

## From London to Padova:

## Doctorate students present their research at international conference



Photos: Syukri Rizki



Photo: R.E Saputra

### London

From the 24<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> of May, a group of Ph.D. students of the Austronesian Section participated in the workshop "Colonialism and Manuscript Libraries in Island Southeast Asia", held at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) of the University of London.

The workshop, organized by the members of the project "Mapping Sumatra's Manuscript Cultures" based at SOAS, was arranged into presentation sessions and master class activities. During the morning sessions, the panelists discussed examples of manuscript collections formed in the Malay world and around the Indonesian archipelago. These



Photo: Zacky Umam

### Padova

Another Ph.D. student, Rangga E. Saputra, presented his research in the Eight International Association of Political History (APH) Conference 2023 from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> of June, in Padova, Italy. The conference was hosted by DiSSGeA (Department of Historical and Geographical Sciences and the Ancient World), of the "Università degli Studi di Padova", and was centred around the theme 'The Mobility of Politics, the Politics of Mobility'.

Rangga E. Saputra presented a paper entitled "*The Politics of Minority Diaspora and The Making of Civil Society: A Case Study of Hadhrami Communities in Singapore, c. 1965-2000*". His presentation delved into the ways in which the second generation of a transnational diaspora had successfully integrated and maintained a respected status in the host societies under the harsh political-economic circumstances of the post-independence period. It focused on the roles of the Hadhrami diaspora as a religious-civil society through

included both manuscripts libraries created because of the influence of Western collectors, and private ones formed under the impulsion of local families and preserved as heirlooms until today.

Our Ph.D. student, Roberta Zollo, presented a communication entitled "*The Paradox of the Datus "Breathing Libraries" and the Effect of Coloniality on the Batak Manuscript Culture*". In her presentation, she argued that the concept of "library" has not a single and straight understanding, and that does not need to refer only to physical collections of books. Instead, she suggested that in contexts in which written texts were not yet the preferred form of textuality, specialists of orality, like the *datu* in the Batak lands, were acting as "breathing libraries" for their communities. These, in fact, were not only producing the texts but also selecting and storing them for preserving and passing them on, which can be seen as the same aims as the ones of any library.

Three other Ph.D. candidates from the Austronesian Studies department, Tiara Ulfah, Syukri Rizki, and Zakariya Pamuji Aminullah, presented their ongoing research in the Masterclass. Tiara Ulfah talked about the rise of lithograph printing in Riau and Singapore from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, which led to the gradual fade of the manuscript tradition of the two regions. Syukri Rizki discussed the Acehese manuscript's production during the years of the Dutch occupation, which he posited to be the zenith of the Acehese manuscript tradition. Three main features marked this period, namely, the rising popularity of texts on Islamic crusade, the prevalence of colonial manuscript studies, and the wide use of European stationary materials. Zakariya Pamuji Aminullah presented some of the latest findings he gathered during his 4-month field research, during which he visited several public and private collections in Bali and Java, looking for copies of the Candrakirana manuscripts.

charity activities. Rangga's research reveals that these played a crucial role allowing this minority diaspora to integrate into different host communities while maintaining a well-respected status. Religious charities also helped them to hinder state persecutions and played a role in smoothing their relations with rulers. Rangga E. Saputra's doctoral project concerns the social history of Hadhrami communities in the Indonesian-Malay speaking countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore) after World War II until 2000.



## Perspectives on Vietnamese History Challenged

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of June, Keith Taylor, Professor emeritus of Cornell University, presented a lecture at our Department of Southeast Asian Languages and Cultures, in cooperation with the Hamburg Association of Vietnamese Studies. The title of his talk was *“Brick Tombs and Brick Walls in Vietnamese Archaeology and History”*. The lecture covered first tombs from Chinese dynasties in today’s Northern and Northern Central Vietnam (1<sup>st</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> cent. AD) and second the so-called Wall of Đồng Hới (17<sup>th</sup> cent. AD), which separated the Northern Kingdom of the Lê-Trịnh from the Southern Rulers of the Nguyễn. What do these two places have in common? He started with a brief introduction of the archives and pictures of historical artifacts relating to his research before mapping out the positions of brick tombs as well as the scanty brick remains of the walls in Đồng Hới (today’s Central Vietnam). The river Gianh (today’s Quảng Bình province) was the common denominator of both topics, first as southernmost border of Chinese empires, second as border between the realms of the Trịnh and Nguyễn. Keith Taylor traced the history of the brick tombs’ owners in three aspects such as society, language and anthropology. He talked about the role of the strategist, scholar and poet



Photos: Quang Minh To

Đào Duy Từ (1572-1634) who proposed to erect the defense system of Đồng Hới against the Trịnh armies. He raised the question if there is such thing like a unified Vietnamese identity, a concept, which has always been promoted by official historiography. Finally, the seminar ended with a lively, warm and engaging discussion between lecturer and viewers.



Photo: Dr. Tịnh Vy Tran

By:  
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**Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> of July 2023**  
**16:00 - 18:00 CEST**  
**Room 221, East Wing AAI**  
**Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1**

**Zoom:**  
<https://uni-hamburg.zoom.us/j/65390845104?pwd=aVhTZ0szVGdKdFhwRXN2QUxhOjI0Q09>

**Webinar ID: 653 9084 5104**  
**Passcode: 64671472**

**Grants (most recently):**  
 DAAD Guest Lecturer at Department of Languages and Cultures of Southeast Asia, University of Hamburg, Germany, 2023.  
 Selected Research Fellowship at RILCA, Mahidol University, Thailand, 2022.

## Memory and Identity in Vietnamese Literature in Germany

Hybrid Lecture organized by University of Hamburg, Asien-Afrika-Institut, Department of Southeast Asian Languages and Cultures *Diễn đàn văn hóa Việt Nam/ Forum of Vietnamese Culture/Forum der vietnamesischen Kultur*

There are several motives for the Vietnamese to migrate to Germany, including war, poverty, power fluctuations, and the search for better lives. Therefore, history not only leaves its footprint in the immigrants’ memory but also shapes their identities. In this talk, I put an emphasis on how diasporic protagonists in Vietnamese literature in Germany restore their past through fragmented memories, how they go through many journeys to constitute their new cultural identities and how they open up new cultural spaces formed by double consciousness between homeland and host land.

### Information about the speaker

Ph.D. (Vietnamese Studies), University of Hamburg, 2020.  
 M.A. (Languages and Cultures in Europe), Linköping University, 2012.  
 B.A. (Literature), Vietnam National University, HCMC, 2007.

### Most recent publications:

*“When the city speaks up: Nature, City and Identity in Lê Minh Hà’s Phố vẫn gió”*, in Ursula Heise (ed.) *Environment and Narrative in Vietnam*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2023 (Forthcoming).

*“Home sweet home in Võ Phiến’s tùy bút”*, *SUVANNABHUMI*, Vol. 14 (2 July), 201-225, 2022.

*“The legacy of the diaspora: memory and homeland-in-memory in the diasporic Vietnamese literature in Germany”*, in Ajaya K. Sahoo (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Asian Diaspora and Development*, 369-380, 2021.

*“Writing on the past: Memory as a driver for writing in Bảo Ninh’s Savage Winds”*, in Thomas Engelbert (ed.) *Empathy and Understanding. The Writer Bảo Ninh on War and Peace*, 77-101, 2021.



## Thai Tag 2023

Future directions of Thai Studies in Germany and career opportunities for students of Thai and Southeast Asian studies

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June, the Department of Thai Studies convened a Thai Culture Day (Thai Tag 2023) at the Asien-Afrika-Institut, University of Hamburg.

The event was opened by addresses from Royal Thai Ambassador H.E. Dr. Nadhavathna Krishnamra and Honorary Consul Stefan Karsten Krohn, and a short introductory note by Prof. Dr. Volker Grabowsky from the Hamburg Department of Thai Studies.

This year, the Thai Tag was held under the motto "Future Directions of Thai Studies in Germany," assembling speakers from the universities of Berlin (PD Dr. Daniel Bultmann), Bonn (PD Dr. Oliver Pye), Cologne (Prof. Dr. Frauke Kraas), Frankfurt a. M. (Holger Warnk), Hamburg (PD Dr. Sven Trakulhun, Prof. Dr. Dr. Jonas Schmidt-Chanasit), Heidelberg (Dr. Benjamin Baumann), and Passau (Dr. Simon Rohwedder). They reported on current teaching and research activities at their departments, and provided an outlook on future developments in Thai Studies in Germany. Asst. Prof. Dr. Catthiyakorn Sasitharamas from Silpakorn University (Bangkok) gave a lecture on "German Studies in Thailand."



In addition to academic lectures, the program featured performances of traditional Thai music and dance, Thai food, and Thai massage.

In the afternoon there were two parallel sessions: "Career Opportunities" hosted by Royal Thai Embassy (Berlin) and Royal Thai Consulate-General Munich (represented by Consul General Ms. Prapenpim Prachonpachanuk) that benefited students of Southeast Asian Studies, and a "Book Launch" in which members of the Hamburg department of Thai Studies (Professor Dr. Volker Grabowsky, Dr. Sven Trakulhun, Dr. Silpsupa Jaengsawang and Dr. Peera Panarut) presented a range of book publications released in recent years.

Another highlight of the event was the award ceremony of the Academic Writing Contest 2023 on the topic "Thai Culture between Tradition and Modernity", in which BA and MA students from different German universities have participated. The

winner was Lucas Ice Pfeffer, a student from the University of Hamburg, with his essay "Resonating Harmonies: Thai Fusion Music as a Sonic Expression of Cultural Synthesis."



Photos: Silpsupa Jaengsawang, Kornkanok Khetnongbua

With 160 registered visitors (and many more who simply came by), the Thai Tag 2023 was a splendid success. It became possible thanks to financial support from the Royal Thai Embassy in Berlin, the Royal Thai Consulate-General in Munich and the Royal Thai Honorary Consulate in Hamburg. The organizers from the Hamburger Gesellschaft für Thaiistik e.V. and the Department for Languages and Cultures of Southeast Asia at University of Hamburg wish to thank students from the department for their assistance, especially Mirijam Schmidt and Tim Arne Rambow, the moderators who guided through the program. Pannarai Büchmann, our Thai Language lecturer, devoted much of her time in the weeks before to make the event happen. Warm thanks also go to Amphan Schmidt and Anutara Busch who arranged lively Thai music performances and Thai dances.

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