Cultural Landscapes of War and Political Regeneration

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INTRODUCTION

All manner of past human activities have directly or indirectly impacted and modified surrounding landscapes, especially when performed by larger-scale, complexly organized societies. Archaeological study of human–environment interactions has evolved over the years. According to Marcus and Stanish (2006:7), it was common decades ago "for scholars to concentrate on the natural environment while underemphasizing the sociopolitical environment in which indigenous agricultural practices and economic strategies were embedded." Marcus and Stanish rightly argue that the social environment and its collection of variables are vital in furthering our understanding of past environments. Though they were referring to human–environment interactions related to agriculture, their argument seems applicable to other examples of intentional landscape modification.

Many researchers today are beginning to study the effects of human–human interactions on the environment. "Current interests in anthropological archaeology on past places and landscapes focus on the interrelationships among cultural practices, conditions, and trends in the natural environment as well as on the characteristics of the built environment" (Rodning 2010:180). Encapsulated in this notion is a dichotomy between the natural and the cultural, with the latter encompassing built, constructed, or remodeled environments, that is, landscapes. Modifications to landscape milieus at both local and regional scales disclose past planning, decisions, and attitudes toward social and natural environments. I agree with Marcus and Stanish in proposing to broaden the purview on ancient societies by considering the effects of other forms of human activities, particularly organized violence and attendant sociopolitical strategies, on past landscapes. This is an area worth exploring, given the prevalence and significance of warfare within the recorded history of complex societies and civilizations of the world. Viewing landscapes as "cultural" products, this article explores the impact of war and power politics, considering the ways in which military and political concerns can become inscribed in the physical landscapes of complex societies.

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I look specifically at the category of large-scale fortifications that resulted in broad transformation of landscapes. Once reshaped by war-related activities, these ancient landscapes continued to function both physically and ideologically and were potentially used by contemporary and later societies. Construction of large-scale fortifications utilizing the surrounding terrain provided physical value to resident communities, demonstrating the ability of the society to defend itself. The resulting militarized landscape also projected an image of the society, signifying along with military prowess the logistical capacity to harness and direct resources. The existence of such built localities likely created powerful impressions, making these sites and surrounding environs potent cultural symbols. Even when not directly used in military operations, many of these militarized landscapes possessed emblematic value, meant to impress, intimidate, or inspire those in contact with them. As places with embedded social meaning, such landscapes reflected the persistence and weight of cultural memories echoing across time and space.

Because they are foci for social production and reproduction, landscapes with built spaces are places vital for the social lives of inhabitants (Fisher 2009). The durability of a landscape's ideological properties allows researchers to examine the appropriation and reuses of the landscape by later generations and societies. Along this line, I also discuss militarized landscapes and their associated symbolic values as they relate to patterns of cultural change and sociopolitical strategies such as political regeneration. The manifestation of certain leadership strategies can be intimately tied to militarized landscapes, especially when these locations offer a combination of both defensive utility and symbolic import. To illustrate these themes, I discuss the Iron Age site of Co Loa in Vietnam's Red River delta, highlighting and situating it within a larger context of cultural alterations and subsequent reuses of terrain stemming from a variety of cultural, political, and military concerns. As one of the earliest fortified, capital cities of the region, the Co Loa case contributes to a fuller understanding of the relationship between regional politics and social violence.

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES OF WAR

Archaeologists have been increasingly concerned with the sociosymbolic aspects of landscapes. For many researchers, a landscape "exists by virtue of its being perceived, experienced, and contextualized by people" (Knapp and Ashmore 1999 : 1). Landscapes function as backdrops against which material remains are plotted (Knapp and Ashmore 1999 : 1). Landscapes can also be viewed as "artifacts" upon which clues about their inhabitants are inscribed, illuminating past behaviors, beliefs, and cultures. It is thus not surprising that landscapes sometimes become important symbols instilled with social weight. This is especially the case when landscapes have been extensively modified through heavy expenditures of effort, as is common during warfare. These built landscapes are often subsequently appropriated by different societies.

One of the major reasons for large-scale modifications to environments or terrain throughout human history is concern over warfare. Beyond textual clues for warfare's pervasiveness, the global archaeological record displays ample signs that collective violence has profoundly affected many ancient societies, at least within the Holocene (Allen and Arkush 2006; Ferguson 2006; Gat 2006; Guilaine and Zammit 2001; Haas 2001; Keeley 1996; LeBlanc 2003; Vencl 1999). Fears of violence and the needs for security, defense, and safety have been part of human lifeways for numerous

societies at different points in human history. These concerns often intersected directly with political power, especially in more recent millennia in larger-scale, highly complex societies.

Archaeologists look for evidence of warfare in indicators related to war preparations, pre- and post-conflict rituals, and the aftermath of war (Kim and Keeley 2008). Categories of material signatures include direct forms (e.g., weapon trauma on skeletal remains, fortifications and military structures, deliberate destruction of property, specialized equipment for conflict, and iconography), as well as indirect forms (e.g., inaccessible habitation sites, refuges, signs of abandonment of sites, buffer zones, warrior graves, and war trophies) (Allen and Arkush 2006; Carman and Harding 1999; Haas 2001; Keeley 1996; Solometo 2006; Vencl 1999).

Archaeological markers of warfare and conflict are not only excavated from the ground; they also sit atop the visible landscape and continue to function as compelling symbols and reminders of past historical trajectories. From the standpoint of landscape archaeology, the category of "fortifications" is most pertinent. Fortification features are essentially omnipresent in the archaeological record of most cultural regions (Allen and Arkush 2006 : 7) and have been built by all types of state and nonstate societies (Keeley 1996 : 55; Keeley et al. 2007). The military functions of these features can be directly inferred from their defensive characteristics (see Keeley et al. 2007 for further discussion). Fortifications comprise numerous structural types, including palisades, forts, towers, moats, bastions, ditches, ramparts, earthworks, and other structures that require a tremendous investment of labor and resources for construction and maintenance (Lambert 2002 : 210; Vencl 1999 : 67). They are the costliest and largest-scale pieces of preindustrial technology and their existence demonstrates that threats of attacks were strong enough to warrant such costly constructions (Keeley 1996 : 55). The construction and utilization of fortification architecture is a strong and durable indicator of the threat and/or presence of warfare. Humans have used natural landscape terrain and topographic features (i.e., elevated or inaccessible locations, bodies of water, and others) in concert with architectural features (i.e., walls, fortified gates, and others) to produce highly customized, defensive landscapes.

These militarized landscapes sit at an intersection between the archaeologies of cultural landscapes and of warfare. I call such militarized landscapes "warscapes," not unlike terms used by others such as "conflict landscapes" (Saunders and Faulkner 2010). In many cases, warscapes have involved military architecture designed for either or both offensive or defensive purposes, constructions with varying levels of terrain transformation and degrees of impact on surrounding environments. They often incorporate artificial with existing natural features. Although the archaeological study of warscapes can encompass various kinds of "places," including battlefields, production facilities, barracks, and cemeteries, fortified places constitute one of the most readily accessible classes of data for the archaeology of warscapes, as they are often the most durable and clearly detectable indicators of war long after initial construction. Highly visible archaeologically, fortifications have the potential to dramatically alter regional political landscapes, and they are some of the most obvious indicators of warfare or the threat of war (Allen and Arkush 2006 : 7). The effect that military concerns can have on both social and natural landscapes is obviously exemplified in constructions such as the Great Wall of China or Hadrian's Wall. As the nature of weapons platforms and technologies evolved through human history, military architecture also changed. Militarized landscapes also began to reflect changing weapons and tactics.

Clear examples of this include the trenches of the Great War or the French Maginot Line of defense constructed between the world wars. Both cases involved very extensive landscape changes along frontiers to counter the weapons' technologies of the times. In short, studying large-scale alterations to landscapes for military reasons offers clues about the consequences of organized violence on behaviors and cultures.

In an insightful piece regarding Hawaiian landscapes of war, Kolb and Dixon (2002) stress that an archaeological landscape not only contains evidence of warfare, but can also be studied to reconstruct past behaviors and beliefs related to conflict. Intentional transformation of terrain constitutes the creation of cultural landscapes, whether it involves building fortresses or watchtowers along an imperial frontier, walls around a city, or ditch-and-palisade constructions around a village. Fortification features offer vital information about the worldviews, cultural perceptions of the natural environment, and lifeways of their builders. Hill and Wileman (2002:14) emphasize that decisions about what to protect or attack, and how to pursue these strategies, are invariably confined by the dictates of topography and weather. Therefore, decisions about the forms of weapons and armor, troop types, methods of transport and supply, defensive features and fortifications, and choice of battlegrounds are all intrinsically linked to practical considerations of geology, vegetation, land use, seasonal change, rainfall, and temperature. Equally inseparable are the cognitive elements of landscape recognition, such as perceptions of sacred and ancestral space, ownership and land use capacities, and wealth and status (as exemplified by control over specific territories or routes) (Hill and Wileman 2002:14). Careful study of defensive features and the surrounding landscapes they are situated within can thus offer insights into the philosophies and decision-making criteria of the societies that constructed them. Climate change and environmental factors leading to drought and outbreaks of increased warfare appear to have influenced dramatic reshaping of landscapes with architectural innovations, widespread abandonments, and other kinds of regional trends occurring in the material record for the societies in areas such as Mesoamerica and the American Southwest (Rodning 2010:185). In southern Africa, fortified settlements and strongholds were associated with large-scale tailoring of landscapes during the late Iron Age and early historic periods (Kim and Kusimba 2008; Pikirayi 2000).

Overall, the archaeological study of warscapes highlights criteria societies use in the selection of locations for settlements and social activities, as well as their attitudes and perceptions about the possible uses of natural landscapes. Modification to natural landscapes often involves heavy investment in parcels of land that are critical to communities in economic, political, strategic, or agricultural ways. Whereas fortified settlements are by far the most common ethnographically among nonstate societies (Keeley 1996:57), simple defensive fortifications and features around farming units or settlements give way to areal defensive strategies with larger societies and states, signifying both territorial organization and centralized decision making (Haas 2001:340). Although there are numerous archaeological cases that illustrate these patterns worldwide, I will briefly discuss examples from East and Southeast Asia.

As seen in the material record of East Asia, the major river valleys of eastern and central China have been home to myriad fortified structures since the Neolithic (Fiskesjo 2001:124). Wall construction along frontiers was a key part of military strategy amongst many Chinese polities throughout several millennia, culminating with the completion of the Great Wall. The earliest, disparate pieces of what would eventually become the Great Wall were constructed during the Warring States period

of the first millennium B.C., with various polities repurposing landscapes within their respective locales. A main impetus for building walls along frontiers was to demarcate cultural and landscape divisions between an emerging Chinese civilization dependent on intensive agriculture from its more nomadic neighbors to the north and west (Lovell 2006 : 31). These militarized landscapes later possessed additional functions related to intra-regional competition between rival Chinese kingdoms vying for supremacy during the Warring States period.

Militarized landscapes and fortification systems on the nearby Korean Peninsula became discernible soon after 700 B.C. (Rhee et al. 2007 : 414). For the early historic era of the first millennium, urban centers such as those of the Koguryo polity (c. seventh century A.D.) were fortified (Barnes 1999 : 244). At that time, expansion of the Silla polity on the Korean Peninsula was perceived as a threat. This led to the construction of several mountaintop fortresses with either stone or stamped-earth walls by the Yamato polity on the nearby Japanese island of Kyushu (Barnes 1999 : 257). The main settlement area and adjacent cemetery of the Otsuka site, a later Yayoi upland site of Japan, were surrounded by moats that dominated the local landscape (Barnes 1999 : 189; 2008).

Defensive landscapes were also built in insular Southeast Asia. Ethnohistorical documentation for the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries suggests that some settlements in the Philippines were particularly prone to coastal raids, which prompted the construction of several types of archaeologically recognizable defensive structures (Junker 1999 : 354–355). Defenses included wooden stockades surrounding entire coastal centers or chiefly residences, earthen fortifications constructed around chiefly house-compounds, and coral block walls. The material record of East Timor presents evidence for an appreciable shift in human landscape use after A.D. 1000, with a transition toward fortified and defensively oriented settlement sites (Lape and Chao 2008). Hundreds of stone walled structures emerged on hilltops and cliff edges and are still visible in the contemporary landscape of north coastal East Timor. According to Lape and Chao, people chose to invest in building fortified settlements only when they were relying on spatially fixed and restricted resources (Lape and Chao 2008 : 12). This underscores the militarization of areas due to political economic reasons.

The start of the Iron Age (c. 600 B.C.) witnessed an emergence of numerous moated settlements throughout Mainland Southeast Asia (Moore 1988, 1992). These sites range in size from a few to hundreds of hectares, typically marked by systems of earthworks and moats (the Co Loa site discussed below is one of the larger examples of this moated settlement pattern). Hundreds of large, enclosed, and moated settlements from the first millennium B.C. have been found in several parts of modern-day Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam (Albrecht et al. 2000; Dega 1999; Fletcher et al. 2008; Higham 1996, 2002; McGrath and Boyd 2001; Moore 1988, 1992). These settlements saw populations generally making extensive use of earthworks and moat features. Many of these sites may have functioned as fledgling, proto-urban settlements. Although the function of these earthwork and moat features varied depending on time, culture, and context, some likely served military purposes at some point in their existence. Moore (1988 : 145), for instance, discusses the defensive potential of moats for many of these settlements in Northeast Thailand. The moats offered protection when they were filled with water. Earthworks may have been topped by dense bamboo, thorn bush vegetation, and even palisades. Inhabitants could have used these defensive features to deter or repel hostile invading forces (Moore 1988 : 145). The

settlements in Thailand's Chao Phraya Valley, for example, had deep moats and steep walls and were sometimes located on the summits of hills, suggesting their possible use as fortified areas by the local population in times of raiding and warfare (Vallibhotama 1992:123). Urban centers with moats and walls would have been ideal locations for refuge in case of conflict; they would also have furnished the means for integrating people in economic, religious, and political life during times of peace (Vallibhotama 1992:123). Elsewhere, the primary functions for the earthworks of Lower Myanmar initially involved hydraulic management, but additional functions such as defense would have been added over time (Moore and Win 2007). In sum, surveying the archaeological records for East and Southeast Asia shows the ubiquity of landscapes modified out of concern over organized violence.

COMMEMORATIVE VALUE OF "WARSCAPES" AND POLITICAL REGENERATION

Although a wide range of definitions has been offered by researchers for a phenomenon as multifaceted and culturally varied as warfare, at its core it is a social phenomenon, one that involves actors and groups of actors within a "social environment" (Layton 2005:47). Acts of war involve diverse and highly complex cultural practices, beliefs, perceptions, moral values, motivations, and social dynamics. I define warfare as organized violence between two independent political units in pursuit of social, economic, ideological, or political objectives. This definition is similar to Otterbein's "armed combat between political communities" (2004:10) or Thorpe's "organized aggression between autonomous political units" (2003:146). Subscribing to this definition entails a recognition that warfare, culture, and politics are intimately intertwined. The connections are clearest when examining collective violence on the scale of highly complex polities anthropologically defined as "chiefdoms" or "states." In these cases, it is quite difficult to disentangle war and politics. As von Clausewitz (1993 [1832]) maintained nearly two centuries ago, war can be viewed as a political instrument, an act of policy. Accordingly, militarized landscapes can play a very important role in the changing sociopolitical trends of a region. The social value of warscapes thus rests upon two main foundations, the practical and the symbolic. The practical refers to the physical characteristics of the site, such as its strategic position and the defensive utility of its terrain or constructed features. The symbolic refers to the ideological qualities of its perception as a symbol, and its commemorative value.

The consequences of war permeate the social, economic, political, and ideological fabrics of society. Given its ability to deeply impact communities, the threat of warfare as well as actual warfare can leave indelible signatures on local and regional landscapes. These potent relics attest to the power of organized violence in affecting worldviews and effectuating sociocultural change. Fortification features constitute a materialized expression of the human fear of being attacked (Vencl 1999:67). In the archaeological past, decisions to undertake massive fortification projects were often precipitated by important political agendas and objectives, with fear or memory of attack operating as one of many possible factors. Hence, militarized landscapes tended to memorialize events, histories, and ways of thinking. The tremendous losses associated with deaths, displacement, upheaval, insecurity, and suffering had lasting effects felt most intensely by those living through times of conflict, but the histories and social memories of such events endured for generations afterward. In this way militarized landscapes would be

essential for changing patterns of political relationships wherein agents attempted to gain, maintain, or use power.

In many parts of the world, landscapes of war are not only still extant, but are actively maintained for future generations to see and experience. Such places include both modified landscapes as well as sites of battles that have left an impression of some kind, whether through physical remains or cultural memories. Flanders Field in Belgium, for instance, might qualify as a kind of warscape due to its distinction as a battlefield during World War I. Today, the landscape still offers reminders of the past as it holds hundreds of monuments and cemeteries. Also in Belgium, an immense hillock commemorates the site of Napoleon's decisive defeat near Waterloo. Known as Lion's Mound, it was artificially built using soil from the battlefield. In the United States, the site of Little Bighorn in Montana is today a national monument commemorating the events of 1876 in which hundreds died in conflict. A visit to the site of Thermopylae in Greece shows several monuments dedicated to Leonidas and the Spartans who fought the forces of the Persian Empire in the fifth century B.C. The locality of each of these landscapes was once a nexus of events filled with death, destruction, fear, or suffering. Painful memories notwithstanding, these warscapes continue to commemorate and memorialize certain ideas, events, and histories.

According to Rodning (2010:180), "It is cultural activity—and cultural knowledge—that gives meaning to particular spaces in the landscape and that makes them places." The original intentions and motivations behind the production of these warscapes, especially those associated with fortifications, may have been military in nature. However, the warscapes that endure tend to become imbued with other cultural meanings and thus become durable features of cultural memory. For example, battlefield archaeology of recent conflicts such as World War I demonstrate that a panoply of data exist both above and below ground. Archaeologists studying the material remains of World War I have focused on heavily scarred landscapes such as trenches in Europe or fortifications in the Near East. In the former case, the speed of postwar reconstruction in Europe left whole landscapes of war intact—systems of trenches, dugouts, tunnels, craters, personal effects, and human remains—all preserved mere centimeters below the modern surface (Saunders 2002:101). In the latter case, in areas of the Ottoman Empire that are today in southern Jordan, "there exist vast areas transformed by war" (Saunders and Faulkner 2010:514). Aerial images of the site of Ma'an, for example, reveal a topography heavily altered to defend the outpost, including strategically placed trenches, redoubts, and fortified escarpments and hilltops (Saunders and Faulkner 2010:517). Relative to material signatures for warfare from ancient contexts, these recent scars on the landscape can be easier to locate, interpret, and explain because of their temporal proximity and our living memory. They allow us to critically evaluate any ambiguous and equivocal material signatures of warfare.

Warscapes of the distant past likely functioned as repositories for cultural memory in much the same way as they do for more recent and contemporary societies. This makes their features symbolically powerful, especially when the features are monumental in scale and incorporate the surrounding landscape. For many parts of East and Southeast Asia, the remains of latter-day fortified settlements still litter landscapes. Some, such as the Wa fortifications of Burma, are still inhabited and continue to be used (Fiskesjo 2001:185). In later contexts, warscapes can come to symbolize perceptions of terrain, the sacredness of a locale, or a society's ties to land. They can also be

used to commemorate specific events or histories. In the case of East Timor, for example, Lape and Chao (2008:11) report that fortifications are remembered by local inhabitants as places previously (before living memory) occupied during a time of internecine warfare.

Because of their symbolic potency, warscapes possess utility for not only commemoration but also for political struggles. Owing to their mixture of defensive and symbolic value, warscapes can be closely linked to the leadership strategies and machinations of political actors. To clarify, we can consider strategies related to political regeneration especially within parts of the Asian past. According to Stark (2006:144), the cyclical quality of ancient states is quite clear when looking at the multiple and overlapping histories of collapse and regeneration of Mainland Southeast Asia in the Common Era. In discussing Southeast and East Asia, Bronson (2006) writes that patterns of political regeneration can be seen within the archaeological history of the regions, especially in cases where textual accounts are extant and the task of reconstructing past strategies related to political regeneration becomes much easier. For instance, Chinese civilization offers what Bronson (2006:140) calls a classic case of repeated template regeneration, wherein following periods of decentralization and decline, regenerated polities emerged that were similar to their predecessors from a century or two earlier. Similarities would extend to details of government organization, institutions, language, and other cultural elements. According to Bronson (2006:140), key factors in this regeneration were "widespread literacy and the existence of accessible historical records that provided a sufficiently detailed blueprint for the preexisting system to be more or less fully constructed." Similarly, within the context of Khmer civilization, Stark (2006:159) notes cycles of fragmentation, collapse, and reorganization embedded with threads of continuity. Implicit in these regenerative efforts is the underlying objective of establishing political authority. Appeals to previous regimes or institutions are rooted in the need for legitimacy, and they also provide archetypes for the development of successful political institutions. Building on this overall concept of political regeneration, I argue that the commemorative value of a warscape makes it a particularly expedient tool for agents who are attempting to legitimize their authority, and this is evident in the case of the Co Loa site of Vietnam.

THE CO LOA CASE

The Iron Age site of Co Loa in northern Vietnam possessed a monumental system of earthen ramparts and moats encompassing approximately 600 hectares of terrain. The site and its massive fortification features would once have dominated the landscape, reshaped waterways, and impacted the local environment (Kim et al. 2010). Parts of the area have been continuously inhabited since the late Neolithic, and the area is today home to thousands of residents in the Co Loa Commune (Lai 2004). By examining the changing uses of the site by various societies from the closing centuries B.C. to more recent eras, we can see that Co Loa's history highlights how a militarized landscape can function and take on new meanings over time.

Current knowledge of the site's pre- and protohistoric periods is based on a blend of Vietnamese textual traditions, Sinitic textual accounts, and archaeological data. To be sure, the validity and accuracy of some of these textual accounts are still open to question (Kelley 2012). Despite historiographical issues, clues can still be gleaned

from these traditions to be used in conjunction with archaeological research. Accord-ing to Vietnamese tradition, Co Loa became the capital of the semihistorical Au Lac kingdom during the third century B.C., at which time much of its monumental system of enclosures and moats was purportedly constructed (Taylor 1983). This would be within the archaeologically known Dongson Culture period, which began at ap-proximately 600 B.C. and lasted until the first century A.D., when Han imperial power took full hold of the region (Pham 2004 : 201). As will be discussed below, recent field investigations suggest that the creation of a militarized landscape at Co Loa roughly corresponds to certain chronological details given in textual accounts.

The Co Loa site is marked by a series of three earthen enclosures and moats that remain standing in various states of disrepair. The outermost rampart curtain is ap-proximately 8 km in circumference and the middle wall is approximately 6.5 km (Kim et al. 2010). The innermost wall is approximately 1.65 km in perimeter, punctuated by what appear to be bastions (Nguyen and Vu 2007 : 173). In some places, these ramparts still stand up to 10 m high and 30 m wide at the base. This system of rampart curtains and moats has remained largely intact since construction. The material record indicates that the earthen walls were amplified and maintained by different societies over subsequent centuries and millennia. The entire system of ramparts necessitated large-scale investments of resources, labor, and time.

The construction and rebuilding phases of these monumental earthworks consti-tuted the creation of a cultural landscape with a number of possible functions. The impressive, monumental architecture operated as a symbol of political authority (Kim 2013). The presence of the rampart curtains also likely aided in the demarcation of physical, social, and ritual spaces. Like many of the other moated settlements of Southeast Asia, the system may also have aided hydraulic engineering efforts intended to support large-scale agricultural production. Aside from these secondary functions, the primary motivation for building these earthworks would have been areal defense and deterrence against possible aggression. Estimates for the total amount of earthen materials moved for construction range from one million (Kim 2013) to over two million cubic meters (Higham 1996 : 122). Ultimately, the system of ramparts repre-sents a tremendous degree of landscape remodeling for military purposes. The defen-sive function makes the site a warscape that has intermittently held strategic and military value for centuries.

In recent years, I codirected collaborative field investigations at Co Loa with the Vietnam Institute of Archaeology to gather data regarding the chronology and construction processes used for the rampart system. In 2007 and 2008, our investiga-tion examined a portion of the middle enclosure; in 2012 we investigated a portion of the outer enclosure (Fig. 1). Our field investigations highlighted the building se-quences of the monumental features. Building commenced during the third century B.C. and was followed by possible refurbishment or amplification episodes centuries later. A combination of artifacts, building methods, and radiometric data suggests that what I refer to as the Co Loa polity constructed the bulk of the ramparts during the third and second centuries B.C. Elsewhere, I have argued that the sheer size and scale of Co Loa's fortifications suggest original construction was directed by centralized, state-level political power, and the settlement appears to be an early form of a South-east Asian city and political capital (Kim 2010, 2013; Kim et al. 2010).

Unexpectedly, we uncovered a smaller set of features buried and preserved beneath the monumental rampart of the middle enclosure (Kim et al. 2010). The earliest struc-

Fig. 1. Satellite photograph of the Co Loa site. Also marked are the locations of the recent excavations and of the bunker dug into the middle rampart enclosure. 1: middle wall excavation (2007–2008); 2: outer wall excavation (2012); 3: location of bunker. (Base image provided by Digital Globe and ArchaeoTerra.)

ture lay on sterile subsoil and consisted of a clay wall and a clay platform with an associated structure and ditches. This set of features appeared to be architecturally unrelated to the larger rampart that followed. These early features may also have been defensive, though on a much smaller scale. Dongson Culture artifacts and radiocarbon determinations suggest this smaller set of features was put in place sometime between the fifth and third centuries B.C. The stratigraphic evidence suggests a period of dereliction followed. The presence of possible defensive features constructed by a smaller-scale society before the emergence of the Co Loa polity suggests that the militarization

of this area may have begun centuries before the monumental system of ramparts was constructed and that the locale was strategically significant.

The time frame of construction of the monumental ramparts corresponds to the end of the Warring States period in Chinese history, so it is possible that construction of Co Loa's system of enceintes was initially motivated by a perceived threat from emergent imperial China. According to Higham (1989:287; 1996:134; 2002:170), the major events of the Yellow River basin to the north would have had a profound impact on the communities of the Red River delta. I agree that Co Loa's ramparts were initially constructed for a military purpose (i.e., defense or deterrence) as well as a political one. The rampart system's builders may have been concerned as the predatory imperial power of the Qin, and then Han, coalesced in the north. They may have also been concerned with local adversaries in the region. Indeed, the Han Empire would go on to annex the entire region of northern Vietnam during the late centuries B.C. and first centuries A.D.

Given the nature and durability of the defensive earthworks at Co Loa, various societies could feasibly have made practical use of this militarized landscape. Clues for this kind of reuse come from both historic and material records. Our recent fieldwork indicates the occurrence of several building episodes within the rampart stratigraphy. There are several clues from textual accounts that offer possible explanations. Judging from textual accounts, it appears that Co Loa functioned as a vital military installation in a few separate instances throughout its history. As mentioned above, Vietnamese textual traditions claim the site was originally the seat of power of the Au Lac kingdom, which used Co Loa as a capital and military stronghold (O'Harrow 1979; Taylor 1983). It must be noted, however, that further material evidence demonstrating a clear and specific link between the site and the semihistorical polity is lacking. Beyond that, semihistorical and historical accounts from Vietnamese traditions and Sinitic sources suggest that the site was used as a military stronghold by subsequent political regimes immediately before and during the Chinese period of suzerainty, including the Nam Viet (also known as Nan Yueh) kingdom just prior to Han annexation and the Han Empire (Nguyen and Vu 2007:175–187). For example, after suppressing a local rebellion in A.D. 43, Han general Ma Yuan purportedly used Co Loa as a base of operation and may have amplified some of the defenses (Nguyen and Vu 2007:175).

Textual accounts further suggest that when the period of Chinese domination over the Red River valley ended in the tenth century A.D., Co Loa became the political capital of the Vietnamese Ngo dynasty in A.D. 939 (Taylor 1983:270; Wheatley 1983:93). The dynasty's first ruler, Ngo Quyen, had just successfully repelled a naval invasion by southern Han forces on the Bach Dang River at the mouth of the Red River delta, and undoubtedly would have had legitimate concerns over future Chinese attempts at invasion. The selection of Co Loa as a capital would have made sense from a military standpoint. According to Schweyer (2011:302), three towers were added along the outermost enclosure during the tenth century.

Looking back at the material record, our recent field investigations also indicate the possibility of a refurbishment or amplification phase occurring during the later Le dynasty period (c. fifteenth to eighteenth centuries). This tentative interpretation is based on the presence of a bowl fragment from that period located approximately 15 cm below the surface of the outer rampart (see Fig. 2). Given the evidence indicating possible rebuilding during this medieval period, one possibility is that Co Loa and its system of defenses once again became a stronghold briefly during the Mac "usurpa-
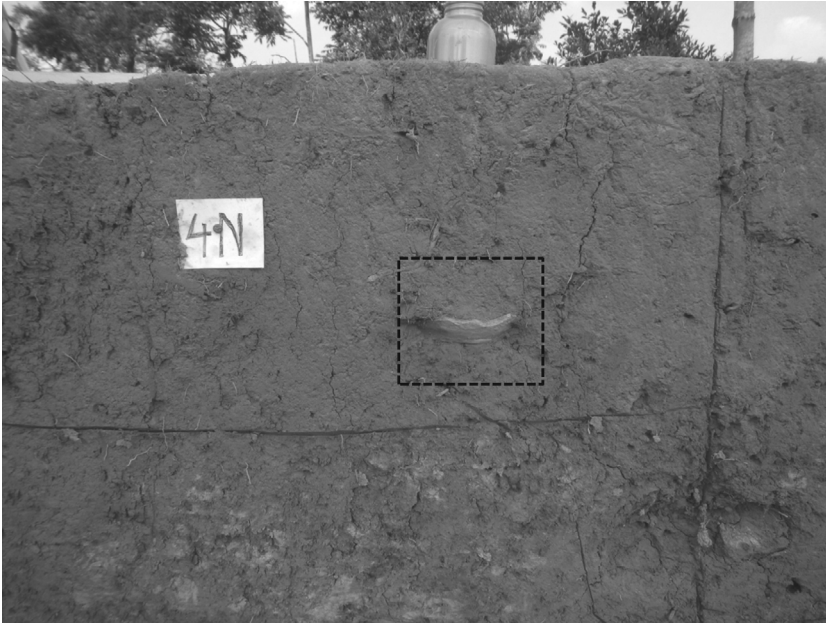
Fig. 2. Photograph of ceramic bowl dating from the Le dynasty period, found during excavation of outer rampart enclosure. The bowl (in square outline) was left in situ within the profile cut of the rampart, approximately 15 cm below the surface.

tion" period of the sixteenth century, when internal political turmoil and conflict marked regional politics (Marilynn Larew, pers. comm.). This is an intriguing possibility, though much more information is needed to test this hypothesis. There is currently little textual or archaeological evidence available to evaluate this notion, though future studies might provide such information.

Ultimately, the available textual and material evidence suggests repeated use of the site because of the practical utility of its military installations. Uses of Co Loa by different societies over the span of its history were thus likely motivated by the presence of existing, "move-in-ready" fortifications that could deter aggression from threats, whether from the north or from local political rivals. Interestingly, our recent investigations of the ramparts revealed twentieth-century usage of the site for military purposes. For instance, we found that a slit trench had been dug within the uppermost portion of the middle rampart (Figs. 3–4). Prior to excavation, our team also recovered firearm shell casings at the base of a tree sitting on part of the rampart as we cleared the surface for excavation. According to local farmers, Vietnamese soldiers used the trench for firing at aircraft, though it is unclear during which twentieth-century conflict this had occurred (i.e., it is unknown whether they were firing on French or American forces). A survey conducted at a different location of the middle wall where it was collapsing also revealed a makeshift bunker dug into the rampart by Vietnamese soldiers as a refuge during bombing runs by American forces (Fig. 5).

Given the monumental scale of the rampart constructions, the militarized landscape has persisted, making the site easy to revisit, refurbish, and reuse defensively when necessary. It is thus fascinating to consider the persistent military uses of the
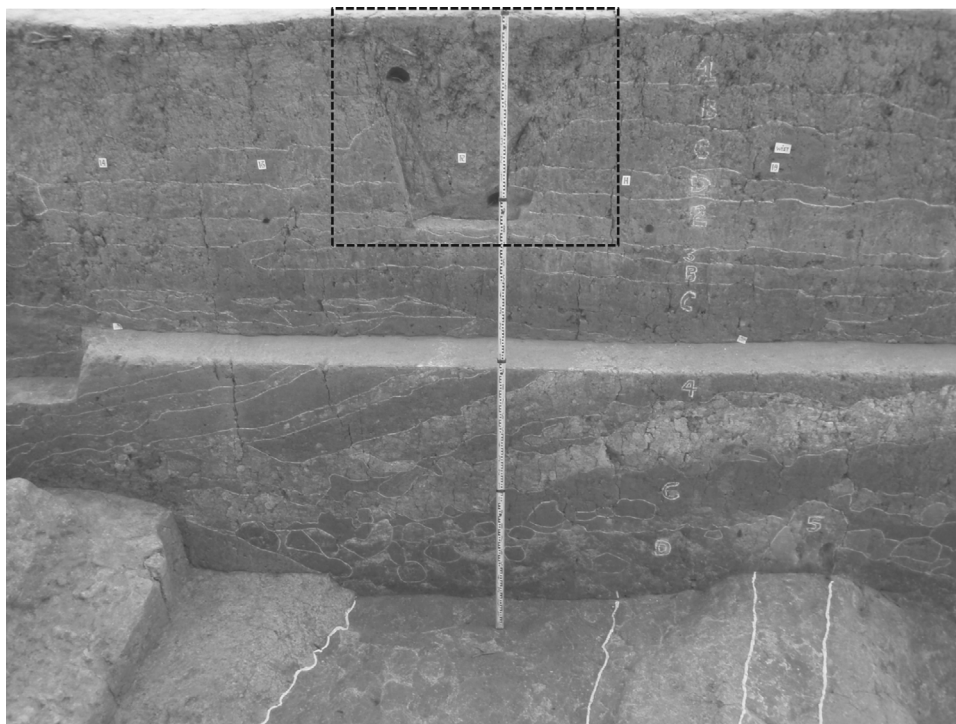
Fig. 3. Photograph of the modern slit trench discovered during excavation of the middle rampart. The photograph shows the profile of the trench (in square outline) within the excavation's western profile.

site's militarized landscape throughout Vietnamese history. Its location in the Red River valley has been attractive for other reasons as well. Like other funnel points of the world, such as the Hellespont or the Malacca Straits, Co Loa sits at a chokepoint for cultural interaction and the movement of peoples and goods. The area has thus been significant both strategically and culturally. Different sociopolitical trends and patterns of warfare have affected the perceptions and functions of the site and its surrounding landscape for over two thousand years, from the Iron Age through the twentieth century.

Beyond physical and military functionality, Co Loa as a militarized landscape would have had other cultural consequences for the region's inhabitants, as military and non-military functions would not have been mutually exclusive. DeMarrais and colleagues (1996) argue that public monuments and landscapes, including defensive structures, have the potential to associate a group with a place and represent the power and authority of its leaders. They contend that "although the meanings expressed in a cultural landscape may change, monuments nevertheless strengthen the association of a group and a place" (DeMarrais et al. 1996 : 19). Similarly, Yoffee (2005 : 39) maintains that symbols of the new ideologies of the state consist of "grand materials," which can include monumental art and architecture. He emphasizes that "the symbols of this ideology are everywhere—in decorative arts, architecture, monuments, and buildings and in the very construction of space in sites" (Yoffee 2005 : 39). Reviewing the

Fig. 4. Photograph of the slit trench from above, facing west. The slit trench enters the excavation trench and moves toward the north before ending.

patterns of political and historical change centered in the region reveals how a militarized landscape can reflect shifting patterns of cultural significance, specifically in how it impacts leadership strategies and political regeneration.

The landscape would have been a potent cultural and political symbol beyond the initial time of construction during the late centuries B.C. The site's alleged history during its pre-Sinitic era suggests that over subsequent centuries, Co Loa was a focal point of political activity. Early in the Common Era, the alleged use of the site by Han general Ma Yuan arguably stemmed from practical reasons related to defense, but it may have been politically motivated. Use of Co Loa by the Han could have emphasized the empire's superiority by building over the architectural remains of a previous polity, much as other imperial powers such as the Romans did elsewhere in the world when they constructed frontier villas and towns over sites belonging to local, indigenous societies.

When Ngo Quyen designated himself king in A.D. 939 and chose Co Loa as his capital, he abandoned the capital located at Dai La (the site of what would become Hanoi). Dai La had been established by the Chinese and was used as an imperial administrative center (Taylor 1983 : 270). Co Loa, however, symbolized a pre-Sinitic past, and I suspect its commemorative value was an important criterion for his decision. "A Vietnamese king ruling from Co-loa evoked cultural memories embedded in myths and legends passed down from generation to generation" (Taylor 1983 : 270). In

Fig. 5. Photograph of the collapsed portion of the middle enclosure where a bunker was dug by Vietnamese soldiers approximately forty years ago.

that sense, the locale was probably viewed as what Hill and Wileman (2002 : 14) refer to as sacred or ancestral space, thus at least partially accounting for its selection as a capital site.

While Ngo Quyen and his administrators may have been descendants of those liv‑ing in the Red River delta from many generations prior, there is little archaeological evidence to suggest that the societies of the tenth century in the delta were connected

to those of the Middle Iron Age, the time of Co Loa's original founding. Unlike the case of Khmer civilization where there is a substantial documentary record for ancient Cambodia that facilitated political regeneration (Stark 2006 : 161–162), societies of the Red River delta's Middle Iron Age left no written accounts. Consequently, the momentous decision by Ngo Quyen to appropriate Co Loa brings to mind what Bronson (2006 : 138) refers to as "stimulus regeneration." [1] Here, political actors, whom Bronson refers to as "regenerators," participate in political regeneration through use of diachronic hearsay. According to Bronson, "this hearsay, composed of hazy historical memories that may or may not be accurate, serves to convince leaders that a higher degree of centralization is possible and to make that centralization more palatable by wrapping it in the mantle of a glorious past" (Bronson 2006 : 138). The use of Co Loa by Ngo Quyen suggests an attempt to establish and legitimize authority based on a strategy of political regeneration. Co Loa's militarized landscape, its commemorative value, and any potentially extant folk traditions, would have operated in conjunction as a "blueprint" (after Bronson 2006 : 140) or template for rallying and political regeneration during the Common Era. In providing physical defense and political legitimacy, the warscape of Co Loa would have thus offered Ngo Quyen access to what Stark (2006 : 162) refers to as "material and ideological resources." As noted by Kolata (2006 : 217), cases of template regeneration do not occur only through the quality and fidelity of written records. Kolata argues this form of regeneration can equally be products of perduring ideologies, worldviews, and daily social practices, however these were transmitted across generations. Ngo Quyen's use of Co Loa suggests that some form of oral tradition endured across the centuries from the time of Co Loa's founding through the first millennium A.D.

The appropriation of ancient relics, sites, and landscapes by later societies is not restricted to societies of the ancient past. The perception of Co Loa as an early capital of "Vietnamese" civilization has remained strong. Even today, the site of Co Loa holds a prominent place in commemorating the origins of a Vietnamese or "proto-Vietnamese" (i.e., pre-Sinitic) past. At present it is home to festivals honoring An Duong Vuong, the purported founding figure of the Au Lac kingdom. Although it is unclear just when such activities began, the presence of temples, shrines, and statues at Co Loa dedicated to the semilegendary figures of An Duong Vuong and his military advisors underscore the commemoration of the ancient past. Figure 6, for example, shows a statue of Cao Lo, who according to some Vietnamese traditions was a general in the Au Lac kingdom during the third century B.C.

We also have information about some more recent constructions, such as the community house built in the seventeenth century (Schweyer 2011 : 303). Future studies of Co Loa's settlement and cultural history would likely benefit from an emphasis on aspects of religious or ideological practice.

A quick survey across East and Southeast Asia reveals similar cases of the ancient, sometimes precolonial past being invoked for modern-day, national reconstructions and political self-determination, such as the myth of Tan'gun for Korean civilization and the place of Angkor (Fletcher et al. 2007) and Sukhothai (Shoocongdej 2007) within Cambodian and Thai national identities, respectively. Ultimately, the Co Loa case demonstrates the uses and reuses of a landscape that has been extensively shaped by a combination of military, political, and cultural concerns. The built environment can simultaneously encompass bastions and towers alongside temples and shrines. Political agendas spurred efforts to construct, rebuild, and appropriate the landscape

Fig. 6. Photograph of the Cao Lo statue at the Co Loa site. Cao Lo purportedly furnished King An Duong Vuong with a powerful and innovative crossbow trigger mechanism.

of Co Loa to formulate and maintain centralized power, thus using both physical and ideological constructs as political strategies. Essentially, Co Loa's uses in defense and politics made the site a landscape and symbol of power, aiding in the production of legitimized authority.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

One of the main objectives of this article was to explore changing contexts of militarized landscapes in the history of a local area. I emphasize two major reasons for why warscapes persist in prominence and use. The first is that peace and war can be alternating realities. As new conflicts arise, the military value of certain landscapes can be revisited. There are many examples worldwide of newer fortifications being constructed over older ones, sometimes constructed by entirely unrelated societies.

The second reason relates to the cultural and political values that become attached to these places. In the case of Co Loa's landscape and its monumental ramparts, we see a site tied to cultural memory, one that has become a powerful symbol. Newly formed polities, such as the Ngo dynasty, may have selected Co Loa as a capital site because of the past that it embodied, thus practicing a form of political regeneration in an effort to garner political legitimacy. Whereas many militarized landscapes are preserved for purposes of commemoration and historical documentation, in what some refer to as "military heritage" (Dobinson et al. 1997), many are also central to political agen-

das. Consequently, the landscapes evolve in form and function in step with sociopo-
litical trends. It is clear that events related to war and politics can have a dramatic and
lasting impact on all aspects of societies and their physical spaces. The Co Loa example
exhibits how shifting patterns of regional politics and social violence can be reflected
in the decisions of local communities in the cultural alteration of their terrain and
landscape. Interestingly, this case shows that human–environment interactions are not
unidirectional, but mutually influential.

It is my hope that future research will continue to examine the characteristics of
militarized landscapes. A number of additional avenues of inquiry could be developed,
since the archaeology of warscapes can provide important insights concerning non-
military cultural trends. For example, examination of fortification features along the
various transport routes of the Silk Road could shed light on decision-making criteria
for investments into some routes versus others, with implications for cultural and
economic choices related to long-distance exchange and trade relations. These kinds
of warscape studies could aid and complement the reconstruction of social networks
and interactions by offering clues about alliances that may have existed between soci-
eties or favored forms of interaction. In some cases, the archaeological study of net-
work interactions has been amplified by evaluating investment choices pertaining
to frontier forts, tollways, guardhouses, temples, shrines, and refuges (Campbell 2009;
Smith 2005). In their cross-cultural study of Neolithic and Bronze Age Europe (c.
6500 to 1000 B.C.), Parkinson and Duffy (2007) assessed fortifications, enclosures, and
other monumental and communally built features on landscapes. They argue that the
creation of features on the landscape such as fortifications and enclosures for defense
are similar to features such as enclosures and henges that are built to bring groups
together for rituals. Similar features can produce two forms of intergroup interaction,
one peaceful, the other more violent (Parkinson and Duffy 2007:100). This kind of
inquiry can help archaeologists identify patterns of social interaction that occurred
during construction and differentiate the role such sites would have played within dif-
ferent regional interactions (Parkinson and Duffy 2007:100–101).

Another potentially productive line of inquiry illustrated by the Co Loa case relates
to the connection between ancient cities and concerns over war, where large-scale
modifications are made for both settlements and defense. Just as permanent human
settlements can dramatically alter surrounding landscapes, the same can be said for
fortifications, especially when combined with cities. Fortified settlements acquire
economic, social, and ritual functions as places of safety or gathering (Vencl 1999:69).
Studies of ancient walled cities in different world regions suggest walls should be
considered a form of monumental, labor-intensive architecture that is used for a vari-
ety of purposes simultaneously (Smith 2003:279). Features that once held military
value may gradually come to hold social meaning for their builders or surrounding
inhabitants. Many of the world's earliest cities were marked by some form of defensive
architecture, sometimes monumental in scale. Barnes (1999:246) uses the term
"cityscape" to describe the phenomenon of a landscape becoming dominated by
various constructions such as walled cities and capitals, as happened during the first
millennium A.D. across the Korean Peninsula. Hundreds of walled sites belonging to
different kingdoms were built in association with the construction of mountain forts,
military centers, and barriers to movement (Barnes 1999:246–247). Some of the
same powerful trends and factors that result in the production of cityscapes can be seen
shaping the production of warscapes. Cityscapes exist because populations are drawn

to gather in a central place for various reasons such as proximity to natural resources, agricultural productivity, or cultural significance. These pull factors ensure that people will continue to live in these locales; the need to defend these physical spaces then arises intermittently.

Future warscape studies could also examine other kinds of contexts, such as archaeological landscapes that have been affected directly by modern warfare. These are landscapes not intentionally modified by ancient or historical societies, but indirectly by more recent actors. Examples from Southeast Asia would obviously include the Plain of Jars in Laos, a landscape that is embedded with unexploded ordnance, or areas of Vietnam where Cham temple architecture has been damaged by modern bombing. As noted by Connell and Silverstein (2006 : 394), the central highlands of Laos constitute one of the most heavily bombed areas per hectare ever. This area of research would be especially compelling for the consideration of both military heritage and site preservation issues related to cultural heritage.

Conflict and organized violence have been profound facets of human history. As lamentable as this reality may be, the archaeological enterprise can benefit tremendously and in assorted ways from the study of militarized landscapes. Evidence of the consequences of violent behaviors are sometimes very clearly inscribed in the landscapes we inhabit, so this line of research helps us address a diverse range of questions pertaining to human history and social change. Although I have emphasized the military nature of the landscape surrounding Co Loa, it is important to note that for vast periods of history, the site and its landscape were used for peaceful purposes. Communities were able to take advantage of the ecological resources and agricultural potential of the area. Throughout these alternating cycles of peace and conflict, the area continued to hold noteworthy cultural and commemorative value. Beyond defensive utility, it is clear that that the site continues to hold significant political, cultural, and symbolic weight, today serving as a symbol of Vietnamese civilization and identity.

This is especially so since Co Loa is emblematic of a period of history prior to domination by foreign powers, despite the absence of unequivocal material evidence clearly connecting historic or modern "Vietnamese" ethnic identity and civilization to the societies of the Iron Age. As noted by Glover (2006 : 26), the past is a moral force in Vietnam and archaeology has played a role in the process of reasserting a national Vietnamese identity. The modern Vietnamese see in their Metal Age (c. late second to late first millennium B.C.) the first florescence of native genius, the creation of a territorial political state or states, with high levels of technical and artistic skills (Glover 2006 : 26). Accordingly, the rich past of the Co Loa site has witnessed a deep accumulation of cultural meaning and social memories. As indicated by the material record, much of this history is intimately tied to changing patterns of politics and war.

NOTE

1. Bronson (2006) also describes "false" forms of political regeneration, not discussed here.

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the production, uses, and reuses of cultural landscapes within contexts of warfare and political change. Ancient concerns over defense and security have led societies to construct fortification features involving extensive modifications to landscapes in many parts of the world. Social memories are often tied to these militarized landscapes, with embedded meanings and values that persist and morph through time. Due to the potential commemorative power offered by militarized landscapes, leadership strategies related to political regeneration can make use of these built environments.

Consequently, the significance of these locales is not limited to military functions, as they can be appropriated by later societies for political agendas. The Co Loa site of modern-day Vietnam's Red River delta, for instance, illustrates such a locality where warfare and politics intersect. Still standing largely intact today, the site's monumental system of fortification features dominates the local landscape, reflecting broad alterations of the surrounding terrain. Although the system was originally put into place during the Iron Age, later societies have capitalized on the site's physical and ideological properties for various military and sociopolitical agendas. Keywords: landscape archaeology, warfare, political regeneration, warscape, Vietnam, Co Loa.