

Session Chair: John Miksic, Associate Professor NUS and Senior Visiting Fellow, ISEAS

1. Reviving a Lost Art: Ceramic Production at Twante – Myo Thant Tyn, President, Myanmar Ceramic Society, Yangon

Abstract: The discovery of great tradition of ancient ash glaze technology at Twante in Myanmar associated with evidence for exportation of ceramics to the Gulf of Arabia since the 15th century AD inspires one to investigate the present situation of this technology at Twante. With surprise and discomfort it was found that for Twante potters ash glaze technology had been forgotten. Due to a scarcity of lead (the only glazing material they now know how to use) and a dwindling market, the economy and livelihoods of the potters' community was seriously affected. In an endeavour to solve the lead problem by reinstating their lost heritage, the Myanmar Ceramic Society (MCS) conducted research regarding the possible revival of the long lost ash glaze technology at the Tradi-Style Ceramic (TSC) Laboratory in Twante. Although MCS could revive the ash glaze technology used by 15th-century potters at Twante (but which requires a higher temperature and ability to create a reducing atmosphere at finishing) this method seems to the potters quite complicated. It also necessitates more consumption of costly fuel wood and still there is no assured market. MCS developed an appropriate low temperature ash glaze flux formula (using a flux of ash with borax) which proved compatible with the familiar lead glaze one. This paper will discuss recent efforts to replace scarce (and poisonous) lead with readily available and less costly (and non-poisonous) ash enhanced borax (lead free) glaze which has a great potential market for hotels and restaurants.

2. Ceramics in Myanmar Archaeology - San Shwe, Professor, Department of Archaeology, University of Yangon, Myanmar

Abstract: The subject of ceramics is a new field in Myanmar archaeology. Several young scholars in the University of Yangon have recently inaugurated research in this field. In this presentation I will summarise their approaches and discuss the possible directions which academic research on Myanmar ceramics should explore in the near future. Chronology, regional typology, and technological variation are some of the basic topics which need to be investigated in order to form a foundation for a systematic long-term programme of research.

3. Questions on a Regional Anomaly: Tobacco Smoking Pipes of Myanmar - Don Hein, archaeologist, , independent scholar and formerly site director for a few archaeological projects in Southeast Asia

Abstract: The understanding of the tobacco smoking pipes of Myanmar changed from curiosity to apparent anomaly when one was found in a mid-seventeenth century context, a period when the predominant method of consumption of tobacco in the region was thought to be as a cigar, itself a legacy of Portuguese influence. Other evidence shows that Myanmar produced and used pipes soon after the introduction of tobacco and therefore appears to have developed or adopted a tobacco culture eccentric to that of

the agency of introduction. However, in respect of Myanmar and some other Southeast Asian states, evidence outside the usual maritime Euro-centric purview provides an alternative possibility to the means of the dissemination of tobacco, one dependent upon the cultural relationships of uplands peoples. It also removes most of the inconsistencies inherent in the earlier interpretations that assumed dissemination from European sources.

4. Pottery Distribution and Myanmar Urbanism - Goh Geok Yian, Assistant Professor, History Group, Nanyang Technological University, and Visiting Research Fellow, Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore

Abstract: Earthenware pottery remains an understudied subject in Southeast Asia despite its importance in determining dating and usage of sites. In Bagan, an important medieval capital of Myanmar, abundant pottery scatters can be observed interspersed between thousands of brick temples, most dating to the 11th through 13th centuries. Previous archaeological and historical research in Bagan has emphasised the importance of buildings and inscriptions, whereas less attention has been given to the Chinese ceramics and locally produced wares found *in situ*. This paper proposes that close examination of the types of Chinese ceramics and indigenous pottery (glazed stoneware and earthenware) can be used to determine the possible functions of the different areas within Bagan. Chinese ceramics, in particular, are important dating markers which can be used to date the sites and associated indigenous wares found in pristine stratigraphic contexts. By examining the surface scatters of ceramics and the artifacts of the pottery assemblage in the Anawrahta palace excavations, this paper hopes to provide: 1) hypothesized functions of sites within Bagan, and 2) possible insight into the socio-economic life in Bagan, contrasting the elite and other groups.