

*Early Theravādin Cambodia: Terms of Engagement*

Ashley Thompson

The present volume is a response to a growing sense of the need and potential for breaking down the national barriers which have long defined the bulk of art historical and archaeological research on Cambodia's Post-Angkorian or Middle Period (for our initial purposes here, dating from the 13th-18th c.), and for energizing the interpretive dimensions of this area of study in methodological and theoretical terms. While the significant strides made, largely in empirical terms, in the fields of Middle Cambodian art history and archaeology in the past two decades are matched by those, largely in interpretive terms, in Theravādin Buddhist Studies, little dialogue exists between these two bodies of scholarship. The one group has been homing in on Cambodia as the other has sought to conceive the commonalities of a cosmopolitan religion anchored in very local realities differing over space and time; the one has focused on refining understandings of chronological historical developments in Cambodia, while the other has sought to sound the *imaginaires* borne by Theravāda Buddhism more broadly. Conceptual innovations in the field of Middle Cambodian history seeking precisely to account for the preponderant role of Buddhist *imaginaires* in the historical developments after Angkor have furthermore remained largely beyond the purview of both of these groups.

Emblematic of the progress in Buddhist Studies is a 2012 essay by Sven Bretfeld, "Resonant paradigms in the study of religions and the emergence of Theravāda Buddhism".<sup>1</sup> In this piece, Bretfeld advances a sonic metaphor to encapsulate his complex reading of the "emergence of

Theravāda Buddhism” in the 19th-20th centuries through the contact developed between Orientalist research and contemporary transformations in the Buddhist world of Sri Lanka. “The stress of this approach”, he writes, “lies on the *relational* notion of religion, which could be described metaphorically as a polyphone ‘concert’ of different agencies, interests, ideas and power relations. Religion ‘sounds’ different depending on who speaks about or for it, and depending on who is observing and who is observed. Nevertheless, all these voices are interrelated and ‘resonate’ each other. Focusing on resonances, the religious field can be analyzed as a polymorph, dynamic formation emerging from the effects of contact”. With this approach, furthered in other publications detailing the work of intra-Buddhist relations in earlier historical moments as these laid the ground for this modern “emergence of Theravāda Buddhism”, Bretfeld acknowledges the necessity and insights of postcolonial critique of the study of “religion” while striving to overcome its critical pitfalls. There is not one single origin of Theravāda Buddhism – be it in the veritable words of the Buddha as some Buddhist texts suggest, or in those of the Orientalist as suggested by some postcolonial critics; instead in Bretfeld’s words we hear the term “emergence” chiming with the paradigm of “resonance” to encourage us to tune our ears to the “concert” that is Theravāda Buddhism.

A preliminary title of the present volume, *The Emergence of Theravāda Buddhism in Cambodia: Perspectives from the History of Art and Archaeology*, echoed such concerns. This title was however ultimately overridden by other concerns emerging from the specificity of the project on early Middle Period Cambodia, probing in particular 12th-14th-century developments. *The Emergence of Theravāda Buddhism in Cambodia* came to suggest to my ears an awkward, imprecise premise that the two substantives – Theravāda and Cambodia – could be separated,

with the dynamic, polyphonous emergence of the one (Theravāda) set against the backdrop of the other singular, static, defined entity of the other (Cambodia). In modifying the title to *Early Theravādin Cambodia: Perspectives from the History of Art and Archaeology*, I have sought to signal something more on the order of a co-emergence, to affirm the integral role of Theravāda in defining the Cambodian state after Angkor, and to suggest that just as Theravāda was making Cambodia so was Cambodia making Theravāda. Yet another alternative title to our volume could have been thus *Early Cambodian Theravāda: Perspectives from the History of Art and Archaeology*.

The pendant to Bretfeld's work on Theravāda in the field of Cambodian history is for me Grégory Mikaelian's 2012 "Des sources lacunaires de l'histoire à l'histoire complexifiée des sources. Éléments pour une histoire des renaissances khmères (c. XIV-c. XVIII<sup>e</sup> s.)" [From lacunary sources of history to the complicated history of sources. Elements for a history of Khmer renaissances (c. XIVth - c. XVIIIth centuries.)].<sup>2</sup> In this essay, Mikaelian throws down the gauntlet to his peers and successors, challenging us to transcend the tired colonially-riveted view of Cambodia's "decline" after Angkor purportedly reflected at once in the relative dearth of historical sources and the self-effacing piety of Theravāda Buddhism. Mikaelian's complaint that colonial scholars, like those mimicking them in their wake, have seen nothing but the absence of historical sources after Angkor resonates with Bretfeld's subtle corrective to conclusions drawn from the postcolonial revelation that the term "religion" and its -isms have no term-for-term equivalent in many non-Western contexts in which the said "religions" have been expounded upon for centuries by Western scholars. The two authors point up the same methodological misstep in which scholars seek mirror images of Euro-American constructs in

their non-Euro-American objects of study. Some have sought and purported to have found “exact matches of the contingent concepts fashioned in specific European discourse”<sup>3</sup>; others seeking and not finding any such match have refashioned the formers’ purported discovery as mere invention. In what I would like to call a decolonising approach whereby we seek the multiple disparate agencies participating in the construction of any historical matrix – which is never short of interpretation, Bretfeld sees neither the presence nor the absence of “Buddhism” in premodern Sri Lanka; rather he sees how “the ‘isms’ of Religious and Buddhist Studies resonate reified conceptualizations of the Teaching of the Buddha that have already been used for centuries in Sri Lankan differentiations that singled out specific material, cognitive, pragmatic and experiential spheres of social and individual life, as well as condensed them in a conceptual design that we can render as ‘Buddhism’ ...”.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, Mikaelian’s critique does not aim to demonstrate the absence or the presence of Middle Cambodian historical sources *per se*. Instead, he advocates probing material and textual cultures as forms of historical source embodying local conceptualisations of history and realisations thereof. For Mikaelian these barely tapped sources for understanding Cambodian history after Angkor are intimately linked to court and religious centres and are themselves contingent upon Buddhist perceptions of cyclical rebirth – the *renaissances* of his title. They are the inland heart whose beat set the historical rhythms of a Cambodia evolving integrally with the Southeast Asian region in what came to be known as the age of commerce. To hear the resonance of these sources with the accounts of Chinese chronicles or Portuguese missionaries, or even with Euro-American “history” derived from or mirrored in modern Cambodian chronicles..., one must be able to hear them, first, on their own Buddhist terms.

The present volume aims to go some way towards achieving this interpretive goal, and to provide others with materials and pathways for going further. In the following I will explore the terms of our title in further detail before presenting each of the volume's essays with an eye on ways in which art historical and archaeological work can contribute to these broader conversations in Buddhist Studies and Southeast Asian History while also evolving themselves through the contact.

# <h1> *"Theravāda"*

What is it that scholars have for so long and often blithely called "Theravāda" Buddhism? What is it, specifically, in Cambodia after Angkor, the ninth-thirteenth-century Khmer polity dominated by Hindu religio-political expression and which dominated mainland Southeast Asia in its time? What are its sources? Its ingredients? How did it shape the land and the people – physically, socially and conceptually? And how was Theravāda shaped by them? The work presented here reinforces contemporary Buddhist Studies scholars' questioning of the salience of the term "Theravāda" to characterise apparently dominant religious practices across mainland Southeast Asia in the second millennium. The revolution in Buddhist Studies has been anchored in textual analyses producing fresh insight into the modern shaping of a general usage of the term itself contrasted with specific and limited usage in the relevant historical textual records, and a concomitant frustration with the persistent assimilation of the two related but distinct historical groupings of "Theravāda" and "Hinayāna" in defining contrast with "Mahāyāna"; the authors in this volume, on the other hand, take to the ground, revealing the

ways in which material evidence can attest to a specific cultural complex bearing the hallmarks of Theravāda without however reinforcing the essentialist stereotypes by which the latter has come to be defined.

The volume is effectively a modest and circumscribed sequel to the seminal 2012 collective volume *How Theravāda is Theravāda?*, a title which itself boldly pursued the lead of Prapod Assavavirulhakarn in his 2010 *The Ascendancy of Theravāda Buddhism in Southeast Asia*.<sup>5</sup> Both publications prompt readers from the outset to consider the interpretive balancing act required to convey the context in question with adequate nuance. Readers will immediately note the unbalanced treatment of the term “Theravāda” in Assavavirulhakarn’s monograph: the straightforward usage of the volume’s title is retracted on opening in its Table of Contents, with the term appearing in scare quotes in the penultimate chapter title: “‘Theravāda Buddhism’ in Southeast Asia”. The oxymoronic logic underpinning the title *How Theravāda is Theravāda* forefronts the same challenge. Maintaining the term while interrogating its authority, this title posits Theravāda as an undecidable category: it both *is* and *is not*. The titles and subtitles in question query Theravāda in ontological terms. This is not just a case of correcting past inaccurate scholarship. Nor is it reducible to the general conundrum faced by all of us *bricoleurs* as sketched by Derrida in response to Lévi-Strauss: like any other we cannot construct the totality of our language and are instead bound to borrowing from “the text of a heritage that is more or less coherent or ruined”.<sup>6</sup> But insofar as modern scholars of Buddhism are largely themselves – and ourselves – responsible for the coining of the term as a blanket cover for a range of practices many of which do not readily correspond to the defining criteria which we, likewise, have attributed to it..., we are doubly bound: to developing critical awareness of our

past and present usage of the term, and to correcting the distortions in interpretation induced by more than a century of usage. In privileging close analysis of specific material evidence of Theravāda in early Middle Cambodia, the present volume is attentive to this ongoing reassessment across the Buddhist Studies field, and means to inform the same in some small way.

A 1997 essay by Peter Skilling entitled “The Advent of Theravāda to Mainland Southeast Asia” is a key precursor to these book-length studies.<sup>7</sup> In opening, the essay makes a simple but crucial point in highlighting the contrast between the distinct development of a historically conscious *thera*-related collective identification in first millennium Sri Lankan Pāli literature and the lack of like textual production beyond the island in this period. The dominant textual evidence of what will come to be called Theravāda in first millennium mainland Southeast Asia is instead in the Pāli epigraphic record in which Pāli scriptural extracts and commentarial references feature extensively, attesting to liturgical practices and doctrinal orientations rather than historiographical ones. Both types of writing practice could attest to modes of defining affiliation, though the latter, Southeast Asian citational writing, does not convey in any explicit way the self-productive institutionalized determination to categorize monastic-institutional affiliation evidenced in the Sri Lankan chronicular traditions. Instead of examining usage of the term “Theravāda” or other associated appellations, Skilling’s essay compiles and analyzes the epigraphic evidence for both the use of the Indic Pāli language and references to the Pāli canon and known Pāli extra-canonical works in the first millennium of the Common Era. Noting how Buddhist traditions themselves recognized dialect as a defining feature of different schools, Pāli and references to Pāli literature are taken as “a strong indication of Theravādin activity in the

region”, in fact suggesting the predominance of Theravādin practices in the Irawaddy and Chao Phraya river basins from the fifth century CE. The essay comprises a concise and cogent guide to Theravāda in the mainland at this time, warning all the while, however, that the affirmation of Theravāda is not to be assimilated with affirmation of a monolithic religious society in any one place or across the region as a whole.

The comprehensive sequel to the above-mentioned work treating Theravāda as a heterogeneous whole is Kate Crosby’s 2013 *Theravāda Buddhism: Continuity, Diversity and Identity*.<sup>8</sup> Crosby’s volume, a monograph-cum-textbook for specialised students, goes a long way toward clarifying the unifying factors of Theravāda *and* highlighting the diversity of practice therein. Crosby explicitly distinguishes her approach from that of her contemporaries struggling “to untangle the extent to which “Theravāda” is *thera-vāda*”, highlighting in her formulation the lingering concern with linking what we call Theravāda to the authentically ancient “word” (*vāda*) of the “Elders” (*thera*, the Buddha’s early disciples). Crosby instead stakes her claim to a critical subject position amongst those who positively “identify themselves as Theravāda Buddhists now and in recent history” as well as their predecessors, “those who contributed to the creation and continuity of the forms and manifestations of Buddhism on which ‘Theravāda Buddhists’ have been able to draw”.<sup>9</sup> The purported shift is a subtle one, privileging exploration of the histories and effects of what have come to be known by “Theravādins” as “Theravādin” forms while still accounting for the impact of modern academic interpretation. Still, Crosby’s “Introduction” reiterates in its own manner Assavavirulhakarn’s varied usage of the term “Theravāda;” only with Crosby we begin with the scare quotes and end with their removal. Crosby’s first subsection, “Problems with the Definition of ‘Theravāda Buddhism’” is paired,



thus, with a closing subsection entitled “Revisiting Conceptions of Theravāda”, a summary of advances the book makes in addressing the previously defined problems.

What, then, is the now abundantly critiqued vision of Theravāda which the present volume encounters? At the risk of reducing inordinately the reductive characterisation under fire, this vision of “Theravāda” in fundamentally flawed ontological terms is: a form of Buddhist doctrine and practice characterised by the use of the cosmopolitan Indic Pāli language to the exclusion of Sanskrit, and core reference to the Tipiṭaka (Pāli canon), specifically including what are considered early Buddhist texts, the Vinaya (texts setting out the monastic discipline) and the Sutta (discourses attributed to the Buddha), as well as a third, later Abhidhamma (systematic elaboration of doctrine) section, along with Commentaries on the canon; a privileging of the extended life story of the Historical Buddha Sakyamuni; a conservative adherence to the Historical Buddha’s own words, and so to an originary, pure form of Buddhism; a monastic commitment to personal salvation structuring a fundamentally apolitical orientation of the religious order at large and, paradoxically, a democratic opening to ordinary people to participate in core practice.

In the above well established – and now well critiqued – vision of Theravāda, each of the above traits is set starkly against the counter-traits defining Theravāda’s supposed other, Mahāyāna Buddhism and its offshoot, Vajrayāna: the use of the cosmopolitan Indic Sanskrit language; reference to the same first two sections of the early Buddhist canon *plus* a large body of other writings including different Abhidharma texts and evincing an embrace of notions of revelation by a Buddha continuing to disseminate teachings from a heavenly realm;<sup>10</sup> investment in the simultaneous multiplicity of Buddhas and bodhisattvas (Buddhas-to-be) and associated esoteric

practices; a monastic commitment to communal salvation underpinning the imbrication of religion in politics.<sup>11</sup>

Allow me a few comments on the above definitions with reference to both Crosby and the focus of the present volume, before directly addressing the other two operative terms of our volume title -- Cambodia and periodisation. The thick contextualisation which preoccupies each author in this volume in and of itself challenges the characterisation of Theravāda as maintaining a privileged relationship with early Indian Buddhism. As Crosby aptly notes, Theravāda is “the process and product of over two and a half millennia since the historical person referred to as the Buddha began preaching the teachings and institutions from which all forms of Buddhism developed”.<sup>12</sup> Integral to the ongoing re-evaluation of Theravāda Buddhism is an awareness that historically conditioned ideological appeals to maintaining a connection to early Buddhism must be distinguished from the connection itself. In art, the appeal is perhaps best expressed in an emphasis on representations of the so-called Historical Buddha. Of course the connection-cum-divide between the actual and the ideological lies at the heart of the long artistic history of representation of the Historical Buddha where the factitiousness of representation itself is perpetually challenged and obscured through ritual processes of image animation. There are myriad ways by which images of the “Historical” Buddha have long been made to live in the here and now. On a more practical level, the predominance of iconographic representation of the Historical Buddha Sakyamuni in early Theravādin Cambodia remains hypothetical. In the absence of specific narrative context, be it textual, iconographic or compositional, we cannot know how Buddha images were identified by their makers and users; evidence suggests in fact a discrepancy between, on the one hand, the

common art historical identification of “the Buddha” which presumes a singular historical figure and, on the other hand, local practices by which Buddha images embody multiple identities, ranging from other Buddhas to local historical or legendary figures. Underpinning this capacity to embody more than one identity is the fact that the “Historical Buddha” is himself larger than life. The Buddha is understood to have been a real historical figure whose career as a religious practitioner and teacher in the fifth century BCE laid the ground for what we now call “Buddhism”. Before becoming a “Buddha” or “Enlightened One”, he was a prince named Siddhattha Gotama of the Sakya clan. This historical figure is sometimes called the Gotama Buddha after his family name, or the Sakyamuni Buddha, the “Buddha, Sage of the Sakya clan”. However, in the historical context at hand, nothing would suggest that reference to this historical figure is ever devoid of the mythic, supernatural dimensions of the same figure’s life story. Beyond the factitiousness of representation, we must query to what degree a given image of the Sakyamuni Buddha is perceived to be without attributions of divinity and attendant soteriological powers, and is in such a reflection of “realism” - Crosby’s term for the problematic scholarly investment in the Historical Buddha typically taken to define Theravāda up against its Buddhist others. Furthermore, when depicted in the absence of textual or sculpted narrative context, many Buddha images appearing in milieux presumed to be Theravādin cannot be simply or singularly identified as representing Sakyamuni; tautological arguments can dominate here, where the Buddha presumed to be Sakyamuni confirms the Theravādin context underpinning that same presumption. At every step we must recall that the term “Buddha” is a title. In Reynolds and Hallisey’s analogy, like the term “king”, “*buddha*” denotes not merely the individual incumbent but also a larger conceptual framework”. The title

“buddha” “suggests the otherness and splendour associated with those [so] named”.<sup>13</sup> Any Buddha is perceived as a transformed historical figure; representations of *the* Buddha are always on some register representations of *a* Buddha. The onus is on the modern viewer to determine if the one can be disentangled from the other in distinct contexts.

The splendid otherness – or divinity – of the Historical Buddha in Theravādin representation has often been attributed by modern scholars, monastics and lay folk alike to contamination from Mahāyāna. Yet, the paradigm of influence, relying as it does on clear distinction between contrasting entities, proves insufficient in explaining many common Pāli Buddhist contexts in which conceptions of and practitioner relations to the Buddha and Buddhahood manifest something other than perception of the Buddha within a strictly historical frame. To attend to this troubling interpretive situation we find terms such as “Tantric Theravāda”, a recent scholarly invention seeking to describe widespread esoteric practices within Pāli Buddhist contexts.<sup>14</sup> Viewed through the established interpretive frame, “Tantric Theravāda” appears to be an oxymoron explicable only through influence of one tradition on another; the current critical approach, however, seeking to forefront evidence in the place of modern categorisation, attentive to the historically inaccurate oppositional pairing of a monastic lineage (“Theravāda”) and a doctrinal orientation (“Mahāyāna”) and so to the porosity historically maintaining between them -- in short hearing the “concert” of Buddhism -- posits the seemingly oxymoronic phrase as a provisional measure for naming “Theravāda” itself in certain contexts. Though the Southeast Asian region’s multifaceted religious past no doubt impacted Pāli Buddhist developments in Cambodia, the latter must also be understood in light of the cultural matrix

shared by diverse monastic affiliations and doctrinal orientations – a matrix shared from their origins but also cultivated in their ongoing developments.

Lastly, any argument for the fundamentally apolitical nature of Theravāda has little traction with the material evidence explored here. If, for example, the typical spatial arrangements of Theravādin sites of worship in Cambodia suggest relatively open access to central icons and religious officiants, there is no doubt that associated religious practices were integrated into political power structures at and after Angkor. Here too essentialist definitions of Theravāda have been formulated through contrast with Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna constructs dominating Angkorian royal expression on the eve of Theravāda's rise. This book argues that the manifest differences in relations between these different Buddhist constructs and political power are to be considered in conjunction with their otherwise common heritage characterised by porosity rather than opposition. On this political point too, relations between Theravāda and its supposed Buddhist others in Cambodia are far more than sequential.

A last brief word on Pāli. By and large the use of Pāli in Southeast Asia can be said to mark Theravāda, with the term now taken in the complexity I have evoked above. On one basic level, it can be said that Pāli replaces Sanskrit in the wake of Angkor, with the earliest definitively dated Pāli composition in Cambodia dated 1309 CE, arriving just in the wake of the last known dated Sanskrit inscription, dated 1307-8 CE.<sup>15</sup> Yet we cannot affirm that all Pāli usage in Cambodia denotes Theravāda in the rigidly established terms noted above; nor can we affirm that the presence of Sanskrit always attests to non-Theravādin practice; nor, lastly, can we affirm that the *absence* of Pāli attests to the absence of Theravāda. Further attention to hybrid usage in the region would strengthen current platforms for analyses of these questions.

Even more importantly, the contrast between Sanskrit and Pāli usage before and after Angkor is to be qualified in multiple ways. This is not a case of one language, associated with one religion, replacing another language associated with its own religion. In addition to the challenge that the Cambodian evidence brings to established notions of such one-to-one correspondence between a discrete religion and a discrete language, it is equally crucial to note that Pāli usage in early Theravādin Cambodia is in many ways *unlike* that of Sanskrit in the pre-Angkorian and Angkorian periods. Sanskrit was a language of epigraphic composition in ancient Cambodia. It was paired with the vernacular Khmer language, the two together participating in the consolidation of a division of compositional labour which relegated poetic developments to Sanskrit and prosaic documentation to Khmer. Pāli, on the other hand, did not come to replace Sanskrit in its literary role in Cambodia. Shifts in the quantity and quality of epigraphic composition in the wake of Angkor included the rise of Khmer as the dominant medium of epigraphic expression. Rather than working predominantly side-by-side, the vernacular came to subsume the vocabulary and literary verve of the Indic languages. It is true that the few Pāli (and closely related Prakrit) epigraphs of pre-Angkorian Cambodia were, as noted above, citational, like those elsewhere in mainland Southeast Asia of the first millennium; and that Pāli usage in Cambodia from the early 14th century was, in contrast – but *like* Angkorian Sanskrit, compositional. Still, Pāli composition did not take hold in Cambodia at this time, while Khmer-language composition did. It is in this sense that it must be said that, after Angkor, Khmer, rather than Pāli, came to replace Sanskrit.

An inadequately studied dimension of these developments in multilinguality of particular pertinence to this volume is the way in which Khmer also came to function as a prestige

language. Khmer's replacement of Sanskrit as a language of literary composition in Middle Cambodia is one indicator of this prestige role; but it is most sharply apparent in the areas at the limits of Angkorian territorial reach, during and after the Angkorian period, where we find multiple declensions of bilingual epigraphy (e.g. Khmer and Pāli; Thai and Khmer; Khmer and Sanskrit; Thai and Pāli...), but also a notable wielding of the Khmer writing system decoupled from the Khmer language. The Khmer writing system had, from its origins in pre-Angkorian times, been used to render Sanskrit and Pāli; this is exemplary of usage across the "Sanskrit cosmopolis", the vast region of Sanskritic culture stretching from present-day Afghanistan in the west to Bali in the east over the first millennium CE., where a range of more or less localised writing systems were used to render the cosmopolitan Sanskrit. When, however, the Khmer writing system came to render Thai, or for example, Pāli in a bilingual Thai-Pāli inscription in which the Thai language portion was written in Thai script..., we see a crucial shift. This participates in a new wave of localisation of Indic culture in the wake of the demise of the Sanskrit cosmopolis as vernacular languages rose to prominence across the vast region; the specific Khmer-Thai phenomenon represents the ongoing cosmopolitisation of Khmer also at the heart of the formation of what would become Thai culture. For the localisation of a culture indicates its cosmopolitan status: in future Thailand, Khmer culture was adapted for specific purposes in the place of or as a form of venerable (Indic) culture even while composition also developed in both Pāli and Thai. The retention of Sanskritic spellings in Indic loanwords in Thai otherwise reflects the Khmer heritage, as do "Thai" mantras deploying Sanskrit, Khmer and Pāli.<sup>16</sup> If evidence of the vernacular Khmer being put to work in critical interpretation of Sanskrit has been identified in the Angkorian period, by the 17th century, we see that the consolidation

of the written vernacular has contributed to a regional practice of creative translation involving Pāli and Khmer as well as neighbouring Thai.<sup>17</sup> The place of Pāli and the Pāli canon in defining Theravāda in this region must be placed in this hierarchised linguistic matrix out of which nation-states were ultimately formed.

In short, giving the label “Theravāda” to any material evidence of Buddhist practice which appears to bear any or even all of the above-named traits risks putting the cart before the horse. The cart we in this volume call, according to modern designation, “Theravāda”, is made of a myriad of component parts none of which on its own renders the cart as a whole, and each of which in turn begs the question of its own singular unconditioned definition. Some will note that I am staging a rhetorical encounter here between the English adage on putting what should logically come second first and the ancient Pāli “Simile of the Chariot”. The latter, a short text staging an episode in an ancient encounter between a Greek king and a Buddhist monk, speaks well to our conundrum in gauging the very existence of something presumed to exist. The textual encounter is one of many in which the Indo-Greek King Milinda questions the Buddhist monk Nāgasena on specific doctrinal points. This one, “The Simile of the Chariot”, concerns Buddhist conceptions of personhood. The text challenges any crude conceptual distinction between material object and concept: an object, like a human subject, and like a name, is a construct. Following a bold opening bid in which the monk Nāgasena appears to affirm that he himself is nothing but a name, he compares the existence of his person to that of a chariot as a means of bringing the king to reach an understanding of this particular area of Buddhist theorisation of ontology:

“If you, sire, came by chariot, show me the chariot. Is the pole the chariot, sire?”



“O no, revered sir”.

“Is the axle the chariot?”

“O no, revered sir”.

“Are the wheels the chariot?”

“O no, revered sir”.

“Is the body of the chariot the chariot ... is the flag-staff of the chariot the chariot ...  
is the yoke the chariot . . . are the reins the chariot ... is the goad the chariot?”

“O no, revered sir”.

“But then, sire, is the chariot the pole, the axle, the wheels, the body of the chariot,  
the flag-staff of the chariot, the yoke, the reins, the goad?”

“O no, revered sir”.

“But then, sire, is there a chariot apart from the pole, the axle, the wheels, the body  
of the chariot, the flag-staff of the chariot, the yoke, the reins, the goad?”

“O no, revered sir”.

“Though I, sire, am asking you repeatedly, I do not see the chariot. Chariot is only a  
sound, sire. For what here is the chariot? You, sire, are speaking an untruth, a lying  
word. There is no chariot. You, sire, are the chief rājā in the whole of India. Of  
whom are you afraid that you speak a lie? [...]

Then King Milinda spoke thus to the venerable Nāgasena:

“I, revered Nāgasena, am not telling a lie, for it is because of the pole, because of  
the axle, the wheels, the body of a chariot, the flag-staff of a chariot, the yoke, the

reins, and because of the goad that ‘chariot ’ exists as a denotation, appellation, designation, as a current usage, as a name”.

“It is well; you, sire, understand a chariot. Even so is it for me, sire, because of the hair of the head and because of the hair of the body . . . and because of the brain in the head and because of material shape and feeling and perception and the habitual tendencies and consciousness [i.e. the five *khandhā*] that ‘Nāgasena’ exists as a denotation, appellation, designation, as a current usage, merely as a name. But according to the highest meaning<sup>18</sup> the person is not got at here. This, sire, was spoken by the nun Vajīra face to face with the Lord:

‘Just as when the parts are rightly set

The word “chariot” is spoken,

So when there are the *khandhā*

It is the convention to say “being””.<sup>19</sup>

To turn the “Simile of the Chariot” to our ends: rather than simply *being* ontologically, it – Theravāda – *is* “because of” its constituent elements. On account of all these things, it, Theravāda, “exists as a denotation, appellation, designation, as a current usage, merely as a name”, “Theravāda”. In naming something “Theravāda”, we must probe its constituent parts and the ways these come together while nonetheless maintaining a vision of the real factitiousness of the construction at hand.

In the rest of the present Introduction I use the term “Theravāda” in this conventional manner highlighted by the venerable Nāgasena. Unless otherwise noted, the term is taken to designate a form of Buddhist practice including expression in Pāli and vernacular Southeast Asian languages but not necessarily to the exclusion of Sanskrit; a privileging of reference to the Historical Buddha but not to the exclusion of elaborate conceptions of Buddhahood and esoteric developments; communal physical and social structures participating variously in the political management of territory and human resources.

# <h1> “*Cambodia*”

Definition of the thing we call “Cambodia” is no less problematic. As with Theravāda, the problem cannot be reduced to anachronistic usage. The English toponym “Cambodia” derives from *kamvuja*, “born of” (*ja/jā*) a mythical ancestor named “Kamvu”. The term appears in compounds with territorial designations in ancient Khmer and Sanskrit epigraphy to designate the successive geo-political entities preceding today’s Cambodian nation-state and dominated by those “born of Kamvu”, – the Khmer(-speaking) people. From this point of view, the term fits “Cambodia” of any time from Angkor on. The linguistic equivalence masks, however, important territorial differences. While modern Cambodia is clearly demarcated in territorial terms, “early Theravādin Cambodia” is not, and the one does not correspond to the other.

In fact, there is a sort of vanishing point where Theravāda and Cambodia meet, highlighting the entanglement of politics and religion in this space and time. The northern and western land borders of pre-Theravādin Cambodia – assuming there is one to speak of, an issue which will be

addressed below – can be defined precisely through the identification of Theravāda as a dominant feature in what is now Thailand. Pāli Buddhist culture(s) stood for centuries, it would seem, as a sort of bulwark against “Cambodia”, as if the former constituted a counterbalance to the latter even without anchoring in a strong, structured singular political entity mirroring that of Angkor. The nature of exchange and, in an increasingly intensive manner from at least the tenth century, veritable patchworked overlap between the Buddhist cultures of what is now central and northeastern Thailand and Angkorian culture is a point of debate raised variously in the present volume. A crucial question concerns at what historical moment Khmer speakers came to inhabit different parts of these regions, and to what degree they, along with related Mon speakers, practiced Pāli-based Buddhisms to the exclusion of the types of Sanskritic Brahmanic and Buddhist cults prevalent in Angkorian culture. As Khmer speakers sprawled across religious borderlands, their presence served to at once share and distinguish between cultures. As noted above, the Khmer language also came to be used as a prestige language by those for whom Khmer was not the mother tongue. When, in these overlapping or border regions, we see Khmer language and/or script paired with Pāli, or with Mon or Thai, we cannot be sure what sort of local usage it represents beyond that to which it manifestly attests: elite written culture referencing Angkor beyond or, at times, as part of Angkor. This begs questions of the presumed discrete nature of ethno-linguistic identity and the mapping of these onto territory characterizing modern historiography. How can we envisage premodern “Khmer-Thai” situations without having recourse to the modern prism by which nations appear pre-destined as such by the apparent natural correlation between ethno-linguistic identity and territorial borders? And this question leads to another: whether or not Angkorian expansion across

religious borders from the tenth century should be considered by any measure a colonisation. And this question leads to yet another at the heart of the present volume: whether Theravādin expansion from the late Angkorian period but especially from the 13th century should itself be considered a sort of cultural occupation or colonisation of Cambodia, and ultimately conceived in relation to occupations or colonisations of a political order.

Two scholarly œuvre are particularly pertinent in exploring these questions. The first is that of Art Historian Hiram Woodward, whom I will more or less let speak for himself in this volume's first essay which, along with its extensive bibliography, conveys the pre-13th-century evidence in this regard. Here I will briefly discuss Historian Michael Vickery's work focused on the textual evidence for the early Post-Angkorian period, from either side of today's Thai-Cambodian border. Through meticulous comparative analyses of epigraphic and chronicular evidence, Vickery ultimately understood the two areas, of the Angkor plain on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the central Chao Phraya basin stretching into northeast Thailand, from the 13th century, to be characterized by similar ethno-linguistic cultures, with relations evolving through mutual assimilation rather than conquest and subordination.<sup>20</sup> With this, Vickery challenges the dominant historiography anchored in modern nation-states and pitting ethnic Tai against ethnic Khmer. In his words the relations between Ayutthaya, an early "Siamese" capital and precursor to modern Bangkok, and Cambodia, so often anachronistically described in terms of international war, become "conflict between rival dynasties for control of mutual borderlands, and... of what both considered to be their old, traditional capital": Angkor.<sup>21</sup> I insist on the qualification of Ayutthaya as "Siamese" rather than "Tai" or "Thai" with reference also to Vickery's interrogations of scholarly suppositions that the term *syām* could have initially

referenced Mon speakers, or peoples and cultures of the Chao Phraya basin irrespective of ethno-linguistic identity, which is to say a mixture of Mon-Khmer and Tai groups drawing substantially on the religious and political heritage of Angkor.<sup>22</sup>

In the first instance, Vickery's formulation reveals the distorting prism by which the historical development of "Cambodia" and "Thailand" or "Siam" have been conceived. Just as European nation-states were drawing national borders between "Cambodia" and "Siam", so were historians tracking the origins and historical limits of these same states, with the one process feeding the other in a mutually reproducing loop. The racial categorisation figuring in this conjoined political and academic demarcation of the region is nowhere more evident than in the art historical field, where arts are classified according to national styles identified with the physical features of the "races" thought to have inhabited the lands in question.<sup>23</sup> The racial categorisation brings with it, of course, attribution of value-bearing characteristics to whole peoples; this serves to establish moral hierarchies between the various so-defined groups, which in the contexts in question are distinctly anchored in value judgments of religious practices, categorised as they are in the art-historically-bound racialising process. The art becomes more than the embodiment of the physical traits of "Khmer" or "Thai", but also a window into the moral rectitude, intellectual capacity and creative flair of these so-defined peoples. In our particular early Post-Angkorian case study, Cambodian art is read as attesting to decadence while Thai art attests to the promise of a dynamic people coalescing into an independent Buddhist state. In the process, originating in and then perpetuated well beyond the colonial period proper, Southeast Asian nations were drawn in the image of modern

Europe. Shattering this lens, Vickery pushes us to see “Cambodia” and “Thailand” together, variously, as one and yet not the same, from the end of Angkor.

Angkor plays a crucial and complex role in the overlaid historical and historiographical processes under our lens here. The rival regional powers – Southeast Asian and/or European – all laid claim to the ancient capital in assimilated geographic and symbolic terms. As the fraught tracing of national borders between the French and the Siamese in the late 19th-early 20th centuries centered around possession of Angkor, so were premodern relations to Angkor interpreted as integral to a fraught tracing of borders between the “Thais” and the “Cambodians” as the Post-Angkorian period lived on.

The rhetorical frame which George Cœdès constructs around his impactful 1958 essay on the watershed of the 13th century in Southeast Asia is fascinating for the nuance it adds to my rapid characterisation here. In a sort of meditative, even despondent mood, Cœdès proposes an analogy between his times --post-World War II which saw the dismantling of the European colonial enterprise in Southeast Asia-- and 13th-century Southeast Asia with its own narratives of (post)-colonisation. Anticipating readerly reactions to his dramatic yet banal designation of this historical moment in Southeast Asia as a “‘turning point,’” Cœdès justifies the characterisation in personal, emotive terms: “From a period in which people have the impression there is no reason why anything would change (impression that my generation had at the beginning of this century) there succeeds a period where everything is put into question, where tomorrows are unforeseeable, and where one hears everywhere moaning about ‘our filthy times’”.<sup>24</sup> This opening bid is mirrored in the last paragraph of the essay, where Cœdès reiterates the parallel between the two “decadent” historical periods. The summary leading up

to this finale addressed to “amateurs of comparisons between past and present”,<sup>25</sup> notes the “the sterilisation of art for which Singhalese [i.e. Theravāda] Buddhism, hostile to personality cults and hardly favorable to the flourishing of the plastic arts, shoulders a good deal of responsibility”.<sup>26</sup> Cœdes’ ambivalence with regards to Theravādin art is hardly obscured by the following rapid acknowledgment that “on the ruins of Khmer and Burmese art of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a new art is born, the Siamese art of Sukhothai” (399). For in the next discreetly damning sequence we find our author pondering to what extent those people living through the change are conscious of its momentousness. On this point, he cites the retrospective epigraphic account of a 14th-century Sukhothai king: ““From that year on [1218 CE or the death of Angkor’s last great king, Jayavarman VII], the nobles, the dignitaries, the brahmans and the rich merchants no longer held the highest place in society; from that moment on, astrologers and doctors also lost their prestige; from that moment on they were no longer valued or respected”.<sup>27</sup> Initially, Cœdès recounts, he understood the 14th-century Tai king in question to be lamenting the loss of the aristocratic Indic world embodied by Angkor; on further reflection on this king’s outlook, however, he reinterprets this passage as a celebratory expression of satisfaction in the Tai establishment of independence from that very world. The replacement of the “refined aristocracy, guardians of Sanskrit culture” by a “decadence” caused by the “adoption of Indian civilisation by a growing number of indigenous people who impregnated it little by little with their own particular tendencies”<sup>28</sup> is clearly not to Cœdès’ liking. That Cœdès’ ambivalence is so palpable here, and that the moral judgments regarding cultural developments after Angkor are so profoundly felt can only be attributable to his own “parallel” experience of displacement at the advent of a new era.



Vickery's work reminds us, however, that Angkor's potentiality far exceeds any modern European model. Like the Ganges, or Mount Meru of Indic geographies, Angkor can be transposed. Vickery highlights research demonstrating that Sukhothai, further north, in the 13th century, was spatially modeled after Angkor; while Ayutthaya in the Chao Phraya basin, appearing in Chinese annals from the late 13th century, was by the 14th century Angkor's successor state.<sup>29</sup> Sukhothai and Ayutthaya comprise two iterations of a single phenomenon in which the reproduction of Angkor participates in the production of a new polity. Modern historiography variously conceives of both as cradles of modern Thailand. This might be considered the same phenomenon by which Theravādin Cambodia was born. Note, for example, that Srei Santhor, a region hosting Cambodian royalty in the early Cambodian Middle Period, derives its name from the ancient name for Angkor, Yaśodharapura.<sup>30</sup> Or that the foundation legend of the enduring Middle-Period capital, Phnom Penh, recounts the discovery of a four-faced statue found floating downstream from the North in a likely reference to Angkorian iconographies.<sup>31</sup> Material remains – textual, sculptural and architectural – demonstrate all of these sites to have been Theravādin, that is they are the cores of polities in which sovereign power and territorial dominion were predominantly developed through Theravādin Buddhist expression. This apparently paradoxical situation in which Theravādin states can be said – if somewhat provocatively in some circles - to have emerged out of non-Theravādin Angkor has drawn attention to the symbolic power of Angkor reigning in the region long after the demise of its political might. Yet the nature of this symbolic power shown up by these exemplary polities cannot be mapped onto real, demarcated territorial possession, on the model of the bordered nation-state. Nor is it limited to a discrete integration of Angkorian

Brahmanic ritual at courts on either side of an imagined border - another established interpretation of the place of Angkor after Angkor implicitly challenged by Vickery's work. The assimilated ethno-linguistic cultures emphasised by Vickery precede the Post-Angkorian period, and pervade it.

The unique and multifaceted role of Angkor also speaks to the power of Theravāda and its others in the region. To be sure, Marxist historian Michael Vickery was little concerned with the inner workings, meanings and so power of religion itself. His interpretation of the historical evidence was oriented instead to pinning down the historical facts attesting to “ethno-linguistic cultures”. Yet, his formulations go some way to mitigating also against the stark contrast established in the scholarly literature between Theravāda and Mahāyāna and/or Brahmanism as both religious practice and political operator in the region; for the particular vision articulated by Vickery of Ayutthaya – if not also Sukhothai – as successors to Angkor also begs interrogation of the stark contrast found in modern historiography between Brahmanic/Mahāyānist Angkorian and Theravādin Post-Angkorian Cambodia and Siam. Despite himself, then, Vickery makes an important contribution to understandings of the workings of religion: in addition to understanding the *differences* between the groupings emphasised in modern scholarship, in following Vickery's lead, we need now to examine more closely the common ground – both physical and metaphysical - shared by Mon, Khmer and then Thai -speaking practitioners of this or that religion.

The contributions to this volume show that, beyond any shadow of doubt, Angkor must be understood as an organising principle of evolving regional Theravādin practice. Much of the material evidence explored – sculpture, architecture, ceramics, texts - attests to the travel of

practices, concepts and ideologies across the region. As a number of essays demonstrate, Angkor-the-site functioned as a veritable reference point for mainland Theravādin practices during and after Angkor-the-empire. In such, it is, along with Sri Lanka or the Pāli canon, a source of mainland Theravāda - which is also to say that Theravāda after Angkor also bears witness to Angkor. Note however that the denomination of ‘kambujā’ in 13th to 16th-century devotional epigraphic texts, at Angkor and beyond, suggests a geo-cultural consciousness associated with but not limited to Angkor proper – in temporal or territorial terms -to have been embedded in and reproduced by Theravādin practice. The quintessential example of this lies in 16th-century texts inscribed by royalty on the walls of the 12th-century Vaishnavite temple of Angkor Wat. The royals record their pious Buddhist works at the temple, including restoration of the temple itself, aimed at restoring Kambujā to its ancient glory.<sup>32</sup> In a text inscribed on a temple on the eastern outskirts of the ancient capital, a man is said to have ordained before traveling to study at Angkor, where he became a scholarly court priest. The epigraph symbolically juxtaposes a series of sacred sites consecrated “in the kingdom of Cambodia” (*kamvujārāsdhr*) with the many *stūpa* which the prototypical Buddhist monarch Ashoka is said to have founded across India.<sup>33</sup> Another set of epigraphs in Khmer but seemingly written by Thai speakers from Ayutthaya recount a 16th-century pilgrimage to Angkor and the southerly royal site of Oudong.<sup>34</sup> Likewise here, restoration of statues is posited as a powerful, pious Buddhist act aiming to ensure the stability of the “country of kambuja” (*kambūjades*, in K.465 and K.285). Angkor was not perceived as co-terminous with Kambujā, but can be said to have acted as a draw in defining it; at the same time, that is in the same devotional actions of travelers, Kambujā’ was an integral part of an evolving regional Theravādin world.

I am suggesting here that the hermeneutic implications of a body of postcolonial research have not been fully digested. The *maṇḍala* model of Southeast Asian statehood developed variously by Stanley Tambiah and O.W. Wolters, and which took particular hold in the wake of Thongchai Winichakul's *Siam Mapped*, has certainly shifted understandings of classical Southeast Asian states as comprising shifting centers and flexible borders radiating out through expanding and contracting movements.<sup>35</sup> This shift in scholarly vision seems, however, to reach its limits in the historiography of Cambodia from the 13th century, as if the classical *maṇḍala* states were then singularly replaced with bordered nation states. Interestingly, Thai historiography does not singularly follow this trajectory, as the successors of the "great *maṇḍalas*" exemplified by Angkor are often today indeed seen in the *maṇḍalas* of post-12th-century future Siam.<sup>36</sup> This does not however stop Thai historiography from stumbling into the trap of by and large seeing Cambodia starkly opposed to (future) Thailand from this moment on. Further attention to the perpetuation of the *maṇḍala* model, along with full acknowledgement of the implications of Vickery's insistence that we shed the organizational principle of historiographies pitting Thais against Cambodians, opens new interpretive horizons. In this context, what shall we make of the established narrative by which Thailand, on the one hand, is understood to have been born in the 13th century, beginning then centuries of more or less continuous expansion, and on the other hand, Angkor is said to have reached its demise and Cambodia to have begun, at the same time, to contract. What, for example, is keeping us from seeing, from the 13th century, a certain expansion of Angkor? The question is a provocation, of course. But one which pushes us to see the continued distortions of our viewing lens crafted in and for the consolidation of the modern nation-state. An expanding Angkor of this order is accomplished not through expansion

out from a singularly powerful center on the model of empire, but rather through the otherwise expansive mode of operation of the *maṇḍala*: replication.

## <h1> *Periodisation*

The search for beginnings heralding this volume is as much temporal as it is geographical.

Identifying the first signs of Theravāda in Cambodia has long presumed not only that the demarcation of Theravāda and Cambodia are themselves self-evident, but also that the absence or presence of Theravāda itself has defined Cambodia in distinct historical periods. As I have emphasised above, however the more we attend to research in this field, the more we are brought to question the validity of the categories upon which we seek to craft our historical narrative.

The purportedly “first Pāli inscription in Cambodia”, *K. 754* documented in the eponymous 1937 article by George Coëdès, has long been taken as a marker for a period divide between Ancient and Middle Cambodia, according to one of the many appellations of the latter which I will discuss briefly below.<sup>37</sup> Dated 1309 CE, the bilingual Pāli-Khmer inscription purportedly from Kok Svay Cek to the west of central Angkor certainly indicates important politico-cultural change otherwise attested in the material record. This is the earliest Pāli epigraph to have been found in the Angkor region which can be positively and precisely dated. For the comparable graphics, another Pāli epigraph, *K. 501*, found further to the west of the core capital, is likely to date from around the late 13th to early 14th century period; it is in this same area that, in 1267 CE, a Buddha image was consecrated as *kamrateṇ jagat śrisugatamāravijita*.<sup>38</sup> Pre-Angkorian

materials often taken to demonstrate Theravādin presence within the Khmer realm prior to the expansion of Angkorian reach are ambiguous in this regard. Peter Skilling has debunked previous interpretation of the canonical extract inscribed in pre-Angkorian writing on a pre-Angkorian Buddha image from Tuol Preah Theat in Cambodian's southwestern Kompong Speu province as attesting to Theravāda: the inscription is in a mixed or Sanskritic Pāli rather than the canonical idiom of Theravāda as has been previously understood.<sup>39</sup> This refinement of our understandings of linguistic evidence, in conjunction with our increasingly refined understandings of relations maintaining between monastic lineage and doctrinal orientation in premodern contexts, also destabilises established assumptions that the stylistic and iconographic resemblances between Dvāravatī and pre-Angkorian Buddha images such as this one from Tuol Preah Theat necessarily attested to sectarian affiliation. The presence of Dvāravatī-style *sīmā* stones in the Kulen mountains on the northern edge of the Angkor plain, along with what may be contemporaneous Buddhist sculpture, may affirm a pre-Angkorian Mon Theravādin presence in this site which would become the cradle of Angkorian civilization. These sculpted stones are common in Dvāravatī contexts north of Angkor in what is now Thailand.<sup>40</sup> But in the absence of substantial archaeological research, we cannot affirm the nature or extent of the beliefs and practices with which they would have been associated. In short, the paucity of Pāli epigraphy prior to the 13th-14th centuries mirroring that of the sort of sculptural and architectural evidence variously characterising Theravādin production elsewhere in the mainland over the first millennium -- *stūpa*, votive tablets, sculpted wheels of the Law, *sīmā* stones -- speaks volumes. In such, research in the wake of Coëdès' naming of the 13th-

century as a “turning point” in Southeast Asian history has largely served to confirm his dramatic stance.

We seek here however to temper such a reading. Recent research does affirm that the steady, intensive *non-Theravādin* architectural, sculptural and epigraphic production characterising the Angkorian state was not simply replaced by Theravādin production from the 14th century; by the end of the 13th century, material production in stone of any order had indeed slowed significantly. Yet, the art and archaeological evidence shed light on transitional processes at hand, combining at once change *and* gradual evolution in and out of the multiple shared heritages developing at this time.

The “first [definitively dated] Pāli inscription in Cambodia” gives us some sense of these processes. *K.754* is in fact a bilingual inscription on the Angkorian model of royal text eulogizing a king and recording cadastral organisation made in the name of religion. It is, like *K. 501*, an original composition. These texts are a far cry from the extracts of canonical scriptures or commentarial references characterising Pāli epigraphy in first millenium mainland Buddhist areas. In both form and content *K. 754* conveys the very particular parameters of this first firm written evidence of Theravāda at Angkor. Territory once under the authority of a *liṅga* is placed, now by the text and in the ritual acts it records, under the authority of a Buddha image who is named, in good Angkorian fashion, after the King. This naming, however, happens only in the Khmer portion of the text, where the King’s name appears in Sanskrit – not Pāli.

Otherwise quite similar to the Khmer, the Pāli portion of the epigraph simply omits this detail.

Other proper names which do appear, in Pāli, in the Pāli portion of the epigraph, appear in Sanskrit in the Khmer portion. The text demonstrates, thus, a critically selective use of Pāli to

operate and document territorial conversion to Theravāda in the Angkor plain on the model, nonetheless, of established Angkorian practice.

*K.501* is in Pāli verse, and comes from a site, further to the west, Prasat Kralanh, which also bears an earlier tenth-century Sanskrit Buddhist inscription. *K.501* also recounts conversion to Buddhism but of a “favourite” of the king; though this text does not, like *K.754*, explicitly enumerate borders of the territory associated with the new religious construction and its Buddha image, it does record the installation of a Buddha image by the king’s “favourite” and celebrates his offering of human and land resources to the service of the Buddhist foundation.

*K.241*, from Prasat Ta An and dated 1267 CE likewise commemorates the installation of a new Buddha image at an older Buddhist site dating to the tenth century. Though this text is not a Pāli composition, in the name of the Buddha image, *kamrateñ jagat śrisugatamāravijita*, it attests to a like process of conversion by which established Angkorian constructs are harnessed to Theravādin ones such that the Buddha in his legendary Victory over Māra (*śrisugatamāravijita*) takes the divine place of the Angkorian “Lord of the World” (*kamrateñ jagat*). In each of these cases statuary gave body to the evolution at hand.

This concentration of early Theravādin evidence to the west of central Angkor is notable also in light of an enigma woven into the verse text of *K.501* from Prasat Kralanh. The donor of the new Buddhist foundation is said to have pronounced it as such:

Sojourn of those who destroy caimans, the river [...]; making people live with these, the Buddha is turned to the west.<sup>41</sup>



Divine images, it should be noted, are nearly systematically erected facing east in Cambodian contexts. The westerly facing Buddha evoked in *K.501* makes a strong statement, akin to that made by the most notable exception to the Angkorian rule, Angkor Wat temple, which faces west and whose central image was likely to have done so as well. To the west of Prasat Kralanh lies, indeed, a river. In exceptionally facing west, the Buddha evoked at Prasat Kralanh would have effectively turned its back to Angkor and turned its gaze to the Theravādin west of what we now call Thailand. A solution to the enigma which remains to this day may lie in further research in this area to the west of central Angkor.

Early Pāli inscriptions from Angkor are otherwise preceded by a body of Pāli written in Khmer script, at times in conjunction with a Khmer language text, documented within the outer reaches of ancient Angkorian *maṇḍalas*. These can be canonical or extra-canonical extracts, or texts praising and documenting Buddhist foundations with or without cadastral implications. Each case requires textual and contextual analysis to determine, however, if it reflects extension of Angkorian territorial and associated politico-cultural dominion, extra-Angkorian practice by Khmer speakers inhabiting areas now in Thailand, or an appeal to the prestige of Khmer.<sup>42</sup>

Crucially, our “first” (post-)Angkorian Pāli inscriptions appear in the same liminal period as a bilingual Sanskrit-Khmer Buddhist epigraph whose doctrinal orientation remains ambiguous. This text, inventoried as *K.888*, is, unusually, engraved in convex lettering on an unusual monolithic sculpture which, I will argue, represents in a fabulously condensed manner the multiple issues at play in defining “Early Theravādin Cambodia”.

The sculpture, inventoried as Ka.1697 and held by the National Museum of Cambodia, comprises a seated figure holding aloft a stone tablet [Figs. 1.1-3].<sup>43</sup> The engraved text, on the tablet which may represent a leporello manuscript, has until recently been understood to be in Pāli. In a 2018 study, Peter Skilling has however shown the text to be a Sanskrit liturgical verse followed by a phrase in Khmer.<sup>44</sup> The epigraph is not dated. Linguist Saveros Pou has however highlighted the similarity of the script to that of *K.754*, and suggested a late 13th to 14th-century attribution.<sup>45</sup> As we know, though Pāli Buddhism was expanding under elite patronage at this time, Sanskrit remained in use as a language of composition in Shaivite contexts into at least the third decade of the 14th century. Skilling has demonstrated that the Buddhist Sanskrit text, *K.888*, is not a case of enduring Sanskritic usage within Khmer or Pāli composition; while much of the text's vocabulary is shared by Pāli and Sanskrit, the inflections are distinctly Sanskrit, making this a Sanskrit composition. Or, perhaps more accurately, it is a citation of Sanskrit verse - on the order of those, predominantly in Pāli, characterising Buddhist contexts widespread in mainland Southeast Asia *beyond* Cambodia in the first millennium of the Common Era. Unlike *K.754* which documents an act of territorial conversion from Shaivite to Theravādin authority at a relatively minor Angkorian site, or *K.241* and *K.501* which also come from minor sites, *K.888* was found at a vast Buddhist temple complex, Preah Khan in Kompong Svay, some one hundred kilometres east of Angkor. Ongoing research is demonstrating this Preah Khan complex to have been a crucible for Buddhist practice in Cambodia from the late tenth-early eleventh centuries for centuries to come, bridging thus what are so often thought to be two monolithic, distinct historical periods - the Angkorian and the Post-Angkorian.<sup>46</sup>

Skilling has demonstrated that *K.888* is a verse of homage to the ‘Three Jewels’ (the Buddha, the Dharma and the Saṅgha or Buddhist Order) associated with the ancient Indian poet Mātṛceṭa (ca. fourth century). Tracking multiple iterations of the verse, from a fourth-century poem to contemporary Nepalese liturgy in passing by the Cambodian appearance in question, Skilling explores the development of pan-Asian intertextuality through movement of people, development of monastic lineages, ritual performance, teaching, etc., ultimately suggesting the verse to represent “common Buddhist property”.<sup>47</sup> Different modalities of the formula feature in this 13th-14th-century Cambodian context and in modern Thai and Cambodian contexts. This situation shows up a shared reference point for a wide range of practices which in scholarly circles have typically been labeled “Mahāyāna” on the one hand and “Theravāda” on the other; these include veneration of the Three Jewels; the notion of refuge offered by one or all of these three; and an aspiration to awakening. Instead of isolating discrete formulas within discrete Buddhist schools, Skilling explores how the fundamentals of the verse take on their own lives within disparate contexts.

The sculpture incorporating *K.888* is also ambiguous. Published dating of the piece to the late 13th-14th centuries is implicitly queried by Skilling - as if scholars had long been led by its presumed Theravādin nature, in an example of the circular reasoning mentioned in opening by which Theravādin traits (here, mistakenly attributed to Pāli usage) are taken to place materials from the late 13th century, which date is then used to confirm said materials as Theravādin. Notably, Skilling explicitly addresses neither the paleographic dating of *K.888* to some one hundred years after the reign of Jayavarman VII, nor art historians’ consistent attribution of the sculpture to this same period, and stops short of advancing any date range for the text

himself.<sup>48</sup> He evokes other material considerations to emphasise instead an affiliation with the Jayavarman VII period, in the late 12th to early 13th centuries, that is *at* rather than *after* the height of Angkor. This is indeed the dating adopted by the National Museum of Cambodia where the sculpture is currently displayed. Skilling makes two observations in this regard. First, the piece shares features with another unusual sculpture found in the same area of the vast Preah Khan site, Ka.1848, a fragmented triad of the *nāga*-protected Buddha-Prajñāpāramitā- (Lokeśvara) set on a high pedestal encompassing a fourth figure in high relief; this piece has itself been dated on iconographic and stylistic bases to the late 12th century [Fig. 1.4].<sup>49</sup>

Second, viewed in profile, the tablet-bearing statue distinctly resembles the famous presumed portraits of King Jayavarman VII, one of which was found in the same temple site of Preah Khan of Kompong Svay [See Fig. 1.2].<sup>50</sup> This is to say that, if the statue's morphology, along with the modeling of the facial features, associate the unusual tablet-bearing figure with the Bayon-period style, or its wake, the specific morphology of the torso makes it one in a series of variations on one of the very hallmarks of the Bayon style, the Jayavarman VII portrait type [Figs. 1.5-7]. In this context, let me recall that the introduction of a certain brand of realism in the art of the Bayon period brings new dimensions to interpretation of style in ancient Cambodian art: with Jayavarman VII, the period style can be indistinguishable from the relatively naturalistic representation of the King himself.<sup>51</sup> The similarity of the Ka. 1697 figure with the Bayon-period statue-portrait cannot be taken simply to show the former to be a portrait of Jayavarman VII or even to date to his reign. In general terms, Hiram Woodward has kindly reminded me in discussing the present essay, portraiture rarely escapes style. But my point here is not that portraiture in our context is so dominated by period style that it melds

with it; but rather that, with the Bayon style, we may be seeing something of an inversion of the general art historical rule insofar as the portrait of the King, or his physical traits, can appear to have themselves underpinned the development of the style under his reign. The King's features, like the period style, could inspire enduring sculptural practice as well as innovating imitation after the fact.

These basic observations give rise to a series of apparent contradictions in the sculptural work, ultimately leading to key questions concerning the identification of the figure, as well as that of the possible lineage affiliation and/or doctrinal orientations of the sculpture-cum-text. Skilling asks a fundamental question which echoes those I raised many years ago in the above cited exploration of style and realism in the art of the Bayon period, also with reference to Ka. 1697's sister sculpture, Ka. 1848: are we looking at a monk, or a king, an ascetic, a brahmin or a lay devotee? The morphological allusion to the Jayavarman VII portrait in Ka. 1697 noted above could suggest a royal identification; yet the figure's drapery suggests a monastic figure. The drapery on Ka. 1697 is nearly identical to that of the Buddha figure at the centre of the triad of the top register of Ka. 1848. This monastic dress, with right shoulder bared and a folded robe over the left shoulder, is in fact "characteristic of... Thai, Lao and Khmer Buddhism"; Skilling goes even further to suggest that it may not be "characteristic of early Indian Buddhist art or of non-Theravāda fraternities".<sup>52</sup> This is an area requiring further research. In particular, there is no sustained critical study of monastic drapery in Cambodian sculptural form attentive to François Bizot's extensive textual and ethnographic research on Southeast Asian Theravādin monastic dress, which might refine arguments regarding Theravādin identification.<sup>53</sup> Bizot has explored how the different elements of Southeast Asian monastic dress, along with different

modes of adjusting the dress, reflect fundamental differences in practices defining distinct monastic groups. Historically, choices in modes of appearance are anchored in questions concerning exposure of the monastic body to the lay world, and include distinctions between forest and village-based monks and modes of subsistence ranging from autonomous forest living to wholesale dependence on alms-collecting social networks. Through textual analyses and observation of contemporary practices, Bizot seeks to link specific modes of dress to distinct origins in specific Sri Lankan or Mon groups. Further research in this area with a sustained focus on sculptural representation could yield important historical data. Of import also for our considerations here is the resemblance of the monastic drapery to that of the Jayavarman VII portrait-statue in the National Museum of Cambodia: though there is no folded robe over the portrait's left shoulder, the upper-body garment of both figures is distinguished by a line running diagonally from the upper right waist under the right breast and up to the left shoulder touching the left neckline. Indeed, one of the astonishing features of this presumed portrait of the King is its very absence of regal adornment.

Yet another feature of Ka. 1697 keeps our interpretive pendulum in motion. In contradistinction to the sculptural treatment of the drapery, the treatment of the hair does not correspond to that of a Theravādin monk, nor to that of a Buddha [Fig.1.3]. It is not shorn in monastic fashion; nor is the shorn head replaced with curls adhering to the head topped by an *uṣṇīṣa*, the cranial protuberance marking Buddhahood. From the back, the hair appears to be combed in a blunt cut across the neck, not unlike that of the classic Jayavarman VII portrait. It is unclear whether the topknot featuring on most versions of the Jayavarman portrait also, if theoretically, features in Ka. 1697 but has been made to disappear, crushed under the weight of the tablet. This

material evidence troubles distinctions, first, between monastics, Buddhas and kings in a context of relatively naturalistic representation, and second, between “Mahāyāna” and “Theravāda” on the 13th-century Cambodian ground. How can we reconcile apparently contradictory elements whereby we have a figure in the Mahāyānist Bayon style, if not veritably referencing the Mahāyānist King Jayavarman VII, appearing in apparently Theravādin monastic dress? How does the dress sync with the treatment of the figure’s hair, or with the Sanskrit text incorporated into the monolithic piece? If the paleographic evidence by which the sculpture’s epigraph, K.888, syncs with art historical assessment of the modeling of the sculptural body, how can such dating be reconciled with the Sanskrit Buddhist usage in a piece evoking Jayavarman VII? In sum, can this piece be considered another iteration of the transitional complex of “early Theravādin Cambodia” decipherable in the royal Pāli-Khmer(-Sanskrit) inscription of Kok Svay Cek? If the late 13<sup>th</sup>-early 14<sup>th</sup>-century dating is correct, it would be the only example of Sanskrit *Buddhist* usage well after the reign of Jayavarman VII and would be embedded in a context of expanding Pāli Buddhist practice. If this dating is incorrect, such that the lettering of the text and the modeling of the body could be attributed to provincial manufacture around the end of the reign of Jayavarman VII or in its immediate wake rather than to a much later date, we still must grapple with the apparent harmonisation of “Mahāyāna” and “Theravāda” elements in the piece itself and in its setting as I will discuss further below. Is it testimony to the porosity between lineage and doctrinal orientation? Is it a condensation of what might be considered two separate portraits of the King in the central axis of the two-tiered Ka. 1848, the one above in the body of a Buddha to be venerated, the one below in the body of a Buddha(-to-be), venerated in a posture of meditative devotion?

The lower figure of Ka. 1848 is particularly evocative in the complex context at hand. As Hiram Woodward has noted, “the adorant seems himself to have become deified, as shown by the presence of an *uṣṇīṣa*”.<sup>54</sup> For the vase held between its clasped hands, art historian Nadine Dalsheimer interprets this adorant with *uṣṇīṣa* as the future Buddha Maitreya. While, for Dalsheimer, the sculpture as a whole is “obviously inspired by the Buddhism of the Great Vehicle [Mahāyāna]”, she is troubled by the unusual composition comprising a fourth figure underneath the common Jayavarman VII Mahāyānist triad; that this ill-fitting figure would be Maitreya haunts her interpretation as a confounding “Theravadin influence”.<sup>55</sup> The regal adornment of the figure in the lower register indeed contrasts with that of the Buddha in the upper register – as with our comparators in the royal portrait and Ka. 1697. The seeming contradiction of a figure simultaneously bearing distinguishing marks of Buddhahood (*uṣṇīṣa*) on the one hand and kingship (adornment) on the other is not however unusual in Theravādin contexts – despite the supposed emphasis on the life story of the Historical Buddha which hinges upon the prince Siddhattha giving up his princely adornment – jewelry, topknot and all -- to reach Enlightenment; the pairing of these features which appears paradoxical through a certain Buddhist modernist lens is in fact a defining feature of Maitreya in modern Cambodian religious contexts. As the Buddha-to-come, Maitreya embodies the (paradox of) the Buddhist king and thrives on its very suggestion of the emergence of Buddhahood in the body of the worshipped-and-worshipping figure before the worshipper’s very eyes, the political figure ushering in a more perfect future. The bejewelled Sakyamuni (or “Historical”) Buddha is itself widespread in mainland Southeast Asia from the 11th century, and in Khmer contexts cannot always easily be attributed to Mahāyāna orientations.<sup>56</sup> This is to say that the bejewelled



Buddha in a Southeast Asian context is not simply evidence of Mahāyāna “influence”; nor, I would argue, is its presence here, lifting aloft as it were the Mahāyānist triad, evidence of “Theravādin influence”. The unification of the multiple figures through the body of the naga is of further interest here insofar as the Buddha protected by the *nāga* comprises a crossover Mahāyāna-Theravāda image, as Hiram Woodward has frequently noted. In short, Ka. 1848 nudges us to reconsider the paradigm of influence as the predominant organizing principle of art historical and historical interpretation in the Cambodian context at hand. So, is the figure in the lower register of Ka. 1848 a monk or a Buddha fashioned in the style of the king, or the king-become-monk-Buddha? Could a genealogical progression be embodied here, where the king’s descendant follows the path of the Buddha? What we can affirm is that Cambodia’s early Buddhist kings could be sculpturally portrayed at once in the body of the Buddha and in that of a devotee – and this in a wide variety of ways, drawing from multiple conceptual resources in and out of Angkor. There is no reason to believe that this practice ended with the end of Jayavarman VII’s reign; to the contrary, evidence suggests it continued in Khmer Pāli Buddhist contexts on and beyond the Angkor plain.

As for any Cambodian Hindu-Buddhist statuary, which always participates in a localisation of cosmopolitan signs, the provenance of these pieces are key to understanding their meaning. Ka. 1697 and 1848 were part of a group of objects found in the vicinity of a colossal composite statue known today as “Preah Chatomukh” (August 4 Faces), “Ta Prohm” (Grandfather Brahma) or “Preah Ang Thom” (Great Buddha) [Cover and Fig. 1.8]. This is a towering stone construction of four Buddhas standing back to back which has been tentatively dated to the second quarter of the 13th century. Like Ka. 1697 and Ka. 1848, it too is unusual in the corpus of Khmer

statuary of which it is nonetheless an integral part. Preah Chatomukh stands at a short distance from another four-faced monument: one of the Jayavarman VII hallmark face-towers, called Prasat Steung. In morphological terms, the one takes inspiration from the other. The proximity in both time and space of these two similar yet different anthropomorphized architectural bodies begs the question of relations maintaining between the religious practices with which they were both associated.<sup>57</sup>

Hiram Woodward's art historical research meets François Bizot's textual and ethnographic work in this ensemble of sculptural remains at Preah Chatomukh. Woodward situates the colossal standing Buddha in the line of "18-cubit" Buddhas developed in "the Hinayāna complex of Lopburi" perpetuated in Sukhothai and Lamphun.<sup>58</sup> Drawing on art historical evidence, Woodward posits this Lopburi Hinayāna complex as the "dominant Buddhist sect for the greater part of the thirteenth century" in both Siam and Cambodia. "Its roots," he writes, "lay primarily in Burma. The sect started to challenge the dominant Mahayana of Cambodia toward the end of the twelfth century; it emerged victorious and it persisted until the middle decades of the fourteenth century when it was finally supplanted as a result of new ties with Sri Lanka".<sup>59</sup> Elsewhere Woodward refers to this pre-reform Pāli Buddhism as "Ariya" Buddhism according to the designation of a group transmitted through Pegu's 15th century Kalyani inscriptions. For Bizot this is the sect at the origin of "heretical" or "tantric" Theravādin traditions known today and which first became manifest in Pāli Buddhism at Angkor from the 12th to 13th centuries.<sup>60</sup> Links with Lopburi, Sukhothai, Lamphun and Pagan are indeed palpable here. Though they are the subject of ongoing research, they remain poorly understood.<sup>61</sup>

What I would like to point out here is the other salient source of early Cambodian Theravāda as evidenced at Preah Khan of Kompong Svay: Angkor itself and in particular Jayavarman VII's Mahāyāna Buddhism. It is no mistake that a number of the early Cambodian Theravādin sites I have thus far mentioned in this essay comprise reappropriation of earlier Angkorian Buddhist temples. Nor should we in my view be obstinate in attempts to disentangle "Mahāyāna" from "Theravāda" in late Angkorian and early Middle Cambodian times. Why, we must ask, in light of evidence such as that I have just highlighted from Preah Khan in Kompong Svay, can we not imagine "Theravādin" monks in 13<sup>th</sup>-century Cambodia undertaking practices, using spaces and developing beliefs associated with "Mahāyāna" Buddhism?

The consternation of art historians before the evidence of a colossal Buddha head found at an early Theravādin site in Angkor Thom is akin to these struggles to reconcile the disparate indices of dating and religious affiliation in the material remains found at Preah Khan's Preah Chatomukh [Fig. 1.9]. The colossal head in question, now in the collections of the Musée Guimet in Paris, appears to have originally belonged to the central Buddha figure of the find site, Vihear Prampir Lavaeng.<sup>62</sup> Its siting at this most monumental of Angkor Thom's Buddhist terraces, surrounded by *sīmā* (Buddhist boundary stones) indicating that Theravādin ordination could have been accomplished here, and its probable association with a colossal Buddha worshipped at this site, make a strong argument for attributing the piece to early Theravādin practice at Angkor. Though only fragments of the central figure were found on-site, these, along with the monumental head itself, suggest the statue to have been like other colossal Buddhas in the Angkor region of this time including that of Preah Chatomukh discussed above, composed of large sandstone blocks rather than the monolith characterising Angkorian-period

production. Yet, as Art Historian Thierry Zéphir writes, the head “displays all the characteristics of the art of Jayavarman VII, to such a degree that it could appear to be a sort of double of the central image of the Bayon”. Holes bored into the headdress, the ears and the neck of the sculpture likely indicate that it was once, or periodically, adorned with jewellery, which practice, again in Zéphir’s words, “would obviously seem to be in discord with an image associated with Buddhism of the Lesser Vehicle [Hinayāna]”. For his deep and sensitive knowledge of ancient Khmer sculptural style and modeling, coupled with established scholarly understandings of Mahāyāna and Theravāda as mutually exclusive, Zéphir cannot reconcile the contradiction in a piece which “never ceases to astonish because it seems to participate in two worlds: that of Buddhism of the Lesser Vehicle... and that of Buddhism of the Great Vehicle”.<sup>63</sup>

This head was removed from its find site and sent by the École française d’Extrême-Orient to France in 1931. In 1933 the French Head of the Angkor Conservation Office oversaw the recovery of the Bayon’s central divinity from a pit underneath the temple’s central sanctuary. In 1935 Cambodian King Sisowath Monivong presided over the ceremonial erection of this monumental monolithic *nāga*-protected Buddha in the place of that whose head had been exported to France [see Fig.2.14].<sup>64</sup> Perhaps the King and his entourage – or the Cambodian labourers who had excavated the Bayon Buddha and lifted it into its new place – understood better than we do today the potentiality of mutual inclusiveness between “Theravāda” and “Mahāyāna” and the innate relations between the “Mahāyānist” Bayon temple and the “Theravādin” terraces of Angkor Thom.

It should be evident from this brief glimpse into sculptural and architectural remains at Preah Khan in Kompong Svay, as in Angkor Thom, that integral to the growing perception of porous borders between types of religious practice in “early Theravādin Cambodia”, along with those between Cambodia and Siam, is a reassessment of periodisation in Cambodian historiography. Readers will note that the “early” period covered by the essays included in the present volume unabashedly reaches into the 12th century.

Yet, the challenge of demarcating the historical period in question goes beyond the specific dating and associated definitional issues raised thus far. The challenge also arises from the history of the academic practice of periodisation anchored in modern Western historiography and politics. This is palpable in the varied usage of contributors to the present volume, where we find the “Post-Angkorian Period”, the “Early Post-Angkorian period”, the “Post-Bayon Period”, the “Middle Period”, the “Early Middle Period”, and the “Early Modern Period”, all referring to more or less the same time. There is a history to the usage of each of these terms, attesting to shifts in perception of time over time, and, periodically, to conscious attempts on the part of individual scholars or scholarly cohorts to engender such shifts within the field. Together they attest to ways in which periodisation is “not simply the drawing of an arbitrary line through time, but a complex process of conceptualizing categories, which are posited as homogeneous and retroactively validated by the designation of a period divide”.<sup>65</sup> This is a definition given by Kathleen Davis in the opening of a book concerning the grounding of political order upon periodisation, most specifically, the modern political order dominated by the West since the Enlightenment and grounded upon a period divide between a “modern”

secularised historical consciousness and the “Middle Ages” in which theology is seen to preclude conceptualisation of historical time.

In his 2012 essay cited in opening, Historian Grégory Mikaelian tracks the evolution of terminology designating the Cambodian Early Modern/Post-Angkorian/Middle Period in the historiography of Cambodia from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, highlighting ideologies determining usage. The “Early Modern” designation has its origins in French colonial pitting of classical Angkor up against the “*époque moderne*” whose roots in the wake of Angkor were posited as those of the modern Cambodian people under colonial rule and effectively detached from the Angkorian heritage. The core reference for this usage is established European historiography which sets the *époque moderne* to begin in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Its English equivalent, “Early Modern”, has been revived recently by those seeking to interpret Cambodia’s history after Angkor within a context of regional and global exchange. The term “Post-Bayon”, used in art historical and archaeological milieu to designate 13<sup>th</sup>-century materials postdating the reign of Jayavarman VII, has not gained traction in broader historical usage. The “Post-Angkorian” label appears to have been introduced by Art Historian Jean Boisselier, and was made widespread by his disciple, Madeleine Giteau with her monograph on “Post-Angkorian” art published in 1975.<sup>66</sup> By and large it can be said that this appellation reflected and reinforced a privileging of the Angkorian period as one of intellectual, cultural and political achievement over the Post-Angkorian period itself studiously neglected as one of decline, and then confirmed as such in the study of its relatively meagre artistic evidence. Read through this modern prism, the local historical records of these two periods were seen notably to demonstrate a decline in local *historiographical* acuity over time – a decline redressed only with the advent of colonial

scholarship. As a riposte to this hermeneutic frame, Cambodian linguist Saveros (Lewitz) Pou substantiated the appellation “*époque moyenne*” which appears to have been first introduced in Khmer as *samăy kaṇtāl* by court intellectual Mahā Bidūr Krassem in his 1938 introduction to the Khmer publication of what are still known -- in Khmer, French and English -- as the “*IMA*”, the Middle Period inscriptions of Angkor Wat temple inventoried by French officials as the “*Inscriptions modernes d’Angkor*”.<sup>67</sup> Thanks to Pou’s published and pedagogical œuvre developed over many decades in the postcolonial era, this appellation has become relatively commonplace, including in Khmer-language usage effectively retranslated as *samăy kaṇtāl*. In Pou’s handling, the term works to dismantle the value judgements inherent in previously established usage. In heralding a focus on cultural continuity over time, the appellation also contributes to that very continuity by raising Cambodian consciousness of the cultural means by which heritage can be actively perpetuated. Some work born of Pou’s determination, notably that of Grégory Mikaelian and myself, seeks now to take a further step in probing the modes of conceptualisation of historical time operative in Middle Cambodia which have been long overlooked, marginalized, demeaned or misunderstood in modern historiography.<sup>68</sup> My own usage in the present Introduction vacillates between the “Middle Period” and the “Post-Angkorian Period”. With the former, I aim to acknowledge historical developments specific to Cambodia as distinct from Post-Angkorian developments elsewhere in mainland Southeast Asia, and to further Pou’s critique of colonial and early postcolonial historiography in its neglect and/or denigration of all after Angkor. My usage of “Post-Angkorian” aims to highlight the importance of Angkor in inflecting subsequent historical developments in Cambodia and across

the mainland, especially in future Siam. The varied usage by the authors in this volume emerges out of this complex scholarly context and attests to varying degrees of intentionality.

### *The Essays*

The present volume is organised in loose chronological order of topic treated, with reference to these very questions of periodisation. With further reference to the related loose geographic definition of Middle Period “Cambodia”, it comprises specialists of Cambodia, Thailand and Burma (Myanmar). We open with Art Historian Hiram Woodward who challenges any facile vision of 13th-century rupture in two ways. First, he culls evidence that “Theravāda Buddhism had long been looked upon in a favorable light” in Cambodia prior to the 13th century, positing the cultural shifts under our microscope as representing a “reinvigoration” or even a “reformation” rather than any “intrusive” movement. Second, he tracks adoptions and adaptations of cultural constructs over time and across space, such that we see, like a gestalt image, now Angkor and Post-Angkor as one, now as distinct, just as we see Cambodia and Siam to vacillate between these two apparently mutually exclusive perspectives.

Woodward’s essay is a call to arms for a new art history of Post-Angkor, and means to serve as a model for it. Woodward’s history to come would, on the one hand, do for Post-Angkor what Art Historian Philippe Stern did for Angkor, tracking evolution in décor and style as a means of establishing a more granular historical account of both Post-Angkorian art and the Post Angkorian period at large. Woodward draws on his two monumental publications on Thai art, *The Art and Architecture of Thailand* and *The Sacred Sculpture of Thailand*, to lay the ground for



this work, discerning trends, influences and borrowings evidenced through “diagnostic motifs”.<sup>69</sup> The synthetic study of these leads to a picture of stylistic evolution pegged to relative dating of the materials. On the other hand, Woodward models future art historical work through a daring interdisciplinary analysis comprising the second part of the essay: a comparative reading of a 14th-century vernacular Thai oath with an 11th-century Cambodian oath up against visual analysis of 12th-century sculpted reliefs at Angkor Wat temple and the parade of structures running north from the Bayon temple inside Angkor Thom. Analyses of these apparently disparate textual, sculptural and architectural sources lead Woodward to link the reliefs of the southern gallery of Angkor Wat with the creative staging of Angkor Thom’s royal plaza as veritable illustrations of the said oath of loyalty to the king, or of the threats advanced against the disloyal. The study seeks to ground new hypotheses on the function of the central plaza of Angkor Thom, overriding extant assumptions regarding its funerary orientation, and, importantly for our purposes here, linking it to Ayutthayan culture. In contending that the face-towers of the Bayon period held nearly the same meaning from both Buddhist and Brahmanical points of view, Woodward also contributes to the breaking down of barriers erected by scholars over time, effacing experience of meaning on the ground.

In the volume’s next essay, Tuy Danel examines Angkorian sculptural representation of *jātaka* tales. The *jātaka*, stories of the Buddha’s past lives which illustrate the bodhisattva’s successive performance of good deeds and concomitant progressive attainment of merit, are known in both Sanskrit and Pāli textual traditions; certain traits however, can be taken to belie distinct sources. The sheer prevalence of representations of scenes from the *Vessantarajātaka*, a story particularly favored in Pāli traditions, in and of itself suggests a Pāli reference at Angkor from as

early as the first half of the 12th century and into the reign of Jayavarman VII. But it is the detail in narrative representation which confirms the pervasiveness of this presence. Through his microscopic lens Tuy identifies scenes and episodes represented sculpturally at Angkor but found only in the one or the other textual tradition, demonstrating thus the co-existence of Sanskrit and Pāli sources operating at Angkor. To what degree the references are actually *textual* remains, however an open question; that is, modes of conveyance of this or that episode or tale informing or supplementing a given sculptural representation could well include the oral, the ritual and of course all manner of artistic form.

Tuy's evidence anticipates that analysed by Samerchai Poolsuwan in the following essay. While in Poolsuwan's western Thai statuary assemblage we will see imitation of Angkorian style, here with Tuy in central Angkor we see the integration of moral tales prevalent in those regions at the outer reaches of Angkorian administrative oversight. Though it is not Angkor Wat temple itself that attract Tuy's attention, the author follows in the tracks of others in this volume in demonstrating the Angkor Wat style and period to have been pivotal in developing the Pāli connection. Tuy's comparison with Burmese modes of *jātaka* representation is also instructive in this regard. Pagan, he notes, evinces a like emphasis on the *Vessantarajātaka*; unlike in Angkor, however, where we see select scenes repeatedly represented as an eclectic element of broader iconographic programmes, such as in the predominantly Vaishnavite reliefs of 12th-century Thommanon temple, at Pagan the tale is found represented in full, with panels detailing each episode in linear progression. Such formal distinctions invite analysis of the status of the source, and particularly any purported textual source, in distinct venues. While *jātaka* representations at both Pagan and Angkor may have sources in Mon Pāli Buddhism,

there is little in the Angkorian record to suggest the predominance of a textual transmission above that of a sculptural one. In fact, Tuy hypothesizes that the Dvāravatī *sīmā*, Buddhist boundary stones sculpted with motifs including *jātaka* representations, may have been the driver of *jātaka* representations at the heart of Angkor; whereas the detailed sequential mode of sculptural representation at Pagan is akin to that of a written narrative account.

In the next essay of this volume, Anthropologist-cum-Art Historian Samerchai Poolsuwan brings us back to the third quarter of the 12th century with a collection of wooden Buddha statues from Tham Phra cave in western Thailand's Ratchaburi province. The essay speaks methodologically and topically to that of Woodward in opening as well as to that of Martin Polkinghorne closing the volume. For each of these authors, close formal study of artistic style serves to deepen extant historical understandings in revealing networks of religious exchange. Likewise for all three, 12th-century Angkor Wat is understood to be a determining influence in Theravādin cultural production. The stylistic features of the unique Tham Phra collection are associated with various sources of Buddhist art during the late first and early second millennia CE -- late Dvāravatī, Pāla from northeastern India and the Bengal area, Khmer most likely from Lopburi, Pagan from Upper Burma, and Mon from Lower Burma and Haripunjaya in northern Thailand. What we see with Poolsuwan however is a certain mobility of style rather than of objects themselves, for the Tham Phra materials, while evidencing each of the above-named cultures, appear to have been produced in local workshops. Indeed, the Tham Phra statues evidence a veritable culture of imitation of those cultures at some distance from the site itself -- Pāla/Pagan and Angkor -- along with a rather eclectic mixing and matching of select elements. Angkor, for example, is conveyed largely through the imitation of adornment rather than facial

features. For Poolsuwan, stylistic imitation does not necessarily correspond to shifts in sectarian belonging or to fusion of distinct religious groups. In his eyes, the Tham Phra statues convey rather the survival of a pre-reform Pāli Buddhism (Woodward's "Ariya" Buddhism or Bizot's "Tantric Theravāda") beneath a Mahāyāna veneer. Importantly, they also suggest ways in which the Buddhism(s) of 12th-century Angkorian hinterlands came to affect Angkorian sculptural production itself as stylistic elements from materials in these areas come to appear themselves on late 12th- to early 13th-century Angkorian Buddha statues and pedestals in central Angkor.

The next two essays in this volume, by Archaeologists Ea Darith and Yuni Sato, bring us into the 13th-14th centuries and shift our focus to the architectural structures understood to cater specifically to Theravādin practices. If the presence of Pāli Buddhism is steadily evidenced in the art historical record at Angkor from the 12th century, these later architectural materials appear to represent a notable shift, with whole architectural structures renovated or singularly constructed seemingly in the name of Theravāda. Ea reviews the unpublished inventory of the "Buddhist terraces" of Angkor Thom carried out by the Cambodian governmental APSARA Authority in 2002 up against a survey of published work to date on these early Middle Period structures and other prominent Buddhist modifications of Angkorian-period temples in central Angkor in subsequent centuries. The "Buddhist terrace" is a rectangular stone platform bearing a Buddha statue at its western end, and surrounded by *sīmā*. These structures appear to be predecessors of the *vihāra* of modern Cambodia. The Cambodian *vihāra* are halls combining two functions which in other Theravādin contexts are relegated to separate architectural structures: a space for lay and monastic worship, and a space for monastic ordination ritual.<sup>70</sup>

Following in the steps of his predecessors in this field, Ea notes the existence of two types of Buddhist terrace sites. The first is systematically integrated into a modified Angkorian temple site; in this type, the terrace abuts the eastern entry of an extant sanctuary. The second is a new standalone construction. With reference to the APSARA Authority inventory, Ea proposes a further typology, comprising five types of Buddhist terrace differentiated by size. In the essay's second section, Ea reviews select highlights of the more monumental modifications of Angkorian structures attributed to later periods. The essay confirms the importance of the Angkorian material heritage in subsequent Cambodian shaping of Theravādin practice otherwise demonstrated in Woodward and Tuy's essays in particular, where we see Pāli Buddhism at Angkor physically and conceptually embedded in extant constructs rather than as "intrusive" phenomena.

Next, Archaeologist Yuni Sato homes in on what has become, through the research of the Japanese-Cambodian team which she leads, the best known "Buddhist Terrace" of Angkor Thom, that of Western Prasat Top, a small temple known in the colonial academic literature as Monument 486.<sup>71</sup> Sato's meticulous examination of this minor site yields significant results for our purposes here. Archaeological work has, first, enabled dating of the various stages of construction of this site in the Early Middle Period. Because of an inscription recovered at Prasat Top, the site has long been assumed to have had its origins in a tenth-century Brahmanic temple; Sato's research shows, rather, an original late 12th- to early-13th-century construction likely to have been Buddhist from the moment of inception. Major development of the site, including the construction of two lateral sanctuaries and a terrace to the east of the original sanctuary, is dated to the late 14th – early 15th centuries. The systematic archaeological

research also brought significant new material finds, including intriguing architectural, sculptural and epigraphic evidence. Amongst these are reliefs of the walking Buddha found to have been sculpted into false doors of the northern sanctuary. Though the walking Buddha, an iconographic hallmark of Sukhothai, is quite rare in Angkor, the larger iconographic ensemble found here -- a sanctuary sculpted with large standing Buddhas in each of its false doors -- is known to have been a defining characteristic of Cambodian Middle Period art.<sup>72</sup> The epigraphic finds are likewise small, but of real significance. These are a brief few words carved into decorative stones found around the terrace in close proximity to *sīmā* stones. The epigraph found to the south of the terrace names the Buddha “Kassapa in the south;” two fragments found to the west of the terrace are likely to name the Buddha “Sakyamuni to the west”. The implications of these particular finds are pursued in the following essay by Art Historian Nicolas Revire.

Revire draws from a wide range of evidence, including that unearthed by Yuni Sato and her team, to track the historical development of the veneration of past and future Buddhas in Cambodian culture writ large over time and space. The essay’s interpretive goals exceed however the establishment of this particular historical phenomenon insofar as, exploring connections between practices of the body, protective chants, iconographies and architectural layouts, Revire shapes out of the materials a window onto the types of beliefs and practices characterising Cambodian Theravāda. In doing so, the author additionally highlights both interregional connections and overlaps between practices typically deemed to be either Mahāyāna or Theravāda. As highlighted in the opening of the present Introduction, Mahāyāna and Theravāda are in fact often set against each other as such for their supposed different

conceptualisations of multiple Buddhas. The Buddhas of Theravāda, it is thought on the one hand, are relatively limited in number and typically understood to embody conceptions of seriality and linear chronological progression; this is foundational to the scholarly characterisation of Theravāda as a rational religion, attached first and foremost to the “Historical” Buddha Sakyamuni who is conceived both as the Buddha of our present era and one in a line of successive Buddhas. The many Buddhas of Mahāyāna, on the other hand, are cosmic, embodying notions of infinitely expanding space and simultaneity; this in turn is foundational to the opposing characterisation of Mahāyāna as relatively esoteric. In positing in particular a sustained emphasis on directional Buddhas in Cambodian practice, that is multiple Buddhas distinctly associated with points in space even as they may appear in series of past Buddhas, Revire’s work lays bare certain esoteric dimensions of Cambodian Pāli Buddhist practice, and begs the question of the pertinence of established Mahāyāna/Theravāda distinctions in the early Cambodian Middle Period.

The last essay in our volume is by Martin Polkinghorne, a scholar who brings disciplinary expertise in both Art History and Archaeology to a sustained focus on the Cambodian Middle Period. The essay emerges from the author’s inventory of a corpus of three hundred sculptures found at Angkor Wat whose stylistic features attest to the complexity of politico-cultural regional networks operating in this period, as to the prominent role of this temple as a locus of ritual practice oriented to the conservation of both ancient and contemporary materials centuries after its 12th-century construction. Set against reflections on archaeological work at Angkor Wat, Polkinghorne’s study of this sculptural corpus contributes to the ongoing development of a more precise historicisation of the often homogenously described “Middle

Period” at this site where we see evidence of 13th-14th-century activity followed by renewed activity from the 16th century.<sup>73</sup> Three select pieces from the Middle Period Angkor Wat corpus are shown, through close stylistic analysis, to have originated in 17th-18th-century Ayutthaya in central Thailand and Lan Xang in central Laos. In considering the specific historical contexts, beyond the evidence at Angkor Wat itself, in which such sculptural donations would have been made, Polkinghorne sketches broader critical understandings of the Cambodian Middle Period, along with the sources available for its study and the disciplinary tools with which we approach it. The essay proposes an understanding of artistic style attentive to the temporal and spatial ramifications of copying, and highlighting the pitfalls of any simple assimilation of stylistic features with geographic and ethnic origin of hypothesized artisans. Stylistic analysis of sculpture is embedded in reflections on current understandings, arising largely from archaeological work concentrated on Greater Angkor, on regional environmental and economic factors leading to shifts in political organisation across mainland Southeast Asia from the 13th century. From this vantage point, Polkinghorne queries early explanatory models of the politico-cultural transition after Angkor, which tended to emphasize the role of Theravāda in causing change, to instead posit religion and even culture at large as non-deterministic. The cultural dimension of the historical complex, embodied in this essay by the donation of Buddhist sculpture to Angkor Wat, is, in Polkinghorne’s evolving vision, to some degree subsumed into the broader regional geo-economic frame, even as the author opens up our horizons in imagining a yet-to-be-uncovered social and religious world decoupled from royal practices and *not* bound to established historical narratives.



Polkinghorne's essay joins each contribution to this volume in highlighting the importance of Angkor beyond Angkor in both temporal and geographic terms. Together, they also highlight what is missing here: new art and archaeological research focused on the Middle Period in Cambodia's more southerly regions. Though Angkor undoubtedly looms large in the formation of a range of regional Theravādin cultures and polities, materials and practices in central Angkor can only be expected to vary from those at a remove from the ancient capital. We have seen one example of this with Poolsuwan's analysis of imitation in the sculptural assemblage of Tham Phra cave in western Thailand. At later periods, just as Sukhothai or Ayutthaya take Angkor as a guiding reference while also differing from Angkor, so too must we expect Cambodia's Middle Period capitals to emerge from Angkor even as Angkor fades from view in ways unimaginable at Angkor itself. At the same time, we can expect new networks across the Southeast Asian and broader Asian region to shift into focus. Ongoing archaeological research on Cambodia's southerly regions in the Middle Period boasts a number of the present volume's authors at its helm. With the appearance of our volume, then, we beckon its sequel, and with it further development of the methodological and theoretical horizons we have only begun to glimpse here, where understandings of Theravādin art of Middle Cambodia are developed with particular attention to the visions and experiences of its producer-users. Reinforcing such interpretive frames will enable the disciplines of the History of Art and Archaeology to transcend the role often attributed them as handmaiden to the discipline of History as defined by post-Enlightenment Euro-American concerns, and to thrive, instead, in detecting the many agencies borne by the objects themselves – even as these will come to inform new historical narratives.

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<sup>1</sup> Sven Bretfeld, “Resonant paradigms in the study of religions and the emergence of Theravāda Buddhism”, *Religion* 42.2, pp. 273-297.

<sup>2</sup> Grégory Mikaelian, “Des sources lacunaires de l’histoire à l’histoire complexifiée des sources. Éléments pour une histoire des renaissances khmères (c. XIV-c. XVIII<sup>e</sup> s.)”, *Péninsule* 65, 2012, pp. 259-305. This text elaborates on a short piece published online under a title which points up more distinctly the concerns shared with Bretfeld: “Écrire l’histoire du Cambodge moyen entre techniques occidentales et doctrines orientales” [Writing the history of Middle Cambodia between Western techniques and Eastern doctrines], *Bulletin de l’AEFEK* 8 (<http://aefek.free.fr>), February 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Bretfeld, “Resonant paradigms”, p. 294.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 278.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Skilling, Jason A. Carbine, Claudio Cicuzza and Santi Pakdeekham (eds.), *How Theravāda is Theravāda: Exploring Buddhist Identities*, Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2012; Prapod Assavavirulhakarn, *The Ascendancy of Theravāda Buddhism in Southeast Asia*, Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Jacques Derrida, “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences”, in *Writing and Difference*, trans. By A. Bass, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979, p. 285.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Skilling, “The Advent of Theravāda Buddhism to South-east Asia”, *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 20, 1, Summer 1997, pp. 99-104.

<sup>8</sup> Kate Crosby, *Theravāda Buddhism: Continuity, Diversity and Identity*, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> The Sanskrit versions of the Vinaya, Sutta and Abhidhamma are the Vinaya, Sūtra and Abhidharma.

<sup>11</sup> Bretfeld provides a concise critical account of the modern invention of the opposition between “Theravāda/Hīnayāna” and “Mahāyāna”. While “Theravāda” originally denoted “a monastic lineage affiliation”, “Hīnayāna” and “Mahāyāna” denoted “personal aspiration and doxo-practical orientation”. The modern intervention was to detach the terms “Theravāda” and “Mahāyāna” from their discrete categories to refashion them as an opposing pair attached to a singular category of variously defined sectarian affiliation, effectively comparing apples to oranges as the English expression would have it (Bretfeld, “Resonant paradigms”, p. 291). The impact of this invention on historical interpretation cannot be over-emphasized. Notably, in our early Middle Cambodian case study, the art historical tendency to classify this or that artefact as evidence of exclusive Theravādin or Mahāyānist beliefs and practices has evolved under its influence, neglecting the simple fact that, historically, monastic lineages were mainly defined by sets of prescripts on monastic behaviour rather than specific doctrinal positions; and that when such positions were held by a lineage proper, they were not necessarily binding for its members. As Bretfeld notes with regards to early Indic developments (as well as for medieval Sri Lanka in subsequent discussions), “A monk could be ordained in a certain Nikāya [lineage] but hold the doctrinal views of another. It was even usual that the same monastery was a place for both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna adepts” (p. 287). On the possibility of esoteric forms of “Mahāyāna Buddhism” evolving “in Theravāda guise” in first millennium Southeast Asia, see Andrea Acri, “Introduction: Esoteric Buddhist Networks along the Maritime Silk



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Routes, 7<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> Century AD” in Andrea Acri, ed., *Esoteric Buddhism in Mediaeval Maritime Asia: Networks of Masters, Texts, Icons*, Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2016, esp. pp. 10-13.

<sup>12</sup> Crosby, *Theravāda Buddhism*, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Frank E. Reynolds and Charles Hallisey, “The Buddha”, in Joseph M. Kitigawa and Mark D. Cummings (eds), *Buddhism and Asian History: Religion, History and Culture*, New York: MacMillan Publishing and Co., 1989, p. 29.

<sup>14</sup> See Kate Crosby’s detailed review of François Bizot’s œuvre in “Tantric Theravada: A bibliographic essay on the writings of François Bizot and others on the yogāvacara Tradition”, *Contemporary Buddhism*, 1,2, 2000, pp. 141–198. This essay marks the start of what is now an œuvre unto its own on the topic, culminating – thus far – in Crosby’s *Esoteric Theravada: the Story of the Forgotten Meditation Tradition of Southeast Asia*, Boulder: Shambhala Publications, 2020.

<sup>15</sup> K. 754 is the first dated Pāli composition noted above. Another earlier inscription (K.241), in Khmer and dated 1267 CE, records the installation of an image of the Buddha called *kamrateñ jagat śrisugatamāravijita*; the appellation combines the common Angkorian epithet for gods, *kamrateñ jagat*, or ‘Lord of the World’, with a Sanskrit or Pali compound designating the Buddha, Victorious over Māra, alluding to a pivotal moment in the Historical Buddha’s life story frequently depicted in Middle Cambodian Theravādin art in the form of a sculpted figure of the Buddha seated in “Māravijaya” or “Victory over Māra” posture often within a sculpted representation of the episode in question. Though the epigraph is not in Pāli, it incorporates this appellation, which is undecideably Pāli or Sanskrit, and which suggests it was an image of this type which was consecrated here in the 13th century. Another undated Pāli inscription, K.501, is likely to date from the late 12th-early 13th centuries. K. 567 is the last dated Sanskrit one. The latter in fact contains four dates, with the latest given above. Another later Sanskrit inscription, K.300, does not contain a numbered date but refers to a reign known to have begun in 1327. Both of these are Shaivite. For recent detailed consideration of the epigraphic records of the late 13th to early 14th centuries as a whole, see Ludivine Provost-Roche, *Les derniers siècles de l’époque angkorienne au Cambodge (env. 1220 – env. 1500)*, PhD Dissertation, Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle–Paris III, 2010, vol 1, pp. 22-48 and translations of select texts in vol. 2. (Note however that --for unexplained reasons-- she does not include K.501 within her study group.)

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<sup>16</sup> See the second section of Hiram Woodward’s essay in the present volume, as well as the work from which he draws there: Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., “The Characteristics of Elephants’: a Thai Manuscript and its Context,” in Justin McDaniel and Lynn Ransom, eds, *From Mulberry Leaves to Silk Scrolls: New Approaches to the Study of Asian Manuscript Traditions*, Philadelphia: Schoenberg Institute, University of Pennsylvania Libraries, 2015, pp. 15–41; and “King Sūryavarman II and the Power of Subjugation,” in George Thompson and Richard K. Payne, eds., *On Meaning and Mantras: Essays in Honor of Frits Staal*, Berkeley: Institute of Buddhist Studies and BDK America, 2017, pp. 483–502.

<sup>17</sup> On the linguistic and literary mechanisms of the Sanskrit cosmopolis and its aftermath more broadly, see Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture and Power in Premodern India*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006. Au Chhieng teases out the linguistic and intellectual dimensions of Khmer vernacular engagement with Sanskrit in his *Études de philologie indo-khmère* series published in the *Journal Asiatique* from 1963-1974. (See “Translation” section on Au Chhieng in *Udaya Journal of Khmer Studies* 15, forthcoming.) Trent Walker has tracked the creative multilingual play at the heart of Middle Khmer Buddhist textual production in his doctoral work: *Unfolding Buddhism: Communal Scripts, Localized Translations, and the Work of the Dying in Cambodian Chanted Leporellos*, PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2018. For other recent work on bilingualism in Khmer epigraphy, see Ashley Thompson, *Engendering the Buddhist State: Territory, Sovereignty and Sexual Difference in the Inventions of Angkor*, Routledge Critical Buddhist Studies, 2016; Chhom Kunthea, *Le rôle du sanskrit dans le développement de la langue khmère: Une étude épigraphique du VI<sup>e</sup> au XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, PhD dissertation, École Pratique des Hautes Études, 2016. Peter Skilling continues to develop meticulous work on the Pāli epigraphy of Southeast Asia, shedding light on relations between Pāli and local languages across the region. On the state of affairs in Southeast Asian epigraphic study more broadly, including Skilling’s useful contribution on the multilingual epigraphy from Thailand, see Daniel Perret (ed), *Writing for Eternity: a Survey of Epigraphy in Southeast Asia*, Paris: École française d’Extrême-Orient, 2018. Many of these studies build on the œuvre of Saverio Pou (Lewitz) as well as those of George Cœdès and Michael Vickery, whose bibliographies are available at <https://www.aefek.fr/page42.html>.

<sup>18</sup> *i.e.*, philosophically speaking, in the ultimate sense, *paramattha*. (Original translator’s note.)

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<sup>19</sup> I.B. Horner, transl., *Milinda's Questions*, trans. By I.B. Horner, London: Pali Text Society, 1990 [1963], vol. 1, pp. 36-38.

<sup>20</sup> For one of his last iterations of this critical position, see Michael Vickery, unpublished revised version of "A New *Tāmnān* About Ayudhya:" 5, n. 29. The article was originally published in the *JSS* 67,1, 1979, pp. 123-86. My thanks to Geoff Wade for sharing an unpublished collection of revised versions of articles on Thai history by Vickery.

<sup>21</sup> Michael Vickery, unpublished revised version of "The 2/k.125 *Fragment*, a Lost Chronicle of Ayutthaya", originally published in *JSS* 65,1, 1977, p. 56.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, pp. 136-137. See also Mikaelian, "Des sources lacunaires", p. 277.

<sup>23</sup> Maurizio Peleggi has examined dimensions of this question in Thai (art) historiography. See especially "The Plot of Thai Art History: Buddhist Sculpture and the Myth of National Origins", in Peleggi, Maurizio (ed), *A Sarong for Clio: Essays on the Intellectual and Cultural Histories of Thailand – Inspired by Craig J. Reynolds*, Ithaca: Cornell University SEAP Publications, 2015, pp. 79-93.

<sup>24</sup> George Coëdès, "Une période critique dans l'Asie du Sud-est : the XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Bulletin de la Société des Etudes Indochinoises* XXXIII,4, 1958, p. 387. A first iteration of this essay was delivered as a talk at the Musée Guimet, Paris, in 1957.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 400.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 398.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 399. On the epigraphic passage in question, see A.B. Griswold and Prasert ာ Nagara, "The epigraphy of Mahādharmaṛājā I of Sukhodaya: Epigraphic and Historical Studies 11/1", *JSS* 61,1, 1973, p. 97.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 400.

<sup>29</sup> The Ayutthaya question pervades Vickery's oeuvre. One example also referencing Sukhothai in these terms (with reference to the work of Griswold and Prasert) is in Michael Vickery, unpublished revised version of "A New *Tāmnān* About Ayudhya", 44 and note 300. Recent work by Grégory Mikaelian and Éric Bourdonneau on the multiple variations on the Angkorian *devarāja*, in Siam as in Cambodia over time and across religions and social milieux, adds significantly to the history sketched here, both in empirical and conceptual terms. The multiple objects which the authors demonstrate to be variously linked to the Angkorian cult provide a matrix for constructing geo-temporal models beyond that of the *maṇḍala* on the one hand and the binary of historical

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rupture versus continuity on the other. The subtle view of 'l'histoire longue' proposed by the authors goes further still to challenge the many binaries anchored in the established periodisation of Cambodian history. Given the timing of our respective publications, the present volume anticipates but does not account fully for the author's theoretical propositions. See Éric Bourdonneau and Grégory Mikaelian, "L'histoire longue du *Devarāja : Pañcaksetr* et figuier à cinq branches dans l'ombre de la danse de Śiva", in Emmanuel Francis and Raphaël Rousseau, eds., *Rāja-maṇḍala : le modèle royal en Inde*, Collection *Puruṣārtha* 37, September 2020, pp. 81-129.

<sup>30</sup> Saveros Lewitz, "La toponymie khmère", *BEFEO* 53,2, 1967, pp. 377-450.

<sup>31</sup> Ashley Thompson, "Lost and Found: the stupa, the four-faced Buddha and the seat of royal power in Middle Cambodia", in Klokke, Marijke J. and Thomas De Bruijn (eds), *Proceedings of the 7th International Conference of the European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists, Berlin, 1998*, Hull: Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Hull, 2000, pp. 245-263; "The Future of Cambodia's Past: A Messianic Middle-Cambodian Royal Cult", in Guthrie Elizabeth and John Marston (eds), *History, Buddhism and New Religious Movements in Cambodia*, Hawai'i: University of Hawaii Press, 2004, pp. 13-39.

<sup>32</sup> *IMA 2 and 3* in Saveros Lewitz, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 2 et 3", *BEFEO* 57, 1970, pp. 99-126. See also Ang Chouléan, "ṭuc purāṇ kāl!" [Like olden times!], *KhmeRenaissance* 3, December 2007-8, pp. 75-77.

<sup>33</sup> *K.177* in Saveros Pou, "Inscriptions khmères K. 144 et K. 177", *BEFEO* 70, 1981, pp. 101-120.

<sup>34</sup> *K. 465, K. 285 and K. 1006*. Khin Sok, "Deux inscriptions tardives du Phnom Bakhèn, K.465 et K.285", *BEFEO* 65, 1, 1978, pp. 271-280; Michael Vickery, "L'inscription K 1006 du Phnom Kulên," *BEFEO* 71, 1982, pp. 77-86; Saveros Pou, "Inscription de Phnom Bakheng (K. 465)", in, Saveros Pou, *Nouvelles Inscriptions du Cambodge I*, Paris: EFEO, 1989, pp. 20-25 ; Saveros Pou, "Inscription de Phnom Bakheng (K. 285)", in Saveros Pou, *Nouvelles Inscriptions du Cambodge I*, Paris: EFEO, 1989, pp. 26-27.

<sup>35</sup> Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, "The Galactic Polity" in *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976, pp. 102-131; O.W. Wolters, *History, Culture and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*, Ithaca: Cornell University Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, first edition 1982, revised edition 1999; Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: a History of the Geo-body of a Nation*, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994.

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<sup>36</sup> For an unapologetic use of the term *maṇḍala* in the place of “state”, and a summary of a succession of Southeast Asian *maṇḍalas* in the *longue durée*, see Prapod Assavavirulhakarn, *The Ascendancy of Theravāda Buddhism*, esp. pp. 18-23.

<sup>37</sup> George Coédès, “Études cambodgiennes XXXII. La plus ancienne inscription en pâli du Cambodge,” *BEFEO* 36, 1937, pp. 14-21 (republished in *Articles sur le pays khmer*, t. I, Paris: EFEO, 1989, pp. 282-289.

<sup>38</sup> For *K.501* see George Coédès, *Inscriptions du Cambodge* III, Paris: EFEO, 1951, pp. 85-88. The date provided in the epigraph is difficult to decipher. Coédès notes that it could render 1074 CE, but one syllable key to such an interpretation remains enigmatic. For the graphics of the text and presumably its Pāli language, Coédès favours a later date, but prior to *K.754*. *K.241* records the erection of the “Victory over Māra” Buddha image. See *Ibid*, pp. 76-78. See also note 14 above.

<sup>39</sup> Skilling, “The Advent of Theravāda Buddhism to South-east Asia”, p. 104. The statue on which the image figures is held by the Musée Guimet: MG 18891. Skilling has also recently published a study of a seventh-eighth-century Pāli text inscribed on a clay tablet found in Angkor Borei district; the text, *K. 1355*, comprises the earliest appearance of Pāli in Cambodia known to date. It is citational, thus confirming the nature of first millennium Pāli in Cambodia like in the Southeast Asian region as noted above. See Peter Skilling, “The Theravaṃsa has always been here: *K. 1355* from Angkor Borei”, *JSS* 107,2, 2019, pp. 43-62.

<sup>40</sup> Stephen Murphy has shown the two closely situated *sīmā* sites on the Kulen to be representative of a culture well developed on the Khorat plateau. As the one instance south of the Dangrek mountains which serves otherwise as a natural border confining the extensive *sīmā* distribution to the northerly plateau, the Kulen example is also anomalous. (Of his many publications on and around this topic, see for example Stephen Murphy, “The Distribution of Sema Stones throughout the Khorat plateau During the Dvāravati Period”, in Marijke J. Klokke and Véronique Degroot (eds.), *Unearthing Southeast Asia’s Past*, Vol.1, Singapore: NUS Press, 2013, pp. 215-233.) Recent unpublished archaeological research led by Kyle Latinis (ISEAS, Singapore) and Ea Darith (APSARA, Cambodia) suggests that the Kulen *sīmā* sites were not active after the ninth century. See [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/David-Latinis/publication/304353545\\_Phnom\\_Kulen\\_Cambodia\\_and\\_Singapore\\_Projects\\_-\\_Royal\\_Residence\\_Palace\\_Site\\_Banteay\\_-\\_Sema\\_Stone\\_Sites\\_Don\\_Meas\\_and\\_Peam\\_Kre\\_-\\_Dvāravati\\_influence\\_-\\_Sema\\_Stone\\_quarry\\_-\\_Implications/links/576cfa8208ae3c5c932d24a3/Phnom-Kulen-](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/David-Latinis/publication/304353545_Phnom_Kulen_Cambodia_and_Singapore_Projects_-_Royal_Residence_Palace_Site_Banteay_-_Sema_Stone_Sites_Don_Meas_and_Peam_Kre_-_Dvāravati_influence_-_Sema_Stone_quarry_-_Implications/links/576cfa8208ae3c5c932d24a3/Phnom-Kulen-)

[Kre-Dvāravati-influence-Sema-Stone-quarry-Implications.pdf](#) (last accessed June 24, 2019). Tun Puthpiseth provides an evaluation of the sculptural evidence he considers to have been associated with the *sīmā* – a colossal Buddha entering nirvana called Preah Ang Thom, a *buddhapāda* and a *dharmacakra*, all sculpted out of the mountain floor. Though he acknowledges the disparate dating given by scholars to these different sculptural elements, as well as the manifest integration of some of them into subsequent cults, he emphasizes the affinity of the ensemble with eighth-ninth-century Dvāravati materials. See Tun Puthpiseth, *Bouddhisme Theravāda et production artistique en pays khmer : Étude d'un corpus d'images en ronde-bosse du Buddha (XIII<sup>e</sup>-XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, PhD dissertation, Paris, Université de Paris IV-Sorbonne, 2015, 78-80.

<sup>41</sup> K.501: st. III, in George Cœdès, *Inscriptions du Cambodge* III, 87-88. My translation.

<sup>42</sup> For an inventory of primary and secondary texts, see the *Corpus des inscriptions khmères* developed by the Cambodian inscription project team of the École française d'Extrême-Orient: <https://cik.efeo.fr/inventaire-cik-des-inscriptions-khmeres/>; as well as Peter Skilling, "Towards an Epigraphic Bibliography of Thailand", in Daniel Perret (ed), *Writing for Eternity: a Survey of Epigraphy in Southeast Asia*, Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2018, pp. 109-122. A key text for establishing further historical bases for understanding Khmer Pāli usage is K. 966, a 12<sup>th</sup>-century bilingual Pāli-Khmer inscription from Dong Mae Nang Meung, Nakhon Sawan, Thailand. The comparative study needed to develop sharper critical assessment of these "Cambodian" and "Thai" epigraphic bodies would also include consideration of the different types of material support on which the texts appear.

<sup>43</sup> For the first systematic documentation of the site including mention of this image and the other materials associated with it discussed below, see Henri Mauger, "Prāḥ Khñ de Kōṃpoñ Svāy", *BEFEO* 39, 1939, pp. 197-220. For our purposes, see esp. pp. 211-212.

<sup>44</sup> Peter Skilling, "Namo Buddhāya Gurave (K. 888): Circulation of a Liturgical Formula across Asia", *JSS* 106, 2018, pp. 109-28. The verse, Skilling notes, contains vocabulary shared by Sanskrit and Pāli, but the word inflections are clearly Sanskrit. This situation highlights two key factors for the present volume: the intimate kinship between the two Indic languages whose distinctions rather than similarities are often emphasized in scholarship in conjunction with rigid categorization of religious affiliation; and the still rudimentary state of our knowledge in this field.

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<sup>45</sup> Saveros Pou, *Nouvelles inscriptions du Cambodge I*, EFEO, Paris, 1989, pp. 14-15. To compare the scripts of the two inscriptions, see Pl. I of *Nouvelles inscriptions* and p. 14 of Cœdès' "La plus ancienne".

<sup>46</sup> In a 1967 thesis Bernard-Philippe Groslier built substantially on the work of Mauger cited above. Groslier's work comprises a detailed study of the architectural structure and décor of the core monumental site: Bernard-Philippe Groslier, *Le Preah Khan de Kompong Svay*, thesis, Paris: Ecole du Louvre, 1967. "The Buddhist Towers of Preah Khan" research project led by archaeologist Mitch Hendrickson is building further on this work to develop also an understanding of the site within the broader Angkorian socio-economic fabric over time

(<http://pkks.sscnet.ucla.edu/>.) While we await the advancement and publication of this team's research my brief comments on the site here should be set against the backdrop of the developing understandings of the complexity of the site.

<sup>47</sup> Peter Skilling, "Namo Buddhāya Gurave (K. 888)", pp. 123-4. Skilling cites Jens-Uwe Hartmann on characterization of the verse as "common Buddhist property" (123).

<sup>48</sup> For art historical assessments, see Madeleine Giteau, *Guide du musée national de Phnom Penh, I: Sculpture*, Phnom Penh, Office national du Tourisme, 1960, p. 50; Nadine Dalsheimer, *L'art du Cambodge ancien. Les collections du Musée national de Phnom Penh*, Paris : EFEO 2001, pp. 178-179. Dalsheimer firmly situates the piece in the 13th-14th c. on the basis of the relatively poor modeling of the body, but nonetheless qualifies this dating as an "extension of the art of the Jayavarman VII period."

<sup>49</sup> Dalsheimer, *L'art du Cambodge ancien*, pp. 222-3. Hiram Woodward also situates the piece in the Jayavarman VII period ; see Hiram W. Woodward, "The Jayabuddhamahānātha Images of Cambodia", *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 52/53, 1994/1995, pp. 108-9.

<sup>50</sup> On the Kompong Svay portrait-statue, along with a figure (Buddha?) in meditation with like morphological resemblance to the portrait, see Christophe Pottier, "A propos de la statue portrait du Roi Jayavarman VII au temple de Preah Khan de Kompong Svay", *AA* 55, 2000, pp. 171-2. The notes include a useful bibliography of other portrait and portrait-like Buddha finds.

<sup>51</sup> See Ashley Thompson, "Angkor Revisited: the State of Statuary", in Jan Mrazek and Morgan Pitelka (eds), *What's the Use of Art: Asian Visual and Material Culture in Context*, Hawai'i: University of Hawaii Press, 2008, pp. 179-213.

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<sup>52</sup> Peter Skilling “Namo Buddhāya Gurave (K. 888)”, p. 109, n. 2. Hiram Woodward points up the need to differentiate the *saṃghāṭi*, as Skilling names the outer cloth layer draped over the left shoulder, and what Griswold termed a “shoulder-flap” (the turned over robe edge) (Hiram Woodward, personal communication, February 2020). See A.B. Griswold, “The Architecture and Sculpture of Siam” in Theodore Bowie, ed., *Arts of Thailand. A Handbook of the Architecture, Sculpture and Painting of Thailand (Siam)*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960, pp. 25-157; “Prolegomena to the Study of the Buddha's Dress in Chinese Sculpture: With Particular Reference to the Rietberg Museum's Collection”, *Artibus Asiae* 26,2, 1963, pp. 85-131; “Prolegomena to the Study of the Buddha's Dress in Chinese Sculpture (Part II)”, *Artibus Asiae* 27,4, 1964-5, pp. 335-348; “Imported Images and the Nature of Copying in the Art of Siam”, *Artibus Asiae* 23, 1966, pp.37-73. For a quick description of the two garments and the resemblance of their appearance on statuary, see “Prolegomena” I (1963), pp. 86-88, esp. n. 8. Theoretically the two can be distinguished through observation of the back of sculpted imagery. That there is no visible trace of the *saṃghāṭi* on the back of Ka. 1697 suggests that what we see in front is the shoulder-flap, however given that the sculpture is unfinished in places we cannot be certain of this. [See Fig.1.3.] We cannot see the backs of the two central figures in Ka. 1848 as they are embedded in the *nāga*.

<sup>53</sup> François Bizot, *Les traditions de la pabbajja en Asie du Sud-Est. Recherches sur le Bouddhisme khmer IV*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1988; and for a summary presentation: “Bouddhisme d’Asie du Sud-Est, ” École pratique des Hautes Etudes, Section des sciences religieuses, *Annuaire*, tome 105, 1996-97, pp. 75-86. Tun Puthpiseth’s encyclopaedic doctoral dissertation documents variations in sculpted Cambodian “Theravādin” monastic dress including but not limited to the covering or exposure of the right shoulder but remains ambivalent in attributing any significance in terms of lineage or doctrinal orientation to these differences. While asserting that the sculpted dress reflects that worn by monks at the time of artistic production, and leaving open the possibility that certain elements of the dress such as the belt could indicate distinctions in practice, he emphasizes that “they [sculpted post-Bayon Buddha images] all belong to Theravādin sanctuaries, [and] do not therefore present specific drapery corresponding to different sects” (Tun Puthpiseth, *Bouddhisme Theravāda et production artistique en pays khmer*, p. 168; my translation).

<sup>54</sup> Woodward, “The Jayabuddhamahānātha Images”, p. 108. Note also that Hiram W. Woodward has long highlighted the Buddha protected by the *nāga* as a crossover Mahāyāna-Theravāda figure.



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<sup>55</sup> Dalsheimer, *L'art du Cambodge ancien*, p. 222.

<sup>56</sup> See Claudine Bautze-Picron, *The Bejewelled Buddha from India to Burma*, New Delhi: Sanctum Books, 2010, esp. pp. 131-40.

<sup>57</sup> For more on Chatomukh and Prasat Steung, including the reasoning behind the tentative dating of the former, see Ashley Thompson, "Revenons, revenants: mémoires d'Angkor", in Nasir Abdoul-Carime, Grégory Mikaelian and Joseph Thach, eds., *Temporalités khmères : de près, de loin, entre îles et péninsules*, Berne: Peter Lang, 2021, pp. 345-375. In the following paragraph I draw from this essay. See also Nicolas Revire's essay in the present volume.

<sup>58</sup> Hiram W. Woodward, "Ram Khamhaeng's Inscription: the Search for Context", in Chamberlain, J. R., ed., *The Ram Khamhaeng Controversy*, Bangkok, The Siam Society, 1991, p. 427.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p. 424.

<sup>60</sup> François Bizot, *Le figuier à cinq branches. Recherche sur le bouddhisme khmer*, Paris: EFEO, PEFO vol. CVII, 1976, esp. pp. 29-42.

<sup>61</sup> In addition to the research presented in the present volume and my own work cited above, see in particular Provost-Roche's evocation of regional comparators throughout her dissertation in analyses of the large Buddha figures in niches on the external sanctuary walls of other early Middle Cambodian sites; and Tilman Frasch's ongoing work on a Cambodian monastic presence at Pagan evidenced in particular by a Pāli inscription from 1248 CE, and other indicators of Cambodia's place in cosmopolitan Pāli Buddhist networks evidenced in particular by another Pagan inscription dated 1270 CE. See Tilman Frasch, "A Pāli cosmopolis? Sri Lanka and the Theravāda Buddhist ecumene, c. 500-1500", in Zoltán Biederman and Alan Strathern, eds., *Sri Lanka at the Crossroads of History*, London: University College London Press, 2017, pp. 66-76; "Kontakte, Konzile, Kontroversen: Begegnungen in der Theravada-Kosmopolis, c. 1000-1300 CE", in Max Deeg, Oliver Freiberger and Christoph Kleine, eds., *Religionsbegegnung in der asiatischen Religionsgeschichte: Kritische Reflexionen über ein etabliertes Konzept*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018, pp. 129-152; and "Pali at Bagan: The *lingua franca* of Theravada Buddhist Ecumene", talk in the Rainy Season Research Seminar Series, Transnational Network of Theravada Studies, 25 September, 2020 (<https://theravadastudies.org/recordings/>). I note also the comparison made with Pagan's Ananda temple by Lam Sopheak. For this archaeologist who led the restoration of Preah Chatomukh, the comparison is evoked both by morphological comparison with the Ananda's configuration of four colossal Buddhas around a central core and playful linguistic comparison between "Pagan" and "Bakan" (pākān). The latter is the common local name for the temple known to international art historians and archaeologists as "Preah Khan", as well as that of the site of another important Middle Cambodian colossal 4-

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Buddha ensemble, at the summit of Angkor Wat temple. See Lam Sopheak, *Rapāy kār(ṇ) juos jul prāsād catumukh*, (Report on the Restoration of Prasat Chatomukh), 2018, unpublished, pp. 47-50.

<sup>62</sup> The first mention of this piece is in Henri Marchal's study of Angkor Thom's "Buddhist terraces", a term which he coined to describe the main architectural feature of these early Theravadin sites in Angkor Thom : Henri Marchal, "Monuments secondaires et terrasses bouddhiques d'Angkor Thom", *BEFEO* 18,8, Hanoi, 1918, p. 13. Thierry Zéphir provides a comprehensive description in Pierre Baptiste and Thierry Zéphir, *L'Art Khmer dans les collections du musée Guimet*, Paris: Edition de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 2008, p. 272-3.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p. 273.

<sup>64</sup> For a detailed review of the find of the Bayon Buddha, and consideration of other materials found in the Bayon pit as well as at Vihear Prampir Laveang and a neighbouring Buddhist Terrace, see Martin Polkinghorne, Christophe Pottier and Christian Fischer, "Evidence for the 15th century Ayutthayan Occupation of Angkor", in *The Renaissance Princess Lectures – In Honour of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn*, Siam Society, 2018, p. 98–132. In this essay, which is an updated version of an earlier publication by the same authors ("One Buddha Can Hide Another", *JA* 301, 2, 2013, pp. 575-624), Vihear Prampir Lavaeng is referred to as "Prasat Prampil Lavaeng". See also reference to this site in the essays by Ea and Sato in the present volume.

<sup>65</sup> Kathleen Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty: How Ideas of Feudalism and Secularization Govern the Politics of Time* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 11.

<sup>66</sup> Madeleine Giteau, *Iconographie du Cambodge Post-Angkorien*, Paris, EFEO 1975.

<sup>67</sup> See the second edition: Krassem, Mahā Bidūr, *Silācārik Nagar Vatt / Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor* with a new preface by Saveros Pou, Paris: Cedoreck, 1984, p. *ga*.

<sup>68</sup> Mikaelian's latest development on this question is embedded in the above-cited work with Eric Bourdonneau, "L'histoire longue"; mine is in the "Revenons, revenants" cited above.

<sup>69</sup> Hiram W. Woodward, Jr., and Donna K. Strahan, *The Sacred Sculpture of Thailand: the Alexander B. Griswold Collection, The Walters Art Gallery*, Baltimore: Walters Art Gallery, 1997; *The Art and Architecture of Thailand* Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003, 2005.

<sup>70</sup> In addition to Marchal's 1918 foundational essay noted above, further analysis of the function and meaning of these spatial configurations can be found in Ashley Thompson, *Mémoires du Cambodge*, PhD dissertation, Université

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de Paris VIII, 1999, esp. pp. 40-114; and “The Ancestral Cult in Transition: Reflections on Spatial Organization of Cambodia’s early Theravada Complex”, in Klokke, Marijke J. and Thomas De Bruijn (eds.), *Southeast Asian Archaeology 1996. Proceedings of the 6th International Conference of the European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists, Leiden, 2-6 September 1996*, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Hull, 1998, 273-295.

<sup>71</sup> Madeleine Giteau’s *Iconographie du Cambodge Post-Angkorien* includes close study of those sculptural materials of Western Prasat Top which were accessible during the period of her research preceding the 1979 publication. As noted below, Sato has been able to build on the study of the site’s material evidence, including additional sculpture brought to light through new archaeological research. Other close examination of the site’s sculpture, preceding Sato’s research published here but usefully set in the context of a near-exhaustive inventory of early Cambodian Middle Period Buddhist statuary is found in Tun Puthpiseth, *Bouddhisme Theravāda et production artistique en pays khmer*.

<sup>72</sup> See Ashley Thompson, *Mémoires du Cambodge*, pp. 114-253; “Lost and Found”; “The Future of Cambodia’s Past”; and “Revenons, revenants”. In her dissertation L. Provost-Roche examines this recurrent configuration in relation to the development of the Siamese *prāṇ(g)*, a sanctuary-tower more elongated than its Angkorian predecessor and with niches on each facade containing large sculpted Buddha figures. For a brief summary: Provost-Roche, *Les derniers siècles*, p. 210.

<sup>73</sup> For description and analyses of the relevant archaeological record at Angkor Wat, see Alison K. Carter, Miriam T. Stark, Seth Quintus, Yijie Zhuang, Hong Wang, Piphall Heng, Rachna Chhay, “Temple occupation and the tempo of collapse at Angkor Wat, Cambodia”, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 116,25, June 2019, 12226-12231.