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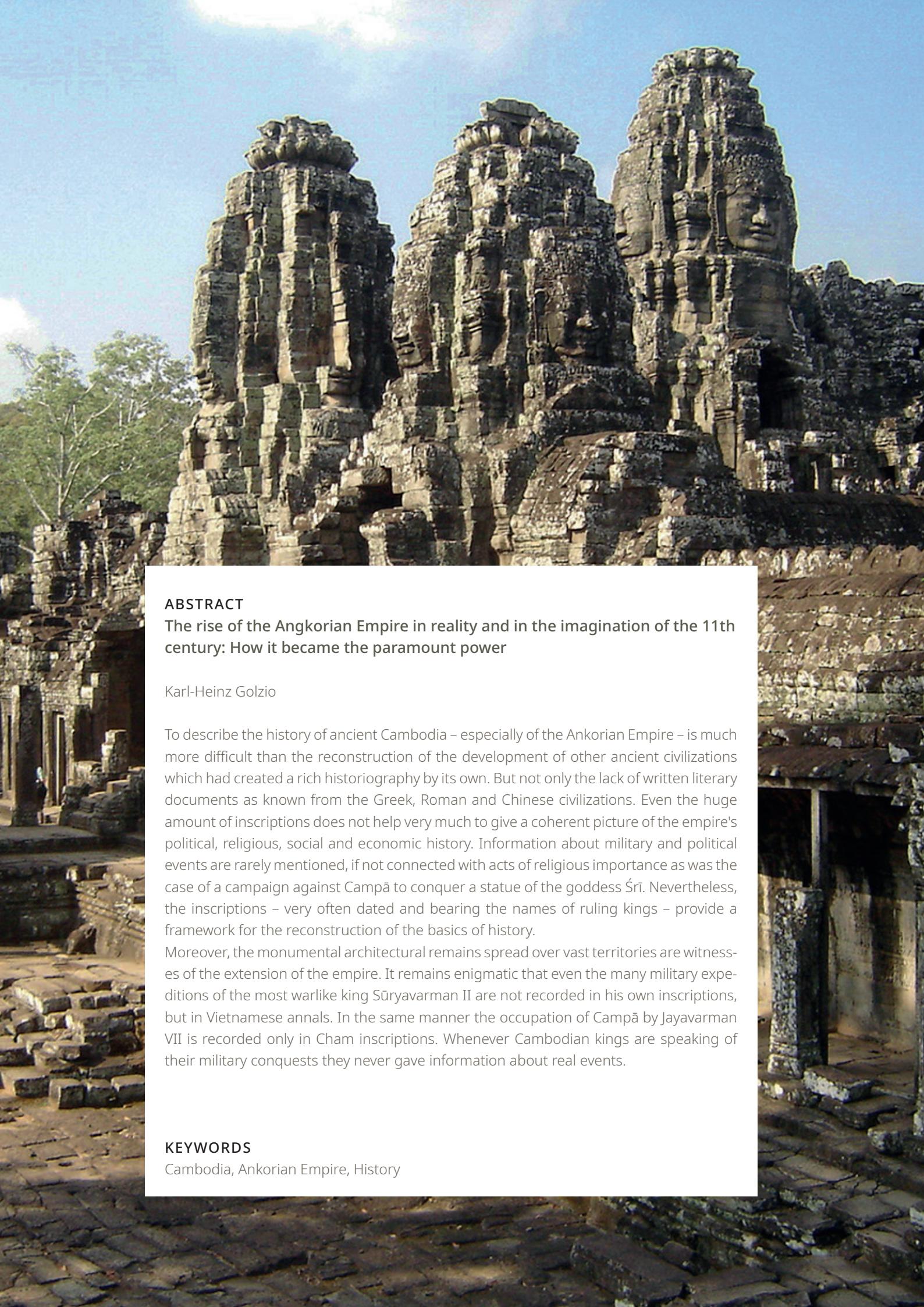

ABSTRACT

The rise of the Angkorian Empire in reality and in the imagination of the 11th century: How it became the paramount power

Karl-Heinz Golzio

To describe the history of ancient Cambodia – especially of the Ankorian Empire – is much more difficult than the reconstruction of the development of other ancient civilizations which had created a rich historiography by its own. But not only the lack of written literary documents as known from the Greek, Roman and Chinese civilizations. Even the huge amount of inscriptions does not help very much to give a coherent picture of the empire's political, religious, social and economic history. Information about military and political events are rarely mentioned, if not connected with acts of religious importance as was the case of a campaign against Campā to conquer a statue of the goddess Śrī. Nevertheless, the inscriptions – very often dated and bearing the names of ruling kings – provide a framework for the reconstruction of the basics of history.

Moreover, the monumental architectural remains spread over vast territories are witnesses of the extension of the empire. It remains enigmatic that even the many military expeditions of the most warlike king Sūryavarman II are not recorded in his own inscriptions, but in Vietnamese annals. In the same manner the occupation of Campā by Jayavarman VII is recorded only in Cham inscriptions. Whenever Cambodian kings are speaking of their military conquests they never gave information about real events.

KEYWORDS

Cambodia, Ankorian Empire, History

KARL-HEINZ GOLZIO

The rise of the Angkorian Empire in reality and in the imagination of the 11th century

How it became the paramount power

Introduction

1 As an empire is characterized as a sovereign state comprising more than one nation or people that are ruled by an emperor or another supra-national kind of monarch, the territory and population of an empire is commonly of greater extent than the one of a kingdom.

2 An empire can be made solely of contiguous territories, such as the Russian Empire or the Austro-Hungarian Empire both comparable to the Empire of Angkor, distinguished also from colonial empires which occupied territories far remote from the homeland. It seems that the realm of Angkor appeared as a territorial empire of direct conquest and control which in most cases can be verified by stony testimonies (inscriptions) found in territories which previously never belonged to Angkor. Astonishingly very seldom a war or conquest is recorded (see below). Sometimes Angkor extended its power additionally by coercion as a hegemonic empire of indirect conquest and control attested to Jayavarman VII who exercised control over the neighbouring Campā: this fact is nowhere recorded in his own inscriptions, but exclusively and extensively in Cham inscriptions. It should be pointed out, that the territorial empire provides greater tribute and direct political control, yet limits further expansion because it absorbs military forces to fixed garrisons, while the hegemonic empire provides less tribute and indirect control, but provides military forces for further expansion. Taagepera defined an empire as “any relatively large sovereign political entity whose components are not sovereign” (Taagepera 1979: 117). Those components can be freshly subdued areas inhabited by own ethnic population as well as territories of foreign political entities. The incorporation of such territories creates an empire which is a multi-ethnic or multinational state with political and/or military dominion of populations who could be culturally and ethnically distinct from the imperial (ruling) ethnic group and its culture (Howe 2002: 15).

3 I try to describe the origin, apogee and decline of the kingdoms of the Khmer people, who are living in the country of Cambodia since ancient times, a land situated in Mainland Southeast Asia. If we consider the sources of the Angkorian Empire flourish-

ing from the 9th to the 14th century which emerged as successor state of earlier kingdoms and petty states, we are facing a peculiar situation. The own written sources consist exclusively of inscriptions – dated or undated – that mostly deal with the foundation of temples or gifts to them. This was connected with the transfer of property rights related to the estate of certain persons who controlled the property of a temple which became tax-free by the act of donation dedicated formally to a god or a Buddha. In most cases these inscriptions have two parts: a text in Sanskrit language in stanzas which contains an eulogy for the donor – very often the king – usually followed by a text in Khmer prose keeping a full list of the property, such as land with rice-fields, trees, etc. as well as cattle and human personnel. If the king is the donor – the Sanskrit text refers to the year of his accession and the date of the inscription – sometimes the exact month and day is given. If an inscription refers to several temporally different acts of donation the dates are given accordingly in the Khmer part.

4 Someone expecting that the eulogy for a king is a record of his real deeds – e. g. campaigns, city foundations, diplomatic relations, etc. – will be bitterly disappointed as here only his gigantic superiority, his lofty knowledge and in general his power are announced in epic broadness; even the statement that he has vanquished the enemy kings, mostly is only a flowery expression without any real background relating to military or political events.

5 Thus the question arises how anything can be said about the real history and the structure of the empire. Naturally, one can get some information about social groups, labour, prevailing religions and the dominant economy – agriculture. The extension of a ruler's power can be verified by counting the different places where he was named in inscriptions and by assessing how monumental his temple-building was.

6 More reliable sources are external records related to the country and its population, especially those concerned with certain historical or quasi-historical events. First and foremost, Chinese records and annals are important in this connection as the Middle Kingdom during certain times of its history had an intensive exchange of envoys with Cambodia, while the contacts during other times nearly came to an end.

7 For instance, our knowledge about the realm of Fúnán 扶南[1] existing from the 2nd to the 7th century and centred around the Mekong Delta comes – besides the very instructive archaeological excavations – from Chinese sources, most of them parts of the different dynastic records referring to external relations with foreign countries. Their records deal with foundation legends and also with actual political events, very often related to China. They tell us that since the 4th century the country was ruled by a clan named Qiáochénrú 僑陳如, a name corresponding to Sanskrit Kauṇḍinya which is corroborated at least by one inscription belonging to the 6th century. It seems that the art of writing, derived from a South Indian alphabet, was unknown in earlier times. Therefore, the inevitable question for the so-called "Indianization" arises, e. g. the taking over and assumption of Indian cultural achievements such as the Sanskrit language, writing, calendar systems and last but not least the deities and religions of South Asia. This implementation of Indian culture was apparently selective as the entire Brahmin social system was of minor interest to the latter although sometimes the four castes are mentioned in inscriptions which, however, are not related to purity and discrimination connected with it. Also, the position of women was much higher than in India what can be verified by considering the repeated transfer of estates by the female line of a family. So very often a new king was not the son of his deceased predecessor, but the son of the old king's sister. We know that after the end of Fúnán Indian deities were combined partially with indigenous religious conceptions. After the rule of a king named Jayavarman numbered by French scholars as the first (I) (ruling between 654

1 Chinese names and items are given in the Pinyin transliteration along with tonal signs.

and 681)[2], who – testified by his many inscriptions – controlled nearly the whole of Cambodia, seemingly petty political entities appeared whose existence we know only from inscriptions and Chinese records. These are the circumstances from which the empire of Angkor emerged.

The early developments

Traces of the formative period

8 The exact steps in building that empire are still unclear. With the exception of one inscription at the beginning of 9th century (K. 124) from Śambhupura (Văt Tasar Moroy) in eastern Cambodia, dated 803/04[3], no other text is known until the last quarter of the century. Then suddenly a king named Indravarman built two temples with inscriptions in his capital Hariharālaya ca. 15 km away from what later became Angkor. Both temples are bigger than earlier ones of the pre-Angkorian period. The first of them, Práḥ Kô (Fig. 1), dedicated on Monday, January 25th 880 AD, was a kind of a "memorial" temple consisting of six towers giving information about the king's predecessors who came to power partly through acts of inheritance. The paired towers were erected for three deceased rulers and their queens. The two middle towers were dedicated to Jayavarman II and his queen who was the daughter of a local ruler in that region. It is said that Jayavarman, coming from outside, had some prestige, although there are no remains of himself, neither temple nor inscription, if he is not identical with a king whom the French scholars classified as Jayavarman Ibis because the numbers I and II had been already conferred when two inscriptions of that ruler dated 770 and 781 AD were discovered. This identification does not seem to be impossible but is not certain. Jayavarman II's son Jayavarman III became his successor; in later inscriptions – mostly of the 11th century – he was always called the "young king" probably because he died young and without children. Seemingly there was no place for him at this sanctuary as the remaining four towers are dedicated to the immediate predecessors of Indravarman and their wives (Pou 2001: 55–57). Thus, the northern towers belonged to Rudravarman

Fig. 1: Praḥ Ko temple

2 He was first mentioned in the inscription K. 1201 from Pràsàt Huei Kadian (Southern Laos) bearing the date May 18th, 654. Santoni – Hawixbrock 1999: 396.

3 IC III: 170–174.

consecrated as Rudreśvara and Narendradevī (K. 318a) the southern ones to Pṛthivīndravarman consecrated as Pṛthivīndreśvara and Pṛthivīndradevī (K. 315a and K. 713 b) (Pou 2001: 41–43). The erection of "memorial" temples and the bestowing of posthumous names for deceased kings (testified for almost all Angkor rulers) is especially used to signify some kind of "transformation" after death. Of course, we find the concept of "unification" with a deity after death also in India, but the Indians did not built such memorial temples and did not use posthumous names.

9 It is interesting that Jayavarman III was not forgotten because a statue called Viṣṇusvāmin was erected for him within the area of Indravarman's second sanctuary, the state temple of Bàkoṅ, dedicated in 881/82 AD (Fig. 2). It was mentioned in the inscription of that temple (K. 826)[4] that the deceased had gone to the Viṣṇuloka (the world of Viṣṇu) which means he was a follower of the god Viṣṇu whose statue has a

Fig. 2: Bakoṅ, temple

place inside this Śaiva temple. That temple, the second great building of Indravarman, is different in shape and function from the Práḥ Kô: it is a temple mountain with a single tower on a platform on the top symbolising the central mountain of the world of the Hindu mythology. Inside this tower the royal *liṅga* Indreśvara, the stylized phallus of the god Śiva or Īśvara was established. Its name is a combination of the king's name with īśvara. With self-confidence he described his own greatness: "The Creator, disgusted, as it were with creating so many kings, created this unique king named Śrī Indravarman, for the satisfaction of the three worlds" (K. 713A, stanza XXVII = K. 826, stanza XXII)[5]. The inscription of Pràsàt Kandòl Dò'm (K. 809) dated between 878 and 887 praises the king as follows (stanzas XIX–XX): "He, the ruler of the whole world which he had conquered [*or*: which he had traversed with great steps], who had himself established on the slope of Mount Meru, he was even more constant than the sun which from time to time goes away. His rule was like a stainless crown made from a jasmine garland on the elevated

4 IC I: 31 ff.; Bhattacharya 2009: 43–63.

5 IC I: 21 and 32.
vyadhād dhāteva nirviṇṇas sṛṣṭau vahumahībhujām
śrīndravarmmeti yaṃ bhūpam ekan trailokyatṛptaye

heads of the kings of Cīna [China], of Campā and of Yavadvīpa [the insular South-East Asia]"[6]. This claim is, of course, a boundless exaggeration but shows at the same time how far-reaching the horizon of the empire was. Campā was the neighbour in the area of modern central and southern Vietnam, and China controlled until the 10th century the territory of northern Vietnam thus bordering the Khmer kingdom. His imperial pretension to be a universal ruler, therefore, seems not unjustified. That Indravarman's domains in reality were not limited to the North-west of Cambodia is testified by the Lolei inscription of his son Yaśovarman (ruled 889–910) dated 8th July 893 informing us that his father had married Indradevī (his mother), the daughter of a ruler named Mahīpativarman of Śambhupura in eastern Cambodia whose genealogy goes back to the beginning of the 8th century. Nevertheless, this information contradicts an inscription (K. 124) dated 803/04 AD from just that town, presenting a succession of queens. It is more trustworthy than a genealogy fabricated at the end of 9th century. One should be careful to believe in such genealogies claiming to refer to historical facts since remote times. For example, Indradevī is said to have been by the maternal side the great granddaughter of the Indian sage Agastya, a mythological figure. This mythical link does not mean though that the contemporary relationships are invented, too.

10 The extension of the realm of Indravarman is testified by other inscriptions. A Buddhist inscription dated 886/87 from Ampho' Fa Jat north-west of Ubŏn in modern Thailand mentions Indravarman as the ruling king[7]. Also, in southern Cambodia he built a temple on the area of the time-honoured sanctuary of Phnoṃ Bàyaṅ known since the beginning of the 7th century which bears an undated inscription (K. 14[8]).

11 However, the question as to how Indravarman was able to found such a state is still unanswered. One component was with certainty marriage alliances, but there is only little doubt that he extended his kingdom also by warfare although he nowhere referred to any concrete campaigns. He speaks only in general words in stanza XXII of the Praḥ Kô inscription of the severed heads of his enemies.

12 Thus there can be no doubt that Indravarman was the real founder of the Angkorian state, and it is therefore necessary to discuss some arguments which Miriam Thelma Stark promulgated in her recently published article "Universal Rule and Precarious Empire: Power and Fragility in the Angkorian State" which is part of a collective volume on "The Evolution of Fragility", published in 2019. In my preceding lines I tried to explain carefully the growing of that state, but Stark repeats the old story, that "the first Angkorian ruler, Jayavarman II, declared himself as cakravartin (universal ruler, Sanskrit) to begin the Angkorian state" (Stark 2019: 162). It must be clearly emphasized that Jayavarman II never made such a declaration as that title was conferred to him retrospectively 250 years later as part of the Sdok Kak Thom inscription (see below).

Foundation and temporary abandonment of Angkor

The growing empire gets a new capital

13 Indravarman's son and successor Yaśovarman (ruled 889–910) also built a "memorial temple" at Lolei in Hariharālaya with many inscriptions (K. 323, K. 324 [dated 8th July 893], K. 327, K. 330 und K. 331)[9]. Around 900 AD he shifted his capital from Hariharālaya to the newly founded Yaśodharapura, later named simply Angkor,

6 IC I: 37 ff., here p. 43.
atulyavikramākrāntaniśśeṣapṛthivīdharaḥ
prayānta pārśvato meror yyo jahāseva bhāskaram //
cīnacampāyavadvīpabhūbhṛduttaṅgamastake
yasyājñā mālatīmālānirmmalā cumvalāyate //

7 K. 495, cf.: Seidenfaden 1922: 63. The inscription records that a certain Somāditya in that very year during the reign of Indravarman had erected a statue of Trailokyanātha ("Lord of the three Worlds").

8 ISCC: 313.

9 See ISCC: 211–231.

"the town" where he – following here his father – erected a terrace temple for the royal *liṅga* Yaśodhareśvara on the top of a natural hill called Hemādri, "golden mountain", later known as Phnoṃ Bǎkhèṅ. Because of the shape of this monument (5 towers on the top, 60 smaller ones on the terraces and another 44 around the terrace building) Filliozat (Filliozat 1951: 527–554) saw a sophisticated Indian symbolism therein, e. g. the common meaning of the temple hill as the universal mountain Meru and probably of the holy number 108 (the complete number of towers surrounding the central building), but all other interpretations seem to be doubtful[10]. Probably at the same time the king ordered the digging of a huge artificial pond, the Yaśodharataṭāka (Eastern Bàràỳ), with an extension of 7 km length and 1,8 km breadth in the north-eastern corner of the new city. On the four ends of the pond steles with long (undated) Sanskrit inscriptions were set[11] referring to ca. 100 hermitages (*āśrama*) for ascetics of different Śaivite (Pāśupatas, Tapasvins), Vaiṣṇavite (Pāñcarātras, Bhāgavatas and Sāttvatas) and Buddhist schools built on the southern bank of the pond, named all together Yaśodharāśramas. These hermitages and other ones outside Angkor are a vivid testimony that the ruler supported the members of different Indian religions. The naming of specific schools likewise points to a growing influence of Indian culture.

The interlude at Liṅgapura

14 Yaśovarman's weak successors, Harṣavarman I (910–925) and Īśānavarman II (925–928)[12], who apparently resided at Angkor until 928 AD were overshadowed by their maternal uncle named Jayavarman (IV) who – in the year 921 at the latest – founded a kingship of his own at Liṅgapura or Chok Gargyar (today Kòh Ker), 80 km north-east of Angkor. There he built a seven-stepped temple-pyramid of ca. 36 metres height called Pràsàt Thoṃ (Fig. 3). The same king, apparently an important ruler, was able to take power also in Angkor in 928.

Fig. 3: Liṅgapura (Chok Gargyar), temple-pyramid Prasat Thoṃ

10 See Vickery 1998: 172–173, who among others pointed rightly to the fact that the 60-year-cycle does not belong to India – as Filliozat suggests – but to China.

11 The so-called inscriptions of Thnăl Bàràỳ, K. 279–283 (ISCC: 413–525).

12 The accession dates are given in the inscription K. 1320 of Īśānavarman II at Vat Phu (Laos): see Goodall – Jacques 2016: 395–454.

Angkor as the dominant power in Mainland South-east Asia

Consolidation and expansion of power

15 After the short rule of Harṣavarman II (941–944) his cousin Rājendravarman II (944–968) came to power. According to stanza XIII of the southern tower of the Bàt Čŭṃ inscription (K. 266) dated Friday, June 12th, 960[13] ("like Kuśa [son of the pair Rāma and Sītā known from the ancient Indian epic *Rāmāyaṇa*] at Āyodhyā he had restored the holy city of Yaśodharapura which was abandoned a long time ago ..." Bàt Čŭṃ was built by the royal architect Kavīndrārimathana and dedicated to the Buddha, to Vajrapāṇi and to the Prajñāpāramitā, thus being a Buddhist sanctuary; nevertheless its inscriptions had many allusions belonging rather to Hinduism than to Buddhism.

16 According to contemporary inscriptions, Rājendravarman II was the son of Mahendravarman, a king of the town of Bhavapura which was known since the 7th century, and of Mahendradevī, sister of Jayadevī the wife of Jayavarman IV. The restoration of Angkor as capital was the beginning of an intense building activity, starting with the completion of the temple of Bàksĕi Čaṃkrŏṅ (K. 286) consecrated on the 23rd of February 948[14]. Amidst the Yaśodharataṭāka Rājendravarman II erected a "memorial temple" known as Eastern Mébŏn dedicated on January 28th, 953. In its five brick towers standing on a central platform and composed as a Quincunx temple (a central tower surrounded by the four other towers on the angle points) he put up statues of his parents shaped as Śiva and his wife Umā as well as statues of the gods Viṣṇu and Brahmā, but in the centre he placed the royal *liṅga* Rājendreśvara. The Quincunx temple became the classical form of a Khmer temple of the Angkor period. The entire compound was similar to the Bàkoṅ flanked by eight towers each bearing a *śivaliṅga*. Its Sanskrit inscription (K. 528) having 218 stanzas (Finot 1925: 309–352) is the second longest ever found, superseding all Indian inscriptions – only the one of the temple mountain of Prè Rup (K. 806) dedicated in 961/62[15] (Fig. 4) has more, namely 298. The content of such epigraphical records is a sophisticated poetry (*kāvya*) being of equal rank to its Indian counterparts using poetical figures (*alaṃkāra*), allusions to religious and philosophical ideas of Hinduism and Buddhism, dealing with such subjects as grammar, erotic, politics, medicine and mythology. Thus, the Angkor period in some respect saw a new wave of "Indianization" which influenced primarily the elite without having a deep impact

Fig. 4: Prè Rup temple

13 Cœdès 1908: 227 and 239; Mertens 2005: 129.

14 IC IV: 88–101.

15 IC I: 73–142.

on the average people but with some resemblance to folk culture. Vivid examples are the ancient mountain deities who were identified with the Hindu god Śiva after the influence of Indian culture became overwhelming (see Shimoda 2007: 25–49). Besides the big temple structures for the great Hindu deities we have numerous inscriptions of smaller sanctuaries dedicated to Khmer gods or spirits not represented by images who were worshipped there.

17 Regarding the warfare of that king we hear something about victories over Lower Burma (Rāmaṇya, e. g. Rāmañññadesa) and Campā at the beginning of his reign (inscription K. 872, dated ca. 946/47)[16]. Because of its religious aspect another inscription is more detailed[17], recording a war against the neighbouring kingdom of Campā during the Fifties of the 10th century. In a text from Campā[18] we find a reference to a Cambodian incursion where the golden statue of the goddess Bhagavatī was taken away from the city of Kauṭhāra and replaced in the year 965/66 by a statue made of stone. Therefore, the victory of Cambodia over Campā was mentioned only because of its ritual meaning connected with the god Campeśvara, a special manifestation of Viṣṇu[19] "Having defeated the king of Campā by the power of his weapons he (Rājendravarman II) handed over (the statue of) Śrī of that king to Hari Svayambhu on the banks of the Viṣṇupadi [Gaṅgā, in this instance here the Mekong is meant], to give him the suitable name Campeśvara"[20]. Whenever this newly (at the beginning of the 10th century) introduced aspect of Viṣṇu was mentioned in later inscriptions, even without speaking of war, it suggests a conflict with Campā.

18 Rājendravarman II had traced back his lineage to an ancestress who was the wife of a legendary king Bālāditya who on his part descended from the couple Kauṇḍinya and a princess Somā, daughter of a certain Soma (perhaps the moon?). That couple occurred for the first time in the undated inscription K. 1142 (Jacques 2007: 47–53) where they appeared as parents of a certain Candravarman who married the unnamed granddaughter of Īśānavarman I (ruled ca. 616–637) engendering the famous Jayavarman I (see above). This is contrary to the interpretation of the preceding rulers who had claimed to be descendants of the Indian sage Agastya. The lineage of Kauṇḍinya and Somā, daughter of Soma, is described in many inscriptions of the new Cambodian dynasty, beginning with that of Bàksĕi Čaṃkroṅ (K. 286) dated February 23rd, 948. Here we also hear for the first time the name of the people descending from a mythical ancestor Kambu and his spouse Merā thus called the "Kambujas" (off-springs of Kambu) and the country accordingly Kambujadeśa.

19 It seems that the country under the rule of Rājendravarman II and his successor Jayavarman V had prospered enormously as not only the number of land donations were raised, but also the number of high officials, probably as a result of a growing population which needed more fertile soil leading sometimes to military expansion. Miriam Stark emphasized that Angkorian rulers "depended on their entourage of royal elite in the capital, a dense web of social relations that they built and maintained assiduously. They married their sons and daughters to provincial elites (who in turn sent daughters to the court to serve as concubines)" (Stark 2019: 171). While the picture enrolled here, might be reflecting some truth, real testimonies of it are rather rare (as was the case of

16 IC V: 99 u. 101.

17 See the Bàt Čŭṃ inscription K. 267, B 21 (Cœdès 1908: 231 and 245; Mertens 2005: 66), saying that his brilliance had burnt the hostile kingdoms beginning with Campā.

18 C. 38, D 2 from Po Nagar. - ISCC: 260.

19 Campeśvara or – very often spelt – Cāmpeśvara, appeared as early as in the inscription K. 428 from Kŭk Práḥ K'ol, Prov. Kŏṃpoṅ čăm (bordering Campā), dated April between 10th and 24th, 761 (IC VII: 76–78). All other inscriptions belong to the 10th or 11th century, beginning with K. 99 from čo'ṅ Aṅ, also Prov. Kŏṃpoṅ čăm, dated 922/23 (IC VI: 107–112) referring to donations offered to Cāmpeśvara.

20 Prè Rup inscription (K. 806), dated 961/62, stanza CCLXXII: IC I, pp. 73–142.

a family which proudly announced their marriage alliances with some rulers of the 13th century: see below).

20 At this point of the history it should be tested whether the description of the development of the Angkorian Empire in the 9th and 10th centuries coincides with the requirements of a directive introduction to the work "Imperien und Reiche in der Weltgeschichte" (Gehlen – Rollinger 2014), with the subtitle "Epochen übergreifende und globalhistorische Vergleiche" (epoch-spanning and global-historical comparisons). The Introduction takes a lot of aspects into consideration regarding when and where an entity such as an "Empire" emerges and how it can be determined or defined. Taking into account that according to Eva Marlene Hausteiner (one of the authors quoted by the editors) "historicity" is an important resource of imperial formation, playing therefore a central role, my definite reply with respect to my subject, the Khmer Empire of Angkor, to her claim runs as follows: there is no such a thing as "historicity", and moreover, there are no res gestae, there was no Livy or Tacit or Sīmă Qiān 司馬遷, no Traian's column and no royal inscriptions announcing triumphantly military victories, political success or conquests, which the exception of stereotypical repetitions of triumphs over unnamed enemies without any historical relevance. A real military campaign hardly occurs in any of the innumerable inscriptions, but in some cases, we are well-informed about this subject by foreign annals. No doubt, there are large bas-reliefs on walls depicting war scenes between Khmer and Cham armies, but in the attached inscriptions you will never find the slightest allusion to the impressive sequence of military actions. However, despite the lack of "historicity" we have enough written sources and a huge amount of architectural and sculptural remains which made it possible to reconstruct the shape of an empire.

The way to become the dominant power - The rise of Sūryavarman I (1002–1050) and the inner and outer expansion of his realm

21 After the death of Jayavarman V, probably in 1001, as his nephew Udayādityavarman I became king in that year (Cœdès 1911: 400 ff.), a very turbulent period in the history of Cambodia started. It seems that the new king never ruled at Angkor; his last inscription hails from Chok Gargyar, dated Friday, February 13th, 1002[21]. Meanwhile a certain Jayavīravarman whose provenance is unknown assumed power at Angkor in 1002, and at the same time (1001/02) another leader named Sūryavarman I, whose lineage is uncertain, too, claimed to be king at the ancient city of Īśānapura (inscription

Fig. 5: Lopburi temple

21 IC I: 50–51.

K. 153 at Pràsàt Robaṅ Romãs)[22]. Some scholars think that he by using the name sūrya ("sun") had the aim to represent himself as legitimate successor of Udayādityavarman whose name means "the rising sun" (Vickery 1985: 236). This, however, cannot be proved as certain.

22 Apparently, between Jayavīravarman and Sūryavarman I an armed conflict for many years took place. This can be verified only by the territorial advantages of Sūryavarman I testified by inscriptions made by him in places where his rival had ruled before. On the contrary, the (badly damaged) inscription K. 196 of Pràsàt Dambòk Kpŏs (likely dated Wednesday, January 21st, 1002) (see Golzio 2006: 117) was seen by Cœdès as an indication of the outbreak of the war, because Jayavīravarman had warned "to move the border stones"[23] which is related with certainty to the delineations of estates belonging to a temple. It was completely unusual at that time to erect border stones to delimit political territories.

23 The government of Sūryavarman was very successful. In 1005 he was in possession of Angkor which is testified by his stele erected at Tép Pranam in Aṅkor Thoṃ (K. 290) dated Saturday, April 21st, 1005[24]. Until the end of the Thirties of the 11th century he was able to control a vast area which includes Central Thailand and parts of Laos around Luang Prabang. The annexation of the Mon state Lavo (today Lopburi in Thailand (Fig. 5; see inscription K. 410, dated January 1036)[25], a kingdom of the Mon people who inhabited at that time large parts of Burma and Thailand, was another building-stone of a realm that included many different ethnic peoples. It seems that the province of Bǎttaṃbaṅ, however, came very late under the control of Sūryavarman I who apparently between 1037 and 1046 founded there in rapid succession some temples as visible signs of the occupancy. One of them, the temple of Pràsàt Snèṅ, with an inscription (K. 879) bearing the dates Monday, May 25th, 1046 and Thursday, June 26th, 1046[26], naming Sūryavarman I, have reliefs depicting themes from the Hindu mythology such as the churning of the milk ocean (Fig. 6) and of god Viṣṇu sleeping on the cosmic serpent. Surprisingly, that serpent looks rather like a Chinese dragon than a snake (Fig. 7). Probably Sūryavarman

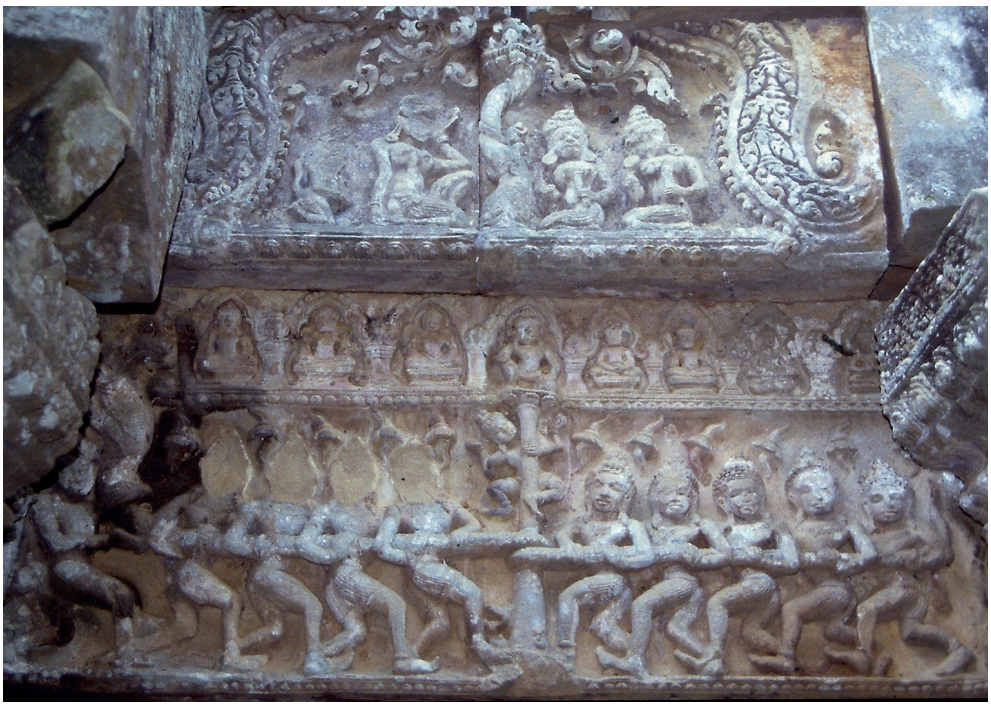

Fig. 6: Sneṅ temple, Churning of the milk ocean

22 IC V: 194–197.
23 IC VI: 224.
24 IC III: 231–233. See also inscription K. 542 at Pràsàt Khlaṅ (IC III, pp. 221–223).
25 RS II, Nr. XIX: 11–12.
26 IC V: 235–236.

Fig. 7: Sneṅ temple, Viṣṇu sleeping on the cosmic serpent

Fig. 8: Praḥ Vīhar (Śikhareśvara)

I came from the north-eastern corner of Cambodia having close contacts to China and Vietnam; another inscription, K. 618 from Pràsàt Sek Tà Tuy, dated Thursday, March 23rd, 1038 additionally mentions the name of the Chinese year ("of the Tiger", Khmer: khāl). We learn more about the brisk building activities of that ruler from the inscriptions K. 380 of the famous temple of Práh Vīhār (Śikhareśvara). The text on the eastern pillar of the southern entrance of building D (Fig. 8), dated November 6th, 1038[27], informs us in stanza XVIII, that in earlier times the king had erected the *liṅga* Sūryavarmeśvara at Jayakṣetra (Văt Bàsĕt) in 1018/19. We read further that at the same time other liṅgas at three different places were erected: one on the top of Śikhareśvara (Práḥ Vīhār), another at Īśānatīrtha (an hitherto unidentified place) and one on the incomparable (asama) rocky mountain Sūryādri (Phnoṃ Čisór, Fig. 9).

Fig. 9: Stairway leading to the Phnoṃ Čisor temple

27 IC VI: 262–267.

The inscription from the western pillar of the southern entrance of building D, dated March 26th, 1049 gives – among others – the information that the king granted to a certain Sukarmā Kaṃsteṅ and his family the area of Vibheda (literally: "discord"), now renamed as Kurukṣetra, the famous battlefield in the Indian epic *Mahābhārata* – a most pious name frequently transferred in a South-east Asian context.

3.2.2 The new ideology of Sūryavarman I and the foundation of an empire

24 It is interesting that the same inscription K. 380 refers to the ancestor Kambu and not to Kauṇḍinya and Somā as the predecessor dynasty did. There is also a reference to a historically elusive Śrutavarman in a selective manner to the Angkor kings Indravarman I, Harṣavarman I and Īśānavarman II, which signifies a distinct ideological delimitation to the predecessor regime. One of the greatest innovations under the rule of Sūryavarman I is the immense revaluation of the figure of Jayavarman II (and also that of his son Jayavarman III). We hear about it especially in the famous Sdok Kāk Thoṃ inscription, dated February 8th, 1053 and composed under Sūryavarman's son Udayādityavarman II by a priestly family which claimed to have occupied uninterruptedly a sacred office since the days of Jayavarman II. In this connection it is important to have a look at the rapid increase of inscriptions under Sūryavarman's reign most of which are non-royal. The majority of them deal with pretensions to land and litigations. However, more important are the inscriptions of high-ranking officials presenting real or fictitious genealogies of their families giving them a quasi-historical background as proof of authenticity. They all make claims to property and ranks by declaring that their ancestors have held offices and properties since the time of Jayavarman II who became in these texts the mighty founding-father of Angkor, unifier of all Cambodia and emperor of the world (*cakravartin*, literally: Wheel Roller). This imperial concept was deeply rooted in the traditions in which the god Viṣṇu, whose attribute among others is a disc or wheel (cakra), was held as the ideal of worship for Kings desirous of obtaining Universal Sovereignty, a concept which can be found as early as in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa*, a religious text of the "sectarian" category (i. e. exclusively concerned with the worship of Viṣṇu) and is traceable to the 4th or 5th century AD.

25 Coming back to the genealogies, it was especially Vickery (Vickery 1985: 233 ff.) who pointed out that none of those alleged offices and no privilege can be verified by earlier, contemporary sources. In some cases, we find even evident absurdities. Here some examples: The undated inscription K. 834 from Tûol Tà Pec[28], belonging to the time of Sūryavarman I, refers to thirteen brothers and cousins serving the kings from Jayavarman II to Sūryavarman I, thus giving them a biblical age. Besides these chronological impossibilities, very often contradictions to the claims of other families appear as they also partly pretended to have held the same offices. Another example: it is said in the inscription K. 989 from Pràsàt Bĕṅ, dated Wednesday, 26th February 1029[29], that during the reign of Jayavarman III a woman named Steñ Bhadrāṇi was born whose grandson Loñ Nāgapāla has held an office during the same reign period. Moreover, the same inscription maintains that a certain Brāhmaṇadatta was *purohita* (chancellor) of Jayavarman II, contradicting the Sdok Kāk Thoṃ inscription which presents Śivakaivalya as bearer of that office during the entire rule of Jayavarman II. Not enough: we have two other candidates, a certain Madhusūdhana in K. 289 and a Keśavabhaṭṭa in K. 534[30]. The examples given here are only a small selection of absurd-

28 IC V: 244–269.

29 IC VII: 164–189.

30 Vickery 1985: 235. K. 289 from Práḥ Ňôk (ISCC: 140 ff.), dated Friday, February 16th, 1067, K. 534 (Finot 1925: 297 ff.) is undated.

ities which were detected by Vickery's work. The actual importance revealed by these inscriptions does not lie in the alleged historical events (which are held true by many modern scholars) but in the documentation of rivalries between great families at the time of Sūryavarman I. The concentration of power in the hands of a certain strata of the society corresponded to the accumulation of land property as the significant source of wealth leading to a growing urbanization testified by the number of places – names ending with – pura, "city". Their number was 12 under Jayavarman IV, increased to 24 under Rājendravarman II (decreased to 20 under Jayavarman V) and finally grew to 57 under Sūryavarman, an indication for the concentration of the population coming from rather sparsely inhabited rural areas (de Mestier du Bourg 1970: 308).

26 Remarkable is also the growing trade activity under Sūryavarman I and the role of foreign traders who exchanged processed goods as clothes and vases (vaudi) and other "exotic" articles for natural products of Cambodia as land, buffaloes and slaves. This can be seen from the inscription K. 206 from Bàsĕt dated July 19th, 1042 referring to the activities of local traders (khloñ jnvāl)[31]. Another inscription of that temple (K. 207) dated Wednesday, February 9th, 1043, informs about the trade activities of royal agents who paid apparently low taxes, but also about a standardizing of measures and weights[32]. Certain traders were royal officials as can be seen in the inscription K. 221 from Bantãy Prãv dated September 5th, 1009[33]. Another text from Pràsàt Kantŏp / Prov. Koṃpoṅ Thoṃ (K. 354) with the dates 1st of December, 1045 and Monday, March 31st, 1046 reveals that the king gave land, buffaloes, rice, jewels and "slaves" to traders in exchange for the goods acquired by them[34].

27 Thus the Angkorian Empire in the 11th century emerged as a supreme power with its own ideology tracing back its roots to Jayavarman II who was now stylized as a cakravartin, a universal ruler. It was Sūryavarman I who after conquering the throne and consolidating his power annexed the Mon kingdom of Lavo holding it for more than two centuries. With him the partial Khmerization of the Menam valley and of the basin of the Se Mun River began. We have no records about war activities, but we can indirectly infer this from the growing territorial expansion. It seems that also Campā and even the Vietnamese state of Đại Việt came into the focus of Khmer military ambitions. Stark (Stark 2019) thought that the king occasionally required loyalty from his subjects through public performance, quoting the inscription K. 292 from the east gate of the Phĭmãnàkàs temple, dated Sunday, August 12th, 1011[35], which records an oath-swearing ceremony by 4000 governors (*tamrvāc*). But seemingly that happened due to a special situation during the fight for power against his rival king.

The empire: setbacks and resurrections

From Udayādityavarman II to Dharaṇīndravarman (1050–1113)

28 The Sdok Kãk Thoṃ inscription composed during the rule of Udayādityavarman II (1050–1067) declares that Cambodia had been dependent on a country named "Javā" before Jayavarman II as national hero freed his realm with the help of the *kamrateṅ jagat ta rāja* (*devarāja*), a tutelary deity of the kingdom. But as nothing is known about such a dependency from contemporary sources (e. g. the 9th century, see above) it seems not unlikely that here allusions were made to events which happened in the mid-11th century (Golzio 2002: 147–149), and Vickery (Vickery 1985: 29) pointed out that the name *javā/chvea* has been used to designate the Cham people until the present

31 IC III: 11–16; Hall 1975: 321.

32 IC III: 16–24; Hall 1975: 322.

33 IC III: 58; 60. Hall 1975: 320 and 322, has this inscription placed mistakenly to the time of Harṣavarman III (1071) because Cœdès in his introduction (IC III: 57) has referred to one inscription of that ruler.

34 IC V: 137–138 and 140–142.

35 IC III: 205–210.

time. Moreover, that name could have also been used for the Vietnamese. A proof can be found in the so-called Sab Bāk inscription (K. 1158), dated February 23rd, 1067 from the vicinity of Nakhon Ratchasima (now Thailand) composed at the end of the rule of Udayādityavarman II. It refers to the fact that at that place a certain Śrīsatyavarman erected statues of the Buddha Lokeśvara in order to prevent Javā from attacking Cambodia (Prapandvidya 1990: 11–14). It is not sure whether the alleged menace of "Javā" came from Campā or Đại Việt. However, it is clear from Chinese sources that in the year 1076 China framed a military pact with Campā and Cambodia (represented by king Harṣavarman III) to launch a joint military expedition against Đại Việt. The armies of the allied South-east Asian countries occupied the Vietnamese province of Nghệ An 乂安, but withdraw after the defeat of the Chinese in 1077 (Maspéro 1918: 33). The Campā inscription C. 90 from Mỹ Sơn, dated 1080/81, refers to a defeat of the Khmer by the Campā king Harivarman IV at a place called Someśvara. Furthermore the text describes the capture of prince Nandavarmadeva and finally the conquest of Śambhupura by the Cham prince Pāṅ (Finot 1904: 945). It seems that Harṣavarman III continued to reign in Angkor during a revolt which finally brought to power a king named Jayavarman numbered as VI. According to the inscription he was coming from the Mun River Valley, more specifically from a town called Mahīdharapura, but known is the famous place of Pṛthuśaila (Phnoṃ Ruṅ) (Fig. 10). According to the undated inscription K. 527 of the Prè Rup temple at Angkor (Cœdès 1943: 14 f.) he assumed power in 1080/81. It is not unlikely that Harṣavarman III or his successors still ruled parts of Cambodia until 1113 when a certain Sūryavarman (II) belonging to a side-line of the family of Jayavarman VI (his grandmother was a sister of the latter and of his brother and successor Dharaṇīndravarman) has reunited by revolt and war the "double kingdom" (dvandva), i. e. he defeated the two rival dynasties. The inscription K. 364 from Ban Th'at (Southern Laos) (Finot 1912: 27) refers to his victory (stanza XXXIII): "Leaving on the field of combat the ocean of his armies, he started a terrible battle. Bounding on the head of the elephant of the enemy king, he killed him, as Garuḍa on the edge of a mountain would kill a

Fig. 10: Pṛthuśaila (Phnoṃ Ruṅ) temple

serpent". We do not know what exactly happened before, but it seems that the branch of Sūryavarman II's family was much stronger than the other one. Dharaṇīndravarman (ruled 1107–1113) had already brought the South under his control as can be proved by his inscriptions at the ancient sanctuary of Phnoṃ Bàyàṅ (K. 650, dated Saturday, Feb-

ruary 9th, 1107[36], and K. 852, dated Sunday, May 19th, 1107[37]). Despite the fragmentation of the empire for a more or less longer period, it seems that it remained intact against potential foreign enemies.

The empire at war: Sūryavarman II

29 It seems that Sūryavarman II during his long reign (1113–ca. 1150) spent much of his time in the north – in what is now Thailand and Laos. Many of the inscriptions of his reign which have come to light are from this region. They show that he founded and restored many temples. Very important is the extension of the ancient pilgrim place of Văt Ph'u, already commenced under Dharaṇīndravarman where according to the inscription K. 366[38] a Śivaliṅga, a statue of Bhagavatī (Umā, the consort of Śiva) as Mahiṣāsuramardinī ("killer of the buffalo demon") and one of Viṣṇu were erected here in 1128/29. Of special interest is the veneration of Viṣṇu Cāmpeśvara (Viṣṇu as Lord of Campā) recorded in an account of a pilgrim's journey to the sanctuary at Phnoṃ Sandak (Prov. Koṃpoṅ Thoṃ) where Viṣṇu is named in the inscription K. 194 dated Monday, July 14th, 1119. This is remarkable in so far as it points to a military conflict with Campā nowhere recorded in one of Sūryavarman's inscriptions. Relying only on these inscriptions the king seems to be appearing as a prince of peace because they do not give any definite information about any wars waged by him except those which preceded his accession. However, Cham inscriptions and the Vietnamese chronicle *Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư* 大越史記全書 (Complete Book of the History of Đại Việt) of Ngô Sĩ Liên 吳士連, finished in 1479, provided an insight into the subject. Before the outbreak of the war Chinese historiographies as the Sòng shī 宋史 ("Annals of the Sòng"), the *Sòng Huìyāo Jīgāo* 宋會要稽槁 ("Selected Compilation of important documents of the Sòng dynasty")[39] and the *Wénxiàn tōngkǎo* 文獻通考 ("Comprehensive Examinations of important Writings") of Mă Duānlín 馬端臨 (ca. 1250–1320) gave records of the diplomatic relations between Cambodia and Sòng China. According to the *Sòng shī* the king of Zhēnlà (Cambodia) sent two high officials of his kingdom as envoys to the Chinese emperor Zhào Jí 趙佶 (temple name Huīzōng 徽宗, ruled 1100–1126) in late autumn 1116 AD[40]. In the year 1120 another embassy was sent to China by Sūryavarman II and in 1128 the Chinese imperial court acknowledged him, "the king of Zhēnlà named Jīnpóubìnshēn 金裒鬢深", as "great vassal of the Empire". Similar embassies were sent by Sūryavarman II to Đại Việt, i. e. to the court of the Lý 李 Dynasty (1009–1225), which was situated in the Delta of the Red River (in Northern Vietnam). As long as Lý Nhân Tông 李仁宗 ruled there (1072–1127) the relations between Đại Việt, Cambodia and Campā were peaceful. But after the death of the Vietnamese ruler in December 1127 he was followed by his minor son Lý Thần Tông 李神宗 (ruled 1128–1138), apparently for Sūryavarman II a good opportunity to begin war against Đại Việt forcing Harivarman IV, the weak king of Campā (1113–1139) to render him assistance. The tensions began as early as 1123; the Vietnamese chronicle says that since this year Cambodians and Chams began to take refuge from their internal enemies at the court of Đại Việt. The chronicle reports that in February 1128 Sūryavarman II led 20.000 soldiers against Đại Việt, using the way from southern Laos over the high Trường Sơn 山脈 mountain range by the Kẹo Nứa pass leading to the sea, but they were defeated and driven back. Nevertheless this defeat did not discourage the Cambodian king who sent a fleet of more than 700 vessels

36 IC I: 268–270.

37 IC I: 267–268.

38 IC V: 288–295.

39 Originally it was a collection of state documents, issued by different court offices during the Sòng period, but published very late by the Qīng scholar Xú Sōng 徐松 (1781–1848).

40 In the twelfth month of the sixth year of the era Zhènghé 政和 (6th November–4th December 1116). Compare Southworth 2007: 91.

to ravage the coast of Nghệ An and Thanh Hóa 清化 in August of the same year, which was without doubt only possible with the support of Campā as Cambodia traditionally was a land power. It might be that the above mentioned inscription K. 366 at Văt Ph'u in southern Laos, dated 1128/29, was a resonance of this triumph, as well as the stele K. 254 of Trapan Dón Ón (at Aṅkor Thoṃ) dated 1129/30[41] and remembering donations to Śiva Pṛthuśaila (Śiva of Phnoṃ Ruṅ), to Viṣṇu Cāmpeśvara and to the Buddha of the Bamboo Grove made on Friday, February 23rd, 1117. However, it was only a short-lived triumph, as the combined forces of Cambodia and Campā invaded Nghệ An again in 1132, but were driven out. After this defeat the war actions stopped, and in spring 1135 missions of both countries arrived at the court of Đại Việt, probably with the aim to make peace. Meanwhile a certain Jaya Indravarman III had been installed in Campā as crown prince (yuvarāja) who was no relative of the king, but highly influential. It seems that he had no interest to be entangled in the war ambitions of Sūryavarman II because they were handicapping trade relations between Campā and Đại Việt and those had become much more important since China, the traditional great trade partner, was shaken by the invasions of the Jurchen in Northern China. Therefore, Sūryavarman II lacked the support of Campā during his next campaign against the Vietnamese in spring 1137 which again failed. It seems that the town of Liṅgapura (Văt Ph'u) (Fig. 11) was the headquarter of Sūryavarman II for all his military incursions into Đại Việt as there is a coincidence between the campaigns and the installation of statues of Hindu deities at the temple of that town[42]. It is not unlikely that the king planned a new attack in 1139/40 as there is a reference to that in K. 366 (see above) mentioning the erection of a statue of the god Rājavināyaka ("The Remover of Hindrances", i. e. Gaṇeśa)[43]. However, the Vietnamese sources do not refer to further aggressions of the Khmer king during the following years. The last known inscription of Sūryavarman II at Văt Slà Kèt (K. 200)

Fig. 11: Liṅgapura (Văt Ph'u) temple

41 IC III: 180–192.

42 For details see Southworth 2007: 101, note 42.

43 K. 366, line 18–19: IC V: 290.

is dated October 17th, 1145, but presumably he still ruled some years after that date because we have got information from some Cham inscriptions: C. 100 and C. 101 from Mỹ Sơn[44], and – especial important, C. 17 engraved on a granite boulder called Batau Tablaḥ[45], where we hear that the king of Cambodia in 1147 tried to vanquish Jaya Harivarman I, Prince Śivānandana, king of Pāṇḍuraṅga (southern Campā), but that he was defeated twice. Moreover, Sūryavarman II had installed Harideva, the younger brother of his first queen (C. 101, A 14–15) as king of Vijaya (northern Campā) in order to get a stronghold on the coast, but that king perished, attacked by Jaya Harivarman I who also conquered Vijaya. However, it seems that the aggressiveness of Sūryavarman II was unbroken. The Vietnamese annals give an account of a new campaign of a Cambodian army against Đại Việt in autumn 1150 for occupying Nghệ An, but the chosen time was extremely adverse: "After they [the Cambodian army] had arrived at Mount Vụ Thấp the combined effect of heat [literally: the rise of the Dog Star] and humidity caused the death of the majority of them, defeated by the insufferable climate. They destroyed themselves" (Southworth 2007: 106).

30 David Porter Chandler, the renowned historian of Cambodia's past, speaks only of the "pragmatic style" of Sūryavarman's kingship, "by expanding the territory and manpower under [his] control", and that he "campaigned in the east, against Vietnam and Champa, using mercenaries drawn primarily from tributary areas to the west" (Chandler 1996: 49), without saying one word how disastrous these wars had been for Cambodia, resulting in a kind of anarchy after Sūryavarman's death. On the other side, it is true that he extended his empire (to which belonged greater parts of what is today Thailand and Laos) controlling thus a large population. Most of his inscriptions are incised at temples situated in places of northern Cambodia or adjacent modern countries like Laos, especially at Văt Ph'u, but we have no one from Angkor which seems to me significant for his entire rule concentrated on expansion by war. This is one reason among others not to ascribe the building of the famous temple of Aṅkor Văt to Sūryavarman II as Chandler and many other scholars before and after him did. They all tried to explain that the king was a follower of the god Viṣṇu as the temple was originally a Viṣṇu temple called Viṣṇuloka ("World of Viṣṇu"). But as we have seen above, in all the inscriptions of that king the god Śiva occupied the first place. Of course, Viṣṇu Cāmpeśvara as subduer of Campā played also an important role. A pilgrimage to the temple of that god at Phnoṃ Sandak (see above, inscription K. 194) by Divākarapaṇḍita, the guru of king Sūryavarman II, was one of the scholars' arguments regarding who declared the king a Vaiṣṇavite, but it was also said that Divākarapaṇḍita started his pilgrimage with the veneration of Bhadreśvara (Śiva). Therefore, it can be concluded that this place was not exclusively reserved for Viṣṇu Cāmpeśvara. On the contrary, it can be shown that in some sanctuaries indeed different deities were venerated, but mainly under the supremacy of Śiva. The inscriptions mentioned above corroborate this. The supremacy of Śiva is also clearly expressed by the inscription K. 237 of Pràsàt Práḥ Khsèt, dated Sunday, May 27th, 1067 or Sunday, October 21st, 1067[46] denoting the venerated deities (The Buddha of the Bamboo Grove, a śivaliṅga and images of Viṣṇu and Brahmā) as a Śaivite tetrad (*caturmūrti śaivī*). Turning back now to the main question whether Sūryavarman II (his posthumous name is not known) was a Vaiṣṇavite or not, we have to consider that his inscriptional testimonies unambiguously reveal his devotion to Śiva as the main deity. It seems not reasonable to think that such a staunch Śaivite as Sūryavarman II

44 See Finot 1904, No. XX & XXI: 955–963.

45 It was lying in the fields near the village Ram in the southern portion of the valley of Panrang (Pāṇḍuraṅga), now southern Vietnam; see Finot 1915: 50.

46 ISCC: 173–177 and IC VI: 293–295. The date, partly damaged, runs as follow: *[98]9 śaka ekādaśī ket --- ādityavāra*: "In the Śaka year 989, on the 11th day of the bright half of [the month] ----, a Sunday").

built a huge Viṣṇu temple. Moreover, as early as 1927 Philippe Stern came for stylistic reasons to the conclusion that the reliefs of that temple were later than those of the Bàyon, the state temple of Jayavarman VII (see Southworth 2003). The king who built this famous Viṣṇu temple is only known (from the 28 small inscriptions numbered K. 298; Maxwell 2006: 183–185) by his posthumous name Paramaviṣṇuloka from which can be deduced that this king was a Vaiṣṇava. It is also remarkable that the last Chinese source before the end of the 13th century, the *Zhūfán zhì* 諸蕃志 ("Description of foreign nations") of the customs inspector Zhào Rǔguā 趙汝适 (1170–1228), completed in 1225, neither mentioned the Aṅkor Văt nor the Bàyon. As the beginning of the erection of the Bàyon was not earlier than the end of the 12th century it is quite understandable that this work which cannot possibly bear information about Cambodia after the year 1200 did not mention that temple. However, the same argument is not applicable for the Aṅkor Văt in case its construction during the first half of the 12th century is accepted. The first description of both sanctuaries can be found in the record *Zhēnlà fēngtǔjì* 真蠟風土記 ("Record of the customs of Zhēnlà [Cambodia]") of the Chinese diplomat Zhōu Dáguān 周達觀 who stayed at Angkor between 1296 and 1297[47]. Nevertheless, Miriam Stark in her newest article (Stark 2019: 171) still maintains that it was Sūryavarman II who constructed Aṅkor Văt (Stark 2019: 171), not recognizing that on the walls of that temple no historical battle is depicted, but instead the Churning of the Milk Ocean and the events of the different Yugas are represented.

The empire fragmented

31 The time from Sūryavarman II's death about 1150 to the accession of Jayavarman VII in 1181/82 AD is very obscure. There are only two Cambodian inscriptions of this period and some of later origin (from the rule of Jayavarman VII) related to that time revealing a fragmentation of the empire governed by different kings, but seemingly all of Khmer origin. According to the encyclopedia Yùhǎi 玉海 ("Sea of Jades") compiled in 1267 by the Sòng scholar Wáng Yīnglín 王應麟 (1223–1292) and the *Sòng Huìyāo Jígāo* envoys from a country named Zhēnlà Luóhú 真臘羅斛 arrived at the Sòng court in 1155. The name "Luóhú" is probably identical with the town of Lavo or Lopburi in Central Thailand. Wolters took into account that this delegation was part of a secession movement, which had separated from Angkor after the death of Sūryavarman II (Wolters 1958: 605–606). That interpretation is supported by Vietnamese records referring to trade missions from Lộ Lạc (Lopburi) as well as from Xiêm La (Siam), arriving as early as at 1149 the coast of Đại Việt (Southworth 2007: 107). Xiêm La is probably identical with the region of Năk'ŏn Sawan north of Lopburi where an inscription (K. 966) of an independent king called Dharmāśoka, dated Sunday, February 5th, 1167, was found (Cœdès 1958: 133–135). Jayavarman VII referred in two of his inscriptions to a king named Yaśovarman II, mainly to the latter's end. Stanza CVIII of the inscription K. 288 from Pràsàt Čruṅ at Aṅkor Thoṃ says[48] that a certain Tribhuvanāditya "due to the victory of the being (*bhūmat*) Rāhu [Daityatamas]"[49] had taken over the unprotected kingdom (*vinā rakṣāṃ rājyam*) of Yaśovarman. The inscription K. 227 from Bantãy Chmàr (Prov. Bantãy Mãnčey) gives more details about this rebellion reporting the storming of the palace and of killing the king by the rebellious troops of Bharata Rāhu[50]. Additionally, the stanzas LXV and LXVI of the stele inscription K. 485 at the Phĭmãnàkàs temple (Angkor) tell us that Yaśovarman II was harassed and finally killed by the revolt of a court official (*bhṛtya*) (Finot 1925: 381, 389). This led very often to the (unlikely) conclusion that Trib-

47 Zhōu – Pelliot 1951: 37–39.

48 IC IV: 209–231.

49 *bhūmā[?]daityatamojayāt*)

50 Cœdès 1929: 309; see also Lowman 2012: 251–254, who translated "Bharata and Rāhu"

huvanāditya is identical with the *bhṛtya*; however, the name of that king is engraved (as Tribhuvanādityavarmadeva) on two silver tables (inscription K. 418), dated 1166/67 and found at Phnoṃ Svám (Nui Sám), Province Châu-đốc (today the Vietnamese province An Giang) (Cœdès 1929: 305). Really astonishing is the continuation of the record of the Phĭmānàkàs temple saying that (the future king) Jayavarman at that very time was at Vijaya in Campā, and, hearing of the rebellion against Yaśovarman II, hurried to help him, but came too late waiting since then for a proper opportunity (stanzas LXV–LXVII). The question arises which function Jayavarman had in Campā where according to the Mỹ Sơn temple inscription C. 85, dated 1163/64, the warlike king Jaya Indravarman IV of Grāmapuravijaya had come to power (Finot 1904: 969–970). Was Jayavarman this king's ally or rather his vassal? We do not know. As Jaya Indravarman IV was still in power in 1183/84[51], it must have been him who sacked Angkor in 1177 – an event recorded in such precision only in Chinese sources, among them the *Zhūfán zhì* 諸蕃志 ("Description of foreign Peoples") of the customs officer Zhào Rǔguā 趙汝适, completed in 1225. It describes how the king of Campā came with an army of boats to the capital of Cambodia, assaulted it and massacred the people of that country on the 13th June 1177[52]. However, the Pràsàt Čruṅ inscription K. 288 (stanza CVIII) reports that Jaya Indravarman IV was able to defeat and to kill Tribhuvanāditya thus occupying the soil of the Khmer[53]. What happened afterwards is not clear. But surprisingly in 1181/82 Jayavarman VII emerged as the new king of Cambodia, although he never explained how he came to power.

32 Jayavarman VII was the most powerful among all Angkorian kings. He was very successful in all his achievements in war and peace. During his reign the territory and influence of the Khmer Empire was more extended than ever before. Nevertheless, he who had subdued all of Campā, gave in his own inscriptions not the slightest hint of that conquest, uprisings and occupation which lasted until 1220 AD. All the details which we know about this are derived from some Cham inscriptions. The inscription C. 92 from Mỹ Sơn (Finot 1904: 973–975) describes the carrier of a king named Sūryavarmadeva, prince Śrī Vidyānanda of Tuṃprauk-vijaya (Pillar B, 1–18): "... Prince Vidyānandana ... went early in his youth in the śaka-year 1104 (1182/83 AD) to Cambodia. The king of Cambodia, seeing him possessed of all the 33 marks [of a man endowed with fortune], received him favourably and taught him, like a prince, all the various branches of knowledge, and instructed him in various branches of military sciences. During his stay at Cambodia, a dependent town of Cambodia called Malyaṅ, inhabited by a multitude of bad men, revolted against the king of Cambodia. The latter seeing the prince well versed in arms, ordered him to lead the Cambodian troops and take the town of Malyaṅ. He did all that the king of Cambodia desired. The latter, pleased at his valour, conferred upon him the dignity of *yuvarāja* [actually crown prince, but here in the sense of vice-roy] and gave him all pleasures and the valuable goods which could be found in the kingdom of Cambodia". The following lines (B 18–23) describe the uprising of the Campā king Jaya Indravarmadeva oṅ Vatuv against the king of Cambodia in the śaka year 1112 (1190/91 AD): "The latter (the king of Cambodia) sent the prince (Vidyānandana) at the head of Cambodian troops in order to take Vijaya and defeat the king Jaya Indravarman oṅ Vatuv. He captured the king and had him conducted to Cambodia by the Cambodian troops. He proclaimed Sūrya Jayavarmadeva, prince In, brother-in-law of the king of Cambodia, as king of the city of Vijaya ...".

33 According to different records preserved in inscriptions there was no end of rebellions in the next years, even of rulers installed by Jayavarman VII such as Sūrya Jayavarman, leading to one campaign after another. Finally, the concept of indirect

51 According to the Po Nagar inscription C. 30 A3 (Aymonier 1891: 44–45).

52 Zhào – Hirth – Rockhill 1911: 54.

53 IC IV: 231.

rule was abandoned and replaced by a provincial government recorded in the Chợ-Định inscription: "in śaka 1129 (1207/08 AD) the sovereign of the earth of Cambodia installed a yuvarāja. Then the people of Pagan, the Siamese and the Davvan (?) came from Cambodia. The sovereign of the earth ordered his troops in fight, to conquer and to arrest, until the sovereign of the earth of Cambodia was able to meet the Vietnamese (yvan). The sovereign led his troops to the north, and the Cambodian general ….. fighting …. (many) Khmers and Vietnamese died. The king was victorious. In the śaka year 1142 (1220/21 AD) the holy land was evacuated, and the people of Campā went to Vijaya"[54].

34 It was this yuvarāja who became in 1226/27 AD king of Campā assuming the name Jaya Parameśvaravarman II. He ist a good example to show how a former vassal of a hegemonic empire became a vice-roy of a now contiguous empire which should become a homogenous state at the will of its sovereign.

35 The extension of the empire of Jayavarmans VII to the north is testified by the inscription K. 368 from Sai Fong in southern Laos (17°35' N, 102°46' E), dated 1186/87 AD (Finot 1904: 22–33). Moreover, Zhào Rǔguā , the author of the *Zhūfán zhì, published in 1225*, considered the Malay Peninsula and Burma as vassal states of the Khmer-Empire[55]. How powerful this king was reveals stanza CLXVI of the inscription K. 908 of his monumental Práḥ Khằn temple dated 1191/92 AD, saying that "those who piously carry the water for the [ritual] bathing [of the deities] every day [during the festival] are the Brahmans, Sūryabhaṭṭa and others, and the king of "Java", the king of the Yavanas (Đại Việt) and two kings of the Chams" (Maxwell 2007: 98).

36 Jayavarman VII confessed that he like his father Dharaṇīndravarman (II) is a Buddhist: this confession can be found in all his inscriptions, as well as in those of his wife, but most impressive are his monumental temples. Unlike the king's predecessors who were mostly Śaivas his favoured object of worship was the Buddha in his three bodies. This is attested in the Mahāyānistic *trikāya* doctrine (stanza I of the Práḥ Khằn inscription) and by worshipping the Bodhisattva of grace, Lokeśvara (Práḥ Khằn, stanza IV); "Lokeśvara stands in triumph, his fingers ornamenting the boughs of his arms like

Fig. 12: Bayon temple

54 C. 4: Aymonier 1891: 50–52; The Vietnamese annals also record two attacks against the southern Vietnamese province of Nghệ An by men from Campā and Cambodia in winter 1216–1217 and winter 1218–1219 are recorded (Southworth 2007: 118).

55 Zhào – Hirth – Rockhill 1911: 53–54.

branches, a golden sacred thread encircling his trunk like a graceful tendril, a walking tree of paradise: [for] he is the one womb and source of the fruits desired by the three worlds" (Maxwell 2007: 3). Mahāyāna Buddhism was the religion he propagated overarching all other religious concepts that he integrated into a huge pantheon in which was place for all Hindu gods as well as for personal spirits. He also had a great number of monuments built during his reign, all with a very distinct iconography and a highly admired new style. Furthermore it is said in stanza XVII that even Jayavarman's father gave away the best of his substance not exclusively to Buddhist monks, but also to Brāhmanas who still played an important role in the empire. Hiram Woodward calls the place where people of different beliefs are embraced equally a "big tent", saying at the same time that it is unknown whether this was a big tent by fiat or by consensus. He concludes that one has "to look at the situation with historical hindsight and the knowledge that at some point following Jayavarman's death, Hindu devotees (presumably) not lived in a big tent chipped away images of the Buddha at the Bayon[56] (Fig. 12) and elsewhere at Angkor" (Woodward 2007: 8). This iconoclasm happened probably in the middle of the 13th century. It seems that not only Hindu devotees were unhappy with the religious politics of Jayavarman VII, but also specific Buddhists may have been discontented by Mahāyāna Buddhism. Woodward suggests that even before the death of Jayavarman people in Lavo (Lopburi) had turned away from this king's religious concepts showing inclinations to Theravāda Buddhism.

Angkor – an empire lacking historical consciousness

37 After the reign of Jayavarman VII, which ended probably in 1217 or 1220 we have no epigraphical accounts of the Khmer themselves until the end of the 13th century, although during this period the Thai people came from the north and annexed great parts of the territory which is today Thailand and Laos thus reducing the power of Angkor considerably. The only inscription to fill this gap after a long period of silence was K. 567 of the Maṅgalārtha temple, dated 1307/08 AD (Finot 1925: 393–406) informing us mainly about the genealogy of the family of the Brāhmaṇa Maṅgalārtha and the position of its members. Kings are only mentioned if they are related to members of the family. One of them is Hṛṣikeśa who came from Narapatideśa (Burma) and allegedly was the *purohita* (chancellor) of Jayavarman VII. It is said that he had prayed to the god Śiva of Bhīmapura for the peace of the deceased king Śrī Indravarman (Indravarman II) who had died in 1243/44 AD. This single date is by no means helpful to clarify the history of the 13th century. To my opinion the building of the famous temple of Aṅkor Vǎt (original name: Viṣṇuloka) of which the foundation stele is lost, belonged to that period (see above). The Maṅgalārtha inscription turns again back to the family life of that Brāhmaṇa who was married to a young girl of good family engendering with her four sons and two daughters. It was reported then that the second daughter by assuming the name Cakravartirājadevī became the chief queen of king Jayavarman VIII. Unfortunately we learn nothing about what happened between the death of Indravanman II and the accession of Jayavarman VIII because for this family's chronicle. The next king, Śrīndravarman, became very important as it says in stanzas XXVII–XXIX that he donated two statues of Maṅgalārtha and his wife in a tower erected by him (inscription dated Thursday, April 28th, 1295 AD).

38 Without foreign records our knowledge of that time would be very poor. According to the annals of the Yuán dynasty (*Yuán shǐ* 元史), completed in 1370 by the scholar Sòng Lián 宋濂 (1310–1381) Mongol troops under general Sogatü invaded

56 The Bayòn was the great central sanctuary which provided accommodation at Angkor to all deities and spirits, but having as central figure a huge Buddha.

Campā in the year 1282. At the beginning of 1283 an officer named Sulaymān sent an imperial order to Cambodia. As a reply, in 1285 Cambodia (here; Zhānlà 占臘) sent a tributary embassy to the Mongol emperor Qubilai Qan in the year 1285 (Pelliot 1904: 240–241, note 5). Moreover, these annals report that in the year 1292 an imperial embassy headed by a certain Ālī 阿里 (ʿAlī) was sent to Campā and Cambodia. The most impressive description of Cambodia at the end of the 13th century though was the *Zhēnlà fēngtǔjì* 真蠟風土記 ("Report of the customs of Cambodia"), written by Zhōu Dáguān 周達觀 who in August 1296 as member of the embassy of the Mongol emperor Temür Ölǰeytü (ruled 1294–1307) came to Cambodia. According to this record Cambodia was at war with the Thai[57]. King Jayavarman VIII (see above) was forced to abdicate in the very year 1295 in favour of his son-in-law Śrīndravarman who celebrated his accession to the throne in the inscription K. 569 (No. 12 of group 5) at the temple of Īśvarapura (Bantãy Srěi), dated Thursday, August 8th, 1303[58]. The last inscription from Cambodia herself is K. 754 from Kôk Svày Ček, dated "Sunday, 22nd of December 1308", referring to the abdication of Śrīndravarman in favour of Indrajayavarman in the year 1307/08 (Cœdès 1936: 15). The text is written in Pāli and Khmer and records the foundation of a Theravāda Buddhist monastery as well as the installation of a Buddha image. This is one of the earliest hints to the growing influence of Theravāda Buddhism in Cambodia, even at the court of the king – a phenomenon observed also by Zhōu Dáguān. The next inscription incised on the Cambodian soil did not appear before 1546 AD. If we compare this time span with German history, it would mean that we were lacking any indigenous historical source between the death of king Albrecht I and the death of Martin Luther. Chinese sources only inform us about the exchange of embassies and trading activities. However, the Khmer language now flourished in foreign countries. It were the Thai kings of Sukhothai who used that language as can be seen from the inscriptions K. 413 of king Ḷidayarāja, dated Friday, May 26th, 1346 and Wednesday, September 22nd, 1361 (Cœdès 1917: 1–47). Another inscription (K. 988) in Khmer language on a Buddha image found near the Thai capital Ayuthaya[59] bears only the date (Sunday, July 8th, 1380, Year of the Monkey). In contrast to the inscriptions of Cambodia here one can get information about historical events. It seems that the previously mighty Angkorian Empire did not collapse suddenly, but lost power step by step during the following centuries.

Abbreviations
IC – Inscriptions du Cambodge
ISCC – Inscriptions sanscrites de Campā et du Cambodge
NI – Nouvelles inscriptions du Cambodge

57 Zhōu 2006: 71 (transl. Aschmoneit).
58 Finot – Parmentier – Goloubew 1926: 98.
59 IC VII: 163.

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