

his wealth about to be seized, his cards toppled, his elder son dead and unburied. Perhaps Maria Guyomar really did ‘spit in his face’, when Phaulkon was led away by his executioners, as Engelburt Kaempfer has it (1690: 33).

New in Forest’s account is the trading with Tonkin, the dismissal of the whole story of the trip to Persia as fabricated, the clearer perspicacity of de Lionne (especially when compared to the arch-ditherer Bishop Laneau) and a partial rehabilitation of the trader Véret balanced by a complete dismissal of the dipsomaniac Vachet. Important in this supposed novel presentation (but one that is not new, since Claire Keefe used it) is the use of original texts and reported conversations, which enhances its veracity.

One could go on and on – as others are undoubtedly doing. This reviewer knew of another Phaulkon account of the tale being concocted in Phuket and still another in the United States. Let us hope they stick to the known facts. Somehow one feels that the story is too good to drop. Film rights, anyone?

Michael Smithies

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*Tracks and Traces: Thailand and the Work of Andrew Turton* by PHILIP HIRSCH & NICOLAS TAPP (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010). ISBN 978 90 8964 249 3 (soft)

This book is a collection of nine papers covering aspects of Andrew Turton’s considerable academic work on Thailand. It also has a select bibliography, spanning the over 30 years of Turton’s scholarly contributions, displaying a wide array of issues that have been scrutinized by the gifted anthropologist’s eye.

Like some of the contributors to the book, I was supervised by Andrew Turton when doing my PhD at SOAS. Hence I gladly took up the task of critically reading the book and writing a review on it. This was especially so since I currently live in Thailand, have spent most of the last 25 years in the country and in many ways have a vested interest in what happens in this “dynamic and rapidly changing society” (citation from the back cover of *Tracks and Traces*). That the country is changing does not detract from the benefits of looking back over the past four or so decades to contextualize matters, as much of the book does, and even to the nineteenth century, as covered in the main by the historical papers at the end of the book. Indeed, understanding the present and being prepared for what is to come can be enhanced by reading about the past, especially when being interpreted in an ethnographic manner that emphasises power relations along with socio-economic and political ramifications.

On a personal note, I have found Andrew Turton a very congenial individual. Though from quite different backgrounds, me obviously being the son of immigrants, we share a certain British-ness and a sense of adventure, whether being done in person or through the literary arts. In 2000, during my year of PhD field study, in which I was principally based in the North of Thailand, I even visited the village in Chiang Rai, where Turton had done research many years earlier. I just decided to turn up at the village on the motor bike I had at the time and see what happened, though naturally wanting both curiosity about my supervisor to be quenched and useful data to contribute to my own research, which was essentially on development, health and traditional knowledge. I was soon directed to people who knew Turton from many years previously and then led to a house where it was insisted I stayed for dinner and later for the night. Photos of Turton, from what looked like a different age (some similar to those found in *Tracks and Traces*), were brought out and many an interesting topic was discussed, including traditional beliefs and practices, how Thailand was changing fast and the way in which traditional knowledge needed to be preserved. A few years later when I recounted this story at a SOAS alumni reunion in Bangkok, I was asked: "Well, was a shrine there to Andrew Turton?"

With this in mind, I read *Tracks and Traces* to see how a coherent message might come across, given such a wide breadth of issues covered by Turton's

writings. My conclusion is similar to that which is stated in the introduction, namely that the collection of papers and the matters they cover, with linkages to Turton's own work, is a partly fragmentary and diverse one, which in itself does indeed reflect the nature of society as understood by "some of us".

As mentioned in the introduction, the first four papers generally cover issues of power and economy. These examine changes, including the move away from a fundamentally agrarian society, over the last few decades in Thailand, essentially starting from the periods covered by Turton's earlier writings, especially his work on the 'Limits of Ideological Domination and the Formation of Social Consciousness', to current times. The conclusions are similar in that the authors recognize that Turton was effectively breaking new ground back then, yet his contribution to understanding the dynamics of power, including resistance to it as well as responses such as methods to enhance invulnerability, in Thai society is continuous by means of being relevant in the modern day. That Turton broke new ground is hard to argue against. He was writing at a time when in Europe academic ideas were evolving fast, with works of writers such as Foucault challenging earlier preconceptions, and taking this exploratory mindset to Thailand to get insights into the dynamics there, while being attentive to detail and open to local knowledge and worldviews.

As Nicolas Tapp indicates, Turton was aware of the need to shun assumptions

of social and cultural homogeneity and adopt interpretive approaches to anthropology to make sense of the dynamics and complexities inherent in Thai society. Tapp's paper is one of the three papers toward the middle of *Tracks and Traces* that is concerned largely with ideology, discourse and participation.

The fact that Turton spent time in rural areas – and I remember hearing a tale from him describing a journey from Chiang Mai to Chiang Rai which took days, including long periods on the back on an elephant – and was receptive to the people there allowed him to extract valuable insights and transmit these to others, often questioning common stereotypes, such as that of docile and ignorant farmers.

In as sense, similar stereotypes are held today, whether about a unitary and essential Thai culture, about North-Easterners who lack the faculties to make political decisions, as Charles Keyes argues against in his paper, or about the lack of fluidity of power relations. In fact, the adoption of a critical eye and the use of ideas Turton put forward and authors in *Tracks and Traces* elaborate on, can result in a clearer understanding of the dynamics prevalent in present day Thai society. Turton witnessed volatility, as I recall when he was describing events related to the student protests of the 1970s; in Thailand today there may still be such volatility under the surface, which does point to the need to address inequalities and encourage greater dialogue among those with differing ideologies.

As academics and researchers,

Turton and the authors of *Tracks and Traces* generally serve an audience with similar interests and faculties. Hence in reading the book some may find parts which are thick in theoretical arguments and constructions harder work than other parts which could be seen to be more accessible to the average reader. Moreover, while inequalities and injustices are identified these issues remain academic, albeit often with undercurrents of how the activist agenda could be stimulated. Regarding activism, this has largely come to fall in the domain of Thailand's vibrant civil society. However, intentionally or not, or maybe because these developments have, for the most part, come about since the bulk of Turton's writings, *Tracks and Traces* does not cover such issues more than in passing.

Jamaree Chiengthong, whom incidentally Turton put me in touch with when I began my field study in Chiang Mai, draws on Turton's and her own research in Northern Thailand analyzing modernization and ideological trends leading up to the present day. Increased commoditization and the money politics of the turn of the century are viewed in the context of class and ideological formations and battles that cut across such lines. Interestingly (for me particularly, given Italian heritage), the case of Italy embarking on a modernization trajectory at the turn of the twentieth century, while facing a crisis of the state, is used to shed light on the situation in Thailand. This is not least of all because of Gramscian class analysis and how this had an

impact on Turton's own thinking. In addition, it does show the relevance of intense ideological battles and the close relations between morality and politics in modern Thailand.

The next paper, by Johnthan Rigg, whose SOAS course on the geography of Southeast Asia I attended in the late 1980s, looks more specifically at popular participation in Thailand's development, linking to national plans and drawing upon Turton's work on the subject, including balances of power, or lack thereof, especially in rural settings. It is evident that the issue of popular participation and the way in which it shapes socio-economic and political processes has evolved dramatically since Turton wrote on the matter over 20 years back, yet a solid historical perspective serves a purpose. This is especially so bearing in mind that Turton, when writing on the matter, was principally concerned with the political and socially activist dimensions of participation, and, while over time it may have become a more mainstream exercise with technocratic and apolitical traits, as noted by Rigg, recent events show that participation often does involve highly political activities.

The final two papers examine Turton's historical contributions, covering slavery and British diplomatic missions. In many ways this progression to study what happened earlier, especially in the case of the diplomatic missions, reflects a process in which Turton, as a scholar having achieved much, could look back on historical occurrences with an "informed eye". I dare say that it might

reflect a move toward more "armchair" academic pursuits which accompany the maturation of the individual, something I may be starting to identify with, in the greater scheme of working to understand human behaviour from a more evolutionary perspective.

The paper by Craig J. Reynolds on Thai institutions of slavery is useful in that it provides a succinct analysis of the subject, while also acknowledging Turton's contribution, which is based largely on the advantages of having an anthropological training (as opposed a purely historian one), and indicating that aspects of these institutions are still relevant today. This should be qualified by referring more specifically to debt servitude or bondage, which recent reports on human trafficking would certainly not refute.

The link between Turton's work on Thai institutions of slavery and British diplomatic mission is historical in context, with common materials from travel diaries or journals from the past being used, yet the diplomatic missions dealing more with the ruling class and how those of different cultures interacted. This time, in particular that in which Dr. David Richardson was visiting Northern Thailand around about 1830, is one of intrigue and trade, especially that in cattle, territory and custom. I remember visiting Andrew Turton a few years back at his home, when he was still working on material related to the diplomatic missions, and, going back to my earlier statement of British-ness, I recall how there might have been a sense of nostalgia for a

time of greater simplicity in both human relations and the possessions aspired to.

So, celebrating Turton with this collection of papers recognizes his valuable contribution to Thai studies and also stimulates the reader to consider how events over recent decades have paved the way for the challenges the country now faces. Without doubt, Turton has enhanced scholarly understanding of a wide variety of “human” issues particularly from an anthropological perspective. What happens next is anyone’s guess, but at least we may be better prepared to live (and die) with it.

Marco Roncarati

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*Through the Eyes of the King: The Travels of King Chulalongkorn To Malaya* by P. LIM PUI HUEN (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2009). ISBN 978 981 2307 73 6 (hard)

Every journey can be reported in a narrative that may include pictures; in particular are the journeys of kings and rulers so recorded. Such a narrative of a journey is not necessarily a description of what the traveler has seen or whom he or she has met—describing the places visited and the people met often inspires the narrator to introduce additional evocations of places and faces. Elaborations of the differences between the hometown and the visited places in terms of daily life and culture are a good example of such additions; thoughts about the loved ones left behind and reflections on the homeland are another. Concurrently, narratives of journeys can be presented in various genres or in a combination of genres: memoirs, letters, travelogues, novels or poetry, for example. They can focus on a wide variety of themes beyond the theme of travel alone: tourism, environment, multiculturalism or nationalism. Moreover, the one who made the journey is not necessarily the narrator—it could be anyone who, for a wide variety of reasons, is interested in the journey: a contemporary, an eyewitness or participant the narrator could be, but he or she could also be a later scholar or writer who was not “there” but feels entitled to create or reconstruct a retrospective narrative. Inevitably such a narrative tells the