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Aceh as a Field for Ancient History Studies

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Because of its geographical situation, Aceh is a key area in the history of the Indian Ocean. Thanks to comparatively numerous written sources, which enable to reconstruct part of the history of two important sultanates, Samudra-Pasai between the end of the 13th c. and the beginning of the 16th c., then Aceh, some information are available on the links between this area and other regions in the Indian Ocean.. The *Hikayat Rajah Pasai*, a Malay text dated end of the 14th c. - beginning of the 15th c.¹, mentions the arrival in Pasai of trading ships from Kling, that is southeast India, during the reign of Sultan Malikul Saleh², a ruler whose epitaph indicates that he dies in 1297. A tradition reported by the Portuguese Tomé Pires suggest the presence of an influential community of people from Bengal there by mid-14th c.³. It is known also that the port of Pasai was visited by Calicut traders at the beginning of the 15th c.⁴. Moreover, since the beginning of the 20th c., we know about the link between twelve funerary monuments of richly carved white marble found in Pasai, and the region of Gujarat, especially Cambay, from where the material was exported and where the monuments were at least partially carved. Some of these monuments, if not all of them, are dated from the 15th century⁵. Besides giving information mostly on traders, foreign sources sometimes contain other valuable details such as the letters of Giovanni Empoli who reported the arrival of slaves from the Maldives archipelago during his stay in Pasai towards 1516⁶. These kinds of indications regarding the presence of Indian Ocean people in the Aceh region increased from the 16th c..

Therefore, based on these few written sources, we get the image of a town like Pasai in contact with almost all the coastal areas of South Asia during its history. In addition, it is necessary to take into consideration the fact that, at the turn of the second millenium, most of the coasts of India in relation with the Malay World, shelter cosmopolitan populations. Among these populations the main foreign components are generally traders of Egyptian Arabic, Turkish, Yemenite, Omani, Iraki or Persian origin, depending on period and places. It is probably among them that the two high ranking Persians met by Ibn Battuta during his stay at Samudra towards 1340, at the time of Sultan Al-Malik az-Zahir, need to be placed⁷.

Therefore it is clear that all along its history a town such as Pasai experienced a cosmopolitanism with a significant participation of Indian Ocean populations. On the one hand, from the beginning of the 16th c., Pasai, then Aceh, as emporia where all the marketable goods coming from the archipelago are available (pepper, nutmeg, tin, gold, camphor, benzoin, ivory and elephants, etc.), are documented by various local as well as foreign sources, which also shed light on its relation with the Indian Ocean; on the other hand very few things are known of the Pasai town structure and organization. There is no ancient map available and, as well as Aceh, no comprehensive archaeological excavations have ever been conducted. The only monuments still visible are islamic tombstones which historical potential begin to be tapped. A summary of recent researches and some research tracks regarding these monuments will be given in this paper. The situation is

¹ Vladimir Braginsky, *The heritage of traditional Malay literature*, Leiden, KITLV Press, 2004: 111.

² Russell Jones, *Hikayat Raja Pasai*, Kuala Lumpur, Yayasan Karyawan dan Penerbit Fajar Bakti, 1999: 21.

³ A. Cortesão (ed. & transl.), *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, New Delhi/Madras, Asian Educational Services, 1990 [1st ed. 1944], vol. I: 142 ([à vérifier](#)).

⁴ Geneviève Bouchon, "Les premiers voyages portugais à Pasai et à Pegou (1512-1520)", *Archipel*, 18, 1979: 129.

⁵ See J.P. Moquette ?????????? ; H.K.J. Cowan, "A Persian inscription in North Sumatra", *TBG*, 80, 1940: 17; Lambourn, *From Cambay...*, IMW, 2003 : 229, 244 ; Lambourn, *The Formation of the Batu Aceh tradition...*, IMW, 32(93), 2004: 217, 219.

⁶ Jorge M. Santos Alvès, *O Domínio do norte de Samatra*, Lisboa, Sociedade Histórica da independência de Portugal, 1999: 119.

⁷ They are cadî Amir Sayyid ash-Shirazi and the great expert in islamic law Taj-ad-din al-Isbahani ("Ibn Battuta. Voyages et Périples", in P. Charles-Dominique (transl. & ed.), *Voyageurs Arabes*, Paris, Éditions Gallimard, 1995: 966).

even more difficult for the contemporary and older towns of the Aceh area: few sources document their relations with the Indian Ocean and only a couple of sites have been briefly surveyed. What I intend to talk about here is a brief survey of the present situation concerning these ancient settlements, with a diversion through the bordering North Sumatra province where the results of excavations on West coast settlements, especially in the Barus area, carried out between 1995 and 2004 by the Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient in cooperation with the Pusat Penelitian dan Pengembangan Arkeologi Nasional Indonesia, may help to understand the potential of the ancient settlements in Aceh itself.

Ancient settlements of the Aceh area

The few data regarding Aceh coming from archaeological surveys published during these last twenty years show ancient settlements have been spotted in three areas: the Lambaro bay, north-west of Banda Aceh, the Krueng Raya Bays, approximately 30 km east of Banda Aceh and the village of Beringin close to Lhokseumawe.

Ed. McKinnon was probably the first to publish information on the Lambaro Bay sites⁸. As soon as 1988, he mentioned the presence of Chinese ceramics shards dated from the 13th c. for the oldest, the presence of Southeast Asian ceramics shards (Thai, Vietnamese and Burmese), of pottery similar to medieval south Indian and Sri Lanka pottery, of glass and bronze fragments, of which one bearing an Arabic inscription or pseudo-inscription, as well as iron fragments. At that time, although submerged, rectangular stone foundations were visible near the Kuala Pancu site. One of them was estimated approximately 50 m by 30 m.

Six years later, McKinnon again, with Lukman Nurhakim of the Archaeological Research Center of Indonesia, Nurdin A.R., of the Aceh Museum, and our colleague Pierre-Yves Manguin, spotted several sites in the Krueng Raya Bay. The remains of a earthen wall three to four meters high, dated 16th or beginning of the 17th c. were discovered in Lhok Cut, close to the eastern tip of the bay. A layer of occupation (voir livres archéo) located at the base of this structure yielded Chinese and Southeast Asian dated between the 13th and the 14th c., as well as shards of Indian red pottery. Moreover many fragments of gold jewels are supposed to have been discovered in this site. In addition, indications of ancient settlements were found in Cut Me and Ladong. On the opposite side of the northern tip of the bay, remains of an old fortress are still visible in Kuta Lubhok. According to oral tradition this building was related to Cola kings of South India⁹.

The third area for which results of surveys have been published is Lhokseumawe. Traces of ancient settlement are still visible among shrimp ponds near the village of Beringin, *kecamatan* of Samudra. Among the finds are Chinese, Thai and Vietnamese ceramics dated between the 15th and the beginning of the 16th c.¹⁰. Several tombstones, on which we will go back later, confirm the presence of a settlement since at least the 15th c. What is also noticeable is a mound, approximately 4 meters high, called "Cut Astana" (the

⁸ E. Edwards McKinnon, "Beyond Serandib: A Note on Lambri at the Northern Tip of Aceh", *Indonesia*, 46, 1988: 102-121; "Medieval Landfall Sites in Aceh, North Sumatra", in E.A. Bacus, I.C. Glover & V.C. Pigott (ed.), *Uncovering Southeast Asia's past : selected papers from the 10th International Conference of the European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists, the British Museum, London, 14-17 September 2004*, Singapore, NUS Press, 2006: 325-334; "Indian and Indonesian Elements in Early North Sumatra", in A. Reid (ed.), *Verandah of Violence*, Singapore/Washington, Singapore Univ. Press/Univ. of Washington Press, 2006: 22-37.

⁹ Suwedi Montana, "Nouvelles données sur les royaumes de Lamuri et Barat", *Archipel*, 53, 1997: 86.

¹⁰ We would like to thank M.F. Dupoizat for her identification on pictures of ceramic shards collected during a brief survey conducted in February 2006 (pers. comm., May 2006). These datations fit with those given by E. McKinnon (2006: 333).

palace's hill) covering about 800 m². This mound probably shelters a brick structure¹¹. To our knowledge, the older site (or sites), known by various sources and settled since the second half of the 13th c. at least, has yet to be found.

While waiting for comprehensive archaeological investigations, we have to rely solely on written sources and oral traditions in an attempt to map the ancient settlements of Aceh. By going backwards in time starting from Tomé Pires statement dated from the beginning of the 16th c.¹², it is possible to suggest the names of several coastal settlements whose foundation occurred in the 15th c. at least¹³:

- Aceh itself, mentioned for the first time towards 1520. The *Hikayat Aceh* recounts that it was founded by the merger of two settlements, Makota Alam and Dar ul-Kamal, located on both sides of a river.

- Lambri (Lamuri): "Lambri" still appears in the name of the kingdom of Aceh at the beginning of the 16th c.. Pires noted its location in the vicinity of the town of Aceh. Since the 9th c., several Arabic sources mention Rami, Ramni or Lamri. The Tamil inscription of Thanjavur, dated 1030, contains the toponym Ilāmurideśam. Lambrē is found in a 12th c. Armenian text. During the following century, Chinese sources mention the country of Lan-wou-Li or Lan-Li, two toponyms reminding of Lambri. Lambri again appears among the settlements mentioned by Marco Polo at the end of the 13th c. During the 14th c., it is mentioned by Odoric de Pordenone (1323), then in the Javanese text *Nagarakertagama* dated 1365. At the beginning of the 15th c., Ma Huan writing on the great maritime expeditions of the Ming dynasty in Southeast Asia and in the Indian Ocean mentions Nan-p'o-Li. Thus, between the 9th c. and the beginning of the 16th c., we have a toponym or a group of very close toponyms at the tip of Aceh. Perhaps here we have to deal with several contemporary and more or less connected harbours with alternate domination. It is almost certain that the discoveries made in the Lambaro and Krueng Raya bays are related to this group of toponyms¹⁴.

On the east coast:

- Pedir, close to the present town of Sigli, has been largely ignored by researchers until now. At the beginning of the 16th c., this big pepper producer was visited by ships from Coromandel, Gujarat and Bengal. Barros, a Portuguese official historian, described it as the largest kingdom of the region, founded well before Melaka, that is during the 13th c. at least.

¹¹ Notulen van de Algemeene en Directievergaderingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, XXII, 1884: 51.

¹² A. Cortesão (ed. & transl.), 1990, vol. 1: 135-148, 163.

¹³ Sources used are: Teuku Iskandar, *De Hikayat Atjeh*, Gravenhage, Martinus Nijhoff, 1958; G.R. Tibbetts, *A Study of the Arabic Texts Containing Material on South-East Asia*, Leiden/London, E.J. Brill, 1979; G. Coedès, *Les États Hindouisés d'Indochine et d'Indonésie*, Paris, De Boccard, 1964; Kéram Kévonian, "Un itinéraire arménien de la mer de Chine", in C. Guillot (ed.), *Histoire de Barus. Le Site de Lobu Tua. I. Etudes et documents*, Paris, Cahiers d'Archipel 30, 1998: 35-118; Marco Polo, *La description du Monde*, Louis Hambis (ed.), Paris, Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1955; L. Bressan, "Odoric of Pordenone (1265-1331)", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, LXX(2), 1997: 1-23; T.G.Th. Pigeaud, *Java in the 14th Century. A Study in Cultural History. The Nagara-Kertagama by Rakawi Prapanca of Majapahit, 1365 A.D.*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1960-1963, 5 vol.; Ma Huan, *Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan*, J.V.G. Mills (ed. & transl.), Bangkok, White Lotus Press, 1997 [1st ed., 1970]; Laurence A. Noonan, *John of Empoli and his relations with Afonso de Albuquerque*, Lisboa, Ministério da Educação, Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical, 1989; J. M. Santos Alvès, *Três Sultanatos malaio do Estreito de Malaca nos séculos XV E XVI (Samudera-Pasai, Aceh E Malaca/Johor)*, Tesa de Doutoramento, Lisboa, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2003; Mark Dion, "Sumatra Through Portuguese Eyes: Excerpts from João de Barros' *Decadas da Asia*", *Indonesiã*, 9, 1970: 128-162.

¹⁴ This hypothesis has been suggested by E. McKinnon as soon as 1988.

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- Aeilabu, a vassal of Pedir at the beginning of the 16th c. after having been a kingdom.
- Lide, a kingdom closely related to Pedir at the beginning of the 16th c.
- Pirada, a kingdom made up of two cities at the beginning of the 16th c., formerly vassal of Pedir.
- Dagroian, a trade place only mentioned by Marco Polo at the end of the 13th c., apparently located between Lambri and Samudra.
- Samwi, mentioned in a 12th c. Armenian text, tentatively located in Lhokseumawe.
- Samudra and Pasai, already mentioned before.
- K' roudayi, mentioned in a 12th c. Armenian text, tentatively located a bit to the east of Pasai.
- Basman, a trade place only mentioned by Marco Polo at the end of the 13th c., apparently located east of Samudra.
- Parlak, close to the present Peureulak, which does not seem to be mentioned after mid-14th c.¹⁵. It is probably the Ferlec noted by Marco Polo at the end of the 13th c. and perhaps the Pourē of the 12th c. Armenian text.
- Tumihang, which name remains today in the name of a river and the name Tanjung Tamiang, near Langsa. This town seems to appear only in the *Nagarakertagama*, that is by mid-14th c..

On the west coast:

- Daya, mentioned in 16th c. Portuguese. It is maybe the town of Barat mentioned in the *Nagarakertagama* by mid-14th c..
- K' rout (or K' routi), a harbour, mentioned in a 12th c. Armenian text, tentatively located in the vicinity of present Lhok-Kruet.
- Mancopa, a kingdom at the beginning of the 16th c., probably in the vicinity of Meulaboh.
- Singkel, a kingdom at the beginning of the 16th c.

Attempts have been made to locate a couple of Chinese toponyms dated before the 9th c. in Aceh, but there is no clear solution yet with this complicated issue¹⁶. The presence in Aceh of settlements of significant size before the 9th c. is quite possible but experience shows that this type of site is very difficult to detect if there is no remains of stone or brick, and if they were abandoned before the 9th c.. A copper Roman coin dated from the emperor Hadrian reign (that is first half of the 2nd c. AD), supposed to have been discovered in Aceh more than twenty years ago, would perhaps be the first clue of very ancient historical settlement in Aceh¹⁷. As enigmatic is the history of ancient settlements in the interior of the territory. Regarding Prehistory, several shells-middens are known

¹⁵ In fact, the last mention seems to occur in the *Nagarakertagama*.

¹⁶ See especially O.W. Wolters, *Early Indonesian Commerce*, Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press, 1967. For an updated review regarding this issue, see Roderich Ptak, "Possible Chinese References to the Barus Area (Tang to Ming)", in C. Guillot (ed.), *Histoire de Barus. Le Site de Lobu Tua. I. Etudes et documents*, Paris, Cahiers d'Archipel 30, 1998: 119-147.

¹⁷ McKinnon, 1988: footnote 94 p. 120.

south of the Tamiang river. Here, shells are mixed with stone tools and animal bones. These sites could have been settled since 12.000 BP¹⁸.

It is advisable to add two lucky finds isolated to this review. It is first of all about a head of stone statue of Lokesvara coming from Aceh, but whose exact origin is unknown, which was offered to the museum of Batavia in 1880. Stylistiquement, this part would be to bring closer the art of Polonaruva to Sri Lanka with a dating of the 10^E S. the second isolated lucky find is known researchers since much more recently. It is indeed in 1991, that a stele registered in tamoule was discovered in a mosque of Desa Neusu in Banda Aceh. Today preserved at the museum of Aceh, it unfortunately is very eroded but could be dated paléographiquement from the end of the XII^E century. The few words which could be deciphered seem to show a bond with commercial activities. The term " *mandapam* ", in particular, could return to a foundation or a gift to a sanctuary, a current practice at the time among associations of merchants tamouls. This inscription could thus be the third inscription relating to old commercial corporations tamoules found in the zone Sumatra/péninsule malayo-thaïe. Oldest, found in Takuapa, on the West coast of the isthmus of Kra, paléographiquement from the 9^E S. It is dated indicates that a tank was built and put under the protection of three commercial corporations, of which the manigramam, often mentioned in the inscriptions of the south of India between IX^{ème} and XIV^{ème} century. This inscription, which also mentions the presence of soldiers, implies that these communities have a counter then in Takuapa.

The other inscription, practically at equal distance from Bandaged Aceh, was found in 1873 in Barus, on the West coast of Northern Sumatra. It is preserved today at the National Museum of Jakarta. Dated 1088, it is clearly about a declaration of members of a major commercial guild of India of the South, the Ayyavole guild, relating to rights to pay by the merchants visiting the place. This inscription enables us to make the transition with a short outline from the urban sites excavated in the area from Barus between 1995 and 2004, sites certainly completely comparable with those which could be excavated in Aceh.

Old urban sites of the area of Barus

At least as of the 6^E S., the name of Barus is associated in various sources with the product which will make its reputation during more than one millenium, the camphor which comes from its back-country. As of this time, camphor is known in China as in the Mediterranean. The oldest site of the area of Barus known to date is Lobu Tua, from which the stele tamoule comes mentioned above. Located at a few hundred meters of the ocean, at an altitude of approximately 20 m, its central part is protected by a system made up of a ground rampart and a ditch still partially visible today, a system which limited a surface estimated between 7.5 and 14 hectares. It is in this central part that the occupation was densest, whereas the vicinity presents a sparser habitat on 200 hectares approximately. More than 1.000 m² were excavated, primarily in the central part. Among the lucky finds, it is necessary to mention Chinese ceramics (nearly 17.000 shards), which makes it possible to date the site between semi-9^E S. and the turning of the 12^E S. the South Asia is represented by several categories of objects, with initially the potteries. Indeed, among 860 kg of collected fragments, many are those which, from their form where them decoration, make think of an origin in Coromandel of the Cola kingdom, of Sri Lanka and probably in India of the North-West. They are pots

¹⁸ McKinnon, "A brief note on the current state of certain of the kitchen middens of East Sumatra", *Sumatra Research Bulletin*, 4(2), 1975: 45-50; P. Bellwood, *Prehistory of the Indo-Malaysian Archipelago*, Sydney, Academic Press, 1985: 173.

to cook various forms (of which *the kadhai* in tamoul, and *the kalaya* cinghalais some, with in particular a decoration printed in honeycomb), dishes, plate, earthenware jar and pot brought by the merchants for their daily use. Lobu Tua also delivered objects originating in the Middle East. Among the potteries, it is necessary to quote the earthenware jars and the pots dated between the medium from the 9^E S. and the beginning from the 11^E S., originating in Siraf, a port located at the bottom of the Persian Gulf in current Iran, as well as a crockery dated from the 11^E S., polychrome incised known as "sgraffiato", often decorated pseudo-inscriptions, probably originating in Iran also. More than 9.000 shards of puffed up glass dated between the 9^E S. and the 11^E S. were collected at the time of the excavations. The majority comes from the Persian Gulf, the remainder having been produced in Khorasan, an area of the north of Iran; or in the Eastern Mediterranean (Egypt, Syria). They are bowls, bottles, carafes, earthenware jars, ewers, goblets and small bottles. The lucky finds also include/understand a seal registered in characters coufic where one can read "Allah. Muhammad" or "by Allah. Muhammad". Originating in Iran, it is dated 10^E S.-11^E S. Among the other very interesting lucky finds appear of the currencies of gold as of the fragments of moulds with currency completely similar to those which one can see with Nadu Tamil, in the museum of Gangaikondacholapuram, the site of the Cola capital in XIe S. In the current state of knowledge, Barus is the first place of Sumatra to have emitted a currency, perhaps as of the 10^E S.

These excavations made it possible to establish that Lobu Tua is a foreign counter, probably created in the medium of the 9^E S. by merchants of India of the South or Sri Lanka, quickly followed by merchants of the Middle East, all in the search of camphor. Nothing indicates the presence of a political power extremely, but Lobu Tua seems to escape control from the great installed capacities working then in the Strait from Malacca. It is acted in fact of a maillon in a commercial network of the Indian Ocean connecting the Middle East, India and the archipelago. The principal role in the city is held by the "Indians" who are associated of Javanais for the trade, like for the extraction of gold in the island of Sumatra. The site is abandoned brutally with the turning of the 12^E S. a local Malayan chronicle of the end of the 19^E S. tells that Lobu Tua was attacked by giants, without giving more precise details. This chronicle is remarkable in measurement, where certainly without knowing the existence of the site of Lobu Tua and even less that of the inscription tamoule, it tells that Barus was founded by of Chetti and the Hindus, thus preserving in the collective memory an old event one millenium and was confirmed today by archaeology.

While following in the same chronicle the account of the successive foundations of the inhabited sites of the area of Barus, one leads to Bukit Hasang. From the physical point of view, the site is very comparable with Lobu Tua. It overhangs the coast at an altitude of 20 m approximately and includes/understands a strengthened central part estimated at 9 ha without taking account of erosion on one of its faces. Nearly 700 m² were excavated on this site. On the whole among the lucky finds, it is necessary to announce more than 43.000 shards of imported ceramics and more than 120.000 shards of potteries exceeding a ton. All the objects are being analysed, but one can already say that the site is founded about the middle of 12th S., then knows his apogee between semi-13th and the turning of 15th S. Abandonné during the 15^E S., it is again inhabited between the end of the 15^E S. and semi-16^E S. on a total surface of 33 ha approximately. The proportion of the imported potteries seems much less significant, which would indicate a population more stable than to Lobu Tua. the inscription of one of the oldest dated funerary steles found on the site (1370) gives an idea of the complexity

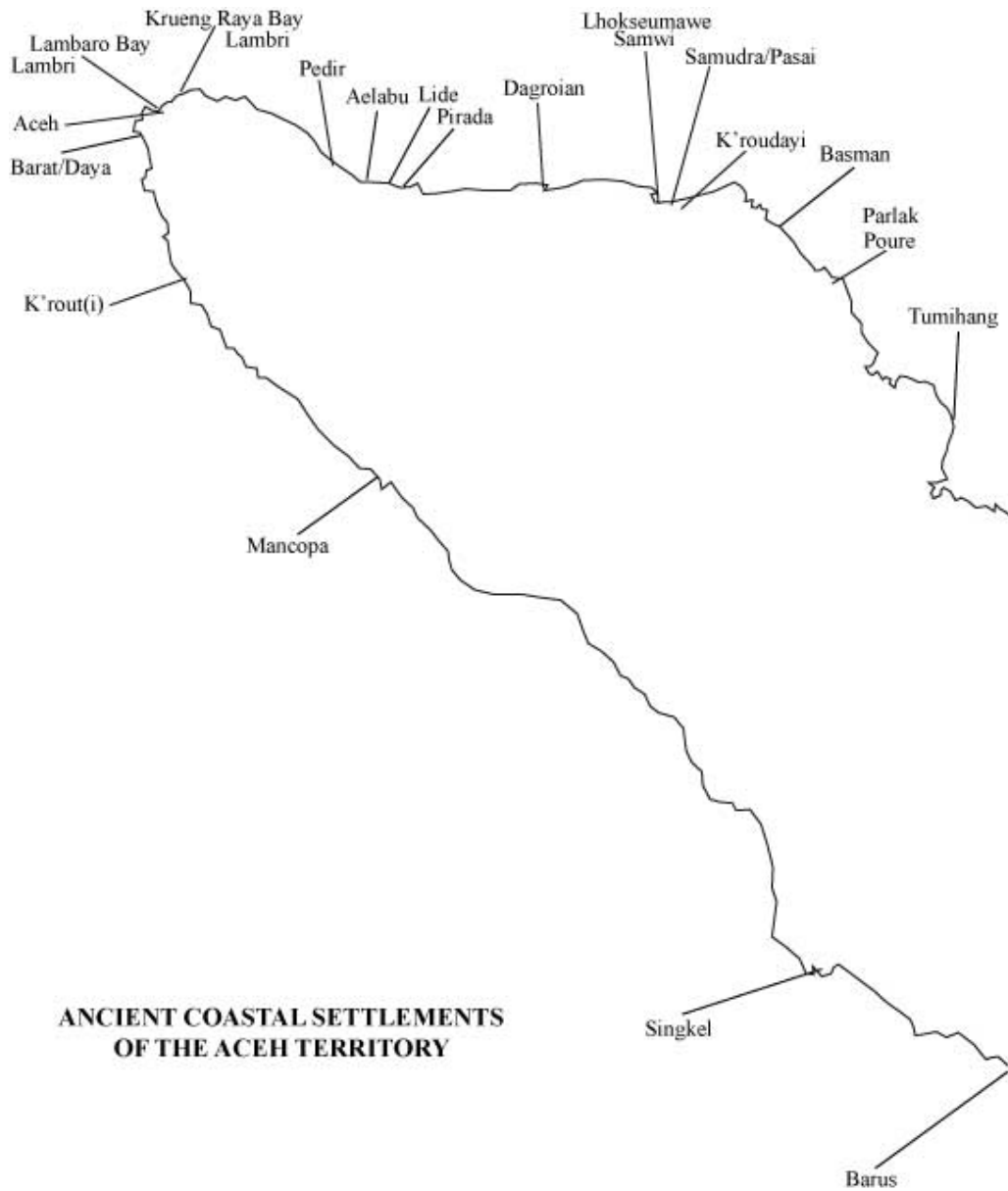
of this company. One finds there words of Arab origin with a construction grammatically Persian, a Malayan word, a name which could be Chinese, as well as a formula attested in Turkey and in Yemen. In connection with Barus and funerary steles, we would like to recall here the recent rediscovery by Ludvik Kalus and Claude Guillot of the inscription of the funerary stele of Hamzah Fansuri, the large poet and Malayan mystic. Recorded in 1934 by an Egyptian epigraphist in a cemetery of Mecque, this inscription indicates that Shaykh Hamza B. ' Abd Allâh Al-Fansûri is deceased into 933 H, that is to say 1527, i.e. well before the date supposed until now. Apart from the implications of this rediscovery for the biography of the poet who thus probably never lived in Aceh, a city incipient at the time, it places Barus like a large hearth of Malayan literature. Barus knew certainly later a strong visible acihaise influence in particular through tombs of the turning of the 20^E S., tombs which are late imitations of an artistic tradition which seems to have taken birth with Aceh at the beginning of the 15^E S.

Moslem funerary steles of Aceh

Aceh is the area of the richest Malais world by far with regard to the old Moslem funerary steles hones some which shelter high-ranking persons as well as members of their family. One can distinguish at least three great traditions. Most spectacular are white marble tombs the imported of Gujarat with Pasai at the beginning of the 15^E S. Another tradition, perhaps local, bears the name of *plakpling*. One misses for the moment of data to date his origin. The tradition best represented is undoubtedly local origin. It is that which one calls *batu Aceh* in the close areas, in particular in Malaise peninsula. Indeed, as of the medium of the 15^E S., one finds these typical steles by their forms and their decorations with Johor, and later of Pattani in the south of Thailand, until the south of Sulawesi, while passing various areas of Sumatra, Java and Borneo. Imported or imitated until the beginning of the 20^E S., these steles of various forms, generally richly carved, translate the great radiation of the sultanates of Pasai and Aceh. If recent research made it possible to count and describe with precision nearly 500 monuments in Malayan peninsula, such a general inventory, bases of any research, is cruelly lacking for Aceh. Aceh shelters the greatest number indeed of it, perhaps 4.000. Approximately 350 of them carry inscriptions containing of the historical data of first importance for the history of the kingdoms of the north of Sumatra. Their study is in hand by two French researchers, Ludvik Kalus and Claude Guillot. But any remainder to be even made on the history of this tradition, like on the artistic aspects and symbolic systems in particular.

The combination of the rare archaeological data published to date with some sources of origin insulindiennes and foreign enabled us to reconstitute partially the urban landscape of Aceh between the 9^E S. and the 15^E S. a first list exceeding twenty urban sites, where any remainder to be made on the archaeological level, could be established. The example of Barus shows that the excavation of these sites would be a major contribution to the history of Aceh and more generally to the history of the Indian Ocean.

Aceh is in addition a single case in the Malais world by the size and the richness of its Moslem funerary monumental inheritance. The area saw thus, from the very start of the 15^E S. at least, the establishment of several monumental traditions of large a intêrêt historical and artistic emblématique, worked out at the time of the sultanates of Pasai and Aceh, a radiation in practically everyone Malais knew. Just like the old urban sites, this treasure made several thousands of testimonys, is a fragile heritage which it is advisable to preserve as fast as possible and to study under its various aspects.





Indian pottery found in Lobu Tua (Barus)



Persian ware found in Lobu Tua (Barus)



The three main ancient Islamic tombstones traditions in Aceh



Graveyard of Kampung Pande (Banda Aceh)(Febr. 2007)