

A Few Observations on the Use of Ceramics in Indonesia

by Satyawati Suleiman

In Indonesia the study of ceramics is still in its initial stage. Mr Orsoy de Flines¹ who started a collection of foreign ceramics before World War II wrote a few reports and a catalogue. Mr. Abu Ridho², who succeeded de Flines as curator of the ceramics collection at the Museum Pusat in Jakarta, prepared a few articles and the text of a large art album of the collection.

Local pottery has been mentioned and described by some prehistorians who made surveys and carried out systematic excavations. Dr. H.R. van Heekeren³ was one of them. Many Indonesian archaeologists worked with and learned from him. When he was compiling his data on burial methods in prehis-

toric Bali and writing his doctoral thesis, Dr. R.P. Soejono⁴, at present the head of the National Research Centre of Archaeology, studied under van Heekeren for many years. In his thesis, Dr. Soejono describes the earthenware pots which served as funeral furniture in graves together with other objects. Younger prehistorians are also studying ancient ceramics in great detail. It is now accepted that other fields of archaeology can also benefit from the study of excavated ceramics and ceramics sherds. Excavations recently carried out by the Classical Archaeology Division, headed by Mrs. Satari and by the Islamic Archaeology Division, headed by Mr. Hasan Ambary, have yielded many ceramic sherds which are now being intensively studied in order to date the excavated sites.

An attempt is made in this paper to collect data⁵ that relate potsherds with the historical sites where they were found.

Local Ceramics

Prehistory

Manufacture of earthenware pots had already started in the mesolithic or sub-neolithic stage (van Heekeren 1972)⁶. In this period, people had already settled on sea-

shores, lakes or riverbanks, and in caves and rockshelters.

In the Gua Lawa cave near Ponorogo (Central Java), cord-marked potsherds were found at a great depth together with bone spatulas. These spatulas, says van Heekeren, were used for peeling wild or domesticated yams and tubers. There were also ill-preserved human skeletons, but the only funeral gift found was a necklace of drilled shells around a child's neck. It appears that at that stage pots made by the paddle and anvil method were not yet used as funeral gifts. Kitchen utensils were of course still in the form of leaves and bowls of coconut husk. Bamboo and gourds or, perhaps, large shells were used as water containers.

Progress in pottery manufacture started at the neolithic stage when people lived in permanent settlements and practiced agriculture. Van Heekeren found at Kendeng Lembu, East Java, polished stone rectangular adzes and a great number of plain potsherds. However, this site did not seem to have been a neolithic settlement but the site of a neolithic workshop; no traces of village life was found.

In Kalumpang, upstream on the Karama river N.W. Sulawesi, 706 plain baked brown potsherds were found with rectangular adzes, ground oval axes, spearheads, arrow

This is an edited version of the publication issued by the Pusat Penelitian Purbakala Dan Peninggalan Nasional in 1980. It came from a paper presented by the author at the Symposium on Trade and Pottery in East and Southeast Asia held in Hongkong on 4-8 September 1978.

The author is a Senior Researcher of the National Research Center of Archaeology of Indonesia. She is also the SPAFA Governing Board member for Indonesia.

heads, knives, unfinished stone adzes and "planks", one stone bark cloth beater, etc. One sherd had incised stylized human figures.

During the Bronze-Iron Age which coincided with the first appearance of Indonesian toponyms in foreign records, around the beginning of the Christian Era, pottery was evidently used for burial purposes. Prominent people seemed to have been buried in flexed position in large jars, whereas common people were buried in earth. Van Heekeren investigated large ceramic jars found at Anyer (west coast of West Java). They contained skeletons and gifts of earthenware consisting of one jar, two 92 mm. - high dishes, and a globular bowl. In the same area, a systematic excavation he carried out yielded potsherds, probably belonging to urns, and fragments of human bones and skulls. This site was obviously an urn cemetery. Van Heekeren dated this graveyard

of Salayar. They contained broken human bones and ornaments: beads of semi-precious stones, a ring, three bracelets, an earring of bronze, and a few golden leaves (found only in one of the three urns).

A most important find was an urn cemetery in the island of Sumatra. The urns were all globular jars, some with straight necks and mouths of varying width and others with necks curving outwards to a lesser or greater degree. Their covers were sherds, broken pots, inverted jars or bottles. The flasks were highly polished red or dark-brown with long slender necks. As the jars were decorated with motifs usually found on bronzes, van Heekeren dated this cemetery to the bronze-iron age, though quadrangular stone adzes were discovered among the funeral gifts. A spindle indicating the practice of weaving was also found. There were many skulls among the human remains,

carry small round pots on their heads. The Buddha, in another scene, is presented milk in a pot by Sujata before he reaches Nirvana. Another shows pots being stacked in a shanty (Bernet Kempers 1977)⁸, and on one other, pots being made by hand.

Excavations on temple compounds also yielded earthenware pots. The sacred spot of the compound has a buried pot as a temple depot. Also on eastern Javanese reliefs, local pottery are depicted as water containers. Trowulan, the site of the ancient town of 14th century Majapahit, still has earthenware pots in the soil. One excavation produced a bottomless earthenware pot which had been the top of a well. Trowulan is also famous for its terracotta figurines and ornaments which at one time embellished the houses of Majapahit.

The statues from the Majapahit period which were intended as images of worship of deceased kings and queens had lotus plants rising from pots flanking the royal figure⁹. In the case of Singhasari royalty, lotus plants were seen rising from their tubers. It appears that the Majapahit statues had representations of Chinese pots, apparently *martavans*, which in Kalimantan are still used as containers of human remains. Perhaps the pots were associated with death (pots) and life (lotus plants) rising from death¹⁰. On ancient mosques in Java, the *mastaka*, the top piece of their many-tiered roofs, was made from terracotta¹¹.

... the pots were associated with death and life
(lotus plants) rising from death.

back to the second or third century A.D. (van Heekeren 1958)⁷.

Urn burials were also found in Sumatra, in Lesung Batu, Tebing Tinggi (S.W. Sumatra). The urns contained human bones, and in one of them was an empty brown-red beautifully polished jar. The decoration of the jar consisted of meanders and fishbone motifs identical with motifs on bronze objects.

In Sulawesi there were several sites of urn burials. In Central Sulawesi people were buried in stone urns, called *warugas*, which were found near stone statues. The dead were provided with pottery. A tall (111 cm. high) earthenware urn was found. It shows that secondary burials, wherein the remains of a person were first buried or kept in some place and afterwards put in an urn, were practiced in the place.

Van Heekeren also refers to a report by Schröder of 1912, concerning three earthenware urns found in the southwestern part of the island

which was proof of a secondary burial.

In Gilimanuk (Bali), Soejono (1977) excavated graves filled with skeletons. Among the funeral gifts were bronze axes, ornaments and earthenware pots. The excavations were conducted several times throughout a period of more than ten years.

History

Local pottery was still produced and used in the period when there were already contacts with India and China and foreign ceramics were already finding their way to Indonesia, though still sporadically. On reliefs of 9th century temples in Central Java, for example on the Borobudur and Prambanan, local pottery is seen used as water containers. A famous scene on the Borobudur relief is of women fetching water from a pond. They

Modern Times

Though modern technology has entered Indonesia, local pottery is still produced and used in large quantities. In the markets, there are always stalls which sell large earthenware pots as water containers. Dishes are often still cooked in earthenware pots (*kendil*). Certain dishes, such as the *gudeg*, a curry of young jackfruit specially popular in Yogyakarta, are said to taste better when they are cooked in an earthenware pot. The *serabi*, a kind of pancake, is baked in an earthenware pan with a lid. The *ikan pin-dang* is fish cooked in large earthen-

ware pots and kept inside for sale. Incense burners are also made of clay, and so are flower pots. The kendil still keeps the drinking water cool in many households.

Ceramics are used in all aspects of a man's life. When a child is born, the placenta is placed in an earthenware pot and buried. It is considered to be the younger brother or sister of the newborn baby. In weddings in Java, when the bride and groom meet in the ceremonial way, the bride has to wash the feet of the groom. She pours water perfumed with flowers over the groom's feet from an earthenware kendil after he has stepped on an egg. Before a funeral, earthenware pots are broken and shattered on the path where the body has to pass before entering the funeral carriage.

For sacrifices, earthenware pots are still used. Sometimes only the potsherds are offered, as in the "copper offering" in West Java. This offering is given when a house is about to be built particularly when the ground slopes southwards. As the south is associated with Kala and the red colour, everything has to be red. Flowers are offered on a red-copper plate, together with a red chicken and sherds of red pottery¹². Local ceramics, besides being household utensils, are therefore also associated with tradition, sacred places and sacred situations.

Foreign Ceramics

Foreign ceramics have been found all over Indonesia. A great number of foreign ceramics, even a few Han, are in the Museum Pusat in Jakarta. They have been described by De Flines (1949 and 1974) and by Abu Ridho (1977). It seems that a great number were found in the islands where the much desired commodities were produced or traded such as benzoin and camphor in North Sumatra, pepper in South Sumatra, gold in Central and West Sumatra, spices in the Moluccas, and sandalwood and other aromatic woods in the islands east of Bali.

Foreign ceramics were said at first to have been used for barter or as presents to prominent people.

Only later were imported ceramics used as household utensils such as plates, bowls, vases, incense burners, etc. These were then the cheaper ware.

In some places, ceramics were used for burying the dead. This practice was found at Kalimantan where whole cemeteries with martavans were excavated¹³. These martavans, originally used to ferment cassava or rice (*tapi*) or to contain food or water, were associated with death in the tradition of the prehistoric Indonesian ancestors. It was also used in Sulawesi but only for kings and prominent people.

In Java, imported porcelains were used specially for decoration. Tiles were inserted in walls as decoration in ancient Majapahit (found in Trowulan, see Abu Ridho)¹⁴. The walls of the mosques at Demak also had decorative tiles. In Cirebon, porcelain dishes were affixed to the walls of the buildings on the Sitinggil compound of the *keratons* of

Ceramics Reveal the Past

Ceramic pieces when whole are, of course, nice to behold, but they cannot tell us where they were originally used in Indonesia after having arrived from abroad. In the course of time they could have changed hands several times. In only a few places, such as South Sulawesi, have ceramic pieces been dug out from the soil.

Ceramic sherds, if found in great numbers on ancient sites, can help date the site and reveal certain aspects of the economic or social life in the past. We have selected for discussion three areas where many ceramic sherds have been found and where actual research and excavations have been carried out. They are: South Sulawesi, Palenbang and Riau and the eastern part of the north coast of Central Java.

In Java, imported porcelain wares were used especially for decoration.

the Sultan Kasepuhan and Kano-man. On the walls of 14th century Candi Panataran in Blitar, East Java, are medallions with decorative motifs mostly of mythical animals; this could have been influenced by the trend of using imported dishes for decoration¹⁵. The habit of inserting porcelain dishes in walls is still prevalent in some temples of Bali.

Foreign ceramics are among the heirlooms kept by Indonesians. They receive the same treatment as krisses and lances; at set times, they are taken out of storage and given a bath in water perfumed with flowers.

Since when have foreign porcelain pieces been used for daily and ceremonial purposes in Indonesia? Does the presence of great numbers of porcelain sherds reveal the presence of the Chinese or is it only an indication of an intensive trade with China? These are the questions which will be discussed presently.

South Sulawesi

In 1948, Orsoy de Flines analyzed ceramics and ceramics sherds found in several parts of South Sulawesi. Most of the finds could be dated from the 13th till the 18th century; one, however, belonged to the period before the 10th century. In Bone, bowls, boxes and dishes from East China and Thailand manufactured in the 14th and 15th centuries were found. A small urn (half porcelain, oblong box) contained the remains of bones. The urn came from Fu-kien in the second half of the 16th century. In Watampone, 10 per cent of the sherds were originally from finer pieces from Central and Eastern China — porcelain and porcelain-like earthenware from the 14th and 15th centuries of Lun Tsuan old Te-hua, Ying-tsing and Tze Tseu. "No ceramics for commoners", was de Flines' comment¹⁶.

A systematic excavation was carried out in 1970 by Uka Tjandrasmita at Takalar. The dig was sponsored by a group of distinguished persons interested in the study of porcelain, several of whom later on joined or helped to found the Ceramic Society. Though not so many objects were found (the ceramics being inexpensive wares), the conclusion drawn from the research was quite important. It proved that the ceramics found indeed served as funeral gifts and were buried together with the bodies.

Until that time illegal excavators had dug up pots, in the process scattering the human remains, thereby, dissociating them from the funeral gifts. The ceramics from this site were from the 15th-16th centuries A.D. and included Sawangkhalok and Annamese as well as Chinese wares. As the skeletons were furnished with inexpensive wares, it was inferred that commoners were buried in these graves. Prominent people were usually buried in jars as noted in the jar-burials in Anyer.¹⁷

In South Sulawesi, however, the bodies were buried in foreign ceramic pots, a status symbol in South Sulawesi. Van Vuuren in 1912 found urns in which the ashes of Buginese kings were buried even as late as the 14th century.¹⁸ The cremation of Buginese kings is mentioned in historical manuscripts, written by the Buginese themselves. The Buginese, though lacking inscriptions on stone and copper, have left many manuscripts which they called *lontaras*. They recorded everything in their diaries and chronicles, from administrative measures, political events, to wars and marriages. The Chronicle of Wajo (Noorduyn 1955), a principality in South Sulawesi, recorded that a king was cremated lying on top of his shields. For this reason, he received the posthumous name of *Matinroe rikannana* (he who is resting on his shield). It mentioned that the ashes were afterwards put in a pot. "It was perhaps the last cremation of a Wajo sovereign",

... ceramics were ... also used to mark the closing of a treaty between two kings.

according to Noorduyn¹⁹ since the Islamization of North Sulawesi had then begun. Moslems do not cremate their dead, but bury them.

Hadimuljono, an archaeologist now in charge of the conservation and safeguarding of the antiquities of South Sulawesi, saw in Soppeng, on the grave of a deceased king, a ceramic piece as a tombstone. According to him, ceramics were in the past also used to mark the closing of a treaty between two kings. They were broken as an oath was sworn. The words spoken were: "If this treaty is broken, so will the party breaking the treaty be destroyed for seven generations" (Hadimuljono 1978)²⁰

The presence of many ceramics and fragments in the area clearly indicates the existence of a thriving trade with China. As Sulawesi was on the way to the spice islands (Moluccas), the sandalwood islands and China, it was natural to expect a thriving seaport at South Sulawesi. Though the people knew no Sanskrit, they had the advantage of possessing their own written characters with which they could keep their accounts and write their diaries, chronicles, etc. The principalities of South Sulawesi might have been mentioned in the Chinese annals, but if so, the transcriptions of their names remain to be investigated.

Palembang and Riau

Though these two places do not form one area, we have nevertheless taken them together since they are both associated with the ancient 7th century Srivijaya Empire. G. Coedes²³ identified Palembang as the ancient site of 7th century Srivijaya (Cheli-fo-che) for most of the inscriptions were found there. Though many scholars have accepted his view (Krom²⁴, De Casparis,

Wolters) a few still seek the ancient site in another place. Moens²⁵, referring to I-tsing's information that in the city of Srivijaya a man cast no shadow at noon, located it in Muara Takus near the equator (0.20 N.W.) which fit the description. Roland Braddell²⁶ located Srivijaya in the Malay Peninsula, while M.C. Chand²⁷ thought it was in Southern Thailand, in the Chaiya area.

In 1974, a team composed of Indonesian archaeologists and three archaeologists from the University of Pennsylvania, including B. Bronson, carried out a systematic excavation in several spots of Palembang where they expected to find evidence of 7th century habitation, especially in the form of ceramic sherds. The results were negative for testpits at Bukit Seguntang, Air Bersih, Geding Suro, and Sarangwati yielded only Ming porcelain of the 15th-16th centuries.²⁸

A trial excavation carried out by the same team near the site of Muara Takus (Riau) produced similarly meager results. Again there were no 7th century ceramic sherds.²⁹ The same results were obtained by a team from the Pusat Penelitian Purbakala (The National Research Centre of Archaeology) in 1976; only Ming porcelain sherds were found.³⁰

Does this mean that Srivijaya was neither in Palembang nor near Muara Takus? Could there have been another reason for the absence of the debris which should have been left behind by a city inhabited for centuries? Should there have been excavations on other spots as, for example, on the bank of the Musi river? Should one look in the mud or water for towns and villages situated on river banks are flood-prone? Even one flood can destroy a whole area, as we still see happening in Sumatra. Is it right

"... why [did] evidence of commercial contacts with China and India appear so late".

to expect Chinese and other porcelain as early as the 7th century?

We have some thoughts to bring forward. Perhaps the thousand monks who, according to I-tsing, were studying in Srivijaya at the end of the 7th century were not Chinese, but Indonesians. They could have used bamboo and leaves as plates for their meals³¹, and coconut husks, seashells, gourds, and bamboo as containers for their water. Neither did they build stupas of brick for in a tropical rain-forest area wood was used. Hence, the sanctuaries and monasteries were made of wood with grass and palm leaf roofs as those in Bali. The "cells" for the monks would have looked like the very simple and modest wooden huts on stilts which one still encounters in a few *pesantrens* (Islamic boarding schools) in North Sumatra (South Tapanuli). Our survey team happened to pass by a very large *pesantren* at Purba Baru, South Tapanuli, in July 1978. Some 2000 students lived there. Every two students shared a hut where they cooked, studied and slept. Another *pesantren* of the same style was found at Padang Lawas in 1975.³² The compound, with the same kind of modest huts, was located near Biaro Bahal I, a brick temple which dates back to perhaps the 13th or 14th century.³³

The monastery or monasteries of Srivijaya, having been built in the same simple style, would not leave much debris, nor would the "city" which was either on the bank of the river or even on the river. The people would have lived in the same way as the people of Sungsang, a village partly on the water and on the riverbank on the mouth of the Musi, 90 km. from Palembang. We visited Sungsang in July 1978. As regards Muara Takus (Bernet Kempers 1959 pl. 198), the brick temples we see now are not necessarily the same as those of the 7th century. The main compound could have been somewhere else; in

the 7th century one would expect wooden buildings for temples and monasteries. Again, even though Muara Takus was the sacred place for worship and pilgrimages, the capital was not necessarily there. In Java, the capital of the 9th century Sailendra kingdom was perhaps not near the Borobudur but rather in the plains of Prambanan. In 14th century Majapahit, the royal palace was near Trowulan while the king went to pray at sanctuaries in Malang and Blitar. Another possibility is that the capital of Srivijaya was not always in the same place.³⁴

The Northeastern Part of Central Java

Orsoy de Flines wrote a report in *Oudheidkundig Verslag* (1941-1947) on a research he carried out in 1940 in some places at the Northeastern part of Central Java. The areas where the survey was made consisted of the Kabupatens of Blora, Rembang, Pati, Jepara, Kudus and Grobogan. These enquiries were the result of a request by Dr. Stutterheim, a former head of the Archaeological Service, to examine the soil around the legendary area of Medang Kamulan (Medang) in the eastern part of Grobogan.

The results were negative: there were only a few ceramic sherds of the 9th to the 10th century. Surprisingly, however, numerous sherds were found in the teak forest, datable from the end of the 8th till the 11th century. In some villages in the same area, there were many finds; in other places very few. Some finds were Chinese and others, Annamese and Sawangkhalok. The sherds could be dated from the 9th to the 17th century. This evidence leads to the conclusion that the whole area had been inhabited for a long time.

The problem of the age of these settlements was taken up in 1975³⁵. A team comprising archaeologists from Indonesia and the USA carried out excavations in the area of Rembang. They examined 50 sites and assembled 40 collections of local and foreign ceramics. There were four groups of foreign ceramics: late T'ang-Sung, late Sung-Ming, Ming and some Ch'ing, Ch'ing and European.

The authors of the report wondered "why evidence of commercial contacts with China and India appeared so late". In Thailand and South Vietnam such contacts were intensive as early as A.D. 200 when large cities like Oc Eo had already begun to develop. Is it possible that

Indonesia lagged 400-500 years behind the mainland? (p. 112c). The team after researching the Binangun site thought that this part had been involved in foreign trade since A.D. 700.

"It is located in an area which is not good for farming. The team members believe that the Binangun complex of sites was an ancient trading port. It is the first to be located anywhere in Java that can be dated to the early or middle first millennium" (p. 112d).

The Rembang teams also regarded the presence of numerous sherds of local ceramics as an evidence of settlements. However, Binangun, which is located on a defensible hilltop and an area of flatland on the eastern and northern side of small bay west of Gunung Lasem (Rembang Report 1975: d), was reported by Orsoy de Flines (1941 - 1947) to be poor in foreign ceramic sherds.

The area surveyed by De Flines, including Rembang, is indeed an interesting part of Central Java. There are toponyms which remind us of Chinese and local records. Waru is a name similar to that transcribed as Po-lu-kia-se³⁶, the place situated in the east towards which the ancestor of the king of Ho-ling moved his capital. It was read as Waruh Yasik while Pelliot thought it to be Waruh Gresik or beach of sand.

Laram Kulon³⁷ in Kudus is the

same name as Luaram in the inscription of Airlangga of 1041. It stated that the Palace of King Dharmawangsa was attacked by the enemy king of Wurawari who came out from Luaram. This attack, which destroyed the palace, could have been sponsored by Srivijaya through a local King of Java (Coedes 1968: 144). Wurawari is a place in the Pekalongan area (Schrieke 1957 a: 211cf).

Foreign Ceramic Sherd Dating

Two important problems arise from the finds of foreign ceramics in this area: Does the absence of early Chinese ceramics imply the absence of ancient trade ports before the 10th century? What is the relationship between Java and Srivijaya?

We indeed wonder why in general the foreign ceramic sherds, particularly those from China, appear so late in this part of the country. Was there no trade with China? But the Chinese annals included embassies from the Indonesian Archipelago, unless of course all the famous toponyms such as She-li-fo-she, Ho-lo-tan, Ho-ling, She-p'o, etc. were outside Indonesia and perhaps on the Malay Peninsula. Evidences of some kind of contact with India since the 5th century exist. They are in the shape of the 5th century inscriptions of Kutai and West Java, early statuary and, later on, the fine architecture and sculpture of Central Java and the inscriptions of the 8-9th centuries which sometimes mention foreigners from India or Mainland Southeast Asia.

The discovery of some ceramics of even the Han period and many of the T'ang period all over Indonesia is not enough proof of the existence of either early settlements in the area or trade with China. Wolters' book on the fall of Srivijaya, referred to by Hall (1970: 61-62) contains some explanation.

"Dr. O.W. Wolters has recently attempted to interpret the evidence

by means of what is known of the changing patterns of Asian trade, and especially the growing importance of Chinese overseas voyages. Dr. Wolters observes that, until the end of the eleventh century, China was dependent on foreign ships in the commerce with the Nanyang. Trade had to be carried on according to the 'tributary' system laid down by the imperial court in its dealings with individual foreign states. That is, trade with China was not open and free to all merchants, Chinese or foreign. It was restricted to the 'Tribute' missions, sent to the emperor by his vassal barbarian rulers, or at least by the so-called vassals".

Dr Wolters suggests that the importance of Srivijaya lays in its role as an entrepot needed by merchants trading to and from China.

"All this changed during the period of the Southern Sung (1127-1278). Their dependence upon seaborne trade

not, however, imply the existence of Chinese settlements. Boechari³⁹ points out that in Java foreign merchants were engaged in international trade. The following were mentioned in an inscription: Chams, Khmers, Thais, Burmese, Ceylonese and Indians from several regions of India (the so-called *wargga kilalan*, foreign settlers). Notice that no Chinese was mentioned among them.

Airlangga who ruled East Java 1019 to 1049 maintained a policy of balance of power with Srivijaya. In this atmosphere of peace, he promoted seaborne trade. His inscription specified the following foreigners⁴⁰, Kling, Aryya, Simhala, Pandikiria, Dravida, Campa, Remen, Kmir (and in another place: Karnataka). Here again we see no Chinese on the list. Apparently at that time, there were no

... the importance of Srivijaya lays in its role as an entrepot needed by merchants trading to and from China.

led them to open the trade to the Nanyang with Chinese vessels. There was a great expansion of the Chinese mercantile marine and Chinese vessels began to trade directly with Southeast Asian ports. Chau Ju-Kua, for instance, mentions in 1225, that Chinese merchants were visiting Java, while another source mentions that they were visiting the Gulf of Siam. Others followed their example and we hear of Tamil and Cairo merchants trading directly with North Sumatrans for camphor."

It shows that prior to the 12th century, the trade in the archipelago and perhaps even to China was mostly in the hands of Indonesian traders and navigators. They probably used their own earthenware and when clay was lacking (as on the Polynesian islands), leaves, wood, bamboo, and gourds³⁸ as containers; it is probably why early Chinese porcelain sherds were not found in the ancient sites.

The presence of early foreign ceramic sherds in some areas does

Chinese settlers yet, though there might have been a few Chinese traders. Krom thought that the trade was in the hands of Chinese (Krom, 1931: 226).

The presence of numerous Chinese ceramic sherds in a later period would, on the other hand, indicate the existence of a Chinese colony called "Kota Cina" or "pecinaan".

Relationship between Java and Srivijaya

Having concluded that there were indeed ancient ports on the north coast of Central Java, we will now discuss the relations between Java and Srivijaya in the light of the ceramic sherds on the north coast of Central Java. The general assumption is that Srivijaya was a "maritime" kingdom and Java an "agrarian" one, a view we cannot share. How could a maritime kingdom live without a fertile hinterland or how could an "agrarian" kingdom such as the Sailendras' in

Central Java live, be wealthy and build magnificent monuments without the revenues of a seaborne trade? It was not from rice alone that they built up their wealth.

Inscriptions, most of which were found in the same part of Central Java where temples and statues were found, could not be the sole source of information on the past. Without the study of ceramics, the knowledge based on these sources would be incomplete. The sherds may supplement the data which are still lacking on the political and economic life of Central Java.

A very important historical problem has intrigued many scholars: the sudden transfer of the centre of power from Central to East Java. A brief account of the political development in Central Java between

came king of Suwarnadwipa and his name appeared in an inscription on copper found on the old site of the extension he made to the monastery in Nalanda. (De Casparis, 1956).⁴²

After Rakai Pikatan, several kings in Central Java were either his descendants or their successors. Their inscriptions appeared until the beginning of the 10th century. Then suddenly after the last inscription of 929, no Royal charters appeared from Central Java; instead, the first inscriptions of King Sindok turned up in Eastern Java. Several scholars speculated the reasons for this sudden transfer of royal power. Van Bemmelen⁴³ attributed this to a volcanic eruption at the time when Dharmawangsa's palace was attacked by the King of Wurawari who came from Luaram. Schrieke⁴⁴ considered the exhaustion of the

which was ruled by the Sailendras?

Moreover, Java and Sumatra were always struggling for hegemony and competing for the trade with China. Their missions never overlapped, as Wolters remarked⁴⁶ Srivijaya (She-li-fo-che) sent missions from 670 to 742, Java (Ho-ling) in 640, 648 and 666, and again as Ho-ling from 768-818 and afterwards, as She'-p'o from 820 till 873. Srivijaya (San-Fo-ts'i) sent missions from 904 to 983 and often thereafter. There were six missions between 960 and 988. A mission then came from Java in 992, after which the missions ceased for another 100 years. Then Srivijaya sent missions between 1003 and 1008. The absence of missions from Java (873-992) occurred when the transfer of capital took place and the kings from Sindok to Dharmawangsa ruled East Java. The reasons for this transfer of power could have been a natural disaster and politics.

A very important historical problem has intrigued many scholars: the sudden transfer of power from Central to East Java.

Boechari (1976) agrees with van Bemmelen that the eruption of Mount Merapi caused the transfer. He disagrees, however, on the dating of the disaster. Van Bemmelen associates the disaster with the *pra'aya* which destroyed the palace of Dharmawangsa in 1016/1017. Boechari places it around 930, the time when the inscriptions came to an abrupt halt in Central Java.

We agree with van Bemmelen regarding the eruption of Mount Merapi, but with Boechari as regards the period of transfer of the keraton to East Java. The Candi Sambisari⁴⁷ which is in the plains of Prambanan serves as a proof. It was excavated in 1969 from about four meters of volcanic ashes. The style of its ornaments and statues is characteristic of the period of the Prambanan temple or a little later. Other indications that an eruption of Mount Merapi had covered whole areas with lava or ashes came from observations by geologists. When Mount Merapi erupts, fertile areas, villages, and roads can be destroyed in a minimum of time. Even now, when we drive to the Borobudur after an eruption, we

732 and 930⁴¹ is needed to clarify this aspect.

Two dynasties or two branches of the same royal family ruled during these two centuries. The family started with King Sanjaya, a follower of a "Hindu" cult who issued an inscription in 732 when he erected a lingga on Mount Wukir. A few decades later, the Sailendra inscriptions began and continued until about 830. The Sailendras, in contrast with Sanjaya and his successors, were Buddhists; and they were associated with the Borobudur and other magnificent sanctuaries. The "Hindu Sanjayas", though in a lesser position of power, still cooperated with them in their temple building.

Pramodhawarddhani of the Sailendra dynasty married in about 830 a prince of the Sanjaya family, Rakai Pikatan. Her younger brother Balaputra was expelled from Java after he led a war against her and her husband. Rakai Pikatan be-

population who had to carry the burdens of excessive temple building as the cause of the transfer of power eastwards. De Casparis⁴⁵ suggested that the reason was a fear of the Sailendras, who had been expelled from Java, and the consideration that trade would be more profitable in the Brantas Delta which was nearer the spice and sandalwood islands. According to De Casparis:

"East Javanese merchants went to Eastern Indonesia exchanging Javanese rice and other products with spices and sandalwood. They took them to Srivijaya, where they met foreign merchants, and exchanged their wares with foreign goods, such as gold, silk and porcelain from China, robes from India, incense from Arab countries, etc. This kind of trade made East Java prosperous".

De Casparis overlooked one point. If the Sailendras were feared, how could the merchants from Eastern Java trade with Srivijaya,

can see how roads and bridges have been damaged, but with modern equipment new roads and bridges can be easily rebuilt, not so in the 10th century. The road connecting the capital, which was perhaps in the plains of Prambanan with the busy trade ports on the north coast of Central Java, was destroyed and remained so. The inscription of Mantyasih, protected by the *patihs*, indicates the existence of that road. Boechari suggests that the road connected the Kedu plains with the north coast via Parakan (Boechari 1976-9).

We suggest that after the destruction of this road, the harbour princes, now independent from the suzerainty of the kings in the interior, became free to trade with Srivijaya. They were on a friendly footing with the rulers of Srivijaya, or to put it more strongly, they were still loyal to the Sailendras.

The kings, who were the successors of Sanjaya, could no longer enjoy the revenues of the seaborne trade. This was why they had to transfer the center of power to East Java. Their presence there would not imply a heightened trade on the eastern islands. It is possible that the harbour princes of the north coast of Central Java prevented them from trading with these islands. The harbour princes were the people who sent the commodities to Srivijaya, which sent missions to China.

The interruption in Java's trade with China lasted until 992, when a Chinese merchant arrived in China with three Javanese ambassadors and their retinue on board. This first mission after more than a century seems to coincide with the aggressive attitude by King Dharmawangsa towards Srivijaya. The Ambassador from Srivijaya who happened to be in China could not return to his country as it was occupied by Javanese troops from 990 till 992. One Javanese ambassador who arrived in the Chinese capital in 992 informed his hosts that his country and San-fo-ts'i were always at war with one another.

The gap of one century in the China trade could also have been caused by the monopoly of the Cen-

tral Javanese harbour princes in league with Srivijaya. This could be why ceramic sherds are found on the northeastern part of Central Java. It would not have been the case if the prosperous trade had been entirely transferred to Eastern Java.

Conclusion

The presence of many ceramic sherds in one place indicates the existence of settlements perhaps even a Chinese settlement.

The absence of ceramic sherds prior to the Sung dynasty (1127-1278), for example in Sumatra, does not mean that there were no settlements. The Indonesians made use of bamboo, coconut husks, wood, gourds and shells for their household utensils. A Chinese source recorded that P'o-Ni had no clay, and therefore the inhabitants made use of bamboo and palm leaves for cooking purposes. (Krom, (1931), p. 236).

Ceramic sherds are very useful in the dating of sites, and in determining the trade and political relations of Indonesia at that time.

The use of local and foreign ceramics for ceremonies shows that Indonesians consider these wares as objects to ward off evil influences and in the case of foreign ceramics as status symbols.

Notes

- 1 Orsoy de Flines: 1941-1947; 1948;1949;1972.
- 2 Abu Ridho: 1977;1978.
- 3 Van Heekeren: 1958;1974.
- 4 Soejono:1977.
- 5 Dates also obtained from *Martavans in Indonesia*, a publication of the Ceramic Society of Indonesia.
- 6 Van Heekeren, *Stone Age in Indonesia*, p.151.
- 7 Van Heekeren, *The Bronze-Iron Age in Indonesia*, p. 80-89: Urn cemeteries.
- 8 Bernet Kempers, 1977, p.1.

175, 176s (Mendut) P1. 179, Prambanan, p1, 177 Bernet Kempers (1959) pl. 289-291, 322. (Trowulan).

- 9 Bernet Kempers, *Ancient Indonesian art* pl. 248. Portrait statue of a Queen of Majapahit. From Chandi Rimbi.
- 10 We wonder whether in Majapahit the ashes of the kings and queens were interred in martavans or other foreign ceramics, as were the ashes of chiefs in Kalimantan and Sulawesi. Soekmono in his dissertation: "Candi, Fungsi dan pengertiannya" (1976) holds that the ashes were thrown away in the sea like in Bali, but having seen the urns of the kings of Cambodia in the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh, we wonder whether the kings of Majapahit had followed the same custom. This would explain the appearance of the martavans, flanking the portrait statues of the Majapahit period (14th-15th century). In this case, the ashes were kept in urns and not in the temples. It would explain the absence of human ashes in the stone boxes with nine holes which were put in the shaft under the statue in the cult temple.
- 11 Uka Tjandrasasmita, *The Islamic Antiquities of Sendangduwur* p. 10. However the mastaka of Sendangduwur was made of copper.
- 12 Mme Viviane Sukanda-Tessier (1977) p. 1228: "Le triomphe de Sri en pays soundanais.
- 13 De Flines (1949) p. 37-38; S. Adyatman 1977.
- 14 Abu Ridho, (1977) pl. 88. *Berita Penelitian Purbakala* no. 1 (Denmak) pl. 122.
- 15 Bernet Kempers, (1959) pl. 282.
- 16 De Flines, 1950, p. 12. The appearance of fine porcelain in Bone makes us think that Bone could have been the most important part of Sulawesi for centuries. We wonder whether the toponym spelled as P'o-Ni by the Chinese, thought to represent Brunei in Northwest Kalimantan, was actually Bone in Southwest Sula-

wesi. The description of the country and people suits Bone well. For example: "lacking earthenware they cooked in bamboo and palm leaves; they sent a letter on a leaf to the Emperor" (Krom 1931) p. 236. The king had a fleet of 100 warships (Krom 1931) p. 305. They were skilled in arithmetic and accounting (p. 399). The facts are in accordance with this information: the Buginese have been sailors for centuries, they have their own script and their manuscripts are called "lontara" which means, leaf of the tal (palm). Accounting would not be surprising for a trading and sailing nation. Cooking in bamboo and leaves is still practiced in Sulawesi. In an article by Grace Wong (1978) on blue-and-white porcelain appears a list of ports visited by Chinese ships when the eastern sea route already existed:

Sanyu, Ma-ri, Hai-dan (in the Philippines), and afterwards: Bo-ni and Mao-juo-ju (Moluccas). In another source: San-dao, Ma-li-lu, Su-lu (in the Philippines), Dong-chong-gu-la (Tanjungpura? or Dong-gala?), Wan-nian-gang (P'o-Ni), Wen-lao-gu (Moluccas) and Wen-dan (Banda?)

The impression that P'o-ni was Bone in southern Sulawesi is strengthened by its location between the Philippines and the Moluccas.

- 17 Van Heekeren; (1958) p. 88.
- 18 Van Heekeren, (1958) p. 80.
- 19 Van Heekeren, (1958) p. 84. Noorduyt, (1955) p. 92. Hadimuljono 1972 p.7 mentions the posthumous name of a raja of Bone: La Tenrirawe Bongkangngeri Gucinna "who sleeps (lies to rest) in a pot". (From Sejarah Wajo (1963) and Sejarah Goa (1967) by A.A. Patunru.
- 20 Hadimuljono p. 12. He mentions other uses of ceramics also.
- 21 Naṣarakertagama, canto 14: 4.5. Pigeaud (1960) I, p.12. Contacts with Java could have been existed even earlier, and

in the period of the Hindu and Buddhist Kings of Central Java, (8th-10th) century. We suspect that the inscriptions in Old Malay were written by princes with "foreign" blood, who did not necessarily hailed from Sumatra, but perhaps from Sulawesi. The Buginese could have been the mercenaries at sea for the Javanese kings and could have intermarried in the princely families.

- 22 see A.C. Kruyt 1933 p. 422-494.

Sulawesi is a good example of a society which developed its own patterns of religion and statecraft without being "hindunized". Also the concepts of gods and divine powers of the kings were original and perhaps like those in Polynesia.

- 23 Coedes: The Indianized States of Southeast Asia.

- 24 Krom, (- 1931), De Casparis, 1956.

- 25 Braddell: Notes on Ancient Times in Malaya - (1951), p. 1 - 27.

- 26 Moens, 1937.

- 27 M.C. Chand: paper presented to the International Association of Historians on Asia. (IAHA) Sixth International Conference. Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 1974.

- 28 Archaeological Research in Sumatra (1974)

- 29 Laporan Penelitian Arkeologi di Sumatra - 1973.

- 30 Report still in press. (Berita Penelitian Arkeologi).

- 31 Like the people of P'o-Ni in the 10th century-Krom (1931), p. 236.

- 32 Survai Sumatra Utara. 1976. pl. 14.; it could have been the same place where the ancient Mahayana Buddhist monastery once stood.

- 33 Biaro Bahal I. Survai Sumatra Utara pl. 16. Bernet Kempers (1959) pl. 223.

- 34 The capital of Srivijaya could have been moved several times in the course of centuries. Natural disasters or destruction by the enemy caused the rulers to look for another place of residence. Moreover it

was considered ill luck to remain in the same place where a disaster had happened. Perhaps they had, like the Javanese kings, also believed in cycle: see Boechari 1977 who refers to Schrieke (1957): Ruler and Realm in Early Java.

- 35 Laporan Penelitian Rembang 1975.
- 36 Krom, (1931), p. 145. Coedes (1968) p. 90, 107, 301.
- 37 Krom (1931) p. 239, 240. Boechari locates Luaram in the area of Madiun as there is still a place with that name.
- 38 National Geographic Magazine, December 1940. p. 745 (opposite coloured illustration) "Provisions for sea: Roots, fruits, nuts, dried fish and water-filled gourds enabled the Polynesians to survive passages as long as two months".
- 39 Boechari, (1977) p. 7.
- 40 Krom, (1931) p. 264.
- 41 Inscriptions uit de Cailendra tijd.
- 42 De Casparis (1950) compares on p. 133 the list of the Sanjayavamsa with that of the Cailendravamsa. The princes of the Sanjaya dynasty are mentioned in the inscription of King Balitung, A.D. 907. Krom 1931 p. 187.
- 43 Van Bemmelen, (1974), The attack on Dharmawangsa's keraton was for a long time thought to be 1006 until Damais revised the date to 1016/1017. L. Ch. Damais, BEFEO (1952) p. 64 n. 2.
- 44 Schrieke (1941), 1957 b.
- 45 De Casparis: (1950) and (1958): "Erlangga".
- 46 Wolters (1967) p. 214.
- 47 Sri Kusumobroto: "Preliminary Note on Sambisari". 1969.

Bibliography

Addiyatma, Lammers
1977 *Martavans in Indonesia*.
Jakarta

- Asmar, Bronson, Mundarjita, Wiseman
1975 *Laporan Penelitian Rembang*. Jakarta
- Bemmelen, R.A. van
1949 *The Geology of Indonesia*. Vol. 1. General Geology of Indonesia and adjacent Archipelagoes. The Hague
- Bernet Kempers, A.J.
1959 *Ancient Indonesian Art*. Amsterdam, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- Bernet Kempers, A.J.
1976 *Ageless Borobudur*. Wassenaar
- Boechari
1976 Some Considerations of the Problem of the Shift of Mataram's Center of Government from Central to East Java in the 10th century. Jakarta.
- Braddell, Dato Sir Roland
1951 Notes on ancient times in Malaya JMBRAS. Singapore.
- Bronson, Wiseman
1974 Archaeological research in Sumatra: A preliminary report.
- Casparis, J.C.
1950 Inscripties uit de Cailendra-tijd
1956 Prasasti II. Bandung.
1958 Erlangga. Pidato pada penerimaan jabatan Guru Besar pada PPTPG di Malang.
- Coedes, G.
1968 *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia*. Kuala Lumpur, Singapore.
- Hall, D.G.G.
1970 *History of Southeast Asia*. New York.
- Hadimuljono
1978 Sumbangan keramik asing bagi penelitian arkeologi di daerah Sulawesi Selatan. Ujung Pandang.
- Heekeren, H.R. van
1972 The Stone Age of Indonesia. The Hague
1958 *The Bronze-iron Age of Indonesia*. The Hague.
- Kusumobroto, Sri
Preliminary Note on Tjandi Sambisari. Ithaca 1959 pp. 1-4.
- Krom, N.J.
1931 Hindoe-Javaansche Geschiedenis's Gravenhage.
- Kruyt, A.C.
1938 De West Toradjas op Midden Celebes. Amsterdam
- Leur, J.C. van
1955 *Indonesian Trade and Society*. The Hague, Bandung.
- Moens, J.L.
1937 Crivijaya, Java en Kataha Batavia
- Noorduyn, J.
1955 Een achttien de eeuwse droniek van Wadjo. s' Gravenhange.
- Orsoy de Flines, E.W. van
1947 Oudheidkundig verslag 1941-1947. Jakarta.
1950 Oudheidkundig Verslag 1948. Jakarta.
1949 Gids voor de Keramische Verzameling. Jakarta.
1972 Guide to the ceramic collection Jakarta. Museum Pusat.
- Pigeud, Th
1960 *Java in the Fourteenth Century* Vol. I. The Hague
- 1977 Seminar Arkeologi. Cibulan, 2-6 Pebruari 1976. Jakarta.
Arti Keramikasing didapati di Indonesia begi kegiatan arkeologi.
- Ridho, Abu
1977 The collection of foreign ceramic in the Museum Pusat. *Oriental Ceramics Volume 3*. The world's great collections. Kodansha.
- Schrieke, B.
1957 Ruler and Realm in Early Java, *Indonesian Sociological Studies*, part two pp. 3-267. The Hague
1957 The End of Classical Hindu Javanese Culture in Central Java Indon. Soc. *Studies*, part two pp. 287-301. The Hague
- Soejono, R.P.
1977 Sistim-sistim penguburan pada masa prasejarah di Bali. Jakarta. (diss).
- Soekmono
1976 Candi, Fungsi dan Pengertiannya (dissertation). Jakarta
- Sukanda, Tessier Viviane
1977 *Le Triomphe de Sri en Pays Soundanais*. Paris
- Tjandrasmita, Uka
1970 The South Sulawesi Excavation Project. Archaeological Foundation. Jakarta.
- Wolters, O.W.
1967 *Early Indonesian Commerce*. Ithaca
1970 *The Fall of Srivijaya in Malay History*. Kuala Lumpur, Singapore.
- Wong, Grace
1978 Chinese Blue and White Porcelain and its Place in the Maritime Trade of China in: *Chinese Blue and White Ceramics*. Singapore.