And Through Flows the River
archaeology and the pasts of Lao Pako

Anna Källén
This is a story about Lao Pako. Lao Pako is located on a small hill on the southern bank of the river Nam Ngum in central Laos. Four seasons of archaeological fieldwork have yielded considerable amounts of pottery, metallurgical remains, glass beads, stone artefacts, spindle whorls as well as other material and structural information that have created a foundation for interpretation. The archaeological interpretation presents Lao Pako as a place where people came to perform rituals c. 1500 years ago. In these rituals, sophisticated combinations of pottery depositions, infant burials and iron production created a narrative about what it means to be in the world. Things in and on the ground created, and continue to create, non-verbal sentences about life and death, fertility, decay and worldly reproduction.

The archaeological interpretation is, however, not the only valid story about Lao Pako. This is a place where spirits are; it is also a tourist resort and a national treasure. These other stories all work to create Lao Pako as a place of interest and are used in this thesis to define the archaeological story, and to visualize the aims and agendas that are inherent in the production of archaeological knowledge.

Using the conceptual apparatus of postcolonial and other critical theory, the thesis aims to critically deconstruct the archaeology performed by the author and others. It entails an explicit critique of the deterministic temporal unilinearity that is inherent in the archaeological narrative of the evolution of humankind, as well as against essentialist notions of culture and the dissociation of the past as exotic otherness. Thus, the different stories about Lao Pako demonstrate the need to critically revise the role of archaeology in a postcolonial world, and create archaeological stories by which we are touched, moved and disturbed, without resorting to imperialist notions of time and progress.

Keywords: Lao Pako, Laos, Mainland Southeast Asia, archaeology, excavation, ceramics, iron production, ritual, gender, the past, time, postcolonial, critical theory

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For Gunnar and Bengt
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A NOTE ON TRANSLATION

Lao, the official language of Laos, is a tonal language with a script of its own. In the absence of common official standards for transcript to Latin letters, there are several possible ways to transcribe Lao in an English text. Some writers rely on old French standard spellings, while others have tried to innovate other ways of writing that would better suit English-speaking readers. In any case, the tones inherent and crucial for understanding the Lao language are never conveyed properly in any use of a Latin script. To suit the purposes of this book, I have decided to use Lao as I have used it myself during the course of my work in Laos and at Lao Pako, that is, in a piecemeal hybrid manner. More specifically this means that where possible I have included names of places, people and crucial words and concepts in Lao script within the English text, followed by an approximate transcript in Latin letters, which is most often according to the spelling (of names and places) used by the concerned Lao people in translations into English. The overall aim is to facilitate the reading as well as the identification of people, places and concepts that occur in the book, both for those who are literate in Lao and those who are not.
The Mekong river, the *Mae Nam Kong* – ‘Mother of Waters’, flows through the entire Mainland Southeast Asia. It touches the territories of all modern nation states in the area: China, Burma, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. Along the way, it takes on various different shapes and is known by many names: *Dza Chu* – ‘River of Rocks’, *Lantiang Jiang* – ‘Turbulent River’, *Tonle Thom* – ‘Great River’ and *Song Cuu Long* – ‘Nine Dragons River’, to name but a few (Osborne 2000:15). As it enters the lowlands after its first two thousand kilometres in Tibet, China and mountainous Laos, and joins the present border between Thailand and Laos, it is known as the *Mae Nam Kong*, and forms, together with its many tributaries, a vast floodplain. This flat and seasonally flooded land is the immediate focus of this study.

Lao Pako is the place I focus on and the place from which I look out, in an attempt to understand the perspectives and ideas of its people. That is, the people who used it in the 4th to 6th centuries AD and we who use it today. One of the largest tributaries of the Mekong, the river Nam Ngum, literally flows through the Lao Pako landscape. Lao Pako is situated on a hill at the southern bank of the Nam Ngum, at a sharp bend and overlooking the course of the river both upstream and downstream. At a distance is the *Phu Khao Khonay* – Buffalo Horn.
AND THROUGH FLOWS THE RIVER

mountain range framing the landscape, a floodplain completely dominated by the river.

The Lao Pako hill is today home to the Ban Pako eco-cultural tourist resort. For long, Lao Pako was known as a phii pa saa – a place where spirits are – among people in the nearby villages. With the establishment of the resort in the early 1990’s it first became known as a prehistoric site of some importance to the national authorities for cultural heritage management, the Ministry of Information and Culture. A series of archaeological investigations followed, all but one in a Lao-Swedish joint research project starting out in 1995, and of which I have myself been a part (for reports, see Källén & Karlström 1999, Bouasisengpaseuth et al. 2000, Källén et al. 2002). The combined results from this fieldwork constitute the bulk of this book.

I saw Lao Pako for the first time in November 1995. I had just finished my graduate courses in archaeology, and I travelled to Laos with my friend and colleague Anna Karlström, having been granted a scholarship from the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) to work together with the Lao PDR national authorities in an archaeological investigation project. I was 21 years old, and it was the first time I travelled outside Europe. In retrospect it is clear how this entire launching part of the Lao Pako project bears signs of our youth and lack of professional as well as cultural experience. Naivety led to mistakes that seem needless today, but with naivety came also fearlessness and direct determination that I am now in some sense sad to have lost along the way.

Anna Karlström and I arrived at Lao Pako the first time by boat, along the river. Little did I know that morning in November, that the slightly elevated hill on the top of the river bank in front of me was about to set me off on an intellectual and emotional roller coaster ride, lasting nearly a decade. I was entirely occupied with all that was new around me. Spending half an hour travelling downstream the Nam Ngum in a long, narrow and scarily flat boat, I saw jungle and bananas and people with cone-shaped hats working in gardens on the riverbanks. The scent of flowers, fire smoke and something indistinguishably rotten filled the air. The boatman spoke in a language that did not even allow me to guess whether he was very happy or very angry. It was scorching hot in the sun and the heavy air enveloped my skin like a fomentation. I was as in a bubble, experiencing this new world at a distance, sensitive to all its novelty. As far as I can remember, the Lao Pako hill did not appeal in any particular way to me, as we approached it on the river. The boatman dropped us off at the bend of the river, and we climbed the steep bank. At the top was a sign pointing to the left: ‘ ← TO THE BAR: 106 m’.
A few years earlier an Austrian had travelled by and spotted the hill by the river, which was then in the middle of a plant school and eucalyptus plantation run by the Lao-Swedish company Burapha Group. The man, Walter Pfabigan, decided to build a tourist resort on the hill. Being one of very few tourist resorts in Laos, it was moulded on ideas from Thailand and Malaysia. It had an expressed ecological profile, with constructions built in traditional Lao techniques and with a minimum of material luxuries. He called his resort Lao Pako, which was the name the Lao people living nearby used for the hill by the river. Lao Pako, in Lao ລາວ ດານ ທາງ, means literally a young forest of ko trees: Lág Pá is young forest, and Ko is a tree that grows in abundance in the area. Anna and I came to Lao Pako because they had found extraordinary and apparently old things in the ground when they were constructing the tourist resort. We were to investigate what it was they had found, in a joint Lao-Swedish research project. We stayed six weeks at Lao Pako, six weeks filled with excavations and documentation, and then returned to Sweden.

The meeting with Laos and Lao Pako was something completely new for me, and it quite unexpectedly opened previously invisible doors in my world. The world where I grew up and started to study archaeology was in some sense protected and homogenous, and in all possible senses a very Swedish world. I had almost no prior exposure to so much difference that I was to meet at Lao Pako, and I was at that time not very interested in the world outside Sweden. This also means that I had no expectations as to where this trip to Laos was going to lead in regard of my own personal experience. While it has not been an outspoken strategy along the way, in hindsight it is clear that this first meeting with Laos was for me the onset of a constant and still ongoing critical enquiry into my known world. This is important to know for the reading of this book, which was created along this decade-long way filled with questioning, where Laos and the area around the Nam Ngum river have slowly become more and more familiar to me, to the extent that it is today an important part of me and my constitution of self.

My meetings with Laos have inevitably put the world I knew into perspective. Somewhere along the way the interest was also awoken in me to understand more about archaeology as a science, as it was illuminated in my meetings with different actors in the Lao Pako project. The archaeology that I had always taken for granted as the only viable way to approach the past, slowly stood out as only one of several possible ways to create stories about the past that apparently worked well for other people, with other perspectives, aims and agendas. This has never made me doubt the value of archaeology (referring back to its etymology, being
defined as knowledge of the ancient) as a potentially great storyteller about the past, rather it has made me wonder about the mechanisms creating our archaeological past. Paraphrasing the feminist primatologist and analyst of science Donna Haraway, in her brilliant analysis of the scientific construction of nature: In what specific places, out of which social and intellectual histories, and with what tools is the past constructed as an object of erotic and intellectual desire? (Haraway 1989:1) These are also the key questions around which the argument of this book evolves.

We will linger a while on the conceptual framework within which I move, the roots of my inquiries and arguments. In the introduction to her book Primate Visions, Donna Haraway lists four temptations in her analysis of primatology as a scientific discourse. These temptations are positions in the current debate that Haraway finds ‘persuasive, enabling, and also dangerous’ in case any one of the positions silences the others, creating a ‘false harmony’ in the narrative (1989:6). Likewise, I have four main, as well as many minor, temptations in my research and writing. I wish to remain tempted and inspired, and not let myself be entirely seduced by any one of them. The first of my temptations is Donna Haraway herself. In the influential article Situated Knowledges in Feminist Studies (1988), and the books Simians, Cyborgs, and Women (1991) and Primate Visions (1989) mentioned above, she has shown that taken-for-granted concepts that constitute the common modern worldview, such as nature, and woman are constructed, while not denying their reality and importance in the real world. Arguing against all vulgar forms of relativism and social constructionism, she strives to combine a view of knowledge as historically, politically and ideologically contingent with a ‘no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a ‘real’ world’ (Haraway 1988:579,584). Adopting a Lacanian perspective on the subject and the self, Haraway has argued convincingly that there is no such thing as ‘pure’ knowledge. Scientific as well as other knowledge can only be produced in embodied form, it must emerge from a body of some sort, and it is never fixed, complete or absolute. Knowledge must be understood as a partial perspective, and precisely therefore is only an explicitly partial knowing self ‘able to join with another, to see together without claiming to be another’ (1988:586, my italics). Consequently, a responsible knowledge claim must for Haraway inevitably be situated (Haraway 1988, see also Rustad 1998). Responsible is to be understood in its literally meaning as ‘able to be called into account’, and to situate knowledge is more complicated than providing an account that will, once and for all, contextualize the research subject. Situating knowledge is rather to be seen as an attitude, which requires explicitness and a dynamic appreciation of the research process, in which the ob-
ject of knowledge must also be pictured as an active agent and not as a flat screen, a ground or a resource (Haraway 1988:583, 592; see also Rustad 1998). In other words, it is not a statement about spatial position but rather it is about involvement and relation, revealing a recurring legacy from Heidegger in Haraway’s thinking (cf. Haraway 2000; Gosden 1994:111). Western scientific knowledge is based on the principle of vision, and Haraway argues strongly against a distanced scientific gaze, which pretends to be all-seeing:

The eye of any ordinary primate like us can be endlessly enhanced by sonography systems, magnetic resonance imaging, artificial intelligence-linked graphic manipulation systems, scanning electron microscopes, computed tomography scanners, color-enhancement techniques, satellite surveillance systems, […] Vision in this technological feast becomes unregulated gluttony; all seems not just mythically about the god trick of seeing everything from nowhere, but to have put the myth into ordinary practice. And like the god trick, this eye fucks the world to make techno-monsters (1988:581).

I share Haraway’s general concern for the ‘god trick’ in science. I would also argue that this is a particular problem for scientific archaeology today, a problem that is indirectly addressed by the shape the Lao Pako project has taken. Only too often, it seems, is a vision-enhancing method used as a legitimising device to knowledge claims in archaeology, seemingly replacing the need to be explicit about the location and the driving forces behind knowledge production. Archaeological knowledge produced with a technologically enhanced vision is often presented by a distant and invisible subject, who pretends to have seen everything from nowhere. Donna Haraway is not in any way seduced or impressed by such blind techno-monsters (yet, it must be stressed, she is not denying the importance of technology in science), the real challenge is instead to find ways and means to produce a responsible, that is, situated scientific knowledge:

I am arguing for politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims. These are claims on people’s lives. I am arguing for the view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring, and structured body, versus the view from above, from nowhere, from simplicity (1988:589).

My second temptation, which I am somewhat more disturbed by, is structuralism and post-structuralism. While I do not in any way claim to have conducted a sophisticated or profound structuralist analysis, I am undeniably attracted to the cool elegance and sense of order in structuralist and post-structuralist think-
ing. When exposed to something new I have a tendency to start ordering that which is unknown and incomprehensible into boxes and categories of either or, black or white. It is satisfying and balmy to my mind to understand the world in dichotomies, in neat clean pictures. Structuralism is also in a sense directed inwards, and in that way it enables a creation of meaning in the local, the particular, without alluding to general routes of development and progress. I am also inspired by structural linguistics in that it finds meaning in momentary space as a complement to the general focus on progress in cultural analysis (Crang & Thrift 2000:4, see also Gosden 1994:49). Nonetheless, there are aspects of structuralism that disturb me to the same degree that I am attracted to others. A structuralist analysis of culture creates fixed and motionless images as it moves away and above the actual events seeking underlying and invisible structures. This entails a necessary neglect not only for the being of the actual people under study. As a consequence, it also neglects ambiguity, the in-between, the dynamics of contradiction that are important parts of all human culture.

Postcolonial critique and postcolonial theory, the third of my temptations, is in some sense saving me from the structuralist side of myself. With parallels to Haraway’s critique of science as described above, but instead with a more general focus on culture, postcolonial theory is useful for critical deconstruction of precisely that which I find problematic with structuralist analyses. Postcolonial critique argues consistently against essentialist, static and simplifying views on culture. Its theory has a toolbox full of concepts to deal with the messiness of human culture; all that which is neither/nor. Just as I am attracted to the order and detachment of structuralism, I am equally drawn to the dynamics and creativity of postcolonial thinking. You will be able to trace this contradiction in my research personality, particularly in the chapters of this book dealing with the material culture of Lao Pako. I have used postcolonial theory in my research not primarily because I work in the former French colony Laos, but as a tool to illuminate the foundations of archaeology as a scientific discipline born out of imperialist structures with certain political and ideological agendas. And I argue, supported by the conceptual tools of postcolonial theory, that these imperialistic politics cling to archaeological narratives with an almost peculiar persistence.

Let us return for a brief moment to Donna Haraway. She belongs to a loosely defined group of critical analysts of science, many born in the 1940s, who are affiliated with university departments in the United States, and who relate strongly to one another, yet have adopted different perspectives in their critical inquiries into culture, science and knowledge. While I have been much inspired by Haraway’s views on science and knowledge in the formulation of an overall
conceptual framework of this thesis, other members of this interrelated group will emerge as influential to the arguments in the different chapters of the book: Bruno Latour addressing issues of time and materiality in relation to scientific knowledge, James Clifford for the critical deconstruction of anthropology and the anthropological gaze, and Judith Butler and Lila Abu-Lughod for feminist and postcolonial critique towards static and essentialist views on gender, stressing performance and embodiment as crucial factors for the constitution of gender. All these scholars are to be found in the borderlands between feminism, postcolonial thinking and science critique. They refer in some way back to Heidegger in that they all refuse to keep a clear distinction between epistemology and ontology, and they use the words theory and critique in a similar way as something both necessary and extremely useful, or as phrased by Judith Butler in the preface to *Gender Trouble*:

There is a new venue for theory, necessarily impure, where it emerges in and as the very event of cultural translation. Thus it is not the displacement of theory by historicism, nor a simple historicization of theory that exposes the contingent limits of its more generalizable claims. It is, rather, the emergence of theory at the site where cultural horizons meet, where the demand for translation is acute and its promise of success, uncertain (1999:ix).

Much of their inquiries focus on desire, power and lust, in its widest senses, as important human driving forces – also in science, and they focus on performance, the active and particular, the local, and the individual in their studies and analyses. What further unites these different writers is in my view a willingness to see science as part of the ongoing world, something which is for real, and should touch us, move us, disturb us. Therefore their writings are in a sense both self-reflective and passionate, yet always based on sophisticated analyses of the scientific discourse. My foremost problem with these critics of science as well as with postcolonial theory is that I am tempted on the verge of seduction. I simply think that these two related forms of critical analysis of science and culture respectively, both based on the method of deconstruction, are very useful, inspiring and constructive to think with.

Finally, my fourth temptation is my love for Lao Pako with its things and people. It has been an important driving force throughout this research project, and I hope that the result is reflective of it. Archaeology should in my view contain an element of love, and maybe it always does. But equally important is that love as a driving force in research is made explicit, to create responsible scientific knowledge and situate the research subject (cf. Haraway 1989:8). Love
must not, however, take over permanently so that it disables the critical in-flux distance between subject and object. Thus my love for Lao Pako is not an erotic or desiring love, nor should it be mistaken for a complete emotional takeover. Rather it is a deep feeling of respect and a fascination for the beauty and sophistication of the place, its things and its people.

Our archaeological investigations at Lao Pako are at the centre of my critical inquiry. In the still ongoing process of critical deconstruction that begun with my first meeting with Laos and Lao Pako, I have identified a number of issues in archaeology, as produced by myself and others, which I must put into question because I find them contradictory to my general sense of ethics. One such problem in the structure of the discipline is the relationship to the Other, because the archaeological narrative works to essentialize and exoticize other people in the past and in the present, using them in discourse as a fundamental difference to the modern world. Another problem is the archaeological realization of the conception of a universal linear time axis, enabling the idea of social evolution and development as a uniform movement towards modernity. Needless to say, time is important for archaeology, but surprisingly few attempts have been made to critically investigate the archaeological use of time. My line of argument has borrowed from one of the few profound studies of time in archaeology, Christopher Gosden's *Social Being and Time* (1994). Gosden is explicitly influenced by Heidegger's classic *Being and Time*, and generally I subscribe to his/their view of time as a human dimension which unfolds in action. Seen like this, time cannot exist as an empty measured entity to be filled with happenings, but is created in existence and action. Time can thus exist only out of that which it is filled with. This general view on time, which blurs the distinction between ontology and epistemology, has significant consequences for my arguments as it opens up for more specific criticisms of the use of time in archaeology. For the argument of this book I see the common modern description of time (both measured and experienced) as unilinear and progressive as deeply problematic. The problem is expressively illustrated in the words of Michel Serres who said, in a conversation with Bruno Latour:

We conceive of time as an irreversible line, whether interrupted or continuous, of acquisitions and inventions. We go from generalizations to discoveries, leaving behind us a trail of errors finally corrected – like a cloud of ink from a squid. “Whew! We’ve finally arrived at the truth”. It can never be demonstrated whether this idea of time is true or false.

But, irresistibly, I cannot help thinking that this idea is the equivalent of those ancient diagrams we laugh at today, which place the Earth at the center of
everything, or our galaxy at the middle of the universe, to satisfy our narcissism.

[...]

[...] so for time, through progress, we never cease to be at the summit, on the cutting edge, at the state-of-the-art of development. It follows that we are always right, for the simple, banal, and naïve reason that we are living in the present moment (Serres & Latour 1995:48).

At the core of my time problem is thus the determinacy that is part of the modern western linear perception of time, where interpretations of the past are always related to a now ‘at the summit’, a now that we have already agreed on is the cutting edge of history. Therefore, as Serres says, ‘we’ are destined to always be right. Time is in fact always at the heart of my critical questioning of academic archaeology, being both a consequence of a linear perception of time, and a means to continuously give meaning to that linearity in its almost entirely uncritical attitude to progress. This is even further complicated in the particular socio-cultural situation of the Lao Pako project. In Laos, ritual cosmology is based on a circular perception of time, characteristic for Buddhist, Hindu and animist cosmology. Time is according to the Lao system described as continuously moving in circles representing the life cycles of the moon, the year, the human being, the Buddha, etc. A specific point in time is there understood in relation to its position within one or several circles. In Laos today, this experience of time is used in a hybrid form with a measured linear time that is compatible with the Western idea of time that is in particular used in historical sciences. This, I will argue, will have unforeseen negative consequences, because the issues of time and the Other as fundamental difference are known to be connected and dependent on each other in the structure of archaeology, something which I will ideal with in more detail in several chapters of this book. The consequence of this argument is that, in a global perspective, when adopting a linear description of time for the understanding of historical development in Laos, it creates a discourse that undoubtedly benefits the West at the expense of Laos itself.

The story I have written about Lao Pako and its pasts is woven of both fact and fiction, and so it must be. While the etymology of fact as a descendant of a neuter past participle refers to something which has actually happened, something which is done and seems unchangeable, fiction refers to human action and forming, is open and inventive (Haraway 1989:4). This does not, of course, mean that fact is more true than fiction nor that it is not constructed, and archaeology must of necessity contain both of them. Writing human science has often put higher demand than natural science on the fiction binding facts in a story. There could be reason for pulling the argument even further, quoting John
Kirtland Wright: ‘All science should be scholarly, but not all scholarship can be rigorously scientific... The terrae incognitae of the periphery contain fertile ground awaiting cultivation with the tools and in the spirit of the humanities’ (cited in Tuan 1990). I mean for this, my archaeology, to be read as a narrative, just as I present and analyse other science as narrative. Following the arguments above, I see it not as dismissive to treat archaeology and other human and natural science as narrative, quite the contrary (see also Serres & Latour 1995:21ff). Critical deconstruction opens an endless array of possibilities to reflect upon ourselves in the most self-constructive way. In my view, therefore, a clearly situated archaeology is only more nuanced and interesting than one that pretends to be disinterested and all-embracing.

This book is, however, first and foremost a story about the place Lao Pako. My story evolves in a movement of wider and tighter loops, but always with this particular place at its centre, and always aiming to understand Lao Pako as a place of interest. In my archaeological interpretation of Lao Pako as a prehistoric site, it will emerge gradually through the text as a place for complex and sophisticated rituals performed 1500 years ago, and I will argue that these rituals can best be understood as a performed narration concerning issues of birth, life and death. Moreover, this archaeological interpretation will be presented as only one of many ways to tell a story and give meaning to the place Lao Pako. Thus, if I have a say, I want this book to be read as a story about Lao Pako. Such a breathtakingly beautiful and thought-provoking place deserves a story of its own. Besides that, it can also be regarded as a story about archaeology as but one way to create a past. I also hope that parts of the book can be read out of specific interest for late prehistoric ceramics of central Mainland Southeast Asia, and also, perhaps, as an example of conceptual connections between iron, pottery and infant burials in a ritual context. Nevertheless, this is foremost a story of Lao Pako and its different pasts. And through it all flows the river – physically and as a metaphor of time – connecting people with place in directional yet endless motion.
A POSTcolonial ARCHAEOLOGY

...Memory speaks:
You cannot live on me alone
you cannot live without me
I’m nothing if I’m just a roll of film
stills from a vanished world
fixed lightstreaked mute
left for another generation’s
restoration and framing I can’t be restored or framed
I can’t be still I’m here
in your mirror pressed leg to leg beside you
intrusive inappropriate bitter flashing


This book was written in a postcolonial world. The postcolonial world is characterized by its legacy of colonial structures – economic, politico-conceptual, cultural – remnants from a past colonial reality in nineteenth and early twentieth century imperial Europe and its colonies; and the post situation, where independent former colonies and colonisers alike are coping with the consequences of those past colonial times. These structures reach far beyond the nation states that were directly involved in the nineteenth and twentieth century European colonial project: they affect the entire world in the twenty-first century time of globalization. Therefore, an analysis of the postcolonial situation is important and inevitable for most fields in social sciences and humanities that address issues of power, identity and cultural imagery in our contemporary world.

The turn of the twentieth century was the heyday of European colonialism, and archaeologists and anthropologists worked uncontested to legitimise the colonial project with its scientific cosmology of human evolution from Stone Age to Modernity, from Africa to Europe (cf. Fabian 1983; Thomas 1996; Rowlands 1998; Gosden 1999). It was at that time the first postcolonial critique was formulated as a direct anti-colonial resistance and so it was among intellectuals in the colonies that critical voices were first raised on the injustices inherent in the colonial system. Early postcolonial critics such as Frantz Fanon have continued to inspire the field of postcolonial critique to this day. This field is now widespread and diverse, to the degree where it is not everywhere fully recognized as
a distinct mode of cultural analysis (Moore-Gilbert 1997:13). It is now covering a wide range of productions in literature, art, film, theatre etc. Bart Moore-Gilbert has defined postcolonial critique as:

...a more or less distinct set of reading practices, if it is understood as preoccupied principally with analysis of cultural forms which mediate, challenge or reflect upon the relations of domination and subordination – economic, cultural and political – between (and often within) nations, races or cultures, which characteristically have their roots in the history of modern European colonialism and imperialism and which, equally characteristically, continue to be apparent in the present era of neo-colonialism (Moore-Gilbert 1997:12).

Postcolonial theory was built within the frames of this postcolonial critique, and it will thus always work with an inherent radical political agenda which is to elucidate and scrutinize colonial structures as the origin of injustice. Although too vast to be grasped in one sentence, postcolonial theory can be described as a deconstructive analytical method and conceptual framework to visualise, analyse and criticise colonial structures affecting power relations, identity construction and other cultural production, working at different levels of society (Moore-Gilbert 1997). One of its anchors is found in the Gramscian theories of power and there especially the notion of *hegemony* and the *subaltern* concept, giving postcolonial theory a strong connection to Marxist theory. Another lies in French postmodern philosophy with strong influences from Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida and psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, bringing *deconstruction* as the main analytical tool. At the core of postcolonial theory is a clear focus on culture, and it works consistently against all forms of cultural essentialism (Gosden 2000:243).

**POSTCOLONIAL THEORY IN ARCHAEOLOGY**

Although postcolonial theory is considered to be one of the liveliest and most important fields of critical discussion in current academia, surprisingly few attempts have been made to use it in archaeology, compared with other contemporary critical theory. There are three more or less separate, yet distinguishable approaches taken in the use of postcolonial theory in archaeology. The first is to understand and analyse the relationships between modern and ancient colonialism, in particular in Classic Mediterranean archaeology (e.g. Webster & Cooper 1996; van Dommelen 1997; Johansson de Château 2002). The conceptual apparatus of postcolonial theory is here used to critically review previous ideas of ancient imperialist structures and power relations, creating a more balanced picture of the mechanisms involved in the political developments of ancient Greece.
and the Roman Empire. It means in this case that concepts such as power and resistance, centre and periphery are problemized and used in a more dynamic sense than in previous analysis. Both Peter van Dommelen (1997) and Michael Rowlands (1998) have concluded that there has been a general reluctance to use postcolonial theory for the analysis of ancient colonial situations, which resides in a fear that using parallels would imply a scholarly conceptual continuity between ancient and modern colonialism. Like both Rowlands and van Dommelen, I find this argument difficult to sustain and would argue instead that, if we agree that there is nothing outside the text – in a Derridean sense of it, the previous ‘neutral’ understanding of ancient colonialism must be based on the mid 20th century concepts of modern colonialism. Since there were no other conceptual ways to describe it, they must inevitably have a modernist bias. And it is precisely that bias which postcolonial theory aims to elucidate and criticize. Therefore, I cannot see how there could be any ground for such fears.

Another postcolonial approach focuses on the imperialist foundation of the archaeological discipline. The colonial roots of archaeology as a discipline are now well recognized, and postcolonial theory has been used more or less profoundly for analysing the history and foundations of the discipline (e.g. Trigger 1984; Rowlands 1989; Gosden 1999; Glover 2003). Historically speaking, archaeology played an important role in shaping a colonial world in the 19th and 20th centuries. Panivong Norindr, in one of many similar examples, denotes archaeology as one of the main enterprises that worked to inventory, catalogue and assess the French colonial possessions in Indochina and their wealth for the great Exposition Coloniale Internationale de Paris in 1931. The Exposition is described by Norindr as a:

...stage upon which to enhance the prestige of Imperial France and thus to justify and promote the ethos of colonialism [...] a space within which various systems of representation and different discourses on the Other come together to ‘materialize exotic cultures’ (Norindr 1996:15f).

Norindr further writes that the will by the French to fashion a coherent identity for Indochina sanctioned the pseudo-scientific idea that all cultures on Mainland Southeast Asia were derivatives of those of India and China. Consequently, writings of the belle époque portrayed Indochina as ‘a region of transition’, ‘a meeting point’, ‘the cross-roads of maritime routes between the Orient and the Far East’, etc.

It is an empty space where traces of a glorious past can only be excavated with
the knowledge and expertise of the French [...] To consolidate these myths of Indochina as lack, void, or absence, a new history of the region had to be written, one that would fit the new political identity assigned to it and accommodate new phantasmatic images like those of Angkor Wat, long forgotten by the natives and ‘rediscovered’ and promoted by the French (ibid:19).

Archaeology was thus in this particular case instrumental for France as colonizers to use as an operative device to claim the right to the past, and hence also the future of the colonized Indochinese territory. More generally, it stands uncontested that archaeology and related sciences such as anthropology were born and raised in imperial 19th and 20th century Europe, as part of the imperialist project to legitimise colonisation. At the core was the idea of a unilinear physical and social human evolution, from savages to modern humans, related to Darwin’s model for biological evolution of species. Technological advancement in material culture was used as the sole measure of complexity and sophistication, and human societies were scientifically ordered on a scale from the simplest to the most complex. In anthropology, the people found lowest on the scale were stone using hunter-gatherers in remote parts of the colonies, and at the top were the colonisers, the modern people of imperial Europe. Archaeology reconfirmed this evolutionary order presented in anthropology with a temporal dimension. Using the linear Christian notion of time that became important in the 18th century (Thomas 1996; Fabian 1983; Tuan 1990:148; Grundberg 2000:13ff), archaeology demonstrated, using a unilinear model of evolutionary stages, how humanity had developed from simple to more complex stone technology, then acquiring the knowledge of agriculture, further learned how to handle metals, eventually developing written language, and finally entered modernity. Archaeology’s vision of unilinear temporal progression and anthropology’s spatially distinctive groups in the ‘ethnographic present’, nailed to the same imaginary developmental sequence were in this way two crucial parts of the same mindset, serving to place the colonised Other as the before in the becoming of modern Europe. Within this mental template, time is curiously compressed in the present, enabling the modern European to conceive of contemporary but spatially distant people as belonging to another time (cf. Fabian 1983; Clifford 1988:16). This further allows and paves the ground for the rather bizarre idea of people at one evolutionary level developing to another stage within one single person’s life time, provided that they are helped by influences from the already more developed, thus legitimizing the aid pretences often put forward in colonial ideology. George Bond and Angela Gilliam write: ‘It reflects where ‘we’ have been and where ‘they’ have yet to reach. In these formulations, our present is their
future’ (1994:13). In this way, archaeology contributed significantly to the definition of development as a universal aspiration for modernity and western values. Postcolonial deconstruction has visualised the ideology and the political agenda behind these mindsets as legitimising colonial oppression, but archaeology has, as far as I can see, not taken into account the consequences of this critique.

A third distinguishable field where postcolonial theory has been used in archaeology is in discussions on cultural heritage and indigenous rights (e.g. Bond & Gilliam 1994; Rowlands 1994, 1998; Chakrabarti 1997; Gosden 2000; Källén 2001). At the core of these discussions is the concept subaltern, and a concern for issues of identity, differing cosmologies, and cultural hybridity. The traditional archaeological narrative has been one of exclusive cultures developing through their own force or through influence in a straight line of descent to the dominant group of the modern nation state. Since postcolonial theory works against all forms of culture essentialism, we need a sharper definition of the word essentialism in order to understand the dynamics at play. Lynn Meskell has identified two understandings of the word as relevant for an examination of social dynamics in archaeology, which are as follows: (i) particular things have intrinsic essences which serve to identify them as particular, and (ii) abstract entities or universals that exist across time and space (Meskell 1998a:142). Expressing in both of these senses an essentialist view of cultural origin, archaeology has been a useful tool to legitimise modern nationalist projects, which have arguably had positive as well as negative consequences (Kohl & Fawcett 1995). The temporal aspect of the development idea, which enables us to conceive of cultural origins in the first place, is naturalised in discourse, and often by archaeologists themselves. There is, however, a complicated ideological operation behind such a world view, which is not in any respect natural, as I have argued above. To be able to envision Vikings as the ancestors of people living in Scandinavia in the 21st century, there is need both for an essentialist apprehension of culture, and a mental manoeuvre of time compression. What we end up with is in Bond and Gilliam’s words that: ‘The postulated past and the present occupy the same temporal space, thereby restoring power to history’ (1994:13).

Postcolonial thinking has foremost been used in the form of postcolonial critique in cultural heritage management to visualise and scrutinize the modern day power relations that are behind the official images of the past produced in history and archaeology, arguing that there are other alternative and mute histories that are not allowed to be told in the national discourse. This has typically been used as a tool to criticize politically dominant groups in favour of minority peoples such as Australian Aborigines, North-American Indians, Maori and
the Saami. This postcolonial critique has thus contributed to the production of alternative histories to be incorporated in school education, claims and realizations of artefact repatriation, and it has been used for arguments in legal land use cases. While these are arguably positive uses of history and archaeology in favour of indigenous rights, it is important to understand this empowering of the past as a mental construct based on the same principles – culture essentialism and time compression – that were and are still used to legitimize the imperialist project. In one of very few critical reflections on this matter, Chris Gosden has argued that postcolonial theory must inevitably be seen as in direct contradiction to laws surrounding repatriation of artefacts and human remains, which use arguments of cultural integrity and continuity with prehistoric cultures as the legal basis for their claims (Gosden 2000:241f). This is a deeply complicated and ambiguous matter, which is in itself well suited for postcolonial analysis. Arguably, archaeology has here for the first time made real and important political contributions to the situation of minority groups, while it is continuously working to reproduce a world view based on an evolutionary development principle where these same groups and their alternative histories are conceptually fixed in time and space, inferior to and always behind the dominating history. And perhaps most importantly, the hegemony is in this case actively reproduced by the oppressed, reconfirming the attraction of the empowered history. Moreover, it can be argued that these formerly subaltern minority groups may use archaeology to claim their own superiority at the expense of another Other, now subaltern. Chris Gosden maintains that a solution to these postcolonial contradictions would be for archaeology to be more open to understanding culture as hybrid or creole formations, and that knowledge of the past is layered and must be formed as a process of negotiation, recognizing the plurality of present interests in the past concerning issues of culture, politics and identity (Gosden 2000:258f).

DISCIPLINE AND CRITIQUE
It can now be said without reasonable doubt that the discipline of archaeology can be challenged by the postcolonial critique, and that it would be shaken to its foundation were the critique to be taken profoundly and seriously. Postcolonial deconstruction has visualized and put into words a set of conceptual contrasts that have been necessary to create western humanism, with both anthropology and archaeology at the core with their conscious study of the Other playing a major part in the creation of western hegemony (Gosden 2000:245). Panivong Norindr has argued that the Western world’s historical narrative articulates a
vision of other worlds as a ‘blank space on which Western desire is written’, and
that in his case France, using Indochina as a space of cultural production in an
exoticizing project pictured it as coherent and backward to sustain the colonial
myth (Norindr 1996:2f). The words and structures Norindr uses to describe the
‘exoticizing project’ of picturing Indochina, can with ease be transferred to
describe pictures of the past as ‘a foreign country’, in Europe and elsewhere
today. And now, at the beginning of the 21st century, a wide range of postcolonial
critics have demonstrated convincingly that such an imperialist mindset is no
longer sustainable. Thus postcolonial critique is not a trend, should not be about
inherited guilt, but is inevitably part of a world dealing with the consequences
of colonialism. While anthropology has to some extent come to terms with its
colonial legacy through a constant and open critical discussion within the disci-
pline, archaeology as described above has instead used postcolonial theory mainly
in a constructive manner, adopting a new conceptual framework and terminology
for cultural analysis of the past, either in prehistory or the colonial past of the
discipline. The postcolonial critical deconstruction has, however, largely been ig-
nored.

Paraphrasing Robert Proctor (1995, quoted in Winston 2001:1), these structures of ignorance are at the core of the contemporary creation of archaeological
knowledge. Ignorance, like knowledge, is actively but not necessarily consciously
manufactured (Winston 2001:1-8). What in archaeology has then been subject to
critical ignorance? In contemporary archaeology there are conceptual structures
and metaphors with clear imperialist connotations. As Nicholas Thomas put it:
notions that were at once widely discredited seem curiously alive (1996:123). One
obvious example of such a strong metaphor is the three-Age system. Prehistory
is commonly divided into three parts: Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age, one
developing more or less smoothly into the other in any given area of the world.
The word Age brings an analogy to the development of a human being, from the
‘cradle’ (another common metaphor in archaeology) to maturity as incorporated
in modern civilization. This metaphor enables us to conceive of a unilinear de-
velopment of humanity, comprehensible as one single lifetime. This
conceptualisation played, needless to say, a pivotal part in the colonialist project,
and is thus still intellectually supported by archaeology. Another related area is
the attention paid to the development of societal complexity, which is still at the
core of much archaeological research, particularly in processual archaeology.
Complexity is here measured in terms of hierarchical social formations, individual and collective wealth, composition of trade systems, etc. The greatest
complexity in all these areas are naturally to be found in the modern capitalist
AND THROUGH FLOWS THE RIVER

society, and thus the cultures of the world have been ordered with the help of archaeology along a developmental line from simple to complex and finally modern. There has been critique posed against the definition of complexity in archaeology, both from critical gender theory and as expressed in the well-known heterarchy debate (Ehrenreich et al. 1995, specifically for Southeast Asia, see White 1995), arguing that there are other ways to measure complexity. There have, however, been very few attempts to debate the value in discussing the development of societal complexity, and why such a concept should be at the core of the archaeological science. A third example is the archaeologically debated and contested notion of culture. James Clifford has argued in a critical review of anthropology that the postcolonial critique from the negritude movement onwards led to a profound disciplinary crisis. It forced anthropology to renegotiate its own role, now that it could no longer present itself as a unique purveyor of knowledge about others:

> With expanded communication and intercultural influence, people interpret others, and themselves, in a bewildering diversity of idioms [...] This ambiguous, multivocal world makes it increasingly hard to conceive of human diversity as inscribed in bounded, independent cultures (Clifford 1988).

> In spite of this, archaeology persists in using a terminology that implies and reproduces a view of prehistoric humanity as inscribed in bounded cultures. Moreover, among the archaeologists who have written on the subject of postcolonial theory I can sense a defensiveness, or perhaps a fear, which is well expressed by Chris Gosden when he explains why postcolonial theory in his view cannot be seriously considered and used in archaeology:

> As well as the lack of concern for material culture, which must be central to any archaeological analysis, postcolonial approaches contain no real theory of history or change, tending to consist of vignettes or snapshots of one time and place (Gosden 2000:243).

> While I cannot agree with Gosden that postcolonial theory with its cultural focus on ritual, architecture, costume, etc, lacks a concern for material culture, it is more interesting to note the almost taken-for-granted definition of archaeology presented between the lines. Archaeology, says Gosden, is about material culture and long-term change. Here I must once again disagree, and refer to etymology where archaeology is defined as knowledge of the ancient. This very book consists exactly of that which Gosden calls vignettes or snapshots of one time and
place, with no attempt from my side to explain the process that lead from Lao Pako and finally to the development of modern Lao PDR. And yet this book is about the ancient past, and I would claim it is archaeology. In fact, the exclusive (and excluding) archaeological focus on the longue durée, has been extensively criticized by feminist scholars (e.g. Wylie 1992; Meskell 1998a; Gilchrist 2000). They have developed an alternative emphasis on the short term, the small scale and the individual in archaeological analysis, which has emerged as a characteristic feminist epistemology (Gilchrist 2000:325). I think, however, that Chris Gosden’s defensive reaction in a paper otherwise supportive of the postcolonial critique is representative of responses by the archaeological research establishment confronted with postcolonial deconstruction of what is traditionally considered to be the foundations of the discipline. But at whose expense are those foundations defended? Could not a story about the ancient be meaningful and interesting without creating a conceptual linear development naturalising past and contemporary oppression?

In conclusion, I cannot understand these remnant imperial structures in archaeology as anything but a result of active disciplinary ignorance of important intellectual currents in the contemporary world. The examples I have given of imperialist metaphors in the archaeological representation of the past are but a few, and I do not wish to say that it is as easy as to find better alternatives. I do, however, sustain that there is need to critically review the role of archaeology in a postcolonial world.

Finally we return to the poem by Adrienne Rich at the onset of this chapter. How does memory speak? Like Homi Bhabha, I see ‘[...] the need to work through the problem of memory in reconstructing a ‘sign’ of history that may not provide a causal or deterministic narrative.’ (Bhabha 1996:204, original italics). That is a memory by which we are touched by the frailty and greatness of humanity, but with no deterministic linearity. Archaeology, in its sense of official memory must be allowed to be as open and ambiguous as life itself. Touching and moving us, like our worst nightmare and a wet dream; in your mirror pressed leg to leg beside you – intrusive inappropriate bitter flashing.
We are about to embark on a journey around the world. Accompanied by the discipline of archaeology we will travel from Sweden to Asia, and back to Europe before we once again head off to Asia. Thereafter we will go to Africa, Thailand and the USA, and finally we end our journey in north eastern Laos. This is a history of research for this particular work. My purpose is to give you a framework; a setting for my own archaeological research as it is presented in the following chapters. For readers who look for more comprehensive accounts on the history of archaeology in Mainland Southeast Asia, I recommend Charles Higham’s books *The Archaeology of Mainland Southeast Asia* (1989) and *Early Cultures of Mainland Southeast Asia* (2002) in combination with the papers of Warren Peterson (1983) and Ian Glover (2003).

My point of departure for this chapter is that an objective history of research is impossible, even a contradiction in terms. To make full use of that situation, I work with my subject as a tool, fully and actively. This history has an associative logic, evolving around the Lao Pako archaeological project and me as a professional archaeologist serving to wrap this project up in the tradition of archaeology of which it is a part. The narrative form was actively chosen to create an alternative way of relating to and acknowledging the bonds to my scientific discipline rather than through a more common linear account, based upon the underlying principle of academic (cf. social) evolution (cf. Fabian 1983:15f). Although I will consistently argue in favour of an archaeology that is consistent with my sense of ethics and with my own understanding of the world, I do not wish to end up portraying my work and my views as more developed than that of any particular scholar or intellectual schools of thought. Instead I wish to point to the complexity and ambiguities of any archaeological work, including the Lao Pako project, from being created at the intersection of scholarly tradition, personal interests, and the socio-political structures of which it is a part. By using other archaeologies, which are in different respects touching upon mine, I aim to offer an understanding of the archaeology I have done at Lao Pako through a patchwork principle. Many small pieces will be stitched together to create a picture of my archaeology in a wider frame.

The archaeology of Southeast Asia has been created and reproduced with a notable lack of critical reflection on the socio-political structures it was and is part of. In a paper that constitutes one of very few exceptions to that tradition¹, Warren Peterson writes:
Scholarly images of Southeast Asian prehistory are a direct reflection of paradigmatic developments in archaeology plus the unconscious political habits of individual archaeologists and anthropologists (Peterson 1983:123).

According to my view, as I do not share Warren Peterson’s thirst for objectivity in archaeological research, ‘paradigmatic developments’ of the discipline are very much intertwined with the socio-political and cultural contexts of scholars, individual as well as the collective. This chapter aims to show how, while at the same time offer you an understanding of my own context.

All that is told in this chapter is in one way or another related to the shape the Lao Pako project has taken. Knowledge about these different scholars and their archaeologies such as they are discussed in this chapter, as well as the political and social circumstances they were and are part of, is crucial for an understanding of this present study. The image of Lao Pako is seen and defined more clearly through the relations to these other archaeologists and archaeologies. Let us now begin our journey in the company of Olov Janse.

OLOV JANSE AND THE BIRTH OF MODERN ARCHAEOLOGY IN MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Olov Robert Thure Janse was born in Norrköping, Sweden in 1892, and came to be one of the scholars who gave birth to a tradition of modern archaeological research in Mainland Southeast Asia. Janse began his studies in archaeology at Uppsala University, as a student of the legendary Professor Oscar Almgren. He left for France in 1922 after having completed his PhD thesis on gold artefacts from the Migration Period in Sweden (Janse 1922). In Paris Janse started to work for the national museum in Saint-Germain and came in contact with a collection of artefacts from Indochina, the French colony in Mainland Southeast Asia. He nurtured a boyhood dream of going to China, which was to him a fascinating land of immense treasures. So when the chance appeared to lead an archaeological research expedition to Indochina, he jumped at it. Indochina was at the time regarded as a backward baby brother of China having formed its cultural identity through a direct mix of second-hand cultural influences from India and China. Studying Indochina would thus be a way of studying China, the main focus of his interests (Janse 1959a:14-32).

Thus Olov Janse travelled to Hanoi in October 1934 with his wife Renée. His autobiography Ljusmannens gåta – ‘The Candle Man Enigma’ [my translation] (Janse 1959a), allows us to follow in their footsteps. At that time, Hanoi was the colonial administrative centre of French Indochina, and also the location of the École Française d’Extrême Orient, the research institute that provided the colonisateurs...
with scientific information about the history, archaeology and philology of their colonised territories. He was well looked after by the EFEO and was immediately given access to a number of known archaeological sites to investigate and excavate. These sites and monuments had in many cases previously been visited by local looters and amateur archaeologists among the colonial officials. During the first decades of colonisation, it was common to identify and excavate historical monuments and sites as a hobby among colonial officials. This was eventually identified as a problem, which called upon the establishment of an institution for management of monuments and cultural heritage of the colonised territory (Groslier 1966:155ff). Thus the EFEO came into being in 1898, cast in the mould of already existing French schools in Athens, Rome and Cairo (Higham 2002:21). The amateur archaeological missions by colonial officials continued, however, and many of the excavations which rendered collections for museums and collectors in Europe, were undertaken with no scientific pretensions at all.


โอโลฟ แจะน์ ในอุทยานทางวัฒนธรรม ฮานอย ฝรั่งเศส ช่างใหญ่.
However, there were also a number of professional archaeologists and art historians working for the EFEO in Hanoi. Most of them were French, and most were occupied with research on major monumental sites, remains of ‘civilizations’ such as the Khmer and the Cham. Many of these men, because this was an almost exclusively male domain, were to become legendary in the archaeology of Southeast Asia. There were names like Louis Finot, George Coedès, Henri Parmentier, Jean-Yves Claëys and Etienne Aymonnier. There were also a few prehistorians, most with a background in geology, who laid the foundation for later research in prehistoric archaeology. The most well-known among these are Etienne Patte, Henri Mansuy and Madeleine Colani, who was one of very few women in the field at this time (Groslier 1966:155ff). We will return to the work of Madeleine Colani later on in this chapter.

Until the Second World War finally interrupted his fieldwork in 1939, Olov Janse worked three long seasons in what is today northern Vietnam, in cooperation with many of the EFEO members mentioned above. There he excavated a number of brick tombs from the times when the Chinese Han, Six, Tang and Sung dynasties had colonised the area. He also did the first proper archaeological excavations of the site Đông Sơn, which was later to become a symbol for the glorious past of the Vietnamese people in nationalist propaganda (cf. Hà Van Tan 1991; Loofs Wissowa 1991:39; Han 1998; Källén 1999:6ff). After his return to Europe and the United States, Olov Janse published the reports from his excavations in three extensive volumes (Janse 1947, 1951, 1958a). He ended up as a well-reputed scholar at Harvard University, where parts of his excavation findings remain today, at the Peabody Museum. The rest of the excavated material are now stored at museums in France, Vietnam and in Sweden. Olov Janse died 1985 in New York, being one of the most highly respected western scholars of Southeast Asian archaeology (cf. Solheim 1985, 2002). His work is often referred to in Vietnamese archaeology of today (e.g. Prior 2002, 2003; Miyamoto 2003), and has been widely appreciated for its high scientific standards.

Janse was indeed a serious scientist. As a disciple of Oscar Montelius and Birger Nerman, two of many father figures in early Swedish archaeology, he was trained in modern archaeological excavation methods. In the introduction to his autobiography, he argued passionately for the importance of a careful documentation of the context of every artefact during excavations:

…even an apparently insignificant little potsherd with no aesthetical value at all may sometimes to the scientist be the key to the chamber that holds the solution to many of the mysteries of the past’ (Janse 1959a:17ff [my translation]).
In retrospect Olov Janse has also been mentioned as one who, with the words of Bernard Groslier, 'introduced order into the researches' in the archaeology of Indochina (Groslier 1966:160). This indicates that he, in his fieldwork, kept to a professional archaeological ethics similar to that followed by most archaeologists in international archaeology today (cf. EAA 2000, see also Källén 2004).

Nevertheless, Olov Janse's theoretical analyses and conclusions are in many ways questionable from the perspective of our contemporary world. The early paper *Arkeologien och reutilisationsproblemet (Archaeology and the Problem of Reutilization - [my translation])* from a volume in honour of the Swedish crown prince Gustaf Adolf, is a good and explicit example of how Janse explained cultural change and artefactual similarities over vast geographical and temporal distances by the principle of diffusion. Using diffusion as a model for explaining change in human societies was common in archaeology at this particular time, when human culture and society in general was perceived as static and humans as uninventive (Trigger 1989:151). He was convinced that the many similarities between for instance artefacts from the Hallstatt Culture of central Europe and archaeological findings in East Asia, could only be explained by diffusion, happening through transportation of physical objects between these two areas. The objects would have travelled with people, moving across the continents. While the movement from west to east is often described by Janse with active words like 'travel' or 'spread', the opposite influence from east to west is described as waves of people 'pouring' (vältra) in over Europe from the east (Janse 1932:382ff). The choice of words in this paper indicates a world view which fits with the view of the relation between the Orient and Europe, such as it was described and criticised by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978). Europe is portrayed as active and in the centre, while the Orient is mysterious, constant and passive in the periphery. Thus words describing a movement out from the centre are active, while the words for the opposite direction are passive (vältra), and indicating a lack of intent and direction. Later on in his career, Janse consistently gave meaning to his excavation findings in Southeast Asia with a symbolic structure created as a sort of cultural patchwork with pieces from China, India and not least the Classical Mediterranean. He traced a Dionysus cult among some Southeast Asian artefacts, and found direct representations of Pan in others (Janse 1958b, 1959a). Only occasionally did he refer to the indigenous people of the same area for analogies, and then in a rather anecdotal tone. He obviously needed to seek the origins for all the splendour he met in the archaeological record with a civilization, and in Janse's world the most prominent of civilizations was the one he was part of, with its origins in the Classical Mediterranean.
Ljusmannens gåta (Janse 1959a) gives us an opportunity to follow Janse's travels and work in Indochina in the 1930's. In a sense it illuminates the scene for his scientific work, as we get to see the world he met in Southeast Asia through his own eyes. Olov Janse lived and worked in a colonial world, and his perspective was undoubtedly imperialist. His research was both a product of, and an instrument to reproduce a French, or European view of a commodified and alluring Indochina, an icon and object of desire and possession (cf. Norindr 1996:4). The social hierarchy with colonisers in another societal sphere, and also at a higher stage of social evolution than indigenous people, was completely naturalized and no object for questioning. While not overtly expressing racist opinions, Janse's interpretations of the past reflect his world view, where people of his kind were naturally worth more than the anonymous and mute indigène. In a booklet with the title 'The Peoples of French Indochina', (a Smithsonian Institution War Background Study from 1944), Janse writes the following on the peoples of Mainland Southeast Asia:

[There is an] extreme variety of ethnic groups. Though many of these groups still stubbornly cling to their beliefs and ancient customs, the French penetration [...] has largely contributed to the levelling of the various social and racial barriers and to orienting the elite of these peoples toward human progress (Janse 1944:11).

The use of words such as stubbornly indicates a fatherly and patronizing perspective, which equates the people he describes with children. A discourse that portrayed indigenous peoples as children worked to legitimize the intervention of colonisateurs who would act as parents and teachers in the process of socialization into a modern society. It is indeed typical of texts from the time just after the fall of French Indochina that colonization was described in retrospect as something necessary and even heroic, with what Norindr has called a 'rhetoric of paternalistic benevolence' (Norindr 1996:44). The French colonisers in Southeast Asia had, seen from that perspective, taken on a great human responsibility and made many personal sacrifices for the greater good of rescuing the peoples and lands of Indochina to modernity from an otherwise inevitable decay. Bernard Groslier wrote in the same spirit about the history of colonial archaeology in Indochina:

This brief summary [...] seeks to show the immense progress that has been made since the enquiries of the dilettantes of the 18th century. [...] By the eve of the Second World War which was to throw Indochina into turmoil, two generations of scholars had built an imposing edifice and enriched history with a fascinating
new chapter. The road had not been an easy one, and some of those who travelled it had sacrificed their lives on the way. But though the names of most of these men are now forgotten it is by their efforts that cities like Angkor and Pagan have at last been brought back to life (Groslier 1966:192).

Illuminated like this, it is almost inevitable to see the archaeology of Olov Janse as somewhat dubious from the perspective of my contemporary society. And the critique is, of course, not new. It is widely known that the entire discourse of human sciences and archaeology during the first decades of the 20th century aimed at picturing colonisation as something natural and inevitable to human society, and thereby legitimising European colonial rule over great parts of the world. During a few decades Olov Janse played a part in the reproduction and legitimisation of the colonial world order through the pictures of the past that he communicated. We must nevertheless remember that from all that has been written about him it is clear that Olov Janse was, and is, regarded as a good scientist and a good man.

A couple of papers from the end of his professional career testify to a change with Janse, who was then suddenly more apt to turn to the local context for analogies in his interpretations (Janse 1959b). He judged his own earlier interpretations, which were based upon the assumption of direct cultural influences from India and China as ‘simplistic’, and began to open up for the possibility of indigenous origins of local cultures in Southeast Asia (Janse 1961:1645). This was at the beginning of the 1960s, 25 years and one World War later. The world of Olov Janse, who was by then almost 70 years old, had changed. What was previously called Indochina had, after years of war and a new wave of colonisation by Japan, become the independent states of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. The archaeological research he was himself part of had contributed to a fundamental change in the view of this area. Olov Janse’s personal reason for wanting to study Indochina, which was as we remember to study the Chinese civilisation in its very periphery, was characteristic for the initial focus of archaeological research in the entire Indochina. The interest was typically either with the Chinese, or the Indian civilization. But at the beginning of the 1960s, a few decades of archaeological and historical research along with a changing political climate had shown that the cultural complex which had at an initial stage of colonization been considered as a passive mixture of elements from Chinese and Indian civilisations, would instead better be defined as a significant cultural complex in its own right, and most importantly, with indigenous origins (cf. Groslier 1966:155). Indochina had, together with Thailand, Burma and Yunnan, become Mainland Southeast Asia.
Just like Olov Janse was once, I am at the time of writing a PhD candidate at the department of Archaeology and Ancient History at Uppsala University in Sweden. I chose Mainland Southeast Asia as a focus for my studies, not because I was interested in China or India, but in Mainland Southeast Asia itself. Then again, my world is in that sense different from Olov Janse’s. My studies are funded by the Swedish International Development Agency, whereas French museums and institutions for colonial research financed Janse’s research. There are some similarities between the projects of these institutions, perhaps most obviously the aim, or mission, to aid or assist the indigènes/local populations with their socialization into modernity. I do not suggest that there is a direct analogy between early 20th century institutions for colonial research and present day international development aid, but there are enough parallels in these two structures to make comparisons worthwhile. Let us keep that in mind as we now move on to take a look at archaeological narratives from Laos in the 21st century.

ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY IN LAOS:
AN EXAMPLE FROM THE 21ST CENTURY
The beautiful and lavish Art et Archéologie du Laos from 2001 is at the time of writing the only book published with an explicit focus specifically on the archaeology of Laos. It is a heavy book with many high quality photographs and drawings, written by Madeleine Giteau, Professor Emerita at l’Université de Paris III. Madeleine Giteau started her art historian career with the École Française d’Extrême Orient in the 1940s, and has since worked long periods for the EFEO, Unesco and other international organisations in Southeast Asia, foremost in Cambodia but also in Laos. As an expert on iconography she has published a number of important works on Khmer art (Giteau 1965, 1975, 1976), and she has also re-edited the classic work L’Art du Laos, originally written by Henri Parmentier (1954).

In Giteau’s own book on the art and archaeology of Laos (Giteau 2001), the main focus is on description and iconographic analyses of reliefs, mosaics, paintings and sculptures from Buddhist and Khmer temples. These are Giteau’s own research fields, and only about a sixth of the total space is devoted to Préhistoire et Protohistoire and Les Poteries, which are more typical fields of archaeological research. The focus on architecture is however by no means coincidental, but must be understood as part of the French colonial culture in Indochina. In the French colonialist ideology of the 1930s, architecture was regarded as the finest and most sophisticated measurement of ancient cultures. Based on interpretations of architectural techniques, conclusions were drawn about intelligence and genius of the builders; the ‘refinement, the strength or naivety of a race’
It must be understood as a consistent part of an ideology aiming to produce an image of universal and unilinear development from ‘primitive’ to ‘modern’ people. As a legacy of this ideology, there is typically a strong emphasis on Buddhist and Khmer art and architecture also in contemporary international archaeology in Southeast Asia, especially among French and Italian scholars. In a short introduction to the history of Laos and its artistic tradition, Giteau writes:

The long Khmer occupation left important vestiges, most importantly the Wat Phu temple. The dominating influence had been that of the Thai, of the same race as the Lao and with similar religion and culture. [...] Lao art did certainly not start to develop until the end of the 14th century, [when the Lan Xang kingdom was in close contact, and even united with the Thai under the reign of king Setthatirat]. The richness and diversity of their works gave them an important place in the artistic evolution of the Indochinese peninsula (Giteau 2001:34 [my translation]).

Words like dominating influence, race, artistic evolution and Indochinese peninsula in this short extract place Madeleine Giteau's language firmly in a colonial discourse. It is in fact almost identical to that of the texts written by Olov Janse and other colonial researchers from the early 20th century, and must in my view be regarded as being part of the same context. Most references cited are also from the beginning of the 20th century, and Giteau clarifies her position further by naming George Coedès (Director of the EFEO in Hanoi 1929-46 (Nugent 1996) and a friend of Olov Janse’s) as the greatest historian ever to have worked in Southeast Asia (Giteau 2001:35). While I agree with Giteau in her appreciation of Coedès as a prominent scholar of his time, the lack of critical distance to the political context of which Coedès was a part, makes Giteau reproduce the colonial discourse that was created by the first archaeologists in Indochina at the beginning of the 20th century, but in her case a century later. Whereas colonial research in the early 20th century can in some sense be excused in retrospect by its socio-political context, such an imperialist discourse cannot be supported by the 21st century society, where historical change is generally explained in more complex terms than through dominating influences and artistic evolution. Yet this book was published in 2001, which must say something about the disciplines of archaeology and art history in Mainland Southeast Asia in the early 21st century.

This does not, however, solely depend on disciplinary structures, but must be viewed in the light of the postcolonial relationship between France and Indochina. Panivong Norindr has eloquently formulated and analysed what he calls the phantasme of Indochina in French culture:
As a discursive construction that supported financial and political ambitions, and as a particularly fecund lieu de mémoire (site of memory) heavily charged with symbolic significance, Indochina continues today to arouse powerful desires. Its luminous aura sustains memories of erotic fantasies and perpetuates exotic adventures of a bygone era, while appealing to the French nostalgia for grandeur (Norindr 1996:1).

The explanation as to why this particular book has not been widely criticized is in my view partly to be found in the format of the book, appealing to a nostalgia for grandeur. It contains a great number of photographs and beautiful drawings of temples, reliefs and Buddhist sculptures: a systematic documentation of what is considered to be the most important religious art in Laos. The major aim appears to be to find an art that is typically Lao, in comparison with the rest of Mainland Southeast Asia. There is no critical reflection on the pictures of Laos and its inhabitants that are simultaneously produced. In other words, there seems to be no discursive importance attached to these images of the world that are communicated, directly and between the lines, in descriptions and analyses of artistic styles. Moreover, Giteau writes in the style of an all-seeing narrator, playing what Donna Haraway has called the ‘god-trick’ of seeing everything from nowhere, letting the story appear uncontested. It can be argued that the coffee-table-book format of Art et Archéologie du Laos makes this case even more serious. Many such folio books have been produced to show the world the fantastic arts and artefacts of Southeast Asia in all its splendour. Such an appearance means that the book is meant to appeal to a much wider circuit of readers than only archaeologists and art historians, many of whom have no previous knowledge about the art and archaeology of Laos, and subsequently trust in the knowledge and authority represented by academia. Such implicit images of history and prehistory are thus more powerful than the explicit pictures discussed among the official contemporary society of researchers in archaeology and art history (cf. Samuel 1994: 13, 17f, 35, 39). Once more quoting the strong arguments of Panivong Norindr:

If absorbed and consumed uncritically, the current wave of popular material on Indochina threatens to submerge all serious attempts at interrogating French colonial involvement in Southeast Asia under the ebb of phantasmatic images that perpetuate the myths of its foundation, promoting a fin de siècle resurrection of the mythologized images of an exotic and erotic Indochina (Norindr 1996:13).

This is precisely why ‘popular material’ like Art et Archéologie du Laos deserves equally serious critical consideration as any overtly argued research results.
I here use Madeleine Giteau and her book on the art and archaeology of Laos as an illustration to my argument. The argument goes of course beyond the critique of this particular book, and it is not my intention to blame Giteau for the inequalities of the world. The broader question must be lifted from the level of political correctness and posed to the disciplinary structures. What is it in the disciplines of archaeology and art history of Mainland Southeast Asia today that validates a division of people, today or in the past, into races? Or, for that matter, find it useful to discuss art in terms of artistic evolution. Where are the people who actually live in Laos? It bothers me that the only book ever published on such a vast – and wonderful – subject as the art and archaeology of Laos is one that communicates a view of the same country's inhabitants in terms of races. It bothers me that the scholarly community has not raised critical discussions on this matter. Or do we agree? The words of one writer are volatile: they may be the result of all from clear intentions to sheer mistakes, while the (silent) acceptance by the scholarly community indicates a more general tendency. On another level of understanding, I see Madeleine Giteau's book on the art and archaeology of Laos as a powerful example of that it is a theoretical simplification to describe the development of the archaeological discipline in unilinear evolutionary terms. The practical world is far messier, and there is today a wide variety of archaeologies out there, which are all legitimized by their cultural or sub-cultural contexts. Thus the question must be what (sub-)cultural context it is that work to legitimate the imperialist agenda of this particular work.

This particular example does not, however, make justice to the contemporary field of archaeological research in Southeast Asia. It is indeed a field of great variation, of which the Lao Pako project is a part. Before we return to take a closer look at contemporary Southeast Asian archaeology, we will make a stop in Africa, partly to put Southeast Asian archaeology into perspective, and partly to provide a background to some main sources of inspiration for my theoretical approach in the Lao Pako project.

POSTCOLONIAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN AFRICA – A BRIEFING

The early history of African archaeology shows many parallels to the history of colonial research in Southeast Asia. Modern archaeology in Africa was created in a strong colonial and racist discourse, which it also helped to reproduce (cf. Trigger 1989:129-38). After independence there has been a multitude of reactions to these earlier traditions, creating a manifold field of archaeology. Contemporary African archaeology is characterized by strong bonds to anthropology and linguistics, and the critique has in a broad sense been pointed towards
archaeology’s role in the reproduction of a general imperialist image of Africa and Africans as being primitive, backward, static and uninventive (Rowlands 1989; Ekblom 1998; cf. also Trigger 1989). There are three distinct reactions to this imperialist discourse, which are of special interest for this study.

Perhaps the most extensive of these reactions has been the processually influenced archaeology, which accentuates ecological and functionalistic aspects of prehistoric and historic societies (e.g. Sinclair et al. 1993; Sinclair 2004). It has been much concerned with issues such as socio-ecological relations, adaptation to ecological changes and food strategies among different economies of hunter-gatherers, agriculturalists and pastoralists. It has also enhanced a neo-evolutionary view on prehistory (e.g. Deacon 2001), and adopted ethnoarchaeology as a common method. The major aim for this processual approach is to create an alternative to the culture-historical approach, which is connected with colonialist archaeology and to lift the discussions from the particular to addressing more general and widely important issues for humanity. High-level scientific analysis has lately often been combined with a local oral history perspective (e.g. Sinclair 2004) to create specific local history and at the same time make the African past become an important factor in a universal historical current (Ekblom 1998; Diop 1970). This approach has been applied by international as well as local archaeologists, and must be seen as a strategy to make African archaeology competitive in international science, and further to show that the issues raised were of active importance for humanity as a whole, not only as a passive negative image of the Western world.

Another more forceful reaction to the colonialist discourse has come from a number of African archaeologists who have used several different approaches to reclaim the images of the African past. Bassey Andah, who claims that only native Africans or ‘true’ Africanists can create a valid picture of the African past represents one extreme. In an almost agitatory line of argument he writes:

[...] it is necessary to excavate and expose the paralyzing structures and strictures of definition of the African which confine both the African insider and the Arab/European outsiders. [...] demand that we reject European - Arab historical vocabulary [...] And only when we have completed the ascent of literacy, identity, spiritual, political and economic freedom, should we welcome them back, but on our own terms (Andah 1990:3).

Another example of a strong argument towards a prevailing imperialist discourse is Webber Ndoro’s doctoral thesis Your Monument Our Shrine (Ndoro 2001), in which he argues for a more locally attuned cultural heritage management
approach to Great Zimbabwe. It is interesting to note that such forceful criticism on the former imperialist discourse as is shown by the examples above is formulated sharply within a post-modern critical discourse originating from universities in the West. Quoting scholars like Michel Foucault (e.g. Andah 1990:3) makes the critique accessible to international academia, and provides an entry ticket to the more exclusive societies of that particular world. We will return to the issue of local critique with a different example further on in this chapter.

A slightly different yet related reaction is that represented by foremost West-European and African archaeologists with a post-processual archaeological approach. This archaeology is the younger relative of the processual school. It lined up with the processual critique of the unscientific culture-historical school, but tried to combine scientific methods for excavation and artefact analysis with a humanist and particularist approach to the interpretation of the past. The post-processual archaeology was formulated as a critique against the processual functionalist and eco-determinist view of human society and launched instead a strong focus on rituals and symbols and metaphors in material culture. However, similar to her processual relative, the post-processual archaeology is often combined with anthropological studies to create local frameworks of meaning and metaphor to understand and interpret material culture (Barley 1984; Collett 1993; Rowlands & Warnier 1993; Bekaert 1998; cf. also Tilley 1999). Although it can be argued that a basic understanding of human culture in terms of development and evolution must underlie every choice of ethnoarchaeology as a method of investigation to understand the past, the post-processual approach has openly criticized the neo-evolutionary view of the processual school. The post-processual ethnoarchaeology therefore, albeit somewhat contradictory, accentuates the distinctiveness in particular human societies and the way they organize their worlds: as abstract structures and as concrete expressions in material culture. Often are these particular contexts also used in comparison with other archaeological contexts in Europe or other parts of the world, to visualize in a sense the vast array of possibilities for human societies to create a world (e.g. Hodder 1982a, 1990). This approach means choosing a different way to criticize the colonial past than that of its processual relative, and aims instead to create a post-modern localized alternative to functionalism and the imperialist focus on cultural evolution. I find this the most attractive of the approaches described above, and my own theoretical framework has, as we will see further on, strong connections to it.

During the last few decades humanities and social sciences in Africa have also been much influenced by postcolonial theory. In fact, postcolonial theory has
been by far most influential in African and North American academia. Archaeology has not shown as strong influences as for instance literary theory and anthropology, but there are a few examples. Michael Rowlands has combined the post-processual archaeology approach with an explicit critical focus on issues of colonialism (e.g. Kristiansen & Rowlands 1998: part III). In a paper on archaeology and colonialism, he says the following about the priorities in contemporary African archaeology:

One of these is the need for an historical archaeology of Africa that would address itself more cogently to understanding the origins of the contemporary economic and political conditions that beset the continent. Many of these require a more long-term view of social change than ‘colonial history’ allows, yet African archaeology appears too preoccupied with demonstrating its value to an international audience concerned with the ‘big questions’ in human prehistory (Rowlands 1989:395).

This critique, pointing to the impact of present-day relations of power and resistance on science, shows the relevance of concepts of colonialism and imperialism for contemporary archaeology. Postcolonial theory lifts the discussion on issues of colonialism to be valid for power relations that exist long after the situation of direct colonization has come to an end. This is used for direct critique, and at the same time as a tool for understanding social, political and scientific structures in contemporary society. The postcolonial critique, which has so far almost exclusively been confined to African and American colonialism has played an important role in the creation of my own theoretical approach to archaeology.

In contrast to the African situation, critical discussions in Mainland Southeast Asian archaeology after the break-up of Indochina have concerned datings and models of prehistoric society rather than the contemporary societal role of the discipline. We will now move to take a closer look at the archaeological site Ban Chiang in Northeast Thailand, and from there look out on the contemporary field of archaeology in Mainland Southeast Asia.

**BAN CHIANG AND THE IRON AGE**

‘Oops, I tripped…’ – so begins one of the most recited legends of Southeast Asian archaeology. The tripper was Stephen Young, sociology student at Harvard University and son of the United States Ambassador to Thailand, who was out doing sociological research walking in a village called Ban Chiang one day in 1966. According to the legend, Stephen Young fell over the root of a kapok tree and
landed with his face down, right on the rim of a pot just barely exposed on the ground (White 1982:15; Ban Chiang Home Page 2003). He saw pottery of the most amazing kinds on the ground all around him, some with the outstanding red-on-buff painted ware with swirling designs that Ban Chiang was later going to be famous for. He soon realized that he was standing on an archaeological site, and collected some pottery samples to bring to Bangkok. In fact, the village Ban Chiang on the Khorat plateau in the northeast part of the country was by then already known to the Thai authorities for Cultural Heritage Management. Six years earlier, an officer from the Thai Fine Arts Department had inspected the site, after the authorities had received information that villagers found curious things en masse when they built new houses or worked in their gardens. But, in the words of Joyce White: ‘there was little official interest at that time in the archaeology of the pre-Buddhist periods’ (1982:15), so it was not until Stephen Young notified American experts on ancient artefacts in Bangkok (Lyons & Rainey 1982:5; White 1982:15f) that the Ban Chiang archaeological site was really discovered in the sense that fits a legend.

No one could have guessed at the time how much Ban Chiang was about to stir up the archaeology of Mainland Southeast Asia. Thailand had – as the only country in the region – never been colonised in the same sense as Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia that were part of Indochina, and Myanmar that belonged to the British Empire. Nevertheless there was an important American influence on the development of the modern Thailand we see today, principally through the United States’ presence in Thailand before and during the Vietnam War. Half a century before, just after the Indochina administration in Hanoi had established the École Française d’Extrême Orient, thirty-nine people held a meeting at the Oriental Hotel in Bangkok in February 1904 and founded the Siam Society (Higham 2002:23). In 1911 it was followed by the establishment of the Fine Arts Department, and the two institutions, both with close connections to the Thai royal family, were going to work side by side in the study and documentation of arts, literature, archaeology and other sciences in Thailand and the surrounding countries (ibid.). To this day, the Fine Arts Department (FAD) is an important actor in Thai archaeology, and the Siam Society produces one of few international journals for Southeast Asian arts and archaeology.

Well, back to the story of Ban Chiang. In 1966, when Stephen Young fell over the kapok root, the research interest for prehistoric times in Thai archaeology was close to zero. The national institutions Siam Society and FAD focused almost exclusively on Buddhist art and architecture: monuments of early Thai civilizations (Higham 2002:24). Three years earlier, the American archaeologist Wilhelm
AND THROUGH FLOWS THE RIVER

G. Solheim from the University of Hawaii who, as a curious detail, was also a student and friend of Olov Janse’s, had begun to do research on pre- and early agricultural society sites, together with his students Donn Bayard and Chester Gorman. They initiated work on now well-known sites like Non Nok Tha and Spirit Cave (Possehl 1982:3; White 1982:13; Higham 2002:25). Thus, when Elizabet Lyons, the American Fine Arts consultant in Bangkok, saw Young’s pottery samples, she sent them home to Philadelphia to be dated with the new thermoluminescence method for dating ceramics. At the same time, the Fine Arts Department initiated excavations at the site, revealing outstanding amounts of cultural material, the earliest layers being associated with bronze. It turned out that the site had a mound shape, entirely covered by a modern village. There were cultural layers of great depth and great complexity, which the FAD excavation team did not have enough resources to handle alone.

However, it was the pottery that was going to turn everything upside down. The results from the thermoluminescence dating in Philadelphia showed a date of 4630 BC (White 1982:16). To some scholars on the project it seemed unlikely, but since Solheim and his students had just recently shown results of extraordinarily early use of metals at the site Non Nok Tha and early plant domestication in Spirit Cave (Lyons & Rainey 1982:6), so why not? At a time when the insecurities of the thermoluminescence method were not yet known, and when the trust in scientific methods in general bordered on religious belief, the warnings from some scholars were silenced by others’ enthusiasm of having discovered evidence of the earliest bronze working in the entire world. One claim led to another and started to run riot. In an article in National Geographic from 1971, Wilhelm Solheim wrote that not only the first bronze, but also the first pottery and the first domestication of plants were likely to have appeared in Southeast Asia (Solheim 1971). All of a sudden Southeast Asia, and Thailand, was called ‘the cradle of civilizations’, and Thai prehistory became one of the highest priorities for the Thai Fine Arts Department and for the international community of archaeologists. All this attention of course led to extensive looting activities in Ban Chiang, where villagers traded pottery and artefacts to foreigners at the Udorn American air base close by (Lyons & Rainey 1982:6). The director of the University Museum at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia went to Ban Chiang in February 1973:

Some of the skeletons left in the open excavation seemed to me to be extraordinarily large and well-formed people for early Southeast Asia. Who in the world were they? Why did they settle here and not in some more fertile area? Or had there been great climatic changes? I was convinced we really must excavate
here, and soon, or all the pottery would be in private hands or in antique shops, and all the other evidence of that civilization tossed into the local rubbish pit (Froelich Rainey in Lyons & Rainey 1982:9).

The University Museum in Pennsylvania started a cooperation project with the Thai Fine Arts Department, co-directed by Pisit Charoenwongsa and Chester Gorman, hired by the University Museum at University of Pennsylvania, and so in 1974, the Northeast Thailand Archaeological Project (NETAP) came into being (White 1982:16). The NETAP project undertook extensive excavations at Ban Chiang in 1974-75, and it became a model on which many archaeological projects in Mainland Southeast Asia in the following decades were to be moulded. First of all, this was the first real cooperation project between one Thai and one American institution. The Americans brought funding and knowledge, and the Thai archaeologists opened their territory while they received training and an upgrade in the latest archaeological methods. This system of reciprocity is, of course, not completely unproblematic, and in retrospect the build-up of an imbalanced power structure in the discipline of archaeology in Mainland Southeast Asia is obvious. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the contributions were real, and that the situation was much improved from the imbalances that existed before (Charoenwongsa 1982; White 1982:17; Higham 2002:25).

The Ban Chiang excavation was also the first real breakthrough for the processual, or new archaeology, in Southeast Asia. It brought a critique against the earlier culture-history oriented colonial archaeology that lived on in Southeast Asia during the low-activity interim period up to the 1960s. It was a large and dynamic team of young archaeologists that worked in Ban Chiang, and over the project reports (e.g. Gorman & Charoenwongsa 1976; Expedition 1982) rest an air of hope for the future and belief in the possibilities for the ‘new’ archaeology to revolutionize the discipline – which it was also about to do, all over the world. The new, or processual archaeology bears traces of the world where it was created in the 1960s, and is characterised by a general optimism towards the possibilities for archaeology to find answers to questions about the physical, cultural and social evolution of humanity – one united humanity. At Ban Chiang the charismatic American excavation director, Chester Gorman, led his students and colleagues in a multidisciplinary research approach that aimed to understand a prehistoric society in its environment. Processual archaeology had a holistic approach to the study of man and environment, which stood out from the typical culture-historical focus on exclusive cultures, typologies and diffusion. Nevertheless it was the power of artefacts that made Ban Chiang what it is today. Joyce White, who is at the time of writing the archaeologist in charge of the Ban Chiang
project at the University Museum in Philadelphia, wrote:

...more than 200 square metres were excavated to depths of up to 5 metres [...] these limited excavations were conducted to retrieve a maximum amount of information and produced a wealth of material: more than 5000 bags of sherds, 123 burials, more than 2000 other artefacts plus soil samples, animal bone, charcoal samples and other items (White 1982:16f).

Ban Chiang has all it takes to become an archaeological legend. It has a proper discovery, and an abundance of fantastic and characteristic artefacts. It holds a major scientific controversy that was just about to change the whole world's gathered knowledge on the origin of everything, before it turned back at the light of new scientific evidence. As if that was not enough, the American co-director Chester Gorman, known as an Indiana Jones of the real world with all the appeals that comes with such an epithet, died unexpectedly from melanoma in 1981. The death of Chester Gorman paralysed the international community of archaeologists in Southeast Asia, not least the American students and colleagues who had worked with him at Ban Chiang, many of whom never returned to work with Southeast Asian archaeology again.

After Gorman, the project leadership from the University Museum in Philadelphia was taken over by Joyce White, archaeologist and archaeobotanist who made a great effort in her PhD dissertation to sort out the complicated chronology of the site (White 1986). The dating of Ban Chiang was still, after over a decade, a matter for controversy. Charcoal samples with, it would later be proved, insecure provenances had continued to give early dates: radiocarbon analysis showed dates in the 4th millennium BC (Gorman & Charoenwongsa 1976). White managed to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the first dates to the 5th or 4th millennium BC had been grossly exaggerated, and that the first secure evidence of bronze at Ban Chiang was in the early second millennium BC (White 1997:104; cf. also Loofs Wissowa 1992). The con-
troversy over the Ban Chiang dates still rises to the surface occasionally (e.g. Higham 2002:133), but with this, the dating of the earliest bronze has now finally stepped out of the limelight in the archaeology of Mainland Southeast Asia.

The time after Chester Gorman’s untimely death in 1981 was one of confusion at the Pennsylvania University Museum. The huge documentation work of all the excavated materials took time, no reports were published and it was as if Ban Chiang faded away into the haze in international archaeology, adding mystery to the legend. Meanwhile, a museum and an open-air excavation display were set up at Ban Chiang, in a joint effort between the FAD and the University Museum in Philadelphia, and in 1992 the site was listed on Unesco’s list of World Heritage Sites. Just recently, the University Museum has begun to publish the reports from the 1974-75 excavations in a number of heavy volumes (for Volume I, see Pietrusewsky & Douglas 2002).

While the story of Ban Chiang is of great relevance for all archaeology that has taken place on the Khorat Plateau from the 1970s and onwards, the Bronze Age discussion with which it has been mostly associated among archaeologists is of less relevance for the Lao Pako site and this study. However, I will return to the Ban Chiang site for comparisons with Lao Pako in the subsequent chapters, and then in particular to the so-called Late Period of the site, the settlement of an iron-using community between c. 300 BC and AD 200 (White 1982:20; Pietrusewsky & Douglas 2002:5). That Late Period of Ban Chiang is part of what has come to be called the Iron Age in Mainland Southeast Asia, starting at around 500 BC and ending with state formations in different parts of the mainland, at the Khorat Plateau probably after AD 600 (cf. Higham 2002:27, 262f). In accordance with the image of the Ban Chiang site, the Iron Age on the Khorat Plateau is a rather bleak period of time in the archaeology of Mainland Southeast Asia. Despite a steadily increasing number of excavated sites with the most intriguing patterns of material culture, the Khorat Plateau Iron Age is typically depicted as low profile and industrial. The Iron Age has in the archaeological narrative become an interim period with its greatest value being that it is pre-state: with chiefdoms developing as precursors to the states that were going to be formed centuries later.

The origins for this image of the Iron Age on the Khorat Plateau can partly be found within the structure of the discipline that the Ban Chiang project created. In retrospect it is clear how influential the Non Nok Tha and the Ban Chiang projects have been on the development of the archaeology on the Khorat Plateau. Many of the international scholars working with archaeological research in this area today have in one way or another been tied to the Ban Chiang project,
and most Thai archaeologists in high positions in University Education or Cultural Heritage Management have received their training and university education within the Ban Chiang project or related ones. Reproducing a tradition started by Wilhelm Solheim and Chester Gorman, most of the international projects have been large-scale operations with a multidisciplinary research approach directed by a strong and charismatic English-speaking male scholar and a more silent co-director from the national cooperation institution. These directors (examples except for Solheim and Gorman are: Donn Bayard (University of Hawaii), Charles Higham (University of Otago) and Ian Glover (University College London)) have been highly influential on the way we appreciate the late prehistory of Mainland Southeast Asia today. With firm fatherly hands they have directed their local and international colleagues and students. In line with the original critique launched by the processual archaeology, as we saw expressed in the Ban Chiang project against the artefact-mania and particular focus of the colonial culture-historical archaeology, the aim was to lift the human society to be in focus, on a more general level. Central questions were: How did people live and make their living, and how could their society have developed into the modern society of Southeast Asia today? Thus a functionalist focus on metallurgy as industry developed in the Thailand Archaeometallurgy Project (Pigott & Natapintu 1997; Pigott 1998; White & Pigott 1996, see also Bronson 1985), and for iron metallurgy in combination with discussions on salt-making (Nitta 1991a, 1991b, 1992).

It is important to understand the image of the Khorat Plateau Iron Age as interacting pre-state chiefdoms involved in iron- and salt-making industry in the light of its origin. This image has been produced within a strictly functionalist school, as a critique against the colonial discourse. A comparison with African archaeology shows the possibilities to study production in other terms than industry. As an example that we will return to further on in this text, several African studies have investigated the symbolic and ritual aspects of the production of iron (e.g. Bekaert 1998; Collett 1993; Rowlands & Warnier 1993) and pottery (Hodder 1982a; Barley 1994; Tilley 1999), which have there emerged as valid and important aspects to the societies under study. A comparison between Southeast Asian and African pottery studies shows that in Southeast Asia there has been almost no interest at all in studying such metaphorical aspects of the production and use of pottery. In an anthology on African and Asian pottery from 1984, most of the papers dealing with African pottery evolves around pottery symbolism (e.g. Barley 1984; Ibigami 1984), while the ones on Southeast Asia (Ho 1984; Mourer 1984) deal almost exclusively with technology, reflecting general tendencies in
these two archaeology traditions. This, of course, is not indicative of a complete lack of pottery symbolism in the Southeast Asian past, but has, I would argue, to do with the structures of the archaeological discipline. I shall return to the discussion on the metaphorical aspect of material culture in the following chapters.

If we remain for a moment with postcolonial African archaeology, we see clearly that the critique of colonialism there has divided into several different roads, of which the processual archaeology is one. The local critique of colonialism from native Southeast Asian scholars exists, but has taken a different position than in Africa. In my view this can be described in terms of active silence. It can be argued that I have hardly included any Southeast Asian colleagues at all in this history of research. That is true, and it is partly due to the nature of this silent critique. Rasmi Shoocongdej from Silpakorn University in Bangkok initiated what she called a ‘conversation across the continents’ in the Southeast Asian Archaeology International Newsletter 1993-1994, where a number of scholars from within Southeast Asia as well as from the outside shared their opinions about positive and negative aspects of contemporary international archaeology in Southeast Asia. Both David Bulbeck in his contribution and Shoocongdej herself identify nationalism and tourism promotion as the major driving forces behind archaeological enterprise in Southeast Asia today. Shoocongdej argues further that the ‘native’ Southeast Asian archaeology in that respect is very different from archaeology in, for instance, the USA, which she describes as more research focused and problem oriented (Shoocongdej 1993-1994). Shoocongdej further lists a number of ‘values and behaviours’ that could pose a potential problem to a foreign archaeologist working in Thailand, were he or she unaware of them:

Thai culture values individuals who are modest, gentle, ever-smiling, non-aggressive, considerate and averse to criticizing others in their presence. Following the Buddhist ‘middle-path’, the Thais like to compromise rather than hurt other’s feelings by decisive acts.

[...]

Such behaviours obviously seem to be misused or misunderstood by many foreigners who seem to assume that we do not have opinions simply because we do not speak them [...]. In comparing Thai and western values, while the Thai may view argument and criticism as being aggressive, rude, and arrogant and showing lack of control, in the west (e.g. America) the same behaviour may be viewed as self-actualisation and showing self-confidence (Shoocongdej 1993-1994).
Thus, the sort of direct and outspoken critique towards former teachers that we have seen in the case of postcolonial Africa is, following the arguments of Shoongdej, impossible in Buddhist Southeast Asia. Contra-hierarchical disagreements and conflicts are strategically dealt with through means of silence, a silence that should not be mistaken for passivity.

Thai, Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian and Burmese archaeologists today constitute an absolute majority of all working with the archaeology of Mainland Southeast Asia. In the first generation, many were trained in the large international excavation projects described above, and many have got scholarships to study further at universities abroad. These same scholars are now leading at universities and other institutions in each country respectively. The next generation have been or are currently trained within the country itself, in the native languages. This means that most of the archaeology that is produced in Mainland Southeast Asia today is communicated in Thai, Khmer, Lao or Vietnamese, and only very few foreign archaeologists master those languages to the degree where they can publish and be part of the national debate (with one exception in the German archaeologist Andreas Reinecke, who has published several books in Vietnamese, e.g. Reinecke & Lê 1998).

Meanwhile, the current internationally communicated image (in English) of the late prehistory of Mainland Southeast Asia, and here specifically the Khorat Plateau, is about origins. As a legacy from the Ban Chiang project, the focus is still on origins. Southeast Asian archaeology – national as well as international – has ever since its colonial upbringing been very much occupied with evolution. The aim is to find the roots, and now it is not so much for bronze technology or plant domestication, but for civilization. It is not difficult – albeit perhaps surprising – to see parallels here to Olov Janse’s archaeological project. But there is one crucial difference in this contemporary approach. The aim is now to find an indigenous root to civilization, and preferably one that leads in a straight line of cultural and social evolution to the dominant ethnic group of each country respectively:

The rise of civilization is one of the most popular and intriguing topics for anyone interested in the past, for in studying ancient states, we can recognize many aspects of behaviour that recall our own experience (Higham & Thosarat 1998:173).

When I began to write about Ban Chiang for this chapter, I had no intention to let this site alone take up so much space. But as I wrote, it gradually appeared to me how much influence Ban Chiang has had on all postcolonial international
archaeology in Southeast Asia, especially for the archaeology of the Khorat plateau, such as the Lao Pako project. We all work to some extent in the starlight of the Ban Chiang legend.

PLAIN OF JARS: ARCHAEOLOGY FROM INDOCHINA TO THE LAO PDR
From Ban Chiang and the Iron Age of the Khorat Plateau, we move northeast, into the territory of the Lao PDR and to the Plain of Jars: a place that has attracted a lot of archaeological attention through time. With the Plain of Jars I want to demonstrate how a place is literally created out of different viewpoints: how five distinct perspectives – from Indochina to the Lao PDR – have created five quite different stories about one and the same place.

The Plain of Jars, or the Plain of Jars, has got its name after its characteristic jar-shaped prehistoric stone monuments, and is situated in Xieng Khouang province in north-central Laos. Around 200,000 people from several officially defined ethnic groups today live in Xieng Khouang, the majority being Phouane and Lao, but there are also smaller communities of Kha and Hmong (Chazée 1999; UXO Lao 2002). The Plain of Jars is a vast area on a highland plateau with more than 60 sites; some host just a few stone jars, while the largest have more than 250 jars and other monuments (Sayavongkhamdy 1996a:11; Sayavongkhamdy et al. 2000:105ff; Rogers et al. 2003). The jars are of varying sizes, the largest more than three metres in height, and associated with them are stone discs and other stone monuments. They have been typologically dated to the last centuries BC and the first centuries AD (at the most 500 BC to AD 800). Pottery, metal artefacts, beads and burnt bones have been found inside and around the jars, which has led archaeologists to interpret them as connected to human burials (ibid.). The Plain of Jars also has a recent history and has attracted attention as one of the most tragically war-torn places on earth, with considerable damage from both the French colonial conflicts and the Vietnam War. A Unesco-Lao project team (Rogers et al. 2003) has described it as one of the world’s most endangered archaeological sites, and they say further: ‘Bombs and land mines left over from recent conflicts are a daily menace both for researchers and local inhabitants who are struggling to eke out an existence in one of Southeast Asia’s most economically depressed areas’ (ibid.). Thus the Plain of Jars is often described as both a highly fascinating place and one of deep tragedy.

No comprehensive study has yet been made on how the local population perceive these monuments. But in accounts with other focuses, for instance Fred Branfman’s Voices from the Plain of Jars (1972) in which people living on the Plain of Jars tell in writing and drawings about their own experiences of the Vietnam
War, the jars seem to have no place at all. There are in all 32 drawings in this book, showing air attacks on elaborated landscapes with houses, people, animals, rivers, mountains and rice fields. But there are no depicted stone jars in any of the drawings, even though they seem to be a very tangible part of the physical environment. Or, with the words of Rogers et al. (2003): ‘The jars’ striking and enigmatic presence has given to the Xieng Khouang Plateau the name The Plain of Jars’. However, there are legends associated with the jars. Some of them say that the stone jars in ancient times functioned as burial monuments, but most stories are elaborations on the theme that they originate from a time when giants (sometimes equated with the Kha people) populated the plain. They used the jars as containers for food and alcoholic beverages (Sayavongkhamdy et al. 2000:105ff), and led a prosperous life until the Ho people (historically known as an expansive ethnic group originating from south China) invaded the area from the north and destroyed the giants’ society (Colani 1935(I):120ff). Today on the Plain of Jars there is a steady and increasing stream of tourists coming to the central town of Phonsavan, and guided tours to the monument sites are arranged with local guides. Tourists are often told that the monuments are several thousand years old, and that they were burial monuments of a very prosperous society that once had its centre there.

The French geologist and archaeologist Madeleine Colani worked for three years during the 1930s with the monuments on the Plain of Jars. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Colani was part of the colonial institution École Français d’Extrême Orient, administrated from Hanoi and working all over French Indochina. Her work and publications (Colani 1935) from the Plain of Jars have been very influential and appreciated for their scientific quality (cf. Sayavongkhamdy et al. 2000; Higham 2002:34). Colani excavated in trenches around a number of jars, as well as inside a cave at the central Ban Ang site. She took into account in considerable detail the indigenous mythology concerning the jars and their origins (Colani 1935(I):120ff), and she agreed with the assumption that there was probably once a prosperous society in this area with its centre to the north-east, yet close to the central monument site (ibid.). The great effort that must have been put into the construction of the monuments is seen as an indicator of a society with quite a large population that was under strong rule (ibid. (II):258). The monuments were interpreted by Colani as burial monuments containing the ashes of bodies that were cremated in the Ban Ang cave (ibid. (II):259). The artefacts that were found around and under the stone monuments were considered mainly for their possibilities to date the monuments and to trace possible relations to other areas around Mainland Southeast Asia.
final conclusion is that the jars were constructed in a society on the Plain of Jars between 300 BC and AD 300, which prospered thanks to a junction of important trade routes, mainly for salt, at this particular place. Such trade routes have also been used as an explanation for artefactual links to other areas. The jars would finally have been destroyed during an invasion in which the invaders’ purpose was to destroy the old society’s link to its ancestors, and thereby undermine its entire foundation (ibid.:120ff).

The present Director General of the Department of Museums and Archaeology at the Laotian Ministry of Information and Culture, Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy, has himself conducted research on the Plain of Jars, as part of his PhD studies. Awaiting the completion of his PhD thesis, he produced a booklet in connection with the opening of an exhibition at the Laos National Museum in Vientiane, with some preliminary results and interpretations about the Plain of Jars (Sayavongkhamdy 1996a). There he described the Plain of Jars as a unique expression of ‘the universally known Megalithic Culture’, which also includes sites such as Stonehenge, Carnac and the stone sculptures of Easter Island. The jars were interpreted by Sayavongkhamdy as temporary sarcophagi for the deceased and their belongings, until after decomposition when the remains were buried in pits at the foot of the stone jar. This procedure, he suggests, was exclusively for high-ranked persons or the male members of the community. Females and children, on the other hand, were cremated and buried in pottery vessels, since the production and transportation of monuments was costly and therefore available only to the cream of society (ibid.:11). The society that produced these monuments is said to have been a highly developed one, whose members mastered a number of techniques for subsistence and handicraft (ibid.:12). A greater part of the discussion is devoted to a proposed ethnic origin of the society, an argument based on the presence of an anthropomorphic decorative figure (see photo in Colani 1932: pl.XXXVIII) found in four different contexts on the Plain of Jars. It is said to represent a mythical ‘frog man’ that has connections with the present ethnic group Lao, which forms the majority of the present nation state of Laos. If this can be shown to be true, Sayavongkhamdy writes:

…the entering of the Lao ethnic group would be pushed back from the 7th century AD to the 7th century BC (1000 years!) (ibid.:11).

Some attention has also been given to the Plain of Jars recently in European magazines, and I will use two such articles to show a more popular (albeit still with scientific pretensions) European view of the Plain of Jars. Pierre Rossion
wrote the first for the French magazine *Archéologia* in 1992. His article with the title ‘Mysterieuse Plaine des Jarres au Laos’ describes the Plain of Jars as *‘one of the two most fascinating enigmas of the Far East’* – the other being Easter Island (Rossion 1992:44 [my translation]). Rossion’s point of departure is that the only serious work carried out on the Plain of Jars was that of Madeleine Colani in the 1930s, and outside of her reports he only refers to other French written accounts from when Laos was part of French Indochina (*ibid.*). He also gives information about some of the ethnic groups inhabiting the area. The sources of this information, he writes, are legends transmitted from father to son. And:

...[t]he natives, even the educated, are still convinced that the jars contained seeds, alcohol or rain water. This theory is not valid... (*ibid.*:46 [my translation]).

This, he argues, is because, should the jars have contained spirituous liquors, it would have been enough for the entire country’s population, and that, he says, is absurd (*ibid.*). He ends the article with an account of the damage done to these monuments during the French and American wars, but he describes recent theft and looting by local inhabitants as a much more serious threat. That, he concludes, is why the Plain of Jars should be protected by Unesco, and archaeologists from the *Ecole Française d’Extrême Orient* should continue to do research there (*ibid.*:47).

Flemming Kaul (1998) has written an article with the title *‘Nu vet vi äntligen mer om de mystiska krukorna i Laos’* (*‘At last we know more about the mysterious jars in Laos’* [my translation]) for the Danish-Swedish magazine *Illustrerad Vetenskap*. The title refers to an expedition led by the Danish photographer and journalist Freddy Wulf, who went to the Plain of Jars to find new and previously unknown jars. Laos as a whole is here described as one of the most dangerous and isolated places on earth, and Freddy Wulf is portrayed as a heroic character. His search is an adventure involving many risks: with an old Russian cross-country vehicle and by foot, his expedition find their way through mined areas, eventually discovering what seems to be a quarry and manufacturing place for stone jars (Kaul 1998:50f). The Plain of Jars is here called

...one of the world’s last great archaeological enigmas [...] the stone jars have kept their mystery because Laos has been on the whole closed to archaeologists (*ibid.*:49 [my translation]).

According to Kaul, there is no internal archaeological activity at all in Laos, and the few scientific investigations that have been carried out have all been
initiated from the outside: France, USA and Japan. In a small text box he tells about the ethnic group Hmong in the area, who make holes in the soft stone monuments to create nests for their precious fighting cocks. The heading of the text box is ‘Old myth destroys stone jars’, and it refers to a local story of how the two giants who once made the jars from elephant and buffalo skin, stone, gravel and sugar, had included silver ingots in the bottom of the jars. These are treasures that local inhabitants have tried to find by breaking the bottom of the large jars. The people living on the Plain of Jars are thus in several ways identified as the major threat to the preservation of the monuments. Kaul concludes that the protection of this area as a Unesco World Heritage site, which has been proposed, will demand great efforts, ‘...not least the enlightenment of the local inhabitants’ (ibid.:50 [my translation]). In an ongoing project on the Plain of Jars, a Unesco-Lao team are working to record, conserve and develop the archaeological sites for cultural tourism. They write in other words about the threats posed, and the possibilities of the cultural heritage:

Most of the heritage resources are at risk from neglect and natural forces such as erosion, stone weathering and growth of vegetation as well as from modern pressures of village growth and community development, principally road construction. Attempts to loot the jar fields have resulted in destruction of archaeological deposits as well as breakage of the jars themselves. There are few mechanisms to protect this rich heritage resource base and none to use it in a sustainable fashion to enhance the standard of living for local communities (Rogers et al. 2003).

This is clearly a more profound description of the contemporary situation for the cultural heritage of the Plain of Jars, as it incorporates different aspects of threats as well as assets. On the other hand, this description does not have, nor does it strive to have, any of the allure and appeal surrounding the other depictions of the same place. The archaeological pictures created by Kaul, Rossion and Sayavongkhamdy are made to sell, to compete on the international, and in the case of Sayavongkhamdy the national, arenas of prehistoric sites. For the Unesco-Lao team the situation is different – their job is not to sell the Plain of Jars to an audience, for Unesco is supposed to represent the gathered knowledge of the World.

These stories about the Plain of Jars, as represented above, are typical of their contexts and can almost be described as stereotypes. The people living on the Plain of Jars today seem to have no strong identity-creating relations to the monuments. They are indeed aware of them, as the jars have a place in mythology where stories about them have an explanatory purpose, but there seem to be
no connections between these material remains of the past and the contemporary society in terms of identity links (cf. Rowlands 1994). Such links are instead crucial for the example of contemporary nationalist archaeology, which enhances the ‘frog man’ connection with the nationally dominant ethnic group Lao. In sharp contrast, neither the 1930s report by Madeleine Colani, nor the contemporary and more popular European accounts by Kaul and Rossion show any interest in the possible importance of these monuments to the people of Laos today. Kaul and Rossion instead portray the Plain of Jars as a sort of universal heritage for which European archaeology has a responsibility, and to which local inhabitants are considered the great threat. The local community is in fact seen in a similar manner in both the colonial 1930s version and the contemporary European ones. In these stories, created for an audience far away in Europe, the local views are reproduced as mythologies whose function is to render the stories an exotic touch, an exotisation that results in the readers’ dissociation and alienation regarding the Plain of Jars and its present inhabitants. The official Lao story, on the other hand, shows no interest at all in the accounts of the local inhabitants, which is in line with the politically communicated image of the Lao PDR as a nation with no domestic problems between different ethnic groups, creating a tradition of official denial of ethnic diversity within the country. In fact, the only one of these different stories that makes an effort to take the local population seriously into account, without neglecting them nor making them into a threat or an anecdote, is the Unesco-Lao project (Rogers et al. 2003).

It is also interesting to note the willingness in both the official Lao and the contemporary European accounts to portray the Plain of Jars as something extraordinary, which is nevertheless part of a universal phenomenon together with other expressions such as Easter Island. The Lao account also compares it to megalithic monuments in Europe, while the European accounts deny such comparisons. This reveals a desire from the official Lao side to be part of, and compared within, the same framework as the global archaeological
tradition with its centre in the West (cf. Peterson 1983:125), and the unwillingness on the contemporary European side to allow that.

There is one important conclusion to be drawn from studying Kaul’s and Rossion’s contemporary archaeological accounts of the Plain of Jars. Although they per definition work in a postcolonial world, it is in many ways a colonial and imperialistic archaeological discourse that these authors, deliberately or not, operate in. I would also argue that their writings are representative for many such accounts in Europe today. It could further be argued that this is connected to the knowledge-trade situation discussed above, where a picture of an archaeological site is created to attract a potential consumer of archaeological knowledge, in this case the readers of the popular magazines *Illustrerad Vetenskap* and *Archéologia*. As Lynn Meskell has reminded us (1998b:136), the economic currency of archaeology should not be underestimated, and a more nuanced picture of the Plain of Jars would, it appears, not be as attractive for the consumer as the black-and-white-good-and-bad one. Thus, instead of making an effort to involve in a meeting with that which is depicted, they strive to remain completely untouched. In this way, these authors retreat through an act of exotisation to make the Third or Fourth world ‘other’ into an object to observe, rather than to involve in. One can wonder whether this has to do with the real preferences of the consumers, or if it is a denigration of the public’s potentials on part of the academics.

I have taken you to the Plain of Jars to show how the knowledges and values of an archaeological site are situational and directional, and how it must emerge through an act of communication. It is a clear and powerful example of how an archaeological site is literally created and communicated to the rest of the world through the pens and lenses of chosen academics. From the Plain of Jars we will now move to the final destination of this chapter. We travel south, downstream along the Nam Ngum river that rises on the Plain of Jars, into the lowlands of Laos until we almost reach the Mekong river and the border to Thailand. And there, on a hill on the southern bank of the mighty Nam Ngum it is: Lao Pako. We have reached our destination, and the real story of this book can begin.
WITHIN THE WHIRLPOOL
AND THROUGH FLOWS THE RIVER

OMNIUM GATHERUM

¿Qué es Lao Pako?

- There were people at Lao Pako a long time ago, even before my grandfather went there to sharpen his iron tools. They used to call Lao Pako Voen Nong Khone because the river is deep and there is a whirlpool there. When my grandfather went to Lao Pako to make a garden they cut the trees and after that they called it Lao Pa Ko, young forest of Ko trees.

Mae To Gim [มา โต กิม] 58 years old, married with seven children and 20 grandchildren. Lao PDR citizen, resident in Ban Phonkham.

- Lao Pako... Lao Pako is an archaeology site. Very important archaeology site in Lao, in Vientiane. I think... Very interesting.

Dr Sounet Pothisane [ดอ ซูนี โพธิสาน] 49 years old, married with two children. Lao PDR citizen, resident in Ban Chanpet Neua, Vientiane. PhD in History and Director of Laos National Museum.
- It is… it is so many different things… the… it is a beautiful spot. That was what first occurred to me. But later on, I mean, seen in this perspective it is a place that is… it is high grounds, that is also why it is beautiful. It… it is… it has… you have a good view of the approaches, there is fresh water, fresh spring water, there is agriculture land… It’s a perfect place for some kind of settlement… Easy to defend.

Mr Peter Fogde [ปีเตอร์ ฟ็อกเดิ้] 50 years old, married with three children. Swedish citizen, resident in Ban Thongkham, Vientiane. Forest engineer and MD of the Burapha Group that was involved in creating and running the Ban Pako resort.

- คำสาปไถ่ไทยยิ่งแย่งดีที่ป่าไถ่ไทย ได้ยินวัดเมือง แต่ยังยิ่งดีอยู่ยิ่งมาก ที่ที่อยู่ที่ป่าไถ่ไทย. คำสาปไถ่ไทยยิ่งแย่งดีที่ป่าไถ่ไทยยิ่งแย่งดีอยู่ยิ่งมาก ได้ยินวัดเมือง บ้างจะมีครั้งนึง ได้ยินวัดเมืองป่าไถ่ไทย คืออภิปราริติ่ม คือ มีป่าไถ่ไทยเป็นป่าไถ่ไทย เป็นบ้านเดิม... อ่าว่ากรทย์ได้...อ่าว่ากรทย์ได้
- I only hear Lao Pako, but I don’t know what Lao Pako is exactly. When I grew up it was called Lao Pako and it still is. Lao Pako, what is the meaning?... It is a problem for me, I do not know... It is important, it is old, and it belongs to my parents and to the archaeologists. From the early times it was called Lao Pako. There is an old property in Lao Pako. Lao Pako is an old village outside of Tha Khai and Tha Suan Ya.

Mr Lang Xouvandi [ล้าง คูวันดี] 46 years old, married with eight children. Lao PDR citizen, resident in Ban Phonkham. Village chief in Ban Phonkham, neighbour village to Lao Pako.
- Lao Pako is a small hill on the bank of the Nam Ngum river, where people came to perform rituals during a few centuries some 1500 years ago. Today there is a tourist resort at the same place, but under the ground are the remains of these rituals, such as pottery vessels, burials and iron slag.

**Ms Anna Källén** 29 years old, unmarried and no children. Swedish citizen, resident in Uppsala, Sweden. PhD Candidate at Uppsala University, archaeologist at Lao Pako.

- Lao Pako is ... mean ... ‘Lao’ is forest ... forest like, you know, forest. ‘Lao’ is small forest. ‘Pa’ is forest. ‘Ko’ is the Ko tree.

**Mr Khamput Sisongkham** 32 years old, married with one daughter. Lao PDR citizen, resident in Ban Nabong. Employee at the Ban Pako resort.
PLACE AND PEOPLE

For places do not just trace out the traces of spaces, they have an active role which is inscribed in their activity. …[P]laces are the means by which hybrids register each other as hybrids and, in allowing the performance of their difference, face change.

— Nick Bingham & Nigel Thrift (2000:299)

The Lao Pako archaeological site is situated on a hill on the southern bank of the mighty Nam Ngum river in central Lao PDR. It is in the Mekong valley, in Mainland or continental Southeast Asia on the Vientiane plain in Vientiane Province, Pak Ngum district, about 40 kilometres as the crow flies to the northeast of Vientiane City. The immediate area around Lao Pako is mostly used for agriculture, and is today home for people from a number of officially defined ethnic groups. The majority is Lao, which is also the majority group in the country as a whole, but there are also groups of Phouane, Lao Isan, Hmong Lay, Hmong Khao and Khmu Ou (Chazée 1999). The exact position of the Lao Pako archaeological site is on longitude E102°51',471' and latitude N18°09',511' on the global grid. The Ban Pako tourist resort (prior to May 2002 known as the Lao Pako resort) is today partly overlapping the prehistoric site. For visitors, the site is reached easiest from Vientiane City by bus and boat, or directly by car.

The Vientiane Plain is an alluvial plain in the Mekong Basin, in the northern outskirts of the Khorat Plateau. The Khorat Plateau stretches across northeast Thailand and parts of central Laos. It is dominated by the large drainages from the Mun and Chi rivers, and has the Mekong river running through its north and east periphery. Lao Pako, situated by the Nam Ngum river, the largest of Mekong’s tributaries in Laos, is in the very outskirts of the Khorath plateau, and the area has more topographical and vegetational similarities with the area south of the Mekong river that today belongs to Thailand, than to more mountainous areas just to the north. A mountain range and national conservation area: Phu Khao Khoay (ฟุ้กเข่าโค้ก) or buffalo horn mountains, is visible from the site.

The river Nam Ngum flows through and defines the Lao Pako landscape. It rises near the Plain of Jars in Xieng Khouang Province and passes through the entire east-central Laos before it meets with the Mekong just east of Lao Pako.
AND THROUGH FLOWS THE RIVER

Lao Pako is situated on a small hill at the bend of the river, with a view both upstream and downstream, just beside the confluence of the great river with a smaller stream. The immediate choice of place seems not to have been coincidental. In the survey around the Lao Pako site in the spring 2000, another similar site was identified a kilometre or so away, on the opposite bank of the river. There were earthenware ceramics with characteristic screw head decoration otherwise found only on prehistoric Lao Pako falling out from the eroding river bank. In the broken jars were iron artefacts and fragments of burnt bone. This place, which we called site 15, is apparently strongly connected with Lao Pako (Bouasisengpaseuth et al. 2000). A closer look at the location of this place, site 15, shows that it is situated on a small hill at the bend of the river, with a view both upstream and downstream, just beside the confluence of the great river with a smaller stream. That is almost a mirror image of the location of the Lao Pako site, just at the next bend of the river. Thus the location of the prehistoric site on the bank at a sharp bend of the river must have been chosen with great care, pointing to the symbolic importance of the river landscape. All through the history of Mainland Southeast Asia, rivers and waterways have been at the centre of life, in function and cosmology. Around Lao Pako the Nam Ngum is and has been a major food resource, an infrastructural highway, giving and taking life in its annual floods. The river is at the centre, life is lived and the world is ordered around it.

The landscape immediately around the site is flat and dominated by the river. The river’s water level varies greatly with the monsoon climate. In the rainy season (May to October), the water level is high, often flooding the plain around. In the dry season the riverbanks are high and steep and are used for cultivation of lettuce, leeks etc. for the nearby villages. The forest is partly secondary for-
est (originally a dry monsoon forest with small to medium sized trees and rare occurrence of lianas, ferns and epiphytes) with bamboo, wild banana etc. Parts of the area are also used for eucalyptus plantations for the Burapha Group. The riverbanks serve as gardens for the nearby villages, and there are paddy fields for slash-and-burn cultivated rice around. There is also a recently irrigated paddy field system for multiple harvest rice to the west.

9. Lao Pako is located on the southern bank of the Nam Ngum river, with Vientiane City to the southwest, the Mekong river and the border to Thailand to the south, and the Phu Khao Khoay mountain range to the northeast.
Lao Pako (ລາວ ມ່າກ), meaning ‘forest of young *ka* trees’, has been known as a specific place among the nearby villages since long times. It is indicated as a hill on the southern bank of the river that is slightly more elevated than the surrounding plain. This means that the hill at Lao Pako is spared on occasions of severe flooding, and when that last happened in the late 1990s, the villagers from around gathered there for a respite from the water. There are today no villages adjacent to the site, which is surrounded by eucalyptus plantations, banana gardens and paddy fields for slash-and-burn rice cultivation. Prior to 1945 there was a village, *Tha Suan Ya* (ท่าสวนยา) about a kilometre to the west of Lao Pako along the bank of the river. The village was abandoned in 1945 after it had been ravaged by fire in the French War, and the villagers settled in the new village *Ban Phonkham* (วังป้อมขาม) a few kilometres away. Several residents in *Ban Phonkham* have said that the hill at Lao Pako was used as a village cemetery for *Tha Suan Ya* before the village was abandoned and the villagers moved to *Ban Phonkham*. The dead were taken by boat on the river the few hundred metres from the village to Lao Pako. It was the northeastern end of the hill that was used, i.e. on the other side of the tourist resort buildings from the excavated areas, and also an area on the western periphery of the hill, which was used as a children’s cemetery (for more detailed descriptions, see the chapter *Creating Reflections*).

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10. Phosphates from analyses in March 2000. The distance between samples is ten metres, the smallest dots mark 0 mg/l PO\(_4\)\(^3-\), and the largest 200-250 mg/l PO\(_4\)\(^3-\). The result should be considered as relational and indicates a clear difference of phosphate concentration between the top of the hill where ancient remains have been found, and the surrounding area, including historic cemetery areas (cf. *Creating Reflections*). Map courtesy of Finnmap, Vientiane.
These recent cemetery areas only negligible concentrations of phosphates in the soil, as compared to the high phosphate levels in the excavated area in the south-western part of the hill (figure 10, see also Bouasisengpaseuth et al. 2000:6ff, 15).

At the time when Tha Suan Ya was abandoned in 1945, it appears that Lao Pako was considered a phi pa raa (ฝูฟ้าเรามี), which is a place where spirits, or phi (ฝู) are, by the inhabitants in the closest villages Ban Phonkham and Ban Nabong (บ้านบอนยาง). A phi pa raa is usually secluded and not used for mundane activities, due to the presence of spirits. After the village was abandoned, however, some former villagers returned to make fruit- and vegetable gardens there. During a short period of time (up until the early 1990s), a man lived alone in a small house on the hill, where he also had a garden with fruit trees. In the beginning of the 90s, the Burapha Group started a plantation and forest preservation project in the area around the hill. Shortly thereafter, the Lao Pako hill was leased to Mr Walter Pfabigan, who built up the Lao Pako eco-tourist resort, partly owned by the Burapha Group. After the sudden death of Mr Pfabigan in January 2001, the majority ownership of the resort was taken over by Mr Bengt Eckerwall, in cooperation with the Burapha Group and the Managing Director Mr Peter Fogde. The name of the resort was changed to Ban Pako in May 2002, and a new management concept was introduced, focusing on nature, culture and health, to attract visitors to the resort. The archaeological site is an important part of the culture profile of the resort, together with the tourist-attracting qualities of present-day rural lifestyles of the neighbour villages.
About one third of the total area of the prehistoric site (the total area being almost exactly 10,000 m² (1 ha), as indicated by the soil phosphates mapped in figure phosphates) is today occupied by constructions for the Ban Pako eco-tourism resort. The remaining part (c. 6,400 m²) functions as a park or cleared space with pathways for the resort guests, and the prehistoric cultural remains are thus almost entirely undisturbed there. The management of the tourist resort encourages and shows much interest in the archaeological research carried out at the site, and is currently negotiating with the Ministry of Information and Culture, Department of Museums and Archaeology to work out a program for protection and management of the site’s cultural heritage resources. There is at the time of writing a photo exhibition of the excavations and findings with texts in both English and Lao at the resort, and there are plans to extend the exhibition with material similar to that which is displayed in the permanent exhibition Lao Pako – a glimpse of the prehistory of Laos at the Laos National Museum in Vientiane.
ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

AIMS, METHODS AND OUTCOMES

Lao Pako was first defined as an archaeological site in the early 1990s, when the tourist resort management on the site found archaeological materials in the ground during construction work for the newly established resort. The findings were duly reported to the Lao Ministry of Information and Culture, Department of Museums and Archaeology (from here onwards referred to as MIC) that conducted a first test excavation of one trench in 1994 under the direction of archaeologist Viengkeo Souksavatdy (ヴィーケー ソウスサワディ). There is no report written in English of this first investigation.

EXCAVATION IN 1995

When I arrived at Lao Pako with Anna Karlström the first time in November 1995, the resort management had encountered more prehistoric materials, some of which were uncovered in a pit that was meant to make room for a septic tank, but was now left open. The Austrian and Swedish management of the resort were interested in having further archaeological investigations conducted, in order to better understand the history of the site and the origin of the things they found in the ground, with the overall aim to attract more tourists to the site. The MIC were positive to an international cooperation project, mainly due to their own strained staff and funding situation. Anna Karlström and I were funded by a MFS (Minor Field Study) grant from Sida, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, and we formed a team with members from the MIC under the direction of Director General Thongsai Sayavongkhamdy (ソングサ サヤボンクハンディ) and archaeologist Thonglith Luangkhoth (トンリット ルアンコット). We had also a number of local employees in the team, of which Sumpiang Douangsompong (スムビャン ドアンソンポン) and Ding Sayavongnak (ディン サイヤボンナク) have since been involved in all excavations at the site.

The aims of this first excavation were kept very basic: simply to find out what kind of remains were represented at the site, how old they were, and to what kind
of contexts they belonged. Since there was hardly any professional infrastructure for archaeological excavations at that time in Laos (no archives, no fixed grid points, very little excavation- or measuring equipment), the excavation methods were also kept as simple as possible. Anna Karlström and I had just finished our undergraduate studies in archaeology with the sole experience of excavation from Neolithic sites in Sweden and on Ireland. Together with the broader excavation experience of our senior colleague Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy we worked out a first excavation strategy, including a local grid. The grid, metric, measured with compass and tape and with its origin at the foundation of the toilet house, has been reused for all excavations. Along the grid we lay out three trenches of varying sizes; D1, E2 and B2, which we excavated in spits (for details, see Källén & Karlström 1999). We excavated with spades, trowels, brushes and tools from the nearby village, measured with measuring tape, plumbob and theodolite, and collected cultural materials in bags and paper boxes to be brought to the Laos National Museum in Vientiane. The excavations of 25 m² in these three trenches revealed large quantities of artefacts, the bulk being pottery and iron production materials (a fuller description is found in Källén & Karlström 1999, Karlström 2000 and Källén 2000). We could conclude that Lao Pako was likely to have been a place for rituals involving pottery depositions and small-scale iron production between approximately AD 350 and 600.

SURVEY IN 2000
Following the 1995 excavation, it took four years until we were both back in Laos again, Anna and I. By that time, we had both finished our graduate educations and were working with new research projects, both dealing with the archaeology of Vientiane Province, yet with two different foci. Anna had decided to focus on issues of cultural heritage management in urban Vientiane (Karlström 2003, and also forthcoming), while I continued to work with the Lao Pako site. Once again we formed a joint project with the MIC, represented by ceramist Boutheuang Bouasisengpaseuth (บุณฑูฏ บัวสิสังกรพสฺเฐพี). A fourth team member was Unla Sisongkham (อุลนา สิสองกาม) from the village Ban Nabong (บ้านน้างประธาน) near Lao Pako. In discussions with the MIC we decided to carry out an archaeological survey of an area of approximately 20 km² surrounding the Lao Pako site, in February and March 2000. There were several explicit aims of the survey. Firstly there was a need to put Lao Pako in a physical context and to gain an understanding of the landscape it was and is part of. Secondly, we wanted to test whether or not archaeological survey methods that had been worked out to suit other projects in other parts of the world would work for this area. One of these methods was a field kit for phosphate analysis (Merckoquant®, see Persson 1997).
Thirdly, we wished to involve the local community in the project to a greater extent than in the previous excavation, and at the same time increase our own knowledge of the physical and cultural setting of the site.

We prepared the survey with studies of a topographic map (sheet 5545 II, scale 1:50000) from 1966, and stereographic pairs of aerial photographs, dating from 1955 and with an approximate scale of 1:30000. From those we chose a search area of approximately 20 km² with the intent to cover as many vegetational and topographic components as possible. They included the banks of the Nam Ngum river, a lowland river valley area covered with forest, paddy fields and present villages. The initial plan was to conduct an archaeological survey based on systematic walking in transects, covering the entire research area. Immediately at the onset of the field survey, that method proved impossible, mostly due to the impenetrable dense forest with thick undergrowth covering large parts of the search area. Instead, we turned to a more humanistic approach based on contacts with the local community. We spent all the survey time in the villages which are located today within the search area (Ban Nabong (บ้านนาบอง), Ban Phonkham (บ้านโพนมาก) and Ban Tha Kok Hai (บ้านท่าโคกhai)) interacting with the villagers. From formal interviews and informal talks we identified archaeological sites, characterised as places where there are what we called ‘old things’. These sites were visited, marked on a map, surveyed and sampled for phosphate analysis. We also began a communication with the villagers in Ban Nabong and Ban Phonkham about the value and importance of old things, about spirits, and about the recent history of the area.

As a result of the survey, more than twenty archaeological sites previously unknown to the authorities were identified in the search area. Of those one is roughly contemporary with the Lao Pako site and most of the other are from more recent times. A phosphate mapping with a 10 x 10 metre grid of the Lao Pako site and a few locations in its immediate vicinity gave at hand a clear pattern of quite remarkable phosphate concentrations on the top of the Lao Pako hill, which is partly where the tourist resort resides today (see figure 10). More detailed information on the survey results are found in the unpublished report Lao Pako Project – Survey 2000 (Bouasisengpaseuth et al. 2000).
EXCAVATIONS IN 2002-2003

Two years after the survey we began the first excavation at Lao Pako specifically for this PhD project, which was running over two seasons in 2002 and 2003. Again it was a joint project with the MIC and now also with the Laos National Museum in Vientiane involved. This time the team was larger. In 2002, the project was co-directed by Phimmasseng Khumlalavong (ปรีดิชัย คงภักดี), archaeologist from MIC, and apart from myself, the team consisted of conservator Marion Ravenscroft from the AESOP foundation in Australia, undergraduate student Christian Vinterhav from Uppsala University, Ban Nabong and Ban Phonkham staff members Ding Sayavongnak (ดีน สวัสดี), Nor Untagok (นอร์ อนทาโกก), Sumpiang Douangsompong (สุมพิญา ดุยงสุมา), and Unla Sisongkham (อุนละ สิริมงคล), and volunteer worker Göran Franson from Uddevalla, Sweden. In 2003, the co-director was Kanda Keosopa (กันดา คิวสตา), archaeologist from the Laos National Museum, and the Pak Ngum district office was for the first time involved in the excavation represented by Phoukong Yutitham (ภูคอง ยุติทัม). The other team members were conservator Marion Ravenscroft, Ban Nabong and Ban Phonkham staff members Ding Sayavongnak (ดีน สวัสดี), Git Sisongkham (จิต สิริมงคล), Nor Untagok (นอร์ อนทาโกก), Sumpiang Douangsompong (สุมพิญา ดุยงสุมา) and Unla Sisongkham (อุนละ สิริมงคล), and finally, volunteer worker Emmy Ageros from Vientiane.

The objectives of this the fourth archaeological investigation season at Lao Pako was to get a fuller understanding of the spread and composition of cultural material over the area that had been identified in the survey with high concentrations of phosphates (used as an indicator of a variety of human activities). Were the remains homogenous all over the area? Would there be similar deposits all over the entire top of the hill, an area of approximately 6400 m², to those recovered in the excavation 1995-96 on just 25 m² in one corner of the hill? And would all remains date to the same period of time, a couple of centuries in the fourth to sixth centuries AD? Or was this a site with a great variety of remains from diverse activities over a long time span?

The method of excavation was worked out to suit those questions. The aim was to extract as much quantitative and qualitative information as possible about the site’s cultural material, while limiting the destruction and keeping the integrity of the site in its current role as a resort. The results were aimed to fit in with the planning of future archaeological investigation projects, and with assessments of the spread and qualities of the material remains to enable a program of cultural heritage management in cooperation between the Ministry of Information and Culture and the Ban Pako tourist resort. An excavation method with small
testpits spread over the entire hill was chosen because it would answer questions on quantity and quality of cultural remains over the area, while minimizing the destruction of the site.

The original plans for excavation was for 64 (1 x 1 m) testpits spread across the entire untouched area of the archaeological site (c. 6400 m²), in order to get a statistically viable material for analysis, and also to investigate in a direct way the nature and distribution of the cultural remains, to serve as information for future cultural heritage management considerations. The considerable amounts of cultural material that were encountered restricted the number of excavated pits to seven in 2002 and nine in 2003, all in all 16 pits which is exactly a quarter of the total amount. We chose to begin in one part of the hill, which means that all sampled testpits in the eastern quadrant of the hill are now excavated, while the remaining three quadrants remain untouched.

The methods used for these excavations were similar to those used in the 1995 season, that is technologically as simple as possible, but for conservation there was a change of approach from the first excavation. Slightly wiser from the experience of encountering such vast amounts of material in 1995, it was arranged so that conservator Marion Ravenscroft could be involved already in the fieldwork, preparing for later reconstruction, packing and storage of finds at the Laos National Museum. She writes:
The conservation component of archaeology in situ is still so often overlooked and therefore, the Lao Pako Project provided an excellent opportunity to implement conservation treatment from the actual point of excavation and introduce some basic conservation procedure to local staff. During fieldwork it was possible to effectively stabilise metal artefacts that tend to rapidly deteriorate as soon as they are excavated. Oversee the washing of sherds and undertake some immediate consolidation of the more fragile material. Finds were registered and packed in a method that would greatly simplify further procedure back at the Museum in Vientiane (Marion Ravenscroft, in Källén et al. 2002).

This approach to conservation proved successful for this case, where we could work actively with artefact analysis already during the fieldwork, which enabled a more active and dynamic excavation approach. Thus not only the artefact preservation benefited from field conservation, but also the excavation procedure as a whole. For more specific details on excavation methods and results, see the unpublished report Lao Pako Project: Excavation 2002 (Källén et al. 2002).

Concurrent with the 2003 excavation, the communication with the local community concerning the value of ancient things, of spirits and of the meaning of Lao Pako, was again intensified. General talks with staff and villagers, visits and interviews have resulted in the chapter Creating Reflections of this book.

All finds from the 16 testpits excavated in 2002 and 2003 were recorded in a database and left for storage in the Laos National Museum in Vientiane. In 2002 some of the finds were displayed in a permanent exhibition at the museum, Lao Pako: a glimpse of the prehistory of Laos (see figure 12a-b). At the very end of the project in 2003, the remaining ceramic vessels that were excavated in 1995 but never reconstructed at the time, were properly recorded and reconstructed to the extent possible. The various information pieces collected during these four excavation- and survey seasons all work together to create the image of Lao Pako presented in this book.
The Lao Pako stratigraphy is shallow compared with other excavated sites on the Khorat Plateau. Settlement sites here often have long and complicated chronologies, and the complex stratigraphic sequences often reach a thickness of several metres. Lao Pako is different. The archaeologist's main reason for using stratigraphy, i.e. the dating of different phases in the history of the site, is of minor importance for Lao Pako. Instead the stratigraphy here reveals only one phase, a short but intense history of usage. The artefacts and structures intermingle in a constant crossover between materials, shapes and depositional contexts, horizontal and vertical. Instead, a closer look at stratigraphy, soil and dating can in this case provide an insight into the compressed complexity of the site.

SOIL DETAILS

The soil in the upper layers of the excavated site is fine without natural inclusions of gravel or larger stones, although often disturbed by termite nests. The soil is a well sorted fine silt, homogenous in colour, described with reference to the Munsell Soil Colour Chart as:

- Dry: *light brownish gray* (10YR 6/2)
- Moist: *grayish brown* (10YR 5/2)

Under the cultural layer, which appears approximately 0.5 metres down and varies in thickness, the sterile soil is similar in colour to the topsoil but can be
described as a sandy clay with yellowish inclusions. About 1.5 - 2.0 metres down begins a layer of packed concrete-like sterile soil interspersed with small (on average 30-60 mm in diameter) lumps of laterite.

A series of pH tests have shown that the soil is slightly or even significantly acid. In the 1995-96 excavation, the tested soil had pH values between 5.5 and 6.0. In the 2002 season, the analysed samples showed an acidity of pH 4.0 to 4.4. The analyses have been carried out in a fieldwork context, and future analysis in a proper laboratory might give more absolute results. A significant acidity of the Lao Pako soil would explain both the almost complete absence of human- and animal bone material on the site, and what appears to be a leaching of pottery wares, which could well be due to an acid environment.

STRATIGRAPHY AND EXCAVATION

A stratigraphic sequence has been developed during the course of the three archaeological excavations at Lao Pako. In the 1995 excavation, the prior knowledge of stratigraphy and dating was nil. Thus the excavation was carried out in spits of 0.1 to 0.2 metres in thickness. The cultural material was collected according to these spits, and the stratigraphic sequence was in that case reconstructed at the end of the excavation while drawing the stratigraphy from the trench walls. In the subsequent excavation of test pits in the 2002 and 2003 seasons, the prior knowledge of the site stratigraphy led us to a different spit approach. In general, there is at Lao Pako a layer of topsoil, varying in thickness between a few decimetres and up to a metre, containing almost no cultural material. The material from this topsoil layer have been collected and labelled spit ‘LI’. Beneath the topsoil is the cultural layer, which varies in thickness and complexity between the different trenches. The materials from this cultural layer, identified as rich in cultural material of different kinds, has been collected in spits with a thickness of approximately 0.1 m each, that is ‘LII’ – ‘LI??’, depending on the thickness of the cultural layer (see stratigraphy drawings in appendix III). Under the cultural layer is a sterile soil, a sandy clay with yellow inclusions, into which pits have often been dug from the level of the cultural layer. Under this sterile sandy clay appears a soil interspersed with small lumps of laterite. This layer is hard and almost impossible to excavate with ordinary archaeological methods. This layer was only excavated, and then with a pick, in the cases where pits containing pottery vessels had been dug down so deep into this otherwise completely sterile compact layer (figure 20).

20. Excavation of sterile laterite strata in T38.

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LAYERS
The topsoil generally contains scattered potsherds of more or less recent origin. Both old earthenware and very recent stoneware and Chinese porcelain are found in this layer. The presence of earthenware pottery, identical to that found deeper in the cultural layer, indicates that materials have travelled vertically between the layers, either by recent human intervention, animal movements in the soil, or as a consequence of natural soil processes. It is likely to be due to a combination of these factors. The topsoil varies in thickness between 0.3 to 0.6 m, and is often disturbed by termite nests, marked with a T in the drawings. In a few places in the sequence, for instance in the stratigraphy of testpits T35 and T36, there are thin charcoal lenses in the topsoil, indicating a historical clearance of the site. This is probably the result of slash-and-burn clearance in connection to the Phonkham villager's garden here a couple of decades ago.

Beneath the topsoil is the cultural layer. It has the same soil structure as the topsoil, but contains more cultural material such as potsherds, fired clay, metallurgy materials, charcoal and miscellaneous artefacts. This cultural material is also clearly of a different character than the topsoil’s, with exclusively earthenware pottery, and other artefacts of prehistoric character. The cultural layer does not generally differ from the topsoil in colour; thus it is only distinguishable on the basis of its material culture contents. In some parts of the site the cultural layer is dense and easily detected, while in others it is hardly visible during excavation. The amounts of potsherds collected from each level in the 2002 excavation, illustrated in figure potsherd distribution, indicate that there are two denser levels at an average depth of 0.7 and 1.0 metre below the surface.
From the cultural layers there are pits dug down containing complete pottery vessels. The pits are generally only just wide enough to fit the group of vessels, and are filled with a mix of cultural material and the sterile layers which the pits cut through. This filling is often indistinguishable from the cultural layer, other than that the pit filling generally is slightly more porous than the packed layers around. The cultural layer differs in thickness and composition between different parts of the hill, in correspondence with the horizontal spread of cultural materials over the hill, as indicated by the plan drawings. The cultural layer is both thicker, has a higher density of cultural material, and is more complex on the slightly more elevated central part of the hill (e.g. square E2, T15 and T22 (see appendix III and figures 22 and 23)), than down towards the southeast slope (e.g. T46 and T47). The cultural layer is thicker and denser on top of the hill, but the frequency of pit depositions is equally high down towards the slope. In some of the excavated squares and testpits, it is possible to distinguish one or two more compact horizons in the cultural layers, only distinguishable on the basis of their higher density of cultural material. In square E2 and in testpit T21, parts of the cultural layer appear to be saturated with a rich or oily substance, leaving the soil greasy and slightly darker in colour. The rich or greasy soil is in both these trenches associated with metallurgy material such as fired clay and tuyère fragments.

Below the cultural layers and pits is a layer of sterile soil with small yellow inclusions, seen as spots with a diameter of a few centimetres in the trench wall. Under this sterile layer is one with inclusions of laterite (see above). Only very seldom have the pits with buried pottery cut down into this layer, which is hard and compact.
Three charcoal samples from the 1995 excavation have been dated with the $^{14}$C dating method at the Laboratory for Isotope Geology at the Swedish Museum of Natural History, Stockholm (for details on calibration and sample context, see Karlström & Källén 1999:41ff). Separate calibration and co-calibration of the results gave a dating of the cultural layer in square E2 to a maximum period of time between AD 350 and 600. These radiocarbon dates are reconfirmed by a typological comparison with the material culture of contemporary sites on the Khorat Plateau, such as Ban Chiang late period X (White 1990:125) and the iron associated occupation levels at Ban Na Di (Higham & Kijngam 1984:30-34).

A study of Lao Pako pottery tempered with rice husk has proven it possible to extract charred organic remains from the ware. This opens up for future more fine-tuned dating of discrete vessels, which has not been possible to fit within the scope of this present project.

**STRATIGRAPHIC CONCLUSION**

The Lao Pako stratigraphy is shallow and represents a relatively short period of usage, during which no major changes in the usage of the site nor the choice of materials can be traced. In some parts in the central part of the hill, the cultural layer is thicker and has a higher density. In the area of higher density, the cultural layer occasionally contains one or two compact horizons of potsherds and other cultural material. These are likely to represent *events*, or brief periods of intense use of the site, in an otherwise continuous usage spanning over a few centuries during the 4th to 6th century AD. In the central part of the hill, where
the cultural layer is thicker and more complex, it is stratigraphically clear that the pit depositions of pottery and other material is contemporary and parallel with the iron production. This is shown as in the examples in figure 24, both in the overlapping of compact horizons in the cultural layer with very dense iron production layers and pits for pottery deposition in square E2, and in a pit deposition of a single lump of iron slag, shown in the trench wall of square D1. In the periphery of the hill, toward the southeast slope leading away from the river, the shallow cultural layers contain almost no evidence of iron production, only scattered potsherds. But the pit depositions seem to be distributed homogenously, albeit in clusters, over the central as well as the peripheral part of the hill.

Having said this, there is a need for a few additional words on stratigraphy. In the stratigraphic method, archaeology visualises and solidifies its ideology of linear time. In philosophical considerations of time, there has been a general distinction between measured and experienced time, and much thinking has been devoted to how these two are related to each other. Measured time is often associated with mathematics and traditionally with natural science, while humanists have been mostly concerned with experienced time and the relationship between the two. I have argued in the Introduction chapter that I here wish to treat time as a human dimension, unfolding in human action. This is generally in contradiction with the stratigraphic method, because through its origin in geology the stratigraphic method works to conceptually naturalise strata produced by humans. Inherent in stratigraphy is an assumption that past times in some sense exist, frozen in the strata, there to be excavated, prehistory to be unveiled. It follows that a utopian case of unaltered, we could say virgin layers, would practically take us back in time, to actually be able to sense the past, as it was. This is, of course, an illusion. When archaeological strata, as they always are, are decomposed, altered, disturbed, or even missing, it is often explained with accounts for the various disturbances that may have caused a deviance from this ideal utopian archaeological vision, i.e. an undisturbed prehistory there to be uncovered. I wish to take a clear stance against such an excavation ideology, and anyhow, I have not found any reasons to work extensively with stratigraphy in the interpretations of Lao Pako. The comparatively shallow layers have been more useful for studying contemporary relationships of material culture and depositions.
Things are essentially what archaeologists deal with: artefacts and physical structures having endured through time. We call them material culture, and the study of it has, albeit approached from different angles, always been at the centre of the archaeological enterprise. Due to its inconspicuous yet dominant role through the history of archaeology, the approach taken to material culture is an important compass indicating ideological orientation. Thus, before we take a closer look at the Lao Pako things, I will begin with a brief introduction to the use and study of material culture in archaeology and the approach I have chosen for this study.

Material culture as a concept has a long history in archaeology and ethnography, with its first reference in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1843 (Buchli 2002:2). Referring to the common distinction between three schools of thought in the history of archaeology, the first culture-historical school used material culture to create typological sequences, from which chronologies were derived, and change was explained partly by evolution and partly by diffusion. Things were separated from their contexts and focus was primarily on form. Typological sequences mapped changes in artefact forms based on biological analogies of changes in the development of mushrooms or the like (Shanks & Tilley 1987:79f). The find context was used secondarily to group forms together in cultures, according to the associations recorded from closed contexts such as hoards or burials. Artefact types were further considered to be expressions of the mental templates of their makers, and artefact cultures were quite unproblematically equated with human ethnic groups (Shanks & Tilley 1987:80f).

With the processual, or ‘new’ archaeology in the 1960s came the realisation that artefact cultures could not be directly correlated with ethnicity, and that the distribution of material culture was due to a complex set of factors. One of the processual archaeology’s front figures, Lewis Binford, described in his classic paper Archaeology as Anthropology (Binford 1962) material culture as an extrasomatic means of adaptation, an interface between people and the environment. Things had in this view either a direct utilitarian function, or a social function in terms of group identity. Processual archaeology thus typically describes material culture either in terms of style or function as separable from each other, and in understand-
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ing the past, primacy is almost exclusively granted to function. Michael Shanks and Christopher Tilley have consistently argued that processual archaeology reduced the meaning of material culture to function (1987:86ff). As an offshoot of processual archaeology, an influential and critical branch of material culture studies developed within Marxist studies in Europe and the United States (Glassie 1999:73; Buchli 2002:10f). It was in that partly scientific, partly political and idealistic movement that the next critical school of material culture studies was born.

The postprocessual critiques to processual archaeology have been formulated from many different angles. First and foremost it is a critique on the reductionist view of material culture almost exclusively in terms of function, and have brought a renaissance of the study of things, an appraisal of the significance of material culture and the materiality of cultural life (e.g. Hodder 1989; Buchli 1995; Tilley 1989,1999). Recent studies of material culture in archaeology have moreover become a link to both museum- and material culture studies in social anthropology (cf. Buchli 2002). This is an alternative to processual archaeology’s connections to functionalist and neo-evolutionary anthropology, and consequently material culture studies have often been formulated by postprocessual archaeologists as a critique towards those very aspects of processual archaeology. I find myself at home in this latter group of material culture studies, and so I acknowledge great but complex interpretative potentials of material culture, reaching beyond issues of function and identity. Henry Glassie (1999:47) has described material culture as comparable with music, or poetry rather than history:

The story belongs to temporal experience. It moves in one direction, accumulating associations sequentially. The artifact belongs to spatial experience. It unfolds in all directions at once, embracing contradictions in simultaneity, and opening multiple routes to significance (Glassie 1999:47).

Moreover, as interpreters of material culture we must accept, says Glassie, ‘the strange responsibility of putting into words that which is not verbal’ (ibid.). Such a responsibility inevitably demands a critical awareness and explicitness about how we use material culture to understand human society.

For my own approach, I concur on a general level with Igor Kopytoff, developing an argument of Émile Durkheim, that human societies reproduce the social structure of its people in the way they order their things, and that this order is culturally created through discrimination and classification of an endless array of singular things (Kopytoff 1986:70, 90). But when it comes to the very essence of material culture, I am more inclined to follow the view expressed by Glassie
above, that material culture is also embracing societal contradictions and works to open up multiple associative routes to significance (cf. also Shanks & Tilley 1987:86). My approach here is akin to the large body of post-structuralist studies of material culture produced in archaeology foremost in the 1990s. Moreover, I see a problem in the current largely unproblemized attitude to the materiality of material culture. While there was often in earlier traditional archaeological studies a focus on material forms in richly illustrated volumes, the significance of material culture is today almost completely verbalized and objectified, leaving out all that is ambiguous, enchanting and promiscuous. In other words, and speaking with Victor Buchli: ‘[t]he erotics and attendant politics of this materiality are inadequately discussed’ (Buchli 2002:14). One aim of my study of Lao Pako is in accordance with this argument, to contribute to a reappraisal of the sensuality of things. In this sense, my approach is closer to one inspired by phenomenology that appreciates sensuality and embodiment in material culture, which has emerged mainly in Anglo-Saxon archaeology from the late 1990s and onwards (e.g. Hamilakis et al. 2002).

One branch of recent material culture studies has focused on temporality – the life cycles of the artefact – and many of its leading voices have dwelled on arguments raised in the now classic *The Social Life of Things* (Appadurai (ed) 1986, and there in particular Kopytoff 1986). Referring back to what has been said here in previous chapters about time and temporality, an approach that enhances the life cycle(s) of the artefact is of particular interest for this study. As opposed to an entirely linear appreciation of time, where an artefact is nailed to a fixed date and place of origin and is thus in a sense reduced to origin, this approach aims to see the artefact as a product of its entire time of existence – its life (Shanks 1998). Such an approach works to appreciate use and wear as part of the creation of the object, and thus puts an emphasis on the context as a creative composition (cf. Glassie 1999:82). The lifetime of an object also includes the time when it has become an archaeological artefact, and been incorporated in scientific- or museum collections. One can say that the life of the object continues after centuries asleep, or that it enters into an entirely new life cycle in its new guise, that is of little significance for this case. More important here is the contextual view of fragmentation, incompleteness and decay not as imperfections, but as important parts of the life of the artefact:

The decay of an artefact is a token of the human condition. The fragment, the mutilated and incomplete thing from the past, brings a sense of life struggling with time: death and decay await us all, people and objects alike. In common we have our materiality (Pearson & Shanks 2001:93).
With this perspective, conservation and reconstruction must be acknowledged as an active and deliberate process of materialization, which produces rather than conserves (Buchli 2002:14 following Latour 1999). This is the perspective I have adopted approaching the Lao Pako material culture, where I wish to communicate the materiality and sensuality of these things, in an active reconstruction aiming not for originality, but to place them back in our present (cf. Shanks & Tilley 1987:116). However, this is complicated considering the essential Buddhist notion of the impermanence of matter, with great similarities to the argument presented by Shanks and Pearson above, where the decay of the material world is a constant reminder of death and thus a crucial part of any celebration of life (cf. Karlström forthcoming). The people in Laos who are affected by the archaeological investigations at Lao Pako, that is both on the national level and in the local community, are generally driven by Buddhist, animist, communist and capitalist ideas, in fluid hybrid forms with varying concentration on either of the four parts. While Buddhism makes a philosophical point in the impermanence of matter, animism (meaning that things are alive) can be used to argue against the celebration of decay inherent in such a notion (Karlström forthcoming). Negotiations about the impermanence of matter is therefore inevitably part of the social reality surrounding the Lao Pako archaeological project, and it can rightly be argued that such a notion is fundamentally incompatible with the scientific principles of conservation applied in this project. It leaves us in the midst of a paradox, which I suggest leads all the way down to the very foundation of the archaeological discipline. The approach taken here is by no means dissolving the paradox, but it can contribute with an illumination of the social dynamics at work.

Finally we turn to another paradox in our dealing with things, which is not in any sense solved here, only at best illuminated. It is presented by Bruno Latour in the citation at the beginning of the chapter, where he develops a discussion on Heidegger's influential distinction between objects – or Gegenstand, and the thing. Latour claims contrary to Heidegger that the two must meet, and that the scientific and technical object must also be appreciated for its rich and complicated, complex and entangled qualities as a thing. Only then can science be lifted from what he calls the matter-of-factual to become matters of concern (Latour 2003). I strive to make Lao Pako and its things a matter of concern in Latour’s sense, fully aware that I will not succeed. Because, as Latour writes himself: ‘no matter what we do, when we try to reconnect scientific objects with their aura, their crown, their web of associations, when we accompany them back to their gathering, we always appear to weaken them, not to strengthen their claim to reality’ (2003:12). Ultimately we are left with this paradox in the structure of science,
and with no claims to a solution I have chosen to highlight it rather than to conceal or ignore it.

THE LAO PAKO MATERIAL CULTURE

In my own opinion, the Lao Pako material culture is fantastic and quite outstanding. It is beautiful to my eyes, and the subtle sophistication of its structure has on more than one occasion given me sudden shudders when I have met them, the artefacts. This chapter builds the foundation for the two following and I will start here with the most fragmented presentation of the Lao Pako artefacts as individuals, only to use the individualised things for understanding the contextual complexity of deposition in the next chapter: Contexts. For me, an individual — sensual — appreciation of single artefacts is crucial for any sensible contextual analysis.

In all this arguing for an appreciation of the sensuality of things, there is one further important aim of a text about a specific site’s material culture. It must be organised in a format that can be recognised and used by the archaeological community, for it is through a formalisation of method and explanation codes that the scientific society is created and recreated. Some call this objectivity, but I prefer to see it in terms of formalisation to the benefit of the scientific society. The format of this presentation makes the foundation for comparisons with other known sites on the Khorat Plateau, following in the chapter Looking Out.

The formalisation necessary for the maintenance of the scientific community must, however, in each single case be balanced against the overall aims and questions of the specific study, in order to create meaning. Thus, in the case of Lao Pako, each set of artefacts will be analysed and described in a code following the current archaeology tradition of Mainland Southeast Asia, whereas the focus on different categories will be dictated by the aims and questions of this particular study. This leads up to an interpretation of the prehistory of this site in Insights, the last chapter in this study of prehistoric Lao Pako.

My study of the Lao Pako material culture has a clear focus on ceramics, although it is only one of a number of possible choices at hand. There are, however, several reasons for the choice of ceramics in this case. First and most...
importantly, the ceramics have always stood out to me as the most extraordinary and dominant feature of this particular site. It is by far the most numerous and intricate of the material culture categories represented there, and it will subsequently be granted most attention. It is also my firm belief that a thorough analysis of the composition, use and symbolism of ceramics at Lao Pako is crucial for a wider understanding of this particular site, as I will argue in the following two chapters. Other artefacts once used for metallurgy or textile production, or yet others such as bronze jewellery, iron knives, stone adzes or glass beads will also be described and briefly discussed in this chapter, but the ceramics remain in focus.

CERAMICS

The ceramic material from the three excavation seasons of 1995, 2002 and 2003 has been documented, collected and analysed in two discrete analytical groups: sherds and complete vessels. The 76 recovered complete vessels have clearly been intentionally deposited in pits, while the potsherds are found scattered on the former ground surface and in the pit fillings. In some of the excavated trenches, the stratigraphy shows two clear horizons of packed potsherds, seeming to represent events where ceramic vessels may have been deliberately crushed and spread on the ground.

The sherds have been collected according to the excavation layers of each trench respectively. A first analysis of sherds was undertaken in the 1995 excavation (Källén & Karlström 1999) and based on that knowledge, a second more thorough analysis of ware composition, decoration and shape was done as an MA Thesis study by Christian Vinterhav during the 2002 excavation (see Källén & Vinterhav 2003). All results on potsherd analysis presented here are based on Vinterhav’s unpublished study, where he sorted and registered sherds originating from seven testpits. In total, 5175 sherds with the total weight of 47 kg were analysed focusing on shape, colour, temper and decoration. These analyses aimed to establish a range of high-resolution technical facts about the Lao Pako ceramics, to be used both for comparisons with other ceramic cultures in the area, and to create a classificatory system to use for documentation and analyses of the interred complete vessels and their relation to the sherds left on the ground.

SHERD SHAPES
All sherds have been divided into categories of base, body or rim. The occurrence of base, body and rim sherds proved to correlate well with the same three sections of a restricted or unrestricted ceramic vessel. The body sherd category is the largest (88%) while the amounts of base (2%) and rim (10%) sherds are considerably smaller. It should be taken into account that only sherds established with certainty to belong to the base or rim sections of a vessel were classified as such. In unclear cases, the sherds were noted as body sherds and as a result the size of this category may be slightly exaggerated. Nevertheless, the sherd shape statistics indicate that all of the three major pot-, jar- or bowl sections are represented as would be expected from an even distribution in the material.

The rim sherds were further classified according to a rim category guide (see figure 28), where only six of 31 matched categories counted more than 20 sherds. The two most common of these were type Q (93 pcs) and type V (82 pcs). Most of these sherds originated from vessels with thin, fine sand tempered ware. This was also the case with sherds of type X (48 pcs) and Y (42 pcs). Type L (56 pcs) on the other hand, was represented by sherds with varying characteristics: sand-, grog-1-, grog-2- and organic tempers, with wares ranging from thin to fairly thick. Sherds of rim type M (49 pcs) had the same range of tempers as well as rice chaff, and the wares were generally thicker.
The Lao Pako ceramics have been described by the project conservator Marion Ravenscroft as follows:

The greater majority of ceramics retrieved from the Lao Pako site may be described as ‘soft body’ ceramics and therefore, are quite fragile. The body or fabric of these ceramics tends to be very soft and quite friable which is typical of low temperature, open firing techniques. A variety of different materials were used to temper the fabric and depending upon the tempering material employed, some ceramics are slightly more robust than others (Marion Ravenscroft in Källén et al. 2002).
All ceramics, sherds and complete vessels alike, have been divided into eight different types of temper, solely based on an ocular field examination by Christian Vinterhav and myself. Samples from these type categories have been sent to Sweden and Sri Lanka for microscope examination and thin section analysis, and from those analyses I have established eight temper categories: fine sand, coarse sand, laterite, rice chaff, organic, grog-1, grog-2 and none. Various mixes of these different temper categories are common in both the examined sherds and complete vessels. For the sherd statistics a simple approach was taken, recording only what appeared to be the dominating temper category in each sample's specific blend, whereas for the complete vessels, each blend has been described in detail, although only judged from an ocular field examination.

A thin section analysis performed by Dr Anders Lindahl and Pia Sköld at the Ceramic Research Laboratory, Department of Quaternary Geology, Lund University, Sweden has provided more detailed information, in particular about tempers (see Appendix IV). First and foremost, it is clear that a range of different tempers has been used in the ceramic production at Lao Pako. It can be described as if different temper elements have been used alone or in combinations to temper the clay. According to Anders Lindahl’s examination of the thin sections, the eight identified categories can be described as follows:

FINE SAND  This ware is typically very thin and is, among the complete vessels, used exclusively for small pots. The clay has a low iron contents, and was either tempered only with very fine sand, or more likely with no temper at all, if the sand was a naturally occurring element in the clay. The composition of the fine sand tempered ware is so distinctive that it can be concluded that the clay has a different origin than the other wares.

COARSE SAND   The ware tempered with coarse sand appears also to be made of a quite distinctive clay with a high iron content. The granules of quartz and feldspar occur in a wide range of sizes, reaching from tiny to larger in an even blend, indicating that they are a natural component of the clay. This ware has often inclusions of laterite granules.
LATERITE Laterite inclusions in the Lao Pako ceramics occur either as sparse inclusions of relatively large-sized granules or as sand-like tiny laterite granules. Anders Lindahl suggests that laterite is likely to occur naturally in the clay, and should therefore not be treated as a temper. I will, however, include it as a temper category, because the inclusion of laterite varies greatly between the different wares, something which indicates intentionality, and I interpret these ceramics and their tempers more broadly than from a strictly functional point of view.

31. Temper: laterite.

RICE CHAFF The wares tempered with rice chaff are often crude and thick, with a high density of rice chaff. The rice chaff occasionally contains whole charred grains of rice. The chaff has, when fired, left cavities in the clay as it shrunk when it became charred. This, which is clearly visible in the thin sections, gives a porous and light ware. Often there appears to be more rice than clay in this wares, and as they are often poorly fired, the result is a very fragile crumbling ware. The wares tempers all appear to be made of a clay of the same origin.

32. Temper: rice chaff.

ORGANIC The organic category differs in a basic ocular examination from the wares tempered with rice chaff. It is not so crude and thick, and contains proportionally more clay, resulting in a more robust ware. However, it contains also rice chaff. There may also be other organic materials included in this temper. The wares with rice chaff, grog and organic tempers all appear to be made of a clay of the same origin.

33. Temper: organic.
GROG-1 There are two types of wares that have been tempered with grog. Grog-1 appears to have a smooth texture with no great differentiations in colour. This temper appears to originate from crushed fired clay of the same kind as the rest of the ware, and occurs most often as a temper alone. The wares with rice chaff, grog and organic tempers all appear to be made of a clay of the same origin.

GROG-2 This second type of grog temper is more common on Lao Pako than the first, and is the most common temper used in the larger complete vessels with appliqué and incised decorations. The grog is visible in thin sections as inclusions of a paler material with a smooth and blurred texture, indicating that the grog was made of a vitrified kaolin clay. Inclusions of this crushed partly vitrified kaolin clay, often in combination with tiny charcoal and laterite inclusions, result in a fairly robust and dramatic looking white, black, and red ware. Occasionally grog-2 type wares also contain rice chaff. The vitrified kaolin clay could be obtained from crushed imported stoneware pottery, which is highly unlikely in this case considering the complete absence of such materials on the site, or from the fine white clay that is found in abundance around the iron production area, which could very well have been partly vitrified in the metal production process. I consider this latter explanation to be the most likely. The wares tempered with rice chaff, grog and organic tempers all appear to be made of a clay of the same origin.

NONE The wares with no temper at all are often difficult to differentiate from those with fine sand, and occur only very rarely.

The organic and rice tempered wares have often got a thick black core, separated with clear margins from a thin whitish, reddish or brownish surface. Grog tempered wares on the other hand, has a lighter tone (grey/brown) to its thinner core and the margins between surface and core are less clear. The difference in ware colour between rice and grog tempered wares could either be explained
by reactions of mineral included in the two latter types of ware, or by different firing procedures (Rye 1988:114ff; Orton et al. 1993:132ff). A majority of the fine sand tempered ware is whitish, but there are examples of black, brown and red coloured sherds as well. In general, these sherds have no darker core, but it should be taken into account that this ware type is very thin, thus needing less firing in order to get thoroughly burnt. Coarse sand tempered ware is thicker and often reddish. There are two types of laterite temper in the Lao Pako material; one is distinguished by sparse inclusions of relatively large sized granules and the other type has a sand-like constitution of tiny laterite granules. The former is often included in whitish or reddish, grog- or organic tempered ware and is clearly visible on the interior and exterior surfaces. The latter, which is not so common, gives a dark reddish/brownish ware with no visible core.

It might be worthwhile to notice that studies of contemporary pottery production in Laos and Northeast Thailand have shown that a mixture of clay and rice chaff, shaped as balls that are fired and pulverized, works as a temper in earthenware pottery (Cort & Lefferts 2000:64, see also figure 36a-c which are from Ban Maaw near Khon Kaen in Northeast Thailand 2002). This is another combination of the grog- and rice chaff elements that have been used as tempers in the Lao Pako ceramics, and considering that both use a so-called paddle-and-anvil technique to shape the vessels there may also be further similarities between these ancient and contemporary production technologies.
For Lao Pako, all except the latter of the eight temper categories were represented in all seven test pits and throughout all layers with the organic type being most common (see figure 37). The amount of sherds tempered with grog-1 or any of the two sand types (fine or coarse) was also notably large compared with the complete vessels' wares, where grog-2 temper is by far the most common. Even though there is a great variation in the use of temper, only minor differences can be seen when comparing sherds within any one of the eight temper types. This suggests that the variation is a result of great know-how and an established ceramic tradition rather than of experimentation in the manufacturing process.

37. Temper distribution in potsherds from the 2002 excavation.

COLOUR AND SLIP

The colour classification system is based on a division of the ware into five different sections: interior slip, interior surface, core, exterior surface and exterior slip. In the sherd analysis of 2002, a generalizing code for information on ware colour, slip presence and black core presence was applied: [colour] – [SL or noSL] – [BC or noBC]. For the complete vessels recovered in the 2002 excavation (J101-J115), the colour of all five parts of the ware were additionally documented following the Munsell Soil Color Chart (see the next chapter on Complete Vessels for details). Black coating or ‘fire clouding’ appears on many of the sherds (see figure 38). This can be caused by differential access to air in the firing process (Rye 1988:119). Quite a few of the sherds, mostly tempered with
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organic material, were entirely coloured black, possibly produced by a reductive firing process (ibid.). Since it turned out during the course of analysis that the colour variation was so great within one and the same unit – sherds and complete vessels alike – so that the colour information was of no use for any of our analyses, we did not proceed to record specific ware colours in detail after the 2002 excavation season.

A majority of the Lao Pako ceramics have slipped surfaces (see figure 39). Analysing the presence of slip in the Lao Pako ceramic culture from the potsherd material was complicated by that the slip is often restricted to limited sections of a complete vessel (see next chapter on Complete Vessels). Moreover, the wares have in many instances been deteriorated by the soil climate and in our cleaning procedure, so that the surface is gone. The conservator writes: "the red slip decoration is often quite fugitive in water creating problems during the washing process\(^8\). The stability of red slip decoration appears to be dependent upon the success of the firing" (Marion Ravenscroft in Källén et al. 2002). Bearing all this in mind, a 39% occurrence of slip on the analysed sherds indicates that slipped ceramics was quite common at Lao Pako. The slip most often appears in variations of red with a few exceptions in yellow and brown colour. A red slip could be obtained using iron ore from laterite found in abundance in this area, and which could be used as a ferriferous base for red slip. The slip has apparently been applied prior to firing, which is evident from line- and zigzag decorations having been incised after the application of slip (see figure 40). On the characteristic screw head appliqué jars, red slip has been applied onto the exterior upper body, which has further been decorated with incised- and appliqué decorations, and also to the interior surface of the rim and neck, down to the shoulder (see figure 41), with the interior body and base unslipped, but often with dripping traces. We will return to the issue of slipped interior surfaces in the following chapters.

Some ware categories were noted to have a higher frequency of slipped surfaces; grog-2, grog-1- and organic tempered wares in particular, but also wares tempered with rice chaff. The latter exclusively with slip on its exterior surfaces. No sand tempered wares with slip were found in the sherd material. Of three general methods of applying slip to a surface: dipping, pouring and wiping (Rye 1988:41f), wiping is the most probable method used for the Lao Pako ceramics. This is indicated by the uneven edges of the slipped areas and the absence of dripping on unslipped exterior surfaces.
DECORATION

Decorated sherds and vessels have been classified into twelve categories, based on the documentation and find material from the 1995 Lao Pako excavation (Källén & Karlström 1999:15ff) which was slightly revised after the 2002 excavation. The twelve identified categories are: appliqué, striped, zigzag, appliqué-striped-zigzag, painted, cordmarked, incised, dots, ridge, combed, ridge-chequered-combed and finally other.

Perhaps the most distinctive of these, not as frequent in the sherd material as on the complete jars, is the appliqué (see figure 42). The uniform style of this decoration on many of the large complete jars typically consists of two bands of appliqué around the shoulder of the jar. Attached to the lower of the bands are two or four small knobs that resemble screw heads and which are symmetrically placed around the jar. In almost all cases, the bands as well as the screw head knobs are combed and appear with a combination of striped and zigzagged incisions on a red-slipped surface. On the lower body of these appliqué jars appear in some cases a painted red-on-buff decoration. This is almost exclusively on vessels with well-preserved wares, whereas vessels with deteriorated wares often have only the appliqué decoration. Thus this difference might be due to different reactions to the soil climate, which in some cases have dissolved the ware surface. There are four known varieties of this typical screw head appliqué, where type A is the most common and the rest occur more rarely.

Type A has two high-relief bands of appliqué around the shoulder of the jar, two marked screw heads and the bands ending in rounded upward curls. In one recorded example, the bands instead end in downward curls.

Type B has one band of appliqué around the shoulder, flatter than Type A, and two screw heads, considerably smaller than Type A. The curls are extended, similar to Type C, and end where the curl meets the band around the shoulder of the jar.

Type C is similar to Type A, with two high-relief appliqué bands, but instead has four smaller screw heads and extended curls whose ends meet in an ongoing pattern around the upper body of the jar.

Type D is almost identical to Type A, with two appliqué bands and two screw heads with rounded upward curls, but the combing of the appliqué bands is quite different and performed from two angles, resulting in ridge-like bands.
In the analysed sherds as well as on some complete vessels, the three different decorative elements that often accompany the appliqué: stripes, zigzag and painted decorations occur alone (see figures 43-46). There are also some examples of complete jars (e.g. J214) with combed designs in combination with an appliqué-striped-zigzag and painted decoration.

By far the most common decoration type in the sherd material is the cordmarked (see figure 47). The cordmarked wares are in general tempered with sand or rice chaff. The marks vary greatly from clear to smudged, and from fine cords to coarse. With only a few exceptions the cordmarks on the analysed sherds have a horizontal orientation, whereas there are also vertical, diagonal and patch-like cordmarks present on the complete vessels. It can be argued that this type of decoration has functional purposes; such as improving the surface grip or stabilising the structure of the vessel. A majority of the rice chaff tempered ceramics in the Lao Pako find material is cordmarked and in this case the purpose could quite possibly have been to improve the durability of the vessel. On the other hand, examples of jars and pots of the same material, with cordmarks exclusively on the shoulders indicate a strictly aesthetical value.
Other more rarely occurring decoration types found exclusively on one or a few sherds are chequered incisions or combed marks in combination with ridges, incised geometrical patterns and stamped dots and diamond shapes (see figures 48-51). Of these, the examples of incised geometrical designs found on a few analysed sherds, stand out among the rest. It is uncertain whether or not these have originally belonged to ceramic vessels or if they belong to another kind of ceramic object. These incised designs are quite powerful, and only appear on three different sherds in the total material.

Prehistoric ceramics in Mainland Southeast Asia were often produced by what has been called the paddle-and-anvil technique, which is also widely used for production of earthenware pottery in parts of Northeast Thailand and Laos today. Leedom Lefferts and Louise Cort, who have studied contemporary earthenware technology in this particular area have pointed out that the term paddle-and-anvil is a simplification, and that there is no single or universal ‘paddle-and-anvil’ technique that defines earthenware production all over this vast area (Lefferts & Cort 2000:204). Basically, the paddle-and-anvil method can be described as beginning with a ‘pre-form’, which is further shaped by adding more clay or moulding it into a rough vessel shape, which is expanded and shaped into final shape by beating with a paddle on the exterior surface while the vessel is moved around a mushroom shaped clay anvil on the inside. However, Lefferts and Cort’s investigations convincingly demonstrate that there is a great variation in the paddle-and-anvil work processes studied, from acquiring raw materials, to shaping the pre-form, the final shaping of the vessel, drying and finally firing the ceramics.
AND THROUGH FLOWS THE RIVER

(Lefferts & Cort 2000). The analysis of the Lao Pako ceramics does not reveal any details concerning the exact techniques used to produce the different vessels. Nevertheless, the shapes of the largest jars, here described by Marion Ravenscroft, strongly indicate that they have been produced with some paddle-and-anvil method:

The ceramics of Lao Pako do vary in style somewhat however, perhaps the most typical example of the Lao Pako vernacular is that of Jar 17 excavated during the 1995/96 season. Including its rim, Jar 17 is estimated to be approximately 600 mm in height with an extremely rounded form and a heavy, fluted rim. The fabric of the ceramic at its greatest circumference is only 2.5 mm – 3.5 mm thick. Thus it is fair to say the body of many of these ceramics is extremely thin and fragile in proportion to their size and also in proportion to their heavy rims (in Källén et al. 2002).

The thin but surprisingly strong walls of the largest appliqué vessels, is a clear indication that they have been produced with a paddle-and-anvil method, which produces thin but strong large vessels as the ware is compacted when it is beaten into shape (Mourer 1984:32). For the Lao Pako ceramics, it often also appears as if the base, body, and neck parts of the vessels have been joined together rather than been shaped from one single preform, since the vessels have a tendency to crack in horizontal ruptures along both the junction between base and body, and at the shoulder. However, at present it is impossible to go into any further detail on the manufacturing of these ceramics.

COMPLETE VESSELS

In the course of the 1995-2003 excavations at Lao Pako, a total of 76 complete ceramic vessels have been recovered and reconstructed. Initially, in the 1995 excavation, we had no prior knowledge of the site and what find material we were to expect. When it was realized how much ceramics, or rather, the number and state of complete vessels we were dealing with, conservator Marion Ravenscroft, at the time positioned at the Laos National Museum in Vientiane as part of an AVA (Australian Volunteers Abroad) program, was tied to the project. Since then, Marion Ravenscroft has been involved in all excavations and has been in charge of conservation, reconstruction and display of the Lao Pako artefacts at the Laos National Museum. The focus on ceramics, and particularly on complete ceramic vessels that you see in this book, is something which has developed within the
project through time since the first excavation in 1995, along with our growing sense of its great variation and interpretive potentials. The results that are presented here must thus be read keeping in mind that the vessels from the first excavation lack in detailed contextual information compared with those from the 2002 and 2003 excavations. The vessels from the two latter excavations (J101-J115 and J202-J223) have been recorded, cleaned and reconstructed in connection with the excavation, while those from the 1995 excavation (J1-J53) were only partly recorded at the time of excavation, and were not cleaned and reconstructed until 2003, after having been handled and moved around in pieces during the course of seven years at the National Museum in Vientiane. Thus there is a considerable difference as to level of detail, in particular regarding contextual information, between these two groups of vessels. Nevertheless, we made the decision to record and reconstruct every discrete vessel as far as possible, and they will be presented here one by one, before we move on to analyse the Lao Pako ceramic tradition as a whole.

J1

\[ x = -29.30 \]
\[ y = -11.00 \]
\[ z = 99.91 - 99.59 \]

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: grog 2 and laterite
Decoration: appliqué(A)-striped-xx-painted
Rim type: BB

J1 is a large jar with a rounded body, tall everted neck and heavy rim. The base is missing. The vessel is decorated with screw head appliqué, and incised lines and zigzag in a red slip on the upper body. There are also clear traces of a painted red decoration. The ware colour ranges from red to buff, and it is grog 2-tempered with laterite inclusions.

The jar was placed upside down, covering J17 mouth-to-mouth. Parts of the jar was exposed prior to excavation, which is probably why the base was missing.
J2

\[
\begin{align*}
    x &= -16.10 \\
    y &= -32.72 \\
    z &= 99.59 - 98.98
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: restricted (jar)  
Temper: rice chaff  
Decoration: cordmarked  
Rim type: HH

J2 is the largest vessel found at Lao Pako, with a tall flared neck and heavy rim. The body and base are covered by horizontal crude cordmarks, although most is worn off. The ware is rice tempered, brittle with a buff coloured surface and a thick black core. It is very thick at the neck and base, with a marked angle between the thick neck and the thinner body section. Total reconstruction was not possible.

When excavated, J2 contained J15, J28, J31 and J25 (possibly a bowl, disappeared from storage). Reconstruction showed that J15 was the neck section of J2, which had fallen into the jar leaving the rim hanging on the shoulder. Excavation drawings reconfirm that relation.

J3

\[
\begin{align*}
    x &= -34.45 \\
    y &= -12.90 \\
    z &= 100.05 - 99.93
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: restricted (jar)  
Temper: grog 1  
Decoration: incised  
Rim type: H

J3 is a wide-bodied jar with a for the Lao Pako pottery unusual shape, ware and decoration. An incised decoration around the neck have more rounded 'peaks' than the ordinary sharp zigzag incisions. The ware is reddish and grog tempered without slip, and is heavier than that of other vessels. The whole feeling of the jar in-
dicates that it is part of a different ceramic tradition.

Only parts of the jar were found and reconstructed, most of the base but only a small part of the rim. It was found high up in the layers with no contextual relations to other jars or finds.

**J4**

\[ x = -19.55 \\
\ y = -12.33 \\
\ z = 100.00 - 99.90 \]

Shape: restricted (pot)
Temper: grog 2
Decoration: incised
Rim type: Ö

J4 is a large pot of good quality ware. It has a rounded wide body and a tall flared neck. The ware is red and tempered with grog 2. The entire surface is covered in dark red slip, and the neck is decorated with impressionistic irregular line- and multiple zigzag incisions. Only parts of the vessel were recovered for reconstruction.

The pot was found together with J7 and J18 (not excavated), on top of J7.

**J5**

\[ x = -20.55 \\
\ y = -13.70 \\
\ z = 99.80 - 99.40 \]

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: grog 2
Decoration: appliqué(B)-striped-żż
Rim type: cut?
J5 is the neck and upper part of a wide-bodied vessel of a good quality ware. The rim appears to have been cut off. The surface is covered in a red slip and it had a one-band appliqué with a ‘knot’ where there is usually a screw head, and an incised decoration with parallel lines and multiple zigzag. It is similar to the typical Lao Pako appliqué jar, but still different in the morphology of its only band, the curls and the knot. The ware is red and grog-2 tempered. Original drawing by Marion Ravenscroft.

Found alone but close to other pottery depostions.

J6

x = -21,15
y = -13,60
z = 99,70 - 99,35

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: grog 2
Decoration: appliqué(B)-str-zz-painted
Rim type: HH

J6 is a rounded medium sized jar, with straight neck, flat bottom and a well preserved surface. The ware is buff coloured and grog-2 tempered. The upper body is covered in red slip and is decorated with a one-band appliqué with a small screw head and large curls. Under the appliqué there is an incised decoration of parallel lines and a large multiple zigzag, and incised decorations. There are also painted decorations, which are only partly visible on the lower body. All decorations as well as the shape are different from the majority of the Lao Pako jars. Original drawing by Marion Ravenscroft.

Found on top of J34, with its rim down, covering the other vessel.
J8

x = -20,20
y = -13,25
z = 99,76 - 99,43

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: rice chaff
Decoration: cordmarked
Rim type: LI.

J8 is a thin-walled small jar with a thick rounded base and straight neck and rim. The ware is rice tempered with a pale buff coloured surface and black core. It has a fine cordmarked decoration from the shoulder down the body and base. Four rows of cordmarks closest to the neck are horizontal, the rest vertical. Only the base and neck-and rim sections could be partly reconstructed, thus the drawing is a rough sketch.

Found with J10 inside.

J9

x = -20,30
y = -12,60
z = 99,66 - 99,42

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: grog 2 and laterite
Decoration: appliqué (A)
Rim type: H

J9 is a large rounded jar with an angular rim on an everted flared neck. The ware is buff coloured and tempered with grog 2 and laterite. The surface is very worn but traces of red slip on the interior surface of the rim and neck indicates that J9 was originally a typical appliqué jar with red slipped upper body and incised decorations. Only parts of the vessel remain, and a complete reconstruction was not possible. Original drawing by Marion Ravenscroft.

The jar was found in a messy deposition with
three other vessels: J19, J20 and J22. The exact relations between these jars are unclear. At the time of reconstruction, the three vessels were all mixed up, and were randomly numbered.

J10

x = -20,45  
y = -13,35  
z = 99,70 - 99,65

Shape: restricted (pot)  
Temper: coarse sand  
Decoration: cordmarked  
Rim type: KK

J10 is a small delicate pot where only the rim and neck section remains. It has a whitish hard and light ware, tempered with coarse sand. A beautiful and sharp cordmarked decoration covers the shoulder and upper body. Four rows of cordmarks closest to the neck are horizontal, the rest vertical. The neck was originally covered in red slip, almost all of which is worn off. Only the rim and neck section was reconstructed.

The pot was found inside J8.

J11

x = -29,90  
y = -11,60  
z = 100,05 - 99,62

Shape: restricted (jar)  
Temper: grog 2  
Decoration: appliqué (A) -striped-zz  
Rim type: BB

J11 is a large rounded jar of deteriorated buff-coloured and grog 2 tempered ware. Originally it had a dark red slip, which now remains only as flakes on the interior surface of the neck. The upper body is decorated with two parallel bands of appliqué, two screw heads, parallel incised
lines and zigzag. In the storage there was no base to match the reconstructed rim and neck. Possibly it has disappeared prior to excavation, since it may have been exposed similarly to J1. Original drawing by Marion Ravenscroft.

Found on top of J23, covering it mouth-to-mouth.

**J12**

\[
\begin{align*}
  x &= -28.57 \\
  y &= -10.69 \\
  z &= 100.01 - 99.65
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: restricted (jar)  
Temper: grog 2  
Decoration: incised  
Rim type: FF

J12 is a small but tall jar. It has a rounded body and flattened base, and a short everted neck, a rather unusual shape for the Lao Pako pottery. The grog 2 tempered ware is pale buff coloured on the surface and has a black core. There is a red slip on the upper body, as well as on the interior surface of the neck. In the slip there are three bands of parallel incised lines parted by two rows of zigzag.

The jar was found with the mouth down on top of the collapsed J14.

**J13**

\[
\begin{align*}
  x &= -19.40 \\
  y &= -13.25 \\
  z &= 99.90 - 99.60
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: restricted (jar)  
Temper: grog 2 and laterite  
Decoration: appliqué (Br)  
Rim type: -
J13 is the lower part of a large jar, with a rounded body and a dimple base. The ware is buff coloured, and tempered with grog 2 and lots of laterite generating red dots all over the surface. Only parts of the decoration remain: a combed appliqué decoration (type B?) with long curls. Neither neck nor rim were recovered. Original drawing by Marion Ravenscroft.

J13 was found in the trench wall. It is not certain how much was originally excavated.

J14

\[
\begin{align*}
\ x &= -28.62 \\
\ y &= -10.70 \\
\ z &= 99.77 - 99.67
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: organic
Decoration: incised
Rim type: L.

J14 is a large jar with rounded body, slightly flattened base and narrow neck. The ware is pale buff with a black core and organic temper. The entire exterior surface is covered in red slip and has incised lines and one row of zigzag around the neck. The base section was originally documented as J14, and the neck and rim as J30. Original drawing by Kanda Keosopha.

J14 (including J30) constituted the bottom of a group of jars placed in a pyramid formation.
J17

x = -29,30
y = -11,00
z = 99,65 - 99,10

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: organic and laterite
Decoration: appliqué (A)
Rim type: BB

J17 is a tall rounded jar, with a central hole in its flattened base. It has an organic- and laterite tempered ware, buff coloured with a worn surface. It is decorated with a two-band appliqué including two screw heads and slightly irregular curls. The red slip remaining on the interior surface of the rim and neck indicates that J17 was originally a typical appliqué jar with red slipped upper body and incised decorations.

It was found as the main jar with its base down, with J1 on top covering the opening.

J19

x = -20,20
y = -12,30
z = 99,64 - 99,35

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: grog 2 and organic
Decoration: appliqué (A)
Rim type: HH

J19 is a tall and thin-bodied jar in a poor state of preservation. The flattened base has a central hole, chamfered towards the interior. The ware has a grog 2- and organic temper, a black core and originally a whitish-buff surface that is entirely worn off. A very worn and comparatively small screw head appliqué decoration was partly recovered. Original drawing by Marion Ravenscroft.
Found in a messy deposition with three other jars: J9, J20 and J22. The exact relations between these jars are unclear. At the time of reconstruction the three vessels were all mixed up, and were randomly numbered.

**J20**

- $x = -20,20$
- $y = -12,30$
- $z = 99,70 - 99,30$

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: grog 2 and laterite
Decoration: none
Rim type: BB

J20 is a large jar with a wide flared heavy rim. The base is flat and has a central hole, 15 mm in diameter. The ware is buff coloured and tempered with grog 2 and laterite. No decoration could be distinguished. Only the rim, part of the neck and the base were recovered, and no complete reconstruction was possible.

Found in a messy deposition with three other large jars: J9, J19 and J22. The exact relations between these jars are unclear. At the time of reconstruction, the three vessels were all mixed up, and were randomly numbered.

**J22**

- $x = -20,20$
- $y = -12,30$
- $z = 99,70 - 99,30$

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: grog 2 and laterite
Decoration: striped-painted
Rim type: -

J22 is a jar of unusual shape with a very narrow orifice, rounded body and flat base. No rim was recovered. It has a grog 2- and laterite tempered
ware, buff coloured with a red slip covering the upper body. Under an incised decoration with two areas of parallel lines, there is a clear but partly deteriorated painted decoration in red on buff.

Found in a messy deposition with three other large jars: J9, J19 and J20. The exact relations between these jars are unclear. At the time of reconstruction, the four vessels were all mixed up, and were randomly numbered.

**J23**

\[
x = -29.32 \\
y = -11.60 \\
z = 99.70 - 99.20
\]

Shape: restricted (jar)  
Temper: grog 2 and laterite  
Decoration: appliqué (A)  
Rim type: -

J23 is a large rounded jar with a thin flat and slightly dimple base. The ware is pale buff and tempered with grog 2 and laterite. It has a two-band appliqué decoration with two screw heads and traces of red slip. The surface is very worn but traces of red slip indicates that J23 was originally a typical appliqué jar with red slipped upper body and incised decorations. No rim was recovered. Original drawing by Marion Ravenscroft.

It was placed bottom down, containing J42, J43 and covered mouth-to-mouth by J11.
J26

\[ x = -28.50 \]
\[ y = -10.70 \]
\[ z = 100.08 - 100.01 \]

Shape: restricted (pot)
Temper: organic or grog
Decoration: painted
Rim type: T

J26 is a small rounded pot, buff-coloured of an organic or grog tempered ware. A painted decoration in red can barely be seen, but consists of bands forming an intricate pattern of partly overlapping large zigzag around the body of the jar. The entire pot was reconstructed.

It constituted the top of a pyramid formation with J14 and J12 underneath.

J28

\[ x = -16.20 \]
\[ y = -32.65 \]
\[ z = 99.57 - 99.15 \]

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: grog 2
Decoration: none
Rim type: FF

J28 is a tall large jar of a good quality well-fired ware. The shape of the vessel is almost tubular, only slightly rounded restricting it, and with a flattened base. The ware is red and grog 2-tempered. A red slip has originally covered the entire exterior surface. No other decorations were distinguished. Original drawing by Kanda Keosopha.

Found in good shape inside J2.
J29

x = -30.02
y = -10.32
z = 99.91 - 99.85

Shape: restricted (pot)
Temper: organic and laterite
Decoration: cordmarked
Rim type: V

J29 is a small rounded pot of a heavy and relatively thick ware. The ware is grey-brown in colour with organic and laterite temper. The pot is decorated with horizontal cordmarks from the shoulder down. At the rounded base, the cordmarks are more ‘patched’.

Found alone in a deposition high up in the layers.

J31

x = -32.47
y = -16.17
z = 99.43 - 99.32

Shape: restricted (pot)
Temper: fine sand
Decoration: cordmarked
Rim type: V

J31 is a small rounded pot of a rather thick ware. The ware is pale buff or almost white in colour and tempered with fine sand. It has a decoration of horizontal cordmarks from the shoulder down covering body and base. The straight neck and rim has an unusual distinct shape.

Found at the shoulder of J2.
J35

x = -31,15
y = -14,35
z = 99,56 - 99,43

Shape: restricted (pot)
Temper: fine sand
Decoration: incised
Rim type: CC

J35 is a small and delicate pot, recovered in a very fragmentary state. It is rounded with a thin body section and rounded base. The ware is pale buff or white and tempered with fine sand. The decoration consists of two parallel incised lines around the neck. Only the rim and neck section could be reconstructed, body and base are sketched.

Found in a deposition of four vessels of different sizes: J35, J36, J37 and J39.

J36

x = -31,37
y = -14,40
z = 99,81 - 99,64

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: grog 2
Decoration: appliqué (A) -striped-zigzag
Rim type: EE

J36 is a small but tall jar. Only fragments were preserved, thus the shape could only be vaguely reconstructed to have been almost tubular and slightly rounded with a small rim. The ware is red and tempered with grog 2. The upper body is covered in red slip, and is decorated with a two-band appliqué, screw head(s) and curls of an unusual shape (cf. J104, also comparatively small and with similar curl shapes)

Found in a deposition of four vessels of different sizes: J35, J36, J37 and J39.
**J37**

\[
x = -31.10 \\
y = -14.50 \\
z = 99.56 - 99.38
\]

Shape: restricted (pot)  
Temper: fine sand  
Decoration: incised  
Rim type: B

J37 is a small, thin and delicate pot. The shape is rounded with thin body section and a slightly flattened and thicker base. It has a demarcated angular connection between the neck and the shoulder. The ware is pale buff, possibly with a slip in the same colour, and is tempered with fine sand. It is decorated with an incised line around the neck. Only parts of the vessel were recovered.

Found in a deposition of a group of four vessels of differing sizes: J35, J36, J37 and J39.

**J38**

\[
x = -31.50 \\
y = -13.25 \\
z = 99.55 - 99.45
\]

Shape: restricted (jar)  
Temper: grog 2 and laterite  
Decoration: appliqué (D)  
Rim type: BB

J38 is a large jar, partly of a good quality ware. The ware is buff and tempered with grog 2 and laterite. The decoration is an unusual form of appliqué, only seen on this vessel. The appliqué bands have been combed from two sides to create a ridge. It has a screw head beneath which there are two delicate curls separate from the appliqué bands. There is also a worn off incised decoration of lines and zigzag in red slip. Original drawing by Marion Ravenscroft.
The rim, neck, base and the appliqué curls were originally recorded as J38, whilst the rest of the jar was called J49. In reconstruction it all turned out to belong to the same jar and the original deposition therefore contained three vessels: J38, J47 and J48.

**J39**

\[
\begin{align*}
  x &= -31.30 \\
  y &= -14.40 \\
  z &= 99.45 - 99.28
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: restricted (jar)  
Temper: organic  
Decoration: cordmarked  
Rim type: L

J39 is a round wide jar with a thin upper body and rounded base. The ware has a whitish surface with black core and organic temper. The neck is undecorated, while body and base are covered with a patched cordmarked decoration. Only parts of the rim, upper body and base could be reconstructed.

It was found in a deposition of four vessels of differing sizes: J35, J36, J37 and J39.

**J40**

\[
\begin{align*}
  x &= -32.20 \\
  y &= -14.60 \\
  z &= 99.55 - 99.48
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: restricted (pot)  
Temper: fine sand  
Decoration: cordmarked  
Rim type: 

J40 is a small, thin and very fragmentary pot. The ware is pale buff and tempered with fine sand. It has a very fine horizontal cordmarked decoration from the shoulder and down over the body. No rim or clear base sherds were re-
covered, only the shoulder and tiny thin fragments of the body. Original drawing by Marion Ravenscroft.

Found alone, far down below the cultural layers.

**J42**

x = -29,70  
y = -11,55  
z = 99,33 - 99,20

Shape: restricted (jar)  
Temper: coarse sand  
Decoration: striped  
Rim type: O

J42 is a small jar with flattened angular shape. It has an extended body and narrow orifice. The ware is bright white, thin and brittle, and is tempered with coarse sand. The entire body was originally covered in dark red slip, and there are traces of incised lines around the neck. Original drawing by Marion Ravenscroft.

Found on the bottom of the large jar J23, together with J42. The vessels contained nothing else.

**J43**

x = -29,70  
y = -11,70  
z = 99,40 - 99,28

Shape: restricted (pot)  
Temper: grog 2  
Decoration: incised  
Rim type: O

J43 is a small rounded pot in a good state of preservation. The ware is pale buff and grog 2 tempered, and the entire exterior surface is covered in red slip. It is decorated with parallel incised lines and zigzag around the neck. Almost
the entire vessel could be fitted at reconstruction. Original drawing by Kanda Keosopha.

The pot was found on the bottom of the large jar J23, together with J42. All were covered by J11. The vessels contained nothing else.

**J47**

\[x = -31,30\]
\[y = -13,50\]
\[z = 99,50 - 99,35\]

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: sand-laterite
Decoration: incised
Rim type: Ø

J47 is a small thin jar with extended angular body and slightly flattened base. The ware is white and tempered with sand and laterite. The upper- and mid rim sections are very thin, resembling eggshell. The entire outside surface has originally been covered with dark red slip, and was decorated with incised lines and zigzag around the neck.

Found deposited together with J38 and J48, on the side of J38 seeming to be stuck between the group of larger jars and the pit wall.

**J48**

\[x = -31,60\]
\[y = -13,24\]
\[z = 99,35 - 99,00\]

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: grog 2-laterite
Decoration: appliqué (Δ)
Rim type: cut?

J48 is a large and tall jar, of a remarkably good quality ware. It was tempered with grog 2 and laterite. The rim appears to have been cut off.
The dimple base has a central hole with a diameter of 12 mm. It is decorated with a distinct two-band appliqué, with two screw heads and a worn-off incised decoration of parallel lines and probably also zigzag. Original drawing by Marion Ravenscroft.

Found base down deposited together with J47 and J38.

**J51**

\[
\begin{align*}
x &= -21.10 \\
y &= -13.60 \\
z &= 99.45 - 99.40
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: restricted (pot)  
Temper: fine sand  
Decoration: incised  
Rim type: L

J51 is a small rounded pot, of which only the rim and parts of the upper body remains. The rim is thick and heavy, with an angular connection to the rounded thin body. The ware is buff coloured and tempered with fine sand. It has a red slip on the shoulder and neck, which appears to have reacted with the ware and gone ‘bubbly’. It is decorated with one incised line around the base of the neck. Original drawing by Marion Ravenscroft.

The pot was found during reconstruction, and was apparently originally deposited inside J34.

**J52**

\[
\begin{align*}
x &= -19.30 \\
y &= -12.95 \\
z &= 99.55 - 99.55
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: restricted (pot)  
Temper: fine sand  
Decoration: none  
Rim type: L
J52 is a small rounded pot with a slightly flattened base, thin body and flared rim, with a marked angle between the neck and shoulder. The ware is buff coloured and tempered with fine sand. It has no decorations and no slip, but there is a black slip-like residue on the base exterior surface.

Excavation documentation is lacking, but according to the bag coordinates it was found alone.

J53

- x = -19.82
- y = -13.65
- z = 100.01 - 100.01

Shape: unrestricted (bowl)
Temper: organic
Decoration: none
Rim type: GG

J53 is a bowl with a slightly flattened base. The ware is red with organic temper. The upper surface is covered in red slip. Most of the bowl has been recovered.

It was found alone, but close to several other groups of vessels. The bowl was originally registered as F64.

J101

- x = -74.43
- y = -42.64
- z = 99.60 - 99.51

Shape: unrestricted (plate)
Temper: organic and laterite
Decoration: none
Rim type: EE

Colour: 5/6:10R | 8/3:5YR | NG/: 2,5Y | 7/4:7,5YR | —
J101 is a wide plate with complete rim, but where most of the centre is missing. The ware is pale buff or whitish, and tempered with an organic temper. The upper surface and the rim is entirely covered by a thick layer of red slip, while the outside surface is unslipped. Drawing by Christian Vinterhav.

The plate was placed upside down, together with J102, as a lid on J104 which contained an infant burial. The central part of the plate as well as parts of the bowl J102 and the rim of J104 were lost in an identified accidental disturbance from recent construction work at the resort.

J102

$x = -74.43$
$y = -42.64$
$z = 99.60 - 99.51$

Shape: unrestricted (bowl)
Temper: grog 2
Decoration: none
Rim type: GG

J102 is a small earthenware bowl, found upside down on top of J101 covering J104. Only two thirds of the rim section remain. The ware is pale buff or white and grog 2 tempered. The inner and exterior surfaces are both covered in red slip, although worn on the exterior. Drawing by Christian Vinterhav.

The bowl was placed on top of the plate J101, as a lid on J104 which contained an infant burial. Parts of the bowl, the plate J102 and the rim of J104 were lost in an identified accidental disturbance from recent construction work at the resort. Small pieces of laterite were found in the top level of the bowl, just to the north, and J103 was attached to its rim on the south side.
J103

x = -74,50  
y = -42,88  
z = 99,57 - 99,51

Shape: restricted (pot)  
Temper: fine sand  
Decoration: none  
Rim type: L  
Colour: ——| 8/4:7,5YR | 8/4:7,5YR | 8/4:2,5YR | ——

J103 is a small and thin pot with a smooth rounded shape and slightly flattened base. The ware is pale buff or whitish and undecorated. It was tempered with fine sand. The exterior surface of the base is covered by a thick black layer resembling soot. Drawing by Christian Vinterhav.

The pot was deposited on the south side of J102, on top of the deposition with J104 containing an infant burial. It seems to have been put leaning against the pit wall.

J104

x = -74,40  
y = -42,62  
z = 99,60 - 99,34

Shape: restricted (jar)  
Temper: grog 2  
Decoration: appliqué (A) -striped-zigzag  
Rim type: H  

J104 is a rather small and delicate appliqué jar with a rounded body, tall neck and flattened thick base. The ware is pale buff and grog 2 tempered. The upper body was originally covered in red slip. The jar is decorated with two bands of appliqué and two small screw heads with extended and assymetrical curls. Above
and below the appliqué bands are five groups of incised parallel stripes and zigzag, barely visible on the worn surface.

This jar was the central vessel containing an infant burial, deposited together with J101, J102 and J103. Parts of the rim and neck were destroyed in an identified accidental disturbance from recent construction work at the resort.

J105

\[
\begin{align*}
x &= -61.56 \\
y &= -51.60 \\
z &= 100.01 - 99.64
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: grog 2 and laterite
Decoration: appliqué (A) - striped-zigzag
Rim type: H
Colour: 4/6:10R | 7/8:5YR | 6/1:5YR | 7/6:5YR | 4/6:10R

J105 is a large and tall jar with a rounded body, flat base, tall neck and heavy rim. The ware is pale buff and tempered with grog 2 and laterite. The surface is well preserved and covered in dark red slip on the upper body of the exterior surface, and the entire interior surface. It is decorated with two bands of appliqué, two screw heads (of which only one was recovered) with stretched curls. Above and under the appliqué bands are parallel incised lines in six groups of eleven lines, and large double or triple zigzag incisions.

Found bottom up, covering J106 mouth-to-mouth. Only parts of the body were recovered.
J106

\[ x = -61.64 \]
\[ y = -51.58 \]
\[ z = 99.74 - 99.19 \]

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: grog 2
Decoration: appliqué (C) – striped-zigzag
Rim type: M

J106 is a barrel shaped, only barely restricted jar with an everted heavy rim. The ware is buff, soft and porous, and tempered with grog 2. It is decorated with appliqué (type C), four screw heads and with the curled ends of appliqué stretched to meet the next in a continuous pattern around the shoulder of the jar. The upper body is covered in red slip with incised zigzag and line decoration. It has a 15 cm wide band of what appears to be soot on the outside surface approximately 2/3 up on the body. Drawing by Christian Vinterhav.

Found bottom down with another incomplete vessel (J112) inside, and covered mouth-to-mouth with J115 placed bottom up.

J107

\[ x = -61.87 \]
\[ y = -51.10 \]
\[ z = 99.72 - 99.51 \]

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: rice chaff
Decoration: cordmarked
Rim type: /Q
Colour: — | N2,5:7,5YR | N2,5:7,5YR | 6/6:5YR | 4/4:2,5YR

J107 is a rounded jar with a thick rounded base,
found in a fragmentary state. Possibly it originally had a rim that is now worn off, or else the rim is of type Q. The ware is soft and porous, black with a red slipped reddish surface and is tempered with rice chaff. The entire exterior surface is covered with horizontal cordmarks, and on some parts there appears also to be a painted red decoration, which is difficult to distinguish from the red slip. There are also clear production marks. Drawing by Christian Vinterhav.

The jar was placed alone and contained an infant burial.

J108

\[
\begin{align*}
x &= -61.28 \\
y &= -51.63 \\
z &= 99.51 - 99.30
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: unrestricted (bowl)  
Temper: grog 2 and organic  
Decoration: incised  
Rim type: CC  

J108 is a delicate bowl with a foot ring and everted rim. The ware ranges in colour from pale buff to brown, is quite soft and tempered with grog 2 and organic material. A thick red slip covers both interior and exterior surfaces, and the exterior is decorated with groups of vertical parallel lines. Drawing by Christian Vinterhav.

Only parts of the vessel were recovered, and they were stuck on the body of Jx8, together with J115.
J109

x = -71.48
y = -59.80
z = 99.31 - 98.83

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: rice chaff
Decoration: cordmarked
Rim type: M
Colour: —— | N2,5:7,5YR | N2,5:7,5YR | 6/6:5YR | 4/4:2,5YR

J109 is a large globular jar with rounded base and everted neck and rim. The ware has a black core and a reddish surface, and is tempered with rice chaff. Compared with other wares tempered with rice chaff, this is of exceptionally good quality. The body is decorated with fine horizontal cordmarks from the shoulder down. Drawing by Christian Vinterhav.

The jar was placed in a pit together with the similar jar Jx4, both with the base down, and with a spade-like iron- or slag object (F57) at the rim level of J109.

J110

x = -71.20
y = -59.12
z = 99.20 - 98.80

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: rice chaff
Decoration: cordmarked
Rim type: M
Colour: —— | N2/7,5R | N2/7,5R | 7/4:7,5YR | 6/6:5YR

J110 is a wide bodied jar of poor quality ware with significant loss and surface deterioration. It appears to have been similar in size and shape to J111, but could not be reconstructed due to the soft ware quality. The ware has a black core and dark buff or orange surface, and is tem-
pered with rice chaff. It has horizontal cordmarks from the shoulder down. An orange slip is still partly covering the exterior of the rim and neck, but may originally have covered the entire exterior surface. Drawing by Christian Vinterhav.

Placed bottom up, mouth-to-mouth with and on top of J111. The fragmentary state make it difficult to establish the exact relation. Probably the jars Jx1, Jx2, Jx3 were also deposited in the same pit, on top of the two larger. All vessels appear to be empty.

**J111**

\[
\begin{align*}
x &= -71.28 \\
y &= -59.25 \\
z &= 99.02 - 98.66
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: restricted (jar)  
Temper: rice chaff  
Decoration: cordmarked  
Rim type: C  
Colour: ——| N2/:7,5YR| N2/:7,5YR| N2/:7,5YR| 6/2:7,5YR

J111 is a large jar with a rounded body, a thick and almost pointed base, and a straight slightly everted neck and rim. The ware is black and porous, tempered with rice chaff, and a thick brown slip is covering the entire exterior surface. It has horizontal cordmarks on the upper body and possibly the lower body. The body and base was fragmentary, while the rim and neck was better preserved. Drawing by Christian Vinterhav.

Placed bottom down and covered mouth-to-mouth by of J110. The fragmentary state makes it difficult to establish their exact relations. Probably the jars Jx1, Jx2, Jx3 were also deposited in the same pit, on top of the two larger. All vessels appear to be empty.
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J112

\[
\begin{align*}
x &= -61,70 \\
y &= -51,60 \\
z &= 99,49 - 99,35
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: unrestricted (bowl)
Temper: grog 2 and laterite
Decoration: none
Rim type: Å
Colour: 5/6:10R | 6/8:2,5YR | 5/1:5Y | 6/8:2,5YR | 5/6:10R

J112 is a simple bowl of which only parts were recovered, only in two pieces. The ware is of good quality, red and well fired, and tempered with grog 2 and laterite. A red slip originally covered both interior and exterior surfaces, but is now very worn on the exterior. Drawing by Christian Vinterhav.

Found inside J106, in the center and approximately 15 cm above the bottom of the larger jar.

J113

\[
\begin{align*}
x &= -67,10 \\
y &= -64,00 \\
z &= 99,11 - 99,03
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: restricted (pot)
Temper: fine sand
Decoration: cordmarked
Rim type: Å

J113 is a pot with a round extended body, slightly flattened base and everted neck and rim. It was recovered in a very fragmentary state. The ware is thin and brittle, grey or brownish in colour and tempered with fine sand. There are traces of a red or orange slip on the lower body, which may originally have covered the entire exterior surface. It has a field of fine cordmarks, patch-like with alternating directions, on the upper body just below the shoul-
Soot covers large parts of its interior, and smaller patches on the exterior. Drawing by Christian Vinterhav.

Found alone, and could either have been interred against the wall of the same pit as J114, Jx5 and Jx6, or alone in a very shallow pit.

**J114**

\[
\begin{align*}
x &= -67,56  \\
y &= -64,00  \\
z &= 98,97 - 98,80 
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: unrestricted (bowl)
Temper: grog 2
Decoration: none
Rim type: M

J114 is a simple bowl with a flattened base, found in one piece. The ware is pale buff on the exterior and black on the interior surface, which is also slightly deteriorated. It is probably tempered with grog 2. All surfaces are covered in red slip. Drawing by Christian Vinterhav.

Was probably interred leaning against the wall of the same pit as Jx5 and Jx6.

**J115**

\[
\begin{align*}
x &= -61,30  \\
y &= -51,64  \\
z &= 99,51 - 99,30 
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: restricted (pot)
Temper: grog 2
Decoration: none
Rim type: L

J115 is a pot of an unusual shape for the Lao Pako ceramics. It has a foot-ring, extended body...
and a narrow orifice. The ware is quite brittle and ranges in colour from pale buff to almost black with a black core, and is tempered with grog 2. The entire exterior and the interior surface of the rim and neck, all but the pedestal, have originally been covered in a light red or orange slip. Drawing by Christian Vinterhav.

Found stuck on the body of Jx8 with J108.

J202

\[
\begin{align*}
x &= -64.51 \\
y &= -40.14 \\
z &= 99.78 - 99.53
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: restricted (jar)  
Temper: grog 2 and laterite  
Decoration: appliqué (C) – striped-zigzag  
Rim type: II

J202 is a large rounded jar with a thick flat base. The ware is hard and heavy, blackish in colour and tempered with grog 2 and laterite. A dark red slip covers the upper body exterior as well as the rim and upper body interior. Two bands of appliqué (type C) run around its shoulder, with four screw heads and extended curls approaching each other. Surrounding the appliqué is a field of incised lines and large zigzag, clearly applied after the application of slip and appliqué.

Found in a pit deposition that also contained J204, J205, J206 and J207.

J203

\[
\begin{align*}
x &= -55.00 \\
y &= -62.25 \\
z &= 98.94 - 98.60
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: unrestricted (lid)  
Temper: coarse sand  
Decoration: none  
Rim type: I
J203 is a hat-like lid with a cylindrical top and angular junction to a broad ‘brim’. It has a thin and bright orange ware, tempered with coarse sand, and was originally covered in dark red slip.

Found deposited together with J209. The vessel was found in an approximate angle of 80 degrees from the horizontal. It appears as if the two vessels were dumped in a narrow pit, in a part of the site that has only very shallow cultural layers and neat deposits.

J204

\[x = -64.43\]
\[y = -40.15\]
\[z = 99.86 - 99.75\]

Shape: unrestricted (bowl)
Temper: organic
Decoration: none
Rim type: E

J204 is a simple bowl with a marked rim. The ware is hard and pale buff with a black core and organic temper. It is covered in red slip on both interior and exterior surfaces. The ware appears to be similar to that of J202.

Found in a pit deposition that also contained J202, J205, J206 and J207.

J205

\[x = -64.53\]
\[y = -40.04\]
\[z = 99.92 - 99.84\]

Shape: unrestricted (cup)
Temper: coarse sand
Decoration: none
Rim type: -

J205 consists of parts of what appears to be a cup, but it may also have been the top of a lid (cf. J203 and J210). It has an almost cylindrical
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shape, with no clear rim. The ware is dark, almost black and tempered with coarse sand. It is covered in red slip on the exterior surface.

Found in a pit deposition that also contained J202, J204, J206 and J207.

J206

x = -64,28
y = -40,12
z = 99,80 - 99,76

Shape: restricted (pot)
Temper: fine sand
Decoration: incised
Rim type: B

J206 is a small and thin-bodied pot with a straight thick neck and the rim everted at an angle. The ware is pale buff and tempered with fine sand. There are also traces of a buff slip and an incised line at the junction between the shoulder and neck. Only the upper part of the vessel was recovered, disabling a complete reconstruction.

Found in a pit deposition that also contained J202, J204, J205 and J207.

J207

x = -64,42
y = -40,10
z = 99,58 - 99,43

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: grog 2, laterite and organic
Decoration: appliqué (A) – striped-zigzag
Rim type: cut?

J207 is a medium sized jar with rounded body, flat base and straight neck. The rim appears to have been removed post-firing, leaving a smooth edge. The ware is buff and tempered with grog 2, laterite and organic temper. It is
very thin at the widest part of the body, and the base has traces of dross or slag on the exterior surface. It has a rather small appliqué (A) decoration with two screw heads. There are remains of red slip on the interior surface of the neck, and in combination with a worn exterior surface this suggests that it was originally slipped and incised in a typical manner.

Found in a pit deposition that also contained J202, J204, J205 and J207.

**J209**

\[ x = -55,00 \]
\[ y = -62,32 \]
\[ z = 99,80 - 99,52 \]

Shape: unrestricted (bowl)
Temper: fine sand
Decoration: cordmarks
Rim type: F

J209 is a delicate bowl with a rounded shape and a distinct rim. The ware is pale buff, almost white and tempered with fine sand. On the base it is decorated with unclear and rather coarse cordmarks, while the area below the rim is undecorated. Original drawing by Marion Ravenscroft.

Deposited together with J203, and it appears as if they were dumped rather than arranged in a pit.

**J210**

\[ x = -42,29 \]
\[ y = -28,12 \]
\[ z = 99,74 - 99,66 \]

Shape: unrestricted (lid)
Temper: grog 2 and organic
Decoration: incised
Rim type: EE
Hat-like lid with a cylindrical top and a smooth...
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junction to the ‘brim’. It has a hard and heavy ware with buff-coloured surface and black core, with grog 2 and organic temper. The entire exterior surface is covered in red slip and decorated with incised parallel lines in groups of eight, meeting in a cross on the top. The interior surface of the brim is also covered in slip, but has no decorations.

Found in a pit deposition, in situ functioning as a lid for J214. The similarities of ware and appearance of the two vessels suggest that they were made to fit together as one body. Inside J214 were also J220 and J221, and on top of J210 were J213 and J219.

J211

$x = -46.78$
y = -43.43
$z = 99.91 - 99.83$

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: organic
Decoration: none
Rim type: Q

J211 is a small jar with a flat and angular shape. It has a very thin body, where the upper body is slightly concave, a rounded thin base and a heavy rim. The ware has a bright white surface and black core, with an organic temper and disintegrates into ‘flour’. The ware was so deteriorated, that no complete reconstruction was possible. The shape has been reconstructed from single sherds and in situ photos.

Found beside J212, in a neat deposition where the two jars had been placed rims up beside each other. A thin bowl, J224, was found on top of the jar with its base up.
J212

\[ x = -46.86, \quad y = -43.14, \quad z = 99.86 - 99.81 \]

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: coarse sand and laterite
Decoration: none
Rim type: Q

J212 is a thin jar with an angle at its equator and a rounded thick base. It has a deteriorated white ware, tempered with coarse sand and laterite. At least the upper body and rim has originally been covered with an orange or red slip, of which only traces remain.

Found beside J211, in a neat deposition where the two jars had been placed rims up beside each other and J224 was covering J211.

J213

\[ x = -42.46, \quad y = -28.31, \quad z = 99.67 - 99.52 \]

Shape: restricted (pot)
Temper: fine sand
Decoration: incised
Rim type: Q

J213 is a small and thin pot with rounded body and base, and an angular junction between its shoulder and the comparatively heavy rim. The base is thin with finger impressions on the inside. The ware is pale buff and tempered with fine sand, and it has probably a slip in the same colour as the ware. The decoration consists of one/two incised lines at the shoulder-rim junction.

The pot was found on the brim of J210, i.e. in the same deposition as J214, J210, J219, J220 and J221.
J214

x = -42.23
y = -28.15
z = 99.68 - 99.24

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: grog 2
Decoration: appliqué (A) -striped-zigzag-painted
Rim type: cut?

J214 is a large tall jar with a slightly everted neck and a dimple base with central hole. The rim appears to have been removed post-firing leaving a smooth edge. The ware is very thin at both body and base, but thick at the junction between them. It is buff-coloured with a black core, and the ware is in parts badly deteriorated or dissolved. It was tempered with grog 2 and organic temper. The upper body is covered in a dark red slip on both interior and exterior surfaces. Around the shoulder run two bands of appliqué (A), with two screw heads, and around it on the upper body is a striped-zigzag and combed decoration. On the lower body there are traces of a painted red-on-buff decoration with waved bands. Original drawing by Marion Ravenscroft.

The central jar in a pit deposition with J220 and J221 inside it, J210 covering it and J213 and J219 on top of it all.

J215

x = -28.39
y = -20.36
z = 100.29 - 100.15

Shape: restricted (pot)
Temper: fine sand
Decoration: incised
Rim type: II

J215 is a globular pot with a thin body, thick base and narrow orifice. The ware is white and
the exterior surface is covered in dark red slip. It is untempered or tempered with a very fine sand. On the shoulder just below the rim is an irregular decoration of incised lines (2-4) around the pot. The base is not level, and the pot is slightly tilted. The pot gives a somewhat odd impression. Original drawing by Marion Ravenscroft.

Found on top of J216 in the deposition containing J216, J217, J215, J222 and possibly also J218. Only parts of the vessel were recovered, and they were found scattered around the other vessels.

J216

\[ x = -28,41 \]
\[ y = -20,30 \]
\[ z = 100,27 - 99,94 \]

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: grog 2 and laterite
Decoration: appliqué (A)
Rim type: BB

J216 is a rounded jar with tall flared neck and a heavy rim. The ware is buff and tempered with grog 2 and laterite. The exterior surface is deteriorated, but a red slip on the interior surface of the neck indicates that there was originally slip also on the exterior. On the shoulder there are two bands of appliqué (A) with two screw heads. The interior surface of this jar is interesting with considerable ‘smearing’ and finger impressions at and around the base. The red slip on the interior of the neck has left much dripping, adding to a hasty impression.

Found with its base up covering J217 mouth-to-mouth, in a deposition also containing J215, J222 and possibly J218.
J217

\[
\begin{align*}
x &= -28.00 \\
y &= -20.57 \\
z &= 100.22 - 99.67
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: grog 2 and laterite
Decoration: appliqué (A) – striped-zigzag
Rim type: M

J217 is a round and delicate jar with a thin body, flat base and heavy rim. The buff ware is well-preserved and tempered with grog 2 and laterite. The upper body is covered in a red slip on both the interior and exterior surfaces. Around the shoulder run two bands of appliqué (A) with two screw heads, and around it is a well preserved incised decoration with parallel lines and zigzag. The base is not level, leaving the jar slightly tilted. Original drawing by Marion Ravenscroft.

It was found below J216, at the bottom of the pottery group containing J216, J217, J215, J222 and possibly J218.

J218a

\[
\begin{align*}
x &= -28.34 \\
y &= -20.62 \\
z &= 100.09 - 99.60
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: restricted (jar)
Temper: rice chaff and laterite
Decoration: cordmarks
Rim type: -

J218a is the upper part of a jar with a straight neck and rounded body, where the rim is either lost or removed. The ware has a pale buff surface and black core, and is of very poor quality, tempered with rice-chaff and laterite. The withered surface bears traces of diagonal cordmarks from the shoulder down, and there are clear traces of a dark red slip on the neck. The jar could only be partly reconstructed.
The two jars J218a and J218b were recorded as one during excavation, but in reconstruction it showed to have at least two different necks of identical ware. They were found just beside a group of vessels with J216, J217, J215 and J222.

**J218b**

$x = -28,34$

$y = -20,62$

$z = 100,09 - 99,60$

Shape: restricted (jar)

Temper: rice chaff and laterite

Decoration: cordmarks

Rim type: HH

J218b is a jar with a thick neck and heavy rim, thin rounded body and a thick almost pointed base. The poor-quality ware has a pale buff surface and black core, and is tempered with rice chaff and laterite. The withered surface bears traces of diagonal cordmarks. The jar could only be partly reconstructed.

The two jars J218a and J218b were recorded as one during excavation, but in reconstruction it showed to have at least two different necks of identical ware. They were found just beside a group of vessels with J216, J217, J215 and J222.

**J219**

$x = -42,14$

$y = -28,20$

$z = 99,70 - 99,65$

Shape: unrestricted (bowl)

Temper: grog 2 and organic

Decoration: none

Rim type: V

J219 is a footed bowl that was recovered in a good state of preservation. The ware is buff with a black core, with grog 2 and organic temper. The entire interior of the bowl is covered
in red slip, applied onto half of the exterior of the rim. The exterior surface and the foot has no slip.

Found in pieces scattered around the top of J210, placed on top of the deposition with J214, J210, J220 and J221, along with J213.

J220

\[ x = -42,18 \]
\[ y = -28,22 \]
\[ z = 99,48 - 99,26 \]

Shape: restricted (pot)
Temper: grog 2 and organic
Decoration: striped-zigzag
Rim type: Ø

J220 is a globular pot with demarcated short neck and slightly flattened base. The buff ware with black core is of good quality, with grog 2 and organic temper. The entire exterior and the interior of the rim and neck is covered in dark red slip. On the neck there is a field of incised parallel lines and zigzag decorations.

Found complete in a deposition at the bottom of J214, together with J221- also complete, and metal artefacts (F2003:180 and F2003:181).

J221

\[ x = -42,20 \]
\[ y = -28,00 \]
\[ z = 99,42 - 99,28 \]

Shape: restricted (cup) and unrestricted (cup)
Temper: grog 2
Decoration: none
Rim type: C

J221 is an urn-like cup with flat base and a bowl-like lid, both intact. The ware is buff coloured with a black core, tempered with grog 2 and organic temper. The cup has a red slip on the
exterior, and slip traces on the much more deteriorated surface of the lid suggest that it has also originally been covered in red slip.

The cup and the bowl/lid were found in situ on the bottom of J214, suggesting that they had been deposited together, with the bowl as a lid. Inside the cup was a whitish ash-like soil.

J222

x = -28,30
y = -20,35
z = 100,29 - 99,91

Shape: unrestricted (bowl)
Temper: grog 2 and organic
Decoration: none
Rim type: H

Flat bowl with a marked rim and a thin flattened base. The ware is dark buff with grog 2 and organic temper. Both interior and exterior surfaces have originally been covered in red slip, that has now partly turned dark purple.

Only parts of the bowl were recovered, found scattered on top of J216 and inside J217.

J223

x = -29,00
y = -20,30
z = 99,96 - 99,74

Shape: unrestricted (bowl)
Temper: grog 2, organic and laterite
Decoration: none
Rim type: JJ

J223 is a bowl with a marked rim and slightly flattened thick base. The ware is light red and tempered with grog 2, organic and laterite. Both the interior and exterior surfaces are covered in red slip.
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Found in good shape, almost complete against the body of Jx12, obviously deposited in the same pit.

**J224**

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{x} &= -46.70 \\
\text{y} &= -43.36 \\
\text{z} &= 99.91 - 99.87
\end{align*}
\]

Shape: unrestricted (bowl)
Temper: organic
Decoration: none
Rim type: Q

J224 is a small and thin simple bowl. The ware is brittle, white or pale buff, with black core and organic temper. The interior surface has originally been covered in a red or orange slip, which is now badly deteriorated.

Found in a neat deposition with J211 and J212, both with their rims up beside one another. J224 was not identified during excavation due to its ware’s similarity with J211, but is visible on in situ photos. It was found base up on the shoulder of J211.

All these pots, jars, bowls, cups and lids are individuals to me. In my mind, the drawing of any particular vessel can never be separated from the feeling of its ware: soft, heavy, brittle… its shape: rounded, delicate, wild… details like a drop of slip in the wrong place, a fingerprint in the clay or a nail imprint in the cavity just below the rim… and then its relations to other vessels and artefacts in the same depository unit. All these sensual and associative factors should work together with the information represented in the simple schematic drawing, dressing it in some sense to compose every unique vessel. The stripped schematic drawings can, however, be grouped together in a number of different ways to create archaeological order.

Firstly, I have divided all vessels into temper groups (see figures 54a-c). It appears that the three categories grog-2, rice chaff and sand are exclusive in relation to each other, whereas the grog-1 and organic temper can occur alone or in combinations with other tempers, and laterite is never found alone, but only in blends with the others. Moreover, we can see an immediate relation between some char-
acteristic shapes and decorations, and the temper of the ware. Vessels tempered with rice chaff are always cordmarked, while cordmarked decorations are also found on wares tempered with sand and organic temper, but never with grog-2. All screw head appliqué jars, with only one exception, have grog-2 tempered wares, and sand tempered ware is exclusively found in small pots (and one lid). And finally, as if they followed a different logic, bowls as well as mid-size pots and jars with incised decorations occur in all temper categories except rice chaff.
54b. Complete vessels with rice-, organic-, and grog-1 tempered wares.

ขวดрезซิปีและลิ่มยูฮูง สิ่ง kep ขึ้นซั่งลิ่ม, ลิ่มยูฮูง, สิ่ง kep.
Secondly, all complete vessels whose shapes could be firmly established through reconstruction were arranged in a typological scheme, following the shape distinctive criteria presented by White and Henderson for sites in Northeast Thailand (see above, White & Henderson forthcoming). The vessels are in this scheme (see figure 55) arranged from simple to complex, in a diagonal pattern from the top left to the bottom right. There are a few apparently uniform groups, such as simple bowls, and jars with appliqué (A) design. Curiously, there are even more fall-outs, in particular on the fringes and in the centre of the diagonal pattern, where distinctive shape boxes in many cases contain only one or two vessels.

Creating this typological scheme gave me first a feeling of satisfaction. All of a sudden, there was structure and an air of uniformity over the material. At second glance, there was a growing sense of unease. Where was the sensuality of these ceramics now? I had to ask myself what the purpose was of my typology. Did it really work to understand Lao Pako and its things? No, rather, this scheme is satisfying the demands of the scientific community and my own urge for structure, at the expense of the odd vessels that were squeezed into boxes with others, which have quite a different feeling to them. Returning to the basic assumption about material culture I made at the beginning of this chapter, that human societies reproduce the social structure of its people in the way they order their things, I must ask myself what this boxed typology says about me and my society. For these pots, like with people categorized into forced homogeneity, I am sure that there is much more to them than can be illustrated through such a
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>shape</th>
<th>undecorated (painted)</th>
<th>cordmarked</th>
<th>incised simple</th>
<th>incised complex</th>
<th>appliqué a</th>
<th>appliqué b</th>
<th>appliqué c</th>
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<td>bowl</td>
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55. Lao Pako complete vessels typology.

ข้อต่ำบุมภูมิโบราณโดยส่วน
บ่ง ถูกลบหายไป.
56. Lao Pako complete vessels typology revised.
ข้อสนเทศอิทธิพลการฝั่ง
บุฝ ปั่นปันไฟ.
scheme that only works to simplify. In an attempt to demonstrate what I mean with other possible ways to associate and understand these vessels than the sanctioned archaeological division into distinctive shape categories, I have created a second, revised typology (figure 56). Feel free to add your own associations and comments.

LINKING VESSELS AND SHERDS

The pits in which most of the complete vessels have been deposited are dug from depths corresponding with the two dense sherd levels at approximately 0,7 m and 1,0 m below the surface (see chapter The Earth). The results from Christian Vinterhav’s pottery analysis (Källén et al. 2002) as we will see strongly suggest that the people of prehistoric Lao Pako were one or several groups of people connected by a common culture, and it can therefore be assumed that the miscellaneous sherds as well as the deposited vessels derive from the same material culture context. There are, however, differences between sherds and complete vessels worth considering, and which suggest that sherds on the ground and buried complete vessels belong to different conceptual contexts within this group of people.

There are strong links between ware quality and temper, and other features such as decoration, colour and slip in both sherds and complete vessels. These quite apparent links between the sherd material and the complete vessels indicate a similarly structured ceramic culture. The grog-2 tempered ware is the most common among the complete vessels, and its other characteristics on the complete vessels are also found on the same type of ware in the sherd material. This ware is typically decorated with appliqué and incised stripes or zigzagged lines, often in combination. The surface is mostly whitish or reddish, and red slip is common, particularly on the upper body and the neck interior on large jars. These basic characteristics are equally shared by grog-1 and organic tempered wares, which are also represented among the complete vessels as well as in the sherd material. Moreover large granules of laterite are often included in otherwise grog-2, grog-1 or organic tempered wares. This combination is common in the sherd material as well as in the ware of the complete vessels. The rice chaff tempered ware is outstandingly uniform in both types of ceramic material. It has a thin, whitish, reddish or brownish exterior surface with slip, while the core and interior surface is completely black. These sherds have almost always horizontally oriented cordmarks, while the complete rice chaff tempered vessels show varying orientations of the cordmarks. For all cordmarked ceramics, sherds and vessels alike, the marks are often covering most of the shoulder and body.

Sand tempered ware is more common in the sherd material than in complete
vessels, especially in consideration of the difference in size between the small sand tempered vessels and the large ones tempered with grog-2 or rice chaff. This fact does not only mark the most important difference between the two types of ceramic find material, it also accentuates other differences in the statistics. The decorative features which are not present on any of the complete vessels but indeed on sherds of sand tempered ware are: ridges alone or in combination with chequered or combed marks. In the chapter on shape, dealing with rim types, it was noted that six of these were represented by more than 20 sherds (L, M, Q, V, X and Y). Four of these types are represented among the complete vessels, but none of them is dominating. Moreover, four of these rim types in the sherd analysis (Q, V, X, Y) were mostly tempered with fine sand. Of these four types, two are not even represented in the complete vessels.

A few decoration types are also found exclusively in the sherd material, as mentioned above: incised geometric designs, ridges with chequered incisions and single cases with stamped dots and diamond shapes. Christian Vinterhav concludes his ceramics analysis with the following:

When taking all of the similarities and differences into account I find that the similarities convincingly show that the sherd material derive from vessels made with the same technology and which share the same morphology as the complete vessels. A few decorative features in the sherd material indicate a variation not quite equalled among the complete vessels, but this is not surprising as the sherds represent a more extensive material (Vinterhav in Källén et al. 2002:42).

The sherd material and the complete vessels must thus be seen as parts of the same cultural context. The statistical differences between them should therefore be understood as reflections of a difference in attitude to different tempers and decorations in the contexts of sherds left on the ground and pit depositions, respectively.

TEXTILE PRODUCTION
Two categories of artefacts that we associate with textile production have been found at Lao Pako: spindle whorls\(^2\) and clay seals. A total number of 44 spindle whorls were recovered, of which 30 were found in the cultural layers. Even

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\(^2\) Deposition of ten decorated spindle whorls (F1995:231).
though all of these were found one by one, and with no clear contextual connections with other artefacts or structures, it is clear that they tend to group together in some parts of the site, while other parts have no finds of textile production character (see plan drawing in Appendix II). Similarly, the four clay seals were all found in the cultural layers, and in the same areas where the spindle whorls also appear. The remaining 14 spindle whorls were, quite differently, found in depositions together with pottery vessels, and with clear structure and intention to the arrangements. These deposited spindle whorls are mostly decorated (see figure 57 and the top left specimen in figure 58, in contrast to the undecorated ones found in the cultural layer. The decorations consist of incised whirl patterns, lines and in one case of impressed dots around its equator.

The spindle whorls are made of fired tempered clay, and the fabric varies between the items. Some are in good condition, while others are deteriorated and appear to be almost dissolved by the soil climate. Yet others are black and crumbled as if they have been exposed to fire in a hearth. In some cases (e.g. F2003:137, F2003:153), the surface is smooth and appears to be burnished. Shapes vary greatly from annular and biconical to conical or a cut cone shape. The sizes also vary, diameters between 24 and 40 millimetres, and the height between 13 and 35. The shape variation between the spindle whorls found in the 1995 excavation was examined creating a diameter/height ratio (Källén & Karlström 1999:32f). The ratio varied considerably between 1:1 and 2:1, a variation which had no contextual explanation.

The clay seals, including so-called stamp rollers, have exclusively been found in the cultural layers. Three are cylindrical rollers, one with a zigzag pattern, one
THE THINGS

with concentric circles and one with straight lines around the cylinder. The latter of these was only half and in poor condition when it was found. The first two, with zigzag and circle patterns, have both got holes bored at the ends approximately 5 mm in from each side, whereas the last with straight lines has had a hole all the way through. As has been argued earlier (Källén & Karlström 1999:35), the lack of holes bored all the way through excludes the possible use of these first two rollers as beads. Rather they must be regarded as seals, with similar function as the disc-shaped seal with a double flower- or star pattern, where the inner circle has 9 rays and the outer has 14. This seal is made of red well fired oxidized clay, while the rollers are dark grey or black in colour. It is not known what these objects, present on prehistoric sites all over the Khorat plateau, may have been used for since there are so far no imprints found on any preserved materials. It can be assumed that they were used on impermanent materials, of which there is a wide range of plausible possibilities: wood, bark or cortex, leather, human skin, food, textile… Thus the clay seals are here placed in the textile production category only due to the lack of better alternatives.

BEADS

All beads but one found at Lao Pako are made of glass. They vary in size, shape and colour, translucent and opaque. The non-glass one is of cornelian: large, spherical, semi-translucent and amber coloured. The majority of them are, however, small and made of opaque orange glass with rounded or flat disc shapes. A total number of 346 beads have been found at Lao Pako, in 17 discrete contexts. Two of the contexts contain the majority of them: 182 tiny cylindrical translucent dark blue and rounded opaque orange beads with three larger translucent green ones in an infant burial context (F2002:33), and 137 disc-shaped opaque orange and rounded translucent blue, strung together and found alone, deposited in a pit (F2003:92). In some other cases (e.g. F2002:53 and F2003:87) a few small opaque orange beads are found together in a group, but not as belonging to the same original object. The rest of the beads, some fragmentary, are found in the cultural layers and many as stray finds in the screen.
AND THROUGH FLOWS THE RIVER

63. Glass beads from the 2003 excavation. The upper part of the figure shows two different detail versions of all beads found 2003 except F2003:92, which is shown on a string below. The arrows indicate which group of beads the detail refers to.

ลูกปัดแก้วจากงานดึกด่วน 2003.

64. Glass beads (F2002:27).
ลูกปัดแก้ว (F2002:27).

When you think about it, ‘beads’ is a rather peculiar find category. Vast amounts of archaeological research are devoted to the origin and dating of beads, while their contexts, functions and symbolic importance on the site where they were found are only rarely discussed. Beads have instead proven most useful to establish firm conceptual connections between prehistoric sites and regions, and to nail sites and features to certain time periods - two of the main objectives of late 20th century archaeology. It is as if beads are of another realm, a sort of meta-artefacts floating above the physical contexts, and solitarily creating prehistoric political structures. For the archaeology of Mainland Southeast Asia, the origin of beads has been instrumental in the argumentation for and against a so-called indianization of the mainland (for a historical location and critique of the indianization concept, see Stargardt 1990:40ff). Since none of those discussions fit in the aims and objectives of this study, I will here keep to a brief presentation of the beads found at Lao Pako, and will return in the following chapters to their contextual importance for the understanding of the Lao Pako site.
METAL AND METALLURGY
Metals and metallurgy are present at Lao Pako in two distinguishable contexts: production and deposition. These two analytical contexts are, however, linked in the physical contexts of the site. We will return to this latter issue in the next chapter, and will here use production and deposition as discrete groups to describe artefacts and structures.

There is clear evidence of metal production at Lao Pako (see also Källén & Karlström 1999:26ff). Large amounts of bowl shaped iron slag, tuyères, dross on pebbles and pottery vessels, scattered iron objects and fired clay, show that there have been prehistoric iron working activities on the site. There are also large amounts of iron slag exposed on the ground on the eroding southeast slope of the hill. These types of remains are found in different parts of the excavated areas, but in particular in one area around the northeast corner of the 1995 trench E2 \([x = -31, y = -12]\). Here the soil is darker than ordinary and has a richer texture to it, and lumps of slag are found in situ on an imagined former ground level (see figure 66). Broken tuyères are found at the same level, where there are also iron objects scattered around. The tuyères are made of white or buff coloured clay with a slightly wider opening at one end and a rounded one, often covered in metallic substances, probably leading into the hearth or furnace (see figure 68). The iron objects found around this area on the ground level are in general small and with no distinctive shapes, resembling knives, rods or fragments of the same. In other parts of the site similar objects are found, but not as concentrated and in the complete state that we see in the corner of trench E2. Since there are at this stage no evidence of built furnace constructions, but only some remains of fired clay in what appears to be some sort of minor structures (see figure 69), I will for now suggest that the Lao Pako iron production was performed in small scale, and only with forging of already smelted bloom. The many bowl-shaped
slag lumps may be a result of the use of clay-lined small pits for heating the bloom, and where the slag is found at the bottom, assuming its characteristic bowl shape. This is, however, only a fair guess which may well be revised in the light of more structural evidence and analyses in the future.

In addition to these evidences of iron working, there are also vague indications of bronze working at Lao Pako. Some pieces of slag has been found that are much smaller and have a different texture than the bowl shaped iron slag, and which also show a tendency to green corrosion (see Källén & Karlström 1999:27). There are also fragments of what could be casting moulds in the material, for example find F2003:83 – a small footed ‘cup’ made of crude sand tempered clay with a pointed hollow space inside, which was found split in two halves (see figure 70). However, these meagre indications are not enough to draw any conclusions about bronze working at Lao Pako.

The metal objects found at Lao Pako are either of bronze or iron. This conclusion is based on basic ocular examination, since no metal objects or samples were allowed to be taken out of Lao territory for analysis. The iron objects are difficult to mistake for other materials, but the bronze could in theory be of pure copper or any copper alloy with a green corrosion. In practice, and then in particular considering their similarities with other objects known to me made of bronze from the region at large, they may quite safely be considered to be of bronze. Hopefully it will be possible to conduct detailed material analyses of both bronze and iron from Lao Pako in the future. For now, we will keep to a discussion on shape and context.

69. Structure of fired clay in T14 (size 1 x 1 m.).

70. Possible mould fragments.
Iron objects are mostly found in the cultural layers, but also occur in depositions. Often they are so badly affected by corrosion, that the original shape of the object is difficult to distinguish. All iron objects from the 1995 excavation were taken to Mahosot hospital in Vientiane to be radiographed with the weak equipment for ordinary hospital use. The resulting pictures showed only diffuse cores of metal inside the mantle of corrosion (see Källén & Karlström 1999) and gave as expected no further information on structure or manufacturing techniques. The majority of iron objects appear to be rods (F2003:186), or small knives (F2003:141), complete or fragmentary. There are also a couple of simple arrowheads (F1995:21), and two larger hollow objects (F2002:57 and F2003:97) which may be small spades (F2002:57 is 185 mm long) or in the case of F2002:97, a spear head. These two latter larger objects were found on top of two different pottery depositions, and some of the other iron objects have been found inside deposited jars, or at rim level of jars in depositions. In an infant burial in J104 were a number of unidentifiable and badly corroded iron objects in the set of grave goods. Two of these objects appeared to consist of a couple of thin iron pipes attached to each other. Corrosion made it impossible to establish their shape more specifically. We will return to the depositional contexts of iron objects in the next chapter.

76. Iron objects (F2003:184).

77. Hollow spear head of iron (F2003:97).

78. Iron or slag object (F2002:57), to the right featured in situ on top of J109.
In contrast to the iron artefacts, the bronze artefacts are almost exclusively found in closed contexts. There is one exception in the tiny brittle container (F1995:49), with a shape similar to a Dong Son kettle drum. The base consists of a disc, 23 mm in diameter and decorated by a star with eight rays covering at least two concentric circles at the periphery. The body is rounded with four small ears on the side and inside is a charred substance stuck to the walls. It was found in the cultural layer, and its function is as of yet unknown. There are four other fragmentary bronze artefacts (F2003:158, F2003:172 and F2003:183), all three probably originally parts of bangles or anklets, which were found in the same excavation trench (T15), crowded with shallow pit depositions. It was thus impossible to establish firmly whether these three bronze objects were part of a deposition or found in the cultural layer.

The remaining bronze artefacts were all found in closed deposited contexts. The tiny F1995:215 may be a handle or an ornament, and it was found in a pit deposition inside J2 in trench E2. Most of the bronze artefacts are ornaments, like F2002:32 and F2002:35, four almost identical child sized bronze bangles. They were found in two pairs in the same infant burial context in J104, and they have all the same incised decoration. On one of the four bangles, the meeting ends have not been rounded like on the other three. All four bangles have to varying degree been affected by corrosion. Another child sized bronze bangle, F2002:44, was found in the infant burial in J107. It was affected by corrosion, but appears to have had the shape of a full circle. It has a smooth and rounded surface without incised decorations. Its inner diameter is c. 36 mm and the outer c. 42 mm. In the J104 infant burial were also two sets of almost identical child sized bronze anklets, F2002:36. Each set contained four anklets and all eight have a flat circular shape, with a hammered outside face (see figure 86). Also part of the J104 infant burial, F2002:25 and F2002:31 are fragments of a helix shaped
84. Bronze bangle (F2003:180).  
85. Bronze bangle (F2002:44).
86. Bronze anklet (F2002:36).  
87. Bronze helix ring (F2002:25 and 31).  
88. Bronze bells (F2002:54).
89. Bronze bowl fragments, with soil in situ (F2002:52).
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finger ring made of a long flat rod. The rod has slightly narrowing ends, and was originally 226 mm long and around 0.7 mm thick. It has been wound four and a half rounds to make the ring. With the infant burial in J107 followed also five small bronze bells, F2002:54. The bells were severely affected by corrosion and very brittle. They could only be partly reconstructed after cleaning, enough to make reconstruction drawings (see figure 96). The infant burial in J107 also contained the remains of a bronze bowl, F2002:52. It had an approximate diameter of 105 mm, and was decorated with incised parallel lines just below the rim. The state of preservation for the bowl was very poor, so that only parts of one side and the rim was intact. Its exact original look is thus not known.

We will return to discuss the contextual importance of these artefacts in the next chapter, and the similarities to artefacts from other sites in the chapter Synthesis.

STONE

A great variety of stone objects and artefacts have been found at Lao Pako. The largest group consists of pebbles of varying sizes (see figure 90). Some have wear marks from pounding or other usage, and some have dross on the surface. Most of these large rounded pebbles were found adjacent to the presumed iron working area in the corner of trench E2, and some have probably been involved in that process, judging from the presence of dross and their positioning close to slag and tuyères. Some stone objects are more difficult to establish the use of, such as flakes with slightly worn edges that could well have been used as scrapers (figure 91).
Another distinctive category is whetstones (see figures 92 and 93). They are all made of fine sandstone. Some of these objects have a characteristic look almost that are otherwise common in coastal settlements in Vietnam. Their function in this context is not certain, but they may very well be whetstones.

Only one piece of stone jewellery has been found at Lao Pako, a quarter of a stone bangle (F2002:16). It is made of green polished stone, and the cross-section is rounded on the outside and flat on the inside (figure 94).
Finally, a total number of five stone adzes were found in the excavations (see figures 95 and 96). They are all made of a soft white limestone, four are very small while one is considerably larger. Two are shouldered adzes, while three have a simple shape. They all seem to be broken or only halfway executed, and the edges are not particularly sharp.

96. Stone adzes from the 2003 excavation.
Against the principle of the impermanence of matter, in the last chapter we have departed from decay and heterogeneity, and moved with the artefacts, the things, into a new [part of their] life cycle to be dissected, cleaned and reconstructed in drawings and photos approaching their individual original appearances. What we have done is in accordance with science, speaking with Pearson and Shanks: ‘The past is to be purified in a staunching of decay; death is held in check. The task is given to science. Science is applied to clean up the wound and sterilise’ (2001:92). The things have now firstly been treated and described individually, and then been rebuilt and put into neat order to make archaeological sense. And there we will now leave the actual physical things to be incorporated in the collections of the Laos National Museum in Vientiane. Some of the more complete ones have been put on display in the permanent exhibition *Lao Pako – a glimpse of the prehistory of Laos*, while the more fragmentary items are packed and stored awaiting future revivals.

We will now move on and make use of the things to recreate contexts which render them meaningful in an interpretation of the Lao Pako site. The already individualised things – separated from their contexts as they were extracted from the ground, having been placed back in our present through acts of cleaning, documentation and reconstruction – will now be used to form units based on information on their relations and placement in the ground at the time of excavation. The aim of this exercise is to trace the actions of the Lao Pako people, and from them the ideas which then gave meaning to the things.

Based on stratigraphy and spatial relations of the excavated site, I have distinguished two discrete and structurally different kinds of deposition. Both are the remains of the activities that created the archaeological site around 1500 years ago. The first consists of things and structures which were out in the open, on the ground surface. Quite different from those are sets of things carefully arranged in pits below the ground. I will later argue that these two depository modes are conceptually different and are reflective of different mindsets, and therefore I separate them as two sub-groups in this presentation. We begin with the things on the ground.

THE GROUND
The former ground level is found from around 0.5 metres down to one metre below the present surface. The things that were lying on the surface when Lao Pako was used around 1500 years ago are thus to be found within this stratigraphic layer. Moreover, the stratigraphy shows two layers within this, dense with potsherds and other cultural material. As is indicated by the compilation of potsherd statistics from the 2002 excavation, one denser level is found at the approximate depth of 0.7 m and another at 1.0 m from the surface (see chapter *The Earth on stratigraphy and layers*). These denser layers can be the result of two periods of intensified use of the site, or may even represent two single events where a lot ceramics were crushed and left on the ground with other things to decay. No architectural structures such as post holes have been found so far, an absence which indicates that there have been no buildings there, at least not on the excavated parts of the site. The material on the ground can instead be divided into three broad groups of (i) ceramics, (ii) textile production artefacts and (iii) metallurgy remains.

The ceramics in the cultural layers, that is, the former ground level, were as previously mentioned analysed by Christian Vinterhav as part of the 2002 excavation season (Källén *et al.* 2002:18-43). His analysis of 5175 potsherds retrieved from seven testpits shows first of all that the major parts of a ceramic vessel are evenly represented throughout the sherd material. Of all classified sherds, 10% belonged with certainty to the rim, 88% to the body and 2% to the base sections of a complete vessel. While there is no doubt a large number of base sherds classified as belonging to the body section, due to that the most common bases are rounded or only slightly flattened, these statistics reconfirm that all vessel parts are represented in the cultural layer. Further there are no major differences throughout the layer or between the different testpits concerning colour, tempering or decoration of the sherds. In conclusion, the ceramics on the ground, which were recovered from one cultural layer comprising two dense horizons representing either singular events or periods of intensified use of the site, are homogenous in that they represent a great but even variation in shape, temper and style that is typical for the Lao Pako ceramics.

Most of the artefacts that are related to textile production have been found in the cultural layer, and have thus been lying on the ground at the time when the site was in use. Although the group of textile related objects – spindle whorls, stamp rollers and one clay seal – is fairly homogenous as we could see in the last chapter, there is a clear divide between the objects that have been out in the open on the ground and those that have been deposited in pits. Even though I will go
into more detail about the pit depositions below, it can already be concluded that only a few of the spindle whorls have been deposited, alone or in groups, in pits. The remaining spindle whorls together with the three stamp rollers and the clay seal have been out in the open, on the former ground surface. While the spindle whorls deposited in pits are often decorated and finely executed (see below), those that were on the ground are never decorated, they are often broken or burnt and are quite uneven in size, shape and style compared with each other. All textile related things; spindle whorls, rollers and a seal, have a distinctive pattern of distribution in the cultural layer. They occur solely in some parts of the hill, as is indicated in the excavation plan, which coincides with remains from metallurgical activities. Other parts are empty of both metallurgical and textile related things.

Metallurgical activities are in this case traced by structures of fired clay (see figure 69) and a darker ‘rich’ soil in the cultural layer, where there are also lumps of slag, charcoal, fragmentary or complete tuyères and occasionally iron objects. At this stage of the investigations at Lao Pako, we have only very limited knowledge about details of the metallurgical activities. The physical structures that become of metal production occupy a much larger space than has been covered by the excavations so far. Thus it is only possible to identify the presence or absence of metallurgical activities through the presence or absence of these ingredients in the cultural layer. As already mentioned above, the metallurgical activities appear to be limited to certain parts of the excavated area, and these coincide with the presence of textile related artefacts.

In only one case do we have an indication of how the metal production was organised. In the northeast corner of the largest excavation trench, E2 that was excavated in 1995, was an area with a dark and ‘rich’ soil, where large amounts of slag were found together with tuyères, fired clay and iron objects. A drawing of horizontal and vertical relations on the next page shows clearly that most of the tuyères found in situ were placed in a shallow pit (at 99.50-99.70) together with a large pebble, slag and fired clay. There are no iron objects in this pit. Around the shallow pit, and in particular to the north of it are fragments of tuyères, slag and small iron objects scattered around on what should have been the ground surface at 99.80 – 100.10. The iron objects are found in the periphery, while the slag and tuyère fragments are closer to the centre. At present, greater specificity concerning the metallurgical activities at Lao Pako is not possible.
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98a. E2 metallurgy: horizontal distribution.


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PITS

Beneath the ground where people walked 1500 years ago among scattered potsherds, spindle whorls and iron slag, there were things buried in pits. Stratigraphy and excavation plan drawings alike show that pits were probably dug all over the investigated area, which is a quarter of the total site. They are different in size and depth and contain an array of different things, united foremost by the extraordinary consideration and thoughtfulness expressed in the arrangements. These pits represent moments in time, as it was decided that these particular things belonged together as units when they were arranged as one and parted from the visible world through the closure of the pit. Furthermore, the contents of the pits are neatly structured yet not standardised. Often as we will see, its logic is not in any sense straightforward using the structure and terminology of common explanation in archaeology. Altogether this gives us a fine opportunity to trace the intentions of the people that used Lao Pako, and give an insight into their world of meanings. I will here present examples of different arrangements that have occurred in the excavations so far. In the next chapter they will be discussed further in depth and will be used to interpret the site and the meaning of its things.

ceramics

In most cases, the pits contain ceramics. Often there are groups of ceramic vessels arranged in pits, apparently with no contents of the vessels. To be able to account for the possibility that any contents of the vessels have dissolved in the soil climate, the soil has been tested in several ways. Three different types of soil analysis: macrofossil analysis (Källén & Karlström 1999:49), phytoliths (Bowdery 1999) and phosphate analysis of soil from inside and outside empty vessels, have been unable to establish any differences between the soil inside the apparently empty vessels and that outside of them. Thus with this we must assume that they were interred with no contents. The vessels or sherds occur in combination with other materials, or alone, just as they are:

J215, J216, J217 and J222

—a recurring formation with two screw head appliquéd jars with the largest on top. One bowl and one small pot of a different temper are found on top of the group. The photo shows the bottom jar J217 uncovered.
J105, J106 and J112
– similar to the group above, but with the bowl found inside the bottom jar. This may be due to the top jar collapsing from the pressure of the earth. Pieces of its rim were found beside the bowl inside, as shown in the photo.

J110 and J111
– two jars of rice tempered ware with the smallest on top. Large rice tempered and cordmarked jars have also been found in pairs elsewhere (cf. J218a and b)

J211, J212 and J224
– unusual deposition of three thin and fragile vessels. Two angular pots with their rims up, like a pair of eyes, and a thin bowl of the same ware slid slightly to the side.

J203 and J209
– another unusual deposition of a hat shaped lid made of a thin sand tempered orange ware with traces of slip, and a cordmarked thin but large bowl of a fine sand tempered ware. Both vessels are quite rare in shape, and appear to have been leaning against the wall of a narrow pit.
Another kind of pit deposition with only ceramics holds a collection of sherds that does not form any complete vessels, or even larger parts of a vessel. Often it is possible to distinguish a large number of different vessels of the same type among the sherds in one collection. The most distinctive such collection found so far we have called C2 and it was found during the 2003 excavation in testpit T20. It consists mainly of sherds of three kinds: (i) bowls with red slip, (ii) rims of small pots with sand tempered ware, and (iii) pieces of one jar with an elaborate appliqué and painted decoration. The bowl rims in the photo furthest to the left all represent different vessels, as do the sand tempered pot rims in the central photo, while the appliqué decorated sherds to the right all appear to belong to the same vessel. All sherds have been placed together in one single pit.

It also occurs that pottery vessels are found in depositions together with other materials. One such example is:

J202, J204, J205, J206 and J207 – this group of vessels were found in an intricate formation with a number of small iron objects and one large hollow iron spearhead or dagger, all at rim level of the bottom jar. On top of the entire group were one large and rounded carnelian bead and one spindle whorl with perforations around its equator.
burials

Human burials form a special kind of deposition of ceramic vessels with other materials. In three cases we have classified pit depositions as human burials. In the first, found at the bottom of J104, there were remains of radius and ulna bones from an infant together with an elaborate set of grave goods, including tiny infant sized bangles and anklets, which has led me to interpret it as an infant burial. Two more depositions of vessels together with iron- and bronze objects, most importantly perhaps are the child sized bronze bangles that were found in all three contexts, have led me to believe that they may be burials as well, even though all bone in that case were dissolved in the acid soil climate.

J104 (with J101, J102 and J103)

At the bottom of this rather small jar decorated with screw head appliqué were the remains of an infant burial. The very top of the vessel group has been destroyed in an accidental dig at the tourist resort, so the top of the ‘plate’ covering the jar was missing at the time of excavation. This could thus possibly have been a hat shaped lid like that covering the burial in J214. The burial context was however still in situ, with two pairs of tiny bronze bangles (F2002:32 and F2002:35), of which one had the radius and ulna bones preserved in situ. Just beside those was one helix shaped bronze ornament (F2002:25 and F2002:31), possibly a finger ring and in such case of adult size. There were also a collection of glass beads: tiny translucent dark blue cylindrical beads and opaque rounded red ones (F2002:27), together with three larger beads of translucent green glass, one biconical and two cylindrical (F2002:33). Further there were two sets of four bronze anklets (F2002:36), and the find context shows that they were most probably interred four anklets in a row on each of the infant’s legs, with the legs joined together in the grave. For more exact descriptions of these singular artefacts, please return to the previous chapter dealing with *The Things*.

There appears also to have been a number of iron objects among the grave goods, which were too dissolved by corrosion to be able to decide the exact shapes of. However, the positions of the iron objects that were found in and around the main jar are rather curious. Five of the iron objects were found at the bottom of the burial jar, while three were found at rim level just outside the same jar. A possible scenario which could have produced such remains is that some of the small iron objects were interred together with the infant and the rest of the grave goods at the bottom of the jar, while a couple were placed just by the jar at the time of filling the grave. This indicates the importance of iron in the burial ritual, perhaps even a special significance of iron as material rather than its shape as discrete objects.
CONTEXTS
J107
In a rather different vessel than that in the case above, another possible infant burial was found. J107 is a fragile and rather large jar, of a poor quality rice tempered and cordmarked ware. It was found in the corner of a testpit and was completely collapsed. At the bottom were a number of artefacts. First of all there was a tiny bronze bangle (F2002:44), affected by corrosion similar to a small
bronze bowl (F2002:52) that was placed upside down at the bottom of the jar. It was so badly affected by corrosion so that it almost completely disintegrated when the soil inside it was removed. Further, there were a few beads (F2002:53), small and rounded of dark translucent blue glass, and rounded opaque red ones, just like in the burial presented above. And finally there were five tiny and fragile bronze bells (F2002:54), which similar to the bowl and the bangle were badly affected by corrosion. The bells could only be reconstructed in drawing after all soil had been removed. The bells may just as the bangle be characteristic of an infant burial, since there is traditionally a wide-spread connection between infants and bells in ornaments used in Mainland Southeast Asia today.

J214 (with J210, J213, J219, J220 and J221)
This well-preserved deposition is built around the large and beautifully decorated jar J214. At the bottom of the jar were two smaller vessels covered with dark red slip: one pot and one small lidded urn. Just beside the opening of the tilted pot was a child sized bronze bangle (F2003:180) and a badly corroded iron object. The rim of the jar was cut off, and it was sealed by a hat shaped lid decorated with incised parallel lines. On top of it all were one small and thin pot of sand tempered ware, and a bowl with a foot ring, covered on the inside by a red slip. All vessels except the sand tempered pot (J213) appear to be made of the same ware.
textile production
In three different contexts, spindle whorls were deposited with ceramic vessels. The first case has already been presented above, where one single spindle whorl (F2003:93) with perforations around its equator was deposited in a pit together with five ceramic vessels, a carnelian bead and a number of iron artefacts. In another case, three spindle whorls (F1995:135-7) were deposited beneath the base of the small cordmarked pot J29 (see photo below), alone in a pit not very deep under the ground. Finally, an extraordinary deposition of ten spindle whorls (F1995:231, see photo below) with incised whirl decorations was found under the base of a small ceramic vessel (J50), buried alone in a pit. A curious detail is that the majority of spindle whorls deposited in pits were decorated, while those on the ground are with only one exception undecorated.

metallurgy
Metal and metallurgy also occur in pit depositions. While bronze is almost exclusively found in pit depositions with ceramic vessels and most often in burial contexts, iron appears to be different. It is commonly found in the cultural layer, which means that it has been lying on the ground, and is directly associated with other metallurgy materials such as tuyères, fired clay and slag. When iron objects occur in pit depositions, they are treated differently than bronze. Iron does occur on the bottom of burial jars together with other grave goods but is often, as was noted in the case of J104 above, also scattered around the rim level of the deposited vessels. Owing to heavy corrosion it has been difficult to establish any clear shapes of the iron objects, but it appears as if those found scattered around ceramic vessels in pit depositions are in small pieces with no distinctive shapes.
As was indicated above, this can be interpreted as a ritual importance of iron as material rather than as discrete functional objects. This interpretation is further supported by the contextual interrelations between slag and ceramics. On several of the complete vessels that have been reconstructed, such as J207, there are clear traces of contact with metallurgical activities. In the case of J207, the entire exterior surface of the base is covered in dross, showing that it must have been exposed to splashes of liquid metallic residues. In another case, a deposition of four rather small vessels (J35, J36, J37 and J39) were placed in a pit adjacent to the main metallurgy area in the large excavation trench E2, and on top of the vessels there was a neatly placed lump of slag. Further, there is one example in the stratigraphic sequence of the western wall of square D2 (see appendix III), where a lump of slag has been placed alone at the bottom of a deep pit.

**curious depositions**

Finally there are two pit depositions without ceramics that need to be mentioned. The first of these contain a rather large but soft shouldered stone adze (F2003:159). It was found alone, far down below the cultural layer, standing up with the edge pointing down in the ground.
The second is a deposition of 137 beads (plus fragments) in a row as strung on a string. At one end there are cylindrical orange opaque glass beads, which become smaller and smaller as they approach the other end. They are 125 in all. After these are 12 translucent rounded beads of dark blue glass, of the exact same diameter as the smallest orange ones.
As we move on with the interpretation of Lao Pako as a prehistoric site, it becomes more complicated. In the current consensual archaeological understanding of the late prehistory of Mainland Southeast Asia, iron production is dealt with exclusively in terms of industry, whereas pottery is often treated as art, or as a display of wealth or status when recovered as grave offerings, or as functional containers being part of discrete manufacturing traditions. According to these frames, the late prehistoric societies in this area have primarily been understood as economically maximizing production units with their subsistence base in rice agriculture that were involved in extensive trade networks. Since my archaeology has an expressed interest in the individual human, the local, and the particular, I have quite intentionally worked on a detailed level of analysis. This, in turn, has revealed connections and relationships between different categories of material culture, pointing to shortcomings in interpretive models based solely on factors related to subsistence, function and industrial production for the interpretation of this particular site. Hence I need to create another intellectual space in which to discuss the Lao Pako site in a way that can truly give it meaning.

Ritual, it is sometimes claimed, is used by archaeologists to explain that which cannot be scientifically understood in terms of rationality. Like cult, ritual is a word surrounded by mystique, it is connected with the sacred, something basically and totally different from that which we experience as our mundane reality (Eliade 1959:9f). Unlike the more general word cult, ritual is a scientifically construed concept that enables us to analyse such emotive and fundamentally symbolic forms of communication: activities which are irrational with respect to science but rational in terms of its culturally internal coherence and purpose (Bell 1997:1,50; cf. Evans-Pritchard 1976:30). I have interpreted Lao Pako as a place for the sacred. There, the sacred was manifested in the material world. Using Mircea Eliade’s phenomenological framework for understanding ritual, I mean that the sacred was experienced at Lao Pako through its manifestations in ordinary objects such as pots and iron knives: the irrational was thus rationalised in these material media placing it in the borderland between the sacred and the profane (cf. Eliade 1959).

Well then, what was the sacred we can see reflected in the things that remain today from the prehistoric rituals once performed at Lao Pako? And what were these rituals? Can we indeed know anything about the rituals from the tiny material fragments that remain for us to interpret? I will return to these questions...
in the next chapter. This chapter will provide a framework, will show the possibilities to analyse a prehistoric ritual site to gain an understanding of the things, and of the society behind the things. I will start off with a short introduction to the use of ritual as a conceptual tool, and explain my choice of approaches in ritual studies for the analysis of Lao Pako. Finally in this chapter I will present an analytical framework for two of the major categories of material culture at Lao Pako – pottery and iron production – to be understood as remnants of rituals that took place 1500 years ago.

RITUAL AS A CONCEPTUAL TOOL

Ritual appeared as a conceptual tool for social science in the late 19th century (Bell 1997:1, 259). Catherine Bell (1997) distinguishes between three different frameworks for understanding and analysing ritual in anthropology and other social science, developing during the 20th century. The first she calls Myth or Ritual, and describes it as occupied with questions of essence and origin. Scholars such as William Robertson Smith, James Frazer, Sigmund Freud and Mircea Eliade worked foremost to find one eternal essence of religion as well as its historical origin (ibid.:3-22). Simultaneously, but with its peak later in the 20th century, the Ritual and Society framework was developed focusing on questions of the structure and social function of rituals. This focus was part of the so-called structuralist and functionalist schools of anthropology with a wide range of scholars: Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, Durkheim, Mauss, Rappaport, Bateson, Evans-Pritchard, Lévi-Strauss, Van Gennep, Turner, Geertz, Douglas… an almost endless list of names and perspectives that have been of great influence also to the archaeological analysis of ritual. This framework study ritual in order to explain the structure and organisation of society as a whole. The focus is here on the social function of ritual in society (Bell 1997:ch. 2). Bell’s third conceptual framework is called Ritual Symbols, Syntax and Praxis. Many of the scholars associated with the functionalist analysis of ritual have also been involved in this approach, working to analyse the structure of ritual as an independent system of communication, organized like a language. With this focus it is argued that social organisation is theoretically secondary to ‘culture’, which is defined as a primary level of meanings, values and attitudes (Bell 1997:61). Many of the central names for this framework of thought have been of much influence to archaeology: Lévi-Strauss, Leach, Turner, Bloch, Douglas and Bourdieu, to mention but a few. While the functionalist approach has been used more by archaeologists working within a processual framework, the interpretative approach is, not surprisingly, found mostly with those ascribing themselves to a post-processual archaeology.
This scheme of scholars and approaches to the study of ritual, which is by necessity much simplified, clearly shows that it is an issue of immense complexity. As Bell also points out, her division of theoretical approaches to ritual is not to be read as a simple evolutionary sequence (Bell 1997:88), and in any given contemporary study of ritual there is likely to be elements of phenomenology combined with functionalism and structuralism, as well as other views that have not been accounted for here. These approaches are in no way mutually exclusive, and it can be argued that the choice of approach says more about the interpreter and her society than of that under study (cf. Bell 1997:xi). Furthermore, it must be stressed once again that ritual is a conceptual tool (cf. Leach 1968:520), useful in archaeology to make sense of material culture. From within any given contemporary society it is, however, almost impossible to distinguish that which is ritual from life in general. One could not exist without the other, they are entangled.

Let us now return to Lao Pako and the Lao Pako archaeological project. Above I have perhaps too easily categorised Lao Pako as a ritual site, without any further argument to strengthen my case. In the excavations so far, nothing has been recovered that clearly indicates a settlement, i.e. that people have actually lived on the hill. Instead, the material culture at Lao Pako is organised in (i) pit depositions of pottery-, glass-, stone- and metal objects, (ii) iron production, probably in clay-lined open furnace, and (iii) potsherds and artefacts on the former ground surface. Important characteristics of ritual are formalism, traditionalism, invariance, performance and sacred symbolism (Bell 1997:139-69). The Lao Pako pit deposits have been formed in a repeated and strictly formalised pattern of deposition, spanning over at least two centuries. This means that they who were the last to inter things in pits at Lao Pako before it was abandoned would have repeated an activity that had been performed also by the great grandparents of their great grandparents. In these pit depositions we can thus see not only formalism, which is akin to invariance, but also traditionalism. Further on in this chapter I will argue that we have good reasons also to discuss issues of symbolism and performance (cf. Carlson 1996:6) in the interpretation of Lao Pako, but for the time being it is enough to characterize it as a ritual site based on the argument above. In conclusion: the spatial organisation of pit depositions as apparently covering the entire hill, in combination with the absence of postholes or other remains of architectural structures, the presence of small-scale iron production intertwined with the pit depositions, and not least the infant burials indicate that this was a place for activities that can best be described and analysed in terms of ritual.

Once we have defined Lao Pako as a ritual site, we must decide how to ap-
proach it. The short history of ritual studies above is a list of anthropologists, psychoanalysts and other scholars who deal with contemporary rituals, or historical eye-witness-accounts of actual rituals. It goes without saying that even though the anthropological analysis of ritual as been criticized for its primacy on the visual (Clifford 1988:31), anthropologists have had access to information on details such as the movements and detailed spatial organisation of people and things, words and sounds, smells, visual and other sensuous aspects of the very ritual event, which are not to be traced in such detail through the archaeological record (Hicks 1999:xxi). Archaeological interpretations of ancient rituals have also been questioned as by anthropologist Edmund Leach, who wrote: ‘later writers have felt entitled to make the most sweeping reconstructions of ancient religious systems on the basis of slender archaeological residues of ritual practice’ (1968:521). Some archaeologists have shared Leach’s concerns, and accordingly there has been a tendency in archaeology to stop the interpretation of ritual remains at what have appeared to be safe categorization into putatively universal categories such as ‘burials’ and ‘hoards’. I cannot see the reason of not using the archaeological material for interpretation of ritual any more than other aspects of society – or may it be that the knowledge of other past rituals is potentially too challenging for our modern world view? I do not aim for my archaeology to be safe, but instead thought-provoking, debating and challenging. From where I stand, I can see that archaeological remains in general have obvious shortcomings compared with any anthropological documentation. But there are also just as obvious and well-known assets to the archaeological documentation, such as its potentially extended time frame, its specific and detailed material focus, and the analyst’s ability to go back again and again to the material approaching it from different angles, as opposed to the anthropological documentation of the elusive and situational ritual event. Thus the real shortcoming is not so much that a study of rituals in the past will never look like a study of rituals in the present, but rather that archaeologists have applied the anthropological description as the key to past rituals, instead of stressing the assets of the archaeological interpretation and let them enrich and challenge the interpretation of contemporary rituals.

Just as it is practically impossible to separate the sacred from the profane, or for that matter ritual from ordinary life, it is also problematic to divide rituals, past and present, into types such as ancestral, mortuary or fertility rites (Hicks 1999:xxiii). Any given ritual in real society will show elements of several of all possible distinguishable ritual types. Nevertheless, conceptual categories are useful for cross-cultural understanding and analysis of ritual. Based on our...
knowledge of the material culture at Lao Pako, combined with its socio-political setting 1500 years back as well as today, I have chosen to interpret Lao Pako as a place for *rites de passage*, that is rituals which are connected with the human life cycle, and here specifically birth and death (for a briefing see Bell 1997:94, cf. also van Gennep 1960 and Turner 1967). In next chapter’s analysis, I have taken inspiration from phenomenological as well as the structuralist approaches to ritual. With phenomenology, in combination with an emphasis on performance, I wish to come close to the Lao Pako people to understand the rituals in its most immediate sense, how they were lived. With my structuralist approach I stand further away and remain analytically distant, in an attempt to understand individual things as part of a greater order, that is ritual as reflecting a structure of thought, a cosmology. In accordance with Stefan Bekaert writing on iron production in Congo (Bekaert 1998), I see these two in theory fundamentally differing approaches merely as different levels of analytical abstraction, or in Bekaert’s words: multiple levels of meaning. Bekaert shows in a convincing study that any given ritual can be lived, understood and explained in several meaningful ways, all true, depending on the perspectives of both the participant and the analyst.

In conclusion, I will rely on anthropologically constructed frameworks for understanding and analysing ritual in my interpretation of the Lao Pako material culture. My conceptual framework has a partly phenomenological and partly structuralist emphasis. I wish to use these conceptual tools to enable the Lao Pako site to show us the possibility of another, a ritual or symbolic, dimension to prehistoric material culture, adding to the contemporary discourse of Southeast Asian archaeology.

**EMBODIED POTS**

As we have seen, pottery in an outstanding variety of sherds and complete vessels is one of the most characteristic features of the Lao Pako prehistoric site. A wide range of tempers and a great variation in shape and decoration testify to a passionate attitude to pottery making. It has been predominant in archaeology in general, and to no lesser extent in Southeast Asian archaeology, to use pottery almost exclusively to create chronological order, or ethnic groupings from vast archaeological materials (cf. Pluciennik 1997:37). But for Lao Pako, it is undoubtedly a key to deeper understanding to appreciate the use of pottery as one of the main materials in the rituals once performed there. Vast amounts of complete pottery vessels have been buried in pits, in intricate and careful formations, and in most cases completely empty.
How can we understand the pottery formations at Lao Pako? The direct burial association with the Lao Pako pottery that is evident through the occurrence of infant burials opens for comparisons with other jar burials, with infants at Ban Chiang (White 1982:28ff) and Ban Na Di (e.g. Higham and Kijingam 1984:435, 492, 495, 533-42; Higham and Thosarat 1998:81), and more generally as jar burials in covered urns from the Mun and Chi valleys in northeast Thailand that have been described in a paper by Phasook Indrawooth (1997). It has been proposed elsewhere that Lao Pako should be interpreted as such a jar burial site (e.g. Sayavongkhamdy et al. 2000:104; Pautreau et al. 2001:33; Higham 2002:193). And there are indeed similarities to a number of jar burial sites in Thailand described by Phasook Indrawooth, which also date to the same period of time as the activities at Lao Pako. Interestingly, Indrawooth also reports a clear association between jar depositions and iron working activities at these sites (1997:150). We will return to the co-existence of iron production and pottery depositions on these sites further south on the Khorat Plateau in the next chapter.

However, to put the Lao Pako site into the category ‘jar burial sites’ on the basis of remains from infant burials in two, or possibly three out of the almost one hundred complete jars uncovered so far, is not quite satisfactory. It simply would not do justice to the complexity of the site, there seems to be more to read out of the structure of these pottery depositions. There is a remarkable consistency in deposition patterns, suggesting a strong underlying structure regulating action – a structure that gives an opportunity to discuss the intentions of the people that created the site through these remains of their actions. To develop this further, and in consideration of the limitations (a statistically small sample with no direct comparative material from the surrounding areas) and assets (a limited and well structured sample showing morphological and depositional homogeneity) of the Lao Pako material culture, I will use the concept of metaphor as an analytical tool.

There is no ready and fixed definition of the term ‘metaphor’. The word – in its Greek origin metaphor means ‘carrying over’ – has been and is used in a number of different ways, in scientific analysis as well as in common speech. Here I build my argument along lines worked out by scholars such as Raymond Gibbs (1994) and Jonathan Culler (1981), which have been reworked to fit archaeology and the study of material culture foremost by Christopher Tilley (1999, see also Hodder 1982b). A common definition of metaphor is a term, image or object that in a particular cultural situation comes to carry the meanings of another term, image or object from another level of understanding or frame of reference. As expressed by Christopher Tilley, it is ‘a form of compressed analogy’, reflected
in examples such as *the foot of the hill and he was a lion in battle* (1999:5). Metaphors are verbal, textual or material reflections of an underlying cognitive structure and world view. This means that we all constantly use metaphors to understand the world and to communicate that understanding to others around us. In other words, the use of metaphors is a crucial element of all human cultural construction and communication. The metaphors we use in thinking and communication reflect how we associate certain material objects with other objects, or with people, personalities, roles etc. Furthermore, the use of certain metaphors have been shown to be specific to certain cultural situations. Thus metaphors are culture specific, and so the common use of a set of metaphors among a certain group of people at a particular time reflects in some sense a shared world view and cosmology (Tilley 1999).

In the case of the Lao Pako pottery, I will use the metaphor concept on two different levels of analysis, to visualise established structures of thought. In order to put the interpretation of the Lao Pako pottery into perspective, we will first take a closer look at some metaphorical structures in the culture of contemporary Southeast Asian archaeology.

The use of the term *jar burial site* in the archaeology of Mainland Southeast Asia appears to have started with the special issue on Sa-Huỳnh pottery in *Asian Perspectives* edited by Wilhelm Solheim (1959; also Janse 1959b:109). Prehistoric jar burial sites were already known as quite common in insular Southeast Asia, but here it was for the first time presented as a general phenomenon also on the mainland (cf. also Solheim 1960). The term *jar burial site* has thereafter often been used to describe sites with depositions of complete ceramic vessels, often from the late prehistoric period, and in association with other remains, such as iron production residues at sites mentioned by Phasook Indrawooth in an influential paper on the subject (1997). Christopher Tilley has analysed the concept of *megaliths* in European archaeology, as being a contemporary archaeological metaphor that unites under a single term what is in fact a number of rather different lithic remains, all being ‘big stones’, from a vast period of time and an enormous geographical area. This creates a unity that enables us archaeologists to order the material, to compare and analyse it within common frames, which have evidently never existed in prehistory (Tilley 1999:ch. 3).

I would argue that the concept of *jar burial site* is a comparable metaphor in the archaeology of Southeast Asia, albeit not as powerful as the megalith one. Such metaphors are, of course, essential for archaeological research, as they open for an appreciation of similarities and a discussion of differences in light of these similarities. Nevertheless, there is an inherent risk that the willingness to see
similarities overshadows the differences at hand. Tilley writes about the concept of megaliths: ‘[…] its very objectification in discourse as a separate entity leads us to expect that we *should* be dealing with a unitary phenomenon’ (*ibid.*:97). This expectancy of similarity may lead us to a reduced picture of jar burial sites in Mainland Southeast Asia, as having their only value in the bone, metal and glass remains buried in lidded jars, in close analogy with contemporary Buddhist cremation burials in the same area, in jars on secluded burial grounds. While creating such a picture, we are also disregarding other factors such as iron production and deposition of empty pottery vessels at the same prehistoric sites. Are they really anomalies, all such findings?

As I have argued above, the Lao Pako pots are for many reasons not easily squeezed into the concept of *jar burial site*. Instead, I will turn to other metaphorical structures to find a possible way of interpretation. The associations between pottery vessels and human bodies are common and well-known from many parts of the world (Barley 1984:99, 1994; Pluciennik 1997:50; Tilley 1999:8). One expression of that almost universal metaphorical relation is that the terminology used to describe different parts of a pottery vessel in many languages are identical to those for the human body: in English we talk about the neck, shoulder, body and foot of a jar. The same goes for both Lao (for example ¯¾¡ and êɺ¤) and Swedish (with examples such as *hals*, *buk* and *fot*). The connection is so obvious so that it is often overlooked, and the implications of such metaphorical connections between pottery and human bodies for the interpretation of material culture have almost exclusively been investigated in African and South American anthropology and archaeology. From many parts of Africa there are recordings of direct metaphorical relations between pottery and the body (Barley 1994; Ibigami 1984) and more specifically the female body. There are in some of the examples clear morphological indications of this pottery-body connection, with anthropomorphic vessels or with representations of single body parts in the shape of the vessel. In other cases the vessels reported to having been used as representations of bodies or parts of bodies appear to have no morphological similarities to that which it represents. Furthermore, pottery as almost synonymous with the earth is closely associated with the earth deities that are often female (Barley 1994:47-58). Pottery making on the whole is in all African examples connected to a female sphere of society (*ibid.*:61f), as it has also been indicated in different contemporary contexts in Mainland Southeast Asia (Mourer 1984:28; Lefferts & Cort 1997).

In Southeast Asian archaeology, however, there has been almost no interest at all in studying such metaphorical aspects of the production and use of pot-
tery. Tilley’s words: ‘metaphor is linked with emotion and subjectivity and opposed to a disinterested and objective understanding’ (1999:4) gives a clue to understanding why, considering that the processual approach which dominates the archaeology of Mainland Southeast Asia explicitly aims for an objective understanding of the past. In an anthology on African and Asian pottery from 1984, most of the papers dealing with African pottery evolves around pottery symbolism (e.g. Barley 1984; Ibigami 1984), while the ones on Southeast Asia (Ho 1984; Mourer 1984) deal almost exclusively with technology, reflecting general tendencies in these two archaeology traditions. This, of course, is not indicative of a complete lack of pottery symbolism in the Southeast Asian past. There are examples of direct morphological connections between pottery and human bodies also in Southeast Asia. In an excavation of a late prehistoric burial site in Burma, a Burmese-French research team with U Pauk Pauk, Jean-Pierre Pautreau and Patricia Mornais uncovered a grave that appeared to be a cenotaph, but instead contained a row of pottery vessels put together to take almost exactly the size and shape of a human body\(^3\). As another example, Euzebio Dizon has reported about a jar burial site in the Ayub Cave in the Philippines typologically dated to the last few centuries BC and the first few AD, where the burial jars are quite expressively anthropomorphic (Dizon 1993, 1996). The jars, which contained other smaller pottery vessels, bone and other grave goods, are shaped as naturalistic representations of human bodies, most are adult female bodies with breasts although there are also male bodies represented. The jars in this case seem to represent individual bodies, since the character and facial expression is unique for every jar (Dizon 1993:8).

The examples above should have made clear that we archaeologists never produce metaphor-free pictures of pots or any other kind of material culture – simply because metaphor is a crucial element of all human communication. Thus, talking about metaphor in relation with the Lao Pako pottery is not a matter of adding a new aspect to these things, but rather to visualise how these pots are comprehended through the metaphorical structure of contemporary archaeology and ask whether this is likely to correspond with the way the objects could have been understood in the past. Could it be that we have been missing an important factor of why these pots came to exist in the first place? I would argue that it is possible. In the archaeology of Southeast Asia, pottery has foremost been understood as containers, bearers of developmental information and markers of group identity. Such understanding is not in any sense ‘natural’, but culturally constructed. While these aspects are no doubt important for our understanding of the objects, there seems to be more to them.
Using a metaphorical structure where pottery is connected symbolically to the human body is in my view a viable way to bring meaning to the single objects at Lao Pako and their structure of deposition. With the body-, and specifically the female-body-metaphor applied to the Lao Pako jars, we see the infant burial jars with new eyes. Look at the beautiful jar 104! It has rounded body, like a pregnant woman’s belly, and with a narrow opening. The screw head appliqué decoration – could this be a stylised representation of the female genitals? There are obvious morphological similarities with the vaginal opening and the labia. In such a metaphorical structure, the jar with screw head appliqué becomes as a metonym (cf. Tilley 1999:5f; Bell 1997:50f) for the female, the mother, in the specific form of the belly of a pregnant woman. This means that these infants were put back into the womb before being interred (cf. Ibigami 1984:111f; Hicks 1984). Such a symbolism should not be far-fetched at all, provided that these remains are viewed as part of a metaphorical structure more similar to the ethnographic African examples discussed above, or indeed the structures expressed in the anthropomorphic pottery from the Philippines and the ‘pottery burial’ from Burma, than to the ‘jar burial site’-metaphor prevalent in the contemporary Southeast Asian archaeology tradition. Thinking with this metaphorical structure also opens up for a possible understanding of the majority of apparently empty deposited jars. It is known from several diverse cultural contexts that substances associated with childbirth, e.g., blood, birth waters, placenta and umbilical cord, are considered highly polluting, are surrounded by taboos, and have to be disposed of in a strict ritual, often as a burial (Parkin 1992:22, see also Bell 1997:97 for an example from Taiwan, Meskell 2002:81 for New Kingdom Egypt, and Ibigami 1984:110 for Nigeria). Could it be that the jars at Lao Pako were clay bodies used for ritual disposal of afterbirth?

It is my conviction that thinking with different metaphorical structures will bring us further in the understanding of all the empty buried jars at prehistoric sites all over Mainland Southeast Asia of which it has so far been impossible to
make sense. In any case, it is clear that the elaborate structures of deposition that remain after rituals at Lao Pako give us an opportunity to create an understanding of the use and importance of pottery during late prehistoric times that goes beyond the ordering of pots, jars and sherds into technologies and chronologies.

IRON IN OTHER WORDS

The evidence is not so rich for the Lao Pako iron production as for the pottery depositions, and arguments about the meaning of iron at Lao Pako are thereby undeniably weakened. Nevertheless, I find it necessary to discuss iron production and approaches to the analysis and understanding of iron production in general to create an intellectual space for us to be able to appreciate other dimensions of iron production than the technological and merely functional.

In a paper arguing for a wider appreciation of the symbolic dimensions of pottery making, Nigel Barley wrote: ‘For the ethnocentric Westerner, working metal is a purely secular, empirical activity that may entail an amount of ritual dressing up. Burying the dead is, however, 'pure' ritual and so cannot be the basis of a cross-cultural reality. It is not clear that African peoples [or people in any other cultural context, my remark] see things in the same light.’ (1984:95). For Barley in 1984, it was more difficult to argue for an appreciation of pottery symbolism in African archaeology than for the to him well-known ritual dimension of metal work.

In the archaeology of Southeast Asia today, the situation is reversed. Again, I would argue, the reason for this is to be found in the metaphorical structure of the discipline. The extraordinary contribution to the archaeological understanding of metals and metallurgy on the Khorat Plateau by the Thailand Archaeometallurgy Project (Pigott & Natapintu 1997; Pigott 1998; White & Pigott 1996, see also Bronson 1985), has created a strong functionalist discourse in metal studies for this area. Copper-, bronze- and iron production have been studied exclusively as industry with focus on technology, and analysed as a factor for socio-economic development (e.g. Mudar & Pigott 2003). Even more than with Southeast Asian pottery studies, arguably due to this being a narrower research field, this functionalist discourse in metal studies has become completely naturalised and undisputed in the way we view the prehistory of the Khorat Plateau.

In a paper on iron slag depositions in Swedish Viking Age burials, Mats Burström writes that the prevailing archaeological view of the iron production process seen only in terms of technology and economy, is a projection of a modern world view based on a scientific explanatory system, onto the past where it is more than likely that the world was experienced and explained in other terms.
AND THROUGH FLOWS THE RIVER

(Burström 1990, cf. also O’Connor 1975:190 and Haaland et al. 2002). Whilst I do not in any way deny the importance of studies of technology and the social function for our understanding of metals, I see also in accordance with Burström that other possibly important dimensions of Southeast Asian metal work are left unnoticed in this powerful and exclusive discourse.

In the field of anthropological studies, the ritual dimension of metal production is considered as an almost universal phenomenon. Nearly all known ethnographic and historical examples from outside of our contemporary industrialized and capitalized world system of production, show a high degree of ritualization surrounding all metal working activities (Eliade 1962; O’Connor 1975; Barley 1984; Burström 1990; Collett 1993; Herbert 1993; Rowlands & Warnier 1993; Bekaert 1998; Haaland et al. 2002). Often, the production ritual is saturated with sexual symbolism, and the smith is almost always considered to be endowed with supernatural powers (Herbert 1993:12ff; Burström 1990:265). Stanley O’Connor has written:

The iron worker assumes the role of time as he transforms the earth’s substances into metal. With fire and the bellows’ urgent breath he brings ores to ripeness, substituting his knowledge and human time for the pulse of life that moves transparent, a river of cosmic breath, through the rocks, the brooks, and the great mountain, linking the ancestors and the living through the transforming power of fire (O’Connor 1975:190).

A river of cosmic breath... The smith stands right on our modern boundaries between nature and culture, animate and inanimate, subject and object, and the constant transgression of these boundaries works to weaken them (ibid.:179). It is certainly not a coincidence that in Javanese, the smith is called mpu, the same title that is given to the poet (ibid.:175).

Most recent anthropological studies on the symbolism and ritualization of iron production have been carried out in different African contexts (e.g. Collett 1993; Herbert 1993; Rowlands & Warnier 1993; Bekaert 1998; Haaland et al. 2002). In parallel with the research on symbolic qualities of pottery discussed above, this imbalanced research situation is likely to produce a biased picture of symbolism in iron production to be exclusive for people living on the African continent. Attempting to counterbalance this conceptual bias, I will briefly present examples of powerful symbolism surrounding the production of iron from three separate Asian contexts:
In a concrete contemporary example of a production ritual from the Arun valley in eastern Nepal, Gunnar Haaland, Randi Haaland and Suman Rijal describes iron production as dependent on sacrificial rituals balancing male and female symbolic elements. Prior to the smelting of the ore, there was in this case a sacrifice of two ritually purified fowls, one hen and one rooster. During the smelting procedure, happening only on Wednesdays, a second rooster was sacrificed to the furnace, which was engendered and conceptualised as female. A third sacrifice was made in the smithy, where both tools and work space were sprinkled with blood from sacrificed animals. The transfer of blood is here analogous to transfer of life. The sacrifices in this example serves as a medium to prevent misfortune, which is part of the general conceptual structure among people in Nepal in general (Haaland et al. 2002:50f).

Stanley O’Connor has written in a paper on symbolism in Southeast Asian iron working, about the symbolism surrounding the kris. The Indonesian kris, a distinct and well-known form of knife or rapier, is an object embedded in powerful symbolism, and is important to the extent that it is inseparable from the concept of person (O’Connor 1975:175). Initially in the production process the ores are symbolically taken from the womb of the earth, where they are believed to be subject to cosmic laws of birth, death and decay. Thus the miner, smelter and smith are all interfering with the cosmic process and are subject to ritual regulations. The production of the kris is also surrounded by ritual offerings and ceremonial decorations of the workspace. All through the life of the kris, it has a strong connection with the realm of the ancestors, and it is subject to annual ritual cleaning and special storage regulations. It has a dedicated place in cosmos, and plays a pivotal role for the understanding of Javanese cosmology (O’Connor 1975).

Our third example is a Chinese story written by Chao Yeh in the 2nd century AD. The story tells of a famous sword made for Ho Lu, the king of Wu from 514 to 496 BC, by the renowned sword smith Kan Chiang. In beautiful words it shows the importance of the production ritual: ‘To make these swords, Kan Chiang collected refined iron from the five mountains, the best metal in the world [...] He chose the right time and place, with the Yin and the Yang in bright harmony, and the hundred spirits assembled to watch [...] (Needham 1980:516). And so iron production becomes poetry.
On a structural level, all these examples have an important gender dimension to the production of metal. The common use of metaphors such as ‘raw’ and ‘ripe’ to describe different stages of the iron production process (e.g. O’Connor 1975:189; Needham 1980:521) points further to structural similarities with the life cycle. Eugenia Herbert has described an example of sub-Saharan iron production as a transformative process which ‘invoke the human model as the measure of all things, giving pre-eminence to the two most salient aspects of lived experience, gender and age […] uniting the living with the dead’ (Herbert 1993:5). Ethnographic studies from as diverse places as Congo (Bekaert 1998), the Cameroon Grassfields (Rowlands & Warnier 1993:524, 539ff), Western Sudan and Tanzania (Haaland et al. 2002) as well as a summary of common conceptual structures surrounding iron-smelting in south- and east Africa (Collett 1993), all point to a clear metaphorical connection between iron making, especially smelting, and human procreation. The morphology of objects involved in the smelting procedure, their names, the choreography of the smith’s performance and the words used to describe the procedure, are all sexual metaphors. The furnace is often referred to as the womb and has the shape of a woman’s body and the tuyères have the shape of male genitals. The smith performs in some cases in a choreography based on sexual movements, and the smelting procedure is described as sexual intercourse. The metal is the baby, and slag is referred to as afterbirth. There are often strong regulations and taboos based on timing, gender and age surrounding the performative part of the ritual, which are similar to taboos and regulations surrounding pregnancy and child birth (e.g. Meskell 2002:69).

Acknowledging the great variation of rituals surrounding iron production all over the world, it can nevertheless be concluded that the examples cited here have a reoccurring metaphorical structure for metal production involving issues of gender and life cycle: procreation, life and death. Based on this conclusion, I suggest that it is more probable that the people who produced iron at Lao Pako 1500 years ago had a metaphorical structure for experiencing and explaining iron production related to that of gender, age and human procreation, than one based on the principles of industry and capitalism. This eliminates the possible conceptual contradiction that iron was produced at the same time and place where children were interred in jars with glass beads and jewellery. Structural similarities based on metaphors of gender and life cycle, between iron production and jar deposition, make it only logical that they belong to the same place.
LAO PAKO 1500 YEARS AGO
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SYNTHESIS

On the surface Lao Pako gives a modest impression; a small site on a small hill that yields to us quite ordinary finds such as pottery, pebble tools, glass beads and iron knives. The fact remains, however, that Lao Pako and its occupants were a part of the world in these late prehistoric times. For the people who used it the site was not peripheral, but the centre of their world. The artefacts provide evidence of contact with other areas along the Mekong River, and the people who used it were likely to have been aware and part of political and social forces in the surroundings. They organized their community in relation to that outer world, and the outer world also related to them. To do them justice, we must, therefore, approach the archaeological record in a way that will acknowledge the site Lao Pako and its people as being the centre of the world. So we will stay at Lao Pako, looking out on the world around.

LOOKING OUT
How did the surrounding world seem to the people at Lao Pako? We shall, of course, never be able to reconstruct their view of the world, but we can create a picture of how it might have seemed. As a point of departure we will look at what simultaneously happened in the surroundings, in the fourth to seventh centuries AD. This period of time when Lao Pako was in use is commonly referred to as the Iron Age1 in the archaeological narrative of Mainland Southeast Asia. The Iron Age, beginning around 500 BC in this central part of the mainland is characteristically described as an interim period with emerging centralisation in chiefdoms, eventually leading up to the full development of states towards the end of the first millennium AD. The preceding period, the Bronze Age, is like the European equivalent often described as a mysterious golden age filled with rich and elaborate material culture, while the Iron Age is expressionally low-profile but technologically more skilled. European and Southeast Asian alike, the Bronze Age is focused on ritual and described in terms of early civilisation, while the Iron Age is depicted as industrial and 'pre-state'. Charles Higham says about Mainland Southeast Asia: 'the Iron Age [...] involves increased social and technological sophistication that was to generate the development of indigenous states' (2002:170). The archaeological knowledge we have about what was going on in the surrounding Mekong valley and beyond during the period when Lao Pako was in use, is derived from a number of investigated and excavated sites. For some cases, mainly concerning the areas along the coasts of the mainland, there are
also written Chinese sources.

Further to the north was the expanding and aggressive Chinese empire. During the Han Dynasty it had been in control of large areas and populations in Bac Bo in present-day northern Vietnam, but now it no longer fostered such expansive designs towards the south (Higham 1996:332). Downstream the Mekong in the delta near the coast, a large centre with many similarities to contemporary Indian culture emerged in the first century AD. Major changes occurred there during the period Lao Pako was in use. The site Oc Eo, which has revealed a large amount of archaeological evidence corroborating Chinese historical accounts, seems to have been the earliest political centre, until it was abandoned in the fifth or sixth century (Higham 1989:245-254). Another political centre then grew around Angkor Borei. These large centres showed great similarities to India with similar political organization and religious elements, but were also in close contact with China, and had exchange contacts with the Roman Empire. The architecture was based on bricks and carved stone which, as well as the extraordinary and rich material culture, provide evidence of participation in an extensive trade network (ibid.). Related to the so-called Sa Huynh culture on the east coast, in what is today central and southern Vietnam, we find the Cham civilization which spoke an Austronesian language and had strong cultural connections to insular Southeast Asia. Most scholars believe it probable that the Cham were in contact with the Mekong valley which lies directly across the Truong Son mountain range (Higham 1996:307). The enigmatic Plain of Jars with its huge stone jars, that were dealt with in further detail in chapter Upstream, was dated by Madeleine Colani (1932, 1935(II):123) to the same period when Lao Pako was in use. This area is connected with Lao Pako via the Nam Ngum river, so the two places could from a strictly infrastructural point of view easily have been in contact with each other. The dating of the Plain of Jars cannot however be regarded as totally reliable, since it is based solely on the typological sequence established in the 1930s.

There were also smaller communities not as centralized as the polities described above, which are commonly referred to as peripheral and has not been granted much space in archaeological research. For instance, the northern upland areas of the mainland have not yet been subjected to much archaeological enquiry. Nonetheless, examples are known in northern Thailand (Higham 1989:61) of hunter-gatherer communities that kept their subsistence economy throughout the first millennium AD, and even well into the 20th century, without however living in isolation from the rest of the world.

All the above were part of the diverse world which surrounded the people at Lao Pako. Not very far away were communities that are described in archaeologi-
cal literature as dominant and expanding civilizations, just as there were also hunter-gatherers in interplay with other communities. Given the location of Lao Pako on one of the major waterways in Mainland Southeast Asia, and the knowledge we have of contemporary dominant communities and even state formations not far away, we can conclude that the people who occupied Lao Pako were exposed to and reacted to many different cultural influences. They should have been well aware of the surrounding world, and organized their community actively in relation and response to that world. The Mekong River is said to be the artery of Mainland Southeast Asia. To this day together with its tributaries it is the main route of transportation and communication (Sluiter 1993:17, 42). This has been so at least as far back as the earliest written accounts can tell, and we have no reason to doubt it has always been the case. Today large rivers are often used as national and regional borders, which is something we have to disregard when studying the prehistory in this area where the rivers rather have a strong connective quality.

In the river system immediately surrounding Lao Pako there is a number of investigated archaeological sites from approximately the same time as Lao Pako was in use, which are worth taking a closer look at (for a map, see figure 8). These sites can be divided into two groups, the moated sites and those without moats. The moated sites are mostly found in dry areas in the drainage basin of the Chi river further south on the Khorat Plateau. Most archaeological investigations so far on these moated sites have only involved surveys, and only a few have been excavated, therefore they are surrounded by many uncertainties. These, while yet insufficiently dated, seem to have appeared just before or at the same time as iron working. Many moated sites of differing size were constructed, probably both before and during the time Lao Pako was used. The most thoroughly investigated are Ban Chiang Hian, Ban Kho Noi and Non Chai. They appear to represent large settlements, and some were perhaps regional centres for smaller communities in the surrounding area. Their systems of water control were evidently of great importance, and more recent studies have been inclined to emphasise the aspect of water control rather than defence as the primary idea behind the moat constructions (Moore 1988, 1992; Higham 1996:240ff, 2002:187f; O’Reilly 1997; Welch 1997:71). The lack of thoroughly reported excavations from these moated sites disables any deeper comparisons, but as regards the Ban Chiang Hian ceramics, the examined rims from the upper layers show remarkable correspondence to the rims found at Lao Pako (cf. Higham and Kijngam 1984:607ff). The appliqué decoration also occurs at Ban Chiang Hian (Higham and Kijngam 1984:616). At Non Chai it is the later pottery decoration, or rather the lack of
decoration with a preference for plain and cord-marked wares (Higham 1996:214; cf. Bayard et al. 1985) that corresponds well to the majority of the Lao Pako vessels. There was probably local iron smelting at both Non Chai and Ban Chiang Hian, just as there was at Lao Pako.

In general, the known sites without moats show a continuity from the preceding Bronze Age, but their stratigraphic sequences indicate that major changes occurred with the introduction of iron. New artefacts were introduced, as well as new pottery, regarding both technology and style. It has been suggested in the interpretation of the cultural sequence at the site Ban Na Di that these changes were due to an immigration of people from the south, since there are striking similarities with the material culture of the moated sites to the south (Higham 1996:231ff). As Helmut Loofs Wissowa (1993:327) has pointed out, to talk about migrations as explanation for cultural change in this area, would be to oversimplify the complex relations between people and material culture (cf. Shanks and Tilley 1987:ch.4). I suggest that explanations for change must be found within the dynamics of these bronze- and iron using communities, without ignoring the importance of external contacts. These Iron Age sites without moats are in some respects similar and in others different to Lao Pako and the artefacts found there. We will take a closer look at three of the most thoroughly investigated.

*Ban Chiang* is a mound-shaped settlement and burial site with a long sequence of use from the early Bronze Age and into the Iron Age, which had its main period of occupation much earlier than Lao Pako. The initial use of Lao Pako was contemporary with the very last activity at Ban Chiang, in the third or fourth century AD. It is also in this late period – period LPX, dated from 200 BC to AD 300 (White 1990:125) – that we find similarities with the material culture at Lao Pako (White 1982; Labbé 1985). Like in Lao Pako, the dominating find category at Ban Chiang is ceramics. Although both sites reveal a great cultural focus on pottery, and a highly developed artistic skill in manufacturing it, the Lao Pako ceramics differ significantly from that of Ban Chiang period LPX (cf. Glanzman & Fleming 1985). There are few similarities in vessel forms and the composition differs, although there are similarities in some of the tempers used. The basic manufacturing technique, with a moulded basal hemisphere and the upper body and rim added with the paddle-and-anvil technique, appears to be the same (cf. White 1982:31). The appliqué decoration which is very common at Lao Pako occurs as well, albeit sparsely on the Ban Chiang pottery. It is, however, never refined with the screw head and combined with incisions in red slip and occasionally with red-on-buff painted decoration as in Lao Pako ceramics. The relation is reversed with the exclusively red-on-buff painted ceramics which is very
common at Iron Age Ban Chiang (Higham 2002:190f), whereas painted vessels occur more as an exception in the Lao Pako material. All this indicates that there are relations between these two pottery traditions, even though it has a distinctive local character at both sites. Other artefacts appear to have different relationships. The tiny bronze bells found with the infant burial in J107 directly resemble bronze bells found at Ban Chiang (Labbé 1985:31f). One recovered bronze bangle (ibid. 38) also resembles a bangle (F2003:180) found in an infant burial at Lao Pako. Glass- and carnelian beads found at Ban Chiang and displayed at the site museum outside Udon Thani are almost identical to beads found at Lao Pako (cf. also Labbé 1985:44, 46, 68). Another specific artefact type that is represented at both Lao Pako and Ban Chiang are the cylindrical or pointed seals (also called clay roller or clay seal). In particular the Lao Pako roller with a zigzag pattern is in almost total correspondence to rollers from the late period of Ban Chiang (White 1982:54; Labbé 1985:49, 69). Spindle whorls are also almost identical between the two sites (White 1982:76; Labbé 1985:52). There are however material categories such as clay figurines, clay pellets and clay anvils that are quite common at Ban Chiang, but are not represented at Lao Pako.

The material culture of the similar site Ban Na Di is closely related to that of Ban Chiang. Major changes occurred at Ban Na Di with the introduction of working iron in the first centuries BC (cf. the late period of Ban Chiang (White 1982)). The radiocarbon dating of Ban Na Di is still uncertain, and no exact chronological sequence of the different occupation layers has been established (Higham & Kijngam 1984:30ff), but the levels associated with an iron-related settlement should be roughly contemporary with the use of Lao Pako. These levels also reveal the closest similarities to Lao Pako. Ban Na Di and Ban Chiang are similar in the relation their ceramics show to the Lao Pako pottery. The same manufacturing techniques have been used, but there are differences in shape and composition of the fabric. The rim sections show a remarkable correspondence with the Lao Pako rims, which may very well be the result of the use at both sites of the paddle-and-anvil manufacturing technique. The complete vessels also show some similarities to the Lao Pako vessels. At Ban Na Di, unlike Ban Chiang we see a preference for the appliqué decoration (Higham & Kijngam 1984:312-322, 208ff). The appliqué vessels have been dated to around 500 BC and are considerably smaller than the Lao Pako ceramics. However, the dating, as I have argued elsewhere, is rather insecure (Källén 2000) and the execution of the appliqué resembles that of the larger Lao Pako jars. The shapes of the complete Ban Na Di vessels are also more similar to Lao Pako examples than to Ban Chiang vessels. For example, both Ban Na Di and Lao Pako have round-based, softly con-
toured jars with appliqué decoration immediately below the neck, and there are many examples of cordmarked vessels and small pots covered with red slip (Higham & Kijngam 1984). For other artefacts, the relationship is similar to Ban Chiang. Tiny bronze bells are found also at Ban Na Di (ibid.:135), and the glass beads (ibid.:80) appear from drawings to be almost identical to beads found at both Ban Chiang and Lao Pako. Eight stamp rollers (‘clay seals’, Higham & Kijngam 1984:148ff; Higham & Thosarat 1998:168) have been found at Ban Na Di, all but one in the levels contemporary with Lao Pako. Similarly to Ban Chiang, at Ban Na Di there are also many finds of clay figurines, clay pellets and clay anvils that are not represented at Lao Pako. At this later phase of Ban Na Di, burials consisted mainly of infants interred in lidded urns together with iron knives, bronze bangles and occasionally a few glass beads on a separate part of the burial ground. Although the ceramics are not in any respect as elaborate as those of Lao Pako, and the depositions are to a greater extent formalised at Ban Na Di (Higham 2002:189), there is still an interesting parallel to the association of lidded vessels, iron, bronze and glass beads with infant burials on both these sites. There is also indication of local iron production at Ban Na Di from the presence of iron slag (ibid.). So-called jar-burials also occur in moated sites on the Khorat Plateau which are closely related to Ban Chiang Hian and Non Chai, for example at Ban Kan Luang (Indrawooth 1997). Similar mortuary pottery jars are known from the Plain of Jars (Colani 1932:Pl. XLI:1; Sayavongkhamdy et al. 2000). The association with iron-working activities at these sites corresponds to the internal structure of Lao Pako, but it is quite clear that not all ceramics at Lao Pako have been buried with human interments.

Noen U-Loke is another well excavated and documented site further south in the Mun river valley. It is a settlement and burial site that covers twelve hectares and has a stratigraphic sequence five metres deep. It was mainly occupied in the Iron Age, both before and during Lao Pako was in use. The excavations of Noen U-Loke are yet to be fully reported, so the information about the site is derived from a brief but well illustrated account (Higham 2002:196ff). The size and structure of Noen U-Loke is quite different from that of Lao Pako, and the ceramics appear to be entirely dissimilar. However, from the pictures of artefacts and in situ contexts, it is clear that there are some similarities between this site and Lao Pako. The glass beads displayed in the photos are in many cases identical to those of Lao Pako. Perhaps the most striking example is a photo of a grave in mortuary phase 3B with a necklace still in situ around the neck of the buried person (Higham 2002:207), with yellow and blue glass beads, strung in an identical order to the necklace F2003:92 found at Lao Pako. There are identical spindle
whorls, and there is further a number of stone adzes similar to the adzes found at Lao Pako associated with the Iron Age remains at Noen U-Loke. These artefacts are also indicative of structural similarities between this site and Lao Pako. There are infant burials in jars, some interred with rich sets of grave goods bronze anklets, bangles, finger- and earrings, glass bead necklaces and extra pottery vessels, and others were covered in white rice (Higham 2002:203). Furthermore there are depositions of lidded but empty urns, apparently in association with iron production. There are also what Dougald O’Reilly and Charles Higham have called ‘clay floors’ at both Noen U-Loke and the similar nearby site Non Muang Kao (O’Reilly 1997; Higham 2002:200). In photos and drawings, the ‘clay floors’ at Noen U-Loke and Non Muang Kao are similar to the structures of fired clay at Lao Pako, and they all appear to be related to metal production (ibid.).

It is clear that there are connections between Lao Pako and the sites described above, even though internally they are very different from each other. With these external relations in mind, we will now focus our attention inwards, to find meaning in the internal structure and organisation of Lao Pako.

INSIGHTS

The importance of water in Southeast Asian cosmologies is well known. It is reflected in houses, monumental architecture, known mythologies, and it is also strongly hinted in archaeological remains such as the late prehistoric moated settlements on the Khorat Plateau and further to the south, where the moats recently have started to raise an interest as something with symbolical rather than merely functional importance. Janice Stargardt’s study of the ancient Pyu of Burma (Stargardt 1990) is another good example of recent research into the cultural importance of water in Mainland Southeast Asia. Characteristic for this research field, Stargardt’s study investigates an early urban context based on an underlying Buddhist cosmology with a strong focus on technology and economy. It is radically different from this study, in respect of its theoretical approach as well as the study object. Nevertheless, it is possible to find numerous indications of the cosmological and symbolic importance of waterways to the Pyu, for instance the importance of places of confluence and diversion (1990:56ff, 63f), or the influence of what Stargardt has called ‘accidents of topography’ on architectural shapes (ibid.: ch.3). Bearing this in mind, we return to Lao Pako. The Lao Pako landscape is in a sense defined and dominated by the mighty river Nam Ngum. The Nam Ngum rises in the Xieng Khouang Province near the Plain of Jars and flows down into the lowlands of the Khorat Plateau where it joins the Mekong east of Vientiane city. Near this confluence in the lowlands but with the
mountainous uplands within sight is Lao Pako, as we have seen purposefully placed on a hill with a good view both upstream and downstream along the river. We must assume that the river played a central part in people's lives at Lao Pako. Not only is it the main link to and from the outer world, but also it is essential for survival in the dry season as it provides fresh water and fish. Notwithstanding its merits as an essential life giver, the river can also be a deadly threat in the rainy season when it can get out of control, often causing serious flooding around the site. This dual quality of the river and its water makes it likely that the Nam Ngum was as central in the cosmology and mythology of the Lao Pako people as rivers have been and are for people living alongside them in Southeast Asia and elsewhere today (e.g. Allan 1997).

With the river and its water as part of the definition of the place, people chose Lao Pako for their rituals 1500 years ago. The remains from these rituals that we have excavated, documented and reconstructed in the preceding chapters show that the place was created through a series of actions, of two different kinds. The people who came to Lao Pako when it was in use saw ceramics, charcoal, iron slag, spindle whorls and maybe textiles and other perishable materials lying around on the ground. The things on the ground held unspoken messages for them, without words telling which things can or must go together and which are incompatible with each other. The things they saw must have reminded them of their own immediate history, who they were, where they came from, how the world was constituted. Spindle whorls and seals go with iron and tuyères, perhaps belonging conceptually to different genders and as such creating balance with their unity. There were also large but shallow pits and structures of fired clay, where there were hearths with lots of charcoal and the equipment to produce metals. Iron slag, broken tuyères and iron scrap were scattered around these shallow pits. This was the place for transformation of earth and rock into shining plastic metal, through a violent and dangerous fire process controlled by the blacksmith. The creation of metal is in many ways analogous to the creation of life. The shining metal is born like a baby after the ore has been fertilized by the air coming through clay tuyères resembling the male genitals. The fire in the hearth – the womb, delivers a piece of metal as well as lumps of slag – the afterbirth. All who came to Lao Pako and saw the shallow pits with charcoal and hearths may not have had these associations; perhaps only a chosen few had such an insight into the production ritual.

People also came to Lao Pako to dig pits in the ground. They may have been only a few, or a large group of people, and they may have dug many pits or only a single one at a time. We cannot know the exact ritual choreography. But we do
know that they arranged things in the pits with remarkable care and then filled them up again, so that they were invisible on the ground. Despite its invisibility, the things under the ground must have worked to render the place meaningful. Unlike the displayed things on the ground that are visible and open for negotiation, the hidden things under the ground are closed entities. They are static, fixed moments in time and space. Non-verbal sentences. Christian Vinterhav has written about the Lao Pako ceramics:

The pottery formations alone are an indication of an interrelation between the included vessels. However, the many similarities between the vessels that are paired together further enhance the impression of interrelation, and ‘unity’ seems an apt word for their description. It seems as though the two jars act as one body or volume and not simply as two vessels lidding each other (in Källén et al. 2002).

This is also in my view how we must regard these deliberate groupings of different materials and objects; as bodies or volumes. It is clear that different materials have been treated differently in the depositions, and this is a clue to their role in the world of the people who used Lao Pako. It has earlier been observed that Bronze Age and Iron Age ceramics on the Khorat Plateau were produced with local distinctiveness almost down to village level (Higham 2002:185; White et al. 1991:201f). The Lao Pako ceramics reconfirms this observed pattern. It displays technological similarities with the ceramics on other sites further south in the river system, but has a strong and expressive style of its own. The variation among the Lao Pako ceramics is quite outstanding, and the extraordinary effort put into the visual expressions of the vessels, as compared to the rather poor durability from a strictly functional point of view, shows the importance of these ceramics as display objects. When it comes to iron, as far as we understand it from the presence of on-site production, at least some of the iron objects are also of local origin. The ritual location of the iron production process is a further indication of the beyond-functional meanings attached to iron as a material, as incorporated in pit depositions. With bronze, the attitude appears to have been different. The bronzes represent a wide array of different shapes, of which a few have direct connections to the known contemporary sites further south. Investigations of earlier Bronze Age mining in the central Mekong valley have shown that copper mining and bronze production is likely to have been located to mines in the ore-rich outskirts of the Khorat Plateau, that were used by a large number of communities far away on the alluvial plains in the centre of the plateau (Pigott 1998; White & Pigott 1996). One area in particular has been suggested to have been of great importance at least some time into the Iron Age,
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that of Phu Lon just to the south of the Mekong river less than 100 km from Lao Pako (see figure 8). The bronze objects at Lao Pako may well have been produced within such a larger circuit of bronze production. For two material categories: beads and textile production objects, there are strong and direct connections to other contemporary sites to the south. However, these two categories are quite different from each other, so while it can be said with certainty that the beads have been in circulation over large areas, the spindle whorls and clay seals are, just like the ceramics, likely to have been locally produced, albeit sharing ideas of shape and technology with other groups of people on the Khorat Plateau.

The distribution of things, in the micro-contexts on the Lao Pako hill as well as in the macro-scale on the Khorat plateau, is pivotal to render them meaningful in their prehistoric context. The pit depositions at Lao Pako in most cases contain ceramics. In a structuralist sense, there appear to be clear rules regulating action, but within the frames for what is possible there is a passionate attitude to the individual expressions. First of all, the units of ceramic vessels indicate the meaning of temper as something more than a functional addition to the clay to prevent it from cracking. Almost all groups of vessels include one small buff coloured and sand tempered pot, so thin and delicate so that they are often almost dissolved. The vessels tempered with rice chaff have a ware so packed with rice so that not only are they ugly, but also useless as containers, since they crumble as soon as they are exposed to any pressure. Most of the large appliqué decorated jars with grog-2 tempered ware have such thin body sections and heavy fluted rims that they tend to collapse from their own weight. The laterite inclusions used in combination with other tempers have no apparent function other than adding attractive red dots to the surface of the ware. Or is it the iron ore as material that is of importance? It is clearly the vessels as such that are in focus in these depositions. They are containers, but most importantly they contain important substances – such as iron and rice – in themselves. In other words, they are embodied substances. In this way, seen and appreciated in terms of embodied substances, the Lao Pako ceramics challenge the common ‘quality’ assumption, which in a taken-for-granted manner tend to sneak into archaeological interpretations of ceramic culture. Based on the principles of capitalist economics, it assumes that societies develop a ceramic culture, using all available technological skill to maximise the output in terms of what we would call ‘high quality’. The ‘high quality’-ignorant yet sophisticated complexity of the Lao Pako ceramic culture is a direct evidence of the over-simplification of such assumptions. We could take the argument even further and say that bad quality might have been actively and intentionally produced to put an emphasis on decay in the
rituals these ceramics were part of. Such an interpretation, a parallel to the Buddhist notion of *the Impermanence of Matter*, gives one more dimension to the use of metaphors of life and death at Lao Pako.

To enable a discussion on the meaning of things at Lao Pako, there is a need for a few words on the vast subject of gender. Early gender studies in archaeology were almost exclusively driven by a strong radical feminist agenda, which has sometimes, rather simplistically but aptly, been described as ‘add-women-and-stir’ (Sørensen 2000). But, as put by Alison Wylie: ‘what began as an enterprise of adding a missing piece to a complex puzzle led to a reconfiguration of the puzzle as a whole.’ (Wylie 1997:48). Gender studies in archaeology have changed from a search of missing women, to an appreciation of the importance of gender, in terms of what Donna Haraway (1988) has called ‘situated difference’, working in web-like structures reaching from the individual level to the widest conception of society for the organization and world view of any human society. Like many recent gender studies in archaeology, I address gender as complex, embedded and situational, that is, *not* reduced to women and men as polarised, essential and exclusive dichotomous categories. Gender is here used to describe a fluid system of categories made valid through situation, and intrinsically linked to other identity factors such as race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. (cf. Wylie 1997:34f; Meskell 1998a). What is crucial in my use of gender as a category for analysis, is the acknowledgement of the importance of actual people and their most immediate experiences of what it is to be in the world, for our understanding of human societies in the past. This approach to gender is inspired by recent archaeological discussions on embodiment, that is, a conceptualization of the past as lived, sensual experience. Within this field of research, it is particularly in the approach that considers the experiential dimension to embodiment and its consequences for studies on material culture (Hamilakis *et al.* 2002:5) that I have found my inspiration.

When ceramic vessels, that I have argued are embodied substances, were interred in a pit together with other materials at Lao Pako, it was a non-verbal statement. Of what, is the inevitable question? Firstly, it is a story about birth. About conception, pregnancy and delivery. Iron was created when the air from the bellows met the ore in the furnace. Metal was born like a baby in the furnace womb. Fired clay was taken from the clay-lined walls of the furnace, was pulverized and used to temper the clay to make jars decorated with appliqué and a blood red slip around its orifice. In this way, I argue, the ceramic jars are humanized and treated like bodies (cf. Hamilakis *et al.* 2002:11). These jars, embodying the very material of the delivering furnace, have the size and shape of a pregnant
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belly. To pass one’s hand over the rounded body of a jar is sensually the same as stroking the belly of a woman in the last stages of pregnancy. Elisabeth Beausang, writing on the subject of childbirth and mothering, argues convincingly that a discursive neglect for childbirth as an event, has led to an almost complete absence of material culture related to birthing in archaeological interpretations. If they do not address and discuss birthing in prehistory, she writes, ‘archaeologists will never be able to identify material remains that can be related to childbirth events. This will ultimately lead to the contention that such a material does not exist.’ (Beausang 2003:10). A wide range of anthropological studies indicate on the contrary that childbirth is not only of great cultural importance, but is often surrounded by a whole set of material culture, such as sharp-edged tools, amulets and other curious objects, pits for various uses, as well as pots and bowls for ritual disposal of afterbirth (cf. Beausang 2003:68).

Let me now clarify about what I do not mean by an allusion to pregnancy and birth. I am much disturbed by the persistent idea in archaeological interpretations that womanhood is essentially connected with being, or aspiring to be, a mother (for further critique see Meskell 1998b and Tarlow 2000:724). In my present world, it is possible to manifest several kinds of womanhood such as the married mother, the single heterosexual woman, the single lesbian woman, the lesbian woman living in partnership, etc. There is no reason to believe that the world was simply ‘simpler’ in the past. My point is, following the critique by Butler (1993, 1999) and others, that there are in most human societies several distinguishable gender categories in the wider group that can be defined biologically as ‘women’. Gender is necessarily a cultural construction, a structure under constant renegotiation. Any essentializing attempt to ‘naturalize’ gender will inevitably squeeze people into homogenizing boxes, where they will not quite fit in. Many will instead be defined as ‘not quite’, as ‘lacking’ something. In the history of men, women have been defined as lacking (a penis), and in a similar manner many women in the biologically defined group of ‘women’ are considered to be ‘not quite’ women because they are lacking children or heterosexual desires. With this rather extensive detour I wish to say that it is important to see the connection between the appliqué ceramics and pregnancy at Lao Pako not as a direct representation of ‘female’ or ‘woman’ per se. What it is rather, is a manifestation of life, creation and procreation, all of which are potentially of great importance to all members of society, and all revolving around concepts of gender (e.g. Thomas 1999).

Consequently, to make sense of these complex material relationships, we must engage fully in a gendered interpretation of the site, and I will depart from the
words of Marie Louise Stig Sørensen:

The conflict arising from recognizing the complexity and the slipperiness of gender as a basic structure of society is at the same time a tremendous challenge. It shows us the limitations of our knowledge and understanding (2000:6).

The importance of gender for our understanding of the social relations in any human society should be obvious. The negotiation of gender relations is an important part of the reproduction, maintenance and change of social systems (Sørensen 2000:7). But it is a slippery road to walk. Sarah Tarlow writes in a paper on emotions in archaeology, a subject that touches upon gender studies and which is also crucial to consider in an interpretation of the material culture at Lao Pako, that emotion is a centrally important area of human understanding, meaning and experience. As archaeologists, she writes, we must become critically aware of how we represent emotion in the past, to recognize the significance of emotion in writing three-dimensional and humanized pasts (Tarlow 2000:730).

Pregnancy and birth, both human and metallic, were present in the Lao Pako rituals together with death and decay. Embodied in the ceramic vessels were substances such as iron ore representing a pre-form to life, crushed furnace clay representing the pregnant woman, and rice as another important aspect for understandings of fertility and growth. In some vessels, all containing the crushed furnace clay, infants have been interred with elaborate sets of grave goods. Several writers (e.g. Meskell 2002:429; Tarlow 2000:725; Beausang 2003:118f) have argued that infant burials that show great ritual consideration in terms of placement, grave offerings, etc. are strong indications that children and infants were considered to be persons, that they were cherished and their loss painfully felt. The infant burials at Lao Pako support such a view. The elaborate sets of grave goods, individually composed, yet united by bangles and beads, show that these infants were treated as individuals. It is possible that the tiny bronze bangles are identity markers indicating that the child belonged to the gender category ‘infant’. I am sympathetic to Tarlow’s description of death as the moment when relationships are frozen, and that it is the relationship between the dead and the bereaved that is manifested in the material composition of the grave (1999, 2002:92). In one of the infant burials at Lao Pako, the tiny child was accompanied by sets of bronze adornments on both arms and legs, glass beads to form an amulet, and had an adult sized finger ring, supposedly in his or her hand. Beads can be used to manifest the belonging to a certain age-, gender- or ethnic group, which is most certainly in the case of an infant, decided by they who have lost their child. The finger ring is a touching token of a parent’s love.
Gender relations, reaching far beyond issues of man and woman as clear-cut categories, are culturally constructed, and as such also manifested in material culture. To clarify what meaning I put in the word ‘construction’, I speak with Judith Butler:

Moreover, why is it that what is constructed is understood as an artificial and dispensable character? What are we to make of constructions without which we would not be able to think, to live, to make sense at all, those which have acquired for us a sense of necessity? […] Thinking the body as constructed demands a rethinking of the meaning of construction itself. (Butler 1993:xii).

Constructed and fluid gender categories are real and indispensable for all human societies. They are part of what it is to be-in-the-world, and they leave material impressions. Material manifestations of gender relations and negotiations in the archaeological record should therefore not surprise anyone, but should rather be expected. It is on this basis that I want to interpret Lao Pako as a place for manifestation of ideas about gender, life and death. Lao Pako is thus not only a production site, nor is it a burial ground. In its ritual embracing of both, it can best be described as a comment on life.
CREATING REFLECTIONS

My archaeological narrative is only one of many stories about Lao Pako. Like reflections on the surface of the Nam Ngum flowing by, new knowledge is born with a shift in focus or a different gaze. People who live nearby and for whom Lao Pako is part of the living space have stories to place it in the landscape, explain where it is, what it is and what it means. The Lao PDR national authorities for cultural heritage management tell other stories about Lao Pako, placing it in the story of the nation. Finally, its present inhabitants, the Ban Pako resort with its staff, management and visitors produce and reproduce a narrative which makes it a tourist attraction. These different narratives are distinguishable but not in an essentialist sense, rather they move in and out of each other depending on the situation. All of them use my archaeological narrative to some extent, either adopting or relating to parts of it. Likewise my archaeological story depends on these other stories of Lao Pako, partly adopting and partly relating to them. The way I choose to approach this multivocality is reflective of my understanding of culture. The question of how to understand culture has been widely debated in anthropology and culture studies (Hastrup & Olwig 1997). I have taken the position that any essentialist notion of culture in the form of separate and unique but homogenous entities, is not only intellectually unsustainable, but also politically dubious. When I present Lao Pako as a ‘place of culture’, I aim instead to convey a view of culture as a ‘matter of concern’, and, paraphrasing Hastrup and Olwig: explore the siting of culture as a dynamic process of self-understanding among its people (ibid.). This chapter, therefore, takes a broader grip on Lao Pako, aiming to investigate how it is created in the present as a place of the past.

VIEWS, VIEWPOINTS AND INTERVIEWS

Quite early on in my relationship with Lao Pako I realized that mine was but one of many views of that place. Naturally, I believe in my archaeological view and it is the most important from my professional perspective. Nonetheless I recognize that other views are as valid and important from other perspectives. Most importantly, these views interact and work together situated in different contexts, and they are also to some extent defined in relation to each other, working together to create Lao Pako as a place associated with the past. My understanding of these other views initially evolved in my informal interactions with people from the nearby villages, the tourist resort management and the national heritage management authorities respectively. When I eventually decided to incorpo-
rate these other views as part of my story of Lao Pako, I conducted taped inter-
views with representatives from the three different groups. All interviews were
conducted in March and April 2003 by a team including myself, Kanda Keosopha
(เกื้อสะ .locale) from the Laos National Museum, who has also done all trans-
scripts in Lao, and Nor Ountagok (นุ่ม อุมาคกอา) from the nearby village Ban
Phonkham. All the interviewed were asked the same set of questions:

– How would you describe what there is at Lao Pako?
– What do you think about the archaeological excavations there?
– Has Lao Pako been an important place in the past? If so, in what way?
– Is Lao Pako an important place today? If so, why?
– How would you like to see the future for Lao Pako?

Transcripts of the interviews are used as concrete examples to illuminate my
general understanding of the different views on Lao Pako. These concrete ex-
amples will be presented below embedded in an argument based on my own
collected experience from five seasons of fieldwork in the area around Lao Pako
in cooperation with the Ministry of Information and Culture and the Laos Na-
tional Museum in Vientiane. These experiences are in turn expressed in a frame-
work derived from the official history of Laos, social anthropology and general
literature on cultural heritage management, and is here communicated in the form
of ethnography. I understand an ethnographic text in similar terms as James
Clifford, which in turn has connections to Donna Haraway’s notion of situated
knowledges. Clifford describes ethnographic texts as:

...orchestrations of multivocal exchanges occurring in politically charged situa-
tions. The subjectivities produced in these often unequal exchanges [...] are con-
structed domains of truth, serious fiction (Clifford 1988:10, see also Haraway
1988).

This is how I want this Lao Pako ‘ethnography’ to be read and understood.
It must however be clarified that this is no anthropological study as such. It does
not go deep enough to do justice to the social and ideological complexity of each
group respectively. This should be kept in mind. The aim is instead to illuminate
how Lao Pako has consistently been created as a site of interest, a place from
the past to fit in a number of ideological frameworks. In order to do so, the sto-
ries have been condensed and in some cases of necessity almost caricatured in
my choices of what to retell and what to leave out. But the text also aims to show
how identity, as expressed in these different people’s attitudes to Lao Pako, is
relational, inventive, complex, and at times contradictory. In conclusion, this
chapter is not a comprehensive account of the social dynamics surrounding Lao Pako. It is about my understanding of the pasts of Lao Pako, of how a place from the past can come into being, and I aim to show how its value is situated and created through endlessly ongoing negotiations.

LAOS AND THE LAO PDR CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT
Since cultural heritage is always, but not exclusively politically defined on the national level, it is important to understand the current political situation in Laos before it is possible to discuss the national cultural heritage management and its view of Lao Pako. The cultural heritage management of the Lao PDR is governed and administrated by the Ministry of Information and Culture, where the Minister and all officials are appointed by the Communist Party. Since the Lao People’s Democratic Republic is a communist one-party state, regulations for cultural heritage management are designed by the Party and thus not through a democratic process. While the basic regulations for physical protection and management of cultural heritage, as well as the overall definition of what heritage is, are formulated in an almost universal format (cf. Decree of the President of the Lao PDR on the Preservation of Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage (Phoumsavan 1997)), the objectives of heritage management are more interesting, since they indicate the ideological basis for appreciating the national heritage. In ‘Objects of this Presidential Decree’ it is declared that the aim of managing, conserving and preserving the national heritage should be:

…raising the spirit of patriotism, people’s democracy, awareness and ownership of the fine national and ethnic cultures (Phoumsavan 1997:2).

While it is a common objective to actually use heritage to ‘raise the spirit of patriotism’, it is not often expressed so overtly in a code of laws. In combination with ‘people’s democracy’, which is synonymous with one-party communism, this declaration shows that the explicit aim of cultural heritage management in Laos is to legitimise the current political rule. It is also interesting to note the formulation ‘awareness and ownership of the fine national and ethnic cultures’, turning ethnic minority groups into static objects that become part of the national heritage, rather than as rightful owners of the national heritage as citizens of the Lao PDR. This is a common phenomenon all over the world when nation states are ascribing ethnic minority groups the status of heritage objects.

What is then considered to be the national heritage of the Lao PDR? In the Atlas of Laos, a compilation of national and regional statistics to aid the State Planning Committee (Sisouphanthong & Taillard 2000), the following is men-
tioned on Laos’ cultural heritage:

The jewels of Lao cultural heritage are strung out along the Mekong Valley, from the city of Luangphrabang, the original capital of Lan Xang, included on UNESCO’s World Heritage List; via Vientiane, which replaced it in the 16th century; to the Khmer temple of Wat Phou, the ancient capital of the kingdom of Champassak; and the Khone Falls. The prehistoric site of the Plain of Jars (even if the pagodas of the Phouane principality were destroyed during the war), the Buddhist sites of the Sekong Valley and the Xamneua caves that sheltered the Pathet Lao administration during the bombings are among the country’s most famous other sites (Sisouphanthong & Taillard 2000:22).

There are a number of important elements in the account above. The first sentence carries a subtle but crucial message: the jewels of the national heritage are found in the largest river valleys, which is the traditional homeland of the Lao, the ruling majority ethnic group. There are further a number of important and monumental Buddhist sites still in use on this list, which is perhaps not very surprising, and neither is the mentioning of the caves where the communist heroes hided during the Vietnam War. More curious, yet typical, is the reference to the Lan Xang kingdom, which was founded by the legendary King Fa Ngum in 1353 and is considered to be the first and original of Lao kingdoms in a straight line of rule up to King Savangvatthana, who was allied with the former colonial powers and was forced to abdicate in the 1975 revolution when the Pathet Lao formed the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Stuart-Fox 1997). Thus, contrary to what could be expected from a purely ideological point of view, the Lan Xang kingdom and King Fa Ngum are often used today as symbols for national unity and identity, illuminating an interesting ambiguity in the official national identity.

This could be explained if we consider other parameters than sheer party political ideology as driving forces in the construction of national identity. The official national identity is clearly also closely connected to the ethnic group Lao, sometimes to the extent that Lao and Laos are used almost synonymously. It was, however, not until French Indochina was dissolved and the country achieved full independence in 1953 that it got that name, derived from the Lao, a branch of the larger Tai linguistic group. What the name Lao comes from originally, and where the Lao people originates from is a matter for debate. It is often claimed, partly on the basis of linguistic research that they entered the mainland area through migrations perhaps as early as the last centuries BC and the first AD, as part of a greater movement of Tai-speaking groups southward in the river valleys from what is now southern China (Stuart-Fox 1997:8).
The Lao group with approximately 1.7 million people is today the most numerous in Laos, and together with at least 131 identified minority groups they make a total of 5 million inhabitants. The different ethnic groups belong to four quite different linguistic families, and there are considerable differences regarding language, economy, customs, belief systems etc., between the groups (Chazée 1999). Following the 1975 revolution, all citizens regardless of ethnicity were officially to be called Lao, which meant that the 58 ethnic groups that were officially recognised at the time were divided into three groups of Lao invented for this purpose: Lao Loum, Lao Theung and Lao Soung (Chazée 1999:6). The Lao Loum to which the ethnic group Lao belongs, were defined as the inhabitants of lowlands, valleys and plateaux, whereas the Lao Theung would inhabit the watersheds, slopes and valleys between 300 and 900 metres in altitude around the plains, and the Lao Soung were to live on the summits of mountain ranges, above the Lao Theung. Laurent Chazée writes in a study of the different ethnic groups of Laos that this Lao designation reflects the intention to place all ethnic minorities in the national context, even if ‘the Austroasiatic and most of the Miao-Yao and Tibeto-Burmans have nothing in common with the Lao in history, religion, physique, customs, traditions, production systems and habitat…’(1999:6). The Lao Loum and in particular the Lao have a long history of rule in the territory which is today Laos, officially since King Fa Ngum in 1353. And so despite the ideological intention to include all minorities in the nationalist project, the regime have in official records defined the Lao group as normal and most sophisticated in relation to the Other groups that were living on the slopes or the summits. The communist regime has thus in this case adopted and continued the historical narrative of the former Royal government aiming to establish a long and successful history of the Lao and Laos and thereby demonstrating continuity between the glorious past and the current government (Stuart-Fox 1997:6).

What is then the story that is told in Laos today of the origin of the Lao people? The famous legend Nithan Khun Borom tells the story of the origin of all Tai people. Khun Borom, the original ancestor of all Tai, was sent by the King of Heaven to rule over the earthly realm. Life on earth was then threatened by the growth of a gigantic vine. An elderly couple were killed by the falling vine as they tried to cut it down. On the vine were two giant gourds, and cries were heard from inside them. Khun Borom made holes in the gourds, first with a red-hot poker and then with a knife. From the holes blackened by the hot poker came first a dark-skinned people called kha (which is today a pejorative term used for the Lao Theung), and from the holes cut with the knife came later the Lao as part of the Tai. Khun Borom ruled over these people and sent his seven sons to found
seven kingdoms. The oldest of his sons, Khun Lo, founded according to the legend the first Lao dynasty of Luang Prabang (Stuart Fox 1997:7f, cf. also Whitaker 1972:28; Viravong 1964). This legend working to naturalize the Lao group's rule over the Lao Theung groups, but which also acknowledges the Lao Theung to have been first in the area, is the foundation for many national festivities and ceremonies today. Moreover, in one historical narrative from the early 20th century which is still in use in national history education today in Laos (in English translation: Viravong 1964), it is claimed that the direct ancestors of the Lao were called the Ai-Lao. Viravong writes that the Ai-Lao was one of four major 'races' of people that developed in Asia 100,000 years ago. They lived in the river valleys in present day mainland China and made their living on agriculture. The Ai-Lao thus originally shared Asia with three other human 'races'. Except for the Chinese, who is said to have lived on cattle breeding along the Caspian Sea, there were the Tartars 'who lived in the deserts and used horses a great deal in their banditry acts' and the Sinuijus who lived in present Korea and Mongolia and whose 'main profession is also banditry' (ibid:6). Writing further down about the original meaning of the word 'Lao', Viravong claims that:

The word 'Lao' has the following meanings:

1. An American professor, Mr. Clifton Dodd said that the word Lao means big or a tall person, thus leading us to believe that the Lao race is a very large one and has had a great civilization with a high degree of moral virtues in the ancient times.

... In any case, our Lao race had come to existence in the universe at the same time as the Chinese and can be considered on this ground as one of the most ancient races of the world which had known a wide range of splendour and progress no less than any other races of the same era (Viravong 1964:9).

Viravong's text clearly works to establish the Lao ethnic group as one of splendour, progress and with a high degree of moral virtues, on the basis of its claimed prehistoric origins. There is, however nothing in these sections of Viravong's narrative that relates or refers to any scientific sources of history or prehistory of this area. What is in my view the most interesting with this account, which is used for history education in Laos today, is that it creates a prehistoric foundation for the picture that is often communicated in contemporary society of the Lao and their relations with other groups. For example horse-riding, which is strongly connected with Lao Soung groups, is here established as something originally associated with banditry, which Lao Soung groups are often accused of.
today. The emphasis on the original association between the Lao and the Chinese as well as the etymological reference to big or tall as the origin of the word Lao, also indicate that it is these qualities that are discursively associated with civilization and progress. Similarly, the original connection in this narrative between the Lao and agriculture in the large river valleys is something which is today connected with progress and civilization, as well as with the ethnic group Lao today in national discourse.

Let us now return to Lao Pako. Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy, the present Director General of the Department of Museums and Archaeology at the MIC, is an archaeologist with long international experience of archaeology from France and Australia. He has already been mentioned in previous chapters of this book, since he has worked at the Plain of Jars, and was the excavation director and one of the driving forces behind the first of our excavations at Lao Pako. In a volume presenting the results of an international meeting organised in Vientiane 1996 by the French institute EFEO concerning the restoration and preservation of Laos’ heritage, Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy lists a number of priority heritage sites. Similar to the extract from the *Atlas of Laos* above, the two sites listed as Unesco World Heritage, that is the old town of Luang Prabang and the ritual landscape and monuments of Wat Phu, are those with the highest priority. Further, he mentions a number of sites with monuments and ritual architecture such as Srestha Pura in Champassak, Wat Phu Asa, Muong Souvannakhonkhham, and goes on to temple murals in Wat Pa Houak in Luang Prabang, the Buddhist ritual cave Tham Ting close to Luang Prabang, the two prehistoric archaeological sites Plain of Jars and Lao Pako, and finally fine examples of vernacular and colonial style architecture (Sayavongkhamdy 1996b:100ff). Just like in the *Atlas of Laos* it is here obvious that the important cultural heritage is that which is found in the great river valleys and can thus be connected to the official history of the Lao ethnic group. The following is written about the value of Lao Pako:

*Lao Pako est un site archéologique remarquable […]* Les objets récemment découverts, au cours d’une fouille archéologique, témoignent d’une période de développement intense, dans le domaine de l’agriculture, de l’élevage, de l’artisanat et surtout de la métallurgie. D’enormes jarres funéraires (faites en céramique) sont enterrées avec un riche matériel mortuaire. […] Pour son intérêt historique, Lao Pako est un site qui doit être protégé. Il pourra nous révéler l’origine de la civilisation qui naquit dans la plaine du Mékong et probablement les étapes qui ont marqué la fondation de la ville Vientiane (Sayavongkhamdy 1996b:104f).

This is a glorious picture of a place that can testify to major developments of
AND THROUGH FLOWS THE RIVER

great economic, technological and artistic importance. The jars are enormous and contain rich sets of grave goods. But foremost, it is said, Lao Pako should be protected for its great historical interests, because it can reveal the origin of a civilization that was born on the plains surrounding the Mekong river, the civilization that was later going to build the present capital city of Vientiane.

The archaeological investigation reports from Lao Pako are interpreted by Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy in a piecemeal manner, strategically to make sense in the national narrative. Hence, Sayavongkhamdy joins a long and strong tradition with his declaration of the values of Lao Pako, in Laos and elsewhere in the world to establish value in the ancient through a connection with the origins of civilization and the development towards modernity.

Dr Sounet Pothisane is a historian with a PhD in History from Queensland University in Australia, and was at the time of the interview the Director of the Laos National Museum in Vientiane. Sounet Pothisane describes Lao Pako as one of many important sites and historical centres along the mighty river Nam Ngum. Answering the question what there is at Lao Pako, he emphasises the importance of the rivers:

Many of the people stayed at the Mekong river and also at the Nam Ngum river, the Nam Ou river, many many rivers. So, the people in the past times they don’t know roads like this, but the river is the superhighway for them. Mekong is superhighway and the Nam Ngum also another, another way.. So people stay on the bank, not in the mountains, in the forest.. only live near the bank, it is like that.

He says that Lao Pako is an important archaeological site, foremost because it can answer questions about the burial customs around AD 500. He sees the ‘jar burials’ at Lao Pako as one of many interim developmental stages from the earliest Palaeolithic times when he claims that people did not understand how to take care of a dead body, so that there were no burial rituals at all and the dead were thrown to the animals, up until the present cremation tradition which is, Dr Pothisane says, largely influenced by Indian culture. He does not, however, see Lao Pako as an important place in prehistoric times:

A: [...] Has Lao Pako been an important place in the past, do you think?
S: Lao Pako? An important place in the past?
A: In the past.
S: [short silence] I think.. no, not very important. Because it is a village, not a district, not a city in my idea. Because.. Vieng Kham is an ancient city, at the mouth of Nam
Ngum is an ancient city. But Lao Pako is only just a village.

A: Only a village...

S: I think like that, because not too... not very big.

A: Mmm

S: Like a village, people can stay. But the big town, that's for the... made from bamboo or something like that, or wood. Just the rice fields, just like that I think. Not...

A: Not very important then...

S: But we can study the culture of them.

A: Mmm?

S: Because in the time they have to support for the Vieng Kham, people in this area I think. Sometimes for Vieng Kham, sometimes for Pak Ngum, they are city districts.

But Lao Pako is not. What do you think, I don't know?

A: I want to know what you think! [laughter]

S: [laughter] I think like that, because we can't find very important things [...] I think here is nothing, only the village culture. Small culture. Small village. I think like that.

Lao Pako's value lies according to Dr Pothisane in the archaeological site:

A: Is Lao Pako an important place today?

S: I think today it is important for the archaeology site. Because if you can make like an open museum, it is very good for the tourism. How to do? We have to continue again, to dig it up, and to put it like a museum.

An explicit aim from the Lao authorities for cultural heritage management is to turn Lao Pako into a field museum, similar to that in Ban Chiang in Thailand. Ban Chiang, being a Unesco World Heritage Site, has several on-site museums with both indoor displays of objects and reconstructions of prehistoric village contexts, and an open-air display of fixed in situ objects and contexts, as a frozen archaeological excavation. The open-air museum with exposed excavation trenches is often put forward as an idea to be realized at Lao Pako, and it is that which Dr Pothisane refers to in this case. In conclusion, Dr Pothisane identifies a two-fold value of Lao Pako as an archaeological site. First for its research potentials as a burial site which give information about the development of burial traditions in the area, something which matches his own research interests, and second as a potential tourist attraction as an on-site museum.

We can conclude that the national value of Lao Pako as expressed by both Dr Sounet Pothisane and Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy above is related to that it is con-
sidered to be the origin of different aspects of the official view of the modern Lao society, such as technological, agricultural and artistic sophistication, burial customs, and not least the importance of the river. It is also seen as a potential income source as a tourist attraction.

BAN PAKO TOURIST RESORT

The tourist resort was founded in the early 1990s, and it was named Lao Pako after the local name of the hill by the river. The founder and its first owner Walter Pfabigan unexpectedly passed away in January 2001. The Burapha Group, a Lao-Swedish company with several branches in different enterprises in Laos, had been involved in the resort from the beginning, and after Walter Pfabigan’s death they stepped in to sort out the future management of the resort. With the new management came a new vision of the image of the resort, and of how to attract more visitors. It evolved around the three themes nature, culture and health. Culture is represented both by the fact that the resort is placed on top of a prehistoric site, and the contemporary culture of the people living nearby. It is expressed as a typical Lao lowland rice-farming community of the 21st century, and the aim for the future is to have day trips and over-night stays with families in the nearby villages as part of the available resort activities. To match the vision, the name of the resort was changed to Ban Pako in early 2002. Ban means village or home in Lao. In this way the resort was firmly connected to the village concept, and they got rid of the confusions caused by the previous name Lao (ລ່ວ) meaning ‘young forest’, which is quite different from the Lao (ລາວ) as in the ethnic group Lao, the country Laos or the language Lao.

Peter Fogde, the Swedish managing director of the Burapha Group, has had a deep personal involvement in the resort from the start, when his company had forest plantations at and around the site, and he often express a strong enthusiasm and love for the place. Peter Fogde and the Burapha Group have always been supporting and encouraging to the archaeological research there. In an interview on the 1st April 2003 he says that the archaeological investigations are interesting:
A: Could you say why you think they are interesting?
P: Because I’m interested in history, personally. And I think it is of great importance to the country because, as I understand it, it is one of the older and one of the more interesting sites in the country. Therefore it has a national interest as well as... yes... as well as an international interest.

On the question about the importance of Lao Pako in the past, Peter Fogde refers directly to the time when the archaeological remains were produced, around AD 500:

A: Has Lao Pako been an important place in the past?
P: It must have. I’m sure it has. I mean from the finds that we have made, I’m sure we can... [unclear recording]

A: In what way?
P: I mean just the fact that, for instance, that they have actually produced iron artefacts. And they haven’t found anything like that in Ban Chiang, for instance. [...] both a ceremonial site and also a production site.

A: So that makes it important?
P: I think so, yes.
A: Important in what way, do you mean regionally or..?
[telephone rings]}

A: What do you mean when you say important, can you describe more how you... what you mean by important?
P: Well, if it has been an important site, if it was an important site when it was there, is difficult to say. There might have been many such sites, I mean it may have been a site like any other site. But today, when there are not so many other, if any such sites found, it is definitely important.

A: That leads us on the next question: Is Lao Pako an important place today?
P: Yes. Whether it was important at the time when it actually was... when people were living... I don’t know. I can’t answer that. It might be one of a thousand similar places. It’s difficult to say.

A: Is it an important place today... yes?
P: Yes.
A: Why?
P: Yes, because of what I said, because there are not so many other similar places found, and this should... this site should make it possible to better understand what was here before.
A: You are talking about the archaeological site?
P: Yes.
A: Is it not important in any other way?
P: No.

Peter Fogde describes the archaeological site Lao Pako as ‘both a ceremonial site and also a production site’. This is despite the fact that he has often said in our informal conversations that he would rather have seen it as an ancient village, which would go well with the village connection aspirations of the resort. But in the end, he completely adopts the archaeological interpretation of the site provided by me, and relies on the scientific authority I represent. Further, he argues about the importance of the site in a manner that I recognize as similar to my own, although he is not an archaeologist but a forest engineer. He appears to have an idea about the prehistoric times when Lao Pako was used, as something that he knows only very little about, like a foreign country which he treats with respect and is careful not to show any prejudices about. This attitude is quite different from the statements of the Lao scholars above, who are more prone to incorporate the site in the official national history and therefore give more vivid and less wary descriptions. Peter Fogde argues with a quite different attitude about the value of the site today, where he quite decisively claims that it is an important site, foremost because it has an archaeological value.

Ban Pako is in fact mostly run by local managers and staff from the nearby villages. Most are young and have improved their language skills, foremost in English, from working at the resort. They live in the village and have families and small farms on the side. One of the staff members is a man who is about 30 years old, we can call him Keo. At the time of the interview in March 2003 he had worked at the resort for almost four years. He works in the reception and the restaurant, and has a lot of contact with the visiting guests. On the question what he thinks of the archaeological investigations, Keo answered:

K: I think that is good!
A: Why?
 […]
K: You can get something old… like.. ahhh… like archaeology. You can get something that, normally if we stay here, we stay here. We cannot see that. And you come to work here, you can have that to the museum.
A: Mmm, ok. So when you stay here you cannot see it?
K: Yes.
A: What is in the ground, you mean? Is that so?
K: Like old things.
A: Yes.
K: Yes.
A: So archaeology helps, or makes you see the things that are old.
K: Yes, very happy to see that. Very glad. And things we cannot see before, and then we can see now, with you.
A: Yes? And bring it to the museum, you said?
K: Yes. Also it is important for the government and... [pause]
A: Ehrm... why is it important? Why would it be good to see old things?
K: Yes, good for the... special for me, for everybody. And... we never seen before. And then we have seen. We can know a little bit about the old story, you can tell a little bit. Like how many years, one thousand years, one thousand five hundred years, like that. And then I believe that in my heart.
A: And that is good, you think?
K: Yes.

So far, Peter Fogde and Keo largely agree on the importance of the archaeological investigations at Lao Pako. They are important to them because they can give more information about something which was previously unknown. There is only a slight difference in that Peter refers to an increasing archaeological knowledge of prehistory in general, while Keo is referring specifically to himself and the people in the nearby villages.

A: Has Lao Pako been an important place in the past, do you think?
K: Yes, sure!
A: In what way?
[...]
K: Yes! [slight laughter] [...] Like I told you in the first question. We have work here, and someone can find... [pause]
A: Mmm, so you mean it’s good... I don’t quite get you there. Hrm, has Lao Pako been an important place in the past? Why was it an important place in the past?
K: For me, or for everybody?
A: Do you think it was?
K: Ok, yes Lao Pako has been very important...
A: In the past?
K: In the past.
A: Why? Or how? How do you think?
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K: We can see, it is simple. Like I can have a work here and then my English is better. And we can learn English here.
A: Yes? So you mean in the past, like a few years ago, or?
K: Yes, yes.
A: Ah, ok.
K: And then I start work here three years and seven months already. At that time I don’t know English. That is important for me and for everybody.
A: Yes, yes.
K: Yes, and everyone can write English and can speak, yes that’s important for us.
A: Yes, good. Good.

This conversation, which has been shortened here compared with the original transcript, shows clearly how I am so firmly placed in my own definition of the past, so that I am unable to take in and understand what Keo is repeatedly saying. I am expecting him to say something about the prehistoric past, or at least a century or so back. But for him the past is in this case his past, and he has to go as far as to specify it to ‘three years and seven months’ before I finally understand what he is saying. Peter Fogde has much in common with my apprehension of time and the value of heritage, even though he is a forest engineer and not an archaeologist, whereas Keo has a slightly different view of the value of Lao Pako, and he relates also differently to time, or rather to the past. It can be concluded that while both Peter and Keo agree on the value of Lao Pako as an archaeological site because it contributes with knowledge of the old things in the ground, on an international or local level, this is for Peter directly applicable to the past, whereas for Keo, the past is something more directly connected with his own life and life situation.

Management and staff at the resort are however joined in the aspiration to attract as many people as possible to the resort, and they see the prehistoric site as a means for that. Peter Fogde expresses his wishes for the future like this:

A: How would you like to see the future for Lao Pako?
P: [...] I want to see, we have discussed it many times, I want to see it develop... ehh. I want to see the historical values being preserved but also utilised for the good of guests, and the Lao people, and... researchers, and everyone. And I would like to see the whole site as an ultimate example of how the private sector and the government can work hand in hand to achieve this. Because it’s only when values like these are made available that they really have a value. If they are hidden away in museums they have no value. So, it should... that’s what I would like to see.
The two closest villages to Lao Pako and the Ban Pako resort are Ban Nabong and Ban Phonkham. These are the villages that we in the archaeology team have been most involved in during the fieldwork seasons at Lao Pako, and several members of the excavation team are residents of these two villages. Official census details from the Pak Ngum District office on the 23rd April 2003 say that there were 1070 people living in Ban Nabong and 472 in Ban Phonkham. Slightly less than 50% of the inhabitants in both villages were women. In Ban Nabong have 90% stated farmer as their profession, and in Ban Phonkham were 95% farmers. Ban Nabong had both primary and secondary school in the village, while Ban Phonkham had only a primary school. A great majority of all the people living in these villages in April 2003 were literate in Lao, and both villages had Buddhist temples.

The majority of the people who live in Ban Nabong and Ban Phonkham today are ethnic Lao, although there are also members of other ethnic groups such as Hmong and Khmu. Some of the people belonging to groups living on the mountain slopes or summits in the official division of the ethnic groups discussed earlier in this chapter, have originally moved to this lowland area either as refugees or to seek a job or get married to a person from another ethnic group. They are established in the new environment, sometimes keeping some ethnic markers such as clothing or building techniques for their houses, but as incorporated in village contexts with the Lao group and others. Thus it is difficult to sustain an essentialist view of ethnicity on the practical level in this area. Most of the villagers are lowland rice farmers who practise Theravada Buddhism, ride motorbikes and watch television, mainly Thai broadcasting from across the border. Watching television in Ban Nabong in 2003, you were more likely to see Sven-Göran Eriksson coaching the national English football team on the screen, than any traditional Lao dance show or theatre. The people in Ban Nabong live mostly in houses on raised poles which are constructed along the village road, and many keep a few animals such as chicken, ducks, or cattle. Basically, they are modern people who incorporate traditional aspects of their...
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culture such as clothing details, building techniques, division of living space, foods, games, etc. into an increasingly modern lifestyle.

Most of the people in Ban Nabong and Ban Phonkham would laugh and answer ‘no’ to the question whether they believe in spirits, phi (cf. Condominas 1998:29ff; Tambiah 1970). But these same people would never dream of walking through the forest at night, nor would they take a beautiful old pot they found in the ground in their garden and sell it at the market, or indeed visit the local cemetery at any time of the day. The stated reason why they would not do this is that it would upset the spirits, which is serious or can even prove lethal. Perhaps it is the presence of spirits in the world of the people of Ban Phonkham and Ban Nabong that most differentiates their world from mine. Their relationships with the place Lao Pako, prior to the archaeological investigations there, vary within the group. To most of the people we have talked to, the hill by the river was previously known as a phi pa saa, which is a place where spirits are, and which is therefore secluded and avoided for mundane activities. Other typical phi pa saa include the present and former cemeteries and old temple sites. After the establishment of the Lao Pako resort in the early 1990s, the place changed its meaning for most people, especially among the younger generations. Some are employed at the resort, and for others it has become a centre of contacts and influences from the far-away world.

Initially, my interactions with the Ban Nabong and the Ban Phonkham villages was more of a one-way communication, where the other archaeologists and I tried to educate the farmers, to fill what we presumed was a void in their knowledge about the past. The intentions were noble, we wanted to give them something new: a past. Being civilised people, they listened politely and seemed to like some of our stories. At others they frowned, or started to laugh. At about the same time the spirits of their world appeared to me for the first time. As I spent more and more time in the village, I began to understand the range of impact the spirits have on the apprehension of landscape, the organisation of material culture, and on mundane and ritual activities for the people there. I started to ask questions to learn more about the spirits, and the villagers explained. I could understand some of what they told me and I liked some of their stories. At others I frowned, or started to laugh (for further examples see also Källén 2000:71f).

It was a time of confusion for me. I felt a deep respect for the people in the villages and I began to realize that their past was not a void to be filled with the archaeological past I was about to present. And their view of their past was filled with spirits, a phenomenon I could not see, explain or understand with the conceptual framework of my world. Spirits are, and they are not, and it is impossi-
ble to explain when or where they are or are not with the tools of time, space and matter I have at hand. I also came to realise that the villagers probably had a similar feeling about the phosphates I was telling them about. Phosphates are, and they are not. It may be fascinating but not necessarily understandable when soil becomes numbers in a box.

Ever since I first started to interact with the villagers in Ban Nabong and Ban Phonkham, I have asked now and then about Lao Pako, if there are any stories around. I have then been told that it is called phii pa saa and is thus a place where the spirits are, and I have also understood that it was the village cemetery of the village Tha Suan Ya further to the west along the river, which was abandoned in the 1940s. But I did not seem to get much further than that. I had a feeling that this had not so much to do with that they wanted to hide information for me, but rather that it was difficult to explain since I clearly did not understand about the spirits. I therefore decided to ask my colleague Nor Ountagok (นาง อุ่นแท็กทา) if she could ask around in the villages and write down a story about Lao Pako. Nor was, like myself, a bit of an outsider in the village Ban Phonkham where she lived at the time because she comes originally from Kasi further north and belongs to the ethnic group Khmu. Unlike me, however, she was fully integrated in the village society, she speaks fluent Lao and understands very well about spirits. She asked around in the villages, foremost among the old people, and wrote a story about Lao Pako. This is Nor Ountagok’s story in her own words:

104. Anna Källén and Nor Ountagok. อานนา กาเล็น และ นอร์ อุ่นแท็กทา.
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NOR'S STORY ABOUT LAO PAKO – TOLD ON THE 15TH MARCH 2003

A very long time ago, there was at Lao Pako a forest with many big old trees. It was empowered [นิเวศน์] by spirits. The spirits – vin njan [ศีรษะ] – were always present there. The people who lived nearby were therefore afraid, and were careful not to disturb them.

Every month, people have always worked until the eighth night, paet kham (เพ็ตคำม). Then they stop their work because the spirits – phii – are out having a party. Paet kham (เพ็ตคำม) is a special spirit day, as is also the fifteenth night, sip háa kham (ซิปห้าคำม). Sometimes it happened that people tried to work on the spirit days, and then they were hurt. For example a tree may have fallen on them and killed them, because big trees are homes for spirits. Then people started to realize that it was very dangerous to work on spirit days, and therefore paet kham and sip háa kham are now Buddhist holidays, wan sin (วันสิ้น).

When people from the Tha Suan Ya (ท่าสวนยา) village were out to get food during the paet kham and sip háa kham holidays, shoot birds, collect vegetables and fishing, they heard strange noises from the Lao Pako hill. It sounded like human voices, so they thought it could be their friends. But when they went closer they could not see anyone or anything. Instead they heard noises up in the air around them. That was the spirits, phii (ผี).

After that, everyone in the village Tha Suan Ya decided to save the forest there and use it as a cemetery. There were two parts of the cemetery, one for adult people and accident victims on the bank of the river from the resort kitchen house to a big bamboo marking the grave of Mae To Oi, a young woman who died in childbirth. Mae To Oi was one of the last to have been buried at Lao Pako.

The other part of the cemetery was for children, and it was located to the west of the resort, from the chicken shit river where the forest bamboo is, up the slope between the two pathways leading to the Tha Suan Ya and Kasuang villages. The infants up to three months old were buried in jars alone, while older children were buried more like adults, with grave goods. If the living didn’t supply enough materials for the afterlife, the spirit of the dead would haunt them in their dreams and demand that which they needed.

In around 1940, people from the village Voen Kham (เวียนคำ), further up the Nam Ngum river came to clear the Lao Pako hill to make a rice field. The Tha Suan Ya villagers then stopped using it as their cemetery. Instead they burnt their dead and kept them at the new temple in the village. Monks came from other villages to the temple in Tha Suan Ya. They wanted to make a festival – boun – for the spirits at Lao Pako, the phii па ко, because the spirits had been upset by the Voen Kham villagers’ rice cultivation and needed to be reconciled. That festival is called boun djaek khao hai phii (บู๋นเจ้กข้าวไห้ผี), or ‘presenting-food-to-the-spirits’. After that they made the boun djaek khao every year, at the same time. This went on until French forces burnt down Tha Suan Ya in 1945. The villagers moved to stay in other villages: Ban Phonkham or Ban Nabong, or any other village around. After
everything had calmed down and it was quiet again, some people from Phonkham came to claim the land and make gardens. They cultivated sugar canes, papaya, mango, and many different kinds of vegetables. After a few years, the soil was no longer good, so they stopped using it for cultivation. The trees started growing, and soon thereafter Mr Walter came and bought the land from them to make the Lao Pako resort.
AND THROUGH FLOWS THE RIVER

Against this background we will now take a closer look at interviews with two villagers in Ban Phonkham, and an old woman whom we can call To Sumpet in Ban Houna, who lived as a little girl in the now abandoned village Tha Suan Ya that used parts of Lao Pako as a village cemetery. In an interview conducted by Kanda Keosopha and myself on the 14th March, To Sumpet told about the more recent burial customs up until the 1940s:

S: I was born in Tha Suan Ya, an old village. I know about Lao Pako, it was the old cemetery (phi pa saa).
K: Did your father tell you about Lao Pako? How come they used it as a cemetery?
S: When I was born, there was already a cemetery there. The old people told me about it. When people in the village died, they took them to Lao Pako.
K: Did this continue?
S: Yes, it continued from my grandfather’s time to my time, until grandmother [meaning herself] moved away when it was war. Before the war all people in the village, big and small, were taken to Lao Pako when they had died.
K: When they put a body in a pit, what things did they put in the pit with the body?
S: They made a coffin of wood, like our house, to cover the body. Then they put the coffin in the pit.
K: Did they put bodies in jars? How did they do it?
S: If they burnt the body, they put the bones in a jar. But in Lao Pako they never burnt the bodies. My great grandfathers, they burnt the bodies, but during my time, no one was burnt.
K: When did people start to call this place Lao Pako?
S: When I grew up, everyone called it phi pa saa Lao Pako. From the time I can remember, they took everyone that died to Lao Pako.
K: Did you ever see anything in the ground when they dug the graves?
S: I have never seen, but I heard from other people.
K: When they dig the graves, did you see things that people used in ancient times, like pots?
S: Yes, they had put pots, bowls and knives together in pits, to be able to make food. My parents told me, that when they went to Lao Pako to dig for tubers (man), they found knives. But they didn’t keep them.
K: During your time, did they put pots with the bodies in the graves?
S: Yes, they did.
[...]
S: In ancient times they put jars, bowls, knives, everything together. I have never seen them burn bodies, neither old nor young people, all were put unburnt in pits. After
creating reflections

... no one was buried there anymore.

[...] K: When you lived in the old village Tha Suan Ya, what religion did you believe in? And when people died, how many days did they stay in the village before they buried?

S: We were Buddhist. When someone died, they stayed a few days, two or three. After that, they were put in a boat, two boats joined together especially for the dead, and brought to Lao Pako. If they had any belongings, they were given to accompany them in the grave.

[...] we buried people without burning them. Old people, accident victims... everybody were buried like that. Maybe it was difficult to burn them, because they had had been brought there with the boat. The dead had one boat, the people who went to look for tubers had another. There were four or five boats. It was not possible to go by foot, because the bridge over the small river (houay nong khon) was too small. The village was small and had not so many people living there, but there were lots of cattle.

K: Is all of Lao Pako a phi pa saa?

S: Yes, all of Lao Pako is phi pa saa, from houay nong khon to houay khi kai (chicken shit river). But people were buried far from each other. Infants were buried separate from adults. Infants were buried near the houay nong khon, and adults on the other side. When they buried the body, they put all their belongings, all that they need to use, with them, together in the pit. Not on top of the body, but beside them in a wide pit.

This story is interesting to compare with both Nor’s story and the spread of the prehistoric remains as far as we can see from the archaeological excavations. It appears as if the prehistoric remains are concentrated on the top of the hill, whereas the more recent cemetery is split in two parts; one for infants and one for accident victims and adults, on each side of the prehistoric site. The people who decided to use Lao Pako as a cemetery a century or so ago, should thus have been well aware of the older remains and respected them in that they located their own activities outside but adjacent to it.

To Chanpeng is resident in Ban Phonkham and, just like To Sumpet she lived in the village Tha Suan Ya before it was abandoned in the mid 1940s. In an interview conducted by Kanda Keosopha and myself on the 14th March 2003, she said the following about the archaeological investigations at Lao Pako:
K: What do you think about the archaeological excavations, what do you think is in there?

C: I don’t know, but I think there is silver there. There must be silver there. Last time you found jars to take away, but this time I think you will find silver.

[...]

K: Why do you think there would be silver there?

C: Because there is a whirlpool there and I have dreamt that there was a big village there with many many people, like a palace...[long silence]... Where the resort is today was the old children’s cemetery, and next to it was the adult people’s cemetery.

This conversation between Kanda Keosopha and To Chanpeng clearly shows that Lao Pako is a place that lives in the local community, and whose meaning is created with information from archaeological excavations as well as oral local history and dreams.

The village chief in one of the villages close by, we call him Mr Dao, refers to the Ban Pako resort on the question about the importance of Lao Pako in the past. Like Keo at the resort, Mr Dao refers only a few years back in time when asked about the past, and he also expresses what appears to be the general opinion in the villages, that the archaeological excavations are good and interesting, but they are not connected to the value of the place. Its value is rather defined in terms of its qualities as a tourist attraction, which gives both pride and income to the people in the villages around. The past is in this sense strongly related to anticipation for the future.

D: Lao Pako in the past... Lao Pako in the past, about ten years ago... First, our village is very proud. Second it make many tourist come to see Lao Pako. What is important there we can see together. It is a good place...good for making a resort. This is our area. But never seen before. The last ten years it has been very good, because tourists and foreigners have come to visit. And now we can see the old things. More than ten years ago I didn’t know what Lao Pako was. But now we know that Lao Pako is important, and the tourists are happy and excited to see the beautiful view. That is why it is very important and special.

N: What do you think of the future for Lao Pako?

D: I think that it will develop from how it is today, and be better. Many many tourists will come to visit.

To round this off, I will return to one of the main questions for this thesis presented in the Introduction chapter: which are the desires that have been involved
in the creation of Lao Pako as a place from the past? To be able to probe that question we need to consider once more the notion of time. In my view it is clear that all the different actors we have met in this chapter created Lao Pako at the present moment when this story was written, out of the possibilities offered by the past and the potentials held in the future. Hence, the present can be described as a point of oscillation between the past and the future (Heidegger 1962 in Gosden 1994:112), and it was at this present that Lao Pako and its different pasts were created. The different pasts that these actors chose to communicate when they were asked about Lao Pako, were therefore dependent on their present desires and aspirations for the near or far away future. Clearly the possibilities of the past were to some extent restricted by what I would call reality, but within that restricted space there was, as we have seen, room for creation of quite different stories about one and the same spot on the surface of the earth.

Archaeology and heritage studies have recently been much occupied with memory and nostalgia as crucial for our understanding of the past. Although the future is often mentioned briefly as a factor in understanding the past, it is in my view seldom given the intellectual space it deserves. The Lao Pako example clearly shows that the past lies very much in anticipations of the future. Keo and Peter Fogde at the Ban Pako resort, Dr Pothisane at the National Museum and Village Chief Dao all talked about the past of Lao Pako in relation to hopes for a future increase in the number of visitors to the resort. They had different reasons to hope for an increased number of visitors, ranging from personal income, regional economic benefits, employment and language training, to personal and national prestige. Often several of these reasons were present in one and the same person and situation. Furthermore, they had different ways of creating Lao Pako as a place from the past using piecemeal combinations of oral history, dreams, or results from archaeological excavations. Just as much as this is true for the different stories about Lao Pako that were presented in this chapter, it also applies to my archaeological interpretations in the previous chapters. Archaeology as a form of knowledge in the present, says Chris Gosden, derives from a whole series of taken-for-granted notions about space, time and things that are now in existence (Gosden 1994:195). Hence it follows that the past created by archaeology is also dependent on the archaeologist’s anticipations for the future.

A wide range of desires were thus involved in the creation of Lao Pako as a place from the past. Anticipation of academic, regional, national and personal prestige, mixed with emotive considerations, ideological interests, expectations of economic benefits and an urge to see what is there beneath our feet, that is, simple curiosity. Situated like this, with their different driving forces and desires
exposed, these stories also demonstrate that it is naïve to assume that a story about the past holds a higher degree of moral virtue if it is produced in a context that is largely considered to be subjugated. Just as I find it important to give a voice to the people in Laos who are affected by this study, we must be equally careful not to reduce them in totalising terms to a stable category responding in one voice to this particular archaeological project. We must instead see that Lao Pako as a place of the past is embedded in a complex and slippery set of social, personal, ideological and economical ideas, aspirations, norms, emotions... All of which are constantly reproduced and changed through interactions and relations between the different parties. All stories of the past contain the present as well as the future, and must be regarded in the light of their very specific situations.
CONFLUENCE

... Rather, it is a sort of confluence, a form in which fluxes and fluctuation enter, dance, crisscross, making together the sum and the difference, the product and the bifurcation ...

— Michel Serres

I have reached the end of my journey, and it is time to let the arguments of the previous chapters come together, and make some final points. I have presented Lao Pako as an archaeological site, a place where spirits are, a tourist resort, a national treasure, and a place where rituals were performed in prehistoric times.

I have interpreted the things found in the ground at Lao Pako in three archaeological excavations as the remains of rituals performed there during a few centuries about 1500 years ago. At the centre of these rituals were metal production and pit depositions of ceramics, stone and metal artefacts, glass beads and infant burials in complex patterns. The different material categories mix and mingle in sophisticated shapes and combinations, indicating that the people who were responsible for these rituals at Lao Pako saw a great importance in the materiality of these things. I have argued that to go deeper into an understanding of the meaning of the Lao Pako things, we must regard them as part of a metaphoric structure where metals are conceived and born like babies, and human babies are returned to ceramic wombs to be buried. In order to give meaning to the material culture at Lao Pako we must further consider emotion and experience as fundamental to what it is to be human, to be-in-the-world. In such a mind-set, Lao Pako is best understood as a place where rituals were performed to tell and reproduce a story beyond words about what it means to be in the world, a story of life and death, fertility, decay and worldly reproduction.

Time seems to be always at the heart of this story about Lao Pako. I have argued that the modern western idea of time, perceived as a unilinear form of progress with the modern West at the summit, and the rest of the world behind in a constant state of underdevelopment, is at the heart of a major problem for archaeology, and is at the same time reproduced by the archaeological narrative of the past. The different stories I have presented about Lao Pako as a place from the past – of which my archaeological interpretation is one – have demonstrated that the past is dependent not only on the mnemonic and the present, but also on the future. Whilst this is difficult to understand with a unilinear idea of time, it is quite unproblematic if we change to another spatial metaphor. Michel Serres
suggests that the experience of time (not to be confused by the measurement of time which is mathematically defined as a metrical reading on a straight line) should rather be described as something chaotic, visibly disordered, flowing in an extraordinarily complex, unexpected and complicated way (Serres & Latour 1995:57f, see also Bingham & Thrift 2000). He describes it as a handkerchief, first spread out on a table displaying a certain distance from one point to another, and then crumpled in his pocket or torn apart. Two previously distant points are suddenly close, or even superimposed, and other previously close points become distant. This spatial view of time with nearness and rifts – which is constructive in our understanding of Lao Pako as a place of so many pasts – Serres calls topological, as opposed to a rigid geometrical linear time (ibid:61).

Let me take the opportunity to use another spatial metaphor. I have in this book been interested in that which Judith Butler has called ‘the scenography and topography of construction’ (1993:28), being necessarily linked to a fluid matrix of power, which can be articulated through critical deconstruction. This deconstruction must be understood, as Butler understands it for gender- or queer studies and Gayatri Spivak for postcolonial studies, not as an exposure of error, but as the critique of something extremely useful, something without which we cannot do anything (Butler 1993:27ff, quoting Spivak). Using my own archaeological investigations at Lao Pako as a case, I have aimed at such a deconstruction of the powers, ideologies and desires involved in the creation of archaeological knowledge. One recurring point in this deconstruction and critique has been that of distance and detachment, deeply involved in both the archaeological metanarrative and archaeology’s specific methods such as stratigraphy, mapping and typology. My critique of distance and detachment in archaeology is not meant as an exposure of error, but as a critical questioning of something that has also proved extremely useful. But which are the unintended consequences of the use of distance and detachment in archaeology?

James Clifford has described the world at the end of the 20th century as one of drastically expanding mobility and communication, where the ‘exotic’ is no longer distant, but close to us, being part of our daily lives. He writes: “‘Cultural’ difference is no longer a stable exotic otherness; self-other relations are matters of power and rhetoric rather than of essence. A whole structure of expectations about authenticity in culture and in art is thrown in doubt.” (Clifford 1988:14). Hence in this world, our contemporary reality, it is not sustainable to refer to an essentialized Other as a stable static difference. Such pictures must be actively produced, and I have argued throughout this book that archaeology is part of the rhetoric in the production of otherness. The contemporary world must con-
sequently pose a challenge to archaeology, with its vast disciplinary investments in the principles of temporal distance, exotic otherness, and cultural essence. For some, who have invested all in the desire for the distant exotic, the postcolonial world can even turn into a paralysing threat, which can only be tackled by means of conservative nostalgia.

I would claim that with my story of Lao Pako, I have made a serious attempt to write an archaeology that meets this postcolonial critique. As a critique against deterministic linearity, against generalization breeding simplification, and the god-trick of seeing everything from nowhere, I have written about the embodied experience, about localized contradictions and the ambiguous. I have aimed for my text to be a situated and self-critical, non-deterministic and non-linear story about the pasts of Lao Pako. Nevertheless it is clear already now – halfway to hindsight – that I have also been confined to the present structural limitations of my discipline with its significant historical investments in the effects of conceptual distance. For as you know, I have written about the Iron Age of Mainland Southeast Asia, an Iron Age that I already at the beginning nailed the Lao Pako site to with absolute measured dates from a radiocarbon analysis. I have worked with standard archaeological terminology and methods for registration and analysis, and I have thereby produced a set of research results that will no doubt be incorporated in a more general story of the development of civilization in the Lao PDR and in Southeast Asia as a larger region. I have not been deliberately contradictory to be ironic, nor is it a provocation. I have aimed for my archaeology to be broadly useful and this was the way I chose to reach that goal.

Time is the presupposition of the entire question’, says Michel Serres (in Serres & Latour 1995:102), and this appears to be true also for this case. Archaeology embodies time. It works to merge experienced and measured time, when it creates the illusion of experiencing a measured unilinear time spanning over thousands of years. Therefore, the detached and metrical linear metaphor of time that is at the heart of archaeology, works against us in attempts to create meaningful, interesting and human stories about the past. For the experienced past is created at a present interface between the past and the future, as we have seen in the case of Lao Pako. Nonetheless, a linear metrical time has arguably also been extremely useful for archaeology. A critical deconstruction of the archaeological use of time is (thought-) provoking as it forces us to look in the mirror and see the conceptual baggage we are carrying. Intrusive inappropriate bitter flashing... It can also inspire us to look for other metaphors to understand time.
Serres’ description of time as folded, twisted and unexpected is in many ways similar to the flow of a river. He says that Guillaume Apollinaire simply had not studied the Seine well enough when he wrote his classic metaphorical description of unidirectional linear time as the flow of the river, ‘Sous le pont Mirabeau coule la Seine...’ In fact, says Serres, time flows like a river, if one observes it well (ibid:58f). It seems to flow, and it has an apparent direction. But there is also turbulence and percolation, there are pools and rapids, whirlpools make little trickles start to move upstream, and at any time even the largest of rivers can suddenly and unexpectedly change its course. This makes the river Nam Ngum a suitable metaphor for time in my story about Lao Pako. The Nam Ngum has, like time, always been there at the centre of my story. It is part of the definition of Lao Pako for the people living close by, who describe the place as a whirlpool. It is also important for the definition of the prehistoric ritual place, on a hill demarcated by the confluence of a small stream with the larger river. Furthermore, it is instrumental for the incorporation of Lao Pako in the Lao PDR national creation story in which civilization first arose along the main river valleys. And in my story that is now coming to an end, the different pasts of Lao Pako have connected and intermingled like currents in a larger river, twisting and folding time so that past joined future in the present. So, through it all flows the river, in its seemingly endless yet unpredictable motion.
This is a study of the archaeological site Lao Pako, located on the bank of the river Nam Ngum in central Laos. From an archaeological perspective the site is located in the outskirts of the Khorat plateau, which stretches over large parts of northeast Thailand and central Laos, with well-known contemporary late prehistoric sites such as Ban Chiang, Noen-U-Loke and Ban Na Di. Lao Pako is always at the centre of my enquiry; it is the place I focus on and the place from which I look out. It is, in its most basic archaeological sense, a place where people came to work with iron and bury groups of beautiful ceramic vessels in during a couple of centuries around 1500 years ago. At the core of my investigation and argument are the people of Lao Pako, they who used it in prehistoric times and we who use and are part of it today. I have been personally involved in a series of archaeological investigations at Lao Pako, beginning in 1995 and with the last in 2003. The results from our investigations are in this thesis the basis of an archaeological interpretation of the prehistoric site. Furthermore, the archaeological investigations, which were performed in a joint research program with the Lao PDR Ministry of Information and Culture, have been used as a case study in an effort to understand the driving forces and consequences behind the construction of Lao Pako as a place from the past. My archaeological interpretation, which is located within a late 20th and early 21st century tradition of academic archaeology in Sweden and Southeast Asia, has emerged as only one of several ways to relate to Lao Pako as a place from the past. The managers of a local tourist resort, the national authorities for cultural heritage management, and inhabitants of the neighbour villages, are other groups of people who claim knowledge about the past of Lao Pako. Enquiries into contemporary structures of power and desire that are at work in the construction of Lao Pako, put international academic archaeology in relation to a complex localised politics of power, prestige, identity and emotion, reaching from the individual to the global scale, all creating different and sometimes contesting images of the same place.

The introduction, which is also the first chapter of the book, is an introduction to the place Lao Pako. It also contains the creation story of this thesis, how it was conceived in my first meeting with Laos and Lao Pako in November 1995, and how it has evolved along with a series of Sida/SAREC funded archaeological investigations that followed, up until April 2003. Furthermore, it presents the theoretical framework on which the thesis argument has been built. I present four temptations, different perspectives which have inspired me and have been influ-
And through flows the river

ential to the form my research has taken. The first is the collective writings of a
group of critical theorists of whom Donna Haraway has had the strongest in-
fluence on me in this particular study. Haraway has argued that a responsible
knowledge must be a situated knowledge, and that science in order to be respon-
sible must take a firm step away from what she calls the irresponsible ‘god trick’
of seeing everything from nowhere. This is a point of departure for the science
that has been produced in this book. My second temptation is structuralism.
While being somewhat reluctantly attracted to the sense of order in structural-
ist thinking, I also find the consequences of structuralist analysis problematic.
The third, postcolonial theory is therefore in some sense saving me from the
structuralist side of myself. Postcolonialism works through deconstruction to
break up the clear dichotomies of the structuralist order, creating conceptual
space for that which is neither nor, and thus appreciating ambiguity, hybridity and
contradiction as interesting and meaningful aspects of human culture. This
postcolonial dynamic view of human culture as something fundamentally messy
is instrumental for the argument of this book. Finally, the fourth and last of my
temptations is my love for Lao Pako. It is a love based on respect and fascina-
tion for the beauty and sophistication of the place, its things and its people. This,
my love for Lao Pako, has all through the research process been a driving force
of great importance.

The second chapter aims to situate the thesis in relation to a contemporary
postcolonial debate. It gives a brief introduction to postcolonial theory and cri-
tique in general, and lists three different ways that postcolonial thinking has been
used in archaeology. I claim that archaeology has used postcolonial theory almost
exclusively to (i) acquire a set of concepts and analytical tools to better under-
stand ancient situations of colonialism and thus critically revise earlier interpre-
tations of the same, (ii) to analyse and scrutinize the explicit imperialist early
history of the discipline, or (iii) to discuss issues of indigenous rights in relation
to cultural heritage. In this chapter I argue that, no less importantly, there are
remnant and unspoken imperialist structures inherent in contemporary archae-
ology. Those structures were inherited from the early days of research, when
archaeology and anthropology were overtly created and used to legitimize the
European colonial project. Examples of such concepts and structures by which
archaeology continues to conceptually reconfirm an imperialist world order are:
essentialist conceptions of culture, the universally applied Age system for de-
scribing the development of humanity, and the general focus on development of
societal complexity according to definitions of complexity which contains an –
imperialistically constructed – linear and deterministic perception of develop-
ment as ultimately leading to modernity and western values. Based on this, I argue that archaeology could – and should – make use of postcolonial critique and theory to visualise such imperialist notions inherent in contemporary disciplinary structures, and thereby find alternative ways to produce interesting and meaningful knowledge about the ancient, without resorting to unilinear determinism.

The third chapter is a history of research for this particular project. Aiming to situate my archaeology at Lao Pako within its own historical academic context, it is written in an associative patchwork style, striving to localize rather than universalize. To begin with, I take a close look at Olov Janse, a Swedish archaeologist working with the colonial French research institute EFEO in Hanoi in the 1930s. Olov Janse serves as an example to visualize and discuss the academic, ideological and political aims and consequences of early imperialist archaeology in Indochina and Mainland Southeast Asia. The second example is the book *Art et Archéologie du Laos* written by Madeleine Giteau and published in 2001. I use Giteau's book as a case to examine what I claim are clear imperialist structures in the 21st century archaeology of Southeast Asia. Re-cycling the arguments of Panivong Norindr and others, I maintain that Madeleine Giteau's text is an expression of the vivid myth, or *phantasm*, of Indochina in contemporary French and European culture. Following on that is a brief account of the history of archaeology in Africa. African archaeology is used occasionally throughout this thesis as an example to put the Southeast Asian case into perspective. My next example is the prehistoric site Ban Chiang in northeast Thailand. Prehistoric Ban Chiang was in use at the same time as Lao Pako, and there are artefactual connections between the two sites. But even more importantly for this case, Ban Chiang has played a crucial role in the history of archaeological research in this area. It is in my view impossible to understand the present disciplinary structures of the archaeology of Mainland Southeast Asia without prior knowledge about the research history of Ban Chiang. In the final example of this chapter, it is examined how the Plain of Jars in northeast Laos has been constructed as an important archaeological site by a number of different actors, from a local to an international context, from the 1930s until today. It is a lucid example of how an archaeological site is literary created and communicated through the pens and lenses of chosen academics, who are all driven by different desires in terms of politics and prestige.

The next and most extensive chapter of the book is about the site Lao Pako. It is introduced with an *Omnium Gatherum* where six people, all with relations to Lao Pako, describe the place in their own words. Six quite distinctive views of the same physical place are communicated, of which my archaeological perspec-
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tive is merely one. This introduction leads on to an archaeological description and interpretation of Lao Pako as a prehistoric site:

*Place and People* aims to give extensive background information about its geographical and socio-political context. Lao Pako, meaning literary ‘young forest of *ko* trees’, is located in a riverine environment, with the mighty Nam Ngum river playing an important role in the lives of people living nearby. The archaeological site is surrounded by rice farming communities ascribing themselves to different ethnic groups, the majority being ethnic Lao. These people tell that Lao Pako was used as a village cemetery for a nearby village prior to the construction of a tourist resort, which now occupies parts of the prehistoric site, and that it is therefore considered to be a *phii pa saa*, a place where spirits are.

*Archaeological Investigations* describes first the aims, methods and outcomes of the three seasons of archaeological fieldwork at Lao Pako; an excavation of three trenches in 1995, a survey of the site and surroundings in 2000 and another excavation of 16 testpits in 2002-2003. A total area of 41 m² has been excavated during these fieldwork seasons, which is approximately 6.4% of the total site area.

*The Earth* goes into detail about the stratigraphy, soil and dating of the site. The soil is a well sorted fine silt with homogenous colour throughout the layers. The stratigraphy is comparatively shallow, and show two horizons of packed cultural material, representing the former ground levels during a relatively short period of use. Underneath, there are pits of varying size and depth containing depositions of ceramics and other materials. There are also remains from iron production in wide shallow pits. The prehistoric site has been dated with the 14C method used on charcoal samples, to between AD 350 and 600.

*The Things* deals with the material culture of Lao Pako. First it gives a brief introduction to the use of material culture in archaeology, serving to situate the approach I have taken to the things in the investigation and interpretation of Lao Pako. My approach borrows in its most basic sense from that of Igor Kopytoff, saying that human societies reproduce the social structure of its people in the way they order their things. Moreover, I have taken a perspective inspired by Henry Glassie and others, that material culture is comparable with poetry using a textual metaphor, in that it is embracing societal contradictions and opens up multiple associative routes to significance. The Lao Pako material culture, following this approach, is initially described and analysed individually, arguing for an appreciation of the sensuality of things. They have been grouped into five categories: *Ceramics, Textile Production, Beads, Metal and Metallurgy*, and *Stone*. Ceramics, which is by far the most common artefact category, has been further
divided into *Complete Vessels* and *Sherds*. All 76 complete vessels found in the excavations are presented individually. They have been physically reconstructed as far as possible, and are here represented by technical drawings, photographs and textual and contextual descriptions. The sherds have been collected spit by spit and divided into categories concerning shape, colour, temper and decoration. Thin section analysis of the different ceramic wares has produced information about the clay and tempers that were used. Pulling all known aspects of these ceramics together, it is evident that the Lao Pako ceramic culture was elaborate and sophisticated with much effort put into (i) ware composition, making use of several different tempers in various combinations, and (ii) display characteristics such as intricate decorations with appliqué, cordmarks, incisions, slipping et cetera, as well as a great variation in sizes and shapes. These two aspects have been emphasized in the Lao Pako ceramics while the functional quality of pots and jars as containers appears to have been disregarded, resulting in stunningly beautiful yet fragile vessels. The interconnections between different tempers, shapes and decoration elements in the individual vessels, strongly indicate that this is the result of a local and distinctive ceramic production, albeit with technological similarities to contemporary sites on the Khorat Plateau such as Ban Chiang and Ban Na Di. The other artefact categories are not as numerous as the ceramics in the recovered material from Lao Pako, and in this thesis they are foremost used to contextualize the ceramics for the interpretation of the prehistoric site. Textile production is represented by 44 ceramic spindle whorls of annular or biconic shapes, and four clay seals; three cylindrical and one disc-shaped. Similar forms of both spindle whorls and clay seals are known from other sites on the Khorat Plateau. One cornelian and 345 glass beads have also been recovered. They represent a wide range of colours and shapes, and are directly connected with finds from other excavated sites further south on the Khorat Plateau. Metals and metallurgy are present at Lao Pako foremost in form of iron production with clay tuyères, bowl-shaped slag and dross on pottery vessels and pebbles. Furthermore, there are iron and bronze objects present in different contexts on the site. The iron objects are heavily corroded and often with an indistinguishable shape, whereas the bronze artefacts in some instances resemble objects found on other excavated contemporary sites. Finally, a great number of stone objects were found in the excavations. Most are pebbles of varying size and quality, but there are also whetstones, adzes and a fragmentary stone bangle.

*Contexts* put the individualized and separated artefacts into contexts which render them meaningful. These contexts are created out of information about
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visible structures and individual artefacts’ positions in the ground at the time of excavation. I have distinguished two different deposition contexts: firstly the former ground level, where potsherds and other cultural material were scattered on the ground while the site was in use, and secondly pits that were dug to varying depth from the ground level, in which ceramics and other materials were placed in neat structured depositions. Three of the pit depositions contain complete vessels together with beads, iron, and bronze artefacts. All three contain one or several infant size bronze bangles, and in one of them there are two preserved pieces of radius and ulna bone of an infant. These three depositions have been interpreted as infant burials. In addition to these, there are a wide range of depositions of complete or incomplete ceramic vessels, collection of sherds, spindle whorls, beads, one single stone adze, slag, et cetera. These pit depositions, in combination with the iron production materials and potsherds which were lying in the open on the ground surface while the site was in use between AD 350 and 600, are now defining the Lao Pako prehistoric site.

*Ritual Space* aims to create an intellectual space for ritual meaning in the interpretation of material culture, in particular in relation to the consensual archaeological narrative of Mainland Southeast Asia. It is argued that, while this grand narrative has typically pictured human societies as economically maximizing and development orientated production units, it is necessary to consider ritual metaphors to give meaning to the Lao Pako things. The chapter starts with a short introduction to ritual studies, and defines Lao Pako as a ritual site. This is followed by two specific cases; the study of pottery and body metaphors, and the ritual aspects of non-industrial iron production using explicit sexual metaphors. International examples are used to create a space for discussion about Lao Pako as a ritual site.

Finally, *Lao Pako 1500 years ago – an archaeological synthesis* make use of the material culture and interpretive perspectives presented thus far, to produce an archaeological interpretation of the site. It works with a perspective that places Lao Pako in the centre of the world, and begins with an outlook on the surroundings from what we know about the time around AD 350 to 600. There are artefactual and structural relations between Lao Pako and sites such as Ban Chiang, Ban Na Di, Noen-U-Loke and Ban Kan Luang further south on the Khorat Plateau. At the same time, there are a number of groups with quite different cultural expressions and material expressions elsewhere on the mainland that may have been known to the people at Lao Pako. The chapter moves on to look into the Lao Pako site itself. First it examines the importance of water and the confluence of waterways when the people who used the site 1500 years ago
decided to use it for iron production and pottery deposition. It is further discussed how the importance of different materials and contexts is signalled by their varying degree of exposure on the site, and how the place could have appeared to someone arriving there 1500 years ago. Emerging is an image of a complex ritual site. It is argued that the Lao Pako iron production must be understood as conceptually interrelated with infant burials and pottery depositions in a web of gendered metaphors concerning life and death, conception and decay. Thus Lao Pako is not merely a production site, nor is it a burial ground. In its ritual embrace of both, it can best be described as a comment on life.

The next chapter, Creating Reflections, puts the Lao Pako I have just created into perspective, with a presentation and analysis of other stories about the same place. In the same process, it visualizes and discusses my scientific archaeology in relation to these other views. The main source material for this chapter has been collected in informal interactions and formal interviews with actors representing (i) the local farming communities, (ii) the on-site tourist resort, and (iii) the Lao PDR national authorities for cultural heritage management. A number of points of wider importance have been noted from the stories produced by these different groups, for instance a differing perception of time between actors in the farming community and the tourist resort, and the striving on behalf of the national authorities for archaeological research and heritage management to incorporate Lao Pako into the grand narrative of the glorious past of the Lao people. Most importantly, it shows clearly the limitations of scientific archaeology when it comes to a serious consideration of differing views on the past.

The title of the last chapter – Confluence – indicates that this is the place where all issues and arguments raised throughout the former chapters meet and mingle. My archaeological investigation and interpretation of Lao Pako is here analysed in the light of postcolonial critique, and it is argued that I have made a serious attempt to write an alternative, self-critical, non-deterministic, non-linear story about the past of Lao Pako. Nevertheless, I am always confined to the present structural limitations of a discipline with vast historical investments in the principles of temporal distance, exotic otherness and cultural essence.
ត្រូវបានទោសថាក៏បានក្លាយជាបុរសពីក្រុមបុរសពីក្រុមក្រុមត្រូវបានទោសថាក៏បានក្លាយជាបុរសពីក្រុមបុរសពីក្រុមក្រុមត្រូវបានទោស៖ ពេលនេះបានស្លាប់ទោស។ តាំងពីឆ្នាំ២០០៣ ក្រោយពីឆ្នាំ២០០៣ បានស្លាប់ទោស។

ក្រោយពីឆ្នាំ២០០៣ បានស្លាប់ទោស។ ពេលនេះបានស្លាប់ទោស។ តាំងពីឆ្នាំ២០០៣ ក្រោយពីឆ្នាំ២០០៣ បានស្លាប់ទោស។

ក្រោយពីឆ្នាំ២០០៣ បានស្លាប់ទោស។ ពេលនេះបានស្លាប់ទោស។ តាំងពីឆ្នាំ២០០៣ ក្រោយពីឆ្នាំ២០០៣ បានស្លាប់ទោស។
AND THROUGH FLOWS THE RIVER

And through flows the river...
បើយើងណាម៉ានីបានបញ្ជាក់សេចក្តីបំផុតទៅនឹងរឿង១៣៦២ វាលុយបែងស់ដោយព្រះបាទស្រះស្រែស្រាំសំបូរដង្ហុងដំណើរការ ដើម្បីការរៀបចំព្រះមហាក្សត្រជាតិងារក្នុងប្រទេសក្រុងភូមិទៀនដើម។ ដោយយើងនឹងមានការបញ្ជាក់ឬស្គាល់នៅពេលដែលអ្នកមកទៅប្រទេសក្រុងភូមិទៀនដើម។

ពីវគ្គទី៣ ស្រប់ពីយើងបានទទួលបានចំនួនជាង១០០០០០០០ ដើម្បីការរៀបចំព្រះមហាក្សត្រជាតិងារក្នុងប្រទេសក្រុងភូមិទៀនដើម។ ជំនួយវិញ្ញាតិក្នុងបំណុលទៅនឹងការរៀបចំព្រះមហាក្សត្រជាតិងារ។
AND THROUGH FLOWS THE RIVER

And through flows the river

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In this place, the river flows through the valley towards the city, and the path is lined with trees and flowers. The sun shines brightly, casting a warm glow over the landscape. The air is fresh and invigorating, making it a perfect place for a leisurely walk. The river is a constant reminder of the beauty and serenity that nature has to offer. It flows peacefully, carrying with it the sounds of the birds and the rustling of the leaves. A place of tranquility, where one can escape the hustle and bustle of daily life.

- Following the river, the path winds its way through the countryside, passing fields of golden wheat and lush green fields. The aroma of freshly cut grass fills the air, and the sound of the birds singing in the distance adds to the peaceful ambiance.

3 iciary:

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នេះគឺជាអត្ថបទលើប្រព័ន្ធការផ្តល់ដំណើរការព្រមព្រៀត្តមួយដែលប្រឈមប្រាស់ច្រើន ដូចជា ២, ចំណាត់ថ្នាក់, អំបៅ, ការធ្វើការ, ការប្រឈមប្រាស់ច្រើន។

ការធ្វើការដែលប្រឈមប្រាស់នៅក្នុងការអនុវត្តការប្រឈមប្រាស់មិនអាចប្រឈមប្រាស់បាន និងការតែងទៀតរបស់មូលហៀរក្សាលើកាំរុងការអនុវត្តការប្រឈមប្រាស់។ ព្រមព្រៀត្តមួយប្រឈមប្រាស់ដើម្បីរួមមកជាអំពីភាពជីវិតនៃកម្មការដូចជា ២, ចំណាត់ថ្នាក់, អំបៅ, ការធ្វើការ, ការប្រឈមប្រាស់ច្រើន។

I – សេចក្តីបញ្ជាក់តាមតែងទៀតក្នុងការអនុវត្តការប្រឈមប្រាស់ ច្រើន ការសិក្សា, ទូទៅប្រាកដ។

II – ការអនុវត្តសមិនការប្រឈមប្រាស់ព្រមព្រៀត្តមួយ ច្រើន ការសិក្សា, ទូទៅប្រាកដ។ របស់ពួកគេ និងការសិក្សាដែលបាន រួមមកជាអំពីភាពជីវិតនៃកម្មការដូចជា ២, ចំណាត់ថ្នាក់, អំបៅ, ការធ្វើការ, ការប្រឈមប្រាស់ច្រើន។ រួមមកជាអំពីភាពជីវិតនៃកម្មការដូចជា ២, ចំណាត់ថ្នាក់, អំបៅ, ការធ្វើការ, ការប្រឈមប្រាស់ច្រើន។
AND THROUGH FLOWS THE RIVER

ยังได้ยินเสียงก้องๆของคลื่นกระแทกที่ขึ้นที่หน้าผัง, ไปขึ้นอยู่บนที่ยืนเลื่อน
เลื่อนได้ยินเสียงจากที่สัมผัสไปตามแม่น้ำที่ไหลผ่าน ดูเหมือนจะที่รู้เรื่อง
ประกอบกันยินได้ยินเสียงจากที่มีความเมัน และ บีบบุม กระทำอย่าง
เร็วๆนี้เป็นเมัน, ตีตีอาศัย, ตีภูมิตร, ตีภูมิตร, ตีภูมิตร, ตีภูมิตร...

จุดประสงค์ของที่นี่คือการเรียนรู้การใช้ปากน้ำที่มีช่องเชื่อมต่อ
เชื่อมต่อกับแม่น้ำ เพื่อให้คุณได้รับประโยชน์จากแม่น้ำ

สำหรับแม่น้ำนี้คือที่นี่ที่มีช่องเชื่อมต่อขนาด 1500 ปี

ทั้งนี้ได้ยินเสียงของกลุ่มตัวของแม่น้ำขึ้น

เมื่อมีการขับเคลื่อนของแม่น้ำไปตามดัน

1 แม่น้ำซุปเปอร์-
2 เป็นปากน้ำที่รู้เรื่องที่ดี
3 ได้ข้อมูลที่น่าจะใช้ในการตัดสินใจ

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ក្រុមហ៊ុនពោះឈឺនៅតែនៅរាងជាច្រើនប្រភេទ ពោះឈឺនៅឈ្នះ ឱសនិងសេរីស្មុិត។

ក្រុមហ៊ុនផ្តល់ភ្លឺចស់ៗសេរីស្មុិតៗៗ។ សេរីស្មុិតនេះមានចំនួនច្រើនដែលស្គរីសេរីស្មុិតមកពីរដ្ឋបាលនៃតុក្ចីបដ្ឋលំដែរ។ ក្រុមហ៊ុនផ្តល់ភ្លឺចស់ៗសេរីស្មុិតៗៗ។

ក្រុមហ៊ុនពោះឈឺនៅតែនៅរាងជាច្រើនប្រភេទ ពោះឈឺនៅឈ្នះ ឱសនិងសេរីស្មុិត។

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ក្រុមហ៊ុនផ្តល់ភ្លឺចស់ៗសេរីស្មុិតៗៗ។ សេរីស្មុិតនេះមានចំនួនច្រើនដែលស្គរីសេរីស្មុិតមកពីរដ្ឋបាលនៃតុក្ចីបដ្ឋលំដែរ។
NOTES

OUTSET
1 (Rich 1991:43, see also Bhabha 1996)
2 I use the European definition of archaeology as a separate discipline from social- or cultural anthropology.
3 The fact that the foundations of postcolonial theory are so firmly connected with such 'elite' European conceptual frameworks has been one of the main criticisms posed against it. Another has been the institutional locations of most production of postcolonial theory, which are almost exclusively well renowned universities in the United States or Europe. At the core of these arguments is of course the idea that the theory which is supposed to give voices to the silent and faces to the periphery, is in some sense false if it emanates from the dominating centre. Some postcolonial theorists have further claimed that only an oppressed subject can produce a true postcolonial critique, while others have argued that such claims are essentialist and therefore work against the principles of the postcolonial critique (Moore-Gilbert 1997:11ff, chapter 5).

4 Subaltern as in Gayatri Spivak's reading of the term, originally from Gramsci, meaning groups of people who are discursively silent and invisible. In the text they exist only, with Spivak's words, in a space of difference, with silence as part of their definition (cf. Spivak 1994).
5 In one important sense I disagree with Chris Gosden's writings, which in other respects have much in common with my own research, with his interests in the intellectual legacy of Heidegger and in postcolonial theory. What I disagree with is that Gosden's critical enquiries end with attempts to formulate 'models' that should be applicable to situations in the past, for example a model for historical change (quoted above), and one for meaning derived from human action (Gosden 1994:38). In my view, Gosden resorts with these attempted models to the solid epistemology that he aims to criticize, which makes his argument inconsistent.

UPSTREAM
1 Another example is the 'Conversations Across the Continents' initiated by Rasmi Shooongdej in the Southeast Asian Archaeology International Newsletter, issues 2-5 1993-4 (Shooongdej 1993-94), and yet another is a number of papers written by Ian C Glover, of which Glover 2001 is the most extensive.
2 To my knowledge the collections from Olov Janse's work in Indochina are located at the Peabody Museum of Harvard University, the Musée Guimet and the Musée Cernuschi in Paris, the National Museum of History (former Musée Louis Finot) in Hanoi, and at the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities in Stockholm (Prior 2002). There is also a small collection of ethnographic objects from his travels at the National Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm.
4 Original French text: ‘La lointaine occupation khmère a laissé sur son sol d’importants vestiges, au premier chef le temple de Vat Phu. L’influence dominante a été celle des Thaïlandais de même race que les Lao, de même religion et de culture très proche. […] Certes, l’art lao n’a commencé à se développer qu’à partir du XIVe siècle […] Toutefois la richesse et la diversité de ses œuvres lui donnent une place importante dans l’évolution artistique de la Péninsule Indochinoise.’ (Giteau 2001:34)
5 The italics used for Iron Age and Bronze Age mark that I refer to them as literary constructions, objects created in the archaeological narrative. It assumes a universal and linear social and economic human evolution, which I find deeply problematic. Further arguments on this are found in the chapter Outset. Nevertheless, the Iron
Age is important as an archaeological construction, and must as such be used in a discussion that refers to the archaeological narrative of this time and this area.

6 I.e. in south Thailand before the first couple of centuries AD, and further north before the 7th century AD
8 This booklet presents nine prehistoric sites that have been archaeologically investigated recently within the territory of Lao PDR. Except for the Plain of Jars and Lao Pako, both dating to late prehistoric times, the remaining seven sites are rock shelters in the Luang Prabang and Hua Pan Provinces, excavated by Sayavongkhamdy himself (Sayavongkhamdy 1996a).

OMNIUM GATHERUM
1 All these people have been asked the same question: ‘What is Lao Pako’, or in Lao คำว่ามาจากไหน? My own answer was written down first of all. All interviews in Lao have been conducted by Mr Kanda Keosopha, team member of the Lao Pako project from the Lao National Museum, Ms Nor Ountagok from the village Ban Phonkham and myself. They have been transcribed from tape recordings by Kanda Keosopha and translated into English by Kanda Keosopha and myself.

PLACE AND PEOPLE
1 The Ko tree is occasionally also referred to in Lao as Sa So:m, in Latin Anthocephalus chinensis (cf. Gardner et al. 2000). The timber is used in light construction work, but is also used in India for symbolic sculptures of Vishnu on temples. The bark is used to treat uterine complaints, blood diseases, dysentery and leprosy and it is also used in anti-fertility. The fruits are edible (all information on the Ko tree has been received through personal communication with John McArdle at the Ban Pako resort)
2 The meaning and importance of Lao Pako in the local community will be dealt with in more detail and analysed in the chapter Creating Reflections.
3 A map may appear to be a neutral and detached picture of reality. Yi-Fu Tuan among others has argued that this is not at all the case. He writes: ‘The map is God’s view of the world since its sightlines are parallel and extend to infinity’ (Tuan 1977:123). This can and should in my view be compared with Donna Haraway’s ‘god-trick’ of seeing everything from nowhere (see Introduction).

THE EARTH
1 Stratigraphy drawings from all three excavation seasons at Lao Pako are found in Appendix III.
2 Laterite is here, according to common usage on mainland Southeast Asia, used for rock-like conglomerates with high contents of iron. This material is undergoing a rock-formation process, and if it is left in the ground will eventually become sandstone. At Lao Pako, laterite is found both as small or medium sized lumps (up to 5-6 centimetres in diameter) in the sterile strata under the cultural layer, and as rust-coloured gravel on pathways and in streams in the forest around the site. Its presence as large lumps in the cultural layers, as well as in the Lao Pako pottery wares as tempering, indicates that it has been used in the activities there, and is thus loaded with cultural significance.

THE THINGS
1 This line of argument has much in common with Heidegger’s notion being-towards-death, which means that the value of life can only be brought out fully by the thought of extinction. Only fully conscious of our finitude could we come to a full knowledge of ourselves in the world and have a proper attitude towards it
2 In particular, the second most dominating find category at Lao Pako, which is metal production, has here taken a back seat to the focus on ceramics. This is partly due to the structure of the project, where there has been no expert on metallurgy involved in the team, and partly to the Lao PDR national principles for handling artefacts. At the time of excavation, there were strong restrictions concerning all metal- or metallurgy objects, not allowing any samples of such materials to leave the country. Since there were at that time no laboratories able to take on such analyses in Laos, the metal and metallurgy material, today stored in Lao PDR, has only undergone first step conservation, but no further analyses.

3 The terminology used for ceramics in this presentation follows that suggested by Joyce White and William Henderson in an IPPA conference paper 2002 (White & Henderson, forthcoming). To meet the demand of standardization in order to establish ceramic form databases, they have worked out a basic nomenclature to work for sites on the Khorat Plateau. Their terminology, which is focused on rim shapes, was formed out of elements from a number of ceramic classification systems commonly used in Southeast Asian archaeology (e.g. Shepard 1956, Bronson 1976 and Rice 1987). I find White and Henderson's compilation useful, and will in all possible cases use their nomenclature here.

4 Complete vessels are defined as having a clear complete shape, identified in excavation or during reconstruction.

5 With the exception of some stoneware sherds in the surface layers, all recovered ceramics are earthenware.

6 Slip means here a coating of fine clay applied onto the vessel as a thin 'clay soup', entirely or partly covering the vessel surface.

7 The code is to be read as [description of colour] – [slip or no slip] – [black core or no black core].

8 We have made a joint decision between the MIC, conservator Marion Ravenscroft and myself, to wash all ceramics found in these excavation seasons. The reason is that we wanted to put emphasis on the immediate research-documentation- and display qualities of these ceramics. Due to the fugitive nature of both slip and painted decoration in water, and the fragility of some wares, the washing, even though carried out with greatest care, has in some cases been done at the expense of the overall conservation of the objects. Despite this we have decided to focus, at this stage of investigation, on the potential contemporary uses of these artefacts, and therefore proceed with the washing.

9 In the pottery analysis during the 2002 excavation, Christian Vinterhav recorded the colour of each complete vessel in a code after the Munsell Soil Color Chart, with the code referring to [interior slip – interior surface – core – exterior surface – exterior slip]. Even though this information is only available for the vessels excavated in 2002, it has been included in this presentation.

10 I refer to White and Henderson (forthcoming) for definitions of the general terminology, with the added specification that simple incised decorations here refer to incised lines, while complex incised decorations have combinations of lines and zigzag incisions.

11 Objects of similar biconical and annular shape, but made of volcanic rock are known from later historic times in the Sekong province in southern Laos (pers comm. anthropologist Ananda Paxaxay) with the Austroasiatic ethnic groups Katu and Nge (cf. Chazée 1999:87, 89). In Lao these objects are called hin khuan, which translates to 'soul stone'. They function as a person's soul keeper, and are worn as amulets together with beads in elaborate necklaces. The material and contextual differences between these hin khuan and the objects found at Lao Pako make me, however, treat these as spindle whorls associated with textile production rather than soul keepers.
RITUAL SPACE
1 While I find Eliade's description of the essence of ritual and religion useful for understanding human experience in general, I do not agree with his evolutionary description of 'primitive' and 'complex' societies.
2 This formulation is a simplification with a conceptual rather than a practical value. Quoting Edmund Leach: ‘Durkheim, Harrison, Radcliffe-Brown and Mauss all started out with the assumption that every social action belongs unambiguously to one or the other of two readily distinguishable categories: The non-rational, mystical, non-utilitarian, and sacred or the rational, common-sense, utilitarian, and profane […] Each author ends up demonstrating that no such discrimination is possible – that all 'sacred things' are also, under certain conditions, 'profane things', and vice versa’ (Leach 1968:522). Bearing this in mind I maintain, however, that a conceptual separation between 'sacred' and 'profane' can be useful in the interpretation of this site.

LAO PAKO 1500 YEARS AGO
1 See note 5 in chapter Upstream.
2 Several centuries later the politically important centre of Angkor developed even further north, near the Tonle Sap Lake in present-day Cambodia.

CREATING REFLECTIONS
1 I have chosen to let some of my informants in this chapter be anonymous. This has not been an easy decision, because I find it problematic to depict the inhabitants of the villages around Lao Pako as a homogenous faceless mass. My first intention was to let them be part of the story, with their proper names and faces to accompany their words, but confronted with the possibility that this might entail unforeseen political problems for them, I have eventually decided to let them have assumed names. Those who have answered the question 'What is Lao Pako' in the chapter Omnium Gatherum earlier will, however, remain with their identities revealed, for the reason stated above. The same goes for my colleagues working with me in this project, as well as Peter Fogde and Dr Sounet Potsane in this chapter, who hold positions that will reveal their identities in any case.

2 The questions asked in Lao: คำถมถำขามสละขามรำทขำในปีที่ฝอี่มใหม่ไอ? คำถมถำขำที่ทับขำทุ่มสิปจั่นในปีที่ฝอี่มใหม่ไอ? คำถมถำขำที่ทับขำทุ่มสิปจั่นในปีที่ฝอี่มใหม่ไอ? คำถมถำขำที่ทับขำทุ่มสิปจั่นในปีที่ฝอี่มใหม่ไอ?
3 See also chapters Upstream and Looking Out
4 Nor Ountagok's research was conducted in the villages Ban Nabong, Ban Pholhmam and Ban Hou Na.
5 In the Buddhist calendar every lunar month is divided into four parts. The month starts when the moon is gone. On the eighth night, ถม ขำกมิ้น (8 สิป) is the moon half. On the fifteenth night, รวิ่ม ขำกมิ้น there is full moon. Eight nights later is the next ขำกมิ้น, when the moon is half on its way down. After fifteen nights the moon is gone again, and it is once again รวิ่ม ขำกมิ้น. Each of these days are Buddhist holidays.

CONFLUENCE
1 In: Serres & Latour 1995:107
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Reinecke, Andreas & Lê Duy Son 1998 Einführung in die Archäologie Vietnams/Hành trình vào Khao co hoc Viet Nam. Linden Soft, Köln.


University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.


APPENDIX
APPENDIX I
FINDLIST
LAO PAKO 1995 - 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIND NO</th>
<th>MATERIAL</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>OBJECT DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PCS</th>
<th>SIZE (mm)</th>
<th>WEIGHT</th>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995:198</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-20.55</td>
<td>-13.75</td>
<td>99.43</td>
<td>Burnt bone.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:105</td>
<td>Metallurgy</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Slag with fine texture.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30g</td>
<td>Found alone in qdt 1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:106</td>
<td>Metallurgy</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Slag with fine texture.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Found alone in qdt 1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:19</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Rimpiece of jar (rim H).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>150 x 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:53</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>-20.22</td>
<td>-13.72</td>
<td>99.84</td>
<td>Pounding stone.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:67</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Pebble, flaked.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:35</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>-20.04</td>
<td>-12.15</td>
<td>99.92</td>
<td>Spindle whorl.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20 x 34</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>FIND NO</td>
<td>MATERIAL</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>OBJECT DESCRIPTION</td>
<td>CONTEXT</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:098</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-28.55</td>
<td>-9.64</td>
<td>100.21</td>
<td>Burnt bone, small fragments with spongiosa.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:127</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-28.88</td>
<td>-10.01</td>
<td>99.79</td>
<td>Burnt bone.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:132</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-28.61</td>
<td>-10.40</td>
<td>100.31</td>
<td>Burnt bone, one piece and fragments.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:16</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-28.65</td>
<td>-10.60</td>
<td>100.26</td>
<td>Burnt bone, small fragments.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:17</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-29.65</td>
<td>-10.30</td>
<td>100.09</td>
<td>Burnt bone.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:23</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-29.47</td>
<td>-10.03</td>
<td>100.26</td>
<td>Burnt bone.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:31</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-29.72</td>
<td>-11.68</td>
<td>100.03</td>
<td>Burnt bone, fragmentary and with spongiosa.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:58</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-28.75</td>
<td>-10.82</td>
<td>100.07</td>
<td>Burnt bone.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995:138</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>-29.18</td>
<td>-9.90</td>
<td>100.27</td>
<td>Rimpiece of jar (rim D).</td>
<td>97 x 6</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1995:147</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>-29.55</td>
<td>-10.05</td>
<td>100.22</td>
<td>Potsherd with screwhead appliqué.</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
APPENDIX I - LAO PAKO FIND LIST

E2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIND NO</th>
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<th>X</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>OBJECT DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PCS</th>
<th>SIZE (mm)</th>
<th>WEIGHT</th>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995:33</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-31.33</td>
<td>-12.33</td>
<td>100.14</td>
<td>Burnt bone with spongiosa.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1995:114</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-34.70</td>
<td>-12.50</td>
<td>99.89</td>
<td>Burnt bone with spongiosa.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:123</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-31.34</td>
<td>-12.82</td>
<td>100.05</td>
<td>Burnt bone.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:128</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-31.60</td>
<td>-12.85</td>
<td>100.03</td>
<td>Burnt bone, big piece of longbone.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1995:192</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-32.54</td>
<td>-16.34</td>
<td>99.50</td>
<td>Burnt bone, very small fragments.</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX I - LAO PAKO FIND LIST
AND THROUGH FLOWS THE RIVER

1995:21 Metal -33.20 -14.63 100.11 Iron arrowhead, small with tangs. 1 28
1995:25 Metal -32.15 -15.80 100.25 Bronze fragments. 7
1995:49 Metal -33.00 -14.50 100.11 Copper/Bronze container with charred remains inside. Very fragile, with a shape similar to a Dong Son drum. 26
1995:69 Metal -31.80 -14.60 100.17 Iron object, knife? 1 86
1995:75 Metal SF SF SF Iron object, the end of a knife? 1 33 Found alone.
1995:104 Metal -31.00 -13.00 100.00 Iron object. 2 22
1995:144 Metal SF SF SF Iron fragments. 2 31 Found alone.
1995:151 Metal -33.36 -12.15 99.81 Iron object, nail? 1 51
1995:199 Metal -33.00 -15.83 99.23 Iron fragments. 4
1995:201 Metal -33.01 -15.94 99.19 Iron fragments. 2 30
1995:203 Metal -33.03 -15.88 99.06 Iron fragments, circular shaped object. 1 13
1995:214 Metal -32.90 -15.91 99.05 Iron fragments, circular shaped object. 1 10
1995:215 Metal -32.57 -16.20 99.34 Copper object. 1 48
1995:12 Metallurgy SF SF SF Slag. 30g
1995:70 Metallurgy SF SF SF Metal object or slag. 1 35 Found alone.
1995:93 Metallurgy SF SF SF Small slag fragments. 30g
1995:99 Metallurgy SF SF SF Tuyère fragment. 1 55 x 44 Found alone.
1995:159 Metallurgy SF SF SF Slag. 2 34 Found alone.
1995:160 Metallurgy SF SF SF Slag. 2 40g
1995:165 Metallurgy SF SF SF Slag. 1 45 x 31
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Coordinates</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Size/Find Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995:1</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>-34.23/-12.62</td>
<td>100.34</td>
<td>Rimpiece of jar (rim I).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:2</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>-34.73/-12.40</td>
<td>100.19</td>
<td>Rimpiece of jar (rim I).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:3</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>-34.38/-12.37</td>
<td>100.16</td>
<td>Potsherd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:4</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>-34.92/-12.26</td>
<td>100.12</td>
<td>Rimpiece of jar (rim M).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:5</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>-34.33/-12.08</td>
<td>100.13</td>
<td>Rimpiece of jar (rim M).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:6</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>-34.50/-16.00</td>
<td>100.14</td>
<td>Rimpiece of jar (rim M).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:8</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>-32.46/-15.03</td>
<td>100.14</td>
<td>Rimpiece of jar (rim B).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:9</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>-32.76/-15.28</td>
<td>100.09</td>
<td>Rimpiece of jar (rim H).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:10</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>-32.60/-15.96</td>
<td>100.09</td>
<td>Two rimpieces (rim D) and potsherd.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:11</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>-33.00/-15.60</td>
<td>100.07</td>
<td>Potsherd, decorated with appliqué.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:191</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>-32.52/-16.32</td>
<td>99.55</td>
<td>Potsherd with rim M, belongs to J15?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:218</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>SF/SF/SF</td>
<td></td>
<td>Potsherd, a piece of pedestal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:15</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>-33.52/-14.65</td>
<td>100.05</td>
<td>Pebble flake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:41</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>-33.27/-16.00</td>
<td>99.89</td>
<td>Pounding stone.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APPENDIX I - LAO PAKO FIND LIST**
1995:47 Stone -32.50 -14.55 100.01 Pounding stone. 1 150
1995:71 Stone -31.18 -15.41 100.16 Worked pebble. 4
1995:88 Stone -34.00 -14.30 100.03 Small pebble - a pestle? 1 98
1995:89 Stone -31.40 -14.01 100.01 Flaked pebble. 1
1995:92 Stone -31.33 -14.24 100.01 Pebble. 1 95
1995:96 Stone SF SF SF Sandstone, whetstone? 1 35
1995:100 Stone SF SF SF Pebble. 1 45
1995:103 Stone -33.10 -13.14 99.98 Flaked pebble, scraper or pounding stone. 1 135
1995:110 Stone -33.27 -12.55 99.90 Pebble with dross, no sign of usage. 1 70
1995:118 Stone -32.16 -14.01 99.96 Flaked pebble. 1 105
1995:119 Stone -31.70 -12.35 100.04 Sandstone pebble, pounding stone? 2 125
1995:126 Stone -31.00 -12.70 100.04 Sandstone pebble, no sign of usage. 1 35
1995:139 Stone SF SF SF Pebble tool. 1 90
1995:142 Stone -34.42 -13.65 99.78 Fragmentary polished pebble. 1 60
1995:143 Stone -34.39 -14.62 99.78 Pebble with dross, no sign of usage. 1 75
1995:150 Stone -33.95 -12.23 99.77 Conglomerate of minerals. 2 42
1995:153 Stone -33.60 -12.18 99.81 Scaper, with usage retouch. 1 70
1995:155 Stone -31.30 -12.40 99.88 Pounding stone. 1 70
1995:156 Stone -31.93 -12.45 99.90 Scaper, with usage retouch. 1 70
1995:161 Stone -33.40 -14.05 99.93 Scaper fragment with usage retouch. 1 65
1995:168 Stone -33.00 -14.23 99.89 Broken stone axe. 1 55
1995:170 Stone -34.50 -14.60 99.71 Pebble with dross, no sign of usage. 1 50
1995:171 Stone -34.74 -14.34 99.72 Scaper with usage retouch, and broken edge. 1 90
1995:172 Stone -34.00 -14.34 99.69 Pebble flake, with the sharp edge worn. 1 85
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Latitude</th>
<th>Longitude</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tr>
<td>1995:174</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>-33.30</td>
<td>-14.04</td>
<td>99.69</td>
<td>Worked pebble of quartz.</td>
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<td>Stone</td>
<td>-34.00</td>
<td>-13.40</td>
<td>99.67</td>
<td>Sandstone, no sign of usage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995:177</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Fragment of polished pebble, no sign of usage.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1995:180</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>-34.06</td>
<td>-13.15</td>
<td>99.62</td>
<td>Pebble of white quartz, no sign of usage.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:181</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>-34.35</td>
<td>-13.26</td>
<td>99.63</td>
<td>Pebble of white quartz, with dross but no sign of usage.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:182</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>-33.33</td>
<td>-14.95</td>
<td>99.57</td>
<td>Sandstone with carvings on the side.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995:183</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>-33.35</td>
<td>-14.92</td>
<td>99.66</td>
<td>Pebble with dross, no sign of usage.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1995:184</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>-34.59</td>
<td>-12.32</td>
<td>99.53</td>
<td>Polished pebble, no sign of usage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995:185</td>
<td>Stone</td>
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<td>99.56</td>
<td>Polishing stone.</td>
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<td>1995:208</td>
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<td>-12.95</td>
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<td>Pebble.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995:220</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>-32.78</td>
<td>-12.20</td>
<td>99.35</td>
<td>Scraper of quartz with usage retouch.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995:226</td>
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<td>-31.30</td>
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<td>100.06</td>
<td>Pebble.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995:232</td>
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<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Scraper with usage retouch.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:238</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Spindle whorl.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1995:239</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>-34.45</td>
<td>-13.15</td>
<td>99.65</td>
<td>Spindle whorl.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:248</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Spindle whorl.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:249</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Spindle whorl.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1995:250</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Spindle whorl.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:251</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>-31.00</td>
<td>-12.60</td>
<td>99.45</td>
<td>Deposition of ten decorated spindle whorls.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:252</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Spindle whorl.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995:253</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Spindle whorl.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995:254</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Spindle whorl.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1995:255</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>-32.70</td>
<td>-14.20</td>
<td>100.11</td>
<td>Stamproller with concentric circle pattern.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:256</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>-32.63</td>
<td>-14.45</td>
<td>100.03</td>
<td>Spindle whorl.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:257</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>-32.53</td>
<td>-15.03</td>
<td>100.14</td>
<td>Spindle whorl.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:258</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>-31.98</td>
<td>-12.00</td>
<td>99.87</td>
<td>Lumps of very fine fired white clay.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995:190</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-31.38</td>
<td>-12.00</td>
<td>99.87</td>
<td>Lumps of very fine fired white clay, same as in tuyères?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Found alone.*

*Found with tuyères.*

*Found alone in qdt 2.*

*Found alone in qdt 4.*

*Found alone in qdt 2.*

*Focused under the base of 130.*

*Found alone in qdt 4.*

*Found alone in qdt 1-2.*
### T8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>MATERIAL</th>
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<th>PCS</th>
<th>SIZE (mm)</th>
<th>WEIGHT</th>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003:154</td>
<td>Metallurgy</td>
<td>-35.40</td>
<td>-14.48</td>
<td>100.08</td>
<td>Complete end piece of tuyère, rather small with thin walls.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>75 x 42</td>
<td>95g</td>
<td>Found in association with a structure of fired clay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:159</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>-35.26</td>
<td>-14.18</td>
<td>99.67</td>
<td>Big shouldered axe of white-greenish sandstone ('limonite?').</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>98 x 41</td>
<td>89g</td>
<td>Found alone far down below the cultural layer, probably buried in a pit with the edge down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:153</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>-35.67</td>
<td>-14.70</td>
<td>100.07</td>
<td>Spindle whorl with an asymmetrical shape. Black burnished grog tempered ware.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33 x 22</td>
<td>20g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

### T14

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<th>Z</th>
<th>OBJECT DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PCS</th>
<th>SIZE (mm)</th>
<th>WEIGHT</th>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003:108</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-42.88</td>
<td>-28.31</td>
<td>100.08</td>
<td>Two pieces of burnt bone.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20 x 10</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found near hearth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:174</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>-42.29</td>
<td>-28.07</td>
<td>99.67</td>
<td>Tiny glass bead of opaque orange glass.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 x 1</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found inside J210, the 'top' of the hat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:117</td>
<td>Metallurgy</td>
<td>-42.01</td>
<td>-28.20</td>
<td>99.75</td>
<td>Tuyère fragment, end piece.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>39 x 30</td>
<td>4g</td>
<td>Found alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:118</td>
<td>Metallurgy</td>
<td>-42.21</td>
<td>-31.44</td>
<td>99.73</td>
<td>Tuyère fragment?</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35 x 30</td>
<td>8g</td>
<td>Found inside J210, the 'top' of the hat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:175</td>
<td>Metallurgy</td>
<td>-42.29</td>
<td>-28.06</td>
<td>99.59</td>
<td>Fragment of tuyère.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30 x 29</td>
<td>12g</td>
<td>Found inside J214.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:114</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>-42.93</td>
<td>-28.13</td>
<td>99.95</td>
<td>Polished axe of greenish-white lime (?) -stone. The edge broken, and some parts look quite crude. Doesn't appear to be very functional.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>54 x 45</td>
<td>53g</td>
<td>Found alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:119</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>-42.79</td>
<td>-27.92</td>
<td>99.81</td>
<td>Flat round smooth stone, with traces of slag or iron oxide. No wear marks.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>110 x 98</td>
<td>41.5g</td>
<td>Found with pottery, lying on top of the large potholders in C7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:194</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Almost square piece of sandstone with a smooth surface. Possibly a fragment of a whetstone.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>45 x 43</td>
<td>45g</td>
<td>Stray find among the potsherds from T14, layer VI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:107</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>-42.97</td>
<td>-28.20</td>
<td>100.12</td>
<td>Spindle whorl without central hole, no decoration.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30 x 23</td>
<td>5g</td>
<td>Found alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:115</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>-42.79</td>
<td>-28.02</td>
<td>99.81</td>
<td>Spindle whorl with a flat but rounded shape. Flattened around the hole on one side. Hole diameter 4 mm. Red sand tempered ware.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33 x 19</td>
<td>27g</td>
<td>Found alone - possible connection with the stone axe in F2003:114.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:116</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>-42.98</td>
<td>-28.23</td>
<td>99.81</td>
<td>Spindle whorl, broken on one side.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40 x 30</td>
<td>8g</td>
<td>Found alone, in association with fired clay etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIND NO</td>
<td>MATERIAL</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>OBJECT DESCRIPTION</td>
<td>PCS</td>
<td>SIZE (mm)</td>
<td>WEIGHT</td>
<td>CONTEXT</td>
</tr>
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<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:179</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-28.48</td>
<td>-20.28</td>
<td>100.12</td>
<td>Fragment of burnt bone</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15 x 6</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found inside J216.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:157</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>-28.70</td>
<td>-20.73</td>
<td>100.38</td>
<td>Cylindrical glass bead of orange opaque glass. Not in good condition.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8 x 4</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found alone, far up in the layers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:160</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>-28.62</td>
<td>-14.40</td>
<td>100.21</td>
<td>Biconical glass bead of dark blue translucent glass. Big hole: diameter 5.5 mm. Broken on one side.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11 x 8</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found with potsherds in the cultural layer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:161</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Small bright green bead of translucent glass. Rounded shape.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 x 2</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found in the screen, in soil from T15, layer II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:162</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Small rounded bead of translucent blue glass.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6 x 4</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found in the screen, in soil from T15, layer II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:164</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>-28.71</td>
<td>-20.69</td>
<td>100.12</td>
<td>Broken cylindrical glass bead of orange opaque glass.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8 x 4</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found in the cultural layer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:178</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>-28.44</td>
<td>-20.25</td>
<td>100.16</td>
<td>Small bright green bead of translucent glass. Rounded shape.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 x 2</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found inside J216.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:182</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Cylindrical glass bead of orange opaque glass.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 x 5</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Stray find in the screen, in soil from T15, layer V.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:158</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>-28.72</td>
<td>-20.09</td>
<td>100.34</td>
<td>Small fragment of a bronze ring. Good quality bronze, not corroded much.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20 x 7</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:166</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>-28.66</td>
<td>-20.26</td>
<td>100.11</td>
<td>Bronze fragments, possibly from a bronze ring. Cf F2003:173 and F2008:183.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14 x 6</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found just to the west of the body of J216.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:167</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>-28.89</td>
<td>-20.31</td>
<td>100.04</td>
<td>Long narrow iron object. Part of a knife or a rod?</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>70 x 15</td>
<td>17g</td>
<td>Found just to the west of J215 and J216.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:172</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>-28.17</td>
<td>-20.15</td>
<td>100.09</td>
<td>Bronze fragment, probably part of a bracelet or other ring.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>21g</td>
<td>Found in between deposited jars, not clear which deposition it may have belonged to, if any. The find was collected from two exclusive part-contexts, one with the larger 'hills' and one with the smaller.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:176</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>-28.84</td>
<td>-20.30</td>
<td>99.91</td>
<td>Fragment of bronze bangle (?), a 'hill' similar to F2003:173.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td></td>
<td>Found just to the north of, and outside of J216.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:183</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>-28.34</td>
<td>-20.05</td>
<td>100.05</td>
<td>Bronze fragment, part of a bangle (?), similar to F2003:173 and F2008:176.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 x 4</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found on potsherds and close to the neck of J217.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:184</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>-28.27</td>
<td>-20.42</td>
<td>99.75</td>
<td>Fragments of iron, appears to have a bone structure to it. May be unburnt bone saturated by corroded iron. Too fragmentary to see clear shapes.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34g</td>
<td></td>
<td>Found inside J217.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:185</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Small object of iron.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23 x 9</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Stray find in the screen, in soil from T15, layer V.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:186</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>-28.15</td>
<td>-20.56</td>
<td>99.54</td>
<td>A conglomerate of what appears to be iron scrap. Thin pieces of iron corroded into lumps.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50 x 15</td>
<td>23g</td>
<td>Found inside J218.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:165</td>
<td>Metallurgy</td>
<td>-28.95</td>
<td>-20.95</td>
<td>100.10</td>
<td>Fragment of tuyère</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50 x 48</td>
<td>25g</td>
<td>Found alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:163</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>-28.54</td>
<td>-20.66</td>
<td>100.12</td>
<td>Small ball or pellet of tempered clay.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8 x 8</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found in the cultural layer with lots of potsherds.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### T20

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<th>MATERIAL</th>
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<th>PCS</th>
<th>SIZE (mm)</th>
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<th>CONTEXT</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003:85</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-55.40</td>
<td>-39.30</td>
<td>99.77</td>
<td>Small fragments of burnt bone.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25 x 18</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found with charcoal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:91</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-55.43</td>
<td>-39.11</td>
<td>99.73</td>
<td>Small pieces of burnt bone.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11 x 9</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found with the potsherds in C2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:84</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>-55.16</td>
<td>-39.15</td>
<td>99.82</td>
<td>Small flat iron object. Corroded.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30 x 15</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found together with burnt bone. Lots of charcoal, fragments of burnt bone and slag in the layer around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:82</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>-55.75</td>
<td>-39.30</td>
<td>99.89</td>
<td>Big rim piece of a jar, very heavy. Course sand tempered ware with red slip.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>210 x 90</td>
<td>96.5g</td>
<td>Found alone, possibly can the rest of the jar be found outside of the trench.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### T21

<table>
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<tr>
<th>FIND NO</th>
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<th>Y</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>OBJECT DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PCS</th>
<th>SIZE (mm)</th>
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<th>CONTEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003:111</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-53.82</td>
<td>-31.80</td>
<td>99.80</td>
<td>Fragment of burnt bone.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>39 x 11</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:106</td>
<td>Metallurgy</td>
<td>-53.30</td>
<td>-31.15</td>
<td>99.84</td>
<td>Tuyère fragment.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35 x 12</td>
<td>5g</td>
<td>Found alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:121</td>
<td>Metallurgy</td>
<td>-53.64</td>
<td>-31.97</td>
<td>99.41</td>
<td>Conglomerate of quartzite, sandstone and iron slag (?). Similar to F2003:120.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>63 x 61</td>
<td>97g</td>
<td>Found together with fired clay etc (C4), in association with F120. Cfalso F2003:120.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:109</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>-53.06</td>
<td>-31.74</td>
<td>99.90</td>
<td>Unidentified sherd sections, maybe part of a seal.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>45 x 20</td>
<td>8g</td>
<td>Found alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:105</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>-53.88</td>
<td>-31.08</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>Conical shape, double star or flower pattern in relief. The inner star has nine rays, the outer 14.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30 x 30</td>
<td>5g</td>
<td>Found alone in the cultural layer, with potsherds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:110</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>-53.06</td>
<td>-31.91</td>
<td>99.78</td>
<td>Spindle whorl, with central hole. No decorations.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19 x 34</td>
<td>4g</td>
<td>Found alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:112</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>-53.07</td>
<td>-31.02</td>
<td>99.80</td>
<td>Spindle whorl, no decorations.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35 x 25</td>
<td>5g</td>
<td>Found alone.</td>
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</tbody>
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### T22

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<tr>
<th>FIND NO</th>
<th>MATERIAL</th>
<th>X</th>
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<th>PCS</th>
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<th>CONTEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003:122</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-37.37</td>
<td>-33.81</td>
<td>99.95</td>
<td>Burnt bone.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9 x 5</td>
<td>2g</td>
<td>Found alone, under a structure of fired clay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:123</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-37.92</td>
<td>-33.97</td>
<td>99.98</td>
<td>Burnt bone.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15 x 11</td>
<td>2g</td>
<td>Found alone of the corner of the pit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:126</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-37.47</td>
<td>-33.07</td>
<td>99.92</td>
<td>Fragments of burnt bone.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15 x 12</td>
<td>2g</td>
<td>Found alone in layer II.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:128</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-37.06</td>
<td>-33.71</td>
<td>99.92</td>
<td>Small piece of burnt bone.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25 x 15</td>
<td>5g</td>
<td>Found alone in layer II under fired clay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:131</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-37.44</td>
<td>-33.14</td>
<td>98.80</td>
<td>Burnt bone, big pieces.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20 x 10</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found alone in the cultural layer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:140</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-37.13</td>
<td>-33.94</td>
<td>99.78</td>
<td>Piece of burnt bone.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16 x 12</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found close to charcoal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:138</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>-37.07</td>
<td>-33.52</td>
<td>99.77</td>
<td>Small corroded rod-like object of iron.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30 x 13</td>
<td>3g</td>
<td>Found alone in the cultural layer, but lots of metallurgy objects and textile objects around it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIND NO</td>
<td>MATERIAL</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>OBJECT DESCRIPTION</td>
<td>PCS</td>
<td>SIZE (mm)</td>
<td>WEIGHT</td>
<td>CONTEXT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2002:13</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-74.39</td>
<td>-41.91</td>
<td>99.57</td>
<td>Two pieces of burnt bone with spongiosa.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21 x 18</td>
<td>5g</td>
<td>Associated with potsherds and small pieces of charcoal (no complete jar).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:19</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-74.40</td>
<td>-42.38</td>
<td>99.49</td>
<td>Small fragments of burnt bones.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5 x 3</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found just outside the body of J302 under F2002:18.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:21</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-74.35</td>
<td>-42.78</td>
<td>99.54</td>
<td>Small fragments of burnt bones.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9 x 4</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Stack of the outside of J104, south side. (not in situ).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:23</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-74.47</td>
<td>-42.69</td>
<td>99.45</td>
<td>Three pieces of burnt bone.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11 x 7</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found inside J104.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:24</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-74.40</td>
<td>-42.60</td>
<td>99.37</td>
<td>Small pipe-like object, possibly unburnt bone preserved by iron corrosion.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12 x 5</td>
<td>5g</td>
<td>Grave goods in J104, not in situ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:29</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-74.42</td>
<td>-42.65</td>
<td>99.40</td>
<td>Small fragments of burnt white bones.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9 x 4</td>
<td>2g</td>
<td>Found scattered inside J104.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:30</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-74.42</td>
<td>-42.65</td>
<td>99.40</td>
<td>Fragments of unburnt bone - very soft and fragile. Often just a fibre-like yellowish structure.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9 x 4</td>
<td>25g</td>
<td>Found scattered inside J104, mainly associated with the metal artefacts in the bottom of the jar.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AND THROUGH FLOWS THE RIVER

2002:39 Bone -74.33 -42.60 99.37 Two fragile pcs of unburnt bone, one with max diameter of 7 mm, and the other 4.5 mm. Probably pieces of radius and ulna of a very young child. 2 40 x 5 5g Belongs to the grave in J104. Found inside the bracelets in F2002:32, parallel to each other, in situ.

2002:40 Bone -74.47 -42.60 99.38 Pieces of unburnt flat bone, cranial? One rough edge could be a suture on a young child's cranium. Very fragile, has a piece of earth attached to it. 1 49 x 35 17g Belongs to the grave in J104. Found in situ together with a piece of iron (F2002:37).

2002:43 Bone SF SF SF Big piece of burnt bone, flat with clear shape/structure. Disc? 1 23 x 18 2g Stray find among potsherds in layer 2.

2002:27 Glass -74.35 -42.62 99.37 Beads, dark blue (glass - 167 pcs) and red/orange glass - 15 pcs. Blue beads have cylindrical shape with tiny hole, red are rounded. 182 1120 x 2 12g Grave goods in J104. Can belong to the same original object as F2002:33. Most found in situ, some in water screening.


2002:33 Glass -74.33 -42.64 99.38 Glass beads (3 pcs). Two flat and cylindrical and one bigger biconical. Hole diameter 3-4 mm. All green glass. 3 14 x 14 6g Grave goods in J104. Possibly belonging to the same original object (necklace) as F2002:27. In situ.

2002:32 Metal -74.33 -42.60 99.37 Small piece of iron, badly corroded (cf. F2002:20). 1 30 x 13 6g Found just outside the body of J102.


2002:22 Metal -74.60 -42.70 99.52 Small piece of iron. 1 35 x 13 5g On the SW side of J104, at the rim level.


2002:26 Metal -74.50 -42.62 99.38 Small pieces of iron, badly corroded. 8 8 x 5 2g Grave goods in J104.

2002:31 Metal -74.39 -42.60 99.36 Helix shaped finger ring made of bronze, fragmentary. Inner diameter 16 mm. Average thickness of the band 0.7 mm, and width c. 2.8 mm. Makes altogether 4.5 rounds (with F2002:41). 4 17 x 2 4g Grave goods in J104, in situ.


2002:34 Metal -74.40 -42.75 99.39 Rust coloured lump with bone? Probably unburnt bone that has been preserved by a piece of corroding iron (cf. F2002:41). 3 50 x 28 25g Grave goods in J104, in situ.


2002:36 Metal -74.50 -42.66 99.38 Bronze anklets, 8 pcs divided in two groups of 4 rings each. All with a diameter of 50 mm, 1.5 mm thick. 5 50 x 5 125g Grave goods in J104, in situ. With earth remaining inside containing unburnt bone. Outer diameter 8 mm.

2002:37 Metal -74.80 -42.57 99.38 Small rust coloured lump with bone structure. Probably a piece of iron that has preserved a piece of unburnt bone. 2 30 x 17 5g Grave goods in J104, found on top of F2002:40.

2002:38 Metal -74.42 -42.56 99.37 Small corroded piece of iron, possibly with bone attached to it. 1 38 x 10 5g Grave goods in J104, in situ.

2002:41 Metal -74.34 -42.61 99.45 Rust coloured lump with bone? Probably unburnt bone that has been preserved by a piece of corroding iron (cf. F2002:34). The 'pipes' have diameters of 11 and 9 mm. 1 75 x 35 50g Grave goods in J104.
### T29

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIND NO</th>
<th>MATERIAL</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>OBJECT DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PCS</th>
<th>SIZE (mm)</th>
<th>WEIGHT</th>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003:75</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-64.20</td>
<td>-40.83</td>
<td>99.88</td>
<td>Large flat piece of burnt bone.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25 x 13</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found together with some large potsherds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:76</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-64.56</td>
<td>-40.31</td>
<td>99.80</td>
<td>Small fragments of burnt bone.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5 x 4</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found with potsherds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:77</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-64.15</td>
<td>-40.14</td>
<td>99.81</td>
<td>Small fragment of burnt bone.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 x 5</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:78</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-64.44</td>
<td>-40.83</td>
<td>99.75</td>
<td>Small fragments of burnt bone.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td></td>
<td>Found with potsherds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:80</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-64.50</td>
<td>-40.50</td>
<td>99.73</td>
<td>Large piece of burnt bone.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17 x 6</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found together with a pipe-like iron object (F2003:79) and charcoal. Lots of burnt bone in the layer around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:88</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-64.50</td>
<td>-40.16</td>
<td>99.70</td>
<td>Small piece of what may be unburnt bone (?).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12 x 6</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found in Cl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:89</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-64.44</td>
<td>-40.26</td>
<td>99.45</td>
<td>Two small pieces of burnt bone.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12 x 6</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found in Cl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:87</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>-64.35</td>
<td>-40.27</td>
<td>99.67</td>
<td>Four small glass beads, two cylindrical, one rounded and one tiny. All in orange opaque glass. Almost identical to beads found in the 2002 excavation.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6 x 3</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found inside J202, belonging to Cl. Found just inside the body sherds of the jar. Possible connection with F98.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:79</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>-64.50</td>
<td>-40.50</td>
<td>99.73</td>
<td>Pipe like object of iron, badly corroded. Narrowing towards one end.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>58 x 13</td>
<td>3g</td>
<td>Found together with burnt bone (F2003:80) and potsherds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:81</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>-64.66</td>
<td>-40.64</td>
<td>99.72</td>
<td>Rod-like iron object, slightly bent, plus another half, found in the screen. Together they make a horse-shoe shaped object.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>69 x 8</td>
<td>20g</td>
<td>Found alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:86</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>-64.51</td>
<td>-40.44</td>
<td>99.71</td>
<td>Small object of iron, in two pieces. Maybe part of a knife. Corroded.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50 x 23</td>
<td>10g</td>
<td>Found in Cl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:97</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>-64.57</td>
<td>-40.30</td>
<td>99.67</td>
<td>Socketed spear head of iron, found in six pieces.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>170 x 40</td>
<td>93g</td>
<td>Found inside J202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:83</td>
<td>Metalurgy</td>
<td>-64.43</td>
<td>-40.53</td>
<td>99.70</td>
<td>Hollow object of crude pottery ware (coarse sand tempered). The hollow is narrowing towards the base, which appears to have had a 'foot'. Could very possibly be a mould.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48 x 37</td>
<td>78g</td>
<td>Found alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:98</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-64.50</td>
<td>-40.23</td>
<td>99.64</td>
<td>Bead of orange translucent carnelian. Big round shape with a small hole.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16 x 16</td>
<td>5g</td>
<td>Found inside J202 in context 1. Found alone, but has possibly a connection to F2003:87.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:93</td>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>-64.51</td>
<td>-40.00</td>
<td>99.94</td>
<td>Spindle whorl with deep perforations around the circumference.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>34 x 22</td>
<td>13g</td>
<td>The object was cut in two pieces in the excavation. One was found in situ and the other was found in the screen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### T30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIND NO</th>
<th>MATERIAL</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>OBJECT DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PCS</th>
<th>SIZE (mm)</th>
<th>WEIGHT</th>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003:130</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>-46.57</td>
<td>-43.53</td>
<td>100.16</td>
<td>Round big glass bead of orange opaque glass. The hole is crescent-shaped on one side.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8 x 10</td>
<td>2g</td>
<td>Found alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:136</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>-46.45</td>
<td>-43.10</td>
<td>100.11</td>
<td>Rounded big glass bead of orange opaque glass.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8 x 10</td>
<td>2g</td>
<td>Found alone, same as F2003:130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:139</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Small cylindrical bead of orange glass.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 x 3</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Found in the screen in soil from T30, layer II.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AND THROUGH FLOWS THE RIVER

2003:141 Metal -46.77 -43.44 100.04 Narrow iron knife. 5 85 x 20 10g Found with fired clay. & was found in a slight angle, top z being 100.06 and bottom z =100.04. Found alone.

2003:146 Metal -46.98 -43.09 99.88 Small iron object, shaped like a golf club. 1 34 x 11 5g

2003:147 Metallurgy SF SF SF Two tuyère fragments. 2 37 x 24 17g Found among the potsherds from T30, layer II.

2003:148 Metallurgy -46.45 -43.80 99.89 Small round object in two pieces. Slag with high iron content. 2 28 x 20 6g

2003:149 Metallurgy -46.18 -43.73 98.86 Small fragment of tuyère, end piece. 1 27 x 19 2g Found with no clear associations.

2003:155 Stone -46.98 -43.12 99.77 Big smooth pebble, cracked in two pieces. Red granite. No traces of usage on the surface. 2 125 x 70 1040g Found under the base of J212, probably in the same deposition.

T35

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIND NO</th>
<th>MATERIAL</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>OBJECT DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PCS</th>
<th>SIZE (mm)</th>
<th>WEIGHT</th>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002:10</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>-87.57</td>
<td>-50.12</td>
<td>99.77</td>
<td>Copper/bronze object or ore, badly corroded.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19 x 14</td>
<td>7g</td>
<td>No association, slag and fired clay close.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:8</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>-87.92</td>
<td>-50.59</td>
<td>99.78</td>
<td>Iron object, nail? Partly corroded.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35 x 2</td>
<td>2g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:11</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>-87.62</td>
<td>-50.09</td>
<td>99.77</td>
<td>Small scraper, oval shaped.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>47 x 31</td>
<td>10g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T36

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIND NO</th>
<th>MATERIAL</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Y</th>
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<th>OBJECT DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PCS</th>
<th>SIZE (mm)</th>
<th>WEIGHT</th>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002:1</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>-82.57</td>
<td>-54.23</td>
<td>100.28</td>
<td>Small pieces of burnt bone.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 x 1</td>
<td>1g</td>
<td>Without associated objects in level 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:2</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>-82.23</td>
<td>-54.64</td>
<td>100.25</td>
<td>Unidentified iron object. Recent?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>39 x 42</td>
<td>35g</td>
<td>Same level as stoneware sherds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:5</td>
<td>Metallurgy</td>
<td>-82.11</td>
<td>-54.81</td>
<td>100.16</td>
<td>Fragment of tuyère.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48 x 24</td>
<td>17g</td>
<td>Associated with a piece of slag.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:6</td>
<td>Metallurgy</td>
<td>-82.71</td>
<td>-54.41</td>
<td>100.15</td>
<td>Small tuyère fragments of whitish clay.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50 x 30</td>
<td>65g</td>
<td>Associated with slag.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:9</td>
<td>Metallurgy</td>
<td>-82.27</td>
<td>-54.46</td>
<td>99.75</td>
<td>Fragment of tuyère with lump of slag attached.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29 x 13</td>
<td>5g</td>
<td>No direct associations, but fired clay and slag around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:4</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>-82.17</td>
<td>-54.56</td>
<td>100.18</td>
<td>Brit? of clay, orange colour (possibly a sink).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>49 x 34</td>
<td>70g</td>
<td>Associated with C1?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:12</td>
<td>Pottery</td>
<td>-82.22</td>
<td>-54.64</td>
<td>99.61</td>
<td>Unidentified knob-like earthenware (laterite tempered) object</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31 x 8</td>
<td>7g</td>
<td>Found in a cluster of potsherds.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T37

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIND NO</th>
<th>MATERIAL</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Y</th>
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<th>OBJECT DESCRIPTION</th>
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<th>SIZE (mm)</th>
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<th>CONTEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002:48</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Part of a bangle (or other ring) in white/greenish glass. Transaction facetted with rounded inside (of the ring), flat top and bottom and angular outside.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31 x 8</td>
<td>7g</td>
<td>Strawberry in the sieve from T37, level 5 (cf. Pautreau &amp; Mornais 2001, fig 223).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:57</td>
<td>Metallurgy</td>
<td>-71.50</td>
<td>-60.00</td>
<td>99.07</td>
<td>Spade-like object that seems to be a combination of iron and slag. May originate from the iron production process.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>185 x 128</td>
<td>70g</td>
<td>Found in the trench wall, against the shoulder of J109. Seems to have been deposited in the same pit as J109 and Jx4, and on top of the vessels against the pit wall.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX I - LAO PAKO FIND LIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIND NO</th>
<th>MATERIAL</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>Z</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002:68</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Small piece of burnt bone, white.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10 x 5</td>
<td>2g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:53</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>54.92</td>
<td>51.02</td>
<td>99.55</td>
<td>Small beads, one of dark blue/green glass, and six of red/orange glass.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3 x 5</td>
<td>5g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:44</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>54.89</td>
<td>51.02</td>
<td>99.55</td>
<td>Bronze bracelet, fragmentary, child size, inner diameter c. 36 mm and the outer c. 42 mm.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:52</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>54.90</td>
<td>51.02</td>
<td>99.52</td>
<td>Bronze bowl, badly corroded on one side, so that only parts of one side (rim) remains. Rim diameter c. 105 mm. Incised lines parallel to the rim.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21 x 15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:16</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>60.35</td>
<td>51.88</td>
<td>99.93</td>
<td>One quarter of a stone bracelet. Green polished stone with rounded/triangular transection (rounded outside and flat inside).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>60 x 8</td>
<td>10g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:42</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>60.66</td>
<td>51.61</td>
<td>99.83</td>
<td>Stone with a T-shaped mark, probably a whetstone.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>65 x 62</td>
<td>175g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### T46

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIND NO</th>
<th>MATERIAL</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>OBJECT DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PCS</th>
<th>SIZE (mm)</th>
<th>WEIGHT</th>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002:55</td>
<td>Metallurgy</td>
<td>57.60</td>
<td>64.72</td>
<td>99.23</td>
<td>Part of crucible? Bowl-shaped object with pointed bottom, material similar to (same as?) tuyère material.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38 x 35</td>
<td>18g</td>
<td>No direct associations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002:56</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Small fragment of a light-brown polished stone object. Square flat shape with incised parallel lines. Possibly jade.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19 x 13</td>
<td>5g</td>
<td>Stray find in the sieve from T46 level 2.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### T47

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIND NO</th>
<th>MATERIAL</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>OBJECT DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PCS</th>
<th>SIZE (mm)</th>
<th>WEIGHT</th>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003:92</td>
<td>Glass</td>
<td>54.70</td>
<td>62.01</td>
<td>99.68</td>
<td>Glass beads: orange flat with a cylindrical shape (125 pcs + 2 fragmentary), and blue clear ones with rounded shape.</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>370 x 7</td>
<td>20g</td>
<td>Found alone, as strung on a string. The blue beads in one end, then the smallest orange getting bigger towards the other end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003:90</td>
<td>Metallurgy</td>
<td>55.48</td>
<td>62.63</td>
<td>99.05</td>
<td>Fragment of tuyère.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40 x 25</td>
<td>2g</td>
<td>Found alone.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AND THROUGH FLOWS THE RIVER
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APPENDIX III - STRATIGRAPHY

Diagram of stratigraphy for T15 and T20 with annotations for cultural layers and features.
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AND THROUGH FLOWS THE RIVER
AND THROUGH FLOWS THE RIVER
APPENDIX IV
THIN SECTION ANALYSIS - BY ANDERS LINDAHL

Introduction
The Lao Pako pottery presents an intriguing challenge for me as a ceramologist, first and foremost because of my extremely limited knowledge of both pottery types and raw materials in this part of the world. Thus, information and results that involve the relationship between the handling of raw materials on the one hand and vessel shapes and decorations on the other are not dealt with in this investigation. The macroscopic observations of the sherds indicated that the vessels have been fired in an open fire in a fully oxidised atmosphere, during a short firing time. At the macroscopic observations it was difficult to ascertain the type of temper that had been used. Ethnographic data provided by Anna Källén indicated that rice chaff is a common temper material. Anna Källén, who instigated this study, is a PhD candidate at the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University. She has also made a documentation of the total pottery material and made the selection of sherds to be analysed.

Material
12 sherds selected as representative of the pottery material from the Lao Pako excavations were chosen for thin-section analysis at the Laboratory for Ceramic Research, Department of Quaternary Geology, Lund University.

Aim
The aim of the laboratory analysis is to investigate the variation in the production of the Lao Pako pottery with a focus on the choice of raw material.

Method
The method used is the study of ceramic thin-sections under a polarising microscope. A ceramic thin-section is a piece of a sherd that has been ground down to a uniform thickness of 0.03mm. The thin-section is analysed at magnifications ranging from 20X to 630X in both parallel and polarised light. This analysis makes it possible to identify different minerals in the silt and sand fractions. Furthermore remnants of organic matter, diatoms and other impurities of the clay are studied. Particular observations of e.g. minerals and other features of the temper and clay have been noted. Measurements and calculations are performed on the coarse fractions in two different grain fractions – grains $\geq 0.1\text{mm}$ and grains $<0.1\leq0.01\text{mm}$ – at two different magnifications – 20X and 100X respectively. The
software used for the image analysis is KONTRON KS 300.

The variation in grain sizes in a ceramic ware varies, depending on the natural inclusions in the raw clay and any addition of temper by the potter. In raw clay, the grain sizes may vary, depending on the location of the clay deposit but also in one and the same clay deposit, depending on the depth from which the clay was quarried. Thus, the calculation of the grain-size variation of samples is a means of distinguishing different productions.

Results of the microscopy

LP1 The vessel is made of fine clay with a rich temper of grog (plate A:1). Most grains of the grog temper consist of clay with poor iron content, displayed in the thin section in a pale grey colour. Several of these grains have begun to vitrify. This vitrification is not a result of the firing of the pot. They must have reached this stage of sintering in a previous firing. There are also a few grains of grog of a dark reddish-brown colour, which would suggest that these grains have high iron content and possibly that they were originally fired in a reduced atmosphere. The sample also displays very few fragments of organic matter.

LP2A The vessel is made of fine clay with a rich temper of grog (plate A:2). Most grains of the grog temper consist of clay with poor iron content. Several of these grains have begun to vitrify. However, there are a few grains of grog of a dark reddish-brown colour. There are a few fragments of organic matter (more than in the previous sample), some of these display characteristics of rice chaff.

LP2B The vessel is made of fine clay with a rich temper of grog (plate A:3). Most grains of the grog temper consist of clay with poor iron content. Several of these grains have begun to vitrify. There are also a few grains of grog of a dark reddish-brown colour. There are very few fragments of organic matter (cf. LP1), some of these display characteristics of rice chaff.

LP3 The vessel is made of slightly silty clay tempered with grog (plate A:4). The grog temper consists of clay with poor iron content. Several of these grains have begun to vitrify. There are very few fragments of organic matter.

LP4 The vessel is made of fine clay tempered with grog (plate A:5). Most grains of the grog temper consist of clay with poor iron content. Several of these grains have begun to vitrify. There is also a substantial amount of organic matter that can be identified as rice chaff in the sample. The amount as well as the even distribution throughout the sample of the chaff indicates that it is an intentional addition to the clay as a temper.

LP5 The vessel is made of coarse unsorted silty and sandy clay (plate A:6). There is no added temper to the clay. Mineralogically the clay differs from the other clays that have been used for the production of the ceramics. Apart from the common minerals quartz and feldspar this sample also contains some mica (mostly biotite) and minerals of the amphibole group.

LP6 The vessel is made of silty clay tempered with grog (plate A:7). Most of the grog
are dark reddish-brown in colour, which would suggest that these grains have high iron content and possibly that they were originally fired in a reduced atmosphere. There are a few fragments of organic matter, some of these display characteristics of rice chaff.

LP7 The vessel is made of fine clay tempered with a large amount of rice chaff (plate A:8).

LP8 The vessel is made of fine clay with a rich temper of grog (plate A:9). Most grains of the grog temper consist of clay with poor iron content. Several of these grains have begun to vitrify. However, there are a few grains of grog of a dark reddish-brown colour. There are a few fragments of organic matter, some of these display characteristics of rice chaff.

LP9 The vessel is made of coarse unsorted silty and sandy clay (plate A:10). There is no added temper to the clay. Mineralogically the clay differs from the other clays that have been used for the production of the ceramics. Apart from the common minerals quartz and feldspar this sample also contains some grains of the amphibole group, however, most likely not the same type of amphibole as was noted in sample LP5. There are also some very minute grains of epidote.

LP10 The vessel is made of fine clay tempered with grog (plate A:11). Most grains of the grog temper consist of clay with poor iron content. Several of these grains have begun to vitrify. There is also a rich amount of organic matter that can be identified as rice chaff in the sample. The amount as well as the even distribution throughout the sample of the chaff indicates that it is an intentional addition to the clay as a temper.

LP11 The vessel is made of coarse sorted fine-sandy clay (plate A:12). Two possible grains of grog were observed in the thin section. There are very few fragments of organic matter.

Unfortunately, the mineralogy is not very helpful in characterising the different samples. The mineral content is basically limited to quartz and feldspar of the silt and fine-sand fractions. Only two samples (LP5 and LP9) contain additional minerals in amounts that may be used for a characterisation.

Discussion and conclusions

The microscopical analysis of the ceramic thin-sections gives a basis for comparing the coarseness of the clays used for the manufacture of the different vessels. There are two different ways to make these distinctions. It could either be groupings based on the visual impression of the sample (preferably a comparison of photos from different areas of the thin-section) or a more objective way where the grain size distribution is measured in an image analysing system. The former is generally very accurate; the problem is that it is subjective. Most of the vessels (LP1, LP2A, LP2B, LP4, LP7, LP8 and LP10) were made of fine
clays. Two vessels were made of more or less silty clays (LP3, and LP6) and two were made of coarse unsorted clays (LP5 and LP9). The vessel represented by sample LP11 was made of sorted fine-sandy clay. The measurements of grains in two sets of grain fractions – grains >0.1 mm and grains <0.1 mm – are used to illustrate the variation in the coarseness of the clays.

In Table 1 the mean values of the amount of grains as well as the area of grains (both in mm² and in percentage) are presented. In order to minimize subjective evaluations the data of the measurements has been statistically evaluated in a Principal Component Analysis (PCA). The initial Eigenvalues are presented in Table 2. Since more than 93% of the difference is explained in the first two data sets of the PCA these values have been used to produce a scatter-plot (plate A:13). In principal the scatter-plot gives an image that is very similar to the visual grouping. All the samples made of fine clay are concentrated to the lower left corner. The silty samples deviate in that they are placed towards the upper right of the plot. Both of the coarse unsorted clays are more or less located in the lower right part of the diagram and the well-sorted clay, finally, is placed in the upper left corner.

By and large, the material displays a very homogenous manufacturing technique. Grog is the most common temper material both as the single temper and in combination with rice chaff. Even though rice chaff occurs in all but two samples it is probably only in three samples it has any real tempering effect (samples LP4, LP7 and LP10), in sample LP7 it is the only temper material. As for the other samples, the small amount of rice chaff indicates that it has probably been mixed with the clay by accident, although a symbolic addition cannot be excluded.

The raw material for the group of vessels made of the fine clay is most likely from the same clay source. However, the variation in temper suggests that it is not a production of one and the same potter or at the same time. In two cases, concerning samples LP1 and LP2B and samples LP2A and LP8 respectively, the information derived from the thin-section analyses displays such characteristics that it is possible that either they have been produced at the same occasion and/or by the same potter.

In several of the vessels there are two types of grog temper, the dominating iron poor type and a few grains of an iron rich grog. Whether or not these few grains are deliberately added to the clay or are mixed by accident is not possible to say, but there are several ethnographic notes that mention that a sherd from an old broken vessel is crushed and ground and thereafter mixed with the clay for a new pot in a symbolic passing of the old life to a new.
APPENDIX IV - THIN SECTION ANALYSIS

Table A:1. Data derived at the microscopical analysis. The Grog is in most cases made of an almost iron free clay fired at a high temperature. The Organic matter is in most cases identified as rice chaff (++ = very rich, + = rich, O = common, - = poor, - - = very poor). The classification of Clay is based on the visual impression of the sample (Uns. = unsorted, S. = sorted).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample ID</th>
<th>Square/ Layer</th>
<th>Added inclusions</th>
<th>Clay</th>
<th>Grains &gt;0,1 mm</th>
<th>Grains in the interval &lt;0,1&gt;0,01 mm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number of grains, mean value</td>
<td>Area of grains mm², mean value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP1</td>
<td>T36/L3</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Fine</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP2A</td>
<td>T38/L5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Fine</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0,097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP2B</td>
<td>T38/L5</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Fine</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP3</td>
<td>T38/L7</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Silty</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>0,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP4</td>
<td>T38/L5</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Fine</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0,244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP5</td>
<td>T46/L1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Uns. Coarse</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>6,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP6</td>
<td>T46/L1</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Silty</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>2,378</td>
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<tr>
<td>LP7</td>
<td>T38/L5</td>
<td>++</td>
<td>Fine</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0,073</td>
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<tr>
<td>LP8</td>
<td>T36/L2</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Fine</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0,137</td>
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<tr>
<td>LP9</td>
<td>T38/L5</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Uns. Coarse</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>6,253</td>
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<tr>
<td>LP10</td>
<td>T36/L3</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Fine</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LP11</td>
<td>T36/L3</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>S. Fine-sand</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>2,230</td>
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</table>

Table A:2. The Eigenvalues and percentage of variance explained in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th axis of the Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Most of the information (93%) is explained by the 1st and 2nd axis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PCA axis</th>
<th>Initial Eigenvalues</th>
<th>% of Variance</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,03392/067</td>
<td>50,8481/668</td>
<td>50,8481/668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,69595/3489</td>
<td>42,3988/3724</td>
<td>93,2470/391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0,23895/3088</td>
<td>5,9735/1993</td>
<td>99,2207/591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0,03116/3664</td>
<td>0,779234/92</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AND THROUGH FLOWS THE RIVER

Plate A:1. Micrograph in polarised light of sample LP1, fine clay with a rich temper of grog. Most of the grog has poor iron content and is seen in the thin section as grains or patches of grey colour. Several of these grains have begun to vitrify.

Plate A:2. Micrograph in polarised light of sample LP2A, fine clay with a rich temper of grog. Most of the grog has poor iron content and is seen in the thin section as grains or patches of grey colour. Several of these grains have begun to vitrify. Fragments of rice chaff can be observed in the sample (e.g. at the red arrow).
Plate A:3. Micrograph in polarised light of sample LP2B, fine clay with a rich temper of grog. Most of the grog has poor iron content and is seen in the thin section as grains or patches of grey colour. Several of these grains have begun to vitrify.

Plate A:4. Micrograph in polarised light of sample LP3, slightly silty clay tempered with grog. The grog has poor iron content and several of the grains have begun to vitrify. A few fragments of organic matter occur.
Plate A:5. Micrograph in polarised light of sample LP4, fine clay tempered with grog. Most grains of the grog temper consist of clay with poor iron content and several of the grains have begun to vitrify. There is also a substantial amount of organic matter that can be identified as rice chaff in the sample (e.g. at the red arrow).

Plate A:6. Micrograph in polarised light of sample LP5, a coarse unsorted silty and sandy clay. In addition to the common minerals quartz and feldspar this sample also contains some mica (mostly biotite) and minerals of the amphibole group. No added temper can be observed.
Plate A:7. Micrograph in polarised light of sample LP6, a silty clay tempered with grog. Most of the grog is dark reddish-brown in colour, an indication of an iron rich clay. Fragments of organic matter that displays the characteristics of rice chaff occur (e.g. at the red arrow).

Plate A:8. Micrograph in polarised light of sample LP7, fine clay tempered with a large amount of rice chaff.
Plate A:9. Micrograph in polarised light of sample LP8, fine clay with a rich temper of grog. Most of the grog has poor iron content and is seen in the thin section as grains or patches of grey colour. Several of these grains have begun to vitrify. Fragments of rice chaff can be observed in the sample (e.g. at the red arrow).

Plate A:10. Micrograph in polarised light of sample LP9, a coarse unsorted silty and sandy clay. In addition to the common minerals quartz and feldspar this sample also contains some grains of the amphibole group and epidote. No added temper can be observed.
Plate A:11. Micrograph in polarised light of sample LP10, fine clay tempered with grog. Most grains of the grog temper consist of clay with poor iron content and several of the grains have begun to vitrify. There is also a substantial amount of organic matter that can be identified as rice chaff in the sample (e.g. at the red arrow).

Plate A:12. Micrograph in polarised light of sample LP11, coarse sorted fine-sandy clay with very few fragments of organic matter.
Diagram 1. Scatter-plot diagram displaying the data from the 1st and 2nd axis derived from the Principal Component Analysis (PCA). The samples made of fine clay are concentrated to the lower left corner. The silty clay samples deviate in that they are placed in a direction towards the upper right of the plot. The coarse unsorted clays are both more or less located in the lower right part of the diagram and the well-sorted clay is placed in the upper left corner.
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