

Coastal Peripheries during the Pagan Period

Introduction

Agriculture, especially the cultivation of wet rice (paddy), was the backbone of the first Burmese empire (roughly corresponding to the period from the eleventh to the thirteenth century), called the kingdom of Pagan after its capital, a small town in Upper Burma. When the ethnic Burmese, nomadic pastoralists of Mongolian stock, migrated into the dry zone of Burma around the seventh to eighth centuries, they came into contact with the Pyu from whom they borrowed freely, including rice cultivation, dwelling in cities, and perhaps Buddhism.¹ The change from pastoralism to agriculture was fundamental, but the Burmese accommodated themselves to their new mode of life in a few centuries. The Pagan kingdom was clearly based on agriculture, centred in the *khayaing* of Kyaukse and Minbu, and to a lesser degree in the *taiks* along the right bank of the Irrawaddy.² Under irrigation, wet rice provides fairly reliable and rich harvests offering the potential to create a stable peasant society. The Burmese seem to have been very content with the productivity of their fields and hardly ever engaged in other economic activities such as trade, especially not in long-distance and overseas trade. This mentality may, of course, reflect the fact that initially the Burmese had no access to the sea, as Lower Burma was controlled by a number of Mon-dominated city states, and the Arakan coast by the Arakanese (besides this, Arakan was more or less inaccessible because of its topography). It was only after the conquests of King Anawrahta (c. 1044-1078) in the mid-eleventh century that the Mon dominance of Lower Burma was removed. Arakan, as far as we can tell, came under the influence of Pagan another century later when King Alaungsithu restored a deposed prince to the throne.

The attempt presented here to investigate the two coastal regions – which were peripheral from the standpoint of the rulers of Pagan – through Pagan epigraphy is likely to provide an incomplete picture. Pagan epigraphy for the most part consists of

¹ The first to tackle the pre-Burman early history of Burma was the doyen of Pagan studies, Gordon H. Luce, see Luce 1985, and, for the emergence of Buddhism, *idem* 1974. On the role of the Pyus see Janice Stargardt 1991.

² I have argued earlier that the word *khayaing* which describes an area of socio-economic interaction was usually spelt with an ordinary 'n' (rather than with an 'n dot above' as today), indicating that it was a loan word, possibly from the Pyu language: Frasch 1996, 58-59.

donative inscriptions from the capital proper and reflects the perception of the court elites – a very Upper Burman, top-to-bottom view. Unsurprisingly, they have little to tell about peripheral regions. The Burmese chronicles which despite their great temporal distance to the subjects they relate show a remarkable accuracy (owing to several threads of historical tradition that have been preserved by them since the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries) contain little to make up for this lack of information as they, by and large, reproduce this Upper Burman attitude when referring to the coastal areas. Mon chronicles also omit the Pagan period from their narrative (which can be understood as an acknowledgement of the Upper Burman domination during this period); only Arakanese chronicles report an intact line of rulers as an expression of independent statehood. This contrast also informed my approach to the subject. My point of departure will be a look at the Mon realm of Lower Burma and then I shall turn to Arakan and finally attempt a contrasting comparison between the two.

Lower Burma during the Pagan Period

According to the Burmese chronicles, the Mon city-states of Lower Burma, especially Thaton whose ruler and inhabitants were deported to Pagan, were conquered by King Anawrahta around the middle of the eleventh century. There can be no doubt about Anawrahta's presence in Lower Burma as this king left signed votive tablets at numerous sites (see Than Tun 1978, 5-6). This marked the beginning of the Upper Burman domination of Lower Burma for the next two and a half centuries. The Irrawaddy formed a strong link between the capital and the new province, providing for quick communication and the rapid deployment of troops. On the whole, epigraphical evidence seems to support this picture of permanent Burmese overlordship. After Anawrahta, his son Sawlu left an inscription at Mergui,³ but this king also met his death when the ruler of Pegu rebelled and marched against Pagan (GPC, 100-101). Sawlu's successor, Kyanzittha, drove back the rebels to Lower Burma where he left his votive tablets at several sites,⁴ and since the time of this king, a rudimentary centralized administration may have come into existence. The first ones are the two *sumben* Anantajeyyabhikranma and Yankhi who have left their names again on votive tablets found at a *stupa* in Mokti near Tavoy.⁵ The second, hitherto overlooked but

³ Pl. V 548a, cp. Luce 1969-70, 46. The first to edit this inscription was Lunet de Lajonquière in the *Bulletin de la Commission Archéologique de l'Indochine* 1909, p. 237 (unavailable to me). Luce has emended the title in the first line of the inscription *sri bajra ... namena yo vissuto so tasmim* to *Sri Bajrabharana Maharaja*, the title of King Sawlu. However, I think that the gap between *bajra* and *namena* allows more syllables (*aksharas*) than required for *-bharana maharaja-*.

⁴ In an inscription of AD 1107 (which, however, appears to be a later copy), King Kyanzittha's conquest of 'the Talaing country of Ussa (i.e. Pegu)' is mentioned: List 49 = OBI 1, p. 329, l. 5-6.

⁵ U Mya 1961. Pt. 1, Nos. 79-80 and p. 57-60 (U Mya's reading of the second name is *Yikhi*); cp. Luce 1965a, 273. Luce may also serve as an example for the 'central administration'-approach which has dominated research since the days of the empire, to be echoed in quite recent works (Aung-Thwin 1985, 228). One should, however, note that *sumben* (or *sampyan* in the Burmanized version) is in all likelihood a Mon title, so that they may also be regarded as members of a local administrative elite ('guards of Tavoy', as they style themselves) rather than Pagan-commissioned officials.

perhaps more telling example is the *nagarasenapati* of Henbo, a port town that has tentatively been identified as modern-day Yangon (Pl. I 76 = OBI 1, p. 229, l. 1-2; Luce 1969-70, Vol.1, 20, 74, 107-8).⁶ It is also at Henbo where the first land transfers (early 12th century) recorded in Pagan inscriptions took place (Pl. IV 364a+b = OBI 1, p. 1, l. 13; Pl. II 111 = OBI 1, p. 334, l. 24).⁷

The mid-twelfth century saw Lower Burma in rebellion on two or three occasions, once during the reign of King Alaungsithu (already mentioned), and another outburst which was quelled by King Narapatisithu's army commander Thubayit (Supharac).⁸ In between came the Sinhalese raid on Lower Burma around 1164-5 which King Parakkama Bahu I of Polonnaruva had sent to extract revenge for insults he had suffered at the hands of the Burmese. According to the contemporary Sinhalese chronicle *Culavamsa*,⁹ the Sinhalese forces captured the two port towns of Kusumiya (Bassein) and Muttama (Martaban) as well as a third place called *Ukkama* which may be identified as Okkam, a place some twenty miles north of Rangoon.¹⁰ King Narapatisithu then, in his famous Dhammayazika inscription of 1196-8, listed the Isthmus of Kra with the towns Tavoy, Thandok near Mergui and Ligor (or Dhammarajanagara) among those places that had been conquered by him and put under his firm control (*naing-ngan*).¹¹ In the course of the thirteenth century, Lower Burma was gradually placed under closer political control. King Uccana (1249-56), could even permit himself the privilege of pleasure trips down the Irrawaddy to visit his royal lodges (*kwan*) at Yin-o and Saing-thale in Lower Burma (Pl. III 234 = OBI 3, p. 58, l. 19 and 40). This king passed away at Tala, hence his epithet Tala-pyam-min, the 'King who died at Tala' (Pl. II 158 = OBI 2, p. 78, l. 14; Pl. III 296 = OBI 3, p. 187, l. 5). At the end of the Pagan period, we find princes holding towns in Lower Burma as their fiefs (GPC, p. 176).¹² By then, Burmese influence reached as far as Mergui which is illustrated by the use of the Burmese language in epigraphy in the year 1269 (see Appendix 1).

As was quite common in medieval empires, the power of the central ruler began to wane immediately outside the walls of the capital and, though remaining considerable within the core area of the empire (which, in the case of Pagan, should have

⁶ Pl. I 76 = OBI 1, p. 229, l. 1-2 (around 1220). For the identification of *Henbo*, see Luce 1969-70 (1), 20, 74, and 107-8.

⁷ Pl. IV 364a+b = OBI 1, p. 1, l. 13 (the famous Myazedi inscription of Prince Rajakumar of c. AD 1112); Pl. II 111 = OBI 1, p. 334, l. 24 (300 *pay*).

⁸ List 146 = OBI 1, p. 360 = SIP No 12, p. 21. The inscription is a post-Pagan copy, and as in later times the two kings Alaungsithu and Narapatisithu have often been confused because of the similarity of the last part of their names, both references may relate to the same event.

⁹ Geiger 1925/1929, ch. 76.10-75. This part of the chronicle, dealing with the life of King Parakkama Bahu, was written during the later part of the king's reign or shortly afterwards, and is generally regarded as highly reliable, see Geiger 1930, 205-228. The conquest of the port town of Kusumiya (Bassein) is mentioned in the Devanagala Rock inscription that records the reward King Parakkama gave to his victorious general Kit Sri Nuvaragal: *Epigraphia Zeylanica* 3, 312-325.

¹⁰ I have dealt with the Sinhalese expedition and its implications exhaustively in Frasch 1998a. For earlier views, see Luce 1965a, and Aung-Thwin 1976.

¹¹ Pl. I 19 = OBI 1, p. 65, l. 7-10. For a full translation of this inscription, see U Tin Htway 1974, 679-689. For the status of *naing-ngan*, see the summary by Aung-Thwin 1985, 104.

¹² In contrast, the minister Aleimma, who held Martaban 'subject to the king's dominion' (GPC, p. 163 and 173) appears to have been a local (Mon) ruler.

been identical with the central dry zone of Burma),¹³ would at times have been almost negligible in more remote provinces. It seems helpful, therefore, to distinguish between the extension of central rule and the intensity with which it was imposed. The former defines the arena in which military and political power could be exerted, the latter the degree to which it could be foisted on the people. For the relationship between Pagan and Lower Burma this means that even after the initial conquest and incorporation of the latter, Pagan kings would not have been able to enforce their laws all the time. Instead, local authorities were in a position to renegotiate the terms of subordination and maintain a certain degree of independence and autonomy. The rebellions of the twelfth century are a case in point, and another example is provided by the anonymous son of Prince Pyanchi who, after taking part in his father's and his uncle's conspiracy against King Jeyathinga-Nadaungmya in 1211 or 1212, fled to the safety of Tavoy in order to escape punishment (Pl. I 42 = OBI 1, p. 112, l. 13). Immediately after his accession, the king was obviously not yet in a position to control the far south.

It is also remarkable that the hold of the Pagan kings on the material resources of Lower Burma – which can allow an estimation of the intensity of their rule – as expressed in religious donations seems to have been relatively weak.¹⁴ At Henbo, three more instances from the thirteenth century can be added to the two earlier donations mentioned above.¹⁵ Besides these, three dedications are recorded for Bassein¹⁶ and one for Khabin (near Henbo).¹⁷ The amount of land donated is fairly large, ranging between one hundred and three thousand *pay*. Comparable figures are to be found only in areas along the Upper Mu and Chindwin rivers (Pl. I 31 = OBI 1, p. 83; Frasch 1998b, 27-35), where paddy cultivation played an insignificant role. This would seem to indicate that land in Lower Burma was less productive (or, at least cultivation was less intensive) but readily available and therefore cheap enough to be given away in great lots. However, some records also mention garden lands (*uyañ*) which mostly signifies orchards of fruit bearing trees.¹⁸ If ricefields were cheap, these orchards were at the top end of the scale. Another peculiarity of Lower Burma was the notable presence of potters (*o-tein*) who occur on three occasions and potters' land. Thus, in the second half of the thirteenth century, Queen Acaw Min Hla, while staying in Lower Burma, transferred thirty potters and

¹³ This area is not only defined by the climate, it also coincided by and large with the habitat of the Pyu people. The distribution of the edicts of King Kyacwa from the year 1249 was also limited to this core area, see Frasch 1996, 65-9.

¹⁴ Some more places of Lower Burma may have to be added to this list once all the place names from the inscriptions have been identified.

¹⁵ Pl. I 63 = OBI 1, p. 129, l. 17 (600 *pay*); Pl. II 164 = OBI 2, p. 99, l. 1 (100 *pay* and one garden); Pl. III 289 = OBI 3, p. 120, l. 8 (1000 *pay*).

¹⁶ Pl. II 216 = OBI 2, p. 28, l. 18 (2764 *pay*); Pl. III 246 = OBI 3, p. 95, l. 4 (1000 *pay*); Pl. III 249 = OBI 3, p. 103 (unspec. amount of land and garden). Moreover, Bassein is the find spot of two fragmentary inscriptions which are of some interest. The first one (Pl. III 345b = OBI 2, p. 142) is written in Pali which hints at an important religious occasion; the other one (Pl. IV 387b) could record a personal visit there by King Narasihapati in the year AD 1273, see Appendix 2.

¹⁷ Pl. I 63 (3000 *pay*).

¹⁸ Pl. I 76; Pl. II 164; Pl. II 216 (as in the notes above).

1000 *pay* of land suitable for potting to another royal highness, presumably her great-grand niece.¹⁹

One final remark on the events of the late thirteenth century will round off this analysis of the political relations between Upper and Lower Burma. As mentioned above, the chronicles acknowledge the emergence of independent rulers such as Wareru as part of the dissolution process of the Pagan Empire.²⁰ From epigraphy, this reads slightly different as the three Shan brothers who had become the successors of the Pagan dynasty in Upper Burma²¹ claimed continuing overlordship over the *naing-ngan* of Lower Burma. In 1293 and 1296 respectively, the two military officers Yazathingyan (Rajasankram) and Anantajayapakram boasted that they had conquered Tala (Pl. III 292 = OBI 3, p. 196, l. 18; Pl. III 294 = OBI 3, p. 198, l. 6), and in the same year 1293, King Athinkaya (Asankhaya), the eldest of the three brothers, stated in an inscription that the territory he ruled extended from Arakan in the east to the Salween in the west and from Bhamo in the north to Tavoy and Tenasserim in the south (Pl. III 276a = OBI 3, p. 158, l. 1-3). This is of course a formulaic expression (resembling, e.g. the Dhammayajika inscription of King Narapatisithu) which reflects wishful thinking rather than actual political dominance,²² but at least it shows that Lower Burma still was included in the sphere of Upper Burman influence – and vice versa.

This leads to the further question of the economic role played by Lower Burma during the Pagan period. The economy of the Pagan empire, as stated at the beginning, was based on agriculture, especially the cultivation of wet rice. Therefore the best place to begin with is the search for traces of a similar economic system in Lower Burma, the more so since the area seemed destined by nature to be the rice bowl of Burma, as it was indeed borne out by the creation of the ‘Burma delta’ by the British.²³ However, there was a fundamental difference between the rice-producing areas upcountry (the *khayaing* of Kyaukse and Minbu) and Lower Burma as the former were part of the dry zone which required water management in terms of storage and regulated distribution, whereas in Lower Burma water was more than abundant, especially after the monsoon, and had to be drained from the fields as quickly

¹⁹ Pl. III 273 = OBI 3, p. 150, l. 9-11. The other two references for potters in Lower Burma are Pl. I 73 = OBI 1, p. 151, l. 44, and Pl. IV 392 = SIP No 52, l. 11.

²⁰ UKL 1, 298; GPC, p. 173. The Chiang Mai chronicle (Wyatt/Premchit 1998, 36-40) reports not only a marriage alliance between King Mangrai and the daughter of the ruler of Pegu, Suttasomaraja, but also the former king’s expedition to Pagan and Ava in order to lure away artisans and craftsmen.

²¹ Aung-Thwin 1996, tried to show that the label ‘Shan brothers’ was a myth, as the three had been thoroughly Burmanized. This, however, ignores the Burmese traditional labeling system according to which three brothers born of a Shan father may be called and known as the ‘three Shan brothers’, as U Kala in his ‘Great Chronicle’ does. It remains, of course, still arguable whether the ruling period of them and their successors can really be described as a ‘period of Shan domination’.

²² Some 150 years later, in AD 1448, this claim was partly repeated by King Narapati (List 949, here quoted after Tin Hla Thaw 1959, 143).

²³ Here I am using the title of Michael Adas’ book metaphorically for the large-scale colonization of Lower Burma into the world’s biggest rice exporting area during the second half of the nineteenth century. I am well aware of the ‘Orientalist trap’ hidden in this approach which sees British colonialism as a boon for the colonized Mons and Burmese, at the same time denying their own ability to bring about a similar economic miracle.

as possible (overflow irrigation). Certainly, hydraulic engineering was known, and, as the inscriptions quoted above show, rice was cultivated in the vicinity of settlements in Lower Burma, but at the same time epigraphical evidence has suggested low productivity which, combined with an almost complete lack of archaeological remains, gives the impression that Lower Burma could hardly have been an important centre of rice-production during the Pagan period.²⁴

More than rice, pots seem to have been a product of Lower Burma that was much in demand at Pagan. 'In this place Arimaddanapura [i.e. Pagan], where water is difficult to get', as one inscription states (Pl. II 158 = OBI 2, p. 28, l. 1-2), the availability of water was fundamental to survival. Even today, big jars one metre in height and nearly two metres in circumference are employed to store rain water and preserve it for human consumption. To the earliest Europeans arriving in Burma, these pots were known as 'Martaban jars' or 'Pegu jars', indicating their provenance (Yule/Burnell 1886, 559, s.v. 'Martaban'), and more than likely this tradition of pot making stretches back to the Pagan period and beyond (Luce 1985 (1), 50). As mentioned above, potters and land suitable for potting even appear in the epigraphy of Pagan. Adding substance to this, recent excavations have brought to light green-glazed and greenish-white glazed ceramic ware (mainly bowls and plates) which are supposed to originate from production centres in (Lower) Burma (Hein 1996).

Despite the indisputable significance of pottery and the putative agricultural potential, the real economic importance of Lower Burma lay in the field of trade. The core area of the Pagan kingdom was landlocked, and although the international trade of the kingdom was limited, what there was would have been impossible without the ports of Lower Burma. The eleventh century witnessed a kind of 'trade revolution' with regard to the increasing number of traders participating in commerce as well as in terms of the importance trade assumed as a source of state revenue.²⁵ One drawback to full participation was that the Burmese coast lay partly in the cyclone zone of the Bay of Bengal so long-distance sailing routes across the Bay circumvented the area as far as possible. Ships coming from Sri Lanka and South India heading for Bengal usually hugged the east coast of India, while the traverse from Southeast Asia to the ports of Sri Lanka ran further south, touching the southern tip of the Nikobar Islands. Burmese ports were mainly frequented by merchants engaged in a coastal peddling trade. Despite their comparatively low importance as destinations on direct trade routes, Burmese ports were indubitably involved in the trading network in the

²⁴ This opinion is informed by British district gazetteers which, based on surveys of Lower Burma in the course of the late nineteenth century, hardly referred to any notable ancient irrigation works, as well as by Guillon's more recent (and distinctly pro-Mon) investigations of Mon culture (Guillon 1999). He claims that the Mons were skilled in hydraulic engineering but fails to produce any evidence to substantiate his claim. In a way, this also holds for the much earlier approach by Luce 1965b, 139-152, who used linguistic data for the spread of wet-rice cultivation over Southeast Asia and eastern India. The material used by Luce to describe the Mons as the pioneers of wet-rice agriculture in Burma were the Mon inscription from Kyaukse and the two Mon settlements there mentioned in inscriptions. At the time he wrote, Maing Maw, a major Pyu city of the Kyaukse district, had not yet been discovered.

²⁵ The nexus between trade and state formation has been emphasized by a number of scholars, most notably Hall 1985, and, with reference to the Cola state, Spencer 1983. An excellent overview is Kulke 1991.

Bay of Bengal, which can, for example, be seen from the works of Arab geographers of the tenth and eleventh centuries who mention Samandar, Ornashin and Abina as important emporia, presumably of the eastern shores.²⁶ Likewise, places such as Bassein and Martaban are mentioned in a variety of contexts giving evidence to show that the international trading community was aware of their existence.²⁷

As in most Asian port towns, it would be fairly safe to assume the presence of the usual group of Armenian, Arabian, Jewish, Chinese and other merchants in the Lower Burman ports (and perhaps even at Pagan), though all traces of them have more or less disappeared. The only group we know about for sure are the Tamil merchants known as *nanadesis*, those 'trading to foreign countries'.²⁸ In general, seafaring South Indian merchants of the time were Vaisnavas, with the temple of Visnu serving as the center of their religious and commercial activities. At Pagan, this temple (the Nat-hlaung-kyau) stood on a very prominent site, inside the walled city, probably even close to the palace. In the absence of any other trace of their activities at Pagan, this architectural peculiarity may serve as an indicator of the economic importance of as well as the social status attributed to the *nanadesis*.²⁹

Turning to the commodities traded, the most important import wares for Burma, at least in terms of quantity, were cotton and cotton cloth, both of which most likely originated in India where they had been grown and manufactured respectively since time immemorial.³⁰ Though cotton is hardly mentioned in the inscriptions from Pagan,³¹ we get a fairly good impression of how it was used from a contemporary (albeit fragmentary) piece of cloth with *jataka* illustrations, reminiscent of a Tibetan wall-cloth (*thangka*).³² With the help of this cloth, we can imagine what was meant when donors mentioned similar items in their lists of articles donated. One queen

²⁶ Al-Sharif Al-Idrisi 1960, 121. Ornashin is often identified as Arakan though an alternative explanation derives the name from *Urishi/Urishin* or Orissa. Abina is generally identified as 'Burma', obviously for lack of better suggestions. Samandar is often taken to denote Chittagong, though Al-Idrisi describes it as an inland port about one day's journey distant from Sandwip. This hints at another harbour in the delta called *Vangasagara-sambhandariyaka* (e.g. in the Madanpur Copper Plate inscription of King Sri Candra: Basak 1949-50) and possibly to be identified with Sabhar in Bangladesh (see Chakravarti 1996, 557-572).

²⁷ To give but a few examples: Martaban (under its Pali name Muttama) appears in the list of ports attacked by the Cola king Rajendra in the course of his expedition against Sri Vijaya in AD 1023, and together with Bassein (Kusumiya), it was the destination of King Parakkama Bahu's assault in 1164-5. Martaban also served as an important port of embarkation for monks from northern Thailand in their mission to Sri Lanka in the fourteenth century.

²⁸ On Tamil merchant associations in general see Abraham 1988. Recently, their trading network has been reconstructed through the distribution of their inscriptions (Christie 1998).

²⁹ For the temple, see Ray 1932, and Pichard 1996 (6), No 1600. The exact date of its construction is uncertain though it may stem from the time of King Anawrahta, as Ray has suggested. In the thirteenth century, its porch was repaired by one of the *nanadesi* merchants, cp. Hultzsch 1902.

³⁰ As far as I can see, the only locally produced fibre was *bombax malabaricum*, from which a very coarse cloth of poor durability can be woven, see Luce 1940, 285.

³¹ The term *wa* usually appears in a formula that describes *nirvana* as 'the total disappearance without leaving a trace, just like fluffs of cotton that are burnt', e.g. Pl. IV 425a = OBI 3, p. 274, l. 8. Most of the references date from the post-Pagan period.

³² This spectacular find of 1986 has now been published and studied by Pal 1999, who emphasizes the strong Indian influence in the composition. Earlier prints of the cloth which was found in temple No 315 come from Pichard 1988, 3-5, and Time Life Books 1995, 129.

gave ‘a piece of black cloth’ which was ‘to be hung on the wall [just like ?] in the palace’ (Pl. II 138 = OBI 1, p. 24, l. 13), and another couple said that they had prepared ‘a large piece of cloth with golden patterns that was wrapped sevenfold [or seven times] around the top of the temple’ (Pl. I 73 = OBI 1, p. 151, l. 13). Apart for such exceptional purposes, cotton cloth will also have been used for robes, *pasos*, and shirts which are all mentioned in the inscriptions fairly regularly. Cotton and cotton cloth are bulky and quite heavy, so the most convenient way of consigning them to Pagan was by ship. It stands to reason that Bassein, Tala, Henbo, and other ports of Lower Burma will therefore have served as the main gateways for textile imports.³³

Besides cotton and cotton cloth which were in fact mass goods, some luxury items such as pearls and coral also had to be imported. They were too expensive for common use and were perhaps even reserved as a royal prerequisite and for distribution by royal monopolies.³⁴ At least on both the occasions on which pearls and corals are mentioned in an inscription, the donors belonged to the royal family or its affiliates. In 1223, the minister Anantathu and his wife embroidered the top of a [miniature?] *stupa* ‘with an umbrella from which pearls and corals were hung’ (Pl. I 73 = OBI 1, p. 151, l. 12; cp. Frasch 1996, 120-125). Some decades later, Queen Saw gave away ‘all her inanimate treasures such as gold, silver, gems, pearls and corals’ (Pl. III 235 = OBI 3, p. 78, l. 18).

Trade, I am bound to repeat, never played a prominent role in Burmese society and culture, and as the foregoing remarks have shown, this situation will not have been much different during the Pagan period. Nevertheless, trade was pursued, and at least as far as overseas trade and communication were concerned – the contact with other Buddhist communities in India or Sri Lanka (Frasch 1998c) – the ports of Lower Burma were of considerable importance to Pagan. The kings of Pagan therefore tried to establish permanent control by various means, which they succeeded in doing by the mid-thirteenth century.

The incorporation of Lower Burma into the Pagan empire also had its converse effects, as the Mons formed an important group in and around the capital. Throughout the Pagan period, Mons (normally styled as Talaings) figured prominently in inscriptions, whether as donors, witnesses, or as serfs.³⁵ More than that, they were

³³ It should also be noted that although the most convenient transport of cotton products was by water, the Irrawaddy was not the only means of access to Pagan used by foreign traders. An old overland route ran from Assam and Bengal across the Patkai range, along the Chindwin valley down to Pakhangyi (Kukhan in the Pagan inscriptions) where it bifurcated. One route led further south to Pagan, the other one went eastwards to Halin and then along the Irrawaddy valley to Bhamo and China. See Frasch 1996, 58 and 272-3.

³⁴ This is especially true for silk, very likely another import product, which appears in a list of articles under a royal prerogative (*GPC* 142). Though this list may not originate in the Pagan period, at least it reflects the situation of the early eighteenth century when U Kala wrote his chronicle (*UKL* I, 253).

³⁵ The Mons whom King Anawrahta had deported from Thaton were resettled in the village Myinkaba south of Pagan, centred round the temple of their former King Manuha. A number of inscriptions found in the vicinity of this village testify the presence of Mons there (e.g. Pl. II 131b = OBI 1, p. 319). Another Pagan inscription, presumably written by a Mon courtier, comes from the area northeast of the city (Pl. III 308-310 = OBI 1, p. 143). More generally, the prefix *Ya* indicating a Mon woman is met with quite often.

successful in introducing their own cultural achievements into the life of Pagan, especially in the early decades of the empire. The first dated inscriptions, those of King Kyanzitha, were written in Mon rather than in Burmese,³⁶ and there can be no doubt that the Burmese script was developed from the Mon alphabet. Cogently, the Burmese have borrowed a number of Mon words in the field of art and architecture, such as *ta-maw* for a 'stone sculptor' (Pl. I 105a = OBI I, p. 306, l. 44). This has led Luce to recognize Mon influence as dominating the first century of Pagan architecture, distinguishing this 'Mon period' from a 'Burmese' one with a 'transitional period' of the mid-twelfth century in between.³⁷ Indeed, there is a certain change in style perceptible in the course of the twelfth century when the dark, massive, and lowish temples of the early period became lighter, higher, and steeper. It should, however also be noted that a good deal of the Burmese architectural vocabulary was not borrowed from Mon alone but can ultimately be derived from Sanskrit.³⁸ It is therefore at least conceivable that architects and master builders other than ethnical Mon were active in the construction sites of Pagan.

Arakan

Having described the role Lower Burma and its predominantly Mon population played for the Pagan empire, I will now turn my attention to Arakan in an attempt to analyse this other peripheral coastal area in a comparative perspective. A swift glance at the geographical conditions reveals the first difference. Lower Burma was linked to the capital, Pagan, by the Irrawaddy which provided easy access and quick communication. Access to Arakan was only possible across the Arakan Yoma, heavily covered with dense jungles that were difficult to penetrate even in the nineteenth century.³⁹ This topographical feature not only made intervention itself a difficult task, it also held the intensity of Pagan rule at bay. In contrast, Arakan was easily accessible from Bengal either by ship or by way of land routes, and in fact it is even impossible to define a clear boundary between southeast Bengal (ancient *Samatata*) and

³⁶ The inscriptions in the Mon language, mostly of this king, have been edited by C. O. Blagden and Chas. Duroiselle in the *Epigraphia Birmanica*. It has often been assumed that Mon served as a kind of court language under this king, whereas his successors made use of Burmese. However, a newly discovered inscription of the year AD 1129, issued by a certain queen, shows that Mon must have been more than that.

³⁷ Luce's appreciation of Mon culture and its influence on the art, architecture or language of Pagan comes out best in his *Old Burma - Early Pagan*. The labels 'Mon period' and 'Transitional period' serve as headings in the chronological arrangement of the work. I believe that Luce has overestimated the contribution of the Mons at the cost of that of the Pyu people whose temples at Hmawza (Old Prome), employing the true vault, show a great similarity to the architecture of Pagan (cp. Frasch 1996, ch. 1)

³⁸ The words in question are *sarwat* 'mortar' from *sr* 'to mix'; *angattiy* 'plaster' from *anga* 'stucco'; or *ut* from *utthaka* 'brick'.

³⁹ For a general survey, see Leider 1994. In the fifteenth century, the Italian traveller Nicolo Conti needed seventeen days to travel from the capital of Arakan to the Irrawaddy plains: Major 1857/1965, 10-11. See also Hall 1960.

northern Arakan.⁴⁰ Instead of searching for a boundary, it seems preferable to regard the whole area as an arena of cultural mobility, interaction and exchange. That Arakan had initially come under Indian influence, is demonstrated by the Sanskrit inscriptions issued by the rulers of Vesali where a dynasty of Buddhist kings bearing names ending with -candra flourished between the fifth and the eighth centuries (Johnston 1943; Sircar 1957-58; Ali 1961; Sircar 1967-68). Since about the eleventh century, this Buddhist tie between Arakan and northern India had gradually been subjected to mounting pressure. The first step was the reconversion of the later Pala kings of Bengal, who had been staunch supporters of Buddhist institutions such as Nalanda or Sompur, to Hinduism by the mid-eleventh century. The successive fall of the Palas at the end of this century and finally the Muslim conquest of Bengal at the close of the twelfth century⁴¹ created several waves of Buddhist emigration from northern India and Bengal tending either towards Tibet or towards southeast Bengal and Arakan. In the last mentioned place, a number of new centres of Buddhism gradually emerged, protected and supported from various local dynasties (Banerjee 1938; Shastri 1969; Bechert 1977). The most important and longest-lived centres were the towns Comilla and Mainamati (Ramachandran 1946; Morrison 1970 and 1974), both in the vicinity of the Lalmai range. The latter town is very likely to be identified with Patikkara, the neighbouring state to which Burmese chronicles attributed so much significance. It was at that place where as late as in AD 1219-1220 one of the petty rulers (named Ranavankamalla Harikaladeva) made a donation to the monastery of the Buddhist goddess Durgottara.⁴²

Most of what we know up to now about Arakan during the Pagan period comes from the Burmese chronicles, which in this particular case refers to the *Glass Palace Chronicle* alone as U Kala hardly mentions Arakan in his *Great Chronicle* (*Mahayazawin*). U Kala, it should be remembered, wrote at a time when Arakan was a more or less independent kingdom and he had no access to indigenous sources. After King Bodawphaya had conquered Arakan in 1785, these sources were not only available, but had also assumed importance for the Burmese as they lent historical legitimation to their claim to Arakan. U Nyo, the Twinthin-taikwun Mahasithu, represents the heightened interest for Arakan which had just been conquered when he wrote his *New Chronicle* (*Yazawin-thit*) in the 1790s. One of his sources for the relations between Arakan and Pagan, and in particular for describing how a rightful heir

⁴⁰ The river Meghna, an eastern tributary of the Brahmaputra, may have separated Samatata from the rest of Bengal, but if on the other hand the derivation of the name Chittagong from the Arabian Shat al-Ganga ('end of the Ganges') is tenable, the delta was perceived as one unit, drawing a boundary similar to the present political one. See also Das 1898.

⁴¹ The military strength of the Muslim invaders rested on their cavalry which was of little use in the lower parts of the delta because of the mainly swampy ground and the many rivers. Presumably, the Khiljis and later the Delhi sultans controlled merely the area around their capital Lakhnauti/Lakshmanavati (modern Gaur) and parts of the Sundarbans where still today stands the oldest mosque of Bangladesh (cp. Eaton 1993, 35-38). The rest of the Sundarbans was a kind of no-man's land between them and the principalities beyond the Yamuna, Brahmaputra, and Meghna rivers.

⁴² Bhattacharya 1933. It has to be noted, however, that other members of the Deva family which lived in this area and to which Ranavankamalla perhaps belonged, made land-donations to Brahmins, cp. the copper plates of King Damodaradeva (Pandit 1874; Barua and Cakravarti 1947; Dani 1953-54).

was restored to the throne of Arakan by the King of Pagan, was the *Rakhaing minthami egyin*, a 15th century historical ballad.⁴³ Working forty years later, the compilers of the *Glass Palace Chronicle* had additional texts such as a '*Chronicle of Arakan*' at their disposal from which they could draw their information,⁴⁴ but they would of course pick out only what was important for them. In other words, they referred to 'big history', political events and inter-state relations which would generally mean military contest. Accordingly, we learn about Anawrahta's struggle to obtain the Mahamuni image, the restoration of Lekya-min-nan to the throne of Arakan by King Alaungsithu along with the king's visit to Man Aung Island (Cheduba/Meghawati), and, finally, the vain attempt of Macchagiri (obviously a part of Arakan) to regain its former independence when the Pagan kingdom began to fall apart (GPC, p. 65-67, 86, 133-4, 162 and 165-6). Between the lines, it also appears that Arakan was vital to the communication with Bengal and India. The most important place on the subcontinent was Bodhgaya, but closer to Burma was the neighbouring city and state of Patikkara in southeast Bengal whose ruler had found himself involved in Pagan politics on several occasions, once as the grandfather of King Alaungsithu and later as the assassin of King Narathu.⁴⁵ Giving his daughter in marriage to Alaungsithu shows that the King of Pattikara at least temporarily acknowledged the suzerainty of Pagan. In this way, the authors created the impression that Arakan was a tributary state that had to send its princesses to the Pagan court as a kind of tribute or else fight for its independence.

If this centre-periphery relationship between Pagan and Arakan had been permanently instituted, axiomatically there would have been regular intercourse between the two places despite the difficulties imposed by the route, presumably again reflecting a certain asymmetry in the relationship. As we have seen, the Mons have left their traces in Pagan in various ways; and similarly on many occasions we find ethnic labels such as *kula* ('Indian'), *kantu* (Kadu), *sak* (Thet), *syam* (Shan), *krwam* (?Kambodian, perhaps northern Thai or Laotian), *kamlam* (Kanyan) and so on (see Luce 1959; 1976; 1985) attached to names of serfs listed in donative inscriptions. This evidence suggests that people from areas conquered or at least controlled by Pagan were used as a human resource throughout the Pagan period. In the case of the Pyu people, there are reasons to assume that they regarded the Shwe-san-daw *stupa* (where King Anawrahta had enshrined the hair relic brought from the old Pyu capital Prome) as their central place of worship at Pagan,⁴⁶ and even monks and books

⁴³ Twinthin-taikwun Mahasithu 1968, 130-131. *Rakhaing minthami egyin*. Students' Textbook (4th Year). Yangon 1992. Although the *egyin* credited the Pagan King Laungsithu, that is Alaungsithu, with the attack, Twinthin ascribed it to King Narapatisithu who ruled some decades later.

⁴⁴ GPC, p. 122. As for possible other sources, we may, in the absence of an in-depth study of Burmese and Arakanese historiography (the latter I will refer to below), only speculate whether literary sources such as the *Dhanawati are-to-pum* or pagoda histories (which contain, as far as 'historicity' is concerned much legend) like the *Mahamuni-phaya-thamaing* (a version of which entitled 'True Chronicle of the Great Image' was used by U San Shwe Bu and Maurice Collis 1925, 34-52; also see Forchhammer 1891, 1-7) were consulted by the compilers of the *Glass Palace Chronicle*.

⁴⁵ GPC, p. 105-106 and p. 133-134.

⁴⁶ U Than Tun 1978, 5, has pointed out that Anawrahta's votive tablets have been found at Prome while one table written in the Pyu language with the king's name added was discovered at the Shwe-san-daw

from Sri Lanka are referred to on and off (Frasch 1996, 360-365, and Fräsch 1998c). But the expectation of finding an equally rich manifestation of Arakanese culture in architecture or epigraphy is sadly disappointed: references relating to Arakan are strikingly meagre, even though the few inscriptions available seem to correspond with the picture drawn by the chronicles. On the one hand there are the sources relating to the conquest of Macchagiri ('Fish Mountain') which probably refers to the dominion of the Saks, located somewhere in the northern Arakan hills/Lower Patkai range. Two inscriptions report the conquest of this region by King Alaungsithu presumably in the late eleventh century.⁴⁷ Although both are copies, they seem to be corroborated by the Burmese chronicles which state that King Alaungsithu had the head of 'the Kadon, ruler of the Thets,' brought before him.⁴⁸ A century later, King Narapatisithu in his Dhammayazika inscription listed Macchagiri among the places that had been 'conquered' (*naing-ngan*) (Pl. I 20 = OBI 1, p. 68, l. 9; Tin Htway 1974). The Saks tried to free themselves from Pagan overlordship in the last quarter of the thirteenth century, but obviously in vain.⁴⁹ On the other hand, there are only five instances where a person named *Nga Rakhaing* ('Mr. Arakan') appears in a list of serfs dedicated to one of the temples at Pagan,⁵⁰ and from one single inscription a certain predominance of Pagan can be inferred: In AD 1299 – curiously enough at a time when the decline of Pagan as a political centre had already begun – Queen Amipaya Saw made a large dedication to the Hsudaungpyi monastic complex at Pagan. Some of the serfs which she transferred originally belonged to two Arakanese owners as indicated by the prefix 'Rakhaing' in front of their names. In her expression, these serfs had been 'offered respectfully' (*chak*) to her. The serfs, in turn, are said to be 'Indian' (*kula*) in several cases, and were designed, it appears, special tasks within the monastery such as cooking, betel cutting or making music (Pl. IV 391 = OBI 4, p. 188, l. 29-37). However, even if we subsume the Saks and Kanyans under the desig-

Temple, Pagan. U Than Tun therefore suggested that the king may have enshrined the relics found at Prome. A similar transfer in GPC, p. 86-87. In connection with the Shwe-san-daw it is noteworthy that in the immediate surroundings of the temple, an inscription has been found which was written by a Pyu named Singhavirsurjjapuul (U Than Tun 1998). The links to the former Pyu capital are more than obvious by the mention of a 'headman of Prome' (*prañ-su-kri*), a *thera* from Prome and the use of the land measure *namuin* which I take as a Pyu word, occurring only in the vicinity of Prome (Frasch 1996, 73).
⁴⁷ The date of the first inscription (List 26 = B 2, p. 601), AD 1066, is far too early to be taken serious. The second one (List 42 = B 2, p. 835) has the date AD 1098 in its lower part which still does not fall into Alaungsithu's reign (which started around AD 1112-14) but may be true if the future king started his career as a young man by serving as an army leader (cp. for this List 50 = SIP No 4, p. 4, which reports another battle by Alaungsithu in the year AD 1110). This second inscription explicitly mentions the conquest of Arakan in addition to that of Macchagiri. It should be noted that both inscriptions mention the Tharakkhan monastery at Legaing (on the eastern slope of the Arakan Yoma) which the king seemingly visited on his way back to Pagan.

⁴⁸ GPC, p. 118-119. In keeping with Luce's later interpretation, I have split the epithet 'Thetminkadon' of the GPC-translation into two parts which makes much more sense. 'Kadon' could either be a personal name or the word for 'ruler' in the Thet language. The meaning of the place name 'Thetsodaung' ('Hill Ruling the Thets'), a peak in the southeast of Pagan, remains to be established.

⁴⁹ GPC, p. 161 and 165. Pl. III 276a = OBI 3, p. 158, l. 2-3 (AD 1292) of Asankhaya also seems to list Macchagiri (the reading is not clear) among the Burmese possessions.

⁵⁰ The five are: Pl. I 15 = OBI 1, p. 60, l. 27; Pl. I 42 = OBI 1, p. 112, l. 10; Pl. I 43 = OBI 1, p. 114, l. 9; Pl. II 117a = OBI 1, p. 64, l. 6; Pl. III 231b = OBI 3, p. 68, l. 14.

nation 'Arakan', the evidence is still remarkably meagre, compared to the frequent occurrence of other ethnic labels. Aware that neither architectural nor epigraphical studies have so far asked for any real representation of Arakan and that the Burmese and the Arakanese are so closely akin in terms of race, language or religion, that it may be difficult to define clear marks of distinction, it is tempting to conclude (although by way of an *argumentum ex silentio* which admittedly has its own limitations) that this virtual lack of evidence seems to reflect little intercourse between Pagan and Arakan, or in other words: Arakan might have enjoyed much greater freedom than the Burmese chronicles would have us believe.⁵¹

Pursuing this argument in favor of an independent Arakan during the Pagan period, I will look for further indicators in the fields of dynastic history, economy, and religion. Beginning with the political (or more pertinently dynastic) affairs, it is regrettable that hitherto no further inscriptions either on copper plates or on stone (like the Mrauk U pillar) have come to light. These inscriptions record a reliable list of rulers from a Candra family which flourished from the fifth (or earlier) to the eighth century (Johnston 1943). The Vesali inscription of Bhuticandra, which can be assigned to the sixth century, corroborates the information from the Mrauk U pillar (Sircar 1967-68), and so do the Vesali inscriptions which confirm the names Niticandra and Viracandra (Sircar 1957-58), but apart from these few inscriptions, we know little about ancient Arakan. Recent research has shown that Arakan had a distinguished tradition of history writing with some works predating the eighteenth century.⁵² Like the *New Chronicle of Arakan* of Candamalalankara,⁵³ they usually present an uninterrupted list of kings ruling over Arakan. The incontrovertible intention of the latter author would seem to have been to give the impression that these kings, and therefore their kingdom, Arakan, were independent. Rather than by writing inscriptions (which are almost non-existing during the Pagan period, as we have seen), at least some of these kings seem to have made their independent status manifest by issuing coins. Since the days of the Candras, royal coins had been circulated in Arakan, and at the end of the thirteenth century, a certain Mahanandabhaya, uncle of the infant king Naradhipati, revived this tradition.⁵⁴ Although they may have been used in trade, these coins could hardly have had any commercial value, a supposition which is reinforced by the fact that the country is without silver deposits. Instead, they should be taken as symbolic coins, as public manifestations of sovereignty.

⁵¹ In reverse direction, no evidence of Pagan influence in Arakanese art and architecture has been detected so far. The only reference (Barua 1960) who recognized Burmese artistical influence in some bronze figures found at Chittagong sounds very vague and does not tell who influenced whom.

⁵² I'm referring here to the works of Michael Charney and Jacques Leider on whose information my knowledge of the Arakanese chronicles is based.

⁵³ Unfortunately, this is a rather late chronicle of dubious reliability. In one instance, e. g., we find kings over a period of nearly 200 years successively producing heirs at the tender age of six years (I owe this finding to my *saya* U Tin Htway). The names of these kings are, however, interesting. Two kings - Nga Raman and Nay Sim (*alias* Nazim?) - seem to be Muslims, and several bear names with the prefix Nga (Rakhaing, Kyon, Hnalon) which for all we learn from Pagan inscriptions should indicate commoners. A third name, Sanapan Phru, also indicates foreign influence though I cannot tell from where.

⁵⁴ Cp. U Shwe Zan 1994, 144. The coin of King Culacandra shown on the same page looks very similar and can hardly predate Mahanandabhaya's by five centuries.

A look at the economic foundations of Arakan shows a number of similarities to the situation in Lower Burma. Then as now, Arakan also has water – both rain and rivers – in abundance, and wet rice cultivation is possible almost everywhere, if overflow irrigation is employed.⁵⁵ Accordingly, its old capitals were usually situated in the ‘heart of the rice bowl’, the alluvial plains along the Kaladan and Lemro rivers (Daw Thin Kyi 1970, 5). As mentioned earlier, Arakan was also part of the trading network in the Bay of Bengal, although its share may have been small before the fourteenth century and rose in connection with the rise of Portuguese trading activities.⁵⁶ As the few Arab sources show, the forests of Arakan offered trees suitable for a variety of purposes, including shipbuilding (al-Idrisi mentions aloes wood), and that it had the additional advantage that most of its rivers were navigable up to the urban centres (Daw Thin Kyi 1970, 3). Arakan was even more affected by cyclones than Lower Burma, forcing ships from Southeast Asia heading for the Bengal ports to keep close to the shore. In fact, the Arab sources give the impression that direct trade with Arakan across the Bay was the fruit of ships blown off course rather than of intentional navigation. Finally, we should take into consideration that, apart from climatological impediments, trade with Arakan during the Pagan period may have been as heavily affected by pirates (the ‘Maghs’, as they were often called in later sources) as it was in later times. In sum, this leads us to the conclusion that although Arakan never played a prominent role in the trade of the Bay (at least as far as I can see), trade could have contributed to the economic stability and welfare of an independent kingdom of Arakan already in the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, but apart from this, rice cultivation should have been the fundament of this polity.

This brings me to my final point, the state of Buddhism and the religious policy of the Arakan kings. The most sacred site of Arakan was the Mahamuni shrine near Kyauktaw, a place of considerable sanctity, not least because of its great age. As the legend goes, the site had been chosen by the Buddha himself in the course of one of his visits. When Pagan rose to become the most important centre of Theravada Buddhism in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a kind of competition arose between the two centres which, judged by the silence of Burmese sources, ended in favor of the Mahamuni. The Mahamuni image does not occur among the numerous relics and shrines that were acquired by the kings of Pagan according to the Burmese chronicles, and in the same vein, the *phaya-thamaing* (temple history) of the Mahamuni underlines not only its autonomy but also its superiority to Pagan.⁵⁷ After the usual references to the great antiquity and sanctity of the site, the *thamaing* goes on to state that since the ninth century monks had been coming from Pagan and Sri Lanka to worship the image. Similarly, King Alaungsithu’s conquest is described as a kind of pilgrimage to repair and renovate the temple. Given that King Alaungsithu had indeed conquered Arakan, this interpretation of the facts has the obvious intention of glorifying the Mahamuni, and in doing so, it challenges the religious supremacy of Pagan.

⁵⁵ ‘The irrigation system of ancient Arakan has not yet been sufficiently surveyed’.

⁵⁶ The presence of Portuguese traders and their relations with Arakan have been highlighted in a number of recent theses and articles, especially Subrahmanyam 1993, Guedes 1994, and Charney 1998.

⁵⁷ Forchhammer 1891, 1-9. I thank Jacques Leider for making this text available to me.

The connection with Sri Lanka is now corroborated by an independent source: a recently discovered inscription of the year AD 1256 reports that King Alomapyu visited Sri Lanka, perhaps in order to invite monks to help in purifying the *sangha* of Arakan.⁵⁸ It is not alone the king's journey that deserves mention here – I suspect that it was also intended to add legitimacy to the re-organized Arakanese kingdom from the new capital Laungkrak (since 1237) – but also the fact that for all conceivable purposes: pilgrimage, reform of the *sangha* or any other, Pagan would have been a much closer and more convenient place. Even if it had to be a Sinhalese tradition for the proper ordination of monks, it would have been available at Pagan where since the return of Chapata and his companions in the late twelfth century⁵⁹ a monastery of the Sinhalese monks existed.⁶⁰ Moreover, just eight years before Alomapyu went to Sri Lanka, another group of Burmese monks returned from Sri Lanka to Pagan where they took part in the reform of the *sangha* initiated or sponsored by the minister Caturangabala.⁶¹ Although this interpretation may be too early, I assume that the Arakanese king would not have been able to act in this manner had he really been a vassal of Pagan. In conclusion, it should be added that this thirteenth century mission was one of several such contacts mentioned in the *Man Raja-kri are-to-ca-tam*, an eighteenth century chronicle from Arakan.⁶² This well-established relationship with Sri Lanka seems to be the reason why at the close of the seventeenth century the Sinhalese king, in a reverse move to purify the Sinhalese *sangha*, sent a mission to Arakan and not to the far more important Theravada kingdoms of Thailand or Burma (both Upper and Lower), in order to find monks willing to participate in a reform of the Sinhalese *sangha*.

Summary

Despite their almost similar geographic and climatic conditions, the two coastal peripheries that have been dealt with here underwent a quite different development when they became 'provinces' of the Pagan kingdom. After its initial conquest, Lower Burma was gradually drawn deeper into the realm of Upper Burma for which the riverine link was an indispensable precondition. The Irrawaddy provided quick communication between the capital and the subsidiary centres (ports, royal lodges, etc.) as well as easy transport for trade commodities. The ports of Lower Burma not

⁵⁸ Having not been able to check the inscription personally, I am drawing my information from Raymond 1996/1999.

⁵⁹ See Fräsch 1996, 116 and 292. The report about Chapata and the establishment of a Sinhalese order at Pagan comes from the Kalyani inscription which narrates the 'ecclesiastical history' of (mostly Lower) Burma in its introduction (Taw Sein Ko (ed.) 1893).

⁶⁰ This was the Tamani complex, named after one of Chapata's companions, Tamalinda. See Fräsch 1996, 292-296.

⁶¹ Our main source for this reform, a long Pali inscription from Pagan (Pl. III 302 = OBI 2, p. 235) is unfortunately too blurred to allow a full translation. See Fräsch 1996, 241 and 303 for the information gained from the legible portions.

⁶² I am indebted to Michael Charney for bringing this chronicle - rather a collection of various fragments - to my notice and sending me a copy of the relevant passages.

only handled the overseas trade of Pagan, but also served as gateways to the Buddhist communities on the opposite side of the Bay of Bengal. Arakan, in contrast, was more or less cut off from central Burma by the Arakan Yoma, but was in turn much more open to Bengal. By manoeuvring between these two poles, the rulers of Arakan seemingly managed to preserve their independence to a fairly large degree. This they made manifest by issuing their own coins and by undermining the claim of Pagan to religious superiority. In keeping with approaches from recent research on the Arakanese state in the fifteenth century (Charney 1998, Leider 1998), this conclusion would extend the period of an independent Arakan down to the thirteenth century.

Appendix 1

Translation of the Burmese Inscription from Mergui (Pl. III 225 = OBI 3, p. 53)

1. Year 631 (AD 1269), year-name *Sravan*, month *Mlway-tâ*, 5th day of the waxing moon. The rich person (*sû-krway*) Nga Wam Phyi Thin built a *kû* and donated to the Buddha image (therein) - [names of ten serfs].

6) These serfs were donated to make repairs if the *kû* or the image should in future times become damaged.

8) Moreover donated: 100 (baskets ?) of unhusked rice, the produce of which shall be used for food offerings (*samput*).

9) [illegible; from the repetition in l. 19 can be inferred that a tract of garden land is meant] 1000 (or 100 ?) *areca* palms and eighty coconut palms. These are also dedicated for the maintenance if in future times the *kû* or the image should become damaged.

12) For this my good deed that I have built, I wish to attain Buddhahood that is omniscience. May my children and grandchildren, relatives and friends, all good-hearted people gain the same merit as myself as a result of this good deed.

19) If these serfs, rice, *mlway* (? read *mliy*, 'land') and garden that I have donated are taken away by my children or grandchildren, relatives or friends, or ill-wishing people, may the earth be above and they be below, suffering in the Avici hell.

Appendix 2

Text and Translation of the Burmese Inscription from Kyaunggon-myo, Bassein Distr. (Pl. IV 387b, year 635 or AD 1273).

This inscription, which is of some interest for the relationship between the Pagan rulers and Lower Burma, has not been edited so far, and although included in the *Inscriptions of Burma*, it has been omitted from the edition of the *She-haung Myanma kyauk-sa-mya* (OBI) published by the Archaeology department in Yangon. The inscription is both fragmentary (only lines 1-10 remain) and damaged which made reading quite difficult. I have compared the following reading with the version of G.H. Luce that my *saya* U Tin Htway has made available to me.⁶³

⁶³ I regret being unable to use diacritics in the present volume.

Because of the lacunae, the text is difficult to understand. As far as I can see, it records a royal audience (*kwan-prok*, or *kunbyauk* lit. means a 'variegated wooden shelter' normally used for audiences) held in the year 1273 in the course of which a lawsuit concerning land rights was decided by erecting two demarcation pillars. As it is not stated where this audience was held, two explanations spring to mind. If it was held in Pagan, it is more than likely that the son of Prince Singhapati was sent to Lower Burma in order to proclaim the decision and supervise the erection of the pillars. However, it is also possible that the king himself had gone downstream (the reading *man-krî*, 'king', is uncertain but he should have been personally involved as suggested by the term *min-tav-mû*, 'royally ordered'). The identification of Prince Singhapati is uncertain as there were several princes of this name.

Text

- 1) (* so)tthi * santû la butthahû-niy ** sakarac 635
- 2) ... kwan-prok thva(-k so akhâ) nhuik (vattukâ) lay
- 3) ... (skhin) ... rvâ lay lup ra sa sù-tuiw ...i...
- 4) ... kyok 2 tuin le mliy akhrâ
- 5) ... (cuik) sim hu min tav mû e' ** (man-krî) ...
- 6) ... (man) Singhapaty-sâ ...
- 7) Nga Pha Ay 1 yok * Ngâ ...
- 8) Îy sui(v cui)-k ...
- 9) ...
- 10) ... (ra kê ... can) ...

Translation

- 1) Success! Month Santu, Thursday. Year 635.
- 2) ... on the occasion of an audience held in the 'variegated shed'. As for the glebe lands ...
- 3) ... the people who usually work on the village lands ...
- 4) boundaries of the land marked by two stone pillars ...
- 5) '... shall be (erected)', it was royally ordered. (The King) ...
- 6) ... the son of Prince Singhapati ...
- 7) Nga Pha Ay 1 person. Nga ...
- 8) Thus ...
- 9-10) ...

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