

THAI LITERATURE AS REFLECTED IN WESTERN REPORTS DURING THE 17TH TO THE 19TH CENTURIES

Klaus Wenk*

Abstract

The paper explores the relative neglect of the many Thai literary forms by early visitors and scholars who were often perceptive recorders of many aspects of pre-modern culture. The relative brief stays in the kingdom by many of the visitors, lack of linguistic facility and sometimes the prejudiced nature of these travellers led them, for the most part to give a very superficial account of Thai literature.

Introduction

Of all forms of artistic expression, Thai literature has, for obvious reasons, been a field little opened up by research in the West. The so-called plastic arts such as painting, sculpture and architecture immediately disclose the content and meaning of the object represented to the receptive and trained eye. Appreciation of Thai literature, however, is possible only by a careful study of literary texts which quite often are difficult to comprehend for native and foreign speakers of Thai alike. It is, perhaps, surprising that, nevertheless, attempts have been made again and again to comment on or evaluate Thai literature in works describing the country in general.

The following excerpts do not claim to be exhaustive. There may well be other remarks on the subject here and there, hidden in places unknown to me.

La Loubère

In his voluminous, and in many respects detailed work, *Du Royaume de Siam*, La Loubère (1691: 177 ff.) makes the following remarks in the first volume dealing with the description of the country

L'un fut une Comédie Chinoise que j'eusse volontiers vûë jusqu'à la fin, mais on la fit cesser après quelques Scènes, pour aller dîner. Les Comédiens Chinoise, que les Siamois aiment sans les entendre, s'egosillent en récitant. Tous leurs mots sont monosyllables, et je ne leur en ay pas entendu prononcer un seul, qu'avec un nouvel effort de poitrine: on diroit qu'on les égorge.

Remotely connected with literature are also his remarks on page 179:

Les Marionettes sont muettes à Siam, et celles qui viennent du País de Láos, sont encore plus estimées que les Siamois. Ny les unes ny les autres n'ont rien, qui ne soit fort commun en ce País-cy.—Mais les Saltinbanques—Siamois sont excellens, et la Cour de Siam en donne souvent le divertissement au Roi, quand il arrive à Louvò. Elien [the Greek historian] rapporte qu'Alexandre eût à ses Noces des Saltinbanques Indiens, et qu'ils fûrent estimez plus adroits que ceux des autres Nations . . .

* Chinesisches Seminar, Universität Hamburg, Von Melle Park 6, Hamburg 20146, Germany

It can be assumed that the aforementioned puppet and juggler shows were based probably on popular literary texts. What is to be understood by La Loubère's reference to 'Chinese Comedy' is open to conjecture.

J. Leyden

A lengthy contribution was made by J. Leyden in 1812 under the title, *On the Languages and Literature of Indochinese Nations* (1979: 158 ff.). The author, a medical doctor, remarks that 'the materials of this imperfect sketch were chiefly collected in the course of a voyage, which the state of my health caused me to take to the eastern islands in 1805 . . .'

Under reference Number 'X. Thay' a few remarks follow on pages 240 to 254 concerning the Thai language and literature. Obviously Leyden was a well-read traveller, for he quotes La Loubère at the head of the chapter.

Remarks in this chapter which are of importance for literary history are quoted hereinafter. Leyden, whose diction and style are distinct from those of other reporters, puts his words as follows:

All the intelligent Siamese, whom I have met . . . agree in asserting that the Siamese nation, properly so called, consists of two tribes, the Thay and the Thai-j'hay [= Thai Yai] . . . of these the most ancient are the Thay-j'hay, formerly famous for their learning . . . Many monuments of this ancient race exist in the kingdom of Siam, and I was informed, in particular, that in the vicinity of Ligor . . . there are various ancient inscriptions, on stone . . . which are attributed to the Thay-j'hay, but which no person among the modern Thay is able to decipher.

Leyden continues at some length with remarks about the Thai language, differentiating between Thai and the languages spoken by neighbouring peoples (Burmese, Malay). He goes on (ibid. 247),

The first European who attempted to study the Siamese literature, was the learned Gervaise, but his lubrications have never been published. Their [Siamese] poems and songs are very

numerous, as are their Cheritras, or historical and mythological fables. Many of the Siamese princes have been celebrated for their poetical powers, and several of their historical and moral compositions, are still preserved. In all their compositions, they either affect a plain simple narrative, or an unconnected and abrupt style of short, pithy sentences, of much meaning . . .

Both in sciences and poetry those who affect learning and elegance of compositions, sprinkle their style copiously with Bali . . . The laws of Siam are celebrated all over the east . . . The Siamese histories of the Thay dynasty, detail with much minuteness, and great exaggeration, the events which have occurred in Siam . . . (ibid. 248).

It is of special literary and historical interest that he goes on to mention individual titles (ibid. 248 ff.)

The Cheritras, or romantic fictions of the Siamese, are very numerous . . . The following are some of the most popular among the Thay, several of which contain the same stories and incidents as those which are current among the Rukheng, Barma, and Malay nations.

The forty-one titles mentioned by Leyden are listed below in full. Low (1839) fully refers to these titles and his annotations are included in the list.

1. *Rama-kien*.
2. *Radin (Raden)*, possibly an allusion to Inau. Likewise Low (1839: 339).
3. *Sum-mut-ta-ko-dom*, concerning which see p. 250: 'S. is the history of Samanakodom abridged from Bali.' Low: 'S. is the history of Buddha in mortal shape. It is also termed Wetsandon, in Bali, Wessantara.' Low enumerates in detail the individual parts of the *Vessantara Jātaka* (ibid. 339 ff).
4. *Wet-ja-sun-don*. This can only be a corruption of Wetsandon; see 3 above.
5. *Worawong*, possibly an allusion to the *Worawong chādok*; see p. 250: 'Worawong is the history of an unfortunate Rajah, who fell in love with a lady, and was slain by an enchanted spear which guarded her, one night as

- he was climbing to the window of his mistress. This is also a subject of dramatic representation.' See Low (ibid. 340) 'W. is a history in verse of a person of that name, and of a princess Nang Kharawi. His elder brother was Chetta Singhaha Rachasi . . .'
6. *Un-narut*. See Pluang Na Nakhon, *Prawat wanakhadi thai*, pp. 240, 267, 275. Low here adds a fairly long summary of the contents (ibid. 341).
 7. *Mahosot*, presumably a reference to a literary elaboration of the *Mahāśot chādok*, *Maha Ummagga Jātaka* No. 546. (Likewise Low pp. 340 ff.).
 8. *Mélay*, possibly Malāi, alluding to the *Malai-sut* or *Phra Malai kham luang* of Cau Fa Thammathibet. (Likewise Low, p. 342).
 9. *Chatri*. About this see Low, p. 342: 'A drama in the rang Lakhan [possibly: *rong lakhon*] or Ligonean strain.'
 10. *Chalawan*. Certainly scenes from the *bot lakhon Kraithong* (Likewise Low, p. 342).
 11. *Phum-hom*. 'P. is the history of a princess of whom an elephant was enamoured, and her rescue.' On this see Low (1839: 342), 'The story of Phum-Haam or 'she with the fragrant locks,' the daughter of an elephant. She cuts off one of her ringlets and gives it to the winds. It is wafted across the ocean to the country of a certain king who finds it while bathing—being directed to where it lay by the perfume it spreads around. He consults soothsayers regarding the original wearer of the precious ringlet, and is directed by them to the residence of Phum-Haam. With her he elopes, followed by the elephant, which subsequently dies of grief, bequeathing his tusks to Phum-Haam.'
 12. *Pra-Thom*. 'P. is a mythological account of the origin of the universe, according to the principles of the Buddhist sect.' See Low, p. 343: 'I find on examination that it is nearly a transcript of a Bali work. The contents may be briefly described....' The description that follows fills about one page.
 13. *Suthon*, possibly an allusion to the *Suthon chādok*, a *Panyāsa chādok*.
 14. *Pok'ha-wa-di*, concerning which Leyden remarks on page 250: 'P. is the history of Bhagavati.' (Likewise Low, p. 344).
 15. *Teng-on*. A little known *bot lakhon* about which see Worawet Phisit, *Wannakhadi Thai*, pp. 90 ff.
 16. *Lin Thong*. *Bot lakhon Lin Thong*; on this see Worawat Phisit, loc. cit.
 17. *Hok k'hum*. On this Leyden [1812] remarks on p. 250: 'N. is the mythological account of the celebrated hamsa.' (Low ibid. 344 merely refers to Leyden).
 18. *P'ha-non-son-paya*. See Leyden, p. 250: 'P. contains the instructions of the sagacious ape P'hon.' Without doubt this refers to a version of the poem *Phali son nong* (Wenk 1980).
 19. *Mak-kali-p'hon*. See Leyden, p. 250: 'M., the adventures of the son of a chief, who possessed a wonderful cow, resembling the Sanscrit *Kamad'hern*.' (Low endorses this, ibid. 345).
 20. *Sum-p'hansit*. Certainly a corrupted form of *suphāsit* no matter to which text it actually refers.
 21. *Suan-na-hong*. Corruption of *Suvanahong*, *bot lakhon nok*. On this see Damrong, *Tamnan bot lakhon Inau* (p.104).
 22. *Prang-t'hong*. About this Leyden remarks, p. 251: 'P. relates the adventures of the persons who went to the land of the Rakshasas in search of the fruit *prang t'hong*, for which a certain princess had longed when pregnant, the obtaining of the fruit on condition that the child of which the princess was pregnant should be presented to the Rakshasas, the carrying off of the child by the Rakshasa and her return to her parents when grown up.'
 23. *Nang-sip-song*. See Low, p. 345: 'The twelve ladies. It is related in this book that twelve children were exposed and

- left in the forest to perish by their parents who were pressed by famine. A Yak finds them and educates them . . . When grown up there those his proteges elope, and being pursued by him they enter the skin of a huge buffalo and lie concealed . . . and after various adventures reach the kingdom of Phra Tottasen—who takes the liberty of making all of them his wives . . .’ A detailed summary of the contents of the story is given on the subsequent two pages (ibid. 346 ff).
24. *Rama*. Which of the numerous texts from the corpus of the *Rāmakien* is meant must be left open.
 25. *Chumpa-t’hong*.
 26. *Luk-sua-ko*. Presumably *Sua Kho kham chan* by Mahā Ratchakhrū.
 27. *Phim-swan*. A *bot lakhon nok*, unprinted. On this see Worawet Phisit, and Rosenberg (1981: 40 ff.)
 28. *Paja-p’hali*. Possibly Phrayā Phāli, concerning the poems about the monkey ruler Phāli. See Wenk 1980
 29. *T’haw-krung-son*.
 30. *Khun-p’hen*. *Bot lakhon Khun Chāng Khun Phaen*.
 31. *Trai-wong*. See Low, p. 349: ‘The history of a prince who caught a white elephant.’
 32. *Chin-narat*.
 33. *P’howit’hat*.
 34. *Su-t’hin*. The *Suthon* or *Subin Jātaka*?
 35. *Hoi-sang*. See Leyden, p. 251: ‘H. relates the adventures of the prince who was born in a shank shell, and remained in it till he arrived at maturity,’ to which Low refers on p. 349: ‘The prince, however, came into the world, only along with a shank shell. He is exposed in the forest, is miraculously preserved, is adopted by a chief of the Nagas . . . The Thevadas . . . send him afterwards in a gold ship into the regions of the rakshas, a seven days passage beneath a mountain. He returns and goes through many adventures.’
 36. *Sang-sin-chay*. A little-known *bot lakhon nok* (see Worawet Phisit, loc. cit).
 37. *Woranut*. See Leyden, p. 251: ‘W. relates the adventures of the twin brothers Woranut and Woranat.’
 38. *Chitra-kan*.
 39. *Nang-u’thay*. See Leyden, p. 251: ‘N. relates the adventures of a Naga princess, who was carried off by a Rajah.’
 40. *Maha-chinok*. See Low, p. 350: ‘M. is derived from the Bali history of a prince, one of the Avatars of Buddha.’
 41. *Mlek-t’hong*. See Low, p. 350: ‘A history of a Yak princess.’

Leyden’s remarks on this enumerative list are on p. 349,

In the general characteristics of style and manner, these Cheritras resemble those of the Ruken, Barma, and Malayu tribes, and exhibit the peculiar manners of the Indo-Chinese nations, as well as the peculiar features of their mythology.

Leyden’s comment on the prosody of Thai literature is incomplete. On p. 251 he writes,

The Thay exhibits considerable variety of measures, and frequently introduces several of them in the same work . . . The most frequent measure, however, among the Thay . . . seems to be that denominated rap, which consists of four long syllables, but admits occasionally of one or more intercalary short ones: the Ja-ni which consists of five syllables, the Cho-bang of six, the Pat’hamang of seven, the Jesunta of eight are also frequently employed.

It can be assumed that by *rap* reference is made in a very wide sense to *kham rap*, i.e. the rhyme-bearing word in Thai verse. The Jani (*yāni*) and Cho-bang (*chabang*) mentioned further on are *kāp* metres. The other two metres referred to are unknown to me.

John Crawford

Crawford’s journal [1828] occupies a special place. As has been remarked elsewhere (Wenk 1980) in connection with his comments on the Thai legal system, his report is notorious for its

phraseology. On p. 335 ff. he phrases his ideas as follows:

The literature of the Siamese is from all accounts meagre and uninteresting; and in point of imagination, invention, force, or correctness, is much below that of the Arabs, the Persians, or even [sic!] of the Hindoos. Their efforts seem scarcely indeed to rise beyond the rank of those of the tribes of the Indian islands; and judging from a few translations of what were said to be their best works, I have no hesitation in pronouncing them singularly puerile and jejune.

In fact, things are not as simple as Crawford evidently believed them to be. He goes (ibid. 337) on to expatiate on the subject matter in a few more pages of his report. The more remarkable of his findings are as follows: Siamese literature is divided into two groups, one profane, the other religious, the former composed in Thai, the latter in Pali.

A great variety of different measures are said to be in use . . . The style of Siamese composition is simple, and destitute of those strong metaphors and hyperbolic forms of expression which are commonly ascribed to Eastern languages. Brevity is affected by the Siamese . . . but by no means precision or perspicuity . . . Their ambition, in fact, is to mystify their ideas . . . Siamese compositions consist of songs, romances, and a few histories, or chronicles . . . The romances are stated to be upon an equality with the other efforts of the Siamese intellect, destitute of ingenuity . . .’

Among other titles Crawford mentions ‘the history of Rama.’ He rightly observes on p. 337 that ‘the Siamese have no dramatic compositions.’

As his report continues he seizes every opportunity to comment disparagingly on the Thai people and their literature. ‘The Siamese are said to have some historical compositions . . . but it cannot for a moment be imagined that they are capable, any more than other rude people, of writing a rational and connected narrative of their national story’ (ibid. 337).

With regard to religious literature Crawford is partially right in saying ‘It is to sacred

literature only that the Siamese attach any importance’ (ibid 338). In his conclusion he writes on p. 339 that ‘they [the Siamese] can read and write awkwardly and imperfectly.’

Mgr. Bruyère

In a letter addressed to his superior (*vicairé-général*) Mgr. Bruyère (1831) describes the country and the customs of the Thai.

À Siam, les sciences ne sont pas plus florissantes que les arts . . . Aucun Siamois, pas même les talapoins, ne s’occupent de littérature ni d’histoire. Le seul ouvrage qui existe en ce genre, ce sont le *Annales du Royaume* . . .’ (ibid. 167–9).

The Chinese Repository

Cordier (1835: 505–10 and col. 860) published in the journal, *The Chinese Repository*, a ‘Siamese Romance, translated from the original Siamese by Mrs Gutzlaff while residing at Bangkok, the capital of the kingdom of Siam.’

In the introduction to the English version it is said that the text is of the kind as usually read by monks to lay audiences. The story keeps well within the frame of Thai fairy tale literature. The glory of the kingdom Chambauk, ruled by Chambauk Ratchareteret, is described in fantastic language. Chambauk’s most beautiful wife, by name Cantahatawee, gives birth to a son named Chow-tee-ah-woo-ka-man who is endowed with the most outstanding virtues. At the same time there is a second kingdom named Bunchal ruled by King Bunchalrat and Queen Nunthatawi. They had many beautiful daughters before the queen became pregnant once again and gave birth to a daughter of indescribable beauty. The tidings of the birth were brought to King Chambauk Ratchareteret by hunters. He ordered them to try to get in touch with the princess. They eventually succeeded in their mission when the princess was taking a bath. The princess (whose name is not mentioned) has a vision of the prince of Chambauk in a dream. Here the translation comes to an abrupt end.

May it be added here that the image of Thai literature is not improved by reprinting a text of such shallow quality.

James Low

Captain James Low's observations on Thai literature [1839] are of far greater weight. He published a 54 page survey of the literature which, was the most comprehensive study up to date. At the beginning of his study Low expressly refers to the article by Leyden (see above under 2) and proceeds to state his opinion about the forty-one titles listed by Leyden as was mentioned earlier in the present paper. Apart from the titles enumerated by Leyden, Low does not add any more. His study can be summarized as follows,

Prose is amongst the Siamese confined almost entirely to treaties on law and physic, and to writings connected with the common detail of business . . . They have a few fables in prose . . . (ibid. 350).

On the subject of 'poetry and music,' Low correctly writes that owing to the monosyllabic structure of the Thai language the Thai had to modify the prosody adopted from India (ibid. 350 ff). On p. 352 he continues that 'The Thai poetry is so supplied with rhythm that it might and frequently does exist without rhyme.'

Low distinguishes between 'two prominent styles in the poetic works [of the Thai]—the epic and the dramatic.' Concerning 'epic,' he observes that they are 'called *Nithan* or *Niyai* and *ru-ang rau*.' He finally mentions *Nangsu-sowt* or 'heroic poems which resemble the *Cheritras* of India' (ibid. 352).

The term *Nangsu-sowt* used by Low is, as far as I know, not used anywhere else in Thai literary studies. In my opinion there are two possible interpretations for *sowt*, namely *suot* or *sawat* (*a*). However, since Low has given to his term the meaning he thinks right, we can leave it at that.

In another chapter of some 20 pages (ibid. 353 ff.), Low deals with 'drama,' which he refers to as *bot rang*. This term is also unknown today. *Bot rang* should almost certainly read *bot rong*. Low translates it as 'a melodramatic opera' whose subjects are taken from the romantic. They are acted on many occasions of ceremony and at the great festivals . . .'

The institutions of the theatre, the players, speakers and musicians, are extensively dealt

with. Low appears to be keen on getting below the surface of Thai poetry

The *bot rang* employs every variety of Siamese measure and the greatest attention has been paid to suit the language to the actions, feeling or subjects displayed. To each style also distinct and apposite musical airs are appropriate . . . They have likewise *Phleng* or lyric verses and songs, namely *Phleng na*, pastorals, *Phlengo*, or elegiac verses and *Phlenggot* or lamentations.

Low then proceeds to examine the prosody of some selected Thai literary texts which are unknown today. These texts are composed in *kham klon*, in *kāp surāng khanāng*, as well as *kāp chabang* metres. Low attempts here—under erroneous assumptions—to compare Thai prosody with European long and short vowel quantification of syllables. The attempted comparison may have been of some interest to nineteenth century readers. For the present-day reader, however, such comparison is erroneous and obsolete as, consequently, is the major part of Low's essay, (ibid. 345–73). The second part of his essay (ibid. 374–92), deals exclusively with 'Entertainment, Games and Amusements,' hence it is outside the frame of the present study.

Mgr. Pallegoix

A rather cursory contribution is contained in the work by Pallegoix [1854]. Basically Pallegoix merely enumerates facts in cue-word fashion,

La collection des livres sacrés des Thai s'appelle Trai pidok.(ibid. 399); Quant aux ouvrages de littérature profane, il y eu au environ deux cent cinquante dont plusieurs sont d'une haute importance . . . Les autres ouvrages sont des histoires, contes, romans, comédies, tragédies, poèmes, épiques, chansons, etc. Les romans sont presque toujours en vers . . . (ibid. 400).

Under various, even non-literary, cue-words, Pallegoix gives a few short examples of texts: proverbes populaires, fable, petition adressée au roi, Acte d'accusation, Ecrit d'emprunt . . . etc. Pallegoix winds up his short and meagre enumeration, quite unnecessarily, with a Thai version of the Lord's Prayer.

Sir John Bowring

Not very much can be gathered either from Bowring's otherwise comprehensive book (1857). 'The first literary work in Siamese of which we have any knowledge is a book on war and military tactics, written in . . . AD 1498. . .'. For the rest Bowring fully refers to Pallegoix without making a further personal contribution to Thai literary studies.

Adolf Bastian

Bastian (1867) in a book otherwise renowned as a first class source of information, contributes only indirectly to our knowledge of Thai literature. He does not deal with the matter in a separate chapter but intersperses his views in various places of the report on his 'sojourn in Bangkok.' On the occasion of his visit to an unspecified *Phra Alak* (Royal Scribe), Bastian comments,

. . . die Bücherschätze . . . Da waren die dicken Bände der Geschichte Ayuthayas in eleganten und reinlichen Schriftzügen hingemalt, die alten Chroniken, so viele ihrer noch vorhanden, die übersetzungen von Epen and Dramen, Romane, Märchen und Fabeln . . . (ibid. 86)

Nur ging leider die Zeit meines Aufenthaltes rasch zu Ende, um die so reichlich sprudelnden Quellen zu erschöpfen . . .' (ibid. 87). Bei den gelehrten Neigungen des Königs herrscht im Palast viel literarische Tätigkeit . . . Die siamesische Belletristik hat verschiedene übersetzungen aus dem Chinesischen aufgenommen und zeigt auch in ihrem Stil von dorthin gekommene Einflüsse. Der . . . Samkok ist mehrfach ins Siamesische übertragen, besonders durch den chinesischen Gelehrten Hongsen . . . Um die Bücher der Hofastrologen kennen zu lernen, besuchte ich den Hora-Thibod . . . (ibid. 89).

In various places Bastian points to Buddhist literature.

Encyclopedia Britannica

The relevant entry in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* 1875 (vol. 21: 855 ff.) does not give

more comprehensive information than that already contained in the sources mentioned above. The entry, however, does mention 'The inscription at Sukhothai' (presumably of Khun Rām Kamhaeng).

. . . the few manuscript annals mentioned by Pallegoix have not yet been critically examined; but metrical compositions, containing legendary tales and romances abound . . . The subjects are mostly taken from the Indian epics, as in the case of Rama–kiun, more rarely from Malay or Javanese legend, such as the drama I–nau. There is a great variety of metres . . . In their romantic poetry the Siamese have a greater tendency to describe than to relate . . . The great blemish of their poetry consists in tedious embellishments and a hankering after indecent and often gross allusions . . .

The entry also mentions the titles already contained in the Leyden essay. It goes on,

The most popular of the religious books . . . is called Somanakhodom . . . which is identical with the Wessantara Jataka. In miscellaneous literature may be mentioned Suphasit, consisting of 222 elegant sayings in the accented metre called Klong . . . The fable literature is of course largely represented . . .

Summary

In order to become thoroughly familiar with Thai literature, an intensive study over several years is required. Even then, one feels like a mere beginner. The travellers in former times were keen to acquire scientific knowledge or to acquit themselves with diplomatic missions. In most cases they lacked the time and leisure necessary for an intensive study of the palm-leaf or *samut khoi* manuscripts. It is, however, striking that even such authors as sojourned in Thailand for a prolonged period of time did not, in fact, get beyond certain isolated and, for us for the most part superficial, observations about the literature of the Thai.

In none of the studies is mention made of one or the other Thai poets of the seventeenth, eighteenth, or nineteenth centuries who are so well known today. Almost all of what is

known today of the 'classical' period of Thai poetry goes unmentioned. Neither are mentioned the *kāp nēm rua* of Cau Fa Thammathibet, nor a single *nirāt* of Sunthon Phū or Nēm Klan, nor Sī Mahōsot or Mahā Montrī or Khun Phum. It is true that mention is made of the *Rāmakien* and the *bot lakhon Inau* in various places. *Khun Chāng Khun Phaen* is also mentioned once marginally. None of those poems, the *Rāmakien* in particular, is adequately appreciated, nor the influence recognized which they had on the further development of Thai literature. Quite obviously the literary informants of the aforementioned authors were themselves insufficiently acquainted with their own literature. What they brought to the knowledge of foreigners eager to acquire information were stones instead of bread; instead of existing classical texts they produced unimportant pieces of fairy tale narratives which are not known to present-day literary experts, not even by title.

It cannot easily be assumed that the informants themselves believed that the pieces they offered belonged to the height of their literature. If they did, one would have to conclude that the renown of a poet already known well during his life time, as e.g., Sunthon Phū, was exclusively limited to a small circle within the sphere of the royal court without actually reaching a wider public. At the present time we are not yet in a position to assess the situation conclusively. For my part, I am inclined to assume that personal lack of competence of the informants accounts for the fact that the poems and poets famous in our day were then not mentioned, for we have proof today that already in the nineteenth century one poet knew the other (Wenk 1980).

It is remarkable, however, that the area of research defined by Leyden was not extended by subsequent authors. The titles of second and third class literary productions, once mentioned by Leyden, have been adhered to and reproduced by all subsequent authors. All of them explicitly refer to Leyden and Low. Apparently such authors as Bowring and Pallegoix did not even endeavour personally to elicit new information about Thai literature. From the outset, they were content to refer to the works of their forerunners.

In view of the foregoing facts, one is justified to suppose that no other pieces of literature had come to the knowledge of Crawford than those with which Leyden and Low were acquainted. In this case, it is of course partially understandable how Crawford came to pronounce such a devastating criticism of Thai literature.

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