

SECTION IV

AYUDHYA ARCHITECTURE

I U D E A

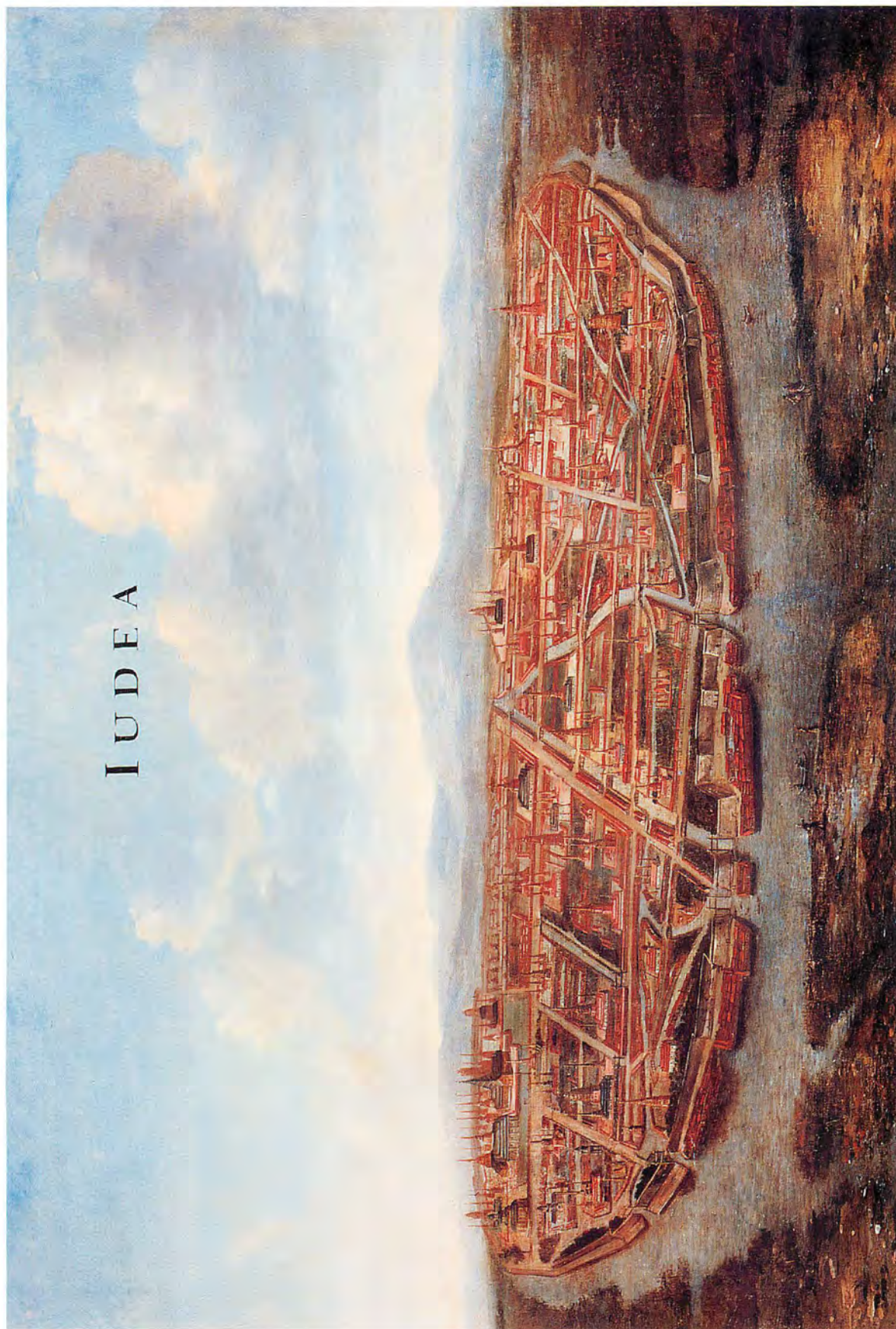


Fig. 5 "Iudea," Anonymous Dutch School, c. 1650, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

A REVISED DATING OF AYUDHYA ARCHITECTURE

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At the beginning of the essay on "The History of Siam before the Founding of Ayudhya," which is included in his introduction to the *Royal Autograph Recension of the Annals of Ayudhya* published in 1914, Prince Damrong Rajanubhab wrote:

"The books composed by the old writers sometimes contain stories of too miraculous a kind to be believed at the present day; and sometimes different accounts of the same event are so contradictory that the reader must decide for himself which of them is right. In the following compilation, therefore, there is much that is conjecture on my part; and as conjecture may lead to error, the reader should use his own powers of discrimination when reading it."¹

This writer agrees with the late Mr. Alexander B. Griswold in his introduction to the Second Edition of the English translation of Prince Damrong's *Tamnan Phuttha Chedi Sayam* (*Monuments of the Buddha in Sayam*), when he wrote:

"I take this passage to be Prince Damrong's general advice to future scholars not to regard his conclusions as the final word, but to conduct investigations of their own. For a long time the advice went largely unheeded in Siam: his prestige as a writer was such that many scholars were content to repeat what he had said, as if no further research could possibly add anything useful to it. In more recent years, however, scholars have begun to realize that a better way to show their respect for his memory is to carry on his work, modifying his working hypotheses when necessary, and searching for further information."²

The aim of this paper is to propose a new dating for Ayudhya architecture which, it is hoped, will replace the existing chronology formulated by Prince Damrong in his *Tamnan Phuttha Chedi Sayam* (*Chronicle of the Monuments of the Buddha in Siam*), published in 1926.³ That hypothesis should now be modified on account of misconceptions in its basic methodology which modern research can point out and rectify, so that art historical studies can proceed afresh after having been influenced by the hypothesis for sixty-six years.

The methodology used in *Tamnan Phuttha Chedi Sayam* is based on the correlation between existing monuments and those mentioned in the *Phra Ratcha Phongsawadan* (*Royal Chronicle*).

It presupposes that the monuments we see today have remained unchanged since the days they were built and that their names correspond to those mentioned in the chronicles.

Furthermore, it relies on the truthfulness of the royal chronicles without having made a thorough comparison with foreign sources to verify them. Thus, the hypothesis assumes that the monuments existing today were built when the royal chronicles say they were.

These methodological approaches were not challenged by Professor George Coedès, who was Prince Damrong's research assistant. So great is Prince Damrong's prestige that no one has questioned the validity of his hypothesis. For had the question been raised, his assumptions would have been found untenable because they are based on premises that lack valid foundation, and the hypothesis would not have been supported.

It will be shown through comparing the monuments with their illustrations in 17th and 18th century paintings, maps and charts, as well as with descriptions by foreign travellers, that the monuments we see today do not correspond with their depictions. Also, the statements in the royal chronicles regarding their founding are contradicted by contemporary Western accounts, which, when cross checked with 17th and 18th century maps, make it obvious that the royal chronicles are usually unreliable.

Prince Damrong's hypothesis for the chronology of Ayudhya architecture as put forth in *Monuments of the Buddha in Siam* is summarized as follows:⁴

*This article is partially based on a paper entitled "Silpakam samai Ayudhya thon plai: miti mai thang kansuksa (Art of the late Ayudhya period: a new direction in research)" presented to the Historical Society Under the Royal Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn at its meeting at Ayudhya on August 13, 1992.

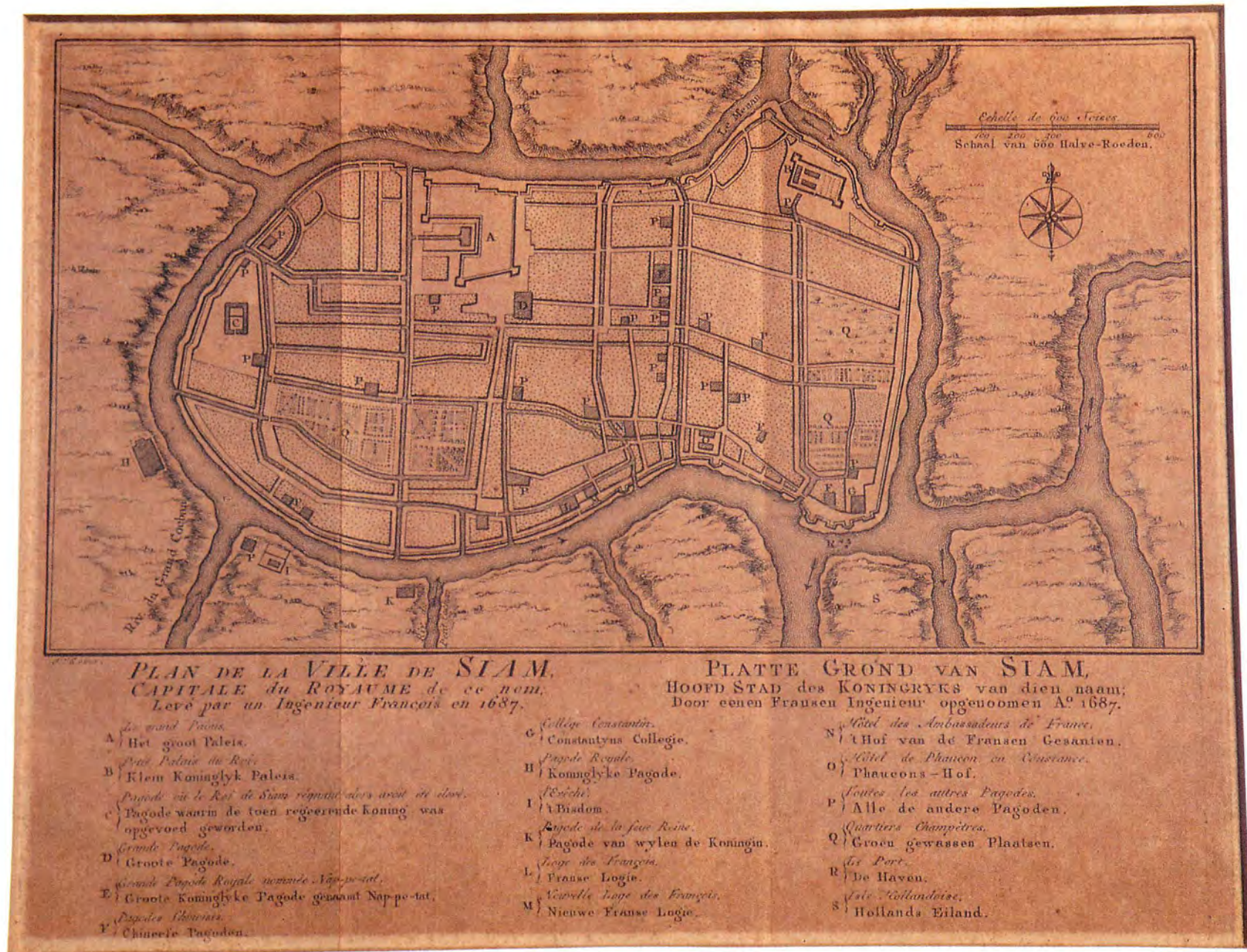


Fig. 1 "Plan de la Ville de Siam, Capitale du Royaume de ce nom levé par un Ingénieur François en 1687." Collection of the Siam Society.

First sub-period.—From the founding of Ayudhya by the Prince of U Thong in 1350 to the end of King Borommatrailokanat's reign in 1488.

The principal monuments at Ayudhya from this period are Wat Phutthai Sawan, built by Prince U Thong (King Ramathibodhi, 1351-1369); Wat Mahathat, built by King Borommaracha I (1370-1388) and King Ramesuan (second reign, 1388-1395); Wat Ratchaburana, built by King Borommaracha II (1424-1448); and Wat Phra Ram, built by King Borommatrailokanat (1448-1488).

These are built in the form of Lop Buri period *prangs*.

Second sub-period.—From King Borommatrailokanat's moving his capital to Phitsanulok in 1463 to the death of King Song Tham (1628).

The monuments are the great stupas enshrining the ashes of King Borommatrailokanat and King Borommaracha III (1463-1488) as well as the colossal gold-plated bronze image of the Buddha called Phra Si Sanphet at Wat Phra Si Sanphet, all built by King Ramathibodi II (1491-1529), and the *chedi* commemorating the victory of King Naresuan (1590-1605) in an elephant duel with the Crown Prince of Hamsavati, copied after the victory *chedi* of King Dutthagamani of Sri Lanka.

The principal monuments built during this period are Sinhalese-style stupas instead of *prangs*.

Third sub-period.—From the accession of King Prasat Thong (1629) to the death of King Thai Sa (1773).

The principal monuments are Wat Chai Watthanaram, the *chedis* at Wat Chumphon Nikayaram and the Prasat Nakhon Luang built by King Prasat Thong (1629-1656).

This sub-period saw the revival of Khmer style in celebration of King Prasat Thong's reconquest of Cambodia. No more large monuments were built by later kings at Ayudhya, not even by King Narai (1656-1688).

Fourth sub-period.—From the accession of King Borommakot (1733) to the fall of Ayudhya (1767).

Although King Borommakot built Wat Kutti Dao, he preferred to restore old buildings. His restorations were faithful to the original style.

As can be seen from the above summary, Prince Damrong relies heavily on the *Royal Chronicles of Ayudhya* for his dating of the monuments. The royal chronicles then available to him are as follows :

The "*Luang Prasaoet version*,"⁵ according to its own exordium, is the earliest, for it is said to have been compiled by the command of King Narai in 1680. It was discovered at Phetchaburi in 1907. However, as it will be shown here, at least two incidents mentioned in the "*Luang Prasaoet version*" show that the compiler was out of touch with contemporary thinking regarding these particular events, which we know from the accounts of 17th century Western visitors to Ayudhya.

With the possible exception of the "*Luang Prasaoet version*," other nonfragmentary versions of the Ayudhya chronicles were written in the Bangkok period. The earliest,

according to their exordia, are the "*British Museum version*," or the *Phraratcha phongsawadan Krung Sayam*, and the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*." The latter is said to have been written by the command of King Rama I in 1795. Since the former was discovered in London in 1958, it would not have been available to Prince Damrong. The "*British Museum version*" is believed to have been the original work, while the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*" is a correction of it.⁶

The *Phraratcha phongsawadan Krung Si Ayudhya* or the *Two-volume printed edition (chabap phim 2 lem)* or the "*Dr. Bradley version*," or the "*Somdet Phra Phonnarat version*,"⁷ is known by all of these names, since it was first published in two volumes under the auspices of King Mongkut in the printing press of Dr. Dan Beach Bradley in 1865.⁸ Formerly it was erroneously attributed to Krom Somdet Phra Paramanuchit (1790-1853). However, this work is a recension of the "*British Museum version*" compiled in the reigns of King Rama III (1824-1851) and King Mongkut (1851-1868).

The *Culayuddhakāravamsa*⁹ is a Pāli work written by Somdet Phra Phonnarat of Wat Phra Chetuphon (1735-1814).

The *Saṅgitiyavamsa*¹⁰ is another Pāli work compiled by Somdet Phra Phonnarat of Wat Phra Chetuphon in 1789.

The *Abridged Royal Chronicle of Ayudhya* is an abridgement of the "*British Museum version*," compiled by Krom Somdet Phra Paramanuchit at the command of King Rama III in 1840.¹¹

The "*Chakraphatphong (Chad) version*"¹² is a recension of the "*Somdet Phra Phonnarat version*." It was discovered in 1908.

The "*Royal autograph version*"¹³ of King Mongkut (1851-1868) is a correction of the "*British Museum version*" by King Mongkut in his own handwriting. This version was completed by Prince Damrong Rajanubhab.

The "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*" will be referred to in this paper as it is the earliest version known to the writer of the *Tamnan Phuttha Chedi Sayam*.

However, the earliest history of Ayudhya yet discovered is the *Short History of Occurrences in the Past and the Succession of Kings of Siam as far as is Known from the Old Histories*,¹⁴ written by Jeremias van Vliet, director of the Dutch East India Company at Ayudhya. Van Vliet first came to Ayudhya in 1633 and remained till 1641. He wrote his *Short History* in 1640. When van Vliet wrote that "The Siamese are not curious enough to investigate events of ancient times and there are no relevant histories which have appeared publicly for posterity,"¹⁵ he did not mean that there had not been historical writings in Siam, but that they were not publicly available because they had been written by monks in the Pāli language, such as the sources for Somdet Phra Phonnarat's *Saṅgitiyavamsa*. According to van Vliet, writing in his *Description of the Kingdom of Siam*,

"Of antiquities of their country ... etc., they [the Siamese] have few descriptions, thus that their principal descriptions consist in the laws of the country, the fundamentals of their religion, the lives, deeds and praise of some dead kings..., and these descriptions

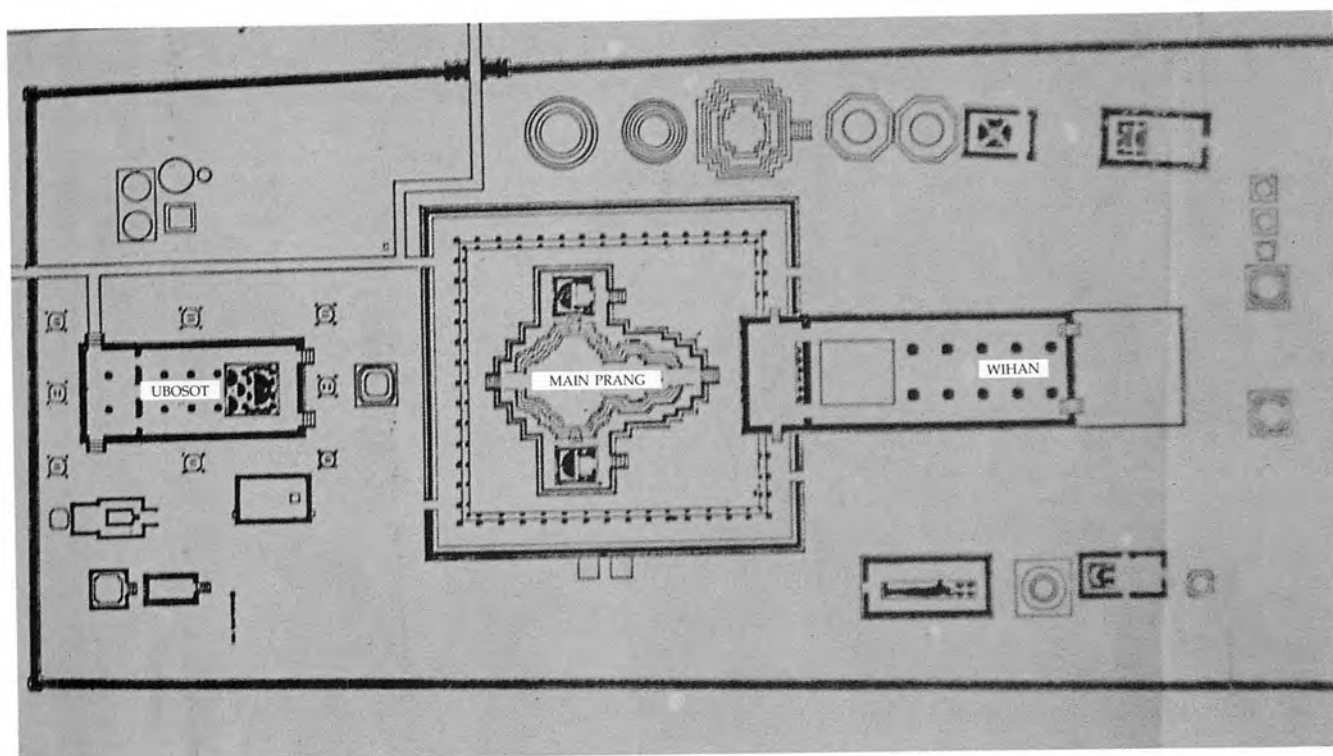


Fig. 2 Plan of Wat Phutthai Sawan, Ayudhya. Fine Arts Department.

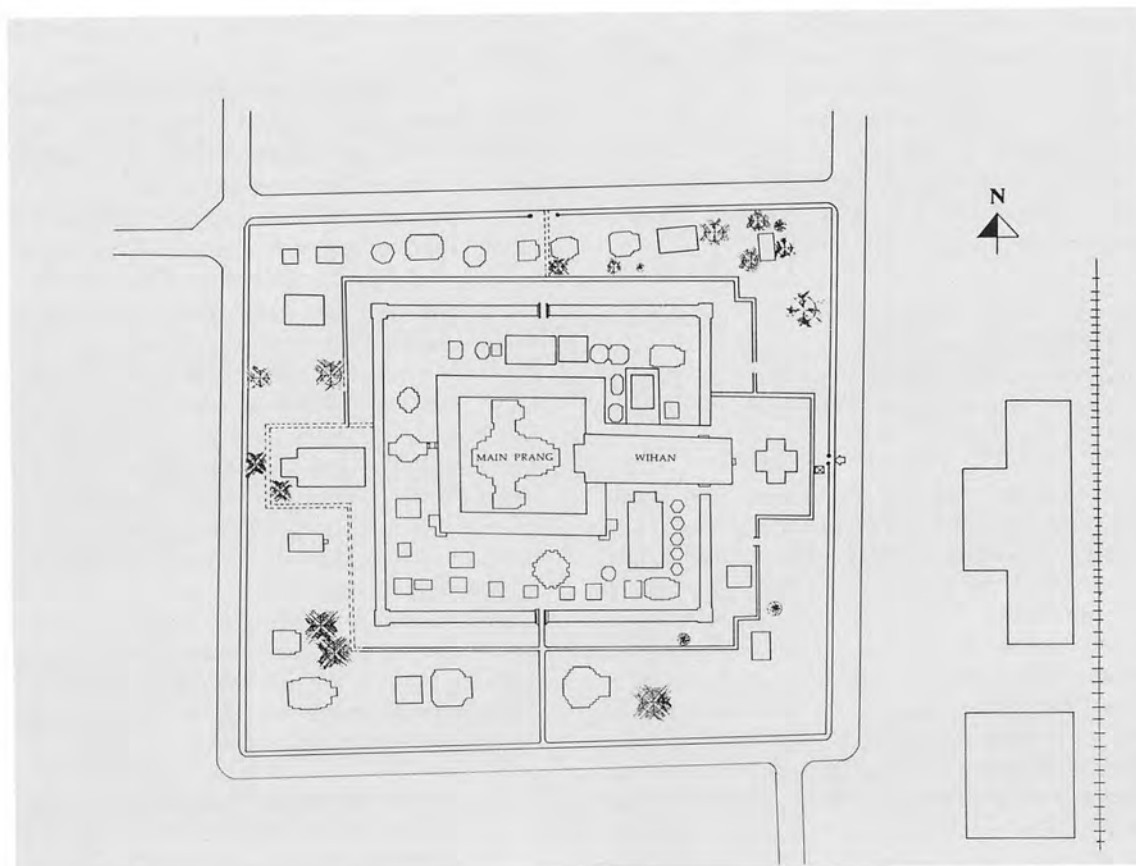


Fig. 3 Plan of Wat Mahathat, Lop Buri. Fine Arts Department.

were mostly committed to the care of the priests ... Thus amongst the nobility, the rich or civil population, not many chronicles or historical records are known, with the exception of those which are reported verbally or related in discourses."¹⁶

The scarcity of chronicles continued into the 18th century. For in their accounts given to the Burmese captors, the former residents of Ayudhya who had been taken prisoner in 1767 said in *The Statement of the Residents of the Old Capital* that

"When Khun Chinnarat [Khun Worawongsa, r. 1548] became king, he had the old chronicles burnt or thrown into the water. On this account, parts of the old chronicles were missing from that time onward."¹⁷

Since parts of the old chronicles were already missing since the mid 16th century, the Bangkok period compilers of the royal chronicle of Ayudhya would have to fill in the missing parts with hearsay and their imagination.

The following discussion will take the monuments mentioned in the *Thamnan Phuttha Chedi Sayam* as examples of each sub-period and compare them to their illustrations in 17th and 18th century European maps and descriptions by contemporary accounts so as to establish whether they had actually existed and in what form.

First sub-period (1350-1488)

Wat Phutthai Sawan

When the author of the *Tamnan Phuttha Chedi Sayam* says that "Prince U Thong built Wat Phutthai Sawan," the information must have come from one of the recensions of the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*,"¹⁸ for the "*Luang Prasaoet version*" does not mention it. He probably did not have Jeremias van Vliet's *The Short History of the Kings of Siam* to compare with the royal chronicles, since it was only translated into English and published by the Siam Society in 1975. According to *The Short History ...*, Thao U Thong built three temples: the Nappetadt (Mahathat), Raeyjae Boenna (Ratchabun) and Waddeun (Wat Doen), "which are still considered to be the most important in the whole kingdom."¹⁹ Apparently either Wat Phutthai Sawan was not considered significant in 1640 or had not yet been built.

In 1687 Wat Phutthai Sawan made its first appearance on a map drawn by a French engineer and is labelled "*Pagode de la feue Reine*," or Monastery of the Late Queen (Fig. 1). Nicolas Gervaise, who came to Siam in 1683 and spent the next four years there, also mentioned the monastery of the late queen. According to him, "The new cloister that has been built in honour of the late queen is filled with more than a hundred figures of women, all beautifully gilded and all with the same face and in the same posture."²⁰ Although he mistook images of the Buddha for "figures of women," his statement that the "New cloister" had been built in honour of the late queen indicates that the Wat Phutthai Sawan had recently been built. Judging by the custom of building a

monastery and transferring the merit accrued to the deceased, as for example King Mongkut's building Wat Somanat Vihāra in 1853 and dedicating it to his late Queen Somanat Watthanawadi, it can be inferred that Wat Phutthai Sawan was built by King Narai in memory of his queen. Also the plan of Wat Phutthai Sawan (Fig. 2) with the central *prang* flanked by two smaller ones to the north and south (now transformed into *mondop*) recalls that of the Mahathat at Lop Buri (Fig. 3), which was reconstructed by King Narai in the 1660's.²¹ This similarity lends support to the hypothesis that the monastery was built in King Narai's reign. Wat Phutthai Sawan must have been an important monastery in 1750, when King Borommakot commanded that the Sinhalese delegation be taken to worship there. The account written by the Sinhalese visitors to "Vat Puthi Suwan" gives us a glimpse of the monument as it existed then, and is quoted below :

"Seven days later on Friday, being full moon, two officers came and informed us that the king had given orders for us to go and worship at two vihāras on this day. We accordingly proceeded in boats and worshipped at the vihārē called Vat Puthi Suwan. The following is a description of the place. On the right of the great river there stretches a plain right up to the river bank; here are built long ranges of two-storied halls in the form of a square, with four gateways on the four sides; on the four walls were placed two hundred gilt images. Within the eastern gate is fashioned a likeness of the sacred footprint, with the auspicious symbol worked in gold. Right in the centre is a great gilt dagaba [main *prang*] with four gates. On entering by the eastern gate there is found a flight of stone steps gilt; right in the womb of the dagaba are enshrined the holy relics; and it was so built that it was possible to walk round within the dagaba without approaching them. There was also within a gilt reproduction of the Sacred Foot. On either side of this gate were built two five-headed Nāga Rājas apparently descending to the bank of earth. To the north of this was a two-storied building with a throne in the middle of it; on this was seated a gilt figure of the Buddha twelve cubits high. To the east of this and facing it was a five-storied building hung with awnings and adorned with paintings and gilding; the pillars in the middle were covered with plates of gold, and on a throne in the centre was a life-size image of gold supported on either side by two similar gilt images of the two chief disciples Sāriyut Mahasāmi and Maha Mugalan Sāmi and numerous others. Above the gateway from the roof to the lintel there was pictured in gilt work Buddha in the Sakra world, seated on the White Throne and preaching his glorious *Abhidharma* to the god Mavu [Maha] Déva and to the gods and Brahmas of unnumbered worlds; and again, when his discourse was ended, he is depicted as descending by the golden stairs to Sakasapura. The vihārē itself is strongly guarded by walls and gates; round about



Fig. 4 Wat Phutthai Sawan from the air. Photograph by Luca Invernizzi Tettoni.

are built pleasant halls and priests' houses filled with the holy men, with worshippers of high rank and devotees of either sex.²²

The monument we see today (Fig. 4) assumed its present form in its last major restoration in 1898.²³

Since Wat Phutthai Sawan was an important monastery in the final days of Ayudhya, it is only to be expected that someone should have made up a hoary history for it. The tale that King U Thong founded Wat Phutthai Sawan was accepted by both the compiler of the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*"²⁴ of the royal chronicle as well as by Somdet Phra Phonnarat in his Pāli work, *Culayuddhākara-vamsa*,²⁵ where the same episode is mentioned. Inexplicably, Somdet Phra Phonnarat in his other Pāli work, *Sangitiya-vamsa* of 1789, attributed the founding of Wat Phutthai Sawan to King Naresuan (1590-1605).²⁶ This discrepancy suggests that in the 18th century there might have been different theories as to who built Wat Phutthai Sawan. The fable that King U Thong founded Wat Phutthai Sawan was not accepted by everyone in the second half of the 18th century, because the former residents of Ayudhya who had been taken captive to Burma in 1767, in their *Statement of the Residents of the Old Capital* attributed the founding of Wat Phutthai Sawan to King Song Tham (1610-1628), saying that the king donated money from the privy purse to build two monasteries so that monks could study the Tipitaka: one was the Wat Phutthai Sawan; the other was Wat Ratnamahathat.²⁷ These different points of view indicate that the attribution to King U Thong was made in the early 19th century, at which time the fact that King Narai built it in memory of his queen had been forgotten. Hence Wat Phutthai Sawan cannot be accepted as example of 14th century Ayudhya architecture.

Wat Mahathat

When van Vliet wrote in *The Short History* ... that the Nappetadt (Wat Mahathat) was founded by Thao U Thong, it reflected the high esteem given to the Mahathat in the reign of King Prasat Thong (1629-1656). In 1636, when the same author wrote his *Description of the Kingdom of Siam*, the Nappetat (Mahathat) together with Wat Sy-serpudt (Si Sanphet), Wat Deun (Doen, meaning the moon) and Wat Thimphiathey (Chao Phraya Thai, or present-day Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon) were "the four principal temples of the whole country."²⁸ Their abbots constituted members of the ecclesiastical council. His statement that "The bishop of the Nappetat has the supreme dignity"²⁹ meant that the supreme patriarch was the abbot of Wat Mahathat. Wat Mahathat was fabulously rich, for "The people say that with the treasures lying under the idols of Wat Sy-serpudt and Nappetat a ruined kingdom could be restored."³⁰

The "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*" (1795) of the royal chronicle of Ayutthaya gives this statement :

"Sakaraj 736 year of the tiger [1374], Somdet Phra Borommarachathirat Chao and the Phra Mahathera Dharmakalyana laid the foundation of the Phra Si Ratna Mahathat to the east [of the Palace]. The height

of the pediment at the level of the lion [sic] measured 19 *wahs* [38 metres]. The finial (*noppa sun*) measured 3 *wahs* [6 metres]."³¹

The "*Luang Prasoen version*" (1680) has the same entry, with the exception of the measurement, saying that "The height of the pediment at the level of the lion measured 1 *sen* and 3 *wahs* [46 metres]."³²

Since the measurements given in these two versions of the royal chronicle contradict one another, it does not lend much credibility to this passage, especially when the attribution to King Borommaracha is challenged by van Vliet's assignment to Thao U Thong forty years earlier.

Although we may never know when and by whom the Mahathat was originally built, there is no doubt that in the reign of King Naresuen (1590-1605) it was counted as one of the city's "three main pagodas." According to Jacques de Coutre, who came to Ayudhya in 1596,

"Each of the pagodas had a very high tower of stone and brick masonry, and gilded from the tip until the middle, with four stairs made of gilded lead ... The said towers were built on very large squares paved with bricks. In each square one had four ponds, one in each corner, with many trees on the water's edge. Around the tower there was a small fence in masonry. Inside the fence there were many lamps around, and may bronze figures leaned against the wall, as high as a man of good stature ... They were made completely out of bronze and natural looking. They were found then forty years before, in the Kingdom of Cambodia, in a ruined city which the natives came across in the forest. They did not know which nation had lived there. When they described it they called it Anguor."³³

This description seems to correspond with Wat Mahathat.

According to the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*," in the reign of King Song Tham (1610-1628) the *prang* at Wat Mahathat collapsed in the year 1606.³⁴ However, the Royal Chronicle has the date wrong, since 1606 would have to be in the reign of King Ekathotsarot (1605-1611). Van Vliet gave the correct year in *The Short History* ... when he wrote that

"In the third year of his reign (1631) the golden tower of the Noppathat suddenly collapsed without crosswind, thunder or lightning. He [King Prasat Thong] had it quickly erected again, but before this tower was totally restored, the scaffolding (beautifully and durably made of bamboo) also collapsed unexpectedly during a rainstorm."³⁵

The "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*" then says that in 1633 King Prasat Thong had it rebuilt.³⁶ The original height, which was 19 *wahs* (38 metres), was increased to 1 *sen* and 2 *wahs* (44 metres) but the height of the finial was retained at 3



Fig. 6 A water-colour copy of the "Afooldinge der Stadt Iudiad Hooft des Choonincrick Siam." Johannes Vingboons, c. 1665. Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague. Collection of the Siam Society.

wahs (6 metres), making a total of 1 *sen* and 5 *wahs* (50 metres). This new *prang* is represented in the oil painting of "Tudea" in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, painted by an anonymous Dutch artist around 1650 (Fig. 5, frontispiece to this article). As depicted in the painting, Wat Mahathat in c. 1650 was essentially the same as described by Jacques de Coutre in 1596. It consists of a *prang* enclosed by a covered gallery. To the east is a *wihan* with the rear porch intruding into the gallery. A group of five cinerary stupas arranged in two rows is placed north of the *wihan* and two are placed to the south of it. The Mahathat thus depicted must have been the result of King Prasat Thong's renovation undertaken around 1637 in anticipation of year *Culasakaraj* 1000 which was due in 1638. As van Vliet reported in his *Description of the Kingdom of Siam*,

"...[H]e [the King] would be the renewer of everything, and that the people, by building and repairing of many new temples, had to serve the gods ... In such a way the king thought to change everything spiritually. In view of this the king had all the principal temples in the entire country, and even in uninhabited places, repaired."³⁷

The royal chronicle does not mention such a preparation. Its only entry for the year *Culasakaraj* 1000 (1638) was a lengthy description of the ceremony held to change the era.³⁸

By the beginning of King Narai's reign (1656-1688), as shown in Johannes Vingboons' atlas of 1665 (Fig. 6), four *chedis* had been constructed, one inside each corner of the covered gallery, and two more cinerary stupas were added to the two south of the *wihan*. Outside the covered gallery to the west, four rows of buildings are shown forming a quadrangle with a large structure placed in the middle of it. As the following account shows, it could have been the residence of the supreme patriarch.

This account of the Wat Mahathat appeared in 1750 when the Sinhalese delegation visited it. Although the name is written "Maha Dhanvarama, in the district named Na pu than," there is no doubt that it was the Mahathat. The Napathat has become the name of the district. The Sinhalese envoys' account of the Wat Mahathat is quoted below:

On the twenty-first day of the solar month Kanya, being Sunday, three officers came in the morning and accompanied us in boats to the vihara called Maha Dhanvarama, in the district named Na pu than, that we might make offerings there to the Buddha and acquire merit, and also see the beauties of the place; and this is what we saw there. The place was a fertile stretch of level land enclosed by four walls, outside which ran four canals. From the water-course to the east up to the gate there was a long covered passage of two stages. On entering at the gateway we saw on the four sides eight holy dagabas [*prang*], so covered with gilding that they resembled masses of *kinihiriya* flowers. In the intervals were various

images. Among them at the four sides were four buildings of two stages against the inner walls of which, and rising to the roof were large gilt images of the Buddha. Within the space enclosed by these were four handsome gilt dagabas [*chedi*] with images interspersed. In the very centre of all was a dagaba [main *prang*] richly adorned, with doors on the four sides fitted with stairs, up and down which we could ascend and descend. At the four corners of the square base of the spire [cornice] were four dragons [*garudas*] with wings outstretched and meeting above; in the four panels [antefixes] were four images of gods adorned with all the divine ornaments, as well as images of the gods who preside at the four points of the compass, with their hands clasped overhead. In the intervals were images of door-guardians armed with swords, of *rākshas* with clubs and of *bairayās* with staves, while above the circular base of the spire were depicted in solid gold the sacred halo [finial]. On either side of the stair leading from the eastern gate ran two snakes [*nāgas*], their bodies the size of palm-leaf palms; where they reached the ground their hoods were raised and resting on slabs of crystal; their open jaws and projecting fangs filled the hearts of those who saw them with terror. Starting from here there were ranged round the dagaba [main *prang*] images of lions, bears, swans, peacocks, kinduras [*kinaras*], deer, oxen, wolves, buffaloes, makaras, and door-guardians armed with swords. Also, carrying palm fans, *chamaras*, *sésat* [parasols], triumphal chanks [= conchs] and various offerings, with their hands clasped above their heads, were numerous images of Brahmas, Sakras, and the Suyama gods, all adorned with gold. In the hall to the east, with its eyes fixed on the dagaba, was an image of the Buddha supported in either side by images of the two great disciples with their hands clasped above their heads. Also there was another image of the lord as he was in life, begging for food with his bowl in his sacred hand. In another building, which was reached by a flight of steps, were various images of the Buddha and two figures of the Sacred Footprint with the auspicious symbols in gold. In a similar hall of the west were three images. Here was depicted in gold our lord reposing in lion fashion in his scented room, whilst Ananda Mahasāmi is approaching holding in his right hand a golden candlestick.

On the four walls was depicted the Vessantara birth-story, and next his birth in the *Thusita* heaven, whence again he was begotten of King Suddhodana in the womb of Queen Mahamāyā and was brought forth into the arms of gods, after which he made his Great Renunciation, and on his gleaming throne under the sacred *Bó* attained Buddhahood; and, seated on the White Throne of *Śakrayā*, he preached his *Abhidharma* to the gods, and after receiving the

Fig. 7 Plan of Wat Mahathat, Ayudhya.
Fine Arts Department.

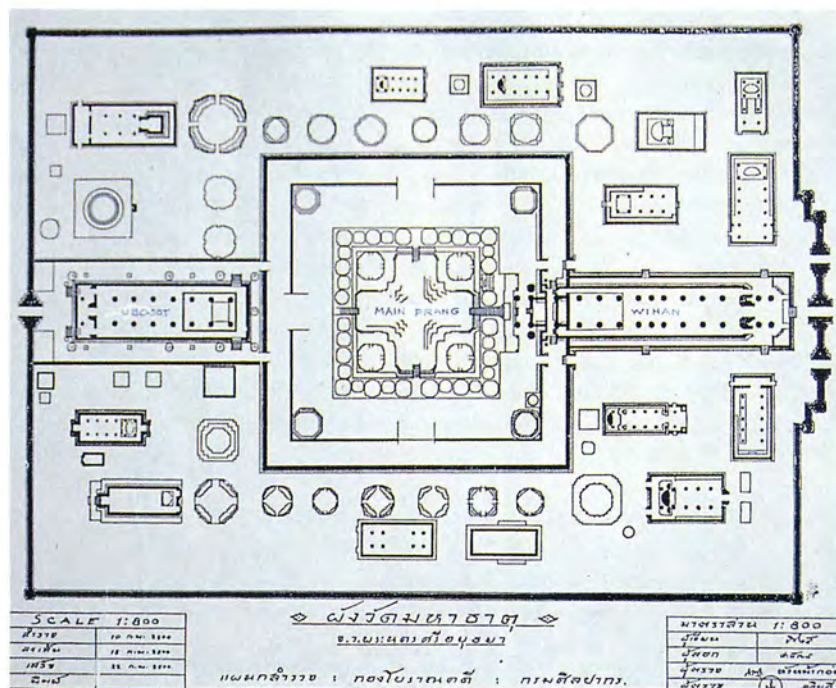


Fig. 8 Wat Mahathat, photographed in
1907.



offerings of the gods and Brahmas he descended by the divine stair to the Śākya city;—all this was pictured in gilt.

Outside the great wall of the vihāre were several preaching-halls; to the west of this was the residence of the Saṅga Rāja. The dining- and preaching-halls were adorned in diverse fashions with gilding. One room was hung with awnings and curtains embroidered with gold, whilst the floor was covered with various precious carpets ...

Surrounding this spot were several houses occupied by a vast number of priests and Sāmanēras, devotees of either sex who observe *dasa sil* [the ten precepts], as well as a crowd of pious and courtly folk who provided daily offerings.³⁹

The Sinhalese account shows that at some time between 1665 and 1750 eight gilded *prangs* were erected along the outside of the covered gallery on each side (Fig. 7). Since no mention is made of the lowermost platform of the central *prang* with ten stupas to each side, nor of the four corner *prangs* on the upper platform, nor of the four arms of the central *prang* each supporting a smaller *prang* above its extremity (Fig. 8), it has to be assumed that all of these additions date from later renovations which took place between 1750 and 1767. For, had they been built before 1750, the Sinhalese visitors would have recorded them in great detail.

Thus the ruins of the Wat Mahathat mostly date between the late 17th and late 18th centuries. The *prang* that was put up by King Prasat Thong collapsed in the reign of King Vajiravudh (1910-1925). Whilst the hypothesis that the Wat Mahathat was built by King Borommaraḥa I (1370-1388) and King Ramesuan (1388-1395) can neither be verified nor disproved, it is certain that the Mahathat we see today is not an example of 14th century Ayudhya architecture.

Wat Ratchaburana

Similar arguments can be made against the hypothesis that Wat Ratchaburana was built by King Borommaraḥa II (1424-1448). There were at least four candidates from Thai sources from which the author of the *Taman Phuttha Chedi Sayam* could choose as who built Wat Ratchaburana. They are as follows:

The "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) Version*" and all other recensions of the royal chronicle of Ayudhya say that two sons of King Intharacha (1409-1424) by the name of Chao Ai Phraya and Chao Yi Phraya had an elephant duel at the foot of the Pa Than bridge, as a result of which both were killed. The youngest brother, Chao Sam Phraya, then became king Borommaraḥa II. He had the remains of his two brothers cremated. At the spot where the cremation took place he founded a monastery named Wat Ratchaburana (Royal Restoration).⁴⁰

The "*Luang Prasaoet version*" is slightly different. It says that King Borommaraḥa II built two *chedis* where his two brothers killed each other in the Pa Than district. "In the same year [1424] the Wat Ratchabun [Royal Merit] was

founded."⁴¹ Apparently the founding of Wat Ratchabun was unrelated to the above story. It is mentioned because it happened to have been founded in the same year as King Borommaraḥa II's accession to the throne.

The *Khamhaikan Khunluang Hawat (Statements of Ex-king Uthumphon)*, which is an account given by the next to last king of Ayudhya (r. 1758), who was taken captive by the Burmese in 1767, says that King Ekathotsarot (1605-1611) built Wat Ratchaburana "in the city to the southeast of the palace."⁴² Since the location corresponds to the present monastery of the same name, there is no doubt that Ex-king Uthumphon meant this one.

The *Khamhaikan Chao Krung Kao (Statements of the Residents of the Old Capital)*, which is an account of the residents of Ayudhya taken captive by the Burmese in 1767, says that King Borommakot (1733-1758) built seven large monasteries, one of which was Wat Ratchaburana.⁴³

The author of the *Tamnan Phuttha Chedi Sayam*, however, opted for the version from the royal chronicle.

Unknown to him, van Vliet in *The Short History ...* attributed Wat Raeyjae Boenna to Thao U Thong.⁴⁴ The Dutch spelling of this monastery suggests that the name is closer to the Wat Ratchabun (Royal Merit) of the "*Luang Prasaoet version*" than to the Wat Ratchaburana of the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*." The Wat Ratchabun must have been an important monastery as van Vliet attributed it to Thao U Thong and the compiler of the "*Luang Prasaoet version*" to King Borommaraḥa II. The Wat Raeyjae Boenna, according to van Vliet, was one of the three temples built by Thao U Thong. Moreover, in 1640 it had "the same size and shape as the Nappetadt."⁴⁵ The oil painting of Iudea (c. 1650) in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (Fig. 9) shows that there was a monastery where the present day Wat Ratchaburana is located (Fig. 10). But, since it consists of a *chedi* and a *wihan* to the south of it, it certainly does not have "the same size and shape as the Nappetadt." Hence, the Wat Ratchabun (Royal Merit) of van Vliet and the "*Luang Prasaoet version*" could not have been the same as the present-day Wat Ratchaburana (Royal Restoration). Although the Wat Ratchabun probably had a *prang*, we do not know where it was located.

By collating Wat Ratchaburana with the one mentioned in one of the recensions of the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*," and assuming that the Wat Ratchabun of the "*Luang Prasaoet version*" was one and the same, Prince Damrong dated the monument to 1424.

In conclusion it can be assumed that the original Wat Ratchaburana (Royal Restoration) may have been built by King Ekathotsarot (1605-1611), as reported in Ex-king Uthumphon's statement to the Burmese, for its existence in the mid 17th century in the form of a *chedi* is indicated by the oil painting of Iudea (c. 1650) as well as in Vingboons' atlas of 1665. However, in Courtaulin's map of "Siam ou India Capitale du Royaume de Siam" of 1686 (Fig. 11), the site of Wat Ratchaburana is not marked on the map. In 1687, when the French engineer drew a plan of the city, again the location of Wat Ratchaburana was left out (Fig. 1). Probably it was

Fig. 9 Detail of "Tudea," showing Wat Mahathat and Wat Ratchaburana, c. 1650.



Fig. 10 Wat Ratchaburana and Wat Mahathat from the air. Photograph by Luca Invernizzi Tettoni.

considered not important enough to be included in the map. Instead the location of Wat Plappla Chai, which is to the north of Wat Ratchaburana, is given on both maps. Had the present monument been built, it would have figured prominently on the map instead of the much smaller Wat Plappla Chai. The *Statements of the Residents of the Old Capital* that King Borommakot built Wat Ratchaburana is essentially correct, because he probably had the *chedi* built by King Ekathotsarot demolished and constructed a new one nearby. Since the captive former residents of Ayudhya over the age of nine years old would have lived in King Borommakot's reign, their statement that King Borommakot built Wat Ratchaburana has to be taken seriously.

Since the present-day Wat Ratchaburana would have had to be built in King Borommakot's reign (1733-1758), it cannot be taken as an example of Ayudhya architecture of the 15th century.

Wat Phra Ram

The fourth principal monument at Ayudhya classified in the first sub-period (1350-1488) is Wat Phra Ram. The author's source for its having been built in King Borommatrailokanat's reign (1448-1488) must have been one of the recensions of the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*." The "*Luang Prasert Version*," however, attributed it to 1369, the first year of King Ramesuan's first reign (1369-1370).⁴⁶

According to the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*," King Borommatrailokanat donated the land where the royal palace had stood so that the Wat Phra Si Sanphet could be built in its place. At the spot where King Ramathibodi I was cremated, King Borommatrailokanat constructed a *phra mahathat* (which generally refers to a *prang*) and called it Wat Phra Ram.⁴⁷

The oil painting of Iudea (c. 1650) shows what appears to be a slender *prang* with two smaller *chedis* to the east of it and one to the west (Fig. 5). A large *wihan* is to the south of it. The Vingboons atlas (1665) also gives the same picture (Fig. 6). The French engineer's plan of 1687 gives it pride of place and labelled it "*Grande pagode*" (Fig. 1).

Two years earlier Père Tachard visited Wat Phra Ram and gave a lengthy account of it in his *Voyage to Siam*, 1685. According to him, it was located "about an hundred paces South of the Palace."⁴⁸ The gilded monument was built on a Greek cross plan with the central *prang* being much bigger than the other four, which were located at the extremities of the cross (Fig. 12). Four stairways gave access to it. Over twenty larger than life statues of men and animals, all gilt, adorned the bottom of the staircase. This five-*prang* structure was surrounded by forty-four "*Pyramides*" [*chedis*] of different form standing on different platforms. On the lowest platform at the four corners were gilt "*Pyramides*" which end in a long slender cone supporting a needle or arrow of iron that pierced through several crystal balls of different sizes. "The body of these *Pyramides* [*chedis*] has too much Sculpture upon it." On the second platform, which was a little higher than the first, "There are six and thirty other *Pyramides* some what less than the former: making a square round the Pagod, nine

on each side." [There should have been 32 altogether, if there were nine on each side.] "They are of two different Figures, some taper into a point as the former did, and the rest are made round like a Bell on the top, after the manner of the domes which crown the Building; they are so mingled that there are not two of the same form."⁴⁹ The former must have been *chedi* and the latter *prangs*, arranged alternately. Above them on the third platform are "four *Piramides* on the four corners of it [corner *chedis*], which terminate in a point. They are less indeed than the first, but bigger than the second."⁵⁰ The whole is enclosed by a covered gallery opening toward the central *prang*. Within the gallery along the outer wall were about four hundred images of Buddha, twelve of "Gigantick Stature," one in the middle of each gallery, and two at each angle. Outside of the covered gallery on each side stood "Sixteen solid *Piramids*, rounded at the top in form of a Dome [*prangs*], above forty foot high, above twelve foot square, placed in a Line like a row of great Pillars." Père Tachard was so impressed by Wat Phra Ram that he said, "We never saw a Fabrick no not in France, where Symmetry is better observed, either for the body of the Building, or the Ornaments about it, than in this Pagod."⁵¹

Since the description does not resemble the depiction in the oil painting of Iudea (c. 1650) or that in the Vingboons atlas of 1665, the "*Grande Pagode*," as described by Père Tachard (Fig. 13), must have been constructed between 1665 and 1685, which falls in the reign of King Narai.

According to the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*," King Borommakot had Wat Phra Ram repaired in 1741. It took over a year to complete.⁵²

The reconstruction of 1741-1742 saw the removal of the sixteen pillar-like *prangs* aligned on each face outside of the enclosure gallery. In their places were constructed two large *wihans*, whose rear porches intrude into the covered gallery to the east and west of the *prang* (Fig. 14). The four corner *chedis* on the first platform were demolished. The nine alternating *chedis* and *prangs* on each side of the second platform were removed and the height of the platform raised. The stairs on the north and south sides were taken down. The north and south arms of the Greek cross plan were transformed into two *prangs* with their entrance porches facing east (Fig. 15). The raised second platform now supports ten miniature *chedis* on the northern and southern sides and twelve on the eastern and western sides. Through a comparison of Wat Phra Ram as described by Père Tachard with the monument we see today, it can be inferred that the four corner *chedis* of the third platform may well have been the only constructions from King Narai's reign that have not undergone structural changes. Thus, most of the Wat Phra Ram we see today date from the restoration of 1741-1742.

Since Wat Phra Ram, Wat Ratchaburana, Wat Mahathat and Wat Phutthaisawan all assumed their present forms in the 18th century, we shall have to look elsewhere for examples of the First sub-period (1350-1488) of Ayudhya art.

(To be continued in the next issue of the *Journal of the Siam Society*.)

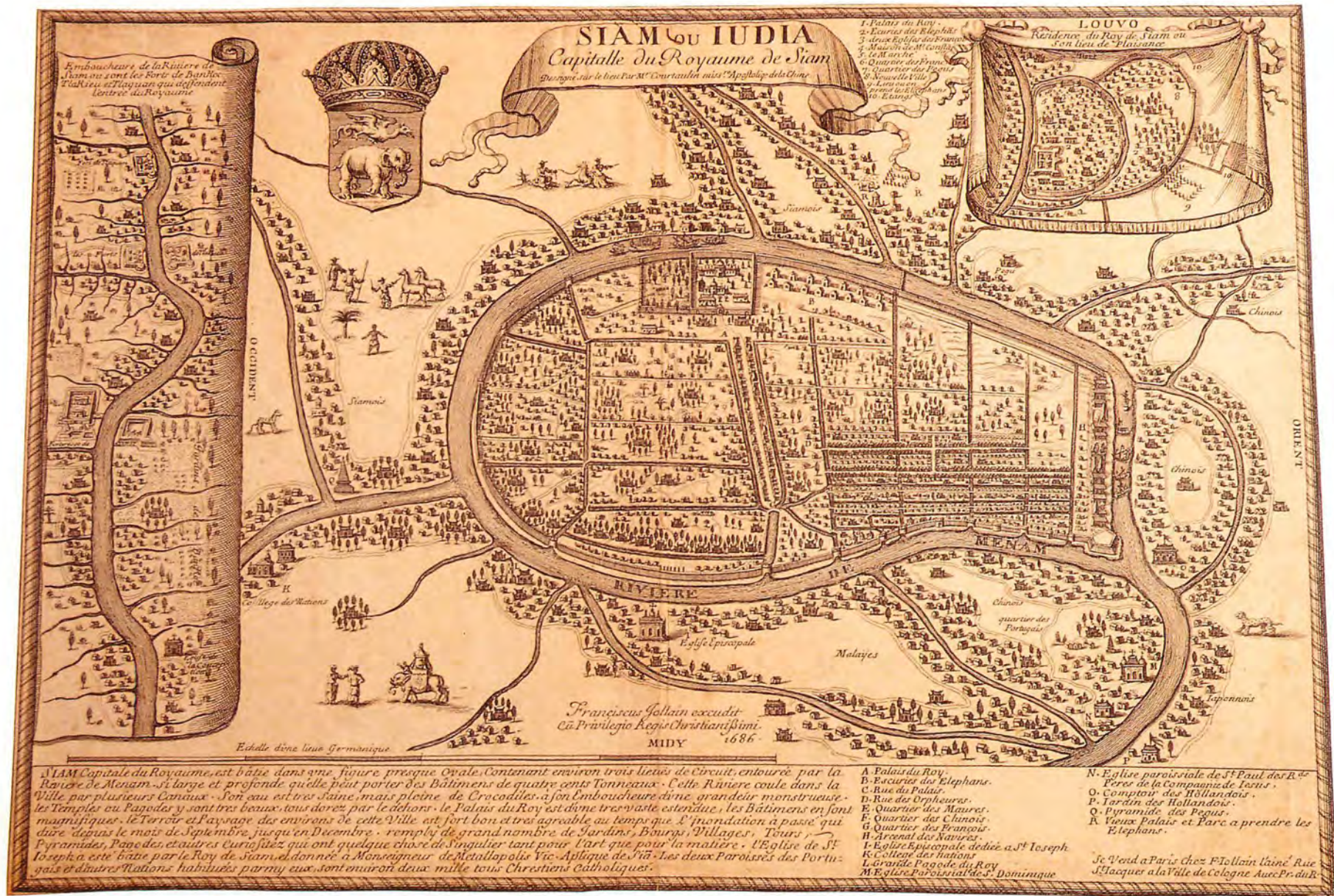


Fig. 11 "Siam ou Iudia Capitale du Royaume de Siam." Designé sur le lieu Par Mr. Courtaulin missre. Apostoliq. de la Chine ... 1686." Collection of the Siam Society.

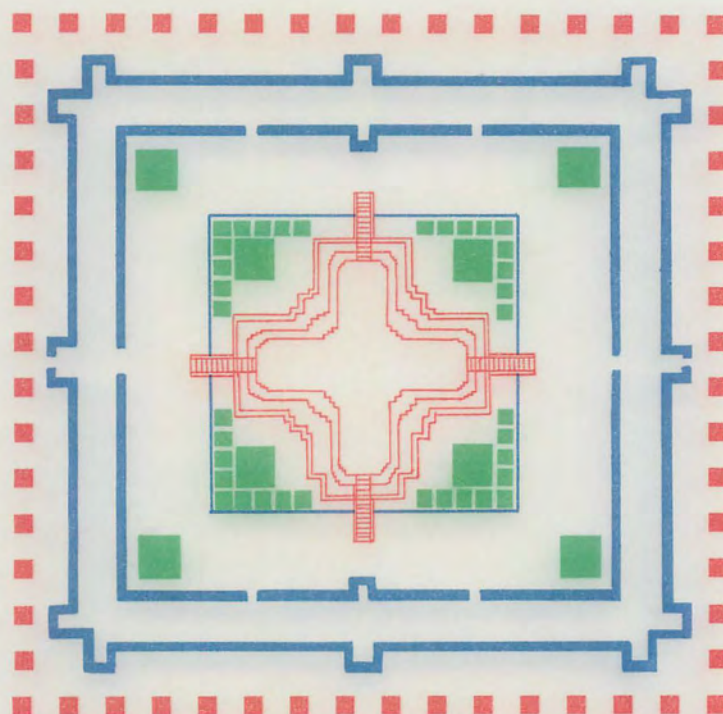


Fig. 12 A conjectural plan of Wat Phra Ram as described by Père Tachard in 1685.

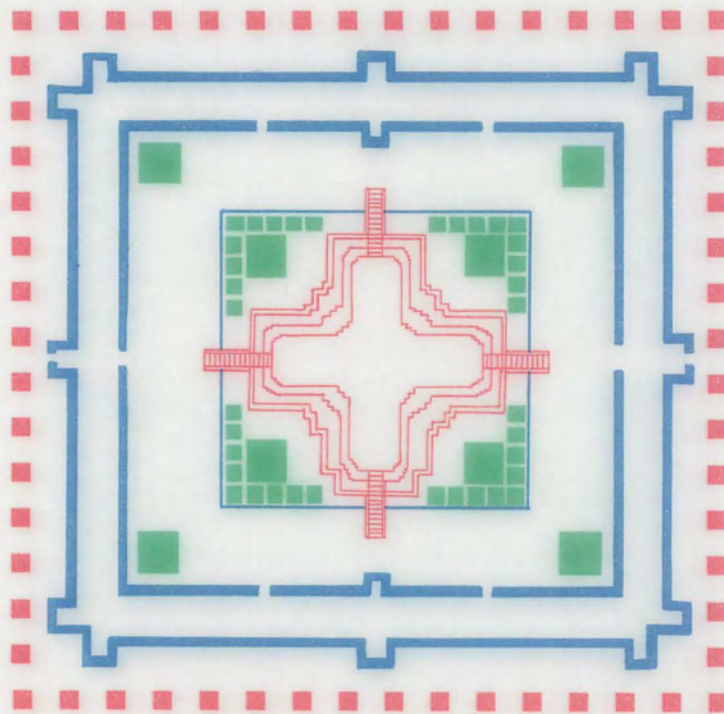
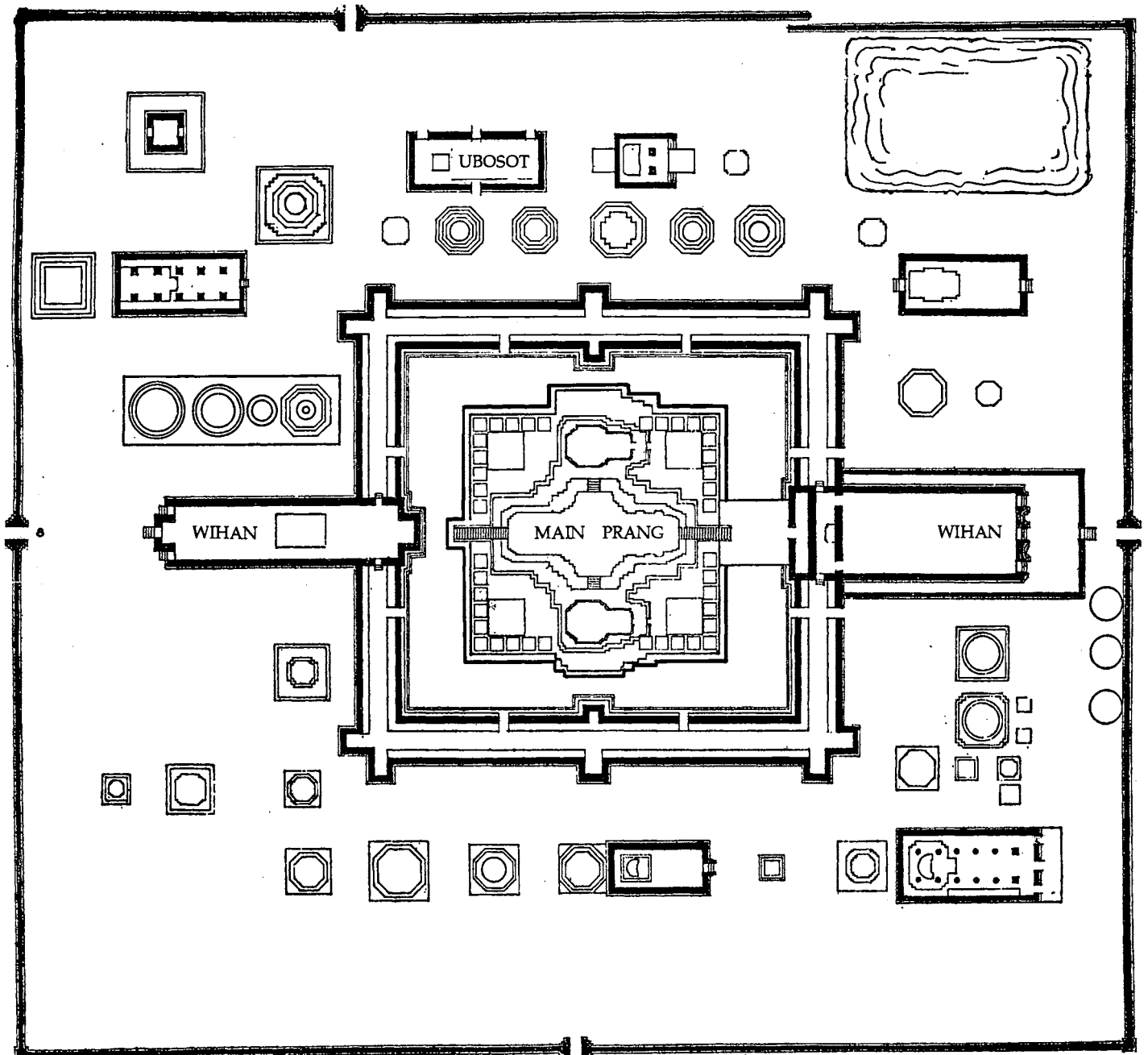


Fig. 12 A conjectural plan of Wat Phra Ram as described by Père Tachard in 1685.



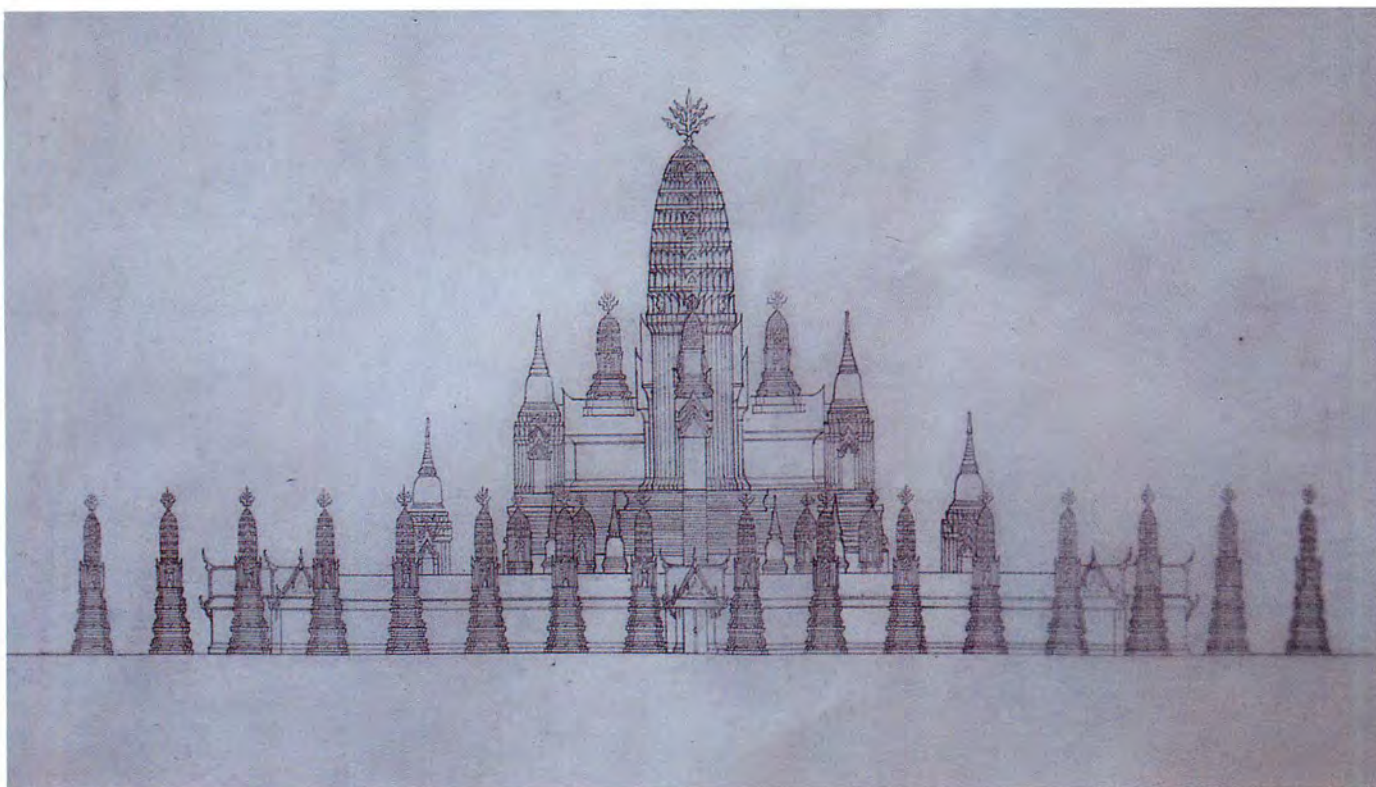


Fig. 13 A conjectural elevation of Wat Phra Ram as described by Père Tachard in 1685.

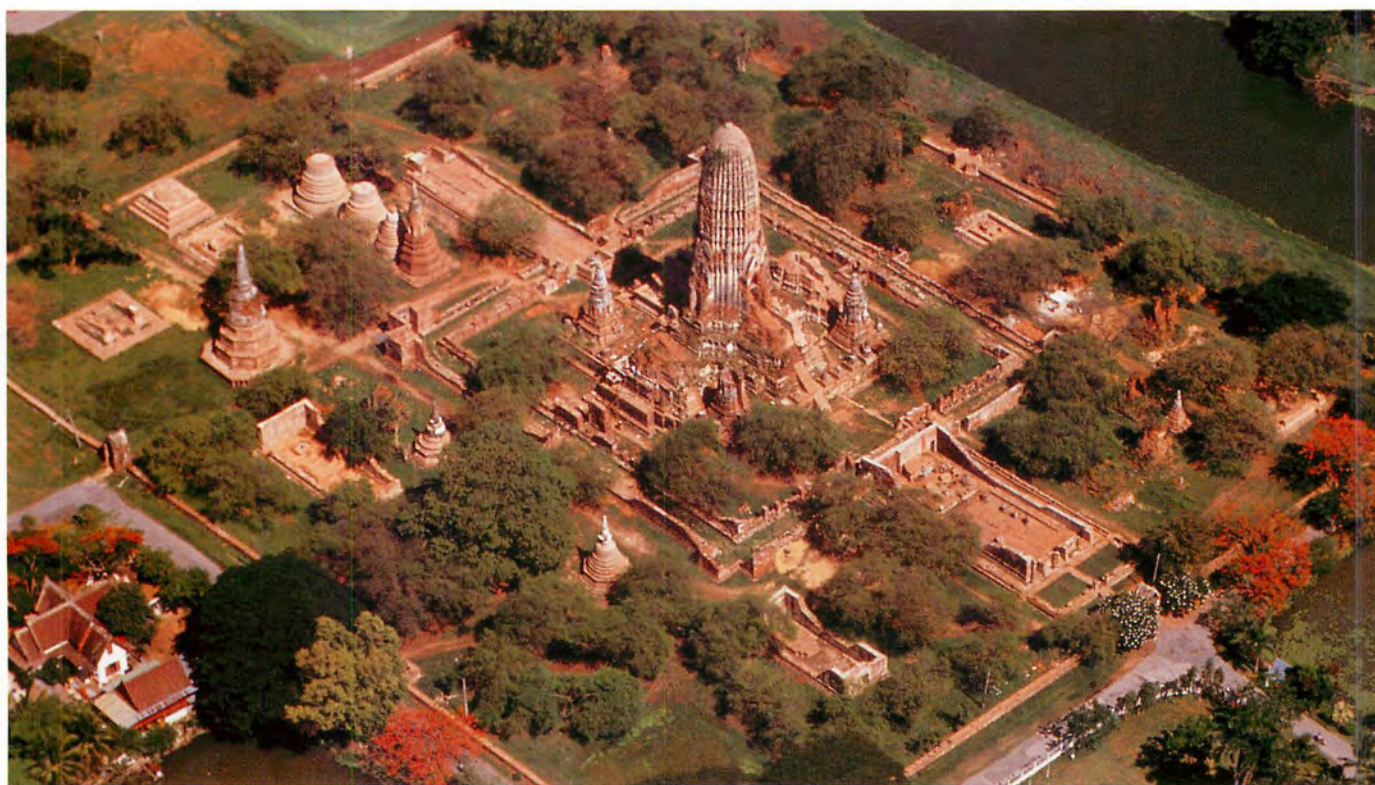


Fig. 14 Wat Phra Ram from the air. Photograph by Luca Invernizzi Tettoni.

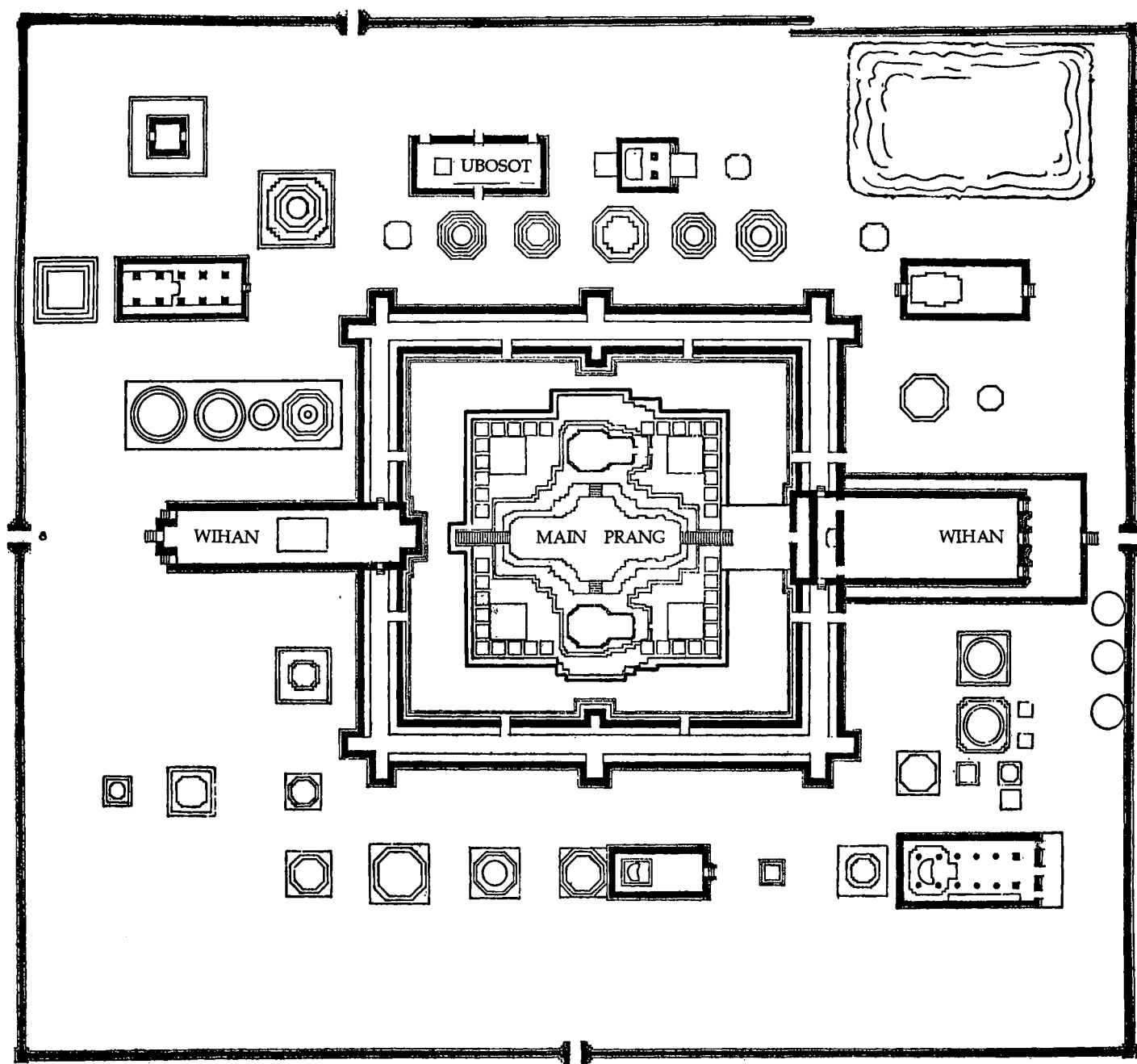


Fig. 15 Plan of Wat Phra Ram. Fine Arts Department.

ENDNOTES

1. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, "The History of Siam before the Founding of Ayudhya," *Phraratcha phongsawadan chabap phraratchahatthalekha*, 2 vols. (Bangkok: Samnakphim Khlang Withaya, B.E. 2516), vol. 1, p. 34.
2. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Monuments of the Buddha in Siam*. Trans. Sulak Sivaraksa and A.B. Griswold (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1973), pp. VIII-IX.
3. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Tamnan Phuttha Chedi Sayam*. (Bangkok: B.E. 2469.
4. Prince Damrong, *Monuments ...* pp. 24-25.
5. The *Luang Prasoe* version was translated into English by O. Frankfurter, entitled "Events in Ayudhya from Chulasakara 689-966," *JSS*, Vol. VI, part 3 (1909), pp. 1-21. Reprinted in *The Siam Society Fiftieth Anniversary Commemorative Publication: Selected Articles from the Siam Society Journal, Volume I, 1904-29*, (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1954), pp. 38-62.
6. *Phraratcha phongsawadan Krung Sayam* (Bangkok: Samnakphim Kao Na, B.E. 2507). See also "Phongsawadan krung si Ayudhya chabap phanchanthanumat (Choem)," *Prachum phongsawadan*, Pt. 64. Vols. 38-39 (Bangkok: Suksaphanphanit, B.E. 2512). According to Khachon Sukhaphanit, the "British Museum version" was begun by Phraya Thamparohit (Kaeo) in the reign of King Taksin (1767-1782). It was completed by his assistant Phraya Phochanaphimon (Thong Yu), who is also known by his clerical name of Somdet Phra Wannarat of Wat Bang Wa Yai. The version that was presented to King Rama I in 1795 was the "Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version." However, the completed "British Museum version" was presented to King Rama I in 1807. Khachon Sukhaphanit, "Khrai Khoe phu taeng phraratcha phongsawadan krung Si Ayudhya," *Khomun prawatsat samai Ayudhya* (Bangkok: Samakhum Sankhomsat Haeng prathat Thai, B.E. 2523), pp. 220-238.
7. *Phraratcha phongsawadan Krung Si Ayudhya lae Culayuddhakaravamsa* (Bangkok: Rongphim Maha Chulalongkorn Ratchawithayalai, B.E. 2535), pp. 1-302.
8. O. Frankfurter, Introduction to "Events in Ayudhya ...," *Selected Articles*. Vol. I, p. 39.
9. *Phraratcha phongsawadan Krung Si Ayudhya lae Culayuddhakaravamsa*, pp. 303-336.
10. Somdet Phra Phonnarat, *Saṅgitiyavamsa* (Bangkok: Rongphim kan sasana, B.E. 2521). This work is chronologically and textually comparable to Jeremias van Vliet's, *The short History of the King of Siam*; see Michael Vickery's review article of van Vliet, *The Short History... in JSS*, Vol. 64, Pt. 2 (July 1976), p. 223.
11. *The Abridged Royal Chronicle of Ayudhya* was translated into English and edited by David K. Wyatt in "The Abridged Royal Chronicle of Ayudhya of Prince Paramanuchitchinorot," *JSS*, Vol. 61, pt. 1 (January, 1973), pp. 25-50.
12. *Phraratcha phongsawadan Krung Si Ayudhya chabap Chakraphatphong (Chad)*. 2 vols. (Bangkok: Suksaphanphanit, B.E. 2533).
13. *Phraratcha phongsawadan chabap phraratchahatthalekha*. 2 vols. (Bangkok: Samnakphim Khlang Withaya, B.E. 2516).
14. Jeremias van Vliet, *The Short History of the Kings of Siam*, Translated by Leonard Andaya; edited by David K. Wyatt (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1975).
15. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
16. Jeremias van Vliet, *Description of the Kingdom of Siam*, Translated by L.F. van Ravenswaay, *JSS*, Vol. VII, pt. 1 (1910), p. 99.
17. *Khamhaikan Chao Krung Kao* (Bangkok: B.E. 2457), p. 69.
18. *Prachum phongsawadan*, Vol. 38, p. 3.
19. Van Vliet, *The Short History ...*, p. 18 and pp. 58-59. It should be pointed out that the Dutch spelling of Wat "Raeyjae Boenna" is erroneously transliterated in *The Short History ...* as "Ratchaburana" and "Waddeun" as "Wat Doem," meaning "Original," in spite of van Vliet's explanation in *Description of the Kingdom of Siam*, that Wat Deun "is devoted to the moon." (*JSS*, Vol. VII, pt. 1, p. 73). Hence the correct transliteration for it should be "Doen," meaning the moon.
20. Nicolas Gervaise, *The Natural and Political History of the Kingdom of Siam*, Trans. John Villiers (Bangkok: White Lotus Co., Ltd. 1989), p. 166.
21. According to Ex-king Uthumphon (r. 1758), King Narai (1656-1688), having reigned for ten years, founded a new city at the site of an ancient one called Lavo and gave it the name Lop Buri. Then he built the palace and the Wat Mahathat. *Khamhaikan Khunluang Hawat* (Bangkok: B.E. 2459), p. 28.
22. P.E. Pieris, "An Account of King Kirti Sri's Embassy to Siam in 1672 Saka (1750 A.D.)," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch*, Vol. XVIII, No. 54(1903), pp. 25-26.
23. Krom Silpakorn, *Phrarathawang lae wat boran nai Changwat Phranakhon Si Ayudhya* (Bangkok: Krom Silpakorn, B.E. 2511), p. 41.
24. *Prachum phongsawadan*, Vol. 38, p. 3.
25. *Phraratchaphongsawadan Krung Si Ayudhya lae Culayuddhakaravamsa*, p. 320.
26. Somdet Phra Phonnarat, *Saṅgitiyavamsa* (Bangkok: Rongphim kan sasana, B.E. 2521), p. 386.
27. *Khamhaikan Chao Krung Kao*, p. 96.
28. Van Vliet, *Description ...*, p. 73.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
31. *Prachum phongsawadan*, Vol. 38, p. 5.
32. "Phraratcha phongsawadan Krung Si Ayudhya Chabap Luang Prasoe," *Prachum phongsawadan*, Pt. 1, Vol. 1 (Bangkok: Suksaphanphanit, B.E. 2506), p. 131.
33. Unpublished English translation by Dr. Philippe Annez of Jacques de Coutre, *Vida, Aziatische omzwerwingen* (Berchem-Anvers, EPO, 1988).
34. *Prachum phongsawadan*, Vol. 39, p. 101.
35. Van Vliet, *The Short History ...*, p. 95.
36. *Prachum phongsawadan*, Vol. 39, pp. 115-116.
37. Van Vliet, *Description ...*, p. 75.

38. *Prachum phongsawadan*, Vol. 39, pp. 124-129.
39. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch*, Vol. XVIII, No. 54 (1903), pp. 26-27.
40. *Prachum phongsawadan*, Vol. 38, p. 13.
41. *Prachum phongsawadan*, Vol. 1, p. 134.
42. *Khamhaikan Khunluang Hawat*, p. 18.
43. *Khamhaikan Chao Krung Kao*, p. 140.
44. Van Vliet, *The Short History ...*, p. 58.
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.
46. *Prachum phongsawadan*, Vol. 1, p. 131.
47. *Prachum phongsawadan*, Vol. 38, pp. 15-16.
48. Guy Tachard, *A Relation of the Voyage to Siam Performed by Six Jesuits sent by the French King, to the Indies and China in the year 1685* (Bangkok: White Orchid Press, 1981), pp. 181-183.
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*, pp. 183-184.
52. *Prachum phongsawadan*, Vol. 39, p. 260.

SECTION V

ASPECTS OF AYUDHYA

