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Java's ruined *candi*s and the British picturesque ideal

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Abstract

When Thomas Stamford Raffles published his seminal text *The History of Java* in 1817, ruins were a favourite leitmotif in British art, forming an important element within the visual vocabulary of the picturesque. Given the fascination in this period for the ruin, fuelled by a tradition of antiquarian enquiry, the newly developing science of archaeology, and the increased possibilities for travel in the wake of imperial expansion, it is not surprising that Raffles chose to devote a whole a chapter of his publication to Java's ruined *candi*s. The plates and vignettes which illustrate the chapter, created according to pictorial conventions that were ordinarily applied to the crumbling remains of Europe's classical past, are amongst the most beautiful portrayals of South-East Asia's architectural remains. This paper examines how these images elicited set emotional responses associated with the idea of ruins and ruination and confirmed key stereotypes associated with the region, linking the *candi*s, and by implication the Javanese themselves, with a vanished past rather than with a dynamic and forward-looking present.

In his address to the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences delivered on 10 September 1815, Thomas Stamford Raffles, the Lieutenant-Governor of the British interregnum government on Java, touched on military surveyor Captain Godfrey Baker's impressions of the monumental architectural remains located near the village of Prambanan. "In attempting to describe the Chandi Sewo [Candi Sewu], or Thousand Temples, which form a principal part of these ruins", Raffles told the gathering:

> he [Baker] laments his inability to convey any adequate ideas, satisfactory to his own mind, even of the actual dismantled state of this splendid seat of magnificence and of the arts. "Never", he observes, "have I met with such stupendous, laborious and finished specimens of human labour, and of the polished, refined taste of ages long since forgot, and crowded together in so small a compass, as characterize and are manifested in this little spot; . . . Chandi Sewo must ever rank with the foremost in the attractions of curiosity, or of antiquarian research".[1]

1 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), 351. See also Sophia Raffles, *Memoir of the Life and Public Services of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles* (London: John Murray, 1830), 159; and Thomas Stamford Raffles, *The History of Java*, 2 vols (London: Black, Parbury and Allen, and John Murray, 1817) vol. 2, 15. For slightly different wording see Baker MS *Java Antiquities*/2 [Captain

Raffles evidently agreed, for he included two vignettes and two aquatinted plates of ruins in the Candi Sewu complex in his landmark publication *The History of Java* (1817).

Baker's evocative response to the ruined *candi* is typical of the way in which ruins were enjoyed and understood in Britain. Ruins had long held appeal for aesthetic reflection and representation in Western art, and by the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when Europeans were first starting to take an interest in the South-East Asian remains, the "pleasure of ruins" had become something of a mania. The crumbling remains of past civilizations became steeped in allusions that were discernible to those who considered themselves to possess a heightened sensibility and an educated taste. "Educated" meant a knowledge of the classics,[2] and an education was not considered complete without undertaking a Grand Tour of the Continent where vestiges of the classical past could be thoroughly explored and enjoyed, as James Boswell found during his own travels in Italy. Writing to Rousseau in 1765 Boswell professed to a modicum of self-improvement as a result of his experiences:

> I have viewed with enthusiasm classical sites, and the remains of the grandeur of the ancient Romans. I have made a thorough study of architecture, statues, and paintings; and I believe I have acquired taste to a certain degree.[3]

It is estimated that by 1785 some 40,000 Englishmen were travelling on the Continent,[4] but while it was classical Greece and Rome that most completely captured the imaginations of eighteenth-century connoisseurs of the ruin, the remains of the past could also be found elsewhere. Scattered across the British Isles were decaying castles and keeps and the many ruined abbeys and monasteries forcefully abandoned during the Dissolution. These provided ample opportunity for ruin appreciation closer to home, particularly during the Napoleonic blockades when travel to Europe was severely curtailed. For the adventurous few there were journeys further afield as Britain's expanding trading empire brought the remains of the pagodas, monuments and temples of South, East and South-East Asia into the lexicon of ruin appreciation.

It was not only the increased opportunities for travel that contributed to the eighteenth-century dilettante's appreciation for the past. The period also saw

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Godfrey P. Baker]. [*Descriptions of Javanese temples*] (Royal Asiatic Society), 2. All quotes in this paper use the original spelling and punctuation as they appear in the editions cited.

2 As Milton Osborne has observed of John Barrow's publication detailing his voyage through South-East Asia while a member of the Macartney embassy, it "was very much a product of its age, an age that did not disdain the accumulation of miscellaneous knowledge and was comfortable in an author's citation of Horace and Pliny" (Milton Osborne, "Introduction", *A Voyage to Cochin China*, by John Barrow, Oxford in Asia Historical Reprints (London: Oxford University Press), xvi).

3 Letter to Rousseau dated 11 May 1765. James Boswell, *Boswell on the Grand Tour: Italy, Corsica, and France 1765–1766* (ed. Frank Brady and Fredrick A. Pottle) (London: William Heinemann, 1955), 85.

4 Maxine Feifer, *Tourism in History from Imperial Rome to the Present* (New York: Stein and Day, 1986), 99.

the beginnings of the development of a systematized approach to the observation, recording, retrieval and classification of historical remains that marked the emergence of archaeology as a new discipline out of the less ordered practices of the antiquary.[5] Archaeological practices challenged the traditional primacy of the text in the interpretation of the past. Objects were no longer analysed based purely on iconological meanings derived from ancient literary sources. Instead, by subjecting them to a detailed and thorough examination with particular emphasis on the accurate recording, in both image and text, of their forms, dimensions and extent, architectural remains and artefacts were used to establish chronologies and shed new light on ancient cultures. The greater prominence being accorded to the object increased the importance of the role played by images in antiquarian publications. Plates showing carefully drawn monuments and antiquities in their current ruined condition, as well as technical drawings of what was assumed to be their complete state, became the established *modus operandi* of the antiquary.[6]

Such an approach had obvious advantages in the South-East Asian context. As local texts were considered by the British to have a highly dubious historiographical value and the local peoples were perceived as indifferent to or ill-informed about their own pasts, the region's objects and monuments came to be viewed as the only authentic repositories of its "true" and "lost" histories.[7] The plates and vignettes of South-East Asia's ruins included in publications of the period, however, did more than just meet a demand for the detailed representation of ruined and conjecturally restored monuments or for illustrations of the antiquities and epigraphical materials found nearby. At this formative stage in the development of archaeological practices, they also conformed with the pictorial rules that governed the aesthetic tastes of the day, most notably for the sublime and the picturesque.

According to its eighteenth-century disciples, those objects or images imbued with the sublime had the power to inspire awe and wonderment and transport the beholder to a heightened emotional experience. Within its vocabulary of stock motifs, ruins were judged to possess just such a power:

> [n]o one of the least sentiment or imagination can look back upon an old or ruined edifice without feeling sublime emotions; ... a thousand ideas croud upon his mind, and fill him with awful astonishment.[8]

5 For an overview of the development of archaeology at this time, see Alain Schnapp, *The Discovery of the Past: The Origins of Archaeology* (London: British Museum Press, 1996), especially chapters 4 and 5. For information on the development of archaeology in India, see Tapati Guha-Thakurta, "Tales of the Bharhut Stupa: archaeology in the colonial and nationalist imaginations", in G. H. R. Tillotson (ed.), *Paradigms of Indian Architecture: Space and Time in Representation and Design* (London: Curzon Press, 1998), 26–58 and Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories: Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

6 Schnapp, *Discovery of the Past*, 237.

7 Guha-Thakurta, "Tales of the Bharhut Stupa", 37 and Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories*, 4, regarding a similar situation on the subcontinent.

8 "On the pleasure arising from the sight of ruins or ancient structures", *European Magazine* (1795), cited in David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 173.

The sheer scale and number of the South-East Asian *candi*s, their silent, gloomy interiors, their air of abandonment, and the sense of mystery that surrounded their origins, meanings and purposes, stirred emotions that were perfectly in accord with the feelings of terror, darkness, solitude, vastness, unfamiliarity, power and magnificence that were the sublime's distinguishing attributes.

In recording their experiences some of the visitors to the Javanese *candi*s and monuments drew on the typical parlance of the sublime. Java's ruined *candi*s struck Raffles with "astonishment and veneration",[9] and Colonel Colin Mackenzie chronicled, with an air of agreeable horror, of his visit to Candi Sewu:

> [o]n looking up, the mind is filled with awe & terror; nothing appears to retain the Stones, which hang or bulge out & threaten to overwhelm the curious Inspector amidst their ruins, from a height at least of 64 feet.[10]

There are clear coincidences of sentiment here with William Marshall's description of the emotions aroused by the sublime in his 1795 review of the poem *The Landscape*:

> [t]he sublime seems to require that the higher degrees of astonishment should be roused, to demonstrate its presence: a degree of terror, if not of horror, is required to produce the more forcible emotions of the mind, which sublimity is capable of exciting … *sublimity* must rouse some extraordinary emotion in the mind; it cannot be dwelt on with indifference, by an eye unhabituated to its effects, and a mind possessing the least sensibility.[11]

Both Raffles and Mackenzie shared with Marshall not only the ability to recognize an encounter with the sublime, but also an acquaintance with the appropriate emotional responses to make, and a knowledge of the fitting terminology with which to describe the moment. Astonishment was the sublime emotion

9 Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 1, 5. Thomas Horsfield similarly noted that the *candi*s moved an "intelligent observer" to "astonishment" (cited in Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 2, 40), while Baker described Borobudur as filling visitors with "astonishment and delight" (Baker MS *Java Antiquities*/4, *Extract from the private journals of Captain G.P. Baker 19th Regt Bengal Infantry, of all memories made on the spot relative to the collection of antiquarian drawings and made by him in a tour thro' the interior of Java in the years 1815/16* (Royal Asiatic Society),118).

10 Mss.Eur.F.148/47 *Colonel Mackenzie's Account of the Antiquities of Java with Drawings; Colonel Mackenzie's Military Report and Journal in Java; Colonel Mackenzie's General Statistical Tables of Java, 1811–1813. Narrative of a Journey to Examine the Remains of an Ancient City and Temples at Prambana in Java. Extracted from the Journal of Lieutenant Colonel Mackenzie 1812* (British Library), 7, f. 22. See also 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), 12.

11 Cited in Andrew Ashfield and Peter de Bolla, *The Sublime: A Reader in British Eighteenth-Century Aesthetic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 276.

nonpareil. It was "the effect of the sublime in its highest degree" as Edmund Burke tells us in his influential and much-quoted essay, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1795).[12]

The elitism implicit in the need for an educated eye and a "mind possessing the least sensibility" as prerequisites to a true appreciation of a ruin landscape was equally present in the picturesque. For its proponents, a landscape was much improved, indeed made picturesque, by its poetic, painterly and classical associations with which the onlooker was expected to have some familiarity. When, early in the eighteenth century, Addison had written that "the Works of Nature [are] still more pleasant, the more they resemble those of Art",[13] he had neatly encapsulated the basic premise of the picturesque, one that required the landscape to bear a resemblance to a painted image. Viewed with the eye of an artist and by the "rules of painting",[14] those prospects deemed worthy of admiration were the ones most closely corresponding with the compositional values of a painted landscape: a tripartite arrangement with side-screens, carefully lit to draw the viewer within. By the end of the century, however, the roles of art and nature had reversed to a degree, with nature becoming the guide to art. A picturesque image was one that most resembled nature, or nature as it should be. "Nature", declared that indefatigable champion of the picturesque, the Rev. William Gilpin, "is the archetype".[15]

Nature, it was admitted, did require some gentle assistance, and the views captured by artists of the picturesque were carefully manipulated to improve on the original. According to Gilpin, images could:

> admit many little alterations, by which the forms of objects may be assisted . . . We must ever recollect that nature is most defective in composition; and *must* be a little assisted. Her ideas are too vast for picturesque use, without the restraint of rules.[16]

What was required for a landscape or its representation to be considered perfectly picturesque was that it exhibit some irregularity, variety, ruggedness and roughness that lent a certain visual interest. And what could be considered more irregular, varied, rugged and rough than a ruined building?

As a complementary adornment to the landscape, the ruin became the pre-eminent leitmotif of the picturesque. "Ruins", declared Claire Clairmont, step-sister of Mary Shelley and lover of Lord Byron, "have a fine effect and henceforth I shall hardly think any scenery complete without them".[17] Gilpin was in full agreement with Clairmont's sensibility, for the imagination, he suggested, is "more taken with prospects of the ruinous kind than with most

12 Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1759), 95–6.
13 Joseph Addison, *The Spectator* 414, 25 June 1712.
14 William Gilpin, *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; On Picturesque Travel; and On Sketching Landscape: To Which is Added a Poem, on Landscape Painting* (London: R. Blamire, 1792), 42.
15 Ibid., 53.
16 Ibid., 67.
17 Cited in Feifer, *Tourism in History*, 145.

smiling Views of Plenty and Prosperity in their greatest perfection",[18] and elsewhere:

> among all the objects of art the picturesque eye is perhaps most inquisitive after the elegant relics of ancient architecture; the ruined tower, the Gothic arch, the remains of castles and abbeys. These are the richest legacies of art. They are consecrated by time; and almost deserve the veneration we pay to the works of nature itself.[19]

Those visitors to South-East Asia who, like Gilpin, possessed an inquisitive, picturesque eye, found plenty of "elegant relics" to amuse them. Throughout the region, scores of ruined temples, pagodas and monuments were "submitting", as Baker observed, "with sullen slowness, to the destructive hand of time and nature".[20]

Baker's allusion to the "destructive hand of time and nature" highlights an important element of ruin appreciation. Much of the perennial appeal of ruins is their capacity to act as salient reminders of the inevitability of the passing of all things, that even the most spectacular and grandiose of human achievements are eventually doomed to decay. What the images of ruin conjured up for their eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century picturesque admirers was an agreeably melancholic reflection on the ephemerality of the works, deeds and lives of humankind.

Melancholy, the "English malady", had become something of a fashionable intellectual indulgence during the eighteenth century.[21] Operating as a *memento mori*, the ruin exactly suited the elegiac tone of the times, encapsulating responses to the futility, transience and smallness of human accomplishment and, at its most basic and foreboding, to our own mortality as Diderot famously demonstrated in a passage of his *Salon* (1767).

> Great thoughts stir within me at the sight of ruins. Everything gradually crumbles and vanishes. Only the world remains. Only time endures. And how old the world is! I am walking between two eternities. Whichever way I turn my eyes, I see objects that have perished – and am reconciled to my own end. What is my own ephemeral existence in comparison with the age of this valley scooped out between the walls of crumbling rock, this quivering forest, or these trembling masses swaying above my head? The very marble of the tombs falls away into dust; and I do not want to die![22]

18 William Gilpin, *A Dialogue upon the Gardens of the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount Cobham at Stow in Buckinghamshire*, The Augustan Reprint Society, no. 176 (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, 1976), 5.
19 William Gilpin, *Three Essays*, 46.
20 Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 2, 9.
21 Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760–1800* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 42.
22 Cited in Jean Starobinski, *The Invention of Liberty* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), 183.

In order for the contemplation of ruins to be a pleasurable experience, however, it was important that some distance, either chronological, geographical or both, be placed between them and the viewer. The circumstances surrounding the act of ruination could not be too precisely remembered: pleasing decay required the slow hand of time. The melancholic pleasure that characterized ruin sentiment derived from contemplation of the erasure of a monument's significance and the passing of those responsible for its construction, not from a remembrance of the act of its destruction.[23] Ruins could be too new and too familiar, particularly when they were associated with events that had resulted in countless personal tragedies and profoundly unsettling changes with which whole communities were still coming to terms. And Europe at this time abounded with such scenes of newly wrought destruction.

In the late eighteenth century, revolutionary France had created such an abundance of ruined buildings that Baron von Grimm, editor of Diderot's *Salons*, wrote with pained irony in a 1791 letter to Catherine the Great:

> one can only assume that Robert, whose principal talent is to paint ruins, must find himself in his element just now. Wherever he turns, he can find his speciality thoroughly in vogue, and can see the most beautiful, freshest ruins in the world.[24]

For the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century onlookers from just across the Channel, such ruins could provide little aesthetic pleasure, raising as they did the spectre of a frighteningly recent social and political rupture that had occurred so distressingly close to home – especially at a time when Britain itself was experiencing profound and unsettling changes to its political, economic and social structures, and to the very shape of its landscape, thanks to industrialization.

In his essay "Why distant objects please", published in 1822 in volume two of *Table-Talk*, William Hazlitt described distance in broad terms, ascribing pleasure to the contemplation of temporal as well as spatial distance, which, he suggested, had "much the same effect".[25] If we widen Hazlitt's understanding of the appeal of physical remoteness to include not only far off objects within a British country scene but also those within the sweeping reach of its expanding empire, we can understand the attraction of representations of South-East Asia's ruined past. Trade and exploration had brought the artistic and architectural achievements of distant peoples to the attention of the British public, and the depiction of the monumental remains of remote cultures expanded ruin contemplation from a rumination on the distance of time to include the distance of place. The chronological, cultural and geographical dislocation of contemporary Europe from Prambanan, Borobudur and the *candi*s of the Dieng Plateau not

23 Ibid., 180.

24 Cited in Francis Haskell, *History and Its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 430. Grimm was referring to the highly regarded painter of ruins, Hubert Robert (1733–1808).

25 William Hazlitt, "Why distant objects please", in *The Selected Writings of William Hazlitt* (ed. Duncan Wu), vol. 6 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1998), 229 [220]. See also Phillipe Junod, "Future in the past", *Oppositions* 26 (Spring 1984), 54.

only dispelled the associations of violence and bloodshed that permeated scenes of recent ruination, but also insulated the British viewer from the trauma of recent experiences on the other side of the Channel. Separated from the viewer by both time and space, the views of Java's *candi*s, like Hazlitt's distant objects, could please because "not being obtruded too close upon the eye, we clothe them with the indistinct and airy colours of fancy".[26]

The pleasing sense of removal or displacement that distance in time and place lent to the contemplation of ruins was further enhanced when their physical destruction could be attributed to something other than human action. Nothing more successfully or more picturesquely invoked thoughts on the transitory quality of human achievement than the sight of ruins overgrown with a luxuriant blanket of mosses, lichens, ferns and vines. A thick shroud of vegetation not only added a tonal interest and variety that enhanced a ruin's formal picturesque qualities, but also prompted meditations on the all-consuming power of nature and the insignificance of humankind in the greater scheme of things. "No circumstance so forcibly marks the desolation of a spot once inhabited" suggested Thomas Whately in his widely read *Observations on Modern Gardening* (1770), "as the prevalence of nature over it",[27] a theme taken up to great effect by Byron in the fourth canto of his hugely popular verse *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. A Romaunt* (1812–18):

> Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grown,
> Matted and mass'd together – hillocks heap'd
> On what were chambers – arch crush'd, column strown
> In fragments – choked up vaults, and frescos steep'd
> In subterranean damps, where the owl peep'd,
> Deeming it midnight: – Temples – baths – or halls?
> Pronounce who can; for all that Learning reap'd
> From her research hath been, that these are walls –
> Behold thee Imperial Mount! 'tis thus the mighty falls.[28]

While we know he is recalling scenes of ruination close to the shores of the Mediterranean, Byron's lines, substituting the tropical banyan for the cypress and ivy of cooler climes, could just as easily refer to the *candi*s illustrated in *The History of Java* which, Baker reported, were swathed in "a profusion of trees and herbage of all descriptions".[29]

So important was the presence of vegetation to the aesthetics of ruin appreciation that, from a formal, picturesque point of view, ruins came to be viewed as natural rather than synthetic motifs. In Gilpin's response to Fountains Abbey we find the balance shifting towards viewing the ruin as an element of the landscape rather than of architecture:

26 Hazlitt, 228 [219].
27 Cited in Louis Hawes, *Presences of Nature: British Landscape 1780–1830* (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 1982), 36.
28 George Gordon, Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. A Romaunt* (1812–18), canto 4, CVII, 955–963.
29 Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 2, 11, regarding Candi Siva in the Lara Jonggrang complex.

> Rooted for ages in the soil; assimilated to it; and become, as it were, a part of it; we consider it as a work of nature, rather than of art.[30]

In order for the ruin to function as a *memento mori*, however, the balance between architecture and landscape could not shift too far. It is their ambiguity in belonging to both the human and natural worlds which gives ruins their affecting poignancy.[31] A building could not be too ruined or the delicate balance between architecture and nature would collapse. There is a difference between ruin and rubble: ruination is not obliteration.

Herein lies the double paradox of the ruin and ruin imagery. Broken and incomplete, ruins rarely conform to their original forms or designs and are as often as not incapable of fulfilling the functions for which they were constructed, yet their aesthetic value lies in this incompleteness.[32] At the same time, while the original building or monument must be vastly transformed in order to provide visual entertainment in its new guise as a ruin, its ruination cannot be too complete. Ruins may indeed be valued for their decomposition as providing evidence of the unavoidable effects of time, but it is their endurance and resistance to absolute annihilation that allows them to be enjoyed as ruins. Once their destruction is complete, the spell is broken: the chimera of the ruin collapses into no more than a disordered mass of brick and stone.

This was an important consideration in the depiction of the South-East Asian ruins. "[S]o much encumbered with stones, weeds, and bushes",[33] the *candi*s were frequently difficult to distinguish through the luxuriant blankets of tropical vegetation and debris they had accumulated over the centuries. Whereas the foliage which adorned Britain's own ruined castles, keeps and monasteries or garlanded the marble colonnades of classical Greece and Rome was thought to enhance the remains by intoning a gentle lament on ephemerality, in the South-East Asian context nature was frequently perceived as dangerous and voracious, its acts of destruction malignant, not benign.

Quoted in British publications of the period, the French naturalist J. B. L. C. Th. Leschenault de la Tour, who had travelled extensively through Java in 1803–06, upheld contemporary theories regarding the extreme potency that tropical plants derived from their torrid climate. In the equatorial regions, he noted,

> the juices of plants, incessantly at work, from the effect of continual vegetation, have a degree of intensity far beyond that in the temperate countries; plants, whether salutary or the reverse, have greater power.[34]

30 William Gilpin, *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1772, on Several Parts of England; Particularly the Mountains, and Lakes of Cumberland, and Westmoreland*, vol. 2 (London: R. Blamire, 1786), 188.

31 Paul Zucker, "Ruins – an aesthetic hybrid", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 20/2, Winter 1961, 119.

32 Linda E. Patrik, "The aesthetic experience of ruins", *Husserl Studies* 3/1, 1986, 32–3.

33 Mackenzie, "Narrative of a journey", (August 1816), 133.

34 Leschenault de la Tour, "Memoir on the Strychno-tieute, Antiaris-toxicaria, and Andira Harsfieldii, of the Island of Java", *Annales du Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle*, chs XI and XII, 457 ff. cited in J. J. Stockdale, *Sketches, Civil and Military, of the Island of Java and its Immediate Dependencies: Comprising Some Interesting Details of Batavia, and*

The scale and vigour of plant life in South-East Asia's jungles astounded the British. "There is nothing more striking in the Malayan forests", Raffles observed,

> than the grandeur of the vegetation: the magnitude of the flowers, creepers, and trees, contrasts strikingly with the stunted and, I had almost said, pigmy vegetation of England. Compared with our forest-trees, your largest oak is a mere dwarf.
>
> Here we have creepers and vines entwining larger trees, and hanging suspended for more than a hundred feet, in girth not less than a man's body, and many much thicker; the trees seldom under a hundred, and generally approaching a hundred and sixty to two hundred feet in height. One tree we measured [in Sumatra] was, in circumference, nine yards! And this is nothing to one I measured in Java.[35]

Little wonder, then, that Java's *candi*s had been so thoroughly overwhelmed.

In his description of the remains at Prambanan, Mackenzie expressed both dread and admiration for the triumphal and destructive power of Java's plant life. A tree growing through the ruin, he suggested, acted with a sly and malicious intent:

> It is really curious to observe how this tree penetrating between the minutest junctions of the Stone has gradually sapped & entwined the whole, sometimes pressing closely from without against some parts of the wall; then disappearing & suddenly afterwards it is seen in various forms; sometimes like a knotted branch, communicating silently & secretly with every part, till at last we find it in all its superb foliage overtopping the whole, proudly smiling at the magnificent ruin it has helped to form; in pretended pity, embracing & clinging about the beauteous the venerable remains of former Ages to preserve it yet a little longer for a few centuries from irretrievable Destruction – Like a secret foe, insidiously decorating the beauty it is working to destroy – but reluctant to complete the Ruin it has begun.[36]

There is an edge, a cruelty, to nature's reclamation of the South-East Asian ruins. Rather than being decoratively "[d]ress'd with the rampant ivy's uncheck'd growth",[37] the perception of many British visitors was that South-East Asia's ruins were neglected and forest-drowned.

Authentic Particulars of the Celebrated Poison-tree, London, 1811, 323. See also W. J. Hooker, "On the Upas Antiar, or 'Poison tree of Java' from the Island of Timor", *Companion to the Botanical Magazine; Being a Journal, Containing Such Interesting Botanical Information as Does Not Come Within the Prescribed Limits of the Magazine; with Occasional Figures* 1 (1835), 311 for another translation of this passage.

35 Letter from Raffles to the Duchess of Somerset dated 11 July 1818, cited in Sophia Raffles, *Memoir*, 317.

36 Mss.Eur.F.148 / 47, 20, f. 28.

37 Richard Jago, *Edge-Hill, or, the Rural Prospect Delineated and Moralised* (1767), bk 2, 285, cited in Hawes, 35.

This did not mean that South-East Asian vegetation could not be depicted to pleasing effect. The lushly verdant power of the jungle could lend an irresistibly sublime aspect to the ruins – it was just a matter of careful editing. As Gilpin advised in his essay *The Art of Sketching Landscape* with regard to British views, South-East Asia's natural landscape could easily be "improved" in its representation.

> [Y]ou must grace [the lines of the country] a little, where they run false. You must contrive to hide offensive parts with wood; to cover such as are too bald, with bushes; and to remove little objects, which in nature push themselves too much in sight, and serve only to introduce too many parts into your *composition*. In this happy adjustment the grand merit of your sketch consists.[38]

Nature, he wrote in another of his instructive publications, should not be copied with "painful exactness":

> This is a sort of plagiarism below the dignity of painting. Nature should be copied, as an author should be translated. If, like Horace's translator, you give word for word, your work will necessarily be insipid. But if you catch the meaning of your author, and give it freely, in the idiom of the language into which you translate, your translation may have both the *spirit*, and *truth* of the original. *Translate nature* in the same way. Nature has its idiom, as well as language; and so has painting.[39]

Changes in the interest of making a good picture could sometimes be taken too far by an over-zealous artist, as Raffles' friend Thomas Murdoch found when commissioning images for his own publication on Madeira. The drawings, Murdoch discovered,

> were made in respect to correctness of representation, subject to Willm. Westall's notions of what is *picturesque*, & accordingly He placed convents where there are none & made other alterations so unsatisfactory in respect to fidelity as to cause Mr Murdoch's plan to be given up.[40]

Not all artists were quite so improvident in their transformation of distant landscapes. With some careful manipulation – a little judicious tree felling here, some replanting there – professional artists were able to depict South-East Asia's ruined past in a highly acceptable style, as the reviewer of *The History of Java* in *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and Its*

38 William Gilpin, *Three Essays*, 70.

39 William Gilpin, *Two Essays: One, On the Author's Mode of Executing Rough Sketches; the Other, on the Principles on Which They are Composed* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1804), 20.

40 George Farington's *Diary*, V, 136, 139, cited in Mildred Archer and John Bastin, *The Raffles Drawings in the India Office Library, London* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1978), 94, n.7.

Dependencies found. "[W]e have rarely seen exceeded", they suggested, "the exquisite combination of foliage and architectural decay, exhibited in the representations of the temples at *Brambanan*".[41]

Such praise owed as much to the skills of the artists responsible for the publication's plates and vignettes as it did to the work of nature. When *The History of Java* was released it had become standard practice for the drawings of amateur draftspeople to be handed over to professional artists to be reinterpreted for publication in a style that suited the aesthetic tastes of the time.[42] Raffles' administration had not included the services of a professional artist, for the official draftsman who had accompanied the British invasion force in 1811 had returned to India with Lord Minto's party.[43] While a number of the images made by members of the British military and Dutch civilian engineers exhibit a passing acquaintance with the niceties of the picturesque, they were, on the whole, created as technical drawings with no great claims to artistic merit.[44] It was only with their reworking by professional artists and engravers back in Britain that sometimes fairly perfunctory drawings became full-blown examples of the picturesque style.

Such a transformation can be detected in the vignette of Candi Lara Jonggrang by the engraver James Mitan included in *The History of Java* (Figure 1). While it might be, as Baker had discovered when surveying the remains, "difficult to obtain a correct plan or description of their original disposition, extent, or even of their number and figure"[45] from Mitan's engraving, the composition as a whole conforms with the picturesque mode of ruin landscape depiction. The drawing by Baker, which was the study for the vignette, exhibits little of the detail, irregularity and tonal variation demanded by the picturesque, showing only a rough tumble of stories and a loosely indicated thick carpet of vegetation largely undifferentiated into individual plants or foliage (Figure 2). In the finished engraving, however, the rules of picturesque composition are in full attendance. Individual plants displaying a variety of leaf forms are discernible in the low, shaded edges. The darkened foreground gives way to a clear and well-lit space winding through the middle ground, drawing the viewer towards the ruin which is elevated according to picturesque convention. Conveniently, Baker found that the most visible and complete part of the otherwise decimated structure at Lara Jonggrang was not at ground level but emerging from the rubble and debris of its tumbled masonry, giving the impression of a miniature martello standing atop a small hillock. The low viewpoint and angle from which he chose to depict the *candi*, ensuring its prominence within the composition, was further accentuated by Mitan by his

41 Review of *The History of Java*, by Thomas Stamford Raffles. *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British India and its Dependencies* IV, no. 24 (December 1817), 574 [incorrectly numbered 590].

42 Mildred Archer and Ronald Lightbown, *India Observed: India as Viewed by British Artists 1760–1860* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum and Trefoil Books, 1982), 81.

43 Anthony Forge, "Raffles and Daniell: making the image fit", in Andrew Gerstle and Anthony Milner (eds), *Recovering the Orient: Artists, Scholars, Appropriations* (Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1994), 113.

44 Ibid., 115.

45 From Baker's report in Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 2, 11.

Figure 1. James Mitan, *Northeast View of the Principal Temple at Jongrángan 1815* (vignette from Thomas Stamford Raffles' *The History of Java*, London: 1817, vol. 2, 11), line engraving

throwing sunlight, the brightest point in the vignette, upon the ruin wall. By adopting the conventions of the picturesque Mitan transformed a very simple sketch into a ruin landscape, ensuring that audiences would be sympathetically receptive to Baker's reflection that "[n]othing can exceed the air of melancholy, desolation and ruin" that the locale inspired.[46]

A similar pictorial manipulation can be detected in John Walker's vignette *One of the Gateways at Majapahit*, based on drawings by the Dutch engineer Wardenaar (Figures 3 and 4). Here the artist has made changes to ensure that the delicate balance between ruin and nature has been maintained. In the original drawing, the cramped and enclosed framing of the image gives the impression that the ruins stood within dense and oppressive vegetation, yet in the vignette there is plenty of light and space. The jungle, which Walker obviously considered had, as Gilpin suggested, "pushed itself too much in sight", has been forced back some distance behind the ruin and pruned into a pleasingly shaped backdrop that throws the gateway into relief and echoes its form: the voraciousness of the South-East Asian jungle has been tamed into English parkland prettiness.

46 Raffles, "A discourse delivered", no. IV (April 1816), 350–51. See also Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 2, 11.

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Figure 2. Captain Godfrey P. Baker, *Northeast View of the Principal Temple at Jongrangan, Including the Northern Entrance, Adjacent Temple etc* (from an album of 58 drawings: *No. 10 Original Drawings for the Engravings in* The History of Java *vol. 2: 55 Sketches and Plans of Subjects in Java, Several Published in 1817, of which 15 are by me, G. P. Baker, taking out the 5 of Plaoosan for vol. 1*) c. 1814, pen and ink and pencil. © The Trustees of the British Museum (1939.3–11.05, 4)

But while scenes of ruination could be manipulated according to aesthetic necessity to reclaim the *candi*s from the encroaching jungle, artists could not make too obvious or too forced a restoration or the ruin would cease to be picturesquely pleasing. As Gilpin remarked of John Aisalbie's restoration of Fountains Abbey which had seen the ruined building cleared of its foliage, the surrounding land mowed, and parts of the building reconstructed,

> [t]he very idea of giving a finished splendour to a ruin is absurd. How unnatural, in a place, evidently forlorn and deserted by man, are the *recent* marks of human industry! – Besides, every sentiment, which the scene suggests, is destroyed.[47]

The speculative reconstructions of the *candi*s included in *The History of Java* avoided such unpicturesque *faux pas*. Presented as unpoetically as possible in

47 Gilpin, *Observations*, 187.

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Figure 3. John Walker, *One of the Gateways at Majapahit* (vignette from Thomas Stamford Raffles' *The History of Java*, London: 1817, vol. 2, 54), line engraving

the form of technical drawings, the contrast could not be more striking between these and the romantic aquatints produced by William Daniell that depict the ruined *candi*s surmounted by masses of luxuriant vegetation against dramatically clouded skies, craggy mountain ranges and smoking volcanoes (see, for example, Figures 5 and 6). Daniell enjoyed a reputation as one of Britain's foremost artists specializing in the Oriental view and his "superlatively beautiful" ruin landscapes, at least to one reviewer, rendered the *candi*s infinitely more pleasing to the eye:

> Not only are we compelled to admire the existing union of nature flourishing and triumphing over the ruin of the efforts and pride of art: – we are called on in accompanying plates to view, though with less admiration, "the temple restored to its original state." … However magnificent they may have been as they came out of the able hand of the architect, they are, judging from their representations, incomparably more picturesque

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Figure 4. J. W. B. Wardenaar, (*Ruin of a Small Temple at Majapahit Covered by Jungle (Java)*) (from an album of 58 drawings: *No. 10 Original Drawings for the Engravings in* The History of Java *vol. 2: 55 Sketches and Plans of Subjects in Java, Several Published in 1817, of which 15 are by me, G. P. Baker, taking out the 5 of Plaoosan for vol. 1*) c. 1814, watercolour. © The Trustees of the British Museum (1939.3–11.05, 29)

> and beautiful in their present state of embellished ruin and destruction, effected by the hand of time.[48]

Vegetation was not only cleared from sites of interest, it could also be added to images to promote their decorative appeal. One of the most obvious displays of an artistic green thumb amongst *The History of Java* vignettes is Mitan's image of Candi Jabung, a brick structure completed during the Majapahit era (Figure 7). In the vignette, the *candi* is given a decoratively verdant setting embellished with elegantly sinuous saplings, delicate fern fronds, and

48 Review of *The History of Java*, *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register* . . ., no. 24 (December 1817), 573 [incorrectly numbered 589] and [574] [incorrectly numbered 590].

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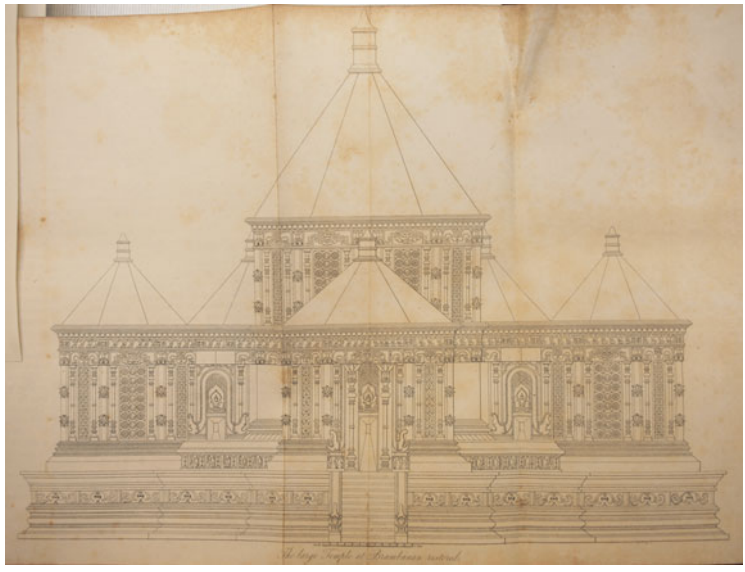

Figure 5. *The Large Temple at Brambánan Restored* (plate from Thomas Stamford Raffles' *The History of Java*, London: 1817, vol. 2, between pp. 18 and 19), etching

Figure 6. William Daniell after H. C. Cornelius, *The Large Temple at Brambánan* (plate from Thomas Stamford Raffles' *The History of Java*, London: 1817, vol. 2, between pp. 18 and 19), aquatint and etching

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Figure 7. James Mitan, *Western Front of the Larger Temple at Jabang near Probolingo 1815* (vignette from Thomas Stamford Raffles' *The History of Java*, London: 1817, vol. 2, p. 51), line engraving

broad-leafed palms silhouetted against a clouded sky. A drawing of Candi Jabung by the physician and amateur naturalist Dr Thomas Horsfield, however, sited the monument on a small hill surrounded by open plains (Figure 8). Another, by a member of Mackenzie's survey party, shows it standing by fields under cultivation (a buffalo drawing a plough can be seen in the mid-ground just to the right of the *candi*), while a drawing by Baker now in the British Museum and purported to be the study for the vignette does not include any elements of landscape at all (Figures 9 and 10).[49] Mitan's picturesquely leafy setting, it would appear, was entirely fanciful.

49 See also another drawing by Baker in the British Museum: Captain Godfrey P. Baker, *Southern Front of the Temple at Jabong* (from an album of 58 drawings: *No. 10 Original Drawings for the Engravings in* The History of Java *vol. 2: 55 sketches and plans of subjects in Java, several published in 1817, of which 15 are by me, G. P. Baker, taking out the 5 of Plaoosan for vol. 1*) c. 1814, pen and ink and wash, British Museum (1939.3–11.05, 35).

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Figure 8. Thomas Horsfield, *(Candi Jabung, East Java)* (from an album of 62 drawings (60 folios)) *c*. 1800–18, pencil, © British Library Board. All Rights Reserved (Horsfield Collection WD956, f.21)

Similarly, the evocative and mysterious mood which Mitan created through a dynamic use of light and dark and his placement of the *candi* partially emerging from shadow was the product of his imagination. Baker and other draftsmen working in Java had depicted Candi Jabung in a very matter-of-fact manner, its form clearly defined by broad daylight and exhibiting no hint of theatricality. Mitan, on the other hand, infused his image with all the drama of the sublime: "Almost all the heathen temples were dark", Burke advised in his *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*.

> [A]ll edifices calculated to produce an idea of the sublime, ought rather to be dark and gloomy … darkness itself on other occasions is known by experience to have a greater effect on the passions than light.[50]

Gilpin also advocated the use of shade, darkness or gloom for picturesque effect:

> In every representation, truly picturesque, the shade should greatly overbalance the light. The face of nature, under the glow of noon, has rarely this beautiful appearance. The artist therefore generally courts her charms in a morning, or an evening hour, when the shadows are deep, and extended; and when the sloping sun-beam affords rather a catching, than a glaring light.[51]

50 Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 100 and 147.
51 Gilpin, *Observation*, 162–3.

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Figure 9. Member of Mackenzie's party, *(South Face of the Temple at Jabung, East Java. A European Officer Making Notes at a Table)* (from an unbound portfolio of 66 drawings) 1812, pencil and watercolour. © British Library Board. All Rights Reserved (Mackenzie Collection WD913, Portfolio no. 7)

While these changes were clearly intended to add picturesque interest to the image, Mitan made other alterations to Candi Jabung which were obviously based on erroneous assumptions about the *candi*'s architectural form. Produced as part of a process in which artists were working with sometimes indifferent drawings of places and objects they had never seen, and in a creative climate in which they were encouraged to make such changes as they felt would be more palatable to British tastes, errors of interpretation were inevitable. As Marryat was to observe some years after *The History of Java* was published, the absence of professional artists from official voyages allowed all manner of inaccuracies to be incorporated into images which purported to provide a faithful view of far off places.

> A hasty pencil sketch, from an unpractised hand, is made over to an artist to reduce the proportion; from him it passes over to the hand of an engraver, and an interesting plate is produced by their joint labours. But in this making up, the character and features of the individual are lost, or the scenery is composed of foliage not indigenous to the country, but introduced by the artists to make a good picture.[52]

52 F. S. Marryat, *Borneo and the Indian Archipelago* (1848), cited in Forge, "Raffles and Daniell", 113.

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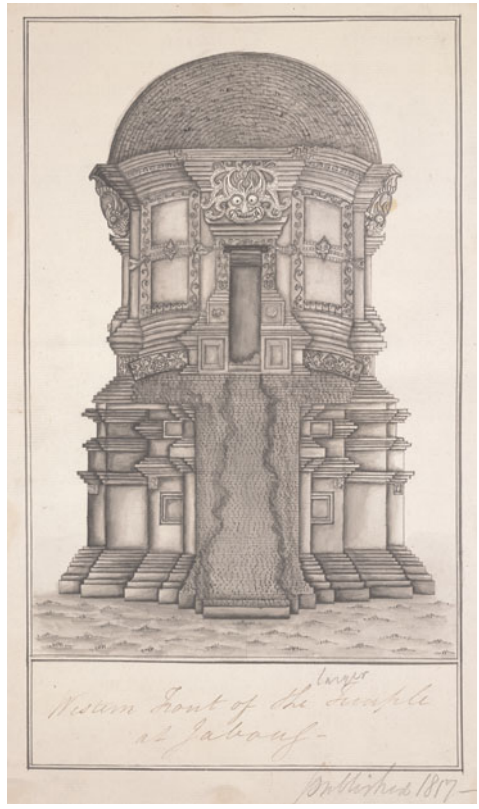

Figure 10. Captain Godfrey P. Baker, *Western Front of the Temple at Jabong* (from an album of 58 drawings: *No. 10 Original Drawings for the Engravings in* The History of Java *vol. 2: 55 Sketches and Plans of Subjects in Java, Several Published in 1817, of which 15 are by me, G. P. Baker, taking out the 5 of Plaoosan for vol. 1*) c. 1814, pen and ink and wash. © The Trustees of the British Museum (1939.3–11.05, 34)

The error in Mitan's vignette lies with his depiction of its roof line. Originally, Candi Jabung's unusual roof line represented a variation on a standard East Javanese four-sided stepped and tapered roof type of the kind depicted in another of the vignettes, *The Smaller Temple at Jabung near Probolingo*.[53] At Candi Jabung, elements of this stepped roof type (vestiges of which can be seen in Horsfield's drawing), were incorporated into the rounded form of a stupa.[54] Drawings executed in Java by Horsfield and by members of Mackenzie's survey party show that this upper section of the *candi* had

53 *The Smaller Temple at Jabung near Probolingo* (vignette from Thomas Stamford Raffles' *The History of Java* (London: 1817), vol. 2, p. 51), line engraving.

54 Ann R. Kinney et al., *Worshipping Siva and Buddha: The Temple Art of East Java* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 221. See also Maud Girard-Geslan et al., *Art of Southeast Asia*, trans. J. A. Underwood (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1998), 355–6.

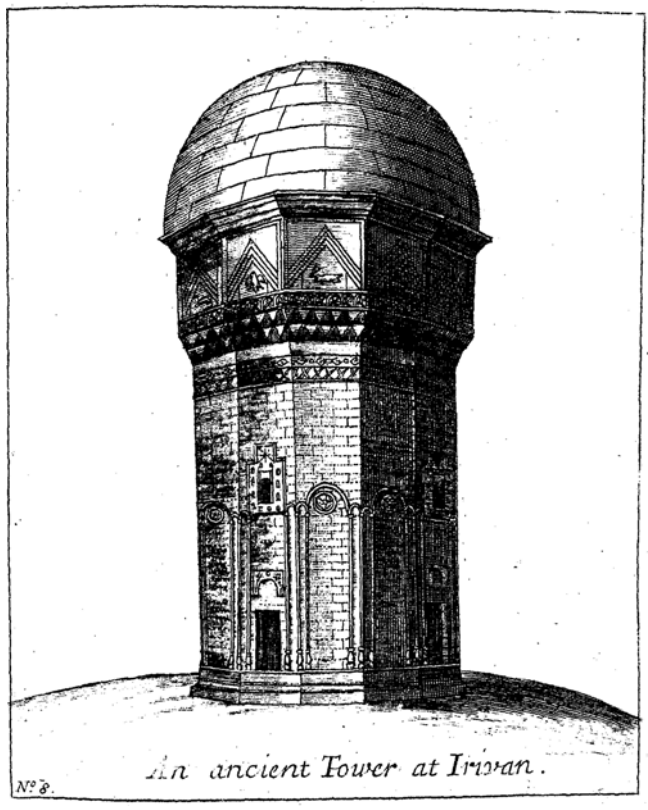

Figure 11. *An Ancient Tower at Irivan* (from John Chardin's *The Travels of Sir John Chardin into Persia and the East Indies*, London: Moses Pitt, 1686, vol. 1, opp. 246), engraving

collapsed into a grass-covered mound, but none of these images necessarily suggest that it had formerly been topped by a simple, unadorned dome as devised by Mitan for his depiction of a more structurally complete building. The images by Baker on which Mitan based his engravings, however, show not only the rounded mass of vegetation, but also what appears to be the remains of a ribbed or tessellated structure which could readily be misinterpreted as a simple brick cupola like that depicted by Mitan. Indeed, Baker may have created his drawings under just such a misapprehension.

Mitan's interpretation of the *candi*'s roof line may also have been influenced by an engraving reproduced in Sir John Chardin's widely read account of his travels, *The Travels of Sir John Chardin into Persia and the East Indies*, which had been published towards the end of the seventeenth century but which still attracted a wide readership.[55] Mitan's image of Candi Jabung and *An Ancient Tower at Irivan* (Figure 11)[56] appear to share a passing similarity.

55 John Chardin, *The Travels of Sir John Chardin into Persia and the East Indies*, vol. 1 (London: Moses Pitt, 1686).
56 Ibid., opp. 246.

Given that Baker's report reproduced in Raffles' text makes reference to "Syrian" roof styles when describing Candi Sewu,[57] and Raffles himself hints at the influence of Egypt with regard to Candi Sukuh[58] (a *candi* which was also attributed to the Carthaginians),[59] it is not inconceivable that Mitan turned to models in the Near East for clarification of architectural details where the Javanese sketches proved confusing or incomprehensible.

Misunderstandings such as these are entirely understandable when we compare the various drawings of Candi Jabung made in Java. While the artists had enjoyed the benefit of actually seeing the *candi*, the images they produced differ dramatically in the quality and style of the draftsmanship. There appears to be little agreement in their conception of the *candi*'s dimensions (compare, for example, the relative size of the personnel in Figures 8 and 9) even though its proportions were recorded as part of Mackenzie's official survey as can be ascertained from those drawings which include Europeans and Javanese in the act of measuring the ruin, and a drawing now in the collection of the British Library which is annotated with measurements.[60]

Mitan's vignette, while it does portray the proportions of the *candi* with some accuracy, makes no reference to the presence of the survey party which had recorded, in written reports and drawings, the *candi*'s dimensions, building materials and current state of repair. Indeed, none of the plates or vignettes in *The History of Java* allude to the British or Dutch surveys, despite the fact that all the ruins discussed in the chapter on antiquities were subjected to this type of scrutiny in order to compile the reports which formed the basis of Raffles' text. On the contrary, there are instances in which European and Javanese interaction with the ruins, as recorded in the survey drawings on which *The History of Java* plates were based, was purposely removed for publication.

The presence of figures in a picturesque landscape was somewhat problematic, for the picturesque's emphasis on the rugged and the rough extended not only to the landscape but also to its staffage. Just as picturesque objects and motifs were rarely functional and the landscapes in which they stood were seldom shaped for utility, ruin landscapes tended to be peopled with the idle, the itinerant, and the mendicant. Improvement and industry were anathema to the picturesque taste. For nature to be the archetype as Gilpin demanded, obvious human intervention in the landscape had to be kept to a minimum, and those motifs deemed most picturesque were often ones which would have been unpleasant or unacceptable in real life. In the picturesque utopia, neat and comfortable residences gave way to crumbling ruins and rustic hovels, tilled

57 Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 2, 19–20.

58 Ibid., 47.

59 Baker quotes from "Note on the Sūkū remains" by Major D. H. Dalton: "[t]he Carthaginians were great navigators – What reason then have we peremptorily to decide that the monument at Soocoo has not been erected by that people?" (Add. 30353/2, *Account of Suku by Major Johnson* [Annotated with comments by Captain G. P. Baker] (British Library), 10).

60 Colin Mackenzie or Member of Mackenzie's party (*South Face of the Temple at Jabung, East Java*) (from an unbound portfolio of 66 drawings) 1812, pen and ink and pencil, British Library (Oriental and India Office Collections: Mackenzie collection WD914, Portfolio no. 7).

and productive lands to rugged wildernesses, industrious agricultural labourers to lazing peasants or bold banditti.

Of course the appalling conditions of Britain's rural poor who had to live in those rustic hovels, and the changing social and economic conditions that resulted from enclosure and the increasing mechanization of agricultural production, which not only led to mass unemployment but also fundamentally altered the landscape so that examples of "untouched" nature were becoming increasingly rare, were all highly problematic. To the advocates of the picturesque, however, representations of rusticity and decay did not invite such unsavoury allusions. "Moral, and picturesque ideas do not always coincide", Gilpin observed in one of his travel publications in a passage that has become somewhat notorious:

> In a moral view, the industrious mechanic is a more pleasing object, than the loitering peasant. But in a picturesque light, it is otherwise. The arts of industry are rejected; and even idleness, if I may so speak, adds dignity to a character. Thus the lazy cowherd resting on his pole; or the peasant lolling on a rock, may be allowed in the grandest scenes; while the laborious mechanic, with his implements of labour, would be repulsed.[61]

These sentiments appear to have extended to Daniell's vision of the South-East Asian ruin landscape, for the drawing by the Dutch surveyor H. C. Cornelius on which his plate *The Large Temple at Brambánan [Prambanan]* is based, is a perfect hive of activity. In Cornelius' image (Figure 12), top-hatted Europeans are hard at work measuring and recording the *candi* and directing a small army of Javanese workers who are engaged in the more menial tasks of clearing it of vegetation and rubble. Such scenes of industry do not appear to have interested Daniell, however. His image retains just the three seated Javanese spectators in the right foreground – the only figures in Cornelius' drawing not actively engaged in the survey. To these Daniell has added four more Javanese figures, all of whom show little interaction with the remains, a pictorial device he also employed in his views of *One of the* T*emples on the Mountain Dieng or Prahu* and *One of the Smaller Temples at Brambanan in Its Present State*.[62] Their inclusion seems in accordance with Gilpin's call for figures to be "at best only *picturesque appendages*" to the landscape. "They are of a negative nature, neither

61 Gilpin, *Observations*, 43–4. Similarly, elsewhere he observed of picturesque appreciation: "[i]t is not it's business to consider matters of utility. It has nothing to do with affairs of the plough, and the spade; but merely examines the face of nature as a beautiful object" (William Gilpin, *Remarks on Forest Scenery, and Other Woodland Views, (Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty) Illustrated by the Scenes of New-Forest in Hampshire*, vol. 1 (London: R. Blamire, 1791), 298.

62 William Daniell after H. C. Cornelius, *One of the Temples on the Mountain Dieng or Prahu* (plate from Thomas Stamford Raffles' *The History of Java*, London: 1817, vol. 2, opp. p. 32), aquatint and etching; and William Daniell after H. C. Cornelius, *One of the Smaller Temples at Brambánan in Its Present State* (plate from Thomas Stamford Raffles' *The History of Java*, London: 1817, vol. 2, opp. p. 16), aquatint and etching.

Figure 12. H. C. Cornelius, *View of the Ruins of a Bramin Temple at Brambanang as Form'd in the Jaar 1807* 1807, pen and ink, wash, sepia and green wash. © The Trustees of the British Museum (Raffles Collection 1939.3–11.06, 30)

adding to the grandeur of the idea, nor taking from it. They merely and simply *adorn* a scene".[63]

It is not only their languorous attitudes that cause the figures to enhance the picturesque appeal of the plates. The clothing styles of the Javanese, so different from European fashions, and their bearing of kris, which marked them not only as romantically exotic but lent the scenes an exciting undercurrent of danger and barbarism, ensured that the figures conformed with Gilpin's opinions on the personnel that were best suited for inclusion in a picturesque landscape:

> The characters, which are most *suited to these scenes* of grandeur, are such as impress us with some idea of greatness, wildness, or ferocity; all which touch on the sublime. Figures in long, folding draperies; gypsies; banditti; and soldiers, – not in modern regimentals . . . are all marked with one or other of these characters: and mixing with the magnificence, wildness, or horror of the place, they properly coalesce; and reflecting the same images, add a deeper tinge to the character of the scene.[64]

63 Gilpin, *Observations*, 45.
64 Ibid., 45–6.

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The kris, in particular, captured British imaginations. It was often represented by British commentators more as an instrument of murder than of warfare, one "characteristic of men more inclined to attack their enemy than defend themselves".[65] For British readers whose imaginations were attuned to the more exciting fictions of the picturesque, Raffles' suggestion that "[q]uiet and peaceable as the Javans now are, were they once roused to insurrection, their blood would rapidly boil, and they would no doubt be guilty of many excesses" must have made a deep impression.[66] Here, it seemed, could be found all the wildness and ferocity that Gilpin demanded.

Survey workers were also removed from Daniell's plate of Borobudur which, although engraved in 1817, was not included in *The History of Java*, but did appear in *Antiquarian, Architectural, and Landscape Illustrations of the History of Java by the Late Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, F.R.S.* published in 1844 (Figure 13).[67] There are a number of drawings of Borobudur by both Dutch and British engineers amongst the sketches compiled by Baker now in the British Museum. A likely basis for Daniell's plate is Cornelius' study (Figure 14) which, although not as populated as his image of Prambanan, also depicts a survey in progress, with Europeans and Javanese measuring and examining the ruin. In the published plate, these figures have been replaced by more passive spectators although, rather bizarrely, Daniell has retained the ladder which leans against the topmost stupa. Also absent are the contemporary *pendopo*s which can be seen at the base of the monument in a drawing attributed to Baker in the British Museum which bears a scored out inscription suggesting that it was the study for Daniell's plate (although there are obvious discrepancies between the two images).[68] Similarly, there is no sign of the small shelter

65 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), 29.

66 Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 1, 252. On the whole, however, Raffles was complimentary in his opinion of the Javanese, noting that they were "strangers to unrelenting hatred and blood-thirsty revenge", "[a]trocious crimes" were rarely perpetrated and when they did occur were "principally owing to misgovernment" (ibid., 249–50).

67 *Antiquarian, Architectural, and Landscape Illustrations of the History of Java by the Late Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, F.R.S.* (London: Henry G. Bohn), 1844. Raffles had intended to produce a second publication in 1817 titled *An Account of the Antiquities of Java, illustrated by Drawings of the Principal Architectural and Sculptural Remains, etc as Surveyed by Capt R. Baker, of the Bengal Military Establishment, in the Years 1815 and 1816*. It was to have included plates not published in *The History of Java*, but was never realized. The additional plates, including the image of Borobudur, were eventually released first in 1830 by John Murray (selling very few copies) and again, more widely, in 1844.

68 Captain Godfrey P. Baker, *Northeast View of Borobudur in the Cadoo, Half a Mile Distant* (from an album of 58 drawings: *No. 10 Original Drawings for the Engravings in The History of Java vol. 2: 55 Sketches and Plans of Subjects in Java, Several Published in 1817, of which 15 are by me, G. P. Baker, taking out the 5 of Plaoosan for Vol. 1*) 1815, pencil, British Museum (1939.3–11.05, 12). The *pendopo*s are mentioned by Baker in his journal as "fit for the accommodation of Travellers" (Baker MSS *Java Antiquities* 4, 117).

Figure 13. William Daniell, *Temple of Bóro Bódor, in the District of Bóro in Kedú* (plate 46 from *Antiquarian, Architectural, and Landscape Illustrations of the History of Java by the Late Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, F.R.S.*, London: 1844) 1817, aquatint

depicted at the apex of the monument in another of the Baker drawings which has been crossed out and labelled with the directive "dele" (deleatur) in pencil.[69] Such intrusions, it seems, could not be allowed to disrupt the picturesque qualities of the ruin.

Although Daniell's aquatint was the first British print of Borobudur, the delay in its release meant that William Home Lizars' engraving in volume two of Crawfurd's *History of the Indian Archipelago* . . . was the first to be made available to the British public (Figure 15).[70] Like Daniell's plate, Lizars' view depicts little sign of habitation or industry despite Crawfurd's observation that the ground surrounding the monument was "cultivated throughout, even to the

69 Captain Godfrey P. Baker?, *North Northeast View of the Great Pyramidal Temple of Buru Budur in the Cadu District, Java in 1815* (from an album of 58 drawings: *No. 10 Original Drawings for the Engravings in The History of Java vol. 2: 55 Sketches and Plans of Subjects in Java, Several Published in 1817, of which 15 are by me, G. P. Baker, taking out the 5 of Plaoosan for Vol. 1*) 1815, pen and ink and wash, British Museum (1939.3–11.04, 20). Another version of this drawing in the collection of the Royal Asiatic Society also has the *pendopo* at the apex of the monument scored out (Captain Godfrey P. Baker, *The Temple of Borobudur from the NNE*, *c*.1815, pencil, Royal Asiatic Society (Baker Collection 08.013)).

70 This image was also reproduced in John Crawfurd, "On the ruins of Boro Budor in Java", *Transactions of the Literary Society of Bombay* 2, 1820, as plate I between pages 154 and 155.

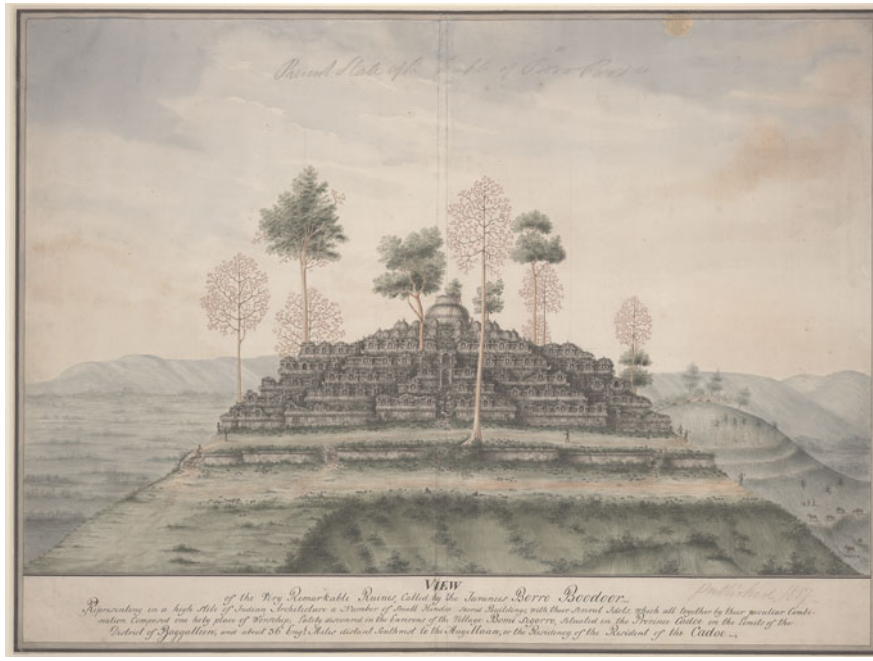

Figure 14. H. C. Cornelius or Dutch draftsman working with Cornelius, *View of the Very Remarkable Ruines Called by the Javanees Borro Boodoor* (from an album of 65 drawings: *No. 11 Original Drawings for the Engravings in the History of Java vol. 3: 65 Plans and Drawings of Boro Bodor, Brambanan, Gûnûng Prao, and Other Temples in Java when in a Non Perfect State, by M. Cornelius and his Draftsmen, 1807. George Baker) c*. 1807–15, watercolour and pen and ink. © The Trustees of the British Museum (1939.3–11.06, 1)

interstices between the walls of the temple".[71] There is no suggestion in either image of the villages which were located in the vicinity of the monument, one of which had been charged by Raffles to keep "the edifice … as neat & clean & well arranged as its present State of dilapidation will permit" in lieu of government rents or taxes.[72] There is a partial, distant view of terraced hillsides in Lizars' engraving but these are entirely devoid of agricultural workers and the only figures in the scene are shown not at work but in conversation, one with a farm implement resting casually on his shoulder. Set amid a tropical wilderness complete with a shadowed foreground of tumbled vegetation and scattered rock, the ubiquitous cluster of palm trees and a suitably disordered line of collapsed fencing, the scene is imbued with a sense of abandonment and neglect that accords with the feelings which Crawfurd suggested were stirred by the locale.

71 Ibid., 155.
72 Baker MS *Java Antiquities* 4, 129–30.

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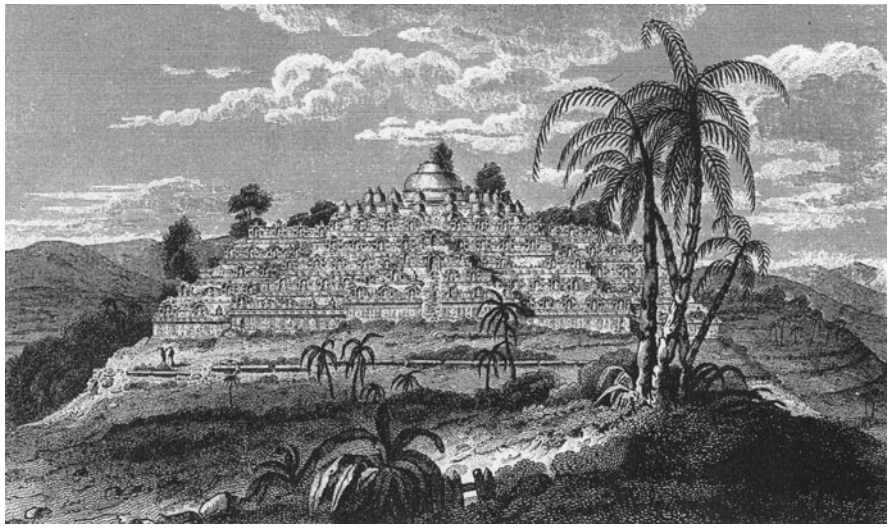

Figure 15. William Home Lizars, *Temple of Boro Budor in Java* (plate 15 (*frontispiece*) from Crawfurd's *History of the Indian Archipelago Containing an Account of the Manners, Arts, Languages, Religions, Institutions, and Commerce of Its Inhabitants*, Edinburgh: 1820, vol. 2), line engraving

> Whether from the ideas naturally associated with the ruins themselves, or from the character of the scenery, or from both, I have never visited this part of the country without feeling a strong impresssion of the tendency of the situation to encourage meditation.[73]

The removal of European figures engaged in the surveys and the Javanese workers in their employ did more than just enable the images to conform with the aesthetic tastes of the day. It also took away any suggestion of an engagement with the contemporary and assisted in perpetuating the stereotype of a static, unchanging Asia inhabited by an apathetic, indolent population. Daniell's Javanese figures engage with the *candi*s neither as venerating postulants nor as inquisitive antiquaries but merely, as Raffles suggested, with "indifference".[74] Nor do they toil in the surrounding fields despite the fact that many of the temples were situated in landscapes that Baker considered "the most luxuriant pictures of Javanese fertility & rural scenery … well cultivated and populous".[75] Instead, they are apparently inclined to do little other than promenade in small groups or recline decorously in the manner of the "lolling peasants" who peopled picturesque interpretations of the European landscape, most famously those of the classical landscapist *par excellence*, Claude Lorrain (1600–82). Lorrain enjoyed an avid following in Britain and his influence on British painting was profound. Daniell's debt to Lorrain was both considered and considerable, and

73 Ibid.
74 Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 2, 6.
75 Baker MS *Java Antiquities* 4, 142.

it is significant that he and his uncle, the artist Thomas Daniell, had chosen to take a copy of the *Liber Veritatis* with them on their travels to, from, and throughout the subcontinent.[76]

One of Claude's great virtues, according to his many British admirers, was that he had restored dignity to the contemporary Italian landscape by investing it with allusions to the past. "A painter of landskips in this style, and with this conduct", noted Sir Joshua Reynolds of Claude in his 1786 address to the students of the Royal Academy, "sends the imagination back into antiquity".[77] Visual correlations between Daniell's depictions of Java's ruined *candi*s peopled with decoratively idle locals and Claude's Arcadian views of nymphs and shepherds ensured that the contemporary Javanese were associated not so much with a progressive and dynamic present but more with a timeless, classical past. They were, the images implied, part of the landscape, part of the ruin, citizens of a vanished, vanquished empire.

This was an important and recurring theme in British ruin sentiment. When *The History of Java* first put the island's ruined *candi*s before the British public, the remains of past civilizations stimulated meditations on decay and demise that embraced not only lamentations on personal mortality but also philosophical enquiry into the rise and decline of whole empires. The vast wealth, substantial political power and sophisticated social organization of past civilizations were apparent from the richness of their material remains. Tracing the course of empire outlined in Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*:

> There is the moral of all human tales;
> 'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past,
> First Freedom, and then Glory – when that fails,
> Wealth – Vice – Corruption, – Barbarism at last,[78]

ruins became humbling and disturbingly prophetic prompts to speculation on what they had "witnessed" of imperial failure and the ruined *candi*s of Java proved no exception.

The island's architectural remains, so handsomely illustrated in *The History of Java*, provided clear evidence of the "extensive traces of antiquity, foreign intercourse, and national greatness" that Raffles believed constituted "striking and obvious proofs … of the claims of Java to be considered at one point far advanced in civilization".[79] For Raffles, this emphasis on Java's former glory

76 Forge, Raffles and Daniell, 119 and Mildred Archer, *Early Views of India: The Picturesque Journeys of Thomas and William Daniell 1786–1794* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), 226. The *Liber Veritatis* was assembled by Claude from drawings of his own major paintings as a record to authenticate his work. Over 200 of the images were reproduced as sepia mezzotints by Richard Earlom in a book of the same title published by John Boydell in 1777. It became highly popular with artists of the period for whom Claude served as an exemplar.

77 Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, ed. Robert R. Wark (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975), 237.

78 Canto 4, CVIII, 964–7.

79 Raffles, "A discourse delivered to the literary", no. IV (April 1816), 349 and 353. See also Sophia Raffles, *Memoir*, 156 and 162. For a fuller discussion of the impact that the depictions and descriptions of the *candi*s in *The History of Java* had on British

was essential. By the time the images of the ruined *candi*s were being published in *The History of Java*, the British had restored the island to Dutch rule and were looking to reduce their involvement in the archipelago, something Raffles viewed with great misgiving. The underlying thesis of *The History of Java* was his profound regret over the loss of the island. His intention was to convince his British audience of the very great mistake that the restitution represented, in the process providing justification for his own policies and activities while Lieutenant-Governor of the island.

The ruin images and commentaries published in *The History of Java*, then, responded not only to the taste for the picturesque but were also deeply informed by Raffles' belief that the British had forgone a significant opportunity to establish their power in the region amongst a people who had once boasted an advanced civilization and were therefore an appropriate (and lucrative) target for British attentions. He was eager to portray Java as a worthwhile colony populated by a people capable of improvement, and the island's architectural remains were of particular importance to his argument. They provided incontrovertible proof that the island's population, at least at one time, had possessed outstanding abilities:

> that boundless profusion of active, unwearied skill and patience, the noble spirit of generous emulation, the patronage and encouragement which the arts and sciences must have received, and the inexhaustible wealth and resources which the Javanese of those times must have possessed![80]

History – and the *candi*s – Raffles suggested, proved the Javanese to be a people with great potential.

Inevitably, praise for Java's past led to unflattering comparisons with its present. The striking contrast between the ruinous state of the *candi*s and what the imagination could conceive to have been not only their former magnificence but also the splendid and flourishing civilizations responsible for their construction, elicited responses that were typical of early nineteenth-century reflections on the fall of empire. In his address to the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences, Raffles felt it might be admissible for him "to lament the contrast of the present times, with 'times long since past'".[81] Contemporary Javanese society, he observed, bore little evidence of the glory or splendour that the monuments suggested:

> The grandeur of their ancestors sounds like a fable in the mouth of the degenerate Javan; and it is only when it can be traced in monuments,

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perceptions of Javanese civilization and its relative state of development in comparison with European, South Asian and South-East Asian cultures, see Sarah Tiffin, "Raffles and the barometer of civilisation: images and descriptions of ruined *candi*s in 'The History of Java' ", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 3, 18, 3, 2008, 341–60.

80 Raffles, "A discourse delivered to the literary", no. IV, April 1816, 351. Raffles is here quoting Baker. See also Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 1, 11 and Sophia Raffles, *Memoir*, 158.

81 Raffles, "A discourse delivered to the literary", no. IV, April 1816, 350.

> which cannot be falsified, that we are led to give credit to their traditions concerning it.[82]

In Raffles' estimation, the *candi*s represented more than just the high point of Java's architectural and artistic traditions: their construction represented the most significant event in the island's history, forming "the most interesting part of the annals of the people".[83]

Certainly no contemporary buildings were thought to equal the ruined *candi*s in splendour or magnificence. The advent of Islam on the island was considered to have been detrimental to Java's artistic and architectural expression, with Crawfurd pronouncing that:

> in a period of 338 years, which has elapsed, since their conversion to *Mohammedanism*, during which they have been, in matters of this nature nearly left to themselves, they have not constructed a single building, that can be compared with even the rudest of the *Hindu* temples, and their mosques of the earliest and latest periods, are mean and paltry wooden fabrics, utterly unworthy of any notice.[84]

His poor opinion seems to have been shared by others. There do not appear to be any images reproduced either as plates or as vignettes in late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century British publications on the region which take Javanese mosques as their subject matter, and drawings of the same subject seem to be equally rare. The rather indifferent vignette by Justinian Gantz after a drawing by Captain P. J. Begbie of a mosque at Malacca included in Begbie's *The Malayan Peninsula* (1834) is one of the very few depictions of a mosque anywhere in South-East Asia included in a British publication.[85] Even then, Begbie does not provide any details of the mosque in his description of Malacca and the

82 Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 2, 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, 584).

83 Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 2, 6.

84 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, 366–7. As Ricklefs observes, however, with the fall of Hindu power on Java, ". . . it was not barbarians who now took centre stage. Nor was it the beginning of a Javanese 'Dark Age' " (M. C. Ricklefs, *Jogjakarta under Sultan Mangkubumi, 1749–1792: A History of the Division of Java* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 1).

85 Justinian Gantz after Captain P. J. Begbie, *Mosque on the Kubu Road, Malacca* (vignette from Captain P. J. Begbie's *The Malayan Peninsula*, Madras: 1834, opp. p. 370), aquatint.

Figure 16. John Walker, *S. E. View of the Palace at Kulásan near Prambánan* (plate from Thomas Stamford Raffles' *The History of Java*, London: 1817, vol. 2, opp. p. 1), line engraving

image functions as nothing more than a visual full stop that separates his texts on Malacca and Penang.

Images of Java's *kraton*s are similarly difficult to find. Although he described the island's *kraton*s as the "only modern buildings they possess, of any architectural importance",[86] Raffles provided only a fairly perfunctory description of their general layout within *The History of Java* running to little more than one page. There are no images in either volume of his publication which take the contemporary *kraton* as their subject, even for the plates of Javanese figures by Daniell where such a setting would have been highly appropriate. Instead, images such as *A Javan in the Court Dress* and *A Javan in the War Dress* have only distant or very partial reference to court architecture.[87]

Two images which do represent rare instances in which contemporary court architecture was reproduced in print form for the British reading public can be found in Major William Thorn's *Memoir of the Conquest of Java*

86 Raffles, *The History of Java*, vol. 1, 473.

87 William Daniell, *A Javan in the Court Dress* (plate from Thomas Stamford Raffles' *The History of Java* (London: 1817), vol. 1, opp. p. 92), coloured aquatint and etching; and William Daniell, *A Javan in the War Dress* (plate from Thomas Stamford Raffles' *The History of Java* (London: 1817), vol. 1, opp. p. 90), coloured aquatint and etching.

(1815).[88] This publication includes numerous views of Dutch forts seized and occupied by the British as well as other subjects, such as the Stadhuis, which were associated with the British victory and the relinquishing of Dutch political power on the island. Amongst these are views of the *kraton* at Palembang and of Taman Sari, the Water Castle at Yogyakarta, but these provide little in the way of detailed information on the impressive architecture of the contemporary *kraton*.[89] As the title of Thorn's publication suggests, the theme of the Palembang and Taman Sari prints is not so much a salute to their architectural forms as a celebration of British military prowess, with the *kraton*s represented as spent and notorious forces.

There are undercurrents of this theme in the *History of Java* plates, for the only "palace" which is illustrated is one in ruins: Walker's engraving *Southeast View of the Palace at Kulásan near Prambánan* (actually the Buddhist Candi Sari) (Figure 16), which forms the full page frontispiece to Raffles' chapter on antiquities. By omitting an illustration of contemporary *kraton* architecture in favour of a plate of what was assumed to be a ruined palace, *The History of Java* images subtly reinforced the conclusions of Raffles and others regarding the island's contemporary courts: that they were the seats of a deeply flawed power presiding over a culture in decline.

Aware of the tastes of their audiences and thoroughly trained in the genre, artists, whether intentionally or not, underscored such sentiments by portraying South-East Asia's ruined *candi*s, pagodas and monuments using the visual parlance of the British picturesque. The picturesque transformed South-East Asia's architectural remains into *ruins*, images which were loaded with readily understood meanings associated with social, political and cultural decay. By employing the same visual vocabulary that was commonly used to express ideas about the passing of empire, particularly that of Rome, artists depicting South-East Asia's less familiar architectural remains provided readily recognizable cues to British audiences which ensured that they would be read as allegories for the political and cultural degeneration of the region's peoples. The ruin imagery made the decline of South-East Asia's societies seem both natural and inevitable and underscored the message that the *candi*s were subject to both a physical and a social decay: they existed both in and within a ruinous state.

88 Major William Thorn, *Memoir of the Conquest of Java; with the Subsequent Operations of the British Forces in the Oriental Archipelago. To Which is Subjoined, a Statistical and Historical Sketch of Java; Being the Result of Observations Made in a Tour Through the Country; with an Account of its Dependencies* (London: T. Egerton, 1815).

89 Joseph Jeakes, possibly after William Thorn, or after Johannes Rach or School of Johannes Rach, *Fort, Palace, and Line of Defence at Palimbang* (plate XVIII from William Thorn's *Memoir of the Conquest of Java*. London: 1815, opp. p. 143), aquatint and etching; and Joseph Jeakes, possibly after William Thorn, or after School of Johannes Rach, possibly A. de Nelly, *Water Palace at Djoejo Carta* (plate XXV from William Thorn's *Memoir of the Conquest of Java.* London: 1815, opp. p. 292), aquatint and etching.