

# A Tentative Interpretation of the Chinese Inscription (1231) Engraved on a Bronze Gong Recovered in Muara Jambi {Central Sumatra.

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## A Tentative Interpretation of the Chinese Inscription (1231) Engraved on a Bronze Gong Recovered in Muara Jambi {Central Sumatra}

[article]

  Claudine Salmon

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## Résumé (fre)

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L'histoire du gong et de sa diffusion en Asie en général et en Insulinde en particulier reste encore très mal connue. Dans un travail récent, Inge Skog concluait qu'il y a très peu d'information sur cet instrument de musique à Java avant le XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle. Or, la mise au jour d'un «gong militaire» pourvu d'une inscription chinoise datée des Song du Sud (1231) à l'intérieur du complexe d'un temple apparemment bouddhique de Muara Jambi fait remonter l'introduction de l'instrument plus loin dans le temps. Cette découverte assez extraordinaire - à notre connaissance, aucun autre gong daté n'a été retrouvé en Chine même pour les hautes époques - a permis de reconsidérer l'histoire de cet instrument dans un contexte géographique allant de la Chine à l'Insulinde. L'article envisage successivement le cadre et les circonstances de la découverte qui remonte au début des années 1980, le gong lui-même d'un point de vue technique, en le comparant aux plus anciens gongs retrouvés en Chine mais aussi dans des épaves de bateaux d'Insulinde, sa technique de fabrication, et l'usage de l'instrument dans la Chine des Song; enfin l'inscription elle-même, son interprétation et les hypothèses concernant le lieu où le préfet, qui est à l'origine de l'inscription et du don, a pu être en poste - en Chine ou à Srivijaya - et, par voie de conséquence, sur les liens entre ces deux pays.

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## Texte intégral

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Claudine Salmon

A Tentative Interpretation of the Chinese Inscription (1231) Engraved on a Bronze Gong Recovered in Muara Jambi (Central Sumatra) (\*)

In order to better appraise the inscription, we will first briefly present the archaeological site of Muara Jambi, the circumstances of the gong's recovery, and the significance of the discovery in the Chinese and the Insulindian contexts of the time. We will also reflect on the gong from a technical point of view, emphasizing its unusual features as compared to

other recovered instruments, and provide a brief overview of uses of gongs in Song times; finally we will present the inscription and elaborate on its contents.

## **The setting**

Muara Jambi is located to the northeast of the present Jambi, capital of the province of the same name, at a distance of about 25 km, on the left bank of the Batang Hari River. The antiquities, located a few hours downstream, were first noticed by the English lieutenant S. C. Crooke who visited the place in 1820. He writes: (2)

Moeara Djambi is said to have been a capital town, and to have in its vicinity ruins of brick or stone buildings, containing images and other sculpture; but time was wanting to

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search for and examine these remains of antiquity; and nothing was discovered but a mutilated diminutive figure of an elephant, and a full sized head in stone, having curly hair, in the style of a judge's wig, and perfectly Caffre cast of features. This later is sent with this report.

In 1936 the Austrian F. M. Schnitger partially excavated the temple of Gumpung (see map n° 5). (3) But the first intensive excavations, although not systematic, were started in 1976 and have continued during the 1980s and the 1990s at different sites from the coastline all the way up to Jambi. (4) Impressive preservation works were carried out on the site of Muara Jambi (see map), and a museum was erected (opposite Candi Gumpung) in which some of the artefacts that have been recovered are displayed. (5) The site is quite large. From East to West it spreads over 7,5 kilometres along the Batang Hari and covers an area of some 12 square kilometres. Eight main temples or candi have been excavated to the west of the river (Kota Mahligai, Kedaton, Gedong I, Gedong II, Gumpung, Tinggi, Kembar Batu, Astana) and one on the east (Kemingking).

The archaeological record shows that the volume of trade declined in Palembang during and after the 11th century and increased in the Batang Hari sites, involving a shift of the Srivijayan capital from Palembang to a so far unknown site in the region of present day Jambi. (6)

## **Brief overview of the archaeological finds**

During the restoration works various objects were recovered, including Chinese and local ceramics, (7) one golden bowl and another one in silver, a "golden blade" with a Chinese inscription that has apparently not been

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1. Reproduction of the Muara Jambi site museum map showing the main remains (2002)

" menapo " or remains of old buildings

housing complex river

canal track local road asphalt road

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2!

map showing the main remains (2002)

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investigated, coins ranging from the Tang to the Northern Song dynasties, and a few bronze artefacts among which were a fragment of a statue (8), a nail, and a gong with a Chinese inscription dated 1231. More recently a few other bronze artefacts were found by the local population, the most impressive being a straight-handled deep belly cauldron that was recovered in 1994 near Candi Kedaton. It is 67 cm high, has a diameter of 106 cm and a weight of 160 kg (plate 8). (9)

**The gong and its significance**

According to Machi Suhadi, it was around 1980 that the gong was found by archaeologists in the precincts of the presumably Buddhist sanctuary of Candi Kembar Batu (see map n° 8, also plates 2-5). We were told that it was unearthed "between two monuments", but the detailed circumstances of its discovery are unrecorded. Presently the gong is displayed in the Jambi province museum; unfortunately it has been placed in the dark corner of a glass case so that it is impossible to scrutinize it. A mere transcript of its inscription,

presumably made by Machi Suhadi himself, was published in 1985 in appendix to a brief note he wrote on old Javanese inscriptions found on bricks unearthed in Muara Jambi (10); the author was apparently not aware of the tentative translation published (but without a transcript) two years earlier by O. W. Wolters in an article that surveyed various Chinese sources dealing with early Indonesia in general and Srivijaya in particular. 1 ; The author, who was much puzzled by the mysterious gong, concluded by saying:

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The object cannot even be assumed to have arrived in Sumatra in 1231 or soon afterwards. The discovery is interesting because it calls attention to Candi Kembar Batu. Further discoveries may help to explain why the bronze found its last home in Muara Jambi.

Although we are not in a position to solve the mystery surrounding the gong, we think that for at least two reasons this object deserves further research.

First, to the best of our knowledge it is the only recovered bronze gong that bears an inscription dating back to the thirteenth century. In China proper, apart from bells, ritual vessels and religious effigies, rather few artefacts in that alloy from the Southern Song period (1127-1278) have survived. As is known the shortage of copper in Song China was a recurrent issue. Jerome Ch'en notes (12) that when the government was reconstituted in Hangzhou 1132 Emperor Gaozong issued an edict, ordering the people to surrender their copper goods to the government and at the same time banning the manufacture of such goods. This being insufficient, in 1154 the Emperor himself set an example by giving 1,500 bronze articles in his Palace collection to the Imperial mint. This measure being still insufficient, a national search was carried out, which resulted in the procurement of some 2 millions catties of brass and bronze from the ordinary people. Successive measures were taken to stop the making of bronze articles (13) and throughout the period of the Southern Song this prohibitive policy remained unaltered. Given this dramatic scarcity of copper, the discovery of a Southern Song gong in Muara Jambi takes a peculiar significance.

Second, the history of gongs either in China or in Southeast Asia has so far remained rather poorly documented in spite of the efforts made by various scholars, and more especially Heinrich Simbriger, who in the late 1930s provided an overview on gong traditions in Asia. (14) Since Simbriger's study has appeared, a few archaeological finds as well as further research have already modified our knowledge of gong traditions. (15) For instance in China proper the rare gongs that have been excavated may be dated by association, especially when they are found in tombs, and the oldest ones go back to the Han dynasty as we will see below. As regards Insulinde

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2. - 3. The enclosures of Candi Kembar Batu showing remains of minor foundations (2002)

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2. - 3. The enclosures of Candi Kembar Batu showing remains of minor foundations (2002)



2. - 3. The enclosures of Candi Kembar Batu showing remains of minor foundations (2002)

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4. The first part of the main sanctuary seen from the rear (2002)

5. The second part of the main sanctuary (2002)



4. The first part of the main sanctuary seen from the rear (2002)



5. The second part of the main sanctuary (2002)

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in peculiar, Jaap Kunst and Inge Skog have greatly contributed to our knowledge. Kunst asserts that the first gamelan was put into service in 347A.D. (16) and refers to Chinese historical texts describing a "gong culture" in Java since at least the 7th century. (17) More recently Skog (18) has attempted to reconsider the history of Javanese gongs by investigating Chinese, Javanese, and Western literary records and archaeological sources and she expresses serious doubts regarding the history of the Javanese gong culture as presented by Kunst, saying that Kunst was misled by the Chinese translations he relied on; and Skog concludes that contrary to what is generally stated no reliable historical records attest the existence of early gong ensembles in Java :

There is very little evidence of gongs in Java in Javanese and Chinese sources before the fourteenth century. The remarkably few examples - in Javanese texts - that still remain after an examination of the sources mention single gongs only, mostly used for military purposes; there is no information on gong ensembles or gong-chimes. ^9)

On the basis of present knowledge, it seems that we now have to consider the Muara

Jambi gong mainly in the context of Chinese traditions.

## The gong as seen from a technical point of view

Thanks to the photographs taken by P.- Y Manguin in 1982 we are in a slightly better position than O. W. Wolters, who had only seen a rubbing, to appraise both the object and its inscription.

### Size and shape

The instrument is plain and belongs to the category of suspended gongs for its rim has two small holes in which a string could be introduced. It is about 45 cm in diameter and its rim, is 6 or 7 cm deep, and with a green patina. Unlike the usual Javanese gong of the gamelan which has a boss, this one has a flat surface and its rim is turned back at a sharp angle instead of being re-entrant. Simbriger has showed that this type of gong was widely spread from China, Japan and Korea in the north to the Philippines and Borneo to the south and to India to the West. (20)

### Comparisons with other archaeological finds

The oldest bronze gongs (in modern Chinese: tongluo 铜锣) so far excavated in China date from the early Western Han dynasty (206 B.C.-25

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A.E.). One was found in a tomb at Luobowan 罗博湾 near Guixian 贵县, Guangxi 广西 in 1976. (21) It is 33 cm in diameter in its biggest dimension; it is "slightly dished" (see plate n° 9) with a rim curved back. The central part (in Chinese: "the heart", luoxin 锣心) is only 22 cm in diameter; on the rim are fixed three movable rings, the purpose of which is to suspend the gong by means of a string. (22) It seems that these musical instruments also reached China from the north-west. The Yueshu 乐书 "Book about Music" by Chen Yang 陈旸 (early 12th century) states that gongs, named shaluo 沙锣, presumably the transcription of a foreign term (possibly of Tibeto-Burmese origin) (23) from which luoxin 锣心 is derived, as well as other musical instruments then used by Western populations (called Hu 胡) were introduced into the territory of the Northern Wei 北魏 dynasty after the reign of Emperor Xuanwu 宣武帝 (500-514) when the population started to enjoy the music of the Hu. (24)

Jerome Ch'en made a survey of the Song bronzes discovered in China from 1950 to 1959 as recorded in the archaeological journal Wenwu 文物 and reached the conclusion that they yielded "a very poor crop of Song bronzes". (25) In the table he compiled, for the areas of Guangdong 广东, Guangxi 广西, Fujian 福建, Zhejiang 浙江 and Hunan 湖南, where the more important Song copper mines were situated, slightly better scores are recorded: apart from mirrors and coins, the discovery consists mostly of useful goods such

as hair-pins, hair-clips, ear-picks and so on, and ceremonial wares. In a pit excavated in Nanping j<sup>h</sup>f<sup>h</sup> (Fujian) (26) that may possibly have been a hiding-place were found some eighty bronze artefacts among which effigies, mirrors, musical instruments such as zhong §§&, bell(s), and qing if or "piece(s) of metal used as a gong", that were probably originally kept in temples where the prohibitive measures of the Song did

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6. Overview of the bronze gong

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7. The gong inscription of 1231

7. The gong inscription of 1231 (photo P.-Y. Manguin, 1982)

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not apply, but apparently no trace of gongs. During the Song times, says Jerome Ch'en, the bronze industry in general was very depressed and consequently the quality of the products could not have been very high. (27) It is true that the gongs recovered in Insulinde corroborate Jerome Chen 's view, as we will see now.

Gongs were found at least in two wrecks: that of Pulau Buaya (to the north of Lingga Island), which contains finds from the Song period (28) and that of the Java Sea, which by association with the ship may be dated from the mid- 13th century. (29) According to the Pulau Buaya Report, "eight flat and slightly misshapen circular gongs (of which six are

in reasonable condition), all with a green patina", were recovered. Their diameters range from 27 to 29,5 cm and the depth of their rim from 4,5 to 6 cm, while the metal has a thickness of 0,5 to 0,8 cm. (30) As far as one may judge, for the photographs are not that clear, these gongs do not seem to show any marks of joints and were probably hammered from the heated alloy. The fact that there were four pairs of gongs may entitle us to think they were supposed to be traded. However considering the fact that the export of copper and copper goods was prohibited, we can hardly expect to find textual information regarding such a trade.

As for the Java Sea wreck, only two gongs were found, one more than half intact and the other with just a highly corroded central portion. The better preserved piece has a diameter of 27 cm. Unlike the previous ones, these gongs have a slight boss which is 0,66 cm in diameter and their rims are so badly damaged that it is not possible to figure their real depth. (31) They may be related to the n° 5 of the typology established by Simbriger, used for gongs that were found in China, Japan and the Philippines. (32)

### **Gong manufacturing**

There is something apparently unusual in the Muara Jambi gong, namely the fact that its rim shows the marks of some six strips of metal that were fixed together by slightly protruding joints, as if they had been soldered side by side; this would mean that the rim was made first and then joined to the

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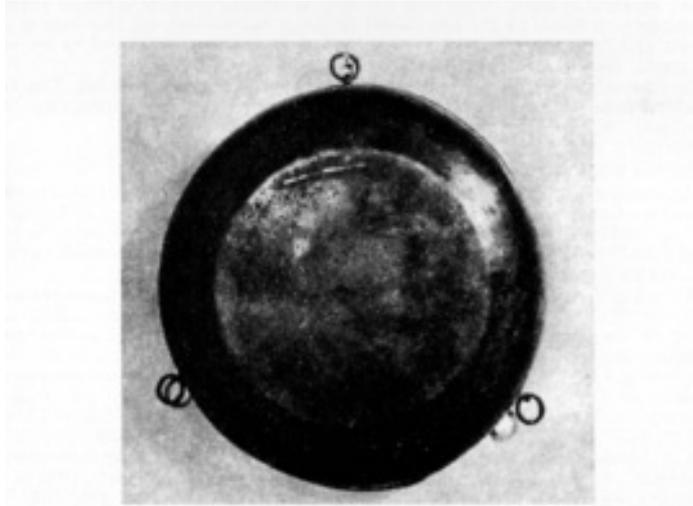
8. A bronze straight-handled deep belly cauldron recovered in 1994 near Candi Kedaton by the local population (2002)

9. A bronze gong excavated in a Western Han tomb at Luobowan, Guixian country, Guangxi Zhang Nationality Autonomous Region

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8. A bronze straight-handled deep belly cauldron recovered in 1994 near Candi Kedaton by the local population (2002)



9. A bronze gong excavated in a Western Han tomb at Luobowan, Guixian country, Guangxi Zhang Nationality Autonomous Region

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disk; as far as can be judged the latter projects slightly over the rim. (33) To the best of our knowledge, there are no written sources regarding the manufacturing of gongs during the Song dynasty.

The first detailed account on copper works appeared in Song Yingxing's *Tiangong kaiwu*, a Ming illustrated work on the different technologies of the time, which was first published in 1637. (34) The author starts with a statement that contradicts our own observations regarding the Muara Jambi gong. He says that "in the manufacturing of musical instruments, the metals must be of one piece without soldering." (35) Then he continues with an interesting description of soldering saying:

All other articles of round or square shape can be soldered over the flame: when powdered tin is used [as solder], the process is called "minor soldering", *xiaohan*, and when powdered bronze is used, it is called "major soldering", *dahan*. Bronze fragments are first ground into powder, and held together with cooked rice. Later the rice is washed off with water and the bronze powder remains in place. Otherwise the particles of the latter would be scattered. (36)

Song Yingxing briefly describes how *zheng*, which at the time was definitely a synonym of *luo* (37) or military gongs, and *zhuo*, a kind of military hand bell or gong, are made. As for the first he comments:

The *zheng* is hammered from the heated metal without casting; (38) the *zhuo* (commonly called copper-drum (*tonggu*) and the *ting-ning* (small bell), however are

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10. Drawing from the *Tiangong kaiwu*, Treatise of technology from the 17th century, and depicting the hammering of zheng or luo

11. Drawing from the *Tiangong kaiwu*, Treatise of technology from the 17th century, and depicting the hammering of zhuo or tonggu

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10. Drawing from the *Tiangong kaiwu*, Treatise of technology from the 17th century, and depicting the hammering of zheng or luo



11. Drawing from the *Tiangong kaiwu*, Treatise of technology from the 17th century, and depicting the hammering of zhuo or tonggu

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made by first casting [the metal] into round pieces and then hammering them.

Then Song Yingxing continues by giving some information on the manner of hammering:

For hammering the gong or the copper-drum the metal is placed on the ground, and the combined labor of many men is required for hammering a large instrument. [As the instrument takes shape] its size is gradually enlarged with the progress of hammering, resulting in the resonant sound of the instrument (pTate 10). The raised part in the middle of the copper-drum is made first, and then the article is cold hammered to produce the [proper] sound. The slightest difference in the strokes will determine whether the sound will be male or female; the former is achieved with many repeated strokes of the hammer (plate 11). (40)

The author provides two interesting illustrations that show how after the disk is maintained immobile with tongs and hammered repeatedly by different blacksmiths until it has obtained the shape of a gong (see plates 10, 11). These illustrations however do not provide a comprehensive view of the manufacturing process. Some phases have been left aside, in peculiar the quenching of the alloy, the trimming of its rim and the filing of the gong. Hot forging and cold hammering, whereby the mechanical properties of high-tin bronze (41) were improved, the vibrations amplified and the sonority modified, were and still are the most important stage of the manufacturing; However the question remains to assess to what extent the technique recorded in the *Tiangong kaiwu* is representative of the gong manufacturing, processes from the Song times. Judging from the photographs only, it seems difficult to ascertain if the Muara Jambi gong was merely cast or not, although we are entitled to think that it was also hammered and polished.

## **Discursive notes on gong uses in Song China**

In Song China, gongs were extensively used in the military but also the civil spheres. In the army they were beaten to halt the troops. In the ancient times it was the military bell or zheng that was beaten to recall the soldiers, while the drum was beaten to start them. However the military bell was gradually replaced by the gong that, interestingly, was occasionally named zheng, making the identification of the instruments over time very problematic. The Song records make undifferentiated use of shaluo, luo, tongluo, zheng, zhengnao | [E f]É, jinzheng ^ |E. Quite often the records use jin , a term which should be rendered as "metal instrument", an expression

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comprising military bells but also military gongs. (42) So do the "Essentials of Military Classics", *Wujing zongyao* j£ \$1 \$\$ H (1044) by Zeng Gongliang H yJk ^ that occasionally refer to "metal" (jiri) instruments but also to jinzheng and eventually zheng, which were beaten to stop the soldiers, but also to punctuate religious and official ceremonies (such

as oath taking) held by military forces. (\* Although we could not find records from the Song times, it seems most probable that gongs were also used in navy as a signal instrument too.

A miscellany from the Song times, the Yunlu manchao ft M W. # or "Copied at random at the cloudy foot of the mountain" (1206) by Chao Yanwei |\$ ^ Hf insists on the many purposes of the military gong, here called lu. The text reads: (44)

In the army the gong (lu) is used to wash the hands, in the way during the Qin and Han times the soldier's cooking pot (diaodou) served to beat the alarm at night; the gong may also be employed to steam rice, (45) because of its convenience.

The uses of gongs in the civil sphere were quite many. Here we will just enumerate a few cases ranging from official ceremonies at the capital to private uses either by the Han people or by minority groups. The Dongjing menghua lu JifC ĨH W" ¥ 3^ "Dream of the Glory of the [Former] Oriental Capital" (1147) by Meng Yuanlao ]£ jt 3è relates how for a winter festival a cortege of elephants and state carriages was directed by beating gongs or tongluo, and drums:

In front of the seven elephants were displayed several tens of red flags and several tens of gongs and small drums; the gongs bearers beat their instruments two times, then the drum bearers promptly replied by striking their instruments three times, repeatedly...

As regards the daily life of the population, the Songshi t^ s£ (47) records

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an interesting case showing that bronze kettle drums but also gongs (shaluo) were extensively used among the minorities from Southwest China:

In the first year of the Yongxi era (984) it was reported that the barbarian populations living in the deep ravines and the grottos in Qiannan used to beat kettle drums and gongs to worship the spirits whenever a person was struck by illness, consequently an imperial decree was proclaimed, which lifted the prohibition on bronze casting in these barbarian regions. (48)

The gong was also found among the Han people as a musical instrument in religious ceremonies, at least since the Tang, (\* presumably on the stage, and also to give a signal or alarm. A record even alludes to someone who dashed a gong {tong shaluo) against a stone in order to frighten and expel a tiger. (50) It was also presumably used on board large ships on which it was beaten whenever the anchor was dropped or weighted or the moorings cast off. (51) One may infer from these desultory notes that during the Song times the gong had already penetrated various spheres of the society.

## The gong inscription

Another peculiarity of the Muara Jambi gong lies in the method by which its inscription was engraved. The characters, instead of being engraved with a chisel (*kezi dao* [0j ? 73]) were punched with a point into the bronze in a series of dots of irregular shape, resulting in a rather unrefined calligraphy that is sometimes very difficult to decipher, especially for the last two characters (plate 7). This method of engraving has been known in China at least since Han times. It was generally employed to delineate small designs on gold jewellery. To the best of our knowledge, it was more rarely utilised to engrave characters, except on hard materials such as ceramics.

The inscription, which is comprised of thirty or thirty-one characters, runs along the rim, of which it occupies less than a half of its circumference (see plates 6 and 7). The engraver, according to the custom, has left a space

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after the date. But if there is an unclear character on the protruding soldering or whether it is just a further space cannot be ruled out. Among the scholars who have been shown the photograph, some do see the lower part of a barely decipherable character that may be read as *xuan j|L* "to state", "to declare", "to proclaim", but some do not see any character. Consequently we have placed the questionable character into brackets. The inscription reads:

The fourth year of the Shaoding era, the seventh month, the twenty-fifth day [1231. 8. 24], [it is declared that] Prefect (*zhijun*) (53) and Great Master Hong, within the scope of his position (*rennei*), has placed two big military (*junqi*) bronze gongs (*tongluo*) into the armory for use.

## Speculations

The inscription clearly states that two "military" gongs were procured for the armory of the prefecture where a certain Prefect Hong was in office. However, rather surprisingly, its author does not state the place name of the administrative unit. Moreover the prefect does not mention his given name, so that it is absolutely impossible to identify him. As a result, we can just only speculate on the way the gong(s) was (were) transported to Muara Jambi.

First possibility: the prefect was appointed in a "prefecture" somewhere in Southern China, and he procured the gongs for local troops. Second possibility: the *zhijun* was the chief administrator of a certain territorial unit, named *jun* or *zhou*, somewhere in the Srivijayan empire, and he procured two gongs for the armory under his control.

The first explanation may seem most plausible. However it remains to explain how a

"military gong" placed in an armory under the supervision of the military could have escaped surveillance and have reached Srivijaya. We know that during the Song and the Yuan times, the trading ships were armed for attacks of pirates. The Yuan dianzhang jt \$\* 3j£ or "Statutes of the Yuan Dynasty" state that these arms during the anchorage of the ship had to be kept in the government warehouse and that they were handed back when the ship weighed anchor. (54) One could conceive that the (two) military gong(s)

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had been given to such a sea-going ship either mistakenly or because those owned previously had disappeared, or for whatever reason. However, one could also conceive that these two gongs kept in an armory had been robbed by pirates, (55) who may have used these on board their own ships, or quite possibly too, resold these to some sea-going merchants, the smuggling of copperwares being common at the time. Then in Srivijaya, either the gong(s) was (or were) resold to a Chinese settler or to a native chief, for at the time these instruments may well have been regarded as a novelty in Jambi, (56) and finally they were abandoned at a date that cannot be ascertained at the place where one of them has been discovered.

The second possibility, which takes us directly to Srivijaya, may well be more convincing. Master Hong was supposedly the chief of an administrative unit here named jun, according to the Chinese usage of the time. Zhao Rugua M #C 31 (1170-1231), in his Zhufan zhi if # M "Foreign Lands" (ca. 1225), when speaking of the administrative units in Srivijaya, makes use of the same terminology:

San-fo-ts'i lies between Chûn-la [Zhenla] and ShO-po [Shepo]. Its rule extends over fifteen chou [zhou]. (i7)

As John N. Miksic has pointed out, "historical evidence, while slight, supports the conclusion that in Srivijaya no monopoly of force existed". (58) Moreover Zhao Rugua provides some interesting information regarding the way war was made by the Srivijayans. He shows that local rulers enjoyed great autonomy. He says:

They are skilled at fighting on land or water. (59) When they are about to make war on another state they assemble and send forth such a force as the occasion demands. They

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(then) appoint chiefs and leaders, and all provide their own military equipment and the

necessary provisions. (60)

In view of this, Prefect Hong might be regarded as a local chief of foreign origin possessing such military power, and owning an armory. He may have used Chinese writing for administrative purposes, as did the secretaries of the Srivijayan ruler when it was deemed necessary, as for instance for sending memorials to the Song court. (61) Chinese was one of the languages used with the merchants coming from China, but presumably also among the Chinese sojourners and settlers, as we may infer from the discovery of a "golden blade" with a Chinese inscription somewhere in Muara Jambi. We may easily conceive that Chinese merchants as well as other foreign traders had their own quarters somewhere along the River Batang Hari, as they presumably had in Palembang, (62) just as Srivijayan and other foreign merchants had their own settlements in cities like Guangzhou and Quanzhou. These two inscribed objects - we regret that so little is known about the "golden blade" - may then be regarded as pertinent information on their existence. This interpretation agrees with the fact that in the late 12th century Srivijaya was still attracting Chinese merchants, since the name of Sanfoqi appears in the *Yijian zhi* ^ M M, a collection of tales, as being the destination of a merchant of Quanzhou who unfortunately was shipwrecked soon after he left China. (63) If this interpretation were correct, the gong inscription should be regarded as the latest Chinese piece of information pertaining to 13th century Srivijaya.

Provided we accept this last hypothesis, the question of the manufacturing of the gongs has to be posed again. Should we regard these instruments as imported goods from China or rather as locally made? Could the unusual method used to make the surviving gong and its engraving entitle us to assume that it was manufactured in Srivijaya? The question can hardly be solved, given the present state of knowledge. However one may conceive that foreign coppersmiths had come from overseas in the way Chinese potters and other craftsmen migrated to present areas of Viet Nam and Thailand, for instance. Judging from the recent discovery of an impressive straight-handled deep belly cauldron, presumably used during

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religious communal banquets, it seems it would be worth reconsidering the question of the import of copper and of the manufacturing of copperwares. Copper was definitely a source of profit. And one may assume that great merchants from China (and possibly from elsewhere as well) drew upon it without the authorization to do so, as we have shown elsewhere. (64) In their sea-going ships they may have transported these goods (copper and copperwares) for sale in foreign countries. (65)

From this gong inscription, new understandings have emerged, especially as regards the presumed existence of a Chinese community in Jambi during Song times. This

community would have played a part similar to that of the Chinese settlement in Palembang, the existence of which has been inferred from various Chinese textual sources, as we have shown elsewhere. (66) It is to be hoped that in a near future further archaeological finds will enable us to elaborate further on this assumption that fits the patterns of relationship between Srivijaya and Song China. We should keep in mind that the Jambi jft -êp. rulers sent six tribute missions to China (1079, 1082, 1084, 1088, 1090 and 1094). 1088 was the year when Zhou Qufei described the force being used by Jambi to protect its entrepôt trade (J| H 2{ç jg5 JH. f{j£ |g ïfi fê ^|). (67) Wolters, who was struck by this sudden spurt of diplomatic activity, noted that it was not long after the shift of the Srivijayan capital to Jambi. And he added:

It is reasonable to suppose that the Jambi rulers wished to inherit the status enjoyed in China by those of Palembang. (68)

As for the intention of Jambi' s last two missions it was clearly diplomatic. The first in 1156-1157 resulted in the investiture of the king of Sanfoqi, and the second in 1178 in the bestowal on the present ruler of the insigna conferred on his father in 1157. (69) From all this it appears that the gong inscription may well be seen as a further link to China and the Chinese.

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## Notes

1.

1. We are indebted to Deng Xiaonan i\$ /Jn \$jf, Claude Guillot, Christian Lamouroux, Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens, Geoff Wade, Yang Baoyun |\$ ^ £\$ for several discussions, to P.-Y. Manguin for his photographs, M.-F. Dupoizat, Daniel Perret, and François Picard for having provided information, and to Mary Somers Heidhues for her editing of the text.

2. Quoted from F.-M. Schnitger, *Forgotten Kingdoms in Sumatra*, introduction by John N. Miksic, Singapore, Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, Oxford in Asia Paperbacks, 1964 (first published by E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1939), p. 12.

2.

3. See Schnitger, *Forgotten Kingdoms in Sumatra*, pp. 15-17.

4. For an overview of the various sites along the Batang Hari River, see Bambang Budi Utomo, "Situs-situs Arkeologi di Daerah Tepi Sungai Batang Hari", *Amerta*, 1984, n° 8, pp. 35-46; Eka Asih Putrina Taim, "Potensi peninggalan arkeologis di Pantai Timur Provinsi Jambi", *Siddhayatra* 1(1), 1996, pp. 23-38; Retno Purwanti, "Pola persebaran situs-situs arkeologi di sepanjang DAS Batanghari, Kabupaten Batanghari, Provinsi Jambi", in *Pertemuan Ilmiah Arkeologi VII*, Cipanas, 12-16 Maret 1996, Jakarta, Pusat Penelitian



Indonesia, September 16-30, 1985, Appendix 7f, p. 262.

11. O. W. Wolters, "A Few and Miscellaneous Bi-chi Jottings on Early Indonesia", *Indonesia*, 36, October 1983, p. 61.

4.

12. Jerome Ch'en, "Sung bronzes - An Economic Analysis", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 28, 1965, p. 618.

13. Ch'en, *Ibid.*, p. 618, n. 23, lists a few measures respectively carried out in 1170, 1176, 1196, 1197, and 1201.

14. Heinrich Simbriger, "Gong und Gongspiele", *Internationales Archiv für Anthropologie*, XXXVI, 1939. This monograph was quite impressive for the time.

15. Jeremy Montagu, "What is a gong?", *Man*, January-February 1965, p. 19, has this to say: "It is clear that gongs existed outside Simbriger's area and thus the use of a geographical limitation is invalid". The same author makes a brief exposé of gongs in the West and mentions a Roman gong kept in the Devizes Museum. "All that is known is that it was found during iron-mining operations at Westbury, Wilts, between 1877 and 1882 and it is dated by association to the first or second century A.D." (*ibid.*).

5.

16. Cf. Jaap Kunst, *Music in Java, its History and its Technique*, The Hague, 3rd enlarged éd., edited by E. L. Heins, 1973, 1, p. 260.

17. Jaap Kunst, *Hindu- Javanese Musical Instruments*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1968, second revised and enlarged edition, p. 65.

18. Inge Skog, *North Borneo Gongs and the Javanese Gamelan. Studies in Southeast Asian Traditions*, Stockholm, Stockholms universitet, 1993.

19. Skog, *Ibid.*, especially the chapter on Javanese gong history, pp. 110-125.

20. See Simbriger, "Gong und Gongspiele", Table 1, n° 1.

6.

21. Guangxi Guixian Luobowan Hanmu jiff Hf jit f| JH ' /Ê \$1 ?H H / Luobowan Han Dynasty Tombs in Guixian County, Guangxi Zhuangzu zizhiqu bowuguan bian, Beijing, Wenwu chubanshe, 1988, p. X, plates 1 [reproduced here], and p. 126.

22. According to Huang Zhanyue j\$ r ft -gj, "Lun Nanyueguo chutu de qingtongqi ifà j^j IE HI tH i. &5 W M \$\$", in *Tonggu he qingtong wenhua de xin tansuo*, 1993, p. 233 a bronze gong was also found in the tomb of the King of Nanyue j^j ÉI, Wendi \$C ^ (137-122 A.C.) in Guangzhou; and another one was allegedly recovered in the necropolis of Shizhaishan £f Hi til, Yunnan province, see Sun Shuyun ÎK5& Wang Kezhi 3£ ~% ^, "Zhongguo

xiangtongqi de shiyan yanjiu t3 IlslIiPifl^JiflÉij'f ^", in Tonggu he qingtong wenhua de xin tansuo, p. 276, n. 6.

23. This would explain why the term shaluo was variously transcribed fj? H, fj> ^ or # M ; the Wa {S from Yunnan province still call the drum guluo ~£j M or "old gong". See also François Picard, *La musique chinoise*, Paris, Minerve, 1991, pp. 109-110.

24. Cf. Chen Yang, *Yueshu*, (éd. Guangzhou, Guangxu bingzi % \$j F5 ^P [1876]), j. 125, 9b :

25. Ch'en, "Sung bronzes - An Economie Analysis", p. 624.

26. See Lin Zhao # |lj, "Fujian sheng sinian lai faxian de wenwu jieshao ijig ^ M Ift 3t % it £§", *Wenwu*, 1955, 11, p. 89.

7.  
27. Ch'en, "Sung bronzes - An Economic Analysis", pp. 622-623.

28. Abu Ridho & E. Edwards McKinnon, edited by Sumarah Adhyatman, *The Pulau Buaya Wreck. Finds from the Song Period*, Ceramic Society of Indonesia, 1998, p. 51, plate 50 showing two gongs.

29. The wreck lies in the Java sea at latitude 4° 14' S and longitude 106° 40' E. See William M. Mathers & Michael Flecker, *Archaeological Recovery of the Java Sea Wreck*. Archaeological Report, Pacific Sea Resources, 1997, p. 58.

30. Mathers & Flecker, *Ibid.*, p. 51.

31. Mathers & Flecker, *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87 and p. 199.

32. Simbriger, "Gong und Gongspiele", Table 1.

8.  
33. We were told by Danny Wong from Universiti Malaya that a similar technique was used until recently in Sabah for the manufacture of gongs, but we have not been able to find relevant data. Skog, *North Borneo Gongs*, in the chapter that is devoted to the gong instruments, deals exclusively with the music.

34. Here we will quote the text as translated by E-tu Zen Sun & Shiou-chuan Sun, *Tien kung k'ai wu, Chinese Technology in the Seventeenth Century*, University Park, Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1966.

35. Zen Sun & Sun, *Ibid.*, p. 197.

36. Zen Sun & Sun, *Ibid.*, p. 197.

37. According to Hayashi Kenzo #|= TÔa gakkî kôM'B.^è^, First éd., 1943, Chinese translation, Dongya yueqi kao, Beijing, renmin chubanshe, First ed. 1962, reprint 1996, pp. 66-67, the zheng (Japanese: shokô U fr£) was introduced to Japan during the Nara period (710-794). It was also called shokôpan fiE ££ \$£ or "dished shokô", which indicates

that it had the shape of a gong.

38. According to A. C. Moule, "A List of Musical Instruments and Other Sound-producing Instruments of the Chinese", *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1908, p. 26, the ordinary gongs "are hammered when the metal is red hot and, and not cast as has been sometimes stated." However according to Paul Champion, "Fabrication des gongs ou tams-tams à Un-Choung-Lan, près Changai", in Stanislas Julien, *Industries anciennes et modernes de l'Empire chinois d'après les notices traduites du chinois par St. J. et accompagnées de notices industrielles et scientifiques par M. P. Ch.*, Paris, Eugène Lacroix, 1869, pp. 69-73, the gongs of which he observed the manufacture were first cast.

39. A. C. Moule, "A List of Musical Instruments and Other Sound-producing Instruments of the Chinese", *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1908, p. 27, alludes to ajingu 𠄎 "metal drum", which he defines as "a circular brass gong about four inches in diameter, with the rim curbed over" and which corresponds to the "copper drum" of the *Tiangong kaiwu*. Moule adds: "There is a raised boss in the centre and a depression carried round near the edge."

9.

40. Zen Sun & Sun, *Tien kung k'ai wu, Chinese Technology in the Seventeenth Century*, p. 197.

41. The formula of the alloy may vary from 70% to 80% copper and 30% to 20% tin, or a compound of copper and tin with the addition of lead, iron or zinc; cf. Stanley Sadie Ed., *The New GROVE Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, London, Washington, Hong Kong, Macmillan Publishers Ltd, 1980, vol. 7, p. 521.

10.

42. The ambiguity of the term jin has even been passed to a colloquial expression that reads: mingjin shou bing 𠄎 𠄎. But in the *Yuanshi* 𠄎 105, "Xingfa zhi 𠄎 𠄎" 4, éd. Beijing, *Zhonghua shuju*, rééd. s.d., p. 2 684 / 694, in the same expression the term jin is replaced by *luo*. Nowadays the term jin definitely refers to a gong and the expression has to be understood as "To beat the gong in order to recall troops."

43. Zeng Gongliang, *Wujing zongyao*, facsimile reprint of 1506-1521 edition, j. 2 and j. 5 diji 14-15.

44. Chao Yanwei, *Yunlu manchao*, Beijing, *Zhonghua shuju*, 1996, j. 9, p. 148.

45. This statement implies that the gong's rim was rather large, a fact that fits the height of the *Muara Jambi* gong.

46. Meng Yuanlao, *Dongjing menghua lu*, Beijing, *Shangwu yin shuguan*, 1959, j. 10, pp. 242-243.

47. Songshi, 493, "Manyi ^ H" 1, "Xinan xidong zhuman ffi^ ^ SM Wt'\ shang, Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1985, vol. 40, p. 14 174.

11.

48. Probably an allusion to the prohibition on copper in all barbarian regions that had been issued in 970; cf. in Songshi, 185, vol. 13, p. 4 524.

49. It is illustrated in some frescos in Dunhuang (cave n° 220). Cf. Liu Dongsheng \$PJ jfi ~j\, Hu Zhuanfan ffi & H, Hu Yanjiu j\$8 B X, Zhongguo yueqi tu zfcì 4> 13 & 3\$ III Û, Beijing, Qing gongye chubanshe, 1987, p. 94.

50. Chen Hu |^ SI (13th century), "Qijiu xuwen tH |f |fj M" j. 4, Wenyuange siku quanshu ~\$C fg H3 0 ^ II, éd. Taibei, Shangwu yinshuguan, 1986, vol. 1039, Zibu xiaoshuojia lei ^p

se

51. We have evidence of this for the Qing period ; see Dashan ^c ftlj, Haiwaijishi m, Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1987, p. 68 <p& SCE M M), and 84 (Pi M M fê).

12.

52. This character may possibly be read as bian fl!, meaning "convenient".

53. Zhijun was an equivalent of zhizhou £p 'jf| and eventually of zhifu £D Jfi, "prefect", but with the difference that it was not the official denomination; see Gong Yanming H \$|E &M, Songdai guanzhi cidian 5f5 ft fT ffrj f? \*, Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1987, pp. 531, 536, 678.

54. Cf. Jitsuzô Kubawara, "On P'u Shou-keng", Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko, 1928, 1, n° 2, p. 67; see also H. F. Schumann, Economic Structure of the Yuan

13.

Dynasty. Translation of chap. 93 & 94 of the Yianshih, Cambridge Mass., Harvard University Press, 1956, p. 227.

55. In the case of Quanzhou ^ j\\ for instance only three main raids were recorded between 1206 and 1276 [one of which in 1232], see Billy K. L. So, Prosperity, Region and Institutions in Maritime China. The South Fukien Pattern, 946-1368, Cambridge (Massachusetts) & London, published by the Harvard University Asia Center and distributed by Harvard University Press, 2000, p. 94.

56. Chen Yang in his Yueshu devotes a chapter to the various music of the foreigners. Speaking of Srivijaya he says (op. cit. above n. 24) j. 159, 3b-4a: "For their music they have small lutes and small drums S. \*p\$ ^ /Js -M£ /J\ f£ ."

57. Cf. Chau Ju-Kua on the Chinese and Arab Trade, edited and translated by F. R. Hirth

and W. W. Rockhill, 1st ed. 1914, reprint, Amsterdam, 1966, p. 60.

58. John N. Miksic, "Srivijaya: Political, Economical, and Artistic Frameworks for Analysis", in SPAFA, Final Report Consultative Workshop on Archaeological and Environmental Studies on Srivijaya (T-W3), Bangkok March 29 - April 11, 1983, p. 226. See also O. W. Wolters, *The Fall of Śrīvijaya in Malay History*, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Oxford University Press, 1970, p. 13, for a similar opinion: "... the overlord . . . had to contend with a variety of persons in possession of armed strength ... the presence of numerous private armed forces in the overlord's territories is unmistakable".

59. Zhou Qufei 周喆非 (12th century), *Lingwai daida* 岭外代答, "Instead of Replies to Friends and Acquaintances about the South-western Regions Beyond the Passes", (1178), ed.

14.

by Yang Wuquan 杨武权, Beijing, Zhonghua shuju, 1999, j. 2, p. 86; German translation by Almut Netolitzky, *Das Ling-wai tai-ta von Chou Ch'u-fei, Eine landeskunde Siidchinas aus dent 12. Jahrhundert*, Miinchener ostasiatische Studien, Band 21, Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1977, p. 39.

60. Chau Ju-Kua on the Chinese and Arab Trade, p. 60.

61. Cf. Chau Ju-Kua on the Chinese and Arab Trade, p. 60: "They also know Chinese characters, which they use in sending memorials to (our) court."

62. Cf. C. Salmon, "Srivijaya, la Chine et les marchands chinois (Xc-XIle s.). Quelques réflexions sur la société de l'empire sumatranais", *Archipel* 63, 2002, p. 62.

63. Cf. Hong Mai 洪邁 (1133-1202), *Yijian zhijia* 夷坚志, j. 7, éd. of *Congshu jicheng*, pp. 52-53; voir aussi Wolters, "A Few and Miscellaneous pi-chi Jottings on Early Indonesia", p. 61.

15.

64. Cf. Salmon, "Srivijaya, la Chine et les marchands chinois (Xe-XIle s.). Quelques réflexions sur la société de l'empire sumatranais", pp. 69-71.

65. As regards copper export from Guangzhou, Billy K. L. So, *Prosperity, Region and Institutions in Maritime China*, p. 64, n. 82, refers to the following article which we have not been able to see: Quan hansheng 关汉生, "Songdai Guangzhou de guoneiwai maoyi 宋代广州的国内外贸易", *Thongguo jingjishi yanjiu* 41 Hi M. M 5, Hongkong, Xinya yanjiusuo, 1976, 2, pp. 110-111.

66. Salmon, "Srivijaya, la Chine et les marchands chinois (Xe-XIle s.)", p. 62.

67. Zhou Qufei, *Lingwai daida*, 2, p. 87; Netolitzky, *Das Ling-wai tai-ta von Chou Ch'U-fei*, p. 40.

68. Wolters, "A Few and Miscellaneous pi-chi Jottings on Early Indonesia", p. 60.

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A Tentative Interpretation of the Chinese Inscription (1231) Engraved on a Bronze

Gong Recovered in Muara Jambi {Central Sumatra, at first glance, the attitude towards modernity flows into the collapsing damage caused.