



# 'KRUNG KAO' : THE OLD CAPITAL OF AYUTTHAYA

by

Larry Sternstein

The Australian National University  
Canberra

In the Chula era 712, the year of the tiger, on Friday the sixth of the waxing fifth month, at 9.54 a.m., the foundation of Ayuddhya was laid\*

At the same time as he formally announced the assumption of sovereign kingship (styling himself Somdetch Phra Ramadhipati<sup>1</sup>) Phra Chao U Thong dedicated the site of his capital — 'Krungthep Dvaravati Sri Ayuddhya'.<sup>2</sup> Three years earlier he had arrived at the site, encamping on the west bank of the Chao Phraya immediately south of the present municipality—that place now occupied by Wat

\* 'Phra Rajaphongsavadan Krung Kao Chabab Hluang Prasöt', that is, Luang Prasot's History of the Ayutthayan Period, tr. Frankfurter as 'Events in Ayuddhya from Chulasakaraj 686-966', *Selected Articles from the Siam Society Journal*, vol. 1 (1904-1929), 1954, p. 46. The corresponding date on the Gregorian calendar is the 19th of March, 1350. Variation which this date has suffered in European accounts need not be considered seriously and any disbelief which its exactness may excite should be dissuaded by the knowledge that such details were necessary for astrological computations. See Col. G.E. Gerini's review of M. Aymonier's book in which this date is contested; *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. 2, part 1, 1905, pp. 84-100.

1. Transliterations of Thai, Pali and Sanskrit names are many. 'Phra Chao U Thong' and 'Somdetch Phra Ramadhipati' are equivalents proffered by the foremost scholar of Thai history, H.R.H. Prince Damrong—see 'The Foundation of Ayuthia', *Selected Articles from the Siam Society Journal*, vol. 3 Early History and Ayudhya Period, 1959, p. 199.
2. The derivation of 'Dvaravati Sri Ayuddhya' ('Krungthep' means 'divine capital') has been rather exhaustively investigated by H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat (see 'The City of Thawarawadi Sri Ayudhya', *Selected Articles from the Siam Society Journal*, vol. 3, Early History and Ayudhya Period, 1959, pp. 229-235). He concludes that both 'Dvaravati' and 'Ayuddhya' are derived from the Indian epics—the former from the capital city of Krishna, the latter from that of Rama, while 'Sri' is 'a mere eulogic expletive'. H.R.H. Prince Chula Chakrabongse (*Lords of Life*, 1960, p. 27) suggests that 'Dvaravati', was included 'Probably to remind people that his ancestors had once conquered a city of ancient Dvaravati.' and Quaritch Wales ('Some Notes on the Kingdom of Dvāravatī', *Greater India Society Journal*, vol. 5, 1938, p. 26) implies that the title was included to honor the kingdom that formerly exercised suzerainty over the area; but, in fact, the term 'Dvāravatī', to designate the ancient Khmer state which occupied the lower Chao Phraya basin and adjacent areas, was introduced by Coedès (*Recueil des Inscriptions du Siam*, vol. 1, 1924, p. 1) 'provisionally... to the kingdom of

Buddhaisawan (see figure 1) which he afterwards erected to consecrate his temporary residence.<sup>3</sup> Apparently, both the consolidation of the kingdom ( which, at the time of accession in 1350, appears, even from the most grudging appraisal, to have included the whole of the basin of the Chao Phraya and the lands to both east and west as far as the frontiers of the Khmer and Burmese dominions, as well as the States to the south, including much of the Malay Peninsula )<sup>4</sup> and the preparation of the site of the new capital, occupied this three-year period. It seems unlikely that, as has been suggested, this interval was spent anxiously awaiting the propitious moment to openly deny allegiance to the then all but powerless suzerain of Sukhothai.<sup>5</sup> While

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Indian civilization and Buddhist religion which has left in the southwest of Siam archaeological traces characterised by pronounced archaism and a manifest resemblance with Gupta art'. Coedès notes further that, 'This name, Dvāravatī, mentioned in the 7th century by Hsuan-chuang and I-ching . . . seems to have been borne at first by a town situated in the neighbourhood of Subarnapuri [Suphan Buri] or of Brah Pathama [Nakhon Pathom], and then applied to Ayudhya . . .', though Pelliot (as quoted by Luce, G.H., 'Countries Neighbouring Burma', *Burma Research Society Journal*, vol. 14 (2), 1925, p. 181) subscribes to 'the opinion of M. Aymonier according to which Dvāravatī must have formerly been Lopburi', dismissing what, in truth, must be considered a presumptuous siting by Colonel Gerini 'on an island in the Menam, at the height of Ayuthia'.

3. See H.R.H. Prince Damrong, 'Siamese History Prior to the Founding of Ayudhya', tr. Crosby, *Selected Articles from the Siam Society Journal*, vol. 3, Early History and Ayudhya Period, 1959, p. 100.
4. 'At the time of the foundation of Ayut'ia . . . King Rama Tibodi probably held sway over the districts of Ayut'ia [Ayutthaya]. Lopburi [Lop Buri], Sup'an [Suphan Buri], Ratburi [Rat Buri], P'etchaburi [Phet Buri], Nak'on Srit'ammarat [Nakhon Si Thammarat], Singora [Songkhla], Chantabun (conquered from Cambodia) [Chantaburi] Tenasserim and Tavoy. He had even extended his conquests as far as [the position of?] Malacca . . .' (Wood, W.A.R., *A History of Siam*, 1924, p. 64).
5. See Phya Boranrajadhanin, 'Ayutthaya', *Annals: A Compilation* (in Thai), pt. 63, 1936, p. 14 and Damrong, 'Siamese History Prior to the Founding of Ayudhya', *op. cit.* p. 100. Though published by the Fine Arts Department as one in a series of historical studies, Phya Boranrajadhanin's work has enjoyed but a limited edition which was distributed only to those officials present at the author's cremation. See also Tri Amatyakul, *The Thai Guide Book: Ayudhya*, 1957, p. 6 and the identically worded *Guide to Ayudhya and Bang-Pa-In*, 1957, p. 7; for the most part these are poor, partial translations of Phya Boranrajadhanin's work— which source goes unacknowledged. The original study being only rarely available and, moreover, couched in rather complicated Thai, subsequent discussion will contain reference, where possible, to the relevant assertions in Tri Amatyakul's twin condensation; however, the basis for argument in these dual references always stems from the scholarly uncertain Phya Boranrajadhanin.

under Rama Kamhaeng U Thong was merely one of a large number of feudatory states,<sup>6</sup> but the empire-building activities of Phra Chao U Thong and his predecessor during thirty years following the end of Rama Kamhaeng's reign, about A.D. 1317, leaves little doubt concerning the independence of the Kingdom of U Thong—rather, it implies no small contempt for the rapidly waning power of the Kingdom of Sukhothai. The *Annals of Ayutthaya* even includes Sukhothai among those states subject to Ramadhipati upon his accession<sup>7</sup>

Tradition has it that Phra Chao U Thong shifted the capital from U Thong, near the present town of the same name, to Ayutthaya when a terrible pestilence, resulting from a scarcity of water caused by the silting up of the Nam Chorakhe Suphan, forced him to flee the former citadel. Though legend is often found to proceed from fact, in this instance that the city was not wholly abandoned, that Phra Chao U Thong, in fact, appointed his brother-in-law administrator of the old capital,<sup>8</sup> argues against such an unpremeditated departure. But even allowing the abandonment of U Thong to have been forced in this manner, this 'explanation' fails to account for the choice of the new site, some seventy-five kilometres almost due east from U Thong, save, perhaps, by the implication that the area was well endowed with the requisite resources—which, of course, is true. Damrong offers an additional explanation, which may be considered basically tenable: 'The land from Ayuddhya upwards consisted in great part formerly of low and marshy ground near the sea. . . [and] all the principal water-courses of the region met together at that place, which thus derived importance as being situated at the mouth of a river and as being the gateway to the whole of the North from Sukhōdaya up to Chīengmai'<sup>9</sup> — in other words, the site was a potential centre of communications.

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6. In retrospect, Damrong ('Siamese History Prior to the Founding of Ayudhya', *op. cit.*, p. 97) believes it to have been a fairly large one, but this appears an untenable conjecture; certainly its area was rather closely circumscribed, if, as Damrong himself believes (*ibid.*, p. 79) it was surrounded by the vassal states of Ayutthaya, Suphan Buri, Rat Buri and Tavoy.
  7. See Bishop Pallegoix's translation as quoted by Bowring, Sir J., *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, vol. 1, 1857, p. 43.
  8. See Damrong, 'The Foundation of Ayuthia', *op. cit.*, pp. 201-2.
  9. Damrong, 'Siamese History Prior to the Founding of Ayudhya', *op. cit.*, p. 99.

Considering, however, that the effective administration of the recently subjected States to the east (in the basin of the Chao Phraya and beyond) and south would demand a more strategically sited capital, it would be difficult to attempt to explain logically the choice of a position other than that at the confluence of the Chao Phraya, Lop Buri and Pasak rivers, in the centre of the fertile basin of the Chao Phraya, far enough from the sea to preclude, or at least discourage, marauding pirates, yet near enough to permit an efficient all-water connection with the States spaced along the littoral of the Gulf.

Throughout, it has been tacitly assumed that the founder of Ayutthaya was previously the King of U Thong. Though the argument for this belief as presented by Damrong<sup>10</sup> appears irrefutable, is eminently logical, has been endorsed by the Historical Research Society of Siam and accepted by modern European historians<sup>11</sup> none of the five versions of the History of Ayutthaya offers any substantiating evidence. The 'official' view is that Chao Phya U Thong migrated to Ayutthaya from Traitrung or Pèp, which was located immediately south of the present town of Kamphaengphet.<sup>12</sup> Obviously, however, the basic argument as presented does not depend upon an exact positioning of the former capital; though it would suffer if Kaempfer's suggestion (accepted by Anderson)<sup>13</sup> that 'This City in ancient times stood at the place, which is now called Bangkok...from whence it was afterwards removed to the place, on which it now stands...'<sup>14</sup> be regarded as proceeding from other than a misinformed or misinterpreted source.

Moreover, the already defensible site, a westward jutting tongue of land formed by a meander of the Chao Phraya to the west

10. See 'The Foundation of Ayuthia', *op. cit.*, pp. 69-74 and 'Siamese History Prior to the Founding of Ayudhya', *op. cit.*, pp. 97-100.

11. See, for example, Hall, D.G.E., *A History of Southeast Asia*, 1960, p. 151 and Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

12. See Damrong, H.R.H. Prince, 'The Story of the Records of Siamese History', *Selected Articles from the Siam Society Journal*, vol. 1, (1904-29), 1954, pp. 82-98.

13. See *English Intercourse with Siam in the Seventeenth Century*, 1890, p. 17.

14. Kaempfer, E., *History of Japan*, tr. Scheuzer, vol. 1, 1727, pp. 42-3.

and south, the Lop Buri to the north ( the present ' City Canal ' see figure 1 ) and the Pasak to the east, could be rendered ' impregnable ' by simply cutting through the narrow neck of land between the Lop Buri and Chao Phraya rivers, and heaping up the mud so excavated ( and that dug from other channels within the site ) around the perimeter of the island created thereby, thus forming a base upon which to erect the stockade. Since no mention is made of these important works in the official histories of Ayutthaya, though several constructions of like import are noted in the years following the founding of the capital, it appears likely that they had already been accomplished when Phra Chao U Thong declared himself Somdetch Phra Ramadhipati; certainly they were completed within his reign, that is, prior to A.D. 1369.<sup>15</sup>

Unlike its better known and undoubtedly more spectacular Cambodian and Burmese counterparts<sup>16</sup> the Thai centre has not excited the enunciation of underlying geomantic principles, despite a very similar, if not identical, Brahmanic-Buddhist/Indo-Chinese heritage.<sup>17</sup> But that this ' magical symbolism which combined long experience with intuition, leading in the end to very practical results '<sup>18</sup> did, indeed, guide construction in a number of instances, is indicated when allusions to associated ritual<sup>19</sup> are coupled with an examination

15. See Phya Boranrajadhanin, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-17, Tri Amatyakul, *Guide to Ayudhya and Bang-Pa-In*, *op. cit.*, pp. 7 and 14 or *The Thai Guide Book, Ayudhya*, *op. cit.*, pp. 6 and 12, and Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

16. See the references cited by Wheatley, P., ' What the Greatness of a City is Said to be ', *Pacific Viewpoint*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1963, pp. 163-88 and, more particularly, V.C. Scott O'Connor's *Mandalay and Other Cities of the Past in Burma*, 1907 and Coedès' fascinating little volume *Pour mieux comprendre Angkor*, 1947, made even more pleasurable when read in conjunction with B. Groslier and J. Arthaud's remarkable pictorial study *Angkor, Art and Civilization*, 1957.

17. See Heine-Geldern, R., *Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia*, Data Paper Number 18, Southeast Asia Program, Department of Far Eastern Studies, Cornell University, 1956 and Quaritch Wales, H.G., *Siamese State Ceremonies*, 1931, particularly pp. 12-25.

18. Gutkind, E.A., *Revolution of Environment*, 1946, p. 20.

19. See Quaritch Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies*, *op. cit.*, pp. 302-7.

of contemporary town layouts,<sup>20</sup> or, more particularly, with late-17th century plans of Ayutthaya ( see figures 2-7 ). Sinhalese Hinayanistic influences first appear in Thailand in about the 12th century and the mass conversion of the Thai from Mahayana Buddhism appears to have occurred during the 13th century.<sup>21</sup> While the Mahayana theory of divine incarnation requires that a temple occupy the centre of the capital, the Hinayana sect, recognising the king merely as a representative of the divine, requires that the palace occupy the centre.

Invoking what might be termed a first principle of geomancy,<sup>22</sup> then, that the palace should be sited in the centre of the walled area ( the ruins of What Phra Sri Sanphet now mark the site of the original palace,<sup>23</sup> which was immediately south of the position noted on late-17th century maps, ( see figures 2-7 ), this north-south cut or moat should have occupied a position coincident with that of the present Maharat Road ( see figure 1 ) which is shown as a canal on both the 'French Engineer's' plan of Ayutthaya of 1687 and Kaempfer's plan of 1690. Such a position would also appear to allow for the 'exterior moat . . . in addition to the already existing moat',<sup>24</sup> dug about 1550;

20. See the maps of Kanchanaburi, Chaiyaphum, Chiang Rai, Chiangmai, Nakhon Pathom, Nakhon Ratchasima, Phrae, Roi Et, Rat Buri, Lop Buri, Lamphun, Sisaket, Sakhon Nakhon, Sara Buri, Surin, Ubon and, of course, Bangkok and Ayutthaya, in *Maps of the Capital Districts of the Provinces of Thailand*, in Thai and on various scales, Royal Thai Survey Department, 1960.

21. See Quaritch Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies*, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

22. An appreciation of the philosophy of geomancy, implications and its applications, may be gleaned from the most interesting expositions of Mircea Eliade in *Patterns in Contemporary Religion*, tr. Sheed, 1958, chap. 10, pp. 369-82, and *Cosmos and History*, tr. Trask, 1954, chap. 1, pp. 6-21, J.J.M. de Groot in *The Religious System of China*, vol. 3, book 1, part 3, 1897, chap. 12, pp. 935-1056, and Heine Geldern in *Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia*, *op. cit.* and 'Weltbild und Bauform in Südostasien' *Wiener Beiträge zur Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte Asiens*, vol. 4, 1930, pp. 28-78, and from the many citations in Gutkind, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-25 and 291-333.

23. See Phya Boranrajadhanin, *op. cit.*, p. 86 and Tri Amatyakul, *The Thai Guide Book: Ayudhya*, *op. cit.*, p. 26 or *Guide to Ayudhya and Bang-Pa-In*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

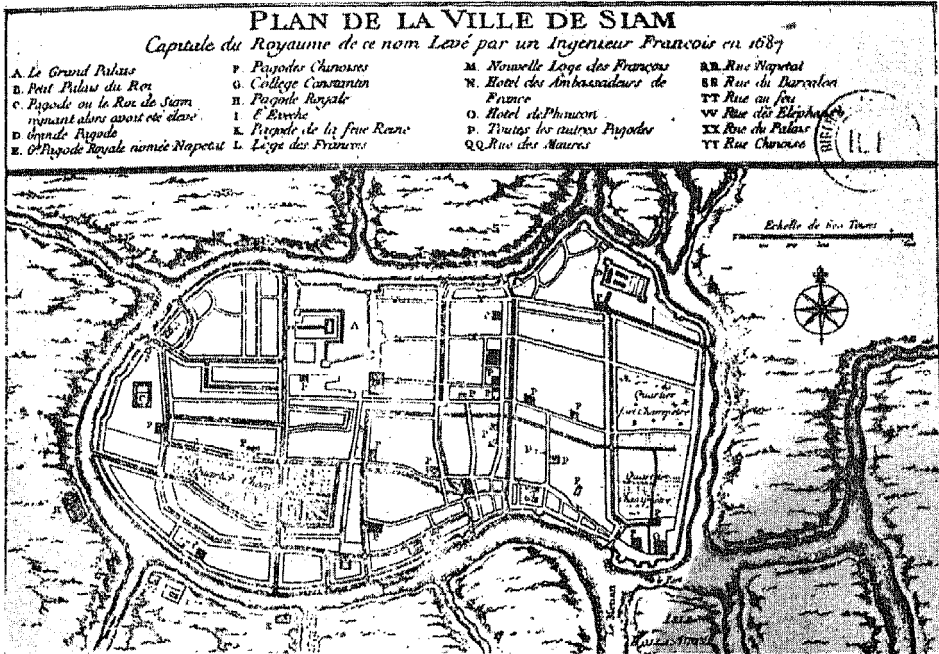
24. Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

An apparently reasonable impression of late-17th century Ayutthaya may be obtained by combining that which is of value on each of the following representations; from the 'French engineer's' plan of 1687, the disposition of the city's main streets and waterways, most of the important places, and scale and orientation; from Kaempfer's plan of 1690, the configuration of the 'Island' and its environs, and the location of a number of noteworthy sites; from the French plans of c. 1690, and c. 1685, a general indication of the use of the land and the distribution of the population; and, finally, from the Dutch views of c. 1725, an appreciation of the form of the city's more important structures.

Note: A thousand paces equal c. 1.5 km.; a thousand *Toise* equal c. 2.0 km.; and a *Lieu Germanique*, apparently the old English league, equals c. 4.8 km.

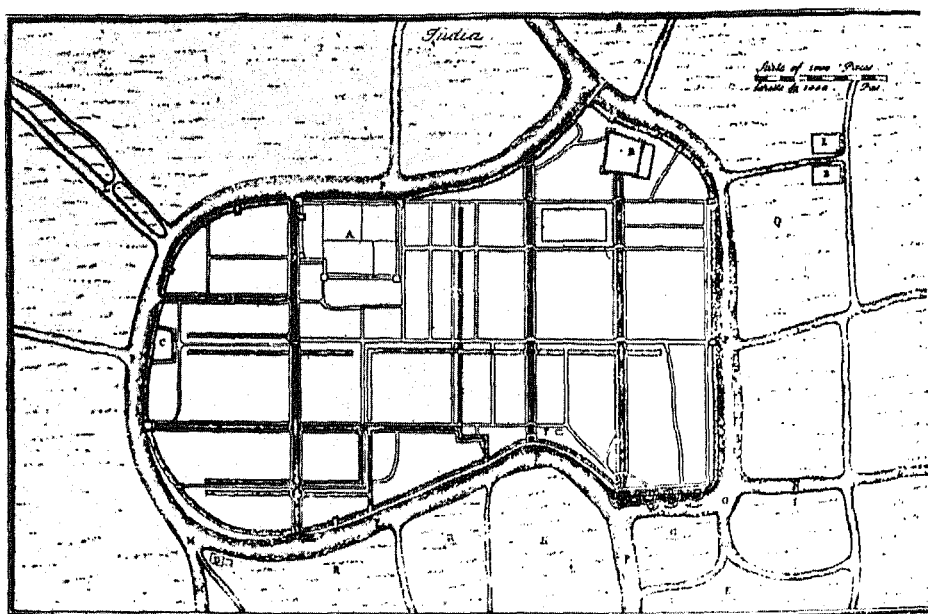






A 'French Engineer's Plan of Ayutthaya; 1687  
 From : The Siam Society's map collection.

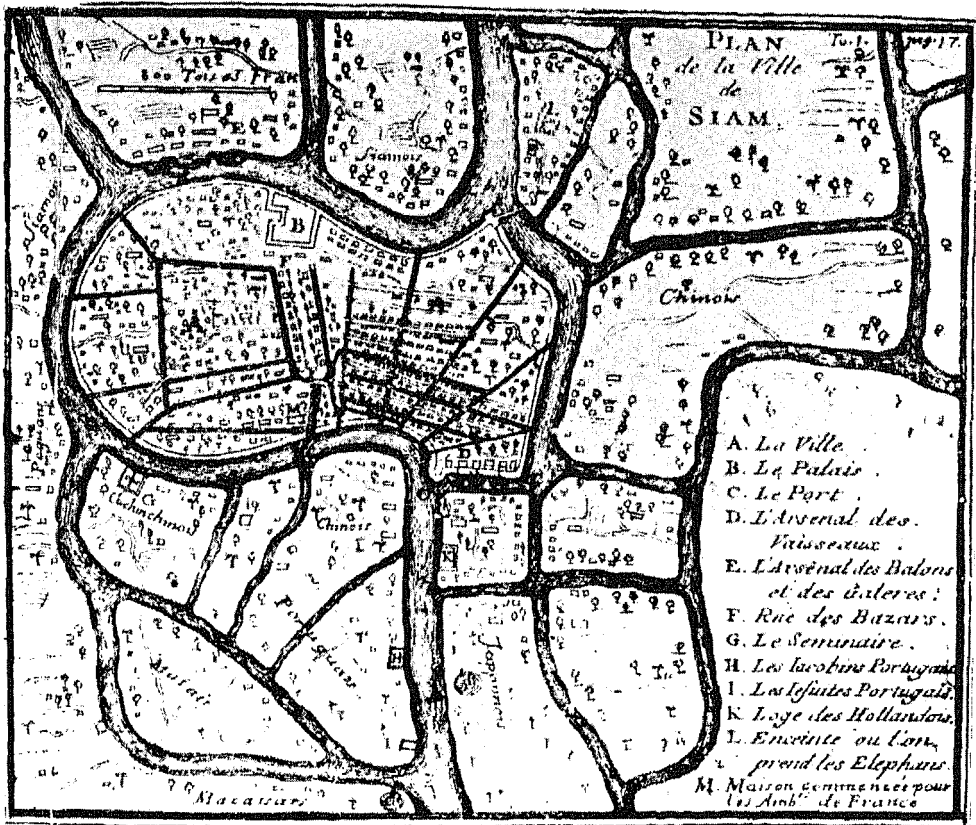
Figure 2. Since, as is likely, the 'French engineer' is Father Thomas Valgarneira (an Italian serving with the French Jesuits), the designer and supervisor-of-construction of the new fortifications erected at Ayutthaya late in the 17th century (begun in 1675 and here shown completed), and as the configuration, size, orientation and the disposition of the city's lineaments are remarkably consistent with present remains, it appears that this plan must be considered the most accurate representation of Ayutthaya available from this period. Note that the letters of a number of places cited in the legend are either missing from, or cannot be distinguished on, the map proper.



Kaempfer's Plan of Ayutthaya ; 1690

From : Kaempfer, *op. cit.*

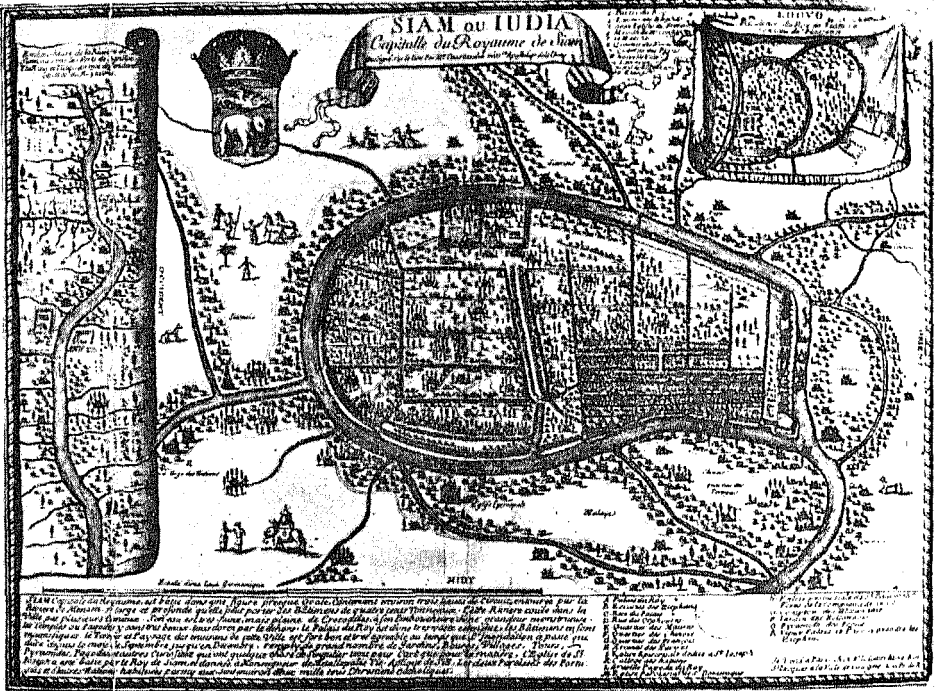
Figure 3. A commendable, if somewhat stylized ground-plan of the city; showing a remarkably accurate configuration, correct orientation and size, and a nice disposition of lineaments as determined from a comparison with the remains of these works. All places especially noted on this plan and also that of 1687 have identical locations.



French Plan of Ayutthaya; c. 1690

From: La Loubère, *op. cit.*

Figure 4. Though the configuration and scale of this plan seem reasonably accurate, its orientation is slightly awry and the disposition of streets and canals differs markedly from that shown on either the 'French engineer's' or Kaempfer's plan. Apparently, La Loubère, thinking to combine what he judged to be the virtues of two previous French maps, accommodated the arrangement of streets and canals and the distribution of structures as shown on the plan of c. 1685 on the general configuration and scale of the plan of 1687. The result is neither as accurate nor as comprehensive as might be desired, but a fairly good impression of the whole is presented, and the general distribution of the city's population indicated.



French Map of Ayutthaya : c. 1685

From: Choisy, *op. cit.*

Figure 5. Despite the misshapen eastern half of the 'Island' and the rather ill-disposed streams, scale and orientation, and the distribution of most of the major features shown (though several important places have been omitted and several misplaced) compares quite favorably with contemporary descriptions and what remains at present. The real value of this map, however, lies in its pictorial presentation, which, if somewhat overdrawn, gives a good general impression of the distribution of the population—making evident the vast amount of open space within the city walls. Note: Though this map is dateless, an abridged version, reproduced in M. Garçon's introduction to the Paris Edition of Choisy's *Journal*, *op. cit.*, carries that of 1686—a date which agrees with that of c. 1685 deduced from several features shown.



Dutch Oblique Plan-View of Ayutthaya; c. 1725

From: A recent color reproduction after the original in Valentyn, F., *Beschryving van Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indiën*, Vol. 3, 1726.

Figure 6. Though this view is hardly of a standard attained in Europe a century before, as, for example, in the *civitates orbis terrarum*, it appears an honest, if somewhat misguided, attempt at portrayal. Failing this, it yet succeeds, quite vividly, in depicting the great number of temples, their general architecture, as well as that of the palaces, and the large areas devoted to these structures.



Portion of a Dutch Map of the Chao Phraya; c. 1725

From: After Hutchinson, *Adventurers in Siam in the Seventeenth Century*, *op. cit.*, which is after a portion of the original in *Valentyn*, *op. cit.*

Figure 7. Obviously, a woefully inadequate 'map', but the architectural form of the principal structures shown (though here indistinct) is remarkably fine and well worth scrutiny; and the general emptiness of the area is made readily apparent. Note: Hutchinson labels this view 'seventeenth century', considering, no doubt, that that shown is based upon information gathered during the late 1600's.

the latter occupying a position coincident with the channel of the present Makam-riang canal, about half-way between Maharat Road and the Pasak River to the east ( see figures 1 and 2 ). However, the 'official' view seems to be that the original moat, known as 'Khu-na' ( literally ' front arch ' ), ' branched off from the Lop Buri river [ the present much diminished channel of which is occupied by the so-called ' City Canal ' ] at the locality of Hua Raw [ the north-east corner of the ' island ' ], and joined the Bang-kacha river at Pom Phet fortress ( the southeast corner of the ' island ' );<sup>25</sup> a position apparently coincident with the channel of the present Makam-riang canal. While offering no indication of the correctness of either position, that the eastern wall was ' pulled down and re-erected near the river bank '<sup>26</sup> in A.D. 1580, seemingly confirms one of them, but the assertion of a simultaneous widening ( to twenty metres ) and deepening ( to six metres ) of this moat ( by then well within the walls ) seems illogical; certainly it was not undertaken for defensive purposes, as has been suggested.<sup>27</sup>

On the most recent official plan of Ayutthaya ( 1:4000, dated 1956 ) the short stretch of water trending northwest-southeast between the ' City Canal ' and the Pasak River ( see figure 1 ) is regarded as a portion of the latter, but an alternative name is also given in recognition of common usage : the ' Khu-na ' stream. This might, not too unreasonably, be interpreted as the persistence of a tradition having a basis in fact, for it appears quite logical, from present maps, to assume that the founding fathers would have simply cut through the narrow neck of land between the then wide Lop Buri and the Pasak rivers, rather than the relatively wide neck between the Lop Buri and the Chao Phraya. However, though at that time the Lop Buri ( ' City Canal ' ) was a much larger stream, the Pasak was much smaller ; the width and depth of the present Pasak River at Ayutthaya have increa-

25. Tri Amatyakul, *The Thai Guide Book: Ayudhya, op. cit.*, p. 6 or *Guide to Ayudhya and Bang-Pa-In, op. cit.*, p. 7, after Phya Boranrajadhanin, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

26. Frankfurter, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

27. See Phya Boranrajadhanin, *op. cit.*, p. 32 and Tri Amatyakul, *The Thai Guide Book: Ayudhya, op. cit.*, p. 6 or *Guide to Ayudhya and Bang-Pa-In, op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.



sed greatly as the water of the Lop Buri has been redirected into its Channel. Given that the area enclosed was to be kept at a defensible maximum, it would have been folly to negate the strategic advantage of a wide band of water to the north, west and south by an unnecessarily long, narrow ribbon of water to the east. Cutting a direct north-south channel from the Lop Buri to the Chao Phraya would not only reduce the length of an obviously vulnerable eastern perimeter but enhance the value of the Pasak as an outer 'moat'. It is possible that this cut was enlarged in 1580, but it appears more likely that the moat widened and deepened when the wall was moved to take advantage of the development of the Pasak channel (in 1688, Gervaise noted that 'The great river laps its (Ayutthaya's) walls on the *southern, eastern* and *western* sides'<sup>28</sup> (my italics) and in 1690 la Loubère stated that The King's Palace stands to the North on the *Canal*'<sup>29</sup> (my italics)) was the short one between the Lop Buri and Pasak rivers-a new 'front arch' or 'Khu-na'.

The advantages of this site being evident, it must be assumed they had long been realised. But beyond a Khmer inscription of A.D. 937 which cannot certainly be considered as *in situ*,<sup>30</sup> the evidence-the large Buddha image in Wat Phanan-choeng, on the east bank of the Chao Phraya immediately below the confluence of the Pasak (see figure I), which was erected in A.D. 1324<sup>31</sup> and the head of another in a pre-Ayutthayan style, now enshrined in the Ayutthaya Museum<sup>32</sup>-permits of only conjectural, if logical, sitings prior to the 14th century, or, rather, prior to the ascendancy of the Kingdom of Sukhothai under Rama Kamhaeng (A.D. 1275-?1317), when, it appears (in the

28. Gervaise, N., *Histoire Naturelle et Politique du Siam*, 1688, tr. O'Neil as *Memoires de Siam*, 1929, p. 15.

29. la Loubère, Simon de, *A New Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Siam*, tr. S.P., 1693, p. 6.

30. See Coedès, G., 'Une nouvelle inscription d'Ayuthya', *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. 35, 1944, p. 73.

31. See Frankfurter, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

32. See Tri Amatyakul, *The Thai Guide Book: Ayudhya op. cit.*, p. 6 or *Guide to Ayudhya and Bang-Pa-In, op. cit.*, p. 7.

absence of any mention of the place) the occupation of so strategic a site by any considerable centre was not tolerated.<sup>33</sup>

Some three hundred and fifty years after its founding, Ayutthaya<sup>34</sup> was still the centre of a kingdom, albeit a restive one, that comprehended much the same dominions claimed in 1350, plus those of the former Sukhothai Kingdom proper which had been wholly annexed by 1438.<sup>35</sup> But the Kingdom had hardly remained static during the intervening period.<sup>36</sup> Ayutthaya itself had been forced to capitulate to the Burmese following investment in 1568, thereby allowing the

33. The meagre evidence for the existence of the *kingdom* of Dvaravati which appears to have occupied the basin of the Chao Phraya by the 7th century and possibly as early as the 4th century (see Coedès, G., *Les Etats Hindouïses d'Indochine et d'Indonesie*, 1948, p. 131 and *Recueil des Inscriptions du Siam*, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 1; Briggs, L.P., 'The Ancient Khmer Empire', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Series, vol. 41, part 1, 1951, p. 48; Luce, G.H., 'Countries Neighbouring Burma', *Burma Research Society Journal*, vol. 14 (2), 1925, p. 181; and Majumdar, R.C., *Hindu Colonies in the Far East*, 1944, p. 222 and *Ancient Indian Colonisation in South-East Asia*, 1955, p. 32) and Phya Boranrajadhanin's (*op. cit.*, p. 32) carefully qualified conjecture concerning a prior settlement on the site of Ayutthaya has deterred neither casual acceptance of a long period of prior occupation (see, for example, Damrong, 'The Foundation of Ayuthia', *op. cit.*, p. 201 and Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 53) nor remarkable assertions to this effect (see Graham, A.W., *Siam*, vol. 1, 1924, p. 28 and Tri Amatyakul, *The Thai Guide Book: Ayudhya*, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5 or *Guide to Ayudhya and Bang-Pa-In*, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6).

34. 'Ayutthaya' is the official modern English equivalent of the Thai name. In addition to the many variants which resemble this rendering (e.g. 'Ayuthia' or 'Ayuddhya'), 'Odia' (occasionally 'Odiaa') 'Judda' (occasionally 'Judea', 'Judia', 'Juthia', 'Juthya', or 'Hudia') 'Iudia' (occasionally misprinted (?) 'India' on maps) and 'Siam' (occasionally 'Siaam') were used by European writers of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. A number of infrequently used variants gleaned from the maps of this period are given by Wheatley (see *The Golden Khersonese*, 1961, p. 235, footnote 3), and Anderson (*op. cit.*, p. 18) includes a partial list of early works in which several of the principal variants are to be found.

35. See Frankfurter, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-8 and Wood, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-2 and 81.

36. See, for example, Wood, *op. cit.*, chaps. 5-14.

extension of Burmese suzerainty throughout the Kingdom during the period A.D. 1569 to c.1585;<sup>37</sup> and had been reduced to a 'second capital' under Phitsanulok during the period A.D. 1463 to 1488 after constant incursions from Chiengmai prompted Rama Boromo Trailokanat to establish the capital in a position from which retaliation was more easily effected.<sup>38</sup> Further, to the bloody intrigue involved in the enthronement of twenty-seven kings was added the diplomatic crises which developed from the cut-throat competition of Indian, Arab, Chinese, Portuguese, Japanese, Dutch, English and French factors as their governments' everchanging interrelationships.<sup>39</sup> However, though the cumulated construction of three and a half centuries had wrought

37. Important, though unsuccessful sieges were engineered by the Burmese (Peguans) in A.D. 1549, 1564, 1568 and 1586; the Cambodians also laid siege in 1570 and 1575. See Frankfurter, *op. cit.*, *passim*, Wood, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-57 and Hall, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-23.

38. See Frankfurter, *op. cit.*, pp. 49 and 51, Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 88 and Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

39. The seizing of Malacca in 1511, then a nominal vassal of the Thai king, led to a treaty in 1516 which permitted the Portuguese to trade at Ayutthaya and several of the peninsula ports. The Dutch East India Company did not begin trading at Ayutthaya until almost a century later, in 1608 (though their factory at Pattani, a nominal Thai vassal, was opened in 1602), by which time Portugal had been united with Spain for some thirty years and their efforts in the East seem to have developed a more religious, less commercial bent. (Though a Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the Spanish Crown and Thailand was concluded in 1598, nothing seems to have come of it). Four years later the English East India Company was permitted to trade at Ayutthaya, being granted a plot of land close to that occupied by the Dutch Company. The Japanese, in the main religious refugees, had been allotted a 'quarter' by King Ekot'sarot about five years previously. The first visit of French clergy in 1662, though unpremeditated, led to the establishment in Ayutthaya of the French Catholic Mission's headquarters for the propagation of the faith in the East, in 1664. Though the Mission attempted at the outset to interest the French Court in a trading venture at Ayutthaya, the French East India Company did not settle agents there until 1682, at which time political circumstances were such that they were especially favoured by being granted a 'ramshackle house on the south side of the island', that is, within the city walls. (See Hutchinson, E.W., *Adventurers in Siam in the Seventeenth Century*, 1940, chaps. 2 through 4; Wood, *op. cit.*, chaps. 7 and 11 through 13; Hall, *op. cit.*, chaps. 12 and 18). Arabs appear to have been trading at Ayutthaya in the 16th century (see Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese*, *op. cit.*, p. 235), and Indian and Chinese merchants were probably in residence when the city was founded—a Chinese section apparently being recognizable early in the 16th century (see Skinner, G.W., *Chinese Society in Thailand*, 1957, p. 3).

a massive change in its appearance, that much had been, if not unaltered, but little affected during this period, is evident from contemporary description.

In fact, brief general descriptions of Ayutthaya, while not numerous, are available from about the mid-16th century,<sup>40</sup> but only three eyewitness accounts merit especial attention: Fernão Mendez Pinto's of about 1545;<sup>41</sup> Joost Schouten's of 1636;<sup>42</sup> and John Albert de Mandelsloe's of 1637.<sup>43</sup> Pinto's description gathers value more from its antiquity than from its content—in truth, there appears to have been no attempt to describe the town per se—but in several instances what has been noted is useful in endeavouring to indicate the evolution of late-17th century Ayutthaya. Mandelsloe's description is useful for several remarks concerning the inhabitants, remarks which will be referred to during the discussion of the Ayutthaya of a half-century later, but, otherwise his observations follow those of Schouten so closely as to arouse the suspicion that the latter's contribution was

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40. See, for example, Balbi, G., 'His Voyage to Pegu, and observations there, gathered out of his own Italian Relation, A.D. 1583', *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, vol. 10, 1905, chap. 5, p. 163; Chevalier de Chaumont, A., *Relation de l'ambassade de Monsieur le Chevalier de Chaumont a la Cour du Roy*, 1686; Tavernier, J.B., *Tavernier's Travels in India*, tr. from the French ed. of 1676, vol. 2, 1889, chap. 18, pp. 288-96; van Vliet, J., 'Description of the Kingdom of Siam', tr. von Ravenswaay, *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. 7, 1910, pp. 12-19 and 82-3.
41. In the *Peregrinaçam*, 1558, but particularly in a long letter written in 1554 from Malacca to the Society of Jesus in Lisbon—Christovam Ayres, *Fernão Mendez Pinto, Subsídios etc.*, Lisbon, 1904, Appendix B. See *The Voyages and Adventures of Ferdinand Mendez Pinto, The Portuguese*, tr. of the *Peregrinaçam* by H. Cogan, 1663, abridged version, 1890; Collis, M., *The Grand Peregrination*, 1949; de Campos, J., 'Early Portuguese Accounts of Thailand; *Selected Articles from the Siam Society Journal*, vol. 7, 1959, pp. 211-37.
42. Schouten, J. and Caron, F., *A True Description of the Mighty Kingdoms of Japan and Siam*, 1671, pp. 124-25.
43. de Mandelsloe, J.A., 'The remaining Voyages of John Albert de Mandelsloe, through the Indies, including his Descriptions of Countries, historical Remarks upon several Nations, and his Observations on the Commerce of the Portuguese, English, and Dutch at that Time, *Harris' Complete Collection of Voyages and Travels*, 1744, pp. 781-82.

firmly in mind. Schouten, resident at Ayutthaya for eight years and manager of the Dutch East India Company's factory from 1633 to 1636 saw 'The City of Iudica [Ayutthaya], the Metropolis of the King and his chiefest Nobles . . . situate upon the River Menam [Chao Phraya]' as

. . . a little round Island, encompassed with a thick stone wall, about six English miles round . . . [with] Suburbs . . . on the other side of the River, closely builded, and full of Temples and Cloysters, lying in a flat fruitful Country. The Streets of the walled Town are many of them large, straight and regular, with channels running through them, although for the most part of small narrow Lanes, Ditches, and Creeks most confusedly placed; the Citizens have an incredible number of small Boats . . . which come to their very doors, especially at floods and high water. The building of the Houses is . . . slight, and covered with Tiles; but the City is beautified with more than three hundred fair Temples and Cloysters, all curiously builded, and adorned with many gilded Towers, Pyramids, and Pictures without number. The King's Palace is seated upon the River, resembling a little Town apart great and magnificent, many of its Buildings and Towers being entirely gilded.

and he thought the city 'admirable', 'perfectly well seated' 'populous to a wonder' and 'impregnable as not to be besieged but six months in a year, by reason of the inundations of the River....'<sup>44</sup> Schouten's exuberance doubtless owes something to his most successful term as manager, during which he directed construction of the permanent Dutch factory; a structure which, while basically similar to other such establishments, appears to have been as sumptuous as those of the Ayutthayan nobility:

There is an excellent building, rather large, with high ceilings, roomy and well-designed store-houses behind it. The building itself has a double gabled front with a lot of carved wood decorations over doors and windows . . . protected by bars against robbers! The walls are of baked bricks and . . . thick,

44. Schouten, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-25.

the woodwork is carved and looks much like oak. A double staircase leads to the dining hall behind which, on each side, are smaller rooms. Here lives the manager to the right and the assistant to the left. Besides, the higher employees are accomodated [sic] here, according to their rank.

Behind the main building there are several rooms for the other assistants, the surgeon, the bottler, the cooks, the trumpeter, the wood-carvers, carpenters, two blacksmiths and several sailors, among them bookbinders, bakers, horse-grooms, and others. All the rooms are adequately equipped and furnished for the various purposes. Only the barbers — seven in number — have to content themselves with their boats as home, as they have to watch them at the same time. The *factorij* is surrounded by a high bamboo fence along which are [sic] built the bottling-rooms, the kitchen, storage rooms, and a mess, the prison, however, is built of stone. There are also stables for about 12 horses. On the other side of the fence are more stables for sheep which are bred here for export; further stables for goats, chicken, ducks, pigeons and even cranes. The last we found running around the lawn . . . . The bamboo fence is made safe against scaling by a wide and deep moat that has a broad outlet under a fortified gate. At the landing on the Bank of the river Chao Phya there is a wide pier for loading and unloading, with comfortable benches to sit and enjoy the river view. Through a wide gate under the main building we reach the ware-houses and beyond, across a wooden bridge, a green field. In the ware-houses are large amounts of timber spread for seasoning. The stone buildings are covered with Siamese glazed tiles; only the stables and the bamboo-huts are covered with palm leaves.

Entering the main building from the waterfront, we find a fine room with a tiled floor, airy with its many windows . . . Behind the storehouses there is a small garden with a few lemon —, orange —, and grenade-trees; but it looked quite untidy and abandoned today, as some pagodas were under construction there.<sup>45</sup>

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45. Dr. Gybert Heecq's description of 1655 quoted by de Voogd in *The Dutchmen in Ancient Ayuthiya*, tr. I.E. Eisenhofer, 1956.

Fifty years later, descriptions of Ayutthaya offer more details, but indicate no basic change.

... the City of *Siam* [Ayutthaya] is not only become an Island, but is placed in the middle of several Islands, which renders the situation thereof very singular.<sup>46</sup> This Island, with the City upon it . . . hath about two German Miles in circumference.<sup>47</sup> It is situate in a Country all flat . . . on a low ground, which is cut through by many Canals coming from the River, and by them divided into so many Isles and squares, that one cannot go far without the help of Boats . . . Divers great Canals go out of the River quite through the City some from East to West, others from North to South, and abundance of smaller Canals being derived from the great ones, Ships may come from the River up into the Town, and put on shore near the principal Houses and Palaces.<sup>48</sup> It is another Venice so to speak.<sup>49</sup>

It is surrounded with a Brick wall, which on the South and North is four fathoms and a half [about nine meters] high, clean, well condition'd and adorn'd with Battlements, but the rest of it is lower, neglected and decayed. This wall is open in many places, where there are small gates towards the River. On the inside there are ramparts rais'd against it at different distances for placing Cannons upon them. At the lower end of the City appears a large bastion advancing into the water,

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46. la Loubère, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

47. Two German miles equal approximately 14.8 kilometres. Schouten's earlier estimate (*op. cit.*, p. 124) of six English miles (about 9.6 kilometers) appears much the better approximation and the 11.4 kilometres for this distance on the 'French Engineer's Plan of 1687 (see figure 2) seems remarkably accurate, as the 'island's' present perimeter approximates 11.7 kilometres, while the distance around via U Thong road, (see figure 1) which follows or lies immediately beyond the former ramparts, is about 10.9 kilometres.

48. Kaempfer, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

49. Gervaise, *op. cit.*, p. 15. A number of observers have, quite naturally, compared Ayutthaya and then Bangkok, with the canalized Adriatic port. Pinto appears to have been the first; referring to the Thai capital as the 'Venice of the East' in a letter to the Society of Jesus in Lisbon in 1554 (*op. cit.*, ).

besides several small ones. The first is furnished with Cannon against the Ships coming up.<sup>50</sup> All vessels moor there because at that point the river forms a wide basin extremely useful and convenient for repairing ships...<sup>51</sup> To fence the City-wall against the wasting of the current, a narrow bank, or key is left, which is built upon in many places.<sup>52</sup>

The first siege of Ayutthaya, in 1549, though unsuccessful, apparently stimulated preparations for another. Immediately afterward work began on a wall and fortifications of brick and mortar, which to judge from the description that 'The brick formed the surface while the inter spaces were filled with mud and broken brick'<sup>53</sup>—apparently encased the previous, perhaps raised, wall of mud. While Wood<sup>54</sup> and Chakrabongse<sup>55</sup> maintain that these defences were dismantled following the successful attack by the Burmese in 1569, Frankfurter,<sup>56</sup> Phya Boranrajadhanin<sup>57</sup> and Tri Amatyakul<sup>58</sup> indicate that they were not; however, whatever the case, King Maha T'ammaraaja convinced the Burmese, then suzerains of Ayutthaya, of the necessity for the erection of new fortifications in order to withstand Cambodian attack. A major feature of this renovation, which occurred about 1580, was the re-erection of the east wall nearer the west bank of the Pasak river, eliminating a strip of land which had previously been of service to besieging forces. Ayutthaya's fortifications (as well as those of several other centres) were being remodelled at the time of the above description, that is, late in the 17th century, under the capable direction of a member of

50. Kaempfer, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

51. Gervaise, *op. cit.*, p. 16-17.

52. Kaempfer, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

53. Tri Amatyakul, *The Thai Guide Book: Ayudhya*, *op. cit.*, p. 12 or *Guide to Ayudhya and Bang-Pa-In*, *op. cit.*, p. 14, after Phya Boranrajadhanin, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

54. *Op. cit.*, p. 126.

55. *Op. cit.*, p. 43.

56. *Op. cit.*, p. 58.

57. *Op. cit.*, p. 32.

58. *The Thai Guide Book: Ayudhya*, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13 or *Guide to Ayudhya and Bang-Pa-In*, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.



the French Jesuit Mission—the Italian, Father Thomas Valguarnera—to incorporate elements of more sophisticated European design; in particular, bastions were erected to command the river approach—see figure 2.<sup>59</sup>

Considering the bigness of the City, it is not very populous<sup>60</sup> . . . scarce the sixth part thereof is inhabited, and that to the South-East only. The rest lies desert where the Temples only stand<sup>61</sup> . . . [and] there are abundance of empty spaces and large gardens behind the streets, wherein they let nature work, so that they are full of Grass, Herbs, Shrubs and Trees, that grow wild.<sup>62</sup>

The Streets run in a straight line along the Canals; some of them tolerably large<sup>63</sup> . . . and in some places planted with Trees, and paved with Bricks laid edgewise . . .<sup>64</sup> but the greater part very narrow, and all, generally speaking foul and dirty: some also are overflow'd at high water . . . and towards the South by reason of the morassy ground . . . people make shift to get upon planks, or paltry bridges . . . The first Street upon entering the City [from the bastion at the southeastern corner] is that which runs Westward along the turning of the Wall: it hath the best Houses, amongst which are those, that formerly belonged to the English, Dutch, and French . . . The middle Street, which runs North towards the Court, is best inhabited, and full of shops of Tradesmen, Artificers . . . Handicraftmen<sup>65</sup> . . . and squares for the markets. These markets are held every day, in the evening and in the morning. They are especially full of fish, eggs, fruit, vegetables and innumerable other merchandise . . . Crowds of people so throng these

59. See Wood, *op. cit.*; pp. 195-96 and Hutchinson, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

60. Kaempfer, *op. cit.*, p. 42. The two independent estimates of the population in 1685—500,000 from information contained in de Voogd, *op. cit.* and 250,000 to 500,000 quoted by Gervaise, *op. cit.*, p. 17—may be considered either remarkably similar or rather dissimilar, but even the most divergent figures are of the same gross magnitude; and though an estimate of close to half a million may appear immoderate, one of less than a quarter of a million seems improbable. However, these figures have resulted from a great deal of supposition from a meagre amount of information.

61. la Loubère, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

62. Kaempfer, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

64. la Loubère, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

65. Kaempfer, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-44.

market places that, at times, it is almost impossible . . . to pass along.<sup>66</sup> In both these Streets are seen above one hundred Houses belonging to the Chinese, Hindostanians, and Moors [Arabs] . . . They are all built alike of Stone, very small, being but eight paces [twelve meters ?] in length, four [six meters?] in breadth and of two Stories, yet not above two Fathoms and a half [four meters] high. They are covered with flat tiles, and have large doors... The rest of the Streets are less inhabited, and the Houses of ordinary Inhabitants are but mean and poor cottages, built of Bambous. . . and boards, and carelessly cover'd with Gabbe' Gabbe', Branches and leaves of Palm Trees...<sup>67</sup> but surrounded with pretty large Grounds... The Piles on which they are erected to avoid the Inundation, are Bambous as thick as one's Leg . . . There never is more than four or six, on which they do lay other Bambou's across instead of Beams. The Stairs are a Ladder of Bambou, which hangs on the outside... And by reason that their Stables are also in the Air, they have Climbers made of Hurdles, by which the Cattle enter therein.<sup>68</sup> The Mandarins or Ministers of State and Courtiers live in separate palaces, with Courtyards to them, which are very dirty. The Buildings in general, though rais'd with Lime and Stone are but indifferent, and the apartments neither clean, nor well furnish'd. The booth, or Shops of the town are low, and very ordinary, however they stand in good order, and in a straight line, as the Streets are.<sup>69</sup>

One single story sufficeth them; and I am persuaded that this manner of building is more commodious to them than ours; seeing that they are not strained for room ( . . . and they take it where they please ) and seeing they build with those slight materials, which every one takes at pleasure in the Woods, or which he buys at a low rate of him that has been there to take them. Nevertheless it is reported that the reason why their Houses have but one Story, is that no Person may be higher in

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66. Gervaise, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

67. Kaempfer, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

68. la Loubère, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

69. Kaempfer, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

his own House than the King of *Siam*, when he passes thro the Street mounted on his Elephant; and that further to assure themselves that they are all lower than this Prince when he goes either by Water or by Land, they must shut all their Windows, and come into the Street, or into their *Balons* (*boat*) to prostrate themselves... For it is not true, that the Houses erected as they are on Piles, are lower than the King on his Elephant; and it is less true, that they are not higher than the King in his *Balon*. But what they doubtless observe, is that their Houses are less exalted than the Palaces of this Prince. Moreover his Palaces consisting only of one story do sufficiently evince, that this is the Phantasie of the Country in their Buildings...<sup>70</sup>

If every House stands single, 'tis rather for the privacy of the Family, which would be discovered through such thin Walls, than for fear of Fire: For besides that, they make their little Fire in the Courts and not in the Houses, it is impossible for them in any case to consume any great matter. Three hundred Houses which were burnt at Siam [*Ayutthaya*] in our time, were rebuilt in two days.<sup>71</sup>

The *Europeans*, *Chinese*, and *Moors*...build with Brick, every one according to his Genius; for that they alone will be at the expense, as I conceive, or that they alone have the Liberty thereof, as it is reported. At the side of their Houses, to keep off the Sun and not hinder the Air, some do add Penthouses, which are sometimes supported by Pillars. Others do make the bodies of the House double, which do reciprocally receive the light one from the other, to the end that the Air may pass from one to the other. The Chambers are large and full of Windows, to be the more fresh and airy...two Brick Houses which the King...had built, one for the Ambassadors of *France*, and the other for those of *Portugal*...are not finished; by reason perhaps of the little probability there was, that they would be frequently inhabited...this Prince begins several

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70. la Loubère *op. cit.*, p. 30.

71. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

Brick buildings, and finishes few. The reason of which I know not.<sup>72</sup>

The Palaces . . . and several Pagodas or Temples are likewise of Brick, but the Palaces are low . . . no more than one story . . . and the Pagodas are not raised high enough in proportion to their bigness . . . they know no exterior Ornament . . . Save in the Roofs, which they cover with . . . Tin . . . or with Tiles varnished with yellow . . . But tho there appears not any Gold in the Palace of *Siam* on the outside, and there is but little gilding on the inside, yet they fail not to call it . . . the Golden Palace, because they give pompous names to every thing which they honour . . . That which . . . makes [their] real dignity . . . is that altho there is no more than one story, yet they are not all level . . . The Roofs are all high-ridged, but the one is lower than the other; as it covers a part lower than another. And a lower Roof seems to come out from a higher Roof, and the highest to bear on the lowest, like a Saddle, the fore-bow of which bears on the hind-part of another . . . this inequality of the Roofs . . . denotes grandeur, in that it supposes an inequality of parts . . . The great Officers will have three parts, one higher than another, which are divided by three Roofs of different elevation: But . . . the Palace . . . [has] seven Roofs proceeding one from under another . . . As to the *Pagodas* . . . I observed only one . . . Penthouse before, and another behind. The highest Roof is that under which the Idol stands . . . But the Principal Ornament of the Pagodas, is to be accompanied, as generally they are, with several Pyramids of Lime and Brick, the ornaments of which are very grossly performed. The highest are as high as our ordinary Steeples, and the lowest not exceeding two Fathom [four meters]. They are all round and do little diminish . . . as they rise; so that they terminate like a Dome . . . Some . . . diminish and grow thick again four or five times . . . so that the Profile of them goes waving . . .<sup>73</sup>

72. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

73. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.

There are three Royal palaces in this City. The first is the new palace built by the late King on the Northside towards the middle of the Town. It consists of a large square, with several sub-divisions, and many buildings (see figure 8)... Within the walls of the Palace as well as without, are... long Stables, in which some hundred of Elephants stand in a long row magnificently harness'd... The second palace, call'd the foremost palace, is situated in the North East part of the City towards its extremity. It is of a square figure, but not near so large as the first... it is inhabited by the Prince Royal... the third... Palace is smaller than any of the two, and situated in the West and least inhabited part of the City. In this lives... a Prince of the Royal Blood...<sup>74</sup>

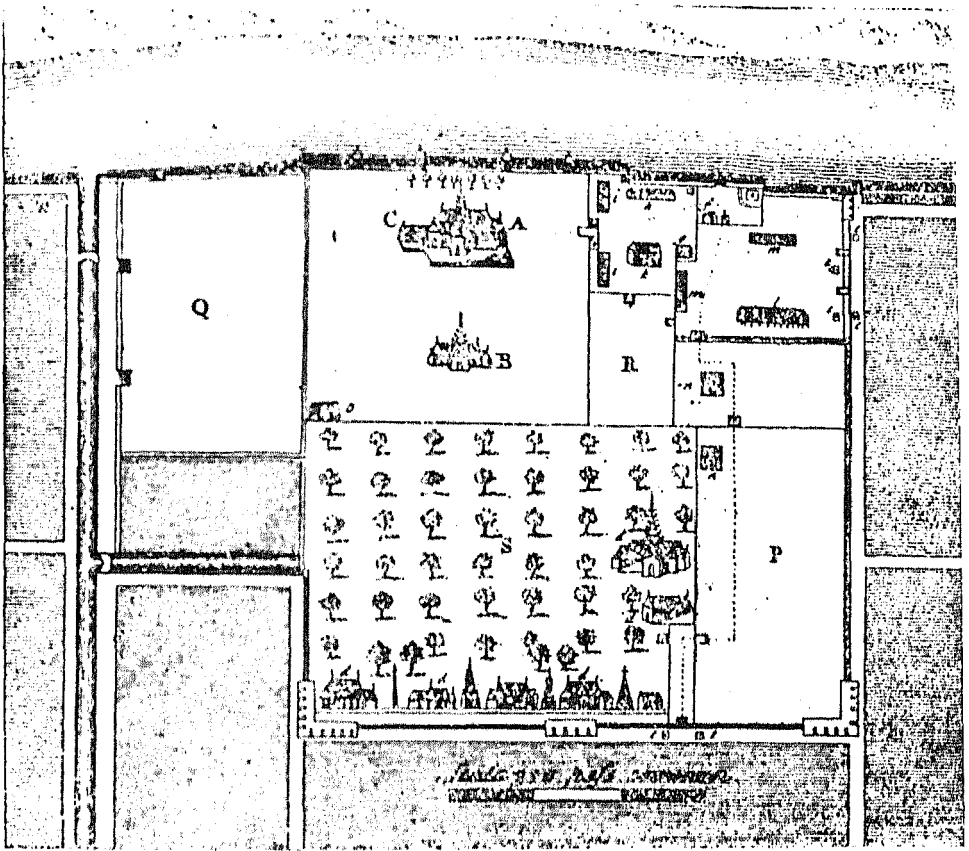
As each of twenty-eight kings had added or renovated several structures in the royal compound, it had become full of imposing buildings when, in the latter half of the 17th century, two additional palaces were built: the Chandra-kasem Palace for the Crown Prince and the Wang Lang Palace for other royal princes. The former, located in the northeast corner of the city, was obviously an integral part of the general strengthening of defences undertaken during the reign of King Maha T'amaraja and, through geomantic allusion, was popularly referred to as 'Wang Na', that is, the 'palace in front' of the Royal Palace; the latter, located along the western wall, was less formidable, but its name, meaning the 'palace behind', that is, behind the Royal Palace, suggests that its function was to defend against an attack from the rear.<sup>75</sup>

... what contributes most to the beauty and magnificence of this city is the panorama of over five hundred pagodas [temples].<sup>76</sup>  
The Temple and the Convent do take up a very great piece of ground, encompassed with an Inclosure of Bambou. In the middle of the ground stands the Temple, as in the place

74. Kaempfer, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.

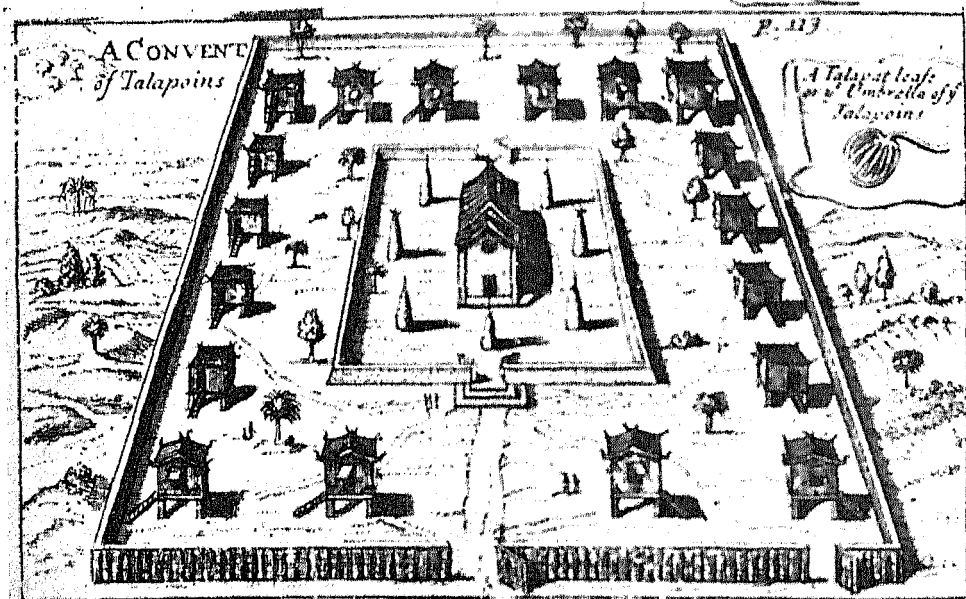
75. See Phya Boranrajadhanin, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-82 and 129-160, and Tri Amatyakul, *The Thai Guide Book: Ayudhya op. cit.*, pp. 14-25 or *Guide to Ayudhya and Bang-Pa-In op. cit.*, pp. 17-28.

76. Gervaise, *op. cit.*, p. 17.



The Royal Palace at Ayutthaya, 1690; from Kaempfer, *op. cit.*

Figure 8. The plan of the royal palace of Siam, wherein A is the late King's palace, together with the hall of audience. B, The old royal palace. C, The dining hall. *ddd*, Several temples. *eee*, etc. Several centry-boxes about and within the enclosure of the palace walls. *f*, The house where they keep the King's plate, with the royal ornaments, and the furniture of the royal palace. *g*, The King's wardrobe. *h*, Stables for the elephants. *ii*, Two houses where the Mandarins meet to consult about the affairs of the Kingdom. *k*, The apartment of the King's physicians. *l*, The Secretary's office. *m*, The royal armory. *nn*, Two ponds for the horses and elephants. *o*, The royal treasury. *P*, A large place for running of races. *Q*, The Seraglio, or apartment of the women. *R*, The court of the white elephant. *S*, Gardens. . . . . These points show what way the French ambassadors were conducted to audience.



A Wat; from la Loubère, *op. cit.*

Figure 9. The wat area: the 'bot' housing the Buddha image centered and sacred plot upon which it stands demarcated by eight 'semas' (here exaggerated so as to appear 'chedi'); the low inner wall (sometimes omitted) separating this most sacred area from rest of wat; the regularly arranged cells of the talapoins along perimeter of wat grounds; the outer wall defining this sacred area from profane area outside; the whole oriented cardinally.

The palace area: (fig. 8) oriented cardinally and arranged so as to set the royal house within the maze of north-south/east-west 'partitions'; subdivisions occupied by one or more of the various State Departments or otherwise serving the King's pleasure. The French ambassadors' (1685-86) approach to the hall of audience illustrates pitfalls awaiting an uninitiated intruder.

The underlying geomantic principles may be readily apprehended in these stylized plans.

esteemed the most honourable...and at the corners of this ground, and along the Bambou Inclosure are ranged the Cells of the Talapoins...and sometimes the Rows thereof are double or triple: These Cells are little single Houses, erected on Piles, and that of the Superior is after the same manner, but a little larger and higher than the rest. The Pyramids stand near and quite round the Temple: and the ground which the Temple and the Pyramids take up, besides its being higher, is inclosed between four Walls: but from these Walls to the Cells there... remains a great void of ground... [see figure 9]<sup>77</sup>

The many Canals occasion a great number of bridges. Those which are laid over the great Canal are of Stone, but as there are no Waggons, nor Carts in this place, they are narrow; in the middle they are high and eighty paces long; but the Bridges over the by Canals are<sup>78</sup>...made of canes...so narrow and unsubstantial that it is difficult to pass over them without... danger<sup>79</sup>...there is a causey, by which alone... People may go out of the City without crossing the water.<sup>80</sup>

Round the City lie many Suburbs and Villages, some of which consist of inhabited Ships, or Vessels, rather than Houses; containing two, three, or more Families each; they remove them from time to time, and float them particularly when the waters are high, where Fairs are kept, to sell their Goods there and get their Livelyhood by it<sup>81</sup>...along the long canals under shady trees... [are] long rows of floating houses which [look] rather shabby from the outside, but [are] clean inside...<sup>82</sup> The Houses in the common Villages, that stand upon firm Ground, are generally built of Bambous, reed, planks, and other ordinary stuff; some of the Houses in the Villages along the banks of the river stand on poles a fathom [two meters] high, that the

77. la Loubère, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

78. Kaempfer, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

79. Gervaise, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

80. la Loubère, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

81. Kaempfer, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

82. Choisy as quoted by Collis, M., *Siamese White*, 1935, p. 47.



waters, which overflow the Country for some months, may freely pass under . . . Each House is furnish'd with Stairs, or a Ladder, to come down in dry weather, and with a boat, to go about it at high water. Other Villages stand on higher and dry ground, and consequently not being subject to those inundations their Houses want neither such stairs or boats. On these eminences also stand Temples, Convents, burying Places and yards where they burn their bones and ashes, where they bury their dead, and erect costly Pyramids over them. On the Southside, at a small distance down the River, the Dutch have their Factory and Magazines very splendidly and conveniently built on dry ground. Lower down on the same bank are other villages inhabited by Colonies of Japanese . . . Peguans and Malaccans. On the opposite side of the River stands a village inhabited by a Portuguese race begot on black Women and farther down stands a Church, dedicated to St. Domingo, to which belong the Fathers of the Dominican Order. Behind it stands another small church . . . kept by two Fathers of the order of St. Austin . . . Not far from hence, on the same plain, stands a Jesuit Church nam'd St. Paul, after the Chief Church at Goa . . . South West of the City, opposite to that side of the River, where it lets out the branch Klang Nam Ja [now called Khlong 'Ta Khian] the Metropolitan Bishop . . . had caus'd a stone Palace to be built, together with a fine Church, which is now lock'd up since his Imprisonment. The Roman Catholick Ecelesiastics in Siam have assur'd me, that there live above three thousand six hundred Christians in the neighbourhood of Judia [Ayutthaya], who are past seven years of age . . .<sup>83</sup>

Though lacking even rudimentary attributes of the contemporary western capital, the 'city' was not without a certain oriental 'urban grandeur', and might well have moved a sensitive European

83. Kaempfer, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-52. The English cantonment, which had stood between those of the Dutch and the Japanese (the French, as previously noted, had only recently arrived and were housed within the walls of the city) is not noted as it was abandoned following the total destruction of the factory by fire in 1682; the English East India Company withdrew its agency from Ayutthaya shortly thereafter (see Hutchinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-85).

soul to a declaration similar to that with which the Abbé de Choisy sought to convey his appreciation of its immediate environs: 'I have never seen anything fairer, despite the fact that the temples mark the only departure from unsophisticated nature'.<sup>84</sup> Admittedly, at this time (that is, during the last few years of King Narai's reign, 1657–88) the court was virtually in residence at Lop Buri, only returning to Ayutthaya for two or three months during the rains or for a particularly important ceremonial.

From contemporary accounts it appears that the court moved to Lop Buri as a consequence of King Narai's contentment there;<sup>85</sup> but recent retrospective investigation, seeking more rational causes considers that French engineers directed all phases of construction and 'suggests a parallel with the artificial splendour of Versailles'<sup>86</sup> or that Ayutthaya 'was too easily accessible from the sea'<sup>87</sup> and therefore exposed to anticipated Dutch naval attack.

Whatever the cause, the development of replete royal quarters at Lop Buri must have diverted energy and expenditure from Ayutthaya; the removal from the capital, *en masse*, of the large body of royal retainers—conceivably a sizeable proportion of the city's total population—no doubt dampened 'urban' activities; and, in the absence of the court the capital certainly lost much of its awesome atmosphere; but, in truth, the whole affair cannot be considered more than a brief excursion. An ill-furnished urban scene might well have been anticipated irrespective of the court's temporary sojourn; for though enwalled Ayutthaya was at once the kingdom's foremost political,

84. This passage, which occurs on page 165 (entry for the 27th October) of the Abbé's *Journal du Voyage de Siam, fait en 1685 and 1686*, Paris edition, 1930, has suffered variously in translation; Hutchinson's rendering (*Adventurers in Siam in the Seventeenth Century op. cit.*, p. 15) given above, requires no amendment.

85. See Giblin, R.W., 'Lopburi, Past and Present,' *Selected Articles from the Siam Society Journal*, vol. 4, Lopburi, Bangkok, Bhuket, 1959, pp. 113-32. Lop Buri is described during this shortlived ascendant period by a compilation of abstracted quotations.

86. Hutchinson, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

87. Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 196 and see Damrong, H.R.H. Prince, 'The Introduction of Western Culture in Siam' *Selected Articles from the Siam Society Journal*, vol. 7, Relationship with Portugal, and the Vatican, 1959, p. 3.

cultural and commercial centre, the kingdom was scarcely more than a loose confederation of politically independent or semi-independent, largely self-sustaining agrarian states, and the basis of the capital's prosperity and pre-eminence, as previously noted, devolved rather from the domination of the fertile basin of the Chao Phraya—the largest and most populous coherent area in the 'confederation'—than from an in-pouring of produce from all quarters of the Kingdom.

Food, housing materials, agricultural and domestic implements and dress being simple, almost wholly of local origin and very similar, if not identical, throughout the kingdom, internal trade must be reckoned negligible (though the distribution of certain localized essentials, particularly salt, was, of course of great importance); while the small populace who led 'a miserable Life, by reason that Provisions are so cheap. . . . they can't gain anything by their Labour',<sup>88</sup> possessing (apparently through necessity) a 'simplicity of Manners, which . . . makes them . . . to slight most of the commodities . . . necessary to the *Europeans*',<sup>89</sup> could, hardly offer other than a meagre market for foreign produce. In fact, in the absence of domestically marketable items, with the exception of Indian textiles which were apparently of some consequence in home consumption,<sup>90</sup> the royal monopolists of foreign trade received either treasure or goods for which treasure was readily redeemable in foreign markets (as, for example, Japanese copper in return for the variety of crudely processed local products exported. Among the more important of the latter appear to have been rice, deerskins, sapanwood, saltpetre and tin. Obviously a most favourable balance of trade—but certainly of no direct, and little indirect, benefit to the public weal.

Royal trading monopolies were formally inaugurated early in the reign of King Prasat Tong (1630-56). Earlier, under King Songt'am (1610-28), all trade passed through the Treasury, but, in all probability, royalty had enjoyed special trading privileges for

88. de Mandelsloe, *op. cit.*, p. 782.

89. la Loubère, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

90. English and Dutch factors in Thailand were able to dispose little else besides various Indian 'cloths'; see letters quoted by Hutchinson, *op. cit.*, p. 51 and Nunn, W., 'Some Notes upon the Development of the Commerce of Siam,' *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. 15, part 2, 1922, p. 214.

sometime previous. The system operated until the mid-19th century. However, from inception, it was diluted both by the granting of monopolies in certain items or the products of certain areas to European and Asiatic factors, and the relative freedom of trade allowed the Chinese. Some writers, among them early observers, have attributed the poor state of Thai trade at various periods to the evils of the royal trading monopoly<sup>91</sup> but others, in retrospect, have pointed out that though such monopolies do indeed impede trade they were usual in the East and did not prevent a flourishing exchange where desired articles were available.<sup>92</sup> After quoting L'Abbé de Choisy's brief description of a Thai home —

*We . . . passed between rows of wooden houses perched on posts, very shabby-looking outside, but, as we were to find, clean within. We entered one of them prepared to see the peasants in rags, but all was spick and span, the floor covered with mats, Japanese coffers and screens everywhere. Hardly inside the door, they offered us tea in porcelain cups.*<sup>93</sup>

Collis, however, explains that the Abbé 'was looking at . . . the distributed dividend of the coast trade'.<sup>94</sup> Unfortunately, there is no evidence of 'the distributed dividend' other than this interpretation of the Abbé's vision. Certainly the suspicion may be entertained that one of Louis XIV's more remarkable courtiers<sup>95</sup> and a member of the French Embassy to the Thai Court was looking at a 'model home'.

Even if but a fraction of Ayutthaya's estimated population of several hundred thousand be considered 'urban', two short streets

91. See van Vliet, J., 'Description of the Kingdom of Siam', tr. von Ravenswaay, *The Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. 7, part 1, 1910, pp. 90 and 93. la Loubère, *op. cit.*, p. 71 and Bowring, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 241.

92. See van der Heide, J.H., 'The Economical Development of Siam During the Last Half Century', *Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. 3, part 2, 1906, p. 79 and Nunn, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

93. Collis, *Siamese White*, *op. cit.*, p. 47, quoting from the Abbé's *Journal du Voyage de Siam*, 1687—the passage seems to have been omitted from the 1930 version.

94. *Ibid.*

95. See 'The Abbé de Choisy', *Selected Articles from the Siam Society Journal*, vol. 8, Relationship with France, England and Denmark, 1959, pp. 1-16.

containing, 'above one hundred Houses belonging to the Chinese, Hindostanians, and Moors', one of which was apparently predominantly residential, can hardly be considered other than a paltry 'commercial core'. However, it may well have been adequate considering the peculiar nature of Thai trade.

By way of introduction to his study of the economy of Thailand during the past century, Ingram considers the economy in 1850 and remarks that

Siam appears to have occupied the position of an entrepôt for the trade of the South China Sea. Goods were collected and shipped to Bangkok from the Malay Peninsula, India, Cambodia, Manila, and other near-by places, after which they were shipped out again to China and Japan. Similarly, goods from China and Japan were brought to Bangkok and then distributed to other countries . . . We can only conjecture about why and how Siam came to fill this role. The sailing range of the junks may have had something to do with it, and so might the attitude or the Chinese toward foreign trade. In any case, the picture of Bangkok as an entrepôt—even in a minor way—offers a startling contrast to her later passive role in foreign trade.<sup>96</sup>

If Bangkok's role as an entrepôt in the mid-19th century causes surprise, that Ayutthaya previously performed this function—even in a minor way—must verge on the inconceivable. But Ayutthaya's reputation as an 'emporium of the East' (however ill-deserved) rests largely upon her role as a focus for the trans-shipment of goods between Europe/India and China/Japan during the fairly frequent and relatively prolonged peaceful interludes of the 16th and 17th centuries; further, this function appears to have been fulfilled, albeit in a minor way and intermittently, from the very inception of this capital which, of course, was coincident with the abandonment of overland routes following the deterioration of Mongol power. The nature of the Chinese junk traffic appears a major factor in the development of the Ayutthaya entrepôt; the continued importance of

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96. Ingram, J.C., *Economic Change in Thailand Since 1850*, 1955, p. 26.

this traffic at mid-19th century must confirm Ingram's conjecture regarding Bangkok's fulfillment of this same role.

Long before Ayutthaya assumed control over the basin of the Chao Phraya and adjacent territories, routeways had been developed across the isthmian portion of the Malay Peninsula which conveniently reduced the tedious, often dangerous, voyage through the Straits of Malacca. In attempting to reconcile Ptolemy's 'Takola' with a place 'in the neighbourhood of the present Ranōng', Gerini<sup>97</sup> first 'fairly well proves' that 'Takola' was a mart and seaport 'from the very beginning of the Christian Era', and then quotes Chinese chronicles of the Wu dynasty which record the passage of an embassy from Funan to India between A.D.240 and 245 across the peninsula remarking that

It would then seem but natural that the embassy...instead of taking the long sea-route round the southern extremity of the peninsula, should proceed.....to C'hump'hōn, and thence across the Kra Isthmus to the mouth of the Pāk-chān, to embark at the famous port of Takola on its journey to India. This is no doubt the usual route...anciently followed by a great part of the trade between India and the Gulf of Siam, in order to avoid the difficulty and dangers of a long sea navigation through the Straits.<sup>98</sup>

More recently 'Takōla' has been linked with 'Tung Tūk...a small island or high sand bank situated at the mouth of the Takuapa river...(which) was probably in the early years of the Christian era a part of the mainland'.<sup>99</sup> Wheatley,<sup>100</sup> however, considers that archaeological evidence 'prohibits the identification of any particular site as that of *Takola*', noting, in passing, that 'Dr Wales's claim to have discovered archaeological confirmation that *Takola* was situated on a small island

97. 'Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia', *Asiatic Society Monographs.*, vol. 1, 1909, pp. 83-94.

98. *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.

99. Giles, F.H., 'Remarks on the Land Routes across the Malaya Peninsula', *The Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. 28, part 1, 1935, pp. 79-80; see also Scott's letter to Giles on pp. 82-3.

100. *The Golden Khersonese, op. cit.*, p. 272.

off the mouth of the Takuapa River<sup>101</sup> seems to be better known than his subsequent retraction of this opinion<sup>102</sup> - hardly surprising, in that the former are rather lengthy and convincingly well-written, while the latter is but a short unobtrusive note occasioned by the researches of Sir Roland Braddell.<sup>103</sup> In fact, Wheatley holds all argument proposing 'this or that particular site' to be 'conjectural and almost certainly illusory'; concluding finally (as did Braddell earlier) that 'The most we can say is that *Tokola* was a port on the north-west coast of the Malay Peninsula and, on the Ptolemaic evidence, was probably in the neighbourhood of Trang',<sup>104</sup> The implications of 'Ptolemaic evidence' being particularly responsive to the theories of the investigator, convincing argument would appear dependent upon more tangible evidence. Either Wheatley is unaware of Scott's intriguing information and the argument stemming therefrom as elaborated by Giles or he has dismissed, without comment, what appears to be a most remarkable deposition. However, he allows as 'extremely possible' a crossing of the Peninsula 'at one point or another' by Chinese ambassadors during the reign of Wu-ti, 140-87 B.C.,<sup>105</sup> illustrates his own conjecture as to where this passage was made,<sup>106</sup> and believes that there 'is some guarantee that the trans-peninsula route was known and used before the fourth century'<sup>107</sup> by trading junks, which were certainly taking regular advantage of isthmian by-ways during the 7th century.<sup>108</sup> Were documentary support lacking, however, early use of these routeways could be reasonably assumed both from their well-established use in the 16th century. Anderson<sup>109</sup> in describing d'Albuquerque's second delegation to Ayutthaya c.1512, notes that

101. See Quaritch Wales, H.G., 'A Newly-Explored Route of Ancient Indian Cultural Expansion', *Indian Arts and Letters*, vol. 9, no. 1, 1935, pp. 1-35 and *Towards Angkor*, 1937.

102. See Quaritch Wales, H.G., 'A Note on *Takola*, *Langkasuka* and *Kataha*', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 23, pt. 1, 1950, pp. 152-3.

103. See 'Notes on Ancient Times in Malaya', *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 22, pt. 1, 1949, pp. 1-7.

104. *The Golden Khersonese op. cit.*, p. 272.

105. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

106. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

107. *Ibid.*, p. 288.

108. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-21 and figure 47.

109. *op. cit.*, p. 26.

They proceeded by sea in the first instance to Taranque, and thence by land with horses and draught-oxen to the city of Siao (Ayutthaya), and on their return they reported that the peninsula was very narrow on that side where the Chinese make their navigation, and that from thence it was only ten days' journey to the coast of Tenasserim, Trang, and Tavoy.

Nunn<sup>110</sup> asserts that

The records of (early 16th century) traffic, through Tenasserim, between Siam and the West, extending as far as Bengal and Cape Guardafui, are fairly full; and it is certain that the Portuguese were not long in making use of their establishment at Malacca to take their share in the trade

- a view which is confirmed by de Campos<sup>111</sup> and Anderson.<sup>112</sup> A comprehensive description of the various trans-peninsular routes through the Tenasserim region is given by Smyth.<sup>113</sup> Briefly, from Mergui the main route went through the town of Tenasserim and then northwards up the Great Tenasserim River to a place now 'lost' called 'Jelinga' (or some near-sounding variant) crossed the watershed shortly thereafter and then fanned out to lead to several small ports along the eastern littoral from Phet Buri in the north to 'Cham' or 'Xam' (Prachuap Khiri Khan?) in the south; the journey to Ayutthaya being completed in small boats. A seldom used overland route also led from Tenasserim to the capital.<sup>114</sup> A less-frequented route followed the Little Tenasserim River from Tenasserim to the southeast where the low pass of Kao Maun gave ready access to the east at about 11°50'N, (the position of the present harbour of Kaw Lek). If the River were followed yet further southwards, relatively easy crossings could be made to Bangtaphan or Chumphon, the latter being also the eastern terminus of a short route from Kra Buri across the narrow

110. *Op. cit.*, p. 210.

111. *Op. cit.*, p. 232.

112. *Op. cit.*, pp. 5-42.

113. *Five years in Siam*, vol. 2, 1898, pp. 47-52.

114. See Tavernier, J.B., *Tavernier's Travels in India*, tr. from French ed. of 1676, vol. 2, 1889, p. 286.



waist of the Isthmus. Further south, on the authority of Giles<sup>115</sup> rather than Gerini,<sup>116</sup> an anciently important route led from Tung Tük (near the present Takuapa) up the Takuapa River, across a watershed of but a few miles and down the Laung River to Chaiya or Bandon. Chaiya was also eastern terminus of a route from 'Pun-pin' opposite the island of Phuket, while further southward along the Peninsula tracks led from Trang to Nakhon Si Thammarat and from Kedah to Songkhla or Pattani, and a number of important passages crossed the wider Malayan area.<sup>117</sup> Martaban, the terminus of several important overland routes from the north, apparently also received cargoes from Ayutthaya destined for points at the head of the Bay of Bengal via the Three Pagodas Pass.<sup>118</sup>

Further a return trip from a port in southern China to, say, the Coromandel Coast, via the South China Sea and the Bay of Bengal, could not possibly occupy much less than the full year, leaving little or no time for even a most efficient transfer of cargoes and a necessary overhaul before the waning of the northeast monsoon. But, in fact, the Chinese 'navigator' much preferred an interminable coasting round mainland Southeast Asia to the relatively short out-of-sight-of-land voyage, and junks were manned, not by 'efficient' seamen, but by so many independent entrepreneurs engaged in multifarious time-consuming 'deals'. The year was fully employed in gaining the Peninsula's east coast.<sup>119</sup> Consolidation of the Ayutthayan kingdom, which late in the 16th century included the entire isthmian portion of the Peninsula, would not only provide conditions favourable to trade but would naturally induce much trans-peninsular traffic to forsake more southerly crossings in favour of those convenient to the capital and

115. *Op. cit.*, p. 81.

116. "Researches on Ptolemy's Geography" *op. cit.*, p. 91.

117. See Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

118. See Collis, *The Grand Peregrination op. cit.*, p. 166. Wheatley provides an illustrative catalogue of the main trans-peninsula routes in *The Golden Khersonese, op. cit.*, p. xxvi.

119. Gutzlaff (as quoted by Bowring, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 246-52) provides a most detailed, yet interesting, account of the more intimate features of the Chinese junk traffic.

encourage junks bound for southern ports, like Pattani, to take advantage of trading possibilities at Ayutthaya by a simple detour along the twisting Chao Phraya. Whatever effect the royal trading monopolies (introduced during the reign of King Prasat T'ong, 1630-55) had upon the level of trade, that certain commodities, for example, tin, had to be deposited in the king's storehouses at Ayutthaya prior to export<sup>120</sup> no doubt further 'encouraged' the re-routeing of traffic to the capital.

It was to tap the China trade that the Dutch, and the English after them, first set up factors in Ayutthaya early in the 17th century. Furnival's 'The English, like the Dutch before them, were tempted to explore the Irrawaddy route to China, but found it unattractive. The main interest of both English and French was in Siam, where they could hope to cut into the China trade and could join forces with the native pirates and smugglers of spices',<sup>121</sup> while unconcerned with nicety of fact—presumably in the interest of brevity—yet contains a germ of truth. Blankwaardt after what appears to have been an exhaustive survey of Dutch/Siamese relations, notes that, in 1603, the Dutch were 'well established in Patani, which was considered . . . the "Door for China and Japan", and they were thinking of making it their "general rendez-vous". It was known however that the King of Siam . . . was doing a lively trade with China and principally with the object of getting in touch with that country, we find in 1603, the Manager of Pattani . . . on a tour of investigation in Ayuthia, and the next year Admiral van Warwyck himself went there to seek the King's assistance'.<sup>122</sup> The Minutes of the Dutch East India Company for the 5th September 1609 provide the record of a resolution 'by the Lords Seventeen that this fleet shall embark the Embassy from the King of Siam . . . to the end that a trade may be fostered with China through the favour of the King of Siam'.<sup>123</sup>

120. See Skinner, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

121. Furnival [sic? I, J.S.], 'The Tropical Far East and World History', *The Journal of the Siam Society*, vol. 39, part 2, 1952, p. 142.

122. Blankwaardt, W., 'Notes on the Relations Between Holland and Siam', *Selected Articles from the Siam Society Journal*, vol. 7, Relationship with Portugal, Holland, and the Vatican, 1959, pp. 17-18.

123. As quoted by Hutchinson, *Adventurers in Siam in the Seventeenth Century*, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

The English having followed the Dutch to Pattani, where 'The traffique... yeildeth no special Matters of it selfe, but is all brought in from other places and because of the scituation of the place there is great shipping for diuers places, whereby much marchandize is brought hither, especiallye of China wares...' were not slow in following on to Ayutthaya where 'there might bee hope to gett footing in China, because of the amitie, it is betweene China and Siam...' <sup>124</sup> The French, as Hutchinson maintains <sup>125</sup> appear to have been most concerned with linking up the trade of Siam, chiefly saltpetre and pepper, with that of France and the Madras coast, but that they were cognizant of the 'China trade' is evident from remarks contained in a manuscript of 1686 entitled 'Observations on Trade for the instruction of King's Envoys to the King of Siam': 'it would be possible to draw thereto [Songkhla and Ligor] all the traders of China, Japan, Borneo and Tongking, also the Moors, and to trade in freedom from those same ports to China and Japan by means of two or three ships with greater ease than from (the city of) Siam'. <sup>126</sup>

Though the inadequate profit to be derived therefrom, and from any other trade for that matter, soon became all too obvious, the Dutch East India Company by maintaining a factory here (not without difficulties which, in several instances, necessitated brief withdrawals) assured Batavia's rice supply; and the English Company, seemingly honour-bound, reoccupied its cantonment repeatedly despite financial loss. <sup>127</sup> Initially both Agencies were located near

124. Maxwell, W.G., 'A Letter of Instructions from the East Indian Company to its Agent, circ. 1614', *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, number 54, Jan. 1910, pp. 81 and 84.

125. See 'Four French State Manuscripts', *Selected Articles from the Siam Society Journal*, vol. 8, p. 102.

126. *Ibid.*, pp. 149-56.

127. Though, to be sure, profit motivated both companies—their activities to this end having been chronicled in studies by Anderson (*op. cit.*) Blankwaardt (*op. cit.*) Collis (*Siamese White, op. cit.*) and Hutchinson (*Adventurers in Siam in the Seventeenth Century, op. cit.*) — the Dutch maintained throughout, as had Joost Schouten (*op. cit.*, p. 151) the Dutch Company's manager during the 1630's, that 'the Company indeed hath not profited much, by reason of several misfortunes by this traffic', enthusing instead, as Joost had, that they had 'gained more reputation than any Europeans besides, by the great friendship and correspondence which is betwixt them and the King; and also have had the benefit of transporting great quantities of all sorts of provisions in Batamia...' When, early in the 18th century, losses were such that the Company's directors repeatedly

one another within the walls of the city, but in 1633 the Dutch negotiated a favourable, if short-term, trading contract which included rights to 'a conveniently situated piece of land . . . with a . . . frontage of some 300 feet'<sup>128</sup> along the eastern bank of the Chao Phraya immediately to the south; and about 1678, after at least two unsuccessful appeals for a new 'factory'—one to Surat in 1661 and another to Bantam in 1678<sup>129</sup>—the English Company's factor at Ayutthaya seems to have accepted the king's generous offer of a conveniently located cantonment and the use of a large warehouse.<sup>130</sup> Certainly there appears no substantive evidence for the suggested expulsion from the enwalled area of either of these agencies or Europeans generally,<sup>131</sup> though such a policy may be logically inferred in that the lands proffered the English and Dutch were well under the guns commanding the southern approaches to the city,<sup>132</sup> and the earlier grant was made soon after the expulsion of the Japanese.<sup>133</sup>

urged withdrawal, Batazia replied 'that they were dependent upon rice from Siam; and that once left, other nations . . . [ might ] make it impossible . . . to get a footing again' (Blankwardt, *op. cit.*, p. 28). The English, reviewing their sporadic activities during the 17th century, concluded that 'Siam never did nor will bring the Company two pence advantage, but many thousands of pounds loss' (letter from London to Madras dated 18th February, 1691 quoted by Hutchinson, *Adventurers in Siam in the Seventeenth Century*, *op. cit.*, p. 190). This fact having been evident from the outset, would seemingly have been sufficient to deter further 'adventures' had it not been that 'the withdrawal of a factory, be it from ever so mean a place, discredits our Honourable Masters and eclipseth their trade in those parts, while our neighbours the Dutch, enemies in trade rejoice thereat, and do always make use of our dishonour to their own advantage' (decision taken by the Bantam Agency c. 1680, quoted by Blankwardt, *op. cit.*, p. 29).

128. Blankwardt, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

129. See Anderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 92 and 147.

130. *Ibid.*, p. 174. The suggested occupancy of this position at an earlier date (see Hutchinson, *Adventurers in Siam in the Seventeenth Century*, *op. cit.*, p. 29) appears erroneous.

131. See de Voogd, *op. cit.* Moreover, Skinner (*op. cit.*, p. 13) notes that 'before 1688 the French, English, and Dutch . . . had a few scattered residences in the city proper', while the French East India Company's agency, as noted previously, was situated within the walls.

132. On at least one occasion (in 1639 during the reign of King Prasat T'ong), Dutch activity provoked destruction of their factory by these guns (see Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 182).

133. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

The Chinese position, while less exposed than that of her European and Asiatic rivals, was not without insecurity, particularly during the earlier decades of the 17th century. However, they were not only favored in the conduct of foreign trade by the 'general course of events... [in which] the Portuguese, Japanese, English, French and Dutch, each in turn... was forced to quit',<sup>134</sup> but, together with a few 'Moors' they constituted the small corps of domestic traders and shopkeepers—apparently the only 'sizable' foreign element, housed within the walls of Ayutthaya. Skinner considers the Moorish and Chinese settlements within the walls to have been 'extensive'.<sup>135</sup> His assumptions concerning the Chinese element, despite the absence of documentary support, are positively stated: 'The bulk of Chinese immigrants were certainly anonymous Chinese traders'<sup>136</sup> and 'The bulk of the Ayutthaya Chinese community was, of course, made up of merchants and traders, but other occupations were represented as well'.<sup>137</sup> 'Other occupations' included artisans of various types, pig-breeders, actors, (several troupes being employed), scholar-officials, physicians and 'probably' vegetable gardeners but, '*Whether there were any manual labourers is unknown*'<sup>138</sup> (my italics). Earlier, Skinner takes pains to show that la Loubère (whom together with van Vliet, he considers 'the most accurate of the visitors') was referring to Ayutthaya when estimating the Chinese 'at Siam' at some three or four thousand.<sup>139</sup> Now, lacking definite assurance that most Chinese were traders, it appears that they were not, for the trading community seems to have been more modest than even the 'bulk' of several thousand celestials; and, lacking definite information concerning the number of non-trading Chinese within the walls, it appears as if 'three or four thousand' would be easily accommodated within the large exterior cantonments allotted them both south and east of the city (see figures 4, 5).

Allotting specific exterior cantonments to the more populous national groups—Cochinchinese, Japanese, Macassars, Malays, Pe-

134. Skinner, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

135. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

136. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

137. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

138. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

139. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

guans and Portuguese, for example (see figure 4), implies an awareness of their potential danger to the crown, but that there appear to have been no extensive foreign sections within the walls may possibly have resulted simply from a lack of usable space. For much of the site was occupied or pre-empted for the more than 'five hundred pagodas', while a large portion of the remainder was either perennially submerged or swampy (the result of natural conditions aided by the practice of 'borrowing' mud from one place to build up another); circumstances which would appear sufficient explanation for the absence of extensive native settlement as well.

Certainly late-17th century Ayutthaya evidenced accord with Buddhist cosmological concepts and canons regarding the delimiting of sacred space from the profane: the wats, each more or less oriented to the cardinal points and surrounded by a wall of sorts within which the 'bot' is centred, picketed by eight 'semas' and in many instances, built atop a terrace and surrounded by a low inner wall (see figure 9);<sup>140</sup> the Grand Palace, a carefully ordered enwalled area, subdivided by 'partitions' trending strictly north/south or east/west, each 'cell' containing structures similarly aligned and, if of especial importance, facing east (see figure 8); the city itself, encircled by a massive battlemented wall,<sup>141</sup> crossed by cardinally

140. For an analytical description of the Thai wat, see Silpa Bhirasri's informative pamphlet: 'Thai Buddhist Art (Architecture)', *Thai Culture*, New Series No. 4, B.E. 2502 (1959).

141. Though the number of gates shown on late-17th century plans and views (see figures 2-7) varies considerably, the most accurate plans, those of the 'French Engineer' and Kaempfer, indicate more than do the others - twenty and seventeen respectively. The latter figure is that recorded by van Vliet (*op. cit.*, p. 19) in 1634 when the 'King renewed them all . . .' According to the 'Topographic Description of Krung Sri Ayutthaya' (Damrong-see Phya Boranrajadhanin' *op. cit.*, p. - on admittedly slender evidence, tentatively credits this work to King Narai, A.D. 1657-88) which is reproduced in and forms the basis for Phya Boranrajadhanin's study (*ibid.*, pp. 115-88) there were no less than 23 large gates (i.e. gates that rose above the parapet) and 61 small gates (i.e. gates that did not rise above the parapet) or 84 in all (*ibid.*, pp. 119-23). According to Seidenfaden (*Short Guide to Ayudhya*, 1939, p. 3) the wall built during the reign of King Maha Chakraphat (1549-69) had 36 gates. There appears no ready connection between any of these numbers and one of cosmological significance, but the network of major streets and canals in that portion of the city initially enwalled (see figures 2-7) allows a conjectural twelve—the number generally prescribed.

directed main streets and canals, and centred by a large royal wat (see figures 2-7). However, Wat Phra Ram, approximately in the centre of the capital in the late-17th century, was not begun until 1369.<sup>142</sup> It appears that, as has been suggested, the palace initially occupied the centre in accordance with Hinayanistic principles, but, when a more substantial structure was raised immediately to the north (about a hundred years later) the area of the original royal residence, being consecrated ground, was given over to Wat Phra Sri Sanphet. Thus, in effect, the lay-out of the capital conformed to Mahayana precept (not surprising in that the court was responsive to Brahmanical doctrine) from about the mid-fifteenth century onwards for when the wall was moved eastward in 1580, Wat Phra Ram maintained the illusion as it happened to occupy a position approximately coincident with the new centre.

A.B. Griswold, now preparing an exhaustive survey of all that is known about archaeological sites in Thailand, has, in conversation, stated his belief in the purposeful centralization of Wat Phra Ram; pointing out that a portion of the canal system shown on Phya Boranrajadhanin's 'Map of Ayutthaya'<sup>143</sup> clearly outlines a near-perfect square centred on this temple. Allowing this map as incontestable (though, obviously, M.L. de Lajonquière's<sup>144</sup> criticism of woeful incompleteness and illusory precision based upon much conjecture is warranted) and disregarding the prior erection of the palace, one is yet at a loss to attempt to explain the possible significance of a central location within this square, as it is coincident neither with the walls of the palace, nor, seemingly, with any prior position of the outer enceinte. Griswold, realising this, is forced to assume that the walls of the city once lay along the inner margins of these waterways, and, further, to interpret the movement of the wall in 1580 as one which affected not only the eastern side but the entire perimeter. The former conjecture has no tangible basis whatever; the latter necessitates the unreasonable generalization of a specific allusion.

142. See Frankfurter, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

143. *Op. cit.*, fold-out to rear.

144. 'Essai D'Inventaire Archeologique Du Siam,' *Bulletin de la Commission Archeologique de l'Indochine*, 1912, p. 43.

Further, allowing earlier conjecture concerning the initial lay-out of the city, if Ayutthaya's sacred plan—its simulation of a celestial archetype—went unrecognised by contemporary foreign observers, numerous wats and the ubiquitous talapoin<sup>145</sup> could admit of hardly a doubt as to the capital's sanctity. Obvious variation from the ideal—discrepancies between a capital as conceived in Buddhist doctrine and the Thai capital—appear to have evolved more from the rationalizing of prior geomantic decisions, in consequence of site peculiarities and the changing milieu, than from any gross inability to confirm these principles or indifference. Yet, even Ayutthaya's carefully poised 'yin-yang' was shaken by a stubborn Burmese investment, maintained, despite flood periods, for nearly two years, and finally, during the night of the 7th of April 1767 the capital was taken.<sup>146</sup> But

In the midst of their enjoyment in celebration of the conquest . . . the commander-in-chief Nemyo Thihapate . . . [informed] his officers that news had been received that the Chinese Emperor had sent a vast army . . . to invade Burma; and that their

145. Schouten (*op. cit.*, pp. 135 and 140) some fifty years earlier, in the early 1630's, estimated the number of temples in Ayutthaya at 'more than three hundred' and the clergy at 'at least thirty thousand' (De Mandelsloë concurs, see *op. cit.*, p. 782); while Hamilton (*A New Account of the East Indies*, vol. 2, 1930, p. 88) at Ayutthaya in 1719, reckoned that there were 'no less than fifty thousand Clergymen . . . in and about the City . . .'

146. During the troubled three quarters of a century previous, that is, following the Phaulcon fiasco late in the 17th century, European contact with Thailand was reduced to insignificance—only the Dutch kept up even the semblance of an Ayutthayan agency and that at irregular intervals. (For a description of this period see Wood, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-50). The Chinese, however, apparently maintained, if not actually improved their position (see Skinner, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-20), doubtless gaining from decreased trading competition what was lost through unsettled conditions. But for Captain Hamilton's description of Ayutthaya in 1719 (*op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 85-104) which substantiates the commentary of thirty years before and Turpin's account ('History of Siam' tr. from the Paris ed. of 1771 in Pinkerton, J., *A General Collection of the Best and Most Interesting Voyages and Travels in all Parts of the World*, 1811, vol. 9, pp. 575-78) which describes Ayutthaya immediately before the Burmese sack as 'composed of wretched cabins, built without taste or convenience' and 'not equal to a quarter of London or Paris' (*ibid.*, p. 578), first-hand description would appear to be entirely lacking—though to judge from Turpin's account Ayutthaya remained unchanged during this period.



brother generals and officers at the capital were distinguishing themselves and winning royal favour by successfully repelling the invasion . . . He added that as they had most successfully accomplished their mission by the capture of the Siamese capital . . . it behoved them to return as quickly as possible, after demolishing the city, moats, and all defensive and offensive works, as commanded by their Sovereign, so that they might be in time to take part in the fighting against the Chinese and share the honours of war in that field also.<sup>147</sup>

Barely two months later the Burmese army had withdrawn.<sup>148</sup> Admittedly, in their haste it is probable that 'The victors behaved like Vandals'.<sup>149</sup> To ascribe their actions to a 'sacrilegious lust for destruction'<sup>150</sup> or the 'blind rage of . . . barbarians'<sup>151</sup> or even to suggest that 'They were naturally enraged by the relentless resistance which the T'ais had shown'<sup>152</sup> nevertheless appears unwarranted. Perhaps more destructive and denudative was authorized (and, of course, unauthorized) 'treasure-farming' after the Burmese withdrawal and the wholesale removal of bricks and other building materials to the new citadel at Bangkok.<sup>153</sup> Obviously much booty had gone undiscovered by the Burmese, for treasure-farming operated on a grand scale for at least fifteen years,<sup>154</sup> and though the defensive

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147. Luang Phraison Salarak, 'Intercourse Between Burma and Siam as Recorded in Hmannan Yazawindawgyi', *Selected Articles from the Siam Society Journal*, vol. 6, Relationship with Burma—Part 2, 1959, pp. 51-2. A detailed account of the siege is contained in this translation of the Burmese Annals, see pp. 29-55.

148. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

149. Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

150. *Ibid.*

151. Turpin, *op. cit.*, p. 652.

152. Chakrabongse, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

153. See Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 273, Phya Boranrajadhanin, *op. cit.*, p. 105 and Tri Amatyakul, *The Thai Guide Book: Ayudhya*, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11 or *Guide to Ayudhya and Bang-Pa-In*, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

154. See Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 270 and Tri Amatyakul, *The Thai Guide Book: Ayudhya*, *op. cit.*, p. 10 or *Guide to Ayudhya and Bang-Pa-In* *op. cit.*, p. 12. But that there is good in all things is certain, for Skinner (*op. cit.*, p. 21) notes that 'According to a French Catholic missionary in Siam at the time, the rapid rehabilitation of the Siamese economy . . . was made possible by the local Chinese, who 'In 1768-1769 . . . went through the ruins with a fine-toothed comb and recovered uncounted treasures from the debris and interiors of pagodas'—assuming, of course, that these pagodas were recognizably ruined.

works had been dismantled and the city fired apparently much remained usable. Further, in that it appears a substantial number of people—perhaps as many as 100,000 families—were ‘allowed or induced to ransom themselves’<sup>155</sup> among them the ‘many members of the Royal Family’<sup>156</sup> whom Phya Tak found at Ayutthaya when he ‘liberated’ it but six months later, the city may well have been depopulated more as a result of the decision to relocate the capital than from losses suffered during siege and removals effected by the Burmese.

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155. Luang Phraison Salarak, *op. cit.*, p. 53. The Burmese historians’ figure for the number of families removed—106,100—is contested ‘because even calculating the modest average of three persons to a family, the number . . . taken away would amount to 318,300 souls’; an incredible figure, particularly in that the Siamese version contends that ‘about 200,000 Siamese died during the two years’ invasion . . . including those killed . . . and those who died of disease and starvations’, so that ‘there could not possibly have been a very large population left in the city’. Further, ‘The Siamese history admits that about 30,000 prisoners of war . . . were taken away, which figure is more reasonable . . .’ (*ibid.*, pp. 52-3). However agreeable this argument appears, during times of siege the surrounding population and armies raised in other parts of the kingdom were gathered in and immediately around the capital, so that an abnormally large number of people would have been at Ayutthaya. How ‘abnormally large’, is, of course, not known, but in that Burmese historians’ total is based upon the apportioning of prisoners to each man according to rank, it is quite conceivable that the number of Thai was fairly substantial. It seems probable, however, that most prisoners of war substituted valuables in their stead. Considering the problems involved in transporting several hundred thousand half-starved men, women and children (particularly when withdrawing rapidly), self-ransoming would appear as attractive to the conquerors as to the conquered. Tentatively crediting both the Burmese and the Siamese sources then (since the degree to which the Burmese figure is exaggerated cannot be gauged by the Siamese figure, itself a suspected minimum) about 100,000 families would have remained in and around Ayutthaya, though a considerable portion of these may have dispersed shortly thereafter.

156. Wood, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

