

BOOK REVIEWS

Review of:

Bellina, B., Bacus, E. A., Pryce, T. O. and Wisseman Christie, J. (eds.) 2010. *50 years of Archaeology in Southeast Asia: Essays in honour of Ian Glover*. Bangkok: River Books. ISBN 9786167339023. Paperback £24.95.

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This festschrift honours 50 years of Dr. Ian Glover's contribution to the development of archaeology in Southeast Asia, just over half of which was spent at the Institute of Archaeology where he lectured in the Prehistory of South and Southeast Asia and is currently Emeritus Reader of Southeast Asian Archaeology. He is a pre-eminent scholar of Southeast Asian archaeology, an inspiration and a friend, and is always happy to share his knowledge, references and anecdotes with scholars and students. The 21 papers in the volume span the breadth of Ian's research, covering both Mainland and Island Southeast Asia, time periods ranging from the Late Pleistocene to historical times, in addition to methodology and materials analysis.

Born in 1930s Lancashire, England, Ian undertook his undergraduate degree at the University of Sydney and his PhD at the Australian National University on the archaeology of East Timor (Glover 1986). Bulbeck's chapter describes his influence in Island Southeast Asia. In East Timor, his excavations sought to recover sequences of stone tools, pottery and bone food remains, and to examine the region as a possible migration route into Australia. Although these links were not proved, this led him to reconstruct local cultural sequences from the Late Pleistocene to ethnographic times. In Sulawesi and the Moluccas, Ian worked on several cave sites where a range of artefacts were analysed and chronologies were established alongside public archaeology projects. In the 1980s, Ian moved his focus to Mainland Southeast Asia. Higham's paper recounts his two major research projects. The Iron Age cemetery Ban Don Ta Phet in central Thailand identified social changes that developed as maritime exchange networks took place and linked central Thailand to India as well as coastal Vietnam. At the walled city of Trà Kiệu in central Vietnam, Ian's excavations showed the transition from the prehistoric Iron Age culture of Sa Huỳnh into the Cham Civilisation, an early state with trade links to China and India.

Part II of the volume deals with subsistence strategies from hunter-gatherers to early agriculture in tropical environments. Shoocongdej's paper discusses subsistence-settlement organisation in the seasonal tropical environment of Thailand, focusing on why and how populations move, suggesting that foragers moved frequently in the wet season in order to procure a variety of resources from a wide range of habitats through

a mixed economy. Rabett and Barker's paper revisits some of the underlying principles that have informed the prevailing models of early tropical foraging. While they agree with Shoocongdej's work, they also stress that tropical foraging strategies were adaptive because they were flexible and it was not a passive activity, as the foragers also shaped their environment determining how plants as a food resource were distributed or clustered. Ian was one of the first to promote the collection and study of plant remains. Oliveira's paper re-examines charred plant remains from Ian's doctoral research in East Timor as a direct line of evidence to assess early subsistence practices, as well as macrobotanical remains from recent excavations which suggest that useful plant species were introduced earlier than previously thought. Castillo and Fuller summarise the state of archaeobotany, the methodological collection problems and evidence for early crops, with an emphasis on rice agriculture. Both papers point to the need for archaeobotanical sampling to become standard practice in order to address issues of past plant management and the origins of agriculture.

Part III focuses on social complexity and early states. Lloyd-Smith and Cole discuss the mortuary practice of jar-burials at Niah Cave, Sarawak. They suggest a correlation between the frequency of grave goods and aspects of wealth and social status within the community with variation of jar-burial type being a local expression of a regional practice. Higham's chapter returns to Thailand and describes littoral sites that favoured early participation in maritime exchange networks, contrasting them with more remote inland communities and the conditions that might have favoured a rapid transition into early states. Cameron's re-examination of fibres and filaments from Ban Don Ta Phet provides insights into the early textile trade with cotton, hemp, musa and silk being exotic fabrics belonging to elites. Bulbeck returns to Sulawesi and compares the Neolithic to the Early Metal Phase, which experienced an increase in the range of material culture with population size and the establishment of relationships between coastal trading centres and permanent rural settlements. Manguin's paper is a departure from prehistoric material culture. His essay addresses the early Indianisation of Mainland Southeast Asia expressed through art and architecture. In modern times, the study of art history has founded a separate area of scholarship from prehistory. Chapters 12 to 14 discuss Ian's influence in Vietnam, especially at Trà Kiệu. Southworth and Prior review its historical and archaeological significance which demonstrates that the site was an important political and economic centre during the first half of the first millennium CE, while Yamagata and Nguyễn Kim Dung examine ancient roof tiles found in Vietnam with designs depicting human faces which were produced locally but belonged to a Chinese style. Trần Kỳ Phương presents an exploration of the upland-lowland exchange network along the Thu Bon river valley, the longest of the main rivers, which has played an important role in the exchange of goods between the uplands and lowlands since prehistoric times.

Part IV concentrates on craft production and exchange. O'Connor analyses shell artefact production, specifically the variety of shell beads in East Timor. The beads show continuity in production with little change in technology from the terminal Pleistocene to early Holocene. Hung and Bellwood examine the Iron Age network of long distance

interaction through the movement of finished products and raw materials focusing on nephrite, jade, stone and glass beads and metals, the most iconic of these is the three-pointed *lingling-o* penannular earring. Dussubieux and Gratuze discuss the appearance of glass from the Iron Age in the form of beads, bracelets and earrings, with several production centres operating at different locations with wide distribution networks. Srinivasan's paper focuses on bronze vessels from Iron Age Indian sites which show that sophisticated bronze working practices existed throughout this period rather than the production of copper-bronze work declining. Using petrographic analysis focusing on tempers, Spriggs and Dickinson's paper distinguishes pottery produced on different islands in Indonesia and links modern pottery-making centres to archaeological evidence for pottery exchange around the time of contact with Europeans.

The final two papers tackle colonialism and nationalism. Ray's essay addresses the construction of India's past under colonial rule, especially in terms of its links with Southeast Asia by examining religious travel and the state control of monuments. Källén and Karlström discuss the past and present politics of archaeology in Laos and how Laotian archaeology has adopted the same detrimental notions of identity, ethnicity and nation as their French colonisers. Ian has always been concerned with the politics of the Southeast Asian past and has warned against the 'two-edged sword' of heritage benefits and how archaeology might be used divisively by the state (Glover and Bellwood 2004: 341). He also points out conflicts of interest between foreign and local archaeologists (Glover 2004: 68). Despite this, Ian looks to the future where authoritative books are written and edited by local scholars (Glover and Bellwood 2004: 342). While this volume has a few contributions by archaeologists from the region, the majority of the papers are by western researchers. However, the field is more inclusive than ever, with more scholars from the region setting the agenda together with international collaborations.

The volume covers a diverse array of subjects, but due to obvious word count constraints the papers can only offer an introduction to the issues. Most are summaries of the contextual background and selected finds and results, only skimming the surface of the research. Specialists in the subject might yearn for more details which are often in obscure publications. Nevertheless, it brings together collections of work in this under-researched area. It is a handsome compendium and a warm tribute to a man who continues to provide influence and encouragement to researchers. For those unfamiliar with the region, it is a lively introduction to the history and present state of Southeast Asian archaeology and it would be a valuable addition to a library as a general text book.

The volume is testament to Ian's achievements and how the discipline has grown over the last 50 years. However, with the loss of the lecturer post in Southeast Asian archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, there is little continuation of Ian's legacy at the Institute. There is also no dedicated centre of Southeast Asian archaeological research in the UK. However, pockets of researchers in the UK and Europe form a vibrant community which meet regularly, for example at the biennial meeting of the European Association of Southeast Asian archaeologists (EurASEAA) in which Ian played a leading role in the

foundation, and acts in an editorial role for the subsequent publication of proceedings. Despite perennial funding issues and lack of institutional homes, this is an exciting time for Southeast Asian archaeology. There are many unexplored areas, rich and diverse topics for study with new scientific methods. The archaeology of Southeast Asia can compete on a global stage with other world civilisations. As those who work in the region have always known, Southeast Asia is the next frontier in archaeology, and Ian Glover has been one of its pioneers.

References

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