

the title is not accomplished. Nevertheless, *Nomadism in South Asia* constitutes a collection of important articles gathered in one volume; while some classical articles are to be found, others are missing. More interesting than some of the out-dated case studies are the recent contributions by Vasant Saberwal and Arun Agrawal. In the introductory chapter a more up-to-date overview would have enriched the volume tremendously, as the topic of mobility, migration, and nomadism is still one in which substantial empirical fieldwork is done. The attention drawn to the theme by this volume should challenge young scholars and encourage further activities in the field.

Hermann Kreutzmann

MICHEL JACQ-HERGOUALC'H, *The Malay Peninsula. Crossroads of the Maritime Silk Road (100 BC-1300 AD)*. (Handbook of Oriental Studies, Section 3, Volume 13). Leiden: Brill, 2002. XXXV, 607 pages, 129 pages of ill., plans and maps, € 210.00 ISBN 90-04-11973-6

HIRAM WOODWARD, *The Art and Architecture of Thailand. From Prehistoric Times Through the Thirteenth Century*. (Handbook of Oriental Studies, Section 3, Volume 14). Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003. XIX, 277 pages, 94 pages of ill. and maps, € 112.00 ISBN 90-04-12137-4

Two new volumes on Southeast Asia have been published in the prestigious series "Handbuch der Orientalistik", and if not all their predecessors succeeded in meeting the standards a reader may expect from a handbook, these two volumes definitely do. Indeed, both are up-to-date, comprehensive and stock-taking contributions in their respective fields. In his book, Jacq-Hergoualc'h, who has been doing research on his subject for almost twenty years, re-examines the position of the Malay Peninsula, and more particularly the land routes across it, within the network of trade routes from the Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal to the Gulf of Thailand and the South China Sea. Starting with general remarks on the physical geography of the region, the study explores the various possible routes, focusing on ports and trans-shipment centres from the time of the first contacts with India to the end of the 13th century when, under the impact of Chinese and Muslim traders, the structure of the trade was once more reconfigured. The identification and dating of the port sites is based mainly on archaeological evidence such as edificial remains, artifacts, coins, inscriptions and, in a few rare cases, shipwrecks. Literary evidence is supplied by the various Chinese reports. The material remains and especially artifacts are exhaustively documented on more than 200 pages of illustrations.

The various chapters are arranged in chronological order and divided again regionally: the first chapter deals with Panpan and Chaiya on the east coast of the Peninsula where the oldest Hindu and Buddhist images were found (5th–8th centuries), followed by their counterpart Langkasuka on the west coast. Jiecha (South Kedah) rose to prominence in the course of the 7th–8th centuries. At that

time, the influence of Srivijaya began to be felt as well. The 9th century then becomes a watershed in the economic history, as it marks the beginning of a commercial boom characterized by a notable increase in goods transported and merchants or trading communities participating. On the Malay Peninsula, this resulted in the rise of further emporia like Tambralinga or Satingpra.

Having comprehensively presented and carefully re-assessed the evidence, Jacq-Hergoualc'h proposes two conclusions. The first is that traders rarely used the land routes across the Malay Peninsula; rather, they circumnavigated it. Given the difficulties of pre-modern land transport combined with the challenges posed by the topography of the region – steep hills, dense jungles and narrow footpaths or rapid flowing rivers – this conclusion would not seem to require further justification. The second conclusion, in contrast, appears less convincing, as it more or less denies the importance of the Srivijayan empire for the region. Here, Jacq-Hergoualc'h may have become a prisoner of his own methodology. In an empirical-positivist manner, he assumed trading activities only where material evidence could be found. Deriving an argument *ex silentio* is always dangerous, as it may easily become invalidated by any chance find, e.g. of an early image or an inscription. This approach is accompanied by an almost complete defiance of any theoretical framework for trade, anthropological, economic or whatever. But a trader or captain going to sea in the 5th century, for instance, did have a rational choice: He could seek protection from the rulers of Srivijaya because the taxes they levied were lower than what he would have had to pay to a local ruler, quite apart from running the risk of being raided at sea. This scenario would lead to the picture that trade across the peninsula remained insignificant as long as a strong centre – be it at Srivijaya, Jambi or elsewhere – successfully suppressed political competitors and offered harbours for shelter and exchange against reasonable duties. Only when the power of the centre waned, as happened with Srivijaya from the 9th century onwards, had sea traders to decide afresh how to transport their goods cheaply and safely. Seen in this light, Srivijayan influence over the Malay Peninsula and the evidence for trans-peninsular trade compiled by Jacq-Hergoualc'h seem perfectly compatible.

Another, albeit minor, shortcoming of the book are the sections in which the author goes beyond his main subject and talks about the trade in the Bay of Bengal in order to put his research on the Peninsula into perspective. The role played by Sri Lankan ports, for instance, is taken into account (pp. 275–280), but recent excavations have shown that the ports on the south coast of the island, most notably Godavaya, may have been of greater importance for maritime trade than the island's northwestern port of Mantai. More astonishing is the almost complete omission of Sumatra, as its northern tip must certainly have served as a landmark for captains sailing towards the Malacca Straits and the Peninsula. Rich finds of ceramics at Kota Cina, for instance, show that this place apparently served as an important port of call and emporium by the 10th century at the latest.

These quibbles apart, it has to be acknowledged that Jacq-Hergoualc'h has tackled the complex problem with great prudence and thoroughness. He has produced a handbook in the best sense which will doubtless serve Southeast Asianists and trade historians alike as a starting point and reference guide in years to come.

An equally positive judgment can be passed as regards Woodward's volume on the art and architecture of Thailand, which is in a way complementary to the one discussed above and also embodies the fruits of several years of research in the field. The book is divided into four chronological sections. It starts with a chapter on prehistoric art, including pottery, rock paintings and a few bronzes. The next part covers the first millennium, from the earliest Indian influences to the culmination of the art of Dvaravati. The following period between the 10th century and c. 1220 AD is characterized by the dominance of the Khmers, which in turn paved the way for the development of regional styles in northern and central Thailand. These are dealt with in the last section entitled "Creating a New Order". Again, the artifacts referred to in the text are fully documented in almost 100 illustrations at the end of the book. A wide range of pieces from collections in both Thailand and America makes it certain that the handbook will gain the status of a first-hand reference volume.

Tilman Frasch

JOHN RICHARD BOWEN, *Islam, Law and Equality in Indonesia. An Anthropology of Public Reasoning*. Cambridge (UK) and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003. XVI, 289 pages, ill., general tables, maps, £ 18.99. ISBN 0-521-53189-6

In the search for an essentialized "true" Islam, Islamic legal trends were, in the past, frequently portrayed in a black or white manner. All too often, the main concern was the daily practice of Muslims, asking whether it could be considered "legal" in respect of an abstract notion of Islamic legal standards. In Indonesian Islamic studies, such an approach can be observed ever since the 19th century when scholars such as Solomon Keyzer (1823–1868), LWC van den Berg (1845–1927), Carel F Winter (1799–1859), and Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936) established the field.

Today's research on Islam in Indonesia requires a more complex and sophisticated approach, based on an inner understanding of the dynamics of Indonesian society, and respectful of the object of study. With his book *Islam, Law and Equality in Indonesia* John R. Bowen deserves to be considered one of the pioneers of such an approach.

The book is organised in three parts. In Part 1, the main thematic perspective is developed, the focus being on "village repertoires". Here, the local traditions are mapped out in a classical anthropological manner, namely bottom-up. The grassroot level and its plural cultural fabric are portrayed as being of central