

Abbreviations

BEFEO	<i>Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient</i>
BKI	<i>Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indie</i>
JMBRAS	<i>Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
JSBRAS	<i>Journal of the Singapore Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
JSEAS	<i>Journal of Southeast Asian Studies</i>
KITLV	<i>Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal, Land- en Volkenkunde</i>
TAG	<i>Tijdschrift van het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundige Genootschap</i>
TBB	<i>Tijdschrift voor het Binnenlandsch Bestuur</i>
TBG	<i>Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde</i>
VBC	<i>Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap</i>

INTRODUCTION

Denys Lombard

The initiative undertaken by the advisory board of *Indonesia*, at Jim Siegel's suggestion, to devote its first issue of 1994 to a selection of articles drawn from the *Archipel* journal is certainly praiseworthy. At any rate, all students of the archipelago will be grateful for such an initiative. . . .

Started in Jakarta in the spring of 1971, six years after *Indonesia*, by a small group of French Indonesianists (who since then have been working mostly in Paris) the journal *Archipel* has regularly been publishing two issues each year, and has reached its 47th issue. In it one finds a resolve to be interdisciplinary, as well as an ear for the most diverse "research echoes." Nonetheless, if any good French Indonesianist knows that he must "practice" *Indonesia*, conversely it seems that *Archipel* still is casting a somewhat odd shadow in America. At best, it is only accepted in small doses. . . .

A given vision of Southeastern Asia actually leads one to think that only the Netherlands was able to develop a knowledge of their Indies; just as the English did of theirs (or again the French of Indochina). This approach, induced by the colonial partitioning which slowly took place after the Congress of Vienna (1815), does not take account of the fact that the Indies were actually accessible to any navigator from Europe, and that there exist often considerable sources written in languages other than those of the "colonizer," be it Portuguese, German, or French. The first Frenchmen who sailed toward the Archipelago in order to buy pepper reached Tiku, on the western coast of Sumatra in 1529 (that is to say, 67 years before de Houtman reached Banten), and they have left us an exquisite account from that first expedition.¹ Other travels followed, individual or collective ones, which have offered us a whole series of equally valuable eyewitness accounts.²

As for scientific "Indology," it was equally precocious in France. If China had attracted missionaries' attention since the 17th century, and that of the "philosophes" since the start

¹ Published by Ch. Scheffer. *Discours de la navigation de Jean et Raoul Parmentier* (Paris, 1883; reprint, Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1971).

² See D. Lombard, "Voyageurs français dans l'Archipel insulindien, XVII^e, XVIII^e, et XIX^e s." in *Archipel* 1 (1971): 141-68.

of the 18th, the “Malay tongue” was considered important enough to be included among the program of the Ecole des Langues Orientales Vivantes ever since its foundation in Paris in 1796. The Chair actually remained empty until 1840, the date of Edouard Dulaurier’s nomination,³ but ever since then instruction has been actively maintained up to present times, thanks to a succession of distinguished orientalist, such as l’Abbé Favre, author of the first large Malay-French Dictionary (1876), of Antoine Cabaton, the author of a dictionary of the Cham language, and also of Pierre Labrousse, author of the recent General Indonesian-French Dictionary (1984), who collaborated in this collection. As for the Ecole Française d’Extrême Orient (EFEO), founded in Saigon in 1898, though of course it was mainly interested in Vietnamese and Khmer cultures, it nevertheless sent missions to Java (including that of Paul Mus, who published in 1935 his own two large volumes on Borobudur), and it also opened in Jakarta, in 1955, a permanent position, which the epigraphist Louis-Charles Damais filled until 1966.

Moreover, there is a third register also explaining the deep and ancient interest of the French regarding the Indies, and that’s the one ruled by the imaginary. From very early on, the exotic novel genre had transported all over Europe—and in France particularly—an entire set of oriental and far eastern clichés, and it just so happens that since the start of the 19th century, the “Malay pirate” appears throughout a whole range of “seafaring novels” as one of the mythical figures haunting perilous Asia.⁴ The visit to Paris by the painter Raden Saleh in 1848 made many people curious, and a short while later, the Netherlands-Indies pavilions at the great universal or colonial *Expositions* (1878, 1889, 1931) drew crowds thanks to their strange objects and their ballet corps. During the 1889 fair, the *gamelan* music accompanying the Javanese female dancers made a strong impression on Debussy, and a wall-paper was produced on which the aforementioned dancers were represented right next to the Eiffel Tower (which had been inaugurated that very same year).

There is, therefore, nothing surprising in the fact that a small group of Frenchmen, brought by chance to live and to meet in Indonesia, should have thought at the beginning of the 1970s of starting a journal which would reflect their common interest, and which would be, at first, printed in Bandung. Since then, the group has grown and the contributions have become diverse, especially since, upon returning to Paris, the journal’s three founders, P. Labrousse, D. Lombard, and Ch. Pelras have been teaching (at the Ecole des Langues Orientales, INALCO, and at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, EHESS), and have been leading research teams.

From among the rather considerable amount of writings thus produced during the past twenty-three years, ten articles have been selected here, unavoidably in an arbitrary way, but chosen mostly in function of the diversity they might evoke.

The first three articles illustrate, punctually, the *diversity of documents* that are possible. Jacques Dumarçay (EFEO), an expert architect who spent most of his career in Angkor (and who is now there again to resume interrupted work) was working in Java during the whole time Cambodia remained “closed.” He notably participated in the works of restoration in Borobudur and at the Candi Sewu, and he tells us here, on the basis of a few bas-reliefs of

³ See Ed. Dulaurier, *Mémoire, lettres et rapports relatifs au cours de langue malaye et javanaise fait à la Bibliothèque royale pendant les années 1840–41, 1841–42 et à deux voyages littéraires entrepris en Angleterre* (Paris: Benjamin Duprat, 1843).

⁴ See D. Lombard, “Aux origines du thème du ‘pirate malais’” in *Rêver l’Asie, Exotisme et littérature coloniale aux Indes, en Indochine et en Insulinde*, ed. D. Lombard, C. Champion and H. Chambert-Loir (Paris: EHESS, 1983), pp. 153–66.

the Prambanan, about the history of carpentry in Java. **Jacques Leclerc**, a researcher at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS), has devoted himself to the history of the Sukarno epoch; he takes here as an iconological corpus the set of postage stamps issued during that period, and uses it to analyze its underlying political discourse. **Marcel Bonneff**, a Javanologist, has lived for a long time in Yogyakarta (as a teacher in Gajah Mada), then in Jakarta (where he currently represents the EFEO). His text, which reconstructs the history of a rather non-conformist Javanese prince from the turn of the century, is included here to exemplify the virtues of biographical studies. Prosopography, which is used systematically in European (and Chinese) studies deserves to be utilized all the more in Indonesia.

The following three articles are properly "historical." Basing themselves on the study of both texts and sites, they aim to reestablish the ancient importance of *routes* and *networks*, all too often obscured by too static a view of "ethnicities." **Henri Chambert-Loir** (EFEO) has been interested above all in Malay manuscripts—as much in their philological and literary aspects as in their historical. The Western sources and the archeological evidence allow him in the main to reconstitute here the role of the Bima sultanate, which until the 19th century was an important relay station on the routes of greater eastern Indonesia. **Claude Guillot** taught in Yogya for a long time, before also joining the CNRS. As a historian he first devoted himself to the history of Christianity in Java, then to the history of the Banten sultanate, which he studies through the European accounts, and by way of digs conducted in collaboration with the Indonesian Archeological Service. He presents to us here a detailed description of the city of Banten, a short time before its fall; it was then a great international crossroads and "the most important urban center of the Archipelago." **Claudine Salmon** (CNRS) and **Denys Lombard** (EHESS/EFEO), both Indonesianists and Sinologists, have notably studied the history of Indonesia's Chinese communities, and they have published a monograph on Chinese temples in Jakarta that takes into account the wealth of epigraphic texts. They reconsider here the ancient relations existing between Chinese and Islamic cultures, which leads them somewhat to modify the point of view according to which all Chinese people of the South China Seas constitute no more than a "foreign body" (an error willingly made by political scientists . . .).

The next two articles obviously are the accomplishment of "ethnologists" used to working "on location," in regions wherein one could assume the past to be less promising than in Java; but as a matter of fact, just as in the three preceding ones, they take into account the entire historical past, and they could stand for that kind of *historical anthropology* through which the *Archipel* group could also define itself. **Christian Pelras** (CNRS), who went on long missions to the Archipelago, notably in Sulawesi and on the Malay Peninsula, has published varied studies of the Bugis; here, he expounds his point of view on the delicate question of the "Islamization" of the southern Celebes. Before joining the CNRS also as an ethnologist, **Bernard Sellato** spent long months in Borneo as a geologist; from his prior training he has retained a deep sense of "strata," and he examines here societies from the center of Kalimantan, not as an aggregate of "ethnic groups," but as the product of a historical process just as complex and exciting as in the case of Javanese, Normans, or Texans.

The last two articles bear on what is called by convention the "contemporary period," that is to say on the "New Order," but both scholars, as much as possible, attempt to take into account the full *weight of the past*. **Pierre Labrousse** (INALCO), already mentioned, is mostly known for his lexicography studies, but he has also given *Archipel* relevant analyses of the present, and he is preparing an extensive study of the "looks" the French have cast upon Indonesia over time. He is studying here the process of rehabilitation the memory of

Sukarno has undergone, in particular between 1978 and 1981. François Raillon (CNRS) was first interested in the student movements following 1965; he has since been regularly observing the evolution of the Indonesian political conjuncture, and deals here with the delicate relations that have always existed between the authorities and Muslim milieus.

Is there, finally, some specificity which would allow us to tie together all these articles extracted from *Archipel*? Doubtless, it is not up to the archipelagist himself to pronounce on this matter, but up to the reader, when he has finished decrypting these ten "looks" which have been deliberately chosen to be different.

From a personal point of view, there seems to exist among all these texts a family resemblance, and here are, for the taking, a couple of rather simple formulas: a) "Everything is a source" (the bas-reliefs of Prambanan to the same extent as the postage stamps from the Sukarno period . . .); and b) "The present cannot be explained without the past," which is another way of referring to the Braudelian "longue durée," as well as to the "historical anthropology" practiced at the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales*.

The times are ripe for the expansion of "cross-studies." About ten years ago, a selection of thirteen articles also drawn from *Archipel* were put into Indonesian, and printed in Indonesia by the publishing house Sinar Harapan.⁵ More recently, Cornell University's Southeast Asia Program took the initiative in producing in English a selection of Japanese studies on the Archipelago.

"To each one's own Indonesia" (or Japan, or United States, or France . . .). These translating projects which grant a privilege to the "perspective" rather than to the object itself, are extremely precious inasmuch as they aim at unmasking the a priori, and introduce that "triangulation" which alone will enable an exact mapping of the field.

One might perhaps attain some day a true "trigonometrical anthropology," with more freedom from these constraining "cultural gravitational forces" which are still affecting the field. At any rate, the present translation goes in that direction, and those who made it possible must be thanked for it one more time.

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⁵ *Citra Masyarakat Indonesia* (Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1983), 281 pp.