Inscriptions of Sumatra
II. Short epigraphs in Old Javanese

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ABSTRACT
This article documents the existence of inscriptions using Old Javanese language on the island of Sumatra, by editing three short epigraphs, the first of which has previously been published but never satisfactorily interpreted, while the remaining two have not yet been published at all. However short these texts are in themselves, they raise interesting questions about the cultural, commercial, political, and linguistic connections between Java and Sumatra in ancient times.

KEYWORDS
Old Javanese, Old Malay, Java, Sumatra, inscription, funerary monument, makara, saragi

The two major literary languages of the Indonesian archipelago, Malay and Javanese, are associated – both factually and perceptually – with the two major islands Sumatra and Java. The earliest written records of Sumatra, taking the form of inscriptions on stone, are indeed in Malay, while the earliest written records in an indigenous language found in Java are indeed in Javanese. Nevertheless, there are exceptions to this pattern of language distribution in the epigraphical record. The presence of a group of inscriptions in Old Malay originating from Central and West Java has drawn considerable scholarly attention; but the reverse phenomenon, the epigraphical use of Old Javanese

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1 Several colleagues have helped me access the inscriptions discussed here, or shared with me their views on problems of interpretation. I gladly acknowledge the help of Agus Widiatmoko, Annabel Gallop, Budi Istiawan, Marijke Klokke, Daniel Perret, Uri Tadmor, and Jan Wisseman Christie.

2 For a discussion of the historical significance of this group of inscriptions, and a complete listing of the relevant secondary literature, see Jordaan and Colless 2009: 194–199

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