# *Raffles and the Barometer of Civilisation: Images and Descriptions of Ruined* Candis *in* The History of Java*

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The publication of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles's *The History of Java* in 1817 marked a new sophistication in the recording of British experiences of the island.[1] Providing a depth of analysis and breadth of subject matter, Raffles's publication was not the fairly simplistic diaristic account of adventure and opinion that had characterised many earlier British publications on Southeast Asia, but a highly detailed, minutely observed and handsomely illustrated study.[2]

The second volume of Raffles's substantial publication opens with a chapter on the island's *candi*s and antiquities illustrated with engraved vignettes by a number of professional printmakers as well as a group of aquatinted plates by William Daniell. Considered not only a leading exponent of the aquatinting process but also one of the country's foremost artists specialising in the Oriental view, Daniell's plates for *The History of Java* represent some of the period's most beautiful images of Southeast Asia.

This article explores the way in which Java's crumbling *candi*s, so handsomely illustrated by Daniell, were appreciated by British audiences as far more than just the exotic and arcane architectural detritus of a distant land. When Raffles published *The History of Java*, images of the artistic remains of past civilisations were understood by his readers in very specific ways. Influenced by aesthetic theories that linked artistic accomplishment with socio-political development, British audiences were attuned to viewing artistic output as a gauge of material progress, while ruins, a favourite *leitmotif* of the period, prompted melancholic and philosophical reflection on the course of empire in which decline was inevitably linked with a society's economic and political condition. Informed by contemporary theories of aesthetic and socio-political development, the descriptions and depictions of Java's Buddhist and Hindu monuments in *The History of Java* allowed Raffles's readers to speculate on the condition, both past and present, of Javanese society and its relative state of development in comparison with European, South Asian and Southeast Asian cultures.

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[1]Thomas Stamford Raffles, *The History of Java*, 2 vols (London, Black, Parbury and Allen, and John Murray, 1817).

[2]Two other notable exceptions of the period include William Marsden's *The History of Sumatra, Containing an Account of the Government, Laws, Customs, and Manners of the Native Inhabitants, with a Description of the Natural Productions, and a Relation of the Ancient Political State of That Island* (London, William Marsden, 1783, 2nd ed. 1784, 3rd ed. 1811) and John Crawfurd's *History of the Indian Archipelago Containing an Account of the Manners, Arts, Languages, Religions, Institutions, and Commerce of its Inhabitants* (Edinburgh, Archibald Constable and Co., 1820).

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During the mid-eighteenth century, a number of scholars began suggesting that artistic endeavour might effectively function as a barometer of civilisation, shedding light on the broader socio-political development of a people rather than merely providing an indication of their aesthetic tastes. This approach was developed to its most convincing in the most important treatise on art and aesthetics compiled during the eighteenth century, Johann Joachim Winckelmann's *The History of the Art of Antiquity* (1764) which had a profound influence on the way in which the artistic remains of early cultures were assessed and understood. What made Winckelmann's thesis so groundbreaking was that he chose not to focus, as others had done, on the iconographical meanings of ancient statuary or on the biographies of artists highlighted as significant in classical texts. Instead, he attempted to elucidate Greek history through a systematised examination of its artistic remains, in the process developing a stylistic chronology for Greek art that traced its progression from its archaic beginnings through to its eventual decline.[3]

By mapping the evolution of a civilisation's aesthetic consciousness, Winckelmann incorporated the concept of historical progress and the correlation between artistic endeavour and socio-political context into critical assessments of specific objects and art styles. Despite the detection of numerous errors, inconsistencies and generalisations in his chronology, his thesis had a considerable impact on the way in which past cultures were assessed and understood.[4] Indeed, so influential did the concept of a link between the socio-political condition of a civilisation and its artistic output become, that by the mid-nineteenth century it was acceptable to suggest that artistic remains could paint a more accurate picture of a civilisation than the more conventional accounts of its military or commercial prowess.[5]

Economic factors, though, still played a critical role in shaping perceptions of progress. The coupling of socio-political development with economic growth, both of which, under the right conditions, were held to be illimitable, was an optimistic mode of thought that gained considerable attention in the latter part of the eighteenth century.[6] Perhaps the most influential and widely read statement of this kind was Adam Smith's *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776) in which Raffles became interested when preparing *The History of Java*. The scale of civilisation, Smith suggested, was best determined using economic development as its index. "According to the natural course of things", he noted,

[3]Alain Schnapp, *The Discovery of the Past: The Origins of Archaeology* (London, 1996), pp. 258 and 262. See also Alex Potts, 'Winckelmann's Construction of History', *Art History* 5, no. 4 (December 1982), 377 ff.

[4]Herder, for example, in his *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man* chose to discuss Roman history and artistic production in terms of tyrannical power which he suggested had inspired the Roman populace to proclaim "the splendour of their victories by monuments of fame, and the majesty of their city by magnificent and durable structures; so that they very early thought of nothing else than the eternity of their proud existence . . . This genius was not the spirit of general liberty and comprehensive benevolence" (cited in Francis Haskell, *History and Its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past* [New Haven and London, 1993], pp. 226–227). Similarly, he discussed the development of the Gothic style in terms of the rise of cities and commerce (*ibid*., pp. 228–229) while others saw it as the product of Europe's feudal system (*ibid*., p. 230).

[5]*Ibid*., p. 217.

[6]See David Spadafora, *The Idea of Progress in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (New Haven, 1990), chps 6–8, and George W. Stocking Jr., *Victorian Anthropology* (New York, 1991), 30ff. It should be noted that belief in the illimitability of progress was generally an English rather than Scottish phenomenon. As Spadafora has observed, it was English commentators who projected the concept of progress into the future, something the Scottish thinkers rarely did.

> The greater part of the capital of every growing society is, first, directed to agriculture, afterwards to manufactures, and last of all to foreign commerce. This order of things is so very natural, that in every society that had any territory, it has always, I believe, been in some degree observed.[7]

Smith's determination that "a civilized and commercial society" represented the highest and most progressive order of social organisation was also adopted by other members of the British enlightenment. John Millar, for example, in his *The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks* (1771) had described the evolution of society in terms of a progression from hunter-gatherers, to pastoral then agricultural communities, and finally to the commercial state.[8] Joseph Priestly, too, advocated an economic basis for social organisation in which he held that a commercial society enjoyed distinct benefits over those more primitive systems further down the order. The development from a hunter-gatherer society to one organised around commercial enterprise, he suggested in his lecture on *The Advantage of Commerce to a State* (1788), involved an increased interdependence and social cohesion which in turn resulted in an expansion and improvement in the system of government and the administration of justice. Commerce encouraged peace, industry and enterprise, and stimulated a demand for labour thereby ensuring that the "nation may procure themselves the conveniences they want; and thus human life be rendered much happier".[9] William Robertson evidently agreed. In his *The History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V* (1792) he suggested that commerce exerted "considerable influence in polishing the manners of the European nations, and in establishing among them order, equal laws, and humanity".[10] Commerce, it seemed, had a civilising effect on those societies in which it became established.

There was, however, an anomaly in the progress-follows-commerce paradigm that was obvious to the British merchants who plied the trade routes of Southeast Asia. Clearly Asia, like Europe, had its share of commercial states of long standing, yet an involvement in international trade had not ensured their progress and prosperity. While many Asian polities could be included within the category of commercial societies, it was a category that was held to cover a very broad range of accomplishment: the characteristics of commercial societies may have been detectable in Asia, but the Asian examples were understood to be very imperfect ones.[11]

Java, a reviewer of Raffles' publication noted, was a "happily situated country [which] may be supposed to have arisen to commercial prosperity, very early".[12] This was something Raffles took care to emphasise within his text. "The same advantages which the Europeans derived from the navigation of the Mediterranean", he observed,

[7]Smith, *Inquiry*, vol. 1, p. 405. See also P. J. Marshall and Glyndwr Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind: British Perceptions of the World in the Age of Enlightenment* (London, 1982), p. 147 regarding Smith's 1762–63 Glasgow lectures on the same subject.

[8]Michael Rosenthal, 'The Rough and the Smooth: Rural Subjects in Later-Eighteenth-Century Art', in *Prospects for the Nation: Recent Essays in British Landscape, 1750–1880*, eds Michael Rosenthal, Christiana Payne, and Scott Wilcox (New Haven and London, 1997), p. 49.

[9]Joseph Priestly, *Lectures on History and General Policy* (1788) cited in Spadafora, *The Idea of Progress*, p. 241.

[10]William Robertson, *The History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V With a View of the Progress of Society in Europe, From the Subversion of the Roman Empire, to the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century*, vol. I (New York: G. F. Hopkins, 1804 [1792]). See also Spadafora, *The Idea of Progress*, p. 275.

[11]P. J. Marshall, 'Taming the Exotic: The British and India in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in *Exoticism in the Enlightenment*, eds G. S. Rousseau and Roy Porter, (Manchester, 1990), p. 55.

[12]Review of *The History of Java, . . . The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register . . .*, no. 24 (December 1817), p. 572.

> the inhabitants of the Malayan Archipelago enjoyed in a higher degree; and it cannot be doubted, that among the islands lying in smooth and unruffled seas, inviting the sail or oar of the most timid and inexperienced mariner, an intercourse subsisted at a very early period.[13]

These exchanges, Raffles suggested, had made a profound contribution to the island's "high degree of civilization and . . . advancement in the arts" which its ruined *candi*s so elegantly and eloquently betokened.[14] There was little doubt, he hypothesised, that Java "very early emerged from barbarism, and rose to great commercial prosperity".[15] Indeed, he compared its situation, so highly conducive to commercial exchange, with Smith's description of England, quoting a passage from Book III of *The Wealth of Nations*. Like England, he noted, Java,

> on account of the natural fertility of its soil, of the great extent of its sea-coast in proportion to the whole of the country, and of the number of its navigable rivers, affording the conveniency of water carriage to some of its most inland parts, is conveniently fitted by nature [. . .] to be the seat of foreign commerce, of manufactures for sale to the neighbouring countries, and of all the improvements which these can occasion.[16]

Clearly, long before Europeans had ventured into their waters, the Javanese had participated in an extensive trading network.

Such activity, however, had not been sustained. While Javanese involvement in trade may have once set them on the path to "advancement in the arts", they were considered to have early on deserted maritime commerce and were now "almost entirely unacquainted with navigation and foreign trade, and little inclined to engage in either".[17] Much of the blame for this was laid on the island's system of government which had not allowed a commercial society to develop according to Smith's "natural course of things". Since the late seventeenth century when François Bernier had published his widely read and translated *Histoire de la Dernière Révolution des Etats du Grand Mogol* . . . (1671–72),[18] oriental despotism had been supposed to be the universal, even a natural condition of government throughout the whole of Asia, Southeast Asia included. Indeed, the Abbé Raynal, in his *Histoire Philosophique et Politique des Etablissements et du Commerce des Européens dans les Deux Indes* (*A Philosophical*

[13] Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 1, p. 190. There was some conjecture that Java's trading links had extended to Tyre, Egypt, and from an early date, to Madagascar, and few disputed that Arab and Chinese traders had been involved in commercial exchanges with the island from at least the ninth century, 'if not much earlier' (*ibid.*, pp. 190–191).

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] *Ibid.* See Smith, *Inquiry*, vol. 1, p. 442. It is interesting to note Raffles' slight variation to Smith's original wording in suggesting Java's manufactures could be offered to "neighbouring countries" for Smith had envisaged England's wares being available for "distant sale". This reflects the nature of maritime trade in the region which was carried out in the main by a succession of traders extending from China to India and beyond, rather than by long-haul shipping.

[17] Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 1, p. 57. In a footnote further into his text, however, Raffles notes that

> [a]lthough but a few of the natives of Java venture their property in foreign speculations, the natives of Java form the crews of all coasting vessels belonging to Chinese, Arabs, or Europeans (*ibid.*, n.†, pp. 201–202).

[18] For an early translation into English see Francois Bernier, *The History of the late Revolution of the Empire of the Great Mogol: together with the most considerable passages for 5 years following in that Empire. To which is added, a letter to the Lord Colbert, touching the extent of Indostan* . . . , trans. Henry Oldenburg (London, Moses Pitt, 1671–72).

*and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*) (1772),[19] one of the most widely read and influential treatises on European imperial and commercial expansion of the period, asserted quite simply that "[a]ll Asia is subject to a despotic government".[20] British authors rarely challenged the validity of this generalisation of almost breathtaking proportions, sweeping together as it does a multitude of cultures and political entities. Instead, the universality of oriental despotism was held to be self-evident[21] and Raffles had numerous precedents when he assured his readers that the Javanese were "as industrious and laborious as any people could be expected to be, in their circumstances of insecurity and oppression" which were the consequence of a government that was "in principle a pure unmixed despotism".[22]

Despotism was considered a powerful disincentive to progress as it stifled all motivation to improvement, both material and intellectual. Where an individual could not enjoy security in their ownership of property, could not safeguard the profits of their labours, could not be guaranteed reward or preferment for outstanding ability or expertise, why, British commentators asked, would they outlay the capital or effort necessary for the improvement of agriculture, manufacture or education that were considered imperatives for progress? According to William Jones, despotism was

> benumbing and debasing [of] all those faculties, which distinguish men from the herd that grazes: and to that cause he would impute the decided inferiority of most Asiatick nations, ancient and modern, to those in Europe, who are blest with happier governments.[23]

Under such conditions, any civilisation would be hard pressed to achieve stasis, let alone progress. Under despotic rule, a population could be stirred to action only by fear or force. Incentive was nonexistent, and society mired in cowering apathy.

Javanese society, though, had to contend not only with the impositions of local elites but also the "influence of a withering monopoly, the rapacity of avarice armed with power, and the short-sighted tyranny" of a Dutch colonial administration, which, by adapting for its own purposes "all the pre-existing machinery of despotism, . . . aggravated the evils of a capricious and semi-barbarous government".[24] While the Dutch government in Europe was considered to "breathe the spirit of liberality and benevolence", the "tyranny and rapacity" of its colonial administration was widely censured and appeared to confirm Hume's observation that those who benefited from political freedom were tyrannical in their rule of others.[25]

The charge of political and economic mismanagement had considerable impact on the way in which contemporary Javanese society was perceived by Raffles's readers and naturally coloured their assessments of the ruined *candi*s and the corollary implications of social

[19] Although the first edition is dated 1770, it actually appeared in 1772. Edition used for this study: Abbé Guillaume-Thomas Raynal, *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*, trans. J. O. Justamond, vol. 1 (London: W. Strahan; and T. Cadell, 1783).

[20] *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 116.

[21] Marshall and Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind*, pp. 141–142.

[22] Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 1, pp. 251 and 267.

[23] Cited in Marshall and Williams, *The Great Map of Mankind*, p. 142.

[24] Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 1, pp. 192 and 151.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. ix. See for example Hume's *That Politics May Be Reduced to a Science* (1748), cited in P. J. Marshall, '*A Free Though Conquering People': Britain and Asia in the Eighteenth Century. An Inaugural Lecture in the Rhodes Chair of Imperial History Delivered at King's College London on Thursday 5 March 1981* (London, 1981?), p. 7.

progress. Perceptions of Java's despotic mode of government weighed heavily against it and tempered British opinions of artistic fluorescence or cultural excellence within the region. It was European societies from classical Greece and Rome to eighteenth and nineteenth-century Western Europe that were judged by British commentators as the most advanced civilisations, the West always being considered the most appropriate source for the type of society to which humankind was progressing.[26] Certainly British perceptions of aesthetic or artistic progress in Southeast Asia were imbued with this chauvinism. The privileged place that classical Greek art held in European aesthetic criticism meant that it became the exemplar against which all other artistic endeavours were measured and, despite an increasing interest in Gothic and non-European architectural styles, the cool formalism of Greek art dominated the canons of good taste as the epitome of the aesthetic ideal. It was a comparison to which Javanese art and architecture were not immune, enabling British readers to gauge the island's cultural achievements, about which they knew little, against the more familiar Graeco-Roman models which informed so much of Europe's own cultural landscape.

Even before *The History of Java* brought Java's architectural remains to the attention of British readers, Indian art and architecture had been subjected to similar comparisons and some of the conclusions drawn were later echoed in British judgements of the Southeast Asian monuments. Hodges's had been a lonely voice when he suggested in his *Dissertation on the Prototypes of Architecture* (1787) and again in his *Travels in India, During the Years 1780, 1781, 1782 & 1783* (1793 and 1794) that India's architectural styles should be judged on their own merits rather than against the classical ideals of Grecian models (which he nevertheless very much admired).[27] More often, Indian art and architecture were scrutinised in terms of how they equated with the Graeco-Roman standards. Indeed, the collector Charles Townley, even while he looked to India as a source of new examples of ancient statuary, remained focussed on Greece and Rome: he hoped to supplement his celebrated collection of Greek and Roman antiquities (now in the collection of the British Museum) with Indian objects in the expectation that a study of subcontinental statuary would shed more light on the ancient world of the Mediterranean.[28]

For those afforded the opportunity to view the Indian temples, Greece and Rome were never far away. In his *Oriental Memoirs*, James Forbes recounted a visit to Elephanta in the company of "an eminent English artist". "[H]e was so absorbed in astonishment and delight as to forget where he was", wrote Forbes. "He had seen the most striking objects of art in Italy and Greece, but never any thing which filled his mind with such extraordinary sensation".[29] Such emotions, however, Forbes felt forced to qualify:

> I do not wish to insinuate from this gentleman's surprize and delight in the caverns of the Elephanta, that he placed the Hindoo sculpture in competition with the Grecian temples and statues: it was the general effect which struck him. However those gigantic statues, and others

[26] Robert Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress* (New York, 1980), p. 280.

[27] Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford, 1977), p. 125. See also Mildred Archer and Ronald Lightbown, *India Observed: India as Viewed by British Artists 1760–1860* (London, 1982), 74 ff.

[28] Archer and Lightbown, p. 22.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

of similar form, in the caves of Elora and Salsette, may astonish a common observer, the man of taste looks in vain for proportion of form and expression of countenance.[30]

Such prejudices are also apparent in assessments of Javanese sculpture and architecture. In closing his chapter on the island's antiquities, Raffles suggested that a comparative analysis of the Javanese remains and Graeco-Roman models was both appropriate and inevitable, although he did not take on the project himself. The haste with which *The History of Java* was prepared, he suggested, forced him to compile his chapter on Java's antiquities largely from the accounts of others and precluded him from expanding further on a subject which he did not in any case feel confident of undertaking. "My object, as you know, is rather to collect the raw materials, than to establish a system of my own", he had written to William Marsden in 1815,[31] absolving himself of the responsibility of adding interpretation to his largely descriptive text. But while suggesting that a comparative study would "require more time and learning than I can command", he did propose it as an interesting line of enquiry suitable for those better placed to make such judgements.[32]

Others did not feel so reticent in offering their opinions on the matter. Captain Godfrey Baker, who had provided much of the material on which Raffles's chapter was based, added a disclaimer to his otherwise enthusiastic description of Prambanan which struck a tone similar to Forbes's regarding Elephanta. Although waxing lyrical about the remains which he described as "stupendous, laborious and finished specimens of human labour" and as examples of "the polished, refined taste of ages long since forgot", he could not help but add a few words of reservation which hint at the superiority of the classical civilisations of the Mediterranean. "I doubt not", he cautions in moderation of his praise, "there are some remains of antiquity in other parts of the globe more worthy of the eye of the traveller, or the pencil of the artist".[33]

The comparisons between Javanese and Graeco-Roman art and architecture were not universally disparaging, but neither were they wholeheartedly approving. Those objects and monuments which to British eyes most closely approached European models were better received than those that did not, but praise in this context was generally still lukewarm. "Their figures, as works of art, possess various degrees of merit", suggested a reviewer of *The History of Java* who based his opinion on the publication's plates. "[S]ome are elegant, and remind us of the Greeks; others are uncouth compounds, analogous to the worst taste of the worst time of Egyptian mythology".[34] Mackenzie's choice of vocabulary when describing an image of Siva (although he did not recognise it as such) found at Prambanan,

[30] *Ibid*., See also Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters*, p. 136.

[31] Letter to Marsden dated 18 September 1815, cited in Sophia Raffles, *Memoir of the Life and Public Services of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles* (London: John Murray, 1830), p. 264. See also Annabel Teh Gallop, *Early Views of Indonesia: Drawings from the British Library* (London, 1995), p. 29.

[32] Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 2, p. 63.

[33] Thomas Stamford Raffles, 'A Discourse Delivered to the Literary and Scientific Society at Java, on the 10th of September, 1815, by the Hon. Thomas Stamford Raffles, President', *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and its Dependencies* 1, no. IV (April 1816), p. 351. See also Sophia Raffles, *Memoir*, p. 189.

[34] Review of *The History of Java, . . . The Literary Panorama . . .*, no. 36 (September 1817), p. 932. This was not the only comparison made with Egyptian culture which, like the Greek, had captured European imaginations, although it was not considered to have reached the same level of perfection. Comparisons included noting similarities in the 'gloom' of the interiors of Prambanan and Egyptian pyramids (Mackenzie Private 36/10(a) *Narrative of a Journey to Examine the Remains of an Antient City and Temples at Prambana in Java. Extracted from the Journal of Lieutenant Colonel*

reveals a bias not only in favour of western sculptural styles, but also for the superiority of their physiognomy. The Graeco-Roman models, he implied, represented both cultural and biological excellence:

> Here I found a stone overturned and firmly sunk in the earth, on which was sculptured the statue of an aged chief or king, remarkable for the majesty and gravity of its aspect, its flowing beard, its raised aquiline nose, and Roman countenance, far different from the Malay, Javanese, or Hindu outline.[35]

Similarly, his highly positive opinion of the remains of Candi Sari was based in part on the *candi*'s restrained architectural style which he implied accorded more closely with key Hellenic ideals than with what many believed to be the worst excesses of Hindu artistic practices:

> Simplicity, Chastity of Stile & an aversion to Superfluous Ornament distinguish the rites & Temples of this religion, whatever it was – Here we find no paltry niches for stinking lamps, no soot or vestiges of Oil burning & soiling the interior – no accumulation of doors, recesses monstrous figures & obscene symbols – All is Unity, Proportion & Truth.[36]

"Simplicity, . . . Unity, Proportion & Truth", the cornerstones of the Grecian architectural ideal so appealing to British sensibilities, were also recognised in Java by John Crawfurd who expressed surprise to find at Prambanan "a degree of symmetry and proportion little to be expected in such structures".[37] He was not overly impressed by the remains, however, and his criticisms regarding a "want of pillars" and a "disagreeable impression of heaviness and inelegance" reveal a prejudice in favour of the Grecian model: "[f]or the place they are in, they are indeed wonderful structures, but one must be a *Hindu* to view them with anything like enthusiasm".[38] Indeed, when Crawfurd did admire examples of Javanese architecture, it was generally for "the excellence of the materials, their great solidity and the minute laboriousness of the execution" than for their aesthetic qualities.[39]

At its best, it seemed, Javanese art and architecture could be but a pale reflection of the Grecian ideal. To the British way of thinking, the Graeco-Roman remains, and by implication the cultures of their creators, were far more sophisticated than those to be found in Java. How then did the Javanese *candi*s compare with the artistic and architectural productions of other cultures in the region, and, to follow the logic of British thinking, how did Javanese

*Mackenzie* (British Library), p. 110. See also Mss. Eur.F.148/47, 9–10, f. 23) and coincidences in the iconographies of Egyptian temples and the remains at Sukuh (Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 2, p. 47).

[35] Colin Mackenzie, 'Narrative of a Journey to Examine the Remains of an Ancient City and Temples at Brambana, in the Island of Java', *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and its Dependencies* 2, no. VII (July 1816), p. 16. See also Mss.Eur.F.148/47, 3, f. 20. Elsewhere in his report, Mackenzie recognises the "more regular" features of a group of sculpted figures as being European and clearly views them as superior to the "Negroe staring v[i]sages" of the "guardian" figures with which they are compared (Mss.Eur.F.148/47, 16, f. 26).

[36] MSS.Eur.F.148/47, f. 48r, cited in Gallop, *Early Views of Indonesia*, p. 25. Gallop also notes that Mackenzie assesses the female figures of Candi Sari in comparison with the attitudes adopted by Greek figures (*ibid.*, pp. 25–27, citing MSS.Eur.F.148/47, f. 29r).

[37] John Crawfurd, 'The Ruins of Prambanan in Java', *Asiatick Researches; or, Transactions of the Society Instituted in Bengal, for Enquiring into the History and Antiquities, the Arts, Sciences, and Literature of Asia* 13 (1820), p. 201.

[38] *Ibid*, pp. 357–358.

[39] Crawfurd, *History of the Indian Archipelago* . . . , vol. 2, p. 200. See also F. D. K. Bosch, *Selected Studies in Indonesian Archaeology* (The Hague, 1961), 30 ff.

civilisation as a whole measure up to its neighbours? By casting the net beyond the Graeco-Roman models to include other South and Southeast Asian cultures in their comparisons, British observers were able to speculate on where Java stood on the scale of world civilisations, both when the *candi*s had first been constructed, and in the early nineteenth century, many years after they had ceased to occupy a central place within Javanese culture.

Java's nearest neighbours would not necessarily have found such comparisons particularly flattering. In Raffles's opinion, Java "had once attained a far higher degree of civilization than any other nation in the southern hemisphere".[40] The British interpreted the supposed absence of imposing remains on many other islands of the archipelago as an indication that neighbouring civilisations of the region had never achieved a level of sophistication comparable to that which had once existed in Java. In 1819, when the British had a very imperfect knowledge of Sumatra's early history and knew nothing at all of the great seventh to thirteenth-century maritime power, Srivijaya, which had had its most important centre of power in Southern Sumatra, Raffles had speculated on the island's relative primitivism:

> Sumatra does not afford any of those interesting remains of former civilization, and of the arts, which abound in Java: here man is far behind-hand, perhaps a thousand years, even behind his neighbour the Javan.[41]

Marsden, however, had held some Sumatran cultures in higher regard. When outlining his theory on the "comparative state of the Sumatrans in civil society" in his influential publication *The History of Sumatra*, he had divided the peoples of the world into five categories. Naturally the "refined nations of Europe" were ranked at the top of the scale along with the ancient Graeco-Roman civilisations and "perhaps China". To the second class he assigned the Persian, Turkish and Mughal empires at the height of their prosperity, along with other European countries, while in the third he included "along with the Sumatrans, and a few other states of the eastern archipelago . . . the nations on the northern coast of Africa, and the more polished Arabs". The fourth class of his scale included the "less civilized Sumatrans" along with Pacific islanders, some Central and South American empires, the Tartars, and all those societies which acknowledged private property and observed social hierarchies. Those in the fifth and final division were clearly beyond the pale, comprising "the Caribs, the New Hollanders, the Laplanders, and the Hottentots, who exhibit a picture of mankind in its rudest and most humiliating aspect".[42]

While he estimated Sumatra to be placed approximately half-way along the scale of the civilised peoples of the world, Marsden had only lukewarm hopes for the island's contribution to world history. "[W]e know not" he observed,

[40] Raffles, 'A Discourse Delivered to the Literary . . .', no. V (May 1816), p. 439.

[41] Letter to Colonel Addenbrooke dated 10 June 1819, cited in Sophia Raffles, *Memoir*, p. 379. See also letter to Thomas Murdoch dated 22 July 1820, *ibid*., p. 463. Raffles did, however, acknowledge that Sumatra had been the home of an empire that extended across the archipelago which had "made considerable advances in those arts, to which their industry and ingenuity were particularly directed, and they still bear marks of that higher state of civilization which they once enjoyed" (Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 1, p. 57). Marsden made reference to an inscribed rock found at Priañgan which had not been deciphered but which, he suggested, "[s]hould it prove to be a Hindu monument . . . will be thought curious" (Marsden, *The History of Sumatra*, p. 352). He also notes the existence of a brick building in the Batta territory, the origins of which were obscure but he suggests could be Chinese or Hindu (*ibid*., p. 366).

[42] *Ibid*., p. 204.

> that this island, in the revolutions of human grandeur, ever made a distinguished figure in the history of the world . . . They seem rather to be sinking into obscurity, though with opportunities of improvement, than emerging from thence to a state of civil or political importance.[43]

Such an observation underscores the importance of the Javanese architectural remains for they provided incontrovertible evidence of the "extensive traces of antiquity, foreign intercourse, and national greatness"[44] that Raffles believed constituted "striking and obvious proofs . . . of the claims of Java to be considered at one point far advanced in civilization".[45] "[T]he perfection of architecture", he noted, "is one of the most convincing proofs and striking illustrations of a high state of refinement".[46] Others echoed Raffles's sentiments. The ruins, suggested Charles Assey, "prove the arts to have formerly attained a high degree of elegance and perfection among [the Javanese]"[47] and "evince a grandeur and advance in the arts of sculpture and design that could only have existed among a polished people".[48] Henry Ellis evidently agreed. The ruined *candi*s, he claimed, "attest a considerable degree of civilization and advancement of the arts" had once existed in Java.[49] Similarly, a reviewer of *The History of Java* commented that it was "evident that this island must formerly have been the seat of a great, independent, magnificent government; and of a dense and wealthy population",[50] going on to observe that

> It had, no doubt, for many centuries, been . . . the seat of an empire, to a certain degree magnificent and puissant, when overthrown and converted by the Mahomedans about the middle of the fifteenth century.[51]

The island's architectural remains, so handsomely and attractively presented in Raffles' publication, proved that not only had there been, at least at one time, a civilisation on Java that had been very wealthy, highly organised, politically united, technically proficient and artistically skilled in order to initiate and realise building programmes that had obviously been both extensive and expensive, but it had enjoyed some longevity, existing under one elite or another for some centuries. "The magnificent works constructed by the Hindoo powers", wrote another reviewer of Raffles's publication,

> bear convincing testimony to their zeal for their religion, the extent of their resources, the ability of their people, and the influence of the priesthood over the nation at large. They are not only

[43] *Ibid*., p. 207.

[44] Raffles, 'A Discourse Delivered to the Literary . . . ', no. IV (April 1816), p. 349. See also Sophia Raffles, *Memoir*, p. 156.

[45] Raffles, 'A Discourse Delivered to the Literary . . . ', no. IV (April 1816), p. 353. See also Sophia Raffles, *Memoir*, p. 162.

[46] Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 1, p. 165.

[47] C. Assey, *Review of the Administration, Value, and State of the Colony of Java with its Dependencies, As It Was, – As It Is, – and As It May Be* (London: Black, Parbury, and Allen, 1816), p. 19.

[48] *Ibid*., p. 84.

[49] Henry Ellis, *Journal of the Proceedings of the Late Embassy to China; Comprising a Correct Narrative of the Public Transactions of the Embassy, of the Voyage To and From China, and of the Journey From the Mouth of the Pei-Ho to the Return to Canton. Interspersed with Observations Upon the Face of the Country, the Polity, Moral Character, and Manners of the Chinese Nation* (London: J. Murray, 1817), p. 57.

[50] Review of *The History of Java, . . . The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register* . . . , no. 23 (November 1817), p. 478.

[51] Review of The History of Java, . . . The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register . . . , no. 24 (December 1817), p. 572.

> numerous, but extensive; and their grandeur, with the labour bestowed on them . . . manifests a state of the arts, which could only be the result of long continued study, and probably of incessant cultivation by many generations.[52]

The ruined *candi*s, then, according to the majority of commentators discussing the island's fortunes at this time, proved that Java had at one time contributed to "the revolutions of human grandeur" even if it was thought that other peoples of the region had not.[53]

Crawfurd, though, was not as convinced.

> The theory of a great monarchy, and of an antecedent state of high civilization and improvement, so often pretended by the Brahmins, has also been forged by the national vanity of the Javanese, unsupported . . . by a shadow of proof, and contradicted by unquestionable internal evidence.[54]

He acknowledged a rather grudging admiration for the extent and quality of the remains of the Majapahit empire then extant, but he cautioned readers to ignore "those exaggerations which the imagination is prone to indulge with regard to all that is involved in the mystery of antiquity". Majapahit's celebrity, he felt, could be attributed to the grandiloquent claims of the Islamic invaders who brought about the empire's downfall and "disseminated and exaggerated the fame of a conquest they had themselves made".[55] But Crawfurd did perceive the Javanese to have "distinguished themselves above the other tribes . . . by their progress in civilization" and like Raffles, considered them to be the "most civilized" of all the peoples of the archipelago.[56]

Comparisons between the Javanese remains and those of the subcontinent were more complex. Those Javanese objects or buildings that diverged from styles perceived as overly Hindu attracted particular praise from British commentators, as may be ascertained from Mackenzie's comments regarding Candi Sari's lack of "stinking lamps", "monstrous figures"and "obscene symbols", and Raffles's general observation of the island's ruined *candi*s that "[t]he beauty and purity of these structures are entirely divested of that redundancy of awkward and uncouth ornaments and symbols which are found in India".[57] But while the more gentle iconographic representations found in Javanese sculpture which displayed "no gross or indecent representations" or the "very fantastic or absurd"[58] were more suited to British tastes than Indian

[52] Review of *The History of Java, . . . The Literary Panorama* . . . , no. 35 (August 1817), pp. 727–747; and vol. 6, no. 36 (September 1817), p. 927.

[53] There was some speculation, however, that ruins might be found on Borneo. In a footnote to his first discourse to the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences, Raffles noted that "[p]illars and remains of buildings" supposedly located on the island were "evidently traces of a more enlightened population at a remote period" (Sophia Raffles, *Memoir*, n. †, p. 143 and pp. 151–152). The current population, though, exhibited little of this civilised state. "Those subjected to the Mahomedans", he suggested

> "appear . . . so wretchedly sunk in barbarous stupidity as to submit to every indignity without resistance, while those who still retain their independence, and who are to be considered as the bulk of the original population, form innumerable ferocious tribes, constantly at variance with each other, and individually rejecting internal government and control" (*ibid.*, p. 144).

[54] Crawfurd, *History of the Indian Archipelago* . . . , vol. 2, p. 297.

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 302.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 286.

[57] Letter to Mr Ramsay, Secretary to the East India Company dated March 1812, cited in Sophia Raffles, *Memoir*, p. 106.

[58] Crawfurd, *History of the Indian Archipelago* . . . , vol. 2, p. 201.

models,[59] the relationship between Javanese and Indian objects and monuments as it was understood by the British was more convoluted than these observations would at first suggest.

Rather than viewing the Javanese monuments as the purely localised artistic expression of communities indigenous to the island, most British commentators suggested that their construction had been prompted by external factors traceable to the subcontinent. Indeed, many felt that the Javanese had not only been incapable of conceiving, developing and realising the construction of the monuments, but also of actively seeking out Indian models or expertise and importing them to the island at their own initiative. Few assumed that it was the Javanese who had initiated the introduction of Indian iconographies and practices to the island which they then adapted to suit their own needs. Rather, British commentators generally accepted that at some stage a large-scale migration from part or parts of the subcontinent had established colonies on Java, bringing with them their own cultural, political and religious agendas, a proposition enthusiastically endorsed by scholars of the subcontinent eager to promote India's claims to great imperial power. Such a stance encouraged a belief that Javanese art and architecture were largely derivative with the Indian models being imposed on, rather than imported by, the local populace, prompting the construction of the *candi*s and fundamentally altering the island's cultural and artistic milieu.[60]

Certainly, the British found that their experiences in India afforded them some familiarity with the iconographies of the Javanese antiquities. Errors of interpretation as to whether sites were Hindu or Buddhist notwithstanding, most of the Europeans who visited the ruins recognised that there were clear correlations and stylistic affinities between the Javanese monuments and Indian models. There are numerous instances of British authors ascribing Indian characteristics to Javanese monuments, such as Raffles's suggestion that

[59] Gallop, *Early Views of Indonesia*, p. 27.

[60] The sources of the Indian colonies became the subject of some speculation. Crawfurd, on the basis that it was "the only country of India, known to the *Javanese*, by its proper name, the only one familiar to them, and the only one of which mention is made in their books" suggested that those responsible for the construction of Prambanan had come from "*Telinga* . . . or *Calin*, as it is universally written, and pronounced in *Java*, and every other country of the archipelago" (Crawfurd, 'The Ruins of Prambanan in Java', p. 367). Raffles agreed that a fluorescence of the arts, especially of architecture and sculpture, on the island had coincided with the establishment of a colony from western India (Raffles, 'A Discourse Delivered to the Literary . . . ', no. V (May 1816), 436 ff. See also H., 'Origin of the Malays', *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and its Dependencies* 12, no. 68 (August 1821), p. 119, regarding Dr Leyden also believing "Calinga, or Telinga" to be the source of the colonists, while others conjectured that based on a "similarity of the names, and the Kanara character's having been said to resemble the Javanese", Sunda or Madura might have been a possible source of migration (H., 'Origin of the Malays', *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and its Dependencies* 12, *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and its Dependencies* 12, no. 67 (July 1821), pp. 29–35, and no. 68 (August 1821), pp. 119–120. See also H., 'Annotations and Remarks with a View to Illustrate the Probable Origin of the Dayaks, the Malays, etc.', *Malayan Miscellanies* 1, no. VI (1820), 33 ff.). Mackenzie, however, did not restrict himself to a single locale when speculating on the origins of the colonists. Rather, in a letter which accompanied an inscribed stone which he sent to Lord Minto, he entertained the possibility that colonies could have been established from all the widely dispersed regions mentioned in the Javanese sources:

> [the stone's] preservation may afford an opportunity of recovering the knowledge of the more Ancient Character & language of the Nations that established themselves early in these Islands; for although several Pieces of the History of the Country have come into my hands, I have not yet been able to ascertain to my satisfaction from what country the first Colonists came. The Accounts vary much mentioning Expeditions from Guzarat & Calinga, in W. India; & from Siam & China; & even from the Arabian Gulph; it is likely that Colonists from all these Countries introduced their respective Systems of Religion & of Letters (letter to Lord Minto dated 11 April 1813, in Mss.Eur.F.148/47, f. 3).

> [t]he figures and costume [in Borobudur's bas-reliefs] are evidently Indian; and we are at a loss whether most to admire the extent and grandeur of the whole construction, or the beauty, richness and correctness of the sculpture[61]

and Ellis's similar observation of the remains at Bantam which he observed

> attest to its ancient splendour; and if the accounts of those who visited it are to be credited, the form and general character of the buildings belong to Indian architecture.[62]

Others identified stylistic correlations between the Javanese remains and specific regions or monuments on the subcontinent, such as the coincidence of pyramidal forms in the *candi* at Sukuh and those in India: "... many buildings in the Carnatic and Dekkan, evince that the same indefatigable race of workmen constructed the latter, and those at *Suku*".[63] Similarly, Crawfurd found certain affinities between Javanese statuary and the physical and cultural characteristics of the inhabitants of Western India.

> The scenery, the figures, the faces, and costume, are not native, but those of Western India. Of the human figures, the faces are characterized by the strongest features of the Hindu countenance. Many of these are even seen with bushy beards, an ornament of the face denied by nature to all the Indian islanders. The loins are seen girt after the manner now practised in India, a custom unknown to the Javanese, or any other people of the Archipelago. The armour worn is not less characteristic.[64]

As well as finding analogous religious practices and architectural or sculptural styles, the British also attributed the Javanese remains to an Indian authorship based on the nature of the sites chosen for their construction. Parallels were drawn between the physical landscapes depicted in *The History of Java* ruin plates and "the wild, mountainous, mythological, poetical, semibarbarous, region of the Dekkan".[65] But while the British were correct to suppose that the physical landscape had been of crucial importance in the siting of the *candi*s, they adopted a somewhat disparaging tone to explain the connection. Whereas they felt confident that the pleasures they themselves derived from wild, mountainous scenery were grounded in rational aesthetic theories of appreciation for the picturesque and the sublime, the predilections of South and Southeast Asian peoples, they suspected, were based on mere myth and superstition. As one reviewer of *The History of Java* observed, the spiritual associations of the physical landscape were of singular importance in the siting of the Southeast Asian monuments.

> To call forth the holy energies of the Hindu, it is requisite that he reside in such countries as the north or south of India, in Nepal or the Dekkan, or in Java. Countries abounding in furcated mountains, pinnacles, craters, clefts, volcanoes, cascades, and all the varieties of epic imagery, are what suit the enthusiastic and mystical Hindu, who sees the attributes of Deity in every aberration, and indeed in almost every operation of the secondary causes in nature.[66]

[61] Raffles, 'A Discourse Delivered to the Literary...', no. IV (April 1816), p. 351.
[62] Ellis, *Journal*, pp. 21–22.
[63] Review of *The History of Java*,... *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register*..., no. 24 (December 1817), p. 582.
[64] Crawfurd, *History of the Indian Archipelago*..., vol. 2, pp. 204–205.
[65] Review of *The History of Java*,... *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register*..., no. 24 (December 1817), [p. 577] [incorrectly numbered p. 593].
[66] *Ibid*.

This was a theme also explored by Crawfurd although he assessed the coincidences in the siting of monuments on Java and the subcontinent in more measured tones. The positioning of the *candi*s, he suggested, offered additional proof that an Indian community had been responsible for the Javanese remains:

> [s]uch a situation as that occupied by the ruins now described, is one that never would be chosen by the present race of inhabitants, whose interests confine them to the plain and all the modern feats of *Javanese* government are in the latter situation. The builders of *Prambanan* must therefore have been actuated by different motives, and these motives are discovered by a reference to the *Indian* precept, which directs a *Hindu* prince to choose the fastnesses of the mountains for the seat of his government.[67]

Furthermore, it was argued, the siting of the monuments was attributable to Indian genius on the very practical grounds of the ease of access to suitable building materials. This, apparently, was a consideration that Mackenzie did not conceive the local Javanese population to be capable of determining for themselves.

> This discovery of the quarries [near Prambanan] also corroborates the tradition of a City being here founded by a Foreign Colony founded by a Prince arriving from India whose ingenious artists would naturally select a spot near to the best materials; this circumstance also has some Analogy to the Observation of so many Caverns, Sculptures & Architectural Decorations being found in the vicinity of Great Capitals in India near quarries of easy wrought materials.[68]

Little credit for the construction of the monuments was directed towards the Javanese free of subcontinental influence, except perhaps for those sites which were considered less sophisticated or aesthetically pleasing. This was certainly the stance adopted by Crawfurd who did not believe the local population capable of possessing the architectural and artistic skills necessary to produce some of the more ornate and well-built *candi*s.

> At the more splendid ruins, – the superiority of the workmanship, – the comparative beauty of the design, – the propriety of the ornaments, – the genuine Hinduism of these, – and the presence of Sanskrit inscriptions, entitle us to conclude that they are the work of foreign artists, or at least were entirely completed under their direction. A very different conclusion is to be drawn from the ruins of mount Lawu. Native scenery and costume are predominant, – the work is coarsely executed, – and the design incongruous, from which the legitimate inference is, that the architects were natives of the country, – or at least, that the foreigners who supervised had little influence, – or were few in number, – or as unskilful as those they pretended to direct.[69]

Crawfurd passed a similarly disparaging judgement of these monuments in his article on Prambanan published in *Asiatick Researches* (1820).

[67] Crawfurd, 'The Ruins of Prambanan in Java', p. 351. Dr Thomas Horsfield proposed a more pragmatic reason for settlements being established in the mountains: "they were influenced probably, as well by the fertility of the soil which generally exists in these places, as by the romantic and exhilarating prospects which they afford" (Mss.Eur.F.148/46 [Thomas Horsfield] *Narrative of a Journey Through Java, with a View to Mineralogical and Other Researches; Mineralogical Account of Java; On the Vegetable Poison called the Oopas; Account of the Medical Plants of Java* (British Library), 33v.).

[68] Mss.Eur.F.148/47, 15, f. 26. See also Mackenzie Private 36/10(a), 113.

[69] Crawfurd, *History of the Indian Archipelago* . . . , vol. 2, pp. 224–225.

> We may be convinced from a variety of facts, that the buildings of *Prambanan*, and all similar structures, are not the work of the natives of the country, but of foreigners and were we to draw any conclusion in favour of the general civilization of the people, from the perfection attained in these, we would argue erroneously. . . . when the emigrations from India ceasing or becoming less frequent, the *Javanese*, were left to themselves, and the monuments, erected from this time, until the utter overthrow of *Hinduism*, a period of more than a century, evince the rude state of the arts among them, and sufficiently attest, that *Prambanan*, and all monuments of a similar nature, were not the work of the natives. The best examples of this degeneracy, are in the *Hindu* relics, discovered in the mountain of *Lawa*. These are evidently dedicated to the same worship as the others, but they are remarkably rude, and on the slightest inspection, are discovered to be the work of a very different race of people, from the older temples.[70]

In Crawfurd's opinion, Java's artistic decline had come about because of the reassertion of a purely local and, to him, inferior aesthetic. Not everyone, however, subscribed to this rather simplistic model of dual cultural influence in which artistic styles were ascribed to either an indigenous or an external origin. While agreeing that a colonising migration from the subcontinent had initiated the construction of the *candi*s, others, Raffles included, viewed such influences in terms of a process of acculturation. Indigenous practices, they implied, were not suppressed intact to re-emerge unchanged after Indian influence had waned, but had instead been radically and irreversibly transformed creating a culture that, as Coedès would come to describe it, was more Indianised than Indian. Under such a model, the ruined *candi*s had to be considered not as the products of a temporary interlude of foreign colonial domination, but more properly as the cultural inheritance of the current Javanese population.

In the end, however, differences of opinion regarding the degree to which the *candi*s were the result of local effort or constructed thanks to imported expertise were largely irrelevant to British estimations of the region's present inhabitants. Expressing a typically bittersweet ruin sentiment, Mackenzie had surveyed the remains at Prambanan with "mixed emotions of regret & pleasure".

> [I]t was impossible to forbear ruminating on the Origin of Edifices so widely different in their stile from what we are taught to expect in these Countries at a remote Era & so widely different from their present state.[71]

Even Raffles, the island's most enthusiastic British advocate, conceded that contemporary Javanese society bore little resemblance to the magnificence evinced by the monuments. "The grandeur of their ancestors sounds like a fable in the mouth of the degenerate Javan", he lamented, "and it is only when it can be traced in monuments, which cannot be falsified, that we are led to give credit to their traditions concerning it".[72]

Certainly no contemporary buildings were considered to match the splendour of the ruined *candi*s. Crawfurd judged Java's mosques to be "mean and paltry wooden fabrics,

[70] Crawfurd, 'The Ruins of Prambanan in Java', p. 366.

[71] Mackenzie Private 36/10(a), 121–122. See also MSS F 148/47, 23, f. 30.

[72] Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 2, p. 6. Similarly, a reviewer of *The History of Java*, suggested that the ruins "may serve to shew the early excellence of the artists who have left such specimens of their genius to a people who seem so utterly inimitative. Except among absolute barbarians, we shall rarely find so few respectable edifices, public or private, as among the four or five millions of modern Javans" (Review of *The History of Java*, . . . *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register* . . . , no. 24 (December 1817), p. 584).

utterly unworthy of any notice",[73] and although Raffles described the island's *kraton*s as the "only modern buildings they possess, of any architectural importance",[74] he devoted only slightly more than one page within *The History of Java* to a fairly perfunctory description of their general layout. By Raffles's reckoning, nothing had surpassed the construction of the *candi*s, not only in terms of their architectural and artistic excellence but also as events of national significance, the *candi*s "forming, if I may so express myself, the most interesting part of the annals of the people".[75]

It was not only the seeming inability of the contemporary Javanese to replicate the feats of artistry, technical ability or social organisation achieved by their forebears that led the British to conclude that the island's civilisation was now in atrophy, but also their apparent reluctance or inability to appreciate or even understand the *candi*s. "The indifference of the natives", observed Raffles, " . . . led them to neglect the works of their ancestors which they could not imitate".[76] Java's *candi*s were judged to be deserted, desolate and forest-drowned, their splendid and carefully-wrought masonry either mouldering away or appropriated for more prosaic uses. Even the special aura that Raffles suggested still surrounded Prambanan could not protect it from the careless plunder of the local population:

> The temples themselves they conceived to have been the work of divinity, and to have been constructed in one night; but unfortunately this belief did not restrain the neighbouring peasants from carrying off the stones of which they were constructed, and applying them to their own purposes.[77]

Large blocks found their way into the construction of dykes. A *linga* was used as a stone bench, a *yoni* as a rice mortar.[78]

Similarly, on the Dieng Plateau, Baker found that many of the local villagers had reused stonework from the nearby *candi*s, though rarely with the same skill and precision as the original masons.

> In the enclosures to several of the villages (which are here frequently walled in) are discovered large stones, some representing gorgon heads, others beautifully executed in relief, which had formed the frizes and cornices of temples, all regularly cut so as to be morticed together, but now heaped one upon another in the utmost confusion and disorder.[79]

Worse still was his observation that

> [a]long the fields, and by the road side . . . are seen in ditches and elsewhere, many beautiful remains of sculpture, and among them many *yoni*s and *lingum*s, where they seem not only to be entirely disregarded by the natives but thrown on one side as if in the way.[80]

[73] Crawfurd, 'The Ruins of Prambanan in Java', pp. 366–367.
[74] Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 1, p. 473.
[75] Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 2, p. 6.
[76] *Ibid.*
[77] *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.
[78] Crawfurd, 'The Ruins of Prambanan in Java', p. 363.
[79] Raffles, *History of Java*, vol. 2, p. 32.
[80] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Their experiences in Southern Europe, the Middle East and Asia had taught the British to have confidence in the exclusivity of their own taste and discernment to truly appreciate the ruined remains of past civilisations. For this reason, the British felt justified in "rescuing" objects and bringing them back to Britain. There they would be safe from the depredations to which they were subject in their original locations, thanks to the perceived avarice and ignorance of the local population. In Java, the removal of objects by westerners was preservation, but by locals, destruction. While Mackenzie, Baker and Crawfurd all lamented that the Javanese *candi*s had had their contents plundered by 'treasure-hungry' locals,[81] few appear to have questioned either the removal of objects by Europeans, or the exploitation of the avarice they found so objectionable in the local population, by purchasing those objects they were keen to secure for themselves. Such acts of 'liberation' were commonplace in those parts of the world in which the remains of the past were to be found, and British societies such as the Dilettanti often sent envoys to bring back samples from sites of particular interest. Nor was it a practice peculiar to the British antiquaries. "Take everything you can", wrote Choiseul-Gouffier, French ambassador to Constantinople to his countryman Fauvel, "lose no opportunity to loot everything which is lootable in Athens and its surroundings . . . Spare neither the dead nor the living".[82]

Not all local populations were keen to part with their ruined remains, however. By careful examination of the British accounts it is possible to find evidence that many Javanese were loath to part with objects which held particular significance. Their attempts to defy European appropriations, however, attracted little official attention or comment, although brief mention is made of acts of resistance by inhabitants in the vicinity of Candi Singasari, a *candi* which included some superb examples of late-thirteenth century statuary. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, a number of images had been removed at the request of Nicolaus Engelhard, the Dutch Governor of Semarang, and installed in 'De Vrijheid', the government park at Semarang.[83] According to a report by a Colonel Adams, members of the local population transferred numerous other objects a quarter of a mile deeper into the jungle to prevent any further removals either by Europeans or by those local elites who were prepared to supply European collectors:

> Mr Engelhardt having carried off the large figures now to be seen at Samarang from the Neighbourhood of this temple, the Inhabitants had concealed the figure just described, and many others not only from all Europeans (of whom Coll. Colin Mackenzie was one, who traversed this province early in 1812, in search of Hindoo Antiquities) but from their own native Chiefs.[84]

This directly contradicts Engelhard's own assertion that "[t]he *Javanese* who inhabit the parts where these Antiquities were found had little value or respect for them".[85] Indeed, his

[81] Mss.Eur.F148/47, 6, f. 21; Crawfurd, 'The Ruins of Prambanan in Java', p. 363; and Baker cited in Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 2, p. 32.

[82] Cited in Schnapp, *The Discovery of the Past*, p. 262.

[83] Bosch, *Selected Studies*, p. 35.

[84] Mackenzie Private 86 I/7 *Notes Made by Colonel Adams on an Excursion into the Provinces of Malang and Antang in the Month of June 1814* (British Library), p. 106.

[85] Mackenzie Miscellaneous 89/6, pp. 345–346.

admission that "they make offerings to several of these Idols or Images, without being able to give any reason why"[86] implies otherwise.

Such an observation brings in to question Raffles's claim to the British "discovery" of remains such as those at Candi Sukuh which, he suggested,

> were not known to Europeans until a short time previous to my visit to the central districts, in May 1815. When I visited them, the native inhabitants of *Súra-kérta* were also ignorant of their existence, and we are indebted for the discovery to the British resident at that court, Major Martin Johnson.[87]

Similarly, Crawfurd recounted in his paper for the *Asiatick Researches* how he had

> discovered in the month of April last, several groups of temples which had hitherto escaped the observation of our countrymen on *Java*, and indeed I believe of all *Europeans*. The natives display an entire apathy on all subjects of this nature and the discovery of these ruins on the present occasion was purely accidental.[88]

It is hard to accept Crawfurd's and Raffles's use of the term "discovery" which credits the remains with an interest or importance that dates only from their sighting by Europeans and so completely ignores local knowledge and practices.[89] A melancholic air of abandonment about the *candi*s may indeed have been apparent to the British for whom the Southeast Asian monuments were astounding, exotic, and mysterious. It does not follow, however, that such emotions would or should have been stirred in the Javanese for whom the monuments were familiar features of a landscape with which they had had a daily and life long affinity. To the local inhabitants the *candi*s were simply there, an unchanging and commonplace presence.[90]

Familiarity, however, did not equate with complacency. The Javanese, while supposedly neglectful of the ruined *candi*s, still treated them with deep respect. It was not only Engelhard who commented on the continued observance of ritual at the *candi*s. "Ganésa and Durgá, but more particularly the latter, are still objects of veneration with the inhabitants of Java", Crawfurd noted in his paper for the *Asiatick Researches*.

> Barren women, men unfortunate in trade, or at play, persons in debt, and sick persons, continue to this day to propitiate the goddess Durgá with offerings, and I have seldom visited *Prambanan*, that I did not find her statue smeared with perfumed unguents or decked with flowers.[91]

Nor did he find that such acts of veneration were limited to just those of the 'lower orders' of the population. Members of the ruling elites also made offerings when "meditating ambitious

[86] *Ibid*.
[87] Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 2, p. 45.
[88] Crawfurd, 'The Ruins of Prambanan in Java', p. 343.
[89] Horsfield, however, does concede the presumptuous tone that use of the term 'discovery' creates, when he writes that he "discovered (or rather was led to them by natives)" a number of monuments in eastern Java (cited in Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 2, p. 38).
[90] Similarly, Dr Clarke Abel noted that the Javanese, while most helpful in assisting him to gather botanical specimens, "were at first much amused at my collecting plants familiar to their daily observation . . . " (Dr Clarke Abel, *Narrative of a Journey in the Interior of China, and of a Voyage To and From that Country, in the Years 1816 and 1817; Containing an Account of the Most Interesting Transactions of Lord Amherst's Embassy to the Court of Pekin, and Observations of the Countries Which It Visited* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1818), pp. 35–36).
[91] Crawfurd, 'The Ruins of Prambanan in Java', p. 339.

schemes of no common danger".[92] Similarly, while visiting Candi Ceto, Lieutenant Williams had found that "[o]n the 12th & last [terrace] stands a small modern native pangoong, in which incense seems to have been lately burnt",[93] something which Raffles also noted at Candi Sukuh:

> The natives who attended informed us that the peasantry of the neighbouring villages were still in the habit of burning incense and kindling fire in this temple, and that when they suffered under or dreaded any misfortune, they made an offering of this nature in the hope of averting it.[94]

The conversion of the mass of the population to Islam may have meant that the *candi*s were no longer the central focus of their spiritual lives, but given the reports which mention the action taken by local populations to protect the monuments from the attentions of Engelhard, Mackenzie and others, and the frequency with which the British sources comment on the continued practice of acts of veneration being made at the sites, assertions that the Javanese were completely indifferent to the *candi*s clearly do not hold true. The deterioration of the monuments so condemned by the British (although still appreciated by them as attractively picturesque, as Daniell's handsome plates attest) in no way impinged upon the Javanese in their exercise of ritual observances at the *candi*s, nor was the spiritual significance of the monuments compromised by the population's conversion to Islam.[95] Their veneration for the *candi*s, however, was incomprehensible to the British. Because Javanese observances did not conform to British codes of aesthetic criticism that demonstrated a discerning understanding of the artistry and architectural merits of the monuments and the concomitant connotations of cultural and socio-political sophistication, the ways in which the Javanese paid their respects to the *candi*s were not recognised or paid much credence.

Instead, British commentators categorised the attitudes of Java's current inhabitants in terms of a shameful neglect and cultural deterioration. Following the pattern laid out by Winckelmann in which an age of artistic excellence was followed by an aesthetic decline, artistic and architectural enterprise in Java were perceived to have sadly degenerated, the contemporary Javanese wholly incapable not only of recreating the artistic accomplishments of an earlier period, but even of appreciating, understanding or explaining them. Given the early nineteenth-century interest in the relationship between a people's artistic output and their political and socio-economic condition, the state of Java's ruined *candi*s had broader

[92] *Ibid.*, p. 340.

[93] Mackenzie Private 2/18 *Account of Suku and Chettock Temples Near Solo, Totally Different From Any Others Yet Discovered on the Island of Java by Lieutenant Williams* (British Library), p. 145.

[94] *Ibid.*, p. 48. See also p. 50 regarding offerings to sculpted images at the *candi* which the local people 'highly esteemed'.

[95] In Burma, where the ruined pagodas were connected with a religion still enjoying the patronage of the elite and the devotion of the majority, their deteriorated state was similarly considered in terms of neglect (and also poor workmanship) although Grant does touch upon an aspect of Burmese Buddhist belief that had a fundamental bearing on the condition of the pagodas:

> . . . there are few exceptions I believe to the rule that the Burmese never repair – and, what is more, seldom make any effort even to *prevent* the destruction of their works by clearing away (though perhaps an endless task) the vegetable matter which is seen to envelope them . . . [T]he Burmans, like their brother Hindoos of Bengal, consider it more meritorious to erect a *new* building, than to repair an old one ([Grant], *Rough Pencillings* . . . , p. 32).

Illus 1. William Daniell after H. C. Cornelius, *One of the smaller temples at Brambánan in its present state* (plate from Thomas Stamford Raffles's *The History of Java*, London: 1817, vol. 2, opp. p. 16), aquatint and etching.

implications than merely representing an aesthetic deterioration. For an astute reader of the period, the ruin landscape plates in *The History of Java* chronicled not only the passing of a high point in the island's artistic and creative history but also hinted at the momentous implications of a wider social and cultural deterioration that accompanied the passing of a once thriving and sophisticated empire.