

of battles fought on water, the images that he conjures up sit more closely with accounts of Salmis or even Lepanto than any later naval engagements in which armaments and manoeuvrability played a vital role. To the extent the bas-reliefs have a story to tell, it is of the boats of rival armies seeking to join battle alongside each other, with the hope of each boat's crew that it could board and overcome its opponents.

Following his discussion of accessories and camp followers, the author offers a tightly formulated 'conclusion' reinforcing his arguments for the paramount importance of the infantry and the uniquely Khmer character of the army. But he does more, for he allows his imagination, soundly based on what he has written and analysed previously, to give us a picture of how he believes the army appeared as it marched off to battle. It is a vision of colour and noise, of a 'shimmering multitude of parasols, standards and insignia', of bells and strummed instruments and 'the booming gong'. As he writes, 'what a din that must have made!'

Specialist in character though this book undoubtedly is, its appearance will be welcomed by all those for whom a visit to Angkor is more than an occasion for a brief, if wondrous, excursion. The author is to be commended for his contribution to our greater understanding of a society that still remains so elusive in many ways.

Milton Osborne

Joyce Clark, ed., *Bayon: New perspectives*. Contributors: Ang Choulean, Olivier Cunin, Claude Jacques, T.S. Maxwell, Vittorio Roveda, Anne-Valérie Schweyer, Peter D. Sharrock, Michael Vickery, and Hiram Woodward. Bangkok, River Books, 2007, ix+409 pp., numerous colour and b/w ills, bibliography, glossaries, index.

Last of the 'temple-mountains' built at Angkor, the Bayon embodies several centuries of architectural tradition – even if borrowings from Angkor Wat, the earlier twelfth century state temple, are the most evident. In addition, the Bayon is the first and only Buddhist Khmer state temple and, contrary to Borobudur (which is in a way its Javanese counterpart), it was from the beginning conceived and built as a Buddhist monument. That, however, in the Angkorean context, does not imply structural differences with Brahmanistic monuments, but signifies another old Khmer tradition most probably nourished by fresh ideas derived from India around the end of the eleventh century, perhaps even later (but definitely before the exodus from India of Buddhist theologians alluded to by Tāranātha, the Tibetan historian). It is on such a double architectural and ideological basis that the Bayon was 'invented' by individual or numerous artists and theologians from the retinue of Jayavarman VII, bearing in mind that theology and political science were there closely linked, and also remembering that the initial construction was followed by one

or several revisions (to say nothing of post-Jayavarman VII avatars).

These various orientations determine the framework of any investigative study about the Bayon: one cannot avoid questioning traditions, inventions and revisions and it may better to deal with the several disciplinary fields involved separately. The present book is made up of ten papers (including a foreword and an introduction), which guarantees multiplicity. This being the case, not being the integrated study which was planned at the start (see the editor's preface), it looks very much like those *festschrifts* where each author deals with his own topic in his own way and with little regard to what may be found in the other papers. Internal cross references are few and connection between 'materialistic' and 'idealistic' (Vickery's terms) specialists is rarely evident. Thus one is surprised to see that nobody has told Vickery that the (so-called) Dufour ground plan of the Bayon is not to be taken as a reference: like all pre-Dumarçay Bayon ground plans, it is erroneous and marked by several oddities such as a supplementary but non-existent tower on the western side of the monument (it may be said in the defence of Vickery that the same Dufour plan illustrating the Bayon appears in a scholarly Angkor guidebook recently published in Bangkok and Geneva). Lastly, some topics are dealt with repeatedly in several papers and one looks in vain for at least a kind of integrative synthesis (e.g. about the face-towers or the so-called 'gallery passages', alias *kui*).

Hiram Woodward's foreword contains, as usual, stimulating suggestions (especially about Buddhist "layers" which may be identified). Michael Vickery's task in the 'Introduction' was more complicated, for he had to present the preceding research, to summarise in an integrated overview the other papers and to express his own ideas. For the past, the presentation is rapid and, as often with this book, work done in the 1960s (especially Dumarçay's) is overlooked, with the result indicated above with the Bayon ground plan. An excursus on the name of the Bayon could have been enhanced by the first mention of the Bayon in Europe found in the English edition (1864, v.II p.2) of Mouhot's diary (which is far more complete than the French one referred to here): known as *Prea sat Ling poun*, it meant, according to Mouhot, "the Pagoda where they play hide and seek." As regards the vexed problem of the certain Shaivite upsurge during the thirteenth century (notwithstanding Claude Jacques), the Jayavarman VIII hypothesis seems a little late for a phenomena which had seemingly quietened down by the time of Zhou Daguan's sojourn in Angkor. In any case, as I have related elsewhere, the Indian and sectarian origin of that violent fundamentalist but short-lived phenomenon is more likely than its attribution to a deliberate royal policy of one of Jayavarman VII's successors.

Claude Jacques, in 'The historical development of Khmer culture from the death of Sūryavarman II to the sixteenth century', expands on the theory he has

been developing for some years and which denies any decline at Angkor after the death of Jayavarman VII. To give it a 'materialistic' ground, he lengthens the construction period of the monuments of the so-called Bayon style, while attributing to the rule of Jayavarman VIII (in the second half of the thirteenth century) some specific changes brought to older monuments (Phimai, Baphuon, as well as Angkor Wat or Beng Mealea). However, archaeological and architectural evidence put forward are mere hypotheses, as is the replacement of the Buddha statue in the sanctum of the Bayon by a Harihara image, to say nothing of the interpretation of the notes of Zhou Daguan. Claude Jacques' paper ends with an excursus about the "gallery passages" or *kui*. On that point I must add that such temporary structures built with thin walls and light covering are most probably those 'provisional temples' (*balālaya*, *balagha*, etc., literally 'infant temples'), which in the Indian tradition are used to shelter the cult image (or a substitute for it) of a temple or chapel during repairs or under construction.

A.-V. Schweyer's paper, 'The confrontation of the Khmers and Chams in the Bayon period', starts with a tedious military history of Khmer-Cham relations between circa 1050 and Jayavarman VII, in the middle of which is inserted a short excursus on 'Khmer influence on Cham art'; however, the statues dealt with are testimonies of Khmer colonial art at the time of Jayavarman VII, while temples of Banhit reflect Khmer architecture of the late

tenth century more than of the twelfth. Dealing with the events of 1177, the author follows Vickery but with some curious arguments (Chams being excellent sailors, they do not need a Chinese guide, or as there is a good land route, why come via the Mekong and the Tonle Sap?). More interesting is the development dealing with the control of Champa by the Khmers during the reign of Jayavarman VII and the emphasis on the expression 'the 32 year war' applied to the period of Khmer occupation in Cham inscriptions.

As usual, T.S. Maxwell's paper, 'Religion of the time of Jayavarman VII', is a very stimulating one, even if one is inclined to differ on many points. It starts by a presentation of the coming of Indian religions to South-East Asia, interestingly but surprisingly leaving out reference to the numerous imported Indian Sanskrit texts, which are the backbone of Indian culture in South-East Asia. Some statements may be doubtful, such as the opposition of a southern Funan where Viṣṇu would have been predominant while the north was the field of the cult of Śiva, but he insists rightly on what he calls 'Hindu-Buddhist tendency' or 'coalescence', giving some good examples (e.g. Prasat Ampil Rolum and inscriptions K. 162–163). He could have added that Khmer architecture as a whole is non-sectarian and that the shift of a cult-place from one creed to another is easy and not rare (e.g. Bat Chum in the tenth century). Lastly, when dealing with the immediate background of Jayavarman VII, it would

have been better to have taken notice of the important Mahayanist temples built in the decades preceding his reign and where plenty of place is allowed for Brahmanic themes (e.g. Beng Mealea and the series of 'temples d'étapes' (staging-post temples) between Angkor and Prah Khan of Kompong Svay). After a confused presentation of the Bayon's 'short inscriptions', comes an excursus of several pages on the face towers. Maxwell seems inclined, like nineteenth century travellers, to look for their invention outside Cambodia, that is to say, in India, but where? It is not very clear. He establishes a dubious parallel between those faces applied to a tower's main body and Indian *śukanāsa* pediments which pertain to foreparts (and are exact counterparts of the numerous Khmer porch pediments). While leaving aside once more the textual background, Maxwell then emphasises in a footnote the idea of 'Southeast Asian voyagers visiting India and returning with useful elements of that culture', for which it would be good to be given at least some positive arguments. Regarding the short inscriptions, he elaborates on their role and on their absence in some places where images could have been installed, while not mentioning the problem of the date of their engraving and of their possible relative chronology. Then dealing with the gods they list, he extends some remarks made by Coedès in 1913 to suggest that the Buddha of the central sanctum of the Bayon is in fact the Hindu god Harihara. We have already seen that C. Jacques suggested that a Hari-

hara image *replaced* that of the Buddha at the time of Jayavarman VIII. Let us remember, however, that of the two goddesses whose presence in inscriptions leads to the creation of those hypothetic Harihara, one (Dharaṇī) is a common Buddhist deity, while the other (Pārvatī) is said in the *Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra* to be a future Buddha! Further on, Maxwell questions the rationale of worshipping numerous 'separate images of the same aspect of the same Buddha in a single temple'. Let us remember the more than one hundred Śivaliṅgas occupying each a chapel in the Phnom Bakheng temple at Angkor or are installed in the galleries of Bṛhadīśvara temple in Tanjore in South India. The same kind of remark may be made about what is said concerning the installation of a new image near an older one, a triviality in Cambodia as in India; this being the case, Maxwell well shows the Khmers' profound knowledge of Indian culture, knowledge which allows them to invent new interpretations for their own use. T.S. Maxwell appends to his paper a synchronistic edition and translation of all 'The short inscriptions of the Bayon and contemporary temples'. Though convenient, it is however difficult to use without going back to the more precise works of Coedès or Groslier.

Olivier Cunin covers the materialistic aspect of the temple but his paper 'The Bayon: an archaeological and architectural study', the longest of the book, has been little used by other authors. It is lavishly illustrated by numerous plans and cross-sections (most of them seem-

ingly based upon Dumarçay's), as well as useful axonometric or bird's eye view reconstructions. In its reconstruction of the outer gallery, Cunin proposes that it comprised eight face towers, using simultaneously some elements of such towers found in the 'Commaille heaps' and the Banteay Chmar model; the hypothesis is interesting, but remains to be verified by actual reconstruction of some, at least, of the supposed face towers. However, his most important contribution is to propose a rearrangement of the chronology of the construction work of the Bayon, a rearrangement based upon several criteria, among which and for the most part comprise the study of magnetic variation of sandstone by the University of Waseda petrology team. The result is a chronology more compact than Dumarçay's (especially concerning the third level); it seems as a whole quite convincing, even if some new findings may appear a little doubtful (e.g. concerning the gallery of the second level). Some remarks seem a little hasty (e.g. about the so-called library-like towers 50 and 51 and their relation to towers 19 and 20). This being the case, one may again deplore the fact that Peter S. Sharrock is, amongst the other authors, the only one who has applied an idealistic eye to the results of O. Cunin's very materialistic study.

The faces of the Bayon (and some other monuments) have often been dealt with, but the paper by Peter D. Sharrock, 'The mystery of the face towers', is welcome. It furnishes a fair review of the present state of the studies, gives

precise hints about possible connection with Nepal face stupas and lastly elaborates three interpretations: Hevajra, Vajradhāra and Vajrasattva. Hevajra is very popular, as shown by several bronze images and a single huge but dilapidated and dismembered statue found near the eastern gate of Angkor Thom. However, its multiple heads would make it unsuitable for face towers (this may or may not be so). Vajrasattva and Vajradhāra share several features and appear quite frequently in Jayavarman VII monuments: Vajradhāra especially in hospital temple libraries, while Vajrasattva is often found on internal lintels of Buddhist shrines (at Prah Khan of Kompong Svay it appears on lintels of small shrines and has been subsequently deprived of upper arms, probably in order to be more coherent with Theravāda iconography!). Sharrock's argument (based *inter alia* upon votive tablets showing the Mahayanist pantheon, see Woodward's article of 1981) leads him finally to propose the Vajrasattva face as the one seen on the Bayon towers. While admiring Sharrock's well-documented 'theological' argument, I wonder if it takes into account the Bayon's political aspect and function.

Vittorio Roveda, in his paper, 'Reliefs of the Bayon', deals with the monument's iconography as a whole (excepting the faces on the towers) and in a general way looks at it more or less in a synchronic mode. The paper is an inventory (first of the reliefs of galleries, then of the pediments and some lintels of towers), followed by some

proposals of interpretation. The inventory is quite cursory, especially for the galleries, where a good visual memory of the reliefs is often needed to follow descriptions as given, but there are very good photographs of some of the hidden pediments of the second level towers. For the interpretation of the outer gallery, Roveda follows the views of Vickery and Schweyer about the naval battle, adding new questionable arguments (the boats are not sea-going ships) and proposes that it is a 'mythic' (rather, 'mock') battle commemorating the non-existent historical one. The arguments he gives against the identification of Malyan rebellion are probably more specious (Cham inscriptions tell us that Cham troops attended the event but do not appear on the carved scene). Concerning the inner gallery, the distinction between original and re-carved images is sometimes questionable (e.g. about Śiva's image in room VIII), but it is well-known that there may be endless discussions about this point.

The conclusion of the book is given by Ang Choulean, whose paper has a title 'In the beginning was the Bayon' I would willingly reverse, as the legacy of the past reflected in the Bayon is often left aside in this book. This being the case, Ang Choulean shows us how the Bayon is at the centre of re-appropriation by the present-day Khmer cosmogical myths figured at Angkor, primarily the Churning of the Sea of Milk. He also reminds us that the reinterpretation of the Bayon, as of Angkor as a whole, has been a continuous process since the

fifteenth century and that the sixteenth century marks an important date in this interpretation.

To conclude, this collective work is more stimulating in the divergent interpretations it gives to some specific subjects than as a general presentation of the present state of studies of the Bayon. It is therefore a good addition to the bibliography dealing with the most puzzling period of Angkorean history. Lastly, we should indicate that the fine general appearance of the book is impaired by use of a very small type and of an even smaller one for footnotes, which are virtually illegible. Narrower margins and the suppression of some figures of little interest would have contributed to a less tiresome reading without increasing the number of pages. Misprints are few but one of them concerns an old master of Khmer epigraphy, Au Chhieng, whose name is misspelt (Au Chhing) in the text as in the index, but not in the bibliography. In that last the reference to Jacques Dumarçay's seminal *Atlas* has been muddled: it should be ascribed to 1967 and not to 1973, which is the date of the book co-authored with B.-Ph. Groslier.

Bruno Dagens