

## **New focus on old archaeology: re-assessing controversies in Southeast Asia**

Convenor: Dr. Lia Genovese, [trinacria\\_1955@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:trinacria_1955@yahoo.co.uk)

Single session panel

Instances of scientific fraud or criminal activities involving archaeology are being re-assessed fairly regularly, supported by new primary sources and publications, often casting doubt on the original judgement. This panel focuses on contentious cases of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century archaeology from Southeast Asia, in light of new data from archives or recent publications. Presentations in this panel offer a critical re-evaluation of historical events, including the conduct of organisations and individuals involved in each case. Late in the 19th century, the French amateur archaeologist Ludovic Jammes claimed to have collected a significant haul of bronze objects from Samrong Sen in Cambodia. Jammes was discredited by French and American scholars but in recent years his claims have been largely validated by artefacts excavated by Cambodian archaeologists. One of the most enduring cases concerns the attempted theft in December 1923 of Khmer statues from Banteay Srei in Cambodia. André Malraux admitted masterminding the looting but recent publications and data from colonial archives call into question the conduct of organisations and individuals involved in his prosecution. The panel also welcomes the re-evaluation of geological controversies, similar to the accusation of scientific fraud against Jacques Deprat in 1914. Although he was dismissed from the Hanoi-based Geological Survey of Indochina, in 1991 the French Geological Society publicly rehabilitated Deprat in the presence of his surviving daughter. Comparative studies are also welcome for archaeological or geological controversies between Southeast Asia and other regions.

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### Brief Bio:

Lia Genovese holds a PhD from SOAS-University of London for a Dissertation titled 'The Plain of Jars of North Laos - Beyond Madeleine Colani'. She is an independent scholar based in Bangkok and is a Member of the Lecture Committee at the Siam Society. Her current research interests include: the Plain of Jars of Laos; French colonial archaeology; the megaliths of South and Southeast Asia; Iron Age mortuary practices; cultural heritage and conservation. She is currently working on a critical biography of the life and work of the French archaeologist Madeleine Colani. Lia's publications are available as open access from her Academia page:

<https://infomedicahn.academia.edu/LiaGenovese/Analytics/activity/overview>

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