Archipel
Études interdisciplinaires sur le monde insulindien

98 | 2019
Varia

Andrea Acri, Roger Blench, Alexandra Landmann (eds), *Spirits and Ships ; Cultural Transfers in Early Monsoon Asia*

Jiří Jákl

Édition électronique
URL : http://journals.openedition.org/archipel/1391
DOI : 10.4000/archipel.1391
ISSN : 2104-3655

Éditeur
Association Archipel

Édition imprimée
Date de publication : 3 décembre 2019
Pagination : 239-243
ISBN : 978-2-910513-82-5
ISSN : 0044-8613

Référence électronique
Jiří Jákl, « Andrea Acri, Roger Blench, Alexandra Landmann (eds), *Spirits and Ships ; Cultural Transfers in Early Monsoon Asia* », *Archipel* [En ligne], 98 | 2019, mis en ligne le 11 décembre 2019, consulté le 16 mars 2021. URL : http://journals.openedition.org/archipel/1391 ; DOI : https://doi.org/10.4000/archipel.1391

Association Archipel

View metadata, citation and similar papers at core.ac.uk
brought to you by CORE
provided by OpenEdition

COMPTES RENDUS

Histoire

Andrea Acri, Roger Blench, Alexandra Landmann (eds), *Spirits and Ships; Cultural Transfers in Early Monsoon Asia*. Singapore: ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 2017, vii-577 p., ISBN: 978-981-47-7275-5.

The volume under review consists of eleven essays, seven of which are papers that were presented at the conference entitled "Cultural Transfer in Early Monsoon Asia: Austronesian-Indic Encounters." All the essays, and a useful introduction ("Introduction: Re-connecting Histories across the Indo-Pacific," pp. 1-37), are linked by their interest in the (early) history of maritime Southeast Asia, and the values, concepts, and practices shared by the people of this expansive region. As usual with compiled volumes, essays differ widely in their quality, which is not a priori a disadvantage. More importantly, few reviewers are in a position to engage with widely different topics collected in one volume. For these two reasons I will restrict my review on five contributions that offer, in my opinion, new evidence or interpretations, and are related to the field of my expertise.

In chapter 3 ('Tantrism "Seen from the East"', pp. 71-144), Andrea Acri looks at the supra-local nature of Tantric phenomena, and offers a number of interesting insights into the early geography of Tantrism. Acri starts with a thorough review of a hypothesis that pre-modern maritime Southeast Asia shared a common religious matrix, a view advanced already in the first half of the 20th century by Paul Mus and Sylvain Lévi. Acri also tackles a hypothesis of an Iranian or more specifically Central Asian origin of several crucial tenets

and tropes of Tantrism, a view defended recently (2012) by David White (p. 75). In the next part of his contribution, Acri voices his reservations about the (posited) homeland of Tantrism in the Indian subcontinent. In the rest of his contribution, the reader is offered an alternative approach, when Acri invites us to look at the phenomenon of Tantrism "from the East," hence from maritime and mainland Southeast Asia. We are offered a meticulous analysis of several major themes and tenets well-known to anyone who has ever studied Southeast Asian religious environment or/and Tantrism. The themes discussed cover "the feminine as power," "monstrosity, mockery, association with animals," and "disreputable magicians," the part I have particularly enjoyed. The picture of "who influenced whom" is indeed complex, and Acri offers a much needed, focused (and still very rare) insight of a scholar, who is well-versed in both Indian and Southeast Asian religious cultures, leading the reader much beyond the unidirectional and simplified paradigm of "Indianization/Hinduization," which still prevails among the scholars of South Asia, not excluding the students of Tantra. In the rather long conclusion, Acri leaves for his readers to choose from four hypotheses he has presented concerning the origin of (often striking) similarities between medieval India and pre-modern Southeast Asia (128-135). The only reservation I have is the use of, in my view, rather infelicitous concept of "medieval Southeast Asia," used commonly throughout Acri's contribution, and getting track recently among other scholars, too. Unlike in India or Sri Lanka, the concept of "medieval" or "early medieval" has never been theoretically analysed and defended: if we talk about "medieval Java" then we also must admit the existence of socio-cultural entities such as "medieval Nias," "medieval Borneo," or "medieval Bangka Archipelago." I doubt we can draw such an artificial line and meaningfully dissect the pre-modern history of Nusantara into a pre-medieval/ancient, medieval, and early-modern periods.

In chapter 5 ("Ethnographic and Archaeological Correlates for a Mainland Southeast Asia Linguistic Area," pp 207-38), Roger Blench elaborates on the concept of "language convergence zone." Blench offers "social and material correlates of the convergence observed in MSEA (Mainland Southeast Asia)." Blench selects several aspects of music, house-forms, weapons, and clothing to provide a "tentative model" of such a "convergence zone" (p. 209). Suggesting, rather unfairly, that "Ethnographers are occupied with the quirks of social media and mobile phones rather than the documentation of rural communities," Blench calls for the resurrection of descriptive ethnography (p. 212), offering some of the results of his own fieldwork in this essay. I find interesting and informative especially the discussion about Southeast Asian heterophony and South Chinese polyphony. Blench reaches a conclusion that "heterophony was an ancient structural principal established in the Southeast Asian region bounded strongly in the west by the monodic traditions of South Asia. The folk traditions of South China were polyphonic but heterophony was picked up by Sinitic speakers and

underlies the art music and large-scale musical structures of East Asia" (p. 215). The interesting discussion on the role and history of gongs in Southeast Asian music, however, is not free of several lapses. Blench (p. 217) notes that "we have no real idea of its antiquity in Southeast Asia; gongs are not shown on the friezes of musical ensembles at Borobudur." Yet, on the next page (p. 218) the author gives us a contradictory statement that "Angkor Wat and Borobudur provide some evidence for the time-depth of gong ensembles." Uncertain about Java, Blench acknowledges that gongs are "present at Angkor in the eleventh century" (p. 217). Kunst (1968: 65-66) and Nicolas (2009), however, have offered clear evidence that gongs were known in Java as early as the 9th century CE. I can add that the term *gong-gongan* in *Kakawin Rāmāyana* (25.66), an Old Javanese court poem composed in the second half of the 9th century CE, refers to the beating or sound of metal gongs.

In chapter 8 ("Pre-Austronesian Origins of Seafaring in Insular Southeast Asia," pp. 325-74), Waruno Mahdi offers a wide-ranging discussion of a little studied problem of the earliest Southeast Asian navigation and early sea-going vessels, using mainly linguistic evidence. Mahdi argues expertly and in a persuading way that the Southeast Asian Negrito equatorial populations were behind the initial development of the first sea-going watercrafts. According to this view, by the time when the rising sea after 12,000 BCE encouraged first maritime mobility elsewhere, seafaring Negritoes looked back on experience more than 40,000 years old. Mahdi suggests that the primitive raft was first replaced by a "multiple dugout," a raft with dugouts instead of logs (p. 326). Some time after this innovation, according to Mahdi, "following increasing sophistication of the dugout hulls, and perhaps also lighter weight of the loads which were carried, the number of hulls could be reduced to the minimum of two" (p. 333). This would result in a construction of a well-known double canoe, the original sea-going watercraft of both the Austronesians and the early Chinese. The author ascribes this later development, when the dugout hulls were enhanced to so-called "five-part hulls," to the cultural exchange between the northward-migrating Negritoes and populations settled by that time in Southeast China and Taiwan (pp. 333-34). I find the fourth part of Mahdi's contribution, where the introduction of sea-going watercrafts to mainland China and Taiwan is discussed in detail, particularly interesting (pp. 337-41). In the second part of his contribution, the author also credits the Negritoes with the dissemination of several important food plants. Particularly revealing is the discussion of the complex linguistic evidence for the westward spread of banana, a plant first attested at the Kuk Swamps in New Guinea (pp. 347-56).

In chapter 9 ("The Role of 'Prakrit' in Maritime Southeast Asia through 101 Etymologies," pp. 375-440), Tom Hoogervorst offers a thorough discussion of Middle Indo-Aryan ("Prakrit") loanwords in Malay, Old Javanese, and other Austronesian languages. Hoogervorst rejects some Tamil-based etymologies,

and proposes an impressive number of new etymologies, tracing a great number of Old Javanese and some Malay words to Middle Indo-Aryan words rather than to Sanskrit, a language that nevertheless left immense lexical imprint on all phases of Javanese language, as well as on classical Malay. I find particularly interesting tracing *juara* ("trainer of fighting cocks") to Prakrit *jūāra* in the meaning "gambler" (p. 392); the author further observes that this attestation would correspond to Sanskrit *dyūtakāra* ("gambler"). Exciting is the new etymology offered for *pagi* ("morning"): rather than reconstructing the word to a higher Austronesian pedigree, Hoogervorst (p. 393) suggests to trace *pagi* to a Prakrit reflex of Sanskrit *prage* ("early in the morning, at dawn"). This reflex may well have been Ardhamāgadhī *page* ("early in the morning"). Another novel etymology is offered for the word *baja/waja* ("steel"), which is traced more precisely to Śaurasenī, Māgadhī, or other related language. Hoogervorst's discussion of the secondary development of the meaning of *baja/waja* (where it refers to dental treatments, such as blackening of teeth) is also revealing (p. 387). Very convincing is the etymology proposed for *ramah* ("effusive friendliness"), which is traced to Sanskrit *ramya* ("pleasing"), possibly through Ardhamāgadhī *ramma* ("attractive"). No less interesting is the long discussion of the complex history of the term *undahagi* ("carpenter, cabinet-maker"), which is reconstructed as **vaddhagi*, a form seemingly related to Ardhamāgadhī *vaddhaï* (p. 422).

In chapter 10 ("Who Were the First Malagasy, and What Did They Speak?," pp. 441-69), Alexander Adelaar revisits the earliest phases of the Malagasy, and offers intriguing insights into the status of Proto-Malagasy and social-cultural environment of its speakers. In one of the best contributions found in this volume, Adelaar offers abundant, persuading evidence for his basic claim that "when Malagasy speakers were still in Borneo, they already spoke a distinct dialect" (p. 445). While it is now widely acknowledged that Malagasy is a member of the South East Barito language subgroup, the initial phase of the language and its relations to Ma'anyan and other South East Barito languages remained so far poorly known. In this fine study Adelaar demonstrates how various early developments set off Malagasy against other South East Barito languages. The author collects and analyses linguistic data supporting a view that Malagasy was most probably not just an early form of one of the extant South East Barito languages, but, still in South Borneo, Malagasy already spoke a distinct dialect (p. 445). The author also revisits a very complex historical context of the Austronesian expansion to Madagascar, offering his views on the relations between Old Malay and an unknown language attested in the 7th-century Malay inscriptional record, likely an early form of Malagasy. Adelaar warns against unfounded claims that a few lines of this language known to us represent evidence for a prominent role of the Malagasy in the maritime history of the Indo-Malay world. Adelaar offers a more balanced view, suggesting that "a more likely scenario is that there was

a symbiotic (but still asymmetric) social relation between Malays and early Malagasy people, comparable to the one that existed between the Malays and surrounding Orang Asli groups during the heydays of Malacca" (p. 458). Adelaar also suggests that remarkably high level of Malay (and Javanese) influence on Malagasy is best explained by a "symbiotic model" (p. 467), according to which the early Malagasy were living before their migration(s) to Madagascar in the direct vicinity of Malays (and possibly ethnic Javanese) who may have settled very early in parts of Kalimantan.

I believe the volume would profit from a compacted, cumulative bibliography: apart from the fact that very many bibliographical entries are shared by more than two essays, some essays are of substantial length so that looking up bibliographical entries in the cumulative bibliography would be more comfortable. The edited volume under review represents a valuable contribution to Southeast Asian studies and offers much food for thought for anyone interested in pre-modern South and Southeast Asia. Apart from interesting, well-researched essays, the editors have also produced a visually appealing and well-organized volume.

Jiří Jákl
Heidelberg University

Fadly Rahman. *Jejak Rasa Nusantara: Sejarah Makanan Indonesia* (« Sur les traces d'un goût insulindien ; Histoire de l'alimentation en Indonésie »). Jakarta : Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2016, xxii-396 p. ISBN : 978-60203-3521-6.

La cuisine, celle d'Indonésie comme celle de tous les autres pays, est un domaine passionnant parce qu'elle constitue un « fait social total » et relève donc de la plupart des sciences humaines. Et pourtant — ou peut-être faut-il dire pour cette raison — la cuisine indonésienne n'a fait jusqu'à présent l'objet d'aucune recherche sérieuse. L'ouvrage de Fadly Rahman, enseignant au département d'histoire de l'Université Padjadjaran, à Bandung, est donc le premier du genre. Que le premier auteur à entreprendre une telle étude soit un chercheur indonésien est pour le moins encourageant.

Le mot *makanan* du titre (sont utilisés aussi *boga* et *kuliner*) est pris au sens le plus large, incluant aliments, techniques, recettes, pratiques et saveurs. L'auteur étudie l'alimentation sous tous ses aspects : il envisage tous les domaines en rapport avec elle (agriculture, élevage, économie, climat, santé, botanique, droit et autres) et il utilise les sources les plus diverses. La recherche est rigoureuse et la bibliographie impressionnante (l'auteur utilise des sources anglaises, néerlandaises, françaises, indonésiennes et soundanaises).

L'étude, cependant, ne commence qu'au Xe siècle, avec l'épigraphie en vieux-javanais, alors que l'archéologie fournit quantité d'informations sur