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COVER: Alix Aymé, *Lever du soleil sur un paysage de campagne*, peinture à l'huile sur toile, 1929–1930, Musée national de Luang Prabang © Lacombe & Ferrer

*For a discussion of Alix Aymé's murals, see Michèle-Baj Strobel's contribution in this edition

EDITORIAL

The *Journal of the Siam Society* (JSS) has long played a crucial role in preserving, studying, and promoting the rich heritages of Thailand and other mainland Southeast Asian countries, along with their interconnected histories. This June 2025 issue continues that tradition with a wide-ranging collection of research articles and reviews spanning ancient inscriptions to contemporary cultural studies, offering insights into history, religion, art, archeology, architecture, languages, and literature, as well as reflections on modern developments in the region.

We begin with a moving tribute to a cherished figure at The Siam Society, Elizabeth Howard Moore (1949–2024). Moore’s scholarly work and dedication to the material culture of the region, especially Thailand and Myanmar, will continue to influence generations of archeologists and students, leaving a lasting imprint on the discipline.

We continue our “Research Highlights” with Pittayawat Pittayaporn’s examination of Lao, Thai, and other Southwestern Tai languages, offering a linguistic perspective on the historical connections that bind these groups. Herbert Swanson then revisits the history of Siam’s first Protestant church, proposing insights into how global religion, regional history, and local communities intersect. This issue also highlights Bangkok’s visual and architectural heritage: Paul McBain’s investigation of the Khrua In Khong style of temple murals provides a look at the fusion of Siamese and Western artistic traditions during the Fourth Reign of King Mongkut; Pinai Sirikiatikul’s study of the Hennebique system of reinforced concrete in the Ananta Samakhom Throne Hall offers an exploration of how Western construction methods were adapted in Siam, following the direction of King Chulalongkorn, during the early 20th century. Further exploring dynamic and evolving cultural and regional landscape, Chris Joll and colleagues examine the careers of Islamic transcultural trend-setters in central and southern Thailand, while Stefanie Siebenhütter analyzes the role of social media in shaping the online presence of the Kui linguistic minority in Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. Both studies underline how modern technologies, and cross-cultural exchanges influence cultural identities and regional societal change.

Also in this issue, we introduce two new sections. First, in “Epigraphic Study”, Chhom Kunthea and colleagues offer a detailed analysis of a newly discovered inscription from Óc Eo in the Mekong Delta, shedding light on Buddhist processions and the ancient toponym Tamandarapura, thereby enhancing our understanding of early Southeast Asia. Second, in “Archeology in Progress”, Saw Tun Lin and his team present preliminary findings from the Shwe Creek excavation in Bagan. Their work contributes to a deeper grasp of earthenware production in medieval Myanmar. In “Museum Spotlight”, Forrest McGill focuses on a recent acquisition of a Sawankhalok ceramic at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, discussing its possible function and international connections with the Islamic world. Finally, “Literature Escape” by John Clark analyses *Defan Doesn’t Recall*, an award-winning novel by

Siriworn Kaewkan, offering a reflective exploration of memory and storytelling in southern Thai literature.

In the last section, “Events & Exhibitions”, Michèle-Baj Strobel reviews a new permanent installation at the National Museum of Luang Prabang featuring splendid and freshly restored murals by French artist Alix Aymé. The paintings offer readers a glimpse into the vibrant world of exotic and colonial art in Laos. Meanwhile, Max Crosbie-Jones highlights the recent UNESCO Seminar on Illicit Trafficking in Cultural Property, held in Bangkok in November 2024. This seminar is a timely reminder of the ongoing efforts to protect cultural heritage from the destructive forces of archeological looting and illegal trade, an issue of paramount importance for the preservation of Southeast Asia’s rich historical legacy.

Among the numerous book reviews featured, we are delighted to highlight a glowing evaluation of *Wider Bagan*, Elizabeth H. Moore’s final published work, a fitting tribute to her enduring contributions to the field. We trust that this issue of JSS will inspire further exploration and engagement with the captivating, ever-evolving narratives of Southeast Asia.

Nicolas Revire
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