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Editorial
A warm welcome to a new issue of the SEALG Newsletter! Our recent annual meeting that took place in Paris was the second successful collaborative conference with the South Asia Archive and Library Group whom we owe a debt of gratitude. The theme of the conference “The French Connection – with South and Southeast Asia” gave us the opportunity to look at Southeast Asian materials from a different angle. This is well reflected in our Newsletter, which does not only contain the detailed report about the annual meeting, but also three presentations that were given in Paris. In addition, you will find news about an innovative retro-conversion project using crowdsourcing. As always, we hope you will find this issue useful and inspirational for your work or research!

Jana Igunma, Editor
SEALG Annual Meeting 2015, Paris

Report by Doris Jedamski (Leiden) and Holger Warnk (Frankfurt)

The Annual Meeting of the Southeast Asia Library Group 2015 took place on 3-4 July 2015 in Paris (France) and was organized as a joint conference together with the South Asia Archive and Library Group (SAALG) in collaboration with the Library of the École Française d’Extrême-Orient (EFEO). Its topic was “The French Connection – with South and Southeast Asia”. Participants from Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Russia, Sweden, Thailand and the United Kingdom attended this year’s meeting.

The meeting started on Friday, 3 July, with a welcome address by Prof. Yves Goudineau, Director of the École Française d’Extrême-Orient. He emphasized the importance of an active network and welcomed the SAALG/SEALG Conference Meeting as a sign of the growing sense of academic cooperation within Europe also in the field of South- and Southeast Asian collections.

In the first session Rachel Guidoni gave an overview of the “Major South Asia Collections in French Libraries”. She described the history and the characteristics of collections kept in various research libraries throughout France. Some of these collections are still little known outside of France, despite the fact that they contain some unique and precious items and a vast range of materials that could form relevant resources for research.

The second speaker, Holger Warnk, introduced “The Nachlass of Maurice Durand in the Library of Southeast Asian Studies in Frankfurt”. Maurice Durand (1914-1966), a former director of EFEO in Hanoi, bequeathed his legacy to Yale University, where it is kept in 121 boxes. However, for reasons unknown more than 20 folders of bibliographical references and notes ended up in the library of the Goethe University Frankfurt in 1969.

Arundhati Virmani talked about “The Archives of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Marseille Province: A Source for Modern Indian History”. Surprisingly, these archives which have fascinating and rare materials on the maritime trade on the Indian Ocean, South Asia and Southeast Asia have to date not received due attention.

Cécile Capot presented “A Brief History of the Archives of the French School of Asian Studies”, depicting the history of these collections covering their creation in Asia, their arrival in France at the end of the 1950s after the French School of Asian Studies had closed its doors in Vietnam, up until the present day situation.

After the lunch break the participants were invited to visit the EFEO Library, located next to the conference room. There, a selection of manuscripts, rubbings, photographs, and maps was showcased especially for the conference participants.

The second panel of the day opened with a presentation on “The Lanna Manuscripts Project at the EFEO”. François Lagirarde and his team recorded and digitized more than 18,000 pages of manuscripts from 41 monastic libraries in Northern Thailand and from the public library of the Siam Society. Almost all of them are in the Northern Thai language and use tham (Dhamma) script.

Olivia Pelletier and Isabelle Dion gave a talk on “Archives about Indochina in the National Overseas Archives (ANOM)” in Marseille, which house rich materials on
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Indochina and India. Illustrated by selected examples, the importance and variety of iconographic resources on Indochina were highlighted.

Jérôme Petit spoke about "Missionaries, Travellers and Scholars: The Building of an Indian Manuscripts Collection at the National Library of France", focusing on the more than 1,800 Sanskrit and over 1,000 manuscripts in other Indian languages kept in the National Library. The beginnings of this collection date back to the early 18th century.

Jacqueline Filliozat, the author of the last paper entitled “The Odyssey of the Pali Manuscript EFEEO Collection", unfortunately could not attend the meeting. François Lagirarde kindly agreed to read out her paper, and subsequently to present an exquisite selection of manuscripts on her behalf. There are more than 900 Pali manuscripts kept in Paris, the majority of which originate from Sri Lanka and the Buddhist states of mainland Southeast Asia.

SEALG Business Meeting
In the late afternoon and with some delay due to the enormous heat, people met up for the SEALG and the SAALG Annual Business Meetings.

Present at the SEALG Business Meeting were Inga-Lill Blomkvist, Annabel Gallop, Claudia Götz-Sam, Per Hansen, Jotika Khur-Yearn, Holger Warnk, Nicholas Martland, Liubov Goriaeva and Hélène Poitevin, who both attended as guests.

Apologies had been received from Sud Chonchirdsin, Jana Igunma, San San May, Lesley Pullen, Stella Schmidt.

Doris Jedamski welcomed all participants. After delivering special greetings from SEALG’s former chairperson Jana Igunma and informing about further apologies for the current meeting, she presented the minutes from the Annual Meeting 2014 in Frankfurt and the financial report that had been compiled by our treasurer Margaret Nicholson.

On behalf of Jana Igunma, Doris briefly reported on the SEALG weblog and forwarded Jana’s appeal to all members to send in contributions.

Then Doris Jedamski reported on the book project which had been discussed at the previous meeting. First negotiations with one of the approached publishers had resulted in a tentative business plan for a possible SEALG book publication. The monograph will most likely be published both as print and as e-book. Two major problems, however, need to be tackled first: due to the immense workload that everyone has to cope with, it has become clear that such a publication project will have to be planned and carried out by a group of SEALG members willing and able to commit themselves to this project. It cannot be the responsibility of just one or two members. Furthermore, it has also been agreed upon a new approach. A conference volume is no longer desirable; the SEALG Newsletter will, however, still offer a platform for the publication of our conference papers. For the book publication a self-contained concept or theme is needed. Due to certain circumstances this project does not have priority at the moment but will be pursued in the future.

In connection with the publication project the question of fundraising has been touched upon. The idea was welcomed to contemplate fundraising activities, and even a small membership fee was shyly considered in order to finance measures to increase the visibility of the SEALG.

Next we discussed possible dates and venues of the SEALG Annual meeting in 2016. Both colleagues from Copenhagen, Per Hansen and Inga-Lill Blomkvist, were addressed and agreed to investigate possibilities of holding the 2016 meeting in
Scandinavia, possibly Copenhagen. Hamburg was noted as a second option, but could not be discussed further since the colleague was absent.

In their reports, the members often referred to somber news related to budget cutbacks and extensive workload, but also successfully completed projects and initiatives were mentioned.

The colleagues from Copenhagen reported that the removal of their libraries has been completed and that their work tasks have been adjusted to the new situation. Annabel Gallop announced the successful completion of a digitization project that had started in 2012. In collaboration with the National Library of Singapore and funded by William and Judy Bollinger, 56 Malay manuscripts have been digitized and are now accessible online on the British Library’s website.

Claudia Götze-Sam elaborated on the drastic development at the Berlin State Library. After many years of financial security, the library can no longer rely on the generous funding from The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG). With a major shift in focus the DFG has reduced its involvement in special collections drastically. Holger Warnk reported for the Library of Southeast Asian Studies at Frankfurt University that the retro-conversion of the catalogue had been completed in June 2015. The integration of the OPAC of the former Asia House Library is delayed due to technical problems. Furthermore, he reported on the efforts related to this year’s Frankfurt Book Fair with Indonesia as special guest of honour.

Liubov Goriaeva provided an overview on libraries in Moscow that hold materials on Southeast Asia and lamented the poor state they were in.

Jotika Khur-Yearn reported that SOAS Library has implemented its library management system (LMS) from the Millennium to Kuali Open Library Environment, known as "Kuali OLE". Also there was a significant change of staff members at senior level, as the heads of three sections of Acquisition, Archives & Special Collections and Teaching & Research Support retired or left, a new post was created as ‘Assistant Director - Research Library Services’ for the Directorate of the Library & Information Services to be in charge of the three sections.

Doris Jedamski informed the group about the latest developments at the Leiden University Library. Since 2010 three of the major Dutch heritage collections in the field of South- and Southeast Asia have been transferred to the Leiden University Library (UBL): the Library of the Institute Kern, the heritage and map collection of the Royal Tropical Institute Library, and, in 2014, the KITLV collection. The work pressure has increased drastically, but the possibilities to make these Asian collections more visible publicly have increased as well. The preparations for the new Asian Library, to be opened in 2017, have begun and are very intense - all in all a fabulous challenge. The Business Meeting was closed rather hastily due to the fact that the building was about to be locked. In the evening people met up for the conference dinner at Oscar’s – a French-Basque restaurant with an amazing Basque waitress not easy to forget.

**Saturday, 4 July 2015**

On Saturday morning, we met at Musée Guimet for a guided tour through the impressive exhibitions of Asian art and the library of the museum. We were welcomed by the Chief Librarian, Mrs Cristina Cramerotti, who gave an overview of the history of
the library and its current function. She emphasized the uniqueness of this library which had been designed to be the actual core of the collection; the museum was added later and was supposed to support the library. In the reading room we could also enjoy an exhibit of exquisite items from the collection. The second part of the visit was dedicated to the museum’s exhibition. Our very knowledgeable and enthusiastic guide, Mrs Gabrielle Gabbe, took us to see tangka’s, numerous splendid Buddha statues and reliefs, and the most delicate ancient objects of glass.

SEALG afternoon panel
This last session of the conference took place in the Panthéon Bouddhique, kindly opened up for us on a Saturday by Mr. Daniel Soulié.

The first speaker of the SEALG afternoon session, Annabel Gallop, spoke about the “Digitization of Malay and Indonesian manuscripts: an overview”. She demonstrated the ongoing efforts by showing examples of Malay manuscripts that were successfully digitized, at the same time pointing out difficulties that were encountered. Furthermore she elaborated on funding models.

Next, Claudia Götze-Sam informed us with her presentation “From Special Collections to Scientific Information Services: What Does It Mean for the Southeast Asian Collection of the Berlin State Library?” on the recent developments of the transformation of the concept of the “Special Collections” by the German Research Foundation into new structures of “Scientific Information Services” for a scientific community.

Liubov Goriaeva presented a paper on “French Studies of Malay-Indonesian Written Tradition: A Glance from Russia” which showed the importance of French scholars studying the literatures of Indonesia and Malaysia for the last two centuries, being among the first editors and translators of traditional Malay texts.


The last speaker, Doris Jedamski, dedicated her paper to the topic of “Ephemera – the Forgotten Ones?”. Ephemera are meant for short-time usage and considered to have no lasting value. Items such as posters, commercial flyers, menu cards, grocery lists, cinema and concert programs and even tickets, they all are usually not collected by libraries, despite the fact that they can provide relevant historical insights, in particular in daily social life. Jedamski made an urgent plea to start collecting ephemera systematically and to make them widely accessible through digitization.

Finally, we would like to thank Helen Porter and her colleagues from SAALG for the marvellous cooperation. Our special thanks go to Maïté Hurel and her EFEO team who turned this SAALG-SEALG Meeting into a great success and a wonderful experience in the tropical heat of Paris.
Participants touring the EFEO Library in Paris.
*Photograph by Doris Jedamski.*

Display of Thai and Burmese manuscripts.
*Photograph by Doris Jedamski.*
Under the Eyes of French Adventurers:
Social Conditions of the Upper Mekong Region in the 1860s

Jotika Khur-Yearn, SOAS, University of London

Introduction
A joint conference of the South Asia Archive and Library Group (SAALG) and the Southeast Asia Library Group (SEALG) was held in July 2015 at the École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) in Paris, France. Thanks to the conference organisers who chose a theme on ‘French connections with South and Southeast Asia’ I was inspired to extend the areas of my interest in Shan Studies. For, before this, I knew very little about historical relations between the Shan and the French. I thought this would be a great opportunity for me, as a subject librarian, to find out information resources on historical relations between the French and the Shan. I thought this would be a great opportunity for me, as a subject librarian, to find out information resources on historical relations between the French and the Shan. I thought this would be a great opportunity for me, as a subject librarian, to find out information resources on historical relations between the French and the Shan. I thought this would be a great opportunity for me, as a subject librarian, to find out information resources on historical relations between the French and the Shan. I thought this would be a great opportunity for me, as a subject librarian, to find out information resources on historical relations between the French and the Shan. I thought this would be a great opportunity for me, as a subject librarian, to find out information resources on historical relations between the French and the Shan. I thought this would be a great opportunity for me, as a subject librarian, to find out information resources on historical relations between the French and the Shan. I thought this would be a great opportunity for me, as a subject librarian, to find out information resources on historical relations between the French and the Shan.

Having said that, the Shan State shared its borders with Laos, a country that was once under French colonial rule. Therefore, I thought there could be a good chance of finding information resources on French-Shan’s historical connections, especially in the borderlands of the Upper Mekong Region.

This paper, which is a revised version of my paper presented at the SAALG/SEALG Conference mentioned above, is an attempt of revisiting some old sceneries of the Upper Mekong Region around the year 1867 AD, by following the footsteps of the French Mekong Expedition, also known as the Mekong Exploration Commission. The main discussion will be about some highlights of remarkable places and people of the Upper Mekong Region, including social customs and traditions of practices as recorded in the report of the commission. In the conclusion, I will say that this paper is the result of an early stage of my research on the history of the Upper Mekong River valley and raise some questions for further investigation. I hope that this paper will give insight into social, political and religious conditions in the Upper Mekong Region around 150 years ago.

The French Mekong Expedition and the Upper Mekong Region
The French Mekong Expedition took place between 1866 and 1868. It is probably less known among European records on the history of the region especially when comparing it with the journey of McLeod in 1837 and the more comprehensive records made by Sir James George Scott in 1900, which is one of the reasons for me to retract some footage of the French Mekong Exploration Commission.

The full report of the Mekong Exploration Commission was published in 1873 in four volumes. Volume two of the report covers the accounts of the commission’s adventures in several areas of Kengtung State. My reading of the report, however, is entirely relied on the English translation by Walter E. J. Tips (1996). There are some problematic issues as well as interesting topics in the report, which convinced me to get hold of and spend a great deal of time reading it.
Over the course of two years, the Mekong Exploration Commission traversed almost 9,000 km (5,592 m) from Saigon, the mouth of Mekong River, sailing up through the 19th century Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar into China's Yunnan province, and finally arrived in Shanghai where the group boarded a ship to return to Saigon.

The main aim of the commission was to explore and examine the course of the Mekong River, and whether it would be navigable as a trading route between Yunnan of China and Saigon of Cochin-China (in the far south of Vietnam). In addition, the commission also had made plans for observing wide areas of subject fields, such as indigenous affairs, economic conditions, trading products, weather conditions, religious beliefs and local traditions and practices etc.

Key members of the expedition were: 1. Ernest Doudart de Lagrée (captain, expedition leader, member of the Agricultural and Industrial Committee Cochin-China, entomologist), 2. Francis Garnier (lieutenant, inspector of Indigenous Affairs, mission leader after Doudart de Lagrée’s death), and 3. Louis Delaporte (lieutenant, archaeologist, artist, art historian).  

The commission left Saigon on 5 June 1866. They spent nearly four months between June and September 1867 on their exploration in the Kengtung State of the Upper Mekong Region, much longer than they wanted or intended to be, mainly due to the unexpected or underestimated problems they faced with regard to their travel documents for passing through the region, as shall be discussed further below.

1 (For more information, see in Wikipedia “Mekong Expedition”).  
2 Photo Source: https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Commission_at_Angkor_Wat.jpg  
3 Photo source: https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Route_of_the_French_Mekong_Expedition_1866-1868.jpg
At this point, I think it would be useful for general readers if I begin with a brief account of the political and administration systems of Burma and the Shan States during the second half of the 19th century. I hope this will offer an overview of the administration system or the political situations of Kengtung State that had a great impact on the French Mekong Exploration Commission during their time in Kengtung’s Upper Mekong Region. The Kengtung State was one of the federated Shan States, which were nominally ruled by Shan rulers, the Saophas, who paid tributes to the Kingdom of Ava (Burma). In other words, the Shan States were under the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Burma, which had extended its power to many parts of the Tai countries, and Kengtung State was obviously in this category. Although the Shan Saophas had the power to rule over their own states, they had to accept and work with the Burmese officers and soldiers who were sent by the court of Ava as the representatives of the governors of the Burmese Kingdom.

When the French Commission entered the territory of Kengtung State, they were facing problems with their travelling documents because they had not obtained an official permission from the kingdom of Burma in time for their journey. Before the group set off their journey in Saigon (southern Vietnam) in 1866 for the Mekong Expedition, the French admiral at Saigon did try to obtain permission from the Burmese court of Ava (Mandalay) for the expedition group to traverse through the Mekong River valley of the Kengtung region, but his attempt was in vain since the Burmese officials were too busy with their own internal affair of the palace revolution at that time (Garny/Tips 1996: 11-12; Wikipedia “Mindon Min”). So, the commission left Saigon without the required travel document risking themselves of facing trouble as they entered the territory of Kengtung State, but the trouble was probably much bigger than they expected. Nevertheless, they not only managed to overcome all the difficulties but also managed to visit several historical and remarkable places in the region.

Remarkable Places and People of the Upper Mekong Region
When looking at the geographical surface of the Upper Mekong Region during the second half of the 19th century, there were some significant differences to what we can see today on the map of the same areas. Some remarkable places mentioned in the report of the Mekong Exploration Commission include Xieng Khong, Xieng Sen, Tang Ho, Muong Lim, Muong Yong, Xieng Tong, Muong You, Muong Long, and Xieng Hong. One may note that the Romanization system for the names of the places above, as recorded in the Mekong Expedition report, are probably not familiar with most Shan or Tai people of the modern time. The more popular terms used for those places nowadays are: “Chiang Khong” (for “Xieng Khong”), “Chiang Saen” (Xieng Sen), “Mong Yawng” (Muong Yong), “Kengtung” or “Keng Tung” (Xieng Tong) and “Jinghong” (Xieng Hong); while some of the places such as “Mong Lin” (Muong Lim) and “Mong Yu” (Muong You) have become less popular; and places such as “Tāng Aw” (Tang Ho) seem to have disappeared from the map of today.
Among the historical places above, it is worth noting that Chiang Khong and Tang Ho were the two important borderland ports of the Mekong River for Siam (Thailand) and Kengtung State, Burma (Myanmar) respectively. This was true in the 1860s, as evidenced by the French Mekong Exploration Commission as they explored the Chiang Khong and Kengtung regions in 1867. Chiang Khong was served as the main port for its bordering matters with Kengtung during this period (late 19th century) because the old city of Chiang Saen, located to the north-west of Chiang Khong and closer to the border of Kengtung, seemed to be a ruined and deserted land at that time (Garnier/Tips 1996: 11-18).

When the Mekong Exploration Commission travelled up the Mekong River from Luang Prabang and arrived in Chiang Khong on 4 June 1867, they were held there for ten days mainly because their permission from the Siamese (Thai) authority to travel up the Mekong River was about to expire. So, Commander De Lagrée, leader of the Mekong Exploration Commission, had to send a letter to the King of Kengtung to obtain a permission to traverse the Mekong River valley of the Kengtung region into Yunnan province of China. The governor of Chiang Khong suggested that the group stayed there until they received a permission letter from Kengtung, because there was no human settlement beyond Chiang Khong up until the border of Kengtung and therefore there would be no safe place to stay and no supplies of food. However, Mr De Lagrée told the governor that it was not his business and persisted that they could look after themselves. So in the end, they were allowed to proceed with their journey and traversed up to Tang Ho (Tāng Aw), a port on the west bank of the Mekong River belonging to Kengtung, and waited there for a letter from the King of Kengtung.

Here, it is worth noting that the geography of this area has significantly changed in the last century, especially since the 1940s, as Mae Sai was created as a minor district in 1939 and became a full district only in 1950 (Royal Gazette in Thai, 55: 3873 & 66: 1433; Wikipedia “Mae Sai District”), and it has since become the main border town for Thailand and Tachileik for the Shan State of Myanmar. Moreover, by the late 20th century a new landmark “Golden Triangle” was created on the Mekong River and its surrounding areas bordering with Myanmar, Laos and Thailand, and therefore the ports
on all sides of the three countries surrounding Golden Triangle area have effectively become the key ports between those countries.

Another remarkable situation here is that, while the places like Mae Sai, Tachiliek and the Golden Triangle have grown and progressed, the place called Tang Ho (Tang Aw) seems to have disappeared from the map of today. Back in the second half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, Tang Ho was clearly an important port of the Mekong River, especially for trading between Kengtung, Siam, Luang Prabang (Laos) and further down to Cambodia and Cochin-China. When the French Mekong Expedition group arrived at Tang Ho on 18 June 1867, they stayed in the Sala (guesthouse), which belonged to the King of Kengtung, as there were already some traders and travellers staying in the Sala. They observed the trading of goods, which included salt for local consumption coming from Luang Prabang, balls of gambier and areca nuts which were ingredients of chewing betel (Garnier/Tips 1996: 19). The location of Tang Ho appears to have been slightly further to the north of today’s Golden Triangle.

While at Tang Ho, Mr De Lagrée realised that they had to wait for one or two more weeks to get any letter from Kengtung, so he sent another letter but this time to the governor of Mong Lin (recorded by Garnier as “Muong Lim”), a province of Kengtung State and the nearest town for Tang Ho, to allow him and his fellows to proceed to Mong Lin whilst waiting for the letter from the King of Kengtung. After long negotiations, Mr De Lagrée and his fellows were allowed to proceed their journey, with the support of twenty men to carry their supplies, and arrived in Mong Lin, a distance of fourteen kilometres (eight and half miles) away to the west of Tang Ho, on 23 June 1867.

A scene of music performance at Mong Lin, drawn by Louis Delaporte (1867)
In Mong Lin, the French Commission observed that there was a five-day market, and they were even surprised to see some products imported from Europe such as English textiles being on display in the market. Garnier reported: “We could not help admiring the ability and practical sense of our rivals in the export field” (Garnier/Tips 1996: 25). It was also reported that they were entertained by the “Muong” musicians, as Garnier wrote, “The principal singer had a pleasant voice and that the lively and the very rhythmic tune which he warbled did seem to be rather rousing. His companions repeated a very short refrain after each of the verses of the soloist, providing with the chorus, sung with remarkable unison” (Garnier/Tips 1996: 27). Mr Louis Delaporte, an artist and member of the commission, had drawn a picture showing an interesting scenario of the performance.

After waiting for about a week, the governor of Mong Lin, an old man in his seventies, informed Mr De Lagrée that he had received a letter from the King of Kengtung giving his permission for the commission to continue their journey to Mong Yawng. The French Commission left Mong Lin on 1 July 1867 heading their journey northwards for Paleo, Keng Lap and Mong Yawng. The French Commission were staying in Mong Yawng, a province of the Kengtung State for more than a month between 5 August and 8 September 1867 (Garnier/Tips 1996: 45, 70) although much of it was against their will, because they were facing serious problems with their travelling documents again here. Nevertheless they took the opportunity to explore the historical places of the area including the ruins of the old city of Mong Yawng, the pagoda of Phra Thāt Chom Yawng and the big Bodhi Tree. With the evidence of its ruined site, Mong Yawng was once a seat of a powerful kingdom.

In the report of the French Commission, Garnier wrote: “Within its walls, we found sizeable ruins of pagodas and extant dagobas (stupas); they indicated a state of prosperity and of great power. One of the most remarkable of these ruins rose on the flanks of the mountain under which the village stood. .... Thāt Chom Yawng appeared to be older than the ruins of Mong Yawng. .... After half an hour of walking, we arrived at a pouchrey [Bodhi Tree] of huge size, which, according to Buddhist legend, had probably been planted at the time of the monument’s construction. The tree was five to six meters in diameter. .... The monument itself consisted of large galleries which formed a square in the centre of which was a gilded pyramid, over-towered by an iron crown.” (Garnier/Tips 1996: 56-58) As one can well notice, the quotes given here are taken out of a long writing on a number of pages of the report of the French Exploration Commission on Mong Yawng and the That Chom Yawng pagoda. Records of historical and archaeological places such as this are invaluable for current and future scholars who would like to pursue their further research on the same areas for new findings or for comparative studies of developments and changes occurred in the areas in contrast with the conditions as stated in previous research works.4

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4 More information on Thāt Chom Yawng and Mong Yawng can also be found in Scott, J. G. 1901: Gazetteer of Upper Burma and Shan States, Pt 2, Vol. 1, pp. 434-437.
There is more interesting information on the Upper Mekong Region as recorded by the French Exploration Commission but my time and space are limited for this article. I hope that readers will be content with the highlights of the report of the French Exploration Commission presented here as useful information for some aspects of studies in the Upper Mekong Region.

Conclusion

The reports of the French Mekong Exploration Commission have provided invaluable information, among many records of their adventures the Mekong River valleys, covering vast areas of Southern China and mainland Southeast Asia, as well as rich information of resources for the study on several fields of the region and its people around the year of 1867. Since then, there is no doubt that the lands and people of the region had passed through different types of situations and changes. Some aspects of social conditions such as political and administration systems of the region may have been changed so much and so many times that many of them are almost unrecognizable, while other social aspects such as local customs and traditions of practices may have been continued and maintained by the communities although it is

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5 Garnier, Francis 1873. *Voyage d’exploration en Indo-Chine, effectué pendant les années 1866, 1867 et 1868 par une commission française présidée par M. le capitaine de frégate, Doudart de Lagrée*, p. 389.
also possible that at times such customs and traditions may have been affected by the changes of the political and governing systems. The point here is that the historical records such as the reports of the French Mekong Exploration Commission will be invaluable resources of information for the study of such changes and continuities in the region.

For example, it would be very interesting to see how the Bodhi tree in Mong Yawng today looks like when comparing it with the record about the tree made by the French adventurers almost 150 years ago. And the same or similar situation would apply to the pagoda of Phra That Chom Yawng which was observed and recorded in detail by the French Mekong Exploration Commission.

As I already said in the introduction, I have to admit here again that this paper is the reflection of an early stage of my research on the history of the Upper Mekong Region. Therefore, more research is needed to be done in order to find some clearer pictures of social conditions of the Upper Mekong Region at the time. Extensive fieldworks as well as local sources of information are crucial for support or clarification of the statements made in the reports of the French Mekong Exploration Commission. Local resources of information could be found in chronicles, oral and written historical accounts, old manuscripts, and so on. Therefore, most, if not all topics discussed in this paper, leave us with more questions for further investigation. I hope that my discussions on geographical notions, the systems of administration and religious traditions of practices of the Upper Mekong region as recorded in the reports of the Mekong Exploration Commission would shed some light for future studies on the history of the Upper Mekong Region.

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Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.m.wikimedia.org

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Archives about Indochina in the National Overseas Archives (ANOM)

Olivia Pelletier and Isabelle Dion, Centre des Archives nationales d'outre-mer (ANOM), Aix-en-Provence

The Centre des Archives nationales d'outre-mer (ANOM) preserves the archives of the administration of the former French possessions overseas, from the 17th century to the period of the independences in the middle of 20th century.

ANOM have been settled in Aix-en-Provence since 1966. The director of the National Archives chose this location in connection with the project of an active university center containing a unit of research on the colonial history. The building received first the documents produced in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia by the colonial administration. The Parisian archives of the services in charge of the French colonial empire’s management were added in 1996. Previously they were kept in « overseas section » at the national archives and in the office of the Ministère des Colonies (Hôtel de Montmorin, rue Oudinot) in Paris.

Among the numerous territories represented in collections preserved in the ANOM, Asia occupies a good place (the second after archives concerning Algeria) with Indochina and India mainly, but also other territories which were not directly under French administration and which maintained close relations with France overseas as the kingdom of Siam, Burma, Korea, Japan, China, Philippines, Dutch and Portuguese settlements.

Those archives are at the same time rich and complex. Rich, because they include funds highly varied: we find next to the paper archives, photos, postcards, maps and plans, a collection of posters as well as a very extensive library. In addition, the ANOM preserves an important collection of private documents acquired by gift or by purchase.

Centre des Archives nationales d'outre-mer, Aix-en-Provence. Reading room (© ANOM)
The web site of the ANOM (www.archivesnationales.culture.gouv.fr/anom/fr) proposes an Instrument of On-line Research (IREL) with a general state of collections, some on-line digitalized inventories, as well as evolving databases. We can consult there the catalogue of the library, and a database including photos (database Ulysse).

Besides the on-line inventories some series of documents are digitised, but the Asia area is not yet concerned. In 2016 the files about Nguyen Ai Quoc (alias Ho Chi Minh) will be consultable online. We also have started the project to put online in the coming years the digitized images of some files from the Gouvernement Général de l’Indochine administration after their restoration.

**French Indochina in the ANOM**

The archives of Indochina consist of two large sets from different origins: on one hand archives produced in Indochina by the various administrative departments set up by the French government in the various levels of the Indo-Chinese administrative organization (general Government, resident and resident superior) and on the other hand archives produced in France by the services in charge of this settlement.

Poster, ca. 1930 - FR ANOM 9Fi478
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I Ministerial archives

a) Secrétariat d’État à la Marine (17th-18th to first half of 19th centuries)

- Correspondance à l'arrivée d'Extrême-Orient (1658-1863), sous-série C 1 - FR ANOM COL C1 :
We find in this fund numerous documents on the policy and the French trade in Cochinchina, in China, Siam and Pegu (Myanmar, Burma) and also archives from the India Company. The inventory of this fund is on-line.

- Missions religieuses (1664-1804) sous-série F5A – FR ANOM COL F5A
  - Siam, Burma, Cochin China, Tonkin (1750-1789),
  - China (1680-1804),
  - India (1664-1791) / Missions religieuses
This fund contains an important collection of correspondences and reports from the office of the settlements in the ancient ministerial archives (17th-18th centuries). The inventory and the digitised images of documents are on-line.

b) Ministère des Colonies

- Dépôt des Fortifications des Colonies/ Cochinchine et supplément Indochine - FR ANOM DFC:
Created in 1778, the Deposit of Maps and Plans of Colonies is grouped the graphic documents and the reports concerning the French possessions. It contains numerous documents on citadels and military barracks but also plans of rivers, of towns and administrative buildings. At the moment only maps and plans about India are on-line on the database Ulysse.

« Plan général de la colonie de chandernagor … » - FR ANOM 27DFC9A
(© ANOM subject to the rights reserved to authors and rights holders)
Several other ministerial funds do not concern exclusively Indochina but contain major files about it:

- **Service de Liaison des Originaires des territoires français d'outre-mer (SLOTFOM) (1911-1957) – FR ANOM 4001 à 4015 COL**
  This fund keeps files produced by the « Service de contrôle et d’assistance des indigènes » (CAI). This service was responsible for the supervision and the surveillance of the natives of the French overseas territories. We find files on the surveillance of the political activities of associations and of persons, reports of the controllers about workers, all of which concern the nationalist and communist movements. The complete detailed inventory is on-line.

- **Commission parlementaire dans les territoires d’outre-mer dite Commission Guernut (1936-1938) - FR ANOM 130 COL**: This commission was in charge of improving the conditions of life in French settlements. Files are often richly illustrated with photos, drawings, graphic materials, plans of traditional architecture, health, demography, crafts and industry. Reports and notes concern economic, political and social conditions. The online inventory is complemented by a documentary file « document du mois ».

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Picture of a Vietnamese family, 1936
FR ANOM 130 COL 93

Vietnam, floating house, drawing, 1936,
FR ANOM 130 COL 93
- **Agence économique de la France d’outre-mer (1897-1967) – FR ANOM 110 COL**

This fund consists of documentary files produced by the Agency, including those from the Economic Agency of Indochina. They complete administrative files which we can find in the other funds in the on-line inventory.

Note that a very important part of the collection of photos stemming from this fund is on-line on the database Ulysse.

**II Local or territorial archives**

Further to an agreement signed on 15 June 1950 between France and the three countries of Indochina (Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia) archives of sovereignty concerning the acts of high administration, the organization of the police, the justice and the army, files of staff, returned to France between 1951 and 1956, whereas archives emanating from technical departments remained on-the-spot (education, tribunals, public building, health...).

The archives of the government of Cochinchina entirely remained on-the-spot. It does not mean that we do not preserve any document about this territory in ANOM. Quite the opposite, many files can be consulted in the fund of General Government of Indochina or in ministerial archives in ANOM.

Local archives arrived at Aix-en-Provence in 1966. The director of the French National Archives wished to implant the archives of French Algeria and settlement there in connection with a project of an active university center containing a unit of research on colonial history.

- **Amiraux / Gouvernement général de l'Indochine (1858-1945) – FR ANOM GGI**

This fund contained more than 66,000 files from the central archives of Indochina. They are easily accessible by two inventories: one classified by archival series, the other one by alphabetical order (geographical and personal names, subjects). The inventory of this fund is going to be put on-line gradually from 2016.

- **Résidences supérieures et Hauts-Commissariat de France**

These funds are very important even if they are incomplete. We find there numerous documents about the administrative organisation and political situation in those territories.

- **Tonkin (1883-1945) - FR ANOM RST**

The main part of this fund is kept in Hanoi, Center n°1 of the national Vietnamese archives. Only about 9,000 files are in Aix-en-Provence. It is planned to put the inventory on-line from 2016.

- **Annam (1875-1952) - FR ANOM RSA**

This very incomplete fund is represented only by remains of the archives of the upper resident and its services. The main part of the documents is kept in Center n°2 in Ho Chi Minh-City.

- **Cambodge (1893-1943) - FR ANOM RSC**
- **Laos (1885-1952) – FR ANOM RSL**
- Etat-Major des troupes de l’Indochine (1880-1899) – FR ANOM EMI
This fund includes correspondences, journals of recognitions, travel journals of regiments, reports of the circles of the military territories. We shall also underline the cartographic and iconographic aspect of certain documents.

This fund includes files established by Security services in Indochina. It also includes files on the organisation and the activities of the various governments, on the state of mind of the populations, files about political and religious personalities, as well as on negotiations between France and national governments. The detailed inventory is online.

File about Nguyen Ai Quôc (alias Ho Chi Minh), around 1930 – FR ANOM 6 HCI 364

III Private archives

Entered by donations, deposits or acquisitions, private archives are a very rich source in ANOM because they contain various types of documents: notes, reports, private and official correspondences and also photos, journals etc. They come from agents of the administration, from institutions or from political or intellectual figures.
We can mention some examples among the most significant private archives:
a) Archives from agents:

- **Auguste Pavie (1814-1947) – FR ANOM 46 APC**
  Consul to Luang Prabang in 1886 and general consul in Bangkok in 1892. The ANOM funds is very rich and interesting, it contains travel journals, correspondences, drawings, maps. The detailed on-line inventory is complemented by an on-line exhibition.

- **Papiers Le Myre de Viliers (1877-1893) – FR ANOM 7 PA**
  We find in this fund documents concerning the governor's activities of Cochin-China (1879-1882), deputy of this colony, plenipotentiary minister in the Siam (1893) and also travel journals of the members of Pavie's mission (1889-1893).

- **Albert Sarraut (1891-1918) – FR ANOM 9PA**
  The fund includes the papers of Sarraut as governor general of Indochina (on 1911-1913, 1916-1919): political affairs, native questions, finances, land tax, concessions, military affairs, tourism, ethnographical museum of Saigon.

- **Emile Bollaert (1945-1949) – FR ANOM 19 APC**
  This small fund contains papers related to the appointment of Bollaert as high-commissioner of Indochina (1947-1948). Documents concern only few political affairs and general administration, but more personal interventions of Bollaert as high-commissioner.

- **Léon Pignon - FR ANOM 59 PA (1949-1950)**
  This little fund contains some reports of the Pau conference (July-November 1950) and **FR ANOM 120 APOM (1946-1958)**: The fund includes documents and letters emanating from the office of the high-commissioner, as well as the files concerning the operations on the piasters in the Indochinese area,

- **Marius Moutet (1936-1968) – FR ANOM 60 APOM**
  We find in the fund documents on his activity as Colonial Secretary (on 1936-1937, 1946-1947) some reports and correspondence on the situation in 1936-1937 in Indochina, in particular on the revolutionary activities and the anti-French agitation, the strikes; press articles, posters, pamphlets and a file on governor Varenne.

b) Archives from private institutions and associations:

- **Comité central français pour l'outre-mer (1863-1965) – FR ANOM 100 APOM**
  The fund includes the archives of the French colonial Union, the Committee of the trade, the industry and the agriculture of Indochina, the French colonial Institute, the Committee of the French Empire, the Central committee of overseas and the French Central committee of overseas. The detailed inventory is on-line.
- **Musée de la France d’Outre-Mer (1724-1984) - FR ANOM 83 APC**
The fund contains a collection of autographs, bibliographic notes and documentation about all territories on the most diverse subjects.

- **Fonds Albert Sallet/Association des Amis du Vieux Hué (1877-1948)**
The Sallet collection in ANOM comprises about 15,000 handwritten pages in Quoc-ngu, Nom, Cham and French characters; of 600 drawings and of a personal correspondence with scientific character. It also includes the collection of the Association des Amis du Vieux Hué. A « dossier du mois » presents this collection online. The detailed inventory will be on-line in 2016.

Two coloured drawings, ca. 1926 - FR ANOM / fonds Albert Sallet
IV The photographic collections on Indochina in ANOM

The ANOM make available iconographic items such as photographs, postcards, prints, drawings, posters either from public administration offices or private individuals for researchers. These documents numbering about 150,000 date from the seventeenth century to the 1970s. We can find all types of photographs: positive or negative glass plates, flexible negatives, cyanotypes, albumen prints, aristotypes, silver prints. The ANOM have begun to digitise photographic resources in the past years.

Photography in Indochina came into existence very early. For example, Emile Gsell was active in Saigon from 1866. We keep photos for all territories, Laos being the one that is less present. We distinguish between public and private images.

The first institution to have photographed Indochina is the Colonial Office created in 1899. It was in charge of monitoring the evolution of colonial policy; including an information service on emigration, a permanent exhibition of samples coming from the colonies, a library; it was related to the different colonial museums like Lyon, Marseille and Bordeaux. It has recovered part of the archives of the permanent exhibition of the colonies created in 1855 which became a museum (Musée des Colonies) later in 1900 after the World Expo. The exhibitions are an opportunity to gather photographs that are made by the colonial administration or professional photographers. The images of the Office are composite because they include vintage prints and more modern reprints.

Among the public photos the Agence economique de la France d'outre-mer must be mentioned. It covers the years 1890-1940 and it is the heiress of the colonial Office. Special attention should be given to the Agence FOM second series which was made between 1916 and 1935 by the Service photocinématographique of Indochina (René Tétart), and then by the Office of Tourism and propaganda (Léon Busy) as well as by the Air Force (Aeronautique militaire).

Before the First World War there was no systematic photographic campaign in the Indochinese territories. This procedure was only created by Albert Sarraut with the Service photocinématographique of Indochina. However, Paul Doumer had promoted his actions on road works by inviting the Parisian photographer Eugène Piroux on site. The Hanoi Exhibition 1902 was the opportunity to host many photographers such as Maurice Bucquet, chairman of photo-club of Paris, Léon Gaumont or Jules Richard who created the verascope camera, but also local photographers.

Among the first photographers we have Emile Gsell. Then, there was Doctor Hocquard who stayed in Tonkin for 30 months. Another important source is that of the missions. We can cite Gsell or Firmin Salles during his inspection tours. Also exemplary photos of Pavie or his companions like Cupet must be mentioned. Others featured in exhibitions such as Aurelian Pestel. In addition to that, photographs were made by the military, civilian directors or settlers.
The ANOM also retain many private sources, for example:
- Dr. Hocquard (49Fi and 56FIB): He was a doctor and he accompanied the army in Tonkin from 1884 to 1886. You can see the photos in the Ulysses database.
- 56Fi: these are prints of Indochina: many clichés that are reproductive engravings taken in old books or magazines like the *Illustration*, the *Tour du Monde*, and some watercolours. This is a documentary collection on Indochina from the beginning (you can find a portrait of Alexandre de Rhodes)
- Le Guennec (58Fi): concerns Saigon and its surroundings and Cambodia (Phnom Penh and Angkor) in the end of XIXe (58Fi)
- Gastaldy (66Fi): especially Angkor, circa 1930.
- Paul Oursou (78Fi): concerns Tonkin and Annam between 1900 and 1921. About 600 glass plates.
- Baudouin, former governor (82Fi): 900 glass plates.
- Archimbaud (88Fi): several hundred postcards.
- Jean-Marie Goddard (92Fi): over 1,300 glass plates.
- Père Guesdon (96Fi): on Cambodia in 1876-1888.
- Dr. Pineau (97Fi): glass plates from between 1885 and 1902 on Cambodia and Cochin China.
- Charles Lemire (143Fi): especially on Annam

The ANOM try to enrich their collection by purchasing photos, albums or glass plates. We also receive donations occasionally. We are digitizing as many albums and glass plates as possible. You can see many photos in the Ulysses database.
Angkor, 8FI98 Album Gsell

Meos (Hmong), 8Fi524 5e territoire miliaire.

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French Studies of Nusantara: A Glance from Russia

Liubov Goriaeva, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow

In this article I would like to reflect on French scholars of Malay written tradition and their considerable impact on our research work - my own and that of my Russian colleagues. While still at the university I decided to study the traditional Malay narrative. At this time - in the mid-sixties – it was not an easy task: in Moscow libraries one could find no more than half a dozen original texts and only two Russian translations. Almost all of the original texts available were published in Jawi script. My choice fell on the *Hikayat Si Miskin* (“The Story of the Poor Man”) – a masterpiece of Malay fictional literature, full of magic and adventure. The only edition I could find in Moscow was a lithographed book in Jawi script, so I had to learn to read it.

Fortunately, at that time in Moscow libraries one could find a number of books of French scholars studying Malay written tradition. My knowledge of French turned out to be of much help to me in my research work. I would like to mention in the first place Edouard Dulaurier who copied in 1840, also in Jawi script, a number of Malay manuscripts from Raffles’ collection (Royal Asiatic Society, London) which became part of the Malay manuscript collection at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Later Dulaurier published in Jawi script a two-volume book *Collection des principales chroniques malayes* (1849-1856) which included the texts of *Hikayat Raja Pasai* (“Pasai Chronicle”) and a part of *Sejarah Melayu* (“Malay Annals”).

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Following Dulaurier, there was Aristide Marre who published in 1874 his translation of the above-mentioned Hikayat Raja Pasai ("Pasai Chronicle") and, in 1877, a translation of the famous Malay mirror Taj as-salatin ("The Crown of Kings") written in 1603 by Bukhari al-Jawhari. While still at the university, I could read and appreciate these masterpieces of Malay written tradition, both in Jawi-Malay and French. Many years later I decided to translate these two texts from Malay into Russian. Taj as-salatin ("The Crown of Kings") has been published in Moscow in 2011. The Russian translation of the Hikayat Raja Pasai ("Pasai Chronicle") is forthcoming; it should appear before the end of this year.

In the 1970-ies a new generation of French scholars gave a second breath to Nusantara studies and especially to studies of the Malay written tradition. The academic journal Archipel became the center of attraction for researchers outside France, among them several Russians - to mention only B. Parnickel, V. Braginsky, A. Ogloblin, S. Kullanda and myself.

I also had a chance of knowing personally the head of the Archipel team - Denys Lombard. His book The Aceh Sultanate during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda (1967) has been of major importance to me when I worked on my Russian translation of “The Crown of Kings” and also to my friend and colleague V. Braginsky when he wrote his book about the famous sufi poet from Sumatra - Hamzah Fansuri.

The encyclopaedic work written by D. Lombard – Le Carrefour Javanais (Javanese crossroad, 1990) - is really an unrivalled masterpiece of historical writing, exhaustive in data and giving a complex image of several socio-cultural strata forming the identity of Nusantara.
Going back to studies of written tradition, first of all I would like to mention my friend and colleague Henri Chambert-Loir. At the Annual Meeting of SEALG in Frankfurt last year I spoke about diplomatic and critical editions of Malay manuscripts. Such works of H. Chambert-Loir like the *Hikayat Dewa Mandu* (1980) and *Cerita Asal bangsa jin dan segala dewa-dewa* (1985) are really exemplary critical editions, while *Syair Kerajaan Bima* (1982) is a model diplomatic edition, giving an exhausting description of the unique manuscript of this poem.

His article on versions of the Malay Mahabharata has been of much help to me when I prepared my edition of Raffles’ manuscript №2 of the *Hikayat Pandawa Jaya* (“The Story of the glorious Pandawas”): the Russian translation has been published in Moscow in 2011 and the Malay edition of the text and research work is in print now in Kuala Lumpur, at the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Publishing House.

Together with H. Chambert-Loir, Russian scholars studied the Malay manuscript collection of St. Petersburg. Most of these manuscripts originated from a lending library of Batavian scribes of the second part of the 19th century (the Fadli family). Henri Chambert-Loir, together with V. Braginsky and M. Boldyreva, was among the first to explore this collection. An article about the manuscripts from this collection was published by Braginsky and Boldyreva in *Archipel* (vol. 40, 1990). My article about three of these manuscripts was also published in *Archipel* (vol. 61, 2001).

When I decided to translate one of these manuscripts – *Hikayat maharaja Marakarma* – Henri helped me a lot to collect data about all known manuscripts bearing this title. As I
could find out, the St. Petersburg manuscript contained not the well-known Malay story by the name of *Hikayat Marakarma*, but its sequel, with a new generation of heroes as its main actors. Thus, the text of this *Hikayat* turned out to be unique: its edition comprised a facsimile on CD disc, a transliteration and a Russian translation, together with a research article.


As a result of his almost 30-year-long work on the St. Petersburg collection and on the Fadli lending library, in 2013 H. Chambert-Loir published in Jakarta a catalogue of manuscripts from this library now stored at the National Library of Indonesia (Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia).

To continue the subject of manuscripts’ edition, I would very much like to speak about Monique Zaini-Lajoubert – in particular about two books of hers. The first one is *Hikayat Indera Quraisyin* (1998) – a text of an anonymous Malay author from Sri Lanka. Being a meticulous critical edition, this book is at the same time an exemplary research work. The second book is *Karya Lengkap Abdullah bin Muhammad al-Misri* (works by Abdullah bin Muhammad al-Misri) – published in Jakarta in 2008. It comprises 5 texts of a Malay author, not very well-known even by specialists, with research articles and comments. This writer – Abdullah Al-Misri – really fascinated me and I decided to translate into Russian one of his works – *Hikayat tanah Bali* (“The History of Bali”). My translation has been published in 2013 in the academic journal “Written Monuments of the Orient” and I can only thank Monique who allowed me (as well as the other Russian readers) to know this author and his books.
Last but not least, I would like to mention here a scholar of a younger generation – Paul Wormser who published in 2012 a research about the encyclopaedic work of Nuruddin ar-Raniri – *Bustan as-Salatin* (“The Garden of Kings”) written in mid-17th century. For this research, P. Wormser was awarded The Jeanne Cuisinier prize in 2011. For a number of reasons the book of ar-Raniri has never been published in full – only some parts and chapters of it. P. Wormser draws a picture of ar-Raniri’s time trying to shed light on some details of his biography and on the problem of his authorship. From my point of view, in some sense this book is a culminating point in French studies of the Malay written tradition.

It is regrettable that in Malay studies there is no more time for research works written in French or Russian. Now, to be read by a larger audience, both French and Russian scholars of Malay culture have to write their books in English and Indonesian or Malay. Fortunately, the *Javanese crossroads* of Denys Lombard finally has been translated into Indonesian - 15 years after the French edition! Fortunately, V. Braginsky could publish in English his fundamental work *The Heritage of traditional Malay literature*, more than twenty years after it appeared in Russian. It is also my case with the forthcoming edition of *Hikayat Pandawa Jaya* in Kuala Lumpur, five years after the publication of its Russian version. And the book by P. Wormser about ar-Raniri, will it finally be read by people who do not speak or read French?

But all these are just complaints of an elderly person and I ask you to excuse me for them. In conclusion, I take the liberty to express my gratitude to all French scholars of Malay culture, both gone from us and living, for their friendship and support.

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Indonesia calling! Crowdsourcing catalogue records for the British Library’s Indonesian collection

Annabel Teh Gallop, British Library, London

The British Library holds about 10,000 printed books in Indonesian, from early 19th century mission imprints through to contemporary research-level publications. Though not as comprehensive as the collections at the National Library of Indonesia or in Dutch, American and Australian libraries, the British Library nonetheless holds some rare and important Indonesian titles, ranging from educational publications in Malay printed in Batavia in the late 19th century to early works of modern Indonesian literature, with a particular strength in the social sciences – law, politics, economics – from the 1950s and 1960s.

Indonesian literary works from the 1960s and 1970s in the British Library.

Since 1982 Indonesian publications have been catalogued through a computerised system and can be searched on the British Library’s online catalogue ExploreBL. Before that date, books were catalogued on cards, hand-typed by curators, and this card catalogue of about 4,000 earlier Indonesian titles has only been accessible in London, in the Asian and African Studies Reading Room in the British Library at St. Pancras.
An example of an Indonesian catalogue card, with the British Library shelfmark, 14650.dd.11, in the top right corner.

In order to widen access to this and other such valuable collections, the British Library has developed LibCrowds, a platform for hosting experimental crowdsourcing projects. The first project series is Convert-a-Card, which contains projects for the retro-conversion of the Indonesian and Chinese card catalogues into electronic records, in order to make them available to a worldwide audience via ExploreBL. LibCrowds was launched in June 2015, and since then the three drawers of Indonesian cards have been successfully tackled by contributors from all over the world.

So far we have found a hit-rate of around 50% in which the catalogue card has been successfully matched with an electronic catalogue record for the same Indonesian book sourced from another library retrieved from the WorldCat database. For a successful match, at least two volunteers need to select the same WorldCat record, lowering the risk of misidentification. The British Library shelfmark, shown in the top-right corner of the card, is then added by the contributor to the electronic record. Following completion of the project, quality control is performed by British Library staff, including spot checks by the curator for the relevant language collections, investigation of any volunteer comments, checking of shelfmark queries as well as a series of other automated checks.
Indonesian publications on law, politics and international relations from the 1960s in the British Library.

For more information on the LibCrowds project, please see the following links:

Please contribute to the Indonesian Card Catalogue project: http://www.libcrowds.com/blplugin/indonesiancardcatalogue_d3/

LibCrowds homepage, with links to blog and progress reports: http://www.libcrowds.com/about

Read about the Indonesian and Chinese card catalogue project on the British Library’s Asian and African studies blog: http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/services/blog/6a00d8341c464853ef017ee63efb3d970d/search?filter.q=libcrowds&search.x=0&search.y=0

Email: crowdsourcing@bl.uk

Twitter: https://twitter.com/LibCrowdsRead

With thanks to Alex Mendes, British Library, and all who helped with the development of LibCrowds.
SEALG Blog

For regular updates regarding the work and annual meetings of SEALG and our partner organisations and institutions, please visit our blog at the following URL:

http://southeastasianlibrarygroup.wordpress.com/

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