moreover, it also makes little sense when the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* claims that these communities' loss of Muslim identity was compensated for by an adoption of Chinese customs (i.e. mosques becoming ancestral temples). A backsliding into traditional Chinese customs — essentially a form of Sinicisation — would imply closer connections to China.

In consideration of the above, and despite some signs of authenticity, the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang* draws on unreliable traditions, ignores more accurate ones, and bears the hallmarks of a modern author. In the context of its difficult provenance, this suggests it is probably a fabrication.

The *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon*

Concerning this text's reputed origin, although the Talang Temple's current community is aware of the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* through Muljana's work, it preserves no memory of the original manuscript(s).⁷⁹ As Poortman was supposedly active 90 years ago, however, this is perhaps neither surprising nor damning; it is unlikely that any current member of the temple's community could have seen or read the originals. But, and as above, this is not the only problem.

The Talang Temple is a traditional ancestral temple, dedicated to its founder, Tan Sam Tjai. Interestingly, the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* mentions this individual: calling him Tan Sam Cai, the text describes him as a Chinese Muslim court official who renegaded on his faith, worshipped at the Talang Temple (according to the text, originally a mosque built in 1415 but later converted into a temple) and finally died of poisoning in 1585.⁸⁰ Accounts of the temple's foundation confirm some of this — namely, that Tan Sam Tjai was a Chinese court official who converted to Islam before later renouncing it and re-embracing his original Chinese heritage. But unlike the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon*, these accounts claim it was Tan Sam Tjai who initially established the Talang Temple as a mosque, before then re-dedicating it as an ancestral temple, where the Chinese community subsequently venerated him after his death.⁸¹ Moreover, Tan Sam Tjai's non-Muslim grave still survives in the city. Located in a Muslim graveyard, it is accompanied by a trilingual (Chinese-Malay-Javanese) memorial plaque that confirms Tan Sam Tjai as a court official, giving him the title Raden Aria Wira Tidela. This plaque, however, dates Tan Sam Tjai's death to 1765. Consequently, he post-dates events by a significant margin — as, indeed, does the current structure of the temple, which is also late eighteenth century (and, unlike Semarang's Sam Po Kong Temple, not aligned towards the *qibla*). All of this begins to cast doubt upon the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon*'s credibility.

79 Interview with the temple's custodian, 15 Mar. 2013.

80 Parlindungan, *Tuanku Rao*, pp. 669–71.

81 This account also came from the temple's custodian.

Indeed, the remainder of the text's contents does little to allay any suspicions, with many of the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang*'s problems finding repetition. For example, notwithstanding a possible Javanese claim that Zheng He's fleets visited Cirebon (below), there is no Chinese record of this event.⁸² Similarly, the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* ends with Pajang's conquest of Demak, again implying the end of one period and the beginning of another.⁸³ There is also the same illogical depiction of Sinicisation as a result of isolation from China.⁸⁴ As above, these points could point towards fabrication.

Perhaps the most significant feature of the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon*, however, is its apparent resemblance to two other indigenous texts, both closely associated with Cirebon: the *Hikayat Hasanuddin* and Cirebon's court chronicle, the *Purwaka Caruban Nagari* (written in 1720). Thus, the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* begins by recounting how, in 1415, a Chinese admiral (*laksamana*) called Haji Kung Wu Ping built a lighthouse on top of Gunung Jati. He also established three Chinese Muslim villages nearby, which would subsequently help repair Zheng He's fleets.⁸⁵ As mentioned, no Chinese source records this incident. The *Purwaka Caruban Nagari*, however, contains a similar account, also claiming that Cirebon began as a series of villages which (due to Chinese trade, not a Chinese official) grew into a city. Then, soon after the city's establishment, the text states that two Chinese officials visited it — a general called Wai Ping and an admiral called Te Ho. Together, they built a pagoda on top of Gunung Jati. Rather than a lighthouse, however, this served as a memorial (to what is unclear).⁸⁶

Despite a slightly different sequence of events, these two narratives are very similar. Notably, the names of the Chinese officials involved — 'Kung Wu Ping' and 'Te Ho' coupled with 'Wai Ping' and 'Zheng He' — appear to be the same. Not only does this establish a possible Javanese tradition linking Zheng He with the early history of Cirebon, but it also suggests a link between these two texts. Any connection, however, is not continuous; the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon*'s subsequent narrative, regarding events after 1526, differs dramatically from the *Purwaka Caruban Nagari*. Rather, for that later period the text resembles the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*.

As such, in 1526 the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* claims that Demak's (third) ruler sent Sunan Gunung Jati to conquer Cirebon. After successfully doing so, Sunan Gunung Jati reputedly moved to Banten before, finally, returning to Cirebon to establish the sultanate.⁸⁷ In essence, this account is substantially similar to the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*'s.⁸⁸ Indeed, the only major difference concerns a man named Tan Eng Hoat, whom the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* claims ruled Cirebon prior to Sunan Gunung Jati's return and who joined forces with him to create the sultanate.⁸⁹ This

82 Neither Ma Huan nor Fei Xin, for example, claim vessels from Zheng He's fleets visited Cirebon; see Ma Huan, *Yingyai shenglan*; and Fei Xin, *Xingcha shenglan: The overall survey of the Star Raft*, trans. J.V.G. Mills (rev. Roderich Ptak) (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1996).

83 Parlindungan, *Tuanku Rao*, p. 671.

84 *Ibid.*, pp. 667–78.

85 *Ibid.*, p. 667.

86 Cited in: De Graaf and Pigeaud, *Chinese Muslims in Java*, p. 120.

87 Parlindungan, *Tuanku Rao*, pp. 667–8.

88 *Hikayat Hasanuddin*, p. 140.

89 Parlindungan, *Tuanku Rao*, p. 667.

individual is absent from the *Hikayat Hasanuddin*. He does, however, appear in the *Purwaka Caruban Nagari*: there, he is Jinbun's Gresik-based grandfather.⁹⁰

Ultimately, these similarities suggest two possibilities: either the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* is a 'hybridisation' of these two indigenous texts, or all three derive from a separate and now lost text(s) or oral tradition(s). Although the latter possibility might explain the slight variations between all three narratives, ultimately the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* is almost certainly not a genuine parallel tradition: the Talang temple community has no independent memory of the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon*, the text's appropriation of Tan Sam Tjai is flawed, its periodisation of history indicates a modern author, and its provenance remains uncertain. These points suggest that the first possibility is more likely, and that the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* is a (probably modern) hybridisation of the two earlier texts. Certainly, the *Kronik Tionghua Cirebon* contains hardly any information which cannot be found in the other two sources.

Conclusion

At the end of our discussion, the legitimacy of both *Kronik Tionghua* remains doubtful. Although we have successfully traced Parlindungan's Resident Poortman, and even though both documents contain features suggestive of authenticity, the account of their discovery is unlikely and many points speak against legitimacy. Consequently, it is perhaps prudent to remain cautious and assume both texts are forgeries. But if so, a question remains: Who forged them and why?

Ultimately, because the evidence points towards a Dutch-educated, twentieth-century forger, and because no one else is mentioned in connection with the texts or their discovery, the two most viable candidates are Parlindungan and Poortman. Neither, however, has an obvious motive for fabrication. Parlindungan's concerns, for example, lay with the Batak, not with Java or Indonesia's Chinese communities (Muslim or otherwise). Indeed, Parlindungan's failure to utilise either *Kronik Tionghua* amply reflects this lack of interest. He simply reproduces them at the end of *Tuanku Rao* as Appendix 31, with a description of how they were found. He neither flaunts nor discusses them. Instead, he merely offers them to the reader as interesting curiosities. Because they therefore serve no purpose within his narrative, he has no obvious motive for fabricating them.

Identifying Poortman as the forger, on the other hand, might explain Wade's observation concerning Gan Eng Cu. As discussed above, Gan Eng Cu is otherwise known only from the *Ming shilu*; Wade has argued that, because the *Ming shilu* was not translated from the Chinese until after 1964, Parlindungan could not have forged the texts because he could not have accessed any information about Gan Eng Cu. But, and as also noted above, Parlindungan does claim that Poortman knew Chinese and, once back in the Netherlands, pursued his research in Leiden.⁹¹ In the 1930s, the University of Leiden possessed at least two copies of the *Ming shi* (the edited version of the *Ming shilu*).⁹² This text also mentions Gan Eng Cu, making

90 Cited in: Talango, *Kerajaan-kerajaan Jawa* (2012), p. 78.

91 Parlindungan, *Tuanku Rao*, pp. 428–9.

92 Leiden University's library catalogue holds this information.

it entirely possible that Poortman knew of him and incorporated him into a fabricated text. But ultimately, and like Parlindungan, Poortman also has no obvious motive.

Perhaps, however, we should consider that Parlindungan claims to have seen the original manuscripts. He also claims to have subsequently donated them to the Museum of Ethnology in Leiden. If the texts are both fabrications, however, neither of these points can be accurate — and, indeed, neither the texts themselves nor any record of their donation can currently be found at that museum. Although the museum's record of the texts, in addition to the texts themselves, could conceivably have been lost during the intervening eighty years, in the context of our broader discussion it seems more probable that their absence is yet further indication that they never existed. But if so, then Parlindungan is actively deceiving the reader. Consequently, this suggests that, and despite the absence of an obvious motive, Parlindungan is the likely forger.

Precisely why Parlindungan should have chosen to associate texts he wrote with Poortman, however, is unclear. But, given the *Kronik Tionghua Semarang's* reference to Gan Eng Cu, which Parlindungan could not have taken directly from the Chinese sources, we could speculate that Poortman (as a real person) was indeed the source of at least some of the information contained in each *Kronik Tionghua*. But, rather than two *peranakan* manuscripts, perhaps this information took the form of a theory (with accompanying evidence) about Chinese Muslim involvement in Java's early Islamisation. Certainly, because many early Javanese texts — all of which were known during the early twentieth century — explicitly identify many key actors in Java's early Islamisation as Chinese, it is entirely plausible that someone with Poortman's background and interests would have developed this theory — and then perhaps turned to the Chinese sources for confirmatory evidence of a Chinese presence on Java. But if so, and if Poortman then imparted that theory and evidence to Parlindungan, we must presume that, for some reason of his own, Parlindungan then decided to present that information in the form of two *peranakan* texts. Although this scenario explains some of the facts, it must nonetheless remain speculative.