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WAS THERE A LATE PREHISTORIC INTEGRATED SOUTHEAST ASIAN MARITIME SPACE? Insight from Settlements and Industries

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1. Introduction

The focus on globalization has encouraged researchers in the humanities to rethink cultural processes on wide spatial and temporal scales, i.e. those of the world and the long-term (Assayag 1998), and to emphasize processes of social, economic and cultural integration.[1] When understood

[1] I follow Bentley's (1999) minimal characterizing criteria, i.e. that integration takes place when cross-cultural interactions "bring about a division of labour between and among interacting societies or when they facilitate commercial, biological, or cultural exchanges between and among these socially and economically integrated maritime spaces interacting societies on a regular and systematic basis".

as an approach to history, researchers looked for processual continuities from prehistory to the modern era that could explain contemporary globalization (Beaujard 2005, 2012*a*, 2012*b*; Beaujard, Berger and Norel 2009). Researchers hold that human history, when understood as a global process, has already experienced several sociocultural translocal processes of "globalizations", such as Hellenization and Romanization in Europe, and Indianization and Islamization in Southeast Asia (Amselle 2000; Assayag 1998). While those translocal processes have been made the subject of abundant research over an extended period of time, the hypothesis of a maritime Southeast Asian globalization, possibly dominated by Austronesian speakers, is a relatively new field of research. The notion of an integrated maritime Southeast Asian space has long been advocated by Braudel-inspired historians such as Anthony Reid, for whom long-established interconnections within the South China Sea accounted for the strong spatial and human integration he observed in Southeast Asia in modern times. However, recent advances in the field of prehistory led a few archaeologists to argue for an interaction sphere that existed already in the prehistoric period (Bulbeck 2008; Hung et al. in press; Solheim 2006). Indeed, it is now demonstrated that in the second millennium BC populations actively interacted and exchanged technologies, human experiences and valuable goods thanks to an advanced sailing technology within the South China Sea. From then on some networks were established, as indicated by shared ceramic traditions and the circulation of characteristic nephrite ornaments. For these archaeologists, these interactions could well have laid the ground for common practices and cultural affinities accounting for the ease with which populations have been circulating and exchanging goods and ideas from the Metal Age, by 500 BC. From this period onward, exchanges increased and trans-ethnic networks began to generate significant quantity of characteristic stone and glass ornaments, distinctive decorated ceramics related to the "Sa Huynh-Kalanay complex"—an expression forged by Solheim (1961)—whose distribution spans from the shores of the Thai–Malay Peninsula to those of the Philippines and of the Indonesian archipelago. In other regions, the common distribution of similar prestige goods across large zones observed in various chiefdoms in Central America,

in Hawaii (Hantman and Plog 1982; Earle 1990), and in the Philippines (Junker 1990, 1993, 1999; Bacus 2003) had been interpreted as manifesting an inter-polity symbolic system expressing elite group alliances and shared identity. In such context, it becomes legitimate to question whether some political and sociocultural configurations that prefigured certain patterns described for the historical periods in maritime Southeast Asia developed during the Metal Age. This in turns leads us to question the plausibility that translocal cultural dynamics existed in maritime Southeast Asia before "Indianization". In other words, is there evidence for shared patterns of values, norms and cultural models during the late prehistoric period that could be indicative of an ancient regional integration? If this were the case, can we identify common socio-political strategies? Also, can we observe an evolution through time and especially when South and Southeast Asian networks intertwined by the late centuries BC? These are some of the issues this chapter will tackle based on recent archaeological data. Two types of evidence, I feel, are especially relevant for the discussion:

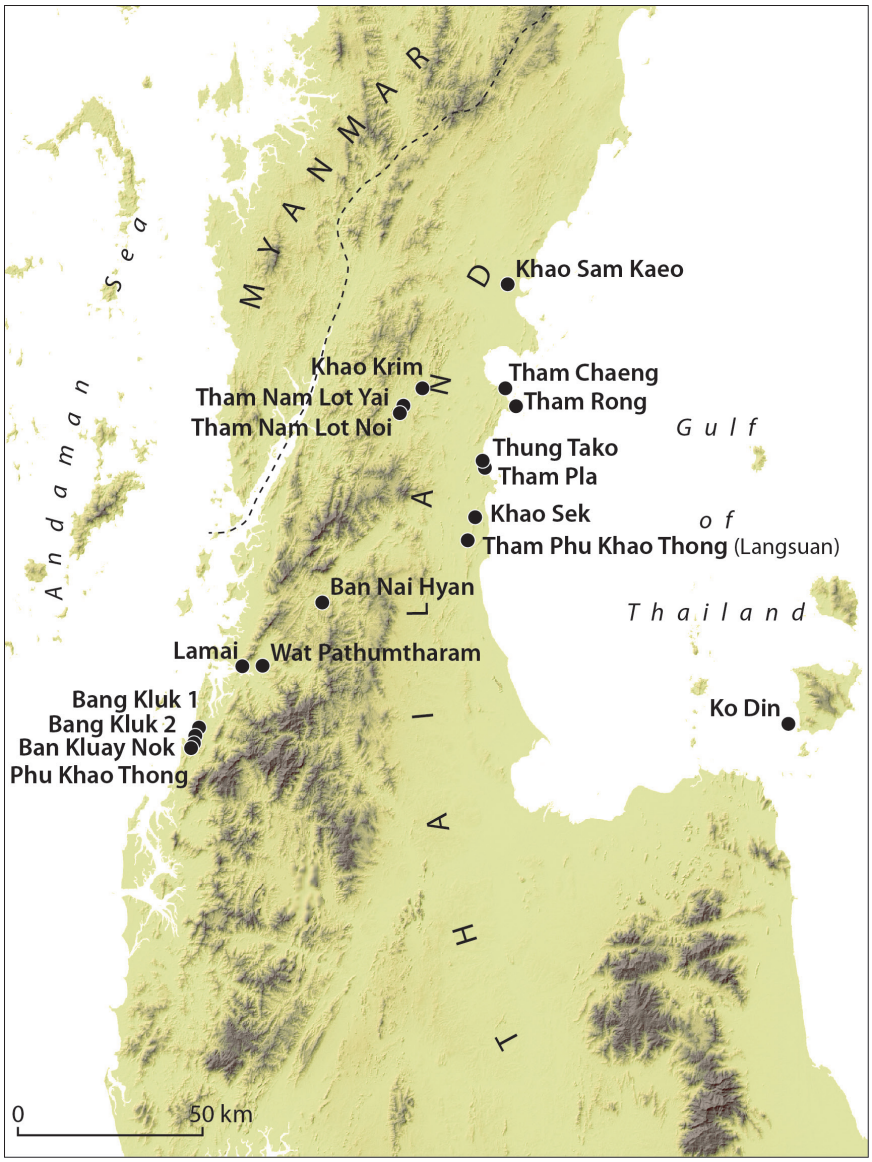
The first one worth considering, even if data are still scarce, comes from investigations of late prehistoric settlements with respect to Co Loa in northern Vietnam and Khao Sam Kaeo in the Thai–Malay Peninsula. Nam C. Kim (2013) and Bérénice Bellina (Bellina et al. 2014; Bellina 2016, in press) respectively argue that for a late prehistoric emergence of urbanism, a process traditionally considered as a historical one correlated to the development of early States. Though the two locales belonged to very different contexts, and Co Loa being not immediately adjacent to maritime networks, they still provide useful insights to the socio-political and economic changes that many populations were facing in Southeast Asia at that time, which arguably motivated their elite to display their political agenda upon their surrounding topography. How did they choose to materialize their power and what may have been their sources of inspiration? This chapter argues that there already are hints of an urban tradition in the maritime region, and that these features prefigure later historical configurations.

The second source of information comes from the analysis of the socio-technical system of two types of industries found within maritime networks, which may be seen as indicative of shared models. The two

are hybrid-type productions. The first, i.e. stone ornaments, associates South Asian technologies and regional style; the second, i.e. the "Sa Huynh-Kalanay" ceramics, often associates local technologies with South China Sea style. What does this common lexicon tell us about the different societies referring to it? I will propose some hypotheses on the socio-political context of the societies producing or ordering it and the potential socio-political strategies they may have served, and argue in favour of the existence of an early integration whereby trading nodes constituted cradles for hybrid cultural products at the heart of these socio-political practices.

The data discussed here were obtained by the Thai–French archaeological mission in the Upper Thai–Malay Peninsula. The Thai–Malay Peninsula has long been a crossroads for cultural and material exchanges. This programme aims at defining the co-evolutions of the different populations of the Peninsula and of their environment in relation to long-distance trade, whether those were involved directly or indirectly. A particular focus is made on the pivotal period of the region's integration in the so-called Maritime Silk roads, by the mid-first millennium BC, to highlight the possible continuities or discontinuities in the network's socio-political and cultural constructions following this interlocking. To tackle these issues, the Thai–French Archaeological mission in Upper Thai–Malay Peninsula (regions of Chumphon and Ranong) excavates and surveys different types of sites representing various types of populations, socio-political organizations and environments (see Map 6.1). Those range from coastal sites with socially complex systems, cosmopolitan configurations and highly specialized crafts such as at the early urban and industrial port of Khao Sam Kaeo (Bellina-Pryce and Silapanth 2008; Bellina, Epinal and Favereau 2012; Bellina in press), Phu Khao Thong (Ranong province) (Bellina 2014; Borell, Bellina and Chaisuwan 2014) and Khao Sek (Langsuan, Chumphon province) to coastal and offshore cave sites such as Tham Tuay, Tham Phla, Phu Khao Thong (Langsuan) and Koh Din, used as temporary camping sites and for funerary purposes (Bellina, Epinal and Favereau 2012), and finally to sites in the interior along transpeninsular routes, cave sites and open air sites such as Tham Than Nam Lot. The materials

MAP 6.1



Archaeological Map of the Chumphon and Ranong Provinces, Thai-French Archaeological Mission in Upper Thai-Malay Peninsula

Source: Author.

or features discussed in this article are diverse and come from these different types of contexts, which exemplify the complexity of late prehistoric socio-political networks.

2. Background: The Construction of the Notion of an Integrated Maritime Space

Before examining settlement and socio-technological evidence that could provide hints on shared cultural patterns and in particular of socio-political traits during the late prehistoric period in maritime Southeast Asia, a historiographic overview of the issue is in order.

In Southeast Asian historiography, the notion of continuity has largely dominated explanations on the construction of socio-political models and, more broadly, of cultural configurations (Reid 1988, introduction; Lieberman 2003; Andaya and Andaya 2015, pp. 35–81). This continuity has been postulated at a time when little was known on the prehistoric and early historical periods. In the 1980s, Ian Glover opened the avenue to studies of long distance late prehistoric period exchange networks, to which were traditionally associated issues of State and urban formation, and in particular with South Asia (Glover 1983, 1989, 1990*a*, 1990*b*, 1991, 1996*a*, 1996*b*, 2000). From then, the topic that has received most interest has been the transition from late prehistoric chiefdoms/kingdoms to States in relation to trade. Explanations conceived that the region owed much of its economic development to demands from South Asian or Chinese markets, whilst its political development resulted mainly from the desire to control this trade (Wisseman Christie 1995). Inspired by later historical situations, it was hypothesized that peer-polity interactions between the late prehistoric competing polities was a likely driving force for the transmission and elaboration of political models found within historical states (Andaya 2008; Wisseman Christie 1995, p. 250). Continuity and external impetus from her two neighbours China and India have long been seen as two main dynamics of Southeast Asian historical trajectories. This position prevailed even if the externalist paradigm, born during the colonial period, that contrasted a coherent universalist/global Indic cultural package to a mosaic of local, indigenous Southeast Asian responses had been obsolete for a long time (Pollock

1998, 2000). It has been shown that there existed no unified Indian culture that produced Indianization and that South Asia itself partook of the same process of Indianization (Kulke 1990; Pollock 1996, 1998, 2000, 2006). Second, in both South and Southeast Asia, societies have been shown to be characterized by their diversity and their various levels of social development (Smith 1999; Morrison and Junker 2002). Third, research focussing on Southeast Asian early historical settlements associated to the earliest States has been critical in showing continuity with previous occupations. Those settlements include mainly Funan at Oc Eo and Angkor Borei in the Mekong delta (Stark 1998, 2006; Stark et al. 1999; Stark and Bong 2001; Manguin 2004), Go Cam (a site of the polity of Linyi) and Tra Kieu (the ancient capital of Champa) in Central Vietnam (Glover and Yamagata 1995; Dung, Glover, and Yamagata 2006; Yamagata 2007, 2014), Bujang Valley remains of Kedah in Peninsular Malaysia (Chia and Mokhtar 2011; Mokhtar 2009 and undated) and Tarumanagara and Batujaya in West Java (Glover and Yamagata 1995; Dung, Glover, and Yamagata 2006; Yamagata 2007, 2014).

Simultaneously, understanding of Southeast Asian long distance late prehistoric networks benefited from the construction of broad comparative regional databases. Data came from fine compositional and technological analysis of crafts products circulating on these networks. Those include, to cite only a few, the Indian-type of knobbed or decorated high-tin bronze bowls (Glover 1991; Srinivasan and Glover 1995; Srinivasan 1997, 2010; Pryce et al. 2011, 2014), glass (Dussubieux 2001; Dussubieux and Gratuze 2010; Dussubieux, Gratuze, and Blet-Lemarquand 2010; Dussubieux et al. 2012; Carter 2013), chalcedony ornaments (Theunissen 1998; Theunissen, Grave, and Bailey 2000; Bellina 2001, 2003, 2007; Theunissen 2007; Carter 2013; Carter and Dussubieux 2016), nephrite ornaments (Hung et al. 2007; Hung and Bellwood 2010), Indian fine wares such as rouletted ware and kendi-type of ware (Bouvet 2006, 2011, 2012), Sa Huynh-Kalanay-related ware (Favereau 2015; Favereau and Bellina in press) and metals (Pryce, Bellina-Pryce, and Bennett 2008; Murillo-Barroso et al. 2010; Pryce et al. 2011, 2014). Beside helping to trace networks and their evolution through time, these databases began to provide firmer grounds to reconstruct socioeconomic contexts and cultural interactions.

To what extent can we trace back in time the antiquity of these networks is a question at the hearth of current research. It is now clear that populations had been actively interacting, exchanging technologies and valuable goods thanks to an advanced sailing technology prior to the Neolithic (Bulbeck 2008; Soares et al. 2016). In maritime Southeast Asia, the dispersal of Austronesian-speaking groups has long been correlated to the spread of agricultural practices (Bellwood 1995, 1996, 1997, 2007), a model that has been increasingly contested (Blench 2012, 2014, under press; Meacham 1984–85; Oppenheimer 2004; Szabo and O'Connor 2004; Spriggs 2007; Bulbeck 2008; Lewis 2008; Hunt and Rabett 2013; Blench 2014). Nowadays, three main models explain prehistoric maritime Southeast Asian connectivity. Hung and Bellwood (2010) postulate the permanence of exchange networks and continuity of some cultural practices since the Neolithic through a combination of trade and Austronesian-speaking population movements. The incentive for the circulations would have begun with the search for land, agriculture, demographic expansion and religion. Solheim and Bulbeck see a trans-ethnic trading and communication network which ended up producing a common culture and an Austronesian lingua franca whose main incentive was trade (Solheim 2006). Recently, Bulbeck (2008) suggested that the Austronesian-speaking traders were, thanks to their advances in navigation technology, highly mobile fisher-foragers entering a previously existing Austro-Asiatic interaction sphere. Bulbeck (ibid.), Blench (2012) and Soares et al. (2016) disconnect the movements of Austronesian-speakers from agriculture. Blench opposes an alternative view whereby the so-called "Austronesian cultural package" is a late construction made from elements that Austronesian speakers integrated opportunistically from the various pre-existing populations they encountered on their way, a long process he calls "austronesianization". For him, a pan-Austronesian religion and trade were the incentive of this cultural harmonization. These models have implications on the later cultural and linguistic shared models leading to question whether these interactions and networks established during the second millennium were maintained through time. Hung and Bellwood and their colleagues believe that a continuity existed. They observe shared pottery traditions as early as the second millennium BC

in the South China Sea (the Bin Chau tradition) that would translate into links existing between the Philippines and Vietnam, and which would prefigure the late prehistoric Sa Huynh-Kalanay pottery tradition (Hung et al. in press). They also believe that the spread of jar burial tradition may result from these privileged sea links. The antiquity and potential permanence of networks led some researchers to hypothesize that this period could also correspond to the formative period when socio-political patterns started to be developed.

Let us now turn to recent lines of data that could bring light on the question as to whether data from settlement configuration and from specific craft productions entailed different levels of networks.

3. Late Prehistoric Settlements: Can We Talk of the Emergence of an Early Maritime Urban Tradition?

Early Southeast Asian urbanization remains poorly understood, particularly in the maritime area. The emergence of cities in Southeast Asia is a very complex and hotly debated issue that this chapter will not tackle as I deal with it elsewhere (Bellina in press). The issue is complex insofar as various definitions apply to what we may now call a "city", and because of the generally poor preservation of settlement remains in a tropical context. My aim here is to argue that from the late centuries BC complex settlements started to emerge; these settlements were seats of polities whose configurations translate into centralization and a coherent political and socioeconomic agenda. In maritime Southeast Asia, major nodes were characterized by a cosmopolitan configuration; they concentrated in socio-professional quarters of various specialized groups producing hybrid cultural products. These may be perceived to prefigure the later city-states that thrived along the shores of the South China Sea.

Khao Sam Kaeo represents such polity. It is a coastal complex polity whose emergence is clearly linked to the development of the maritime silk roads and which is securely dated to the very early fourth to second or first centuries BC. The site has been described elsewhere in detail (Bellina-Pryce and Silapanth 2008; Bellina et al. 2014; Bellina and Bernard, in press) so here suffice it to summarize the main features

necessary for the discussion. Located eight kilometres from the current coastline, the site extends over four hills and is limited on its western side by the River Tha Tapao, which connects it with the China Sea in the east and with resource-rich forests in the north. Its size is of 55 ha and its occupation *stricto sensu* extends over 35 ha delimited by walls and palisaded ramparts. The bordering walls include simple and twin parallel earth walls that were probably surmounted by wooden palisades that did not survive. The presence of these ramparts expresses a double concern: first to retain sediments upslope and upstream, avoiding the erosion and redeposition that are induced by heavy monsoon rains (Allen in press), and second to delineate the urban space, delimiting specialized zones (Malakie LaClair 2008). The network of habitations on piles and terraces was dense and characterized by accumulations of terraces and drains. All craft activities (iron, copper-base alloy, and hard stones) expanded both on the tops and bases of the hills, except that the lapidary glass, stone, and glass-bracelet craft centers have been identified exclusively in the lower parts of Valley 1 and along the river. Two clearly defined zones emerge from the spatial analysis: a southern area corresponding to Hills 1 and 2, most likely used by local populations and a few foreign craftspersons, and a northern area, including Hills 3 and 4, occupied by various Asian groups: South Asian, Southeast Asian, and East Asian. The southern area yielded different types of productions related to the South China Sea lexicon: "Sa Huynh-Kalanay" type of ware, glass and stone ornaments. This zone is taken to be the oldest core of the site that later expended to the north. The northern part of the settlement (Hills 3 and 4) yielded evidence for habitation and for different types of craft production associated with various groups from South, Southeast, and East Asia. Some materials were imported; others were locally produced with exogenous or local techniques. Several of these locally made artefacts belong to the sets of items shared amongst communities along the shore of the South China Sea.

Khao Sam Kaeo cosmopolitan configuration is highlighted by the spatial distribution of materials as well as by its monumental constructions. The enclosing walls, moats and water systems were built, transformed and heavily maintained over centuries and thus appear to be the product of what can be regarded as a coherent political agenda that was

implemented over several generations. In conjunction with other lines of evidence, they are indicative of a certain form of perennial centralized power and of a common sense of civic community (Bellina in press; Bellina and Bernard in press). The walls had multiple purposes, i.e. not only acted as a barrier against floods or favoured certain agricultural activities, but also covered a symbolic function, playing a great social and political significance. This multiplicity of functions seems to have often been the case in the early forms of city walls found elsewhere in Asia (Smith 2003; Indrawooth 2004; Moore and Win 2007; Kim et al. 2010; Kim 2013). In a tropical Southeast Asian environment where most remains in urban context are very poorly preserved, enclosures constitute a crucial element for discussing socio-political trajectories. Besides attesting a form of authority able to control considerable labour for their erection and maintenance, they may also have been a means by which this authority could be strengthened. Alternatively, these monuments may have played a significant symbolic role giving a sense of common identity for the community living within its boundaries (Smith 2003; Kim 2013; Bellina in press).

In addition to monumental evidence, socio-political complexity is indicated by the internal organization of the site characterized by socio-professional zones hosting different social groups and activities. The socio-technical system, a reflection of the socioeconomic and political context, is also complex. These industries have set up far-reaching supplying and distribution networks (the glass industry is a good example) and involved foreign specialists often implementing highly skilled techniques to produce hybridized products meeting the different levels of demands. Finally, this trade-oriented polity has proved to have been able to organize the food supply to host full-time specialists in various arts and crafts, be it by importing some of them from a more or less distant hinterland or by supporting an adequate agricultural base at the site and its immediate surroundings (Allen in press; Castillo in press).

The sources of inspiration for the elaboration of the urban space in Southeast Asia constitute a long debated issue. The position currently held by Nam Kim for Co Loa in North Vietnam and by myself for Khao Sam Kaeo suggests a combination of regional developments and external inputs. Both Co Loa and Khao Sam Kaeo represent hybrid

forms of urbanization, the product of multiple, more or less remote sources of inspiration. To be clear, the sources cannot be fully appreciated yet, given the state of research on this topic and the paucity of evidence in the neighbouring Môn region of Central and Lower Myanmar, and in the insular world for this period. However, among the various sources of urban inspiration, both sites seem to owe to the contemporaneous moated settlements that are found in many parts of Mainland Southeast Asia on the one hand and to those settlements belonging to what Kim has termed the "moated-settlement tradition" on the other. In Mainland Southeast Asia, prehistoric moated settlements are found in various regions ranging from Myanmar to Vietnam. Their function and precise dating are often still unclear: were they proto-urban inhabited settlements, or ceremonial centres? In any case, all these sites reflect efforts to control water and hence can be seen as early participants in the process of experimentation that led to the elaborate Southeast Asian traditions of water management that are well-represented, for instance, in the Khmer Empire and the Dvaravati and Pyu cities. Besides this regional source of inspiration I believe that Khao Sam Kaeo may have found inspiration amongst the South Asian enclosed cities that arose during the so-called "second urbanization", which took place by the early to mid-first millennium BC. Similarities concern morphology, location, size and rampart system. However, comparison cannot be pushed further given the dearth of comparative data on the plan and internal organization of early Indian cities. Khao Sam Kaeo, with its cosmopolitan configuration marked by walled areas, differs in many ways from the known Indian cities; furthermore, the latter were not directly involved with overseas trade. Arikamedu (Begley 1996) and Pattanam (Cherian et al. 2007), being long-distance trade-oriented settlements, would probably provide more pertinent comparisons. However, successive excavations for the former and those currently taking place for the latter have not highlighted any overall city planning. This lack of opportunity to compare trading settlements from the Indian Subcontinent is a considerable handicap in our attempts to reconstruct the history of port-cities at a wider Asian scale.

In Southeast Asia, it is very likely that the current absence of complex walled late prehistoric settlements comparable to those of

Khao Sam Kaeo and of Co Loa reflects more the state of archaeological research than a historical reality. The existence of a commonality of patterns and features in fortified urban settlements across mainland Southeast Asia appears all the more plausible as Chinese texts refer to them in the early centuries AD. On the Thai–Malay Peninsula, Chinese sources describe the existence of several centralized polities. From the sixth century AD, the *Liang Shu* accounts that the capital of the Langkasukha polity located in the Pattani area was fortified and Wheatley (1983) hypothesized the use of "palisaded enceinte with double gates". Similarly, the capital Siṁhapura of the Red-Earth Kingdom (probably in the area of Songkhla, a region located about 350 km south of Chumphon) was protected by walls with triple gates. Within this enclosure the palace consisted of storeyed structures (Wheatley 1983, pp. 233–34). In another polity called Buan-Buan located somewhere in the Isthmus of Kra, the Chinese describe maritime people living mostly by the water-side and in default of city walls, depended on palisades. These allusions only provide vague descriptions for these early settlements on the Peninsula; this state of affairs is most regrettable as for this region archaeology fails to provide hard evidence for urbanism in trade-oriented sites before a later period. Other slightly later well-preserved evidence of a major trade-oriented site come from Sungai Batu, Kedah whose industrial, monumental and port structures date back to the third century AD (Chia and Mokhtar 2011). The next chronological example of early historical walled city is Oc-èo pertaining to the Funan polity (first to twelfth centuries AD), which Bourdonneau has reinterpreted as an early trading city displaying Indian influence in its structuring and prefiguring the typical Khmer city model with its geometric cosmological plan (Bourdonneau 2007, pp. 122–23).

One may argue that as early as the late prehistoric period, along with the development of long-distance exchanges, the "moated-settlement tradition" evolved in Mainland Southeast Asia by integrating foreign influences; concomitantly, in maritime Southeast Asia, analogous types of settlements started to display South Asian/Indic urban traits. The overall configuration of Khao Sam Kaeo bears elements heralding those found in much later maritime city-states that thrived along the

fringes of the South China Sea, like Pasai, Banten, Malacca, Ayutthaya, etc. Khao Sam Kaeo shares with these port-cities a cosmopolitan topography marked by walls. As for their internal organization, Reid (1993, pp. 78–79) specifies that historical port-cities all had some "degree of cosmic order at their core, which always risked being completely overwhelmed by the chaotic influx of people attracted at times of prosperity[; …] only the royal citadel and adjacent public buildings were truly planned, while outside settlements clustered irregularly around markets, waterways, and the compounds of powerful patrons". Miksic (2000, pp. 118–19), on the other hand, completes this picture adding that in reality, each "heterogenetic" city (trading cities) had a distinct trajectory with unique social, political and economic configurations. These particular configurations specific to each trading polity's trajectory prevent us from elaborating a narrow definition and leaves room for flexibility. Khao Sam Kaeo is plausibly an early representative example of this tradition of "heterogenetic cities". Historical accounts cited by Reid (1988, pp. 101–3) suggest that these cities patronized experts in the arts and crafts coming from various regions. Such a situation mirrors what spatial and technological reconstructions evidence at Khao Sam Kaeo. Like in later trading ports, highly specialized industries were attached to compounds, implementing advanced technologies to produce prized products, several of which were part of the symbolic assemblage shared by maritime Southeast Asian elites. The technological reconstruction of these industries, which produced prized objects such as some stone ornaments and specific ceramics, has allowed us to characterize their socio-political environment and their evolution.

4. Maritime Southeast Asian Integrated Sphere: Evidence from Industries

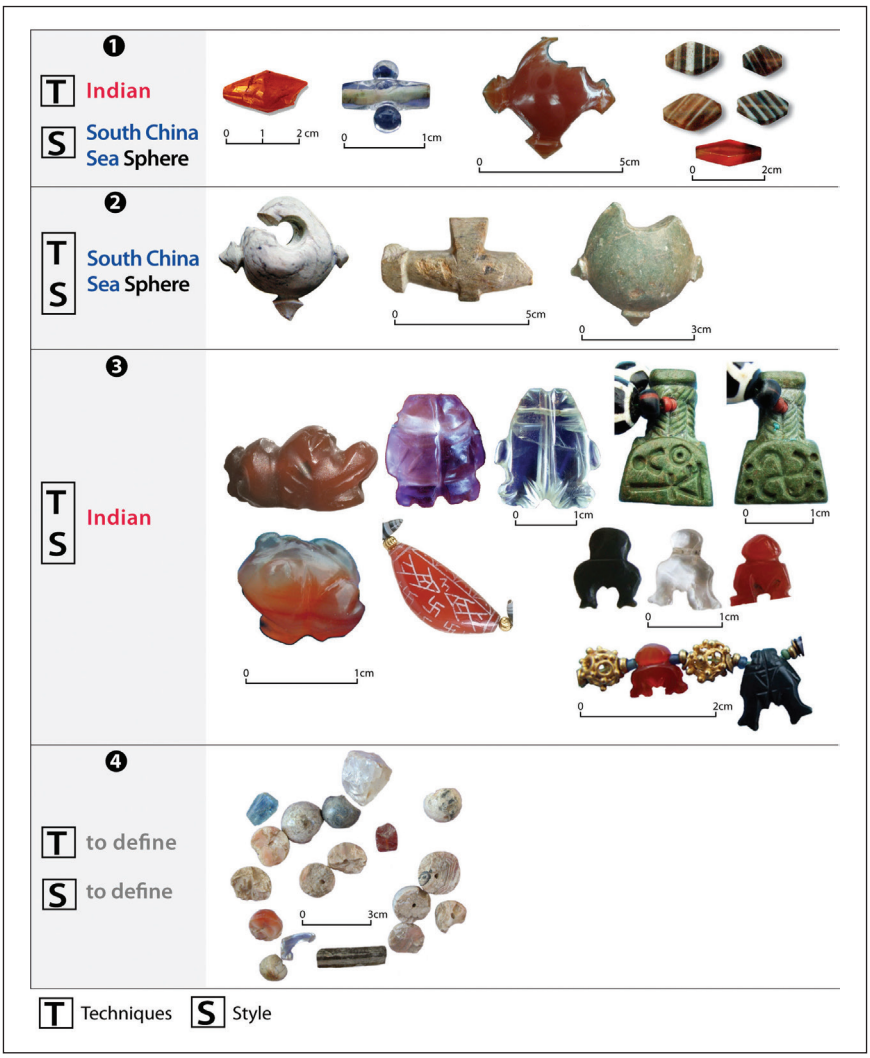
Amongst the set of items shared in maritime Southeast Asia, some circulated prior to the connection with South Asian networks, such as the Dong Son drums from north Vietnam/Southern China (Calo 2014) or the *lingling'o* nephrite artefacts (Hung et al. 2007; Hung and Bellwood 2010) or hard stone ornaments (Bellina 2007); those support

the view of an active and interconnected pre-existing prehistoric exchange network in the South China Sea with shared symbolic and cultural lexicon.

From the connection to South Asian and Chinese networks by the mid-first millennium BC onwards, we find a proliferation of production centres in the Kra Isthmus in the Thai–Malay peninsula. This proliferation is to such an extent that we can virtually talk of an "industrial specialization" of this region. The analysis of the distribution of ornaments crafted in these production centres, such as Khao Sam Kaeo, Phu Khao Thong and Khao Sek, is underway and should eventually allow us to determine whether they were feeding different networks: peer polities and/or hinterland providing the goods needed for export? So far, the analysis of the production at Khao Sam Kaeo provided clues to characterize the types of production and its socio-political context, and to suggest its social destination. Four traditions or groups were identified based on morpho-technological criteria (see Figure 6.1):

1. Group 1 was produced in the southern part of the settlement, and consists of both finished and unfinished products. This type of production, combining Indian raw material, highly skilled Indian technologies implying several years of apprenticeship with South China Sea-related style, is the earliest type I have identified in Southeast Asia, beginning in the fourth century BCE and found in Central Thailand (Ban Don Ta Phet), South Vietnam (Sa Huynh sites) and Palawan in the Philippines (Tabon caves). I have hypothesized that this category of products may have been produced by Indian craftsmen (Bellina 2001, 2003, 2007, 2014).
2. Group 2 consists in artefacts made of nephrite and mica and only includes a small range of shapes: three *lingling'o* comparable to those from Sa Huynh sites in Vietnam such as Giong Ca Vo and Lai Nghi and sites in the Philippines, the bicephalous ornaments (Nguyen 1995; Reinecke and Nguyen 2009) and bracelets (excluding fragments and raw material)—a range reduced still further at Khao Sam Kaeo where most evidence consists only of production evidence and partially worked raw material. Like Group 1, Group 2 is characterized by a type of ornament shared

FIGURE 6.1



The Four Hard Stone Ornaments Groups Identified at Khao Sam Kaeo

Source: Author.

by South China Sea maritime communities but perhaps extending further northeast to include areas stretching to Taiwan (Lan-yu Island southeast of Taiwan). Specimens of this group are mainly found along with production waste on Hills 3 and 4.

3. Group 3 is an Indian-inspired South China Sea type of production, associating Indian-derived morphologies with highly skilled Indian technologies. The group comprises ubiquitous morphologies alongside a wide variety of figurines, some clearly associated with Brahmanical, Buddhist or Jain imagery (at this early period, those cannot be differentiated yet). This group is characterized by a wide range of morphologies inspired by South Asian imagery but developed to an extent not seen elsewhere in South Asia. Group 3 is found amidst other Indian or Indian-inspired materials on Hill 3. Given the expertise implemented in producing artefacts belonging to Group 3, I hypothesize that those were likely made by South Asian artisans or local artisans trained by South Asians. This group was also probably produced at a slightly later stage than Group 1. Even though some figurines belonging to Group 3, amongst which animals such as lions or tigers, tortoises, frogs, fish, etc., cannot be undeniably or uniquely related to Indian imagery, one notes their sudden appearance and diffusion in both South and Southeast Asia during the late centuries BC and early centuries CE. Group 3 was probably aimed at South China Sea network adapting Indian-inspired vocabulary on the site and in other Southeast Asian sites like in Ban Don Ta Phet in Central Thailand. This "Indianized South China Sea repertoire" differs in many respects from what is found in coeval South Asian contexts. Indeed, as noted above, Group 3 associates a vast range of morphologies, some of them very rare or absent in South Asia itself, with production of such a high quality that is infrequent in South Asia.
4. Group 4 can hardly be described in detail as it suffers from the small number of specimens and from a lack of secured context, which was significantly disturbed by looting activities. It is difficult to say whether this type of production results from the transfer of Indian mass-production techniques or if it was inherited from a local tradition exemplified by polished axes occurring frequently in the region. The latter option sounds less plausible as the few beads which I have encountered in the region were made of soft stone or shell. Made on Hill 4 and found amongst

> Han material, this lower-quality type of production did not require great skill. It is also the latest group produced on the site since the Han material dates it at best from the late third century AD.

The first three groups have been interpreted as productions made-to-order by artisans patronized by trading elites. Attached specialization involves the manufacturing of restricted goods mostly aimed at elite patron consumption and redistribution through gifts; craftsmen's subsistence was supported partially or wholly by the sponsor. This kind of specialization develops in complex societies and results from the elite's desire to control both the production and the distribution of political currency used for legitimization, alliance-construction strategies and stabilization of authority. Because of the control exerted by the elites and the dependence of the attached specialists on them, the workshops were expected to be found in the vicinity of the elite habitation such as in a major regional centre (Brumfield and Earle 1987). Extrapolating from later historical sources, Khao Sam Kaeo industries with what seems to be made-to-order ornaments production appears to correspond to this model indeed. So far, no production has been recovered outside its boundaries (i.e. walls or embankments). Craft specialists are not dispersed in the region but are concentrated within well-delimited parts of the settlement. Historical accounts show that large cities of the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries AD displayed socio-professional quarters each dedicated to a specialized craftsmanship. This concentration can be explained by the high demand that we would expect in the context of large urban centres, because those were nodes concentrating both local and international trading routes, and also because the wealthiest consumers, the royal courts and the merchants were also found there. Urban production centres continued to display this organization into the nineteenth century in Southeast Asian cities, such as Batavia and Surabaya, where artisans as well as communities of foreign traders continued to live in their specialist quarters or "kampung" (Reid 1988, pp. 101–13). Except perhaps in the case of Group 4, whose destination could not be determined, ornaments produced at Khao Sam Kaeo seem to satisfy specific, well-defined demands for very fine quality, high-skilled materials whose style is specific to a

"South China Sea-network". Was this demand exclusive for "royal" courts and merchant-aristocrats? If so, were they exerting some sort of control over the production? It is difficult to answer this question with the data at hand. Craft systems' socio-political environment and their evolution in relation to trade is an under-investigated topic of archaeological research in Southeast Asia, the only exception being the systematic study carried out in the historical chiefdoms of the Philippines by Laura L. Junker (1999). Even for major historical maritime-trading polities such as Śrīvijaya, Champa or Malacca, archaeological data is absent. Allusions to the socioeconomic and political context in which craft specialists operated can be found in much later textual sources or in even more recent ethnographic descriptions. The latter mostly relates to patronized specialists. Ethnohistorical sources and archaeological researches of the political economy of Philippines chiefdoms show that "political currency" was generated through alliance-structures as well as through the sponsorship of artisans specializing in the production of luxury goods. Historical accounts relate how, in the case of such other high-value industries as those of the silversmith and goldsmith, shops were not stocked with ready-made ware. William Dampier (1651–1715) observed that the artisans' reluctance to accumulate a large stock was explained by the risk of burglary on the one hand, and of using expensive raw materials without a secure commission on the other (Reid 1988, pp. 101–3). This state of affairs may have applied to artisans working other precious materials such as exotic hard stone ornaments. At Khao Sam Kaeo, no stock (of finished products) was recovered or reported neither in or near the workshops, or anywhere on the site. Finished products were found isolated (i.e. not as a group).

How to interpret this commissioned work in socio-political terms? The production system probably contributed to the political legitimization of the trading elite, whether a ruler or a leading class. At Khao Sam Kaeo and most likely also in other port-cities yet to excavate, industrial systems probably participated in stabilizing the political position in relation to three different types of emulation. The first emulation was probably internal and was generated by the diverse

communities or clans of local and foreign traders, craftsmen or religious specialists staying more or less temporarily in port-cities. Those groups were probably well aware of the novelties available in other port-cities and may have put more pressure on the port-city elite to remain up-to-date.

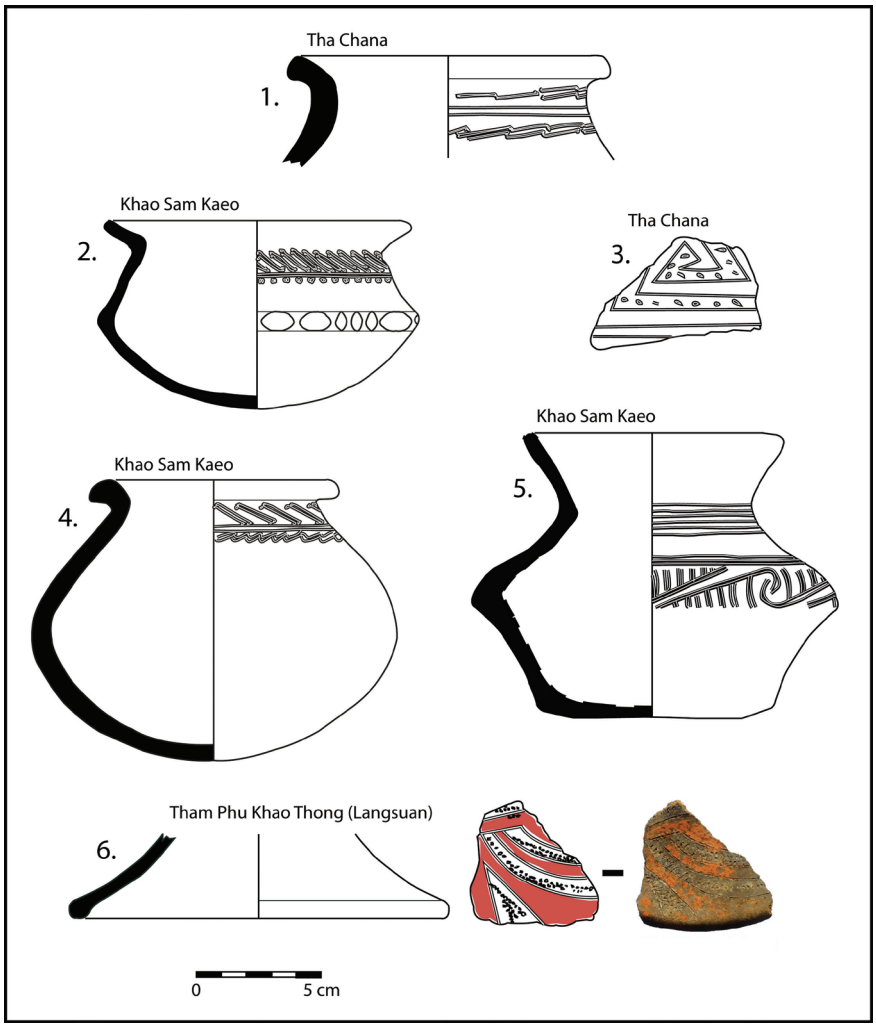
The second emulation came from the need to maintain good relationships with other more volatile societies of different socio-political organization, be they seafaring populations or collectors of raw materials inhabiting the forested interior linked to the port-city—populations with whom they developed inter-dependant relationships. These more volatile societies had to stay in the pyramidal social construction as they were vital for the attractiveness of the trading polity and thus the power of its leader.

The third challenge was probably exerted by other societies of similar rank, such as other coastal trading polities whom they were competing with. I believe that some sort of "jousts of prestige" between trading elites took place in the context of competing trading polities. To what extent did those competitions encouraged excellence by pushing the limits of expertise (technologies)? This emulation through possible contests-like interactions for gaining and maintaining prestige might also have contributed to disseminating technologies, complex knowledge and cultural features amidst coastal urban elites. Such processes could have played a significant role in the transfer of exogenous cultural traits. However, the sequence of cultural exchanges between Indic and South China Sea sphere that this kind of stone ornament production revealed is that exogenous traits were exaggerated, be they technical or iconographic. Competing elites from early trading polities over-emphasized the attributes of "otherness" deemed to be sophisticated. The social identity of trading populations across the South China Sea rested on the sublimation of what seem to be no longer South Asian cultural traits. Paralleling Greek models exaggerated in the Roman world, the "more Indian than Indian" cultural traits were synonym of excellence. The evolution of these industries and the socio-political strategies they served show how the "otherness" was handled in the construction of social identity. Such characteristic in the process of cultural exchange has also been attested in later historical periods in the realm of Khmer

architecture (Dagens 2005, 2009), as well as in urbanism at Oc eo (Bourdonneau 2007) and may thus represent some sort of recurrent pattern throughout the region.

Let us now look briefly at another hybrid industry whose stylistic lexicon is shared by South China Sea networks: the Sa Huynh-Kalanay types of ceramics. What does this industry tell us on the cultural sequence and the socio-political strategies? Aude Favereau (2014, 2015; Favereau and Bellina 2016) carries out a comparative study of Sa Huynh-Kalanay type of ceramics found in the Thai–Malay peninsula and along the shores of the South China Sea. One difficulty arising from its hazy chronological sequence is the lack of absolute dating. Typical of the Metal Age, this complex seems to decline after the early centuries AD in the Peninsula, but its peculiar style may have survived longer in the Philippines (Favereau, personal communication). In the Peninsula, most of these decorated ceramics relate to local technological traditions within which they seem to constantly represent a minority group. Though their decorative repertoire displays an "air de famille", they also show distinctive traits (see Figure 6.2). These ceramics were found in an urban context in the southern part of Khao Sam Kaeo as well as in Tha Chana, another early trading polity of the Peninsula that have not yet been investigated because of their non-secure context; but they were also found in coastal cave sites as part of mortuary goods such as in Tham Tuay caves and in the recently excavated coastal caves of Phu Khao Thong (Langsuan). Their use was most likely exclusive and served special occasions. Favereau observes their great diversity within the Peninsula. This diversity may indicate a small-scale production that was the result of occasional demand. Favereau's technological reconstruction led her to conclude that some were locally produced with local techniques, others were locally produced with imported techniques whilst a small group was imported. All display a common style and tend to be sporadic. Who ordered these productions amongst whose producers? Although it is still premature to answer this question at this stage, one may hypothesize that these productions were commissioned to experienced craftsmen possibly staying in commercially active nodes.

FIGURE 6.2



Sa Huynh-type of Ware from the Thai-Malay Peninsula

Source: Drawing and photos by Aude Favereau.

It is also still unclear who the groups that referred to this stylistic repertoire were. Were there natives of the peninsula who adopted a foreign style? Were there also groups coming from the Philippines from where

this style likely originated, or from various regions of the South China Sea? This would conform well with G. Benjamin's (1987) hypothesis. Benjamin argues that the ancient settling in the Kra Isthmus area was the result of sea-going populations intermarrying with local people. These seafarers were interested in trade and in particular in the opportunities offered by trans-peninsular routes. They would have come directly from the Philippines rather than through Indonesia (Benjamin 1987, p. 131) and would have been responsible for the remains of archaic forms of Austronesian lexical elements. Some small-scale Sa Huynh-Kalanay type of productions also found in the funerary site of Ho Diem in Vietnam (Yamagata 2008, 2012), would support this view. These groups may relate to very mobile sea populations that some ethnographic accounts show to have been guardians of sea lanes, collectors of sea products and involved in inter-island trade (Bellina, Epinal, and Favereau 2012). In the Malay context, they were part of the port-cities maritime hinterland, i.e. part of the polity social structure (Andaya 2008).

Within the Peninsula, groups of different socioeconomic structure belonging to different contexts may have referred to this lexicon. It is possible that some of the populations that ordered and used these pots, possibly made by craftsmen working in large settlements, may have been mobile populations living in a symbiotic relationship with complex coastal trading polities. Were those natives of the Peninsula that became economically specialized or were they migrants attracted by trade and the openings of the trans-peninsular routes? Did sea-going elites and port-cities trading elites came to share similar tokens of power? These are questions that further research will hopefully help clarify.

5. Conclusion

The study of settlements and crafts help us formulate the hypothesis of a late prehistoric maritime Southeast Asian integration area where common socio-political practices were elaborated. I believe that the late prehistoric period and the entrance of the region into a wider trans-Asiatic network corresponds to the elaboration of an urban tradition

that prefigures the later port-cities that thrived across the South China Sea. In this urban tradition, the elites may have referred to regional as well as Indian models. They chose to materialize their power with the erection of walls and the construction of quarters to which were attached highly specialized artisans, most likely working under their patronage to produce political currency and means of legitimization. These productions evolved in time, eventually integrating foreign elements that were sublimated and enhanced when deemed to be most sophisticated. A core characteristic of this South China Sea network culture is its capacity to adopt and exaggerate any foreign innovations serving socio-political strategies. This behaviour has been emphasized before by researchers such as Oliver Wolters (1999), thus suggesting a continuity in cultural practices.

Various groups from the Peninsula and the South China Sea (possibly from the Philippines, Indonesia and coastal Vietnam) participated in this network. At that time, some of them may have become assimilated to the maritime world and become socioeconomically specialized. The development of the trans-Asiatic network and of trading nodes that structured it may have opened a range of opportunities for groups to exploit economic niches, whether as guardians of sea lanes, or as gatherers of raw materials, or as traders. To what extent the specialists in those trading cities oriented their production to meet the elites' needs for alliance, thus leading to a harmonization of tastes or codes amongst the various groups involved, is a question future research will hopefully help us to answer.

As a whole, my preliminary research postulates the plausibility of a late prehistoric maritime Southeast Asia integration, where trading nodes would have been cradles for some early socio-political practices that further developed over time. The control by the trading elites of the legitimizing means of production in the landscape or in centres of craftsmanship is at the heart of these socio-political practices.

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