

This leads to the question of political sociology. In his conclusion the author distinguishes his approach from technocratic and institutional approaches that offer technical solutions to political problems. Yet, in the list of lessons that his political sociology analysis might offer to policy-makers he suggests precisely those institutional fixes that might be achieved through better regulation and law making and by better sequencing of land acquisition and road building. These sound a lot like the conclusions a rational choice economist or public choice institutional economist might make. Surely a true political sociologist would see solutions in contestation at the political level, including the construction of powerful political coalitions. After all, that is what people like Kalla and Bakrie do to achieve their aims.

There is a final point about theory. There is a well-established literature where rational choice economics, new institutional economics and public choice political economy are explicitly rejected in favour of structural political economy and political sociology approaches to problems of social and political change, including in Indonesia. This includes the most cited works on contemporary Indonesian politics, not easily missed. For whatever reason, there is no reference to any of this debate in this book. Yet, the author needs to explain how his own 'political sociology' is different to those established political economy and political economy approaches that appear so similar. I suspect it is because his is pluralist in nature. This is why a reference to the recent debate between structural and pluralist political scientists and political economists published in the Cornell journal, *Indonesia* (96, Oct. 2013), might have been useful.

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Ancient glassware in Malaysia: The Pengkalan Bujang collection

Edited by DANIEL PERRET and ZULKIFLI JAAFAR

Kuala Lumpur: Department of Museums Malaysia, 2014. Pp. 206. Map, Plates, Bibliography, Index.

doi:10.1017/S002246341600062X

This volume provides a useful, profusely illustrated and up-to-date insight into ancient glass excavated at the Pengkalan Bujang and Sungai Mas sites in Malaysia, with notes on other related finds from elsewhere in Southeast Asia as well as various shipwrecks.

The work is set out in four sections: the first by Daniel Perret is a comprehensive review of recoveries of ancient glass in Southeast Asia with a map showing the various locations discussed. This is followed by a catalogue of significant sherds and outline drawings of fragments of glass vessels from Pengkalan Bujang in Kedah by Daniel Perret and Zulkifli Jaafar where almost 6,000 sherds have been recovered. A detailed section on the chemical composition of glass artefacts based on LA-ICP-MS (Laser

Ablation-Inductively Coupled Plasma-Mass Spectrometry), a recently-developed non-destructive analytical technique, with new data from Pengkalan Bujang and Sungai Mas by Laure Dussubieux and Jane Allen follows, with a final discussion on the Pengkalan Bujang glass, its characteristics and historical context by Daniel Perret. At the end of the day, however, although general conclusions may be drawn from this work, we appear to be left with more questions than answers regarding the specific origins of the ancient glass, for, as the authors point out, more research is required to try to resolve the many outstanding questions relating to their origins.

The catalogue of fragments is illustrated with colour photographs, although not to scale, but with accompanying line drawings that provide a useful range of illustrations for future physical comparisons.

Analysis of ancient glass vessels in the Malay Peninsula was pioneered by Alastair Lamb in the 1960s. Thereafter analytical work on glass from Sumatra was undertaken initially by Dr Robert Brill at Corning, with more recent typological analyses on a broad range of recoveries from the west coast of Sumatra sites of Barus, Lobu Tua and Bukit Hasang by Guillot et al. in *Histoire de Barus II* (Archipel, 2003) and more recently chemical analyses by Laure Dussubieux, 'Compositional analysis of ancient glass fragments from Si Pamutung, North Sumatra', in *History of Padang Lawas, 1. The site of Si Pamutung (mid ninth–thirteenth century CE)* (Archipel, 2015).

Although identification of early glass-making locations in Southeast Asia has transformed older theories relating to India as a source of glass, the lack of information with regard to the manufacture of glass as well as earthenware, particularly relating to mediaeval South Asia and Sri Lanka, leaves a hiatus in identifying the specific origins of these materials. Analysis suggests that early trading networks linking the Near and Middle East to both the west and east coasts of India would, however, appear to have played an important role in the distribution of glassware.

Determination of the chemical composition of the Pengkalan Bujang glass was divided into two main categories — identification of glasses with a high lime (Ca) content which appear to originate in the Near East and those with a high alumina (Al)–low lime content, formerly associated with South Asia or Sri Lanka, but which more recently have been found at sites in Asia Minor that may, significantly, have been linked to the early and mediaeval Indian Ocean trade networks. These categories are further subdivided into those glasses which use a vegetative or plant source for the potash content, i.e. designated as v-Na-Ca and those which use a mineral (sand) source, designated as m-Na-Al.

V-Na-Al glasses were identified at both the Pengkalan Bujang and Sungai Mas sites. These glasses had formerly been identified in Sumatra at sites including Barus Bukit Hasang and Lobu Tua, Kuta Kareueng in Aceh, Kota Cina on the northeast coast, Si Pamutung in the Padang Lawas, at Muara Jambi and Palembang. Similar glasses have been found in the wreck of a Chinese junk off the coast of Brunei dating to the late fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries and in Kenya. These are provisionally thought to have a possible Near Eastern origin. Glasses with a higher lime content — V-Na-Ca¹ were identified in Pengkalan Bujang and Sungai Mas, but were also found in Lobu Tua and Si Pamutung and a wreck off the coast of Turkey. They are now also thought to have come from the Near East. The V-Na-Ca² variety found at Pengkalan Bujang cannot as yet be attributed to any specific source. The third variety, the

V-Na-Ca³ group, has been found at Sungai Mas and at both Lobu Tua and Si Pamutung, though not at Pengkalan Bujang; they have also been found at Khuan Lukpad, an early site in southern Thailand and Sumatran sites such as Muara Jambi and Kambang Unglen, Palembang. All these glasses are thought to relate to the soda plant-ash glass that dominated mediaeval production in the Islamic world from about the eighth century CE onwards. Comprehensive statistical data is provided for all the analyses.

A variety of hypotheses are offered with regard to the usage of glass in mediaeval times. Recoveries at Lobu Tua and Bukit Hasang in Barus were found in what had been habitation areas. This is true also of the finds at Kota Cina, the majority of which were small glass containers concentrated in two small areas close to a domestic hearth. These vessels were clearly used in a domestic environment. Moreover this same location yielded a gold *tāli* or marriage token, which may suggest the vessels may have contained unguents or perfume of some form used by female members of the community.

All-in-all, this is a useful work on mediaeval glass at Pengkalan Bujang and in Southeast Asia generally, but is best read in conjunction with earlier work by Guillot et al. (2003) and earlier articles by Dussubieux as well as his most recent work. I do feel, however, that in the preparation of this work the authors may have benefited from conversations with Dr Alastair Lamb, said to be resident in France, and with Dr Robert Brill, now retired at Corning.

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Museums, history and culture in Malaysia

By ABU TALIB AHMAD

Singapore: NUS Press, 2015. Pp. 328. Tables, Maps, Illustrations, Abbreviations, Glossary, Bibliography, Index.

doi:10.1017/S0022463416000631

This book provides an overview of an area which has, until now, been relatively neglected: museums and public history in Malaysia. Through a survey of a number of the institutions that have sprung up as part of a postcolonial museumising boom, Abu Talib Ahmad analyses the extent to which their exhibits support or challenge national historical narratives. His consideration of the impact of political and cultural developments from the 1960s to the present offers a revealing perspective on contemporary Malaysian attitudes towards history and heritage.

The National Museum in Kuala Lumpur forms the starting point for the study. Since 2007, this institution has focused solely on history, incorporating many of the exhibits formerly displayed in the now-defunct National History Museum. The book's extended introduction describes both museums' foregrounding of nationalist, Malay-centric narratives which are designed to complement the national history curriculum and to support official nation-building aims. The author then introduces the