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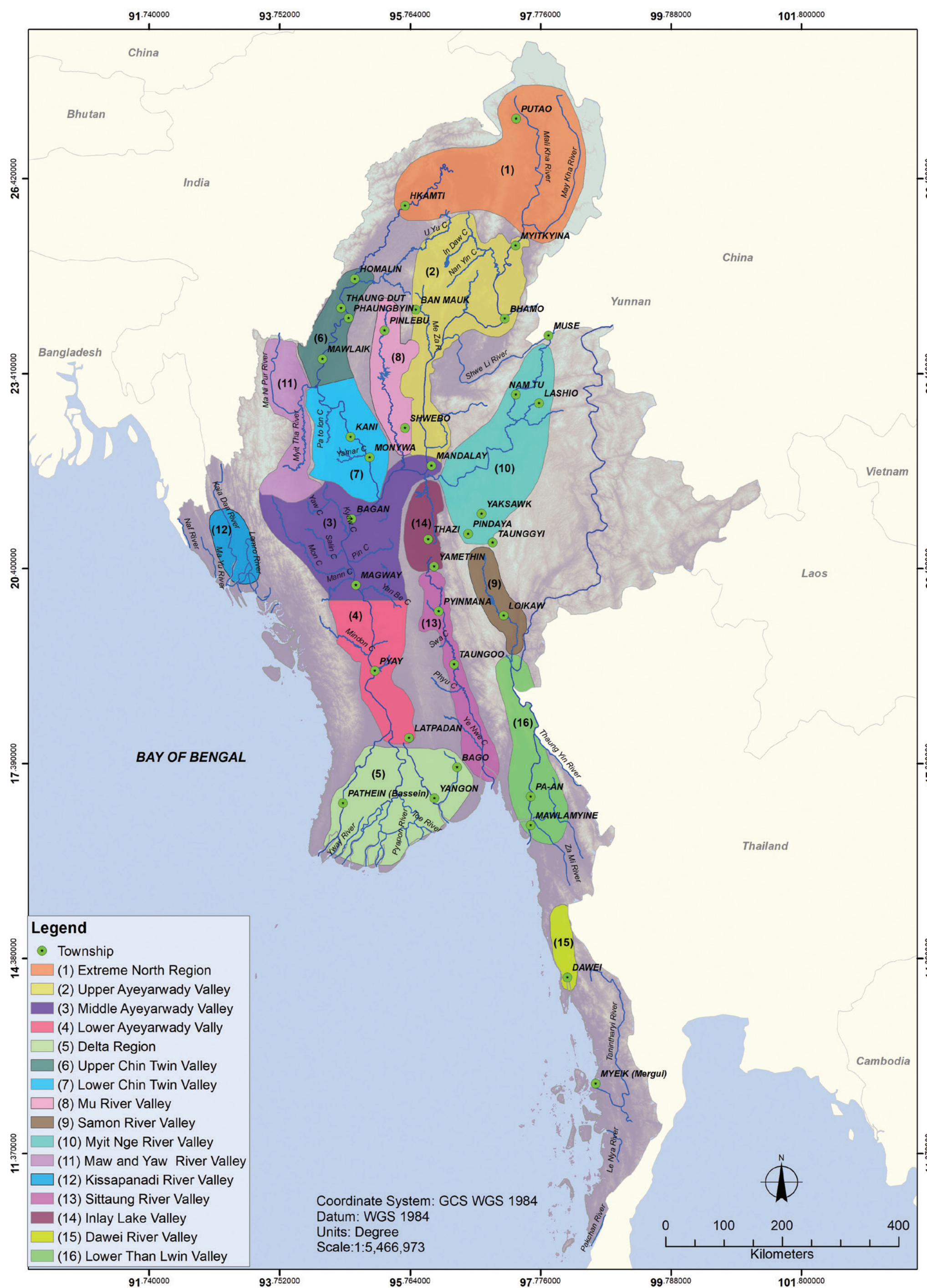
1. Introduction

Background

Wider Bagan: Ancient and Living Buddhist Traditions began in 2011 while I was watching the two-storey Ta Mok Shwe-gu-gyi temple of the eleventh to thirteenth century CE emerge from an overgrown stupa under the direction of U Win Maung (Tampawaddy). The temple, covered in stucco, is unique—a previously unknown jewel. But where were the other temples like this? Much reading and many discussions and trips followed—the findings of which are documented in this book. It is hoped this may be the beginning of a continuing process, and that future scholars will reach into the data embedded in the maps and words of these pages.

Attributes

Wider Bagan is defined in this book by five tangible attributes that date primarily to the eleventh to thirteenth century CE: water features, walls, inscriptions, temples and images. The term "attribute" is adapted from the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, in which cultural values are expressed through "form and design; materials and substance; use and function; traditions, techniques and management systems; location and setting; language, and other forms of intangible heritage; spirit and feeling; and other internal and external factors" (UNESCO 2019a, p. 27). These qualities have guided the present inventory. Each attribute, whether it be a temple or a dam, has been geographically located and assigned an identification number



Map Showing the River Valleys of Myanmar.

consisting of a letter and number given in square brackets in the text and on the maps. Examples are given below in the section on river valleys. Beyond the location, the attributes mark points of social engagement and a "sense of place" across Wider Bagan (Van Dyke and Alcock 2003, p. 161, citing Feld and Basso 1996).

Three attributes often used to summarize royal authority beyond Bagan are discussed in the next chapter: inscriptions, walls and water features. Following this are descriptions of the types of temples and images. Each of the attributes is briefly noted below and discussed more fully in the next two chapters.

Inscriptions [IN]

Inscriptions [IN] inventoried in Wider Bagan are those on stone slabs located at sites or in a local museum. The inscribed texts are described where space allows, but a compendium of transcribed texts is a project for future scholars. Only one ink inscription was identified during survey, but if they could be identified, adding ink and terracotta epigraphy to this group would be desirable. Many stones kept *in situ* within temple compounds have over the last hundred years been placed in sheds, possibly following earlier traditions of shelter. The abundance of inscriptions from this era is in contrast to those of first millennium CE Pyu scripts used to write Pyu and Pali. A small number of these have been found on terracotta votive tablets and on some images (Moore 2007b, pp. 173–74). The Pyu language inscriptions and populations at Bagan are discussed later in this chapter.

Walls [RW, DW]

Walled sites in Wider Bagan are divided into two types: territorial resource walls [RW] and defensive walls [DW]. At both types, temples and other attributes may be outside the wall. The great majority of walls have fallen into disuse over the centuries, in contrast to the water management features. They are distinct from the enclosing walls and gates of the Pyu sites in Upper Myanmar that enclose extensive habitation and cultivation areas. While the earlier "extended" form is justifiably cited as part of the emergence of first millennium CE cities, the walls of the Bagan period are not a continuation of this urbanization process (Moore 2007b, pp. 148, 154, 168, 176, 182, 193, 203, 214, 220).

Water Features [W]

While there has been hydrological change such as desiccation, meanders and at times movement of the watercourses, the presence or absence of utilizable water frequently determined settlement location. The water features are the most problematic attribute from which to separate past

and present operation as the great majority continue to be used today. The features were adapted from the natural hydrology and their use in the first millennium CE was an integral part of the expansion of wet rice agriculture. Thus, assessing their extent and productivity in Bagan circa the eleventh to thirteenth century CE is open to debate—a point reiterated frequently in the succeeding chapters.

Temples [T]

Temples include ancient remains, renovated and active temples, and complexes consisting of a temple, *thein* (ordination hall) and monastery complex. Some temples called *mote-htaw* (*moat-htaw*) are traditionally related to the distribution of relics and the erection of 84,000 stupas under the third century BCE Mauryan king Asoka (Thiridhammasoka), or to a visit by the historical Buddha Gotama (Gautama) or astrological considerations drawing in orientation, earth-connected traditions and the birth day of the donor (Maung Yin Hlaing 2019, pp. 217, 220). Temples are in walled compounds but not all are within a larger city wall. In addition, a Bagan period temple may be within a later period wall; for example, at Allakappa (Allagappa) and Mekkhaya (Ashin Dham Meik Sara, pers. comm., 27 October 2019; ဦးခင်မောင်တိုး Khin Maung Toe, pers. comm., 28 October 2019) (ch. 6).

For the short-lived Pinya period of the early fourteenth century, images and temples are often stylistically described as being late Bagan or Pinya. The architecture may be typical of the eleventh to thirteenth century CE period, with variations in the decoration. An example is the Gudoke-gyi temple in Taungdwingyi. As with other temples of the Pinya period, it is notably large, and the arch has the characteristic keystone of Bagan architecture. But the stucco work varies, as seen in the triangular motifs on pillars and the style of the garlanded ogre faces on the facade (Win Kyaing, pers. comm., 4 October 2019).

Images [B, A and VT]

Images include ancient and renewed images of the Buddha where stylistic traits of the eleventh to thirteenth century remain apparent. In addition, images of selected monks, *nats* (spirit figures) and *bilu* (ogres) are listed. These are all identified with [B] and a number in the text and on the maps. Other images are *andagu* [A] and a few illustrative votive tablets [VT] where an exceptional piece or *in situ* deposit has been recorded. Production of votive tablets was abundant, but *in situ* examples are rare. Footprints of the Buddha akin to those found at the capital as paintings on the ceilings of antechambers or as free-standing sculptures within temples from the eleventh century have not survived in Wider Bagan, although a few stone footprints are noted in the text.

Figure 1.1 Gudoke-gyi Taungdwingyi (photo by Win Kyaing 2015).

First Millennium CE Criteria

Five diagnostic or indicative criteria of the first millennium are mentioned in the text but are not included as attributes for Wider Bagan: bricks, pottery, coins, beads and mortuary goods. Their absence may indicate they never existed or, equally plausible, they are yet to be found, have been recycled or their role fulfilled by other as-yet-unrecognized goods of non-durable materials.

Brick sizes change from the first to the second millennium, but they are not listed as an attribute as eighty per cent of the temples have been renovated. Bricks from the first millennium CE in Upper Myanmar have dimensions of between 50 × 26.2 × 8.7 and 43.5 × 21.2 × 6.2 centimetres (Berliet 2010b, p. 26). They are similar in Lower Myanmar sites such as Kyaikkatha (45.7 × 22.8 × 6.3–7.6 cm) and Thaton (45.7 × 22.9 × 7.6 cm) (San Win 2019, pp. 134, 138). Comparable bricks are also found at Rakhine sites and at U Thong, Phimai and Nakhon Si Thammarat in Thailand (Moore 2007b, pp. 131–33; Moore and Aung Myint 1991). The bricks become medium-sized in the early second millennium CE (e.g., 35 × 20 × 5 cm to 40 × 21 × 6 cm) but are still larger than recent bricks (22.5 × 10 × 4.5 cm) (Moore and Win Maung [Tampawaddy] 2018, p. 129; Yamin Htay 2017, p. 26). They are also firmer and more compact

than Pyu bricks (Tint Lwin 2007, p. 19). Pottery is a ubiquitous attribute of the first millennium and, while different in style and fabric, continues to be abundant at Wider Bagan sites. It has not been used in the present inventory as, given the continuity of temples, it is documented at only a few sites where there have been excavations, such as at Tagaung on the Upper Ayeyarwady, Nwa-htein in Pakhangyi, Ta Mok Shwe-gu-gyi in Kyaukse, and Bawrithat near Inle Lake.

Beads in stone and glass are a strong identifier of first millennium CE sites in Upper and Lower Myanmar (Moore 2007b, pp. 113–17). They are not typical of the second millennium CE so are not included here. Ornaments are depicted on paintings. Stucco has survived on some temples such as Ta Mok Shwe-gu-gyi [T160] and the KKG21 structure at Beikthano, where, along with the bricks (37.5 × 17.5 × 6.25 cm) and plan, it dates the structure to between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries (Aung Thaw 1968, p. 26; Moore 2007b, p. 164). Another portable criterion of the first millennium CE that is absent is coinage, which was replaced by exchange of land and goods during the early second millennium CE (Moore 2007b, pp. 142–43). Pieces of silver bullion have been recovered from surface finds at Bagan, but not any bearing identifying motifs. The dearth of coinage during the early phases of Bagan is also witnessed in Bengal and other mainland areas, where lumps of metal replace coins. Both Bengal and, to the east, Yunnan were Vajrayana cultures characterized by the use of cowrie (kauri) shells (Mukherjee 2018, pp. 165–66, 170).

Urns with bones and ash are an abundant indicator of the first millennium CE Pyu cultures of Upper Myanmar (Moore 2007b, pp. 136–39). Many urns are similar—either simple vessels or drum-like pots with decorations and lids. An exception is Tagaung, where the stamped vessels from the TG31 pit in the middle of the site are distinct, perhaps dating from the later first millennium CE (ch. 6). The burial customs employed at Bagan and in Wider Bagan are not yet clear, although ongoing research suggests some continuity with the end of the first millennium CE, including examples seen at Beikthano in Taungdwingyi and Ta Mok Shwe-gu-gyi temple in Kyaukse (ch. 6). Given the absence of stupa excavations, the possibility of interment remains open and is discussed further in the final chapter.

Summary

While the attributes are described separately, they were created in various combinations marking religious properties and fields where monks and laypeople have been maintaining the heritage over the past circa one thousand years. Patronage for the Buddhism(s) of the many temples might have been non-specific or determined by the presiding monk at the time; it was the support of place that was critical in the life of the

community. The attributes pertain therefore to both the period of the eleventh to the thirteenth century CE and to longer-term rhythmic cycles (Ingold 1993, p. 160).

River Valleys

The attributes are organized according to the eighteen river valleys of Myanmar, where man has most easily obtained food and water and thus a framework prioritizing the human relationship with the environment (Win Maung [Tampawaddy] 2016c, p. 159). This focus on the valley does not neglect the significance of upland areas for resources such as timber, stone and produce. Indeed, these are an integral part of the patterns of interchange and they are referred to throughout this book where tangible information is available and also within chronicles and legends that record the vital interactions of the Bagan period between mountain and plain. The attributes of most river valleys are displayed on a single map; three exceptions reflect either the length of the river section for the Upper Ayeyarwady (five maps) and the Middle Ayeyarwady (twelve maps) or the density of attributes for the Samon Valley (three maps). As this suggests, the largest number of sites—some sixty per cent in total—are located along the Middle Ayeyarwady River Valley region, followed by the Samon River Valley region and the Upper Ayeyarwady River Valley region. The attribute identification numbers are given in square brackets such as [IN01] for inscription number 1, [DW22] for defensive walled site number 22, [RW09] for resource walled site number 9, [T160] for temple number 160 or [W43] for water management feature number 43. These identifiers are used throughout the text and on the valley and city maps throughout this book. The valley maps, with one exception, are in the gazetteer (ch. 5), where further details such as the nearest villages and townships are given. A bilingual list of the names of villages, towns and sites and the spellings on the maps by MIMU (Myanmar Information Unit) and UTM (Universal Transmercator Maps, One Inch, Survey Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Information, 2001/2005) is provided as an appendix.

The Ayeyarwady—over two thousand kilometres in length—runs the length of the country as the primary axis of the river valley system (Drury 2017, p. 13). In contrast with other major rivers within the region, such as the Mekong, the Ayeyarwady lies almost entirely within the borders of Myanmar, and so within a monsoon climate. And unlike the Cambodian capital of Angkor, which is so greatly affected by the melting of snow on the Himalayas, the Ayeyarwady is only minimally impacted by snowfall to the north (Moore, Freeman and Hensley 2007, p. 180; Stamp 1940, p. 332). Given the extent of the Ayeyarwady, it is divided in this book into

five sections: (1) Extreme North Ayeyarwady, (2) Upper Ayeyarwady, (3) Middle Ayeyarwady, (4) Lower Ayeyarwady and (5) Delta River Valley regions (Win Maung [Tampawaddy] 2016c, p. 161). The significance of the Ayeyarwady is followed by its two primary tributaries, the Chindwin and the Mu; both of which rise in the north and flow south to join the Ayeyarwady. The Chindwin (circa 1,100 km long) is divided into (6) the Upper Chindwin and (7) Lower Chindwin River Valley regions, where the river flows into the Ayeyarwady north of Bagan. The (8) Mu River Valley region (circa 275 km) lies midway between the Chindwin and the Ayeyarwady. The short (circa 160 km) (9) Samon and (10) Myit Nge(h) (circa 200 km) also join the Ayeyarwady, but near Mandalay, and flow in from the south and northeast respectively. The valley numbering then moves to the west with (11) the Maw and Yaw River Valley region and (12) the Kissapandi (Kaladan) River Valley region (circa 120 km). Moving back to the eastern areas of the country are (13) the Sittaung (circa 420 km) and (14) the Inlay Valley region (circa 200 km), (15) the Dawei-Tanintharyi River Valley region and (18) the Lower Thanlwin (Salween) (circa 420 km). No points are included within the Upper (16) and Middle (17) Thanlwin because of the absence of valley margins or cultivable lands flanking the river.

The underlying geology, mountain ranges and prevailing winds of the monsoon cycle affected the formation of soils, cultivation and husbandry as well as communication routes, which could be impassable during the rainy months from May through September in Wider Bagan. Most of the attributes are east of the Ayeyarwady in the traditional area of Tampadipa. But there are also two resource-rich areas within the then Sunāparanta on the opposite bank: Pakahangyi—with its timber, pink sandstone and iron—and the rice-granary areas of Sagu-Legaing (ch. 6). The attributes discussed here are a representative sample and this study does not claim to be the last word. Certainly, others exist; either not detected as a result of renovation or were not within the documentation or time available to the author. Whatever the limitations, the attribute sample begins to define the geography of Wider Bagan. The populations in these regions were mixed, as was the case at the capital—although, as discussed in the following sections, the cultural heritage of Bagan is often presented as being the product of a single group.

Multiple Groups – Pyu, Mon, Bamar, Rakhine, Shan and Yunnan

Bagan is frequently labelled Bamar (Burmese), and there are debates on the contribution of Mon groups in the early phases and on the first millennium CE founding of Bagan by the Pyu cited in chronicles. The

debates and related issues are important for considering movement between areas, but also for highlighting the process of homogenization in describing Wider Bagan. This is also the case with Rakhine and Shan areas, where less or only general attention has been paid to their role during this period. For all these areas, movements were adapted to the natural constancy provided by features such hills or water sources—some of which were auspicious or had known productivity (Robson 2011, p. 7). The river valleys offered natural passages facilitating the intermixing of population groups over time. To the east, the Upper Ayeyarwady, the Myit Ngeh and the Samon Valley connected the varied groups on the Shan Plateau. To the west, the Chindwin linked to both the northeast and northwest. And the Man(n) of the Minbu granary area reached west towards Rakhine. While distances were great, routes were for the most part along waterways and traversable land. In rural areas today, one still sees barges being pulled by a team of oxen, moving timber, rice and many other products from one village to the next (Win Kyaing, pers. comm., 30 June 2019).

The language of inscriptions at times indicates the presence of at least a component of the population of an area, but it is important to highlight the variations. Most populations were not homogenous single groups, while a few appear to have remained constant over numerous generations. A Burmese inscription, for example, at the Chan-tha-yeh Zeidi, Kya Ywa—the Thakhin Seku Gyi inscription [IN20]—records an extended property dispute over land spanning four generations after the land was gifted to a monk (Nyein Maung 1983a, vol. 3, p. 14; Win Kyaing, pers. comm., 21 February 2017) (ch. 3). And at Shwe Taung Htee Uszana [T157] pagoda in Kyaukse, a Burmese language inscription of the fourteenth-century CE king Uzana [IN47] records his renovation of an earlier work of the Bagan king Narapatisithu, where twenty villages each contributed twelve workers. In both cases, while the language of the inscription is Burmese, the populations of these places were undoubtedly mixed ethnicities. In the rare cases of multilingual inscriptions, such as the 1079/1080 CE Myittha inscription [IN51], a wider social and Buddhist context is highlighted that is far broader in its implications than, in this instance, its Kyaukse location (Handlin 2018, p. 252). The key element linking these examples is not a single group but the marking and continuity of place. While this is an obvious point, it is often lost in discussions of the Bamar (Burmese), Mon and Pyu—the main groups associated with Bagan.

Another related example is that of the Mon language inscription at Kyaik-ta-lan [IN58], near Ayetthema, in the present Mon State. The stone records the repair of an existing structure by the Bagan king Kyanzittha—not a new construction (ch. 5). Kyanzittha favoured the Mon language for

his proclamatory inscriptions in all parts of the country; so to explain this example in terms of the location of the stone would be a misnomer. The point of mentioning this here is to stress the numerous groups and the misperceptions that arise from labelling architecture as Mon or Bamar, for example. Inscriptions, where they can be connected to an identifiable structure today, may be in Mon, Pyu, Pali, Myanmar, Tamil or Chinese languages. A thirteenth-century inscription stone found near Tharba gate (the main remaining gate of Bagan today) and now housed in the Bagan Archaeology Museum is inscribed in Pyu on one face and Chinese on the other. A reversed imprint of a Chinese coin on a shard of red-slipped earthenware was found at 1.9 metres below ground level in 2003 during excavations of the Bagan palace site. The imprint suggests a decorative use. The script reads "chong-ning tong-bao", which is typical of Northern Sung bronze coins of 1102–6 CE (Hudson 2004, p. 231). Analysis of the glazed ceramics from the excavations and survey from a range of temples has yielded celadon, blue and white, and white shards of the thirteenth to the fourteenth century CE (Goh 2018, pp. 186, 188–89). A stone tile (circa 35 × 20 cm), also in the Bagan Museum, is inscribed in Tamil dated to circa the twelfth century. The four inscribed pillars of King Kyanzittha's palace (1101–2 CE) also highlight the presence of multiple groups. The inscriptions contain a detailed description of Vaishnavite and Nāga rituals, and include mentions of Burmese (*mira*), Mon (*remen*) and Pyu (*tircul*) groups side by side. Among the various groups, the Mons appear to have occupied a special place. Blagden suggests that the Brahmans were Vaishnava and possibly came from the Mon country, while the vessels of gold, silver and copper for the lustral water poured by the Brahmans were always carried by Mons (Blagden 1923, pp. 3, 9). About a decade later, the 1113 CE Myazedi inscription also has Burmese, Mon and Pyu faces, reiterating the multi-ethnic empire of Anawrahta's time (Koller 2017, p. 95). As these inscriptions begin to illustrate, the marking of place at Bagan was the product of not just one but of many language and cultural groups.

The Pyu and Mon and Thaton

The issue of multiple groups is also seen in relation to the role of first millennium CE Pyu and Mon at Bagan. The first millennium CE Pyu cities of Upper Myanmar are often described as simply Pyu, and Bagan as Bamar or Burmese. In fact, neither the Pyu cities nor Bagan were composed of a single group in either the first or second millennium CE. For the Pyu, early twentieth-century scholars used this term merely as a "convenient label" (Blagden 1919, p. 61). Nonetheless, the Pyu cultures of Upper Myanmar have been homogenized into a single cultural type (Moore 2009b, p. 101). Chronicles, however, recognized diversity,

recording Tibeto-Burman groups such as the Kanyan, Thet (Pyu) and Burman. In addition, the material culture from sites such as Tagaung, Maingmaw (Pinle), Halin, Sri Ksetra, Beikthano and Waddi are each distinct, enabling identification of a Tagaung Pyu versus Beikthano Pyu, for example. Despite this, the first millennium CE artefacts of Upper Myanmar continue to be blended into a single "Pyu" culture. The three walled Pyu cities of Halin, Beikthano and Sri Ksetra were inscribed as a serial property into the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2014. While the nomination dossier highlighted how each site contributed distinctively to the emergence of the first "historically-documented Buddhist urban civilization in Southeast Asia", the single inscription has perpetuated and strengthened the loss of diversity in interpreting the artefacts and landscape of this period (UNESCO 2014a, p. 5). This homogenization is particularly relevant to Bagan as these earlier groups did not just disappear—as seen below in the discussion of the Pyu and Yunnan. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries CE, many different groups were visualized—as can be seen, for example, in paintings of ethnic diversities in the complex of Hsin-gyo [T065] and other temples of the Lower Chindwin (Khin Maung Lay 2018, pp. 11–19). First, however, the emergence of Bagan will be considered, both in relation to the sequence of walled cities and to debates on the role of Mon and Pyu peoples in the making of Bagan.

Emergence of Bagan – Walls and Migrations

The walled area known today as Old Bagan is the fourth in a traditional sequence of walled cities and palaces in this area—a tandem emergence of fortification and royal centres seen earlier at Halin, Beikthano and Sri Ksetra (UNESCO 2014a, p. 21). At Bagan, the first is the walled site of Kyauk Saga, dated to the second century CE, in the south of the capital. In this sequence, given the scarcity of water, the land at Yon Hlut Kyun east of the Tuyin Range may have been used for the assembly of the nineteen village headmen by King Thamudarit (Win Maung [Tampawaddy] 2006, p. 1). As this suggests, Kyauk Saga is attributed to Thamudarit (107–52 CE), who is also credited with creating a federation of nineteen villages. He was followed by Yathekyaung (152–67 CE) and the hero Pyu-saw-hti (167–242 CE) (ch. 4). The second city of Thiripyissaya to the north was founded by Thinlikyaung in the fourth century, who dissolved the nineteen-village federation. The third walled city of Tampawaddy, slightly to the northeast, is dated to the sixth century. This was followed by the presently visible ninth-century CE wall of King Pyinbya (Pe Maung Tin and Luce [1921] 1960, pp. 50–51). This fourth walled city, again to the north and on the river, is mentioned in chronicles but with no further comment on the surrounding "peri-urban" area (circa 80 km^2) (Iannone,

Pyiet Phyo Kyaw and Macrae 2017, p. 3). There are only about a hundred structures within Pyinbya's wall. While a western wall eroded by the Ayeyarwady has been suggested, no concrete evidence has been found to date (Daw Thin Gyi 1966, p. 179). In contrast with the chronicle dating, radiocarbon dating suggests the wall was built between the eleventh and thirteenth or fourteenth centuries CE and the palace in the thirteenth to fourteenth century or later (Grave and Barbetti 2001, p. 81; Pe Maung Tin and Luce [1921] 1960, p. 55). In support of the chronicle date, finger-marked bricks typical of the first millennium CE have been found within the city wall. Documentation of the large bricks has been focused near the southeast corner of the city wall, possibly reflecting reuse of an earlier fortification and temple site (UNESCO 2019b, p. 126).

For the emergence of Bagan, Luce argued for a flow of Burman peoples from the Mon area of Kyaukse, giving rise to the saying that "Myanmar began from Kyaukse" (*Myanma-asa-Kyaukse-ka*) (Luce 1966, pp. 54–55). U Po Lat advocated the site of Tagaung instead, hence "Myanmar began from Tagaung" (*Myanma-asa-Tagaung-ka*) (Po Lat 1966). The case for the Pyu has been most strongly argued by Aung-Thwin to counter a "Mon Paradigm" (2005). His conclusion is based on a number of elements, including the development of Burmese script, architecture, chronicle accounts of the monk Shin Arahan, and the conquest of Thaton (ch. 4). In considering here the emergence of Bagan, although agreeing that the "Mon Paradigm" is valid on some grounds, it has to be noted that this paradigm does not take account of the considerable archaeological exploration of Lower Myanmar, particularly around Thaton (Aung Thaw 1972; Aung-Thwin 2005, p. 67; Moore 2007b; San Win 2019; Stadtner 2011a, p. 30).

Thaton Archaeology and Sri Lanka

In Luce's era there had been little ground survey around Thaton or other areas of the present administrative area of Mon State. This has now changed and at least seventeen surveyed moated sites in Thaton (Suvaṇṇabhūmi) have walls and artefacts of the first millennium CE (San Win 2019, p. 131; Stadtner 2011a, pp. 34–40). The following details illustrate the complexity of influences active around Thaton during the late first millennium CE.

- The script of a Pali inscription of the *Paticcasamuppada* at Kunzeik is likened by San Win to the southern Indian Kadamba script of the fifth century CE and is similar to that on the Maunggan gold plates from Sri Ksetra.
- Numerous terracotta plaques with lively and distinct depictions of bull fighting, horse battles and celebrations at Kyontu near Kyaikkatha are dated to between the fifth and eighth century CE

(San Win 2019, p. 135; Wreyford 2018, p. 255).

- At some renovated sites, the original terraces have been retained, such as at Zothoke and at the three-terrace Thagya Hpaya at Thaton. These terraces have been dated to the eleventh century, and the original plaques to between the ninth and eleventh century CE (San Win 2019, p. 138; Stadtner 2011a, pp. 41–42).
- A few excavations were carried out at Winka and Kyaikkatha in the 1970s, and more in the 1990s, leading to documentation of structures and a cache of silver coins with conch shells dated to between the mid first millennium and the ninth to tenth century CE (Aung Myint 1998, pp. 104–5; Moore 2007b, p. 144).

In addition, survey by San Win and 2013–15 excavations carried out by Kyaw Myo Win and Kyaw Nyi Nyi Htet of the Department of Archaeology at Winka village (Taikkala, Ayetthama) unearthed a series of city walls and foundations in Thaton (Suvaṇṇabhūmi). These walled sites are worth listing for the cumulative evidence on the ground: Sittaung (36 ha), Kyaikkatha (289 ha), Kawhtin (16 ha), Taikkala (Ayetthama) (25 ha), Taikkala (Winka) (128 ha), Zothok-1 (37 ha), Zothok-2 (182 ha), Muthin (64 ha), Kakadit (12 ha), Leikkhon (12 ha), Donwun (29 ha), Kadaikalay (21 ha), Kadaikgyi (96 ha), Mayangone (84 ha), Hsinphyukyun (28 ha), Thaton (283 ha) and Sampanago (126 ha) (San Win 2019, p. 131). The 2014 Winka excavations documented a city wall (WK.TG.1), a circular base of a presumed stupa (WK.7) and a probable religious building with votive tablets (WK.8), as well as a north–south defence feature (WK.9) to assess the city wall. During the 2015–16 season, five more masonry and laterite sites were excavated at Winka (WK.10, 11, 12, 13 and 14) and one at Ma-law Gyaung near Kyaikkatha. Three architectural phases were identified from the work: burnt brick; burnt brick and granite; and brick, granite and laterite (San Win 2019, p. 150). In short, whether Anawrahta captured Thaton or not, the dense distribution of first millennium CE religious architecture with a range of materials makes a sound case for Mon expertise having played a role in Bagan's architecture and religious development (Moore 2007b; Stadtner 2011b, p. 5)

Furthermore, the coastal region around Thaton is easily accessible to Sri Lanka—a significant religious and architectural influence, along with Pala-Sena and Nepalese stylistic interchange (Elgood 2018, p. 17; Huntington 1985). An example is seen in an inscription dated 1248 CE found at the Thitmati pagoda near the Dhamma-yazika stupa in the southeast part of Bagan. Donated by minister Satuyingabo (Caturaṅgabala), it records the assistance of Sri Lankan and Cambodian monks in a *sanghā* purification (Frasch 2014, p. 105). Frasch notes this as a brief heyday when Bagan was preferred over Sri Lanka by laypeople, Buddhist scholars and monks and there being Mons and possibly a

South Indian community resettled around Myinkaba village. There is in addition a Sinhalese structure at the Tamani complex near the Dhammayazika, the Bodhiramsi "Thera" in a compound in New Bagan, and the Setana stupa with its dome and *harmika* (Frasch 2017, pp. 71–72). South of the capital are four monument clusters, including Salay, a smaller area around Hsalay, and possibly Myingun, whose population may have been linked to a Sinhalese *nikaya* (ch. 5).

Architecture and Epigraphy

The debate about the Mon and later Bamar is further seen in stone and ink inscriptions. G.H. Luce extrapolated these to architecture, generalizing the population complexity. A clear progression from Mon to Bamar was read into architectural change from single-storey to two-storey temples. The period from 1057 to 1174 CE—concentrated in the reign of Kyanzittha (1113–74 CE)—was designated as the Mon period and thereafter as Burmese (Luce 1969, vol. 1, p. 283). The early phase included single-storey *lay-myet-hna* structures with four entrances. The superstructure was surmounted by either a *sikhara* or a stupa; the former Mahābodhi pyramidal type following Orissa examples and the latter seen as local (Koller 2017, pp. 103–4; Pyiet Phyo Kyaw 2018, p. 60). In the Kyanzittha palace inscription (1101–2 CE), the wooden structure is described as a *pañcaprāsāda*, or five-fold pavilion, with a central structure surrounded by minor ones at the four corners—a form some scholars suggest may have been typical of Mon architecture (Kyaw Nyein 1989, p. 46). Another innovative element, the true arch, was used to create hollow structures with spacious interiors in what Luce called both Mon and Burmese types. At present, South Asian sources have not been identified for the true arch, although similarity is seen farther afield in two Central Asian buildings—Temple "T" at Chocho/Gāochāng and Chaitya-temple no. 2 at Tallyk-Bulak, north of Turpan, Xīngjiāng (Koller 2017, p. 108). Given these many options, clearly to assign a single population group to the architectural element would not be accurate (ch. 3).

Luce's presumption of Mon being among the architectural influences is viable, as noted above with Mon archaeology, plus there is the abundance of early Bagan period Mon epigraphy from inscriptions on terracotta to ink glosses and stone inscriptions. Many other influences also contributed—multiple Pyu groups, Burmese and Central Asian—if Koller's hypothesis noted above is considered. Various languages—including Mon, Pali, Sanskrit and Myanmar—are seen on votive tablets ascribed to Anawratha's reign in areas far from Bagan. For example, the Department of Archaeology found some tablets at Moe Meik, northern Shan State, in 1971 and one in Kalay in 1983. The Moe Meik tablets were inscribed with Mon script and Mon language on the reverse. Other tablets

from Moe Meik have Mon script and Pali language on the reverse, while ones from Kalay have Mon language in Mon scripts. Similar examples are widely distributed from Bagan to Tagaung, Shwebo and Htilin in the Maw and Yaw River Valley region. The farthest to the north is the one noted at Nwatale, Mong Meit (Khin Ma Ma Mu 1992, pp. 17–18, 95–96; Luce 1969, vol. 1, p. 17; vol. 2, pp. 5–6; vol. 3, plate 9; Mya (Thiripyanchi) 1961, vol. 1, p. 50, fig. 68 a, b).

Summary

Multiple groups created the attributes of Wider Bagan; their movements framed by the interconnections of the river valley. Despite homogenization over a long period, Bagan was not just the product of Mon, Pyu and Bamar influences. Inscriptions in various languages may have been cases of literary usage or indicate some of the past groups. Both Bagan and Wider Bagan were stimulated by ongoing movements of varied population groups; the tangible remains are not convertible to a single group or a single flow of settlement from Kyaukse, and the architecture cannot be separated into Mon and Bamar types in the manner Luce suggested. In addition, the array of settlements and artefacts in the regions around Thaton—well located for interaction with Sri Lanka—runs counter to its dismissal as a regional centre. The existing literature for the most part dwells on questions of Pyu, Mon and Bamar at the Bagan capital. When Bagan is used as the label for the kingdom as a whole, it is in great part only this evidence that is used. Other significant areas and population groups were many, including Rakhine areas to the west and to the east, Shan groups, and the mixed populations of Yunnan discussed below.

Rakhine and Shan Groups

While the river valleys of central Myanmar are the primary areas of Wider Bagan settlement, upland areas were a vital part of the trade and cultural interchange. There are at present 135 officially recognized “ethnic groups” in Myanmar; Bamar peoples make up about sixty-eight per cent of this total. Population figures, however, are not always indicative of land settlement, today or in the past. Present figures nonetheless give an idea of the poor fit between administrative borders and population groups. In 1994, for example, it was estimated that the present Kayin (Karen) State contained less than twenty-five per cent of the country’s Karen population (Smith 1994, p. 43). This is relevant to the Bagan period in highlighting population fluidity. In addition, the Shan, Rakhine and Mon had independent kingdoms outside the Bagan domain that maintained active relations with Bagan (Hla Maw Maw, pers. comm., 30 May 2018). Among these, the tangible record of the Lemro Dynasty (880–1430 CE)

has until recently been minimal, although the preparations for a UNESCO World Heritage Committee dossier submission on the fifteenth-century CE capital of Mrauk-U in 2019 has added to documentation of this region. There are in addition connections between Rakhine and Wider Bagan, such as a traditional "Bu-ywet-man-nyo" road said to have made travel quick between Sagu-Legaing and the Rakhine Kyauktaw Mahamuni shrine at the first millennium CE site of Dhannyawadi (ch. 6). Several fine *andagu* are found in Rakhine—another indication of the exchange of goods and ideas between these areas (ch. 3).

In contrast to the scarce mention of Rakhine, the Shan figure frequently in chronicles and are visible in artefacts and inscriptions. Shan peoples are widely dispersed today and arguably were so in the past, including large segments of the population in Kachin State. For the Inlay River Valley region, a cluster of brick structures retain arches and stucco work that is stylistically of the eleventh to thirteenth century CE, and there are local attributions to various Bagan kings (ch. 5). Attributes are included in the Extreme North Ayeyarwady River Valley region, such as the walled site of Waingmaw [RW01], but more research is needed to assess their relationship to Wider Bagan. These disparate cases reflect the diverse geography; for example, with Inlay being easily accessible from Meiktila and Pyawbwe in the Samon Valley. Waingmaw, in contrast, was triple the distance away and far closer to the Shan capital of Mogaung within a Tai area extending from the Hukaung/Hugaung-Tanai area. In the thirteenth century CE, Mao troops reportedly moved across the Ayeyarwady and Chindwin to Assam (Hla Maw Maw 2017, p. 71). This and other evidence will be elaborated in subsequent chapters. But in relation to Bagan, there has been little discussion of the Shan other than to profile the perceived threat. There are further contrasts between traditional Burmese and Shan accounts. For example, the usual reason given for the construction of the forty-three forts by the eleventh-century ruler Anawrahta is protection against threats from the Shan areas, whereas chronicles of Mohnyin (Mong Yan), Mogaung (Mong Kwang) and Momeik/Momeit (Mong Mit) give a different picture (Hla Maw Maw 2017, p. 75). These chronicles at times record prior occupation of fort sites, such as Myadaung [DW11] by the Mohnyin Sawbwa and Madaya [DW27] by the Kyaing Hon Sawbwa of Momeik. At the Bagan capital, Shan settlement included farmers, soldiers and artisans known for pagoda construction; the hero Pyu-saw-hti (Pyu-Sao-Hti) had Shan heritage (Sai Aung Tun 2009, pp. 60, 75, 91). Other examples include Shan sources of stone for *andagu* votaries, and the former significance of Madaya in exchange routes with Shan areas (Win Maung [Tampawaddy], pers. comm., 10 June 2018). Continued movement between the two areas also contributed to the availability of labour in the capital and other areas (Frasch 1996, p. 87). When this

varied population is combined with the range in size and function of King Anawrahta's forty-three forts, a much more fluid and complicated profile of the intersection of the two areas is seen than that obtained by simply looking at a map of the linear arrangement of the forts along the edge of the Shan Plateau (chs. 2 and 6). Another aspect of this was the numerous phases of cultural contact between Central Myanmar and areas of Yunnan and beyond, which will be discussed below.

Yunnan and the River Valleys of Bagan

Yunnan and its surrounding areas played a sustained role in the development of Bagan that is not frequently noted. There were three moments during which close exchange occurred: the circa 600 BCE to 300 CE bronze-iron culture of the Samon Valley, the traditional 832 CE destruction of Sri Ksetra, and the disputed late thirteenth-century CE Mongol invasion of Bagan. These three moments are briefly reviewed below, along with a concluding summary on their significance.

Samon Valley and Dian Cultures

The first point of documented interchange—the circa 600 BCE to 300 CE Samon Valley culture—is not mentioned in local or national chronicles. The typical objects of this culture first came to light in 1998 through "bead-digging" and irrigation projects in the arid zone. The most common finds have been recovered only within Myanmar, from mortuary deposits between Halin in the north and Pyinmana in the south. The limits of this distribution may be revised in future; for example, 2019 saw the discovery of typical bronze-iron "Samon" type burials near Wea Laung circa thirty kilometres north of Mt. Popa. Typical objects included high-copper beaten bronze "mother-goddess" figures placed on the top of log coffins, and flat floral ornaments thought to have been placed on the sides. On the skeletons were multiple *kye doke*—small bronze packets signalling wealth, possibly from rice cultivation (Moore 2007b, p. 101). Other bronzes of this era and many musical instruments—including Heger I cowrie-drum containers—appear to be imports produced in the Dian cultures of Yunnan from sites such as Shizhaishan and even Lijiashan (Moore 2010, p. 122). As it stands, the Samon-Dian links demonstrate trade and exchange between Yunnan and India and south to the Andaman Sea. While the emergence of the Pyu Buddhist polities signalled a shift to South Asia, the goods and exchange networks of the earlier era were not obliterated. This is illustrated by a mention of the area in a second-hand report obtained from an Indian emissary by envoys K'ang T'ai and Chu Ying during a mission to Funan circa 240 CE and in the later accounts below (Briggs 1951, p. 21).

The Pyu and Nan-Chao

The period from circa 300 to 832 CE saw the founding of Kunming (Tuodong) in 765 CE and the rise of Buddhist kingships at Pyu cities in Central Myanmar. The Samon culture disappears and there is little evidence of interchange with that of the Pyu other than polished stone beads. The *Man-Shu* relates the sacking of Sri Ksetra in 832 CE when Yunnan is said to have raided the cities of the Pyu and exiled them to the area around Kunming or Yünnan Fu (Tuodong), where they "subsist[ed] on fish, insects, etc. Such is the end of their people" (Luce 1985, p. 66; Moore 2004, p. 8). While this suggests a scattering of impoverished people, the reputedly fierce Pyu (P'iao) served with the Nanchao troops in 850s campaigns against Annam (Backus 1981, p. 212). Luce further comments that the P'iao are still mentioned as one of the tribes of the "Gold-teeth Comfortership" southwest of Ta-li and east of Mien (Burma). What Luce does not note is the ambiguity this entails; for just as Tarop is a mutable term for those beyond the border, the *Yuan Shih* labelled the Mien areas simply as part of the Southwestern Yi—the barbarian groups beyond the Han borders (Goh 2010, p. 151; Pe Maung Tin and Luce [1921] 1960, p. 80). Working primarily from linguistic evidence, Luce proposed a simple progression and migration following the supposed 832 CE attack and the founding of the kingdom of Tambadipa and small areas at Kyaukse and Minbu (Luce 1966, pp. 54–55).

Pyu, Mongols and Bagan

The third period of documented contact with Yunnan included Pyu peoples. It begins around the twelfth century CE with records of a Pyu population in inscriptions at Bagan. These include one in the reliquary of Anawrahta's Shwe-hsan-daw Pagoda that is thought to date to the mid-eleventh century. Another is the instance of Pyu language on one of the four inscribed faces of the early twelfth-century CE Myazedi inscription. The thirteenth-century bifacial slab in Pyu and Chinese found near the east gate of Bagan noted above is also important in reflecting alliances between Pyu and Chinese (Yunnan) to defeat the Bamar at Bagan. This in turn echoes translations of the *Man Shu* and the New Tang History, where the Pyu are said to have been conscripted to fight with Nan-Chao to take Hanoi in 863 CE. The thirteenth-century inscription is not written in the usual manner for Chinese, vertically top to bottom, but as Myanmar inscriptions are set out, from left to right (Liu Yun 2018, 2019). Drawing on earlier work of Taw Sein Ko and Chen Yi-sein that determined the inscription dated to the era of Mongol incursions by Kublai Khan (r. 1271–94) and the establishment of a tributary relationship with Bagan, Liu Yun translates this as imperial orders forbidding the destruction of

the Bagan kingdom. Luce also saw the inscription as an imperial edict serving as a warning to military forces in Yunnan (Luce 1959). Liu Yun concludes that the major part of the forces sent to Bagan were not Mongol troops but Chinese-speaking and Pyu-speaking soldiers (2019, p. 71). Additional inscriptions from the fourteenth century list Pyu occupations such as carpenters and concubines, and there are Chinese accounts of the Yuan incursions, including details of an encampment at a Piao Dian, or Pyu Kingdom, at the head of one of three routes into Upper Myanmar, which is described below.

Yuan Shih Account – Battle at the "Head of the River"

The *Yuan Shih* (history of the Yuan) gives a detailed account of a late thirteenth-century battle, which includes the names of some allying with the Mongols, the Pyu and the Yunnan chiefs. These included A-Bi-Li-Xiang (A-pi-li-hsiang/Anantapicañ), a salt-well official, and the "white shirt Bai Yi", who tried to block Bagan negotiations with the Mongol court. In this account, A-Bi-Li-Xiang was sent to Tai-Gong (Tagaung) in 1285 CE for negotiations between the Bagan and Mongol courts (Aung-Thwin 1998, pp. 44, 69). There were also various Gold-teeth Tribes, possibly in today's Dehong province and Wa and Palaung areas of the northern Shan States (Than Tun 1964, p. 136). As the "Head of the River", Kaungsin [DW05] was the meeting point of three routes from Yunnan to Myanmar: (1) Tian-Ma-Bu (Heavenly-Horse-Tribe), (2) Biao-dian (Pyuma/Burma) and (3) Ah Guo's border. The three routes met at the Mian (Myan) city of Jiang-Tou-Cheng (Kaungsin; Head of the River City) (Tai 2018). Luce suggested Kaungsin may have been Kadu—this place name appearing in an inscription of 1196 CE (Aung Kyaing [Minbu] 2014, pp. 40–41; Luce 1969, vol. 1, pp. 34–36). In 1228, Kaungsin is said to have been nominated as an administrative and military centre, but, on 9 December 1283 CE, troops took it, killing over ten thousand people (Berliet 2010b, p. 158; Huber 1909, pp. 668–69; *Song Lian: Yuan Dynasty History* 1984). The Bai Yi (white shirt) chief noted above was a relative of the Mongol king's son and a neighbour of the Mian; he reputedly knew the three routes and tried to block negotiations between the two courts. Despite the disparity between these different text sources, it appears that a large battle took place at Kaungsin. Others of the forty-three forts—both those in the north around Bhamo such as the 1283 battle site of Nga-saung-gyan [DW02] and to the south the site of Tagaung [DW12]—also figure in this late thirteenth-century period of conflict and unrest. For example, some sources say that after Kaungsin fell the Mongols took Tagaung on the Shweli River in 1284 (Aung-Thwin 1998, pp. 44, 69). A further point of debate is whether Mongol troops reached and sacked Bagan. The *Yuan Shih* records that in 1287 Bagan was reached, seven thousand were

killed, the Mian pacified, and that tribute was paid yearly (*Song Lian* 1984). Aung-Thwin suggests the word used means they reached what the Chinese perceived as the Bagan kingdom but not the city itself (Aung-Thwin 1998, pp. 65–66). Whichever was actually the case, there was another Mongol incursion in 1301 CE (Aung-Thwin 1998, p. 88). A sense of the wider impact of these events is given in Tun Nyo's *New Chronicle*, where he notes that when the Chinese arrived at Bagan in 646 ME [1284 CE] at the vital port of Muttama (Martaban) in the south, Wareru killed the junior Aleinma (Tun Nyo [1968] 2012, p. 148). Aleinma, a common name, here signifies an appointee of the Bagan king, and Wareru's action reflected the ensuing instability with Mongols at Bagan and the king having fled downstream (San Win, pers. comm., 28 January 2019). While these vivid accounts are political, awareness of the wider Buddhist world is seen in some late thirteenth-century murals at Bagan. At a small, single-celled structure (IMP1077) north of Thiripyitsaya, for example, Chinese and Sri Lankan devotees are depicted venerating the Buddha's eye-tooth (Handlin 2018, p. 241). In a further mural, found in the Kyanzittha-umin, a group of Mongol hunters—identified by their broad-brimmed, feather-topped hats and their boots—are depicted relaxing under trees (Bautze-Picron 2014, p. 17, fig. 20). The Mongol presence is connected to the Mongol invasion of Bagan in 1284/1287 CE and the story of the monk Disapramok, delegated by King Narathihapate to travel to the Yuan court to negotiate with Kublai Khan (chs. 4 and 6).

The relationship of these various border groups to the Pyu (P'iao) at Halin and Sri Ksetra is not clear, but the accounts reinforce the sense of many Pyu groups not allying with the Bagan court. The people of the Gold Teeth Comfortership on the southwest border of Nan-chao noted earlier reportedly tattooed their bodies and capped their teeth with lacquer and precious metals. An upper jawbone drilled on eight teeth with 102 very small holes and filled with gold foil—found in 1999 with a skeleton under a stone slab and a 1.5-metre pillar less than a kilometre west of the Shwe-gu-gyi Zeidi [T239], south of Halin—may be linked to these groups in an earlier time. Other goods included pottery, iron tools and silver and gold rings (Moore 2007b, pp. 124–25) (chs. 4 and 5).

Summary

The accounts above highlight the presence of numerous groups of "Pyu" peoples with fluctuating loyalties along the Upper Ayeyarwady around Bhamo and south to Tagaung. The supposed loss of ten thousand soldiers at the late thirteenth-century CE battle at one of the forty-three forts, Kaungsin, raises questions about the defensive success of the forts and also suggests the presence of Pyu mercenaries recruited by the Chinese court. As with the distinctive artefacts from excavations at different

Pyu sites, these mercenaries were not necessarily a homogenous group or related to the Pyu of Sri Ksetra. Nor is the vivid *Yuan Shih* account matched with evidence on the ground. The large gap between the text and late thirteenth-century artefacts or inscriptions to corroborate these on the ground may be filled following planned excavations at Tagaung [DW12]. Wall remains were identified at Nga-saung-gyan [DW02] and Kaungsin [DW05], although both are remote and have few above-ground remains (Aung Kyaing [Minbu] 2014, pp. 41, 137).

To recap, there are few tangible remains to support text accounts of the early second millennium CE, but distinctive artefacts extending from Halin to north of Mt. Popa underline closer sustained connections than are generally indicated during the first millennium CE. In the second phase sketched out above, Yunnan was independent from circa the eighth to the thirteenth century, and it had shifting loyalties with Tibet to the west and the Tang and Song dynasties of China. Given this profile, it has been suggested that Nan-chao (Nanzhao) may have been instrumental in the founding of the medieval city of Bagan and its dynasty (Aung-Thwin 1991, p. 587; Thant Myint-U 2012, p. 165).

Land and Place

As the above accounts underline, Bagan and the river valleys were not a clean slate: few areas were cleared from the forest. Pre-existing owners yielded the lands and goods that were bestowed as appanages by the king, his courtiers and the elite of the countryside. The land continued to be adapted, venerated and changed despite changing ownership. Shifting ownership in some cases may represent a doctrinal shift—at least in part. This has been suggested for China, where a Buddhist response to Daoist incursions is noted in the mid-thirteenth-century CE, but with the comment that in doctrinal debates about scriptures the real issue was monastic property rights (Robson 2011, p. 35). Auspiciousness of place also relates to the original foundation, although whether in a "numinous" context as Robson discusses for China or simply as fertile land is unclear. The site at Ta Mok Shwe-gu-gyi, Kyaukse, has burials, donations and structures spanning more than a thousand years. The Bagan period temple [T160] here is oriented to the north—a direction possibly associated with local *weiza*-type cults. It is surrounded by fertile fields, and its sacred renown is inseparable from its reputation as a productive area for cultivation. In short, separating the sacred and agrarian landscape is not feasible. This issue is discussed further in connection with water management features (ch. 2). Change, whether changing places or changing uses, or change prompting replication, is also highlighted in the donation of images, possibly accompanied by the replication of relics or the discovery of a

previous auspiciousness (Strong 2004, p. 232). One example is seen in Monywa at the Hsin-gyo Shwe-gu [T065], where a sandalwood image of Alaungsithu is now accompanied by a second image. Both are kept securely in separate, heavy, gold-painted colonial-period safes. A much earlier illustration is suggested in the two footprints of the Buddha at the site of Shwe-set-taw [T101] near Sagu in the Mann Valley, Minbu (Khin Thidar 2016) (ch. 5).

Local Customs

Whereas the sections above drew attention to connections between regions, this concluding portion highlights links between village and court rituals. This book, in looking from the village level out, documents temples and other attributes in areas that may have had considerable or little to no obligation to the court, but whose customs were taken up or shared at Bagan. They underline a commonality and exchange not apparent in terms such as border, centre and periphery. This was noted earlier in relation to produce and the movement of people. And while the examples below are few, certainly others could be identified with further research. This recalls, however, that Bagan was only one centre among many before its rise, and that towns and villages both enabled and limited the court (Frasch 1996, p. 86). On issues of land and place, for instance, rituals for erecting a building were shared by all levels of society. Such rituals may be seen at their most elaborate in the inscription found near the main Tharba gate at Bagan that records the construction of what is thought to have been the twelfth-century palace of King Kyanzittha. An example is the *pannet-tin*—the process of driving in the stakes—for Kyanzittha's palace (IX, Face F44) (Lei Lei Win 2012, p. 3; Nyein Chan Soe and Naing Soe 2017, pp. 91–92). The process was the same whether it was for a temple, a village or a "royal house". The same ritual is recorded in the 562 *saka* city founding of Laung-she [RW48] by King Popa/Bagan Sawrahan in the seventh century CE in the Maw and Yaw River Valley region. By the time of King Anawrahta in the eleventh century CE, the village name had changed to Byut-pat-ywa. But the most critical origin ritual was that of the nine founding markers—*pannet-ko-kyet*. The ancient moat was marked by wooden pillars with the foundation markers, along with two temples (Shwe-sa-ri Hpaya ရွှေစာရိဘုရား and Mingala-U-Hpaya မင်္ဂလာဦးဘုရား), a monastery (In-boat kyaung အင်ဘုတ်ကျောင်း) and three *nat*—or tutelary spirit—shrines (Taung-gyi Shin Nat Kwan Nat-sin, Moe-nat kwan and Anauk Shin-ma Nat kwan တောင်ကြီးရှင်နတ်ကွန်းနတ်စင်၊ မိုးနတ်ကွန်း၊ အနောက်ရှင်မနတ်ကွန်း). There were also three linked ponds—Kan-thone-hsint (Ashin-gyi kan, Moe-nat Kan and Ye-htein kan ကန်(၃)ဆင့်)—a canal (Myaung gyi မြောင်းကြီး) and a bridge (red; Ta-da-ni ၊ တံတားနီ) (Tin Soe (Laung-she) 2011, p. 3). The *pannet*

provided the fundamental basis of the village. This is seen again in the procedures to erect Kyanzittha's palace, where the succession of rulers—while not secondary—is only made possible because of this enduring localized foundation.

A further illustration is seen in the record of nineteenth-century CE appointments for headman of the town of Salin, one of the Minbu rice granaries in the Bagan period. The later Salin domain was extensive—extending from the Ayeyarwady in the east to Legaing in the south and Laung-she to the northwest (Htun Yee 2014, p. 109). Four hereditary lineages ruled the area, but they were always in dispute over joint administration and royal appointments and dismissals. The region was an important political and religious area in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During this period it witnessed a changing process of negotiation with the court—both socially and politically—up to its annexation by the British in 1885. The relevance for Wider Bagan lies in the constancy of a local dynamic in prescribed rituals and passed-on knowledge that was sustained through successive rulers, which may have been the most significant authority for this process (Tanabe 2018; Hearn and White 2009). As these examples show, local customs were of primary importance at all levels of society. If they remained unbroken, they gave flexibility and resilience to both the wider landscape and the capital. Within these areas today, the continuation of basic social organizations, with adaption to changing times, has sustained religious spaces integrated within the community. Each area reflects local and at times intra-regional interchange. Areas of the Samon River Valley and Monywa in the Lower Chindwin were not simply provincial areas to Bagan; each rose and was sustained or fell on its own terms and within local networks (Moore and Soe Thainkha 2019).

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Chapter 1 defines the scope of the book and introduces the river valley framework and the attributes: water management features, walls, temples, inscriptions and images. These traits of the eleventh to thirteenth century are also related to those of the first millennium CE. The presence of multiple groups is stressed, particularly the Pyu, Mon and Bamar (Burmese). Recent archaeological survey around Thaton is used to balance debates on the role of Mon and Burmese at Bagan, including the division of architecture at the capital into Mon and Burmese styles. Movements of various peoples are emphasized—between groups in the central Ayeyarwady basin, western Rakhine, the eastern Shan regions and beyond to Yunnan. The chapter concludes by highlighting further

connections between land and place, as well as customs common to the villages of Wider Bagan and the court.

Chapter 2 – Inscriptions, Walls and Water

Chapter 2 considers the three attributes most frequently used in the literature to demarcate Wider Bagan: inscriptions, walls and water management features. These three attributes are frequently cited to summarize what were varied and fluid relationships between the court and outlying regions. Each section reviews issues arising from such overviews and defines the examples recorded for this study. The first section on inscriptions considers dating, types of writing, similarities and differences between court inscriptions and those of Wider Bagan—highlighted by two inscription stones at Bagan: the Mya-zedi and the Dhamma-yazika—and definitions of empire, kingdom and state. Other sections focus on ambiguities in land measures, epigraphic data on crops cultivated, and the act of witnessing and the subsequent maintenance of donations. Descriptions of Wider Bagan stones include their location, method of production, size and decoration. The chapter concludes by considering the housing of the inscribed stones in sheds. The walls, deteriorated or often overgrown, are classified into territorial resource and defensive walls. Some sections—such as the analysis of the forty-three forts of the eleventh-century king Anawrahta and the section on the word *khayaing* (*kharuin*)—underline the ambiguities of these terms. The chapter concludes with the water management features, the continuities seen in the historical Kyaukse, Minbu and Tonplon areas, and sacred watersheds.

Chapter 3 – Temples and Images

Chapter 3 defines temples and images. For architecture, the temple and stupa forms are summarized along with details of modifications to the layout, superstructure and encasement or enfolding; these terms are defined in the chapter. Images include those of the Buddha in bronze, terracotta and wood, as well as *andagu*, votive tablets and images of monks, spirits and ogres. The ritual contexts of some images found *in situ* are reviewed and examples are given of the types defined in the attributes.

Chapter 4 – Memory of Tutelary Individuals, Monks and Kings

Chapter 4 considers traditional narratives of tutelary, monastic and royal characters in Wider Bagan. Generally, the "'dead subjects' of archaeology are divided from the field's contemporary valences, yet the two domains emerged in tandem and are epistemically interlaced" (Meskell 2012, p. 234). The figures all link in one way or another to the court—ranging from the hazy origins of selected *nats* to three influential monks: Shin

Arahan, Paunglaung Shin Kassapa and Shin Disapramok. The largest group are royal narratives of heroic acts and donations, identifying temples in Wider Bagan with the religious stature of the distant capital. In this sense, they are reminiscent of the process through which Jataka stories and toponymy became identified with particular sites in northern India (Appleton 2007, p. 113; Pollock 2006, p. 16).

Chapter 5 – Gazetteer of the River Valleys

Chapter 5 is a gazetteer addressing the attributes in their river valley settings. While Wider Bagan is often presented as a landscape of rice fields, the descriptions in this chapter highlight a diversity that enabled the capital and the lands beyond to expand and survive. Each river valley is described, noting the terrain and rivers that helping to explain the locations of temples, inscriptions, images, walls and water features. The most attention is given to areas with the greatest number of sites: the Upper and Middle Ayeyarwady, the Lower Chindwin, Mu, Samon and Myit Ngeh, although summaries are given for the Extreme North, Lower and Delta Ayeyarwady, Upper Chindwin, Yaw and Maw, Kissapandi (Kaladan), Inlay, Sittaung, Dawei-Tanintharyi, and Upper, Middle and Lower Thanlwin valleys.

Chapter 6 – Significant Nodes and Phased Chronology

The final chapter profiles nine significant nodes: seven in Tampadipa (Tagaung, Madaya, Allagappa, Kyaukpadaung, Beinnaka, Myittha and Mekkhaya) and Pakhangyi and Sagu-Legaing in the traditional area of Sunāparanta. The chapter concludes by drawing together the dynastic eras of royal associations, epigraphy and stylistic studies into a Wider Bagan phased chronology. The data shows notable contrasts in activity in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries between Wider Bagan and the capital. The divergence highlights the authority of both—an essential but little-recognized symbiosis and parity in the making of Bagan. On-the-ground evidence from the eleventh to the thirteenth century remains provisional but affirms the independent trajectory of Wider Bagan in its ongoing interaction with the capital.