

**Recent Rock Art and archaeological discoveries
in East Kalimantan-Indonesia
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Since 1992, and thanks originally to the exceptional interest of one of the cavers crossing Kalimantan provinces from West to East in 1988ⁱ, a large amount of archaeological discoveries has been later gained. Being eventually and mostly involved into the survey of caves and rock shelters of East Kalimantan, a Franco-Indonesian team, has since regularly let merge some parts of the deep past of that archaeological blank area. Altogether more than 100 caves have been visited and checked, within which more than 30 contain totally unexpected and determinant Rock Art paintings.

During the last decade and more precisely, last 3 years, French and Indonesian archaeologists, assisted by cavers, have surveyed two main karstic areas, located, one North of Sangkulirang, the second Northwest of Sangatta (see map1).

These two large areas roughly spread over a 40 by 20 kms space each, appeared to be especially well enough geologically structured and rich concerning archaeological remains of all kinds. These large conic karsts, uplifted from tectonic pressure movements after the Myocene, some 60 millions years ago, have developed three geomorphological networks of cavities and galleries.

These superposed strata, located differently in the uplifted outcrops have proved to be dwelled and used differently along the time (see fig. 1). At a broad level of description (see Chazine, 2005, for a more precise insight), the lower one has been usually used as common or daily dwelling places since oldest periods, i.e. before 10.000 years ago, at least, before the end of Pleistocene. It contains all the classical occupation remains: food remains (bones and shells), stone tools workshops with their waste piles, charcoals and fireplaces. Ceramics are often present from surface to the upper or latest levels (surface to minus 40 to 60cm), corresponding to post-Austronesian occupation phases. Within many of the adjacent cracks or crevices, funerary ceramics associated with human bones are neighbouring some late "Dayak" or similar cultural communities who have settled around in the vicinity and left their wooden mortuary coffin burials and displayed personal items.

An intermediate net of cavities, located between 50 to 150 m higher in the cliffs, has had various or composite uses. In a few cases, a punctual dwelling has happened, presenting the same occupation clues than the lower level. Nevertheless, the main use of these intermediate caves, cracks or dry rock shelters has been devoted towards succeeding funerary purposes.

There, a very large amount of earthen funerary urns presenting a large set of differentiated decorations had been regularly observed during 2001' to 2003' field sessions. During 2004' field session, while extending a new

test pit in Keboboh caves complex, our colleagues Jatmiko and Udin have also unexpectedly unearthed two burials (Jatmiko et al., 2004). Once unveiled from surrounding deposits, they appeared to be in a flexed position, a feature which would correspond to a pre-Austronesian inhumation process.

The third level of cavities, practically located up to 300 m high, has not provided until now, any if almost no occupation remains but paintings. Some of these caves contain a totally specific Rock Art expression, which induces to interpret these places as having had a very specific function. We will see later in this paper, what kind of activities the particular isolation, remoteness and emptiness of these caves and rock shelters would have had in the pasts.

This natural stratigraphy which has been selectively exploited for cultural and precise goals, is one of the specificities observed in East Kalimantan's (inasmuch as Palawan's) karstic outcrops. The regularity of that distribution (29 positive cases upon a total of 32) makes it a noticeable landmark which local communities have themselves emphasized.

Amongst all dwelling and occupations remains largely found in the lowest, and -less frequently- in the median levels, comprising all kinds of lithic and bone remains (to be more precisely presented later in this paper), the earthen wares are bearing a large amount of directly readable data. As it is limited to the "Austronesian techno-culture" phase, starting around 3,500 years ago, it is too early to consider it as a general objective "leading fossil" or "chronological marker". Nevertheless, at least for East-Borneo prehistory, its main characteristics may be used for discriminating styles, periods, inasmuch as local firing processes.

Since our cooperative Franco-Indonesian program has started last 2003, implying excavations conducted in selected caves and rock shelters, findings of different kinds of earthen wares ceramics both on surface and within stratigraphied dwelling places layers, have enabled us to separate common and/or funerary items.

Broadly speaking, the display of motives and shapes of pots which have yet been sorted are very similar to those which had previously been excavated or collected in Sarawak, Sabah and even Palawan island and the North-Western part of South East island Asia. Some of them being directly similar to the basis reference "Sa Huynh-Kalanay style" analysed and proposed long ago by Pr. Solheim II (Solheim II 1964).

They show eventually not much difference with many of those which have been studied long time ago in Sarawak', Brunei' or Sabah' sectors, by numerous and well known archaeologists (Harrisson, Solheim, Bellwood... etc). In East Kalimantan, styles vary from the oldest periods (around 3,500 BP) to the most recent surviving influences (Iban or so-called communities), not older than 200 to 100 BP. Decorations vary from paddle and anvil technology using different cord, square carved, mat and granulated motives, to all the possible numerous incised decorations (see fig. 2). Some cases present also geometric excised designs or motives. Stamped features (including linear " grain rice-like" impressions) may also be combined within variable incised schemes. The incised motives comprise geometric, curvilinear

and/or stenciled/stamped impressions (see fig. 3). The use of specific tools, producing sinuous designs obtained from bivalves shells (cardium-like) which has been yet found only once in Sarawak (Solheim II & Tweedie, 1959), has been now also collected within two caves (Gua Tengkorak and Gua Keboboh) along the Marang river (see fig. 4 and location map). Macro-observations show that the prints differ one from the other, indicating at least two different shells/tools and probably makers.

One amongst other cardium decorated sherds from G. Tangkorak and belonging obviously to the same pot, would be a part of a handle or prehension tag, in the shape of an animal figurine (see fig.5). They show a strong analogy with figurines which have been found in Lubang Angin (Datan, 1993).

Another zoomorphic figurine has just been found during our last field-session, a tiny and remote crack-roomy place named Gua Unak. It presents a composite feature: large horizontal ears-like protuberances and side wings or stumps (see fig. 6). The remaining part shows that the figurine had a vertical axis of symmetry. The presence of a hole in the lower middle part, associated to the bent edge, would induce to interpret it as a probable lid handle. They should have been thus two or four located in opposite position.

A complementary screening of the small cavity using a 2-4mm mesh, has not provided any complementary part. Considering that the firing of the clay, being very poor and limited to the minimum rendering the whole thus very breakable and damageable, it should have normally totally disappeared. Their extreme fragility would explain why these figurines seem to be very seldom yet in SEA (Cameron, 2005).

Within an increasing number of funerary jars checked along our previous and actual surveys, one very specific was discovered in a small adjacent crevice of Gua Kairim. Considering its huge size first, around 1 meter high and 50 cm for the lip diameter (see fig. 7), added to the unusual large geometric curvilinear incised motives, it appears to be totally different from all others. Not only in Kaltim's set, but even in the whole Borneo Island. It displays numerous variations of alternative indented surfaces yet totally unusual in the surveyed area. Its resemblance with Lapita style ceramic was surprising enough to induce to check it with specialised colleagues. Preliminary and first glance identification confirmed a characteristic late Lapita style expression (comm. pers. Noury, in 2004' report).

Stressing later that possible clue, a double first "lapita-like" sherd, decorated with stamped dentate motives, came to be found in Gua Batu-Aji (see 2004 report). Unfortunately located in sub-surface of midden deposits, it could not be dated nor included in any determining process. During the 2005' Liang Jon excavations, another sherd has been found, well embedded in a regular stratigraphy. Laying at minus 40cm within a stabilized occupation layer, that dentate decorated small sherd shows the characteristic stigma of the dentate tool. In that precise case, it is totally similar to some Fijian and New Caledonian samples (Lapita Conf., 2005). It would correspond to the same period as other early earthenware witnesses, and would be thus also

synchronic. According to Noury, it would correspond also to the late Lapita period/influence, around 2800 BP (comm. pers. May 2005). For R. Green (comm. pers. Aug. 2005), it would correspond to a retroverse effect, similar to the Bukit Tangkorak data found in Sabah, by Bellwood (1989), which happened 3200-3100 years ago (see Fig 8).

2005' excavations in Liang Jon, based upon previous researches from 2003 and their promising results, have been centred mainly upon two enlarged test pits 1,5m x 1,5m, located on one row, between the two previous surveyed areas (see fig. 9). One (A) has been dug until a depth of 3 m, without reaching yet the terminal rock basement, while the second (B) having encountered a burial, has been stopped after a 60 cm depth.

Both of them have provided a very large set of archaeological remains including stone tools and general middens comprising various faunal bone remains and shells of different sources. More interesting, they are also apparent in distinctly separated levels, some almost complete kits related to the preparation and use of red ochre. That late group of artefacts may be related not only to specific or funerary rituals, but possibly to the ornate caves located in the direct vicinity (200 to 500m). Sophisticated physical methods of comparison should thus be employed to compare the different coloured stuffs.

Once excavated, mainly under GH. Ferrie's supervision, the skeleton, which appeared around 60cm depth, is lying in a straight elongated position, most of its bones being in apparent connexion (see Fig. 10). The left hand is applied upon the belly. The right one, although apparent on the right side of the ribs, seems, from the position of the elbow and the missing fore-arm, to have been somehow twisted backwards. But the most strange fact, is that there is no head but a stone in place. The upper part of that stone came to sight only after a circular line of stones containing charcoals and confirming the presence of a fire structure at the previous level, had been removed. The clearing of the skeleton, which was in process, let suppose that the head would have been bent backwards and covered by that late stone. Once removed, it became clear that the corpse had been beheaded. During the extension of the scraping of the layer, some parts of skull appeared, some 60 cm away, just at the foot of the cliff wall (see Fig.10). The clearing of that conglomerate of skull pieces has shown that they were corresponding to at least two individuals, (and possibly three). Preliminary observation of the cervical vertebra and the occipital hole(s), has not shown any blow or cutting action tracks. It would thus indicate that the splitting of the head from the body has been done after death, once the decomposition of the corpse was already enough advanced.

The similarity of formal situation is particularly striking with the recent discoveries made in Vanuatu, by Spriggs and his team (Spriggs & al. 2005). There, they unearthed some 20 burials typically belonging to the Lapita period. Some of the skeletons had been beheaded –without provoking stroke wears- and moreover, their head having also been replaced by a stone. More interestingly, some bones have been deliberately taken away, and particularly

some fore-arms... From the bio-anthropologists having studied the bones assemblages, they estimate that after one year, it becomes possible, without breaking the bones remaining connexion (pers. comm. Valentin, Lapita Conf. 2005). It implies nevertheless that the body having been buried after death, the head alone had to be unearthed, using then forcibly a location marker. The position of the feet assemblage, inasmuch as the arms and hands would indicate that the body had been toughly and completely wrapped in a mat or at least with ties (ropes, bark or *tapa* stripes).

Hardness and consistence of the ground has been observed during the excavation process, it appeared that the body had been buried in digging a hole not much larger than the corpse in the ground and later refilled, due to the difference of flat regularity in the deposits. The coincidence of the level from which the burial has been dug and the level of the occurrence of the "lapita-like" postsherd has to be noted. Although it would not constitute yet a real acceptable proof, it is nevertheless a clue, which has to be kept in mind.

While awaiting C14 datation results for the Liang Jon excavations, that particularly significant occurrence, should be added to the similarity with the large Lapita inspired funerary urn from Liang Kairim. That convergence would at first and primary approach, confirms, if definitively established, that circulation of cultural items related with the Lapita periods or influence phases, has been even larger than estimated previously. Limited until now to the NE part of Borneo, mainly thanks to Sabah's investigations (see Bellwood 1989), that influence would have extended also Southwards to East Kalimantan. The exchange and circulation process including cultural items, would they be physical : like obsidian from Talasea in New Britain (see Specht 1985), transported and found in NE Sabah, or symbolic like designs or myths, would probably include also some specific decorated ceramics. Whether only lapita-like pots or their technology, has circulated, missing until now enough identified data, remains a yet unsolved question.

As a matter of fact, birth origins of "Lapita cultural complex" inspiration is still a question debated between scholars (see the numerous Lapita and IPPA Symposia held since the past decades). It broadly varies from Eastern to Western sides of New Guinea, and our late discovery is more precisely trending towards the Western origin or clustering area. Other sites from insular SEA have also provided somehow lapita-like ceramics, although not using the very specific dentate stamped technique.

Some of the most well known originate from Kalumpang area (Sulawesi) and Talaud islands, or even in and around Taiwan, have already been described by Bellwood (1997). The appearance of such ceramics in East Kalimantan, corresponding simply to the extension westwards of its possible influence, is just enlarging the probabilities area and does not present any contradiction with already established hypothesis.

The other important findings from 2005' excavations (Gua Tebok and Liang Jon) are the numerous artefacts related to ochre uses, excavated between the upper levels and the lowest ones (2,5m deep). They comprise

the complete set, from the large raw core (15cm in diameter), to the red wearings pestle, including core flakes, used pencils with wearing marks and flat to hollowed red surfaced anvils. Most of these late anvils are from calcitic-sandstone, whose provenance may be located precisely. They would come from the eastern side of the Gunung Marang itself, where sandstone dots emerge from pure calcite deposits. It appears quite visibly intermixed in the cave named Gua "tanah lihat" (cave "where earth is visible"), at the bottom of the main cliff (see 2003' report). This complete assemblage of ochre implements, shows how its importance was noticeable. Although Gua Tebok and Liang Jon 2005' excavations have both provided a remarkable set of ochre, Gua Tebok is presenting the advantage to contain some hand stencils (one of them right in the middle of the huge ceiling, 8m high). They may thus be with high probability directly related to them. That important use has had a lasting activity during a long lap of time because it appears in the different succeeding occupation layers. These late are still awaiting datations sampling.

Although almost all kind of stone tools and their industry, including raw materials inasmuch as refuses, from upper until lower levels (minus 3m), no real significative change could yet be observed in lithic technology. Surface inasmuch as first 50 to 60 cm layers, which contain ceramics corresponding thus to the "Austronesian" techno-cultural phase, do not present other signature than medium to small flakes industry. Only one broken part of the cutting edge of a polished adze has yet been found during the 3 campaigns, indicating that the introduction and adoption of that new techno-cultural practice, carried by Austronesians, did not spread regularly inside all areas of Borneo. At a broad level of consideration, there is no main noticeable change in the stone tools assemblage. They are mostly flakes, whose statistical distributions appear to vary slightly. As already stressed by Julien Espagne (see 2003' and 2004' reports), the frequency of Kutai flakes remains proportionally high, and lasts from buried ancient levels (yet radiocarbon undated) to sub-surface locations. Nevertheless, the main impression is confirmed that the "Pleistocene knapping technology" has lasted until very recent periods although ceramic technology was spread all over Kalimantan. It shows some seemingly contradiction concerning the acceptation or borrowing of foreign technics, by prehistoric hunter-gatherers. They have clearly conserved or adopted only what was corresponding to their needs and culturally agreeable.

A more precise description of lithic technology by J. Espagne, will appear besides, based upon his study yet in progress.

The study of animal bones by HG. Ferrie being still at its beginning and in progress, only a first general draft of his preliminary interpretations is provided hereafter.

Primary and general observations concerning bone study conducted by Jean-George Ferrié

Within the general frame of archaeological researches conducted in East Kalimantan, we have undertaken the study of faunal bone remains which have been discovered within some sites of the Marang river area.

That study has two main goals. First, it will allow to collect data concerning the different animal species, which were present in the surveyed area during different chronological phases, and to follow their evolution. Being accepted that the absence of one species in the archaeological frame would not mean its general lack in the natural environment: human communities being able to manage many choices within their accessible possibilities.

Second, as a main task, we should be able to bring out original data upon daily life of communities who have settled in this area. Thanks to a detailed taphonomic and archaeological analyse of bone remains, it should be possible to reconstruct exploitation strategies of the natural environment managed by these populations. Once established for each site, synchronic and diachronic comparisons, for inter- and intra-locations will be performed, with the intention to search possible differences and evolutions in the managing of local animal resources.

A set of test-pits has been dug during the 2005' field session, on Gua Tebok, Liang Unak and Liang Jon sites. They have provided an important quantity of bone remains. The total weight overpasses practically 30 kg. Only Liang Jon and Gua Tebok have yet been submitted to a preliminary sorting and study. Most of the bones are highly fragmented, and depending of test-pits and layers, a large proportion of them is burnt.

Within identified taxons, suidae, followed by turtles (mostly shell parts), then cervidae, constitute the main core. Some bones of primates and carnivores have also been identified in a lesser proportion in the different assemblages.

In the Test-pit B in Liang Jon, levels 24, 25 and 26 would differ from others, because of the majority proportion of cervidae. The proportion of suidae and turtles within these layers would be thus lower than cervidae, indicating an important change in the diet or food practices. These primary observations should be confirmed later with more precise observations.

The first sorting of bones has already let appear an important proportion of burnt bones. In Liang Jon, 36% of the total determined remains and 68% of undetermined fragments are burnt. These proportions are respectively 36% and 73% in Gua Tebok. If animals constitute an important diet resource, they are also providing an important raw material subside (long hard bones and deer antlers, inasmuch as skin and tendons). In Gua Tebok and Liang Jon, uses for non-dietary purposes have been identified thanks to the discovery of different bone points or needles.

A more detailed analyse is clearly necessary in the intention of establishing the taphonomic history of each assemblage and then in precisising the acquisition and exploitation process for each species. These data will be tied and cross-checked with those of other disciplines, the only procedure permitting to precisely describe the past way of life of the communities who have previously settled in this area.

Equally important by their number inasmuch as by their contents are the ornate caves which have been discovered since 11 years in that area. Being established by now that the oldest representations are older than the end of Pleistocene (10.000 years BP), they constitute a determining core of the South East Asian prehistory.

Mainly characterized by a high number of negative hand prints, it shows also different manners of using not only combinations but also overpainted hand stencils. That late characteristic let it differs from all surrounding cultural expressions, and even of all worldwide examples. Its origins are not yet clearly established but analyses have proved to be dated from more than late Pleistocene (10.000 BP). Being unique in that part of the world, and presenting more links with its far neighbours from Australia, than with the closest islands (Sulawesi, Moluccas and Western New Guinea, mainly described by Kosasih, Setiawan, O'Connor, Delanghe & Arifin) this would induce to consider differently the settlement and cultural diffusion of Rock Art in that large area. One new hypothesis would be that before the end of Pleistocene (10.000 years ago) and during its move towards Australia, a group would have settled –or escaped- in that remote area of East Kalimantan and locally kept that painting tradition and its former usages. The fact is that there is no apparent aesthetic, neither figurative link, between the rock art painted in these caves and any ethnographic "Dayak" style figurations.

Although the presumption of a specific "austronesian" origin has been proposed and would for many cases fit there with the local "prehistory of history", mainly in East Nusantara, by some scholars (Balard, 1992), that explanation does not match observations for East Kalimantan.

The presence of a few general figures in some caves, presents some analogies, with some common symbolic "ideograms", in frequent use in South East Asia. For instance, the arborescent feature found in Gua Tewet (see Fig. 11) linking a minimum of 7 differentiated negative hand prints, may evoke possibly the "tree of life" scheme. Another hypothesis is preferring the "visual language" approach and its logical interpretations, is supported by P. Setiawan, our everlasting global partner since 1995.

Apart that possible reference with some "Dayak" cultural expression, it would possibly also be perceptible in what seems to represent the large bees hive and the "honey tree" painted in Kerim cave (see Fig. 12). It is known from ethnography (Van Geddes, 1959, Hopes, 1997) that much respect was paid to any honey tree and a specific dance used to be performed by communities, after or against bad or difficult events or periods.

Would these representations ("tree of life/honey tree") and customs (honey tree dance) pre-exist before the arrival of Austronesians, followed themselves later by generic Dayak cultures, is still a possible hypothesis. This late one, is forming the bulk of possible eventually consequences of the contacts between Pleistocene populations, long time settled in South East Asia. Samples from Niah or Tabon, show that peoples -Homo sapiens sapiens- were already living there since 40 to 50.000 years, compared to newcomers like Austronesians, some 5.000 years ago only. What kind of exchanges or inter-influences have thus and then happened, and in which directions, is still a puzzling question, breeding discussions between specialists.

The investigations conducted in Gunung Marang cluster have began to nourish the gap of knowledge still remaining in that large area. Completing –or

confronting- other data gathered not only in Eastern Kalimantan, but also the complete Eastern side of Island Borneo, archaeological results converging from all disciplines would provide a determining clue for interpreting the role that this precisely "in the between" location, would have played in the past. Concerns towards its proper study but also its efficient protection should therefore be strongly linked for future generations.

Note on the economico-cultural environment of the Gunung Marang Reserve situation (JM. Chazine/Kalimanthrope)

The state of protection of that huge and determinant patrimony is eventually almost null. The burial sites and the painted caves, had remained until recent decades under a traditional and implicit protection. Local communities, mainly Dayak and their more slightly episodic Punan contacts were the only ones to settle within that area. Some caves had thus been devoted to keep funerary remains, jars for older times, and wooden coffins for more recent, like in Gua Lungun or Gua Tengkorak. The dramatic 1997' hazes, have left nothing but charcoals from these wooden items. The whole area had anyway already been abandoned some decades ago, under common pressure of the Government and the logging companies attractive salaries. Only bird nest collectors, ancient residents or newcomers from the Transmigrasi process, were roving from caves to caves. Pressure was not that much important, based upon a low and temporary mean human presence. Conditions and incomes produced by some caves has strongly increased and time length during which a new population remains on the spots has totally changed also. Being reduced from 45 days of minimal maturation, it has dropped down to 42 if not 40, decreasing dramatically the natural stock for reproduction. Bands of 6 to 10 men stay all the time near the caves to collect and protect the "goldmine" and consequently predate everything still living around.

Large areas are now under a huge and almost wild threaten from free scavengers and logging gangs. Protection and information actions have now to be organised and coordinated, in accordance with the local authorities demands and intentions. Discoveries and findings already gained in that specific area are important enough to help settle local showroom and exhibitions actions for enhancing cultural awareness.

At another level, the groups exploiting the natural resources of these remote and desertified areas do not belong to the new created local culture, i.e. the "Kutai". A neologism which has the advantage to integrate as many people as needed, as long as they have been resident since enough time or generations. It permits also to include in a new generic, common and neutral term, Dayaks or assimilated communities and overpass the cultural complex of inferiority which has been and still is prevalent. A rather little number of "real new Kutai" are permanently involved in logging or forestry industries, inasmuch as bird nest collecting. They use to come there to get a harsh but speed, amount of money and behave just like simple or other predators. They do not feel any cultural, historical neither emotional link with those who have left the archaeological remains that archaeologists excavate and exhume from the ground and the caves. They have in no case their ancestors buried there and will never have. Thus cultural links between previous inhabitants and local authorities do not yet exist at all. Understanding and protection measures are totally foreign constraints for these new scavengers, inasmuch as there is no support for the Administration on the spot. That gap is not the smallest problem which has to be managed and solved to attempt to protect and maybe enhance the cultural consciousness of a morally and geographically distanced population.

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